

PPTA NEWS

The magazine of New Zealand secondary teachers

Volume 37 • Number 2 • April / Paenga-whāwhā 2016

Inside our annual Issues and Organising Seminar **PAGE 10**



PPTA NEWS



ISSN 0111-6630 (Print)
ISSN 1178-752X (Online)

PPTA News is the magazine of the New Zealand Post Primary Teachers' Association. Approximately 18,000 copies are distributed free to secondary and area schools and other institutions. Not all the opinions expressed within PPTA News reflect those of the PPTA.

Editorial and advertising

Enquiries should be addressed to: The editor, PPTA News, PO Box 2119, Wellington, New Zealand.

Ph: 04 384 9964 Fax: 382 8763

Online: www.ppta.org.nz

Editor: Anna Kirtlan Email: akirtlan@ppta.org.nz

Layout and design: Ben Weston

Printed by Toolbox Imaging

Deadlines

May edition: 5pm, 12 April for articles and ads.

June edition: 5pm, 11 May for articles and ads.

PPTA field officer contacts

Contact your local field office for all queries about your collective agreement entitlements or for assistance with employment relationship problems.

Auckland

4 Western Springs Road, Morningside

P O Box 52 006, Auckland 1352

ph (09) 815 8610 fax (09) 815 8612

email: auckland@ppta.org.nz

Hamilton

Level 1, 650 Te Rapa Rd, Te Rapa

P O Box 20 294, Hamilton 3241

ph (07) 849 0168 fax (07) 849 1794

email: hamilton@ppta.org.nz

Palmerston North

Guardian Trust House, cnr The Square and Main Street

P O Box 168, Palmerston North 4440

ph (06) 358 4036 fax (06) 358 4055

email: palmerston@ppta.org.nz

Christchurch

Level 1, 501 Papanui Road, Papanui, Christchurch 8053

DX Box WX33613

ph (03) 366 6524 fax (03) 379 4011

email: christchurch@ppta.org.nz

Dunedin

Queens Garden Court, 3 Crawford Street

P O Box 1561, Dunedin 9054

ph (03) 477 1311 fax (03) 477 1804

email: dunedin@ppta.org.nz

PPTA member benefits



HealthCarePlus offers PPTA members health, life and disability insurance.

When disruption to your health happens it's a good idea to have affordable protection in place.

The sooner you join HealthCarePlus, the sooner we can help you pay for your day-to-day health costs.

ph 0800 268 3763, or

email contact@healthcareplus.org.nz

www.healthcareplus.org.nz



PPTA members are eligible for a special banking package with Kiwibank.

Kiwibank is 100% New Zealand owned and operated.

It's been thinking up ways to give Kiwis better value banking since 2002.

The banking package currently includes 0.25% off Kiwibank's advertised fixed home loan rates (excludes special offers or one-offs), 0.50% off Kiwibank's advertised variable home loan rate (excludes revolving home loans and offset mortgage), free EFTPOS on your everyday accounts and great discounts on credit cards and insurance.

Visit www.ppta.org.nz/membership/benefits to view the complete package, and the terms and conditions that apply. If you'd like to join Kiwibank, call 0800 629 008.

Kiwibank Limited's Disclosure Statement is available from your local Kiwibank or at www.kiwibank.co.nz.



Hertz rental car

PPTA members can receive special member rates – quote CDP no 1754881 when booking.

Ph 0800 654 321

www.hertz.co.nz

Inside this issue...

Claire Couch receives Guy Allan Award	4	East Coast region builds momentum	7
Obituary: Gay Simpkin	5	JVP by-election	8-9
Alisi Fusi Wightman scholarship visitors to NZ	6	Issues and Organising Seminar in Auckland	10

Let's try learner-centred PLD for teachers

It seems that at every conference I go to these days people (usually not teachers) sit around affirming the need to focus on providing the right conditions for our students to have the best possible chance to learn and grow. The debate then inevitably moves on to how they make sure that teachers do a better job of providing these conditions in the classroom.

The conditions themselves are nothing new: provide a student-centred curriculum, respond to the individual needs of each student, ensure that students have the time to reflect on their learning, and of course, foster an environment where it is safe to fail – as long as students learn and change as a result.

So how do we make sure the teachers can and do create classrooms that look like this? Simple really – provide the same learning conditions for the profession that we know best supports the learning of our students.

We know that it is good for the learning in our classrooms to be student-centred. We are encouraged to allow our students to have an influence on what happens in our classrooms. Sure, we are the experts but we know that if students don't truly believe that the content is relevant, useful and interesting to them, they will not engage. Just imagine if Cabinet took the same approach and instead of them making decisions for us about what professional learning and development (PLD) is to be prioritised they simply left it to us. Let us have a PLD system that is learner, rather than politician, centred.

The expectation that we take the time to know and respond to the needs of each of our students is the norm. Long gone is any notion of a "cookie cutter" curriculum. Could we expect the same for teachers? Instead of someone in the ministry looking at school-wide data and deciding which school gets what, why can't PLD demand be driven by the individual? Of course it is sometimes appropriate to take a school-wide approach to issues and initiatives but too often this sees the individual being ignored. Let us have a PLD system that is nimble enough to respond to the needs of each of us.

Students need to have the time to

usefully reflect on their learning. Real learning comes from being able to identify not just what went wrong, but *how* things went wrong, so we know how to do things differently next time. The establishment of Communities of Learning could help to create some time and expertise to lead such reflection. Unfortunately, given the overwhelming bureaucracy that has taken over our professional lives, these opportunities may never be realised. Let's ditch some of the paperwork and give teachers some time to effectively reflect on what happens in our classrooms.

