

West Spreydon Board of Trustees

Attitude, Adventure, Achievement – the journey starts here

We thought we'd tell you something about our journey as a board and how we developed our vision....

In 2007/2008 our West Spreydon Board of Trustees began a journey with the need to appoint a new principal. This started us thinking about our core beliefs and values. Since then we have appointed a new principal and developed a new 3-5 year strategic plan, which is expressed in a new logo and imagery. We thought it would be helpful for our school community and local community to have some insight into how we arrived at our current vision and values.

We asked our school, parent and local community what they valued...

In 2008 and 2009 the Board surveyed our staff, parents and local community. Here are some things the Board and community liked about our school and wanted to develop further...

- **School with Character** – history, heritage, personality, long term staff, smaller school, caring / cared for, everybody known, “like a character home”
- **School that's Local** – connected, supportive, school of choice, “the local school”, reflects full diversity of neighbourhood
- **School that Achieves** – committed to excellence with high expectations
- **School with Attitude** – laughter, personality, adventure, “have a go”, “can do”

We developed a set of core beliefs . . .

The board worked with educational consultants and staff to translate these values into a coherent vision. As a board we discussed our beliefs about education and were pleased by how similar our ideas were and how closely these aligned with the ideals of the staff and community.

Our Shared Beliefs...

- Learning is an adventure.
- We have a responsibility to *challenge ourselves to do our best to be our best.*
- We have a responsibility to *support each other to do our best to be our best.*

- Children learn best when the family, the school and the community work together.
- That school should be a catalyst to inspire and empower learning for life.
- Every child is someone special who deserves to belong to something special.
- That diversity adds richness to life and lifelong learning.
- Our teachers make a difference.
- A sense of humour brings perspective and resilience.
- Education is a key to equality, democracy and healthy society

More recently at the Board Retreat in August 2010 these beliefs were reinforced.

We summarized again our core beliefs: Justice, Equality, Compassion, Honesty, Achievement and Resilience. We want our children to value our values, to have a sense of belief and hope in themselves and their future. It is our hope that you will experience these beliefs and values in action in the relationships, expectations, curriculum and general culture of our school.

This is the vision we developed . . .

We are an important part of the local community, its history and its future.

There is a lot in this simple phrase. Some key words in this that might be useful in painting a picture....

- **“Important part”**: A school that is experienced as vital and valued by children, parents and the local community. Embedded in this phrase is an attempt to recognise that we are simply a part – an important part of the local community. It takes many parts working together to achieve a satisfying whole.
- **“Local community”**: High expectations require high support. We need our local community to be supportive and in return we need to support our parents and children. This statement also expresses the highly connected world vision of the revised curriculum. Our children are part of their families and our families are part of their local community. If we can all work together we can make our local community even better.
- **Local means sustainable**: We also believe that we can play our part in helping to create a sustainable natural environment by making it easier to make simple choices to walk and bike to a local school rather than driving across town.
- **History**: History contributes to a sense of identity and formation of values and attitudes. West Spreydon School has a great history to recognise and remember. For example, when our pool was in the paper in the last couple of years we had ex-students of West Spreydon people coming forward to talk about some of their experiences: learning rugby from our ex-principal Stew Cron, swimming in the school pool, learning the art of gardening and fundraising for the library and hall.

- **Future:** want to play our part in creating a foundation for learning that takes our students and their families through the at times difficult and joyful paths of life. We want to build up generations for the future who have a strong sense of values.

West Spreydon School - The journey starts here . . .

Our Mission is *Student Achievement*.

This is our ultimate measure and reason for our place in our learning community. One of the main reasons why we selected Marriene as our principal was because of her passion for student achievement and her drive to help staff and students achieve to their utmost.

Imagery and Motto



In Christchurch, when you look west you'll see mountains. We chose Aoraki/Mt Cook as the basis for our logo. These three peaks represent the three A's: sense of Attitude, sense of Adventure and sense of Achievement.

Whakatauki

Whaia te iti kahurangi

Ki te tuohu koe, he maunga teitei

"Should you stumble, let it be to the lofty mountain."

Who and what is a Board of Trustees?

Our role is set out in legislation . . .

Boards of Trustees are elected to ensure that the local community has a say in their local school. The government established this system as “Tomorrow’s Schools” in 1989 and it has continued to the present day. The Education Act sets requirements for Boards, and Boards are answerable to the Ministry of Education. The Board of Trustees governs the school by establishing a vision and a strategic plan and monitoring the progress of the principal and staff towards achieving this plan. The principal interprets the vision and strategic plan and carries out the day-to-day running of the school.

