



ST IGNATIUS CATHOLIC SCHOOL BOARDTALK

February 2016

Welcome back – a note from our Chair

The summer holidays are now well and truly behind us and if you are like our family, you are welcoming the commencement of the 2016 school year. The routines are getting re-established, the kids are back into the swing of learning and they are enjoying having their friends around them full time again.

A special welcome to those families new to our school. Whether you have just moved to the area, or your 5-year-old has grown up far too quickly and is in their slightly too big uniform heading to school, we hope that you will enjoy your time at St Ignatius.

In this edition of Boardtalk, there are a number of important items that I want to share, and while there is a lot to work through, I would ask that you take the time to read and reflect. Should you have any queries in relation to the content, actions or opportunities - please do not hesitate to contact us.

One aspect that has a significant influence to the success of our school, and most importantly our children's learning, is that of being actively involved. The school cannot function without the help of parents, relatives and friends who actively get involved and support the school through both their own personal efforts and the building of positive relationships.

There are many opportunities for our community to support, directly and indirectly, in delivering a great learning experience for our children. I would encourage all our families to participate in the many events organised by both the school and the PTA as ultimately they are for the benefit of our children and our community.

There are also many opportunities where we would welcome your personal efforts - whether it be through joining the Board or PTA, or whether you are able to volunteer your time, expertise (and sometimes just some manual labour) in a way that helps the school and our children.

I appreciate that many parents have significant work commitments, however please do take the time to think about the opportunities that come through in the Heads Up and other notes, and whether you are that right person who can step in and help out!

I wish you all a positive and successful 2016, and look forward to hearing some great stories about the experiences of our children, our parents and staff as we all continue our lifelong journeys of learning.

Regards

Owen

Building relationships

In 2016, there is a deliberate focus and commitment from our Principal and staff to kick off the year with an investment in building quality relationships with our parents, and that clear goals are set for your child's development in 2016.

You will have seen in the HEADS UP several opportunities to connect with your child's teacher including:

- Opportunities where the learning spaces may be open before and after school
- Teachers being present in the playground after school
- Shrove Tuesday picnic evening to meet the teachers and other parents
- Learning Community Parent Information Evenings
- Parent & Teacher meetings

These are great opportunities to not only meet your teachers, but also to learn more about what 2016 will look like for your Learning Community.

The Parent & Teacher meetings are an extra investment this year and are intended to be a time where parents can share their goals, challenges and development areas of your children. This could relate to a particular academic goal, identifying whether you and the school share a similar view on your child's current academic levels, or it could relate to building your child's confidence levels, developing their social skills or even sporting skills.

Our teachers will then take these conversations into consideration as they deliver the curriculum throughout the year.

National Standards Reporting

At the most recent Board meeting on 25 November 2015, the interim results from the current round of National Standards testing were presented.

The school invests significant effort to ensure the assessments for National Standards are a fair reflection of the child's current performance levels, including using standardised tests (that are used across all schools); and professional conversations with other schools on moderating (comparing) results to ensure consistency of interpretation.

The confirmed results and comparison with 2013's and 2014's data are set out below:

National Standards Data
Comparism 2013, 2014, 2015

Reading National Standards									
	Well below		Below		At		Above		
2013	1	1.0%	25	11.0%	96	44.0%	98	45.0%	220chn
2014	1	0.4%	17	7.5%	111	48.9%	98	43.2%	227chn
2015	3	1.0%	17	7.0%	95	40.0%	125	52.0%	240chn

Writing National Standards									
	Well below		Below		At		Above		
2013	0	0.0%	26	12.0%	164	75.0%	30	14.0%	220chn
2014	1	0.4%	22	9.7%	168	74.0%	36	15.9%	227chn
2015	2	1.0%	24	10.0%	156	65.0%	58	24.0%	240chn

Mathematics National Standards									
	Well below		Below		At		Above		
2013	0	0.0%	22	10.0%	149	68.0%	49	22.0%	220chn
2014	2	0.9%	20	8.8%	130	57.3%	75	33.0%	227chn
2015	2	1.0%	19	8.0%	135	56.0%	84	35.0%	240chn

The Board is satisfied that the National Standards (Reading, Writing and Mathematics) results for 2015, show

- a greater proportion of students moving from "At" to "Above" standards;
- in each of the categories, between 89% and 92% of students are At or Above standard.
- in each category, a reduction in the percentage of children Below standard.
- writing remains one of the key focus areas for which we are seeking to improve the levels of achievement.

The Board is currently working with the Principal to identify and agree appropriate achievement goals for 2016.

Parent community update

In our December update, we advised that the Board had received correspondence from a number of parents. The Board has spent time considering and reflecting on the themes contained within the correspondence; and identified actions that are currently being implemented.

As a Board, we believe it is important that we are clear and transparent with our community, and that you are able to have an appreciation and understanding of the both the issues raised and the manner in which the Board is addressing them.

The key themes that the correspondence focused on included:

- Behaviours – both the general expectations of appropriate behaviours within the school environment and those that would be defined as bullying. This also includes the methodology for dealing with unacceptable behaviours.
- Academic achievement levels – including teaching and learning practices, understanding progress and how it is measured, graduate profile, and tutoring.
- Engagement between the school and its community – including how the school connects with our families, as well as how our families connect with the school and with each other.
- Leadership and governance – including transparency, managing concerns and seeking appropriate evidence of achievement.

