



Education Report: Request to recapitate Waerenga School (2046)

To:	Hon Erica Stanford, Minister of Education		
Date:	24 July 2024	Priority:	High
Security Level:	In Confidence	METIS No:	1328521
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Messaging seen by Communications team:	No	Round Robin:	No

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to seek your decision on Waerenga School Board's application to cease to be a Year 1-6 contributing school and become a Year 1-8 full primary school under section 194 of the Education and Training Act 2020 (the Act).
2. In May 2024, we undertook consultation on your behalf, under section 209 of the Act, on the application. In assessing the results of consultation and the impacts on the local school network we do not recommend you agree to this proposal.

Summary

3. When assessing applications from schools to recapitate we consider the Board's desire to extend year levels and grow its roll, with the wider network implications and impacts at schools such as costs, staffing, curriculum, sustainability and viability.
4. The proposed recapitation would have the following implications and impacts:
 - Te Kauwhata College and Te Kauwhata Primary School rolls and resourcing would be reduced.
 - Additional school transport costs to transport learners to another school for technology provision.
 - Potential additional operational and staffing costs related to changes to the schooling network.
5. Te Kauwhata is an area projected to experience population growth. However, the timeframes for planned housing developments are unclear, as is when and where the growth and capacity will need to be accommodated in the schooling network. When there is more certainty on the future growth and demand we will be able to have better conversations with local schools and the community on the future shape of education in the area including any recapitation to Waerenga School, in line with any other schooling network changes.
6. We recognise that Waerenga School provides well for its students. However, when considering this recapitation we had to balance the desire of the Waerenga School Board to become a Year 1-8 full primary school and grow their roll, with the costs, impacts and the ongoing sustainability of the schooling network.

7. As such, at this time we recommend you decline the Waerenga School Board's application. However, should you wish to agree to the proposal to recapitate we have provided an option/recommendation to stage the recapitation over two years to mitigate the impacts on the schooling network.

Recommended Actions

The Ministry of Education recommends that you:

- a) **note** that due to the impacts recapitation will have on other schools the network and additional transport and operational costs we are recommending you decline the proposal from the Waerenga School Board to become a Year 1-8 full primary school;

Noted

- b) **note** when there is more certainty on the future growth and demand we will be able to have better conversations with local schools and the community on the future shape of education in the area including any recapitation to Waerenga School, in line with any other schooling network changes;

Noted

- c) **agree** to decline the proposal Waerenga School Board to recapitate and become a become a Year 1-8 full primary school and cease to be a Year 1-6 contributing primary school;

Agree / Disagree

Or

- d) **agree** to the proposal from the Waerenga School Board to recapitate in a staged approach to a year 1-7 school from 2025 and a year 1-8 school from 2026.

Agree / Disagree

- e) **note** once you have made your decision, we will develop a letter for the Waerenga School Board and local Members of Parliament for you to inform them of your decision.

Noted

We also recommend that you:

- f) **agree** that this report will be released in full once it has been considered by you. Any information that might need to be withheld will be done so in line with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982.

Agree / Disagree



Jocelyn Mikaere
Hautū | Deputy Secretary
Te Mahau | Te Tai Whenua



Hon Erica Stanford
Minister of Education

Background

1. Waerenga School is a Year 1-6 state school located in a rural setting outside Te Kauwhata. The 1 March 2024 roll of the school was 92 students with 55% living in zone and 45% living out-of-zone. The school has capacity for 100 students. Most students at the school identify as European (67%), with 19% Māori, 7% Pasifika, 6% Asian and 1% other.

Year Level	Number of students in zone	Number of students out of zone
0	0	0
1	5	4
2	9	11
3	6	10
4	9	4
5	19	7
6	4	4
Total	52	40

2. The Waerenga School Board has applied for recapitation on three other occasions in 2002, 2011, and 2012.
3. The Education Review Office reviewed Waerenga School in August 2023. Its report is attached as Annex One.

Application

4. The Waerenga Board's application to become a Year 1-8 was focussed on the well-being of their whānau.
5. In their application they noted:
"Our main purpose for this application is well-being of our whanau. I have noticed a consistent theme over the years that parents become stressed as their child enters year 6. Our families are split between keeping their younger tamariki here at Waerenga while they travel out of our area to a full primary school – sometimes up to 40km away for year7&8 schooling. It makes clear sense to be a school that can cater for our community and offer year 7&8 to our organic families to relieve the pressure."
6. The application is attached in full as Annex Two.

Network Analysis

Current Network

7. The population in Te Kauwhata is projected to grow as part of the Waikato Council's plan for the area. An additional 1,190 dwellings and corresponding infrastructure improvements are planned.
8. The growth will bring with it more school-aged students which will impact the schooling network. The timing of the development is now unsure as the work on the development has slowed. Initially this development was planned for completion in 2028, but it is now expected to be later than this.

