



February 2009 Update: Hill Top Trust Board

This update is a continuation of a regular communication to keep parents, ex-parents and those with an interest in Hill Top School apprised of our progress through these difficult times.

The Board of Trustees and the Management Team of Hill Top School are very aware of the disappointment felt by so many of the Hill Top School community in the current situation. We are working presently to keep the School going whilst other options for the future are examined. Our immediate concern is to resolve the current financial difficulties and move Hill Top forward into a new chapter while still providing a nurturing and supportive environment for those families that have chosen to remain with the school. Hill Top's reputation, over so many decades, has been one of special and vibrant learning. The Hill Top community spirit has been strong. People loved coming here and took pride in all the activities and achievements of the children.

Fiscal Update

While short term cash flow is still an issue, the school remains in a positive capital position. The Board is actively pursuing options to obtain funds and/or sell assets to pay the mortgagee, creditors, teachers and outstanding deposits to affected parents.

We remain determined to honour the debts of the School, as the School either closes or, hopefully, is able to move on to another site as a smaller and more viable operation; still focussed on good values and an outlook on learning that will prepare the children well for the rest of their lives.

Class Update

One mixed class opened on February 2nd, with Mark and Elise Broadwith establishing a close tuition structure, personalised for the stages of the individual students. This class includes Year 1 – Year 4 students.

The children have bravely soldiered on with their learning and cannot too easily escape the teacher's attention nowadays! Their parents have been much in evidence about the school; cutting lawns, tending the gardens and assisting the class generally. This helps retain the community spirit and keeps the costs down.

St Dominics have generously resurrected the school pool, in exchange for its use (from now until the weather cools beyond tolerance!) the children from Hill Top and St Dominics will share the pool time and take advantage of this wonderful asset. We are most grateful to the parents of our neighbouring school for all the efforts – and chemicals – they have put in to the pool for all to enjoy.

The Board is not actively marketing for enrolment for classes until short term cashflow and debt problem is resolved, but there has been some interest from parents wanting to enrol new students.

It has been good to see the children spending time with St Dominics students. Either with the Hill Top class going across to St Dominics, or a St Dominics class coming across to Hill Top to play and socialise.

The Ongoing Future for Hill Top School

The board of Trustees is continuing with the options worked through with the parents in 2008.

An update on current progress follows:

- The Ministry of Education has determined not to purchase the Heaphy street site outright as there are a number of other schools in the area
- Discussions with the Ministry of Education are ongoing regarding options to Integrate the school into the state school sector
- Discussions with a school interested in amalgamation with Hill Top have not been successful
- Three groups are currently showing interest in purchase of the Heaphy St property. The Board is working with these groups to develop an offer for the divestment of the Heaphy street site, ideally with contingency for Hill Top School to remain on site as long as is practical
- As soon as a likely outcome is known, discussions will begin with parents regarding the shape of the next stage of the Hill Top journey. These will be exciting and challenging times and we look forward to leaving the current, less pleasant, times behind us

Do You Need More Information?

If you need more information then please don't hesitate to make contact via email at Board@HillTop.school.nz.

For any Educational or day-to-day management issues, please contact Mark Broadwith via the school office.

Yours Faithfully,
HILL TOP SCHOOL TRUST BOARD

RHONDA EVANS
CHAIRMAN