

# Newtown School Board of Trustees

## Meeting Minutes

Mon 28 Mar 2022, 6.30pm  
Waitangi and Zoom

Present: Haidee Westwater (Zoom), Jacqui Goble (parent), Jess Gorman (chair), Joe Winkels (arrived 7.00pm), Kath Forster (Zoom, for item 3 only), Leanne Whitfield, Linda Martelletti, Nick Booth (Zoom), Nicki Read, Steve Kerr (minutes), Yadana Saw.

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### 1. Karakia timatanga

### 2. Conflicts

No conflicts of interest were declared.

### 3. Kath Forster, PB4L Restorative Practice - guest speaker

Kath spoke about the principles of restorative practice and the work she has done with Newtown School over the last year. She talked about how restorative practice principles can apply to the role of the Board of Trustees.

Haidee asked about how we can involve the parents so they are looped in when restorative practice is happening and get the chance to learn how to have these conversations. Nicki said some parents are aware of it, but we could offer something like Kath's board presentation to parents. School staff are not the experts, but changing the way we speak and the questions we ask has become internalized for us. Kath suggested it might be an idea to put the seven questions in the newsletter or on the website, so parents know what a restorative conversation looks like. There might be other ways to communicate too. It's really important to put it in front of the community again and again.

Yadana asked whether there was another way to refer to restorative practice, which will make more sense to some parents than the term 'restorative practice'. Something like 'this is how we do things when there's conflict'. Kath said she agreed, that's a great idea. Some schools call it 'values and learning' or 'relational practice'. But remember the practice is not just reactive when there's conflict. It's also proactive, about building relationships.

Nick said he was part of a restorative practice session, and he was initially apprehensive but it was very positive and fantastic. He said it worked to bring the issue to light and gave his whānau a clear path forward.

Jess thanked Kath for her time and said the practice is very useful for the school and for us as parents, and also potentially for us as a board.

Yadana said she'd like to hear from teachers about what restorative practice is like for them.

- **ACTION - Jess to put restorative practice on agenda for a future board meeting**

Jess asked Leanne to share her experience of her first few months at Newtown School as an incoming deputy principal. Leanne said it had been a great experience so far. There is a great community with a lot going on. Staff have been very welcoming, and the kids have been very welcoming. It's been a difficult time with Covid but it's been a great start.

Nicki said that Leanne and Justine would take turns attending board meetings.

#### 4. Previous minutes

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

#### 5. Action items

082	Talk to Janelle about what might be useful for the board in terms of Te Tiriti training	Joe	Carry forward
081	Decide frequency of board comms and draft the emails. First edition to include a call out for someone to sit on board until election.	Yadana	Close
080	Populate board work plan	All	Carry forward
079	Find out what particular delegation issues there may be around finance	Nick	Carry forward
078	Create draft delegations table	Jess	Closed
077	Invite Kath Forster in to speak to the board on the principles of restorative justice	Nicki	Closed
076	Bring plan for conservation and restoration of artwork to future board meeting	Yadana	On the agenda today
075	Add item to agenda for future meeting: Hau Tū governance evaluation tool (timing, resourcing,	Jess	Closed

	etc)		
072	Work with Ngāti Kotahitanga whānau on approach to engagement between whānau and board for 2022	Joe and Jess	Carry forward
071	Review Māori achievement policy	Joe and Jess	Carry forward. Ngāti Kotahitanga whanau have given feedback on the policy. Joe felt it might be better to focus on engagement first, then engage further about the policy
062	Sign up to NZSTA internal governance evaluation tool	Haidee	Carry forward

Haidee said she had a question going back to an action from last year. What are the next steps for the learning spaces review?

Nicki said she would ask new staff and new parents about how they are finding it. Haidee said she imagined something broader than that. We need a deeper look at how different children are experiencing the environment and parents' perspectives - an overview of how it's working and how we can make it better. We've been asking for it for a couple of years and it is really important. Not just pedagogical perspective, also health and safety and education outcomes. She would like some specific feedback from the review, not just an update on the process.

- **ACTION - Nicki and Haidee to meet to discuss review of the innovative learning environment**

## 6. Principal's report

Nicki said she'd adjusted the format of the report to make the strategic objectives more explicit in the report. The detail of what has been done in the last month is in italics at the bottom of each table.

Nicki said a new ERO evaluation partner, Mary Ely, is now on board. She's our third person from ERO now. Mary is meeting with the leadership team next week.

Covid has been an interesting journey - it's the ninth week of the Omicron outbreak. Some teams haven't had all their staff for most of that time. It's been hard work for the leadership team and the teachers. The kids have been good, but it puts a strain on teachers. Overall 28% of kids and 22% staff have been positive. Last week was our peak for staff absence, it's great to have staff coming back. Some are still feeling less than 100%.

Linda said the staff team has been really working as a team and has been really kind and supportive, it's been phenomenal.

Leanne said that the support staff have played a really important role in keeping us running. There's a process for teaching staff for disregarding sick leave and getting additional resources for relievers. There is no equivalent process for support staff. Joe asked if there's anything we can do to help support staff in terms of leave.

- **ACTION - Nicki and Leanne to come back with any actions we can take to help support staff in terms of leave**

Nicki said the kitchen build is going really well. It should be functional by the end of the week. It looks amazing and there have been no delays. It will be fantastic, it will have so many uses. Melissa has done a truckload of work in that space. If we didn't have someone like her it just wouldn't have happened.

