

**VICTORIA AVENUE SCHOOL
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
NEWSLETTER
May 2010**

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Board of Trustee Elections 2010

The three-yearly process of electing the school's Board of Trustees is now well underway, with the voting having closed last Friday. In the end, there were 14 nominations received (incredibly, 10 received in the final 36 hours before nominations closed), and this week we will find out the result and which 5 people will take office as the new Board on Friday 14-May. The first meeting of the new Board is being held on Monday 31 May 2010 at 7:30pm.

Our warmest thanks go to Gerard Brown and Tom Gordon who are standing down at this election.

Gerard was co-opted to the Board in 2008 to handle the Policy portfolio and has used his wide knowledge and experience as a lawyer to tremendous effect. He fitted in straight away around the Board table, and there have been many instances where Gerard's sage advice and professional knowledge have been of great value to the school.

Tom has been a Board member since 2004 and retires as Deputy Chairperson. Tom's professional life in the education sector has brought great balance to the Board, and his input will most certainly be missed. Being a member of the HR subcommittee, Tom has played a huge part in many of the key personnel placements, including the appointment of Allan Short as principal.

To both Gerard and Tom, we extend our sincere appreciation for their time and dedication.

Donations

It is no secret that the Board relies heavily on the School Contributions (voluntary donations) from parents.

In 2009 the total donations received were \$177,000 (representing an 80% collection rate), and to date the school has received just \$141,000 which represents full donations from only 60% of school families.

This year's annual budget is based on a collection rate of 85% of full donations being received (although obviously we would like that figure to be higher), and while some of this will be made up by instalment payments, year-to-date, we are well short of the \$200,000 which would meet that target.

The 2010 budget that has been approved by the Board shows a surplus after expenses of just \$7,700 leaving little room for flexibility and the probability of a deficit if we don't achieve our 85% collection rate.

If you haven't paid already, we ask for your support and for payment of the \$460 school donation for your child.

Property Update

In 2009, the Board commissioned a firm of architects to come up with a "Property Masterplan" for the school site to give us a big picture that we can work towards, and this plan has been accepted

and approved by the Board. The architects recommended creating separate areas for the senior, middle and junior school groups. Due to the magnitude of the total project, they recommended the masterplan could be broken down into four stages for execution.

Stage 1 is the start of a re-development of the Junior School, and at \$515,000 on its own is a significant investment for the school. Ministry funding will cover just over half of the total cost of the project with our own cash reserves making up the difference.

If you've been at the school recently, you will have noticed that work is now well underway on the new junior school block. Work commenced on the relocation and renovation of two classrooms at the beginning of the April school holidays and we are hoping that they will be handed back to the school for use in Mid-May. The building consent has recently been issued, and construction will now start on the two new classrooms and these are due to be completed for the start of term three.

The masterplan, and full details and plans of these significant improvements will soon be available in the school reception and on the website.

School Vision, Values and Strategic Plan

During 2009, the Board went through a strategic planning process during which time we reviewed and updated the vision, values and set the school's four year strategic plan.

The process involved the Board, the Senior Management Team, staff, students and an outside facilitator. The results of recent annual parent surveys were also considered.

The result is the School Charter, a document which contains the vision, values, and strategic goals for the next 4 years, which forms the basis for the detailed annual planning by the Senior Management Team and teaching staff.

The School Charter is on the school's website at : <http://www.victoriaave.com/our-school/charter>

We encourage you to take a look at the Charter, and read not just the vision and values, but also the six strategic goals which will drive much of what happens school-wide in the next four years.

Allan Short and his team provide regular updates to the Board against the goals in the strategic plan.

PTS Events

The PTS plays such an important role in school life and does a very successful job of it; not just in its much-needed fundraising capacity, but also in the friend-raising it achieves by bringing a key component of our school vision, "We encourage family and community involvement", to life.

The Board is most grateful for the efforts of all concerned on the PTS during Term One with the success of the Meet the Teacher evening , School Picnic and Promises Auction being just three examples of their huge dedication to VAS.

I can assure you that the money raised by the PTS makes a significant difference to our school and the school could not operate without their time, commitment and support.

Behaviour Management Policy

During 2009, the Board of Trustees conducted a review of the Student Behaviour Management Policy and Procedure. This review has been comprehensive and wide-ranging, and included consultation with the school community including pupils, staff and parents and an independent ERO

special review. The final policy and procedure has been ratified by the Board, is in use at the school and is available on the school website at:

<http://www.victoriaave.com/our-school/policies-and-procedures>

The Values of VAS which form part of the school charter were developed by the students themselves and have been used as a base for this policy.

There has been an investment made in the professional development of staff in restorative practice and this has already been put to good use.

We thank all those that provided input and feedback during the process.

Summary

Although I am seeking re-election, this is my last newsletter as chairperson of our current school Board. Although this Board term has had its challenges, we have accomplished much in the last three years and on a personal note I have thoroughly enjoyed working with such a talented and dedicated group of people.

Special note has to go to Allan Short, who leads a superb team of teachers and support staff, and has exceeded all expectations we had when we appointed him in 2008.

A great school does not just happen. It takes many people to bring that about – staff, parents and friends. The community is the life-blood of any school, but especially primary schools and particularly since the “Tomorrows Schools” concept was introduced by the government. Parents now have to take active responsibility for the performance of their children’s school and the elected Board representatives are there to ensure that happens on everyone’s behalf.

Vlad Kozak
May 2010