



PPTA TE WEHENGARUA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2018

CAREER PATHWAYS – Subject Pedagogy Specialists

2018 PPTA CONFERENCE PAPER FROM THE HAWKE'S BAY REGION



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This paper from the Hawke's Bay region proposes that the PPTA executive investigate the development of a subject pedagogy specialist role for teachers who do not wish to progress their careers through management pathways.



RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THAT the report be received.
2. THAT the PPTA investigate this proposal and formulate a plan for subject pedagogy specialist roles.
3. THAT this plan be consulted upon with members prior to the next SCTA and ASCTA negotiations.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. Following the Alternative Disputes Resolution Panel (ADR) in 2003, the PPTA has been looking at furthering career pathways for teachers. From this came the Specialist Classroom Teacher (SCT) in 2006, the Senior Subject Advisors (SSA, instated in 2007 and removed during 2010-11 negotiations), and now the Communities of Learning positions. These were intended to enable teachers to take pathways that did not necessarily involve middle or senior leadership positions in schools.
- 1.2. The PPTA's main messages to the Ministry of Education when working on this issue in 2006 were¹:
 - That new career pathways that allow individual teachers to build on their strengths and share pedagogy with others are important
 - That any increase in pay and status should be related to new responsibilities
 - That this is the way to share the benefits of individual strengths and any professional learning that teachers undertake beyond the boundaries of their classroom
 - That any professional development structure which is developed to help support the new career pathway should be accessible to all and should not be a cost to the individual as this is an investment in education
 - That completing a certain level or type of professional learning should enhance an individual's eligibility for, rather than entitlement to, a new specialist position.
- 1.3. This seems to be further supported by the Ministerial Taskforce of 2003, which said that "these career pathways be underpinned by improved professional development and teacher-focussed qualifications"².

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1. This paper has arisen out of
 - (1) The desire for teachers to stay in the classroom and to challenge and develop their pedagogy in their subject areas for other teachers and importantly, for the students.
 - (2) The need for an alternative career pathway for teachers who are not interested in management or leadership roles, which often require quite different skills to pedagogical skills.
 - (3) A dissatisfaction from our members over the inconsistent working of the communities of learning.

¹ IPM 31/2 26 July 2006

² Ministerial Taskforce Recommendation 6, Ministerial Taskforce on Secondary Teacher Remuneration 2003, page 47

- 2.2 Currently, the obvious career pathway for teachers is to move into middle management and senior leadership. Alternatively, some teachers have the opportunity to be some sort of general pedagogy specialist teacher within a Community of Learning. However, this opportunity is not presented to many teachers. Many valuable and experienced teachers are being lost to the classroom because the only way for them to advance financially is to accept management and administration leadership roles.

3. SUBJECT PEDAGOGY SPECIALIST

- 3.1 This paper asks that we research a new alternative to middle management called perhaps a subject pedagogy specialist (SPS) (as opposed to a leadership specialist who would progress through the management pathway to senior leadership as a career progression).
- 3.2 Subject pedagogy specialists would, in their subject areas:
- a) challenge and develop their pedagogy,
 - b) mentor others, and
 - c) stay in the classroom to directly benefit students.
- 3.3 The SPS role would have a number of goals:
- retaining teachers in the classroom,
 - developing pedagogy in subject areas,
 - mentoring other teachers, and, most importantly,
 - benefiting students.

4. THE PROCESS

- 4.1. This would require the development of criteria or of a teacher-led process to identify those who are eligible. For example: they hold specific university papers, a PhD, or a post-graduate diploma; or they have undertaken subject-related investigation/inquiries and hold a qualification in working with adult learners.
- 4.2. Once eligible, the teacher is recognised as a subject pedagogy specialist. The school would receive a time allowance to provide release for the specialist to use their subject skills and knowledge to mentor within their own school and/or the schools in the surrounding region. Units would be attached to the position.
- 4.3. Originally, the idea was that subject associations would be the subject pedagogy specialists. While in some areas and in some subjects these subject associations are doing a good job, in others areas around the country and in some subjects they are not.

4.4 [Singapore](#) and teaching systems in China have these kinds of subject specialist positions.^{3 4}

The following extract from the Singaporean Ministry of Education website⁵ illustrates the type of role we are proposing.

ENHANCING YOUR STRENGTHS — CAREER TRACKS

Because different teachers have different aspirations, the Ministry of Education has three career tracks or fields of excellence.

The Teaching Track provides professional development and advancement opportunities for teachers who are keen to further develop the pedagogical capability of the teaching force, with the pinnacle position of Principal Master Teacher. The Leadership Track gives you the opportunity to take on leadership positions in schools and the Ministry's headquarters. If you are inclined towards more specialised areas where deep knowledge and skills are essential for breaking new ground in educational developments, the Senior Specialist Track is available for you.

There will be flexibility for lateral movements across the different tracks. Education Officers can choose to move across the different careers tracks, as long as they satisfy the standards and criteria of the job / career track they aspire to take on.

5. ADVANTAGES OF CREATING THIS ROLE

- 5.1. It will keep experienced and valuable teachers in the classroom in front of students.
- 5.2. Teachers seeking improvement in their pay could do so by focussing on raising their skill level in their subject areas by mentoring, without having to move into management.
- 5.3. It will add prestige and respect to the teaching profession as a whole, and recognise excellence in subject pedagogy.
- 5.4. Students will benefit directly.
- 5.5. Via the selection process and a prescribed training/qualifications programme, we will be creating true pedagogical leaders who will be adding value to the education system.
- 5.6. Time and extra units will be attached to the roles.

³ <http://ncee.org/what-we-do/center-on-international-education-benchmarking/top-performing-countries/singapore-overview-2/singapore-teacher-and-principal-quality/>

⁴ <https://www.moe.gov.sg/careers/teach/career-information>

⁵ <https://www.moe.gov.sg/careers/teach/career-information> (accessed 27 June 2018).

6. THE NEXT STEPS

- 6.1. The PPTA Executive will investigate this proposal and formulate a plan for a subject pedagogy specialist role.
- 6.2. Factors that should be investigated include
 - The remuneration for this position. It should be substantial, and in line with remuneration for middle and senior leadership.
 - The time allowance. Perhaps one hour per week, in line with the HoD beginning teacher time allowance.
 - The application. It must be available to all teachers who satisfy the criteria.
 - The differentiation from the CoL within-school teachers (WSTs).
 - CoLs don't exist in all schools.
 - WSTs are not subject pedagogy specialists – they are generalists.
 - Specialist teachers in short supply (e.g. physics, mathematics, and te reo etc.). This proposal should encourage such specialists to stay in the classroom and allow mentoring of teachers new to or moving into that subject.
 - Travel costs for mentoring. If an SPS travels to a neighbouring school, that school should cover the travel costs.
- 6.3. This plan is to be consulted upon with members prior to the next SCTA and ASCTA negotiations.
- 6.4. We do not see the service qualification increment allowance (SQI) as a payment for this purpose as it excludes those with units, is limited to \$2,000 per year, and is limited to further qualifications. The SPS role is not necessarily about higher qualifications. Rather, it is about developing specialist pedagogical skills through inquiry, investigation, research or qualification. It is also about mentoring teachers and staying in front of students.