

## **THE NEW ZEALAND PRINCIPALS' FEDERATION (NZPF) 2014 GENERAL ELECTION MANIFESTO**

### **Introduction**

The New Zealand Principals' Federation (**NZPF**), established in 1982, is the largest principals' organisation in the country, with 2,578 members and is the only organisation working solely on behalf of all New Zealand school principals. It is a professional body, and supports principals through the provision of information, professional resources, professional development, a helpline, advocacy and legal support and advice services. NZPF also represents principals on reference and community groups pertaining to education as well as meeting regularly with the Minister of Education, the Secretary for Education and the CEO of the Education Review Office as appropriate. The work of NZPF is directed through its AGM, its members and its 15 strong executive committee.

### **Principles:**

1. A successful public education system will lead to a more equitable and prosperous country
2. Positive and healthy working relationships between the education sector and government is critical to the implementation of education policy
3. Accountability for the public investment in education should be transparent and trustworthy
4. Children should leave school with appropriate skills to be successful in the 21st century global world
5. New Zealanders can expect teachers to provide a high quality relevant inclusive education system

### **Core beliefs and values**

NZPF operates from a set of core beliefs shared by its members. These include:

1. That the educational interests of the nation's children are central to any position held by NZPF.
2. That empowering and supporting principals in their leadership role will enhance the quality of education for New Zealand children.
3. That NZPF can assist in advancing the educational aims for New Zealand.
4. That the profession is invited to critique and contribute to the development of any Government policy or reform agenda at the earliest opportunity so that better teaching and leadership practices flourish.

5. That there be equity of access to quality professional life-long learning for all principals
6. That state and state-integrated schools continue to be fully funded by the Government.

### **NZPF key policy areas:**

#### **National Standards (NS)**

NZPF believes that:

The Government's rationale for the introduction of 'National Standards' (NS) is to lift student achievement especially for Māori and Pacific Island children, special needs and children from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

New Zealand principals do not have confidence in NS to lift achievement because:

- They were hastily constructed, vague and untested
- They assume all children are the same and they are not
- They are not nationally norm referenced as other assessments
- They undermine the NZC which is celebrated as the best in the world.
- National standards do not reflect progress, do not take uneven learning into account or respect that children do not all start school on equal footing
- The standards cannot produce reliable data
- The standards are dangerous if they are the basis of reporting to parents and the wider public
- National standards can potentially threaten our quality education system

#### **Assessment**

NZPF believes that:

- Investment in the PaCT tool should immediately cease unless there is a change in legislation to keep national standards data confidential to each school
- All schools should have robust assessment systems using tools which are nationally norm referenced and produce reliable data.
- Schools should choose their own assessment tools from a range of excellent options including PATs, STAR, Asttle and others
- ERO should be tasked with monitoring assessment practices in schools and promoting and supporting best practice
- ERO's reporting line should be changed to reflect its independence from the Ministry of Education and should report directly to the Auditor General's Office or the Parliamentary Science & Education Select Committee.

#### **Addressing Underachievement**

NZPF believes that:

- Solutions lie with economic and social solutions as well as educational
- Changing emphasis from deficit language to positive is an important step in shifting the mindset and expectations. For example, Māori achievement and learning not Māori underachievement; inclusive education not special needs or disability.
- Schools should be adequately funded for learning support programmes such as PB4L, reading recovery, RTLB services, and many more initiatives that have shown to make a difference for children who struggle to achieve
- Schools should be supported to implement Ka Hikitia, the Māori strategy for learning which has shown to be successful in lifting Māori student achievement levels.
- Schools should be encouraged to fully implement the excellent NZC and this should be their major focus

## **Professional Learning Development (PLD):**

NZPF believes that:

- On-going PLD is essential for all NZ principals
- The Ministry should provide funding for principals to engage in PLD which is relevant to their individual development as leaders of learning
- The recent shift in the Ministry's direction for PLD, linking all options to national standards and achievement is a narrow focus and unhelpful.
- Funding for PLD for programmes that specifically assist low decile school achievement, should be reinstated.

