



Mangere Bridge School Candidate Statements – School Triennial Board of Trustees Elections

1. Lysandra Cleere

Kia ora koutou, my name is Lysandra Cleere and Mangere Bridge is part of me, and I love our local community. I have lived in Mangere Bridge since I was in primary school myself and now, I have two daughters, in year's 3 and 5, who attend MBS, and absolutely love the school.

I have been a proud secondary school teacher for over 20 years and value education deeply. I currently work in middle management and lead a team of teachers and am involved in writing and implementing curriculum. I understand the trials within education in New Zealand and see the value in a broad curriculum where each student can see themselves and have an opportunity to reach their potential.



2. Abby Francis

Kia ora koutou,

My name is Abby. I am a proud parent of three tamariki. One who has been through Māngere Bridge School and two who currently attend.

Over the years, I've been actively involved in the Māngere Bridge community. I am a member of the PTA, where I've enjoyed working alongside other whānau to support school initiatives and events. My whānau attended Māngere Bridge Playcentre for five years, where I gained governance and policy experience. I also have experience navigating education regulations and contributing to preparation and engagement with the Education Review Office (ERO).

I have a background in education and currently work in Deaf education. I'm passionate about inclusive education and making sure all tamariki get the support they need to thrive.

I would love the opportunity to contribute to Māngere Bridge School as a member of the Board of Trustees.





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3. Susana Guttenbeil

Fakaalofa lahi atu, talofa lava!

As a parent, I care deeply about our children deserving of a school experience that reflects their culture, values, and identity - where equity is not just a goal, but a lived reality for all families. With a background in journalism and currently GM of content at Pacific Media Network, I'm a strong advocate for inclusivity and representation. I'm passionate about ensuring our school environment supports strong relationships between whānau, staff, and students.



I'm standing for the board again to help uphold a vision of education that prepares our tamariki to thrive academically, socially, and culturally.

Fa'afetai lava, many thanks!
Susana Guttenbeil

4. Justis Kamu

Talofa lava,

My name is Justis Kamu, father of Levaula, a Year 5 pupil in Room 14 (and a new entrant in late 2026). We joined the Māngere Bridge School (MBS) community last year and have appreciated the warm welcome and support. I am seeking a position on the school board to help all children, staff, and whānau thrive - ensuring we have a school where everyone belongs and can succeed.



My three years (2022 - 2025) on the Roscommon School board provided valuable insights into effective governance. I learned the critical importance of a well-supported principal and a strong, empowered staff with positive relationships with pupils and whānau.

As an MBS board member, I will champion this by:

- Supporting our principal and staff to create an environment where all children love to come to school and importantly high achievement is an expectation for every pupil.
- Engaging and listening to whānau to ensure their voices are reflected in board decisions.

As a proud Samoan married to Arohanui (Cook Island), I understand the complexities of navigating different cultural environments. We have raised our children in both bilingual and mainstream education and have seen how they flourish when they can confidently navigate their unique cultures. I believe this perspective is important for ensuring MBS remains an inclusive and culturally responsive school.

I am committed to serving our MBS community and would be honoured to help shape the school's future.

Soifua, Justis Kamu



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5. Sarah Mariu

Ko Whakarongorua te maunga
Ko Utakura te awa
Ko Hokianga te Moana
Ko Mataitaua te marae
Ko Ngati Toro te hapū
Ko Ngāpuhi te iwi
Ko Sarah Mariu ahau

Kia ora koutou,



My name is Sarah Mariu, and I am proud to put my name forward as a candidate for the Board of Trustees at Maangere Bridge School.

In 2018, my husband Reuben and I made the decision to move our whaanau into Maangere Bridge for our tamariki and the rich education we knew this school offered. Currently our son, Benjamin is in Piiwaiwaka and daughter, Amelia in Te Hiaroa - Maunga Pikitea.

Professionally, I work as a Resource Teacher of Learning and Behaviour (RTLb), supporting students, families and teachers across a number of schools. My work is grounded in equity, culturally responsive practice, and the belief that every learner brings strengths to be recognised and nurtured. I have a particular interest in supporting Māori and Pasifika learners and strengthening the systems that enable success for all students. I am passionate about ensuring all tamariki have the opportunity to thrive in a safe, inclusive, and high-quality learning environment.

As a whaanau we have experience navigating the organisations that support our tamariki both within the school system and outside of it. Working hard to maintain our own family's wellbeing through life's ups and downs, I understand the importance of voice, manaakitanga, and partnership in education.

