

FUTURE OF EDUCATION IN HĀWERA

SYNTHESIS OF FEEDBACK

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the Ministry of Education's planning for the future of education in Hāwera, those schools that could be affected and iwi were consulted with on two proposed options: the recapitulation of the Year 1-6 contributing primary schools in the area to teach Year 1-8 (Proposal A), merging Hāwera Intermediate and Hāwera High School (Proposal B1), or closing Hāwera Intermediate and Hāwera High School and creating a new school (Proposal B2). These proposed options were narrowed down from a wider field of proposals gained through community engagement in 2020 and earlier in 2021.

Thirteen organisations submitted feedback through this process, and there was no clear majority for any of the options.

- Four organisations support Proposal A.
- Five organisations support Proposal B2.
- Two organisations support both Proposals A and B2.
- Two organisations were neutral.

The most common reason for supporting Proposal A over Proposal B was that there is a belief that Year 7-8 students should not be in the same schooling environment as older students because the younger students could be potentially exposed to negative social interactions, and that children should remain in a primary school setting for longer to develop appropriate social and educational skills to succeed in a high school environment and beyond.

Those who supported Proposal B2 see this option as the only way to lift student achievement rates, build a schooling environment based on Te Tiriti partnership, and have the adequate resources needed to promote excellence.

When considering the weight of feeling on both sides, Proposal B2 is the only option which could be reconciliatory to those who did not support it. If steps were put in place to remediate the concerns of those who support Proposal A, and if the Ministry of Education consults and communicates this plan, then Proposal B2 will be the option that is the most supported by respondents.

INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Education is currently working on plans for future schooling in the Hāwera area, and is committed to investing in the property at Hāwera Intermediate and Hāwera High School. In 2017 the Education Hāwera Facilitation Group led a community engagement process on aspirations for future schooling provision in the area. Since that time, there have been changes to schooling in the area (boards, principals, etc), and so the Ministry contracted an independent facilitator to lead a new engagement process.

This process focused on the community's aspirations for education provision, including the resources and facilities they believed would best enable or support these aspirations. As part of this, the community were presented with a number of options for the future structure of the schooling network, which is currently comprised of a range of contributing and full primary schools, a Year 7 – 8 intermediate school, and a Year 9 – 13 high school.

As a result of this community engagement, two proposed options were put to affected schools, and iwi in Hāwera for further feedback. The two options are:

Proposal A. Recapitulation of 6 contributing primary schools in the area to become full primary schools (Year 1-8), and the closure of Hāwera Intermediate. The schools that would become Year 1-8 are: Hāwera Primary School, Turuturu School, Mokoia School, Normanby School, Ramanui School and Tawhiti School. Should this option be approved, the primary schools would retain Year 7 students from 2022 and Year 7 and 8 students from 2023. Simultaneously, Hāwera Intermediate would have Year 8 students only for 2022 and close at the end of that year. Hāwera High School would remain as is.

Proposal B. Primary schools remain as they are (Year 1-6). Establish a Year 7–13 secondary school under one of the following scenarios:

Proposal B1. Merge Hāwera Intermediate and Hāwera High School to form a Year 7–13 school from the start of 2023 on the Hāwera High School site.

OR

Proposal B2. Close Hāwera Intermediate and Hāwera High School and open a new Year 7-13 school on the Hāwera High School site from the start of 2023.

If it wished, the board could structure this as a middle schooling (Year 7-10) and senior schooling (Year 11-13) within one school on a common site.

Methodology

Respondents were asked to prepare feedback on the two proposals. Some of the schools conducted surveys to their communities, whilst others used internal feedback mechanisms to generate their submissions.

Thirteen organisations submitted feedback through this process. A small majority (five) of these organisations expressed whole support for Proposal B2, four submitted feedback for Proposal A, two for both Proposals A and B2, and two remained neutral. The list of organisations and their positions is presented below.

