

Newtown School Board of Trustees

Meeting minutes

Wednesday 24 July 2019, 6.30 pm, school staffroom

Present: Jess Gorman, Nick Booth, Yadana Saw, Haidee Westwater, Amelia Handscomb, Mark Brown, Nicki Read, Louise Conwell, Wanwan Liao and Jo Gould (minutes).

1. Karakia

2. Previous Minutes

The minutes from the Board meeting held on 26 June 2019 were approved (moved Jess, seconded Nick).

3. Staff spotlight

The staff spotlight item on the agenda is an opportunity for staff members who are leading change in Newtown School to present to the Board. This month the Board heard from Wanwan, who is involved in a number of environmental projects around the school.

Wanwan took Board members for a walk around the school to show the various projects that are underway. These include veggie gardens for the *Garden to Table* programme, where students grow vegetables that they use to cook meals. Wanwan pointed out the compost and worm farms, and mentioned that some children are also involved in the *Root to Tip* cooking competition.

Other projects that the school is involved in are *Paper to Trees*, where the school is rewarded with native trees in exchange for paper that is recycled (a number of trees were planted during Matariki), and recycling oral care waste. The school also has an active enviro-crew, a group of students passionate about various environmental issues that come up with ideas (like plastic-free Wednesday) to make a difference.

Wanwan observed that the various projects are exposing students to environmental issues from a range of different perspectives. Students are becoming more aware, and this environmental awareness is evident in their inquiry work, where students often think about environmental issues related to the subject under inquiry.

The Board is very supportive of this work.

4. Principal's report

Nicki tabled her report. Items discussed included:

- Debbie and Nicki are involved in a research project with Victoria on education outside the classroom. The focus is on how engaging with providers who aren't teachers but are "content experts" can deepen learning on future focussed issues. The project involves Informal providers pitching their ideas to schools.
- English Language Learners (ELL) – the school receives funding for around 90 - 100 ELL students. The funding must be spent on programmes/teacher aides to support their language learning. Audits are undertaken on both the funding and the programmes. Nicki commented that the school needs to be strategic about how the funding is allocated. Wanwan mentioned a survey she conducted to find out how many children speak a language other than English, which was around 140 students. A first language group has been established, to come together and connect with each other through various fun activities. Wanwan said it is an opportunity for the children to use and appreciate their very "special power". Mark pointed out that the school also hosts German classes after school, and has had French and Cook Island Māori classes in the past. The Board indicated their support for this, and encouraged the school to "push on". There was a suggestion to link in with secondary schools in the area, to find older students who speak languages to connect with Newtown school students who also speak that language. This may be useful where there are only a couple of children who speak a particular language.
- Dance – 60 students are involved in Dance Splash. A dance tutor is working with students in Harakeke and Tui, with three teachers also being involved.

- Five new student teachers will be at Newtown School this term.
- A whanau hui will be held in week 3 for all members in the school community who identify as Māori.
- Three parent events were held last term. The Matariki breakfast was very successful, and is worth running again as an annual event. There was also lots of positive feedback from parents in response to the end of term sharing event. The performance assembly was also well received – Board members commented that the children were naturally confident, and it was a very inclusive event.
- Kāhui Ako – Mitch Jorden has been appointed to one of four “across school positions”, for an 18 month period (until the end of next year). The next step is to appoint within school leads.
- Working bee – Nicki said around seven people attended the working bee, and achieved a lot. It may be worth locking in a regular working bee slot in the term calendar.
- Property – Additional bag hooks have been installed within Tui. Line markings were completed over the holidays. Second basket ball hoop has been installed. Paul from Jerram Tocker Barron Architects has completed plans for the old Tui area.
- Mark is on strike. He congratulated the union for achieving an outcome for the teachers, but commented that the principals missed out. Officially he is not communicating with the Ministry, but there are mechanisms to make contact when student wellbeing is at stake
- It is encouraging to see kapa haka numbers have increased. The school is very fortunate to have the skills Matua Gregory brings to instructing students in taiaha. There is the possibility of a taiaha camp, to be hosted on Somes Island with support from the local iwi.
- Berhampore enrolment scheme - Berhampore school has previously consulted with the Newtown School BOT about their proposed enrolment zone, which overlaps slightly with our zone. Mark will circulate documentation which details the proposed zone. Board members will have a short time to review the proposal. Mark will respond to Berhampore School after 3 pm on Friday.

5. Make up of the Newtown School BOT

The Board can co-opt additional members, provided the criteria in section 99 of the Education Act 1989 have been considered (including that the Board should, as far as is reasonably practicable, reflect the ethnic and socio-economic diversity of the school community, the character of the school and the community it serves, the gender mix in the New Zealand population, and the need to have management expertise/experience). A holistic perspective is also appropriate – i.e. what skills does the Board need, and for what roles?

