

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

**Date:** 18 November 2025

**Time:** Meeting opened at 5.15pm

**Location:** HGHS Principals office

### 1. MEETING OPENING

#### 1.1. Karakia

#### 1.2. Present:

Catherine Bentley, Brendan Jones (Chair), Lani Kawana, Moira Fomai, Candyce Keelan, Stacey Tito, Paul Drower, Tagi Olive, Sonya Lyndon (Secretary)

#### 1.3 Apologies:

Nil.

#### 1.4 Declaration of interests:

Brendan Jones declared a conflict of interest in relation to the Attendance Plan, as his wife, Katherine Jones, is a member of the HGHS Attendance Team.

The Chair granted Lani Kawana speaking rights for the meeting.

### 2. FOR APPROVAL

#### 2.1 Confirmation of Minutes

**Motion:** That the minutes of the meetings held on 3 September and 21 October be confirmed as a true and correct record.

Moved: Brendan Jones

Seconded: Candyce Keelan

Carried

#### 2.2 Correspondence

**Motion:** That the inwards and outwards correspondence be received.

Moved: Candyce Keelan

Seconded: Brendan Jones

Carried

##### 2.2.1 Inwards Correspondence

- Correspondence was received from the PPTA advising of planned industrial action. The industrial action has now concluded.
- A letter was received from Emma Jensen requesting leave. The Board agreed to defer consideration of the request pending confirmation of the Principal appointment, as Emma Jensen may be required to act as Principal in Term 2.

##### 2.2.2 Outwards Correspondence

Nil.

#### 2.3 Finance Report

##### 2.3.1 Governance Report

The Governance Report was presented.

Clarification was provided regarding:

- \$27,000 expenditure to HBHS (Waipukurau bus), and
- Whakapapa Holdings costs (school trip).

**Motion:** That the Finance Report be received.

Moved: Brendan Jones

Seconded: Tagi Olive

Carried

##### 2.3.2 Draft Budget 2026

The draft 2026 Budget was presented. The Board discussed the proposed allocation, including provision for an additional part-time counsellor. No concerns were raised.

**Motion:** That the 2026 Draft Budget be approved.

Moved: Brendan Jones

Seconded: Paul Drower

Carried

#### **2.4 Principal's Report**

The Principal's Report was taken as read.

The Principal advised that the Ministry of Education had requested projected NCEA Level 1 achievement data. The school is forecasting a 70% pass rate at Level 1, representing an approximate 20% increase, and a projected 70% pass rate at Level 2. These results place the school in a positive position relative to national trends.

The Board was also advised that ERO and Ngāti Kahungunu presented findings from a five-year research partnership in which the school has participated.

**Motion:** That the Principal's Report be received.

Moved: Catherine Bentley

Seconded: Moira Fomai

Carried

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

External examinations are now well underway, with high levels of student participation across all senior year levels. This is particularly pleasing given the national context around attendance and engagement, and reflects the clarity and consistency of communication with students throughout the year.

Later this month, I will be meeting with both the Ministry of Education and Evaluation Associates to discuss our anticipated results for Year 12 and the outcomes of CAAs. These conversations will support our planning for 2026, particularly around literacy and numeracy progression and the use of targeted supports next year.

Across our Hubs, junior curriculum planning for 2026 continues to strengthen, with whānau engagement now embedded formally into planning cycles. Teachers report greater clarity around the purpose of curriculum design and the use of common assessment tasks.

Senior Prizegiving was held earlier this month and was a spectacular celebration of academic excellence. The hall was filled to capacity with whānau. While this is a wonderful problem to have, we are already planning alternative solutions for 2026 to ensure a comfortable and accessible space for all attending whānau.

We are not anticipating significant shifts to our curriculum in response to the recent national announcements regarding the new curriculum draft, the removal of Te Tiriti o Waitangi from the Education Act, or the restructuring of the Teachers Council. Any required changes are expected to affect Year 9 only.

#### **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:**

Our 2026 timetable team is deep into construction of the timetable and continues to make pleasing progress. As at today, we are fully staffed for 2026.

This month, two key appointments were made:

Head of Department Performing Arts – Suzy Baker: Suzy joins us from Palmerston North and brings deep expertise as a jazz specialist. She teaches both music and drama and is currently TIC and Across-School COL Lead. Her leadership will strengthen our growing Performing Arts pathway.

Learning Support Coordinator – Dr Kate Elworthy

Kate is an experienced educator with a rich background in literacy, structured literacy, and teacher coaching. She brings significant leadership experience and will be a strong addition to our Learning Support team and the wider Curriculum Team.

