Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Monday 18 August 2025 from 7:00 pm to 8:55 pm

Present: Byron Lynds (Presiding Member), Stacey Newlands (Deputy Presiding Member), Ava Szabo (Principal), Juliette George (Staff Representative), Rod Webster, Lillian Park, Rhiannon Jarvis, Tara Israelson (Staff Representative), Rachel Visser (Student Representative), Tanya Laybourn (left 7:47 pm), Hayley Luan (minutes)

Apologies: Anahera Brown (left 7:06pm), Jenny Jellicoe

The meeting began with a karakia. The Board thanked Anahera for her dedication to the Board over the past 3 years and for taking on a leading role on the staff exit committee. Anahera thanked the Board and Ava for their support whilst she was on the Board.

Anahera left at 7:06 pm.

Declaration of Interests

Byron is a member of the Trust.

Acceptance of Previous Minutes

Rachel noted the second sentence in the 5th paragraph under School AI Policy should read "Juliette noted students are encouraged to use AI as a tool in the High School".

Motion: The minutes of the last Board of Trustees' meeting held on Monday 16th June 2025 were accepted as a true and accurate record with the above correction.

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

Chair's Update

Byron welcomed Tara attending the Board meeting as the Preschool staff representative. Secondary school teachers will strike on Wednesday 20th August 2025. There is a paid union meeting (PUM) on the same day for NZEI members including Primary teachers and support staff. The Primary will remain open with a small number of staff and parents are encouraged to pick up their children early on that day if possible. There is limited information regarding the upcoming strikes and PUMs at this stage.

The Board newsletter article is due to Ashleigh by Tuesday 26th August. The Board is responsible to publish a newsletter article every term focusing on education, Montessori philosophy and governance etc. Rachel volunteered to write the upcoming Board newsletter article discussing what it looks like being a student rep on the Board.

In March 2026, the school Strategic Plan will be re-assessed by the Board. Byron suggested adding an agenda item regarding the Strategic Plan for each Board meeting going forward. A Strategic Plan sub-committee has been formed with Stacey, Rod and Ava as members. Byron noted that apart from the School Charter, the Strategic Plan has to be updated and submitted to the MoE every 3 years. The Strategic Plan had a major update in 2020 when the Board held consultations with the whole school community (parents, students and staff). The Strategic Plan refers to three goals: Curriculum, Montessori Philosophy and Te Tiriti. Due to the MoE changing plans, no major changes were required in 2023. Minor changes have been made to the Strategic Plan to reflect the new focus of the MoE such as attendance etc. The Strategic Plan is now due to be updated and submitted to the MoE in 2026 for the following 3 years. It was noted that the Board is able to decide the level of consultation for the Strategic Plan. Lillian noted that the Board can consult the community to see whether there should any changes to the current Strategic Plan. Ava noted that the school Annual Plan is drawn directly from the Strategic Plan and the 2026 Annual Plan will be submitted to the MoE in May 2026.

EOTC Proposal Form

Tanya presented the updated EOTC proposal form to the Board and suggested that it would be good if Board members upskill themselves in relation to approving school EOTC events.

Tanya noted that at present, the EOTC proposal form and SASS forms are presented at the same Board meeting and are being approved at the same time. Tanya suggested the Board receive the EOTC proposal form 2 Board meetings ahead of the event for general discussions. Once the proposal is approved to proceed, the detailed SASS form is to be reviewed at the following Board meeting for further discussions. The updated EOTC proposal form contains the basic information along with the learning intentions, activity outline and the risks that the Board may focus on. According to the SLT, the risks that the Board was looking at were water-

related activities, travel arrangements, medical arrangements and whether an outside provider is involved etc. Weather considerations are another important area that the Board should be aware of due to the Whangarei boys school cave tragedy.

