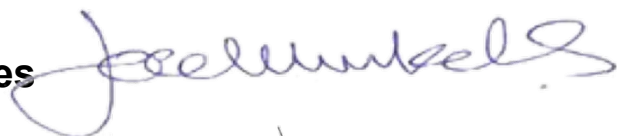


Newtown School Board of Trustees

Meeting Minutes



Monday 17 June 2024, 6.40pm
Staff room

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

Also present: Danielle Te Waiti, Debbie Purves, Sarah Divers, Steve Kerr (minutes).

Apologies: Shannyn Edmonds, Fatima Osman Amin.

1. Karakia timatanga

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

2. Te Tiriti in action

All board members shared examples of honouring Te Tiriti in their lives. These included: working with whānau Māori at another school to think of student-led ways to celebrate Matariki; seeing the school sing to the people going on their hikoi down to Parliament for the activation on budget day (mihi to Maraea and venue who organised the group to go down there); planning to make a consultation submission on name change at Pito-One in te reo Māori; meeting with the Wellington Tenths Trust on behalf of the Kahui Ako; participating in a language planning wananga for Ngāti Kotahitanga and thinking about how we use reo in our homes and how we support our tamariki.

3. Learning support

Nicki welcomed Newtown School's Learning Support Coordinator, Sarah Divers, to the hui and thanked Sarah for her hard work.

Sarah spoke about what learning support looks like at Newtown School. She said it's driven by inclusive education: all learners are welcomed into our school and are supported. She described the three tiers of the learning support triangle. According to the model, tier 1 is general instruction and this works fine for 80% of students. Another 15% need targeted support such as support from a RTLB (Resource Teacher: Learning and behaviour) or other teachers. Then 5% of students need individualised support for more complex needs, e.g. ORS (Ongoing Resourcing Scheme), Behaviour, and so on.

Sarah said that the Ministry of Education provides funding tiers 2 and 3 at a level equivalent to 8% of students at Newtown School. However, the actual number of students who need support is much higher than this: 19 students in tier 2 and 23 students in tier 3, plus a further 8 referrals on the waiting list.

She said that it's a tricky space because the need always outweighs the support that is available. Support looks quite different for different students depending on what the students need. So we have to be creative.

Naomi asked if there are students that we think need support but they don't qualify, what do we do? Sarah said that that's really tricky sometimes. There's a lot of back and forth trying to get support and sometimes we can repurpose support to go further.

A board member asked whether parents ever challenge Ministry decisions about which students get support and is there support for them to challenge? Sarah said that it is possible to challenge through the ombudsman but that's a difficult thing to pursue. It's very time consuming and tricky.

Naomi asked whether the support is delivered in English or in te reo Māori? Sarah said that's something we're trying to be creative about. She said that with speech language therapy, there are not many therapists that speak te reo so the school has asked the therapist to do a bit of training with Whaea Susie so she can use some of the techniques herself, in te reo. Sarah said there is much higher demand for RTLBs who speak te reo than there are reo-speaking RTLBs.

Sarah spoke about an example of a student with complex needs, who only qualifies for support from one service.

Sarah said that English language learners are included in the figures for learning support too, because they need group support. She said there are 158 English language learners at school, and there are lots of recent migrants. She said that English language learners and tier 2 and 3 students combined make up about 50% of the school.

Naomi asked whether there is reading recovery support for te reo? Sarah said no there isn't at the moment. Sarah said that reading recovery will stop from next year.

Sarah spoke about the number of students receiving support or funding through each of the various learning support programmes. She said that all of the programmes require parent consent and knowledge, so the whānau are engaged through the process. She spoke about all the different programmes for literacy, oral language, maths, such as Lego Therapy and Spring Into Maths.

Sarah said that the school is very lucky to have some really highly skilled TAs (teacher aides) who are providing support. She said we have eleven TAs and two reading recovery and early literacy support kaiako, and two bilingual teachers.

Trey asked what happens when support funding runs out for a student, and they still need support? Sarah said sometimes they go on a waiting list, and sometimes the teachers and TAs will carry on with some of the additional support. She said the school is lucky to have a RLit (Resource Teacher: Literacy).

Trey asked about how whānau are engaged to come in and have a kōrero and help the students themselves. Sarah said the RLit meets with the whānau and shares resources with the whānau.

Naomi asked how we identify which students need support? Sarah said it includes collaborative whānau hui, informal conversations with the student's whānau. She said there is a learning support group, with one kaiako from each whānau. The group looks at what support we have in place, how it's going for each student, and what else can we do.

