

Newtown School Board of Trustees

Meeting Minutes



Weds 19 May 2021, 6:30 pm
Staff room and Zoom

Present: Haidee Westwater, Jess Gorman (chair), Joe Winkels, Keith Hutton, Mark Brown, Nick Booth, Steve Kerr (minutes), Yadana Saw (Zoom, left 8.45pm), Justine Henderson (until 7.10pm).

1. Karakia timatanga

No conflicts of interest were declared.

2. Learning support coordinator update

Justine gave a presentation on the support programmes run at Newtown School and what is covered. She said programmes for maths are a bit scarce. SPRING is the only remedial maths programme available in NZ. On the other hand, there is lots for literacy and behaviour. There are also a lot of programmes in the 'other' column, for more holistic learning.

Justine said that the school chooses which programmes are appropriate based on what we notice about kids. This starts with the class teachers' noticings about kids in terms of numeracy, literacy, etc, The standard NZ curriculum assessments give snapshots about where kids are at.

The board asked if there is room for parents' noticings. Justine said that this happens through learning conversations. She said that the assessments give hard data but they are not the only thing the school uses to make decisions. Information is gathered in formal and informal ways.

Once information is gathered, the teachers identify target students and at risk students. These are 'step 2' and 'step 3'. Then we develop more adaptive programmes. The teachers work with whanau. We also think about how we can use TA support in a more casual way.

A lot of the support programmes aim to front-load knowledge activities to give the kids a head start. For example, with ESOL kids the teacher will read the book the day before. Or other kids will be given practice in turn-taking before they go out to do PE.

Step 3 is more intensive. We have a bit of ADD and ADHD support. These kids are given target goals. We also review lessons through a UDL (universal design for learning) lens to make sure all our kids can access the programme.

How do we know it's working? We look at things like engagement and attendance for signs of progress, it's not just about increased academic achievement. We give it six weeks and see if there's a change. If there's been no movement then we do a review. We ask, is this the best programme for the child? Is the adult that's working with them the best match for that child? Have there been interruptions during that time? Is there enough time in the week for the programme to be effective?

Justine is part of a Kahui Ako group for learning support. There are some good trends and data coming out. The trends are similar across schools. The biggest trends are in writing, cognition, reading, and numeracy. And also social and emotional issues, which go hand-in-hand with academic trends.

Newtown school is also a part of a new pilot model for Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour (RTLB). The new approach is to start with a 'universal focus' - looking at the whole class and what's happening in class, rather than doing lots of individual referrals. We are also trying to use time better, for example trying to reduce the burden of lots of meetings if possible.

There's an RTLB for Maori immersion. There is a former teacher with knowledge of the Maori curriculum who can work with Ngati Kotahitanga. Some learning support programmes can be easily used in Te Reo - e.g. SPRING.

The board thanked Justine for her presentation and acknowledged the range of work she's doing across a complex system. It acknowledged the heavy workload that can be hard to manage and juggle at times.

Finally, Justine said that the update of the learning support procedural guidelines is still in progress. In the meantime the current guidelines are fine and functional, despite being due for an update.

3. Previous minutes and actions

Approve minutes

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

Action items

#	Action	Assigned to	
032	Seek feedback from Ngati Kotahitanga whanau on what they'd like to see the ERO evaluation focus on	Joe	Closed. Joe to feed in at this meeting
031	Report to future meeting on the progress of the review of the modern learning environment	Mark	Carry forward to the next meeting. Leadership still discussing
030	Identify a school partner (teacher) to support artwork strategy work (see action 010)	Mark	Carry forward. Mark to approach Julia
029	Recirculate draft achievement survey to BOT for feedback by end of holidays	Jess	Closed. No feedback received. Nick will run with the survey as is.
027	Meet to do further work on the achievement survey	Nick, Mark, Nicki	Carry forward. Nick to talk to Tom
026	Provide feedback to Nick on the draft achievement survey questions	Board members	Closed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ACTION - Nick will report back at next meeting
025	Speak to Amelia to clarify the process for notifying people about policies that need review	Joe	Closed. Done.
024	Clarify what the requirements are under the Health and Safety at Work Act to coordinate with agencies who use school premises	Haidee	Carry forward. Haidee to chase School Trustees Association
022	Email comms again seeking additional board members, Yadana to assist in drafting message	Jess, Yadana	Carry forward.
021	Update to board on learning support procedural guidelines	Mark or Justine	Closed. Done.
016	Put notes from Te Tiriti training in BOT Google Drive	Nicki	Closed. Done.
014	Think further on gender inclusion at school in light of kapa haka and different cultural views	Joe, Yadana, Haidee	Closed. Done. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ACTION - Haidee to talk to colleagues at other school and a prepare short update about the terminology on gender inclusion ACTION - Haidee to set up a meeting with Jono from Wellington College about

