

THE NEW ZEALAND PRINCIPALS' FEDERATION (NZPF) 2020 GENERAL ELECTION MANIFESTO

NZPF Vision for Education

Every child in Aotearoa New Zealand, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion or family circumstances has the right, as a citizen, to access a free, equitable, quality, public education, tailored to their culture, capabilities and talents that enables them to succeed.

Background

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 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

Introduction

This manifesto represents the views of the NZPF membership, including substantial input from the 120 regional presidents attending the 2020 Moot and the NZPF executive committee.

NZPF acknowledges the extraordinary circumstances facing our nation in this election year 2020. We recognise that the global health crisis due to the pandemic COVID-19 has changed the lives of every New Zealander.

We note the priorities of the Government, as a result of this global pandemic, are to first focus on locking down the nation and stamping out the virus. To achieve success, a considerable new stream of funding has been allocated to supporting front line hospital staff, health facilities and testing and contact tracing services to curb the spread of the virus. Secondly, the Government is supporting the thousands of New Zealanders now out of work and helping businesses that might otherwise collapse. We congratulate and thank the Prime Minister and her Government on moving early and fast to give our nation the very best opportunity to overcome this pandemic as quickly as possible.

NZPF endorses Government priorities as we face this unique global state. We acknowledge that the Government's Budget for the coming year has had to be completely rewritten to meet the new health priorities.

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This manifesto is therefore unlike any other in an election year. It outlines those areas in education that NZPF assesses as priority for schools. It seeks a modest funding allocation to the most serious problem currently facing schools but does not seek significant funding allocation in any other area.

The manifesto is written on the assumption that New Zealand students will all return to school some time before the conclusion of the second school term 2020.

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

1. Wellbeing & Equity

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.

Principals and Teachers

To achieve equity in our schools, NZPF believes we also require equity of funding across our schooling system which is not currently the case and has been highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

NZPF supports the establishment of a workable, robust and reliable register for special needs students.

Despite the huge focus on wellbeing we continue to have both staff and students under stress.

Reducing compliance issues has assisted and eliminating national standards from the mix has been a big help, but despite this, the workloads for principals and teachers and the ability to easily access support, needs to change.

Schools still struggle to attract quality teachers to fill vacancies and it is difficult to keep beginning teachers in the profession.

The significant difference between primary management staffing entitlement and secondary is placing undue stress on primary management staffing teams. This anomaly needs quick resolution.

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Workloads are a significant factor that make choosing the teaching profession as a career, less attractive.

Student Bullying, Mental Health and Violent Behaviour

More students are suffering anxiety and emotional trauma than ever.

Bullying is a key factor and at worst is associated with our unacceptably high youth suicide rate.

Bullying through social media, is a huge challenge since it spills over into the out-of-school lives of students too. It is a challenge for which we have few answers.

More focused research is needed that includes student voice.

Dealing with violent, abusive and disruptive students brings threats to wellbeing. Principals face the tension between keeping staff and students safe and keeping mentally and emotionally challenged young people in school

One of the few solutions currently is invoking suspension and exclusion legislation. NZPF does not view this as acceptable.

Trained experts and school counsellors at the primary and intermediate levels are urgently needed. These staff should be embedded in schools.

Managed Moves, an initiative operating in a Kahui Ako in Napier is showing great promise as an effective solution.

NZPF would like to see a modest budget applied to this initiative to extend it to all ten Ministry regions.

Easing up the access to residential school options and the Intensive Wrap-around Service (IWS) would help rather than waiting until a child is in crisis.

NZPF recommends that we create a national special needs database then fund all special needs students based on the database so that all students who need it will receive learning support.

Conclusion

Behavioural and learning support needs are extensive in New Zealand schools and the highest priorities of principals across the country. In the current environment it would not be possible to apply the necessary funding to solve even some of these

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needs. NZPF would recommend repurposing funding currently directed to the Ministry's special education budget, including RTLB and applying it directly to schools.

Equity Poverty and Social Issues

NZPF supports the recent Lunch in Schools initiative launched at Flaxmere School and recommends the programme be extended across the country

NZPF opposes initiatives that create winners and losers. Recent examples include Communities of Learning (CoLs) or Kahui Ako and Learning Support Coordinators (LSCs)

A pool of centrally funded para-professional support staff would greatly assist schools to meet their diverse learning support needs.

Greater staffing components at management levels which schools could use to positively influence challenging issues and relieve teachers. We ask for parity for primary, intermediate and middle schools with secondary school management allocation.

Conclusion

Schools alone cannot achieve equity and the wellbeing of all staff and students. They reflect the inequities that exist in our wider society. Schools cannot fix domestic violence and housing issues which create social impacts on schools. Only cross-Government collaboration of the Ministry of Education, Oranga Tamariki, Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Health can make a difference. With support, schools will play their part and make their contribution to reducing inequities and other factors affecting wellbeing.

2. Curriculum Progress and Achievement

The world of work and life requires young people to be educated as creative problem solvers, 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 and contribute to their society.

To achieve these goals, NZPF supports that we have 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 classroom.

