

# Newtown School Board of Trustees

## Meeting Minutes

Mon 19 Sep 2022, 6.35pm  
Staff room and Zoom



Board members:

Fatima Amin Sheikh, Jess Gorman (chair), Joe Winkels, Mika Mardhiah, Naomi Taylor, Nick Booth, Nicki Read.

Also present:

Ali Zainal Abidin, Alysha Stephens (via Zoom until 8.00pm), Justine Henderson (until 7.40pm), Linda Martelletti, Steve Kerr (minutes).

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### 1. Karakia timatanga

After the karakia Jess welcomed new board members Mika, Fatima, and Naomi. She thanked outgoing members Linda and Yadana for their huge contributions over the last term.

### 2. What we want for Newtown School

Jess invited everyone to introduce themselves. Following introductions, she asked board members to split into pairs and write down what they wanted for Newtown School.

Nicki said these ideas will also feed into the school's strategic plan which is a roadmap for the school. The plan is reviewed every year.

After the small groups had written down their ideas, Justine reported back to the group. She said the comments on post-its fitted into five themes:

1. Outdoor spaces and buildings
2. Te Tiriti, te reo, cultural diversity, more reo being spoken, Maori in leadership
3. Inclusion and success, fun, achievement by all, success defined by whanau
4. Student agency - learners knowing where they're going
5. Growing the community

The statements from the post-its are attached in the Appendix at the end of these minutes.

Jess asked whether people had anything to add. Nick said it'd be good to keep those notes and come back to them in future so we can track our progress.

### 3. Principal's report

Nicki explained to the board how she prepares her monthly report. She said that the report tries to reflect all the things that the school does that are mentioned in the strategic plan. There's so much that goes on in the school that sometimes it is very full. She explained that the document contains many links to other documents, and that she takes the report as read - that is, she assumes board members have read the report before the meeting.

Attendance: Nicki said that attendance has been challenging for schools post Covid. The government is providing some support that schools can apply for to help. Newtown School is averaging 40-55 absent students each day, so it's an issue. She said the school is trying to connect with those families and ask what we can do to help.

Joe asked if there were any themes about why kids are absent. Nicki said it's a mix. For some kids it's fear about getting sick. Sometimes kids have been at home looking after whānau and have just continued. Some are a bit over cautious when they're just a bit sick, which is what we've all been told to do.

Justine said that the school knows where all our kids are, even those who are absent, which is good. Not all schools know this. Nicki said usually it's the home class teacher that will bring the kids back, it's very relationship based.

Naomi asked if there were any issues to do with transitional housing. Nicki said no, not at the moment but there have been in the past, so it's good to keep an eye on.

Bicultural discussions: Nicki said we've got a relationship with Te Ati Awa. We've now formed a steering group with a rep from each of the seven schools in our Kāhui Ako. The purpose of the group is to build a deeper relationship between schools and mana whenua, so we are not just calling on iwi when we need something like a pōwhiri protocol. Mitch is steering that mahi and Maraea, Hine and Nicki are also involved.

Learning support: Justine said that In Class Support (ICS) is the second highest level of support available for kids. Justine recently helped moderate applications from over 500 kids from Wellington region, for the 180 ICS spots available. Those kids will get 5 hours a week of support for learning. Justine said the process had given her insight into the criteria that are used for making these decisions. Newtown School has five kids funded for next year, up from three last year, which is a good result.

Kapa haka: Nicki said the kapa haka rōpū has been amazing at recent events. She said they now have a reputation and people want them to perform. Nicki acknowledged all the hard work that goes into the kapa haka performances.

Staffing: Nicki said that the school now has two staff recovering from concussion. It's a long slow recovery, it's quite unnerving. School is doing all it can to support them. There is a return to work plan in place and we have relievers. Both were workplace injuries.

Jess asked where there was any more resourcing required to support them, or measures to prevent injuries? Nicki said she would think about it.

Nick asked if an incident report had been filed? Nicki said yes that was all done.

Property: Nicki said there had been a lot of work painting the swimming pool over the last few weeks. It's starting to look like a real pool. She said Aquazone won't start lessons until term one next year, but the school can use the pool before then. There will be a pool party soon, perhaps in the first week of term four. Aquazone will provide water safety training for teachers. Nicki said the old Tūi space is progressing well and is nearly done. We will need to work out naming for it and we're just beginning to plan the opening.

