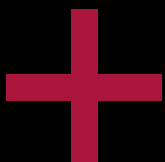


June 2022  
Volume 37, Number 2



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A game of cricket to warm up for a day's work



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# EDITORIAL

Liz Hawes EDITOR



**EVERY FIVE-YEAR-OLD WANTS** to go to school. They can't wait to get there and paint pictures, make things, read books and count things. They acquire a new teacher and inherit a whole group of new friends. They play, have fun, squeal loudly, and run. School is bliss.

They may not realise when they are five, but school is also where they will gain the knowledge and learn the skills to be successful in life. These skills include literacy and numeracy; building a knowledge base about living and working in their world; thinking for themselves; communicating with others; getting on with others; and collaborating and sharing with others. It is their human right to be educated at school – a highly valued right which many have fought hard to achieve.

If you accept the argument that what you learn at school sets you up for life, then you might also argue that to be successful in life, you must attend school. After all you can't learn what schools teach if you are not there. There is a high correlation between attendance and achievement at school.

According to current reports at least 30 per cent of young people across the country are missing from school right now. Why?

It would be easy to blame the pandemic. After all, we are battling the highly contagious Omicron variant right now with tens of thousands of cases every day. That would explain a big number of school absences, but not all of them because school attendance rates have been sliding since 2013, well before the pandemic arrived. In fact, between 2015 and 2019 the percentage of students regularly attending school fell 11.8 percentage points.

Some will say the reasons for school non-attendance are just too complex to either tease out or generalize from. That too may be true, but the real question is whether we are prepared to tackle the problem.

The Government certainly is and has had parliament's education and workforce committee investigating school non-attendance since last year. In April, the committee released their findings. The findings were the result of examining submissions from several sources including the Ministry of Education, the Office of the Children's Commissioner, the New Zealand College of Clinical Psychologists, principals, students, families, and carefully analysing the effects of the pandemic. They are compelling and have prompted the Minister of Education to inject \$88 million into fixing the problem.

The findings fall broadly into four categories. They relate to the complexity of family circumstances outside of school, students themselves, schools, including the ability of neurodiverse and students with disabilities to enrol in schools and the pandemic.

The investigation confirmed that the complexity of family circumstances was a factor and could be described variously as

socio-economic circumstances, health and mental health issues, housing and family transience. These are loosely described as economic and social issues over which a school has no control yet can impact seriously on student school attendance. Solutions cannot be found within the school or even within the Ministry of Education. They cannot easily be resolved by Government either without a keen focus on social and housing inequities, poverty, family violence and mental health. These are tough problems. The gap between the wealthy and the poor is now a massive gulch and the group struggling with the effects of poverty is growing. Many see no way out. Mental health issues thrive when life is reduced to how we survive till tomorrow. School attendance is unlikely to be a top priority for these families and even if it was, they would struggle to pay for school uniforms, books, stationery and transporting their children to school.

That said there is also an element of parentally sanctioned absenteeism where parents deliberately keep children at home or take them on extended holidays during school term time.

School inclusiveness is another issue. Whilst it is highly unlikely that any principal would refuse an enrolment just because a student is neurodiverse or has a disability, schools do need appropriate resources, specialist help, and learning supports to provide the education such students need. For decades school principals have been advocating for increased support so they can cater for all students. Most agree that the level of support they currently have is woefully inadequate.

Further, schools have been critical of the Ministry attendance service which many find ineffective. Most agree that a localized service would be preferable provided it is adequately funded.

What schools can take responsibility for though is the school culture, the kind of education they are providing and the way they deliver the curriculum. Feedback from students suggests that in some cases schools could do better. They have suggested schools can become toxic places when bullying is not checked which affects students mentally and emotionally and can lead to dropping out of school. They say schools should take a holistic view and recognize the different circumstances students are in, rather than ignoring the social and emotional factors that affect them every day. Students also referred to the importance of building strong and healthy relationships with teachers which brings greater understanding and more likelihood of student engagement and school attendance.

The five-year-olds probably can't fix all the social, financial and health inequity issues but I suggest a small portion of the \$88 million be allocated to asking them what they think would keep school the most exciting fun-filled place for everyone to go to every day. They might just surprise us.

# PRESIDENT'S PEN

## The Post-Covid Challenge – Curriculum and Change Leadership

Cherie Taylor-Patel NATIONAL PRESIDENT, NEW ZEALAND PRINCIPALS' FEDERATION



**COMING FROM 'TE** Wai-o-nui o Tirewa', the great forest of Tirewa, better known as the Waitakere Ranges in West Auckland, I have often reflected upon what it is that makes this place so special to me. It is my turangawaewae and the place I call home. It is also an intricate, complex ecosystem that is sustained because of the inter-relationships within it. As an eco-system, it works because a huge range of different plants, shrubs and trees co-exist, creating multiple layers of flora and fauna that makes it distinctly special. When in balance, every tree thrives and the result is a stunning environment that people respond to on many different levels.

*Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* and the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) is another eco-system of different curriculum areas that are interrelated through the values, key competencies, concepts and content that teachers weave through every subject area. It has a key role in supporting students to become engaged, motivated, active, life-long learners. Like the trees of the Tirewa forest, children are all different. They are not like a forest of pines with predetermined narrow futures.

### The complexity of balance

In the 1990s, every year for nearly a decade, a new curriculum document was implemented. These were dense, with many strands, achievement outcomes and an expectation that all strands and achievement objectives would be taught. How to manage the balance of coverage and student mastery was a dilemma.

In the early 2000's the curriculum documents were revisited and condensed into the NZC – a curriculum framework. Known as one of the least prescriptive curriculums in the OECD, New Zealand educators valued the flexibility and creativity the curriculum framework afforded teachers to plan and deliver curriculum relevant for their local context.

In 2009, with a change of government came a change in education ideology. The 'National Standards' era saw literacy and numeracy results become high-stakes drivers that narrowed the curriculum and our definitions of success in learning. Success in literacy and numeracy was the goal, but student achievement outcomes did not improve.

Metaphorically, while the forest of pines grew, opportunities to nurture and grow a native forest declined and many students, whose talents were not primarily in literacy and numeracy were diminished and their strengths, achievements and aspirations were under-valued. Not only did the forest of pines fail to achieve success with a singular and narrow focus, as measured by OECD PISA test results, neither did the native forest. Declining student achievement trends were also seen in other countries that had

adopted the 'Global Education Reform' ideology.

### To reform or refresh?

In 2017 our new Minister of Education announced that New Zealand would no longer be pursuing National Standards as the predominant measure of success for students, for schools and for the system. For the first time since 2009, New Zealand school leaders could consider and prioritize what a balanced curriculum might be.

In 2020, it was announced that *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* and the New Zealand Curriculum would be updated. In addition to having the opportunity to develop a balanced curriculum approach, the introduction of the *Aotearoa New Zealand Histories* curriculum has enabled leaders to consider how we might localize our curriculum content, to know, learn and teach New Zealand history.

Alongside the work being done on the *New Zealand Histories* curriculum, the 'Curriculum Refresh' workstream was begun. How to ensure equitable outcomes for all students, with a focus on well-being, identities, languages and culture were key drivers for this work. Research findings suggested we needed to identify key concepts in each curriculum area that all students would be taught, so phases of learning would be more consistent and systemic.

The first two curriculum areas chosen to refresh were literacy and mathematics. Initial timelines for the roll-out of the 'Curriculum Refresh' have been delayed by COVID. But, as we look to create 'new normals' in our schools, the review and refresh of curriculum priorities is now our focus. Decisions leaders make for the future will impact every learner, at every level.

High quality teaching and learning in every classroom is our core business, our purpose and our legacy. If we want every student to flourish like a beautiful, diverse native forest, we need to be clear we are not here to grow a forest of pines.

So, what are the challenges being presented by the Curriculum Refresh that school leaders need to consider? How are we going to achieve equity and excellence in education, as 'leaders of learning' in *Aotearoa* in 2022?

### The challenge and the opportunity:

Simply put, as leaders our job is to support our teachers, staff, students and parents through a change process. Current curriculum documents, content and planning needs to be reviewed and aligned to

- a. Key concepts deemed essential to teach, in literacy and mathematics



- b. A localized curriculum focus and
- c. Incorporating local Māori histories
- d. Where our students are 'at' in their learning and wellbeing, after a disrupted two years of pandemic

What we teach needs to have purpose and relevance for our learners. It needs to start from where students are at and sequentially scaffold the learner so success is an everyday event.

But, learning also needs to be engaging, motivating and inspiring. What we teach can be the spark that ignites a passion for learning and a catalyst for future careers, aspirations, dreams and goals. Curriculum content can strengthen students' sense of self, identity, culture and language. It can build understanding of connection, community and whanaungatanga. As Dr. Hana O'Regan has said *'We've got an incredible opportunity in front of us . . . within the education system and as a community to grow up as a country, to stand up as a country, and be brave enough to really, truly understand who we are.'*

Through curriculum, powerful, rich, authentic learning experiences can unleash learners' potential. Students can be encouraged to explore, debate, wonder and critique, to make sense of our world as local, national and global citizens.

As leaders, our immediate challenge is how to lead a change process in curriculum, while also establishing 'new norms' and reconnecting with staff, students and whānau in a pandemic that is not yet over.

