

Newtown School Board of Trustees

Meeting minutes

Wednesday 7 December 2016, 6.00 pm, school staffroom

Present: Mark Brown, Annette Gittos, Julie Bennett, Lucy Kebbell, Kelvin Harper, Daniel Petersen, Nicki Read (items 1-12) and Jo Gould (minutes).

Apologies: Victoria Esson and Karen O'Leary

1. Karakia led by Daniel

2. Previous minutes and actions

2 November 2016 minutes were approved (moved ANNETTE, seconded DANIEL)

Action items were reviewed and updated as required.

Mark welcomed Nicki, and acknowledged her contribution (and that of the wider staffing team) to the development of the Newtown School Curriculum. Mark also acknowledged Kelvin and his work, particularly in the development of the national standards achievement and progress report.

3. Conflicts of interest

No new conflicts declared.

4. Newtown School Curriculum

Nicki presented to the Board the Newtown School Curriculum, which represents three years of work. The curriculum is a living document, which will evolve over time. Lots of voices have already been represented but there are more to collect and reflect in the curriculum. It covers directives (what the school must deliver), aspirational goals, what's happening now and how we get to where we want to be.

Nicki detailed the work undertaken on various aspects of the curriculum throughout 2016.

The work on the curriculum began with identifying who is in the school community (including parents and children), clarifying the children's learning needs, identifying values and actions that are core to the school community (connected, curious, resilient), gathering "learning statements"

from the children - where they articulated what “powerful learning” is for them, unpacking the school’s “essence statement” - love learning, love life - and what this means in practice.

Next steps are to capture the whanau voice - for instance, asking what would connected, curious and resilient students look like? There is a meeting on 8 December 2016 with the school community to kick this work off.

Along with the Newtown School Curriculum, the student achievement draft plan for 2017 has been developed, which summarises effective classroom practice and actions the staff will take to accelerate learners (and how these children will be identified).

Members of the Board discussed aspects of the curriculum, and in particular endorsed the learner core values of the school that are reflected throughout the curriculum. Nicki invited the Board to provide to her any individual feedback they have.

5. Principal’s report and national standards

Mark tabled his report. He acknowledged the work of the Board over 2016 and the passion that Board members bring to their work. He observed that 2017 will be an exciting year - a dramatic change in the look of the school, and exciting new initiatives in the classroom environment.

Kelvin presented the end-of-year national standards achievement and progress report for 2016, and the discussion touched on the following:

- Some of the overall achievement data looks disappointing, but a large number of children have made a year’s progress over 2016 (even though they may still be below the national standard). It is also worth remembering that there is a sizable group (around 90) within the school who are English as a second language students.
- Each whanau has looked closely at the data for their students, and identified actions and targets for 2017.
- How the school assesses writing - subjective judgements are involved, and it may be that teachers are marking too harshly. Teachers will need to ensure that the variance is narrow (though moderation). Mark assured the Board, however, that overall the data is reliable and valid.
- Some Board members were less interested in the demographics of the learners and their achievement levels, but rather the barriers to learning that exist for certain students and how the school can help students to overcome those.
- The Board acknowledged the work of teachers in focusing, in particular, on accelerating student learning.
- Maori medium data is reported on using a different achievement scale from the mainstream standards. Positive results were discussed, especially for Te Reo, which is very encouraging. Fraesar is well supported by Whaea Susie in teaching both spoken and written Te Reo.

6. Draft School Annual Plan 2017

To be discussed at the January 2017 meeting.

7. Policy

Lucy ran the Board through the Newtown School Policy Framework (links to the policies are still to be completed). Lucy commented that the table of finance dates is perhaps too prescriptive for the framework document, and that it is probably best to have all finance-related policies in the one document.

The Board approved the Policy Framework (with the table detailing the finance dates deleted) (moved LUCY/seconded ANNETTE)

A new credit card policy tabled (following changes recommended by the auditor - see below)

The Board observed that the guidelines for physical restraint should be referenced in the school's policy documents - the school will follow the recently-released Ministry of Education's guidelines covering this issue.

8. Finance and property (including draft 2017 Budget)

Mark informed the Board that BDO has completed the official audit. BDO are preparing the letter for the school, which will indicate that the processes and financial information are correct. During the audit process BDO recommended that the credit card policy be updated to provide for greater Board oversight of the expenditure, and this has been actioned.

The Board noted the expenditure for the month of October 2016 of \$29,040.

Mark tabled the governance reports for Newtown School dated 31 October 2016 from Education Services.

