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Principals Position Misunderstood

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The New Zealand Principals' Federation (NZPF) has recently drawn attention to the plight of schools dealing with young people in schools displaying violent behaviour and placing other students at risk.

"This is not a new phenomenon," said NZPF President, Perry Rush. "There is a growing number of young people in our schools displaying severely violent behaviour and we have been seeking appropriate assistance to keep these young people in education for many years."

"We recognize that these young people require appropriate expert support that schools are not appropriately resourced to undertake, despite having presented the Ministry with alternative models that have been trialled and proven to work well," he said.

"We agree with the Commissioner for Children, Andrew Beecroft when he says that children suffering trauma and high stress should not be excluded from education. What Judge Beecroft is clearly unaware of is that we have been battling to get appropriate, therapeutic and workable solutions for these young people for many years. We want these young people able to access the support and expert help they quite rightly deserve so that they can recover and continue to pursue their education," he said.

"One such option is Te Tupu Managed Moves which has been very successfully trialled in the Hawkes Bay and provides the therapeutic and specialized support these traumatized youngsters need to work through their issues so they can safely return to school settings and continue their education," said Rush.

"We would be delighted if Judge Beecroft would support us to further roll out this programme across the country," he said.

"This would also require the commitment and support of the Ministry to fund the programme so that principals are not hamstrung between their obligations to maintain the safety and wellbeing of all staff and students and their obligations to accept enrolments of violent youngsters they cannot support," he said.

"We can't have it both ways," said Rush, "or we are just inviting more students and staff to be traumatized," he said.

"The situation is at crisis point and requires immediate Ministry action."

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