

Education Report: Outcomes of Consultation on Proposed School Closures and Mergers in Greater Christchurch

Summary of Recommendations on Proposals for Closures and Mergers

1. On 13 September 2012, you announced investment of \$1 billion over the next ten years to develop greater Christchurch as the leading education community in New Zealand. Alongside the announcement of the investment, the Ministry proposed a series of closures and mergers of 38 schools in greater Christchurch:
 - thirteen schools were proposed for closure, with their learners being accommodated elsewhere in the network
 - eighteen schools were proposed for merger with one other school
 - five schools in Aranui were proposed for closure, to be replaced by a year 1-13 campus
 - two schools in Akaroa were proposed to close and become part of the Akaroa Area School, while continuing to operate on their existing sites.
2. Two schools (Hammersley Park and Le Bons Bay) had applied for voluntary closure. They undertook a shorter consultation period, and will close on 27 January 2013.
3. Because of the complexity of the proposal in Aranui, the five schools there were given an extension to the consultation period. Their responses are due to the Ministry of Education on 7 March 2013. The remaining 31 schools provided their feedback on the proposals to the Ministry by 7 December 2012.
4. Of the 13 schools in this group which were originally proposed for outright closure, we recommend that eight should proceed. They are:
 - Linwood Intermediate School¹
 - Richmond School
 - Shirley Intermediate School
 - Glenmoor School
 - Kendal School
 - Manning Intermediate School¹
 - Branston Intermediate School
 - Greenpark School.

¹ For both Linwood Intermediate and Manning Intermediate, we have presented two recommendations: firstly, that the school should close and we consult with local primaries about recapitation; secondly, that we consult more widely about Year 7-8 provision and you defer the decision about closure until after that consultation. Further details are set out in paragraph 53.

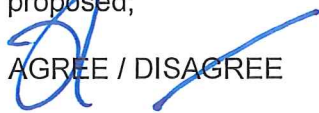
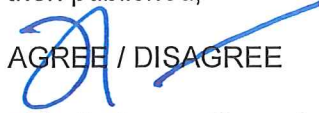
5. The three schools where we do not recommend proceeding with closures are:
- **Ouruhia Model School** – we recommend that the school should remain open and relocate to a site which is better suited to cater for population growth in Belfast
 - **Burnside School** – we recommend that the school should remain open and be rebuilt on its site, forming part of a hub of education provision with Cobham Intermediate and Burnside High Schools
 - **Burnham School** – we recommend that the school should remain open and relocate to a site which is better suited to cater for population growth in Rolleston.

We now recommend retaining **Duvauchelle** and **Okains Bay Schools** as separate institutions, and exploring greater collaboration and shared governance across these two schools and Akaroa Area School.

6. Of the nine proposed mergers involving the remaining eighteen schools, we recommend that six should proceed. They are:
- **Central New Brighton and South New Brighton Schools**
 - **North New Brighton and Freeville Schools**
 - **Phillipstown and Woolston Schools** (but using the Woolston School site, in order to create an education hub with the relocated Linwood College)
 - **Burwood and Windsor Schools**
 - **Unlimited Paenga Tawhiti and Discovery One Schools**
 - **Lyttelton Main and Lyttelton West Schools.**
7. The two proposals where we recommend that we do not proceed are:
- **Linwood Avenue and Bromley Schools** – we recommend both schools should remain open, as the relocation of the Phillipstown-Woolston merger means both schools are needed in the network
 - **TKKM o Waitaha and TKKM o Te Whanau Tahi** – we recommend both kura should remain open, but one should relocate. The Waitaha Advisory Board-Mātauraka Mahaanui should provide advice on which kura should relocate as part of its consideration of wider Māori medium provision.
8. We recommend that you reconsider whether **Gilberthorpe and Yaldhurst Schools** should remain open as separate institutions, as when Gilberthorpe School is redeveloped and grows, Yaldhurst School may be needed in the network to release over-crowding pressures whilst new patterns of enrolment are established.
9. Of the 215 schools in greater Christchurch, this report contains recommendations that could result in 11 of the 31 schools subject to this round of consultation not being closed or merged. The recommendations concerning the 31 schools in this report would mean that 8 of the 215 schools would close (3.7%) and 12 would merge (5.6%). The majority of the remainder will be repaired; some schools will be relocated and some new schools built.

Recommended Actions

We recommend that you:

- a. **note** the requirements for school closures and mergers set out in the Education Act 1989; ✓
- b. **note** the information and support provided by the Ministry of Education to Boards to assist their consultation; ✓
- c. **note** that, in line with section 157 of the Education Act 1989, the Ministry consulted other Boards where the roll might be affected; ✓
- d. **note** that the 31 schools submitted their responses by 7 December 2012, and the process of analysis undertaken by the Ministry since then; ✓
- e. **note** the evidence provided about middle and intermediate schools and small schools; and the submissions from other interested parties and the Ministry's response; ✓
- f. **note** the Ministry's recommendations on the proposals, and that you are asked for decisions about which schools should close or merge in the individual education reports which accompany this report; ✓
- g. **note** the Ministry's approach to securing high-quality early childhood education, bilingual, special education and technology provision following these changes; •
- h. **note** that the Ministry is proposing that all mergers take place in January 2014, and that closures take place in January 2014, except for intermediate schools where primary schools are recapitulating when the closure is proposed for January 2015; ✓
- i. **agree** that relocatable classrooms should be provided to accommodate some learners in merged or different schools in the short-term, at a total cost of \$2.7 million in order to progress mergers and closures more quickly than originally proposed; ✓

AGREE / DISAGREE
- j. **note** the next steps for the implementation of proposed closures and mergers, and that you will receive further advice by 12 April and 19 June 2013 to inform your final decisions; ✓
- k. **agree** that this Education Report should be released to affected schools and then published; ✓

AGREE / DISAGREE
- l. **note** that you will receive the Ministry's advice about the proposals for schools in the Aranui Learning Community Cluster by 25 March 2013; ✓
- m. **note** that you will receive a full communications plan following discussion with you on Tuesday 22 January about options for relaying and announcing decisions on 18 February 2013; ✓

n. **note** that you will receive further advice about secondary school provision in greater Christchurch by June 2013; ✓

o. **agree** that Cabinet's consideration of the overall business case should be delayed until August 2013; and ✓

 AGREE / DISAGREE

p. **finalise** the attached Cabinet paper (Appendix 1) for consideration at the Cabinet Business Committee on 30 January and Cabinet on 4 February 2013.



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Deputy Secretary
Regional Operations

Encls



Hon Hekia Parata
Minister of Education

22/1/13

Education Report: Outcomes of Consultation on Proposed School Closures and Mergers in Greater Christchurch

Overview of Report

1. This report sets out the Ministry's recommendations following the consultation on proposed school closures and mergers in greater Christchurch. It provides:
 - the background to the proposals, and details of the process of statutory consultation under the Education Act 1989 (the Act)
 - the Ministry's work to consider the responses, a summary of the most relevant evidence, and details of responses received from organisations other than schools
 - our recommendations on the 31 schools proposed for closure or merger
 - details of how we will ensure continued provision of bilingual, technology and special education
 - revised timelines for the implementation of the proposals
 - a clear plan for how the Ministry will support schools, their learners and staff through the process.

