

**Newtown School Board of Trustees**



**Meeting minutes**

Wednesday 26 February 2020, 6.30 pm, school staffroom

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Present: Jess Gorman, Nick Booth, Haidee Westwater, Amelia Handscomb, Yadana Saw, Victoria Esson, Louise Conwell, Mark Brown, Nicki Read, Moria Ross and Sarah Shore (items 1 - 2), Anna Kemble Welch and Rhona Carson (items 1 - 3), Elizabeth Cox, and Jo Gould (minutes).

Apologies: none.

**1. Karakia**

**2. Introductions**

Moria and Sarah introduced themselves to the Board. Both Moria and Sarah started teaching this year in Whānau Harakeke.

The Board welcomed Elizabeth Cox to the meeting. Elizabeth is the chair of the Island Bay School Board of Trustees.

**3. Newtown Fair**

The Board welcomed Anna Kemble Welch (organiser of the Newtown Fair) and Rhona Carson (Chair, Newtown Residents Association) to the meeting. Anna and Rhona discussed a number of issues related to the fair, including the school providing car-parking (for a koha) for stall holders, and the use of the school's tables and chairs, the grass area by Emmett St and the staff car-park. Children participating in the school kapa haka group performing on the main stage will be using the hall early in the morning to get ready for the event, so care will need to be taken when cars are parking on the school grounds. The school has cones available to help with this.

The Board acknowledged all the work that went into providing such a great community event.

**ACTION: Jess and Nick to pop an item in the school newsletter, calling for volunteers to help with the stall-holders parking in the morning and packing away tables and chairs in the late afternoon of the Newtown Fair.**

#### **4. Previous Minutes**

The minutes from the Board meeting held on 27 November 2019 were approved and the action items discussed.

#### **5. Principal's report**

Mark tabled his report. Items discussed included:

- **Treaty of Waitangi training** - the school year started off with three teacher-only days, one of which involved Treaty training facilitated by Janelle Riki Waaka from Core Education. Mark, Nicki, Louise and Nick, who all attended, were very positive about the experience, describing it as affirmative, provocative, informative, confronting, and challenging.
- **Cultural responsiveness** - this is a focus for the school, and the Kahui Ako. Professional development work is being facilitated by Waikato University, to build capability for staff and students. This involves the use of a survey tool, and shadow coaching for staff. The SAF worker is also a facilitator, drilling down into engagement, achievement, leadership, and governance, with an initial focus on Ngati Kotahitanga. Nick pointed out that there's a NZSTA resource for BOTs to self review their Māori cultural responsiveness called Hautū.
- **Attendance data** - data on attendance, absences and truancy for 2019 was presented. An overall attendance rate of 90% is acceptable. Newtown school's rate was 90.8%. Mark pointed out that children with a low attendance rate are followed up, with letters, visits to the home, etc.
- **Annual plan and charter** - can be submitted to MoE. Deadline is 1 March, but can be revised and resubmitted. Working documents. Board members to provide any comments a week before the next meeting.

- **Start date for 2021** - the Board agreed that the school year would start back on Wednesday 3 February in 2021.

## **6. Student achievement data**

Achievement data for 2019 was presented to the Board. The data provides a summary of school-wide achievement in literacy, writing and maths at two points during the year (the middle and end), plus achievement data for Ngati Kotahitanga. Students are assessed according to where their year group is expected to be at the *end* of the year. Mid-year data is therefore at a lower level, but there is a significant improvement at year-end showing the progress made. Overall the results are good, especially when compared to national averages.

The data is used to identify “target” students, those who are achieving at a level that is a year and a half lower than what is expected for the child’s age. The school unpacks what is happening and develops programmes to address the areas where improvement is needed. High achievers are also identified. The Board asked whether parents/caregivers are aware if their children fall within these groups. Mark responded that he would expect staff to have conversations with caregivers about how they can work with the school to lift achievement, and about what supports are being put in place at school.

For the tamariki in Ngati Kotahitanga, there has been a lift in performance. Small cohorts are involved, which makes it challenging to present data without individual children being identified.

Going forward, Mark will report to the Board school-wide performance data twice a year, with more frequent updates on target/at risk student groups.

The Board discussed sharing the PaCT with parents/caregivers – in particular, letting the school community know that it exists, what it does, what teachers use the tool for, etc. Sharing a student’s results can be tricky, as it needs a conversation to explain what the results actually mean. The tool also focuses on a narrow part of the curriculum - reading, writing and maths, so doesn’t give a full picture of how a child is getting on.

In terms of transitions to intermediate school, curriculum levels are shared with SWIS (not PaCT results, as SWIS does not use this tool), along with broader conversations about what the school knows about the children.

## **7. Staff representative report**

Louise provided an update on the Year 6 camp, happening on 4 - 6 March at Camp Wainui. The theme for the camp is tūtahi (standing together as leaders). Detailed information about the camp is available in the Board meeting folder in Google Drive. The cost this year has gone down from \$127 to \$60 per child, thanks to fundraising from market day last year and the school's contribution. Nicki, Matt and Wanwan will be there, along with lots of parents who are helping out.

