



Board of Trustees Newsletter Term 3 2018

Dear St Heliers School Community

It would be fair to say that there is never a quiet time at school, but since my last newsletter the list of events and excursions is quite something. The Book Fair at the end of last term was a highlight and especially the Fathers' and Sons' Breakfast which was a fun and memorable morning for all.

There was our cross country event which attracted a great turnout of cheering parents. It was brilliant to see enthusiasm throughout the field of runners and the support that the children showed each other during the event.

Just last week we have had many students away in Tauranga participating in the AIMS (Association of Intermediate and Middle Schools) Games. I have heard some very good results, and know that this will have been a fantastic experience for all of our athletes.

There has also been a Writers' Festival, an interactive poetry show, Cycle Safety Programs, The Science Roadshow, the Year 7&8 Red Cross Walk, Life Education Caravan, Mathex Competitions, many exciting class outings, and I would really like to be let in on the secret of Year 3 Mystery Destination Trip! What an adventure that must have been.

The PTA have also had a busy time, and the Board would like to sincerely thank everyone involved in:

- The Teachers' Dinner on interview night at the end of last term
- The Year 7&8 Berkeley Movie Event
- The Junior and Middle School Movie Night in the hall
- The Mamma Mia parents' movie night
- The Brett Lee Internet Safety Evening which included parents of our neighbouring schools.

You will have seen an email recently from the PTA calling for new recruits. Currently it really is a case of a very small number of people doing an awful lot for the good of every child at St Heliers School. I absolutely understand that life is crazy busy, and the last thing we need is to take on large time commitments, but can I ask you to consider what it might look like if every parent at the school was happy to give say four hours a year to a PTA cause? We would have thousands of hours that could translate directly into benefits for our children. Supporting the PTA does not have to be a permanent or enormous commitment, so please consider putting your hand up, even for an hour or two of help.

Board Activity and Professional Development

The Board attended a Communities of Learning (COL) Combined Board Meeting in June. This was an interesting evening that included reports from the outgoing and incoming Lead Principals, and a guest speaker who talked about an Emerging Leaders Pilot Program for our COL.

In June I attended a workshop on community engagement. A positive reminder that effective partnerships between school, parents, whānau and communities result in better outcomes for students. I also attended a Principal Appraisal workshop which simply reinforced that our current practices in this area are completely appropriate.

In August Craig and I attended an infrastructure workshop, facilitated by the Ministry of Education, alongside Principals and Board members from the Selwyn, Glendowie and Tamaki areas of East

Auckland. The focus was the growth of Auckland, and specifically the expectation that there will be over 7000 new homes in our surrounding suburban areas over the next 10 years. This leads to a projection of up to 1200 new students in the schools of this area. The workshop sought feedback on growth planning for these future demands.

On 20 September I will attend a Property Workshop led by the Ministry of Education, and late in October I have been invited to attend a Hui in Northland, with a number of fascinating speakers including the Children's Commissioner, Judge Andrew Becroft.

Block 3 Building

It has been exciting to watch the redevelopment of Rooms 4, 5 and 6, and we are on schedule for handover to the school late September. I am very much looking forward to the official tour, and I know that this is going to be a wonderful environment for our children.

Honorary Award

The Board would like to congratulate Craig who was recently offered an honorary membership of the Auckland East Rotary Club. This recognition reflects his contribution to, and high standing within our local community. This is a significant and well-deserved acknowledgement.

Board Staff Representative

With the departure of Rob Stickland from his IT role at the school last term, the Board also lost our Staff Representative. The process for the election of a new staff rep is underway, and we look forward to welcoming them on Board.

NZEI Strike 15 August

The Board is grateful for parent's understanding and support of our teachers during the strike, and we appreciate the disruption this might have caused families. A strike is always a last resort, but it is crucial that a fair agreement can be reached. You may have noticed some of the recent newspaper headlines:

- 'Teacher shortage – slow train wreck'
- 'No suitable applicants for vacancies'
- 'Relief teacher supply hits critical low'
- 'When principals quit to drive a tow truck, we have a problem'

Conversations around pay rates can be difficult, but there is much more to the concerns that the NZEI is currently presenting to Government. There can be no arguing the fact that there is a teacher shortage throughout New Zealand, and many schools are having to restructure their classes and their offerings in response to a lack of job applicants. The Government does need to give consideration as to why this is. This leads us to the issue of teacher workload. One aspect of this is the increasing numbers of students with significant needs who require additional learning support – a resource that is often not available. Teachers are requesting meaningful conversations around this, but sadly the latest offer this week states that there is "no provision to address workload" and "no extra funding for supporting children with additional learning needs".

Wellness Survey

With full awareness of the emerging trends above, the Board made the decision to conduct a Wellness Survey of the teaching staff earlier this term. We used an excellent tool from the NZ Council for Educational Research. Craig, Patsy and Angela are to be congratulated on the fact that all respondents felt supported at St Heliers School, and believe that SHS is a great place to work. This is an outstanding testament to our Senior Leadership Team and their commitment to, and care for, the staff of our school.

The survey also revealed feedback from our staff that is consistent with what we are hearing all around the country with regard to workload, time available for the classroom aspect of their role, and work-life balance.

The Senior Leadership Team will delve further in to all aspects of the feedback with the staff to ensure that everything is being done within the school to support our teachers in every way possible.

Looking Forward

Show, Show, Show! The Board just cannot wait to see 'The Arts Take Flight' in Week 10. The energy and excitement has been building and we know that this will definitely be a highlight for children, families and staff. This show is always an exceptional display of talent and an even more stunning showcase of our schools' culture. It will be a week of memory making for all. Thank you to the staff for the extra hours they have given toward this experience for the children, to all of the parents who have been shopping, sewing and have volunteered their time to costume management and supervision of children on the show days. It will all be worth it! Enjoy!

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kathy Harding', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Kathy Harding
Chair

St Heliers School Board of Trustees