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PPTA NEWS

Volume 31 • Number 3 • Paenga-whāwhā / April 2010

Members
wrap up claims
package p5

PPRS
The logo features the letters 'PPRS' in a bold, yellow, stylized font. Below the letters are several green New Zealand dollar bills, some of which are partially overlapping and appear to be falling or scattered.

Are we being set up for a scam? p8-9



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

Editorial and advertising

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Editor: Anna Kirtlan
Layout and Design: Ben Weston
Prepress by Toolbox Imaging Limited.
Printed by The Print Room.
Visit www.ppta.org.nz for *PPTA News* ratecard information.

Deadlines

May edition

5pm, 5 May for articles and advertising.

June edition

5pm, 29 May for articles and advertising.

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The price to choose

It was noted at last year's annual conference that there was a day of reckoning coming for the New Zealand education system because successive ministers, entranced by the notion of "choice" in education, have been allowing the establishment of more and more small schools. In 1991, the current speaker of the house Dr Lockwood Smith, then the minister of education, warned that this practice was "going to cost the taxpayer millions – and there is no more money – that means the existing state schools run the risk of getting less."

And verily what was foretold has come to pass. Last week PPTA sought under the Official Information Act a document from the minister of education that establishes a new and reduced formula for those kura kaupapa Māori (primary schools) which wish to offer secondary education and become wharekura (area schools).

What seems to have happened is that the ministry, alarmed by the \$100 million plus price tag for seven kura to be equipped, staffed and funded for specialist secondary provision decided it needed to act to reduce costs. The document reveals that these schools are now classified as area schools but are receiving only \$50,000 base operations funding, not the \$130,000 that other area schools usually get, a flat per student rate of \$2000 per head but no funding for other aspects of operations (such as water, heat and lighting) and a severe cut-back to property entitlement.

It may well be argued that this is a reasonable response to pressure on the public purse from the establishment of new small secondary schools either as wharekura under s.156 of the Education Act or the "special character" area schools and secondary schools which are established under either s156 of the Education Act or via the Private Schools Conditional Integration Act but it has ominous implications.

In the first place, is it consistent with the crown's obligations to honour the Tiriti o Waitangi if that means agreeing to the establishment

of multiple small schools but funding them less than other schools?

Secondly, given the well-understood difficulties of providing effective secondary education, including a reasonable range of specialist options for students in very small schools, are the ministry and the minister simply defaulting on their responsibilities? Is it ethical to accede to the desire of many communities and part thereof to establish their own schools without addressing the serious issues of equity and sustainability?

And thirdly, where does it leave everyone else? The ministry has called this new funding formula "interim" and has signalled an intention to "investigate different base funding levels for all small composite schools" in 2010. This might mean protected funding for those schools that are small because of their remote locations but reductions for other schools that are small because they are not essential to the network – in other words a long overdue rationalisation programme. Alternatively we could be hearing the sound of a very significant seismic shift in New Zealand education – a more deliberate withdrawal of government funding and a transference of costs to parents. It's impossible to say at the moment because as far as I am aware neither PPTA nor any other affected group has been consulted about these developments.

Parents should be very afraid because choice costs – and they are the ones that are going to pay.



by Kate Gainsford

The Australian Scholarship Group calculates that the cost of educating a child in a non-government school in Australia is now \$(AU)150,000. And even if you have the money that doesn't guarantee a place in the school you want – the schools will be doing the choosing.

In England last year, almost one in six children were refused a place at their first choice of secondary school – and the rate rose to one in three in and around London. So serious has this problem become an advisory centre has been set up to help parents deal with the trauma of missing out. Using the acronym CHILD the group advises parents to keep Calm, seek Help, join waiting lists Immediately, Lodge an appeal and consider Different schools as a strategy for dealing with disappointment.

Go figure. ▪



“Short-sighted” decision not irreversible

The voices of 51,089 adult community education (ACE) supporters were heard at the Beehive last month when a petition they signed was presented to the Education and Science Select Committee.

Community Learning Association through Schools (CLASS) president Maryke Fordyce and Labour’s tertiary spokesperson Maryan Street presented and spoke to the petition, which called for the reinstatement of the night class funding that had been slashed by 80%.

Maryan said it was an opportune time for the petition to be presented, before the 2010 Budget was finally decided. The budget cuts were already being felt up and down the country, she said.

“Where there were 212 high schools offering a wide variety of night classes this time last year, there are now only 24. There used to be 220,000 people availing themselves of these low-cost, accessible post-compulsory opportunities – now there are whole parts of New Zealand which have lost this vital infrastructure.”

Maryke told those present that



CLASS president Maryke Fordyce (left) presents a case for reinstating night class funding to the Education and Science Select Committee flanked by Labour MPs Maryan Street and Damien O’Connor.

the classes left were few and sparsely situated, with some being a two- or three-hour drive for many. For example the entire Southland area was being covered by one school in Dunedin, she said.

Maryan told those present that she found it very odd that the Ministry of Social Development was encouraging beneficiaries to upskill and get back into the workforce while at the same time funding was being cut to an

area that provided a non-threatening opportunity for second chance learning that led to jobs.

