Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Monday 20 May 2024 from 7.10 pm to 7.50 pm and from 8.24 pm to 9.04 pm

Present: Byron Lynds (Presiding Member), Ava Szabo (Principal), Rod Webster (via online), Lillian Pak (via online), Tara Israelson (on behalf of Anna McLean), Toby Champion (student representative), Juliette George (staff representative), Drew Mayhem (via online), Hayley Luan (minutes)

Apologies: Stacey Newlands (Deputy Presiding Member), Jenny Jellicoe, Anna McLean (staff representative)

The meeting was opened with a karakia. Byron welcomed Tanya to the meeting to report on the 2023 NCEA results.

NCEA Report

Tanya presented the NCEA report to the Board. She acknowledged the High School teachers for their mahi in 2023 during the industrial action and with Ava being away on her sabbatical leave and subsequently Katy resigning from the High School DP role. The 2023 NCEA results are pleasing, even with acknowledging the ongoing effect of COVID on students. Physics and maths results were down slightly. An updated timetable will be required to ensure that Physics and Maths are still met robustly. Teachers' do not mind clashes on the timetable, but it may affect students. It was noted that internal results were better than external exam results and this was a general trend across the country. When students have enough credits, they tend to choose not to sit external exams as they do not receive as many excellences in external exams as internal exams. Specialist subjects' results are very good considering we are only a small school. The big thing for the High School this year is there are no NCEA Level 1 exams anymore, however NCEA Level 2 exams are offered for 2 years. With the changes, the school is able to conduct broader and deeper learning experiences for the students and they have the opportunity to de-silo. There is the opportunity to integrate more to achieve more Montessori authenticity. Tanya acknowledged the High School teachers for listening to the students and other teachers' feedback and meeting with parents. We are a small school and are responsive to students' needs. There have been more structured classrooms established from the beginning of 2024 and students feel secure that they are well looked after by the teachers. An ongoing challenge is to balance out Montessori authenticity and support independent learners. It is a good balance between structural classes and independent module study. We have to nurture the fact that we have post pandemic students who may need further support in a structural way. Advisory groups have been formed in Tawari. The four Tawari teachers look after and keep track of the students in their advisory groups for academic results and pastoral needs. The advisors have a good view of where the students are and can provide the constant support as required.

Questions were invited. Anahera questioned how Te Kura fits with structural classes? Ava noted she performs the admin work on Te Kura. She receives a notification from the system if a student has not returned to work on Te Kura within a week. If a student has not returned within 2 months, they cannot enrol in any courses for the rest of the year. Ava talked with students about how they were progressing and then followed up with them to make sure they've got the support they need. The advisors also keep track of the students. Tanya works with those ākonga who are doing Te Reo Māori and they have their own timetables. The same is for ākonga who do NCEA Level 1. There are numerous challenges. The school is monitoring how students are progressing and how they feel for each subject. Te Kura is flexible for students to change subjects. That can be a downside as the students were not aware if the subjects are something they really want to do when they enrolled. However, it is a really good way for providing subjects that are wanted and not provided at Wā Ora. Anahera noted that as Te Kura is an online system, do students need more support with it? Tanya noted that advisors have conversations with students for feedback. Meetings have been held for students to list items they'd like to feedback regarding Te Kura. There are about 16% students (8/51) who are enrolled in Te Kura. Byron noted that students may not need support from staff members on site at all times. Tanya noted if the students cannot get in touch with the tutor or are not getting any feedback, she will step in. If there is no learning happening, Tanya and Ava will step in. Byron questioned how Tanya is finding NCEA? Tanya noted Level 1 standard is new for every school across the country. She is worried about all NCEA Level 1 students who have not had any normal school for close to 4 years over COVID and now have to face the new Level 1 standard. Students find it quite difficult and they also felt there was a lack of support. We relooked at what was designed last year and how much independence was required from the students. Kawakawa is quite a well structured environment, however there was not much structure set up for Tāwari. Tanya has been working hard to help the students based on their feedback. We've settled on a compromise that the environment is not as independent as it should be in a Montessori environment, however not as structured as it would be in a State School. Students work with the teachers for numeracy and literacy classes and get to do module independent work with the support of their advisors.

Toby questioned whether the school has a concern due to the students having less exposure to formal assessments, which could cause a problem when they enter Level 2 exams? Tanya noted numeracy and literacy are provided externally. Year 11s will sit their first numeracy exam tomorrow. If they do not pass, they will re-sit the exams in September. Those exams will provide students with an exam experience/environment. At the end of 2024, English and Maths external exams will also be available to students – these are optional and students will have to pass 1 numeracy exam for 10 credits, and reading and writing exams for literacy. All together these three exams are compulsory for NCEA. Juliette noted Year 11 students could do modules to prepare for derived exams which are mock exams. Among which, they gain exam experiences as well.

