

It's just not enough:
Principals discuss the staffing of
secondary and composite schools

Case study research report
by Dr Judie Alison for
Secondary Principals' Council of Aotearoa
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Glossary of terms

ASTCA	Area Schools Teachers' Collective Agreement
BoT	Board of Trustees
CoL	Community of Learning. The original name for what is now also known as Kāhui Ako, communities of schools working together on shared goals related to student learning.
FTTE	Full-time teacher equivalent. This is expressed in decimal points, e.g. a full-time teacher is 1.0.
HoD	Head of Department
Kāhui Ako	Community of Learning
LSC	Learning Support Coordinator
MAC	Maximum Average Class size per full-time teacher, as required by the STCA
NCEA	National Certificate of Educational Achievement, New Zealand's qualification system for secondary school students
NELPs	National Education Learning Priorities
NZEI	New Zealand Education Institute: Te Riu Roa, the union representing primary, early childhood and area school teachers and support staff in schools
ORS	Ongoing Resourcing Scheme for students with special needs, under which students are categorised as having High or Very High needs
PPTA	New Zealand Post Primary Teachers' Association: Te Wehengarua, the union representing secondary and area school teachers and principals
SAC	Special Assessment Conditions, support for students who have sensory, physical, medical or learning difficulties doing NCEA qualifications
SENCO	Special Education Needs Coordinator
SLT	Senior Leadership Team – the principal, associate principal, deputy principals, and assistant principals.
SPC	Secondary Principals' Council of Aotearoa, the council representing principals who are members of PPTA
STCA	Secondary Teachers' Collective Agreement
TA	Teacher aides

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I would also like to thank Rob Willetts, the staffing guru at PPTA National Office, for his endless patience in answering my questions, finding resources and information for me to supply to principals in response to questions they asked, and generally supporting me in this project.

Executive Summary

The research

The research reported here was commissioned by SPC, The Secondary Principals' Council of Aotearoa, as part of collecting a body of evidence to present to a Staffing Summit in Wellington, 15-16 July 2021.

A representative sample of ten schools was constructed from a list of schools that had volunteered to be part of the study. Face to face interviews were conducted with the principals of secondary and composite schools that covered a wide range of geographical areas, school types, size and socio-economic status of schools. This fieldwork was conducted in June and July 2021.

The effects of subject specialism

Secondary schooling is distinguished from primary schooling by the extent of subject specialisation offered to students. Whether these subjects are taught in isolation by a single teacher or, as in some highly innovative schools, taught alongside or merged with another subject, the teachers of these subjects must ensure that their students are able to achieve at the levels necessary to be able to access the pathways they wish to follow beyond school.

The degree of specialism, and the extent of student choice, increases with each level of secondary schooling. As an example, by Year 13 the junior level subject Science splits into five separate subjects: Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Earth and Space Science, and Agricultural and Horticultural Science, and students wishing to pursue Science-related careers will choose, from those of the five that the school is able to offer, one or more science at that level.

It is this subject specialist character of secondary schools that makes staffing them so much more complex than staffing a primary school with students remaining with one teacher for all or most of the day in a single cohort-based group.

Developing a timetable to meet the pathway needs of every student in a secondary school is not a task for the faint-hearted, and it is made much harder when the overall quantum of teachers is simply not enough.

Pastoral care and guidance counselling

Secondary schools are required to make guidance counselling available to their students, and this is generally done by employing one or more qualified (usually at Masters level) school guidance counsellor. In addition, schools need to establish comprehensive pastoral care systems, usually consisting of a Deputy Principal with responsibility for pastoral care, overseeing a group of deans, who in turn oversee a group of form/whanau/tutor teachers who would most often follow the students in their form class through the year levels of the school, either as a “vertical group” (Years 7 or 9 to 13 in a single group) or a “horizontal group” (a single year level in a

group). This form teacher role is additional to teachers' subject specialist teaching roles.

Secondary schools receive an allocation of staffing called 'base guidance' that is calculated on their Year 9 to 15 roll. (But there is no allocation for students in Years 7 and 8 who may be in a secondary school, e.g. a Year 7-15 school, an area school, or a Kura Kaupapa Māori.) Principals have been calling for many years for improvements to this staffing allocation, and the needs have accelerated over that time.

This was echoed by principals in the case study schools. Some of the reasons why, for them, this need is becoming more urgent included Covid-19 and its effects on students and their families, a rapidly increasing incidence of anxiety among young people, and the negative aspects of social media.

The case study schools were having to draw staffing from other areas to adequately provide for their pastoral care and guidance needs, in particular from the staffing provided for curriculum. This has a cost, in terms of less curriculum breadth, students being taught in multi-level classes, and larger class sizes than are optimal for student learning. The principals described the difficult compromises they had to make in order to meet their students' needs in this area.

Leadership in secondary schools

The complex and subject specialist nature of secondary schools means that there need to be more tiers of leadership. Not only does a secondary school have a principal and a number of deputy principals who oversee curriculum issues, pastoral care and guidance systems, staff wellbeing, timetabling, property matters and more, but it must also provide for curriculum leadership in all the specialist subjects it offers.

The principals in the case study schools talked about the complexity of their role, and how this was shared out among their team of associate, deputy and/or assistant principals. In addition, they expressed concern that the time available for middle leaders to manage their subject specialist areas was insufficient for the wide range of tasks they needed to do. These included curriculum development and innovation, managing change in NCEA requirements, quality assurance of NCEA assessments, leading the professional learning of their staff, managing resources, and more. One principal admitted that being a Head of English at a previous time in his career had been "the longest hours [he] ever did".

Staffing the curriculum

It is a big challenge, even in smaller secondary schools, to put teachers with the right level of subject knowledge in front of classes that are big enough to be viable to staff, but not so big that students and teachers suffer. Everything that leads a school to draw on its curriculum staffing for other purposes, such as pastoral care and guidance, makes this task even harder.

In the case study schools, there was mention of having to resort to multi-level classes (where up to four different levels of a subject are being taught at the same time), split classes (where two teachers share the lessons between them across a week, perhaps one teaching three lessons and a different teacher the fourth), over-large classes (including a few over 30), and simply not being able to offer a subject because there was not enough staffing available.

It has been claimed by some advocates that e-learning is a 'silver bullet' to ensure that students can access the full breadth of the curriculum. The principals in this study who had experience of this were generally not convinced. One principal had analysed the NCEA course endorsements achieved by his students and found that the vast majority of these came from classes where they were face-to-face with a teacher. They were far less successful in their e-learning classes. On the other hand, the principal of the Kura Kaupapa Māori was disappointed that e-learning offerings seemed to have declined in recent years, as access to subject specialist teachers who are fluent in Te Reo Māori is a constant challenge for Kura.

Ministry of Education discourses encourage and celebrate curriculum innovation, and all new school buildings are required to be flexible in ways that enable such innovation. However, it should not be assumed that innovative curriculum requires fewer teachers; the case study schools engaged in innovation had found that this required the same or more staffing.

Staffing for special needs

Most of the case study schools had students who had been classified as having High or Very High Ongoing Resourcing needs, which meant that some staffing came with them as long as they remained on the roll.

However, it was the students who missed out on this ORS staffing that these schools found harder to cater for, and principals said they had many students in this category. One principal listed some of the complex needs that might be evident in this group of students: mental health issues, autism spectrum disorders, ADHD, oppositional defiance, dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, and more. Another principal talked extensively about the complex family and whanau issues her students faced. A Christchurch principal talked about trauma-affected students, many of whom would have been at a very vulnerable age during the 2010-2011 earthquakes, and affected by the ongoing stresses of housing remediation, financial pressures, and more.

Funding staff above entitlement

As a consequence of secondary schools receiving insufficient staffing from the state, many of them resort to finding other ways to fund extra teachers.

One option that has been available to some schools but not others, hence creating significant inequities, is the recruiting of international, or foreign fee-paying students (FFPs). Some of the case study schools, especially those in major urban areas, had had significant numbers of FFPs, one school reaching 122 students prior to Covid-

19. However, Covid-19 and consequent border closures have had a disastrous effect on this source of income, and this seems unlikely to change in the next year or two. This means that at the end of this year, some of these principals may be having to make cut-backs in their staffing and fund redundancies for staff hired out of FFP funds.

Some schools, for various reasons, have accumulated funds and are able to use these to fund additional staff for a limited time at least. Most, however, don't have such funding sources.

Many of the case study schools were involved with secondary-tertiary programmes which meant that some of their students were taken out of the entitlement staffing calculations and funded through the Operations Grant. This did not seem to be a major problem for schools, but it can lead to quite a large pool of teachers being counted as 'additional staffing' rather than 'entitlement staffing'.

The demands of collaboration

It feels to principals that the demands on them to collaborate with others have increased in recent years, and one described this area as taking "a helluva lot of time". The two areas of collaboration that principals talked about most were collaboration with whānau and with their local Māori community more widely, and collaboration with other schools, usually through Kāhui Ako or Communities of Learning.

Collaboration with Māori through working with Rūnanga or other Iwi organisations and individuals puts pressure, not only on the school, but on the Māori end of the partnership. Some principals talked about their local Rūnanga being small and having few Kaumātua or Kuia to advise them. Principals talked about learning how to ensure that their relationships with Māori organisations were true partnerships rather than the school 'using' local Māori in order to be able to tick off the box for collaboration.

While most case study schools were in Kāhui Ako, this initiative of the previous National government could not be said to have received resounding applause from the case study principals. In some cases, it was working well and the school was benefiting; the area school's collaboration with a group of other area schools was one example of this. In other cases, enthusiasm was more muted. Secondary schools, under the previous government, were under pressure to form a Kāhui Ako that matched the concept of "a pipeline", a progression of students from a given set of primary and intermediate schools into a particular secondary school. But many of these schools have found that this "pipeline" is notional only, and that only a minority of students from other schools in the Kāhui Ako end up on their rolls. Some principals could see other benefits from working with their primary colleagues, however.

The impacts on teacher supply of insufficient staffing

Having too few teachers in a school means those that are there are having to work harder to meet the needs of all of the students. Unprompted, four of the ten principals talked about how this pressure was leading to teachers seeking to move from full-time to part-time positions, in order to be able to improve their work-life balance. This is a grave concern when a steady supply of qualified and suitable teachers cannot be guaranteed.

Roll growth

A number of the case study schools were facing roll growth over the next few years as a result of housing developments. Some principals talked about the pressures of roll growth on their ability to maintain their school cultures and dynamics. At the same time, they noted that there were some benefits to having a larger roll.

Introduction

Background

The Secondary Principals' Council of Aotearoa commissioned this case study research as part of gathering information to present to a Staffing Summit in July 2021.

This Summit focused on staffing needs in secondary education by considering a range of evidence. This included presentations by keynote speakers, results from a survey of principals, and this case study research.

The purpose of this research was to provide a qualitative analysis of the gaps between resourcing and need in the secondary sector, by interviewing principals in a range of schools.

Definition of secondary schooling

For the purposes of this research, secondary schooling is defined to cover students in year levels 9 to 15,¹ or, in secondary or composite schools with year 7 and 8 students, inclusive of those students.

This sounds complicated, and it is. In some urban areas, intermediate schools have been closed as a result of Ministry-mandated reorganisations, and the Year 7 and 8 students placed in secondary schools. In some rural areas, there are longstanding Year 7 to 15 schools where an intermediate school would not be viable but access to some subject specialist teaching was favoured by the community. (Intermediate schools are a kind of halfway house between primary schooling, where the student generally spends the whole day in one classroom with the same generalist teacher, and secondary schooling, where the student moves between subject specialist teachers for much of the day. Most intermediate schools have some subject specialist teachers, e.g. for Technology, Arts, or Physical Education.)

'Composite schools' have students at both secondary (year 9 – 15) and primary (year 1 – 8) level. These include:

- Area schools, which include all year levels, from year 1 to 15 (established under Section 190 of the Education and Training Act 2020 or Section 146 of the Education Act 1989) – one of these was included in the research;
- Kura Kaupapa Māori, which are designated special character schools (established under Section 201 of the Education and Training Act 2020 or Section 155 of the Education Act 1989) – one of these was included in the research.

In this report, for brevity, I have generally used the term 'secondary school' to include both secondary and composite schools, because the research was mainly concerned

¹ While most students leave school after Year 13, schools can have Year 14 and 15 students, so schools are described as Years 1 to 15, 9 to 15, etc.

with staffing for secondary specialist provision, including in the two composite schools.

Staffing for secondary education

The way that a school generates the staffing it receives from the Ministry of Education for a given year has become increasingly mystifying to many principals.

The first school I visited had sent me a Confirmed Staffing Entitlement notice from the Ministry of Education that ran to 8 pages, and illustrated most of the components of staffing.

As with all secondary schools, there are three major components to the school's staffing:

- Curriculum (including Maori medium staffing) which is based on the number of students at each year level. (Students taught in Te Reo Māori as the language of instruction generate a higher level of staffing.) This staffing is intended to cover the STCA entitlements for non-contact time, as well as curriculum contact. For this school, this was 55.4 FTTE.
- Base guidance, which varies depending on the students at Years 9 to 15 enrolled in the school – for this school it was 2.7 FTTE.
- Management, which is a combination of a base management allowance plus roll-related allowance - for this school it was 6.1 FTTE.²

In addition, there are a number of other packages of staffing that a school might receive. The ones identified on this first school's notice were:

- The school hosts an RTLB cluster of 42 RTLBs, plus a manager, generating 43 FTTE.
- The school has 41 ORS funded students with High and Very High needs, plus associated teaching, management and salary units, plus teacher aide staff.
- The school has five Blind and Low Vision and Ko Taku Reo (Deaf and Hearing Impaired) students, generating 0.35 FTTE.
- The school hosts a Teen Parent Unit, generating 3.5 FTTE.
- The school is part of a Kahui Ako (Community of Learning) consisting of ten schools, and has one Across Community teacher and nine Within School teachers, each generating either 0.4 FTTE or 0.08 FTTE staffing to cover their time working on Kahui Ako tasks.
- The school receives staffing for three beginning teachers (0.24 FTTE each) and three second year teachers (0.14 FTTE each).
- The school receives additional staffing of 1.1 FTTE for Instrumental and Vocal Tuition for its students.

² The intricacies of how this is calculated can be seen at <https://www.education.govt.nz/school/funding-and-financials/resourcing/school-staffing/entitlement-staffing/#guide>

- The school receives 0.16 FTTE for its Specialist Classroom Teacher, and 0.16 FTTE for a teacher who has a Study Support Grant which gives them relief from a small amount of teaching so that they can work on their study.

There are also sources of staffing that don't show on the notice, but contribute to the employment of further teachers using the Operations Grant:

- The school hosts Foreign Fee-Paying students, and has to hire teachers from the fees to meet their needs.
- The school runs Secondary-Tertiary programmes that meant about 30 Year 12 and 13 students were removed from staffing and funded for 0.8 FTTE because one day of the week they were at a tertiary institution. The school needs to employ teachers from this funding to cover shortfalls caused by these students being out of school for 1 day a week.

“It's just not enough” (principal)

And yet, despite all these bits and pieces of staffing that schools may or may not receive, the principals of the case study schools were unanimous that the staffing they receive from the Ministry of Education is simply not enough to do what the government, their communities and their students expect of them, and that they have to make really hard compromises just to get by with what they have. This report describes how these compromises play out, and the unmet needs that can leave principals struggling to sleep at night.³

The researcher

This case study research was conducted by Dr Judie Alison, a former secondary school teacher, middle leader, and PPTA activist who was an Advisory Officer at PPTA National Office from 2002 to 2018. In the latter capacity she focused largely on professional issues (curriculum, qualifications, professional learning, pastoral care, etc), but also contributed to a number of PPTA policy initiatives related to staffing. Her Doctoral research, which she completed in 2007, used New Zealand's transition to a standards-based school qualifications system, the NCEA, as a case study for the policy gaps that can develop between schools and policy-makers. Since 2018, she has worked as an independent researcher.

³ Appendix 1 provides an analysis of four of the case study schools' actual usage of staffing versus their allocation.

Methodology

The research process

The research was conducted during June and July 2021. Interviews were face to face, except for the Kura Kaupapa Māori interview where Zoom needed to be used.

All principals in the sample were asked to make themselves available for an interview of up to two hours. They were encouraged to include in the interview another senior leader with good knowledge of staffing, and/or the timetabler, and/or another relevant staff member. Others were present in four of the interviews, usually another senior leader. This means that where a school is quoted in this report, the voice is usually the principal's but not in every case. In one school the principal was in an acting capacity, but this has not been identified because it might risk the school's anonymity.

An interview schedule was supplied in advance to enable participants to give prior thought to the issues being canvassed. (The interview schedule is attached here as Appendix 2.)

Before the interview, principals were asked to supply their most recent Confirmed Staffing Entitlement notice from the Ministry of Education, and a completed spreadsheet showing their staffing usage. All principals supplied their Confirmed Staffing Entitlement notice. The spreadsheet was felt by some schools to be an excessive time requirement, and in those cases alternative information about staffing usage was supplied instead.

Selection of the case study schools

The Secondary Principals' Council called for expressions of interest for this research. 21 schools had volunteered by the time the sample needed to be drawn.

