

Newtown School Board of Trustees

Meeting minutes

Wednesday 25 July 2018, 6.30 pm, school staffroom

Present: Mark Brown, Annette Gittos, Julie Bennett, Lucy Kebbell, Kelvin Harper, Miriam Swanson (items 1 - 3), and Jo Gould (minutes).

Apologies: Victoria Esson and Daniel Petersen

1. Previous Minutes and Actions

The minutes of the 27 June 2018 Board meeting were approved and the action items were discussed and updated.

Annette commented that the school's submission on the Wellington Connections consultation was well received by the Wellington City Council. Thanks again to Jude Ball for drafting the submission on behalf of interested parents, caregivers and the Board. The Board observed that it would be good to keep in contact with Council staff about transport issues around the school.

2. Conflicts of interest

None declared

3. Student Achievement Mid-Year Report

Kelvin tabled a mid-year report on student achievement, focusing on the school-wide learner targets that were developed following the ERO report in 2017. These targets are: acceleration practices (to accelerate learning for all children), writing (with a particular focus on learners identified as being "well below" their expected level at the end of 2017), Maori and Pasifika reading and writing (ensuring that Maori and Pasifika learners stay motivated, valued and have opportunities to excel), and student wellbeing (especially with the move into the new school building). The school is still using the PaCT tool, to report results against the curriculum level (which are broad, especially when compared with the previous national standards). For some of these targets, the school is still working on how to measure progress (for example, the student wellbeing one).

The report focussed on the writing target. All learners that have been identified as being “well below” (that is, two years below their expected curriculum level) have had some form of programme or support put in place. A total of 29 students have been identified as needing significant support in 2018. 20 have in-class support (provided through ORS, in class support or RTLB), and 9 students have adapted or supported programmes in place. Kelvin noted that 10 students are ELL.

Mark pointed out that there is now a “pre level 1” of the curriculum, which is useful for ORS students and others on learner support.

The Board asked whether there had been any feedback received from parents on the mid-year reports. Kelvin commented that they haven’t received any yet, but that some could be received through the conversations at parent-teacher meetings in August.

The Board then discussed what could be included in the reports. With the move away from reporting against national standards, there has been no guidance or direction to schools from the Ministry about what to report in terms of student progress and achievement. But parents want to know where their child is at, and whether they need to be concerned about their child’s progress. There needs to be some careful thinking about what needs to be included in the end-of-year reports so that they are clear and meaningful.

4. New Build and Official Opening

Mark commented that the blessing of the new school went very well, and expressed his thanks to those involved, and to all the parents and members of the school community who attended.

There was a massive effort to get everything out of the pre-fabs and into the new school in just over a day. Lots of parents and children helped, and teachers spent a lot of time setting up the spaces over the holidays. Children and parents have been, largely, very positive about the new building.

There are some teething issues and defects, which will be resolved. For instance, some of the doors are too heavy for children to open. There is also an issue with the automatic doors out onto Riddiford St. These can be activated by pushing a switch, which can be reached by children. Mark indicated that these doors will be re-programmed so that they can’t be opened during morning tea and lunchtimes.

The security system in the old buildings need to be upgraded.

Stage 2 is now underway, which includes the removal of the prefabs. The main playground is being repaired, and should be available in week 2 (although this is weather dependent). The junior playground is being constructed. There are no car parks for staff for about three weeks. Stage 2 is due to be completed by 27 August 2018.

Funding for the pool refurbishment is being considered by the Wellington City Council as part of the Ten Year (Long Term) Plan. This is a rigorous process which has previously been outlined to the Board. The school is seeking \$500,000 plus GST, and will hear the outcome in mid-August. Members of the Board can attend the Council meeting on 15 August 2018 to support proposal, and/or email the Council with their support. Mark pointed out that the Council has unspent money for swimming pools - these include the original funds earmarked for Newtown plus one other school (that has subsequently decided not to build a pool). The school has contacted a couple of contractors to test their interest in being involved in the project. If funding is approved, the school will need to move quickly.

ACTION: Mark to provide information to Annette about the pool funding proposal, that can be used in an email of support to the Council. Mark to also circulate the terms and conditions for the funding (which would apply if the application was approved - covers things like the need to get three quotes for the work, to start the refurbishment work within a year, and to provide reports to the Council about who is using the pool, etc).

