

Newtown School Board of Trustees

Meeting minutes

Wednesday 31 January 2018, 6.15 pm, school staffroom

Present: Mark Brown, Annette Gittos, Julie Bennett, Lucy Kebbell, Victoria Esson, Kelvin Harper and Jo Gould (minutes).

Apologies: Karen O'Leary and Daniel Petersen.

1. Election of Board positions

At the beginning of each calendar year, school Boards of Trustees are required to elect the Chair of the Board and other relevant positions. Annette was re-elected as Chair (nominated by Julie, seconded Lucy), Julie was re-elected as Deputy Chair (nominated by Lucy, seconded Annette) and Victoria was re-elected as Treasurer (nominated by Julie, seconded Lucy). Annette, Julia and Victoria indicated that they are happy to continue in these positions, although Annette indicated that this would likely be her last year as Chair of the Board.

The following Board members were re-confirmed in their sub-committee roles: Policy (Lucy), Sponsorship (Karen - need to check with her if she wants to continue in the role), Health and Safety (Julie), Dyslexia (Julie and Annette), Maori medium (Daniel - need to check if he wants to continue in this role), Property (Julie and Victoria), Principal appraisal (Annette and Julie), liaison with FANS (Karen - need to check with her if she wants to continue in the role), and Communities of Learning (Annette).

There was some discussion about whether a new sub-committee on student achievement was required, but the general feeling was that this should continue to be a focus for the whole Board. The Board is interested in receiving reports on student achievement across the whole curriculum, with a more forward-looking focus - for example, where should resources be focussed? Where are the gaps? What evidence-based successful programmes are available to address these gaps? Mark indicated that this could be part of his Principal's report, and that he will bring to the Board a summary of John Hattie's work on what works best for student learning.

ACTION: Re-look at the Board sub-committees mid-year.

ACTION: The school's Communications Plan should be on the Board's agenda every two months, to check in on progress.

ACTION: Mark to bring a summary of John Hattie's work to next month's meeting.

2. Previous Minutes and Actions

The minutes of the 13 December 2017 Board meeting were approved and the action items were discussed and updated.

In terms of the 2018 budget, Victoria observed that some items will need to be re-looked at. The final budget will be presented to the Board for approval at the February meeting.

3. Conflicts of interest

None declared.

4. Presentation on National Standards

Kelvin, picking up on the earlier discussion about the Board's desire to be more forward-looking, rather than just looking at past student achievement results, commented that during 2018 writing will continue to be a focus.

During Term 1 (from week 5 onwards), Nicki will go into every classroom to observe teaching practice. She will then sit down with each teacher to discuss her observations and come up with a "teacher inquiry" goal. Different approaches can then be applied class-wide, but the impact of the practice on one child in each class will be monitored. This is so that teachers can observe what practices are working, and what are worthwhile to continue.

Mark emphasised that the expectation is that teachers will continue to work on sharpening their practices - to consider what is going to make the biggest impact on student learning. More teachers will be observing each other's practices and interventions, and discussing this among all teachers to share (and question) approaches.

ACTION: Invite Nicki to attend March and June Board meetings to discuss the teacher inquiry process aimed at strengthening teaching practice.

After questions from the Board, Mark and Kelvin clarified that information about students' achievements will still go into PaCT, but the assessment against national standards component will change. It is part of Rebecca's role is to review this assessment side of PaCT. The school is waiting for clarity from the Ministry about what is replacing national standards.

Mark observed that the maths specialist teaching position and accelerated maths programmes will continue this year.

There was some discussion of gifted children - Mark noted that the school supports these children going to specialist classes in Miramar, but parents have to pay for these. There is a need to ensure that these children are challenged.

5. Principal's report

Property/New Build


Mark pointed out that the contractors are on track for completing the new building by 4 May 2018 (second week of term 2), when the building will be handed to the school. The builders will have moved out by that date. This is only 13 weeks away - the school has developed a list of tasks to help ensure a smooth transition. Included in the list is the task of deciding what items will be taken into the new school, what needs to be disposed, and what needs to be purchased. There is a furniture and fittings budget to cover the costs of new purchases.

There has been some waterblasting of specific areas in the school, with plans for some working bees around the school in the lead-up to the opening of the new building. The school will be painted in March (a 6 week process) to match the colour scheme of the new school.

Craig (who developed the school logo) is going to look at the school site, in conjunction with the school architect, to consider signage. Any new signs need to be in both English and Te Reo.

Asphalt within the building zone will be replaced. The junior playground is also being designed.

Murals - submissions for the new murals are due by the end of February, so they could be done in time for the new school opening.

 28.02.18³

Prefabs - two prefabs will remain, but the rest are needed elsewhere, so won't be staying on our site for long. Once we are in the new school, the prefabs can be fenced off and removed (probably in June).

6. Committee reports

Policy

Lucy informed the Board that the next set of policies for review are the employment practices, which need to be brought together as a cohesive package.

Health and Safety

There was some discussion about the state that the school is left in after the Saturday market. Mark is meeting the market operator's on 1 February to finalise the MOU between them and the school, and he will ask them to address this cleanliness issue.

Finance

Nothing to report.

7. Draft School Charter 2018-2020

The Board discussed the draft School Charter, which includes the school's vision, values, and themes.

Some Board members observed that the school vision - nurturing the whole child to create a growth mindset for lifelong learning - in the draft charter is more of a mission (a description of what the school does, or sets out to do) rather than a vision (which is more aspirational in nature). The mission needs to be in both Te Reo and English. Further work is needed on the school's visions, perhaps informed by the story of the Newtown School logo.

The Board discussed some refinements to the themes, including adding a further value about supporting the successful learning outcomes of the Maori immersion unit.

ACTION: Lucy to revise sections of the draft Charter based on the Board's discussion.

ACTION: The Board to re-visit the school's vision by the end of the year.

ACTION: Mark to explore the process for obtaining a Te Reo name for Newtown School. Both Julie and Victoria have contacts who may be able to assist.

Work continues on the School's Annual Plan, which should be ready for approval at the next Board meeting.

8. Any other business (including correspondence)

Correspondence

Annette had previously circulated correspondence from the Ministry of Education about plans for Communities of Learning (which continue to be "BAU" for the Ministry).

Annette had also circulated a letter to the Prime Minister (copied to the Minister of Education and local Member of Parliament) inviting her to the opening of the new school building.

The Board noted that they had been informed of the hearing date for off-licence application that the Board had made a submission against.

9. In-Committee

The Board moved into committee at 8.41 pm to discuss personnel and other matters. The Board and moved out of committee at 9:24 pm.

Next meeting: 28 February 2018

