



President's Comment 16



Sandy Pasley
SPANZ President

10 February 2016

Dear Colleagues

I hope the 2016 academic year has started well for you.

Many of us, throughout the country, are concerned about ensuring that we have high quality teachers in front of our students. Of particular concern, is the shortage of teachers in certain subjects. This concern is widespread throughout New Zealand and is in the STEM subjects. A number of areas in New Zealand are also experiencing difficulty in attracting high quality teachers to positions in their schools. We know from research that the biggest difference to student learning is by having a highly competent, well qualified, passionate, enthusiastic teacher who can relate to the students in front of them.

We raised the issue of the shortage of teachers in certain subjects and in certain areas when we met with Minister Parata in November last year. Last Friday we met with Ministry of Education officials where we discussed the details of our concerns. They assured us they are working behind the scenes with a number of initiatives to improve teacher supply and quality. We hope that the initiatives they are working on will be promptly approved and enacted to halt what is becoming a very critical situation.

Last year we had the highest number of vacancies for Principals' positions advertised in the Gazette since we started tracking vacancies in the early 1990's. It is crucial that we come together as Principals to support each other, listen to valuable ideas and give feedback on the ways that SPANZ can support you in your position.

At the November Executive Meeting Patrick Walsh and I had the opportunity to meet with representatives from the NZ Police who agreed that a Memorandum of Understanding would be created between NZ Police and SPANZ. This will aim to facilitate a better understanding and co-operation in relation to Police investigations in schools particularly in relation to sexual assaults, cyberbullying and the general misuse of social media. There will be another meeting later this month to progress this issue and I would appreciate your feedback on what you see as important to include in the discussion and in a subsequent Memorandum.

Your Executive has also been working on what promises to be an exciting event, a very well put together and informative SPANZ Conference 3 - 6 April. The venue is the Millennium Hotel Queenstown. The New Principals Session on Sunday will start at 10 am and the Powhiri at 5 pm. The conference will close on Wednesday at approximately 12:15 pm. Look for the brochure and registration form arriving in your inbox shortly. The Millennium and Copthorne Lakeside Hotels Queenstown are holding a number of accommodation rooms which you can book via their website www.millenniumhotels.co.nz/nz/SPANZ16.

Nāga mihi

Sandy Pasley
President

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