



PPTA TE WEHENGARUA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2024

THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL'S NOMINEE

THIS PAPER DISCUSSES THE HISTORY OF THE PRINCIPAL'S NOMINEE ROLE AND IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED. IT WAS WRITTEN IN CONSULTATION WITH SENIOR POSITIONS' ADVISORY GROUP AND SECONDARY PRINCIPALS' COUNCIL



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RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 That the paper be received.
- 2 That PPTA Te Wehengarua calls on the Ministry of Education (MOE) to recognise the value and importance of the Principal's Nominee role; and provide appropriate resourcing of both time and remuneration.
- 3 That PPTA Te Wehengarua calls on the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) to closely monitor workload of the PN to ensure it is sustainable.
- 4 That PPTA Te Wehengarua continues to use all professional and industrial forums to seek better appropriate recognition and support for the role of the Principal's Nominee.
- 5 That PPTA Te Wehengarua calls on the MOE to address all resourcing needs created by the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) change package, literacy/numeracy and curriculum alignment so that it is adequate for all schools.

1. PRINCIPAL'S NOMINEE ROLE

- 1.1 The Principal's Nominee (PN) is a staff member nominated by the principal of a school with consent to assess. The Principal's Nominee is nominated every year. The PN is responsible for ensuring that their kura or school meets the requirements of:
- a. the Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment and Skill Standards Rules 2022 for schools, and
 - b. the NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, Tertiary Education Organisations assessing against Achievement Standards, and Candidates 2023.¹

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In 2002, the first group of students and teachers undertook the new NCEA qualification, at Level 1 and over 2003 and 2004, Levels 2 and 3 were successively introduced, along with the separate Scholarship examination. Given the scale of introducing a new qualification framework, there were significant impacts on teacher and student workloads, and the path of implementation was not smooth. The same could be said of the Principal's Nominee (PN) role, also established in the early 2000s (previously NZQA Co-ordinator).
- 2.2 Since the introduction of NCEA, PPTA has kept up a continuous call for increased resourcing for the PN role which is not provided for as part of schools staffing entitlement, funded and determined by the MOE.
- 2.3 Between 2002-2016 PPTA made three recommendations to annual conference concerning the PN as part of its major policy decisions on NCEA 2002 – 2016:²
- In 2007 PPTA demanded that the MOE fully resource time for the PN, middle managers and teachers responsible for subject areas to deal with moderation.
 - In 2008 PPTA reiterated its demand for adequate support for the NCEA in terms of targeted staffing improvements to provide time for PNs to carry out their responsibilities.
 - In 2011 PPTA demanded that NZQA commission, in consultation with PPTA, a job-sizing study of the role of PN.
- 2.4 PPTA's 2010 *Reasons for 18 Credits* campaign had as the 18th reason for fewer credits - to help manage the workload of the principal's nominee!³

¹ <https://www2.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/ncea-for-teachers-and-schools/principals-nominee/>

² <https://www.ppta.org.nz/publication-library/document/554>

³ [18-reasons-for-18-credits-managing-student-and-teacher-assessment-workload/](https://www.ppta.org.nz/publication-library/document/554)

2.5 In 2016 PPTA made two recommendations to the Workload Working Group:

- that NZQA and PPTA work on developing joint advice and guidance for schools on the PN role and ensure it is readily accessible;
- that NZQA, as part of providing high quality support for PNs on managing quality assurance at the school level, reviews this support with a view to equipping PNs to remove any instances of over-engineering in their schools.⁴

3. THE ONGOING NEED FOR ADVOCACY

3.1 NZQA's website states that "since its introduction, NCEA has evolved to become a more flexible and inclusive model of education".⁵ The reality in schools is that 'flexible and inclusive' has been part of unabated curriculum change and increasing workloads.

3.2 Public engagement on the NCEA Review in 2018, led to the Labour government's 2020 NCEA change programme and the introduction of literacy and numeracy co-requisites, now set to be reworked under an extended time frame by the 2023 coalition government. In the mix has been NZQA, embarking on its 'digital assessment transformation journey' with multiple trials and pilots between 2015 and 2018.

3.3 NZQA's digital assessment vision is for moving NZ national senior secondary assessments (NCEA) online. In 2021 19.6% of students sat a digital assessment where the subject was available digitally, in 2022 it was 34.3% and in 2023 approximately 40% of students participated in digital end-of-year external assessments.⁶ Embedding digital has, however, not been smooth sailing as evidenced by the failure of the digital assessment platform debacle of November 2023.⁷ Often overlooked, in the raft of changes and issues of the NZ (NCEA) qualifications' programme, is the significant impact on the Principal's Nominee role, which is increasingly unsustainable.

