

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Parents, Teachers, and the Board of Governors 18 October 2025

Board of Governors Present: Mr. Darron Tarr (Principal), Mr. Ryan Reed (Deputy Principal), Rev, Iain Uys, Mrs. Nompilo Mswane (Chairperson), Mrs. Lilian Corden-Lloyd (minute secretary).

1. **Welcome:** Mr. Darron Tarr
2. **Opening prayer:** Rev, Iain Uys
3. **Apologies:** None
4. **Approval of Previous A G M Minutes**
Proposed by Matsrai Chikwanda and seconded by Ketsi Ngwenya
5. **Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes** - None.
6. **Principal's Report** – Mr Darron Tarr
7. **Vice Chairperson Report** – Mrs. Nompilo Mswane.
8. **Parent Representative** – Zandile Tshabalala
9. **Finance Report** - Mr Darron Tarr
10. **General**
11. **Benediction**

6. Principal's Report - It is my privilege to present this year's Principal's Report, and I thank you for your presence and continued interest in the welfare and future of our school. The past year has been one of both challenges and triumphs. I'm going to speak to you openly and honestly about where we stand, what we've achieved, and the road that lies ahead.

1. Academic Performance

Despite the financial pressures we face, our staff and learners have remained focused and committed, and we are particularly proud of the following:

- Our academic performance across all phases has remained consistently high, with ongoing improvement in core subjects such as Mathematics and English. This is reflected in the number of academic badges we award each term, which has increased exponentially over the past three years.
- We also have seen much larger numbers of learners performing well in external mathematics benchmarking examinations over the past three years.
- We continue to integrate Biblical principles into our curriculum, allowing our learners to grow spiritually as well as intellectually.

These successes are a reflection of the dedication of our teaching staff and the support our learners receive at home.

2. Christian Values in Action - Each year, we witness the fruits of our spiritual development programme:

- Weekly devotions and outreach initiatives have strengthened our school's Christian identity. We are particularly proud of our outreach initiatives. As a mission of the Pinetown Methodist Church, with which we

have a close collaboration, John Wesley School aligns itself with the objectives of other missions of the church and, when possible, endeavours to support them. Such a mission is Phakamisa, which oversees the running of three Pre-primary schools, situated in impoverished areas in the Highway region.

- Staff devotions have been a source of strength for our team during uncertain times.

We remain deeply committed to our mission: *“Educating with Excellence, Guided by Faith”*.

3. Sport and extracurricular achievements

Not only do our learners excel in the classrooms, but they also excel on the sports field, and we have had a number of excellent results in sport this year.

- The KZNCCSA Senior Winter Festival took place at Redwood College in Umhlanga, our Under 13 soccer girls were the best performers, making the final for the 2nd consecutive year.
- For the first time, our Under 9 netball girls and Under 9 soccer boys participated in the KZNCCSA Junior Winter Festival at Redwood College in Umhlanga. Both teams exceeded expectations, with the girls making the semi-finals of the netball and our boys the final of the soccer.
- Our Under 13 boys' soccer team competed in the Highway region 'A' league this year and will do so again in 2026. Our boys also did exceptionally well in the prestigious Kearsney Soccer Tournament in July. We in 6th place overall, finishing ahead of top schools such as Westville Senior Primary, Atholl Heights, Clifton, Winston Park, Reddam and Broadhurst Primary from Botswana.
- At the SACSSA National Cross Country Championships in August, Onamandla Karumbidza finished in 1st place in the boys Under 12 division, in the process becoming the SACSSA national champion and earning his SACSSA colours. At the same meeting, both Langelihle Hlophe (Under 10 Girls) and Angel Machadu (Under 13 Girls) finished in the top 5 in their respective events.
- Onamandla Karumbidza and Ntuthuko Nyanda, both in Grade 7, represented KZN in the KZNIPSSA Ian McLeod 2025 Soccer Tournament held at Hilton College in July.
- Our Grade 3 girls and boys started competing in mini hockey tournaments on Thursday afternoons that were hosted by Westville Junior Primary School on the AstroTurf pitch at Westville Girls' High School in term 3 and they made excellent progress.
- At the KZNCCSA Provincial Athletics Championships in August, Lizweletu Ngcobo – 3rd Boys u11, 1200m, Angel Machadu – 3rd Girls u13, 800m, 1st Girls u13 long jump (Set a record of 4.80m, previous record of 4.72 held since 2022).
- Both athletes qualified to represent the KZNCCSA team at the National Championships in September, Lizwelethu Ngcobo – 5th Boys u11, 1200m, Angel Machadu - 3rd Girls u13, 800m, 1st Girls u13 long jump (Equalled the SACSSA record: 5.08m that has stood since 2022).
- On the cultural front, Khaya Zungu in Grade 7 placed 2nd in the prestigious Panda Paints art competition and our senior choir performed superbly at the Winter Festival of Choirs at Winston Park Primary School in June.

