

Govt to consult over high school

Anni Schwanen

HOPES for a new local secondary school in north east Christchurch are one step closer to being realised.

The Government recently announced the Ministry of Education would now investigate and begin consulting with the community to assess whether there was sufficient need for a new high school.

The announcement was in response to National Party MP Aaron Gilmore and the North East Secondary Education Committee's (NESE) 3664-name petition and proposal set before parliament's Education and Science Select Committee in April.

It showed the current resident population in the area – south of Waimakariri River, east of Marshland Road and north of Avon River – was over 25,000.

Although more than 2200 children attended six primary schools in the 8083 postcode area, no local intermediate or high schools were provided.

With an increase of 2890 primary school students by 2015 and 4000 by 2025, plus an additional 3500 dwellings planned for the area over the next 20 years

NESE chairperson Amanda Williams was concerned north east residents fell outside the areas for zoned high schools.

"None of these houses in Timara Park were here five years ago. The Preston subdivision will bring in more people so the area is going to be running at capacity with no high school.

We want a local high school as we don't think it's reasonable to send our kids for miles."

She said that from the area Ministry of Education data showed students from the area were going to 22 different high schools.

Shirley Boys', Avonside Girls', Mairehau and Aranui were the nearest state high schools but Mrs Williams said both Shirley and Avonside were running at capacity and the other two schools were only able to take on a small amount of students.

Mrs Williams said out of nine potential school sites Waitikiri Drive was the preferred option although other private lands were being considered. She hoped the community would have a new local high school operational by February 2012.



Studious: Windsor School students Jennifer Williams, 10, left, Artem Chensky, 10, and Annabelle Williams, 8, want to carry on their studies closer to home.

Photo: Anni Schwanen



Contact your local Christchurch East MP **Lianne Dalziel**

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