			<p>how transgender kids perform in kapa haka competitions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ACTION - Keith to speak to Gary at Primary Sport Wellington re: gender inclusion in cross country and swimming competitions (with Haidee if possible)
008	In consultation with the school community and teachers, develop a communications channel strategy, which clearly sets out what messages or information are going to put on what channels, and when.	Nick, potentially working with Tom Hovey	<p>Closed. Meeting scheduled for next week.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ACTION - Nick to update next meeting
010	Yadana to develop an overall strategy/vision for artwork commissioned for the school, including conservation and restoration of existing works.	Yadana	Carry forward. Yadana to talk to interested parent and teacher.

4. Principal's report

The report was taken as read. Mark thanked the board members who have attended and supported meetings and events recently, for example the mural unveiling and ERO workshop. He emphasised the school's main focuses for 2021 are cultural responsiveness, teacher practice, and leadership.

Mark said that the school is being hit by Covid a bit this year, for example through the delays in the pool building. Also the school roll has flattened because there is almost no immigration. Two or three years ago a third of our roll were immigrants. This means that on 1 July when we put in our school count, we'll be low and our funding will be reduced, we'll possibly be on the cusp of losing a teacher.

There is a lot of coverage about mathematics and the media at the moment. This is healthy but some teachers can feel it as a bit of a bashing. There was a good article in STA News about the curriculum refresh with guidance for boards of trustees.

- **ACTION - Mark to circulate STA News article on maths curriculum refresh**

5. Staff rep update

Keith said that the main theme for staff at the moment is the increased focus on Te Reo, that's the big push for this term. We're happy about being settled in for the new term in terms of routines etc.

Our inquiry focus is about action and reaction. We want to jump in and get a lot of science in this term, but we don't always call it 'science'. We're doing lots of good hands-on activity. I feel bad for the cleaner sometimes! The upper school is doing more critical thinking and integrating science with reading and numeracy.

The board asked whether the school had enough resources for teaching science. Keith said that the teachers have got a wishlist, but there's a lot you can do without a lot of resources, getting ideas from the internet. One group has gone to university to do some experiments there. If you can work without specialised equipment, then everyone can have a go, the kids don't have to wait to use the bunsen burner.

The board said it would be good if kids can identify that they're doing science, so they know they're doing it and they know they like it for the future.

The board asked what's the impact of kids the Reo Rua kids coming in and out? Keith said it's really helped with language. Lots of interesting things pop up organically in class. We're running a separate programme for kids who aren't in Reo Rua for the day that Reo Rua is on.

6. Discussion the ERO evaluation process

Mark said that following the recent ERO meeting, the school had to firstly decide what its evaluation focus will be and secondly decide on the approach to measuring the non-negotiable legislative compliance things.

Regarding the approach to compliance, do we want to do this as a once every three years paper exercise, or do an online version, one bit at a time? Mark said that he would be happy to do it either way, and that either way you need to be able to produce evidence of compliance, and ERO will sample the evidence. Board members said that they would prefer whichever works best for the school and the administration staff from a pragmatic point of view. Mark said that the one-off approach is probably best from that point of view.

The chair asked what had been discussed with ERO in terms of an evaluation focus? Board members who attended said they had discussed a range of ideas but hadn't landed anywhere. They said the conversation was positive in that the school leadership and board were unified. They said that ERO recommended a narrow defined measurable focus, and the board wanted something that wouldn't put additional pressure on teaching pressure.