Official opening - the school has requested that this happens in week 9 or 10 of Term 3. The school should know the date by mid to late August 2018.

5. Principal's report

Mark tabled his monthly report to the Board. Items discussed included:

- CoL - schools have met recently to discuss the selection process for the CoL leader. Annette is our representative in this process.
- Workwise - Trish is working to set up the Workwise online health and safety system for the school to use. The first H&S report for the Board should be available in time for the August Board meeting.
- An Independent person has evaluated the handrail on the balustrade, and has discussed the issue with the Ministry of Education, the architect of the new building and the Council. A report

on the issue is expected to be available shortly. Julie pointed out that there also needs to be a report completed on possible hazards in the new building, which can then be included in the Hazard Register.

ACTION: A report needs to be completed on any hazards identified in the new building. Any identified hazards need to be included in the Hazards Register.

- The school roll has increased to 392 children, with more in the junior school so we can expect to get an increase in teaching staff.
- The school needs to arrange some storage for surplus furniture (possibly a container).
- A school concert is scheduled for 12 September 2018 (based on the availability of the Wellington High School hall, which will be the venue). The theme will be on who we are as a school, and will be an opportunity to showcase the school's talent in kapa haka, taiaha, ukulele (etc).
- There have been three incidents involving the school - some graffiti on the new building (which will be promptly removed), plus two Fire Service callouts: one was the result of sprinkler system problems (which lost pressure due to a fault), and a couch was set on fire by the hall. Mark attended both callouts.
- The teachers strike has been confirmed, currently for the afternoon of 15 August but this may be extended to the full day.
- A parent offered, at the recent FANS meeting, to provide the school with advice on applying for funding from the trusts that operate gaming machines. She observed that there are a lot of applicants for these funds, but often they don't read the funding criteria. Any applications would need to be run past the Board for approval.

ACTION: Mark to provide Lucy with the quotes for installing astroturf in the area adjacent to the playground.

- Insurance to cover the use of Mark's car for school purposes - Mark indicated that he has private insurance for his car, but that if any incident occurs while the car is used for school purposes, it should be covered by a commercial insurance arrangement. One option is for Mark to use part of his principal's allowance to top up the personal insurance to the commercial insurance rate.

ACTION: Mark to explore possible commercial insurance top-up options for his car (to cover any incidents that occur while the car is being used for school purposes), and to report back to the Board.

6. Finance

Mark tabled the Finance Report, which noted expenditure for the month of June of \$114,542. There have been some large capital expenditure items, including for the security system, ICT, school painting and a bookshelf system for the immersion class. Admin costs have been high, as has been expenditure on relief teachers (as some teachers have had lengthy periods of illness).

The signatories on the cheques have been changed, in line with the decisions of the Board at the last meeting.

7. Committee reports

Policy

The Board agreed to invest in School Docs (www.schooldocs.co.nz) which has good online policy templates (which are updated when new legislative provisions come into force). The system will improve staff access to the policies, and has a built-in review cycle to help ensure that the policies remain up-to-date and relevant.

ACTION: Lucy to work with Trish to implement School Docs.

Health and Safety

Julie stressed the need for staff to be aware of the school's H&S policies and procedures. Health and safety could be a standing agenda item at staff meetings, with different policies being briefly discussed so staff are aware of expectations.

The Board was pleased to hear the progress on First Aid training, with over half of the teachers now having up-to-date First Aid certificates.

Dyslexia

Sally has shared with Board members the Newtown School Learning Difficulties Report. The report summarises progress over the last three years in identifying students with learning difficulties, and the measures that have been put into place to support these students.

ACTION: The next meeting of the Learning Difficulties Action Group will need to be rescheduled, as the group is currently due to meet on 15 August (the day of the teacher's industrial action).

8. Any other business (including correspondence)

An email has been received from ERO, following up on the 2017 review and actions. Mark has been in touch with ERO to explain about the move to the new school and that the requested information would be provided in August 2018.

ACTION: Mark to respond to ERO in August 2018.

An email had been received from Miriam Swanson, expressing an interest in the vacant co-opted Board member position. Annette has discussed roles, commitment, etc, with Miriam, and invited her to attend this Board meeting.

9. In-Committee

The Board moved into committee at 8:48 pm to discuss personnel and other matters. The Board and moved out of committee at 8:51 pm.

Next meeting: 28 August 2018



29 Aug 2018