

Newtown School Board of Trustees

Meeting Minutes

Weds 24 Feb 2021, 6:30 pm
Staff room and Zoom

Present: Haidee Westwater, Jess Gorman (chair), Joe Winkels, Keith Hutton, Mark Brown, Nick Booth, Yadana Saw, Steve Kerr (minutes). No apologies.

1. Karakia timatanga

2. Previous minutes and actions

Approve minutes

The chair moved that the minutes of the December meeting be approved as true and correct. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Action items

| # | Action | Owner | Raised | 24 Feb 2021 update |
|-----|--|-------------------|------------|--|
| 001 | Consider including comments about the overall student achievement results in 2020 in Board communications with the wider school | Jess | 07/12/2020 | To be discussed further in Chair's report |
| 002 | Meet in January with those who had expressed an interest in the vacant Board position. Jess to come back to the Board with a recommendation. | Jess and Yadana | 07/12/2020 | No potential candidates were interested. To be discussed further in Chair's report |
| 003 | Find out the kawa around how Board members (including the Principal) can come and speak at Ngati Kotahitanga whānau hui | Joe | 18/11/2020 | In progress. Further korero required to 100% sure of kawa |
| 004 | Work on the draft Strategic Plan or discussion at a Board meeting in the New Year | Jess, Mark, Nicki | 18/11/2020 | In progress. Not late yet. To be discussed on this meeting's agenda |
| 005 | Draft a letter from the Board to the Ministry outlining the ongoing concerns with the new building and inviting a representative to attend a meeting to discuss the issues | Haidee | 21/10/2020 | In progress. Mark to meet with the Ministry rep first |
| 006 | Share the learning support procedural guidelines with Board, once the revision work is | Justine | 21/10/2020 | In progress. Justine still working on guidelines |

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| | complete, before a decision is made about whether a link to them should be included in the learning support policy | | | |
| 007 | Look into developing a policy to ensure that the Board, after the triennial elections, looks to co-opt a Board member who represents the Ngāti Kotahitanga whānau | Jess, Nick | 23/09/2020 | In progress. Nick and Jess will discuss at next Ngāti Kotahitanga whānau hui |
| 008 | Develop a communications channel strategy, in consultation with the school community and teachers, which clearly sets out what messages or information are going to put on what channels, and when | Nick, with Tom Hovey | 26/08/2020 | In progress. Nick to organise catch up with Tom. Mark noted staff have been putting earlier recommendations into practice |
| 009 | Include agenda item in early 2021 on ideas to harness parent enthusiasm for being more involved in the school | Jess | 26/08/2020 | Closed. On today's agenda |
| 010 | Develop an overall strategy/vision for artwork commissioned for the school, including conservation and restoration of existing works | Yadana | 17/06/2020 | To be discussed under agenda item increasing caregiver involvement |
| 011 | Nicki or Mark to determine what amount from the FANS funds should be set aside to purchase new kapa haka uniforms | Nicki or Mark | 25/09/2019 | Closed. Kapa haka uniform purchased |

3. Conflicts of interest

No conflicts of interest were declared.

4. Principal's report

Mark said he is really looking forward to this year. Last year was a bit bumpy, but out of that came some things that have become strengths, for example the way the school uses technology. Most of the school's operations are 'well developed' against ERO criteria. However this year Mark wants the school to improve even further. It's really good to have a board that backs the staff. It's going to be a good year.

Mark welcomed Keith as the new staff rep on the board. He said it is going to be an important year from a staff perspective, and it's great to have someone with Keith's experience as rep.

ERO review cycle

Mark said that ERO's approach is no longer to come into once every three years for a snapshot. The approach is changing. Newtown School is one of the first round of schools going into the new model, which is an ongoing relationship between ERO and the school. It's a two year cycle of identifying what can be improved, planning for improvement and monitoring progress. Mark said it was a good approach. Newtown School will have a role in driving the process, it's a collaborative approach.

The ERO evaluation partner has already met with Mark, Jess, the leadership team, and staff. The first step is for her to meet with us, and get a feel for the school. Then we will form an evaluation team, which will include two board members. The next steps are to identify what will be evaluated, how it will be measured and evidenced. A practicing principal from another school is supporting the ERO evaluation partner. The staff will welcome the team to the school at 9.30am next Weds 3 March. Board members are welcome to attend.

Board members said that they liked the sound of that approach, being collaborative, richer, qualitative, and with less power dynamic than in the past. They pointed out that ERO might be able to suggest ways to measure progress on things like being more culturally responsive, as raised at Te Tiriti training.

Mark noted that there are still assurance and compliance elements to the ERO review.

The board thanked Mark for his approach and openness to working with ERO in the new model. They said Mark's approach puts the school in a really good place.

