

## Houghton Valley School Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Monday 21 February 2022

*Meeting held via Zoom due to COVID-19*

**Meeting opened:** 7:05pm

**Present:** Bret McKenzie (Presiding Member), Luana Carroll (Principal), Mike Brough, Georgie Ferrari, Vanessa Smith, Stephanie Bosch (Staff Trustee), Emily Faith (Secretary)

**Conflicts of interest:** None

**Last month's minutes:** Approved

### 1. Presiding Member

Bret is able to remain on as Presiding Member (Board Chair) until September. (Nominated by Georgie, seconded by Vanessa.)

### 2. Principal's Report

Luana noted that the COVID management team (Luana, Miriam, Denise, and Vanessa) has been in frequent contact, and thanked Vanessa for her participation. Having more people across this helps immensely.

Nice to start the term back at school and getting settled in under the Red setting. Whānau have been fantastic. New entrants are transitioning really well, thanks to Morgan.

Staff began the year with professional learning and development (PLD) on 'Pause Breathe Smile', which has been very useful. Lots of strategies for teachers and students. Self-regulation tools now more consistent across the school. Also continuing with maths PLD this year, and accelerated literacy learning. Steph ran a good session today on writing, which is a special area of focus. Teachers are setting goals for their professional growth. Trying to frontfoot a lot of regular planning work in order to focus on COVID.

Whānau meetings went well; great to see everybody.

At the Red setting, focusing on outside learning as much as possible (no masks required). Bringing in Healthy Minds, Healthy Bodies programme (outside). No external activities this term under Red, so no activity fee sought from parents.

Last year – revisited school vision. Long term plan and annual goals reflect this vision. Hauora sits at the heart of everything. Teachers are upskilling in assessment as children are learning (will be more sharing of learning on Spotlight, at least 7 items per child per term).

Last year's budget finalised, with the exception of one outstanding invoice. Came in with an underspend. A number of overspends have been COVID expenses (around \$23k, which was not funded by the Ministry, unlike in 2020 when extra funds were made available). Already have been spending a lot on extra supplies eg masks, cleaning products. Expect will have to pay more for relievers if teachers are away sick.

Good position with auditors; tracking well to have audit done on time. Denise has done a great job moving everything along.

Retaining wall has been finished, although grass has been sprayed on instead of the planting that was expected. Have asked the property manager to come back on this. The construction team was excellent.

Focus on how to connect and communicate with whānau – will have a regular Zui (Zoom hui) on a Friday. Will also have Zuis on topics people want to engage on, such as COVID – to allow people to ask questions, go through the plan, and how home learning will occur.

Sadly about to lose the head from our local Community of Learning / Kāhui Ako, Karen Spencer, so Kāhui is looking for a new lead.

Board noted that it has been an outstanding start to the year; feedback is that the school is managing the COVID response really well.

Noted mask wearing not compulsory for staff but all staff have chosen to wear them. Not worn outdoors. Important for children to see faces. Exceptions are made for children with hearing issues – teachers can remove masks so they are able to lipread. Met with these whānau before school started to go through how this would happen.

### **3. COVID-19 Update**

Luana is spending a lot of time on COVID management out of school time. Trying to encourage other local schools to share information and resources, so parents with children at different schools are hearing consistent messages. COVID will bring a lot of extra administration – for example, Luana and Miriam will have to do all the contact tracing and notifications.

Difficult to say what the tipping point will be when the school needs to close for on-site learning – eg, when more than 4 teachers are sick/isolating across the school. Board will make the decision to close, based on recommendation from the Ministry. Note that there may be multiple closures if there are waves of illness.

Staff are feeling secure about level of preparation. Feedback received from whānau was that for learning from home, they want children to be able to learn independently and connect with teachers. However, this is hard to plan as staff may be sick or need to care for others in their households.

Agreed the more communication with whānau, the better.

### **4. Election Planning**

Emily volunteered to act as the Returning Officer for the election that needs to be held in May. Need to fill Kelly's position; later in the year, Vanessa, Mike and Bret's roles will come up. Bret will write a note to parents explaining why we will have two elections this year.

### **5. Annual Plan and Strategic Goals**

Luana spoke to a report 'Analysis and Variance Reporting', which is a Ministry requirement. It measures progress against the school's strategic plan and annual goals. Some things to note:

- strategic plan aims to engage tamariki as learners, students have agency and take ownership of their learning – addressing this through the Inquiry programme led by Morgan
- culturally responsive lens is interwoven throughout (led by the Cultural Responsiveness Team)
- explicit teaching – learning is pitched at the right levels, assessment practice is more coherent and robust
- using our outdoor environment, working towards EnviroSchool GreenGold rating
- ensuring that Māori students are achieving
- Pause Breathe Smile programme
- strong focus on writing skills
- moving to peer coaching for assessment (for teachers), rather than leadership-led appraisal
- attendance measure – if a child feels engaged, they are more likely to want to come to school; behavioural measures also linked to engagement
- focus on the 'Exploring' part of our school vision – going outside for new learning opportunities.

A question was asked about whether gender diversity can be incorporated into our strategic goals (hauora). The board noted the list of goals is extensive. Are we aiming to do too much, or asking too much of staff? Mindful of their workloads. Luana explained that many of the above goals are interrelated (can be worked on together), some can be completed quickly (such as PLD), others will be year-long, and it is important not to lose momentum on programmes once begun. Staff have clear and defined areas of responsibility. Plan has been developed with a COVID lens in case COVID has a significant impact on the school year (can pivot to focus on specific areas, not competing tasks).

## **6. Budget**

Comments as per above in the Principal's Report; effect of COVID remains to be seen.

December 2021 and January 2022 budgets approved.

## **7. Property update**

The scope of the renovation project may have shifted again (due to level of damage to existing walls – the western wall in Ngaio particularly needs work). More discussions are needed. Asphalt on top court – this was going to be done at the same time as the walls. Need confirmation from architects that no more drains need to be laid before the court can be resealed.

Review progress in both these areas at next meeting.

## **8. Closing remarks**

Board acknowledged all the hard work by Luana and the teaching team, especially in the current environment with COVID.

**Meeting closed: 8.30pm**

*Next meeting: Monday 21 March 2022*

*Signed: Paul McKerrin*