



## KARORI NORMAL SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES HUI MINUTES

<b>Date</b>	Wednesday 6 December 2023
<b>Time</b>	6.30pm
<b>Present</b>	James Appleton (Acting Principal), Simon Johnson (parent trustee - Chair), Phil McIntosh (staff trustee) (by Zoom), Rosemary Mose (parent trustee), and Blair Wightman (parent trustee – Deputy Chair)
<b>Apologies</b>	Natalie Vaughan-Sanders (parent trustee)
<b>In attendance</b>	Jacque Kean (co-secretary), Jacqui Croft

### 1. ADMINISTRATION

#### 1.1 KARAKIA

Simon welcomed everyone to the Board hui. Board members began the hui with a karakia.

#### 1.2 PRESENT AND APOLOGIES

There was an apology from Natalie. Rosemary attended from 6.35pm onwards.

#### 1.3 CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

There were no changes to the agenda. It was noted that items 4.3, 'Related party disclosure', and 6.3, 'Principal Professional Coaching (and Wellbeing) Support Fund Term 4 Declaration', of the Acting Principal's report would be discussed in the public-excluded part of the meeting.

#### 1.4 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest in relation to the agenda for this meeting.

#### 1.5 CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

**It was moved** that the Board minutes of the meeting of 30 October 2023 be accepted as a true and correct record.

*Moved Simon / Seconded Blair / Agreed*

## **2. STRATEGIC REVIEW**

### **2.1 REFLECTION ON 2023 AS A BOARD, INCLUDING 'I LIKE, I WISH, I WONDER' THEMES**

Board members agreed to defer their reflection.

## **3. REGULAR REVIEW**

### **3.1 PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE AND FINANCIALS**

The Board took the Acting Principal's paper as read. The Board's discussion included the following:

#### **Roll**

There has been a big increase in the roll this year. The year started with a roll of 600, and will finish with over 700 students. Most years, the roll grows by between 50 and 75 students over the course of the year. This year the increase is over 100, which reflects a trend seen in other schools.

At the August and September board meetings, the Board approved funding from cash to cover the additional staffing required due to unexpected roll growth. This will be felt in the budget in 2024.

For 2024, the MoE is predicting a lower overall roll, but KNS already has over 20 students due to start at the beginning of the school year so the MoE's prediction may not be accurate. The school will have enough teachers to start with, and can apply for more staffing if the roll exceeds the MoE's prediction.

#### **Staff only day – item 1.1**

Colin Lambie led a successful staff-only day with a focus on the refreshed maths curriculum (which has phases rather than levels), along with planning for 2024.

The Board discussed the timeline for the release of Te Mātaiaho (the curriculum refresh). They noted that the final draft of Te Mātaiaho has yet to be released, and that there may yet be changes as a result of the change in Government. However, teachers are used to change and the SLT has confidence in the skill of KNS staff. The MoE has given two staff-only days for training in the new curriculum, and there will also be a Kāhui Ako day focusing on it.

#### **Akomanga Rūmaki trial terms 3 and 4 evaluation – item 1.3**

The Akomanga Rūmaki report was taken as read.

School-wide achievement data is currently being collated, and data from the Akomanga Rūmaki trial will be brought to the Board in early 2024.

Not counting absences due to family holidays during term time, attendance has increased by 3.3% for Akomanga Rūmaki students, with the biggest increases seen in those with the lowest attendance. There has also been an observable increase in engagement and confidence. Whānau have expressed their thanks at whānau hui.

Some new families have specifically asked if their child can join the class.

The Board noted that the main goal of the Akomanga Rūmaki trial is to increase the achievement of Māori learners. Whether there is a 'return on investment' will be hard to measure in the short term; whether there is meaningful change would need to be measured over the long term.

The school now has a funding option to continue the trial.

#### **Strategic Plan consultation – Whānau hui and Pasifika fono – item 2.1**

The Board held a successful hui and fono. Attendees liked being able to give face-to-face feedback, and it helped to build connections between parents and the school. The feedback builds on feedback already received via the survey.

