

## **Future Education Provision for the Waimea Schooling Network - Information Evening**

Minutes of Meeting: Wednesday 11th August

Location: Wakefield School Hall

Start Time: 7.05pm

Approx 40 People in attendance: 25 community members and 15 speakers

Present: Janet Kelly (Facilitator); Board Members: Ryan Edwards (Chair); Lea Galvin; Sonia Emerson, Brad Pyers, Dane Boswell, Scott Mackenzie (staff Rep on BOT), Peter Verstappen (Principal); Victoria Edwards (minute taker); Grant Watson (Principal Upper Moutere); Pete Mitchener (Principal Broadgreen Intermediate); Ex Wakefield School Students; Lower Moutere Students; Sarah Wilkin & Lyn Evans (RTLB service); Yvonne Fenemor (Deputy Principal Waimea College)

- Peter opened the meeting and welcomed everyone including speakers and the community. Advised the meeting to share views and for an update on current position.
- Ryan Edwards - Introduction and thank you to speakers and community. Ryan confirmed that this is a follow up meeting to the one in May. Advised that there will not be a vote this evening it is to share and gather information. He advised that media are not present as an invitation-only meeting to the local community. Any questions back to board and they can address as necessary or refer to the Ministry.
- Janet Kelly - Introduced herself and reiterated that the meeting is an opportunity to gather information. She acknowledged that this is a big decision for the community, but this meeting is not a debate but a forum for sharing information, experiences and asking questions. She advised that the speakers are talking about experiences and not expressing views.
- Grant Watson - Principal of Upper Moutere School with some current students. Currently Full primary and discussed positive and negative in their experiences. They travel to Motech at Parklands school in Motueka to cover the Technology units and modules.

**Question:** How much time on the bus travelling to Tech?

**Answer:-** Grant - Leave on the bus at 11.30 to arrive at 12pm. Arrive back at school about 2.45pm

**Question:** How is Parklands going to be able to hold another 3 schools for Tech classes?

**Answer:** Grant confirmed that they wouldn't be able to. Peter - advised there are options that would be looked at eg Children go to WIS for Tech or it may be done in house.

- Pete Mitchener - Principal of Birchwood School. Pete covered a little history around why intermediate schools were initially put in place and confirmed that no more intermediates are being built as the model has/is changing. Pete discussed the pros and cons of intermediate.

In his experience every child is different and it depends on your child as to which path suits them better.

**Question:** At Intermediate would you get full tech?

**Answer:** Every school is different, but with Broadgreen the children have 2 sessions 1.30min a week. Specialist for 6 weeks.

**Question:** So would my child be better off at Intermediate?

**Answer:** Totally depends on your child and the school.

- Ex Wakefield Students gave their opinions about moving into Intermediate from Wakefield School.

### **NO QUESTIONS**

- Lower Moutere Students (Full Primary) discussed their experience of full primary and had a focus on needs for children with higher learning needs finding full primary setting easier to deal with. 1 transition to college easier than 2 transitions

### **NO QUESTIONS**

- Sarah Wilkin & Lyn Evans (RTLB Service) Sarah confirmed that they had attended the meeting in May and she found it great to see the community here again. She acknowledged that change to a full primary school was a very important decision. Sarah explained about RTLB and who they were. She explained that RTLB service is trained specialist teachers with experience in all settings. They support people across the Nelson bays region. She highlighted that all schools work hard to meet the needs of the students. Sarah confirmed that there are families that may need additional support and that is what the RTLB service provide. Transition is a huge part of their job and they will be on hand whatever decision is made.

### **NO QUESTIONS**

- Yvonne Fenemor - (Deputy Principal Waimea College)  
Yvonne congratulated the students for their public speaking. She advised that the Principal could not be present as had other school commitments. Yvonne provided a background to her teaching history across the Nelson schools. Yvonne acknowledged that transition is difficult whether from full primary or Intermediate but the College will support students when they move to college and will adapt the transition programme to the type of school the child is coming from. Yvonne reiterated that this decision is important but asked the community to remember that the children should be at the heart of this decision and not what is easiest. Yvonne's experience shows that full primary can be more connected to the community. She touched on current

research into 1 transition to year 9 and if it is better for children. She advised that some children thrive off 1 transition whereas others excel with 2 transitions. It all depends on the child and more important that parents are involved. She confirmed that Intermediate do provide lots of opportunities, but so do full primaries.

**QUESTION:** Have you noticed the needs of children from full primary differ in year 9 from non full primary - are they more frightened or more prepared?

**ANSWER** - Different children have different responses. Yvonne said that no real noticeable difference beyond the child

**QUESTION:** If WIS is at capacity how is the college looking? Is this an issue? They must be developing at the same time?

**ANSWER:** Yvonne confirmed that Yes college is over capacity at the moment. 17 new classrooms are being built and she feels they are lucky at the moment. They have fabulous new resources when completed and will no longer be at capacity. WIS are at capacity and are also having new rooms built. MOE working at what will happen in the whole area as more people are moving here.

Speakers finished and left at 8.10pm

- Peter confirmed that the school does currently have enough room to expand to a full Primary
- Ryan confirmed that the Board are aware that Technology is a huge concern for the community and this area definitely needs more answers from the MOE. He reiterated that the Board will not be pushed or rushed into a final decision and again stated that no decision has been made.

**QUESTION:** Have the board had any further clarification or answers from the Ministry around the questions asked following the last meeting?. Anything further update?

**ANSWER:** Peter - yes they have been shared - Peter then went over the questions and the answers that have been shared with the community.

**QUESTION:** Who make final decision

**ANSWER:** Sonia and Ryan confirmed The Board.

**QUESTION:** Why not the community?

**ANSWER:** Sonia explained that the Board have been instructed by the ministry that it is a board decision. Board has been tasked with scenarios and they need to consult the community for input and feedback.