Background

2. The focus of our work in greater Christchurch is on raising student achievement and ensuring that all learners can access high quality education. There is considerable opportunity in Christchurch to provide existing and future learners with greatly enhanced access to quality education. While the necessary investment in infrastructure provides a platform for this, raising the quality of teaching and leadership is central to improving student achievement. The work being done by Learning Community Clusters to develop and implement plans to maximise student achievement is critical.
3. Prior to the earthquakes, the education system in Christchurch – as in New Zealand as a whole – performed well for many learners. However, the system under-performed for Māori learners and Pasifika learners: in 2009, more than half of Māori learners and nearly half of Pasifika learners in greater Christchurch left school without NCEA Level 2. Learners in special schools were often isolated from their peers, and the three special schools were not well located to meet the needs of the community. In 2010, there were around 5,000 more available places in schools than learners.
4. The earthquakes of 2010-11 caused massive disruption and loss for the people of greater Christchurch. Schools played a crucial role in supporting their learners, families and whānau and their wider communities through the immediate aftermath of the earthquakes. However, the extent of damage to land and buildings, and people movement in the wake of the earthquakes, mean that the school network cannot be restored to the way it was in September 2010. Overall, there are around 4,300 fewer learners in schools in greater Christchurch than before the earthquakes. This means we have a total of 9,300 more places in the network than we require. Large numbers of families have relocated as a result of the earthquakes, with the movement out of east Christchurch being particularly pronounced.

5. The physical damage to school land and buildings has been very significant, with the majority of schools suffering some damage. Prior to the earthquakes, many buildings were aged and not fully weathertight. Some do not support modern teaching and learning practices, and many are inaccessible to learners with physical difficulties. Many school buildings do not meet the new earthquake standards.
6. On 13 September 2012, you announced investment of \$1 billion over the next ten years to develop greater Christchurch as the leading education community in New Zealand. A central part of our strategy is for schools to work together in Learning Community Clusters, in order to consider and better meet the needs of all the learners in the area, leading to increased achievement. Each school is in one of 39 geographical clusters alongside local early childhood education (ECE) centres, and we have also established clusters to support specialist provision, including secondary, Māori medium and technology provision.
7. Each of the 39 geographical clusters has begun their work to develop a comprehensive plan to raise student achievement across their schools. These plans will reflect the different starting points of the schools as well as the different needs of local learners, although we expect there will be a strong emphasis on raising participation and achievement of priority learners and supporting learners' transitions between schools. We have received outline plans from almost half of the clusters, and will continue to work with all clusters to develop full plans in the next six months. Schools are considering how capital investment might be used across the cluster, including the possibility of sharing facilities across schools and with the wider community.
8. Alongside the announcement of the investment, you confirmed that over 170 of the 215 schools in greater Christchurch would be repaired and retained in the network. Some of these schools would relocate, and we would provide new schools in areas of population growth. You announced proposals to close or merge 38 of the 215 schools:
 - thirteen schools were proposed for closure, with their learners being accommodated elsewhere in the network
 - eighteen schools were proposed for merger with one other school
 - five schools in Aranui were proposed for closure, to be replaced by a Year 1-13 campus
 - two schools in Akaroa were proposed to close and become part of the Akaroa Area School, while continuing to operate on their existing sites.

The Consultation Process

9. The school closure and merger process is governed by sections 154, 156A and 157 of the Act. These sections require the Minister of Education to consult the Board of the school concerned and the Boards of any state schools where the roll might be affected before making an initial decision to close or merge a school. The Minister then gives the Board of the school proposed for closure 28 days in which to provide any further arguments in favour of the schools remaining open. Although not legally required, you have decided that this process will also be followed for mergers.

10. You wrote to the Board chair of each of the schools with a proposal for closure or merger on 28 September 2012 requesting that they consult their communities, and asking them to return their feedback on the proposal by 7 December 2012. Hammersley Park and Le Bons Bay Schools had previously approached the Ministry requesting voluntary closure at the beginning of 2013, so they were given a shorter deadline of 26 October 2012. You have previously agreed the closure of Hammersley Park and Le Bons Bay Schools [METIS 726372 and 726374 refer], and the schools will formally close on 27 January 2013.
11. After the school holidays, on 12 October 2012, the Ministry supplemented previous information by providing each school with a detailed rationale for the proposal which specifically affects them. This included information about each school's land and buildings issues (and an indicative cost to remediate them), as well as updated information about school rolls based on the new July 2012 enrolment data and local population changes. The Ministry offered to meet the Boards of all affected schools to discuss the rationale, and clarify any of the information provided. This included a meeting with the engineers who had prepared the geotechnical and other building reports.
12. On 16 October you wrote to the 36 Boards² offering to meet them and their communities to directly hear their concerns, issues and alternative proposals. Thirty-five schools took up the invitation and you subsequently visited them all. A small number of Boards asked for an extension to the consultation process to allow their communities more time to consider the issues. However, this was not a widespread request and some Boards specifically requested to maintain the proposed timetable. On balance, it was decided not to extend the timetable for all schools, which means that schools and communities will be able to get certainty about the future as soon as possible. However, given the complexity of the proposal for Aranui, you decided to extend the consultation period for those five schools until 7 March 2013.
13. As part of the process for school closures or mergers, section 157 of the Act requires the Minister to consult with the Board of Trustees of any state school whose roll might (in the opinion of the Minister) be affected if a decision is made to close or merge a school. On 19 October 2012, the Ministry wrote to the Boards of 70 schools to consult them on your behalf. We received 14 responses by the deadline of 7 December 2012. We contacted each school which had not responded, and a further nine made a submission.
14. You recognised that the consultation process initiated on 28 September put additional demands on Principals, staff and members of Boards and provided a range of support to help them. The Ministry provided funding to the Board of each school so it could appoint an independent facilitator to run the consultation process and write the submission. You approved a consultation day or teacher only day for those schools involved in the consultation process and provided an additional staffing allowance (worth 0.2 of a full time teacher equivalent) to provide a day a week during term 4 for a member of staff to focus on the consultation process. The Ministry also contracted CORE Education to establish a virtual learning network for each school, so Boards could facilitate electronic consultation with their school community.

² Excluding Hammersley Park and Le Bons Bay schools.

15. Boards were able to work with their facilitator to develop an effective consultation process for their community which allowed them to hear the voice of their community. Details of how they conducted their consultation process are included in their submissions, and briefly summarised in the reports on the individual proposals. The consultation typically included meetings with, and surveys of, parents. Some schools took a proactive approach to engaging the wider community. The Ministry's Pasifika Advisory Board organised two fono for Pasifika parents, and representatives from the Waitaha Advisory Board-Mātauraka Mahaanui met facilitators to help them consider how they could effectively consult with Māori parents and whānau.
16. The Boards of all 31 schools met the deadline of 7 December 2012, and we provided you with copies of their submissions on 14 December. In addition, two of the schools in the Aranui Learning Community Clusters submitted their responses. These two submissions will be analysed when we have received the other three submissions in March.

The Ministry's Process of Analysis

17. The Ministry established a cross-disciplinary team to thoroughly analyse all submissions. This team included staff members with substantial experience of working directly with schools in greater Christchurch. Additional expertise was brought in from property, the school network and early childhood education teams. A strong governance process was also established at an operational level on a daily basis and at senior management level. The Ministry's legal advisers have been involved throughout to ensure that the analysis and process were robust and met the Ministry's responsibilities under the Act, and have reviewed draft education reports about the individual proposals.
18. Every argument and proposal made in Boards' submissions was carefully considered by the Ministry's analysis team. Where necessary, additional data about demographics, the local school network, and property and financial information was commissioned to allow an informed consideration about all the options which had been raised.
19. Throughout the process, we have been particularly careful to assess the possible implications for learners from our priority groups: Māori and Pasifika learners, learners with special education needs and learners from low socio-economic backgrounds. Experts from the relevant Ministry of Education teams have been involved in the analysis and discussions.

