

BOARD Talk

An update from the Maungaraki School Board of Trustees



March 2015: Update

As you read this we have one week left of the first term – are you ready for the holidays? This term has been incredibly busy on a number of fronts, so it will be nice to have a bit of a break before we launch into Term 2 which for us will be dominated by our **strategic planning**. We have our first planning meeting for this next week and throughout Term 2 there we will be consulting with the community – parents/caregivers, staff, students, community businesses/organisations and almost anyone else who is prepared to have an opinion on the focus for our school over the next 3-5 years. It will be an exciting time and we look forward to hearing what you have to say. Please get involved – the more input we get, the more fairly and accurately we can reflect what our community wants for our school.

We were thrilled when Naila (who co-chairs the Maungaraki School **Home & School**) came to tell us about what they were up to at the start of our March Board meeting. It's amazing what is being achieved by this outstanding group of people. They really do make a difference to what the school can offer your children – all those things that are over and above what we can offer with Ministry funding alone. Our heartfelt thanks go to all those who contribute through the Home & School.

It's so good to see our 2014/15 **property projects** coming to a successful conclusion. They seem to have been a long time coming but if you talk to the teachers and the children who are using the new or newly refurbished rooms they will very quickly tell you just how good they are. We are hopeful that Rooms 7 and 8 will be finished before the end of the holidays meaning Mr Greaney and Mrs Webby can start the new term back where they belong and enjoying the new teaching space. There will be an event to celebrate and formally open these buildings early in Term 2 so keep an eye out for that. You may be curious about the unfinished look of the deck between Rooms 10 and 11. This project is happening across two phases with phase one due for completion as part of the broader classroom refurbishment – unfortunately the budget just doesn't stretch to completing the full decking at this stage. So if you know of anyone who would like to contribute to phase two please let the school know – builders, building material supply merchants, people who are prepared to complete grant applications, or even just if you are handy with a spade or hammer and prepared to be involved in a working bee ...

Would you believe that it is almost three terms since the **1:1 device initiative** was implemented for Year 5 and 6 students, and now we have four year groups successfully using chromebooks in their day to day schooling environment. One of the things we assured you of when we commenced this initiative was to look at progress against established success measures – here are some excerpts from the first summary report. It's a benchmark that we are looking forward to building on when we look at the 12 month success measures in Term 3 of this year.

- Analysis of Literacy and Numeracy data showed that students in the 1:1 device classes made more progress than in other classes in relation to National Standards, we were particularly pleased with the improvements in writing with students in 1:1 device classes showing an average 23.3 point shift in AsTTLe scores (expected shift for the same period of time would be 10-15 points). There could be a number of factors that could have contributed to these results, we look forward to watching the trend over time.

- Scans of our learning environment mapping showed that pen and paper still play an important role in the learning environment, and also showed that students are seeing more connections between home learning and school. We were also pleased to see that learners are better able to articulate their own learning and next learning steps at the end of 6 months with the 1:1 initiative.
- Student voice surveys conducted as part of this initiative (prior to commencement and at the end of the year) showed a strong increase in interactions with friends (both learning WITH and FROM). The responses showed that collaboration is a strength of the initiative. These survey results also showed an increase in learners feeling they are involved in decision-making processes and have a stronger sense of ownership over their learning.

Any family who is interested in seeing the full report is welcome to contact Lisa Cavanagh at school for a copy.

As part of the 1:1 device success measure report we also identified a number of next steps. These include completing the same analysis at the end of 12 months with the devices; developing a clear pathway for learners as they prepare for inclusion in 1:1 device classrooms at the beginning of Year 5; continuing to provide parent education so that parents can effectively support their children's learning; continuing to focus on choosing the best tools for the job, being aware that chromebooks are just one of many options in the modern classroom.

Overall we are confident that we are on the right track with the 1:1 initiative and that a focus on continuing to work on these elements will only see the effectiveness of the initiative and student achievement information improve further.

We are also pleased to be notified by the Ministry that we are next on the list to have a **wireless network upgrade** (they call it a SNUP). This will mean that we have improved accessibility and speed over our wireless network. We anticipate this work happening over the second half of 2015. The Ministry of Education has conducted extensive research into the safety of wireless technology and recently released a brochure about this for parents. You can find this at <http://parents.education.govt.nz/assets/Parents/Documents/Primary-school/FINAL-WiFi-flyer-online.pdf>

A final note ... remember that you are welcome to come along to any of our meetings! Next year is an election year so if you want to find out what being on the Board is all about to help you decide whether it is a role you want to take on, come along – or we are more than willing to answer any questions you might have and they can be asked via the school website or directly to any of us.
Till next time ...

The Maungaraki School Board of Trustees:

Janine Foster (Chair)
Simon Williamson
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