

# Hawke's Bay Secondary School Principals' Association

Hon Ms Hekia Parata  
Minister of Education  
Parliament Buildings  
Private Bag 18041  
WELLINGTON 6160

By email: [hekia.parata@national.org.nz](mailto:hekia.parata@national.org.nz)

Tena koe Ms Parata

I write on behalf of the Hawke's Bay Secondary School Principals' Association to express our concern at the process and establishment of the PSKH Te Aratika Academy by the Te Aratika Charitable Trust in Hawke's Bay.

The announcement that this Partnership School was being established took us by surprise. No consultation with local schools preceded the press release, even though discussions must have been proceeding for a considerable length of time. Therefore, no discussion has been possible about how the current concerns for Maori boys in Hawke's Bay could have been addressed within the existing network of schools.

It is our understanding that the local Ministry of Education office was also taken by surprise by the announcement. The local knowledge available in the Ministry office and in the region's existing schools has not been treated as the rich resource it is. The depth of passion and commitment we have to seeing the success of our rangatahi has not been plumbed. We share your concern for the future of our Maori young people, and we have special knowledge of their local needs, yet we have been excluded from discussions about what can be done for and with them. Moreover, an opportunity has been missed to invest the funds into a project supported by local schools, utilising existing networks and infrastructure.

We are also surprised to discover that students will be recruited from our schools. Ngati Kahugnunu Inc's endorsement of the charter school's establishment seems to be based on the belief that it "seeks to reverse the negative trajectories of some of our most at-risk rangatahi." Yet in answer to our questions, the trust has said that it is "required to operate an open enrolment policy so any male student wishing to access the educational opportunities on offer would be eligible to submit an enrolment application." Further, that "The school has not targeted HB's alternative education students," yet we would maintain that these are amongst the most needy in the region. Is it your intention that PSKH Te Aratika Academy recruit students who are already succeeding and thriving in local schools? Is it your intention that the school does not have a special mission to those who have not coped in the mainstream?

We already have upwards of 20 high schools operating in the Napier-Hastings region. We consider it to be an unfortunate decision to establish a partnership school here, and would appreciate an explanation as to how and why this has come about without consultation.

Yours sincerely



**Stephen Hensman**  
Chair, Hawke's Bay Secondary Principals' Association

Copy to: Roy Sye, Katrina Casey, Hon Craig Foss, Casey Tapara, Meka Whitiri, Stuart Nash