Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Monday 15 September 2025 from 8:35 pm to 9:30 pm

Present: Byron Lynds (Presiding Member), Stacey Newlands (Deputy Presiding Member), Ava Szabo (Principal), Juliette George (Staff Representative), Rod Webster, Rhiannon Jarvis, Lucy Bayliss (staff representative), Tara Israelson, Hayley Luan (minutes)

Apologies: Rachel Visser (Student Representative), Jenny Jellicoe

Declaration of Interests

Byron is a member of the Trust.

Acceptance of Previous Minutes

Stacey noted on page 3 the second paragraph above the motion, the first sentence should read "... they have the same neuro diversity trend as we do."

Motion: The minutes of the last Board of Trustees' meeting held on Monday 18th August 2025 were accepted as a true and accurate record with the above correction.

Moved by Stacey/ Seconded by Juliette/ Carried unanimously with no abstentions or nays.

Tumuaki/Principal's Report – September 2025

Ava presented the Principal's report which aligns with the Strategic Goals.

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

Ava noted the highlights of the Term 2 Annual Plan update. From 2026, school attendance needs to be reported to the Board with a formalised format designed by the government. There have been attendance reports produced by Edge (Helix) and the Ministry of Education at present and this new school attendance report will be separate.

Primary 9-12 PAT and E-Asttle testing were completed online for the first time and results were received immediately after the testing. Previously it took a long time for teachers to mark the tests, record results etc. It is also the first year to test Year 3s in Maths and results were positive. Ava noted this is due to the Montessori teaching methods which help students understand the maths concepts.

Kawakawa results have dropped this year. It has been noticeable that not having Sarah Jane in this space has made a difference. Punctuality is a problem in Tawari. From 2026 with the new attendance criteria, students will be marked as unexplained absence if they arrive after 9:10am. Ava will double check with the High School. High School ākonga have been made aware of the changes and it has made a difference already. An email will be sent to Primary whānau regarding the change of punctuality criteria in 2026.

Gaming has been an issue in the High School and a huge amount of work has been done in this area. There are 2-3 High School ākonga involved and we are able to monitor it easier being a small school. N4L has mentioned to Ava that the school can block gaming sites, however that does not seem to be working very well. N4L will be coming on site during the September holidays to repair issues after the firewall upgrade in the previous holidays, so hopefully this will assist the issues in blocking sites.

As part of the Learning Support Programme, the school has been allocated an extra 0.36 FTTE (9 hours) for a Learning Support Advisor. As Juliette is already performing this work, the SLT will decide the best way to use these extra hours. There has been limited guidance received from the MoE regarding how these hours can be used. Tara questioned if the funding can be used for 5 years olds, as it is stated that the funding is to be used for Year 1-Year 8? Juliette noted that there are early interventions that go all the way to Year 1 students. Ava noted that the majority of the funding will be used for Primary students.

Byron questioned how the co-requisite results look compared to national results? Juliette noted that this is the first uptake and the school has not received enough information back yet. Those ākonga who did not pass the co-requisite exams will have a second chance later this year. These co-requisite exams are for Year 11s and those who did not previously pass. Students have to pass the co-requisite exams to be able to receive NCEA qualifications. The new subjects for secondary schools have been published by the MoE recently with no consultation with schools. It looks like there will be a significant focus on English, Maths and foundational skills for Year 11 students. It is uncertain what the foundational skills are at present. Ava will give a curriculum update on NCEA changes at the next Board meeting.

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.

The Grass Roots Conference in Australia was a really good opportunity for SLT to meet new Montessori teachers and reconnect with Montessori teachers in Australia. The Northside Montessori School came to visit the High School on Friday which went very well.

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

The PLG with Huia Puketapu in the Wellington region at the beginning of 2025 went well. A second day has been scheduled with Huia in November for the Lower Hutt region. Teachers in each PLG have been working to create resources to share the knowledge they have learned from Huia. They will present their work during the last 2 full staff meetings of the year.

Personnel

Tanya will be completing the Adolescent Diploma in 2026, which has been budgeted for. Lucy will begin her study for the Preschool Montessori diploma in 2026. Karen, Assistant Teacher in Kauri, will be starting her teacher training next year and will be supported by the school.

Roll

The 6-9 classes will have large numbers at the end of 2025.

Health and safety

There was a concussion in the Primary where two students collided with their heads. One of them is still away from school. A staff member got caught by a door during high winds and hurt their back. The staff member is on ACC leave at present.

Motion: That the Principal's Report for September 2025 be accepted.

Moved by Ava; Seconded by Rhiannon; All in favour motion carried.

Health and Sexuality Consultation Survey Wrap Up

Ava presented the health and sexuality consultation survey feedback. We received a similar amount of responses this year as in previous years. It is good to see that many people would like to meet face to face regarding this topic. A counsellor has been contracted for the Primary during Term 4. The counsellor will be present for one day a week and can meet with up to 6 students during the day.

It was noted that navigating grace and courtesy and friendship is a big issue in the Primary sector. Ava is looking at the opportunity of having PB4L (Positive Behaviour for Learning) to train our staff on the next steps after restorative. Ava will keep the Board updated once she has more information about this.

Ava noted that students are interested in consent in healthy relationships. The government has drafted a new sexuality and health curriculum which is still to be finalised. Our students want to talk about anxiety and depression, which does not seem to link to the new curriculum directly. Generally speaking, parents are happy with the school age appropriate guidance.

