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# PPTA NEWS

Volume 30 • Number 9 • Whiringa-ā-nuku / October 2009

**TEACHERS'  
PROBLEM**

**DOGS  
EAT  
HOMEWORK**

**PARENTS'  
PROBLEM**

**LOW  
STUDENT  
ACHIEVEMENT**

**CLASS  
SIZE**

**VIOLENCE  
IN  
SCHOOLS**

**Education  
research**

**Are the dice loaded? p5**



*PPTA News* is the newsletter of the New Zealand Post Primary Teachers' Association. Approximately 18,000 copies are distributed free to secondary and area schools and other institutions. Not all the opinions expressed within *PPTA News* reflect those of the PPTA.

## Editorial and advertising

Enquiries should be addressed to:  
The Editor, PPTA News, PO Box 2119, Wellington, New Zealand. Ph: 04 384 9964; Fax: 382 8763; Email: akirtlan@ppta.org.nz  
PPTA website: www.ppta.org.nz  
Editor: Anna Kirtlan  
Layout and Design: Ben Weston  
Prepress by Toolbox Imaging Limited.  
Printed by The Print Room.  
Visit www.ppta.org.nz for *PPTA News* ratecard information.

## Deadlines

*November edition*  
5pm, 6 November for articles and advertising.  
*December edition*  
5pm, 30 November for articles and advertising.

## PPTA field officer contacts

PPTA members! Contact your local field office for all queries about your collective agreement entitlements or for assistance with employment relationship problems.

### Auckland

4 Western Springs Road, Morningside  
P O Box 52 006, Auckland  
ph (09) 815 8610 fax (09) 815 8612  
email: auckland@ppta.org.nz

### Hamilton

Level 1, ANZ Building, 650 Te Rapa Rd, Te Rapa  
P O Box 20 294, Hamilton  
ph (07) 849 0168 fax (07) 849 1794  
email: hamilton@ppta.org.nz

### Palmerston North

Guardian Trust House, cnr The Square and Main Street  
P O Box 168, Palmerston North  
ph (06) 358 4036 fax (06) 358 4055  
email: palmerston@ppta.org.nz

### Christchurch

Latimer View House, 215 Gloucester Street  
P O Box 13-005, Christchurch  
ph (03) 366 6524 fax (03) 379 4011  
email: christchurch@ppta.org.nz

### Dunedin

Queens Garden Court, 3 Crawford Street  
P O Box 1561, Dunedin  
ph (03) 477 1311 fax (03) 477 1804  
email: dunedin@ppta.org.nz

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# Testing times ahead

*“Political pressures are one main reason that worthwhile changes in education do not last or even worse why wrong changes are made in the first place”.*

**Y**ou're telling me! The comment belongs to Dr Ben Levin who is currently professor and Canada research chair in education leadership and policy at the Ontario Institute and was, before that, the deputy-minister of education in Ontario so he should know. To add to these credentials, he has written a book entitled *How to Change 5000 Schools* (2008) about making effective and sustainable change in education

When I hear the new minister of education say the education sector must face change, I wonder if she is familiar with Levin's work and indeed where she has been over the past 20 years to have missed the most active period of change in the sector in centuries.

Levin points out that education reform in the 80s and 90s “was driven in most places by the idea that improvement could be created by changes in governance, through increased testing and accountability or by threats and punishment for failure.” He sees this approach as a recipe for destroying teacher morale and, in the end, reducing student achievement rather than raising it. He thinks the focus should be on providing the sort of wide-ranging professional support that enhances teachers' capacity to be effective in the classroom.

The quality of change management in New Zealand certainly deserves some scrutiny and criticism. During the 80s and 90s the profession saw severe erosion to teachers' autonomy and deliberate undermining of their sense of mastery and purpose as the New Zealand curriculum was reviewed and reviewed again. Assessment was completely revolutionised and “new” pedagogies emerged based on personalised

learning, IT relationships and key competencies.

Without a doubt lessons can be learned from expensive mistakes – expensive mistakes that frequently started their life as “fiscally neutral” initiatives that have since cost millions in the mopping up.

The Taumata Whanonga, for example, highlighted the costs of a fragmented, underdeveloped, under resourced jumble of services and the need to invest in what Judge Andrew Becroft refers to as a comprehensive “Rolls Royce” service. By learning from expensive mistakes, we can save ourselves some much needed dosh. The key to that according to Levin is, “Effective leadership at all levels including political support... critical to the whole improvement endeavour”.

While we have seen the germs of political support for cross sector problem-solving addressing behaviour issues raised at the Taumata Whanonga – it is the beginning only. It will require politicians to actively listen and respond to the expertise and practical advice from teacher unions and specialists.

This is not something they do willingly – consider the 18 months of industrial action it took to persuade Hon Trevor Mallard that teachers deserved non-contact time and a reasonable pay rise.

The current government shows no willingness to respond to the question of how cutting \$50 million from the staffing budget affects student learning. It refuses to reconsider the ACE cuts even in light of the growing evidence that they are harming the very communities that most need literacy and numeracy support. New Zealand teachers will not receive any more mandated time to get to grips with the implementation of one of the most cutting edge curriculum documents in the world. No money is to be spent on “easy, across the board increases” in wages.

Thankfully, governments come and go while PPTA stands the test of time.



by Kate Gainsford

And our resolve will be tested when it comes to bargaining new collective agreements next year.