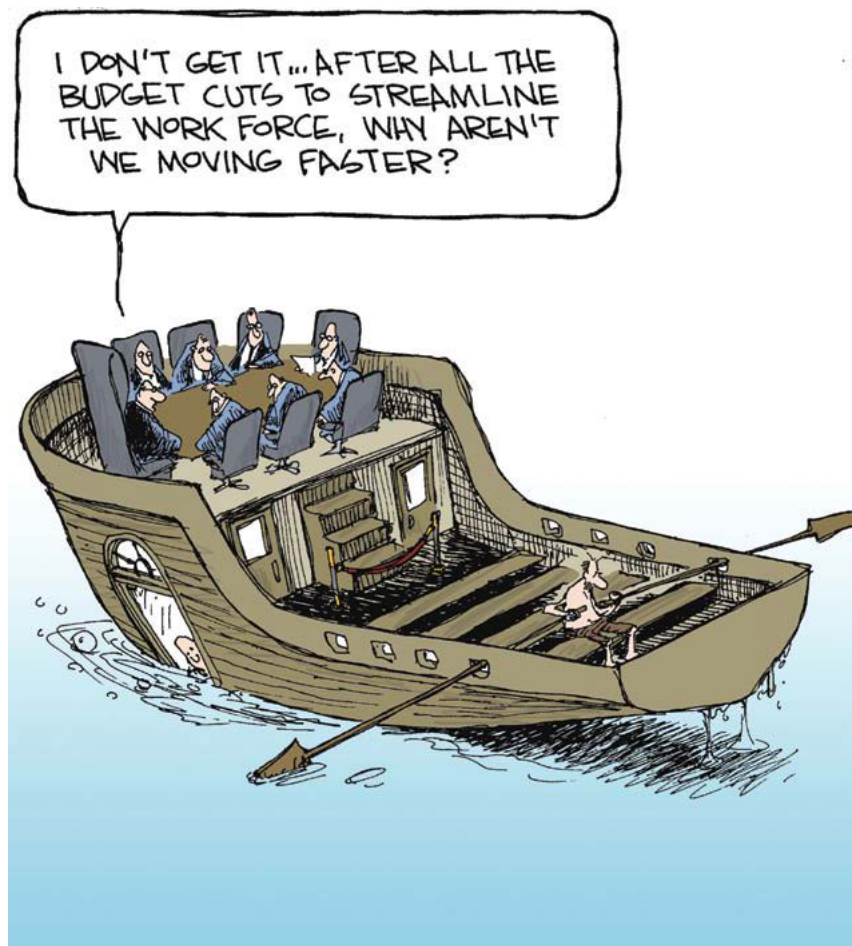
We try to foster classroom environments where it is safe for our students to try, and to fail as long as they learn from the experience. We need to make sure that it is safe to share, not hide, our mistakes. High stakes, high profile accountability structures do not help us to do this. Linking appraisal (whether of a school, department or a teacher) to NCEA results can limit healthy engagement



by Angela Roberts

around what has or hasn't worked. Let us have an environment where robust and honest reflective practice is revered.

Respect our ability to discern for ourselves what PLD we want and need in order for us to be the best that we can be. Provide us with the conditions to grow and improve, just as we are expected to do for our students.



Reward for long hours of toil

Kaipara College branch chairperson **Claire Couch (right)** is presented the PPTA Guy Allan Branch Activism Award by Auckland Western Ward executive member Melanie Webber.

Members of Kaipara College formally nominated Claire for her achievement of maintaining a 92% membership roll in the 13 years she has worked at the school, which they put down to her personable abilities.

"Her mediation skills and advice has been appreciated and problems sorted before they have been blown out of proportion," they said.

They also acknowledged the extra hours she put on their behalf, frequently journeying 98 kilometres to Auckland to attend regional meetings while also filling the roles of branch secretary and treasurer.

Claire's experience as a PPTA branch chair spans almost as many years as her teaching career. From the mid-90s she has served in the role at Bay of Islands College, Opotiki College and Raglan Area School before coming to Kaipara College in 2003.

"Over the years as branch chair in the



various schools I have been in, I loved standing up for what I believed in," she said. "Protest marches, meetings in town, conferences, the hard talks on behalf of colleagues, baking scones on behalf of PPTA ..."

" I loved standing up for what I believed in."

"Constancy and absolute belief" contribute to regional service award

St Joseph's Māori Girls' College teacher **Radne Adern (centre)** is the Hawkes Bay regional winner of the PPTA Service Award.

The annual awards are designed to recognise significant contributions members or former members have made through their activism and commitment.

Radne has been a PPTA member since she began teaching in 1980 and has always been an active member of her branch.

She was branch secretary at Colenso High School in the 1990s when staff became embroiled in a dispute with their principal who had unilaterally taken the school into bulk funding. The branch refused to interact with the principal and set up a renegade staffroom in another part of the school. Radne actively supported and encouraged members at this difficult time.

Most recently Radne has been the chair, secretary and treasurer of the St

Joseph's Māori Girls' College branch.

Then Hawkes Bay regional chair Jan Torrey (left) said Radne had also been involved in organising and leading branch training days.

"As a result of the work she does in the school, members are well informed and their views, via Radne, contribute to the wider debate in the region," she said.

Radne regularly attends both I and O Seminar and PPTA's annual conference and at both of these is prepared to raise ideas and feed back the information she has learned, Jan said.

Until four years ago Radne was the Hawkes Bay regional women's representative and in this capacity organised workshops and information meetings for women in the region.



"Radne is a valuable regional team member. Her constancy and absolute belief in the power of the collective remains as important to her today as it was when she first joined the union in 1980," Jan said.

Obituary: Gay Simpkin 1942 - 2016

An activist, union stalwart, staunch feminist and scholar, Gay Simpkin made a great contribution to PPTA over many years of her life.

Gay led PPTA bargaining after the passage of the State Sector Act in 1988 when the State Services Commission was intent on undermining and eventually destroying the national collective and removing the professional voice of teachers from discussions about education.

As advocate Gay brought the full range of her intelligence and deep understanding of the professional and industrial concerns of secondary teachers to the table. The negotiators frequently had to work through the night and deal with all manner of hostile attacks on the union and teaching workforce. Throughout all this Gay remained committed, determined and optimistic.

That period, known as the Long Negotiation, lasted from 1987 to 1989. Around this time many unions lost national awards and many conditions, but Gay's leadership and negotiation skills ensured PPTA members retained

their pay and conditions in a single national award while also fighting off performance pay.

Gay's quality as an academic was demonstrated when, despite her direct involvement at the time, she was later able to dispassionately and helpfully review the Long Negotiation in her doctorate.

