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PPTA NEWS

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THE BEHAVIOUR ACTION PLAN



Why the hold-up? p4



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Top stories

The behaviour action plan	4
Virtual learning	5
Social class linked to achievement	7
CTU biennial conference	9
Tevita Koroi on Fijian democracy	11

Shabby and cynical

John Key's remark to the Council of Trade Unions (CTU) biennial conference last month – that teachers should offer to take a pay cut in order to raise the wages of support staff – was somewhat offensive coming as it does from a man whose considerable personal fortune was made wheeling and dealing on the unproductive and often destructive currency markets. Considering also that the lousy pay that support staff get has been shown to be a direct result of gender discrimination, a circumstance Key's government seems happy to prolong by refusing to follow up the PAEE reviews. I don't think he can get away with suggesting teachers should take more hits than they already do. Glass houses John, glass houses.

Other than that, the conference was a positive experience. The chance to compare notes with other unions and share knowledge of what is becoming an increasingly hostile environment for workers and unions was very valuable.

The solidarity demonstrated at the conference may well be needed in the coming months. On top of zero pay increases, the systematic removal of the fourth week of holidays and the privatisation of ACC, the government has signalled it intends to eliminate meal and rest breaks and review personal grievance procedures. (For review read "make it more difficult for employees to receive recompense for unfair treatment in the workplace".)

The amendments proposed to the Employment Relations Act (Rest Breaks and Meal Breaks) are truly Orwellian. You see even though it's entitled rest and meal breaks, it has this delightful little clause:

"An employer is not required to provide rest breaks and meal breaks in accordance with section 69ZD(1)– ... only to the extent that having regard to the nature of the work performed by the employee, the employer cannot reasonably provide the employee with rest breaks and meal breaks."

In other words, the right to reasonable meal breaks is determined by what suits an employer at any partic-

ular time. Should an employer, in a moment of generosity, decide to provide a rest and/or meal break she/he may also determine not only when it is taken but where and may require that the worker "continue to perform some of his or her work duties, during the break." (proposed s69ZD 2)

How shabby and cynical is it to use the Employment Relations Act, an act specifically designed to build productive employment relationships, to deny workers rest and meal breaks? Samuel Parnell who is credited with sparking the campaign that resulted in New Zealand becoming the first country in the world to introduce the eight-hour day would surely be turning in his grave.

Sadly for us this same government, which appears set on stripping out as many employment protections as it can, is technically our employer. It hasn't had a practice of listening much to the profession – often to its cost. When Special Ed 2000, an initiative of the last National Party minister of education, was launched, PPTA pronounced it a dog. Ten years later, countless negative evaluation reports from the Education Review Office and probably a billion dollars down the drain, the present minister of education now thinks it's a dog too. We would like to think that when bargaining gets underway next year the government will accept that PPTA actually knows much more about the reality of secondary schools than politicians, public servants and government advisors and that negotiations should reflect that. Instead I fear we will be facing a pre-determined political agenda to dump on teachers and state education.

It puts one in mind of Voltaire's comment about God (rephrased for this government as), "If a financial crisis did not exist, it would be necessary to invent one."

More enlightened governments that value education and recognise its contribution to economic well being, do things differently. The president of the English union NASUWT (National Association of Teachers/Union of Women Teachers) Julian Chapman



by Kate Gainsford

was recently in New Zealand (see page 9) where he talked about the mechanism for establishing teacher salaries and conditions there. Since 1991 their salaries have been set by a statutory body called the School Teachers Review Body which is charged with consulting with all interested parties, receiving and considering submissions, then making a proposal to the secretary of state.

In its most recent determination, it proposed pay increases for teachers of 2.3% for 2009 and 2010 – this in a country which has been hit considerably harder by the financial crisis than New Zealand.

It's an interesting reflection on New Zealand governments and their priorities that we are unlikely to see anything like this established here. The one experience we had of such a body was in 2002 when, after months of industrial action, the government agreed to set up the Alternative Disputes Resolution Panel. The panel promptly proposed an increase for secondary teachers of 12% in contrast to the 3% the Labour-led government had been stuck on and that had been accepted by the New Zealand Education Institute (NZEI).

And there's the rub. New Zealand governments of whatever hue are never going to allow an independent, non-partisan, non-political body to set teachers' salaries because it will establish the worth of teachers as far above the value that any political party is apparently prepared to accord them. ■

Why the hold-up?

At the beginning of this year a plan was hatched to help deal with the unprecedented levels of violence and antisocial behaviour in our schools.

Eight months and a number of serious incidents later the education sector is still waiting for it to be released.

The behaviour action plan was the result of a hui held in March to address the growing issue of disruptive and antisocial behaviour in schools. Representatives from the education sector and beyond put their heads together during the Taumata Whanonga behaviour summit to help identify the problems and how to deal with them.

At the time of printing, those consulted about the plan – including PPTA – were waiting on a letter with information about a further meeting in the hope that this will finally produce a release date.

PPTA president Kate Gainsford says the delay in releasing and implementing the plan is extremely frustrating.

“It means that schools and communities continue to grapple with the serious five percent and the not-so-serious 15% of students with behaviour issues,” she said.

Following the Taumata in March it was expected that education minister Anne Tolley would receive the behaviour action plan in May.

“There have been delays since then – the last deadline we were aware of was the first week of last month when we were told there would be some sort of media release. That hasn’t happened.

“What would happen if schools took the same liberty with deadlines?” she said.

“The government is quick in making cuts and in investing in private schools – but not quick when

it comes to this issue.”

Delays do not help provide security for schools trying to do their best for their students, she said.

“We have put faith in a hui process only to find that eight months later we are still waiting.”

Kate described the plan as needing to provide a weave of support for students, that should include different threads including alternative education, truancy, Child Youth and Family Services (CYFS), youth justice, youth health, RTLBs and school guidance counsellors to name a few.

“Currently there are patches, there are parts where it has worn thin and then there are holes.