4. Financial Position: A Time of Challenge

I speak candidly when I say that we are currently in a season of financial distress. Like many independent and Christian schools across the country, we have been affected by:

- A decrease in learner enrolment and a concomitant reduction in income from school fees.
- Limited external funding or donor support,

- Escalating operational costs (security, utilities, maintenance, learning materials).

As was the case last year, we are currently operating with a budget deficit that, if permitted to escalate, will affect our ability to maintain current staff levels, resources, and core programmes.

5. Looking Ahead: Cost cutting

The following measures have been put in place to contain costs.

- We have consolidated the activities of our two computer labs into one facility, thus cutting down dramatically on operational and maintenance costs.
- Two teachers left John Wesley School during the course of the year, and another two teachers will be leaving at year end. In 2026, we will undertake a consolidation exercise in Grade One and Grade Two by reducing our classes from three to two in these respective grades, which means that two of our departing teachers will not be replaced. This will save a considerable amount of money on our salary bill, without compromising our education standards and without increasing our class sizes dramatically.

6. Looking Ahead: Income generating strategies

- We need to stabilise our enrolment and prevent a further decline in our learner numbers. We have dramatically increased our marketing efforts using both social media platforms and traditional media outlets.
1. Ongoing Social Media promotions, design and placement of adverts, videos, posts, and stories.
 2. Open Day on 26 July, 3 Testing Days.
 3. Online Applications.
 4. Monitoring and responding to all comments and messages that come through via Facebook Messenger and Instagram.
 5. June/July - Front page advertising Isolezwe and a full page in The Get It Magazine.
 6. June/July/August - Front-page advertisements in the Isolezwe, The Post and The Highway Mail newspapers and a 2nd full page in The Get It Magazine.
 7. August - Printing and distribution of 20,000 flyers via Vibrant Direct in the greater Upper Highway area. Advertising our Fun Day and admissions for 2026. Entrance Testing Days for 2026 admissions. Flyers will also be sent home with our learners.
 8. A Meet and Greet initiative on 20 August by the Foundation Phase teachers, Mrs Williams organised this specifically to invite Pre-primary School teachers to John Wesley School for a "Meet and Greet" and tour of the Foundation Phase and school - to encourage them to suggest John Wesley School as a good option to their parents with learners entering Grade 1 in 2026.
 9. August - Advertising for both the school and Fun Day in the Westville Times – print and online.
 10. Videos marketing the school and our Family Fun Day have been sent through to the Pinetown Methodist Church to promote John Wesley School to the parish members before services.
 11. Future Advertising (October-December/January): Planned advertisements in the Isolezwe and Highway Mail as well as continued online social media promotion.
- We need to establish additional streams of income and remove our sole reliance on school fees as a source of revenue.
 - Fundraising is crucial in order to reduce our budget deficit, improve our facilities and enhance our teaching capacity.
 - We wish to establish an online school offering extra tuition in English and mathematics in order to broaden our base of learners. This service will be available to our existing enrolled learners as well learners that don't attend John Wesley School but need extra expert tuition in these core subjects.
 - Secure corporate funding and sponsorship.

7. A Call for Support and Partnership

To ensure our future sustainability, we cannot afford to continue on this path without a collective effort from our school community. Parents and guardians, your voice and presence matter. We ask for your partnership in the following ways:

- Ensure school fee payments are made each month, on time and in full.
- Volunteer to become involved in our fundraising efforts.
- Help us connect with local businesses, or organisations that may wish to sponsor or support our school.
- Pray for our school leadership, staff, and learners - for wisdom, provision, and strength.

Considering the current economic climate in our country, it is important that we carefully consider the direction we take as a school, and this requires both intelligent and strategic planning. In this respect, I must give credit to the Board of Governors of John Wesley School, led by our articulate and highly competent Chairperson, Ms Nompilo Mswane. Thank you to our parent representatives, Mrs Zandile Tshabalala, Mrs Zinhle Meyiwa, Mr Ntuthuko Mathe, and Mr Bongani Mkhize. Credit must also go to the Finance Committee, under the guidance of Mrs Lindiwe Mazibuko, which manages the finances of the school most responsibly. I want to thank Reverend Iain Uys, Mr Mandla Ndaba, Mr Nkosenhle Mkhize and Mr Thabiso Rametse for their participation and meaningful contributions in our BOG meetings as representatives of the Pinetown Methodist Church. I also wish to thank our Deputy Principal, Mr Ryan Reed, our staff representative, Ms Kristen Cilliers and our Marketing Manager and my Personal Assistant, Mrs Corden-Lloyd, for their participation in BOG meeting and the valuable contributions they have made over the course of this year.