If bargaining was the initial skirmish, full bulk funding was the war. By then Gay was PPTA's industrial deputy general secretary and again she led the charge. She clear-sightedly set in train the school-by-school, branch-by-branch, resistance that set PPTA up for the eventual and historic victory.

Even after she left PPTA staff Gay continued to contribute to the association's thinking. In 2011 she investigated branch activism in Auckland – and her report gave new insights into the operation of branches and how they could best be supported.



Gay was much loved by the people who worked with her. She will be remembered as being calm, kind, non-judgemental and supportive.

Because of Gay's hard work and intellect public education is better placed than it would have been, PPTA is a stronger association and secondary teachers continue to stand together as professionals.

Thank you Gay.

Members encouraged to respond to ministry's census

The Ministry of Education will be asking all secondary teachers to complete a 15-minute "teacher census" over a four-week period in April.

PPTA president Angela Roberts said the association had been in consultation with the ministry about the census questionnaire and supported the process.

"We're encouraging all our members to complete the census because it's important to us that the ministry gets an accurate picture of the nature of the secondary teacher workforce so that it can better understand the challenges we're facing in the sector," she said.

The findings from the census will provide information to the Joint Secondary Teacher Supply Working Group which was an outcome of the 2015

STCA settlement. The working group will report to the minister of education later this year.

The ministry last undertook a secondary teacher census 10 years ago. Roberts said members who were in fixed-term positions or who were leaving the profession may not have engaged with that survey, but they were critically important to this year's census.

"In the 2016 census there will be an important question about fixed-term appointment and an extension to the question on teacher intentions to investigate why teachers are choosing to leave the service," she said.

"Members who are in either category are therefore particularly encouraged to complete the census."

**ADD YOUR
PIECE-
THEN GET
THE BIG
PICTURE**

THE 2016 SECONDARY TEACHER
CENSUS IS NOW OPEN.

Visit **TeachersCount.**
education.govt.nz to find
out more and complete
the Census today.



Pasifika women unionists visit NZ to extend focus

New Zealand unions' professional role and work supporting students has impressed two teachers from the Pacific Islands.

Oketi Akauola from Tonga and Neselinda Meta from Vanuatu were nominated by the Council of Pacific Education (COPE) affiliate unions for the Alisi Fusi Wightman scholarship for women.

Alisi Fusi Wightman, the scholarship's namesake, was an activist in the Fijian Teachers' Association in the 1970s and 80s. She was the vice-president of the association and its only female leader at the time.

As recipients, Oketi and Neselinda were hosted by New Zealand, Australian and Fijian unions for a week each.

Oketi has been teaching for almost 16 years at secondary school level in Tonga. She has been both deputy principal and principal at one of the government secondary schools during the last five of her teaching years and her current position in Tonga is chief education officer for all primary schools.

Education had already brought her to New Zealand where she has been sent by the Tongan government to complete a Masters of Education. Based at the University of Waikato, Oketi is focussing on professional development and leadership, skills she will take back to Tonga when she finishes this year.

"There is not a lot of work done around professional development and leadership training in Tonga. I am looking forward to taking these skills back home and sharing them rather than the usual practice of importing people from overseas," she said.

During her week being hosted by unions, Oketi has "learned a lot, seen a lot and met a lot of great people".

She has noticed a vast difference in the way union work in New Zealand is carried out compared to Tonga.

"We are mostly focussing on teacher salaries. Here the union is looking out for the well-being of students, away from just themselves. We are very small so are at the bottom of the ladder. There is definitely room to improve and extend our focus of work," she said.

Along with the union focus on students, Oketi was also impressed



COPE Alisi Fusi Wightman scholarship recipients for 2016: Oketi Akauola and Neselinda Meta.

with union support around professional development.

"It is a lot to absorb in a week, but I have made some valuable connections," she said.

Neselinda has been teaching in primary schools around Vanuatu's Port Vila for 16 years and is deputy principal of her current school.

She is also the secretary of the women's network of the Vanuatu Teachers Union (VTU) — which she does on a voluntary basis.

Neselinda helps plan programmes and workshops for the women's network, working with parents and teachers. She runs workshops on the other islands in Vanuatu, flying between the far flung ones. The union has a sub office on Tanna Island and contact over such a vast area is mostly by telephone. In some outlying places people have to climb up hills to get reception to communicate with the offices, she said.

Membership of the union is voluntary and Neselinda often finds people sign up after she has run a workshop.

"It makes me so happy."

There is one success story she is

particularly proud of.

"My principal, she was not a member. It was through me that she signed up. I tell members, if I can do that then you can easily sign people up."

Like Oketi, Neselinda would like to see more professional learning and development in the Vanuatu education system, particularly for principals.

She has found visiting New Zealand schools very interesting and certainly noticed the difference in resources. She would like to take some of what she has learned about the New Zealand education system home and improve on the way things are done in some areas.

"I'll start small, with the school I am in," she said.

She also wants to build what she has learned about how New Zealand unions run into her women's network.

Both women thanked all those involved in the scholarship for the opportunity and PPTA and NZEI for hosting them.

Their next stop was Fiji where they expected to be helping union members clean up schools following the devastation caused by cyclone Winston.

Region building momentum

PPTA's East Coast regional team has developed an outstanding ability to organise despite the challenges of geography and workload. Regional chairperson Conan Doyle puts that down to a team of like-minded people who get on well together.

“I think that plays a big part in our mahi for the union,” says Conan who’s been in the role for the past couple of years.

“The most satisfying part of being in a union and the part I play is knowing that, together, we make a positive difference for ourselves and society as educators. We stand for education in the broadest sense of the word.”

Conan teaches at Wairoa College, but doesn't regard his relative isolation from the rest of the team in Gisborne as a disadvantage.

“Living in Wairoa and being chair for the East Coast isn't difficult despite the majority of our branches being in Gisborne,” he says.

“I think that a change that is helping us as a team and as an association, with the awesome level of membership, is the ability to communicate so easily and immediately with things like email and smart phones.”

With Gisborne just a little over an hour's drive, Conan says attending regional meetings there isn't really a problem for Wairoa College members.