The ESOL hui will be held on 13 February 2024, and the hui for the rest of the school community will be held on 20 February 2024.

The Board thanked Rosemary for her contribution to the hui.

#### **Health curriculum consultation – item 2.2**

The health curriculum community consultation included questions about contraception and STIs. KNS had not consulted on or taught those topics previously.

Of the 63 responses, only two were negative, with those two respondents unhappy that 'Navigating the Journey' is being taught at all. However, the Board noted that it is not optional, as it is part of the curriculum. The Board has no discretion to remove it from the curriculum.

The only real theme to emerge from the feedback is that there is low awareness of 'Navigating the Journey' amongst whānau of years 1 to 4. KNS will work to improve communication about the health curriculum with those year groups from now on.

The next step is for the Board to adopt a statement about the delivery of the health curriculum and share it with the school community for feedback. The draft statement was taken as read. It is KNS's statement, but it is not inconsistent with those of Kelburn Normal, Karori West, and Northland schools.

As with any other policy, KNS will need to revisit the statement if the new Government changes the curriculum.

**It was moved** that the Board adopts the health statement presented and shares it with the community for feedback.

*Moved Rosemary / Seconded Simon / Agreed*

KNS will share the statement with the community in the New Year.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>SLT</b>
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To consider face-to-face hui next time KNS seeks feedback on the health curriculum.	
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### **Staffing update – December 2023 – item 3.1**

Julia Laidlaw will be moving overseas. There have been good applicants for the vacancy and KNS expects to make an appointment shortly.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Blair</b>
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To conduct an exit interview with Julia Laidlaw.
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### **September 2023 finance report – item 4.1**

There are no finance issues of note.

### **KNS Payroll Internal Processes and Controls – item 4.4**

These are statements of who has authorised user access. They are important because the school generates the payroll and it is school personnel who benefit from that.

**It was moved** that, in accordance with the Ministry of Education/Edpay guidelines surrounding the school Payroll Internal Processes and Controls, the Board approves the following:

- The attached (to the Board pack) KNS Edpay Online Access Report for the End of Year 2023 and Start of Year 2024; and the Chairperson to sign.
- The attached (to the Board pack) KNS Edpay Online Access Report for the End of Year 2023 and Start of Year 2024; and the Chairperson to sign.
- These two approvals be recorded in the minutes and the approval process remain in the Board calendar twice a year – being December and June.

*Moved Simon / Seconded Blair / Agreed*

### **Revised 2024 KNS Budget – Values Project additional budget request – item 4.5**

As part of the Values Project, the SLT have found someone who would be ideal to work on incorporating the identity of the school in a new logo and signage and updated website.

The Board discussed the SLT's request for approval of additional expenditure of up to \$10,000 for this. The Board's discussion included the following:

- The website update would actually be a complete 're-do' of the website; it is not a 'rebranding' exercise.
- Initial impressions of the school are formed from the website.
- The work could be done in stages, without having to commit to every stage.
- The PTA may contribute to the final cost.
- At this stage the SLT is asking for approval for an increase in budget, not approval of a contract.

Although in principle the Board broadly supports a new website, logo, and signage, and will support a budget increase, as part of their due diligence they would like some further analysis from the SLT before approving any actual spend:

- A high-level statement of work, so the Board is comfortable the focus is on the right things;
- Some evidence that the pricing is competitive;
- A timeline.

**It was moved** that the Board approve the \$10,000 budget increase (but not spend, as yet) and approve the 2024 KNS Budgeting Operating Surplus to be decreased from \$33,072 to \$23,072 (before Gala Funds and Property Donations).

*Moved Rosemary / Seconded Blair / Agreed*

ACTION	SLT
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To bring, to the first Board meeting of 2024, an analysis of the proposal behind the Values Project additional budget request.	
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#### **School Donations comparison – item 4.6**

The Finance Committee will come back to the Board with a recommendation for the donation level for 2024. The data at 4.6 is one input KNS uses when setting donation levels.

There has been a significant uplift in payment of donations recently.

