

THE NZPF MOOT 2023 PRESIDENT'S SPEECH

*Tū tonu te reo korōria ki te wāhi
ngaro, te mātāpuna o nga mea katoa
ki te hunga kua ngū i te mate, haere
atu rā
E nga mana, e nga tapu o te whēnua
e tū nei āhau, koutou e korowai nei i
a tātou i raro i ō tūpuna me nga
taonga tuku iho a ō mātua, tēnā
koutou katoa.*

*E ngā mana, e nga reo, e ngā
karangatanga maha ō ngā hau e
whā, e ngā pātaka ō ngā taonga tuku
iho, tēnā koutou katoa.*

Ko Orowhana toku maunga.
Ko Rangaheke toku awa.
Ko Mamari toku waka
Ko Te Rarawa toku iwi.
Ko Ngati Kuri toku hapu
Te uri o Hapakuku Ruia
Ko Manukau toku marae.
Ko ahau te Tumūaki o Manaia View
Ko ahau te Manukura o Nga Tumūaki o Aotearoa
Ko Leanne Otene Ahau.

No Reira



Tena Koutou, Tena Koutou, Tena Koutou Katoa

I acknowledge our Minister of Education, Hon Jan Tinetti. We welcome you, Minister, as a past Principal, and feel optimistic that, as you listen to our current leaders, you will be reminded what a huge honour it is to be Principals in our communities, to be leaders of learning and to be educating and nurturing the Akonga of today. We are also proud of **your** achievements and thank you for the mahi **you** do so we have the tools, resources and personnel to do the mahi **we** do. We know that with your support we can all achieve our goals.

I want to welcome our special guests,
First, Jehan Casinader who will be our MC today. Jehan is a well-known NZ Journalist and television presenter, and a promoter of mental health, leadership and diversity. Jehan has a long relationship with NZPF so it is indeed a privilege to have him keep us all on track today. Tena Koe Jehan

I also welcome Te Akatea Māori Principals President, Bruce Jepson and Pasifika Principals President, Sa'ane Faafo Oldehaver.
Tena Koe Bruce. We acknowledge the role of Tangata Whenua in ensuring Tangata Tiriti not only honour the Tiriti but also enact it in our schools. Talofa Lava Sa'ane – We welcome you to your first Moot as Pasifika President.

It is important that we hear Māori and Pacific voices so that we can learn how we can all realise the aspirations they have for their people, our people.

And welcome to our sector partners, The Ministry of Education, NZSTA, the Teachers Council and ERO. Thank you for the mahi **you** do to support us to be the very best we can be so that Tamariki across the country have the best teaching and the best learning opportunities.

Today we are privileged to be sitting alongside the Presidents of all the Regional Associations across New Zealand. As a Federation our primary goal is to advocate for all Principals. So, we are here to listen to them, to learn all we can to support and act on their behalf. NZPF sits at decision making tables - not to warm a seat - but to provide valuable insight and advice from our sector. We want you, our partners, to understand that collaboration is not just about hearing our views but taking heed of them. We are committed partners and, as such, we offer our views freely with one aim in mind – to

have a shared plan – to ensure our Tamariki have the very best opportunities of success.

I welcome our Sector Partners, NZEI, PPTA, SPANZ, Catholic Schools, Special Schools, Rural Schools and AIMS. Thank you for the mahi **you** do – NZPF values the relationships we have with each of you in your work to support our shared memberships.

Finally, I welcome the Presidents of our Regional Associations – On behalf of The Federation, I thank you - for all the mahi you do to support principals in your regions. We often talk about how - after *Tomorrow's Schools* - we lost the vital connections between us. Well, Principals' Associations are one of the points of vital connection for all principals - to come together - to experience the social and professional benefits of being part of a collective. You provide professional learning experiences, moral support and mentoring for the principals in your region - and that boosts the profession - and gives it the trust and confidence it needs. The model for Principals' Associations is ***principals supporting principals***.

