



PPTA TE WEHENGARUA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2018

PROFESSIONAL LEARNERS

AN ADVISORY SERVICE TO SUPPORT AND STRENGTHEN THE TEACHING PROFESSION



RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THAT the report be received
2. THAT the PPTA re-affirms that all types of professional learning and development (PLD) are important and that teachers should be able to access relevant PLD which is
 - based on individual choice and an individual's learning interests and needs
 - cross school or within school curriculum focused or skills development focused PLD done through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)
 - whole school focused (around vision and values, Māori student achievement and other such initiatives)
3. THAT PPTA reaffirms that every teacher has a right to access to PLD that
 - relates directly to specialist areas of curriculum knowledge and assessment
 - is readily accessible
 - is endorsed by an appropriate agency
 - is based on best evidence
 - fully funded
 - is in-depth and one-off
 - is timely
 - connects teachers with colleagues from other schools
4. THAT the PPTA calls on the government to press ahead with its commitment to establish a national, public and comprehensive advisory service.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Professional support for teachers and schools is patchy, often hard to access, and of variable quality. From beginning teachers on their own in a subject area trying to build a curriculum from the ground up, to principals trying to deal with multiple agencies and legal requirements, educators in Aotearoa have too often felt isolated and lacking a network of support.
- 1.2 Recognising this problem, the new government has committed to creating an advisory service for schools. This paper establishes a PPTA position on the advisory service.
- 1.3 In 2013 PPTA Conference endorsed a paper that described the full range of professional learning and development that teachers need, which includes peer-to-peer, professional learning communities and within-school formal and informal PLD. This paper focuses on formal, externally provided PLD.

2. THE PPTA'S CURRENT POSITION

- 2.1 The 2007 Best Evidence Synthesis on Professional Learning and Development introduced a framework and evidence base, which has unfortunately had little impact on the policy design for delivery of PLD. The PPTA's president wrote in the introduction at the time:

“What is needed is a comprehensive approach to ensuring that the kind of professional development that has a significant positive impact on teachers’ ability to meet the needs of all their students is made available to all teachers. Timperley et al. have shown that quality professional learning comes from providing opportunities for each teacher to engage at a deep level with ideas and approaches. They must have extended time to do this, they need access to external expertise, they need their thinking challenged, they need to learn alongside colleagues, and their leaders need to provide the right conditions for the learning. PPTA believes strongly that these learning opportunities must be personalised to each teacher’s needs.

“PPTA members tell us that such learning is rarely available to them. This needs to change.”¹

We have continued to try and address this since.

- 2.2 2013 Annual Conference called for the establishment of a “national, university based PLD service”. Specifically, members asked the government to
 - Ensure schools should be able to access relevant PLD

¹ Timperley et al. 2007, Teacher Professional Learning and Development, Best Evidence Synthesis. Available from https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/16901/TPLandDBESentireWeb.pdf

- Guarantee every teacher has a right to access PLD
- Extend successful models of in-school teacher mentoring through specialist positions
- Return to a national PLD infrastructure that uses at least six universities and the wānanga Aotearoa and Awanuiarangi to act as local and trusted providers and brokers of fully funded PLD
- Provide funding to subject associations so that they can also provide fully funded PLD.²

3. CURRENT STATE

3.1 PLD that is resourced centrally, as opposed to out of schools' own operational budgets, currently is funded to the tune of around \$70 million a year. To assess the PLD provision in New Zealand, we will consider the current PLD model in terms of each of the bullet points from above.

3.2 Ensure schools should be able to access relevant PLD

The professional body for PLD providers in New Zealand published a report³ a year ago identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the model of PLD provision. The report identified that schools/kura that are most in need of PLD provision, such as lower decile and rural schools and those with significant Māori and Pasifika populations, are less likely to apply for PLD than more advantaged schools. No reason is given for this. However, it could perhaps be because the process is so complex and time-consuming, as this was another feature of the model of PLD provision that was identified as problematic. This supports what the PPTA has heard. Anecdotally we have heard that schools find the process of applying for PLD difficult and time consuming. The PLANZ report also states that “allocations may depend more on the quality of proposal writing than the professional learning needs of a school and the achievement challenges of its students”. The quality of the proposal should never be a barrier to the provision of PLD for teachers.

