



Graeme Daniel – President  
Allenvale Specialist School  
14A Aorangi Road  
Christchurch 8053  
Phone: 03 351 6743  
principal@allenvale.school.nz

Louise Doyle – Secretary  
Oaklynn School  
20 Mayville Street  
New Lynn  
Auckland 0604  
Phone: 09 827 4748  
principal@oaklynn.school.nz

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## *PRESIDENTS NEWSLETTER*

*FEBRUARY 2014*

A warm welcome to you all for the 2014 year. No doubt you have been completing your Analysis of Variance for the 2013 year along with drafting your charter for the 2014 year. Both these documents are to be with your regional Ministry of Education by 1 March.

## *SPECIAL EDUCATION NETWORK REVIEW CHRISTCHURCH*

As you will be aware, the three special schools have had the opportunity to submit to the Ministry their respective views on the September 2012 proposals for the re location of each school. Submissions were made last term and will be included as an addendum to the report that has recently been peer reviewed by Katrina Casey, deputy secretary. The report that outlines the Ministry of Education's preferred options was also reviewed by the Canterbury Education Renewal Advisory Board (Ministerial appointed) of which I am a member. The views of the board were also attached as an addendum. It is my view that whatever is the outcome for Christchurch may signal a blue print for the country.

I am very aware that there are in the Ministry and the community, inclusion protagonists who believe that all students should attend their local school as not to do so is an infringement of their rights. In their view, these young people should be with their peers so their peers become tolerant of diversity and these young people are connected to their community. As I have written previously, Warnock (Terzi 2010) states "the right to an appropriate education that meets a student's particular needs is more important than the right to be educated alongside their mainstream peers. It is their right to learn that we must defend."

It appears to me that too often, the inclusion protagonists refer to models in different countries where special schools have either been closed or reduced to specialist units. However, in the UK, the new approach to special educational need and disability is bringing some significant changes to the special education scene particularly in that parents will have greater control over the services they use with the right to a personal budget for their support and the right to seek a place at any state-funded school whether that is a special school, a mainstream school, a maintained school, Academy or a Free School. It is my determination that we will maintain options for our parents whether that is in a base special school, an attached satellite, a TEC unit or accessing the Outreach Service from a special school. As president of your association, I regularly remind others

that I represent 3000 families in addition to the leaders and staff of special schools across the country. It is my intention to visit the UK this year to have face to face discussions with Ministry for Education personnel, special education leaders and practitioners in regard to their journey and progress with the Action Plan that has been developed from the Green Paper and the government's new approach to special educational needs and disability.

## **NOVOPAY**

The on-going problems continue to plague our executive officers and principals. It appeared by the end of year that things were improving however so far this year just getting through to the call centre is often impossible or a message requests to call back later in the day. I have noted that if you complete the correct Novo form and it is incorrectly processed, you are then asked to complete another form to rectify their error. Incredibly time wasting and frustrating. I am aware that many of our schools are still owed substantial amounts of money through incorrect payments to staff, many of whom had already moved elsewhere. I have written to Peter Hughes requesting support for schools who are owed substantial amounts of money paid from their operations grant.

## **INVESTING IN SUCCESS**

This government initiative will invest 359 million into supporting raising student achievement. The cabinet paper specified the various organisations that will make up the working party. Our sector is represented by the NZPF however I thought it disappointing that our association was not considered to have some value to add. I have brought this to the attention of Peter Hughes who has responded *"I would really appreciate you (and your colleagues) input into the design and implementation work we have to do next. I have asked Graham Stoop to lead this work for me reporting directly to me. Graham will contact you to talk this through. I think the special education sector could play a critical role in helping us get this right and I'm very keen for you to be involved directly."*

*This package and these proposals are a huge opportunity for all of us and Graham and I are absolutely committed to working with the profession to get the design and implementation right."*

## **SECTOR REPRESENTATION**

This year I will continue representing your association on:

- The Minister of Education Cross Sector Forum
- The Priority Learners and Vulnerable Children's Working Group
- The Transitions/Clusters Working Group
- The Special Education Advisory Group
- The National Leadership Forum
- Ministry of Education advisories as requested.

We are also represented on the Inclusive Education Capability Project Advisory by Louise Doyle.

## *SESTA ADVISORY*

As you are aware I have chaired this group over 2013. The final report is almost complete and will include twenty one recommendations to Minister Kaye along with roles and responsibilities for schools, parent/caregivers, the Ministry of Education and transport service providers. There will also be best practice guidelines. It is expected I will present this report to the Minister in March. The advisory group, that also included Kathy Davidson from Sir Keith Park School along with parent representatives, transport providers, Ministry of Education personnel and NGO representatives worked very well together in spite of some philosophical differences.

## *CONFERENCES 2014*

This year as part of our cycle of conferences, we are joining the NZPF for their conference and will hold our Annual Meeting at the conference. I have had this meeting added to the NZPF schedule. The conference is being held in Invercargill on the 23 – 26 September. I encourage you to attend.

The Australian Special Education Principals Association (ASEPA) is joining with the Australian Council for Educational Leaders (ACEL) to host the First Asia Pacific Congress on Creating Inclusive Schools. It will be held in Sydney on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> May. New Zealand delegates are welcome.

## *EXECUTIVE MEETING*

The last meeting was held in Wellington on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2013. Included in discussions:

- Life Membership; who gets life membership, what is the criteria, who decides, what are the benefits (if any), when is an award considered. It was suggested that each regional representative discusses the criteria and feeds back to the executive.
- The conference cycle was confirmed and is to be put on the website. It is likely that the 2015 conference will be held in the South Island. The Southern Region will consider where it may be held.
- Specialist Teacher Outreach Service – issues of funding, remuneration, travel costs are issues of concern across the regions. Draft guidelines are being developed by the Ministry of Education. It is intended to seek a meeting with the Ministry to voice concerns raised.
- Novopay and its inherent issues were discussed.
- Enabling Good Lives demonstration in Christchurch was discussed. This is an interagency initiative where funds are pooled, including ORS, for students from the age of 18 years who wish to leave school. Navigators will work with these students and their families in the last year of school using the Individual Transition Plan from the school to assist in the student's transition and to meet their aspirations for further learning, training, employment, leisure and living.
- Safety of male staff and personal care of students.

## ***NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING***

To be held in Wellington on April 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> April.

## ***NZPF PRESIDENT'S MOOT***

I have been invited to attend this moot in Wellington on April 4<sup>th</sup>. All presidents of regional and national associations meet annually. This Moot is entitled *Looking forward to change* and includes presentations from Hon Hekia Parata, Peter Hughes, Peter Witana, Enosa Auva'a, Phil O'Reilly, Cathy Wylie and education spokespersons from each of the main political parties.

I trust that this year goes well for you all. As leaders you carry a significant responsibility not only for your students but for the staff in your schools. The work is never easy and maintaining a safe environment for students and staff can be challenging at times. Our student population requires the commitment of staff who often go the extra mile. I acknowledge you as leaders of a profession that you can be proud of.

Ngā mihi nui



A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to be 'Graeme H Daniel', written over a white background.

**Graeme H Daniel**

**President**