



12 April 2013

Draft Education Renewal Recovery Programme in Greater Christchurch
Ministry of Education
shapingeducation@minedu.govt.nz

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Education Renewal Recovery Programme

The North East Secondary Education Committee (NESE) presents this submission to the Ministry of Education's "Directions for Education Renewal in Greater Christchurch" document.

NESE is submitting this document to enable consideration of the communities in the North East of Christchurch. NESE has advocated for these communities since 2008. We represent a large population of families with children who will be directly affected by the secondary school renewal processes.

Our philosophy is about accessible local schooling, minimizing transport, living more sustainably and strengthening communities. NESE's objectives are to promote and advocate for secondary education in North East Christchurch. We advocate for parents and children. We take great care to be impartial in our investigations and to address the majority of the community's needs in our recommendations.

Committee members are regular attendees and contributors to the education renewal process. The documents NESE presents are well considered, reflecting ongoing research and consultation with our community. There is an expectation to have our voice included in consultation on secondary education as NESE represents the area of North East Christchurch. This area has no other local representation for secondary schooling.

Several of the primary schools in our area are proposed to merge¹. Our recommendations are based on the assumption that the interim proposals for primary schools in North East Christchurch will follow through either as documented, or with minimal change.

¹ Burwood & Windsor; Freeville & North New Brighton; Central New Brighton and South New Brighton.

NESE believes establishing a strong bridge between primary and secondary levels is a major component in achieving the vision of lifelong learning. Establishing a comprehensive network encompassing all education services from Early Childhood through to Tertiary Education will build a robust education framework serving communities well beyond Christchurch's recovery phase.

It is timely for NESE to consider all options that come from our community engagement including an inclusive approach for the many families that make up our community. Change is inevitable in the current environment. Families are now looking for results that show courage, planning and consideration of all people that make up our society.

NESE can see the overall picture and shape of education provision being developed throughout greater Christchurch. We believe in local provision for specific communities. NESE believes meeting education needs within a community setting from Early Childhood onwards delivers many benefits to students, families and the community. The benefits contribute to improving the health and function of the community including local businesses and the natural environment, resulting in measurable improvements in community wellness and fiscal outcomes. The population in the North East is quite diverse. NESE has a strong desire to increase participation in education for targeted groups not currently reaching their full potential.

Establishment of a New Secondary School

Proposals for the existing secondary schools have not acknowledged the large population of the North East. The North East of Christchurch is a rich learning environment. We wish to unite the community around a secondary school. A well placed co educational secondary school would nest within our naturally rich environment within a strong supportive surrounding community. NESE supports a location that promotes biking and walking; has easy access to bus routes and is close to the majority of residents, without imposing on surrounding residential areas. Placing schools within the community they serve ensures benefits to all members of that community. It would be a recovery highlight for the East.

The area encapsulates a population with a strong dedication to the area, including families repairing and rebuilding their homes; new homes in the Prestons subdivision and new immigrants to New Zealand for the rebuild. The area has a long history of having a high proportion of families with young and school aged children. It has affordable housing and a strong recreational focus. It has a natural catchment with several established early childhood services and full primary schools that can link for easy transition to secondary education. The path of learning would be clearly envisaged.

The school could be a relocated secondary school. The school could provide distinctive curriculum highlights including cultural, historic, physical and environmental subjects. The culture for learning would be very strong and give many experiences to all students through utilizing modern teaching methods, ICT and resource sharing between schools.

Secondary students from South New Brighton would also be included as Aranui moves to become a combined campus for Early Childhood education through to year 13. A natural catchment from Marshland Road including Prestons through the Parklands area, North Beach and Brighton will ensure the new school is viable. All of these suburbs could reach a well placed school without having to cross main roads. This is a consideration in safety, active transport and natural neighbourhood connectivity.

Mairehau High School

Mairehau High School is in an unusual position. While it has traditionally been considered as a school for the East, it is not well placed for links to the Eastern communities. Its current location is increasingly removed by the barriers of main transport routes. The school has a poorly defined natural catchment. The effort to travel to Mairehau from the Eastern suburbs is similar to the effort needed to travel to any other secondary school. Often families then consider other factors and secondary school destinations are based on these. Unfortunately, the unfair stereotype of good schools and bad schools prevalent in Christchurch has dealt hard on Mairehau. NESE is adamant that this stereotype needs to be removed from Christchurch education at all levels.

We propose that Mairehau High School be rejuvenated to a different site. A site on the Northern side of the main transport routes would serve the growing population of Belfast. A site towards the East would better serve the large populations of the North East.

Shirley Boys' High School and Avonside Girls' High School

The future of Shirley Boys' and Avonside Girls' High Schools needs to be discussed within our proposal. A family's choice of a single sex school may be based on heritage or consideration for an individual child. It is a choice that is expected and should always be available in a large city. Some families choose single sex education where their child has struggled in a co-ed environment. Families choosing single sex schools are more likely to commit to travel costs.

Locating co-educational schools in the suburbs and single sex schools near the city centre could provide an accessible approach for single sex schools as well as schools of special character. Single sex schools could be placed side by side while retaining their own individual identities.

We are in favour of Shirley Boys' High School relocating to a suitable site near or adjacent to the Avonside Girls' High School site. This would enable resource sharing and with the possibility of optimized time tabling to co-share subjects at the top end of the school. If Shirley Boys' High School cannot readily be located near Avonside Girls' High School, then the site chosen should give consideration to the possibility of Avonside Girls' High School also being located on the same site. However, both schools should retain their own independent identities.

It is important to consider how zoning would work for single sex schools under this proposal. Our suggestion is that single sex schools would either have no zone or that they could have their own zone network. We believe all co-ed schools in suburban areas should be zoned to ensure that every residential area has a clear educational direction for their children. Zone catchments should be logically placed to enhance their communities now and into the future.

NESE believes

- Accessible secondary education is a priority for all areas of Christchurch, to enable regular student attendance and a high level of student achievement.
- Both co-ed and single sex schooling must remain as viable secondary education options.
- All co-ed secondary schools should be zoned.
- A clear learning path should be known in each community with every residential area having a clear educational direction for their children.
- Any charter school proposed should only be additional to a strong and comprehensive state education network.

NESE supports the following outcomes

- The location of secondary schools in North East Christchurch should be geographically well placed to provide accessible education to meet the needs of current and future populations.
- A well placed co educational secondary school should be established in North East Christchurch.
- We support the rejuvenation of Mairehau High School on another site towards the North.
- We are in favour of Shirley Boys' High School relocating to a suitable site near or adjacent to the Avonside Girls' High School site.
- In the event that Shirley Boys' High School cannot be located near Avonside Girls' High School, then the chosen site should allow the possibility of Avonside Girls' High School being located on the same site.

Conclusion

NESE asks the Ministry of Education to ensure our community is adequately resourced for lifelong learning including provision of secondary education to meet the needs of the current and future student population.

NESE will continue to advocate for the educational direction of families in North East Christchurch. We wish to continue to actively participate in shaping the future of education. Committee members are always available to share ideas for further proposals and to assist with community consultation.

Yours sincerely



Amanda Williams
Chairperson



Elissa Smith
Media Spokesperson