

Communication from Board Chair - Ed Nepia

The Board of Trustees would like to update you about several important aspects of our school. We realise there are many challenges facing our community at this time and so wanted to provide reassurance about the school so that this is not weighing on your mind.

Covid-19 – Moving to Level 2

Firstly we look forward to welcoming back our students next week. The Principal and staff will be in touch with more information about the arrangements for a return to school. I can assure you that the Board and school management have put a lot of thought into how we can assure the health of everyone in our school once it restarts on 18 May.

We would like to thank all of our families for their efforts around supporting teaching and learning programmes from home. We know there has been a range of experiences for our students during this time with some finding it difficult while others have enjoyed their time at home. We hope that the return to school will be smooth and positive for your son/daughter.

We would also like to sincerely thank all of our staff for embracing the required changes and ensuring that there has not been too much disruption to student learning and achievement during this time. Our school is committed to ensuring that everything possible will be done to ensure that these weeks do not negatively impact on the results of students, particularly those sitting NCEA. Heads of Learning Areas will be carefully working through where students are at and putting in place anything needed to address any gaps in knowledge and set students up for success for assessments and end of-year examinations.

Student Wellbeing

Along with safeguarding the health of students, the wellbeing of students is critically important to us. We would like to reiterate that the school's counsellors continue to be available for any student needing any level of support – from a quick discussion to advice and guidance – about any aspect of their life, whether school-related or not. We urge parents or caregivers to mention that this support is available to their child to utilise. Students can access a counsellor by emailing the UrSpace team directly at counselling@mtaspiring.school.nz

Election of Two Parent Trustees

As you know the Board of Trustees received two resignations from parent trustees this month. Both volunteered significant time and energy to MAC and we thank them for their service.

As a result of the resignations, there are now two casual vacancies on the Board of Trustees. We have agreed the appropriate way forward is to hold a by-election to fill these positions. The newly elected trustees will be in office until the end of the retiring Trustees terms, in this case the end of 2020. A further election will be held at that time (mid cycle election) to elect two parent trustees for a three year term. Whoever fills the casual vacancies for the remainder of this year will be able to stand for re-election at the end of the year.

There is a formal process and timeline that we need to follow. Our next step is appointing a Returning Officer who will be in touch with key dates along with a call for nominations. Please start

thinking about who you can encourage to stand, or perhaps whether you would be interested in standing for the Board. Diversity of opinion and experience adds a richness to the Board and provides for good decision making. There is training available through the New Zealand School Trustees Association (NZSTA) so no previous experience is needed in a governance role, just a genuine interest in being involved in the school at a strategic/governance level and making a difference to all our students, now and into the future. For further information about the role of school trustees please [see here](#)

Co-option of a new Trustee

The Board has the right to co-opt trustees from within the community. Co-opted trustees enjoy all the rights and responsibilities of elected board members.

The Board is pleased to announce that Bridget Legnavsky has been appointed through the co-option process as a trustee. Bridget is well known to many in our community in her role as General Manager of Cardrona Alpine Resorts (Cardrona and Treble Cone) and was immediate past chair of the Wanaka Chamber of Commerce. Bridget brings governance experience, a deep knowledge of our community and strong communication skills to the Board.

Community Information Meeting Outcomes

We would like to thank every member of our community who attended the 16 March Community Information Session. At the meeting the Board and Principal provided information about different aspects of the school and heard community feedback. The key topics of discussion were:

- Wellbeing, behaviour and school culture
- 2019 Education Review Office (ERO) report
- Principal performance management
- Communication with the community
- Strategic Plan review process
- Consistent enforcement of school policies and procedures
- Disciplinary procedures
- Trustee skillset, accountability and transparency
- Mobile phone use
- Drugs and alcohol.

As those who attended will know there was a lot of frankness in the session, which the Board appreciates. It is through knowing the aspirations and priorities of the community, along with agreement about where improvements need to be made, that gives us a launching pad for progress.

While there was agreement that there are many positive things happening at MAC, including that the vast majority of students are receiving a quality education, it is clear that in order to be great we need to take further steps.

We are very mindful however that we will be judged by our actions and not our words, so with this in mind the Board has spent a significant amount of time reviewing the feedback and discussions and developing a more detailed action plan around the key topics of discussion. The action plan can be found by clicking [here](#), and the minutes of the meeting can be found by clicking [here](#).

We also acknowledge that there is a need for better communication links with our community. Over the course of the rest of the school year we will provide Board updates each term about our priorities and progress in meeting the actions of our overall MAC strategic plan (which can be found by clicking [here](#)) and the actions coming out of the community information meeting.

Student Achievement – 2019 NCEA Data

We thought it would also be useful to provide our community with our school’s latest data around student achievement. As you will see our students are achieving very well, particularly compared to other similar schools and nationally. While our 2019 University Entrance rates were slightly lower than other decile 10 schools they were still very high and were reflective of the goals and aspirations of the students sitting UE, many of whom in 2019 were not intending to transition into a higher education setting. We congratulate all of our 2019 students for doing so well in these external assessments and we all look forward to following their careers over the coming years.

MAC v the Rest 2019

Level	MAC	All schools	Decile 8-10	Decile 10
Level 1	85.9	71.0	78.8	80
Level 2	88.5	77.1	83.3	82.1
Level 3	79.7	66.9	76	78.9
UE	68.1	48.7	63.7	69.2

For further information around the MAC Academic progress data [please see here](#).

Ministry of Education

We are aware that there is a suggestion in a part of the community that the Ministry of Education should be investigating our school or that external ‘intervention’ through the Ministry is needed.

We have discussed the school’s situation in depth with Ministry staff and they are confident that we have a plan to move forward. The Ministry will continue to work with the us to support resolution of the concerns raised and offer any assistance that may be needed.

Moving Forward

As noted above, we are committed to being the best school possible through addressing our key shared priorities and better communicating our actions.

At the end of the day, the one thing that we all have in common is wanting the very best for the current and future students of MAC. We are all focused on ensuring students receive an excellent

education at MAC as this is their right and provides them with the very best foundations for their futures.

With our students at the forefront of decision making and discussions, I am confident that we can navigate our way through the coming weeks and months respectfully and constructively and end up with a stronger school at the end.

Change is not instant, but we are very confident that with your trust that we will all see true progress over the coming weeks and months. As you will know anything relating to staff or individuals needs to be confidential, but you can be assured that there is plenty happening both publicly and behind the scenes that will strengthen the school and set it up for a strong future to meet the needs and aspirations of our students and community.

In the meantime we ask for your support of our students, staff and leadership to ensure that the return to school is positive and free from distractions. We will keep you informed as we move through the year but please don't hesitate to contact the Board if you have any feedback, questions or concerns at any stage.

Mount Aspiring College is at the heart of our community. Over the years our students have enjoyed fantastic success academically and through sports, the arts and their contributions as volunteers in our Students in the community program. The Board is immensely proud of their many successes and the dedication and hard work of our staff who have contributed so much on their journey of learning and development.

These are truly unprecedented times for our country and our community and rest assured the board, leadership team and staff are focused on working together to support our students and community as we face these challenges together.