Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Monday 16 June 2025 from 8:25 pm to 10:00 pm

Present: Byron Lynds (Presiding Member), Stacey Newlands (Deputy Presiding Member), Ava Szabo (Principal), Juliette George (Staff Representative), Jenny Jellicoe (via Zoom), Lillian Pak (via zoom), Rhiannon Jarvis, Michela Homer (Staff Representative), Anahera Brown (via zoom), Rachel Visser (Student Representative), Hayley Luan (minutes)

Apologies: Rod Webster

School AI Policy

Michela has been working with staff and students to create a school AI policy. She noted that Tanya has brought concerns to the recent SLT meeting regarding use of AI at the High School.

School Docs has a generic AI policy, but needs to be reviewed and approved by the Board. A large part of the School Docs AI policy is around training and supporting staff and students on how to use AI properly. It was noted that Year 13 students are keen to have guidance on how to use AI in their daily learning.

Stacey questioned how this looks under Montessori philosophy? It is important to make sure the work students turn in is their own work. Michela noted there is an academic authenticity policy on School Docs which talks about the boundaries of using AI in school work. For example, Albany School uses an assistive tool from the Australian framework. The tool does bias checking using a critical lens. There are also a lot of training tools being developed in New Zealand and these tools can be used to help students and teachers when using AI. It was noted that AI is not for children under 13 years.

Byron noted a good start is to let staff know how AI works and how to support students to use it. Michela noted the key thing is to acknowledge that AI changes continuously, however the ethical use is something that should never change. It is important that the students know AI could be biased. Ava noted private and sensitive information may be shared with the public once it is entered in AI. It was noted that there are different kinds of training being provided and staff should upskill themselves to be able to help students. Any training should also be frequently tracked.

Rhiannon noted the main thing is to know what AI is. Juliette noted students are encouraged to use AI in the High School, however they need to rephrase any answers from AI. Michela noted the key skill students have to learn is to check the information from AI as sometimes AI can be wrong. Ava also noted AI can give different answers to the same questions. Michela noted it is critical for older students to use critical thinking when using AI for problem solving or deepening their learning.

Byron noted that training for staff could be outsourced to an AI expert. Rachel noted the training has to be clear and really simple for students to understand. Michela noted that Tim Moore could be a good online training source - he is an education consultant with a Montessori background, however he does not have any knowledge about NCEA as he works at a government level in Australia.

It was noted that training staff and supporting students on AI are important. The parents should know their children are safely supported at school for using AI. The AI policy will be discussed at the SLT meeting and sector meetings before being presented at the next Board meeting. The procedures do not need to be brought to the Board level.

The policy sub-committee will review the AI policy and bring it back to the Board with any feedback at the August meeting.

Declaration of Interests

Byron is a member of the Trust.

Acceptance of Previous Minutes

Ava noted in Goal 3 of the Principal's Report, Kathryn Berkett will come to present in Term 3, not Term 4 2025. Michela noted that in the before school care and after school care section, at the end of the last paragraph, the ratio should be 1 teacher to 6 children, 2 teachers to 20 children. Stacey noted it would be better to simplify the discussions regarding the maths teacher.

Motion: The minutes of the last Board of Trustees' meeting held on Monday 19th May 2025 were accepted as a true and accurate record with the above corrections.

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

Chair's Update

Nothing to update.

Tumuaki/Principal's Report – June 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 that there will be changes to the school testing system. The co-requisites contain reading, writing and maths testing and are offered to Year 11, Year 12 and Year 13 students. If students pass the co-requisite testing at Year 11, they do not have to sit it again in Year 12 and Year 13. If they fail one of the tests, they are provided 2 opportunities each year following to re-sit. Students have to pass all the co-requisite testing to be able to receive an NCEA certificate.

The time frame for students to receive their exam results will be shortened in 2025. Last year, results came back 2 weeks before the students sat the next exam. The students were unsure if they passed the exam or not and it was difficult for teachers to assist them without knowing results. In addition, maths exams will focus on maths rather than literacy. Not all ākonga sat exams in 2024 due to absence or not wanting to sit the exam etc. This year all the students will sit the exams. Those who are unable to sit the exams are rescheduled for a later sitting.

