



# PRINCIPAL MATTERS

NGĀ TUMUAKI O AOTEAROA

THE MOST RESPECTED AND INFLUENTIAL ADVOCATE FOR NEW ZEALAND'S PRINCIPALS

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### President's Message



Kia ora e te whānau

Can you recall a time when principals and the Ministry of Education worked in genuine partnership?

I can! The last 8 weeks.

The shared mission to convert our education system into remote learning, then a hybrid approach and back to schooling on site has had an extraordinary effect on a relationship that had, over the years, lost its way.

Trust between principals and the Ministry had been dealt a severe blow by former government policies, 'Clayton's' consultation processes, and imposed practices that were offensive to the educational heart of principals.

The Ministry personnel were seen as political apparatchiks - more interested in serving the flavour of the government than they were in championing sound educational leadership and creating the conditions for principals and teachers to enact a powerful, forward thinking vision for education.

This disconnect damaged trust and fed a 'them' and 'us' mentality that prevails today.

It has not always been this way.

There was a time when principal leaders and the Ministry acted in unison. New policy and important workstreams didn't begin with political imperative they started in conversations between practising educators and the Ministry of Education. Real problems, issues and new ideas were discussed with the profession and Ministry staff, who were often former principals. They brought their experience of schooling and curriculum leadership to the debates. The Ministry was infused with a sense of realism and clarity about what worked for schools. We experienced a symbiotic relationship where principals and the Ministry could not function effectively without each other. Mutual respect and appreciation were commonplace.

The winter of discontent was enabled by the autocracy of Education Ministers Tolley and Parata. The ethos of principalship was so damaged in those years, we still see its impact now.

The appointment of Peter Hughes as Secretary of Education in 2013 began a thaw. He recognised the disjuncture between practising educators and the Ministry of Education. Rather than describing the Ministry as the sector leader, Peter preferred to think of the Ministry of Education as stewards of the education system.

*"The real leaders in the education sector are the school principals, who lead teaching and learning in our schools, and the people heading up the other provider organisations in the tertiary and early childhood sectors. Our job as stewards of the education system is to stand behind these individuals and their staff and to back them to win. It's as much about the way we behave and interact with people in the education sector as anything else. We need to be respectful of people at the front-end of the sector and the work they do. We need to listen to them and learn from them."*

How refreshing it was to hear a public official talk this way!

Iona Holsted's appointment in 2016 has further operationalised this view. Much is occurring in the Ministry of Education that represents genuine engagement and collaboration with the sector.

Despite the good work done to rebuild trust, we stand at a crossroads.

The recent *Tomorrow's Schools Review* detailed a significant change to the Ministry of Education. The Education Service Agency (ESA) is to be established within a redesigned Ministry of Education. The purpose is to provide more front-line, responsive, and accessible local supports in the domains of governance, leadership, curriculum, and teaching and learning. The redesigned Ministry will provide leadership advisors and a National Curriculum Centre.

The success of the ESA and redesigned Ministry rests on the capacity of the Secretary of Education, to genuinely reject top-down control and build a responsive and collaborative Ministry that has cycles of practising educators moving in and out of its key functions.

The opportunity exists to leverage off this extraordinary period of horizontal sharing and trust between principals, through the COVID-19 crisis, and to build that same ethos into the relationship between principals and the Ministry.

As the Secretary of Education contemplates phase 2 of the ESA design, a phase in which she has invited considerable input from principals on the focus and functions of the ESA, I say let's be brave and bold.

If we are to solve the problems of underachievement and disengagement of our youth, then we must reject the failed dogma of the past. A powerful, top-down, boss-led, centrally driven, and politically mandated Ministry will not suffice. It has not worked in the past and will not work now.

Principals will never implement political ideas that hurt young people and damage the profession. Nor will trust be built by the offer of crumbs from the consultation table. We've had that before and never again will we accept that disrespect.