The researcher selected a sample of ten of these schools, using Ministry of Education information about decile, size, etc, and considering the feasibility of getting to the schools in the time available. This resulted in a sample that covered a wide range of schools, in terms of:

- Locality type, i.e. main urban, urban, provincial, or rural
- A range of regions (covering Auckland, Waikato, Hawke's Bay, Manawatu, Wellington, Canterbury, Otago and Southland)
- Socio-economic status of the school catchment (as evidenced by decile grouping)
- School size (from about 140 to 1800 students)
- School type, i.e. 7-15, 9-15, area school, Kura Kaupapa Māori, secondary school incorporating a Rumaki (Māori immersion unit), co-ed/single sex.

Interviews were recorded and detailed notes taken. Principals were promised that their schools would not be identified in presentations or in this report, without their

explicit consent. School information supplied has been securely stored by the researcher.

Linking the case studies

As the interviews progressed, the researcher identified themes that were emerging, and these were very similar to those identified as the focus for the principals' summit. These broad themes were:

- The complexity of staffing a secondary school
- Staffing for pastoral care and guidance counselling
- Staffing for leadership
- Staffing for curriculum
- Providing for students with special needs
- Funding staff above entitlement
- The demands of collaboration
- The impacts on teacher supply of insufficient staffing
- Roll growth.

This report is organised around these nine themes, with a Conclusions section that summarises the key findings.

Report style

It is a convention in research reports that when a participant is quoted, there is a subsequent comment by the researcher, especially at the end of a section. In this report I have chosen instead to let many of the quotes from principals stand without further explanation, on the grounds that they speak for themselves, and very eloquently. Further comment by me would simply appear banal.

Pseudonyms for schools

The participant schools were offered confidentiality, and as part of providing this, pseudonyms were chosen, in consultation with each school. Brief descriptions of then ten schools are below:

Pseudonym for school	Approximate roll size	Decile range	Locality	Other characteristics
Bridge College	200	1-3	Provincial	Co-ed, Year 9-15
City College	1800	8-10	Main urban	Co-ed, Year 9-15
Forest Area School	170	4-7	Rural	Co-ed, area school, Year 1-15
Kahuarau Girls' College	500	1-3	Main urban	Girls' school, Year 9-15
Kauri College	250	8-10	Rural	Co-ed, Year 7-15
Mapuna High	1200	4-7	Main urban	Co-ed, Year 7-15
Middleview High	1200	4-7	Urban	Co-ed, Year 9-15

Onekiritia College	700	8-10	Urban	Co-ed, Year 9-15
Pōhutukawa College	1400	8-10	Provincial	Co-ed, Year 9-15
TKKM Rimu	150	1-3	Provincial	Co-ed, Year 1-15, Maori immersion

Theme 1: Complexity of staffing a secondary school

Some of the principals interviewed were aware of the recent release of NZEI's report *Pūaotonga: Releasing the potential of every child*. They noted the list of issues raised with the NZEI panel as familiar to them as well, such as increased diversity of students, increased complexity of learning needs, expectations of more student-centred teaching, a broader and more complex curriculum, insufficient time to do the job, unmanageable workloads, and a sense that students are missing out because teachers can't do the whole job in the time available.⁴

On the other hand, these principals noted that there were many additional staffing complexities in secondary schools. Secondary schools are organised to provide subject specialisation opportunities for students in order to prepare them for a wide range of post-school pathways. Alongside that, many of them are moving into innovative ways of structuring the timetable to deliver a future-focused curriculum and to meet an increasingly wide diversity of needs as students move through their teenage years. Complexities in school structures, such as being, or becoming, a Year 7 to 15 school, or having a large Rumaki (Maori immersion unit) as a partner within the school, can also present challenges.

The Collective Agreement requirements in terms of Maximum Average Class Size and teacher non-contact time add a further layer of complexity.

Subject specialisation

One complexity is that teaching in a secondary school is organised around specialist subjects. One principal commented:

Every angle is telling us to offer different pathways for students and every time we expand the number of pathways, it expands the complexities of the timetable and it's not like in a primary school when you've got 120 students and you can put them in six classes of 20. But in a secondary school, we might have 32 that want to do Photography, and 20 that want to do something else, you're always going to have those unders and overs, so you can never just timetable on the basis of all the classes being 26 or 23 or whatever. (Middleview High)

For a Kura Kaupapa Māori, staffed as a composite school but with extra staffing for its Māori immersion level, provision of specialist subjects becomes even more complex. At TKKM Rimu, there are twice as many primary students as there are secondary students, and the principal saw herself as conducting "a juggling act" to provide adequately for the secondary students:

We're bottom heavy, so I'd be expecting to have the bulk of our teaching staff down the primary end, but then, we've also got to consider at the secondary level they're doing multiple subjects that require multiple teachers who are skilled in that field to be able to

⁴ Pūaotonga Independent Review Panel (2021), *Pūaotonga: Releasing the potential of every child* (2021), p.28, Wellington: NZEI Te Riu Roa.

deliver NCEA 1-3 adequately. So it's a really hard juggle to be able to do that out of the allocation that the Ministry give us... And it's even worse in immersion Māori because there's not enough fluent speakers and that's the requirement, they have to be fluent, or else what's the point in us providing a Kura Kaupapa Māori education if we're not finding a fundamental basic of being able to speak Māori... We have to provide immersion at the 100% level. (TKKM Rimu)

Innovative timetable structures

Half of the case study schools would be seen as engaging in quite radical innovation in order to provide a curriculum that is engaging for students and meets their diverse learning needs. This is covered in more detail under Theme 4 'Staffing for curriculum', but one example here, from Onekiritea College, demonstrates the complexity of staffing such innovation.⁵

At Onekiritea College, Year 9 and 10 students choose from a range of new modules every semester (2 terms), and these modules are combinations of subjects with two specialist teachers planning, teaching and assessing the module together, in the same space. Each of these teachers has to ensure that students can achieve the learning objectives for their individual subject, as well as attend to the meaningful combining of the two subjects, for example putting free-hand sketching (Art) alongside a study of botanical eco-systems (Science).

Year 9 and 10 entitlement staffing is at a ratio of 1 teacher to 23.5 students, so with two teachers for the group, the Ministry ratio would indicate 47 students in the group. However, the school sees that as too many to meet all the students' individual learning needs during the semester, so it tries to keep the groups in the 40-45 range, which the principal recognises as "sucking into our entitlement at a higher rate than we should".

On top of this complexity, the school also operates a form class system that is much more than the traditional daily or twice-daily 10-minute roll-checking session. The students spend about 3½ hours in their form class each week, and there is a separate curriculum provided for this. This time is counted as part of a teacher's teaching load. In order to make this time productive and ensure that every student's learning and pastoral care needs are met, the school keeps the form classes to 15-17 students, and this again is a significant drain on staffing.

Many schools keep junior classes quite large, up to 30 students, in order to free up staffing to provide curriculum breadth at the senior level. Onekiritea College does not do this, but still needs to provide some subjects at the senior level that have as few as 12 students, "because we believe our kids should have access to the full range of the curriculum".

⁵ Onekiritea College operates in a flexible learning space and would be described by the Ministry of Education as offering an innovative learning environment.

And to add a further layer of complexity, the school also has all of its students working on integrated projects that are nearly year-long, for which they are in multi-level groups for most of one day a week:

We do a term's practice first, then to be a project, you have to partner up with someone in the outside world, solve a problem for them, and publicly exhibit the work. So we've got kids trying to cure cancer, trying to find out whether the parallel universe expands at the same rate as this universe, we've got kids trying to make fudge. This year, because of the Covid experience, for Year 9 and 10 we've partnered up with a business council and so that's the partner for them as we look at entrepreneurship. (Onekiritia College)

Not surprisingly, the school is funding about 6 teachers above entitlement staffing. Much of the income for this has, in the past, come from foreign fee-paying students, but this source has largely dried up in the last two years.

The principal admits that innovation on this scale is very demanding on teachers, but the success of it for students means everyone wants to keep doing it:

I've tried a few times to change the model slightly to address [teachers'] workload and they've pushed back because they know it's effective for kids. And one thing I've noticed is that the actual act of teaching in the space is quite gentle in our school, it's the below the waterline duck paddling furiously that's happening. (Onekiritia College)

The effects of being a Year 7-15 secondary school

Mapuna High has the complexity of having changed from a Year 9-15 school to a Year 7 – 15 school in recent years. While the principal said she loved having the Year 7 to 8 students, it took the Ministry of Education about six years to build the necessary extra rooms required. Now that the building is there, the school has changed from a standard secondary structure of Years 9 to 13, to having a middle school (Years 7 to 10) and a senior school (Years 11 to 15). The school has grown significantly as a result, and is still feeling the growing pains of this in such problems as insufficient gymnasium space and sports fields that have been built over and not replaced as yet.

Taking on Year 7 and 8 students from closed intermediate schools means the school has become the Technology centre for six nearby primary schools as well as for its own Year 7 and 8 students, adding a further layer of complexity to its staffing.

Also, because of this change of structure, the school now has two different zones delineated, one for entry to Year 7 and 8, and the other, partly overlapping, zone for entry to Year 9 up. The principal explained:

The Ministry won't include in our zone local Year 1-8 schools, so their students can't come to us for a middle school experience, but they can come at Year 9. (Mapuna High)

Kauri College, on the other hand, has been a Year 7 – 15 school for much longer, and has found ways to make the staffing work, partly because it's a smaller school

than Mapuna High and therefore gets a better staffing ratio that helps to ensure a degree of curriculum breadth:

We get a better staffing ratio than a bigger school because we're 250 students, then we make sure that the younger year levels are a reasonable size. They're not large, but at Year 7 and 8 we have conjoint classes, so instead of having two Year 7 and two Year 8 classes, we have three Year 7 and 8 combined classes. That makes classes of about 26, 27. That effectively releases six senior courses we can run further up. You just have to differentiate more in the room, but in a small school you have to anyway. Then we split them into two classes at Year 9 and two at Year 10, so they're quite small classes. (Kauri College)

Having a school within a school

City College is unique in that it has its own Board of Trustees constitution, signed off by the Minister of Education. This is because the school has a large Rumaki [Maori Immersion Unit] that operates as a school within a school. The Rumaki has over 200 students in Years 9 to 11. The school has worked to operate as a partnership, and the Board constitution tries to reflect that:

Because of the co-governance constitution, we have a big board, 15 people. We have me as principal and the Tumuaki [principal of the Rumaki], we have two student reps, two staff reps, parent reps from both the main school and the Rumaki. The constitution was gazetted [two years ago], it's the only one in the country. It has been a long journey to get to it, two years, and there are still issues to work out, and with the Ministry. (City College)

Managing the Maximum Average Class size and maximum contact hours

Over the last twenty years or so, PPTA has negotiated two provisions to help keep teachers' workloads manageable. These are:

- Guaranteed non-contact hours – five per week for a teacher without salary units, and in addition one hour for each permanent salary unit held up to a maximum of three (with a requirement to endeavour to provide an additional hour for each additional permanent unit);
- A Maximum Average Class size of 26 students for each teacher.⁶ If this cannot be met, some kind of compensatory mechanism is called for.

There was no indication that any of the case study principals saw these provisions as unwarranted, in fact some of them thought they were not enough to allow their teachers to do all that they needed to do. The matter came up instead as an indication of the complexity of developing a timetable that both meets the Collective Agreement requirements and meets the needs of students.

At Pōhutukawa College, the Board has committed to minimising the number of shared classes (where two teachers split the periods for the class between them), in

⁶ Calculated by adding the products of the number of students in each class X the contact time with the class and dividing the sum by the total contact time with all classes.

the interests of both students and teachers, but this leads to complexities in meeting the STCA requirements for maximum contact hours:

We used to have around 25 or 26 teachers involved in shared classes, and now we're down to just a couple. Basically, we've got it down low. But that comes at a cost because it means... the frustration is that the formula for calculating contact hours doesn't allow for flexibility, so we end up with people that are either under-allocated or over-allocated if you don't have shared classes, so you have to compensate the overs. (Pōhutukawa College)

The school found that the teachers for whom it was more difficult to match contact hours to STCA requirements were the teachers who had no management units:

...because to get to the 20 they have to have 4 junior classes and 2 senior classes and then there are a couple of people who are deans and also have a management unit for a curriculum area and they are actually over. [The principal would like to see] additional non-contact provisions that might be negotiated for teachers, because I do think if you're a full-time teacher doing 20 hours of teaching, your job is hell, that is a tough job. We have one young man in that position, his first non-contact in the week is Wednesday Period 5, he's just running to stand still. (Pōhutukawa College)

The school provides compensatory mechanisms to any teachers who are over the maximum contact hours, but this draws on Operations Grant funds:

We provide release days as time in lieu, they can use the day how they want but they don't have to be on site. They get two a term. I sometimes wonder if that's overly generous but anyway, it's fine... They still have to write relief, a bitter pill, "I'm going to have the day off but I've got to spend the time preparing lessons." (Pōhutukawa College)

At the same time, the school has to keep an eye on the size of classes, to ensure that they don't go above the MAC of 26 per full-time teacher. The principal said:

You end up in the junior school where option classes tend to be big, up around 28 to 30, those teachers then end up having a class average over 26 that we have to compensate as well. It's okay generally for the core subjects, because generally our core classes are around 25, we've managed to keep to that, so generally they're hovering around the right number, but for example PE and Food/Nutrition, there could be up to 28 or 30 kids in the class. For Technology we try to keep to the limit of 24 kids in the class. And then we have to do the compensatory mechanism. The number requiring compensatory mechanisms is about eight [teachers]. (Pōhutukawa College)

Middleview High finds managing the MAC complex too:

Generally, we've been able to keep below [the MAC]. There are teachers way below, e.g. teaching Year 11 Te Reo, Photography. Basically if [a class is] less than 15, we combine it. We've got about a dozen classes in the senior school which are combined levels, and this puts added stress on the teacher and means the students don't get as much direct input into their learning. And some of the subjects are quite different at the different levels, like Music, Dance, Product Design, Economics, Senior Arts, Food and Nutrition... We've got workshop teachers that say they can't have more than 24, if

you've got Year 9 option groups and they say they can't have more than 24, suddenly the Drama teacher has to have 28. (Middleview High)

Despite these difficulties, this principal actually felt that a Maximum Average Class size of 26 was "probably too high now, when you look at what teachers have to do, the number 26, actually 24 would be more reasonable... Too many bodies in the class, too many to get around to. With 23 you can get round the students."

Meeting the Collective Agreement requirements is challenging in a Kura Kaupapa Māori too:

By rights I should be a walking principal with the number of students we have, but I'm not, because we haven't got enough funding that allows me to do that, so I have to jump in [and teach]. And if you've got beginning teachers, they need release, and full-time teachers that need release, and who's going to do it? (TKKM Rimu)

A highly innovative curriculum can also make meeting the Collective Agreement requirements a challenge. At Onekiritea College, most periods are 80 minutes long. The principal said:

It's hard to do the unders and overs on 80-minute periods. Most of my staff are either 20 or 40 minutes under their allocation, and some are 20 or 40 [minutes] over. So the 20 or 40 over, we give a day in lieu once a term or a semester, but we don't have anything on the other side for the ones who are under, so it's like what I experienced at [another school] where we had 100 minute periods and in the end they walked away from it after I left. You have the equivalent of 1 extra teacher sitting out in those 20 minutes of under-usage. But 60-minute periods are too short. It [80 minutes periods] creates one less transition in the day and the transitions are the most stressful time in schools and with our particular model of two teachers teaching about 45 kids, they need more time rather than less time. (Onekiritea College)

Having Year 7 and 8 students added to your school also adds a level of complexity in trying to meet the non-contact requirements. The Mapuna High principal said that in terms of non-contact time they were mostly fine, although because the Year 7 and 8 classroom teachers have 17 hours with their homeroom classes, they could do only 3 more hours or they would not be receiving the minimum 5 hours non-contact time required. It was not that easy to find three-hour slots for them to fill.

Meeting the Maximum Average Class Size was also more difficult for Mapuna High because the staffing for students in Years 7 and 8 was at a 1:29 ratio, and late enrolments at Year 7 had led to classes over 29 at that level. The school was compensating teachers with some extra non-contact time.

City College had been using income from Foreign Fee-Paying students to help it meet the Maximum Average Class Size and non-contact time requirements, and with the loss of most of those FFP students, was feeling the pinch. However, rapid roll growth has saved the situation in the immediate term:

We, for a big number of years, have been enabled by our international student income to staff over and above our entitlement, and generally we've been able to have round

about 12 staff over our entitlement, and the reason for that was our agreement with our PPTA branch that because of our mixed ability teaching approach we would keep our junior classes down to no more than 26 kids. We've sort of been able to do that, but with the roll growth pressures we've had, there've been times when it's been very hard to manage and some of our Year 10 classes went up to 28, 29 over the last couple of years. We're back at the 26 now but with roll growth, I can say to the Board that we've reduced our over-entitlement from 12 to 8.6 or something like that. We've reduced it to 8.6, but it's not by reducing staff, it's because of the extra staffing entitlement we've got with the roll growth, because we're now staffed at 1740 or something like that. (City College)

Nevertheless, the principal recognised the inequities in some schools' being able to recruit FFP students and others not:

If we didn't have the international student income, we wouldn't be able to meet the Maximum Average Class size and required non-contacts. I'm on record as saying that our international student income would be a lot of gala days if we had to do that. On a bigger picture view, massive inequities have been created in the New Zealand education system by the international student market, because we're very lucky that we can attract 122 international students... (City College)

Conclusions

Creating a timetable that meets students' needs in terms of learning and pastoral care, and at the same time meets collective agreement requirements and matches the right teachers to the right classes, is not a task for the faint-hearted because of its complexity. While the case study schools had different challenges, and took different approaches to this task, they were unanimous that an overall increase in staffing would make producing a timetable a lot easier and better for students and their teachers.

