

Independent Schools of
New Zealand
PO Box 5222
Level 8, 86-90 Lambton Quay
Wellington 6145

Phone: +64 4 471 2022
Fax: +64 4 472 4635
Email: info@isnz.org.nz

ISNZ Newsletter

To all Chairpersons, Principals and Bursars
(Confidential—for members only)

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ISNZ welcomes Deborah James to the position of Executive Director



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Deborah James has been appointed as the new Executive Director of Independent Schools of New Zealand (ISNZ). ISNZ is a Wellington-based organisation that represents 80% of the 30,000 New Zealand children who are educated in the private sector. Ms James is currently the Director of Development at St Margaret's College in Christchurch.

A trained teacher with a strong history of voluntary and professional work in not for profit organisations Ms James has had a long involvement with independent schools. She was a student at Chilton St James School in Lower Hutt and more recently she served on the Selwyn House School board for 12 years, the last four as Chairman.

Chairperson of ISNZ Peter Ferguson welcomes the appointment of Ms James to the role of Executive Director. "Ms James has both the experience and understanding of the nature of independent schools, and the passion for the important role they play in New Zealand, to ensure that she will serve our organisation extremely well", said Mr Ferguson.

Private sector rolls have increased by over 25% since 2000 said Mr Ferguson, as parents are obviously increasingly concerned that they make the best educational decision for their children. ISNZ works to support the continuing development of its 44 member schools, and to be a voice for choice in education.

Ms James will replace the current Executive Director Joy Quigley at the end of February. Joy Quigley is moving to Kerikeri with her husband.

The three Rs for the 21st Century: Resilience, Relationships and Respect

**ISNZ conference 23-24 May 2008
Hyatt Regent Hotel, Princes Street, Auckland**

When Bill Clinton was asked what the equivalent of the Lunar Landing would be in the 21st Century he replied it would be cross cultural understanding. If we are to survive on this planet together we need to improve our relationships – be they far away or close by. We need to develop greater respect for our planet and for all its occupants, we need to be more resilient when adversity strikes.

Schools will always place an emphasis on Reading 'riting and 'rithmetic, now with their dressed-up names of literacy and numeracy incorporating wider meaning.

In addition ISNZ Member Schools have at their heart a philosophy based on “old-fashioned values”, part of which has a new dressed-up name of relationships and respect. It is reasonable that language evolves and is influenced by fashion the same as clothes are. Sometimes there is a complete discard of the old, other times the changes go in cycles. The conference theme and Bill Clinton are not suggesting that we have to change our values, more that they have to be more inclusive of a wider group. There is no suggestion that an abhorrent act is acceptable because it has its underpinnings in a cultural tradition, for instance activities such as binding Chinese girls' feet, castrato, female circumcision, hitting children over the head (or at all!) are all now rightly condemned. Instead, technology brings a new wave of issues that require different techniques to build relationships and ensure respect. Ongoing strife and war requires us to re-evaluate the most effective ways to ensure safety and well-being for all children.

Resilience also has an interesting history albeit under different names. For instance, the rites of passage into adulthood has taken many forms over the past millenniums as communities sought to promote the qualities they held dear. Kurt Hahn (founder of Outward Bound) noted that the survivors of downed ships in WW2 had experienced and survived previous rigours, often in WW1 and through that they had developed a will and a capacity to overcome incredible challenges. He strongly believed that you could train the mind as well as the body to face and overcome adversity be it mental or physical. Top athletes attest that winning is more about the mind than the body. Resilient people develop techniques that allow them to bend, but not break.

The speakers that we have lined up for the 2008 ISNZ conference will all relate to this theme, focusing on strengthening resilience, strengthening relationships between children, their families, the school and the wider school community and having respect for all we have an impact on, be it people or things.

Go to the ISNZ website www.isnz.org.nz to register for the 2008 ISNZ conference and for more information about speakers Dr Michael Carr-Gregg, Dr Michael Grose, Dr Derek Rogers, Dr Rosalind Hursthouse and Deborah Stevens.

