

**BOARD ON TOP**  
**Newsletter of the Tapanui School Board of Trustees**

10 October 2016

Dear Parents/Caregivers

The Board of Trustees met in the last week of term for our second meeting of Term Three. Our agenda included discussion around Play Based Learning, the Community Consultation Survey and the Maths Curriculum Report.

- 1. Play Based Learning** - At the beginning of Term Three the teachers in the Matai Hub introduced Play Based Learning to the classroom. Jane and Abbie joined us at the Board meeting to provide us with information on the research behind PBL and how it will benefit students at Tapanui School. While there have been some changes made to how learning is delivered, PBL still aligns with the New Zealand Curriculum, particularly around its focus on the Key Competencies (learner qualities). PBL also aligns with the goals laid out in our School Charter, particularly in regards to increasing student engagement in their learning and developing a school wide culture of self regulated learning and behaviour that is aligned to the school's mission and values. Reading, literacy and maths remain a key focus of learning in the Matai Hub. As a Board we are aware that some parents have concerns around PBL. We have had assurances from school management that staff will continue to work with parents and caregivers to provide information, answer questions and address concerns. An information Evening was held at the end of Term Three. On the first Wednesday of Term Four an Open Day will give parents an opportunity to visit the school and view how learning is being delivered in both hubs. This will be followed by a Parents Night on the Wednesday evening to answer questions you may have, specifically around PBL. If you are unable to attend either of these but have questions you would like to ask, please do not hesitate to contact the school to arrange a suitable time to meet with your child's teacher. One of our key roles as trustees is to monitor student achievement. We will continue to do so and, as always, will provide feedback on this to parents.
- 2. Community Consultation Survey** - The Board would like to thank you for your participation in this survey. Please find the report on the results of the survey at the end of this document. The board adopted the recommendations made by the Assurance Committee at our September meeting.
- 3. Maths Curriculum Report** - A very positive report on Mathematics (Statistics) was delivered to the Board. Statistics involves identifying problems that can be explored by the use of appropriate data, designing investigations, collecting data, exploring and using patterns and relationships in data, solving problems, and communicating findings. Statistics also involves interpreting statistical information, evaluating data-based arguments, and dealing with uncertainty and variation.

It should be noted that assessment in this strand of mathematics typically makes up around 5-20% of a teacher's OTJ (Overall Teacher Judgment) when reporting on Maths progress against the Government's National Standards.

Key Findings - Across the year groups 94% (90/96) are working within the expected level for their time at

school and 100% are working within or beyond expectations.

- 4. Community of Learning** - The Board of Trustees has received notice that the Minister of Education has accepted the Expression of Interest from West Otago schools to form a Community of Learning. The cluster includes Tapanui School, Waikoikoi School, Heriot School, Waikaka School, Blue Mountain College and Kidzway Early Learning Centre. At the beginning of Term Four we will meet, alongside a Ministry of Education representative, to outline the next steps in the process. We will continue to keep you informed as information becomes available.

#### **General**

Congratulations to the staff and students of Tapanui School for the excellent performance they put on in the last week of term at the school production of Ali Baba and the Bongo Bandits. What an amazing group of talented students we have, who were well supported by an enthusiastic staff.

It is hard to believe Term Four is here already. The Board meets again at the beginning of November, followed by our final meeting of the year in mid-December.

The Board would also like to remind parents that the Tapanui School Complaints Procedure is available for you to view on our website. A paper copy can also be requested by contacting the school office. It outlines the correct procedure for dealing with any concerns or complaints you may have.

Kind regards,

Alena Stuart

Board Chairperson

## **Community Consultation Survey - Results 2016**

The Tapanui parent community was surveyed on a variety of aspects of school performance and student engagement during Term 2, 2016. Summaries of the responses received by the Board, as well as recommendations, are shown below. Responses were received from 65 of the 76 families on our roll at the time of the survey.

### **Trends:**

#### **MY CHILD / REPORTING**

Students enjoy being at school, are encouraged to work to the best of their ability and generally find the work interesting. Parents are confident that the school is meeting their child's learning needs.

