



Matamata Intermediate School

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Dear Parents and Caregivers

This week we received confirmation of the planned strike for both primary and secondary teachers across New Zealand.

Consequently school will be CLOSED on Wednesday May 29th.

We fully appreciate that this will be an inconvenience to our families, but also feel strongly that change and action is urgently needed in order to support our learners and our teachers.

** Note: this newsletter is in no way intended to be political. It does however show the determination and passion we have to ensure that we can support our kids as best as we can.

The media tends to focus on pay as the key issue, but there are a range of important factors impacting on our ability to do the best for your children and our students.

1. Support for learners with special needs - Our school currently receives less than \$20,000 specifically tagged funding to provide additional support for students with learning, behaviour and/or health needs. The current offer does not include adequate release to support teachers and leaders in planning and designing personalised programmes, meeting with support agencies and meeting with families/whānau.

2. Recruitment and Retention: Due to increased expectations and a declining value for the profession of teaching, fewer students are training. There is a 40% reduction in people choosing teaching as a career over the last 5 years. There is also a growing number of existing teachers exiting the teaching profession early.

A decade ago we used to get a 100 applicants for a teaching job. Principals could choose the best candidates to meet the needs of their school. Now - we see vacancies having no applicants at all. We have classes being split because we can't find a reliever. We see higher class sizes.

3. Release time: Currently secondary teachers receive 5 hours per week (equivalent to 10 days every term) to plan for the needs of students. Primary teachers receive only 2 days every term. This release time is critical; allowing teachers to personalise learning, work with small groups or 1:1 with students, visit other schools, meet with parents or support agencies, and engage in professional development.

4. Pay: To ensure we recruit and retain teachers, pay DOES need to be part of the consideration. While teachers are absolutely “in it for the kids”, they too have families to support. A beginning teacher starting on approximately \$47,000/year, working an average of 50hrs per week earns an average of approximately \$18 per hour (barely above the minimum wage). The current offer will provide a beginning teacher with an extra \$19 per week. Those of you living near the school will see members of our team arriving as early as 7am and leaving late in the evening, and also at school on many days during the term breaks.

Our children deserve the best quality teachers and we need to attract the very best and brightest school leavers. Salaries need to be part of this equation to ensure we are competitive with other university degrees and options.

Therefore... we ask for your support as we take action on May 29th. We really do understand the inconvenience and impact on parents/whānau. However... we can assure you that this decision is not taken lightly.

YOUR children (OUR students) deserve the very best. We care about them immensely, and we are determined to ensure we get a better deal for them.

Ko koe ki tēna, ko ahau ki tēnei kīwai o te kete
You at that, and I at this handle of the basket.
(By working together we move forward)

Debbie Currie
Principal