Louise informed the Board of a proposed new outdoor education experience, run with the support of senior students from Wellington High. Matt Titcombe would be involved, together with another teacher from Wellington High, teaching around 12 Newtown students various water sports (surfing, paddle boarding etc). Wellington High would provide the gear and transport, and Newtown School would contribute petrol money. The students would be selected by the school, with permission sought from their caregivers. It would run as part of the time to thrive programme, aiming to give a confidence boost, and encourage positive risk-taking. The programme would run on a trial basis initially. More detail of the proposal is in the EOTC activity proposal in the Board documents folder. A RAMs form is being completed. The Board was supportive of the proposal going ahead, observing that there were some risks that would need to be carefully managed through active supervision of the children involved.

## **8. Policy Update**

Trish and Amelia are very close to having a model school docs website for the Board to review.

The Board discussed further reminders about the complaints process (in the newsletters, etc), to encourage parents to raise any issues directly with staff in the first instance.

## **9. Property**

Yadana reported that there had been a media inquiry (Radio New Zealand) about progress on the school pool. We are waiting to hear back from the project manager (Mark Scrimshaw) about engineering and other costs - Jess offered to help Yadana follow up on this.

**ACTION: Yadana to get an estimate/quote for Mark Srimshaw's project management costs for the pool, as school has to carry this amount until WCC releases some funds.**

The school has applied for \$200,000 from the AMS fund to modernise the old Tui block and staff room.

The painted surfaces in the new buildings aren't sufficiently robust for the school environment. The architect suggested using an enamel based paint to reduce signs of wear and tear, but the Board is keen to explore "whole of building life" solutions. **ACTION: Mark to raise this with the Ministry, as ultimately this is in their hands.**

The maintenance of the school's gates was discussed. This is the school's responsibility, and continues to be an ongoing issue.

#### **10. Finance**

Victoria summarised the December 2019 results, which is the end of the financial year. The school finished with \$42,508 in available funds, and \$73,589 in working capital. There were some unbudgeted expenses which resulted in a negative year-to-date variance of \$29,105. Victoria estimated that the end of year wash up should bring that variance down to about \$5,000.

BDO has completed the audit, resulting in a few areas for the school to focus on - accuracy of the payroll (changes have been implemented to improve this), cyclic maintenance (the school doesn't have a property plan because of the new build, but is getting one), management override (there is a low risk that managers can override the system), and the Principal's use of the credit card (which can only be used by Mark, and the Board needs to check all credit card payments. Jess indicated that she looks at these and signs them off on a regular basis).

The budget was discussed, with Victoria clarifying some line items in response to questions raised by Jess.

#### **11. Health and Safety**

Haidee reported that a review of the school's Healthy Food Policy will progress, and recommended that the Board spend some time on the policy at the next Board meeting.

**ACTION: Haidee to follow up with Bronwyn for the material she was pulling together around the healthy food policy.**

Information the Ministry of Education has provided about the coronavirus has been circulated to the wider school community. Hand sanitisers have been purchased, and the junior school has been practicing healthy hand washing. There are plenty of tissues available in the classrooms.

## **12. Community engagement**

Nick is meeting with the Ministry next week, to discuss what needs to happen (constitutionally) to get an ex-officio position on the Board in place for a Ngati Kotahitanga representative. Once this is clearer, he can talk to Ngati Kotahitanga whānau.

Nick, Mark and Karen F have met to share the work that Tom did on school communications. Karen F will be working to support community engagement during 2020, including progressing this work.

Nick also mentioned that he has been in touch with the Community Centre to start building a relationship – will meet with them to discuss this in a couple of weeks.

A reminder that Lucy Kebbell is happy to apply for grants for school projects (e.g. sandpit, football goals, carved pou). All that is needed is a form completed with the details of funding requirements, and quotes for the work.

**ACTION: Jess to add grant applications as a regular agenda item.**

Signage around the school was also discussed. Mark mentioned that wayfinding signs are being reviewed. Signs in both English and Te Reo, and signs pointing out Ngati Kotahitanga, could be considered as part of this work.

## **13. Correspondence**

The Board discussed an email that had been sent to both the BOT and Mark about gender inclusiveness at the school. A parent had observed that there was a boys and girls toilet in the junior school, and questioned whether this was the practice throughout the school. The parent was also questioned whether inclusiveness in this regard is something that is discussed at the staff or governance level.

Mark commented that he had spoken to the parent, and the issue had been resolved for Whānau Tui. There are, however, separate toilets in older parts of the school (including the hall). This is an issue that needs to be considered as part of any future property plans.

In terms of wider issues of gender inclusion, requiring boys and girls to line up in separate lines isn't an issue at Newtown School, but does come up in certain sporting competitions (southern zone athletes, cross country etc). It can be challenging for school swimming sessions, especially when religious beliefs require girls to swim separately from boys. The school tries to cater to all needs by giving children options. Consideration will need to be given to changing rooms in the new swimming pools. There is also the opportunity to review forms, to ensure gender neutral terms are used (parents/caregivers, rather than mother/father, for example).

#### **14. Future agenda items**

- Review of the healthy food policy
- Presentation from the SAF worker
- Wellbeing (Louise)
- Curriculum design (Nicki)

Next meeting: Wednesday 25 March 2020

