

Minutes for Full Board Special Meeting
Tuesday 28 October 2025 at 5.30 pm
Held in: Te Puna o Te Pito Mata
Te Kura Tuarua o Te Kavaeranga |
Thames High School Staffroom

*Our Mission: Kia mahara o neherā; Kia Waihangā āiane; Hei aratakinā ā mua.
To acknowledge our past; To inspire our present; To transform our future world.*

Meeting commenced at **5.34 pm**

QUORUM: Confirmed

1. MIHI WHAKATAU / WELCOME AND KARAKIA

Introduction/whakawhanaungatanga – Led by Brendon Wilkinson

2. ADMINISTRATION

2.1 Present and Apologies

Present: Brendon Wilkinson (PM), Michael Hart (Principal), Cindy Dargaville, Alia Finn, Siobhan Flanigan, Lydia Lester, Kathy Ngamane, Daniel Neufeld, Brooklyn Jiang

Apologies: Wayne Whitney, Ngaio Hodson-Rapana

Non-Board Members: Sharyn Baker, Gareth Wright, Chris Ashforth, Lisa Barnett

Motion: That non-board members attending are given speaking rights.

Moved B Wilkinson. CARRIED.

2.2 Declaration of Interest

None

2.3 Confirmation of Minutes (5.48 pm)

Motion: The [minutes of the full board special meeting](#) held on 15 October 2025 are approved with amendment to the apologies to read: **Cindy Dargaville, had confirmed attendance but was unable to join the meeting as no suitable device was available at the meeting venue for her to connect online.**

Moved B Wilkinson. All in favour. CARRIED.

2.4 Matters Arising (5.53 pm)

None

3. STRATEGIC REPORTING AND MONITORING

3.1 Presentation / Curriculum Focus

Social Sciences Department Biennial Report – HoD Social Sciences apologies.

- **Deferred** to November 2025 meeting

3.2 Principal's Report (5.55 pm)

Principal's Report

- o [Counsellors Report Term 3 2025](#)
- o [Thames High School VOR 2025 \(sport\)](#) (electronically only)
- o [2025 Term 3 THS 24-7 Report](#)
- o [Alternative Education Proposal / rationale](#)

Discussion:

- **Alternative Education Proposal –**
Principal – Benefits of a proposed alternative education model that is independent of both the Care House and the Paeroa model. The Board noted that a more localised option will provide improved responsiveness to the needs of young people. The Ministry of Education has accepted the model, with implementation expected for Term 1, 2026
- **Stand downs and Suspensions**
Discussion focused on the processes and purpose of stand-downs and suspensions, and pastoral entries ensuring clarity, consistency, and alignment with legal and pastoral behaviour.
- **Curriculum Refresh**
The Board acknowledged the significant workload associated with the national Curriculum Refresh. It was noted that meetings related to the refresh are part of teachers' professional responsibilities, including professional development. The purpose of these meetings is to support discussion, collaboration, and informed decision-making.
- **Reviewing Librarian role**
The Board discussed the ongoing review of the Librarian role, including the wider function of the school library. The review will incorporate student voice, resource management needs, and clarity around the position requirements and defining the person specification before the role is advertised.
- **Enrolments**
The Board discussed the reasons why students choose to enrol in other schools, including family connections, sporting opportunities, subject offerings, and behavioural elements. While data is collected, some parents do not provide a response. The most common reason identified is that siblings are already attending the alternative school.

The Board agreed to further capture and analyse the reasons why locally based students enrol elsewhere, including through community engagement. It was noted that principals of other schools' report experiencing similar patterns.

- **Achievement Progress**

The achievement progress report to include data presented by ethnicity in future reports. It was noted that Year 13 has a larger proportion of Māori students, then the average for the school with strong retention rates and steady achievement progress.

The most significant disparities influencing achievement is the difference in attendance rates between Māori and non-Māori students. While progress has been made, the school has yet to identify an effective approach to achieving equitable attendance rates.

Moved M Hart, **seconded** B Wilkinson. All in favour. **CARRIED.**

3.3 Finance and Audit Report (6.41 pm)

3.3.1 Motion: The Board accepts the recommendation of the Finance Committee that accounts payable for August 2025 paid September 2025 and September 2025 paid October 2025 are approved.

Moved M Hart, **seconded** S Flanigan. All in favour. **CARRIED.**

3.3.2 Motion: The Board accepts the recommendation of the Finance Committee that term deposits of \$100,000K for 30 days at the best rate for November 2025 are approved.

Moved M Hart, **seconded** L Lester. All in favour. **CARRIED.**

3.3.3 Budget 2026 (6.44 pm) – Business Manager

- Scoping – Priorities, Needs
- Input / Discussion

- **2026 Budget Planning**

The Business Manager reported on initial discussions held with Heads of Department regarding the 2026 budget. The preliminary figures indicate a starting budget deficit of approximately \$30,000, with further work required on the detailed allocations.

