

# **SURVEY OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS ON SECONDARY TEACHER SHORTAGES**

**November 2017**

**A report from NZSPC/SPANZ**

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## The survey

The New Zealand Secondary Principals Council (SPC) of PPTA and the Secondary Principals Association of New Zealand (SPANZ) surveyed secondary school principals about their current experience of secondary teacher shortages and anticipated staffing requirements for the start of 2018. The online survey was open from 20 October 2017 to 7<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

This report summarises responses of secondary school principals nationally and by regional groupings and extrapolates to all 331 secondary schools.

### ***Defining 'regions'***

The NZPPTA regional boundaries were used for the analysis in this report.

Metropolitan regions are those which include cities/conurbations with populations of over 100,000, i.e.:

- Auckland/Manukau
  - Wellington/Hutt Valley
  - Canterbury
  - Waikato
  - Western Bay of Plenty
  - Hawkes Bay
  - Otago
- 'All regions' – every region, including those listed separately below.
  - 'Auckland/Manukau region' (*A/CM*) - the schools covered by the Auckland and the Counties Manukau regions.
  - 'Other metropolitan' are the Metropolitan regions excluding Auckland/Counties Manukau.
  - 'Other regions' are the all regions excluding the seven metropolitan regions defined above.

### **Responses**

	All regions	Auckland/Manukau	Other Metropolitan	Other regions
Schools	331	80	123	128
Responses	126	25	53	48
Response rate	38%	31%	43%	38%

## Executive summary

- 1 Problems filling secondary teacher vacancies are countrywide, but more intense in the major metropolitan regions and currently most intense in Auckland/Manukau.
- 2 The majority of responses from all parts of the country indicate the appointment of secondary teaching staff is more difficult than in 2015.
- 3 Currently there are indicated to be around 570 positions that secondary schools have not been able to fill with external appointments.
- 4 More than 700 positions in secondary schools are indicated to have been filled only by compromising on the qualifications or quality of the appointees.
- 5 Secondary school principals are identifying the following as the most common manifestations of the supply crisis:
  - smaller numbers of quality applicants for positions
  - smaller number of applicants for positions
  - too few experienced teachers applying
- 6 Most principals reported being sometimes unable to find external relief cover for absent teachers.
- 7 The information provided suggests that the 331 secondary schools currently expect to have to find around 1400 secondary teachers will need to fill their expected vacancies for the start of 2018.
- 8 Secondary teaching positions/vacancies/appointments in composite schools will be in addition to those identified in this report.

## Filling vacancies

A majority of principals in all regional groupings are finding the supply situation more difficult than in 2015. 71% thought it harder or much harder than two years ago, with 92% of responses from Auckland saying this.

**Compared to 2015, how hard overall have you found it to fill vacancies this year (other than short term relieving vacancies)?**

### Region

Response	All	A/CM	Other Metro	Other
Much easier than 2015	2%	0%	4%	2%
Easier than 2015	3%	4%	2%	4%
About the same as 2015	15%	4%	23%	13%
Harder than 2015	27%	28%	34%	20%
Much harder than 2015	44%	64%	34%	43%
Unsure/don't know	8%	0%	4%	17%

Those who indicated increased difficulty in appointing identified the main problems as smaller fields of quality applicants, smaller fields of applicants generally and too few experienced teachers applying.

**How has the greater difficulty in making appointments been manifested?**

Response	Region			
	All N=117	A/CM N=25	Other Metro N=53	Other N=48
Smaller numbers of quality applicants	79%	92%	59%	73%
Smaller number of applicants	61%	64%	53%	66%
Too few experienced teachers applying	55%	60%	45%	56%
Greater competition for the top applicants	37%	68%	22%	27%
Other schools offering additional inducements	27%	72%	12%	15%
Too few new teachers applying	23%	24%	22%	27%
Greater competition for graduates at university principals' days	18%	48%	8%	10%
Other difficulty	26%	40%	24%	29%

## ***Examples of other difficulties identified (as quoted):***

### Auckland

- *It seems that applicants generally come from within Auckland not outside , so just rotating the same number of teachers around Overseas applicants now being cautious as to which region in NZ they wish to work in , Auckland often not the choice*
- *Graduates told me at University interviews days, Auckland was not there first choice as it was too expensive to relocate to or live in.*

### Incentives

- *Potential teachers demanding units for roles that haven't been advertised with units.*

### Isolated areas

- *Isolation is a key issue for our area. We tend to get transient single sex teachers applying for and getting jobs at our school.*

