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Luxon Needs Educating

Source: NZ Principals Federation

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"The leader of the opposition party could do with some education in the difference between opinion and evidence-based argument," said Cherie Taylor-Patel, President of the New Zealand Principals' Federation (NZPF), on hearing Luxon's comments about school attendance.

Luxon has hit out at school principals over attendance rates saying principals "are not focusing as strongly only on getting kids to school as they can." A few hours later he was pointing the finger at parents saying, "we've got to call parents to account..." "You had the kids, it is your responsibility to make sure they have the education that you never had."

"These inflammatory remarks are Luxon's personal opinion, reflecting his own biases and are not supported by any evidence or understanding of the issue," said Taylor-Patel.

"Students who fail to make 90% attendance are considered non-regular attenders," said Taylor-Patel, "a fact that Luxon has not mentioned. It doesn't take many half-days off school to drop to below 90% and covid alone would account for the majority of non-regular attendance over the last three years," she said.

"Despite the known covid effect, principals have been collaborating in their efforts to find local solutions to the lower attendance numbers," said Taylor-Patel. "All over the country schools have been working in partnership with their Ministry regional offices to develop creative ways to bring the attendance rates up again," she said.

"I would recommend to Mr Luxon that he does some research into what initiatives schools are already implementing, and that he visits schools and makes his own contribution to the many campaigns schools are engaged in to lift attendance levels," she said.

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