Boards' Arguments

20. As you know, many Boards have provided detailed arguments about the merits – or otherwise – of our proposals, and any proposals they have put forward. These are fully considered in the individual education reports for each proposal. However, there are two recurring themes where it is worth noting the Ministry's approach. These are the value of middle and intermediate schools and the value of small schools. They are considered below.

Middle and Intermediate Schools

21. Several of the submissions from intermediate schools highlight the needs of learners in Years 7 and 8, and claim that any move away from intermediate school provision would mean that the needs of these learners would be lost in wider primary or secondary school provision. Some of these submissions recommend remodelling their network to allow their school to continue as a middle school.
22. In 2007, the Ministry commissioned research reports to review the existing literature on teaching and learning in middle schooling, and to provide a statistical overview of the same area. The literature review³ identified a lack of strong research evidence for the efficacy of middle schools and middle schooling. The Education Review Office (ERO) had previously noted, "New Zealand-based information about educational provision for students in the middle years of schooling is minimal."
23. There is, however, evidence that the quality of teaching has a much greater impact on learning than the structure of the school network. The 2007 review notes: "The literature is clear in advocating middle schooling approaches focusing on quality teaching and enhanced learning rather than on structural arrangements." The authors argue that effective middle schooling involves rethinking teaching to better meet the needs of young people, and that "building or designating a middle school does not guarantee that accepted middle schooling practices, and therefore desired outcomes, will be achieved".
24. The review argues that "new or changed arrangements can act as a catalyst for changing thinking and teaching practice", which suggests that the proposed closures and subsequent recapitations and changes of class provide an opportunity to help ensure the needs of Year 7 and 8 learners are met.
25. This existing research was reinforced by the statistical overview, which found that there is no conclusive evidence that the quality of education, student achievement or students' attitudes to school during the middle schooling years is associated with school type. Given we know that transitions between schools can be difficult for some learners, there may be a case for a network which results in fewer transitions.
26. An earlier ERO report considered the education of students in Years 7 and 8⁴. It concluded, "There is not a strong relationship between the type of school attended by Years 7 and 8 students and the quality of education. All the types of schools investigated for this study included some schools that were performing well and some that were performing poorly." It reached the same conclusion as the literature review: "It is the quality of practices rather than structures that determines how effectively schools meet the needs of their Year 7 to 8 students".

³ *Teaching and Learning in Middle Schooling: A Review of the Literature*; Australian Council for Educational Research; 2009

⁴ *Students in Years 7 and 8*; Education Review Office; 2000

27. ERO found that transitions between schools “can disrupt students’ learning”. Tackling this issue is obviously particularly important for intermediate schools (and any middle schools) as learners face two transitions within a short period of time. They also noted “there does appear to be a link between the quality of education and the size of the school”: “Both the total number of students at the school and the size of the cohort of Years 7 and 8 students appear to influence the effectiveness of schools in catering for Years 7 and 8 students.”
28. We do not accept that there is a compelling case that the needs of Year 7 and 8 learners can only be met, or indeed best be met, in intermediate schools. Across New Zealand, there are primary, secondary, composite and intermediate schools which are successfully working to identify and meet the needs of learners in Years 7 and 8. The Ministry believes it is appropriate to continue to have a range of options for the structure of schools. There is no intention in this process to systematically or completely remove intermediate schools as an option for parents to choose.

Small Schools

29. Several submissions cite the benefits of being a small school, and suggest that this means they should not close or merge. For example, the submission from the Board of Ouruhia Model School draws on international evidence to suggest that “learners are more likely to have their individual needs considered” and “children from disadvantaged and minority backgrounds tend to do better in smaller schools”. Canterbury District Health Board (CDHB) has compiled a literature review, *The role of schools in communities and community recovery post-disaster*, which includes a section on school size.⁵
30. This is another area where the research evidence is limited. The literature review cites one study which suggests “that the research is insufficient and too inconsistent to determine which school size works best for optimal school achievement”. In 2002, John Hattie reported “We know of no New Zealand research examining effects of school size.”⁶ As the submission from Shirley Intermediate School acknowledges, “In New Zealand there is no clear evidence to support or refute the claim of school size due to a lack of research and achievement/outcomes data.”
31. The literature review cites ERO’s report on small primary schools⁷ which suggests that whilst small schools may “have more of a ‘family’ atmosphere and it may be easier for students to settle in and feel a sense of belonging”, it may also be more difficult for smaller schools to provide a balanced curriculum, recruit good teachers and Principals, and select their Board from a smaller pool of parents. ERO’s analysis of the performance of 400 small schools⁸ found that small schools performed less well on curriculum management and delivery, but did “perform well in terms of their school climate”.

⁵ The submission is dealt with in more detail in the next section.

⁶ *Schools Like Mine: Cluster Analysis of New Zealand Schools*; J. Hattie; 2002

⁷ *Small Primary Schools: Performance as a function of size*; ERO; 1999

⁸ In this context, small means schools with fewer than 150 learners.

32. It is difficult to draw conclusions from the international evidence, not least because the size of 'small schools' varies significantly in different contexts. Kathleen Cotton's 1996 study of school size⁹ is frequently cited, and criticises the trend towards larger schools in the United States, but she notes that "high school enrolments of 2,000 and 3,000 are commonplace". Her report draws on 69 different reports: 42 do not quantify what they mean by a small or large school, and of the 27 reports which do provide a definition, the size of a small school varies between 200 and 1,000 students. Clearly, many schools in this category would be a large school in the New Zealand context, severely limiting our ability to draw any conclusions from this international research.
33. John Hattie summarises the international evidence by saying there are two opposing viewpoints in the research: one claims that larger schools provide an economy of scale and are better able to create specialised services to meet their learners' needs; the other contends that small schools can maximise interrelations between students, leading to better student engagement in their learning (it should be noted that the suggestion is that this is particularly the case in secondary schools). He cites two studies which showed "large schools might benefit high socio-economic status students but that small schools may benefit low socio-economic students". Both studies are American; neither set out a definition of small schools, and one is based on data from 1983-84.
34. Given this, we are not persuaded that small schools necessarily provide a more nurturing environment for their learners, are more likely to be at the heart of their community or provide better outcomes for any particular groups than larger schools. The research is very fairly summarised by the CDHB which concludes "smaller schools have both advantages and disadvantages".

Other Submissions

Canterbury District Health Board submission and literature review

35. CDHB has provided a submission on the renewal process, and a literature review of 'The role of schools in communities and community recovery post-disaster'. Several schools have included the reports in their submissions, and they are attached as Appendix 2.
36. The CDHB submission sets out the relationship between education and health outcomes and encourages the Ministry "to consider health as a key issue", but does not comment on specific proposals for merger or closure. It quotes research suggesting that between 10% and 30% of children and adolescents "will suffer significant psychological effects" as a result of the earthquakes. Recognising this, the Ministry has already established a comprehensive programme to support children's wellbeing and mental health. Learners who may suffer significant psychological effects need help from mental health professionals, so we have provided information and support to schools so they are able to identify and refer learners to appropriate health services. We continue to work closely with the schools with the highest identified needs in order to provide learners and staff with access to the services they need to promote and support their wellbeing. It will be important that this support is maintained – and where needed extended – as the closure and merger process continues. This is further considered in paragraphs 98-101.

