

# BOARD NEWS

December 2009

With Christmas fast approaching, it's time to reflect on another busy year for our school and to take a peek at what's in store for 2010. This newsletter is a bit longer than normal but please bear with us! The good news is we promise you won't have to read another Board News until March 2010!!

## Thanks

Our sincere thanks go to all in the school community who have contributed to the school in so many ways.

We particularly want to thank Louise Green and all our staff who have worked really hard. The teaching staff have made a real commitment to professional development this year, with much work in the areas of Literacy teaching, EHSAS (Extending High Standards Across Schools) and the AtOL (Assessment to Learn) programme. Special thanks from the Board also go to Judy Cosgriff and the support staff who support the school and the Board in so many ways.

We are very grateful to the Home & School for their ongoing fundraising efforts and especially their contribution to hardware for the ICT suite. Without the benefit of fundraising, organised by the Home & School and supported by the whole community, we simply could not afford to do some of the things we do at the school.

We hope you all have a good Christmas and enjoy the holidays. We look forward to another good year at Khandallah School in 2010!!

## 2009 in Review

### Numeracy and Literacy Results

At the beginning and end of the year teachers undertake comprehensive assessment so that they can plan the next steps of learning. The Lead Team and Board also study performance across the school to set targets and identify resource and intervention priorities.

You will get individual feedback on your child in their portfolio, but here is some information on achievement across the school:

- Reading

Based on results from last year, the board set a target of having 90% of students achieving at or above expectation at the end of the year. At the beginning of the year 78% of students were already achieving at or above the end of the year expectations. By the end of the year 92% of our students were achieving at or above expectation.

- Writing

At the beginning of 2009 79% of students were achieving at or above end of year expectations for writing. Our target of 90% of students achieving at or above expectations was exceeded, with 93% of students at or above expectation when assessments were completed in September. It was particularly positive to see that of those who were below expectation at the beginning of the year 85% made good progress.

- Numeracy

Numeracy assessment looks at results in 3 different areas - addition and subtraction, multiplication and division and proportions and ratios. Khandallah School's numeracy results are compared to other decile 8-10

schools across New Zealand (Ministry of Education rating of schools based on socio-economics). Generally Khandallah School's results are better than other decile 8-10 schools. The percentage of Khandallah School students achieving at or above expectation is in the table below:

	Khandallah School
Addition and Subtraction	90%
Multiplication and Division	89%
Proportions and Ratios	89%

As part of the annual planning process the Lead Team are working on plans for supporting the children who are achieving below expectation and classroom teachers will use assessment information to inform learning programmes to meet the needs of all children.

More detailed information on the numeracy and literacy results will be in the school's 2009 annual report out next year.

### ICT Suite

The ICT suite will be set up and running from the beginning of the year. The primary purpose of creating an ICT suite is to use technology to change the way that teaching and learning takes place. It is not to teach children how to use computers (many of them are probably already experts!) but to enhance teaching across the curriculum. This presents a significant challenge for the school as it is a new way of working and teachers will vary in their experience and confidence.

To support teachers in developing their practice in working with technology and to 'kick-start' ICT learning in the school, the Board is funding the position of a non-teaching ICT Coach. The model, of having a dedicated and specialist coach, was trialled successfully this year with Karen Grant as the Literacy Coach. It is a great way of ensuring strong focus on an important area and sharing knowledge and practice across the school. Congratulations to Annette Colls on her appointment to the position of ICT Coach for next year and for enthusiastically taking on this vital role. But most importantly of all, thank you to the parents and school supporters who have paid their donations and worked tirelessly to raise the funds to fit out the ICT Suite. Without your support this exciting development would never have happened!

### Property Update

2009 has been a huge year for property development and maintenance. By the end of the summer holiday break, over \$400,000 will have been spent on the school's property infrastructure!

Major works include:

- The ICT Suite and Room 16 redevelopment
- Creating new office space for the RTLB teachers
- A complete replacement of the school's security system
- Seismic strengthening work in D Block (Rooms 7, 9 & 10) and the Hall annex
- Resurfacing of the main driveway and asphalt repairs in the drop off zone and top car park
- Improving drainage by the Clark Street pedestrian entrance
- Exterior painting of the majority of the school to bring about an amazing and refreshing change of colour!

Phew!

### Policy Development

Three Board policies have been implemented this year, following community consultation:

- Self Review
- Financial Management
- Property Management

The Health and Safety Policy and a combined Personnel Policy have been drafted and are being reviewed by the Board. These will be put out for community consultation early next year.

### Draft Charter

The most important policy of all is the school's Charter. The Charter was completely rewritten this year to incorporate a "Principles" based approach and was discussed in several community consultation sessions. These have also dovetailed with the important work of developing a new curriculum. Feedback was excellent, especially in relation to defining the school's 'special character.'

The Charter is now required to be updated every year, so as to include the annual targets for student achievement. The 2010 Charter will be finalised early in the New Year, once the Board and the Principal have reviewed the 2010 Annual Plan and implementation plans for both National Standards and the NZ Curriculum.

## School Donations

Thank you to all those who paid parent donations in 2009. We received approximately 70% of requested donations, raising just over \$75,000 and enabling us to fund important initiatives such as the Literacy Coach, teacher aide time and intervention programmes outside those funded by the Ministry of Education. This includes initiatives such as Reading Recovery.

A recent benchmarking exercise found that our donation request is comparable to similar schools in the Northern area. The Board has therefore decided to keep the level of the donation requested to the same as 2009, which is:

One Child \$290  
Two Children \$560  
Three or more Children \$750

The donation request has remained at this level since 2005 which means in real terms the donation request has actually gone down.

