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SUMNER SCHOOL SUBMISSION REGARDING PROPOSED CLOSURE OF REDCLIFFS SCHOOL

Sumner School Supports the Return of Redcliffs School To Redcliffs

The Sumner School Board of Trustees supports the return of Redcliffs School to Redcliffs.

The history of Redcliffs School spans for more than a century, having first opened in 1907. It has long been an enormously important part of the suburb of Redcliffs. Strong and well-functioning schools such as Redcliffs School form the heart of a community.

How Would The Closure Of Redcliffs School Affect The Bays Cluster?

Since 2008, Redcliffs School, Heathcote Valley School, Star of the Sea School, Mt Pleasant School and Sumner School have enjoyed being part of the very successful Bays Cluster. Our Cluster is something of an exemplar of how a cluster of schools can work. Each school has its own distinct character and identity which contributes to the success of the Cluster as a whole.

Co-operation and collaboration exist on many levels between students, staff, management and the Boards of each school.

There are a huge number of benefits for the students of all school communities involved. These range from the sharing of specialist teachers in Physical Education to Cluster Enrichment Programmes in Electronics, Writing and Science. Participation in Bays-wide cultural and sporting events such as Winter Sports Tournaments, the Bays Cultural Festival and Bays Cluster Music Concert is a very positive part of the education of students at each school.

Teachers meet and enjoy a strong sense of collegiality as well as sharing Professional Development workshops. Periodic meetings of Tier 1 and 2 leaders and Special Literacy leaders strengthen their practice.

There are also regular meetings among the Principals of the Cluster to which Kim Alexander, the Principal of Redcliffs School, makes an important contribution.

Board members across the Cluster benefit from jointly attending seminars from guest keynote speakers in the field of education.

Redcliffs School, which is situated geographically at the centre of the Cluster, has played a key and vital role since the Cluster's inception. Its position in the centre of the Bays' Cluster provides a central and convenient location for Cluster activities. If there was no school in Redcliffs, the schools

in Sumner would become more isolated and the strong link between Cluster members more difficult to maintain.

Also, losing Redcliffs School from this beneficial alliance would alter the dynamic of the Cluster as it would increasingly become dominated by two big schools – Sumner and Mt Pleasant which would necessarily increase in roll size to incorporate the former Redcliffs School pupils.

We submit the Cluster would not be as strong or diverse without the presence of Redcliffs School in Redcliffs.

How Would The Closure Of Redcliffs School Affect Sumner School?

The proposed closure brings great uncertainty around the future roll size of Sumner School.

Point 41 of Part 3 (Page 12) of the Shaping Education-Future Direction Redcliffs Report states that the projected rolls of Redcliffs School between 2019-2029 do not take into account the large number of homes in Redcliffs that are likely to be repaired and reoccupied and which may lead to the number of students per household resembling pre-quake levels.

If there is a possibility that Redcliffs student numbers could reach pre-quake levels in the medium term, as set out in Figure 2 on Page 12 of the Report to the Minister, this is potentially in the order of some 400 students.

Further, the Ministry concedes in the document 'Network without Redcliffs School', that projected rolls in Sumner School may have been underestimated. Sumner School's roll is not presently in decline as predicted by the Ministry. It is clear that there is still a large degree of uncertainty as to what the future roll might look like in the near and medium term at Sumner School.

We submit that the Ministry should undertake more research and demographic modelling, before proceeding to make a decision on the basis of this seemingly incomplete and inaccurate information.

What Are The Implications Of Closing Redcliffs School In The Event Of A Natural Disaster?

There is no guarantee on any school site that the education of its students will remain uninterrupted. If Redcliffs School is closed, a natural disaster which cuts Sumner off from Redcliffs (e.g. because Peacock's Gallop becomes impassable) would put significant pressure on Civil Defence efforts at Van Asch Deaf Education Centre (VADEC) to return children to their homes in Redcliffs.

It is widely accepted that Peacock's Gallop is still moving and that engineering solutions are still being considered. While it is one thing to have a school population temporarily located on the opposite side of Peacock's Gallop to their parents and homes, it is completely another to make this a permanent solution. The Ministry of Education must have a plan in place to relocate large numbers of children from Sumner VADEC back to Redcliffs in the event of an emergency (up to 400 if we are to rely on the numbers in the Report to the Minister). It is not acceptable to make it the responsibility of the staff and parents of Sumner School to care for these children for any extended period of time.

The Ministry of Education should also take heed of the fact that Sumner is served by a Volunteer Fire Brigade and has no St Johns or Police services within the village. The February 2011 event made it

clear that in the event of a natural disaster, Sumner can easily be cut off from the rest of Christchurch. The Ministry cannot rely on local Emergency Services for the ferrying of children between Sumner and Redcliffs.

We submit it is the Ministry's responsibility to take into account adequate Emergency and Civil Defence Responses when considering the proposed closure of Redcliffs School.

How Would The Closure Of Redcliffs School Affect Traffic Congestion And Student Safety?

Car parking and traffic safety are already ongoing issues at Sumner School and the congestion would be exacerbated by increasing the size of the school population.

We submit it is the Ministry's responsibility to take into account adequate Traffic Safety Responses when considering the proposed closure of Redcliffs School.

How Would The Closure Of Redcliffs School Affect Our Education Renewal Programme 2020?

If Sumner School was to increase its number of students significantly, the current 2020 Master Plan would need to be brought forward as a matter of urgency so that facilities could be completed to accommodate the increased number of students. This would avoid temporary measures being taken which would be uneconomic.

How Would The Closure Of Redcliffs School Be Managed?

If the Ministry decides to proceed with the closure of Redcliffs School, we would strongly advocate for the start date to be at the beginning of 2017 rather than part way through 2016 as is currently proposed. This would be a difficult transition for both Sumner and Redcliffs School that could be made worse if it were to occur part way during a school year.

We would need a carefully considered and well-resourced transition plan for what will likely be an unsettling event for both the Sumner and Redcliffs School student population, staff, management and wider community.

Sumner School Supports the Return of Redcliffs School To Redcliffs

We support Redcliffs School's submission to the Minister Hon. Hekia Parata to remain open and to return to Redcliffs. Closing the school would adversely affect the Redcliffs community at large, and potentially upset the educational and emotional well-being of many Redcliffs School students.

We submit that the closure of Redcliffs School would be a real loss for many Redcliffs School students and their families, for all the schools in the Bays Cluster, and for the wider Redcliffs community. In addition, without further consideration and more certainty around the changing demographics of the area, it will create great uncertainty for neighbouring schools and communities in the Cluster and significant pressure on our existing community safety and emergency services.

Sumner School Board of Trustees