“When there's a PUM (paid union meeting), for example, our principal normally lets us get away at morning tea time to be in Gisborne by around noon. Plus, tradition has it that the last meeting of the year is in Wairoa.”

Conan is grateful the regional PPTA team has the ability to work collaboratively with plenty of experience and depth to draw on despite the retirement of a couple of long-serving activists in recent years.

“Overall we have a good bunch of like-minded and supportive people on our team, and we enjoy the work we do for our members.”

That level of commitment and enthusiasm recently brought all seven of the team to this year's PPTA Issues and Organising Seminar in Auckland where they familiarised themselves with the latest developments of issues concerning teachers and compared notes



with other regional activists from around the country.

“I'd like to say how important this annual training is for educating those new to their roles at a regional level, but also for developing solidarity and support for each other,” Conan says.

“Plus, it's a good chance to discuss issues and topics affecting members.”

The most pressing of those issues, according to Conan and just about any secondary teacher you care to ask, is workload.

“I've been teaching about 10 years and the amount of things we are expected to do that aren't directly related to planning and teaching is somewhat overwhelming at times.”

Last year's settlement of the Secondary Teachers' Collective Agreement presented PPTA with the opportunity to participate in an inter-agency working party tasked with identifying “the key contributors to teacher workload in NZ secondary schools” later in 2016.

In preparation, the association is circulating to members the findings of a report into the issue by its Workload Taskforce.

“I will be following the research and findings that are currently being done by PPTA with great interest,” Conan says.

“It's a terrible feeling when you

“I've been teaching about 10 years and the amount of things we are expected to do that aren't directly related to planning and teaching is somewhat overwhelming at times.”

struggle constantly to meet commitments. Although remuneration is always a consideration, being able to do a job well and not lie awake stressing about making it all happen is important also. Any good employer knows if you ask too much of your workers something's got to give.”

Conan says that since teachers spend most of their working hours caring, nurturing and educating the nation's young, it's important to stay positive, enthusiastic and creative to serve them well.

“This is very challenging even at the best of times. Workload issues need to be addressed and I'm confident our union will develop a measured and timely response to our collective concerns.”

JVP by-election: Candidates' personal statements

PPTA received three nominations for the vacant position of executive junior vice-president whose personal statements are given below in alphabetical order. All full members should receive ballot papers via their branch. Voting closes Friday, 15 April.

Jack BOYLE

SACRED HEART COLLEGE (LOWER HUTT)

Ehara taku toa I te toa taketahi engari he toa takimano.

Public education is a taonga and teachers have always been its guardians. But if we want to retain our public education system, guardianship is not enough. We will have to lead – to safeguard, nurture and grow this treasure. We will have to stand up – to demand that we are consulted, trusted and empowered as professionals. We will have to work together – to use our professionalism and our passion to ensure that teaching is valued by the community, rewarding for teachers and transformational for our students.

As part of the presidential team I will ensure that your voices are heard.



Working together

Over the past decade I have stood alongside you to challenge policies that negatively impact teachers –

including protesting funding cuts, making submissions against flawed legislation, supporting members who aren't receiving their entitlements and lobbying for fairer pay and conditions. In meetings across the country, from the national media to staff rooms, it has been a privilege to stand alongside teachers on issues that are widely held and deeply felt.

As part of the presidential team I will continue to stand with you – and work for you.

Leading from the front

As the chair of PPTA's Behaviour Taskforce I have helped develop PPTA's behaviour guidelines and make them available to all secondary schools, grown practitioner workshops for teachers at the PB4L Conference and represented teacher views about behaviour in the media, in print and on the stage.

As co-chair of the Workload Taskforce I have been involved in the development of the workload survey, helped shape the workload report and sought teacher voice for the Working Party which will form the basis of our next collective round. I have brought your views to the MOE, politicians, international forums and the public, because teachers must be heard. I have also worked for a fair settlement of our collective agreement because the work that teachers do must be valued.

As part of the presidential team I will speak with your voice.

Peter CALVERT

DANNEVIRKE HIGH SCHOOL

As the second highest polling candidate in the 2015 presidential election I am grateful for the opportunity to stand for the presidential team again so early in the year. I wish resigning junior vice-president Hazel McIntosh well for her future and I hope she continues her involvement with PPTA.

Once teachers were one of the most trusted and respected groups in New Zealand. I want to see a return to this.



Association policy is that teachers should work in an environment that respects their mana and dignity and respecting this right is in the best interests of our students.

To make this policy real we need to take a strong stance against the increasing compliance that has been creeping into our schools:

- We need much stronger behaviour management systems that

trust teacher decisions.

- We need to pressure NZQA to reduce their auditing of educators and develop simpler ways of moderating work.

- We must continue to oppose EDUCANZ and fight for a high trust model for teacher registration.

- With the introduction of multi-choice testing in NCEA "the driver's licence theory test" it is important to consider simpler forms of assessments that are easier to manage.

But most of all we simply need to reduce the bureaucracy that prevents teachers doing what they got into the profession to do which is teach.

Joe HUNTER

OTAGO GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL

serve the teachers of my region and the country as a conduit for information and an advocate for active change to improve conditions of teaching and learning. I enjoy working for social justice in an intelligent and collaborative organisation – the Island Community, Otago Girls' High School, PPTA. I relish the opportunity for professional, personal and political learning afforded me by the union. I am a staunch defender of the union as a professional body.

