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# PPTA NEWS

Volume 31 • Number 4 • Haratua / May 2010



## **Scams, scandal and safety**

Seeking internet security  
in schools.

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*PPTA News* is the newsletter of the New Zealand Post Primary Teachers' Association. Approximately 18,000 copies are distributed free to secondary and area schools and other institutions.

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

## Editorial and advertising

Enquiries should be addressed to:

The Editor, PPTA News, PO Box 2119, Wellington, New Zealand. Ph: 04 384 9964; Fax: 382 8763; Email: akirtlan@ppta.org.nz

PPTA website: [www.ppta.org.nz](http://www.ppta.org.nz)

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## PPTA field officer contacts

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

### Auckland

4 Western Springs Road, Morningside

P O Box 52 006, Auckland

ph (09) 815 8610 fax (09) 815 8612

email: [auckland@ppta.org.nz](mailto:auckland@ppta.org.nz)

### Hamilton

Level 1, ANZ Building, 650 Te Rapa Rd, Te Rapa

P O Box 20 294, Hamilton

ph (07) 849 0168 fax (07) 849 1794

email: [hamilton@ppta.org.nz](mailto:hamilton@ppta.org.nz)

### Palmerston North

Guardian Trust House, cnr The Square and Main Street

P O Box 168, Palmerston North

ph (06) 358 4036 fax (06) 358 4055

email: [palmerston@ppta.org.nz](mailto:palmerston@ppta.org.nz)

### Christchurch

Latimer View House, 215 Gloucester Street

P O Box 13-005, Christchurch

ph (03) 366 6524 fax (03) 379 4011

email: [christchurch@ppta.org.nz](mailto:christchurch@ppta.org.nz)

### Dunedin

Queens Garden Court, 3 Crawford Street

P O Box 1561, Dunedin

ph (03) 477 1311 fax (03) 477 1804

email: [dunedin@ppta.org.nz](mailto:dunedin@ppta.org.nz)

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# What's the plan Anne?

“Fortunately serious incidents like this one are rare,” was the dismissive response of minister of education, Anne Tolley, to the alarming news of a second knife attack on a teacher by a student in the last eight months. What is unfortunate is that the statistics clearly do not bear out the minister's view at all. In 2008, 422 teachers needed treatment under ACC for assault injuries and schools stood down 288 students for physical attacks on teachers.

What is truly “unfortunate” is that these events are not rare at all. The figures indicate that two serious assaults take place in a secondary school every day. That these do not necessarily result in life-threatening injuries is testimony to the capacity of individual teachers to defuse and deflect violent situations, not to any national initiatives around student and teacher safety.

Yes, dear reader, I do know about the Positive Behaviour for Learning Action Plan and would like to be a strong advocate for it. The problem is there is no plan, no action and no money to support its operations in secondary schools. Of course it is important to support interventions in the early years of a child's life because all the evidence is that behaviour is much more difficult to change as the child gets older, but as the experts at the Taumata Whanonga noted, “intervention needs to be early in life or early in the life of the problem”.



While I agree with Mrs Tolley that the problem of disruptive behaviour is “not something that we are going to solve overnight,” I cannot accept that waiting for 12 or so years until the current beneficiaries of the Positive Behaviour for Learning Action Plan reach secondary school age represents a reasonable timeframe. Teachers who suffer either physical injury or the psychological effects of working in a physically and verbally threatening and stressful environment need to know that the minister of education understands the urgency of the issue and is on their side.

And it isn't just teachers – too often teachers' injuries result from their efforts to stop fights between students, so parents too must feel concerned by the minister's apparent indifference to the rising levels of violence in secondary schools.

Not that I am remotely interested in the suggestions made about “search and seizure” power for schools. The problem of community-based violence, particularly that connected with gangs, will not be solved by increased search powers or metal detectors in schools.

The problem with Tomorrow's Schools is that it dumps responsibility for student safety entirely on boards and principals while denying them access to the coherent nationwide support services that have been shown to reduce violence in schools. More than once this year I have been in schools which have accessed funds

from the increased Interim Response Fund only to find there are no appropriate support services for them to purchase in their region. It certainly makes a nonsense of the minister's fobbing off of any responsibility by claiming that schools have flexibility to cater for students that don't “fit in”. More thoughtful answers are required.

