

**PRIMARY PRINCIPAL SABBATICAL STUDY**  
**PARENT CHOICE OF SCHOOL AT YEAR 7/8 LEVEL**  
**PROVISION OF THE TECHNOLOGY CURRICULUM AT YEAR 7/8**

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**Term 3 2010**

**Contents**

**Acknowledgments**

Thank you to the:

- Ministry of Education for the opportunity for Sabbatical leave.
- Hobsonville Board of Trustees for granting my absence for this leave.
- Full Primary School Principals in North West Auckland for responding to the questions posed in the questionnaire.
- Teachers and Principals of the Intermediate Schools visited.

**Purpose of the Study**

- To investigate reasons for parental choice of school at Year 7/8 level.
- Provision of technology for Year 7/8 students.

**Background**

- Many full primary schools lose students to other schools at the end of Year 6 and at Hobsonville Primary School, a full primary school in North West Auckland; we have continued to lose up to 25 students each year.
- We have implemented various strategies to retain our senior students, including parent education evenings, developing and reviewing a Year 7/8 prospectus, ensuring students have both male and female teachers at this level, and the implementation of motivating and challenging programmes for this age group.
- The reasons for parents making the choice of continuing with the full primary education or opting for a different choice of school and the reasons behind their choice has been the focus of my own research.

## **Process**

- a) A survey with questions pertinent to what the parents of Year 5/6 students expect for their 11 and 12 year old children was prepared and circulated to parents at Hobsonville Primary School. Questionnaire enclosed.
- b) A survey was devised to obtain statistical information from full Primary Schools in the North West Auckland cluster of schools. Survey of 14 full primary schools in the Northwest cluster. Enclosed.
- c) Questions were also asked about the provision of technology in these same schools.
- d) Visits were undertaken to Intermediate schools where the majority of students from Hobsonville Primary School were enrolled and to other Intermediate Schools to observe and seek information about the way the Technology Curriculum is delivered and the facilities, resources and programmes offered.

Findings are based on responses received from parents at Hobsonville Primary Schools and Principals from the 14 schools surveyed (enclosed), as well as visits to Intermediate Schools in West Auckland and on the North Shore.

## **Conclusion**

### **Parental choice of school for Year 7/8 students**

The study undertaken confirmed that parent's choice of schooling at Years 7/8 were based on priorities other than the provision of teaching and learning in core curriculum areas. These included students personal growth, prior experience of others in the family attending the school of choice, availability of information about the school, choosing a school that prepares students for Secondary school, extracurricular activities available, the availability of specialist teachers and curriculum delivery, in these specialist areas e.g. visual arts. Word of mouth information from other parents and the influence of peers on students also plays a part in parent choice. The provision of leadership and sporting opportunities were seen as of importance. Of a lesser priority were that the parents attended a similar type of school, school proximity to the family home, cultural opportunities and Education Outside the Classroom (EOTC).

Being with friends featured highly for the students themselves.

## **Conclusion**

### **Provision of Technology for Year 7/8 students**

The teaching and delivery of the Technology curriculum was similar in the majority of schools visited. Programmes are planned dependent on the specialist skills of the teachers involved and facilities and resources specifically for the provision of Technology were also available in each school.

Without the provision of purpose built facilities and the ability to employ specialist or extra teaching staff the provision of technology in full primary schools for Year 7/8 students is not a viable option.

A shared facility used by a group of full primary schools would prove a better option and would be welcomed by the Principals surveyed. Teachers would be able to plan and work more closely with specialist teachers to provide purposeful technology programmes that fulfill the intention of this curriculum learning area. There would also be less down time used for travel.

I enjoyed the study and found it very worthwhile and relevant to future planning and development of Hobsonville Primary School, a full primary school in North West Auckland.

I found the period away from my role as Principal very refreshing and it gave me time for reflection, recreation and recuperation. I am able to return with renewed passion.

**SUMMARY OF PARENT SURVEY (HOBSONVILLE PRIMARY SCHOOL)**  
**CHOICE OF SCHOOL FOR YEAR 7/8 CHILD**

**Returns 55%**

- The majority of the 55% of replies show 89% of parents stated that their child would be returning to the same full primary school.
- The majority of those parents intending to move their child to another school after their Year 6 year were enrolling at an Intermediate school outside their local area of North West Auckland.
- Students would travel to Intermediate outside the local area by bus, private vehicle or by car pooling arrangements.
- Extra cost would be incurred when students moved to another school for Year 7/8. This applied to additional cost of fees, uniform and transport.
- Reasons given for choice of school for Year 7/8:

The main reasons, in order of importance, for choice of school for Year 7/8, including their child remaining at the same full Primary school, were as follows, in priority order:

- Personal growth e.g. independence and self management.
- Others in the family attended the school.
- Information available about the school was very important e.g. Open Day, parent evening prospectus.
- Preparation for Secondary school.
- Extracurricular activities available.
- Specialist teachers.
- Word of mouth information from other parents.
- Leadership opportunities.
- Sporting opportunities.
- Special culture of school.
- Curriculum delivery.