I am concerned at the overwhelming



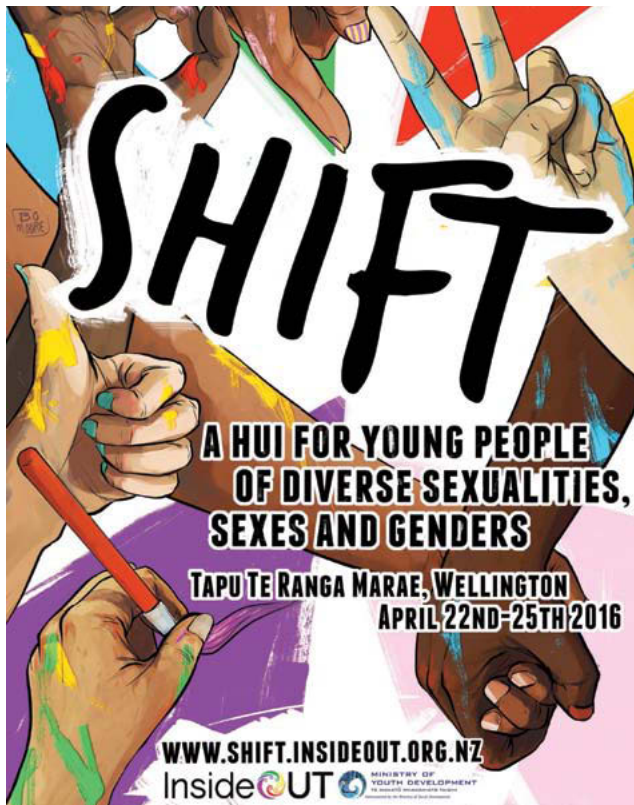
workload I see my colleagues working under, the assessment juggernaut that is NCEA and the increasing creep of privatisation. There is little in the way of professional learning, mentoring or support but plenty of compliance, arbitrary targets based on scant evidence and unrealistic expectations of heroic teachers. New teachers now have a condensed start to their career – does it best prepare

workload I see my colleagues working under, the assessment juggernaut that is NCEA and the increasing creep of privatisation.

them for the huge task ahead? I question the erosion of teachers' democratic processes in the shape of the Education Council and I see the strain inadequately resourced and underfunded schools are put to. The inequity of our society is sharply reflected in our education system.

I uphold our collective's core value of quality public education for all. I want to take a greater part in union activism – in working for fair pay and conditions for teachers, constructive work with the government and an equitable society that values the transformative power of learning. Our members should not be marginalised when they are at the heart of education.

E te Wehengarua, kia kaha i te hoe waka! Kia kōtahi tātou, hī!



Hui to celebrate diversity

InsideOUT is inviting 13 to 22 year olds to take part in a hui for young people of diverse sexualities, sexes and genders this month.

The hui will run in the school holidays from Friday 22 to Monday 25 April at the Tapu Te Ranga Marae in Wellington.

InsideOUT is a national organisation working to make schools and communities safer for diverse young people.

National coordinator Tabby Besley said the hui would focus on celebrating the diversity of our identities within the community, working on how we can go back into our own schools and communities and make them safer and more inclusive places.

“Young people talk about these hui as being life changing experiences, the first time they ever felt like they belonged and saw their identity reflected, so it's an experience we want to make possible for as many as we can, with your help,” she said.

Members "buzzing" after activists' workshops

PPTA members from throughout the country gathered in Auckland last month to talk activism, employment and social issues at PPTA's annual Issues and Organising conference.

Around 150 enthusiastic and engaged delegates attended workshops on membership and community engagement, Māori and Pasifika perspectives, health and safety, precarious work, pay and employment equity and teacher supply to name a few.

A popular workshop was delivered by author and researcher Max Rashbrooke on economic inequality – where the debate's going and what it means for teachers.

He spoke of the complex relationship between schools and economic imbalance, saying that schools are not the cause of these issues.

"What kids bring to the school gate are problems of society at large and they should be addressed by society. It should not be the burden of schools to solve this...We need to recognise that we have all drawn from a 'common pool' and we need to replenish it," he said.

A community organising panel with members from PPTA, other unions and community groups was also held. Speakers who have been active in campaigns surrounding the Living Wage, young workers' rights and climate change (Generation Zero) discussed how these groups can work together on issues which are important to PPTA members.

Speakers included PPTA junior vice president Hazel McIntosh, CTU president Richard Wagstaff and UNICEF NZ national advocacy manager Deborah Morris Travers.

Members spoken to by *PPTA News* said they found the discussions and workshops invigorating. They were "simply buzzing" afterwards and looking forward to applying their new knowledge.



Better provision for due diligence

A new health and safety act, which came into force this month, will provide paid time and training for staff to ensure their workplace is safe.

The Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 has been the cause of much discussion, debate and confusion.

A brief outline of the changes and how they might impact on schools is available in the October 2015 *PPTA News* (vol. 36 no. 8).

The act's key emphasis is on everyone in the workplace being involved in health and safety.

One of the most positive features is its focus on supporting more effective worker engagement and participation in health and safety, PPTA advisory officer with responsibility for the health and safety portfolio Doug Clark said.

Through the act the Ministry of Education promotes health and safety representatives and health and safety committees as crucial to the safe operation of a school.

It emphasises the rights of all workers to participate and engage in health and safety and to have health and safety representatives and committees by law. It also asserts the rights of health and safety representatives and committees to have paid training and paid time for the job.

The newly published *Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 – A practical guide for boards of trustees and school leaders* (a joint New Zealand School Trustees Association and Ministry of Education resource which PPTA had a role in developing) lists obligations to a health and safety representative (HSR) to:

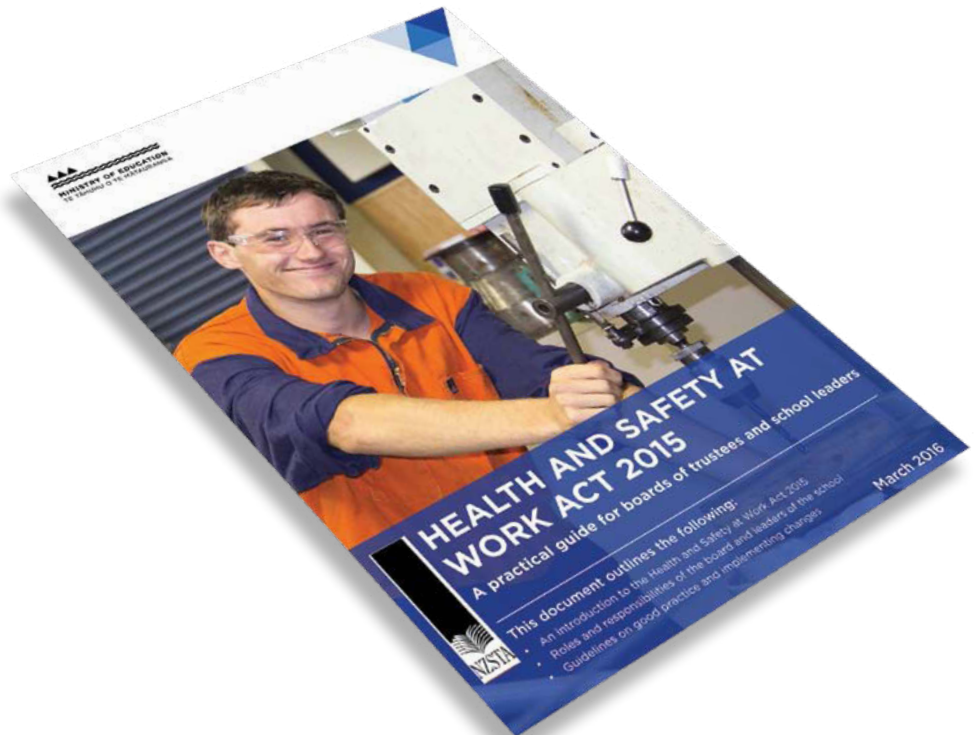
“Allow an HSR paid time and provide any resources, facilities and assistance to enable them to perform their role and exercise their powers.