#### **Miles Group property report – December 2023 – item 4.7**

The ground is softer than had been expected, so the contractors are having to dig deeper. This is causing a delay, but overall things are progressing well.

KNS is obtaining new quotes for the junior playground. The goal is for a natural-looking (rather than plastic) playground. A proposal will be presented to the Board in 2024.

#### **Draft term dates for 2024 – slight change – item 6.1**

As flagged in the previous meeting, one of the Kāhui Ako days has been reclassified as a curriculum day, so the school year will end on 19 December 2024.

#### **End of Year parent survey – item 6.2**

The number of responses to the survey is already close to last year's total (which was low), and it is hoped there will be more responses.

The Board noted that the responses to the Strategic Plan survey are on the KNS website, and a link was provided in the newsletter.

**It was moved** that the Board get the End of Year parent survey results independently analysed.

*Moved Simon / Seconded Rosemary / Agreed*

#### **KNS PTA – December 2023 update –item 7.1**

The Board noted the PTA's wish to help with funding big ticket items, which may include the new website and/or the junior playground.

### **Ryman – Karori Campus update – December 2023 –item 7.2**

The Board noted Ryman's recent announcement that this is now a landbank site, so it could be some time before there are any further developments on the site.

### **3.2 SCHOOLDocs**

The Board noted the SchoolDocs Board assurances, and agreed to the amendments noted in the draft, subject to the tweaks made during the meeting:

- Under 'Term 4 board review', '*Curriculum and student achievement policy (board)*', the second sub-bullet point should read only as follows: 'provide all students with opportunities to achieve success in all areas of the national curriculum' (ie: delete from 'including' onwards).
- Under 'Managing Income and expenditure', '*Property planning and maintenance*', delete the first bullet point while the capital works are underway, as KNS does not currently have a 'property committee' and does not currently provide a standing annual report (the MoE holds condition assessment reports for all KNS buildings).

Board members are still checking with SchoolDocs as to how best to review the delegations.

### **3.3 ROLLING AGENDA / WORKPLAN FOR 2024**

The Board Chair explained that the rolling agenda/workplan includes placeholder dates around Principal recruitment. The Board Chair will soon meet with the MoE and the NZSTA, and the Board will likely discuss a recruitment process at the 27 February 2024 meeting.

The rolling agenda/workplan includes space in May and June for some form of induction for the new Board member.

The rolling agenda/workplan also includes slight changes to reporting on strategic goals due to the timing of the new Strategic Plan.

The amended meeting calendar for 2024 includes an informal catch-up on 20 February 2024. Board members noted that coincides with a Strategic Plan hui, but they will keep this date in the calendar.

**It was moved** that the Board approve the rolling workplan/agenda for 2024.

*Moved Simon / Seconded Rosemary / Agreed*

**It was moved** that the Board move into 'in committee' and that the public (other than Jacqui Croft, due to the knowledge she has and expertise she can provide as a staff advisor to the Board) be excluded for a discussion, pursuant to section 48 of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, in order to protect the privacy of individuals.

*Moved Simon / Seconded Rosemary / Agreed*

## 4 GENERAL BUSINESS

### 4.1 ACTION LOG FROM MEETING ON 30 OCTOBER 2023

	What	Who	When assigned	Action / comment
1	To amend the induction plan on Google Drive.	Simon	February	Deferred to 2024
2	To work with the PB4L team to consider how best to celebrate student, staff and community achievements.	Acting Principal	February	Ongoing
3	To measure and document any improvement in student achievement – including attendance, engagement, confidence – between the beginning and end of the Akomanga Rūmaki trial.	James	August	End of Akomanga Rūmaki trial
4	To add an ESOL student category to the end-of-year achievement report.	SLT	September	End-of-year achievement report
5	To include a note in the newsletter each term inviting feedback on the implementation of policies that are currently being reviewed by the Board.	Board secretary	September	Each term, at the time of the SchoolDocs review
6	To feed KNS's policy changes back to SchoolDocs.	Natalie	September	<b>Actioned. Closed.</b>
7	To mention, at the next PSG meeting, the PTA's request for MoE funding to provide alternative play space during the capital works.	Acting Principal / Simon	September	<b>Closed.</b>
8	To conduct an exit interview with Ali, Rose, Megan and Abby, to Board members, and provide the relevant contact details.	James	September	<b>Actioned. Closed.</b>

### 4.2 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

#### **New school board eligibility requirements**

The Board Chair noted the Education and Training Amendment Act 2023 which made changes to eligibility to serve on school boards (due to come into force on 22 February 2024).