Primary and Kawakawa ākonga sit PAT and E-asTTle assessments. Although we try to have minimum exams as possible being a Montessori school, we are required to have two exams twice a year at minimum. PAT tests reading, writing and listening and E-asTTle tests maths. E-asTTle testing for maths has included Year 3 ākonga this year. All tamariki have to sit writing assessments from Year 3. For those who move to the Primary in Year 2, they can opt to sit writing assessments if the teacher believes they are ready. Reading assessment is provided for tamariki in Year 4 and above. Listening assessment is for tamariki in Year 3 and Year 5. It was noted that tamariki may feel stressed about taking assessments. The 9-12 tamariki completed their assessments digitally in 2025. Ava noted good feedback has been received regarding the digital assessments - everything is marked automatically with detailed comments and teachers can see the results immediately and decide how to support tamariki accordingly.

The adolescent programme has compiled an adaptive test for ākonga to prepare for E-asTTle maths assessment. The adaptive test is required by the Government and is designed to test ākonga where they are at and how far they could go.

The Government is working towards a new assessment tool to replace E-asTTle in 2026. The current assessment system will be redundant once the new testing is up and running.

The Teacher Only Day in May focused on curriculum. High School staff reviewed the sexuality education framework and the new guidance for reporting. That guidance has been released by MoE directly to whānau with children up to Year 8. The language in the guidance is easily understood. It was noted that reports sent to whānau from the school is comprehensive with all the required information for parents to know how their children are doing at school and how to support them in daily learning.

The pedagogical rōpū started at the beginning of the year, bringing all staff together as a whole with a focus on Montessori philosophy. There is a big difference among Preschool, Primary and Secondary student characteristics. In an Area School which is geographically separated, it is acknowledged that it is the culture and Montessori philosophy that bring us together. The first discussion relating to characteristics in the planes of development went well at the recent full staff meeting and will continue at the next full staff 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.

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.

Ava acknowledged the people who came to help for Matariki Day activities. Ava thanked our amazing whānau for making it a great day for the school community. The school is unable to host a successful event like this without all the help from our whānau.

The Primary Kapa Haka group will present at the Hutt Festival next Thursday and the Preschool Kapa Haka group will present next Tuesday. A local community member is coming to coach kapa haka at the High School from Term 3. She has been interviewed and police vetted. Rachel questioned if the Board is paying her. Ava noted that she will be paid from the operational grant for 1.25 hours on Wednesday and a half day on Friday afternoons.

Personnel

Lisa is currently on maternity leave. An advertisement has been posted for a Language Teacher to cover her maternity leave.

Sarah Jane will continue on sick leave. At present, the advertisement for a reliever is for a fixed term period until the end of Term 4, 2025. This is to allow flexibility for the school to adapt to any upcoming changes in Term 4.

Michela has resigned and her last day of work is 11th July 2025. The Board acknowledged that this is Michela 's last Board meeting and thanked her for her contribution to the Board.

Ava questioned the Board if it is appropriate to move a staff member from a fixed term contract to a permanent contract. The staff member has been on a fixed term contract for a couple of years and the Board is fully funding their wages. The reason for their contract to be fixed term is that it is dependent on students' needs. This need will be ongoing and the staff member has been doing a great job by assisting ākonga at the High School. Ava would like to honour the staff member and place them on a permanent contract. Ava will bring more information to the next Board meeting for discussion, including the benefits and the financial impacts of changing the staff member to a permanent contract.

Roll

We are enrolling children in the Preschool at present. The Preschool roll is projected to be 97 by the end of Term 3. The Preschool roll is affected by a number of reasons such as when children are toilet trained etc. Michela noted that the age and gender pattern in the Preschool will impact the Primary. The SLT work very hard to maintain the gender balance. A lot of Preschool children have their birthdays in July/August when they transition from the Preschool to the Primary. The 6-9 classes have 100 students in total now and will be 107 by the end of 2025. The increase in student numbers in the 6-9 classrooms is closely tracked and is manageable.

Ava noted there have been no hazards or near misses registered at present. Near misses are those events that did not happen, but could have happened. Staff are responsible for recording any hazards or near misses if they see any around the school.

Rhiannon questioned why the College has lower student numbers compared to the 6-9 classes. Ava noted a few Year 11s left school last year and there are some Year 12s leaving for trades or going to study at Weltec. Although the school does not provide Gateway, ākonga can choose to take hospitality or hard trade courses. A couple of new ākonga are enrolled into the high school from other local schools. There can also be some returning students to the High School. It was noted that new students may bring something new to the High School. Although we are not suitable for everyone, generally speaking, most new students fit well into the High School environment.

