Sabbatical Report and Recommendations

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Shirley Boys' High School

Focus: Research new schools and their construction, both in a physical and in an organisational sense, ahead of the school's rebuilding.

The sabbatical has been a worthwhile exercise, in the first instance it gave the opportunity to Mr Haywood to run Shirley Boys' High School, something he did with aplomb, but in addition it allowed me the opportunity to reflect on what we are doing as a school and why, and critically to look at where we have to go and how we might actually be able to get there.

Background

This section is included for people outside the school who will read this document. It is old ground well traversed by staff and board members associated with the school, however outside that group it is not well understood at all. I include this material for the record.

In September 2010 and in February 2011, Shirley was hit by major earthquakes, and the world changed. The second most damaging one was so destructive of property and infrastructure that a decision was made by ministry that a rebuild on the current site was impossible.

What followed was a pattern of decision making by ministry that was characterised by gross insensitivity, appalling lack of planning and at times astonishing stupidity.

A simple example, the initial plan was simply to get rid of Shirley (the largest, state school for boys in the South Island, one that regularly had a waiting list of students trying to gain entry), by closing it down and allowing its students to go to Christchurch Boys' High School, a completely different school, with a totally different culture, one that was damaged itself in the earthquakes and which was full anyhow!

Months passed before this insane idea was dropped and a decision made to relocate Shirley in a yet to be determined site with Avonside Girls' in a co-location situation.

At the time of writing this document, more than three years have passed and the schools still have no decision on where they are to be re-located, no planning has been initiated by ministry to help the schools prepare for the move, no support has been given to at least begin the planning and determine what must be retained and what has to change in the two schools, so no-one has any idea exactly what the schools will look like or how they are to be managed. Most importantly the system of competition between all schools (one that began with Tomorrow's Schools), for students, has been left intact by ministry, this has created a problem of significant and far reaching proportions.

In a nutshell the two schools have been left to survive. With damaged (school and local) infrastructure, they have been left to fend for themselves, as schools in the west (with largely undamaged school and local infrastructure) actively head hunt and capture the students that traditionally would have stayed in the east. This has in turn created a pattern of behaviour where the brightest students with the most potential are leaving, and going to schools on the other side of the city. This pattern of behaviour has caused a roll fall and successive CAPNA's in the east. In addition,

the teachers with the collateral to move have seen the writing on the wall and have initiated movement themselves- often to the opportunities in the west.

While some might say that this is just life and everyone should just accept what happens, one thing is very clear, the failure to address system wide issues has had a number of potentially damaging consequences, one could mention the negative impact on the schools in the east, but much more far reaching, is the impact of a brain drain on the east, the worst outcome of that is the creation of an economic problem that will act as an anchor holding back the city for generations to come!

Having said all this, what I will finally observe is that this city owes much to the Board and to the teaching and support staff of Shirley Boys' High School. These people have remained loyal and have done their job in trying circumstances- nearly 20% were in the red zone and had to leave their houses, closer to 50% had damaged houses that required EQC intervention- as Headmaster of the school I wish to acknowledge them and their commitment to the wonderful establishment that is Shirley Boys' High School.

Where do we have to go?

First of all I think we need a brief reminder of what The Ministry of Education is thinking. It would appear reasonable to accept that if they are going to spend many millions of dollars rebuilding us, then we are going to get what they want us to have, and I think therefore we can rule out getting a school where practice is traditional and based on one teacher in charge of a class of 25+ students who are taught in a traditional assembly line fashion.

The material that follows is copied directly from The New Zealand Ministry of Education website.

Supporting future-oriented learning and teaching - a New Zealand perspective

This research project draws together findings from new data and more than 10 years of research on current practice and futures-thinking in education. The report discusses some emerging principles for future learning, how these are currently expressed in New Zealand educational thinking and practice and what they could look like in future practice.

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Executive Summary

It is widely argued that current educational systems, structures and practices are not sufficient to address and support learning needs for all students in the 21st century. Changes are needed, but what kinds of change, and for what reasons? This research project draws together findings from new data and more than 10 years of research on current practice and futures-thinking in education. It aims to support the Ministry of Education's programme of work to develop a vision of what future-oriented education could look like for New Zealand learners. The work is guided by three high-level research questions:[1]

What could future-oriented learning and teaching look like, what ideas and principles underpin it and what makes it different from other teaching and learning practices?

