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PPTA NEWS

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Will a reshuffle mean the same deal for night classes?

p8



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Real improvements better than political stunts

It's great to bring in the new year with robust debate around key issues such as national standards. Unfortunately, few public debates these days are free from personal attacks, particularly when politicians feel threatened or under pressure. I am proud to lead PPTA and to act as the voice of teachers, so be assured that this union will continue to speak out regardless of the brickbats, for the betterment of students and the wider education system. PPTA's motto is "we stand for education" and when it counts, we do.

The cabinet reshuffle shows that the prime minister is clear about trying to find the best people for the work to be done – and in supporting the ministers responsible for education to do the best they can. We are certainly hoping that the new minister responsible for tertiary education, Hon Steven Joyce, will reconsider the short-sighted decisions that have been made in the area of Adult and Community Education (ACE).

This government clearly wants change and its desire to improve outcomes for students is welcome. Problems arise though when it is unable to distinguish between actions that genuinely improve teaching and learning and initiatives that are no more than political stunts.

The national standards policy is a case in point. It will not enhance learning as we explain in the article on page 4. The government invests in research and advice on a wealth of issues ranging from truancy, alternative and special education, mental health services, behaviour and family support. So it is intriguing that it is refusing to acknowledge the overwhelming evidence that the national standards approach is educationally unsound.

Similarly, experience with the youth guarantee confirms a tendency upon the part of governments to look for populist quick fixes (boot camps, three strikes ...) rather than sustainable change that comes from well-funded, coherent programmes and support.



by Kate Gainsford

On the other hand, PPTA welcomes the planned roll-out this year of the evidence-based interventions that make up the behaviour action plan in schools. The plan targets long-term improvements in children's behaviour. Although there is little for secondary schools at present, we look forward to the next report from the Advisory Group on Conduct Problems, which will focus on teenagers. Intervention once students reach secondary school is more complex and expensive so we do not want to see the government backing out when the going gets tough.

News that the economy is set to improve is heartening as 2010 is the year for negotiating the new collective agreements for teachers and principals. We remain hopeful that the government will take this opportunity to invest in our young people and in our future. Secondary education can be a springboard for economic growth and social cohesion.

My view is that the Ministerial Taskforce on Secondary Teacher Remuneration, led by Dame Margaret Bazley and set up in 2003 to develop a ten-year plan for managing change in the sector, still has much to offer. Its vision for the gradual revitalisation of the profession put an end to many years of conflict, cost-cutting and industrial mayhem in the sector. It would be a tragedy indeed if the government were to return the profession to those times. ■



"Unfortunately, we're approaching the expiration date on most of our quick-fix solutions."

A student is more than a test score

Implementing national standards in New Zealand is a misguided approach to a manufactured “crisis”, PPTA president Kate Gainsford says.

“**E**xcessive monitoring does not improve teaching and learning. In fact, it generally has disastrous unintended effects on students and teachers,” Kate said.

To help ensure discussion on the issue is well-informed, PPTA has released a paper that looks at the danger of National’s standards in a country that “already over-assesses”.

“A student is more than a test score,” Kate said.

The position paper shows that the policy will impact negatively on the New Zealand Curriculum.

“The curriculum should be about ... ensuring student learning is at the centre, not constant measuring.”

It is backed up by a background piece on national standards, which shows the negative impact implementation would have on innovation in assessment, professional learning and student behaviour at secondary level. It also explores the dangers of a narrowing of focus in the curriculum. “2010 should be all about the New Zealand curriculum,” Kate said.

“The curriculum should be about broadening teaching and learning opportunities and ensuring student learning is at the centre, not constant measuring.”

Also raised in the paper is the time taken away from teaching and learning. Academic critiques of the policy are included and they are substantially weighing in on the side

of NZEI’s preference for a trial of the standards.

“Spending precious government funds on the introduction of national standards as they are is unwise. If the government wants schools and teachers to be more data driven in their practice, it must walk the talk. It is fair and reasonable to request a trial for a practice that has thrown up so many worrying questions and too few satisfactory answers.”

New Zealand has a number of major projects to address literacy and numeracy teaching in primary school, Kate said.

“These projects would be much more effective if they were available to more schools, teachers, and students.”

The report explains that “highly destructive” league tables resulting from collated results are inevitable, despite government claims that this is not its intention. It also shows that most parents do not want the standards.

“Government-funded research showed no strong demand. Parents wanted informative plain English reports on their own child’s progress. That doesn’t require this standards policy.”