A draft budget for 2017 was tabled and discussed. A final budget will be presented for the Board's approval at the February 2017 meeting. The draft budget has increased expenditure to support learners, and for increased access to digital devices, with lower expenditure budgeted for property maintenance (given the new build). There is likely to be reduced income in Term 2 as the pool will unlikely to be available for use. Mark noted that Victoria is looking at phasing the budget to reflect that certain parts of the year are more expenditure-heavy than others.

Other points discussed included the expenditure on the new playground. Although the Board has approved funding for this work, any fundraising money generated from F@ANs means that the school will have to dip into the reserves to a lesser extent. Mark also noted that, following

consultation on the proposed playground design with students, a bucket swing has been added, at an additional cost, which the F@ANs fundraising could potentially cover.

9. New build

The tender process (including due diligence) has been completed and Naylor Love Construction selected (this will be made public later in the week). Mark tabled the tender documents.

A document covering school access and vetting requirements was tabled. Mark clarified that every contractor working on the new build will be Police vetted. Work will commence on 10 January 2017. The main building work is expected to be finished by September/October 2017.

As the contract for the new build came in under budget, Mark reported that the Ministry can invest further funding back into the school for development of the grounds (etc).

10. Maori medium

Daniel reported that three students will be leaving Ngati Kotahitanga this year - Fraesar is organising for them to be presented with pounamu. Daniel observed that it has been a good year for Ngati Kotahitanga, and planning is underway for 2017 (including fundraising around matariki and running Te Reo classes - Daniel offered to provide a lesson for teachers).

11. Health and safety

Julie reported that the Health and Safety sub-committee (Julie, Mark, Kelvin and Darrell Smith) met last week. Julie observed that Darrell is very well qualified for the job. Darrell will meet with Mark in January 2017, to identify areas that need to be addressed.

The sub-committee will meet once a term, and has plans to meet with Workwise.

The Board discussed the boys toilet, which has now been locked. Alternative toilets are available for use. There was also a discussion about changing facilities for parents with smaller children. Mark advised that parents and caregivers are able to use the sick-bay and adjacent toileting area for these purposes.

Mark has met with the playground contractor, and a meeting is also planned with contractor for the new build, to go through health and safety issues and site access.

In light of recent incidents where children had suffered concussion, the Board observed that there should be someone covering the reception area during lunchtime. There should also be someone observing children who are in the sick-bay.

12. Any other business/correspondence

Correspondence - Annette tabled a letter from the Chair of the board of the Mt Cook School. As part of the informal consultation process on the proposed enrolment scheme, Mark had shared with Mt Cook school the initial boundaries of Newtown School's proposed home zone. The Chair of the Mt Cook Board expressed concern about an area that will be an overlap with Mt Cook's current home zone. They wrote a letter to the Ministry's Operations Manager for our region. Mark and Annette have spoken about the issue with Mitzi Austin of MOE. Mark noted that we are still at the informal stage of developing an enrolment zone, and the overlap provides families with more choice.

ACTION: Lucy will draft a response for Annette's signature.

Enrolment scheme - there is a question around special programmes (a Maori immersion unit fits within the definition of a special programme under the Education Act. Other types of special programmes are not clearly defined in MOE guidelines. MOE is working on developing these). Mitzi indicated that the school should go ahead with the consultation, and the Ministry will address the issue their end.

Mark tabled the proposed home zone - because it is a legal document, the Ministry has tweaked the wording to make it suitable for formal consultation. The Board unanimously approved the proposed zone for the formal consultation process that is planned for February 2017.

Mark suggested that we invite the local MoE property person to come to the January 2017 Board meeting to discuss the prefabs, and possible implications of their removal on the roll growth. Clarification is required about options for the school to respond to any possible future roll growth (for instance, shrinking the home zone or using prefabs).

Dyslexia working group - met last week. An audit has been completed which identified what the school has been doing to address the needs of these students. The strategy has been updated and the "way forward" will be tabled at the next Board meeting.

F@NS update - Lucy reported that F@NS met last week (Mark turned up as the staff rep) - filled lots of roles, which is encouraging. There is a stronger structure going forward. F@NS is currently fundraising for new playground (for instance, parents had buckets at market over the weekend and raised over \$500, and raffles are underway).

13. In-Committee: Personnel Matters

The Board moved into committee at 8:53 pm, and moved out of committee at 9:23 pm.

14. Closing karakia

Next meeting: 25 January 2017 at 6 pm (for 2017 meetings will be held on the fourth Wednesday of the month)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'O. J. G.', with a small arrow pointing downwards to the right of the final stroke.