



**Response to the report by the Tomorrow's
Schools Independent Taskforce:
*Our Schooling Futures: Stronger Together***

April 2019

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NEXT STEPS

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SUMMARY

PPTA agrees with the expressed view of Tomorrow's Schools Independent Taskforce (TSIT) that after thirty years of the current regime, the promises made to teachers, parents, the community and students have not been delivered and that the primary cause of this failure is competition, polarisation and inequity.

Governance: Recommendations 1, 2 and 3

PPTA supports the proposal to regionalise some tasks that boards may find onerous (property maintenance and buildings, human resources, procurement, digital technology services, accounting, financial reporting, administration around suspensions) and to also provide more focused leadership support for principals with a view to providing early assistance so schools are not left to sink into a spiral of decline. More professional support for teachers and improved special needs support is also welcome. A regional referee to ensure fairness around zoning is needed.

PPTA does not support the hub model in its current form, largely out of concern that it appears too similar to the district health board (DHB) structure and because there is a lack of clarity about the industrial and employment arrangements. More details are required about its role and function, and the employment implications.

Schooling Provision: Recommendations 4 to 10

PPTA supports **Recommendations 3, 4 and 6** which deal with Māori and Pasifika education and the importance of smooth transitions across schools types.

It also supports **Recommendation 8** which proposes to establish full-service schools with appropriate health and social support on site.

Recommendation 10 which calls for an investigation to determine the role of Te Kura in the new system is also supported.

PPTA opposes **Recommendation 7** which basically calls for the breaking up of secondary schools and their replacement with middle schools and senior high schools. This would be expensive, disruptive and would severely undermine specialist delivery particularly in STEM subjects.

Recommendation 9 which asks hubs to engage in blue sky thinking is regarded with some scepticism by PPTA. The proposed changes will be challenging enough without inviting hubs to spend time and energy on speculation.

Competition and Choice: Recommendations 11 and 12

PPTA has consistently opposed those aspects of Tomorrow's Schools that have created winner and loser schools, inequity and racial polarisation. Consequently it supports

recommendation 11 which encourages better management of the network, fair access for students with disability and learning support needs, enrolment schemes that do not deliberately exclude some students, and restrictions on donations and foreign fee-paying students.

PPTA supports **recommendation 12** which puts integrated schools on a more even footing with other public schools.

Disability and Learning Support: Recommendations 13,14 and 15

PPTA wholeheartedly supports proposals for better resourcing for schools and fewer bureaucratic hurdles for parents of students in need of learning support.

Teaching: Recommendations 16,17,18,19 and 20

The five recommendations under this heading address concerns teachers have raised over a number of years: workforce planning (better late than...), more flexibility in Kāhui Ako, less compliance around teacher appraisal, support for new teachers/kaiako, use of paraprofessionals, better access to PLD – including teacher-to-teacher PLD and the addition of teacher wellbeing as a category in the evaluation of the quality of PLD. It is timely that the system be reoriented to better support classroom practice rather than governance, management, administration, compliance and blame.

PPTA supports these proposals with the observation that a number of these issues could be resolved with improved salaries and conditions.

School leadership (Recommendations 21, 22 and 23)

Ineffectual principals can destroy a school and damage the educational opportunities of a whole cohort of children. Given this, PPTA supports the proposal to move some tasks from the principal into the hub/regional body to reduce principal workload plus the creation of leadership adviser positions in the Hub/regional body.

Recommendations 21 and 22 suggest establishing a leadership centre within the Teaching Council. PPTA supports the thrust of this proposal because ensuring our schools are led by competent, ethical, collegial leaders with a broad understanding of teaching, learning and children, is the least we can do. Expanding the role of the Teaching Council must not increase costs to teachers or distract from its key registration tasks.

Resourcing: Recommendations 24, 25, 26 and 27

PPTA strongly supports **recommendations 24 and 26**. The current funding system is unfair and inequitable. Schools that have a disproportionate number of the most disadvantaged students with the most complex educational needs do not receive sufficient funding and appropriate support. For too long governments have refused to acknowledge how difficult

this challenge is and have resorted to blaming teachers for what is largely economic inequality.

Recommendation 25

PPTA does not believe it was necessary for the TSIT to rule on one small aspect of management staffing in the absence of the wider context which includes class size, non-contact time, understaffing of large schools and curriculum breadth in secondary schools. Staffing proposals should be dealt with as part of workforce planning.

Recommendation 27 shifts responsibility for aligning the school network to hubs which may well be a better system as politicians are inclined to open/integrate schools to gain electoral popularity, not because of roll growth. PPTA is not opposed to some rationalisation of the school network, providing the process is fair and well-managed and the outcome is an improvement in the quality of education for students.

Central Education Agencies: Recommendations 28, 29,30, 31 and 32

It has been PPTA policy since 1999 that ERO and NZQA should be reintegrated into the Ministry of Education, in the hope that this will allow synergies in policy development and reduction in red tape. The expanded role of the Teaching Council is not supported in the absence of clear indications of how this will be funded.

Next steps

PPTA sees merit in developing more details around the proposals. There is a critical need that the current uncertainty around industrial/employment matters be addressed.

PART ONE - INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

Introduction

PPTA represents the majority of teachers engaged in secondary education in New Zealand, including secondary teachers, principals, and manual and technology teachers.

Under our constitution, all PPTA activity is guided by the following objectives:

- a) To advance the cause of education generally and of all phases of secondary and technical education in particular;
- b) To uphold and maintain the just claims of its members individually and collectively;
and
- c) To affirm and advance Te Tiriti O Waitangi.

This submission is from the PPTA Executive, and is on behalf of all of our members.

PPTA thanks the Tomorrow's Schools Independent Taskforce (TSIT) for the comprehensive approach it has brought to this review and for its willingness to engage widely with the sector and community during the process. It is clear that there is little serious dispute about the problems of our devolved education system, but reaching agreement about the best way to address concerns is not so straightforward. PPTA agrees with the stated position that any change can't be rushed and that "if these recommendations are to be implemented successfully, they will need rigorous analysis, iterative, consultation and evaluation throughout the development and implementation processes"¹ In particular, secondary teachers will be watching closely to see whether any funding accompanying the proposed changes is used to enhance teaching and learning or whether, as in the case of the 1989 reforms, it is captured by managers, consultants and officials.

PPTA appreciates that detail is necessarily limited at this stage; however this has led to speculation about the extent of the power and responsibilities of the hubs. As we outline in our response to Recommendation 3, some of this detail, such as whether national collective agreements will be retained and the employment arrangements for teachers and principals, will need to be addressed if the report is to get full teacher support.

The case for change

The TSIT has made a comprehensive case for change and has provided strong evidence of the equity and achievement failings of the current system.

PPTA has long experience with dysfunction in schools. These events tend not to be on the public record because they are often confidential for legal reasons or because the public outcry around exposure would damage the interests of students. Although many of the problems that are aired publicly occur in low decile, under-resourced schools, high decile schools are not immune from shabby practice, though they are generally better at covering their tracks. The following is a summary of some of these concerns.

