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ISTANZ
The Independent School Teachers'
Association of New Zealand Incorporated

ISTANZ NEWS

From The President. .



I can't believe that as I am writing this column the first term is coming to a close. For me personally it has been an exceptionally busy and demanding one. As a consequence I am aware that the March Newsletter will not reach our schools before the end of term. I apologise for that.

However that does not mean that your Association has been asleep! Far from it. The National Executive have met. Some of the issues are reported in this newsletter.

Membership still remains the number one priority. If we are to provide the service you all want, and deserve then we need the support from all independent school teachers. If you have yet to get your subscription organised it is never too late. I urge you to take action now.

The main issue for the recent Executive Meeting was to set out a policy for the Association's involvement in contract agreement negotiations. We have now done that and a summary is included in this newsletter. We have also begun the contract processing with our first school under the Act. St Kentigern School have begun the process.

We are approaching the process positively and look forward to an agreement that both the Trust Board and the school staff are comfortable with.

To assist the negotiating process our Employment Officer, Immediate Past President, Mairi Ferguson has prepared a very good model contract to assist schools who are going through the negotiating process. At the moment it is being used as a framework for two schools. Again there are more details in this newsletter.

I am concerned that there are no nominations for Vice President. We will repeat the exercise in May. I look forward to a good outcome.

Thank you for your support and encouragement. Please feel free to make contact with us. What are your issues and your concerns? What do you want us to do for you?

With best wishes for term two.

Bruce Owen

National President.

ISTANZ Begins the Employment Agreement Process

At the recent National Executive Meeting a process was agreed to for the implementation of employment agreement negotiations. A written procedure is now available for use. In short this process is as follows:

- It is ISTANZ policy to encourage the use of a collective agreement.
- Once a school has decided to proceed with a collective agreement an approach is made to the employing authority by ISTANZ.
- The employing authority are informed of who the negotiating team are.
- The negotiating sub-committee discuss processes and issues with ISTANZ.
- The sub-committee decide whether they will negotiate improvements to an existing agreement, or table a completely new agreement.
- Negotiating meetings will follow as required.
- Good faith bargaining will be encouraged.
- If a stalemate situation arises ISTANZ may recommend the use of a professional mediator.
- Once agreed to then the agreement is signed by all parties.

For ISTANZ Members Only

The agreement once negotiated and signed can only be used by ISTANZ members. It cannot be used by individuals negotiating their own contract.

We are currently working with St Kentigern School on their contract. Other schools have already indicated that their contracts are due to be renewed during this year.

ISTANZ Standard Employment Agreement

Many schools have asked for advice and assistance in preparing a contract in the past. We have now put together a standard Employment Agreement which is designed to provide the framework for a good school contract. We have tried to put it together in a way that is fair and balanced for employers and teachers.

The Standard Agreement is the property of the Association and may only be used in whole or part with our Agreement. As a consequence it will only be made available to schools who are involved in negotiation. It is available to school employing authorities to make use of for a fee which is available on request.

The Standard Agreement will not be available for general distribution. We need to protect our own initiatives and our intellectual property.

Membership

There has been a surge of interest from schools and already the indicators are that membership has increased. As the term comes to a close it is a timely reminder to get those applications processed. Remember the greater the membership base the more effective the Association will be.

Vice President

I regret to say that not one nomination has been put forward for the position of Vice President. This is of major concern. If ISTANZ is to move forward we need to have people who are willing to lead it. Now that we have paid administrative support the work load is manageable. However it does need someone with charisma, credibility and organising ability.

We will try again next term.

Wellington

We are concerned that Wellington schools are not represented at the Executive table. During term two the President and Secretary will visit Wellington to meet the staff of local schools.

ISTANZ Policy on strikes

The concept of a union conjures up all sorts of images of placards, banners, militancy and strikes. This is not ISTANZ policy. We need to make it clear that our policy is to operate as a professional association in a professional manner.

Our policy is not to endorse the use of striking. If a particular school felt that it needed to strike that is their right and prerogative under the Act. However we will not ask other schools to join.

If NZEI or PPTA felt that they needed to take strike action ISTANZ will not join in.

Education Amendment Bill [No 2]

ISTANZ has made a submission to the Bill. The main points in the submission are as follows:

Education Council -

- We are arguing for full representation on the Education Council. At the moment independent schools are not, yet the state teacher unions are.
- We note that a profession-wide Code of Ethics is being prepared. So far we have had no input into that process.
- We wonder whether the term Education Council is the best term, and suggest the use of 'Teachers' Council' instead.
- ISTANZ is asking that the chair be elected by the Council and not appointed by the Minister.

The Bill also proposes to require that school boarding hostels meet -

- Minimum standards
- Licensing of hostels
- Complaints procedures
- Procedures for the inspection and monitoring of hostels
- Penalties for failing to maintain minimum standards

ISTANZ supports the proposal provided that reasonable consultation takes place.

Malcolm Walker will be having a personal meeting with Gerry Brownlee, MP for Ilam and National Party spokesperson for Education and a member of the Education Select Committee.

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