



Trustee News

March 2015

Kia ora koutou

Thanks to all of you who made it to the picnic night last night. It was great to see so many people enjoying the late afternoon sun. A smaller group made it down to the hall after eating to hear Mike, Larissa from the fundraising committee, and I talking about plans for the year.

I used that opportunity to talk about the work that we started last year to test and refresh the school vision. The result is a new vision statement, the same C.A.R.E values that we all know and love, some new 'enablers' for our staff, and a future-focussed list of qualities what we hope our year six graduates will leave the school with.

We have summarised them on a letter that is coming home with your child today, and comes complete with a fridge magnet, which features our new school logo and motto.

This work will now be used as the base for our annual school plan and charter, and the accompanying budget, which we will be reviewing and signing off at the next Board meeting. We'll also be confirming a Board plan for the year and will publicise opportunities for members of our community to provide input into issues.

I also spoke about some of the property projects that we are hoping to get underway very soon. Many of the enhancements that we want to make to our school grounds fall outside of the government funding that we receive, so we rely on fundraising and grants to fill that gap. Larissa spoke about some of the community fundraising events that are being planned for the year, and a newsletter will be coming home which will outline them, and also ask if you are able to help in any way – big or small.

FINAL FEEDBACK FROM THE SCHOOL SURVEY

Tom Haig has prepared the following summary of the section on the school's engagement with you about your child's learning, from the 2014 Parent Survey.

Thank you again for your input into the survey of parents and caregivers of children at Kilbirnie School. The Board of Trustees and staff at the school have been looking carefully at the data and working out what the key messages are, the good things we are doing, and possible changes that could be made. This summary is for parents about the key findings from the section on engagement with you about your child's learning.

In terms of communicating with the school, over 95% of parents who responded felt that it was easy for them to contact their child's teacher. Nearly 90% were satisfied with how well

the school responds to their questions or complaints. A smaller proportion were satisfied that they were getting good information about their child's progress at school - just over 25% were not happy about the information they received. A number of parents did not like the three-way conferences, or wanted more regular, smaller updates. Just over 20% of parents said that they could not easily find out about their child's achievements or challenges at school. It was clear from the longer answers to this question that many parents appreciated regular emails home, and it was also clear that teachers used a variety of methods to communicate.

In regards to parents and caregivers supporting their children's' learning at home, nearly 80% of parents agreed that they received useful information from teachers about how to do this. This has been a particular focus of the discussions about National Standards that teachers have been having in the three-way conferences in the last few years. Over 80% of parents who responded agreed that their children bought homework that they talked about at home. However, just over 25% did not feel that they knew what they could do at home to support their children's school work. Teachers have been discussing ways in which they can give more advice in this area, and there has been some interesting work from the Ministry of Education and the Education and Science Select Committee on this lately, which will be helpful.

The final set of questions were on how parents felt about coming into school to support learning (as opposed to helping out with fundraising activities, or transport for trips and such-like). Nearly 90% of parents agreed that they had opportunities to be involved in learning activities at school. It was notable that nearly 45% said that they would like more opportunities to be involved in learning activities at school - this may have reflected that parents are very busy, and it was not the school putting up the barriers. This appeared to be an issue for many, from the comments. Over 95% of respondents agreed that teachers made parents who were supporting learning activities feel welcome, which is heartening.

There were a range of other comments about the best ways that the school could be in touch with parents, and about things the school could do to help parents to support or extend their child's learning. These answers are being looked at carefully by the staff, and the ideas are very welcome. If you ever have ideas about these sort of things, feel free to get in touch with the Board of Trustees, the principal Mike, or your child's teacher.

WE REPRESENT YOU

At last night's I also repeated that the Board of Trustees is there to represent you, so if you have any questions or queries that you would like to raise, please get in touch with a member of the Board of Trustees – our details are below.

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Kind regards
Chris Montgomerie