Longer term, this change process gives us a unique opportunity to personalize students' learning. We need to start from where students are at, work out what is needed to make progress to pass recognized milestones, at a pace that is right for them. 'Ngā whakapiringatanga' is about creating optimum conditions for learning. How we lead the change management process to refresh schools' curriculum is like creating the perfect conditions for a forest to thrive.

### Leading 'the best school years ever':

As we 'refresh' and reprioritize our local curriculum, we also need to rethink pre-COVID achievement benchmarks we traditionally have used to define success. Students will achieve these benchmarks, but the timeframes will be different. There is opportunity to redefine and measure success in learning in different ways, to better reflect what we value. If the 'curriculum refresh' is designed to improve equity of outcomes in achievement, it is school leaders who are the key to making this a reality.

These pandemic years have been like no others in our living memory. Collectively, as leaders, we need to ensure that in 50 years time, when this cohort of learners reflects on their time at school after 'the COVID pandemic of 2020 to 2022', they remember them as 'the best school years ever'.

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# MANAGING SAFETY SHOULD BE SIMPLE

If you're anything like me there are a few things in life that can sit on the TO DO list for some time . . . you know it needs to be done, but the thought of it is either too daunting, or the mountain just seems too big to climb. Maybe it's beginning an exercise regime, starting a diet, or writing a will.

For many schools (and other organisations), setting up a proper system to manage safety, hazards and risks can be one of those daunting TO DO items. You might currently have a paper based system that you're justifying to yourself serves the purpose, but the reality is that it's not really effective, and doesn't actually bring any real benefits to the school. It's a box ticking exercise, and unfortunately if (when) things go wrong, box ticking just doesn't cut the mustard when it comes to showing the measures taken to manage risks and prevent accidents.

## Visibility

An effective incident and issue reporting system is critical for the management team to know what is happening at the "coal face". The key requirements of an effective reporting system are simplicity of use (i.e. online), a no blame culture, and positive feedback for staff after they submit reports into the system. If these requirements are met, staff will respond accordingly and significantly increased reporting will follow, providing a level of visibility that was probably not present before.

## Improving Safety

Obviously the ultimate goal of any Safety Management System is to improve safety and reduce risk/accidents. No computer system can do this alone unfortunately, and managing safety will always requires common sense decision making by humans. However, a good Safety Management System can assist greatly by providing key information in an easy to access format.

## Peace of Mind

The reality of life is that whenever humans are involved there will always be risk and accidents. We can never reduce all risk, and in some cases it is not actually wise to do so as risk can provide valuable learning opportunities for adults and children alike. However, **managing the risk** is where we can often do better.

Knowing you have managed your schools risks to the best of your ability will provide peace of mind, so that if (when) an incident or accident does occur, you have the documentation recorded and readily accessible to show the mitigating actions that have been put in place to attempt to control the risks.

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# TEACHING COUNCIL'S NEW ITE REQUIREMENTS



Cathrin Jordan & Susan Fogarty | TEACHING COUNCIL | MATATŪ AOTEAROA

Initial Teacher Education (ITE) plays a pivotal role in ensuring our teaching workforce is well-prepared to meet the needs of diverse learners and their whānau/families and communities. Our ITE system is on a multi-year voyage of change.

**WE KNOW THAT** Principals care intimately about getting this right and supporting the development of the next generation of teachers. Principals have been closely involved in the Council's ITE strategy. We are committed to finding new ways to have Principals partner in this work as we progress the next phase of change.

## Foundation of the whare

One of the most important aspects of developing and nurturing ITE programmes for future teachers, is ensuring a Te Tiriti led, values-based ITE strategy using Te Tiriti o Waitangi to provide a framework of leadership capability, growth, and development for Kaiako/teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Council is seeking to build an education system that supports Māori to enjoy and achieve educational success as Māori, and allows Kaiako/teachers to develop their teaching skills in Aotearoa for all the communities they serve. With this in mind, it is the role of the Council, as kaitiaki for the whare of the profession, to ensure these foundations are well built and can hold up the whare of the profession. Weaving Te Tiriti, tikanga Māori and kaiako/teacher voices into Council processes is critical to the success of ITE programmes.

The Council whare is held up by ngā pou o te whare | the pillars of the house, which represent the work needed for a strong and effective profession. The four central pou represent the values of the teaching profession and the Council:

- Whakamana – empowering all learners to reach their highest potential by providing high-quality teaching and leadership
- Manaakitanga – creating a welcoming, caring, and creative learning environment where everyone is treated with respect and dignity
- Pono – showing integrity by acting in ways that are fair, honest, ethical, and just
- Whanaungatanga – engaging in positive and collaborative relationships with our learners, their families and whānau, our colleagues, and the wider community.

These values/ngā uara, which the Council adopted from the teaching profession, underpin the *Code/Ngā Tikanga Matatika* and the *Standards/Ngā Paerewa* and clearly articulate the

expectations and aspirations of the teaching profession.

The six other pou in the whare represent our work to support the teaching profession and also underpin ITE programmes allowing the Council to take a more holistic approach to programmes under development, including:

- Pou Aro Whakamua – future direction of teaching
- Pou Whai Rēhitanga – becoming registered and certificated as a teacher
- Pou Tikanga Matatika me nga Paerewa – the Code and Standards
- Pou Here Tōmua – establishing and maintaining standards for ITE and undertaking ITE programme approvals
- Pou Matatika – high standards of ethical behaviour
- Pou Mataara – high quality teaching practice.

The first stage of our ITE journey has been the development of new ITE Programme Approval, Monitoring and Review Requirements (ITE Requirements). The new ITE Requirements are the primary means by which the Council can shape a future focused ITE system. They set the direction for ITE programme design and delivery, as well as ITE student selection and graduate outcomes.

Introducing these new ITE Requirements has been a major milestone, but it will take time for them to have an impact on the education system. ITE providers have had to develop new programmes to meet these ITE Requirements, and – in many cases, – student teachers are just entering those new programmes now. It will take two or three years before many new teachers will be graduating under the new ITE Requirements.

The new ITE Requirements were launched in 2019, following a period of intensive engagement from 2016 with key stakeholders, including ITE professionals, principals, and teachers. The main shifts in the new ITE Requirements are:

- flexibility – allowing providers to prioritise their programme design and assessment decisions in the context of their local community and ITE partnerships
- requiring authentic, reciprocal partnerships – with local teachers, iwi, and community organisations
- culminating in integrative assessments against the Standards | Ngā Paerewa to demonstrate the weaving together of all the learning



- increased emphasis on development of student teachers' capability in te reo Māori

We want to make sure our newly qualified teachers are well equipped to meet the learning needs of their students when they start teaching, but at the same time we need to acknowledge that they will continue their learning and development throughout their careers which will see their skills, knowledge and practice develop over time.

### Supporting the readiness of newly graduated teachers

There is an important ongoing debate about the 'readiness' of new teachers to teach from day one. One expectation is that new teachers need to be completely ready to teach from the first day of their professional careers. While the Council aims to have new teachers ready to demonstrate core teaching skills when they start teaching, we know new (and all) teachers have an ongoing journey to build skills and experience.

Like anyone in an unfamiliar whare, new teachers who have only just entered the whare will need time to feel comfortable and begin to value it as their space and place to see where things are and what they mean; the tekoteko carved figure at the top of the ridgeline, the pou supporting the building and the tukutuku panels.

Within the whare is the support new graduates need to succeed. There are others who have been in the whare longer and have more experience and knowledge who will guide new teachers through a two-year induction and mentoring programme, as part of their Tōmua | Provisional practising, helping to build their strength, capability, and confidence to find their place in the whare.

The emphasis in the new ITE requirements on ITE providers building authentic partnerships is one of the key ways the whare can be built to support our student and graduate teachers. This reciprocal partnership with kura/schools and Centres ensures that the theory/practice divide is challenged and brought into balance. This is not an easy journey however as this requires ITE providers and partners to interrogate whose knowledge and what knowledge is more important at each step. Through this honest and frank reflection in collaboration with each other, the walls of the whare can be strengthened, and the roof extended, to provide a safe space for student teachers to also reflect, interrogate, and inquire into practice.

The new ITE requirements reflect this 'knowledge of practice' approach that prepares teachers to generate knowledge through inquiring into their own practice as well as using the knowledge or theories produced by others. Student teachers are viewed as inquiring practitioners with an emphasis on exploring the challenges of knowledge and practice, in order to find transformative solutions. Engagement in inquiry is aimed at understanding, articulating, and changing practice to enhance learner outcomes and to ensure graduates are capable of successfully teaching in today's environments with the skills to adapt and meet the needs of teaching in the future. In this way teachers, regardless of service length, will have agency and are continually learning from, with and about each other.

In terms of programme design, this model involves kura and centres in co-designing programmes, assessments and professional experience placements. As a part of this collaborative, co-design process, and to further overcome the risk that ITE become increasingly academic, the new requirements ask ITE providers and partners to establish Key Teaching Tasks

(KTTs) which provide assurance of readiness. KTT's are a set of 10-15 key tasks that graduates from the programme must be capable of carrying out as a beginning teacher on day one of the job. They are intended to be clearly defined discrete tasks, aligned to Ngā Paerewa/ the Standards. They should be observable and measurable and describe actions that derive from the integration of knowledge, understanding and behaviour. This is a good example of how ITE providers and partners can develop and foster the authentic partnerships which are integral to the success of the graduate teacher.

