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## **Children Short-changed by Teacher Drought**

**Source:** NZ Principals Federation

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The New Zealand Principals' Federation (NZPF) President, Whetu Cormick says official views on availability of teachers and relief teachers and the reality facing principals in schools do not add up and children's learning will suffer as a consequence.

'Auckland is an obvious case,' said Cormick. 'Principals are telling me that the pool of relievers has already reduced as more relievers have been asked to take on fixed term or full year positions to try and meet the teacher shortage. But many relievers are retired teachers and do not want to take on long term work.'

'My concern is that when children are exposed to multiple relievers in a year or when schools are forced to double up classes to cope, learning is negatively affected. Sound learning and teaching is based on the development of strong, healthy, trusting relationships between the student and the teacher. That can't happen when the teacher keeps changing or there are too many children in a single class,' said Cormick. Auckland is not the only province scrambling to find teachers. 'I am hearing from principals in cities like Queenstown, Tauranga and Wellington and other pockets across the country where there are teacher and reliever shortages too,' said Cormick.

'The only way to address this problem is to incentivise teachers into those difficult to staff areas,' said Cormick, 'because the main issues are affordable accommodation and cost of living including travel,' he said. 'Beginning teachers are not attracted to Auckland and others are leaving all for the same reasons,' he said.

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