PPTA's annual conference identified the need for an extensive network



by Kate Gainsford

of specialist support (including more RTLBs, trained case managers, social workers, liaison support positions) operating out of behavioural health clinics attached to schools. The real answer lies in the recommendations that called on the government to coordinate and resource those programmes which have been shown to successfully reduce conduct problems in schools. Of course that would be expensive (though effective), whereas it is cheap to legislate for schools to have expanded security powers even if it does nothing to address the underlying problems. It's even cheaper to offer soundbites. For politicians, lots of words and legislation can give the appearance that something is actually being done.

Finally on this is topic, I have been intrigued by the media practice of describing the teacher who was injured last week by such phrases as “popular”, “laidback” and “well-liked.” Some media even went so far as to check the highly dubious website rate my teacher web for information. What are we to make of this? Are we to assume that if a teacher were less popular, the public would consider their injuries as somehow deserved?

There is simply no justification for a teacher to be assaulted in the course of his/her work and, however expensive and difficult it may be to fix, the minister cannot avoid government responsibility for ensuring schools are safe places to work and learn. ▪

# Otahuhu College rocks

**A** PPTA branch that has supported members on a local and international level was the recipient of the 2010 Guy Allan Award for Branch Activism.

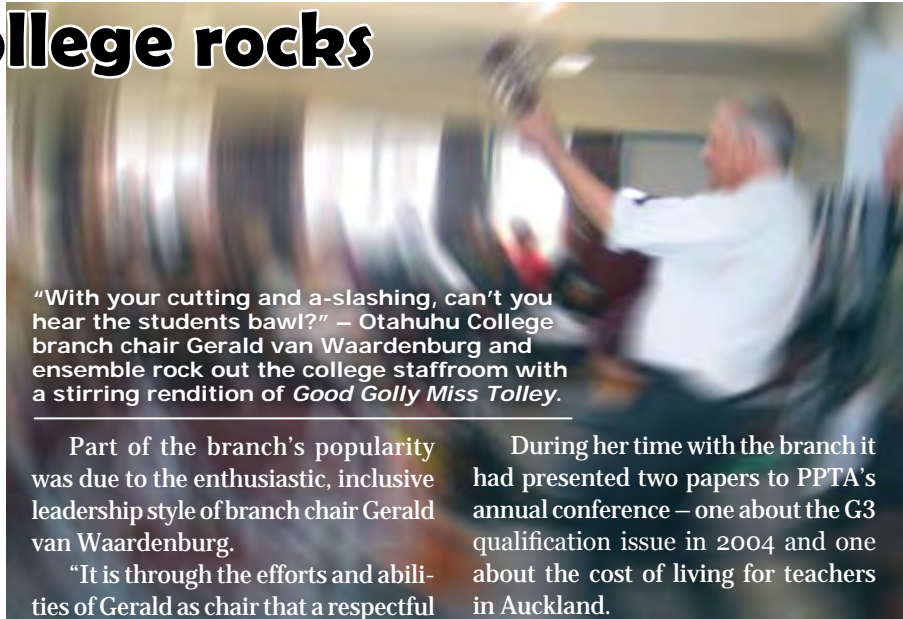
The Otahuhu College PPTA branch was nominated for the award, which recognises outstanding activism in the Auckland and Counties-Manukau regions.

It was established in the memory of Guy Allan who was a field officer in those regions from 1993 until his death in 2002.

Otahuhu College member Irene Symes nominated the branch because of the way it supported members individually and collectively.

Branch meetings were characterised by good humour and a strong sense of camaraderie, she said.

“Discussion at these gatherings is typically robust and everyone feels free to contribute.”



“With your cutting and a-slashing, can't you hear the students bawl?” – Otahuhu College branch chair Gerald van Waardenburg and ensemble rock out the college staffroom with a stirring rendition of *Good Golly Miss Tolley*.

Part of the branch's popularity was due to the enthusiastic, inclusive leadership style of branch chair Gerald van Waardenburg.

“It is through the efforts and abilities of Gerald as chair that a respectful relationship has been forged with the school principal and board of trustees,” she said.

Irene was particularly impressed with how visibly active Otahuhu College branch members were on a national level.

During her time with the branch it had presented two papers to PPTA's annual conference – one about the G3 qualification issue in 2004 and one about the cost of living for teachers in Auckland.

PPTA president Kate Gainsford told those gathered that it was wonderful to see such a strong and active branch, particularly with the upcoming STCA negotiations.

