

PPTA NEWS

The magazine of New Zealand secondary teachers

A commitment to staff
and student wellbeing at
Napier Girls' High School
– page 5



PPTA News



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In this issue...

Making teacher supply a priority	3	PPTA Pasifika conference	8-9
Focus on wellbeing at Napier Girls' High	5	Christchurch Girls High rebuild	10
PPTA executive elections	7	NZ really wants to talk about NCEA	13

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Making teacher supply a priority to bring out the best

New Zealand Secondary Principals' Council chair James Morris shares his thoughts on teacher supply during the launch of PPTA's Bring out the Best campaign



James Morris | NZSPC chair

One of the great privileges of working in schools is that we get to share in the success of our students.

Although it is lovely to bask in the reflected glory of outstanding achievement in sports, culture and academia it is the 'every day' success that provides me with the most satisfaction and enjoyment. Be it the student who finally is able to stand up and deliver that speech they were

initially too filled with anxiety to do; or getting their best mark yet in a test; or finally nailing a three pointer; or for some students just getting to school every day

We get to see this success every day, in small ways and extraordinary ways, we get to be part of it. If there is one thing that principals know, and parents know, and students, and researchers and even Treasury knows – the most important thing a school can do to ensure this student success is to have the best teachers. This is no hunch or 'common sense' or 'nice to have' – it is as close to a fact as we have in the complexity of education. It is the teachers that make the difference and it is the best teachers that will make the biggest difference.

And so it is hugely frustrating, beyond frustrating, perhaps a tragedy, that there are not the teachers with the skills and experience available that the students in our schools need. Now we can muddle through and find compromises but our kids and our country need much more than

compromises when it comes to the best teachers.

I am hugely optimistic and positive about the future of New Zealand education but we have got to keep our eye on what we know we need. We have to attract the best to teaching and we have to keep them there. We need the conditions that give the support for teachers to do their jobs well.

It is easy to criticise those who are not in schools but who make decisions about schools, as being out of touch with the reality of school life. To an extent this is unfair because the politicians and government officials I have interacted with appear to be working hard to make a positive difference. I do however want to emphasise the urgency with which this challenge needs to be addressed. Every hour, every day and week without the best teacher with a student is an opportunity lost – an opportunity that is not easily recovered. Hours and days and weeks and terms are flying on by. We can only bring out the best in all of our students if we make teacher supply a priority.



"We get to see this success every day, in small ways and extraordinary ways" – NZSPC chair James Morris talks about the impact of teachers on students' lives during the launch of PPTA's Bring out the Best campaign.

'The 80s called and they want their salary back'

PPTA members show their support for striking primary teachers

PPTA stood in solidarity with NZEI when primary school teachers took to the streets on 15 August.

General secretary Michael Stevenson said it was great to be a part of the association's sister union's strike.

"Despite a bitterly cold southerly wind hitting Wellington during the night, NZEI members arrived at Wellington Stadium early for the pre-march rally. Around 5000 primary and intermediate teachers, along with many supporters, were present and ready for action," he said.

"What stuck out for me from the stage were the blunt and quite often humorous placards. My favourite was 'I'm not normally a sign guy, but come on Chris'. My next favourite was, 'The 80s called and they want their salary back'."

PPTA president Jack Boyle joined Michael in sharing messages of solidarity from PPTA.

"We teachers need to feel empowered to speak out and stand up for the critical role we play in the lives of young New Zealanders. Parents and whānau need to support their schools and the people who work in them - sharing the stories about the difference teachers make.

And the government needs to support us too, ensuring that our pay and conditions allow us to bring out the best in every child," Jack said.

Members in Auckland, Canterbury, Hamilton, and Tauranga all reported great turnouts.

PPTA junior vice president Melanie Webber said there was a great feeling of solidarity at the Auckland rally with lots of music and singing. There was a great variety of speakers from principals to beginning teachers and a board of trustees chair.

Western Bay of Plenty PPTA regional chair Tania Rae had a great reception when she spoke at the Tauranga rally.

"I'm proud to be standing with you as you make a stand for an education system that works for us all - teachers, children, whānau, communities and society," she said.



Standing together – PPTA members support striking primary school teachers.

Focus on wellbeing at Napier Girls' High School

Napier Girls' High School staff and senior leaders share their secrets for promoting school wellbeing

Swimming, art, Pilates and book clubs are just some of the options for Napier Girls High School staff taking part in a scheme to promote school wellbeing.

Spurred by national concern over mental health issues for students and staff and inspired by stories of wellness programmes at other schools, Napier Girls' High School took action.

"Research shows improved staff wellbeing leads to increased student wellbeing and our senior leadership team wanted to 'fill the tank' for staff," PPTA branch chair Mandy Johnson said.

"People are our most precious resource and staff are always giving, giving, giving. This is about acknowledging what a tough job teaching is," principal Dawn Ackroyd said.

A whole-school wellness audit was conducted at the beginning of 2017, and a three-year strategic plan developed around that.

This included redefining the school values with a broad theme of Whanaungatanga/Belonging and the implementation of restorative practice.

"In 2017 we had four deputy head prefects, each with a strand of Hauora to oversee; physical – Taha tinana, mental and emotional – Taha hinengaro, social – Taha whanau, and spiritual – Taha wairua."

During professional development (PD) slots between 8.25am and 9.10am at various times of the year staff are able to choose from a range of options including swimming, seaside stroll (and coffee), art, craft, Pilates, Hooked on Books (and coffee) and foot golf. All staff have also been introduced to mindfulness.