- Parents attended similar type of school.
- Teachers.
- Cultural opportunities.
- Closest school.
- Education Outside the Classroom (EOTC).
- Friendships featured highly for the students themselves.

### **Summary**

- 50% of parents/caregivers who replied recognise the development of the Key Competencies, such as self management and independence related to personal growth, are important factors in making school choice for their child's Year 7/ 8 years of schooling.
- 46% based their choice of school on having all of their children at the same school during their primary school years.
- 33% felt that preparing students for secondary was a consideration.
- Other factors influencing choice included parents own experiences at particular types of school, information available about Year 7/8, e.g. information evenings, open days, and prospectus; sporting and cultural opportunities, as well as extra curricula activities offered, leadership opportunities, specialist teachers, having technology on site, and word of mouth recommendations.

### **Conclusion**

- For the most part full primary schools are able to offer students opportunities seen as important to parents / caregivers and provide excellent curriculum coverage and learning based on sound classroom practice for this age group.
- Specialist teaching is provided by the majority of full primary schools in learning areas that require a higher level of expertise e.g. Music, The Arts, and Languages. Schools provide specialisation by using the strengths of teachers within the school or employment of full and part time teachers with the expertise required.
- On site technology provision is difficult to provide without extra funding, facilities, and staffing. Some schools provide facilities to meet some of the requirements of the 'Technology' curriculum.

## LEAVING FULL PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Summary

- Replies were received from 9 full primary schools in North West Auckland ranging from decile 3 to 10.
- Between 8% and 48% of Year 6 students leave their Full Primary School at Year 6. The average leaving rate is 20%.
- Four of the schools say that the percentage of students leaving is consistent year by year. Two report less left last year compared with the previous year.
- The majority of schools lose Year 6 students to Intermediate Schools or Junior High School. These schools are located mainly on the North Shore, although 3 schools have students leaving to attend an Intermediate school located in West Auckland.
- One school reported students moving to another Full Primary in West Auckland.
- Parents also choose to enrol their children into Catholic Education.
- Two of the schools have some parents who choose Private Education at this time.
- Some consistent reasons for students leaving at Year 6 were:
  - A wider range of resourcing and facilities were available in Intermediate and Junior High Schools.
  - To be with friends. Students tended to be influenced by where their friends would be undertaking their Year 7/8 years of schooling.
  - Specialisation. Parents viewed specialisation in subjects where students were given the opportunity to work with teachers who had specific skills in areas such as ICT, Technology, Visual Arts, and PE and Sport, as being a preferred option in their choice of school at the Year 7/8 level.
  - Choice of secondary education. Parents wanting to enrol their child at a secondary school outside of the local area tended to choose schools that were within the zone of the secondary school of choice.

## **PROVISION OF TECHNOLOGY**

### **Summary of Questionnaire**

- In answer to questions related to the provision of Technology the majority of Full Primary Schools thought that Full Primary Schools should have their own centre so that Technology could be presented according to curriculum requirements.
- Equal numbers expressed either satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their present provider.
- Three schools did not prefer to provide resourcing and facilities for Technology. Additional workload to run the centre on their own site was a factor.
- All but one school was receptive to a shared purpose built facility.

### **Summary of Intermediate School visits to view facilities and Technology programmes**

- After visiting a group of Intermediate schools on the North Shore and West Auckland it was found that the provision of Technology was similar. Specialist teachers were employed to provide aspects of Technology according to the Technology Curriculum.
- The specific skills of the specialist teachers were utilised to provide multi materials, hard materials, food technology, electronics and ICT. Staffing and specialised facilities were provided for Technology. Schools relied on the capabilities of the specialist staff and programmes reflected this.

### **Implications for Full Primary Schools**

- It is difficult for Full Primary Schools to provide the range of Technology programmes for Year 7/8 students that are available in Intermediate Schools because our Full Primary Schools do not have the specialist staffing or necessary facilities, resources and equipment.

### **Conclusion**

- With the provision of a purpose built Technology facility for a small cluster of Full Primary Schools I believe the Technology Curriculum could be planned effectively to benefit students and deliver the Technology Curriculum as intended.
- Teachers could plan programmes with specialist teachers so that the intention of the Technology Curriculum and processes would have benefits for the students involved.
- There would be less down time in travel involved.

