

SUBMISSION TO THE EDUCATION SELECT COMMITTEE FROM NZEI TE RIU ROA AND THE SERVICE AND FOOD WORKERS' UNION

FUNDING OF NON TEACHING STAFF IN SCHOOLS

Executive Summary

The issues

1. Issues for non teaching staff

- There are approximately 27,000 support employees employed in schools in positions other than teachers and principals. Included in this category are administrative staff, finance managers, teacher aides, technicians, librarians, caretakers, cleaners, kaiarahi i te reo and health support employees such as therapists and nurses
- The funding for the employment of these employees is bulk funded to schools through the operations grant. This grant covers virtually all school costs other than the employment of teachers and principals. Therefore, as well as being intended to cover schools' requirements for the employment of support personnel, it must also cover school expenditure on resource purchases, maintenance, legislative compliance and all other operational costs.
- Unlike teachers and principals, there is no staffing schedule or staffing entitlement in regard to support personnel.
- The result for these support employees is that they have:
 - Little or no job security;
 - Jobs in which the hours of work are subject to regular change with no security from year to year as to how much of a job they will retain of if the job will continue at all
 - No income for at least 7 weeks of the year
 - Low rates of pay
 - Collective agreements which are, arguably, negotiated outside a reasonable definition of a good faith process
 - To effectively compete with schools' other priorities such as resource purchasing and maintenance
 - Often, very little access to professional development
 - Inequitable employment conditions

- In many cases, lesser status within their school than their teaching colleagues because of the temporary or less secure nature of their employment
- Working relationships with their principals which are adversely affected by the employment decisions forced on the principal by the current funding regime.

2. Issues for Schools

- Inability to employ key support staff personnel on secure terms and conditions;
- Inability to recruit and retain suitably skilled, experienced and qualified staff;
- Having to make decisions about reductions to employees' employment in order to balance school budgets and meet other expenditure priorities despite these decisions often being to the detriment of the operations of the school. Given that there is seldom any flexibility, in practice, about the hours required for support personnel such as administrative staff and caretaking staff, this will commonly reduce the level of teacher aide support. This in turn may well be to the detriment of the effective delivery of the curriculum in the classroom;
- Inability to employ the number of support staff required to effectively operate their school;
- Difficulty complying with the industrial entitlements of support personnel, especially covering service-based pay increments and the rights of employees to permanency of employment status.

What has caused these issues?

There are a number of factors that have given rise to these issues and these are covered in detail in the body of this submission. That said, there are two fundamental factors involved:

- i. Having these employment costs "lumped in" with all other school expenditure costs; and
- ii. Government having taken no steps to analyse the needs of schools in the area of the level of support personnel now required to maintain effective operations and provide the necessary teacher and student support. After fifteen years of self managing schools, the formula initially implemented in 1990 has no relevance to the needs of schools in 2005.

Suggested remedies

This submission details the remedies that NZEI and SFWU believe should be implemented to overcome the issues identified above. In essence this submission recommends that:

- The identified core roles in schools should be centrally funded on the basis of an entitlement formula to be jointly developed by Ministry and the unions. This would provide full time equivalent staffing entitlement based, primarily but not exclusively, on per pupil funding;
- The staffing entitlement would be delivered to schools as an agreed number of entitlement hours within four occupational streams – administrative support, classroom support, library and property;
- Each school would determine how to deploy that staffing resource to fit their school operations;
- Additional core positions would be available upon application where schools met the criteria for entitlement to such positions (e.g. social workers, security guards);
- A single pay scale would be developed with agreed entry and ceiling levels for each occupational classification. Employees employed from entitlement staffing would be centrally paid by Ministry;
- Schools would retain the ability to employ additional support personnel from their operations funding or from locally raised funds.

Recommendations

The unions propose that a joint Ministry of Education / NZEI / SFWU Ministerial taskforce be created to:

- i. investigate the feasibility of the support staff funding model proposed in this submission; and**
- ii. develop formulae to support the proposed models in consultation with key stakeholder groups, in particular NZPF and NZSTA.**
- iii. complete this work by no later than November 30, 2006.**
- iv. provide the Minister of Education with regular update reports during the period of this study.**

SUBMISSION TO THE EDUCATION SELECT COMMITTEE FROM NZEI TE RIU ROA AND THE SERVICE AND FOOD WORKERS' UNION

FUNDING OF NON TEACHING STAFF IN SCHOOLS

Background Papers

Union Coverage

NZEI Te Riu Roa represents approximately 10,300 support staff in schools. These employees perform a broad range of functions in schools. Included among the occupations covered are school administration managers / school secretaries, teacher aides, librarians, science technicians, therapists, kaiarahi i te reo and IT support personnel. The Service and Food Workers' Union (SFWU) also cover a small number of these employees.

The SFWU also covers caretakers and cleaners employed by or in schools.

For the purposes of this paper, all the employees referred to above are designated as support personnel.

Collective Agreement Coverage

Support staff employed in schools are covered by two collective agreements – the Support Staff in Schools Collective Agreement to which both NZEI and the SFWU are parties and the Kaiarahi i te Reo, Therapists', ATSSD and Special Education Assistants' Collective Agreement to which NZEI is the sole union party.