Plain English and informative reporting was a good thing for teachers, parents and students, Kate said.

“You don’t need expensive national standards to do this. The money would be better spent on more one-on-one time and smaller classes to help pick up the students that are falling behind.

“It is unpleasant that the debate from some quarters has turned to teacher and union bashing. This is not a sensible way forward. Teachers

are not afraid of change, nor accountability. They would not be in the job if they had an aversion to either. Hopefully it is sensible discussion and open minds that will see us through the political mire ahead,” she said.

Both papers can be found online at <http://www.ppta.org.nz/index.php/nat-standards> or by looking at the What’s New section of our homepage. ▪

National standards won’t work – what will?

- More highly qualified and experienced teachers for children with the greatest learning needs.
- Support for teachers to boost effective teaching and improved understanding of students’ diverse learning needs.
- Support for principals to provide strong community and professional leadership.
- Opportunities for all parents and whanau to talk about their child’s progress and learning needs.

- Excerpt from NZEI national standards bus tour pamphlet

Auditor general weighs in to behaviour debate

At a time when disruptive and dangerous student behaviour is becoming an increasing problem, a report by the office of the auditor general reveals our schools' most difficult students are not getting the support they need and deserve.

Instances of violence on both students and staff have led to higher proportions of stand downs and suspensions, but problems within the system mean teachers are forced to apply bandaids to enormously complex behavioural issues, PPTA president Kate Gainsford says.

"In these cases it's the students, their parents and teachers around them that pay the price," she said.

The report discloses that the Ministry of Education has unsuccessfully sought increased funding on several occasions for both the Severe Behaviour Initiative and the Speech Language Initiative.

"The ministry has been unable to access the money to do the job properly," Kate said.

The brief of the audit was to examine how effectively the ministry managed its support for school aged students with the highest level behavioural problems, speech/language difficulties, intellectual or physical disabilities.

It looked at four initiatives – Ongoing and Reviewable Resourcing Schemes (ORRS), the School High Health Needs Fund, the Severe Behaviour Initiative and the Speech Language Initiative – which provide support to up to 20,500 students.

The auditor general's report showed the support network in place for students with behaviour issues was fragmented and flawed - yet the behaviour action plan, dubbed Positive Behaviour for Learning, that was released last year offered little new support for secondary students, Kate said.

The report also showed the ministry's approach to students with severe behaviour issues was deficient in a number of ways.

"It calls on the education minister and ministry to play closer attention to the needs of students and the data collected, with a number of areas



needing serious improvement."

The report noted that in the case of the Severe Behaviour Initiative there was a high risk that some students eligible for its support had not been identified.

It also reflected the experience felt in many schools that some districts have a greater need for support than others, and that this support was "not timely enough".

Criticism was also made of the variation in support provided to students with similar levels of need in similar circumstances.

Educators interviewed for the report said many students assessed as having moderate needs were displaying needs that were increasingly severe at school, particularly when it came to behavioural issues.

It was acknowledged that this placed significantly more pressure on teaching staff, school communities, and services providing support for those children.

"If students are not supported within a reasonable timeframe, their situation may worsen and they may be more difficult to manage when

support is provided," it says.

The report makes 10 recommendations which include improving information about the level of need for support and providing students who have similar needs and circumstances with similar support – regardless of where they live. More effective systems for collating information about the ministry's support for students was also called for.

"The minister has reconvened the group that worked on the Behaviour Action Plan, including representation from PPTA. But it is disturbing to see a lack of urgency on issues facing secondary schools and these students in particular," Kate said.

"The minister is known to have sent officials back to 'try again' before today and we hope she again refuses to settle for less than adequate suggestions, plans and funding from the behaviour action working group in 2010.

"This work could make all the difference to secondary schools and students who currently do not have access to a fair and comprehensive level of support," Kate said. ■

STCA - a big industrial year

Marion Norton, PPTA's lead negotiator, surveys the landscape.

Already PPTA's conditions strategy committee has met for two days in January to shape up a claim from extensive feedback from the term four paid union meetings (PUMs).

Members will be asked to vote on this proposal in another round of PUMs later in March after PPTA's executive has finalised it. Bargaining is expected to begin in July.

The whole aim of bargaining is to achieve a ratifiable settlement - one that the government is prepared to pay for and one that a majority of members will vote to accept.

Settlements of this nature were achieved in a few short months in both 2004 and 2007 - a rather different story than that of 2001-02, when industrial turmoil reigned for 18 months.