Organisation	Position
Hāwera Christian School	Neutral
Hāwera High School	B2
Hāwera Intermediate	B2
Hāwera Primary School	A
Makahu School	Neutral
Mokoia School	A
Normanby School	A
New Zealand Educational Institute	B2
Ramanui School	Both A and B2
Tawhiti School	Both A and B2
Te Korowai o Ngāruahine Trust	B2
Te Runanga o Ngati Ruanui Trust	B2
Turuturu School	A

This Report

This report is a synthesis of the feedback received through this consultation phase. As different organisations used different methodologies to gather their data, it is not practical nor reliable to treat the data in a unified quantitative manner. Therefore, each submission has been summarised, and key recurring themes have been highlighted.

This report concludes with a discussion on the weight of feedback for each proposal, and ultimately concludes that Proposal B2 is the option that could have the most support if steps are put in place to reassure those who support Proposal A.

SUPPORT FOR PROPOSAL A

Four schools who submitted feedback on the two proposals were in support of Proposal A. They are: Mokoia School, Normanby School, Hāwera Primary School, and Turuturu School.

Mokoia School is in favour of Proposal A because they "would like to offer the continuation of our rural character, specific local curriculum and family atmosphere to our year 7 & 8 pupils from next year." The school sees Proposal A as a way for their students to continue to build on relationships they have formed with the staff and other students, and make them better prepared for integrating into a larger school setting for high school.

Normanby School and its community largely support Proposal A, but would need additional resources if this were to go ahead. Normanby School conducted surveys of parents, staff and students and received 116 responses, representing 64% of all surveys released. Prior to this survey being released, there was a community meeting to inform parents about the change, and get feedback on the questions on the survey. 67% of the respondents supported Proposal A, with the rest supporting proposal B. There is no data for preference of B1 or B2, but Normanby report that most of those who supported B also support B2.

Five themes emerged from Normanby School's consultation for supporting proposal A. They are:

1. The maturity and development of children was mentioned a key reason for supporting proposal A. Many think that Year 7 – 8s should not be in high school as they are in different stages of their life. Further, because of the important time of brain and body development for 10-13 year olds, having them in a familiar and safe environment is in their best interest.
2. Previous parental experience with high school was another reason for supporting proposal A. Some parents who have had children go through high school had negative experiences there and want to keep their children in a primary/intermediate setting for longer. Some parents noted concerns that bullying increases in high schools, and don't want to put their child in that environment for as long as they can.
3. The culture of Normanby School was often mentioned as a reason for supporting proposal A. Many parents mentioned that they like Normanby School, with the staff, culture, and pedagogical approach mentioned as positives. Keeping their children in this environment for longer is preferable for many parents.
4. Normanby School's ability to cater to those who have disabilities was also mentioned as a positive of proposal A. Parents who have children with disabilities expressed confidence that Normanby School provides effective support to their children with disabilities and additional learning needs.
5. Students at Normanby preferred Proposal A because they enjoy their school and their learning environment. Further, they feel safe at Normanby School, and feel that the move might change this.

Normanby School had in previous years looked at facilitating recapitulation in their own school at the request of the parents and the wider community. This process was paused however, because of the current Ministry of Education consultation process. Parents in their community have expressed concern, over a number of years, of their children leaving Normanby at Year 6 because of "the potential of their children being exposed too early to negative social interactions and behaviours before they are developmentally ready (e.g. bullying, disrespect towards adults, social media, drugs, smoking and sexualised behaviour)."

In addition to this concern, some parents at Normanby think that Proposal A will have a significantly smaller disruption on their education journey for their children. This is because Normanby can more easily pivot to the recapitulation than building a new high school. However, if Proposal A is to go ahead then the school states that they will need additional resources: more teaching space, equipment, staffing, and increased curriculum and specialised teaching support.