Theme 2: Staffing for pastoral care and guidance counselling

Among their many other roles, secondary schools are expected to provide for the emotional wellbeing of their students, and this involves a wide range of teaching and sometimes non-teaching staff, including the principal and other senior leaders, deans, form/whānau teachers, guidance counsellors, careers advisers, nurses, social workers and other health professionals.

The Ministry Guidelines *Te Pakiaka Tangata: Strengthening Student Wellbeing for Success*⁷ give a sense of the importance and complexity of this task. The guidelines distinguish between the two commonly used terms, ‘pastoral care’ and ‘guidance counselling’:

- ‘Pastoral care’ is defined in the guidelines as “an aspect of the work of deans, guidance counsellors and other staff involved in supporting student wellbeing. Each staff member has a part to play in respecting and caring for students. Their pastoral role is to guide, enable and empower students to use good information to make well-considered positive choices for themselves, educationally and in life”.
- ‘Guidance counselling’, on the other hand, is defined as “a specialist role undertaken by those professionally trained in counselling theory and practice. It involves a trained professional forming a relationship with a student to support them with identity development, enhance their resiliency skills, and develop the resources to manage their relationships with others in their life.” Most guidance counsellors in New Zealand secondary schools are former teachers who have done Masterate level qualifications in guidance counselling.

Principals were unanimous that the Base Guidance staffing provided for pastoral care and guidance was totally inadequate to meet today’s student needs, and that they had to draw on other parts of their staffing, such as their curriculum and management staffing, to provide for this area. They also were, in some cases, funding additional staffing for pastoral care and guidance out of their operations grants.

Guidance counsellors, deans and more

The inadequacy of provision for pastoral care and guidance has noticeable impacts on students. At a number of the schools, principals commented that students experienced significant delays in seeing guidance counsellors because there just weren’t enough counsellors. This is a major concern, as guidance counsellors work with students who may be suicidal, self-harming, victims of abuse, and other serious trauma. Having to wait to see the relevant professional can be life-threatening.

⁷ <https://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/School/Supporting-students/Pastoral-Care-Guidelines-Te-Pakiaka-TangataNov2017.pdf>

Kauri College, which has been able to allocate only 0.6 FTTE to a Guidance Counsellor on staff, is using Operations Grant funding to supplement the Guidance Counsellor's work by paying for students to use counsellors outside the school:

We've got five counsellors in town and we allow our kids to have some choice about where they go for counselling, so we pay for that... The pathway to this is that I or the Guidance Counsellor can refer a kid on, and then we will pay for it... We finance that out of the Covid grant we got, and other agencies, trusts etc, that will give us a bit of money. (Kauri College)

In a composite school, the amount of staffing for guidance is minimal, and whatever is offered mostly comes out of curriculum staffing. At Forest Area School, the nominal staffing for all guidance was 1 FTTE, so the school was using Operations Grant funds for a counsellor for two hours a week. The principal described the impacts of this:

I'm doing pastoral care work because we don't have deans, and no guidance counsellor, though we pay for that at \$150 an hour for two hours a week, so if anything happens outside of Tuesday 9-11am, it comes to us [teachers], untrained and unqualified. She's qualified and trained, absolutely... That doesn't cover the need... We had an incident recently where one of girls said Mum was hitting her, the guidance counsellor tried to refer it out but the nearest help was [three hours' drive away], waste of time. There are some support networks around, the social workers we've had allocated to students have been very good, but if we wanted to add someone else to their list, it's a long and convoluted process. It's the nature of our geographic isolation, that everything is an hour away minimum. (Forest Area School)

For him, this is the area he would put extra staffing if he had it. The absence of a trained and qualified guidance counsellor is a major concern to him, and he has even offered to pay for a suitable existing member of staff to be trained:

We don't have the facilities to cope with a suicide, for example, we'd have to ask the Ministry to send a team in. Without that fence at the top of the cliff... [a guidance counsellor]. If I had someone who was trained, I'd find the space in my staffing to do the role, to have them spend the hours. If I had more staffing, that would give me the capacity to do that. (Forest Area School)

Principals talked about the huge demands on other teachers involved with pastoral care: deans, form teachers, whānau leaders, and others with pastoral care roles.

The principal of Middleview High said that they received 2.7 FTTE guidance staffing, but they actually used 6.6 FTTE for this purpose. This 6.6 was made up of 1.8 FTTE for guidance counsellors, and the rest was used for time for deans and heads of house and for a Careers Counsellor at 0.8 FTTE. (This didn't include form teachers, who would be defined as part of a school's guidance team.) He said:

Each dean gets a line effectively, the super deans [heads of house] get two [lines], so we put 60 hours into deaning, effectively... After Covid we got some Covid money to employ another guidance counsellor – [students were suffering] anxiety after coming back from Covid, there were other issues at home, parents having lost their jobs, no

money in the house, some of them needing to work because the family is short, all those sorts of things... (Middleview High)

He was adamant that the staffing in his mid-decile school did not allow them to be fully meeting students' pastoral care and guidance needs. He said:

No, God no, absolutely not, the BoT gets a report on what they're dealing with, and there's this sharp spike on the number of students who are dealing with anxiety, it's an exponential increase over the last five years. It's not just nationwide, it's international. Some people argue it's social media, the uncertain world, what's the future. Guidance staffing doesn't even touch the surface in terms of what's going on in families, so many students in homes with Oranga Tamariki involved, we're going into the Food in Schools programme because so many kids aren't being fed, we've been running Breakfast Club for years. People forget the range amongst a mid-decile school's students, decile 1 to 10 in our school, it averages to decile 5 but you get the complete range. (Middleview High)

The principal of Pōhutukawa College said that they used all of their 2.7 FTTE Base Guidance staffing just to employ guidance counsellors. That meant that other forms of pastoral care and guidance, such as deans and careers advice, had to come out of curriculum staffing:

This is the problem with pastoral care, it will suck up all the hours you give it, so you have to prioritise that allocation somehow, and that's where the pressure comes on your staffing, and that's why we're over our allocation... (Pōhutukawa College)

In thinking about his wish list for staffing, he commented: "For our pastoral care, we've got 48 hours of non-contact used for deans ... and that comes out of our curriculum staffing. I think an acknowledgement that deaning is an important part would be one thing..."

Mapuna High also uses a lot of its staffing for guidance. This school was required to take on Year 7 and 8 students about eight years ago, and have recognised that they have "a disproportionate number of students coming with trauma and the pastoral care team needs to be robust". It is important to note here that these Year 7 and 8 students are not part of the Ministry's calculations for the school's Base Guidance entitlement, and yet they have just as much need for this support. The pastoral care team consists of:

Within guidance, two counsellors, each at .8, and one at .2, and within pastoral care we've got a head of Year 7 and 8, a head of Year 9 and 10, a head of Year 11 and 12, and a head of Year 13. And above them we've got a Team Leader for the senior school, one for the middle school, plus a DP with pastoral responsibilities... It's quite a lot of staffing in there and they're run off their feet. We have put a lot of staffing into pastoral care, more than into teaching and learning and more than into systems and information. (Mapuna High)

The principal at Kahuarau Girls' College is also clear that her school's staffing is insufficient to provide the pastoral care her students need, and the stress is showing in disproportionate amounts of sick leave taken by deans:

I think it falls short around pastoral care. We have a need for counsellors and mental health workers, and we're really not covering that category... We've got a DHB funded nurse and we're about to put our own Board funding into another mental health nurse, but also around deaning and that real connection with students, I think if we could fund those roles properly... We've got four deans... The Deans have 7.5 hours a week, that's probably not enough, we look at the sickness rates for the deans and we can see they're under pressure. (Kahuarau Girls' College)

Even though it is a small school, Kauri College puts a lot of staffing and funding into pastoral care for its students. The principal described it:

Our pastoral care system starts with the classroom teacher, and they benefit from the small classes, and then there's the form teacher, and above that we have a dean for Year 7-8, one for Year 9-10, one for Year 11-12 and one for 13. We have a pastoral team of the DP, the deans, the Guidance Counsellor and the Learning Support Coordinator. We have a 0.6 Guidance Counsellor. The deans only get 1 hour each of non-contact time which is not enough so we work compensatory things like we don't give them duty if we can avoid it, and we lighten up other areas so when we roll round to inter-sports things and they might not have a sports team, we'll make sure that they get a whole day freed up, and we'll give them release time using the relief system when they scream. (Kauri College)

At Onekiritea College, the form teacher (hub) system is successful only because the school hires staffing above entitlement:

If we weren't funding extra staff, they [hub teachers] would find it very difficult to do what they know they need to in terms of the feedback loop for their kids, and they would find it very hard to deliver the dispositional curriculum with 20 or more kids in their hub. We would have to adjust our expectations and that's a compromise which is too big... (Onekiritea College)

The principal of City College believes that parents want to see the school focusing on the wellbeing of students:

Eight out of ten parents care about their kids' wellbeing more than anything else. So as a response to that, we've put in a large wellbeing network. We have two deans in each house, and they're given eight hours each so that's more than an HOD would be getting. Counselling staff, we have three counsellors. The government acknowledged that and we had an extra 0.2 added to our staffing allocation for an extra couple of days of guidance counsellor, but we were already over our entitlement anyway. But we've gone ahead and advertised for another couple of days for a fourth person. We're going to employ another nurse half time, we've got one at the moment. (City College)

The impacts of Covid-19

Most case study schools mentioned that the pandemic, and associated lockdowns, had increased student and whānau needs for support, and put their pastoral care and guidance teams under greater stress.

The government set up an Urgent Response Fund in the middle of 2020 “to help address attendance issues, re-engagement in learning and wellbeing for children and young people following the Covid-19 lockdowns”, but applications for this have now closed. Schools in the sample who had applied for this support valued the extra funding, but would like to be able to continue what they were enabled to do.

I think from my perspective the Urgent Response Funding that came through enabled us to do a whole lot of things we'd have liked to do but didn't have the resource. So we applied, tagging attendance as the thing we wanted to change, so we've now got a Student Engagement Officer that I'd really like to see continued because he works extensively with the parents in our community and he's got the ability to create relationships and to do it in a culturally responsive way, he's Samoan. So we want to continue that, he's 30 hours a week and he's very busy. Early days but he's definitely broken the ice with the community. It was too difficult to make referrals [to the Truancy Service], we had to jump through too many hoops, and then it was some random person that didn't know the people in our community and that created barriers to connection so it wasn't easy to get that going. (Kahuarau Girls' College)

The Ministry's website now says that the fund is fully allocated and online applications have closed, and “For ongoing need related to the impact of Covid-19, please contact your local Ministry office.”

Pōhutukawa College has a Māori support staff member who helps the teaching team with liaising with Māori whānau in terms of wellbeing and engagement. They employ him for two days a week as whānau support:

He works with, post-Covid, trying to re-engage particularly some of our Māori students, and we just noticed that if you ask someone to come in for a meeting, the meeting time would be set, and no-one would come in. So the idea was for the school to go to them, so he goes out and visits whānau and if he notices any need around, like for food, he'll get some kai from the marae or the foodbank and take it down to the families and things... We lost some students after Covid lockdown. Some just completely disengaged from education and just couldn't re-connect... Those were kids that had struggled with school anyway and so the whole period of time of non-attendance, coming back after that was just too hard. Small numbers but still... (Pōhutukawa College)

The principal of Onekiritea College also noted that Covid-19 had had a significant impact on the need for guidance in his school: “We've got two guidance counsellors, it looks like a good ratio but it's not enough, especially with what we've been experiencing post-Covid.”

Developing a curriculum to support student wellbeing

On top of its provision of guidance counselling, Onekiritea College offers what they call a “dispositional curriculum” through their form classes. Developing this approach has been a major undertaking for staff, and it uses a lot of staffing:

We have a formalised Hub curriculum, a dispositional curriculum, the front end of the NZC...⁸ so in quite a modern way you are teaching kids in that time. You can't do that meaningfully with a group of 25 kids... Because we think that's important, we've got leadership and team structures that are built to support that, so one of my DPs is in charge of our 4 Learning Community Leaders, so they'd be like vertical deans on steroids and so they are an important cog in our middle leadership group. Their job really is to support coaches, the teachers who run the Hubs, to deliver the Hub curriculum and support every kid on their academic and personal excellence pathway, so that team sets the big structure and then in our professional learning cycle every fortnight they lead their particular coaches around, here are the resources we've developed, which ones do you want to add in to make sure we're addressing the habits etc... We find all the resources, we're eight years in, and I'd say where we are now with our dispositional curriculum, we're quite happy with it, but we only got there last year, it was all finding our way, making lots of mistakes, and we needed to do that because nothing existed, nothing dispositional existed... (Onekiritea College)

Bridge College's approach to supporting its students includes spending the first part of every morning in vertical whānau groupings comprising Years 9 to 13, with about 14 to 15 students in each group within a larger whānau grouping of 45 to 50 students. This larger grouping is staffed with a Deputy Principal, a middle leader called a Quality Teaching Leader, the three whānau teachers, and two teacher aides. The whole staff is required to run these whānau groupings, so it is staffing-hungry but a central part of the school's pastoral care approach as well as its wider learning programme.

In these whānau sessions, the students do a tutorial programme of “intense literacy, intense numeracy, it's the part of the day with tikanga”. This literacy and numeracy is not done in isolation, but is structured around themes into which the students have input:

It's been really interesting, we started the year and all the kids went surfing, so we started with literacy and numeracy around surfing, so then we surveyed the kids and they said they quite enjoyed it, but what they'd really like to learn about was sex, relationships, all that kind of mind-body stuff... It's been the best response we've had to anything, that's the theme at the moment, and we're doing the literacy around that, and we've asked the kids, what's the next theme, and they're saying they want more of the same. We've done all that gender diversity, consent... (Bridge College)

Despite the success of these whānau sessions, the principal of Bridge College believes that another four or five teachers would really help them have groups small enough to enable teachers to really connect with their students:

⁸ Ministry of Education (2007). *New Zealand Curriculum*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.

For a start, the most important thing is that the kids each have one teacher they can hook onto when they're in trouble, and in a school like this I reckon if you had 10 kids that you fostered all the way through it would be better. You can't underestimate that teacher-student relationship when it's these kids. The parents here are so excited when they see that happening. (Bridge College)

The impacts of socio-economic disadvantage

Schools in socio-economically disadvantaged areas have a critical mass of students whose needs for pastoral care, guidance and social work support can be huge. The principal of Bridge College said "The staffing is not OK for a Decile 1 school, it is absolutely not OK, and the reason for that is that every kid at this school, I can tell you their story and it's a big story." She described the kind of issues her students are facing:

They're turning up late because they've been looking after the little sister or brother beforehand, they're turning up and they haven't eaten anything so they've got a really empty stomach. On a really cold day they don't turn up much because how can you walk along to this freezing school,⁹ and why would you, I don't feel like turning out myself on those days sometimes. Not only that, but these kids are witnessing domestic violence, I get things through the Ministry saying there's family harm incidents. There's 11 kids in a family in a little tiny home, they're not eating properly, they're not sleeping properly... You've got kids coming from homes with dirt floors, they haven't been fed, there's kids with really dirty clothes... These kids are coming to school and the police raided their house that morning, or something's happened and you see all police cars out here, and they're sitting in classes with the stress, and yes, we can get them to the counsellor and all that stuff, and we've got Oranga Tamariki dealing with families, but for a teacher in a class, you can't tell me that the same [staffing] formula should be used, it's just wrong to me. The teachers here are amazing... Don't underestimate them, ever. (Bridge College)

The school has a full-time guidance counsellor, even though this draws on staffing for other areas, and it also provides other services:

We have a full-time guidance counsellor, God yes, she used to be here just two days a week but we've got to have her here all the time, and we've got a doctor who comes in once a week and a nurse two or three days a week. We get funding for that. But the counsellor we staff from our entitlement... (Bridge College)

The Bridge College principal wanted to see a special summit for low decile schools so that they could convey the message to decision-makers about the seriousness of what they face: "I would really like at some point a Decile 1 and 2 schools' summit and have the Secretary for Education and the Ministry in the room, I have talked with ERO and the Ministry about it." She said that she had visited a low decile school in Sydney which had eight extra teachers because of the socio-economic status of its

⁹ When the principal arrived at Bridge College four years ago, the heating system was failing, and in the school's old buildings that get no sun and have no insulation, the school was icy cold. Although there have been some improvements, I noticed that the corridors were still very cold.

students. She believed that there was nowhere near enough staffing for low decile schools in New Zealand.

