



PPTA TE WEHENGARUA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2022

REFLECTING ON THE EDUCATION ACCORD 2019 - 2022



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RECOMMENDATION

1. That the report be received.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. In the 2019 Collective Agreement settlement, the Tripartite Education Accord agreement between NZEI, PPTA Te Wehengarua and the Ministry of Education was established. The intent of the Accord was to provide a forum to find solutions to teachers' workload issues.
- 1.2. An Accord governance group, made up of the leaders of each of the organisations, was set up and has met regularly since late 2019. The group had a facilitator, who trained them in interests-based negotiation, with the hope that they might move past the traditional positions imposed by the system and towards outcomes that would benefit all parties.
- 1.3. While the Accord has proved beneficial in some respects, it is fair to say that it has not achieved significant workload mitigation for teachers.

2. SUCCESSES

- 2.1 There are two things that can be said to have genuinely reduced teacher workload (at least for some members) - the change from appraisal to professional growth cycle (PGC) and the allocation of teacher-only days to prepare for the changes to NCEA. Both of these were commitments made by the Minister at the conclusion of the 2019 STCA settlement that were progressed by the Accord process. While neither has been perfect, they can be said to have been of benefit to many teachers. This indicates that the Accord has functioned best when it is implementing an undertaking that has political commitment and resourcing.
- 2.2 Another clear success was in the first stages of the pandemic, when we found ourselves suddenly in lockdown. The Accord was used as the vehicle for Covid support and management decisions. It became the template for dealing with the initial crisis. While groups like SPANZ and NZPF were involved, Accord partners chaired the meetings, strengthening the voice of teachers in the space.
- 2.3 The Accord governance group has met regularly, usually once a month, and has discussed relevant educational issues seriously. There may not have been as much progress on workload issues as we wanted, but they have met, conversed, and maintained working relationships throughout. Despite significant disagreements and rumblings of disbanding the Accord, none of the parties has walked away. They have also agreed to continue meeting during the first half of 2022, even though Collective Bargaining provided the Ministry a reason to cease these meetings.
- 2.4 The routine of meeting regularly to discuss whatever issues are pressing is beneficial. Given the positional nature of the system, keeping the parties in the room talking to each other, may not be enough to be a "win" but it is certainly a positive.

3. CHALLENGES

- 3.1 The main barrier to the Accord achieving meaningful workload reduction was that there was no resourcing or funding to take the necessary action.
- 3.2 Over the course of the last two years, the Accord saw the creation of 10 sub-groups:
- Compliance reduction
 - Personalisation of learning
 - Children with complex additional needs
 - Wellbeing
 - Section 18a / Delegate release time
 - NCEA review Teacher only days
 - Covid-19 response
 - Kāhui Ako
 - Teacher Aide Funding
 - Teacher Aide Career Pathways
- 3.3 The subgroups were made up of representatives of the three Accord organisations, and sometimes other relevant groups such as the Secondary Principals' Association of New Zealand, New Zealand Principals' Federation, or the School Trustees Association. These subgroups were not resourced to implement changes. Their function was to make recommendations to the Accord governance group. Any recommendation that required on-going funding by the Ministry of Education was never progressed further, highlighting the need for political will and allocated budget in order for the Accord to be successful.
- 3.4 The Accord subgroups have produced three pieces of original research.¹ The governance group may not have been able to take any of the suggested actions, but this research remains available to us for use in the future.

4. THE “PRE-BARGAINING” EXPERIMENT

- 4.1 The Accord agreement provided for a series of “pre-bargaining” meetings between the three parties. The reality of the bargaining process in the time of Covid meant the timing of these meetings became problematic. PPTA Te Wehengarua did not have an endorsed claim prior to the agreed start date of the meetings and were therefore unable to discuss details of the proposed claims outside of the membership space.

¹ This research includes a report from the Children with Complex Additional Needs subgroup, and two from the Personalisation of Learning subgroup. Further research on the subject of the Teacher Aide Career Pathways is proposed.

4.2 The most notable outcome of these meetings was the inclusion of an additional claim in PPTA Te Wehengarua’s claims package. This is the claim to discuss the areas of shared interest that have been identified during the pre-bargaining conversations. The claim is not for any specific action on these areas, but to discuss them. These areas are:

- Appointment criteria for Across Community Teachers
- Change management practices
- Employment matters highlighted by the pandemic
- Kāhui Ako leadership models
- Constraints around Kāhui Ako roles
- Processes for determining individual starting salaries
- Recognising the role of union membership in industrial relations
- Recognition of new, non-standard qualifications for pay purposes
- School closures and employer for supernumerary purposes
- Sick leave provision review
- Supporting teacher trainees and newly certificated teachers
- Supporting the NCEA review and curriculum refresh
- Supports for secondary schools with recruitment and retention pressures.
- The role of attestation for pay purposes

4.3 The three parties reflected on the process at the end of the series of “pre-bargaining” meetings and made the following recommendations for considering similar processes in the future:

- The timing of the process should be carefully considered, both in relation to timing of collective agreement negotiations and also as to how it relates to work being undertaken as part of an Accord, or other work programme
- There needs to be clarity about the purpose of, and expected outcomes from this sort of process
- There needs to be clarity about how any change can be agreed and implemented. If this is to involve the reallocation of existing resource or a refinement or reshaping of current resource allocations this needs to be clear and be considered separately to any terms and conditions requiring new resourcing that may form part of a bargaining settlement.

4.4 PPTA Te Wehengarua’s negotiating team further reflected that the name “pre-bargaining” was in itself problematic, as it promised more than could be delivered within the constraints of the bargaining processes. To be a truly meaningful interaction, it would need to be an ongoing process with focussed aims. They would need to be timed so that they feed into the budget setting and claims development process, rather than coming at the end.

5. FUTURE ACCORDS?

- 5.1 In February 2022, the Executive Committee considered the options for potential future Accord agreements as part of the collective agreement bargaining round. They decided that any future Accord agreements would need to meet certain conditions, namely that the agreement would
- include a specific work programme focussed on workload reduction
 - be resourced
 - be between the Ministry and PPTA Te Wehengarua only, with other parties invited to participate when relevant
 - have an agreed independent chairperson/facilitator
- 5.2 The Executive further agreed that members may be surveyed about the Accord agreement if required in the context of Collective Agreement negotiations.