Hāwera Primary School also sought feedback from their school community and their results were similar to Normanby School. Hāwera Primary School ran a survey, to which they had a 31% response rate. Of these, 70% indicated their preference for Proposal A.

There were four key reasons for support of proposal A over proposal B:

1. Parents saw Proposal A as the safer option, as it does not prematurely expose children to negative social interactions and/or behaviours (such as bullying, fighting and social media), and developmentally inappropriate situations (such as smoking, sexualised behaviours, etc).

2. Parents thought that Proposal B has the potential to create a situation where younger children are lost or intimidated by a larger school setting, and there was not enough information to ascertain if the proposed curriculum would do enough to alleviate these reservations.
3. Parents also support Proposal A because they like the way that Hāwera Primary School operates, and want to keep their children in this environment for longer. This was particularly true for those who have children with additional needs.
4. Proposal A would require fewer resources to implement. Hāwera Primary School already has the room to grow in the short term, they have large grounds, and sufficient physical and environmental facilities to cater for the proposed increase in senior students.

However, if Proposal A were to go ahead Hāwera Primary School indicate that they would need additional staffing provision, curriculum support, property infrastructure, and funding, amongst other needs. Further, Hāwera Primary School is of the opinion that either all schools should be recapitated, or none of the schools should be.

Similar to the other primary schools consulted, **Turuturu School** support Proposal A based on their community feedback. Turuturu held two community meetings, and then released a survey to their parents. There were 153 responses to the survey, which represents 73% of the families at Turuturu School. A clear majority (84%) of those who responded to the survey support Proposal A. The staff at Turuturu School were also surveyed, with 67% in favour of Proposal A.

When asked why they support Proposal A, the most common response from parents was that Year 7 and Year 8 students are too young to be in a high school environment, and that it might jeopardise their emotional, physical or social safety. Other reasons include that a Year 1-8 school provides a more supportive and age-appropriate schooling environment, parents are happy with Turuturu School and want to keep their children enrolled for longer, and that they prefer a later transition for their children to a high school environment.

Turuturu School note that in the short term, if Proposal A were to go ahead, they could temporarily accommodate the 2022 Year 7's in what is currently the ICT and Library rooms, but would need the following investment in the school: additional teaching spaces, bathroom facilities, staffing, amongst others. Turuturu School also suggest that if the Educational Development Initiative funding guidelines were to change to incorporate the schools who recapitated than this extra funding may cover the costs associated with the recapitation.

In sum, the four primary schools who submitted wholly in favour of Proposal A have a central theme: there are strong concerns amongst the community that a Year 7-13 high school would not be a safe option for the Year 7-8 children, and that Year 1-8 schooling is in the best interests of the children to develop the appropriate social and educational skills to succeed in a high school environment and beyond.

SUPPORT FOR PROPOSAL B

Support for Proposal B came from five organisations: Hāwera Intermediate, Hāwera High School, Te Korowai o Ngāruahine Trust, Te Runanga O Ngati Ruanui Trust, and the New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI). Those who support Proposal B all indicated that they support Proposal B2 - the closure of both Hāwera Intermediate and Hāwera High School and the creation of a new Year 7-13 school on the Hāwera High School site from the start of 2023.

Hāwera Intermediate and Hāwera High School indicated support for a separate middle and senior within the newly created school.

The Board of Trustees of **Hāwera Intermediate** support Proposal B2, stating that this option offers an opportunity to "develop a school perfectly suited to the needs of our distinct district." Hāwera Intermediate surveyed the school community, receiving a 30% response rate. The school community indicated similar levels of support for both Proposals A and B2, with concerns about bullying and the age-appropriateness of intermediate aged children attending high school as common themes against Proposal B2.

However, the Board (and the majority of the staff) have indicated that the opportunities Proposal B2 offers outweigh the negatives, which they say can be remediated. They say that the Year 7-13 school will "provide a purpose-built education pathway without limiting tamariki opportunities." Further, the Board say that Proposal B2 offers more flexibility to offer a relationship-based learning pedagogical approach, which would support and strengthen teacher collegiality, which in turn supports improved educational outcomes for the students.

