

Omanu School Board of Trustees Newsletter

The Board has completed its Review of the feedback received from our School Community Survey. This helps the Board set its Strategic Plan and Annual Targets. Thank you to those who took the time to reflect and respond.

The following is a summary of the range of responses (themes) received.

A There was a strong affirmation of existing practice with particular support for:

- continuing to foster sound values that will lead to a caring and safe environment where students self confidence and love of school will grow.
- retaining the emphasis on the basics of literacy and numeracy while still exposing students to a variety of learning experiences
- the importance of access to a range of Information and Communication technologies (ICT)
- building a sense of pride and community through the celebration of success
- continuing to develop facilities to enhance learning opportunities for children

B More specifically, comments relating directly to the questions asked in the questionnaire included:

| Key things to come out of parent consultation | |
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| 1 | Preparing for the future: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Developing problem solving and critical thinking skills b. Caring, safe environment c. Solid foundations for Literacy and Numeracy |
| 2 | Important Omanu School characteristics: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Sense of community b. Good facilities which are also well maintained c. Pride in achievements and good at celebrating these |
| 3 | What things could we do differently to support children learning: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Smaller class numbers b. Acknowledge and cater for different learning styles c. More opportunities to develop the Visual Arts, Music, Phys Ed |
| 4 | Being involved with your child's education and school experiences: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Current opportunities are good b. Class letter each Term - using varied communication opportunities is important c. Taking opportunities to discuss progress with all teachers - where this is applicable |
| 5 | Existing avenues for communication and consultation: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. like what we have b. email access for school and support group - promoting technology to enhance education c. Parents like to know when particular children will be involved in school assembly/events so they can attend |
| 6 | Further information about teaching programmes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Teachers sharing information about class learning outcomes for the year b. consistent approach to homework - schoolwide overview provided to guide parents expectations |
| 7 | General comments: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Make sure teachers are well resourced to do their day to day job b. More flexible learning spaces - for group teaching c. Better toilet facilities d. Loved new interview booking system - using changing technology to enhance communication between home and school |

C Communication between home and school is seen as very important - but recognised as a 'two way street'. The school should continue to explore new initiatives in developing communication options - but parents acknowledge the importance of their role in taking the initiative to use school's clear 'open door' policy to seek clarification or address concerns as they arise.

D Further ideas provided for the Board's consideration included:

- further develop the potential for 'e' communication
- look at opportunities to further expand Integrated Inquiry learning and teaching strategies
- further develop the place of the 'Omanu Learner' concept and the NZ Curriculum 'Key Competencies' within our school curriculum
- enhance student capacity for problem solving
- monitor class sizes, within Government Resourcing policies and practices

The Board will now take into consideration this feedback - and that of the staff - and develop a Strategic Plan that will provide guidance into the future. An overview will be provided on our upgraded Website, highlighting areas of learning focus, facility and asset upgrading timeframes - allowing parents to remain in contact with ongoing Board initiatives to support the education of children at Omanu.

Further Board of Trustees Information for Parents

Current Projects

1. Upgrades to Office Area and Staffroom are progressing well. This project funded by the MOE will be completed by the end of this Term.
2. We are about to go to tender for the upgrade of the A Block toilets. This work will be completed during the Christmas holidays, pending MOE approval.
3. The Board has approved significant expenditure in IT which will further open up opportunities for all students. It is our policy to first trial new initiatives to try and ensure the ongoing IT 'spend' will actually facilitate student learning and meet school teaching needs. This trial period is also used to upskill staff on how to best integrate IT into the wider Curriculum - thus gaining maximum benefit from costly resources.
4. Currently the Board is considering building a further classroom space to ensure that school roll growth throughout the year will be accommodated, while retaining our withdrawal spaces such as the Tech room, Arts Centre, Music Room for their intended purpose. Enrolment Zone policy and practice is an ongoing issue for the Board to monitor.
5. National Standards - The Board's Stance

The Board has a statutory obligation to implement this Government initiative including the requirements to report progress in relation to these Standards. The school's efforts to meet these requirements is certainly to be seen as 'work in progress'. The Board shares the concerns of many in the Education Sector, that the implementation of these Standards should have commenced with a trial to ensure that the changes will actually support children's learning and achievement - before their nationwide implementation. Of course our concern is not about having standards in schools, as these have always been there through existing testing, collection of information - and reporting processes. Our concern is that Boards are being forced to implement wide spread, unproven changes.

For a detailed view of the concerns expressed by a large number of school Principals you may wish to go to www.ourprincipals.org.nz You may also wish to share your views on this issue with the Minister of Education, Anne Tolley - a.tolley@ministers.govt.nz
The school is always willing to clarify with you, what it can, about this Government Policy.

6. The Board wishes to reinforce the fact that we have an 'open door' policy for all people who have an interest in our school. You are welcome - and encouraged to talk directly with teachers, the Principal or Board members about issues that come within their jurisdiction - or be referred to someone who can help you with your request.

* Our best wishes for the coming festive season - and we look forward to another busy year in 2011 supporting the education of your children.

Ady van der Beek - Chairperson, Sally Cox, Harley Balsom, Jimi Grant, Dean Wearne, Celia Ward (Staff Rep), Rex Allott (Principal)