



PRINCIPAL MATTERS

NGĀ TUMUAKI O AOTEAROA

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

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President's Message



He rā whatiuwhati kō.

A day for breaking the spade.

Kia ora e te whānau,

This week we are a country of two halves. In the South Island, a tsunami of covid has hit our schools, sending hundreds a day to isolate at home, while in the North Island, principals are welcoming back students who have now recovered from covid. At both ends of the country, principals are examining the implications of removing vaccination mandates, maintaining safe staffing levels and getting through the daily essentials. Kia kaha! This too will soon be over.

Amid the health crisis, you may have missed last week's release of *Now I don't know my ABC*, a report on the poor state of literacy in our country, published by the 'Education Hub' think tank. If you did catch up with it, it's unlikely you found it as entertaining a read as the title insinuates.

The report highlights the decline in students' literacy levels, as measured by PISA and PIRLS international assessments and

the New Zealand NMSSA data. It references wider societal factors that have also influenced the decline and recommends changes that could be made within the system. While the timing of the report couldn't be worse for most of you, nevertheless it is worth looking at some of the analysis and suggestions for improving.

What are the issues and what can we do?

The report identified that we do not have a national plan or agreement about how reading, writing and oral language should be taught in schools and it goes on to suggest ways in which we might do this better. The *Curriculum Refresh* is one vehicle through which we can decide what should be taught, what could be taught and what would be nice to teach, if there is time.

Starting with literacy is logical. It is a foundational subject. It has clear progressions and a range of assessment tools to identify progress, achievement levels and next steps. We know, however, that a narrow focus on literacy will not bring overall gains in achievement. A decade of 'National Standards' taught us that.

As we review and co-construct improved literacy content and delivery, we must be mindful that the rest of the curriculum is kept in balance. No subject exists in a vacuum. Literacy is essential to all curriculum subjects. It makes sense to use the rich, powerful, authentic, engaging learning experiences of other subjects, that students find motivating, to help build literacy skills. When students are motivated about a topic, whether that is social studies, technology, art, music, physical education, drama, sport or performance, they want to talk, to read, to write and to learn more. If we want our students to love reading and to love learning, we have to make sure our teachers use their skills, knowledge and creative talents to make literacy relevant, purposeful and fun.



What does effective literacy look like?

We have no national agreement on effective literacy pedagogy and assessment. Schools use many pedagogical approaches for many reasons. We teach a diverse population of students within and across our schools. Sometimes we choose a pedagogy by design and sometimes by default.

Literacy experts agree that oral language is the foundation for a strong literacy programme. Our preschool teachers focus heavily on developing oral language through play and read to the children every day. Advocates for structured literacy want accelerated and consistent improvement in reading. Other teachers advocate for a balance of phonological and whole language strategies. For ESOL students or dyslexic students there are calls to personalize learning, to better meet individual styles and needs.

In my experience, it is the teacher who has indepth knowledge and understanding of all the dimensions of literacy who will run the most effective classroom where all students achieve.

Right now there is a wide range of professional development in literacy. Equity of access to PLD and evidence of PLD effectiveness is variable. Historically, national literacy strategies have been established, but once PLD funding is withdrawn, they fall away.

The Education Hub report talks about a three tier approach to improving literacy instruction, including

1. a) Well-designed, research-informed, in-class learning,
2. b) Specific targeted interventions for students who have had disrupted learning or those who have specific learning disorders, such as dyslexia and
3. c) Intensive interventions for key students who need more support.

The key to all of this is investment in our leaders and our teachers. Within our sector, we need investment in literacy PLD that we know will make a difference to students' learning. The

sector also needs to be involved in the review and redesign of current literacy progression frameworks.

Literacy Communication and Mathematics Strategy

The Ministry has just released the *Literacy and Communication and Mathematics Strategy*. While the strategy is comprehensive, it is not yet clear how kaiako and teachers across New Zealand are going to “agree to and use a widely understood common practice model that is effective in teaching literacy and communication”. There is clear intent to begin capacity building at national, regional and in-school levels. Who leads this and how the sector is involved will be critical to the strategy's future success.

