



Trustee News

March 2019

Kia ora te whānau

We have had a very busy start to the school year. While it is easy to write that sentence every year, I would particularly like to thank Tony and the senior staff for the work that they put into last week's visit from the Education Review Office. It was an intensive week and came straight after the senior classes returned from a successful camp. Several board colleagues and I were able to attend a sum-up meeting last Thursday, where the assessors talked through their findings. While I can't pre-empt the report that we will receive in the next month, it was affirming for us to hear that they feel that we have a clear focus on equity and excellence for all students and have good processes in place to make sure that this happens.

In this newsletter I will cover:

- board elections this year
- the Government's Education Conversation Kōrero Mātauranga draft report and submission period
- review of last year's survey findings.

BOARD ELECTIONS THIS JUNE

The Board of Trustees is made up of 5 elected representatives, a staff representative and the principal. Elected representatives are usually parents or whanau of children at the school. We are community representatives with a governance role and through discussing and approving the school strategic plan and budget, we have a say in the type of school our kids attend, and the types of learning experiences that they will have.

As representatives of the school community, we need to make sure that we are representing the aspirations of you all, and the annual survey, held every year in term 4, is an important way of getting a wide range of views on relevant topics.

If you are interested in seeing what the board does, we encourage you to come along to a meeting. Our next one is Thursday 28 March 7-9:30pm in the school staff room. If you just want to have a chat at this stage, please get in touch with an existing board member listed below.

While the list at the end of this newsletter has allocated a 'position' to various members, we welcome people with a range of skill sets to the Board – we just need you to be passionate about Kilbirnie School! That said, there is usually a finance portfolio allocated and with several of our existing board members not be standing again as their children are leaving or have left the school, it would be an advantage to have someone with a finance knowledge at the table.

Boards of Trustees are well supported by an independent organisation called NZSTA, which runs general training courses for new Trustees, as well as on more specific topics. There is information on

their website and they are hosting a series of meetings called Kōrari for people interested in the trustee role. The closest one to Kilbirnie is at Wellington High School at 6pm on Monday 1 April.

EDUCATION CONVERSATION KŌRERO MĀTAURANGA

I recently attended a consultation meeting for the Government's Independent Taskforce to review the current education system. This has been a thorough piece of work with some quite transformational recommendations that are aimed at helping schools concentrate on the best educational outcomes for the students. They are currently consulting on the draft document and submissions are open until 7 April. The link below provides a summary and also a link to a survey where you can fill out just one section or many.

<https://conversation.education.govt.nz/conversations/tomorrows-schools-review/>

SCHOOL SURVEY

We undertake a school survey every year to get the views of the community on topics that have been top of mind at board meetings. It is undertaken in term 4 each year so that we can feed the results into the annual planning process.

- Communication about student progress and achievement

There was general support for the range of opportunities through the year for parents to have a conversation about their child's learning. After feedback about the beginning of the year 'meet the teacher' and information evenings we made some changes to the format. We heard that families with more than one child couldn't get to two places at once, and so scheduled hub meetings on different evenings, and the optional meetings to talk about your child were scheduled separately, and in classes where teaching is shared, both teachers were present.

We received feedback about the three-way conferences, and the school will review the amount of information that is provided to whanau in advance of the conferences. We do see value in having the child involved in this discussion – and this is more evident as they get older (and as the parent of a secondary school student I can say this only becomes more important at NCEA level), but parents should know that if they want to have a private discussion with the teacher, they just need to get in touch via email and arrange a suitable time.

Parents were also keen to hear more about what is being worked on in the classroom, so teachers will try to ensure that regular emails to parents contain information about learning as well as logistics.

- Property

The school is undertaking a review of school facilities at the moment as part of its 10 year plan with the Ministry of Education and community feedback is an important part of this process. Community feedback was synonymous with current Board thinking in that some areas of the school are logical targets for property development. Developments will be planned with the intention of creating learning spaces that enhance and underpin modern teaching approaches. At present some of our buildings naturally support these approaches while others make these more challenging.

There was also general support for a range of outdoor facilities and suggestions for new developments. There is always scope for further development in this area however many potential enhancements are not covered by operating or property funding, so rely on local charity grants, fundraising and working bees. We do have plans to add a lot more plants over the

winter terms, and to enhance the area on the side of the adventure playground, so look out for working bee opportunities.

- Culture, customs and beliefs

There was general feedback that the school was doing well with understanding the culture, customs and beliefs of all our whanau. The cultural day was well received and there were suggestions that more could be done to inform students about festivals that are important to other students, and to have news about sharing family customs.

Māori whanau felt that the school was doing well or very well in terms of Māori enjoying success as Māori, but we as a school want to make sure that what we do reflects the aspirations of our Māori whanau. Lead staff are currently working on a survey that will go out to parents and whanau of our Māori students. The information from this survey will then inform a hui in term 2. Parents have also asked that they have the opportunity to learn te reo and tikanga Māori too, as well as the words to the waiata that our children are learning, so this will be discussed at the hui.

ANY QUESTIONS, JUST ASK

As outlined above, we represent you and take your views seriously. If you have any questions about any of the items mentioned above or want to find out more about how the board works, please contact me or one of the trustees listed below.

Ngā mihi

Chris Montgomerie
Chair, Board of Trustees

Name	Position	Name	Position
Chris Montgomerie	Chairperson/Property	Tamsin Wilkins	Personnel
Derek Blair	Finance	Jane Lamb	Policy
John Denton	Projects/Education	Lucy Corry	Communications
Tony Austin	Principal	Peter Dobson	Staff representative
Heidi Cannell	Secretary		