



PPTA TE WEHENGARUA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2020

TEACHER WELLBEING

ANNUAL CONFERENCE REPORT



RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the report be received

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A paper entitled *'Looking after each other: teacher mental health and wellbeing* was presented to PPTA Annual Conference 2019. Conference passed the following remits :
1. THAT the report be received; and
 2. THAT a taskforce :
 - a. be convened to report to annual conference in 2020 with recommendations on how schools can appropriately support the general wellbeing of their staff;
 - b. be limited to not more than five individuals;
 - c. be appropriately funded for the Association year beginning 1 February 2020; and
 3. THAT PPTA develop staff wellbeing tools and guidance for schools.
- 1.2 This report provides an update on work completed to progress these recommendations.

2. TASKFORCE

- 2.1 A taskforce has been established in accordance with remit (2) above.
- 2.2 **Membership**
- 2.2.1 Due to the impacts of COVID-19 and the lockdown, membership of the taskforce was expanded from five to ten members (including the president and an advisory officer).
- 2.2.2 In addition to the president and an advisory officer, the taskforce consists of:
- the junior vice president;
 - a member of executive;
 - a member of Te Huarahi;
 - a guidance counsellor;
 - a middle leader;
 - a regional chair;
 - a representative of Tāmaki Makaurau; and
 - a representative of the Secondary Principals' Council.
- 2.3 **Initial meeting**
- 2.3.1 The taskforce met for the first time (by Zoom) on 7 April 2020 and set immediate, short term and medium term priorities.
- 2.3.2 Immediate priorities were to address issues resulting from COVID-19 and the lockdown and to identify particular groups requiring support and advice.
- 2.3.3 The issues adversely affecting member wellbeing in the wake of COVID-19 included:
- expectations about contact with students;
 - workload expectations;
 - expectations of and on principals;
 - timetabling;
 - expectations about the use of IT;
 - partnership under Te Tiriti o Waitangi; and

- a lack of clear guidelines around pastoral support expectations.

2.3.4 The taskforce then gave consideration to what might be needed as we moved into alert levels 3 and 2 with issues such as cleaning of desks, dual workload (from online and face-to-face teaching), how to access EAP, reducing assessment loads and how to manage risks in 'the moist breath zone'. This work helped inform the ministry's daily bulletins regarding health and safety and other decisions regarding resourcing and operational supports for schools during this period.

2.3.5 Short term work priorities included:

- identifying further impacts on education workers linked to COVID-19;
- curating existing PPTA tools and resources that could help to support teacher wellbeing;
- identifying any gaps in current supports, tools and resources for teacher wellbeing; and
- proposing additional supports for development in the short to medium term.

2.3.6 Finally, medium term work areas were identified as:

- evaluating the efficacy of advice and support for wellbeing within NZ secondary schools;
- curating existing PPTA tools and resources that could be part of the implementation of the Wellbeing Framework and broader Wellbeing Strategy (see below);
- considering what other supports teachers might need to make use of the Wellbeing Framework in schools and kura;
- proposing a model for different member groups to co-develop tools and supports for wellbeing (as detailed in brief in the wellbeing strategy); and
- advising the executive on possible next steps.

2.4 **Second meeting**

2.4.1 At a subsequent full day meeting on 16 June the taskforce spent some time reviewing and curating existing advice, guidance and resources applicable to members' health, safety and wellbeing during the lockdown and subsequent reduction in alert levels.

2.4.2 The areas identified as most useful for the PPTA website included advice on:

- working from home;
- digital delivery;
- what happens beyond digital delivery – assessment etc;
- mental health; and
- EAP/counselling.

2.4.3 A preference was stated for an online wellbeing resource hub where curated resources might be accessed as needed.

2.4.4 The taskforce has also reviewed a draft toolkit including planning templates and guidance for use by schools to support education worker wellbeing.

2.4.5 Finally the taskforce endorsed the following guidelines for school policy and practice to support staff wellbeing:

- co-develop, produce, implement and communicate a wellbeing at school plan;
- develop wellbeing awareness among employees (e.g. through induction, PLD sessions, PLGs or other collaborative groupings);

- encourage open conversations about mental health, stress, burnout and the supports available when employees are struggling (e.g. reference to EAP services);
- provide good working conditions to ensure teachers have a healthy work-life balance, can participate in decision making and have guaranteed opportunities for development (e.g. ensuring all provisions of collective agreements are adhered to, endorsement of PPTA's Promise to New Teachers, use of the Change Management Toolkit, open consultation around timetabling policy);
- model and promote wellbeing through effective people management by principals, senior and middle managers; (e.g. explicit reference to Teaching Council's leadership and Inquiry PLD);
- routinely monitor teacher wellbeing, including the use of the 'Wellbeing at school survey'; and
- encouraging the understanding that teacher wellbeing should not be sacrificed for student wellbeing – it is not a zero sum game – and that both employer and worker have professional responsibilities to ensure that teacher wellbeing is supported and maintained in order to best serve students.

3. EDUCATION WORKER WELLBEING FRAMEWORK AND WELLBEING STRATEGY

- 3.1 In the interval since Annual Conference 2019, executive has endorsed an Education Worker Wellbeing Framework and a Wellbeing Strategy.¹ These documents were also endorsed by the Accord wellbeing sub-group and the Accord Governance Group at its final meeting in 2019.
- 3.2 These documents, which lay out the foundations of systems and strategies to implement wellbeing in schools, were introduced to members at the wellbeing workshop at the Issues and Organising seminar in March 2020.
- 3.3 Content from the framework and strategy also informed the toolkit provided to participants in the Health and Safety/Wellbeing courses delivered as part of the PLD fund in 2020 (see below).

4. HEALTH AND SAFETY/WELLBEING COURSES

- 4.1 Wellbeing training having been identified as an area for deployment of the PLD fund, WorkSafeReps has been contracted to deliver (in collaboration with PPTA staff) *Creating Positive Workplaces* seminars. Face to face seminars were initially planned around the country however delivery shifted online when the lockdown intervened. A total of 89 attendees have participated in these seminars from around the country and we anticipate a mix of face-to-face and online delivery will continue.

¹ MX20/002

5. ACCORD

- 5.1 Following on from an ISTP commitment made in 2017, wellbeing is one of the agreed priorities in the Accord document.
- 5.2 In May 2020 the Accord wellbeing subgroup considered the linkages between its previous work in developing and endorsing the framework and strategy and the immediate needs identified by the PPTA wellbeing taskforce, and determined that priority actions should include:
 - the development of an online resource hub;
 - targeted bulletins and/or guidance about teacher wellbeing;
 - a pulse check template for schools; and
 - socialising the tiered support template (from the agreed framework).
- 5.3 A government appropriation for \$16 million over four years to support teacher and principal wellbeing in response to COVID-19 was subsequently made on 3 July 2020.
- 5.4 The Ministry of Education has not yet enacted any of these recommendations.