3.3 Guarantee every teacher has a right to access PLD

One could take this recommendation even further, and suggest that every teacher has the right to access relevant PLD. The model of PLD provision privileges access to whole-school PLD. Is it

² Professional Learning and Development, a paper from national executive. 2013. Available from <https://www.ppta.org.nz/dmsdocument/341>

³ Professional Learning and Development in Change, from PLANZ (Professional Learning Association New Zealand: Te Māngai Whakangungu Kaiako o Aotearoa. 2017. Available from <https://www.planznmwk.org/assets/Uploads/Professional-Learning-and-Development-in-Change-PLANZ-070817.pdf>

any wonder then that one of the constant cries from the NCEA Review is the need to put the curriculum ahead of assessment? That the education system finds itself in this situation should not be unexpected, given that the only subject-specific PLD many teachers have been able to access in recent years (if indeed they have been able to) are the Best Practice Workshops from NZQA which focus on assessment.

3.4 Extend successful models of in-school teacher mentoring through specialist positions

There are a couple of models of in-school teacher mentoring. These are the Specialist Classroom Teacher (SCT) positions, and the Within School Teacher (WST) positions that exist within Communities of Learning (CoL). The SCT role has been around since the 2006, and is mostly working well in schools. The WST roles are more recent, and only exist in schools that are part of a CoL. The PPTA CoL survey⁴ and feedback from a series of CoL meetings across the country have identified a number of issues with this model, particularly with respect to development and implementation. The WST is “intended to contribute to raising student achievement through support for professional learning”⁵. An issue identified through the PPTA’s work is that some WST are not aware that a core part of the role is to work with other teachers to provide modelling and feedback on good practice. Therefore while the intent of the role is that they are an in-school teacher mentor, supporting PLD by working with other teachers, in reality this is not what is happening. Until the system can get the roles that exist operating as intended, there is little point in extending it any further.

3.5 Return to a national PLD infrastructure that uses at least six universities and the wānanga Aotearoa and Awanuiarangi to act as local, trusted providers and brokers of fully funded PLD

The PLD delivery model, as it currently operates, is the complete opposite of this. It has become fractured, with limited economies of scale in terms of infrastructure. The PLANZ report raised some significant issues in this area. They report that there is an increasing trend towards sole trader PLD providers and organisation of fewer than five PLD facilitators. The current model of PLD delivery has encouraged the rapid growth of these small organisations, but this raises questions about “currency, consistency of message and professional support for many facilitators”, especially when providers are not funded to upskill or mentor their staff. In addition to this, providers have experienced large administrative costs compared to the previous contracts. Any economies of scale that exist when larger organisations deliver PLD are lost under a model

⁴ <https://www.ppta.org.nz/dmsdocument/568>

⁵ <https://www.ppta.org.nz/dmsdocument/390>

as fractured as the current one. Therefore, money that should be supporting PLD for teachers is in fact supporting large administrative costs. In addition to these issues, PLANZ estimates that in 2017 the PLD advisor workforce decreased by approximately a third, and that Māori medium was most significantly impacted. In 2013, it seemed a sound idea to return national PLD to the universities and wānanga. In 2018, as discussed later, there is a question as to whether the tertiary providers are the right organisations – let alone whether they have the capacity to deliver under this proposed national model.