We want to work with a Ministry that has our back and is committed to growing solutions to the 'wicked' problems we confront, with enthusiasm, generosity and integrity.

In turn, as always, we offer the highest standards of professional effort. Principals, like all humans, achieve greatness when we are inspired and encouraged - not controlled!

Let's look to the relationship between principals and the Ministry of Education that has developed over the COVID-19 crisis. It is a relationship that has been helped along by the excellent performance of the Ministry and by principals who have acknowledged this.

Let's not squander the momentum.

The single approach untried by every education system worldwide is the one that has the human qualities of trust, openness, and connectedness at its heart.

My message to the Secretary for Education, Iona Holsted, is 'The good will is there. Let's lead the way!'

## Budget 2020

Budget 2020 was always going to place a significant emphasis on the nation recovering from the impact of COVID-19. We cannot quibble with this critical investment.

But this is a budget that is disappointing for schooling.

We welcome the free lunches in school for 200,000 additional students, a cost of living increase to the operations grant, investment in Te Reo Māori, some extra funding for English second language learners and students with high health needs and the already announced capital for property improvements, but there are some glaring omissions.

There is no funding for urgent in-school solutions, including alternative pathways, for students in crisis and struggling with their mental health, especially those who display violent behaviour. COVID or not this help cannot wait! I note no provision of student counselling services south of Year 9 or an extension to the provision of Learning Support Coordinators or the School Donations Scheme.

The other serious omission is funding to revive the Arts in schools and set up an Arts Curriculum Advisory Service. This omission is in stark contrast with the \$246.8million given to arts and culture in the wider community.

Principals await more specific information about the funding of the Tomorrow's Schools Review outcomes. We are yet to see how the Leadership Centre will be funded and operationalised to meet the needs and aspirations of principals.

We are hopeful that these issues will be addressed through the \$20billion fund not yet allocated.

Ngā manaakitanga

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## NZPF Notices



### Nominations for NZPF Election 2020

Nominations are now open for NZPF President and Vice President for 2021.

Click [here](#) to download a nomination form.

Nominations close on 5 August and the electoral roll closes on 25 August. Your subscription payment must be received by this date in order to be eligible for voting.



### NZ Principal Magazine also Online

You and/or your team members can easily access the NZ Principal Magazines online, as an e-magazine or as a PDF. Additionally you can search for a previous issue, an article by title or by the author of the article. All magazines back to Term 1 2012 are available in this format. To view or search click [here](#).

## Useful Information



EDUCATING TO PREVENT CHILD ABUSE

### Returning to the classroom

#### Increased risk of Child Protection issues

Among the many challenges that remote learning has created for teachers, is the difficulty of being able to check on the wellbeing of their students. These times of increased stress increases the risk of Family Harm incidents occurring. Child Matters team have developed resources to support teachers to know what to be aware of as they and their students return to the classroom. Please click [here](#)

#### Self-Care for Teachers

It is important that teachers are supported as they navigate this new teaching environment and the extra pressures it brings.

Child Matters have developed free resources to support teachers to be aware of the need for self-care, and how to be aware of professional dangerousness. More information may be found [here](#)

#### Other Support Available

The team at Child Matters are working hard to continue to offer schools services as they face these new challenges. Free support on offer includes:

- **Free Consultation Service** – We will continue to offer a full consultation service free of charge and you can access this by contacting our National Services Manager Megan West on [022 547 7505](tel:0225477505)
- **Resources** available - We know the need for at risk children is increased during this time, so we are working daily to develop resources that are relevant to this new work environment. Please click [here](#)
- **Continuing Education** – On-line options for Child Protection training will be available shortly.

Please keep an eye out on our Facebook Page for regular updates on all of the above.

## Business Partners

NZPF assures its business partners that, as members, you will contact them to have a conversation if you are purchasing products, services or solutions for your schools that a business partner supplies. Please support our partners as their assistance to NZPF means better membership services to you.

#### Gold Partners



#### Silver Partners



#### Bronze Partners

