

September 2023
Volume 38, Number 3



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The articles in *New Zealand Principal* do not necessarily reflect the policy of the New Zealand Principals' Federation. Readers are welcome to use or reprint material if proper acknowledgement is made.

SUBSCRIPTION

Distributed free to all schools in New Zealand.

For individual subscribers,
send \$40 per year to:

New Zealand Principals' Federation
National Office, PO Box 25380,
Wellington 6146

New Zealand Principal is published by Cervin Media Ltd on behalf of the New Zealand Principals' Federation and is issued four times annually. For all enquiries regarding editorial contributions, please contact the editor.

ISSN 0112-403X (Print)
ISSN 1179-4372 (Online)

PHOTOS FOR THE MAGAZINE:

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CONTENTS

SEPTEMBER 2023

- 2** EDITORIAL
Liz Hawes, Editor
- 3** PRESIDENT'S PEN
Leanne Otene
- 6** WEST COAST PRINCIPALS TELL THEIR STORIES
Liz Hawes
- 9** THE ROLE OF PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP ADVISORY
Liz Hawes
- 12** ANXIETY AROUND MATHEMATICS AND ITS TEACHING WITH PRIMARY TEACHERS
Julie Whyte
- 18** DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S HILLARY AWARDS CELEBRATE YOUTH SERVING THEIR COMMUNITIES
Liz Hawes
- 21** A COMMENT ON SCHOOL POLICIES
Fi McMillan
- 27** NZPF ELECTION YEAR MANIFESTO
- 31** THE PROFESSIONAL GROWTH CYCLE
Lester Flockton
- 33** MISTAKES THAT PRINCIPALS SHOULD AVOID – LESSONS FROM OUR POLITICIANS
Martin Thrupp
- 35** OPINION – FROM WHAKAMĀ TO WHAKAMANA: FROM SHAME TO EMPOWERMENT
Helen Kinsey-Wightman



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EDITORIAL

Liz Hawes EDITOR



PRINCIPALS ACROSS THE country are desperate for staff. If you live on the West Coast (see story p.6 of this issue), in Auckland or Northland, very few, if any teachers are applying for advertised vacancies. So fraught is the staffing situation that recently, Kyle Brewerton, the Auckland Primary Principals' Association President said, 'Some schools may just have to send classes home.'

Sending children home occurred in the second school term, in Auckland, this year and principals predict this may happen again. It's a last resort. It's what happens after principals and senior management staff have all taken their turn teaching classes, leaving their management duties for after-hours. It's after teacher-free classes have been split between other classes already at capacity, leaving teachers with 50 per cent extra students. It's stressful, not sustainable, and wrong.

If we think relief teachers can fill the gaps, we can forget that too. Many are already employed full-time and, in some cases, have come out of retirement to help with the shortages. Some principals say it's the worst staffing shortage they've ever experienced, which begs the question, what has changed?

One indisputable factor is that just across the Tasman, teachers are paid a great deal more than teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand. Auckland may be ranked the world's tenth most liveable city by the Global Liveability Index, but the cost of living does not make Auckland a winner with teachers. Basics like housing, travel, and the general cost of living are all rising. Teachers no longer find Auckland an attractive or affordable option. They are exiting in droves. Schools that once attracted over a hundred applications for a basic teaching job, are begging for a single application.

The Ministry tells us that they have freed up visa and registration processes to attract more teachers from overseas and assure us that there are plenty interested in coming to our shores. Principals, however, do not agree that overseas teachers are the answer. They say many such teachers are not an easy fit with our context and culture and much prefer teachers trained in Aotearoa New Zealand. Principals are not prepared to just take anyone to teach their tamariki. They believe in offering all tamariki high quality teaching and learning that is culturally appropriate and te Tiriti based, as is our policy. Schools are expected to not just honour te Tiriti o Waitangi but to enact it.

The key question remains, why do we have insufficient teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand to staff our schools? Is the Ministry doing enough to make teaching an attractive option for our school leavers? It is well known that we are a diverse community (see President's Pen p.3 in this issue) and subscribe to inclusive practices. These are worthy goals and enthusiastically

supported by schools. Whether these goals are well served with support from the Ministry is another question. In any survey of principals, formal or informal, the results consistently show that learning support does not meet growing needs. This is not a new issue. Principals have been highlighting the lack of learning support, in-class support, counsellors, teacher aides and education specialists for years. Inadequate support for learning needs is doubtless a factor in potential teacher trainees choosing alternative careers.

We have a surprisingly large number of small schools in Aotearoa New Zealand, in part because of our geography. Many of those schools are isolated. We once had an expectation that teachers would complete 'country service' and in many cases, accommodation was provided to encourage this practice. Today there is no such expectation and there are no incentives for young teachers or indeed principals to teach in or lead our rural schools. Perhaps the Ministry might reconsider incentivizing teachers and principals into these areas by helping with accommodation and paying an incentive allowance to compensate for the costs of living in isolation.

Principals are clear that they prefer to recruit teachers trained in our country. It is not encouraging when we hear that our main Initial Teacher Education (ITE) providers – our universities – have made severe cuts to their teacher trainee intakes. Universities may have their own funding disputes with the Government, but this move does not help the teacher shortages in our schools.

Is it time to rethink the way we train teachers? ITE has been a bone of contention with principals in recent years with many criticizing the style and type of teacher training. These issues include the lack of preparation for practical classroom teaching. It is not just about having knowledge of theory and curriculum. It is mostly about how to lead tamariki to learn and understand. It is about how to motivate, enthuse and excite tamariki about learning and providing practical activities for them to engage. Principals will justifiably ask, how can trainees learn about dance, sports, art, and drama in a lecture theatre? These activities can often be the conduit for tamariki to access literacy, mathematics, science, and social science. The current answer is to send trainees to schools on 'practicum' experience. Principals would say this is not enough, the training model is not working, and we need a rethink of our ITE provision.

Is relief in sight for the workforce issues in our schools? The answer lies with Ministers and the Ministry and how motivated they are to acknowledge and accept the reasons behind the shortages and commit the funding to address them. In an election year, we would hope that at least one political party will take up the challenge.

PRESIDENT'S PEN

Embracing Diversity in Aotearoa, New Zealand Schools: Our Korowai

Leanne Otene NATIONAL PRESIDENT, NEW ZEALAND PRINCIPALS' FEDERATION



I WANT TO celebrate the tumuaki of Aotearoa New Zealand, for the amazing work they do. My focus is on the ways principals embrace inclusion and how they enact Te Tiriti o Waitangi. It is not easy to be fully inclusive, yet principals across the motu welcome, love and teach all tamariki, irrespective of their background, ability, or aspirations. They immerse them in learning, central to which are the language, values and tikanga of our founding document. Our schools are the korowai protecting and honouring our young people.

Being inclusive means supporting young people from all social classes, cultures, religions, and gender types, and with a range of physical and mental abilities and learning styles. It means completely embracing the rich diversity of our society and treating every child as a contributing, valued member.

At the same time, principals are enacting Te Tiriti o Waitangi with enthusiasm. I am in awe at the way principals are delighting in the opportunity to learn te reo and tikanga with their staff and tamariki. And I love the way tumuaki have reached out to hapū and iwi to co-construct the curriculum – especially the Aotearoa New Zealand Histories curriculum.

Principals hold the power to shape the future of our country through the kind of education they promote in our schools. By using this opportunity to champion diversity, principals embed biculturalism to build a strong foundation for our multicultural country to grow and prosper. This creates an environment in which the learning of all tamariki can flourish.

Let's explore the many benefits that emerge, as principals champion diversity and inclusivity in our schools, building a korowai.

The first, I will call a 'Tapestry of Identity'. Incorporating te reo Māori into daily school life, helps foster a sense of pride and belonging for our tamariki. Our tamariki Māori see themselves in their education. Their whakapapa is acknowledged, and their histories are shared. Embracing Māori values, customs, and genealogy creates an environment where diverse learners can connect, learn, and grow together, forming friendships that transcend cultural barriers and promote understanding, empathy, and unity.

This practise is an example of upholding the principles of te Tiriti o Waitangi and enacting them. Te Tiriti is a blueprint for fostering equitable partnerships between Māori and non-Māori tamariki. Through their commitment to honouring

Te Tiriti, principals strengthen the social fabric of their school communities.

By using this opportunity to **CHAMPION DIVERSITY**, principals **EMBED BICULTURALISM** to build a **STRONG FOUNDATION** for our multicultural country **TO GROW AND PROSPER.**

In our vibrant, multicultural society, providing a Tiriti based, inclusive educational environment is important. Principals encourage multiculturalism by celebrating the richness of our students' diverse backgrounds, genders, cultures, and traditions. They create a space where students feel valued, respected, and supported and where all students are empowered to unlock their full potential. It is a space where gender diverse students can express their authentic selves and racial discrimination

has no place. Tamariki become global citizens, capable of navigating an interconnected world with open-mindedness, tolerance, and respect for all individuals.

Such an environment enhances academic excellence, through the vibrant tapestry of diverse ideas and experiences. It enhances problem-solving skills, critical thinking abilities, and creativity. Through collaborative experiences, tamariki learn not only from textbooks but also from one another, preparing them for success in an interconnected world.

There are also benefits that extend beyond the school. Promoting inclusivity creates a safe space where families from diverse backgrounds feel welcome and valued. Engaging iwi, hapū, whānau, caregivers, and extended families fosters a sense of belonging, builds trust, and strengthens the partnership between Mana Whenua, home, and school. Principals weave bonds of unity that enrich the wider community.

Principals don't do this alone. The teachers, paraprofessionals, support staff and Boards of Trustees make up the school's 'critical connectors' for inclusivity to prosper. In turn, principals lead, mentor, guide, and coach staff to embrace these values, and provide focused professional learning to develop their strengths. Working in partnership with Boards of Trustees, ensures budgets and strategic plans include deliberate actions for inclusive practices to be enacted.

The final cog in the wheel of success is our education system, which provides the resources, tools, and personnel to serve our schools and support them to implement diversity and inclusivity goals. The Ministry of Education acknowledges that schools need funding to meet all students' learning needs. They agree that teachers need culturally responsive teaching resources, professional development opportunities, and specialized support for diverse learners. Like us, they want all tamariki to succeed,





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and for our country to embrace the values of an inclusive and diverse society, where discrimination and racism have no place and where empathy and tolerance abound.

What decides the resources is the Government. As we head towards a general election, we remind all our political leaders to put the tamariki of our nation ahead of their political aspirations. Our students deserve an education system built on a solid foundation that grows in strength, year on year. Too often, we see a new Government waste precious resources introducing new systems from overseas they think will be better. We are unique, diverse, and inclusive. We can be successful and create a flourishing nation if politicians listen to the experience and knowledge of our education experts and practitioners.

