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PPTA NEWS

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Not all the opinions expressed within *PPTA News* reflect those of the PPTA.

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Step change and the national standards chimera

Whatever did we call new policy before we had the phrase “step change”?

It seems as if every quango that comes up with a completely undemocratic idea that flies in the face of experience, research or common-sense is able to explain away these difficulties with the phrase “step change”.

I have since discovered that the phrase comes from business, from one John Kotter, who used it to describe his eight stage model of “change management.”

A new CEO comes into a company, creates a sense of panic and crisis to justify sacking half the staff (aka “obstacles”), uses the money saved to pay management bonuses and to increase directors’ fees and shareholder returns, then sits back and enjoys the plaudits.

The most recent document to invoke the step change incantation was the report of the Inter-Party Working Group – a group of MPs from ACT, National and the Māori Party. Their report *Step Change: success the only option* deserves to be widely read because it is rare to come across a formal document that is so blatant in its selective and dishonest use of research.

As PPTA has pointed out to the group, it uses data as a drunk uses a lamp-post – that is for support rather than illumination. It would be reassuring to think that such a tendentious piece of work would be consigned to the recycling bin. On the other hand, politicians have a practice of circulating extreme ideas which masquerade as a response to an invented crisis with the aim of justifying less extreme ends.

The national standards debate provides good example of the deliberate manufacturing of a sense of crisis around the New Zealand education system. This has not been easy because New Zealand has a very successful record in international tests backed up by comments from

Professor Terry Crooks coordinator of the National Education Monitoring Project (NEMP) who has assured New Zealand parents that there is simply no evidence of any decline in achievement over recent years.

Not what the politicians want to hear! Instead they have begun wringing their hands about the 20% of students who do not achieve at school.

The government is under the illusion that schools have some problem identifying these students. While that may well be true in a small number of cases, that’s not the issue. The real scandal – if we have to have one – is how little consistent help there is for these kids who are identifiable well before they start school. Secondary teachers certainly don’t need help identifying them. By year 9, the record will show that their lives have been peppered by numerous interventions from multiple agencies but nothing consistent or coordinated or successful. The government’s response is to bolt on yet another disconnected initiative in the form of remedial assistance for a half day a year.

While money is wasted on the national standards chimera, the Behaviour Action Plan, which offers a multi-systemic, long-term, thoroughly-researched approach to addressing under-achievement is being starved of funds.

As there are no sound educational arguments for national standards, the government is now shifting the argument to new ground. The debate is no longer about the best interests of children. It is now about making “those uppity teachers and principals do as they are told – just as we had to when we were at school”.

Ugly and irrational as that is, Alfie Kohn*, an American educationalist, has identified even more unsavoury reasons to explain why affluent American parents appear so keen on national testing. In a country where top schools produce bumper



by Kate Gainsford

stickers for parents that say, “My child is an honours student at ...” he observes that for many parents it is not enough that their own children are succeeding, they need to know other children are failing and failing conspicuously.

He also discerns amongst these parents “...selfishness, which sometimes accounts for both the callous disregard for other people’s children and, in the final analysis, what many affluent parents are doing to their own. Social psychologists call it BIRG: basking in reflected glory. ‘We didn’t realise they had so much emotionally invested in the concept that they were the parents of the *good* students’”.

Maybe this doesn’t apply in New Zealand yet, but if we continue to promote policies that cynically feed off the natural anxiety parents have about their own children, we should not be surprised by the anti-social tendencies that may be unleashed. •

**Only for My Kid: How Privileged Parents Undermine School Reform*, Phi Delta Kappan April 1998. The whole article may be read here: <http://www.alfiekohn.org/articles.htm>.



Now that's really dim ...

Last month PPTA launched dimming.co.nz – an interactive website designed to encourage debate around education issues and draw attention to some of the government's dimmer policies.

The first issue tackled by the site is the slashing of funding for adult community education (ACE) by 80% – a move that seems to be a far cry from the National Party's aim to secure "a brighter future".

As part of an ongoing campaign to provide people with fresh perspectives on questionable education policies, an animated video clip was launched on the site.

Starring education ministers **Anne Tolley** and **Steven Joyce**, the 65 second clip examines the fact that both ministers seem to be unaware of the dimness of the decision to cut ACE funding.

A billboard promoting the site was erected in Wellington earlier this month and PPTA hopes it will encourage more people to visit dimming.co.nz and have their say.

