

Newtown School Board of Trustees

Meeting minutes

Wednesday 1 May 2019, 6.30 pm, school staffroom

Present: Lucy Kebbell, Miriam Swanson, Jasmine Gilbert, Nicki Read, Victoria Esson, Louise Conwell, Amelia Laing (items 1 - 5) and Jo Gould (minutes).

Apologies: Julie Bennett.

1. Karakia

2. Farewell and welcome

The Board noted the resignation of Annette Gittos, and acknowledged with thanks her long and dedicated service to the Board, initially as Treasurer and more recently as Chair for the majority of the current term. The Board observed that Annette had been a thorough, diligent and engaged trustee over her time on the Board and put a huge amount of work into Newtown School. Annette was responsible for successfully leading the strategy and direction of the Board through a period of major changes. The Board wished Annette all the best.


Louise Conwell was welcomed. The Board was pleased to have a staff rep back on the Newtown BOT.

3. Previous Minutes and Actions

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

4. Conflicts of interest

None declared.



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5. School community engagement

Amelia, as a representative of FANS, outlined some current issues with the lack of engagement in the FANS group. Amelia commented that only four parents attended the last FANS meeting, and that they are feeling a little disillusioned as numbers and support appear to have declined. They are questioning whether the group needs to be restructured and “re-branded”. Issues discussed with the Board included:

- From its name, it is not immediately obvious what FANS is about. It appears more formal than it is. The structure could be tweaked to make it more effective, accessible, open and collaborative.
- FANS email address – the group would prefer to communicate as the school, rather than have a separate email.
- FANS would like to support school-run events, like the Family Fun Night, rather than have separate FANS-organised and run events.
- The FANS meeting structure is formal, and perhaps not the best way to engage parents. After school or coffees catch-ups might be better.
- If the group continues, it would be great to have more staff input to encourage parents to join or contribute. More diverse representation from across the school community would also be great.
- One option discussed, which was supported by the Board, was having parent representative(s) volunteer from each class or whanau to organise social gatherings for each whanau, meet and greet new families when their children start, network to gather volunteers for school-wide events etc. Lucy pointed out that Jess had previously done some work on a similar proposal and may be a good person to discuss this with.
- Another suggestion was to take a look at other school websites to see how their parent groups operate.

The Board concluded that it sees real value in FANS, or a similar parent-run group, to create events which are community-driven, tapping into the resources in the wider school community.

ACTION: Nicki to raise the parent whanau rep idea at a staff meeting.

6. PB4L and School Culture Team

Louise presented to the Board on work underway to continue to build a culture of positivity at Newtown School. The School Culture Team is a new team, established late last year, which is led by Louise and has reps from each whanau and the school leadership team. The team has a focus on wellbeing, identifying and addressing cultural trends, and building student ownership around the school values, PB4L (etc).

Work currently underway includes developing a document which covers the school values and what these might look like in students' learning, relationships, environment and wellbeing – for example, “I aim high”, “I am positive”, “I care for my environment”. Also under development is an information booklet/flyer for parents and caregivers to explain the school values, so that consistent approaches and language can be used in both the school and home environments.

Louise summarised the Tier 2 data (which covers students who have been on reflection time – for example, for repeated minor behaviours, or behaviours that escalate to more serious incidents). The data is collected to identify patterns and trends – for instance, Tuesday is typically the day with the most incidents recorded. Out of class (i.e. students being out of class when they should be in class) and physical aggression are the most occurring behaviours, often occurring just before breaks or at the beginning of breaks.

Tier 1 covers more minor behaviours – calling out regularly in class, not following instructions, coming in late after breaks, etc. Staff have started this term to collect data on these behaviours, to help identify problems at this area and see what strategies are working.

Children demonstrating Tier 3 behaviours receive outside support, wrap-around services (etc).

Louise noted that 3,400 cards of awesome were given out in Term 1.

7. Just Culture - discussion document cultivating open reporting

Lucy spoke to the “Just Culture” document, which came out of a meeting Lucy and Miriam had with Mark and Nicki following an incident at Mercy Park involving children practicing for the cross country race.

The document recognises that mistakes do happen, but the focus should be on good reporting of incidents and identifying lessons that can be learnt. It sets out possible responses, in a performance management context, to respond to incidents that put others at risk.