3.4 PPTA's 2022 Annual Conference paper *Updates on The NCEA Change Package And More: Do We Need A Pause?* did note increasing pressure on PNs and the 2023 annual conference report: *Curriculum and NCEA update*, highlighted major concerns with the logistics of administering the literacy and numeracy assessments as well as the disadvantage to diverse learners by digital assessments.⁸

⁴ [Secondary Teacher Workload Working Group Report \(ppta.org.nz\)](https://www.ppta.org.nz)

⁵ <https://www2.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/about-ncea/history-of-ncea/>

⁶ [Briefing to the Incoming Minister He whakahoutanga ki te Minita tomo mai \(nzqa.govt.nz\)](https://www.nzqa.govt.nz)

⁷ <https://www.1news.co.nz/2023/11/03/nzqa-website-glitch-a-nightmare-for-stressed-teachers-students/>

⁸ [How NZQA embarked on a transformational journey to digital assessment \(rmresults.com\)](https://www.rmresults.com)

4. WIDELY HELD AND DEEPLY FELT

- 4.1 Secondary Qualifications Advisory Group (SQAG), March 2022 raised with NZQA that the workload of the Principal's Nominee had increased and become unsustainable. They pointed out that changing expectations and requirements were increasing the workload of PNs and impacting the effectiveness of the role in assuring the quality of qualifications their school/kura awards and in managing assessment processes and practices to support this outcome. NZQA committed to a review of the role.⁹
- 4.2 The Secondary Principals' Council (SPC), who are principal members of PPTA Te Wehengarua, consider that the PN role is now unsustainable and undervalued. They believe that the substantial increase in expectations and workload of a PN need to be fully recognised by MOE and NZQA; and adequately resourced. They have shared these concerns with NZQA at meetings in November 2023 and in March 2024.
- 4.3 PPTA Senior Positions Advisory Committee (SPAC), who are AP and DP representatives from across the motu, with some also holding the PN role, also shared these concerns with NZQA representatives at their March 2024 meeting. SPAC feedback highlighted the workload has increased every year and it is hard to see it improving in future. A shift to continuous moderation (while good for supporting teachers) has further increased the workload.
- 4.4 The frustration of increasing workload has been strongly raised at Term 1 regional PN meetings. In fact, it has been regularly raised at this forum for the last two-three years.
- 4.5 The National Association of Deputy and Assistant Principals (NASDAP) has expressed its concerns to NZQA, and PPTA supported them in calling for a full review of the PN's role by NZQA and appropriate resourcing of time and remuneration for this changed role as soon as possible.
- 4.6 NASDAP, PPTA, NZQA and MOE (which needs to be part of the funding review) met in May, with both PPTA and NASDAP expressing that the role of the PN is unsustainable and there is a need for NZQA to job size the role.
- 4.7 NZQA would not commit to job sizing as it believes the PN role varies in every school, however, intends to share three common operational models illustrating how different schools are managing the function of the PN. PPTA Te Wehengarua does not consider that the role of the PN is varied, rather there is variation in school size, location, resource capacity and this variation is exacerbating inequitable levels of support for the PN role.
- 4.8 The Otago Secondary Schools' Principals' Association (OSSPA) has also voiced the concerns of its members (June 2024), to NZQA Relationship Managers and via other associations to the MOE, noting no response to the sector has occurred of the inadequacy of current provisions for assessing the NCEA co-requisites in Reading, Writing and Mathematics. PPTA Te Wehengarua has supported the OSSPA concerns and written to NZQA, Ministry of Education, Regional Office (July 2024).

⁹ Personal communication - Reviewing the Role of the Principals Nominee. Power point

- 4.9 The 2024 formation of Aotearoa New Zealand Principal's Nominee Network, whilst a positive innovation on the part of PNs, is a further indication of unsatisfactory resourcing for the PN role. The group has been formed by PNs, for PNs and has quickly grown to a membership of 300. It also strongly believes that the PN role has become so increasingly complex and large that there needs to be more support, formalisation and recognition of this essential role in secondary schools.
- 4.10 PPTA Te Wehengarua agrees that schools are finding the current demands of providing the common assessment activities (CAAs) unsustainable and that the Principal's Nominees (PN) role is increasingly untenable.