This only ended when an independent panel arbitrated a very good outcome for secondary teachers and a call for finding a better way. The ministerial taskforce's 10-year plan was aimed to do that - and did so for 6-7 years. That decade is not over - hence the president's reference to it in her viewpoint on page three.

A settlement must also serve the secondary teaching profession well. PPTA's aim is always to ensure a good supply of highly trained and qualified secondary teachers who are able to work effectively with all teenage

students in all schools, and develop their full potential before they move on to the next phase of their lives.

It is essential to address the many factors that affect recruitment and retention and to build the professional capacity of the secondary teaching workforce. Teachers and schools need the time and space to best meet the learning and pastoral needs of each of their hundreds of students. This was the basis of the ministerial taskforce's plan.

Members calls for smaller class sizes, time for professional learning and up-skilling, access to expert external support and mentoring are all about teachers wanting to do the best job they can. Recognition must be made of the many complex jobs in secondary schools - the demands made of teachers at all levels of leadership and management in secondary schools are high. It would not be a bright idea to curtail investment in any of this as New Zealand works through economic recovery.

All of that does present a challenge for this year's industrial round as the National-led government has already made clear it is cutting public spending and reallocating funds to areas where it is more effective ("productive") - and that public servants cannot expect pay increases.

In the term four PUMs last year a large majority of members were very

STCA claims 2010 timeline

March - regional PUMs for members to vote on a proposed claims package.

May - lodge claims with government.

July - start bargaining.

clear that they did expect annual pay increases and clearly anything less than a cost-of-living increase is a cut. Hopefully this government will not get left behind but follow the lead of Australia, Canada, the USA and UK where there continues to be significant investment in education - including teachers' salaries.

Members may have to make some hard but well-informed choices about what they want from this round and how strongly they will stand together and fight for that - and public education as a whole. It is likely that the results members want will be achieved only through collective and resolute effort. ▪

NZ Institute of Economic Research forecast

March Year Percent Change	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012
GDP	-0.4	2.8	3.0
CPI	2.3	2.1	2.3
Private Sector Wages	3.5	2.2	2.4
Employment	-1.8	1.3	2.1
Unemployment	7.0	7.0	6.3

Although many forecasters are saying that the recession was shallower than had been expected, workers will still be feeling the pinch as unemployment rates are expected to remain at high levels for the next two to three years. This pessimism is mirrored in the recently released Treasury forecast which predicts unemployment to sit at 7.0 percent in 2010, 6.9 percent in 2011 and 6.0 percent in 2012. Private sector wage forecasts are also pessimistic, (forecasting a dip to a 2.2 percent increase in the average wage by March next year), though still ahead of inflation.

SOURCE: NZIER, published 15 December 2009

PPTA hopes cabinet reshuffle will lead to ACE rethink

PPTA president Kate Gainsford hopes National's education portfolio reshuffle will signal a rethink on the poorly thought out adult community education (ACE) cuts.

Kate welcomed the decision to hand education minister Anne Tolley's tertiary portfolio to transport minister Steven Joyce, and hoped that Joyce's track record of problem solving would be reflected in his dealings with ACE.

"At this time of year the issue is even more pertinent as people are looking to enroll in classes that no longer exist," Kate said.

"This, in an environment where we are trying to grow the skills base of the workforce, is such a waste of potential."

"We are already hearing from schools which have had to turn hundreds of learners away. While those people who are better off financially continue to have access to all the 'hobby courses' they wish for," she said.

"Was this the intention of the policy?"

Kate hoped that Joyce would see the obvious folly of the decision to cut night classes by 80%.

"The figures speak for themselves. ACE delivery in about 230 secondary



schools reached more than 250,000 adult learners annually across the country each year. A recent PricewaterhouseCoopers report calculates that each dollar of government funding generated a return of \$16 to \$22," Kate said.

"It also showed that ACE makes a significant social and economic contribution to the education sector, the individual and the wider community – as well as creating a culture of lifelong learning."

The tertiary portfolio would require a cool head and a steady hand, Kate said.

"There is a lot of change and challenge ahead. PPTA will continue to advocate for thoughtful and coherent change.

"We are looking forward to having discussions with the new tertiary minister about how community and adult education can assist with the government's plans for economic growth and prosperity," she said. ■

NZQA scans horizon for electronic marking of NCEA

PPTA is keeping a close watch on NZQA moves around electronic marking of NCEA external standards, PPTA's Curriculum Advisory Committee (CAC) convenor Hazel McIntosh says.

