Hawera Education Community Engagement

The Ministry of Education is planning for the future of schooling in the Hawera area. There is a commitment to investing in property at Hawera Intermediate School and Hawera High School. A similar process was undertaken in 2017, however schooling in the area has since changed (boards, principals, etc.) and a new engagement process undertaken by an external facilitator was conducted.

Six options for the future structure of the schooling network were given for feedback:

* Option 1: Year 1 – 8 primary schools, year 9 – 13 secondary school
* Option 2: Year 7 – 8 intermediate school and year 9 – 13 secondary school on separate sites
* Option 3: Year 7 – 13 secondary school
* Option 4: Year 7 – 8 intermediate school and year 9 – 13 secondary school on a single site
* Option 5: Year 7 – 10 middle school and year 11 – 13 senior school on separates sites
* Option 6: Year 7 – 10 middle school and year 11 – 13 senior school on a single site

The community were also asked about various aspects of education that may be important to them and that may require additional consideration in any future plans.

The community were approached first through face-to-face workshops and focus groups help at various schools to discuss the pros and cons of options and help form content for a survey. The survey was the primary tool for feedback and gave the community a chance to rate options, indicate their preferred option, and provide commentary on the aspects that influenced their decision-making. Participants were also asked to list anything that could either increase or decrease their preference for each option.

A separate consultation process was conducted with Ngāruahine iwi following the main engagement process, as they felt their views had not been fully captured. This involved two hui and a paper survey.

Analysis of numerical responses involved basic descriptive statistics including averages, and comments were analysed by assessing common language and organising comments manually into themes.

The online survey had 362 responses. 30 participants attended the iwi hui and 21 of these completed a paper survey which was analysed separately. The largest group in the survey was parents/primary caregivers who made up nearly three-quarters of the survey. Current staff, former students, and community members each made up approximately one-quarter of the sample.[[1]](#footnote-1)

# Results

The following were the top 5 most important aspects of education to the community.

1. High-quality teaching and learning
2. High-quality staff and resources
3. Smooth transitions between schools
4. Facilities which are accessible for all
5. Facilities which are designed to last

This shows that participants value high-quality education provision in facilities which are built to last as well as smooth transitions for students as they move through schools. These suggestions were made throughout the survey in terms of the perceived pros and cons of the six options.

When asked to rate how much they prefer each option (from highly opposed to highly in favour), the option with the highest average rating was Option 1 – extending primaries to year 8 then transitioning to secondary for years 9 – 13. Option 3 (year 9 – 13 secondary school) and Option 6 (co-located middle and senior school) were the next most popular options. Option 2 represents the status quo and this option was not highly rated, indicating a desire for change.

When asked about which option was their most preferred the most frequently chosen option was Option 1 with more than one-third of participants choosing this. This was followed by Option 6, then Option 3.

Across the six options, positives and negatives of each were assessed using thematic analysis and themes were sorted into 5 categories:

1. Transitions
2. Student outcomes
3. School quality-resources
4. Age and development
5. Redevelopment[[2]](#footnote-2)

The most commonly reported positive of Option 1 was that it would have fewer transitions and that it may be a more effective transition. It was also commonly reported that year 7-8 students might have better outcomes in primary school than intermediate school. The most commonly reported negative was that students could be in primary school for too long before moving on. While Option 1 was the most preferred option, participants were clear that this is only the preferred option if *all* primary schools extend to year 8. If not, preference for this option would drop significantly and other options would be preferred.

Participants who prefer Option 2 like the system the way it is and feel that intermediate is a good transition to act as a stepping stone between primary and secondary school. The most commonly reported negative of Option 2 was that they don’t like the intermediate system and believe the system doesn’t work. The preference for Option 2 could be increased if there was a significant improvement to, and investment in, the current facilities. Improving education in the current system also stood out as having a potential to improve support for this option.

Having fewer transitions and shared facilities/resources/governance were the most commonly reported positives of Option 3. Many participants, however, felt that year 7-8 students are too young for secondary school. Preference for Option 3 could be increased through addressing age differences and ensuring that age cohorts are able to be sufficiently separated. Being provided with evidence for the efficacy of this model, and having facilities to accommodate the number of students, would also make participants like this option more.

Option 4 was seen as an improvement in terms of having more effective transitions and sharing facilities, resources, and governance. This option was criticised, however, for still being too separate and not changing enough to address problems. Age concerns were also present as different age cohorts would share a site.

Option 5 was a positive for some by separating age cohorts and offering better outcomes and opportunities for students in a middle/senior school arrangement. Not sharing facilities, resources, and governance was a concern for some.

Positives of Option 6 were similar to those of Option 5 but with the benefits of having shared facilities, resources and governance. Unlike Option 5, this option would have different age cohorts on the same site and this was a negative to some. Having different schools sharing a site was still seen as being ‘too separate’ by some participants who would prefer a more integrated model, such as Option 3.

Options 4, 5 and 6 had similar results for what could change their preference. This includes evidence for improved education, separating different ages, shared and improved facilities and resources, school collaboration and separation, and having significant support and buy-in.

The iwi consultation found Option 6 to be the most favoured option. The positives and negatives given by Ngāruahine iwi participants were similar to those in the general community feedback. Iwi emphasised that changes made to the intermediate and secondary schools should not impact negatively on Kura Kaupapa and should aim to be inclusive of Kura and benefit Kura Kaupapa through shared facilities and resources. Iwi also discussed the importance of focusing on the people and addressing concerns with education in Hawera, emphasising that people should come first, buildings second. They recommended that education in the area should extend beyond year 13 to give students the ability to attain knowledge and skills which allow them to work in the Hawera area.

For a more detailed breakdown of the results including all the themes from the survey, a copy of the report has been made available.

1. People could belong to more than one Group, e.g. someone could be a parent and a teacher. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This refers to this redevelopment process, including addressing problems, being feasible etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)