My message to our inspiring school leaders across Aotearoa, New Zealand, is to say thank you for your unwavering commitment to inclusivity, our diverse tamariki, and honouring our treaty. You are appreciated. Your commitment to fostering understanding, respect, and acceptance shapes the future leaders of our society and promotes harmony, empathy, and unity. Individually and together, we can continue to weave a vibrant korowai that envelops every student, paving the way for a successful future society for Aotearoa New Zealand.

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WEST COAST PRINCIPALS TELL THEIR STORIES

Liz Hawes

WITH ITS FERVENT drive to address inequities for principals, the NZPF national executive is acutely aware that principals in some areas of the country feel their voice is not heard. They say specialist resources don't reach them, no one is advocating for them, and their unique circumstances are not recognised. One of those areas is the West Coast of the South Island.

In response, a group of NZPF executive members, led by president Leanne Otene, travelled to Hokitika to meet up with principals from the Buller Principals' Association and the West Coast Principals' Association. They came to listen to their stories, to understand their context and to act on their suggestions.

The remoteness of the West Coast became quickly apparent as the group travelled from Hokitika, through the breathtaking West Coast landscape, to Westport, the venue for the first meeting. For those who had never visited the West Coast, the trip was a revelation.

They drove the winding, spectacular Coast Road through the Paparoa National Park and from the windows of their nine-seater van, were mesmerised by the steep landscape, lush vegetation, and wild exposed coastline. They passed the famous Punakaiki Pancake rocks and blowholes [vowing to visit them on the way home], and were awestruck by the dense forest, bursting with miro, rimu, kahikatea, matai, totara, tree ferns, vines, and ground ferns all spiked with glades of impossibly exquisite nikau palms. The nikau is New Zealand's only native palm and the world's southernmost naturally growing palm.

Leah Marris, principal of St. Canice's School in Westport hosted the visitors. She opened the meeting, noting it had been a tough gig since 2020 when Covid-19 arrived on our shores. 'Our local principals' association has been amazingly supportive,' she said, 'keeping us together and helping us cope, because it's been really hard.'

With the introductions over, the group got down to sharing their experiences as principals of schools in the small, remote Buller community. Six local principals had gathered, mostly from Westport, Granity, and Reefton. Hearing the stories of these principals first hand was both

affecting and informative and certainly useful.

Craig, from Westport South School concurred, times had been tough, especially since he was a beginning principal. 'I went to South School as a child and taught here for several years and this year my eldest child started school here,' he said proudly. He went on to say that there is much poverty in Westport now, of which even he wasn't aware. 'The community hasn't fully recovered from the 2021 flood,' he said. 'Add Covid to that and you can see why we have a disengagement problem and some negative behaviour creeping in.' For all that, Craig said he still felt privileged to be leading the South School and like Leah, acknowledged the great support from the Buller Association and his great team at school. 'We all trust and support each other,' he said.

Wayne, principal of Sacred Heart School in Reefton said that despite the risk of moving, he was lured to Reefton from his Paraparaumu Beach school, by his wife's family who were from Reefton. 'Four years later we are still here,' he laughed. He reported being amazed at the drop in curriculum funding for his 30 students, after what he was used to in a school of close to 600 students. He agreed with his local colleagues that Covid had taken a toll and the last two terms had been especially trying, but in his optimistic way said, 'The good days still outdo the bad days.'

Executive members expressed empathy, particularly those who had experienced the Christchurch earthquakes, and understood the devastating effects of natural disasters. They also shared the importance of collegial support and congratulated the West Coast principals on their strong bonds and support of each other.

But if they thought that was the end of natural disaster stories, they were wrong.

Gemma, principal of Granity school, had another version. 'Coastal erosion is really bad for us,' she said. 'We've had rocks in the playground from sea surges, so nature is a serious issue.' Gemma is confident that the new sea wall will contain further sea surges, but 'managed retreat' is still not off the table. 'The problem is, there is no alternative site. We have the sea, then the hills. We have nowhere to go.' She reported that quite



Six Buller principals, came out to share issues and solutions with the NZPF executive group

continued on p.8

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a few houses in Granity had also been affected by the surges. Despite this, her school roll was climbing. 'We were expecting 18 but by day four of this year, we had 24 and now the roll is 37.'

'We are fortunate,' she said, 'to have excellent staff, including a second year beginning teacher, who make the best team, and we have a very experienced junior release teacher who is fabulous. I also have good principal release, so I am lucky,' she said.

Cath O'Loughlin, experienced principal of Westport North school said poverty had grown very quickly in the town, as had transience and the number of methamphetamine addicts. 'Getting learning support, psychologists, specialists, and therapists for children is frustrating because of our isolation. They travel from Christchurch,' she said. She also raised the staffing problems that the West Coast faced. 'Principals and teachers often use Westport as a stepping stone in their career and don't stay long,' she said. The reasons were many including isolation, and cost of living. 'Housing may be cheaper, but power and petrol are expensive on the Coast,' she said. There were also interminable problems in getting specialists in literacy, mathematics and science.

Further problems included that they are all feeling tired, time-poor and unsupported by the agencies that should be serving them. They feel neglected for being small, mostly U1 and U2 schools. Most were paid less than Deputy Principals in larger schools, or lead teachers in a Kāhui Ako – which none of the principals supported. PLD was virtually non-existent and teacher resilience was low. They dreamed of guidance counsellors, business managers, child mental health experts, extra release time and more staffing. The lack of a post-principalship career pathway on the Coast meant principals retiring were being lost to the profession when they still had more to offer.

They would love to be more focused on the Curriculum Refresh which has their full support, but little support from anywhere else and no time to think, reflect and work together on it. There were positive ideas about how to keep teachers longer by bonding them and giving them an isolation allowance, as secondary teachers get and they all had good relationships with their school Boards of Trustees, even if, as principals, they did all the Board work themselves. Some favoured 'hubs' which were a centrepiece of the Tomorrow's Schools Review, so they could reduce their workload and pass property and other issues over to what might have been the 'business unit'.

Sixteen principals had gathered in Greymouth and squeezed into the very compact Rural Education and Activities Programme (REAP) rooms where the West Coast Principals' Association members reported similar issues as found in the Buller.

The RTLB also attended this meeting explaining that there were 14 RTLBs for the entire West Coast, serving 34 schools over a stretch of 500 kilometres. Teams were based in communities, she said, and they worked mostly with Kāhui Ako. Yet again, the implications of living in this very beautiful but isolated stretch of the country, became apparent.

Principals opened discussion by raising the issue of technology contributions. The question of the additional cost of hardware used by the students was raised. One principal reported that when asking parents to contribute to these costs, about 20 per cent responded positively. The West Coast is not an affluent area and any request to meet additional costs for education are likely to be met with inaction. The answer was for the schools to pull together and cover the costs as a collective.

Like the Buller principals, the West Coast principals were well connected, because they had little or no other support. With more schools and bigger schools, West Coast principals could achieve more, like the South Westland Schools Day for teacher and teacher aide training and the work of the Kāhui Ako.

One of the most affecting stories came from Donna, the

principal of Fox Glacier school, who had driven 3 hours to join the meeting. 'I am a sole charge principal with 18 students. I am my own caretaker. I do all the cleaning as well as all the principal duties and teach full time. If I get Covid, I close the school for a week. There is no one else. I can't even call on a kind parent or a LAT (someone with a limited authority to teach) because everyone in Fox Glacier is already employed. I would love to have a break sometimes and leave staff to lead for a time,

but I have no staff. To come to this meeting, I shut the school. I don't even have 'Teacher Only Days' because that's a conversation with myself. I am Secretary to the Board of Trustees as well as principal on the Board, but with all the other work, I really haven't time for Board business. In no other industry in the country would this happen. Sole Charge Principals are so vulnerable. I live in the most picturesque part of the country, but I never see it. I go to school early and come home late.'

The conversation turned to safety and whether sole charge principals with not a single other staff member were safe. It was agreed that they were not and that all sole charge schools should be allocated at least one fulltime equivalent teacher. 'No one comes to Fox Glacier for a 0.3 position,' said Donna.

The executive members pledged to take the issues raised in both the Buller and the West Coast, to the decision makers in Wellington, and lobby officials until they got action. In the case of sole charge principals, across the country there are not many of them and the cost to the Ministry to provide each with at least one full time staff member would not break the bank. It's not asking much, given the sacrifice and hard work going into educating the youngsters of one of the most isolated areas in the country.

The van trip back to Hokitika was quiet, punctuated only by a stop to take in the extraordinary pancake rocks and blowholes of Punakaiki. Back at the executive table in Wellington, rural issues debates now have a newfound substance, and real examples to guide the executive's next stage of advocacy.



West Coast principals gather to meet with NZPF national executive members to share their schooling experiences

THE ROLE OF PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP ADVISORY

Liz Hawes

TIM WHITE, CHIEF Principal Leadership Advisor, in the Ministry of Education, talks to Liz Hawes about the new advisory service for principals.

*Kotahi karihi nāna ko te wao tapu nui a Tāne.
The creation of the forest of Tane comes from one kernel.*

The establishment of the Leadership Advisory Programme came as a direct response to the Government's 'Review of Tomorrows' Schools' report recommendations. The report recommended several key changes, intended to strengthen support for school leadership and included:

- The establishment of a Leadership Centre within the Teachers' Council
- The establishment of Te Mahau
- The creation of Principal Eligibility Criteria, and
- The creation of a Leadership Advisory Programme.
- The original recommendation statement read, 'Leadership Advisors will have the knowledge, expertise, and experience needed to provide local support and advice, helping address issues as they arise. They will play a key role in sharing effective practice across the system to raise the overall quality of the education system.'

An extensive consultation period followed with the sector and this feedback helped shape the initial framework for the Leadership Advisory programme, leading to the first cohort of Advisors being appointed to begin work in the first half of 2023.

'For many years, NZPF has recognised principals' need for a systemic advisory service for principals,' says Leanne Otene, President of NZPF. 'We are delighted that the service, led by former principal, Tim White, has now been established. What we wanted was a service by principals for principals and this is exactly what we have now. Principals trust and respect their colleagues because they know the complexities of leading schools in a diverse environment. They know the breadth of the job, its demanding mix of responsibilities and its challenges,' she said. 'They can empathise and quickly identify roadblocks that principals face, because they have faced these issues themselves. An experienced principal is well placed to support beginning, mid-career and other more experienced principals as they navigate their role,' she said.

The Leadership Advisory Programme has two streams of Advisory support- one for English and Māori medium schools and one for Kura Kaupapa Māori schools.

There are 12 regional advisors, one for each Te Mahau region, in the English and Māori medium streams. There are a further four advisors exploring specific support for Pacific Principals,

Area School Principals, tumuaki Māori in English and Māori medium schools and for principals leading rural and small schools. Supporting tumuaki in Kura Kaupapa schools are five advisors, managed by Te Runanga Nui and Ngā kura a iwi.