“The government wants to dim the lights on a programme that serves the wants and needs of the community. This was a very short-sighted decision but it’s not too late for the government, especially under the new minister for tertiary education, to revisit that budget cut,” she said. ▪

www.dimming.co.nz

“I despair at this government. ACE, national standards, Radio NZ. It takes years to build up good things but it takes 5 minutes for a pack of dim-wits to cut it down ...”

- Dave

“... this campaign hits the money as far as the stupidity of the gov’t’s actions. It’s a serious issue, but laughable too.”

- Ralph

“Could someone clearly explain the logic in these cuts? Many who are disadvantaged are National voters, like me.”

- DS



JOIN THE DEBATE ABOUT DIMMING THE LIGHTS ON NIGHT CLASSES

Claiming quality

PPTA members have voted overwhelmingly in favour of an STCA claim that focuses on high quality, well resourced public education.

Paid union meetings (PUMs) were held throughout the country last month with 97% of those who voted backing the claim, PPTA president Kate Gainsford said.

The proposal covers four areas – student and teacher learning conditions, professional support for teachers, remuneration and good employment conditions. It included a base scale increase of 4% for a one-year term and improvements to targeted allowances, and had widespread member support, Kate said.

“It’s about maintaining the value of the secondary teacher’s job. Our teachers are part of a global market and we need to ensure secondary teaching is a first choice career,” she said.

It is also proposed to seek an additional 1% employer contribution for teachers in Kiwisaver – to bring it in line with the 3% contribution of the Teachers’ Retirement Savings Scheme, which was closed with the introduction of Kiwisaver.

Other proposals include a reduction in class sizes to no more than 30 students (or no more than 24 in practical classes where there are hazards present), greater professional support for teachers and safer working environments. Free immunisation against contagious diseases and the provision of laptops to all teachers as basic tools of the job have also been requested in the claim.

“We want all teachers to be able to concentrate on providing the best learning environment for their students.”

PPTA had looked at the way other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries had responded to the financial crisis when drawing up the claim, Kate said.

OECD countries had responded in three kinds of ways, she said.

The first, which included a group of countries in Eastern Europe (such as Hungary, Romania, the Czech Republic and Serbia¹) responded by



Members gather in force at Wellington’s March regional PUM.

cutting spending on education. The second, including Latin America, responded by protecting and maintaining investment in the education budget and the third, which included countries such as Australia and Canada, had responded by increasing investment in education as a way out of the financial crisis and towards growth and prosperity for all.

Already New Zealand’s education expenditure per school student is below the OECD mean, according to the Education Counts statistics website.

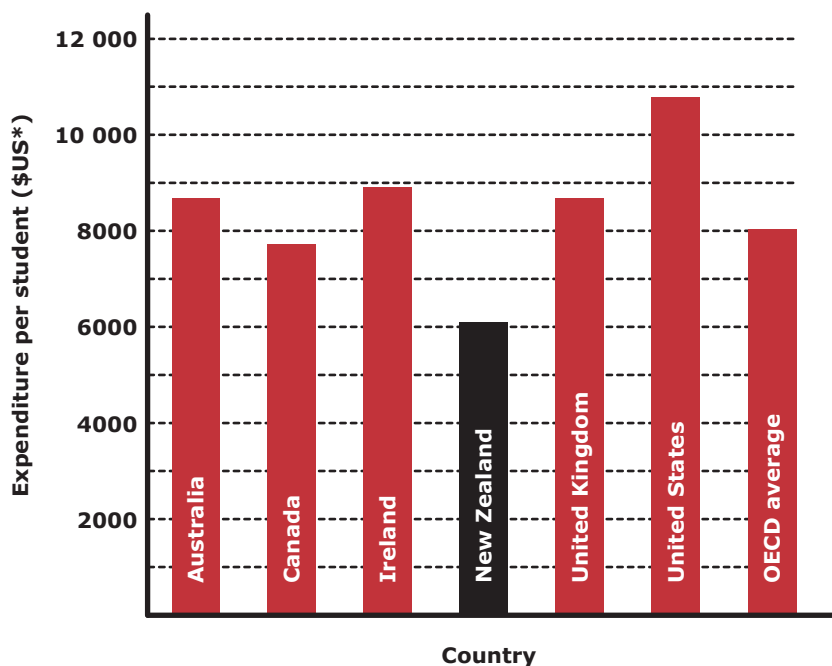
“Effective schools require the right combination of trained and talented personnel, adequate facilities, state-of-the-art equipment and motivated students ready to learn,” it said.

Kate said PPTA would be interested to know which group the government wanted to be in. With the budget cuts it has been signalling it appears to wish to join Eastern Europe.

“We would like to see unequivocal evidence that the government wants to be in group three and is going to support teachers to do the best possible job for New Zealand students,” she said. ■

1. *Education and the Global Economic Crisis: Summary of results of the follow-up survey*, Education International, December 2009, updated February 2010.

Government spending on secondary education in 2009



Sources: Education at a Glance 2009 : OECD indicators, OECD, Paris, 2009 or revised data. www.oecd.org/edu/eag2009.

