

PPTA NEWS

The magazine of New Zealand secondary teachers

Rebalancing Teacher Workload

PPTA's activities in the
workload sphere pg 6-7



PPTA News



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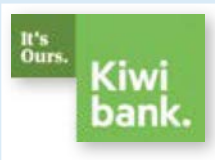
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Education isn't an island

Addressing poverty by supporting schools as community hubs



Jack Boyle | President, PPTA

Many of you will have seen the Sunday Star Times report a few weeks ago on families in boarding houses in Auckland, living in conditions that are more believable in Dickens' London than 21st century New Zealand.

In my office I have a poster from the children's commissioner's 2016 Child Poverty Monitor which shows there are 155,000 children living in material hardship; that means genuinely lacking things they need. And the Salvation Army's 2017 State of the Nation report tells us that "Entrenched child poverty has become the new normal".

These are important reminders of the conditions that some of our students come from and go home to each day.

For us teachers, the relationship between education and poverty is a difficult one.

On one hand, we are told that 'decile isn't destiny' and as long as teachers have high expectations whatever lives students lead outside of school don't matter at all. There's some truth to this, in that there are students who overcome amazing odds, and teachers' high expectation can be part of this.

On the other, there's the daily reality of students who have no internet access at home, are regularly sick from poor housing, have significant family responsibilities, and school work is simply too far down the priority list for them and their families.

The evidence is clear that poverty, and the difficult, stressful lives that go along with it, has a real impact on the chances of doing well at school. The weight of research showing this is incontrovertible.

So what can we do about it? Is there anything more than doing our jobs well,

supporting each and every student to do their best?

As individual teachers, maybe not. But as a collective, with political clout, absolutely there's more we can do. Supporting policies that will make a difference for these students is part of it.

That's why PPTA is advocating for schools as community hubs.

This simply means that social, cultural, health, leisure and other facilities for students, their families, whānau and wider communities are situated at school, and that schools become a magnet for and centre of the community.

Making schools into hubs acknowledges that education isn't an island, and that what happens outside the school gate can't be simply 'left at the door'.

We already have some great examples of this, but what we don't have is a consistent government policy to promote it. Where it's happening schools that have had some extra space and community backing, such as Aurora College, are basing a range of services for students and whānau on-site, or partnering with local health providers. Kelston Girls' College is partnering with local health providers to provide a fully-funded medical centre on the school grounds.

While there are barriers, and no doubt the government will be quick to raise the financial ones, it seems like the time for this policy has come.

The data the government has gathered on the replacement for the decile system has made it much harder for them to ignore the out of school factors that they used to insist was just an 'excuse' teachers use to explain underachievement. And at the same time they are keen to link early childhood centres, schools, tertiary institutions and communities through communities of learning. This is the next logical step.

When a school is a community hub it means that through partnerships it builds the wellbeing and social capital of students, their whānau and the community, as a planned and systematic part of its role. But not all schools can become a community hub on their own; this relies on long-term commitment from the wider community and the state, which is why one of PPTA's election year goals is to commit to supporting this model.

Of course, a student who is living in a chaotic, unsafe and unhealthy home is always going to face greater challenges than one from the opposite. But if the school environment is somewhere they can access healthcare or counselling they need, stay longer hours to do homework, sport or cultural activities, and can have breakfast, then that's got to help. And if their families can come and use these things too, maybe creating a better relationship with the school and teachers at the same time, even better.



Source: Child Poverty Monitor 2016.

Mental health teaching resources to receive upgrade

Lynfield College teacher Kat Wells and Auckland University researcher Katie Fitzpatrick discuss their work bringing mental health education into the 21st century

School mental health education resources are in for a much-needed upgrade thanks to a Lynfield College teacher and an Auckland University researcher.

Lynfield College health and physical education head of faculty Kat Wells and University of Auckland associate professor Katie Fitzpatrick are collaborating on a mental health teaching resource for year 7-13 students, with the aid of a Beeby Fellowship grant.

Things have changed since 1994

This innovation in mental health education has been a long time coming, with existing resources last updated back in 1994.

Despite its age the current resource (Taking Action: Life skills in health

education) is still in high demand, Kat says.

“People always want a copy but there’s not enough, and it is in desperate need of an update.”

“It’s a great opportunity for us to collaborate and produce something really wonderful for teachers and schools.”

Kat has led curriculum change in health education at her school, is a member of the national executive of the New Zealand Health Educators’ Association

and teaches health education from years 9-13.

The aim for the new resource – with a working title of Mental health education and Hauora: a resource for teaching about resilience, interpersonal skills and wellbeing – is to be the ‘go to resource’ for teachers wanting to teach about mental health, interpersonal skills and wellbeing, she said.

The mental health resources will be part of a wider investigation into health education in schools by Katie, who is an internationally recognised authority in health education. She has a teaching background and has done extensive school-based research into low decile New Zealand schools.

The Beeby fellowship means she can partner with Kat to translate the findings of the mental health part



Kat Wells and Katie Fitzpatrick hope their new mental health education project will become the ‘go to resource’ for teachers.

of the research into practice as a teacher handbook.

“The issues students face, particularly in terms of mental health, have changed since then (1994). We want to give teachers the tools to talk about things that all students deal with, like stress and social media. It’s quite a different world than it was and the current resources don’t really translate,” Katie said.

The fellowship money was the equivalent of a university grant and allowed Kat teaching release time to work on the resource.

“It’s a great opportunity for us to collaborate and produce something really wonderful for teachers and schools,” Katie said.

Good teaching materials vital for under-resourced mental health education

The researchers say the area of mental health education is currently under-resourced in New Zealand schools.

“While there is ample resources in other health-related areas (such as sexuality education), few resources currently available support teachers to address mental health, interpersonal skills and resilience,” they said.

Mental health is a key area of learning in the Health and Physical Education area of the New Zealand curriculum and recent youth health research also suggests such learning is urgently needed, they say.

“While it is not the express purpose of schools alone to address these societal health issues, learning in health education...can help young people to develop the skills and knowledge to support themselves and others in developing positive emotional and mental wellbeing.

“Good teaching resources that align with the New Zealand Curriculum and the National Certificate of Educational Achievement are vital.”

Promoting positive coping strategies

The Beeby Fellowship put the researchers in the best position to be able to collaborate and take action, Kat said.

The resource would aim to help students identify mental health issues, manage stress, provide positive strategies and advice on where to get help, she said.

“It may also help students communicate effectively and develop anti-bullying strategies.”

“It’s pre-emptive. Looking at things that people, schools and communities can do to promote positive mental health and showing how we can be responsive... which is really needed in this space. It needs to be a lot better,” she said.

There would be notes in the front of the resources to help teachers address the difficult issues - how to work through emotional issues and manage questions around suicide.

Katie believes a larger focus on mental health in the health curriculum could combat the stigma around mental health issues. She would also like to see a larger focus on health education. “It should be timetabled into the school day the way it needs to be.”

.....

“It’s pre-emptive. Looking at things that people, schools and communities can do to promote positive mental health and showing how we can be responsive.”

.....

“The scope of the book is limited to mental health, but there are so many other issues that could be addressed through the health curriculum – sexuality education is one of the others. I would like to see schools give health education as much timetable space as other subjects,” she said.

