

WELLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL – BOARD MINUTES

Notice of a meeting to be held on **Monday 13 December at 6.00pm** [online](#)

Present: Belinda Rynhart (Chair), Dominic Killalea (Principal), Annette Atkins, Catherine Hill, Evžen Novak, Jo MacDonald, Wyatt Page, Eve Ashby, Theo Melville, Solomon Daniel

In attendance: Alison Jeffery (Board Secretary)

Apologies: None received

Visitors: **MoE:** Alex Hamlyn, Kathryn Yorke, David Brunson, Mark Willard, Carl Ashby, Bruce Curtain
Students: Mary Maughan, Lulu Shepherd, Mia Rosemergy
Parents: Alex Hills, Hannah Gower and Jared Connon
Staff: Megan Southwell

The meeting opened with a karakia.

As Board chair, Belinda opened the meeting, outlining the agenda and introducing the Board to the visitors to the meeting.

Correspondence item received from Alex Hills

Alex Hills was invited to speak to the Board. Alex outlined the experience that the group of parents attending the Board meeting online included. Alex spoke to communication difficulties that she perceived between herself and the school over the previous eight weeks and expressed her discontent with the Board meeting being held online and the lateness of this decision being communicated to her.

Alex read a prepared statement to the Board and invited other parents to relay their personal stories.

Parent 2 echoed Alex's complaint regarding the late notification of the online Board meeting.

Parent 3 spoke to his year 9 student's experience at WHS. His son has chosen not to be vaccinated against COVID-19 and has allegedly been targeted by his peers for going against the mould. The parent recognised COVID-19 as an issue but stated his opinion that COVID-19 (information) shouldn't be present in the classroom as this introduces bias against those who share different viewpoints. The parent also referenced communications with the Year 9 Dean who had been supportive of his student.

Parent 2 reported that her son felt unsafe and unable to speak up. He felt unsupported. This parent referenced a letter that was sent to the Board by parent, Nicola Bark. They referenced the Principal's Term 4 address to parents and suggested that it included insinuations that do not show the school in the best light and give licence to bullies. She referenced the need to be inclusive and stated that the school is not inclusive on this issue. The parent wants to see the communications sent by the school ensure that anybody who may be feeling marginalised feels more included.

Parent 1 expressed her hope that the Board would take notice and adhere to guidelines. She reiterated that the school has a statutory responsibility to take care of children in its care and not identify unvaccinated children, even inadvertently. She referred to Nicola Bark's letter, referencing that students had overheard other (unidentified) students on a bus referring to anti-vaxxers needing to be shot. She does not want those views in society. She referenced diversity and inclusivity and the values they do want to see happen at WHS.

Parent 3 expressed his thanks and appreciation for the time at the meeting. This was acknowledged and responded to by the Board Chair.

The parent visitors left the meeting.

Ministry of Education presentation

Megan Southwell and the MoE team joined the meeting for this item.

The MoE team were introduced to the Board and talked through the [Seismic Assessments Update](#) presentation.

In the question and answer session the following areas were discussed:

- The occupancy of lower rated buildings. It was noted that any decision relating to the occupancy of low rated buildings was a joint decision between the Board and the MoE.
- Whether there will be a 'new school' or not? It was noted that existing buildings are pieces of the puzzle: some may be replaced, others refurbished. There will be new buildings to see the school through the next half-century but exactly which buildings will remain is yet to be confirmed.
- What happens if Wellington City Council does not accept the lift safety risk assessment? If WCC decides that a building is earthquake prone, then the board has to act. If they do not, then the board needs to determine whether it is worth upgrading a building as part of the master plan strategy.
- The issue of concrete squalling around blocks was discussed. There are four panels at present that are the main issue and could be dealt with if required.
- The lifespan of concrete - 50-60 years - was discussed and the Board asked if this was a reliable figure? It was noted that there is work that can be done to reverse or slow the ageing of concrete.
- How do we keep the site active while a new build is undertaken? E.g. if A block needs to be kept open while a new building is constructed? The next step will be a workshop: MoE design teams to consider the robust nature of proposals.

Alexander Cattanach will be invited to the first Board meeting of 2022.

The Ministry of Education team and Megan Southwell left the meeting.

Minutes of last meeting

Jo MOVED: THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 8 November be accepted.

CARRIED
Wyatt

Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

Follow up to parent presentation at Board meeting

Further to Alex Hills' item, the Board noted the following:

- The school has received correspondence regarding differences in position regarding vaccination over several months including following communications that included a survey from a vaccination provider and the Principal's message that referenced critical thinking.
- The school acts as a hub for Simply Dental and has also acted as a centre for Measles vaccinations in the past.
- Bullying is not accepted and will be followed up as a separate issue
- In teaching, it is normal to take a current issue and run with it as it presents a good opportunity eg. in Science to teach about vaccination with a view of enabling students to make an informed decision.

The Board's position is to listen to the perspectives of the community but it does not mean that the Board has to support the different views. In this respect this is no different to other issues e.g. climate change. The school is pro-Science, it is what we teach. The Board's perspective, and therefore the school's, is that the school deals with bullying appropriately and listens to the perspectives of its community.

It was noted that the narrative changed in the parents' presentation from the written submission to focus more on bullying and / or pressure on students in classes when they addressed the meeting. Bullying is not accepted at WHS and complaints about bullying are investigated by school management. School management will investigate the bullying allegations raised if more details are provided. For example, in the bus incident described by the parent it was not clear that those who were speaking negatively were WHS students.

The Board contested references from the parent presentation that WHS is not an inclusive school: the school aims to find a way to include all. It was acknowledged that anti-vax is considered a slur by some and an alternative term could be used, if one is proposed.