In fact, there is **no** extra staffing per se for a low decile school; the extra resourcing comes only in the form of some extra funding in the operations grant.¹⁰ The Bridge College principal argued that it was unconscionable that the staffing formula was the same whatever the decile of the school, because she saw more teachers as a large part of the answer in schools like hers:

I'm worried now about this whole rhetoric about deciles, they're going to take away deciles and I can see high decile schools saying great, and they think that the decile one schools get all the resourcing, but we don't... If I could make a rule for principals, I reckon you should never be a principal unless you've been a teacher or a principal in a decile one school, because they talk bullshit. What worries me now is the rhetoric from the Decile 10 schools who are saying now it will be fair, because we'll get the money for the odd kid we've got, the two or three who are maybe poor by their standards, and it's not about that, it's about the big mass, the whole school here... You'd just never convince me that the staffing should be the same, never in a million years, the issues... (Bridge College)

Restorative practices

Schools' philosophies and approaches to conflict and student behaviour differ. A number of case study schools typified their approach as being "restorative practice". The principal of Onekiritea College described this as follows:

We never give up on kids, we don't suspend or expel anyone, we're really restorative practice here, every day. Being a restorative school means that you believe that you will not give up on any kid, that you don't worry about public perception about being soft, all you worry about is the needs of all your kids and your staff, and when things go wrong that means a relationship has been harmed so you concentrate on fixing the relationship and so that drills right down to how do you talk to kids, what do you do when a kid is continually late, what do you do when a kid defies you, because that all happens here, these are just normal teenagers, those things happen here. We're lucky that our model really engages kids, so that solves a lot of our problems, and we've got really robust learning intervention processes... (Onekiritea College)

When selecting teachers, Onekiritea College looks for people who have the appropriate mindset for this:

Every teacher we appoint, we go through a process that involves the whole SLT team and other people we think might be relevant, because the most important job I have is to get the right people on the bus... The filter we apply is mindset and we've got some processes that we're really happy about now with which we can figure out that mindset, and it's about not giving up on kids, managing difficult people, so it's all about relationships, your propensity for collaboration, to be exposed and to be wrong. So

¹⁰ <https://www.education.govt.nz/school/funding-and-financials/resourcing/operational-funding/school-decile-ratings/>

those are the things we explore through our appointment process... (Onekiritea College)

The principal at Bridge College never used the term “restorative practice”, but her description of what she wants to see in relationships in the school epitomises it:

Kids miss out on the really rich relationships they could have, like other kids have mum and dad at home to be worried about how they’re doing and whether they’ve got enough, but very few of these kids have those conversations at home, and it’s not because they don’t care, they’re just too busy, so here the teachers are a really important part of their lives, in fact Covid was tough on these kids, we had a lovely couple of months when they came back, they were so pleased to see us... They missed their teachers. (Bridge College)

In fact, one of the big challenges for Bridge College is that, while its roll suffers greatly from white flight and middle-class flight, it also ends up being the recipient of local students tipped out of the schools they had flown to, and this presents big challenges with settling them into the Bridge College culture:

And for example, this term, I think it would be close to 10, this mass of kids who’ve been expelled from other schools who come here and we take them all because they’re local kids. I just take them, they live here, they know the other kids, but that takes huge effort, they come in and we haven’t had them for six months, whereas the other kids that we’ve had... A kid called out something rude to me and this kid said “That’s not respectful, is it?” And I said “No, it’s not!” So our kids who have been here all the time carry the culture, so the kids coming in, it really jars... (Bridge College)

At the opposite end of the scale, Kauri College, a Decile 9 rural school, also finds students expelled from other schools their biggest challenge:

We pride ourselves on getting our kids to 16, no matter what, and to where they can make a decision about what next, as long as we can start with them and work with them over the period from Year 7 to 13. The ones that we can’t always get there with are the ones that come later after being kicked out from somewhere else. We have to spend a lot more time on those kids, and on one-on-one stuff. That requires more time, and you really have to donate it then. (Kauri College)

There is no doubt that intensive relationship-building and relationship-restoration of this kind is very demanding on teacher and leader time.

City College also operates in a restorative way with students. Nevertheless, the principal believes that schools are not generally resourced to work with difficult students, and said that they had taken 14 “directed enrolments” that year, where the Ministry finds a new school for students who have been indefinitely suspended. He had a number of thoughts about this situation:

More and more difficult kids are coming into the schools, and schools are not resourced in any way really to support them, and what happens is they fall out of the system. [Judge] Andrew Becroft [Children’s Commissioner] says that if you want a

silver bullet, it's to keep them in school. Every one of the principals is trying to get rid of the bad eggs, the ones that are bugging up education for everyone else and you need alternative ways to the really blunt instruments of stand-downs and suspensions, you need the supports to keep those kids not only in school but functioning effectively in schools... Over this year and last year, we've accepted 14 directed enrolments by the Ministry, students that are out of our zone and for whatever reason are not coping in their zoned school, and it's got something to do with the inclusive nature of this place, it's got something to do with non-uniform, it's got something to do with the caring nature of our teachers and all the rest of it, it's got something to do with timetable flexibility, it's got something to do with this being a magnet school for kids with special learning needs, and it's screaming to me loud and clear that the very traditional socks up, hair tied back arrangement is working less and less effectively. (City College)

When asked what extra staffing was needed for schools to be able to keep these students and work with them successfully, he said:

That's a big question. In simple terms it would look like lower ratios of students to teachers, so we'd be looking more like a 1:20 ratio than a 1:26 ratio, I would have thought. It needs more specialist support... (City College)

This principal spoke highly of the local Activity Centre, for which they were the administering school:

We're a big user of the activity centre and the purpose of that centre is to take kids and get them up to a functioning level where they can survive back in a mainstream secondary school... We imagined that the activity centre would be bulldozed at one stage, but they've got beautiful new buildings... About 75% of the kids that go to the activity centre come back to us and settle. (City College)

There are only thirteen activity centres across the country, most of which have survived from before the shift to Tomorrow's Schools in 1990, after which date no new activity centres were created. The bulk of alternative education is in less well-resourced centres that, unlike activity centres, are not required to employ registered teachers.

Conclusions

Staffing for pastoral care and guidance is grossly inadequate for schools to meet their students' needs in today's world. Although there was no question directly focusing on this area, all the case study schools highlighted it as where they felt the staffing pressures most keenly. No school in the sample was able to staff the necessary pastoral care and guidance from their base guidance entitlement, so they were all drawing on curriculum staffing, and in many cases funding positions above entitlement to even begin to feel they were meeting student need.

Theme 3: Staffing for leadership

The Management time given to secondary and composite schools falls well short of the amount needed for the complex leadership structures needed. Management staffing consists of a base amount plus a roll-generated component. Middleview High School, for example, at a roll level of around 1200, received 6.1 FTTE for management. Even City College, the largest school in the sample at about 1800 students, received only 8.4 FTTE for management.

The role of principal is highly complex, and a team of deputy/assistant principals is required to share that load. In addition, a secondary school with the kind of extensive curriculum breadth needed to prepare students for multiple post-secondary pathways requires a large team of middle leaders. While the number of management units allocated to a school may, or may not, be sufficient to recognise these extra responsibilities, the amount of time allocated through the staffing ratios is definitely not enough.

Complexity of principal's role

Principals were asked to comment on the complexity of their roles, and to what extent they were able to delegate aspects of the role to other senior leaders to make it manageable.

The principal of Mapuna High explained how responsibilities were distributed across their leadership team:

You get 5.2 [FTTE] Management staffing. We've got three DPs and four Team Leaders, and Heads of Learning Area (10), and then there are some HoDs (special ed unit, Science, Arts, etc). The DPs basically run the school, I as Principal do the political stuff, and being a cultural leader, I don't do the systems stuff, and not the curriculum leadership. (Mapuna High)

Her list of what the days involved for her gives a sense of the complexity of a principal's role:

Yesterday I finished a Board report, went to a cluster meeting, went to the Ministry, then went home and did the work on zoning that I need for a Board meeting on Monday. I'm probably in school now more than I used to be, I've quit some of the things I was doing because I was being pulled in all sorts of directions to do this that and the other thing. I try to go to all the secondary principals' meetings, that's three-quarters of a day, there's someone coming to talk about NCEA so I'll have to go. For me at the moment, for the Board, sitting on my desk at the moment is the Education and Training Act, the NELPs, and our Strategic and Annual Plan ... I want to line these all up, our Annual Plan covers off most of that. A fair bit [of the principal's job] is how do we empower and train up a Board, who are really busy, so a lot of my job would be HR, complaints. I've had a number of serious issues, in the last three or four years I've had one competency procedure, I've had one teacher who I was really concerned about his mental health and it became discipline, a teacher who had a student who had

a horrendous accident in class and I decided he was either negligent or careless, and I've had another teacher who acted inappropriately with a student [assault], and these all go to the board, and it's quite difficult to get a Board disciplinary committee together just because they're so busy. We don't do many stand-downs and suspensions. It's that sort of stuff that takes a lot of my time and effort. (Mapuna High)

A major reorganisation of schooling in her area is taking a lot of the Kahuarau Girls' College principal's time and focus. The Ministry of Education is having discussions with her and other local principals about co-locating a number of schools onto the Kahuarau site, and establishing a social services hub alongside to provide for the community. She said that it was hard to focus on the immediate demands of the school with this big picture vision in front of her:

I deal with staff who are upset about their contact hours or something that's happened in a classroom right up to I'm sending letters to the Minister of Education... It does feel every now and again that I take my eye off things here because of what I'm dealing with, which is why I have to have a slightly larger team that I can trust to just run the school, and I haven't quite got there yet. (Kahuarau Girls' College)

She believed that she needed a substantial senior leadership team to be able to create change in the school:

I've got four DPs, and that's a choice I made about where I put staffing, they're mostly teaching 4.5 hours, and are on six or seven units... That changes next year and we'll put more resource into the middle leaders... We've got an AP as well. We're trying to create change because results had been declining steadily alongside a decline in the roll... We used Covid as an opportunity to create change, we caused a lot of stress but we're now in a better position. (Kahuarau Girls' College)

Just because Kauri College is a much smaller school than Mapuna High, it doesn't mean that the role of principal is any simpler. The principal said that it was a myth that in smaller schools everything is scaled down, and that in fact leaders needed to be more versatile:

In a small school, there's a smaller team, each person has more tasks, and they have to know those tasks well. I would argue that a good DP or AP from a smaller or mid-size school is going to make a much better principal, other things being equal, because they understand how a school works and the nature of the jobs. (Kauri College)

Similarly, in an area school, while the number of staff and students may be much smaller, the role of principal is no less complex, but there are fewer people to whom to delegate tasks. The principal of Forest Area School said that staff in his school "wore many hats" and described some of the issues he was dealing with currently:

What have I dealt with today? Discipline, finance, staffing because I've got a LAT who's no longer on the LAT page anywhere so that's a staffing issue, something's come through about my rebuild and I've got to sign something off, that's every day. Yesterday I spent a day learning about EOTC to realise that we're about 5 years behind the ball and we're engaged in dangerous activities and there's only one person in the school liable and that's me, so I'm going to be breaking the news to people that

they won't be doing some of their camp activities because they're not safe, and they'll say "But you're ruining our fun" and I'll say I don't want to pay a fine... Then someone said "Your website doesn't work" and I asked "What you do mean it doesn't work?" and they said, "Oh we can't get access to it because it's run by a local parent as a side business and it's not really his priority", so I contacted him and he said "Oh I don't really have time for it and it's about to collapse anyway because the software's no longer supported by the company I bought it from" so we need a new website. So I asked "Is anyone interested in building a new website?" and the answer was no, so guess who's doing the new website? Me. Not doing the technical work, but liaising with the company and liaising with a photographer and getting people to write bios and all that, that's me. So that's what I mean about capacity. In another school there'd be an IT-friendly teacher who'd say "Oh, I'll help you with that because it's an interest of mine". One of our teacher aides maintains our laptops, again many hats... I'm in classrooms most days. The boy that just walked past, he has ADHD, I enrolled him, I met the mum, in another school that would done by a DP or a Dean. I visited him in the classroom to see how he's going... It's far more hands-on... (Forest Area School)

He made an interesting comment about the challenges of coming from secondary school roles to become the principal of an area school:

Any principal coming to an area school is lacking expertise in one of two areas, in my case the only understanding I have of primary is through my children. You've got to learn this whole new set of language, skills, contracts, you're used as a timetabler and senior leader in a secondary school to what the contract requires and then you've got to learn it again for the area schools' contract.

Making tough decisions about staffing

One aspect of the principal's role that causes a lot of stress is the need to make really difficult compromises in arriving at solutions to problems. Staffing is a big part of this. When I asked the principal at Kahuarau Girls' College about compromises she had to make in this area, she said:

I guess constantly, but I think there are times when it's worse, and it's when we're doing that first run at the timetable, and then I can see that we've got some real issues and I have to... I've identified three things that are really important to me, and [the timetabling team] work on those issues so that ethically I'm not making mistakes. What we're aiming for is that everyone is timetabled to the 0 [meaning no-one is over or under their non-contact allocation], that student choice drives our decision-making, and that we aren't doing anything that is going to drive a teacher under... (Kahuarau Girls' College)

Similarly, the principal at Pōhutukawa College also used a set of strategic priorities to guide difficult decisions about staffing use:

We've got three priorities that guide our decision-making. One's about equity of outcomes, ... one's about connectedness and belonging and the other's about developing future-ready courageous learners, so it comes back to how we're doing it. Our whole strategic plan is based around those three priorities, and then from there you're looking at the ways in which we're making it happen which often involves how

we use staffing... I think our staffing reflects those three priorities. (Pōhutukawa College)

The Associate Principal role

When a school roll reaches 1400, it is able to have an Associate Principal, which is a position just below principal in seniority and carrying many of the responsibilities of a principal. A qualifying school receives an extra 9 Management Units (MU's) to be used for this purpose, but, astonishingly, no extra staffing. One principal commented:

We have an Associate Principal and we get 9 units and all of a sudden you create a whole new position but that staffing has had to come out of somewhere. That's ludicrous, yes you can have 9 MU's, but you've got no staffing for it. (Pōhutukawa College)

Middle leadership for curriculum

The subject specialisation role of secondary schools means that staffing has to be found to support the tier of leadership that manages those subjects.

Out of Middleview High's staffing, it needs to provide non-teaching time for a wide range of curriculum leaders, who generally have one less class than other teachers in order to perform their roles. The principal described the HoD role as "an impossible job to do", and said that because they don't have enough time to professionally develop their staff, work with them on professional growth cycles, manage the moderation and provide assistance to teachers, this has negative impacts on students. He said:

We use way more than that [6.3 management staffing] here, you couldn't do it with what the formula gives you for leadership ... That 6.3 has to include the HoDs. It's ridiculous. An HoD English would get one line off [4 hours], it's an impossible job to expect on that time allowance. The job is much harder than when I did it, and through my career being HoD English was the longest hours I ever did. My daughter's a Human Resources adviser, and she just thinks it's laughable. They [English HoD] have got a team of 14 staff, they're effectively a HR person, and they do the [teaching] job as well! In business the HoD wouldn't have any classes. It's ridiculous... I would have much more management time in schools to allow for all the management that middle leaders have to do. We didn't have things like appraisal when I was HOD, it was all peer appraisal, I didn't do it all, and all the NCEA and moderation and marking, it was just an exam before. It hasn't been recognised how much that job has grown. (Middleview High)

In a composite school, the middle leadership structure tends to be much thinner, and most curriculum specialists would be sole teachers of their subject. This relieves them of the role of managing other teachers, but they still have to keep up to date with developments in their subject, make decisions about curriculum changes, manage NCEA assessment and moderation, and manage resources. At Forest Area School, some of the middle leadership tasks are covered by senior leaders:

We have one subject specialist per subject. A lot of the HoDs have no non-contact time for the role. I've got 13 of our 20 units tied up in senior leadership. When I came here, the previous model had principal, deputy principal, and three syndicate leaders in a school of 160 kids and that seemed a bit top-heavy to me. What we've now switched to is one syndicate leader for Year 1 to 8 and one for Year 9 to 13 and I've decided to keep that model, but I'm calling the syndicate leaders APs... The DP is on 5 units, and the APs are on 4 each, and that leaves me with 7 units... It does seem top-heavy, and it doesn't leave much for the middle leadership of the school, so we pick up all the slack for them... The HOD English gets a unit, and a couple of non-contacts for that which is more than the STCA. Other unit holders don't necessarily get their full non-contacts every year and they tend to say don't worry about it, but we negotiate release days to compensate. (Forest Area School)

Conclusions

Leadership in a secondary school is widely distributed across a team consisting of the principal and senior and middle leaders (who may be focused on curriculum or pastoral care). The Management Staffing component of entitlement staffing is wholly insufficient, and leadership time becomes another drain on curriculum staffing. Small schools end up with a few leaders "wearing many hats", which is its own source of stress.

Theme 4: Staffing for curriculum

The curriculum staffing provided to a secondary school is the biggest staffing component. However, because overall staffing is not sufficient, given the complexities of a modern secondary school, curriculum staffing is drawn on because of the inadequacies of the other two major staffing categories, Base Guidance and Management. One principal put it like this:

I think the staffing you get is based around a really traditional model of school with really limited acknowledgement of the other things that all schools do out of a whole lot of good will but also at the expense of curriculum because the staffing has to come from somewhere. (Pōhutukawa College)

Secondary schools feel under pressure to provide as wide a range of subjects as they can to meet the diverse needs and interests of their students, especially in the senior levels. The curriculum they provide must also be engaging and future-focused, and this leads many schools to engage in innovation around how they deliver the curriculum. On top of the timetabled subjects, secondary schools try to provide co-curricular and extra-curricular activities to enhance students' school experiences.¹¹ These activities can be vital to keeping a student engaged with schooling, and in most cases are run by teachers in addition to their timetabled work.