The Leadership Advisory is intended to be an iterative, organic programme, which is responsive to the changing needs of principals. Each will learn from the other and advisors will share their new learning with each other and with the principals they serve.

'We are a small team,' says Tim, 'so we are constantly on the look-out for ways we can extend our reach and serve more principals. Some of our regions are geographically extensive and we want maximum impact from our advisors. We don't want them spending significant time in cars,' he said. 'Our response to the travel challenge has been to include digital, group or cluster advisory services alongside face-to-face consultations,' he said.

Leadership Advisors are based in regional offices of Te Mahau, and are members of the Te Mahau leadership team, reporting directly to the Regional Director. They are current principals on secondment, or recently retired principals, appointed initially for 12 months, but from 2024, 12–24 months. Ensuring they have currency, are experienced, well connected, and respected by their peers, is a critical feature of their role.

Being located in regional offices, allows them to develop both social and geographical regional knowledge, regional culture, and ways of working, which helps them in designing their response to the needs of the principals they serve. An example of this is the way rural and small schools were prioritised in the Hawke's Bay and Tairāwhiti regions when Cyclone Gabrielle stormed through.

'Schools were cut off; some were badly damaged; there were school staff members and principals who had lost their homes, or escaped, leaving everything behind,' said Tim. 'Principal advisors were able to work in tandem with staff of the Ministry's regional offices, to support the principals, and bring them the help they most needed, in as timely a way as physically possible,' he said.

So, who is Tim White?

I ask Tim what makes him qualified to lead the Principal Advisory Service programme.

He clarified that he was appointed Chief Leadership Advisor at the beginning of 2023. Prior to this, he was the Principal of Frimley Primary school, in Hawke's Bay [see article in *NZ Principal* magazine, March 2022, vol 37 (1) pp.10–15]. He saw the new job as an exciting opportunity to lead and develop much needed support for school leaders, and to support the principals who would be doing this work.

Earlier in his career, Tim was a rural and small school advisor and the Associate Director for the New Zealand Principal



and Leadership Centre (a collaboration between NZPF and Massey University). He also took time out to run a small school leadership consultancy business.

It became clear to me that Tim was at a stage in his career where he was ready to give back. He wanted to use his previous leadership experiences to support his principal colleagues.

‘It is a huge privilege,’ he said, ‘to support and guide the leadership advisors as they encounter the complexity of demands principals face. Whilst we want our service to be nationally coherent, we don’t want a “cookie cutter” approach. Every region of Aotearoa New Zealand is uniquely different, and each requires a distinct response,’ he said. ‘We want principals to influence the development of the service and encourage them to reach out to us as an individual, a cluster or Principals’ Association, or as a Kāhui Ako. Through the two-way connection, we can all learn from each other and make the service more robust and relevant to principalship today.’

He is confident that the leadership advisors already appointed have the depth of experience and knowledge to coach, advise, share best practice and support their colleagues across the sector and region. In return they are rewarded with the wonderful opportunity to learn from those they support, visit a wide range of schools (Primary, Intermediate, Area, Secondary, Specialist), develop increased clarity about Te Mahau and build relationships with the Ministry’s wider integrated support team.

Who are the Advisors in 2023?

The inaugural leadership advisory cohort is almost as varied as the schools that make up Aotearoa! They come from rural and urban schools, have had teaching and non-teaching principal experience across primary, intermediate, area and secondary schools. This year’s advisors have been Kāhui Ako leads, RTLB lead Principals, Beginning Principal mentors, Association leaders, ERO secondees and the list goes on . . .

The July Winter Summit

Once a term, Tim leads a summit of the leadership advisors. They meet as a national team to learn of changes coming up, examine the data collected to understand patterns emerging, share ways of working and receive professional learning for their role.

I had the honour of meeting with the team and the opportunity to ask them how their work was going, what issues they were supporting principals with, how many principals had sought their support, what challenges they face as leadership advisors and what progress they were making.

Brendan Morrissey is from the northern Te Tai Tokerau region. His first response to how his work is going was, ‘We need a lot more of us!’ He said much of his work was helping principals to cope. He used to be a rural principal advisor, which is helpful now, given the number of small rural schools in the region. Already he had met with 115 principals but had 151 on his list. ‘One third of the principals are in their first or second year of principalship,’ he said. ‘It’s a very inexperienced workforce. There is high attrition with many experienced

principals leaving the profession or retiring,’ he said.

An important role for leadership advisors is connecting tumuaki with the Ministry and improving the relationships between the Ministry and the sector. ‘Regionally we work with the Ministry as a team and that way we make better progress,’ he said.

He told me his job is amazing and he is loving the journey. He gets to go to schools he’d never been to. ‘I’m only going to schools or groups at their invitation,’ he said. ‘That includes individual schools and collective groups, like Professional Growth Cycle (PGC) groups.’

He acknowledged that different regions experienced principalship differently and there were marked differences between rural and urban schools. Despite that, there were common issues.

These include workforce shortages with principals filling the gaps by teaching classes, and it is common to find beginning principals struggling to develop their initial strategic plans. Too much change is another common complaint.

Pene Abbie (Canterbury/Chatham islands), Jackie Barron (Otago Southland) and Lynne Hepworth (Taranaki, Manawatū, Whanganui) also listed teacher recruitment as an issue for many, adding that principals are attracting only small pools of applicants to choose from, and for many schools there are few or no relievers. ‘Staff churn is an ongoing issue,’ said Lynn. ‘Principals feel overwhelmed. They have Covid fatigue, in some cases

disaster fatigue and of course the ongoing changes.’

All three expected that they would be working mostly with groups but quickly realised that principals in small and isolated schools needed individual support. ‘They need the face-to-face connection, at least initially, then we follow up by email or phone call. It’s a challenge to get around them all,’ they said.

Much of their work also involved helping principals to set up Professional Learning Groups and Professional Growth Cycles groups, because they are now mandatory. Having the influence to broker support and advocate for principals directly with the Ministry was considered the most rewarding aspect of their work.

‘Many didn’t realise that there is so much support already available from the Ministry and it is available for the asking, like advice on property management. They did not see the Ministry as a resource to support them. Our job is to make that clear and to connect them with those services.’

Mark Brown from Wellington region said the biggest difference he makes will not be seen immediately but further down the line. ‘We are helping principals build their kete of knowledge and skills to do the job. Whether we did that well will be visible in years to come,’ he said. Meanwhile he was thrilled to be able to share his own principal experience to help his colleagues.

Mark Johnson (Cyclone recovery schools) from Greenmeadows in Napier had the most harrowing story to tell. His region incorporates both Hawke’s Bay and Tairāwhiti.

‘The effects of the cyclone are still very raw in the Bay. Communities, families and staff lost so much,’ he said. ‘Nori Parata, who was principal of Tolaga Bay Area School and is currently the Civil Defence Deputy Officer of the region, was wonderful to work with. We worked closely with the principals



John Armstrong (Leadership Advisor| Nelson/West Coast) on the left working with St Joseph’s School (Nelson) Leadership team – Chris Gladstone Principal (far right) and Liz George, Deputy Principal (middle).

of affected schools, who were incredible in their response,' he said. 'It was such a hard load to carry.'

It isn't over yet because no one knows what lies ahead for the economy of the region and how that might impact on school rolls.

'The Ministry has been hugely supportive and understanding and that has been well appreciated, but the future is very uncertain,' he said.

John Armstrong from Nelson comes to his advisory role with 25 years of experience as a principal in the Nelson region. His territory stretches from Haast on the West Coast to the Kaikoura in the East. It is a massive area.

'The biggest difference I have made so far,' he says, 'is connecting with the principals and taking their messages to the Ministry and vice versa.'

'Many of the schools I visit want face-to-face contact, especially the small schools, and those where there has been a change of principal,' he said. 'There are many challenges. Principals are feeling overwhelmed and in need of support. It is so rewarding that I can facilitate that support. Sometimes just putting one principal in touch with others, with their Principals' Association or a Kāhui Ako makes a huge difference,' he said. 'Collaboration and connection is critical for a principal to function well.'

In John's experience, the biggest issues principals face in his region are human relations issues. 'They are about building relationships and communicating with staff and their Boards of Trustees,' he said.

How do we know if the Leadership Advisory programme is having an impact?

Leadership advisors are now responding to high numbers of requests for support. Sometimes these come from individual principals. Other requests come from groups, clusters or less formal groups, working through similar processes or issues. While generally by invitation, leadership advisors sometimes get referrals from other Te Mahau staff who have received requests for specific supports. At other times, leadership advisors might just pop into a school when they are passing by.

We can infer a lot from the number of principals we have had contact with and particularly those who request 1-1 follow ups or subsequent visits to their cluster or group.

We will begin a more formal evaluation to measure how worthy the service is, from term three.

'While we know how busy principals are and how much they dislike completing satisfaction surveys, it is important for us to have high quality feedback. This is one way that the sector can be involved in shaping what the future service will look like and help us ensure that it is meeting principals' needs,' said Tim.

How to contact your regional Leadership Advisor

Your regional advisor contacts are below. Please note we are still standing up the service and some roles won't commence until 2024:

- Tai Tokerau: Brendon Morrissey brendon.morrissey@education.govt.nz

- Auckland Tāmaki Herenga Waka: South, Southwest Tāmaki Makarau Kevin Bush kevin.bush@education.govt.nz

- Waikato: Nesan Govender nesan.govender@education.govt.nz

- Bay of Plenty/Waiariki: Brendan Wilson brendan.wilson@education.govt.nz and Mārama Stewart (support tumuaki Māori in English and Māori medium schools) marama.stewart@education.govt.nz

- Hawke's Bay/ Tarāwhiti: Nori Parata nori.parata@education.govt.nz and Mark Johnson (cyclone recovery schools) mark.johnson@education.govt.nz

- Taranaki, Whanganui and Manawatū Lynne Hepworth lynne.hepworth@education.govt.nz

- Wellington: Mark Brown brown@education.govt.nz

- Nelson, Marlborough, West Coast: John Armstrong john.armstrong@education.govt.nz

- Canterbury, Chatham islands: Pene Abbie pene.abbie@education.govt.nz

- Otago, Southland: Jackie Barron jackie.barron@education.govt.nz

- Area Schools: Gary Pascoe gary.pascoe@education.govt.nz



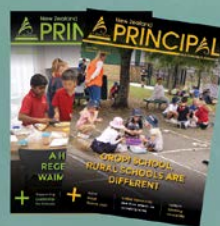
Strengthening relationships between Te Mahau and the New Plymouth Principals Association. Lynne (regional Leadership Adviser), Marlene (Regional Director of Education), Dee and Jeremy (Co-Presidents of NPPA) discussing opportunities for sharing information and streamlining communication.