The community felt the school was approachable about any issues regarding their child or their learning. The interviews in Terms 1 and 3 were seen as a good way to gain an understanding of children's progress and achievement. School reports are well received and provide the information parents want.

#### **COMMUNICATION**

The school community use a variety of communication tools provided by the school. The most popular were the school newsletter and text alerts. Emailed reminders and notices are also appreciated.

#### **BRING YOUR OWN DEVICE**

A split here about whether BYOD was making a difference to student learning, however the Committee acknowledge that it may have been too early to expect a definitive result. About ⅔ of parents indicated they would likely provide a device for their child in 2017.

*(Please note - a Transition to Rimu Hub Evening will be held in Term Four which will include information about BYOD for Year 3 parents. More information about the evening will be provided by the school soon).*

#### **CURRICULUM**

The community endorsed the four school values and the majority were very happy with the amount of time dedicated to learning, fitness/sport, cultural aspects and meeting student's individual needs.

Most parents have a good understanding of MLP and believe the strategy works well for their children. Many parents have raised concerns around Play Based Learning.

#### **EDUCATION OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM**

The community supports the status quo around camp remains - one camp every year with a duration of 2-3 nights. 37 out of 65 parents believe there should be a Leadership Camp for Year Six students in addition. Parents indicated that overall students are given enough sporting opportunities.

#### **CHARTER**

Overall, parents responses to the questions in this portion of the survey were very positive, especially in regards to the questions around the Charter and Key Competencies.

The majority of parents find the Principal is approachable (83%), the school facilities and resources are adequate (90%), there are enough opportunities for parents to get involved in the school (94%), the school environment is tidy and complements learning (91%) and the school has a good reputation in the community (90%). Within the comments section there are three references to bullying. We are aware that the use of the word bullying is sometimes thrown around loosely, without correct understanding of its meaning. We believe the school has been actively seeking to reduce bullying and are confident this will remain a focus for school management.

## **SCHOOL UNIFORM**

64% of respondents would like to see the Merino Top added as an option.

## **THE SCHOOL YEAR**

Over half of parents (52%) are in favour of aligning with BMC. However, 66% percent of parents would prefer to start as late as the Ministry allows. It is normal practice for BMC to open as early as the Ministry allows. Therefore, if we were to align, we would not achieve option 2 of starting as late in the year as possible.

## **ONE BIG IMPROVEMENT.....**

There were several ideas including

- Upgrade the playground
- Update the buildings to reflect Modern Learning Environments

While the Board accepts these as areas for development, these are both areas for which there is no funding. To advance this the Board would rely on locally raised funds or using limited reserves.

## **Recommendations:**

The Assurance Committee

- Recommends that the staff provide greater clarity about the Homework Policy particularly for students in Year 1-3.
- Suggests that the community is reminded of the purpose of interviews and that our Charter puts 'students at the centre of learning'. Teachers are available for parents to meet them without their child present should this be desirable.
- Suggests a reminder is put into the newsletter each term of ways to contact teachers directly.
- A one page document is developed by the Principal and the Board bulleting the School's Vision and Annual Goals. It is suggested that this is sent home in Term 1 each year and also available on the website.
- Recommends the BYOD page on the website is updated to provide more information including the 'Fact Sheet' developed during the consultations in 2015.
- Suggests a reminder is put into the newsletter educating parents on the PTC App. A flyer about the setup and use of the PTC App is recommended.
- Recommends that teachers invest more time helping parents understand how learning happens so that those who have concerns particularly about literacy (reading, writing, spelling) have greater reassurance that these facets are happening as well as how they are happening. Help parents understand the philosophy behind changes to how learning is delivered (for example Play Based Learning) in advance in order for them to feel they have been involved and informed.
- Recommends that the Merino Top is added to the school uniform as an OPTIONAL item.
- Recommends that we discontinue our endeavour to align the school year with BMC due to the majority of parents wanting to start as late in the year as possible and a lack of overwhelming support to align, which Ministry had indicated we would be required to show. Tapanui School will therefore look to start as late as possible each year in line with the majority feedback.