And about assessment ...

The report calls for investment in tailored assessment tools. Assessment in general needs a rethink in the Post-Covid era. We have an opportunity to rid ourselves of excessive assessment, and notions of accountability measures and outputs. These ideas have no place in learning.

Assessment to inform ‘next learning steps’ is however critical. We want to evaluate the success of different initiatives and practices to better support students' learning. Evaluation at systems level is also useful, so long as the information gathered is used for improvement purposes.

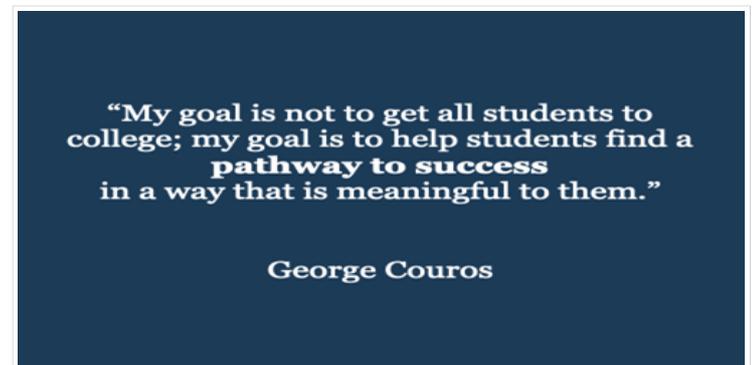
Assessment in literacy needs to be part of a wider conversation about how we define success in learning, post-covid.

Is this the time to co-construct definitions of what it is to be a successful learner?

Is this the time to review the rigidity of ‘pre-covid’ achievement milestones, in favour of ‘post-covid’ progression signposts?

Is this the time to redefine assessment as a guide to the next goal, rather than a measure of success or failure?

Through the *Curriculum Refresh*, we have an opportunity to lead the change we want to see.



But just for now, getting through to Easter COVID-free is the best we can hope!

Te Ahu o te Reo Māori

This year, the Ministry of Education has partnered with twelve groups across New Zealand to deliver Te Ahu o te Reo Māori.

It is a key strategy to support the goal of ensuring that “by 2025 all children in school in New Zealand will have te reo Māori integrated into their learning”.

The programme is specifically aimed at supporting the education workforce; teachers, managers, support staff and whānau to use te reo Māori with confidence. It focuses on Māori language acquisition for immediate integration into the classroom and has been well received by schools and staff. Teachers and staff who have participated in the programme describe it as practical, positive and effective in helping to build their confidence and capability.

Registrations are now open for the term two intake which begins on 26 April or 2 May 2022. The programme is open to all teachers, support staff, and whānau of all schools, kura, kōhanga, and early childhood centres.

To assist with your ongoing communications, Te Ahu o te Reo Māori in a nutshell is:

- A free te reo Māori programme for the education workforce
- Delivered online
- Caters to all competency levels – beginners to advanced
- Each level is completed in a single school term
- Includes a \$500 payment to schools/ECEs per participant graduate
- Tailored to your region, local iwi and histories
- Supports teacher professional standards
- Supports delivery of Aotearoa NZ histories
- Helps to build a localised curriculum

For more information or to register, please click [here](#).

[Te Ariki Scholarship](#)

The Te Ariki Scholarship was set up in 2014 in memory of David Stewart. David was a respected educator who worked closely with principals, to support professional learning. He developed professional learning circles, used by groups of principals to inform their individual and collective practice.

Today the focus of his work aligns most closely with the professional growth cycle work many of you are involved in.

Each year a scholarship is offered to a school leader to study and/or do research in the area of leadership. Sometimes it is used to assist people completing a Master’s dissertation or thesis or part of a doctorate. Sometimes it is awarded to a principal or educator who wants to lead a research initiative on some aspect of leadership.

Applications for the 2023 award are now open. Please follow the [link](#) for more information.

Wondering of the Week:

To what extent do your teachers and staff use te reo Māori in classroom teaching and learning?

Te Reo Māori is used consistently in all classrooms every day.

Te Reo Māori is used by about two thirds of teachers and staff regularly.

