



Board or Trustees

Annual Report for 2012

Kai Ora & Welcome

Russell Street School started, and indeed ended, 2012 with an energy of positivity and excitement for both students and staff.

Board of Trustees:

We had a very interesting year at Ministry level with debates over class sizes, the implementation of novopay etc. Despite these, Russell Street School remained extremely focused on delivering the highest quality education for all learners.

There were some changes to the Board of Trustees Team: Kevin McFarlane left us, after doing an amazing job in his property portfolio role. We held a by-election from which Andrew Jamieson was elected and thereafter we “selected” Darryn Joseph, and “co-opted” Cindy Irvine & Kirsty Giles to join us on the Board. The Board remains strong, with the continuing focus on learning and teaching being our top priority.

The enrolment scheme was reviewed and again zoning was found to be necessary. The school roll remains full, with a waiting list after each ballot.

Our charter continues to provide us with a positive direction to continue plans for improvement. Our vision statement: “To inspire creativity & excellence both within and beyond the four walls of the classroom”, is key to this and all our plans link directly back to it.

Board member training this year has been mainly “on the job” with the use of some on-line webinar training sites. Our leadership team at Russell St School has been great in assisting Board members in coming to grips with our role. The Board is very well connected to the school, members regularly visit classrooms and chat with staff. Once again this year we have had “issues and projects” brought to the meetings led by students, and I must say it is a wonderful breath of fresh air to any Board meeting to hear the student voice.

The school has adopted the idea of developing the library as a “Hub” which will make the library a multi-literacy lounge for all students, staff, whanau/family, in the pursuit of establishing lifelong readers.

Reports to the Board:

Achievement reports - for the first time we have a full complement of achievement reports regarding National Standards. Rolling National Standards out over a three-year period was a deliberate strategy and an example of great leadership demonstrated by our senior leadership team. This enabled our teaching staff to get to fully get to grips with and understand the detail within each of the National Standards.

Reading, writing and maths are all above the national average. For reading it is well above. Maori achievement, on the whole, corresponds with other sub-groups. This data has been used to set targets for 2013 with a strong focus on lifting achievement across the board in writing.

This year the Board had a workshop on the achievement information. The Board was actively involved in understanding how this information is gathered and assessed. Board members worked alongside the leadership team to consider and respond to the data shared. This also led to the formulation of draft targets or goals for the next year.

Achievement Reports were tabled on:

-Attendance (There is not generally a problem in the school, but for some children, there is a correlation between achievement and attendance).

-Engagement (Students are actively involved in their learning and not simply passive participants)

-National Standards (Reading, Writing and Maths) as above.

-Progress made in National Standards. –This report shows that students generally make early progress in our school and then at least keep pace. Generally speaking, Maori students made accelerated progress in 2012

-Key Competencies: students generally achieve well in all areas. Self-management will be a focus for 2013.

-Reading Recovery: this report showed students that previously had reading recovery continue to make good progress.

Several policies were reviewed and updated throughout the year.

Personnel:

The Staff at Russell St School are an awesome team of dedicated, inspirational leaders and are high motivated not only within the classroom and schools grounds, but also in the wider community. We thank you all for the role you play with in Russell Street School. We continue to enjoy a relatively stable period with staff. Kirsty Giles left us in her role as teacher Aide. At the end of the year we farewelled Jocelyn Goodwin, teacher, who won a leadership position at a school within the city.

We acknowledge the achievement of the following: Joy Kitt was seconded to Waikato University to facilitate science education in regional school. During this period, Kerri Satherley took Joy's place in the class room. Joy also won a Royal Society award for excellence in science education.

Stephen Baker won "Best Teacher Tweeterer" and was runner up in "Best Teaching with ICT".

We celebrated with Sonita McErlean on becoming fully registered at the end of the year.

Jacqui Innes was appointed to the permanent position of Team Leader.

Professional Learning:

The Board recognise the importance of supporting and developing our staff to be the best they can be. In 2012 several tiers of professional learning were focused on:

-further building leadership capacity (for all leadership members: Jacqui Innes, Julie Walkley, Elly Warnock, James Rea and David Reardon);

-building a community of learners;

-developing teacher knowledge (especially in National Standards assessment);

The focus of professional learning is now designed to be adapted by each teacher engaging in a teacher inquiry. In 2012 this approach included a new collaborative form of inquiry whereby teams of teachers developed a lesson together, taught it, reflected on it and then retaught a revised lesson. This was powerful learning at its best.

Our staff routinely visits other schools. This year they visited a diverse mix of Hawkes Bay schools, coming away with new ideas and insights with which they could apply to our own setting.

