



SUNNYSOOK PRIMARY SCHOOL

"Learning for a Successful Future"

BOT News

Board of Trustees Newsletter - September 2018

Welcome

Kia ora, Talofa, Malo e leleli, Kia orana, Fakalofa lahi Atu, Taloha Ni, Ni sa bula, 你好, Namaste, 안녕하세요, Hola.

BOT Membership Update

Earlier in the year we bid farewell to Board member Matt Coyle who left with his family to live in the Netherlands – a great opportunity for the Coyles, but a loss for the Sunnynook School community.

At our last meeting we elected to fill Matt's vacancy by selection. We are pleased to announce that the new member of the Board of Trustees is **Jason Alexander**. We are really pleased and think Jason will make a great addition to the team. We asked Jason to introduce himself to you:

Kia ora koutou,

My name is Jason Alexander and I am excited to join the Board of trustees at Sunnynook Primary.

My wife Tanith and I have lived in Sunnynook for almost 10 years now and have 2 daughters both of whom are now at Sunnynook, Keira in Year 2 and Roxie who has just started as a new entrant.

I have always worked in technology and for the last 5 years I have been the ICT lead at Hāpai te Hauora who are a non-profit public health organisation based in West Auckland. I also have a small web design and development company.

In my spare time (when not spending time with my family) I play rugby for Northcote in the winter and embarrass myself on the touch field in summer.



Welcome Jason! This means our current BOT membership is:

From left to right: Jason Alexander, Audrey Cadness, Benji Potvin (Chair), Rebecca Tindall, David Hermans, Sharon Weymouth (absent), Virginia Montague (absent)



This is also a useful time to remind you that anyone is welcome to attend a Board meeting, whether to talk to us about something specific, or just to see how it all works. Please contact our school and Board secretary – Lee-Ann Griffiths (secretary@sunnynookschool.nz) if you're interested or if you wish to discuss a specific matter relating to the governance of the school.

New Shade Structure and Turf

We are hugely excited that the construction of the new shade structure and artificial turf has commenced (you may have already noticed the work beginning). The work will carry on into the school holidays and is expected to finish around 14 October. This is what the final project will look like when it's finished:



This will provide a fabulous facility for the school, and will enable our children to play and have sports practices during all types of weather, protecting them from both the sun and the rain. It will also be a fantastic, and much-needed permanent venue for our all-school assemblies and our end of year prize-giving.

The investment has been made possible by many years of good fiscal management by the school, but more importantly by the many years of generous donations from parents and by the superb fundraising efforts of the PTA and students. Thank you all!

Those of you with a longer history with the school will know that the original plan was to raise enough money to build a proper school hall. It may or may not surprise you that nowadays government funding does not support such facilities. Last year the Board paid for some design and costing work that revealed that a school hall is unlikely to be achievable in the foreseeable future – we just didn't have enough money. So rather than keep on saving indefinitely, we thought it was time for the community to see the fruits of its generosity, and we directed the money towards this great new shade structure. We hope you will agree this is a good decision.

Supporting our teachers

Like most primary schools across New Zealand, the Board made the decision to close Sunnynook Primary School on 15 August for the day of industrial action by the New Zealand Educational Institute, the teachers' union. While this was inconvenient for many parents, the Board absolutely supported our teachers' right to take this action, as well as their reasons for it. We think our teachers at Sunnynook School do a fantastic job preparing our kids for the future, and we think they deserve more recognition for that.

Being a teacher is particularly difficult in Auckland; a challenge shared by other key workers. Auckland has some of the highest house prices in the world relative to incomes, and both house prices and rents have outstripped wage and general inflation over the last decade or so. The North Shore is a particularly expensive place to live, as many in our community will appreciate. This means that teachers – particularly those just starting out, or those trying to juggle their career with family commitments – are finding it increasingly difficult to forge a viable career in this city. As such, many are choosing to work elsewhere in New Zealand or overseas, and schools in Auckland are finding it difficult to hire teachers. Yet Auckland is still growing and its children need well-qualified, experienced and committed teachers in order to thrive.

Luckily Sunnynook is a well-run, supportive school in a great neighbourhood, which means we aren't finding it as difficult as some schools to fill vacancies. Nevertheless, as a Board we still think our staff deserve recognition for all their hard work. This includes better financial recognition to help them do the job we need them to do, in Auckland, as well as more government support for teaching children with special needs. This is why we hope you joined us in supporting our great team on 15 August.

Fundraising and donations

Sunnynook Primary School receives funding from a number of different sources, such as Government Grants, PTA and other fundraising, and parent donations. Donations have a direct impact on the quality of education we can offer your children.

The day-to-day running of the school is largely funded by the Operational Grant provided by the Government. As a school community we have come to expect extra teacher hours, teacher aides, professional development of our staff, and computer, classroom and library resources. The grant, which is based on the school's roll, does not adequately cover these important educational needs.

We want to be able to continue to invest in upgrading the school's facilities, including things like the shade and turf upgrade. Ministry of Education funding does not often support the school capital upgrades that we think our children deserve.

Even though we've made the decision to invest in the shade structure, we will need ongoing funding to maintain it and to invest in additional features like lighting and sound equipment. Raising money for this is the purpose of the **PTA Quiz Night** on 14 September, which we hope lots of you will be attending and supporting - it promises to be a fun night!

We will also want to start looking towards the next investment, including upgrading the field so that it can be used more by the children during the winter months.

This is why the income from voluntary parent donations is so important for our school.

It's also why the great fundraising efforts that PTA, teachers and students put effort into are so welcome, and should be fully supported. We particularly want to congratulate the children for raising almost \$14,000 in the recent 'A-Thon' fundraiser, which is being used to invest in the school library. A great result!

Health Curriculum Community Survey

Thank you to everyone who responded to our Health Survey in May. Consulting with our school community provides us with the opportunity to outline the current programmes being delivered, the effectiveness of how they are being delivered and to identify some of the health education needs of our students.

There were a lot of positive comments with common themes around the sports programmes our School has on offer and the variety of activities that are available to students. Feedback on areas of improvement, were around providing more information to parents on the range of activities the school runs and how students can become involved.

In terms of what was felt as 'most important' that our students learn, mental health was considered the most important. Feedback supporting this result cited concerns with suicide rates in NZ and the need to help children deal with the challenges of life and the need to build resilience. Body Care and Physical Safety also ranked highly in terms of importance.

Your responses help us make decisions about how much emphasis is placed on different aspects of the Health Curriculum.