

# Newtown School Board of Trustees

## Meeting Minutes



Mon 4 July 2022, 6.30pm  
Staff room and Zoom

Present: Alysha Stephens (parent), Debbie Purves (left 7.20pm), Helen Walls (presenter, 7.20-8.00pm), Hilary Lintott (left 7.20pm), Jess Gorman (chair), Jessica Scott (parent, left 8.05pm), Joe Winkels, Leanne Whitfield (left 8.05pm), Linda Martelletti, Nick Booth, Nicki Read, Steve Kerr (minutes), Yadana Saw.

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### 1. Karakia timatanga

### 2. Conflicts

No conflicts of interest were declared.

### 3. Mid year achievement report

Debbie and Hilary presented the achievement report. They started with highlights from the first two terms for each whānau, including student voice, current focus, and 'where to next'.

Yadana asked whether the focus on fine motor skills has always been there over the last few years. Nicki and Debbie said yes, that's always been there, but they had noticed that there are more children at the moment that need support with fine motor skills.

Next, Hilary and Debbie presented the achievement and progress report including PACT data and overall teacher judgements. The presentation focused on maths, writing, and reading. It included targets set for 2022, and the progress towards those targets as at mid year. For maths, most years were mostly on target. For writing and reading, quite large numbers of children in senior school whānau were not reaching the expected level. Writing has been a focus for all whānau in the first two terms. Māori and Pasifika data for years 3 to 6 showed they are slightly below the all-of-school figures.

Jess asked for year 1 and 2 data for Māori and Pasifika to be added.

Hilary and Debbie acknowledged that there was a lot of disruption in term 1 due to staff and student absences.

Jess noted that Hilary and Debbie had had to pull the data together quickly but that the BOT now had a couple of weeks to consider the data so it can be discussed properly at the next meeting.

Yadana asked whether there was anything that was surprising. Hilary said they thought writing would be an issue but the figures were still a surprise.

Joe asked if there was anything that we know is really making a difference in terms of cultural responsiveness. Hilary said that capturing student voice was very important for this.

- **ACTION - all members - to email Hilary and Debbie any questions on the achievement report**

#### **4. Helen Walls on Structured Literacy**

Jessica (parent) said she was very interested in the way literacy was taught and very excited that Newtown School was taking a more structured approach to literacy.

Helen said she had been a teacher for 20 years but is also an education researcher working on evidence-based approaches to teaching literacy. She said that Wellington is a bit behind some other regions on this so it's great that Newtown School is leading the way.

Helen said that literacy teaching in NZ is quite shameful, and that one in five 15 year olds are illiterate. It's definitely time to introduce new evidence-based methods. She said that NZ has been following the 'whole language' approach to reading but this is not well supported by research and evidence. Evidence suggests that it is important to teach the 'code' of English language and teach it explicitly. Kids need to learn common consonant sounds and short vowels and have them in their long term memory before adding more complexity. Trials have shown that children learn to read quickly and more easily this way than just by being immersed in interesting language.

Helen said it is a big exciting change, even though it's quite counterintuitive for many teachers who learned to read and write using the 'whole language' approach. It's our struggling learners that need this approach the most.

Helen said she would be working with Leanne, Nicki and Justine to make sure that all the teachers at Newtown School are really confident with the new approach. She said the school would be keeping all the things that it does well, like increasing kids' vocabulary and conceptual knowledge, play-based learning, etc. But we'll also add structured literacy learning as well. She said the approach would probably be short bursts of all class teaching, then using books that have been carefully chosen so that they can be read with the knowledge that the kids have.

Nicki said the school has made a commitment to work with Helen for 18 months to give professional development to staff. She said while it's not a quick fix, the school thinks this will make a significant difference to our learners. Nicki said Helen will do a night for parents.

Nick asked Helen what the BOT could be doing to support. Helen said the school will need more resources, like the right kind of books. She said some of the old assessment approaches are no longer so useful when we're working with a new model, so the school might want to supplement some of its old assessment schedules. It's a big change for teachers so they'll need your support. She said we shouldn't try to do everything all at once, but go at a gentle pace to upskill teachers in their code knowledge and change lesson structures.

Nick asked whether it's applicable to all years at school, even kids who are struggling at years 5 and 6? Helen said yes definitely, it's really the only way to go for those children. Structured literacy is also essential for learning how to spell and write more generally.

Jess thanked Helen and said it's great that there's going to be parents night too.

## 5. Previous minutes

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

## 6. Action items

100	Look into whether into what the school could develop a green/natural environment policy	Yadana	Carry forward. In progress.
099	Circulate draft arts strategy prior to June BOT meeting	Yadana	Closed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>ACTION - All members - give feedback on draft arts strategy</b></li> <li>● <b>ACTION - Nicki to invite Yadana to speak to staff on arts strategy</b></li> </ul>
098	Take a look at the survey material in the shared folder and provide feedback by next meeting	All board members	Carry forward
097	Share the slides from Janelle's presentation with board	Nicki	Closed

