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Principals welcome Minister Hipkins' return to Education Portfolio

Source: NZ Principals Federation

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The New Zealand Principals' Federation (NZPF) congratulates and welcomes the re-appointment of Hon Chris Hipkins as Minister for Education and Hon Kelvin Davis and former primary school principal, Jan Tinetti as Associate Ministers.

"It is good to see Chris Hipkins in the role of Minister of Education and Kelvin Davis as Associate," said Perry Rush, President of the NZPF. "We have already established good working relationships with Chris and Kelvin and expect that in this second term of the Labour government, we will be able to make much more progress on some critically important areas," he said.

One of those areas is learning and behaviour support, with which principals have been pleading for help for several years.

"Our sector has been besieged for some years now with extremely challenged young people who have not had the opportunities they deserve because we have not had the funding to implement those interventions that can make a difference," he said.

Rush expects that having a recent school principal as Associate Minister of Education will help.

"Jan Tinetti was a respected school principal," said Rush, "and we expect that she will have a positive influence on making progress with learning and behaviour support because she is well aware of the issues and how extreme they are," he said.

Other issues Rush expects to see resolved in the next term of Government include leadership support for principals operating in highly complex roles, curriculum advisory and a greater emphasis on and funding for Arts in schools, initial teacher education, property issues and addressing inequities.

"We know that the Arts have been sorely neglected over the past decade and we also know the incredible value the Arts bring to addressing trauma and anxiety in our young people and giving young people a platform for expression," he said.

"If we learned anything from the COVID experience," said Rush, "we learned how inequitable our society is and therefore how inequitable is access to education for our young people,"

These inequities are also seen in the way school property issues are managed.

"Low decile schools are being treated differently from large high decile schools with roll growth," says Rush. "We have far too many older low decile schools with leaking roof issues, dampness and mould that are not getting the attention they need," he said. "This is wrong. All children deserve to learn in a dry warm school," he said.

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