The leadership advisory exists to support and build leadership capability across the sector, support transformative change across the system and help in the design of a sustainable Leadership Advisory model. If this sounds like a role for you then contact Tim White at the Ministry. Secondments are an amazing opportunity to broaden your experience and develop your own leadership skills.



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ANXIETY AROUND MATHEMATICS AND ITS TEACHING WITH PRIMARY TEACHERS

Julie Whyte | SCHOOL OF EDUCATION & SOCIAL SCIENCES, TE KURA KAUPAPA MĀTAURANGA, PĀPORI TE PŪKENGĀ



THERE'S BEEN CONSIDERABLE international research completed in relation to maths anxiety, more specifically with learners and pre-service teachers. This article shares ideas gained from completing a doctorate about maths anxiety and primary teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand, which relate to the histories, the impacts, and the influences of maths anxiety.

About the research

This doctoral research was grounded in interpretivism, which has the aim of understanding the world of human experience, along with Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory, with the belief that mental activity emerges from participation and social interaction with others. A qualitative/interpretive approach was utilised, 'with the purpose of describing multiple realities, developing deep understanding and capturing everyday life and human perspectives' (Trumbull & Watson, 2010, p.62).

Although there were three approaches utilised to locate participants, almost all teachers responded to Facebook posts in two teacher-related groups and my own page. Twelve primary teachers self-reported as experiencing maths anxiety and a semi-structured interview was completed with each, which enabled them to share their own experiences within their lived world with maths anxiety. Data gathered was thematically analysed, which involved exploration, reflection, categorisation, and description. Fundamental ethical considerations were central to the planning, implementation, and reporting of this research, including, but not limited to, anonymity. It is for this reason that all teachers have been referred to as her/she, as fewer males were participants in this research.

The histories

Maths anxiety, considered to be 'a negative response specific to anticipation of or involvement with mathematics that interferes with performance' (Whyte, 2022, p.20), was experienced by all 12 teachers when they themselves were students: five were primary students, six were secondary students, and one was a student at a tertiary provider. While parents were identified as having contributed to the beginnings of maths anxiety for only three participants, all were able to identify the teacher within their educational setting that activated their anxiety. It was shared that not only was it the way that mathematics was taught, but also the actions and interactions of teachers that contributed. Mathematics teaching that involved speed, teacher talk and chalk, memorising ways of working things out, and following the teacher's way of solving problems, along with minimal interaction or explanation escalated anxiety. For my participants, anxiety was raised when teachers embarrassed, ridiculed, showed

frustration, yelled, and utilised insensitive comments towards them; or were sarcastic, angry, stern, patronising, or stropky. With these behaviours, participants were left feeling humiliated, frightened or a failure.

When anxiety levels were raised, the participants responded in a number of ways involving a mix of cognitive, affective, physiological, and/or neural responses. The exact mix and the degree to which these responses occurred also varied significantly between participants, although no participant had experience of only one of these response types, and three experienced all four response types. Specific responses included, but were not limited to, negative self-talk and momentary brain freeze; nervousness, a distrust in their ability, and a fear of looking stupid to others; changes to heart rate and breathing, as well as feeling nauseous, a flushed face, increased perspiration, and tears; along with the anticipation of being involved in something mathematical, including teaching mathematics.

Not only did the teachers interviewed self-report experiencing maths anxiety, but maths teaching anxiety was revealed during each interview. Similar to maths anxiety, maths teaching anxiety is considered 'a negative response to anticipation of or involvement with, activity relating to mathematics teaching, or beliefs held in relation to perceived competence with teaching mathematics' (Whyte, 2022, p.43). Maths teaching anxiety was experienced to varying degrees, and in different situations. For example, planning for mathematics teaching, professional development for mathematics teaching, and mathematics teaching itself, whether anticipation or involvement, increased anxiety.

With the variety of responses and situations for anxiety around mathematics, it was somewhat surprising that only half the teacher participants identified a management strategy for their anxiety as students. This 'distract and avoid' strategy involved clowning and chatting, dropping mathematics as a subject, or stepping away from mathematics for a period of time. As teachers, all participants developed strategies to manage their anxiety, and the range of management strategies was broader. While still including distract and avoid, the range of management strategies now also included finding trusted support within their school environment, being prepared for teaching with detailed planning, limiting the year level of teaching, and developing understanding of the mathematics to be taught. It is thought that in the role as teacher, the participants may have required a greater variety of management strategies, as the situations in which mathematics was discussed were more varied, and they now also held responsibility for teaching mathematics.

continued on p.14

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Professional role

With the mixture of maths anxiety and maths teaching anxiety, it was found that the professional roles of these teachers were impacted. Firstly, more than half the teachers in this study identified mathematical professional development as a context in which their experience of anxiety was heightened. As part of professional development activities, they feared being called on, felt very uncomfortable, were hesitant to contribute, and felt the dread of the expectation that mathematical ideas discussed and learned in the professional development sessions would need to be incorporated into classroom teaching. It was of concern that these teachers did not expect to gain from their attendance at professional development, though not surprising, as they were strongly focused on their anxious responses to the professional development, rather than on engagement in learning.

Second, a number of teacher participants attempted to preserve their professional role by keeping their experience of maths, and maths teaching anxiety, or their perceived weakness with mathematics hidden. They ensured that it didn't show; and would fake a positive relationship with mathematics. While some kept it hidden, five found trusted support within their schools, mostly with a limited number of people, to maintain their professional role. These trusted support people checked planning ideas for pitfalls, were encouraging and supportive, were totally safe when holding knowledge of anxiety around mathematics and mathematics experiences, gave time to explain things, and never judged.

Lastly, while teachers had developed strategies to manage their anxiety, the strategies often showed care and concern for learners in a variety of ways. The teachers were aware of their own anxiety and many shared that they did not want their own learners to have a similar experience of mathematics learning, nor did they want them to develop an anxiety around mathematics, as they themselves had. They were also concerned that their teaching may negatively impact learner outcomes. Because of this potential impact, five participants eliminated responsibility for higher level mathematics teaching by either limiting their level of mathematics teaching or by shifting the responsibility for planning of mathematics teaching to another teacher.

Even though more than half the participants in this study found professional development an activity that heightened the anxiety they experienced, eight teachers demonstrated care for learners by developing a greater awareness of mathematics and its teaching so that their understanding and skills were improved. They undertook self-directed professional learning for mathematics teaching, much of which was of their own choosing and separate from the facilitated professional development that occurred for teachers.

Although identified as a strategy to manage anxiety, being prepared for mathematics teaching may also be considered as demonstrating mathematical care for their students. Many teachers talked of wanting to engage their learners with mathematical learning and to that end spent considerable time prior to teaching to develop their understanding of the mathematics to be taught and to be well planned. They did this so that they were in a position to understand learner thinking; be a step ahead of their learners; ensure teaching was powerful; and provide good solid teaching in maths. If unsure of mathematical concepts, or holding a belief that they might experience difficulty explaining them, these teachers were prepared with resources for their learners..

Teaching mathematics

Many teachers interviewed carried doubt about their ability to work mathematically and to teach mathematics effectively. Eleven presented as having low self-efficacy regarding mathematics, and *all* participants demonstrated low mathematics teacher efficacy. There was belief that they were useless at maths, judged themselves as not mathematically minded, or not maths people, and saw maths as their flaw. Participants were wary of working with high achieving students, were concerned they were incorrectly teaching students, and there was little, if any, enjoyment for teaching mathematics for many. There were fears of not explaining correctly, concern about teaching mathematics or teaching it the right way, or that they plainly disliked teaching mathematics. Rather than seeing mathematics as a challenge, these beliefs left many of the teacher participants feeling threatened by mathematics itself and its teaching. It must be difficult for these teachers to show enthusiasm for mathematics to their learners when feeling threatened by it.

To manage the doubt around mathematics and experiences, over half the teachers identified that they avoided teaching mathematics as much as possible. For example, one teacher deliberately timetabled mathematics for the time most likely to be interrupted by other things, as well as limiting the scheduled time for mathematics teaching and learning in the classroom. Others dropped mathematics when something was added to a day's timetable, shortened the scheduled mathematics teaching time to extend learning areas that preceded or followed mathematics, removed mathematics from the timetable completely at times, or limited the areas of mathematics taught. For example, geometry may have been overlooked in teaching and, therefore, learning. These actions are in contrast to an Education Review Office (2018) report that emphasised the importance of mathematics teaching and learning occurring every school day and of teaching the full mathematics and statistics curriculum. Developing discussion with and between students requires mathematical risk-taking, though eight teachers in this study indicated uncertainty around developing this discussion, and all that it entails, in mathematics teaching and learning. They were aware that they sometimes had difficulty explaining things when working with students and believed that they were not as maths smart as some of their students. They also identified that they were uneasy with the possible thinking that students might share and, when a student shared their thinking, were sometimes confronted with the realisation that their own understanding of a mathematical concept was not as clear as they had originally thought. With anxiety being raised, some teachers were doubtful about their capacity to oversee the classroom environment when they were experiencing raised levels of anxiety. Despite their awareness that holding onto control limited opportunities for development of student agency during mathematics teaching and learning, they were hesitant to lessen their level of control.

Assisting with reducing maths anxiety and maths teaching anxiety

There are varying figures that indicate the occurrence of anxiety around mathematics for teachers, just as in the general population. In 1982 (Widmer & Chavez), it was reported that 16 per cent of 230 teachers in the United States experienced maths anxiety; McAnallen (2010) found that 33 per cent of almost 700 teachers in the United States identified as being maths anxious; in 2015, a research study by Adeyemi Adeyemi (2015) found that

all 111 participants experienced some level of maths anxiety, with 64 per cent experiencing a moderate level and 19 per cent experiencing a high level. Gürbüz and Yıldırım (2016) also shared that all of the 559 participants in their study experienced some level of maths anxiety.

Considering the international information above, it is likely that there may be quite a number of primary teachers experiencing anxiety around mathematics in Aotearoa New Zealand. Consequently, it is crucial that we, the members of the education sector, begin to understand the experiences of teachers who have anxiety around mathematics, whether the mathematics itself or its teaching, and the impact and influence that this anxiety has on their professional role and their teaching of mathematics. Without an understanding of and for these teachers, it is unlikely that we will be in a position to assist in reducing the levels of anxiety that they experience, nor in reducing the chances of learners experiencing maths anxiety.

To this end, it would be useful if team and staff meetings included constructive and non-threatening discussion around positive and negative experiences of teaching mathematics, as well as successful and unsuccessful strategies that have been utilised in teaching practice. These discussions may lead to the provision of assistance in ways to address teacher anxiety around mathematics.

