



North New Brighton School

Submission to Ministry of Education

for

Proposal to Merge

December 2012

North New Brighton School

23rd November 2012

To the Minister of Education
Hekia Parata
c/- Katheryn Palmer
Acting Regional Manager – Southern
Ministry of Education
39 Princess Street,
PO Box 2522,
Christchurch 8140

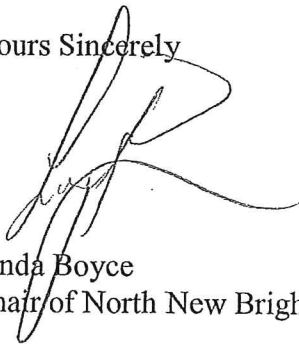
Dear Minister,

Please find herewith our submission required as a result of the proposed merger between North New Brighton School and Freeville School.

It has been conducted in as fair and reasonable manner as possible given the time constraints and the hectic time of year. Please note that all the community and staff survey responses as well as the collated results do not form part of this submission however all originals will be held securely by the board and will available upon request.

We look forward to hearing back from you in due course and take the opportunity to wish you a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Yours Sincerely



Linda Boyce
Chair of North New Brighton School Board

Executive Summary:

The proposal is for the merging of Freeville School and North New Brighton School.

The board undertook the consultation process by engaging a facilitator and carefully planning the process and timeline. The process included a written survey out to both the community and staff, a community meeting held at the local scout den, a staff meeting held at the school, various other feedback and comment opportunities and an opportunity to share thoughts, ideas and frustrations at a cluster forum.

The timeline was as follows:

October 29 th	Survey out to community ¹
October 31 st	SWOT analysis with community and staff
November 5 th	Survey back to school
November 18 th	Community survey responses collated ²
November 19 th	Round table discussions with staff ³
November 19 th	Sharing thoughts/progress/ideas with Brighton cluster (Includes North, Central and South New Brighton and Freeville Schools)
November 29 th	Consultation with staff/community on draft Submission
December 4 th	Submission completed

There were 23 responses from a possible 159 families from the Community survey and the collated results form part of this submission.

All teaching staff attended the staff consultation session and this feedback² has been added to the weight of the community responses.

SUBMISSION

1. Answers to unanswered questions?

The board, staff and community are seeking the answers to some very fundamental questions.

- Given that the reasons for a merger in our case are stated as 'grounds, buildings and people', and given that our grounds are fine, our buildings require some work but are still deemed acceptable for this proposed merger (as evidenced in the MoE report for North New Brighton School) and we have a growing roll, why are we under a proposed merger? What is the 'real' reason?
- There is already evidence of staff bleeding from our wider sector. If the merge process continues for four years and high quality staff continue to bleed there is a huge risk of a significant negative impact on student achievement and staff morale not only in our school but across the whole sector. What will the Ministry do to mitigate this risk?
- There has been a steady stream of inconsistent communication from the Ministry. Both ourselves and Freeville have asked the Ministry the same questions about the same issues around a merged school and have received answers that are completely opposite. What will the Ministry do to ensure we get consistent answers which we can rely on?
- With so much inconsistency and uncertainty and with the Ministry placing heavy demands with short timeframes on tired staff, the relationship with the Ministry is at an all-time low. How can we work together in a harmonious relationship when there is no trust? How will the Ministry rebuild this relationship?

2. Responsibility and Accountability

- We've been told that we will have state-of-the-art learning environments. As always the 'fiscal' considerations will compete against the "ultimate teaching and learning environment" (i.e. a 'modern' learning environment). If we are forced to merge in any sort of form, how can we be assured that the Ministry will deliver on its promises?
- The community, indeed the whole sector, identifies the huge potential risk to student achievement if this process is not handled well from start to finish *and* if merged schools do not get the resources needed to complete the job. What accountability rests with the Ministry to provide the buildings, land, resources and environment we need to ensure student achievement is not compromised either during or after the process is completed?

- What responsibility will the Ministry take to act *quickly* if we end up taking considerably more children than expected?
- Canterbury has had far more than its fair share of upheavals and imposed major changes. This proposed merger (and other closures) is yet another major upheaval that other communities outside of Canterbury do not have to face. We desperately need time for things to settle down. What assurance can the Ministry provide that there will be no more big changes in the next few years to come?