Responsiveness to staff needs is shown through time off during derived grade examinations, late starts during occasional PD slots – especially during busy weeks such as open nights, and staff briefings being dropped to three mornings a week to allow for time to catch up before school.

"We celebrate all birthdays and there is a staff scholarship for a sabbatical. There is also lots of yummy food. No meetings take place without food," Mandy said.



From left: Napier Girls' High PPTA branch chair Mandy Johnson, deputy principal Suzanne Downs, principal Dawn Ackroyd and deputy principal Megan Mannering.

The school's board of trustees was fully in support – to the extent that the senior leadership team would dress as bunnies and distribute Easter eggs to everybody, Mandy said.

Two senior leaders, Megan Mannering and Suzanne Downs, are driving the programme and there is a wellbeing committee with diverse representation including support staff. Two staff have also been sent to a national wellbeing conference.

The focus on school wellbeing was timely in terms of linking to the NCEA review, Mandy said. The school was now looking at the number of credits being offered and where reducing them would improve staff and student workload.

Staff buy-in had been excellent, Mandy said. "People felt it was timely. Everyone has appreciated the range of measures, both the specific activities focussing on wellbeing and the changes made at a deeper structural level to reduce workload stress."

As a result of this work the school has been awarded accreditation by Investors in People, an international standard for good people management.

"Investors in People is a really good endorsement, with clear indicators of success and engagement. It explores leadership, staff induction, appraisal and engagement," Mandy said.

"We are thrilled to be awarded the Investors in People accreditation. Our people are our most precious resource. The award reflects the dedication and wonderful contribution of our staff who

make Napier Girls' High School the great school that it is," principal Dawn Ackroyd said.

Investors in People head Paul Devoy congratulated the school and said the accreditation was the sign of a great employer and a great place to work. "Napier Girls' High School should be extremely proud of their achievement," he said.

Mandy says the focus on wellbeing has enhanced relationships across different faculties. "Relationships are the glue that creates a functioning school. Staff morale is high. This is seen whenever times are tough, there are lots of volunteers to help – people are willing to go the extra mile to be involved," she said.

Mandy definitely recommends other schools take this approach and says it's great to see that many already are.

Her advice for those wanting to focus on wellbeing in the same way is to consult with and respond to staff.

"Start with a baseline analysis, an inquiry that shows what you are already doing well, and conduct a wellbeing audit. Use ERO wellbeing indicators for guidance."

Consulting with experts and evidence-based research was vital to implement the process successfully. The process also had to be resourced sufficiently, she said.

If you start with staff wellbeing, then student wellbeing will follow, Mandy said.

"It's not rocket science, just get going on it and get started!," Megan Mannering said.

Change isn't impossible, you just have to be committed

Talking to year 13 Macleans College Social studies students about teacher welfare

A group of year 13 Macleans College students' social studies project has led to a petition about teacher welfare. Jake Le Sueur, Will Taylor and Ryan Coward share their journey with PPTA News.

Q: Tell us a bit about yourselves as a group.

A: We are year 13 students at Macleans College. We are in the same social studies class and so have become close friends throughout the year, which led to us working together on one of our internal assessments. We would like the readers to know that change isn't impossible, you just have to be committed. At the beginning we all thought this was just something to do for internal credits but we have achieved much more than that.

Q: Tell us a bit about your social studies assignment. We understand it involved creating a policy you think would change New Zealand for the better.

A: The internal assessment involved us attempting to influence a policy change in regards to an issue of our choice. As a group we decided to focus our efforts on the welfare of teaching staff in New Zealand secondary schools. We had to make sure that we were reasonable as well as ambitious to make sure that the change would benefit New Zealand in both the short and long term. We want teachers to be supported universally so that they are in a position to teach to their full potential.

Q: Why did you choose the area you did?

A: We wanted to choose an issue that would impact something that would be relevant to us. Therefore, we chose to focus our efforts on teacher welfare because, as year 13 students, we understand the importance of a good education and believe teachers should have benefits added to their careers to highlight the important work that they do.

Q: Why do you think teacher welfare is so important?

A: Put simply, teacher welfare is an incredibly important concept for the



From left: Jake Le Sueur, Will Taylor and Ryan Coward want teachers to be supported universally.

reason that it is crucial that teachers are prepared to teach. Having teachers dealing with mental health issues as a result of their daily working life isn't fair for students or the teachers themselves. It is only right that teachers are fit to carry out their job on a daily basis. We are part of a school with great support systems, which we know don't exist everywhere, and this is something that needs to change.

Q: What sort of impact do you think these issues have on students?

A: School is the stepping stone between learning and moving into the real world. Most students don't actually realise how much time and effort teachers put in to make sure that their students are well and truly prepared to live out their life. However, if at any point in a student's life, a teacher hasn't been able to complete their job sufficiently, gaps in learning could put students on the back foot as they move into tertiary education or full-time employment. If teachers are more concerned about pay, welfare and themselves they won't be able to prepare for their students, meaning that students will get a lower standard of education than they deserve and that the teachers are capable of.

Q: Tell us about the petition.

A: As part of the assessment our group created a petition detailing the changes to policy we were looking to implement:

- Giving teachers a percentage of their pay for out-of-school activities such as planning, marking and school meetings.
- Offering optional psychological check-ups once a year and making sure that teachers have someone to talk to if they are stressed.
- Improving salaries for teachers, especially in Auckland, to make the job more attractive for those who are looking to enter the teaching profession.