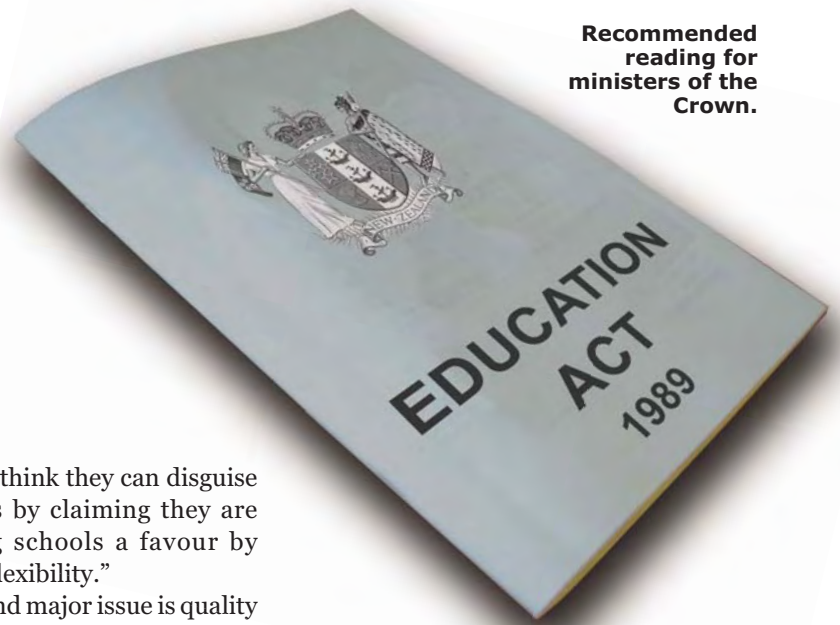
The start of this process, the term 3 paid unions meetings, have been very positive. Across the country a high proportion of members have engaged in considering the industrial, economic and political scenario. There is wide agreement and understanding of the risks of under-investing in secondary education and the impact of minister Tolley's desired staffing cuts on students were expressed as key concerns.

Indeed, members voted overwhelmingly for executive to oppose the cuts and present a plan of industrial action, if that is deemed necessary to prevent the cuts. They also suggested a range of possible industrial actions should they be needed.

Let's hope it won't be and that our political leaders consider the insights that Ben Levin offers. Because in spite of everything, the profession has managed to shape itself into a highly effective and sought after workforce, nationally and internationally – one I feel privileged to work alongside and represent. I enter my second term in this position as determinedly optimistic as I began my first. It is inspiring work seeing colleagues supporting each other in branches, schools and communities to achieve the best possible results for students and the profession as a whole. ■

# Tolley unaware of the value of guidance counsellors

Recommended reading for ministers of the Crown.



At a time of unprecedented levels of violence in schools, when New Zealand holds the record for teen suicide, the axe is hovering over our best form of frontline support – school guidance counsellors.

Informal discussions between education minister Anne Tolley and various sector stakeholders have flagged counsellors as part of the \$50 million staffing cuts announced in this year's budget.

At present school guidance counsellors are employed as teachers and have to be trained and qualified as such, if they are to be employed permanently. They are covered by the secondary teachers collective agreement (STCA) and are paid through schools' staffing entitlement.

In response to a letter written by a concerned guidance counsellor, Tolley has said that providing for school counsellors through staffing entitlements can "reduce schools' flexibility to employ the most appropriate staff, be they registered teachers or qualified counsellors."

This raises a number of concerns, PPTA president Kate Gainsford says. The minister appears to be considering removing guidance counsellors from the staffing entitlement, which begs the question – "where will the money to provide pastoral care and guidance for students come from?"

"I hope this is not signalling that schools are to be 'flexible' and either do without a counsellor or try to employ cheaper counsellors from money bulk-funded into the operations grant," she said.

"We've been here before – politi-

cians always think they can disguise funding cuts by claiming they are really doing schools a favour by 'enhancing' flexibility."

The second major issue is quality control. While guidance counsellors are employed under the staffing entitlement they are legally bound by the Teachers' Council code of conduct. This kind of protection is vital when counsellors are placed in such a high-trust position. Presently, schools that permanently employ non-registered teachers using the staffing entitlement are breaking the law.

Under Tolley's proposed changes unqualified counsellors could potentially be employed through the school support staff agreement for a lot less money.

School counsellors that are members of the New Zealand Asso-

**"We've been here before – politicians always think they can disguise funding cuts by claiming they are really doing schools a favour by 'enhancing' flexibility."**

**- Kate Gainsford**

ciation of Counsellors (NZAC) are also bound by a code of conduct, but there are no legal repercussions if this code is breached.

Counsellors deal with poverty, psychological disorders, alcohol and drug abuse, eating disorders and depression. They liaise with support agencies such as CYFS and play a key role in suicide prevention. In short,

they provide support to troubled students when they need it most."

Guidance counsellors also carry out a wide range of education-related tasks including helping students address barriers to learning, dealing with subject choices and in some cases teaching classes, taking on sports teams and going on school camps.

"Considering the millions the government plans to spend on troubled young people once they leave secondary schools (via the Youth Guarantee), surely it is financially and educationally unwise to destabilise the pastoral care network in secondary schools," Kate said.

"Especially when it's not even going to save significant amounts of money.

"What we have here is an ideological excuse posing as a solution to a non-existent problem. If the minister is really determined to rip \$50 million out of secondary staffing without regard for the destructive effect that will have on students, then she should do that honestly and upfront not hide behind spurious claims of 'flexibility'.