¹ Our Schooling Futures: Stronger Together. P134

The mythology of competition

The TSIT's assessment that too many of the levers in the system drive competition at the cost of responsible, ethical, collegial, professional practice is indisputable. In general, the high decile school in a community is much more able to control its intake and consequently has fewer Māori, Pasifika, and low SES learners, and fewer students in need of learning support. It tends to have a rising roll meaning more funding and is adept at raising money from its parents, the wider community and from organisations of past pupils. Meanwhile, the students suffering the greatest economic and educational disadvantage cluster in the schools that have the least resourcing. The smug explanation for this disparity is that the high-decile school is well run and has excellent teachers whereas the board, principal and teachers in the struggling school are variously dismissed as being lazy and incompetent. It is this sort of mythology that militates against equity and drives educationally-dubious experiments such as charter schools.

Low decile schools do the heavy lifting

As noted earlier, the schools dealing with the students who have the most complex educational needs are the least supported and the most criticised. They also, despite decile related funding, often end up with similar or even fewer resources than schools serving our wealthiest students, undermining their capacity to meet the far greater educational needs. They also suffer from decile drift in relation to teachers and principals. Teaching staff often begin their careers in low decile schools and move to higher decile schools as they become more experienced and effective. This not only means low decile schools suffer from the instability generated by high staff turnover but that they are also doing a disproportionate share of the training of new and new-to-New Zealand teachers and principals. Once teachers and principals have relocated to high decile schools, they tend not to move down the deciles (with some notable, altruistic exceptions) and can develop unsympathetic attitudes to their colleagues who work in more challenging schools. This lack of understanding is worse for teachers and principals who have never worked anywhere but comfortable, high-decile schools.

Winners and losers

Since the State mandates attendance at school between the ages of 5 and 16 (for good social reasons) it is morally unacceptable for it to preside over a system of winner and loser schools. Parents have a right to expect that there will be a well-resourced, well-run, neighbourhood school for their children to attend. It is fundamentally wrong to make parents shop around for a school that they hope will meet the needs of their child.

In practice, it is the parents with extensive social and economic capital (i.e. the money to pay for an expensive uniform, any school charges and the time to transport their children to a more distant location) who get their first choice of school. The rest tend to settle for what they can get. The drift to a school system segregated by social class and ethnicity was observed as early as 1994 in the Ministry of Education-commissioned Smithfield Reports.² A year later, politicians acknowledged that the pure Tomorrow's Schools vision was not going to deliver equity, and the first foray into decile funding, Targeted Funding for Educational

² Hughes, D; Lauder, H; Watson, S; Hamlin, J, Strathdee, R and Simiyu, I. The **Smithfield** Project, **Reports** to the Ministry of Education. (1994-1999) Ministry of Education. Wellington.

Achievement (TFEA), was introduced. It was aimed initially at decile 1 to 3 schools but subsequent governments acceded to demands that it be extended to all schools.

“Effective and efficient?”

Part of the appeal of Tomorrow’s Schools was the expectation of savings: according to the 1989 blueprint document, developed by the Picot Taskforce, *Administering for Excellence*, “(o)n a conservative ‘best guess’ efficiency and effectiveness gains in the use of resources ... (should give) an overall net benefit of at least \$93 million (pa).”³ If this level of savings was realised it was achieved by increasing the workload of principals and teachers and persuading parents on boards to undertake tasks that were once the province of fully-paid employees. Despite these efforts, the cost-cutting that has been a feature of Tomorrow’s Schools, along with the systematic increase in charges to parents, local fundraising, and fee-paying students suggests that the promised savings never emerged. The Picot Taskforce did not anticipate (or perhaps they did) the high cost of digital revolution which hit schools soon after. The initial cost of equipping schools with technology was almost entirely funded by parents. Nor did the Taskforce seem to consider how much of school budgets would be eaten up by consultancy fees and the cost of legal advice and often legal action.

The Picot Taskforce also declared (optimistically in hindsight) that:

- “Savings will result from ending the duplication of decision-making and the rule-book-following procedures that are currently widespread”⁴ and that, “placing most decisions on education services in the hands of the institutions will increase efficiency and effectiveness by a minimum of 10%”⁵ and that,
- “the stock of property will be better run.”⁶

In summary, there may well have been savings but, if so, they were achieved by running down the physical and human infrastructure. It has been estimated that bringing school buildings up to code will cost \$1 billion for each of the next ten years⁷ and the teacher shortage is so severe that the Secretary for Education is relying on New Zealand’s capacity to buy in from overseas “ready-made teachers.”⁸

Moreover, there has been no reduction in administration; instead, the bureaucracy was exported to schools. Schools have had to create additional positions usually at senior management level, and positions to deal with the multiplicity of controls and directives from the centre. Prior to 1989, these positions, along with that of the principal, often included some classroom teaching. The mushrooming of administrative tasks has made that impossible and added to the pressure on curriculum delivery.

PPTA warned about the likelihood of this in its 1989 submission on the changes.

“The reality of a state funded system is that the ultimate responsibility for the disposition of funds rests with central government... Given this responsibility, it seems

³Administering for Excellence: Effective Administration in Education.(The report of the Picot Taskforce) Wellington 1988 P.92

⁴Ibid P.90

⁵Ibid P.95

⁶Ibid P.95

⁷[Third of school buildings fall short on health and hygiene](#) Radio NZ July 9 2018

⁸[The problem with NZ's response to the teacher shortage.](#) NZ Stuff Nov 6 2018

inevitable that with operational experience will come a steady growth of centrally imposed constraints on the way boards use funds.⁹

The market, which was the mechanism the Picot Taskforce was relying upon to deliver efficiency, equity and innovation, has clearly failed.

Fiscal discipline and moral hazard

It didn't seem to occur to the members of the Picot Taskforce that self-managing schools might struggle to manage their finances¹⁰, that they might decide that maintenance of buildings was unaffordable, that they might involve themselves in expensive legal battles¹¹, that their efforts to expand and be innovative might lead to bankruptcy¹² or that they might be subject to fraud; all these things have happened fairly regularly.

In the early days, the Ministry of Education argued that its policy-only role meant it could do nothing to assist schools which were facing financial hardship as a result of poor or illegal financial decisions. The popular view was that to assist a struggling school would create a moral hazard because other schools would come to believe that errors were without consequence. This was untenable, firstly because boards were volunteers without the necessary knowledge to avoid mistakes (and often without access to good advice) and secondly because the debt ends up being carried by a cohort of students and their parents who bear no responsibility for past policies.¹³ Less likely to make the headlines, but still reasonably common, is the practice of principals moving to another school leaving debt behind them. This makes for a challenging start for a new principal who may have been completely unaware of the problem.

School closure – giving schools a dose of the market.

One of the expectations around Tomorrow's Schools was that schools that were not succeeding would close as happens in business. The idea that school closure can be used as a punishment that will serve to improve performance completely ignores the needs of the students. The dislocation and uncertainty caused by school closure is profoundly distressing for parents and children and is educationally destructive.