That doesn't just happen without strong leadership and without a solid structure that works. I stand here today to thank you for volunteering to be the leaders of your regions and ensuring that your association structures are sound and functioning well for all your members. As a Federation, we are here to listen, to learn and to act.

I especially acknowledge the leaders who have been supporting their regions through the devastation of Cyclone Gabrielle. I felt incredibly privileged to hear firsthand from principals in Gisborne and in Napier these past weeks. The stories were quite extraordinary - like the principal whose bridge to civilization will not be repaired inside of three months, The principals who had near death experiences and losses of their own but continue to give all to their communities, to work through the challenges and hardship to bring our Tamariki back to school. I thank those principals for their frank and honest feedback which brings their reality to life and is hugely helpful to me when advocating here in Wellington. I understand how tough it is for these principals and for those of you leading these regions, as you grind through this overwhelming recovery stage. Be assured - I will be pulling every lever I possibly can - to get you the help you most need.

The cyclone - and let's not forget the floods that preceded the cyclone – on top of three years of covid with school learning, home learning and hybrid

learning – has left us fatigued. We are wearied by the relentless pressure to support our Tamariki, their whanau and our communities and to get our Tamariki back to school. Yes, our attendance rates have taken a dive, and yes, we all want to see attendance rates back to 90%.

But I have a message for our Minister and Sector Partners about attendance and it is this - Please take the pressure off us and give us practical supports! We are human - and like our former Prime Minister, our tanks are running low. We are not resigning, we will work through these issues but we are not super-human. We know that covid continues to infect our people and we will soon face another winter. Don't let it be 'the winter of our discontent'. We do not need more mixed messages – on the one hand, scientists telling us that tamariki and staff who are sick must stay at home, and on the other hand, we must get our attendance rates up! A more balanced realistic path is what we need - and more effort put into keeping our tamariki and teachers safe at school. We need more Ministry effort directed at:

1. Providing more ventilators in schools so our schools can be healthier places through the winter;
2. Continuing supplies of masks and sanitisers so that if covid cases increase again, we can reintroduce mask wearing;
3. Allocating more staffing for schools so that we are not continuously juggling classes when our teachers are away with covid.

These are not normal times. In fact, I would say that there is no longer a place of "Normality". We must learn from our experiences with Covid, with Natural disasters and we must adapt. Adaption means taking those learnings, acknowledging the challenges and putting in place realistic expectations and having ongoing supports.

As an organization NZPF is acutely aware of principals' hauora and the effects the last three years of covid has had on every principal. Recent reports have shown that as a sector, schools have weathered the greatest impact of covid with the highest rates of infection of any other group. We are still vulnerable. Covid has not gone away. In fact, I would suggest that relief for teachers with covid is needed as much now as it was a year ago and the supports for this are not sufficient. On top of that, the role of principals is already highly complex and has become even more so. We are not just leaders of our schools; we are leaders of our communities; we provide support for our tamariki and teachers; but through covid and now the

weather events we have also been supporting whanau, feeding them, and supporting them to get through.

Those principals in regions that have also suffered weather events, including Auckland Coromandel and Gisborne floods and now Cyclone Gabrielle, you are managing crises on a daily basis.

That is why NZPF is launching its National Hauora Campaign Strategy – to focus on your health and wellbeing which has taken a battering these past few years. You will hear more about the Hauora strategy this afternoon.

The second issue I want to address today is our ‘Curriculum Refresh’. Most of us agree that this is well overdue, and we welcome the changes proposed. Our curriculum had become too localized for some and not enough for others. We were on the brink of embedding a world class curriculum back in 2007, then national standards intruded. That was a decade of evidence informed and enlightened learning lost - and education has still not recovered.

