



# SPANZ

SECONDARY PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION OF NEW ZEALAND INC.

**Secretariat Address**

P O Box 11541, Ellerslie Auckland 1542  
Phone: 09 571 2233: Fax: 09 571 2244  
Email: [office@spanz.school.nz](mailto:office@spanz.school.nz)



Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2008

## President's Comment 16

Dear Colleagues

The attention drawn to schools' resourcing by the North Shore secondary principals' group has prompted some interesting responses from the Minister. If reported correctly, he believes that our schools are very generously funded, that some principals are being 'disingenuous' about their school's level of locally raised funds and he is now focussing on costs associated with Schools Plus rather than the substantive issue.

It is perhaps timely to reflect back on the findings of the review of schools' operational funding that was released in November 2006. That report clearly identified cost pressures for schools and further work was carried out in the areas of ICT funding, support staff funding and a survey of school finances. The ICT and support staff reports are with the Minister and remain confidential at this stage. The survey report independently carried out by Polson Higgs is due to be completed later this month. There has been a tremendous amount of work in producing these various reports and as yet there has been very little recognition by government of the report findings and that schools are struggling to make ends meet. We should also remember that ERO carried out a review on schools use of operational funding and that report highlighted the importance of locally raised funds for meeting day to day costs for many schools.

When the Minister states that our schools are generously funded, we need to ask – "funded for what?" For example, what is an acceptable standard of IT network configuration for an average secondary school? What is the expected ratio of computers per student? And computers per technician?

It is interesting to read through the list of items that schools are expected to cover with their operational grant funding (annex three, page 42, *Review of Schools Operational Funding*). The list is comprehensive but it makes no attempt to define a satisfactory level of performance for each item and that is at the heart of the funding issue. If government wants schools to reach certain standards they need to be well defined and then adequate resource has to be provided.

Executive is due to meet with the Minister at the end of this month and the one agenda item will be the resourcing of secondary schools.

**Peter Gall**  
**SPANZ President**