

Support Staff Workforce Strategy

Report of the Working Group

May 2010

Executive Summary

1. The Support Staff Working Group comprises staff and representatives of NZEI Te Riu Roa, New Zealand School Trustees Association (NZSTA), and Ministry of Education officials.
2. The Working Group has been charged with identifying:
 - potential workforce issues that might hinder the effective use of support staff
 - attainable changes that would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the support staff workforce.
3. There are over 20,000 support staff in New Zealand schools undertaking a broad range of roles. Directly and indirectly, they contribute to the learning outcomes of students.
4. The Working Group's mandate is to focus on improvements that could be made within the existing funding frameworks for support staff, and the model of self-managing schools.
5. This is the report on the first phase of this work. It forms the basis of any decision to move to the next phase.
6. In phase one, the Working Group gathered the limited information available about the support staff workforce. To inform its understanding of issues relating to support staff, the Working Group looked at:
 - policy and policy review documents, including the current Special Education Review
 - research about the education workforce
 - literature about productivity in the wider workforce
 - the Ministry's current administrative and IT change initiatives, and their potential relevance to the support staff workforce.
7. The Working Group is keenly aware that there is great diversity within New Zealand's 2,477 state and integrated schools as they have evolved

under the self managing model and adapted to local needs. As a result, it is expected that there is no single model that can be applied to support staff in every school.

8. The Working Group identified some focus areas worth exploring as ways to increase support staff effectiveness and efficiency. The focus areas are:
 - Induction and training of support staff
 - Role definition, guidance, support and mentoring
 - Right person/right job specialisation
 - Teamwork and culture
 - Productivity through effective systems and relationships
 - Capability for change
9. The Working Group recommends that Phase Two of the project should proceed, and that more information should be sought about the support staff workforce before developing policy and strategy recommendations. More information will be sought on the nature of support staff, what they do, and how they are managed and supported within schools.
10. From this, the Group will be able to identify areas where some well-founded strategies and policies could be developed to ensure that school productivity – ‘collectively making resources count’ – is enhanced.