Understanding different cultural perspectives of mental health

The new resource will also help youth understand different cultural perspectives and approaches to mental health, the researchers say.

Development will include input, consultation and trialling with teachers working with Pasifika, Maori, Asian and Pakeha New Zealand youth, along with those of other ethnicities.

“As a result of this process, the resource will engage with the burgeoning diversity of youth cultures in schools.”

The researchers will ask teachers and schools to share ideas, which would be credited to them in the materials, and trial material with their classes for feedback. They are working with student teachers at the University of Auckland too.

“Through conversations around schools about what’s available and what isn’t available in health education, we hope to create a beacon of light for the future. If there are examples of schools with really good processes, we want to share that,” Katie said.

Accessing the new resources

Mental health education and Hauora: a resource for teaching about resilience will be published through the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER). It will be released for sale as a book and made available as a digital resource on their website.

Kat and Katie expect the book to be available mid next year and hope to be able to launch it at a health and physical education conference in July 2018.

Youth 2000 - The Numbers

In the latest version of the Youth 2000 survey series (a youth health survey of more than 8500 New Zealanders aged 13-18) mental health was a key concern.

.....

9% of boys and 16% of girls showed signs of depression

.....

18% of boys and 29% of girls engaged in deliberate self-harm

.....

10% of boys and 21% of girls admitted to having suicidal thoughts

.....

The Youth 2000 research team stated their findings identified that “bullying...(and) significant depressive symptoms...(are) significant problems for New Zealand youth.”

Joint taskforce investigates secondary workload issues

PPTA, the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders have released a report into excessive secondary teacher workload

NCEA, excessive administration and a lack of resources and people

Through the second half of 2016 PPTA, the MoE and a number of education agencies formed a taskforce to investigate workload issues for secondary teachers.

The Secondary Teacher Workload Working Group report has now been made public by the new Minister of Education.

It identifies NCEA, school management, compliance and administration, performance management, appraisal and certification and new initiatives as drivers of excessive workload. It also recognises a lack of resourcing and people, particularly and kaiako Māori and Pasifika teachers.

“Workload can impact on teacher satisfaction, retention and wellbeing with a flow-on effect to student learning and wellbeing. If workload is high, teachers are more likely to be dissatisfied with their job, consider leaving the profession and have a poor work-life balance. This issue particularly impacts on teachers and middle managers,” the report says

Workload investigation grew from the STCA

The group arose as part of the settlement of the 2015 Secondary Teachers Collective Agreement. The earlier Supply Working Group had already identified workload as an important component of secondary teacher supply problems. This group used PPTA's 2016 report on workload as a basis for some of its work.

Representatives of the working group visited five schools to talk to teachers and school leaders to help develop their recommendations. Many of the solutions proposed by those interviewed regarding the issues associated with a lack of people and time suggest additional resources to meet the challenges schools are currently dealing with. Those suggestions included the reduction in; class size, contact time, staffing ratios, professional development, and extracurricular activities.

Joint recommendations

There were a number of shared recommendations and a number of recommendations from PPTA that the ministry would not sign up to because they would cost money or did not match current government policies. However,



A lack of resourcing is pushing up workload stress

within their limited mandate the ministry, Education Council and NZQA, along with NZSTA have committed to working through the joint recommendations

- There is an effort being made to address workload drivers that are part of the NCEA system, the associated resources and information available to members, and the over-engineering that drives the unsustainable workloads of many teachers.
- PPTA, the MoE and STA are committed to improving school management practices generally, to providing better support and PLD for those wishing to make a career in school leadership and those already in those careers. There is also a commitment to eliminating bullying work environments.
- The joint recommendations for Maori and Pasifika involve looking for better ways to support those teachers.
- The parties agreed that it is important to clarify and minimise compliance obligations on schools and encourage as much as possible to be done by support staff rather than teachers. However, the government funded agencies would not agree to support a recommendation for more resourcing to allow schools to employ more support staff. We did recognise a lot of compliance is driven by individual schools rather than actually being required by agencies. Eliminating that unnecessary complexity will assist in lightening the burden in some schools.

- The organisations also agreed schools often simply expect too much from teachers and middle leaders in terms of appraisal and performance management. This could be reduced considerably in many schools without undermining the value of a robust performance management system. Education Council is to look at its requirements and see where these can be made less arduous.
- There is a joint commitment to try to find better processes for managing new initiatives, and to developing better change management skills within leadership PLD.

On the issue of ‘people and resourcing’ PPTA couldn’t get agreement from any of the other agencies. We have called for additional staffing to recognise the changes and growth in complexity of the practices and expectations around teaching and learning. They are needed also to provide additional time allowances for middle leadership to address the class size problems in large schools, and to resource community liaison roles in schools with large Maori and Pasifika communities.

There is currently a work plan for making the recommended changes happen but it is likely that essential steps (like additional staffing) will require a collective agreement claim. In the meantime, PPTA will keep members updated on any progress.

Rebalancing secondary teacher workload

PPTA president Jack Boyle outlines the association's activities around the workload issue

In regional and branch visits I have made over the last two years, teacher workload has been the fundamental concern for members everywhere.

And it still is. Correspondingly, from the start of my time on executive this has been a critical focus for me – because it is for you.

In 2016 PPTA Te Wehengarua published its Workload Taskforce Report on its investigation into issues of workload intensification for secondary school teachers in New Zealand. It was little surprise to teachers that the taskforce findings reflected an intensification of workload problems previously identified by various working parties and reports over the last 15 years. If anything, the situation has only become worse – the job of a teacher has certainly become more complex.

We presented the findings of the taskforce to the Joint Ministry of Education/PPTA Workload Working Group last year. The subsequent Workload Working Group report validated everything you had been saying about workload, but it might just as well have been locked in a drawer of previous Education Minister Hekia Parata's desk (in an unopened envelope)... until last month, when new Minister of Education Nikki Kaye formally acknowledged both the Workload Working Group report and the joint report of the 2016 Secondary Teacher Supply Working Group.

A range of suggestions for improvements to workload are identified in the report. These aim to allow teachers and school leaders to teach and lead more efficiently and effectively, as well as improve secondary teacher recruitment and retention.

There are a number of recommendations from PPTA which the ministry refused to sign up to – either because they did not represent the existing government line or because they're the ones with the dollar signs attached. Despite this, it is definitely worth a read.

Over the next 18 months we will be throwing everything we can at progressing all of the recommendations



Teacher workload is a fundamental concern for members everywhere

(including those the ministry didn't sign up to). Already minister Kaye is aware that teacher workload is a key issue for us in our discussions with her and her ministry. We have also been having regular meetings with the Ministry of Education, Education Council, NZQA and other agencies to progress a 'Workload Reduction Implementation Plan'. This plan is to reduced unnecessary work in four key areas: NCEA, appraisal and certification requirements, school management and administration practices and the excess of new initiatives. (Areas that require more money – time for the job, extra administrative support, Maori and Pasifika teacher pressures – we will be pursuing through other means.)

We will share that plan with you this year and press the ministry and other agencies to tick off as many of the recommendations as soon as possible.

We are determined to have a real influence. We won't be content with a talk-fest either. We want action.

Progress so far:

You will probably be aware that the 85% NCEA Level 2 target has been scrapped. This was one of PPTA's recommendations. We hope this represents an opportunity for

teachers and schools to switch focus, and move away from the over assessment of our students.

