

# BROOKLYN SCHOOL (WELLINGTON)

## PARENT BOARD ELECTION CANDIDATE

### PROFILES

#### ANDERSEN-HUGGINS, Ellen



Tēnā koutou e ngā whānau, I'm Ellen, and have been a part of the Brooklyn School community since 2016 and currently have Kitty and Sophie at the school. I enjoy supporting school activities, and was very pleased to be able to host the Whānau Pūmanawa group at my own marae in Ōtaki this year. In my work life, I am a public servant who works closely with governance, and alongside both iwi and government to uphold the mana of the Treaty of Waitangi. My background is in architecture, and my focus these days is on the care of important heritage places and buildings. I'm keen to support the school and our wider school community however I can.

#### ASTON, Sia



Kia ora, my name is Sia Aston and I'm standing for the Brooklyn School Board of Trustees. I have one child at Brooklyn School, aged nine, in the Takahe class. I've lived in Brooklyn with my family for ten years and feel very connected to this special community. Over the years, I've supported the school as a parent helper, crossing patrol volunteer, and with strategic communications advice. I care about creating an environment where all children thrive, where families are included, where teachers can be their best and our children enjoy the best possible learning environment. Professionally, I bring significant experience in leadership, strategy, and public engagement. I currently serve as Deputy Director-General at the Department of Conservation, where I lead Ministerial support, governance, risk and assurance, communications and engagement and commercial partnerships. My background includes many years working in journalism and communications, and I have a strong understanding of how to balance transparency, accountability, and care in decision-making. I believe my mix of professional experience and personal commitment to the school makes me well placed to contribute constructively to the Board. I value collaborative leadership, careful stewardship of resources, and above all, doing what's right for our tamariki. I'm passionate about ensuring all children feel valued and supported to reach their potential, and that the school continues to reflect the aspirations of its diverse community. I would be honoured to serve and contribute to Brooklyn School's ongoing success. Ngā mihi nui, Sia Aston

#### BOA, Marie



My name is Marie Boa, and I am standing for election to the Board of Trustees. I have two children currently attending Brooklyn Primary School (Year 1 and Year 4) and I would welcome the opportunity to serve on the Board and contribute to the continued growth and positive direction of our school. I have a genuine interest in supporting quality education and ensuring the best outcomes for all our tamariki. I'm a Chartered Accountant with close to 20 years' experience in finance, gained in Wellington and London. I hold a Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of Commerce and Administration from Victoria University of Wellington. I have been admitted to practise law in NZ, although I've chosen not to do so and have instead pursued a career in finance. I'm currently employed as Finance Manager for The Institute of Directors, a membership and training organisation for boards/directors that's purpose is to drive excellence and high standards in governance. I believe my professional experience would allow me to add value to the board's work in areas such as financial oversight, strategic planning, and good governance, while always keeping student outcomes at the heart of decision-making. I would be proud to contribute my skills and time to support the principal and school leadership team, and to represent the voice of parents and whānau in our community. Thanks, Marie Boa

## BUDHIA, Neelish



Kia ora koutou, I am the proud father of Bodhi (Tūi Rua) and Anjaline (who will be joining the Brooklyn School whānau towards the end of 2025). Our family has deep roots in Brooklyn. I first moved here with my parents in 1996 during my final years of secondary school. Today, my parents still live locally, and my wife Vanita and I returned to Brooklyn in 2018, just before Bodhi was born. Professionally, I work as a Construction Project Manager, and my work gives me strong insight into how Ministry of Education property projects and funding works. With over 20 years in the architecture and construction sector, I bring expertise in health and safety, risk management, sustainability, and asset lifecycle planning – skills I believe can add value to our school community. As a parent of a neurodivergent child, I am deeply passionate about fostering an inclusive environment where every student can thrive, and where our teachers are supported with the right resources and opportunities to give our children the very best start in their academic journeys. Earlier this year, I was co-opted onto the Brooklyn School Board, and I have thoroughly enjoyed my time so far. I would be honoured to continue serving our school, supporting its growth, inclusivity, and success. Ngā mihi nui,

