

A Spotlight on collaboration

Part 3 of 5

Sylvia Park School (SPS)



To finish we explored ideas around a recently circulated NZ Herald Opinion piece, [School as we know it has gone; how can we rethink education?](#) The effect of COVID-19 is seen as widening the gap between students already at a disadvantage — like those without internet and in transitional housing — and those able to study at home with ease. We questioned if it was a social divide. Or was it something else?

Discussion centered around the understanding that the teachers' positive learnings gained through lockdown were wanting to be implemented. Some of these were manageable inside their own classrooms however other ideas required leadership influence and direction. This led to the following questions being raised around Leadership roles within our system:

- » If we are pushing the reset button where will leadership come from?
- » Can principals be held accountable for the quality of service and care provided during lockdown?
- » How can we measure the moral purpose or agenda of those in Principal roles?
- » What lens is applied to Principal appraisals?

What will we do differently to create our 'new normal' when we return to school (beyond today)?		
25 responses		
Flexible learning times	12%	'Could students choose what they do, when they do it? For the year 7/8 change starting time later. Start for deeper learning later, they could choose what they do in the morning.'
Flexible environments	16%	'Use the outdoor classroom as a learning space for students.'
Utilising expertise of staff/support staff/whānau	4%	'How could we utilise the expertise of our teacher aides and whānau? E.g. Ercan as an artist, Tina teaching Tongan language.'
Student choice/agency	20%	'Creating a youth advisory across the Kāhui Ako.' and 'Giving students a voice when they return.'
Digital platforms/access/learning	20%	'Digital technologies (parents see the importance).'
Building Kāhui Ako relationship	12%	'Year 8's working with students OTHC (in year 9). How could students work together? Students from year 9 with year 8 students. Peer mentors. Shared learning experiences.'
Rethinking curriculum subjects/delivery	8%	'Having to rethink NCEA - looking at cross curricular links. Initial output is completely different.'

SPS Table 2

The themed evidence in table 3 below continues the work of the Think Tank session. The first three questions were also posed to our entire SPS teaching staff and include the Think Tank data.

What worked really well? (BENEFITS)	%	What has been difficult? (BARRIERS)	%	What will we do differently to create our 'new normal' when we return to school? (BEYOND TODAY)	%
76 responses		42 responses		41 responses	
Collaborative planning	5	Lack of collaborative planning	2	More online opportunities	7
SPS Connect - (Co-constructed responsive pedagogical platform)	11	No access to internet Internet connectivity No access to devices Devices not working properly	29	More student choice Giving students a voice	32
Student Agency	18	Teachers missing physical classroom & relationships	2	Better utilisation of classroom devices	11
Established platforms (Google and Seesaw)	12	Parents lack of confidence Parents still working from home Parents needing more support	24	Continue SPS Connect (Co-constructed responsive pedagogical platform)	7
Whānau engagement / relationships / connection / Whānau as teachers	21	Students lack of confidence on platforms Disengaged students Students with devices but not using them Lack of prior exposure to platforms	24	Passion projects	7
Student led learning - passions	7	Lack of ESOL/ support staff input	7	Flexible Environments	24
Support staff engaged	3	Miscommunication via online	5	Flexible working times	7
Environment	8	Miscellaneous	7	Utilising expertise of staff/ support staff/ whānau	5
Students as teachers	5				
Feedback	7				
Miscellaneous	3				

SPS Table 3

Conclusion

Collaborating with diverse people helped us to make sense of our experiences and to extend our thinking. We were able to plan a positive way forward for our schools as a result.