

May 17 2023

Iona Holstead  
Secretary for Education  
Ministry of Education  
1 The Terrace  
Wellington

Tēnā koe Iona

**SUBMISSION ON**  
**Terms of Reference for Ministerial Advisory Group**  
**Te Tāhuhu o te Mātautanga**  
**Ministry of Education**  
**May 17 2023**

**Personal Details:**

Agency: New Zealand Principals' Federation (NZPF)  
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The NZPF has long called for reductions in staff:student ratios from years 4 -10, increases in learning support staff, and an increase in the number of teachers training in Mathematics and Science, te reo Māori and specializing in trauma led teaching. We have also called for an increase in the number of learning support specialists available to schools, including psychologists, speech language therapists and behavioural management experts and we have supported the lobby for a higher ratio of curriculum and management staffing for primary schools. All of these issues clearly indicate that we do not think the current staffing allocation mechanisms are suitable for today's teaching and learning requirements.

We therefore welcome this staffing review and have confidence that a much stronger and better planned workforce for the future will result.

The national executive members have read the Terms of Reference for the Ministerial Advisory Group on school staffing and offer the following commentary:

1. NZPF supports the establishment of a Ministerial Advisory Group to examine staffing in schools, which will include the student:teacher ratios. We note that the current staffing system was developed in 1995 and is not a suitable system for 2023.
2. NZPF has long held the view that the staffing ratios be revised and has advocated for primary schools to have staffing parity with secondary schools.
3. NZPF is concerned that there is a systemic weakness in long term planning for teacher training in certain subject areas and competencies. These include shortages in teachers of te reo Māori, Mathematics and Science, and there are major gaps in the numbers of teachers who are trauma trained, who are specialists in the management of high needs students and who are competent in leading physical education classes, music and art classes.
4. We therefore would suggest that aspects within the Highest Needs Review that involve staffing of specialists and trauma trained teachers, be included in the Terms of Reference for the Ministerial Advisory Group.
5. On leadership, NZPF advocates strongly for ongoing, equitable PLD to be made available to principals throughout their careers. Currently provision of Leadership PLD is woefully inadequate.
6. In the absence of 'Eligibility Criteria' for applying for a principal's position, NZPF is concerned that principals are being appointed to schools with little or no knowledge of the administrative and management requirements of principalship. These include, but are not limited to financial, legal, legislative and property responsibilities.
7. Learning support needs for schools have grown exponentially over the past decade as child poverty levels have increased and social cohesion has frayed. Natural disasters including earthquakes, floods and cyclones have exacerbated the number of children suffering trauma and anxiety such that at least 20% of our school children now present with some form of social, emotional and or learning needs. All of these young people need and deserve learning support. The level of staffing to meet these needs is distressingly below what is reasonable.
8. NZPF has recommended that counsellors and mentors be available to all schools, irrespective of their location, size or status.
9. It is the view of NZPF that the Ministerial Advisory Group on staffing would need to have a minimum of 50% of its membership to be practicing principals, so that these practical and real staffing issues can be clearly communicated and acted on.
10. NZPF would support the nomination of Sandy Hastings, Te Kura o Pūroto, Beckenham, Christchurch to the Ministerial Advisory Group. Sandy has extensive experience as a principal and brings 16 years of experience in both rural and urban settings. She has a very strong sense of equity and knowledge in how to achieve it.
11. NZPF also supports a second nomination – Leanne Otene, principal of Manaia View School, Whangarei, and currently elected president of NZPF. Leanne has substantial experience with 23 years of principalship and adds further value in bringing a comprehensive understanding and knowledge of Māori Education, its aspirations and functions. She is well versed in the staffing issues for Kura Ā Iwi and Kura Kaupapa Māori.

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12. NZPF is acutely aware that the staffing needs of Kura Kaupapa Māori and Kura Ā Iwi schools may be different from others and strongly recommends that there be a dedicated position on the Ministerial Advisory Group to represent their special staffing requirements.
13. NZPF does not support having allowances, units, entitlements and classroom release time sitting with the collective agreements of the unions. We believe they too should be reviewed by this Ministerial Advisory Group.
14. NZPF supports the inclusion of the ORS staffing formular in the terms of Reference for this Ministerial Advisory Group.

In summary, NZPF endorses the establishment of the Ministerial Advisory Group to review school staffing. We agree with the broad scope as outlined in the Terms of Reference but would recommend some changes.

NZPF requests that staffing related to the Highest Needs Review be included in this review and that allowances, units, entitlements and classroom release time also be included for debate.

NZPF has nominated two possible members of the Ministerial Advisory Group who we believe would bring considerable practitioner experience to the group. These are Leanne Otene, principal of Manaia View School, Whangarei and Sandy Hastings, principal of Te Kura o Pūroto, Beckenham, Christchurch.

Nga manaakitanga



Leanne Otene  
NZPF President

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