Ngati Kotahitanga representation

The Board discussed possible Ngati Kotahitanga representation. This could be an ex-officio position, in recognition that Ngati Kotahitanga is a special programme, although this may need a constitutional change (Nick has had some initial discussion with STA about this). An ex-officio position means that Ngati Kotahitanga whanau would nominate who fills the strategic role on the Board. Formal co-opting on to the Board wouldn't be required.

There was some discussion about whether the Ngati Kotahitanga rep would be on the Board to represent the whanau of Ngati Kotahitanga, or to perform a broader role of representing a Māori view in the strategic decisions made by the Board. Clarification of the role would be important, in discussion with Ngati Kotahitanga whanau. The Board was keen that a bi-cultural lens is brought to the work of the Board.

ACTIONS:

The Board agreed that Jess, Nick and Yadana would draft some material for Ngati Kotahitanga whanau to consider at their July whanau hui. This would set out, at a high level, plans for Ngati Kotahitanga representation on the Board. Board members could attend the August whanau hui to discuss the proposals and answer any questions.

In the meantime, Jess, Nick and Yadana would draft a role description for the Ngati Kotahitanga rep position, and bring this back to the Board for discussion at the August meeting.

Nick indicated that he would also attend the school-wide Māori whanau hui (7 August at 4.30 pm – 5.30 pm) to discuss ideas for how to bring a bi-cultural lens to the work of the Board.

Finance

Currently the Finance position on the Board remains vacant. Victoria Esson has indicated that she is willing to be co-opted on to the Board in the Finance role for 18 months. The Board was of the view that this would help with continuity, and could enable another Board member to up-skill in the area through this transitional period. The Board also recognised that Victoria has a lot of depth to bring to the role beyond her financial knowledge.

ACTION: The Board agreed that Jess invite Victoria to be co-opted onto the Board until the end of 2020 (moved Jess, seconded Haidee).

Other

- Diversity – cultural, language – how do we get this community voice reflected in the work of the Board? This may not necessarily involve someone coming to every Board meeting. Nick has been doing some thinking about this, and will lead a discussion at the next Board meeting.
- A lot of school Boards have elections every 18 months, where half of the Board members are up for election. This allows for some continuity across the work of the Board. This is something the Newtown BOT could look into at a future date.

6. Reporting on student achievement

The school reports to the Board on student achievement, including reporting on teaching outcomes, successes, gaps, and how the school proposes to address those gaps. The previous Board asked for reports on student achievement twice a year, with mid-year and end-of-year results.

At the August Board meeting Mark will present on student achievement, in particular how this is assessed and what the Board would like to see in reports on this topic. Before that meeting, Mark is keen for Board members to think about what they would like presented in the reports. The school can provide advice, as the reports need to be meaningful, follow best practice, etc.

7. Swimming pool project

Yadana provided an update on the school pool project. Stage 1 (of possibly four stages) of the project will shortly go out to tender. It is likely that there will be a shortfall in funding to complete this first stage. Yadana recommended that a sub-committee be established to look into fundraising to cover the shortfall.

ACTION: Yadana to catch up with Lucy (and Jasmine). Amelia also happy to be involved. Yadana will draft a paragraph to be included in the school newsletter, whanau newsletters and Facebook, asking for people to be involved in the fundraising sub-committee.

8. Trustee administration

Delegations

The previous Board signed off on financial (and other) delegations in May 2019, when Nicki was acting in the Principal role.

ACTION: Amelia will review the delegations, in light of NZSTA recommended practice.

New trustee register

All new trustees need to be signed up with NZSTA using either the [online form](#) or (if that won't work) a paper copy.

ACTION: All Board members to ensure that they have registered with NZSTA.

Conflict of interest register

Jess circulated a conflict of interest form, which is to be used if Board members have an interest in any issue that comes before the Board.

Jess mentioned that she works for Crown Law, and does provide legal advice to the Ministry of Education on occasion. If any conflict arose in future she would ensure both the Board and her employer were aware of it.

Future agenda items

The Board discussed possible agenda items for future meetings, including:

- Reporting on student assessment and achievement
- Important school documents that the school community should have access to (this would include an assessment of what's already on the school website, whether it is easy to locate, and whether anything is missing)
- ERO review (due next year), in particular the Board's role in this
- Brief reports from each portfolio at each meeting, including a slot for Louise to raise any issues as the staff rep

Next meeting dates

The Board agreed to the following meeting dates:

- 28 August 2019
- 25 September 2019
- 23 October 2019
- 27 November 2019
- End of year dinner (date TBC)

Board members were also keen to share an afternoon tea with staff members, possibly on 16 August (date TBC).

DM 28/8/19.

