



PRINCIPAL MATTERS

NGĀ TUMUAKI O AOTEAROA

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

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President's Message



*Ko te kairapu, ko ia te kite.
He who seeks will find.*

As educators across the country steer a steady course, to bring everyone to safe harbour at the end of the year, we are doing so in a headwind, with crosscurrents and tricky winds. Despite our efforts as leaders and as a sector through the year, the negative narrative around attendance and student achievement has been particularly prevalent in the media this week.

Achieving attendance goals -

Decline in attendance has been an issue for many years, particularly since the truancy model changed in 2013. We have witnessed further decline throughout the pandemic years. This week, ERO released a report, based on evidence collected from 33 schools.

The report concludes that attendance issues are complex. They occur in all socio-economic bands; there are multiple barriers to attendance from families taking children on lengthy overseas trips during term time to families who cannot afford

school lunch or school uniforms. It will take a combined effort of multiple agencies, families and school staff to address this problem.

School leaders can create solutions to reengage students through regionally funded projects. The ERO report was clear that solutions will work only when the cause of absenteeism is understood. For some students the problem lies with their relationships with peers, with teachers and/or staff. For others, it is student boredom, not seeing relevance in what they are learning, or that there are more fun things on offer at home. For some families, it is lack of resources, wellness, family and cultural priorities, that affect attendance. For other families, holiday time starts early... often.

We can't fix all these problems, but we can address school-based barriers. We can support students to make friends, keep friends and connect with peers. We can ensure school programmes are motivating, fun, relevant and something not to be missed. We can be creative in how we manage barriers like breakfast, lunch, transport options, uniforms and homework support.

There are also key messages we need to share with parents:

- If students have one week off every term, over ten years they will miss a year of school.
- Being at school everyday matters because of the sequential nature of learning, especially in literacy and numeracy.
- By law, students **must** attend school and
- One of the highest predictors of education success is attendance levels at school.

Every parent wants their children to be successful in learning and in life. We can do so much in school but there is also a 'common story' that needs to be socialized, about the roles staff, students and parents play together in reversing the trends in attendance. We need to challenge our parents to 'walk the talk' with us.

Attendance, achievement and leadership -

Right now teachers are working all hours to plan, teach, assess and write final reports. Meanwhile, we are hearing through (some) media that schools are failing students whose achievement levels are 'appalling'.

Through the NCEA 'Change programme' a small pilot was developed to trial new assessment tools. Students trialing the tools produced low scores, particularly in writing. Data from this little trial has been inflated by certain sensationalist media to suggest that our school system is in crisis, that students are barely literate, that teachers are not doing their job and leaders need to be made more accountable.

We know student achievement has been declining for some time. We also know learning is complex, sequential, and positively affected by three key things –

1. The relationships teachers have with their students
2. The content knowledge teachers have and the pedagogy they use and
3. The use of formative assessment to provide students with feedback and 'next steps' in learning

Professor Russell Bishop highlighted these at our recent NZPF conference. He also suggested that if we support teachers to focus on relationships with learners, content and pedagogy and the use of formative assessment strategies, the 'literacy crisis' would be over in two years. Work done through 'Te Kotahitanga' proved this. Further research led by Professor Bishop in Canada and Australia reinforced previous findings.

Professor Bishop advocates for within-school coaching as the most effective PLD to employ. He says that literacy (and numeracy) facilitators and/or lead teachers working in classes to model, to observe, to give feedback and feed-forward to teachers based on evidence of student learning, is the most effective way to improve student achievement. In his keynote address, Bishop stated that rather than trying to find "the" pedagogical approach, school leaders need to focus on supporting teachers to use good evidence-based practices that work.

This is another 'common story' that needs to become part of the post-COVID success story we are leading.

**If a child is more than
a test score, so is the
teacher of that child.**

@teachergoals

Wondering of the Week:

To what extent do you or have you used in-school / across-school coaching strategies to support improvement in teaching practice?

In-school coaching is a regular part of our PLD programme.

In-school coaching is used reasonably regularly - around once a term.