Electronic marking does happen in some other countries, and claims are made that it is faster, produces better quality of marking, and saves money. On the other hand, there have been some problems as well, Hazel said.

At this stage, a request for information (RFI) has been issued, seeking expressions of interest from IT firms.

The RFI is around the scanning of exam papers and the ability for markers to work with these papers online.

"NZQA is quick to say that the RFI is a process for 'testing the water' at this stage, checking out what potential providers are available and what they can do," she said.

"At a later stage, a request for proposals (RFP) is likely to be issued to companies identified as having relevant capability, and this would have a lot more detail about requirements."

In November last year CAC heard

from representatives of a company that is interested in bidding for this work, so that the union had a clearer picture of what might be involved. CAC could see that there were pluses and minuses in such a move, and committed to maintaining a close eye on the issue, Hazel said. While markers sign private contracts with NZQA for that work and PPTA does not represent their interests, the union has an overall interest in anything that might impact on the credibility and quality of the NCEA, she said. ■

NZ Glass Environmental Fund Attention Teachers

Expressions of interest to make application for a grant from the NZ Glass Environmental Fund are invited.

Up to \$25,000 will be available in total for suitable environmental projects. For application forms and guidelines see our website

www.recycleglass.co.nz

or contact:

NZ Glass Environmental Fund

PO Box 12-345 Penrose, Auckland 1642

Phone: 09-976 7127 Fax: 09-976 7119

Deadline for expression of interest is 31 March 2010.

Sponsored by O-I New Zealand.



Get Outside Conference

Education Outside the Classroom brings the revised NZ Curriculum "alive" encapsulating the underlying principles: vision and values, key competencies and learning areas. It offers teaching and learning in "real" contexts through connections with community and environments.

The Get Outside Conference (April 2010) is a unique opportunity for educators interested in teaching and learning outside the classroom to build confidence, enhance, enrich and revitalise their teaching. The conference will be held at the Royal New Zealand Police College and offers all teachers, outdoor providers and outdoor educators the opportunity to expand their capability, share ideas and be inspired. A combination of experts and

practitioners will present a rich variety of sessions focussing on learning in the school grounds, local communities and environments.

Liz Thevenard (Senior Lecturer VUWCOE, Chair EONZ) and her conference planning team of teachers believe in the importance of building educators' confidence and competence to take students outside the classroom and this conference offers a unique opportunity to do this. "I am committed to enabling teachers to 'Get Outside' and to manage learning safely. EOTC has been a passion of mine throughout my teaching career. It excites and engages learners and provides memorable learning."

Bridget Janse (HOD Outdoor Education, Paraparumu College) says that, "Environmental awareness and sustainability will be two of the key messages throughout the conference. In the current situation of global environmental change it's important that children engage with their environment, that they understand, appreciate and value it and are involved in sustaining it".

For more information about 'Get Outside', 6 – 9th April, 2010, visit www.trcc.org.nz.



Induction and mentoring made easy

Primarily aimed at school leaders and other staff responsible for induction and mentoring programmes for beginning teachers, *Lessons From Beginning Teachers* is a robust look at what is involved. However, the final chapter (with copying rights) speaks directly to beginning teachers.

The book's structure is practical, with case studies and narratives to introduce each chapter, followed by analysis and suggestions for good practice. Each chapter concludes with a summary and a series of "stocktake" questions.



Of particular use are the tables that address the new registered teacher criteria (RTC), with suggestions about what each criterion might look like and what evidence would show development.

The chapters cover:

1. Supportive work contexts: setting the scene for success
2. Schools that support workplace learning
3. Mentoring and personal support

4. Widening horizons
5. Making the induction year work for the beginning teacher

This book will make a useful addition to schools' professional libraries and is well worth the purchase price.

You can find information at www.nzcer.org.nz simply google the keywords: NZCER, press, beginning, teachers. ▪

New guidance counsellor guidelines

PPTA has been working with the New Zealand Association of Counsellors (NZAC) over the last two years to produce a new set of guidelines for schools on guidance counselling.

They replace the *School Guidance Counsellor Appointment Kit*, published by NZAC some years ago.

A final version of the guidelines has been released for the start of the 2010 school year.

The guidelines cover issues such as the role of a guidance counsellor, employment of guidance counsellors, where counsellors fit into schools and appropriate relationships between counsellors and school leaders.