5. ARE THEY LISTENING?

NZQA

*“Experience has taught teachers that the NZQA generally over-promises and under-delivers.”
2010 NCEA Internal Assessment: A harder job than professional marking!¹⁰*

- 5.1 Sadly, the above 2010 annual conference paper quote, appears to remain relevant in 2024. NZQA commenced a review of the role of the Principal's Nominee, in 2022, based on the concerns of the SQAG. The intent of the review was to ensure the role of the PN remained fit for purpose; and to identify whether additional resources in schools/kura are required to undertake the role.
- 5.2 The review report was published December 2022, although it does not appear online. Review findings will be of no surprise to secondary school teachers with workload imbalance, resourcing of the PN role, managing increases in data and in information, managing digital change and the new achievement standards all highlighted.¹¹
- 5.3 NZQA acknowledges that the extent of the role and responsibilities of the Principal's Nominee have changed since the role's inception and are impacted by:
- increased student retention in the senior school;
 - an increase in the number and complexity of courses in the senior school;
 - greater expectations on tracking qualification outcomes;
 - national changes in assessment (digital externals, the Review of Achievement Standards, external literacy and numeracy, Te reo Matatini me te Pāngarau).¹²

¹⁰ [NCEA Internal Assessment: A harder job than professional \(studylib.net\)](https://www.studylib.net)

¹¹ Meeting notes – Secondary Qualifications Advisory Group (SQAG), March 2023

¹² Meeting notes – Secondary Qualifications Advisory Group (SQAG), March 2023

- 5.4 The report points out that quality assessment outcomes rely on a school's resourcing of the role, which in turn relies on the school's capacity and capability. It suggests that investigating with the MOE how the role might be resourced, which could help to ensure that the personnel selected, and time allocated, are appropriate and consistent with role expectations.¹³
- 5.5 The review did highlight that NZQA's annual Administration Payment to schools (\$3 per enrolled student, plus \$3 per examination candidate) to ensure timely and accurate management of candidate data, the smooth conduct of examinations collection and submission of International Fee-Paying candidate fees, has not changed since 2002.¹⁴ It acknowledges that the MOE does not make provision for the PN role as part of schools staffing entitlement.
- 5.4 PPTA Te Wehengarua considers it crucial that the PN role be provided for as part of schools staffing entitlement and that the payments to support the management of the qualification system should reflect the actual cost in 2024 and beyond.

Ministry of Education

- 5.5 At the most recent SPC meeting (June 2024), Secretary of Education, Iona Holsted did speak to the Principal's Nominee role. She admitted that the role is incredibly challenging and needs to be addressed. The Secretary is very aware of the issue of additional workload, as a result of the co-requisites, including the technology component that has changed the role. This was brought to her attention by Grant Klinkum (NZQA). She acknowledged the MOE has met with PPTA, NASDAP and that SPANZ has also raised this concern. However, Ms Holsted advised that although very aware of the issue, the Ministry did not currently have funding to address it.
- 5.6 Current resourcing of the PN role is contingent on the kura or school's discretionary staffing and operation's budgets.¹⁵ PPTA believes that this position needs to be appropriately funded in both time and remuneration and that this funding needs to be from MOE.
- 5.7 PPTA also shares the belief of both NASDAP and OSSPA that an increase in funding is required for schools to run external examinations that should be the domain of the NZQA.
- 5.8 SPAC members have noted in the meetings that the MOE and NZQA do not appear to be working in union or listening to each other and express the concern that the two organisations could struggle to reach agreement on resourcing of the PN role. PPTA Te Wehengarua calls on both parties to address the issue – NZQA must advocate for appropriate resourcing to all appropriate channels; the MOE must address the funding inadequacy.

