

Maungaraki School Board of Trustees

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BOARD OF TRUSTEES NEWSLETTER September 2009

Don't know about you, but this seems to have been a particularly busy year. We keep wondering when things are going to slow down but with ongoing building projects, national standards, the new curriculum, and an imminent ERO Review we think we can safely say that any slow down will not be this year! But it's all good fun!

Here is a bit about what is happening ...

A New Staff Rep

Welcome to Janet Evans who joined the Board as the staff representative at the end of Term 2. The staff representative is a full member of the Board – it is important for the Board to have a staff member's perspective on the issues under discussion and we are already appreciating Janet's valuable contributions.

Thank you very much ...

We are truly grateful to the Home & School for their donation of \$6000 which went to specific items around the school. Thank you to the committee for their ongoing support and hard work, and also to all our parents who support the Home & School – it really does make a difference.

Trustee Elections 2010

Next year is Board of Trustees election year which comes around every three years. We know that some of the existing members will not be in a position to stand again so we need you to consider taking on the role. In a nutshell the Board holds responsibility for the policies and direction of the school and has a degree of influence over what happens in the school.

For those of you who are thinking about putting your name forward we are keen to have a Q&A night – you can ask any questions you like to get an idea of what being on the Board is all

about, the responsibilities, the portfolios, the time commitment. If you think that might be for you let us know you may be interested and come along – it is a great way to find out!

We, the current Board, are happy to answer any questions you have at any time, and of course, you are welcome to come to a Board meeting. The dates for the remainder of the year are:

- 9 September – 7.45p.m. start
- 21 October
- 18 November

Meetings are in the staff room usually starting at 7.15p.m.

Budget Revision & Asset Replacement

After receiving an increased Operations Grants from the MoE (more children = more money), we decided our annual budget needed to be reviewed. We were looking for areas where there might be savings and others which needed additional money allocated.

The school bursar Mike Thomson is feeding into this process after identifying and listing all school property and drafting an asset replacement plan. Initial findings suggest that the school is looking at a substantial outlay in future years (especially in relation to computer equipment) if we want to keep things up to date. This will be an area of focus in our budgeting for 2010.

ERO '09

The Education Review Office is a government department whose purpose is to evaluate and report publicly on the education and care of students in schools. An ERO review offers a fresh perspective with the aim being to help improve the quality of teaching and learning in a school. It affirms the good practice in a school and helps the Board and Principal establish priorities for improvement and create momentum for change. The external review of

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ERO is designed to complement our school's own self review.

A team of reviewers will be joining us at school for the final week of this term, 21st – 25th of September. The reviewers will be given one of the new rooms off the library to work in, but we can expect to see them around the school for the week of their visit. Caroline Mareko is our review leader and she is very approachable. Parents will be informed of the review outcomes during Term 4.

Extra Teachers

As class sizes are larger than we would like, the Board has employed Jackie Sutherland and Karen Samuels as extra teachers to provide support to existing staff.

Next term Jackie will pick up groups of children who have been identified as being "at risk" (that is students who are not achieving at the level we would expect) and children who are excelling in specific areas. Jackie and her groups may operate in the classroom alongside the usual class programme or in some instances the small groups will withdraw from the class. The goal is for these extra programmes to have a positive impact on student achievement results at the end of the year.

Property News

It has been a busy time for property matters recently. New small teaching spaces and meeting areas have been completed in the library to allow small groups of students to work with teachers or teacher aides.

We have been thinking about how to make the best of the money we have been allocated for our next new classroom and the extra we received for additional non-teaching space.

We have selected as architect local company Design Group Stapleton Elliot. With Nigel Dong and John Sik (whose daughter as it happens was a past pupil of our school) we have been working on the most cost effective solution. The architects have drawn some exciting plans and concept designs for a new Block D parallel to the South East fence near Sean's shed. The plans are available to see in the display case outside the office if you are interested. The block will comprise a new classroom and new staff room, and will do much to improve the

general look of the school and cater for our growth in both student and staff numbers. We are nearing the end of the planning stage and close to tendering and the selection of contractors. The plan is for construction to start early in Term 4 to ensure we start the year with the new facilities ready to go.

