

Under the Radar

An important update about Board matters

August 2010

Welcome to this, the fourth of our regular updates on Whenuapai School from your Board of Trustees to keep you, the parents and community, informed about your School. Here are some of the matters discussed at our recent meeting.

Keyboards and Key Thinking

Senior staff and ICT Coordinator Shannon Corsan have spent considerable time over the last few years grappling with how to bring Whenuapai School up to scratch on the ICT front (that's computers and stuff in case you didn't know). This month, Shannon and Deputy Principal Karney Dawson presented a new strategy to take things forward. They were ably assisted by new staff rep Mary Anne Carr-Neil who was able to give a teachers perspective on how decent ICT tools can make a difference to classroom learning. It made for a compelling case, especially when viewed with what we are expected to deliver under the National Curriculum. So, the Board voted to support a strategy which will future proof the School and give students and teachers the tools to learn and teach in the 21st Century. The next bit is how far to go and how to pay for it. Watch this space. Ideas and budgets are being kicked around as we speak, but its been a leap forward to see the strategy endorsed.

Building Blocks

When we are talking about struggling for cash for computers, it might be hard to figure out how we can be talking about having money to rebuild the Administration Block. Here goes an attempt at an explanation– the Ministry of Education gives us Operational Funding to run the School on a day-to-day basis. That's to cover everything from teaching costs to courses to sports to, yes, ICT. The money to pay for property related matters comes from an entirely different stream and we can't divert either stream into the other. There's no doubt that the Admin Block needs work quick smart– the staff room is crammed, we have two deputies tripping over each other in a single office, the Office / Entrance area need re-thinking and there is no appropriate meeting room. Luckily we can approach the Ministry about dipping into the Capital works funding stream to do something about it. So we have. This month, the Board approved the draft plans that we will be asking the Ministry to support. Fingers crossed!

Across the Board

We were presented with information gathered from the first portion of National Standards data. It was an accumulation of the Standards across the School - a collation of all the raw information presented to parents in the reports last term. What it shows is that Whenuapai School is doing very, very well. The numbers of children who have already achieved or exceeded National Standard is impressive, and the numbers who will by the end of the year is even more so. It's a great opportunity to thank our staff and senior management for the job they do.

Healthy and Safe

You may have seen recent media coverage about the impacts of the tragedy at one school where the boiler blew up, killing a valued staff member. With the courts recently holding the Board to account for it's part in the tragedy it is a reminder to all schools to ensure they have a safe environment. With that in mind, Board member Brendon Harkness together with Principal Warren Spanhake and Caretaker Tony Bonner have embarked on a project to review the School's health and safety policies, standards and practices to make sure everyone—staff, students and visitors, are safe. As they say, it is better to be safe than sorry.

That's all for now – we'll be back with another update after the next board meeting at **7pm on September 13**. Your Board is: Peter Lamberton (Chairperson), Warren Spanhake (Principal), Mary Anne Carr-Neil (staff rep), Gregg Carrington-Hogg, Brendon Harkness, Tracy Collins, Les Stockley and Eugene Bingham.