Due to the ongoing refinement needed, the draft budget process continues. The next board meeting is to approve the draft budget. The Business Manager noted that inflation continues to impact costs across all areas. Key priorities for the 2026 budget include literacy, numeracy, equity funding, sustainability, and community engagement.

It was proposed that the Finance Committee convene again to review the budget in greater detail and return to the full Board with a recommendation. The approval of the 2026 draft budget will be conditional on confirmed student numbers as of 1 March 2026.

Committee Membership (6.48 pm)

The Presiding Member asked the two Board members who were not present at the Board induction meeting whether they would be willing to serve on the Finance Committee or the Property Committee. Kathy Ngamane confirmed her acceptance to join the Property Committee.

3.4 Property (6.49 pm)

3.4.1 Motion: The Board accepts the recommendation of the Property Committee that the [Minutes of Property Committee](#) meeting held on 20 October 2025 are approved and the October [Property Report](#) is accepted.

Moved M Hart, **seconded** B Wilkinson. All in favour. **CARRIED.**

Action: The Property Committee minutes from the meeting held on 20 October 2025 amended to include reference to feasibility and costings related to heating. The Business Manager will also send the Electrical Capacity Report to Alia Finn. **(BKR)**

3.4.2 Motion: The Board accepts the recommendation of the Property Committee that Onform Property Management be engaged to complete an updated cyclical maintenance plan.

Moved M Hart, **seconded** D Neufeld. **CARRIED.**

3.5 Other Committee Reports (7.02 pm)

3.5.1 Staff Health & Safety – meeting scheduled for Thurs 31 October 2025

3.5.2 TAMSO – Hui held scheduled for Monday 3 November 2025

3.6 EOTC / Overnight Trip: Approvals (7.03 pm)

EOTC Trips

Motion: The Board gives initial approval for the overnight trip(s) with the understanding that the remaining steps for EOTC will be followed delegating authority to W Whitney, Board EOTC liaison to approve and report to the Board.

Moved S Flanigan, **seconded** L Lester. All in favour. **CARRIED.**

4. STRATEGIC DISCUSSION and DECISION-MAKING (7.06 pm)

4.1 Key Issue Exploration / Consultation

(e.g. Initiatives, Curriculum Development, Property Planning, etc.)

- [2025 - 2026 Strategic Plan](#) Awareness
- [2025 THS Annual Implementation Plan](#) (electronically only)

Senior Leadership Team (SLT) available for Questions and Answers:

• Pastoral and Student Wellbeing Update

Deputy Principal Chris Ashforth presented an update on recent student survey feedback, including students' responses regarding their relationships with their kaiāwhina (e.g., "Does your kaiāwhina know you?"). This work has been initiated in collaboration with external advisor Clive Hamill, who is supporting Chris and kaiāwhina in strengthening pastoral processes and practices.

Through PB4L, the school is also exploring options for enhancing student reward systems. This initiative aligns with Strategic Intent 2, particularly Objective 2.1: Strengthening Pastoral Care and improving attendance levels among learners.

• Assessment Practices Update

Deputy Principal Gareth Wright provided an update on the school's ongoing work to strengthen assessment practices (Strategic Intent 1.1.2). This includes literacy and numeracy co-requisites, formal exams undertaken by students, and the successes achieved. Attention is being given to derived grades and the transition of students into the senior school.

It was noted that Social Studies and Physical Education, as two core curriculum areas, are recognising the value of formal examinations. Meetings with Heads of Department have focused on ensuring that junior subject areas implement a minimum of one assessment per term. Feedback from assessments will be shared with parents to increase transparency and engagement.

In the senior school, study practices are being reviewed, with attention to how students allocate study time and identifying strategies for more effective learning and assessment.

• Business Alumni Connections

The Business Manager, Sharyn Baker, reported on the development of business alumni connections through attendance at Thames Business After 5 events over the past year and a half. These engagements have generated enquiries and interest in Thames High School from the local business community.

• Student Leadership and NCEA Engagement

The Principal, Michael Hart, highlighted the panel interviews with student leaders, during which students were asked, "Where do you think you have made the most difference in 2025?"

He noted that one area is the improved focus on end-of-year NCEA progress to determine study leave.

4.2 Policy Review Schedule (7.20 pm)

[Term 3 2025 Policies](#) and [Term 3 2025 Assurances](#) to be ratified.

- [Child Protection](#)
- [Abuse Recognition & Reporting](#)
- [Food & Nutrition](#)
- [Safety Checking](#)
- [Police Vetting](#)
- [Missing Student Procedure](#)

Motion: That the Board ratifies the Term 3 2025 **Policies** and **Assurances**.

