To the Hawera Intermediate School Community

Following the major fire at our school in October 2015 the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the education providers in the Hawera area agreed to discuss the long term vision for local education and explore models of education that may be best for the future generations. Initially this involved all education providers then specifically primary schools however there were no general consensus to extend their schools to include Year 7- 8. Most recently Hawera Intermediate School (HIS) Board and Hawera High School (HHS) Board have been investigating whether a Year 7- 13 school model could be a viable option.

Both boards worked collaboratively with a facilitator assisting with the process. The MOE directed the Boards that their focus should be primarily on student achievement for considering different school models and not on buildings, staffing or finances. The Board agree that student achievement is at the forefront however they do not agree that the latter should not be considered as they can have impacts on student achievement as well.

After many board and combined boards meetings; reviewing NZ student achievement data; visiting Y7-13 schools; and consulting with the community the HIS Board, as the legal representative of their school community, are able to make a recommendation to the Minister about schooling provision and provide reasons why.

Hawera Intermediate School Board unanimously recommends Hawera Intermediate School and Hawera High School are retained as a separate intermediate school and high school for the following reasons:

The Ministry of Education confirmed that changing to a Year 7-13 school model does not mean it will improve student achievement. This is supported by government research and MOE student achievement data. [[1]](#footnote-1) [[2]](#footnote-2)

Community consultation showed the majority of responses were in favour of retaining separate schools and disagreed that a Year 7-13 school would likely provide better learning opportunities for local students.

Any school model option can have quality teaching, strong pedagogy, and effective teaching and learning programmes.

The Hawera Intermediate School has recently received a positive ERO report. [[3]](#footnote-3)

A Community of Learning has been established in the South Taranaki area to improve student outcomes and achievement. This involves collaboratively working with all schools including the Hawera Intermediate School and Hawera High School.

The MOE have informed the Board that if there is a year 7-13 school there will be no new buildings with the Year 7-8 students being accommodated in the high school.

The Boards stated that their preference was for a merger if a Year 7-13 school option was chosen at the community consultation meetings and on the Education Hawera website. [[4]](#footnote-4) The MOE have informed the Boards that no decision on mechanism (merger or closure) can be made until after the Minister has decided on the school model. This creates uncertainty for the staff.

The Education Development Initiative (EDI) funding is available from the MOE for schools that are closing or merging to manage the process. This is only for a set period of time; is seen as a short term boost; and is overseen by the MOE. Overall the operational funding remains the same whichever school model is chosen. Baseline teacher salaries will be the similar regardless of the school model option however there will be less senior management roles.

The Hawera Intermediate School Board and our school community see value in an intermediate school designed to cater for emerging adolescents. We strongly advocate that we do not want to put our students, staff and school community through this change process when there is no evidence of improved student achievement. Our school community are still grieving that our school burnt down and we would like it rebuilt.

The MOE indicated the Minister would likely make a prompt decision once recommendations were received on June 9. We have recently been informed a decision may not be made until after the General Elections in September. This impacts significantly on our school community particularly our staff. We are asking the Minister and the MOE to communicate the reasons for this and consider making the decision in a timely manner which is supportive of our school community.

Regards

Bart Crawshaw, Hawera Intermediate School Chairperson

Craig Simpson, Hawera Intermediate School Principal

1. <https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/35494/Transition-to-Secondary-School.pdf> p.24 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/36281/913_TL-MidSchool.pdf> p.11; p.83 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <http://www.ero.govt.nz/review-reports/hawera-intermediate-21-04-2017/> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <http://www.educationhawera.nz/> Frequently Asked Questions [↑](#footnote-ref-4)