The Curriculum Refresh gives us all an opportunity to revisit our great curriculum and make it even better. We welcome that. Curriculum is our bread-and-butter. We are all leaders of learning - it is our passion. Take the new Histories curriculum for example. It has lifted our spirits and brought excited debate to our sector. We cannot wait to establish continuous partnerships with our local Hapu and Iwi so our local histories, stories and legends can be told and appreciated for generations to come. Those already engaged are loving the learning experience and teachers across the motu are lining up to learn te reo at their local marae or through community classes so they can glean an even deeper understanding of what they are learning.

We are delighted that the teaching model of Know Understand Do which applies to the Histories curriculum, will also be applied to the wider curriculum. The curriculum ‘road shows’ the Ministry and NZPF have partnered together on over the past year or more have been well attended and much appreciated. Every principal wants to be on board and every principal wants to implement the curriculum refresh successfully.

The Curriculum advisors are responsible for working alongside our schools to deliver the PLD required to ensure the Curriculum Refresh is successfully implemented. As the ink is still not even dry on the Curriculum Refresh

Document, we are not confident they are ready to support us in the way we need them to help us.

We want these Advisors to be successful in their roles and given time, I have no doubt they will be. What we absolutely do not want is to rush implementation of an inspired Curriculum Refresh, supported by Advisors who are not yet ready!

So, on curriculum, I have another message for our Ministers and Sector Partners. “Slow down!” We cannot implement something so transformational and of such high quality when principals and teachers are gasping to get through each day, lurching from crisis to crisis, and their supporting Advisors don’t yet know what they are doing. No one wants this to fail! We just all need more time to get it right - so it will endure - and our Tamariki will succeed and flourish.

One thing we have learned over the years is that if we want great teaching of a great curriculum, we need ongoing professional development for our leaders and teachers. Right now, that is one of our greatest weaknesses. We applaud the Ministry for seconding Principals into positions of Leadership advisors. They are already making an impact in our Regions. They are supporting Principals to lead but more are needed.

The next urgent issue has been urgent for too long. We welcome the work recently completed by the High Needs Review Advisory Group empowering schools and kura to partner with learners and their whanau - to consider individual’s needs - and decide what would work best for each learner. We welcome the shift away from an application-based system so that students and their whanau have greater choice and control.

The seven building blocks of change read as a promising list and include customized tailored supports, a confident capable workforce with capacity to respond, learning supports for Māori and Pacific students and their whanau and families that are developed by Māori and Pacific people and a new funding model to support a tailored and flexible approach. These are actions that we would all support. We are also pleased that a business case is underway to take to Cabinet to fund the new model for highest needs students.

But in my final message to Ministers and Sector Partners, as any principal will tell you, when dealing with our top 5% of highest needs students, that translates to teams of highly specialized experts including psychologists, speech and language therapists, specialists in dyspraxia, dyslexia, autism, and alcohol fetal disorder - and counsellors - continuously accessible to every school. It translates to highly trained trauma and behaviour specialists available in every school. It translates to a substantial level of funding to pay for these experts and to train our teachers and Teacher Aides in these specialized areas. It translates to brave, transformational, and innovative change.

We cannot wait for the next tranche of Learning Support Coordinators to be funded. We need an LSC in every school now. We need the services of a SENCO in every school now! We need specialists on the ground available to every school – now!

We can take the urgency out of pushing up attendance rates and we can take the urgency out of implementing our curriculum refresh. But we cannot take the urgency out of our desperate need for specialists - for our Tamariki with highest needs.

There are many other topics I could cover today - such as the Draft Planning and Reporting Regulations and politicians have certainly given me a great deal of ammunition in last 24 hours. But I want to repeat what I said earlier, NZPF is here to work with our Sector Partners to get it right for our communities, for our principals but most of all for our Tamariki. There is success through synergy.

Today we will have the opportunity to hear what each of our political parties has to say about these and other education topics. I urge you to listen carefully because later in the year we get to choose who leads our government for the next three years.

Nō reira, tēnā koutou tēnā koutou tēnā koutou katoa.



Leanne Otene - Manukura
NZPF President