



## VICTORIA AVENUE SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### **Victoria Avenue School Board of Trustees Newsletter June 2011**

Welcome to the fourth newsletter for 2011 from your Board of Trustees.

The Board met again on 13 June and considered a broad range of matters from the upcoming ERO visit to student attendance guidelines.

The relatively brief period between this meeting and our previous meeting was due to Allan Short departing last weekend to attend the 15<sup>th</sup> “International Conference on Thinking” in Belfast and to visit leading “thinking schools” in the United Kingdom. We wish Allan a very successful trip and a well deserved break with his family in the United Kingdom following this professional development.

#### **New Board Member**

We are delighted to welcome Andrew Cleland as a new member of the Board. Andrew has been co-opted to the Board to assume responsibility for the Treasurer role from Rob Hamilton. Andrew is well qualified for this role, being a qualified Chartered Accountant and having undertaken a range of financial, audit and commercial roles, most recently with Fonterra.

Andrew is married to Jenny Hayward who was the previous School Accountant and now manages the uniform shop. They have a daughter Cate who is currently in Year 2, and a son Angus who completed Year 6 last year.

#### **ERO Visit**

ERO has confirmed that it will be visiting our school in Term 3, most likely in the second half of September. The Board and the senior management team are already well underway in preparing for the ERO visit.

A key task for the Board is the completion of the Self-Audit Checklist and Board Assurance Statement. This covers the full range of legal responsibilities that the Board has for governing the school and reporting to the Ministry of Education. We plan to have this completed prior to our next meeting so this can be approved at that meeting and then submitted to ERO by the end of August.

#### **Charter Feedback**

The Ministry of Education has acknowledged the receipt of our School Charter and provided favourable feedback. The Ministry noted that the “Victoria Avenue School clearly articulates its commitment to student engagement, achievement and excellence with the emphasis on improvement in pedagogical knowledge and classroom practice.”

Naturally we are pleased with this positive feedback. We also are committed to fulfilling the vision and strategic goals outlined in the Charter.

### **Progress Towards Strategic Goals**

Allan Short updated the Board on progress towards our six strategic goals at the meeting. Overall, the school is making very good progress during the year-to-date. Key points to highlight are:

- Mid-year reports will be going home at the end of Term 2. Based on these reports, the Board will receive an update on overall progress against National Standards for discussion at its next meeting.
- Virtually all of our ICT goals for 2011 have already been achieved. As discussed at the recent Parent Workshop, Ultranet (whilst still being developed) is now being successfully used by staff and students. The Parent Portal will become available in due course once the developers have released it to us.
- Most of our targets regarding strong partnerships with the wider school family and our local community have been achieved already, largely due to the efforts of the PTS and the extensive range of after-school clubs and activities.
- We are making excellent progress on our various property goals – see below for further details.

### **Maori and Pacifika Student Update**

Allan Short reported to the Board on achievement by Maori and Pacifika students. The results indicated that both Maori and Pacifika students are achieving at a level consistent with all other students at Victoria Avenue School.

Allan, Jane Cameron and Anne Bridgman met with parents of Maori and Pacifika students earlier this term. These meetings were extremely positive and the discussions provided good feedback about our school.

### **Property Update**

Garry Scarborough updated the Board on current property initiatives. These include:

- Obtaining quotes for the refurbishment of Room 7;
- Reviewing quotes for the shade canopy outside Rooms 11-14;
- Updating our five-year property plan with the Ministry of Education; and
- Reviewing the geotech report on subsidence behind Rooms 19-21.

We plan to spend time during Term 4 looking ahead to further potential property projects for 2012 and 2013. These are likely to include refurbishment of the senior classrooms – namely Rooms 1-6.

### **Community Events**

Kim Grenfell updated the Board on recent community events and other PTS initiatives. These include the Disco, the Kindy Kids Morning Tea and Grandparents Day. These “friend-raising” events were aimed at three different segments of the school community and were all hugely successful.

PTS fundraising events in Term 2 have deliberately been kept low-key following the very successful School Gala at the end of Term 1. However, the PTS has still made good progress with the Spellathon, recycling telephone books, and selling daffodil bulbs and the Entertainment Book.

The Board is very grateful for the significant role the PTS undertakes in bringing our school and its community together, and in raising much-needed funding to support key projects (e.g. the new wooden decks outside Rooms 8-10 and our new hall sound system). Hardly a week goes by without the PTS being active somewhere within the school community – they are a very committed and hard-working team to whom we continually owe a big “thank you”.

### **Student Attendance Guidelines**

Vlad Kozak and the senior management team have recently completed a review of the student attendance guidelines to ensure they meet Ministry of Education expectations. When an absence occurs, the school is required to report whether the absence is “justified” or “unjustified”. The Ministry has issued schools with guidelines in these areas.

Examples of a “justified” absence include: family bereavement, force majeure event, dance or music exams, and cultural or sporting representation.

Examples of an “unjustified” absence include: out-of-town travel (both domestic and overseas), recovering from a busy weekend, birthday celebration and moving house.

Consistent attendance at school is obviously a major contributor to student achievement, so we aim to take all reasonable steps to ensure students attend school when it is open.

We are now over half way through Term 2 and approaching the shortest day. We hope everyone is coping with the winter coughs and colds going around, and those darker mornings for the pre-school sports practices.

Our next meeting is scheduled for 29 August during the fifth week of Term 3.

Rob Hamilton  
Chairperson