

Newtown School Board of Trustees

Meeting minutes

Monday 7 December 2020, 6:30 pm

Present: Jess Gorman, Nick Booth, Yadana Saw, Joe Winkels, Victoria Esson, Mark Brown, Nicki Read, Louise Conwell, Steve Kerr and Jo Gould (minutes).

Apologies: Haidee Westwater



1. **Karakia**
2. **Previous minutes**

The minutes from the meeting held on 18 November 2020 were approved. Action items were discussed and updated.

For the action item about correspondence received from Ngati Kotahitanga whānau about the bilingual education proposal, Jess had drafted a letter in response. The letter will be forwarded to whānau ahead of the hui on Wednesday that Board members have been invited to attend.

3. **Conflicts of interest**

None declared.

4. **Budget 2021**

Mark spoke to the school's budget for 2021, prepared with the support of Education Services. The budget has a small deficit, but Mark pointed out that the school has in the past underspent by around 5% so he expects the end result to be near zero. The level of expenditure for student support has been retained. The Ministry determines the figure for cyclic maintenance, which is included in the budget. The school's income continues to be supplemented by the government's school donation scheme, which amounts to \$150 per year per student. Typically the budget is reviewed in March/April and again in mid-year.

The Board discussed the financial risks around the pool refurbishment project. The budget does include some income from the swim school which may be impacted by a number of factors. There is a need to keep looking for additional funding for the pool project. Options discussed included grant funding from Sports Wellington, and PAK'nSAVE Kilbirnie.

The Board APPROVED the budget for 2021 (moved Victoria, seconded Jess, supported unanimously).

Victoria informed the Board that the November financial results have not come through yet from Education Services. Victoria offered to help Nick run through the results when they have been received, for presentation at the first Board meeting in 2021 (which can also include the December results).

As this was Victoria's last meeting as Treasurer and Board of Trustees member, Mark acknowledged with thanks her contribution to the Board over the years, and her commitment to governance and the school's finances. Nick has offered to pick up the Treasurer role in the New Year.

5. End of year student achievement report

Mark introduced this item by acknowledging the collective efforts of staff that went into preparing the three reports tabled for the Board and the results summarised in those reports – the end of year achievement reports for maths and literacy in the English medium, and the end of year achievement report for Ngati Kotahitanga in the Māori medium.

Mark observed that there has been a transformational change in student achievement over the last several years. Achievement success rates have moved from around 40-50% in the English medium and 10% in Māori medium to 85-90% in the English medium (literacy and numeracy, except for a cohort in Year 3), with the majority of Māori medium students now achieving at the level they are expected to be at or above.

Nicki commented that the reports represent the end of a long journey of staff looking at students' achievement, patterns within those results, what to celebrate and where to put additional resources to lift achievement levels. Teaching teams have analysed the comparisons between the mid to end of year results, and made suggestions for actions and additional support in 2021 (actions and additional support recommendations). Target groups (those performing at a lower level than expected) have been identified, with additional support planned for next year.

The Board encouraged the school to think about how to measure, report and celebrate achievements in other curriculum areas, as not all children excel in numeracy and literacy but do in other areas. The Board is keen to continue this discussion next year. The Board also thought it would be useful to communicate the overall student achievement results with the wider school community, to celebrate success in this area.

ACTION: Jess to consider including comments about the overall student achievement results in 2020 in Board communications with the wider school.

6. Questions and decisions arising from written reports

Property

Yadana noted that the neighbouring Sagata Ana childcare centre will be the most impacted by the pool refurbishment project, as the pool backs on to their property. The Board discussed offering the centre the use of the school playground and/or Moana, as the centre re-opens in early January before Newtown School starts back up. A postal drop has been planned for Emmett and Minerva Street residents, to let them know about the pool refurbishment plans.

Principal's report

Mark encouraged Board members to read about ERO's new Operating Model (a link to the material is in Mark's report). This sets out how the school's performance will be evaluated in future.

Mark acknowledged Louise's contribution as staff rep on the Board. Mark observed that she is a highly professional and capable teacher moving on to another role in Otaki. Mark also acknowledged the work of each individual Board member (including Amelia who left the Board last month) and all the work they do behind the scenes. Mark also thanked Jo for her contribution in taking the minutes, and welcomed Steve into the role.

Jess provided an update about filling the vacancy that resulted from Amelia's resignation from the Board. No objection had been received from the school community in response to the notification that the Board intends to fill the vacancy by selection. As a result, no election is required. Three people indicated to Jess that they were interested in more information about the position, and another two expressed an interest if no one else had come forward.

ACTION: Jess and Yadana to meet in January with those who had expressed an interest in the vacant Board position, and talk to them about the role. Following these conversations, Jess to come back to the Board with a recommendation.

The vacant staff position would be raised at the staff meeting in early 2021.