

Newtown School Board of Trustees

Meeting Minutes



Monday 19 March 2024, 6.40pm
Staff room and Zoom

Board members: Nicki Read, Joe Winkels (co-chair), Nick Booth (co-chair), Jess Gorman, Naomi Taylor, Trey Tanuvasa (arrived 6.50pm)

Also present: Steve Kerr (minutes), Danielle Te Waiti (deputy principal)

Apologies: Shannyn Edmonds, Fatima Osman Amin.



1. Karakia timatanga

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

2. Co-option discussion

Nick said that a parent in the school community had expressed interest in being involved in the board and he thought she'd bring great skills to the board. He said that Joe had had coffee with her and had similar views. He said that he and Joe thought that based on her professional experience the person could help ensure the board engages with communities that aren't well represented on the board. Joe said the person seemed extremely genuine about wanting to participate in the board and the community and she had some really valuable skills.

Naomi said that her and Trey had similar thoughts about the process of how the idea to co-opt came about. She said we should make sure there's a process to make sure that we draw on people who are often not represented on the board. Also it's a good time for board members to think about the skills we have collectively, and what the gaps are.

Jess said that co-option is a special power of the board to fill positions from time to time. It's a good time to discuss the process going forward. On the other hand there's a limited window to fill the position before the next set of elections, and to make sure that we have enough people on the board. Also we're not at the limit of co-opted positions yet.

Nick said that the board has five elected members, so it can have four co-opted members in total. Currently two members are co-opted, Lisa and Shannyn.

The Board discussed its "no surprises" approach and Nicki explained how this helped her prepare material in advance for meetings. Trey said that she felt a bit undermined when she got the email last week about the potential co-option, because she wasn't aware that it was going on. She said she agreed we should be open to getting more people on the board, but we should follow a good process for co-option. She said she was also concerned about the way that items are added to the agenda. She said that she felt the language in Nick's email, asking members to raise matters with him so as not to keep Nicki and Danielle over time on Tuesday night, suggested a constraint on board members' ability to raise questions during the meeting. She asked Nick to reconsider the language used in his emails to foster a more open environment for board members.

Joe said that in retrospect the board should have thought about the co-option process more deeply after the last elections when we decided to co-opt Mitzi and Yadana as members to capture their enthusiasm.

- **ACTION - Joe and Nick to develop a co-option process and bring a draft co-option policy to the next meeting**
- **ACTION - board to do a skills assessment to identify their skills and what gaps there might be which could be filled through co-option**

Jess said she supported developing a formal process, but in the meantime it would be good for the other board members to meet her and continue that process so we don't lose momentum with the person. Joe said the board can meet with her and discuss, and meanwhile develop the process.

- **ACTION - Nick to arrange an opportunity for the board to meet the parent who is interested in joining the board**

Trey asked what skills are needed on the board, to fulfil the portfolio roles. She said she wanted to know what other skills are required and what skills we already have on the team.

- **ACTION - All board members to write notes of how they see their portfolio responsibilities**

3. Whakawhanaungatanga

Board members shared their dreams about what could be achieved as a board. These included: a constitution of the board that captures co-governance and grows Māori participation, building a community that shows up for each other, change the sound of the bell to the pūtātara (conch shell), leaving a good legacy for the next board, making sure that the board is a welcoming place for incoming board members, recreating the portal space between the sliding doors, finding ways to share ourselves authentically,

the school as a green patch and oasis rather than a urban concrete space, finding a way to tell this board's story and make sure it's passed on.

The board discussed ways to explain and show Te Tiriti to people who are new to Aotearoa. These included a Te Tiriti workshop, opportunities for whānau Māori to work through what this means, making resources available to whānau and staff about how the board embarked on co-governance journey, improving cultural competency within school so that all families that know what Te Tiriti means, making sure all teachers have cultural competency.

4. Te Tiriti

All board members shared examples of honouring Te Tiriti in their lives. These included: noticing the stark contrast between Newtown School and other schools in terms of how visible and embedded their approach to Te Tiriti is, and expressing support for rangatahi of the school in Palmerston North who did a haka in response to David Seymour.

5. Te Tiriti Action Plan

Joe updated the board on where the action plan has gotten to. He said that he and Naomi had shared the action plan with Danielle. He said the first three actions are:

- We have a strong partnership and engagement with Mana Whenua.
- We ensure a solid framework is established for future Boards.
- We engage Kaiako Māori and Māori whānau to share our aspirations around where we are at the Tiriti education space for the community.

Naomi said that she and Joe meet every Monday at noon, and invited other board members to join.

6. Cultural responsiveness planning

Nick said this item stemmed from how this year's camp clashed with Ramadan. He said the school should think about how to maximise opportunities to recognise the big events for different communities.

Naomi said we need to work on building relationships with the right people in the community, such as the imam, so we have those relationships when we need them. Nicki said she'd met with the imam a few weeks ago, and he was very open to sharing ideas and meeting again. Danielle said that the school had helped Muslim whānau during education outside the classroom week which also clashed with Ramadan, so they

didn't exhaust themselves on the walk and had the opportunity for prayer. Nick said we should let new whānau know that the school will support whānau in that way.

Trey asked what is the role of the board in helping staff to do these things? Nick said that the board can set an expectation that the school is culturally responsive and consider those things.

- **ACTION - Nick/Joe to add an item to reflect on Ramadan and school event scheduling, to future meeting agenda**

7. Community engagement

Nick shared the NZSTA resources on community engagement. Joe said that the board needed to spend some time working through what community engagement should look like in our particular community.

