

A needs-based model for secondary staffing

A discussion document from Secondary
Principals' Council of Aotearoa

September 2021

Contents

Introduction	1
Assumptions for a needs-based staffing model	2
A needs-based model	3
Background to this proposal	5

PPTA represents the professional and industrial interests of secondary and area school teachers and principals.

PPTA | PO Box 2119, Wellington 6140 | Phone: +64 4 384 9964
Email: enquiries@ppta.org.nz



Introduction

Adequacy of the current secondary staffing formula

The current formula for allocating secondary staffing fails to meet the needs of schools. It does not get the amount of staffing or the components right for the different types of staffing schools need.

In 2020, the Secondary Principals' Council of Aotearoa (SPC) initiated a four-part review of the adequacy of secondary staffing. The aim of this review was to develop a needs-based staffing model to better serve our schools and our students. The review included:

- » a survey of principals about the entitlement staffing adequacy¹
- » a wider teaching force survey of where additional staffing is most needed²
- » case studies of staffing use in a representative group of secondary schools³
- » a staffing summit for secondary and composite school leaders to consider current pressures and expectations on schools, identify coming changes and consider how to staff schools for their needs.⁴

SPC has produced a summary report of its findings to date on the adequacy of secondary teacher staffing and the need for change.⁵

A needs-based model

Through these engagements with school leaders, we have developed a model of resourcing for secondary staffing that would more accurately reflect the needs of our students and our schools. We are now releasing it for discussion with the wider sector, politicians and with the community.

You can provide feedback to your local SPC representative, or chairperson@spc.org.nz or online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SPCNEEDSBASEDSTAFFING2021>

We look forward to hearing your thoughts.



Kate Gainsford
Chair, Secondary Principals' Council of Aotearoa

1. SPC. (2021). *Entitlement staffing adequacy: a survey of secondary and composite school principals*. Wellington: Secondary Principals' Council of Aotearoa. <https://www.ppta.org.nz/past-events/the-staffing-summit/document/1457>. The report gives more detail of the lack of needs-based logic in the current formula.

2. A survey will be undertaken in term 3 2021.

3. Alison, J. (2021). *It's just not enough: Principals discuss the staffing of secondary and composite schools*. Wellington: Secondary Principals' Council of Aotearoa. <https://www.ppta.org.nz/past-events/the-staffing-summit/document/1447>

4. SPC. (2021). *2021 staffing summit report*. Wellington: Secondary Principals' Council of Aotearoa. <https://www.ppta.org.nz/assets/Staffing-Summit-2021/SPC-Staffing-Summit-Report-21.9.21.pdf>

5. SPC. (2021). *Secondary staffing and the need for change*. Secondary Principals' Council of Aotearoa. [ADD URL WHEN AVAILABLE ONLINE]

Assumptions for a needs-based staffing model

The staffing formula allocates the amount of teaching staffing available to secondary and composite schools. No formula can differentiate perfectly based on need, though fine tuning can be done through other mechanisms (application pools or special purpose staffing) if it uses clear, fair and objective criteria.

The total staffing delivered to a school through its entitlement staffing should approximate as closely as possible the needs of secondary and composite schools in a way that the current model significantly fails to. A needs-based model would begin with the actual needs schools have and a sense of the magnitude of staffing required and then be formulated component by component to meet those needs.

The model proposed for discussion is underpinned by the following assumptions:

- » The entitlement staffing should be sufficient for the basic needs of any school and adjusted for each school to reflect differences in relative need.
- » The staffing formula should be logical, transparent and open to accountability.
- » While schools should retain flexibility around the use of the staffing generated, the relativities between the formula components should reflect general patterns of staffing use in schools.
- » More staffing should be allocated through general entitlement to meet core needs.
- » More staffing should be allocated for common local needs that are not currently recognised by the entitlement staffing but are an expected component of education in New Zealand.
- » An average of 5 FTTE per school additional staffing should be allocated through the staffing formula.
- » There should be no schools that have less staffing than they currently do in a shift to a needs-based model.

A needs-based model

Schools with a secondary roll under a minimum level (e.g. 50 year 9–13 students) would have a base staffing allocation to cover management, pastoral care and curriculum.

Schools above that minimum would be resourced more directly for need through four entitlement components, special education components and additional staffing components. The level of special needs staffing must be reviewed separately to ensure it is adequate for needs and for meeting our national and international obligations.



Curriculum entitlement

- » A base entitlement regardless of school size that allows for breadth of specialist coverage.
- » Curriculum ratios that allow schools to have average class contact sizes of 25 or fewer (such as 1:20 for years 7–10 and 1:17 for years 11–13).
- » A per student component is added to support local curriculum and co-curriculum/extracurricular.
- » A per FTTE planning and preparation time component.
- » The sum of these is increased by a weighting based on the equity index.