There will be a joint-agency/PPTA resource coming out to schools this year outlining some steps to reduce workload for teachers and over-assessment for young people, and of course PPTA already has a lot of guidance that you should be using, like the change management toolkit and timetabling guidelines.

We're also working with NZQA on how we might use the 2018 NCEA review to rebalance the amount of assessment in schools. In the meantime we are participating on work around online moderation, reduction of credits for Level 1 of NCEA and advice around cross-curricular assessment.

Of course, we're already starting to discuss how teacher workload might be addressed in our collective bargaining round next year. (Rest assured, we will be consulting widely with you over the next 18 months).

In the meantime, if you want to put teacher workload on your branch or regional agenda, support from our field staff, national office staff or a personal visit from me are all options you are welcome to consider.

Creating safe schools, workplaces and communities

Speak Up, Stand Together, Stop Bullying – celebrating Pink Shirt Day

Part of our work as teachers and staff is to stand together and take action against bullying, so that every person is able to be safe at school.

On 26 May schools, offices, police stations and even air force crews took part in Pink Shirt Day.

Celebrated annually around the globe, Pink Shirt Day began in Canada in 2007 when two students took a stand against homophobic bullying, mobilising their whole school to wear pink shirts, after a peer was bullied for wearing a pink shirt.

Pink Shirt Day aims to create schools, workplaces and communities where all people feel safe, valued and respected.

The other thing we did to celebrate Pink Shirt Day was put out a media statement celebrating the update and re-release of our guidelines for schools to help them create a safe and affirming environment for all students, because we believe that gender and sexuality should never be barriers to student engagement and achievement.

Each student has the right for their unique identity to be recognised, respected and celebrated.

PPTA is taking the lead in this work because we believe it is our role as teachers to bring out the unique strengths of each child, so they can make the most of every opportunity at school and beyond. We want every school and every teacher to have the resources they need to build an inclusive school culture.

What we didn't expect was that our guidelines would start a national conversation about how to create safe schools! For Shawn Cooper, convenor of the PPTA rainbow taskforce, it meant a week of interviews, talking to media, travelling and even starring on weekly political show Backbenches.

Not only that, but many others in the education sector and beyond were discussing the issues and helping New Zealanders understand why safe spaces for children and young people are so important.

The 'Affirming diversity of sexualities and gender identities in the school community' resources can be found in the Rainbow Teachers community section of the PPTA website.



“Ki te kotahi te kakaho ka whati, Ki te kapuia e kore e whati”



“Alone we can be broken. Standing together, we are invincible”

Top to bottom – Green Bay High School's Jeni Little and Jenni Child, Rolleston College, Paraparaumu College and Mt Maunganui College staff and students celebrate Pink Shirt Day

Defending public education

University of Waikato professor Martin Thrupp on the importance of protecting public education during an election year

Recently I was asked in an interview what I thought about the state of the New Zealand education system after nine years of the National-led government.

'Grim', I said. 'Dire', I said. 'Going to hell in a handbasket', I said - just in case a little humour was needed.

The reason I take this view is because the public education system is continuing to be hollowed out at every level. Teacher education, resources for teachers, professional development, leadership preparation, special education, educational research, curriculum coverage: you name it, its been falling back.

It's about funding patterns in education and moves towards privatisation. Where education is not in decline it is often because educators are working against the grain of policy rather than being supported by it.

Education is increasingly becoming a private good that families and individuals have to pay for. In an unequal society many obviously won't be able to afford it and over time successive generations will lose the life-chances they could have otherwise had. Schools serving poorer communities will become increasingly cash-strapped. The potential for companies and corporations to make money off the education system is a further problem. Authenticity declines as the profit motive increases.

Of course the government highlights supposed reforms or investments but they are never uncomplicated. Take the building of new schools, surely something to celebrate. In fact that's often just keeping up with rampant population growth, the government sometimes wants to use public-private partnerships (with concerns about transparency) and has a faddish attachment to Innovative Learning Spaces (which is another opportunity for profit-making).

The government trumpets improved achievement against targets or improved rankings but you would be naïve to believe much of it. Consider instead how easily the numbers can be manipulated and how headline statistics mask a multitude of problems.

It's concerning when evidence that casts doubt on policy has been ignored



Protest art: A creative way of drawing attention to New Zealand's sick education system

or dismissed or has not been sought in the first place. In 2009 Bill English said in the House: "This government has the capacity to make its own distinctions between good advice and bad advice. Advice we disagree with is bad advice; advice we agree with is good advice". It was tongue-in-cheek but these days seems a true word spoken in jest.

It certainly is dispiriting to see what's happening to public education and teachers don't have a lot of spare time. But there are a few things we can all do:

Vote for public education. Personally I've never joined or endorsed any political party. But I'll vote against a National-led government in the next election because of their policies. Imagine a fourth term: public education will be more on the ropes than ever.

Realise the Global Education Reform Movement (GERM) might exist not just in the abstract but right under your nose. Do you have a principal or board of trustee members that basically regard your school as a business? Does your school contract in private providers? Are there dodgy business sponsorships or philanthropic involvements?

Use opportunities as they arise and whatever skills you feel comfortable with in the battle for public education. Talking, persuading, writing, protest art. Be supportive of like-minded

colleagues and those who put their heads above the parapet.

Be a bit difficult. Teachers have always achieved a lot through quiet resistance and responses to bad policy.

Support the PPTA. Teacher unions and professional organisations are much of the reason public education can still be feasible in this country. The New Zealand public owes these organisations an enormous debt of gratitude even if many people don't realise it.

If you are a young teacher find out some of the history of teaching and neo-liberal reform in New Zealand. What was bulk-funding and why did teachers resist it?

If you are an older teacher try not to disengage in a nostalgic way because the battles we lose now will affect our children's children and so on. Also please don't use the skills you have honed in public education to help private providers make money out of the public system.

Finally teachers certainly support public education by working on the day-to-day quality of teaching and learning in schools. But this shouldn't stop us pushing back against the scapegoating of teachers and schools for wider socio-economic problems.

Prof. Thrupp's new book: 'The Search for Better Educational Standards: A Cautionary Tale' will be published by Springer in September.

When teaching is in the blood

Buller High School's Ellen Curnow and Andrew Basher talk about teaching with family and the benefits of rural schools.

Some families have teaching in the blood, and some schools are the lucky beneficiaries of those families.

This is the case with Westport's Buller High School which has not one, but two, father-daughter teaching teams.

Ellen and Ray Curnow bounce ideas off each other and sometimes share classes – they both teach English. Principal Andrew Basher and his daughter Melissa share advice and co-coach the school soccer team – they both teach maths.

Union activism in the breed

Nelson/West Coast PPTA executive member Ellen Curnow never thought she would be a teacher. Both her parents were and as far as she was concerned, it was not on the agenda for her.

A few years and a hairdressing qualification later however, she swapped the scissors for whiteboard markers. "I wanted to do something interesting and challenging. Also, I had my son when I was quite young and teaching seemed like a secure job for a young parent."

Not only is she an English teacher like her dad; she is now an English teacher with her dad. "I was teaching in Northland and was looking for a change and a job came up in my dad's English department at his high school. Once he knew I was applying, he stepped back from the selection process. I think he was pretty surprised I did."

