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Principals call on Minister to scrap charter school experiment

Source: NZ Principals Federation

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Principals across the nation are calling on Minister Parata to put a stop to any further charter school developments in the wake of the closure of Te Pumanawa o te Wairua, the Whangaruru charter school.

'I congratulate the Minister on her courageous and bold move in closing the Whangaruru charter school,' said Iain Taylor, president of the New Zealand Principals' Federation (NZPF). 'Now it is time to reflect on why charter schools are not a good idea for New Zealand before we waste more precious resources on this unnecessary option,' he said.

The first charter schools opened in 2014 to provide an alternative system for raising the achievement levels of Pasifika, Maori, special needs and kids from low socio-economic circumstances.

'It's been an expensive exercise at Whangaruru,' said Taylor. 'We have 39 kids who have just had two years of learning opportunities snatched from them. Tax payers have funded \$3.2million in operations grants to no useful ends and another \$1.6million, supposedly for establishment costs, was used to buy a farm,' he said.

'We said from the start there were flaws in the whole charter school system with no requirement to employ registered teachers and not enough public accountability,' said Taylor. 'It is now clear from this example that they did not have registered teachers and the Minister may never again see the money spent on the farm.'

'Our message to the Minister is to support our public schools to all be great schools and not pour any more money into charter schools we don't need,' he said.

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