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

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

BoT Health and Safety Updates

Ava reminded the Board of their responsibilities as a PCBU. Ava attended a conference recently and one of the speakers was the Chair of the school Board with the caving tragedy. The trip was a day trip and was not overseen by anyone, although it did contain high risks. The investigation found that no one was liable and the school was not fined. The insurer paid $1 million which was just enough to cover the costs. It was highlighted by the speaker that school Boards need to ensure they are insured for at least $500k under their risk and liability management scheme.

This is a good reminder for the Board to look at the risks as a PCBU, not only for the physical work place but the safety of the staff and the students. Ava noted there is a document called work engagement and participation within the health and safety scheme. Ava will include the health and safety session in her end of year report to the Board. Ava questioned what the Board would like to see in that report?

Lillian noted there is a section about work safety in the work participation agreement. Ava will read the document recommended by Lillian and will share her thoughts with the Board. It was noted that the current health and safety documents for schools are outdated. Byron noted there is a health and safety committee at HIBS. The committee meets twice per term to discuss key health and safety areas. All new staff are inducted for health and safety when they begin work at the school. Staff have health and safety briefings every 2-3 years. Ava noted that although there is no health and safety committee at Wā Ora, health and safety is discussed at the SLT meetings, full staff meetings and sector meetings.

Ava noted the PCBU holds a high responsibility in health and safety areas throughout the policies. Stacey questioned if there are any thresholds to bring an event to the Board for approval? Are the 9-12 EOTC day trips needing to be approved by the Board? Ava noted that those EOTC day trips are not high risk activities like caving or water activities so they do not have to have Board approval. It is important that staff know what their responsibilities are during day trips. Michela suggested sending out a survey to staff at the next sector meetings to collect their feedback on staff responsibilities for day trips and camps.

Board Policy Review

The Emergency Management Plan for the Area School was reviewed at the recent SLT meeting. The plan contains a lot of information regarding drills, emergency evacuations, contact numbers and civil defence etc. An up to date printed copy of the Emergency Plan and procedures can be printed off from School Docs, which provides a wealth of information regarding what to do during emergency situations. Ava noted that we have our own specific policy for shelter in place and a specific lockdown procedure. There is no procedure for tsunami required as we are not in a tsunami risk zone.

There are a number of health and safety related policies under Board review on School Docs at present. These policies are in a folder sitting in every classroom as required. Ava noted that the police make official lockdown decisions and inform schools very quickly. SLT and all staff should have working knowledge of the lockdown procedure. It was noted that the MoE crisis team can be contacted

if needed and they are very good at directing the school about what to do in different emergency situations. Lockdown drills are conducted in Term 2 and Term 4.

The policy sub-committee has reviewed the 3 policies for Planning and Preparing for Emergencies, Disasters, and Crises; Communication During an Emergency, Disaster; Crisis Emergency Closure. There are no changes suggested by the sub-committee. Byron noted an external company visited HIBS to review the school owned policies and procedures, which was very valuable in gaining knowledge in this area. Ava noted she is happy to have experts come onsite and provide recommendations. Once a police officer came to observe the Preschool lockdown drill and they provided useful information.

Year 13 Leadership Camp

Tanya is away on an Outdoor Education Camp at present. Accommodation needed to be changed as the hut they were going to stay in was too cold and too far to walk.

Ava noted Wā Ora has made a change to staff using their own vehicles to transport students. Staff will now have to complete a form to confirm that they have a full driver's licence, have seat belts in their car, their warrant of fitness is valid and they approve taking students in their personal cars. It was noted that another note should be added to the form as to "staff will take responsibility when transporting students". Ava noted that all teachers are police vetted as a requirement for teachers' registration and any non-teachers have current police vetting.

Stacey noted a typo error in the first box on the first page of the SASS form. It should read "no candles when sleeping".

It was noted that there will be a gear check before they leave for camp and no staff will be sleeping in the same tent as students.

Motion: That the Year 13 leadership camp is approved to go ahead.

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

Blue Light Camp

Stacey noted there are 6 students going to the Blue Light camp in 2025.

It is a leadership camp which is conducted by the police at Trentham Army Base. We have sent ākonga on this camp for 3 years in a row. Rachel noted that people who attended the camp all loved it.