“District truancy services are different in every region. What’s available in terms of child and family assistance, before-school checks, mental health, psychiatric and youth health services can be patchy or non-existent from one place to another.

“Schools try to hold it all together – doing their own weaving on the run.”

The behaviour action plan needs to be multi-tiered, complex and comprehensive to help bring those services together for schools, she said.

Kate saw a number of positives in the process of putting the action plan together – but also felt the end result did little to address the problems that face teachers and students in secondary schools now.

“There has been genuine engagement across the sector. Teachers have really worked with the Ministry of Education. People who have knowledge and expertise in these areas have been listened to.”

Academic research, both from New Zealand and overseas, on student behaviour has been considered and this is a good opportunity to draw those threads together, she said.

There was a large degree of commonality in what hui participants



said – with a common theme being the need for services and interventions that can be used early in life and **early on in the life of the problem.**

A number of initiatives flagged in the action plan target children early on in life which was a positive start, but one of PPTA’s major concerns was the problems that occurred during the onset of adolescence, when a child reaches secondary school.

“In these cases the resources and initiatives risk looking pretty limited for servicing students and teachers,” she said.

Kate was dubious about any heavy reliance on an increase in the interim response fund (emergency money principals have access to during a serious situation that requires intervention.)

“All those involved in the pastoral care of at-risk students need to access a secure level of service in times of crisis rather than only have money thrown at them. Dependable expertise and timely services are what’s missing from the system at the moment,” she said.

Kate also believed that National’s Youth Guarantee should be included in the behaviour action plan because it deals with a set of students that disengage from school.

“If that’s what the extra time is being spent on then that’s good, but we don’t know for sure.”

Kate said members had seen no immediate impact in the levels of support for behaviour problems since the hui in March, and it would be “shabby if the high expectations we had of the process ended in little more than plans to plan or vague intentions”.

“We want to be optimistic though. Watch this space.” •



Virtual lessons win accolades

Science and Biology teacher Steve Martin and his year nine science class have created a virtual world that students, parents and teachers can access – any time, anywhere.

The Howick College teacher's virtual classroom concept has netted him a Microsoft distinguished teacher award for outstanding contributions to information and communication technology (ICT).

Using Microsoft Office Live Workspace, Steve and his students have created virtual lessons for their science course.

"For every lesson we have a learning objective, so for each one of those in year nine science there is a virtual lesson," Steve said.

The lessons are much more than just a copy of what the students cover in class, because the students create the resources themselves.

They include videos – which they can either create themselves or download from YouTube – links to relevant websites and Web 2.0 applications such as cartoon makers.

"If they are studying an atomic model, they can make a cartoon of an atomic model. Its great quality, real Cartoon Network stuff," Steve said.

The best part of the virtual learning system is its collaborative nature, he said.

"They (the students) can take the virtual lesson and build it into their own lesson."

The resources the year nine students are creating now will form the basis of virtual lessons for the following year's class, he said.

Because the lessons can be accessed from anywhere, students



Digital collaboration: Howick College students Finn Forsyth-Wright (left) and Georgia Ross (right) share a virtual lesson with their award-winning teacher Steve Martin.

can work together on resources wherever they are. They can share their web lesson file and their desktop and work together at the same time.

"Three kids can work on the same file from home. They can take control of the mouse and use instant messaging and video programs to talk to each other in real time," he said.

Content from the virtual lessons can also be downloaded onto students' ipods.

Virtual lessons are a good way for students to review what they have learned in the classroom, but they are also an excellent tool for students who miss lessons.

"If students are absent from school due to illness or other reasons, they can still take the lessons. It's a great system. You don't have to send out books or anything."

Virtual lessons are also a useful tool for parents who want to understand what their child is learning at school.

"For parents who might not be scientifically minded, they can watch the videos to see what their children are learning."

Eventually Steve hopes for a school-wide roll-out of the virtual lessons. He has had a lot of interest from other staff members and, if successful, would like to see virtual lessons in schools throughout the country.

He is also looking at creating a virtual classroom support centre where students can not only help each other, but their teachers as well.

"Teachers can't know everything and students find this stuff so intuitive it would be a great way for them to

work together," he said.

Steve was one of only two teachers to win the distinguished teacher award – which was announced at the ULearn conference for educators last month. His fellow winner was Methven Primary School ICT teacher Jan Anderson.

Both teachers will receive training, hardware, software and a personal kit designed for their teaching methods worth more than \$8000. They will also attend regional and international Microsoft conferences to present their findings and methods to other educators.

Steve was very excited about winning the award, but the biggest reward was that the virtual lesson programme was seen as something worthwhile, he said.

Previous award winners have been Howick College teacher Nathan Kerr and Oamaru Intermediate deputy principal Deidre Senior. ■

The community face of ACE cuts

Wairoa College and Mana College are two schools that have felt the sting of night class funding cuts in very different ways.

The small rural community of Wairoa contributed 1500 signatures to the 53,000 presented to parliament last month, asking for the 80% funding cut to adult community education (ACE) classes to be repealed.

Sadly though, the college was one of the many schools to have its application for a slice of the remaining 20% of funding declined.

Wellington's Mana College on the other hand was one of the "lucky" few to have its funding application approved. But relief turned to disappointment when the school discovered the money on offer would not be enough to continue running night classes.

Mana College ACE co-ordinator Pam Ringrose said the college's board of trustees discovered the amount of funding the school had been allocated was not enough to do the work required to keep the classes running.

She described the loss as a "tragedy" that would hurt communities throughout the country.

"Where else can you get this unique style of adult learning? It provided the first step for many New Zealanders on their path towards a skill, a career, social contact and confidence," she said.

ACE classes were an extension of

the compulsory school system which provided for ongoing education as the right for everyone, she said.

"Where will the average New Zealander be able to go to learn other skills at an affordable cost?"