Resignation of Deputy Principal - Christian Pera



Christian has resigned to take up the position of Establishing Principal of a new Charter School in Wellington. Given the magnitude of preparation this requires, I have agreed that Christian will finish his duties at the end of November. A transition plan is now underway to ensure continuity of leadership and key processes during Term 4 and into 2026.

Attendance remains a key focus, particularly for our Year 9 and 10 students. The Attendance Team has been working directly with whānau of students sitting just below the 90% threshold. Students are responding well, and we expect to lift a number of students above 90% before the end of the term.

We continue to keep whānau informed regarding measles updates, encouraging vaccination verification should a case emerge in Hawke's Bay.

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

Senior Prizegiving highlighted a large and growing level of whānau attendance and engagement—an encouraging outcome aligned with our strategic goal of strengthening whānau partnerships. This aligns with the shift we have embedded in junior planning this year. With the hall now consistently reaching capacity, alternative venue planning will be brought to the Board in early 2026 for consideration.

Our sports and cultural programmes continue to flourish, with the Gisborne Girls' Exchange this week, as well as the return of all sports uniforms now being actively followed up.

The State Girls' Conference held earlier this month highlighted widespread sector concerns about the pace and scale of national changes, including:

The release of the new curriculum

Removal of Te Tiriti o Waitangi from the Education Act

Restructuring of the Teachers Council

Each of these has significant implications for schools nationwide. HGHS remains well positioned due to our robust local curriculum and clear strategic direction. We await further information from the Ministry regarding operational expectations for 2026.

### **3. General Business**

#### **3.1 Principal Recruitment – Update**

The Principal Selection Committee provided an update on the recruitment process.

The position was initially advertised and received one application. Further targeted advertising and direct approaches resulted in additional applications. Following shortlisting (including review of CVs and video submissions), three candidates were shortlisted.

Subsequently, one candidate withdrew due to personal circumstances and another accepted a position elsewhere. One candidate remained and was interviewed by the Board.

Following discussion and consideration of interview outcomes and referee checks, the Board agreed to proceed with an appointment.

It was acknowledged that, as a first-time Principal, the appointee will require appropriate Board support. The Board expressed confidence in the candidate's suitability and fit for the school community.

**Motion:** That the Hastings Girls' High School Board offer the position of Principal to Lisa Akers.

Moved: Brendan Jones

Seconded: Paul Drower

Carried

The Board noted the importance of clearly communicating its support and confidence in the appointment.

**Motion:** That the Board delegate authority to Brendan Jones to sign the Letter of Offer on behalf of the Board.

Moved: Catherine Bentley

Seconded: Stacey Tito

Carried

### **3.2 Property Valuation – Early Childhood Centre and Caretaker’s House**

Stacey Tito and Brendan Jones met with the Early Childhood Centre Treasurer and Manager to discuss the current lease arrangements. Relevant documentation relating to the original agreement could not be located.

The Centre advised that it is operating at financial capacity and would be unable to sustain rental payments at the level indicated in the recent valuation report. It was noted that increased rental costs could impact the Centre’s long-term viability.

The Board agreed to defer any decision until the next meeting.

### **3.3 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee Report**

Following Christian’s resignation, the Business Manager, Sonya Lyndon has taken on the Health, Safety and Wellbeing portfolio effective immediately.

Actions taken in the last week:

- Reviewed all previous committee minutes and actions;
- Convened an updated meeting of the Health and Safety Committee; and
- Closed or updated most outstanding items.

The committee agreed to reconvene in December to review progress and set priorities for 2026.

As part of this work, the committee recommended the separation of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committees, each reporting through me to the School Board. This structure provides better alignment of expertise, ensures confidentiality for wellbeing matters, and strengthens overall compliance and staff support systems.

Proposal to Split the Health and Safety and Wellbeing Committees

As part of strengthening our Health, Safety and Wellbeing framework, it was agreed that the current combined committee will be separated into two distinct groups — a Health and Safety Committee and a Wellbeing Committee.

While the combined committee has worked effectively, the two areas require different expertise and approaches. Health and Safety focuses on operational safety, hazard management, and compliance under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015. Wellbeing focuses on staff and student wellbeing systems, psychological safety, and workplace culture.

Maintaining them as one committee presents challenges, including the need for specialist input on physical safety matters alongside confidential wellbeing discussions that are not appropriate in a wider operational forum.