What are the conditions that enable future-oriented learning and teaching? What are the issues and challenges?

How might transformational future-oriented learning and teaching approaches be promoted, enabled and sustained?

What is "21st century learning" or "future learning"? Educationalists first started to talk about "21st century learning" during the latter years of the 20th century. At that time, the phrase held connotations of the future, of change, of something "different" from practices of the day. However, now that we are in the second decade of the 21st century, the phrase is increasingly problematic. Does it still connote ideas and practices that are different, visionary or futures-oriented? Or does it simply describe ideas and practices that are currently happening? To avoid confusion, it is tempting to discard the term, yet this is also problematic since "21st century learning" has gained traction and is associated with an extensive body of relevant research. In this report we use the terms "21st century learning" and "future learning" interchangeably. We also begin from the premise that "21st century/future learning" is not a fixed prescription or known formula. Rather, it can be considered as an emerging cluster of new ideas, beliefs, knowledge, theories and practices—some of which may be visible in some schools and classrooms, some which exist only in isolated pockets and others which are barely visible yet. This report discusses some emerging principles for future learning, how these are currently expressed in New Zealand educational thinking and practice and what they could look like in future practice.[2]

How can we research the future of education?

The challenge is to develop a view of how the emergent cluster of principles that underpin future-oriented teaching and learning can be embedded at the whole-system level, enabling local and systemic development to support *all* New Zealand learners to successfully participate in, and contribute to, our national and global future as well as their own personal futures.

Research into present-day practice in schools and classrooms on its own cannot provide sufficient knowledge about how to address *system-level* challenges for innovation and transformation. However, looking at today's innovative teaching and learning practices can provide some insights into future possibilities, when integrated with theoretical arguments about the future of education.

Why change is needed

During the latter half of the 20th century, international thinking about education began to shift to a new paradigm. This shift was driven by an awareness of massive and ongoing social, economic and

technological changes, and the exponentially increasing amount of human knowledge being generated as a result. International thinking began to seriously examine questions about the role and purposes of education in a world with an unprecedented degree of complexity, fluidity and uncertainty.

Alongside economic, social, political and technological changes, many serious challenges characterise the 21st century world. Some authors describe these as "wicked problems". They are "highly complex, uncertain, and value-laden",[3] spanning multiple domains: social, economic, political, environmental, legal and moral. It is argued that learners—*and* teachers, school leaders and families/communities—need support to actively develop the capabilities they need to productively engage in 21st century wicked problem solving.

Many significant international projects have considered how schooling might change to better match the changes that have taken place in the 21st century. Two important ideas that underpin this work are (1) a shift in the meaning of "knowledge", and (2) the need to build education systems based around what we now know about learning.

New meanings for "knowledge"

The terms "knowledge age" or "knowledge economy" refer to a reorganisation away from an Industrial Age economy, where exploitation of natural resources, primary production, mass production and bureaucratic management hierarchies were the standard model for economic development. In the Knowledge Age, the ability to generate value through innovation (and the rapid creation of new knowledge) has become the basis for economic development. It is argued that education for the Knowledge Age must foreground the development of learners' dispositions, capacities or competencies to deal with new situations and environments, including those with high degrees of complexity, fluidity and uncertainty. This does *not* mean that knowledge no longer matters, or that the school curriculum does not need explicit goals for students' knowledge development. Rather, the future-focused education literature suggests we need to adopt a much more complex view of knowledge, one that incorporates knowing, doing and being. Alongside this we need to rethink our ideas about how our learning systems are organised, resourced and supported.

New understandings about learning

Research clearly shows that people do not learn well as "spectators", as passive recipients of pre-packaged, bite-sized pieces of knowledge delivered to them by experts: good learning requires active engagement in the "whole game".[4] The more people learn, the more they are capable of learning. Although some of these principles are understood by many teachers, our education systems and practices are often set up in ways that do not support these principles to operate in practice. If we are serious about building an education system that is capable of preparing young people for the "knowledge societies" of the future, we need to reconfigure it in new, more knowledge-centred ways. However, it will only be possible to do this when there is wider public awareness of the growing gap between the kinds of learning our young people are getting, and the kind of learning they need. There will also need to be wider public support for teachers and school leaders as they attempt what is effectively a paradigm shift in practice.