**QUESTION:** If board members making decision how many board members have had children gone through WIS

**ANSWER:** Sonia yes, Scott Yes

**QUESTION:** Have you thought of us parents who have been in school for many years? Maybe the change could be brought out to new parents so new parents are aware that school is going to year 8 when their children start their school years.

**ANSWER:** Ryan explained that the minimum amount of time is a year. If the decision is to move to a full primary then the change will be made with an appropriate timeline.

**QUESTION:** Would the Board have much say on timings?

**ANSWER:** Ryan confirmed yes MOE said they will not force a decision and not inflict a timeline.

**QUESTION:** Putting back to the Board to make a decision is ok, but there is not a choice as the intermediate school is bulging. How will they make the school take more? It seems like it has to happen as they are at capacity - so is there really an option? Not sure there is a choice?

**ANSWER:** Scott confirmed there is definitely a choice. Ryan said MOE has repeatedly confirmed that it is our decision. There is no pressure to say yes. Janet advised that this is an unusual position as usually it is the school that approaches the ministry about changing to full primary and not the Ministry approaching the school as in this situation.

**QUESTION:** MOE have obviously extended the date of decision as thought that an answer on this decision was now overdue?

**ANSWER:** Ryan said that was most likely his slip. The Board have not said when a decision will be made but are just talking dates for communication. MOE has not applied pressure. Board don't want it to go on too long so are trying to gather info and share.

**QUESTION:** What is the capacity of the school to go to full Primary. What is the cost of that e.g. losing a music room?

**ANSWER:** Peter confirmed that yes some of those spaces would be used up. Property available to the school is as per roll. The roll is smaller now than it was when the additional classrooms were built so we have luxury of space at the moment. Unless roll grows there will be no new buildings and current classrooms used for music etc will have to be utilised in other ways.

**QUESTION:** At what point can we find out about what the tech modules will look like? Helpful to know more and potentially in a more visual way to help with decisions so people don't close their mind?

**ANSWER:** Sonia advises this is a struggle as not the only school so no commitment from MOE about how tech will be provided. Ryan confirmed that as soon as the Board knows - you know. If we go first then Tech could be at WIS until an alternative is arranged.

Peter has done some research and looked at other schools of how they do tech and how it could be run. He is investigating options that could be available as there are other ways of doing

it that don't immediately spring to mind; for example, some schools do all the tech programme in-house.

Member of the Community suggested that there is lots of talent within the community that could be used to help run tech and extension activities.

Member of the Community have moved here from Invercargill and a Full Primary school. They voiced that a country school can provide opportunities with sustainability projects, pouring concrete, eat off the land, and working on a farm. Wakefield presents a rich environment that our students could benefit from hands on.

**QUESTION:** What is the impact on WIS if we go there for Tech? Will the children currently at WIS not get as much available?

**ANSWER:** Peter said that it would need to be clear and would need to be confirmed that they would have capacity so there is as little disruption. This is something that would need to be worked through. WIS wouldn't lose out as teaching would come back to WIS

**QUESTION:** Is there provision being made for module type things kids can participate in as they have way more stuff there now. They have 70+ to choose from. If we have a full primary lots of kids to miss out?

**ANSWER:** Sonia said modules range from chess, sport, drama, origami etc. She thinks that it would be interesting to see how many get used.

Peter said that it is about the curriculum that you deliver to year 7 & 8. If we go to a full primary we have to generate the richest curriculum. May not look like modules but it will be the richest experience that can be delivered.

Ryan confirmed that those conversations still need to be had and the board doesn't know the answers yet. There are many options to look into and advise. Peter has a background in moving a school to full primary.

**QUESTION:** If Wakefield does become a full primary will there be more support for mental health services?

**ANSWER:** Peter confirmed that this is a great question. Schools up to year 8 do not receive staffing for counsellors and we are pushing for this to change. We've had some service recently due to Covid funding but this has stopped. WIS does have some ongoing access to counselling support.

**QUESTION:** Is there a transition plan for moving forward in the long term? A Concern for kids in years 2,3,4,5 so what does the plan look like? I challenge the board for a transition plan. Has to be done properly and everything is in place and ready.

**ANSWER:** Sonia replied that this is something that we do before we have a decision as we need to be sure that we can develop the curriculum. Years 2 & 3 may not need transition as kids are adaptable and will make it normal quickly.

**QUESTION:** Why was WIS not here?

**ANSWER:** Peter confirmed that WIS were invited and there have been many conversations with the principal Justine. Peter confirmed that she was willing to be here but unfortunately was busy.

The Deputy Principal was going to attend but a decision was made not to come due to the potential to be put on the spot and wanted to avoid awkward conversations. The Board wanted to put information to the community and needed it to be clear whilst keeping speakers safe. WIS definitely wanted to be a part of the evening.

**QUESTION:** Has there been any interest from the other schools?

**ANSWER:** Ryan confirmed that he is involved with ongoing communications with chairs. Two months ago there was a meeting with Principals and chairs from four of the five affected schools. Schools are at different stages in the process. Ryan confirmed that the communication is open. Ranzau also has to decide its view on the option to move the school into the Lower Queen street area. We'd like to work with the MOE as a group of schools, whole realising that it's up to each community to make the right decision for them.

No more questions.

Ryan closed the meeting that anyone in the community can contact him at any point to discuss this issue. He can then pass any questions on to the Board. He confirmed that this issue will be discussed at the next Board meeting and then also in a separate meeting. Sonia again reiterated that NO decision has been made and no decision will be made at the next Board meeting.

Meeting Closed 8.40pm

A group stayed on for a cup of tea and further conversation.