



St Leo's Board of Trustees – Newsletter Term 2, 2018

Kia ora and welcome to this edition of the St Leo's Board of Trustees Newsletter.

The Board of Trustees are delighted to have Mrs Maureen Harris leading our school as we embark upon a new chapter at St Leo's.

We also wish to welcome the new families joining the school this year.

1. Change to the Board & St Leo's Team.

We are delighted to have Maureen Harris join us as Principal at St Leo's this Term. Maureen has a wealth of experience, including 10 years as Deputy Principal at St John Primary School in Mairangi Bay, and we look forward to working with her and the team to continue to develop our fabulous school.

Sadly at the end of last Term David Williamson stepped down from his role as Proprietors Representative on the St Leo's Board of Trustees, due to work commitments. We wish to thank David for all the hard work that he put into our school and know that he will continue to play an important role in our Parish.

We are also pleased to inform you that, Karla Welson has been appointed to the role of Proprietors Representative on the Board. She will support Peter Wolfkamp as the existing Bishops Representative, as well as Father Larry, who are delighted to have her on our Board.

As a Board of Trustees, our role is to enhance student progress and achievement whilst monitoring financial and resource management. At St Leo's we also have the additional opportunity to embrace the Catholic Character and all that makes our wee school so special.

We would like to take this opportunity to provide an overview of some of the key initiatives that we have been working on over the last few terms and our plans for the future.

2. Our School Charter and Strategic Plan

One of the key governance obligations that we have as a Board is to set the school's strategic goals. These are as follows:

- To work with our staff, parents, students and the wider community to continue to develop and strengthen our special Catholic Character
- To develop greater parental and key stakeholder engagement in the development of our Learning Community.
- To have teachers deliver quality education using Innovative Learning Practices which are focussed, encompass student agency, and teaching as inquiry.
- To ensure that all students achieve their personal potential and wherever possible attain appropriate Curriculum Levels - linked to our COL achievement challenges
- To continue to focus on improving our facilities, resources and systems

3. National Standards

As you are probably aware, the Government has abolished National Standards. Schools are still required to report to parents, at least twice a year, on their child's progress and achievement, but



this will now be based on the New Zealand Curriculum Levels. The removal of National Standards allows schools to broaden their curriculum and concentrate on an integrated curriculum.

This term, a written report will be sent home in Week 9 outlining the children's achievement against the Curriculum Levels in Reading, Writing and Mathematics. Then, in Week 10, Parent Conferences will be held where the teachers will talk about the children's progress in all areas of the curriculum and answer questions about progress against the curriculum levels rather than National Standards.

4. Operating Budget & Importance of Fees

The BOT receives income from the MoE to run the school and achieve the objectives specified in our school charter. This income is based on the school roll. As we are a small school, we also rely heavily on the BOT operating contribution (or donation) from school fees and the income from the fundraising efforts of the PTFA. Currently, we are budgeting to fully fund a fifth teacher to provide stability within teaching and classroom environments.

Like most New Zealand schools, St Leo's is under constant pressure to manage its budget. We currently forecast an operating deficit in 2018 because of the cost of funding the fifth teacher. The BOT operating contribution, PTFA fundraising and of course the school roll all play a part in easing the challenge of maintaining a sustainable budget. The BOT would therefore encourage the community to continue to actively assist the St Leo's team in promoting our school.

5. Community of Learning (CoL)

Community of Learning (CoL) – Some of you may have come across the opportunity driven by the Ministry of Education to create like-minded communities of schools to enhance collaboration. The Board support this initiative as it provides a closer link with the schools that many of our children will eventually progress to; Carmel and Rosmini. The Catholic CoL includes Carmel, Rosmini, St Leo's, St Joseph's, St Mary's, St John's and Stella Maris Schools. The benefits which we expect to arise from being part of the CoL is collaboration between the schools to improve practice in order to raise student achievement.

In 2017 our CoL group came together to begin the process of creating an inquiry as individual teachers. These inquiries were presented to the CoL group in November 2017. Each CoL teacher had reflected on a specific area of learning in their classes. When the presentations were completed, it was interesting to note and discuss how similar the areas of concern were, across the range from Junior Primary to Year 13. All of these inquiries are available on the CoL website. <https://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Ministry/Investing-in-Educational-Success/Communities-of-Schools/AC/99126-ACHCHA.pdf>

In 2018 the focus will be around collaborative inquiry. The CoL has identified our student needs as defined by the 3 domains of learning - Affective, Cognitive and Metacognitive. Small groups within the CoL have begun to frame up their inquiries. St Leo's will be working with teachers from St John's and St Joseph's. Our Inquiry question is: How can a play - based learning approach increase motivation and achievement in writing both inside and outside the classroom?

We will keep you updated of progress.



6. PTFA & Investment

We would like to extend a big thank you to our wonderful PTFA, who work tirelessly to raise funds for the benefit of our school and children. 2017 fundraising has contributed towards our fifth teacher, sun shades over the Junior playground as well as a number of other items.

As a Board, we are continuing to work towards the improvements detailed within our 10 Year property plan, which include the recently installed Fresco shades over both St Clare and the Library entrance ways. The 2016 strategic survey provided the Board with a clear understanding of the community's priorities, including property investment. We recently met with the Property Manager from the Catholic Schools Office at the school to seek assistance with some projects planned in the near future. We are pleased with progress we have made to date. Strategic consultation is conducted on a three yearly cycle and is aligned to fall within MoE Trustee election years. The next strategic survey will be conducted within the latter half of next year, after the 2019 Trustee elections, and will assist the Board with the development of the 2020-2023 Charter and Strategic plan.

As we enter a new Association year the Board would like to ask the community to get behind and support the 2018/2019 PTFA and wish them all the best for a successful year ahead. It is important to also acknowledge past PTFA members and recognise their support has contributed towards the strong foundations we are currently blessed with.

7. Parish and School collaboration

We are delighted with the work that the Parish and the school are undertaking together, as exemplified by the 8th April Family Mass and the opportunity afterwards with the family picnic. We will continue this collaboration with St Francis and All Souls at the governance level to support our Catholic character.

125th anniversary of St Leo's (1893 – 2018)

We have many reasons to celebrate this great wee school of ours, however an important anniversary is approaching; The 125th Anniversary of the establishment of the school.

We want to use this opportunity to initiate some projects which can involve the pupils and their families, Alumni and the wider community.

Further details will be listed in the school Newsletter.

8. Marketing St Leo's

The Board with the support of the new Principal and teaching team are re-igniting various marketing initiatives aimed at increasing the school roll. Our objective is to raise awareness of our great wee school within the local community and beyond. The best promotion, however, is the message our wonderful loyal parents can spread across their networks about our unique values, small class sizes and remarkable educational results feeding into some of the best secondary schools in Auckland.

We wish you and your families God's blessing.

Ma te pono me te aroha.

The St Leo's Board of Trustees