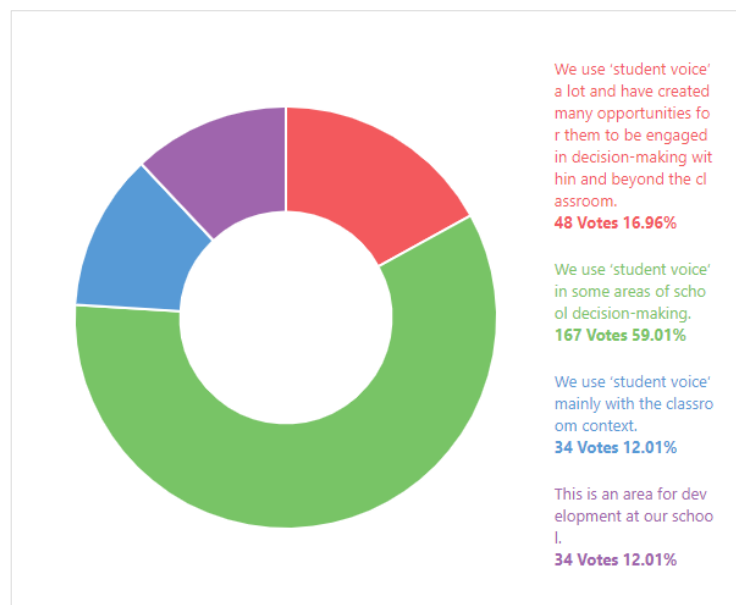
In-school coaching has been used, but is not a regular PLD strategy.

In-school coaching has been used, but is not a regular PLD strategy. We do not use in-school coaching as a PLD strategy.

Vote

Results of last Week's poll:

To what extent does your school use 'student voice' to make decisions?



Ngā manaakitanga

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NZPF 2023 Conference - Early Bird Registrations Now Open!

The NZPF 2023 Conference website is now open for earlybird registrations. The conference will be held in Queenstown from 11-13 September 2023.

Visit the [website](#) to register now. Earlybird registration closes on 31 May 2023.



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](#).



Children & Young People Voices in the NZ Curriculum Refresh

'Mai World: Participation and Engagement' team at the Office of the Children's Commissioner have recently started working alongside the Ministry of Education to ensure the voices of children and young people are at the centre of Te Mātaiaho New Zealand Curriculum refresh, currently taking place until 2025. Access and participation in inclusive and equitable education is a crucial priority for the Children's Commissioner, Judge Francis Eivers (*Ngāti Maniapoto, Waikato*).

The Mai World team are reaching out to schools, kura, organisations and communities to **nominate** young people to be part of the Youth Voices Group in 2023. This group will champion *how* the voices of children and young people are heard across the country. The '[Key Information](#)' document provides detail around the project, including the workload, compensation and key dates.

Nominations close 21 November 2022 – submit [this form](#) to educationvoices@occ.org.nz OR do it [online here](#).



PLD for Experienced Principals: Where is it?

"It is generally acknowledged that on-going training for principals and aspiring principals is vital for a continued development of quality schools" (Stewart, 2000, p. 92). BUT research agrees that there is a notable absence of ongoing professional learning development for experienced principals (Service & Thornton, 2021).

This research project focuses on what PLD (professional learning and development) current, experienced primary school principals identify as enhancing their continued growth and advancement.

Research results will be used to make recommendations for future PLD opportunities for experienced principals in Aotearoa, New Zealand. The research project is undertaken by former Otago Principal, Hamish McDonald, as part of the requirements for a doctorate in education (EdD). If you have six or more years of experience as a principal [follow this link](#) about this research project and how you can participate.



Ann Milne Education

A long-term educator, Ann Milne teaches critically conscious, culturally sustaining leadership and learning, transforming the educational experiences of Māori and other minoritized learners.

Ann also speaks at events, including the most recent Māori Achievement Collaborations (MAC) conference.

Visit her [website](#) to learn more about how you can access PLD for your staff and leadership teams and apply for Ministry of Education PLD hours. Ann is a member of the provider panel in her own right so can deal directly with the Ministry and schools making the application process so much simpler for you.

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.

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