
NCEA Monitoring System Report

Conference 2002 required that the "carefully planned, implemented and monitored pilot programme of Level 2 NCEA in 2003" be "monitored by PPTA monitors (external to a pilot school) reporting regularly to National Executive who will lobby NZQA and the Ministry of Education to correct and solve problems as they are identified, and collate and report on progress to PPTA members and to Conferences in 2003 and 2004".

Straight after Annual Conference, branches were sent advice about the conference decisions and the processes which should be used to decide whether to implement Level 2. In the term which followed, however, the number of schools and teachers who opted to implement Level 2 this year far exceeded expectations, and stretched the meaning of "pilot" more than somewhat. Nevertheless, it appears that in almost all cases these decisions to implement Level 2 were made by consensus.

At its November meeting, the Executive approved plans for the required monitoring system. Regions were given materials and asked to appoint a monitoring coordinator by the start of Term 1 2003, and to begin to seek a team of people to serve as monitors for schools in their region, reporting to the regional coordinator. The materials were put on the PPTA website, and in Term 1 2003 branches were advised to work with their regions if no monitor approached their school.

However, this appears not to have been a priority issue for regions, and other issues such as the G3 Equivalent problem intervened. Furthermore, with almost all schools involved with Level 2 in some way, the requirement for an external monitor for every school was simply too big for regions to meet. At the Issues and Organising Seminar in late February, regions asked if the Coordinator could communicate directly with Branch Chairs to get feedback on any issues that were arising, and it was agreed that this would make the monitoring task more manageable. However, despite repeated reminders, there are still eight regions which have not notified National Office that they have a Coordinator. Very few reports have come in from regions. A call for reports at the end of Term 1 produced material from three regions. A call at the end of Term 2 produced no response at all. It would appear that a monitoring system of this kind does not meet the needs of members and branches.

On the other hand, there is no doubt that there are implementation issues remaining, and issues which have been raised with the President or Executive members or directly with National Office have been energetically pursued with the agencies. A number of 'wins' have been recorded, and members have been kept informed about the issues and progress being made through regular NCEA Bulletins which are faxed to branches. Strongly critical submissions covering a wide range of concerns were made to the Select Committee on NCEA in October 2002 and to the first meeting of the reconvened NCEA Forum in May 2003.

Issues which have been addressed in the period since last Annual Conference include:

- **Training for Level 2 and 3 and the 'generic' assessment day in Term 2**

The Association has continued to lobby about subjects where there appear to have been inadequate resources or facilitation problems.

- **In-School Professional Development and Implementation Time**

PPTA lobbied for the 'Wellington model' of an hour a week for NCEA time in all schools in the region to be mandated across the country. This did not happen, but we understand that a number of schools are making this time available to their staff.

- **Operations Grant Funding**

The Association via the President and the Chair of Principals' Council made it clear to the Minister that the miniscule increase in schools' operations grants to cover the costs of administering the NCEA was grossly inadequate. However other budget allocations announced at the same time such as to improve software for school administration systems and to fund NZQA's administration of the NCEA were much needed.

- **Student Fees for Qualifications**

Early in 2003 the Association lobbied the Minister about the increased fees and the difficulties about the current system for applying for financial assistance. We suggested that eligibility for financial assistance should be linked to the Community Services Card. In early May, the Minister announced that this would happen for this year. The February Executive meeting passed a resolution that the Association supported in principle fee-free qualifications, and liaison has been established with the Child Poverty Action Group and QPEC to work together towards this goal.

- **School Administration Systems for Qualifications**

In June the Association warned NZQA that its intention to penalise schools financially if they did not meet 'accuracy standards' for entries to external standards would be received very angrily by schools, and we were proven right. In August, as a result of strenuous lobbying by PPTA and schools, NZQA announced that it was adjusting its deadlines and its demands somewhat. National Office keeps in touch with a group of Principals' Nominees to identify issues which are developing around school administration systems.

- **Internal Assessment of Level 1 External**

In March, the Association became aware of a circular from NZQA inviting schools to volunteer to internally assess some Level 1 external standards. We could see this would arouse suspicion among members that NZQA was attempting to off-load work onto schools, and raised our concerns with NZQA. That, combined with vigorous lobbying of the Minister by Principals, resulted in the circular being withdrawn.

- **Review of Level 1 Standards**

PPTA has been keen to ensure that members were consulted in the review of Level 1 standards, and reminded them about the end of January deadline for the first phase of consultation, and the deadlines at the end of Term Two for those subjects which had a second phase of consultation. Our advice to the Minister was that the results of the consultation process should be respected, and that minor changes which would make the standards easier to teach to and assess should be implemented, but any major change which would have a negative impact on teacher workload should be avoided.

Recommendation:

1. That the report be received.