Rod acknowledged Tanya for compiling the report. He noted independency should start from the Primary school so students grow into the environment. They cannot be independent all of a sudden when they are in Tāwari. Ākonga are supposed to use their time wisely during the exam periods and focus on the achievement expectations. If the school can give students the best tools to study in their early ages, that would be great.

Byron questioned what is the percentage of students not taking external exams. Ava noted Level 3 English for example, 5 students registered and 2 did not turn up. Students can do their own calculations to count their credits and they know straight away that they do not have to take any external exams. Toby questioned whether the school was concerned about students not going to external exams. Ava noted there is an expectation that students turn up to all exams, however they can make their own decisions. Juliette noted when looking at neurodiversity students, they focus on a couple of specific exams and put the mahi in for those exams. Rod noted the key thing is pathway planning from Kawakawa. Learning partnerships between the students and whānau are important. Lillian noted the pathway planning from age 13 is very good and it provides knowledge to students so they are aware of what they want to do when they reach Tāwari. Ava noted that the Kawakawa students are learning a broad range of subjects and they have a wealth of knowledge and experiences before they are in Year 11. They know well what to do by the time they are in Year 11.

Anahera questioned whether the feedback from whānau will be reflected on changes to modules and affect any future decisions? Ava noted as we are a small school, students and whānau feedback is always taken seriously by the school. She will keep whānau updated with any future changes. It will be interesting to see how many of the current Year 11s will take up the opportunities and challenges with the new changes in NCEA Level 1 and how that will feed into NCEA Level 2.

Tanya left the meeting at 7:50pm.

In-Committee Meeting

In-committee Meeting from 7.50 pm to 8.24 pm

Motion: That the public be excluded from the following part/s of the proceedings of this meeting namely for agenda items under In-Committee. Minutes are kept in the PEB minute book.

The meeting reopened at 8.24 pm.

Declaration of Interests

Byron is a member of the Trust.

Acceptance of Previous Minutes and Matters arising

Motion: The minutes of the last Board of Trustees' meeting held on Monday 18th March were accepted as a true and accurate record.

Moved by Anahera/ Seconded by Lillian/ Carried unanimously with no abstentions or nays.

Presiding Member Update

Byron was contacted by a school family regarding a potential complaint. No official complaint has been received at present. Byron will update the Board with further information if and when an official complaint is received.

Tumuaki/Principal's Report – May 2024

Ava presented the Principal's report which is written in line with the Strategic Goals.

Goal 1: To support each child/ākonga's progress and achievement against the NZ Curriculum and Te Whāriki

Mary Ely, an ERO evaluation partner, makes regular visits to the school and has attended a few SLT meetings over the past years. She will zoom for a couple of SLT meetings in Term 3 and Term 4. She is happy to see that a good system has been developed and implemented and that staff are provided PD sessions with Helen Walls for writing.

Regarding the government mandate of 1-hour Reading, Writing and Maths, these have been integrated into the daily learning routine and Primary kaiako are keeping track of the students with their Reading, Writing and Maths. ERO is set to monitor the mandate and Mary Ely is on board with our integrated learning. It has been confirmed that 5 year olds in the Preschool are not part of the mandate.

Goal 2: To ensure we build, develop and practice an authentic Montessori programme and approach throughout the school aligned with MJ2EX and the Wā Ora Montessori essential elements.

An observation programme has been introduced whereby teachers are able to observe in a class in a different sector to their own where they do not normally teach. They will have the opportunity to look at the characteristics of the students in other sectors. If High School kaiako come to observe in the Primary or Preschool, they will be able to look further down the school to know where the students have come from and what they do in these classes.

The observation is for a 40-minute session and discussions and sharing of feedback will be organised afterwards. Discussions have been held at the last full staff meeting with teachers from each sector of the school stating what it looks like when observing in each sector. Anahera noted it would be good to have a Whānau Hui representative to attend the staff meeting to hear the feedback from the teachers' observations across sectors.

A "Going Out Programme" has been introduced in the Primary classes which provides the opportunity for students to visit a variety of places in the community, such as supermarkets or the local library with an adult chaperoning them. Ākonga are able to make their own decisions, look after their budgets and plan their own routes. The intention is to have the students become more independent and take on more responsibilities. Anahera noted that it would be good to provide more information to the parent volunteers regarding the Going Out Programme so they are aware of what their role involves. It was noted that it is important that the parent volunteers guide the students, but do not step in to make decisions. Ava noted that a "Going Out Parent Evening" will be held to clarify any confusion and provide further information.

Goal 3: To establish, maintain and improve equitable learning outcomes as Tiriti partners, recognising the importance of partnership with Māori in education.

This is the main focus for 2024. Ava has been talking with the Tāwari students regarding whakatauki. There will be whakatauki on each Tāwari fortnightly blog relating to a variety of information to provide wisdom through a Māori lens. Hilary has been doing quite a lot of work on tikanga practices and Te Reo Māori authenticity with Kawakawa.