(*Converted using purchasing power parities for GDP.)

Education in NZ: good ideas, no strategy

The New Zealand government has a lot of good education initiatives but lacks any overarching strategy to link them all together, according to Ben Levin, a Canadian professor of education and leadership.

Professor Levin, who will be a keynote speaker at next year's professional conference, Edscapes – mapping teachers' professional lives, shared his thoughts on change in public education, professional identity and the importance of teacher unions, while visiting New Zealand last month.

Professor Levin's career spans government, academic and research work. He served as deputy minister for education in Ontario Canada from 2004 to 2007 and now is a Canada research chair in education and leadership policy at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto.

Professor Levin's latest book *How to change 5000 schools* details how large-scale change in schools can be achieved without punitive forms of accountability, and shows how in Ontario positive partnerships between educators and policy makers has proved the best strategy.

"Key partners – the provincial Ministry of Education, school boards, schools and provincial and local organisations of teachers, principals and others – work together," he says.

Professor Levin praised New Zealand's "strong tradition of public education" and said there were many positive initiatives in place – but unfortunately there were not the resources or support to back them up country-wide.

"In New Zealand you have lots of good projects, but you have no strategy. Every school in New Zealand has a project going on – and often



"You cannot improve a school system through choice and competition – no one has done it."

three or four, but without an overarching strategy and resources, it's a recipe for no progress.

"I recommend one strategy and a small number of goals – then a relentless focus on those goals," he said.

In Ontario educators picked three goals – better outcomes, reduced inequities and increased public confidence. This mantra was repeated enough that the government picked it up and it became policy, he said.

The New Zealand Ministry of Education had similar goals, but not the strategy to achieve them, he said.

"There are lots of good ideas but no one says 'that's good practice' why don't we all take it up?," he said.

PPTA president Kate Gainsford said that the unions' role in promoting best practice was important. Professor Levin agreed, saying it was short-sighted strategy to try to reduce the influence of teacher unions.

"The reality is that excellent schools need strong teacher organisations," he said.

Ontario's 120,000 or so teachers and most of its support staff are

unionised. In many parts of the world countries had the right goals for education change and better outcomes for students, including students from groups that had previously lagged behind average achievement levels, professor Levin said.

"But many of these efforts have used wrong-headed approaches or failed to pay enough attention to what we are learning about effective large-scale change. In particular, many strategies place too much emphasis on test results as the main way to drive

improvement," he said.

Standards and data were all about trying to improve outcomes – "raising the bar and closing the gap," – but this provides an equity challenge, professor Levin said.

"New Zealand's overall level of achievement is good – but the equity issues are worrying."

Data was useful but it could easily be misused, particularly in the case of league tables.

"There are multiple levels, multiple indicators and different ways of recording them – so you can't really say 'these are the top 20 schools'," he said.

In Ontario, schools were funded by district and so were not competing with each other, Professor Levin said.

"You cannot improve a school system through choice and competition – no one has done it," he said.

Gainsford said she could see an alignment of thinking between professor Levin's book and the situation in New Zealand.

"We require greater coherence – there is the opportunity for improvement and we hope that won't be squandered by a lack of strategic thinking and long-term planning," she said. •

Building healthier school communities

The Puke High School is the first school in the country to become part of a new health initiative to improve the well-being of staff.

The school is taking part in the WorkWell programme which aims to help businesses put in place simple strategies for managing employee well-being.

“We’ve long recognised a need to include staff in our aim of improving the health of our whole school community,” Te Puke High School principal Alan Liddle said.

The school already focuses on health and wellbeing among students – with two staff members, head of Physical Education Wendy Donaldson and head of Health Carol Power, establishing a school health forum more than 10 years ago.

This forum has led a number of initiatives, including a drug and alcohol contract, a student wellbeing



Working well together: Alan Liddle principal Te Puke High School, Theresa Thompson of Toi Te Ora Public Health Service, Carol Power head of health Te Puke High School and Jen Murray also of Toi Te Ora Public Health Service.

contract and a comprehensive health education curriculum.

A student health committee was also formed for students to conduct their own health promotions covering issues like drugs and alcohol, asthma, diabetes, breast cancer, smoking and mental health.

In 2005-2006 the school was involved in the Ministry of Education’s student wellbeing contract, which aimed to build student resil-

ience so they were better able to cope with life experiences that may affect their mental or emotional wellbeing. Creating a healthier school community and improving the wellbeing of staff was a natural extension of this, Liddle said.

In November last year the school joined five other businesses in the Bay of Plenty participating in WorkWell, which is the first programme of its kind to be offered in New Zealand. Created by Toi Te Ora Public Health Service

professionals, it includes an accreditation scheme and provides assurance for employees, suppliers, customers and the wider community that a high standard of workplace wellness is achieved.

Te Puke High School’s WorkWell leader Carol Power said staff were enthusiastic about being part of the pilot and that all staff groups were represented in the school’s WorkWell group. ■

Polyfest on top of the world

With awe-inspiring talent and vibrant colours the largest Māori and Pasifika cultural festival in the world, the ASB Polyfest, celebrated its 35th anniversary with one of its biggest and brightest events to date.