They were developed with the help of a group of school guidance counsellors: Jonathan Loan (Hillmorton High and previous NZAC Council member), Helen Bowbyes



(Wellington Girls), Paul Cutler (St Bernard's College), Sarah Maindonald (Hillmorton High), and Sandra Tyree (James Hargest College). A draft has been out for consultation for some time.

Hard copies of the guidelines are being sent to principals and

guidance counsellors, and both PPTA and NZAC will carry them on their websites. This will make it easier to provide updates and additional information.

The guidelines will be useful, not just to principals and guidance counsellors, but to teachers as well ▪

Tomorrow's Schools – what the experts say

Tomorrow's Schools, 20 years on... is a study recently published by the Cognition Institute which examines this often controversial “reform” of our education system. It makes for some interesting reading as the following excerpts show.

“**T**omorrow's Schools is yesterday's news ... While there have been excellent gains in the professionalisation of principals and teachers, there are too many gaps in our system as we continue to stay with the fundamental philosophy of Tomorrow's Schools.”
– **Auckland University professor John Hattie**

“Many teachers foresaw competition replacing social justice, product replacing process and the profession of teaching devalued by a concept of management that explicitly made no distinctions between managing a factory and managing a school.”

– **Margaret Bendall, Auckland University Experienced Principals Development project director**

“If you choose to emphasise the negative, education always produces some politically exploitable statistics.”

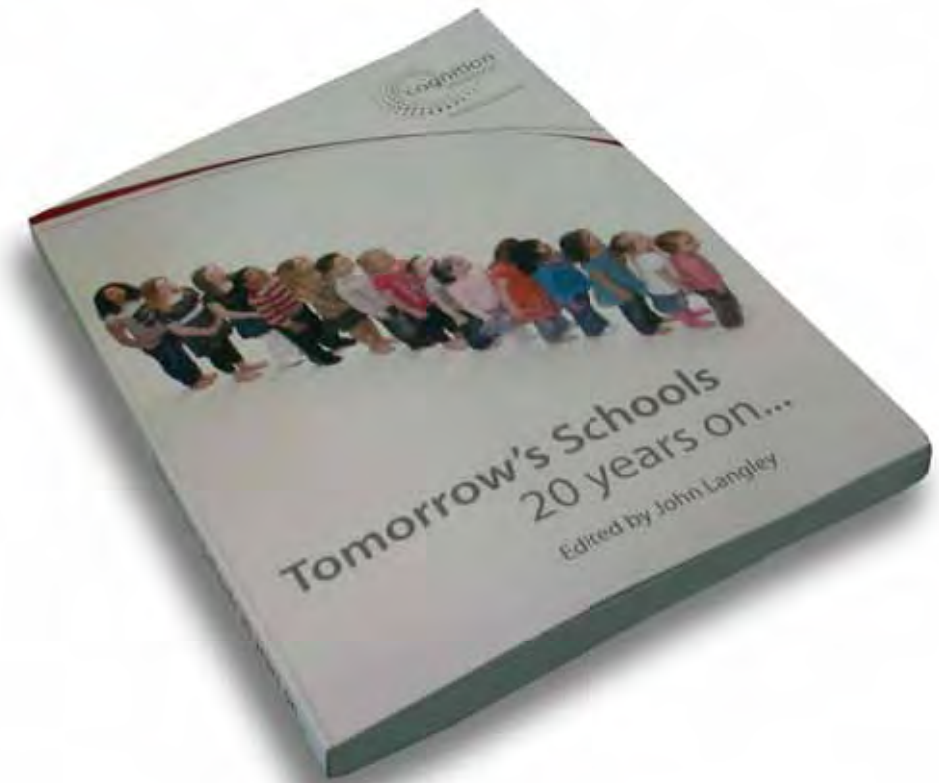
– **former education minister Wyatt Creech**

“Competition versus cooperation ... It could equally be claimed that it fosters wasteful resources and social injustices and does not include a strategy for seriously addressing the ‘long tail’ of the lowest performing students.”

– **Cognition Education CEO John Langley**

“At a policy level, the practical distance between the Ministry and schools is reflected in the steadily rising volume of statutory and regulatory prescription, of which the National Assessment Standards are but the most recent, prominent example – government and agencies shouting through loud hailers from afar.”

– **Cognition Consulting chief operating officer Terry Bates**



“Tomorrow's Schools ... interrupted thinking about and focus on the real business of schooling i.e teaching and learning.”

