

The North East Secondary Education Committee Inc. (NESE) advocates for secondary education in North East Christchurch. NESE has been actively lobbying politicians and the Ministry of Education since 2009. NESE's Management Committee members are all volunteers from the local community.

Building alliances in the community

NESE committee members aim to continually meet people in the community to share ideas and gather public opinion and feedback. The NESE Committee consults widely to establish good working relationships with influential people and organisations. In the last year committee members met or attended meetings with representatives of other organisations, business people and community leaders. We have benefited greatly from their advice and encouragement.

Personal contact with NESE supporters

Active consultation with families is one of the ways NESE ensures we represent our community's views. We receive valuable feedback by engaging the local community in conversation. During the year the committee kept in touch with our subscribers by email. A newsletter was sent to subscribers in September. Our Facebook page is a good way to distribute information quickly. We ran a small parent focus group and have had plenty of personal contact with families in the community during the year.

Document of community discussion

We used data from an Official Information Act request to investigate and substantiate specific education concepts. These findings together with feedback from our community and a small focus group were incorporated into a document submitted to the Ministry of Education in December.

Key points from the document

- Equality. Families value secondary schooling that allows the school community to remain diverse and engages all cultures and people equally.
- Co-ed. Families believe co-ed schools are the way for the future. However, they also agree the single sex choice should always be available.
- The future size of Shirley Boys' and Avonside Girls' High Schools. The community feels these schools should have similar roll sizes to prevent the continued imbalance at the co-ed schools.
- Transport. Families consider up to 3.5 km is a reasonable distance to travel to school by walking or cycling, preferably without travelling on or crossing major roads. Limited transport options to schools further away affects whether students can participate in after school activities.
- Transition from Primary to Secondary School. Many parents feel the transition process from primary to secondary school is either totally lacking or at best poor.

NESE's position on Education

NESE considers the provision of local secondary schooling in North East Christchurch is still a priority. The community's first preference is for a local co-ed school. The recent announcement that QEII is the preferred site for Avonside Girls' and Shirley Boys' High Schools could make secondary schooling more accessible for the area's students. NESE committee members look forward to engaging with the Ministry and Boards of both schools as the proposal develops to ensure optimal outcomes for the schools and local community.

NESE's Key Messages

- Secondary education planning must involve local input to achieve the best long term outcome.
- A local secondary school would support the rebuild of our community.
- School zones and catchments should not cross major arterial roads. Primary school zones should fall inside a secondary school zone where possible.
- NESE is committed to promoting safe, active transport to school.
- Families and children should be able to envisage lifelong learning in their local community.

Ministry of Education

The Ministry's decisions on our nearest secondary schools are to invest in the redevelopment of Mairehau High School on its current site; build the new Aranui Campus and to co-locate Avonside Girls' and Shirley Boys' High Schools on one site. The vision for secondary education is to link schools, encouraging collaboration, allowing schools to work together in new and novel ways.

Peter Hughes the Secretary for Education encouraged NESE to participate in discussion on the sites for the relocation of Avonside Girls' and Shirley Boys' high schools and contribute to the development of a shared vision for secondary education by secondary schools and the Ministry. These processes are ongoing. Peter also suggested NESE should meet with the local Learning Community Clusters to which we have initiated contact seeking an invitation.

Coralanne Child the Director of Education for Canterbury met with us during the year and has continued to facilitate NESE's involvement with the Education Renewal Recovery process.

Lobbying MPs and local body politicians

During the 2014 year we met individually with several MPs and had a good exchange of ideas about secondary education issues. Our ideas were heard and generated good discussion with - Poto Williams, Christchurch East's Labour MP; Joanne Hayes, National's list MP in Christchurch East; and Catherine Delahunty the Green Party's education spokesperson.

NESE's work continues to be well supported by Councillors David East & Glenn Livingstone, as well as our Community Board Chair Andrea Cummings and other Community Board members.

Candidate Forum for the General Election

NESE held a Political Forum for the 2014 General Election in Sept at the Parklands Baptist Church. Hosting a political forum is an effective way for NESE to educate politicians, while updating the public on our achievements and progress. It's also a great opportunity for voters to see candidates in action, meet the candidates and ask them questions. We were privileged to have Chris Lynch as MC. He questioned the candidates well and built a good rapport with the audience.

NESE's Management Committee 2014

The Management Committee is a dedicated group of people. Education remains a high priority for our families. I would like to thank committee members for the commitment and enthusiasm they continue to bring to this project. Amanda Williams (Chairperson), Greg Morehouse (Vice Chairperson), Angela Wilson (Secretary) Kerri Rowlands (Treasurer), Committee Members Rae Mills and Elissa Smith.

Angela Wilson has tendered her resignation from the committee. Angela was one of NESE's founding members. She's been a reliable helper at public events and was in charge of NESE's fence signs. Her connections, insight and encouragement have made valuable contributions over the years.

CCC Community Services Award

Committee member Elissa Smith received a Community Services Award from the Burwood Pegasus Community Board in June for her outstanding service to NESE and other voluntary organisations.

Fundraising

No fundraisers were held in 2014. The year's expenses were paid with money raised previously. Fundraising will need to be undertaken this year. We would welcome donations to help with NESE's 2015 expenses. NESE is a registered charity so donations of \$5.00 or more are tax deductible.

Community Support

Committee members would like to thank and acknowledge our many supporters who share information with us and contribute in other ways. We are extremely grateful for the ideas and support we continue to receive from the community.

Amanda Williams
Chairperson