

Newtown School Board of Trustees

Meeting minutes

Wednesday 29 July 2020, 6.30 pm

Present: Jess Gorman, Nick Booth, Haidee Westwater, Amelia Handscomb, Yadana Saw, Victoria Esson, Louise Conwell, Mark Brown, Nicki Read (items 1-3), Juliette Davis (items 1 - 2) and Jo Gould (minutes).

1. Karakia

2. Staff spotlight

Juliette introduced herself to the Board. Juliette has joined the Harakeke whānau teaching team with Alice Cooke, who returns from parental leave.

3. Principal's report

Parent evening

Nicki provided an overview of the planned parent evening on student achievement and progress, to be held on 11 August. Content for the evening has been developed with the curriculum team, and will cover: the school's curriculum values; skills progression (and how this is measured); overall teacher judgement and the tools used to inform this (including PACT); children's relationships, social development, behaviour, competencies and capabilities; and how the school communicates children's learning to parents and caregivers.

New school reports

Louise presented to the Board a new model for student reports. Students will generate their own statements about their learning (with support from the teaching team in their whānau), with teacher endorsement/comments also provided. Children's achievement in relation to the New Zealand curriculum levels for literacy and numeracy will be included in the report. Information about PACT can be provided as part of the learning conversations.



Mark tabled his report. Items discussed included:

- Cultural responsiveness – work is underway to identify current practice in terms of teachers' cultural responsiveness. PD (professional development) will then be undertaken to move the whole school's practice in this area.
- Enrolment scheme – the school's enrolment scheme is reviewed annually. After some discussion, the Board approved Mark's proposal to continue to allow up to 10 out-of-zone five year old students annually to enrol in the school.
- Recent amendments contained in the Education and Training Act 2020 have changed the rules around the use of physical restraint in schools. Physical restraint can only be used where there are no other options to prevent imminent harm. Any use of physical restraint must be reported to the Ministry.
- One "major" behavioural incident (as that term is defined under the PB4L framework) involving a student was reported to Jess (as Chair of the Board) and Haidee (as the Board's health and safety rep). No restraint was required. Keeping the students and staff safe was the priority.
- Waka project – Mark shared with the Board details of a project underway through the BGI (Boys and Girls Institute) to produce hoe waka (paddles). The project organisers are keen to use the prefab outside of school time for this project. Funding for the project has recently been secured from the Wellington City Council's Social and Recreation Fund.

4. Chair's report

ERO

ERO recently spoke separately with Jess and Mark about the school's experiences and responses to COVID-19. A summary of the items discussed was circulated to the Board members. Jess and Mark observed that the conversations were open and genuine, and ERO seemed impressed with the school's response and that the school has reviewed and reflected on the experience. The timeframe for ERO's next review of the school hasn't been finalised, but it is likely to be sometime later in 2021.

Board self review process

Jess commented that as the Board has now been operating for just over a year, it would be timely to check in on how the Board is going. Various aspects could be explored, with input from staff (perhaps through a discussion over morning tea and the opportunity to feedback directly to the Board) and the school community (through, for example, the engagement survey work that Nick has underway). The Board could then invite Chris Rowan to facilitate a self-review session.

ACTION: Victoria to make contact with Chris Rowan from Impact Group to see if she is available to facilitate a self-review session with the Board.

Grants

The Board discussed improvements to the process used for tracking grant funding received and receipts for how funds were spent. There needs to be a separate process from the standard financial services provided by Education Services to ensure that receipts are easily available for the accountability reports for funders.

ACTION: Melissa to establish (and maintain) a register to track grants that have been applied for, what funding was received, and what the grant funds were spent on.

5. Staff update

Louise noted that there is a busy five weeks coming up, with reporting, learning conversations, parent evening, and cultural responsiveness work underway.

6. Finance

Victoria presented the financial results for the month of June 2020, which represents 50% of the year gone. Expenditure was high for this month, which resulted in a monthly deficit of around \$49,000 against the budgeted estimate.

Around 60% of the salary budget has been spent, even though only 50% of the year has gone. Increased payments for learning resource staff as a result of the recent Collective Employment Agreement has

contributed to this. The school can expect the Ministry to make some adjustments to operational payments in response.

Income is tracking well, with the overall variance of budgeted income against budgeted expenditure remaining positive. The working capital has decreased slightly.

The credit card expenditure for the month of June has been reviewed and all is justified expenditure.

7. Health and safety

Haidee presented a report from the July meeting of the health and safety subcommittee. Heating in the new building continues to be an ongoing issue, with teaching spaces either too hot or too cold. The Board recognises that this health and safety issue needs to be addressed by the project manager as a priority. One solution is a manual override switch for the windows.

Funding has been approved to fix the flooding problem outside the bike/scooter lockup area.

8. Policy

Amelia reported that School Docs is ready to be shared with staff, Board members and the wider school community.

Amelia took the Board through a proposed cycle for the review of policies, where policies under review are shared with stakeholders for comment. The stakeholders could include the Board, staff and/or the wider school community, depending on the particular policy being reviewed. School Docs offers a good platform to review policies, as it allows for comments to be made on any existing policy. Other consultation methods can also be used as part of a review. The next steps would depend on whether changes are agreed as a result of any feedback received. Once the new policy is agreed, a date will be set for the next review of the policy.

Amelia proposed the following policies be reviewed this term: appointment procedure (July), child protection (August) and learning support (September).

The Board approved the appointments procedure policy, with a minor amendment to para 13 to remove the reference to returning documentation to applicants (as CVs, cover letters etc are submitted electronically).

Amelia noted that, subsequent to the discussion at the last Board meeting, a new version of the healthy food and nutrition policy had come through from School Docs, which builds on the National Administration Guidelines/Heart Foundation advice. The Board made some minor changes to the policy, around promoting water and plain milk as the healthiest drink option, and seeking to assist access to healthy food where needs are identified. The Board approved the policy and agreed to review it in six months' time.

9. Community engagement

Nick noted that around 130 responses had been received to the online survey on school communications that was emailed out to caregivers and staff. A group of Somali parents also plan to shortly contribute a paper response.

Nick reported that he had attended a Kahui Ako meeting, where feedback was requested from Boards about whether they were receiving information about the work of the Kahui Ako. The Board confirmed that information is included in Mark's report to the Board, and summary information is reported to the wider school community through the newsletter.

Ngati Kotahitanga ex officio position – There is an **ACTION for Jess and Nick to follow up with parent in Ngati Kotahitanga who expressed an interest in this position.**

10. Property

Yadana reported that an invoice for approximately \$45,000 in project management costs incurred to date for the school pool project had been sent to the Wellington City Council. Yadana is awaiting an update from the project manager about the tender process. The next step is the development of a plan to fundraise for the remaining stages of the project.

ACTION: Yadana to come back to the Board at the next meeting with possible fundraising options for the pool project – sponsorship, crowd sourcing, etc.

Yadana said that a parent with relevant professional experience is keen to be involved in developing an arts strategy for the school.

11. Previous minutes

The minutes from the meeting held on 17 June 2020 were approved and the actions items discussed.

12. Conflicts of interest

None declared.