

Meeting Minutes

Meeting: Papakaio School BoT Board Meeting

Date: Date of Meeting - 23rd June 2025

Attendees: Damian Brown (Principal), Ed Finlay (Presiding Member), Nikki Wheeler (Staff rep), Hayley Easton (Parent Rep) , Joe Laming (Parent Rep), Jess Wright (Parent Rep)

Apologies: Fiona Nelson (Parent Rep), Stacey Butson (Parent Rep)

1. Karakia & Introductions

- The meeting began with a karakia led by Joe.
 - Attendees introduced themselves to ensure recognition.
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2. Conflict of Interest

- No conflicts of interest were declared since the last meeting.
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3. Minutes from the Last Meeting

- The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed.
 - **MOTION:** That the minutes from the last meeting be accepted as true and correct.
 - Moved: Jess
 - Seconded: Joe
 - Carried unanimously.
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4. Matters Arising

- None from the previous meeting.
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5. Correspondence & Board Membership Clarification

- Damian reported a phone call with NZSTA (Bruce) regarding board member numbers.
 - The school currently has six elected parent board members, while NZSTA advises a maximum of five.
 - It was noted that this has been the case since 2018.
 - A past oversight in the re-election process for board members whose terms had ended was identified as a potential cause.
 - **Key Point:** For the upcoming triennial elections, four current elected members will be stepping down (everyone except Hayley and Joe).
 - **Key Point:** To align with NZSTA guidance, the school will advertise for **three** elected parent board positions.
 - Stacey has indicated her desire to re-apply for a position.
 - The board discussed the importance of defining positions within the board, like a secretary or finance officer, though acknowledged the reality of changing roles.
 - Damian mentioned that NZSTA praised the use of AI (Gemini) for secretary duties as a legal and clever solution.
 - **MOTION:** That Megan be formally appointed as the **Returning Officer** for the Papakai School Board triennial parent elections. The election date will be **September 8th**, with nominations being called for **three** positions for a three-year term. The board will **not** be providing electronic voting. Candidate profiles will be required 28 days prior to the election date.
 - Moved: Ed
 - Seconded: Joe
 - Carried unanimously.
 - **Action Item:** Megan to be provided with all necessary information and dates from NZSTA to manage the election process.
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6. Principal's Report (Damian)

- **Attendance:** (Details reserved for a later, dedicated discussion point).
- **Self-Review (Vision Examination):**
 - Damian shared preliminary ideas for strategic goals for the next three years, focusing on:
 - The school's place within the community.
 - Curriculum delivery.
 - Personnel and school culture (aligning with "knowledge and character").
 - These ideas are being developed in collaboration with the Springboard Trust. The next meeting will focus on defining metrics and assessment methods for these goals.
- **Teacher Registrations:** All teacher registrations are current.
- **Personnel:** The school is still actively looking for a Learning Assistant for Room 5.
- **Audited Budget Statements:**

- **Key Point:** The 2024 audit has been finalized. Solutions and Services have provided a full budget statement of financial position and statement of cash flow, extracted from the board-approved operating and capital budgets, for use in the 2025 annual accounts.
- **MOTION:** *"Now that the 2024 audit has been finalised Solutions and Services has provided a full budgeted statement of financial position & statement of cashflows extracted from the Board approved operating & capital budgets for use in the 2025 annual accounts. We acknowledge that these reports are prepared post 2024 audit finalisation to ensure accuracy and usefulness in the 2025 annual accounts. On this basis the Board approves the use of these documents in the 2025 annual reports."*
 - Moved: Ed
 - Seconded: Jess
 - Carried unanimously.
- **Classroom Upgrades:** No new developments to report.
- **Staff Support & Health and Safety:**
 - Damian expressed deep appreciation for the staff's resilience and support, especially given ongoing demands over the past three years.
 - No major incidents have occurred since the last meeting, and no drills have been conducted.
- **Leave & Sabbatical Leave Requests:** These items were deferred to a later committee discussion.
- **Roll Numbers:**
 - Current roll is 118, having balanced out after initial losses post "moving day" due to recent new enrolments.
 - The school anticipates reaching 121 students by the end of the year.
 - Damian is confident of being staffed for six teachers next year and plans to dispute if necessary.