A useful metaphor: "Unbundling" schools

"Unbundling" is defined as "a process in which innovators deconstruct established structures and routines and reassemble them in newer, smarter ways".[5] This term is often used in the business and

technology sectors but is also helpful for thinking about the education system. It involves multiple ideas and practices coming together in ways that could "re-bundle" learning and teaching to better reflect the context and demands of the 21st century world.

The question is, *which* ideas should sit at the heart of this rebundling? Our work suggests at least six emerging principles. None of the principles is entirely new or revolutionary. However, the challenges of the 21st century provide a fertile context for all of these principles to come together to finally provide a coherent direction for designing a future-focused education system.

Emerging principles for a 21st century education system

Theme 1: Personalising learning

Personalising learning aligns with the idea that education systems must move away from an Industrial Age "one-size-fits-all" model. The idea of "personalising learning" calls for reversing the "logic" of education systems so that the system is built around the learner, rather than the learner being required to fit with the system.[6] This challenges us to think about how to deploy the resources for learning (teachers, time, spaces, technology) more flexibly to meet learners' needs. It also requires us to think about the *new* resources that may be needed, beyond those traditionally thought of as part of the schooling system, and to think about how best to support learners' access to those resources. While personalising learning-based approaches are being implemented in a limited way, in pockets and/or at the margins of the sector, we are not yet seeing the kinds of "deep personalisation" argued for by future-focused educationalists.[7]

Theme 2: New views of equity, diversity and inclusivity

Current educational policy typically concentrates on the issues of diversity, equity and inclusivity in relation to particular groupings of learners and communities for whom educational success has lagged behind that of other learners and communities. There is a recognition that these learners' and communities' needs have not been well met by the education system in the past, and a major goal of the current education system is to address the needs of "diverse" learners in order to raise overall achievement levels and reduce disparity.[8]

However, a future-oriented approach suggests that we need to develop new ways of thinking about equity and diversity. Achieving equity is not *just* about addressing the underachievement or disengagement of particular groupings of students and communities and bringing everyone closer to a single normative standard of what counts as success. This is particularly important given the arguments that currently accepted markers of success in education probably do not adequately reflect the kinds of learning that are needed for the demands of the 21st century. "Diversity" needs to be recognised as a strength for a future-oriented learning system, something to be actively fostered, not a weakness that lowers the system's performance. Diversity encompasses *everyone's* variations and differences, including their cultures and backgrounds. This calls for greater engagement of learners, family/whānau and communities in co-shaping education to address their needs, strengths, interests and aspirations, while also ensuring that all students—no matter where they are from or where their learning happens—have opportunities to develop and succeed according to the high-level educational aspirations set for, and agreed to, by New Zealanders as a whole.

A second idea that commonly comes up in discussions of equity/diversity and 21st century learning is that 21st century citizens need to be educated *for* diversity—in both the people sense and the knowledge/ideas sense. The changing global environment requires people to engage—and be able

to work—with people from cultural, religious and/or linguistic backgrounds or world views that are very different from their own. Alongside this is another different but related imperative. Doubts about the ability of existing paradigms to solve current social, environmental and economic challenges mean that a future-focused education system must provide learners with past paradigms *and* the ability to think between, outside and beyond them—that is, the ability to work with a *diversity* of ideas. It is argued that future-oriented learning should provide all young people with opportunities to develop these capacities.

Theme 3: A curriculum that uses knowledge to develop learning capacity

One of the biggest challenges for education in the 21st century is that our ideas about curriculum are currently underpinned by at least *two quite different epistemologies*, or models of what counts as knowledge. The first view is the "traditional" idea of knowledge as *content*, concepts and skills selected from the disciplines to form the "subjects" or "learning areas" of the school curriculum. From this point of view, the learner's job is to absorb and assimilate that knowledge into their mind and demonstrate how well they have done this through various means of assessment. It is assumed that this knowledge will be stored up for later use during the learner's life.

The second conception of knowledge is associated with the Knowledge Age/"21st century" literature. In this view, knowledge is seen as something that *does* things, as being more energy-like than matter-like, more like a verb than a noun. Knowledge, in the Knowledge Age, involves *creating* and *using* new knowledge to solve problems and find solutions to challenges as they arise on a "just-in-time" basis. These ideas about knowledge have emerged in the world outside education—driven in large part by economic, social and political changes, often facilitated by new technologies.