¹³ Meeting notes – Secondary Qualifications Advisory Group (SQAG), March 2023

¹⁴ Meeting notes – Secondary Qualifications Advisory Group (SQAG), March 2023

¹⁵ Meeting notes – Secondary Qualifications Advisory Group (SQAG), March 2023

6. DIGITAL EXAMS REVIEW

*“NZQA website glitch 'a nightmare' for stressed teachers, students”
Radio New Zealand¹⁶*

- 6.1 The failure of the NZQA online system, October 30 - November 10, 2023, was indeed a nightmare, for many but was felt most keenly by PNs across the motu as they scrambled to address the ‘glitch/es’. As a result of this failure, a Review of Digital Exams was commissioned, with the review published May 2024.
- 6.2 The review made recommendations¹⁷ that NZQA with the MOE, should examine the Principal’s Nominee model in schools with a view to:
- Developing a consistent and clear position description.
 - Understanding the support needed for those in this position.
 - Developing a plan for the professional development of this group.
 - Clarifying channels by which PN feedback and input into service delivery design can be captured to inform practice.
- 6.3 Although NZQA is reluctant to commit to job sizing the role of the PN, PPTA believes that to properly understand the support needed to PNs, NZQA needs to appropriately scope the role of the PN.

7. WHAT ARE THE SPECIFIC ISSUES WITH THE PRINCIPAL’S NOMINEE ROLE?

Increased workload

- 7.1 NZQA’s review acknowledges that the extent of the role and responsibilities of the PN has changed since the role’s inception. Increased student retention in the senior school, the number and complexity of courses and greater expectations on tracking qualifications has increased the workload of a PN.¹⁸
- 7.2 So too have the national changes in assessment, implementation of digital NCEA examinations and other external assessment, such as co-requisites. Specifically:
- **Literacy and Numeracy Assessment, Common Assessment Activities (CAAs)** have created a huge increase in complexity and workload for PNs. OPSSA in its letter (June 2024) to MOE and NZQA highlighted that many PNs work 12-hour days preparing for and running these assessments. In most cases these are staff who also have their own teaching timetables. Principal correspondence shared with PPTA, underlines the real concern among PNs about the upcoming (2024) ‘submitted externals’ in addition to the CAAs. MLAC and SPAC have given similar feedback.

¹⁶ <https://www.1news.co.nz/2024/05/01/number-of-failures-identified-in-nzqa-2023-digital-exam-glitches/>

¹⁷ <https://www2.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/NCEA/External-review-of-digital-platform/Review-into-the-delivery-of-digital-assessment-events-30-October-to-10-November-2023.pdf>

¹⁸ Meeting notes – Secondary Qualifications Advisory Group (SQAG), March 2023

- **External portfolio standards:** OPSSA describe previously busy PNs as being at breaking point with the additional workload created by the CAAs, and the new demands being placed upon them by the upcoming NCEA Level 1 external portfolio standards. SPAC point out that the ‘internal-externals’ and the requirements around uploading have added hugely to the workload of the PN role.
- **Data management** has increased the workload of the PN with the NZQA *Review of the Principal’s Nominee role*¹⁹ noting that managing increases in data is taking more of the PN time. More student results via internal assessment have meant PNs spend more time recording and checking student grades, more personalised learning means more time spent entering individual student data.
- **Digital assessment (including online exams and digital submission)** has increased the complexity of monitoring external entries. New systems and styles of exams have had to be catered for, including the training of Exam Centre Managers (ECMs) and supervisors in these various aspects, most often falling to the PN. The digital problems to date have required ‘more’ of the PN.

Senior leaders also consistently feedback that the costs to schools in holding CAAs is significant, particularly with exam supervision.

- **Special Assessment Conditions (SAC)** having tripled in number, increasing the volume of work for the PN, with the need to check for SAC entitlement accuracy in external entries.
- **Derived Grades at scale,** have further increased the workload with NZQA expectations of regular submission of derived grades and a quality assurance process for these, having to be managed and monitored by the PN.
- **Increased communications** have added to the workload of the PN. PPTA Te Wehengarua has considerable feedback that the communications from NZQA are increasingly complex, often untimely and certainly too frequent. NZQA’s review highlights that its communications and channels have expanded in the last ten years and that its systems are not designed to suit schools, rather their business needs. PPTA, SPC, SPAC, and NASDAP have highlighted this issue.

NZQA has shared with PPTA that it is actively looking at ways to enhance communication and support. It intends to refine and simplify PN communications and will take up the NASDAP/SPAC suggestion to organise regular PN seminars/webinars focussed on key information “and sharing of good practice”.

- **Turnover:** There has been a big turnover in the role over in the last few years with many PNs not being able to continue, and in many case Deputy Principals having to take on the role as there is no-one else willing to step-up into it as the role of the PN is not adequately recognised.