As part of our assessment we had to prove that we attempted to change the policy so we thought that the petition was a good idea as it also helped us get the opinions of others about the issue.

Q: What sort of a response have you had so far?

A: We've collected a combined total of over 150 signatures, along with a number of really positive comments giving feedback to the work we were doing. Our petition has also been submitted to the Minister of Education and a number of other politicians.

Q: Would any of you consider becoming a teacher after you leave school? Why/why not?

A: Jake - To be honest being a teacher has never really crossed my mind as a potential career option simply down to the fact that I'm not sure how I would act in the teaching environment.

Will - Being a teacher has not crossed my mind because there is no positive association with becoming a teacher. It's all 'long hours, bad pay and too stressful'

Ryan - I considered it for a long time as I collected future career ideas but have since decided against it. I don't know how well I'd be able to handle the lifestyle of teaching.

Q: Is there anything else you would like to add?

A: The next time you or someone you know comes face to face with a teacher, simply just say thank you. Simple acts of kindness go a long way no matter the situation they occur in.

PPTA junior vice president candidates

Joe Hunter and Melanie Webber are running for office.
Look out for executive voting papers in your schools next term



Joe Hunter

Kia ora te whānau o Te Wehengarua

I'm Joe Hunter from Otago. I come from a strong family history of teaching, learning and social activism. I live in an old house by the harbour with an artist, loads of books, RNZ, a big garden and an old dog as support crew. Teaching is the most interesting and challenging work I've known. I enjoy it immensely and I'm always learning.

I am part of the team taking our claim to the negotiating table to address the crisis of teacher supply and teacher workload through our collective agreement. We have the right to fair pay and good working conditions and our students have the right to learn in well-resourced local schools. We can be proud of all the work we do to advance quality public education and social justice.

We are facing huge challenges as a profession but we also have the capacity to make a real difference – not just for the students in our classrooms but in our wider society. This is the time to work collaboratively with government. PPTA is a professional body and we need to be at the forefront of change in education.

I think it is also time to review how we work as a union; to explore effective and meaningful ways of working and leading as a collective that serves all our members well. I've been an activist at branch, regional and national levels. Now I want to share your voice and represent secondary teachers on the Presidential team as Junior Vice President of PPTA. Thank you for your support – let's bring out the best!

Mauri ora tātou!



Melanie Webber

We become teachers because we want to make a difference. We care about students, and we want to do all we can to ensure that they have the best opportunity for success. Teaching is an amazing job, but it is also an increasingly unsustainable one. Over the past year I have felt privileged to be a voice for teachers in expressing the concerns that many of us feel in the face of chronic and increasing teacher supply issues.

David Seymour likes to say “there’s a reason they’re called the teachers’ union, not the children’s union”. For me this couldn’t be further from the truth. Thanks to the strength of our collective, we remain the voice that stands up for the right for all students to a high quality public education. I am regularly reminded of this when I find myself the only practicing teacher in a room where policy that impacts not only teachers, but the students we teach, is being discussed.

We know that it is teachers that make the difference in the classroom, and yet all too often we are worn down by administrivia and continual underfunding. With these issues unresolved, an aging workforce (21% of secondary teachers are over sixty), and a decline in the number of new teachers willing to take up the mantle (34% fewer trained in 2015 compared to 2009), we are facing a significant crisis in staffing our schools.

We cannot simply stand on the beach watching the waves roll in. As a part of the presidential team, I will continue to sound the clarion call on these issues.

“Unions have always been very good to me”

After recently migrating from Fiji to teach in New Zealand Taita College science teacher Deepak Prasad has become PPTA’s 1000th new member since this time last year.

During a surprise visit by PPTA president Jack Boyle in September, Deepak said, when he saw the job advertised he thought “teaching in New Zealand is where I want to be”.



On reaching 1000 new members over the past year president Jack Boyle said “I see it as a signal that secondary teachers are really identifying with what we are doing.”

Upon getting the job Deepak, his wife and young child picked up and left Fiji “pretty much straight away” although he found the support for relocation more difficult than he expected for a specialist role like teaching. “There are a few issues with things like getting my qualifications recognised and the pay and the cost of moving is very high but I am very happy to be here... teaching”.

When asked if having PPTA regional chair Desiree Mulligan on the staff was one of the reasons he decided to join the PPTA Deepak laughed, saying “she’s very good but no, I have always been in the union. I was in the FTU (Fiji Teachers Union) and unions have always been very good to me”.

Brown, bilingual, brainy and beautiful

Teachers at a decile one Mangere secondary school share how they keep the next generation of Pasifika students engaged

“She never gave up on us. She always had high hopes for us. She would stay up late for us, she picked us up. She believed there was something within us that shined bright.”

These were just some of the ways members of the Southside Rise student panel at PPTA's 2018 PPTA Pasifika Fono described the teachers that brought out the best in them.

The theme for the fono, which took place at Auckland's Holiday Inn during the recent term break, was 'Ama Takiloa' meaning - to light the way. In leading the “Brown, bilingual, brainy and beautiful – generation B to the power of four”, workshop at the fono, PPTA members Alisi Tatafu, Katalina Ma and Frances McIntosh explained how they did just that.

All three teach at Mangere College, a decile one school in the gateway

of South Auckland. Their workshop focused on shifting thinking to a mixture of face-to-face and online learning to keep students engaged in school.