#### **Correspondence**

The Board noted the following correspondence, copies of which are attached to these minutes:

- Email from Naomi Lane dated 2 November 2023;
- Email from Joost van Amelsfort dated 9 November 2023;
- Email from Rohan Biggs dated 11 November 2023;
- Another email from Rohan Biggs dated 11 November 2023;
- Email from Rohan Biggs dated 25 November 2023.

## 5. NEXT MEETING/CLOSURE

### 5.1 CLOSURE

The Acting Principal thanked the Board for giving him the opportunity to fill the Acting Principal role. He also expressed his thanks for the great help he had received from the two Deputy Principals.

The Board thanked the Acting Principal for stepping up and doing an amazing job in such exceptionally difficult and sad circumstances, and for 'keeping the ship afloat'.

The Board felt that the Acting Principal exemplified Conrad's ability to develop leaders, and they acknowledged the Acting Principal's work as tumuaki.

The next Board hui will be held on Tuesday 27 February 2024.

The meeting closed at 8.15pm with a karakia.

Signed:

Date:

### Summary of actions for next meeting:

	What	Who	When assigned	Due
1	To amend the induction plan on Google Drive.	Simon	February	Deferred to 2024
2	To work with the PB4L team to consider how best to celebrate student, staff and community achievements.	Acting Principal	February	Ongoing
3	To measure and document any improvement in student achievement – including attendance, engagement, confidence – between the beginning and end of the Akomanga Rūmaki trial.	James	August	End of Akomanga Rūmaki trial
4	To add an ESOL student category to the end-of-year achievement report.	SLT	September	End-of-year achievement report



<b>5</b>	To include a note in the newsletter each term inviting feedback on the implementation of policies that are currently being reviewed by the Board.	Board secretary	September	Each term, at the time of the SchoolDocs review
<b>6</b>	To consider face-to-face hui next time KNS seeks feedback on the health curriculum.	SLT	December	As appropriate.
<b>7</b>	To conduct an exit interview with Julia Laidlaw.	Blair	December	February
<b>8</b>	To bring, to the first Board meeting of 2024, an analysis of the proposal behind the Values Project additional budget request.	SLT	December	February

**From:** Naomi Lane afamilyoflanes@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Thanks  
**Date:** 2 November 2023 at 6:46 PM  
**To:** bot@kns.school.nz

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Thabks for the lovely card and chocolates!  
That was very kind

**From:** Joost van Amelsfort joost.vanamelsfort@nzregco.com  
**Subject:** Frank van Amelsfort (Year 5) Fw: Next Friday 17th November - Tamariki encouraged to wear yellow, white, black as part of our Tuakana/Teina celebration  
**Date:** 9 November 2023 at 5:02 PM  
**To:** bot@kns.school.nz, jappleton@kns.school.nz

JV

Dear James and BOT

My wife Kerri today happened to draw my attention to the draft Board of Trustees strategic plan - vision and focus areas. That was followed shortly after by the school update, set out below this email.

I note the BOT intends to seek further feedback on the draft strategic plan and I intend to participate in that process. That the BOT proposes that a key KNS strategic focus area (and number one in the list no less) is on honouring the Treaty, almost beggars belief. KNS's focus should be on learning - it is alarming that learning / academic achievement forms only one of the four focus areas. I'd wager that very few (if any) submissions on the draft strategic plan said "KNS needs to do more to honour the Treaty - that should be a core area of strategic focus".

As a parent I have seen this dynamic increasingly creep into schooling and public life - I can only assume the recent government has been a key driver of that.