Starting life as the Auckland Secondary Schools Māori and Pacific Islands Cultural Festival in 1976, Polyfest is now an iconic annual event celebrating the pride and passion of Māori and Pasifika communities through song, dance, speech and art.

ASB Polyfest 2010 was hosted by Sir Edmund Hillary Collegiate over four days in March and attracted around 90,000 spectators and 9000 students competing from 60 schools.

Performances were held on five main cultural stages – Maori, Cook islands, Niuean, Samoan and Tongan – with additional performances from other cultures taking place on a sixth “diversity” stage. ■



Students from Aorere College strut their stuff at the new AUT campus in Auckland.



Are they the next ta

Public private partnerships (PPPs) overseas have plunged so of dollars. Despite this track record the New Zealand government at how the love affair with private investment went sour with

First came the flurry of press releases extolling the virtues of PPPs, then the creation of New Zealand's first privately built prison was announced – and now the government is poised to let the private sector loose on our schools. Cabinet papers have revealed plans to build a school on crown land, which would be owned by a private company and leased back to the school's board of trustees - a move PPTA president Kate Gainsford believes is short-sighted and dangerous.

"Governments can always raise money at a cheaper rate than private companies so there is no real benefit for the taxpayer and limitless potential for profiteering," Gainsford said.

"I predict PPPs will follow on from leaky buildings and sub prime mortgages as the next taxpayer rip off."

Under the PPP plan, private firms would design, build, maintain and own a school, while the government owned the land and the school's board of trustees retained governance. The school's owners could use the school outside normal school hours, and school boards would have to negotiate an "occupancy agreement" with the private owner.

Minister of education Anne Tolley told *The New Zealand Herald* that similar partnerships had been successful overseas and could "cut costs, improve maintenance and allow greater community use of facilities."

Overseas examples, however, have proved the opposite. Inadequately budgeted projects have lead to extra costs to the taxpayer, design problems, late delivery and cuts in services. In some cases loans are still being paid back to private enterprises, years after facilities have been forced to close.

In 2008 Gainsford visited the education sector's umbrella union Education International (EI) in Belgium to look further at work being done on the "Hidden Privatisation in Public Education". EI felt this was a significant enough threat to require that affiliates actively develop policy in this area "as a matter of priority".



"It is in the context of larger international developments that the situation in New Zealand warrants closer scrutiny," Gainsford said.

In March 2009 the government set up a national infrastructure unit and released guidelines on PPPs.

New Zealand's largest business broker, Craigs Investment Partners has launched a \$125 million fund to invest in the government's PPP vehicle, Public Infrastructure Partners (PIP). It is the first chance individuals have had to enter into PPPs through building public assets that will be leased by the government.

The projects are likely to be open for tender, and at least one Australian company has said it would be interested in public buildings here.

"The risk for PIP is to build the school on time and on budget, and to maintain it to the required standard," Gainsford said.

"The public sector can raise finance more cheaply than the private sector, and private partners need to factor profit into the equation, while the state does not.

"The possibility of a private partner

failing and the taxpayer having to pick up the costs is a very real one," she said.

The risks of PPPs have been known for a long time, Gainsford said. In fact, back in 2006 the auditor general published a report warning that "Public entities are ultimately accountable for delivering public services, and cannot transfer this responsibility to the private sector." The report comments that the risks involved can adversely affect the "value-for-money outcome of the project and damage the reputation of both parties".

Advice from Treasury the following month was also far from positive, focusing on risks such as "the private sector either going bankrupt or making inordinate profits, which can make PPPs politically unacceptable".

Despite all of these concerns, the current government appears determined to pursue PPPs.

Treasury guidelines released last year appear to assume that PPPs will be created.

"(It is) desirable to develop specialist expertise to support departments and agencies in the development of PPPs ... It is also desirable to promote a high degree of standardisation, discipline and transparency in the letting of PPP contracts through guidance material for government agencies that might be involved in letting PPPs," the guidelines read.

Gainsford was also concerned there would be little consistency in the services provided through PPPs.

Communities have been frequently constrained by the limits of what is available in their geographical area, she said.

"Fragmented groups and services have already seized the opportunity to fill gaps. This does not ensure a consistent and reliable support or service. "There is potential for growing amounts of money to be made from the public education system by private companies or bodies corporate at the expense of educational needs," she said. ■

taxpayer rip-off?

Schools and communities into debt, forced hospitals to close and cost taxpayers billions. The government seems to believe it is a good idea for our schools. In this issue *PPTA News* looks at the hope that New Zealand can learn from other countries' mistakes.



The worst of British - more tales of PPP woe

Schools, public agencies, and ultimately the tax-payer, will end up paying twice as much as necessary for developments built under the UK government's version of public private partnerships (PPPs).

Yet the New Zealand government wants to follow suit by promoting the idea.

In the UK the public service union Unison has been campaigning against PFIs (Private Finance Initiatives) - the British equivalent of PPPs. They cite a number of disasters including, inadequately budgeted projects leading to extra costs to the taxpayer, late delivery on projects, and failures to deliver causing costs to be transferred back to the taxpayer.

