



17th February 2023

Teacher Stop Work Meeting

Friday 3 March 1:30pm to 3pm

We ask parents to arrange to have children collected at 1pm to allow teachers to attend their local meeting.

The Teacher and Principal collective agreements expired on 30 June 2022. Since then the teacher union, NZEI, has been in negotiations with the Ministry of Education to reach a new agreement.

Several offers have been put forward as “this is our best offer”. However the offers have come up well short of attempting to address the most pressing issues in our education sector - particularly in the areas of resources for teachers and schools to provide a world class education system to our children without having to rely on the good will of our staff to work most evenings and weekends just to keep up.

Additionally, the offers have come well short of even keeping up with the rate of inflation. As a result, the reality is that most of our youngest teachers cannot afford to live in the areas where they work, let alone pay off their student loan or save for a house. For a large number of our teachers they would be financially better off working in a job that requires no qualifications, remains within an 8 to 5 window and allows them to have a weekend. As a result NZ has an alarming number of teachers who either leave the profession within 5 years, or who move overseas.

Over the next few weeks the 80 000 members of NZEI - the teacher and principal unions, are coming together en masse to discuss the latest “best offer” and decide on next steps, including ongoing industrial action.

If action is decided, our goal will not be to inconvenience our communities, but to make a stand for the issues within our sector that need addressing. Issues include;

- children with special and gifted needs should have adequate resourcing to allow them to succeed,
- children who are struggling to learn to read and write, like our our dyslexic children, should receive adequate resourcing,
- teachers need to receive time to complete the administrative tasks asked of them by central office rather than have to work evenings and weekends to keep up
- school funding should keep up with the rate of inflation at a very minimum,
- new initiatives from the MOE should come with time resources to allow schools time to implement them,

- wages in the education sector need to at least keep up with the rate of inflation over the last 3 years, and next 3 years, to allow teachers to be able to afford to live in the community in which they work without having to consider alternative career paths.

On Friday 3 March teachers from across Cambridge, will be closing their doors for the afternoon from 1pm to attend an NZEI meeting with 400 teachers from our area to discuss the latest offer and agree on next steps. Previously we have been able to roster teachers to attend several meetings over the day to keep the doors open. As things are coming to a head it is time we got together as a large group and signalled that ignoring these issues due to our perceived silence is no longer an option. As mentioned previously, our goal is not to inconvenience our families, but to draw attention in a very public and visible way to the ongoing issues that remain unaddressed that are disadvantageous to our children and staff. As a sector we want to signal that it is no longer OK to rely on the good will, good nature and “don't rock the boat” nature of our wonderful teachers. Unfortunately, it is only when finding an answer is a priority of the politicians that things will change, and this will only be achieved by standing up and being vocal for things that matter in very noticeable ways. We'd love you all to let our local MPs hear your voices and concerns on behalf of our teachers.

Thanks for your support as we make a stand for our education system, not just for today, but for the generations to come.

Ngā mihi



Tracey Bennett