



## Our Schooling Futures: Stronger Together

### Whiria Ngā Kura Tūātinitini

#### Submission on behalf of Sacred Heart Girls' College, New Plymouth

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of Sacred Heart Girls' College New Plymouth, and its Proprietor, The Mission College New Plymouth Trust Board, please find our thoughts and concerns in regard to the review of Tomorrow's Schools (the report), as presented by the Taskforce, released December 2018. We agree, in principle, with the aims of the review, in that we need to ensure that our education system promotes equity and excellence and ensures that every learner achieves educational success. Historically, Catholic schools came into existence in order to provide for equity, a premise that remains in the modern Catholic schooling context; diverse, inclusive, Christ-centric centres for excellent education that embrace gospel values.

We hold serious concerns around the impact the review findings would have, if recommendations were to be implemented, on the state integrated schooling system (11.4% of the schooling population). Our Catholic special character, centred on the charism of The Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions, is at the heart of who we are, and our integration agreement with the government ensures that our special character, and the preservation and promotion of it, is protected through that legislation. There appear to be significant consequences on the integrated schooling network, and urgent, further consideration needs to be given before any proposed changes are implemented.

#### Governance

- State-integrated schools maintain their special character through governance
- The report fails to recognise the right of the Proprietor in participating in school governance
- Principals have a significant role to play in preserving and protecting special character; relationships between Principals, Boards and Proprietor's Representatives are crucial to this
- Principals appointed and appraised by proposed Hubs threatens the legal right of the Proprietor
- The Proprietor owns the property on which the school operates, funds new footprint and ensures new capital works reflect the property vision of the MoE
- State integrated schools cannot manage their property through the proposed Hubs
- Student behaviour management aligns with special character ethos and MoE guidelines
- The special character of a school will not be reflected if decisions around student management are made by Hubs
- The Proprietor has responsibility for the governance of the school Boarding Hostel
- The Proprietor's ability to properly govern the Hostel would be compromised by Hubs
- 70% of schools are said to be doing really well, 20% less so, and the remainder are not performing in a manner that gives equity and opportunity to students
- Should significant real power be transferred from Boards of Trustees, elected by school parents and augmented by representatives of the Proprietor, it is likely to become very difficult to encourage school parents to stand as Trustees
- The introduction of Hubs to remedy the minority would be retrograde for the majority



## Schooling Provision

- Integration agreements, and the preferential entry legislated for, determine intakes into Catholic schools, not geographic boundaries
- The choice of special character education, for those who have the legal right to access it, should not be viewed as 'a challenge for effective network provision'. At the time of passing the enabling integration legislation (pre-Tomorrow's Schools), Parliament clearly intended extending and lawfully enabling the choice of special character education
- Integrated schooling provision is an integral part of the school system, with appropriate recognition and respect for its legally sanctioned role to embed special character

## Competition and Choice

- The intention of parliament at the time of integration was to provide choice for those seeking Catholic education; state-integration provides for this
- State-integrated schools are not 'in competition'; they provide choice for those seeking special character education. Integration agreements and preference criteria determine such
- State-integrated schools are diverse communities with wide-ranging socio-economic representation
- Inequities between schools have arisen and been exacerbated by an incorrect perception of inequality and lack of informed opinion regarding the Catholic schooling provision
- The report demonstrates a lack of understanding of the legislation guiding preference and maximum rolls, and reflects misinformed, misguided public opinion
- Students attending state-integrated schools are legally entitled to school transport to the nearest state-integrated school
- The report does not reflect the legal transport provision for those attending state-integrated schools
- Enrolment schemes do not apply to state-integrated schools, which cover much wider areas
- Those who meet preference criteria, and choose state-integrated education, have every right to access it

## Disability and Learning Support

- Increasing national funding in disability and learning support is a necessity
- The provision for such services in Hubs would be ineffective without increased investment

## Teaching

- The provision of quality teachers is a nation-wide issue
- Catholic schools have an additional requirement of teachers holding Religious Education qualifications; provision of such in NZ universities requires further development

## School Leadership

- School leaders require improved professional development and professional support
- In state-integrated school leadership advisory requires provision for those leading in specific special character environments
- It is difficult to know where this resourcing and expertise would come from, in the proposed Leadership Advisors roles within Hubs



## School Resourcing/ Central Education Agencies

- We support the implementation of the equity index; this has long been promised
- School resourcing in NZ is inadequate
- Increased funding needs to be targeted where the greatest need sits: learning support, raising student achievement through targeted pedagogical and wellness initiatives
- Expenditure in establishing another bureaucratic layer, Hubs, would be mis-guided use of additional valuable resources that should be channelled where educationalists know bring the best outcome for all learners; quality teaching
- Why create Hubs when there is existing governance expertise across the network that could and should offer governance support to those who require it e.g. NZSTA, Institute of Directors, Governance NZ

The Tomorrow's Schools model established 30 years ago, engaging governance by community Boards of Trustees has been a success for the majority of communities and schools, is due for some adjustments. These adjustments would be best-supported by a more efficient Ministry of Education, with increased funding to better resource the minority of schools who are struggling to provide equitable, excellent education. Our Board of Trustees, and our Proprietor, believe that some of the recommendations in the report would have significant, unlawful, detrimental impacts on Catholic schools, as outlined in the points raised in this submission, and request urgent review prior to any proposed implementation.

*John Middleton*

On behalf of the Proprietor  
Mission College New Plymouth Trust Board

*Stephen Hill*

Board of Trustees  
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Reference: APIS/Sir Br Patrick Lynch KNZM,QSO