**Questions and Answers**

**Area School Teachers’ Draft Claim and Negotiations**

1. **Teacher supply problems**

**What are the problems at the moment?**

There are shortages of teachers in a range of subjects, most intensively in maths, sciences and Te Reo, but also in subjects like business studies and even in traditionally well filled areas like English in a number of places.

Recruitment into initial teacher education has dropped by 40% since 2011. We face a bulge of teachers approaching retirement and growth in student numbers to 2025.

**Is this just an Auckland problem?**

No. While the shortages are most intense in Auckland (cost of accommodation, rising rolls, and the sheer number of teacher in the area) the shortages are broadly spread across the country, with some exceptions in lower housing cost areas immediately outside Auckland which are benefitting from a flow of teachers from Auckland.

**What are the causes of the problems?**

* A decline in teacher pay relative to the earnings of other workers makes the job less financially attractive to current and prospective teachers.
* High and increasing workload pressures make the job unattractive.
* Alternative career options for qualified teachers are continuing to draw experienced teachers away from the profession.
* In a number of places high housing costs make it difficult for people to establish themselves in the area.
* A high proportion of our workforce is close to retirement age.
* Considerable roll growth over the next decade will put extra pressure on the shrinking supply of teachers.
1. **The focus and the campaign**

**What is our campaign?/What are we doing to get people onside?**

PPTA Te Wehengaru and NZEI Te Riu Roa are both running campaigns designed to highlight to the public the positive things that teachers do for students, the issues faced by schools and the impacts of shortages on students.

These campaigns “Bring out the best/Puawai te pai”and “It’s time—Kua tae te wā” are running alongside each other and complement each other. Area School Teachers are covered by and encouraged to participate in both.

1. **Pay**

**Where does the 15% pay increase come from?**

This is the percentage required to re-establish (and maintain) relativity against the median weekly wage at the average level we had between 2002-2005.

**Relative Teacher Salary**

That would mean a 15% increase for a one year term to catch up and a further 3.8% per year approximately after that to maintain the relativity if the agreement is settled for more than one year.

1.47 times the median wage

1.8 times the median wage

1. **Equity**

**If we are successful with the non-contact claims year 1 – 6 teachers will still have less non-contact than year 7-13, why is this?**

The claims are based on what has been already claimed in negotiations for the PTCA and the STCA, to address workload issues. If we are successful with these claims then the gap between the different year levels will have decreased taking us a significant step closer to being able to address the issue in future negotiations.

**How does aligning the expiry dates of all the collective agreements help with equity?**

Collective Agreements do need to be negotiated separately, however if they all expire at the same time then it is easier to coordinate the negotiations and potentially the date at which pay increases come into effect the next time around. This addresses an issue that has been raised by ASTCA members of your pay increases coming into effect later than the PTCA and STCA.

**Why do small schools need an additional mechanism for recognition of responsibility?**

Currently the main ways of recognising responsibility are based on a size based formula, this means that small schools don’t get many units, or management allowances, so people with leadership roles often don’t get extra remuneration for this. This is particularly an issue for small schools with diverse communities with high needs, where additional leadership responsibilities can be significant.

**Where does the claim for a lump sum of $3000 come from?**

This is the amount that a secondary teacher at the top of the scale has lost between 2011 – 2018 because teachers covered by the STCA have got pay increases before teachers covered by the ASTCA. Previously this issue was managed through back payments for ASTCA settlements however the government bought in a policy not to do that, causing disadvantage for members.

1. **Workload**

**Extra time means more teachers – where will they come from?**

Improved pay and working conditions improves recruitment and retention of teachers.

When non-contact time was introduced thousands more teachers were employed across the sector to accommodate the change. This was a complete reversal of the shortages that were being seen beforehand.

Addressing pay and working conditions now will have the same effect.

1. **The process from here**

**Where are we at in negotiations at the moment?**

The claim that is being considered by members is the proposed final claim to take to negotiations. If it is endorsed by members then it is proposed that we will begin negotiations in April. Your collective agreement expires on 7 April 2019.

**Can we reject parts of the claim if we don’t like them?**

No – we have had a claims development process first by NZEI members and PPTA members separately and then the development of this joint claim by a combined group of member leaders. So we want to respect the integrity of this process by presenting the claim as a whole. If you have feedback about particular areas that you think are important or are less keen on then your PUM leader can note this down and it can be forwarded to the negotiating team for their information.

**Don’t we just automatically get what is negotiated for primary and secondary teachers?**

Primary and Secondary Teacher negotiations are ongoing, neither has managed to achieve an offer that is satisfactory for members. Now is an opportunity for Area Schools to add our voice to the call to address the issues that have caused the crisis in recruitment and retention – to get a settlement that is acceptable for everyone.

**Why have our PUMs changed to school level meetings?**

To minimise disruption to schools to allow the country and school communities to focus on healing after the devastating terrorist attack on Christchurch.

1. **Industrial Action**

**Will we be asked to take industrial action?**

Industrial action is only called if the negotiations are deadlocked and no progress can be made on significant items.

A claim of this magnitude has never been won in the past without some form of action, but claims like this one are only make when the profession is in crisis and the long term consequences of not addressing those problems (for teachers and students) outweigh the short term disadvantage.

Members will always be asked to vote on whether to take industrial action and on the type of industrial action. If the majority vote is to support action then all members participate.

**Can we take industrial action with secondary and primary teachers?**

Members will always be asked to vote on whether to take industrial action and on the type of industrial action. If Secondary and Primary teachers have indicated that they are going to take industrial action, and Area School teachers negotiations have broken down then yes Area School Teachers can vote to join them.