

CONFIDENTIAL

To: The Waitaki Boys' High School Board of Trustees ("the Board")

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Report:

The Board contracted us to "further investigate" matters raised in the independent report known as the Cleave Hay Report (the "Hay Report").

On 27 August, we met with a sub-committee of the Board, comprising the chairman and one other. They confirmed our brief as:

- (1) to determine whether there was substance to the claims and allegations made in the Hay Report and
- (2) to make recommendations for further action.

All parties also agreed, at that meeting, that we would forward a copy of our report to the office of the Ministry of Education in Dunedin.

Subsequently, over a 4-week period and some 32 hours, we interviewed, at various locations, a broad and comprehensive cross-section of interested parties - including current staff at WBHS, the Rector and Deputy Rector, former staff and others. Face-to-face interviews, email correspondence, letters and exit interviews provided an extensive, varied and balanced representation of perspectives.

We have reviewed this material at length. In our opinion based on the investigations we have carried out the information we have gained confirms the findings of the Hay Report.

It is our opinion that:

- There *is* a culture of bullying in the school: We have identified a management style that is likely characterised by "fear and favour" and were surprised by the number of interviewees who would speak to us only on condition of anonymity and strict confidentiality. Many respondents provided details of what they considered to be unethical and unprofessional conduct by the Rector and certain other senior staff. Many teachers have left the school since the Rector began there because they believed that they could no longer work in the environment.

- The current teaching staff is significantly polarised; there have been, and are, “winners and losers” as a result of the Rector’s HR and management practices. The management style appears to have been ineffective in building a cohesive team.
- The policies, procedures and systems in place for managing student behaviour are largely ineffective and appear poorly implemented. This has likely led to the high levels of stress and low morale amongst teachers – many of whom told us they are afraid to speak out, fearing that they will be blamed or bullied or “targeted”.
- Policies around employment, human resources and personnel management, are not well understood, seem often to have been poorly crafted, and reflect no or little evidence of effective consultation.
- Board-level policy decisions - around the introduction of the Cambridge Examination system, for example, or around other matters, including:
 - the current student management system
 - employment conditions for part-time, fixed-term and permanent teachers,
 - the management and control of board-level correspondence,
 - complaints from staff and parents - especially about the Rector,
 - relationships with neighbouring schools,
 - future development plans,
 - processes and procedures in respect of teacher competence,
 - information about boarding enrolment and scholarship policies,

have all, in our view, been developed, communicated and implemented poorly and ineffectively.

- Some instances of management practices could be perceived as incompetent, disingenuous, unprofessional, potentially divisive and at times maybe vindictive.
- The extent of mismanagement constitutes a failure at a governance level and, in our view; the Board of Trustees is currently at risk of considerable personal- grievance litigation.
- There appears to be a lack of, or very poor, governance structures to guide processes. This has led to the Rector and Senior Management Team usurping much of the Board’s governance role and functions. The board appears in our view to have lost control of its governance function and the Rector and senior management team have filled that vacuum.

Conclusion:

Over the past 4 weeks, we have been made aware of extensive information, from interviews and other sources, reviewed it thoroughly and verified that the Hay report is in our view substantially correct.

We have found that there is considerable disaffection and lack of trust in school governance, leadership and management - amongst staff and within the community. It has led to what is a toxic environment for many staff and it is most likely impacting on student learning and well-being. It is unlikely that this will change as long as the current governance arrangements and management structures remain in place.

In our view, the Board has been ineffective in meeting the responsibilities of its governance role, which is to determine the school's policy framework and to direct, work with and oversee the Rector and management team in implementing it. Although some staff and parents recognise some good qualities, it is clear that the current management style and practices put the Board and the school at considerable risk. This needs to be rectified urgently and considerable reform and change is called for.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Michael Corkery', written in a cursive style.

Michael Corkery

Alan McLay