With this understanding and knowledge of maths anxiety, teachers will be in a more positive position to recognise this anxiety in themselves and that experienced by colleagues and learners, and assist in reducing anxiety for mathematics.

It is crucial that mathematical professional development opportunities provided for teachers not only involve the development of mathematical knowledge and teaching practices, but attend to the emotional aspects of teaching and learning also. When professional development involves learning around emotional aspects, it is likely that anxious teachers will engage more positively with professional development opportunities, since intellectual endeavours and emotional aspects cannot be separated. When emotional aspects are acknowledged, teachers with anxiety around mathematics will become less marginalised, and the mathematical ideas and concepts that are a part of professional development are likely to become more meaningful.

It is also important to recognise that anxiety around mathematics is not an individual issue or responsibility. It must also be owned by school personnel, professional development providers, and others. We know that a consequence of the anxiety teachers experience around mathematics may then impact the development of student interest in or disaffection towards mathematics. It is important to consider that the teacher–student relationship with mathematics may go some way to explaining the relatively poor international scores that New Zealand students are achieving.

The above were recommendations from my research study. However, it's also important to hear the voices of teachers who were interviewed in this research study, as they provided ideas for assisting individuals who may experience anxiety around mathematics. These ideas included, though are not limited to:

- developing strong relationships so that individuals feel secure in sharing their anxiety;
- reducing judgemental tendencies, especially for those who may be hesitant to contribute to discussion or may take more time when responding;
- having empathy and patience;
- being aware that there may be people that may not appear anxious, though they are;

- being available to share and listen to questions;
- giving some time to support the development of mathematics understanding and its teaching.

Macy (pseudonym) also shared her thoughts about there being 'a lot of off-the-cuff comments about maths and being bad at maths that [she] thinks perpetuate the anxiety ... a lot of offhand comments made that can be quite negative towards that person who has spoken out, doing everything not to show it [anxiety], and trying to pick up as many clues and messages around teaching that they can.' From Macy's shared thoughts, it may be considered useful that these offhand or off-the-cuff comments are kept in check, especially during team and staff meetings, as well as professional learning and development activities – even during the snack and coffee or tea time.

Conclusion

In this article, you've read about the histories, impacts, and influences of maths anxiety and maths teaching anxiety of 12 primary teachers who self-reported as being maths anxious. You've had the opportunity to hear their voices and listen to their first-hand experience of these anxieties. We are all faced with challenges in our educational roles, and I am hopeful that you take up the challenge to consider the following questions, and act on your considerations where and when necessary.

- How anxious about mathematics and mathematics teaching are teachers within your staff team?
- How might you raise awareness of anxiety around mathematics within your school?
- What support might you provide to teachers who experience anxiety with mathematics and its teaching?
- How might you respond to a teacher who approaches you to share their anxiety around mathematics and its teaching?

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DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S HILLARY AWARDS CELEBRATE YOUTH SERVING THEIR COMMUNITIES

Liz Hawes

Simon Woolf Photography, Wellington PHOTOGRAPHY

RECENTLY THE NZPF national office appointed a young, new staff member. In preparing for the interviews, we drew up a list of personal characteristics to look for in selecting the best candidate. This included having the confidence to push boundaries, a sense of humour, good communication and time management skills, being a problem solver, having self-discipline, the mental toughness to finish a task, responsibility, respectfulness, being a team player, having a sense of service, compassion for others, open-mindedness, being a motivated learner, and possessing leadership. In other words, we were looking for a Duke of Edinburgh's Hillary Award candidate!

The Duke of Edinburgh, HRH Prince Philip, established the Award which has been offered for over sixty years in New Zealand, and is intended to 'challenge young people to dream big and discover their potential.' It is open to young people aged between 14 and 24 years and is run through school programmes, community groups such as the Girl Guides, Cadets, and Scouts New Zealand.

There are five discrete sections to complete to achieve the Gold Award. The first of these is volunteering. Candidates are challenged to give back, through service to their communities. Young people learn all about helping people, the community, the environment, or animals. The 2023 recipients covered many different volunteering activities from working in animal shelters, helping Department of Conservation staff with pest eradication, repairing walking tracks, volunteering in soup kitchens for the homeless, or working in a charity shop, visiting residential care facilities, keeping company with the elderly or entertaining them. For many, these were settings in which they had no previous experience.

Physicality is the next requirement and sustained weekly activities are in order. Candidates might pursue a sport, gym or dance class, or they might plan out a walking or running routine. Of the 2023 graduates, all these activities were covered with some including swimming, rowing, and cycling.

The third section is about skill development. Recipients wrote about their development or continuation of speech, drama, photography, singing and dance skills. Some took up blogging, others gardening including plant and vegetable growing. Dressmaking and drawing attracted a few and First Aid courses and learning about emergency services became a passion for others.

All Duke of Edinburgh Award candidates complete an expedition, the fourth section of the Award requirements. This may be a tramping adventure, canoeing, kayaking, cycling, horse riding or sailing. It may involve more than one of these activities. The Duke of Edinburgh Award organization provides leaders who are also responsible for training candidates. There are specialist trainers for different activities and candidates undergo training with their instructors before commencing the expedition of their choice. The 2023 candidates described the expedition section as the most challenging but also the most rewarding. They listed countless skills and personal attributes

they either acquired or honed, while completing their expedition. Many spoke of persistence, growing self-confidence, of problem solving, resilience and the value of disciplined effort. They challenged themselves to adventurous journeys, tramping through the Abel Tasman National Park, tenting, rock-climbing, white-water rafting, horse riding and climbing on Mt Ruapehu. For many, these were new activities. As Gregory Whitiskie wrote, 'It has given me the self-confidence to try new things and take opportunities when they are given to me.'

Finally, to qualify for the Gold Award, candidates must complete a week-long residential experience. The point of the residential experience is for the candidates to leave their comfort zone and go to a new place to meet, live and work with new people as a group. They work with these same new people throughout the week and socialize with them in the evenings. Developing social skills by interacting with people they don't know, in a setting that is new



The Governor General, Dame Cindy Kiro, congratulates the 2023 recipients and welcomes them to Government House

to them, is an important point of this exercise. Candidates may be doing charitable work, indoor or outdoor work. This year's Gold Award winners reported that the residential experience was an excellent way to establish new friendships and working relationships. Several said the friendships they made have continued and many said that interacting with people from different cultures, different areas of society and with different interests, broadened their own minds and made them more reflective.

It was a privilege to join NZPF President, Leanne Otene, and celebrate the outstanding achievements of 43 young New Zealanders, as they received their Duke of Edinburgh Gold Awards from the Governor General, Dame Cindy Kiro, at Government House this year.

Hope Anderson-Gardner spoke on behalf of all the recipients, and showing her respect and value for the culture of Aotearoa New Zealand, introduced herself to the appreciative audience, by delivering her pepeha in te reo Māori.

She thanked the Governor General, Dame Cindy Kiro, and her husband, His Excellency Dr Richard Davies, for hosting the Awards ceremony and welcoming the recipients and their families into their home – Government House.

She noted that the path to the Gold Award was challenging especially through the Covid years and lockdowns. At the same time, she acknowledged that recipients all felt proud that they had committed to completing the Gold Award which had been a rewarding experience teaching them all a new level of resilience.

She said they had all learned to set goals for the year in completing the Bronze, Silver and Gold levels of the Award. For most, the goals were set with their dedicated Award leaders at school. For herself, she said, completing the physical tramping challenge for the Silver Award was the most testing and there were moments when she wondered if she would make it home! 'My toenails were badly affected,' she said, 'which was not so good when I returned to ballet classes.'

She then paid tribute to the host of volunteers and trainers who supported the recipients on their journey to reach the prized Gold Award. 'For us to complete this Award has taken a village,' she said. 'On behalf of us all, I thank all those who mentored and supported us and led us through this incredible journey.'

She concluded her heartfelt address with a whakatauki.

He waka eke noa We do not achieve alone, but as a collective.

Dame Cindy Kiro had the final word, acknowledging the attainments of all the recipients of the Gold Award. She reported that with the passing of the Duke of Edinburgh, HRH Prince Philip, his son HRH Prince Edward would now take the title of the Duke of Edinburgh and become patron of the Award scheme. 'Prince Edward completed his own Gold Award in 1986,' she said, 'and

is proud to see the high participation levels in New Zealand. A further connection with the Prince is that he completed his own gap year in 1982, as a Junior Master at Whanganui Collegiate School here in New Zealand,' she explained.

Dame Cindy reported that the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme was established in New Zealand in 1963 and the first Gold Award was presented [to Michael Menzies of the New Plymouth Scouts] in 1964. [The first young New Zealand woman to receive hers was Margaret McHugh of the North Dunedin Land Rangers, in 1965]. Since then a quarter of a million young New Zealanders have participated in the scheme.

'All of these young people test themselves and become future leaders for good in our communities,' she said.

'Like Prince Edward, the Award experience spans generations and the basic principles of the Award still resonate. Like kaitiakitanga, these principles are preserved for future generations. Like manaakitanga, participants engage in the service of people, volunteering to give mana to others, to support and care for them.'

'The Duke and later Sir Edmond Hillary, provided legacies that live on in this Award – to achieve what they never thought possible, through motivation, resilience and confidence. These qualities leave you well placed to make your mark on the world,' she said.

She noted that participants in the Award are not alone, thanks to the Award leaders, volunteers, parents and friends who support them. She extended her thanks to them all for making it possible for so many young people to meet the challenges of the Award.

Dame Cindy's final words were addressed directly to the recipients, 'Keep hold of the knowledge you have achieved, live your lives in the

loving service of others and care for the natural world you live in.'

As the Award programme states, by creating opportunities for rangatahi to discover or develop a skill, get physically active, give back to their communities, and take part in an adventure, young people are challenged to leave their comfort zones. Participants build self-confidence and greater resilience, helping to set them up for success in today's uncertain world, where they face more challenges than ever.

The next time I am in a position to help choose a new staff member, I will be adding Duke of Edinburgh's Hillary Award recipient to the list of candidate characteristics.



Hope Anderson-Gardner addresses the 2023 recipients of the Gold award

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A COMMENT ON SCHOOL POLICIES

Fi McMillan PRINCIPALS' ADVICE AND SUPPORT LAWYER

THE WAY WE live, the way we work, and the technology we use is rapidly changing. This means that the rules that govern the way we operate must be flexible enough to allow for change, and they must be regularly updated. School policies are no different.

Policies are the agreement between the school and the community about how things will be managed. Failure to properly follow policy exposes the school to risk of a complaint, and makes it more difficult to justify decisions and actions taken. Given the rapid changes we are experiencing, what might have been appropriate ten, or even five years ago, may no longer capture the types of situations we are seeing today. Policies need to be legally compliant, accessible, current, and relevant. They require regular review.