## GUNN, Jane



Tēnā koutou katoa Ko Jane Gunn tōku ingoa. I feel very lucky to have my four tamariki, Juno, Isla, Mila and Lucas at Brooklyn School, and am excited by the prospect of being able to give back to our kura whānau through serving on the board of trustees. I have spent my working life within the education sector, first as a secondary school teacher, then as a special education teacher, as a learning support advisor for the Ministry of Education, and now as an educational psychologist working within a school. Through this work I have had the privilege of working with countless teachers across many different primary and secondary schools, and a few kindergartens too, giving me an in-depth understanding of quality teaching and learning. The New Zealand schooling system is facing some of its biggest changes in decades, with teachers being expected to learn, teach and assess a new curriculum while it is still in the process of being developed. It is more important than ever that school systems are effective at supporting our teachers to do the job that they love, while reducing extraneous teacher workload. As a member of the board of trustees, I will use my knowledge and experience to provide strategic support and guidance to the school management, advocating for an inclusive school environment where student wellbeing is nurtured alongside academic excellence. I will welcome your feedback and input, ensuring Board decisions reflect the interests of the school community.

## HOULDING, Nicola



Nicola Houlding (BSc, MInstD) My name is Nicola (Nic) Houlding and I'm standing for a second term on the school Board. I've lived in Brooklyn with my husband, Dave, for 15 years and we feel fortunate that our three kids attend Brooklyn school—Henry (Moa), Leo (Takahē) and Hazel (Kiwi). I believe the education sector is massively under-resourced and I'm in awe of the energy and dedication of our kaiako and support staff amidst significant and enduring change. I'm passionate about community, whānau, kaiako and ākonga voice being reflected in school direction, as well as ensuring limited resources are directed to where they will bring the most benefit. Highlights during my last three years on the Board include:- Working alongside our dedicated and passionate Board members, management team, kaiako and support staff.- Facilitating development of the school's Strategic Plan, including tangible, measurable, actions.- Securing significant grant funding for school activities and resources (including AstroTurf replacement and all-school swimming lessons); enabling more school funds to be applied to learning and in-class support initiatives.- Seeing the tangible outcomes achieved through the range of learning support initiatives funded by the Board. EXPERIENCE I'm a strong problem solver and bring both strategic and critical-thinking strengths to this role. I've run my own business (Canopy Consulting) since 2020, providing strategic advice and investment decision support to organisations across many sectors. Prior to this, as a Principal in Becca's Advisory business, I led the company's NZ Business Resilience practice and business case services. I'm a member of the Institute of Directors, have completed the Company Directors Course and undertake regular professional development to make sure I bring my 'A-game'. My governance experience includes my service on the Brooklyn School Board, parent member and Secretary at Brooklyn Early Childhood Centre, and committee memberships for Wellington North Badminton Association. INTERESTS When I'm not driving kids to football practice, I love to cook, hang out with friends and whānau and head to the gym. My goals for the next year include getting back into Masters badminton, mastering burpees, and learning to play Minecraft. I've recently discovered the donut slide at Cyberpunk Ninja and plan to hone my skills there over the coming year. I see serving on our school Board as an opportunity to give back to our school community and it would be a privilege to do so for another term.