Investigations also reveal that there are a number of high profile individuals profiting from the scheme.

The quality of school buildings completed by PFIs was inferior to those completed by the state and there was little evidence of innovation. Costs varied widely and there was no consistent pattern of PFIs delivering for less.

An investigation by UK paper *The Sunday Herald* has also revealed that private companies could pocket up to £50 billion in profits from investing in the scheme.

"The revelations, based on tens of thousands of pages released under freedom of information laws, have confirmed critics' worst fears. They say PFI has turned out to be a huge scam, a total taxpayer rip-off, and a cynical accounting fiddle," the paper says.

International financial projections for six PFI schemes show investors are expecting to recoup 12 times more than they invested. "In some cases shareholders are predicted to make truly astronomical gains," the article said.

PFI was designed as a way of injecting private capital into public projects in an attempt to get debts off Treasury's books, it said.

The idea was that capital would be raised on the private market to fund developments that would be built and run by private firms - much like New Zealand's proposed PIP fund.

Although the projects would cost public authorities little up front, they would then have to pay for them in installments over the next 25 or 30 years.

A second investigation by *The Independent on Sunday* revealed a "largely hidden debt mountain of hundreds of millions of pounds."

The nature of PFI deals means the payments still have to be made, even if the project is abandoned. There have been cases of schools that have been forced to close but still had to make repayments for the next 20 years. ■

"The revelations, based on tens of thousands of pages released under freedom of information laws, have confirmed critics' worst fears. They say PFI has turned out to be a huge scam, a total taxpayer rip-off, and a cynical accounting fiddle."

Losers & Winners

Losers

- Balmoral High School in Belfast closed six years after it had been built, after pupil numbers had halved. However the Northern Ireland Department of Education still owes the contractor £370,000 pounds a year for the next 18 years.
- Queen Mary's Hospital in Roehampton cost £73.5 million to build, but will cost taxpayers in excess of £340 million by 2034.
- In Oxford taxpayers will have to pay back £832 million for the John Radcliffe Hospital, which cost £134 million to build.
- Highlands School in Enfield plunged into £300,000 of debt because of an "expensive and inflexible contract" with a private contractor.

Winners

- UK politicians with PFI connections:
- Alan Milburn, MP - as minister of health described PFIs as "the only game in town." Is now a director of Diaverum Healthcare, a company contracted to run the kidney dialysis unit at the PFI funded Burnley General Hospital.
 - Quentin Davies, MP - Minister of defence and former director of Vinci UK and Vinci SA, firms involved with PFI projects with a total capital value of £223 million which will cost £933 million over the terms of their contracts.
 - John Reid, MP - former home secretary and paid consultant to G4S UK and Ireland. G4S is involved in PFIs, mainly in prisons, with a total capital value of £330 million, they will end up costing £3.6 billion
 - Patricia Hewitt, MP - during her tenure as health secretary, British Telecom (BT) won IT contracts for the National Health Service. The former minister is now a director of BT group and was paid £59,475 for 140 hours' work over the past six months at a rate of £424 an hour. ■

SOURCE: *The Independent on Sunday* - Special investigation: How Government Squanders Billions.

Setting the standards

A new subject association formed last year is providing advocacy and support for teachers of Computing and Digital Information Technology.

The New Zealand Association of Computing and Digital Information Technology was created partly as a result of an initiative of PPTA's ICT advisory committee, but it is a totally independent institution. Burnside High School teacher Vilna Gough-Jones was elected the group's first president.

Major work already carried out by the group includes designing new achievement standards for Technology and running successful one-day conferences in Auckland and Christchurch.

A three day conference, which will be a collaboration between the New Zealand Information and Communications Technology group (NZCIT) and Cognition Consulting is also planned for November this year.

Any teachers who are interested in presenting full or half-day workshops should email m.alford@gmail.com as soon as possible.

Association spokesperson Maurice Alford said great progress had been

made in designing the new achievement standards.

"After consultation and feedback with selected groups there will now be a good pool of achievement standards for level 1 in the technology learning area," he said.

A news article in January this year indicated that employers were looking for students with multi-discipline skills, so schools should think in terms of designing courses that have content from a combination of Digital Technology strands, Maurice said.

"For example, a school could consider offering two courses in year 11 in 2011: one with a focus on Digital Information, Digital Media and perhaps some programming, and one with a focus on programming and Computer Science, Digital Infrastructure and some Digital Information. Electronics could fit into either of these. Bear in mind that not everything you teach needs to be assessed, so a school may teach the fundamentals of tech practice in project



development with planning, testing, and evaluating, as part of developing a media product, for example, but may not necessarily assess this.

"Another school may look at offering a course with a focus on Digital Infrastructure, Electronics and tech practice. So whether your school offers one or more courses at year 11 – you have a choice in what you teach and assess," he said.

Final numbers and names of achievement standards and Technology subjects are still to be confirmed, but with the Ministry of Education recommending courses of approximately 14 to 20 credits, there will be a big enough pool of assessments to give teachers amazing choice in designing courses for their students, he said.

