



STARTED SCHOOL
New entrants
page 13

Christchurch's largest circulating community newspaper

Eastern edition

Inside



MY CAR
Small, green and angry **7**



SPECIAL NIGHT
Kids up close with rugby heroes **10-11**

Push for new high school

By ANNA PRICE

A proposal for a new high school in Christchurch's fast-growth north-east will be taken to Parliament's education and science select committee in Wellington on March 31. It will be backed by a 3664-name petition seeking a high school in the zone identified by the 8083 postcode.

The 33-page proposal, drawn up by the Parklands Residents' Association's northeast education committee, cites current figures showing around 2500 children across six primary schools in the area waiting in the wings.

Committee member Amanda Williams said the invitation to present the argument to back their proposal at select committee level represented a step forward.

"The population in the northeast is growing," she said.

"It has far exceeded past Ministry of Education projections."

If the proposal proceeds, the push would be on for what would be a high-decile school to be opened as early as February 2012.

"This will be a hard-sell. To achieve that we need Ministry of Education support and money from local community."

A school that would start with several hundred students then quickly move to beyond 700 was achievable, she said.

A housing explosion and a hike in the birth rate had pushed local primary schools to near-capacity with 2800 pupils expected within the next six years, spiralling to more than 4000 by 2025. A further 3500 houses were planned.

Windsor School was adding two new classrooms, and in the past year, new buildings had been built at Parkview, South New Brighton and New Brighton Catholic schools. Another classroom was also planned at South New Brighton this year.

The delegation would be introduced to the select committee by Christchurch East-based National MP Aaron Gilmore. The committee is chaired by National MP for Tamaki Alan Peachey.

"We are ready to confidently speak to them knowledgeably," Mrs Williams said. "We believe we have a robust case. The need is clear. We are confident our case is strong and need to persuade them to agree with our position and move forward quickly."

Waitikiri was regarded as an ideal potential site but sites on private land may also be suitable.



Bring it on: Jennifer Williams, 10, left, and her sister Annabelle, 7, are keen for a high school to be built in their territory, the city's north east.



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