

Newtown School Board of Trustees

Meeting minutes

Wednesday 27 March 2019, 6.30 pm, school staffroom

Present: Mark Brown, Julie Bennett, Lucy Kebbell, Miriam Swanson, Jasmine Gilbert, Annette Gittos, Nicki Read, Victoria Esson (items 1 - 5), Nick Booth (items 1 - 8), Justine Henderson (items 1 - 4), and Jo Gould (minutes).

Apologies: none.

1. Karakia

2. Previous Minutes and Actions

The minutes from the meeting of 27 February 2019 were approved and the action items were discussed and updated.

3. Conflicts of interest

None declared.

4. Inclusive education

Justine briefed the Board on inclusive education. Justine pointed out that inclusion is not a programme - it's a mindset. It's about opportunities for learning for all, so all students feel valued. Every child has different needs. As teachers, educators and parents, we need to be aware that students need different things to succeed. Children should be able to access what they need to succeed.

Justine commented that there is already a really good base for inclusive education at Newtown school - some good thinking has been done, and some good processes and practices are in place. The growth mindset language and thinking being used around the school, particularly in Whanau Tui, is a good example. Staff now need to stretch their ideas and practices. Justine has undertaken a couple of

workshops with staff to start thinking about how to build on what is already in place. In particular, thinking about what the children need, how they learn best, and how the great learning spaces in the school can be fully utilized.

There is a learner support lead in each whanau, who has responsibility for ensuring all teachers are embracing inclusive education. They help to identify children in the whanau who need support, and identify additional supports that are needed - RTLB, in class support, speech language therapy etc. Everyone is encouraged to try a range of strategies.

Justine has also been considering the teacher aide timetable - is it a good fit? Are the TAs working to their strengths? And are the children responding well? Justine also mentioned that IEPs are being redeveloped with fewer goals - these are more concise and more achievable.

Mark observed that part of the reason for appointing Justine is to look at the learner support with fresh eyes - reviewing what is in place, and introducing new ideas.

The Board asked whether additional funding is required. It was observed that Newtown school already has a lot more learner support in place, particularly for students who have moderate learning needs. In Justine's view there is room to be more savvy with how the funding is spent- upskill TAs to work with more than one child at a time, for example.

The Board asked how the school knows if the strategies (etc) are working, and having an impact. What's the school's measure of success? What is the school looking for in two or three years? Justine commented that this can be difficult to determine, as the gains (for example, the children feeling more settled and happy) aren't easy to measure. Also need to consider what is being measured - a learning outcome, teaching practice, or something else? Do parents know what interventions and strategies are being used for their child/children, and are they noticing a difference? The inclusivity/wellbeing survey could provide some useful insights.

Mutukaroa - home and school partnerships for Whanau Tui - was discussed, as this is seen as a positive way to bring families into the school and provide feedback to whanau. There is support at the Board

level for extending this through to Years 3 and 4, but budget constraints mean this isn't currently possible.

The Board thanked Justine for the great work she is doing in this area.

5. Evacuation policy/procedures

Following the recent tragic events in Christchurch, the Board had a lengthy discussion about evacuation and lockdown procedures at the school. Key points discussed included:

- Over the last week the MoE has advised that they are reviewing lockdown procedures, and that schools should hold off making any major changes to their policies until the results of the review are known.
- Newtown school met today (27 March) with the local community constable to discuss lockdown procedures on the school site. This raised a number of issues, including how the school would signal to teachers and students that a lockdown was in place, how children would be accounted for when they might not be going back to their home classes, procedures when children are out in the local community (e.g. Newtown library) when a lockdown is initiated, etc.
- Many families don't provide up-to-date contact numbers, and usually only have one emergency contact. Lots of families don't have smartphones, and don't have English as their first language - they may not understand what a lockdown is, or what reunification means.
- Nicki, Mark and Julie have also met with Civil Defence, as the school is a Community Emergency Hub - a place for the community to coordinate their efforts to help each other during and after a disaster. The school has the first priority on using the hall in case of an emergency, but many members in the community would expect to also be able to use the facilities.
- Teachers currently use personal phones to communicate, and would also use these in cases of emergencies. The school might want to make a contribution to acknowledge that teachers are using their personal phones for school business.