Staffing a broad curriculum

Most schools, whatever their size, find they can't deliver the curriculum breadth they, and their students, would like to have on offer. The principal at Onekiritea College said:

But we have to compromise about courses, for example Outdoor Ed is getting very popular and we should have run it at two senior levels this year but we were already over-staffed so we didn't. I've got a keen group of staff who want to put together a Māori performing arts course and I've had to say no, not yet... So it's about not offering the full range of stuff that you think you should... (Onekiritea College)

Pōhutukawa College's Board of Trustees has committed to offering Te Reo as a specialist language, and is funding a second Te Reo teacher even though they don't currently have the number of students that would generally require:

You might have noticed we've got two Te Reo teachers, one's on a fixed term at the moment and the other's permanent, but we don't have two teachers' worth of Te Reo, so it's a commitment to grow the area, to bring in Māori Performing Arts, but this year there's a lot of team teaching going on with the two of them. It's a cool initiative but it's a whole teacher... They work collaboratively with the secondary schools around us,

¹¹ Co-curricular activities are defined as experiences that complement what students are learning in the curriculum, whereas extra-curricular activities are defined as activities that fall outside the scope of the curriculum.

and the Kapa Haka rūpū is a joint group with one of those schools. (Pōhutukawa College)

For smaller schools, providing a broad curriculum is even harder. The principal at Kahuarau Girls' College would like to be able to staff a better Science programme for her students, but staffing pressures in her relatively small school mean that the range of options in Science is quite limited:

I'm going to say Science as well, staffing, it's greatly under-resourced, getting them into doing labs and experiments and if we were able to resource that better staffing-wise we could get that really firing... There's so much more that we could be doing: Earth and Space Science for instance... [She later mentioned Horticultural Science too]. The reality is it's a small roll, and every time you offer a new subject your class sizes drop further which creates further demand on the number of staff required to staff the curriculum so we're restricted in what we're offering. (Kahuarau Girls' College)

In a Kura Kaupapa Māori, staffing the secondary specialist curriculum is challenging. At TKKM Rimu, there are only four full-time teachers for the 50 or so secondary level students. However, the principal has found some creative ways to make this work, which she described as "being smart with your teaching allocation", but said "Oh my gosh, it takes a lot of preparation and a lot of work from the staff, it's a huge ask from them". One approach is to have the primary and secondary curriculum specialists work together and design a whole-of-kura programme. She gave Pūtaiao (Science) as an example:

It's the same programme but it looks different at the different stages, so we have built a curriculum like that, so it would flow, so that we knew when they graduated as a Year 5 they would know this, this, this and this and they'd be ready for the next stage, because those two leads had got together and planned it out. Because of our staffing size, we do a lot of whole kura teaching, so it's a whole day or a whole week where it's just Pūtaiao and those two leads would be training or rolling it out to all the staff, so they'll be saying this is what Pūtaiao is going to look like this week, and these are the activities but we'll do it as a whole kura, or we might even do it in whānau groups where we've got the secondary married up with the primary and they're rotating in their activities. It's just for the secondary they'd be having their NCEA checklist... (TKKM Rimu)

In an area school, it requires considerable skill to provide curriculum breadth. At Forest Area School, there are only 54 students in Years 9 – 15. The principal was quite clear that he didn't have enough staffing to adequately deliver the curriculum:

No, we lack enough teachers to go in front of the kids, to offer the range of senior subjects we want to, and to get anywhere near it we have to combine junior classes and I have to teach as a principal, and as a new principal it's challenging enough, let alone teaching 8 hours a week in addition. (Forest Area School)

One of the ways he is considering to deliver more curriculum breadth is by combining option classes across four of the year levels, Years 7 to 10. (Currently they are combined in Years 9 and 10.) He described his plan:

I'm looking to combine Year 7 to 10 option lines to try to get more options on offer, because you need more students to get more options, and we'd run half year options over four years so over that time they'll see 8 options, or at least 4 if they do the same thing year on year, like Te Reo for instance. It will mean a lot of multi-level teaching, but in a smaller school like this where you've got only one class at each level, you have to differentiate anyway... Someone might want to offer Economics at the junior level, I've got someone who wants to do that, but if you've only got 6 kids you're not going to have enough to sustain it, but offer it over four years and every kid will probably choose it some time. (Forest Area School)

He is also considering some level and subject combinations in other curriculum areas:

I've offered to take a combined Year 9 and 10 English class, so instead of having 9 or 10 in the class I might have 28, and I'd have the same range as in a class of 15 ... English and Social Studies I thought we could combine, Maths and Science we'll keep separated, PE is already combined... (Forest Area School)

E-learning for curriculum breadth

E-learning is one solution for schools struggling to provide curriculum breadth. It has gone through significant change in recent years, moving from requiring expensive audio-visual equipment in each school and a Ministry "bridge" to facilitate national connections, to schools being able to use cloud-based video conferencing services such as Zoom on ordinary laptops. Despite this, the fundamental problem remains, that the teacher is not present in the room, and is online with the whole class only once a week. The teacher-learner relationship that is so important to success is harder to build in these circumstances.

Some case study schools avail themselves of online learning opportunities in order to provide curriculum breadth, but these are not without problems:

We dabbled with [X]Net for Japanese and Spanish a few years ago but it didn't work, the model of teaching by teachers from other schools who don't really understand how we do things was challenging for our kids, for our timetable, so we've tried that, we do have the odd kid who does Te Kura for languages, often they'll be a native speaker... (Onekiritia College)

Forest Area School has a significant number of students (46 this year) learning online, but the principal there has some doubts about its benefits. Participation in online learning requires there to be an E-Dean, who spends 8 hours in the e-learning centre making sure that students are all on track, recording results, liaising with online teachers, and so on. Of the four hours per week provided for a subject, only one is face to face online, and in the other three hours the online teacher is available for email correspondence with students. The principal's analysis of the success rates of students learning online compared with those in a face-to-face class worries him:

84% of our [NCEA subject] endorsements come from students who have a teacher in front of them, whereas only 16% come from where they do it online, so instantly you

have this disparity between success rates online versus a teacher in front of you. So I've got, including myself, five teachers at the secondary end of the school, and that's one of the reasons we're revising our option structure so that we can have more teachers in front of kids... The student voice is very clear, we've done analysis of that and they want a teacher in front of them, they'll take an online course if they have to, but if they had a choice between History and Geography, and History was online and Geography face-to-face, they'd choose Geography every time. If it's their last choice, they'll take a teacher over a subject. (Forest Area School)

Kauri College also uses online learning to some extent, and seemed more satisfied with it. The arrangement involves a quid pro quo, whereby a school provides a course online using one of their teachers, and in return can enrol their students in other courses:

We have to provide one staff member who provides a course that everyone else can use, so we have to staff that, so our one is Japanese, she teaches a Level 1 Japanese course online and then we can access all the other courses... We have to be creative and look for solutions elsewhere. (Kauri College)

In the past, the Kura Kaupapa Maori sector have been big users of e-learning in order to connect their students with subject specialists who are fluent in Te Reo. However, the principal of TKKM Rimu said that this had not really been accessible to them in recent years, although there were some new developments in that space:

That was a huge push, for Kura Te Aho Matua definitely there was a period when we all had special TVs and each kura, because each kura is different, the belief is each kura has a super power, and X kura, their super power is in Maths, so they're experts in Maths, their students just excel in everything Maths, so their Maths team would lead all of the Pangarau for Level 3, and we had to timetable our students so they could be part of what was delivered via the TV once a week. But also, he held seminars in the school holidays, week-long Maths seminars that were just amazing, and so we were part of that resourcing, it was a really brilliant way of being able to provide teachers that weren't necessarily in your own school but accessible to our students. I'm not sure whether the Ministry stopped funding it or what, because all the teachers were still there, it was the framework that funded it was no longer in place cos in 2018 we only got a year of it, then it stopped. Now, last year it started back up that our national governing body run it now as opposed to being a Ministry-designated resource, and it's just limited to one day that you'll log onto the website and connect to whatever the topic is for that week. We can access it on our laptops. The governing body is starting to get funding from the government to roll out programmes, which is really good because they used to be, for the last 20 years at least, they were a group of 5 people, doing a nationwide rollout and having to be everywhere. (TKKM Rimu)

Staffing for an innovative learning environment

Two of the case study schools were in new buildings that would be deemed to be "flexible learning spaces", but they were not the only ones innovating around curriculum delivery. The Ministry of Education tends to use two terms in this area, and it is important to distinguish between the two:

- Flexible learning spaces, which are the physical characteristics of schools constructed in about the last twenty years, where internal walls are easily moved or removed altogether, learning spaces will usually be occupied by more than one teacher and class group, and furniture and its configuration will support different types of teaching and learning.¹²
- Innovative learning environments are future-focused, are capable of evolving and adapting as education practices evolve and change, offer students and teachers “flexibility, agency, ubiquity, and connectedness”, and enable teaching and learning that is “collaborative, reflections and inquiries are shared, and ... leads to a more robust, continuously improving community of practice”.¹³

Onekiritea College, as a new school, is indisputably a flexible learning space, and it is also providing an innovative learning environment. The principal complained that, while the Ministry of Education actively promotes flexible learning spaces and innovative learning environments within them, they have never adequately staffed these schools for what they expect of them. He said: “My view is they should have a [more generous] formula for modern learning environments, and it might encourage other schools to get into it, to come along on the journey, because there are different levers, you’ve got to adjust them all.”

He referred to David Hood’s concept of ‘the paradigm of one’ as being the traditional organisation of teaching and learning: “One teacher, teaching one subject to one class of one age using one curriculum at one pace, in one classroom for one hour” (Hood, 2015).¹⁴ He said that in contrast, an innovative learning environment operates in “the paradigm of many”, where the physical environment “has been driven by the principles of open, visible, flexible, and connected, so if we want to maximise that we need a pedagogy that’s open, visible, flexible, and connected, otherwise there’s a mismatch.”

In a school designed in the past, he claimed:

...there’s only one thing you can do ... and that’s put 25 kids and one teacher in a space. As soon as you only put 5 in there, you create overcrowding somewhere else, so if you have to put 25 kids in there, there’s only one way to teach, and that’s to teach from the front, you can put an interactive whiteboard in there but that big kid sitting in the back corner can’t get out to interact on it, so that’s the influence that it has.
(Onekiritea College)

This was not future-focused, he said:

¹² <https://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Primary-Secondary/Property/Design/Flexible-learning-spaces/FLS-The-impact-of-physical-design-on-student-outcomes.pdf>

¹³ <https://elearning.tki.org.nz/Teaching/Innovative-learning-environments>

¹⁴ Hood, D. (2015). *The Rhetoric and the Reality*. Masterton: Fraser Books.

Even if you believe that's the right way to teach, do you really believe that will be the right way to teach in 50 years' time? We don't really know what will be the right way to teach then, so the learning spaces have to be flexible, and that means that if the right way to teach something is with a lecture, then fine, put 200 kids in there, and give them that lecture. If the right way to teach something is one on one, then have spaces to do that. (Onekiritea College)

City College is the other case study school in a flexible learning space, but in their case, this was as a result of a rebuild. As a large school, they face a constant struggle to meet the Maximum Average Class Size, but the principal commented that because they had adopted longer lesson times, the large class sizes seemed to bother students less:

The feedback I get from kids is not negative [about big classes]. One of the reasons for that I guess is that with the move to new buildings, we've changed to mostly 90-minute periods, so it gives teachers more access, more time with the kids and more work gets done over the course of the contact, so in that respect the class size thing hasn't bothered the students, they feel they've got enhanced access to their teachers. From a teacher perspective, it's had a significant impact on their workloads because they may only have to prepare for three classes a day rather than four or five, sure they're 90-minute classes and you've got to be prepared, you can't wing it, but there's been a positive impact there too... We're talking about the notion of maybe 90 kids and three teachers, and they may not always be the same subject, for example in the Science and Maths area of the school there's a lot of cross-curricular collaboration between the two groups, and the same in the Social Sciences area. (City College)

Despite their different types of innovative practice, both these schools found their overall staffing entitlement insufficient for their needs. There appear to be no staffing economies in shifting to innovative learning environments.

Staffing for extra- and co-curricular activities

One principal commented that there needed to be enough staffing allocated to allow them to pay teachers for their work in the extra- and co-curricular areas, such as sport, music, etc.

We can't do a lot of the sports, extra-curricular, we don't have enough people to help with that sort of stuff. How do we enable students to do the sports they want to do without driving our teaching staff under the bus? So how do I balance that and work that out? If I could have a few more staff, we could spread it out a bit more. I was standing beside a football field with three other staff, and we were all soaking wet, and I was thinking, how can I push staff to do this? ... What we want is for it to be included in our staffing allocation. (Kahuarau Girls' College)

A similar comment was made by the principal of Pōhutukawa College, in response to a question about where they would use any extra teachers they were given:

Supporting co-curricular activities, we've had a drop-off in the staff involved in co-curricular, something's got to give, support them with time. (Pōhutukawa College)

Conclusions

Curriculum staffing, while the largest component of a school's entitlement, proves in all the case study schools to be insufficient to meet needs. This is partly because it is drawn on to meet shortfalls in the other major components, base guidance and management staffing, and also for special needs provision (see following section). It is also simply not enough for most schools to deliver the broad range of subjects that a modern secondary school is expected to provide for its diverse learners.

E-learning, sometimes touted as the answer to staffing shortfalls, is not being found by schools using it to be a silver bullet, and students do not appear to favour it over having a teacher present in person.

Theme 5: Providing for students with special needs

The amount of staffing available for students with a wide range of special needs is felt by principals to be nowhere near enough. While a school may have a number of ORS students who generate teaching and teacher aide time, there are problems if a student moves on during the year and takes their funding with them. However, it is the students whose needs do not qualify them for ORS who are harder to cater to adequately, and principals see a need for a lot more staffing for these students.

In a secondary school context, coordination of the provision of support for students with special needs is a major task. This includes ensuring that relevant students can access Special Assessment Conditions to enable them to succeed in NCEA.

Schools have been asking for staffing to provide a SENCO (Special Education Needs Coordinator) in each school for some years, and this was a recommendation of a Select Committee 'Inquiry into the identification and support for students with the significant challenges of dyslexia, dyspraxia, and autism spectrum disorders in primary and secondary schools' in 2016.¹⁵ Recommendation 33 of that report was "That the Government task the Ministry of Education with assessing the feasibility of funding full-time, trained Special Needs Coordinators for schools with more than 200 students."

There has been some progress since 2016 in the creation of Learning Support Coordinator positions, but many schools have not been able to access these for reasons that are far from clear to them. Some schools are resorting to creating such positions out of their curriculum staffing because the need is so great, but this becomes yet another cost to other parts of the school's staffing. The case study schools who had Learning Support Coordinators spoke highly of the resource, but those who had missed out either cobbled together the staffing from other sources, or managed without.

A slightly tangential issue came up in a number of interviews concerning the rate at which the Ministry of Education funds teacher aides, a rate which is well below the current Collective Agreement rate for them. This leaves schools either allocating fewer teacher aide hours to students than the Ministry has deemed them to merit, or else funding the difference from their Operations Grant. If they use the Operations Grant, that gives them less ability to buy teachers from that source.