Caretakers and cleaners employed by Boards of Trustees are covered by the School Caretakers and Cleaners Collective Agreement.

Grounds staff employed in the secondary sector are covered by a separate collective agreement to which the Amalgamated Workers Union of New Zealand (AWUNZ) is the union party.

Current Funding Arrangements

Bulk Funding through the Operations Grant

With the exception of a small number of centrally funded occupational therapists and physiotherapists, all staff other than teachers and principals employed by schools are bulk funded, primarily through the operations grant funding.

ORRS Funding and SEG

A proportion of the Ongoing and Reviewable Resourcing Scheme (ORRS) funding distributed by the Ministry of Education is targeted at enabling schools to employ teacher aides to work with students verified as having high or very high special education needs.

The nature of this ORRS funding presents significant employment challenges to schools. While the Employment Relations Act (ERA) is clear in its intent with regard to limiting fixed term employment, the way in which the ORRS funding resource is delivered to schools makes the employment of teacher aides on a permanent basis something of a financial risk for schools.

Those students who are verified as meeting the criteria for funding on the Reviewable Resourcing Scheme may have that funding withdrawn at any point at which it is determined that the child has progressed to a level at which the funding is no longer warranted. The school may then determine that it can no longer afford to continue to employ the teacher aide who had been working with that student. Had the school employed that teacher aide on a permanent basis, as may have been required under the ERA, it would then be faced with having to pay redundancy for which it has received no funding. The same applies when ORRS funded students are transferred unexpectedly to another school.

There is no correlation between the rates paid as ORRS funding and the rates in the collective agreement.

Schools also receive a Special Education Grant (SEG) which is delivered based on a per pupil and decile basis to assist schools to support students with moderate special education needs but who do not qualify for ORRS funding. SEG funding is not tagged to individual students.

Again, one of the most practical ways to support these students is by providing additional teacher aide support but a recent ERO report¹ found that there was a high level of confusion in schools as to which students should be regarded as having “moderate special education needs”. It also found that there was a high level of inconsistency in the way that this funding is being used.

Providing effective support for students with special or particular educational needs, whether those needs are based on physical, intellectual, emotional or behavioural issues, necessitates, in part at least, the employment of skilled and experienced teacher aides. To be able to employ teacher aides with these skills, schools need to be able to offer fair and secure terms of employment. The current funding mechanisms do not enable this.

Finding a more effective funding mechanism to support students with special educational needs is a high priority in the compulsory education sector. It is essential if schools are to be able to employ recruit and retain the quality

¹ ERO June 2005 – An Evaluation of the Special Education Grant

teacher aides the students need. However, for the purposes of this submission we suggest that this should be viewed as a separate body of work.

ESOL Funding

This is tagged funding provided to schools to support the students they enrol from a non English speaking background – primarily migrant and refugee students. Again this funding is discontinued at the point at which the student attains the required English language standard.

ACC Funding

This is another funding source which continues only for as long as ACC determines that it is warranted by a particular student. Schools, therefore, have no certainty of knowing for how long it will continue. It is also, like ORRS funding, not directly linked to the rates of pay in the collective agreement.

GSE Behaviour Funding

Group Special Education staff may deem particular students in need of additional behavioural support and provide some funding for this. This is short term, renewable funding paid at a notional rate which, again, is not linked to collective agreement rates of pay.

Cumulative Effect of “Intervention” Funding Models

This submission focuses mainly on the employment and operational issues created for schools by the bulk funding mechanism of the operations grant funding model.

However, there is a great deal of additional pressure placed on school management teams in trying to employ the necessary staffing resource based on the short term or reviewable funding they receive from the various sources identified above. The fact that these are all delivered at notional, and different, rates adds to the challenges. In particular, it becomes virtually impossible for schools to be able to balance the twin requirements of providing effective support for these students with specific needs while also acting as a good employer as required under the State Sector Act.

For the teacher aides it inevitably means uncertain and insecure employment.

Genesis of the Staffing Component within the Operations Grant

Prior to the inception of the Tomorrow’s Schools reforms and the move to self-managing schools in 1990, all non teaching staff employed in schools were centrally funded. The amount of such staffing to which schools were entitled was determined by formulae developed by the Department of Education and administered and monitored by Education Boards. These formulae took into account such factors as school roll and type and, in the case of caretakers and cleaners, school size and configuration.

With the introduction of Tomorrow’s Schools, the costs of the employment of all staff other than teachers and principals were transferred into schools’ operations grants.

From that point the size of the school's operations grant has been primarily determined by roll size. From 1990 to 1996 there was no inflationary adjustment to schools' operations grants – the grants were effectively frozen while schools' operational costs continued to grow.

While there have been inflationary adjustments since 1996, and in particular in the past six years, these have neither compensated for the six years of funding stagnation in the early nineties nor have they addressed the growing needs of schools in the area of support staff.

Changes to Schools' Support Staff Needs 1990 – 2006

- **Administrative staff** – The move to self managing schools automatically changed and broadened the roll of school administrative staff. From being largely secretarial / clerical staff employed in schools operating under the administration of Education Boards, they became the administrative staff in what became the equivalent of businesses employing anywhere from three to three hundred staff.

