# E te whānau Kahurangi, tēnā koutou,

We're halfway through 2024 already which seems incredible. It also feels like a good time for us, as a Board, to provide you with a few updates that we've been discussing in our meetings so far this year.

#### Role of the Board

Our Board is made up of our Principal Kyran, staff representative Angela Keane, and five elected parent representatives: Alison Howard, Iraia Whakamoe, Robyn Wong, Mike Townsend and Jane Pierard. Our role is to govern the school and our primary objective is to ensure that every student at Kahurangi School is able to attain their highest possible standard in educational achievement.

Board meetings are public and whanau are welcome to attend these meetings. Our meetings are generally held on a Tuesday evening twice a term and are advertised in our school newsletter.

## Changes to school policies

New policy introduced by the current coalition government requires all schools to provide one hour each daily of reading writing and maths. Kahurangi School has always had done this, so tamariki will not have experienced a change.

We are also now required to remove mobile phones from students for the school day. Again, this was already happening at Kahurangi, so our practice has not been affected.

# Challenges that all schools in the motu are facing

You may have seen media reporting over the past year about the challenges all schools are having. These issues are felt in every school in the country, with teachers and principals reporting more challenging environments that they have ever seen before. This is partly related to the more complex behavioural challenges teachers are managing in their classrooms. The Education Review Office (ERO) has even noted that current behavioural issues in New Zealand classrooms are more severe compared to other countries.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also had a lasting impact on schools, leading to gaps in student achievement and increased issues like student anxiety and mental health challenges. School attendance rates have dropped significantly, adding another layer of complexity.

There is a notable shortage of teachers across the motu, making it increasingly difficult to find qualified teachers for our kura.

The rising costs of resources and services are another significant issue. We are finding it harder to afford learning support, EOTC learning experiences, resources, and services that were previously within budget, further straining the schools ability to address these issues effectively.

#### Financial sustainability for Kahurangi School

We recently had a very positive report back from our auditors for 2023/24 which shows that our finances and operations are running effectively and are well documented.

We also recently published our annual report 2023 which contains our audited annual financial statements. It shows we ended 2023 with a surplus of \$35,520 after budgeting a deficit of \$17,189. The main reason for the surplus was the successful biennial Spellathon raising over \$30,000 (A shout-out to Kahurangi whānau for your wonderful support of this!).

However, this year, we have agreed to budget a deficit which is now operational. We've discussed some of the financial challenges and opportunities as a Board and thought we would share with you. We would also welcome your thoughts and ideas on remaining financially sustainable into the future.

Kahurangi School is, and has always been, a 'free' school, which means that all tamariki have equal access to the same resources and opportunities without any cost to whanau. We talked about this in our Board update in August 2023. Unlike most other schools, we don't ask families for fees or donations. However, in this current environment we realise this may not be sustainable.













The funding system for schools changed on 1 January 2023, moving away from the Decile System to using an Equity Index to better target equity issues. This has resulted in Kahurangi School being entitled to less equity-based funding. The Ministry of Education provided full transition funding for 2023 so we were not worse off then, however, this year and over the next 2 years this transitional funding reduces each year until we're down to the new level of funding in 2026. This ends up to be a reduction of over \$54,000 in 2026.

Alongside these system changes, the increased cost of living is affecting us all and our general operational costs have increased. For example, swimming lessons previously cost around \$5,000 for transport and lessons combined, whereas now the bus transport cost alone for the junior school is approximately \$7,000. The cost for all our tamariki (including seniors) is around \$20,000.

At the end of last year we announced that we would fund an extra teacher in 2024 which we have done. This is being funded from our reserves (savings). While we can use reserves to cover the increased cost pressures for this year, we need to address our future financial sustainability and we will have to make some choices.

We would like to remain a 'free' school. We receive a small amount of Government funding for not charging fees to parents. We could retain this status and this funding while also choosing some initiatives to be paid for by whānau (for example, after school sports).

Another opportunity we have started exploring is using a fundraiser to submit funding applications for specific initiatives, for example, the school counsellor, school swimming (EOTC), after school sport and books in homes.

We know we have a connected and supportive community who may be able to tap into fundraising opportunities that will retain the wonderful resources and experiences that all our tamariki currently get equal access to so would welcome your ideas.

#### Strategic plan

We completed our strategic plan and annual implementation plan for 2024-25 earlier this year and are now well into working on implementing our goals.

One of our strategic goals is for all akonga having a strong foundational base in literacy, because we know that this is the key to all other learning. We had already committed to bringing structured literacy into Kahurangi before it was mandated by the current government. Because of this, we were luckily a little ahead of some other kura and were successful in winning funding for teacher professional development. Kyran has sourced a highly skilled provider and development has already started, including the most recent teacher only day which was solely focused on upskilling in structured literacy.

All staff and Board members attended a practical workshop on Te Tiriti o Waitangi in April 2024. This day workshop connected to our strategic goal for Te Ao Māori, supporting us to understand the aspirations, context, and history of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. To be a good Tiriti partner, we need a collective understanding of the complexities of Te Tiriti, its impact on tangata whenua, and its ongoing effects on our tamariki Māori. Having everyone attend at the same time was important for enabling rich discussion and consistent learning. This educational journey is critical for us, as we intentionally look to the aspirations of whānau Māori and plan for making these aspirations a reality.

## Big news for Kyran

In September 2024, it will be twelve years since Kyran led the establishment of this new school as its inaugural Principal. Since beginning in the role, she has not had the opportunity to take time out to reflect, rejuvenate, and focus on her own development. Kyran has been awarded a Primary School Principals Sabbatical in 2024. Kyran applied for this in 2023 with the full support of the Board. Sabbatical leave is 10 weeks' paid leave to carry out research that will benefit the school and the wider education sector along with building in an extended period of time to 'switch off'.

Since well before Covid, we (like every other school in the motu) have seen an increase in children with more complex behavioural needs in classrooms. Since 2022, Kyran has focused her own professional development on trauma-informed practice, the neurosequential model, and other evidence-based tools to support tamariki with extreme behavioural challenges. Kyran's research during her sabbatical has a project-based focus looking at trauma-informed practices been implemented in Aotearoa that have experienced a significant positive shift. Kyran will be taking her sabbatical leave in Term 3 of 2024 and will be back for Term 4. While Kyran is away, Ruth Cooper (Deputy Principal) will be Acting Principal.

On the back of Kyran's sabbatical leave, she is travelling to Finland with a cohort of school principals from Aotearoa and Australia for a close look at their education system and schools for insights into how and why they are positioned as having the highest rate of academic achievement in the world. This is separate to the sabbatical leave and is funded through a specific, ringfenced, professional development award that all school principals received in 2022/23.

We wish her well and look forward to hearing Kyran's learnings and ideas for Kahurangi in Term 4.

Kia ora rawa atu, nā,

**Kahurangi School Board** 