Speech professor Alisi Tatafu spoke about reaching students where they were. “They are a new type of student, they get their information from social media. So we reach them through a mix of face to face learning and online.”

Emailing was a good way of engaging with students' families and sharing their voice, but direct contact was also necessary. “You can have all the apps but you still have to have face to face time in class,” she said.

Mathematics teacher Katalina Ma said students came to Mangere College with various levels of understanding, family and community support and that all were valued equally.

She was interested in the NCEA review's call for project-based learning, which she believed could make

material more accessible. “Working collaboratively across departments, for example bringing maths into PE and other classes could make it all on one level for students.”

Science teacher Frances McIntosh has taught at Mangere College for 17 years and says it is important to share information with students in a way they can work with. “We are doing a lot of scaffolding as teachers of Pacific Island students and we are getting a lot more students through to years 12 and 13,” she said.

The skills students grow and learn to appreciate at school, were serving them well in later life, she said. “Some of our students have gone on to do medicine and they shine. Pacific Islanders make up the majority of people in South Auckland hospitals and it is wonderful, particularly for older patients, to have a doctor or nurse who can speak their language.”



“Brown, bilingual, brainy and beautiful”.
(From left): Katrina Ma, Alisi Tatafu and Frances McIntosh talk Pasifika student engagement.

Helping teachers, students and communities

Lighting the way at the 2018 PPTA Ama Takiloa Pasifika conference

Encouraging and empowering teachers to be those who light the way for their communities and students was what PPTA's 2018 Ama Takiloa Pasifika conference was all about.

The fono included a wide range of workshops and great speakers including Associate Minister of Education Jenny Salesa, Auckland councillor Fa'anānā Efeso Collins and community leader David Tua.

"The minister was able to update us on the ministry's plans for Pasifika education going forward, which was really exciting and then we had Fa'anānā Efeso Collins talk to us about his own journey in lighting the way, about how he's a really passionate advocate for Pasifika people having a voice in New Zealand" PPTA Komiti Pasifika chair Natalie Faitala said.

Mental health and peer support leader Vito Nonumalo was also singled out for his session on Pasifika mental health. "This is a really important issue for us" Natalie said, "especially with our teachers working with students in our schools that are affected by mental health and wellbeing issues".

As well as the keynote speakers there were a range of workshops covering unconscious bias, dealing with stress, effective practice for teachers, Pasifika success, making links with families and preparing students for university.

There was also a lot of discussion around the current reviews and changes in education and how PPTA was advocating for Pasifika achievement in our schools. PPTA president Jack Boyle said, "One of the proposals for this year's collective agreement negotiations is around how we can better support Māori and Pasifika community liaison roles, so having that conversation with teachers who do that work already was really helpful I think".

Both Jack and Natalie said that it appeared those who attended were really inspired. "They told me that they felt reignited, that their passions had been lit and they were ready to go back to their classrooms and give their best efforts for their students", Natalie said.



PPTA Pasifika conference attendees felt reignited and inspired.

“There were huge vibrations through the building”

Christchurch Girls' High School PPTA chair Alastair Blythe shares how his branch and management worked together to address serious quake repair health and safety issues

A strong PPTA branch and supportive management have worked together to address health and safety issues surrounding a Canterbury school rebuild.

Christchurch Girls' High School was in the unusual position of having repairs to quake damaged buildings carried out while the school was still open.

PPTA branch chair Alastair Blyth said, while physical health and safety issues were addressed around the rebuild, unforeseen mental health and safety issues had left staff and students sick, exhausted and traumatised by loud noises and vibrations reminiscent of the quakes.

Pressure from the rebuild initially became apparent in the middle of last year, Alastair said. “Poor communication meant on some days people would arrive at school to find they had to shift classrooms or offices. Staff would also be required, with little notice, to take time from their teaching to review plans and make pressing decisions about building designs and décor. They weren't given time to properly consider decisions which had long-term implications for their departments,” he said.

Staff felt the rebuild was something that had been decided between the Ministry of Education and the architects, without their involvement. The school's PPTA branch had an initial meeting and presented their issues to the principal. This led to discussions with the ministry, which agreed to fund a senior management position to take over the school's deputy principal role. This freed up the deputy principal to be a point of contact for staff with concerns and ensure someone with knowledge of the day-to-day running of a school attended the planning meetings.

“Staff began to get more regular building updates and information about what was going on. People felt much more informed,” Alastair said.

It turned out some of the government project planners had come up with ideas about when teachers worked that weren't practical. “They thought the school wasn't being used at lunchtimes and that everyone left at 3.10pm.



Repairs to quake damaged Christchurch Girls' High School were carried out while the school was still open.

Concrete drilling often began as soon as the bell went,” he said.

Further issues began this year with the reconstruction of the main part of the school; a four-story building that was set to have a floor by floor refurbishment, while the rest of the building was still in use.

The physical health and safety issues surrounding the rebuild had been addressed with the top floor isolated and scaffolding put up around it, but as the building started problems began, Alastair said.

When work started on the fourth floor, which housed the English department, that department was relocated, but classes continued on the first three floors.

“On the third floor,” they could hear things regularly being dropped onto the ceiling above them. There were huge vibrations through the whole building. We had kids still recovering from earthquake trauma who were getting agitated and teachers were stressed and upset too.”

Some staff began taking their classes to any other part of the school that was free to ease the stress on their students, Alastair said.

