



Monday 13 May 2019

We have just received confirmation that the “**mega teacher strike**” is confirmed for **Wednesday May 29th**. This means both primary and secondary teachers across the country will be on strike and all schools will be closed.

As teachers we continue to be frustrated and saddened that we have not been able to resolve the issues facing teaching in NZ.

Some of the issues that remain for us are:

- Primary teachers get **10 hours a term** release time. Secondary teachers get **5 hours a week**. This is not fair. The lack of release time impacts on the teaching in the classroom - and our students deserve better!
- The govt offered primary teachers a **\$500** bonus to sign the agreement. They offered secondary teachers **\$1000**. This is not fair.
- The government is refusing to commit to **pay parity**. Teachers should be paid the same for equal qualifications - regardless of the age of the students.
- Currently our beginning teachers spend a minimum of 3 years at university and then start on a paltry \$47980. This offer gives them 3% straight away. So about \$1400 before tax - or about \$19 a week. This is one of the reasons we have a 40% **reduction in people choosing teaching as a career**.
- Experienced teachers stand to get about \$27 a week from this offer.

And the biggest issue impacting on all of us

- The **support for learners** with special needs - both learning and behaviour - is nothing short of pathetic. Limited release for primary teachers means they have no extra time to plan for these learners - or attend meetings, or support whānau.

When Chris Hipkins was in opposition - he talked about how low teacher salaries are, and the need for drastic action in education. Now that he is Minister of Education - he is facing the largest strike action in memory. National's Nikki Kay is talking about how bad the situation is, and how teachers deserve a pay jolt - but it seems easy to say things in opposition.

A decade ago we used to get a 100 applicants for a teaching job. Principals could choose the best candidates to meet the needs of their school. Now - we see vacancies having no applicants at all. We have classes being split because we can't find a reliever. We see jobs being re advertised over and over again. Birchville is in an enviable position and very fortunate to have such a dedicated teaching staff and have also recently had **two** strong candidates for a senior position. This is not the norm.

We have already battled this for a year. It has cost teachers who cannot afford to go without pay - and we seem to have made little headway. We know it's frustrating for parents too.

Please believe that we are fighting for the education for your children. We have come too far to give up now.

We are forever hopeful that the government will finally be courageous enough to invest properly in education. Fund us so that we can be world class. Fund us so every student can get the best education possible.

So we understand that May 29th will be inconvenient. We are hoping for a resolution.

We thank you for your endless support for us as teachers.

Ngā mihi nui koutou

Robyn Brown
Principal
Birchville School



Learn to love. Love to learn.
Ako ki te aroha. Aroha ki te ako.