"Section 77 of the Education Act requires schools to provide guidance services to their students, yet the minister appears to be suggesting schools be put in a position where they cannot afford to do this," she said. ■

## Educational research – a form of lying?

Education research in New Zealand could be about as credible as research commissioned by drug and tobacco companies into their products, a Massey University professor says.

Professor of teacher education John O'Neill gave a presentation "New Zealand Research Says Teachers Matter Most: Truth or Truespeak?" to PPTA's Wellington regional conference in August.

In it he pointed out there was little completely independent or disinterested research done in New Zealand.

He questioned the independence, credibility and truthfulness of educational research, when the Ministry of Education (MoE) is all but the monopoly commissioner of it – particularly when research in New Zealand tends to be closely tied to policy in which the funder had a vested interest, he said.

Professor O'Neill is critical of research that underpins claims quality of teaching is the biggest factor in student underachievement.

It has been widely asserted by the MoE that "evidence" shows up to 59% of variance in student performance can be attributed to teachers.

Professor O'Neill disputes this figure – questioning the credibility of research that relied on ministry funded, competitively tendered, short-term contracts. MoE tenders often specified the questions, methods and even samples researchers use, professor O'Neill said.

"This raises questions about its independence and truthfulness, just as with much of the 'research' commissioned by drug and tobacco manufacturers.

"Do most studies show 59% variance, one study only, or is this an average variance across all studies? The assertion is meaningless unless we know about the data that were used to support it."

Fifty nine percent never-



John O'Neill

**"It is difficult to imagine a report of a viticulture science researcher's findings on grape vine quality being accompanied by her opinions on the hourly wage rates paid to seasonal fruit pickers ..."**

theless became a political benchmark, irrespective of context. However, at the same time the MoE released another review which said "taken as a whole, family and community resources, processes and characteristics are the most important influence on educational outcomes for children in early childhood and schooling".

Both statements together say something considerably more meaningful and truthful to uninformed readers than either does alone, Professor O'Neill said.

The whole picture shows family and community are the most important in terms of successful educational outcomes over all, but teachers have the greatest influence within the school.

Issues relating to class size have been another casualty of this cavalier approach to research, professor O'Neill said.

He used the example of a large scale MoE schooling improvement initiative in South Auckland called Picking up

the Pace. Research data reported a significant increase in literacy achievement. However, a much less widely reported aspect of the study was that class sizes were kept unusually low so teachers could complete the additional assessment, teaching and record keeping.

"To not give the class size variable equal weighting is like reporting an observational study which showed that light and heat are the requirements for successful plant growth, while omitting the fact that the plants were also watered each day.

"No reputable scientist would do so but for some reason it appears to be regarded as perfectly acceptable to be selective in the dissemination of New Zealand educational research.

"It's the overriding message that counts, not the simple facts," he said.

"This is marketing, not science."

Another factor of concern for professor O'Neil is published research that doesn't clearly define what is fact and what is opinion.

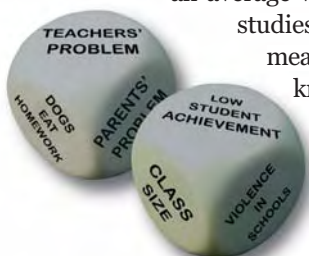
He uses John Hattie's book, *Visible Learning* to illustrate this. Along with his controversial claim that class size is unimportant, the media picked up on Hattie's personal beliefs about performance pay, which professor O'Neill says have no basis in the evidence.

"It is difficult to imagine a report of a viticulture science researcher's findings on grape vine quality being accompanied by her opinions on the hourly wage rates paid to seasonal fruit pickers in Marlborough vineyards," he said.

It should be up to the researcher to clarify these misrepresentations, but in Hattie's case this did not happen.

Educational researchers need to ensure, in so far as they are able, that their research is presented in the most truthful manner, professor O'Neill said.

"These statements do not necessarily falsify the facts, but they omit essential information and, as such, may be regarded as a form of lying."\*



# Tea party on steps of Parliament

A group of staunch suffragists held a tea party with a twist on the steps of Parliament last month.

The women arrived with costumes and tea cosies to launch the Pay Equity Challenge coalition on the eve of Women's Suffrage Day.

The Pay Equi-Tea Party drew an interested crowd as coalition members dressed in period costume spoke of the struggle for pay equality. A cake, missing a symbolic 12 % slice, represented the continuing gap between men and women's wages.

Windy conditions meant the ladies had to hold on to their bonnets, but this did not deter them from speaking out. They asked why, 116 years after New Zealand women became the first in the world to get the vote, they still cannot get paid the same as men for doing work of the same value.



The pay equi-tea party on the steps of Parliament commemorates 116 years of ... always getting a bit less.

The goals of the Pay Equity Challenge coalition are: to achieve equal value and recognition of women's work; to keep pressure on government to address pay and employment equity; to support groups of workers fighting for pay and employment equity; to create pressure on employers to address pay and employment equity; to look at industrial, social, legal and political solutions; to keep pay and employment equity on the public agenda; to educate the public about pay and employment equity, and; to build support for the coalition.