Moved B Wilkinson. All in favour. **CARRIED.**

[Term 4 2025 Policies](#) (closes 19 December 2025)

Action: Term Policies for review are put on THS Facebook page (**RED / LDR**)

5. BOARD PROCESS and SELF-REVIEW (7.23 pm)

Strategic: Governance Capability / Continuous Improvement

5.1 Proposal for a Strategic / Policy Committee to lead and review the Strategic Plan and policies (*Deferred from previous meeting*)

- [Proposal and Terms of Reference for Strategy and Policy Committee](#)

- Proposal and Terms of Reference for a Strategy and Policy Committee. The principal noted that SchoolDocs policies are regularly reviewed, and any changes are made to the documents, which the Board then ratifies at the end of each term. Also notes that School Docs are overly detailed and in some cases details are not in keeping with NZSBA recommendations and can cause issues.
- The proposal includes establishing a standing committee to maintain a strategic focus, monitor progress on the Annual Implementation Plan, and provide regular updates on its implementation.
- The committee would support the Board in ensuring that the information presented is accurate, timely, and aligned with the school's strategic objectives.

Motion: That terms of reference of **Strategic / Policy Committee** are approved and the members of the **Strategic / Policy Committee** for the 2025/2026 school year are: **Lydia Lester, Cindy Dargaville, Alia Finn, Brooklyn Jiang**

Moved B Wilkinson. All in favour. **CARRIED.**

5.2 Deputy Presiding Member (7.27 pm)

- Purpose: Cover / succession
- Call for nominations

It was noted that if the Presiding Member is unavailable for urgent matters, the Deputy Presiding Member will act as the next point of contact.

Motion: That the board appoints **Alia Finn** as deputy to the Presiding Member (PM) for Te Kura Tuarua o Te Kauaeranga | Thames High School until the first board meeting in February 2026.

Moved B Wilkinson. All in favour. **CARRIED.**

5.3 Self-Evaluation / Reflection (7.30 pm)

NZSBA (New Zealand School Boards' Association) meeting self-review is a process for a school's board to evaluate its own performance.

- [Board culture](#) (electronically only)
- [Template NZSBA Board Meeting Self Evaluation](#)
 - The Principal noted that ongoing self-evaluation is a recommended process that the New Zealand School Boards Association (NZSBA) has long advocated.
 - The process involves having a board evaluator present during a board meeting to guide members through the evaluation, ensuring effective governance practices.
 - The Principal suggested incorporating this self-evaluation as a routine part of the beginning of board meetings, in line with NZSBA's recommended good governance practices.

Motion The Board accepted the Principal's recommendation to incorporate board self-evaluation as a routine part of the beginning of board meetings, in accordance with NZSBA's recommended good governance practices.

Moved by: B Wilkinson. **CARRIED**

Action: Develop a Google Form version of the [Template NZSBA Board Meeting Self Evaluation](#)

5.4 Planning for next meeting / Agenda Items

- Proposal - change to date of final meeting to 1 December 2025
- Other topics for next meeting?

Motion: That the date of the final Board meeting be changed from 24 November 2025 to 1 December 2025.

Moved B Wilkinson. All in favour. **CARRIED.**

6. CORRESPONDENCE and OTHER BUSINESS (7.35 pm)

6.1 Inwards / Outwards Correspondence

6.1.2 Inwards

- [MAJ - Resignation email rec'd 23 Aug 2025](#) (electronically only)
- [HWS - Resignation letter rec'd 19 Sept 2025](#)
- [CNW - Resignation email rec'd 19 Sept 2025](#)
- [PPTA National Executive 2026-2027 rec'd 27 Oct 2025](#)
- [School Support Staff Collective Agreement Negotiation](#)
- [Secondary Teachers' Collective Agreement negotiation](#)
- [Teacher and Principal latest data](#)

6.1.3 Outwards

- [MAJ - Resignation acceptance letter dated 28 Aug 2025](#)
- [HWS - Resignation acceptance letter dated 19 Sept 2025](#)
- [CNW - Resignation acceptance letter dated 3 Oct 2025](#)
- [Principal to PM - Notice of strike action](#)

Motion: That the Inwards correspondence is accepted and the Outwards correspondence is approved.

Moved by: B Wilkinson. **CARRIED**

Action:

- That the end of year farewells for leaving staff are sent to the board and Kiryn Curnow **(RED)**
- The Board Secretary notify Hon Scott Simpsons office of the two co-opted board members **(RED)**

7. PUBLIC-EXCLUDED BUSINESS (IN-COMMITTEE) (7.20 pm)

7.1 Personnel / Student / Financial

The Board moved into Public Excluded Business ("In-committee").

Motion: That the public be excluded from the following part/s of the proceedings of this of this meeting namely agenda item number **7** of the agenda. The grounds are that the matter is of a **Personnel** nature and the reason is to protect the privacy of **LDR / JDN**. This motion is proposed to comply with section 48 of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA) and the special requirements when moving to exclude the public.

Moved to exclude the public / into committee at **7.41 pm**.

Moved by: B Wilkinson. **CARRIED**

Full Board Meeting closed at **7.55 pm**

Brendon Wilkinson
Presiding Member

Date: _____