### Middle leadership

- *This was particularly noticeable in middle management roles area*

### Overseas applicants

- *Increase in applicants from overseas without necessary pre-requisites, or with teaching experience only in countries/educational systems which have very different cultures/expectations from NZ*
- *Too many overseas non-English speaking teachers applying....as far away as Turkey*
- *Most of the already very limited number of applicants, have no or very little experience in NZ education or NCEA*

### Widening subject shortages

- *The pool of applicants has reduced significantly. Science, Maths, Technology are essentially non-existent. Now we are seeing the pool reducing in subjects like History, Economics, Geography also.*

## Day relievers

A majority of principals in all regional groupings are finding that they cannot access day relievers at least some of the time. 77% sometimes or often cannot find day relievers to cover classes.

### Access to secondary-trained day relievers for absences

Response	Region			
	All	A/CM	Other metro	Other
Always have access to more than needed	4%	0%	8%	2%
Can find external cover when required	17%	8%	19%	19%
Sometimes cannot find external cover	64%	60%	58%	69%
Often cannot find external cover	13%	24%	13%	6%
Other	0%	0%	0%	0%

### Principals' comments on relievers

- *Does not help the ridiculous constraints on registration these days.*
- *Ok at this stage but most are retired teachers and been with us for years. The future does not look bright however.*
- *Our school regularly needs to readvertise to fill vacancies. There are very few relievers available and our staff regularly use their non-contact allocation to cover classes.*
- *The new requirements on registration for relief teachers is already becoming a challenge for schools to find and employ suitable relief teachers - and this will certainly get worse!*
- *We have relievers but increasingly not in the subject area involved. New regs are wiping out the older retiree pool due to the cost and inconvenience in remaining qualified to teach.*

## Vacancies which could not be filled by external appointment

Principals indicated how many secondary teaching positions they have been unable to fill with external appointments. This does not include positions which were filled by a strong internal candidate against external competition.

These responses indicate that there are currently 573 secondary teaching positions around the country that secondary schools have not been able to fill with external appointments.

### *Advertised permanent positions which could not be filled externally*

Region	Positions <sup>1</sup>	Schools <sup>2</sup>	Positions per school <sup>3</sup>	Projected <sup>45</sup>
All	134	77%	1.08	360
Auckland/Manukau	48	86%	1.92	
Other metropolitan	35	71%	0.67	
Other regions	51	79%	1.09	

### *Advertised long term positions which could not be filled externally*

Region	Positions	Schools	Positions per school	Projected
All	76	65%	0.65	220
Auckland/Manukau	31	75%	1.41	
Other metropolitan	23	61%	0.45	
Other regions	22	65%	0.50	

### *All advertised positions which could not be filled externally*

Region	Positions	Positions per school	Projected
All	210	1.73	580
Auckland/Manukau	79	3.34	
Other metropolitan	58	0.68	
Other regions	73	1.59	

**NB.** In addition to these positions are the unfilled secondary teaching positions in the 127 composite schools.

<sup>1</sup> This is the total number of positions indicated by all the schools responding from the region.

<sup>2</sup> This is the proportion of all the schools responding from the region with such vacancies.

<sup>3</sup> This is the total number of positions indicated by all the schools responding from the region divided by the number of schools responding from the region.

<sup>4</sup> To nearest 10 positions

<sup>5</sup> This is the average number of positions for all the schools responding from the region times all the schools in the region.



## Compromise appointments

Principals indicated how many positions they have had to fill with compromises on the appointments.

Compromises were defined as those made when the appointee:

1. Lacked appropriate subject qualifications
2. Lacked appropriate subject qualifications at the teaching level
3. Caused concerns that would *normally have precluded appointment*

The responses indicate that there are currently 709 secondary school positions around the country that principals have filled with compromise appointments

### ***Permanent appointments which required compromises to fill***

Region	Positions	Schools	Positions per school	Projected
All	149	80%	1.19	400
Auckland/Manukau	66	94%	2.64	
Other metropolitan	36	72%	0.68	
Other regions	47	81%	1.00	

### ***Long term appointments which required compromises to fill***

Region	Positions	Schools	Positions per school	Projected
All	112	48%	0.95	310
Auckland/Manukau	45	68%	2.05	
Other metropolitan	34	40%	0.68	
Other regions	33	48%	0.72	

### ***All appointments which required compromises to fill***

Region	Positions	Positions per school	Projected
All	261	2.14	709
Auckland/Manukau	111	4.69	
Other metropolitan	70	0.83	
Other regions	80	1.72	

**NB.** In addition to these positions are the compromise appointments to secondary teaching positions in the 127 composite schools.