The Knowledge Age literature argues that reproducing existing knowledge can no longer be education's core goal, because (a) it is no longer possible to determine exactly which knowledge people will need to store up in order to use it in their lives after school, and (b) the "storing up for future use" model of knowledge is no longer useful or sufficient for thinking about how knowledge is developed and used in the 21st century. Instead, the focus needs to be on equipping people to *do things with knowledge*, to use knowledge in inventive ways, in new contexts and combinations. An individual's stock of knowledge is important as a foundation for their personal cognitive development: however, for it to be useful as a foundation for their participation in social and economic life, the individual must be able to connect and collaborate with other individuals holding complementary knowledge and ideas.

What this means for the school curriculum is a shift in what is "foregrounded". Instead of simply assuming these capacities will be developed through engagement with disciplinary knowledge (the traditional view), there is a shift to focusing on the development of *everyone's* capabilities to *work with* knowledge. From this point of view, disciplinary knowledge should be seen, not as an end in itself, but as a *context* within which students' learning capacity can be developed. While the use of the term "learning areas" in *The New Zealand Curriculum*[9] (*NZC*) document signals this, it is clear that this has not changed underlying thinking for many educators. It seems clear that the work of building a 21st century education system must involve supporting educators—and the public—to understand the paradigm shift in the meaning of such apparently common-sense terms as "knowledge" and "learning", and how this might change the way curriculum is interpreted into learning and teaching experiences.

Theme 4: "Changing the script": Rethinking learners' and teachers' roles

Twenty-first century ideas about knowledge and learning demand shifts in the traditional roles or "scripts" followed by learners and teachers. If the purpose of schools is not to *transmit* knowledge, then teachers' roles must be reconceived. Similarly, if the learner's main job is no longer to absorb and store up knowledge to use in the future, then learners' roles and responsibilities also need to be reconceived. This calls for a greater focus on recognising and working with learners' strengths, and thinking about what role teachers can play in supporting the development of every learner's potential.

The idea of changing the scripts for learners and teachers is often shorthanded with phrases such as "student-centred pedagogies" or "student voice", alluding to the need to engage learners (and their interests, experiences and knowledge) in many decisions about their learning. However, the idea of sharing power with learners can be met with resistance, particularly if this is interpreted as an "anything goes" approach in which learners are given *complete* freedom to set the direction for their learning. The challenge is to move past seeing learning in terms of being "student-centred" or "teacher-driven", and instead to think about how learners and teachers would work together in a "knowledge-building" learning environment. This is not about teachers ceding all the power and responsibility to students, or students and teachers being "equal" as learners. Rather, it is about structuring roles and relationships in ways that draw on the strengths and knowledge of each in order to best support learning.

Theme 5: A culture of continuous learning for teachers and educational leaders

All of the principles discussed above suggest that teachers, school leaders, educational policy leaders and other adults supporting young people's learning need particular attributes and capabilities that enable them to work effectively towards a future-oriented learning system. It is important to note that some of the approaches advocated for 21st century learning—and the ideas that underpin them—may differ from what today's teachers, school leaders and educational policy leaders experienced in their own school learning. Teachers and school leaders may resist adapting current approaches if they don't see the need for change, or if they aren't convinced that adapting current approaches is possible, let alone likely to lead to better student outcomes.

It is important to note here that many "21st century" ideas about what meaningful learning looks like, and how to support it, are actually not new. They have been around for a very long time and are well supported and practised by many teachers. The challenge here is how to achieve a system shift that creates a more coherent educational ecology that can support what is known about good learning *and* that can accommodate new knowledge about learning and, importantly, new *purposes* for learning in a changing world.

This means that education systems must be designed to incorporate what is known about *adult* learning and cognitive development as well as what is known about young people's learning and development. This has implications for thinking about professional learning approaches and structures for teachers and school leaders: Are adults in the education system able to access the kinds of learning supports that they need in order to be the best leaders for a future-oriented learning system?

Theme 6: New kinds of partnerships and relationships: Schools no longer siloed from the community

Learning for the 21st century, it is argued, should support students to engage in knowledge-generating activities in authentic contexts. Students must learn to recognise and navigate authentic problems and challenges in ways that they are likely to encounter in future learning situations. However, today many learners encounter learning situations in which the "messiness" of the real world is simplified as contrived learning tasks with answers or outcomes already known to the teacher.

