

School Support Staff

Collectively Making Resources Count



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The Working Group would like to express its appreciation of the schools, principals and support staff who contributed to extending our knowledge of the support staff workforce in our schools.



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Preface

A number of reports over the last few years have been produced that are relevant to the employment of support staff in schools. The first was the Review of Schools' Operational Funding (December 2006) which recognised that an increasing need for non-teaching staff in schools was creating pressures on schools' operational funding and that further work was required to ensure support staff were effectively utilised. This report was followed by two further reports, one focusing on the resourcing of ICT in schools, and the second (Review of Schools' Operational Funding: Non-teaching Staff Workforce—Final Report (October 2007)) looking in more depth at the non-teaching staff workforce.

The two reports noted especially that the numbers and diversity of support staff in schools had increased hugely as a result of diverse influences such as the Special Education 2000 policy, the need for more sophisticated data management, the broadening of the curriculum and an increased emphasis on the pastoral care of students.

At 29.4% of the total numbers in the school workforce¹, and at a cost in 2009 of \$400 million², the question about whether or not this workforce is as effectively used as it might be becomes an important one in thinking about value for money of the Government's investment in education.

Despite much change in schools and the resulting change in the nature of the support staff workforce, there has been no work done previously with a specific focus on its effective use. There have been few, if any, resources provided to schools that discuss the effective use of support staff specifically, with more general guidance documents being provided that are intended to cover both teaching and non-teaching staff. The exception to this is the provision of a resource kit³ for schools to assist with the effective use of teacher aides.

In this current project, the Support Staff Working Group's brief is to consider what could be done, within current school management and funding arrangements, to optimise the efficiency and effectiveness of the support staff workforce in contributing to learning outcomes for students. There has been much comment over time about the current policy setting with regard to the funding of support staff but this matter is outside the terms of reference for this project.

This second report of the Working Group is centrally about the characteristics of support staff in New Zealand schools and about management capability and practices in schools with respect to the employment of support staff.

1 Made up of 21,769 support staff and 51,974 teachers by headcount, not FTEs. Figures for support staff are taken from the April 2009 payroll snapshot; figures for teaching staff taken from Education Counts.

2 This cost will be slightly understated because remuneration for support staff in schools that manage their own payroll systems are not included in the figure.

3 Kia Tūtangata Ai Supporting Learning: An Introductory Resource for Teacher Aides/Kaiawhina Supporting Teachers of Students with Special Education Needs, Ministry of Education, January 2002

Executive summary

This is the second report of the Support Staff Workforce Working Group.

In the first phase of the Working Group's programme, the Working Group developed a phrase "collectively making resources count" to describe the goal of utilising the support staff resource to support the achievement of education outcomes for students. The phrase had as its basis that the productivity of support staff cannot be considered in isolation from teaching and leadership staff in schools and the functions they perform. It is essentially about the utilisation of *all* resources to further educational outcomes.

The Working Group also recognised from general concepts of productivity that "the way people are treated and managed is of fundamental importance to workplace productivity"⁴.

The Working Group concluded in Phase One that there was insufficient knowledge of the nature of support staff and the way that they are managed to provide a basis for talking about current, emerging and successful practice in respect of support staff. The Working Group resolved that Phase Two of the work programme should address this deficit and, based on the knowledge gained, make recommendations about actions that could be taken to make the support staff resource count.

The Working Group engaged researchers to develop case studies to illustrate some existing good practice and carried out surveys of principals and support staff to elicit information about support staff and current practice in their management.

The case studies illustrate that some schools are advanced in "collectively making resources count". In these schools, support staff are increasingly viewed as integral to the teaching and learning focus of the school. The schools' recruitment and management practices are designed to ensure that support staff enable the school to be the sort of school they want to be.