Covid preparedness

Mark said the Ministry of Education has produced a Covid preparedness checklist, to ensure schools are ready to respond to different alert levels. There are some changes. Some school whānau have asked whānau about what technology they have at home. Other aspects are to ensure that we have correct contact details for parents, systems for getting devices out to tamariki, knowing who needs them, the medical status of staff, which staff are able to attend school under level 3, etc.

Update on bilingual classes

Ngāti Kotahitanga now has 25 tamariki, with three more coming in. Numbers will need to be capped, but not for existing whānau or for five year olds. We would like to talk to Joe about how the cap might work. There are 15 junior tamariki. We need to provide additional support for Whaea Maraea.

Joe said that Ngāti Kotahitanga whānau have discussed at points the kinds of criteria that might be used for a cap, such as language proficiency. We need to preserve the

essence of Ngāti Kotahitanga and make sure the teachers are supported and the language is maintained.

Mark said there is a waiting list of English medium tamariki wanting to join the bilingual classes. That waiting list is likely to grow. We will need to provide support for Mitch, we may need to channel some of our reserves to that support.

Board members asked whether the same resourcing could be used to support both Ngāti Kotahitanga and the bilingual classes. Mark said the school is considering this. Matua Jesse is developing and has great talents. The kids have really responded to him.

The board asked how the waiting list for bilingual classes will be managed? Mark said it is difficult. We are looking for people who can co teach with Mitch. They need to be fluent reo speakers not just intermediate. There are not too many people like that, but we are talking to someone. We have spoken to VUW to find masters students who are training to be bilingual teachers but there are not too many.

E Tū Kahikatea mural

Joe said that Ariki finished the mural outside Ngāti Kotahitanga last week. We're planning a dawn service and karakia to celebrate the work and a kapahaka performance and celebration. No dates yet.

Mark said Ariki spoke with staff to explain the narrative of the mural. He would like all the students to have the opportunity to understand what the mural is about. Joe said that that would be part of the celebration.

Other board members said the mural was an amazing piece of work.

Strategic plan

Mark spoke to the current 2020-2022 Strategic Plan. He said that aspects need review, for example it doesn't reflect our focus on biculturalism and Te Tiriti. He recommended that we submit the plan, but do further work to update it. It's meant to be a working document.

The board agreed to submit the plan, with a commitment that we will review and update it.

- **ACTION: Mark to submit Strategic Plan**

Annual plan

Mark spoke to the draft Annual Plan for 2021 which he and Nicki are preparing. The main areas for strategic goals are the cultural responsiveness, teaching practice, how we help certain groups of kids who are at risk of underachieving, incorporating Te Tiriti, ERO planning and evaluation. He asked the board whether there's anything else they'd like to see.

Board members asked how the school would respond to the recent coverage about NZ schools' poor international placing in science and maths. Also, what focus would there be on arts and drama. Board members said it would be good to see how these will be reflected in our definition of success.

Mark said we are starting to work on how we define success, that there is further to go. It's a journey. We know parents want the school to broaden definition of success.

The board asked how teachers are going with PACT. Mark said it varies, some are good, others are still learning. Moderation is very important. It helps that teachers are working in teams of four. The school may need to provide more support.

Mark said our focus is cultural responsiveness. We've made progress since 2017. Right now, every Māori student is either in immersion class or in bilingual class. The challenge is with new Māori kids arriving and we have a waiting list - do we make them wait or offer a place ahead of others.

Board members asked whether the bilingual unit will get a name. Mark said yes it will, but we want the name to come from whānau.

- **ACTION: board members to share ideas for strategic goals in the Annual Plan before it is finalised**

Inclusive practices

The board explained that we need to ensure that we support our non-binary students at school including from a property perspective, for example on decisions about the changing rooms for the pool. We want to be inclusive but also take account of cultural beliefs. We might want to develop some guidelines for the future.

One parent has suggested the pool have a couple of separate bathroom/cubicles that were available, these could also be the accessible toilets. There would also be boys and girls changing rooms. We will need to think about this in future for school hall too.

Mark said we 100% support you. We're about to make these sorts of decisions.

A board member recommended the resources on the Gender Minorities Aotearoa website. Onslow college has a very good policy on gender inclusive spaces, it is very specific and detailed. Kāhui Ako may also have guidance or a policy.

Mark raised the issue of how to support non-binary tamariki in kapa haka, do they join male or female role. The school has sought advice from local iwi and the Ministry, and the Ministry came back with advice. We're working through these issues. We need to be culturally appropriate too, for example thinking of how we will be received at a kapa haka festival. He said we also have parents who are adamant about gender issues because of their faith, whose beliefs need to be taken into account.