## Staffing for 2010

Congratulations to Geraldine Scanlan who has been appointed to a permanent position on the teaching staff. Welcome and congratulations to Beccy Haley who is joining our senior school. Congratulations to Kristina Stevens, Alice Robson and Zoe Horne who have been appointed to fixed term positions for 2010. Congratulations, of a different sort, are due to Amy Miller and husband Grant on their news that Amy is expecting a baby in May.

## Education Review Office

Khandallah School is due for its next ERO review in 2010 and indications are that the review will be conducted in the first term.

The Board is positive about the upcoming review and we hope to get some good feedback on the progress the school has made since the last review in 2007. We hope to hear from ERO that the school's self review approach and commitment to continuous improvement are bearing fruit.

We appreciate that ERO review time can be both stressful and time consuming for staff, so we will work with the ERO reviewers to make the process as easy and effective as possible.

## National Standards and the NZ Curriculum

2010 sees the implementation of both the revised NZ Curriculum and National Standards. The NZ Curriculum was released in 2007 and is to be fully implemented in schools in 2010. The Leadership Team has done a lot of work over the last year developing a new Khandallah School curriculum.

More recently, the introduction of National Standards has been a controversial subject. National Standards was a National Party election campaign commitment aimed at improving student achievement and providing easy to understand reporting on achievement. At this stage National Standards have been released for Numeracy and Literacy and schools are expected to use the standards from the beginning of 2010. In 2010 schools need to report to parents at least twice a year against the standards. At the end of 2010 we need to include targets against the standards in our 2011 Charter and we will need to report against these targets in our annual report for 2011.

While Khandallah School is working towards these requirements, the Board of Trustees has major concerns about the introduction of National Standards. In some ways, at least initially, we will not see major changes (although implementation of the standards will be a significant amount of work for the teaching staff). Much of what is contained in the policy is in line with our ongoing efforts to use assessment data to inform teaching and learning, target students who need extra assistance and provide parents with good information on how their child and the school as a whole are doing. However, we are worried that over time the implementation of National Standards could result in more dramatic changes to our education system. We believe that our role as trustees is to foster student achievement and to protect students from harm and there is a lot of concern in the education sector that National Standards may cause serious harm to children.

Bill Courtney and Louise Green both took part in the Forum held recently in Wellington, attended by representatives of all the relevant education sector groups, including academics, researchers, teachers, principals, trustees and school organisations. The Forum called for the Minister of Education to slow down the implementation of National Standards and to seriously consider a trial before full implementation.

Following the Forum, a group of four leading academics wrote an Open Letter to the Minister, stating that:

"Minister, in our view the flaws in the new system are so serious that full implementation of the intended National Standards system over the next three years is unlikely to be successful. It will not achieve intended goals and is likely to lead to dangerous side effects."

"Minister, you are aware the international record on the effects of national testing is damning. We recognise the intended National Standards are not national tests, but our understanding of why national testing has such adverse effects convinces us that the intended National Standards system will suffer most of the same problems."

Other concerns raised in the letter include:

- Labelling children as failures as opposed to focusing on the progress they are making;
- The descriptions and examples in the standards being insufficient to allow them to be applied consistently.

Most of us on the Board are not educational experts, so we can only seek answers to the questions raised by experts. We are concerned about statements such as "dangerous side effects". The Minister's response (Dom Post, Mon 30 Nov), places great emphasis on the New Zealand approach being "unique" and saying that the government has learned from the many failed examples of standards/ testing regimes overseas. However, the Minister never seems to have really addressed the sector's concerns about the gathering and use of system-wide assessment data.

We have written to the Minister expressing our concerns but we share the feeling of many in the education sector that our voice has not been heard. We were also extremely disappointed to read in the Dom Post article by Mrs. Tolley that the NZ School Trustees Association is a "strong supporter" of the policy. We have written a formal letter of complaint to NZSTA making it clear that at no stage has the Association ever asked member boards for their views and that the stance taken by the President and national executive has never been circulated to

members for consultation and feedback. We will also be writing to our local MPs to outline our concerns.

We want to ensure that you, as parents, are aware of the concerns relating to National Standards and we want to hear your views. Information on National Standards, including the letter written by the education academics and Mrs Tolley's response, will be posted on the school website. In the New Year we will also post a survey asking your views.

In the meantime, the school will do its best to implement the standards in the most effective and constructive way possible given the challenging timeframe. We will outline our approach at the parent engagement evening in mid February.

We hope all the concerns about National Standards will be listened to and steps taken to mitigate the risks involved.

### **Board of Trustee Elections**

The voting date for the "Triennial" election has been set as Friday 7 May 2010. Four parent representative positions on the Board are up for election in 2010. As we now have split elections, the remaining parent-elected board members (Steve Ware, Catherine Cooper and Peter Boniface) will continue in office until their terms expire in 2011.

Being on the Board of Trustees is a challenging and interesting way to contribute to the school and the school depends on having committed trustees to bring their skills and perspectives to the Board. We encourage parents to think about being nominated for the Board. We will have an information session for those interested early next year and nominations for the Board of Trustees will be called for in mid-March, so it isn't too soon to start thinking about it!

### **Board Meetings**

The Board meets on Thursdays at 7:00 p.m. in the staffroom and meetings are open to the public. Provisional meeting dates for the first few meetings in 2010 are shown below:

Term 1	11 February 18 March
Term 2	29 April 20 May (New Board takes office)