Naomi asked who will organise the blessing for the pool re-opening? Nicki said it's on the to do list to make happen.

Finance: Nicki said there was a problem with the internet last week, which meant that Melissa hasn't been able to do the coding so there is no finance report this month.

Streets for People: Nicki said the organisers were delighted with the event and how it went. She said Nick has put in a huge amount of work liaising with WCC.

Nick said that off the back of the event he had spoken to the council about the plans for the cycle way. He had told them how many more bikes and scooters there were at school after the Streets for People event, and that this suggested that when there are opportunities for safe transport, whānau take them. He said there will be some changes to short stay parking. He said the council thanked the school for hosting the event.

Inspire the Future: Nicki said this was a really successful programme and she would like to do it again.

Nicki told the board members that if they have any questions about anything in her report after the meeting, they can ask her any time.

#### **4. Updates on from current board portfolios**

Jess invited board members to say a few words about their portfolios

Chair: Jess said the chair sets the agenda and meets with Nicki regularly. The chair asks Nicki to report to the board on particular topics. She said board members can ask her about things that they want to know from Nicki. That way, at the meeting Nicki is

prepared to talk about the things that board members want to know about. Jess said that if there's an incident at school, Nicki will check with her about what's been done and is there anything more to do. Also the chair does school communications. She said that sometimes there are specific things the chair does like investigating a complaint. Jess said that fortunately she hasn't had to do that. The workload can go up and down.

Finance: Nick said the treasurer's role is to work with the accountant. The accountant does in-depth monthly financial reports. The treasurer whittles those down and presents them to the board. Nick said he meets with Nicki from time to time to discuss the budget. There's not much wriggle room in the budget. The treasurer presents the budget to the board to be approved.

Community engagement: Nick said the focus for community engagement over the last term was on the introduction of learning conversations and learning records. He said the school also did a survey of whānau on what they thought of school communications. There is a follow up survey out at the moment.

Health and safety: Nick said he had picked this up after Haidee left the board. This role is about making sure that the school is a good employer to its staff and good host to its kids. Nick said the board rep is a member of the health and safety committee that meets once a month.

Policies: Joe said that we have a great tool called SchoolDocs who help us to make sure we review all our policies annually. We seek feedback each term on the policies that are up for review. We then look at any feedback that comes in from parents and make sure we take that feedback into account.

Ngāti Kotahitanga: Joe said he was a co-opted rep for Ngāti Kotahitanga on the board.

Property: Jess said that Yadana had held this role and it has been very busy over the last term with the pool and old Tūi. This will probably stabilise now and not be so busy. The main task will be to make decisions on the school's five year property plan.

Staff representative: Linda said that this role is to bring their personal voice and not necessarily to try to represent all staff. She said the staff rep doesn't take on another portfolio. The staff rep brings a staff perspective on issues and votes as a board member. Linda said she usually sends an email to staff after each meeting summarising the discussion, and is available to speak to staff at any time.

## **5. Previous minutes**

Jess asked the members to affirm the minutes. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. Jess said the board would defer reviewing the actions from the August meeting to the next meeting.

## 6. Discussion and appointment of new board roles

Jess said asked each board member what roles they were interested in taking.

Naomi said she was happy to do any role. She said it would be great to have another portfolio position on the board who would be responsible for making sure we make progress on recognising our Te Tiriti role.

Nick said he didn't mind which role he had. He was keen for someone else to do community engagement.

Mika said she didn't mind either. She said she could help with any of the roles as she was new and can learn.

Joe said he was not interested in the chair role. He supported the idea of a potae for someone to take care of the treaty partnership to keep us moving forward. He said community engagement sounded interesting, or health and safety, or property.

Jess said she wouldn't mind doing finance or property. She said as chair, she'd be happy to step aside, or to do another year. It'd be nice to have a change of chair during this three year term. She said she liked Naomi's idea of a co-chair roles for Māori and Pakeha. She said she would check with the STA on making sure there are no legal barriers with that.

- **ACTION - Jess to come back to the next meeting with more information on co-chairing**

The following roles were agreed:

- Te Tiriti role - Naomi and Joe
- Policies - Nick
- Community engagement - Joe
- Property - Naomi (temporary)
- Health and safety - Mika
- Finance - Jess (temporary)
- Staff rep - Fatima

## 7. Discussion about co-opting options

Nick explained the board's co-opting policy for Ngāti Kotahitanga. He said that when the last board was elected, it wanted to have a permanent Ngāti Kotahitanga rep on the board. Joe was co-opted onto the board in that role. The board then decided it would be a policy to always have at least one rep from Ngāti Kotahitanga on the board.