Teachers at Hāwera Intermediate said that the new school offers a range of benefits including: purpose built facilities (such as new spaces which could promote school culture, which have been missing since the fire) which would benefit the students, and a fresh start for the community. Teachers expressed that there are negative connotations associated with both the Intermediate and High School, and the new school would allow for a new reputation to emerge. They note that the middle and senior model would allay a lot of the fear of 11- and 18-year-olds being in the same schooling space. However, Hāwera Intermediate note that these two schooling systems must be flexible enough to allow for upward leadership and academic movement if a student's needs are not being met in their current cohort.

Hāwera High School supports Proposal B2 for similar reasons to Hāwera Intermediate. Hāwera High School surveyed their community, with a 14% response rate, and there were similar levels of support expressed for both Proposals A and B2. Again, the community expressed concern that Year 7 and 8s are too young to be around older students, for their development and safety. However, some in the community said that the middle and senior schooling options would address some of these concerns.

Hāwera High School are of the view that the new school would work as a "circuit breaker" and offer an opportunity to address serious and significant equity concerns that the school holds. In particular, they are concerned that their NCEA achievement rates are 10% below the national average, their male students underperform female students by 10%, and there is more than a 20% disparity between Māori and Pākehā students across all levels of NCEA. In addition to this, Māori achievement rates at Hāwera are lower than the national average for Māori students. Hāwera High School believe that Proposal B2 offers the best opportunity possible to reduce these disparities.

Hāwera High School note that for Proposal B2 to be successful the establishment board needs fair representation. The inclusion of mana whenua and iwi as part of the establishment board is an opportunity to have a genuine partnership with mana whenua and iwi and other community stake holders. Further, having personnel on the establishment board who have been involved in this project from the outset would allow for a continuity of knowledge.

Hāwera High School believe the following quote from a community member sums up the opportunity that Proposal B2 offers: "If we want all of our students to achieve, to be engaged,

to be lifelong learners and have a pathway to successful learning this option gives us the best opportunity to make it happen. It gives us a once in a lifetime opportunity to take an honest look at ourselves and make a change. We are failing our students. We are failing our families. We are failing our communities. We have the best opportunity to do more than raise student achievement, with this option we can uplift an entire community.”

Te Korowai o Ngāruahine Trust (Ngāruahine) support Proposal B2 because they see this option as contributing to ensuring a smoother transition between schools and onto employment. Further, they add that this option has a strong whānau focus, and that relationships can form naturally and flourish. This option, they add, will have high quality facilities and resources, which will offer an opportunity to ensure high quality teaching and learning, which is responsive to the needs of the rangatahi.

However, Ngāruahine note that that in addition to Proposal B2, there should be iwi and whānau Māori representation on the governance group that oversees this change. Ngāruahine also note that there needs to be broader wraparound support for students, and resourcing that goes beyond infrastructure and also into investment in education that meets the educational needs of rangatahi.

Te Runanga o Ngati Ruanui Trust (Ngati Ruanui) have their own educational strategy, Te Paepae o Aotea, which reflects their educational aspirations of reducing the education deficit that exists for the Ngati Ruanui uri because of colonisation, muru raupatu and systemic racism. Te Runanga o Ngati Ruanui Trust feel that Proposal B2 is the best option to advance their interests as long as they are equal partners with the Ministry of Education throughout the process. This is reflected in the following nine principles that Te Runanga o Ngati Ruanui Trust supplied in their conditional support for Proposal B2.