## **Self-managed Schools:**

NZPF believes that

- All schools should remain self-managed under a Board of Trustees
- Self-management includes the continuation of stewardship over school property
- NZPF does not support a move towards private/public partnerships for schools
- Schools should be accountable to their BoTs, to their parents and to their communities
- Schools should continue to have their practices monitored by ERO

## **Māori Education:**

NZPF believes that

- Lifting achievement for Māori children must include cultural, economic, social and educational solutions
- Promoting practices in schools that are more compatible with making Māori children feel a sense of belonging and connection to their school, especially in mainstream schools, would assist their motivation to learn
- Schools should be encouraged and given the necessary support to implement the Māori Strategy Ka Hikitia which shows promise in lifting the achievement levels for Māori children
- Support and encouragement should be provided for the sector to 'unpack' the concepts embedded in Ka Hikitia
- All principals should be given the opportunity to embark on a journey of self-evaluation and development in relation to the cultural values of Ka Hikitia which include understanding a Maori World view which is legitimate and different from a Pakeha world view
- The opportunity to learn Te Reo should be available to all students.
- Commitment to and resourcing of capability building of teachers is paramount

## **Pasifika Education:**

NZPF believes that:

- Resources and support should be offered to schools to help them implement the Pasifika Strategy
- A quota system and incentives be applied to encourage recruitment of more Pacific Island teachers
- The Ministry should appoint Pacific Island advisors to schools to assist them in establishing school cultures that take account of the growing number of Pacific Island children in their schools
- The Ministry should develop resources that assist schools in how to fully engage with Pasifika communities

## **Special Education – Inclusive Education**

NZPF believes that

- The special education service (support for inclusive education) requires full, fair and flexible funding
- Funding stays as close to the child as possible
- The system should allow for local initiatives and decisions to optimize financial and human resources
- There should not be a one size fits all RTLB cluster service
- There should be an expanded and equitable verification process for the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS)
- There be more categories in which severe behaviour is considered
- Simpler and more responsive application process be established
- There be more flexible use of teacher and teacher aide funding
- Parents be given a choice of different special education (inclusive education) options
- It is helpful to maintain and expand special schools/units where possible to become resource and support centres alongside joint enrolment in the mainstream.
- School accountability be executed through annual reporting, financial audit and E.R.O. visits
- There needs to be a heightened awareness on the part of politicians and Ministry staff of children with challenging behaviour
- Extending the PB4L programme to all schools is desirable

## **Education Council Aotearoa New Zealand (EDUCANZ)**

NZPF believes that

- The new title should be changed to have relevance to teaching, for example The Teachers' Council of Aotearoa New Zealand (TCANZ)
- Teachers want an autonomous professional body which is completely independent of Government
- Reference in the new legislation to 'educators' rather than 'teachers' is unacceptable
- The governing board of the Teachers' Council should comprise a majority of democratically elected teacher representatives

## **Novopay**

NZPF believes that:

- Schools operational funding be immediately increased to take account of the additional costs to every school of working with the Novopay pay roll system
- Schools should be immediately repaid all outstanding funds used to pay teachers who have not been paid correctly
- The Government should be working on a long term solution to the Novopay pay roll system rather than continuing to pour further additional funds into a failed system

## **IES**

NZPF believes that:

- Collaboration is a useful practice for schools where groups evolve in a voluntary, dynamic 'bottom up' way, and have the funds to choose their own PLD objectives, manage the work of the cluster as they see fit, choose their own leadership/fund manager and where each person's contribution is equally valued
- Collaboration has the potential to help groups of schools raise achievement levels of their students provided autonomy remains with the cluster
- Establishing an innovation fund for the professional development of teachers and principals is a welcome step forward
- Forced collaboration does not enhance sharing of good practice

- Appointing and paying an additional \$40,000 to 'executive principals' to direct the collaborative work of clusters of schools is not good use of funds
- Policy developed outside of input from the profession is less likely to be robust, centred on learning or enthusiastically implemented by the profession
- There is no evidence that the model of IES proposed will raise student achievement for priority learners
- An advisory service for leadership support and development is a more legitimate career pathway

Philip Harding  
President  
New Zealand Principals' Federation  
Mobile 021 058 4824  
pauld@nzpf.ac.nz