



Board News Update – Term 4, 2018

The purpose of this update is to highlight some of the main developments that the Board has focused on during term 3, and provide an indication of some of the key issues on the horizon as we progress further through the end of 2018 and into 2019.

First, we would like to say a special welcome to those parents and caregivers who are new to the school. Given the roll of the school has stabilised after a period of strong growth, in September the Board offered a limited number of out of zone enrolments for the first time in a number of years. We were delighted that these were taken up by 7 students, including some children of existing staff members.

We would also like to say a special congratulations to all those children that represented the school with such distinction in the wide range of sporting, cultural and academic activities in recent months. It has been such a busy time of the year for children, staff and parents.

Finally, well done to Raewyn Watson for her one-year anniversary as our new Principal!

Teachers strike

As we communicated last week, the school will be closed on Friday 16 November 2018.

The Board carefully considered the availability of teaching staff, and decided that there was insufficient staff to provide either the normal teaching services or supervision of children during the strike.

It is important that you make alternative arrangements for the care of your child/children during school hours on the day of the strike. We know that this is inconvenient for parents and students, but please be assured that student health and safety is our main priority and concern.

While the Board of Trustees is not directly involved in negotiations between the NZEI and the government, we would note that there has been a noticeable reduction in the number of teachers applying for advertised positions across the country, including at Ngaio School. In the long term, it is in the best interest of the children and their learning that high quality teachers are retained and attracted to work in the industry.

Tui Block teaching and learning

Student achievement and wellbeing is a key priority of the Board right across the school.

With our senior students having completed 2 terms in their new learning environment in the Tui Block, this provided an opportunity for the Board to be thoroughly updated by the staff and management.

In August, each child in Tui was allocated a key teacher, their Whānau Kaiako, to deepen relationships with between teachers and children, and between teachers and parents. As we approach the end of the year, it will be a natural time to once again consider the systems and processes in Tui, and review how the varied spaces in Tui are being utilised to target the learning needs of each individual child.

In that spirit, the Board was delighted to ratify the appointment of James McMullan to the Tui Syndicate team leader role, starting in 2019. James is currently the Deputy Principal of Waipukurau School and brings a wide range of skills and experience to this leadership role, including introducing an ILE (Innovative Learning Environment) pedagogy and practices to his Year 5 to 8 Syndicate.

Parent communications review

At the beginning of the year, the Board commissioned a review of parent communications at the school, following feedback from many parents who felt overloaded by communication coming from many sources at the school, including various forms of newsletters and emails.

Jo Hughson chaired a working group for the communications review comprising members drawn from the admin staff, teaching staff, the Board, PTA, and parents with extensive expertise in communication.

The proposals of this working group were approved by the Board in September, and will see the launch of a new Ngaio School website for the beginning of 2019, parent portal, and a clear communications policy and procedures for staff.

The Board would like to say a special thank you to those parents driving this project.

NOSCAR review

During term 3 the Board also completed an internal review of our after school care programme (NOSCAR), with a focus on ensuring there are sound policies, procedures and systems to support the management team. Mike Letts oversaw the review for the Board.

NOSCAR is an important part of the school, and the Board is eager to ensure it is fulfilling its intention. A particular challenge is the roll, which is usually under pressure with a long waitlist.

Once the findings of the review are implemented, there may be scope in 2019 to consider an increase in the number of places available at NOSCAR. A key consideration will be the ability to manage any increase while sustaining the current high levels of care.

Other issues on the horizon in term 4 and beyond:

- **Staff wellbeing:** With the building work at the school more settled, and our new Principal having completed one year in the role, it is an opportune time to take a gauge of staff wellbeing and take forward lessons.
- **ERO review:** It is around 4 years since Ngaio School last passed its ERO (Education Review Office) review. The long period between reviews illustrates ERO's confidence in the school. Given the review cycle, our next ERO assessment is likely to be within the next six months. It is reassuring to have the continuity brought about by having Lucy Elwood on the Board, who was also a trustee at the time of the last review.

Property update

While there are currently no large Ministry-funded property changes at the school, the Board continues to have a number of property issues on the agenda overseen by Mark Palmer.

Some immediate projects in progress include:

- **Re-sowing** of the western end of the school field began in October, with fences due to come down in December. The plan is to re-sow the eastern end of the field in April 2019.

- **New school signage** is up on Abbott Street, Colway Street and Ottawa Road, thanks to funding from the PTA.
- **New bag storage** for the Tui Block has been installed with new cubbies located on an external wall.
- **Prefabs:** Unfortunately, there has been no news on the prefabs on the top school fields, where the timing of their removal is completely dependent on when the Ministry finds them a new home.

The Board continues to work closely with the PTA to identify suitable projects to be funded with community involvement.

Board Elections

The three-year term of the current Board of Trustees comes to an end in 2019, with Friday 7 June 2019 the recommended date for the election of five parent trustees and one staff trustee.

Of the current group of parent trustees, at least three (Jo, Lucy and Mike) will not be putting their names forward for re-election due to their youngest children finishing at Ngaio School during the term of the next Board.

It is essential for the future success of the school that we have a strong governance group to challenge and support management. This requires having a diverse mix of people around the table, with different backgrounds, experiences, perspectives and roles within the community – combined with a real willingness to work closely as a team, and determination to retain an unwavering long-term focus on student achievement and wellbeing.

If you are interested in putting your name forward in June 2019, we would strongly encourage you to talk to one of the existing trustees to better understand the role, and to attend the Board of Trustee meetings early next year as an observer.

Thank you and Farewell

For those parents and caregivers with children finishing Year 6 at the School, we would like to say a special thank you for your invaluable support over the years. We hope that Ngaio School has provided a rich and stimulating environment to support your child becoming a lifelong learner. All the very best for the future.

To all parents, caregivers, teachers and support staff: thank you for your contribution to the School in 2018, and all the very best for the rest of the year ahead.



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On behalf of Amanda Frater, Jo Hughson, Lucy Elwood, Mike Letts, Mark Palmer and Raewyn Watson.