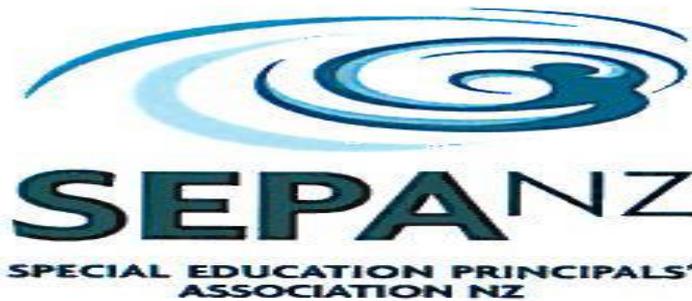


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“It’s not where, it’s how”
“Ehara I te wāhi ko te tino take, engari me pēhea”

SEPANz Executive:

Northern/Auckland: [Sally Wilkinson, Blomfield Special School \(Secretary\)](#)

Central: [Daniel Price, Arahunga Special School, Whanganui](#)

[Diane Whyte, Fairhaven Special School \(Treasurer\)](#)

Southern: [Bernadette Mulcahy-Bouwman, Van Asch School, Christchurch](#)
[Margaret Dodds, Waitaha Centre](#)

NZEI REP: [Barrie Wickens, Tauranga Special School](#)

PRESIDENTS NEWSLETTER

February- March, 2018

Kia ora. Tēnā koutou katoa.

The election duly came and following a surprise outcome, we are all now coming to grips with some new thinking. James Le Marquand has had positive discussions with Hon Tracey Martin in West Auckland and I have attended meetings at which Hon Chris Hipkins was present. The government moved quickly on promises such as: Charter Schools and National Standards. A work plan (MOE drafted) has been released and provides objectives and timelines regarding the governments’ high level priorities.

Both Members have expressed support for our sector and appreciate information that only our representatives can provide. Should anyone have an opportunity to “chat” with our new Ministers it will be excellent to provide additional insight into our challenging, yet rewarding role.

The Minister and the MOE folk in Wellington are looking to develop a thirty year (yes 30 year) strategic plan for Education. It is essential that “we” in-put to such thinking and that we can clearly identify “ourselves/our Young People” in that plan. I don’t believe that it should be a plan that the MOE develops as their “shaping for the future”. The Minister describes it as a means of reducing political interference and thus eradicating “the chance to use education as a political football”.

The Minister has requested two “Summit Meetings”. A cabinet paper will be released in the next few weeks with specifics of the summit and the focus of the work-plan. Ostensibly the gatherings are to collaborate/consult with all educational sectors and their affiliates. The Summits will be conducted in both Auckland and Christchurch. One Summit is to be held in May and the second in September. Having expressed the concern that our sector had been “consulted with to death” the Minister agreed and said that we would not again be targeted.

Community of Learning (CoL)/Kahui Ako needs to have more flexibility built in. No long term decisions have been made at this stage. The Initiative “is on hold” and remains operative for 2018, until the government has more information about it. **My warning being that we cannot be left out! For example, if Kahui Ako are to remain then we must be included in the funding arrangement.**

The ministerial funding review wherein the previous government was moving away from the decile system, has been put on hold at this stage, but will be worked through carefully in the future. The minister acknowledged that morale is not especially high in schools at present and they are attempting to address this. Within the “work plan”, under “work force”, there is talk of a strategy to recruit and retain teachers. Naturally we are in a position that not only do we require Teaching Staff – we require well-trained Teachers in the field of specialist education and they are simply not available!

A new plan for learning support and special education is also in a process of being reviewed – one hopes that our representatives will be fully immersed in this work!.

National Standards were unfortunate for our Young People and no-one seems especially distressed by their demise! – however the new process aimed to provide us with an appropriate means for describing progress that our students make was developed using the Standards. I think though, it will be a fairly simple process to refer back to the NZ Curriculum levels.

The reporting process, developed by the NZCER Team and Jacky Burgon, is based on the Progressions and literally looks at progressions that can be made within the Literacy stream and now they are developing one for Mathematics. I think this may be a “heads-up” for the direction that any new process to replace reporting against the Standards might proceed -?

I understand that some Mainstream Principals have expressed concerned at the axing of the Standards and are asking for a replacement. If you too, are concerned, my advice is to go

directly to our NZ Curriculum – it is a perfect starting place! In our case we have always identified the Key Competencies as pivotal in considering progress for our Young People. The K.C Pathway is available from Fairhaven School, Napier – ask for Nianna! There will be a NZ Curriculum Hui on 9 March. NELP Members (Leaders/Presidents of the various Ed. Groups) were invited. The curriculum gives value back to Teachers and Principals. Key points during the hui will be:

- The process
- Involvement of stakeholders
- A celebration of the holistic nature of the New Zealand curriculum

Specialist Service Standards:

Please re-read my Term Three, 2017 Newsletter for background information!

I attend a three -day workshop about the “new process” immediately following the ASEPA Conference in May, and so will be better able to provide important information for your edification!

SEPANZ Executive:

The Executive will meet on the 13th March. If there are any burning issues that the Executive can address for you kindly contact your member.

SESTA – Transport:

Transport applications and the MOE response has caused consternation in some regions. The challenging situations appear to be region/area specific. In discussing what Learning Support found difficult with some applications I was told that: some schools used the same “reason” that transport was required on every application. It is not enough, for example, just to state “health and safety”. We do have to provide salient and personalised information. Another example centred on the fact that some Children are travelling huge distances – over an hour each way - and alternative placements had to be explored before agreement could be given.

