



PPTA TE WEHENGARUA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2022

UPDATE: THE PLD WE NEED



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RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the report be received.
2. That PPTA Te Wehengarua recommends that Te Poutāhū (Curriculum Centre) be guided by the Best Evidence Synthesis contexts for effective PLD.
3. That PPTA Te Wehengarua calls on the Ministry to provide access to relevant and timely PLD to support the implementation of the NCEA change package and the curriculum refresh, inclusive of Mātauranga Māori.
4. That PPTA Te Wehengarua supports the idea that PLD should be publicly funded and delivered, not outsourced.
5. That PPTA Te Wehengarua calls on schools to respect the right of teachers to identify their own areas of professional development.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At the 2020 annual conference, policy was passed about the amount of professional learning and development (PLD) teachers should be entitled to: 20 hours per year, 10 hours of which are teacher self-identified. But the quantum of PLD is only part of the story, the other parts are access, expertise and quality. This paper addresses these.

2. ACCESS

- 2.1 Teaching is not a skill that once learnt in initial teacher education is there for life. An effective teacher's career requires on-going professional development to hone skills and learn new ones. Each year teachers face new groups of students with unique needs, some of which require additional skills. Teachers teach different subjects, levels, and standards. Government and school priorities change. New research reveals new and more effective ways to engage students and foster learning. Teacher professional development is a key component of a successful career and as such is enshrined in the Standards of the Teaching Profession.
- 2.2 The devolved education system has treated teacher professional development poorly. For two years after the introduction of Tomorrow's Schools the Ministry continued to fund the Advisory Services through the universities and Colleges of Education. After that time the funding went directly to schools that then prioritised the funding as they felt fit. From that time teacher professional development became haphazard. Some schools gave it high priority, others did not. To compound matters, schools had to seek professional development from approved facilitators. There was no longer a prospectus detailing an array of courses available throughout the year.
- 2.3 At a Peak Bodies meeting a principal shared his experience of spending 30 hours of staff time to access 50 hours of centrally funded PLD. At another meeting of principals there was a request for PLD to be able to be organised through a single phone call.
- 2.4 In addition, the designers of Tomorrow's Schools assumed that the informal connections between schools would continue once things were decentralised. This did not happen. Competition exacerbated the problem. Schools became isolated from each other. Teachers lost track of subject clusters and regional associations. Ironically it was the lack of support for the introduction of NCEA and the upheaval of the new curriculum that briefly forced teachers together and there was a time where collaboration flourished, where resources and ideas were shared – but through adversity.
- 2.5 The Tomorrow's Schools Review (TSR) criticised the provision of PLD to schools and teachers. In its Educational Conversations the Tomorrow's Schools Independent Taskforce (TSIT) heard that the “current procurement model is over-regulated, bureaucratic, and time-consuming for both schools and the PLD providers”, and principals called for less time consuming and drawn-out processes to apply for and access Ministry-funded PLD.¹

¹ Report by the Tomorrow's Schools Independent Task Force - [Tomorrows-Schools-Review-Report-13Dec2018.PDF \(education.govt.nz\)](#)

- 2.6 In its final report the TSIT recommended a Curriculum Centre be set up, complemented by coordinated national and local delivery of professional learning and development. The Centre would be centrally funded and focus on the National Education Learning Priorities so that the system would be engaged in learning how to improve itself.
- 2.7 The intention was to provide greater coherence to what is presently a fragmented system of support for teachers. At the national level, the Centre would provide teachers with high quality nationally led curriculum, assessment, learning and pedagogy guidance and practical support developed collaboratively with the sector, including a well-resourced, searchable database of quality curriculum resources. It would be staffed by experts who would provide advice, resources and support in curriculum design, learning, assessment, and pedagogy - a flexible mix of seconded teachers, tertiary teacher educators and researchers, and accredited private providers.
- 2.8 The Curriculum Centre as set out in the TSR could address many of PPTA Te Wehengarua's concerns about access to PLD. It is gratifying that cabinet² approved the Curriculum Centre and made it a high priority. Budget 2021³ provided capital to support the implementation of the reforms of the TS system; aiming to provide frontline support closer to schools and create a more networked system that is responsive to learners' needs, as well as establishing the key leadership and core support functions of the Education Service Agency.
- 2.9 The Ministry has established Te Mahau (Education Service Agency). This is a separate unit within the Ministry and houses the Te Poutāhū (Curriculum Centre) and the Education Support Learning Networks. The structure and personnel of Te Mahau is being purpose-built however it has taken time to recruit and second people with the necessary skills and experience. Given that many of those employed at Te Mahau are from the schooling sector, this recruitment contributes to the current teacher supply issue.
- 2.10 The Ministry of Education has appointed 38 curriculum leads who work in all curriculum settings and have a direct connection to Te Poutāhū (Curriculum Centre). The Ministry believes "they provide real opportunities to make a bigger difference to education and provide kaiako with the curriculum service and support they deserve"⁴ and they will offer various levels of support - *Self-directed, Guided, Supported*.