Wairoa College on the other hand had its application for funding declined outright – the school plans to attempt to keep night classes running on a user-pays basis, but it is likely its community will struggle to pay increased fees.

Wairoa College ACE co-ordinator and PPTA branch chair Clement Pinto says the small rural Hawkes Bay town will be severely disadvantaged by the funding cuts.

"In order to continue to offer these courses we will need to increase our fees three to five-fold to make it viable. An increase in fees will make it hard for most of our students," he said.

If the classes were cut completely it would affect 750 adult students and make 15 tutors and a co-ordinator unemployed.

Wairoa College ACE students were predominately Māori, female and in the low income bracket, Clement said.

"At present we charge low fees of \$60 per term for woodwork and \$20 a term for all other courses."

This covered classes like basic conversational English, healthy cooking for parents of school children, first aid and budgeting courses, computer skills, jewelry making, conversational Māori, basic Spanish, guitar lessons,



A community speaks out: Wairoa College ACE co-ordinator Clement Pinto (left) helped gather nearly 580 signatures in just one day as part of a nation-wide petition calling for the repeal of ACE cuts.

Yoga and Pilates and various types of dancing. In the pipeline were bee keeping, home maintenance and home handyman courses.

"Most of these courses are now under threat due to the reduced funding and the inability of our locals to pay more.

"It is unwise and narrow-minded of the government not to want to give a little back to the community through funding the night classes. Wairoa citizens are very angry and disappointed," he said. •

ACE petition reaches Parliament



The petition requesting a repeal of ACE cuts was presented to Parliament on 20 October. The petition, organised by CLASS (community learning association through schools), drew 53,000 signatures from communities and schools.

Addressing supporters on the steps of Parliament, CLASS president Maryke Fordyce (right, in red) said the government's decision was made without consultation. "The community had nothing to do with it – the government's priorities are not the communities' priorities," she said.

PPTA president Kate Gainsford also spoke. "We've heard a lot of talk about mandate from this government. The only mandate regarding ACE cuts is in these (petition) boxes." •

Social class linked to achievement

Up and down the country newspaper editorials and radio commentators have sung the same tune – the failure of students must be laid squarely at the door of the teachers.

However, Massey University emeritus professor of education Ivan Snook says social inequality has a much bigger role to play in the “long tail of underachievement”.

It is common knowledge that in New Zealand the gap between the wealthy and the poor has widened enormously since the social revolution of the 1980s and 1990s, professor Snook says.

“This has been accompanied by a dramatic rise in violence, child mortality, infectious diseases and a decline in overall school achievement, which may well be ‘the long tail of poverty,’” he said.

In his paper *Social class and educational achievement: Beyond ideology* Professor Snook attempts to go beyond simplistic finger pointing to look at the challenges many students bring with them when they enter the school gates, and how these can be dealt with.

Recent discussions of league tables and standardised testing have once again drawn attention to what is often called “the gap” – the wide variation in success rates for different groups gaining school-based qualifications.

“In New Zealand this has tended to focus on differences between Māori and Pakeha but it arises also in discussion of social class ... in relation to proposed standards, the tone is of outrage that teachers should be ‘scared’ of being held accountable.”

Professor Snook says it is “ethically wrong” to hold teachers accountable for achievement differences that are largely the result of social class and home background.

“The dispute is often ideological rather than data based and, because of this, each side tends to see the other as merely providing excuses.”

Professor Snook believes the gap boils down to one question – “can educational inequalities be removed by changes in the school or must they



“Educational policy should not proceed apart from social policy.”
- Ivan Snook

be tackled in the wider community?”

According to *Social class and educational achievement* shows, the latter is most definitely the case. Professor Snook cites research that shows the education gap is not restricted to New Zealand – it happens in every developed society.

“Students with good family resources out-perform those who come from poorer backgrounds.”

These inequalities are not just restricted to educational achievement.

Professor Snook says that within any society, including New Zealand, those who are poor are much less healthy, have lower life expectancy, lack adequate housing, are over represented in the prison population and are more often the victims and the perpetrators of violence.

“Educational inequality is one part of wider social inequality,” he says.

Professor Snook then looks at studies which show those social problems are due, not to the amount of income, but to its spread.

“To give just one example: USA, New Zealand, Portugal and Ireland (with high income inequality) have high infant mortality rates, while Japan, Sweden, Finland and Norway (low income inequality) have low infant mortality rates. The same picture is basically true of health, violence, life

expectancy, teenage pregnancy, rates of imprisonment, abuse of alcohol and the use of illegal drugs.”

Although good schools make a difference, the biggest influence is family background, making tackling each problem separately ineffective.

“All this leads to the conclusion that, on their own, schools are relatively powerless to close the educational gap: closing the gap requires an emphasis on policies to remove the causes of poverty. To hold schools and teachers accountable for differences in the attainment of social groups is unfair and unreasonable.”

Professor Snook does not just assert this point – he also provides a careful critique of the reasons given by those who place responsibility solely on teachers and schools.

He looks at, and refutes, the argument that some schools have beaten the odds so all schools should be able to – looking at the motivations behind the way schools are set up, how they select students, the individual backgrounds of the students and the results of standardised tests.

“We have to recognise that achieving on standardised tests is not all of education and may not even be the most important part. The business world often argues that affective characteristics are more important to them than cognitive ones: they want employees who are loyal, trustworthy, creative, flexible and able to work co-operatively. Standardised tests do not measure these traits and may indeed discourage them.”

Professor Snook’s paper looks at the approaches of various different schools in New Zealand and highlights the success of those that work with their community instead of in isolation.

“These approaches show that education of parents is as important as the education of their children. And yet, there have been recent savage cuts of funding for Adult and Community Education which will hurt lower socio-economic groups most.

“Educational policy should not proceed apart from social policy.”

Social class and educational achievement: Beyond ideology can be found in full at www.ppta.org.nz. ■

Pacific unions tackle major challenges

Classes of over 70 students held under tents because there aren't enough classrooms and teachers too poorly paid to consider union membership are just some of the problems teachers confront in the Pacific.

