

Back to school as the principal

It was a trip down memory lane for Livestock Improvement Corporation chief executive Mark Dewdney as he headed back to Hamilton Boys' High School this week – this time as principal.

Mr Dewdney was one of 22 Waikato business heavyweights who left their boardrooms and headed back to school as part of the COMET Principal For a Day programme.

A Boys' High old boy, Mr Dewdney described his Wednesday visit as a "walk down memory lane".

He attended the school from 1979 to 1984 and was even taught English by principal Susan Hassall.

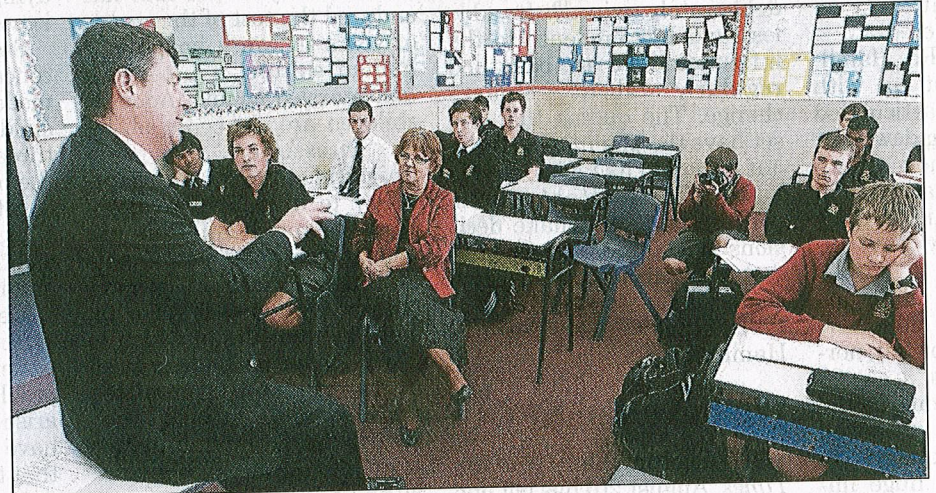
"The first thing we did was go through my old report card," Mr Dewdney said. "She said I was a capable student, works well at all times. But I thought the B was a little unfair."

Mr Dewdney, who has not been back to the school since he left, was surprised to see so many of his old teachers still there.

He was also amazed at how much the school had grown.

"When I was here there was about 1000 students. Now there about 2000."

Mr Dewdney, who went on to study accounting, marketing and law at Waikato University, shadowed Mrs Hassall



Inspired: Mark Dewdney talks to Hamilton Boy's High students. Photo: MARK TAYLOR

for much of the day.

"There are a lot of similarities between being a chief executive and principal, like managing people and setting a vision.

"Although I think being a principal would be harder."

He also spoke to several classes of students about his background.

But he said the real highlight was watching the Boys' High first XV rugby team take on Rotorua Boys' high.

"This is better than watching the All

Blacks," he said.

This was the second year the programme had run. It aims to connect the business world with secondary school education system at the leadership level.

Other business people to go back to school yesterday included Tainui Group Holding chief executive Mike Pohio, Waikato Chamber of Commerce chief executive Wayne Walford, CPS chief executive Anthea Simcock and Taupo Mayor Rick Cooper.