

MOOT 2017

Liz Hawes EDITOR

THE NZPF MOOT is always a highly anticipated event on the NZPF calendar. It is the opportunity for regional representatives to make their contribution to the work programme of NZPF.

This year, high profile television journalist, Jehan Casinader chaired the day linking the sessions with his wonderful repertoire of stories and humour. He also made his own contributions through insightful interpretation of the day's debates.

The President's Opening

As is tradition, the Moot was declared open with a speech from the NZPF president. This year, President Whetu Cormick told his audience, the theme of the Moot was change and how to navigate it.

He opened with the question, 'What's new about change in



NZPF President Whetu Cormick captures the room's attention with his opening speech

education?' He went on to explain that the world of education is in never ending flux and that was fine, if change had meaning and was prompted by professional and academic rationale or by new research. Change was normal and expected. Equally worthy of consideration were ideas for change prompted by our school communities, he said.

He then traced educational change from the time of '*Tomorrow's Schools*', noting that this period provided the most radical transformation of the school system since its inception in the 1800s. It was not supported by all at the time, he said, but there were aspects which were thoroughly embraced including giving governance of local schools to communities through establishing Boards of Trustees and making schools self-managing.

'Underneath some of the turbulence,' he said, 'sat some good practical ideas as the old school Boards had become heavily bureaucratic and controlling.' In other words, there were some good sound reasons for '*Tomorrow's Schools*' changes.

Similarly, he said the Curriculum Review of the 1990s was welcomed and embraced by schools and communities. Again, good reasons drove the changes and the process was deliberately slow to allow for meaningful consultation with communities, so that strong relationships between school and community could be fostered and changes could be properly embedded.

'NZ today has a world class curriculum that is both rich in values and competencies and broad based academically and we are immensely proud of it,' he said.

The next tranche of changes came in 2008 and these have continued unabated for the past nine years, he said. Changes began with the standardisation of assessment – the introduction of national standards. What was different about this and subsequent changes, he said, was that there appeared to be no



Whetu Cormick, NZPF President, gives the opening address

call for these educational changes from the profession, from the academics, from new research or from the public. They were just announced and the profession was expected to accept them. Whilst it was clear that assessment through national standards would never address any genuine concerns for students struggling with learning, national standards were consistent with moves towards standardisation and testing by many other OECD countries. They would create a data source for measuring school performance so that schools could be publicly compared. This notion of comparing school performance on a narrow set of measures became central to so many more changes that followed.

It took some time for people to realise, he said, that what was driving the most recent changes was an ideological shift associated with what is commonly known as the *Global Education Reform Movement*. It is a movement by which education is viewed purely in economic terms.

The next changes he described were tied up with the '*Investing*



The political panel in action

in *Educational Success*’ policy. The policy was presented as supporting collaboration across clusters (later to become Communities of Learning or CoL) of schools to improve learning and teaching through the sharing of teaching and leadership expertise. Three years later, Cormick told us, it seems the CoL are intended for much more. The goal posts have been expanded into the administration arena and the idea of saving money has been introduced to the mix.

He assured the gathering that these issues and other regional concerns would be debated in the course of the day. He said NZPF would also present their educational manifesto to political candidates in this year’s election. The manifesto priorities, he said, are designed to give the young people of New Zealand the best opportunity for a successful future.

Minister of Education Hon Hekia Parata

As this would be her last address to an NZPF audience, the Minister was introduced by President Whetu Cormick who thanked her for her unfailing support of the NZPF Moot and annual conferences throughout her tenure as Minister. ‘Minister Parata has always responded positively to our invitations to speak at NZPF events’, he said, ‘and we are grateful for that.’

In keeping with the Moot’s theme, Minister Parata opened her

address saying that, ‘Change is a constant [in education] and our challenge is how we respond to that.’ She proudly told her audience, ‘I am not in parliament just for the sake of change.’ Rather, she said, ‘I am driven by analysis [to create] a robust [education] system fit for the twentieth century.’

She addressed four issues in her final speech to principals. These were Communities of Learning (CoL); the funding review; property; and digital connection.

