

Letter writing is a useful part of a well-planned campaign strategy. It shows that people feel strongly about an issue, and this puts pressure on decision makers.

This letter-writing campaign relies on PPTA members building a personal connection with government decision-makers. Letters written in people's own words show that they really care about the issue and can be very powerful and persuasive; they must be heartfelt and genuine.

At this point in our Bring out the best campaign it's useful for us to let our decision-makers know exactly what the solutions are to the issues on secondary education and what their role is in fixing them. Our aim is to make them feel confident to take and support the actions we want, and also to feel responsible for making them happen.

We need these people to feel an emotional connection to our cause, believe that change is possible and understand their role in the change.

Jacinda Ardern's government is prioritising children; we need to be part of that. She has said "We need to ensure our policies across government are making a difference to the lives of children." and "We still have the potential to be world-leading in this area, we are small enough that we can absolutely introduce child wellbeing policies so that New Zealand is once again a great place to bring up children and be a child."

Our values are well aligned, now it's up to us to help Jacinda Ardern and her government make the right decisions for secondary teachers and education.

Here are the things to cover in your letter, in your own words:

A personal connection

- Do some research about your MP
- Have you met them before?
- Do you live in the same community?
- Did they say anything useful during the election campaign or since?
- Are there values that you share?
- How much do they know about the teaching profession?

Problem

Secondary schools around the country are experiencing an unprecedented shortage of teachers. Teachers themselves are struggling with over-assessment, red tape and box-ticking, and children are missing out on the one-on-one time they need with their teachers. You could:

- Describe the impact of teacher shortages on your school and region – be specific but you don't have to name schools
- Describe the impact of teacher workload on yourself and your colleagues.

Cause

Over the last decade our leaders have chosen not to prioritise education. The results of a decade of under-funding and neglect by the previous government are a profession that is being decimated, students who aren't getting the best that we can give and run-down and neglected infrastructure.

Action

We need our elected representatives to make the changes required so that every teacher is enabled to bring out the best in every child.

Decision-makers can help their colleagues understand the issues and solutions. They need to support our collective agreement claims and recommendations of our previous workload and supply reports.

Jacinda Ardern's new government has an opportunity to transform the lives of children across the country with a renewed commitment to making teaching once again a meaningful and respected career for people to pursue.

Explain why the PPTA's claim is an important way to address these challenges.

Use data and content from www.bringoutthebest.nz or the PPTA website page to support your letter.

Outcome

All our schools are great schools.

Teaching is the respected career choice it once was and attracts quality graduates with the skills and specialisations the country needs.

Together we bring out the best in all our kids.

Values

Equity and equality are important to us all.

Every parent wants the best for their children – and every teacher does too.

We teach because we are motivated by bringing out the best in our students. We want them to leave school equipped with the skills, confidence, values and knowledge that will allow them to make the most of every opportunity in life.

It's a big role, and one that carries with it a duty of care and responsibility. Secondary teachers play an important role in making New Zealand a better place for all of us to live and grow.

A typical letter would include:

Your name and address

Day, Month, Year

Hon. Jane Bloggs

Minister of Education

Freepost

Parliament Buildings

Private Bag 18041

Wellington 6160

Tēnā koe

First paragraph: Say why you are writing e.g. to let them know how they can help fix the staffing shortages in the secondary education sector. Say that you are writing as a teacher and a member of PPTA exec. Say why you teach and why this issue is important to you.

Second, third paragraphs and body of letter: Talk about the problem, their cause and what action you want them to take. Make it feel do-able by talking about the outcome we want to achieve and the values you hold.

Final paragraph: State again what action you would like the politician to take e.g. Support our collective agreement claims, actions the recommendations of the Workforce and Supply reports.

Nāku, nā

Your signature, name etc

Cc: PPTA president, Jack Boyle