The government has failed to listen to the hundreds of thousands of New Zealanders who have had their lives enriched by night classes. It had no mandate to make the cuts and has ignored the fact that night classes have made a significant contribution to the economy at a minimal cost – it is time to let them know this is not good enough! •



www.dimming.co.nz – What you can do

- Watch the video and share it with your family and friends. The wider it can be circulated the better
- Sign up your support – let the country know what you think about ACE cuts by signing up to dimming.co.nz. You will receive an e-newsletter with details of the campaign and future actions
- Share your stories – many of you have taken or taught night classes – we would love to hear what ACE means to you
- Vote in our online poll – Do you think Adult Community Education funding should be reinstated? – let us know.
- Have your say on our discussion board
- Join us on Facebook – show your support by joining the dimming Facebook fan page
- Caption competition – show your creativity and sense of humour by entering a competition to caption the picture below. First prize is a \$40 book voucher and the best entries will be displayed on dimming.co.nz
- **Keep watching dimming.co.nz over the next few weeks for more comment about education issues.**



Do you have a caption for this billboard?



In the line of duty – PPTA president Kate Gainsford supervises the installation of the dimming.co.nz billboard at Wakefield St, Wellington

March paid union meetings (PUMs)

Members to vote on STCA claims

At the end of last year members identified the issues they wanted addressed in this bargaining round. Executive has collated the information and developed a proposed claim that members will be asked to approve at regional meetings this month.

Developing a balanced claim was not an easy task given the range of items members proposed. Inevitably some had to be left out but may still be pursued in future claims or forums other than collective agreement negotiations.

The claim proposal addresses four main areas.

1) Improved remuneration for classroom teachers and middle and senior managers that better recognises the responsibilities they have in leading learning in secondary schools. The demands of the new curriculum along with the standards realignment will require increased productivity from teachers – something the government has said it wants from the state sector workforce.

2) Improving aspects of good employment practice like further identifying improvements to health and safety in schools, ensuring fairness and equity for part-time teachers and the provision of “tools” for the job.

3) Improving and encouraging professional learning and development for teachers.

4) Ensuring secondary teachers’ work is manageable so the capacity to address the learning needs of individual students is enhanced.

Members’ responses showed they were well aware of the restrained economic conditions in New Zealand

but also extremely mindful of the need to be able to continue to do their job well. They know that retention and recruitment requires that their salaries retain parity with other similar professionals, otherwise the trend of teachers heading overseas will accelerate.

One of the PPTA executive’s goals is to return to a situation in which New Zealand graduates see secondary teaching as a first-choice career with salaries and employment conditions in schools comparable to Australian states. Therefore the proposed claim includes such items as:

- A 4% increase to the base scale.
- An additional 1% employer contribution to Kiwisaver.
- Increased value of units, more units and allowances for professional leadership and management.

- Improvements to some targeted payments to encourage teachers to apply in hard-to-staff schools and undertake further qualifications.
- Fully funded laptops.
- Limiting class sizes.
- Reinstating specialist subject advisors.
- More sabbaticals.

Since the disruptive 2001-2002 period, PPTA has worked to create a stable educational environment and reduce teacher loss rates. New Zealand cannot afford to ignore the rates of pay increases that are currently being paid to teachers overseas and the fact that many countries continue to boost investment in education as part of the recovery.

Once approved, the claim will be lodged on the 3rd of May. ▀



What to do when the police come knocking

An assault allegation by a student that was recently thrown out of court has highlighted the need for teachers to be aware of their rights when approached by police.

John (not his real name) was caught by surprise when two policemen arrived on his doorstep one morning just as he was leaving for school. He was asked to come with them to the local police station to answer a sexual assault allegation made by a student to police.

John had been aware of two previous allegations made by the same student that had been investigated by the school board and dismissed, but he knew nothing of the new allegation.

John had not been told of his right to legal advice and his wife attempted to contact PPTA and others for help.

The PPTA field officer for his region attempted to get a lawyer to the interview, but by the time this could be done the interview was over.

The interview was videotaped so, although John had not signed a statement, all of his answers had been recorded. At the end of the

interview he was arrested, not only for the alleged incident, but for the two allegations that had previously been dismissed.

The school board suspended John on pay until the court case was dealt with. Bail conditions stipulated no contact with the school, staff or students.

He was refused name suppression which led to him and his family receiving abusive phone calls and feeling besieged in their own home. John's physical health deteriorated and he was hospitalised several times with a – now ongoing – heart condition. He also became depressed from not being able to work.

The case went to trial nine months after he was arrested and the result was a hung jury. A second trial took place early this year and PPTA used its legal advisors, Michael Reed QC and Paul Morten QC, who were unavailable for the first trial.