Let's consider a social media policy for example. It wasn't very long ago that we didn't even know what TikTok was. We are now seeing an increasing number of cases involving TikTok, which like any industry, can create problems for staff, students, and Board members. Does your policy provide clear guidelines for managing potential issues? Policies which are lengthy or overly prescriptive are harder to understand and implement. A policy that attempts to outline every potential issue is likely to leave something out, and make it harder to deal with new issues. If your social media policy prohibits people accessing (on school grounds or equipment) only certain specific social media platforms then it may leave out newer platforms like TikTok.

There are still schools who are catching up with the recently introduced Education (Physical Restraint) Rules 2023 (the Rules) and associated guidance (the Guidance). The Rules required Boards to have in place, by 7 May 2023, a policy on reducing student distress and the use of physical restraint in accordance with the Guidance. The Guidance set out a practical approach to recognising and understanding distress and minimising the use of physical restraint. If your policies have not been updated and

you do not act in accordance with the Rules, then no matter how fairly or reasonably you may have tried to act you are at more risk of a complaint and your actions will be difficult to defend.

While you cannot completely eliminate the risk of complaint from a disgruntled staff member or unhappy parent, ensuring that your policies are up-to-date and consistent with the resources available, including Ministry of Education guidelines and NZSTA advice, will ensure that you can better respond to a complaint and address the issues in a more timely manner. Given that complainants will frequently escalate their complaint to external agencies such as the Ministry, the Teaching Council, or even worse, the media, having followed a policy which is fair and reasonable and legally compliant will put you in the best position to defend the school's actions.

From an employment perspective, when dealing with any staffing matters or complaints, it is essential to follow the relevant policies. Referring to the employee's terms of employment and the school's complaints policy might sound like a basic first step, but you would be surprised how often that step is omitted in the immediate reaction to receiving a complaint.

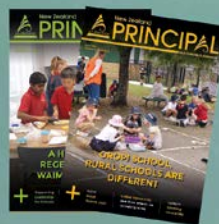
At PASL, where we advise principals on matters affecting their own employment and their relationship with the Board as their employer, we frequently find ourselves reminding Boards that the policies apply to the principal too. The principal is entitled to be properly supported by the Board as their employer, to be treated in good faith, and to have any potential concerns or complaints resolved at the lowest level and in a manner which protects the principal's dignity and mana.

Policies ensure everyone knows what the rules are. They are important for deterring problematic behaviour, and an essential point of reference when things go wrong. It is important that you know what they are, and that you ensure they are up-to-date and understood by your school and community.



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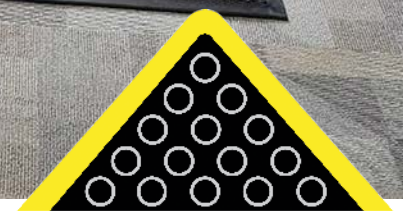


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Q: What factors convinced you to engaged AFS services?

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Q: How has AFS helped address your school's challenges?

A: AFS are readily available to advise and recommend a way forward. One of the highlights for me has been the willingness of AFS to attend board meetings to talk through financial matters that my board might be struggling to understand. With their extensive experience and profound understanding of how school funding works, AFS has provided both reassuring and practical advice, offering invaluable support to overcome obstacles.

Q: What sets AFS apart from other providers?

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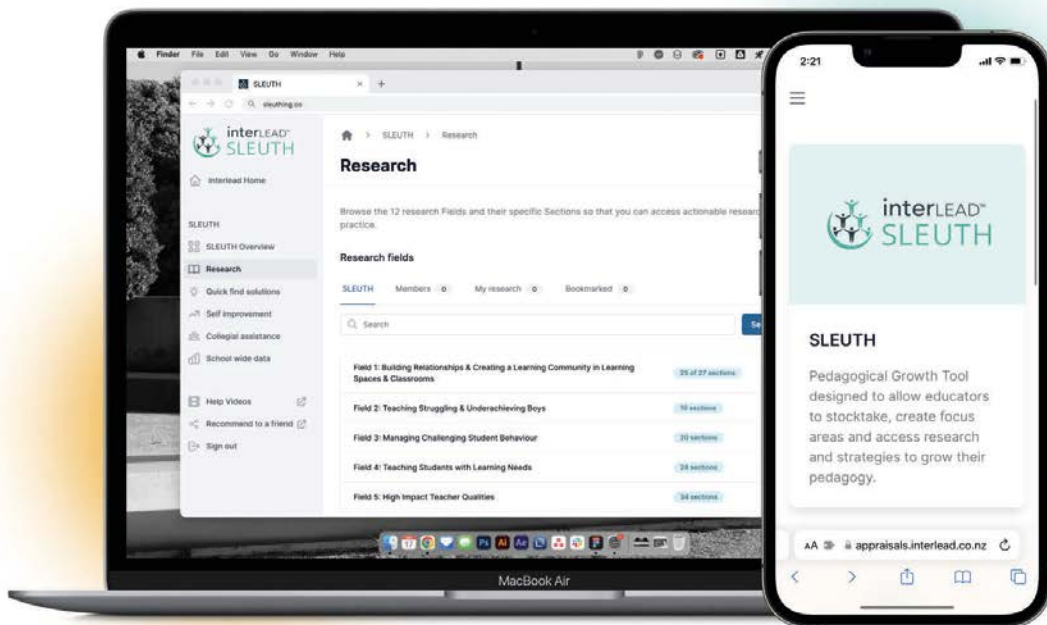


"Personally, switching to AFS has been the single best service provider change that I have made in my 11 years as a school principal. I would recommend them without any reservations."

Martin Hookham
Principal of Korokoro School




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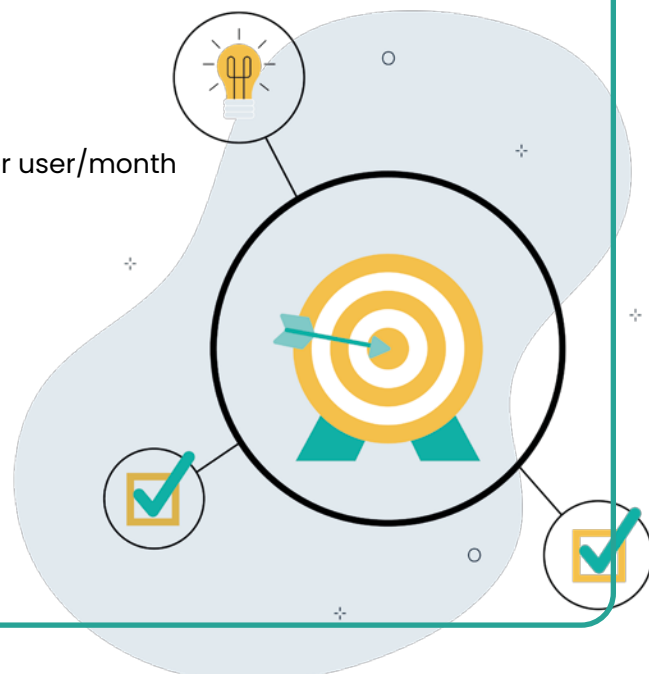
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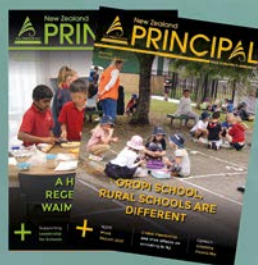
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NZPF ELECTION YEAR MANIFESTO

EACH ELECTION YEAR, NZPF develops its own manifesto to share with all political parties. This year, the manifesto was constructed in collaboration with the Presidents of the Regional Principals' Associations, at the NZPF annual Moot.

It was a lively day, filled with enthusiasm for what principals know is possible and achievable for the tamariki of Aotearoa New Zealand – provided politics did not dominate. To this end, our 2023 manifesto suggests a cross-party coalition for forming

education policy. The coalition would be a balance between all political parties, practitioners, educational experts and academics. In this way, education policy would be based on expert knowledge, research, experience, and understanding of how tamariki learn best. It would be possible to plan long term and create certainty for our sector in the future.

Below is an excerpt from the manifesto. See the full manifesto online: https://nzpf.schoolzineplus.com/_file/media/505/nzpf_manifesto_may_2023_final.pdf.



THE NEW ZEALAND PRINCIPALS' FEDERATION (NZPF) 2023 GENERAL ELECTION MANIFESTO

NZPF Vision for Education

Every young person in Aotearoa New Zealand, whatever their ability, ethnicity, gender, religion or social circumstances has the right to a free, equitable, quality, public education, that is tailored to their needs, and enacts Te Tiriti o Waitangi and its values of partnership.

Political Statement

Education is an investment in our nation's young people who will inherit the successes, failures and challenges of the previous generation. It cannot be left to chance or to politics.

NZPF supports the removal of education from party politics, where education has repeatedly become an election year political football. We support the establishment of a 'Cross-Party Coalition', which would also include practitioners, educational researchers and academics. The 'Coalition' would make considered, long term educational plans that would extend beyond the three-year electoral cycle.

Background to NZPF

The New Zealand Principals' Federation (NZPF), established in 1982, is the largest principals' organisation in the country, with over 2,000 members. The organisation's focus is school leadership, and it is the only organisation working solely on behalf of all school principals in Aotearoa New Zealand. The Federation holds to a set of principled views outlined below.

Principles:

1. A successful public education system, that gives effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, will lead to a more equitable and prosperous country.
2. Positive, collaborative, and constructive working relationships between the education sector, Tangata Whenua and government are critical to the implementation of education policy.
3. State and state integrated schools, Kura Kaupapa Māori and Kura a Iwi receive fair, equitable and adequate resourcing to enable them to achieve agreed educational aims and outcomes.
4. Students leave school with the appropriate lifelong competencies and skills to succeed in a fast-changing world.
5. The governance and management of New Zealand schools are vested in local communities and Boards of Trustees.
6. New Zealanders can expect teachers to provide a high quality, relevant, inclusive, culturally appropriate education system.



NZPF Core beliefs and values

NZPF adheres to the values of Rangatiratanga; Manaakitanga; Kotahitanga and whanaungatanga and operates from a set of core beliefs shared by its members. These include:

1. That the educational interests of the nation's students are central to any position held by NZPF.
2. That through empowering and supporting principals in their leadership roles, the quality of education for young people in Aotearoa New Zealand will be enhanced.
3. That equity of access to quality professional life-long learning for all principals is essential for maintaining a quality education system.

Introduction

This manifesto represents the views of the NZPF membership and includes substantial input from the 120 regional presidents and the NZPF national executive.

