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ER 9/1

28 February 2017

Hon. Nikki Kaye
Associate Minister of Education
Parliament Buildings
Freepost Parliament
Private Bag 18 888
WELLINGTON 6160

Tēnā koe Minister

Please find **attached** a letter which I have sent to the 29 public tertiary education institutions in New Zealand. This is in response to the change in the Education Act allowing these organisations to sponsor charter schools.

As you are familiar with the PPTA position I won't set it out again here, but I thought that this letter may be of interest.

Naku noa, nā



Jack Boyle
PRESIDENT

c.c. David Seymour MP, Act Party

SO1/22/2; ER14/8; ER15/8

22 February 2017

Name

Address

Address

ADDRESS

Tēnā koe

I am writing to you about the recent change to the Education Act which allows tertiary education institutions to run 'partnership schools' (or charter schools as they are commonly known).

As you may be aware, the Ministry of Education is currently seeking applications from organisations, including tertiary institutions, to sponsor partnership schools that will open in 2018 and 2019.

Our organisation, PPTA, is the professional association and union for secondary teachers in New Zealand. PPTA is opposed to the opening of charter schools in New Zealand as they undermine public education. We are writing to encourage your institution not to apply to sponsor a partnership school, for the following reasons:

1. Distraction from core business

Running a school which is part of the compulsory education system is very different from providing tertiary education, as is recognised in the Education Act, with the significantly different regulation governing the two sectors. The potential for this to distract from the core business of TEIs was noted in the Regulatory Impact Statement for the Bill, and again in the submission from Te Pōkai Tara, Universities New Zealand. As is also noted in this submission, there is nothing preventing current sponsors of partnership schools from accessing current educational research and partnering with tertiary institutions, as many schools do already.

2. Running two very differently regulated institutions

Partnership schools are essentially regulated as private schools, and are not covered by the Official Information Act, the Ombudsman Act and a raft of other legislation that covers public organisations in New Zealand. This would set up an awkward tension and potentially challenging management issues within a TEI which may be sharing personnel and resources between public and private sides of the organisation.

3. Lack of evidence for charter schools

The international evidence on charter schools is at best mixed. Where studies have

shown results for charters that match the best of the public system they have generally been in jurisdictions with far less autonomy and flexibility in the public school system than we already have here.

In New Zealand the evaluation of the programme is in its very early stages. While achievement in some of the existing schools may be high, this does not show that it is the charter school model itself that is leading to these results and the evaluation has not addressed this.

Furthermore, one piece of evidence from overseas which is clear is that enhanced school choice and privatisation does lead to greater segregation between schools, both along racial and socio-economic lines. With the educational challenge in New Zealand being primarily one of increasing equity of achievement for Māori, Pasifika and low socio-economic background students, we should be very cautious about policies which create greater divisions between these groups.

4. Relations with secondary schools and teachers

PPTA members have made it clear that they do not support charter schools. Our Annual Conference in 2013 passed a motion stating that our members will not be working with or supporting charter schools, or their sponsors. Charter schools are well funded to deliver the whole curriculum, and as they are premised on the failure of public schools and directly compete with them for scarce educational resources, it is our position that they should not expect support from public school teachers.

Any tertiary institution that becomes a sponsor of a partnership school would risk falling foul of this motion. Many tertiary institutions have strong, positive relations with secondary schools, which are extremely valuable for both parties, and their students, and becoming a partnership school sponsor could be very detrimental to these relationships. Essentially any such TEI would be saying, "We don't need the existing relationships we have with schools, because we can run schools better than you". I am sure you can see how provocative this would be to local schools.

The interface between the compulsory and non-compulsory education sector already has a number of challenges. At the same time, we are aware that there are numerous examples of good practice between schools and tertiary institutions, and we want to see these strengthened, learned from and where appropriate, replicated. I hope you will agree with me that there is no need for tertiary institutions to put their hands up to support a marginal policy which is based on flimsy evidence and is widely rejected by educators.

Ngā mihi nui



Jack Boyle
PRESIDENT