The 1989 ‘*Tomorrow’s Schools*’, she said, could not have anticipated the speed of development of social media platforms and the collapse of distance and time. Previous [education] systems were about what is best for teachers, whereas she wanted a system where students and their individual pathways were at the centre.

‘Sectors are functional ways of organising how adults work,’ she said, ‘but they create barriers for parents and kids navigating transitions.’ She went on to say that Communities of Learning (CoL) were designed so that transitions would be smooth because they focus on the whole pathway.

On the funding review she said, ‘We want to know what it costs to deliver a year of curriculum because we know kids can be behind a whole year.’ She acknowledged that some kids carry risks of disadvantage and that while the decile system helped,



MC for the day, Jehan Casinader kept the day flowing with his insightful observations and pertinent stories



Minister Hon Hekia Parata addresses principals for the last time

it was too blunt. 'We need to better target those kids,' she said.

Her answer to working out how to target funding for disadvantage was to use data because data would point to meaningful pedagogical decisions.

On property she was direct. 'It may seem like a crisis for an individual school but five billion dollars are going into property now,' she said, 'which is one third more.'

She went on to explain that there has been phenomenal growth and so decisions about individual property requests have to be judged against national priorities.

She also noted that our schools are the most digitally connected in the world with \$700 million spent on digital connections. 'How you use it,' she said, 'is the measure of the true value of digital connection.'

The Minister said that the core challenge for leaders of schools was to know whether you are causing change and ask yourself, how do you know?

Questions to the Minister

Question: Please elaborate on the 'right data' that Government has collected to give you confidence that you can target funding for human and material resources to deliver the curriculum.

Answer: No, we don't know [how to target funding to deliver the curriculum]. There are two separate things. There are schools and curriculum and success. Kids are persistently not learning on criteria used for all schools. It's about learning outcomes. We are funding for quality teaching and learning for good life choices. The NZ Curriculum is fabulous in theory with values and competencies and too often we do not see enough about delivering that curriculum. How much does it cost for a year? There are many variables like the strength of the teacher and whānau and community and the aptitude of the kids.

I have a technical reference group to advise me on this and people in the group say it is hard. There is a second [aspect] and that is the extra supplementary funding for those at risk of not succeeding because of disadvantage. We know that if ten kids have the exact same factors, three will not succeed. So that's an indicator. Looking to disabilities, what do we have to supplement there? And [then there are] rural kids and what we know is that operations money for water, light and heating has not always gone to that and property maintenance has not always been kept up to date, so tax payers pay twice because it still has to be done.

Question: Our biggest problem is highly challenging students. How does the Education Update help with special education? Trying to work with parents who are not always supportive is a problem.

Answer: There is no one set answer. It's not all about the Education Update. It's [what you do] in schools. It's PB4L and having better relationships. When you say, 'how has the Education Update helped? We are still in the process of it. There

is a pilot running in Waiariki, a triangulated assessment with the specialists, the parents and the child. It is an IEP (independent education programme) approach, and how to provide wrap around services with one person liaising between the family the school and the specialist. We are looking for early intervention because this makes the difference

Question: The cold hard reality is that it can take twelve months to get an assessment for a child with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome or with ADHD. We have an increase in these and

other severe behaviour disorders in kids. We can have behaviourally disordered kids turning up at school with knives. The interim relief fund is far too small to keep these and the rest of our children safe. What is the Government doing about this?

Answer: We spend \$630 million on special education. It is true that more kids are presenting with challenges and health issues. We looked at Northland and used a

social investment approach. We now have a team up there. We do not have an endless pipeline of money. It has to be balanced against demands for roads in Auckland and health. That's the context. To suggest that we are doing nothing is not right. We are improving the system. I cannot speak for the District Health Board about assessments for Fetal Alcohol Syndrome kids.

Question: [As Minister] you espouse passion for collaborative practice. I am in a CoL and we want to collaborate. The model needs more flexibility. How do we change the model? [Secondly] We want the Government to build a high trust model with teachers and principals. It is too 'top down'.

Answer: I don't agree it is 'top down'. I established inclusive policy development through the Cross Sector Forums. That never existed before. This involves the sector voice. We didn't consult with you on national standards because that was a [National Party] manifesto commitment. Parties put up policies. That's what elections are about. I have been available to any organisation and met every invitation. In all these processes it doesn't mean we agree on everything. I have also taken delegations overseas.

