

FAQs on Kāhui Ako Disestablishment

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If you have other questions about your specific circumstances, contact your local PPTA Field Officer

About Kāhui Ako

What are Kāhui Ako?

Kāhui Ako are also known as Communities of Schools or Communities of Learning. They were an initiative of then Education Minister Hekia Parata.

A Kāhui Ako is a group of schools approved to receive resourcing under the Investing in Educational Success (IES) initiative announced in 2014.

Funding currently covers some administrative costs for the Kāhui Ako schools and three associated roles in each Kāhui Ako: The Community of School Leadership role, the Across Community of Schools Teacher (ACT) and the Within School Teachers (WST). Schools can also issue Kāhui Ako responsibility time and salary allowances for teachers who are not in those roles but are undertaking work associated with their Kāhui Ako.

There are 220 established Kāhui Ako around New Zealand.

The Ministry of Education describes them thus:

Kāhui Ako, or Communities of Learning, bring together education and training providers with the aim of helping students to achieve their full potential.

Each Kāhui Ako sets shared goals, or achievement challenges, based on the needs of its children and young people. The Kāhui Ako works with students, their parents, whānau, iwi and communities to achieve those goals across the learner pathway.

Kāhui Ako include early learning services, schools, kura, and post-secondary education providers.

State, state-integrated, schools and kura that are members of Kāhui Ako receive ongoing operational funding and staffing support. Private schools and early learning services can be unfunded members.

About 80% of schools are part of a Kāhui Ako, along with early childhood centres and some tertiary providers.

Why does PPTA Te Wehengarua support them?

The Communities of Schools/ Kāhui Ako model was developed based on sound research into the benefits of cooperative models.

A majority of members have endorsed the Kāhui Ako model since their creation in 2014.

They provide:

- alternative classroom-based career pathways for members,
- resourced collaboration between schools and within schools based around a focus on student outcomes and shared achievement goals,
- they support effective pedagogical change in schools and a mechanism for quick transmission of good teaching and learning methodology.

Most Kāhui Ako work effectively and can point to positive outcomes for their ākonga.

See for example [Transforming Education - The impact of 110 Kāhui Ako](#)

What are the reasons for and against keeping Kāhui Ako?

For:

They provide:

- alternative classroom-based career pathways for members,
- resourced collaboration between schools and within schools based around a focus on student outcomes and shared achievement goals,
- they support effective pedagogical change in schools and a mechanism for quick transmission of good teaching and learning methodology.
- support the aspirations of classroom teachers to be more effective and to have a pathway to pedagogical leadership.
- allow the growth and development in the school setting of education theory and its associated practices.
- allow the exercise of personal professionalism, free from government direction.

Most Kāhui Ako work effectively and can point to positive outcomes locally for their ākonga. See for example [Transforming Education - The impact of 110 Kāhui Ako](#)

The Kāhui Ako roles support the professional development of other kaiako and retain many secondary teachers who otherwise may have left the profession.

Against:

- Not all Kāhui Ako are effective – they require the active cooperation and support of the school leadership, particularly of the secondary school leadership as the bulk of the resources for a Kāhui Ako will lie with the secondary school.
- Not all schools can now be in a Kāhui Ako. Funding restrictions put in place after the creation of Kāhui Ako mean new ones can't be created. Originally intended to be 250 Kāhui Ako, the number is now limited to 220. About 80% of schools are in Kāhui Ako.
- Some school leaders would like to use the funding (about \$129.6M per year, roughly half of this to secondary schools in Kāhui Ako) for their own purposes or priorities.
- The Ministry scrapped its evaluation programme early in the life of Kāhui Ako so there is no peer reviewed, independent body of systematically collected data on their outcomes nationally. The government uses the absence of evidence of outcome to justify the disestablishment.
- The Minister believes this will increase the numbers available for day relief.

About the disestablishing of the Kāhui Ako

Why did the Government disestablish them?

Essentially to free up existing money to fund current government policy initiatives.

How much does this save the government?