Trey said that she felt that the school and the staff are doing everything, they have the relationships with the community. In a way, we are doing it but not reporting it. She said that she and Fatima needed to talk to more families in the school and report back to the board on what's happening, then we can see where the gaps are. We would like to do some clips on Facebook of community stuff, and have the kids leading it. That would show that there is something going on with community engagement. She said she knows that that's operational but she'd seek Nicki's permission. She said we'd also like to do something that involves food. Nicki said that she liked the idea of doing more reporting of what is happening.

Naomi said that she'd like a calendar of all the events that are coming up. We could hand over rangatiratanga to the different communities to take responsibility for celebrating different events. Jess said she'd like to get families more involved in those kinds of activities, she said that this used to happen more before Covid.

- **ACTION - Trey and Fatima to prepare a calendar of community events, language weeks, etc**

8. Tumuaki report

ERO - Nicki said that the school's ERO partner comes back tomorrow for a further conversation about the new requirement for one hour a day of reading, writing and maths in primary and intermediate settings. Nicki said she's an ally and she recognises what the school is trying to achieve.

Pasifika Early Literacy Project - Nicki said that Debbie, Nicki and Cath have been part of Pasifika early language he Pasifika Early Literacy Project (PELP). The project uses dual

language books provided in five Pasifika languages. She said it was a reminder of the gift that it is to have other language speakers in the kura. PELP will come in and do some observing and modelling. They will come to our fono. They were very uplifting people to work with.

Camp and EOTC - Nicki said that there's a lot of work that goes into these but we see the kids really fly when they're doing those activities. She said it is delightful to see kids in those environments, particularly those who find it difficult to learn in the classroom.

Newtown Festival - Nicki said that kapa haka rōpū opened the festival. She said she was so proud.

Māori Achievement Collaboration - Nicki said that the school has been part of this for a while. She said it's a really eclectic group of schools. It is a non-profit organisation, a professional learning and development pathway by principals for principals focused on changing education outcomes for Māori students. She said it was a privilege to be part of that recent session. Newtown School will be hosting the next one. We are looking at their resources to see how it can fit with our Te Tiriti strategy and action plan and the other things we are doing.

Ngāti Kotahitanga - Nicki said that we have the new kaiako until the end of the term. She said she's trying to charm her to stay, but she's touring around. She said that some of the parents of kids in the growing Ngāti Kotahitanga classes have less reo themselves, we are working on making that work. It continues to be a balancing act - it's hard but not impossible. Within the whānau, there's a network to support language learning.

Te Ahu o Te Reo Māori - Nicki said that study has begun, 17 kaiako/teachers are signed up.

Kahui Ako Across School Leads - Nicki said that the school is awaiting the paperwork to fully celebrate the joint appointment of Lily Whitehouse and Maraea Pukeke-Pine as the Across School Leads for the Kāhui Ako. Should be finalised this week.

Property - Nicki spoke about the need for new surfacing in the upper playground.

- **ACTION - Nicki to send Steve two quotes for replacement playground matting**

Health and Safety - Nicki said that the health and safety committee met. She said the reverse lockdown has been scheduled.

Finance - Nicki said that the Two Baskets koha is finally in the school's account. She acknowledged the work of Mark Brown and Mark Potter to make this happen. She said the intent of the funding is to enable access to learning for local children that may not be able to because of family circumstances. She said it will be great to have this easily

available for when it is needed. She said the amount in our account will be more than budgeted, which is a nice surprise.

Nicki referred back to the discussion earlier in the meeting about the 'no surprises' approach for board members raising issues at meetings..She explained that it was something that she had asked for, so that she could be properly prepared to respond to questions in meetings.

- **ACTION - Jess to update the slide pack for new BOT members to include some content to explain the board cycle of agenda setting and no surprises, for future board members**

9. Portfolio reports

Finance - Jess said the January and February finance reports are in the folder. She said things look mainly on track. She said we're getting more into deficits, but that is what has been budgeted for. She said that she and Nicki had looked into putting some money into term deposits, but they felt that with cost escalations at the moment it was best to keep our funds accessible.

Naomi said she has asked whether there was anything we could do to support our Palestinian whānau, to see if there's anything we'd like to do to support them. Nicki said she would follow up.

- **ACTION - Nicki to look into what school can do to support Palestinian whānau**

Policy - Nick said that there is a phones in schools policy in School Docs, but we don't have to do anything because we already have a policy.

10. Previous minutes

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

#	Action	Assigned to	Status
169	Nicki to gather some research on the reasons for not giving homework	Nicki	Closed - see link in Tumuaki report

168	Nick and Joe to add item to agree a focus for the community engagement approach to future hui agenda	Nick and Joe	Closed
167	Circulate the link to the updated strategic plan and the Te Tiriti plan to all board members for comment	Nicki	Closed
166	Develop a proposal to enable school to move funds into term deposits, and bring proposal back to the board to approve	Jess and Nicki	Closed
160	Consider board responsibility to address racism for strategic plan (structural racism, engagement with wider communities e.g. meet with imam)	All	Closed
150	Develop and document the process for co-chairing, including how this works together with the Ngāti Kotahitanga co-option model	Naomi, Jess	Carry forward
141	Consider fundraising options for cyclone at future meeting	Nick	Closed

11. Closing karakia

Meeting closed at 9.50pm.

Date of next meeting:

- Monday 13 May 2024