“Pay the HSRs’ training fees and any reasonable expenses incurred in attending the training.”

Under "obligations to a health and safety committee" (HSC) it agrees to “allow each member of an HSC paid time to attend meetings of the committee and carry out functions as a member of the committee”.

The document also emphasises the role of unions in health and safety.

Concerns have been voiced about



the potential impact of penalties on principals, but if a school has current robust systems then it should be business as usual, Doug said.

“The principal can be held liable if, and only if, they have been negligent in their duties. If a principal has done due diligence (including having a health and safety group with trained and qualified representatives) then there should not be any issues,” he said.

Legally a board of trustees may have liability as an entity but its individual members are exempted as elected volunteers.

Doug has been surprised by recent comments made on the issue. He has regularly sat on a cross sector health and safety forum with representatives of all agencies involved in education and said those issues had been debated, argued and resolved. The liability and ability to sue individual teachers and principals has been around since the 1992 Health and Safety in Employment Act.

The fines were for failure to provide duty of care and gross negligence and as such nothing much has changed, he said.

In 1992 the top penalty for individuals was \$500,000 (approximately \$808,000 in today's money) and in the 2015 act it is \$600,000.

“So prior to the new act fines of up to \$500,000 caused no issues but \$600,000 is now a problem? That means individual houses have to be put in trust? Who is kidding who?,” he said.

“The new law clarifies and tightens up lines of responsibility and post Pike River that is a good thing, but to qualify for these fines you must have done something extremely bad.

“As the cross sector forum has said all along, if you have sound, robust, current systems then you have nothing to worry about.”

If you are a PPTA member you can get the latest updates by contacting hands@ppta.org.nz.

Cutting edge or chaos?

Modern learning environments — innovative learning spaces or just barns with beanbags. The design of learning space is a hot topic so *PPTA News* asked two secondary teachers and PPTA activists *Michael Tarry* and *Chris Abercrombie* to share their views.

A natural and organic way of teaching and learning

by **Michael Tarry**

Let's get one thing clear right away: I don't like the term "modern learning environment." I don't work in an MLE - I work in a school. That's all MLEs are, after all. They're schools just like any other. There are some differences, of course. At my school, we have three 100-minute periods a day. Tuesday and Thursday mornings are taken up with academic mentoring and pastoral support. On Wednesdays, we don't have



any classes - instead, the kids work on independent projects that don't have to do with the curriculum. We're a school with no uniform, no bells, no classrooms, and the kids call the teachers by their first names.

It sounds like the opposite of what a school should be, but really it's the most natural and organic way of teaching and learning. I find that the kids are much better behaved when there are no classroom walls. When the kids call

us by our first names, it actually feels more respectful than them calling us sir and miss. It's certainly more relational. It's certainly more whānau. The lack of bells forces everyone to be naturally better at time management, and the lack of classroom walls means you really have to be onto it with your behaviour management and lesson content. Losing a day each week so the kids can work on independent projects actually makes good sense - it teaches them a vast set of skills that you couldn't really teach that well in a classroom. I really can't imagine working anywhere else.

Good teaching happens no matter what the room looks like

by **Chris Abercrombie**

What are MLEs? I think of beanbags, walls of windows, and break out spaces.

I've always thought that MLEs are a case of mutton dressed as lamb as it seems that MLEs are a case of if we put the students in a fancy room then the learning will be better. Without a change in teaching there is little point in spending all this money on



beanbags and fancy chairs - a classic example of the ministry going halfway with funding change. They've paid for the fancy classrooms but not the PD needed for them to be used to their full potential.

While there is evidence that improving the physical environment (lighting, temperature, sound) can improve educational outcomes there is no consistent evidence that open learning spaces improve outcomes. There is also

concern about how MLEs will impact on student-teacher ratios. Open learning spaces put two or three classes together which will create havoc in working out these ratios.

I also have concerns about the more specialist teaching spaces that are needed in secondary schools. Imagine a Media Studies class being run alongside a Chemistry class with a little bit of English thrown in the mix for good measure.

When it comes to MLEs we must remember that good teaching takes place no matter what the room looks like.

Room for rebuttal: is the research reliable?

Michael says: MLEs aren't 1000 kids in a cacophonous barn with the teachers shouting amidst the din. Actually, the learning spaces are often quiet - the kids are too busy learning. MLEs require more structure, planning, organisation and patience than normal classrooms. While it's true that the evidence for MLEs isn't conclusive yet, research strongly points towards relational and collaborative approaches to teaching

and learning being better than the traditional chalk-and-talk silo mentality. Every MLE includes specialist spaces like labs and studios - but what would be so nightmarish about having a Chemistry class next to an English class? MLEs aren't chaotic - they're organic.

Chris says: there is no consistent evidence that open space MLEs increase student outcomes.

The other issue is this minimally guided teaching, be it called inquiry, project, self-directed or whatever the current word is, goes hand in hand with MLE.

The evidence suggests that this leads to shallow outcomes for the amount of time that takes out of schools.