Moreover, the line between a struggling school and a failing school is not clear-cut and definable. In reality, teachers, parents and students will do everything they can to try to turn around a struggling school, often succeeding only in slowing the rate of decline and not actually arresting it. Every year funding and staffing decrease with a consequent reduction in curriculum choice and extra-curricular options and pastoral support for students. Recruiting and retaining staff and board members becomes difficult. During all this time, successive cohorts of students pass through the school and receive an impoverished educational experience.

⁹ PPTA. Submission on Administering for Excellence 1989. Internal paper available on request

¹⁰ [Results of the 2017 School Audits](#). Office of the Auditor General

¹¹ [Principal's dismissal reveals conflicts](#). 2012

¹² [College clears its debt](#). Marlborough Express November 2013

¹³ "After the discovery of his fraud, the college was forced to say no to new rugby gear and library books for students, unable to recover the cash that Hancox had drained." [Investigator's report reveals how Donald Hancox defrauded Upper Hutt College](#) NZ Stuff August 2016

Dynamism and innovation

Another one of the assumptions of the Picot taskforce was that the market would make schools more dynamic and innovative. In practice, given the choice, New Zealand parents seem to valorise a model of schooling that is close to a 19th century English public school – traditional subjects and delivery, uniforms and the standard extra-curricular activities. Experimental schools such as Four Avenues in Christchurch and Metropolitan in Auckland were closed under pressure from an accountability regime that defined learning in very narrow terms. Where there has been innovation it is in the struggling schools: rural schools and the Virtual Learning Network (VLN), low decile schools with Gateway and the provision of social and health services, as well as the range of kura and Pacific Island language nests.

We expect students to cooperate but...

Many boards and principals and most teachers subscribe to a model of cooperative engagement with surrounding schools but, as the TSIT notes, that is difficult to do when principals' salary depends on the number of students the school can attract, and when school resourcing and teachers' continued employment is directly related to the number of students who come through the gate. The result is predatory behaviour on the part of some schools (for example poaching top sports players¹⁴ and dubious practice around enrolment schemes) and in other schools, short-term decisions made in order to survive, such as the abolition of the guidance counsellor position. Much money and energy is expended on marketing and promotional activities such as advertising, sending buses into other schools' zones, open evenings that are like full-scale drama productions and elaborate efforts to ensure that ERO reports reflect a favourable (though possibly not accurate) picture of the school. More negatively, schools facing problems such as funding deficits, high staff turnover, sexual harassment or health and safety issues try to conceal them for fear of the impact on the school roll.

Fear drives poor employment practices

This same fear can also cause boards to be bad employers, constantly ratcheting up staff workload, and expecting them to tolerate unhealthy and sometimes unsafe working conditions. There have been occasions when whole schools have been bullied into silence about a particular activity (for example, credit farming¹⁵) because that was the price of appearing to be successful.

How do you share employment?

The current situation of individualising of employment to boards creates challenges with regards to the importance of sharing expertise across the sector. Various solutions have been proffered to overcome the difficulties of shared employment including changing the law to allow the ministry to employ staff¹⁶, establishing certain schools as host schools for employment purposes, creating consultant positions, or operating on a trust and goodwill basis as the VLN does. They operate their shared curriculum delivery model by swapping

¹⁴ <http://gisborneherald.co.nz/localnews/3830324-135/poaching-must-stop>

[Claim Auckland schools skew zones](#)

[Zoning, Enrolment Schemes and Choice – Education Apartheid?](#) PPTA conference paper 2013

¹⁵ [Government moves to rein in Cambridge High](#)

¹⁶ Education Act 1989 [91N Power of Secretary to employ teachers](#)

curriculum subjects or transferring staffing and/or cash. All of these options have risks, chiefly because of the detachment of the employee from the employer nexus.

Host schools

The responsibilities assumed by the host schools for roles such as resource teachers are onerous and schools do not always find the level of support and funding from the ministry compensates them for the inconvenience. The Itinerant Music Teacher network, the prototype of host employment starting in 1989, has suffered from a shortage of funding and goodwill from participating schools and an unwillingness to act as a host school. The current system is relatively inflexible about shared employment. Current challenges, such as shortages of skilled relief teachers, could be ameliorated if it was easier to have a base employer with a staff member shared between a range of schools.

PART TWO – COMMENTS ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS

This submission will now comment on each recommendation in turn. PPTA supports a system that ensures equity and that is focussed on student achievement. It does not support a system that encourages competition and relies on chance, nor a two-tier system that treats schools with struggling boards differently. It supports a system that encourages shared responsibility, encourages collaboration and provides appropriate support and resources.

1 Governance

Recommendation 1:

We recommend that the roles of boards of trustees are reoriented...

1.1. PPTA supports an approach that enables consolidation of elements of management and administration – for example sharing aspects of boards’ accounting systems or property management. It is clearly a useful way for schools to share costs and build support and understanding while allowing boards and school leaders to give more attention to educational issues. The evidence and experience confirms that boards of trustees do not always have the expertise to manage schools effectively and, where they do, their success often comes at the expense of other less effective boards. It bears repeating that in a compulsory education system, there can be no tolerance for a system that builds in winners and losers as an operating principle. A critical question that the report grapples with is, at what level is it appropriate to make what sort of decisions? PPTA’s view is that there are too many decisions currently made at board of trustee level that boards are neither the most skilled nor the most efficient body to make. They are also able to make decisions that impact on surrounding schools without necessarily consulting those affected.

1.2. Parental engagement is more than governance

There is no doubt that parental engagement with schools is an important contributor to children’s success, but it need not be in a governance role. As many as a quarter of boards do not have a full complement of board members and probably many more have only got the required number because principals have actively recruited members. This suggests that the allure of being on a board of trustees is not as great as the Picot Taskforce thought it might be.

1.3. PPTA Secondary Principals’ Council, in its 2017 advice to the new minister, made the following observations about boards of trustees:¹⁷

- “Overwhelmingly the actual level of parental interest and involvement in the election of Boards of Trustees is very poor. Figures from the June 2016 round of elections shows that the median return of voting papers for secondary and area schools was 19%; and in Auckland 26 secondary schools had less than 10% of voting papers returned.
- The skills available for communities to call on for potential Board members vary enormously across the country. Even in better-served communities, schools still

¹⁷ PPTA. Internal paper, available on request

end up with Boards comprised of well-meaning individuals whose last direct involvement in a school was when they attended school.

- From a total budget for education of over \$10 billion, a tiny fraction is spent directly on Boards. The majority of that goes to NZSTA to train and support Boards. Boards may or may not access that support. The result is that Principals spend large amounts of time inducting and training Boards.
- There are major concerns when it comes to Principal and other senior staff appointments. A Board with no previous experience in personnel appointments of any kind can choose to make the appointment without reference to any external support or choose to use an outside consultant whose skills and knowledge may not be monitored for quality or effectiveness.
- That concern flows on to Principal appraisal. In this situation novice Boards can take an active involvement in appraisal and do it badly or a Principal can use an external appraiser of their own choice and leave a Board none the wiser as to the true level of their Principals performance. Many 'consultants' undertake appraisals when they have conflicts of interest and lack independence; and lack quality assurance processes."

