

Resource 4 - Negotiations Update

Negotiations Update

NZEI accepts that this year's negotiations are taking place in a challenging economic environment and this is reflected in the level of the claims that members have endorsed. The focus of the NZEI negotiating team is on securing a fair and reasonable salary increase for teachers but the ministry has made a very small salary increase offer to teachers and has indicated an unwillingness to agree to any ongoing work that could help address teachers' issues. The hand out you have already received demonstrates how small the offer is. They have refused to address the claims NZEI tabled to address workload and to address the issues raised by specific membership groups.

The Ministry has also made a significant 'claw back' claim about the way units are used. This claim could result in significant disadvantage for many teachers.

Discussion One (5 mins)

Discuss how your group feels about the offer that has been made so far in negotiations.

Vote

Count how many people agree or disagree with these statements:

1. We reject the current ministry offer in the primary teacher negotiations.
2. We believe that the current Ministry offer shows that the government undervalues teaching in the primary sector.

Units

Being paid units is the way that teachers in professional leadership positions are recognised. Career structures are created by schools determining the number of units each position receives. Therefore they are important to the whole profession both in terms of paying professional leaders but also in the way that teachers are promoted. A teacher who wishes to develop his/her career does so by applying for jobs with units.

The Ministry has made a claim to allow all units to be fixed term and divisible by two (so teachers could be given half a unit each). The Ministry has made this claim so that units could be used to reward teachers. This is a way of introducing performance pay. It would mean that teachers would need to compete with one another each year in order to get a unit. As with any form of performance pay, as opposed to pay that recognises skills and experience, it is anti-collegial and based on a subjective opinion.

Your negotiating team is opposed to this claim because the reason we negotiated more units in the 2007t negotiations was so that schools could strengthen their career path structures and pay teachers taking on professional leadership roles. Not only would the Ministry claim undermine teachers' career paths and potentially eliminate roles such as APs and DPs, it would also disadvantage teachers in other ways:

- Q1 and Q2 teachers with fixed term units only would not be able to progress beyond step 10 or 11. For some teachers this would mean a more than \$10,000 per annum loss in potential earnings
- There is no salary protection for fixed term units if a school has to go through a surplus staffing process
- Fixed term units are also not considered for other things such as employer contributions to government super.



Discussion Two

Discuss how you feel about units being used for performance pay.

Vote

Count how many people agree or disagree with these statements:

3. We reject any changes that may lead to performance pay
4. We reject the Ministry's claim to make all units fixed term

More information about units is available in the Unit Guidelines booklet. Although not all teachers get units now, it is important for the profession that they continue to be used to recognise professional leadership and to create and support career paths.

So What Can We Do?

The picture may be a bit grim right now but as a profession we can work together to ensure that units are protected and that our pay offer is improved. There are some simple things to do immediately to help achieve this:

1. Endorse the following statements so your negotiating team can give the Ministry a strong message:

Vote

Hold a vote to endorse the following statements so your negotiating team can give the Ministry a strong message.

Count how many people agree or disagree with these statements:

5. We call on the Ministry to make a fair and reasonable offer for settlement which includes:
 - A fair pay increase which appropriately values the work of teachers; and
 - maintains pay parity with secondary teachers; and
 - Does not include any claims which are to the detriment of teachers terms and conditions of employment
6. If the ministry does not improve their offer, we call on the NZEI negotiating team to refer the matter back to its members for further discussion and consideration of the next steps required to convince Ministry to make a realistic offer

2. **Make sure all the votes from your school are recorded on www.teachersmatter.org.nz**
3. **Sign up to www.teachermatter.org.nz** to keep up to date with what's happening.
4. Get all the teachers in your school to sign the 'Effective Leadership' 'arm' poster to show your support for professional leadership. The 'arm' is a visual way of us telling Government how important strong and secure professional leadership is for student learning by ensuring that permanent units remain to create permanent leadership structures.

The most important thing is that we work together as a profession to ensure quality teaching and learning is protected and enhanced.

