

Monday Mailing - Week 7

I find myself writing this on a Sunday morning watching test cricket while reflecting on the week that has been.

We had a great first Connections activity of the year at our Wairakei Retreat. Andrew Jones posed interesting questions about a region-wide approach, to finding the alignment of what a 'Successful Education Setting' would look like, something that sounds easy, but for those who are in a CoL will know, it's hard to come to a collaborative agreement around such concepts, but imagine the possibilities to have something we can all collectively work towards.

At Wairakei, we had a guest speaker around Diversity that some may have struggled to make a connection with the importance of the message they shared. Marcel is one of the Senior Leaders at ASB bank and for all purposes is successful in leadership, what was obvious was that his journey is far from what society would deem "normal" through education and moving into the working world. Within each of our schools is 1% Trans Gender students (our setting is currently working hard in this space if anyone needs a hand) and 4% that will fit into the LGBTI community unsure where they belong. Some may think that as Primary, Intermediate and Middle Schools that this is more of an issue for Secondary, it's not! Students as young as 5 will want to start transitioning and schools and whanau need to be prepared for such situations.

Thank you to those who provided feedback and voted on constitutional change for the WPA. At our AGM it was passed that our Committee will now appoint the President after elections take place every two years, from within the elected Committee. The committee will also appoint a new President if this position is vacated during the term. This will follow a similar format to that of the current Board Model within schools. Minutes of the AGM along with the Presidents Report has been included for people to read.

Unfortunately, I had to leave immediately after the AGM to head to Wellington for the NZPF Moot. I must stop and commend the NZPF for taking the time to collect the thoughts of those who wish to participate in this vital conversation we are having. Last Tuesday I attended the Tomorrow Schools Review Road Show at Fairfield College. It was great to hear first hand from Bali Haque (the chair of the task force) along with Mere Berryman (task force member) who acknowledge that some of the recommendations hadn't been clearly written and could be open to interpretation. The main talking point is around the forming and function of Hubs, the hard bit being around the funding to be able to help make these Hubs a reality. While the review and its recommendations are intended to be implemented in their entirety, Bali Haque indicated that it would be a measured approach with aspects being brought in over a period of 3-5 years, as a complete change overnight would be too dramatic.

The conversation with the group, as you can see from the notes from Whetu Cormick, was also based around not just a rebranding of the current Ministry and ERO to new hubs. The profession needed input to who is employed in these hubs. If we as principals are employed by the hub, how do we maintain an independent voice?

While at the Moot, our MC for the day, Jehan Casinada challenged some of the thinking in the room. As someone who has been involved with the NZPF for the past 4 years he made the point we as a profession have been crying out for change, now we have the opportunity to be involved in what wholesale change could look like, therefore we need to make the most of this opportunity and look for the positive things we can support. While there were many positive discussions had and support for some of the recommendations, there were the habitual whingers who dominated some of the discussion points.

The Minister also spoke and asked for us within the profession to have an open mind to the recommendations from the Task Force and wanted to point out that this was a genuine time of

consultation with no set agenda or decisions being made from the first report and if changes were required, well so be it. He also wanted to highlight the work that has been completed by the Labour-led government in scrapping National Standards and placing the Education Council back in the hands of Teachers with elected members overseeing the Teacher Council moving forward.

Unfortunately for me, most of the positive comments made by the Minister on the day, were underdone by two things. One he didn't address Labour's promised \$150 extra funding in lieu of donations, and two, his parting comment in regard to funding the proposed changes was quote "it is our job (as principals) to convince parents to pay more taxes".

The Minister highlighted that last year was about "talking" and this year is about "making decisions" with some of the themes being around governance of schools, compulsion within the curriculum, especially around the teaching of the history of Aotearoa, Te Ao Maori and Reo to help improve how schools design their local curriculum. He also used words that were aligned to PaCT Tool language for the "monitoring or tracking of progress and achievement."

NZPF are working hard to collate everyone's thinking from the Moot, from surveys they are completing to help form a submission to go in, the timeframe has been tight with submissions closing 7th April. We encourage individual principals and schools to place in a submission.