In the second case the prosecutor agreed much of the video interview

was inappropriate and should not be used. The complainant and the only witness to the alleged incident agreed the touch that allegedly took place could have been accidental and not of a sexual nature. The judge agreed. The previous two charges were also dismissed because of inconsistencies in the student's evidence.

In the first trial John had been held in the cells for a total of nine hours when the trial was adjourned. At the second trial he was strip-searched before presenting himself to court.

Sadly for John, it is not over yet. Mandatory reporting means the board had to report the case to the Teachers Council who had initiated an investigation in the Complaints Assessment Committee (CAC). John had to sign a voluntary undertaking not to teach in any school until the CAC has finished its investigation. The CAC meets once a month and it is unclear when it will complete its investigation. ▪

Your rights



So what rights do you have as a teacher if the police ask you to come to the station for an interview?

Teachers have the same rights as the general public. If the police do not have a warrant for your arrest or charge you with a specific offence, there is no obligation to be interviewed. John (as many others would) wanted to be helpful and clear up any issues – but in these circumstances he should not have accompanied the police.

You have a right to legal representation. PPTA field officers are authorised to engage a local lawyer for the first interview in the above circumstances. If charges are laid, members must then apply for further PPTA legal representation.

Our advice is not to accompany or report to the police without a lawyer.

You should go to a lawyer first and together make a statement or have the lawyer come with you.

You do not have to agree to a video interview – the police may replay all, or edited parts, of the interview in court. What you say is a matter of record and transcripts are available to the police.

The police may ask you hypothetical questions which give the impression an incident could have taken place. You might agree that such an incident could happen. This is incriminatory. Your body language and demeanor will be judged by the jury and this could be detrimental if you react badly under pressure.

Events such as the above are rare, but it is important that teachers know their rights and act correctly when the need arises. ▪

Who you gonna call?

Surveys conducted with members who have joined PPTA over the last 12 months show that, for most, one reason for joining is the range of support they get from PPTA.

What is the nature of that assistance? Firstly, members should consult their branch officers because many issues (timetabling, non-contact time, etc) are best dealt with at a branch level.

Further, all members have access to their local field officer. Field officers are trained in dispute resolution and are widely experienced in matters to do with collective agreement interpretation and compliance. Any member wanting assistance over specific employment issues should consult their field officer first.

If legal matters are involved field staff and members are supported by PPTA's in-house legal counsel, who has wide knowledge of employment law especially as it affects teachers. This includes cases which are referred

to the Teachers Council.

Sometimes the matter is more serious and, as the result of a complaint, police are involved. Should this happen and should a police officer wish to interview you about a work-related matter you should again contact your field officer in the first instance.

Co-operate with the police but do not make a statement until your field officer has arranged for you to have legal representation. If the matter proceeds to court an application can be made to PPTA's general secretary for legal assistance and this request is considered by PPTA's management committee.

If such assistance is approved, legal representation will be provided. For more than 25 years PPTA has been fortunate to have retained the services of barrister Michael Reed QC. He and his colleague, barrister Paul Morten, handle any court work needed by members. Note that if you engage a lawyer of your own PPTA will not meet associated costs.



Michael Reed QC

Most teachers and principals complete their career without the need to call on these forms of assistance. But secondary teachers are vulnerable to complaints from students and parents and PPTA is conscious of its constitutional objective "to uphold and maintain the just claims of its members individually and collectively".



Checklist

Most employment issues can be resolved at a branch level through discussion. However if you need assistance over an employment related issue:

1. phone your field officer (field officer contact numbers can be found on the inside cover of the PPTA News).
2. make no statement on the particular issue until you have contacted your field officer
3. do not attend meetings with your employer unrepresented, in respect of the issue in dispute and
4. remember that you can only have one representative – if you hire a lawyer yourself you can not also have PPTA representation. •

Professional emotional support

Comments made by the employment court's chief judge in a recent case of wrongful dismissal reflect what PPTA has known for a long time – teachers need access to professional emotional support.

Judge Graeme Colgan's comments followed the case of a teacher seeking reinstatement after being dismissed in 2008. The employment court ruled in the defendant's favour but said he should return to work at another school.

The dismissal followed a marked deterioration of the teacher's mental and psychological health.

It was the second case the judge had come across where proceedings had turned litigious before the teacher concerned received the support they needed.

Judge Colgan said the case's unfortunate circumstances illustrated a need for "teachers, principals, and boards of trustees – with the assistance of their professional organisations – to consider putting in place collegial support systems for increasingly isolated teachers in circumstances such as (the defendant's)."