ACTION: By the next Board meeting, templated procedures (covering lockdown, earthquakes and other civil defence emergencies) will be developed based on the best advice the school has received.

These will be communicated out to the school community, and can be updated based on any MoE advice subsequently received.

The Board offered praise and thanks for the school's approach and response to the tragic Christchurch events.

6. Principal's report

Mark's report was tabled. Items discussed included:

- The Strategic Plan has been revised in light of the discussion at the last Board meeting. The plan has six strategic goals, with strategic outcomes which reflect Te Ao Māori, cultural identity, wellbeing and learning capabilities. The plan also includes a new vision and mission for the school.

ACTION: Mark to send an email to Board members seeking approval of the Strategic and Annual Plans, and School Charter.

- Project Managers for the pool project meet monthly. An emergency meeting was recently held to discuss air conditioning, which was initialled costed at \$30,000 but has increased to \$80,000. There have, however, been some savings around the choice of light-weight wooden walls and the roof design. The project is mostly tracking to the timeframe (about a week and a half out). Construction must start by 1 June (according to funding agreement).

7. Committee reports

Health and Safety

Jasmine reported that there had been 14 incidents for the month of March, and 40 incidents where children had been to the medical room.

The Board agreed that the costs of flu vaccinations for staff members will be covered by the school.

All teachers are immunised against measles. Trish is pulling a report on the number of students that aren't immunised.

Second locks have been placed on the gates. Signage has been ordered for front gate indicating opening hours.

The complaint about the toilet incident that was discussed at the last Board meeting has been resolved. It was clarified that there wasn't a situation where a child was asked to pick up a sanitary pad.

Policy

Lucy had circulated to Board members a proposed amendment to Child Protection Policy, covering Police checks for volunteers who are staying on overnight school trips. The amendments reflect requirements in the Children's Act 2014 (previously the Vulnerable Children's Act). Any Police checks will be valid for one year.

There was some discussion about the difficulties of locating the relevant policies on the school website. It would also be useful to have BOT meeting dates and agendas on the website.

ACTION: Nicki to report back on website improvements.

Finance

Victoria had prepared a financial report for the months of January and February 2019. She observed that the school is in a good financial position, as is expected at the beginning of the financial year.

Adjustments that were made to the budget were good, as we are tracking very close to budgeted expenditure.

Property

The school will have to cover the costs of additional bag hooks.

Ngati Kotahitanga has a new fridge and oven.

Fundraising

Lucy reported that she is preparing funding applications for a number of items - matting and a slide for the adventure playground, a second basketball hoop on the school grounds to make a full court, plus an additional mural.

ACTION: Lucy will circulate resolutions seeking the Board's approval to apply for funding once all the quotes have been received.

8. Any other business

Correspondence

An email had been received from Sarah Jull, who sought alignment of school holiday dates at the start and end of the year for schools in the area, to make it easier for working parents to find holiday programmes. There was some discussion among the school principals about this a couple of years ago - all agreed at the time, two schools subsequently changed, but most are aligned.

Dunedin STA conference is on 31 July 2019 - early bird enrollments are closing in May - Jasmine indicated that she would like to go. This was supported by the Board.

Board elections

Trish is going to be the returning officer. The Board discussed how the school could get a more diverse Board that is representative of the school community. It was observed that evening meetings don't work for all.

ACTION: Miriam will include another update about the elections in the school newsletter.

9. In-Committee

The Board moved into committee at 9.29 pm to discuss personnel and other matters. The Board moved out of committee at 9:57 pm.

Next meetings: 1 May 2019 and 29 May 2019

 1.5.19