

GREATER CHRISTCHURCH EDUCATION RENEWAL ADVISORY BOARD

Proposals for the Future shape of the Greater Christchurch Special Schools Network—Supplementary Advice to the Minister of Education & the Ministry of Education

BACKGROUND

1. The Education Advisory Board provided comprehensive advice to the Minister of Education and the Ministry of Education in late 2013 .This advice was in response to the draft Education report on the above proposal.
2. The Advisory Board is pleased to see that its advice is explicitly recognised and considered in the revised proposal from the Ministry.
3. As a result of meeting with the Ministry to discuss changes between the two proposals, the sub group of the Advisory board has decided to provide brief supplementary advice to the Minister and the Ministry.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE

1. The Education Advisory Board supports the overall thrust of the proposal to strengthen the network of Special Education provision within Greater Christchurch. However ,it continues to have a serious concern that the proposal ,whilst improving and strengthening the network ,is very likely to miss a “once in a lifetime “opportunity to create a network for Special Education in Greater Christchurch that would give leadership to the emerging changes in the provision of disability services and of Special Education.

The principal concerns of the Advisory Board are summarised below.

2. It is considered important that, in the planning for new schools or the substantial reconfiguration of existing schools, the implications for and needs of Special Education are fully considered from the initial concept plans. In addition, the wider community as well as the school community should have knowledge of this expectation from the time of initial consultation. This concern is not specifically a Greater Christchurch issue but one which must be considered across New Zealand in schools planning/major reconfiguration.
3. The importance that the proposal considers how Special Education students (and the provision of Special Education) can enjoy a greater level of community inclusiveness , including ensuring that Special Education students (particularly in the 18 -21 year age group) have pathways and opportunities which support their community inclusiveness – irrespective of the location of their Special School.

4. The potential failure of the proposal to ensure that the “future shape” of Special Education provision in Greater Christchurch comprises a network of Base and

Satellite schools which will operate in an integrated manner and which will provide equitable access for families over the next 10 or more years. In particular, the Education Advisory Board considers it important that

- Base schools are physically located to ensure equitable access to Special Education throughout Greater Christchurch and that there is a network of satellite schools that complement those Base schools
- Base schools and satellite schools are appropriately integrated with their collocated/ neighbourhood Mainstream schools.
- The concept of a network of Special Schools is “enabled” through consideration being given to arrangements and opportunities for shared governance, shared leadership/management, shared operations (e.g. specialist teachers, professional development ,joint contracting) and shared physical and learning resources.

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