



President's Comment 11

29th April 2010

Dear Colleagues

Rise in Violent Crime and School Bullying

Dr Angus (Children's Commissioner) and Howard Broad (Police Commissioner) recently expressed concern over the increasing violent incidents involving young people (up 9.2% from last year).

They identified contributing factors as:

- the increasing use of cyber-bullying, cell phones, facebook, which is highly invasive and insidious since it comes into the home and can be 24/7;
- alcohol fueled events and binge drinking;
- a more violent adult community which is reflected in school communities.

Added to this concern is the increasing number of verbal and physical assaults on our staff by students.

My issue is that there is increasing liability on Principals and Boards through legislation and common law to maintain a safe working environment for staff and students. Unless however we have access to appropriate professional development, intervention programmes, specialist support and well-funded alternative education, we run a real risk of being sued! It is hoped that the original Taumata Whananga, the MOE's Behaviour Management Plan and review of Special Education will deliver on these issues.

Review of University Entrance

NZQA has established a Steering Group and Technical Advisory Group to review University Entrance. Sandy Pasley and myself will represent SPANZ on these two groups.

This is a significant review with major implications for secondary schools. Issues to be determined include:

- Whether the current standard meets universities and student needs
- Literacy requirements for University Entrance
- The possibility of applying a common standard of entrance to all degree level study in universities and other tertiary organizations
- The impact of any proposed changes on particular student populations

At the global level, it is a tension between creating a 'university standard' which means students are 'fit for purpose' i.e capable of success at degree level and not unreasonable denying access to degree courses to students who could achieve with support. We will keep you posted.

Previous Comments

Comment 10 - 22.04.10

Mangatepopo Gorge Tragedy Coroners Report, Technology Curriculum, National Standards, SPANZ Union .

Comment 9 - 31.03.10

BOT Elections, Jurisdiction over Students After Hours, Monster Parents.

Comment 8 - 25.03.10

New SPANZ Executive, SPANZ Union, NZ Teachers Council Registration Fee Increase.

Comment 7 - 18.03.10

Farewell to Peter Gall - previous President of SPANZ..

Comment 6 - 11.03.10

Ministry of Education and NZQA Regional Seminars.

Comment 5 - 04.03.10

Internet Safety in your school.

Contact Us

PO Box 11541
Ellerslie Auckland 1542

Phone: 09 571 2233

Fax: 09 571 2244

Email: office@spanz.school.nz
www.spanz.school.nz

Sound Advice From a Judge

Further to my opening comment on teenage crime, the following advice from a judge dealing with criminal youth offending appears appropriate.

'Always we hear the cry from teenagers, "What can we do, where can we go?"

My answer is, "Go home! Mow the lawn, wash the windows, learn to cook, build a raft, get a job, visit the sick, study your lessons. And after you've finished, read a book.

Your town does not owe you recreation facilities; your parents do not owe you fun. The world does not owe you a living.

You owe the world something. You owe it your time, energy and talent, so that no-one will be at war, in poverty or sick and lonely again. In other words, grow up, stop being a cry baby, get out of your dream-world and develop a backbone not a wishbone.

Start behaving like a responsible person. You are important and you are needed. It's too late to sit around and wait for somebody to do something someday. Someday is now and that somebody is you."

Principal Voice and STA – A Missing Link!

I was surprised and disappointed to read an article in the 29th March Education Gazette, "Good Governance" in which quote "The Education Gazettes brought together a group of education sector professionals to talk about what we've learned about school governance, and what helps school Boards do their jobs well".

The group included Lorraine Kerr (President of NZSTA), Ray Newport (General Manager NZSTA), Jeremy Wood (MOE Group Manager), Chris Wells (MOE Adviser), and Bruce Adin (Northern Regional Manager by phone). There were no Principal representatives despite Principals being Chief Executives to Boards, and having a role in governance as Trustees.

This group went on to make comments such as "The Chief Executive needs some critical performance management objectives".

The School Trustees Association is at risk of driving a wedge between Boards and Principals. If Principal groups are not consulted and we are treated as mere 'managers' of schools employed by lay Boards to implement their policy, it will undermine the whole ethos of Tomorrows Schools.

It is time STA recognised Principals as career professionals who are full participating members of the Board and play a critical role in policy, leadership and management.

School Balls and After Ball Parties

It is that time of year when Principals both celebrate the coming of age of their students into adulthood at balls and worry about the parties afterwards.

In my capacity of legal adviser I have assisted a number of schools with some fallout with after ball parties. I have attached to this President's Comment a few salient observations which you may wish to share with parents and students who are thinking about organising an after ball party.

Enjoy the weekend!!



Patrick Walsh

President