

# Have your say to strengthen education in Miramar South and Strathmore Park

## Background Information for the Consultation Process

This information has been developed by the Boards of Miramar South and Strathmore Community schools to provide background for those filling in the survey and attending the consultation meetings

### *Why we are consulting with the community*

The Minister of Education has asked the Boards of Miramar South and Strathmore Community schools to consult with their communities on the future of primary education in the area. We'd like to know how you think we could make this work for our community.

### *Background*

Miramar South School and Strathmore Community School are 1.2 km apart from each other. Both schools have more classrooms than they are currently using. Because of this, the Minister has asked us to consider a merger, bringing the two schools together on one site. They are also interested in other options that you might suggest.

The current rolls of the schools are: 109 [Miramar South] and 67 [Strathmore]. Combining these rolls would still provide a small school which can respond to local needs.

### *Future vision for education in your area*

By consulting with the school community, we want to develop a shared vision for the future. We'd like to know how you think we can best work alongside the Ministry of Education to provide our children with the best possible facilities and educational environment.

### *How each school contributes to the community*

Both schools make valuable contributions to the community, and we'd like to continue to build on this for the future. Both schools are proud of their cultural diversity and encourage and foster our many different family backgrounds. We're proud of other things too such as academic and sporting achievements, and high quality literacy and numeracy programmes.

Miramar South School has A'oga Amata Miramar and dental clinic onsite and provides education from years 1–8. It has relationships with a variety of pre-schools and numerous community groups and it's hall and grounds are used by them.

Strathmore Community School has close ties with its wider community – Strathmore Park Kindergarten and Peninsula Community Preschool are regular visitors to its whanau room and library, and the school grounds are regularly used by community groups.

Possible advantages of merging the schools could be that a larger school would get more teachers and more funding than a smaller school. This would provide more resources, helping to ensure our students continue to receive high-quality education in the future.



# Questions and Answers

## What is a merger?

A merger, or merging two schools, happens when two separate schools combine to make one new school on one site. The school may have a new name. The continuing Board will develop values and vision appropriate to the merged school. A new Board will be elected within 3 months of the merger.

If a merger between Miramar South School and Strathmore Community School goes ahead, we will follow Ministry of Education guidelines for merging schools. These guidelines cover community consultation, the roles of Boards of Trustees and processes for managing the merger.

## What will happen to the staff?

The merger will affect the staffing of the existing schools. However the communities need to be able to decide what is the best for their children/communities without having to consider what the staff may or may not do.

Both Principals' positions in the existing schools will be disestablished. The principal's position at the new school will be advertised nationally. While the existing principals will be able to apply for the new job they have no absolute right to be appointed.

All other positions, both teaching and support staff will, in the first instance be made available to existing permanent staff. The rights of all staff will be protected by provisions of their Collective Agreements.

Staff on fixed term contracts will have no right to a position in the merged school.

## When will decisions be made?

This round of consultation will finish at the end of term 2 (15 July). The Ministry of Education will write a report to the Minister, which includes the feedback from the consultation. The Minister will then make a decision about the next step. We expect to be told the Minister's decision on this initial round of consultation in August.

The Minister might ask for another round of consultation on a particular option. This will depend on how many options were suggested during the consultation and how strongly they were supported.

## What funding is available for the merger process?

If a merger goes ahead, the merged school will receive Education Development Initiative (EDI) funding. This is one-off funding that is used to:

- manage the transition (students, staff, Board)
- fund projects that help raise student achievement in the reorganised school.

This amount of money is calculated from the roll of the smaller school as at 1 July 2010 (i.e. 67 students at Strathmore Community School).

Note that the EDI funding is not available for any alterations or improvements to school buildings or facilities. If the schools merge onto one existing site, there is no additional funding available to make changes to school buildings or facilities.

## **What support is there for merging schools?**

The Ministry of Education will employ a change manager and support people to help with the transition process to the merged school structure. Other Ministry of Education support will be available to help the Board to develop its vision and philosophy etc. This process, and the appointment of staff, needs to take place before the date of merger.

The Ministry of Education also need to make sure that students' learning at the merging school and the continuing school is not interrupted.

## **If the two schools merge, what will happen to resources and any vacant site?**

The resources, for example computers, desks and library books of the merging school are offered to the Board of the continuing school. If the Board does not want them, they are offered to other schools in the area.

The Ministry of Education has a process for disposing of surplus buildings and sites.

## **What will happen to the assets, debts, and community raised funds of the school that is to merge?**

Where one school merges with another, the debts and assets of the merging school move to the Board of the continuing school. Any community raised funds are also passed to the continuing school. The accounts of both schools are closed and new accounts are opened for the continuing school.

## **What will happen to the early childhood centres (i.e. A'oga Amata Miramar at Miramar South School and Peninsula Community Preschool at Strathmore Community School)?**

The early childhood centre management, staff and parents will be encouraged to become involved in the consultation process. During this process they will be able to put forward their views on early childhood provision in Miramar South School and Strathmore Community School areas.

## **What happens to the Boards of Trustees in a merger?**

If the Minister agrees to a merger, she will announce which Board will be the Board of the continuing school. This is the Board that manages the merger process. Following the Minister's announcement, this Board must co-opt at least one person from the Board of the merging school.

The Board of the continuing school works to develop the vision, philosophy, policies and practices of the merged school. It also manages the merger process with the support of the Ministry and the change manager. This includes making staff appointments.

The Board of the continuing school must hold elections within three months of the merger date. This is to make sure that the Board of the merged school is then representative of its whole community.

## **What would we call a merged school?**

In most mergers the Board chooses a new name to mark the change to a merged school. The new name is usually chosen in consultation with the community.

## Important dates to note

**Parent/Caregiver meetings:** These are an opportunity for parents and caregivers to come and find out more about the proposals and tell us their views.

Strathmore Community School: **16 June at 5.30pm; and 23 June at 7pm**  
Miramar South School: **5 July at 5.30pm; and 7 July at 7pm**

**Community meetings:** We hope you'll be able to attend one of the community meetings

Strathmore Community School: **5 July at 7.30pm**  
Miramar South School: **13 July at 7.30pm**

**Viewing Days:** Come and visit the schools on the viewing days. The viewing days allow you to see what each school looks like in terms of school buildings and facilities.

**Monday – Thursday 20-23 June: from 9am to 6pm**  
**Friday 24 June: from 8am to 3.30pm**  
**Saturday 25 June: from 9am to 12 noon.**

**Also:**

<b>20-24 June:</b>	A survey to collect your ideas about the proposals will be available [see school websites or ask at the school offices]
<b>August</b>	Expect to hear the Minister's decision
<b>September</b>	Possible further consultation

**Further timelines:** The most likely timing for the opening of a new or merged school is in term one of 2013, unless the community is unanimous in its support of a single option during the current consultation, in which case the Minister may be able to make a decision in time for a start in 2012.

We look forward to your feedback and ideas for the future of schooling in our region.

**Wayne Lowther**  
**Chairperson**  
**Miramar South School BOT**



**Bill Taylor**  
**Chairperson**  
**Strathmore Community School BOT**