It seems Frank's generation is being forced to participate in an ideologically-driven, race-based experiment based on a revisionist interpretation of what the Treaty supposedly requires to happen in our education system. At Wellington College (where our middle son Jacob now is after ending at KNS last year) that approach has made others (including its Pacifica and Asian populations) feel like second-class citizens, as they're told they need to give effect to "*Te Tiriti o Waitangi, to ensure that Mātauranga Māori is taught alongside Pākehā forms of knowledge [!!!!] so that all students are able to participate in society as culturally competent citizens of Aotearoa.*" This is not a case of semantics. With respect, that is alarming woke nonsense. It seems the fact of being a multicultural society has fallen along the wayside, as it's now Maori and "everybody else".

It feels like the education system is getting its priorities wrong here - schooling should be about core learning, not about driving a social agenda. The BOT's proposed focus area number 1 is a distraction and reflects a social agenda focus that is not within its mandate. I do wonder if that continuing distraction underpins the continued underperformance of the students coming through into secondary and tertiary education, and which I (as an employer) now encounter as the tail-end of those students emerge into the real world.

Re the email below - and correspondence generally from KNS: If I as a parent (and my child) need a glossary to understand what my child is being taught or what events are happening, I don't consider that to be right. That may reflect on my lack of fluency in te reo, but given the last census highlights only 4.0% of the population speak anywhere near a proficient level of te reo maori, that will apply to the vast majority of the parents and

guardians of KNS pupils as well as the students themselves. I literally had no idea what below was about. Having googled it - I then wonder "what on earth does this have to do with schooling my child?" If KNS wants to have an event to celebrate and facilitate older pupils supporting younger pupils (whether they're siblings or not) why on earth does that need to be contrived artificially into the below approach? I suspect a number of parents across the KNS network, like me, are somewhat over this. For Frank, that likely means he leaves and goes to Wellesley - an expensive and logically challenging "solution" to having him focus on a core education...

Kind regards,



**Joost van Amelsfort**  
Chief Executive

**DDI** +64 4 498 2278 **M** +64 21 918 427  
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Wellington 6011, New Zealand  
[nzregco.com](http://nzregco.com)

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**From:** Karori Normal School <noreply@linc-ed.com>

**Sent:** 09 November 2023 1:38 PM

**To:** Joost van Amelsfort <joost.vanamelsfort@nzregco.com>

**Subject:** Next Friday 17th November - Tamariki encouraged to wear yellow, white, black as part of our Tuakana/Teina celebration

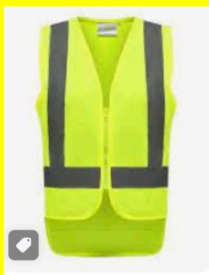
**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Karori Normal School has shared a Community Notice



Next Friday 17th November - Tamariki encouraged to wear yellow, white, black as part of our Tuakana/Teina celebration

Karori Normal School  
Nov 09 at 1:18pm



At KNS we have a 'Tuakana/Teina' approach.

Our older tamariki support and āwhina our younger tamariki.

We can all be a 'tuakana' when we share our knowledge and expertise with a 'teina'.



**Tuakana/Teina Celebration**

**FRIDAY WEEK 6**

**November 17th**



**Wear yellow or black or white** (or orange, apricot etc.)

## Ngā Rōpū Ako o te Kura (School Learning Groups)

Kia ora tātou

For those of you who are new to our KNS community, Ako Groups are run each Friday 10:20 - 11:00 a.m. Each rōpū is made up of tamariki from the ages of 5 - 13 years.

Our current Ako Group theme is that of [Tuakana/Teina](#) and this concept is central to how we operate these groups. We are very much enjoying seeing the older tamariki support and teaching the younger students. Of course, there are also times where the younger children lead their elders.

We are encouraging all the ta...

[VIEW FULL COMMUNITY NOTICE ON HERO](#)

Sign in to your school account to see all updates that are relevant to you and your children.

