HASTINGS GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL NGĀ RAU HUIA O ĀKINA BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

Date: Tuesday 16 September 2025
Time: Meeting opened at 5.15pm
Location: HGHS Principals office

1. MEETING OPENING

1.1. Karakia

1.2. Present:
Catherine Bentley, Brendan Jones, Lani Kawana, Sonya Lyndon (Secretary), Candyce Keelan, Stacey Tito, Paul Drower, Cheryl Bunker (NZSBA)

1.3. Apologies:
Moira Fomai

1.4. Declaration of interests:
None

1.5. Governance Support – Introduction of Cheryl Bunker (NZSTA)
Brendon introduced Cheryl Bunker, Regional Advisor from NZSTA. Cheryl attended the meeting to offer governance support to the newly formed Board and to assist with guidance around current processes and best practice for effective Board leadership.
Motion: *Move that Cheryl be given speaking rights for the remainder of the meeting. Moved by: Brendon Jones, Seconded by: Catherine Bentley, Carried.*

2. FOR APPROVAL

2.1. Minutes of the previous meeting [August]
Motion: *Move that the minutes of the previous meeting from 21 August be approved. Moved by: Brendon, Seconded by: Lani, Carried.*

2.2. Correspondence

2.2.1. Inwards Correspondence
No inwards correspondence received.

2.2.2 Outwards Correspondence
Action Item: Letter to the Auditor: A letter was sent to Moore Oldershaw Audit as per the minutes of the 6 August meeting, confirming that the Board has reviewed the recommendations in the audit report and will address them in due course. The MOE are aware of the reasons for the hold up. The Auditor is away in China.
Tenant Notification – Property Valuation: Letters were sent to the tenants of Kiwi Kidz and the Caretaker's house advising them of the upcoming building valuation. The valuation has now been completed, and we are awaiting the formal report from Added Valuation.
Next Steps: The Board will receive and consider the valuation report once it has been issued. The valuations will be available at the next Board meeting.

2.3 Finance Report
The Board received an update on the current financial position. To date, 50% of the budgeted spend has been used, and the projected year-end deficit is now expected to be under $100,000, a significant improvement from the originally budgeted $296,000 deficit.
Key points discussed:

- 2026 Budget: The draft budget will be presented for approval at the November Board meeting, with final confirmation in February once final figures are available. The budgeted deficit for 2025 is currently forecast to be around $150,000.
- Term Deposits: A number of term deposits are maturing, and will be reviewed as part of ongoing cash flow and investment management.
- Bank Staffing: The bank staffing line typically reflects a deficit, as it covers staff absences. However, due to a specialist teacher leaving earlier in the year and not being replaced, the school is currently tracking $8,000 in credit, rather than the expected $90,000 deficit. The target is to bring this line as close to zero as possible. Bank staffing remains a challenging area to manage.
- Income is currently tracking higher than projected, contributing to the improved financial outlook.

Motion: *That the Finance Report be accepted. Moved: Brendon, Seconded: Candyce, Carried.*

2.4 Principals Report - See below, taken as read.

Catherine Bentley is currently serving as Acting Deputy Principal – Curriculum in addition to her responsibilities as Principal, and will continue in this dual role for the remainder of the year. The position of Deputy Principal – Curriculum has now been permanently appointed, with the successful candidate Rob Orr. Rob has accepted the role, and the appointment will be announced to staff tomorrow.

An updated Attendance Management Plan has been prepared and will be shared with the Board shortly for review and approval.

Motion: *That the Principals report be accepted, Moved by: Catherine, Seconded by: Candyce, Carried.*

2.4.1 Te Kanorautanga (Learners are achieving excellent and equitable educational Outcomes) - Shaping Teacher Capacity - Curriculum enrichment - Strengthening structures and Systems

This month I have stepped into the Acting DP Curriculum role. This has given me valuable insight into the day-to-day challenges and aspirations of each HOD. Meeting directly with them has reinforced the importance of strong line management—listening, solving, and enabling leaders to shine in their roles. Despite ongoing uncertainty across the education sector, our curriculum and pedagogy remain a real strength. Attending the IOGS conference in Christchurch confirmed that our innovative junior curriculum is well positioned, and the impending changes to the national curriculum frameworks should have minimal disruption to our delivery.

Sector-wide concern continues to grow regarding the sheer scale of changes being signalled—curriculum, NCEA, and AI among them. While these present complexity and uncertainty, I remain confident in the capability of our staff to respond thoughtfully and strategically. Interviews for the permanent DP Curriculum role will take place early next week, advertised internally in recognition of the strong expertise we already have in-house.

Holly MacDonald, who has just completed her second year of teaching, has resigned to take up a position closer to home. Holly has been a valued member of staff and will be sadly missed by both colleagues and students.

2.4.2 Te Tuakiritanga (Learners and whānau tell us they see and feel their identity, language and culture on a daily basis) - collaborative community partnerships - enhancing Ākina coach capacity - Strengthening Relationships with Whānau

2.4.3 The restructure of our Attendance Team has now been completed. This was a necessary move in light of increasing Ministry of Education compliance requirements, the need for clear leadership and accountability, and our ongoing drive to improve student engagement. The new structure ensures leadership, clarity, and resourcing are in place to provide proactive and consistent support to students and whānau. Pleasingly, our in-school attendance application has also been approved for further funding, strengthening our systems.

