

President's Comment 11



Sandy Pasley
SPANZ President

24 September 2015

Dear Colleagues

As you will all be aware there are a number of issues facing us as Principals not the least of these being the Health and Safety Legislation. Patrick Walsh has represented SPANZ on the Ministry of Education Reference Group and I sincerely thank him for his representation on our behalf and for putting the Principal's perspective to the forefront at all times. He has submitted the following item for this Comment.

Health and Safety Concerns

The Ministry has agreed to a request from SPANZ to accept direct questions from you on Health and Safety matters under the new legislation, particularly those that might or will affect all schools.

The first of these issues raised by a number of Principals is whether buses hired by schools should be fitted with seatbelts. While each school should carefully consider their own context e.g. rural/urban and risk factors the response from the Ministry of Education is a useful guide for your Board and community. It reads:-

I am aware that there are concerns about children travelling on school buses without seatbelts. Student safety is the Ministry's highest priority and seatbelts and standees on school buses are areas that are regularly reviewed. We also work closely with colleagues in the NZ Transport Agency and the Ministry of Transport on these issues.

Mandatory fitting of seatbelts has been considered in the past, by the NZ Transport Agency, and lead to the development of the Land Transport Rule: Seatbelts and Seatbelt Anchorages. However, at this time, legislation does not require seatbelts on large passenger vehicles. A large number of buses in the fleet are incapable of being retrofitted with seatbelts that would comply with the safety requirements associated with fitting seatbelts.

The size and structure of buses lowers the risk of injury to passengers compared with smaller vehicles, and research shows passenger safety is not necessarily dependent on wearing seatbelts. Research both in New Zealand and internationally shows that school buses are one of the safest ways for students to travel to and from school.

The Health and Safety Legislation requires all practicable steps be taken to ensure the safety of all concerned. We are satisfied that at this time legislatively compliant large passenger vehicles do meet the requirements of the Health and Safety Legislation.

Delaney Myers

Director School Transport

If you have other Health and Safety issues that you consider might affect all schools please contact Richard Wards at the Ministry of Education on Richard.Wards@education.govt.nz

Your SPANZ Executive met in Wellington in the last two days of last week. At this time where there are a number of changes happening in education it is very pleasing to see that we have the strongest membership we have heard for many years. Sometimes members are unsure of what aspects of SPANZ that they have membership of. I have listed below the categories of SPANZ membership.

SPANZ Professional

SPANZ Legal Professional Assistance

SPANZ Legal School Assistance

SPANZ Union

Please be in touch with ros@spanz.school.nz if you seek any clarification of your membership status and what it entails.

Later this year SPANZ Union will join the NZSPC in the negotiation of your Collective Agreement. It is only through a Union that all Secondary School Principals' in New Zealand will be able to negotiate appropriate salary increases and improvements in work conditions.

I strongly urge you to consider joining SPANZ Union who will work on your behalf to protect and enhance the employment conditions of Secondary School Principals.

To join SPANZ Union contact Ros in the SPANZ Office ros@spanz.school.nz

Best wishes for the end of Term Three and good luck with catching up on the outstanding paperwork over the break.

Nāga mihi

Sandy Pasley
President

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