- 1.4. One of the positive things to come out of Tomorrow's Schools was that secondary schools, in particular, became more open to parental involvement and more aware of the importance of keeping parents informed and building relationships with them. This is something schools should continue to do regardless of the nature of the governing body. PPTA has even developed advice for schools that want to better involve Māori parents.¹⁸

Recommendation 2:

We recommend that local Education Hubs are established.

- 1.5. The PPTA Executive does not support all the elements of the hub structure as outlined in the report. While appreciating that a regional body that provides the support and coordination that the system currently lacks, is needed, Executive felt the model in the form proposed appears too similar to District Health Boards. It does not want to see national coherence compromised by regional bodies - which has happened to some extent with DHBs - and is alarmed by the high salaries DHB managers pay themselves while suppressing wages and conditions of workers in the health sector. While this may be a consequence of overall levels of government funding, the DHB structure has lent itself to this particular agenda. PPTA wants more clarity around the industrial and employment implications of the hub model; a clear statement regarding national collective agreements would allay some of the apprehension felt by teachers and principals.

1.6. Who's on the hub board?

While Executive appreciates that an election process for the hub carries the risk that some groups would be excluded, it feels that there is a need for some democratic

¹⁸ [Whānau, hapū, iwi, māori communities and schools working together – mā te mahi tahi, ka ora ai te taitamaiti: Working together to support Māori student success](#)

involvement and the opportunity for local community responsiveness and accountability that this encourages. It endorses the proposal that half of the directors should be practising educators and that iwi representation will be mandatory.

1.7. Better management

Aside from that PPTA sees merit in a regional agency that would undertake some of the more onerous and complex functions that boards currently undertake. For example, teachers regularly call for a more collaborative approach to digital technology procurement and maintenance. They also regularly request better support for schools facing financial difficulties because they bear the brunt of financial cutbacks. Teachers who work in schools that are under financial pressure inevitably find themselves buying school supplies so the students don't miss out not making claims for financial reimbursement.

1.8. Professional Collaboration

PPTA policy also supports the provision of an extended range of services to teachers and principals, especially around curriculum, assessment, leadership and learning support, including the sharing of professional expertise through secondments and enhanced career paths for teachers. The employment arrangements around secondments, however, are complex and teacher shortages will further undermine the intent, so more work on the operational detail is needed. As the success or otherwise of the hub model is dependent on the quality of the personnel who staff it, teacher supply issues may impact on that as well.

1.9. One stop shop

If the hub can succeed in providing links to all the other government services that schools use, it would reduce frustration and workload in schools and would better ensure student safety. For a number of years, secondary teachers have been asking for outside expertise in order to deal with students who suffer from the range of behavioural, health and mental health issues that are all too common in classrooms.

1.10. Principal matters

One suggestion that PPTA would look favourably on is that the autonomy of boards in relation to principals' appointments could be constrained. One of the flaws of a model that has appointments made by lay boards of trustees is that they often do not have access to the knowledge and insights that being a member of a close-knit profession gives and consequently they make mistakes. PPTA is aware of principals who had their employment terminated in one school and who then reappear in another school and proceed to repeat the errors of judgement that were behind their previous failure.

1.11. Building trust

The proposal for ongoing support for schools and more low level intervention recognises that the 1989 assumption that schools could be left to sink or swim was educationally destructive and financially wasteful. The issue is not just one of monitoring but of building trusting relationships with schools so they seek help before problems become insoluble.

1.12. Suspensions

PPTA does not have a particular view on the processes around suspension but can see merit in the proposal to take some of the related administration off boards. One aspect that does give PPTA cause for concern is that some schools are protected from having to take on students who may have been excluded, because they have either enrolment schemes or maximum rolls. Once again, the burden falls unfairly on the struggling schools. Also PPTA is aware of cases where the Ministry of Education has compelled schools to accept violent and dangerous students back in the school without providing any further support; in other words, the ministry is prepared to put the safety of staff and students in the school at risk in order to solve its problem. Hopefully, a regional body would take greater responsibility for the overall wellbeing and security of everyone.

1.13. Complaints

While it seems reasonable that the hub would establish a complaints service, there would be implications for teachers' and principals' employment and these would need to be addressed. Use of a restorative approach is supported by PPTA, with the warning that teachers are somewhat cynical about it because so many schools do not have staff capable of running a restorative process effectively and rarely do schools provide enough time for what can be a lengthy procedure.

1.14. This section confirms PPTA's earlier expressed concerns about the need for more work to be done on the employment implications. If the complaint service is dealing with an allegation against a staff member for whom the hub is the employer it would be at risk of undermining natural justice requirements.

1.15. It also raises the question of where teachers' complaints go if the principal and board fail to act on them. There have been occasions when teachers have had to act as whistle blowers in order to have a financial, sexual harassment or health and safety issue addressed. This may put their continued employment at risk. ERO has had a practice of meeting with the PPTA branch chair because they often have insights into issues in the school that management might prefer not to discuss. It may be that a more collaborative and transparent system will obviate the need for secrecy but a channel for teachers' concerns will still be needed.

Recommendation 3:

We recommend that Education Hubs are regularly reviewed

1.16. PPTA supports a formative approach to reviewing schools, not the name, blame and shame that was used by ERO for so many years. On the other hand, there are claims that ERO has such a light touch that it sometimes misses serious incidents, so fails to act as an early warning system. The Hub should need to have a current and accurate picture of the schools it is responsible for. In the case of teachers' appraisal PPTA encourages ongoing, relationship-based, 'high support and high challenge' evaluation. A similar approach should be taken for schools.

1.17. Executive has some concern about the use of KPIs in this context bearing in mind the recent experience with Better Public Service goals. As they were designed for political ends rather than school improvement, they were without a sound rationale. Gaming of the system was to be expected.

2 Schooling Provision

Recommendation 4:

We recommend that a Te Tiriti o Waitangi-led, future focused state schooling network planning strategy be developed by the Ministry alongside the Education Hubs.

- 2.1. PPTA includes in its constitutional objectives an obligation “to affirm and advance Te Tiriti of Waitangi” and since 1995 has had policy which calls on the Association to “assert the central role of secondary schooling in New Zealand’s education structures and that Māori medium education in Te Reo Māori me ona tikanga be an essential part”. It supports this recommendation.

Recommendation 5:

We recommend consideration be given to the formation of a dedicated national Education Hub for Kaupapa Māori settings that provides a strong and coherent parallel pathway within the overall network.

- 2.2. One of the problems facing kura is that they have generally been established as a result of local commitment and enthusiasm which means has meant there is an absence of a national strategy and a coherent network. PPTA agrees that this needs to be addressed.
- 2.3. PPTA also supports the goal to prioritise Pacific language options. In 2010, PPTA Annual Conference affirmed “its support for Pasifika students to be enabled to learn and use their heritage languages and culture within the New Zealand education system in line with the National Language Policy and the Pacific languages strategy.”

Recommendation 6:

We recommend that work is undertaken to ensure that student transitions between schools or providers are seamless as they progress through the education system.