PPTA News caught up with Papua New Guinea Teachers Association representative Jennie Kome and Vanuatu Teachers Union representative Marguerite Firiam on a visit to New Zealand as part of their Alisi Fusi Wightman scholarship.

The scholarship is run by the Council of Pacific Education and brings Pacific women teacher unionists to Australia and New Zealand every second year to increase their knowledge and see first hand how other teacher unions operate.

Jennie and Marguerite say teachers in their respective countries need strong unions to address many major challenges.

"One of our main problems is that teachers are given more responsibilities than just teaching and there aren't enough resources," says Maguerite. "Some classes have up to 40 kids with three different levels



Marguerite Firiam and Jennie Kome.

in each. More and more children are entering school with inadequate levels of literacy."

"My daughter is a teacher and has 72 in her grade four class," says Jennie. "One teacher taught for a year under a tent and is now resigning because she can't handle it. Many teachers have to teach the old curriculum because they have only old resources. Some schools have had to close down for lack of funding."

Both Jennie and Marguerite say that years of being underpaid mean

most teachers are reluctant to pay union fees, but that may be changing as unions notch up small but significant gains.

"Our union successfully managed to negotiate full maternity leave for teachers," says Maguerite. "Before 2000 teachers on maternity leave were only paid half."

"We've had some recent success with salaries," says Jennie. "But ... the economy has raised the standard of living so that now another increase is required." ■

Tapping into the student voice

"Why would I want to read some article from an old newspaper about Robert Mugabe when I could ask my friend (online) from Zimbabwe what it was like living there?"

Today's teens want the chance to make the cyber-world a part of their learning experience, according to an Epsom Girls Grammar School study on student voice.

Working with the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) chief researcher Jane Gilbert, they took part in a project in which six year 10 students gathered data on the actions and discourses they observed their teachers using, and the effectiveness of those techniques.

The six girls observed three lessons in four subjects – English, Maths, Science and Social Studies.

They were also asked to report on what they were doing outside the classroom, the skills they learned in these activities and whether these skills can be transferred into the classroom.

During the collection of data the girls began to think more deeply about what they were actually learning and whether this differed from their perceptions of what the teachers thought they were learning.

They identified a very clear culture in each subject area. This went from classroom management and teaching methods to an ability to group subject teachers by their choice of clothes.

They eventually grouped the subjects into two categories – Maths and Science were "what is the answer?" subjects, while English and Social studies were "what is your opinion?" subjects.

Students felt strongly that they wouldn't be able to learn as well in cross-discipline situations and felt secondary school was about learning from passionate, subject-specific teachers.

They were also clear they didn't like being sent off to investigate a question that the teachers already knew the answer to: "If you want us to investigate, then make it real so our answer is new to you too," was the response.

Students wanted to choose how they presented their findings and they wanted teachers to trust them to investigate using resources that were more natural to them, such as experts from their online discussion forums.

Source: The Collaborative Path to Implementation: Insights from the NZCER Curriculum Conference Series. ■

CTU conference explores alternatives

Rising unemployment, pressures on existing jobs and difficulties in maintaining real incomes, all in the wake of a global recession, are just some of the challenges working people face said Council of Trade Unions (CTU) President Helen Kelly in her opening address to the council's biennial conference in October.

The theme of the conference was "unions creating alternatives" and sought to discuss and define policies and campaign strategies to counter the effects of recent global economic pressures.

"Economic policy, unions and campaigning are the ingredients of the alternative," she said.

"If we have learned anything in the boom and bust economic cycle, that we have seen fail working people time and time again, it is that things need to change.

"We need the economy to be simply the thing that drives good communities."

The prime minister John Key also

addressed the conference and told delegates he was as conscious as they of the challenges that lie ahead.

But despite being eager to share his view that unions and the government "share many of the same hopes and concerns", he continued to promote number of government initiatives that were less than popular with conference affiliates. These included restraints on public sector pay negotiations, increased ACC levies and the introduction of national standards in literacy and numeracy.

"I am backing my education minister 100 per cent on their (national standards') implementation and I am confident that unions can work constructively with her to make this policy work," he said.

However, PPTA president Kate Gainsford has said education minister Anne Tolley's plan creates a "huge risk" that primary teachers will feel pushed to focus on numeracy and literacy in isolation, instead of developing them within a broad-based curriculum.



Helen Kelly

"We cannot afford to ignore the needs of students as they enter secondary education," she said.

In addition to debating and passing a number of remits, affiliates wrapped up the conference by passing a 23-point resolution aimed at tackling issues compounded by the recession.

For a full version of the resolution visit union.org.nz/conference2009/resolution. ■

UK and NZ teacher unions share concerns

The president of the United Kingdom's biggest teachers' union took the chance to meet his New Zealand counterparts last month and discovered some striking similarities.

National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) president Julian Chapman visited Wellington as part of a whistle-stop tour of the southern hemisphere.

He decided to come to New Zealand after meeting Kiwi representatives at education conferences held in Kuala Lumpur and Ottawa.

Julian's visit followed a trip to Australia to meet with unions there.

He described NASUWT and PPTA as "educational soul-mates" saying there were more similarities between the two unions than between NASUWT and the Australian unions he visited.

He also found similarities in the issues both unions were facing – particularly the looming spectre of national standards in New Zealand primary schools.

The UK government was looking at national testing at key stages and NASUWT was dubious about the value of this. They were also very concerned about the league tables of school performance these could produce, he said.

"Our view is that it's not the testing that's the issue it's the use that could be made of the results."

NASUWT was also concerned that SATs (scholastic assessment tests) that are sat externally will be replaced by internal teacher-marked tests, creating a huge workload for teachers in terms of assessment.

The British government has already removed SATs at key stage two (primary school level) and wants to remove SATs altogether, he said.