Other events that NZACDITT will be running this year include a Moodle (Modular Object Orientated Dynamic Learning Environment) conference in April and a Confluence software symposium in September.

NZACDITT has a website – www.nzacditt.org.nz – and all teachers of Computing, Digital Technology, Information Technology and Electronics are encouraged to join this subject association.

Teachers from other subject areas who may wish to expand their horizons are also welcome, particularly those who hope to offer blended courses which combine with their main subject strengths. ■

New Technology achievement standards – how will they work?

The standards will be roughly divided into four groups.

- Generic Technology with nine achievement standards worth approximately 40 credits
- Graphics and Design with nine achievement standards worth approximately 30 credits
- Digital Technologies with 12 achievement standards worth approximately 35 credits
- Processing/Manufacturing/Construction with eight achievement standards worth approximately 30 credits.

No achievement standard will be compulsory and there is a good mix of external and internal assessments.

In the Digital Technologies area, there will be at least two achievement standards in each of the five areas of Programming and Computer Science, Digital Media, Digital Information, Digital Infrastructure and Electronics.

These draft achievement standards were released in late March for wider consultation.

Comments and suggestions will be considered in May, and then these level 1 achievement standards will be on the same time frame as all other subjects' achievement standards by being published in July and registered by November ready for next year.

Pink Shirt Day – make a stand against bullying in schools

Bullying is a serious problem in New Zealand schools – and the frequent reports of physical and emotional violence are backed up by facts and figures.

- Children and young people consistently rate bullying as one of their biggest concerns (Office of the Children’s Commissioner’s School Safety inquiry).

- 6% of students reported being bullied at least once a week in the last 12 months and 4% had not gone to school at least one day in the last month due to fear of bullying (Youth 2007 report)

Pink shirt day (Wednesday, April 28) is a chance for schools and students to make a difference by standing up against bullying.

SS4Q (safety in schools for queers) has been organising schools and community groups to show their support by signing up to take a stand against bullying.

“Children and young people need to know they will be supported when they speak out against bullying.



Schools cannot solve these problems alone,” SS4Q media spokesperson Laressa Donaldson said.

The first Pink Shirt Day took place in Halifax, Nova Scotia, when two 17-year-old high school students decided to stand up for a friend who had been harassed for wearing a pink shirt to school. The boys decided the bullying

had to stop – they went to a discount store and brought 50 pink tank tops, sent out a message to schoolmates that night and the next morning handed them to students to wear – the bullies were never heard from again.

For further information on Pink Shirt Day check out www.pink-shirtday.org.nz.



Mapping teachers' professional lives
Wellington Convention Centre
18 - 20 April 2011

Themes: Leadership
Engagement
Professional activism

Keynotes: Ben Levin
Christine Richmond
Judyth Sachs

Follow us @Edscapes on www.twitter.com

For more information, registration enquiries, or if you would like to run a workshop at the conference, email us at piu@ppta.org.nz.

Award helps teacher “sell” science to students

Morrinsville College science teacher Paul Lowe was honoured with a prime minister’s science prize worth \$150,000 last month – and he credits a PPTA study award with helping him get there.

Paul’s work involved selling science as a “team strategy” by giving students in groups of three a real world task and the independence to find a solution.

Projects covered everything from swine flu to how to survive a bushfire and field trips like snorkeling at Goat Island Marine Reserve to learn about bio-diversity.

“My students choose their own research projects and through the CREST (Creativity in Science and Technology) programme, science fairs and Realise the Dream (science and technology award) perform at the highest level,” he said.

Morrinsville College received two thirds of the prize money and Paul collected the rest.

Paul described receiving the science prize as “a huge occasion for myself, the school and students I have worked with”.

He also thanked PPTA for a study award he received which gave him the opportunity to get inside his students’ heads.

“It started back in 1998 when I had been working for two years on my PhD with Curtin University (in Western



Stephen Barker Photography

Science teacher Paul Lowe adopting a team strategy with students.

Australia) looking at the effect of students working and being assessed in teams on their attitudes towards science (Cooperative Learning and Assessment or COLA). I finally completed this in 2004. The study award I gained in 1998 was a significant part of this and I thank PPTA for this opportunity,” he said.

Those interested in applying for this year’s PPTA study grants and awards should check out the information below. ▪

Teachers’ study awards

2010

If you are interested in completing a qualification, taking time off each week to study while teaching, moving to another curriculum or subject area, or taking time off to research a topic of interest, have a look at the professional development opportunities available on the TeachNZ website:

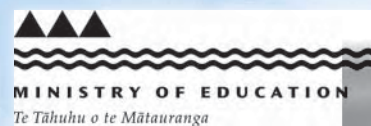
www.teachnz.govt.nz/studyawards

Study Awards, Sabbaticals and Fellowships for study in 2011 are now open and **close 2 July**.

Study Support Grants for study in 2011 are now open and **close 24 September**.

Māori Medium Bilingual Education and Guidance Counsellor Training Study Awards for study in 2011 open 21 June and **close 24 September**.