- 2.4. The TSIT has not really acknowledged that problems at transition points are largely a by-product of the competitive funding system. For example, primary schools sometimes recommend particular secondary schools for their students, shutting out others, and this has dramatic effects on resourcing levels. In the senior secondary school, loss of students has serious implications for the continuation of programmes for the remaining students so it’s not surprising that goodwill is stretched. The report’s proposals about funding, zoning, better management of the network and increased collaboration may ameliorate some of the transition difficulties.
- 2.5. There is a range of activities that most secondary schools follow, including peer support and contact with parents that help make new students feel welcome. One thing that doesn’t help is the community alarming children with stories about how much more challenging secondary schools will be. In general, this issue could be addressed

by the creation of a more collaborative climate and by the provision of quality advice and resources for schools.

Recommendation 7:

We recommend the phasing in of schooling provision that provides more stability and better transitions for students, and over time, establishing a schooling model based on: Primary schools (Years 1-6), middle schools (Years 7-10), and senior colleges (Years 11-13); or: Full primary schools (Years 1-8) and secondary schools (Years 9-13); or: Composite schools.

- 2.6. It's not clear why the Taskforce found it necessary to state a preference on school type, especially when it isn't accompanied by any credible research on why any particular structure might be better than another. Oddly, the Taskforce proposals don't reduce the number of transitions at all but simply suggest moving it to a more problematic point. There is already some evidence that middle schools aren't good at keeping Year 9 and 10 students up to speed with their peers already at secondary school and releases them ill-prepared for the secondary environment at year 11.¹⁹
- 2.7. In general, the structure of schools is of little importance to learning outcomes so the historical and geographical patterns should probably be left as they are. It is clearly going to be considerably more expensive if junior high schools are to duplicate all the specialist rooms and equipment that is available in the local secondary schools – unless it is the Taskforce's view that New Zealand students are to continue in general education until the end of year 10. This is unlikely to be associated with improvements in educational outcomes, particularly in STEM subjects.²⁰
- 2.8. It is unclear why the taskforce is advocating the position on middle schools. Other than some lightweight statements about "providing greater stability for their students and enable(ing) better support for their learning and wellbeing," the report provides no evidence for what appears to be a plan for the dismantling of traditional secondary schools. The Taskforce seems to have little idea of how fraught this process would be in reality. Network reviews are not for the faint-hearted.
- 2.9. Interestingly, the middle school experiment was introduced in the US in the 1970s. However, by the late 1990s, school systems in many states began ditching middle schools in favour of placing the "middle grades" back into the primary and secondary systems. Many US educators now regard the middle school experiment as a failure.
- 2.10. Moreover, much of the philosophical basis for consolidating students in years 7-10 is based on a false partition of our young people who, therefore, don't require a separate system of learning and are confused by being segregated. "Taken to its logical conclusion then, every age group can be viewed as having special needs; since every

¹⁹ K Hawk & J Hill [Transition traumas, traps, turning points and triumphs: Putting student needs first](#)

A paper prepared for the PPTA 'The Way Forward for Secondary Education' Conference, Wellington, April 18-20, 2004.

²⁰ The same difficulty arises with the proposed expansion of 1 to 6 primary schools to 1 to 8.

child is different, it might be suggested that 13-15 year olds attend a different school than 16-18 year olds!!”²¹

- 2.11. Change for change’s sake, particularly when it is disruptive and expensive is unwise but particularly so in this case when the Taskforce has set aside its overarching concern with equity to propose a model that risks entrenching inequality. Currently, most well-off communities in New Zealand are served by popular Year 7-13 or 9-13 secondary schools. There will be little desire to alter that model so the Taskforce risks establishing middle schools as a second-best choice in poor communities where students will be offered a modified and limited curriculum taught by (often female) non-specialists.
- 2.12. Further, the Taskforce acknowledges that its proposals are unlikely to work in rural communities but is untroubled by the educational consequences of increasing the incoherence of the school system. Nor does it give any consideration of the impact on nation-wide sporting and cultural events that are reliant on a secondary school structure. The Taskforce needs to properly consider the consequences of further fragmentation of the school network.
- 2.13. If the Taskforce wants to get rid of intermediate schools, the cheapest and least disruptive option is to merge them with secondary schools to form 7-13 schools.

Recommendation 8:

We recommend that national guidelines are developed for schools to become full-service sites that offer extensive wraparound services in socio-economically disadvantaged communities.

- 2.15. PPTA supports this proposal as students need a range of social, psychological and health support if they are to learn. PPTA has written extensively about it in [Equipping schools to fight poverty: a community hub approach.](#)²²
- 2.16. Presumably more work will be done to clarify the interface between full-service schools and the hubs as the employer of a range of experts in curriculum, pedagogy, health, learning support and wellbeing.
- 2.17. The Taskforce’s support for Alternative Education Centres will be welcomed by PPTA members who feel that too often they are left to cope with students whose behavioural needs are beyond anything the schools can deliver.

²¹ Lee H and Lee G. [Caught Between Two Schools.](#) Waikato Journal of Education 2:1996 p.69

²² <https://www.ppta.org.nz/dmsdocument/337>

Recommendation 9:

We recommend that Education Hubs, working with schools and communities, design community-wide flexible curriculum, assessment and timetable offerings for schools.

These options should:

- **Use digital infrastructure and delivery options more intensively.**
- **Enhance and incentivise school and tertiary programmes, especially in senior schools.**
- **Encourage the use of just-in-time assessment badging and micro credentialing**
- **Make better use of school facilities by students and the community throughout the day and at weekends.**

2.18. PPTA is has some concerns about this proposal because New Zealand schools are littered with the remnants of policy developed by enthusiasts, poorly implemented and under resourced. Teachers are left trying to knit the pieces together and deal with the unintended consequences. Fresh in teachers' memories is the push for modern learning environments which was promoted by the ministry and some architects, despite the concerns first expressed by teachers and now being repeated by parents. The PPTA conference paper [Flexible learning spaces: an experiment on our education system?](#)²³ summarises this debacle.

2.19. Given the workload hubs will have and the challenges in establishing working relationships, probably the last thing they need to do is dedicate time and money to speculation about the future; getting the present right will hard enough. As an example of how futile this process can be, bullet point 4 suggesting wider use of school facilities was also advocated under Tomorrow's Schools but the reality is that the cost and inconvenience for schools in terms of possible damage, health and safety, the availability of staff and the cost of lighting and heating tends to make such ventures unattractive. One initiative, though, that secondary schools would probably welcome back is a return to evening classes.

Recommendation 10:

We recommend an investigation into the role of Te Kura

2.20. Clarity around the role that Te Kura ought to play in the national education system is something PPTA members have been calling for since 2006. There would probably be an enhanced role for Te Kura in a more collaborative school system.

2.21. An option in regards to Te Kura and distance/online learning options that could be considered is that the hubs could pick up the role as local employer for teachers working in this space. Virtual Learning Networks that merged into hubs could provide better professional support, links to schools in a region and employment certainty to teachers in these roles, as well as a wider range of options to meet students' needs.

²³ <https://www.ppta.org.nz/dmsdocument/547>

3 Competition and Choice

Recommendation 11:

We recommend that each Education Hub has a planned network for state and state-integrated schools.

