

Revisiting the role of the Specialist Classroom Teacher: EOI for working party to update appointment guidelines and handbook

At the February, 2026 meeting of the Executive, the following paper was discussed ‘Revisiting the role of the Specialist Classroom Teacher’. A number of recommendations were passed including:

1. That a small, short-life working group be established, consisting of four Specialist Classroom Teachers (SCT) supported by relevant advisory officers. That the working group be asked to:
 - a. update the Specialist Classroom Teacher Handbook (SCT Handbook);
 - b. consider ideas for the expansion of the SCT career pathway; and
 - c. advise on possible amendments or updates to the Guidelines for the appointment of Specialist Classroom Teachers in Secondary Schools and the Guidelines for the appointment of Specialist Teachers (ST) in Area Schools (SCT Guidelines).
2. That the group meet face-to-face for two days in Term 2 2026 with further meetings online as required.
3. That there be a report to May Executive on the outcomes and proposals of the working group.

Background

The SCT role was an outcome of the 2003 Bazely report on Secondary Teacher remuneration and the subsequent long term workstream process.

Negotiated into the 2004 Secondary Teachers’ Collective Agreement, the Specialist Classroom Teacher (SCT) role has now been around for nearly two decades.

Underpinning it is a set of joint guidelines for appointment¹ in 2005, followed by a pilot in 2006. The guidelines were written in conjunction with the Ministry of Education and the then NZSTA (now Te Whakarōputanga Kaitiaki Kura o Aotearoa²) and were last updated in 2012. They have not needed updating as the collective provisions have not changed.

A handbook for SCTs was developed in 2006 by PPTA and people in roles similar to the then to-be trialled SCT role to give practical guidance to the role. The handbook was last updated in 2008³.

The original role was meant to be an expanding career pathway. That did not eventuate, and the intended pathway was to a large degree replaced by the Kāhui Ako roles. With the disestablishment of those roles, it was determined at Annual Conference 2025:

“That PPTA consider the value of an expansion of the Specialist Classroom Teacher model and inclusion of this into the PPTA long-term vision under vision area ‘Teachers are well supported in their roles’.”

Since then:

- The long-term vision has been updated to reflect this motion.⁴
- In late November 2025, the SCT Association was revitalised with a one-day online hui attended by 41 SCTs from across Aotearoa. The workshops were well-received and included conversations with Advisory Officer Rob Willetts and Adele Scott. Regional and National contact lists of SCTs were updated, and attendees were pleased to hear about the recent resolution at Annual Conference to explore extending the SCT role.
- The Bay of Plenty PPTA Regional Committee passed a motion at their regional meeting on the 27th

¹ [Guidelines for the appointment of Specialist Classroom Teachers](#)

² [Te Whakarōputanga Kaitiaki Kura o Aotearoa - NZ School Boards Association — Te Whakarōputanga Kaitiaki Kura o Aotearoa](#)

³ [SCT Handbook 2008 copy](#)

⁴ [PPTA’s Long Term Vision for the secondary teaching profession | PPTA](#)

November 2025 to support the formation of a working party or taskforce to advance the recommendations above.

Next steps

- Establishment of a working group of SCT representatives (4 SCTs)
 - SCT Association to call for EOI from its members based on agreed criteria (below)
 - The President and General Secretary would then select the working party members, ensuring appropriate representation (geographical, gender, experience)
- Initial online meeting to:
 - set up document sharing
 - agree on tasks needing to be completed prior to pre-face-to-face meeting
- Two-day face-to-face hui in Wellington to:
 - update the SCT Handbook;
 - consider ideas for the expansion of the SCT career pathway; and
 - advise on possible amendments or updates to the SCT Guidelines.⁵
- Report the work and the recommendations from the working party to the May Executive, to allow time for any further work required for incorporation of ideas into annual conference paper(s).

Criteria for Selection onto the SCT working party

Successful applicants onto the working party must be current members of PPTA Te Wehengarua AND will meet the following criteria:

- A minimum of two years' recent experience in the SCT role
- Familiarity with the SCT Handbook and SCT Guidelines
- Ability to attend online and face-to-face hui
- School supportive of time release

In addition, the following would be highly desirable:

- Active contribution to the SCT role within own cluster/region
- Consideration of the SCT pathways

Note: Teacher release time and expenses to attend hui will be covered by PPTA Te Wehengarua

Process to apply:

Via survey link [EOI Specialist Classroom Teacher Working Party Apply here](#)

Closing Date: Wednesday March 18th 4pm

If you have any questions please send these to **Dr. Adele Scott, ascott@ppta.org.nz**

⁵ If the guidelines are to remain joint guidelines they would need to be agreed between PPTA, The School Boards Association (formerly STA), the Ministry of Education and NZEI (Area schools). Joint guidelines have been challenged by the Ministry in recent times, most recently in the PUMs case, so it is possible they have fallen out of favour with the government. If agreement is not reached there is the option of the PPTA publishing updated guidelines with the other parties.