PPTA general secretary Kevin Bunker was pleased to welcome Julian and was very interested in the national testing parallels both countries faced.

Both were concerned about the



Julian Chapman

risks of teaching to the test, the possibility of a narrowed curriculum and league tables.

He was also interested to hear the concern about extensive testing being assessed internally by teachers.

"It's a way of saving money by adding to teachers' workloads and is a fear we would share if there were a significant shift in NCEA marking," he said. ■

Schools' guide to the Privacy Act

Written by leading New Zealand privacy lawyer Kathryn Dalziel and published by the Privacy Commissioner, *Privacy in Schools* gives practical advice to schools about how the Privacy Act works. It includes discussions and examples of each of the privacy principles and looks at other relevant legislation that may need to be applied first. For instance:

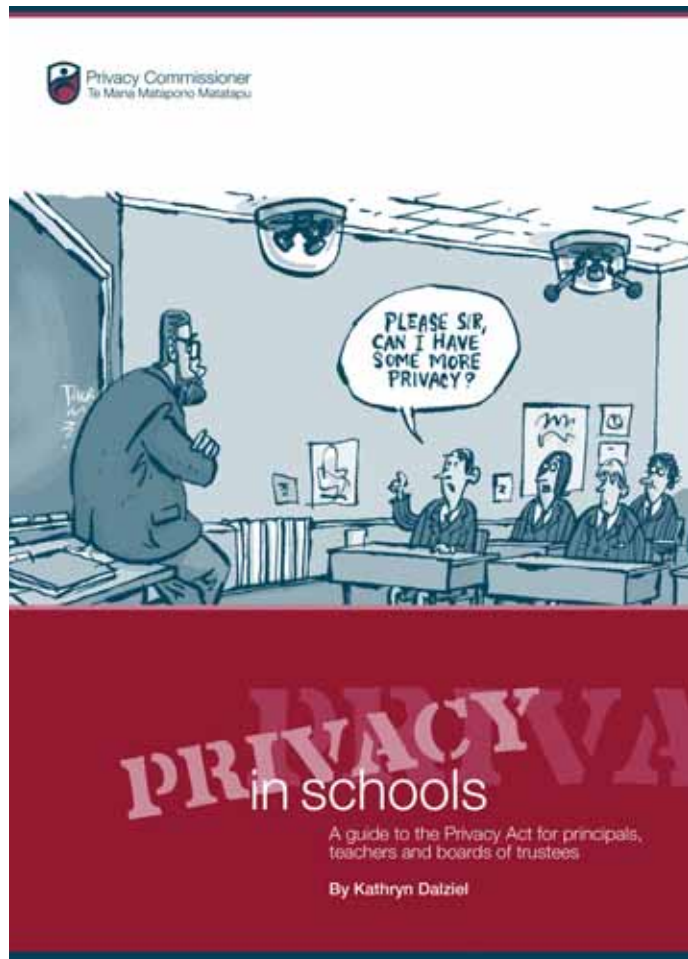
- Can schools use CCTV cameras?
- Should they put photos of students on their websites?
- Do school counsellors have to disclose information to parents?
- When do schools have to disclose information to other agencies?
- How much information needs to be collected on school enrolment forms?

Privacy in Schools is available as a free pdf download from www.privacy.org.nz.

Also published in hard-copy: A5, 40 pages, colour, \$20 or \$15 per copy for orders of 10 or more (plus \$2.00 p&p).

To order:

- Ph: 09-302 8680
- Fax: 09-302 2305
- Email: enquiries@privacy.org.nz
- Write to: The Office of the Privacy Commissioner, PO Box 466, Shortland Street, Auckland 1140. ▪



PPTA senior positions advisory committee (SPAC) elections

Attention APs and DPs

This term the senior positions advisory committee (SPAC) has elections due in the following regions:

- Northland/North Shore
- Waikato/Central Plateau/Thames Valley
- East Coast/Hawkes Bay
- Wellington/Hutt Valley/Wairarapa
- Canterbury/Aoraki

Nomination forms will arrive at your branch soon and will be distributed by your branch chair. Only current AP/DP members are eligible to stand as (and vote for) representatives to this group.

Visit www.ppta.org.nz/index.php/who-we-are/senior-positions-advisory-committee for a list of the current SPAC reps in the regions mentioned above. Please forward any queries about the nomination process or the elections to Sarah Dalton, advisory officer at national office: sdalton@ppta.org.nz.

House for sale

WEST AUCKLAND, 4 brm, dbl garage (internal access), end of quiet cul-de-sac, kindy and children's park adjacent, established vege and flower garden, sunny deck, private section. Primary school 800m, shopping mall 1.5km. Ten high schools within 10km radius.

Enquiries: phone owner (09) 818 4266 (evenings).



Speaking out for democracy

Fijian unionist and teacher Tevita Koroi says the need for his country to return to democracy is “one of great urgency”.

Speaking at the Tertiary Education Union’s (TEU) annual conference earlier this month, Mr Koroi, who is president of the Fijian Teachers Association (FTA) and president of the Council of Pacific Education (COPE), thanked New Zealand unions for their ongoing support for the growing democracy movement in Fiji.

“FTA acknowledge the support teacher unions have provided to colleagues in Fiji,” he said. “Your messages ... send reassuring calls.”

“The restoration of democracy in Fiji is of paramount importance. It is not going to be easy, but not impossible.”

In May this year the interim Fijian government dismissed Mr Koroi from his position as principal of Nasinu Secondary School after comments he made in December 2008 at the launch of Movement for Democracy in Fiji – when he said the interim government must hold free elections as soon as possible.

He told delegates at the TEU conference that two recent interim government decrees had made things particularly difficult for unions in Fiji.

“The administration of justice decree gives the government power to decide which cases should go to the courts and which should not.”