This implies that learning will require additional resources/support/expertise/input from a much wider range of people. Teachers ought not to be the only people from whom young people learn. As already argued (under the themes of personalising learning and equity/diversity), learning needs to be more connected with the community. Teachers still need strong pedagogical knowledge, but they also need to be able to collaborate with other people who can provide specific kinds of expertise, knowledge or access to learning opportunities in community contexts.

A final argument associated with this theme is that education and learning systems will not have traction to shift towards more 21st century approaches if this shift is not supported by the wider community. Public education is a collective good in which everyone has a stake. To be legitimate it must build our collective social and economic capacity *and* meet individual needs—immediate (and/or perceived) and future. To do *both* requires community understanding of, support for and contribution to what is being attempted. This "buy-in" could be achieved by engaging community members in authentic educational activities that draw on their expertise.

Subthemes: New technologies and collaborative practices

The Ministry of Education expressed interest in exploring two subthemes within this work on 21st century teaching and learning. These are framed by the questions: "What is the role of current and emerging technologies?" and "What is the role of collaborative practices?"

The role of current and emerging technologies

As OECD/CERI notes, "the rapid development and ubiquity of ICT are resetting the boundaries of educational possibilities. Yet, significant investments in digital resources have not revolutionised learning environments; to understand how they might requires attention to the nature of learning." For the most part, educational thinking has moved on from the idea that simply introducing new ICT tools and infrastructure into schools will trigger beneficial and meaningful educational change. In New Zealand at least four strategies have been used to support educational ICT developments: providing enabling tools and infrastructure; providing inspiring ideas and opportunities to connect ideas; enhancing capability; and supporting innovation. Our analysis suggests that educational ICT development needs to be supported by all four strategies. This synthesis identified a range of ideas and practices associated with ICT—some of which reflect 21st century ideas about teaching, learning and knowledge, and others which do not. The potential of new technologies to transform teaching and learning is heavily dependent on educators' abilities to see the affordances and capacities of ICT in relation to the underpinning themes for learning for the 21st century outlined in this report. It is further dependent on schools having the infrastructure, inspiration, capability and opportunities for innovation to achieve these kinds of teaching and learning.

Role of collaborative practices

While networking and clustering have become increasingly popular in education, the range of reasons for, and outcomes of, networking and collaboration are often unexamined. School networks can vary in terms of their *goals* (which could include school improvement, broadening opportunities [including networking with nonschool agencies such as social services or business] or resource sharing), and their *timescales,* from short term to longer term relationships. Networking and collaboration *in themselves* do not necessarily support the emergence of future-focused learning practice. However, research suggests that educational clustering and networking provide opportunities for professional learning and expanding ideas about what is possible.

Policy implications

We conclude by putting forward three key ideas as a way to structure the thinking that will be needed to develop a policy/system response to the question of how we can rebuild New Zealand's education system for the 21st century. These three ideas are "diversity", "connectedness" and "coherence".

While these three key ideas inform all six of the key themes, they also allow us to see a way forward that goes beyond "ticking the boxes": that is, *are* schools personalising learning; *are* they educating *for* diversity (as well as working to achieve success for all learners); *are* they building learning capacity; *are* they reconceptualising the roles and responsibilities of teachers and students; *are* they engaged in continuous professional learning; and *are* they developing a range of new "real" partnerships with their communities? What is needed is, not more effort focused on the *parts* of this system, but strategies designed to *put these ideas together*: to join all this up in a way that is driven by a coherent set of shared ideas about the future of schooling and its purpose and role in building New Zealand's future.

Footnotes

Two sub-theme questions of particular interest to the Ministry of Education run across the three high-level research questions. These are: "What is the role of current and emerging technologies?" and "What is the role of collaborative practices?"

Recommendations

It seems reasonable then to accept that we have to change our processes that ensure teaching and learning occur successfully for two reasons, the first is that what we are currently doing needs changing, staff workload is too high and anomie is the outcome of that, and the second reason is that Ministry expects us to embrace Modern Learning Practices and will construct a Modern Learning Environment for our new school with this in mind.

However the implementation of change is fraught, frankly a straight out set of recommendations with a view to implement as soon as possible is going to fail, I have no illusions about my strengths and my needs and therefore I do not believe that my simply informing the staff that radical and immediate change is going to be required from them, is going to work. I suggest a different way forward is necessary.