The programme approvals that the Council have seen under the new ITE requirements encourage reflection on practice as experienced in professional placements through a theory lens gained through knowledge of pedagogy.

When in a whare, there is a time to listen to elders, and those with the knowledge, but there is also a time to do, to prepare food, or chairs or bedding. So it is with learning. Practical experience enables student teachers to function with confidence and competence on their first day of teaching. Further early support, such as mentoring and professional learning is pivotal for teacher retention. A high quality ITE system enables student teachers to gain subject and pedagogical knowledge and ensure that they have the practical skills for effective teaching and learning with a diverse range of learners.

Recognising the importance of the professional experience placement, the Council requires that ITE programmes must demonstrate high-quality features such as:

- every aspect of the ITE programme is integrated, so there is not a sense of 'theory' and 'practice' being enacted separately in different settings
- student teachers and School, Kura or Centre partners are suitably prepared for professional experience placements, and students are willing and able to take agency and develop expertise with support
- formative and summative assessment of student teachers being a transparent and agreed process, with shared expectations between the ITE Provider, the student teacher, and the centre/school/kura

The new ITE Requirements introduced an increase to the minimum required period of professional experience placements:

- an increase of 10 days, from 70 to 80 days, for one- and two-year programmes
- an increase of 20 days, from 100 to a minimum of 120 days, for three-year or longer programmes.

The increase is intended to provide more opportunities for students to develop practice and have teaching experience with a diverse range of settings and learners. Supervision of student teachers during professional experience placements is supported by Associate Teachers who will hold a current Tūturu/Full Practising Certificate (Category One) or Pūmau/Full Practising Certificate (Category Two).

Once a student teacher has completed their programme, we recognise they have not yet had the opportunity to independently demonstrate using and meeting Ngā Paerewa/the Standards on the day they start teaching, and therefore, we expect new teachers will meet Ngā Paerewa/the Standards *with support*, provided by their mentor teacher and kura community, during the required two-year induction and mentoring programme as part of their Tōmua/Provisional practising certificate. It is only when a teacher is issued with a Tūturu Category One or Pūmau |

Category Two Full practising certificate that they are considered able to fully meet Ngā Paerewa/the Standards. Experience shows that induction and mentoring play a pivotal part in developing a teacher's competence.

In these ways the balance of life in Te Whare o te Matatū Aotearoa – the House of the Teaching Profession is maintained.

### Impact of the new ITE Requirements

While the new Requirements set the direction for the journey, it will take time before we see an impact on the education system. Graduates from programmes approved under the new ITE Requirements will start teaching in 2022, with the first graduate cohorts of 3-year Bachelor programmes not being employed until 2023.

### Next Steps

The Council is focussing on Phase Two of the ITE work programme and has reconvened the ITE Advisory Group to provide advice and support for the following mahi:

- evaluating the impact of the new ITE Requirements, including looking at one-year graduate programmes
- refreshing the ITE Requirements in line with the curriculum review
- monitoring and review, national moderation, audits and special reviews of ITE programmes
- how the first two years of teaching is better supported
- Strengthening authentic partnerships.

In February 2022, the Council published a full report on the journey of ITE *'Creating an equitable future-focused Initial*

*Teacher Education (ITE) system – The new ITE Requirements-the journey so far'* on our website at <https://teachingcouncil.nz/professional-practice/ite-providers/initial-teacher-education-ite-report/>.

Te Whare o te Matatū Aotearoa – the House of the Teaching Profession is a place for every teacher and provides space where manuhiri/guests are welcomed and cared for. Our challenge is to continue building on the collaborative partnerships that take place in ITE to ensure the profession has highly skilled teachers that will make a real difference to the ākonga/learners of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Council staff members would be pleased to talk to any regular meeting of principals in your area. Feel free to contact Michael Thorn at [michael.thorn@teachingcouncil.nz](mailto:michael.thorn@teachingcouncil.nz).

Ngā mihi

### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Cathrin Jordan joined the Teaching Council | Matatū Aotearoa in 2021 as a Policy Analyst working in the Initial Teacher Education (ITE) space. Before that Cathrin worked as an Analyst at the Ministry of Education's Analytics & Insights team and at a global strategic advisory firm in Wellington.

Cathrin was born in Frankfurt, Germany, where she completed a bachelor's degree in General Management, a master's degree in International Business and a PhD in Behavioural Economics. She moved to New Zealand in 2018.

Susan Fogarty is the Communications & Advice Manager at the Teaching Council

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# Making a difference

## Teacher Sharee Ineson, explains how Cambridge Global Perspectives is equipping students with a wealth of transferable skills while they develop as active global citizens

Cambridge Global Perspectives is an innovative and exciting skills-based programme for students aged 5 to 19 at every stage of the Cambridge Pathway – from Cambridge Primary through to Cambridge A Level.

“The course gives students the skills and passion to be active global citizens both now and in the future,” says Sharee Ineson, Teacher, Cambridge IGCSE Global Perspectives at Southland Girls’ High School in Invercargill, Southland, New Zealand.

“Through relevant and meaningful inquiry into global issues, they develop critical and creative thinking skills, while gaining a deeper understanding and insight into perspectives at a global, national and local level.”

### Topic-based learning with relevance

Cambridge IGCSE Global Perspectives is built around a broad list of topics, each of which encompasses issues of global importance. Students explore topics that have the most relevance to them and complete a written examination, individual report and team project.

“Students develop a confidence and self-belief that they can make a difference and their voice is valid and valued in a global society,” says Sharee.

Recent projects that Sharee’s students have focused on include the use of animals to reduce anxiety and roleplay simulation games about different journeys refugees may face.

“Students’ prior knowledge and interest in topics are encouraged and developed, as are their preferred ways of learning,” says Sharee.

Many projects in class link to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with a recent example focused on making a ‘to do’ list for the world, incorporating photography and giant post-it notes.

“It connects to the syllabus topic Conflict and Peace, but I also connect the Cambridge IGCSE components to the SDGs as I’ve noticed many universities are incorporating these SDGs into courses,” explains Sharee.

### Opportunities for increasing engagement

Sharee builds on opportunities to use “the teachable moments where ideas come out of discussions and relevant current events”.

She cites **travelling festival of art The Walk** ([walkwithamal.org](http://walkwithamal.org)), featuring ‘Little Amal’ – a giant puppet of a young refugee girl created to represent all displaced children. Last year, Little Amal travelled over 8,000km from the Syria-Turkey border across nine countries.

“When we found this project, the engagement levels increased and shifts in students understanding deepened,” says Sharee.

Having a shared language with Cambridge Global Perspectives classes in other schools is also valuable, she says: “Knowing they are part of a connected world brings a sense of belonging outside of our classroom.”



Sharee Ineson, Teacher, Southland Girls’ High School in Invercargill, Southland, New Zealand

### The benefits of teamwork

The teamwork component of Cambridge Global Perspectives develops a wide range of skills, says Sharee:

“Using logical reasoning, research and creative thinking skills, group work opens up new options that were not clear as pathways beforehand. Students feel valued for their strengths, and the power of like minds builds an environment of collaboration, where diversity brings possibilities.

“If you were to visit any of our Global Perspectives classes, you would see a range of perspectives and opinions. By considering different experiences and perspectives in a group, students develop themselves as innovators.”

### Developing transferable skills

Students also produce an individual report and Sharee says this chance to study in depth as an individual brings a sense of ownership and accomplishment: “Time management, communication and research skills are all developed and within the context of the student’s individual report topic. As students reflect on their learning and develop their personal voice, their confidence in themselves as a lifelong learner increases.

“The course allows students to make meaning in a context that challenges their thinking while still having their learning facilitated and supported by a teacher. They build their resilience and capacity as learners.”

Sharee believes the skills students develop have many different applications: “Students I have taught have spoken of transferring their skills into future learning, but equally into career opportunities and leadership roles,” she says.

Meeting and collaborating with teaching teams across other Cambridge subjects helps to embed and further develop the skills learnt through Cambridge Global Perspectives, says Sharee: “This allows the Cambridge learner attributes to become a shared language across all areas, therefore strengthening the ultimate goal of students achieving personal excellence.”





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# CULTURE CHANGE AT WESTPORT NORTH SCHOOL

Liz Hawes EDITOR

It is impossible not to be overawed by the Buller. Nature reigns big in these parts. On a 1040-meter-high bed of rock, sleeps the giant Mount Rochfort, named after John Rochfort (1832–93) a pioneer survey-engineer who conducted mineral surveys of the Buller District.

**ROCHFORT BROODILY OVERSEES** the town of Westport and shares a plateau with Denniston, famed for its high-grade coal. Remnants of the impossibly steep Denniston incline railway, once an efficient, gravity driven conduit for coal wagons, and locally referred to as the 'eighth wonder of the world', are a visible reminder of the industry that built the district. The 1670-meter incline operated from 1880 to 1967 and once provided the only access to the Denniston settlement which was located about halfway up the mountain at the Brakehead.