This addition will release the old staffroom for two much-needed teacher withdrawal spaces for extra small group work. We are considering this and other ways to improve the admin area, and will update you when the plans have been viewed and discussed. Watch this space ...

Contacting the Board

There are a range of options about how you can contact the Board.

Through the school website provides the ability to send e-mails directly to any Board member. Individual Board members can also be contacted as follows:

Raji Divekar at home on 586-8433 or by e-mail at divekars@xtra.co.nz

Janet Evans (Staff Representative) at school on 569-7205 or by e-mail at jevans@maungaraki.school.nz

Janine Foster (Chair) at home on 586-1311, by mobile on 027 290-1617 or by e-mail at janine.foster@police.govt.nz

Tim Fox by e-mail at timandlauren@paradise.net.nz

Kaye Francis by mobile on 027 227-4216 or by e-mail at kaye.francis@nbnz.co.nz

Hugh Frostick at home on 586-1491, by mobile on 027 429-1918 or by e-mail at hugh@frostick.net

Carmen Jennings (Principal) at school on 569-7205 or by e-mail at cjennings@maungaraki.school.nz

Niggles Process

As parents we all have times when we need to share our niggles, and it is often best to do so before they escalate into something larger. It is important for the school to know parents' concerns as we value the partnership between home and school.

To help parents know who to talk to about any issues we have outlined the process. There are a number of options available to you.

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- If it is in relation to something that is happening in the classroom, the first point of contact must be the teacher.
- If you are not satisfied with the outcome there you should talk to the relevant Syndicate Leader:
 - *Junior* – Janet Evans who is also Deputy Principal;
 - *Middle* – Belinda Postma;
 - *Senior* – Eric Pampalone.

They, along with the Principal, make up the management team of the school.

- If you are not satisfied with the outcome after talking to the Syndicate Leader, or it is a more generic issue you should talk to the Principal or the Deputy Principal (DP).

If it is a generic issue, or you are still not satisfied after talking to the Principal or the DP, you should contact a member of the Board. You can use the contact details above or a letter outlining your concerns could be sent to the Board for consideration and discussion. This should be to the Board Chair, labeled 'In Confidence' and either posted in the school letterbox in the office foyer or handed it to office staff who will pass it on to us.

Please be assured that people do regularly contact the Board and we welcome that as it is very difficult for us to take any action on concerns if we are unaware of them. We all have the children's best interest at heart.

Beautification Plan

Maungaraki School's beautification plan is in the early stages of development with a landscape designer engaged to provide us with ideas for the school. Once this is finalized we will share the plan with everyone and provide an outline of what are the first steps in bringing this plan to life. We hope our community will take an active role in this.

National Standards

This is clearly a topical issue. The National Standards aim to lift achievement in literacy and numeracy (reading, writing, and mathematics). Maungaraki School was chosen by the Ministry of Education to consult regarding the reporting to parents on the National Standards. The parents who attended the session were clearly interested in all dimensions of child and school

performance. This is not something that we are surprised by as the recent census information shows we have a highly educated, highly interested community that is very keen to know not only how their child is performing against national norms, but also within their school.

As a Board we are committed to ensuring our parents have all the information they need to see how their children are performing across all aspects of the curriculum, not just those to be covered by National Standards.

And Finally ...

As always our contact details are on the Maungaraki School website and at the foot of this newsletter. People are starting to contact us more so we must be doing something right!

We are keen for you to let us know if you have any concerns or questions and praise is good too, if you think we deserve it. We appreciate the contributions from those of you who have been in contact. All your feedback helps to mould the decisions we make and therefore add value to our school and the children in it.

Janine Foster
BoT Chair
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