In Primary, students get the opportunity to present their pepeha/whakatau in front of the class to start the morning. The Primary students have been learning and singing more waiata in class.

The Preschool have been practicing for Kapa Haka and costumes have been ordered for performances. Both Krista and Ingrid are presenting raranga at the MANZ conference in July 2024.

Rod was acknowledged for facilitating a big hui to link up with Kohanga Reo near Naenae School. Tara went to Te Māngungu Marae last Friday for their open day and had a chat with the Chairperson who would like to connect with all schools in Naenae. There will be event held on their premises for the local schools to perform Kapa Haka.

Personnel

A new teacher has been employed for Rātā - Robyn Windley. Robyn is a qualified teacher based in New Zealand and she is Primary trained. She is currently teaching at a Preschool in Palmerston North and will be moving to Wellington to begin working at Wā Ora before the end of Term 2. Robyn is not Montessori trained, however she is looking forward to undertaking Montessori training when there is a suitable course available. Tania will remain in Rātā class to work alongside Robyn; however, she will be able to step out of the classroom on some days to continue her Primary DP role after Robyn is settled in the class.

Roll

The roll is looking healthy.

Health and Safety

There are no head injuries to report and whānau have been contacted for any other injuries received if the school office staff believe it is necessary to let whānau know.

Motion: That the Principal's Report for May 2024 be accepted.

Moved by Byron; Seconded by Juliette; All in favour motion carried.

Strategic Plan

Ava will send out an information pack to the sub-committee with a summarised form before the end of the week. The subcommittee will report to the Board at the next meeting.

BoT Financials

The BoT financials look good. The major maintenance is beyond the budget as the cyclical painting which was scheduled for 2023, actually happened in 2024. Byron noted that the FTTE is currently underused and questioned whether it will be balanced out at the end of the year. Hayley noted this was because the school is short of staff at present. The extra FTTE will be used for the new Rātā teacher and also a Te Reo Maori teacher when we employ one and confirmed this will be balanced out at the end of 2024.

The 2022 Board of Trustees financials are currently with Deloitte and under Senior Manager review. The auditors are currently onsite for the 2023 financials for both the BoT and the Council. The BoT financials are due to be submitted to the MoE by 31st May and the Council financials are due for the 2024 AGM in June.

Anahera questioned about the local funds and what they are? Hayley noted that local funds is a name used from the MoE annual financial template and it is used for the money collected from the school community in relation to activities and random donations.

Motion: That the May 2024 Board financial report be accepted.

Moved by Byron; Seconded by Lillian; All in favour motion carried.

Administration

Correspondence

The correspondence was noted. Ava will forward the emails she's received from NZSTA to the whole board.

Other Business

Stacey will write the newsletter article due in Term 2 on behalf of the Board. The Board newsletter article does not have to sit between Stacey and Byron. If anyone else is interested or has any interesting topics they would like to write about, please feel free to issue an article. The Board is scheduled to write an article for the newsletter each term. Toby noted he would like to write an article about getting more students to play sports at Hutt Valley High School. Ava noted she can assist in getting this to the High School students.

Anahera noted that she has reached out to both Yashoda and Lockie regarding staff exit interviews. Yashoda noted she prefers to complete a survey rather than have an in-person interview. No response has been received from Lockie yet.

Byron noted there is still a vacant co-opted position on the Board. Drew noted that he will step down from the Council at the AGM in June 2024. Drew's vacancy will be up for election at the upcoming AGM. There is an article in the newsletter regarding the AGM and the Council election. If there is no interest for the Treasurer role, the Board will have to co-opt someone for the role. Lillian noted nominations have to be received 5 days before the AGM. If there are nominations received before the AGM, there is no need to take nominations from the floor at the AGM.

Agenda Items Next Meeting

- Strategic Plan

The meeting closed at 9.04 pm.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Monday 17 June 2024 in the Tawari classroom at the High School

Signed Presiding Member, Wā Ora Montessori School

Date 17/6/24

Action	Personnel	Due
Ava to send out an information pack to the Strategic Plan sub-committee with a summarised form	Ava	Before the next Board meeting in June

2024 Council/BOT Meetings

7.00pm at Wā Ora Montessori School – Tawari Classroom

January – No meeting
Monday 19th February 2024 (Week 4, Term 1)
Monday 18th March 2024 (Week 8, Term 1)
April – PD Session - TBC
Monday 20th May 2024 (Week 4, Term 2)
Monday 17th June 2024 (Week 8, Term 2)
July – PD Session – TBC
Monday 19th August 2024 (Week 5, Term 3)
Monday 16th September 2024 (Week 9, Term 3)
Monday 21st October 2024 (Week 2, Term 4)
Monday 18th November 2024 (Week 6, Term 4)