Students who don't qualify for support

Many students who are not eligible for ORS staffing and funding still require high levels of teacher and teacher aide time. The Pōhutukawa College principal put it this way:

¹⁵ https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/sc/reports/document/51DBSCH_SCR71769_1/inquiry-into-the-identification-and-support-for-students

Let's talk about special education. You've got your ORS kids that generate staffing, then you've got all these kids that sit just under ORS that don't generate any special levels of staffing and I think there needs to be acknowledgement of those kids, their complex needs, sometimes mental health, learning difficulties, ADHD, oppositional defiance, dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, all those kids that have not got identifiable special needs that generate ORS funding but need more than just mainstream provision. There needs to be massive recognition of them, because if we could staff something for those kids... I know [staff member] makes a great job of applying for funding for those kids, it's a competitive funding and a few kids get it each year, a bit of teacher aide time, that funding itself is inadequate. We only put the kids in that we think deserve to get it, but they rank them and the others miss out... (Pōhutukawa College)

The principal of City College had similar views:

Special education is absolutely one of the areas where the staffing entitlement is not enough. We constantly exceed our budgeted plans in that area, particularly in relation to teacher aides because we don't believe in home-rooming them, so to adequately support a mainstreaming Kaupapa you've got to put in the staffing support. The whole ORS funding, with an ORS-funded kid you've got the funding then the kid moves on so you lose that funding and you've got to find the money to support the teacher if you value them, which you do because they're absolutely outstanding, so it's a Mickey Mouse funding system as far as that goes. And then the kids just above ORS are another challenge. We had an autistic kid here who didn't qualify for ORS funding and the dad was particularly vehemently oppositional to that, because he said "If Alex was in a wheelchair, there'd be no problem, but with autism that's not a tangible disability, you don't qualify for funding." There's other funding sources, but it's really hard to get and it's timebound and inadequate, but any money is better than no money. (City College)

Onekiritea College has eight High ORS students, for whom they receive 0.8 FTTE in total. However, on top of these, there are many students who have not met the ORS criteria but have major needs:

You've got a list of ORS kids, but there's at least 30 kids on top of that who in any civilised world would be identified as having special needs that require some extra support above and beyond... So we fund teacher aides for them... We have to do some grouping, so we end up reducing those kids' module choices because we have to group them in threes or thereabouts with one teacher aide... (Onekiritea College)

But even with such approaches, there are students whose needs are so major, the school is simply not able to meet them fully:

We have a kid who, if he's going to be in a mainstream school needs more than 11 hours teacher aide time, it's unrealistic, and I said to my LSC the other day, "Give him his 11 hours and in the other times, tell his teachers not to worry about him, because he's not disruptive", but she was in tears about trying to meet this kid's needs, she'd met with the MOE psychologist about trying to meet this kid's needs and they were just totally lacking any empathy about what the demands of that child were, and that's just one kid of a number... (Onekiritea College)

The school puts staffing into this area well above what they are allocated by the Ministry of Education. The principal said:

It is hugely demanding, the number of either teacher or teacher aide hours you get with kids with high needs is totally insufficient, so we pour money into topping that up, we do more than top it up, it's making it work, so teacher aides, I've never had a team of teacher aides like we've got here, and I've got an awesome SENCO who runs the team... We have a Learning Support Coordinator, who is the person who was our SENCO, and then we grabbed another staff member and made them three quarters SENCO, so we have two people working in there, and they have a team of teachers who work in those [literacy and numeracy support] classes, and they have a team of teacher aides that they run. (Onekiritia College)

Mapuna High, like the other schools, has students who have major needs but for whom there is no extra staffing:

With more staffing we'd definitely have smaller classes, all you need is to put 4 kids with traumatic backgrounds into a class the size of many of ours... The amount of money we're putting into teacher aides in mainstream, and that's not funded... If I had more budget, I would put in more teacher aides, because the ones we've got who are longstanding and highly capable make a massive difference in a classroom. [John] Hattie would disagree, he'd say teacher aides don't make a difference, but with some of these individual kids that we've got... The Board said to me recently, if you could wave a magic wand what would you do, and I said other than a gym, I'd have a class of 15 kids who otherwise I know are going to fall out because of their traumatic backgrounds, trauma below the age of 5... If I had money, I would use it for a unit for some of these kids, who spend a lot of time wandering anyway. They spend some of the time in student support but often they don't get there. We've got lots of kids who come in part-time who are making transitions either from health issues or truancy back into school and they go into student support and they might be on limited timetables. Alongside that I would want someone who understands what a trauma-sensitive school needs to be like, understands that for these kids every day is a new day, that you're helping to re-programme these kids' brains. That's what I would do if I had an extra million dollars a year. (Mapuna High)

Special Assessment Conditions

An issue specific to secondary schools is ensuring students with sensory, physical, medical or learning difficulties can access Special Assessment Conditions (SAC) for NCEA assessment, to optimise their chances of success. Coordinating applications for SAC is a major task, and on top of that, students who qualify for SAC have to have these conditions, such as a Reader-Writer, made available for relevant internal assessment tasks as well as for the external assessments.

One principal described their provision as follows:

The reading teacher spends a chunk of her time ensuring our students can get special assessment conditions, we have about 10% of our students who are entitled to SAC [special assessment conditions for NCEA], well over 100 students. The application is relatively straightforward, but it's once you've got it, then it's providing the resource to

make sure the students get the conditions for internal assessment, across Year 9 to Year 13... (Pōhutukawa College)

While we were talking, he pointed out a member of the public arriving at the school and waving at him cheerily. He said she was one of a number of volunteers who help their students access Special Assessment Conditions:

It's staffing, because she [the reading teacher] coordinates the volunteer army of mostly retired people who come in and help with this. They're amazing at removing barriers for our young people. (Pōhutukawa College)

Staffing for students with literacy and numeracy needs

Schools take a variety of approaches to helping students overcome literacy and numeracy issues that are holding them back in accessing the curriculum, but these approaches inevitably require small groupings, and use a lot of staffing.

At Onekiritea College, there is an extensive and flexible programme available for these students as need arises, and this takes advantage of the innovative timetable structure at the school:

In our SPIN lines [Special Interests], say for our foundation learners [Year 9 and 10], in every line we run this thing called SYMTEXT (for Symbols and Texts) and it's staffed by primary trained teachers who provide the support for kids around literacy and numeracy so they can access the curriculum elsewhere, so they're not withdrawn from any classes for it, they can choose it for half a year or a year. And there are some kids that have solved the problem they had in literacy or numeracy through SYMTEXT so they don't have to do it for a whole year as a subject, they can choose another Art or whatever. We've now rolled it out into [Year 11 and Year 12]. We've got a couple of teachers in there who work on creating contexts for kids to develop their literacy and numeracy... (Onekiritea College)

The principal at Bridge College believes firmly that the way into improving her students' lives is through teachers helping them to be effective lifelong learners:

There's a difference for me, and it really is in sharp focus here, between, yes, these kids need counselling, obviously, but where you get the most bang for your buck with these kids is actually having them learn something, being with them and treating them with respect about them being learners. (Bridge College)

This is reflected in the way the school uses its whānau groupings of 14 to 15 students to address students' literacy and numeracy issues as well as to meet their guidance needs. (See also Theme 2: Staffing for guidance.) In these whānau groupings, they are using an approach called 'Write That Essay'¹⁶, and students are expected to carry over this learning into their curriculum modules. The groupings are Year 9 to 13, which has advantages:

The parents want the Year 9 to 13 groupings, because they'll keep each other in line, the Tuakana/Teina thing... This requires big differentiation... (Bridge College)

¹⁶ <https://www.writethatessay.org/>

The school had streamed classes when the current principal arrived, and she moved away from that for a range of reasons:

But for me streaming is not the answer. There's no point in putting these kids... They're as bright as buttons, they're funny, a joke a minute, big brains, they just haven't learned to read and write, so what they need is to be in the whānau group, in these rich language environments, learning new language and getting to the point where they want to read and write. They don't need to be sitting next to an old Pakeha lady, again, as one boy said. What I would do if I had more staff, I'd have a group of about 10 kids in a whānau group, because that would be quite intense then ... You need 10 because you need to have a little bit of a mass of people, and they'd be sitting round a table like this having proper discussions. (Bridge College)

While she acknowledged that many of her students had "massive problems", she said the role of the teacher was to teach:

I keep saying to the teachers, you're not counsellors, you're not mum and dad, you're not whānau, you're not big brother, you're not the cool uncle, you're none of those things, you're a teacher, stick to that and be a teacher. So, whenever you talk to the kids, ask them how that work's going, did you finish that task, come with me and we'll do it now, that will take the kids up and out of their issues for that moment. (Bridge College)

The school is happy to use anything that assists learning, even if it might appear "old-fashioned":

In each whānau group they've just read a book, out loud, and the kids have loved it, and a young teacher just from teachers' college said to me he never would have believed it would work and it felt like a really old-fashioned thing to do, but they've read it, and it's made a difference to the kids wanting to read, so we now have 45% of the kids taking books out of the library. (Bridge College)

Funding rate for teacher aides

A number of principals mentioned that the money they received from the Ministry of Education for the teacher aides they were allocated did not match the rates set down in the latest Support Staff in Schools Collective Agreement. One principal said it cost the school \$7 per hour extra to employ a teacher aide, and schools are choosing between paying that out of their Operations Grant, or hiring the teacher aides for fewer hours than have been allocated.

The Mapuna High principal said:

If the Ministry would fund TA's at the right rate... Let's look at In-Class Support, the RTLBs will say "That's five hours" and I'll say "No it's not, you're paying \$20 an hour but these people are earning \$26, \$27, so how do I fund 11 kids, so that's 11 hours a week that's not funded?" It's terrible. The Ministry say "It's a contribution towards..." but I've got 11 of them... They're highly skilled, our aides, so that's 11 hours, let's say it's \$7 [difference], so that's \$77 every week, I don't have that, how do I find that? I said to the RTLB service, I'm sorry but they're getting 4 [hours] but I will make sure

they're podded so that actually it might be 8 [hours] with two of them ... (Mapuna High)

The principal at Forest Area School valued their teacher aides very highly, but was very aware that the government's failure to fully recompense schools for the Collective Agreement increases was causing a significant drain on their Operations Grant:

I'm running a \$70,000 deficit this year, with the new contract for teacher aides. We have five, six teacher aides here, almost all on full-time contracts, so the allocation before the pay increase was \$68,000, it's now \$148,000. We're very generous here which was one of the things that sold me to the place, there's almost a teacher aide for every second class... Which is great but it's costly, over a quarter of my operations grant. But if you value it, and the teachers value it, and it benefits the students, it's just a matter of finding cuts elsewhere. (Forest Area School)

Conclusions

While there is targeted staffing provision for those students who qualify through the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS), the majority of students with special educational needs miss out on this, and schools have to use other sources of staffing to assist them, and to coordinate provision. This comes largely out of curriculum staffing, at a cost in the form of larger classes and less curriculum breadth.

The Special Assessment Conditions provisions for NCEA add another layer of complexity, and are very demanding on teacher and teacher aide staffing.

The fact that the Ministry of Education has not adjusted the funding for teacher aides in the light of the recent pay increase is causing pressure on schools' budgets.

Theme 6: Funding staff above entitlement

It is common for secondary schools to fund teachers above entitlement. There can be a variety of reasons for this: hiring teachers out of FFP income in order to meet their particular needs; having students on secondary-tertiary programmes taken out of entitlement and cashed up in the Operations Grant but needing to provide teachers for them; and simply using funds from a range of sources, including fundraising, to meet curriculum and/or pastoral care needs not able to be met with entitlement staffing. If teachers have been hired from sources other than entitlement staffing, the school has to pay for any redundancies required. This can prove expensive if schools have been good employers and appointed these staff permanently.

International (foreign fee-paying) students

Schools that recruit foreign fee-paying students are expected to hire teachers out of the funds generated to provide for their curriculum and pastoral care needs, but the pandemic has left schools in a difficult position, with students returning home and not being replaced. Some of those teachers may not be needed for some time, and may not be able to be used elsewhere in the school.

Middleview College has been caught short by the loss of foreign fee-paying students. The principal said:

We've got \$330,000 of our bulk grant which we largely get from our overseas students which we haven't got at the moment, so we've got just to [make] do with our current staffing. We're actually employing more than our entitlement. It's roughly 4 teachers... That's hurting, because one of the main reasons we undertook to grow that was because of the income it generates to help the school out. So that's a double whammy if you like. We got funding from the govt last year to sustain numbers, they gave us the difference for what it had been and post-Covid, but we haven't got that this year. But when we've got to lay off staff, do the process, we haven't got the income to do it. The Ministry would say we elected to have them and it's our problem. There are management people, teacher aides that have got a language, homestay people, ESOL teachers, etc. You've structured your classes to take them into account, like 3 Chemistry classes instead of two. And we were paying for that extra staffing. And we were using the money just to run the school and pay for extra staff. We used a lot of the money for staff wellbeing like counselling hours, smaller class sizes, school vans and things like that, that we wouldn't have got otherwise. Basically, the operating grant you can wash your face with it, but you'll never be able to do any special things with it, you've got to create your own separate income stream to do that. International students are one option for that. (Middleview College)

Pōhutukawa College had 35 international students pre-Covid, and was on track to have 50 by the end of 2020 when the pandemic hit. At the time of the interview, they had six remaining. The principal said:

The European ones all got bundled onto planes and sent home even though some of them didn't actually want to go, the Chinese students too, so we've got some Japanese students left, they haven't been home for two years. Our newly appointed International Director is having to be redeployed in all sorts of ways, she's gone part-time and is working in two other areas of the school, but the strain will be on that next year, we'll probably have three kids then. The staffing was across the school so it's a bit hard to quantify, with 35 kids that's two teachers in the senior school. (Pōhutukawa College)

Onekiritia College is also becoming nervous about the possible implications of a continued absence of foreign fee-paying students on its ability to deliver its innovative curriculum for the benefit of all students. The principal admits that they "went to a number [of FFP students] higher than perhaps we would have wanted except that our model is quite staff-hungry..." They have used the ESOL staff hired for the FFP students to also meet the needs of domestic students from non-English speaking backgrounds and this has worked well in the past. However, the 35 FFP students they had about three years ago have dwindled as a result of Covid-19:

Around 25 were on site at the start of 2020, some went home and we dropped down to about 20 on site, two went back at the end of last year, and this year we realised that was an income hit but expenditure went down because we had funded a marketing trip that we no longer did, so it didn't hit us too much financially... This year we still have 17 who didn't go home, so they've been away a long time... I am getting a bit nervous, we've gone with about seven teachers over on our total staffing, the Board wanted us to stick with that staffing, they didn't want us to make anyone redundant, and they expect that the international student market will begin again, but maybe differently. (Onekiritia College)

City College, too, is facing a budget deficit of \$300,000 to \$400,000 this year as a result of loss of FFP students, and unlike Onekiritia College, they have embarked on a redundancy round. The school had been quite heavily engaged with the international student market and was feeling the loss:

In 2019 we had 122 international students, and this year we're down to 47, so that basically has meant a \$1m cut to our income. The ones we had here we arranged homestays over the summer, and a holiday programme... and of those 47 that we've got here now, we're predicting we'll have 25 stay on for 2022, so on that basis, we've gone through a redundancy with our international team, something I hadn't really signed up to, I was thinking it wouldn't happen, and we have to pay for the two redundancies we've done. We've got one permanent director and two part-time support people to look after the 47 we've got, and that means our break-even point has dropped down from 36 students to 19 students. That was the hard reality, that we were looking down the barrel of the international department staffing costing us money. We have made the decision that, should those numbers not eventuate, we will not go through any other redundancies, we'll redeploy those two staff members into other roles within the school. The Director position would remain. (City College)

Despite the above, the principal seemed quite philosophical:

Can you find me a principal that runs a school according to their FTTE [entitlement staffing]? A local principal tells me he's 15-18 staff above his entitlement, another school that usually has international students. Another school that had over 300 international students is in deep trouble. We were all warned, keep a nest egg, but nest eggs in schools? Give me a break! (City College)

Kauri College, on the other hand, had not gone into having FFP students in a big way, and had therefore not been as negatively affected as other schools. This was despite the school being in a prime tourism area, with a lot of outdoor opportunities for students. At the time of my visit, they had three FFP students left who had been there pre-Covid and had not gone home. The maximum the school had ever had was about six. As a small school, they had always been reluctant to become dependent on FFP students: "I think it's a mug's game when schools set themselves up to be dependent on foreign fee-paying students... I don't buy into this nonsense that this Covid thing has really hammered us because we haven't got our 200 fee-paying students, why did they ever get to that point?"

Instead of FFP students, the school was happy to have a number of exchange students on its roll:

We've found we get as much bang for our buck from the exchange students. They come in, they don't pay a fee but they get added to our staffing, and they generate operations grant. Because we're a smaller school, our classes might have six in Calculus, six in English, three in Geography, so they don't cost us anything at all in our staffing, but they generate staffing, so four or five exchange students can make quite a difference to our staffing formula, that will enable us to run one more course. They come in very good at English so we don't need to provide ESOL, whereas the international students, they require a timetabled period for ESOL plus other maintenance that's required around that because they're more needy and English is a second language, but we don't have to do anything for the exchange students. I'm tilted towards more exchange students and fewer international students. (Kauri College)

Secondary-tertiary programmes

When a school enrolls students in a secondary-tertiary programme, the students concerned are not counted in entitlement staffing, but the school receives funding per student that reflects the proportion of the week that the student is at school, e.g. three or four days. (The tertiary partner receives funding for the balance of the week.)

A number of case study schools had students on secondary-tertiary programmes. Kauri College, for example, had 4 students involved, and received a quarterly payment of \$9,650.00 in its operations grant to reflect this. The principal described himself as "a fan" of the system, because it benefitted their students and "has enabled them to bridge the gap between school and work, or school and training."

However, Kauri College keeps the numbers involved small, for the following reasons:

The number hovers between four and six, part of it's for pragmatic reasons around transport and those sorts of things, but largely it's about the kind of students it's designed for and matching that student to that programme, and we're not interested in building it up higher just to get a bit more money, that would be wrong. If we can't make it work for the student, we deserve to lose it... After the STP year, most of them leave for further training, apprenticeships or work. (Kauri College)

The principal at Forest Area School was more enthusiastic about their secondary-tertiary programmes, and half of their Year 12 students are involved this year. He said, "The kids love it, I think it's hugely successful." They have a Memorandum of Understanding with their closest polytechnic, but they can also use other tertiary partners because of their geographical position. Getting the students to the appropriate courses is an interesting challenge:

We have a school car and we pay someone to drive the students to the courses. We use a teacher aide that doesn't work in school on that day, so he and his wife drive them over, and we get that reimbursed, petrol and wages, it's a great system. (Forest Area School)

The cashed-up nature of the staffing didn't bother him unduly:

The stress of it for a lot of principals is that it comes off your formula staffing, but you get more cash back in than you'd get in formula staffing anyway. As long as you're happy to go over your formula staffing entitlement and then get the cash back in, it's all fine. (Forest Area School)

Kahuarau Girls' College is unusual in that it has its own trades academy which has 81 places across Years 11, 12 and 13. This is a large proportion of the roll to be cashed-up, so the school is funding a considerable number of teachers out of its Operations Grant. A further complication is that the school itself is using only about 50 of these places, with the rest being shared with other schools.