Naomi asked whether we could have parent volunteers in reading recovery? Sarah said yes we have a couple in Tūi, but we could always do with more.

Sarah spoke about the services that the school offers for behaviour needs such as self management and self regulation. Trey asked what sort of approaches the school uses for students that are acting out like throwing something, would they do Check In Check Out, or some other technique? Sarah said it depends on the student and the situation. Debbie said that kaiako use 'zones of regulation' - green, orange, red - so students know some of the things they can do if they are heading for red, to get them back into the green. Those are individualised for the particular student.

Danielle said sometimes a lot is done with behaviour needs but it's not a public approach, we'll deal with it but it might look like nothing's happened. She said we deal with it in a way that keeps student's mana intact, so they feel safe to return to class and the class feels safe to receive them. Trey said it's really good to hear that, because some parents think that the school doesn't do anything.

Sarah identified some things that would make a big difference for school, the big challenges. There were: expanding support for brand new learners of English; upskilling around neurodiversity; supporting hauora for students (developing emotional regulation skills, counsellor, social worker); and more within-school support for tier 2 students in Ngāti Kotahitanga.

Joe said he wondered what the dollar value of the missing support that is needed. It would be good to understand, so the board could think about how it could support the school to find more resources.

Naomi suggested strengthening relationships with social service providers such as Kahungunu Whānau Services.

Trey suggested working with third or fourth year student social workers. Nicki said that the school has done that before - it can work but it takes the right set up for supervision, etc. Trey thanked Sarah and celebrated her work with Trey's whānau. Trey said that Sarah does really hard work and with a lot of heart and a lot of passion.

4. SWIS enrolment scheme proposal

Nick said that South Wellington Intermediate School (SWIS) is starting up an enrolment scheme (zoning) due to the expected growth in the community. He said that that will have impacts on our kura. Nick said that he and Joe would like to see the entire Newtown School within the SWIS zone. He said we should also let SWIS know that a lot of Ngāti Kotahitanga students come to Newtown School from outside our zone, and we'd expect them to be able to go to SWIS. He said that SWIS has asked for feedback from us on the proposal.

- **ACTION - Joe and Nick to draft a letter to SWIS on the enrolment scheme**
- **ACTION - Joe and Nick to add a piece on the consultation in the school newsletter**

5. Tumuaki Report

Finance reports - Nicki said the finance reports for February, March, and April were in the shared folder.

Audit - The audit completion report is also in the folder. Nicki said that the auditor had made a number of recommendations. As a result, the school has updated its asset register and is in the process of updating its ten year property plan. She said the auditor also noted a concern about the school running a deficit budget this year. She said that the school was planning for a small deficit this year only. She said the auditor also commented on the expenditure on cushions for the staffroom, and recommended that the remaining Principal Professional Coaching and Wellbeing Support funds are used for professional development.

Items of significance in the April finance report - Nicki gave updates on these items. She said the 10 year property plan is being finalised. She said that the school's teacher course fees are over budget. This expenditure was on a collaboration course and leading adult learners. She said the school was also overspent on learner support, but there was money available in other areas to cover that. She said that the capital expenditure budget had gone towards setting up the new Ngāti Kotahitanga space, the new bench outside, and the safety nets - and that these were all things that had been discussed with the board. Nicki said that she had noticed the increase in electricity costs. She said the school will be spending some money on upgraded security equipment after

we had the intruder, and that expenditure will show up next month. She said that there had been an increase in ESOL funding which was really good.

Finance - Jess said there are three months of finance reports in the shared drive now. She said the pattern is that we're going into deficit but we're tracking well in terms of spend for how far through the year we are. She said that administration costs like electricity and insurance are going up. She said it's good to remember it's a very tight budget, so we should start up a wishlist for grants, for example. Where there is any flex in the budget, we should make sure we use those funds for things that we can't fund in any other way.

Staffing - Nicki said there were a couple of staff-related decisions to approve. She said that Zoe Koning-Thornton has resigned from the end of the next holidays. She will be replaced with Maddi Smart who is known to the students and will be full time in Pohutukawa. Nicki said that Annabel has also resigned. She was on extended parental leave and has resigned to work at Berhampore School which is closer to her home and where her children will attend. Lastly, Nicki said that teacher aide Cam has resigned to move to Palmerston North.

Danielle said that the new kaiako Rekha and Daphne are a really good fit. Nicki said we're really lucky to have good teachers that we can access in our relieving pool. It's a real jigsaw getting staffing right.