As a member of PPTA's executive Ellen is following in her father's footsteps in more ways than one. "Our careers have followed similar pathways. Dad was on PPTA executive at 33 and I'm on PPTA executive at 33."

Buller High School is a particularly active PPTA branch with 100% membership and Ellen enjoys the opportunity to represent her branch and region through executive. "It's challenging and it's frustrating sometimes as well."

Not only do the Curnows teach the same subject, at times they teach

the same class. "We teach together. Last year we were team teaching a year 13 class."

With 32 students enrolled in year 13 English and two teachers available, they had the numbers to make it work. Both father and daughter were timetabled at the same time and they ran a mixture of joint lecture-style lessons and separate classes.

"Sometimes we ran lectures with all of them and other times we split it. Each of us offers a text and they choose which text they want to study. I think they appreciated being able to choose."

Working together in the shared sessions was a great experience, Ellen said.

"I think the relationship that dad and I have is a good example for them, that you can really bounce ideas around."

"We were all squeezed into one room with me and dad bouncing ideas off each other. And of course there were plenty of dad jokes. I think the relationship that dad and I have is a good example for them, that you really can bounce ideas around. Because discussion is such a massive part of teaching English – it's good to model that, it's a way of thinking out loud.

"Sometimes when it's one teacher in the classroom it's harder. You have to model it by talking to yourself because the kids don't always want to take up the discussion," she said.

Ellen's PPTA activism is no surprise given her family background. Ray Curnow has always been an active unionist and Ellen remembers attending marches and pickets with her dad since she was about four years old. "It's in the blood."

She learned lessons about solidarity from an early age.

"When I was in year 11, in 1999, there was a strike towards the end of the year and I needed to work on my art boards. My art teacher told me she was going to be at school - so I worked on my boards while she was there. Dad found out and was so mad. I didn't realise what it meant that that teacher was at school. Now I do."

Mixing family and the workplace has worked well for Ellen, though things can be a little more informal than other schools.

"Sometimes when I get asked a question and I don't know the answer I'll say 'I'll just ask my dad', instead of 'I'll check with the head of department'," she said.

Becoming a fully-fledged part of the community

Buller High School principal (and PPTA member) Andrew Basher is surprised and pleased to be working with his daughter Melissa.

Melissa Basher had previously worked at Te Aroha College and had returned home for six weeks. She had a British passport and was planning on teaching overseas but discovered a job opening at Buller High School.

"There was a maths vacancy, and blow me down, she applied for it. I didn't think she would," Andrew said.

She started at Buller this year and will finish her registration at the school. "She has some great teachers mentoring her," he said.

Both father and daughter are keen mathematicians and, while Andrew has moved into senior management, he still hasn't gotten rid of the bug. He is teaching some maths classes at the moment and is able to help clarify things for Melissa.

"The apple doesn't fall far from the tree. She doesn't mind asking questions and it is really rewarding working with her," he said.

Melissa had always been very good at maths and, out of the blue, decided teaching might be a good career, Andrew said.



From left: Andrew Basher (principal, maths teacher), Melissa Basher (maths teacher), Ellen Curnow (English and drama teacher) Ray Curnow (HOD English)

She loves to travel and sees teaching as a good transferrable skill. "I'm really impressed with how she gets involved with the kids. She just loves maths," he said.

The beauty of teaching in a rural school like Buller is the backup you get, Andrew said.

"We support and look after our teachers. When you become a teacher in our school you become a fully-fledged member of the community.

Teachers who start in a rural school can make moves in their career at an earlier stage because they have more experience, he said. "Rural schools are great that way. You get to do everything. Melissa is helping me coach the soccer team."

Basher is a well-known name at the school, with Andrew as principal, Melissa having gone there and her mother working part time at the

school for a while too. So the family teaching scenario is nothing unusual for the students. "The kids don't really notice. It doesn't even click to them. All of the teachers' kids go here."

.....
"The beauty of teaching in a rural school like Buller is the backup you get."

Andrew is a little miffed his daughter is stealing some of his thunder though. When out and about in the community he is used to students coming up and saying "hello Mr Basher". Now when he is seen out with Melissa it's "hello Miss Basher".

"I get a bit put out to be honest. It's all about me."

Andrew loves the environment of working on the coast and finds it community-minded rather than isolating. "And it's only a 40 minute flight to get to the capital city."

"The kids are great, people in our community walk with their heads up and say hello. It's an open environment. The kids are very accepting of people. We don't have gangs. The kids do naughty things, but they are ordinary naughty things."

There are 330 students in the school and Andrew knows every one of them. "They can't just become a number, they are a person in their own right and they remain that way because the community is watching," he said.

Andrew is really pleased this is the environment Melissa is gaining her teaching experience in.

"I think it's great she wants to move down here and work with her father. I'm really proud of her."

Dyslexia as a teaching tool

PPTA members Duncan Trickey and Lucy Blake show teaching with dyslexia can be a strength

People with dyslexia see the world differently – and this is absolutely no barrier to becoming a teacher.

In fact, according to PPTA members Duncan Trickey and Lucy Blake, it can actually be a strength.

Dyslexia is a neurobiological learning disability that involves difficulty reading or interpreting words, letters and other symbols. It typically results in poor spelling and decoding abilities but does not affect general intelligence.

From embarrassed and stubborn to empowering students

Duncan Trickey teaches maths and social studies at Otago Girls' High School.

He began his teaching career as a 22 year old in Scotland, where he taught religious studies and some calculus.

Diagnosed with dyslexia at primary school, Duncan was "quite stubborn" about getting the support he was entitled to. "I was very embarrassed about it as a kid," he said.

This stubbornness continued through to college where he was offered extensions and extra time for exams but turned them down because he thought "extensions were for thickies".

Duncan managed to make it through university without any official assistance. He was offered the use of a laptop as an aid, but refused because he did not want to stand out from other students. "I wrote all my essays and then a wonderful friend, who was a top English student, would correct my mistakes," he said.

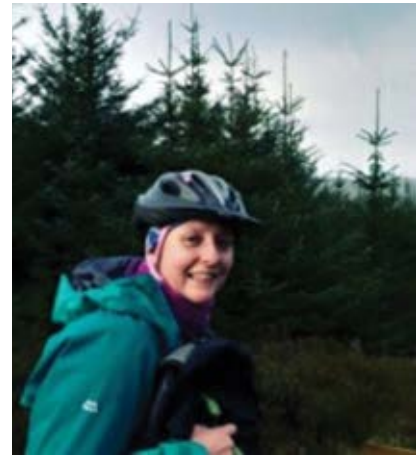
When he was accepted into teacher training he didn't think his dyslexia would affect him too much – until he had to write on a board.

"When I tried to write the word 'disease' while I was placement it kept coming out as 'die ese'. You can't get away with that in front of a year 10 class. They picked it up straight away. I tried 'oh yeah, I was just testing you' but they saw right through that," he said.

Duncan was able to get support from an older teacher who had exactly the same problem. She gave him tips on how to get by, including having key words written



Duncan Trickey



Lucy Blake

down. "Without her I don't know if I would have made it all the way through teacher training. I quite enjoyed it after that."

During the interview for his first job, Duncan didn't say anything about having dyslexia.