Additional workshops looking further into recent ISNZ research on independent school market share and public attitudes to independent schools will be available, plus an engaging and challenging look at the child's need to play.

Auckland delegates—give yourselves a treat, especially on Saturday night and stay over at the Hyatt Regency following the conference dinner.

The after dinner speaker is John Ansell—Wordsmith extraordinaire.

Our regular, and some new sponsors, will also be present at the conference. We thank them for their ongoing support, which in part assists us with conference costs.

**Register now www.isnz.org.nz/conference
and book your accommodation at the Hyatt Regency Hotel**

(AHIS and ASBA delegates can also register for their conferences here.)

Draft AHIS and ISNZ programmes enclosed

Summer talk

Following on from the last newsletter where hard numbers were talked, here are some further discussion topics for barbeques and lunch-room chat

The latest round of teacher remuneration settlements will have another profound impact on our schools who, unlike state and state integrated schools, do not have these costs immediately provided for by the state (ie taxpayer).

There has been a 42% real decrease in the value of the per capita state grant since the Labour led government imposed the cap on money provided for private schools in 2000. At the same time they reinterpreted the regulations around the integration act to make it much more difficult for independent schools to integrate - indeed only a handful have since 2000, all but two being Catholic.

Meanwhile a number of state integrated schools have successfully applied to have their roll cap lifted (allowed if they can show reason, like pressure on "the network of state schools" and if they have great demand for their special character, some of which is rather broad in interpretation).

Some other private schools have integrated "by the back-door" by becoming satellite schools of currently integrated schools.

Many independent schools balk at the thought of giving up their independence and having to report to the Ministry of Education for various aspects of their operation, and being constrained by other requirements. One of the major constraints has been the requirement to teach the national curriculum, but since the introduction of NCEA there has been far greater willingness for state and state integrated schools to implement alternative curriculum to sit alongside the national curriculum.

What has been intriguing me has been the enthusiasm with which many of the Christian integrated schools have taken the more open ended approach to the national curriculum by teaching it from a biblical world view. This is not a criticism of them doing so - more power to them for using this to their advantage.

However now that there is this obviously acceptable broader approach to implementing the curriculum one has to ask "why not us" when it comes to more funding? Integrated schools currently receive over 91% of the funding available for an equivalent decile state school. The proprietors still own (or can now lease) their land and buildings, and as we know, as long as they continue to have a mortgage to bring their buildings up to an acceptable level (and acceptable is at quite a high standard in many such schools) then the fees can be pretty high - over \$8,000 in some state integrated schools.

A number of state and state integrated schools have occasionally taken a somewhat indifferent, and sometimes hard nosed approach to some Ministry requirements. Their size, status and the demeanour of their boards and principals enable them to get away with it. Our recent Colmar Brunton research indicates that the public think many are independent of the state. Again one asks "why not us?" to have this freedom plus funding.

Our schools educate New Zealand children of New Zealand taxpayers. Most of them use the National Curriculum as a base document (it helps meet the Education Act requirement that they "inculcate sentiments of patriotism and loyalty"). Many of our schools have a special character that is as strong, if not stronger, as most state integrated schools, and as with the latter, sufficiently flexible to allow them to enrol those who previously would not have met the more stringent requirements of the preferential roll.

Kura Kaupapa, Montessori, Hare Krishna, Rudolph Steiner ... there is a long list of schools with different philosophies. With such a broad approach taken under the state umbrella, isn't it timely to break down all the barriers about funding? Who cares who owns or operates the school as long as the children are receiving a quality education in a place that enhances their wellbeing.

Springbank most outstanding enterprise school in Northland

ISNZ Member School Springbank has been announced as Northland's Most Enterprising School for 2007, for the third time. Springbank was established by proprietors Bob and Sophia Warren in 1996 with enterprise as its special character within a high quality all round education. They involve all students, from pre-school to year 13, in enterprise education in varying degrees. The school has created a Business Hall of Fame and Distinguished Business Lecture Series. Springbank also works with many community groups such as Riding for the Disabled, The Centre and Puketi Forest Trust, World Vision, The Cancer Society and the Heart Foundation of NZ.

