



## Re-engaging with your Community – The St Paul's Experience

### **Preamble:**

- ISNZ member schools statistics for 2011 indicated that there was a 0.16% decrease in secondary school numbers and 1.14% decrease in students boarding in ISNZ member schools.
- St Paul's Collegiate is currently a school which is operating against the overall trend in the independent sector, having experienced substantial roll growth over the past two years (i.e. 565 in July 2009, 604 March 2010, 642 July 2011) with a roll predicted in March 2012 to be at a historic high, despite the recession (i.e. 680 students).
- St Paul's position in 2009 was grim (i.e. death of Boarding Housemaster, resignation of Headmaster, low staff morale, disengaged parents and Old Collegians) – sandwiched between high performing local state day schools (i.e. Waikato Diocesan, Hillcrest High School and Hamilton Boys' High School), high performing local independent day/boarding school (St Peter's) and within the next five years the prospect of a new Decile 10 state day school being constructed 5km north at Rototuna.

### **Establishing what needs to be done:**

#### Community Survey:

- In October 2009, we undertook a comprehensive community survey asking parents to comment on why they selected St Paul's; how they viewed our performance in our key cornerstones of academic excellence, sporting endeavour, cultural participation and the Christian Dimension; and how they rated their St Paul's experience overall (i.e. results and feedback was provided progressively on each section of the survey in newsletters in 2010).

#### Interviewing all staff:

- Each teaching staff member was given a half hour interview in Term One, 2010 with the Headmaster and asked what was special about St Paul's and what were the frustrations and things we as a School need to work on.

#### Staff Forum:

- Staff were provided with a summary of the community survey results, before discussing what were St Paul's points of difference and what we needed to consider in order to address parental perceptions.

## **Re-enforcing our points of difference/focus:**

### Promoting St Paul's five points of difference:

- Personalised education (class sizes/size of school)
- Holistic approach to the development of young people (Sport, Culture, Christian Dimension)
- Growth through adventure (Tihoi – unique learning environment)
- 'Best for Boys' – single sex junior school and co-educational senior school.
- Achieving 'Personal Bests' from the classroom.

### Articulating the message in the community:

- A user-friendly website.
- Meeting with groups of parents; boarders; day boys; in their regions (BOP, Poverty Bay, King Country, Counties Manukau).
- Restructured newsletter.
- Re-engaging with Old Collegians – regional social events, mini-reunions, promotion on the website.
- New parent interviews with the Headmaster.

### Showing that we mean business:

- Making a statement on School Culture (formal uniform worn twice a week, Headmaster's runs, hair length/standards of dress).
- Restructuring senior leadership team.
- Boys' Focus Group – Celia Lashlie, John Badalament, involvement in IBSC.
- Establishing what our girls want – interviewing them for feedback on their experiences.
- Focus on the future – recabling, virtualisation of servers and 'refreshing' PC platform.
- Modernisation of facilities – Old Collegians' Pavilion, Management Centre, Boarding Houses, Dining Room.

### Broadening our appeal – Engaging our students:

- Emphasis on personalising our experience – introduction of Teacher Aides.
- Introduction of new courses – Year 13 Construction (built a Fale in Samoa and Tihoi House at Hamilton campus); TOLA – Tihoi Outdoor Leadership Academy for Year 13; introduction of Ag. Hort. Science and new language options (Spanish and Maori at Year 9).
- Prefect Leadership Camp at Tihoi and broadening leadership opportunities (I-Team).

### **How can we continue to get our message out there?:**

- The use of radio (Yr 10 and Yr 13 Tihoi programmes).
- Advertorials in local newspapers.
- The prominent role of the website in prospective family's decision making.
- Meeting stakeholders "at their place".
- "sweating the little stuff"

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