Over the past fifteen years there has been exponential growth in the compliance requirements schools must meet and on which they must report to the Ministry and other government agencies. Examples of this include planning and reporting and health and safety compliance.

To be effective and to build and maintain the links with the school community the amount and necessary quality of the communications with schools' parent / whanau community has increased significantly.

Included within this group of staff are finance managers, executive officers, office managers and principals' secretaries. These are all high level, demanding functions in the schools of 2005. They are all necessary functions in today's schools and bear very little resemblance to the role of the school secretary that existed prior to 1990.

Schools are now required to operate as small to medium sized businesses. There must be recognition of the need for schools to employ the staffing infrastructure to operate as such.

- **Classroom Teacher Aides** – There has been enormous growth in the number of teacher aides employed in schools over the past 15 years. Given the tightness of schools' budgets, it is safe to assume that these are all positions that are deemed necessary for the effective operation of each school and the effective delivery of the curriculum. Any funding mechanism needs to reflect the key role that teacher aides now play in the operation of schools.

While it is difficult to generate actual figures on the issue, there is overwhelming anecdotal evidence that there has been a significant increase in student behavioural difficulties which now confront teachers and schools. For the curriculum to be effectively delivered to a class, schools have to have

strategies for coping with students with behavioural issues. These are most commonly addressed through the employment of teacher aides. Teacher aides are an indispensable and growing component of the staff of every school in New Zealand.

The loosening of NZ immigration policy has also seen a huge increase in the number of students with little or no English. Again, in order to cope adequately with the demands such students place on the classroom, additional teacher aide support is necessary.

- **Special Needs Teacher Aides (ORRS funded)** – For the purposes of this submission, the unions submit that teacher aides employed solely or substantially to support students verified under the ORRS scheme should be dealt with in a separate funding investigation exercise.

Special needs teacher aides are, arguably, the most vulnerable and least appropriately remunerated staff employed in schools. However, as much of the funding for their positions is delivered via ORRS funding and as there are many issues surrounding the provision and funding of special education that NZEI believe need to be addressed, it is proposed that this is an exercise for another forum.

- **Librarians** – The school library is the hub of each school's information resources. ERO has stated that an effective school library is fundamental to the development of student information literacy. Operating an effective school library is a skilled and specialised task. Each school must have the capacity and funding to employ a specialist in this role.

The role of the school librarian has expanded, in many cases into also managing what is effectively a media centre for the school.

The role of librarians in the secondary sector has been further expanded with the introduction of NCEA. This has led to significantly increased demands being placed on librarians to source appropriate research resources and assist with the development of student research skills.

- **IT Staff** – Essentially, none of these roles existed in 1990. While there was, according to the Associate Minister, a one off 5.2% increase to operational funding to assist schools to employ the necessary specialist personnel to support their expanding IT networks, this comes nowhere near meeting the actual costs. IT staff include those employed to provide technical support and maintenance through to roles in larger schools such as web developers and programmers.

In order to employ staff with the necessary skills, schools have to pay the relatively high rates of pay dictated by the market.

- **Health Professionals Employed in Schools** – These include occupational therapists, physiotherapists and school nurses. Rates of pay elsewhere in the public sector for these roles have now increased significantly. There has been

no corresponding adjustment to school budgets to enable schools to match the rates now applicable outside the school sector.

Some therapists employed in schools have remained centrally funded pending the outcome of separate analysis being undertaken by the Ministry into the provision of therapy in education.

- **Kaiarahi i te reo** – Kaiarahi i te reo are specialist support staff who are fluent in te reo and have an in-depth understanding of tikanga Maori. Initially these positions remained centrally funded but they have subsequently become bulk funded through the operations grant. It is incongruous that while the number of kura kaupapa Maori and full immersion classes has grown and evidence accumulates that Maori student achievement increases with students taking this path, the number of kaiarahi i te reo employed in the education sector has fallen. These are salaried specialist roles providing support to students being taught in te reo.

With the funding of the positions having to now be found from the operations grants, many schools or kura are opting for the cheaper alternative of employing kaiawhina or teacher aides on lesser rates. We submit that this is to the potential detriment of Maori students.

- **Science Technicians** – This is a core role in many schools, mostly in the secondary sector. The requirements placed on these employees have expanded even further with the introduction of NCEA.

The expansion of the science curriculum and the increased compliance requirements in relation to health and safety and handling of hazardous substances have also impacted on science technician roles.

- **New Roles** – In addition to the core roles referred to above, NZEI has identified that there are a number of new job titles falling under the umbrella heading of support staff that did not exist in 1990. At that time there were no more than around 10-15 distinct support staff roles in schools. The NZEI Support Staff Funding Report identified 225 distinct support staff job titles. While a number of these titles do refer to the same or similar generic jobs, many others are new roles.

Some of these “new roles” that have become or are becoming increasingly common in schools include sports co-ordinators, arts co-ordinators, truancy officers, social workers and security officers.