1. Ngati Ruanui values and indeed unique connection with our w’enua, that any school is built on must be recognized, respected and included.
2. Ngati Ruanui must be involved and represented as an equal partner with the Ministry of Education from the beginning of the creation of a new school model – from design to planning, project roll-out and completion.
3. Ngati Ruanui uri must be employed in the whole project, including design, construction and staffing of any new schooling model on our w’enua.
4. Space designed for schools must be safe strengthening our Ngati Ruanui culture and able to be utilised for the community outside of school hours.
5. Ngati Ruanui educationalists, kaimatauranga must be given first-priority to employment opportunities – including retaining old and recruiting new educational and matauranga cultural staff.
6. Is reflective of our Ngati Ruanui aspirations in the curriculum and pedagogy and the success as determined by our w’anau, ‘apu and Iwi.
7. That strengthens safe space that Ngati Ruanui metrics measure as success for our tamariki, Rangata’i and communities.
8. That ensures Ngati Ruanui are represented at all levels of governance including an Iwi position on the Board of Trustees and cultural advisors are Ngati Ruanui mana, reo and tikanga.
9. That the schooling option in Hāwera is extensively resourced to address the deficit education situation Ngati Ruanui uri are in.

The New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI), representing their members at Hāwera Intermediate, support the closure of both schools and the creation of a new Year 7-13 school. Their support is based on the additional resources that will be available at the new school. However, the NZEI note that because the staffing of schools in Hāwera is difficult, staff should retain their roles until the end of 2022.

To summarise, the five organisations who submitted in favour of Proposal B2 see this option as the only way to lift achievement rates, build a schooling environment based on Te Tiriti partnership, and have the resources needed to promote excellence.

SUPPORT FOR BOTH PROPOSALS

Two schools, Ramanui School and Tawhiti School submitted that both Proposals A and B2 should go ahead simultaneously.

The **Ramanui School** Board of Trustees provisionally support both of the proposals because there are equal pros and cons to be considered. Ramanui School surveyed their school community and a majority of respondents expressed support for Proposal A. The majority support Proposal A because they view it as safer, and reduced the potential likelihood of being exposed to negative social interactions or behaviours and over mature habits until they were developmentally ready. Further, some had not heard enough about how Proposal B would work, so were unwilling to support it. Other reasons listed include younger children being lost in a large school setting, and that Proposal A is the "logical step" because Ramanui School already has the classroom spaces available.

Similar to the other primary schools which submitted in favour of Proposal A, Ramanui indicated that they would need additional staffing, classroom resources, etc. They also note that if the Educational Development Initiative funding guidelines should be changed, that this may cover some of the expected costs of recapititation. Ramanui School also indicated their opposition to any school recapitating on their own: either all schools in the area should, or none should. Further, Ramanui note that school zoning may need to take place if Proposal A goes ahead.

In regard to Proposal B, Ramanui note that the establishment board should have two primary school principal representatives on it. They also add that the timeline should be shortened, as to lessen the impact on students.

An alteration to Proposal A was **Tawhiti School's** first choice: recapititation of the primary schools, but with a full rebuild of Hāwera High School. However, if this cannot go ahead, Tawhiti School supports both Proposal A and B2. When the Tawhiti School community was consulted, 55% of respondents supported Proposal A, and 45% supported Proposal B. The safety of children was listed as a key concern, with members of the community noting that they did not think that children would be socially or emotionally ready to be in an environment where they could be exposed to negative social interactions. Further, there are concerns that Proposal B2 would unduly disrupt the education of the senior students in the primary school, as it would take time to build the new school.

The Tawhiti School community views Proposal B2 as offering an opportunity to reset the culture of the secondary school, to attract and retain innovative educators, and to provide facilities that can meet the needs of the wider community. Further, they view it as a "great

opportunity for the South Taranaki community." However, they echo feedback that Ramanui expressed: the establishment board should have primary school principal representation, that the timeline should be shortened to minimise the impact, and that recapitation should either occur in all or none of the schools affected.