He said the situation should have been a matter for "counselling and other professional assistance to a longstanding but unwell member of the school's staff."

Judge Colgan spoke of the desirability of "independent assistance" and suggested a number of models, including the scheme that provides welfare for the police and the Friends' Panel among lawyers.

"I commend consideration of such a scheme by the New Zealand School Trustees' Association, the teacher unions and the relevant school principals' organisations," he said.

PPTA deputy general secretary Colin Moore said setting up a support service for teachers had long been a priority for PPTA and in the last negotiation round it was agreed to look into the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) that

offers confidential support services to employees.

The secondary teachers' collective agreement (STCA) states:

The PPTA and the NZ School Trustees Association have agreed that in regard to the issues relating to a national Employee Assistance Programme guidance will be provided to Boards promoting the benefits of such programmes. The PPTA and NZSTA will investigate the potential for facilitating access for Boards to nationally accessible provider(s).

A number of schools had independently decided to meet the costs of signing up to EAP, but little traction had been gained for this on a national level, he said.

EAP provides a number of services, including budget advice, counseling and psychological assistance and PPTA would like to see it made available in all secondary schools.

It is running in approximately 70 secondary schools, with the approval of their boards.

EAP general manager Rod Berry said the organisation had had very positive feedback from the schools involved.



"The issues schools deal with are very different from other businesses," he said.

One of the up sides for teachers is that EAP is available 24/7, Berry said.

"We know that teachers' responsibilities can make it difficult to access our services during working hours."


EAP also provides telephone and e-counselling so it can be as accessible as possible, he said.

It also provides support for 'one-off' situations where schools who might not have a contract with EAP can come to them for support for an individual.

"We never say no," he said.

PPTA recommends branches in schools without access to EAP should approach their board about signing up, Moore said.

"A word of encouragement may be all it takes for them to realise the importance of such a service," he said. ■



Employee Assistance Programme

EAP Services Limited Employee Assistance Programmes provide a personal support strategy for employees who experience personal or work problems.

It provides professional and confidential counselling support across New Zealand and Internationally

EAP has three counselling models: face-to-face, telephone and e-counselling through the ASK EAP service, which can be directly accessed through its website www.eapservices.co.nz.

It can also be contacted through 0800 327 669 (0800 EAP NOW) . ■

Holding fire

Queensland barrister Ross McSwan says it is best to deal with conflict issues in schools as quickly and informally as possible.

McSwan, who has particular expertise in resolving contentious issues in a school environment, was invited to New Zealand by the New Zealand Secondary Principals' Council (NZSPC) to deliver a course on dealing with conflict in schools last month.

McSwan says that conflict issues in New Zealand schools are the same as across the Tasman, and that most could be dealt with before things got litigious.

"When you're dealing with conflict in schools – whether with parents, members of staff or even boards of trustees, the best thing to do is deal with it at the earliest opportunity, in the most informal way and with the most appropriate people," he said.

This was one of the reasons why McSwan decided to give seminars on conflict resolution.

"I was a family court lawyer and saw a lot of cases go through that shouldn't have been there. I wanted to see things dealt with at an earlier stage," he said.

The type of conflict that could be present in schools had changed over the years, McSwan said.

"Some years ago conflict was mostly within the staff or employee/employer issues. But more and more conflict now comes from parents. Parents are not required to play by the rules. They don't have codes of conduct – which makes dealing with them doubly difficult," he said.

McSwan stressed the importance of natural justice in all cases of conflict.

"The person being complained about has the right to know who complained and the substance of the complaint. They need to be told in a timely fashion and any decisions made need to be based on accurate information," he said.

The course involved role-playing challenging situations at work such as a person being accused of bullying, a staff member not managing the job satisfactorily or dealing with an angry parent.

It looked at ways of managing these situations through candid conversa-

tions and informal meetings, but also covered formal processes (desktop mediation) if the people in conflict were not going to agree on a solution.

"Educators are strong negotiators, but instinctively avoid conflict ... It's best to try to sort things out at the lowest level first."

It was important to build a supportive culture in schools and for teachers to keep an eye out for each other, he said. ■



Ross McSwan - "Educators are strong negotiators, but instinctively avoid conflict."

NZQA sets new rules for further assessment

NZQA's new rules that limit the number of further assessment opportunities come into effect this year.

"This should help teachers to resist pressure to over-assess and to manage their assessment workload", PPTA president Kate Gainsford said.

The rules require students to be offered a maximum of one further assessment opportunity, and only where it is feasible to offer one.