Guidance, pastoral and learning support entitlement

- » A base pastoral care and learning support component would apply regardless of size of school to ensure that there is someone in each school who can specialise in the provision of pastoral care and guidance (e.g. 0.5 FTTE per school).
- » A roll-based entitlement for pastoral care and learning support (e.g. 1 FTTE per 400 students).
- » A base component regardless of roll size for all schools to allow appointment of a teacher with expertise in special needs education and learning support (e.g. SENCO or LSC).
- » The sum of these is increased by a weighting based on the equity index.



Professional development and mentoring entitlement

- » The curriculum and guidance and pastoral staffing components generate additional staffing for the professional development and mentoring of teaching staff (e.g. 1 hour per week per FTTE staffing), which is then increased by a weighting against the equity index.
- » More-isolated schools would have an additional adjustment based on their isolation index.



School leadership and management entitlement

- » 1 FTTE is designated for the principal regardless of roll size.
- » A base component community/whānau/iwi liaison (e.g. 1 day per week) plus a per student component (e.g. 1 FTTE per 1,000 students) weighted against the equity index
- » The curriculum and guidance and pastoral staffing components and professional development and mentoring components are divided by 9 to provide the general management component.

Additional components

Current to-individual allowances (e.g. beginning teacher time allowances) and special education staffing etc. would be in addition to current entitlement. Two new components are proposed:

- » An additional time allocation for each student enrolled in an approved online course to cover both the lower class ratios and the additional e-dean time required.
- » For directed initiatives, such as the NCEA refresh, the staffing entitlement should be temporarily increased to provide time for the PLD, planning and implementation of the initiative.

A more-rational basis for meeting school needs

Applying the components in this model would produce a more rational allocation of staffing to schools than the current staffing formula. It would be more reflective of the general areas of need of schools. Fine tuning by weighting against the equity index for each school would then make the allocation more responsive to the differences in needs arising from their particular student profile.

Background to this proposal

2012 Secondary Schools' Staffing Group

In 2012, SPC was represented on the Secondary Schools' Staffing Group (SSSG), which investigated the staffing of secondary schools.⁶ The findings in its report⁷ are discussed below.

The SSSG noted the following:

- » The staffing formula should be reviewed to address the disproportionately negative effect of the formula on larger schools and junior high schools.
- » The staffing allocation is based upon liability limitation rather than school and student needs.
- » There needs to be a common understanding of what a needs-based resourcing model may be and how it might improve the delivery of staffing.
- » There needs to be a better understanding of the use of operational funding and locally raised funds for additional staffing and the associated risks and opportunities.

The SSSG noted the lack of information on whether the guidance time allocation is appropriate in secondary schools or what ratio of students to guidance hours is most appropriate (generally or by decile). It also noted the lack of information on whether the management time allocation is appropriate for need. A current analysis of these two entitlement components shows that they are poorly designed to meet needs.

The report notes that, as the secondary roll size increases, both the management staffing and the staffing provided for guidance and pastoral care decrease as proportions of total staffing.

Schools can cross-subsidise between staffing entitlement components, but capacity to do so declines with increases in roll size.

The report also noted that there were class size implications of the curriculum staffing formula.

- » The largest average class sizes and the highest proportion of classes over 30 are more likely in larger schools, in junior secondary years and in classes where there has been a selection of 'higher ability' students.
- » The larger the school, the higher the proportion of teachers with an average class size of more than 26 and the more likely there will be teachers with individual average class sizes over 30.

Modelling of the curriculum entitlement staffing predicts increasing class sizes as the roll gets larger and that the ability to avoid over-large classes rapidly reduces unless the schools use other staffing resources for curriculum purposes.

Most principals employ additional staffing to supplement entitlement staffing. At the time the SSSG reported, 319 secondary schools employed a total of 940 FTTE teachers above entitlement. Generally, larger schools employ proportionately more additional staffing, and higher-decile schools employ proportionately more relative to their size than do low and mid-decile schools.

6. In addition to the principals' representative, the group included the Ministry of Education, NZPPTA and NZSTA.

7. Secondary Schools' Staffing Group. (2012). *Report of the Secondary Schools' Staffing Group*. Wellington: Ministry of Education and Post Primary Teachers' Association. <https://www.ppta.org.nz/publication-library/document/32>

Increasing pressures

Despite agreement between the signatories to the SSSG report that the staffing formula does not work for larger secondary schools in terms of class sizes and that there is no evidence the staffing allocations for management and pastoral care and guidance are appropriate, nothing has been done by successive governments to address the problems.