3.6 Provide funding to subject associations so that they can also provide fully funded PLD

Under the Networks of Expertise funding, subject associations are now able to apply for funding. Networks of Expertise “seek to grow and develop existing and new curriculum, teaching and learning networks. The support will meet the specific needs of teachers.”⁶ It must be said that subject associations are (usually) made of busy classroom teachers trying to do their best. For the most part, up to this point they have been volunteers. Talking to those working in this area at the 2018 Subject Association Forum, it became evident that this process is operating in a somewhat backward manner. The first round of funding expressions of interest (second round if you count the initial round of funding that was not openly contested) was completed before the Ministry had appointed National Coordinator roles. Many subject associations were unaware of the funding because the first round of expressions happened over the summer break. Each subject association was grappling with the same issues, and the ability to access a coordinator earlier would have alleviated some of the common challenges. Most subject associations are small entities run on a volunteer basis, managing relatively small amounts of money brought in from subscriptions. Now they have to manage contractors, deal with their changing status due to increased income, and make significant changes to their infrastructure to cope with these new roles. And for how long? Who knows?

4. NEW GOVERNMENT POLICIES: THE ADVISORY SERVICE

- 4.1 The Labour Party came into government in 2017 with some specific policies about teacher professional development and support. It stated:

“Labour will establish a comprehensive education advisory service to share best-practice and act as mentors and advisors to teachers throughout New Zealand. The new advisory service will:

⁶ <http://services.education.govt.nz/pld/networks/what-is-the-networks-of-expertise-initiative/>

- *Oversee all centrally funded teacher professional development spending, and provide advice, where appropriate, to schools and early childhood services on their own internal professional development programmes*
- *Have the power to second excellent teachers and educational leaders for a period of up to 3 years to act as mentors and trainers*
- *Labour will establish a College of Educational Leadership that will operate as part of the education advisory service. The new College will:*
 - *Establish minimum qualifications required of those applying for leadership positions*
 - *Ensure that quality professional development programmes are available for all new and existing educational leaders*
 - *Have the power to second existing educational leaders into the College for a period of up to 2 years to act as mentors and trainers”⁷*

4.2 Since then, this pre-election promise has been confirmed by the Minister. He noted to Cabinet in March 2018

“To support strengthened leadership and collaboration, I intend to establish an Education Advisory Service which will share best-practice, act as mentors and advisors to teachers throughout New Zealand, and oversee all centrally-funded PLD.”⁸

4.3 The timing for this has also been set by the Minister, with proposals for its establishment to be presented to Cabinet in late 2018.

5. PROVISION OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT: SOME INTERNATIONAL MODELS

5.1 There is a large and increasingly robust literature on models of PLD provision from around the world, to some extent encouraged by global comparative educational research undertaken by the OECD through such mechanisms as PISA and TALIS.

⁷ Labour’s Education Manifesto, available from <https://www.labour.org.nz/educationmanifesto>

⁸ Minister of Education to Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee, 2018, Towards a Future Focused, Learner Centred Education Workforce Strategy to 2032 , available from <http://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Ministry/Information-releases/2018-releases/Final-Education-Workforce-Strategy.pdf>

5.2 Some models from other jurisdictions with relevance to New Zealand are described below. Clearly it is neither desirable nor possible to simply ‘drag and drop’ international models into Aotearoa, but there are policy settings which can – and should – inform decision making here.

5.2.1 Singapore⁹

Singapore has been consistently rated at or near the top of global education league tables, with PISA 2015 putting the city-state in first place for performance¹⁰. However, equity in Singapore is not as strong, with a relatively high level of students’ variation in performance explained by socio-economic status: 17% compared to an average of 12.9% and New Zealand’s 14%.

Singapore’s education system is highly centralised, with a single initial teacher education provider and 350 public schools providing education to the vast majority of the country’s learners.

Entry into the teaching profession is competitive, with only around 1 in 8 applicants being accepted, and once they start their ITE, all students receive a stipend of around 60% of a teacher’s salary for the 3.5-6 years of training.

All teachers in Singapore have an entitlement to 100 hours a year of PLD fully funded by the Ministry of Education. There are three tracks for teachers’ careers, which lead to different roles in the system and have different PLD and education associated with them – the ‘teaching track’, the ‘leadership track’, and the ‘specialist track’.

