



Board News Update – The Year in Review; and Year Ahead

It has been a big year for Ngaio School and we are excited about the year ahead.

The purpose of this update is to highlight some of the main developments that the Board has focused on in 2017, and to provide an early indication of some of the **key issues on the agenda** for 2018.

Our vision, as set out in the school's Charter, is to provide the children of Ngaio with a rich and stimulating curriculum and learning environment where teachers, parents and the community work in partnership to support children to strive for personal excellence. A key measure of success is **student achievement**.

At each Board meeting, the Associate Principals or Syndicate Leaders present to the Board on an aspect of the School's student achievement results, spanning a number of testing methods, across reading, writing, maths and other parts of the curriculum. We are always left impressed by both the standard of achievement at Ngaio School, and the way that the teaching staff are continually striving for improvement in each child.

While the agenda of the Board can at times be focused on property, finances and personnel, we are very conscious that this is all about ensuring that the school has the **resources required** to achieve the end goal – student achievement and developing lifelong learners.

The Year in Review - 2017

At the end of the first term, Liz Millar announced her retirement at the end of nearly 10 years of excellent service. Through April and May, the Board was focused on the recruitment process for a **new Principal**, and in June we announced that Raewyn Watson (formerly the Principal at Houghton Valley School) would be starting at the beginning of term 4. Through the appointment process there were two things that impressed the Board most:

- The first was her clear ability to **build successful relationships**. This is a requirement for any Principal. However, for a school the size of Ngaio, it is essential that the Principal can listen to staff, parents and caregivers. Raewyn has a warm and authentic approach; matched with an equal amount of resilience that is needed to be Principal.
- Secondly, was the alignment of Raewyn's **vision, values and philosophy of teaching** with those of Ngaio School. She has a deep understanding of education theory and practice, and has implemented an approach to learning that aligns very well to Ngaio.

We hope that some of you have had the opportunity to meet our new Principal during term 4 at the welcome to new students and parents (Whakatau), STRIVE assemblies, PTA meetings, or other events at the school. With over 700 parents and caregivers, it can take time, but we have no doubt that a strong relationship with parents and the community will develop.

The Board would like to say a special thank you to Amanda Frater, who filled the role of Acting Principal during term 3, supported by Kirsten Reid as Associate Principal, Bronwyn O'Halloran as Acting Associate Principal, the Syndicate Leaders, teachers, and support staff. It is a testament to the strength and commitment of the entire staff that the school didn't miss a beat through this period.

The beginning of term 4 coincided with the Board's other main focus over 2017, which was ensuring the successful completion the **new school block** (yet to be named), which was funded by the Ministry of Education. This will be the home of our Year 5 and Year 6 students in 2018.

In addition, the Board funded the construction of **The Cloud** (Te Kapua) outside the new school block, which will provide an excellent space for not only shade, but for school performances and assemblies, and to connect the new Block to the lower playground. It is an impressive sight from the Colway Street entrance.

One of Raewyn's main tasks during term 4 has been finalising the **allocation of teachers** to learning spaces in 2018. This has been a great opportunity to both get to know our outstanding existing teaching staff and recruit for the final places to be filled.

As well as a new Principal at Ngaio School, there was a changing of the guard on the Board with **Robert Stewart** retiring after 10 years of tremendous service to the community. **Mark Palmer** joined in his place at the end of September, having already assisted the Board throughout the year, including by overseeing the rebuild of the Pool Sheds with this year's Gala funds. It is exciting to have this project completed in time for the early summer that has arrived in Wellington this year!

The Year Ahead - 2018

An immediate area of focus for the Board in 2018 is ensuring that we are utilising our **new block and teaching spaces** as effectively as possible.

This preparation has already started, with the Board approving additional funding for an excellent full day of professional development with Mark Osborne, who is one of New Zealand's leading authorities on the topics of **future-focused education**, innovative learning spaces, and cutting-edge practice. In addition to his role as a consultant, Mark is currently completing his PhD on leadership, use of space, and pedagogy at the University of Melbourne.

He worked with staff to explore aspects of modern learning practice and the best use of our wonderful new learning space. While these sessions were designed primarily for the teachers that will be in the new block in 2018, they were insightful for our other teachers in collaborative learning spaces, and for all teachers more broadly on how to **enhance their teaching practice**. The staff are energised and excited, and the Board is committed to provide further professional development to support our teachers make best use of our impressive new facilities.

The **Official Opening** of the new block will be in early 2018, once the new block is the home to our Year 5 and Year 6 students. This will provide an opportunity for parents and caregivers to see these learning spaces in action!

Looking further ahead into 2018, there are at least two areas where the Board will be engaging with parents and caregivers for their feedback.

- First, we are scheduled to review the School's Charter and Strategic Objectives. It is important that these reflect the view of our community. In recent years, these have received a light refresh, but the arrival of our new Principal and completion of our major building works provides an opportunity for a thorough review.

- Second, now that the main teaching blocks are completed, we can focus on prioritising the school's next property enhancements – with early scoping work started on the school entrances, re-sowing the grass on the school fields, and improving connectivity between McLeod and the rest of the school. We will be seeking feedback.

Welcome and Farewell

Finally, we would like to welcome those parents and caregivers that are new to the school.

If you are interested, there are many ways for you to engage in life at Ngaio School, whether it is volunteering as a parent help, sports team coach, or at the Clinic. In particular, the PTA always welcomes new members and does fabulous work for the school through the funds raised at the Gala and other activities through the year. It is also a very effective way to be part of the parent voice.

For those parents and caregivers with children finishing Year 6 at the School, we would like to say a special thank you for your invaluable support over the years. We hope that Ngaio School has provided a rich and stimulating environment to support your child becoming a lifelong learner. All the very best for the future.

To all parents, caregivers, teachers and support staff: thank you for your contribution to the School in 2017. We wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.



Christian Hawkesby, Chair

Email: christian@harbourasset.co.nz Phone: 027 503 5401

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