- 3.1. As far back as 1999 PPTA has called for “funding mechanisms which encourage cooperation between schools rather than competition” and for “ a guarantee of access for regionally-agreed home zones with balloting for out-of-zone schools to ensure all students have equal access to a high quality education.” More recently it has explored the failings in the current system in a paper called [Zoning, Enrolment Schemes and Choice – Educational Apartheid?](#)²⁴
- 3.2. The Association agrees with the Taskforce that the network needs to be better managed to ensure fair access for all students, including those with disabilities, to prevent schools using enrolment schemes to exclude some students and to protect the taxpayer’s investment. This will not be a popular move with those schools that have been able use a zone to select their intake but without it New Zealand can neither arrest the trend to polarisation nor have an education system that gives a fair go to all New Zealand children.
- 3.3. The Rt Hon David Lange has argued, in what he described as his final word on the 1989 reforms, that the potential of the system was destroyed by the abolition of zoning:

“Tomorrow's Schools was not designed to be a competitive model of schooling. Schools were encouraged to compete for students when the National government removed geographic school zoning and the ballot for places in out-of-zone schools. It also reduced funding for schools in difficult areas, and abolished forums designed to give parents and caregivers the means to complain about poorly performing schools. In the view of the National government, competition for students and the funding each student attracted would allow good schools to drive out bad schools”²⁵ In his view, the critical issue was “the choice between a competitive model of school management and a collaborative model, or, as politicians would probably put it, between freedom of choice and equality of opportunity.”²⁶
- 3.4. The current ad hoc state of the schools network wastes taxpayer money and does a disservice to students. Every time a new school is added to the network significant costs are added for property, base operations funding and staffing. As these schools are often very small the additional staffing generated per additional year level is proportionately very expensive – for example a single student in year 9 and one in year 10 (in a school that already has 200 year 1-8 students) will generate two full-time positions and some additional guidance and management time. Extra costs are also

²⁴ <https://www.ppta.org.nz/dmsdocument/347>

²⁵ Speech Notes Rt Hon David Lange "[Another Day for Tomorrow's Schools!](#)" The Clem Hill Memorial Lecture 28 September 1999 Massey University

²⁶ Op Cit

generated by the free transport entitlement students at integrated schools have. This practice will also be contributing to secondary teacher shortages.

- 3.5. It is unreasonable and impractical to expect the taxpayer to fund a limitless number of secondary schools of choice particularly when they are small, expensive to operate and restricted in the range of subject options they are able to offer students. At the same time, there are a number of secondary schools that have no choice about their small size; they are either small because of their isolated location or small because of the socio-economic status of their intake. They struggle to meet the needs of their students under the current funding arrangements partly because so much money goes into providing expanded choices elsewhere.
- 3.6. There is a need for a body distant from politicians to conduct a review of the school network to identify those that are essential-to-the-network and then to adjust the funding mechanism to better reflect the reality: that these schools are responsible for educating students for whom choice does not exist. The proposed hubs could fulfil this role. The taskforce should note, however, that school network decisions can rarely be truly 'depoliticised' and that the hubs, if they are making these sorts of decisions, will need to be able to demonstrate that they are locally responsive and accountable, while still maintaining the ability to make decisions based on long term thinking and the best-interests of the students.
- 3.7. As an example of how complex the agendas around school structures are, a recent proposed closure for a low-decile secondary school that was probably too small to be viable was averted after a political campaign to keep it open. The campaign was largely driven by the parent community in the nearby, higher decile school which would have otherwise had to take in the students.
- 3.8. PPTA conference has also called for a "fully state-funded compulsory education system and a truly free education for all its secondary students" so there is support for limiting donations. This is particularly important because high charges serve a dual function: they make the school more attractive to some parents but also to exclude poor families.
- 3.9. PPTA also supports moves to better regulate practices around international fee-paying students and has been calling for restrictions since 2004. Funding raised this way enables schools spend more on marketing the school and on the payment of higher salaries to teachers - and especially to principals. These payments avoid the need to seek approval in from the State Services Commissioner (concurrence) because it is not public money. There is a risk schools will become dependent on that form of tenuous funding and that New Zealand students would suffer in the event of a market collapse. It also raises the possibility of boards appointing principals who can make the school money rather than seeking professional leaders.
- 3.10. The priority task for schools in the compulsory sector is to provide New Zealand students with the best possible education, not to engage in commercial activities. There is also a policy concern that such activities absolve governments of responsibility for ensuring that the education system is properly funded.

Recommendation 12:
State-integrated schools

- 3.11. As integrated schools are now funded on the same basis as all state schools, it is fair that they be subject to the same rules and expectations. Like all forms of zoning, the maximum roll provisions enable integrated schools to select their intake, so that needs to be captured in the zoning changes. Similarly, integrated schools cannot really expect to continue to receive the privilege of subsidised bussing when all other parents have to make a financial contribution.

4 Disability and Learning Support

Recommendation 13:

We recommend that the Ministry continue to lead national strategy and policy in Disability and Learning Support, and that the Ministry work with the Education Hubs to support their work and learn from effective practice.

- 4.1. PPTA supports improved resourcing, access and coordination for special needs students. This is the area where the competitive ethos has failed most egregiously. In 2000, the Ministry of Education dispensed with special units and the experienced staff employed there in the belief that all schools would have to make some effort to accommodate learning support students. What happened was that the schools that had previously been magnet schools tended to remain that way but without the additional resourcing. At the same time, the tight funding was eked out by creating multiple levels of bureaucratic hoops for schools and parents to jump through to access support. It's not so much that schools don't want to be inclusive but that the funding regime makes it complex and expensive to be involved. A more effective and coordinated system is needed.

Recommendation 14:

We recommend that every school is supported to be inclusive through having a designated Learning Support Coordinator

- 4.2. PPTA has consistently supported inclusion in education for students with additional learning needs, with the proviso that it is accompanied by adequate resourcing to support teaching and learning. We have also supported a parent's right to choose options other than full inclusion, including special needs units that support partial inclusion as appropriate, and residential special schools if they feel that they are more appropriate for their child. We believe that a learning support coordinator will help students to access to the support that they need in order to succeed at school.
- 4.3. PPTA is also pleased to note that the Taskforce acknowledges that even with the addition of learning support coordinators, there is still insufficient funding to make up for years of neglect.

Recommendation 15:

Education Hubs to coordinate learning support.

- 4.4. Schools will welcome the support that can be provided regionally, particularly in relation to shared expertise and assistance with the paperwork. If this were enacted, parents would, for the first time, be able to feel confident that there was a local organisation concerned with, and competent to, advise on their child.

5 Teaching

Recommendation 16:

We recommend that the Ministry of Education work with the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand to ensure there is a coherent future-focused workforce strategy, including ensuring Initial Teacher Education provision is future-focused and fit for purpose. The test of this strategy will be whether every school can appoint and retain the teachers/kaiako it requires to deliver excellence and equity.

