

# Newtown School Board of Trustees

## Meeting Minutes



Monday 19 February 2024, 6.40pm  
Staff room and Zoom

Board members: Nicki Read, Yadana Saw, Joe Winkels (co-chair), Nick Booth (co-chair), Jess Gorman, Fatima Osman Amin, Naomi Taylor, Trey Tanuvasa.

Also present: Steve Kerr (minutes), Danielle Te Waiti (new deputy principal), Luke Roper (new kaiako/teacher - until 7.15pm), Mitchell Brennan (new kaiako/teacher - until 7.15pm), Cole Hanfling (new kaiako/teacher - until 7.15pm).

Apologies: Shannyn Edmonds, Kiran Lather (new kaiako/teacher), Doreen Blask (new kaiako/teacher).

---

### 1. Karakia timatanga

Nick welcomed everyone and confirmed there were no conflicts of interest.

### 2. Whakawhanaungatanga: Highlights of 2023

Board members and attendees shared school highlights from 2023.

### 3. New teacher highlight

Cole, Luke, Mitchell, Danielle introduced themselves to the board, their experiences and where they're from. They spoke about what they were looking forward to at Newtown School, their favourite lunch on the run, and what they enjoy doing outside of school. Nicki said she was very grateful to have such fabulous people on the team, she said the school is very lucky.

### 4. Te Tiriti

Board members sharing recent experiences in honouring te Tiriti in their lives - participating in recent school pōwhiri, teaching their children their pepeha, involvement in recruitment to new roles on Kāhui Ako, experience of learning about the history of our

national parks, being involved in decisions to clean up waterways of significance to mana whenua, and so on.

## 5. Confirmation and reaffirmation of key areas

Joe explained that this agenda item was to review and reaffirm these things at the beginning of the year: the delegations, conflict of interest policies, assurances, the board's kawa/protocols and the code of conduct, and portfolio roles.

Naomi suggested that we could link the board kawa back to the school's values. Trey said it was important to reaffirm these things when all the board members are here so everyone's clear and there needs to be a restorative approach if someone makes a mistake or causes offence. Nicki said she agreed the description of the kawa at the moment didn't really capture the school's restorative approach.

The board discussed the way the kawa could be brought to life more, and the way that the board's kawa and code of conduct interact with each other.

Nick showed the board the Board Responsibility policy and encouraged them to take a look and comment on it.

The board reaffirmed the portfolios as follows:

- Policies - Nick
- Health and Safety - Trey will think about it and Nick will send some materials to read
- Finance - Jess
- Te Tiriti - Joe and Naomi, plus Shannyn (TBC)
- Property - Naomi
- Community engagement - Fatima and Trey
  
- **ACTION: Trey and Shannyn to confirm their possible portfolio roles**

Trey said that she thought that the community is so diverse, the community engagement portfolio is so broad, we need to focus on something specific, where there is a need, so we can make a difference. Jess said that's a really good idea, perhaps it could be a future agenda item so we can all discuss different ideas.

Nicki said that would be helpful, it's particularly hard to whānau that are completely new to Aotearoa and who know no one. She said it would be great to be able to help them more.

- **ACTION - Nick and Joe to add item to agree a focus for the community engagement approach to future hui agenda**

## 6. Strategic plan

Nick invited Nicki to give a refresher on progress with the strategic plan. Nicki showed the board the annual implementation plan. She talked through the updates and highlighted the new things such as Roots of Empathy, Trauma Informed Practice, etc

Nicki explained that she had used some of the wording from the Tiriti action plan in the annual plan. She gave some examples of some practical changes that had been made to give effect to the annual plan, for example kaiako/teachers going out to play for the final ten minutes of lunch time. She said it's already making a difference in terms of positive play.

Nicki said the number of English language learners is still a big challenge. Yadana asked whether there was anything the board could do to support. Nicki said not really, the school is flexing the resources it has, such as the ESOL budget, to support those students. She said we have to be creative. She said most of the new whānau are here to support the hospital.

Yadana suggested perhaps the board could write to the hospital recruitment team to talk to the school more to find ways to support those whānau as much as possible.

Nick asked what can the board do to support that? Nicki said potentially just more events or engagement, like the parent groups we had in the past, would be good..

Jess said the new format for the strategic plan was really good, it's much clearer than previous plans.

Trey asked how we welcome other cultures and encourage their voice if we are bicultural, not multicultural? How do we embrace the voices of young people whose culture is not Pākehā or Māori? She said it was not clear to me. Danielle said as she understood it, anyone who is not tangata whenua is Tangata Tiriti. She said that Tangata Tiriti is not an ethnicity, it's everyone who is not Tangata Whenua. She said that there is also a responsibility for kaiako to know their learners, to know where they're from and celebrate that.

## 7. Tumuaki report

Play, Eat and Learn - Nicki talked about the programme change of Play, Eat and Learn. She said that normally there would have been consultation but it was the beginning of the year she thought the school could just give it a go. She said that the feedback had been really positive. Students are eating more and focusing better in the afternoon. She said there was less rubbish. She said there had been some research on this from after

the Christchurch earthquakes. Naomi asked if there's any stress for kids that don't have lunch. Nicki said good question, we are monitoring that and there is food available. It's a bit tricky because the children's lunch boxes are emptier than before anyway. So we're keeping an eye on it, we've got sandwiches good to go.