Revitalisation of the Arts is essential to broaden and enrichen the curriculum.

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For children to learn, children must attend school. We continue to be challenged by the persistent absences of some groups of children who struggle to maintain even half a year of school attendance.

The one most influential factor on a student's learning is the quality of the teacher. NZPF supports every teacher being a quality teacher.

To ensure quality in our teaching workforce, we must have a high-quality Initial Teacher Education (ITE) system and that includes practice-based education which is currently lacking.

In our environment of self-managed schools, Principals and teachers in partnership with their Boards and communities set their own localised curriculum to achieve these ideals.

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 finance Iwi in this role.

Such an approach is about personalised learning and places children at the centre. This means teaching and learning is heavily dependent on strong relationships between teacher and student.

NZPF supports the continuation of this model of 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.

To support our diverse students, it would be helpful to have resources to apply to supporting ESOL teaching and learning.

NZPF recommends that we adopt a broad definition of what education success is.

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 a sampling approach to create a picture of the schooling system's performance at a national level.

We recognise the importance of an ongoing service of curriculum advisory for schools which we believe is best delivered through the Ministry of Education under the new Education Services Advisory (ESA).

NZPF recognises that funding cannot flow easily in our current environment. We recommend that less funding is allocated to bureaucracy and more directly to schools to address the many issues outlined in this manifesto.

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Conclusion

New Zealand has a Curriculum to be proud of. Key to building on its strengths lie with the ESA. NZPF recommends that having a principal voice in its design is essential. It will be responsible for curriculum advisory and support which is the area principals have the most expertise. It would be advantageous all round to have an advisory service that best meets curriculum development and delivery needs.

3. Māori Education & Racism

NZPF acknowledges the systemic racism that exists in our Education system. We support the Government's recognition of this and the generous funding allocated to Te Hurihanganui to address racism and unintended bias in our schools and the system.

We endorse the Māori Achievement Collaborations (MACs) PLD for principals which has been very successful in breaking down racism and supporting principals to adopt a bicultural approach in their schools. We recommend that the MACs be extended to all regions of the country.

The statistics for Māori student achievement remain unacceptably low and NZPF would encourage the acceleration of implementing more successful initiatives such as the MACs to lift the success rates.

It is well known that Māori students do very well in Māori immersion learning settings. This is because they are encouraged to be proud of their Māori culture and heritage and are enabled to succeed as Māori.

NZPF endorses the support for the teaching profession to learn Te Reo Māori and encourages the Government to recruit and train more Māori teachers who are fluent in Te Reo.

NZPF also endorses the Government's support for the teaching of New Zealand history in schools so that all New Zealanders will understand the effects of assimilation policies on Māori and why they have continued to have a negative effect on Māori success socially, economically and educationally.

Conclusion

The most effective currently established PLD to address racism and bias in schools and lift Māori student achievement is the MACs. Because this PLD has repeatedly demonstrated success, we believe it should be rolled out across the country and

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funded accordingly. In addition, we support the teaching of New Zealand History in our schools and the teaching of Te Reo Māori.

4. Leadership

High quality experienced school leadership, like high quality teaching, has a significant impact on success for learning.

Involving principals in policy making processes ensures buy in from schools and policies that are relevant and address the real issues schools face.

Professional supervision and relevant leadership networks are helpful to allow principals to share good practice and build confidence in leading their schools.

Principals require ongoing non-contestable PLD that is relevant to leading schools in New Zealand, that acknowledges our diversity and special education and behavioural challenges, is important for principal performance. NZPF is concerned that current PLD provision for leadership is inadequate, irregular and inequitable.

NZPF supports nurturing a high trust environment between Government, the Ministry and the profession. Too often we see Government or Ministry initiatives, intended to address serious concerns, such as serious behavioural issues, missing the mark. NZPF supports that schools be funded directly to address such issues because they are better placed to know what children require special support and how best to apply support.

NZPF welcomes the idea of establishing an Education Services Advisory (ESA) in the Ministry and believes that involving the profession at the design phase would make for a more relevant, robust Advisory Service that would support high quality practice-based leadership in schools

NZPF welcomes the announcement to establish a Leadership Centre and supports the Centre being located with the Teaching Council and not with the Ministry of Education. This would ensure that the Centre can operate independently and without political interference.

NZPF would expect to have a position on the governance board of the Leadership Centre.

NZPF supports the continuation and expansion of the Principal Leadership Support Service and recommends that the service is not located within the Ministry of Education.

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NZPF supports secondments into the Principal Leadership Support Services and ERO to provide informed and practice-based advice to their work.

NZPF supports principal secondment to assist ERO to develop its new improvement-based model of school evaluation.

Conclusion

Leadership is critical to making a difference in schools. Well supported leadership leads to success at every level of the school. The Leadership Centre will be key to clustering those activities that support and grow better leaders for our schools in a partnership relationship with principals.

NZPF recognises that new funding cannot flow easily in our current environment. We recommend that less funding is allocated to bureaucratic functions and more directly to schools to address the many issues outlined in this manifesto.

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