“We would love to be able to clone you,” she said. •

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# The mother of all claims

Our claim and the government's counter-claim are on the table. Will the result be a "modern and simple" collective agreement – just like we had in the 1990s?

The Ministry of Education has presented PPTA with a collective agreement claim that appears to have come straight from last century, PPTA president Kate Gainsford says.

By the time this issue of the *PPTA News* is in schools there will have been at least five days of secondary teachers' collective agreement (STCA) bargaining with the ministry, and further days are planned through to the middle of June. It is likely PPTA will ask members to consider progress in bargaining at special meetings to be held during the week beginning 21 June.

Both the ministry and PPTA presented claims for the STCA on May 3, but a lot of work will be needed to bridge the gap between the two, Gainsford said.

PPTA's claim focused on improving teacher and student learning conditions and the future supply of secondary specialist teachers, so New Zealand's public education system remained robust.

The ministry's claim on the other hand appeared to be about deprofessionalising teachers and reducing and minimising current provisions in an inexplicably random way, she said.

"Nothing has been offered to address recruitment and retention issues, and it carefully avoids mention of remuneration at all. One might interpret this as the government having no interest in stability and effectiveness in the secondary sector, no respect for secondary teachers and no concern for students' learning environments.

"Be that as it may, we know that our members won't sit by and see the good work in secondary schools undone."

**"The government is big on rhetoric around quality education for all, but the ministry/STA claim will simply result in 'winner and loser' schools."**

**– Kate Gainsford**



Representatives from PPTA (left) sit and welcome ministry and STA officials (right) at a pōhiri to open a meeting earlier this month in which both parties presented their claims for the next STCA.

The ministry and the School trustees Association's (STA) self-proclaimed "modern and simple" claim appears to be a trip back to the 1990s as it intends to impose more costs and place difficult management decisions about the allocation of scarce resources back into boards' hands, Gainsford said.

"The government is big on rhetoric around quality education for all, but the ministry/STA claim will simply result in 'winner and loser' schools.

"PPTA believes that all students should get a fair go, not just those in schools that happen to have spare cash in the operations grant to pick up extra costs that are being sheeted home to them."

The negotiations are proceeding differently this round as it is unusual for both claims to be presented on the same day, Gainsford said.

"Both parties have put a lot of

claims on the table and due process is that all of these need to be discussed, so there is a lot of work to be done."

However, Gainsford hoped that, through the negotiations process, both parties would be able to find some common ground.

"The aim of bargaining is, after all, to find a ratifiable settlement – one that members will sign off and one that the government is willing to fund.

"We are fully cognisant of the fiscal environment, but see the time we have together at the bargaining table as a way to resolve problems. We have been able to do this in the past, and we have signalled our intention to continue this approach. "It's a chance for this government to invest in education as a response to the global financial crisis – and not use it as an excuse for short-sighted cuts," she said.

PPTA members can access updates about the negotiations as they progress by going to [www.ppta.org.nz](http://www.ppta.org.nz), logging in and going to Collective Agreements/Negotiations. Members can also sign up to an automated "STCA update" mailing list. ■

# Seeking security

The internet is now an integral part of the New Zealand education system, but it also has the ability to threaten teachers' professional reputations and livelihoods. This has prompted the publication of *Computer Security for New Zealand Schools* – a paper that seeks safe and secure internet environments in schools.

In response to growing concern that teachers are being left vulnerable to online threats, a group of legal and computing specialists have put together a toolkit to help minimise these risks.

*Computer Security for New Zealand Schools* was written after a well-respected New Zealand head teacher was falsely accused of accessing inappropriate material on his computer. Despite his innocence, he lost his job, his home and has since moved overseas.

The paper's author, IT specialist Warren M Anderson, seeks to bring wider attention to the dangers the internet poses. The paper offers teachers and principals advice on how to protect themselves from inappropriate material, online scams, spyware and "phishing" emails that attempt to trick the recipient into parting with money or personal details.

An issue often overlooked was that educators were not information technology experts, so rarely encountered the harder aspects of computing, Anderson said.

"This means they tend to view computers and the internet as simply being a means to an end and only learn enough to allow them to perform their daily tasks. Unfortunately, when dealing with the internet, this is akin to sending them into a Wild West gunfight armed with a water-pistol."

Expanding existing Ministry of Education guidance, the paper addresses schools, teachers and school network administrators.

