Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Monday 17 November 2025 from 9 pm to 10:03 pm

Present: Byron Lynds (Presiding Member), Stacey Newlands (Deputy Presiding Member), Ava Szabo (Principal), Juliette George (Staff Representative), Rod Webster, Rhiannon Jarvis, Sadie Taylor (Student Representative), Jenny Jellicoe, Maryann Robertson, Lucy Bayliss (staff representative), Tara Israelson, Allie Ganapathy, Hayley Luan (minutes)

Declaration of Interests

Byron is a member of the Trust.

Acceptance of Previous Minutes

Stacey noted in the policy review, the 2nd sentence in the 4th paragraph should read "it is a good opportunity for the Board to discuss what is in place for the school when needed and to understand what we do on a daily basis."

Motion: The minutes of the last Board of Trustees' meeting held on Monday 20th October 2025 were accepted as a true and accurate record with the above corrections.

Moved by Ava/ Seconded by Lucy/ Carried unanimously with no abstentions or nays.

Tumuaki/Principal's Report – November 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 she has received a workbook for maths based on the recently updated maths curriculum. It will be introduced to Year 1-8 students. The way it was written is to make students feel successful, however the concepts shown in the workbook are quite narrow. It does not give many explanations and students may need an adult to help them if they get stuck. Ava noted that this workbook is made by one of the four suppliers and other workbooks are better. Tara questioned whether there is a follow up to check if the school is following the new curriculum and to check how the students' progress? Ava noted that there is limited information about any follow ups, but our students generally do well on maths tests in the past. Ava will scan some pages of the maths workbook and share them with the Board.

Ava explained the co-requisite exams to the Board. All Year 11 students have to sit co-requisite exams for reading, writing and maths and it is compulsory to pass those exams to get NCEA qualifications. The co-requisite exams are provided twice a year with set dates in May and September. Our students did well on those exams and our pass rates are higher than the national average.

Phonics testing has been introduced to the Primary school. The children who enter the Primary have to sit a phonics test 20 weeks after their 6-year-old birthday. The Primary students' management system highlights those students when it comes to the time for them to take the phonics test and they take the test with a teacher sitting next to them. The school then submits the results, but not sure what happens next.

Rhiannon questioned whether it is compulsory to use the resources provided by the MoE? Ava noted that the MoE wants schools to cover the new curriculum, however how we cover the curriculum is up to the individual school. Byron questioned whether there are any risks that the MoE changes may "erode our special character"? Ava noted that we have to be very careful and make sure our foundation of Montessori is maintained. It depends on how we are going to follow the new curriculum. It becomes hard when the MoE requires the student to achieve a certain goal in a certain year which is different from the Montessori philosophy we follow at school. We get the students working at their own pace rather than setting up a goal for them. Rhiannon asked whether we can push it back by referring to our Montessori philosophy. Ava noted that we can demonstrate our special character if needed and the MoE is always good in that space. It was noted that ERO will come in Term 1, 2026 to review the area school. Rod asked whether there are any changes to the central learning areas for the key competence. Ava noted that no information has been received in that area.

Goal 2: To ensure we create, develop and practise an authentic Montessori philosophy and approach ensuring the school is responsive to the needs of our tamariki

The new curriculum will be looked at and linked to Montessori philosophy.

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

It was noted that a PLD session presented by Rod was exceptionally good and was well received.

Personnel:

Brian, the High School PE teacher, has resigned and is leaving at the end of the year. A few applications have been received for that role. Tania will finish her fixed term position at the end of 2025. Michael Draper, the High School Physics and Digital Tech teacher has resigned and an advertisement for his position will be posted tomorrow. Rose, the Assistant Teacher in Tawhai has also resigned. Liz Merton is retiring at the end of the year; however, she may return to do some relief work after Term 1 2026.

Mandeep has been appointed as the Maths Teacher at the High School. She is quite knowledgeable and has a good relationship with the staff and students already.

SENCO Report

Juliette presented the SENCO report. There are 2 learning support programmes in place at present. Approximately 39% of our students have high needs, which is a decrease from 45% in 2024. However, as more categories have been included for multiple needs, there are 163 combined additional needs to cater for compared to 155 in 2024. Rhiannon noted that it is good to see the students' progress. Juliette noted that the Teacher Aides are working very hard to help students with high needs and it is showing in the results.

We are grateful for Taita College providing the venue for our students to attend NCEA exams. We trialled digital tests this year and it went very well. Acknowledgement for the hard mahi that the Kawakawa teachers and Paula have been doing to identify students with high needs.

The reading mums programme has been ongoing for 16 years and the children all love to do reading with the reading mums.

It is sad to see that RTLB has been disestablished this year due to government saving. In the past, Juliette stepped in first to help those students identified with special needs and referred them to the regional RTLB co-ordinator if needed. Learning support is the next level of support above RTLB. ICS continues next year with 10 hours being offered. High health needs funding (SHHNF) will continue in 2026 but it is typically a decreasing funding pot. The music therapy provided by Rani Allan will continue in 2026 as well.

The government announcement on learning support has not translated into any funding at present. The school can only apply once or twice for IRF of $800 which lasts for 3 weeks on living wage.

Tara questioned whether we have more students with high needs in comparison to other schools? Juliette noted that we are a magnetic school and many new students who enrol have neuro diverse conditions. Tara noted that we do not say No in the Preschool to new students with neuro diverse conditions while other centres do. Ava noted that around 6-7 years ago, we were ahead of other schools for the numbers of neuro diverse students. However, most schools are now in the same boat. We are careful about taking in external students to the Area School due to capacity for care and it is cohort related as well. Byron noted that it is a growing need everywhere.