- **Caretakers** – As with many other roles, that of the caretaker has expanded with the move to self managing schools. The term caretaker was appropriate when these were employees looking after property that was managed and maintained by Education Boards. Today the role is that of a property manager.

Managing and hiring out facilities, organising and assessing maintenance quotes from trades people and managing cleaning contracts are all roles that the caretaker must now perform. This is a much higher level of responsibility

than simply contacting the Education Board whenever any maintenance was required.

Issues for Support Staff

- **Insecurity of Employment** – This is consistently identified as the number one concern of the unions’ support staff membership. As detailed above, support staff are performing essential and often complex roles within schools. As a result of the funding arrangements in place since 1990, many have been employed on what is little better than a casualised basis. Schools are incentivised to keep support staff costs as low as possible in order to free up funds to spend on other priorities such as resource purchases and maintenance.

Support staff (other than caretakers and some senior administrative staff) are mostly employed for just the forty weeks of term time each year. Other than payment for annual leave, they receive no income for the other 12 weeks of the year.

Support staff also face the continual threat of having their hours of work reduced or their positions disestablished. While a fall in roll may understandably change staffing requirements, changes may also occur with new principal appointments, board changes and year to year financial shortfalls.

One of the key factors impacting on schools’ ability to retain suitably skilled and qualified staff is the schools’ inability to consider employment arrangements for more than one year in advance. A recent NZEI survey of teacher aides revealed that 52% of the 2391 respondents were employed on a fixed term basis. NZEI believes that a high proportion of these are inappropriate and driven by concerns of potential liability of redundancy costs.

- **Rates of Pay** – These are inevitably affected to the detriment of support staff by the current funding arrangements. Some schools effectively benefit from employing their support staff at the lowest possible rates through consequently freeing up more funds to cover the cost of other expenditure items such as resources and maintenance. Conversely those schools that pay their support staff fairly and well are penalised by having less money left in their budgets to cover those other costs.

NZEI is taking a series of cases against schools which it has found have not passed on the wage increments to which employees are entitled or have graded their staff inappropriately. The union has now recovered almost two million dollars in underpaid wages for support staff in the past three years alone. It is not uncommon for schools to make it clear that if we succeed in such cases they will be forced to respond by reducing the employee’s hours of work. The liability in underpaid wages being accrued (often unknowingly) by schools will create serious financial difficulty for those schools.

External factors are creating severe recruitment and retention difficulties within a number of support staff occupations – for example IT support,

librarians, finance managers and therapists. Across the board the rates of pay for support staff in schools compared compare very unfavourably to like positions in the private and even elsewhere in the public sector.

According to statistics from the Hay Group² the market median rate for a legal administrative assistant is \$42,370 per annum ((\$20.37 per hour). This is equivalent to the administrative grade B role in schools – the grade B pay scale in the Support Staff in Schools Collective Agreement is (effective 4 January 2006) is \$12.50 - \$20.27 per hour. Hay’s data on legal executive assistants shows a market median of \$51,900 (\$24.95 per hour). This is arguably equivalent to an administration manager or principal’s PA in a school. Employees in such roles may, in practice, be employed in either grade B or grade C of the collective agreement which puts them in a range of \$12.50 - \$27.62 per hour but there is only the one top step available that matches or better the market median for the legal position.

Support staff are also among the lowest paid staff in the education sector. Within the sector the average hourly rate across the sector³ identified by Statistics New Zealand is \$25.90 per hour. Of the 53 printed pay rate steps available to support staff in schools, only one – the top step of administrative grade C - is at a higher rate than this average rate for the sector.

The application of a pay and employment equity audit tool may well start to address this issue – we are confident that it would expose the inappropriately low levels of support staff pay at many schools. However it would be an extremely slow, time and resource hungry mechanism for addressing the issue given that it may have to be applied separately at each of the country’s 2,600 schools. Putting that aside, under the current funding arrangements schools are unlikely to have the necessary resources to address the required remedies that may be identified.

- **Impact on Bargaining** – Bargaining for all three of these collective agreements invariably occurs after the announcement through the Budget of the level of operations grant funding increases for the following year. Inevitably this impacts directly on the bargaining process.

The Ministry negotiators make it clear that the percentage by which the operations grant has been adjusted that factor will have a major bearing on any bargaining outcome. Settlements are always reflective, therefore, of a figure determined by the Budget over which the unions have no influence. There is little or no latitude to negotiate around other factors impacting on support staff employment such as recruitment, retention and external market comparator rates.

When the unions achieve a settlement that varies to any extent from the operations grant increase, this inevitably leads to widespread cutting of support staff hours as schools feel they have no other way of covering the

² Hay Group employment data updated as at September 1 2005

³ Statistics New Zealand - Quarterly Employment Survey data current to the September quarter, 2005

increased costs. This occurred at the end of 2000 when increases of 5% were negotiated for a period when the operations grants increased by 3.4%. The net outcome for many support staff was that their hourly rate went up but their hours went down and their take home pay remained static.

It is questionable whether this pattern of bargaining fits within the definition of good faith bargaining. Regardless of that, the unions acknowledge that schools can only play with the cards they have been dealt and that it is the inadequacy of the funding mechanism that is at the root of the problem.