The floor in Moana has been replaced. There was a bit of black mould that has been removed and there will be testing to make sure there is no health risk.

The old Tūi refit is on track. There has been good progress. We've made some decisions about building materials to avoid delays from shortages. We're still possibly looking at June for completion.

The swimming pool is still a work in progress. Rob from Clorogene has fixed up the concrete pipe issue. However, the heat pump no longer works, and the gas is no longer available. We're looking at options. A like-for-like replacement would be around \$11,000. However we've been advised we need a bigger unit which could be up to \$30,000 all in. That's on top of other build cost increases including resulting from Covid. We need to have a conversation about how to finance.

- **ACTION - Nicki to set up call with Yadana and Nick to discuss funding additional pool costs**

Nick gave his finance report. He said the written report is in the shared folder. There was a surplus of \$18,486 against income for the month of February. He said that admin expenditure looked high, with 26% of the budget spent and only 17% of the year gone. Many of these costs are subscriptions - such as Access It, Hero, and insurance - so these are upfront costs each year. Nicki has spoken to Education Services services and they are happy with the school's position.

Jess asked about the 'exit from school' incident referenced in the principal's report. Nicki said that was where a child had walked out the gate. They were scooped up straight away, but that's quite a big deal for us. A near miss. So we're reviewing what we need to avoid that happening again in future.

Nick asked Nicki to include some comments in her report on other curriculum areas, as well as reading, writing and maths.

## **7. Board 2022 work plan**

Jess asked board members to add upcoming activities in their portfolio areas to the work plan.

## **8. Elections**

Jess said that the deadline for voting this year will be 7 September 2022. The school needs to appoint a returning officer. Previously this has been Melissa. It would be great to have her again but we need to check in with her.

- **ACTION - Jess to ask Melissa whether she would like to be returning officer again**

Jess has been thinking about how to get parents to be more involved in stepping forward as trustees. She would like all board members to write a blurb for a 'spotlight' in the school newsletter. Jess will circulate dates.

- **ACTION - all board members to write a blurb on themselves for school newsletter**

## **9. Written reports**

Haidee said she would like to take a more strategic approach to health and safety issues. She said that NZSTA has identified ten components of an effective health and safety system, and she planned to discuss two each month for the next five months. This will help the Board to engage with health and safety issues and ensure that it meets its legislative responsibilities. The first two topics are leadership and worker participation.

Haidee identified a few things for consideration. She said the board's discussions around the definition of 'achievement' should keep in mind the legal imperative that we 'ensure every student at the school can reach their highest possible standard in educational achievement'. She pointed out the importance of communication, especially on the website.

In terms of inclusivity, Haidee said she would like to hear more from whānau of students with different needs. She asked whether board members had any thoughts about how to collect this. Yadana suggested asking Justine about who to talk to and how to talk to them. That should work better than a survey, for example. Haidee agreed that was a good idea and emphasised that we need to hear directly from whānau, as well as from staff and management. Nicki said it'd be good to work out what we would do with that information. Haidee said participation is a good starting point. It might give us some leads about what actions to take, for example how to advocate for more effective RTLB services. She said

that as a board member she doesn't know how parents and whānau are experiencing those services. She said she would also like the board to think about how we make worker participation in health and safety more robust.

Joe said there are lots of policy reviews coming up this term. Some will be quick to review, others will take much longer. Melissa will go out to the wider school community to consult on these.

Yadana asked whether it is a board decision whether to keep vaccine protocols. Nicki said yes it is, but MOE is strongly in favour of keeping current arrangements. There will be more MOE guidance to come. Yadana said that the school may want to reiterate those points to the school community.

Joe said that a number of Ngāti Kotahitanga whānau have been impacted as positive Covid cases or contacts. Some whānau have opted to keep their tamariki at home. So there have been small numbers at kura over the last few weeks. We have three new tamariki this year. The noho is still planned for later in the year.

Yadana said that the art strategy will have two parts. First, creating a register of all the art we have around the school, and finding any documentation relating to existing artworks. Secondly, we will develop a strategy for our visual art. For example, do we want our visual space to reflect our strategy or our inquiry? Yadana will work with Julia and Eve on this. We still need to work on the process for developing the strategy. The latest news on the Kamala mural is that it will be difficult to remediate it, other than replacing the graffiti guard. Part of the problem is the site's exposure to the full sun. We should have guidelines about appropriate placement of any new artwork.

- **ACTION - Nicki and Joe to follow up with whaea Hine about conservation of carving**

## **10. Delegation of authority to principal**

Jess said that she thought it would be a good idea for the board to make a list of all the things that the principal *doesn't* need to check in on. This would help clarify the divide between operational and governance. This idea came from Nicki's mentor. Jess would like to discuss it further at the next meeting.

- **ACTION - Jess to draft a provisional list of 'principal delegations' for board to discuss without Nicki at the next meeting**

## **Karakia whakamutunga**

The main meeting closed at 9.15 pm.

**Dates of future meetings**

Monday 23 May 2022

Monday 20 June 2022

Monday 25 July 2022

Tuesday 23 August 2022

Monday 19 September 2022

Monday 17 October 2022

Monday 21 November 2022

Monday 12 or 19 December 2022