

Community Consultation Summary – June 2018

Otumoetai Intermediate School

The Board of Trustees planned and implemented a process to establish community understanding of current strategic goals, how successful these were as an integral part of the school's strategic plan and how these could be progressed further.

The process

- (a) A questionnaire, incorporating the 7 strategic goals, was prepared by the Board of Trustees. Parents were able to respond online or by way of a paper format. Individuals were not identified in this process and 313 responses were received. The responses to each question varied.
- (b) Staff were surveyed as well and 28 responded.
- (c) A community consultation meeting was arranged. Organisation was informal. People were able to move around tables, discuss the goals and respond in 'post it note' form to the prompts provided.
A small number of parents, students and Board of Trustee members took part.

Analysing the feed back

Responses and comments from all 3 approaches were collated and these summaries have been provided for the Board of Trustees information. They may provide the basis for further discussion – as applicable.

My own analysis/ interpretation of all three sets of collated information has resulted in me being able to identify the following 'themes' for the Board's ongoing discussion and consideration as the school strategic plan is reviewed and implemented.

Overall themes

1. The current goals are very widely supported. They are seen as important foundation blocks for providing a positive, progressive teaching and learning environment.
2. The majority of respondents see the ongoing ability of the school/students to achieve these goals as successful or very successful.
The goals around partnerships and innovative practices have more respondents seeing outcomes as 'slightly successful'.

Responses to this question in general, could be influenced by the short timeframe students are at Intermediate. There is less time to see the outcome of the goals 'in action' for their child which could influence the confidence they have in responding even more positively. Any replies from respondents who do not yet have a child at Intermediate or those in their first year, would obviously reflect this.

3. It is important that effective teaching is meeting the needs of individual students. (Children are not on a conveyor belt!) Positive teachers, supported by Senior Management, promote a safe and encouraging environment and that a holistic learning environment is addressed through clear learning goals for students.

- It is important to progress equitable learning opportunities for all abilities.
- Recognise diligence not just achievement.
- Smaller class numbers can facilitate social and academic development.
- Importance of teachers understanding cultural differences.
- Educate parents on what a “positive” learning environment looks like.

4. Parents support an “open and frank” communication between home and school – with clear information provided about events, learning opportunities and children’s learning needs. Parents welcome the use of technology to facilitate communication – and ways technology can facilitate learning at home (or ‘after hours’ at school?) They welcome the opportunity to “see kids at work at school and sharing their learning. Parent education is important – they want to be up with the play. e.g Maths Day.

5. It is important that ongoing Staff Development is valued by the school – it is important teachers have the resources to do the job. Induction of new staff and retention is important. (Management and staff competencies are important here.)

Are the school’s ‘expectations of Staff’ clear – both to teachers and parents? Enthusiasm for the role rubs off on children and parents. It is important that any concerns raised are addressed and channels for doing this are clear to parents.

6. While it is very clear that students (and Staff) should be ‘digitally savvy’, there is a clear indication that values and interpersonal skills should be promoted strongly within the curriculum – (they are caught and taught). Learning needs to have a future focus (e.g STEM). It is important Learning is undertaken within a collaborative context (using the Inquiry approach) – and that there are equitable learning opportunities and experiences.

Other Language learning, entrepreneur skills and education outside the classroom should be evident – “there’s a big world out there”. Understanding local and global community connections is important.

Providing ongoing ‘parent education’ opportunities is valued.

7. Some find the notion of “full potential” as “problematic” and ask “in what context is this seen?” It should not be seen as a narrow ‘achievement’ focus just because this is seen as more measurable.

There should be ‘differentiated’ learning and teaching approaches in classrooms, and the ‘average’ kid should not be lost in all of this. (Be careful about MLE initiatives here.) A ‘well rounded’ happy child is the goal to meet potential – now and ‘down the road further!’ with equal opportunities for all.

8. Self worth, self awareness, self confidence and realistic expectations of themselves are important for this age group – “Being comfortable in their own skin”

It is important to address/monitor social media use and knowledge (for children and parents).

Teacher, student and parent education about this stage of development and the implication for teaching and learning is important.

9. Parents feel it is important to consider the ‘feedback’ from the survey and act upon it to support ongoing school improvement.

Further reference is made to equity (e.g participation in extension classes for all abilities).

Collaboration with other schools to share/gather ideas is seen as very positive – and getting the balance between IT skills and people skills.

10. In considering these goals overall, the Board of Trustees should reflect upon:
 - Sharing the goals with families – giving examples of them in practice.
 - The importance of nurturing children ‘holistically’.
 - Consult with Iwi to develop a specific goal around “Tataiako” themes.
 - Develop a specific goal around “inclusion” (diversity, special needs).
 - Don’t be afraid to share “the good, the bad and the ugly!”
 - Develop a ‘parent speak/kids speak’ version of the goals, and get these out there. Share these with families.
 - Establish goals and guidelines for transitioning from primary school and to college. Share with parents.
 - Build on ways for children to contribute to their community/society – How? What?

11. The Core Values are strongly supported across the school and should be monitored and mentored. It is important for teachers to ‘engage’ with them and the wider corporate life of the school should reflect them.
Providing examples of these as ‘Values in Action’ and looking at what they look like in ‘kids’ speak’ has been suggested.
Maybe the statements around them could be stated as more succinct statements as well as providing a Maori cultural context for them.
If parents enrol their children at Otumoetai Intermediate there should be a clear expectation that they will support them – and this should be reflected in enrolment documentation.

General Points

- In many instances, the ideas outlined above may only reflect a few comments of a similar nature. They may however just be a ‘heads up’ as to the opinions of a wider audience – or something that could be followed up in a more focussed consultation process around a particular theme/idea.

- 313 parent responses is an excellent outcome. It might be possible to conclude/surmise that those who did not bother to respond to this survey could be quite satisfied with the ‘status quo’ and the direction the school is taking with these current Strategic Goals in place.
NB – the format of the online survey did not isolate the ‘source’ of the response, i.e the child currently attending, about to enrol, child previously attended the school.
In many cases the responses include “maintain these”, “continue to develop” – reinforcing current practices and focus.

- “Technology’ and “relationships/Values” are both important skills

- Sharing information about this stage of development and children’s learning and progress – as an individual – is seen as important by parents and teachers.

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