"I had gotten through university and had my qualifications. I didn't think it was relevant."

"It's about knowing your weaknesses and working with them. We're on a learning journey together."

Then, during a session with other beginning teachers on how to support people with special needs in the work place, he asked "what about dyslexia?"

"When I got back to work the DP hauled me inside his office and told me I had been rather naughty and should have revealed it - that if they didn't know they couldn't support me. It turned out it was a good thing because some other colleagues were in the same boat."

Fast-forward to 2017 and Duncan is now very open about having dyslexia, and even teaches a bit of English.

He tells his students straight away. "I've made up my own mihi – who I am,

where I'm from and that I'm dyslexic. I usually end up with kids coming up to me and saying 'me too,'" he said.

A moment Duncan is most proud of was when a parent got in touch to thank him. She told him her daughter came home saying "maybe I'll be a maths teacher. Mr Trickey said he was dyslexic and he's a maths teacher. If he can do it, I can do it." "She turned out to be one of my best maths students," Duncan said.

He now uses his dyslexia as a teaching tool with his students. "We work together. They help me when I am trying to get things right. They look up the words." "It's about knowing your weaknesses and working with them. We are spelling in English and Te reo. We're on a learning journey together."

Being dyslexic also means Duncan is in a good position to challenge students who say "I can't do this because I'm dyslexic." This attitude works with students with other challenges too. He once encouraged a student with dyspraxia (a developmental coordination disorder) to play rugby. "His mother said to me 'he's not meant to be good at things like that' – and he turned out to be one of my best players.

"There isn't an excuse. It does make things more difficult, but you can do them, it just takes time," he said.

During the time he has been teaching Duncan has seen a definite change in attitude towards people with dyslexia

and other special needs. However there is still a long way to go to reach equality for all dyslexic students, he says.

Because dyslexia can be seen as 'milder' than some disabilities it can be harder to get access to support. "There are still some real issues. Some parents have to shell out a lot of money (for support) and it can be heart-breaking for some of the kids whose family can't afford it."

At a previous school he taught at he saw students whose families never had the money or time to get all the paperwork together. He would like to see more support, particularly in lower decile schools, to help this happen.

His advice to people with dyslexia considering a career in teaching is not to see it as a barrier.

"If you enjoy working with young people, know that it is always possible."

A wiggly way around things - seeing the world in a way others can't

Westland High School science and biology teacher Lucy Blake's dyslexia means she sees the world differently to most.

She has Scotopic Sensitivity syndrome – a problem with the brain's ability to process visual information. "I think about things differently and see the world in a way people who aren't dyslexic can't. I see it as a strength," she said.

"I don't see the world in straight lines, I see a wiggly way around things."

Lucy was diagnosed with dyslexia in her 20s, during her third year of university.

"I didn't really get much support at uni, but during teacher training I received quite a lot. I had access to resources and tools – it was really quite good."

She describes her spelling as "sometimes appalling" with "weird dyslexic blocks" around certain words.

"Obviously, teaching science I have to spell scientific words. I can spell Latin names for things fine, but then I can't spell the word 'obviously'."

For Lucy the joy of discovering she was dyslexic was realising she was "not stupid". In fact, she she actually has a rather high IQ. "I'm actually highly intelligent, but in some areas I haven't got a clue."

.....

"I think about things differently and see the world in a way people who aren't dyslexic can't. I see it as a strength."

.....

She hates application forms with a passion but has had no issues going for job interviews because she has "very good verbal reasoning."

Lucy sees her dyslexia as a strength because it makes her hyper-aware of the quality of anything she produces.

"Because I'm so worried about getting

stuff wrong I am really careful. I double and triple check any material that's going to the kids. If I go to an interview now I tell them that I'm dyslexic because I see it as one of my strengths," she said.

Like Duncan, Lucy sees her dyslexia as a good tool in the classroom when it comes to relating to dyslexic students. It also means they can't pull the wool over her eyes.

Students trying to use their dyslexia to get out of doing school work don't stand a chance with Lucy.

"They say, 'I can't do this Miss, I'm dyslexic', and I turn around and say 'well so am I. That's why I've put this in a dyslexic-friendly font with an easy to read background.' They just go 'oh' and get on with it. They can't get away with 'I can't do it' with me. "Once they realise it's not an excuse, I get great work out of them."

When Lucy first started teaching, in North Wales, she saw being dyslexic as a weakness and didn't want her students to know. Back then teachers were told they weren't allowed to diagnose students with dyslexia, she said.

"From a local authority level it was like dyslexia didn't exist, or wasn't important."

She was also told by a colleague that dyslexic people shouldn't teach, which did not do a lot for her self-confidence.

It took Lucy three or four years to come to terms with being dyslexic and now she is really confident. "I'm in a much different place about it mentally now. I think I'm a pretty good teacher."

Her advice to other dyslexic teachers or people with dyslexia wanting to teach is to be confident because they have unique skills.

"Also, spellcheck is your friend."

"Don't worry about it. You've got something other teachers don't have. At my last school one teacher came up to me with work by a dyslexic student and said 'can you read this?'"

While a number of people think of information in terms of lists and bullet points, Lucy makes more free-form connections. "I think I'm more connected than non-dyslexic teachers."

Lucy hopes speaking up will help other dyslexic teachers.

"I hope this helps a few people who are a bit worried about stuff. Dyslexia doesn't define you, it gives you skills that are different from others," she said.



Spellcheck (and dictionaries) are your friends

Committed to valuing education and young people

Longstanding PPTA staff member and relieving field officer Helen Pearce farewells Western Springs College principal and long-time PPTA supporter Ken Havill

Ken Havill B.A, Dip guidance and counselling, M.Ed. admin, principal Western Springs College
8.12.1929 – 29.4.2017

Ken Havill - principal of Western Springs College for 19 years, and deputy principal for 7 years before that - exemplified the very best qualities of the New Zealand secondary teacher. Self-effacing yet determined, totally committed to the value of education in its broadest sense for young people, throughout his career Ken was unstinting in his work to provide stimulating and affirming opportunities for every student for whom he was responsible. A liberal in the true sense of the word, Ken strongly believed in social justice and co-education. He said on becoming principal, "I love the atmosphere of mutual respect and encouragement between the sexes between young men and women which is nurtured in the school."

Ken's teaching career began at Mt Albert Grammar School followed by country service at Bay of Islands College. He then spent from 1976 to 1990 at Massey High School where he was noted for his drama productions and coaching of rugby league and cricket. In 2008 he was honoured with a Woolf Fisher Fellowship for educational excellence. Sport and drama were career long passions. Tricia Reade, chairperson of The Auckland Performing Arts Centre (TAPAC), the performing arts facility next to the school, paid tribute to Ken: "His enthusiasm, drive and commitment in getting the project up and running, especially during the difficult early days, were responsible for the building of TAPAC."

Western Springs College is unique in that it has established since 2012 co-governance of the school with its bilingual unit, Nga Puna O Waiorea, which puts the Treaty of Waitangi into practice "in all aspects of the school including governance, management, school culture and practice."