- **Use of Locally Raised Funds** – NZEI found, as part of the research conducted in 2003 into the funding and employment of support staff⁴, that 41% of schools were having to use at least some locally raised funds to employ the level of support staff they deemed necessary to operate their schools. This correlates with research undertaken by NZCER⁵ which indicates that schools are having to increasingly find other funding sources to maintain their core operations.

Apart from again highlighting the inadequacy of operations grant funding, this also means that support staff are vulnerable to any reduction in a school's capacity to raise funds locally. In 2005, for example, this led to widespread support staff job loss following the drop off in foreign fee paying students enrolling at New Zealand schools.

- **Employment Relationships** – Boards of Trustees, and principals in particular, are having to make often harsh decisions on the employment status of support staff based on Ministry's decision-making on the level of operational grant funding rather than the needs of the school. For example:
 - Any decision to pay an employee at a higher rate, as may be merited by that employee's job description and performance, may be deferred as it means that the school has less money left over to cover other priorities it will have; or
 - After all other options have been explored when trying to achieve a balanced school budget, reducing teacher aide hours is often seen as the only practical option left for a school.

In either scenario, this will cause tensions between the support staff and the principal and the rest of the school management team. This is inevitably to the detriment of the operations of the school but is unavoidable under the current funding regime.

Impact on Schools

⁴ Research undertaken for NZEI by Maria Stubbe and recorded in The Final Report of the Support Staff Funding Working Party (endorsed by NZEI Annual Meeting, September 2004)

⁵ An Increasing Tightness – Pressure Points for Schools' Financial Management. Second year report from the NZCER school funding study undertaken by Cathy Wylie and Julian King

The factors identified above impact directly on the ability of schools to operate effectively and to fully meet their potential to raise student achievement. The key points are:

- Schools are unable to employ the level of support staff required to meet all core operational costs;
- Schools have difficulty recruiting and retaining suitably skilled and qualified support staff;
- Reporting and compliance costs force schools to divert funding from the classroom where it could be more directly impacting on student achievement;
- Schools are unable to adequately pay for the high level positions which are now fundamental to the effective operation of self managing schools;
- Schools are unable to make staffing decisions based on need;
- Collective agreement compliance is a struggle for many schools. As a result many have had to deal with litigation and / or significant downstream compliance costs;
- Teacher workload and stress issues are exacerbated by the inadequacy of the level of teacher aide and technical support available to them; and
- Schools may be confronted with having to make decisions such as whether to proceed with necessary maintenance when the only way that this can be funded is to reduce the level of teacher aide hours in the classroom. In the view of the unions this is an unacceptable choice to force school managers to make and one that can not be viewed as improving their ability to enhance student achievement.

The bottom line to this is that two fundamental question put to schools as part of the NZEI research on support staff funding and employment were:

Do you consider your school receives sufficient government funding to meet minimum staffing requirements for administrative / teaching and learning support? Over 80% of schools across the primary and secondary sector responded NO.

75% of schools responded YES to the question Do you think there is a need for a change to the way funding for support staff in schools is delivered?

Suggested Remedies

Introduction

NZEI's Annual Meeting (NZEI's policy setting forum attended by over 400 representatives from throughout New Zealand) in 2004 unanimously voted to adopt the Final Report of the Support Staff Funding Working Party. That report was subsequently endorsed by the SFWU.

The report included a proposed alternative funding model. This was endorsed by other education stakeholder groups, including the Principals' Councils within both NZEI and PPTA.

The model is based on the twin objectives of:

- providing greater employment security and certainty for support staff
- retaining the ability of schools to deploy their support staff resources as they see fit within their school.

The model proposed a level of centralised funding of support staff in schools which would be delivered as entitlement hours. Schools could deploy those hours in whatever configuration they chose. Any staff employed from within the core entitlement would be directly funded centrally. Schools would then employ any additional support staff from their operational grant.

The unions acknowledge that the level of complexity of this model limited the level of support for it. This submission recommends the development of a simplified alternative mechanism that retains key elements of that original proposal.

Funding streams

One of the elements included in the original proposal was the delivery of funding in four funding streams to cover the following areas:

- Administrative support / IT support
- Classroom support
- Library
- Property

i. Administrative support

Every school in the country has a need for core administrative support. Throughout NZEI's research there was a high level of sector support for having centrally funded administrative positions. The type and number of positions would vary across school size and type.

Administrative positions can range from one part time office administrator in a small primary school to a team of 15 or more in a large secondary school. That team may include an executive officer, principals' secretary,

finance manager, office manager, receptionist, reprographics staff and other office staff.

The unions propose that a formula be developed to determine the level of full time equivalent administrative support to which the school would be entitled. The school would then choose how that entitlement would be deployed.

The development of the entitlement formula should be determined through a process of sector consultation. It is likely that the basis of the formula would be a combination of roll and school type. A starting point for the development of any such formula would be to determine the actual administrative support needs in a U1 primary school and extrapolate from that.

The core position at a U1 primary school would be that of an office manager. The point at which the formula delivered over 1 FTE admin staff would be the point at which other core positions could become available to be centrally funded.