⁹ *School Size, School Climate and Student Performance*; K. Cotton; 1996

37. The submission also states that teachers have “an important and influential role in fostering recovery” (and rightly pays tribute to the work they have done since the earthquakes) and that schools provide “a point of focus for the community”. Both of these points are explored more fully in the literature review. The report gives details of the primary health services which are delivered through schools and ECE centres, including school dental services for primary school children and public health nursing. It notes that the “services and their delivery models are flexible and can be melded to best fit the future shape of education services”. It also recognises the potential of co-locating health and social services with schools, which will be explored as the renewal process progresses.
38. The recommendations set out by CDHB fit well with the Ministry’s thinking. They include continuing to prioritise the support of Principals, teachers and students; having Māori students’ achievement and the promotion of Māori language and culture as explicit priorities supporting schools which wish to develop health and social services hubs; and continuing to engage with school communities. The Ministry’s earthquake renewal team will continue to work with CDHB staff to ensure we take the “unprecedented opportunity” to collaborate, identified in this report.
39. The literature review does not make recommendations about individual proposals, but instead provides information about factors to be considered. These are the impact on schools and their communities (which is broken down into the effect of closures on school communities; effects of changes to the school community on teachers and students; and the importance of school communities in post-disaster settings); children, schools and disaster recovery; and school size. The review acknowledges “a relative dearth of literature on education restructuring in post-disaster settings” and does not claim to be comprehensive.
40. In considering the possible effects of closures on school communities, the review stresses the role of a school as “a key community centre”. It also considers research about previous mergers and closures in Invercargill and South Taranaki, reporting that some parents felt negative effects, including concerns about their children being less accepted at higher decile schools and having to walk longer distances. It suggests that positive effects from previous mergers and closures may include more educational opportunities and more diverse social networks, but that negative effects may include more distant relationships between adults and students, larger class sizes and transportation challenges.
41. When making recommendations about closures and mergers, we have been mindful of schools’ role in the community and have ensured that communities continue to enjoy good access to school provision. This issue is further complicated by the significant movement of people in greater Christchurch as a result of the earthquakes. We should acknowledge that communities are not always the same as they were before September 2010. A new school may also provide a new focus for the community, particularly if it is co-located with other community facilities. On the issue of class sizes, there is no intention on the behalf of the Ministry to do anything as a result of the proposed closures and mergers that will lead to larger class sizes (although some learners will be in larger schools). Many larger schools have been very effective in providing a range of environments within their schools as well as ways to ensure learners do not feel overwhelmed by the size of the school.

42. The section on effects of changes to the school community on teachers and students mainly cites international research. One small-scale American study looked at school closures and mergers in Arkansas¹⁰, with interviewees painting “a complicated picture of consolidation, with stories that often contradicted each other”. An important finding was that “the onus of fitting in [to a new school] was on the moving students”. With this in mind, the process of any merger or closure will be supported by a change manager, who will work with schools to support all their learners and teachers. Funding is available for projects to help meet specific needs of learners and improve attainment and wellbeing in the new school. The same report also notes that “children adapted to the closure more easily” than their parents, settling into the new school within months and making new friends. We note that in a number of cases children will in fact enrol at a different school and retain their existing group of friends.
43. One 1984 American study specifically considered the impact on minority populations¹¹. It quoted survey evidence that mothers felt their children had been happier and working at a better level in the closed schools. Although the literature review says this study has ‘limited generalisability’ and suggests it may also be biased, there is no doubt that we need to pay particular attention to the needs of ‘marginal or vulnerable’ students throughout this process. In line with the Ministry’s focus on priority learners, we will ensure that planning for the implementation of any changes considers and supports learners’ different needs.
44. The section on the importance of schools in post-disaster settings examines the immediate aftermath of disasters. It cites international evidence about schools being able to provide ‘stability and familiarity’ to parents and children. We know that the same applied in Christchurch: school leaders and staff worked extremely hard in the aftermath of the earthquakes to provide a place of emotional and physical safety for children. We are confident that school leaders and staff will continue to do this, even if they are in a different school setting.
45. Like the main CDHB submission, the section on children, schools and disaster recovery identifies that between 10% and 30% of children are likely to suffer significant psychological effects as a result of the earthquakes. It identified the role of schools in monitoring individuals’ recovery, through teachers’ knowledge of children’s academic and social progress and ability to compare them with their peer group. It quotes research stating ‘the positive impact that schools can have on students’ mental health at a crucial point in time’. The Ministry recognises this, and provides support to schools to help them with this, as set out in paragraph 95. The literature review also examines the support teachers need to recover. It acknowledges that the Ministry has already ‘taken on Board research from other international disaster contexts’. However, the report notes that the proposed changes ‘may represent an additional burden that is unhelpful’ for teachers’ wellbeing. We argue that there is a strong need to make changes to the school network. The Ministry acknowledges that the proposed changes are upsetting for teachers and other staff in the schools concerned, and we are committed to providing appropriate support through the change process to staff.
46. The final section of the review looks at the evidence on school size, which has already been considered earlier in this report.

¹⁰ *A phenomenological study of rural school consolidation*; K. Nitta, M. Holley and S. Wrobel; 2010

¹¹ *The school closure issue and the Chicano community*; R. Valencia; 1984

Other Submissions

47. You have received a submission from the Post Primary Teachers' Association (PPTA). It is wide-ranging, and contains some material which is more relevant to the broader education renewal programme or other Ministry policies. You will have noted that PPTA urge you to "proceed with caution with considering the closure or merger of any secondary schools and technology centres", citing uncertainty over future rolls and geotechnical reports. In making our recommendations, we have used the latest information available, and have delayed consideration of most secondary provision where we do not currently have sufficient information. PPTA also set out its strong opposition to middle schools, and its belief that they create an unnecessary additional transition for learners. The submission stresses the importance of ensuring appropriate access to schools for learners and the importance of providing appropriate environments for learners with special education needs, which we have considered as part of our recommendations.
48. Submissions were also received from:

New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI)

- NZEI made two submissions to you: one dated 14 November 2012, and subsequently a shortened version dated 12 December. A summary of the first submission is detailed here as this is the version which was received prior to the closure of submissions. NZEI expressed a view that the merger and closure proposals were based on cost drivers rather than on creating innovative and high quality teaching and learning. NZEI put forward three proposals based on three themes as follows:
 - **Ensuring high quality teaching and learning continues in schools affected by merger or closure proposals.** NZEI propose that staff involved in merging or closing schools retain their current positions for at least two years from the date of the final decision
 - **The Government's planning and consultation process.** NZEI propose that the Ministry partner with organisations such as NZEI to scope a new consultation framework
 - **A focus on resourcing children's mental and emotional health.** NZEI propose that there is a more explicit long term programme to support training of educators to work alongside other organisations to support children.
- At the time this submission was made, there were proposals that would not be implemented for some years. The Ministry is now recommending, in most cases, that these dates be brought forward. The appointment of staff to merged schools will be made in accordance to the Education Act, and any staff who are not appointed to their former roles, will be covered by the conditions of their respective employment agreements. The Ministry and NZSTA will work with Boards to address any issues which arise about staff appointments and redundancies.
- The Ministry does not support a new consultation taking place for schools in Christchurch, but will discuss the issues raised by NZEI and how these might influence any future processes.

- Paragraphs 98-101 and 104-107 of this report discuss support of learners during the process of change.

Christchurch City Mission:

- The Mission is concerned about the wellbeing of children and families from low socio-economic backgrounds, and additional costs faced by families when schools close or merge. It observes that it is important to have local schools for communities: our proposals ensure that children continue to have good access to school provision across the city. Funding is provided to Boards to support learners through mergers and closures, and we will work with Boards to help them address the needs of their learners.

North East Secondary Education Committee (NESE):

- NESE does not offer a direct view on any of the proposals, but notes that the proposals to close Chisnallwood and Shirley Intermediates may encourage more children to remain at local full primary schools and state that it is important that any closures “do not limit active transport”. Its main argument is that the plan for education renewal “must include a robust direction for local secondary education for children within the north east”, and we will consider this when developing plans for secondary education across the city.