7. Financial Report (Damian)

- The financial report was presented.
- No specific questions or points were raised for discussion beyond the earlier audit approval.
- **MOTION:** That the financial report be tabled as read.
 - Moved: [Damian]
 - Seconded: [Hayley]
 - Carried unanimously.

8. Attendance Report & Achievement Data Discussion

- **Attendance Report (Damian):**

- Attendance is trending upwards compared to last year.
- Most long-term absences are explained by medical reasons or family holidays (e.g., a family trip to India).
- Out of the "red" singular absences, three of four are explained by holidays or long-term medical absences; one is a long-standing issue.
- **Key Point:** Team Services advises a focus on students with attendance below 80% (which would be 8 students for the school currently, typically the easier ones to explain). The government's new target is 80%, down from 85%.
- Joe expressed concern about the "green zone" (students above 80% but not consistently attending), suggesting that even small improvements in this large group could significantly impact overall achievement. He highlighted the lost learning opportunities for these 24 students (20-25% of the roll).
- Damian confirmed that increased public awareness and discussion about attendance has likely contributed to the upward trend.
- The school currently has 81 students above 90% attendance.
- Discussion around incentivizing attendance (e.g., certificates, house points for 90-94%, 95-98%, 98-100%).
- **Action Item:** Damian to provide more detailed data and reporting on students in the "green zone" (e.g., those in the 80-90% and 90-95% bands) and their reasons for absence.

- **Achievement Data Reports (Damian):**

- Damian expressed satisfaction that the school has **not experienced the typical mid-year slide** in achievement this year.
- **Reading:**
 - **Key Point:** The downward trend in reading (evident since 2021) has been arrested.
 - For the first time since 2021, the total percentage of students "at risk" and "working towards" expectations has decreased from the previous year.
 - 74% of students are at or above expectations (a slight increase from 72% at the end of 2024). This is positive as there has been no backslide this year.
 - **Gender Split:** Boys have made significant progress in reading, moving from 58% at or above expectations in June last year to 73% this year. The percentage of boys failing has reduced from nearly half to 28%. The historic gender gap has significantly closed (girls hold only a 2% advantage over boys, compared to a previous 25% gap).

- **Ethnicity Split:** Māori students are the only group not showing positive progress in reading. While 13% are above expectations, 63% are not hitting targets. This is an outlier compared to last year's improvements.
- **Year Level Split:** Year 2 students (now Year 3) who were a concern last year have made significant gains, suggesting early MSL intervention is highly effective. The Year 7 cohort (who did not benefit from early MSL) continues to struggle, highlighting the difficulty of rectifying issues later in schooling.
- Overall, the reading data presents an encouraging picture, with improved comprehension due to reduced cognitive load from decoding.
- Damian attributed the reading improvements to having a more effective and experienced MSL teacher (Wendy) who excels in structured delivery.
- **Writing:**
 - **Key Point:** Only 20% of students are working below expectations, a result Damian attributes directly to the success of the Writer's Toolbox.
 - The school has not seen the typical backslide evident in previous years.
 - Overall percentage of students at or above expectations is consistent with the end of last year, with more students achieving *beyond* expectations.
 - **Gender Split:** Boys are "absolutely thriving" in writing, showing the best results in Damian's 10-year tenure at the school. The gamification and structured nature of Writer's Toolbox, along with teacher familiarity, are believed to be key factors. Girls are also performing well, with 31% achieving beyond expectations.
 - **Ethnicity Split:** While not as stark as in reading, Māori students are still the lowest achievers in writing. However, 63% of Māori students achieving in writing would be considered good in isolation, but stands out due to the exceptional progress of other groups.
 - **Year Level Split:** Year 2 students (now Year 3) who were at risk last year have significantly improved (from 12 to 4 at-risk students), again supporting the effectiveness of early intervention. The same group of 5 Year 7 students struggling in reading are also struggling in writing, indicating a correlation.
 - Damian is highly proud of the school's writing results, noting they are honest and not "massaged." He cautioned that further significant jumps (like 20%) may be harder to achieve moving forward as the remaining strugglers have had long-standing challenges.
- **Māori Learner Data (Additional Discussion):**
 - A specific concern was raised regarding three Māori students with consistently poor attendance and low literacy results, suggesting a strong correlation.

