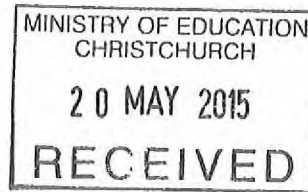


Board of Trustees
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8th May 2015

Re: Submission to the proposed closure of Redcliffs School

Dear Coralanne,

The Heathcote Valley School Board do not agree with the Minister of Education's proposal to close Redcliffs school. We do not believe that closing the school is in the best interests of the students, the Redcliffs community and the wider community.

Why do we oppose it?

The original Redcliffs site has been judged to be safe, yet the Minister argues that the proposed closure is due to potential disruption in a future event, and her not being able to guarantee continuing and uninterrupted education provision at the Redcliffs site. (We believe this could apply to many other schools in New Zealand). The term potential disruption implies **only** that there is a possibility that there may be some disruption. Should Redcliffs school close, there is one certainty - there **will be** very significant disruption to the learning and well-being of Redcliffs school's students, the students in the schools to which they would be distributed to and students of the wider community.

We are acutely aware of what it means to attend your local school in your local community; the New Zealand Curriculum places a strong emphasis on Community Engagement and Community Connectedness. The closure of Redcliffs school would directly compromise and seriously hinder community links, community engagement and community connectedness of its student group, parents, whanau and the wider community, including Heathcote Valley.

What will we at Heathcote Valley lose?

Redcliffs School is one of the key members of the Bays Cluster schools, which was set up in 2008. It is a highly functioning cluster that has been identified as such by the Ministry of Education, and has been held up as a role model at various times. Merging Redcliffs school with other schools will have the following negative effect on the cluster as a whole:

1. Cluster principals attend monthly Bays Cluster meetings. Kim Alexander, the current principal of Redcliffs school, has a measured and thoughtful response to problems / opportunities, a particular strength in systems, and adds a great deal of experience to the group. She is very highly regarded by her peers. Reducing the number of principals in the cluster will affect the quality of the discussion and decisions that are made.
2. The dynamics of the cluster will change. There is a likelihood that the cluster will be dominated by the two significantly larger schools (Sumner and Mt Pleasant).

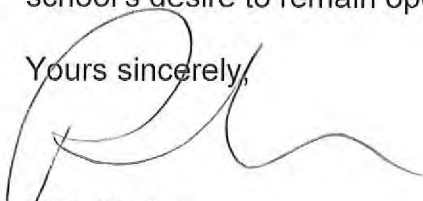
3. Cluster Events will be affected. Currently we have a large number of events that are supported and organised by the principals (musical festival, cultural festival, speech competitions, sports tournaments, Bays rock band competition, the tech-fest, science, technology and maths enrichment programmes). Reduce the number of schools and principals and this will likely reduce the number of events that will be organised.
4. Reducing the number of schools will also affect our flexibility when organising events, thus impacting on what will be offered. Redcliffs is the centrally located school within the Bays Cluster.
5. There are also separate termly cluster meetings for both the tier 1 and tier 2 leaders of each of the schools. Reducing the numbers and diversity of these leaders will also affect the quality of the discussion and decisions that are made.
6. Bays Cluster teachers meet formally once a term (and more frequently on an informal basis) to collaborate and discuss best practices in their year groups. Reduce the number of schools represented, and you'll reduce the diversity of ideas.
7. We would lose the opportunity to have joint PD sessions with Redcliffs teachers and leaders. e.g. In early May 2015, their Deputy Principal invited the cluster schools to join their staff in Professional Development relating to teaching children with dyslexia.
8. We would lose the strong educational value of Redcliffs, their strong drive for educational learning outcomes and their modelling of good practice. (At the 2014 cultural festival, Redcliff's Kapahaka group included members from yrs 1-8. Ours was restricted to yrs 4-8. This led to us asking the question - Why are we restricting our membership? We now have Kapahaka groups that cover the range yrs 1-8 thanks to them sowing that seed).

One of the main reasons that the cluster has functioned so successfully is because of the diversity that each school community brings.

The Heathcote Valley School Board of Trustees believes that the closure of Redcliffs school would be seriously detrimental to the emotional, social, educational and spiritual connectedness of Redcliff students and their families, and have a negative impact on the success of the Bays Cluster. Redcliffs school is one of our schools and the Redcliffs Community is one of our Communities.

It is for these reasons that we throw our complete support and resource behind Redcliffs school's desire to remain open and return to their site.

Yours sincerely,



Rich Matla
Chairperson
Board of Trustees
Heathcote Valley School