Members so far include PPTA,

NZ Council of Trade Unions, NZ Education Institute, the Women's Studies Association, New Zealand Federation of Business and Professional Women, Workplace Wellbeing Project, Working Women's Resource Centre, National Network of Stopping Violence Services, Coalition for Equal Value for Equal Pay, Child Poverty Action Group, Rural Women NZ, Zonta Club of Mana, Public Service Association, NZ Nurses Organisation, Tertiary Education Union, Engineering Printing and Manufacturing Union, Service and Food Workers Union and National Distribution Union. ▪

# A night out with the YANTs

Last month 24 YANTs (young and new teachers) from Wellington and Hutt Valley regions joined forces to share issues and support each other.

The first informal YANTs meeting was held over drinks and dinner at the Lone Star Cafe in Petone.

Organiser Brian Dunckley was pleased with how the evening went.

"I think the event went really well, with a good mix from the Wellington and Hutt Valley regions - it was a good turn-out for the first event like this."

The evening was a way for YANTs to form networks of help and support outside of school and in an informal way, Brian said.



"But my designer told me MINE was an original": Brian Dunckley and Douglas Miller host September's Wellington-Hutt Valley YANTs meeting.

"People started to realise that they were not alone with the way they felt about some things, and that the issues they were having at their school were not a one-off event...It's

all about supporting each other to strengthen the profession and get the best outcomes for our students."

The topics discussed ranged widely, "from situations where we have been put in front of a class with no clue as to what we were doing, to home ownership. Conference papers were also discussed as well as the effects the 'recession' will have on our wage round," he said.

All going well, another event will be held halfway through term 4, about the same time that senior students will leave for study break, he said.

If you would like more information about these events, please contact [news@ppta.org.nz](mailto:news@ppta.org.nz). ▪

# ACE protests hit the streets

Thousands of people throughout the country hit the streets, signed petitions and held community meetings to protest massive cuts to adult education funding.

The government plans to slash 80% from the budget for the adult community education (ACE) classes that have given New Zealanders skills and confidence for the past 100 years.

Schools that currently run night classes were told they could apply for the remaining 20% of funding, provided they met certain literacy and numeracy requirements.

It has recently been revealed however that just 50 of the 212 schools now providing ACE classes will get funding next year.

The funding will cover courses for just 25,000 of the 220,000 people enrolled in ACE classes around the country. This means there are up to 180,000 adult learners who could now miss out.

Communities around New Zealand have made it very clear that this is not good enough. Protests, petition signings and meetings have been held up and down the country – and there is no sign adult learners are going to give up the fight.

To keep updated with the ACE campaign and download the petition visit the CLASS (Community Learning Association through Schools) website at <http://www.stopnightclasscuts.org.nz/>.



Photos: Paul Rees



**P**PTA's annual conference is the best time to remember that at the government's expense.

When asked what the protesters did, she said they deflated 600 balloons and held them up in their dismay.

The protest capped a series of events (community learning a day) at the PPTA conference in Fordyce in which she brought up her concerns ahead of its opening.

"The community has a right to know what their priorities are not the conference."

"There are a few MPs who are listening to the voice of public anger."

Earlier the conference she said she had reiterated her intention to continue to do so.

"... we just don't have the time for courses," she said.

Delegates held up "D" balloons and Tolley left the auditorium.

ference was many things this year, but will probably be remembered for delegates blowing a resounding raspberry at the government's planned cuts to adult community education.

Many thought of the cuts all 150 delegates noisily emblazoned with 'Stop Night Class Cuts' to "voice" their opposition.

At the conference a speech made to the conference by CLASS (New Zealand Association through schools) president Maryke O'Connell generated the government for shunning community education from its own agenda.

"The cuts had nothing to do with it – the government's communities' priorities," she said.

Delegates were out there learning what it's like to bear the brunt of the cuts.

Delegates heard from education minister Anne Tolley who refused to reverse the decision to make the cuts.

Delegates gave the money to fund recreational and hobby classes.

Delegates held "Don't let the sun set on night classes" placards as they cheered.

Tolley also refused to provide for any further curriculum support days and made it very clear wage increases would be nowhere on the horizon. She refused to budge on the issue of stripping \$50 million from schools' staffing budgets, but offered no ideas on how this could be done. An announcement of \$45million to go towards educating parents and teachers at low decile schools was welcomed but it was felt this would not be enough to help teachers already dealing with disturbed and violent students.

Other speakers at the conference included Council of Trade Unions president Helen Kelly, PPTA human rights in education award recipient Libby Giles and kaiarahi matua of the Ministry of Education Kiritina Johnstone.

Papers discussed at were 80,15,5 percent – what we know, what they need, Integration or disintegration?, Mentoring for secondary teachers, Housing affordability, Duty outside of timetabled hours and Connected secondary schools.

Video coverage of all 2009 conference speeches and debates is available on the internet - just Google the keywords "presentationcentral" and "ppta".

For information about policy recommendations passed at the conference visit [www.ppta.org.nz/index.php/annual-conference/annconf-papers2009](http://www.ppta.org.nz/index.php/annual-conference/annconf-papers2009).



# Teachers, principals must remain united

New Zealand Secondary Principals Council (NZSPC) chairperson Julia Davidson shared her views on the challenges ahead for Kiwi principals during her speech to PPTA's annual conference.

Julia, who has taken the reins after jointly chairing NZSPC with Graeme Macann, thanked those that had gone before her.

"Karen Sewell, Graeme Marshall, Bruce Murray, Janice Campbell, Arthur Graves, Don McLeod and most recently Graeme Macann – I honour them and the work they put into this organisation," she said.

Julia is taking over as NZSPC chair at a time of potentially significant change for principals in New Zealand.