The rules will also ensure that there is more consistency between schools about which students can have a further opportunity and what grade they can get.

PPTA's NCEA seminars in 2008 showed that school practices varied widely, and this has been unfair to students.

"If a further opportunity is offered, it must be offered to all students entered for that standard, regardless of how they did the first time," Kate said.

There must also be no restrictions on what grade a student can achieve on the further opportunity, so students can use it to improve their grade, she said.

"For example from Merit to Excellence. If they do worse the second time, it's the higher grade that is

submitted to NZQA."

If any student was given a further opportunity it would have to be offered to all students, Kate said.

"There is no way that teachers' workloads should increase as a result of these rules. They were intended to make teachers' and students' assessment workloads more manageable."

The rules also include some useful clarifications about re-submission. This was an area that PPTA's NCEA seminars revealed was very unclear to teachers.

The rules can be found at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/acrp/secondary/4/441.html>. ■



Shared belief in a fair deal for students

About 160 PPTA members attended the 2010 Issues and Organising (I & O) Seminar held in Wellington last month. Teachers from all around the country took part in a number of workshops on topics such as professional development, information technology, the behaviour action plan, dispute resolutions in schools, taxation issues and issues facing the union movement in general.

They discussed the industrial and political climate and what could be expected during the upcoming collective agreement campaign.

Keynote speakers included Canadian economist Dr Jim Stanford and world-leading scientist Professor Sir Paul Callaghan.

Participants were welcomed to the conference with a powhiri and a haka from Porirua College students.

PPTA president Kate Gainsford told those gathered that PPTA would not hesitate to go into battle over issues of professional principle.

“At its heart, PPTA remains a collective of professionals with a shared belief in the importance of ensuring all students get a fair deal. It is that professional commitment that fires so much of our industrial concern,” she said.

See next month’s *PPTA News* for a more detailed article about the keynote speakers. •



ACC cut anyway

Bikers, unions, psychotherapists and opposition MPs were among the 1000-strong rally that gathered outside Parliament on 16 February in a last-ditch effort to dissuade the government from passing a bill making changes to ACC.

The government was so taken with this display of democratic fervour that it passed the bill anyway, cutting entitlements and hiking up fees.

Among the changes were increased levies for motorcycle registration, entitlement cuts to victims of sexual abuse and, one that is of great concern to teachers, reduced earnings-related compensation for workers.

Speaking to the rally, the Council of Trade Unions (CTU) secretary Peter Conway said the government will continue to attack ACC with claims there is a costs "blow-out".



Taking a hit: Motorcycle owners are among many being targeted by changes to ACC.

"They have invented a 'crisis' around ACC so they can open it up to private sector insurance companies," he said.

"The government is in the process of grinding down ACC – increasing levies unnecessarily and reducing entitlements for vulnerable workers."

Some opposition MPs also grabbed the mic to voice their concerns.

"Money isn't the issue here," said Green Party co-leader Metiria Turei (pictured). "It's about protecting New Zealand people."

Labour Party leader Phil Goff reprimanded the government for its attack on ACC.

"We're proud of ACC as a government funded system. Stop the privatisation," he said. •

Seeing red: pay disparity unacceptable



Kitted out in red T-shirts and bags the Pay Equity Coalition supported international Red Bag Day on Thursday 18 February.

Up and down the country, volunteers were out and about talking with communities and selling red bags to draw attention to the pay gap between women and men. Red Bag Day follows on from similar events in Australia, the United States and Germany.

Coalition Spokesperson Angela McLeod said in some New Zealand

workplaces the gender pay gap is as great as 35%.

"The gender pay gap is cutting family incomes, pensions, investments and tax revenue and reducing productivity," she said.

"Women are more likely to work part time and in poorly paid industries and women still have significant restrictions on their career opportunities.

"A gender pay gap is neither economically sensible nor socially justifiable," says McLeod.

"Women are no longer prepared to accept this basic unfairness and the Government must show leadership and articulate its strategy to reduce the gender pay gap".

The members of the Pay Equity Coalition include unions, the New Zealand Federation of Business and Professional Women, Working Women's Resource Centre and the National Network of Stopping Violence Services to name a few. •

Blogs of the month

Can the kids really not wait for slogans?

By Albatross

It is interesting that Ministry of Education officials have turned to slogans in an effort to sell national standards.

This is no doubt a response to the dearth of data supporting such a programme.

The current slogan is “the kids can’t wait”. As with all good advertising, the sentence is never completed.