Coal-mining families endured extreme conditions on the bleak, windswept Denniston. The hard rock landscape ensured no garden would flourish nor grave be dug. In any Westport pub, you will still hear stories of Denniston folk packing their dancing clothes and whizzing down the incline in a coal cart for a bit of social fun in the local town. Similarly, coal wagons hauled up supplies, including mail, clothing and groceries and the dead were taken down the incline for burial in the town cemetery on Utopia Road,

at the end of which burbles Deadman's Creek. Only the tough endured the inhospitable conditions on Denniston. Few would have lingered to take in the splendid views of the Tasman Sea and coastal plains which, today, are a tourist's delight and are clearly visible from the Brakehead.



Native flora welcome visitors to Westport North School



The entrance to the school makes the intentions quite clear



The brooding Mt Rochfort watches over the town of Westport



Cath O'Loughlin, Principal of Westport North School

Nor would they have stopped to admire the cloak of dense native bush enveloping their mountainous world. Short of its use as a source of heat and fuel, the pristine podocarp forests, chock full of top-class kahikatea, matai, totara, miro and rimu, tree ferns, vines and ground ferns, were just another barrier to slash through, another force of nature to challenge the pioneering spirit of the intrepid coalminers.

Down on the flat, the town of Westport was not without its environmental threats either. Its proximity to the Southern Alps creates an unusually high rainfall. In keeping with every other giant-sized natural feature of the region, the powerful Buller

River is one of our country's longest and strongest, stretching 170 kms from Lake Rotoiti through the Buller Gorge to empty into the Tasman Sea at Westport. On an average day it flows at 429 cubic meters per second and in flood, holds the record of any New Zealand River at 14,000 cubic meters per second.

The third flood in eight months had just pounded the town of Westport when I visited. It was sad to see so many yellow stickered houses (not safe to inhabit) but the pioneer spirit of 'roll up your sleeves and get on with it' was evident everywhere. Some houses were still under repair from the previous flood. It was inspiring to see neighbours helping neighbours clear



The three pou representing the values of Respect, Responsibility and Relationships



On The far side of the garden we can view the pergola. The children learn that they are the Kaitiaki (guardians) of the garden



The young ones read to each other

fallen trees, mud, silt and debris. Days before, volunteers had turned out from across the town to help rescue those unable to evacuate in time and temporary accommodation had been brought in for families while houses were repaired. There is no time to dwell on adversity in Westport. When you're up against it and there's work to be done, you get on with it.

At the local Westport North School, this same attitude drives the cultural changes being led by principal Cath O'Loughlin. Cath has been principal of Westport North since 2015, after spending four years there as Deputy Principal. It was during her Deputy years that it was decided future generations of young people in Westport can be raised with a full appreciation of tikanga Māori, te reo and a Māori world view. The time was right. Awareness that biculturalism benefitted all New Zealanders was already growing. Parents, particularly of Māori children, wanted their tamariki to feel they

belonged at school and that their Māori culture was not just accepted but actively embraced and valued. The common goal for the school and parents was that Māori children would succeed, not by compromising their culture, beliefs and values, but by practicing them and sharing them with all the children of Westport North School. This latter goal was key. At so many levels, what is good for Māori children is good for all children, and Cath was right on board with that way of thinking.

The first step was building a greater appreciation of tikanga Māori with staff. Already there were two teachers fluent in te reo who led the year 1 – 8 bilingual class from 2011. This was a first for Westport. But unfortunately for Cath, these two were in high demand and within a short time had left to take up further responsibilities.

For the bilingual class to maintain its momentum, another



Child's impression of their principal, Cath O'Loughlin



Children get ready to play poi rakau



The new entrant numbers are diminished from covid, but these little ones are keen to get on with their writing skills



Practising action songs is part of the whānau class learning



Learning to korero to the group

of the permanent teachers moved to Christchurch for a year to complete Hōaka Pounamu, a post-graduate diploma in bilingual teaching.

‘The commitment to this Kaupapa is so strong,’ explained Cath, ‘and for this teacher to take a year away from her family and school showed such dedication to what we are trying to achieve,’ she said.

Cath was clear that a bicultural school wasn’t just about a single class with a teacher. She recognized they needed the entire staff on board to affect the culture change the school was after.

Kaua e rangiruatia te hāpai o te hoe; e kore tō tatou waka e ū ki uta.

Don’t paddle out of unison; our canoe will never reach the

shore.

‘This has been a long journey,’ she said, ‘because we wanted everyone heading in the same direction and committed to the same Kaupapa and that takes time.’

It also takes strong relationships and by the time she had taken the principal’s role, Cath was very clear that the local iwi would be fully involved and that her entire school community would understand why the changes were taking place and how everyone would benefit.

Changes began gradually. The school’s values of Respect, Responsibility and Relationships are now described in all the school’s branding and publications as manaakitanga, kaitiakitanga, tohungatanga and rangatiratanga. Three pou stand



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A quick game of cricket to warm up for the day



Padder tennis is endless fun while all the time improving coordination and timing

tall at the school's entrance representing these values. Children across the school were taught the conventions of writing their own pepiha and all classes now begin the school day with a karakia.

I visit the whānau (bilingual) room, which has grown to two classes in the past couple of years. There are normally 22 children in the whānau room but with COVID ravaging the district, fewer than half the children were present. Like every other school in the country, Westport North was suffering high case numbers of the Omicron variant and of the 245 children on the school roll, some 92 were absent.

I enjoy a busy morning in the whānau room. We have our karakia, are addressed by one of the students, who delivers a very comprehensive pepiha, we practice waiata and action songs and play Poi Rākau, a traditional Māori game which helps to build coordination skills. Ka mau te wehi! Fantastic.

I examine the whakapapa map and find that the tamariki

identify with a broad range of iwi.

'It is important to our tamariki to understand their cultural identity,' says Cath, 'and all our tamariki are encouraged and helped to identify what iwi they belong to,' she said. 'It gives them pride and heightened esteem to know who they are and where they are from,' she explained.



Learning to dribble the hockey puck

The students are also given the task of translating an instruction from their teacher relating to the concept of manaakitanga. What would you suggest a visitor might do in Westport? They constructed their list, which was kindly intended for me. It was an impressively balanced list and clearly demonstrated their knowledge and pride for their town. It included physical features such as the Lost Lagoon, Kawatiri Coastal River Trail, Carter's beach, the school garden, the

Orowaiti river, mussel rock and Denniston; eateries such as Jays Café, the Denniston Dog and the Star Tavern at Cape Foulwind; and places of interest like the Coaltown museum, Denis's Book

Shop and the local library. It was also suggested I might like to browse the Op Shop because everything there is cheap!

In the whānau room, te reo is spoken about 50 per cent of the day. What is helpful is that throughout the entire school, te reo is heard in every classroom every day. 'Korero ki tou hoa,' you might hear in any classroom, meaning, 'Talk to your friend.' 'He pai to mahi,' a teacher will be saying to a



Sports Academy students can take a break for a game of table tennis during the day



Principal Cath O'Loughlin takes a stroll around the tranquil school garden

student, meaning, 'That's good work.' Gradually, te reo is becoming more and more common place as the school continues its journey towards biculturalism.

Westport North school has had its fair share of youngsters suffering anxiety and fears not just through the covid pandemic but also because of the floods that have ravaged the district. Children's wellbeing is therefore prominent at Westport North. The school adopts the concept of hauora which is built on 'te whare tapa whā' – the four pillars of the whare. Taha Hinengaro, mental and emotional wellbeing, Taha Wairua, spiritual wellbeing, Taha Tinana, physical wellbeing and Taha whānau, family and social wellbeing. The children can immediately see that all four pillars must be in balance and be strong to hold up the whare and are well versed in the practical implications of each. It is a powerful model and easily relatable

for the children.

A new feature of the school is its beautifully designed garden of which both staff and students are very proud.

'We intend to start growing vegetables for our community in the future,' says Cath, 'and the children will gradually become



At Westport North children work indoors with the doors and windows open to keep the room well ventilated and protect them all from covid



Pipiha conventions are taught throughout the school



The Tino Rangatiratanga flag hangs proudly alongside the New Zealand flag in the [bicultural] whānau room

more involved in the planting, nurturing and harvesting of produce,' she explained. Meanwhile it is a tranquil retreat for both staff and students.

The second major distinguishing feature of Westport North School is its Sports Academy.

'The academy was set up in 2014 for children in years five to eight,' Cath tells me.

Part of the rationale for the sports academy was to raise success levels for the under-achievers. These were youngsters who through behaviour management issues or concentration issues were not achieving as well as they might.

'Some of the children in the academy are very high sporting achievers,' explains Nick, who heads up the Academy, 'and some of them are here to use physical activity to channel their energies differently, modify their behaviour and improve their academic results.'

Principles underlying the rationale for the academy include training the mind through training the body. It means that intent and focus in physical performance is transferred to cognitive training

creating a pathway to do better in mental activities as well as physical. It is also known as full circle training where sport, strength and mind are all developed together to help an athlete reach their full potential.

The youngsters in the academy certainly engage in more sporting and physical activities than others and the physical bouts during the day provide a release for pent up energy, for ameliorating frustration and curbing anger outbursts.

'Sometimes just a short spell playing table tennis or going for a run around the field will do the trick,' says Nick, 'but we also develop sports skills in the students.'

'The net affect is that the mind training involving discipline, self-management and focus which are required to participate in a game, is eventually transferred to academic activities,' says Nick.

So, is it working?