49. These submissions are also attached as Appendices 3 and 4. You have already received a submission from Te Rūnanga Nui o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori o Aotearoa. This submission is concerned solely with the proposed merger of the kura, rather than implications for Māori medium education, so is considered as part of the education report on the proposed merger of the kura.

Our Recommendations about School Proposals

50. The Ministry is providing you with a separate education report for each proposal, which includes a detailed analysis of each Board’s submission, together with appropriate recommendations. At this stage you are asked to decide whether your preliminary decision is that you are satisfied that schools “should” merge or close, and you will not be asked to make a final decision until after Boards have had 28 days to provide additional feedback on the proposal. We also recommend that you release the education reports about individual proposals, so Boards are fully informed when they make their responses, in line with the Ombudsman’s request in his recent report.
51. Our full recommendations are set out as a table as Appendix 5. Maps showing provision before the earthquakes, the effects of the original proposals, and the effects of the revised proposals are included as Appendix 6.
52. Overall, of the 13 schools proposed for outright closure, we now recommend that you should proceed with eight (Hammersley Park and Le Bons Bay School have already closed). They are:
 - Linwood Intermediate School
 - Richmond School
 - Shirley Intermediate School
 - Glenmoor School
 - Kendal School
 - Manning Intermediate School

- Branston Intermediate School
- Greenpark School.

53. Our original proposal for Manning Intermediate and Linwood Intermediate were for them to close and their learners be accommodated in recapitated primary schools. However, following feedback during the consultation period, we are presenting two alternative approaches. You could continue with the closure procedure, and initiate formal consultation with local primary schools, which would allow you to announce a final decision by 13 May 2013. Alternatively, you may wish to consider whether to change the class of the local secondary schools (Hillmorton High and Linwood College respectively) so they become Year 7 to 13 schools. Doing this would involve a formal consultation with the local primary schools and high schools about either recapitation or a change of class. This would run until 5 April 2013, and you would defer your decision about whether the intermediate schools should close until after this consultation. In this scenario, you would announce your decision about whether the intermediates should close by 13 May (and any subsequent change of provision elsewhere). If you decided that either or both of the intermediates should close, you would proceed to the 28 day period then. Further details are set out in the individual education reports.
54. There are three schools where we recommend you do not proceed with the proposal for closure:
- **Ouruhia Model School** – the Board of Ouruhia Model School has proposed in its submission that the school should remain open in order to reduce the pressure on Belfast School and the relocated Marshlands School. Our original proposal was for future population growth in Belfast to be accommodated through a satellite of Belfast School. Whilst Ouruhia Model School is not essential in the network as it is currently positioned, we recommend that it is retained and then relocated to serve population growth in Belfast at the appropriate time in the future.
 - **Burnside School** – the Board of Burnside School developed a proposal to rebuild the school with a modern learning environment, combined with a community education hub and shared facilities with Cobham Intermediate School. This provides the opportunity for a strong collaborative approach between Burnside Primary, Cobham Intermediate and Burnside High Schools. Cobham Intermediate also requires investment, so the opportunity for shared facilities is considerable. This model of three schools working together presents a valuable opportunity in the future to test a different way of managing Year 1-13 education. If successful, it could provide a model for the rest of the country. There was evidence of strong support for the proposal from across the cluster, and we would work with other agencies to consider co-locating health and other services on the site. This proposal also offers an opportunity to develop innovative and collaborative practices to support the diverse needs of the learners at Burnside School.

- **Burnham School** – the Board of Burnham School set out its school's role in meeting the particular needs of the large number of children whose parents serve in the New Zealand Defence Force, and suggested that its roll may grow due to future increases in population in Rolleston. However, most of the growth is in other parts of the town and the high cost of rebuilding the buildings on the current site is prohibitive. We propose relocating Burnham School so that it can better serve the area of Rolleston with a rapidly growing population, as well as its existing population. We recommend engaging with the Board in the month after the announcement to get its feedback about the relocation.
55. In addition, you proposed that **Duvauchelle** and **Okains Bay Schools** would close but remain on their sites as satellites of Akaroa Area School. We now recommend that you do not proceed with this. Instead, we recommend that the two schools remain as separate entities, and that we work with the schools to develop extended collaboration, including considering shared governance arrangements. This offers the opportunity of achieving the original rationale of better access to high-quality education provision for local learners, without having to implement major closure processes.
56. Of the nine proposed mergers, we recommend that you proceed with six. They are:
- **Central New Brighton and South New Brighton Schools**
 - **North New Brighton and Freeville Schools**
 - **Burwood and Windsor Schools**
 - **Unlimited Paenga Tawhiti and Discovery One Schools**
 - **Lyttelton Main and Lyttelton West Schools**
 - **Phillipstown and Woolston Schools** (but using the Woolston site) – You initially proposed that Woolston and Phillipstown Schools merge on the Linwood College site. In its submission to you, the Board of Woolston School proposed that Phillipstown and Bamford Schools should close, with most of their current learners enrolling at Woolston School. One significant advantage of this proposal is that it would create a local education hub. This would include the new primary school, and the relocated Linwood College and its Teen Parent Unit. This hub could also include an expansion of the existing bilingual provision, hosting technology provision and exploring a co-located ECE centre. The proposal also includes collaborating with the City Council and CDHB to develop other community facilities on the site.
57. The idea of a hub has the potential to radically improve the provision of education for some of the communities in greater Christchurch who have been most affected by the earthquakes. However, we do not think that Phillipstown School should “close”. For this to be a partnership between two schools to support all of the learners in the community, we consider it would be better for the schools to merge. We recommend that the schools would merge at the beginning of 2014, ahead of the necessary work to improve and expand buildings on the Woolston School site to allow the appointed Board to develop a vision for the merged school. We do not consider that Bamford School should be included in the proposal as it currently a necessary part of the network.

58. We recommend that you do not proceed with two merger proposals:
- **Linwood Avenue and Bromley Schools** – Proceeding with a merger on the Woolston School site would have significant implications for the proposed merger of Linwood Avenue and Bromley Schools. One of the most important reasons for the proposal was that the current Linwood Avenue School site is just 1 kilometre away from Linwood College, which was the proposed site for the merger of Phillipstown and Woolston Schools. Under the revised proposal, there would be provision at the Linwood Avenue, Bromley and Woolston Schools' sites, retaining good access to primary schools for all families in the Linwood cluster. We therefore recommend both schools should remain open
 - **TKKM o Waitaha and TKKM o Te Whanau Tahi** – When you proposed the merger of the kura, you said you wanted the community to explore options to enhance the quality of Māori medium provision across greater Christchurch, and ensure better access to this provision for learners. The Waitaha Advisory Board-Mātauraka Mahaanui has been considering the provision of all levels of Māori medium provision across greater Christchurch.
59. The submissions from the kura contain innovative ideas about easing the transition between full immersion and other levels of Māori medium provision. We recommend that the Ministry should work with the kura, their whānau and the Waitaha Advisory Board-Mātauraka Mahaanui to develop more detailed plans to enhance quality and access to Māori language in education. This should include discussions about the best location for bilingual and immersion provision across the network, and include considering whether one kura should be relocated in order to improve access across greater Christchurch (both are located currently slightly to the south of the city centre, meaning that whānau in the north of greater Christchurch have a long journey in order to access this provision).
60. We recommend that you consider the proposed merger between **Gilberthorpe** and **Yaldhurst Schools** further, and determine whether both schools should be maintained in the network. As set out in the original rationale, Gilberthorpe School is situated in an area with the potential for population growth, and needs significant investment in its buildings. As it is redeveloped and has the potential to grow, it may be preferable to maintain Yaldhurst School in the network to release over-crowding pressures whilst new patterns of enrolment are established.

