

## Moot Speech

Greetings to you all - from the Far North to the deep South. From the extreme West to the East, Nau mai Haere Mai! And a special welcome to Colin Griffiths from Great Barrier Island. Nau mai Colin! I think you take the prize for the longest trip!

It's great to see so many of you here today, bringing the voice of your regions to our table.

The Moot is a tradition - about as old as NZPF.

It was established to make sure the executive reflected the regional voice in all of its work / in its policies and in its public statements.

We are a membership organisation and while it is impossible to reflect every single member's view all of the time, we can bring **you** people together / as representatives / to inform us.

We listen to you and that helps shape our advocacy work on your behalf.

Your voice is highly valued by our executive and I thank you for coming here today to share your thoughts with us. Nau mai haere mai. Koutou katoa.

This year our Moot is all about Change. It is about the change that we are living with every day. It is about how to navigate that change, stay sane and maintain the good will of our communities.

Some of you will have been around long enough to say, 'What's new about change?'

Since '*Tomorrow's Schools*' in the late 1980s **we** have been experiencing change.

*'Tomorrow's Schools'* turned our education system on its head! It was out with the old school boards and in with self-managing schools, Boards of Trustees and local control.

It caused chaos in many quarters and was not universally embraced.

But underneath that turbulence sat some good practical ideas.

The old school Boards had become heavily bureaucratic and controlling.

You'd hear stories like if you wanted a box of coloured chalk you'd have to fill out several forms, submit them in triplicate and wait for a decision!

It had become a system that was choking good leadership and suffocating every good idea.

*'Tomorrow's Schools'* promised to give power and control to the school to make its own decisions, to be innovative and responsive.

To allow teachers to identify individual learning styles, learning progress and learning needs of our young people and to respond quickly so no learning time was wasted.

Schools could now go directly to their communities and identify the expertise they required from any number of sources.

They could engage the people they needed and get on with the job of teaching without any recourse to bumbling, unwieldy education boards.

*'Tomorrow's Schools'* is not perfect. But many would say it is much better than the way it used to be.

Most principals today would argue strongly to keep self-management of schools.

They would also vote for local governance of their school through their Board of Trustees.

The next big change we had to navigate came with the Curriculum Review of the 1990s.

This was a serious test for the new system and created a great deal of nervousness all round.

Principals worried about how the consultative approach would work?

Would local communities engage with the process?

Would parents make a useful contribution to the school curriculum?

How would principals manage this process?

If principals had their doubts they needn't have worried.

Communities quickly engaged and embraced the chance to be involved in building the curriculum for their own children.

They brought their ideas; they listened to each other and made their contributions.

It was not a rushed process. It took many years. It was a process that forged strong relationships between home and school, setting a healthy tone for the future of our young people.

Out of it came curricula that reflected the beliefs, values and cultural knowledge of communities right across the country. It was a hugely rewarding process.

Arguably NZ today has a world class curriculum that is both rich and broad based and we are immensely proud of it.

Consultation with our communities helped entrench our relationships and reinforced local ownership and engagement.

It energised us and our communities loved it. Most importantly, it provided almost limitless opportunities for our young people to access learning through multiple pathways.

As we know, it's our struggling learners who often need multiple ways into learning.

That might be through:

Outdoor education;

Sport;

The arts;

Environmental education

Or other programmes.

The new curriculum allowed all of these options and more.

No sooner was the new NZC beginning to embed than along came the next tranche of major changes for us to navigate.

If *'Tomorrow's Schools'* had been the biggest shake up in the history of our education system, then what happened after 2008 was off the Richter scale.

Enter / National Standards.

National Standards had been hastily put together and principals everywhere could see the flaws.

We wanted to examine and debate them. We pleaded with the Ministry to let us reconstruct them and turn them into a useful tool for measuring learning progress.

That was not going to happen. The standards were mandated and it would become unlawful not to implement them.

To address the unreliability issues the government started development of a multi-million dollar tool called the Progress and Consistency Tool (PaCT).

PaCT was designed to give confidence to national standards data which we knew was flawed. It was intended to legitimise the standards so they could be used for accountability purposes.

Politically we could never fight the government's slick PR machine.

The public was told in bright glossy brochures that:

The government wanted standards for education that were the same for all children across the country;

They wanted national standards results reported to parents in plain English

And they wanted the national standards results publicly available so that parents could compare schools anywhere in the country.

The public was told that one in five children was failing creating what appeared to be a major crisis requiring a radical response.