The Working Group was drawn to this anecdote quoted in productivity literature:

“ When President John F. Kennedy was visiting NASA headquarters in the early 1960s he passed a janitor who was mopping the floor. The President asked him what he was doing and the janitor responded, *'Helping to put a man on the moon, Mr. President.'*”

⁴ The Workplace Productivity Challenge: Summary of the Report of the Workplace Productivity Working Group, August 2004, page 17

The Working Group wondered how many support staff, asked the same question, would answer, “Helping to achieve educational outcomes for students.” How many principals would convey to support staff that that is what they are doing? Some principals in our case study schools clearly have a view of support staff that integrates them with the teaching staff in the achievement of the school’s vision for itself. We would expect that, alongside good management practices, this approach would facilitate high levels of productivity.

Our surveys did not set out specifically to elicit the extent to which schools had an integrated view of teachers and support staff, but they asked very specific questions about management practices in schools with regard to support staff. Ideally, management practices with support staff would mirror good practice with teaching staff, though there are clearly some characteristics of support staff employment which mean this equivalency can be challenging to achieve.

The surveys showed that management practice varies greatly. A number of our case studies show evidence of increasingly professional management of support staff over one or more areas that are important and in line with practices that are expected with regard to teachers.

However, there is also much evidence that there are opportunities for many schools to improve their practices and facilitate and shape the performance of support staff to better effect. The Working Group agrees with support staff when they say that inadequate practices with regard to support staff indicate that their capacity to contribute is undervalued.

On the basis of our research, it seems that overwhelmingly, support staff in New Zealand schools are strongly attached to their jobs. A high proportion of support workers who responded to the surveys loved their jobs despite some consistently expressed drawbacks to the jobs. The major source of that job satisfaction, that is their sense of pleasure in working with young people and contributing to their learning, means that they are highly motivated to make a difference in their schools.

The high level of job satisfaction expressed came as something of a surprise to the Working Group, since anecdotal evidence has suggested that the workforce is a somewhat dissatisfied one.

For some support staff, lack of professional development and career progression opportunities were sources of dissatisfaction that are relevant to the terms of reference of the Working Group.

Issues of pay and job security, which are outside the scope of the terms of reference of the Working Group, were also raised by support staff respondents as concerns. Some comments suggest that sometimes these concerns relate to the school boards’, principals’ and support staff’s understanding of the range of employment arrangements that are available to support staff. This is an area where greater understanding is needed at school level and this forms Recommendation 5.

The Working Group regards the issue of being respected, valued and supported as critical to the central concern of the group’s work, that is, “What are the keys to ensuring that the support staff workforce is a highly productive one?”

Comments from support staff indicated that they did not always feel appropriately valued within their schools and that they are the outsiders in an 'us/them' culture. This issue appears to be one that is frequently discussed within support staff circles and one that many principals acknowledge as causing concern to support staff.

Principals on the whole displayed a high degree of awareness of the concerns of support staff. Many had made significant efforts to be inclusive and to have management processes and systems that ensure the contribution of support staff is optimised and valued. Nevertheless, there was evidence from support staff responses that sometimes the 'walk' was not fully consistent with the 'talk'.

At the same time, there were comments from principals in their survey responses indicating that some support staff found change somewhat challenging and that it was difficult to introduce new ways of doing things or a change of focus in their roles.

Both principals and support staff indicated that the ways teachers and support staff (particularly teacher aides and specialist staff providing classroom and curriculum support) work together is a critical issue in thinking about the effectiveness of support staff. Teachers were not surveyed as part of the Working Group's research and the teachers' perspective remains a gap in the Working Group's understanding.

Recommendations 9–11 within this report relate to seeking improvements in the ways teachers and support staff work together. They variously involve actions by the Ministry, NZEI Te Riu Roa, NZSTA and by schools themselves.

Our research points to a general need for better induction of support staff and more attention to creating meaningful professional development for support staff even in the absence of appropriate, formally established courses. As well, it is evident that some schools need to improve communication processes to better inform support staff and to improve practices so that they are more inclusive of support staff.