I doubt very much that the kids really

can’t wait for national standards. The students I have asked give the following answers – Christmas, Easter, to get my own room, for my big sister to leave home, for school holidays, playtime, a new bike, breakfast, shoes, etc. Not one mentioned national standards.

Now it would be humorous if it were not so tragic.

The kids in New Zealand schools can’t wait for smaller classes, access to specialist teachers in reading,

writing and maths, the New Zealand curriculum.

They also can’t wait for an end to government policies that have seen the gap between the rich and poor grow faster than other OECD countries. And they can’t wait for a minister of education to have the moral courage and educational purpose to strive for excellence and equity.

Upon reflection the ministry is right – “the kids can’t wait”. •

Government won’t play by its own rules

By Observer

This government doesn’t seem to have the slightest commitment to the idea that employers should act in good faith or that the State Sector Act 1988 (s77A) requires schools to “operate a personnel policy that complies with the principles of being a good employer”.

When it announced its poorly thought-through decision to can ACE (night schools) funding within the 2010 year, it appears to have had no clue as to how schools were meant to pay redundancy costs except that they should use whatever spare ACE money they had.

Even a quick risk analysis would have told them that schools would not have enough to pay if the employees had had a lengthy period of employment. When PPTA pointed this out to the Tertiary Education Commis-

sion (TEC), the agency responsible for ACE funding they were told TEC couldn’t help as it had no money. PPTA took the matter up with the minister who pronounced dismissively that, “schools should not have made permanent appointments with annual funding”. PPTA pointed out that no way was it annual funding back in the mists of time when these appointments were made. But the minister had made up her mind and was determined not to be troubled by any inconvenient facts.

Now PPTA has been forced to consider compliance action against schools whose operations grants can’t carry the redundancy costs because our ACE members have a legal contract and must be paid out. Meanwhile, TEC, the Ministry of Education and the government hide from consequences.

Apparently there has been talk about the government asking the

State Service Commissioner to develop yet another behaviour code for teachers on top of the multiple ones that already exist.

He might be better engaged in developing a code for more ethical employment behaviour from governments and their departments. •



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

Then check out PPTA's blog – The Pigeonhole www.ppta.org.nz/index.php/ppta-blog. Please email blog ideas or content to akirtlan@ppta.org.nz

Letter

The fallacy of underachievement’s long tail

Dear editor,

Anne Tolley is imposing national standards testing on schools because she believes that in the international studies like PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study), New Zealand shows a significant number of “tail-end” students compared to other developed countries in the world.

This “significant New Zealand tail-end” is a fallacy. It’s all in the fine-print.

In the PIRLS background data

(*PIRLS 2001 technical report, chapter 9: Sampling weights and participation rates*) tables show England excludes 3.7% of students from the study. The USA excludes 4.7% and New Zealand excludes 1.7%

Why did England exclude almost twice as many students and the USA exclude almost three times as many?

Both England and the USA officially recognise dyslexia as a disability. New Zealand did not until very recently. England and the USA “excluded”

their students with dyslexia and New Zealand did not. Rather like three classes sitting the same test but two teachers telling the students who will fail not to come that day.

This resulted in comparing apples with pears and New Zealand appeared to have a significant tail end.

Anne Tolley needs to stop now, read the fine print and get real.

She could even ask teachers and academics what she should spend the millions of dollars on.

Ngaere M Thorogood

Out in the field

The simplest question in the book

Information and advice from PPTA's intrepid field officers.

You would think that the simplest question to answer from the STCA would be "How much notice do I have to give my employer if I intend to resign?"

However the answer may not be as simple as it seems. The words appear clear. For permanently appointed teachers, the STCA states in clause 3.11.1:

The notice required to be given to a permanently appointed teacher who holds a position which was advertised shall be two months, and for a teacher who holds such a position the notice to be given to the employer shall be two months except where the teacher and the employer shall agree to a lesser period of notice from the teacher.

So, a permanently appointed teacher wishing to resign has to give two months notice unless "the teacher and the employer agree to a lesser period of notice". Consequently many phone their PPTA field officer because the real question they are asking is "How can I get out sooner?"

The reasons for wishing to depart sooner are varied. For example, a teacher may be appointed to a new position on 6 December. Do they really want to return to their previous school for the period up until 6 February? Often common sense prevails in this situation and "a lesser period of notice" is agreed on but the employer of the school being vacated has to find a new teacher and that is not easy during the summer vacation. Push the resignation date

out to 15 January and the problem is exacerbated. How does one give a letter of resignation to a principal who is on holiday from 18 December until 15 January? The principal may want to uphold the contractual period of two months and think that this should be 15 March because they opened the resignation letter on 15 January.