Without the evidence why are we spending millions on beanbags?

Future focus too caught up in tech

PPTA member *Michael Harvey* shares his thoughts on coding, future focus and educational buzzwords.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines pedagogy as “The art, occupation, or practice of teaching.” Pedagogy is the “how” of shaping learners into citizens of the society of the future. The educational buzzword, “future-focused pedagogy” is therefore a tautology because pedagogy is already future focused. As teachers we are naturally focused on developing students’ capabilities that will best serve them as future citizens in society. A very real danger as educators is that we are making value-laden assumptions behind what capabilities our students actually need.

A recent trend in education has seen students focusing on certain subjects because it lined up with the zeitgeist. However, the attention of a student is tremendously valuable. We should stop teaching them whatever makes us feel good.

At present, the media is directed towards stories about robots replacing humans in the economy. This explains the government’s enthusiasm for directing students into science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

Coding is now receiving greater emphasis. Nevertheless, this is based on a dangerous assumption, one that supposes that everybody can just build and make and code their way out of the predicted joblessness and social restructuring.

It may be right that robots will be flipping burgers; but computers are now writing programs too, so the opportunities for a career in coding are decreasing. (See Jeremy Howard’s “The wonderful and terrifying applications of what computers can learn.”) Computer science



Michael Harvey: "We should stop teaching them whatever makes us feel good."

does provide logic, problem solving and creativity skills, but there are better ways to introduce these concepts, especially in poorer classrooms.

So what can I teach a class of students that will allow them to contribute to their future society that doesn't involve trying to anticipate what skills will be in demand when they leave school?

The future is unknowable until it has arrived, we can have ideas about what the likely future is, but these are just stories, our selection from a range of potential possibilities.

In her book, *Learning Futures: Education, Technology and Social Change*, education professor Keri Facer explores some of these potential futures ahead of us. In doing so, she emphasises that these stories of potential futures are precisely that: stories. The nature of stories is that they can be adjusted, that they are fluid. The future is the consequence of decisions that are made right now. As Facer says:

“The future is not something that is

done to us, but an ongoing process in which we can intervene.”

The social entrepreneur network Ashoka prioritises empathy. Empathy allows the strengthening of communities. When we don’t know what course of studies will lead to a successful contribution to society, we can ask: How can I make learners likely to seek out and capitalise on the opportunities unique to their future?

Pedagogy should allow learners to not only become “confident, connected, actively involved, lifelong learners” as defined in the New Zealand Curriculum, but adopt this vision to see themselves as learners already.

It’s easier to anticipate the needs of people than the needs of industry and any educator who really wants to make broad statements about what is good for “everybody” needs to keep that in mind.

Michael Harvey is an Auckland science teacher who blogs at:

www.theflippedscientist.blogspot.co.nz.

Do you write a blog and want to share it?

Contact Anna Kirtlan, editor, *PPTA News* at akirtlan@ppta.org.nz.

Out in the field

When “form-time” becomes contact time

Information and advice from PPTA's intrepid field officers.

With the 2016 academic year now in full swing it's important to take time to consider the workload ahead. Teachers fought long and hard to establish and maintain the non-contact provisions we access today.

What is contact time?

Contact time is defined as the specific time when teachers are teaching or supervising timetabled learning activities.

Is form-time contact time?

Where teachers are performing administrative duties such as taking the roll and reading the notices in form-time, this doesn't count as contact time or non-contact time but as "other duties". Where teachers are being required to deliver or supervise some form of learning programme during form-time then it counts as contact time whenever it is scheduled, and whatever those times are called. School-wide initiatives that sometimes occur during form-time such as silent sustained reading, academic mentoring, and social skills programmes would constitute

contact-time. Accordingly, where teachers are engaged in these activities this forms part of their timetabled contact-time.

Resolving contact time issues: a model example

Kiwi High School runs a standard five day, five period (one hour) timetable. All permanent full-time teachers receive their five guaranteed non-contact hours and do not have more than 20 contact hours. Teachers who work part-time also receive pro-rata non-contact time.

A new student mentoring school-wide initiative is introduced and is to occur during form-time on a Monday for 30 minutes. The mentoring programme constitutes contact time. This had not been factored into the timetable. The branch draws this to management's attention. After some discussion a timetable audit is performed where mentoring is included in the teacher's contact time. Adjustments are made as necessary to the timetable to ensure that no full-time teacher has more than 20 hours contact time and teachers who work part-time maintain their non-contact ratio.



It's about time

It is important that our conditions related to non-contact are monitored and maintained. Timetable audits can be done at any time by the branch. PPTA has produced a contact time "audit tool" in the form of a booklet entitled *It's about time* that you can find in the Resources section of www.ppta.org.nz. There are also sample timetable policies, FAQ's, and calculators available. We encourage you to take some time and monitor your branch's timetable and its policy to ensure that your entitlements are being maintained.

Letters

Knocking teachers for no good reason affects our mental health

Iwanted to thank you and your team for the article about the misleading newspaper headline on mentally ill teachers. I was completely appalled when it came out.

If teachers are depressed maybe the schools concerned should be doing a teacher inquiry into why their staff are depressed or stressed. Is it due to overwork and lack of care on the school's behalf?

I am very concerned that many schools use our young teachers' enthusiasm and are quick to discard staff when they become tired and rundown from stress, constant change and overwork.

The education system should be

doing all it can to maintain and support experienced staff who need refreshing or recharging through sabbaticals and the like. Being constantly pulled down by the media and minister of education it is hard to maintain respect for the profession in the community. This, in turn, affects how we see ourselves.

From newspaper articles you would think we were all poor teachers. In reality we have one of the highest ranking teacher services in the developed world.

Thanks again for addressing this issue, please keep up the good work in promoting our profession.

Debbie Whiteley





All it needs is a mortar board cap

Courtesy of a *Timaru Herald* article on IES we present pretty much every cliché about education in one picture.

Thanks but no thanks

As part of the Education Legislation Amendment Bill, Hekia Parata and David Seymour want tertiary institutions to be able to run charter schools. A slight fly in the ointment is the fact that they don't actually want to.