The students representatives on the Board spoke positively to their experience of the vaccination discussion in science classes and were respectful of the approaches that their teachers had used.

Principal's report including property

- ERO will return to school on 21 February. ERO's focus will align with the annual plan.
- The regular links to the annual plan, Māori achievement, Teaching school and principal practices (TSP) were included in the Principal's report with apologies for delay in presenting TSP data. TSP could go into early meetings next year.
- In addition to normal property updates, projects about to commence and future planning work were detailed.
- Total FTEs (full-time equivalent) staffing figures. The school is funded for 90 full-time teachers - just over 100 people. There are 50-55 support staff bringing the total staff to 160.

Finance report

- This financial year the school will meet the approved budget. There was a deficit in November but the surplus to date is \$450k. A similar deficit to November's is expected for December and will match the expected surplus.
- Budget surplus expected for 2022 - \$43.
- The budget for 2022 is not yet finalised. This will come to the Board in February. A big reduction is being supported by the profitability of CEC (\$400k). A small loss is anticipated from International, but continued investment in this area will facilitate the retention of the international department for the future.
- The CAPEX budget will be further reviewed.
- Sue's reporting is much appreciated by the Board. The Board expressed their gratitude to Sue for her clear reporting.
- The budget is still draft while we wait for finalised figures in some areas e.g. TAPEC top-up funding for Teacher Aides. This has come through today and will not have been reflected in the Board paperwork yet. There will be two additional TA positions to be filled in early 2022.
- It is anticipated that delivering a budget in the black is unlikely. It was noted that the school is in the fortunate position to have reserve funds to draw upon.

Students' report

- The Board expressed their thanks to the students for their first report.
- Key points covered: students recognised that it was a challenge to miss the final events for seniors but recognised that this was unavoidable e.g. Year 13 events, e.g. the Ball.
- Juniors have a few events happening at the end of term, but not the short courses that they would have had at the end of term.
- The student representatives met with the Student Council and are looking forward to working with them in 2022. They are determined to hit the ground running early in Term 1.
- Students took questions from the Board. The Board noted that they are looking forward to working with the student reps in 2022.

Strategic Business

Ministry of Education presentation regarding campus master-planning (see pages 1-2)

Other business

Policy review Term 4 feedback

Māori Educational Success

- It was considered that the policy is deficit in its wording. It does not take into account the new Education and Training Act (2020) that has implications for this policy in particular.
- It is hoped that, as a result of feedback, there will be a policy that is more informed in the new year.
- Whānau hui have not been happening. It feels as though this has been lost from the school. Edward Meredith will be involved as Acting DP in Term 1 and it is hoped that this will ensure that whānau will become more engaged.
- The Board has a role in the area of whānau engagement and it was noted that there should be a Te Whānau a Taraika representative on the Board: the school needs the liaison between the Board and our Te Whānau group. There is provision to co-opt someone onto the Board in this context.
- Further to a meeting with Megan Southwell, the Board received feedback that online hui would not be a workable solution.
- The school is trying to establish links with Te Atiawa. Staff have attended sessions e.g. getting stories into schools (Liz Melhuish and Nevin Broughton), Dominic has followed these up and is inviting iwi into school. However, there are many demands on iwi time from other schools across the city.
- The Board questioned the scope that might exist for neighbouring schools to work together and thus make it easier for connections with iwi to be developed. One aim of the Kāhui Ako is iwi liaison that all schools could access. This will be followed up in 2022.
- The Board noted that it would be ideal if the MoE was involved in helping facilitate links with iwi.
- Friday 17 December is the deadline for feedback into generic policy and the revised policy is due early 2022. The Board agreed to give feedback re: second small paragraph to School Docs and to reference 'What does success as Māori for Māori look like?' as part of this.
- Once the revised Māori Educational Success policy is received from SchoolDocs it will be communicated to the wider community and the Board.

Harassment

- Feedback: - the relationship between harassment and bullying requires clarification. Definitions need to be included, highlighting the distinction between the two terms. Culturally responsive needs to be included too e.g. mana enhancing in relation to dignity.

International Department Policy - COVID-19 vaccinations and homestay caregivers

- This policy was accepted by the Board by email on 30 November 2021.

Meeting dates for 2022

- Dates for the 2022 calendar were circulated and agreed.
- It was noted that the first meeting of Term 4 will be the first meeting for the new Board.
- To establish whether a handover meeting takes place the minutes from 2019 will be revisited.

Correspondence received by the Chair and actions taken

Date	From	Concerning	Action
Magazines, Newsletters, Promotional			
29.11.2021	Ministry of Education	Education Gazette, Vol.100, No.15	
9.12.2021	Capital City Kāhui Ako	Summary report November/December 2021	

Letters and Addressed Mail			
Date	From	Concerning	Action
22.11.2021	Liz McKay	Formal Thank you to WHS Staff	
22.11.2021	Christine Brooks	Notification of Paid Union Meeting	
29.11.2021	Alex Hills	Formal letter to the Principal and Board of Trustees	

Action - The Board will respond to the correspondence from Alex Hills referring to the law and Ministry of Health guidance. The allegations of bullying will be referenced and parents invited to provide information about incidents so that SLT can investigate. The letter will also state its support for the Principal. The responsibility for drafting and reviewing the letter was determined. The letter will be reviewed by all Board members before it is sent.

- The Board noted that a letter received from Nicola Bark also required a reply.

AOB:

- The link to the Ministry Bulletin for Educational Leaders will be shared with the Board.
- The Board expressed their thanks to Catherine Hill for the work she has done while on the Board and wished her all the best for her new role at VUW.
- Belinda thanked the Board for their work in 2021.

The meeting moved to in committee at 8.50pm

The meeting closed at 9pm