Rod acknowledged the hard mahi that Juliette put in to complete the report.

EOTC Proposal Forms

Year 4 Sleepover SASS Form

Year 4 sleepover is being held at Mount Bruce. There will be 3 teachers and all parent helpers are police vetted.

Tawari Camp SASS Form

The total numbers of students attending the Tawari camp is yet to be confirmed. This camp is weather dependent and will be cancelled on adverse weather.

Odyssey 2026 EOTC Proposal Form

This is the first time for Odyssey to travel down south again to Marlborough sounds and Mistletoe Bay after COVID. We have used the providers before. Details to be presented at the start of 2026.

2026 Kawakawa Kaitoke SASS Form

There will be 60 students and 7 staff going to this overnight camp. This camp aims to build the community for the new Kawakawa class. The amazing race will run again this year as it went well last year.

Waitangi Camp SASS form

A small number of Year 12 students chose to attend the 2026 Waitangi camp. It was noted that Waitangi Day has become an enormous event and does not suit Year 8s anymore.

2026 9-12 Camp SASS form

9-12 camp SASS form will be shared by the end of Term 4. Anna is trying hard to get the health and safety report from the provider of the camp.

Kawakawa Big Day Out

The Kawakawa big day out is a day trip. However, as there are risks involved with water activities and swimming in Days Bay, it is brought to the Board for review. This is a well-planned event with staff who have completed the water safety training to look after the students. There is detailed information about the students swimming skills and their medical needs. Each staff member is set to look after a certain number of students to ensure safety near the water.

Motion: The Board agreed for Year 4 sleep over, Tawari Camp, Kawakawa Kaitoke Camp, Waitangi Camp and Kawakawa big day out to go ahead. The 2026 9-12 camp will be approved in the summer holidays upon the receipt of the SASS form.

Moved by Rhiannon/ Seconded by Rod/ Carried unanimously with no abstentions or nays.

Policy Review

This has been moved to the next Board meeting in February 2026.

BoT Financial Updates and Draft BoT 2026 Budget

Hayley presented the BoT draft 2026 budget.

The operational grant is budgeted based on 287 students. The trust donations income of $500k will be requested to cover the Primary teacher assistants' pay of $200k, unfunded Teacher aides pay of $110k and the additional High School teachers' pay of $150k. It is unsure whether this funding structure is viable going forward.

There will be quite a few property maintenance jobs happening during the summer holidays. All projects will be covered by P1 money including the 6-9 deck, admin block re-roofing etc. The property maintenance top up grant of $8,850 plus GST will be used to paint the front walls of the admin block. Te Reo Maori budget has increased to $800 for each sector. $10k has been budgeted for 2 staff to attend the Montessori Congress in Mexico in 2026.

Hayley noted this opportunity is to share the information with the Board. The final 2026 budget will be presented for approval at the February Board meeting in 2026.

The interim audit for both BoT and the Council has been completed. The Council final audit with BDO is scheduled for the end of January 2026 and Hayley will set a date with Deloitte for the 2025 BoT final audit before the end of Term 4.

The November financials are similar as in October. All surplus of the activities will be spent by the end of 2026. Hayley will send the donation request of $200k to the Trust as budgeted on behalf of the Board.

Motion: That the November Board financials are accepted.

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

Petition - Removal of Te Tiriti

Byron presented the correspondence that was drafted by Krista Kerr (Preschool teacher) regarding the recent government release of removing Te Tiriti o Waitangi from the Board of Trustees. Maryanne noted this can be linked to the school Strategic Plan. In our guiding principles, we talk about our emphasis on ensuring our partnership is inherent with Te Tiriti. Tara noted that she can edit

the letter and add the wording to communicate with the community tonight. Byron noted that it requires due diligence before the correspondence is sent to the school community and the Minister.

Ava noted she will put the letter on a template tomorrow morning and share with the Board before posting it to social media accounts. There was no consultation of this government release and it surprised everyone. Tara noted that the treaty is between Maori and the crown. We are an integrated school, and we are also a crown entity publicly funded. The Board agreed to send the correspondence to the school community and a letter to the Minister stating the school's objection on removal of Te Tiriti. Stacey noted that when posting the message on the school Facebook page, it would be helpful to include the sentence that "we as a Board held a conversation at a recent meeting and came together to make the following statement."

Administration

Correspondence

The correspondence was noted.

Agenda for next meeting

- Approval of 2026 BoT budget
- Policy review
- Self-Review plan
- Strategic plan is on hold for a year
- EOTC policy

The meeting closed at 10:03 pm.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 18th February 2025 in the Tāwari classroom at the High School.

Signed Presiding Member, Wā Ora Montessori School

Date 18/2/26

Action	Personnel	Due
Anna to send through the SASS form for the 9-12 camp once received	Anna	By the end of January 2026
Hayley to request $200k Trust donation to the Trust as budgeted	Hayley	Before the end of Term 4 2025
Ava to work with Tara to post the correspondence to the community and send the letter to the Minister to confirm that Wā Ora Board will continue to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi	Ava and Tara	By 18th November 2025

2026 Council/BOT Meetings

7.00pm at Wā Ora Montessori School – Tāwari Classroom

January – No meeting

Wednesday 18 February 2026 (Week 3, Term 1)

Wednesday 18 March 2026 (Week 7, Term 1)

April – No meeting

Wednesday 20 May 2026 (Week 5, Term 2)

Wednesday 17 June 2026 (Week 9, Term 2)

July-No meeting

Wednesday 19 August 2026 (Week 5, Term 3)

Wednesday 16 September 2026 (Week 9, Term 3)

Wednesday 21 October 2026 (Week 2, Term 4)

Wednesday 18 November 2026 (Week 6, Term 4)