PPTA branch chair when first at the school, Ken always supported union membership and activity



Ken Havill

wholeheartedly. PPTA meetings are still included in the meeting cycle and all members are expected to attend. New staff are encouraged to join PPTA, the STCA is complied with, consultation with the branch occurs and PPTA industrial action and political positions upheld. For example, when bulk funding of relief was introduced Ken told the branch the staff would not be told about the relief budget and teachers would not be asked to do relief. "We're not going to make this work," he said. The result of this attitude was a very loyal staff, extremely respectful of Ken's leadership.

From a field officer point of view, Ken was a very open and fair person to deal with, welcoming PPTA support of members, although not afraid of firm action when the situation warranted it. He had high ethical standards and expected others to have them as well. When Auckland field officer Guy Allan died unexpectedly in 2002, Ken

welcomed the use of the school hall for Guy's farewell. He supported the work of PPTA's national executive members from his school, Allayne Ferguson, Melanie Webber, Tupe Tai and Maggie McKenzie.

In the last few years, despite his ill health, Ken fought a major battle to get the Ministry of Education to commit to the sorely needed rebuilding of the school. The present buildings, sited on an area of landfill, opened in 1963 as Seddon High School. Nearly 80 per cent of the school will be replaced at a cost of \$79 million, the country's largest ever school building project.

Under Ken's leadership, the school gained excellent academic results and glowing ERO reports. His legacy lies in the opportunities he gave to staff and students to develop their abilities, gain self-confidence and contribute to the betterment of society.

Ken is survived by his wife and two daughters.

About tax – paying for education and public services

An excerpt from the newly released *Progressive thinking: ten perspectives on tax*

The Public Service Association (PSA) last month released a book to challenge some of the ways we talk about tax. *Progressive thinking: ten perspectives on tax* has contributions from researchers, economists and commentators on critical issues relating to how we take responsibility as a society to pay for the things we value.

Below is an excerpt from the book, from the section by Terry Baucher, a tax specialist and consultant, on New Zealand's tax settings in an international context. The book is available from the PSA website.

During the year ended 30th June 2016, the Government collected nearly \$70 billion in tax revenue, or about \$14,900 from every person in the country. That sounds like a fair sum of money, but how does New Zealand's tax burden compare internationally? Very well it appears, based on the 2017 edition of the OECD's annual Taxing Wages report. According to the OECD, a childless single New Zealand worker earning the average wage had the second lowest "tax wedge" in the OECD's 35 member countries. One-earner families with two children had the lowest tax wedge in the OECD.

The low tax wedge is a combination of relatively low income tax rates, no social security taxes and transfers for social assistance, such as Working for Families (WFF) tax credits.

The OECD survey looks at income tax, but what about GST? This made up \$18.2 billion, or 26.1 per cent, of the total tax collected in the 2016 year. GST's percentage of the overall tax take places New Zealand second overall in the OECD.

On average, GST or value added taxes represent about 20 per cent of tax revenues in other OECD countries. New Zealand's higher GST take is because it has no exemptions or variable rates, making it the most comprehensive GST in the world.

This is the result of the "broad base, low rate" approach to tax policy that governments of both hues have

followed since the mid-late 1980s. A broad base with no exemptions allows lower tax rates, and the GST system – which is regarded as a model of this kind – best exemplifies this policy.

However, one problem with GST is that it is seen as a regressive tax for low income persons as they pay a greater proportion of their income in GST than higher income earners. This has prompted calls to zero-rate fresh food, for example, as a means of redressing this issue.

Such proposals address the symptoms, not the cause. Families struggling to meet the bills suffer from a lack of income, not over taxation. Boosting incomes for low and middle income families would be far more effective than an ill-defined tax break.

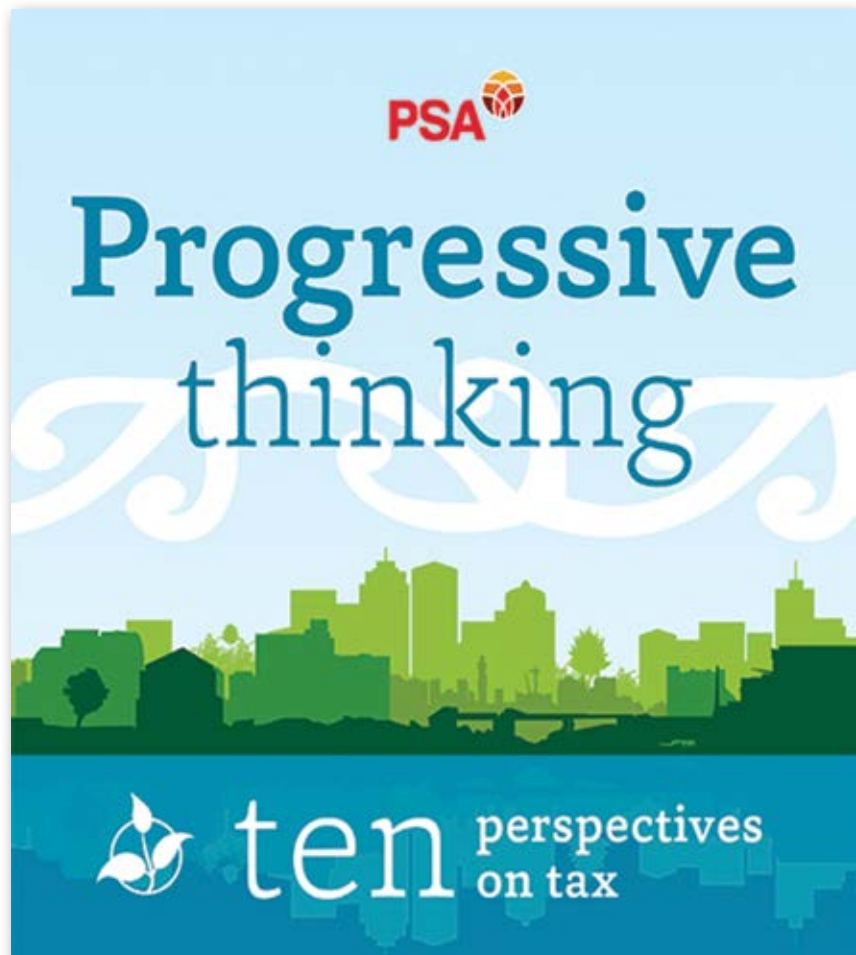
Lessons from overseas

New Zealand's "broad base, low rate" approach to tax policy is seen as best

practice. Nevertheless, are there lessons from overseas tax systems for New Zealand? Yes, in the form of a comprehensive capital gains tax (CGT). This would apply without the need to determine a person's intent. Its introduction should broaden the tax base to meet future health and superannuation demands and help address growing wealth inequality.

New Zealand is practically alone in the OECD in not having a CGT. The United States has treated capital gains as income since it introduced a Federal income tax in 1913. The UK has had a separate CGT since 1965, Canada introduced its CGT in 1972 and Australia has taxed capital gains since 1985.

There are decades of practical experience about the implementation and operation of a CGT available from other jurisdictions.



Demystifying headline grabbing test results

Otago Girls High School branch chair Duncan Trickey reviews
The Global Education Race: Taking the measure of PISA and international testing

Around the globe a haphazard sample of 15 year olds hold the keys to the future of educational policy. These athletes in the Global Education Race have differing starting points.

In my native Scotland propaganda videos are played, possibly blue face paint is handed out and the students storm into the testing room with a sense of doing their bit for the country. In South Korea they already have the investment of \$18 billion (US dollars) yearly in private tutors meaning that the inspirational videos are possibly unnecessary.

