
Meeting Minutes- Papakaio School BoT

Date: Monday, August 4, 2025-

Meeting Opened 7.02 pm

Attendees: Ed Finlay (PM), Nikki Wheeler (staff), Joe Laming, Fiona Nelson, Hayley Easton, Jess Wright, Damian Brown (Principal) **Apologies:** Stacey Butson.

1. Opening Karakia

2. Conflict of Interest

No new conflicts of interest were declared.

3. Minutes from the Last Meeting

Minutes from the last meeting were confirmed via email.

MOTION: That the minutes from the last meeting, confirmed via email, be accepted.

- Moved: Jess
 - Seconded: Fiona
 - Carried unanimously.
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4. Matters Arising

Forgies Funding for roofing Work: Damian provided an update on the release of funds from Forgies for the Roofing work completed. The paperwork has been signed, and while the money has not yet arrived in the bank, it is in process. The accountants have recorded this as a receivable asset, which has positively impacted the financial policy from 200% over to 45%.

5. Correspondence

No specific correspondence items were discussed beyond the Forgies funding update.

6. Principal's Report (Damian)

Attendance:

- Damian reported ongoing confusion and discrepancies between the school's internal attendance data and that provided by the Ministry of Education's Edge system. Recent data from Edge showed inconsistencies (e.g., a student marked as chronically absent when present), which later corrected itself.
- Despite initial frustrations, Damian clarified the actual chronic absence figures based on reconciled data. There are **three students categorized as chronically absent**, all of whom have explanations (new enrollment, extended holiday, or a historical ongoing issue).
- Out of students in the 70-80% attendance bracket, half are due to medical leave, holidays, or recent enrolments. This leaves **four students** (two Filipino boys in Wendy's room, one Pākeha boy in Wendy's room, and one Pākeha boy in Nicky's room) who will be targeted with letters regarding their attendance.
- **Key Point:** The unreliability of the Ministry's data causes additional work and frustration for school staff.
- While attendance is slightly down on last year, there has been a lot of sickness, with **24 students off** on the day of the meeting.

Vision:

- No meeting on vision has occurred since the last general meeting. A meeting is scheduled for next Tuesday before the home-school event. Updates will be brought to the next board meeting.

Personnel:

- **Teacher Aides:** The school is considering **two new teacher aide appointments**.
 - One to support a Year 3 boy, with the decision pending on whether support is best provided during core curriculum time (mornings) or in the afternoons (to address behavioural challenges often seen then).
 - One to support Sammy, being mindful of her desire for independence but acknowledging additional support would be beneficial for group work and an extra pair of eyes/ears in the classroom.
- The school can currently afford both appointments, having saved funds from not having a teacher aide in every room for the past two terms. No final decisions have been made.

Finance & Property:

- **Bank Staffing:** The school has a surplus in bank staffing funds, which is a "good problem to have," but challenging to fully utilize without impacting student learning. This surplus is due to specific releases (Principal, Kāhui Ako, Nicky, Cat) that will not carry over into next year's budget.
- Damian is exploring options to provide Wendy with Friday release for library work, contingent on Morgan's availability, and to link this to a Syndicate Leader role.
- **Relievers:** Quality relievers remain scarce.
- **Key Point:** While the bank staffing surplus needs to be spent by March next year, any unspent funds will not be returned to the school (unlike previous years where 70% was returned).
- **Classroom Upgrades:** No further developments on the classroom upgrades, which were scheduled to start at the end of August.
- **Health and Safety:** Deferred to the next health and safety report.
- **Wellington Camp:** Danique, who is recovering, may not be able to cope with the physical exertion of the Wellington trip. Damian stated he is prepared to go with the students if needed, maintaining a historical practice for the camp.
- **RAM Forms:** RAM forms for the board report will be emailed out for review to ensure satisfaction before finalisation.
- **Sports Events:** Cross country event went well, with good student performance and community support. 25 students are attending North Otago next Monday.

Ministry of Education Meeting:

- Damian met with Ministry of Education advisors (Otago Southland and North Otago) who sought "success stories" from the region. Papakaio School was put forward.
- **Key Point:** Damian highlighted the success of the **Writer's Toolbox** program, emphasizing that its funding would be jeopardised if the school is not funded for six teachers next year (which Ministry officials control). The Ministry representatives were "extremely impressed" with the school's initiatives and indicated they would not want to jeopardise such successful programs.
- David Tapp (Ministry official) praised the school's programs and approach. Nikki Ryan (Ministry staffing contact) also expressed interest in visiting the school.
- Damian asserted that the school's ability to navigate challenges (due to agile staff and students, and community support) makes it resilient regardless of external pressures.
- Discussion on the broader issue of equitable access to successful programs like Writer's Toolbox for all communities, not just those who can afford it.
- Concern was raised about the Ministry's push for single-provider literacy solutions (e.g., IDEAL), which might limit pedagogical choice and impose significant PD and rollout costs on schools. Damian argued for good pedagogy using tools, rather than "teaching to the book."

MOTION: That the principal's report be accepted.