NZPF acknowledges the extraordinary circumstances facing our nation in this election year 2023. After navigating through a global health crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic for three years, we have continued to register covid cases this year affecting the education of students and the staff in our schools. In addition, the North Island of New Zealand has endured the effects of severe flooding in the Coromandel and Auckland and devastation wrought by Cyclone Gabrielle in Gisborne and the Hawke's Bay.

NZPF acknowledges that the country now faces challenges to rebuild the infrastructure, including affected schools, of the Hawke's Bay and Gisborne regions and invest in remedial repairs caused by the Coromandel and Auckland flooding. We acknowledge that the Government's priorities for this election year will have altered to accommodate these demands.

This manifesto outlines what practitioners describe as necessary for a successful free and compulsory education system for Aotearoa New Zealand in 2023. NZPF recognises that education faces competing demands this election, including from its own Early Childhood sector. NZPF does not expect that every funding need will be met immediately, but would strongly recommend that the following three priority areas be fully funded:

- (1) Further reductions in staff:student ratios for years 4–9.
- (2) A boost in the number of learning support specialists and teacher aides to manage the growing diversity of learning support needs in all schools.
- (3) On-going free and equitable PLD for teachers and principals to implement the much-needed Curriculum Refresh.

Curriculum, Learning, Progress and Attendance

The world of work and life requires young people to be educated as creative problem solvers, communicators, critical, reflective thinkers, and cooperative team players. That means young people must learn to manage their own learning and their own lives with resilience and persistence to participate in and contribute to their society.

To achieve these goals, NZPF supports that we offer a broad, rich well supported curriculum that provides multiple pathways and approaches to learning, a set of key competencies and plentiful learning experiences both inside and outside the classroom.

1. For children to learn, children must attend school. We continue to be challenged by the persistent absences of some groups of children and we are grateful for the attention that attendance rates have attracted in the wake of COVID-19. We appreciate the appointment of additional Attendance Officers and look forward to sharing ideas about how this resource might be used most effectively to lift our attendance rates back to acceptable levels.
2. Principals recommend that the best use of attendance funding and attendance officers is to support schools in building local campaigns and initiatives for encouraging young people back to school and re-engaging them in their learning.
3. The one most influential factor impacting on a student's learning is the quality of the teacher. NZPF supports every teacher being a quality teacher. It is concerning that we are experiencing a shortage of quality teachers and graduating teachers are not staying in the profession long-term.
4. It is essential that we address the teacher shortage by valuing teachers as professionals and attracting and retaining high quality educators through better pay, conditions, and support.
5. Supporting Beginning Teachers will improve overall teacher quality and effectiveness. In-school support and mentoring needs to be longer term and mentor teachers must be given the appropriate release time and support to perform this role well.
6. Reviewing and improving Initial Teacher Education programmes will better prepare educators for the classroom so they can offer a broad curriculum including Music, Arts, Drama and Physical Education.
7. Given the diversity of our students, smaller class sizes are essential. Reducing the staff to student ratios of each year level, up to year 9, will allow for more individualised attention and constructive student–teacher interactions.
8. The reduction of student:staff ratio from 1:29 to 1:28 over two years for years 4–8 students is a welcome start but to lift achievement in these and across all years, staff:student ratios will need to be dropped much further.
9. NZPF recommends that the staff:student ratios for years 2–9 in English medium schools should be the same

as years 2 and 3, which is 1:23. This would also address the inequities of staff:student ratios varying across the school.

10. In our environment of self-managed schools, principals and teachers in partnership with their Boards and communities set their own localised curriculum.
11. NZPF recognises the special benefits of consulting Hapu and Iwi in this process to ensure that the culture and curriculum of the school is inclusive of a Māori world view. NZPF recommends that there be consideration to financing Iwi in this role.
12. Schools are proud of the newly launched Aotearoa New Zealand Histories curriculum, and the opportunity it has provided for young people and teachers to learn, in partnership with their local Iwi and hapu, the history of their whenua and the stories of their place. They also embrace the pedagogical approach with its “Know, Understand, Do” model of learning.
13. NZPF supports the continuation of this model for all curriculum delivery as the most successful way to make curriculum relevant, motivating and to meet the aspirations and learning needs of the students in their schools.
14. The Curriculum Refresh, launched in the last two years has been welcomed by schools and has given teachers and principals the opportunity to re-examine their teaching methods of subjects such as literacy and numeracy, in which student success rates have been falling. It has also given the profession the opportunity to focus on what comprises the national curriculum – and is therefore non-negotiable – and what comprises the local curriculum. This exercise has highlighted the critical importance of ongoing curriculum support and PLD for teachers and principals who lead the curriculum in their schools. It has also highlighted the need for a Common Practice Model which NZPF endorses.
15. NZPF recommends that we adopt a broad definition of what education success is and how to assess it and that practitioners be invited to contribute to the debate.
16. NZPF opposes learning assessment that is in any way standardised and is opposed to any form of assessment that becomes a measure of a school’s performance. Any such assessment would fly in the face of the personalised learning approach. NZPF favours ongoing formative assessment so that teachers can plan next learning steps for each student.
17. When considering achievement/assessment as a measure of student success NZPF supports a curriculum band approach where different levels of the curriculum may take one, two or even three years to achieve, rather than the (yearly) age-based approach. The age approach would assume that all students of the same age can achieve at the same level and at the same rate. This is not true of learners in Aotearoa New Zealand where we have high levels of child poverty, huge income disparities between families, high numbers of ESOL children, systemic racism and where data often shows that our Māori and Pacific Island students lag behind others. Whilst we can be proud to have many of our students achieving at the highest level in the world, the gap between those students and those at the bottom is the biggest in the OECD group of countries with whom we compare ourselves.
18. NZPF favours a sampling approach to create a picture of the schooling system’s performance at a national level. The National Monitoring Study of Student Achievement (NMSSA) has been a successful model and NZPF recommends it be continued.
19. We recognise the importance of an ongoing service of curriculum advisory for schools which we believe is best delivered through the Ministry of Education.

Conclusion

New Zealand has a Curriculum to be proud of. Key to building on its strengths lies with the current Curriculum Refresh. This work is progressing well and NZPF acknowledges the partnership with the sector in the design and writing of the new curriculum levels and content.

Schools in Aotearoa New Zealand have high levels of diversity and therefore must apply pedagogical approaches to match that diversity. Children arrive at school with very uneven levels of readiness to learn and with uneven learning support needs and our schools must be funded to cater for these differences.

Smaller classes, continuous teacher PLD, valuing teachers, preparing trainee teachers to arrive in school ready to teach a broad curriculum, and reducing administration tasks for teachers, ongoing formative assessment would all help lift the success rates of our young learners.

NZPF recommends that the Curriculum Refresh process is slowed so that the necessary PLD can be delivered and principals who lead curriculum in their schools will be well prepared to implement the Curriculum Refresh with their teachers. To achieve this the Curriculum Advisors in the Ministry will need to be well voiced in the reforms and available to deliver their expertise to the principals.

Equitable Delivery of Education for Schools and Students

For the past two decades NZPF has highlighted inequities in the education system and suggested ways to address these. Over time,

continued, see full manifesto: https://nzpf.schoolzineplus.com/_file/media/505/nzpf_manifesto_may_2023_final.pdf





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How well do you know the ins and outs?

Lester Flockton lester.flockton@gmail.com

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL IS no longer mandatory for teachers and as of 1 February 2023 for principals. The Teaching Council has replaced it with the Professional Growth Cycle (PGC) which is now a requirement for every teacher's registration. The PGC is built around the Council's five 'elements' (do you know what the 5 elements are?), with a central stipulation of meeting the Council's six 'Standards' or 'Paerewa' (do you know what the 6 standards are?).

The replacement of appraisal with the PGC is centered on a notion of 'professional trust'. There are few hard and fast rules around how it should be put into practice. Some argue that this new thing is like a marshmallow: it has no teeth. Others argue that its greatest weakness lies with the likely looseness in how it will be interpreted, practiced and checked.

Fragilities aside, there are already suggestions that many principals and teachers think the PGC is pretty straight forward and doesn't require too much knowledge or effort. Others are not so gung-ho.

When preparing a seminar for principals and presiding board members late last year we were very aware of various opinions and attitudes of the kind mentioned above. Importantly, the seminar was focused on ensuring that those who took the time to attend would obtain critical knowledge and capability for doing PGCs in their schools with professional integrity, confidence and economy.

We therefore kicked off the seminar by getting everyone to do a non-disclosure 'pre-test' (quiz, self-assessment, examination, reflection, survey, . . .) to find out whether or not they already knew all (or most) of what they really should know. That is, did they need to stay on at the seminar or could it be a waste of valuable time? As it turns out, everyone admitted to struggling to answer many of the items. But no need for despair. A couple of hours later they all graduated and congratulated themselves with 100 per cent confident answers. Time and attention paid off!

That aforesaid 'quiz' follows below. So how robust is *your* knowledge? If you haven't done your homework, you might be surprised about what you *think* you know.

PGC Seminar Assessment

1. What triggered the introduction of PGCs?
2. Principals will no longer have annual performance reviews.
 - a) True
 - b) False
3. Principals must join a PGC network.
 - a) True
 - b) False
4. PGC requirements are the same for both principals and teachers.
 - a) All of them
 - b) Some of them
 - c) None of them
5. What is the central reference point for a PGC?
 - a) The elements
 - b) The Standards
 - c) The Leadership Strategy
6. The 'guidelines' for the structure of PGCs are:
 - a) The Standards
 - b) The Element
 - c) The Leadership Strategy
7. How many of the 6 Standards can you name?
8. There is only one development focus for each PGC.
 - a) True
 - b) False
9. The principal decides the PGC cycle focus/topic for staff.
 - a) True
 - b) False
10. All teachers in a school must have the same PGC focus/topic?
11. A PGC must last for one year.
 - a) True
 - b) False
12. The presiding board member decides the principal's endorser.
 - a) True
 - b) False
13. Another principal in a PGC network can be an endorser for a principal in that network.
 - a) True
 - b) False
14. What is the essential qualification required of an endorser?
15. Who cannot be an endorser?
16. The endorser must back up his or her decisions with documented evidence.
 - a) True
 - b) False
17. What is the purpose of observation of teacher practice?
18. What is required for endorsing the triennial renewal of a practicing teacher certificate?
19. Evidential documents are required for confirming that teachers meet the Standards and have participated in a PGC.
 - a) True
 - b) False
20. PGC networks should be locally based.
 - a) True
 - b) False



21. Who may be involved in giving the principal feedback on a PGC 'journey'?
22. Support staff must have a PGC.
 - a) True
 - b) False
23. What is the biggest change from the previous appraisal system to the PGC system?
24. The Ministry of Education must approve the focus of your PGC.
 - a) True
 - b) False
25. ERO will want to see evidence that the school's PGC is compliant.
 - a) True
 - b) False
 - c) Anyone's guess

Need to find answers

The following websites should give you all you need to know:

- <https://teachingcouncil.nz/assets/Professional-Growth-Cycle/PGC-Principals-Tumuaki-and-ECE-Professional-leaders-FAQs.pdf>
- <https://teachingcouncil.nz/professional-practice/professional-growth-cycle/>
- <https://teachingcouncil.nz/faqs/faqs-professional-growth-cycle/>
- https://teachingcouncil.nz/assets/Professional-Growth-Cycle/TC-Professional-Growth-Cycle-for-Teachers_Elements.pdf





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MISTAKES THAT PRINCIPALS SHOULD AVOID – LESSONS FROM OUR POLITICIANS

Martin Thrupp thrupp@waikato.ac.nz



IT'S BEEN A regular theme of my columns that as educators not *all* of our focus should be on our own schools and communities. Rather a lively interest in the wider world can reap many rewards, including for those who follow the daily news.