I have an idea that in New Zealand we may possibly have the students repeat the national mantra of “She’ll be right” before going into bat.

Mirth aside this book is about trying to demystify the headline grabbing tests. The tests themselves seem to have become goals for some countries, for example Australia aiming to be top five by the near mythical year 2025. The authors are not anti-testing and certainly not anti-PISA and they make this clear throughout the book. They are however against the simplistic view of the aim of these tests by some of the key players in the game.

PISA testing leaves a nation well-armed to enter into a meaningful debate on the state of its own education system and provide evidence-based policy to be broadly discussed.

It is far too difficult to simply look at one system and compare it with the other due to the numerous cultural differences and not to mention the differing samples taken through the educational system. For example when comparing Vietnam with New Zealand it must be remembered 50% of 15 year olds in Vietnam are not enrolled in schools.

The book is comprehensive in its understanding and offers a real insight into the worth and workings of PISA. It then puts the ball firmly in the government's court to unpack the information, with the help of actual

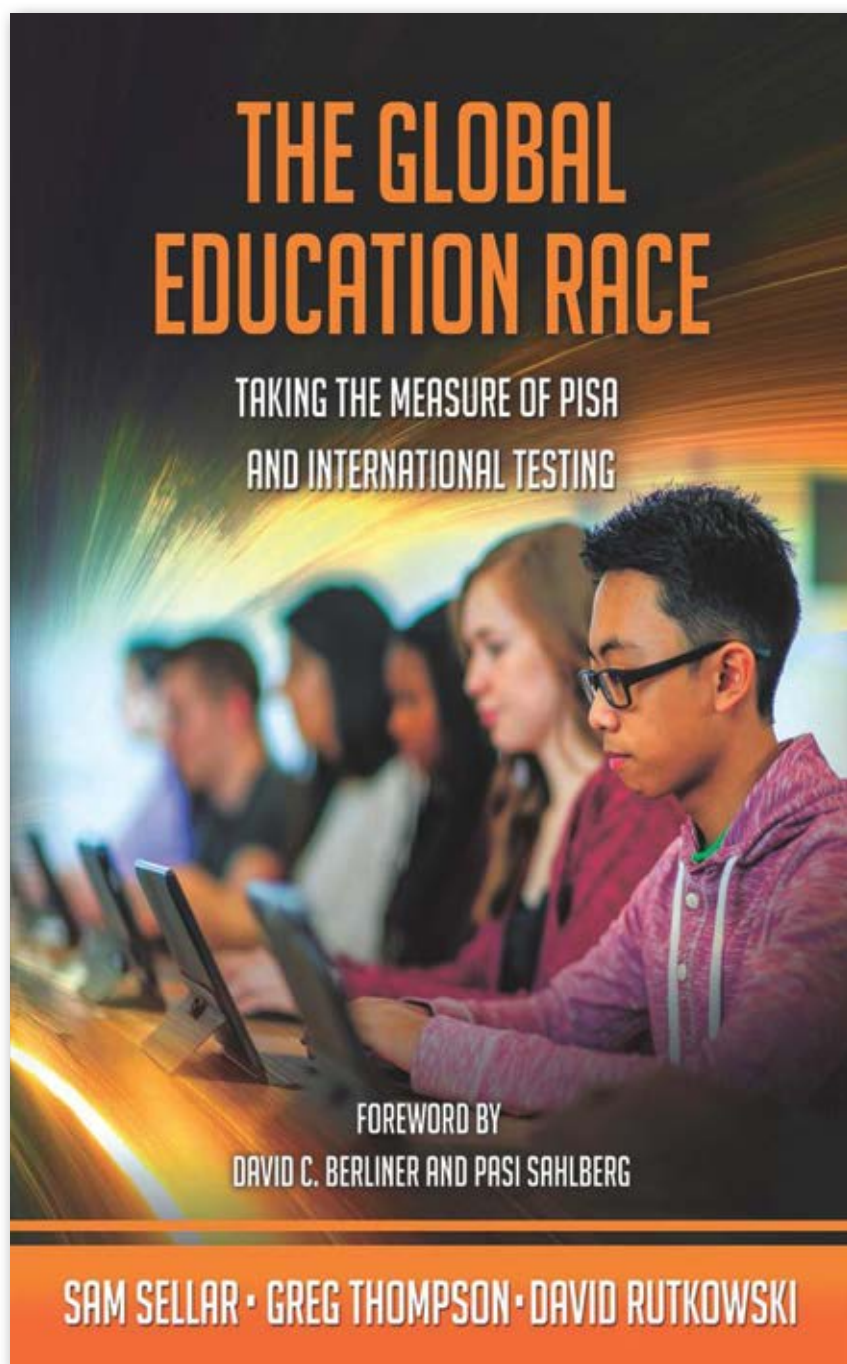
educators, to see what the testing can tell us about our education system.

My personal favourite part is in the conclusion where it gives a list of seven points to talk over with the Minister of Education when you are stuck in a lift with them. Well worth a read for all before a potential teacher-bashing cycle and knee-jerk policy stems out of an indifferent PISA result.

Or equally reminding us that even if we do perform well we still need to ensure equitable outcomes for all our students. Whatever happens, PISA testing data should be looked at in a New Zealand context and as a starting point for the discussion

Brush Education Inc.

Authors: Sam Sellar, Greg Thompson and David Rutkowski



Retraining to teach

Guest columnist Dave Armstrong proposes a novel way of addressing teacher shortages



Dave Armstrong

With many schools experiencing teacher shortages, it is important that talented people in other professions are given every opportunity to consider teaching as a career.

Given the volatile nature of New Zealand's job market, a number of talented individuals may find themselves without a job after this September. Yet with just a little training, many of these people described below could make excellent teachers. I hope they will be given every consideration by schools. To protect their identity from their present employers, only first names have been used.

Bill – a competent manager who would be good with school finances. Could do worse if you needed an economics HOD in a conservative Southland school. Tends to get his ideas from other teachers and then claim them as his own. Usually good with deadlines though when asked to complete a simple task he sometimes replies with comments like 'yep, will have that done by 2030, or maybe 2070.'

Andrew – also competent though a little boring. Possibly good in a 2MU role that does not require too much vision. Might do better as principal if he teamed up with a charismatic and popular deputy.

Jacinda – strengths in English and History and has been known to DJ on occasions. Great potential, and could prove very popular with students and other teachers, but has not really been tested in the cut and thrust of a challenging classroom environment.

Metiria and James – couple available for small rural school. If you need an ebullient, fun, slightly wacky Art or

Drama teacher Metiria fits the bill. James is more staid, but could be ideal in a commerce or economics role. Both seeking simple rural accommodation but not fussy as long as it has compostable toilet, complete insulation, rainwater collection hubs, medicinal marijuana patch and off-grid solar generation.

Gerry – Te Reo Maori and woodwork. Probably not the best teacher for scholarship students but a real enthusiast. Might suit a South Island school, though he can get a bit tetchy when talking about Christchurch. Tends to dislike red tape (see: security, airport) which could make administering NCEA assessment difficult.