PPTA
NEW ZEALAND POST PRIMARY
TEACHERS’ ASSOCIATION
TE WEHENGARUA
www.ppta.org.nz



Application Forms and Guidelines will be available later in the year so please check www.teachnz.govt.nz/studyawards for updates.

If you have any enquiries contact teacher.studyawards@minedu.govt.nz.

NZSPC

NEW ZEALAND SECONDARY PRINCIPALS' COUNCIL
OF THE POST PRIMARY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

Engaging in Wellington

A conference for secondary principals

27 - 30 JULY 2010

THE HOLIDAY INN, 75 FEATHERSTON STREET, WELLINGTON

The New Zealand Secondary Principals' Council of the PPTA (NZSPC) invites you to *Engaging in Wellington* – a professional conference giving secondary principals an opportunity to meet, learn and share ideas.

Register online or download a form at the NZSPC website www.nzspc.org.nz.

ANZELA



AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND EDUCATION LAW ASSOCIATION

Education law seminar 2010

When two wrongs don't make a right: Safe conduct of disciplinary investigations of students and staff in the education sector

Schools and tertiary institutions, staff and students, principals and boards all have an interest in managing disciplinary investigations safely – whether these are misconduct processes for students or employment related for staff.

This seminar will explore the current issues facing those in educational governance and management. It will identify the fundamentals of sound process and the pitfalls to avoid. The session will be interactive and invite discussion and questions from the attendees.

3 May – Hamilton @ University Lodge, Knighton Road (behind the Resource Centre), University of Waikato

6 May – Wellington @ Rainey Collins Lawyers, Level 23, 157 Lambton Quay (Midland Park)

17 May - Auckland @ Kohia Centre, Gate 1/ 78 Epsom Avenue, Epsom (Gate 2, Level 2 parking)

19 May - Christchurch @ Our City-O-Tautahi, 159 Oxford Tce, Cnr Worcester Boulevard & Oxford

Cost for members: \$40. Non-members: \$50 Time for all seminars: 4pm - 6pm finish.

For more information or to register please contact: Susannah Higgins, Rainey Collins Lawyers, PO Box 689, Wellington 6140. Email shiggins@raineycollins.co.nz. Ph: (04) 473 6850.

Out in the field

Get it in writing from the outset

Information and advice from PPTA's intrepid field officers.

Case 1

Monica had been employed at her current school for five years. At the end of last year her principal advised her that her fixed-term appointment would not be renewed. She approached her field officer.

Monica's original letter of appointment could not be found. Neither could the original job advertisement. However the field officer was able to have Payroll confirm that for five years the school had been coding information supplied to Payroll regarding Monica as if she was permanently employed.

When this advice was drawn to the school's attention, the school agreed that Monica was permanently employed.

Case 2

Robert held three management units. When he was originally employed his letter of appointment indicated that two were permanent and one was

fixed-term. Two years later the principal wrote advising that the fixed-term unit was to be made permanent.

Several years, and a change of principal, later the school sought to remove Robert's third unit. Robert sought the advice of his field officer. Although the school had no copy of the earlier principal's letter making his third unit permanent, Robert had kept his copy.

When this was produced, Robert's unit was retained.

Comment

A considerable number of the queries that field officers receive relate to appointments. The most common disputes relate to tenure, hours of work, length of appointment, and job description.

Field officers can assist members to get their appointments properly documented and recorded at the start of their tenure.

In terms of the collective agreement:

- Most positions must be adver-

tised in the Education Gazette (3.2.2 of the Secondary Collective.)

- Part-time teachers must have their hours confirmed in writing on appointment. Agreed changes to permanent hours must be confirmed in writing, as must changes to non-permanent hours of four weeks or more.

- There must be a genuine reason for a position being fixed term. The employee must understand and agree to the reason why the appointment should end at a particular time or at the end of an event or project. This agreement should be put in writing.

Too often the requirements in the collective agreement, as to what matters relating to employment must be put in writing, are ignored.

Teachers should ask for job offers, job descriptions, hours of work, length of employment and tenure to be confirmed in writing. Subsequent promotions, or significant changes of job description, should also be recorded in writing. ■

Are you in the Government Superannuation Fund?

PPTA members who are contributors to the GSF can join the Government Superannuitants Association (GSA).

The GSF is a lifetime contract between the contributor and your employer, the government. It is important that the rights that members have (both current contributors and annuitants) are protected – in fact it could be more than your lifetime as the scheme gives surviving partners of annuitants an annuity for their lifetime.

The provisions of the scheme, such as adjustments to annuities to compensate for Consumers Price Index movements, are provided for in legislation, but constant vigilance is required to ensure



that such provisions are maintained. The government gives, but sometimes the government takes away.

The GSA permits contributing members – and their partners at no extra cost – to join for an annual subscription of \$19.50. This about 5 cents a day to help protect one of the most valuable assets you

and your partner have. The GSA has 19 branches throughout the country. Branches have regular meetings and run social events for members.