Only about \$31.5M for the 2025-26 year, as the costs of redundancy and the one year's salary protection relating to the disestablishment of the roles, and the removal of the additional staffing associated with them will have to be paid for. Once those have worked through (from 2027) it saves about \$129.6M per year.

What will they spend the money on instead?

The Treasury commentary indicates that Kāhui Ako funding will be used to pay for other government's education policies:

- learning support coordinators for schools with Year 1-8 students,
- increased funding for the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS),
- expanding Te Kahu Tōi, the Intensive Wraparound Service

- increasing Teacher Aide support for the Early Intervention service in primary schools
- updating the maths and pāngarau curricula for Years 0 to 8 students
- tutoring-based intervention for Year 7-8 students below their ideal curriculum level for maths and pāngarau
- design, creation, distribution and maintenance of a library of science and pūtaiao kits for schools and kura teaching Years 0-8
- increased provision for structured literacy for years 1-8
- completing the Curriculum Refresh for Y1-10.

This is a significant transfer of funding from secondary schools to primary initiatives. PPTA Te Wehengarua does not oppose the resources for these primary initiatives, but believes it should be new money, not funded from the disestablishment of Kāhui Ako and at the cost of secondary teacher salary and jobs.

Was this agreed to by PPTA Te Wehengarua?

PPTA Te Wehengarua was not consulted about these changes – no sector groups were.

PPTA Te Wehengarua opposes the disestablishment of the Kāhui Ako.

PPTA Te Wehengarua does not oppose the resources for the primary initiatives, but believes it should be new money, not funded from the disestablishment of Kāhui Ako and at the cost of secondary teacher salary and jobs or the gains made by Kāhui Ako.

What is PPTA Te Wehengarua doing about this?

Our immediate steps are to:

- protest the disestablishment of the Kāhui Ako and support the Kāhui Ako Association.
- Challenge the evidence-free decision to disestablish them.
- investigate the potential for a legal challenge over the failure to consult over the removal of jobs and allowances.
- survey teacher members and principals to identify the issues associated with the disestablishment of the Kāhui Ako and the associated resourcing.

How many people are affected?

There are approximately 600FTE of staffing across the Kāhui Ako schools. About half is in secondary and area schools. The number of people affected is much higher as the full-time equivalent hours provide time release of between 1 and 10 hours per person.

Most directly affected are some 2000 members in secondary and area schools who will lose salary and time allowances associated with the roles.

Other teachers will lose hours or employment as those in Kāhui Ako roles return to their full teaching roles. As these roles are integrated into school timetables it is not yet possible to put a figure on how many will be affected. A further complication will be differences in circumstances in each school. A school with a rising roll may absorb the reduced Kāhui Ako staffing and no jobs may be lost or reduced – but sustaining them in a rising roll would mean impacts like increased average class sizes and/or the reduction in curriculum offerings.

All teachers in a Kāhui Ako school will lose access to the professional development support and mentoring offered by the Kāhui Ako roles.

If a school loses staff who are in Kāhui Ako and who resign from teaching because of the reduction in pay and the loss of their Kāhui Ako duties, there will be difficulties for some schools in replacing them in a time of significant secondary teacher shortages. This will put pressure on other school staff.

What happens to my Kāhui Ako?

The Minister will issue a notice essentially saying the Kāhui Ako no longer exists.

References to Kāhui Ako will be removed from the legislation.

The resources to the schools in the Kāhui Ako will cease from the start of the 2026 school year.

When do the roles go?

At the end of the 2025 school year – 27 January 2026.

How will schools keep doing the Kāhui Ako work?

Many schools will want to continue the work of the Kāhui Ako, but they will have to find the staffing time and the funding for allowances and operation costs from their own operations grant and staffing entitlement.

How will the school sort out the changes to timetables?

In term 4 the school will start to plan its timetable for next year.

It will look at the staffing it has available (ministry-funded staffing and board-funded staffing) and allocate that to meet the needs it has for management, the identified curriculum needs of the students, its pastoral care time allocations etc. This is the same process it follows each year.