9. The structure of the Te Kauwhata network is focused on contributing schools (Te Kauwhata Primary School and Waerenga School) feeding into the local Year 7 to 13 colleges. There are two Year 1-6 primary schools in the Te Kauwhata area contributing to Te Kauwhata College at Year 7. This structure is long-standing.
10. The majority of students in Waerenga School's zone who chose to go to alternate schools go to Maramarua School (Year 1-8, school roll 113; 22km/around 20mins from Waerenga School) and then Hauraki Plains High School (Year 9-13, school roll 843). Hauraki Plains High School is located in Ngatea and is 40km from Te Kauwhata (about 30 minutes' drive).
11. Over the last couple of years, roughly similar proportions of Year 7-13 students from the Waerenga School zone have gone to Maramarua School and Hauraki Plains College, compared to Te Kauwhata College. Refer to the below table, which shows other schools attended by students in the Waerenga School zone across years 7-13 as at March 2024.

School Name	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Total	
Hamilton Boys' High School					1	1		2	2%
Hamilton Girls' High School			2	2	2			6	7%
Hauraki Plains College			9	9	8	2		28	31%
Maramarua School	7	6						13	14%
Morrinsville Intermediate	1							1	1%
Ngāruawāhia High School				1				1	1%
Pukekohe Christian School				1				1	1%
Sacred Heart Girls' College (Ham)				1				1	1%
St Joseph's Catholic School (Fairfield)		1						1	1%
St Paul's Collegiate (Hamilton)						1		1	1%
Te Kauwhata College	5	4		12	4	4	2	31	34%
Te Wharekura o Rakaumangamanga						1		1	1%
Waikato Diocesan School For Girls					2		1	3	3%
Wesley College				1				1	1%
Grand Total	13	11	11	27	17	9	3	91	

12. The Ministry does not hold data about why families may choose to send their children to out-of-zone schools, and there are a variety of reasons they may choose to do so, including preferred school culture, convenience in relation to caregivers' workplaces, and seeking alternative curriculum or sporting opportunities.
13. Waerenga School has heard that families attending their school prefer the continuity of learning from year 1-8. They also consider that it allows for year 7 and 8 students to have leadership opportunities they would not be able to access when entering as the youngest students to a high school.
14. Hamilton City has a range of popular secondary schooling options with strong histories, and high cultural and sporting achievements. They include private schools, co-educational and single sex state schools and state integrated schools. As they generally have more students than Te Kauwhata College they are able to offer wider curriculum options and more sporting and cultural opportunities.

Current Waerenga School roll and projected impact of recapitation on roll numbers

15. There are currently 92 students with 55% living in zone and 45% living out of zone. The impacts of recapitation on the Waerenga School roll, if there is a 100% retention rate of current year 5 and 6 students over the next two years, would be 102 in 2025 and 116 in 2026.
16. This figure does not include the current Te Kauwhata Primary Year 6 students who would become eligible to attend Waerenga School. It also does not include students who are currently attending out of zone schools who may then choose to attend Waerenga School.

Property

17. Waerenga School has Ministry-funded property for 100 students. Because a high proportion of its roll is currently out-of-zone students, recapitation (at least in the short-medium term) would not generate entitlement to additional property. The Board of Waerenga School has indicated that it has its own board owned property which could help support the additional roll. We understand it is an 86sqm classroom, built in 2002, which is currently in use, and has a capacity for 25 students.
18. The mechanism we have to support the board to manage its in-zone roll within its current property provision is by amending its enrolment scheme and reducing its home zone. It would take some years however for such a change to impact its actual roll as the school has a high proportion of out-of-zone enrolments who would be entitled to stay at the school through to Year 8.

Staffing

19. If recapitation is agreed to, the additional of 34 students from 2027 would result in an increase of at least 1.4 Full Time Teacher Equivalent Entitlement (FTTE) at Waerenga School.
20. This would not be a neutral exchange. While this would result in a reduction in resource for Te Kauwhata College, it would unlikely to be substantial enough to lose a full FTTE.
21. Some parents who currently send their children to Te Kauwhata Primary school are likely to choose to instead send them to a full primary if there is one nearby, which could also result in a reduction in their resourcing. The quantity would depend on the number of families who make this choice.

Technology for Year 7 and 8 learners

22. Technology is a mandatory part of the curriculum for Year 7 and 8 learners (for example, ICT or woodworking classes). Waerenga School does not currently have resources for these classes, so any learners who attend would be entitled to be transported to a different school for this part of the curriculum.
23. The Ministry provides a conveyance allowance to schools of \$3.44 per learner per week for this transport. The exact amount this will cost per year depends on the number of learners and frequency of the courses each year.
24. For an indication of costs, the conveyance allowance once the school has fully recapitated would be in the region of \$4,678 in 2026 and \$5,366 in 2027. This is based 40 weeks of classes with 100% retention of current year 4, 5, and 6 students and no additional students joining the school.
25. The nearest school with dedicated technology space and teaching staff is Te Kauwhata College, however they have indicated they would not be willing to offer this provision to learners at Waerenga School. The next nearest school would be Maramarua School.

