

IMPRESS ME: All 10 Whangarei mayoral candidates, including Warren Slater, standing, fronted up to Whangarei Boys' High School yesterday to tell Year 13 students about their plans for the district if elected. **PICTURE / JOHN STONE**

Candidates front up to young voters

by Mike Dinsdale

Whangarei's youth want to become more involved in how the district is run and the mayoral hopefuls have been quizzed on what they are going to do for them.

All 10 Whangarei mayoral candidates, incumbent Stan Semenov, Morris Cutforth, sitting councillor Vince Cocurullo, Paul Jeeves, Warren Slater, Isopo Samu, Simon Vallings, Mita Kayal Ruri, Don Hedges and Terry Burkhardt, faced students at Whangarei Boys' High School yesterday.

About 70 Year 13 students heard the candidates telling them why they felt the youth should vote for them and what their visions for the district were should they become mayor.

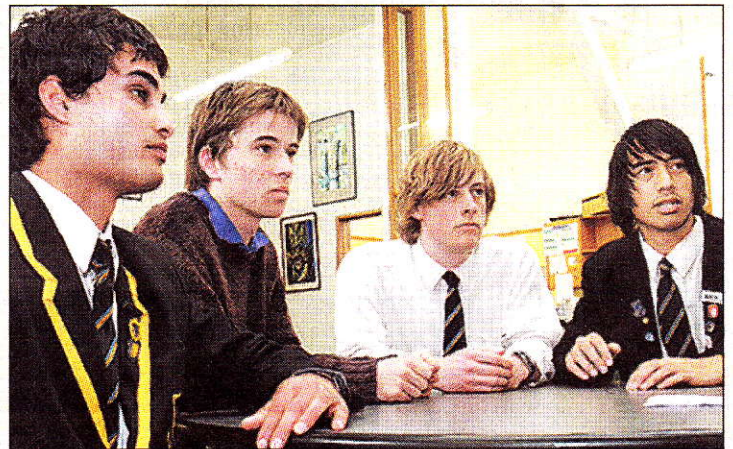
Questions the candidates faced included how they planned to stimulate the economy, their opinion on

recent alcohol law reforms, their plans to promote Whangarei and attract tourists and investment, their vision for the district and how they would get youth more engaged in the community.

WBHS head boy Gaurev Correa and fellow Year 13 students Andrei Gilbert, Matthew Scott and Te Hira Baker were all pleased the politicians took time out to hear them, but felt more could be done to engage the district's youth.

Gaurev said youth forums, where youngsters could express their views to the council, would help but it was important that the council then listened to what they had to say.

Matthew said a council youth liaison officer would be a good idea to find out what the district's young folk wanted. He said today's youth felt disenfranchised from local body politics and that their



VOTERS: Whangarei Boys' High School head boy Gaurev Correa and fellow Year 13 students Andrei Gilbert, Matthew Scott and Te Hira Baker outline what they want from the next mayor of Whangarei. **PICTURE / JOHN STONE**

voice was not being heard.

"We want to be listened to, not preached to," he said.

Andrei said providing more varied activities would be a way of steering youth away from alcohol and drugs and

into more positive outcomes. Boys' High headmaster Al Kirk said the meeting was a great chance for the students, who wrote the questions themselves, to know what the candidates stood for.