In terms of the running of the school on a daily basis, I extend my gratitude to our school's management team, our Deputy Principal, Mr Ryan Reed, Our Foundation Phase HOD, Mrs Donel Williams, and our Intersen Phase acting HOD, Ms Claire Stansell for their support and outstanding efforts this year. All of the support staff at the school, from administrators to maintenance staff to general assistants, teacher assistants and aftercare facilitators deserve high praise for their competence and their professionalism.

Mr Tarr concluded his report with a simple but powerful truth: God is not finished with John Wesley School. This is a school with heart and with hope. While our financial situation is serious, it is not irreversible. With openness, unity, and shared responsibility, I believe we can turn things around. Our learners deserve a safe, well-resourced, and thriving school environment, and we remain committed to working with all of you to preserve this reality.

Let us stand together for the future of our children and look ahead not with fear, but with faith - confident in the God who has brought us this far and will carry us through.

God bless you, and God bless John Wesley School.

7. Chairpersons Report: Mrs. Nompilo Mswane

Mrs Mswane apologised for her late arrival, explaining that she had not been feeling well earlier that morning. She reminded parents how fortunate they are to have their children at John Wesley School, an independent Christian school dedicated to laying a strong foundation for learners as they prepare for high school and beyond. While acknowledging the financial pressures many families are facing, she commended the teachers for their commitment to excellence and the high standards they maintain. She expressed confidence in Mr Tarr, his management team, and the staff, whose dedication ensures the continued success of the school. Mrs Mswane also noted her disappointment at the poor attendance at the AGM, encouraging parents to prioritise these important meetings and become more involved. She stressed the importance of paying school fees on time to support the sustainability of the school, and concluded by thanking the management, admin staff, and teachers for their ongoing dedication to the learners.

8. **Parent Representative – Mrs. Tshabalala**

Mrs Tshabalala reiterated the importance of parental involvement in all aspects of their children's school life, emphasising that a thriving school community depends on active partnership between parents and the school. She highlighted that fundraising plays a vital role in supporting the school's resources, maintaining facilities, and creating opportunities that enhance the overall educational experience for all learners. In this regard, she encouraged parents to respond positively to requests for fundraising initiatives throughout the year, as every contribution, whether big or small, makes a meaningful difference. She also invited parents to take a proactive approach by sharing ideas and suggestions with the school, fostering a spirit of collaboration and ensuring the continued growth and sustainability of the school.

9. **Financial Report – Power Point Presentation presented by Mr. Darron Tarr - As per attached**

The Finance Report included an image of **Mayfair Convent Primary School**, a school very similar to John Wesley School, not only in its Christian ethos but also in the resemblance of its main building to our own. Sadly, it was shared that Mayfair Convent School, a 112-year-old private primary school in Johannesburg, will be closing at the end of 2025 due to financial pressures, reduced government subsidies, and declining enrolment. Founded in 1913, the school's property is set to be auctioned on 16 October 2025. This serves as a sobering reminder of the reality many independent schools face, and highlights how important it is for parents to take an active role in their children's schooling by supporting the school through consistent fee payments, active involvement, and participation in school initiatives, in order to help ensure long-term sustainability.

10. **General**

- Mr Tarr urged parents and guardians to consider serving on the Board as additional Parent Representatives. He invited those interested to reach out to him via email or to speak with the Vice Chairperson, Ms Nompilo Mswane, for further information.
- A parent raised concerns regarding the ticketing process on the Family Fun Day. There was particular concern over the long queues for buying tickets. The parents were assured that the concerns will be discussed before the next Fun Day.
- Mr Tarr responded to a question regarding the integration of Christianity into daily life at John Wesley School by reassuring parents that the Christian ethos is intentionally woven into all aspects of school life. He explained that devotion and prayer form a regular part of both Intersen and Foundation Phase assemblies held on Mondays and Wednesdays, while each grade in the Intersen Phase is also given the opportunity to lead a devotion during the Friday Main Assembly. He further highlighted that assemblies are often led by guest speakers, including Rev. Iain Uys and other representatives from the Pinetown Methodist Church, and noted that Rev. Iain Uys also leads staff devotions once a term. In addition, Mr Tarr shared that educators are encouraged to incorporate the Word of God into their lessons where appropriate, and many do so. Learners also pray before each break and at the end of the school day. He concluded by explaining that, due to the demands of the curriculum, it is not always feasible to include formal Religious Instruction on a regular basis.

11. **Benediction by Mr. Darron Tarr**

Benediction - "And now may the Grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us now and for evermore, Amen."

End