Principal, Sophia Warren, is an Independent Schools Association representative on the ISNZ executive and brings both a smaller school and a rural school perspective to the board meetings.

It is not easy for smaller independent schools to operate as the sole independent school in more rural areas, sometimes in an hostile local education environment.

ISNZ Member Schools such as Springbank in Kerikeri, Rangitaiki Independent School near Whakatane, Matahui Road near Katikati and Waihi near Temuka (South Canterbury) have all contributed significantly to raising the level of education locally because they do offer choice for parents. Sometimes even the threat of choice is enough to force other schools to reconsider how they can improve what they are doing. The recent OECD PISA report noted that school results improved significantly when families had two or more schools to choose from. Choice is more likely to be the case in more urban areas, and it takes a level of faith to open an independent school in a more rural area.

As they worry about the mortgage in the middle of the night the boards/owners of these independent schools can take some small comfort from knowing they have improved New Zealand's education, although we do appreciate that altruism doesn't pay the bills.

Computer games altering young minds; a serious concern or latter day Luddite reaction?

Children under seven should be banned from playing computer games because it could damage their attention span, leads to children's brains developing differently, and may be behind the increase in the diagnosis of attention-deficit disorder says Jane Healy, an educational psychologist speaking at a seminar discussing the effect of technology on young children's brains. She said most children should be kept away from computer games until they are at least seven and their brains have had time to develop.

A decade on from the introduction of "computer games" teachers must be now well positioned to make some informed comment about whether Ms Healy's fears are just those of a latter day Luddite, or that there is a basis of truth in her argument. Certainly the constant action, sound and light, some with disturbing content, is far different from the childhood games of the previous generation, when watching television too much was considered the evil. Prior to that it was reading comics, and before that too much reading of books generally following the development of the mass printing of children's books.

Most of us probably have an uneasy sense that there might be some truth in Ms Healy's assertions. New scanning techniques show that young brains do develop differently when there is a significant shift in sensory input, be it from a preponderance of fear or anxiety or in security in their lives. It is the result of young brains being bathed in cortisol, some brain researchers say, for prolonged periods.

The question we have to ask is if the sensory input that comes from computer games is necessarily bad, or is it another turning in mankind's social and evolutionary development that requires yet another adjustment in teaching and parenting styles?

National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) website

NAIS has over 1000 member schools and a number of affiliated international organisations, of which ISNZ is one. We have been developing closer links since NAIS President Patrick Bassett came to the ISNZ conference in 2003.

Their larger resource base enables them to produce very significant research and tools to assist independent schools with governance, headship, finance and resourcing issues, development, marketing and communication.

You can access the Members' Only section by going to www.nais.org and then clicking on the members' section and using 33673 as the username and joyisnz as the password.

This password will change in time but we will let you know when the new password is required.

If you wish to purchase some of their publications either do it personally, or contact ISNZ as there are discounts for bulk purchases, as well as a reduction in shipping and packages fees. ISNZ can find out if other schools wish to purchase the same publication.

Charities Commission update from overseas—lessons for ISNZ Member Schools

In New Zealand we are probably wise to keep a watching brief on what is happening with other like countries' charities commissions and it is useful to note that the UK Charity Commission has just published new guidelines that affect Britain's private schools. The schools must show they are aiding "people in poverty" if they are to keep tax breaks worth up to \$260 million. (From an article in The Independent.) Any school that fails to take a proactive role in helping those from poorer backgrounds risks losing its charitable status, warned the guidance, which is set to come into effect in March 2009. Working with other schools that enrol disadvantaged students is likely to be taken into account, as well as enrolling such students on scholarships.

Private schools in the UK have noted that the rules are less draconian than they could have been, but there is still a lack of clarity over terms such as "showing public benefit" and helping "people in poverty".

Many ISNZ Member Schools have a number of programmes that assist them to show they are performing a "public benefit" although most of them have made a point about not being public about it as that is part of their philosophy.

It is timely to ensure such programmes are well documented even if not necessarily public knowledge.