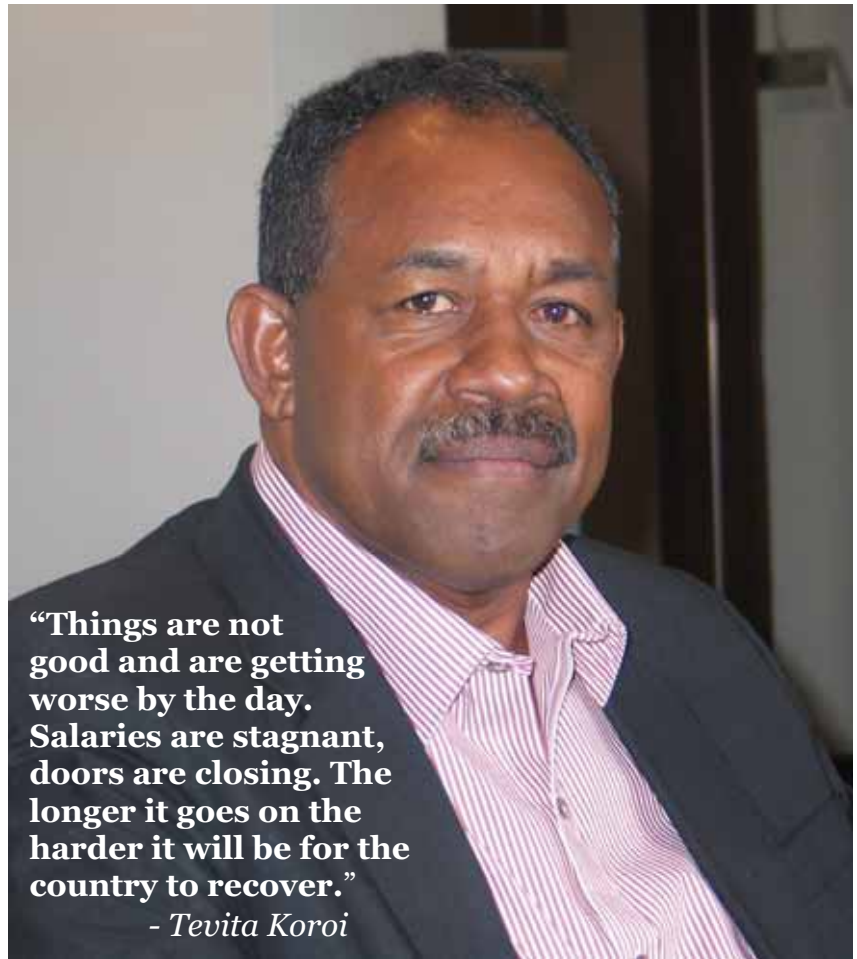
He said this meant that many cases of workers’ grievances simply were not being given a hearing.

“And the public emergency regulation curbs gatherings and meetings and places restraints on media freedom.”

He said Fijian teachers were devastated by the government’s decision in April to hand compulsory retirement to all civil servants over 55, affecting over 900 teachers.

“The task of replacing these teachers has yet to be completed,” he said. “The impact on the quality of education in schools is enormous.”

Talking with journalists after



“Things are not good and are getting worse by the day. Salaries are stagnant, doors are closing. The longer it goes on the harder it will be for the country to recover.”

- Tevita Koroi

his speech, Mr Koroi said the government’s excuse for the forced retirements was that “a cost cutting measure” was required.

“But ... you have to have replacements for these positions. There’s not much cost saved,” he said.

“The real motive is to get rid of senior people ... who are in the way of what the regime wants to achieve.”

He said the replacements were likely to be individually contracted for three years.

“By having individual contracts the government will undermine teachers’ collectivity.

“We’re not engaged in any collective negotiation process. The labour courts that are meant to look at workers’ grievances are not responding.

“Things are not good and are getting worse by the day. Salaries are stagnant, doors are closing. The longer it goes on the harder it will be for the country to recover.”

He said that change would only come if there was a commitment from all sides in Fiji to engage in dialogue.

“It may be difficult, but that’s the way to go.”

PPTA president Kate Gainsford wrote to Fijian interim prime minister Voreqe Bainimarama in September requesting him to reinstate Tevita Koroi as a school principal, and suggested he was being unfairly punished for exercising free speech.

A representative of Bainimarama replied and said the prime minister was confident the Fijian courts would independently deliver justice in the case of Mr Koroi.

“Your expression of international solidarity with the Fijian Teachers’ Union is very much admired,” continued the reply. “... And we wish the NZPPTA a merry Christmas, a happy new year and good work with the New Zealand Charter schools.” ▪

Proposed registration changes

- flagging the snags

The Teachers Council is consulting the profession on some proposals for changes in teacher registration.

The council welcomes submissions from teachers, organisations (e.g. school staffs, PPTA branches) and from individuals. **Submissions close on Friday 27 November.** The consultation document is available at: <http://www.teacherscouncil.govt.nz/policy/consultation.stm>.

Matters of concern

1. What is a “teaching position”?

The biggest issue in the consultation is a proposal to revise the council’s definition of “a teaching position”. The revised wording says it, “Involves holding the prime responsibility for the planning, implementation, assessment, evaluation and reporting of a sequential programme of learning (sustained, full cycle of teaching and learning, length to be determined)” and “enables appraisal against all the Satisfactory Teacher Dimension/Registered Teacher Criteria”.

The problem is that neither the previous definition nor this proposal is sufficiently flexible to cover all the non-standard roles that secondary teachers hold now and may hold in the future. For example, it appears to not apply to guidance counsellors, careers advisors, resource teachers learning and behaviour (RTLBs), even non-teaching senior managers.

It is simply not going to do the job. These people have been appointed to teaching positions, and can’t be just removed from them by the Teachers Council redefining what a teaching position is.

2. Categories of registration

The council is also proposing to make a new distinction between registration and holding a practising certificate. It suggests three categories of full practising certificate: in a teaching position, “in transition”, or “allied teacher”, i.e. working in a learning institution but not in a teaching position.

