

An Update from the Board of Trustees of Frimley School

There continues to be a lot of talk in the media about education in New Zealand, including the National Standards promised and implemented by the government elected in 2008. Working with National Standards is one of a number of challenging issues that the teaching team and the Frimley BOT are facing - issues that we believe are important to bring to your attention so that you can understand what we are doing and why, and the impact on our children, our staff and our wider community.



In conjunction with our principal Malcolm Dixon, the Senior Management team and the staff of Frimley School, we have outlined some of the current issues:

Dental Services (as per recent Newsletter)

From approximately the beginning of Term Three the children who attend Frimley will visit a Dental Services caravan that will come on site and children's teeth will be inspected by a Dental Therapist. If they require any further treatment, you the parent will be expected to transport your child to a new clinic that has been built at the rear of Mahora School. This new clinic will service all children who live on the West side of Hastings. We are very concerned about the practicalities for those children whose parents are unable to take them to the clinic for treatment.

Resource Teachers of Learning and Behaviour (RTLB)

Currently Hastings West schools are well serviced by five RTLB's who work with children that have learning or behavioural issues. Hastings East schools have their RTLB's, as do Flaxmere schools, and so on throughout the country. At the beginning of next year across New Zealand they are going to be packaged up into thirty groups. The group that Frimley has been placed in extends from Porangahau through to Kereru and includes all of CHB / Havelock North / Hastings and Flaxmere Schools.

We are very concerned that the whole RTLB service will be downgraded and any form of service will be difficult to obtain. The reason for the change was that some RTLB services in New Zealand were not effective, but this was certainly not the case in Hawke's Bay.

Heat Light Water Funding

The Ministry of Education provides an operational grant to be used to run the school, including Heat Light and Water costs. Prior to 2010 if a school went over the allocated amount, the additional expense was refunded upon application by the MOE. The MOE now base the Heat Light Water funding on the amount that the school spent in 2009. Now if it goes over that allocated amount the Board of Trustees needs to fund the additional expense. In 2010 here at Frimley we went over this amount by almost \$10,000 and energy costs are continually increasing - this additional cost reduces the funding available for classroom resources and other educational materials.

Ministry of Education

We are aware of at least fifteen high quality managers who have left or are about to leave the Ministry of Education since the commencement of the 2011 school year. They were not made redundant, but appear to have chosen to leave - they include Secretary of Education, Manager NZ Curriculum Teaching and Learning, Area Managers Central North and South, Manager

Napier MOE, Senior ICT Consultant MOE Head Office, Group Manager Property Head Office plus a host of others in MOE Head Office.

We are concerned that these people are leaders in education and their departure indicates a significant loss of educational expertise that will be very difficult to replace.

New Zealand Curriculum

The NZ Curriculum was published in 2007 and was the envy of the many other countries. It is a document that allows schools to cater for the needs of their communities as long as they are within the Education Act. However, the advisory services that supported schools in the delivery of this curriculum have been slowly removed, and the focus on National Standards has meant that the Curriculum document's impact will be eroded away.

National Standards

Our Principal, Malcolm Dixon, recently attended the New Zealand Primary Principals conference where a number of the keynote speakers questioned why New Zealand was following a path that the top achieving countries in the world have abandoned. They now believe that innovation and creativity (traits that New Zealand is built on?) should be to the forefront of their curriculum (as was intended with the NZ Curriculum).

We all agree that the ambition of aspirational standards that we want our children to achieve is worthwhile, however the reality of implementation is where the problems have begun. The simple fact is that children are different - they grow, learn and develop at very different ages, stages and rates. It is no more logical to have a National Standard for maths and reading as it is to have a National Standard for height and weight! As one of the conference speakers noted, "**Children are just like popcorn they all pop at different times**" - from the time that are born, when they learn to walk or talk, when they start teething, when they learn to read and when they start to achieve with their learning.

The BOT are legally obligated to implement the National Standards, which we have done with the support of the entire teaching team. However, we do want to achieve the following:

1. A clear understanding by our parent community of what National Standards actually are, and what they mean when we report back to you.
2. A strong message to our lawmakers that high-performing schools such as Frimley (as assessed by the Education Review Office) were always providing a clear indication to our parents of how their children were progressing in relation to their peers and to our own standards of achievement.

Where to from Here?

We want you to be informed about the issues that affect Frimley School and your children. We are very fortunate that Frimley School has a particularly strong team of professional, quality teachers that have always been able to recognise the different levels of learning that children have reached, and implement appropriate strategies that keep the Triple A values of Attitude Action and Achievement alive and well.

Finally thank you one and all for your continued support of Frimley School. You should all be feeling very proud of our achievements. Your board is always available to assist in any way to improve the quality of education and we are always looking for new ideas and strategies to enhance children's learning.

Ian Horsefield BOT Chairperson.