



Board News Update – Term 3, 2018

The second half of the year is upon us already.

The purpose of this update is to highlight some of the main developments that the Board has focused on during term 2, and provide an indication of some of the key issues on the horizon as we progress further through 2018.

First, we would like to say a special welcome to those parents and caregivers who are new to the school in 2018.

Teachers strike

As we communicated last week, the school will be closed on Wednesday 15 August 2018.

The Board carefully considered the availability of teaching staff, and decided that there was insufficient staff to provide either the normal teaching services or supervision of children during the strike.

We know that this is inconvenient for parents and students, but please be assured that student health and safety was our main priority and concern. We understand that given the circumstances other Boards of local schools have come to the same conclusion.

While the Board is not directly involved in negotiations between the NZEI and the government, we would make three very clear observations.

First, we are extremely lucky to be a school with a very talented and committed teaching and admin staff.

The second observation would be that, like the rest of New Zealand and Wellington, in recent years there has been a very noticeable reduction in the number of teachers applying for new positions as they arise at Ngaio School. It has become much more challenging to recruit.

Finally, in the long term, it is in the best interest of the children and their learning that high quality teachers are retained and attracted to work in the industry.

Tui Block teaching and learning

The completion of the Tui Block has enabled the Board to shift its focus from the practical issues around building work, to ensuring the school makes the most of utilising this wonderful new space to the full benefit of the children. This has dominated the Board's agenda through the first half the year.

We are very proud of the professionalism of our teachers at Ngaio School, and will continue to support them with PD (Professional Development) to ensure their teaching methods are developing the children as active life-long learners. Near the end of term 2, a group of teachers and management visited two schools in Auckland with innovative learning spaces, to exchange ideas and experiences. Lessons from this trip will form part of the Board's agenda in term 3.

We would encourage parents with children in the junior school to join the Tui tours. We hope the insights will build confidence in the experience their children will have as they eventually move through the senior school into the Tui Block.

Parent communications review

At the beginning of the year, the Board commissioned a review of parent communications at the school, following feedback from many parents who felt overloaded by communication coming from many sources at the school, including various forms of newsletters and emails.

The review involves undertaking an audit of ways the school is currently communicating with parents, lessons from the approaches of other schools (and other organisations), and options for the more effective use of technology to develop a one-stop place for key school information and dates (such as redesigning the website, shared events calendars, or apps).

Jo Hughson is chairing a working group for the communications review comprising members drawn from the admin staff, teaching staff, the Board, PTA, and parents with expertise in communication. The proposals from the working group will come to the Board during term 3, and we will set out a timetable for when these improvements can be implemented.

NOSCAR review

During term 2, the Board decided to undertake an internal review of our after school care programme (NOSCAR), with a focus on ensuring there are sound policies, procedures and systems to support the management team. Mike Letts is overseeing the internal review for the Board.

NOSCAR is an important part of the school, and the Board is eager to ensure it is fulfilling its intention. A particular challenge is the roll, which is usually under pressure with a long waitlist.

NOSCAR comes under the umbrella of MSD (Ministry of Social Development), and as such an external review is undertaken every few years. This external review occurred at the beginning of term 3, and they were pleased with the way NOSCAR is being managed and the care it provides. There may be an opportunity at some point in future to increase the number of places, and this term we will be looking at what we would need to do to manage any increase while sustaining the current high levels of care.

The Board will look to draw together the outcomes of these internal and external reviews during term 3, and set out and plan for implementing the enhancements that follow.

Other issues on the horizon in term 3 and 4:

- **Staff and student wellbeing:** The Board plans to survey both staff and student wellbeing. With the building work at the school more settled, and our new Principal nearing one year in the role, it seems an opportune time to take a gauge of staff and student wellbeing and take forward lessons.
- **Values and Charter review:** Each year in March the Board is obliged to submit the school's Values, Charter and Strategic Objectives to the Ministry of Education. With a new Principal in place, we undertook a light touch review earlier this year, on the basis of undertaking a thorough review for 2019. The Board plans to kick this progress off during term 3, by starting to consult for feedback from parents, staff and the community.
- **ERO review:** It is around 4 years since Ngaio School last passed its ERO (Education Review Office) review with flying colours. The long period between reviews illustrates ERO's confidence in the school. Given the review cycle, our next ERO assessment is likely to be within the next six months. This will be a great opportunity to check that our

systems and processes continue to evolve to deliver great student achievement – in particular, tracking the link between teaching methods and targeted improvement and development. It is reassuring to have the continuity brought about by having Lucy Elwood on the Board, who was also a trustee at the time of the last review.

Property update

While there are currently no large Ministry-funded property changes at the school, the Board continues to have a number of property issues on the agenda overseen by Mark Palmer.

Some immediate project in progress include:

- Re-sowing the **grass on the school fields** and implementing an ongoing maintenance plan, to address the health and safety issue of the field in its current state of disrepair. This is currently scheduled to occur in two phases: the western end of the field in October 2018; and the eastern end of the field in April 2019.
- Upgrading **school signage**, given existing PTA funding. This project is well advanced in design phase.
- Resolving **bag storage** for the Tui Block with new cubbies located on an external wall.

Further ahead, the agenda includes:

- Undertaking maintenance of McLeod, where NOSCAR is currently located.
- Exploring improved connectivity between McLeod and the Tui Block.
- Removing the prefabs from the top school fields, where the timing is completely dependent on when the Ministry finds them a new home.
- Assessing the modernisation of the Abbott Street entrance, once the prefabs are safely removed via this route and any damage to the entrance assessed.
- Exploring the potential for an enlarged shade sail on the current site of the prefabs.

The Board continues to work closely with the PTA to identify suitable projects to be funded with community involvement.

To all parents, caregivers, teachers and support staff: thank you for your contribution to the School in the first half of 2018, and all the very best for the rest of the year ahead.



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On behalf of Amanda Frater, Jo Hughson, Lucy Elwood, Mike Letts, Mark Palmer and Raewyn Watson.