James Rea and Stephen Baker attended a weeklong professional development tour of leading schools in the northern region, and likewise returned motivated with new insights. Their report back was a night of learning and engaging with ipads & Apple TV.

Learning & Teaching:

Elearning:-There was a significant lift in the number of children bringing their own digital devices from home. This was a benefit to all in the classroom and made for some fantastic learning opportunities.

Reporting to Parents: The new model/framework was further revised to include judgments against National Standards in writing. Thanks to the brilliance of our Student Management System, we were able to pull three years of work together under one format, which they developed at a very reasonable cost. This was significant work, which will make reporting processes less cumbersome in the future.

2012 was the first full year of implementation for our "Catch Me If You Can" sports development initiative. The end of year data showed considerable progress and growth of our entire baseline group; and a small growth in number playing organised sport. We are grateful to Shaleena Durston for her amazing leadership in this hugely beneficial programme for our students.

We won several awards this year, including: The-McDonalds More FM Junior Joker, which netted 4k of Ipads, we also won 9 Manawatu Digi awards including three supreme awards, a significant number of children achieved ICAS distinction or high distinction awards.

DANCENZ group was runners-up; BP Technology teams were 1st and 2nd; and a student won a NZ MADE award (elearning) as best presenter or actor/actress.

I hope I haven't missed any great achievements off this list. What an amazing talented group of students we have at Russell St School. We are proud of you all, keep up the great work guys.

This year's camp was held at Highland Home in the Pohangina Valley. This was a great time of team building and learning outside the classroom. It was a great success for most of our students with lifetime memories created.

Reporting to Parents formats was reviewed. Generally, parents value all forms of reporting, including informal ways. Written reports are seen as well designed and complete. As with any matter there are differences of opinions on the best ways to report, and in this case there is also a 'government expectation' of what reports will contain.

Tikanga Maori:

Over the year we have met with whanau to strengthen and grow this group. It is great to see support for our kapa haka group is increasing. The kapa haka has smart new uniforms this year and their performances are always highlight. In particular, the performance at the end of the year Graduation for years 6's was outstanding, with our year 5's stepping up and filling the shoes of those year six graduating. The school held a special project where students designed and completed "pou" for placement in the school grounds. Staff & Board members was involved in a Treaty of Waitangi workshop.

Property:

This year has been fairly quiet on the property front, our main focus has been on maintenance. Room 12 got some stylish new furniture, which they were excited to see. It provides some variety and choice in the classroom and encourages both individual and collaborative learning. It has been great for both students and teaching staff.

The school pool was painted and was therefore used fully by classes over the summer period. We also offered access to family/whanau for use after hours. The pool is a great asset to our school & community (especially over the long hot summer we experienced). During 2012 we had our fair share of vandalism, an issue that led to a full review. More lighting and cameras were added to our existing system. We also began to lock the Tyndall Street entrance, only having it unlocked for arrivals and departures from school. This has had a positive outcome for all.

Student led property projects include building a cycle mountain, and grasshopper tennis courts being marked out. It is great to see these projects fully utilised ever since.

Thanks heaps to Ivan Mills our amazing groundsman/ caretaker for keep our school looking & running so well.

Community:

We have an amazing community surrounding us at Russell Street School. They are always there to support us, by taking sports teams for training, turning up with gardening tools on our beatification day, buying chocolate for our fundraisers, supporting school activities in many many other ways. We thank you all for that.

The RSS Supporters' Club (PTA) have always been a dedicated team of hard working people, with a real focus and determination to make our great school even greater. With all the things you do from running fun events like the school disco, raffle for a ride, involving and encouraging us all in a positive way. The funds you raise to help with other activities we really are encouraged by what you do. Thank you.

Conclusion:

Russell Street School has had another wonderful year.

To all school staff, The Board of Trustees wish to express their sincere thanks to you all. You all make our school the best place to be, your dedication & commitment to our students is outstanding and we thank you for going that extra mile.

David Reardon, our Principal and leader of a dynamic team. You give so much to Russell St School and our school is a richer place for that.

As this is my last year on the Board and my final opportunity to write the annual report I have some people I would like to thank personally: The school patrol, Office angels, Library monitors, Peer mediation team, E monitors and to all the rest of the wonderful students at Russell St School that have helped out in making our school one awesome place to be. I wish you all the very best.

David, thanks for your help in so many ways. You are a great and inspiring leader, I have learnt a lot from you.

To my fellow Board members, thank you for your dedication, hard work, and thinking you bring to the meetings. Our children are the beneficiaries of that.

There is one very special, amazing and very inspiring lady that I know without her Russell Street School would not be the same. Jean Wilkinson our wonderful Librarian, thank you Jean for your long commitment to the students and staff of Russell St School. You are an inspiration.

Warmest Regards
Graeme Brown