Teachers employed in fixed-term positions may feel even more pressure over resignation dates, especially if the opportunity for a permanent position arises. STCA 3.11.2(b) says that for fixed-term positions "nothing shall prevent a shorter notice [ie. shorter than the period specified in 3.11.2(a)] being agreed between the teacher and the employer". ▪

ACE collective agreement still applies

Schools that are attempting to run revamped adult and community education courses this year, after the savage cuts the government made to funding last year, need to remember that the Adult and Community Education Collective Agreement is still a live document and must be adhered to.

The rates offered to employees in adult and community education

must be those listed in the collective.

If an employee is not a union member s/he must be told that there is a collective agreement that applies, be given a copy of the collective agreement and must be told how to join the union. (See Employment Relations Act 2000 s.62.)

It is illegal for employers to offer rates lower than the collective and

to invent new terms and conditions. Employers cannot seek to evade the law by drawing up individual agreements because such agreements must be based on the collective and must not be inconsistent with it. (ERA 2000 s.61)

The employment relations authority is empowered to impose a penalty on any employer "who fails to comply with this section". ▪

Letter

Deep thanks to PPTA and MoE

Dear editor,

I am writing to express my deep thanks to the PPTA and Ministry of Education officials who administer the Study Awards for teachers.

I was the recipient of one of these awards in 2009 to complete my Masters of Educational Leadership and Management through Unitec.

This has been one of the most challenging and rewarding things I have completed in my life. I have learnt so much and cannot speak

highly enough of the opportunity I was fortunate enough to be offered.

I have just had confirmation that my thesis has been passed and I have been successful in also being awarded my MEdLM with Honours. Thank you for this wonderful scheme - long may it continue.

Kind regards,

*Karene Biggs
Assistant Principal
Aorere College*

Karene's thesis is on the induction of overseas trained teachers in South Auckland secondary schools. If you are interested in reading it please email akirtlan@ppta.org.nz and I'll put you in touch with her - ed.



Do you want to know more about:

- *what works to get truants to attend school?*
- *how to make disruptive or violent students behave?*

If so, you may want Kaye McLaren to speak to teachers and /or parents at your school. Kaye is a researcher with great experience dealing with young offenders in prisons, CYF residences and in the community. The author of:

- *Tough is not Enough*, about preventing youth crime
- *Building Strength*, about what creates school success, and
- *Reconnecting Young People*, about how to engage youth in education,

Kaye brings facts to life with real stories. Her 2008 PPTA conference presentation 'Learning to Stop Crime' was well received. Presentations/workshops can be tailored for your school or used as a fundraiser. Contact Kaye at kaye.mclaren@paradise.net.nz or 027 294 7935.



Celebrating teacher education

The School of Education at the University of Waikato celebrates 50 years of teacher education this year.

The first student intake for the School of Education, formerly the Hamilton Teachers' College, was in 1960. It is now the number one education school in the country according to government rankings.

Since its formation, the school has educated thousands of pre-service teachers in early childhood, primary, secondary and Māori medium teaching.

The 50 year celebrations will involve a series of events in mid to late 2010, culminating in a celebratory gathering on Saturday 13 November for past and present staff and students.

Interested parties can register by:

Phone: 07 838 4500

Email: celebrate.50years@waikato.ac.nz

Or visiting the webpage education.waikato.ac.nz/50years



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato



Too little, too late

Much has been made of newly released ACC statistics that show 442 teachers needed ACC-funded treatment after assaults at school during 2008 and 2009.

The Ministry of Education has responded to these shocking figures by announcing that a “new” \$45 million support scheme should put a stop to them.

Interestingly enough – \$45 million is the same figure the government has given for the Behaviour Action Plan (now officially known as Positive Behaviour For Learning) – which focuses on early childhood but offers little for secondary schools dealing with violent students right now. It appears the \$45 million “solution” is not new money at all and

that secondary teachers will have to wait ten years for the students the money will actually target to grow up and enter their classrooms.

Rugby tackles education – and wins

Its official – in New Zealand, the rugby-heads reign supreme.

Next year school terms will be reorganised to fit around the Rugby World Cup – this will disrupt exam preparations for seniors, but hey, there’s sport to be watched!

Next year teachers will also be introducing new achievement standards which will place extra stress on themselves and their students – and losing time before exams will only add to that stress. The question is whether the world cup is more important than student success and teacher sanity and sadly, the answer appears to be – yes.

It won’t happen here, honest!

