



## Board of Trustees Newsletter Term 3 2019

Dear St Heliers School Community

It is almost cliché to talk about how quickly the years go by, but it really is staggering to realise that we are hurtling toward the end of Term 3. Our newly elected Board of Trustees have already had three Board meetings, and new members Amanda Aitken and Janine Wiles Cosgrove have quickly demonstrated what an asset they will be with their new perspectives, pro-active mindsets and enthusiasm for making a positive difference to our school.

It was encouraging to have nine parents put themselves forward as candidates for our recent election. Many schools struggle to find parents who are interested in the governance role and willing to commit the time required. So thank you to those who put their name forward. We also had very good voter turnout for our election which reinforces the important element of our community's connection with their school.

I would like to express my gratitude to our out-going Board members, Nigel Gormly who was a trustee for 6 years, and Christine Abbott for 3 years. They both gave themselves fully to their roles, and their contributions played a very important part in the ongoing improvement and success of St Heliers School.

### **So, what does a School Board actually DO?**

I thought you might be interested to understand what it is that the Board does, beyond having the privilege of shaking the hands of children in special assemblies.

Boards are nga kaitiaki kura... the guardians of our schools. We work with our Principal/Tumuaki toward the shared vision of student achievement and the best possible educational outcomes for every child.

The legislative framework is the Education Act 1989, the NELPs (National Education and Learning Priorities), and the NAGs (National Administration Guidelines). The Board is responsible for making sure that our school's curriculum and strategic plan is in line with these three foundation points as set by the Ministry. We do this through the creation of our school charter and strategic plan, from which comes the annual plan showing the management that will lead us to success for every student.

To illustrate the difference between the *governance* of the Board, and the *management* of the Senior Leadership Team:

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|  The Board is the <i>what</i>     | The Principal is the <i>how</i>        |
|  The Board <i>assures</i>         | The Principal <i>ensures</i>           |
|  The Board is the <i>policies</i> | The Principal is the <i>procedures</i> |

Our framework is made up policies, finance, property, human resources, and health and safety. We approach all of these from the position of responsibility to provide an environment that enables effective delivery of quality teaching and outstanding educational opportunities for all.

Underpinning all of this is the knowledge that community engagement is crucial in fostering student success, and so our vision includes an environment that is welcoming not only for students but for all whanau.

I hope that summary gives you an idea of the role and purpose that we are all so greatly invested in.

### **Professional Development**

It is important for the Board to take learning opportunities provided to ensure we have the knowledge and skills to best serve our school.

On 31 July we attended a Governance Essentials Workshop designed for new trustees to learn the fundamentals of being a school board member.

On 29 August I attended a Finance Workshop focusing on compliance, good practice, and common risk areas.

We also look forward to attending an inclusive schools and student well-being workshop on 23 October.

### **COL (Community of Learning) Lead Principal**

At the beginning of this term Craig completed his year in the role of COL Lead Principal. Our COL includes St Heliers School, Churchill Park School, Glendowie School and Glendowie College.

Craig deserves high praise for seamlessly assimilating the role of COL Lead Principal in to his already full work schedule over the past 12 months. This would not have been possible without the exceptional support of Patsy Torrie (Deputy Principal) and Alex Wood (Assistant Principal), whom we are very grateful to. However, Craig really has done a magnificent job, ensuring that our Community of Learning continued to focus on and succeed in its achievement challenges, while not compromising anything at St Heliers School despite the additional workload. Thank you Craig and well done.

A Combined COL Board meeting was held on 25 July to give our new Boards the opportunity to meet each other, and to welcome our new Lead Principal, Liz Gunn from Churchill Park School.

### **PTA**

Exciting times! With new faces and new inspiration filling the key roles on our PTA, things are looking great for fun events for our community and success with our fundraising ventures. I suspect that our new PTA Chairperson Tarryn Crooks has broken some kind of record by attending her first PTA meeting three days after her daughter began school, volunteering that very night to Co-Chair the PTA, and then stepping in to the full Chair role about a month later! Thank you Tarryn.

### **Thank You to our Staff**

It does not matter how many times I express gratitude to the staff of St Heliers School, it just never feels like enough. From the welcoming help you receive in the school office, to the tireless commitment of our caretaker, the enthusiasm of our learning assistants and librarian, the expertise of our ESOL and specialist teachers, and the constant passion of our classroom teachers and Senior Leadership Team as they consistently go over and above in the interests of your children. At the end of June, the Board provided a lovely thank you morning tea for the staff, but just in case the message was obscured by sweet treats, can I take this opportunity to thank everyone again for the work that you do. It is noticed and it is appreciated.

## **Looking Forward**

It has been so pleasing to watch the re-development of Rooms 7 and 8. I am very much looking forward to the official tour of these modern and innovative learning areas and specialized teaching spaces. These rooms will soon be ready for handover to the school, and all that remains is to discover which lucky teachers and children will be able to enjoy them first.

Continuing on the topic of our fantastic staff, the Board wanted to ensure that our Deputy Principal Patsy Torrie, was not only head-down working at an exceptional level, but also had the opportunity to grow professionally and remain current with global education issues. We encouraged her to apply for a place on the NZ Educators' Delegation to China with the Confucius Institute, and were very pleased when she was accepted. This takes place in October, and we wish her the most fabulous trip.

For those students and families taking a shorter journey to Tauranga on 8 September for the AIMS (Association of Intermediate and Middle Schools) Games, go well! Soak up the enormous atmosphere, and put every possible amount of effort into your performance. It will be wonderful to hear about your experiences.

Enjoy the remainder of the term everyone. Spring is on our doorstep, although I suspect that winter is not quite finished with us yet!



### **St Heliers School Board of Trustees**

*From left: Craig McCarthy (Principal), Kathy Harding (Chair), Chris Browne, Amanda Aitken, Janine Wiles Cosgrove, Luis Cass, Lizanne Franklin (Staff Representative)*

Kind regards

Kathy Harding  
Chair

**St Heliers School Board of Trustees**