"Schools as employers have a responsibility to protect their employees ... teachers as employees have a responsibility to protect themselves ... and network administrators have a responsibility to protect their users," he said.

Unfortunately, school IS (internet safety) teams were often in the unenviable position of being underfunded and understaffed, but still expected to provide a safe computing environment for teachers and students.

"Making IS decisions based on budgetary constraints or insufficient knowledge presents a risk to the school's employees, as it encourages schools to adopt poor quality solutions. When the issue at stake is the security of the school's network and the protection of its employees, it was inevitable that sooner or later the system was going to break down and someone was going to get hurt."

The paper looks at how schools can act to provide tools and protection to their staff and how they should respond if required to investigate a member of staff.

"It is vitally important that this investigation is carried out correctly ... it is easy to get into a position where the guilt of the accused is assumed ... if they have done nothing wrong, a lot of damage can be done to the individual and the school if the situation is not handled properly."

Anderson seeks to provide a balance between the rights of teachers,



the usability of computer systems and the protection of students.

"For anything to improve, more work is required on the part of the education sector and technology groups to develop training and resources that will help educators to use technology safely and effectively."

*Computer Security for New Zealand Schools* can be found on the New Zealand Association of Computing and Digital Information Technology Teachers (NZACDITT) website at: <http://nzacditt.org.nz/resource/computer-security-in-new-zealand-schools>.

Tips for teacher safety online can also be found on the PPTA website at: <http://www.ppta.org.nz/index.php/ict-teacher-reps/912-safety-online>. •

## Tips to keep yourself safe

- Desktop computers and laptops should be secured when unattended.
- Computer passwords should not be shared with anyone and should be changed every three to four months.
  - Avoid adware and spyware – do not install any software on the computer yourself.
  - Do not trust unexpected emails with attachments even if they look like they come from someone you know. If in doubt, delete it!
  - Be suspicious of emails that try to scare, or compel, you to act quickly to prevent an account closure, correct a security problem, or collect prize

money – if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

- Remember – the internet never forgets. The things you publish on the internet are likely to be available to search engines for decades to come. As a rule of thumb, ask yourself if you would be happy for the photos, personal information or comments you have placed on a social networking site to be available to your employer, parents, peers or students.

- If an inappropriate image appears on your computer screen do not turn a blind eye. Instead you should take appropriate action so you can avoid any misunderstanding about how the material got there. •

## Pioneering “m” learning

An award-winning mobile learning project pioneered by an Auckland teacher and his students may be rolled out across the country if a 12-week pilot goes well.

The mLearning (the “m” is for mobile) project has already won Howick College teacher Nathan Kerr a top innovation award and has drawn international attention.

Now Howick College, in conjunction with Vodafone and the University of Waikato, has been selected by the Ministry of Education to take part in a 12-week trial to explore the impact of mobile devices on learning.

mLearning is a relatively new field which allows digital lessons to be “zapped” into mobile devices without the need to be connected to the internet – allowing students access to lessons anytime, anywhere.

Nathan now advises overseas governments on mLearning systems and was keynote speaker at two large US technology conferences last year.

Nathan and fellow Howick College teacher Robert Douglas were approached by the ministry to direct and facilitate an “mLearning capability development project” – a move that Nathan found “quite remarkable.”

“It’s very unusual for individual teachers to get funding for a project – it either has to be very well put-together or there needs to be a pressing need.”

The e-learning unit at the Ministry of Education was impressed with the success that had already been achieved through the mLearning project, Nathan said.

“We thought we would be doing well just to be cc’d in on emails about mLearning, but instead they took us out and proposed to us,” he said.

“They want to look at rolling out mLearning so the rest of the country can benefit from it.”

The pilot will receive funding from the ministry’s digiops (digital opportunities) project, which had almost closed off.

“We were lucky there was a funding source available. If it hadn’t been used in a set period of time it would have gone back into the grand pot of money,” he said.

To be able to carry out the pilot there needed to be a telecommunications company involved to help with troubleshooting and an academic body to put together a report.

Both Vodafone and the Waikato



Inspector Gadget: Nathan Kerr demonstrates the power of mobile learning.

University faculty of education came to the party, Nathan said.

The pilot has already started and Nathan, Robert and their students planned to work “extremely hard” to do it justice.

“The students are the ones that are carrying it at the end of the day – they are so enthusiastic about it,” Nathan said.

