



**NZEI Te Riu Roa Support Staff Workforce Strategy**  
**Frequently Asked Questions**

**NZEI Te Riu Roa is working with the Ministry of Education and the School Trustees Association on a Support Staff Workforce Strategy. You probably have questions about this Workforce Strategy, some of these will be covered by the following information.**

Support staff are a vital function in any school. They provide essential assistance with learning and the day-to-day running of the school. This workforce strategy provides another opportunity for us to look at acknowledging this important role and further work to develop the support staff profession. All of this helps us move forward with our goal for a FAIR DEAL for SUPPORT STAFF!

**About the working group**

A support staff working group has been set up to look at issues across the support staff workforce and to consider what improvements can be achieved within the resources we have. The group is made up of representatives from the each organisation. Our combined experience includes time spent in the following roles: teacher aide, office manager, media centre manager, teacher, and principal of primary, secondary and special schools.

**How long will this last?**

The Work programme is scheduled for one year - during 2010. The recommendations from this years' work, will inform our future professional work for some time to come.

**Q: What areas are out of scope or can't be addressed by this working group?**

**A:** The areas that have been agreed that won't be discussed by the working group are:

- Remuneration and pay structures
- Terms and conditions within collective agreements

- Review of the funding model for the support staff workforce
- Duplicating activities in the Special Education Review.

**Q: How did the workforce strategy come about?**

A: This was raised as part of the Support Staff Campaign through negotiations in 2009. Due to our membership density within the sector, the Ministry of Education agreed to progress this work outside of bargaining, in a professional forum.

**Q: What is different about this workforce strategy than what we have done in the past?**

A: All three parties now acknowledge that support staff are a crucial workforce within schools, and acknowledge that schools could not do the good job they do without the invaluable part support staff play in supporting teaching and learning, and, the administrative running of schools.

**Q: Is it just another working party?**

A: There have been a range of important projects since 1994 that NZEI Te Riu Roa have been involved in, all of these have added valuable background information to this current work. This is the first time we have had a shared conversation with the Ministry of Education, School Trustees Association and NZEI Te Riu Roa to progress work on Support Staff at a professional level.

**Q: What is this going to achieve?**

A: Initially, the group will build a better understanding of issues relating to the efficiency and effectiveness of the support staff workforce. We will look at what improvements might be achieved within the existing operating model of self managing schools. We will look at the effectiveness of support staff roles and the contribution support staff make within the context of the whole school team. We already have some information on this area, but there's still more to learn. This is not about saving money, but it is about increasing value for money. It is not about individuals or particular schools.

A report will be developed with recommendations that will include a description of what changes could be made to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of support staff to do their job.

**Q: What areas have the working group considered so far?**

A:

- How support staff are managed and supervised, and how their work roles are defined.
- How we enable the teamwork/integration of functions that allow the contribution of support staff to be maximised.
- How we optimise the contribution of support staff to management of the school in a way that optimises the contribution of teaching staff to educational outcomes.
- What is the contribution that support staff make to producing educational outcomes. Do we know what they are doing and why.
- How the roles of support staff fit within the school as an organisational system, and how schools themselves fit in to a wider education system.

**Q: When will the report be available for me to read?**

A: The work will be put in a report, which will be presented to the Secretary for Education, Karen Sewell, for consideration. The phase one report outlining initial work will be available to all members in May and the final report will be published late 2010.

Geraldine Ryan  
20 April 2010