The support staff survey results indicate that the support staff workforce includes individuals whose qualifications and experience suggest that they have a greater contribution to make than is utilised. Although the nature of some of their roles give an appearance of impermanence, our data showed that many support staff had been employed in their current schools or in the school sector for an extended number of years.

Very few principals in our survey expressed any concerns about their ability to recruit people to support staff positions. In the economic climate expected to prevail over the next few years as New Zealand recovers from the recession, it seems likely that most recruitment needs will be reasonably easily met. This climate may provide principals with more choice when they recruit.

Schools' ability to retain good support staff is likely to rest in large part on their ability to manage them professionally and to make them feel respected and valued for the skills, attributes and commitment they can bring to the positions.

The Working Group's brief was to consider, within the existing model of self-managing schools and current funding arrangements, what strategies could optimise the effective use of support staff in supporting teaching and learning. On the basis of the research undertaken, the Working Group has concluded that there is no necessity for new, large-scale, centrally mandated initiatives throughout schools to improve the benefits to schools and students from the support staff workforce.

Rather, the Ministry, NZEI Te Riu Roa and NZSTA should review the support and advice they give to schools currently, and incorporate the consideration of what constitutes effective management of support staff within current initiatives and documentation. There should also be further investigation of the range and availability of relevant professional development and training currently undertaken by support staff with a view to extending the provision which schools can provide or access. (Recommendation 12–14)

The Working Group believes that, mostly, the productivity of support staff is in the hands of school management and support staff themselves. Principals and support staff can draw on the collective capacity of their peers and their supporting bodies and on their professional development experiences to build the practices that will lead to productive systems in their schools.

Over time, “small differences in rates of productivity growth compound, like interest in a bank account”⁵. There are many drivers of productivity and the practice of some of them has been explored in our research. Increasing productivity is not an ‘all or nothing’ approach. Schools can assess what it is they do well and where they can improve. Attention to any one driver is likely to see greater productivity gains than if nothing is done.

The Working Group acknowledges that principals have a challenge in finding the balance between focusing on pedagogical and administrative matters to create a whole-of-school system that optimises outcomes. However, when principals work to improve the effectiveness of support staff by ensuring that systems and practices exist to enhance their ability to both contribute directly and to support teachers and leaders, this is different from the principals doing work that is more appropriately done by support staff themselves. The Working Group recommends that the Kiwi Leadership model and the professional development of principals and aspiring principals should incorporate consideration of the strategic management of support staff. (Recommendations 15–16)



5 Ibid, page 13

The challenge for schools is, in essence, the same challenge facing very many workplaces in New Zealand. International data on labour force productivity shows that New Zealand has a below average performance in a global sense. We know that New Zealanders work hard, but our levels of productivity, compared internationally, indicate that we are not ‘working smart’ to the extent that we need to.

All workplaces face the same issues of trying to maximise the outcomes achieved for the inputs used, no matter what the desired outcome is. Concepts of productivity will apply to schools as much as to other workplaces and are as urgently needed there as elsewhere in the economy.

The Working Group has concluded that there is room for the Ministry of Education to improve its practice in that it needs to more consciously take account of the support staff workforce in its planning of initiatives that affect schools, of the impact such initiatives could have on the roles of support staff and how changes arising from the initiatives will require support staff input. (Recommendation 18)

The Working Group considers that it is likely that a gap exists in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) preparation of teachers relating to their capability to make effective use of teacher aides in their classrooms and makes a recommendation to explore options for addressing the gap. (Recommendation 14)

The Working Group urges that this report be published so that schools—principals, teachers and support staff—have the opportunity to think about the implications of our findings for their practice. (Recommendations 2–7)

The Working Group also urges that a full research report be produced by the Ministry’s Research Group for publication. It also advises that based on this report and the fuller research report, a resource could be developed for whole-of-school professional development. (Recommendations 3–7)

The Working Group considers it will be beneficial if the Ministry of Education, NZEI Te Riu Roa and NZSTA continue to work together to develop complementary and shared work programmes to continue to build and assist with the overall productivity of the support staff workforce. (Recommendation 21)

