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## **MP TO WALK IN SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF SHOES**

Christchurch East MP Lianne Dalziel is taking up a challenge issued by school support staff to “walk in their shoes” for the day.

Support staff, such as teacher aides, librarians and administrators, work at the frontline of education yet are among the lowest paid workforces in the country. Some earn as little as \$12.94 an hour.

Their collective agreement expired in March and despite negotiations throughout the year, the government has shown no inclination to recognise their contribution to children’s learning nor address their issues of low pay.

Last Friday, as part of two days of “Think Pink” action to highlight their fight for fair pay, support staff issued a challenge to all MPs to “walk in their shoes.” MPs were invited to spend time in schools and experience first-hand the duties and responsibilities of support staff. They were also asked to live on \$12.94 an hour for the day and donate the difference between that and their salaries to charity.

Lianne Dalziel has said she is up to the challenge and will spend time at Burwood School today (Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> December) from 8.50am through until the afternoon. She says she will be donating the extra money to the Aorangi School Camp Fund.

“I’m doing this because I want to get a better appreciation of the work that school support staff actually do.”

“ I know how vital teacher aides are in supporting the work that teachers do and think it is totally unfair that they have been caught up in the government’s wage freeze which might be appropriate for an MP’s salary but certainly unfair to someone earning so close to the minimum wage,” says Ms Dalziel.

NZEI, the union representing support staff, congratulates her for being the only MP so far who has been willing to take up the challenge.

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