Passing a particular FTE equivalent level would then also be the determinant of the point at which schools would be entitled to centrally funded positions such as executive officers and finance managers as distinct from the office manager role.

Each of these FTE positions would be centrally funded within the pay bands agreed to be applicable to those positions, as described in the “revised pay scale” section below.

A level of centrally funded IT support would be developed in a similar way. It would seem logical that a formula for the funding of IT support could be developed on an uncomplicated per pupil basis.

ii. Classroom support

Every school should be entitled to per pupil funding of classroom teacher aide positions to assist with raising student achievement. These positions are an indispensable component of every school’s operations. This does not incorporate teacher aides employed specifically to work with students with special education needs.

A case could be made that decile should be a factor in developing a formula for teacher aide support. Statistics suggest that under achieving students are more heavily represented in lower decile schools.

Teacher aides perform a range of functions in the classroom that assist with raising student achievement. These include:

- Assisting teachers with the management and integration into the class of students with behavioural difficulties;

- Helping to alleviate teacher workload and stress;
- Assisting with the development of learning resources; and
- Assisting students with learning difficulties.

Each of these functions helps to ensure the consistent delivery of the curriculum to all students.

Funding for kaiarahi i te reo positions on a per pupil basis to all schools delivering immersion education would be included in this funding stream. This would be specifically tagged funding to ensure the employment of staff in these roles where appropriate

In a secondary / composite school setting there would then need to be a determination about which other positions have become core functions and would therefore warrant central funding. These would include science and home economics technicians, sports co-ordinators and school nurses.

iii. Library / IT provision

Libraries are increasingly becoming the information and IT hub of each school. Consistent support for effectively managed libraries in every school would be one of the potential benefits of this proposal with each school provided with FTE funding for qualified librarians delivered on a per pupil basis.

ERO has identified that school libraries are fundamental to the development of students' information literacy. However, there is a high degree of inconsistency in schools in the way that the school library is operated and managed. When funding to employ qualified library staff competes with a other priorities schools often compromise by employing a willing but unqualified teacher aide to managing the school's information resources.

This issue has been exacerbated by the removal of tagged teacher librarian funding to schools in the mid 90's.

As with the model for administrative staff, the point at which a school would be entitled to additional centrally funded library staffing would be determined by reaching a particular roll size.

Tied in with library funding are positions involved in the provision of electronic information within a school. More data will be needed to determine how those roles have evolved and how the Ministry sees them evolving. The evolution of that role must not, however, compromise the basic principle that any direct teaching that is involved is being provided by a fully trained and registered teacher.

Certainly, school libraries are increasingly evolving into media centres. School websites are often constructed and maintained as part of the school library function.

iv. Property

The role of caretaker is the other core role which we submit should be centrally funded. This is a role which is essential in every school's operations. Per pupil funding on a banded basis would form the basis of a school's entitlement but other factors such as a school's physical size and configuration would need to be considered.

Funding cleaners is more problematic because so many schools have now contracted out cleaning to commercial cleaning companies. There could still be a formula developed for central funding of cleaners.

Positions Centrally Funded upon Successful Application

The demographics of the school's catchment area often determines the need for other positions such as truancy officers, social workers and security officers.

The union proposes that these positions should be centrally funded where the school can make the case that these are core roles in their school

Special Education

A separate exercise should investigate alternative funding mechanisms for special needs education to ensure the employment of specialist staff such as teacher aides and therapists and other specialist staff on a more secure and equitable basis than is currently the case.

The unions are determined to find a more satisfactory model for the employment of teacher aides working with students with special needs. These are workers performing skilled work with high levels of responsibility. They are devoted to providing education to these students who require intensive support. Yet these teacher aides are typically the staff members at a school who receive the lowest rate of pay and have the least job security.

The result of the low pay, no job security lot of these staff is that they are consistently lost to the education sector. This despite many being qualified, having developed high level skills and strategies for supporting these students and being dedicated to the work they do. This is an issue which should be of concern to all stakeholder groups involved in education.

The unions propose that there be a working party established of all stakeholder groups to develop a model for employment of these teacher aides that would enable them to be paid at a fair and reasonable rate of pay and to be retained in the education system.

Development of Alternative Model

The unions have consistently stated that it would be of no value to develop an alternative support staff funding model in isolation from the other key stakeholders in the compulsory education sector. The model proposed in this submission is intentionally in conceptual form only for that reason.

The unions believe that this model would meet the objectives of providing greater security of employment for support staff, security of funding for Boards of Trustees and would leave Boards with the flexibility to determine how they deploy their staffing resources.

In this submission we have proposed that staffing entitlement should be determined primarily on a per pupil basis, but within broad roll size bands. It makes little difference to the role of an administration manager whether they work in a school with a roll of 300 or one with a roll of 400 for example. One of the flaws with the current system is that funding is so sensitive to minor roll fluctuations – as a result support staff hours are often cut but with no corresponding reduction in job size..

In determining a starting point, the unions contend that after 15 years of self management schools now have a very clear understanding of their needs in the area of support staff. Given the constraints of operations grant funding it is safe to contend that any support staff employee employed in any school is there because there is a need for that position. On that basis it should also be safe to contend that a survey of school support staff employment practices would reveal the minimum staffing level required in schools.