## JANSE VAN RENSBURG, Gerard



Kia ora koutou katoa. I firmly believe a good education is the foundation for not just a bright future for individual people, but for communities and countries as a whole. But a school like Brooklyn Primary is also more than just a place of learning, it is a core part of our community, bringing us all closer together, and providing that shared sense of community and belonging no matter the shores we originally came from. I have a passion for education, having spent most of my career working in different parts of the education sector. I work for several years as a tutor and lecturer at universities, helping young people learn and grow in a new and exciting but often overwhelming space for them. I have also worked in primary schools, running an evaluation on a learning support intervention, and managed national research and evaluation initiatives across government agencies. As a result, I have a solid understanding of both the internal operations of schools, but also of the external contexts schools operate under. As a professional evaluator and data analyst I am a champion for robust evidence-based decision making and proper long-term planning. For any organization to flourish, a good strategic vision needs to be supported by solid execution roadmaps or implementation plans. These are the exact skills I have honed over the last decade in my professional career, supporting people to not only set meaningful goals, but also mapping out realistic action plans that can deliver on those goals. As a board member this is what I hope to provide our school, a passion for education, backed up by the skills needed for effective long-term planning and decision-making. I can also make a pretty good boerewors roll with relish at any cultural fairs or give good sci-fi and fantasy book recommendations as a bonus. Ngā mihi nui, Gerard

## KEANEY, Sean



Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou katoa, Brooklyn School and our community is pretty special and our whānau love being a part of it. I'm standing for re-election as I enjoy the opportunity to contribute to the governance of our great school and to provide some continuity as we have a number of current board members standing down this election. My day job is CEO of advertising agency FCB Aotearoa and I also sit on the board of our industry body, the Commercial Communications Council and the Barnardos Foundation Board so have strong governance experience. I'd be pleased to be re-elected and continue to bring a parent voice and to support our wonderful kaiako and wider support staff.

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## NICOLL ANTIPAS, Philippa



Whāia te mātauranga, hei oranga mō tātou | Seek after knowledge for the sake of your wellbeing. My name is Philippa, and my husband Tony and I have Finn who is in the wonderful Zoe's class - Tūi Rua. We have been pleased with the education Finn is receiving and hope to see this continue and strengthen over his years at Brooklyn School. I am a former secondary school English teacher (including being a trustee on a Board of Trustees for a school in Tauranga), and have a PhD in Education (in teacher professional learning and development). I currently work part-time at the Otago Medical School in Wellington in their Education Unit; co-lead a research project with the Social Studies Educators' Network; and I contract to Victoria University in their Teacher Training Programmes. All of these relevant experiences mean I have great empathy and appreciation for the work of our teachers. I particularly want to ensure good governance structures at Brooklyn School so that our teachers are supported with their workload as they grapple with heavy curriculum demands. I will take up the challenge (Mauria te taki!) to support robust conversation, community voice, and that the strongly future-focused education of Brooklyn School continues.

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## STEENKAMP, Naomi



Kia ora koutou, I'm Naomi, and I'm standing on behalf of my husband and I for the Brooklyn School Board of Trustees because we believe in the value of holistic, inclusive education and want to contribute meaningfully to the continued success of our children's school and community. As proud parents of four young children, 11, 9, 8, 6 - in 2025, we have one child in each of the four syndicates. This gives us a strong and personal connection to every level of the school, and a deep appreciation for the dedication and care shown by the staff across all year groups. We feel fortunate to be raising our whānau in Brooklyn and would love the opportunity to give back. I bring a broad and diverse skill set, developed through roles as a founder, small business owner, and project lead across compliance, governance, health and safety, and primary food production. I have extensive experience working within legal frameworks and regulatory environments, and I'm comfortable navigating complex, process-driven systems to find practical, people-focused solutions. I'm organised and motivated and I seek quality outcomes. I am a speed reader with a memory like an elephant and hold several qualifications including a Communication Management degree. At the heart of my interest in education is a belief in nurturing the uniqueness of each child while also supporting the collective needs of the group. I'm passionate about wellbeing - healthy minds, healthy bodies, and emotionally safe environments. I believe that every moment can be a teaching moment, and that encouraging children to understand their own values and worldviews - and to respect those of others - is foundational for learning and growth. I'm collaborative, practical, values-driven, and committed to serving a full three-year term with care, respect, and energy. Thank you for your consideration. Ngā mihi nui, Naomi Steenkamp