– **Victoria University education and public policy consultant Elizabeth Eppel**

“As teachers have to accept that parents expect good learning for their children, so government has to accept that teachers possess professional expertise ... The classroom is never divorced from the community,”

– **Educational author and officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit, Harvey McQueen**

“The new capabilities required by boards and schools, including legal, financial, property and employment responsibilities were considerable and seriously underestimated ... the educational effectiveness of these

reforms was limited by: lack of clear educational purpose ... and the failure of the Ministry to redefine its educational role within the emerging system,”

– **Motu Economic and Public Policy Research director Howard Fancy**

“Our self managing system continued to run on goodwill, on the back of a marked degree of trust of educational professionals and public confidence in the quality of public education,”

– **NZCER chief researcher Cathy Wylie**

For a copy of *Tomorrow's Schools, 20 years on...* email [publishing@cognition.co.nz](mailto:publishing@ cognition.co.nz) or go to <http://www.cognitionresearch.org.nz/files/docs/tomorrows-schools-20-years-on.pdf> ■

Blog of the month

More cost-cutting at the Ministry of Ed.

by Flying Pig

Last month PPTA was notified that the Quality Teaching Partnership Fund (QTPF) will be the latest casualty of cost-cutting at the Ministry of Education.

The QTPF is a fund that has supported the last two subject association forums by covering the cost of accommodation for participants. PPTA also had funding from it for one of our professional conferences.

Subject associations apply to the fund for help with their annual or biennial conferences. Adele Scott, of the NZ Association for Language Teachers (NZALT), has written as follows: "The withdrawal of MOE QTPF funding is an issue and NZALT intends to write to the ministry about this (although I'm not sure that we can expect a change)". This will affect PPTA's national conference and regional languages seminars.

NZALT will certainly not be the only association affected. Associations will also now have to cover the

accommodation costs of their participants at our forum in July, so they are being doubly hit.

The sentence in the letter that is most infuriating is the one that says, "In the present economic environment, the ministry has had to reconsider the effectiveness of all services and focus on what is going to make the most difference in terms of student learning outcomes".

How are they so sure about which those are? Subject associations provide an invaluable support to secondary teachers, but it is probably true that measuring this is well nigh impossible. But if something can't be measured, it doesn't mean that it is not important.

Furthermore, the reality is that vast amounts of ministry money is having to go on the implementation of national standards for which there is absolutely no evidence of improved student learning outcomes, and ample evidence of the likely negative effects. But governments can't let the truth get in the way of ideology! •



Do you have a burning education issue you would like to blog on?

Would you like to see what is on teachers minds? Then check out PPTA's blog - The Pigeonhole <http://www.ppta.org.nz/index.php/ppta-blog>.

Please email blog ideas or content to akirtlan@ppta.org.nz.



Papanui High School PPTA branch members joined their support staff colleagues to celebrate the settlement of their wage claim. The branch thanked their support staff for the hard work they put in at the school, and branch members in turn were praised for the support

they provided to their colleagues during what were difficult negotiations.

Months of negotiations and action to highlight their low pay issues resulted in a settlement where support staff at the bottom of the scale will move from \$12.94 to \$14.62, while

those earning more than \$14.62 will receive a 1.4% increase. The agreement runs for 15 months and will expire on 31 March 2011.

School support staff include teacher aides, librarians, office managers, ICT specialists and therapists.

Out in the field Information and advice from PPTA's intrepid field officers.

Salary assessment for new and beginning teachers

New and beginning teachers must get their salary entitlement assessed to get on their correct pay step.

A salary assessment is when payroll assesses certified copies of a teacher's qualifications and teaching experience.

A certified copy is the copy of a document that is stamped and signed as a true copy of the original by a person who is allowed to take declarations.

A photocopy of the certified copy is not a certified copy.

School principals can certify true copies.

Teachers should complete the salary assessment form ESP7t and attach the certified copies to this.

Teacher salaries are determined by qualifications, training and experience. Evidence of each of these must be presented to the salary assessment unit in the form of certified copies.

Once payroll receives all documentation they need to do the assess-

ment, it will take no longer than 15 working days.

Teachers will receive the untrained, unqualified pay rate until payroll has assessed their salary.