'There are definitely improvements in academic performance,' says Nick, 'and at the same time, all of these kids are improving their sports skills.'



Assistant Principal Nick Machin heads up the Sports Academy



Classroom boundaries can be extended outside in good weather

It is not just those in the sports academy who love sport and physical activities at Westport North. Physical education is a favourite for every class. Routinely, teachers take their children out for physical education. each morning.

'Physical exercise helps kids to settle and concentrate,' says Nick. 'It's good for all kids, not just the academy kids.'

Westport North is a school on the rise. All would agree that biculturalism is just part way into its journey, and the sports academy has more to achieve too. But as each teacher in turn revealed, the key to achieving more lies with the leadership, direction and support they all get from principal Cath O'Loughlin. As one teacher put it, Cath brings us all together and we're a close team. We're loving the journey, we're all in it together and we all support each other. Children at the school would agree. 'I like school,' said one young student, 'because the teachers here care about what you think and they listen to us.'

Westport North School? Highly recommended!

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# LET'S TALK ABOUT PROFESSIONAL

Bindy Tatham and Rachel Kent PROFESSIONAL INSIGHT

Principals – have you ever posed this question to your staff?

*Do you accept that invite to an 18th birthday party? Do you answer that late night text from a student who says they are feeling depressed?*

**THESE ARE JUST** some of the issues teachers must navigate throughout their career. Maintaining professional boundaries is a critical skill for any teacher. Determining where the boundary lies is not always straight forward and often presents as an ethical issue for teachers. Having a clear sense of what is acceptable conduct for a teacher and some idea about what to do when you find yourself in a 'grey area' is vital for the safety of the teacher and the student/s.

The Code of Professional Responsibility sets out the standards for ethical behaviour that are expected of all teachers. This article focuses on commitment to learners, specifically clause 2.2 – *engaging in ethical and professional relationships with learners that respect professional boundaries*.

The Code applies across all sectors of the teaching community (early childhood, primary and secondary). Our Code: Examples in Practice provides teachers with an excellent guide as to what complying with the Code might look like. It also provides examples of behaviour that may not comply with the Code.

Boundary breaches can be emotional, financial, communication, or sexual breaches. Grooming is at the more serious end of a boundary breach as it can amount to a criminal offence. Grooming is deliberate and calculated with the groomer's goal being to create a strong, emotional connection with a child or young person as a way of gaining that child's trust prior to initiating a sexual relationship. Being aware of the signs of grooming is very important as a teacher.

There are areas where there is an increased risk of a boundary breach. Teachers who become a confidant, friend or counsellor to the student/s are on a slippery slope and can, quite unintentionally cross the line. Being a confidant is particularly dangerous if the teachers themselves are vulnerable or having a difficult time in their personal lives. Those teachers may appreciate the adoration and emotional dependence they have created as they seek to get their own needs met. But undoubtedly this can affect student

well-being and learning.

Physical environments may also be a factor. Older style classrooms may have fewer or higher windows and teachers in these environments should take extra steps to ensure everyone's safety (both teacher and student/s) – consider leaving doors open and avoid being in classrooms with only one student. Modern learning environments in primary school settings provide greater visibility and co-teaching provides teachers with another adult in the same space which can be helpful.

Some teachers, new to the profession, may not have developed a strong sense of professional identity. In the secondary school setting, they may only be a few years older than their students and if they live rurally, may socialise with them. These beginning teachers need support from their senior teachers to understand what is and isn't acceptable behaviour as a professional.

However, some teachers just get carried away, enjoy the attention given to them by their students and behave unprofessionally. Here is an example:

'Teacher L'<sup>1</sup> taught 'Student E'<sup>2</sup> when she was in Year 12 and 13. On Student E's last day of school (Dec 2016) she texted Teacher L to thank him for his input into her academic and sporting achievements. She also said she would like to bring him

a cake the next day. She brought in the cake to school, and they had a conversation about her future plans which lasted about 45 mins. Teacher L then emailed Student E to thank her for the cake. Emails between the two of them went back and forth until January when Teacher L set up a private 'Chatstep' online 'chat'. They chatted over January often late at night or in the early morning. Teacher L asked intimate questions like: 'what are you wearing?', 'how many times [have you] had sex?' etc. Teacher L was 49 and an experienced teacher. Student E was 18.

In February 2017 Teacher L set up a Facebook account



# BOUNDARIES



with the purpose of continuing the 'chat' with Student E. He used a pseudonym to avoid his wife finding the page and so he could save the conversations (as Chatstep automatically deleted the chat).

In May 2017, Student E thanked Teacher L for helping her with her university studies and asked Teacher L to stop messaging her as she felt the conversation was inappropriate.

In June the school became aware of the messages and began an investigation. In July the school submitted a mandatory report to the then Education (now Teaching) Council. Teacher L told the Disciplinary Tribunal that his own family had been profoundly affected by his conduct.

The Tribunal was not assured that Teacher L would not engage in further similar conduct as he had done no reflection or taken any remedial steps.

Teacher L's registration was cancelled. Teacher L was granted name suppression to protect the identity of Student E and his own son.

This case illustrates the damage that can be done by a boundary breach. Not only does it affect the student involved. It affects the teacher, their career, their families, and community. It also lowers the reputation of teaching profession. Parents need to be assured that teachers won't take advantage of their children.

It is widely accepted (especially during a pandemic) that using online platforms is an essential way for teachers to communicate with their students. School online learning platforms offer a safe and monitored communication space, but using social media is an area where things can go very off track. All social media platforms encourage a type of communication that is casual and informal, and the use of emojis is common – some of which have 'alternative' meanings. Do you know what the eggplant emoji means?

The speed at which the communication occurs on social media is also a risk factor. People expect instant replies. How often have you misinterpreted what another person has written? The chance that a teacher's 'friendly' message could be misinterpreted as 'flirtatious' is enormous. Does your school have a policy for the use of social media? There should be a clear distinction between professional and private and any communication with students needs to be solely focused on educational issues.

Teachers need to consider that anything they say on social media is permanent and publishable. Despite 'privacy settings' anything can be screenshot – and we know how tech-savvy the kids are. Before you hit 'send' or 'post' ask yourself whether you would be happy if your Principal, your partner or the lawyers at the Teaching Council read it.

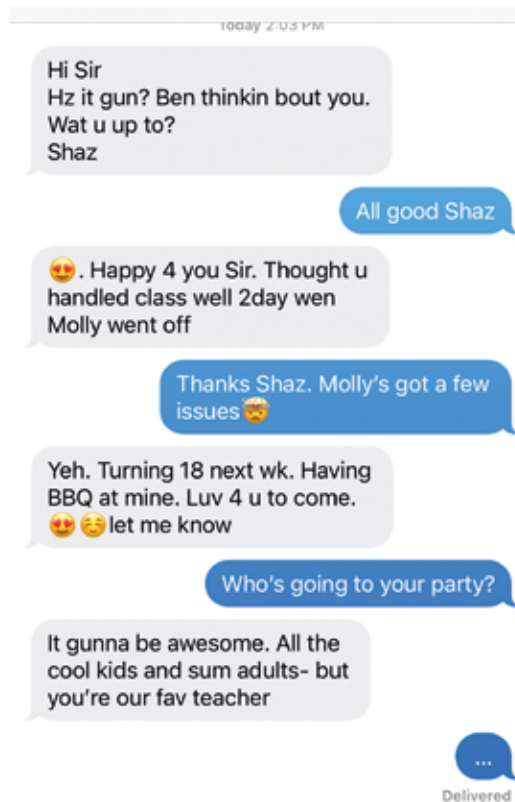
Teachers should be careful not to encourage a student to develop an emotional dependence on the teacher and avoid treating a student as 'a friend'. A teacher must set the tone and focus the teacher-student relationship on learning and wellbeing, not friendship. If a student needs support beyond the learning environment, a teacher should refer the concerns on to appropriate people and agencies.

Under the Code of Professional Responsibility, if you are concerned about another teacher, you have a professional duty to take action (Clause 1.5). Reporting a colleague

is always going to be a tough call but you need to understand that the well-being of students is paramount, and you have an obligation to protect them from harm. (Code 2.1).

There are a number of ways to prevent yourself from crossing a professional boundary. Things aren't always clear cut. Developing self-awareness and engaging in critical self-reflection is a key tool for any professional, particularly when assessing whether there is a risk of breaching a professional boundary.

Being safe and protecting yourself and your profession requires a degree of insight. As a teacher you need to examine your own thoughts, feelings and actions towards your students. If you think



you are at risk of crossing a boundary or have actually crossed one, you need to tell a colleague, your senior or your Principal and discuss it. At all times it is the teacher's responsibility to maintain the boundary.

Professional tensions will be frequently faced and your commitment to uphold the high professional standards of the teaching profession requires self-reflection, openness and transparency. This is all a part of the life-long learning journey that a teacher engages in across their career.

*Professional Insight offers a half day course for teachers about Professional Boundaries (online or in-person). A course outline is available on request.*

**ABOUT US:**

Bindy Tatham and Rachel Kent have recently been in-house lawyers at the Teaching Council advising investigators (investigating alleged professional misconduct) and Complaints Assessment Committees (who assess the teacher's conduct).