This is quite normal political behaviour when introducing an unwelcome reform agenda.

Many within the education sector recognised that national standards were not really to help lift achievement for the failing 20% but rather to create a measure for future accountabilities.

Many of you will remember the performance pay debates that emerged at that time too.

So how would teacher performance be measured? On national standards results.

Then it was comparing **school** performance.

How would that be measured? On national standards results.

And so the list goes on.

As we argued the toss on how unreliable the national standards were and how much they would undermine our world class curriculum, the government was charging on with their reform agenda which was grounded in a much bigger ideological shift.

It was grounded in a movement which stretched way beyond New Zealand, and was well advanced in the UK and the USA.

It is called the Global Education Reform Movement. The movement is based on replacing state supported schools with private schools that are Government funded and sponsored by business

The UK is well advanced in this model and the former UK Minister of Education Nicky Morgan told the National Association of Head Teachers last year that by 2020 every state school would be an Academy School (or private charter school).

In the UK they have an administrative structure which groups academy schools into geographical clusters, each with an executive principal and one Board of Governors for the cluster.

These are called Multi Academy Trusts or MATs.

The executive principal receives central funding for the cluster to distribute to the schools.

The MATs are intended to:

Provide centralised services for economic benefits;

Share best practice

Focus funds where they are most needed;

Increase flexibility and sharing of staffing resources;

Provide succession programmes to retain good staff

Encourage collaboration

The role of the Boards of Governors is to have business, legal and financial skills and to understand data and quality teaching and learning.

The similarity between MATs and CoLs here in New Zealand is breath-taking. Most of the MATs functions I have just mentioned are direct quotes from the UK Ministry documents.

So is the fact that CoLs in New Zealand are a mirror structure of MATs in the UK just a coincidence?

Or is our government trying to emulate the UK model for future privatisation here?

I would like to think we are capable of creating our own solutions to educational challenges and we don't need huge systemic changes to do it.

Since the former Prime Minister John Key announced the IES and Communities of Schools policy in 2014 we have had more changes.

The Update of the Education Act enables all the functions that MATs undertake right now. Let's just list them out:

1. Abolishing NEGs and NAGs and replacing with a Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities (SNELP)
2. SNELP would over-ride our world class NZC and take control away from the local level.
3. The Minister would have the right to make changes to SNELP without any consultation or even reference to the House of Parliament
4. One Principal could control more than one school
5. One Board could govern more than one school and Boards could be forced to merge if the government wanted them to
6. Individual School Charters would be abolished and a CoL could have one charter across the whole cluster. This move heralds the end of self-managing schools.

Last Friday I attended the Minister's cross sector forum. The meeting topic was CoLs.

My greatest concern about CoLs after examining the UK structure of MATs is that they could end up being less about collaboration and enhancing young peoples' learning and more about administration and how to save money.

My concerns are that CoLs, like MATs could become administration and resourcing units.

Attending Friday's meeting left me feeling more concerned than ever. The following information was distributed about CoLs and what they can do:

In a CoL you can 'find efficient ways to share resources';

You can set up governance through multiple Boards combining and then you can decide whether to have multiple principals or a single principal for the CoL;

You can Share funding;

You can transfer staffing entitlement to share the costs of employing additional resources;

You can Pool your operational funding for a variety of purposes;

You can Share property and facilities such as specialist labs, technology facilities, gymnasiums and swimming pools;

You can Save time and money by accessing new bundled services (HR, IT, business support, property maintenance and financial services) thereby reducing the administration burden and costs;

You could Pool the Special Education Grant to employ a full-time special education teacher;

You could Share PLD funding to build capability in your CoL;

The CoL could have oversight and set the direction for your health and safety policies;

You could have a single property advisor assigned to your CoL;

Throw the funding review into this mix and you can see that there is cause for concern.

Change has been all pervasive for us since the late 1980s.

We are often criticised for being change averse and unwilling to look at new and innovative ways of operating.

We are told we are stuck in our ways and far too protected by our unions.

I do not believe that. In our schools we have to be agile in our response to challenges and changes and we are.

We have to navigate our way through change every day.

Change in itself is not a problem and does not create stress. What creates stress for us is change that makes no sense.

Change that no one has asked for and is not based on sound learning theory creates doubt and suspicion because it will not enhance our young peoples' learning.

Korero mai, Korero atu ki ō hoa

Today I look forward to hearing your views on the changes before us debating them with you and incorporating your good ideas into NZPF's position statements.