¹⁹ Meeting notes – Secondary Qualifications Advisory Group (SQAG), March 2023

Inadequate resourcing

*“The implementation of the Change Package represents a significant shift in the way that NCEA is delivered and experienced. Understandably, there is some anxiety in the sector, particularly given other changes that are underway. This is why I have directed the Ministry to ensure that there is adequate support and resourcing for schools, kura and foundational tertiary providers for the **entire** implementation process.”*

Chris Hipkins, 2020

- 7.3 Minister Hipkins did emphasise the huge shifts required in the change package and committed to the need for adequate support (Cabinet Paper, February 2020); unfortunately, the resource allocated to schools was and is still inadequate. NZQA knows that quality assessment outcomes rely on a school’s resourcing, and across the country this is varied.
- 7.4 The variation is very visible in the role of the PN. Schools allocate varying amounts of time and remuneration to their PN by utilising MUs or MMAs. In some schools, the PN is on their Senior Leadership Team (SLT), while in others, they are a staff member for whom an SLT member has oversight.
- 7.5 Not all PNs have a clear time allowance for being PN and there is considerable variation in both time and remuneration through unit allocation.
- 7.6 SPC feedback is that some schools support the PN role with an additional administration position, however these costs are absorbed by the school’s own budgets and means that their operational grants are spent on this rather than supporting students and staff elsewhere. Other schools expect the PN to do their own administrative tasks, as they do not have the funds to allocate to support the administration.
- 7.7 Correspondence from principal associations highlight that some schools have resorted to self-funding an extra PN position with units and time, to deliver NZQA’s requirements. Small schools do not have the infrastructure or resources for digital exams, and lack of resourcing is creating unacceptable equity issues within our qualification system.
- 7.8 NZQA makes an annual contribution to schools, however admits the amount does not cover the cost of resourcing the PN role, and that the range of functions is also not proportional to the number of candidates entered.²⁰
- 7.9 SPAC members highlight a noticeable increase in plagiarism for the new 1.3/1.4 achievement standards (AS). Increased cases of plagiarism have required many more hours of investigation work for the PN, which is of course unfunded time. The absence of a national digital platform to complete these internally completed - externally marked AS has left schools and the PN floundering.
- 7.10 NZQA has its vision for digital exams, however, to date this has required a lot of work by schools and has not been resourced, for example NZQA file releases require the PN to distribute the information to Heads of Faculty and the PN is often the person delivering PLD on the Level 1 changes to staff.

²⁰ Meeting notes – Secondary Qualifications Advisory Group (SQAG), March 2023

- 7.11 Teachers feel the workload increase themselves and can certainly see the impact on PNs. The recent digital issues have caused teachers to question the capacity of NZQA to manage assessment.
- 7.12 In fact, NZQA's review of the PN role advised that the Review of Achievement (RAS) standards, along with its digital-first approach, will result in further workload increases in the short to medium term. It suggests that in the short to medium term, PNs need additional support or resourcing to carry out their role and duties effectively.²¹ The report does not however provide any detail on this suggestion.

Solutions

There is a desperate need for an immediate boost to secondary and area schools' Operations Grants to fund these extra costs, because they are currently being funded at the expense of other essential aspects of schools' operations.²²
PPTA Te Wehengarua submission, 2002

- 7.13 Although it could be asked today, PPTA Te Wehengarua made the above recommendation in its 2002 submission to the Select Committee Inquiry into the National Certificate of Educational Achievement. In 2024, PPTA continues to believe that there is a desperate need for an immediate boost in funding to ensure a sustainable Principal's Nominee role and a fully resourced qualification system. The importance and mana of the role of Principal's Nominee needs to be recognised and upheld.
- 7.14 Principal feedback is that the PN role needs to be a tagged resource. SPC would like the PN role to be recognised and resourced similarly to the Specialist Classroom Teacher (SCT) role, with both an allocation of time and appropriate level of remuneration.
- 7.15 SPAC solutions include:
- Resourcing for digital examinations during the year. An exam centre manager, as per the end-of-year exams would be sensible.
 - Formalise the PN role with a time allowance and attached remuneration. This should be scaled for larger schools.
- 7.16 PPTA Te Wehengarua agrees that there are no simple solutions to address the extra workload generated by this much more complex qualifications system, but solutions must be found. The Ministry of Education and NZQA share responsibility for the Principal's Nominee role and the solution must involve both organisations.

²¹ Meeting notes – Secondary Qualifications Advisory Group (SQAG), March 2023

²² [ppta-submission-implementation-of-the-ncea](#).