

Education Report: Application for the cancellation of the Integration Agreements for Our Lady of Fatima School (3460) and St Paul's School (3541), Christchurch

Executive Summary

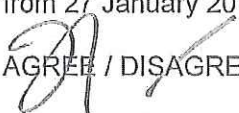
1. In March 2014 you received a letter from Bishop Barry Jones, the Proprietor of Our Lady of Fatima School and St Paul's School in Christchurch, stating that he wished to cancel the integration agreements of both schools, close them, and establish and integrate a new school on the current Our Lady of Fatima School site.
2. This proposed change is to align schooling with the newly amalgamated parish the Bishop created after the earthquakes, called St Francis of Assisi Catholic Parish, Mairehau.
3. After considering his proposal and the supporting material you wrote to the Bishop agreeing that the Ministry would undertake consultation with the Boards of the affected schools about his request.
4. Feedback was also sought from the Boards about:
 - two possible dates to implement any change: from the start of Term 3, 2015, or from the start of Term 1, 2016.
 - the process for how the new school could be staffed, based on the processes in the Primary Teachers' Collective Agreement used in the merger of state schools. This process is supported by NZEI for the use in the St Paul's and Our Lady of Fatima proposed change, should the Bishop's proposal be approved.
5. This consultation process has now finished. Submissions were received from the Boards of both schools, as well as the staff of Our Lady of Fatima School, about the Bishop's proposal and the preferred implementation timeframe. The Boards of four other state schools (Waitākiri School, Mairehau Primary School, Banks Avenue School and Parkview Primary School), who are also in the local network of schools provided feedback on the proposal and timeframes for it.
6. The Board of Our Lady of Fatima School provided feedback on the implementation process for staffing the new school (should the Bishop's proposal be approved). This was through their legal representatives Wynn Williams Lawyers. Both Boards had commented on earlier iterations of the process. Wynn Williams Lawyers also contacted the Ministry to remind us that legal action would be taken if the final decision was not to close St Paul's School and retain Our Lady of Fatima School.

7. During the consultation period you also received 15 emails/letters directly from parents and staff from Our Lady of Fatima School about the proposal. Most of these raised concerns about the consultation process and supported either the amalgamation of the two schools, or the closure of St Paul's School and that Our Lady of Fatima School be retained. Two supported the cancellation and closure of St Paul's and Our Lady of Fatima, and establishment of a new school on the Our Lady of Fatima Site.
8. The Board of St Paul's School accepts the Bishop's proposal and indicates a preference for it to be implemented from Term 1, 2016.
9. The Board of Our Lady of Fatima School objects to the proposal to cancel its integration agreement. It does state however that it supports the implementation from the start of the 2016 school year, rather than part way through 2015.
10. The Ministry acknowledges that this has been an extended period of discussion about the future of schooling for the Parish, and it has been a difficult process for the schools and their communities.
11. It is recommended that you agree to cancel the integration agreements for both schools with implementation from 27 January 2016. This time frame allows for the process to establish and integrate a new school to take place.
12. If you agree with this recommendation and wish to continue with the process to cancel the integration agreements for the schools you should:
 - sign the attached letters to the Proprietor and Boards of Trustees
 - sign the gazette notices
 - sign the copies of the Agreement to Cancel the Integration Agreements and Provisional Registration documents.
13. Note that, if this is your decision, you will receive an application from the Bishop to establish and integrate a new primary school on the current Our Lady of Fatima School site. A report about this proposal will then be provided for your consideration.

Recommended Actions

It is recommended that you:

- a. **agree** to cancel the integration agreements between the Crown and the Proprietor of Our Lady of Fatima School and St Paul's School, Christchurch, from 27 January 2016;


AGREE / DISAGREE

- b. **note** that the Proprietor intends to close the schools at the date of the cancellation of the integration agreements (27 January 2016). Bishop Jones will apply to establish and integrate a new Catholic primary school which, if approved, will be located on the current Our Lady of Fatima School site, and will open in 2016;
- c. **note** that the staffing process for the new school, will be through the protocols that have been agreed with NZEI and are based on the processes used in a state school merger;

If you agree to cancel the integration agreements you are also asked to:

- d. **sign** the two copies of each of the attached Deeds of Cancellation of the Integration Agreement for Our Lady of Fatima School and St Paul's School, Dallington;
- e. **sign** the attached gazette notice notifying the cancellation of the integration agreements; and
- f. **sign** the enclosed letters to the Proprietor, the Board Chairperson of each school, and the local MPs informing them of your agreement with the Bishop's request.

If you decide not to cancel the integration agreements the Ministry will develop alternative letters to the Proprietor and Boards for your signature.


Katrina Casey
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Sector Enablement and Support

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Hon Hekia Parata
Minister of Education

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