David – young and intelligent with impeccable dress sense. Could fill shortages in Latin, Economics or Mathematics. Would prefer somewhere like Epsom, with a high-decile boys school being ideal, or even charter school considered. Probably not a good fit at a lower decile school as he tends to blame students, parents and other teachers for their 'failing'.

Hekia – intelligent, charming, organised and fluent in Te Reo, Hekia is a principal's dream. Even better, she believes kids learn more in big classes than smaller ones! An enterprising school administration could pile 40 or 50 kids into her classes, allowing other teachers to reduce their class numbers and increase their effectiveness. Has a slightly patronising manner with students and other teachers.

Winston – highly experienced with major interest in extra-curricular activities. Could fill many roles, though probably not Dean of Overseas Students. Interested in outdoor education, especially fishing, and would be great fun on a school trip.

Colin – charismatic and strong in religious studies. Has also expressed a desire to contribute poetry to the school newspaper. Has had some tricky legal disputes in the past so BoTs should tread over contractual matters carefully.

Steven – excellent administrator with high workrate but tends to want to run everything. Every school needs a Steven, but only one.



Teacher status and a registration mistake

Send your letters to news@ppta.org.nz – Maximum length is 250 words

Raising teacher status

Dear Editor,

I read with interest Jack's comments about teachers' status and pay, in the May/June edition.

When I left teaching after approx. 38 years' service, I was at the top of the basic scale (ie about \$78,000). I was still only a basic scale teacher, not having been interested in promotion to the dizzying heights of head of department or beyond.

By way of comparison, my daughter (29years old), is currently earning \$103 000. She joined the Defence Forces from school at 18 years old. She was paid from day one, so no student debt. When they required extra qualifications they paid for her tuition.

She has recently graduated as an officer, and is currently training for her future role. Better pay would certainly be a start to improving a teacher's status.

Yours
Tony Ensor

Registration clarification

The article (p8) 'Supporting New Teachers by Ending Temp Contracts' addresses important issues for new teachers gaining registration. There is one important inaccuracy in this article. The paragraph at the bottom of the second column states: "Some had been illegally let go after school rolls had dropped and others struggled to meet registration criteria, **which requires two years full time work**".

The words in bold are incorrect - full registration can be gained with a .5FTE workload or above. This is what I did - I had full time work (fixed term) for my first year of teaching, then picked up a .5FTE workload after a year or so, which meant I could keep working towards full registration.

Also, a block of relief teaching of set classes of six consecutive weeks or more (provided it is above .5FTE workload) counts to registration as well.

Regards
Joanna Love

Editor's response:

PPTA apologises for this error in the article. Joanna is quite right. In addition, the Education Council is now trying to be more flexible about its interpretation of "satisfactory recent teaching experience" for provisionally certificated teachers seeking to move to full certification, so that periods of teaching that are close to 0.5, or average 0.5 across the total, are able to be considered as "satisfactory", as long as there is good evidence of induction and mentoring.

The council has also recently announced there is money available to help provisionally certificated teachers who are part-time or relieving across a number of schools to move to full certification. This money is to release a mentor in a host school for one hour a week to work with a reliever who is part of the way towards full certification but not there yet because of the number of hours they teach in individual schools. Information about this was in the May 31 Collective News and can be found in the Getting Certificated/Induction and Mentoring section of the Education Council website (go to Getting Started – Provisionally Certificated Teachers).



"It's about time teachers had some recognition."

Units and middle management allowances

Information and advice from PPTA's intrepid field officers

In a few months' time, the Ministry of Education will be advising all schools of the number of units and Middle Management Allowances (MMAs) available to each of them for the 2018 school year.

This presents an opportunity for teachers to increase their income through remuneration for additional responsibilities and to participate in the structuring of responsibilities within their school.

The provisions of the Secondary Teachers' Collective Agreement require employers to consult with teaching staff prior to the allocation of these additional salary payments; however, this step in the process sometimes results in confusion. A robust allocation process requires a clear shared understanding of the level of disclosure required for consultation; the policy and consultation process being followed;

and the timeframe for decision-making.

In practice, to meet their obligations as a good state sector employer (and before any allocation is made) each school should:

- develop a regularly reviewed policy articulating the principles of how units and MMAs are to be used (e.g. any strategic goals/priorities; proportions designated for management/ curriculum/ pastoral; proportion to be fixed term; equal employment opportunity obligations etc.) and the process for application; and
- ensure teaching staff have access to sufficient information to provide meaningful feedback on the allocation of units and MMAs and are given a reasonable opportunity to communicate their views to their employer.

Genuine consultation does not necessarily require individual's names to be used for the purposes of mapping

the current unit/ MMA allocation, although we note that many schools find this useful. At minimum, the employer must advise all teaching staff of:

- the number of units/MMAs being funded by the ministry;
- how many of those units/MMAs are currently fixed term;
- whether there are any units/MMAs not currently allocated; and
- a breakdown of how the units/MMAs are allocated to particular positions within broader groupings of responsibility such as management, pastoral, and specific curriculum areas.

PPTA has a range of resources and exemplars available to support schools and branches through the allocation and consultation process. If your school is not regularly consulting with teachers regarding the allocation of units and MMAs, please contact your local field office for further advice.



Genuine consultation is required around unit and MMA allocation

Education and the election

PPTA Auckland Presents: The 2017 Election Education Debate

PPTA members in Auckland and the Far North are keeping their communities informed by inviting politicians to share their election plans for education.

If your branch or region have any election events planned let us know at news@ppta.org.nz and we will get the message out.



The 2017 Election Education Debate

Auckland

**7pm, Thursday 10 August
Western Springs College**

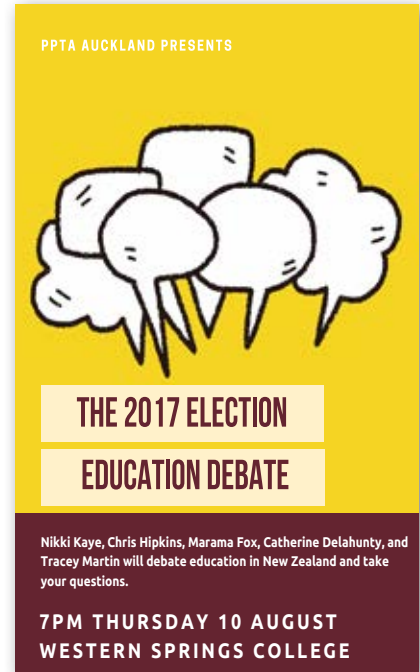
Nikki Kaye (National), Chris Hipkins (Labour), Marama Fox (Maori Party), Catherine Delahunty (Green Party) and Tracey Martin (New Zealand First) will debate education in New Zealand and take questions.

Organised by PPTA Auckland and chaired by Victoria Woodman (University of Auckland) the event is open to the public.

Upper Northland

**6.30pm, Thursday 24 August
Kaikohe Memorial Hall**

A pre-election event will be held in the far north with Winston Peters (New Zealand First) attending, along with representatives of other political parties.



The PPTA News debate page is not afraid to tackle the tough issues and we want to hear from you.

We are looking for PPTA members who are interested in writing 250 words for or against an education-related issue, with a further 100 word rebuttal to your opponent's piece.

If you have an issue you are passionate about and can make a short, sharp argument, this page is for you.

Just send your suggestions through to news@ppta.org.nz and we will get things in motion.

