

MAUNGATAPERE SCHOOL

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Principal: Mrs J. Eagles
Chairperson: Mr D Adams

6 October 2015

Dear Dave

The Maungatapere School Board of Trustees has asked me to respond to your letter regarding your concerns around the Bible in Schools programme at our school.

We appreciate the points you have made and also acknowledge that within our school community there will be people with opinions at all points of the continuum.

Our Board of Trustees discussed your presentation at some length and made the following points:

- The Education Act states it is up to the Board of Trustees to decide if religious instruction or Bible in Schools takes place.
- The school enrolment form has a yes/no response to participation when children first attend.
- There is the opportunity to not participate in the programme at any time and this is communicated to the community before the programme begins at the start of each year.
- Children not participating are not discriminated against in any way and are some of several groups who do not participate or attend. There is no breach of the human rights act.
- NZ Bill of Rights states everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief, including the right to hold opinions without interference.
- We believe the school community are intelligent and experienced enough to know what is involved and make a decision for themselves or ask questions if they want further information.

The Board has looked at what is happening at Red Beach School which is currently before the High Court and believe the outcome of this may define the issue in the future.

Until that is resolved the Board has decided to continue with their current stance. The Bible in Schools programme has been a part of the school for a very long time and up until this time there have been no issues, as any families not wishing to participate have exercised their right not to.

We appreciate that you feel passionate in relation to your beliefs but also appreciate there are other members of our school community who feel just as passionate about wanting it to continue and are equally able to justify its inclusion.

We believe our community is generally considerate of all points of view and as representatives of our community want to reflect this and not be influenced by our own personal beliefs.

The current situation we believe allows for our community to do this.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dean Adams', written in a cursive style.

Dean Adams
Board of Trustees Chairperson
Maungatapere School