In 13 weeks the results will be coming through to Waikato University for independent assessment, Nathan said.

“The object is to find the absolute best practice and promote that.” •

## National education network trial extension

**Following a successful 2008 trial involving 23 schools, a national education network (NEN), offering high-speed access to education related content via ultra-fast broadband is being expanded to include up to 200 schools.**

### Who is eligible to participate?

**Schools which have an open access fibre connection to the internet by 30 June 2010 are eligible to participate in the NEN trial extension. Priority is being given to schools in local or regional clusters, although these schools are not automatically included.**

### How do eligible schools register their interest in joining the trial?

**Interested schools that believe they will have the necessary fibre infrastructure in place by 30 June 2010 should complete the preliminary online survey at:**

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/29PZPK6>

**For more information visit:**

<http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/Schools/Initiatives/ICTIn-Schools/ICTInitiativesAndProgrammes/NENTrialExtension>

## Still some way to go with NCEA - NZCER research

A recently released New Zealand Council of Educational Research (NZCER) report shows that teacher support for NCEA has risen since 2006, but that there are still some areas of concern.

The 2009 NZCER survey of secondary schools, which has tracked teacher, principal, board of trustee and parent attitudes towards NCEA since 2003, shows growing support for the qualification in many aspects, according to PPTA advisory officer Judie Alison, who analysed the report.

On the other hand, the proportion of teachers who agree or strongly agree with the general statement "I am supportive of NCEA" has increased only 4% since 2003 (from 65% to 69%).

Principals, however, have always been more positive in response to this question, and their level of support has moved from 87% to 95%, she said.

At the same time NCEA is now seen by more teachers as "a credible qualification", with the proportion agreeing or strongly agreeing with that proposition moving from 27% to 47%, but this is still a minority of teachers.

"In the period between the 2006 and 2009 surveys, certificate endorsement has been introduced in an attempt to improve student motivation under the NCEA. This would appear to explain an increase in the proportion of principals and teachers who believe that NCEA motivates high-achieving students.



"Conversely, there has been a decrease in those who believe that NCEA motivates low-achieving students."

The report comments that "these differences point to a perception among some education professionals that motivation gains for higher achievers may have been achieved at the expense of motivation for those with the greatest learning needs" (p18).

View the full report at [http://www.nzcer.org.nz/default.php?products\\_id=2529](http://www.nzcer.org.nz/default.php?products_id=2529).

## Secondary teachers scapegoats for NZQA blunder

Secondary teachers are being asked to pick up the tab for the New Zealand Qualifications Authority's (NZQA) mistakes – a situation PPTA president Kate Gainsford says is unacceptable.

NZQA is required by the government to moderate 10% of all internally assessed student work for NCEA to ensure consistency of marking.

However NZQA has seriously misjudged the number of marking samples needed from schools in the first half of the year to meet the 10% target.

Instead of owning up to the mistake and fronting up to the government NZQA had decided to pass the problem onto teachers, Gainsford said.

This means teachers in those

schools due to be moderated in the second half of the year will have to send in considerably more material to make up the shortfall and cover NZQA's error, she said.

"Moderation is already a huge workload and cost imposition on teachers and schools," she said.

"NZQA must go to government and admit the 10% target for this year cannot be met."

Gainsford said it was not surprising she had heard of some schools choosing to refuse to submit the extra standards and only send in the standards originally selected in the school's 2010 moderation plan.

"For NZQA to do this indicates they have no idea of the workload demands and stress moderating work places on teachers," she said. ■





## PPTA's guide to government-speak

With STCA negotiations in full swing and the Budget to decipher there is a very real danger of people drowning in a sea of jargon. To help prevent this the *PPTA News* team has come up with a quick layman's guide for a number of terms you may come across.

For example:

Re-prioritise = cut

Amend = cut

Simplify = cut

Austerity measures = cuts

"finding" money for something = cutting money from something else.

If you have any further examples of government-speak you would like us to decipher feel free to email [news@ppta.org.nz](mailto:news@ppta.org.nz).

## Mallard's 'cutting' edge blog

Becoming an opposition MP has certainly let the cattiness out of the bag for Labour education spokesperson Trevor Mallard – and nowhere is this more apparent than in his "Chopper Tolley" post on Labour's Red Alert blog. Mallard has posted a photo of Tolley's infamous helicopter ride on the blog as part of a caption contest. So far responses include:

"We've got a lot of evidence to shred boys, we need an industrial sized set of blades" and "Unfortunately, that rescue helicopter couldn't rescue the



education system from her."