The principal explained where she is using Operations Grant funding for staffing, and where she plans to use it in the near future:

The trades academy, extra staffing in languages, and that's really to get the bilingual pathways under way... On a very basic level, in constructing a timetable, we need extra staff. In my head I have a dream list, so the other area that I know I have to put more staffing into is digital technologies, so that's the big area next year. So it's bilingual pathways, digital technologies, Science, Maths. (Kahuarau Girls' College)

Funding additional staffing to meet curriculum needs

Schools may also find they need to staff above entitlement because they can't meet students' curriculum needs otherwise. Middleview College finds it can rarely avoid this:

We always spend huge amounts on staffing extra to entitlement. In theory we want to spend zero, and in the odd year we have, but we inevitably have to pay, because in theory we might want to employ just that many, but it depends on the mix, because you can't necessarily find a teacher that can take Phys Ed and Science and Maths, you

might have to employ more to cover that, even though you only wanted to employ one body, so there's a lot of complexity. (Middleview College)

Mapuna High also funds staff above entitlement to meet curriculum needs, and it stretches their resources substantially. This year they are funding 3.24 FTTE, which is more than they feel they can afford. In part, this need is caused by the less than favourable ratio the Ministry of Education uses for their Year 7 and 8 students:

At the start of the year, we were saying "We can't go over 2, we can't go over 2 [FTTE above entitlement]", but we just couldn't make it work. With the class sizes we had to add another Year 9 class, Year 7 and 8 we've got classes of 31 this year, and they have to go in for their Science and Technology groupings and they're practical subjects and they're too big. In some cases we've got two classes split into three, making about 20 in each. But we're not staffed at 1:20, we're staffed at 1:29, so that makes it difficult for the Year 7 and 8. (Mapuna High)

When asked what she would do with more funding, the Mapuna High principal was clear she would spend it on more teachers:

I'd buy more teachers, you've got to put your money where your priorities are, but how can you? How can you manage a budget when it's just not enough? So, we buy in three teachers and I only wanted us to have two because of the international situation [a drop in foreign fee-paying student numbers because of Covid], and that allows us to run a better curriculum with some multi-level classes in the senior school. I'd love not to have multi-level classes, I'd love it if that were possible, but across languages, art, dance, some groups are just not big enough so you make this decision, are you going to cut the subject or are you going to teach multi levels? Dance has got Year 10 to 13 students in it, four levels in one class, the whole class is now around 27 because she won't say no... (Mapuna High)

The principal at Kahuarau Girls' College faced the same issue, and also talked about complexities with paying for teachers out of the Operations Grant:

We can't offer the things that they really need to do, it means that we don't have the digital technology pathways, we haven't got enough... It would be lovely to do more Music, all of those electives... the arts generally... It restricts the opportunities for students, really, it's all of those really future-focused things that we can't do, anything that's connected to IT – coding, robotics – we haven't got enough specialists to push that sort of thing forward. One of the things I'm going to do is to use our money to bring someone in, that's what we'll have to do, but you know there aren't that many mechanisms for me to do that anyway, to pay them. I'll have to use RRR's and then it's either \$4k or \$6k, and then we end up in that tangle with Novopay about who's paying for what. (Kahuarau Girls' College)

Smaller schools

Smaller schools are less likely to be able to fund additional teachers out of their bulk grant. The Kura Kaupapa Māori principal was asked if her school bought any additional staffing above entitlement, and she said "No, there's no wiggle room to

fund our own, but it comes right down to who would we fund, because there's no one there. You have to grow your own." (TKKM Rimu)

This concept of "growing your own" seemed to be unique to the Kura Kaupapa Māori context, and was a way of solving the problem of the nationwide shortage of teachers who are both fluent in Te Reo Māori and have appropriate teaching qualifications for the secondary specialist subjects. The principal said:

All the high-performing kura grow their own, like their graduates from Year 13 are encouraged to go to teachers' training college and come back, or the parents are encouraged to. I was one of the first that did that, because who best to teach our tamariki but our own parents and graduates? ... So we've got three Raukura, we call them, graduates from our kura, who have gone off and done teachers' training and then come back to us. We celebrate that. They're the role model for the next lot that are coming through, because they see this could be my pathway in front of me. A lot of kura are doing that, there'll be a lot of graduates who are now teaching, because that's the answer, the strategy that we're all doing in order to keep this Kaupapa going in order to be able to provide for the next generation. (TKKM Rimu)

Conclusions

Schools vary as to their ability to fund additional staffing, and size makes a difference. The two main sources drawn on appear to be funds from FFP students and funds from Secondary-Tertiary programmes. However, two principals confessed to me that their schools had quite substantial cash reserves, accumulated under their predecessors, and they were under pressure from the Ministry of Education to spend this money. In both cases, it seemed likely to be swallowed up more by property projects than by staffing.

Theme 7: The demands of collaboration

As one principal said of collaboration: “It takes a helluva lot of time...” In recent years, increasing demands have been placed on schools to collaborate:

- With whānau, to ensure that the school is connected with its community;
- With their local Māori community, to develop and make known the school’s policies, plans and targets for improving progress and achievement of Māori students;
- With other relevant cultural groups such as Pasifika and other cultures reflected in their school population;
- With other schools in their area, e.g. through creating Kāhui Ako or other forms of collaboration;
- With local social services, police and other agencies for the wellbeing of students;
- With local employers and tertiary organisations in order to facilitate a range of pathways for senior students.

There has been no additional staffing or funding provided to schools for this work, except in the case of Kāhui Ako where there is extra staffing provided to release certain teachers to do the work of the Kāhui Ako. Principals talked about the time demands that some of the various forms of collaboration place on them and other staff, particularly collaboration with Māori and in Kāhui Ako.

Collaboration with the Māori community

Pōhutukawa College is making determined efforts to work with its local iwi, including having an iwi representative on the Board of Trustees, and a Kaumātua for the school. However, the principal acknowledged that this collaboration work falls mostly on him, and that he has to be very careful not to place excessive demands on the iwi:

It’s a small iwi and I know staff would be keen to have more iwi connections but I’m really cautious of not just using them, it’s about relationships. Last time I went to see the Kaumātua, the Board had a series of questions they wanted me to ask, but I got through two or three of them and then decided that was enough, I needed to stop asking questions and find out how he’s going, you know? Rather than suck knowledge from him. But there’s not a lot of people, we’ve sadly lost a number of Kaumātua, so small numbers but good people. (Pōhutukawa College)

At Onekiritea College, the departure of a Deputy Principal provided an opportunity to get someone into the Senior Leadership Team to lead in that area. The principal said that DP’s role was “to lead the embedding of culturally sustainable pedagogies and practices in our school”. He commented:

Now that just rolls off your tongue, but it means connecting with the actual local community, the local whānau, developing programmes and practices and pedagogies and she’s the DP who’s in charge of projects, partners and pathways and sitting in her

umbrella is professional learning, so she manages the Within School leads [for the Kahui Ako], so that's become our professional learning focus, and we've only had one PLD focus for three years and that's embedding culturally sustainable practices and linking in with local iwi, which has been pushed along in some ways, and in some ways hindered, by our Kahui Ako who have this aspiration as well, which I don't think we would have if it wasn't for me insisting on that... They're all into it now. (Onekiretea College)

As is the case for Pōhutukawa College, the local iwi for Onekiretea College is small and therefore has capacity issues. Despite that, the school and iwi have found interesting ways to work together:

One of their few paid people has come in and run workshops on stories of the iwi, and been with us at our Noho, been with groups of kids to develop Kowhaiwhai and so on. A real gateway in was when we partnered with a group ... and we developed the first app, in conjunction with the iwi, that takes people through the stories, the Waiata, the Haka, and learning Te Reo, the group ran it for us and everything went through the [iwi] filter. That created a really neat bond out of which grew the idea of working closely with them to influence our curriculum. They're right in the middle of lots of things like developing a place for their marae, and so they said right from the beginning, "Don't you dare come and ask us to come and sit on your Board of Trustees because there's 30 Boards of Trustees that want that, what we want is a meaningful sustainable relationship." We really loved that message, because that's what we want, so we've got a strong relationship with them but it takes a lot of time. (Onekiretea College)

Mapuna High is finding collaboration with its local Māori community a challenge, due to competing demands on the local iwi:

It's a struggle. Prior to me being in this school, the Māori community was strong, and they built a Whare in the school, and at that point the parents were very connected with the school, and some of those parents even trained as teachers, and there were big ties with local iwi. However now there are Kura Kaupapa Māori in the city, and allegiances have shifted. We used to have a Māori DP and we relied on him for connections to the iwi, but he's left. We do have an established connection with a marae, and I want to take the whole staff there to establish a closer relationship.

At the same time, we are working on culturally responsive practice through our professional learning. We have 18 staff doing Ann Milne's course,¹⁷ and we're working really hard on concepts around anti-racism, on teachers becoming anti-racist, 25 teachers and Board members are doing the course through Education Perfect on Te Reo and Tikanga Māori.¹⁸ We have a Māori counsellor here one day a week, he's developed a model of wellbeing, and he and I do PLD together for other groups. (Mapuna High)

¹⁷ <https://www.keaeducation.nz/kea-associates/kea-associates-col-170/ann-milne.html>

¹⁸ <https://help.educationperfect.com/article/439-education-perfect-te-reo-māori>

The issue of trying to collaborate with an iwi that is very stretched faces Kahuarau Girls' College as well. There is a large Kura Kaupapa Māori in their wider area, and the school is trying to build trust with them about not being in competition:

We've got connections with [Kura Kaupapa Māori] and the iwi who are the mana whenua, we've actually asked the Ministry to help us formalise those connections. We've been very careful to say to the KKM that we're not setting up a Rumaki, we're not going to compete with them in that way, we're trying to transform our total school so that Maori feel they are part of it... The difficulty I find engaging with iwi is actually finding someone who will give us the time, they're really busy, so we struggle to find the elders to come in and be part of it. We're really lucky to have one of our Māori teachers who is an ex-student, trained here, came back and worked here, she really is the one who helps make those connections. We do things like blessings with our own people, it's when we need a male we have trouble, so [teacher] has been training some of the male staff to do the first part of the powhiri. (Kahuarau Girls' College)

Distance from a major centre poses challenges in this area for Kauri College:

We have 9% who identify as Māori but we don't have a local rūnanga, it's an hour 40 away, we have tried to get a kaumatua but haven't been able to. We started Te Reo Māori languages from the local polytechnic, but we haven't had that for the last couple of years. (Kauri College)

Pōhutukawa College has a Māori support staff member who they have shared with a nearby primary school because of his local knowledge:

We have a support staff member who has a lot of local knowledge and history and we gifted him to one of the local primary schools so he could take them on a hikoi around the local area, sharing the knowledge. His staffing doesn't come out of teaching but he's a huge resource. (Pōhutukawa College)

The principal of Bridge College, where at least 80% of the students are Māori, was startled by comments from an Education Review Office team who visited the school:

They said we didn't consult with our Māori community, and the Board are sitting there, and they're all Māori, all mana whenua, and some of the staff are Maori, mana whenua, and they were going "What do you mean?" (Bridge College)

In contrast with the other case study schools, at a Kura Kaupapa Māori, collaboration with the Māori community is fundamental to how they operate. TKKM Rimu is a composite school, but with a Kohanga Reo and a tertiary institution attached in addition. This gives them an ability to provide a continuous pathway of learning, both for the student and their whānau, and with this come significant expectations:

We've got an enrolment criterion that's mandated by our Board that we must have one fluent or confident speaker at home that's able to support the child, because gone are the days that it's the Kura's job to teach the Reo from 9 o'clock to 3 o'clock, no, it's a partnership with the whānau, with the Kāinga, to support the child's journey so that's what we tell them at enrolment, right from the start, that can you please share with us your Reo Māori plan, and if they haven't got one, we'll support them to develop one,

because that's what they need in order to support our tamariki... The tertiary part of the campus is able to provide that, they've got a tutor whose job is to teach Te Reo Māori to the tertiary students, and he offers a night class on site to any parent or any staff who want to improve their Reo. (TKKM Rimu)

It is clear from these examples that collaboration with Māori can take different forms in different contexts.

Communities of learning (Kāhui Ako)

The Kāhui Ako initiative was set up to provide a vehicle for schools to collaborate with other schools. Most schools in the sample were in Kāhui Ako.

Most often, secondary schools are partnered with primary schools in their general area. One principal commented that the initial notion of a secondary school working with the primary schools that fed into it (the so-called 'pipeline') didn't work very well in their city, with only about 40% of the students in their Kāhui Ako's primary schools actually moving to them for secondary. This did not mean that the Kāhui Ako had no value for them, however:

There are lots of initiatives they've had, it started off being subject-based and now it's wellbeing based, they're sharing practice across the CoL. We've got nine full-time learning support coordinators across the CoL, we put extra funding in to ensure every school had one. The coordination of those 10 is great, doing literacy, dyslexia, learning labs, teaching mixed ability classes. Science across the CoL has been a big success, it's really upskilled the primary teachers for science. The focus is cross-cultural practice this year. (Middleview High)

Onekiritia College is in a Kāhui Ako that the principal said had a reputation as high functioning, however he was ambivalent about the benefits:

I waver about the benefits. We've been really successful with collaboration about special needs delivery across the Kāhui Ako, and we've done some really cool work about what successful transition between primary and secondary looks like, and we've been really successful about exposure of students to career opportunities, so this Thursday we have a big Year 6 to Year 9 careers expo coming up, and also that transition from primary, we've been able to talk with primary people about what they think makes for a good transition process... But I do resent from time to time, quite regularly, the amount of work that it creates without the resource coming into our school. (Onekiritia College)

He made the point that while the Lead Principal got time and money for the role, the work of the Kāhui Ako also created workload for him that did not replace anything else, it was extra work. This included, for his senior leadership team, responding to rubrics that were being developed to define what success looked like in order to develop a graduate profile, and also leading workstreams for presenting to the principals in the Kāhui Ako. This is work for which he doesn't receive any extra time.

His school also misses out on the skills and experience of the people who have been appointed to Across Community roles:

Having staff involved, like we've got three of the Across Community leads from our school and there are only five in the whole Kāhui Ako, because they're bloody good people, and you get the staffing back for that, but they're only doing stuff for us for 0.6 so I feel as if we miss out on that quality. (Onekiritea College)

The principal of Kauri College was also unconvinced of the value of Kāhui Ako, and regarded it as money not well spent by the government:

I think there's too much spent on the Communities of Learning, \$360 million. I can see a benefit in this area for the principals in schools with only 2 or 3 staff because they can come together and discuss things, but for schools from this size up [250] there's enough diversity that you can solve most of your problems within the school. But in terms of anything else educational, we've seen nothing from the Community of Learning we're part of. (Kauri College)

Forest Area School was in a Kāhui Ako that was made up of four area schools, and this seemed to be working well for them. The principal called it "the most successful I've seen, because we're all the same and we all share the same issues." The absence of competition across the Community of Learning impressed him:

In this CoL, you can have four or five people across the CoL all teaching new entrants, and there's no competition, no reason to keep secrets, so they can get together and share. We have just one Within School teacher, who has four days out a term. We are all focusing on local curriculum design, so the CoL also has 200 hours of PLD on local curriculum design and we also have our own PLD, mostly on digital curriculum but also on local curriculum, accessing the local community and using the curriculum to access the local community, so I have made contact with [iwi], and the rūnanga are doing research for us on places of local importance, and are going to present in a staff meeting soon, and we have a facilitator working with staff on things like the ecology of the local area for science, those sorts of things. We're doing a combination of bicultural and other general local curriculum lens, which is fine... (Forest Area School)

However, this principal made a comment similar to the principal at Onekiritea College, that the CoL adds to the workloads of people who are not in CoL roles, and in a school where the curriculum leadership tier is very thin, this is a big issue:

Our CoL teacher will go away, and sometimes the AP Secondary goes as well, and they go to these PD days about local curriculum, and they bring it back to syndicate or staff meetings, but then the individual teachers are sent away to make it work, without the time because we don't have the time, and that is a staffing issue. In a larger school I'd have an HOD with a line, and they'd do the work for their department, and then they'd say to their staff, the assistant HOD and I have come up with this plan, and here's a unit we've planned on static images, and we want you to use that as a starting point. It's the same with differentiation, with biculturalism, you'd have someone with the time, energy or initiative to do it. But when you're the only person in the department, you haven't got that. (Forest Area School)

The City College principal could see advantages for them in being in the particular Kāhui Ako they were in, because it helped with recruitment of students into their Rumaki, which has a much larger zone than the rest of the school:

We haven't taken out of zone enrolments since 2009. Because of its special character, the Rumaki is able to take students from [across a wider area] and they do, but we have seven immersion units in primary and intermediate schools that are part of the Kāhui Ako so it's starting to become a no-brainer that we focus on those schools rather than [across a wider area]. What we've been working on is to see a greater proportion of the Kāhui Ako schools contributing students to our school. (City College)

He also found it difficult to argue against the principles of Kāhui Ako and he could see some benefits, however there were issues in the practicalities:

Conceptually, notionally, philosophically, the concept of a CoL is hard to argue with, especially at the high school level where you get the benefit of the transitions, that sequencing of learning, but practically, bloody hell, they're a nightmare to run because of the restrictions in relation to funding, in relation to achievement challenges, in relation to meeting time, getting everybody together from across 12 schools, and ... there's professional jealousy between HoDs, who have maybe the biggest role in a school, and the Across Community teachers who get almost an equivalent salary of a 4 MU HoD and they've got bugger all to do... The advantage of the CoL is we know what to expect, we know who's coming, we've met them, we know them, we understand them, we know their educational challenges so we're ahead of the eight ball when they arrive, and this is particularly the case with our learning support students where there's a relationship established right through the intermediate school so that confidence is established for the kids and their parents. (City College)

Pōhutukawa College, on the other hand, was not in a Kāhui Ako yet. They were in the process of getting their model and their achievement challenges signed off when the pandemic struck, and since then there had been no progress. The principal was aware that they were missing out in some ways as a result, but could also see problems with the model in terms of shortage of time for teachers to incorporate the new learnings of the Kāhui Ako into their own practice:

I'm conscious we're missing out on stuff not being in one, and we collaborate with the primary schools anyway, and I'd quite like to pick it up again, but it's where do you find the space and time? One thing I like about it is those in-school teachers, they get a little bit of time and remuneration for being an outstanding classroom teacher and staying in that role is one of the things I like about it. Across school teachers... The problem about the model is there's no funding for all the professional development that's needed, across the whole school, you get all these enthusiastic teachers, and they go right "We're going to do this, we're going to do that!" But then, everyone else says where's the time to do that? The teachers are busy doing their job and they haven't had all that kind of process the leaders have gone through, the thinking and the connections, and they've got all excited, and they've done all of that, then they go to put it out to the rest of the school and ... (Pōhutukawa College)

Conclusions

Collaboration with Māori is an essential part of every school's work, but it can be time-consuming and challenging, and there is no time allocation for principals or other senior leaders to do it. On the other hand, the principals I interviewed all found

this to be a really rewarding part of their school's work, and they could see significant benefits for all of their students, not just their Māori students.