"For the first time there is a new union in town and we are each vying for membership as the contract negotiations loom. Principals have to make a decision – which contract will I end up signing, so effectively who will be my bargaining agent and to whom will I pay union fees?"

"For me this is a purely rhetorical question but I think it's important to explain why that is – because I believe it strikes at the very heart of the debate and it's a debate schools might like to have with their principals – simply by asking which union are you joining?" she said.

"I joined PPTA as soon as I could. I was going to be a teacher, and secondary teachers were looked after by the PPTA.

"Teachers weren't highly paid, but there was an understanding that they had rights which had been hard fought for over many years and belonging to the union helped share the load for gaining more rights as negotiations occurred.

"There were always a few people who refused to join the union, but they never bothered Julia.

"We came from opposing viewpoints but we each respected each other's opinion and the right to hold it."

Julia said most principals she

knew, still thought of themselves as teachers.

"We might not be in the classroom any more but actually we still could if we had to be. The bottom line is that we probably got into the job because we wanted to help students and we thought we could make a difference. In that regard we are no different to most teachers in school today.

"Our job is now different, but we want to achieve the same end point. The easiest way to do our job is to work with our staff to a common goal. Co-operation not competition (despite Tomorrow's Schools' best intentions) is the way most of us operate.

"We acknowledge the scarce resource that is government funding and want to make the best use of it, for the good of as many staff and students as possible. We want all employees to be covered by the same rules – apart from anything else it makes everything easier to manage.

"We all acknowledge that we need to attract good teachers and middle and senior managers, otherwise who will take our jobs when we leave? To do this, we need to support the secondary teachers as they negotiate their collective – provided we get a slice of the pie as well.

"So if this is your modus operandi, why would you want to be in an organisation that is in competition for the resources and aims to set colleagues in the same school against one another?"

Julia finds it "deeply ironic that some of the most fervently anti-union principals of recent times are now creating their own union.

"I would have thought that if, as a principal, you truly cared about your staff and the students in your school, it would be in your best interests to belong to the same professional organisation as your staff. Our jobs are different, but we are essentially wanting to work together to achieve the same goals," she said.

"I acknowledge that PPTA doesn't always do what we want. We should



Julia Davidson

**"I would have thought that if, as a principal, you truly cared about your staff and the students in your school, it would be in your best interests to belong to the same professional organisation as your staff ... to achieve the same goals."**

have the same rights as any other member when we need help – and I think PPTA is going to need to consider how it can address this issue over the next few years because it isn't going to go away.

"We can all do better but we need to work together from inside the tent. We need to support each other better. We need to communicate better. I think we are at a pivotal time in our history. We need to know what our members need and whether PPTA/SPC is addressing those needs – and always, how can we improve? We need to accept that not all principals will belong to our group. But I believe it is crucial that most principals do belong. We need to be united with our staff in protecting all that is good about the state education system in New Zealand as we head into potentially murky waters in the years ahead." ■

## Students deliver stunning kōrero

The quality of the speakers at this year's Ngā Manu Kōrero speech competition was "absolutely stunning," according to PPTA president Kate Gainsford.

Kate joined PPTA Kaitiaki Rongorua Moira Aberdeen to represent the association at the event's finals at the Energy Events Centre in Rotorua last month.

The contest, of which PPTA is a sponsor, has been running since 1965. It is intended to encourage the development of skills and confidence in spoken English and Māori.

Kate was deeply impressed with the competence of the students speaking.

"There were stunning levels of

research, stunning levels of critical thinking and stunning deliveries," she said.

Students competing gave word-perfect performances, with speeches that were sometimes as long as 30 minutes and included singing.

"It was amazing, they would put most adults to shame," she said.

Moira said the quality of the oratory was outstanding.

"The students were out of this world – they are definitely future leaders."

She was also impressed with the sense of community felt at the event.

"Teachers go, students go, families go – it's a big community thing," she said. ▪



**Stunning delivery – Hemi James Hill from Hato Petera College, Tamaki Makaurau wows the judges. Hemi came third in the prepared section of the Pei Te Hurinui Jones Senior Māori Section.**

## Lagging minimum wage needs a hurry-up

Thousands of workers, particularly young people, are earning poverty wages, according to Unite New Zealand.

The union is campaigning for an immediate rise of the minimum wage to \$15 an hour and aims to gather the 350,000 signatures needed to initiate a citizens' referendum.

The "\$15 an hour Campaign for a Living Wage" organiser Joe Carolan said a low minimum wage affected the people who needed the money the most.

He would like to see all teachers sign the petition and encourage senior students to do the same.

"It's an issue of particular significance to senior students as many will be working on minimum wage to pay their way through tertiary education," he said.

The current adult minimum wage is \$12.50 an hour - \$500 a week. Unite believes an adult in a full-time job should have a reasonable standard of living without getting



into debt or relying on income support and \$15 an hour – \$600 a week would be a good place to start, Joe said.

Once the 350,000 signatures have been gathered the petition will be presented to Parliament, then every voter in New Zealand will get the chance to vote in a referendum.

The referendum will ask:

"Should the adult minimum wage be raised in steps over the next three years, starting with an immediate rise to \$15 per hour, until it reaches 66% of the average total hourly earnings as defined in the Quarterly Employment Survey?"

Unlike superannuation or benefits the minimum wage is not automatically increased each year. By making it 66% of the average wage (the same as the married rate for superannuation) it will keep the lowest paid New Zealand workers out of poverty, Joe says.