An example of how a new funding model applicable to school administrative staff could be developed is attached as Annex A.

Positions Not Covered By Centrally Funded Entitlement Staffing

In the fifteen years of self managing schools a number of roles have evolved that are specific to the programmes and enrolment policies that schools have adopted. This is particularly so in the secondary sector.

The union proposal recognises the need for schools to retain the funding and ability to employ specialist staff in positions that are specific to the support of specialised curriculum delivery. There are a broad range of these positions in place currently – roles such as arts co-ordinators, chaplain's assistants, cultural group assistants / advisors and resource room assistants. These vary greatly from school to school. It will be essential to retain sufficient funding in the operations grant to enable schools to have the discretion to employ staff in the positions they deem necessary within their school's operations.

There are then a range of positions that are generated from schools' decisions to enrol foreign fee paying students – roles such as ESOL

assistants, homestay co-ordinators and international student co-ordinators. It is accepted that these roles would be funded from the fees generated through the enrolment of the students.

Revised Pay scales

For this model to work the current wage and salary structures that apply to the staff covered by the three collective agreements would need to be changed. Clearly centrally funded entitlement staffing cannot be delivered via a wage structure with a variety of grades.

The unions propose that a single linear pay scale should be developed to underpin this model.

This pay scale would necessarily have a relatively large number of steps as we are looking at a scale that would cover a broad range of staff from clerical assistants and cleaners through to finance managers, executive officers, senior librarians and IT specialists.

Within the scale there would be entry points and ceilings established for each agreed banding of jobs. This may also be an opportunity to introduce additional qualification step(s) for each position in place of the current qualifications allowances.

An example of how this wage scale could be constructed and operated is attached as annex B

What Happens to the Operations Grant?

Over the next nine months, the Ministry of Education are undertaking a comprehensive review of operations grant funding. ERO are also investigating how effectively schools are using their operations grant funding to enhance student learning and achievement.

Without presuming what may emerge from the Ministry and ERO reviews and evaluations, all available evidence suggests that operations grant funding is falling significantly short of enabling schools to maintain effective operations. As support staff employment generally represents around 50% of school expenditure from their operations grant, it is reasonable to suggest that this is the major pressure point for schools.

NZCER have recently released their 2nd year report as part of a three year longitudinal study of government funding of schools. That report was commissioned by NZ School Trustees Association. The report found that schools are finding it increasingly difficult to survive financially under the current operations grant funding regime and that curriculum delivery is in danger of being compromised. This is particularly due to the fact that schools are unable to afford to employ the level of support staff they require.

Removing support staff costs from the operations grant would obviously alleviate the financial pressure on schools. However, the unions acknowledge that if 50% of school expenditure is removed from the operations grant there is likely to be a reduction in the level of the operations grant to schools. The amount by which the grants are reduced would be impossible to predict until the findings of the Ministry review are released and adopted.

When NZEI released its initial recommendation around an alternative funding model, the major concern of some stakeholder groups was the extent to which this may deplete the operations grant. It is acknowledged that this is something that would have to be resolved to the satisfaction of all stakeholders. One of the guiding principals underpinning the NZEI research was to ensure that neither support staff nor schools would be disadvantaged by any alternative funding model.

Summary

This is a complex issue. There are fundamental questions that have to be asked. These are:

- Does the current funding system enable support staff to be employed fairly and equitably?
- Does the current funding system enable schools to provide the best possible educational opportunities for schools? and, if the answer to those questions is no...
- Is it possible to develop a funding system that would provide a yes to those two questions.

The unions' proposed model does provide the potential to:

- enhance the employment conditions and job security of their support staff membership; and
- recognise the autonomy of schools in an era of self management and would not disadvantage schools financially; and
- provide a platform for achieving enhanced student learning outcomes; and
- be practical and achievable within the current environment.

This proposal would be a significant change to current arrangements. The scope of change is reflective of the scale of the problem.

The government has introduced industrial legislation underpinned by the concepts of good faith and equity. Yet the funding arrangements that exist currently preclude these staff from having access to good faith bargaining or enjoying equitable terms of employment.

- Their bargaining follows on from a pre-established budget increase and any significant shift from that increase results in hours being reduced.

- Large numbers of support staff are employed on a fixed term basis because schools can not cover the potential redundancy costs they would otherwise accrue;
- The current system has created a situation where literally millions of dollars are owed to support staff in underpaid wages; and
- In the country's education system it is neither fair nor equitable nor appropriate to continue to condone a system where over 25,000 government funded employees are employed on conditions where they have no little or no job security and where the ability to negotiate enhanced terms and conditions on their behalf is, in practice, so severely limited.

Neil Hammond

NZEI Executive Officer

Example of How a New Funding Model Could Be Developed- Administrative Staff

Applying this in practice to determine a school's administrative entitlement for example could be based on taking the following steps: -

- i. Survey U1 primary schools and establish a base line entitlement for administration management / finance management based on current employment practices. Test this baseline entitlement against the reasonable job sizing and evaluation based on an agreed job description to cover the functions that would be reasonably required of an employee in this role in such a school.