Staff on the third floor also began getting sick because of the dust in the air. “They were getting sinus and eye infections and suffering breathing difficulties, to the point where some sought medical advice.”

When it became apparent building was taking a heavy toll on staff working in close proximity, the branch carried out an informal survey. When that showed many staff were suffering ill health, the principal and board were informed. “They responded immediately. They realised it was not a good situation.”

At the suggestion of the school's PPTA field officer Blair O'Brien, they conducted an in-depth health and safety audit. An auditor spoke with around 40 staff, school management, contractors, project managers and the ministry. “They wrote up a comprehensive report which showed that, while most physical health and safety issues had been taken into account, what hadn't been was the mental wellbeing of the staff and students.”

Following the result of this, and the discovery that significant invasive groundwork was to take well in excess of the initial planned timeframe, the work on the site has been shut down until the ministry can safely move forward in a way that allows the school to keep functioning while maintaining the health and safety of everyone involved.

Alastair's advice for members who find themselves in similar situations is that there is strength in numbers. Branch meetings provided a valuable forum for members to freely express their concerns, to raise the awareness of their colleagues about how they were being impacted, and to be reassured that they weren't the only ones with health concerns. Many of the solutions to the issues were identified by branch members and passed on to the school's managers.

The outcome of working with management and conducting the health and safety audit was a great result for staff and students, Alastair said.

“It means teachers are able to focus back on their jobs without dealing with the stress and health impacts of the rebuild. Things have really settled down now, people are able to focus on teaching and learning again.”

Teachers make powerful contribution during quakes

The short and long term effects of teachers as first responders

Teachers in Canterbury made a powerful contribution to supporting children and their families during the devastating earthquakes in 2011. Around 10,000 education staff became first responders for Christchurch's 150,000 school students. Not one child was injured on school grounds during the civil emergency, which caused severe damage around the city, killing 185 people and injuring many others.

A recent report into those efforts and their on-going impacts for teachers has resulted in invaluable insights and practical recommendations according to University of Canterbury College of Education, Health & Human Development senior lecturer Dr Veronica O'Toole.

Following the earthquake, Dr O'Toole interviewed 20 teachers about their experiences.

Teachers called on all their skills to attend to children's safety, Dr O'Toole says. "For all the teachers I interviewed, their priority was making sure they did not show their fear to prevent any further distress for the children and students in their care. They remained on duty until the last child was reunited with their caregivers."

In the report Christchurch teachers'

emotion regulation, goals and strategies for their immediate fear in the first moments of the earthquake are compared internationally to that of first responders.

According to Dr O'Toole, "strategies teachers normally use to present a calm and professional image underpinned the regulation of these teachers' fears at the time of the earthquake".

However, the lasting effects for teachers may be less positive. The report found that while some emotion regulation strategies may be effective in the moment, they can be less suitable longer term.

"Experiencing intense fear at the time of a trauma can have negative emotional impacts in both professional and untrained first responders later on", she says. In addition to this, on-going stressors related to increased job demands even in the normal course of events can lead to teacher burnout and attrition. "Although this may be moderated by teachers' positive emotions and love of their work, when occurring simultaneously with negative emotions – which was also evident in the Christchurch teachers – their internal skills and resources can become depleted over time, leading to emotional exhaustion and burnout."

The findings of this research are an important reminder of the significant role played by teachers during the earthquake and throughout the prolonged aftershock sequence, Dr O'Toole says.



Photo credit: Lloyd Morgan CC-BY-SA 2.0

Teachers played an important role during the Canterbury quakes and aftershock sequence.

Dr O'Toole's suggestions for teachers include:

- During daily reflections, try taking a different perspective of events or try changing thoughts from a negative to a positive interpretation. Then review the emotional response to the revised thoughts. This cognitive reappraisal can be practised and learned as part of improving our emotional lives and reducing emotional exhaustion.
- In disaster planning, under guidance, first thoughts (cognitive appraisal) and revised thoughts (cognitive reappraisal) could be included in rehearsals and drills, to anticipate the presence of emotions in the immediate and prolonged aftermath.
- Finally, the more aware that government and management can be of the potential for a hometown natural disaster to increase job demands and contribute to teachers' emotional exhaustion and burnout, the better the support that can be given to teachers.

Other recommendations from the research include:

- consideration of a social emotional learning (SEL) follow-up programme for first responder teachers
- incorporating learning more about emotions and research-informed practical skills to manage teachers' on-going emotions, health and wellbeing post-disaster.

Standing united in West Virginia

Talking to West Virginia Education Association president Dale Lee about teacher strikes and government neglect

West Virginia Education Association (WVEA) president Dale Lee played an integral part in the teacher strikes that put an end to years of government neglect. He speaks to PPTA News before attending our 2018 annual conference.

Q: Tell us a bit about yourself.

A: This is my 11th year as president of the West Virginia Education Association (WVEA), after 22 years of teaching high school special education math. I'm a lifelong resident of West Virginia and a second generation public school teacher; my daughter is a 3rd generation teacher.

Q: What drew you to the union movement?

A: Growing up in southern West Virginia as a state with a rich history within the labor movement, I have union roots. I have always wanted to make a difference for our members and the students of West Virginia. I was a third year teacher in 1990 when West Virginia had its first teacher strike. I was outspoken during the strike and then was elected as a local president.

Q: Tell us about your involvement in the West Virginia teacher strike and the Red for Ed movement.

