



## Board Newsletter

### Term 2 2021

It is always somewhat of a shock to find yourself in mid-June knowing that the year is half over, however with our disrupted start to the year, it also feels later than Term Two. The children have been able to enjoy some amazing experiences so far this year including Year 8 Camp, Year 7 Challenges Week, and Swimming Sports. There were learning excursions to the Zoo, Te Tuhi Gallery, the rocky shore beach study, the supermarket, the Museum, Writers Festival, and TiriTiri Matangi Island as well as representation at several sporting tournaments. Thank you to the parents who gave their time to make these trips possible. I also want to thank our wonderful PTA for the work they have done so far this year and will continue to do, to support the school and staff and to bring our community together. The Meet the Teachers event had such a great atmosphere, and we are very much looking forward to the upcoming movie night, and trivia night.

The work of the Board continues behind the scenes with our priority of governance that focusses on child and staff well-being and safety, the best possible learning opportunities, ensuring equity, growing good citizens, property needs, funding, legal compliance, community engagement and so much more!

Recently we have also needed to attend to the new **Education and Training Act 2020** which places a strong focus on giving effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi) in our schools. While the new act shines a spotlight on the poor student attendance statistics in New Zealand, the Board is very proud of the high attendance rates at St Heliers. This is a testament to the educationally powerful connections that our staff are responsible for establishing with our children. Children want to be at school when they are engaged in their learning, and when it is meaningful to them. Our staff are to be congratulated on the environments they have created fostering this engagement and connection for the children and their whanau. The act also implements a name change from 'Board of Trustees' to 'School Board' and introduces a new Code of Conduct for Boards.

Another key role for the Board is to ensure that an annual **Principal Appraisal** takes place, and our Board engages the services of external agency EdSol for this purpose. Craig McCarthy has received an exceptional appraisal report for 2020, which we received in March of this year. It is an extremely comprehensive document detailing aspects of NZ Principal Professional Standards including pedagogy and culture, performance objectives, and compliance attestation. Our appraiser has told me directly that he believes Craig to be 'one of New Zealand's leading principals'. The Board was also particularly pleased with the statement 'St Heliers has a great reputation as a leading learning organisation'. We know that Craig would credit that comment to his Leadership Team and Staff, and we know that to be true, but we also know how crucial he is as the leader, navigator, and motivator who can make

this kind of success possible for our staff and students. We are very lucky to be associated with this level of success. Congratulations Craig!

In mid-April, the Board attended a **combined CoL Meeting**. Our CoL or Community of Learning includes Glendowie Primary School, Churchill Park, and Glendowie College. It was encouraging to hear the Lead Principal report on the shared community goals around well-being, student agency, and the new NZ History Curriculum, and the combined work that the schools are doing to support each other and achieve the best outcomes for our students in these spaces.

In terms of our **property** focus this year, we are pleased to see the completion of the upgrade of Rooms 11 and 12, with their bright and colourful bathroom, as well as the rapid construction of the Ministry of Education's Health & Safety requirement of our perimeter fencing. The Board have agreed to take this opportunity to 'finish the job' by re-building and extending the stonewall on the corner of St Heliers Bay Rd and Maskell Street. The old wooden noticeboard fence is to be removed, and our school's name will adorn the stonewall to proudly complete our cohesive school surround. With the new fencing, our grounds will remain accessible to our community outside of school hours, however we have recently been disappointed by the broken glass and other rubbish that staff have discovered outside classrooms on Monday mornings, and hope that the behaviour of these individuals does not force changes to our current access policy.

On the **financial** front, we have recently emerged from our gruelling annual external audit, with a very positive report. This is a credit to the hard work and dedication of our Executive Officer Philippa van Ryn. Thank you!

The Board continues to take opportunities for our own **professional development** as provided by the NZ School Trustees Association (NZSTA). Evening workshops, and Saturday morning networking events, help us to ensure we are fulfilling our roles as best as we possibly can.

I am continuing to enjoy my role as the **Chair of the Auckland Regional Executive of the NZSTA**. Just this year, this role has given me the opportunity to hear presentations from, and connect with:

Liam Rutherford      NZEI President (NZ Educational Institute)

John Edwards      Privacy Commissioner

Paul Hunt      Human Rights Commissioner

Paula Tesoriero      Disability Rights Commissioner

Glenis Philip-Barbara      Assistant Children's Commissioner-Maori

Daryn Bean      Deputy Secretary of Maori Education (MOE)

And Chief Advisors on Education System Policy from the Ministry of Education (MOE)

I am very appreciative of my own learning opportunities around the various facets of education, and the many stakeholders.

I am also a member of the **ESOL** (English for Speakers of Other Languages) **National Advisory Group** led by the Ministry of Education, and as such was just delighted to hear the 21 different languages spoken by St Heliers School children during our recent International Languages Week in May. Many of these children have joined school with very little English and are making amazing progress. A big thank you to Jan Bryant, Jenna Kelly, and Julie Oakford in our Language Room.

### **Looking forward...**

Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> June will see the first in a series of '**new parents morning teas**' to welcome new parents to the school community. This is such a positive initiative and the Board look forward to being involved alongside the Senior Leadership Team and PTA.

On Friday 25<sup>th</sup> June, the Board will host a **thank you morning tea** for all staff. It is vitally important for us to show our staff how much we value the work they do, the attitudes they bring, and the difference they are making daily.

Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> June is the night of our workshop for our Community of Learning school parents on '**Supporting Children to Manage Anxiety**'. We know this will be a really affirming evening for many, and we are proud to be contributing to this vital area of the mental health of our tamariki. The registration link is:

<https://events.humanitix.com/helping-children-cope-with-anxieties-st-heliers-school>

Later this year we will be conducting a **survey** of our parent community to seek your feedback on our school vision, student learning, environment, communication, and future priorities. This feedback plays an important part in the formulation of our strategic goals, and annual plan.

And later this year we will see the return of the biennial **School Show!** If you have yet to experience one of these, you are in for such a special treat.

To conclude... we did not get the start to the year that we hoped for but now we look to the positives of the disruption we have all experienced. There is a Latin phrase: **Per aspera ad astra - through adversity to the stars**. I am sure I am not the only one who reads that and imagines Buzz Lightyear saying, "To Infinity and Beyond!" I think the two go together quite nicely. Our children are not limited by the events of the last year or so, they are strengthened. It can be a gift to have to let go of expectation and in so doing become open to new realms of possibility. Our greatest learning experiences are simply not found on the days that everything goes our way.

Kathy Harding

Board Chair



The St Heliers School Board (from left)

Craig McCarthy - Principal, Kathy Harding – Chair, Finance, and Human Resources; Chris Browne – Property; Amanda Aitkin - Health and Safety; Janine Wiles Cosgrove – Policy; Luis Cass - Health and Safety; Lizanne Franklin - Staff Representative.