We can confirm that in addressing the concerns, many can be connected to objectives that the Board has already set for the Principal. These are found in the Charter - a document prepared by the Board in consultation with the community that outlines the objectives for the school. It contains goals; together with strategies for achieving those goals.

Some examples of these goals include:

- **Strategic Goal 2 - To value and celebrate strong home, school, and parish partnerships.**
 - The key actions directed towards achieving this goal include:
 - Build a strong sense of partnership between home, school, and parishes where all are actively involved.
 - Effectively articulate and share expectations of 'Our Way'.
 - Have a supportive environment which promotes a sense of identity and belonging.
- **Strategic Goal 3 - To have a learning culture that is relevant and personalised, evidenced by children striving for excellence.**
 - The key actions directed towards achieving this goal include:
 - Teachers and parents will work collaboratively to support children's learning pathways.
 - Use evidence based practice to inform teaching to raise the levels of achievement in literacy and mathematics for all learners being guided by the Ka Hikitia strategy for all Maori, and Pasifika Education Plan for all learners.

In addition, the Appreciative Inquiry process continues into 2016, the current focus of which addresses more of the themes raised, including:

- Our graduate profile
- Reporting
- How our community welcomes new families

In particular, the buddy system is underway - 5 out of the 6 new families have a buddy family with goals for providing information, support and social interaction. Some of the new families met up with their buddy family in the playground the Saturday before school started.

The Board will carry the Appreciative Inquiry process forward in 2016, as it is an effective method to connect with our community and focus on some agreed actions.

However, the Board also recognises that it is important to continue to seek out ways in which improvements can be made that will benefit the learning of our students. To this end, the Board has committed to several further actions through 2016:

Issue	Action
Academic achievement - St Ignatius Teaching and Learning Practices	The Board is exploring using the services of an appropriate independent consultant to review for effective delivery of the NZ Curriculum. The school is scheduled for its three yearly review by the Education Review Office in Term 3 or 4.
Behaviours	Growing Self Responsibility protocols are currently in place within the school and outline expected behaviours of students. These protocols are currently being reviewed by the staff and once re-confirmed will be published on the website; and will be included in Learning Community Information evenings to be conducted later in February.
Bullying	A Bullying Policy will be implemented through Term 1. Education will be ongoing for children, parents and staff to assist all to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand and appropriately identify bullying behaviours; • jointly construct expectations and responsibilities that address events that cause or trigger unwanted behaviour; and • provide guidelines for dealing with it if it occurs.
Engagement	Outlined earlier in this note are several of the events the Principal and staff have already committed to that deliver a range of opportunities for parents, teachers and children to engage in positive ways. The Board and Principal are continuing to seek opportunities to enhance the parent – teacher – child relationships.
Governance	The Board regularly receives advisory support and attends training from the New Zealand School Trustees Association ("NZSTA"). We have recently accessed a NZSTA advisor to provide coaching to support the Board in appropriately meeting its governance and stewardship responsibilities.

We trust this has provided a clear and transparent update to our community on the correspondence. Throughout 2016, we will continue to address the concerns raised and we thank you for your respect and especially your appreciation of the time it will take for these and other actions to be implemented.

Together with the leadership team, our teaching and support staff, and our wider community, the Board hopes we can all share in the collective commitment and responsibility to strive to improve learning and outcomes for all our children.

Board of Trustees – Elections and current open position

Our Board is comprised of

- 4 Parent Representatives,
- 2 Bishop's Representatives
- 1 Staff Representative
- The Principal

During Term 2 2016, Elections for the Parent Representatives and Staff Representative for the Board of Trustees will be held. Trustees are elected for a period of three years, and it is a great opportunity to get an understanding of, and ultimately influence, the dynamics of how a school runs, the goals we are trying to achieve and the challenges our management team work through. More information will be made available closer to the time. If you are interested, feel free to contact one of the Board members for more information.

We would also like to remind our community that we are still seeking to appoint a Bishop's Representative on the Board. If you are a baptised, committed Catholic actively involved in either St Heliers or Glendowie Parish and you are interested in joining the Board of Trustees, then please let us know. The position is appointed by the Parish Priests and Principal.

Other volunteer opportunities

As mentioned earlier, there are many opportunities for our community to get involved in supporting the school in 2016.

Please contact the office if you are interested in:

- Joining the Board
- Joining the PTA, or helping to organize one or two of their events
- Becoming the Sports Co-ordinator or Coach for one of the sporting teams
- Helping out with building, property and garden maintenance
- Offering reading support to our younger children
- Helping in the library

Board of Trustees Contact Details

Should you wish to contact the Board please email on StIgnatiusBot@Gmail.com

Should you wish to arrange an appointment with the Board, please contact the office on 09 575 7081 or office@stignatius.school.nz.

The current Board is comprised of:

Name	Role
Owen Hicks	Chair, Parent Representative
Carol Sullivan	Principal
Marcella Thomas	Proprietor's Representative
Verna Love	Parent Representative
Mat Anderson	Parent Representative
Fran Serrano	Parent Representative
Robyn Lee	Staff Representative
Vacant position	Proprietor's Representative