

**THORNDON SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES OF MEETING
30 JULY 2025 AT 5.30 PM IN THE STAFFROOM**

In Attendance

Etuale Togia (Principal)
Leah Reid (Staff Representative)
Murray Fox (Co-Presiding Member)
Chevelle Ataera (Co-Presiding Member)
Simran Pawaria
Toby Barach
Graeme McFadyen
Melleny Black – online

Chevelle had a special welcome for Graeme, Simran and Melleny who was joining us from overseas.
The meeting started with a karakia.

Apologies

Nil.

Simran has volunteered to support Melleny with the finance portfolio.
Graeme was thanked for all the work he has been doing with Etuale.

Correspondence

Thank you email from Etuale.

Minutes of Previous Meetings

The minutes of the 24 June 2025 meeting were confirmed as being a true and accurate record.

*Moved: Chevelle Ataera
Seconded: Leah Reid
Carried: Unanimously*

Hall will be discussed under property.

Action Points:

Attendance updates – ongoing.
International Proposal – on the agenda.
Ally Payne regarding the Noddy House, Katie Flintoff from Ministry due to visit – ongoing.
Meeting about wellbeing survey – completed.
Arborist – information in Principal's report.

Community/Personnel

Etuale explained that Graeme's role is compliance based in conjunction with the Principal's appraisal. It is also part of Etuale's professional growth cycle.
Graeme thanked everyone for the warm welcome and for the board engaging with him.

He advised that it is no longer called an appraisal, with the change to professional growth cycle.

Process basically centred on three to four items

- korero between Etuale and Graeme professional leadership that he is offering.
- focus on what his objectives are.
- own reflections.
- gathering of feedback – done a fair bit of that.
- valuable interactions with parents by phone.
- beginning of Term 4 Graeme will ask Etuale for a reflection on his year.
- will come with a record/summary of his leadership.
- moved from using the word accountability to use the word assurance.
- Board are happy with Graeme's process.
- Graeme had been in classroom spaces today.
- will meet with children in the morning.
- met with staff this afternoon. Very positive. Joined in and shared.

Murray said that he was looking forward to reading through the feedback.

Leah mentioned that they spoke about the culture of the school and leadership.

Graeme has questions for the Board in terms of feedback.

Chevelle performed a karakia for kai.

5.55 pm – Etuale excused himself from the meeting.

Graeme explained that his impression of our MLE's is that both the children and teachers seem to be enjoying it.

Current feeling on culture of the school?

- feels good – making a contrast to a year ago – dramatically improved.
- classrooms are happy.
- teachers are happy.
- last year challenging – things feel more certain. Etuale is transparent.
- more confidence in the direction that the school is taking.

Quality of communication?

- gaps in communication eg. PE (not on Etuale).
- useful to gather feedback on who reads the newsletter. Format difficult to access on mobile phone.
- how would community prefer to see the newsletter?
- what other forms of communication do other schools use?
- whatsapp groups.
- Etuale created documentation and systems for board to understand roles via a website. A lot of work has been done behind the scenes.

In five years time, what would you like the school to be known for? What would it have been progressed to?

- music programme back full time.
- diversity uplifted and promoted more.
- international student portfolio raised.
- leading the way in innovation.

- Etuale made a good start to making the cultural connection. Would like the relationship to continue to grow.
- hitting targets for reading, writing and maths.

Observations about the quality of classroom teaching.

- lack of confidence from some of the community – teaching, communication, classroom discipline – scared of being seen.
- feels old school – using methods from the past.
- area that Graeme can talk to Etuale about. Graeme feels Etuale does have some comprehension of the situation.
- when Charlotte was acting principal there were complaints – parents not happy with process.
- Melleny asked the question – should the board be addressing some of these challenges to the community?

When children leave, what skills or qualities should they leave with?

- confidence, independence, make friends, do social things.
- curiosity for learning.
- courageous – feeling empowered. Celebrating differences.

Hopes and aspirations for our school?

- teachers knocking on our door.
- students also.
- good teacher retention.
- students leave with a love of learning.
- flexibility and options eg. Chickens.

Graeme handed out surveys for board members to complete.

6.42 pm – Etuale returned to the meeting.

6.47 pm – Simran left the meeting.

6.55 pm – Graeme left the meeting.

Property

Report taken as read.

Outdoor learning space – what it could look like.

- Spoken to teachers and given feedback.
- Mural on wall.

Noddy House

- Ministry coming in to talk to Etuale about it on Thursday, next week.
- Numbers are growing. Need to ensure we have space.
- Need to discuss further.

Resolution: “The Board agreed to defer the external painting of the Noddy House.”

Moved: Chevelle Ataera

Seconded: Murray Fox

Carried: Unanimously

Hall

- look at flooring – held off.
- what are we going to do with the hall?
- need more detail around the pros and cons of the hall.
- hall is an asset at the moment. Bringing in some money.
- everyone appeared to agree to keep the hall.
- good to have an idea of costs, in terms of what the building costs us eg. Rates, insurance, etc.
- Chevelle to reach out to David regarding past documentation.
- Etuale to report on his meeting with Katie from the Ministry.