Donald S  
K  
Wellington C

[office@kns.school.nz](mailto:office@kns.school.nz)



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**From:** Rohan Biggs rohanbiggs@hotmail.com  
**Subject:** Request for material summarising parental feedback on strategic plan  
**Date:** 11 November 2023 at 3:09 PM  
**To:** Bot Chair bot@kns.school.nz, James Appleton jappleton@kns.school.nz

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RB

Tena Korua

I would be grateful if you could send me a copy of the material considered by the Board on 5 September summarising parental feedback on the strategic plan questionnaire.

As always I am keen to minimise any administrative burden this creates and am happy to clarify or re-frame my request if that helps to do so. I am relying on the Official Information Act in making this request.

Regards

Rohan Biggs

**From:** Rohan Biggs rohanbiggs@hotmail.com  
**Subject:** Board meeting 30 October  
**Date:** 11 November 2023 at 3:00 PM  
**To:** Bot Chair bot@kns.school.nz  
**Cc:** blair.wightman@outlook.com, James Appleton jappleton@kns.school.nz, Phil McIntosh pmcintosh@kns.school.nz, Rosemary Mose roosemary.mose@hotmail.com, nataliemary@gmail.com

RB

Kia Ora Team

Thanks for opting to hold a by-election for the vacant parent representative position. It's hard to overstate both the importance and fragility of democratic institutions in New Zealand at present so your decision to uphold democratic process at the school is great.

I have a few observations from the last Board meeting.

I note that specific consultations on the draft strategy have been targeted at Māori, Pasifika, and English as a second language communities. I wondered whether you had given consideration to targeted consultation with Asian families (acknowledging that can be an unhelpfully broad category).

The last data return published on EducationCounts indicates KNS has five times as many students identifying as Asian than as Māori, and six time more Asians than Pacific. Perhaps there is a reasonable overlap with the English as a second language group but I expect it would be far from complete. While I could construct a Treaty-based argument to privilege consultation with Māori over Asians, I could not do so for Pasifika.

Interestingly, my e-mail group of parents for numeracy and literacy has a disproportionately large number of Asians, and a distribution that extends beyond the combined volume of Māori and Pasifika students. Also as an interesting aside, at an aggregate national level Asians do a fantastic job of undermining the argument that you need culturally responsive teaching practice for academic success.

I was interested in the discussion around the choice of "The Code" as the preferred structured literacy approach, and particularly the preference for this programme over iDeaL. The latter was deemed "too prescriptive" and "wouldn't work for us". I note that Marsden uses iDeaL although I think their commercial incentives are to prioritise the interests of their students over staff sensitivities. I do worry that decision-making at KNS is overly influenced by the interests of teachers, rather than the interests of students and parents. The following two points expand on this concern.

There was a great unintended moment of enlightenment during the last Board meeting. Blair asked the acting Principal what the extent of change would be for teachers in implementing the Code. The response was (to paraphrase) "it depends on which teacher, for example some are using phonics already but not all, and the idea is to standardise practice". From this statement we can conclude the following: Some teachers are using practices that are widely recognised as relatively ineffective. James knows who they are. It's been like this for a while. No one is doing anything about it until next year at best.

If you weren't operating a state monopoly, this approach really wouldn't be good enough. I'm sure none of you could imagine this state of affairs being allowed to persist in a private school, but as noted above the incentives are different. It certainly undermines the claim KNS is committed to high academic standards. If the Board isn't going to notice this kind of thing and intervene in the interests of students and parents to change incentives, there is no other actor in the system that will



actor in the system that will.

Finally, I was intrigued that honouring the Treaty is a proposed key focus area for the school. In all my conversations with parents, none of them has ever raised the need for more of a focus on the Treaty. Some of them have suggested there is decidedly too much focus on the Treaty already given the additional attention numeracy and literacy require. This leads me to wonder what the nature of parental feedback on the strategic plan has been to date (was there a noticeable theme of parents hankering after more Treaty honouring at KNS?). To date I have resisted the temptation to OIA the material you considered at your closed workshop on parental feedback but I now intend to seek it. As a related aside I'm sure you have all been following the call from the Chief Ombudsman for Council workshops to be public – surely of relevance to the operation of KNS Board business:

<https://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz/news/chief-ombudsman-calls-council-workshops-be-open-default>

My guess at present is that honouring the Treaty is something the school leadership wants to do, rather than parents but I could be wrong. No doubt it is also possible to point to sections 32 and 127 of the Education and Training Act 2020 as a basis for choosing this key focus area. Fair enough, there is some legal encouragement. I'm not sure I can look forward to similar enthusiasm from the school in implementing the policy agenda of the democratically elected incoming Government over the next few years. If anything, it seems highly likely that the Board will need to consider its response when the NZEI and presumably some of its KNS membership actively resist implementation – that will be an interesting test of whose interests are prioritised.

As a final point - Simon's last communication suggested the next Board meeting will commence at 6.30pm while the Newsletter states a 7.30pm start. It would be great to clarify the start time before the next meeting.

Regards

Rohan Biggs

From: **Rohan Biggs** <[rohanbiggs@hotmail.com](mailto:rohanbiggs@hotmail.com)>

Date: Sat, Nov 25, 2023 at 1:56 PM

Subject: Summary of schooling policies from the incoming Government

To: Bot Chair <[bot@kns.school.nz](mailto:bot@kns.school.nz)>, [nataliemark@gmail.com](mailto:nataliemark@gmail.com) <[nataliemark@gmail.com](mailto:nataliemark@gmail.com)>, Rosemary Mose <[rosemary.mose@hotmail.com](mailto:rosemary.mose@hotmail.com)>, [blair.wightman@outlook.com](mailto:blair.wightman@outlook.com) <[blair.wightman@outlook.com](mailto:blair.wightman@outlook.com)>, James Appleton <[jappleton@kns.school.nz](mailto:jappleton@kns.school.nz)>, Phil McIntosh <[pmcintosh@kns.school.nz](mailto:pmcintosh@kns.school.nz)>

Kia Ora Team

Please see below a summary of the schooling-related policies from each of the three parties in the coalition Government. I've provided some commentary on the National Party ones.

### **NZ First**

- Lift school achievement by teaching kids an hour each of reading, writing and maths every day, banning cell phone use at school, and regular assessment and reporting to parents.
- Enforce compulsory education and address truancy.
- Focus on doing the basics better through emphasising reading, writing, and maths
- Refocus the curriculum on academic achievement and not ideology, including the removal and replacement of the gender, sexuality, and relationship-based education guidelines.

### **Act**

- Amend the Education and Training Act 2020 to enshrine educational attainment as the paramount objective for state schools. [This means removing or relegating the objective of honouring the Treaty].
- Restore balance to the Aotearoa New Zealand's Histories curriculum.
- Reintroduce partnership schools and introduce a policy to allow state schools to become partnership schools.
- Explore further options to increase school choice and expand access to integrated and independent schools including reviewing the independent school funding formula to reflect student numbers.
- Prioritise reporting and enforcement action to reduce truancy, including centrally collecting and publishing attendance data.

- Improve the cost-effectiveness of the school lunch programme

National Party Policy	Comment
Require all primary and intermediate schools to spend an average of at least two hours a day on reading and writing, and one hour a day on maths.	This is a very blunt intervention, but one that England used when it turned around its declining performance. This policy is probably required to re-focus schools on their fundamental purpose. There's no way you'd use this approach in a high-performing system, but we no longer have one. We have a highly distracted system with declining academic performance.
Share best-practice guidance with schools on timetabling to support them to meet the minimum class time requirements	I'm not sure this is a huge deal but perhaps it will help.
Rewrite the curriculum to include clear requirements about the specific knowledge and skills primary and intermediate schools will need to cover for each school year in reading, writing, maths and science.	This will be a boon for parents to help them understand what their children are meant to be learning. The existing curriculum re-fresh was beginning to do this. It also re-focuses schooling on knowledge acquisition and away from student-led inquiry (this is a good thing – until you have a core body of knowledge to manipulate, you can't do anything genuinely “creative” - one of the alleged benefits of student-led inquiry).
Require schools to assess student progress in reading, writing and maths at least twice a year every year from Year 3 to Year 8, using the e-asTTle assessment tool.	This is great. There are multitudinous and totally bogus arguments against testing. I have no doubt we'll hear about them from the teacher unions shortly. Be in no doubt that testing is critical to improving the performance of students and teachers. KNS's teacher judgement approach to performance measurement is no substitute for this.