This year it will plan on the basis that the Kāhui Ako additional staffing will not be available to it, and that the Kāhui Ako teachers will not have the release time and will return to their normal teaching duties.

If it now has too many teachers in permanent positions for next year it will have to go through the surplus staffing processes of the collective agreement to identify which positions are going to be disestablished.

I'm not in a Kāhui Ako. Why should I care?

Most teachers over their career would be likely to be employed in a school that is in a Kāhui Ako. Almost all teachers then will lose the opportunity to be employed in a Kāhui Ako role in future, even those not currently in one.

Several thousands of your colleagues will have pay and conditions taken away from them without consultation or evidence-based justification. This is poor practice which, if applied to other jobs, salary units, staffing entitlements, roles and resourcing, could impact on other teachers in the future.

With the loss of salary and the alternative career pathway there is a potential for the loss from the secondary sector of hundreds of highly trained and experienced teachers with skills in mentoring and adult professional development that will add to the current secondary teacher supply problem, which impacts on all schools and will impact on students and teachers too.

The Kāhui Ako were nurseries for innovative teaching and learning practices and for practices which changed teaching and learning behaviour in ways that improved outcomes. Those innovations were able to percolate between schools. The opportunity for innovation across the sector has been eroded with the loss of the Kāhui Ako.

Almost all of the money saved by the government through this will go to primary schools. As a matter of basic principle PPTA Te Wehengarua supports that the needs of one sector in education should not be met by cutting resourcing to another sector.

Rather than cutting Kāhui Ako entirely, the government should have been looking to strengthen the system, provide access for all schools into a Kāhui Ako and undertake proper evaluation and dissemination of initiatives and innovations arising from within the communities.

General impacts on teachers and school leaders

What happens to my Kāhui Ako job?

Your Kāhui Ako role will continue until the 27 January 2026 and then the school will no longer get resourcing for the role. It will cease.

You will get salary protection for up to a year if you are in a permanent or long-term fixed term role that went into 2026.

Your time allowance for the role ends at the end of the 2025 school year.

Your duties in the role end at the end of the 2025 school year.

You return to the duties you had before you took the Kāhui Ako role.

I am in a Kāhui Ako role – will I lose my job?

Not as a direct consequence of the change. In almost every case you will just return fully to the role you had before you took on the Kāhui Ako role.

Indirectly it is possible, but unlikely, that the school may be forced to reorganise its staffing because of the loss of the additional time it received for the Kāhui Ako roles. This is not a significant risk for those in the roles, it is more of a risk for other staff members, particularly those who are backfilling the additional non-teaching time of the roles.

Do I have to keep doing the Kāhui Ako work?

No. Once the role is disestablished the associated duties end.

This applies whether you are receiving salary protection or not.

Some schools may decide to continue to resource the duties for some of the roles from their own funds and entitlement staffing. If that happens then they would advertise the roles internally and there would have to be (written) agreement on what the duties were, what the salary and time allowances would be and what the role would be called.

Do I have to go back to my previous teaching load/previous duties?

Yes, unless there is agreement between you and the employer to do otherwise.

You may not go back to teaching exactly the same classes as before because of normal timetable changes that happen from year to year, but you will go back to your normal teaching load.

Can I volunteer for redundancy if I lose my Kāhui Ako role?

Not just because your Kāhui Ako role is disestablished.

However, if the school has to undergo a CAPNA (i.e. disestablish some general roles because it now has less staffing resources for 2026 than it has teachers who are in permanent positions) then it may call for volunteers and you would be free to do so, though the board retains the right to determine which offers it accepts.

You should talk to your PPTA field officer before making a decision to volunteer for redundancy.

Could the school keep my role going?

Some schools may decide to continue to resource the duties for some of the roles from their own funds and entitlement staffing. If that happens then they would advertise the roles internally and there would have to be (written) agreement on what the duties were, what the salary and time allowances would be and what the role would be called.

A school with a rising roll or with local funding may absorb the reduced Kāhui Ako staffing and keep some roles going, but sustaining them in other circumstances would mean impacts like increased average class sizes and/or the reduction in curriculum offerings, reducing non-contact time of other teachers etc.