The general feeling among Board members was that the document is a good starting point to acknowledge what the Board would like to see in this context. The document will be discussed at the next health and safety sub-committee meeting, as it could feed into incident reporting timeframes – a period of reflection is important (rather than reporting within 24 hours of the incident, for example). Nicki would also reflect on how the document’s contents fit in with other things that already exist.

ACTION: Nicki and the health and safety committee to consider the “Just Culture” document, and report back to the Board at the 29 May 2019 meeting.

8. Kāhui Ako Update

The Board noted the MOU signed in March 2019 with the Capital City Kāhui Ako and the Newtown School BOT. The MOU sets out how the parties will work collaboratively together to raise student achievement.

Nicki noted that the Kāhui Ako did consider the issue raised by the Newtown BOT, about whether the COI would focus on maths and writing which was signalled in an ERO report. The Kāhui Ako would look at enhancing practice in this area, but that they are also committed to looking at more broad, holistic challenges.

9. Principal’s report

Nicki’s report was tabled. Items discussed included:

- The Board appreciated the changes Nicki had made to the structure of the report. They noted the new section on staff wellbeing, and clarified that EAP is available to staff.
- Work continues on reviewing the school's emergency preparedness and traumatic incident procedures, which should be ready to share with the Board by the June meeting. The Office staff are updating students' emergency details.
- Feedback from the recent learning conversations with parents/caregivers and teachers has been positive. One parent evening per term has been planned, each with a different focus.
- Billy is doing an excellent job in the school counsellor role, which has been really positive for the school community. The Board was interested to explore how this great work could continue once Billy's placement finishes.
- Swimming pool upgrade – no update. Nicki indicated that this is all on track.

9. Committee reports

Health and Safety

Jasmine reported that the health and safety committee hasn't met this month because of the school holidays.

Policy

Nicki reported that progress is being made with the School Docs, but it is time-consuming and is taking longer than expected.

Finance

Victoria reported that financial information for March hasn't been provided to the school, but should be available soon. Victoria will circulate the information when it comes through. The end of year financial statements should be finalised shortly. As with previous years, the school needs to prepare an annual report to accompany the financials, with a short report from the Chair. Ideally this should be finalised before the Board elections.

The Board approved delegations for the acting Principal. Most financial delegations remained unchanged, except the operating and capital expenditure limits (both increased up to \$10,000). Nicki

can delegate expenditure for specified purposes to staff members, up to the value of \$500 (i.e., not requiring Nicki's approval). The delegations also cover non-financial matters, for example, the Board needs to be advised of any media interviews undertaken by the Principal.

Property

As covered in Nicki's report, Mark and Paul (the architect) met at the end of Term 1 to discuss a range of outstanding issues, including the remedial work list, bag hooks and the upgrade of the new administration block. Work on the hall upgrade continues, with quotes coming in for various items.

Fundraising

Lucy reiterated that she is able to apply for grants for various projects that the school is keen to progress, but she needs quotes to complete the applications. The application process can take several months once you factor in the time to get quotes, applying for the grant, and notification of the outcome. It is often a 6 week wait once you have submitted the application. The hall refurbishment could be a good option to progress. Also a sandpit for the junior classes.

Victoria indicated that she is keen to reinvigorate the art group, as the three murals that were originally proposed haven't all been completed. The Board supported this.

10. Any other business

Board elections

Nicki advised that Trish is working to a timeline, as follows:

Date	Item	Description
First week in May	Electoral roll	Checking the electoral roll data is accurate Booking advertising Preparing postage
8 May	Full roll closes	Roll will be available at the school office for people to check if they want to
Week 2, Term 2	Call for nominations	Newspaper ads, social media,

		newsletter, posters around the school Nomination forms sent home to every eligible person
22 May	Supplementary roll closes	Roll will be available at the school office for people to check if they want to
24 May	Nominations close	A list of nominations will be collated as they come in
26 May	Post out voting forms	
7 June	Election day	

11. In-Committee

The Board moved into committee at 9.05 pm to discuss personnel and other matters. The Board moved out of committee at 9:13 pm.

Next meeting: 29 May 2019

