



Our new Ngaio School Principal – Raewyn Watson

We are delighted to announce Raewyn Watson as Ngaio School's new Principal, beginning at the start of Term 4.

Raewyn has around 20 years' experience as a Principal in the Wellington region, most recently at Houghton Valley School on the south coast.

Raewyn has three adult daughters and lives on a large hobby farm in the Takapu Valley with her husband Dave. Passionate divers and fishers, their charter business and teaching of Coastguard Boating Education courses are all on hold while they regenerate the native bush, develop extensive orchards and vege gardens, and look after a menagerie of animals.

When asked in the interview for five words to describe her leadership, Raewyn replied:

"Fair, Creative, High-Expectations, Involved, and Fun!"



These qualities, and much more (described more below), shone through during the appointment process.

Principal Selection Process

Appointing a new Principal is one of the most important roles of any Board of Trustees.

It is a decision that will affect the learning of hundreds of children in our community for years to come. For Ngaio School, the challenge is that we are already a high-performing school, with a widely respected, high-performing retiring Principal, Liz Millar. It is a very hard act to follow.

We promoted the position as a feature advertisement on the Educational Gazette for maximum coverage. Raewyn came through a rigorous selection process that involved an application form, submission of CV, detailed written questionnaire completed by three referees, a guided visit to the school, a presentation to senior staff, and a 90 minute interview seeking concrete examples ranging from vision to operational capability and everything in between. Through this process, the Board was supported by Jeremy Edwards, who acted as a consultant and adviser through each step. Jeremy is a very experienced and well respected Principal (of Northland School), who has assisted as an educational expert in the appointments of nearly 20 other principals.

Given the importance of the appointment, rather than create a subcommittee, the entire Board of Trustees was engaged together throughout. Jo Hughson and Mike Letts drew together the application material, interview questions and selection criteria, informed by feedback from staff and parents on the leader needed for our future; Lucy Elwood and Robert Stewart contributed to the discussions and deliberations at each step, drawing on their collective 15 years' experience on the Board; and, as Associate Principal and Staff representative, Amanda Frater provided an invaluable detailed knowledge of Ngaio's existing teaching methods and approaches.

Raewyn Watson

At the end of this process, the Board quickly came to a unanimous decision to appoint Raewyn Watson.

There were two things that impressed us most about Raewyn.

- 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 and parents, and build strong support for the way ahead. Raewyn has a warmth and authentic approach, which we believe that will really appeal to the children, staff and community. This is matched with an equal amount of resilience that is needed to be Principal.
- Secondly, and just as important, was the alignment of Raewyn's **vision, values and philosophy of teaching** with those of Ngaio School. Raewyn has a deep understanding of education theory and practice, and has implemented an approach to learning that aligns very well to our school's model of integrated learning. It was clear that Raewyn would embrace what Ngaio has already achieved, while retaining high-expectations, and challenging us all to build further on those achievements and continue to evolve into the future.

Raewyn is hugely excited about the opportunity to lead Ngaio School; and we are thrilled to have found her.

Through the end of August, we will give Liz Millar a fitting farewell, ahead of her last day at Ngaio School on 1 September. Amanda Frater will be Acting Principal in the weeks ahead of Raewyn's arrival at the start of Term 4.

We look forward to being able to announce more details on how we will all welcome Raewyn to the school and community.

Many thanks,



Christian Hawkesby, Chair

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On behalf of Amanda Frater, Christian Hawkesby, Jo Hughson, Lucy Elwood, Mike Letts and Robert Stewart.