The Effect of Proposals on Early Childhood Education Provision

61. Just as with the compulsory sector, the earthquakes and their aftermath have had a significant effect on the ECE sector. There are currently 357 ECE services in greater Christchurch, including seven Māori medium services and five Pasifika language services. 22 services have closed since September 2011 with a loss of 880 spaces, but more than 500 new spaces have been created, mainly in the west of Christchurch and in the Selwyn district.
62. Levels of participation in greater Christchurch remain above the national average, but Māori and Pasifika families are less likely to participate. The Ministry has developed a plan to support the ECE sector to meet demand in the short and long term, continue to value and support the identity, languages and cultures of learners, and encourage ECE participation by families from priority groups.

63. There are five ECE services which share a site with one of the schools which we are recommending should close or merge¹²:

Cluster Area	School	ECE Service	School proposal
Brighton	North New Brighton School	North Beach Community Preschool	Merge on site
Central City	Phillipstown School	Te Hohepa Te Kohanga Reo	Merge on different site
Lyttelton	Lyttelton West School	Busy Cs	Merge on different site
Mairehau	Glenmoor School	St Albans Playcentre	Close
Roydvale	Kendal School	Kidsfirst Kendal Ave	Close

64. The Ministry has worked with these providers to develop a range of options to promote continued access to ECE. These are considered as part of the individual education reports. Each of the options has cost implications, but it is not assumed the Ministry is responsible for these costs except where stated.

The Effect of Proposals on Bilingual Provision

65. One of the most important goals of the education renewal programme is to ensure that the identities, languages and cultures of all learners continue to be valued and supported. We want to encourage many more students to participate in Māori medium education and learning Pasifika languages, so we have been mindful of the potential impact of our recommendations on existing language provision.
66. Of the schools now recommended for closure or merger, six currently offer provision of Māori medium education. Of these, Freeville, Unlimited Paenga Tawhiti and Woolston Schools are proposed to merge. We believe that these proposals provide an opportunity to extend provision across the merged schools, as well as working with other local schools in order to consider how this provision can be grown across those schools' Learning Community Clusters.
67. Three schools which currently offer provision of Māori medium education are proposed to close. These are Branston, Manning and Shirley Intermediate Schools. You should also note that Linwood Intermediate offers Samoan language classes. If your final decision is to agree to close these schools, the Ministry will work with schools in their local Learning Community Clusters to develop new provision. This provision will evolve over time and will not necessarily replicate existing arrangements. For example, the Boards of Linwood North School and Linwood College have indicated in their submissions to the Ministry that they want to deliver specialist education for Māori and Pasifika learners.

¹² A further three ECE services are on one of the five schools proposed for closure in Aranui.

The Effect of Proposals on the Provision of Special Education

68. We have asked Boards to consider how well they have developed inclusive practices so they can properly support learners with special education needs. Learning Community Clusters will be considering this as they develop their plans, and issues around inclusion features in a small number of submissions from schools.
69. We are no longer proposing the merger of Bromley School with Linwood Avenue School, so only one school which has satellite provision for learners enrolled at a special school is affected by the proposals. This is Glenmoor School, which currently hosts four learners enrolled at Ferndale Special School, and we expect that this number will increase to seven in 2013.
70. We will work with Ferndale Special School to ensure that these learners, and any others who may join the provision at Glenmoor School over the next year, continue to have suitable provision as part of a special school from January 2014. In the longer term, the Ministry will continue to work with special schools and the wider school community to improve access and equity for learners with high special education needs, and their successful transition to any new special school provision.

The Effect of Proposals on Technology Provision

71. We have asked all schools in greater Christchurch to work with each other and other education providers in their Learning Community Clusters to develop provision that better meets the needs of all the learners in the area. This should include ensuring they provide a rich and engaging curriculum, an important part of which is technology provision. Currently, 26 schools in greater Christchurch provide technology provision for Year 7 and 8 learners; 17 of these host learners from other schools. Of these, five schools are affected by the current proposals for closures and mergers: Phillipstown, Branston Intermediate, Linwood Intermediate and Manning Intermediate Schools host provision from other schools, and Shirley Intermediate provides technology provision for its own learners, but does not host provision from other schools.
72. We expect Learning Community Clusters to consider how the New Zealand Curriculum technology learning area / Te Marautanga o Aotearoa, Hangarau wāhanga ako can best be delivered in the renewed environment, and the provision that will best promote learner engagement and achievement. It may be that rather than continue with traditional patterns of provision, some clusters may wish to consider how technology can be better integrated across the curriculum, or how to work more closely with local secondary schools. However, we recognise that parents need certainty that provision can continue in the short term whilst clusters develop their longer term plans.

73. As such, we recommend that:

- the extensive existing provision on the Phillipstown School site (which caters for more than 1,300 learners) is maintained until Learning Community Clusters have developed and implemented other plans. This will mean that provision will be managed by the Board and Principal of the newly merged Phillipstown / Woolston School (if you agree to this merger): there is already a successful example of a Board of Trustees in Canterbury managing off-site technology provision. The Boards of both Linwood College and Woolston School have already expressed interest in managing the technology provision in the longer term.
- if Branston Intermediate closes at the beginning of 2014, technology provision for the more than 500 learners it serves moves to the nearby Hornby High School site. This can be maintained until Learning Community Clusters have developed and implemented other plans for technology provision.
- if Manning Intermediate closes at the beginning of 2014, technology provision for the 200 learners it serves could move to Hillmorton High School until Learning Community Clusters have developed and implemented other plans.
- if Linwood Intermediate and Shirley Intermediate close at the beginning of 2015, technology provision could move to Linwood College until Learning Community Clusters have developed and implemented other plans.

Implementation of the Proposals

74. When the initial proposals were made in September 2012, Boards were provided with an indicative timeline for implementation. We have taken the view that where schools are scheduled to close or merge, it is better that this is done quickly to provide certainty for learners, parents, staff and the wider community. For closures, this prevents slow roll decline and the possibility that many of the staff will choose to move to other schools over this period. For mergers, it allows an appointed Board of Trustees to start considering the needs of the whole school community, and to manage its resources and staff appropriately. Where the merged school will have new buildings, it allows the Board and senior leadership team to be involved in the design to ensure it meets the needs of the community.
75. We have therefore prioritised property work to ensure that there is sufficient capacity for learners who move school as a result of closures, and that new buildings are progressed as quickly as possible for affected schools. The individual education reports set out the details for each school.

Proposed timetable for closures

76. Under the Act, a school ceases to operate on the date of closure and its Board no longer exists. The assets (and debts and liabilities, where they exist) of a closed school transfer to the Ministry on the date of closure. Permanent teaching and non-teaching staff are eligible for the surplus staffing options that are detailed in their particular collective agreement. Primary schools can close at any time of the year, but the Secondary Teachers' Collective Agreement assumes that a secondary school will close on 27 January.