Finding signatures for the petition has not been a difficult task and Unite has been buoyed by the success so far. Unite delegate Esther Ma'ake (pictured) managed to sign up 130 people in the video store where she works in just one week.

The petition is available on the PPTA website at: <http://www.ppta.org.nz/index.php/collective-agreements/notices>

It is also available at <http://www.unite.org.nz/>. ▪

# Quite a few things you always wanted to know about vouchers, but were afraid to ask...



by The Winged Avenger

- Q.** when is a voucher not a voucher?  
**A.** when it's a bulk fund.  
**Q.** when is a voucher also not a voucher?  
**A.** when it means the removal of zoning.  
**Q.** when is a voucher good for education?  
**A.** so far, never...

So, what is a voucher?

“Vouchers” describes various systems that place school funding in the hands of students and families. The idea is that each student is entitled to access education up to a set value each year. This value is issued in the form of a voucher. The student takes the voucher to their chosen school and redeems it for their education.

Generally, vouchers (and their ilk) are raised in the context of “consumer choice”. Advocates argue that vouchers enable parents and children to choose the school that best fits their needs. Evidence shows that, actually, without significant state intervention, vouchers work the opposite way: some schools get to choose their students – not the other way around.

Discussion of vouchers in education is generally linked to right-wing or free-market agendas. Vouchers are not the only means that are used to try and effect change: zoning removal has a “quasi-voucher” effect; bulk funding has similar effects to vouchers – though is arguably less destabilising for schools than voucher systems.

Vouchers are predicated on a free-market notion of competition between schools, which has also been shown to

have a detrimental effect on students’ learning. Moreover, a common net effect of voucher systems is increased social segregation.

Voucher systems resemble bulk funding because schools get their income (almost) entirely from the vouchers students bring with them. Unlike bulk funding, or the current system of funding based on half-yearly roll returns, schools’ incomes wax and wane as students come and go. The idea is that if one school proves unsuitable, a student simply takes their vouchers (and remaining annual value) and moves to another school. This would mean real budgetary instability for schools, combined with an administrative nightmare for those called upon to calculate values, transfer rates, etc. Even Maggie Thatcher admitted that “colossal” administration costs probably rendered a voucher system unworkable when it was under consideration in Britain.

The voucher system proposed by Roger Douglas in the 1990s was a combination of tax breaks or vouchers (depending on your income). He argued that it would achieve innovation, variety and high performance. His system covered teacher salaries as well as other school funding, with boards of trustees determining pay rates. Douglas’s system also included the right for schools to decline an enrolment – goodbye student choice, hello segregated schools! Also under this system schools would set their own fees. So, it would be possible for a school to set fees above the voucher entitlement to students, meaning

that schools could establish their own client base using economic barriers to entry. The appeal of vouchers for many of the proponents is that they may be used indiscriminately at state and private schools. Yes that’s right – 100% taxpayer subsidy for wealthy parents to send their children to private schools.

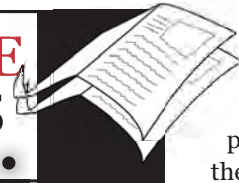
Chile trialled a voucher system a few years ago, believing that it would lead to improved learning outcomes for all. They got the opposite – variable outcomes, combined with social streaming. Not achieved.

The OECD says there is no direct evidence that competition improves school performance. Vouchers are predicated on the belief that competition and free market business models will work in the school system. You would think, particularly since the most recent international financial collapse, that people might have learned that “pure market models” (a) don’t always work in the financial sector and (b) bear little relevance to the serious work of teaching and learning in the public education sector.

Vouchers don’t work. Educationally, they are not compatible with a quality public education system. Environmentally, you don’t have to be a wild green to see that transporting kids across cities twice a day instead of having them walk or bike to their nearest local school is madness. Voucher debates are an irritating distraction from more important conversations about the nature of 21st century schooling.

It’s time to put this red herring aside and work actively to promote better understanding of the public value of education. ▪

## IN THE NEWS



What is being offered now is not quite a scholarship scheme but a lottery to qualify for Act policy, in which funding follows the student to a school of his or her choice," she said.

### But they need the money – honest!

No wonder private schools need a \$35 million government bailout - the poor dears have luxury hotels to buy.

Last month it was revealed Dilworth School bought luxury hotel and spa Hotel du Vin for "an undisclosed figure". The hotel is set to become a rural campus, an addition to its current campuses in Epsom and Remuera.

It's beginning to become clear why adult education funding has been slashed and under-resourced public schools have been told to suck it up and get on with it.

It's simple – private schools need more toys.

### Is there anybody out there?

When associate education minister Heather Roy held a press conference to announce the government's new Aspire scholarships to private schools she had probably hoped for a better turn out.

Present were a Warriors rugby player, her son's Year 9 class – and one lonely reporter.

"I was the only reporter there," writes the *New Zealand Herald's* political editor Audrey Young.

That hasn't happened since the 1993 election campaign when then prime minister Jim Bolger, finance minister Bill Birch, and Paul East (crown health enterprises) held a press conference in Papakura on National's social policy and I was the only reporter there," she says.

Young appeared dubious about the implication that children from poorer areas were less likely to succeed if they went to their local state school, saying state schools she knew of "recognise and foster the best in kids."

"Labour scrapped the scholarships when it came to office in 1999.

### Do as I say, not as I do

Last month finance minister Bill English told teachers, doctors, nurses and other public servants to forget about any wage rises when their pay deals expire.

