

**THORNDON SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES OF MEETING
14 MAY 2025 AT 5.30 PM IN THE STAFFROOM**

In Attendance

Etuale Togia (Principal)
Leah Reid (Staff Representative)
Murray Fox
Chevelle Ataera
Toby Barach
Melleny Black
David Hylands (MoE Finance)
Jen Carey (MoE Education Advisor)

The meeting started with a karakia.

Everyone introduced themselves to our Ministry visitors.

David explained his role.

Allocation of funding to schools from Crown/Government.

They have access to our payroll.

How does the Board protect themselves from risks?

Board have to act in a fiscally responsible manner.

Every time the Board meets there will be a governance report.

- What have we planned?

- How have we achieved the plan?

- Require explanation.

The board acts through policy.

Should be a policy for every item.

David explained how Education Services provide their monthly financial reports.

Statement of responsibility need to be signed by presiding member and principal.

Auditors have access to Education Services.

Before 31 May Auditors should be in touch.

Require representation letter.

Good practice for board to approve actions of presiding member and principal to resolve that they have authority to sign the letter.

Loss of \$220,000 in 2024.

Ploughing through a lot of money.

Board should have a system of internal controls.

Obligations – September/October Ministry of Education produces provisional rolls for 2026.

1. When the provisional roll is set, is that a reasonable number of students?

2. For that number of students, the Ministry decide how many teachers we are entitled to.

You always keep the staffing entitlement.

If the roll drops, the Ministry will downsize the entitlement.

Do we have adequate procedures in place to protect us?

Risks, responsibilities and transparency.

A lot of rolls are dropping around Wellington.

Principal would feed information about provisional roll to the board.

Explained the appeal process.
Gives you an opportunity for a recruitment drive.

Budget

If budget is not being achieved, what is the impact on the children?

Finance

Difference between governance and management.
Key dates for financial situation.

Property

Footprint of the school.
Low cost materials for school buildings.
- Ministry give money for general maintenance.
- External painting – some money can be saved (deferred).
Property consultant allocated to help with 10 Year Property Plan.

Working capital

- look at bank account.
- Board know some of the money is tagged eg. International students.
- \$450,000 in bank.
Available funds – working capital – less future commitments for the school.
Amount of money to keep in bank is half of the operations grant per quarter.
Spoke about replacement of assets.
David happy to come back in September/October.

Jen thanked Etuale for hosting Minister Seymour. There has been a notable increase in attendance. We had a good morning here.

Etuale spoke on behalf of the Board, he thanked the Ministry and advised that he values our partnership. He shared with the Ministry representatives what progress we have had in the last 12 weeks.

6.38 pm - David and Jen left the meeting.

Thoughts/comments – a lot of detail.
Put things into context.
Highlighting dates.
Succession planning.
Finance playbook.
Traffic light methodology.
Phasing is important.
How is this impacting quality?
Lot to bite into.
Personnel/staffing – how do we justify a walking person?
Profiling our school is important.

Apologies

Nil.

Declarations of Interest

Nil.

Correspondence

14 April – Teaching continuity and community engagement.

Shift of Jane away from the Kea team.

Etuale to respond to email, after board members contribute.

Jane is finding it difficult to lead a team from afar.

Discussion on staff retention, permanent and fixed term positions.

Minutes of Previous Meetings

The minutes of the 19 February 2025, 26 March 2025 and 7 May 2025 meetings were confirmed as being true and accurate records.

*Moved: Leah Reid
Seconded: Murray Fox
Carried: Unanimously*

Action Points:

Murray contacted NZSBA on 27 March.

Delegations will be covered tonight.

Presiding Member

Called for nominations.

Expectations for the role.

- regular meetings with Etuale.
- being there – Etuale needs someone to bounce ideas off.
- someone to lean on – support him.
- have the children's backs.
- work as a team.

Liked the idea of a co-chair or deputy.

Discussion followed.

Resolution: *“The decision of the board was to work with two co-presiding members. Both Chevelle and Murray were nominated and elected as our co-presiding members.”*

*Moved: Melleny Black
Seconded: Leah Ried
Carried: Unanimously*

Parent Representative Vacancy

Who will put feelers out?