Most case study schools were in Kāhui Ako, and most of those could see some benefits, but this is not a policy that is without problems. The lack of time for those who are not in Kāhui Ako roles but for whom the work of the Kāhui Ako has implications, from classroom teachers right up to principals, is an issue that is being felt in the case study schools.

Theme 8: The impacts on teacher supply of insufficient staffing

Although they were not specifically asked about this, some case study schools reported that they were losing teachers, or having teachers ask to move to part-time positions, because of the constant pressure caused by there not being enough staffing resource for teachers to do the work required, leading to excessively high workloads.

Teachers wanting to reduce hours

Middleview High had allowed a number of staff to drop to 0.8 FTTE loads:

We've got 14 staff on 0.8, they've made that choice because they think the workload of 5 classes is unsustainable. They come all day but they don't take as much work home. There's only one teacher in our Maths Department that teaches 5 classes, the rest are all on .8. Some people will tell you they don't have any work-life balance, they just work, 60 hours a week or more. (Middleview High)

In contrast, at Pōhutukawa College, the principal is reluctant to agree to teachers dropping to 0.8 or even 0.6:

And what you end up with is a number of teachers requesting to go part-time, and I decline the majority of them because we have the need for people to be team teachers, duty staff, to be part of the school, contributing to the life of the school. Some of them want 0.6, 0.8. What people get attracted to is the idea of .8 + 11%, you don't lose a lot of salary, and what people see is they won't have a form class, there's this feeling you can choose a bit about what meetings you come to depending on what you're timetabled for, it transforms your job with a little less income. But you just can't run a school like that. I've got two staff that are doing it temporarily this year, one for health, and one we could in terms of the staffing, it was fine for us to staff, as a one-off for this year, so it's kind of a bit like a refreshment year for her. I don't mind rotating that around different people, but I don't want permanent part-timers who just come in to teach and leave. They're not part of the school, they don't see the change initiatives, they're not part of the change, they haven't contributed to it. (Pōhutukawa College)

The principal at City College has also been facing requests from teachers to move to part-time positions, and because he is observing the Prime Minister's Covid-19 encouragement to us all to be kind, he has tended to agree:

More and more valued staff are negotiating with us, because we're kind like the Prime Minister tells us to be, part-time positions. There are a couple of people who are actually HoDs of smaller departments that are part-time... We accommodate that... That's a compromise, and it's something that my colleagues are saying you'll have to stop being so kind, because we can't sustain this any more... Despite all of the wins that PPTA have had over the 40 plus years that I've worked in this profession, I don't think teaching has ever been more difficult than it is now. (City College)

Loss of teachers

When I visited Mapuna High, the principal was just absorbing the news that one of her English teachers had suddenly resigned because of the lack of work-life balance:

I have an English teacher who's a great teacher who resigned on Friday because she says it's all-encompassing and she doesn't want to do it any more, she wants to do some other things in life. Fair enough. It's a big job. And I think the number of kids that you see in a day in a high school is too tiring. (Mapuna High)

The pace of change at the moment is also an exacerbating factor. The principal at Mapuna High said her teachers were:

... just coping with curriculum, the thought of Curriculum Refresh, NCEA, trying to get their heads around the changes for that, a lot of them are doing [various PLD programmes] and we're trying to bring in a new teaching and learning framework all based around four sort of areas, it's about motivation and resilience: knowing our learners, active planning, goal setting and feedback, and celebration. We've gone through all the research... We've got people who are saying it's just too much, we can't cope any more. We're begging people to coach sports teams... (Mapuna High)

Conclusions

It is a serious concern that teachers are opting out of part or all of the teaching role in the interests of their mental and physical health, and to achieve a better work-life balance. Qualified teachers are a precious resource, and New Zealand's supply situation is fragile. An injection of extra teachers into all secondary and composite schools would help to make the job of teachers, and of principals, more manageable.

Theme 9: Roll growth

The subject of roll growth came up in a number of interviews in relation to staffing issues. Principals recognised that having a roll that is growing reduces some staffing pressures, but it creates other problems, and allowing schools to grow at the expense of other schools in the immediate area was not good use of taxpayer funds.

Drivers for growth

The principal of Middleview High argued that Ministry policies incentivised principals to work to maximise the school's roll, rather than to keep it at an appropriate size that would make best use of the capacity of all the schools in a town or a region. This was inconsistent with the current government's wish to see a reduction in competition for students between schools, and was a waste of taxpayer-funded resources when some schools faced declining rolls and unused buildings, and other schools were bursting at the seams and demanding extra buildings.

He said, "If your roll is growing, you are really winning." The way this worked, he said, was that the revenue of a school is determined by its roll, and the more students you have, the bigger your Operations Grant, your 5YA property funding, your Furniture and Equipment grant, and your teacher entitlement. "If you lose students, and your average class size of 28 goes down to 22, you've got less staffing and less money, but you still have to put a teacher in front of each class, you've still got to turn on the lights and the boiler."

He expressed doubts about the principal's salary being based on the size of the school roll:

I say that a principal who lets their school grow at the expense of other schools should get **less** money, because it's their job to manage the roll at the right size, and not take students from other schools. I firmly believe that as a principal you've got an obligation to look at the managing of education in your whole region because we're all responsible for the cost of education to the taxpayer, and it's costing the Ministry huge amounts of money when they have a school that could take 800 more students and they haven't got them. (Middleview High)

The principal at Onekiritea College knows that, whether he likes it or not, his school faces considerable growth over the next few years, as it is sited in an area where new housing construction is very rapid. Although his Staffing Entitlement Notice warns that he may have to reduce staff at the end of the year, he is not worried, as "The demographic predictions are for rapid, rapid, rapid [growth] so it's always going to get eaten up." The school was designed for 1350 students plus a satellite class from a local special school, and it will reach that number within a few years. Onekiritea College has been resolute in taking students only from within its zone.

The principal at City College, whose roll is projected to grow to 2140 by 2023, and 2700 by 2030, also recognises that growth has its advantages: "The bigger your

school grows, the more subjects you've got in your option lines and the fewer clashes there are and kids get the programmes that they want."

In contrast, the growth at TKKM Rimu has been far more organic, responding to the needs and wishes of its particular school community. The principal explained the history:

We were only ever going to be a three classroom kura, so we built for a maximum of 40, primary. Things developed. We only built the kura, the primary sector, because we had an onsite Kohanga at the time, and we had our tertiary sector, and of course with the tertiary sector came parents, and the parents wanted a Kohanga, and then our graduates from the Kohanga had nowhere to go to continue their Reo, so that's how the Kura Tahī [primary school] was established. And then of course once they graduated year 8, our whānau said "Well, we need secondary now" and so that's pretty much in a nutshell what our progression's been like, it's been based on the needs of the school community of the time. Our secondary is still a baby, it was set up about 2018 off the top of my head. (TKKM Rimu)

Disadvantages of growth

The principal at Pōhutukawa College was facing a natural growth in the school population over the next few years as a result of a building boom in the school zone. The Ministry has committed to constructing ten new classrooms in the immediate future to cater to this growth. This is not a prospect he greets with any enthusiasm:

As the school grows, the complexities of the number of kids, it changes the dynamic of the school. I think a beautiful school is one of about 1100 students where everyone knows each other. As you grow, you're getting more young people in the same space, it gets more complex to know the kids, to have the relationships. One of our strategic goals is to build connectedness, but how do you achieve that or allow that to happen, what structures do we put in place to allow students to feel connected? (Pōhutukawa College)

As well as seeing advantages from growth, the principal at City College, aware of housing developments which will push up numbers in their zone, is similarly nervous about the prospect of his school growing significantly and losing some of its special character:

I agonise over the roll growing, because we're a very special school indeed, with no uniform, an inclusive school, and I'm desperately worried about losing the special character of the school if we get swamped with numbers. (City College)

Conclusions

Growth is a two-edged sword for schools. Because of rapid housing growth in their zones, some of the case study schools were having to face the prospect of their school rolls increasing in the next few years. They were worried about its impact on the culture and climate of their schools.

Overall conclusions

While secondary schools share many of the same concerns as primary and intermediate schools, as explored in the recent NZEI research¹⁹, there are a significant number of complexities that create additional needs for staffing in secondary schools. Subject specialisation is the key to secondary schools providing pathways beyond school for their diverse students, but this makes producing a timetable with insufficient FTTE to staff it a complex task indeed.

Many secondary schools are large institutions, and some very large, with twelve in the 2,000 - 2,999 range, and two with over 3,000 students. A large primary school would be around 600 students. The larger a school becomes, the harder it is to keep classes to a reasonable size and to find staffing to provide for the full range of students' needs, because the impact of the base elements of the staffing formula becomes less and less significant.

The demands for pastoral care and guidance counselling have accelerated over recent years, and been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Principals expressed a need for significant injections of extra staffing in this area, if they are to meet the critical wellbeing needs of their students. The urgency of these needs drives principals to pull staffing for pastoral care from the pool that would otherwise have been used for curriculum, or to fund additional positions rather than leave students without support. Socio-economic disadvantage adds to the range and intensity of wellbeing needs in schools, but social and mental health issues are evident in all secondary schools as students grapple with adolescence and the shift to adulthood in a difficult world.

The complexity of the leadership tasks in secondary schools has also been exacerbated by constant increases in demands on schools with no matching increases in management staffing. Over the last twenty years or so, there have been, to name just a few, new requirements for health and safety, teacher registration and appraisal, building partnerships with the Māori community, a changing national curriculum, and a constantly changing qualifications system, the NCEA. New pathways beyond school have opened up for students, and schools have had to expand their curriculum offerings to enable students to access these. As the curriculum expands, the need for skilled middle leadership expands with it.

Over half the schools in the sample were working on quite major curriculum innovation, in order to meet their students' learning and wellbeing needs, and to deliver a more future-focused approach to learning. These schools did not always have the benefit of buildings designed for these different approaches, but this did not stop them.

¹⁹ Pūaotonga Independent Review Panel (2021), op. cit.

It might be thought that innovative timetabling would make more economical use of the staffing resource, however it appears to be quite the opposite, that innovation demands more teaching staff, not less. There is a need for strong whanau/form teacher-student relationships in such schools, in groupings that need to be smaller than traditional form classes, no more than 15 students. These groupings tend to occupy more time in the week, because they ensure students can successfully navigate the range of pathways offered. This usually requires virtually every teacher to have a whanau group role, and is therefore a big demand on staffing. While this kind of innovation is strongly supported by Ministry of Education discourses, there is no extra staffing provision for such schools.

Special needs education has been a hot topic for many years, with protests from parents and schools about insufficient resourcing for it. In the case study schools, the biggest problem was how to support the students that have not been identified officially as requiring support, such as through the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme, but still have significant needs. Schools have to draw on their general curriculum staffing and Operational Funding to support these students to access the curriculum successfully.

Enabling students to access Special Assessment Conditions for NCEA is a major undertaking for secondary schools. Many schools do their own assessments of students, and make applications to NZQA to be allowed to provide the special assessment conditions. The school then needs to provide those conditions for both internal and external assessments. One fortunate school had a “volunteer army” of mostly retired people who gave their time to the school for this purpose, but even so, coordinating these volunteers is a major task.

The pressures of staffing secondary and composite schools when the entitlement staffing is insufficient for the needs mean that most schools end up funding some positions. Some of the case study schools had, pre-Covid, been able to do this through having some foreign fee-paying students, but this source is rapidly dwindling and there is no clear sign of when such students might be able to return. Some schools in the sample had substantial reserves that enabled them to fund additional teachers and teacher aides, but most did not.

Enrolling students in secondary-tertiary programmes forces schools to accept that some of their staffing will be “cashed up”, because these students are taken out of the roll calculations and funded instead. While the funding rate appears to be, on balance, a winner for schools, it still introduces a level of complexity and requires principals to consider what staffing they need to buy from the funding.

Collaboration in a variety of forms is another major task for the case study schools. There is a clear expectation that schools will build partnerships with local Iwi and their Rūnanga in order to improve the achievement of Māori students. However, these Māori organisations tend to be very stretched with multiple schools trying to

partner with them. Almost all of the case study schools had faced these issues, and were having to find creative ways to establish the partnerships they need.

Kāhui Ako, or Communities of Learning, have proven to be a mixed bag for schools. The original model that schools were pressured to adopt in the early years of the programme, of a single secondary school partnering with a number of primary and intermediate schools in its general area, has flaws. In urban areas with a number of secondary schools available, relatively few of the students from the Kāhui Ako's primary and intermediate schools may actually arrive at the secondary school, so the "pipeline" notion does not work very well. One of the most successful Kāhui Ako seemed to be one made up of a group of area schools, because they all had similar issues, and the "pipeline" for them was through the levels of their own school. On the other hand, principals could see benefits in themselves and their staff working with colleagues in primary schools.

Principals talked extensively of the negative impacts on their students when there was insufficient staffing. However, in addition, some principals talked about the negative impacts on teacher wellbeing and teacher supply as well, with examples being given of teachers trying to achieve work-life balance by moving to part-time positions, and others leaving the profession altogether. One might say that one consequence of insufficient staffing in secondary and composite schools is that the profession ends up "eating its own".

Appendix 1 – Staffing allocation v. usage

The tables below show the staffing allocations of four of the case study schools and compares them with how the staffing is actually used. The tables show only allocations and usage for Curriculum, Management and Base Guidance. Other bits and pieces of staffing, such as ORS staffing, Kāhui Ako staffing, beginning teacher staffing are ignored, because they are all specific to individuals.

In the Usage table, Curriculum staffing is divided into curriculum contact and non-contact, as both are assumed to be able to be staffed from the Curriculum Staffing allocation.

The 'All' column is the total amount of staffing allocated or used, expressed in FTTEs. It is clear there that all four of the schools are funding additional staffing. This means that the percentages are of a higher base than was granted in entitlement staffing.

The summary of the staffing supplied to these schools is given in the table below.

Staffing allocations:

School	Curriculum	Management	Guidance	All (FTTE)
1	83%	11%	6%	14
2	81%	11%	9%	29.1
3	85%	9%	6%	48.53
4	88%	8%	4%	64.9

The proportions of staffing use by designated purpose were:

Staffing usage:

School	Curriculum Contact	Curriculum non-contact	Management	Guidance	All (FTTE)
1	74%	13% ²⁰	9%	4%	15.2
2	57%	22%	17%	4%	36.18
3	64%	22%	11%	3%	56.01
4	62%	19%	11%	7%	69.7

²⁰ As this is an area school, not all teachers receive 5 hours (20%) non-contact time per week.

Appendix 2 – Interview Schedule

These questions are just conversation-starters and are not fixed. However, they will give you a sense of the areas we are likely to cover. You are likely to have other areas that you would like to emphasise.

1. Do you believe that the MOE staffing you receive is adequate? (The Appendix to this schedule is a list from SPC of what they see to be schools' obligations to the state for which staffing is required.)
2. If you don't believe your MOE staffing is adequate, tell me about how it falls short for your school.
3. Is the school funding any additional staffing? If so, what's the source of that funding (e.g. foreign fee-paying students, bulk grant, community fundraising, etc), what are you using it for, and why do you feel it is needed?
4. The MOE staffing for the role of principal is 1 FTTE for each school. The principal role is very complex, and in most schools, other members of staff are delegated parts of the role. What are your thoughts about this?
5. There's an increasing expectation on schools that they will work in collaboration with other schools and with the community, particularly the Māori community. How are you meeting this expectation and do you have a sense of how much staff time this requires?
6. The 2012 Secondary Schools Staffing Group report indicated that schools of different sizes would have more or less difficulty in meeting the maximum average class size of 26 that is specified in the STCA. How many of your staff would be over that maximum average class size, if any? How are you dealing with that issue, and what do you see as possible solutions?
7. You will no doubt be having to make compromises between conflicting demands on your school's staffing based on your school values and culture, the wider context in which your school is operating, the demands of legal and collective agreement requirements, and other factors. Could you tell me about how this works in your school?
8. What are the impacts of not having enough staffing? In particular, could you talk about impacts on students, impacts on staff and impacts on yourself?
9. Is there anything we haven't covered that you want to raise at this point?