Sometimes there can be delays and these can occur at any step in the process. The most frequent delay is when teachers have not completed the form correctly or have failed to provide the necessary documentation to the salary assessment unit. If you are claiming relevant work experience (see Appendix A, clause 1.4 of the STCA), this must be documented by the employer stating the nature of the work, the dates you were employed and whether it was full time. Often this evidence is difficult to gather, businesses have closed, the work may be freelance, or documents need translation. We recommend submitting qualifications and training evidence even if the work experience documents are pending. At least this will get you off the untrained, unqualified step.

Teachers' pay starts from 27 January or a date after that when the principal required new teachers to be at school. This is often a day prior to the students returning. That is the date you will be paid from. So the first pay is typically for 10 days rather than the 14 many are expecting. You may want to be at school earlier than the formal start date which is a matter of goodwill.

However, if you are required to be there and participate in meetings or professional development then you should be paid.

To check the salary rates look at clause 4.2 of the STCA. This can be done online at www.ppta.org.nz by clicking on Collective Agreements/STCA/Part 4 – remuneration.

If you are not paid accurately on your first pay, or have queries about your pay, contact your branch chair and then through them if necessary your field officer. Many schools will advance teachers funds if there is an issue with pay. ■

PPTA develops professional learning toolkit for teachers

There's more to professional development than a good lunch, and too many teachers know that bad professional development is unproductive, expensive and unpleasant, PPTA's Professional Issues Advisory Committee (PIAC) convenor Angela Roberts says.

"Thanks to the leadership and professional development best evidence synthesis (BES) we know quite a lot about what works best in the New Zealand context. But is this practice the norm in all our schools?" she asked.

The PPTA toolkit summarises

current understandings about quality professional development and will offer branches a step by step audit process they can use to evaluate their own professional development arrangements.

The toolkit also walks members through the next steps, should an audit show up problems.

Regional activists at the February Issues and Organising Seminar will comment on the draft before it goes out to some branches for trials.

The toolkit will be available on the PPTA website by the end of the year. ■



Angela Roberts

Not Listening

Dear editor,

Congratulations on bringing together in the October 2009 issue of *PPTA News* a powerful set of statements supporting an equitable state education system, obviously under threat at this time.

I wrote recently to the *Listener* on the Aspire scholarship scheme, a proposal to introduce the “Big Wednesday” mode of thinking to seek to sidestep the issues of disadvantages in society that pose challenges to the state’s schools – and in a manner which denigrates those schools.

It hasn’t been printed.

More strength to your arm and to the very focussed leaders of the organisation, which I served as assistant general secretary, 1973-78.

Ken Rae

For the students

Dear PPTA,

After many years of teaching (off and on since 1972) and PPTA membership, I have resigned from Wakatipu High School.



We stand for education.

It occurs to me how much I have to thank PPTA for.

Of course, as a union, PPTA works to improve the pay and conditions of members in the face of at times reluctant governments (such as this one).

But what the public doesn’t understand is how really the aim is to improve education for the students, with constructive initiatives and support for changes which we can see

will benefit the kids.

I wish that the media would understand this, as it irritates me to read even editorials which think that we oppose some changes for selfish or defensive reasons.

So, thank-you for enhancing the experience of teaching in New Zealand for these many decades.

I wish the PPTA ongoing good courage and wisdom in the future.

Marion Borrell

Well trained teachers the key to alternative education

Dear Kate Gainsford and Julia Davidson (chair NZSPC),

Thank you both very much for your concern and interest in the alternative education sector. Having the support of both PPTA and the New Zealand Secondary Principals’ Council during 2010 is crucial to the sector at a potential turning point. I read with interest the article titled: MOE wanted plug pulled from alternative education (*PPTA News*, December 2009) regarding the release of the Ministry of Education’s review.

I have been closely involved with the AE sector since its inception and now have grave concerns for the possible closure of programmes throughout New Zealand beyond 2010. It is very clear that where well trained teachers are employed, AE students make significant academic gains.

However, as you are probably

aware it has become very difficult to employ well trained teachers under the current funding structure and this is why many providers end up employing under-trained staff. This in turn, often leads to limited academic gains for students.

Students attending AE have almost always reported that their main difficulty at secondary school was unhealthy relationships with teachers and this issue of learning to relate does indeed need to be attended to more in in-service and pre-service teacher training.

However, in the interim, AE is certainly still going to be needed for a small number of students throughout New Zealand beyond 2010.

I began teaching in AE in 1995 and at that time there was no formal name given to the sector. The programme emerged out of a community/school partnership in response to student

needs. Other programmes gradually began to emerge throughout New Zealand in a very ad hoc manner, and I have no doubt that this will happen again if AE were to officially close. This ad hoc development is flawed as it is difficult to provide support and to ensure the sector is regulated and monitored to assist with development.

