

**PIRONGIA SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**Minutes of Community Consultation meeting held in the School Hall at 100 Beechey**  
**Street Pirongia on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> of August 2017**



Meeting Opened: 7.09 pm

In Attendance: 41 individuals made up of: Caregivers, Early Childhood owners / representatives, Pirongia School teachers, staff & Principal.

Jan welcomed those in attendance.

**Agenda**

- Cohort entry
- Digital curriculum
- Yr 7/8 programme
- Enrolment zone
- Property – new classrooms

**Purpose**

To inform, discuss with, and gather feedback from the stakeholders of Pirongia School the items on the agenda.

**Topics**

**Cohort Entry – Presented by Jan Cullen**

- Cohort Entry allows four and five year old children to start at school at the beginning of the term closest to their fifth birthday, rather than on their fifth birthday. Caregivers still have the right to choose to start their child up until six years of age, but once they turn six they must be enrolled (which is the case now too).
- Changes to the Education Act is the legislation that gives school’s the mandate to do this. However, it can only occur after consultation with their community and, once adopted, one term’s notice must be given. If Pirongia School were to adopt this practice, the earliest it would be available is Term 1 2018.
- **Tabled item 1: Requiring compulsory attendance at school for under sixes.** Currently, children under six don’t have to be enrolled. Cohort entry changes mean that once a child is enrolled they must attend regularly. However, they still don’t have to be enrolled till they are six.
- **Tabled item 2: Enabling schools to introduce cohort entry.** The Ministry of Education (MOE) have determined dates and cutoffs as to when children can start (shown here and retrieved from <https://education.govt.nz/ministry-of-education/school-terms-and-holidays/#midterm2018>).

**2018 mid term dates for schools implementing cohort entry**

TERM	START OF TERM DATE	MID TERM DATE*	END OF TERM
1	07/02/2018**	20/03/2018	13/04/2018
2	30/04/2018	11/06/2018	6/07/2018
3	23/07/2018	03/09/2018	28/09/2018
4	15/10/2018	12/12/2018	20/12/2018

\*This date is the mid-point between the start of term and the start of the next term. If a child’s birthday falls before the mid term date, then they can start school at the beginning of that term or at the start of any later term until their 6<sup>th</sup> birthday. If their birthday falls on or after the mid term date then they can start school at the beginning of the following term or at the start of any later term until their 6<sup>th</sup> birthday.

\*\*The date used for the first term is the latest possible term start date. Even if your school uses an earlier start date than the day after Waitangi Day, or finishes before the latest possible end date for Term 4, the proposed mid-term dates will apply for the purposes of a cohort entry policy.

- There would be four intakes per year.
- If a child's birthday is in the first half of the term they can start at the start of the term, if a child's birthday is in the second half of the term they can start at the start of the next term.
- Discussion from Community:
  - If a child isn't ready to attend school at five, they can wait for a future cohort, thus taking the pressure off the perceived necessity to start on their fifth birthday.
  - It becomes a discussion on when to start rather than 'You're five therefore you go to school'.
  - The Playcentre's philosophy is that of kids staying in a play based culture for as long as possible, so Cohort Entry supports that, so they are for this concept.
  - Impressions can see the merit in groups of children moving into school, they may be able to better prepare them for the transition as a group. Also, it would be beneficial to them to know that x number of spaces will open up on a specific date, rather than one here and one there.
  - After one year data would still occur once a child has been at school 40 weeks (one year), which would mean that blocks of six year net testing would happen rather than being spread out. This will put pressure on teachers.
  - Overall, the community agree Cohort Entry would be a good thing.

### Digital Technologies – Presented by Edward Walker

- **Tabled item 3: Digital technologies: hangarau matihiko.** There is already a digital technology aspect to the NZ Curriculum. This MOE initiative expands on what is already happening in a way that should better prepare children for the world they will live in. It is not about IT devices, especially at the junior levels.
- The MOE see the future being heavily reliant on technology.
- Pirongia School recognise the need to equip children with the skills needed to contribute to their society.
- Digital Technologies is about understanding the language behind the technology they are already using (phones, iPads etc).
- Digital Technology as defined by Edward Walker: 'Getting kids to identify a problem, design a solution that has specific step by step instructions that a computer can understand'.

### Year 7/8 Programme – Presented by Amanda Nasilasila

- **Tabled item 4: Pirongia School Year 7/8.** Pirongia School is passionate about the range of opportunities that this school provides at Year 7/8 level. Here are some of them:
  - Leadership. Not everyone is a leader when they enter Yr 7 but the skills they develop when they're in a caring, safe environment set them up for later in life.
  - Learning. There 60-70 children at Yr 7/8 and they are spread over three classes. The Board of Trustees of Pirongia School (BOT) recognise that low class numbers at this level is important and Amanda thanked them for their continued support via funding a teacher to allow this to happen. Small classes and the knowledge staff have of the individual children as a result of them being in the school since Yr 1, allow children to begin learning right from the start of week one. The school receives good feedback from TA College how well our children transition to College.
  - Culture. Every opportunity the school is given is passed on to the kids to enrich their learning experience. These opportunities are often as a result of being part of the Waikato Full Primary Association.
  - EOTC. Some schools aren't offering camps anymore due to changes in H&S legislation. Pirongia School recognise the value of skills learnt outside the classroom for all children aren't putting camps in the 'too hard basket'.
- Data – Pirongia School's data at Yr 7/8 exceeds the national average – by a lot.
- Wayne Carter (BOT Chair and TA College Deputy Principal) stated their data from children from Pirongia School and one other that feed into TA College consistently (the last seven years) is at least 10% above the rest.