A: After years of neglect and broken political promises, our educators (teachers and service professionals) had enough. Our locals began getting support through letters from their local boards of education and through educating the public and the parents by wearing Red for Ed on Wednesdays. After a small pay raise bill passed our Legislature and a punitive measure in our health insurance was initiated, four of our southern counties decided to take a day of action. The WVEA, along with the other organizations, soon called for a vote to allow us to call a statewide work action. In preparation, our members worked with community organizations, including churches, to ensure that children would be cared for and fed during the work action. This was especially important in West Virginia, with so much of the population living in poverty and relying on federally-funded



Dale Lee was the voice of educators during the nine day West Virginia teacher strikes.

school lunches to support child nutrition. Knowing we had the support of the entire education community and the public allowed us to be successful at the end of the nine days. I was blessed to be the voice of our educators and negotiate with the governor and our Legislature. From the national level, the National Education Association (NEA) was with us every step of the way helping us with staff and resources. The NEA president, vice president, and secretary-treasurer came to West Virginia for support.

Q: Obviously there are too many big issues happening in education in the US to canvass properly in a simple Q and A, but we would love to hear your thoughts on the following:

The Janus vs AFSCME supreme court decision to deny unions the right to charge "fair share fees" (what we would call bargaining fees)?

A: This US Supreme Court decision is simply an attempt to destroy our unions and weaken public education in the United States. The Republican right wing knows the NEA is a strong advocate for our members and our students. With West Virginia being a Right to Work state (a statute that undermines workers' power to organize), it doesn't affect us directly. It is telling that the six states that had a work action the past year are all Right to Work states

The challenges around working with Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos.

A: Having a Secretary of Education who has no public school background shows the attempt by this president's

administration to destroy our public schools. NEA fights so that every student, regardless of where that student lives, receives and excellent education and can pursue their dreams.

The issue of firearms in schools and suggestions of arming teachers.

A: Schools should be a safe haven for our students. I am against arming teachers as we should be looking at serious gun control laws and a better mental health service. Our students from Parkland High School and beyond have shown us all the power of uniting and speaking out.

Charter school Legislation.

A: West Virginia does not have charter schools due to WVEA successful challenges to several legislative attempts to allow charter schools. Our focus should be in providing a great quality public education for ALL students, not just a chosen few.

Q: What advice do you have for New Zealand educators going forward?

A: I am very proud that West Virginia educators showed the world what can happen when you stand united and speak in a loud voice for our profession and our students. My advice would be to establish your goals and continue to speak in a unified voice. Building partnerships with parents, students and community organizations for the common goal of great public schools reaps results. At the global level, with Education International, our solidarity fortifies us for further progress.

New Zealand really wants to talk about NCEA

Nanotechnologist and science teacher Dr Michelle Dickinson (aka Nanogirl) is a member of the NCEA review Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG). She shares her experience with PPTA News

Q: Why did you agree to go on the NCEA Ministerial Advisory Group? What do you think that you bring to it?

A: I am passionate about equity in education, having seen first hand the challenges that students from a diverse range of backgrounds had in achieving NCEA credits during my time as an engineering academic at The University of Auckland. From this experience I founded and run a social enterprise that works with schools around the country as well as in Asia, Europe and the Middle East, helping teach science to students in schools and providing PD to teachers in fields including science, engineering, coding and robotics.

Obviously I bring my professional and academic experience, and what I have learned working with teachers in schools. Beyond that I think my personal learning journey brings a valuable perspective. I come from a low socio-economic background. I failed year 13. From that less-than-ideal start, I achieved a PhD in engineering and have worked around the world at the cutting edge of my field.

Q: What do you think the main strengths and weaknesses of NCEA at present are? How does it compare to the assessment system when you were at school?

A: NCEA is one of the most flexible systems in the world. It is able to provide a rich learning environment for a wide and diverse range of students. NCEA is much better than the rigid system I grew up under where I was only allowed to study three subjects with one three hour exam for each subject at the end of two years of intense study.

No system is perfect. NCEA is one of the only systems in the world that gives major assessments to students three years in a row. This can lead to high workload stress as both students and teachers work towards gaining large volumes of credits.

Q: How did the group come up with the six 'big opportunities'?

A: We were asked to come up with a document that was big and bold and would help ignite public conversation around NCEA. We were given six key principles to work with: Wellbeing, Inclusion, Equity, Coherence, Pathways



Dr Michelle Dickinson (aka Nanogirl).

and Credibility. With these in mind we brainstormed six big ideas for NCEA we thought would be bold and innovative enough to spark conversations around how people might address some of the challenges around these principles.

Q: What has struck you about the feedback to the big opportunities you've received so far?

A: That New Zealand really wants to talk about this. There has been an amazing amount of feedback from a wide range of New Zealanders who have found a place to voice their opinions. I think the opportunities have given them permission to say what they have been thinking behind closed doors, and feel empowered that their voice will be heard by the MAG and the ministry.

Q: What do you think about concerns from teachers and principals that there hasn't been enough opportunity for their expert opinion to be heard?

A: I think any process that may result in change needs to hear from voices both inside and outside the system. Principals and teachers have been engaged through regional workshops, focus groups, meetings, surveys and online submissions. We also have incredible principals and teachers both in the MAG, the reference group and now in the newly created Professional Advisory Group (PAG) who have brought great insights into some of the system's constraints. One of the things I love

most about being in the MAG is reading through submissions from the public. This has given us honest and useful insights into teachers' thoughts and ideas around NCEA.