- The discussion highlighted that a lack of exposure to regular schooling as a family norm can perpetuate a cycle of low attendance and engagement, where parents may not fully perceive the impact.
- It was noted that students, like anyone, tend to dislike activities they're not good at, making school challenging if they're already behind due to absence.
- **Action Item:** Damian to approach the families of these Māori learners with a "blank piece of paper" to ask what support they need, rather than prescribing solutions.

○ **Maths:**

- **Key Point:** A slight improvement was observed compared to this time in 2024, with students below expectations decreasing from 30-32% to 22-23%. This suggests the new pedagogical changes for maths are beginning to show positive results.
- **Challenges with Prime Maths:** The Prime Maths curriculum is text-heavy, posing a literacy barrier for some students. Feedback has been given to developers regarding adapting features like voice-to-text. The international nature of the program means it lacks a New Zealand context, though NZ-specific textbooks are planned.
- It was noted that despite the challenges, Prime helps students identify the maths in word problems, contributing to success in testing like GLOSS.
- **Comparison to End of 2024:** The percentage of students below expectations has decreased from 28% at the end of last year to 23% currently, halting a concerning downward trend in maths.
- **Gender Split:** Maths achievement is relatively even across genders. Boys have slightly improved quicker (32% below to 28%) compared to girls (25% below to 20%).
- **Ethnicity Split:** Māori students' achievement in maths (63% not meeting expectations) is consistent with writing results, remaining a key area for focus.
- **Year Level Split:** The Year 2-3 group is still recovering, and the same Year 7 students struggling in reading and writing also show difficulties in maths, likely due to the literacy demands of the resources.
- **Overall Maths Outlook:** Despite being a new program, solid progress has been made, stopping the negative slide. The decrease in the "at-risk" category (from 22% in 2024 to 15% in 2025) and a slight increase in students exceeding expectations indicate accelerated progress across different student levels.
- The confidence gained from success in literacy (reading and writing) is expected to positively impact maths performance.
- **Key Point:** The data validates the school's strategic choices for student advancement. Damian emphasized the importance of maintaining a long-term perspective and trusting the process.

- **Overall Achievement Summary (Damian):**

- Damian expressed immense satisfaction with the staff's performance over the last six months, highlighting the exceptional nature of the mid-year report with no "slide backwards."
 - The consistency brought by initiatives like MSL and Writer's Toolbox is clearly benefiting students.
 - The school has recently completed a curriculum-aligned scope and sequence for writing using the Writer's Toolbox, providing clear progression across year levels and ensuring seamless transitions.
 - The use of "whisper phones" (acoustic listening devices) allows students to hear themselves read, aiding in self-correction without disturbing others.
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9. Target Data Students (Continued Discussion)

- The target data shows an 80% success rate for students achieving their writing targets, echoing the school-wide progress.
 - For maths and reading target data, two-thirds of targeted students are on track to meet their goals.
 - Damian expressed satisfaction with the identification, intervention, and tracking of these students.
 - All figures for mid-year target data are up from last year, indicating that longer-term interventions are gaining traction.
 - The staff's efforts were highly commended for these "absolutely exceptional" results.
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10. Meeting Closure

- **MOTION:** That the Principal's Reports (including Attendance, Financial, Health & Safety, General Annual Goals, and Achievement/Target Data Reports) be accepted by the Board.
 - Moved: Ed
 - Seconded: Jess
 - Carried unanimously.

The meeting went into committee to discuss sensitive personnel matters.

Meeting Concluded: 8:08 PM