PPTA’s concern about this is that although the council suggests that the teaching practitioner role could include professional leaders and resource teachers, despite the fact that they may well not do any classroom teaching, “some guidance counsellors” (presumably the teaching qualified ones, which is the vast majority) appear likely to be relegated to the “allied teacher” practising certificate category.

Why there should be a distinction made among these groups is not clear. For a perspective on the significant contribution that guidance counsellors make to the development of the key competencies in the New Zealand Curriculum, read an article by Colin Hughes,

HoD guidance at Trident High School available from the Guidance Counsellors section of the Communities area of the PPTA website, at <http://www.ppta.org.nz/index.php/guidance>.

3. What is recent teaching experience?

Another proposal that may concern teachers is to change the definition of “recent teaching experience” for the purposes of maintaining a full practising certificate, currently two years in the last five, to a more demanding requirement of one year in the last three. The council’s argument for this is around the speed of change in education and the need to be assured that a person with a full practising certificate is up to date. Someone re-entering teaching after a period of over two years would be placed in the “subject to confirmation” category, in today’s parlance, or the “transitional” category if the proposal discussed above was adopted, and would then have a reduced period of “advice and guidance” before being recommended for a full practising certificate again.

4. How long should a teacher be provisionally registered?

A less contentious proposal is to limit provisional registration to three years, with a right to apply for a further three years if the beginning teacher is “making satisfactory progress towards meeting all of the Satisfactory Teacher Dimension/Registered Teacher Criteria”.

This would mean that someone who failed to achieve full registration after six years, or was making insufficient progress towards it after three, would have to leave the teaching profession. Teachers may be surprised to learn that for some years now, due to a glitch in writing the legislation that set up the Teachers Council, there has been no upper limit on the time a teacher could stay provisionally registered. At one stage the limit was five years. •

**A TEACHER
IS A TEACHER**
... enables appraisal against
all the Satisfactory Teacher
Dimension/Registered
Teacher Criteria!

Out in the field

Developing a timetabling policy

Information and advice from PPTA's intrepid field officers.

At this time of year many schools will be looking to develop policy or review existing policies. It's mandatory for schools to have a timetable policy. If your branch is among the few schools that still lacks a policy then this is a good time of year to get the ball rolling.

The Secondary Teachers' Collective Agreement (STCA) establishes the need for a written policy which must be "developed in consultation with... teaching staff." Because the branch is the best representative "staff" group on site it may wish to draft the initial policy and if so, the PPTA document *Non-contact time, average class sizes and timetable policies* provides a helpful guide. It's available at www.ppta.org.nz, google the phrase "PPTA Non-contact timetable policies". This document also includes a copy of Judge Goddard's definition of "consultation". In a consultative process, your view will be genuinely considered and sufficient time will be allowed for response, suggestions and clarification. Consultation is not just a formality.

The timetable policy may include more than the STCA provisions but

cannot be contrary to, or offer less, than those entitlements. The STCA is a legally binding document while a school policy acts as more of a guideline for the practical application of the STCA provisions and the particular custom and practice of the individual school. If your policy does not reflect the STCA (for example, it offers lower entitlements or is out of date) then the STCA will override the school policy. It's important that the anomalies in the school policy are fixed up during the review process, as this can be confusing for the teachers in the school.

Under part five of the STCA your policy must have at least the following:

- A description of the non-contact entitlements of the STCA.
- Statements about class sizes (which may include minimum and maximum class sizes). It must state that the school will endeavour to meet a class size average of 26 students for each teacher.
- A "process" providing for circumstances where the employer can't, for genuine reason, provide the right number of non-contacts,

or cannot help but give a teacher a larger class size average than 26. This process is known as the "compensatory mechanism" where the school compensates a teacher for the temporary inaccessibility of their STCA entitlements. If no compensation is offered, then no process has occurred to provide for the situation.

The types of compensation vary but usually a range of options is listed in the timetable policy, and the access to those will be by agreement between an individual teacher and the principal as one type of compensation may suit one member, but another member might prefer something else.

Examples of compensation include, but are not limited to, time off in lieu, being excused from assembly, meetings or duty, or a payment of money.

If you and your branch would like further advice about timetabling policy, refer to the STCA and *Non contact time, average class size and timetable policies*. Your PPTA field officer may also help in the development or review of a policy. Any questions should be referred to your local office. •

Blog of the week

Cockroaches, class size and student achievement

by Peter Sumpter, Villa Maria College

A scientist was researching cockroaches. He trained one to jump out of a petrie dish each time it heard the command "Jump". He then removed its legs and repeated the experiment. On the command "Jump" it stayed motionless in the dish. This proves scientifically that if you take the legs off a cockroach it will go deaf.

Most high schools have larger classes for their high achieving and well motivated students, allowing the school to have smaller classes for low achieving students or students who require learning support.

Enter New Zealand's leading educational researchers to survey the students. The statistics clearly show that the highest achieving students came from a class of 30 taught by

teacher A, while the lowest achieving students come from a class of 18 taught by teacher B.

"Minister, we have completed our research!"

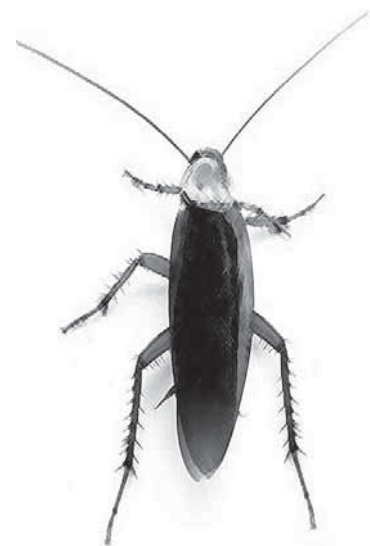
"What have you found?"

"We found that class size does not positively correlate to student achievement! In fact we found that larger classes actually improve student achievement. It is the teacher who has the biggest effect, not small classes at all!"