3. Integration with ECE Centres

There is a growing very beneficial relationship between our school and several ECE centres. (North Beach Community Childcare Centre, North New Brighton Kid's First Kindergarten, North Brighton Playcentre). This relationship is one which is desirable on both sides with benefits for everyone, especially the preschoolers as they integrate into North New Brighton.

After the September earthquake the Ministry relocated the North Beach Community Childcare Centre onto North New Brighton's School grounds stating that it would be 'temporary'. The relationship between our two organisations has blossomed to such an extent that we would both love to make it a permanent arrangement.

4. The Community's Desire

The consultation process has clearly identified what the community sees as absolutely vital for the education of their children. These powerfully held feelings (and in many cases passions) leave no doubt about what they expect to see if the school is merged.

- A clear, well defined timeframe from start to finish
- The merged staff and board involved in design and planning from start to finish
- Faith and trust restored through two-way *transparent* communication
- A modern, state-of-the-art and well resourced teaching and learning environment
- Minimal disruption to teaching and learning
- The Ministry following through and 'honouring' what they have said
- Assuming we stay on our site, our beautiful trees stay
- The pool stays or is part of any new site
- A new school hall and library/information centre is part of the package
- We are *one* school on *one* site – (on Leaver Tce.)
- No exacerbation of post traumatic stress or anxiety in any of our previously identified children or families

The board have seen the written submissions, heard the community and staff feedback, and taken into account the general chatter and 'feel' both within and around the school. Whilst it is a natural thing for anyone to want to avoid change

(especially forced change) there is within our community a reluctant acceptance that some sort of change is inevitable. This is certainly clear from the feedback responses. To this end the board therefore submit the following.

PROPOSAL

Our proposal is for a merged school which has open grounds and learning spaces in a sustainable environment that is ECO friendly. We would like seamless integration with ECEs' and work with and alongside them to take full advantage of what they know about their children so that we can be well prepared for each child even before they start at school.

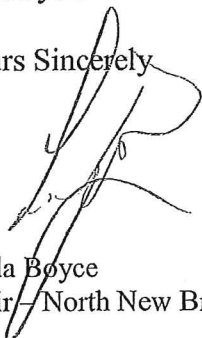
The merged school would have landscaped grounds in an environment which embraces all cultures especially our Maori and Pasifika and which also recognises the *history* of *both schools*. Being a school which is close to the beach we would like it built into the design and planning using innovative and creative architecture. (It would not do to attempt this by 'patching up' existing buildings. The board would not support a 'patch-up' merger.) These new facilities would be sought after by the community and along with the integrated relationships would draw them into the life of our school.

The playground would be a place where children can find rest and peace as well as adventure, and excitement. This would then be a school where two communities which are very different could come together and call it their own; where teaching is alive, vibrant and creative and learning is exciting and happening at every level all the time, where the best from both schools is brought together for the benefit of all to create an altogether exceptional school. All this would have the huge positive impact we're all wanting in our children's lives.

To this end we await your response. We are happy to answer any questions about any part of our submission.

Thank you.

Yours Sincerely



Linda Boyce
Chair / North New Brighton School

¹ Community Consultation Survey – See Appendix A

² Community Consultation Responses – See Appendix B

³ Compilation of Staff Feedback - See Appendix C

Appendix A

Dear Parents/caregivers

As you are aware the Ministry of Education has proposed that our school merge with Freeville School.

Part of the process we must now undertake is to consult with you, our community. In order to be fair and just we have compiled the following questionnaire/survey and ask that you complete it as fully and as honestly as you can.

We need to hear from you. Once all the survey results have been collected the board will collate them and use the feedback to put together a draft submission. You will then be given an opportunity to see the draft submission and provide comments and additional feedback. From here the board will modify the draft submission as it sees appropriate and submit it to the Ministry of Education. The submission must reach the Ministry by Dec 7th. A full timeline is at the bottom of this letter.

Whilst the timeline is short, please carefully consider your responses.
Thank you.