3. EXPERTISE

- 3.1 Senior Subject Specialists (SSAs) were established in 2006, albeit only funded for one year and were "experienced practitioners," seconded from the classroom to support other teachers in the same senior subject. Many had facilitation and/or moderation experience in NCEA. The initiative was designed to offer these experienced teachers the opportunity to increase their own skill set and professional attributes which may help support leadership on their return to their schools. Simultaneously, the one-year secondment was an opportunity for senior subject

² Cabinet Paper – Reform of the Tomorrow's Schools system (November, 2019)

³ Budget 2021 - <https://www.treasury.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2021-07/b21-wellbeing-budget-v2.pdf>

⁴ <https://temahau.govt.nz/working-together/curriculum-leads-kaihautu-marautanga-service-kaiako>

teachers around the country to benefit from the experience of the SSAs through a range of professional development and learning opportunities”⁵

- 3.2 PPTA Te Wehengarua see a role for Senior Subject Advisors, a national network of subject specialists, who could be employed by Te Mahau to support the NCEA changes. In the evaluation of the SSAs “teachers were effusive in their praise for support they received, some indicating that it was the first time they had been exposed to specific senior subject support. Many SSAs suggested that while there was other subject support available in advisory services, their presence was more keenly felt by teachers, because their role was completely dedicated to a senior subject.” The SSA claim is part of the current STCA/ASTCA negotiations.
- 3.3 The NZCER report 2021 stated that “PLD should be publicly funded and delivered, not outsourced.” This is a position that PPTA Te Wehengarua should support. The Ministry should have control over the content and quality of PLD so that expertise is built and retained. Subject associations and the Networks of Expertise are providing great support to teachers, however these still largely operate on the goodwill of teachers. There is a need for PLD to be delivered by an advisory service or Te Mahau (as suggested in the TSIT report), with people employed by the Ministry or seconded to it.⁶

4. QUALITY

4.1 Research is clear about the requirements for effective PLD. The Iterative Best Evidence Synthesis (BES) on Teacher Professional Learning and Development⁷ sets out seven contexts for effective teacher learning:

- Extended time for opportunities to learn
- External expertise
- Teachers’ engagement in the learning
- Prevailing discourses challenged
- Opportunities to participate in a professional community
- Consistency with wider trends in policy and research
- Active school leadership.

4.2 It will be important that the Te Poutāhū (Curriculum Centre) fashions courses and resources that align with these requirements. PLD that is mainly about content can be delivered in conferences, jumbo days or even online. However, PLD that challenges current practices and deals with the complexities of teaching and learning will need to take place over a period and will generally use a mix of external input and knowledgeable teachers from within the school or from the network of schools.

⁵ [Evaluation of the Senior Subject Adviser Pilot Initiative \(2007\)](#)

⁶ Secondary teachers’ perspectives from NZCER’s 2021 National Survey of Secondary Schools

⁷ https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/data/assets/pdf_file/0017/16901/TPLandDBESentireWeb.pdf

- 4.3 Teachers' PLD is both formal and informal and school leaders need to strike the balance between focusing on national and school priorities and those individual teachers identify. Teachers indicated in the 2021 NZCER report⁸ that they were spending a median time of 20 hours in formal PLD in 2021. Most of this formal PLD time was not on topics that teachers were identifying for themselves. It is important that a school recognises a teacher's personal rangatiratanga. Reflective teachers involved in a professional growth cycle are often best placed to know the areas that they need to develop.
- 4.4 Changing practice draws on good-quality PLD as well as school cultures that actively support well-founded teaching and learning practice. The NZCER 2021⁹ national survey of teachers found that professional learning is variable. Only 36% of teachers found whole-school PLD useful. Most practical help from PLD over the past 3 years was about building positive relationships with Māori students, whereas the least practical help was about developing localised curriculum and teaching te reo Māori.
- 4.5 In fact, teachers want more PLD and exemplars and much more help to enact the change required to incorporate mātauranga Māori into their teaching and learning. Many teachers said that they have a lot of personal learning to do before they can support students and want actual support from MoE, properly resourced rather than theoretical. There is a need for more exemplars, and to subject-specific professional learning that demonstrates the change in professional context.

⁸ [Secondary teachers' perspectives from NZCER's 2021 National Survey of Secondary Schools](#)

⁹ [Secondary teachers' perspectives from NZCER's 2021 National Survey of Secondary Schools](#)