Secondly on the [CoL] model, adjustments are being made but as with 'Tomorrow's Schools' we didn't say you could opt out of having Boards of Trustees. We have put over \$300 million aside for CoL. There are not limitless resources. Until Achievement challenges are endorsed we cannot appoint positions. There is \$300 million waiting for those roles to be approved.

Question: I don't want lead teachers out of my school, replaced with relievers. There just aren't the relievers there anyway.

Answer: That is a system issue. Teacher supply is a big problem especially attracting good teachers into the system. I spoke to twelve secondary schools and asked how many of the year thirteen students were encouraged into teacher training. The answer was none. I am told there are particular issues in Auckland with teacher supply. The number of teachers that left Auckland in the last year is 2.1 per cent. The vacancy rate is 1.5 per cent



Principals share their regional concerns

which is half of what it was in 2007.

Question: I want to know what it is that the government values about what we do for kids in our role.

Answer: I don't know any other Government that has put \$300 million extra into education. We may not agree on a whole lot of things but we have increased funding to education by 35 per cent over seven years. The number of kids in school has increased 3.5 per cent. The operations grant has gone up 16 per cent and the CPI 10.9 per cent. We have spent \$5 billion on property and in Christchurch we spent \$1.37 billion to rebuild the network. We absolutely value education.

President Whetu Cormick thanked the Minister for her address and for answering the questions. He wished her well for her future in retirement.

Top Issues from the Regions

The regional presidents, as is tradition, shared with each other the most pressing issues for schools in their regions. This year there were no surprises with special education and Communities of Learning (CoL) rating as the most critical topics by far. These

were followed by principal, teacher and student wellbeing, issues specifically affecting Auckland, school property and the shortage of quality teachers and relievers across the country.

The regional presidents were clear that they wanted some action from their national federation on special education and the issues associated with CoL.

As this issue of *NZ Principal* goes to print, the NZPF President, Whetu Cormick has met with the Secretary for Education and other Ministry officials to raise concerns about both issues. He has also issued a media release on the state of special education showing that across the country principals are at breaking point trying to accommodate students with very challenging behaviour disorders. Since then the newly appointed Minister for Education Nikky Kaye, in conjunction with the Minister for Social Development, has

announced new funding of \$34.7 million, specifically to address problems schools are facing as they try to accommodate students with these very challenging behaviours.

A survey designed to provide a comprehensive representation of CoL has also been disseminated to all schools. It is expected



Education Spokesperson for the New Zealand First Party, Tracey Martin, delivers a hard hitting suite of policies which would see an end to Charter schools and national standards and reaffirmation of the New Zealand Curriculum

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that an analysis of the survey data will be available mid-May. The findings will be shared with all principals. Further action will be taken commensurate with the findings.

Political Panel

As is customary in an election year, political party representatives were invited to briefly address the regional principals who had submitted questions to MC Jehan Casinader. We acknowledge and thank Chris Hipkins, Labour; Catherine Delahunty, Greens; Tracey Martin, NZ First and David Seymour, ACT for responding positively to our invitation.

The panel provided lively debate which was skilfully chaired by the astute Casinader. It quickly became clear that all of the representatives found the current Government direction for education lacking and surprisingly found more in common with each other than not. The outlier was Seymour and his determination to support the Charter School alternative which found no favour with the audience or any of the opposition

parties – who all vowed to get rid of Charter schools if they were elected to Government.

What became clear was that the opposition parties present, given the chance, would change the direction of education. It would no longer follow the Global Education Reform Movement (GERM) agenda which has dominated in New Zealand for the last nine years.

Another pleasing aspect of listening to the political debate was that many of the priorities for education listed in the NZPF manifesto were endorsed by the political representatives present.

Squeezed in between what was otherwise heavy political debate were two sessions on how principals might look after themselves and become more resilient. These sessions were presented by Sven

Hansen and Declan Scott of the 'Resilience Institute'.

The closing of another very successful Moot was led by NZPF Kaumatua, Haterei Temo.