NEUTRAL FEEDBACK

Two schools consulted expressed a neutral position in this consultation. **Hāwera Christian School** opted out of the consultation and want to remain neutral because they are a special character school (state integrated). They did note, however, their opposition to Mokoia School recapitating on its own, and that either all or no schools should recapitate. **Makahu School** also opted out of the consultation, stating that they are too far away for their students to consider attending Hāwera High School.

SYNTHESISING THE FEEDBACK

As demonstrated throughout this report, there is a split opinion on whether Proposal A or Proposal B2 should be adopted. Broadly, the primary schools in the area support Proposal A, whilst Hāwera Intermediate and Hāwera High School, alongside representatives from iwi and hapū, support Proposal B. Respondents were united in their desire to see an outcome that was in the best interests of the students and the community, and to act with speed.

Considering the weight of opinion discussed in the above summarised stakeholder feedback, if the Ministry of Education could allay concerns about younger children being exposed to anti-social behaviour, then Proposal B would likely have the most public support. This was the most reoccurring factor to many of those who submitted feedback for Proposal A. Some of those in favour of Proposal A mention in their feedback that if there was a clear plan on how to minimise exposure to anti-social behaviour then they could support Proposal B. If Proposal B goes ahead without this plan in place, then it has the potential to deter families from enrolling their children in the Year 7-8 classes. The proposal to have a middle and senior school as part of Proposal B2 should strongly be considered if this is the approach taken, as respondents clearly expressed a preference for it.

Whilst adopting both Proposal A and B2 might seem like a popular suggestion, it could result in the new Year 7-8 classes at the new Hāwera High School being undersubscribed, thus defeating the purpose of the recapitation, and making it difficult to plan property provision.

Further weight should be given to Proposal B2 as the preferred option because of the support it has from organisations representing iwi and hapū in the area. As articulated by those who submitted, Proposal B2 represents an opportunity to build meaningful partnerships with iwi to advance Te Tiriti-based principles of co-governance of education in the area.

If Proposal A is to be adopted, it would be difficult to reconcile those who expressed a preference for Proposal B2. If Proposal B2 is adopted it is easier to reconcile those who expressed a preference for Proposal A. For example, primary school principals could be on the establishment board, steps could be put in place to safeguard children from the perceived anti-social behaviour of older student, and a middle and senior school could be established within the new school. Therefore, Proposal B2 represents the option that could have the largest community support, if the proposed steps are actioned during implementation.

CONCLUSION

This report synthesises the opinions of 13 organisations within the Hāwera area on whether their communities/members supported the recapitation of the primary schools to include Year 7-8 students, or if there should be a new school that would enrol students from Year 7-13.

Four schools who submitted feedback on the proposed options were in support of Proposal A. They are: Mokoia School, Normanby School, Hāwera Primary School, and Turuturu School. Support for Proposal B came from five organisations: Hāwera Intermediate, Hāwera High School, Te Korowai o Ngāruahine Trust, Te Runanga O Ngati Ruanui Trust, and the New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI). Two schools, Ramanui School and Tawhiti School submitted that both Proposals A and B2 should go ahead simultaneously. Two schools, Hāwera Christian and Makahu School, expressed a neutral position in this consultation.

Those who support Proposal A do so because of concerns amongst their communities that a Year 7-13 high school would not be a safe option for the children, and that Year 1-8 schooling is in the best interests of the children to develop the appropriate social and educational skills to succeed in a high school environment and beyond.

Those who support Proposal B do so because they see this option as an opportunity for a clean start for secondary education in their community, and they believe that it is the only way to lift achievement rates, and have the adequate resources needed to promote educational excellence.

In weighing the evidence, and proposing a path forward, it is suggested that Proposal B2 is considered by the Ministry of Education as the recommended option. This is because it currently has the most support, and if the concerns that primary schools and their communities can be addressed, then it is the option that will have the broadest support. Additional weight is also given to Proposal B2 as two organisations representing mana whenua support this, and it offers the Ministry of Education an opportunity to act as a partner in a bicultural Tiriti-based education.