At the same time he was preaching the need for restraint in the public sector, Mr English – himself a public servant – was receiving nearly \$1000 a week from taxpayers to live in his own home.

English told the *Sunday Star Times* the "good times" from pay increases given under the previous government were over. However it was his own financial "good times" that attracted media attention. The bad publicity over the housing allowance forced English to pay back \$12,000 and stop claiming an out-of-town allowance – let's hope he will also be made to see the sense in supporting the teachers, doctors and nurses, who will help pull this country through the recession.

### Ministry doublespeak

After months of asking for clear and coherent advice on key competencies, the Ministry of Education has finally come out with a statement – one that is filled with flim-flam, have-a-dollar-each-way, bureaucratic speak.

At last the ministry has definitively said that assessing the key competencies using "Simple indicators, scales and rubrics (such as those now included in some Student Management Systems - SMS) ..." is not what they want schools to be

doing (p.11, *Education Gazette* 12 October 2009). They even applaud schools that have resisted going down that simplistic track.

On the other hand, the message contains a classic example of ministry doublespeak about the accreditation of SMS as initiated in



**"I was just tightening my belt from the inside."**

2005: "Ministry accreditation does not imply that all SMS functions will align with the direction and intent of the National Curriculum. Each school must exercise judgment and discretion as they purchase and use SMS and similar products, to ensure their practices are educationally sound and will support the intent and direction of the National Curriculum."

Pure ideological gobbledegook. Why not do what PPTA has been asking them to do for months, i.e. withdraw the accreditation of SMS that persist in providing functions that are in conflict with the "direction and intention" of the curriculum? We know the answer, don't we? Tomorrow's Schools, otherwise known as "leaving schools to make mistakes and get the blame for them". •

# Out in the FIELD

## Tussles over tenure

Information and advice from PPTA's intrepid field officers.

### Case one

Joanna returned to her school after 18 months' leave. At the time she returned to work there was a dispute over her employment status. The school claimed that she was 0.5 permanent part-time. Joanna claimed that she was 0.8 permanent part-time. Neither the school nor Joanna could provide any documents to support their claim.

The field officer tracked down the original advertisement in the *Education Gazette* and also obtained evidence from payroll which indicated that in the returns the school had made to payroll prior to Joanna's leave the school had coded her as 0.8 permanent part-time. The school therefore agreed to increase her hours.

### Case two

John was advised by his principal that one of his units was fixed-term and that this fixed-term status was about to come to an end. John produced correspondence between him and the previous principal at the time the unit was given in which an offer of an extra unit was made and accepted. The principal's letter made no mention that the unit was fixed-term. In John's letter of acceptance

he made mention that the unit was permanent.

With the assistance of the field officer, the current principal came to accept that the unit in question was a permanent one.

### Field officer comment

Field officers commonly become involved in disputes over the tenure of the jobs of individual teachers. Many of these could be avoided if schools followed the provisions of the relevant collective agreement.

Part 3 of the Secondary Teachers' Collective Agreement and Part 2 of the Area School Teachers' Collective Agreement set out the procedures for making an appointment. They specify what particular jobs should be advertised. Teachers should take particular care when accepting a job offer where there has been no advertisement in the *Education Gazette*.

Teachers should expect to receive a written letter of appointment. It is good practice in such circumstances for the teacher to keep a copy of the original job advertisement and the letters of offer and acceptance. Where a teacher is subsequently promoted within his or her existing school, or when a teacher's job description is significantly altered,

letters should be exchanged between the principal and the teacher confirming the nature of these changes.

The collective agreements set out the expectations for part-time and fixed-term teachers. In particular, the agreements require that:

- part-time teachers should have their hours confirmed in writing and subsequent changes to their hours of work should also be confirmed in writing.
- any additional hours that apply for a period of four weeks or more should also be confirmed in writing.
- written advice relating to part-time hours should indicate clearly whether there is any payment for non-contact time and whether the hours being offered are exclusive or inclusive of such non-contact time.
- fixed term teachers should have a letter of appointment setting out their terms of appointment. The letter must indicate a genuine reason based on reasonable grounds for specifying why the employment will end.

Field officers are available to offer advice to job applicants to ensure that the nature of the job being accepted is properly documented. ■

## Marching in a collective spirit

Dear editor,

The Wellington High School branch of the PPTA initiated a demonstration on 4 August against funding cuts to adult community education. Your report of this demonstration in the August *PPTA News* article "Rain-soaked rally draws hundreds" gives the impression that the PPTA national leadership was responsible for it.

The branch had agreed to stop work from 2.00 pm and march to Parliament and the action was then organised by our members and ACE colleagues.

In the face of the branch's determination the school's board of trustees reluctantly accepted our stopping work at 2.00 pm.

As your article suggests, our demonstration was a very useful action. It was useful because it involved real organising on the job, including the withdrawal of our work. This is the type of action which is needed, but organised on a national basis. That would have impact!

Wellington High School branch

***There was nothing in the article in the August edition of the PPTA News to suggest that national office organised the rally. The only mention of PPTA was that Kate Gainsford spoke "along with politicians and students of all ages". Space constraints meant we could not name every group involved and we felt it more important to focus on the issues behind the rally.***

— ed

# Time for a lab manager allowance?

Dear editor,

It is with interest that I read the article on “laboratory managers” from the latest *PPTA News*. As one myself who foolishly just got assigned as HoD science, I am now suffering under the extra workload without time allowance nor units.