To join the GSA visit www.gsa.org.nz for an application form or contact the national office at PO Box 11993, Wellington 6142, or email gensec@gsa.org.nz or call 04-472 7006.

Your decision to get the benefits of the Government Superannuation Fund was a wise one. Show similar wisdom now and join the GSA to protect them.



No, but not having breakfast, sleep or shoes might!

“Just because you are poor doesn’t mean you can’t learn” – was education minister Anne Tolley’s response to a deputy principal who asked how national standards would help pupils who came to school without food or highly stressed from family situations. Tolley told a testy public meeting in Dunedin last month that “throwing money” at social problems had not fixed them – but apparently throwing it at one-size-fits-all testing will...

Actually, looks are everything

A US casting company is looking for Kiwi teen talent for a TV show billed as the next “Hanna Montana”. A flyer doing the rounds is looking for “good looking, fresh faced and confident teenagers” to audition for the show. It then goes on to say “This TV series will be cast purely on photographs, so we need to have the best possible photo” – We assume actual talent is optional then.

The perils of tasers in schools

According to a US newspaper, two female students at a Chattanooga high school got into a fight and when a teacher tried to break it up one of the students assaulted her. A school resource officer allegedly tried to taser that student but

missed and accidentally tasered a third student who was trying to help the teacher.

World’s smartest spies they ain’t

Still in the US – A federal lawsuit has been taken against a suburban Philadelphia school district for spying on students through school-issued laptop webcams.

The suit says school district officials can activate the webcams remotely without students’ knowledge and alleges the cameras have captured images of high school students and their families as they undressed or were in compromising situations.

The cat got out of the bag when an assistant principal spoke to a student about inappropriate behaviour at home that had been seen through a camera. ▪

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 1970.

A dictionary for the times

The *Pocket Oxford Dictionary of Current English* was first issued in 1924. It was revised in 1946 and is a long-established favourite in schools and with the public. A fifth edition was published by Oxford University Press in late 1969. In this new edition a great many new words appear: Cybernetics for example – and Psychedelic.

Wet lunch hours

The worst thing I know in teaching is to be on duty for a wet lunch-hour. It’s only then that you realise how inadequately equipped our schools are for any kind of indoor activity except for teaching – though pupils can usually be relied on to make up all sorts of unauthorised games, like throwing chalk and smashing furniture.

- excerpt from ‘Chips off the shoulder’

Times they are a-changing

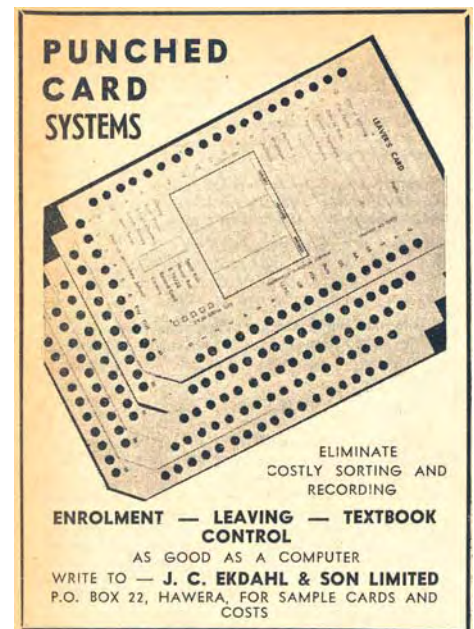
Except for a few headmasters whose emotional investment in the past blinds them to the present, everyone must be conscious that we live in a

world of rapid change. Parents find they have no past that parallels their children’s present... On campus light-shows with loud rock music, pot-smoking and clothe-styles follow closely the crazy rocketing space-age American scene ... no prior generation ever had a Woodstock convention of pot and acid-rock. For good or for evil our society is changing and will continue to do so, and whether we like it or not, education must suffer the same process.

- excerpt from ‘Education and the Information Explosion’ by Dick Nicholls

Drastic solution to staffing shortages

The situation which arose at Opotiki College at the outset of the school year, as a result of its staffing shortage, highlighted an issue which has to be squarely faced. Rather than resort to the usual procedures of spreading his existing staff resources more thinly and thereby giving the impression that



Punch cards advertised in a 1970 issue of *PPTA News*. “As good as a computer” - These days some might say they’re better.

his school was catering adequately for the educational needs of all his pupils, the principal told the pupils in the classes for which he could not provide teachers to study at home during those periods. ▪

New Zealand Premiere of

Breaking the Silence: Burma's Resistance

\$25 per
ticket

Join us for free drinks at a social hour
before the screening
contact unionaid@nzctu.org.nz for
tickets

*A new Canadian documentary filmed secretly
inside Burma showcases the country's little known
networks of resistance movements. It sheds light
on the enormous risks taken by ordinary Burmese,
and their long struggle to remove the country's
brutal military dictatorship.*

Directed by Pierre Mignault 75 minutes



Wellington

Monday 26 April, 8pm
at Paramount Cinema
Courtenay Pl

Auckland

Monday 3 May, 8.30pm
at Academy Cinema
44 Lorne St

All proceeds to UnionAID, the international development
agency of the NZ Council of Trade Unions.

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