- Moved: Damian
 - Seconded: Joe
 - Carried unanimously.
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7. Financial Report

- **Cash and Bank:** \$161,000 (slightly down on last year, as expected).
- **Net Working Capital:** Over \$107,000 (slightly down on last year, as expected).
- **Surplus:** Currently \$13,000, with a forecast of \$30,000 by year-end
- **Spending Control:** Damian has been strict on spending this year to avoid a large deficit.
- **Staff Development:** Slightly over budget (107%), but considered a worthwhile expenditure.
- **Repairs and Maintenance:** Now at 45% (down from over 200%), indicating projects have been completed and funding has been granted.
- **Home and School Funds:** There was a question about the home and school's financial activity, noting few meetings this year and an apparent lack of regular financial contributions.

MOTION: That the financial report be accepted.

- Moved: Damian
 - Seconded: Ed
 - Carried unanimously.
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8. Curriculum Reflections (Writing)

- **Consistent Delivery:** The Writer's Toolbox program shows consistent delivery across the school.
- **Challenges:** Main challenges include the volume of work for teachers and students, and differentiation in whole-class teaching (an inherent challenge with diverse learners).
- **Positives:**
 - High engagement with the digital tool and "Quick Writes" by students.
 - Positive mid-year data results.
 - The new **termly and yearly expectations document** (developed with Writer's Toolbox team) has been well-received by teachers, providing clear scope and sequence, ensuring continuity across year levels.
 - Teacher feedback on student progress aligns with school-wide data.
- **Ongoing Support:** Workshops with Writer's Toolbox coaches are crucial for teacher support and clarity, particularly as new teachers are onboarded (with intensive training provided).

- **Student Outcomes:** The structured approach of Writer's Toolbox is seen as a significant benefit for students' structural understanding in writing, preparing them well for high school.
- **Impact of Consistency:** The consistency brought by structured literacy and Writer's Toolbox has been invaluable, especially given the significant changes in recent years.

Acknowledgement: The board expressed gratitude to the teachers for their hard work in implementing the program and presenting the digestible report.

9. Policies on School Docs

No group discussion required. Board members are expected to review policies in their own time.

Stacey's Query: Stacey had contacted Damian regarding the process for making disclosures, asking about his point of contact for advice/guidance. Damian confirmed his contact is with the Ministry, noting a past instance where he was advised that the disclosure of physical abuse (hearsay) had to come from the person who directly heard it, not from him as the Principal.

10. Classroom Upgrades and Solar Panels

Classroom Upgrades:

- Progress with Forgies on the classroom upgrades has slowed.
- The Ministry had slated the project to start the **first week of September**.
- Concerns were raised about the lack of a definite start date, lead contractor, and the impact on school operations (e.g., needing to move classrooms) and other planned renovations like carpeting.
- **Action Item:** The board to consider forming a small group or plan to keep pressure on Forgies and the Ministry (contact Ferdi Koen) for a firm start date and project details.

Solar Panels:

- Hayley has applied to Meridian for initial funding (submitted yesterday \$36,000) for a portion, to add to the \$10,000 from The Lions, \$15,000 from the school fundraising and then the Target Community Trust.
- She hopes to have funds secured by the end of the year for installation in January/February.
- **Key Point:** Grant funding typically requires waiting for money before commencing work. The "lead-in time" for grant approvals is considered generous, but the installation itself is expected to be quick once funds are secured.

- Discussion arose regarding the suitability of the quoted solar panel solution. Concerns were raised about whether the proposed system would sufficiently cover the school's power bill, especially given that peak solar generation (11 am-3 pm) may not align with the school's highest power draw (winter mornings, 6-9 am, for heating).
 - Hayley confirmed that **excess power generated can be sold back to the grid via "Flex,"** as advised by Morgan Easton (Power Board member).
 - **Action Item:** Hayley to confirm with the solar panel provider (Ryan) that the quoted system will produce enough power to significantly offset the school's overall electricity bill and to clarify any details about battery storage or other solutions. Hayley will follow up with the Ministry (Ferdie Koen) regarding their school's solar panel installation.
 - **Action Item:** Hayley to send an email to the solar panel provider to inquire about timeframes for the project.
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11. Meeting Close

Board Transitions:

- Discussion around the upcoming board member transitions (due to the August 11th changes) and ensuring new members receive relevant information, particularly regarding the round forms.
- The current Chairman of the Board (Ed Finlay) will be stepping down, as will Stacey.
- The Home and School President position was raised, with a suggestion for a transition given Jane's current roles on the Trust and previous roles, and the potential for a leadership change during their AGM (scheduled for Aug 12th).
- The school trust's composition (Chairman of the Board, Chairman of the Home and School, and one other board member) was noted, indicating changes to the trust will also be needed.
- Ed Finlay resigned his position as Presiding Member of the Board.

MOTION: Hayley moved that Joe Laming assume the role of Presiding Member, effective immediately.

- Moved: Hayley
- Seconded: Ed
- Carried unanimously.

Thank you

Damian expressed thanks on behalf of the school for the contributions made by the outgoing Board members, highlighting the dedication and time that they had put into making the school such a success.

Meeting Concluded: 8:08 PM