Specific impacts on teachers and school leaders

I am a principal in a Kāhui Ako leadership role, how does this affect me?

You will return full time to your principal role.

The time allowances for the Kāhui Ako leadership role will end on 27 January 2026.

You are entitled to three months' notice of the disestablishment of the role and payment for the role during that time.

I am not a principal, but I am in a Kāhui Ako leadership role, how does this affect me?

You will return full time to your main (non-Kāhui Ako) role.

The time allowances for the Kāhui Ako leadership role will end on 27 January 2026.

You are entitled to up to 12 months' salary protection from the start of the 2026 school year, i.e. you get the Kāhui Ako payment for any of the 2026 school year that you would have been in the leadership role.

I have a permanent Kāhui Ako role – what happens to my payment for the role?

A teacher will get paid the Kāhui Ako salary allowance you have for another 12 months after the role is disestablished on 28 January 2026, unless you go (back) to a job that pays more than the allowance.

A principal in the lead role will have three months' notice of the disestablishment and be paid their leadership allowance for that period.

How many roles/allowances should be permanent?

If a secondary school has 3 people or more in the Within School Teacher roles or receiving the Kāhui Ako responsibility allowances, then at least 60% must be permanent.

If an area/composite school has 3 or more teachers who teach 7-13 in the Within School Teacher roles or receiving the Kāhui Ako responsibility allowances, then at least 60% of those teachers must be permanent WST or receiving equivalent permanent responsibility allowances.

If you think your fixed term Within School Teachers role/Kāhui Ako responsibility allowance should be permanent, contact your field officer.

I have a fixed term Kāhui Ako role – what happens to my payment for the role?

You get paid the Kāhui Ako salary allowance you have for the time you would have been doing the Kāhui Ako duties in 2026, so up to 12 months after the role is disestablished on 28 January 2026, unless you go (back) to a job that pays more than the allowance.

If your role was going to end in the middle of 2026 you would get six months' salary protection.

If your role was going to finish at the of 2026 you would get the full 12 months' salary protection

If your fixed term role was to end before the start of the 2026 school year you continue to get paid for it until then, but you will have no entitlement to salary support after that as your payment was ending before the role is disestablished.

I am job sharing a Kāhui Ako role – what happens to me?

When the role is disestablished, you will be paid for your share of the associated salary for up to 12 months, provided that you were in a permanent job share or a fixed term job share that was not going to finish at the end of this school year.

You will return to your full non-Kāhui Ako duties.

What if I am employed to cover the release time for a Kāhui Ako teacher/lead?

You need to have a conversation with your principal about what is likely to happen.

If you are in a permanent position with some fixed term hours for the Kāhui Ako cover, the fixed term hours may be reduced next year.

If you are in a fixed term position and only covering the Kāhui Ako hours, then your position may not be renewed next year.

If you are employed permanently and some of your hours directly or indirectly are covering release time for Kāhui Ako roles then the school must continue to employ you for the same number of hours unless it goes through a formal process of reorganisation or surplus staffing and your position was identified as surplus.

Seek advice from your PPTA field officer if you are unsure.

I am not employed in a Kāhui Ako-related role - could this affect me?

If some of your hours fill in for classes that would otherwise be taught by the Kāhui Ako teachers (i.e. that are released by the time allowances) then you may be affected.

Some teachers will lose hours or employment as those in Kāhui Ako roles return to their full teaching roles.

A school with a rising roll may absorb the reduced Kāhui Ako staffing and no jobs may be lost or reduced – but if they seek to sustain some of them in a rising roll will mean impacts like increased average class sizes and/or the reduction in curriculum offerings.

All teachers in a Kāhui Ako school will lose access to the professional development support and mentoring offered by the Kāhui Ako roles.

If a school loses staff who are in Kāhui Ako and who resign from teaching because of the reduction in pay and the loss of their Kāhui Ako duties, there will be difficulties for some schools in replacing them in a time of significant secondary teacher shortages. This will put pressure on other school staff.