We are now preparing for a further restructure in our Lunch Team, driven by changes in funding and the scope of the programme beyond 2025. This is a difficult process for all involved, and we will continue to manage this sensitively.

Planning is well underway for the October strategic trip to Japan. The purpose of this visit is to reconnect with six long-standing partner schools, establish three new school connections, and engage with two trusted recruitment agents. The trip is also an opportunity to explore outbound exchange options for our own students, with Minoh Gakuen in Osaka identified as a promising partner. This work aligns strongly with our international growth strategy for 2026, supporting both enrolment pipelines and cultural exchange. Immediate outcomes are expected in the form of confirmed student numbers for 2026, with long-term benefits to diversify recruitment and enhance student experience

2.4.4 Kaitiakitanga (Learners as guardians of our past, present and future) - Building Leadership Capacity, Establishing a Hub based Junior Curriculum

While there is deep concern across the sector at present around large-scale reform and uncertainty, our kura remains in a strong position. We are well placed because of the clarity of our strategic vision, the strength of our curriculum, and the calibre of our teaching staff. This does not lessen the sense of sadness many feel in the profession, but it does affirm that our pathway forward remains both steady and future-focused.

2.5 Policies for review

Policy review plan.
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1zp-ggnqVz0vMlfu5HzcdC7PBvQgHEWdcYCyLC0dR1rw/edit?usp=sharing
Sonya to update the link to Board only policies.

2.6 Culture and Climate Survey – Provider Selection

As part of our commitment to strong governance and effective leadership, it is important for the Board to have an accurate and independent understanding of the school's current culture and climate. This includes staff perceptions of leadership, management, and overall well-being. Two proposals have been received from external providers (attached). Both outline survey tools, analysis methods, and reporting processes designed to capture a clear picture of the current environment.
Decision Required:
The Board is asked to:
Review the attached proposals.
Consider the strengths, limitations, and costs of each option.
Decide which provider to engage to conduct the survey.
The Board discussed options for conducting a Culture and Climate Survey. It was agreed that a smaller, focused survey will be undertaken in 2025, specifically to support the recruitment of a new Principal.
The broader Culture and Climate Survey will be deferred to 2026, to allow for a more meaningful engagement process following the leadership transition.

2.7 Staffing update

The attached needs to remain confidential until after the staff announcement on Thursday at 3pm. Board members are encouraged to come along to support Catherine in her announcement and reassure staff that there is a plan and that the Board will do the right thing. The Board discussed a range of options for engaging external support to manage the upcoming Principal recruitment process. After consideration, the Board agreed to engage Kerry from Workforce NZ to lead and manage the recruitment.
Motion: *That the Board appoint Kerry from Workforce NZ to undertake the management of the Principal recruitment process. Moved: Brendon, Seconded: Stacey, Outcome: Carried.*

2.8 Reconsideration of By-Election – Change to Selection Process

The Board revisited its earlier decision to proceed with a by-election to fill the current casual vacancy. After further consideration, the Board agreed to change its approach and proceed with the selection process, in line with NZSTA guidance.
Motion:
That the Board initiate the selection process to fill the casual vacancy.
Moved: Brendon
Seconded: Stacey
Outcome: Carried

2.9 In-committee Minutes for ratification

Motion to move the minutes from May 26 from General into In-Committee. Moved By Brendon, seconded by Catherine. Carried.

3 General Business

3.1 Health and Safety Report

No report available.

3.2 Property Valuation

Previously discussed in outward correspondence. Agenda item held should the report from the valuers arrives ahead of the Board meeting for consideration.

3.3 Approval of In-Committee minutes 2025 required.

Hardcopies of these will be circulated on the night of the Board meeting to those who were in attendance at those meetings for approval. Bring forward to the next meeting.

3.4 2026 Kapa Haka National Competition Update

Te Rōpū Mana Huia, a combined group with Hastings Boys' High School (HBHS), will be attending the Kapa Haka Nationals in 2026. HBHS has approached their Board and secured $30,000 in funding to support the campaign. They subsequently advised HGHS of this commitment.

As a result, HGHS will need to match this contribution to ensure equity in the partnership. This funding would need to be included in the 2026 school budget.
The first whānau hui is scheduled for early next term, at which point further detail on costs and planning will be shared with the school and whānau.
Catherine recommended that the Board provisionally factor $30,000 into the 2026 draft budget, to be confirmed at the November Board meeting.

3.5 Investment Funds – Review and Advice

Brendon raised the matter of the school's funds being invested across three different banks, each with varying interest rates and terms. As these investments begin to mature, the Board will need to consider how best to reinvest or realign the funds going forward.
Brendon offered to invite his brother-in-law, who has expertise in this area, to provide the Board with independent investment advice. This would be offered free of charge.
The Board agreed to invite him to attend the next Board meeting, ahead of the November draft budget meeting, as this will be a timely opportunity to review and potentially align the school's banking and investment strategy.

3.6 Governance Support Plan – NZSTA-Funded Professional Development

Cheryl Bunker advised the Board that NZSTA can provide funding for a Governance Support Plan, which includes three professional development sessions with an approved provider.
One session is proposed for next term
The remaining two sessions would take place in 2026
This opportunity will provide ongoing professional development and support for Board members in their governance roles.

4. Meeting closure

4.1 Finish and date of next meeting

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.00pm. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 21 October at 5.15pm in the Principals office.

4.2 Closing karakia