

10 June 2014



To Parents, Whānau, Caregivers, Staff, Students and Supporters of Christchurch East School

Warm Greetings,

As we are now well into the second Term for 2014, it is timely to provide an update on activities that have been happening at the School during the first part of the year. I apologise that I have not provided an update sooner; I have been awaiting some further information as outlined below.

This time of year with the cold weather and short daylight hours can be a trying time and, as we noticed this time last year, we are starting to see increased health related issues within the School both with students and staff. I urge you to take care of each other and be aware of health issues as they arise to limit the impact on others.

School Activities

As always, there has been plenty happening within the school. Some highlights for the term have included:

- Team Koru (Junior School) have continued to build momentum with their Discovery programme and PMP programme
- Team Harakeke (Middle School) have had a trip to the Airforce Museum
- Team Kauri (Senior School) have had their camps (at Woodend and Living Springs). It was wonderful to enable these to occur again, the first time since 2010. Many thanks to the parents/caregivers and staff who assisted with making these camps a great learning experience for the students.

Parent and School Community Evenings

Last year we invited parents and caregivers to attend meetings that outlined the strategic direction of the School as well as providing more information about the School's curriculum. Information was also shared on programs that show how together we can work to lift student achievement. The meetings provided a wonderful opportunity to gain some feedback from parents and caregivers.

We are planning to hold similar meetings again this year, early next term. Dates and times will be notified in the newsletter in the coming weeks. I encourage you to attend these meetings if at all possible.

Christchurch East PTA

Your School PTA has continued to work very hard to develop activities during this year and has organised a number of great events for the students such as the family picnic and movie night.

The School is lucky to have such dedicated parents supporting these activities and I again strongly encourage you all to support your PTA by attending their events and meetings.

ERO Review

As I outlined in my newsletter in December, ERO completed a staff survey in Term 4 last year in preparation for their review which was conducted on site in week nine of Term 1 this year. The draft report of findings has just been received and we are now following the normal process of arranging a meeting with ERO to discuss their findings further and will then await their final report which, once issued, will be available for anyone to review on the ERO website or from the School.



Overall I believe the report was favourable. There are however some areas for improvement, and these will be incorporated into an action plan to ensure that they are appropriately addressed.

Board of Trustees Election

The Ministry of Education has been completing a review of the governance and management activities at the School, and of the actions that I have taken as Commissioner. A key part of this review was awaiting the final ERO report which as noted is still to be received.

The Secretary of Education will make a decision on when the School is to return to self-governance and when an election is to be held. The exact timing is not known at this point; however, I am very hopeful it will be later this year. When it is deemed the right time for an election, a very clear communication process will be put in place, and Trustee awareness sessions will be held for those that might be considering standing for the Board.

In addition, I am keen to meet with any parents/whānau or members of the wider School community who may be interested in learning more about the governance processes for the School by establishing an "Advisory Group". This group would meet once each term with myself and the Principal. At the meetings, we would provide an update on the governance matters that are relevant in the School and seek some feedback. The group would not have any "official status" as a governance group but it would provide an opportunity for those that have not had previous School Trustee experience to gain an understanding of what a Trustee role would involve. If you are interested in learning more about this please contact me on: bot.chair@chcheast.school.nz

Commissioner Activities

I continue to work closely with the School Principal and the Ministry of Education to ensure that the governance of the School is effective. I have also been involved with the recent Ministry of Education and ERO reviews.

During Term 1, the focus has been on ensuring that the compliance activities required of the School have been met. This includes a review and update of the School Charter and Annual Plan which were submitted to the Ministry of Education. An updated financial budget has also been developed and the annual financial statements and audit process have just been completed.

The focus for the remainder of the year is to ensure that we implement actions outlined in the school's Annual Plan and actions arising from the ERO review. In particular, there is a clear focus on teaching and learning strategies, and continued implementation of the School's curriculum and learning programs.

In closing, I thank you again for your continued support of Christchurch East. The School continues to develop in a positive way and I look forward to continuing to work to ensure that together we can take Christchurch East School into an exciting future as we move back towards self governance.

Kind regards

Michael Rondel
Commissioner: Christchurch East School