The supervision requirement is also very important in the EOTC world. The practitioners and the teachers on camp have to deal with a much wider variety of students' needs such as anxiety, neuro diversity, medical conditions etc. Managing those behavioural needs and medical conditions are seen as big as the risks of drowning or falling off the cliff etc. Our teachers have done a great job of dealing with those risks on school camps.

Other important areas of EOTC events relate to transport, external provider agreements, site visits and accommodation etc. Staffing and cost information is also included on the updated proposal form to provide the Board a big picture in relation to the event. The Board can request further details for high risk activities to be included in the SASS form if necessary.

Rod questioned whether Tanya is seeking the Board approval on accepting the updated EOTC proposal form? Tanya noted that she would like the Board to adopt this updated EOTC proposal form. It was also suggested that the Board sign their approval on the form so it is clear that the Board accepts the EOTC event to go ahead.

Stacey questioned what is best practice drawn from the EOTC proposal forms? Tanya noted that she recently attended an EOTC session at a Deputy Principal national conference and also referred to the forms on EONZ (Education Outdoors New Zealand) website when compiling the new EOTC proposal form. Common questions received from the Board for previous EOTC events were also taken into consideration when updating the form.

Rod questioned if any school policies will need to be updated due to this updated form? Ava noted no policy will be changed as this is not at a school policy level. This form can be loaded onto School Docs and maintained by the school.

Tanya proposed that Board members attend an online training session organised by EONZ called "EOTC through a Board lens". The training covers what is best practice for governance on EOTC. EOTC governance is to ensure a proper approval system is in place and all requirements are being met. The Board needs to consider whether there are robust policies and procedures regarding approving EOTC events as opposed to looking at event by event. There may be some areas that are overlooked because they are not reported on the SASS forms such as transport authorisations and whether external providers or volunteers are police vetted etc. It is recommended that Board members check the EONZ website for more resources regarding EOTC. Tanya is running a fatality prevention workshop at present and best practice is to work towards never having a fatality at our school.

Lillian questioned whether it is possible for the health and safety staff rep to cast their eyes on the EOTC proposal form before sending it to the Board for review? Ava noted the SLT takes the role as health and safety committee for risk management. It will be a big ask of the health and safety representative to review all EOTC forms, which is not necessarily their expertise. Lillian noted the health and safety representative may have additional training and they may see things differently. Tanya noted the health and safety representative at the High School currently reports anything they believe is risky around the High School. It is a different role to review EOTC proposal forms and the person does not have the necessary skill to review the EOTC forms.

Byron noted a sub-committee can be formed and the members can participate in the EONZ online training regarding EOTC. The sub-committee will then work with Tanya to review and devise the new EOTC approval process. Rhiannon and Stacey volunteered to be on the EOTC sub-committee. Tanya will chat with people from other schools to see what their processes are to approve EOTC proposals.

The Board accepts that the updated EOTC proposal form is to be presented 2 meetings before the event followed by the SASS form being presented at the following Board meeting.

Year 7 Camp and Year 11 Leadership Camp

This camp is to provide an authentic leadership opportunity for the Year 11 students who choose to take the Outdoor Education course this year. As there is no Year 9-12 camp this year, Tanya discussed with Anna about taking Year 7 students on this camp. The Tāwari ākonga will practice their leadership skills and the Year 7 students are to get some experience pre Odyssey.

The camp is an overnight tramp and is to be held at Dry Creek, which is at the bottom of Haywards Hill, Belmont National Park. Parents will drop off their children at 4pm after school. Juliette and Hilary will come for a visit to talk with Year 7 students who are transitioning to Kawakawa next year. Students will be back at school by lunch time the following day. The activity on this camp that is of most risk is cooking dinner. Tara noted that some random people may house there. Our group will camp around the corner inside the gate which is closed at 6 pm every day. There is a stream close by, but we will not be in that area. Three teachers will be onsite for the camp. Nadine will look after Tōtara students and Tanya will look after the Year 11s. Yet to be decided who will be there with the students from Tāwhai. The camp is 3 weeks away and the Year 11s are planning for the camp at present. The camp will not go ahead if the weather forecast is for rain.