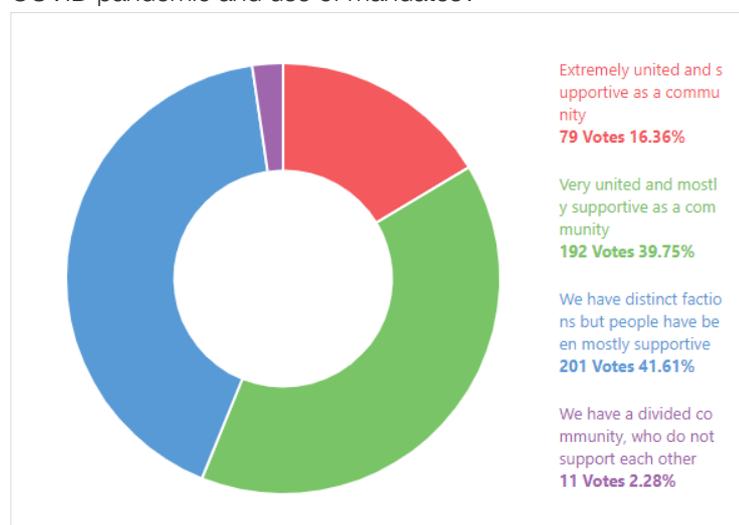
Te Reo Māori is used by some teachers and staff who have expertise in te reo Māori.

Te Reo Māori is used by a very few teachers on rare occasion.

Vote

Results of last week’s poll:

To what extent is your community united in their views on the COVID pandemic and use of mandates?



Ngā manaakitanga

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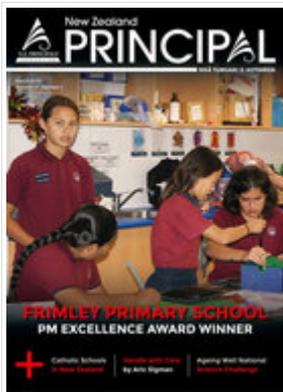


NZPF Conference - Early Bird Registrations

Registrations for the 2022 NZPF Conference are open. The conference will be held at the new Te Pae, Christchurch Convention and Exhibition Centre, on 14 - 16 September.

Register before the early bird deadline of 31 May to save up to \$100 on your registration.

Visit the [website](#) to register now.



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](#).



Māori First Time Principals' Programme

The Māori First Time Principals' Programme is designed for Māori principals in their first years of principalship. It is free to participants who are members of the [Te Akatea Māori Principals' Association](#).

The programme is underpinned by kaupapa Māori and transformative approaches to leadership. It provides both personal and professional learning to develop and strengthen leadership which honours Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Participants will be on a journey together – an ongoing cycle of learning, research and development, where whānau, hapū and iwi aspirations will be central. The programme will be delivered through national and regional wānanga, noho marae and hui and school visits will also be arranged for personalised learning. An online component will include workshops, online forums and presentations.

For more information click [here](#).



Have your say on the draft Physical Restraint Rules and Guidelines

The Ministry of Education, supported by the Physical Restraint Advisory Group, is consulting on updating the rules and guidelines on the use of physical restraint in schools following [changes in the Education and Training Act 2020](#). Submissions are open until midnight 3 April 2022.

The purpose of the consultation is to make sure that the new rules and guidelines are workable and sustainable, uphold the rights of children, whānau and school staff, provide clarity and support as to when and how physical restraint can be used, and prevent the use of physical restraint except as a last resort to prevent imminent harm.

You can read the draft rules and guidelines and provide feedback [here](#). Summaries of the proposed changes are available in English, te reo Māori, and nine Pacific languages, and five accessibility formats. Please share this link with your

community so that we can hear from as many people as possible.

We would also like to talk with you

The Ministry of Education is also working with Litmus to conduct focus groups and qualitative interviews with children, young people and their family, whānau and caregivers. This will help ensure that the new rules and guidelines, and associated training, supports practices that will meet their needs. This engagement will run through March and April. If you want to be involved in these qualitative interviews please email physicalrestraint.convo@education.govt.nz

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



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Bronze Partners