26. As the board of each school is their own Crown entity, the Ministry has no mandate to direct a school to accept students from another school to access their technology programme. If recapitation were approved, the Ministry would work with nearby schools to find a place for these students.
27. Legislative changes would be required to allow the Ministry to direct school boards to accept technology students. There is no legislative vehicle in place that would allow for this change before the proposed recapitation start date in term one 2025.
28. The earliest legislative changes could be made would be through ETAB 2, which will be passed in March 2025. As there has not yet been consultation with the sector or policy consideration for this change, we do not recommend this approach.
29. If you wish for us to progress legislative changes, ETAB 3 may be a more appropriate vehicle. This would allow the Ministry to undertake consultation with the sector before policy decisions are taken in mid-2025. Changes could go into place in August 2026.

School Transport

30. Waerenga School and Te Kauwhata College are part the Waikare Schools Transport Committee network of schools, that receive school transport assistance under the Direct Resourcing (DR) bulk funding scheme. This means the Ministry provides bulk funding directly to the network of schools, to organise and manage their own transport assistance for eligible students.
31. For Year 7 students currently enrolled at Te Kauwhata College who are eligible for school transport assistance, they will continue to be deemed eligible for school transport assistance for their Year 8 schooling provided the students circumstances remain the same.
32. For new Year 7 and Year 8 enrolments at Waerenga from the anticipated start date of Term 1, 2025, will be eligible for school transport assistance provided they meet the eligibility criteria.
33. If the re-capitation is approved, then a review of the Network's funding will need to be undertaken in 2025 to capture the above and to ensure funding remains within policy. The outcome of the review will be dependent on the eligibility outlined above, student numbers and their locations. Therefore, the potential impact on the funding for the schooling network is not known at this stage.
34. Waerenga School and Te Kauwhata College have enrolment zones in place, if part of this application also includes a review of the enrolment zones this may have implications on school transport assistance and the assumptions above.

Consultation

35. Clause 209 of the Education and Training Act 2020 requires that consultation be undertaken with the state schools whose rolls might be affected by the change before an application for recapitation is determined. Consultation was undertaken with the two schools that would be directly affected.
36. Te Kauwhata College do not support the application. They have identified that they are likely to experience staff losses, operational funding decline, and excess teaching spaces. The College would like to see Waerenga School working collaboratively with them and Te Kauwhata Primary School, as they consider that by working together, they could further enhance education in their shared community. They have flagged the opportunity for Waerenga School to join the local Kāhui Ako.

37. Te Kauwhata Primary School do not support the application. They have identified that they are likely to experience staff losses, operational funding decline, and excess teaching spaces.

Risks and Mitigations

Risks to approving recapitation

38. Te Kauwhata Primary has indicated that if Waerenga School were to be approved for recapitation, they would also apply to become a Year 1-8 school. This could further exacerbate balance and roll numbers within the schooling network.
39. Recapitating either school would reduce the number of learners at Te Kauwhata College, and therefore their funding entitlements.
40. Te Kauwhata College and Te Kauwhata Primary would be disappointed with the decision.
41. We would manage these risks by working with Waerenga School to update their enrolment zone to reduce the impact on these schools.

Risk to declining recapitation

42. The Waerenga School Board has indicated that some students who would prefer to go to Waerenga School over Te Kauwhata College may continue to travel out-of-zone to attend other full primary schools (such as Maramarua School). This could lead to a drop in the roll at Waerenga School.
43. Waerenga School and its community is supportive of recapitating the school and will be disappointed with the decision.
44. We would manage these risks through ongoing conversations with the schools and community about the appropriate time for any school network changes in line with the projected growth and demand in the area.

Conclusion

45. We recommended declining the recapitation of Waerenga School for the following key reasons:
- Te Kauwhata College and Te Kauwhata Primary School rolls and resourcing would be reduced.
 - Additional costs to transport learners to another school for technology provision.
 - Potential additional operational costs related to changes to the schooling network.

Next Steps

46. Once you have made a decision, the Ministry will provide you with a letter to sign and send to the Board and local Members of Parliament informing them of your decision.

Proactive Release of this Report

47. The Ministry recommends that this report be released in full once it has been considered by you. Any information that might need to be withheld will be done so in line with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982.

Annexes

Annex One – Waerenga School - Education Review Office

Annex Two - Waerenga School Recapitation Application

Proactively Released