### Enrolment Zone - Presented by Jan Cullen

- In-zone roll growth is high and expected to grow.

- **Tabled item 5: Pirongia School Entitlement Zones.** The MOE approached the school and asked us to review the current enrolment zone boundaries. The boundary on the TA side stopped at the town boundary. There are two large subdivisions planned on the edge of town which would be included in our zone. The MOE asked us if we wanted that subdivision to be in the school's catchment – we said no and that change to the enrolment zone has already been implemented.
- Waiari Road is now included in the school's enrolment zone.
- The MOE recognise that our roll is going to continue growing and asked if we would consider bringing the enrolment zone on the TA town side back to somewhere around Hawthorne Road. Jan called all caregivers currently affected and the farm owners if those caregivers were sharemilkers to get their opinion. If the change was made all children currently enrolled would still be in zone but future children (including siblings) would be out of zone. All those contacted wanted their kids to be in rural schools because they are rural families. Jan summarised their responses and submitted that, along with the BOT's thoughts, to the MOE. Common sense has prevailed – the MOE can see that future in zone growth is going to come from within the village itself and not the area from Hawthorne Road to TA town – and have left the boundary as is.
- There is currently an overlap in the enrolment zone with Te Awamutu Primary School from approximately Hawthorne / Mangapiko School Road to the town boundary. This tends to function quite well with families that are town orientated choosing to send their kids to school in town, and rural families attending Pirongia School. This will continue.

#### **Property: new classrooms - Presented by Jan Cullen and Wayne Carter**

- It has been a two year process to get to this point.
- The three classrooms have been allocated.
- The MOE asked the school to come up with a long term plan about how we see the infrastructure situated on school grounds. The BOT considered:
  - the numbers of children coming into the school over the next several years,
  - how any buildings could be situated on the school site without losing green space to classrooms, which we know our community values highly,
  - the fact Pirongia School is a large rural school and all that means to *us* (ie, our culture: Ag Day, mud runs, athletics, the way *our* kids be kids),
  - the pending decision of the land next door (latest update from the MOE is that no decision will be made until after the election – but the BOT are not hopeful).

Based on the above a 15 – 30 year plan was designed to design and build an additional nine classrooms within the existing building footprint of the school, replacing old classrooms with new and moving others. This plan was submitted to the MOE in the first week of the term 2 holidays.
- Reasons the BOT do not want modular classrooms include:
  - the footprint is long and thin with a breakout room sticking out the back – they are not designed well to minimise space used and where we need to put four we wouldn't get them in,
  - the learning space is right by the thoroughfare so children get distracted often,
  - the breakout space is not large enough to take a small group of children to work,
  - the buildings are not firewalled so a full stove cannot be used (we had thought to incorporate a kitchen for class cooking),
  - the buildings are noisy and the individual rooms cannot be sectioned off,
  - the cost of them, for what they are, doesn't add up – especially when they are asking us to fund the fourth one out of our maintenance money. We are being told the rate is \$3,300 / m<sup>2</sup> and we know we can build a better building for less than that,
  - overall, the building isn't fit for purpose.
- Initially, the MOE advised us we had a good case for getting an exemption from the modular classrooms (we currently only have two permanent classrooms on site), however they now seem to be road-blocking us at every turn.
- Wayne talked the group through the 10 Year Property Plan (10YPP), explaining each stage.
- Jan, Matt Allen, Lisa Shaw and David van Straalen visited to schools in Tauranga on Tuesday 29/8/2017 with modular classrooms. Jan showed images of the classrooms. All BOT members talked to teachers, DP's and children at those schools about the modular classrooms. Feedback from them was not positive. The group also

got to see design and build classrooms at two schools. The difference in space, design, soundproofing was overwhelmingly obvious.

- Wayne stated that the BOT's opinion is that they don't want modular classrooms here. This decision is based on what they think is the best for our children, both present and future. However, it looks like we may have to negotiate with the MOE to get design and builds, and by doing so there will inevitably be more delays. In the meantime, we know there will be issues about where to put all the children coming into the school.
- Wayne asked the Community their thoughts, questions were raised and discussed covering:
  - where children would be taught – there is no definitive answer yet but places suggested were the library, hall, staffroom.
  - carparking – the MOE have stated bluntly that parking is not their issue. If the BOT chooses to increase parking it would be at our own cost and we'd lose field space.
  - can a path be created from the entrance at the rear of the school across the fields so that entrance can be used all year round – this is noted as being a good idea.
  - who needs to be approached to get a foot path on the north side of Beechey street from the crossing – The Residents & Ratepayers association is the group to contact.
  - hall capacity – the BOT acknowledge hall space is an issue, current priority is getting classrooms for children to learn in. Marion Johnson has expressed interest in initiating a community effort to help solve the hall issue. The BOT have ideas that hinge around the land next door. The BOT have invited Marion to talk further with them.
  - members of the community asked what they can do to assist.
- Wayne asked the Community if they thought design and build is the right choice for Pirongia School, and if necessary would they give their backing to the BOT to take the issue about not accepting modular classrooms further (Wayne spoke briefly about what further action may look like).

The result of a show of hands showed was overwhelming support.

Jan thanked everyone for coming and for their continued support.

Meeting Closed: 9.04 pm

Principal:

Jan Cullen



Date:

1-9-2017