There are two main nationwide providers of PLD in Singapore, alongside individual schools’ own delivery.

The National Institute of Education (NIE) is an institute within the major university of Singapore that is the only ITE provider in the country and is a strongly connected to the Ministry of Education. The board of the NIE is chaired by the Secretary of Education and is made up of a range of university academic staff and education administrators.

Many of the NIE’s courses lead to qualifications, but there are also short one-off courses on pedagogy or content for groups of teachers. All PLD is linked to the ‘teacher growth model’, a national strategy from the Ministry of Education, and ranges from subject

⁹ Most of the information in this section is from the paper Bautista, A., Wong, J., & Gopinathan, S. 2015, “Teacher Professional Development in Singapore: Depicting the Landscape” Available from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/301225638_Teacher_Professional_Development_in_Singapore_Depicting_the_Landscape

¹⁰ PISA 2015, Results in Focus Available from <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisa-2015-results-in-focus.pdf>

specific courses (e.g. Pollution Experiments Using Ecotoxicology Biomarkers for Schools” or “Teaching Julius Caesar”) through to broader courses on assessment or inclusive education and such like¹¹.

The Academy of Singapore Teachers (AST) is the other main PLD provider. It was established in 2010, and is more of a networked PLD model than the centralised NIE. The AST is established as a section of the Ministry of Education, however it has a board made up of a range of stakeholders from all levels of education (teachers, principals, academics, educational administrators), and in many ways plays a similar role to the Education Council here, such as promulgating a code of ethics for the profession – though without the regulatory function.

The AST organises networks of professionals in four ‘subject chapters’ which all teachers can belong to, and six Centers of Excellence focussed on the main languages of Singapore, music and arts, and physical education. All teachers have access through the AST to an online portal for PLD and resource sharing.

5.2.2 Japan

Japan is also a consistently high-performing country on international comparative tests, coming second in the OECD in PISA in 2015¹².

Teaching in Japan is a respected and desirable profession, with teacher pay rates for experienced teachers amongst the highest in the OECD. Since the 1950s, governments have required teachers to be relatively highly paid compared to other civil servants, which has resulted in an over-supply of applicants to join the teaching profession¹³.

While there are many providers of initial teacher education, entry to the profession is carefully regulated by local ‘prefectures’ – regional administrative units that employ teachers and regulate education in a local area. Prefectures’ ‘Education Boards’ are required to work with local ITE providers and schools to set and deliver PLD programmes in accordance with a (national) Special Act for Education Personnel. Alongside this, there is a national collective agreement for teachers which sets terms and conditions of work.

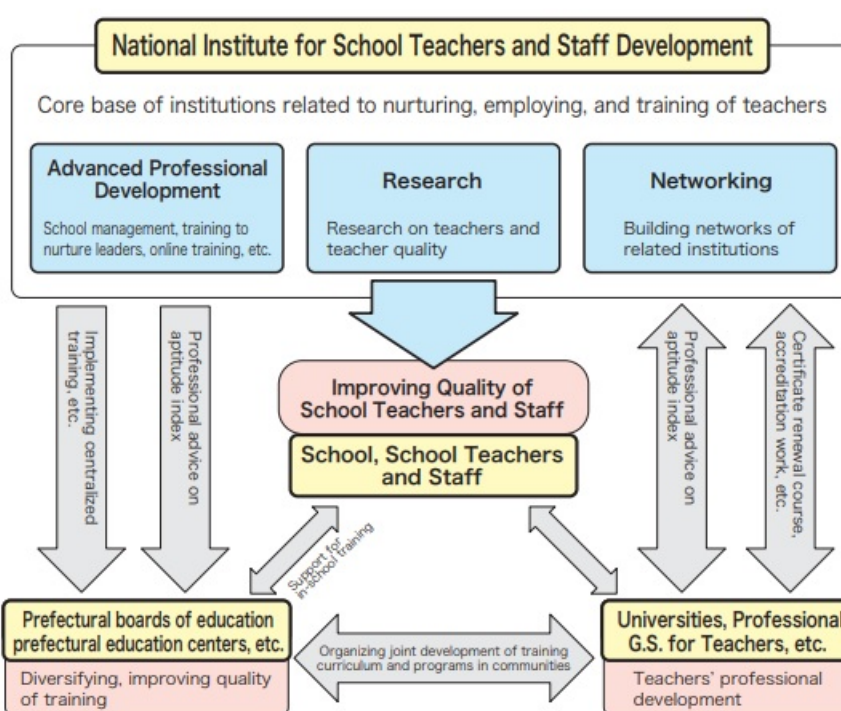
¹¹ NIE Professional Learning Catalogue, July to December 2018 Available from [https://www.nie.edu.sg/docs/default-source/GPL/pd-catalogue-\(jul-dec-2018\)_fa\(web\).pdf](https://www.nie.edu.sg/docs/default-source/GPL/pd-catalogue-(jul-dec-2018)_fa(web).pdf)