Please do continue to help the AE sector. We are in urgent need of support this year and while relatively small in number, it is very significant given the nature of the young people the sector serves.

The implications for mainstream secondary schools and local communities, if the sector does cease to exist, are likely to be very significant indeed.

Judy Bruce

*School of Sciences & Physical Ed.
University of Canterbury*

IN THE NEWS



Raising Pasifika profile

Congratulations to Toesulu Maea Brown from Auckland Girls' Grammar for being nominated for the New Zealander of the Year award.

Toesulu's work in raising the achievement levels and profile of the Pasifika community netted her the nomination, and last year she became a member of the New Zealand Order of Merit.

At the time of printing the awards were yet to be announced, next

month's *PPTA News* will include an update and more detail about her achievements.

From dwarfs to docos

Talk about a song and dance number – first Rodney Hide prances around in a dwarf costume at Corelli Academic School of the Arts to illustrate his love of private schooling, and now the school is to star in a documentary about a scholarship program that has barely started. Heather Roy is due to visit Corelli this month to take part in the doco about students receiving the new Aspire scholarships to private schools. With no results or data available on the program yet it is a guaranteed warm fuzzy. Why let the facts get in the way of a good story?

So what are they meant to use, crayons?

The Ministry of Education's health and safety department decides decoration is dangerous:

"A particular concern has arisen from Poker Work Machines. Apparently these are used by schools for burning designs on wood, leather and similar materials.

The potential problem with these machines is that can be easily misused.

For example, it has been reported that students or others can open the case and tamper with the wiring risking a shock. These should either be taken out of use or more carefully managed." ■

Chalkdust: a look into PPTA's past

A series looking at education through the eyes of the *PPTA News*. This month we travel back to 1980.

New wave of technology

Technologic change will have a far-reaching impact on society and on education. The silicon chip, basis of the new generation of computers and microprocessors will revolutionise industry, commerce and daily living ... it will undoubtedly destroy many jobs and dehumanize and de-skill many others. Some of the subjects now taught – for example shorthand and technical drawing – will probably be of little use to budding practitioners before the end of the new decade.

– *PPTA general secretary Bruce Webster*

Staffing shortages – some things never change

New Zealand secondary schools will begin the new year at least 500 teachers short – an average of two per school ... All state secondary teachers and schools will be wondering just how bad the staffing position in their schools must become before the necessary remedial action is taken.

"This is industrial action, not a children's tea party."

– *Kawerau College branch pushes for more 'militant' tactics to highlight staffing shortages*



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Relationship problems

Relations between the PPTA and the Education Department are expected to deteriorate in 1980 as teachers are forced to continue highlighting problems in the secondary school service.

– *Essay by retiring president Russell Hodge*

Field officers – 30 years and counting

The PPTA's first field officer, Chris Edmonds, believes his responsibilities and functions are vital to members and that more field officers should be appointed to cover all of New Zealand. ■

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HAITI Earthquake Solidarity Fund - urgent action appeal

Dear Colleagues,

Education International, concerned about the humanitarian impact of the devastating earthquake which struck Haiti earlier this week, has launched a Special Fund to help the families of teachers who have been affected and to support our member organisation CNEH, the Confédération Nationale des Enseignants d'Haiti, to re-establish its work of caring for teachers and promoting education.

Communication is extremely difficult but Education International is doing its best to establish contact with colleagues in Haiti.

Initial reports suggest that the destruction and loss of life is considerable. The Haiti Press Network reports that many school buildings have collapsed and that hundreds of students were trapped under the rubble. The President of Haiti, René Préval has described a bleak situation to the Miami Herald, saying "Schools have collapsed. There are a lot of schools that have a lot of dead people in them".

Our thoughts are with the survivors and people of Haiti during this difficult time. Immediate rescue efforts are vital and humanitarian aid agencies must be supported in their work.

The long-term impact of the earthquake is immense and EI is committed to assisting CNEH so that they can support teachers, students and communities in their task of rebuilding their lives and returning to work and school.

EI will continue efforts to liaise with Haitian colleagues to assess the impact on schools, teachers and students so as to determine how best to contribute to alleviating the unfolding humanitarian crisis. Updates will be available on the EI website. (*Abridged*)

Yours sincerely,



Fred van Leeuwen
General Secretary



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