

**Minutes of the Ōtaki College
Board of Trustees' Meeting**
Wednesday 30 March 2022 at 6.00pm

1.0 Karakia, lead by Ms Kaihau

2.0 Parents/Community Time (this took place in the middle of the meeting, from 7.08pm - 7.40pm. Awhina Osborne and their whānau attended for the Community Time section only.)

Awhina Osborne and her whānau came to the meeting to express their views on certain uniform issues. Ms Gaylor welcomed the visitors to the meeting and then Board members and visitors introduced themselves.

Awhina's whānau explained that they felt that constraining which items of clothing could be worn together diminished the gender neutral nature of the uniform and could be limiting and harmful to gender diverse students. They felt that it would be better if students could choose whichever items of clothing they wanted to wear on any particular day - e.g. the shirt or blouse and tie with shorts.

Awhina's father also raised an issue regarding, what he felt had been, an unfair labelling of Awhina due to their pink hair.

Mr Fraser apologised for this, stressing that it was not in line with the College's staff focus on building good relationships with students.

Mr Fraser gave a summary of the background to the changes that had resulted in the current uniform, saying that student input had been key in creating what was considered to be a smart, comfortable and gender neutral uniform. This input had included advice from the College's student LGBT+ group. He said that the College was working hard to support gender diversity and to create a gender neutral environment that was safe and supportive for all students.

Awhina's mother then spoke about the historical background in Ōtaki of "welcoming diverse cultures and diversity" and gave a folder of information on the support of gender diverse students in education to the Board. She said that when Awhina had first enrolled their Dean had explained that the uniform was gender neutral and Awhina could wear what they wanted. Awhina had therefore been extremely disappointed to find that this was not, in fact, the case and that they were being spoken to adversely for mixing and matching uniform items.

Dr Spinks said that, while she did appreciate the initial efforts that the College had made on its journey to support gender diversity, including the genderless terms of Ngā Kākākura and Ngā Kaingārahu for the Heads of School, she would still like the Board to read and act on the information that she had provided.

She said that the whānau's recommendation to the Board was "that students can choose from the current range of approved uniform items to be mixed and matched as students wish to wear them".

Awhina's whānau also raised the possibility of having a tartan blanket of some sort as part of the uniform that students could wrap over their skirt/trousers/shorts for formal occasions.

Ms Gaylor thanked Awhina and their whānau for taking the time to come and put forward their views to the Board.

3.0 Attendance

3.1 Present

Andy Fraser, Penny Gaylor (Chair), Maewa Kaihau, Layton Miscall, Dale Nakhla (on-line), Shelly Warwick

3.2 In Attendance

Jarrad Porima, AP (from 6.10pm-6.15pm), Vivienne White (Minutes)

3.3 Apologies

Sarah Ropata and Natasha Simpson. **Moved "that the apologies be accepted"**. Andy Fraser/Layton Miscall/carried unanimously.

There were no conflicts of interest.

Ms Gaylor explained that the whānau of Awhina Osborne, including their mother - Aroha Spinks and father - Noel Osborne, wished to attend the Parent and Community section of the meeting, but were not able to attend until later in the evening.

Mr Fraser invited newly appointed Assistant Principal, Jarrad Porima, to join the meeting briefly in order to meet the Board. Introductions were made.

4.0 Matters of an Urgent Nature

There were none.

5.0 Minutes

Moved "that the minutes from the meeting on 16 February 2022 be received". Layton Miscall/Shelly Warwick/carried unanimously.

Moved "that the minutes from the meeting on 16 February 2022 be accepted as a true and correct record". Layton Miscall/Shelly Warwick/carried unanimously.

6.0 Matters Arising

There were none.

7.0 Principal's Report

The Principal's report had been previously circulated and was taken as read. Ms Gaylor asked Mr Fraser for any updates to his report and called for any questions.

a) COVID Organisation

Mr Fraser said that this was continuing to be time consuming.

b) NCEA Data

Mr Fraser commented on the final 2021 results, saying that they were reasonably pleasing, particularly given the disruptions caused by COVID.

c) Proposal to formalise the Arahunga/Ōtaki College relationship by Creating an Arahunga Hub at College

A draft letter to Arahunga requesting that Learning Support become an Arahunga class had been previously circulated. Mr Fraser tabled Arahunga's proposal to create a permanent partnership between the two organisations and create an Arahunga Hub at the College.