Those of you who are interested in how the competition is going (for research purposes only of course) can find the Chopper Tolley blog at: <http://blog.labour.org.nz/index.php/2010/05/01/chopper-tolley-caption-contest/> ...

## The natural order of things

"Let's get this straight. Paying school teachers is said to be a very very bad thing to do as we emerge from the recession – but letting CEOs in the private sector make out like gangbusters is totally fine, even while they're preaching austerity to everyone else. That's just the natural order of things."

- *Columnist Gordon Campbell gets stuck into CEOs. His full column can be found here: <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/HL1005/S00051.htm>.*

# 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.



## Students march on parliament

Over 400 Wellington students marched on parliament on Thursday June 25 to protest to the minister of education about teachers salaries and conditions... All students participating in the march went as individuals, many of them under threat of severe penalty by their principals. One Wellington principal threatened to cane every one, even girls, who went on the march.

## An MP in the making

Catherine Delahunty, a 6th form student at Onslow College, spoke to the crowd about the reasons for the march, stating that all the students wanted was "good teaching and teachers, not baby-sitters...we have to

prepare for exams, and we want to be adequately prepared."

## The days before cellphones and email

Consider just such a simple thing as internal communications. Ever notice the hoo-ha that goes on if you want to find a particular teacher at a school. Much referring to timetables, then usually a long walk, accompanied by the school secretary, to some remote corner

of the school. Isn't it about time that someone came up with a simple but efficient form of internal communication? In these days of electronic wizardry, something of the sort doesn't seem beyond the bounds of possibility.

-*Excerpt from Chips off the shoulder*

## Same story, different decade

Too often the responsibility of teaching children is being given to people who are simply employed as "warm bodies" to stand in front of a class. This was stated on 11 May by Mr D.E Hood, of Cambridge, chairman of the Waikato region of NZPPTA...These "warm bodies" are untrained, unqualified and inexperienced, but are supported by trained experienced teachers who are already heavily committed to their own work. "To obtain quality teachers a realistic salary structure is required." ▪

Blog of the month

# Telling the truth about teacher salaries

by Rob

New Zealand teachers have one of the lowest starting salaries in the developed world.

The OECD's *Education at a Glance Report (2009)* shows that New Zealand teachers have one of the lowest starting salaries but work some of the longest hours.

- Of 29 countries in the survey New Zealand had the fourth worst starting salary.
- After 15 years' experience New Zealand secondary teachers have a cost of living/exchange rate-adjusted (PPP) salary which is 17% lower than the OECD average.

What we as a profession have to consider is what happens to teacher supply in the very near future when the economy recovers and new jobs and higher wages are again easily available outside teaching. A short-term advantage gained by the recession can quickly revert to a major teacher shortage.

We are asking for 4% to ensure that we have prepared for the inevitable counter-supply pressure which will (if not adequately anticipated) lead to another sudden and severe secondary teacher shortage as soon as next year.

In a competitive international market for secondary teachers we are also at risk of losing more teachers overseas if we do not maintain the relativity of our salaries internationally. We are already significantly behind other similar countries.

The government has carefully chosen its time period for commenting on teacher salaries to support what is a traditional policy of National governments to neglect secondary teacher salaries in the state sector until driven by a publicly unmanageable teacher supply crisis to a minimal response.

By using a low point as a starting reference (2000) and looking only at the "recovery" period underpinned by the recommendations of the Bazely report and the (often reluctant)

adherence to them by successive Labour governments, the current minister of finance is presenting a distorted and politically motivated picture of teacher salaries. And he's not even correct in the critical figure he uses. At this stage in 2000 the top of scale rate was \$50,300. This means that the increase over the last 10 years has been 38%, not the 50% he claims. We hope the finance minister is getting at least some other numbers right!

Some context might help to present a more accurate picture than the minister's carefully selected sound bite.

The attractiveness of secondary school teacher salaries depends on how the dollars compare to what could be earned outside teaching.

Most teachers are paid at the top of the scale rate. This is the "standard" rate for salary comparison and is the rate for the basic teaching job. It is what most graduates could expect to be paid if they come into teaching and what most teachers thinking of leaving for other better paying jobs are assessing their options against.

