

School Board Update: Headlines from the September 2021 Meeting

A full copy of the minutes of this meeting are available from the Main Office.

This is usually our 6th meeting for the school year, but with the sudden Lockdown in August and a cancelled August meeting it is our 5th. September is usually a bit of a breather month before the mad rush towards Christmas which has helped us catch up what was meant to be covered in August along with our September Agenda. To assist catching up we had an earlier start, which certainly helped getting through what was a full Agenda.

While September is also the month where we would potentially receive a new Student Rep onto the board, this is another thing affected by the Lockdown, with elections now rescheduled for October.

With the house names discussion occurring at this meeting, we were joined by the Senior Leadership Team who also took the opportunity to walk through some of our usual reporting items, alongside Tony, generally focusing on their areas of management. As the August meeting usually covers our half year review, Alternative Education Report and July Roll return, we had these on this months Agenda as well as our usual items, alongside some policy reviews and updates, Multi Sports Turf update, and the September Roll return. The summary is:

- We received from the House Names Working Party a list of 6 options for us to consider for voting purposes. Our role was first to consider if there was any option that we considered would be inappropriate to put to the vote and secondly whether we should reduce the options put out to the school community for their consideration. A robust discussion was had, bringing us to the conclusion that the working group had done a great job with what they had narrowed the choices down to because we were happy to put all 6 house name options out to the vote. So, school community, keep an eye out for your voting form next term and make sure you have your say.
- This year, rather than having an Education Review Office (ERO) visit, which is effectively an audit of the school, there is a new process in place in which the school does an “Evaluation for improvement” on an area of the school. As we are always looking for improvements, we wanted to use this process as a tool to evaluate something that we were already looking into, rather than treating it as a “tick box” exercise. The SLT presented to us that the focus of their report will be “How effectively is the school preparing all Year 9 and 10 students, to demonstrate strong literacy understanding and skills to achieve success across all learning areas and in particular NCEA”. This is quite timely due to the changes that are going to occur to NCEA in the near future.
- The Senior Leadership Team walked us through the highlights of the Annual Plan review and confidently answered any questions that we had of them. We noted how busy the year has been and how much has been completed. While we are hopeful that this year’s Lockdown won’t have as much impact as last year’s did, we did note some date changes for future events as well as some activities that have been curtailed or adjusted. Overall, the board is very happy with where the school is at.
- Neil took the opportunity to talk to his Alternative Education Report and noted to the Board, that the change in venue which was brought about by the sale of the existing one, has worked in favour of the students and staff.

- Wayne then took us through his lengthy Property Report, with focus on the planned classrooms addition for the start of next year (to meet the role growth we are experiencing) and some of the changes occurring with our capital spending budget – both with its timing and MOE procedures.
- Wayne then talked to his Health and Safety Report, again updating us to his updating of COVID measures due to the rule changes with this outbreak. He also updated us, on behalf of the Te Awamutu Combined Schools Transport Management Committee, to the outcome of a review of the Te Kawa crossroads bus stop which is a recent addition due to some rule changes regarding the school transport zone. Because there was some parental concern expressed about the safety aspect of the bus stop, a thorough review was undertaken by the school in conjunction with NZ Police, NZ Transport Authority, Ministry of Education, Otorohanga District Council and Go Bus.
 “The final assessment is that the Te Kawa bus stop is safe, however further investigation will be conducted by WSP/NZTA and Otorohanga District Council to see whether further changes to road markings, signage or speed limits are required to further enhance safety along this stretch of road.”
- The Multi Sports Turf subcommittee updated us on progress. While it seems that the building industry works to a different timetable to most of us, we can’t deny that with the potential value of this spend we want to get this correct. The good news is that we have narrowed down our building options to the extent a site survey has now been completed and we are now waiting on the final pricing. Without the lockdown this would have been ready for this meeting so hopefully, the next news on this will be the signing of the contract. Once this is place, we will be looking for any interested persons, from our present and past school community, who wish to help with the funding.
- We reviewed, and updated the following policy:
 - Critical Incident/Crisis Management
 - Health and Welfare
 - Infection Control of HIV/AIDS and other blood-borne viruses
 - Health Centre Guidelines & Procedures
- We caught up on 2 months of financial reports and considered what our year end position might now look like considering the effect this year’s lockdown might have. It was also a timely review after hearing how close the Multi Sports Turf might be.
- The usual Principal’s Report, correspondence and last meetings minutes were tabled and discussed where necessary. We are approaching the time of year when teachers consider moving around. While there is still a supply issue, we are hopeful that there may be some quality “Auckland” teachers who are tired of Lockdowns and are ready to move.

For those who are avid readers of these updates, you may have noticed that it has been renamed from “BOT update” to “School Board update”. This is because it has been recently found that the

Education and Training Act 2020 that was implemented in July of last year has effectively changed the board's name to "School Board". This is something that has passed under the radar of many schools (thanks MOE for letting us know) and people connected to schools. We have decided that the most effective approach to this change is to steadily update the names as we come across them. With our Policy review process being a 3-year cycle, there could be a few years before all references to BOT are removed.

It is also a good time to remind everyone that we have a direct email address so if you need to contact the Board Chairperson electronically then there is an address that will survive changes in the chairperson. Please be aware that the Board Chairperson should be the last person in the chain of command to be contacted, which means that when all other processes (as documented in our school policies and procedures) fail to meet your need then the Chairperson is available.

The updated email address is shown below and available on the school website. Please remember that the board members are "volunteers" and "human" so please approach them understanding that they are generally busy people who have put themselves forward to serve the school community, to the best of their abilities.

Our next meeting is currently scheduled to be held Wednesday 27th October 2021 at 6.00pm in the Staff Room. As is usual the meetings are open to all so if you are interested in what we get up to, do come along and see and hear what we do; you are most welcome.

Craig Yarnley

Chairperson

Boardchair@tac.school.nz