Mr Fraser spoke in support of the proposal, saying that having Arahunga running the Special Needs department as an Arahunga Outreach class had worked well over the past three years and had benefited the College.

In answer to Board questions Mr Fraser said that the Hub would be run out of the existing Learning Support building. He also confirmed that having additional, possibly older, Arahunga students coming into the building would not mean that Ōtaki College students would be less welcome to use the space. The Board suggested that it would be prudent to put in a clause giving the College the ability to withdraw from the partnership at a later date should Arahunga cease to meet the needs of the College.

Moved "that the Board endorses the Principal's recommendation to formalise the arrangement with Arahunga and agrees to sending the previously circulated draft letter to move this forward". Penny Gaylor/Layton Miscall/carried unanimously.

Mr Fraser informed the Board that Arahunga had appointed a new SENCO to work at College - Rachel Kneepkens.

d) Te Takanga o Te Wā & Aotearoa New Zealand's Histories

Mr Fraser said that the curriculum content had finally been launched and that there was a webinar on Tuesday 5 April at 3.45pm to introduce the content.

Ms Kaihau expressed interest in viewing the webinar. Mr Fraser to send her the link.

Ms Nakhla asked how the College was placed for the roll out of the curriculum. Mr Fraser said that he was prepared to approach this slowly in the current year due to Penny Quinn being on sick leave with Jarrad Porima running the Social Sciences department in her absence as well as carrying out his Assistant Principal role.

e) MoE Confirmed Staffing

Mr Fraser ran through the numbers, saying that the actual figures were 45 students below the confirmed staffing levels. He said that housing had affected the numbers, with several families being forced to move to Levin. In addition, larger than expected numbers of Year 12 and 13 students had found employment, many in apprenticeships. He commented that, while this had an adverse effect on roll numbers, it was an excellent outcome for the students themselves.

Mr Fraser confirmed that the lower roll numbers meant that an increase to the building footprint was not on the immediate horizon. Having the enrolment scheme in place, however, meant that, should numbers rise, the College would be in a best placed to request additional buildings.

f) Personnel

Mr Fraser updated the Board on staff movements:

- Penny Quinn remained on sick leave, potentially returning for 2 hours a week in Term Two, focussing on Psychology. Jarrad Porima would continue to head the Social Sciences department until her full return.
- Lucy Abriata had commenced her maternity leave - Alan Flaws had been appointed in a fixed term capacity to cover her maternity leave. He would, however, be on sick leave for six weeks during this period.
- A current reliever had indicated they were willing to take up the .5 Technology position, leaving another established reliever free to teach some of Penny Quinn's Social Science classes.

g) Property

Mr Fraser said there had been no progress on the LSC building being constructed in Auckland. He said that he would discuss with OCTA and the MoE Property Advisor, the advisability of initiating legal proceedings.

Mr Fraser said that Brendon Jelly had been appointed as the new Property Advisor for the College. Mr Jelly would be coming into College to look at all property matters and would begin work on the 10 Year Property Plan.

Mr Fraser said that cyclical maintenance was underway again, many matters having been delayed by COVID.

Moved “that the Principal’s report be accepted”. Andy Fraser/Penny Gaylor/carried unanimously.

Mr Fraser said that he would be introducing a new format for his report and the Agenda from the next meeting. He said that he felt that his most important task for the Board was reporting on progress against the Strategic Plan and that the new format would assist in this.

8.0 Planning and Review

a) Policy Review

- Policy Making Policy
- Governance Policy
- Board-Principal Relationship

It was agreed that every policy should state that one of its primary purposes was to “uphold the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi”.

In the current policies under review this statement was to be added under the Rationale for the Policy Making policy, moved from c) to a) in the Board-Principal Relationship and added as 1.2 under the Governance policy. It was also to be added to the Rationale for the Planning and Review policy.

An additional clause should be added as 1.3 of the Governance policy - “Support the ongoing relationship with Ngā Hapū o Ōtaki”.

Moved “that the Policy Making Policy, Governance Policy and Board-Principal Relationship be noted as having been reviewed with the above changes to be made”. Penny Gaylor/Andy Fraser/carried.

b) ERO

Mr Fraser gave the background to the new format of the ERO process. He confirmed that the College was well placed across the board for the review and he had not identified any areas of concern. He asked that members check their portfolio areas in the audit checklist that had been previously circulated and get back to him with any concerns/comments in order for him to send the completed checklist back to ERO by the end of the term. Ms Gaylor and Ms Warwick confirmed that they had met with the relevant staff members for their portfolios and had gone through the checklist with them.

