

# Henderson North School



Dear Parents and Caregivers,

During August, Henderson North School teachers are likely to be involved in some form of industrial action. This letter is to help shed some light on why the teaching profession is moved to action, and why they need your help and support.

Firstly, this is not about pay but about the quality of education that your child receives.

There is a serious crisis occurring in Education. We have teachers leaving the profession in droves; a large percentage of our workforce about to retire (with others postponing retirement), lessening numbers of people entering training and graduates leaving the job in the first 5 years of teaching.

We call this the 40% problem!

- **40% of teachers are leaving in their first 5 years of teaching**
- **40% of teachers are due to retire in the next 10 years**
- **40% less teachers are being trained than in 2012!**

The crisis is most serious in Auckland, and other parts of the country are finding themselves in the same position Auckland was in only a short few years ago. The issue in Auckland is confounded by the huge number of teachers who are leaving the city to seek refuge in other parts of the country where their wage will go further!

***When we take this aspect in to account along with the 40% problem, Auckland is hemorrhaging teachers.***

## **What exactly is this 'crisis' the profession is concerned about?**

1. **There are less and less people applying for jobs.** In many cases in Auckland, schools are getting NO applicants.
2. **Finding a classroom teacher is hard but, finding a reliever is even harder!** (those wonderful and essential beings that come into your school to teach a class when the day to day teacher is sick or attending professional development).
3. **The problem is not just a Primary school issue** – our secondary schools are struggling, and for them they have the additional headache of finding specialists, especially in areas where people can make more money in the corporate world as opposed to being a 'teacher'. Our Early Childhood sector is also struggling to find staff.

## **SO, why is this 'crisis' such a big deal?**

There are a number of reasons and unintended consequences that arise because of the teacher shortage, and the public should be concerned.

***IT is an 'INTERUPTUS' Issue.*** In Auckland it is particularly dire but the impact is beginning to be felt across the country.

1. ***EDUCATION INTERUPTUS*** - There is a whole generation and cohort of students who are getting shortchanged in their education. They are facing an inconsistent education because in some cases they are having a series of part-time teachers, or there is no teacher to be found, so classes get split.

***Ask yourself this*** – *if a student has spent a significant amount of their education with a series of inexperienced teachers, year after year, or a new teacher each week/term because a school cannot replace the teacher, what happens to their education? What happens to the relationships they need? What happens if the only teacher they have is one that would not perhaps make it under ideal circumstances, but because a school is desperate to have a live, breathing human in front of students that is what they get?*

2. **CLASSROOM INTRUPTUS** – how many times have parents gone to drop their child off in the morning only to hear their child's class is split between the following classrooms, due to not being able to find someone to teach the class.

*Ask yourself this: What does this do to the students, being split up and routines disrupted? What does this do to the class that has to cater for the additional students, and what does it do to the teachers that have to add another 5 or 10 students into their class? How conducive to quality teaching and learning is that?*

3. **LEADERSHIP INTERUPTUS** – Where schools can, they use senior leaders to take classes or be the 'reliever'. However this 'solution' is not sustainable. They then have to add another working day to the end of that day, in order to do the things they would have been doing instead. When schools put one of their senior leaders into a class fulltime, it means loading up the rest of the senior leaders who were already juggling big work loads. At best, it is a temporary solution and puts stress on all the systems in the school, as there are less people supporting student learning.

*Ask yourself this: What does this do to workloads? How does this help retain staff? Why would anyone enter leadership in these conditions?*

The flow on effects from this crisis are huge.

- **Teachers are coming into work when they are sick** because they are trying to save their colleagues the stress of a split class or their students not having a teacher.

- Some **schools are having to double classes** – this is not sustainable.

- Teachers, who live in Auckland and other expensive places like Queenstown, are leaving the city/town in droves looking for a chance to buy a house and make their wage go further. When they leave, they are not being replaced by the 'next wave of teachers'.

**There is no 'next wave' of teachers'.**

Most importantly – it is **our students, the next generation, that are being impacted** on right now by this crisis. It is only because schools are being creative that things are 'sort of' ticking along. It is a Band-Aid at best and that Band-Aid has run out of stickiness!

The last time we went on strike as a profession was in 1994. We do not like causing disruption to our students and whānau, but things must change.

**Teachers and leaders have had enough.** Every time one of our profession leaves, the rest of the teachers have to pick up the slack and, right now, there is no slack left and most of the goodwill that was in the profession, has gone.

Please understand this is not just about Pay and it is not just about Auckland – it's much deeper than that. This teacher shortage is serious – please understand that if we do not do something about making it affordable to teach in our cities, attractive to want to be a teacher, and do something about ensuring our teachers and leaders have the time to manage the workload – **then your child, your neighbours child, the child you see walking into your local school or the child about to leave school that you employ to work in your business or alongside you – they are the ones that are going to be shortchanged.**

**Please show your support for our teachers.**

**From Teachers, Staff and School Leaders**