We all know that extenuating circumstances apply to specific Whanau/Families – if after completing the form to the best of your ability, you still receive a red flag, I suggest that you fully discuss the circumstances with your local Learning Support Manager. If that does not bring about an appropriate schooling option for the Child – then you will have to contact Wellington – as they make the final decision. Providing valid options concerning the well-being of Child and Whanau/Family is always pivotal. In the event that you must find mainstream placement for the Child, I suggest that you explore Outreach service provided by your school, as a positive outcome for the Young Person.

NZEI: Support Staff Collective Agreement: a continuing hot potato! We whole-heartedly support our Para-professionals however, without guaranteed increased Ops grant/ORS funding

then a successful result could be disastrous for all of our Support Staff. NZEI have definitely made adequate compensation/funding to schools a part of the action.

This matter and the situation that Specialist School Principals' salary is not commensurate with our responsibility and workload was eloquently discussed on Friday 23rd February when Steph Mills and Roy Fletcher (NZEI) met with the ASSPA Group.

It is a matter of high importance, one which we have forwarded to Barrie, as NZEI Representative for SEPANZ. The claim must be taken further if we are not to be left out again!

NZPF MOOT – 12th March – Wellington:

If anyone is attending the MOOT please let me know so that we might “join forces” while at MOOT.

SEPANZ Executive Meeting 13th March:

To be held – Wellington. Issues to your Executive Member please.

Sector Reference Group Meeting – 14th March – Wellington:

This is the second Education Act Update meeting scheduled for 2018. I will attend on your behalf and report back as required. One item of particular interest will be “Restraint”. The Act states, in Section 139AC, that:

A Teacher or authorised staff member must not physically restrain a student unless –

- a) The teacher or staff member reasonably believes that the safety of the student or of any other person is at serious and imminent risk; and*
- b) the physical restraint is reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances*

As we know this matter is of great consternation to the mainstream and action/change has been called for. Graham Stoop met with myself (and others) to discuss the whole matter and it appears that the Education Council has a better understanding than most, and will collaborate with MOE.

I urge all of our Staff to have a clear understanding/ working knowledge of the “*Guidelines for Registered Schools in New Zealand on the Use of Physical Restraint.*”

Colleagues

We fare-welled **Jan Kennington** who retired from Wilson School last year. Jan is currently working as a leader in Special Education in Samoa!

Likewise the indomitable **Faye Phelp** retired from her position at Carlson School, Auckland.

Graeme Daniel has announced his retirement and looks forward to Allenvale appointing a Principal this year. Graeme fulfilled the duties of SEPANZ President for two terms – during Hon Hekia’s feisty, fascinating, reign as Minister! Graeme worked tirelessly, under at times difficult situations, for example attempting to rationalise the SESTA (transport) process and as an Advisory member for the writing of

the Restraint Guidelines – among other contentious Learning Support/Special Ed. issues! I have greatly appreciated Graeme’s support in his role as the Immediate Past President.

Our sector is indebted to the contribution made by these wonderful and dedicated people. We wish them exciting endeavours and great success in enjoying a well-earned “change”.

They are already missed.

The positive news being that **Natalie Todd** has been appointed as the Principal at Wilson School, and **Trudi Brocas** is the inaugural Principal for the new-to-be-built Central Auckland Special School – which is a combination of both Carlson and Sunnyside Special Schools.

Wishing you all joy and excitement as you ride the roller-coaster of Specialist Educational leadership. Welcome!

ASEPA Conference, Adelaide - REMINDER:

The 20th anniversary of the establishment of ASEPA. SEPANZ Colleagues cordially invited! The 2018 ASEPA National Conference will be held at the Stamford Grand Hotel, Glenelg, South Australia, from the 16th - 18th May, 2018. Conference theme: 'Turning Tides, Inspiring Minds' Join us!

IMPORTANT INVITATION:

On SATURDAY, 12TH MAY IN AUCKLAND, Professor Barry Carpenter will be speaking with Specialist Educational Leaders (Principals, Senior Leaders) about:

- **Engagement for Learning,**
- **the expected changes as a result of Dame Diana Rochford’s report to the UK Government stating that P Levels should be replaced,**
- **and other research and interesting international trends concerning our sector.**

Barry will speak with us for approximately 3 hours.

Although the venue is not definite – we expect that Diane Hankins’ kind offer to host the event at the Sommerville School, Tamaki Campus in East Auckland, will be accepted.

The cost per person is \$25 and includes a lunch.

- **Please let me know as soon as possible if you want to/are able to, send anyone to this event. NUMBERS IMPORTANT AT THE MOMENT FOR PLANNING PURPOSES PLEASE.**
- **It is a rare opportunity!**

Professor Barry’s visit comes about as a result of my sabbatical in the UK and meetings with Barry and other UK Colleagues. Realizing that Barry would be speaking at the

ASEPA Conference in Australia in May, I invited him to firstly visit New Zealand and meet with our Ministry of Education (and Politicians if possible). The idea being that Barry has “co-constructed” the Engagement for Learning process which has been identified by Dame Diana Rochford as an alternative to the P scales, Barry works closely with the UK Government and with international Communities, and has a Chair at Oxford! Barry offers an informed insight into our practice and the desirability of a dedicated, specialist school provision.

Our MOE and NZCER have been very responsive and will meet with Barry on 11th May.

You will note that this all takes place before the ASEPA Conference!

Looking forward to catching up with many of you, and your Leadership Teams either at Professor Barry’s event or during the ASEPA Conference.

Our Well Being (or lack thereof) is a worrying current issue – please take care of your yourselves! Don’t hesitate to contact your Executive Member when/if concerns arise!

Very best regards

Judith

Judith Nel

SEPANZ President

Principal, Parkside School.