

## Rural Matters

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Rural Matters 2 – 12 November 2015

### Welcome to 'Rural Matters' Issue 2 2015

As you may recall, when we launched 'Rural Matters' in September, we promised to get two publications out to you each term. This is the second for term four.

Thank you all for your positive reactions to the publication which targets rural principals. As the publication evolves we hope it will develop its own character and pitch.

This issue covers some of the practical things that you have to achieve before the end of the year along with some reading suggestions and advice on dealing with email stress.

#### Book Look

'[Creative Schools](#)', Revolutionising Education from the Ground Up by Ken Robinson & Lou Aronica.

This book, by world leading educationalist Sir Ken Robinson, gives a broad overview of a range of different approaches schools can take in capturing student creativity and developing it in a school environment. He recommends a highly personalised, organic approach to learning. You may not have time to read the book just now, but get a copy to take with you on your summer holiday.

#### Banking Staffing

This is the time to get your calculations in order for your 2016 staffing. Gavin Price, the NZPF expert in banking staffing matters, sends regular updates to NZPF. These are all archived on the NZPF website. You can [access that advice](#) at any time. You may also find the [NZEI surplus staffing advice](#) helpful.

#### Email Stress

With the syncing of email to our mobile devices, the work and home separation has become very fluid. The temptation to constantly check emails can lead to added stress at the very time you are trying to relax.

At school, constant interruptions from email 'pop-ups' interfere with your concentration and stem the flow of thought when you are engaging with intellectually demanding matters. All of this contributes to feelings of being overwhelmed and getting nowhere.

#### Suggestions:

1. Turn off email auto download and notifications - gain a sense of control by only downloading and viewing emails when you choose to (not before bedtime if you are planning to get a restful sleep).
2. Create a 'check email time'. Work out the best times of day for you to check emails and only access email during those time periods. Deal immediately to 'quick response' emails (less than two minutes work). If the email requires longer to deal with, 'flag' it for action later.
3. Never forward a troublesome email to any staff or board member in the late afternoon or evening. Save it until the morning when they can do something about it. That way only one person has a sleepless night not two or three people. You could ask Board members to do the same for you!
4. Use the 'unsubscribe' option as much as you can. Everyone wants to have your attention and send you email notifications. Resist!

#### Health and Safety

Don't panic about the new legislation at this time of the year and don't waste time and money attending workshops offered by commercial companies.



If you wish to attend workshops, NZSTA will be running these next year. Ensure that you have good policies and practices in place.

### Tips:

- In your Principals' report to the BoT include a section on Health and Safety.
- Report incidents that are recorded in your *Accident Register* (without names).
- Include anything else pertaining to Health and Safety that the BoT needs to be aware of.
- If you have a '*Student Council*', the Council's agenda could include Health and Safety as a permanent item. Often the children notice first if there are any dangers in the playground.

### ICT

If you have any problems with your school network, or if you need any advice about ICT & eLearning you should [contact the CLA](#). The CLA is the Ministry's '*Connected Learning Advisory*'. The staff give impartial, up to date advice and if schools come to them with any issues, they will stay with them right through to resolution.

Are you connected to [N4L](#)? N4L is the 'Network for Learning', a free, fast and managed internet service. It is definitely worth changing over, although some schools experience a few issues when switching. It is better to make the change during a holiday break and make sure your tech support person is on call! If N4L is not in your school area yet, then [contact](#) them to find out when they will be. N4L don't provide phone lines, so if you want these through broadband, you will need to make arrangements through another provider. There are some great options out there.

### Hauora

Keep in touch with colleagues around this busy and stressful time of the year. Getting together in December over a coffee, or something stronger, might just be the ticket to a smooth run-up to the summer break. Share your worries, share resources and share what you are doing to finish off the year and be ready for 2016. That way you can enjoy the summer break you deserve.