On that basis please keep in mind the following:

1. The Christchurch Eastern Secondary Schools have just begun working on a plan (MOE are involved) which broadly involves each school actively accepting that Modern Learning Practice in a Modern Learning Environment must be thoroughly investigated before implementation, also that any investigation must be by staff, be manageable in terms of staff workload and must be spaced over a lengthy period of time- at the moment we are saying three years.
2. The schools in the consortium are intending to dissect Modern Learning Practice into key components and set up test situations in each school, spreading them around the schools in the consortium. In this way, the work involved will be evenly distributed and by ensuring that outcomes are shared with all members of the consortium, it is expected that the schools involved will be better positioned to move forward, changing only what is necessary in their schools.
3. Changes will be implemented, when schools such as ourselves, determine what things work, and work these into a strategic plan which has as its aim, implementation by 2018. This is the time Shirley is supposed to transfer into a new school on a new site, a school created according to Modern Learning expectations, (refer to The Ministry notes above).
4. This plan will ensure that staff input occurs and new practice will be gradually implemented. For Shirley in particular, the aim is to arrive at the start of 2018, actually ready to implement Modern Learning Practice in a Modern Learning Environment. Each of the schools involved intend on working together and supporting each other, and we also hope that Ministry and UC will be involved as well. We also believe that our current goals (increased Maori/Pasifika achievement and the development of E Learning skills) will sit nicely with all moves to journey successfully to a MLP in a MLE.

Please keep this in mind when you look at the concrete recommendations which arise from the sabbatical, also keep in mind that some of the recommendations have nothing to do with MLP, they are more of a function of the fact that I believe we need to retain many traditional practices (co-curricular activity being one) and implement other traditional practices- fund raising and old boy networking, being others.

The following recommendations are not presented in order of importance.

Recommendation 1

A meeting with all staff is organised to take place early in term 4, at the meeting a plan is outlined to staff (with senior teachers and Board members identified and present), which outlines that The Board is setting up a body called SET (Senior Executive Team) to investigate, consult and to finally recommend to The Board how the new school is to be shaped. The group will look at MLP in a MLE and determine appropriate HR structures and Teaching and Learning processes, that will ensure excellent teaching and learning occurs for all students at all times. In addition SET is charged with the responsibility of ensuring all that is worthy in our current school and structure is identified and retained and it goes without saying, practices that are beyond their use by date are removed. This is especially important because it is accepted that many staff are currently working in overload and need some current practice to change as a result.

Should this be acceptable to The Board, I will draft it into our current Strategic Plan along with the recommendations that follow, all of which will be designed to take us through to 2018.

Recommendation 2

Graduation is a particular interest of mine and the following idea which is briefly outlined below, came from Brooklyn Tech in New York.

Beginning in 2010, it was decided that each student must meet the following requirements by the end of their senior year to receive a Brooklyn Technical High School diploma:

I. A minimum of 50 hours of community service outside of the school or through specified club activities.

II. A minimum of 32 service credits earned through participation in Tech clubs, teams, and/or participation in designated school related events.

Service Credits are earned as follows:

1. 8 service credits per term to all students in BETA, NHS, JSA, Student Government, student productions, stage works, cheerleading, and PSAL teams.

2. 6 service credits per term to all students participating student leadership, who work on office squads, or compete in non-PSAL teams.

3. 4 service credits per term to all students who participate in all other clubs not referred to above.

4. 2 service credits for participation in specified school events

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Our Graduation system needs careful analysis to determine if it is still fit for purpose, also our Co-Curricular compliance system.

I recommend that we look to investigate our existing models and we also investigate at the same time new practice. The one that has appeal to me at the moment is one where a graduation certificate awarded in the final year of school. The graduation certificate will reflect character development and be synchronized to the sort of skills students require to flourish in the economic environment of the 21st Century.

Furthermore, since whatever we do is so important for staff and students, I suggest that final recommendations be integrated into a student's timetabled programme and that it become part of a teachers teaching programme as well.

Final recommendations will need to also feature important elements of our leadership and Shirley Man programme as well.

Recommendation 3

If we are to move to MLP, one where teachers have the time to actually do what is required, and that includes time to plan in a co-operative environment, it needs to be recognised that our timetable is out of date and no longer fit for purpose.

