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Some wins for schools in Budget

Source: NZ Principals Federation

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Today's Budget, as was already signaled, focused heavily on Early Childhood Education, but schools did not miss out.

"We are pleased that this Budget addresses some of the Tomorrow's Schools recommendations, including a Ministry overhaul to refocus on serving schools through establishing Education Service Agencies, and a curriculum centre," said Perry Rush, President of the New Zealand Principals' Federation (NZPF).

"With a curriculum refresh underway, the work of this new curriculum centre will be pivotal," he said.

Rush was less enthusiastic about the proposed 'online curriculum hub'.

"What we most need for schools to deliver a world class quality curriculum, is a team of expert curriculum advisors on the ground," he said, "not another website resource."

"We have excellent curriculum subject experts working in our profession now, and they are the people who can make the curriculum refresh work," he said.

"We know that for teachers to grow in curriculum knowledge and expertise they need ongoing professional learning from curriculum advisors who are already experts in their fields," he said.

Rush was heartened to see that principals' calls for appropriate support for our most traumatized young people have been heard, with the allocation of \$17.7million repurposed funding for learning support that includes support for alternative education services. This funding will help stabilise alternative education while it is redesigned. Enabling 'at risk' primary and intermediate school students access to alternative education is a goal.

"The number of students showing up at schools traumatized and in desperate need of specialized support, has grown exponentially," he said. "The support these students need, especially those displaying violent outbursts, is more than a mainstream classroom can offer," he said.

An additional \$24.3million has been targeted to provide intensive support for our most vulnerable young learners at risk of disengaging with schooling.

The plight of schools unable to meet maintenance demands on school property were also heard with a one-off package of \$52.8million to address property upgrades and maintenance.

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For further commentary contact Perry Rush, NZPF President
Mobile: 021 490 079

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For more information contact:

Liz Hawes | Communications Manager, NZ Principals Federation

Email: liz.hawes@nzpf.ac.nz. Tel: +64 (0)4 471 2338, Mobile: +64 (0)21 847780