096	Take note of what events we're at in the community and what opportunities there may be for engagement with whānau Māori and the wider community	All board members	Carry forward
095	Come back to board with a more tailored proposal for a BOT session with Nathan	Jess, Joe	Closed.  Joe and Jess have had a couple of meetings with Nathan and there is a proposal in the shared folder for June.  They now think it'd be best to run the session for the new board when it comes in. They will still sound Nathan out and make sure resources are in place so that the waka is ready for the new board immediately when it comes in.
094	Invite interested BOT members to meet with potential appraisers	Nicki	Closed. Done.  Jess and Nicki met with Michelle and she was very organised and impressive. Board members had read the proposal and supported engaging Michelle.
093	Include a focus on ESOL in the next principal's report	Nicki	Closed
092	Ensure make sure Ngāti Kotahitanga progress is included in next principal's report	Nicki	Closed. Whaea Maraea will come into next meeting
091	Bring plan a plan for spending the \$12,000 Beginning Principal funding to next to meeting	Nicki	Carry forward
089	Follow up with whaea Hine about conservation of carving	Nicki and Joe	Carry forward
087	Ask Melissa whether she would like to be returning officer again	Jess	Closed
085	Come back with any actions we can take to help support staff in terms of leave	Nicki and Leanne	Closed. Nicki said the school had used discretionary leave to look after support staff. School hasn't been out of pocket. I'll bring it back to the board later in the year if we need to, depending on illness.

084	Meet to discuss review of the innovative learning environment	Nicki	Closed. Replace with action below. Nicki will speak to Haidee. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>ACTION - Nicki to speak to Haidee and report back on plan for ILE review</b></li> </ul>
079	Find out what particular delegation issues there may be around finance	Nick	Closed. Nick talked to NZSTA - we should decide what we need to do, then run it past our auditor. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>ACTION - Nick come back with a draft plan for delegating finance role due to illness</b></li> </ul>

## 7. Principal's report

Nicki said she had decided to use some of the Beginning Principal wellbeing funding to attend a principal's conference. She suggested that at the August BOT meeting there be a strategic focus on Ngāti Kotahitanga, both on achievement and a broader discussion.

Nicki told the board that Leanne is spending three days a week teaching in Waitangi, because numbers are large and also there are a lot of new students in Waitangi, which is unusual. Leanne has been targeting literacy. Linda said it's working really well having Leanne as part of the Waitangi team. Nicki said the arrangement is working really well for Waitangi teachers and the kids, but it has an impact on Nicki as principal because it means some of her senior staff conversations have to happen after hours.

Nicki said that Mitch has applied for a scholarship which would mean she would seek leave for term 4 and term 1 next year. She would step down as kahui lead. She said she had endorsed Mitch's application as principal because it's a great opportunity.

Nicki said the report has a live link to the health and safety hazard register. She said she would work with Melissa to do a plan at the beginning of term 3, there's a lot to include following the policy review.

Nicki said that a review of pay equity for administration support staff is coming up. She said she would like to review the job descriptions for the school's admin roles prior to the new roles coming in.

Nicki said the invoice for the heat pump had arrived. She will talk to the vendor to try to delay payment. She said she would explain that we're waiting to hear back from grant funders on further funding and that we cannot use grant funds for money that has already been spent.

## 8. Out of zone enrolments

Jess said that she and Nicki could agree to the school accepting ten out-of-zone enrolments, and these would be for year 1 students. Jess said that sometimes there are very good reasons for out-of-zone students in years 2 to 6 to need to enrol. She said the school would like some discretion.

- **MOVED - that an additional six out-of-zone places for children in years 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6 are created (in addition to the ten out-of-zone places for year 1 students)**

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

## 9. Elections

Jess said that Melissa was happy to be returning officer again. She said that as it's not part of Melissa's job description, she will be entitled to additional pay. It involves a lot of work outside work hours. Jess provided the board the standard NZSTA appointment letter. The call for nominations will happen quite soon.

- **MOVED - to appoint Melissa as returning officer**
- **MOVED - to run the election with physical forms, not electronic voting**

Both items passed unanimously.

Jess said that we need to put together an induction pack for the new trustees.

- **ACTION - Jess to start a google doc for board members to collaborate on an induction document**

Joe suggested that there be a mihi whakatau for the new trustees.

## 10. Written reports

### *Property*

Yadana said there was nothing further to discuss beyond what had been covered already. She noted that the board had agreed over email last week to carry over their funding application to Four Winds for the pool heat pump. That way Four Winds would consider it again in late July. By then, the results of the other applications would be known.

### *Policies*

Joe said he'd be engaging with School docs to look at the Māori educational success policy. He said we have a lot of flexibility to make sure that the policy genuinely reflects us.

### *Ngāti Kotahitanga*

Joe said there was nothing to report.

### *Finance*

Nick the finance report is in the drive. We had a surplus of \$79,222 against income for May. Our income against budgeted expenditure for the year to date at the end of May showed a \$180,494 surplus.

The ops grant has come in, so there is a lot of money in the account. We met with education services and had a mid-year review. That is in the folder too. No real concerns other than the uncertainty around the pool.

### *Health and safety*

Nick said Nicki had gotten some more health and safety reps on the committee. He attended the meeting and it was good.

## **11. Haidee's resignation**

Jess said she wanted to acknowledge Haidee's resignation and to thank her for her contribution over three years as a board member. Nick said he really appreciated her very caring approach. Yadana said she appreciated Haidee's relational and pastoral approach.

## **Karakia whakamutunga**

The meeting closed at 9.23pm

### **Dates of future meetings**

Tuesday 23 August 2022

Monday 19 September 2022

Monday 17 October 2022

Monday 21 November 2022

Monday 12 or 19 December 2022