Our current teaching model is assembly line based, it features a range of period times around the 50 minute mark, in this situation one teacher controls and teaches up to 27 students. This model is simply out of date, it encourages a silo mentality, and it does not reflect the need for the development of in depth learning, or of co-operative teaching and learning or of individualised learning. Ironically it also contributes to teacher overload.

Immediate attention must be given to setting up a team to look at a new system of delivery of teaching and learning, I will not try and indicate what the outcomes of this investigation will be, but I do point out the following things that arose from the visits to MLP schools.

- Periods are longer 90 to 100 minutes in length, and they are structured in anything from 6 to 10 day cycles.
- Planning for teaching is far more detailed than it is here at Shirley and much of this occurs in weekly timetabled time
- Teaching is team based, with several teachers involved in teaching groups of up to 50 students.
- Teaching is divided equally into time for direct instruction, group work in which co-operative work between students features, and where the teacher mentors and facilitates. Finally there is time to pursue individual learning- most often using personal devices in a BYOD environment.
- The Modern Learning Environment pretty much demands this type of approach. Large open spaces, able to be used flexibly feature prominently.

SET must immediately organise investigation into timetabling with a view to introducing change incrementally if it is deemed change is required

Recommendation 4

We are still a school where the commitment to co-curricular activity needs to be maintained. We also do a lot of work involving field trips and suchlike that occur out of class time. However frequent trips impact on the teaching and learning process, students miss lessons and teachers are forced to

teach with depleted classes. This contributes to increased workload for staff and diminishes the chances of good learning outcomes.

Consideration is needed for school to have two weeks one in the first half of the year, the second later in the year where there is no classroom based instruction at all.

In this time all field trips and sporting/cultural trips occur. Camps etc. as well. Otherwise all field exercises, experiments etc. have to occur in the designated 100? minute period.

Recommendation 5

There is no doubt that extra sources of revenue are required, to this end attention needs to be given to determining how to bring people into our school HR structure whose job is solely to achieve that. This may involve all of the following:

We need to introduce a marketing manager into our school structure. This person could manage a team where some of their salary comes from funds they raise. Potentially such a team could be involved in the following tasks:

1. "Friend Finding" We must increase the amount of intellectual and financial resources from our Old Boys and to this end we need people to be employed whose job it is to achieve this.
2. Web site management.
3. Trust development and management
4. Finding sources of contestable funding.

We also must re-develop the international department. This will involve renewed focus on short and long term stays. The aim must be to bring into the school, a minimum of 50 international students each year.

Finally and referencing the need to market ourselves strongly, a marketing firm needs to be brought into the school, and must work with The Board and SET to develop and implement a strategy to take us forward into the new school. The change in uniform will be part of this strategy.

Recommendation 6

The key to successful modern teaching and Learning is a strong ICT infrastructure. Consideration must be given to implementing an HR structure that delivers this.

Recommendation 7

We need to look at developing a strategy to become a year 7-13 school, there are excellent reasons for this recommendation but I will not go into detail at this time, other than to say that this option must involve negotiation with our local intermediates and that AGHS needs to be involved as well.

Conclusion

In conclusion I do not believe that we have a lot of time available, and in that limited time The Board must meet and consider the aforementioned recommendations. The following sequence of events should therefore be our aim.

The Board must meet and discuss Modern Learning Practices in a Modern Learning Environment. This should begin with each board member referencing the material I have sent out over the previous 10 weeks.

I will parallel this with a similar discussion with the Senior Executive Team, which for the record is a group of 11 senior staff charged with leading and consulting staff as we move to a new site, one in which a new school fit for Modern Learning Practice is constructed. This group will oversee the process that will conclude with our entry into new school and will also manage current issues, ensuring decisions made in the present time are synchronised with what the new school is set up to achieve, starting in 2018.

All agreed decisions will be written into our strategic plan, which takes us through to 2018, at which time we are due to enter the new school.

The Board, or its representative(s) and SET must meet the staff early in term 4 2014, fully aware of Ministry intentions as far Modern Learning Practice is concerned. This awareness will mean that The Board can be absolutely clear about what is expected of all Shirley staff in the new environment, and they are able to communicate these to the staff.

The last three years have been characterised by uncertainty, clarity for staff and the community the staff serve, is now absolutely necessary.

J Laurenson

September 2014