Jess asked how we're supporting our kaiako to be confident in maths, referring to a recent news article about this. Nicki said most kaiako are confident, but a couple have indicated they are not, so they have been buddied with mentors to provide support.

Ngāti Kotahitanga - Nicki said she was very excited two classes have had a great start. She said there's been a bit to work out and set up with two classes. One of the challenges is that some of the new whānau have a real variation in their confidence in te reo, both for students and whānau. So there are lots of conversations between all the kaiako and the whānau to make sure the model stays strong.

New staff induction - Nicki asked board to look at the pack to get a sense of how the school is introducing new kaiako to get to know the community.

Bike space - Nicki said the bike track had been painted and 20 bikes and helmets were coming. She said Eke Rua is coming in to do some bike maintenance. She said she had heard lots of comments from students saying they like how there are lots of bike things are happening at the moment.

Bees - Nicki said the school is preparing for a March installation. There's an empty hive there at the moment. She said there are a few safety docs to be finalised.

Balcony safety - Nicki said the netting is installed and ready. She said it had happened really quickly.

Ten year property plan - Nicki said the draft plan is complete and consultation will happen soon.

Sandpit - Nicki said she's really keen to fundraise and get a sandpit to happen. Kids have been wanting a sandpit for a while.

Nicki said the new teachers are really working really hard, they're embracing all the good things here at Newtown. She said the school is really lucky.

Yadana asked about the student achievement targets for literacy. She said she found the discussion and information presented to the board really useful and wondered how we could share it with school whānau. She said it might be good to front foot this early in the year, and tell whānau, 'this is what we're aiming to teach, this is how we're going to teach it, this is what we're aiming to achieve'.

Trey asked about homework. She said that repetition is what helps the learner to remember. She asked about the research to say that homework is not necessary. She asked Nicki to clarify why the school doesn't give homework. Nicki said that we expect the students to work really hard during the day, then in the afternoon the value of playing and being with their family is more important than repeating what they'd learned during the day. Trey asked if there is research to support that decision. Trey said she was passionate to see Māori and Pasifika succeed and wanted to know if this could make a difference in making sure that our students are ready to move on when they finish at Newtown. She said the board didn't get a chance to discuss this fully at the meeting at the end of last year.

Jess and Fatima spoke about how they had asked their children's teachers for more resources to take home, and they had provided it. Trey said that some parents and whānau wouldn't ask a teacher.

- **ACTION - Nicki to gather some research on the reasons for not giving homework**

Jess said she thought having the whakamōhio conversations before school was really good. Nicki said yes we had good feedback on that change. She said the attendance was about the same as when we had whakamōhio at the end of the year

Trey asked about the discussion about attendance at the last board meeting. She asked whether there was more we can do? Nicki said that the school already does a lot to try to get all students to attend. She encouraged Trey to check the attendance report in the shared folder, it shows how Newtown School compares to the average.

## 8. Portfolio reports

Finance - Jess said there are three finance reports in the folder. She said that January is not finalised yet, but it all looked on track. She said November and December ended up okay, but the school was in deficit for both of those months. Jess wondered whether this was in part because of general cost rises, and should we build a bit more fat into our budget for this year? Nicki said that cost rises are making a difference, but we spend most of our money on people.

Health and Safety - Nicki said there's a meeting happening next week, and there will be a report to the March meeting.

Te Tiriti - Joe said the Te Tiriti plan is in draft. Joe said he'd walk Nicki and Danielle through it. He said it was all tracking to where we wanted it to be.

Property - no update

Policy - Nick said there are heaps of policies up for review this term. He said there are quite a few important ones coming up. He encouraged board members to provide comment.

### Assurances

Nicki assured the board:

- that the strategic plan will be submitted to the Ministry of Education on time, and that annual financial statements will be send to the school auditor by 31 March;
- that teachers of students with learning support needs have a sound understanding of student needs, and systems are in place to support these students;
- that at least once every two years a consultation with the school community has occurred on health education;
- that the school safety management system aligns with board duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015;
- that the policies and procedures relating to first aid, recording and notification of accidents, and managing, administering, and recording medication are up to date and implemented correctly;
- that digital technology and online safety policies to promote internet safety and prevent bullying are being implemented correctly.

Community Engagement - Fatima said she was talking to Faiza about how to celebrate Ramadan at school. She asked Nicki what is the plan for Muslim kids on camp because it clashes with Ramadan. Nicki said yes it's a real shame, we have been talking to the whānau about this. She said the school had tried to find a week to hold camp when the site was available that did not clash with Ramadan but there was no way to avoid it.

## **9. Previous minutes**

The minutes of the December meeting were approved as true and correct.

Nick closed the meeting by saying thank you and farewell to Yadana.

## **10. Closing karakia**

Meeting closed at 9.50pm.

Date of next meeting:

- Tuesday 19 March 2024