The mother of all car washes: spotted at Westland High School. Trucks getting washed as a precaution after removing fire damaged material from the school before staff and students returned.

“Overall, the value of partnership schools is not yet proven, and it could be assumed that from the proposal it has been designed for a tertiary education institute to take on the risks associated with an organisation such as this” — just one of the reasons provided by Universities New Zealand in its submission to the bill that this is a dumb idea.

Netflix billionaire wants to replace teachers with computers

Netflix Billionaire Reed Hastings' Crusade to Replace Public School

Teachers With Computers is an actual headline of an actual article about something that is actually happening in the US.

The technology mogul has poured \$100 million into high tech dominated charter schools. Despite his initial Rocketship charter schools falling numbers and results he is still intent on pushing a formula where students are placed in overcrowded computer labs for hours at a time with unproven software and minimal teacher supervision. The school day lasts for eight hours and teacher raises are dependent on test scores. Sadly this is not the Twilight Zone.

New online tool supports healthy food in schools

How healthy is the food provided at your school?

A new online tool has been launched to help schools find this out. The School Food Environment Review and Support Tool (School-FERST) aims to enable schools to self-review the healthiness of the food and beverages they have available and support them in improving their food environments where needed.

The tool has been developed by the INFORMAS (international Network for Food and Obesity/non-communicable Diseases Research, Monitoring and Action Support) team from the University of Auckland and is designed to enable schools to assess and continue to contribute positively to their food environments by capturing important indicators and best practice examples.

Indicators include foods and beverages provided and sold on the

school premises, use of school gardens, participation in food and nutrition programmes and the school's food and nutrition policy. School-FERST will also highlight the efforts of schools that are taking positive steps to improve their food and nutrition environments and promote these schools as role model schools.

The Childhood Obesity Plan announced by the government in October 2015 includes a focus on education and the school environment. The lead agency for this work, the Ministry of Health, supports the use of School-FERST by schools.

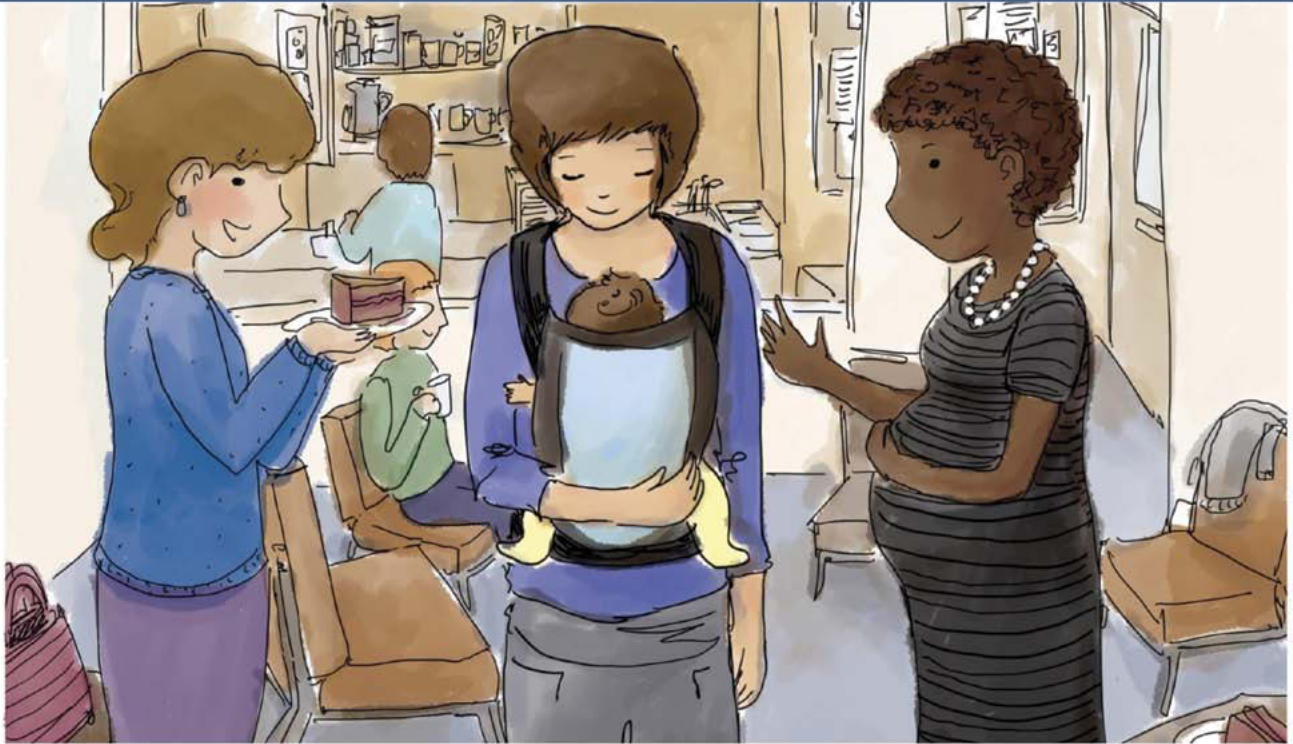
School-FERST will provide detailed, individual feedback to schools on various aspects of their school food environments. Schools will also be able to see how they fare in comparison to schools in their decile, region, and across the country. Those with exceptionally

INFORMAS
Bencharking food environments



healthy environments will be identified and promoted as role model schools, to offer best practice examples for others to follow. School-FERST will also provide resources to guide those schools working towards improving the healthiness of their food environments. To get involved with the School-FERST project, schools can contact: Erica D'Souza e.dsouza@auckland.ac.nz or visit www.schoolferst.co.nz.

Campaigning to Increase Paid Parental Leave to 26 Weeks



2014: 14 weeks

2015: 16 weeks

2016: 18 weeks



Just #8moreweeks to 26 weeks! Together we can achieve a lot.



Make sure your students aren't getting exploited at work

You can help your students get the information they need to be treated right when they join the workforce.

Stand Up for Students has volunteers ready to present entertaining, informative, and curriculum-friendly presentations covering:

- Employment Agreements
- Minimum entitlements
- Unions
- Discrimination
- And more...

Email us at: nzstandup@gmail.com

stand up
youth union
movement