Q: How have you balanced the views of students, teachers and the 'end users' of the qualification, such as tertiary and employers?

A: We have ensured voices from all of these groups have been represented both in our public voice and through conversations with the advisory and reference groups. Balancing these views is challenging at times as each group has its own bias around the NCEA system, so we have continually returned to reflecting on the outcomes around teaching and learning as well as opportunities and pathways for the student.

Q: What do you think the relationship should be between a curriculum and a qualification system?

A: I think any innovation in education needs to consider curriculum, pedagogy and assessment as well as the resultant qualification. My personal learning journey - from failing high school to completing my doctoral studies has shaped my thinking here a great deal. I believe each student has their own learning journey and that a great learning pathway should be adaptable and allow a level of flexibility as students discover their strengths.

What happens when your school has a falling roll?

Advice from PPTA's intrepid field officers on surplus staffing

Janice was elected branch chair of her provincial co-ed school at the beginning of this year. Several times during the year the principal had made a number of unfortunate comments about staff needing to work harder or their jobs would be on the line if the roll dropped.

PPTA members approached Janice asking what their rights were if the roll fell.

Janice approached the principal who was not forthcoming, however she checked the Secondary Teachers' Collective Agreement and found part 3.9 and appendix H (part 2.13 and appendix 5 in the Area School Teachers' Collective Agreement). The collective agreement provisions outlined the process and criteria if a school was to lose staffing. She also checked with her local field officer and found the provisional staffing entitlements generally arrived in schools mid to late September. The principal then has to decide whether to initiate the surplus staffing process. Three young staff had approached Janice. They all had been appointed on fixed-term agreements that finished at the end of the school year. They asked Janice if their positions would be automatically 'rolled over'. Janice thought not but checked with the field office. Their advice was that the surplus staffing provisions did not apply to fixed-term appointments, nor do fixed-term appointments have an automatic right to any vacancy at the school. They also advised the teachers to check the legality of their fixed-term positions with their field officer. Another older teacher saw Janice and said he would be happy to take a voluntary retirement option if they were offered. Janice advised her colleague to contact the field office for further advice.

She then approached the principal on behalf of the branch to check the process. The principal said they had to lose four full-time teachers, but because three staff members were non-permanent and their positions expired at the end of the year, he would only have to find one more position to



Your collective agreement has a number of provisions if your school has a falling roll.

manage the required reduction. He further indicated that he was keen to keep the Te Reo teacher who held one of the fixed-term positions.

The principal also hoped some permanent staff members would retire or move on so he could manage the required reduction by attrition. He said he would not tell the staff yet and asked Janice to keep their conversation confidential. If he needed to he would offer the voluntary options later in term four, if nobody retired or moved on.

Janice was not happy with this and rang the field office.

The advice she got was that if the school was required to reduce staffing as a result of the provisional staffing notice then the employer must inform staff. She was also told the surplus staffing process needed to be concluded by 27 November to allow for the two months' notice period. This is because the disestablishment of positions takes effect from 28 January.

If staffing reductions cannot be fully met by attrition and voluntary options then any remaining reduction is carried out by the board undertaking a detailed curriculum and pastoral

needs assessment (CAPNA) of the school. People who lose their positions through this process have a range of surplus staffing options available to them, which are again set out in the relevant collective agreements. If this happens PPTA will appoint a surplus staffing nominee to the school. They are a nominee of PPTA's national executive and their presence is to ensure the collective agreement provisions are followed. Janice felt confident to report to the branch that the process was about to start and arranged for the field officer to explain the process in more detail.

While surplus staffing can be a stressful and difficult situation to manage, delaying the start of the process can make things worse.

The purpose of the collective agreement provisions is to ensure that any reductions in staffing and units are handled with procedures that are; nationally agreed, seen to be fair, objective and free from personal prejudice and which protect the rights of the teacher(s) concerned. Our advice to branches or members who have any concerns or questions about surplus staffing matters is that they contact their local field office.

Students' education the casualty of day reliever shortages

Classes are being merged or cancelled and seniors left unsupervised as schools struggle to address a shortage of day relief teachers

There have been growing expressions of concern from secondary teachers and principals about the shortage of day relievers.

A recent PPTA survey of a random sample of members and a separate short survey of a group of representative schools identifies some of the impacts of this shortage.

The survey indicated that, even with help from their teaching staff, schools still have to make some educationally difficult compromises to cope with the shortage of relievers.

Apart from agreeing internal cover, common responses were to merge classes into larger ones and to leave senior classes unsupervised. In some cases schools have had to cancel classes and send students home and there are reports of schools closing for a day because of the relief teacher shortage.

There is no doubt that this situation is failing our students. Each time classes are merged, or an unqualified person fronts a class, or schools have to send them home, or preparation time is cut short students' education is the causality.

It is also failing our teachers. At times when workloads are one of the main drivers out of teaching and deterrent to entry to teaching additional workload covering relief classes just makes the burden more unmanageable.

Teachers can only be asked to exceed their weekly maximum contact hours (20 for full-time teachers, less any additional time allowances) if there is a genuine reason, and if so they may choose to agree to do that in exchange for an agreed compensatory mechanism. Use of teachers for day relief then should be a very rare thing, but an absence of any day relievers would constitute a genuine reason a school would ask teachers to forgo a non-contact period in exchange and agree a compensatory mechanism.

The feedback from 440 teachers revealed that more than half had agreed to undertake day relief in the first four weeks of term 3 because of the shortage of day relievers.