Bindy and Rachel have recently set up an investigations firm and are both licensed Private Investigators and enrolled Barristers and Solicitors of the High Court. Rachel is also a registered social worker. Here is the link to the website: [www.professionalinsight.co.nz](http://www.professionalinsight.co.nz)

**Rachel:**

Prior to being a lawyer Rachel was a social worker for 13 years and worked with a number of different groups – children, families, older adults, refugees. Rachel then did a law degree and has mainly worked for

professional regulators (Medical Council, Social Workers Registration Board, Veterinary Council, Real Estate Agents Authority and Teaching Council) in a number of different roles – lawyer, investigator, lay member and Convenor on CACs, and on Performance Assessment Committees (competence assessments for doctors).

Rachel was the first lawyer at the Social Workers Registration Board and wrote their Code of Conduct. Rachel then did investigations for the Teaching Council and subsequently was employed as an in-house lawyer.

**Bindy:**

Prior to working at the Teaching Council, Bindy did conduct investigations for the Veterinary Council and Social Workers Registration Board and was a report writer at the Teaching Council. In the earlier part of her career, she was a commercial lawyer at Kensington Swan (Wellington) and Anderson Lloyd (Dunedin) before stepping out of the workforce to raise her daughters.

We would be very happy if Principals wanted to contact us directly.

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**REFERENCES**

- 1 Teacher L v CAC NZTDT 2018/23
- 2 Teacher L and Student E both have name suppression.

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# SCHOOL BUDGETING – STRETCHING THE DOLLARS

Given the challenges posed by COVID-19, Schools and their whānau have proved to be amazingly resilient over recent years; learning to adapt, innovate and enhance learning experiences by quickly implementing online learning platforms. This has changed education forever and driven the need for longer-term strategies and streamlined processes throughout the rest of the school environment.

With this in mind, timely and informative budgets play a vital role in providing principals and boards with financial confidence during these uncertain times. A well-constructed budget can also provide opportunities, facilitating instant decision-making when required. Budgets should not just be viewed in the context of the next 12 months but also consider the school's longer-term strategic goals; what does the board want to achieve in the next 5 to 10 years? This ensures that not only the children of today are benefiting from sound financial decisions but also future generations. Those future generations will also contribute to the community during the years ahead.

Given the importance of reliable financial information in order to deliver enhanced resources for students and teachers alike, schools need access to value-adding financial solutions and knowledgeable support. Choosing the right solution and engaging an experienced support provider is critical.

When preparing an annual budget, every school is different and, as such, requires personalised assistance. Sound advice should provide suggestions around enhancing revenue and be considered when making some of the tough spending decisions. As part of the onboarding process at Accounting For Schools, we take a lot of time and care to understand a school's specific requirements and needs. A comprehensive and accurate annual budget for the coming year should also consider the impacts on the years beyond as well. We have developed several cloud-based collaborative tools, including customised budget templates, staffing calculators, and asset replacement programmes. We are genuinely focused on the long-term future of all schools, not just the next few months.

A budget is only as good as the information available, however, At Accounting For Schools, we are proud to be a Xero platinum partner,

using the latest technology to provide insight and deliver confidence around the Schools finances.

We utilise cloud-based accounting software that can be accessed from anywhere in the world. Xero provides accurate, understandable, and timely financial information. It also gives back control to the school, allowing payments to be made when required, management of categorising expenses, and the ability to collaborate with multiple invested partners.

When preparing financial information for schools, such as monthly management reports, we strive to provide understandable summaries of the key impacts and how those impacts are now being managed. Our team of school experts provides timely support, genuine advice, and technical expertise to help schools make more informed decisions.

By utilising Xero, Google Drive, and other cloud-based applications, Accounting For Schools can assist and support schools in any part of the country; we also enjoy travelling when we can to meet with schools face to face. These systems also enable collaboration and allow us to deliver a more streamlined process, ensuring faster delivery for schools, which also extends to our annual accounts support process.

When it comes to the annual audit and the year-end financial statements, many schools find this a daunting and time-consuming exercise. At Accounting For Schools, we view audits as an excellent opportunity to review the school financials, not just a box-ticking exercise. We seek to filter the audit queries, mitigating needless disruption during an extremely busy time of the year for the school support team and ensuring statutory deadlines are met.

Using Xero already? Mention this article, and we will provide access to our budget training toolkit and prepare a budget template for 2023 in Xero for your school at no cost.

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The graphic features a young boy with glasses and a backpack pointing towards a central graphic. The graphic consists of four colored circles arranged in a 2x2 grid, connected by dotted lines. The top-left circle is orange and contains the text 'Time Saving Processes'. The top-right circle is red and contains the text 'Control of School Finances'. The bottom-left circle is green and contains the text 'Future Planning and Forecasting'. The bottom-right circle is yellow and contains the text 'Unparalleled Support'. In the top-left corner of the graphic, there are two circular logos: a blue one with the word 'xero' and a grey one with the text 'PLATINUM PARTNER'. At the bottom of the graphic, there is a red banner with the text 'AFS' in white, followed by 'afsl.nz' in white. To the right of this banner, the text 'Accounting For Schools' is written in a stylized font, with 'Accounting' in red and 'For Schools' in white. Below this, the phone numbers '0800-ASK-AFS' and '0800 275 237' are listed in white.

# WHY JOIN PASL?

Fi McMillan EMPLOYMENT LAWYER, ANDERSON LLOYD



Is it really all over if you have to talk to a lawyer about your employment relationship with your Board?

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Certainly, if the situation is dire and your Board will not conduct itself in the manner of a fair and reasonable employer, leaving you no option but to resign or be dismissed, then PASL legal representation will assist you to either retain your position or to arrange the best possible exit. Most situations however are resolved well before that point.

As a PASL member you are required to inform us of potential issues at the earliest possible opportunity. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between Board or operational matters, which might require you to take advice from NZSTA or other advisors to the school, and matters which affect your own employment, which are covered by PASL. If you are not sure then we suggest you contact the Hotline anyway, and we will quickly explain whether or not we can assist.

If we can assist, then we usually do so by advising you quietly in the background rather than engaging directly with the Board in the first instance, which can escalate the situation unnecessarily. Once we have a clear understanding of the facts and of your particular concerns we can make sure you properly understand your legal and contractual rights and responsibilities, and the options you may have for a fair and procedurally correct resolution. In addition to discussing these with you, we are happy to review a draft of any written response or comments you may wish to make to the Board, and to help you prepare for any meetings.

If the low level approach is not immediately successful, or for more serious issues, PASL might write a letter to you setting out the legal situation and some constructive options for resolution. Some principals have found that simply having such a letter enables them to have more confident discussions with their Board, while other principals find it useful to share the letter with the Board or its presiding member with a view to facilitating an informed discussion. Either way, such letters can support a constructive resolution of potential issues. We can for example, identify any points of procedural unfairness and suggest ways of avoiding unnecessary disruption to the working relationship

between Board and principal and to the school.

We cannot make Boards behave reasonably however, and if the low level approaches are unsuccessful then PASL can represent you more directly. If we open a file for you, then you are entitled to up to \$25,000 (including GST) of legal advice. In this case, even if we have had to notify a personal grievance on your behalf in order to protect your position, it does not have to mean that everything is all over for you. Unless you particularly want to leave the school we can ensure that we keep your options open, and we can encourage your Board to choose a fairer path which

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would enable you to stay. If we can get things back on a fairer track then we can slip back into the background and advise you only if required.

As NZPF President Cherie Taylor-Patel has noted in her 25 February 'Principal Matters' Message, our self-governing school system has had the effect of leaving principals exposed and unsupported if they become faced with vexatious or unreasonable Board members, staff or parents. In some instances it seems that the Board would prefer to support a disgruntled complainant rather than properly support the principal. The stresses associated with Covid-19 have exacerbated the usual issues, and reduced people's capacity to cope. NZPF is taking steps to address these systemic issues, in consultation with NZSTA.

Even in those most serious situations however, it remains the case that it is not all over if you have to talk to a PASL lawyer. Getting prompt advice through the Hotline can help you avoid a potentially more damaging situation arising.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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# ARE WE BECOMING AN ILLITERATE

Liz Hawes talks with Kaylene Macnee PRINCIPAL OF DISCOVERY SCHOOL, WHITBY

The voices are rising again, this time from an Education hub founder, Dr Nina Hood. 'Two in five young people are failing in literacy and numeracy!'

IN 2008, A similar cry resulted in the most educationally destructive policy of all times. Schools were instructed to get 85 per cent of each student cohort, irrespective of individual skill, ability, or circumstance, to reach an arbitrarily constructed set of literacy and numeracy national standards, in a set time.

The standards and targets were set in such a way that low decile schools would most likely fail to reach them. Failure of the low decile schools would justify turning them into Charter schools, and so privatization of the public school system would be underway. National standards were an economic and political policy, not an educational one.

Following the national standards policy was not a choice. It was mandated through legislation. No matter what any principal or teacher thought about the lack of educational merit, they were bound to teach to the standards – often to the exclusion of other learning. I vividly recall a cartoon, designed to show the inane stupidity of the national standards. The monkey, elephant, snake, and fish were all lined up awaiting instructions. 'You are all to climb that tree!' barked the instructor.

Now that stupidity is no longer driving education policy, addressing the dip in our literacy and numeracy results should follow a more rational process.

