
From: Tuesday, 1 July 2014 9:37 p.m.
Sent: Hekia Parata
To: Rt. Hon. John Key
Cc: Wasting taxpayers money to close Our Lady of Fatima School Mairehau Christchurch
Subject:

E1.20597

Dear Ministers

I have concerns regarding a proposal by the Bishop of Christchurch to close Our Lady of Fatima School in Mairehau Christchurch.

There are two schools concerned in this matter - St Pauls from Dallington and Our Lady of Fatima School in Mairehau. As a quick background, St Pauls was badly damaged in the earthquakes and the school site was red zoned so the school was moved to temporary facilities in Shirley.

Options were looked at in 2012 and at the end of three rounds of consultation the Bishop/Catholic Education Board decided that there was no need to rebuild St Pauls as there were other schools the pupils could go to. St Pauls would no longer exist.

At the end of the third round of consultation, the Bishop/Catholic Education Board put forward the following two proposals.

- Option A - Closure of both schools

This is what the Bishop has now asked the Minister of Education to agree to, closure of both schools and loss of all jobs.

Most teachers could not vote for this because removing all the staff that children knew at either school is not good for the children and their education.

The children deserve continuity so this option was not supported.

The staff also wants to continue serving the school community.

- Option B - Merger Option

Overall, the teachers could not support this because it is an illegal option for integrated schools. The law allows this to happen in state schools but this does not apply to us. The teachers could not support an illegal process that could result in loss of jobs for a number of their colleagues.

3 staff did support this option

Our Lady of Fatima School has made it perfectly clear that neither of these options is what they want, so have fought hard to retain their school but have always made it clear that they would welcome any students from St Pauls and of course with added numbers of students, then there would clearly be a need to employ more teachers too. New classrooms are already being build.

The fight over the merge/closure has gone on so long, that all but FOUR of the St Pauls staff already have new jobs to go to. So the proposal is that 16-17 staff from Our Lady of Fatima School lose their jobs (and taxpayers have to fund the redundancy payouts) just so 4 staff from another school can apply for a job. I have also heard (though true or not I can't say) that the St Pauls Staff were put on temporary contracts till the end of 2015 so their jobs will cease to exist at the end of next year anyway. We also want to keep our Headmaster, the Headmaster from St Pauls has said they don't even want the job.

Has anyone gone to St Pauls' and asked how many students are actually wanting to come to Our Lady of Fatima School? St Pauls' has lost a number of students over the past year and

I expect enrollments for next year will be very low - but the students aren't coming to Our Lady of Fatima School.
There are other Catholic Schools closer that they are choosing to go to - so why go through this exercise?

At this stage, this is just the Bishop's recommendation. Until the Minister of Education makes her decision in August, none of this occurs so I ask that some common sense is applied to the situation. One school needed to close and it essentially has - so why close a second school that is performing well, moreover, why spend spend taxpayers money unnecessarily?

Regards
Parent of a pupil at Our Lady or Fatima School

From:
Sent: Wednesday, 2 July 2014 10:42 a.m.
To: Hekia Parata
Subject: Our Lady of Fatima School

E1.20611

Dear Minister Parata,

We are the parents of a pupil at Our Lady of Fatima School in Christchurch. We urge you not to accept the Bishop's recommendation to close both Our Lady of Fatima School and St. Paul's School.

It is very sad and disruptive for the pupils and staff at St. Paul's School to lose their school due to the earthquakes and attend a new one. This does not mean however that the pupils at Our Lady of Fatima School should lose their teachers too. It is also a huge waste of taxpayer money to close Our Lady of Fatima School and make all the staff redundant.

The best solution is to increase the roll at Our Lady of Fatima School, welcome the children from St. Paul's school and there should be enough teaching positions for the remaining permanent teachers from St. Paul's School. This way all the children would know some of the teachers and all the teachers would know some of the children. The children from both schools would adapt to the changes a lot better with teachers and support staff they already know. Retaining staff members from both schools would greatly enhance the coming together of the new school community. The principal of Our Lady of Fatima School was the principal of St. Paul's School for 11 years, making him the best person to bring both school communities together.