The board discussed potential evaluation focuses, the need to choose something that can be measured, and what evaluation support was available for the school. The board discussed choosing a focus relating to cultural responsiveness, such as trying to improve our responsibilities under Te Tiriti, Ngati Kotahitanga, or developing

relationships with iwi. The chair said we'd need to choose something specific within the cultural responsiveness area. We should start by focusing on something that won't be too difficult to measure, so we can familiarise ourselves with the process. We can choose more challenging topics in future.

Following further discussion, the meeting reached agreement on a potential focus for evaluation:

- How has professional development in Te Reo been embedded in teaching practice, and what impact has it had on learning outcomes?

This focus will be tested with ERO and Waikato university. The focus on Te Reo rather than, say, Te Tiriti training, might be easier to measure.

The chair asked how this measure would apply to Ngati Kotahitanga? Joe said the Ngati Kotahitanga target is 80% usage of Te Reo. We could still measure the baseline and see what improvement we see.

- **ACTION - Mark to meet with Andrea to discuss this potential evaluation focus and next steps**

7. Property update - swimming pool

Yadana said that progress is slow. The roofing has arrived, but we need a structural engineer to advise on the south wall now the design has changed and the wall is going to be timber all the way to the ground. This has created delays and additional costs. The end date will not be 30 May. We're now looking at August or September. There will be a variation to contract, so we will need to dip into contingency to fund. We've had no success in getting a quote from builders and contractors for stage 2.

There has been some impact on the Aoga Amata, with some debris in the sandpit. We'll need to remediate.

Mark said that he and Yadana are putting off any other work - e.g. the sandpit - until the pool stage 1 is completed.

- **ACTION - Yadana to put an item in the school newsletter seeking parents to help get quotes for Stage 2 work**

Mark said the work on the old Tui block was being tendered through a government tendering service. It is entirely Ministry funded with a different project manager. We are letting the project manager handle everything and letting it progress.

Mark and Yadana have done a walk around the hall to identify potential changes to kitchen and bathroom, more detail at next meeting.

- **ACTION - Mark and Yadana to update next meeting on progress of plans for hall**

The chair thanked Yadana and acknowledged that it's been difficult and a lot of work.

Nick said that a parent had asked if the school has a planting programme. The parent is keen to support and he can get plants.

- **ACTION - Nick to put the parent in touch with Mark to talk about potential planting programme**

8. Questions and decisions arising from written reports

Health and safety

Haidee said there was no written report. She met with Mark yesterday and the key things are covered in his report. We discussed absenteeism data. The school came out quite well in terms of national data and Kahui Ako. However we have some issues around lateness that aren't covered in that data. There might be more we can do.

Mark said that the school tracks lateness. We have some kids who are chronically late. We have ten kids who have been late 25 days out of a term. This is a pattern he hasn't seen at other schools. We do letters and conversations. Haidee suggested we could tighten up on the data collection and that might help to decide how to respond.

Finance

Nick said we are a third way through the year, and as at 30 April 2021 we have spent 34% of what we have budgeted for the year.

Spend for April was \$74,026.

Surplus for the year to date is \$244,009. This is because we have received 61% of our income already due to the timing of how our funding comes in.

There was small credit card expenditure, which was all justified expenditure.

The tricky stuff is all about the pool. When it comes to finance issues around the pool build, we might want to draw on finance skills in the school community.

Mark said the school has \$70,000 reserved to cover contingency for the pool.

Policies

Joe said that he had nothing to share at this point, but now that he had met with Amelia he'll have a report for next month.

Mark thanked Joe for his work in supporting the unveiling and blessing of the mural. Joe said that all the support from Ngati Kotahitanga whanau and from the rest of the school was humbling. The artist Arika was humbled, she was amazed at the manaaki that was shown.

Community engagement

Update to come next month after Nick meets with Tom.

Property

Discussed above.

9. Karakia whakamutunga

The meeting closed at 9.05pm

Next meeting: 16 June 2021