77. We suggest that the four contributing and full primary schools proposed for closure would close at the beginning of 2014, and that their learners are accommodated in other schools. Section 154(2) of the Act sets out that where the Minister is satisfied that a school should close, the Board of that school has 28 days from receiving written notice of this, to provide any further reasons for why the school should remain open. As previously agreed and notified to schools, the Ministry will therefore ask schools to provide any additional reasons by 22 March 2013. We will provide advice to you about these responses by 12 April, enabling you to make a final announcement about these schools on 13 May 2013.
78. The situation is more complicated for intermediate schools. Firstly, where local primary schools are recapitulating, we need to avoid learners attending a contributing primary school for Years 1 to 6, moving to an intermediate for Year 7, then returning to a full primary school for Year 8, and moving again into a secondary school in Year 9. For this reason, where intermediate schools are proposed for closure with learners attending Year 1-8 primaries instead, we recommend that the change takes place over two years. Where the proposal is for the closure of an intermediate school with learners being accommodated in a secondary school, the change can be implemented in a year.
79. Secondly, all of the proposed closures to intermediate schools would require changes to patterns of provision in the local network to ensure that there is sufficient provision for learners in Years 7 and 8 (either the recapitulation of contributing primaries, or a change of class for high schools). The Act requires us to consult with the Boards of the schools which are proposed for changes, as well as with Boards of schools where rolls could be affected.
80. If Shirley Intermediate closes as proposed, its learners can be accommodated by recapitulating Shirley Primary which is well situated in the network and has sufficient space. If Branston Intermediate closes, its learners can be accommodated through a change of class for Hornby High School. In both of these cases, the receiving schools have already had the opportunity to comment on the potential changes, so we propose that formal consultation on recapitulation or a change of class takes place at the same time as the 28 day period for the closures. The Ministry would also consult with other schools whose rolls might be affected under section 157 of the Act. As with the other closures, this consultation period would run until 22 March 2013, and the Ministry would provide you with advice by 12 April 2013 allowing you to make an announcement about your final decision on 13 May 2013. Shirley Intermediate would close in January 2015, and Branston Intermediate would close in January 2014.
81. As set out in paragraph 53, for Manning Intermediate and Linwood Intermediate, you may wish to consider the different options for how learners could be accommodated after the closures. If you decide to initiate a new consultation about a change of class for the secondary schools, then we propose that this would run until 5 April 2013. You would be able to make an announcement about whether you decide the schools should close on 13 May (alongside your other decisions), and a final decision before the end of term 2.

Proposed timetable for mergers

82. Whilst there is no statutory requirement for further consultation on mergers, you have agreed that the Boards of schools which you decide should merge should also have the opportunity to provide any further reasons to you for why the merger should not take place. As with closures, this period will run until 22 March 2013. The Ministry will provide our advice to you by 12 April, allowing you to make a final decision by 13 May 2013. This is not the case for the merger of Unlimited Paenga Tawhiti and Discovery One, where both Boards have already agreed to the merger. Mergers must be gazetted at least one full term before they are implemented: this process allows us to gazette mergers in term 3 of this year where necessary.
83. For mergers, no school is legally closed, but the Board of one school is identified as the Board of the continuing school, and the other Board(s) is identified as the Board of the merging school. For legal and accounting purposes the Board of the continuing school is the legal entity which takes on the employees, assets and liabilities of the Board(s) of the merging schools.
84. During an interim period before the date the merger takes effect, you can determine whether the Board of the continuing school is made up of either:
- the current members of the continuing school's Board, plus one or more trustees from each merging school's Board or
 - an appointed Board, with a new constitution specified in the gazette notice.

This interim period starts on a date you determine when you gazette your final decision to merge the schools.

85. If you decide to continue with proposals to merge schools, we recommend that you state a preference for a Ministerially specified constitution for the Board of each continuing school during the interim period. This period starts at a date set by you and ends three months after the merger takes effect, when elections are held. This Board will govern the continuing school during the interim period before the merger, as well as the newly merged school for the first three months. The Board of the merging school will continue to govern the merging school during the interim period.
86. This situation is complicated by the Board of Trustees triennial elections which take place this year. The common date for these elections is 30 May and we expect the vast majority of schools to hold elections then, although a small minority may decide to hold them earlier in the date range you specified (9 April to 30 May). This means that parents will vote to elect new Board members, who in the continuing school will be replaced by a Ministerially defined Board shortly after the election.

87. To manage this risk, we propose that the constitution for the new Board of the continuing school is three elected parent representatives of the Boards of each of the continuing and merging schools, as well as both the Principals (until a new Principal of the merged school is appointed). We propose that the three top-polling candidates from each Board will be the parent representatives on the new continuing Board. We would also expect the change manager for each pair of continuing and merging schools to attend Board meetings and be granted speaking rights. However, we would not include a staff representative on the continuing Board. If we were to do so, we think we would need to include a representative from both schools, which would mean that there would be six parent representatives and four members of staff on each Board. The Ministry's view is that this would unhelpfully dilute the influence of the democratically elected parents.
88. In all our communications, we will make it clear that if your final decision is that the merger goes ahead, the triennial elections being held will be used to establish the membership of the appointed Board. We will explain that the Board of the merging school will continue governing that school until the formal date of the merger, and that three of its parent representatives will be on the new appointed Board. We will work with NZSTA to prepare a communication pack for all affected Boards setting out the process in the event that your decision is to proceed with the merger.
89. One of the roles of the Board of the continuing school is to appoint staff to the merged school. The collective agreements allow for permanent positions to be advertised to permanent staff from the merging and continuing schools first, and any which are not filled are then advertised nationally. The Principal's position at the merged school is always advertised nationally. Permanent staff who do not win positions at the merged school are eligible for the surplus staffing provisions of their collective agreement.
90. In order to allow school Boards and leadership teams to work with their new communities as soon as possible, we recommend that all the proposed mergers happen at the beginning of 2014.
91. If you agree to progress the mergers, we will make temporary relocatable classrooms available on the current sites of South New Brighton and Woolston Schools (and if necessary, Gilberthorpe School) to allow them to accommodate all the learners of the newly merged school from January 2014. Unlimited Paenga Tawhiti and Discovery One will remain on separate sites until a new site in the central city is found to accommodate them. For the three remaining mergers, we will prioritise property work to ensure that new buildings are available as soon as possible, but they will be on split sites for the first two years. For Freeville and North New Brighton Schools, we are able to put temporary classrooms on the North New Brighton site to allow the school to operate on one site, but this would mean that learners lose access to the modern learning environment which already exists at Freeville School. The combined roll of Burwood and Windsor Schools is currently too large for all the learners to be accommodated on the Windsor site. The roll will continue to fall, allowing all learners to be in a rebuilt school on the Windsor School site. Lyttelton Main and Lyttelton West Schools will need to remain as separate sites during the rebuild of the school on the Lyttelton Main site.

92. We will also need to use some relocatable classrooms to accommodate some learners from some of the schools which will be closing. We estimate that accelerating the timetable as recommended will cost an additional \$2.7 million, which is manageable within the overall budget for this project.

Supporting schools through the next stages of the process

93. When decisions about mergers and closures are announced on 18 February, we will provide affected schools with a comprehensive information pack which will set out the next steps and milestones in the process, as well as the support which will be made available.
94. For all closures and mergers, the Ministry will appoint a change manager to support the Boards (where schools are merging, both schools will work with the same change manager). For mergers, the Board of the continuing school will need to take responsibility for ensuring a smooth transition to the new school for learners, staff and the wider community, including working to establish the vision and values of the new school, developing its curriculum and appointing the Principal and staff. Both Boards will need to ensure they maintain high-quality teaching and learning through the transition, and communicate effectively with parents and the wider community. The change manager will meet regularly with the Boards to help them do this by discussing progress, and identifying and resolving problems.
95. The Ministry will also appoint an overall change manager given the scale of, and timescale for, change. Responsibility to effect the closures and mergers will be held by the Regional Director (Southern) reporting to myself as Deputy Secretary, Regional Operations. We will ensure that all business-as-usual resource is co-ordinated through this process and will enable the Programme Director, Christchurch Education Renewal to focus on the other parts of the programme.
96. The Ministry also appoints a residual agent to help manage the process. The residual agent has a key role in ensuring that the Board continues to effectively and prudently manage public funds through the closure or merger period. They will work with the Board to review all financial commitments, develop a budget until the date of closure, and transfer assets once the school closes or merges.
97. Ministry staff will work closely with the change manager and ensure that we are able to provide sufficient support to Boards throughout this process. We will also ensure that the Board and school staff are aware of any additional support they could access, for example, through NZSTA or NZEI. The Ministry will also draw up an agreement for the use of money available through the Education Development Initiative (see paragraphs 104-107 for further details).