¹² PISA 2015, Results in Focus Available from <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisa-2015-results-in-focus.pdf>

¹³ National Center on Education and the Economy, ‘Japan: Teacher and Principal Quality’ Available from <http://ncee.org/what-we-do/center-on-international-education-benchmarking/top-performing-countries/japan-overview/japan-teacher-and-principal-quality/>

Sitting above the prefectures, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (known as MEXT) sets policy and distributes funding to the prefectures. MEXT hosts and funds a range of national institutions, including the National Institute for School Teachers and Staff Development (NITS).

NITS conducts research and policy development, assists local prefectures with their PLD, and has a significant role delivering PLD as well. Their national offices host PLD courses for thousands of teachers and administrators each year. The diagram below is from the NITS website and describes its role in regards to PLD administration and delivery, and that of other organisations in the Japanese education infrastructure¹⁴.



5.2.3 Finland

Finland's education system is internationally well-regarded¹⁵, with its high performance and high equity being held up as a model for other countries to learn from. While to some extent features of this are related to wider social and economic settings, it's clear that many other countries with similar contexts (such as Finland's Scandinavian

¹⁴ National Institute for School Teachers and Staff Development, 2017. NITS Guidebook. Available from http://www.nits.go.jp/en/files/brochures_guidebook_2017_001.pdf

¹⁵ Such as, Sahlberg, P. 2015. Finnish Lessons 2.0, What can the world learn from educational change in Finland. Teacher College Press; New York

neighbours), don't perform as well educationally, suggesting there are some uniquely successful features of the Finnish school system.

One of these features is a professionalised and skilled teacher workforce. Teachers in Finland can enter the profession through a range of ITE tracks, from elementary teachers, junior specialists, senior specialists, special needs teachers and so forth – all of which are at Masters level¹⁶. Teaching is seen as a desirable career, and only 15% of those that apply are selected into ITE. Those that are accepted receive their training for free with a stipend to support them¹⁷.

In teachers' collective agreements there is a requirement for all teachers to have three days of (funded) PLD a year, but most teachers have much more than this. One of the features of the system is that, as all teachers have research expertise developed during their ITE, there is a lot of teacher-led professional inquiry carried out in schools that is locally developed and supported.

Above this is a national and local system of PLD support. At the national level there is a subsidiary of the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI). This organisation sets policy and funds professional learning for teachers, which is then delivered at the municipality level. EDUFI also offers support direct to municipalities, though it is unclear whether it delivers professional learning to teachers itself.

Municipalities, which are local boards, have a large degree of autonomy, and are the employers of teachers. They are required to provide professional learning of a range of types, and work with tertiary institutions and other providers to do so. Their funding is mostly provided centrally. Local municipalities are the main providers of professional learning to teachers in Finland¹⁸.