Nick said under the legislation, the board can have up to nine members, but must have more elected members than co-opted members. Since we have five elected members, that means we can have four co-opted members.

Jess said that the board would like Ngāti Kotahitanga whānau to choose whether they want to take up one or two of the of the potential co-opted positions. Then the board could also ask Mitzi and Yadana, who stood for election, to join as co-opted members. She said Mitzi is keen to contribute, and it would be great to have Yadana on the board for continuity and for her governance skills.

Nick said that the board had lost three members since the previous election so it had barely enough members by the time of the election. So it would be great to have more people on the board. It would also send a signal to the community to encourage people to come forward as there will be a role for them.

Jess suggested that the board confirm her as chair for one more month, so that it can be discussed again at the next meeting once she has gathered information on co-chairing possibilities. She said she looked forward to hearing back from Ngāti Kotahitanga on the offer of the co-opted positions.

Jess asked board members what they thought about the co-opted positions.

Mika said she'd like to take a bit of time to think about it because she was new. She'd like to find out more.

Joe said it would be awesome to have four co-opted members. He asked what would happen if an elected member left, leaving equal numbers of elected and co-opted members? Jess said we'd ideally replace the elected position, and we'd need to keep an eye on quorum.

Fatima said she felt like she would get good help because she works at school. She said she will go through the emails to get a good idea of her responsibilities.

Naomi said she thought the more members the better. She asked whether it would be a problem if the board was at its maximum size and other things came up. Jess said the board can always involve other parents in our work without them being elected, as it has done for grants work recently.

- **ACTION - Jess to contact Yadana and Mitzi to see if they are interested in being co-opted onto the board, potentially with Yadana having a sustainability focus and Mitzi -focusing on comms, community engagement, and website**

- **MOVED - that Jess be appointed chair for one more month until the next meeting. Motion seconded and passed unanimously.**

## **8. AOB**

Joe said he had met with Takirirangi Smith, the original carver, about the restoration of the whakairo (carving). He said whaea Hine had worked hard to get a costed proposal back for the restoration. Takirirangi had shared the proposal and costs with Joe and Nicki. The costs would be about \$12,000 for removal, restoration, re-carving part of it, reassembly, and ensuring all work is done following the correct tikanga. Jess said that sounded very reasonable.

The board agreed in principle to proceed with this and to seek funding for it.

Naomi asked whether we can teach kids not to throw balls at the whakairo. Nicki said yes, that area is now a no ball zone.

## **9. Future meetings**

Jess asked all board members which days of the week suited them best to meet. All board members were happy with Mondays. Jess will send around future dates by email to check that they suit all members.

- **ACTION - Jess to confirm future meeting dates with all board members**

## **10. Karakia whakamutunga**

The meeting closed at 8.37pm

## Appendix: Post-it notes from the 'What do you want for Newtown School?' session

- To be a fun inclusive space
- A community hub
- Buildings, pool, and land functional and working all the time
- Growing our depth of te reo Māori and tikanga
- Ensure Newtown continues to reflect its community
- Always keep the multicultural alive
- Awareness for disabled students
- Keep up all the positive vibes we have here
- Success is meaningful and defined by whānau
- Māori in leadership positions
- A place where we hear te reo in the playground along with native birds
- We all know whose whenua this is
- Board reflects community
- Strong and bold partnership models across school
- Strong connection between home and school
- Happy and connected staff who love their mahi
- To graduate independent confident future leaders
- A place: home, welcomed, loved
- Achievement in all areas of learning (not just reading, writing, maths)
- Confidence and authenticity in bicultural relationship at our heart
- A safe place where kids enjoy learning, having fun, being proud of who they are and where they come from
- Each learner being seen and known with passion and needs supported and celebrated
- Students to be happy and engaged in learning
- Water balloon fight, free sushi, more Māori art, secret base, archery, more Māori books in library, art station at morning tea and lunch
- Continued progress towards meaningful Treaty partnership
- Staff to feel inspired and supported
- Affirming tūrangawaewae with relationships that build others up
- Support student voice and advocacy
- Greater outdoor active play spaces
- Be an advocate for growing up speaking and learning in te reo Māori
- Growing Ngāti Kotahitanga Māori role