Tara questioned if there is any PD for staff to know how to help students when they feel anxious or depressed? Ava noted staff can be provided with training and she is currently looking at the possibility of one staff member being trained who can then train other staff members.

Technology Report

Ava noted Anna felt that Technology was quite difficult to report on within a Preschool setting. It is a subject that does not fit in the Preschool environment very well. Tara noted that the Preschool does not use screens at all unlike other ECE centres. She sometimes uses her phone to share photos or search for Maori words etc. Children may take photos on the teachers' phone but there are no tablets or computers in the Preschool environment.

In Primary, Technology is wrapped up in other subjects and students use machinery to weave, clay or learn how to cook etc. Year 7 students attend Avalon intermediate for technology lessons. Tara noted that in Preschool, they do carpentry, cooking, weaving, dying and sewing etc. Tara and Lucy will discuss the Technology in the Preschool sector at the sector meeting when it is time to present the next Technology report to the Board. Ava noted that the Technology curriculum is currently undergoing a refresh in all areas, however it keeps changing. There will be more focus on the digital curriculum for Primary and more conversations will be happening in this area. There will be more Chromebooks purchased for the 9-12 students to allow for research or typing up their finished work.

Technology is integrated in Kawakawa subjects as in other sectors. Students cook in the commercial kitchen and use the laser cutter and 3D printer for Maker Space. Digital technology and Micro Economy courses are provided for students as well. There are no exams for the students in the Adolescent Programme except for reading and writing, which are required by the MoE.

A dye sublimation kit will be purchased for Tawari using the STAR funding as there is a Technology student in Tawari wanting to do personal design on T-shirts and are looking at a different way to do it. Tawari students can opt to study BCATS for Hard Tech and some of them choose to attend Whitireia to study trade. The BCATS students built the chicken's house and a shade house for the school from what they've learned on the course.

Policy Review

There are 3 policies due to be reviewed by the Board. The policy sub-committee has reviewed the 3 policies: Child Abuse Policy, Child Protection Policy and Safety Checking Policy. Ava noted the school has robust policies and procedures in practice in this area.

At present, all child abuse related cases are reported to Ava. Although it is not required by law, Ava still reports any cases to Oranga Tamariki after talking with whānau. There are about 5-6 cases a year in the Area School and the procedure is robust. Stacey questioned how staff are equipped to receive child abuse disclosures? Ava noted often those disclosures are made to counsellors. We have to accept the disclosures and hand it over. The key is to not ask many questions. It was noted that we have a well-being co-ordinator who works predominantly in the High School and a counsellor working with High School ākonga. There will be another counsellor employed to work in the Primary from 2026.

Tara noted all Preschool staff completed a child protection course two years ago. Lucy noted that the Preschool teachers should complete a child protection course every year as a best practice. Tara noted she makes a note for a bruising no matter what the parents say. It is to record and follow up in case anything happens. There is no PD requirement for Area Schools regarding child protection but it is required for ECE centres. The Area School staff are required to have PD for physical restraint and privacy and confidentiality.

In terms of Safety checking, all volunteers and non-teaching staff are police vetted. It takes up to 20 days to receive the police vetting results. Teachers are police vetted through the Teachers Council.

No changes are recommended by the sub-committee for the policy reviews.

Motion: That the Board approves the review of the above policies as completed.

Moved by Stacey; Seconded by Ava; All in favour motion carried.

Board By-Election Update

Hayley noted that the Board by-election nominations close on Wednesday 17th September 2025. At present, one nomination has been received and another Preschool parent is interested in putting their name forward as a nominee. If only 2 nominations are received for the 2 vacancies, no voting process will be required and the 2 nominees will be duly elected as Board members for the next 3 years.

BoT Financial Updates

Hayley presented the September Board financials.

The operational lease will be capitalised by the end of the year. The teachers' salaries FTTE is underused by 0.09 at present and will be balanced out by the end of the year. Another $200k donation will be requested from the Trust in November as budgeted to top up 2 extra teachers' salaries. The cash flow forecast looks healthy for the Board.

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Motion: That the September Board financials are accepted.

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

Administration

Correspondence

The correspondence was noted.

Agenda Items Next Meeting

- Writing report
- Principal Report
- NCEA changes update

The meeting closed at 9:30 pm.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Monday 20th October 2025 in the Tāwari classroom at the High School.

Signed Presiding Member, Wā Ora Montessori School

Date 17/11/25

Action	Personnel	Due
The EOTC sub-committee to book the online EOTC training session on EONZ website and invite all the Board members to attend	EOTC sub-committee	By the end of Term 4 2025

2025 Council/BOT Meetings

7.00pm at Wā Ora Montessori School – Tāwari Classroom

January – No meeting
Monday 17 February 2025 (Week 3, Term 1)
Monday 17 March 2025 (Week 7, Term 1)
April – No meeting
Monday 19 May 2025 (Week 4, Term 2)
Monday 16 June 2025 (Week 8, Term 2)
July-No meeting
Monday 18 August 2025 (Week 6, Term 3)
Monday 15 September 2025 (Week 10, Term 3)
Monday 20 October 2025 (Week 3, Term 4)
Monday 17 November 2025 (Week 7, Term 4)