Added to this would be a similar exercise to establish the base line needs of a school in relation to IT support. This would added in to the administration entitlement funding stream.

This would become the baseline to underpin the formula throughout the primary sector.

- ii. Apply the formula developed at the U1 school to other U grades through the primary sector on an equitably incremental basis. Tagging the entitlement hours steps to the U grades would mean there would be a level of equity within schools in terms of the impact of roll change. At each U grade step there should be a cross check through surveys of schools to analyse the staffing entitlement delivered by the formula in comparison with current actual staffing levels.
- iii. At an agreed roll size milestone, schools would become entitled to an element of executive officer staffing entitlement. This may, for example, kick in at U5 school size. To use purely illustrative figures, this may mean that a U5 primary school had an entitlement to 1 FTE staffing entitlement to be paid in the administration manager pay band, 1 FTE in the administration pay band and 0.5 FTE in the executive officer band.

The school could then deploy within those FTEs as they saw fit and may for example have a full time administration manager, three part time administration assistants and one part time executive officer. The entitlement could be configured and deployed according to the schools needs.

Or they may choose to convert the executive officer role into a full time position by transferring some of their entitlement staffing from the administration assistant entitlement and meeting the difference in the entitlement staffing rates from their operations grant.

- iv. The same exercise would carry on through to the intermediate, area and secondary school sectors but would be subject to a distinct baseline

survey to identify the additional positions that are core rolls in these schools. These may include such roles as reprographics assistants and principals' personal assistants.

- v. Again there would need to be a crosscheck across the sector as the baseline formula was applied to progressively larger schools. In the larger schools the flexibility that would exist around the deployment of the staffing entitlement would obviously increase significantly.

This example demonstrates how a formula could be developed and applied in relation to the employment of administrative staff. Under the unions' proposal, a similar but not identical process would then apply to determining staffing entitlement in relation to the classroom support, library and property funding streams. These would take into account the various other factors identified earlier in this report.

<i>Draft Scale Included Solely To Illustrate Possible Model</i>

Proposed Revised Wage Scale Structure

Step	Hourly Rate	Salary rate
Dd	\$31.00	\$64728
Cc	\$30.25	\$63162
Bb	\$29.50	\$61596
Aa	\$28.75	\$60030
Z	\$28.00	\$58464
Y	\$27.75	\$57942
X	\$27.00	\$56376
W	\$26.25	\$54810
V	\$25.50	\$53244
U	\$24.75	\$51678
T	\$24.00	\$50112
S	\$23.75	\$49590
R	\$23.00	\$48024
Q	\$22.25	\$46458
P	\$21.50	\$44892
O	\$20.75	\$43326
N	\$20.00	\$41760
M	\$19.25	\$40194
L	\$18.50	\$38628
K	\$17.75	\$37062
J	\$17.00	\$35496
I	\$16.50	\$34452
H	\$16.00	\$33408
G	\$15.50	\$32364
F	\$15.00	\$31320
E	\$14.50	\$30276
D	\$14.00	\$29232
C	\$13.50	\$28188
B	\$13.00	\$27144
A	\$12.50	\$26100

To illustrate, each generic core position would then be assigned an entry point and ceiling as set out in the following table. Again, this is a draft included for the sole purpose of illustrating how a single, linear pay scale could operate.

Position	Entry Point	Ceiling
e.g Executive Officer etc	Y	Bb
	Q	Z
	M	V
	J	T
	H	Q
	C	L
Administration Assistant	A	D

Each employee who has completed a certificate or diploma assessed on the NZQA framework as level 4 or above will be entitled to advance to one step beyond the ceiling for their position.

Each employee who has completed a degree will be entitled to advance to two steps beyond the ceiling for their position.

Progression through the Applicable Pay Scale Steps and Application of Negotiated Increases

It is proposed that progression through the steps would continue as is currently the case in the Support Staff in Schools Collective Agreement – i.e. on an annual basis subject to meeting or exceeding the written requirements of the position.

As this scale is premised on staff being centrally funded, the rates in the scale would automatically move in accordance with any negotiated increases in the collective agreement. This would mean that the applicable increases would not have any impact on the school’s operating budget and would remove a major point of tension and contention from the workplace.

There would still be a number of positions funded through the schools’ operations grants as described earlier in this submission. There would need to be some mechanism for adjusting this portion of schools’ operations grants in alignment to increases negotiated at the bargaining table.

For those positions that are funded through locally raised funds, schools could develop policy around aligning the fee setting schedule to the collective agreement settlements.

Translation and Grandparenting

In any transition to a new pay scale there are numerous issues to be addressed. The unions have assured members that this exercise will not result in a

reduction in pay for any individual. The only way this can be guaranteed is through a grandparenting agreement that those on rates in excess of the newly established ceiling rate for the position they occupy would have that rate grandparented to them until such time as the collective agreement rates caught up to it.

The unions acknowledge that this would not be a cost neutral solution. However, all available research indicates that schools find it extremely difficult to either employ the number of support staff they require from within available operational grant funding or to recruit and retain the skilled and qualified staff they require in many of the support staff roles.

This proposal would provide a way forward to address those issues.