- 5.1. This is a very ambitious goal which is not going to be easy to deliver. One of the reasons New Zealand has not had a very effective workforce strategy for schools is firstly because the initial assumption was that the market would take care of it and secondly because the ministry of education has divided loyalties. Although it is supposed to oversee teacher supply, the Ministry of Education is also responsible for negotiating the national collective agreements. In the former case, it wants to ensure that schools have an adequate supply of teachers, but in the latter case, it must deny there are teacher shortages to avoid having to fund a pay rise. When there are supply issues, the ministry, under pressure from the politicians, is inclined to favour the cheapest solutions – fast track training and overseas recruitment – rather than responses that are in the best interests of New Zealand schools. For a national workforce plan to be useful, it would have to, as far as possible, be evidence based, widely agreed and function outside the political sphere.
- 5.2. Although the Teaching Council is not conflicted in the same way, PPTA members are concerned about any extension of the Council's role because they pay for its work. Consequently, they would prefer to see it restricted to its registration functions. Perhaps it would be better to establish an independent government-funded agency to do this work?
- 5.3. It is disappointing that the Taskforce didn't identify salaries and working conditions as a factor in building an effective teaching workforce and instead suggested strategies that plug gaps such as fast-track training for teachers and paraprofessionals. While these are not necessarily bad in themselves, PPTA is not confident that they will be delivered in way that enhances the profession because the imperative for cheap, politically-sellable solutions is so pervasive.
- 5.4. School-based teacher education makes very significant demands on associate teachers without adequate recompense or time. Teacher workload is such that teachers are not looking for extra tasks, so providers can struggle to find sufficient associate teachers. If school-based training is to succeed, concerns about the compressed nature of the courses and the unrealistic demands on associate teachers will have to be addressed. Establishing mentoring as a career path option might be one option.
- 5.5. PPTA is not opposed to the idea of guaranteed employment for beginning teachers but there are industrial implications. As with many aspects of the report, the employment

considerations need serious work and expert input before PPTA's final position can be determined. One option in regards to this recommendation is that these positions might be best established as supernumerary.

Recommendation 17:

We recommend that a Curriculum, Learning, Assessment and Pedagogy unit at the Ministry of Education works with the Education Hubs.

- 5.6. One of the most destructive aspects of Tomorrow's Schools was the demolition of groups that advised on curriculum and were said to be subject to "provider capture." This cavalier approach left teachers without the curriculum support so vital for effective teaching. The introduction of the new Technology curriculum and the implementation of NCEA are two examples of unsupported, or minimally supported, change that drove teachers out of the profession and subjected students to experimental, and sometimes poor, practice. There is definitely a need to reconstitute a body that can provide curriculum leadership.

Recommendation 18:

We recommend that requirements for the Kāhui Ako pathway model enable more flexibility in clustering arrangements, achievement challenges, and in the use of staffing and funding resources.

- 5.7. PPTA has similarly called for changes to this programme to make it more effective. PPTA shares this view and warned the minister and the ministry throughout the implementation process that conflicting agendas were likely to undermine the scheme. The 2017 PPTA conference paper identifies where the initiative went wrong. [Communities of Learning: The slippage between planning and implementation](#)

Recommendation 19:

We recommend that the Teaching Council develop more flexible guidelines for teacher appraisal including team appraisal, peer appraisal, and the frequency of reporting.

- 5.8. It is disappointing that appraisal, which should be a formative and useful process for teachers, has become a narrow and negative experience, often done cursorily because of teacher workload. It is yet another example of the low-trust, compliance-based model that the agencies operate because they do not have the time and resources to build professional relationships. The vast amount of time that the process takes is unlikely to ever be justified by the outcomes. While this is generally not because of the Teaching Council's messages, it is the reality of school leaders that have absorbed decades of messages about the importance of high-stakes, performative accountability regimes.

- 5.9. Middle leaders identified appraisal as the biggest generator of workload after NCEA.²⁷ The suggestions the Taskforce makes should make this process less onerous, though the underlying workload issues need to be addressed before it will be professionally useful.

Recommendation 20:

We recommend that Education Hubs co-ordinate professional learning and development (PLD) and advisory services in order to provide local support and grow and sustain local expertise.

- 5.10. Professional development has been a hit and miss affair for a number of years and a source of constant, justified complaints from teachers. In 2013, PPTA members declared their position on professional development as follows:

All types of Professional Learning and Development are important and (that) schools should be able to access relevant PLD such as that which is:

- i. *based on individual choice and an individual's learning interests and needs.*
- ii. *cross school or within school curriculum focused or skills development focused PLD done through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs);*
- iii. *whole school focused (around vision and values, Māori student achievement and other such initiatives).*

- 5.11. Thus, PPTA welcomes the prospect of a return to a national system of professional development that respects teachers' knowledge and expertise and supports them to share best practice. The adoption of a contracting system that, in many cases, eliminated local provision, was an absurdity driven by a political dislike of the university-based support services. The current PLD provision has become even more patchy, with a lot of expertise lost to the system when contracts became even more fragmented. As a result of a lack of nationally provided PLD, many schools spend considerable sums employing contractors to deliver whole school PLD which is often not in areas where teachers had identified that they needed help. The suggestion that PLD return to having an "on-call" geographical basis as well as national provision is supported by PPTA policy.

- 5.12. In contrast, for a brief period of time, secondary teachers were assisted by a national network of senior subject advisors, who were greatly used and valued. PPTA was instrumental in setting this up. More recently, PPTA has worked with NZEI, the Ministry of Education and the Teachers' Refresher Course Committee (TRCC) to establish Networks of Expertise which draw upon the long-established practice of teachers providing PLD for their colleagues.

²⁷ [Better leading for better learning report of the middle leadership taskforce to annual conference 2017](#)

6 School Leadership

Recommendation 21, 22:

We recommend that the Leadership Centre be established within the Teaching Council.

- 6.1. As previously noted, PPTA remains concerned about the implications of the expansion of the Teaching Council's role but recognises the need to ensure our schools are led by competent, ethical, collegial leaders with a broad understanding of teaching and learning and children: a Leadership Centre to foster leadership among teachers could help achieve this end.
- 6.2. Leadership is one of the most significant in-school influences on student outcomes, and has a significant impact on school culture and the workplaces of our members. Provisions to promote leadership in schools are currently inadequate. We support the need for leadership development at all levels, "a more systematic approach to ensuring that all our schools have the leadership they need, for the three spheres of school leadership described: principals/tumuaki, team leaders, and expert teachers."²⁸
- 6.3. If the Leadership Centre or any other functions are added to the work of the Teaching Council it is essential that the full funding for this is provided directly by government. If government believes that these roles are of value and are worth creating, then they should stump up the resources.

Recommendation 23:

The role of the hub in supporting leadership

- 6.4. The role of the principal is critical to a well-functioning school, and is the most important appointment. An effective principal can advance the values, vision and goals of the school, and have a significant impact on the learning of the students. However, even an experienced and capable principal needs support. Ineffectual principals can destroy a school and damage the educational opportunities of a whole cohort of children. For that reason, it is critical that they should not be appointed to jobs that are beyond their capacity nor left isolated in schools without support, advice and guidance.
- 6.5. Given this, PPTA can see the benefits of moving some tasks from the principal into the hub/regional body to reduce principal workload allowing them to concentrate on professional leadership. The appointment of leadership advisors to provide support to principals in what can be a lonely job is an important acknowledgement of the challenges principals face. The suggestion that principals' positions be reviewed after five years to assess whether they wish to make a contribution to the wider network of schools, may go some way to addressing the problem of decile drift. It is unfortunate that this was initially read as proposing fixed-term appointments as it has caused unnecessary alarm.