- **MOVED - that the board accept the resignations of Zoe, Annabel, and Cam**

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. Nick thanked Zoe, Annabel, and Cam and wished them well.

Nicki said that Debbie Purves has applied for a sabbatical in 2025. She said there are only 50 places available so it's hard to get one. The focus of Debbie's sabbatical is structured literacy, and how students from all cultures can benefit from learning English through structured literacy while also holding on to their culture and language. Debbie has taught at Newtown for 12 years. Nicki said she fully endorsed Debbie's application because she's a deep thinker and an amazing teacher.

- **MOVED - to endorse Debbie's application for a sabbatical**

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Property - Nicki said she was talking to Waterfords to see how the school can improve its security.

English Language Learners - Nicki said the school has a verification visit coming up. It's quite a robust process, the Ministry looks at our processes and what we're doing and how we can improve what we do.

Principal Wellbeing fund - Nicki said she'd spent some time with a wellbeing coach who specialises on wellbeing for principals. She said that had been really good.

Health and safety - Nicki said the committee had met and she encouraged board members to read the minutes. She said the school had decorated the front fence for Pride Week. She said Pride Week coincides with Eid this year which is lovely from a diversity and inclusion point of view. Nicki said that the school has a little bit of funding left over from WCC to encourage students to bike and walk to school, so she is looking at ways to make Newtown safer for biking and walking. Lastly, she noted that there is a consultation on the health curriculum coming up in term 3.

Donations scheme - Nicki said the board needs to minute that it will opt to stay with the Ministry providing donation money, rather than parents.

- **MOVED - that the school opts to stay in the Ministry of Education donation scheme**

Motion seconded and passed unanimously.

6. Constitution planning

Naomi said she and Jess had been looking at how the school can ensure it maintains co-governance and a strong board into the future. She described the proposed principles for the constitution. The first principle is Ranginui and Papatūānuku, which is about understanding and maintaining healthy relationships with each other and the land. The second principle is Tiriti o Waitangi: to recognise and respect the rangatiratanga and mana motuhake of Māori and in partnership to re-indigenise and decolonise the educational experience. The third principle is the school value that all learners should equitably achieve and succeed as tangata whenua and tangata tiriti.

Jess said she and Naomi had been thinking about different ways to ensure that we get good representation on the board. People can join the board through elections and co-option. She said they had come up with some options for using co-option which they needed to test with Newton School in Auckland. Jess said that one thing we have control over is the size of our board. The board can have between four and seven members, plus the tumuaki and staff rep. Board members can be co-opted as long as a majority of elected members is maintained. Jess said whatever we do, it would not be purely a board decision.

Naomi said the idea was to have two co-opted Ngāti Kotahitanga board members and two other whānau Māori board reps. She said her and Jess liked the idea of co-opting in pairs so people are well-supported when they join the board.

Naomi sought approval to form a subcommittee to carry this forward, including not just board members but also other whānau who are passionate about this. She said the next steps would include a hui with Ngāti Kotahitanga, a hui with kaiako, consultation with the community, etc. She said we would like to complete this process to have it accepted by the board and ratified by the Ministry in time for the next board election later this year.

- **MOVED - to form a subcommittee to develop the constitution**

Motion seconded and passed.

7. Portfolio reports

Policy - Nick said he will talk to Nicki about the equal employment policy.

Community engagement - Trey thanked Danielle, Nicki and the staff and students who helped celebrate Samoan Language Week. She said she was really impressed with the students who helped celebrate. She said she would like to do something for other communities. Faiza is working on something for Somali Independence Day. Trey said she had started up a Zoom meeting group for Samoan parents. She said it's great working with Fatima. She said we have to keep going now that we have some momentum. It makes such a big difference to have parents from different communities come in and do something. She thanked Nicki for supporting our ideas.

Māori caucus - Joe said last week we had a wider whānau Māori hui in the kura. Thanks to Lily and Venise for their presence and support. Joe said that Shannyn says there are two people who are keen to be co-opted onto board. He said they are working through the best way to encourage their enthusiasm and find a way to make it work.

Joe also said he had written up notes from the board wānanga on Saturday, he asked everyone to please have a read. He said we are still looking for a parent to support with project management for the playground work.

8. Previous minutes and action items

Nick said we will review the minutes of the May meeting and action items over email.

9. Closing karakia

Meeting closed at 9.20 pm

Date of next meeting:

- Monday 22 July 2024