## Anticipated appointments required for 2018

Including the existing vacancies, principals expect to have to fill a number of permanent and fixed term secondary teaching positions for the start of the 2018 year. They gave their best indication of the number of such positions.

The responses indicate that secondary school principals currently expect to have to find 1400 secondary teachers around the country to fill staffing positions for 2018.

### *Expected teacher numbers to fill permanent positions for 2018*

Region	Positions	Schools	Positions per school	Projected
All	328	81%	2.69	890
Auckland/Manukau	113	92%	4.52	
Other metropolitan	108	75%	2.12	
Other regions	107	83%	2.33	

### *Expected teacher numbers to fill long term positions for 2018*

Region	Positions	Schools	Positions per school	Projected
All	180	68%	1.58	520
Auckland/Manukau	45	80%	2.25	
Other metropolitan	78	64%	1.56	
Other regions	57	66%	1.30	

### *Expected teacher numbers to fill all positions for 2018*

Region	Positions	Positions per school	Projected
All	508	4.27	1410
Auckland/Manukau	158	6.78	
Other metropolitan	186	2.84	
Other regions	164	3.63	

**NB.** In addition to these positions are the required secondary teaching appointments for the 127 composite schools.

## Examples of Principals' Comments

### **Applicant numbers/quality**

- *Have definitely noticed fewer applicants and fewer quality applicants.*
- *I have been involved with or have appointed staff often over the last 15 years. This year has been the most challenging in terms of the low number of applicants in particular*
- *It is getting harder and harder to get good applicants and to have a choice of appointment. There are fewer NZ trained applicants and many more overseas trained applicants.*
- *Quality of applicants is my main concern*
- *The number of applicants for 'Teacher' positions is exceptionally worrying. With the exception of PE, I have only received 1-2 applications for each position advertised. I am exceptionally concerned about what will happen in Term 4 and over the holiday period.*
- *The number of quality applicants for jobs is the lowest I have ever experienced - the situation for quality state education is dire. Urgent action needed!*
- *The pool of applicants is not as good as it has been.*
- *There is a definite decline in numbers of applicants and quality of applicants. We used to be spoilt for choice. It is also true that we are now needing to replace staff who are retiring who have been with us for a long time. This is also making it more evident.*
- *Vacancies are getting more difficult in all areas.*
- *We are fortunate in that as an established and stable school we have small staff turnover but over the last five years I have definitely noticed fewer appropriate applicants across the board.*
- *We have advertised twice for a Maths teacher and have not receive suitably qualified/experience applications*

### **Auckland**

- *I have a number of teachers who are looking to move out of Auckland and while I estimated 3 positions that I will need to fill, this is very conservative and dependent on what happens with these teachers.*
- *It is definitely harder than in 2015. Both last year and this we were nearly sorted at the end of Term 3, but Term 4 saw a significant number of resignations to move within Auckland to schools closer to home with shorter travel time.*

### **Beginning teachers**

- *Disappointed at lack of beginning teachers applying.*
- *Observations from having advertised several positions so far in my large, Decile 8, urban provincial city school 1) For the first time ever, am having trouble finding any applicants for Yr 7-8 area (primary trained) 2) For the first time ever, I had NO applications from beginning teachers for permanent fulltime jobs. This is very scary.*

*Graduates from the closest ITE Uni providers seem uninterested in considering positions out of their home city 3) Even Education personnel cannot come up with anyone suitable for one position 4) For two of the permanent positions filled for next year, there was only ONE suitable applicant each (whom I appointed) 5 Most overseas applicants are patently unsuitable*

### **End of year**

- I believe that I will be able to cover the currently advertised positions but there could yet be more late ones which may be much harder.*
- The problems will get much worse through this term. The good quality Graduates have all got jobs and they are the main source of new teachers into the pool. Little evidence of overseas teachers arriving at this stage. I anticipate having to use Recruitment agents as the late vacancies come up. During this term we will still see staff movement as Auckland teacher leave the city or move closer to home to reduce travel times*
- This is a moving feast - and there are many days to go before we feel confident that we are fully staffed for 2018. I am thankful when I get to the end of a week and I have not received another resignation. We have two maths vacancies yet to fill but at least we have filled these maths vacancies in the meantime amongst other subject areas.*