6. CONCEPT FOR NEW ZEALAND'S COMPREHENSIVE ADVISORY SERVICE

6.1 A national advisory service which takes some of the features of successful international models, and builds on the government's proposals and the PPTA's existing policy could be a significant

¹⁶ Nieme, H. 2015. Teacher Professional Development In Finland: Towards a More Holistic Approach. From *Psychology, Society and Education*, November 2015

¹⁷ Darling-Hammond, L. 2010 Steady Work: How Finland is Building a Strong Teaching and Learning System. Available from <https://pasisahlberg.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Steady-Work-Darling-Hammond.pdf>

¹⁸ Information in this section was mostly found on the website of the Finnish National Agency for Education, <https://www.oph.fi/english>

step in growing the professional capacity of teachers.

6.2 A centralised advisory service which exists as an arm of a revitalised Ministry of Education is an option which could deliver equitable access to high quality PLD. It could overcome a number of weaknesses in the current system.

6.3 **Employing PLD expert advisors directly**

Centrally employed PLD experts with expertise across the curriculum and the range of pedagogical needs of schools would be part of a strong national network with direct links to both central agencies and schools. Currently, PLD advisors are employed by a wide range of providers including for-profit companies, not-for-profits, tertiary institutions, and sole traders. PLD funding is dished out in (often tiny) contracts, which leads to a mosaic of provision rather than a coherent whole.

6.4 **Knowledge of local needs**

A PLD service that is employed centrally but based in local Ministry regions could develop mutual, trusting relationships with schools and teachers, and meet needs much more proactively than the current application/rationing model.

6.5 **Opportunity for capacity building through the system**

Provision that is part of a network or 'ecosystem' of support for schools and teachers that funds then releases expert teachers to work on specific projects, be seconded for periods of time, or be identified to work as mentors, would strengthen collaboration and build on existing expertise in the system. The Advisory Service could build on and link a number of existing initiatives in the sector, magnifying their impact, including roles such as the SCTs, WSTs and ACTs; and programmes such as the TLIF and TLRI¹⁹. It would also be a natural home for the TRCC and the proposed College of Leadership – much more so than the Teaching Council, which is the regulatory body for the profession.

6.6 **Governance that connects the sector**

While the Advisory Service rightly fits under the Ministry of Education – which as the employer in the sector has prime responsibility for professional learning – a semi-autonomous agency along the Singaporean or Japanese model is worth considering. Mutual responsibility and a venue for stakeholders to demonstrate leadership would link the sector, which could indicate a governance board made up of sector unions, tertiary institutions, the Teaching Council, and Ministry officials.

¹⁹ SCT: Specialist Classroom Teacher WST: Within School Teacher ACT: Across School Teacher TLIF: Teacher Led Innovation Fund TLRI" Teaching and Learning Research Initiative

6.7 'Oversee' or deliver?

One aspect of the government's policy on the advisory service that remains unclear is whether the intention is for the service to administer contracts for the current centralised PLD budget (around \$70 million a year), or whether it will take over the roles currently performed under these contracts. While there may be some rationale for elements of PLD spending to remain on a contracted basis – at least initially – building a national advisory service with the features described above would remove the need for the contracted model and provide a more sustainable and comprehensive service.

6.8 Universities or an Advisory Service?

While PPTA policy has previously been in favour of basing a national PLD infrastructure on tertiary institutions, there are a number of reasons why now this may not be ideal, including:

- There is a lack of capacity after years of being run down. Few tertiary institutions now carry the expertise in PLD provision that they used to, as many contracts have been lost to private providers.
- There is a lack of commitment to school education from tertiary leaders. The University of Auckland's decision to lay off significant numbers of staff in the Faculty of Education and Social Work is an example.
- Universities and wānanga don't have nationwide coverage, and access would be inequitable.
- The Tomorrow's Schools' review and current government's policies present an opportunity to build a revitalised public system of professional advice and support for teachers.