



Wadestown School

Board of Trustees

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News from the Board – May 2018

This newsletter from the Board of Trustees provides you with a detailed update on the various property projects in place across the school.

As communicated in the News from the Board last December, the Board and Principal have experienced significant frustration in the handling of these projects by the Ministry of Education and unfortunately delays have continued to be endured across the start of this year. We have further intensified our pressure on the Ministry and this has led to some clarity and renewed commitments from the Ministry as outlined below.

New Classrooms

Whilst the Ministry committed to have these operational on day one at the start of the year and this was just achieved, there has been ongoing following up to resolve completion issues and the surrounding grounds. The delays, time and continuous reminders have been annoying. The classrooms are now close to final sign off.

New Canopies and Decking

Completion of a continuous canopy around the front of the new classrooms to meet the existing verandah is being partly funded by the Ministry and partly by the school. The work will also remedy design flaws with the delivery of these 'modular' classrooms such as uncovered/exposed bag hooks outside.

The Board is also taking the opportunity to have the existing verandah 'clearlight' replaced as part of this project.

This work had been approved for commencement during the April school holidays - but no work occurred.

We are now assured that work will commence during the current term. This is expected to take several weeks, depending on weather and management of noise and disruption to classes.

Surrounding Grounds

Completion of work at the rear of the new classrooms, including retaining cut sections of bank below the existing fence, remain outstanding but will be completed during this term.

Remediation of fences removed around the tennis courts is also being attended to.

Once these and related issues such as drainage have been resolved the damage done to asphalt surfaces by heavy vehicles is to be repaired.

The Board is annoyed at how long it has taken the Ministry to address these basic tasks.

Purakau Ave Access Way

Starting next Monday 14th May, a major project commences to construct a new emergency vehicle access way from the top of Purakau Ave, turning right and curving up to the asphalt area of the tennis courts.

The Ministry needs to complete this work in order to achieve Council consent for the new classrooms.

Presently, emergency vehicles cannot use the access way as it is too steep and tight a bend.

The new access way involves construction of retaining systems on each side of the drive and then relevelling it to enable emergency vehicles to take a wider and more gradual turn.

The Ministry has advised that this work is expected to take 12 weeks and during this timeframe Purakau Ave will not be able to be used for access.

The Board believes that the school community should consider the 12 week timeframe to be a best case scenario as it is weather dependent and it is a significant project.

New Walkway

A condition of the school agreeing to the location of new classrooms at the bottom level of the school was a commitment by the Ministry to construct a new walkway down to this level in the north east corner of the school grounds.

This walkway will go from the current pathway (that runs from behind the old PE shed up around the school boundary to the flat area by the middle block) down the sloping ridge (currently beyond the wooden fence) to the corner behind the new classrooms (or in the far corner where the old playground equipment used to be).

This is another significant Ministry project. The Board has pushed hard for this to be addressed as a priority. Concept plans will be considered by the Board at our next meeting so the Ministry can get developed drawings, engineering and consents underway.

We expect this project is not likely to be completed until later in the year as it is a significant project and the construction works are likely to extend over many weeks.

Admin Block Remediation Work

In December the Board advised the school community, based on Ministry communications, that the remediation of this block will be completed during term one this year. This involves relocation of the office, sickrooms, staff room etc to elsewhere. Room 9 was going to be used for these purposes during term one while room 0 is being utilised at Weld St.

Nothing happened. In addition the Board has now been advised by the Ministry that the work will take 22 weeks to complete (two terms).

The Board has told the Ministry very plainly that due to the impact on the operations of the school the scenario of this work commencing soon is unacceptable. A 22 week timeframe would ensure that students would stay at Weld St for the remainder of the year, and with the school's strongly growing roll it would impact on the school's ability to bring on the new classroom as is the norm around the middle part of the year.

The Ministry has now agreed to undertake this work commencing in mid December which should result in the work being completed during term 2 next year, which is manageable from an operational perspective and has the least impact on teachers and children.

Demolition of Rooms 7 and 8

Until all of these school works are complete, demolition of these classrooms is postponed until the school is ready as there may be a short term need for the space to be used for administration or teaching purposes.

Weld St Site

During the school holidays at the end of this year the Weld St buildings are going to be repainted as it is approximately 10 years since the last painting occurred.

This will involve scaffolding the buildings.

The Board is optimistic this work will be completed such that it does not have an impact on the functioning of the school or the new school year in 2019. This is not a Ministry of Education managed project.

Main Block Rose St

A consequence of the Ministry taking three years to decide on and then build the new classrooms is that the school is about 2-3 years behind on its 'normal' (Board managed) capital works program.

The usual 5 year capital funding has been fully earmarked for the Rose St main block of the school – essentially the last part of the school in need of significant upgrading.

The Board will soon engage an architect to plan the works to be undertaken as we wish to have any work occur prior to demolition by the Ministry of rooms 7 and 8. Ideally work will commence in December but this will largely be contingent on availability of contractors. Once again this is not a Ministry of Education managed project.

Grounds and Playgrounds

The greatest frustration of all for the Board is the impact the Ministry's delays and works have had on the Board's plans for a major upgrading of grounds and playgrounds using funds raised by the school community.

Whilst there is relative certainty now about the eventual outcome of all the building works across the school, the Board is mindful that development of grounds, fields and play areas can not be done and then be put at risk by the works explained earlier in this newsletter being undertaken. For example, the area adjacent to rooms 7 and 8 is likely to be a suitable area for play equipment but the flat area is likely to be needed for demolition works and related access. Post demolition, the Board expects the need for the Ministry to construct retaining walls and suitable barriers in this location.

Nevertheless trustees will be discussing at the next Board meeting the process for producing an overall concept plan for the school's grounds. Areas such as the Weld St site and the tennis court / asphalt area (after completion of the new walkway) could progress if these are considered to be priorities for redevelopment and work from the overall concept plan.

As previously committed, this exercise will include consultation with teachers, children and parents.

The Board again thanks everyone for their patience and we would like to particularly acknowledge our Principal, staff and children for enduring the impact of these works on a daily basis.

Kind regards



Neil Paviour-Smith
Board Chair