### **Isolation**

- Smaller rural communities are finding it harder to find qualified suitable teachers who are willing to teach and live in a rural setting.*
- This year is harder than last year, which was harder than the year before. Even in "easy to staff areas" the number of applicants has dropped! Hard to staff it comes down to luck if someone qualified applies.*

### **Middle leadership**

- The HOD Maths has been advertised twice now, starting early in Term 3. I received 1 application first time around but the candidate declined the job offer - the second time around I have received 0 applications. (The job closed today).*
- Middle and senior leadership positions are extremely difficult and we are having to re-advertise and make short term compromises. This adversely affects workloads and leadership outcomes*
- Far fewer middle management applicants these days and if PPTA/MOE don't do something about making that more attractive (\$ and time) then it will only get worse. A new aspect is seeing staff surrender positions in order to increase work/life balance. We have seen shrinking pools of applicants for some years. Please, this issue has to be addressed in the current STCA negotiations.*

### **Overseas teachers**

- Following shortages this year I commenced 2018 appointments a lot earlier than in the past and without knowledge of pending vacancies. I appointed 6 overseas teachers in hard to staff areas on the assumption that I will need them.*

- *I have to resort to using agents getting us people from overseas which cost our school a lot of money (even though it is Ministry subsidised) to get good staff - and they can't guarantee getting us anyone - average of \$8000 per teacher and they don't tend to stay for more than three years, usually two!*
- *We seem to have a lot of overseas applicants apply who need support*

### **Part time**

- *A lot more staff want to go part-time*

### **Poaching**

- *HOD Mathematics is our current vacancy problem. We will be trying to recruit from another school that already has a dire shortage.*
- *Incidents of schools asking their staff (who previously taught here) to contact staff holding permanent positions and not looking for positions to see if they would be interested in applying. In both cases, staff have subsequently applied and won positions*

### **Retirements**

- *2017 has been an artificial situation for our school in that there has not been a need to advertise any positions. This is a combination of having to reduce staffing number to be more sustainable and redesign courses. However - I am very mindful, based on numerous conversations with other Principals, that when we reach a stage of having to appoint new staff to cover pending retirements and other likely changes due to promotion we will struggle to fill these positions, especially in certain areas.*
- *It feels like it is getting harder. The reasons for retirement are, travel overseas, or retirement. More retirements coming too.*
- *We're coping but with large numbers of pending retirements in the next 5 years it is going to get much harder*

### **Special character**

- *Being a Christian state-integrated school, all our applicants have to fulfil special character requirements. Consequently, when we advertise vacancies, Christian teachers in state schools take the opportunity to come and work for us. We have always operated in a niche market - the current staffing shortages have not affected our niche - just yet!*

### **Subjects**

- *A number of curriculum areas are particularly difficult to fill - Digital Technology, Technology.*
- *An experienced Science Kaiako was appointed for a one term position but due to personal circumstances the Kaiako left town and we were unable to appoint an expert into the job. An English Kaiako ended up teaching Science for the term.*

- *Key areas of concern have been English, Maths and Technology. It is now usual for me to advertise twice in these areas before I get an applicant I am prepared to employ.*
- *Like many other schools we have advertised twice in the Gazette for a Hard Tech and ICT teacher with no applicants. Have gone to Ed Personnel with similar responses. Not sure how these will be filled.*
- *Mathematics, physics and chemistry positions are almost impossible to staff.*
- *Maths and science continue to be specific areas of difficulty.*
- *Still really hard to fill Maths, Science and Agriculture positions. Now getting harder to fill Food Technology and Special Needs.*

## **General**

- *For years this problem has been spoken about and yet nothing other than lip service is provided to it from the recent Govt. The new Minister needs to consult with schools rather than be guided by Ministry bureaucrats who also have no idea what is happening in our schools.*
- *In my experience of nearly 10 years of principalship, the current climate is as difficult as I have seen it for recruiting both teachers. I have also been an advisor for several secondary principal appointments and have been very surprised by the poor numbers and quality of candidates that these roles are attracting. Very concerning.*
- *It's a disaster*
- *Our situation is compromised by the MOE's anticipated staffing for 2018 being based on 15% less students than the 2017 figure while our roll is down 4.5%. We have a reasonably stable roll over the last 6 years with a maximum swing of 5% fluctuations*
- *There is an urgent need to address teacher pay and workload to make teaching an attractive career option to young people.*
- *This is an urgent issue, we will realise the effect in about 2 years! Will be tough times for senior leadership trying to staff schools*
- *We are in trouble as a profession*