Stacey questioned whether there are students from other schools? Ava noted the students come from different schools in New Zealand and the camp is about building leadership skills and looking after each other.

Michela questioned if the camp suppliers have their own SASS forms? Ava noted that the police sent through all their SASS forms and can share them with the Board if required. Jenny noted her son who previously attended the camp found it very rewarding.

Motion: That the Blue Light Camp be approved to go ahead.

Moved by Michela; Seconded by Jenny; All in favour motion carried.

Kawakawa Service Camp

Ava shared background information regarding the camp with the Board. Kawakawa ākonga previously stayed at Raukawa during Odyssey in 2024 and it was beautiful and everything was well maintained. However, when they returned in 2025, the caretaker is not often onsite due to his wife being very sick and maintenance has not been maintained. The site relies heavily on volunteers and as a result, Hilary would like to take Kawakawa students back to help clean up and maintain the camp site for this year's Kawakawa service camp.

Rachel noted that Raukawa is a charity with limited government funds. It would be good to help keep the site well maintained. It was noted that the tools required will be provided. Students will have free accommodation as a reward for helping maintain the site. They have to provide their own food though as the camp site is self-catering. This camp is curriculum related and parents will be requested to pay a small amount of donations to cover transport and food costs.

Kawakawa students helped the local community on past service camps. They have previously gone out with DOC, made paths and walkways, cleared out gorse, planted trees etc. Rachel questioned if the teachers will be overseeing the students or if there is an

instructor on site? Ava noted that there will be a mixture of both. There are 50 students and quite a few staff going on the camp. The camp site is about 3 hours' drive from school.

Motion: That the Kawakawa Service Camp be approved to go ahead.

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

BoT Financial Updates

Hayley presented the June Board financials.

The Trust has approved the Board donation request of $200k and the donation has helped relieve the cash flow stress of the Board account. The BoT audit fee has increased to $12k in 2025 and the MoE will fund $4k of the audit fee. The repair and maintenance spending is for tightening the ceiling net in T2 and pigeon repellent in the fale area. Byron questioned why the office salaries are substantially lower than the budget. Hayley will check and report back at the August Board meeting.

Motion: That the June Board financials are accepted.

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

Funding Request

Ava noted as the biggest Montessori school in New Zealand, we have people from other Montessori schools across New Zealand come and visit us. It is nice to share our knowledge with other like-minded people, however there is no big Montessori community for the Primary and High School in New Zealand and the closest Montessori community for us is in Australia. Ava is intending to attend the Grassroots Montessori conference in Australia in August 2025 along with Anna and Tanya. This is a good networking opportunity especially for the Primary and High School. The vast majority of people who go to the MANZ conference are from Preschools. The theme for the Grassroots conference this year is "A Story to Tell".

The schedule is to fly to Brisbane on Friday 29th August and return on Monday 1st September. The total cost is approximately $8000 for flights, accommodation and conference registration etc. As no staff are attending Meeting in the Middle this year, that budget can be used to cover the conference costs. In addition, it is much easier to go to Brisbane compared to Adelaide.

Anahera questioned if that would mean that three SLT members will be offsite for 2 school days on Friday and Monday. Is this going to be a concern? Ava noted that staffing has been sorted for those two days. Hilary will step up for Tanya for the High School. Tania will manage the Primary and Jo will contact Byron if required. Tara and Krista will oversee the Preschool. These staff have done similar jobs previously.

Motion: That the funding request for attending Montessori Grassroots conference is approved.

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

Administration

Correspondence

The correspondence was noted.

Other Business

Motion: That Hayley Luan and Joanne Dyer are appointed as the returning officers for the 2025 student election.

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

Agenda Items Next Meeting

- AI Policy
- Interim results
- Technology report

The meeting closed at 10 pm.

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

Signed Presiding Member, Wā Ora Montessori School

Date 18/8/2025

Action	Personnel	Due
The policy sub-committee to review the SchoolDocs generated AI policy and bring it back to the Board with feedback at the August meeting	Policy sub-committee	By the next Board meeting on 18th August 2025
Ava to bring further information to the next Board meeting for discussion, including the benefits and the financial impacts for moving a staff member from fixed term to permanent contract.	Ava	By the next Board meeting on 18th August 2025
Hayley to check the office salary expenditure actual amount	Hayley	By the next Board meeting on 18th August 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)