The much reported blunders of some of our central government and local body politicians in Aotearoa in recent times provides a great example of learnings to be had. The leadership context may be different than in schools but it is not hard to imagine relevant mistakes amongst principals as well.

It has been conflicts of interest that have undone MPs Michael Woods and Stuart Nash, and the former Race Relations Commissioner, Meng Foon. Amongst principals, conflicts of interest often seem to involve family members.

At the minor nepotism end it may be that a principal's spouse or partner is employed by the school and receives some sort of privileged treatment, even if it is just the joys of pillow-talk. This probably causes some unhappiness amongst staff in many schools. At its worst – think of the Auckland school reported to have employed a known rapist closely related to the principal – nepotism can rip a school community apart.

Stuart Nash's problem was 'loose lips', sharing his opinion of decisions around the Cabinet table with business people who were his supporters. Principals get a lot of privileged information as well. They need to learn to make very good judgements about what can and can't be shared in any situation.

As well as conflicts of interest, Michael Woods was also guilty of not 'getting around to it', in his case not getting rid of shares despite numerous reminders. This makes me think of some of the less palatable desk work involved in being a principal, such as applying for funds or other resources.

Principals might put off such applications repeatedly, and some might never get done in time. But sadly it's the school and sometimes particular staff or students that will miss out as a consequence.

Not all failings of politicians or principals are immediately obvious, with some it's more a matter of emphasis. I'm thinking now about the leadership of Jacinda Ardern and Chris Hipkins.

After Jacinda Ardern left the PM's role this year, many commentators summed up her time in office as a leader promoting an abundance of ideas but with poor execution. This signals how important it is for principals to not just offer ideas but to follow through and help their staff actually get things done.

Indeed one way that principals can cause a lot of resentment

amongst their staff is by being 'missing in action', having lots of days or part days away from school, for reasons that seem somewhat spurious. Principals may be privileged compared to other school staff in having control over the use of their time, but being present and involved at school and not too early out the gate will reap many rewards in terms of staff relationships.

One variation on the theme reflects our social media era – principals turning up at school events such as camps or productions long enough to create Facebook posts but not truly mucking in.

Of course, there's the opposite problem: doing too much. In the political sphere Chris Hipkins has been a good example.

You'll recall that before becoming PM he was Minister of Education, Public Service, Covid Response and Police. He was also Leader of the House. Holding multiple portfolios, he became a regular Mr Fix-It for the Labour-led Government.

Personally I couldn't believe how much Hipkins was taking on and felt it was disappointing for the education sector where numerous matters would have likely benefitted from the attention of the Minister.

Chris Hipkins would have no doubt argued 'needs must', as Labour struggled to find enough experience amongst its ranks to fill the portfolios needed. And principals are also familiar with 'needs must' determining all kinds of decisions that are less than optimal.

Still, becoming the solution to numerous school activities and developments is not an approach that principals should seek to emulate if they are to grow the people around them. So, again, it's that careful balancing act of being involved but not over-involved that's required.

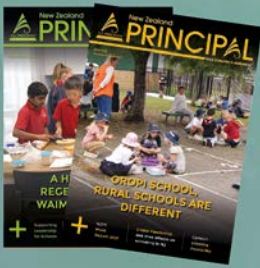
Also in the news, Minister of Justice Kiri Allan was accused of being too tough on her staff, including yelling and screaming at them. (Allan has denied this and there are no formal complaints). It serves to remind that for principals there are many interpersonal hazards, especially after the impact Covid has had on staff expectations and on mental health.

Dealing with serious concerns about staff is typically a long game where principals do very well if they can objectively take advice and pursue suitable employment processes. Some principals struggle to contain their frustration, others live in fear of personal grievance and are reluctant to take any action. In many cases, principals also have to deal with the attitudes of other staff who for legal reasons are unable to be informed of the whole picture.

... principals might as well **LEARN** from the mistakes of other public figures who end up **MAKING HEADLINES** for the wrong reasons.



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Auckland Mayor Wayne Brown raises yet another problem – poor communications. For principals, this often means staff or Board chair only hearing about things at the same time they have gone to the community. As in most organisations, the general expectation should be ‘no surprises’.

Finally, there was Wellington Mayor Tori Whanau getting a little too inebriated in public (whether or not she actually said, ‘Do you know who I am?’). Principals also need to recognise their positioning and to be careful about consuming alcohol in particular settings. Probably, with schools and children involved, even more so than the Mayor of Wellington.

Raising all of these cases of politicians making mistakes might seem judgemental or even a matter of taking pleasure from the misfortune of others, but for me it’s been more in the spirit that ‘to err is human.’ Leadership roles in education also have numerous fish hooks, so principals might as well learn from the mistakes of other public figures who end up making headlines for the wrong reasons.



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FROM WHAKAMĀ TO WHAKAMANA: FROM SHAME TO EMPOWERMENT

HELEN KINSEY-WIGHTMAN

FEELINGS OF SHAME are powerful.

As school leaders we work in a range of situations where levels of shame are high.

In my first term as tumuaki of a Y0–6 primary school I have spent time supporting a group of children struggling to regulate their emotions. As I have talked through incidents that have led to them getting angry, I have found that the moment when they lose their cool and lash out verbally and/or physically is frequently when someone else (often a friend) uses the word, 'Shame!'

There is often shame present for whānau we work with, when talking about the learning and behaviour of their tamariki and rangitahi. Often, because school is a safe place for children, we know a lot of detail about the home life of our students. In meeting with teachers and school leaders, whānau will need to talk about issues within their homes that have led to trauma and shame for their children such as marriage breakups, family violence, addiction, poverty, homelessness, grief and health issues. Parents may also be coming to terms with physical and neural challenges such as ADHD, ASD, dyslexia which are likely to have long-term impacts on the learning and behaviour of their tamaiti.

When supporting staff who are struggling with their mental health, discussions about workload, EAP access and sick leave are often the visible part of the iceberg. Underneath lie the feelings of shame and worthlessness that may have led to mental health challenges and also are exacerbated by seeking help. I don't think I have ever supported a staff member to access mental health support or take leave without them saying, 'I feel so embarrassed . . .'

As in so many areas, whilst most of us are not trained counsellors/psychologists/HR managers (for those of you who are rural principals insert plumber/pest controller/receptionist!) we often need to step into these areas and do the best we can.

So what do we need to know about shame?

Brene Brown says, 'The difference between shame and guilt is the difference between "I am bad" and "I did something bad".' The Foundation for Post-Traumatic Healing and Complex Trauma Research¹ explains the neuroscience of shame thus:

'When faced with shame, the brain reacts as if it were facing

physical danger, and activates the sympathetic nervous system generating the flight/fight/freeze response. The flight response triggers the feeling of needing to disappear, and children who have this response will try to become invisible. They will literally look smaller and their expressions become blank. In comparison,

the fight response expresses itself as verbal and behavioural aggression by the embarrassed person towards the other who caused them to feel ashamed. The freeze response is what normally occurs when people are faced with trauma where they feel trapped and powerless. The freeze response allows us to survive situations where intolerable things are happening to us. The freeze response to shame has negative consequences too. The freeze response upsets our ability to think clearly, which results in beliefs that we are stuck in a situation where we

have no power because we have something wrong with us.'

We are a PB4L kura. In a recent staff meeting, I spoke about the (inappropriate) use of shame as a behaviour management tool. The first task was, *Think about a time when you were shamed/humiliated by a teacher . . . How did it make you feel? What did you learn?* The room was a buzz of discussion – everyone had a story – none of them positive. We talked about times when we still use shame as a discipline tool by pointing out a child's behaviour in front of others. Those teachers who use this strategy frequently, will definitely be familiar with flight/fight/freeze responses.

A useful way to understand responses to shame is to use Nathanson's Compass of Shame model. Nathanson identifies four possible responses to feelings of shame, see page 36.

In recent years, we have heard a lot about trauma informed practice and as a result I think we are less likely to label children as 'naughty' or 'defiant' but rather to see their behaviour as a response to a trigger. Dolezal and Gibson argue for moving beyond a trauma-informed approach and towards what they call shame-sensitive practice.

*'Trauma has been positioned as a significant public health issue which many argue necessitates a trauma-informed approach to health, care and social services . . . Shame is a key emotional after effect of experiences of trauma, and an emerging literature argues that we may "have failed to see the obvious" by neglecting to acknowledge the influence of shame on post-trauma states.'*²



1 <https://cptsfoundation.org/2019/04/11/the-neuroscience-of-shame>

2 <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41599-022-01227-z>



So what is shame sensitive practice? To understand this, I would recommend reading Dolezal and Gibson's article – their conclusion is, 'Organisations must actively work to create the conditions, policy and practices that promote shame-sensitivity, where relationships based on dignity, respect, empathy and trust are the first priority within workplaces and when delivering services.'

This is not easy work – as a post-colonial society, Aotearoa New Zealand's attachment to shame is deeply embedded. However, we are also a young and agile country and we learn fast. We used to believe that smacking children was an effective method of discipline. According to Save the Children's 2018 survey:

*'Public tolerance of physical punishment of children continues to decline. Support for violence free parenting has more than doubled since 2008, with 43% of New Zealanders disagreeing that it is okay to physically punish children, up from just 20% in 2008. Parents disagree with the statement at an even higher rate with 50% completely disagreeing with physical punishment, 30% being unsure, and just 19% continuing to support the use of physical punishment . . . Eleven years after the law change support for violence free parenting is now significantly higher.'*³

I believe it is valuable to talk to our staff about how we can minimise experiences of shame for everyone in our kura community. Because after all, 'Where did we ever get the crazy idea that to make people feel better we have to first make them feel worse?'⁴

3 <https://www.savethechildren.org.nz/assets/Files/Reports/STC-Childrens-Report-DIGITAL.pdf>

4 Nelsen, Lott and Glenn (2000)



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