One of the items on the table for the upcoming pay talks should be

a “laboratory manager allowance”. This needs to be separate from, and extra to the MU’s, and targeted solely for the lab manager. The value needs to be set at least to that of one MU. It should possibly also attract at least an hour’s non contact per week.

*Patrick Kelly  
HoD Science and Maths  
William Colenso College*



***We have put readers’ concerns about the code of practice for school exempt laboratories to the Ministry of Education. At the time of printing PPTA News was yet to receive a response. – ed***

# The teachers they are a changin’

**NATHAN KERR** presents a column looking at the characteristics of successful 21st century teachers, and what trends are emerging both in New Zealand and overseas.

**D**iscussions about the characteristics of a successful teacher, and what trends influence those teachers, are rare. This article is based on literature reviews, information gathered from the ISTE/NECC Conference in Washington DC, and personal reflections.

The roles of the 21st century teacher can be grouped into four areas.

## 1. Energiser teachers

Energiser teachers are “hot” personalities, meaning they are always analysing best ways of teaching and learning, and like to try out new methods and ideas. Energiser teachers believe teachers are the single most critical influence on student success in learning. They acknowledge that the skills needed for engaging students are complex.

## 2. Ethicist teachers

Ethicist teachers consider the wider environment and culture that their students and the students’ families come from in order to gain their trust and develop a rapport. They value the importance of acknowledging the emotional intelligence of students.

## 3. Entrepreneur teachers

Entrepreneur teachers are determined to improve the status quo of the school, and will go to great lengths to do so. This may include developing new software or pioneering new learning methods, such as ‘mLearning’.

## 4. Environmentalist teachers

Environmentalist teachers believe

teaching and learning should not only happen in the classroom. Education outside the classroom should be compulsory according to some of these teachers. They also feel there needs to be understanding that complex issues requires a multi-discipline approach. Environmentalist teachers promote sustainable practices in personal and professional life – moving beyond “being a greenie” and making teaching sustainable.

## Trends

So what are the trends which are influencing teaching in the 21st Century?

The new paradigms of life and learning are influenced by:

- Lifespan. This is extending (for the Western world) – 55 to 78 years in the past century.
- An increasingly electronic environment.
- The Zeitgeist (floating change) of “lifelong learning”.
- Significant financial reframing over the next few years (retirement at 70 + years old).

Those trends raise some interesting questions about teaching and learning, as well as society in general, such as, who are our students? Below are some interesting points regarding many students at school today.

- Life expectancy of 120 years?
- Smaller families (or even a single spoilt child).
- Cocooned due to safety factors.
- “Twitch thinking speed”, no thinking, only action with



consistent on-line use (either via mobile devices, or computer).

- High consumption patterns – their bedroom material weighs approximately 20 times that of a 1958 bedroom’s material.
- A new “silent” generation – a revisit to pre-Baby Boomers.

The above trends of our students have the potential to develop some very exciting challenges in education ...

... In summary, regardless if you relate to the energiser teacher, the ethicist teacher, the entrepreneur teacher or the environmentalist teacher personality, the teaching profession needs teachers who believe they can make a difference in the lives of their students. This, and the above trends, will help drive successful teaching well into the 21st century. ▪

**This article is edited from a longer essay. Email [news@ppta.org.nz](mailto:news@ppta.org.nz) for the full version.**

*Nathan Kerr teaches at Howick College and is the winner of the New Zealand Innovation Teacher of the Year Award (2008) and the World’s Innovation in Collaboration Award (2008).*

## Area school teachers meet to discuss next ASTCA



Area school paid union meetings kicked off in August providing a way for members to get together, away from work, to think about the coming Area School Teachers' Collective Agreement (ASTCA) round.

Huruni, Cheviot and Amuri area schools held a successful combined meeting (pictured above) at Amuri Area School. It was jointly presented by Bruce Anink from Amuri area school, on behalf of PPTA and Paul Munally from the Huruni NZEI area school advisory committee.

Thirty-five people, PPTA and NZEI members, attended and there was lots of useful discussion, Paul said.

"Everyone was enthusiastic and pleased to be involved this early on in the negotiation round."

Given the extent to which the political and economic environment has changed since teachers' collective agreements were last ratified in 2007, teachers have been keen to get together and discuss what affect these changes will have on negotiations. •

Whether you're a seasoned player or new to the ropes, we'd like to see you there ...

### REGIONAL OFFICERS' TRAINING DAY 2010



#### Who should attend?

All regional chairs, secretaries, treasurers, women's co-ordinators, Pacific Island co-ordinators, Te Reo-a-Rohe, regional YANTS and support service volunteers.

#### Where?

The Brentwood Hotel, Kilbirnie, Wellington.

#### When?

Friday 26 February 9.30am – 4.30pm

#### Who pays?

Funded nationally.

### ISSUES AND ORGANISING SEMINAR 2010



#### Who should attend?

All regional officers, plus any member of PPTA who wishes to become actively involved in our union.

#### Where?

Brentwood Hotel, Kilbirnie, Wellington

#### When?

9.30am Saturday 27 February to 1.00pm Sunday, 28 February

#### Who pays?

Regional officers are paid for nationally, other attendees have to be authorised and paid for by their region.

#### Futher details

The full programme and registration details will be available at [www.ppta.org.nz](http://www.ppta.org.nz) from the end of October. Travel and accommodation details are available from Louise Mortland at [lmortland@ppta.org.nz](mailto:lmortland@ppta.org.nz).