Motion: That the Year 11 leadership camp and Year 7 camp is approved.

Moved by Rhiannon; Seconded by Tara; All in favour motion carried

Tanya left at 7:47 pm.

Tumuaki/Principal's Report – August 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

There is no additional information regarding NCEA changes for schools at present.

The Curriculum Report is quite comprehensive. Tara noted that the Preschool teachers do not teach Cosmic Education in Preschool as it is designed for the 6-12 students. The Preschool completes learning stories and teaches general cosmic education foundation.

Ava acknowledged Rose (Tāwari) for preparing the section for the curriculum report in 3 days whilst teaching. She worked very hard and her part is excellent.

In terms of the Interim Report, the data is important although it is not everything. Writing results have dropped a little bit. The small cohort coming through to Year 2, Year 3 and Year 5 have got higher needs that we have ever seen - children struggle with the most basic things. The whole country is seeing a rise in the numbers of neuro diverse children – all schools are the same. The 6-9 classes will have big numbers at the end of 2025. On top of that, 11 children who have very high needs require additional support. A meeting has been organised with the MoE phycologists. It was noted that there was only minimum funding allocated for learning support in the past.

Tara noted that teachers in the classroom deal with children with different needs. All children are moving through different sections across the school with their needs. Ava noted the children needing support for literacy may not have needed that attention until they move up to the next class. When they move from Preschool to Primary, they are in a space where children are more social. If they are unable to connect with their peers, they need another layer of socialisation that may raise different problems.

Tara noted that the Montessori philosophy is perfectly capable to support each child for where they are at and the children can move up to the next level at their own pace. It is the Ministry standards that puts those children on a specific level and makes it difficult for them to meet. Children cannot legally stay in the Preschool once they are 6 years old and they have to move to the Primary.

The maths results look good, which is completely down to our Montessori materials. The writing results in certain areas are still strong. Ava has asked Kawakawa teachers for more information regarding the drop for the Year 9s. The results are highly cohort related. The cohort of Year 9 2024 and now in Year 10 is a strong cohort. The reading results for Year 10 boys have gone up from 42% last year to 75% this year.

Ava has spoken with other schools in Naenae and they have the same neuro diversity trend as we do. However, they do not have the rare neurological disorders we are seeing at present. Engagement in the classrooms is needed at this stage.

The Board acknowledged Robin Wilkins for being offered the honorary member of MANZ in recognition of her lifelong contribution to Montessori Education. Ava noted that Robin is very excited and humbled to receive the acknowledgment.

Motion: That the Principal's Report for August 2025, the Interim Report and the Social Science Curriculum Report be accepted.

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

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.

Nothing to discuss.

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

Nothing to discuss.

Personnel

Lucy Bayliss, the new Preschool Centre Manager, will begin working at Wā Ora from Monday 8th September 2025. Lucy is an experienced ECE worker and will begin her Montessori training in 2026.

The Board acknowledged Emma for taking on the responsibility of the Preschool rosters in Term 3.

Additional Primary Teacher Hiring Proposal

Ava presented the proposal on behalf of Anna (Primary DP). The 6-9 classes will end up with 105 students in total by the end of 2025.

This is partly because of the MoE intervention 2 years ago which brought in quite a few new students to the Primary School. That has made a big difference to us being a small school.

A plan has been made to extend the 6-9 classrooms to the outdoor area (playground side) so that children do not have to stay inside in one classroom. A decking area will be built over this summer holiday to alleviate the problem, therefore this additional teacher hiring proposal is for Term 4 2025 only. Anna proposed to hire a registered teacher for the afternoon session to take some of the 6-9 students to the outdoor (playground/court) area. The estimated staffing cost would be about $9,500 maximum depending on the teacher's salary.