Given the sector is mid-stream through a 'curriculum refresh' exercise, it makes sense that literacy and numeracy would be under scrutiny at this time.

I spoke to Kaylene Macnee, principal of Discovery School in Wellington, who was last year seconded to the Ministry as the practitioner's voice, leading the curriculum refresh.

Results of the international league tables, TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study), PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) and PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) had just been released and

New Zealand had slipped down the rankings.

The international league table results do not shock Kaylene in the slightest. 'Our own national monitoring unit, which is a better reflection of our context, tells a similar story,' she says.

So why are we doing less well in these subjects? We start with numeracy.

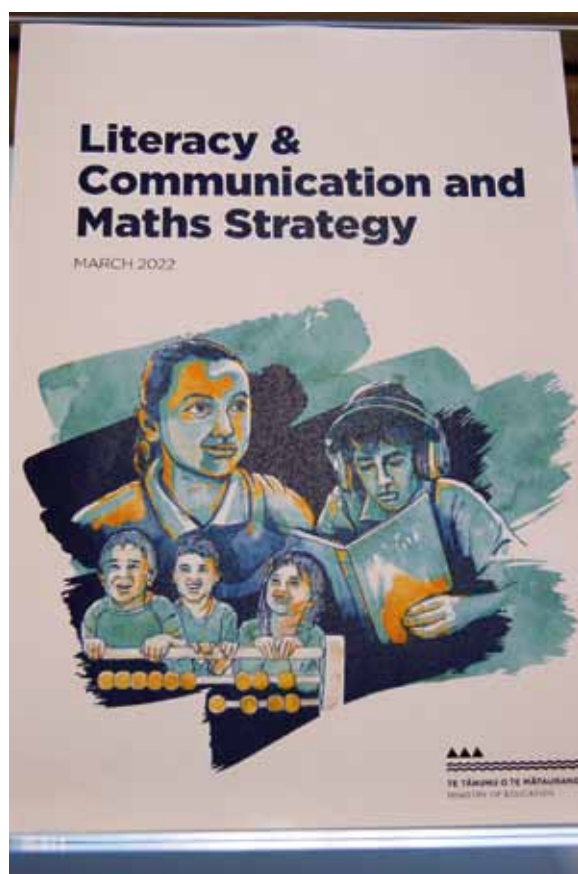
'There is a lack of clarity for teachers,' she argues. 'The national curriculum is not clear about the non-negotiable areas to be taught and it is also unclear what is expected at each level,' she explains.

In her view the much-disparaged *Numeracy Project* promoted by the Ministry of Education over many years, is partly to blame.

'Many children lack the foundational skills and basic facts,' she said, 'because there has been too much emphasis on strategy. Children don't need two strategies to solve one problem,' she said.

A second issue Kaylene identified was the lack of detail on progressions to measure achievement. 'These were tied into the PaCT (Progress and Consistency Tool), a tool based on the Learning Progressions Framework (LPF) designed to track progress in reading, writing and mathematics and not widely trusted by the sector,' she said.

PaCT was an online system and used teachers' judgements to determine achievement levels, alongside the LPF. Categorising assessment information and individual teacher judgements into different levels of the LPF was not a straightforward task. Human judgements can be influenced by bias and faulty assumptions, so training in using this system was necessary to use it successfully. There were those who praised the PaCT system, with its rich exemplars for teachers to use in making their judgements but the uptake in training was slow and sporadic, reflecting the sector's lack of trust. Because it was an online system, teachers feared that the data could easily be sucked into the student management system and used as a school performance measure just as national standards was previously.



The newly released Literacy & Communication and Maths Strategy (March 2022)

# AND INNUMERATE NATION?

‘What happened was individual schools started to subscribe to particular mathematics programmes,’ she said, ‘even though we know children are not all the same.’

What schools suffered from was having clarity of a national curriculum and the professional learning to go with it.

‘Had the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) not been interrupted by national standards, maybe we would have got there,’ she said.

Earlier this year the Ministry of Education released a strategy for literacy, communication and numeracy in which it too acknowledges that the demands of literacy and communication and numeracy are not currently explicit in the NZC (2007). The strategy calls for a shift so that ‘... all teachers are supported to be effective teachers of these areas,’ (*Literacy & Communication and Maths Strategy*, p.5)

The strategy continues to emphasise national consistency and ‘for every Kaiako to have access to the services, support and leadership they need.’ (p.7)

The Strategy also outlines some damning realities about the state of our school performance in respect of both literacy and numeracy (p.9), including:

- Only two-thirds of primary schools teaching students in



Kaylene Macnee, Principal of Discovery School, Whitby

years 1 to 3 have been identified as using reading assessment effectively

- Only 9 per cent of schools have ‘highly effective’ processes for gathering and using information on maths and literacy to support learning
- Teachers have a relatively low specialisation in maths
- Children aren’t receiving sufficient or appropriate opportunities to learn maths
- Many primary teacher trainees struggle with demonstrating the maths knowledge needed to teach year 7 and 8 students and a number express negative views about maths

These are concerning realities when it is well known that literacy and numeracy achievement are predictors of future academic success, economic success and civic participation.

Kaylene Macnee had a further target when examining schools’ underperformance in preparing our young people to be literate and numerate citizens in the workforce. She pointed to Initial Teacher Education (ITE) providers and questioned whether the providers of teacher training were adequately preparing teachers to be successful practitioners. It is heartening to see (p.7 of this issue, *Teaching Council’s New ITE Requirements*) that the practice component of teacher training has been increased by 10 hours for a one or two year training programme and by 20 hours for a three year programme, but is this enough? Kaylene would suggest not.



Games can help strengthen basic maths skills



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‘What teacher trainees need is to be exposed to curriculum experts in all subjects, throughout their training. Working in a classroom with an Associate Teacher in a school has always occurred and should continue but that is not where trainee teachers will acquire all the knowledge, competencies and assessment knowledge for teaching literacy and maths that they need to teach independently and successfully,’ she said.

‘Teacher training must return to the what, the why and how we teach it,’ she said.

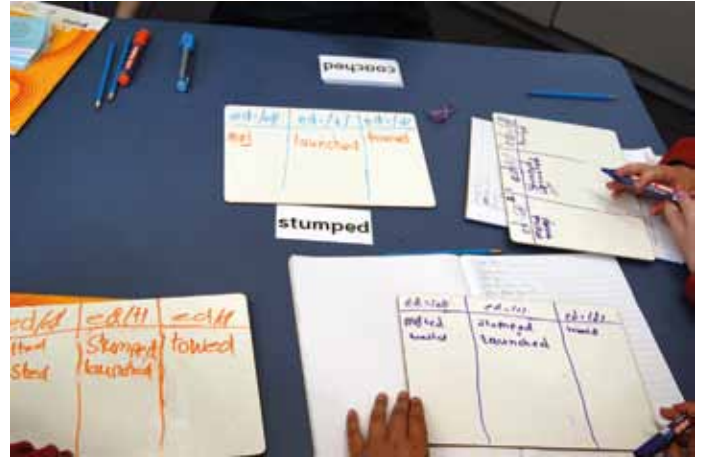
In her view some of the approaches being taken by some ITEs may not be as evidence based as was thought. What is needed is national leadership for curriculum delivery, curriculum experts in ITE and curriculum advisors in schools. All have been absent for too long.



Puzzles and games are useful to reinforce basic foundation skills whilst access to books supports literacy



Basic number charts and alphabet letters support foundation literacy and numeracy skills



The science of reading in practice

Just as performance in maths needs improvement, so also in literacy and communication. 'Literacy is a critical skill if students want to access all other subjects of the curriculum,' explains Kaylene.

The problems in literacy parallel the maths issues in that there is no clarity of national curriculum and PLD for teachers is woefully inadequate. Consequently, we have seen, as with maths, schools adopting programmes for the whole school. These can sometimes be highly successful and a recent 'Science of Reading' approach, involving more phonics teaching rather than the previously popular 'whole language' approach to teaching

reading has taken off. Whilst this particular approach may not be harmful to children's learning of literacy, and indeed some would say quite the opposite, there are other programmes out there that might be.

Kaylene is quite clear that although some principals may not be willing to give away too much autonomy, it is time for a return to national curriculum leadership, to curriculum experts in the education training space and for curriculum advisors in all subjects to be available to schools.

'Literacy and numeracy are far too important to our children's futures to leave it to chance,' she said.



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# FALLING ON YOUR FEET

Great plans, well actioned, and then there's good luck

Martin Thrupp [thrupp@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:thrupp@waikato.ac.nz)



**DID YOU HAVE** a good summer? I hope so. Mine was both horrendous and wonderful at the same time. I had a cancer diagnosis and surgery but also then a very fortunate outcome.

The problem started when a blister on my heel refused to mend, and over 2021 I had various diagnoses, and treatments such as liquid nitrogen. My GP, who provides skin clinic services, eventually said that he could cut the blister out but being on my heel I'd be unable to walk on it for a while. Never any talk of cancer because it didn't present as a melanoma.

By December I resigned myself to having the procedure and made an appointment for January. But when I got back to Hamilton after a month-long holiday in the South Island, my GP took another look at my heel and suggested I see a plastics specialist. At my first appointment the specialist was concerned it had not healed after so long and told me: 'We are going to get to the bottom of this!' She took some small punch samples and sent them off to the lab.