In 1980, under the Muldoon government, the top of scale salary for a secondary teacher was 1.73 times higher than the average wage. In 1985 this rose to 1.93 times the average wage under the Lange government.

During the 1990s, a succession of national governments (in which English was a member) cut secondary teacher numbers (1991/2 and 1994/5) and allowed the secondary teacher salary rate to fall to a low of 1.32 times the average wage, creating the damaging teacher shortage in the mid-90s. They were forced into a temporary salary boost in 1996, lifting the TBS to 1.43 times the average wage, still significantly below the comparative rate in the Muldoon years. From then they allowed the relative rate to steadily fall again.

When Labour took control of the front benches in 1999 it was faced with ongoing and systemic teacher supply problems. A pitiful pay offer in 2001 completely misread the



teacher supply situation and led to widespread industrial action when schools found themselves unable to attract or retain staff at that pay rate. An independent panel chaired by Dame Margaret Bazely was convened to look at the evidence provided by both sides in the dispute and recommended a staged 13% increase in the rate.

The subsequent Ministerial Task-force on Secondary Teacher Pay and Remuneration (2003) – also chaired by Dame Margaret – recognised the teacher supply problems continued and recommended (amongst other things in a 10-year plan to improve the attractiveness of teaching as a profession) that an objective salary mechanism should be applied to prevent teacher salaries from again falling behind and limiting the need to take industrial action to keep salaries current.

*Abridged - Full version at The Pigeonhole. Details below.*



**Have a burning education issue you'd like to blog?**

Like to see what is on teachers' minds? Check out PPTA's blog – The Pigeonhole <http://www.ppta.org.nz/index.php/ppta-blog>.

Send all blog ideas or content to [akirtlan@ppta.org.nz](mailto:akirtlan@ppta.org.nz).

## Out in the field

**Consultation and communication: elements of good faith**

Information and advice from PPTA's intrepid field officers.

**T**eachers have the right to be consulted about their conditions of work and proposed changes which may have an impact on their job. The Employment Relations Act 2000 (ERA) contains important provisions to ensure genuine consultation is carried out. PPTA's collective agreement provisions are also helpful in requiring consultation about specific areas.

The object of the ERA is "to build productive employment relationships through the promotion of good faith".

Communication and consultation are key components of good faith relationships. Parties to an employment relationship must be "active and constructive in establishing and maintaining a productive employment relationship" in which they are "responsive and communicative" (s. 4(1A)(b)).

Parties to the employment relationship include "an employer and an employee" (s 4(2)(a)) and "a union and an employer" (s. 4(2)(b)). In schools,

the "union", in the case of PPTA, includes the school's PPTA branch and authorised union officials.

Among other things, the duty of good faith applies to any matter arising in relation to a collective agreement and to consultation between an employer and employees.

The STCA and ASTCA specify that the teaching staff must be consulted about the allocation of units, MMAs, (middle management allowances) the timetabling policy (non-contact time, class size) and surplus staffing.

For consultation to be genuine, teachers are entitled to have all relevant information about the matter under discussion. For instance, in the case of units or MMAs, relevant information includes the number of units/MMAs allocated to the school, who holds them, whether they are permanent or fixed-term and what they are for. If such information is not provided on request you may obtain it under the Official Information Act.

In addition, genuine consultation

requires adequate time and the opportunity to express views.

A failure to comply with the duty of good faith, other provisions of the ERA or collective agreement provisions can result in a penalty, as can inciting, instigating, aiding or abetting any breach of the employment agreement (s 134).

It is useful to have consultation about the consultation process itself, as well as to develop a communication and consultation policy which can be used in building good employment relationships. Many branches have now set up regular meetings between branch office holders and school management for each party to raise and discuss issues. Your branch can negotiate a process and policy that suits your school environment.

Contact your field officer for assistance if consultation is not taking place in your school, or if you would like more advice about consultation policies and processes. ■

To view the ERA, Google the keywords: NZ legislation acts ERA.





*E hara taku toa i te toa takitahi,  
engari he toa takitini*

# 16th NZ PPTA National Māori Teachers' Conference 2010

Sunday 4 July - Tuesday 6 July

*Sudima Lake Rotorua Hotel*

*Pōhiri 2pm, Sunday 4 July*

Transformation, Liberation and Celebration  
Consolidating Māori Leadership  
Reclaiming Collective Space and Shared Conversations

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