NAME (Optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Class level: \_\_\_\_\_

## HOBSONVILLE PRIMARY SCHOOL

### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS OF YEAR 5 & 6 STUDENTS

*Thank you to the parents of students who will be Year 7 in 2010 for returning the information requested about placement for 2010.*

*I would really appreciate your honest feedback as part of research I am undertaking, related to Full Primary Schools.*

*As this research is due to be completed before the end of 2010 I am collecting this end of year information at this time.*

**1. I intend to continue my child's education at Hobsonville Primary School, a full primary.**

Yes                       No                       Not decided as yet (go straight to question 7)

**2. My child will be attending:**

Hobsonville Primary School                       An intermediate school                       A private school  
 A school outside Auckland area                       Another full Primary school  
 Catholic or other religion                       Junior High School

**3. If not Hobsonville Primary School:**

A West Auckland school                       A North Shore school  
 Another school in this area                       A school out of Auckland  
 A school in another suburb of Auckland

**4. How will your child get to school?**

Bus                       Private vehicle                       Walk                       Ride a bicycle                       Carpool

**5. Please state approximate distance from your home to the school your child will be attending and travel time:**

Distance \_\_\_\_\_ Travel time \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Will extra cost be incurred by the choice of school?**

Fees

Uniform

Transport

**7. Please tick the reasons for your choice of school at Year 7 & 8 level:**

- Parents attended similar type of school
- Other children in the family attend or attended the same school
- Teachers

*Comment:*

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*Question 7 continues over the page*

**Question 7 continued:**

- Senior leadership

*Comment:*

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- Leadership opportunities available for my child

*Please stipulate:*

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- Personal growth e.g. independence, self-management
- Sporting opportunities
- Cultural opportunities
- Extra curricula opportunities
- Information from other parents e.g. word of mouth
- Friends
- Specialist teachers
- Homework
- Special culture of school
- Facilities

*Please stipulate:*

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- Curriculum

*Comment:*

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- Education out of the classroom (EOTC)

*Comment:*

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- Preparation for secondary education
  - Information available from school of choice e.g.
    - Prospectus
    - Open day
    - Parent evenings
    - Web site
    - Other
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**8. Please state any other reasons, not listed, for your choice of school at Y7/8 level:**

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**9. What are the 3 main reasons for your choice of school at Y7/8 level:**

**1.**

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**2.**

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**3.**

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**10. What do you think is the best way of providing information about Hobsonville School?**

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**11. Please comment on the way information about schooling at Year 7 & 8 level at Hobsonville Primary School has been shared:**

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# HOBSONVILLE PRIMARY SCHOOL

## QUESTIONNAIRE REGARDING FULL PRIMARY SCHOOLS

2010

Dear (name of Principal)

*I am undertaking research during my Sabbatical leave regarding full Primary Schools and Intermediate Schools. Also, the provision of Technology at Year 7. I would therefore really appreciate you filling this out for me and returning it to Hobsonville Primary School. The information will remain confidential and schools will not be named in my report.*

**MARGARET DOHERTY**

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**12. Number of Year 6 students 2009** \_\_\_\_\_

**School** \_\_\_\_\_

**Decile** \_\_\_\_\_

**Principal** \_\_\_\_\_

**13. What percentage of Year 6 students moved to another school at the end of year 6?**

Percentage \_\_\_\_\_%

**14. Is this fairly consistent with previous years?**

Yes

No

**If no, did more or less students leave at the end of 2009?**

More

Less

**15. State type of school students are moving to for their Year 7 & 8 years.**

*(Please put in order of priority)*

Intermediate

Junior High School

Private Education

Catholic or Religious Education

Another full Primary

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**16. If the majority leave to go to an Intermediate School, where is the school located?**

- North Shore
- West Auckland
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**17. Do you use any initiatives to promote the full primary school / Year 7 & 8 area?**  
(Tick those that apply)

- Information evening
  - Information morning or afternoon
  - Orientation day
  - Year 7 & 8 Prospectus
  - Information about Year 7 & 8 through newsletters
  - Notice board
  - Other (please state)
- \_\_\_\_\_

**If you organise special days or evenings, what is the parent attendance like?**

- Poor
- Average
- Very good
- Exceptional

**18. What are the main reasons parents give for moving schools at Year 7 & 8 years?**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**19. Do you think our full Primary schools should have a Technology facility?**

- Yes
- No

**20. Are you satisfied with your present Technology provider?**

- Yes
- No

Reason/s for answer

\_\_\_\_\_

**21. Would you prefer to provide your own Technology if resourcing was made available?**

- Yes
- No

**22. If this was not viable, would you be receptive to a purpose built Technology facility being provided closer to smaller groups of full primary schools?**

- Yes
- No

**23. Have you any further thoughts or ideas with regard to the provision of Technology at Year 7 & 8 level?**

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**Please include any comments or thoughts that may be helpful to my research.**

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***Thank you. Your help is very much appreciated.***