Ms Nakhla asked whether the legal matter that had arisen in 2020 should be mentioned in the checklist. Mr Fraser said that he felt this was outside the timeframe of the current review.

Mr Fraser said that Maddy Haydock from ERO, would be visiting the College on 23 and 24 May.

- c) **BOT Election**
Moved “that September 7th 2022 be accepted as the date for the BoT Election”. Penny Gaylor/Andy Fraser/carried unanimously.

Mr Fraser said that he would follow up with Ian McMillan regarding the possibilities for a Returning Officer, including a company who would run an on-line election.

Mr Miscall said that he would be interested in standing for election as a member of the school community, if eligible.

It was agreed that the BoT should start promoting the election. It was further agreed that the Board Chair should approach Sarah Ropata to see if she would be willing to draw up a plan for the promotion and work on suitable communications to share with whānau.

9.0 Health and Safety

Ms Warwick said that she had met with Marion Lumley. Mrs Lumley had said that the Health and Safety Committee had not met as frequently as scheduled due to COVID constraints but that it was intended they should meet twice per term. Reporting of Accidents and Injuries was continuing. Mrs Lumley was currently in the process of updating the Health and Safety procedures and was working on an exit plan for students after an emergency which was missing from the current Emergency Procedures

It was noted that COVID had affected attendance. Mr Fraser tabled the current numbers of students who had tested positive for COVID. The overall rate was 19% of the total roll, with Year 7s being the highest at 34%. This was to be expected as the Year 7s were too young to yet be fully vaccinated.

10.0 Uniform **Uniform**

The Board considered the matters that had been raised in Parent/Community time. It was agreed that the current uniform did cater for gender diverse students and had been developed after thorough consultation with the student body, including input from the LGBT+ group. Student voice had been sought and listened to in the development of the current uniform. It was further agreed that the reason for setting limits on the number of combinations of items was to maintain the smartness of the uniform. It was not felt that this compromised the gender neutral quality of the uniform. Mr Fraser to convey this view by letter, email or meeting with Awhina Osborne's whānau.

Mr Miscall said that he would be happy to meet with Awhina on a regular basis to support her with any issues she might be having.

The Board discussed the student queries that Mr Miscall had brought to the Board.

Socks - current wool socks were uncomfortable, cotton might be better. Mr Fraser said he would approach Kirsten at Marlan Trading and see if she could source cotton socks, this would be on the proviso that current stock would have to be sold before new ones were introduced.

Adding a black lava lava to the College uniform. Mr Fraser said that he had no objection to potentially adding an ie lavalava to the uniform. The Board felt that they would like to understand more about the significance of the ie before committing to an item of uniform which would create more combinations. Mr Fraser said he would ask a Pasifika parent to come to the next meeting and talk about the cultural significance and the practical applications of wearing the ie.

The letter from a student requesting that jeans become part of the uniform was discussed. Ms Gaylor to draft a reply saying that the Board agrees that jeans should be worn on non-uniform days only.

11.0 Student Welfare

Mr Miscall had had an on-line meeting with Natasha Simpson and she had put forward several questions to be asked at the meeting.

Ms Simpson had asked for the attendance stats for the term so that she could compare the figures to previous years, given that attendance had been down. Mr Fraser said that Mr Wood would be happy to provide the statistics, but that they had been completely skewed by COVID and were therefore not comparable.

Ms Simpson had raised the question of mental health concerns being behind some of the absenteeism and asked if Jo McInerney's workload had increased to the point where students were not always able to access her services. Mr Fraser said that Ms McInerney was receiving assistance thanks to funding from the XŌtaki Trust and that referrals were at a reasonable level.

Mr Miscall asked if changes would be made to school lunches as a result of the recent student survey. Mr Fraser said he, together with other local Principals were working very hard to get changes made by Libelle.

Mr Miscall asked whether somewhere other than the new outdoor area could be used to store the left-over lunches as students were throwing the food around. Mr Fraser said that the students involved in the latest incident would now be helping to keep the area neat and tidy, but he agreed to look into a better process for disposing of the left-overs. He said that the general wastage involved was one of the issues that he was asking Libelle to address.

12.0 General

a) March Roll Return

The Board noted the March Roll return.

15.0 Date of Next Meeting

18 May 2022 at 6.00pm.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8.30pm.

Confirmed: _____ **Chairperson**