Separating the committees will:

- Ensure the right people are engaged in the right discussions;
- Allow compliance, risk and operational safety to be addressed efficiently;
- Protect confidentiality for wellbeing matters; and
- Streamline reporting through a single portfolio lead to the School Board.

Establishment of the Wellbeing Committee

The Wellbeing Committee has been established to strengthen the school’s systems for supporting a positive, sustainable, and safe working environment.

Purpose:

- Identify wellbeing trends, pressures, and successes across the school;
- Recommend strategies and system improvements that enhance staff wellbeing;
- Promote awareness of available supports (EAP, pastoral processes, leave provisions, etc.);
- Foster a collaborative and respectful staff culture.

Membership:

Union Representatives | Board Staff Representative | Pastoral Leaders | Curriculum Leader (representing middle leaders) | Hauora Coach | HSW Lead (Chair)

Confidentiality:

Individual staff circumstances will not be discussed unless explicit consent is given. The committee will focus on patterns, systems, and themes to protect privacy while improving overall wellbeing.

The Wellbeing Committee meets monthly and reports key findings and recommendations (not personal details) to the School Board via the Health, Safety and Wellbeing portfolio lead.

### **3.4 Pastoral Sub-Committee Report**

#### **Attendance Management Plan – Update**

Paul said that everything that the MOE requires Catherine has done well to cover. Paul believes that Catherine has chosen the right people in the attendance team.

Catherine said that the capacity is big, but they are still being managed through the old lens and that needs to change.

Paul said it all aligns. The new Principal promotes this work.

**Motion:** That the Attendance Management Plan be passed as a draft for approval at the next meeting.

Moved: Paul Drower

Seconded: Tagi Olive

Carried

### **3.5 Personnel Sub-Committee Report**

Catherine Bentley and Brendan Jones continue to meet weekly. The meetings are progressing well, and Brendan noted that he feels well connected to the school.

#### **Sub-Committee Responsibilities**

The Board discussed the appropriateness of committee membership. It was agreed that Candyce Keelan would step down from the Personnel Committee and that Stacey Tito would assume this role.

### **3.6 Casual Vacancy**

The Board discussed potential candidates to fill the current casual vacancy and will continue to seek suitable applicants.

### **3.7 Policy Review**

The Board acknowledged that the policy review schedule requires attention. Priority will be given to addressing outstanding policies in Term 4. Trustees were reminded of the importance of completing assigned reviews.

### **3.8 Changes to Education Legislation**

The Board discussed recent and ongoing changes to education legislation, including matters relating to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

**Motion:** That the Board write to the Minister of Education to express its opposition to the proposed changes. Catherine Bentley to draft the correspondence.

Moved: Catherine Bentley

Seconded: Stacey Tito

Carried

### **3.9 Tennis Court Resurfacing Project Update.**

The Board received an update on funding applications currently in progress for the Tennis Court Resurfacing Project. The following applications have been submitted, with decision timeframes noted (subject to variation over the Christmas period due to trust meeting schedules):

- Trillian Trust – \$10,000 (decision expected end of November)
- ARCS – \$10,000 (decision expected end of November)
- Youthtown – \$15,000 (decision expected end of November)
- GRTC – \$10,000 (decision expected end of November)
- NZCT – \$10,000 (decision expected end of January)
- FW – \$10,000 (decision expected mid-December)

### **3.10 Update for the Board on the recent Japan Trip**

Please read the attached. There is a budgeted trip in next year's budget. As a board they were happy with the outcomes of the trip. Good to have booking for next year as this brings income into the school. Having Rob going on the trips is a good fit for the school. Let's continue to grow.

### **3.11 End of year staff and Board function**

Please make a note in your dairies that the Staff and Board end of year celebration will be held on Friday 12 December at 1pm at Black Betties in Hastings. Please rsvp to Sonya by 28 November.

### **3.12 Principal Farewell Arrangements**

The Board received an update on arrangements to acknowledge Catherine Bentley's service to the school.

Farewell acknowledgements are being held across several school events, including Senior Prizegiving, Junior Prizegiving, a staff function, and a private farewell event.

Associated costs are being met within existing budgets. A farewell gift was purchased in line with appropriate expenditure guidance and sits within delegated approval limits. The Board noted the update for transparency and record purposes.

### **3.13 Thank you and farewell for Lani and Catherine**

The Board thanked Lani and Catherine for their contribution to the Board.

### **4. Meeting closure**

Finish and date of next meeting. There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.30pm. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 17 February at 5.15pm in the Principals office.

2/17.2.26