There have also been conversations regarding the possibility of transitioning children to the 9-12 classrooms when they turn 9 years old (rather than at the end/beginning of the year). It was noted that students do not have to transition if they are not ready. It may relieve the pressure of the big sizes of the 6-9 classrooms. More conversations will happen regarding this before a final decision is made.

Rhiannon questioned what is the plan for next year. Ava noted that the Primary roll may change for 2026 and she will be reporting back to the Board with any updates.

Motion: That the additional primary teacher hiring for the outdoor area be accepted.

Moved by Rachel; Seconded by Rod; All in favour motion carried.

Board Election Update

Byron noted that the school had a triennial election in August 2025 for 3 vacancies on the Board. Only one nomination was received for Stacey Newlands, Stacey is therefore duly elected as a Board member for the next 3 years.

It was confirmed with NZSBA that the Board can choose to run a by-election or select to fill the 2 existing vacancies. By-election is quite similar to a triennial election whereas eligible parents nominate and then vote online to elect 2 new parent representatives. There must be more elected Board members than selected members. Byron noted that there are 3 elected Board members on the Board at present, so it is possible for the Board to go with selection. However, if one elected member decides to step down, there has to be a by-election to fill the vacancy. If the Board opts to go with selection, the Board has to notify the community about the selection and the community let the Board know whether they want to have a by-election within a certain number of days. If more than 10% of the eligible parents say that they want a by-election, the Board has to run a by-election accordingly. There is no cost either way as the MoE will fund for the by-election and it is free to run a selection.

Lillian noted the community may appeal if they think the selection is not transparent. By-election has a clearer process and all the eligible voters can nominate and vote online.

The Board agreed for a by-election to fill the 2 vacancies. Hayley will get in touch with Schooled to organise a by-election online.

Motion: That a by-election will be held to fill the 2 Board vacancies.

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

Staffing

Ava presented a proposal to convert a fixed term contract to a permanent contract for a long standing Teacher Aide at the High School. Their role was initially partly funded by the MoE with the Board topping up the remainder of the salary. The MoE funding has since ceased and the staff member is now fully paid by the Board. This staff member has stayed on a fixed term contract for quite a few years and the need for this role is still required at the High School.

Motion: That the Board approves the staff member to move from a fixed term contract to a permanent contract.

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

BoT Financial Updates

Hayley presented the August Board financials.

The 2024 BoT audit has been completed. The drop of the office salaries was due to the reversal of a journal made at the end of 2024. There will be another journal made at the end of this year to adjust the holiday pay for the office staff. This is due to timing of the budget and Hayley will adjust the budget to reflect the real figures.

The currently underused FTTE will be balanced out by the end of this payroll year.

Lisa is on unpaid maternity leave and the saving of her salaries can be used to cover the additional Primary teacher's salary for Term 4.

$200k Trust donations will be requested in November as budgeted toassist with the cash flow.

Rhiannon questioned what does the locally raised funding include? It was noted that the locally raised funding income is for camp donations, class activities etc.

Motion: That the August Board financials are accepted.

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

Administration

Correspondence

The correspondence was noted.

Agenda Items Next Meeting

- AI Policy
- Annual Plan Update
- Technology Report

The meeting closed at 8:55 pm.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Monday 15th September 2025 in the Tāwari classroom at the High School.

Signed Presiding Member, Wā Ora Montessori School

_____

Date 2 October 2025

_____

Action	Personnel	Due
An agenda item regarding Strategic Plan to be added onto each Board meeting going forward	Hayley	Before the next meeting on 15th September 2025
Rachel to write the Board newsletter article and submit it to Ashleigh by 26th August	Rachel	Before 26th August 2025
Rhiannon and Stacey to take the online training regarding EOTC governance	Rhiannon and Stacey	By the end of October

Hayley to get in touch with Schooled for the Board by-election	Hayley	Before the next meeting on 15th September 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)