The name of the school can still be changed by the Board of Trustees to St. Francis of Assisi, so that it has the same name as the parish. To close Our Lady of Fatima School in order to open a new one under the name of St. Francis of Assisi is not a valid reason.

If Our Lady of Fatima School were to close, then the staff will start looking for other jobs to get certainty around their future and we might lose them before the school closes. This will cause even greater disruption to the pupils who might have a relieving teacher for a short time before the new school opens with yet another new teacher.

The loss of all staff from both schools would be very detrimental for all the children involved. The focus should be on what is best for the children and their education. We should save what can be saved. Please keep Our Lady of Fatima School open. The coming together of the two schools, in whatever form that will take, will be disruptive for everyone involved. Please don't make it more disruptive than it has to be. Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely

From:
Sent: Wednesday, 2 July 2014 1:18 p.m.
To: Hekia Parata
Subject: Keep Our Lady of Fatima and Our Teachers!!

Christchurch

02nd July 2014

Dear Hekia,

I am writing to you as a concerned parent from Our Lady of Fatima School in Innes Rd, Christchurch. We have over the last 18 months been going through the process of having our school merge with St Pauls.

We have attended meetings about this process and been informed by the Bishop late last year that St Pauls would be merging with our school on our site, instead of St Pauls having their own school. We have welcomed this option and are happy for them to come to our school- even though this means that the school our children currently attend will double in size.

The only issue we had and did not want to happen was to have the current teachers and staff of Our Lady of Fatima lose their jobs; meaning that our children would have an entire new school and teaching staff.

I cannot express my disappointment and concern enough to find out that in the last meeting with the Bishop he has decided to take this option and close both schools and create a new school on the Fatima site with all staff losing their jobs and to make matters worse they are hoping to achieve this change in the third term of next year while our children are on holiday.

So not only will our children return to school in the third term with extra children they will then have new staff teaching them as well. I can't understand how this can be good for our children's education when the new staff won't even know the children at all and will not understand where they are at with their level of learning. The disruption that this will have on my own children I feel will hinder their learning and be extremely disruptive for them especially after everything that they have already been through.

Our eldest child is currently in the senior school her teachers are aware of this and she has extra help with learning; we as parents have put a lot into her learning and the staff at Fatima have been more than accommodating with her needs and making sure she is at the current level she needs to be at with her fellow classmates. If the school was to change its staff then she will just become a number and will be lost in the process along with many other students at Fatima who also have learning disabilities- *changing the teaching staff will not only confuse and upset our children they will not be provided with the best education that they deserve.*

My biggest concern is that after talking to many parents at the school- that St Pauls families have already chosen other schools for their children to attend as this has been an extremely drawn out processes and that if the you chose to take the side of the Bishop and close both schools that none of the students from St Pauls will even enrol or attend Fatima- meaning that to close Fatima which is up and running successfully with 16 permanent staff is not only a waste of taxpayers' money to have to pay all their redundancies it is something that can be completely

avoided by allowing Our Lady of Fatima to stay open and have the money that would be used to close the school to put back into our children's education.

You have always said your strategy for Christchurch in the rebuild is to ensure maximum staff retention and focus on the children's Education by closing both schools and reopening a new school on the same site as Our Lady of Fatima is doing the complete opposite and will just be throwing money down the drain that could be used instead to help Our Lady of Fatima move forward with the merge of St Pauls.

What we are asking Hekia is for your help to allow us to move forward with the merger for St Pauls to come together with Our Lady of Fatima; keeping in place both lots of staff from each school to allow as little stress and change for our children and our future children attending Fatima.
Our families have all been through enough in Christchurch and the simple things in life matter and the less upset we can cause our children the better their futures will be.

The only legal way to solve this issue is to close St Pauls School and allow Our Lady of Fatima to remain.

Please take our concerns seriously- we need you to act quickly to avoid the closer of both schools.
Please help our children get the education that they not only need but deserve. Please save our Teachers. We have all been through enough.

Yours Faithfully,

Parent of