Yours sincerely

Chair
Board of Trustees

Item	Date
Survey out to community:	October 29 th (Monday)
Survey back to school:	November 5 th (Monday)
Public meeting for community:	October 31 st (Wednesday) (4:30pm at Scout Den, Leaver Terrace)
<i>BoT Collates survey results and writes draft submission:</i>	
Consult with staff/community on draft: <i>Board will amend submission as deemed appropriate</i>	November 28 th (Wednesday)
Send in Submission:	December 4 th (Tuesday)
Deadline to ministry:	December 7 th (Friday)

What opportunities do you think there might be if our school merged?

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How could we maximize these opportunities?

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What impact do you think a merge would have on:

Our school?

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Our community?

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Our children?

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Your child/ren?

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You?

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What is the *most important factor for you* which drives your thinking on this issue?

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What are the risks if we merge?

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How could we mitigate (lessen or try to lessen the extent of) these risks?

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As a bottom line, what is the best possible outcome for the children of our school?

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If we do not merge, what is a reasonable and viable alternative?

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In case you don't get the opportunity, what question/s would you like us to present to Hekia Parata on your behalf?

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Is there any other comment you'd like to make?

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Please circle the appropriate response. I am a:

Current:	Student	Parent/Caregiver	Staff Member	Other
Past:	Student	Parent/Caregiver	Staff Member	Other

Thank you for taking the time to fill this in. Please get it back to the school no later than: **Monday 5th November.**

Appendix B

NNB Community Consultation Responses

For many of the responses it's difficult to tell how the respondent actually feels. Some seem ambivalent, or can see things both ways. Some are not actually clear about what they're saying. Others are very clear. In summing them all up, if it isn't clear I've taken the over-all positive/negative feel and placed it in one of the three categories below.

Strongly or seemingly in favour of merge	3
Unclear	17
Definitely against or quite negative	3

There are a lot of one-off perceived risks and opportunities. Some are guesses about what others 'think' and may or may not do, and some pertain to a specific person or family which, while perfectly valid, cannot influence the whole-school outcome. These are not included in the following table. Generally, where there are three or more that fall roughly into the same category they are listed below.

<u>Perceived Risks</u>		<u>Perceived Opportunities</u>	
• Bullying	5	• Working together with other schools	4
• Us/Them attitude	3	• Modernizing/upgrading school facilities and grounds	15
• Overcrowding	5	• Teachers with new ideas/strategies etc.	5
• Student/teacher ratio	7	• More kids therefore new friendships/activities	4
• Loss of NNB Identity/culture	8	• Other	7
• Loss in quality of education/or kids slipping through cracks	5	• None at all	2
• Road congestion/access/parking	5		
• Loss of staff	5		
• Uniform issues	2		
• Other	4		

Appendix C

North New Brighton School – compilation of Staff Feedback

Major Issues

- Bringing two staff groups together which have very different cultures
- Loss of staff
- Very difficult to plan for anything in the short term
- Inconsistent communication between the Ministry and the two schools involved. Two different things have been said to the two schools about the same thing
- Continuity for the kids
- Breakdown in the relationship between the Ministry and the school community
- The 'vested' interest of the new principal in the merged school
- Much higher than expected student numbers because other school's students may choose to come to NNB instead of where they're expected to go

Ministry Responsibility

- What will be determined by 'fiscal' considerations Vs 'ultimate' teaching and learning environment
- Communication and relationship rebuild – *Actively* listening
- Student learning is not compromised through the merge process
- No more new initiatives – Allow our schools to settle down and catch up after so many shake-ups and MoE demands
- The merger is fully resourced from start to finish

Non Negotiables

- Clear well defined timeframe from start to finish
- Staff involved in design and planning from start to finish
- Faith and trust restored through two-way transparent communication
- Modern, state-of-the-art and well resourced teaching and learning environment
- Minimal disruption to teaching and learning
- The Ministry 'honours' what they have said
- Our trees stay on the avenue through our school
- Our pool stays and/or is upgraded
- We have a new school hall, library/information centre
- We are one school on one site – (here at Leaver Tce.)

Our Vision

- Open grounds and learning spaces
- ECO friendly and sustainable environment
- Landscaped grounds
- Recognising history of both schools
- Recognition of our 'beach' environment
- Innovative architecture
- Community using facilities
- Environment which embraces all cultures especially our Maori and Pasifika
- Provision of innovative and creative playground activities