HISST Grants

Apply for 2008 grants by 31 March 2008. See wall poster sent to schools in December 2007 for details.

What is the low point of your resilience? Is it ...

Trying to sell a house in today's less than buoyant market? Idiots in the supermarket carpark? Lack of rain, too much rain, edginess about the finance company you entrusted with your hard earned dollars?

The following figures are from www.miniature-earth.com . They do not claim to be precise, but it does help keep life in perspective.

If the world population was reduced to 100 people living in a small village

61 people would be Asian
12 people would be European
8 people would be from North America
5 people would be from South America including the Caribbean
13 people would be from Africa
1 person would be from Oceania [Whom would we choose?]

50 would be female and 50 would be male
47 would live in an urban area
9 would be disabled
33 would be Christian
18 would be Muslim
14 would be Hindi
16 would be non religious
6 would be Buddhist

43 would be without basic sanitation
18 would not have an improved water supply
6 people would own 59% of all the wealth of the community
13 would be hungry or malnourished
14 would not be able to read
7 would have a secondary education
12 would have a computer
3 would have internet access
1 adult aged between 15 and 49 would have HIV/AIDS

If you have a refrigerator to keep your food in, your clothes are hanging in a closet, and you sleep in a bed with a roof over your head, you are richer than 75% of the village's population.

If you have a bank account you are one of 30% of the richest people.

18 villagers struggle to live on less than US\$1 per day
53 live on US\$2 per day or less

And the whole village will spend US\$1.2 trillion on military requirements and US\$100 billion on development aid.

ISNZ research

Colmar Brunton Public Attitudes to Independent Schools

New Executive Director, Deborah James, has been analysing this data and will be releasing it when she takes up her position. There will also be further opportunity to explore its findings, and ways to build on them, during a workshop at the ISNZ conference.

Castalia research on Independent Schools Market Share

Using roll information from the past decade, then projecting forward 10 plus 10 years, this document provides useful information for ISNZ Member Schools when they are predicting future roll growth. It will incorporate the latest Ministry of Education roll projection figures which are currently with the Minister of Education awaiting Cabinet sign off.

It is expected that this research will be particularly helpful for ISNZ Member Schools that do not have dedicated personnel working in this area.

Researcher, John Beckett (who also authored the 2003 NZIER report "Funding Arrangements for Independent Schools"), will also take a workshop at the ISNZ conference to further explore ways an ISNZ Member School can use this information.

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Welcome to new Principals in 2008

Jo An Radojkovich, Hill Top School

If you have recently started in your new position as a board Chair, Principal or Bursar, remember no matter what happens something similar will have happened in another ISNZ Member School before and you only need to ask to get some support as you work through the issue. Inevitably the joys outweigh the horrors of your new position but some how joys don't keep you awake at night.

Dates for 2008

Finalised:

21-24 May—Annual conference

15 July—Welcome to independent schools, Christchurch

8 August—New board induction seminar, Wellington Airport Conference Centre

22 August—Non ISNZ Member Forum, Auckland or Wellington

1-2 September—Forum

2 September—Chairs' seminar (half day with Principals), Holiday Inn, Wellington

16 September—PAs, Wellington Airport Conference Centre

To be finalised:

Executive meetings

CEO Day—unfortunately scheduled for the date that Maadi Cup was moved to so shall now have to be altered. Date to be advised.

Aspiring Leaders, Hamilton

Farewell from Joy Quigley

As this is my last newsletter, I take this opportunity to thank you ISNZ Member Schools and sponsors very much for your support and friendship over the past seven years and seven months. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time with ISNZ, combining my passion for choice in education with working with so many professional and positive people. I look forward to working in the background with Deborah over the coming months and welcome her to the position of Executive Director.

Thank you.

JoyQ

Enclosures:

1. Managing Principal appraisal (performance review) - good practice framework. STANEWS November/December 2007 (Chairs and Principals)
2. Dealing with the "Irrational" Negotiator, Working Knowledge, Harvard Business School (All)
3. The New Disciples, Education Review 18 January 2008
4. Package of governance principles and good practice for Chairs.