"Well done. That will silence the call for more teachers in schools. Performance pay is the answer! What is your next project?"

"We have been contracted by Ag Research to investigate hearing impairment in cockroaches."

(No cockroaches were harmed in writing this article.) •



Ode to night classes

The light bulb of learning is flickering so slow
Night classes as we know them are all set to go
From woodwork to Yoga, dancing and song
The isolated and lonely have come along

The tutors and students came from near and afar
To learn more about languages, or play the guitar
Many thousands of Kiwis have been through our doors
A fact that our government conveniently ignores

Now the time has come Walrus Tolley has said
To ditch ACE funding and go private instead

So to all of our learners, and tutors out there
This short sighted decision has made this quite clear

So let's make the most of what we have left
Enjoy the classes and don't feel bereft
Night classes will come back out of the dark
We all need to learn and continue to spark

The failed policies of past ages are set to repeat
Rogered by Ruthless politicians from easy street
But we will endeavour to help you along the way
For those who can afford it, it will be user pay.

Anon

Ed research - selective, seldom peer reviewed

Dear editor,

Strong (albeit persuasive) words from professor John O'Neill (*PPTA News*, October 2009). I'm sure he's caught the hearts and minds of my colleagues with his article. And what's more he explained his critique with examples we teachers can relate to (growing plants, winemaking, etc).

I know it's silly but my attention was caught by the wonderful graphics which tempted me to read the discussion.

A great deal of funding for

research comes from the Ministry of Education and Professor O'Neill's tobacco and drug parallel may be a tad polemic but it illuminates his point well. It is only in recent years that I've discovered that a great deal of educational research is not peer reviewed – certainly not by the O'Neill method.

I've also discovered anecdotally that the ministry doesn't publish all research in my area (ICT) and I've wondered how much of this type of "research" influences decision

making. Additionally, I'm told work is sometimes selectively published.

I wish I had numbers to support these comments. I wish too, that I had more faith in the system.

Speaking of faith – the age of miracles may not be over – we may get a response from the ministry. However, I expect a scholar of Dr Hattie's standing will respond and I look forward to his reply.

Michael Peterson
HoD ICT/Technology
Hukarere Girls' College

Letter to John Key ...

... from adult students studying French at Hutt Valley High School.

Dear prime minister,

We are members of a class of adult students of level 2 French at Hutt Valley High School (HVHS) in Lower Hutt.

We wish to express our concern that through government's recent funding decisions our class and others at Hutt Valley High School will cease at the end of 2009. This course has been running for more than a decade to the best of our knowledge! For many people who study through adult community education, they simply cannot afford to pay more money. They cannot afford the classes at, for example, private institutions which cost about four times what we pay at HVHS.

We feel your decision to cut the fundraising will mean the end of a long historic form of learning in New

Zealand. Adult education classes in New Zealand have been going for over a century.

We also know that these classes are wonderful for making contact with a wide range of people from many different backgrounds and countries.

In addition to the learning, the evening classes are a marvelous use of local schools out of hours. They also help in creating and cementing our community. They are an expression of life-long learning and help us be good role-models for the younger generation.

We ask that you do not rush through with this policy as the impacts are very wide. As a minimum, please delay it in order that the community can properly consider it. You need to listen longer to people on this (more



than 200,000 people take these classes each year!)

We feel this decision was made suddenly and was not foreshadowed in the lead up to last year's election, unlike other National Party policies.

Regards,

Margarita Misovska Dimitirevska
French tutor on behalf of the
Tuesday Night French Class of
Hutt Valley High School

IN THE NEWS



Must try harder

After her first year in the job education minister Anne Tolley has received a decidedly average report card from the *New Zealand Herald*.

She has failed to subdue what political reporter Claire Trevett refers to as “the infamously lippy and powerful teacher unions” and succeeded instead in turning the public septic over cuts to adult community education (ACE).

Trevett says that Tolley underestimated the public reaction to the cuts and erred in understating their impact by saying they would only affect “hobby courses” like Moroccan cooking and belly dancing.

She described Tolley’s performance as “inconsistent” and said she took longer than many of her colleagues to come to grips with her portfolio. Tolley’s sales pitch on the “half-baked” national standards policy failed to convince many and overshadowed other areas where she has

performed well. Perhaps a visit to the principal’s office is in order?

Complex title, simple message

“*Parsimonious Motivations, Educational Dogmatism and Political Folly: Contextualising Cuts to Adult Community Education*” – the title may be a mouthful but the message is simple – cutting night class funding is a dumb idea.

An editorial that features in the latest *New Zealand Journal of Teachers’ Work*, penned by joint editors Paul Adams and John O’Neill,



Image reprinted courtesy of Kapi-Mana News/Paul Ekers.

looks at the reasoning behind the cuts that will see ACE funding slashed from \$16 million to just \$3 million. It examines a change in thinking at the highest levels that is “economically, ideologically and educationally

dogmatic”. The cuts will directly affect the education of more than 160,000 people cost 212 ACE co-ordinators and tutors their jobs.

“Disenfranchising over 160,000 taxpayers and citizens – who are mostly voters – for a relatively small sum of money is not only illogical but also political folly,” it says. The full editorial can be found at: http://www.teacherswork.ac.nz/journal/volume6_issue1.php.

Lipstick in School

Apparently, after applying lipstick in the toilets at a Brisbane school, a number of 12-year-old girls would then press their lips to the mirror leaving dozens of prints.

Every night the maintenance man would remove them and the next day the girls would put them back.

Finally the principal decided she would call all the girls to the toilets with the maintenance man to explain the problem. To demonstrate how difficult it was to clean the mirrors, she asked the maintenance man to show the girls how much effort was required. He took out a long-handled squeegee, dipped it in the toilet, and cleaned the mirror with it. Since then, there have been no lip prints on the mirror. •

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

Travel and accommodation details are available from Louise Mortland at lmortland@ppta.org.nz.

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