Meanwhile my life was going rather well. I had nearly completed a large edited book on Finnish education after three years work, and I got the news that I was to be awarded with an honorary doctorate from the University of Turku in Finland, a great honour. There was also still time for snoozing in a hammock under trees in the hot Waikato summer.

Everything changed on February 3. In the morning I had the satisfaction of sending the book manuscript to the publisher, in the afternoon I got the diagnosis that my heel problem was in fact a malignant melanoma. In no time I went from someone with a blister on my heel to a priority patient facing a cancer that could prove fatal.

After that, things happened rather quickly, although it didn't always seem so at the time. I had a hospital consult and a CT PET body scan. Then a six hour surgery at Waikato Hospital during which surgeons removed my heel with the melanoma and used a still attached flap of my instep to create a new heel. They then filled the instep with BTM, a strong artificial substance, which they will eventually cover with skin taken from my thigh. A really impressive reconstruction.

As I recover at home weeks later, I know it's been a significant setback but I also consider myself very fortunate as the scan and biopsies have indicated the cancer never spread beyond the tumour removed with my heel. Whakawhiti te rā! A big relief.

Actually the whole experience feels like one of those bad jokes that go to polar opposites, let's see: Unfortunately I got cancer. Fortunately it could be cut out. Unfortunately it was in my heel where cutting it out involved a major procedure. Fortunately I live near a hospital in a country with super-skilled surgeons and

specialist nursing staff. Unfortunately it was in the middle of a Covid surge. Fortunately the urgency of my condition meant the surgery was not delayed. Unfortunately the only scanning machine in our region was broken for a week causing a delay. Fortunately when the results came back they were favourable. And so on.

Here's a few things I have learnt from the experience. First, that skin melanomas are helluva things. You can even get one if you are not a sun-loving, beach-goer type and on parts of your body that rarely see the sun. They can be cut out if detected early, if too late the cancer spreads and not much can be done, hence they are so dangerous. New Zealand apparently has the highest rates of melanoma skin cancer on the globe. Are you and your whānau and school taking the risks seriously enough?



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Related to this, I now realise it simply doesn't pay to put off health issues until after: the end of term/a holiday/the house renovations/a family wedding or other event (tick whichever applies). In my case I didn't have my blister cut out earlier because it would have upset plans to do the Milford Track. It was indeed a 'Great Walk', and I did well to reserve my wife and I a place on the DOC booking system. But it certainly wasn't worth delaying a health problem that turned out to be so serious.

Another thing about experiencing a health crisis is how it brings out love and support from family, friends and colleagues. Gratitude doesn't cover it. But I was further struck by how interactions with everybody you are in contact with become more poignant when life hangs in the balance. You get a really heightened awareness of how wonderful most people are, even as they go about their day to day lives.

I want to mention my week in hospital following surgery. I have never had to stay in hospital before, and it was both remarkable and truly humbling to be in the tender care of all those people working together, doing different roles skilfully, taking over each other's shifts and so on. I think in some ways health and education share the same caring-profession qualities. It has to be a team effort and when the team is working well, it's a wonder to behold. Especially if you are vulnerable and on the receiving end.

My experience has made me think about luck, including the place it has in education leadership. We can plan well, we can become very skilled and knowledgeable and that all makes a huge

difference, but the success of any particular practice or event often comes down to good luck as well. It just happens that a newcomer to our district wants a job locally and has the teaching attributes we are looking for. There's that parent who puts up their hand at a meeting and asks just the right question. The weather forecast for camp isn't great but actually the day dawns clear and fine. For those that are religious, these are blessings as well as luck.

Our good fortune should bring a measure of humility, but we should also celebrate it. For as long as I can remember, my mother has been fond of saying about some person she is discussing: 'Honestly, if they fell in the water, they'd come up with pockets full of fish!' It's an expression of delight, amazement and relief that people can escape impending disaster and that a situation has turned out well. It has probably never been a common saying in Aotearoa although I once found it in an old copy of the *Southland Times* (29 April 1884, p.3).

What I would say then about luck (and note the new title of my column!), is that I hope that as a principal you fall on your feet more often than not. That on top of your hard work, luck or blessings are mostly on your side. And I also hope that in a way, you come to expect this, even if you don't take it for granted. Because even in our very troubled world, there is still a great deal of good luck about. As you can see from this column, I'm considering myself lucky just lately, and I'm delighted to be able to tell the tale.

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# NEW BEGINNINGS

HELEN KINSEY-WIGHTMAN



**OVER THE LAST** 4 months, I have singlehandedly sold a house, moved a 10 hour drive away from most of my friends, lived in my campervan, started a new job, bought a new house and begun the process of integrating into a new community. Life is good! My new school is an Area school just outside of Whangārei and my daily commute takes 15 minutes – without a traffic light, a crossing with a road patrol or a roundabout. On a busy day I might pass 3 vehicles on the way.

This is not my first time to live in rural NZ, so I do have some of the basics sorted. I know how to indicate the sheer joy of passing another human on the road by picking up one finger from the steering wheel and raising it in a silent salute as we pass on the road. I know that nothing yells townie better than a pair of floral gumboots at Lamb and Calf Day and I also know that as a new member of a community where everyone knows everyone, I am definitely under observation . . .

At the end of a long weekend of unpacking boxes after 3 weeks in my new house, I headed out on to the deck with a beer and registered the fact that my lawn was beginning to resemble a meadow. Kikuyu grass has been described as a plant with all the attributes of a rampant weed – my townie lawnmower took one look and packed a sad. Having travelled 650 kms in the back of a truck it took some significant persuasion and a few choice words just to get it to fire up – when it needed emptying halfway down the length of the lawn I soon realised that it was going to be a big job.

It was 4 o'clock on a Sunday afternoon and I got the sense that my new neighbours were poised to watch the entertainment in the manner of experienced Kiwi campers seated under their gazebo, beers chilled and sausages ready to go on the barbie, watching as the Aucklanders pull in to the empty tent spot next door. It's starting to drizzle, they have an SUV full of hungry, sulky teenagers and a tent that has never been out of its packaging – tensions are rising and next door smug smirks are being exchanged . . .

Whilst I have made other moves in my life involving bigger shifts both geographically and culturally, being in my 50s means I have more baggage – both physical and emotional – only some of which adds to my bank of resilience! However, I also have significant resources, which many who make much bigger life changes do not.

As I was preparing to leave Palmy Girls' High, we had a visit

from Abbas Nazari who spoke to our students about his family's journey from Afghanistan to New Zealand as refugees, when he was just 7 years old. Ten years ago, a then 18 yr old Nazari spoke at TEDx Christchurch<sup>1</sup> and received a standing ovation, he has since written a highly engaging book entitled '*After the Tampa*'. The story of his family's perilous journey through Afghanistan, Pakistan, Indonesia and Australia, narrowly avoiding detention on Nauru, their time at Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre and eventual settlement in Christchurch where they then lived through earthquakes and the March 15th Mosque shootings certainly adds a sense of perspective to my own modest life changes.

It has also led me to reflect upon how we support newcomers – staff, students, whānau – into our community. What do we need to give them so that they can flourish? This includes practical tools (Do new staff moving from another district know that they may be eligible for Transfer and Removal expenses from the Ministry? Are staff moving from overseas offered OTT PLD and training about Te Tiriti? How do we support whānau who are speakers of other languages?) as well as emotional support (Are new students linked with a buddy student, how are they informed about school support systems? Do staff know that they are able to access EAP counselling support?)

In reflecting on his family's experience as refugees here in Aotearoa, Abbas Nazari is unfailingly positive about the support they received and the opportunities available to him and to his nieces and nephews who are second generation Afghani New Zealanders. He says, 'After overcoming so many challenges, one of the remaining obstacles – one of the hardest issues to resolve for refugees – is the puzzle of identity. While I fully support refugee services, they cannot fix everything. The question of identity and belonging cannot be settled by some government policy.'<sup>2</sup>

For the student refugees who attended Nazari's presentation, the discussions that teachers had as a result have undoubtedly led to reflection about identity and greater understanding on both sides.

Since graduating from Canterbury University with a degree in International Relations, Nazari gained a Fullbright Scholarship and completed the Security Studies Programme at Georgetown University in Washington DC. Now back in NZ, the next edition of School Journals will feature an adapted version of his book



and he is available to speak at schools. He can be contacted on [hello@abbasnazari.org](mailto:hello@abbasnazari.org)

His story is a clear challenge to those who would argue that taking in refugees is a net loss to our national balance sheet and also to those who merely see it as an act of charity or the exercising of our responsibilities as a first world nation, Nazari's educational success and the sense of loyalty and social responsibility he feels to his adoptive country is a powerful message that supporting refugees benefits both our cultural capital and our nation's bottom line.

One of the whakatauki on the wall of my new office is: He aroha whakatō, he aroha puta mai – If kindness is sown than kindness you shall receive. I am grateful to those who have taken the time to welcome me into my new school community. As school leaders, thinking about the needs of newcomers and creating systems that show kindness is a smart thing to do for the long-term health and wealth of our school community.

#### REFERENCES

- 1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FDjbBtlk2c>
- s p280 Nazari.A *After the Tampa: From Afghanistan to New Zealand* Allen & Unwin 2021

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CHALLENGE? WILL YOU...  
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