In most cases these teachers had to give up preparation time for their own classes to cover classes whose teacher was absent.

The day reliever shortage is a reflection of the overall shortage of secondary teachers.

PPTA estimates that over 200 secondary teachers deferred their retirement at the end of 2017 because there are no teachers to replace them. This has further fuelled the shortage of day reliving teachers this year, alongside the use of day relief teachers to plug the more than 800 permanent and long term vacancies secondary schools have indicated they have not been able to fill with full-time teachers.

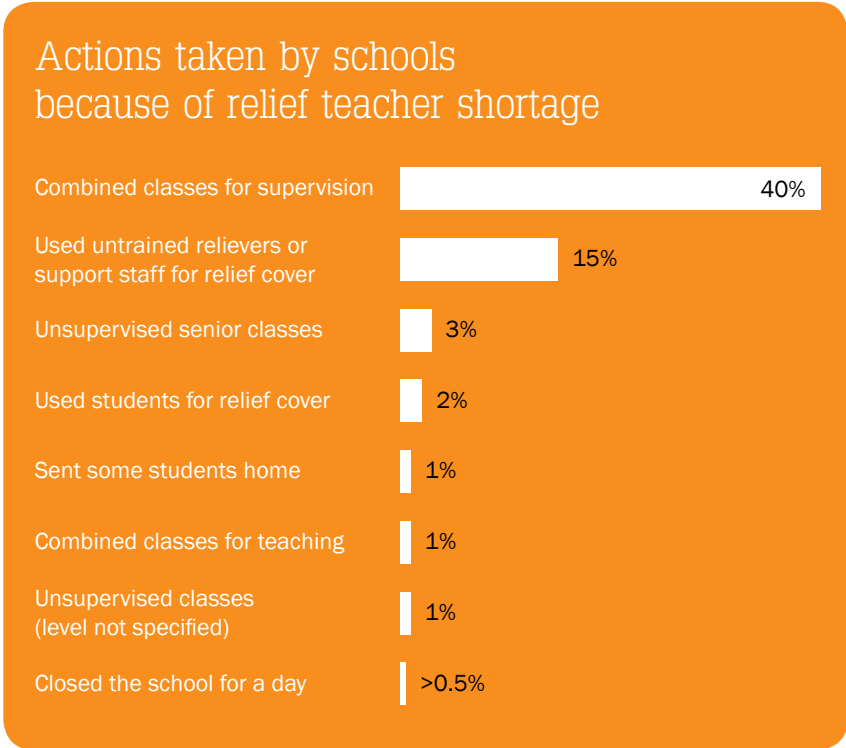
The day relief problem is not a surprise to PPTA. Annually the association surveys all secondary and composite school principals on the state of their teacher supply. The report from this year's survey highlighted the average number of day relievers per school was continuing on a downwards trend. The average of 7.1 relievers available per school was the lowest recorded in these surveys, which have run since 1996.

Most schools reported between three and five relievers available to them. One in six had two or fewer relievers available, including one in 12 that had none.

The depletion of the day relief pool is an early and ongoing warning sign of significant secondary teacher shortages. It was an issue raised by principals in 2016 when the Joint Working Group on Secondary Teacher Supply investigated the problems of supply for secondary schools, which observed that "there are areas of concern. These include retention of middle leaders, new teachers and relief teachers, as well as the potential medium term impact of a significantly ageing workforce."

The report noted that principals then were finding it increasingly difficult to recruit relieving teachers, particularly in the Auckland region. It noted that some of this was due to the number of day relievers recruited into permanent and fixed-term roles.

PPTA has a claim in the current STCA negotiations for an increase to the maximum payment possible for day relievers. At the time of writing the ministry had made no offer.



Secondary Teachers' Collective Agreement update

An update on ongoing STCA discussions with the Ministry of Education

After PPTA's recent paid union meetings, branches contributed other claims for the association's national executive to consider.

At its meeting on 2 August executive considered those claims and made a decision on which would be featured in the final claim Secondary Teachers Collective Agreement (STCA) claim to be presented to the Ministry of Education. PPTA members can access the final claim on the member's area of ppta.org.nz.

On August 7 PPTA's negotiating team began discussions with the ministry regarding the STCA. So far there has been six days of discussions with the ministry, with further meetings to continue into September.

At these meetings the PPTA team presented all the relevant background

information and support material to substantiate our claims.

Representatives on the PPTA negotiating team presented examples of how the declining supply of secondary teachers and the workload pressures affect members and the students they teach. The ministry has acknowledged the power these

real life experiences have upon their understanding of the issues.

Over the coming weeks video updates will continue to be put up on our members' only Facebook group. Members can find this page by searching "PPTA members – bring out the best" or through the members' only section of the PPTA website.



PPTA's -2018 negotiating team (from left): Joe Hunter, Jen Dive, Doug Clark, Powhiri Rika-Heke, Derek Morris, Ellen Curnow, Rob Torr and Graham Smith.

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If you are a member there is also a number of interest group email newsletters you can sign up for. These include, Te Huarahi Panui, PPTA Women's Network Newsletter, NETs Bulletin, Pasifika Newsletter, NZSPC Newsletter, PPTA Rainbow Network Newsletter and the Professional Issues Update, among others. Just go to ppta.org.nz and look for 'newsletters'

Keep an eye out for the results of our PPTA member communications survey in the next issue of the PPTA News.