I have also received a study award to attend Te Wānanga Takiura and undergo full immersion Reo study for 2026. This is both a personal and collective dream for our tamariki and whaanau.

I value collaboration, clear communication, and shared decision-making. I believe our school board has a key role in ensuring transparent governance, strong partnerships between home and school, and strategic thinking to support staff, students and whaanau.

Other relevant experience includes:

- Teaching in Maangere and wider South Auckland for 15+ years
- Mentoring teachers in culturally responsive practice and pedagogy
- Currently working as a specialist teacher within our community, and neighbouring areas

I would be honoured to bring my skills, experience, openness to learn and heart for service to our school board. Thank you for considering my nomination.

Ngā mihi nui,
Sarah Mariu



6. Denver Muller

Fakalofa lahi atu kia mutolu oti, koe higoa haaku ko Denver Muller. I am 28 years old, and I am a full-time mum of 5. Four of my children currently attend Mangere Bridge School ranging from Year 1 to Year-5. My hobbies are playing indoor netball, catering to my family, spending time with friends and caring for the people that mean the most to me.

I am very passionate about my kids learning and what they are exposed to when it comes to being in a safe school environment. As a parent, I believe children should be given the chance to learn in a safe, inclusive, high-quality learning environment, helping them to become the person they aspire to be, as well as to achieve their goals and dreams.

In the five years I have been a parent at Mangere Bridge School I have supported the school in many areas which include:

- Being a part of the PTA for the past 2 years, assisting with fundraisers for school necessities such as the school park, the school pool, equipment and many more.
- Volunteering as a netball manager for 4 different teams across 4 years.
- Helping out with zone sports including netball, softball and cricket.
- Helping out with netball zones and netball competitions such as Battle of the Bridges.
- Helping out with language weeks as well as overall support for the children and teachers when needed.

I believe being present is important for a child's development and growth as this is one of many fundamentals that will help a child thrive.

I am currently studying a certificate in computer skills and digital financing to better my knowledge and upskill my learning around management and education. I would also like to further my studies in other areas once I've completed my current certificate.

My vision is to support the school in continuing to deliver quality education and creating change such as:

- Developing better communication with teachers and parents
- Advocating for change to address current conflicts and issues that are affecting our children in their current learning space.
- Ensuring that our teachers, parents and children's voices are being heard, as they have the right to their say when it comes to their teaching and education.
- Always putting our children's best interest first.

I am committed and ready to serve with integrity and care. I will be honoured to represent our community and contribute positively to the future of our school.





7. Nicola Owen

Noo Airani me Weera ooku tupuna

I tipu ake ahau i Manchester

Ko te piriti o Maangere tooku kaainga inaaiane

Ko Nicola Owen tooku ingoa.

Kia ora, my name is Nicola Owen. I am originally from Manchester with Irish and Welsh ancestry. I moved to Maangere Bridge in 2007 where I live with my partner Paul and our ten year old.



I was asked to join the Board of Trustees at Maangere Bridge School in 2023 and had the honour of being elected as Chair / Presiding Member in December 2023. I am standing again to continue supporting the school as we engage more closely with mana whenua to enable our school to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, work to open the Samoan Bi-lingual unit, keep improving our achievement results and complete the school renovations and pool upgrade.

I bring a strong sense of social justice and want to make sure that every child gets a chance to learn and succeed in a way that works for them. In my time as Chair I have worked to develop a culture where we listen closely to whaanau and continuously seek opportunities to improve and learn from our mistakes.

I love spending time at our regular poowhiri to welcome new whaanau and helping out at sports events and the Matariki Markets. We chose Maangere Bridge School after four years at Maangere Bridge Playcentre because of the strong sense of community that it shares. We particularly value the way our school celebrates the culture of all our whaanau and encourages our tamariki to think about how they each belong. Our child is in year 5 in Te Hiaroa at Maangere Bridge School and throughout our time here we have seen the love and care that all the staff put into nurturing every student.

Most of my working career has been in disability advocacy and Human rights. I managed the Disability Service at AUT, ran Auckland Disability Law and worked at the Human Rights Commission. My current work is in disability training and as Co-Director of Audio Described Aotearoa Ltd.

I have a range of governance experience including the Coalition of Community Law Centres, Auckland Playcentres Association and The Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind, along with two years on the Maangere Bridge School Board of Trustees.