Principals debate their regional concerns in groups

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THE NEW ZEALAND PRINCIPALS' FEDERATION (NZPF)

2017 GENERAL ELECTION MANIFESTO

Introduction

THE NEW ZEALAND Principals' Federation (NZPF), established in 1982, is the largest principals' organisation in the country, with 2,178 members. The organisation's focus is school leadership and it is the only organisation working solely on behalf of all New Zealand school principals.

Principles:

1. A successful public education system will lead to a more equitable and prosperous country
2. Positive, collaborative and constructive working relationships between the education sector and government are critical to the implementation of education policy
3. State and state integrated schools 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 the 21st century 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 education system

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 New Zealand's young people 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

NZPF wants every young person in New Zealand to have the best education, to succeed at school and to succeed in life

NZPF believes that education is the lynchpin to achieving the nation's ambitions socially, environmentally and economically. Because of its importance NZPF believes education policy should be developed by a cross-party accord in collaboration with the profession.

Schools in Aotearoa New Zealand celebrate the diversity of young people, of communities and of the different contexts within which they operate. They strive to be inclusive and equitable and to produce well rounded citizens who will contribute to fostering a democratic, tolerant, caring, fair and

prosperous society. They are ambitious for every young person to reach their learning potential.

That means educating young people to be creative problem solvers, critical, reflective thinkers, and cooperative team players. It means young people learn to manage their own learning and their own lives with resilience and persistence and they learn to participate and contribute to their society.

What do schools need for young people to succeed?

- A system of education that provides structures, processes and procedures to facilitate world class teaching and learning
- A profession of high quality, publicly trusted, well trained teachers who provide safe, stimulating, relevant learning experiences
- High quality experienced school leadership
- Access to specialised experts and professionals to support the learning and behavioural needs of all young people who require these services
- Sufficient teachers and teacher aides to meet the needs of all students in the school
- Fair, reasonable and equitable funding of schools
- Access to affordable modern technology
- Well maintained schools that are local, modern and central to the communities they serve
- A competent well trained Board of Trustees to provide school governance functions

Under what conditions do young people achieve learning success?

- A broad, rich curriculum that provides multiple pathways and approaches to learning, a set of key competencies and plentiful learning experiences both inside and outside the class room
- A school environment that is culturally attuned and allows Māori students to succeed as Māori
- Social conditions that motivate every young person to turn up at school every day
- Relevant, timely and adequately funded Professional Learning Development for teachers and principals such as the Māori Achievement Collaborations (MACs) and Principal Leadership Advisory Service
- Learning and Assessment tools that are developed in collaboration with the profession and show learning progress and next learning steps across a broad curriculum
- A National Education Monitoring Programme to show progress at a national level
- High levels of interaction between teachers, and high levels of engagement with parent community

- Class sizes that maximise the learning potential of all students
- Opportunities for collaboration and networking both within and between schools
- Self-managing schools which allow for timely and innovative response to individual students' needs
- Quality training opportunities for Boards of Trustees
- A competent well-funded property unit in the Ministry that responds in a timely fashion to property requests
- Ready access to social and justice system support, welfare, health, dental health and other educational supports for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Continual distractions as changes are introduced that are not necessarily supported or understood by the profession and which are draining resources from areas of need
- Lack of collaboration with the profession in developing educational policies
- Lack of attention to democratic principles for example as applied to the governance board of the Education Council where Teachers cannot elect their own representatives
- School operations funding not keeping pace with real costs
- Inadequate funding and insufficient access to specialists and teacher aides for young people with special learning needs, health, behavioural and social needs
- Insufficient funding for school property expansions and maintenance

What are the obstacles to schools achieving equitable learning outcomes for young people?

- Relentless changes to the Education Act, education policies and procedures over the past nine years
- Government's dependence on education models from the UK and the USA which do not fit New Zealand's diverse cultural make up or New Zealand parents' desire for local control over their local schools
- Government's support for the Global Education Reform Movement and its privatisation agenda
- Government dedicating funds to policies with low uptake such as IES
- Government expenditure on unpopular initiatives such as Charter Schools which neither parents nor the education sector have invited

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