²⁸ Our Schooling Futures: Stronger Together p102

- 6.6. PPTA would like to see the definition of leadership sufficiently broad as to encompass all the leadership roles that exist in secondary schools including senior managers and the middle managers who are so critical to effective curriculum delivery. Generally, they get no training for their jobs.

7 Resourcing

Recommendation 24:

Because the proposed equity index better identifies those schools with the highest proportions of disadvantaged students, we recommend that it is implemented as soon as possible.

- 7.1. PPTA has actively lobbied for this approach over a number of years.²⁹ It will have direct impact on equitable provision and it is probably the first thing the Taskforce should endeavour to put into action. However, PPTA notes that the recommendation to increase equity funding to 6% of the total pool of funding (from around 3% currently) is not actually high compared to international examples of good practice. The advice that the taskforce received on this issue shows that equity funding in overseas jurisdictions ranges from 5-15% of the total quantum of school funding. Six per cent therefore would still be at the lower end. PPTA's position is that 10% of the total amount of school funding should be equity based, and that this should not come from re-prioritised funding but through new resourcing targeted to the schools serving the most at risk learners.

Recommendation 25:

We recommend that the allocation of staffing entitlements and management resources is reviewed to ensure that there is alignment and coherence across primary and secondary schools.

- 7.2. PPTA does not support this recommendation. Given the extensive range of problems with staffing and workload in New Zealand schools, it is bewildering that the Taskforce has chosen to privilege one very small element while ignoring issues such as class size, non-contact time, understaffing of large schools and curriculum breadth. It seems to have assumed that secondary staffing is already sufficient and has failed to grasp that secondary and primary staffing formulae are different because specialist delivery requires more staff. This might be better fed into a group charged with developing a coherent workforce plan.

Recommendation 26:

We recommend that Education Hubs work with school principals/tumuaki who receive equity funding to identify and share best practice around the use of this funding both within and across Education Hubs.

- 7.3. There is always benefit in sharing good ideas and best practice, something that does not occur naturally in a competitive system. Facilitated collaboration is a positive approach.

²⁹ [A needs-based model of resourcing — time for a national discussion?](#)

PPTA conference paper 2014

Recommendation 27:

We recommend that Education Hubs carry out school network reviews to ensure smaller schools that are unable to deliver quality education services are merged with others, or closed, where this is a practical possibility.

- 7.4. PPTA is not opposed to some rationalisation of the school network providing the process is fair and well-managed and the outcome is an improvement in the quality of educations for students.
- 7.5. As noted earlier, politicians find it difficult to resist the temptation to gain political fame and electoral favour by opening new schools, most often in areas where there are stable or falling rolls. Integration, special character provisions and most recently the charter school push have added small, fragile schools to the network which have, in turn, undermined the viability of surrounding schools. The result is a mishmash of schooling options characterised by small size and consequent difficulties in offering a comprehensive curriculum. While rural schools are small by necessity and need extra funding and support to compensate for the challenges of remoteness, many other small schools have sprung up in urban areas where there was no need for additional sites. This wastes scarce educational dollars.
- 7.6. It may be preferable to have the hub/regional body manage the opening and closing of new schools given politicians tend to have short timeframes that preclude them thinking about the long-term needs of the network. They are much more enthusiastic about opening schools than they are to make the hard call about closing them.
- 7.7. It is not clear that the Taskforce has understood how difficult this proposition will be to put into practice. It will be easier to put a moratorium on the establishment/integration of school in areas where there is no justified need than it will be to close schools. Changing school structures is always hazardous because the community breaks down into warring factions. It will be particularly so after thirty years of publicly-sanctioned patch protection.

8 Central Education Agencies

Recommendation 28:

We recommend that the Ministry of Education is reconfigured.

- 8.1. It has been PPTA policy since 1999 that ERO and NZQA should be reintegrated into the Ministry of Education, in the hope that this will allow synergies in policy development and reduction in red tape.
- 8.2. The prospect of a Ministry of Education that includes a focus on curriculum, pedagogy and assessment is also welcomed and is consistent with PPTA policy. It bears repeating that currently the ministry allows its role in negotiating national agreements to compromise any possible educational leadership/stewardship role it might take. On countless occasions PPTA has been involved in working parties with the Ministry of Education and the School Trustees Association on professional matters (such as curriculum, middle management and workload) only to come to the end of the process and have the ministry refuse to agree to evidence-based positions, instead directing the Association to “bring the matter up in bargaining”. It should not be solely PPTA’s job to cost and advocate for changes that improve teaching and learning.
- 8.3. Schools need better leadership and would probably prefer to deal with a single central organisation.

Recommendation 29:

We recommend that Education Hubs are created.

- 8.4. As noted earlier, PPTA is concerned about risks in the hub the model and awaits further details on the advantages and disadvantages of various structures.

Recommendation 30:

We recommend that an independent Education Evaluation Office is created.

- 8.5. PPTA supports a high trust model so believes the focus of EEO on hubs providing support for student achievement and wellbeing provides the right message and incentives. We note that EEO is a term regularly used for something else - Equal Employment Opportunities (New Zealand even has an EEO Commissioner) so this title will be confusing.

Recommendation 31:

We recommend that the Teaching Council is expanded.

- 8.6. As mentioned earlier, PPTA supports the establishment of a Leadership College but has some concerns about this because while teachers are funding the Council, they do not want see a range of constantly expanding functions without a very clear indication

of who is paying and how that will affect the Council's other roles. Any new functions must be paid for by the Crown.

Recommendation 32:

We recommend that the Education Review Office and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority are disestablished.

8.7. These two bodies have been major drivers of workload for schools so teachers will be unlikely to mourn their passing. Schools will need to be assured that new joint organisation is coherent and collaborative in its operations and less inclined to make busy work for schools.

NEXT STEPS

We suggest the Establishment Group focus on developing answers to the following:

- How will the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi be explicitly and authentically enacted?
- What are the core purposes of the recommendations?
- What cultural and structural changes will need to be made?
- What independent research and evidence will be needed to support the changes?
- What skills, capabilities and knowledge will be required from people in the system to ensure success, and how can these be nurtured?
- How might the changes impact on other parts of the system?
- How could the more complex changes be phased?
- What might be the unintended consequences of the changes and how can these be mitigated?
- What outcome, process and relationship evaluation indicators will be used to make judgments about the efficacy of the changes?
- How do we ensure changes are sustained?
- Are the changes adequately resourced?
- Are the timelines for implementation realistic - not driven by political imperatives?

PPTA commends the Taskforce for giving consideration to best practice implementation. One of the things the Establishment Group could usefully do is set up a group to advise on the industrial and staffing ramifications. PPTA is keen to contribute to any such group in the spirit of Article 3 from the International Summit of the Teaching Profession (2018) "... the delegation is committed to co-constructing with the profession the design and implementation of changes that affect the profession."³⁰

³⁰ [ISTP 2018. Countries Commitments p.11](#)