- **ACTION: Joe and Yadana to think further on gender inclusion at school in light of kapa haka and different cultural views**
- **ACTION: Mark to incorporate gender inclusion into the Annual Plan**

5. Chair's report

Achievement comms

Jess said we need to think about how we communicate students' achievements. We want to celebrate success in maths etc without seeming to ignore other kinds of achievement. In light of the Te Tiriti training, are Māori students achieving as Māori? We learned that in te ao Māori a student's strengths (e.g. in manaakitanga) reflects on all students as a collective achievement. How do we make sure we value all kinds of success and take a more bicultural approach?

A board member said we should take a 'both and' approach. These are things we have succeeded in. We should ask parents for ideas about what else they see as success, what should be measured. We need a plan about how to capture any feedback, for example a survey.

Mark said we want to broaden people's ideas about achievement so it's not just academic. The board said this might be something we could work with ERO on. Building on ERO's Kahikatea strategy on Maori succeeding as Maori. It would be good to hear from whānau what they want. And from kids, what do they think of as 'success'?

- **ACTION: Jess to email BOT with draft comms seeking feedback from whānau on what they see as success, taking into account advice so far from Tom and previous surveys**

Te tiriti training

Jess said that at the Te Tiriti training last month, she and the other Board members attending had sat down with Nicki and Mark to look at Janelle's questions from a governance point of view, the school's engagement with mana whenua, etc. She said it would be very valuable to have the opportunity to go deep on these issues as a board. It

could be good to take longer - a whole day or half day - to get really into issues as we develop the strategic plan.

Board members were supportive of this idea.

- **ACTION - Jess to circulate notes from Te Tiriti training to BOT**
- **ACTION - Jess to circulate a Doodle poll to see what dates would work for a longer session**

Board representation

Jess said we need another board member, we're short. This an opportunity to appoint members to get better representation on the board from mana whenua and the new NZ community of recent migrants and refugees. These are big parts of our school community. She had asked Mark and Keith about which parents, caregivers, or community members might be interested in a role. They would have a better idea about who might be keen, and could refer anyone who is interested to Jess and Yadana for a chat. We need to be conscious of the balance of co opted and elected members. The board supported this idea.

- **ACTION - Mark and Keith to talk to potential board appointees and refer them to Jess and Yadana**

Annual reports

Jess said we're a bit behind with the cover statements for annual reports. However the reports themselves have been submitted to the Ministry.

Increasing caregiver involvement in school activities

Jess said she would send out comms on the seed money soon. Board members suggested using the school picnic to encourage people to get involved.

- **ACTION - Jess and Yadana to arrange stand for picnic to recruit caregivers to get involved in school activities**

6. Questions and decisions arising from written reports

Principal

Mark would like to introduce our three new staff members to a future board meeting

- **ACTION - Chair to invite new staff to next meeting**

Property

Work on the swimming pool is finally happening. Roofing has been delayed as materials are stuck in Melbourne due to Covid. The release of council funding has been sorted out, the contractors are being paid. A shelter will be built on the side of Tui to deal with water play. This work is going out to tender. Teachers can now open the windows.

Grant application

Jess said that Mitch is seeking a grant from the Grassroots Trust to take 30 students and staff to Matiu/Somes Island and the Island Bay Marine Reserve, for \$1,100+GST.

Jess moved that the board approved the application to Grassroots Trust. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Policies

Two policies are due for review, but these have not yet been done. Work in progress.

Mark suggested that we should look at developing a policy to coordinate and prioritise grant funding. For example priorities would be the pool and the noho marae.

- **ACTION - Joe and Steve to check in with Melissa to understand the current system for grants and track down the grant resources developed by Jess and Lucy**

Finance

Nick said he has had a handover from Victoria and is now meeting with Mark every month. He spoke to the finance reports for month ending 31 Dec 2020 and month ending 31 Jan 2021. He noted that as of 31 December 2020, the school was overspent, driven by salaries spending. This was not cause for concern. As at 31 January 2021 we spent 5% of what we have budgeted for the year.

Mark said that the audited annual accounts are due with the Ministry in March. We'll see the accounts in the next couple of weeks. The school has an appropriate level of reserves for contingencies.

Nick said that in her handover Victoria had stressed that the board needs to make sure it is supporting Yadana with the pool, it must be seen as the responsibility of the whole board.

Nick moved that the Dec 2020 and Jan 2021 financial reports be accepted as accurate. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Health and Safety

Written report taken as read. According to a recent news article the Ministry is doing some research into noise levels in modern learning environments. This issue is still under consideration by Mark and the leadership team. A survey may go out soon. The board are keen for the school to be included in the Ministry research if possible.

7. Future dates

Wednesdays at 6.30pm is a convenient time for everyone.

- **ACTION - Jess to circulate proposed 2021 meeting dates**

8. Karakia whakamutunga

The meeting closed at 8.41pm

