



# VICTORIA AVENUE SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES

## **Victoria Avenue School Board of Trustees Newsletter October 2011**

Welcome to the sixth newsletter for 2011 from your Board of Trustees.

The Board met again on 3 October and considered a broad range of matters including the ERO visit, a progress update on our strategic plan, results from recent reading assessments, a proposal from Year 6 students and the annual Health and Safety Report.

Term 3 is now at an end and the holidays are upon us. Reaching the end of Term 3 has been longer than normal (due to the Rugby World Cup timing extending Terms 1 and 2) and our students have certainly used this to make great progress in the classroom and get involved in a broad range of activities. A big thank you to our fantastic teachers for making the term so enjoyable and diverse for our students, and also to all the parents who got involved to help make our school the best it can be.

### **ERO Visit**

As many of you will know, the Education Review Office (ERO) visited our school last week. On Friday last week and Monday this week, the Board of Trustees received formal feedback from ERO on their review of our school.

The feedback we received was outstanding and quite overwhelming. The reviewers indicated that this was a very impressive review, that morale throughout the school was excellent and that the teaching quality was of a very high standard. As a result, students are well engaged in learning and student achievement is consistently well above expectations.

Our school is very fortunate to have a great team of very talented senior management, teachers and support staff who have all contributed to this wonderful result. The feedback from ERO is a direct result of the passion, expertise and dedication they all bring to our school.

We expect that ERO's final report will be available for public release in early November once it has been through the confirmation processes.

### **Year 6 "Marvellous Makeover" Proposal**

The Board was delighted to consider a proposal from the Year 6 students in Rooms 4 and 6 regarding the "Marvellous Makeover" of the outdoor area behind Rooms 7-10.

This proposal emerged from an inquiry learning project that the students have undertaken over the past few weeks. It involves:

- Revitalising the "forest" area below the new decks outside Rooms 7-10
- Building a new stairway connecting the decks and the boardwalk
- Extensive new planting throughout the "forest" area

The Board was hugely impressed with the careful thought and effort that went into the proposal and has agreed to support it. We look forward to assisting the students of Rooms 4 and 6 bring this proposal "to life" during Term 4. If you are interested in finding out more about the project please look at the presentation in the main corridor outside Room 6.

### **Student Achievement**

As part of our review of the Annual Targets adopted by the Board for 2011, the Board reviewed the results of the STAR reading assessment for Year 3 students. The results showed a significant improvement from Term 1 to Term 3 with 78% of Year 3 students now achieving at an “above average” level and no students “below average”. Particularly good progress was made in the areas of comprehension and vocabulary, reflecting the teaching focus implemented following the review of the assessment results in Term 1.

### **Progress with Strategic Plan**

Allan Short also updated the Board on progress towards our six strategic goals at the meeting. Overall, the school is making very good progress during the year-to-date. Some key points to highlight are:

- A full programme of staff professional development in “Thinking Skills” has been undertaken, and our school has been accredited as a “Thinking School” by the Cognitive Education Centre at Exeter University
- Excellent progress has been made regarding the introduction of National Standards, particularly in the use of assessment data and the moderation of achievement results across and between year groups
- The trial programme in Te Reo Maori commenced in Term 2 with the Middle Syndicate has been very successful and, as a result, has been extended to the Senior Syndicate in Term 3
- Development of the Ultranet is nearing completion – it is already being used by staff and students, and a trial of the Parent Portal is now planned for Term 4

### **Financial Update**

Andrew Cleland updated the Board on various financial matters. We are making very good progress in relation to school contributions, having received \$195,000 in contributions as at the end of last week. However, we still require further contributions to achieve our budget for this year. The Board followed up with parents regarding non-payment of contributions earlier in Term 3 and has also sent reminders this week to parents who are paying contributions on an instalment basis.

The Finance Sub-Committee has also drafted a debt management procedure to ensure that all parents are clear about how overdue expenses will be managed by the school. Consistent with this procedure, amounts that are overdue by more than four months will be referred to a debt collection agency.

### **PTS – Change of Chairperson**

Kim Grenfell updated the Board on the PTS’s activities. In particular, she advised that Kim Hamilton has “retired” as Chairperson of the PTS after giving over three years to this role. Kim has made an enormous contribution during her time as Chairperson – she has been instrumental in setting up systems and documenting procedures for PTS events, adopted a “think big” approach in the annual planning of the PTS calendar and worked tirelessly to ensure all the PTS’s fundraising and friend-raising goals have been achieved.

We extend our sincere thanks to Kim for her immense contribution to our school. We have been very fortunate to have had the benefit of her energy, organisation and innovation in the Chairperson role. Under her leadership the PTS has contributed over \$300,000 to our school and also made a tremendous contribution to our school community and spirit.

A new Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson are expected to be confirmed by the PTS at its next meeting.

### **Junior School Shade Canopy**

Allan Short updated the Board on progress with the new shade canopy outside Rooms 11-14. A contractor has been appointed and we expect construction to commence during the holiday break.

### **Wifi in Our School**

As indicated in our previous newsletter, the Board has written to the Minister of Education and the Minister of Health to seek their guidance on the safety of using wifi in our school.

The Board had not received a response prior to our meeting and hence deferred any further discussion on this matter until our next meeting.

### **Health and Safety Report**

Alana De Bruyn presented a comprehensive annual Health and Safety Report to the Board. This report considered all aspects of health and safety in our school including sickness and injury, crisis management, environmental hazards, water safety and arrangements for non-custodial and shared custodial parents.

While the report did not identify any significant issues that needed to be addressed, it did make a range of recommendations for the Board to consider. The Board accepted these recommendations and delegated responsibility to Allan Short to implement them.

The report also highlighted the following important “reminders” for parents and students:

- The Cyber Safety Use Agreement sent to all families in Term 3 needs to be signed and returned – students are unable to use the internet at school until this is done
- All visitors to the school (including parents, volunteers and contractors) must sign-in upon entry to the school and be made aware of any potential hazards pertaining to their visit

### **Parent Survey**

The Board intends to conduct an online parent survey again early in Term 4. This will provide all parents with the opportunity to provide feedback on our school and how we can make it even better for our children. The survey results will be used to review school performance and establish objectives for 2012 and beyond. We look forward to your feedback.

We hope everyone has an enjoyable holiday break and continues to enjoy the excitement of the Rugby World Cup. Go the mighty All Blacks!

Our next meeting is scheduled for Monday 7 November during the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of Term 4.

Rob Hamilton  
Chairperson