

Under the Radar

An important update about Board matters

May 2010

Welcome to this, the second of our regular updates on Whenuapai School from your Board of Trustees. Here are some of the matters discussed at our recent meeting.

Strip Landing: Last year, you'll have noticed that our friends at the Air Force erected a tall wire fence around the entire perimeter of the Base. You may have seen it as a barrier; in fact it has brought the school and the base closer together. With the help of the base rep on the board, Tracy Collins, the Air Force has agreed to let us use their land adjacent to the school. It's a strip of up to about 10m wide between the new fence and the old one, and runs from the front gate to the back of the school. It will be particularly useful for the cross country and as a retreat for classes during the summer. Our thanks to the Air Force for this generous gesture.

Heating up: While the temperature has been dropping lately, we're hoping it will soon be a tad warmer in the library and resource room. This year, the library moved to the old block behind the astro-turf to make way for the creation of new classrooms. While the facilities are not ideal, the board is anxious to make it as comfortable as we can. With that in mind we've agreed to install 2 air conditioning units in the library to cope with the temperature fluctuations and conditions for the books and staff. In other property news, the teachers and Mr Spanhake say that the Archgolas you'll have noticed outside some of the classroom blocks are being made good use of, shelter from the sun and rain. We're so impressed that it's likely you'll see more going up this year, thanks to funding from the Ministry of Education.

Reporting in: This term's reports will focus on literacy. In the last week of the term you'll get an update on how your children are performing in reading, writing and spelling. It's the usual high quality stuff with one slight but significant difference. After all the controversy you'll have heard in the news about National Standards, you'll get to see what they're actually all about. Pupil's ability in reading and written language will be reported against the National Standards. The mid year report measures pupils progress in relation to National Standards, at that point in time. The board will also receive collated data on what percentage of pupils at each level of the school are achieving or not achieving the standards, an important tool to measure how well we're helping the teachers and staff.

Next, please! The Year 5-8 parent-teacher interviews were a hit with staff reporting a good turn-out. The Year 0-4 teachers will be available on June 30. Make sure to check out the new online booking system which parents of the senior school pupils reported was a terrific innovation. These meetings are an important opportunity for teachers and parents to catch up and discuss the childrens' progress so please make use of them.

Back to basics: A reshuffle of our budget has allowed the board to free up some money for the school to make long-overdue replacement of furniture in rooms 9-20. We've bought a variety of equipment including book shelves, book displays and art trolleys. These will go a long way to helping teachers store resources and make for more attractive classrooms.

Let's count again: As you'll know, the school's roll has grown markedly over the last few years – about 25%. Last year, to stem the flow somewhat we stopped accepting out-of-zone enrolments (except siblings of existing pupils). But still we grow. This year, we expected 54 new entrants. The actual number will be 66. This is in part because of people moving into the area and also because we weren't told about other children turning five. That's an important point – to help with planning, please let us know early when children are due to start school, and please suggest to any neighbours or friends to do the same. A new class will be set up in Room 5 in August to cater for the increase in roll number.

Under the Radar

An important update about Board matters

Computer days: The provision of ICT – computers and stuff – is a topic the board ponders regularly. Many of you will remember the process we went through in 2008 deciding if we would install a “Discovery Room” to complement the ICT suite. The board decided it was not something we could afford at the time. Nevertheless we decided it was important we review that decision in the future. ICT head Shannon Corsan and co-deputy head Karney Dawson have asked the board to again think of what level of ICT we have in the school. At this month’s meeting they posed an interesting question for the board: “What skills and learning opportunities with ICT do you want students to experience by the time they leave Whenuapai in Year 8?” As parents and staff, what do you think? Should we have computers in the classrooms? How well do you think the current level of ICT is serving the pupils? Bear in mind that the curriculum states as one of its key competencies for pupils: “They confidently use ICT to access and provide information and to communicate with others.” As always, we’re interested in what you think and we’ll certainly keep you informed of any decisions we consider.

Board of Trustees Contact Details:

Warren Spanhake (principal)	warrens@whenuapai.school.nz
Peter Lambertson	peter.lamberton@asb.co.nz
Shannon Corsan	shannonc@whenuapai.school.nz
Les Stockley	leslie.stockley@nzdf.mil.nz
Tracy Collins	TRACY.COLLINS@nzdf.mil.nz
Gregg Carrington-Hogg	gregg@cinemaservices.co.nz
Eugene Bingham	eugene.bingham@gmail.com
Ceilidh Martin	ceilidh.martin@nzdf.mil.nz