8. Neha Patel

Kia ora, my name is Neha Patel. I'm of Indian ancestry and was born in Zambia, where I spent my childhood. I came to New Zealand with my family when I was 11 and have lived in Auckland ever since. I moved to Maangere Bridge in 2016.

I'm standing for the Board of Trustees at Maangere Bridge School as I believe my skills and experience will support the school in a meaningful way. I began my working life as a lawyer with YouthLaw community law centre, where I learned about the importance of Boards of Trustees in shaping the lives of young people. My time in community law also brought home to me the importance of good governance in public institutions and community services.

An enjoyment of history and scholarship led me to complete a Masters degree in Ancient History, after which I began working in the public service. I'm currently a senior advisor with the Ministry of Justice.

There are three ways that I would like to contribute as a representative on the Board. The first is to listen to school community on its priorities and concerns. I am keen to support the Board's ongoing work to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and to create learning environments for students from diverse cultures. The second is to apply and develop clear, consistent policies for decision-making and future planning, and the third is to use my legal knowledge and background to help the school meet its statutory responsibilities.

If elected to the Board, I'd bring a strong sense of service to the role and to advocating for the rights of tamariki. Maangere Bridge School has a clear commitment to giving all students a chance to learn and succeed on their own terms, and I would work hard to uphold this.





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9. Jade Penno

My name is Jade Penno, and I am excited to submit my candidacy for a position on the Parent Board. As a dedicated parent of Zayla Ioane currently in Room 1, I am passionate about supporting our children and families to help provide a positive, safe and inclusive environment.

I bring a few years of owning a small decorating business plus being a overly involved stay at home mum to the table, and I believe having this would help with many roles/events at the school.

If elected, I will advocate for our children's wants and needs, our parents perspectives, and initiatives that enhance both academic and social experiences for all students. I would only have the best interest for our children at heart.

I am committed to listening to the concerns and ideas of fellow parents and working together to strengthen our school community. I would be honoured to serve and contribute to the continued success of Mangere Bridge School and would love to watch not only my children but all our children thrive!

Thank you for your consideration and support.

Sincerely,
Jade Penno

10. Mark Sapsford

Kia ora, my name is Mark Sapsford and I'm standing for election to the Mangere Bridge School Board. I'm a proud local resident and parent, with a 5-year-old daughter currently attending the school, a 3-year-old at home, and another child on the way—so our whānau will be part of the community for many years to come.

I'm standing because I want to give back to this wonderful school and contribute to its continued success and growth. My values, and those of my family, are strongly aligned with the inclusive, community-focused approach.



Professionally, I serve in a clinical leadership role at Counties Manukau Health and am a board member of a professional charitable organisation. These roles have given me leadership experience and a strong foundation in governance, teamwork, and achieving shared goals.

It would be a privilege to represent our school whānau and work alongside others to support the continued development of Mangere Bridge School.



11. Salea'aumua Sofara

As a stay-at-home mom, I have the privilege of being deeply involved in my daughter's education and daily life. Over the years, I have seen firsthand how much of an impact a supportive, engaged school community can have on a child's growth and development. I would love the opportunity to contribute to the school board to ensure that all children, including my own, have the best possible educational experience.

Being a stay-at-home mom has allowed me to build a strong connection with my community, and I believe I bring a unique perspective to the table. I am committed to advocating for the needs of students, teachers, and families, and I am eager to be a voice for those who might not always have the platform to be heard. My goal is to work collaboratively with school leadership, faculty, and parents to create an environment where every student feels valued, supported, and encouraged to reach their fullest potential.

I believe that my availability and flexibility as a stay-at-home mom will allow me to be an active and consistent contributor to the board's efforts. I am ready to invest the time and energy needed to positively influence school policy, foster communication between parents and staff, and support initiatives that enhance the overall educational experience.

In addition to my role as a mom, I have over 15 years of experience as a retail manager. This position allowed me to develop strong leadership skills, including budgeting, team management, and problem-solving. I've learned how to effectively communicate with diverse groups of people, adapt to changing situations, and find creative solutions to challenges. These skills, combined with my passion for supporting children and families, would make me an effective advocate for our school community. I am confident that my experience in management, paired with my commitment to my daughter's education, would allow me to contribute meaningfully to the work of the school board.

I am truly excited about the possibility of working together with the school board to shape the future of education for our children, and I would be honored to have the opportunity to serve.

Sincerely,

Sa Sofara