Supporting the wellbeing of learners, staff and school communities

98. As noted above, since the first earthquake, schools and ECE centres have played an important role in supporting parents and learners' wellbeing. Sir Peter Gluckman's May 2011 briefing paper¹³ highlights the importance of effective recovery programs that support the majority of the population using community-led interventions, and ensure efficient referral to specialist care services are available and accessible for those with more significant needs.

¹³ *The psychosocial consequences of the Canterbury earthquakes: a briefing paper*; Sir Peter Gluckman; 2011

99. The Ministry has followed this principle and ensured a range of support focussed on promoting wellbeing. Whole school recovery plans have been developed with 31 identified schools, including 15 schools which now have proposals to close or merge. These plans ensure that social supports were provided that reflected the needs of individual school communities, and allowed established community supports to be maintained. We anticipate that support will need to develop and evolve to reflect schools' engagement with their reshaped communities, enabling new relationships, direction and support for the families and learners over the next 5-10 years¹⁴.
100. In their submissions, some schools cite evidence that learners are still suffering stress as a result of the earthquakes and the related disruption. They claim that proceeding with closures and mergers would result in further strains on already fragile communities.
101. We recognise that this is the case and consider that it is important that we make appropriate support available to schools that are proposed for closure or merger. The Ministry response teams will be available to all affected schools, and will work with the wider change management team to provide tailored programmes to meet schools' specific needs, which reflect the well-established principles of effective recovery after natural disasters¹⁵. This program of support will be undertaken in collaboration with community services, resource teachers of learning and behaviour, and social workers in schools.

Communications

102. At our meeting on 22 January 2012, we will discuss the options for relaying and announcing the decisions. Following this discussion, the Ministry will work with your office and other key players to develop a comprehensive communications plan. A senior external communications expert has been brought in to provide advice and quality assure the communications approach, plan and other material.
103. Learning from the September 2012 announcement, we have asked CPPA for advice about how to inform schools about your decisions about their future. We all agree that we want to ensure that this is done as sensitively as possible, giving schools sufficient time to communicate the decision to their community before any wider announcements through the media. We also want to be as open and transparent as possible about the decision-making process and the factors which were considered. To support this, we recommend that when Boards are told about the decisions on 18 February, they are provided with a copy of the education report relating to their school, and that this education report. We also recommend that all the education reports (including this one), as well as the Cabinet Paper, are publicly released later that day, once Boards of Trustees have had the opportunity to share the news with their communities.

¹⁴ *Long Term Personal and Community Response to Disaster*; R. Gordon; 2012

¹⁵ *Psychosocial Recovery from Disasters: A Framework Informed by Evidence*; M. Mooney et al; 2011

Financial Information

104. When schools close or merge, the change to the schooling network generates Education Development Initiative (EDI) funding, and where there are multiple changes across a schooling network (with more than one school remaining) it also generates Joint School Initiative Funding (JSIF).
105. Should the closure and merger proposals that we are recommending proceed, these would generate approximately \$16 million in EDI funding and JSIF. The total amount will obviously vary depending on the final decisions.
106. These funds are used for projects that support student achievement, psycho-social needs, transition and change management within and across schools and Learning Community Clusters.
107. The Ministry is working with the Greater Christchurch Education Advisory Board to determine how this funding can best be used to support the aims of the Christchurch reorganisation. While traditionally JSIF funding remains within the small group of schools which are directly affected by the closure or merger, in this case we are trying to determine how it could be used to best support Learning Community Clusters across the greater Christchurch area. We will provide further advice on this by 4 February 2013.

Next Steps

108. This report should be read in conjunction with all the Boards' submissions (which you have already received) and the 21 education reports about the individual proposals. The Ministry is ready to provide any additional information or analysis you may need. We are also providing a draft Cabinet paper alongside this report.
109. With the exception of the proposed merger between Unlimited Paenga Tawhiti and Discovery One, further consultation is required for all the proposals. As outlined above, this process will begin on 18 February.
110. As noted above, the Boards of schools in the Aranui Learning Community Cluster have until 7 March 2013 to return their submissions. The Ministry will provide you with advice on these submissions by 25 March, allowing you to announce your decision before 19 April (the final day of term). If you do consider that the closures should continue or that we should look at alternative proposals, there will be a further consultation with the Boards.
111. In September 2012, we indicated that we would discuss secondary provision across greater Christchurch with all state secondary schools. Secondary schools have also suffered damage to their land and buildings, and have been affected by families moving after the quakes. There are currently more than 1,300 spare places in the state secondary school network, and long-term projections suggest that demand for places is unlikely to increase significantly.

112. The situation is complicated by the fact that three secondary schools – Avonside Girls' High, Christchurch Girls' High, and Shirley Boys' High – suffered some of the most severe earthquake damage. We have therefore commissioned detailed geotechnical assessments for these three schools, and these are in the final stages of peer review. You will shortly receive an education report which provides a brief overview of the findings of these reports and the next steps in our engagement with these schools [METIS 737014 refers]. This report will also include information about similar assessments at Kaiapoi Borough School and Redcliffs School.
113. The Ministry has funded a facilitator to help secondary schools work as a cluster to consider provision across greater Christchurch, and how the schools might collaborate in order to raise student achievement. The Ministry will continue to work with the cluster to develop options for the future of the network, and we expect to provide you with advice on this by the end of term 2.
114. In order to support recovery and renewal across greater Christchurch, Cabinet approved an Order in Council in 2011 which amended some provisions in the Act and associated regulations. It gave the Secretary for Education the ability to approve a special enrolment zone for a school, particularly around the way a home zone is defined and different methods for selecting out-of-zone learners. It also provided that a learner who was enrolled at a school on 22 February will continue to be regarded as living in the home zone of that school. This was extended in 2012, and we will shortly provide advice to you on a further extension of this and other provisions. Following your decisions on the schooling changes and analysis on enrolment patterns is undertaken we will be in a position to review enrolment schemes and where necessary work with Boards to develop new home zones.
115. Before the September announcement, we had planned to develop a full business case for Cabinet's consideration in February 2013. The business case will be comprehensive, and include the implications of all of the current proposals for closures and mergers, as well as reflecting the Learning Community Cluster plans (which are now due to be received in June) and the proposals for secondary school provision across greater Christchurch. We therefore propose that we delay Cabinet consideration of the business case until August.

Conclusion

116. This report has detailed the formal process of consultation undertaken by school Boards and the Ministry, and the Ministry's analysis of the submissions. Where Boards have developed alternative proposals, these have been carefully considered and we have made recommendations that change our original proposals in a number of cases based on these responses and the arguments presented by Boards.
117. Of the 215 schools in greater Christchurch, two have agreed that they will close on 27 January 2013, and we are recommending that a further eight should close. We also recommend that 12 or 14 schools should merge. Of the 31 schools considered in this paper, we recommend that nine continue as separate institutions, and you reconsider the proposal to merge two.