Use money from the deferral of cyclical maintenance to pay for removal of hazardous trees.

The question was asked: Can we allow to move money from cyclical maintenance and allocate it to something else? The answer was yes.

Noddy House is down to be demolished. Etuale has requested the Ministry hold off.

Resolution: *“The Board approved the removal of hazardous trees as a health and safety concern.”*

*Moved: Chevelle Ataera
Seconded: Leah Reid
Carried: Unanimously*

Sandpit – work in progress.

Fencing – still on track – further action within the next couple of weeks.

Finance

Worked with Education Services to refine the budget.

Looked at worst case scenarios.

\$107,000 down to \$100,000.

International students should bring it down again.

ESOL teacher replaced with a teacher aide and Charlotte.

2027 should be a \$0 deficit.

Melleny has some comments:

- understanding that we cannot sustain a deficit budget.
- plan for revenue streams.
- mapped out with Education Services where do we need to be numbers-wise.
- how many international students do we need? Hall hire?
- need to get to where we were several years ago.

David Hyland recommendation (what David suggested was the minimum).

What is the amount set aside for asset replacement? Could only cope with \$20,000-\$30,000 as a current rough estimate.

Next year will be tight.

Risk to achieving the budget -highest risk would be staff illness.

A \$100,000 deficit is better than a \$250,000 deficit.

Resolution: *"The Board approved the revised budget."*

*Moved: Chevelle Ataera
Seconded: Toby Barach
Carried: Unanimously*

International Fees

Proposal paper taken as read.

- reflected that the \$14,000 we charge is low.
- our administration fee is low.
- getting an experience through our culture.

Resolution: *"The Board agreed to increase our international fee structure to \$18,000 per year and an increase of the administration fee to \$500.00. This would also mean an increase to the termly and weekly fees."*

*Moved: Chevelle Ataera
Seconded: Murray Fox
Carried: Unanimously*

Strategic Plan/Annual Plan

Reflection on goals.

Connection with local iwi is going well. Still building on the relationship.

Kawa of Connection.

Kapa haka started.

Enabled Etuale to get back into class as he runs kapa haka.

Kaianga wa time.

Assurances

Attendance is good at the moment.

Three-quarters of the school are at 100% attendance.

Reporting processes – holding pattern – new method of reporting coming soon.

Lot of change coming through.

Learning Support process – this is Charlotte's role. Have sat down with her and refined the SENCO role.

Team Reports – reflection and realignment to new job descriptions.

Policy

AI policy – still in progress.

Personnel

Charlotte was successful with her study leave application.

She has been approved for 32 weeks.

Looking at reconfiguring her role for next year.

Charlotte wanted to pass on her thanks to the Board.

Enrolment Scheme

Our numbers are rising.

Fair bit of interest in our school.

Year 1 and 2's maximum number is 66. If the Noddy House were available, we could consider increasing this number.

Resolution: "The Board agreed to having 23 spaces at the new entrant level for 2026."

Moved: Murray Fox
Seconded: Leah Reid
Carried: Unanimously

Policy

Chevelle covered the action points from SchoolDocs.

Login changes.

Internal policy reviews – international learners policy, attendance, parents/families how to raise queries and concerns. Leah and Chevelle to discuss.

Happy to update policies.

Generative AI policy – Chevelle to talk to Michael Howden.

Finance, Asset Management and Health and Safety are currently under review.

Melleny sent an article to Chevelle and Murray on modern learning environments. The feeling is that the government put a negative spin on MLE's. Etuale replied that if parents want to talk about it, come in for a conversation.


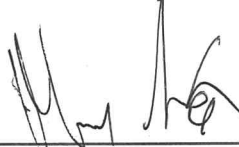
Discussion on MLE's.

Community consultation?

Etuale can reach out to Alistair and possibly Bill to ask them to come and share their Kaupapa.

Meeting Closed with a karakia: 8.38 pm

Date for Next Meeting: 3 September 2025

Signed:  

Chevelle Ataera & Murray Fox
Presiding Members

Date: 3/9/25

Action Points:

Action	Assigned to	Date Opened	Date Completed
Check attendance updates	Presiding member <i>Principal</i>	4.12.24	Ongoing <i>3.9.25.</i>
Proposal on International Students pricing change to be emailed out	Etuale	26.3.25	30.7.25
Ask Ally Payne from IR Group to visit our site to assess Noddy House and sandpit.	Etuale	24.6.25	Ongoing
Meeting about wellbeing survey	Etuale and Chevelle	24.6.25	30.7.25
Board Selection process - check in with Melleny - contact person selected	Chevelle	24.6.25	30.7.25
Request new quote from arborist and recirculate	Etuale	24.6.25	
Graeme and Etuale to meet regarding past parent complaints and the process undertaken	Graeme and Etuale	30.7.25	31.7.25
Reach out to David Chan regarding past documentation on the school hall	Chevelle	30.7.25	