



5th March 2024

Kia ora koutou,

We have been informed by NZEI that there is a paid stop work meeting for our teaching staff taking place on the afternoon of **Thursday, 21 March**, from 1:30 pm.

Parents/caregivers are asked to **collect children between 1pm and 1:15pm** to allow teachers time to travel to the meeting at Cambridge Middle School.

Our after-school care program will run an extended afternoon program for those families who normally use the service. There will be a very limited number of non-union teachers on-site to help supervise children if parents have no other option.

Why the need for a meeting? Didn't teachers get a pay rise last year?

This meeting is to brief teachers on the changes happening/coming to the education sector with the change of Government and to get teacher voice on the key points they want NZEI to lobby for on their behalf.

Some of the key things happening within the education sector currently:

- The move towards twice-a-year national testing in Reading, Writing and Mathematics. How this data will be used and shared has yet to be announced. Observations from other countries warn us that performing in tests becomes the focus of the education system with National Testing.
- Significant cuts to funding support for children with learning needs. The goal to cut back spending in the public sector is seeing support for children with additional learning, behaviour or health needs being significantly cut back. Many children across the school are no longer receiving any support, or if they are, receiving a drastically reduced amount of support. This either disrupts a class, or teachers have to spend considerable time trying to support these children, which takes their time away from teaching the other children in the class.
- Attendance - the Ministry of Education directive to target attendance has been left to teachers and other school staff to improve without additional support. The "social-work" aspect of working with families has moved from external agencies to now sit largely with schools.
- Agencies who work with schools face significant cutbacks. People are leaving, and roles are left unfilled for extended periods of time.
- Property maintenance has been significantly cut back. In practical terms, this means that the money each school gets to maintain the buildings and grounds will no longer cover the costs needed to keep a school well-maintained. This money will now have to come from other discretionary school funds, like purchasing learning resources, sports equipment, library books etc.

This meeting aims to make the education sector aware of the impact of these changes across the board and develop key lobbying points to take forward. I understand this causes an inconvenience for our community, however these issues are too important to ignore.

Ngā mihi nui

Tracey Bennett