Introduce a common reporting template, so every parent receives a detailed report on their child's progress in reading, writing, and maths at least twice a year.	This could be good, it's a bit hard to tell yet. I could do with a bit less of the "random thing your child said" turning up in the school reports I get, and a bit more of an indication that there is some insight into my child's numeracy and literacy development.
Introduce an age-appropriate skills check-in towards the end of Year 2 to assess basic skills such as counting, phonics, and letter formation.	This could be good if it provides a consistent and comparable view of your child's capability at this point. It should aid early intervention where something is going wrong.
Expand the NMSSA study to sample all year groups for reading, writing, maths and science annually, to monitor progress towards the target of 80% of Year 8 students being at curriculum by 2030.	I don't know much about this programme, but I expect it will help provide a more informed top-down and systemic view of national performance without having to wait for the infrequent international comparison data (e.g., OECD's PISA programme).
Improve new teacher training by requiring primary and intermediate teaching graduates to pass an exit exam demonstrating expertise in reading, writing, maths and science teaching in order to register as a teacher.	This is a great idea. If you want to be scared about the quality of teacher training in NZ, read this report: <a href="https://www.nzinitiative.org.nz/reports-and-media/reports/who-teaches-the-teachers/">https://www.nzinitiative.org.nz/reports-and-media/reports/who-teaches-the-teachers/</a> In summary there appears to be a greater focus on ensuring teachers understand social justice issues than there is on their ability to teach.

Reprioritise professional development funding towards upskilling existing teachers in reading, writing, maths and science instruction, and the use of assessment, and make this a requirement for teaching certification.	This makes sense. There is a huge spend on professional development for teachers, but surprisingly little is directed towards things that will actually improve pedagogy.
Scrap teacher registration fees, which teachers currently have to pay every three years to renew their practicing certificate.	Yay for teachers! Frankly they deserve big pay rises if they help re-build a World-class schooling system that New Zealand can be proud of.
Reduce teacher workload by developing a high-quality, free, online resource bank that includes a variety of teaching materials such as lesson plans aligned with the new curriculum.	This should be a game changer. It almost beggars belief that we expect teachers to re-invent the wheel in 2500 schools. Of course, most teachers will inherit lesson plans and borrow from other teachers, but the quality will be variable at best. This is a core feature of Singapore's system (which is academically the best in the World). To maintain your teacher registration in Singapore you have to contribute to keeping the central lesson bank up to date and incrementally improving its quality.

<p><b>National's Literacy Guarantee</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teach every child to read using structured literacy by making it a requirement at primary school.</li> <li>2. Introduce short phonics checks for year two students to inform parents and teachers about each child's reading progress.</li> <li>3. Provide structured literacy intervention for learners who need extra support.</li> <li>4. Ensure teachers get training on how to use the structured literacy approach.</li> </ol>	<p>I was gob smacked when my daughter started school to find that KNS was still using whole language / three cuing approaches to teach literacy. Any school that takes literacy seriously will have stamped that out years ago.</p> <p>There's a bit of detail to watch out for as this is operationalised, but by and large this is a huge relief. It should not have taken a central government intervention to achieve this. A professional body with standards would have done this to itself years ago.</p>
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If there was one key theme running through all of this, it is a big pivot towards prioritising numeracy and literacy. There is a focus on both the volume and quality of tuition.

The NZEI has already come out complaining about partnership schools, I expect that is just the beginning of a programme of resistance. No doubt others will bemoan schooling being a "political football".

The one sure-fire strategy for keeping policy-makers out of teaching is to deliver better numeracy and literacy outcomes. To date this hasn't appeared to be a strategy the NZEI has considered, but it's never too late.

Regards

Rohan