While Prime Minister John Key insists on keeping up with Australia

we certainly hope that doesn’t apply to our education system.

The Ministry of Education has said time and time again that the controversial national standards policy will not lead to “teaching to the test” at the expense of the wider curriculum.

Across the ditch however that is exactly what is happening. Victorian teachers have been told to teach explicitly for the national tests that are the cornerstone of their government’s National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). They have been told to “explicitly teach for NAPLAN” and give students a “daily NAPLAN item” in class. We can only hope our government does not blindly follow.

One bus analogy too many

“They should get off their protest bus and get on board with national standards” – Anne Tolley tries to hitch a ride on the bus theme but misses her stop. ▪

Chalkdust: a look into PPTA’s past

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

Internet anyone?

“In the future, knowledge will be a commodity readily available to all by electronic means. The main skills needed will be those of accessing the information and making use of it intelligently.”

Computer scientist Mike Beardsmore examines the challenges to education in the 1980s arising from the “micro-electronic revolution”.

Trendy lefties

“Our education system is being infiltrated by left wing Socialists” says National MP for Invercargill Norman Jones, in an article that uses the phrase “trendy lefties” no less than four times.

“I had a sound, factual education in basic vocational subjects when I was at school. I never got

the opportunity to be brainwashed by trendy leftie teachers under the guise of liberal studies. As far as I am concerned it’s time we got back to the basics and tossed out all this rubbish about liberal studies, social educations, sex education ... the lot of it.”

And it gets worse...

Mr Jones also believed that issues like homosexuality, racism and the union movement were best left untouched by secondary schools.

“They can learn about those sort of things when they’re in the working world or at university, when they’re old enough to deal with it.”

Grim predictions

“The Post Primary Teachers’ Association has decided to convene a new Curriculum Review group in a move to ensure the education system can respond to the problems of a youth unemployment, new technology and general economic malaise predicted for the 1980s.” ▪



Here we go again ...

We could be in for a bumpy ride this year

As collective agreement negotiations gather pace, you, as a PPTA member, will want to be kept informed every step of the way.

It's said that a week is a long time in politics - so the most up-to-date information about how our agreement claim is progressing won't necessarily appear in this monthly magazine.

However, with the help of modern communications, PPTA's national and field offices will work hard to keep every PPTA member up to speed.

In addition to keeping an eye on your inboxes, pigeon holes and noticeboards, you might like to regularly check www.ppta.org.nz. Login and go to Collective Agreements/Negotiations.

Better still, while you're logged in, you can opt to be alerted every time a negotiation update is made. It's easy:

1. Click the Mailing Lists link under the Members heading in the left-hand column.
2. Click the My Subscriptions icon.
3. Click the Yes button by list #16 "STCA Negotiation updates".

Also, keep an eye out for the "Negotiator" section within the PPTA Collective News (a fortnightly newsletter emailed to branches). It contains all news, notices and announcements about the negotiations as they unfold.

Strap yourself in. •



Carrying the Tapa Teaching Pasifika students for non-Pasifika Teachers



"After the first day at Porirua College I wondered what I'd got myself into. I couldn't pronounce many of the students' or teachers' names, I had no idea of their background and little idea of where to start in terms of building relationships with them - well, without sounding a bit thick or ignorant...at this point I knew I had a challenge ahead of me" Helen Hardwick (HOD PE Porirua College).

This from Helen Hardwick who arrived in a New Zealand classroom from England in 2002. She has now been teaching at Porirua College for three years.

Helen is one of the organisers for an upcoming course to try and assist non-Pasifika

teachers of Pasifika students, **Carrying the Tapa.**

As New Zealand teachers work in more multi-cultural settings, increasing their skills and knowledge about how to forge cross-cultural relationships becomes essential.

Pacific Island students currently make up 9.7% of the students in our classrooms, and come predominantly from Samoa, Niue, Tokelau, Tonga and the Cook Islands. We know that the achievement of these students is dependent good working relationships with their teachers. A good relationship is about mutual understanding and respect of values, beliefs, practices and then a shared vision with the student about the appropriate way

forward for their education.

Gabrielle-Sisifo Makisi one of the Planning Committee members for Carrying the Tapa noted in her 2008 research that "for Samoan students quality teaching will require teachers understanding and building on what Samoan students know and value and their preferred learning behaviours".

This course is an opportunity for teachers to increase their knowledge about these Pacific Islands and their practices, values, language, religion, geography ... and also to learn more about what it is to be Pasifika in New Zealand.

To read more about Carrying the Tapa, 12 - 14th April, 2010, please visit www.trcc.org.nz. •