While the staffing entitlement has not significantly changed since 2012, there are new pressures on the uses of staffing:

- » Greater demands for pastoral care and guidance.
- » An increasingly complex management environment.
- » Greater expectation of:
 - differentiated learning and learning pathways
 - community and whānau liaison
 - a move away from streaming and integration of students with greater learning needs
 - the use of innovative learning environments.
- » The accelerated development of blended and asynchronous teaching and learning practices.
- » Increasing recognition of the wellbeing impacts of workload of principals, senior leaders,⁸ middle leaders, pastoral care teachers and classroom teachers.
- » The COVID-related loss of international fee-payer income has exposed the vulnerability of schools relying on the additional teachers it purchased to mask shortfall in the entitlement staffing.

Recent findings

A range of reports provide many reasons for change to a more rational and realistic needs-based staffing formula for secondary teaching and learning and the functions that support it.⁹

Needs

Identified school needs that can be addressed through the staffing formula include:

- » curriculum breadth
- » qualification delivery
- » class size
- » co-curriculum/extracurricular
- » preparation and marking time etc. for curriculum teachers
- » middle management and leadership
- » senior management and leadership
- » pastoral care and guidance
- » learning support and special education
- » community and cross-school liaison
- » mentoring and PLD
- » new initiatives introduced by government
- » online and blended learning.

These needs vary by size and complexity of school, the nature of the students attending and relative isolation (specifically in terms of access to PLD).

8. Riley, P., Rahimi, M. & Arnold, B. (2021). The New Zealand Secondary Principal Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Survey: 2020 data. Melbourne: Centre for Research for Educational Impact (REDI), Deakin University. <https://www.principalhealth.org/reports/NZ%20Secondary%20Principal%20Occupational%20Health,%20Safety%20and%20Wellbeing%20Survey--2020.pdf>

9. See footnotes 1, 3, 4 and 7.

The table¹⁰ below shows that the proportion of entitlement staffing does not match the proportion of staffing use by schools. The particular stand-outs are the entitlement for management and use of staffing for management, which are the inverse of each other, and the provision for and use of pastoral staffing where schools are generally using less and less staffing proportionately for pastoral care of students as their rolls increase.

Staffing allocations				
School	Curriculum	Management	Guidance	All (FTTE)
1	83%	11%	6%	14.0
2	81%	11%	9%	29.1
3	85%	9%	6%	48.5
4	88%	8%	4%	64.9

Staffing usage					
School	Curriculum contact	Curriculum non-contact	Management	Guidance	All (FTTE)
1	74%	13%	9%	4%	15.2
2	57%	22%	17%	4%	36.2
3	64%	22%	11%	3%	56.0
4	62%	19%	11%	7%	69.7

10. See footnote 3.

Note that these figures represent proportion of staffing allocation and proportion of staffing use. All these schools used more staffing than they were allocated as they employed additional teachers.

This information from the case studies helps to explain an apparent anomaly in the staffing adequacy survey where principals noted that the highest level of under-resourcing was in the management staffing component but the highest area of pressure from understaffing was in the pastoral care needs of the students. The case study schools seem to confirm that schools must use what staffing is available first for management and curriculum needs and only then have flexibility to apply what is remaining for pastoral care.

This is an important consideration in shifting to a needs-based staffing model as it suggests that, unless the pastoral care staffing was tagged for use, pastoral care needs would only be addressed when there is sufficient staffing available for the curriculum and management needs of a school.

Differences between staffing supplied and staffing used

- » Principals identified that, on average, they are 5 FTTE under-resourced for mandated requirements though the staffing formula. This equates to an under-resourcing of about 1,600 FTTE across secondary schools for core responsibilities.
- » Proportionate use of staffing for purpose is different to proportionate supply of staffing components.
- » Schools have to prioritise staffing use for curriculum and management over pastoral care.
- » Schools use an average of 1.22 FTTE of self-funded staffing for local requirements, which are common (or should be) to all schools as extracurricular/co-curriculum and iwi/community liaison. That is equivalent to an additional 340 FTTE across all secondary schools but is an underestimate as this is only what schools could afford to pay for, not what would be optimal.
- » The current system under-resources secondary schools for needs by more than 2,000 FTTE.
- » The current system of staffing does not recognise difference in needs that are generated by the student intakes nor the new demands placed on schools – for example, for consultation, individualised learning and collaborative practice.

Contact us

PPTA Te Wehengarua national office: 60 Willis Street,
Wellington, 6011

Postal address: PO Box 2119, Wellington, 6140

Phone: (04) 384 9964

Fax: (04) 382 8763

Email: enquiries@ppta.org.nz

Website: ppta.org.nz