Look at list of previous candidates.

Panui to announce vacancy.

Acknowledge Natalie.

Skill set that we are after.

Murray reached out to NZSBA for advice.

- acknowledge that we made a mistake.
- so low in numbers.
- notify community to fill vacancy by selection.

- still within the period.

Resolution: *"The board decided to fill the vacancy, due to a resignation, by selection."*

*Moved: Melleny Black
Seconded: Murray Fox
Carried: Unanimously*

Communication will go out to our community.
Wait 28 days for responses.

Resolution: *"The board made the decision not to fill the two vacancies that occurred due to a resignation and a conflict of interest occurring."*

*Moved: Melleny Black
Seconded: Murray Fox
Carried: Unanimously*

School Board Election

Hela was selected to be our returning officer for the upcoming school board election.

We will stick with the standard election date of 10 September.

Code of Conduct

Taken as read.

Still valid.

Dovetails to job descriptions for co-presiding members.

Delegations

Have not changed from when they were presented in March.

Missing some aspects of compliances.

Property is a bit light.

Etuale explained the AMS money.

Resolution: *"The board agreed to accept the delegations."*

*Moved: Melleny Black
Seconded: Toby Barach
Carried: Unanimously*

Principal's Report

Taken as read.

School Compliances

Annual report to the community.

Etuale assumed it had been done for 2024.

He created a document which needs to go out to the community – add to website and advise community that it is available to read.

Needs to be up on website by 31 May.

Resolution: *“The board approved the Annual Report to the community and passed it based on the proviso that it is subject to clarifying the data represented are OTJ’s rather than standardised reporting.”*

*Moved: Melleny Black
Seconded: Murray Fox
Carried: Unanimously*

Pilot Programme

Child protection policy.

Support students and teachers.

Need to opt in. They come in an run it to support us.

Benefits outweigh any possible risks.

Resolution: *“The board agreed to join the School Alert System, the wellbeing focused initiative led by the Ministry of Education and Police.”*

*Moved: Melleny Black
Seconded: Toby Barach
Carried: Unanimously*

Personnel

Situation with teacher. Been employed under a work visa for migrants. She applied for citizenship rather than a renewal. Her contract needed to change to align with new regulations. May only be here for two weeks. Her contract is now null and void. Further change. Etuale is very aware that the board is wanting stability. This is an unfortunate situation because she has connected well in the short time she has been here. For the week eight board meeting, hoping to see more settled numbers. Hopefully turn fixed term positions into permanent ones.

Property

10 Year Property Plan will come to light after the AMS project.

Etuale invited a property person from Taranaki to audit our spaces.

He created a presentation to share with the board.

Finance

Re-budgeting process.

More certainty around some invoices.

Unbudgeted items.

Good start to year.

Would like to get to break even.

Hidden costs in staffing.

Items of significance:

- learning subscriptions – Hapara and Writers Tool Box licenses.
- transferred a teacher from teacher salaries to bulk grant to balance staffing.

Resolution: *“The board ratified the Term 3 and Term 4 policies with the exception of the gifts to staff policy and gifts.”*

*Moved: Melleny Black
Seconded: Leah Reid
Carried: Unanimously*

Gifts to staff policy.
How will we implement the exit survey?

9.12 pm – Toby left the meeting.

- Gifts to staff – not currently in our suite.
- acknowledge significant events.
 - no obligation for staff to donate.
 - can write to SchoolDocs and ask them to change the wording.
 - leave this policy out.

Meeting Closed with a karakia: 9.20 pm

Date for Next Meeting: 18 June 2025

Signed: 

Chevelle Ataera & Murray Fox
Presiding Members

Date: 24/6/25

Action Points:

Action	Assigned to	Date Opened	Date Completed
Check attendance updates	Presiding member	4.12.24	Ongoing
Delegations	Presiding member	19.2.25	14.5.25
Community consultation on artificial turf.	Natalie and Chevelle	19.2.25	24.6.25.
Proposal on International Students pricing change to be emailed out	Etuale	26.3.25	Ongoing
Contact NZSBA re vacancies	Murray	26.3.25	27.3.25
Communication to community about board vacancy	All	14.5.25	16.5.25