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## **Let Schools Administer Attendance Fund say Principals**

**Source:** NZ Principals Federation

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The New Zealand Principals Federation (NZPF) welcomes the announcement to fund a further 82 Attendance Officer roles to lift school attendance across the motu.

NZPF President, Leanne Otene was clear about how the new resource should be applied.

"The vast majority of young people are attending school regularly, but we do have about 15% who are persistent non-attenders, and that percentage varies across different regions," she said.

"If we want to re-engage those young people in school, we need Attendance Officers who have good relationships with the community and the families involved," she said.

"These families are more likely to be struggling with social, emotional and financial issues themselves, and need support beyond just thinking about school attendance," she said.

"We have had three years of covid and several weather disasters which impact unequally on families. In some cases, older children will be in paid employment to help support their families, which is why they have not returned to school. For others, every day is a struggle to pay the bills and put food on the table," she said.

"These families need understanding and empathy and above all a trusted relationship with the attendance office if we are to get these young people back into school and learning again."

"The best way to achieve success is to give the schools agency over the funds. Schools can then deliver a localized response. They already have a relationship with their community, and they know and understand what will work best in their local area," she said.

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