What the board does . . .

The big picture: Once every three to five years the board establishes a strategic plan, after consultation with school staff, parents and community. The board will also meet annually to refresh and revise the strategic plan.

Meetings and ongoing work: We meet each month for 2 ½ hours. Most members would carry out at least two to three hours of work between meetings. A typical meeting will include a report back from staff on results from a curriculum area, an extended discussion on one of our strategic goals, a setting up or reporting back from an audit, finance and property section, and questions on the principal’s report. We try to keep most of each meeting future focused.

Discipline: If a student is suspended the board have to meet to review a suspension and decide on the outcome for the student.

Auditing: The Board need to audit school processes – meaning they go and check out the information they are getting is accurate, e.g. finance, curriculum. Anything media related to the school also goes through the Board. The Board chooses the principal, and has a representative on teacher appointments.

The Board Chair: Every year the board must elect a board chair. Currently we have two board chairs as this is the hardest and most time-consuming job on the board. The Board chair/s set the agenda for the monthly meeting, facilitates each meeting and ensures communication flow between meetings. Our co-chairs have a weekly meeting with the principal and are a key part of ensuring a strong relationship between the Board and the principal. The Board Chair also acts as official spokesperson for the Board.

The Principal: The role of the principal is to run the school and they are held accountable through agreed annual goals. Generally speaking she makes all the day to day, week to week, term to term decisions. Every now and then the principal will need to get permission

from the Board if an item of expenditure is outside of agreed annual budget, relates directly to strategic plan, or if there is a serious discipline issue.

Training: As a Board we have received useful training on governance, policy and team work. We have had a regular consultant/trainer over the last three years, Al Fone, from Sharp Consultants. He knows us well and we regularly draw on his expertise. If you are interested, a good place to look for more information on Boards of Trustees is www.sta.co.nz

In 2009 we set some goals for ourselves in the way we work as a Board.

Getting reporting on student achievement

Communicating better with staff and community

Developing our own leadership and skills through training

Improving our strategic alignment with other schools nearby

Trustees are generally parents and future parents who are voted on. The trustees are elected every three years – the next election will be around May 2013. Other community members can be co-opted (not voted) for specific skills required. We currently have 4 elected members. Marriene is at every meeting and so is a staff member who is the staff trustee. We have currently agreed with the staff to rotate the staff trustee so we can strengthen our relationship with the permanent classroom teachers that way.

Dreams for our 3 year term

Top staff, Top professional Development for staff and BOT,

Top buildings Create exciting learning spaces, Open learning environments, Refurbish learning spaces, Hi tech

Physical Environment – pool, playground, hall, Great new playground, Playground – holistic view, child development, playing and learning, Complete playground

Reaching out to community – community pride in West Spreydon, more community involvement in playground, pioneer pastoral programmes, increase connection between parents – email lists, social services linked – high support to match high expectations, cultural diversity, award for connectedness to community, walking and biking

School roll to 250 – 300 – whatever is best for economy of scales and staying a community school. Sustainability in leadership, working with our other cluster schools more

Physical Involvement – physicalness for boys especially, sports, more male role models identify trees for climbing

Arts, Kapahaka, home etc / life skills

Ownership of children, uniform – proud to wear it and to wear it correctly

Communicating with the board

For those wanting to know what is the latest for the Board work – we aim to have an insert in the newsletter once a month after our meeting and keep this website page up to date. Of course you can talk to any of our Board team informally anytime as a fellow parent. We all wear our Board hats at all times. Day to day management issues need to be addressed to the principal.

If it is more than a simple update on the “latest and greatest” on governance, we won’t engage with you directly, but with our Board hats on we will do our best to point you in the right direction towards good process. Suggestions and complaints are usually management not governance so we will point you to go to Marriene or the classroom teacher. Eg “the time of assembly’s could be this” would go to the leadership of the school, “my child does not get enough homework” would go to the classroom teacher. The Board does not influence what is done with that only that this is heard and is integrated into a good process. If you have a formal complaint that goes beyond management of the school, say if you believe these processes are not working then a formal complaint or suggestion can go directly to the board via the Co-chairs. The Board will check the processes.

Formally – dmajor@spreydon.org.nz; 021 546 444

Finally anyone is welcome to our meetings at anytime – they are open public meetings and we would be rapt to have interested parents and community members to come along and observe. Please understand that you do not have speaking rights at those meetings. We meet in the staffroom at school. The dates for the year are in the school calendar.