

SUMMARY

This paper outlines work PPTA's middle leadership taskforce has done in its inaugural year to clarify the important role middle leaders play in curriculum delivery and the extent to which the increasing workload demands, particularly around NCEA, are compromising that role.

CONTENTS

1. Background	1
2. Membership of taskforce	1
3. Work done so far	2
4. Plan of action	3

1. Background

- 1.1 Annual Conference 2014 passed a resolution that PPTA establish a taskforce to review the role of middle managers in secondary schools with a particular focus on contribution to achievement, remuneration, responsibilities, status and job size. Conference asked that the taskforce report back to Annual Conference 2015.
- 1.2 What follows is a brief report to this year's conference, but a full paper with recommendations is planned for Annual Conference 2016. This timing will ensure that the work of this taskforce is synchronised with the plans for a major paper on workload from PPTA's workload taskforce which will also come to the 2016 conference.

2. Membership of taskforce

- 2.1 The call for nominations for the middle leadership taskforce produced a range of members from whom to select a representative group, and the final list covers most learning areas, types of school, deciles and geographical areas, as follows:
 - **Anna Heinz:** Head of arts faculty and visual arts, Nelson Girls' College. Anna is convenor of the taskforce.
 - **Chris Bangs:** Head of ESOL and assistant faculty leader of language and languages, Lynfield College, Auckland.
 - **Glenn Cassidy:** TIC chemistry, Tokoroa High School, and PPTA executive member.
 - **Karen Gibbs:** Head of maths, Taradale High School, Hawke's Bay.

- **Hazel McIntosh:** Head of science, Kamo High School, and PPTA junior vice-president.
- **Elizabeth Ross:** Head of technology, Melville High School, Hamilton.
- **Te Aomihia Taua:** Head of te reo Māori and leading a trades academy at Tikipunga High School, Te Huarahi member.
- **David Tinker:** Head of science faculty, Nelson College.
- **Catherine Wynne:** Head of faculty for English, media, ESOL, languages, and library, Mahurangi College, Northland.

3. Work done so far

3.1 The middle leadership taskforce has met once so far, in July, and much of the time was spent identifying the enormous range of responsibilities of curriculum leaders. It is clear that the workload has expanded well beyond what is reasonably manageable, and that one of the major contributors to this is the NCEA and the increasing load it is imposing on middle leaders in particular.

3.2 At the same time, there are many other pressures that are impacting on middle leaders. These include:

- The variability of school-based decision-making about allocation of time and units to middle leaders;
- The tensions between trying to do an excellent job as both a middle leader and as a classroom teacher;
- Constant change that is poorly managed, so that there is never a stable state during which to reflect and evaluate;
- Low trust, compliance-focused approaches in some schools;
- Competition for students between departments and between schools leading to a drive to increase student achievement at all cost;
- The pressure to constantly drive up student achievement leaving no room for work/life balance for teachers, especially middle leaders;
- A growing need for middle leaders to develop expertise in pastoral care of stressed teachers as well as students;
- The absence of career pathway planning, with no co-ordinated preparation available for aspiring middle leaders and no guaranteed support mechanisms for new and existing middle leaders;
- Low rates of applications for middle leadership positions because of the unmanageability of the job.

4. Plan of action

4.1 The taskforce has three major tasks ahead of it in the next year:

- To prepare a submission on middle leadership workload to PPTA's workload taskforce;
- To prepare a discussion paper on middle leadership for branches and regions in Term 1, 2016;
- To use responses to the discussion paper to prepare a paper for Annual Conference 2016.

4.2 In its paper to Annual Conference next year, the taskforce plans to put forward a set of proposals on how to turn middle leadership from an unmanageable job to a role to which teachers aspire, which is able to be done along with a good work/life balance, and is well rewarded and recognised for its significant contribution to the learning and wellbeing of students and teachers. Discussions by middle leaders in branches and regions during Term 1, 2016 will help to develop these proposals.