Recommendations

The Support Staff Working Group recommends that:

Approval

1. the Secretary for Education approve this report for publication

Use of the findings and the report

2. the report be published on the websites of the Ministry of Education, NZEI Te Riu Roa and NZSTA
3. the findings of the survey research and the case studies be developed as a resource for principal, teacher and support staff professional development
4. the Ministry develop and publish a more detailed research report of the findings of the surveys of principals and support staff
5. principals use the reports and the resource to be developed for their own professional reflection on practice and as a basis for in-school discussion and professional development
6. support staff use the reports and the resource to increase their understanding of the workforce they belong to and the contribution their work makes to student learning outcomes
7. school boards, principals and support staff use this report to create greater understanding of the range of employment arrangements that are available to support staff
8. NZEI Te Riu Roa and NZSTA utilise the resource to promote awareness of the need to think strategically about the deployment and management of support staff
9. ERO note the report and consider its relevance to their work programme

Future action

10. schools consider how their systems, processes and training facilitate effective teamwork between teachers and teacher aides
11. opportunities be developed for support staff training, either by schools themselves or by the Ministry or other appropriate agency external to schools, including combined training of teachers and teacher aides
12. the Ministry incorporate the management of support staff within the Educational Leadership Model that underpins Kiwi Leadership for Principals

13. the Ministry of Education utilise the resource to be developed (see Recommendation 7) within Kiwi Leadership for Principals programmes so that principals are stimulated to think strategically about the deployment and management of support staff
14. the Ministry discuss with the New Zealand Teachers Council means that could be used to encourage Initial Teacher Education providers to prepare teachers for the management of teacher aides in their classrooms
15. the Ministry develop a mechanism for ensuring that their development of national initiatives in schools takes account of the impact on support staff and of the contribution that support staff can make
16. the Ministry consider discussing this paper with the New Zealand Productivity Commission to provide an opportunity for the Commission to contribute useful insights about productivity in the education sector
17. the Ministry, NZSTA and NZEI Te Riu Roa review the availability and appropriateness of current training for support staff with a view to discussing with relevant agencies the opportunities for extending options available to schools and support staff
18. the Ministry, NZSTA and NZEI Te Riu Roa consider exploring what constitutes best practice in the working relationship of teachers and support staff, especially teacher aides, for the achievement of learning outcomes, with a view to developing material which would guide the establishment of effective working partnerships between teachers and teacher aides
19. the Ministry, NZSTA and NZEI Te Riu Roa consider seeking the views of teachers about their need for and use of support staff, particularly teacher aides
20. consideration be given by the Ministry, NZSTA and NZEI Te Riu Roa to reviewing current guidance documentation to boards and school principals on the induction and management of school personnel, with a view to providing guidance that recognises the challenges of managing support staff
21. representatives of the tri-partite Support Staff Workforce Strategy Working Group continue to work together as required to progress professional issues with the goal of continuing the work on improving the effective use of support staff in schools
22. the Ministry, NZEI Te Riu Roa and NZSTA agree an action plan to take these recommendations forward.

Background

The Support Staff Working Group

The Support Staff Working Group was set up in August 2009 as a shared initiative of New Zealand School Trustees Association (NZSTA), NZEI Te Riu Roa and the Ministry of Education. The Working Group consists of staff from the Ministry of Education, NZSTA and NZEI Te Riu Roa, two school principals nominated by NZSTA and two school support staff nominated by NZEI Te Riu Roa (see Appendix 1 for group membership). Its terms of reference (Appendix 2) were developed and approved jointly.

The objectives of the group were to:

- identify and assess whether there are potential workforce issues which are seen to hinder the effective use of support staff, using a process of research and consultation
- seek to identify attainable workforce change initiatives that will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the support staff workforce.

The Working Group's focus is on what improvements can be achieved within the existing funding arrangements and the existing model of self-managing schools. Recommendations need to be able to support teaching and learning.

Support staff are defined for this project as:

- teacher aides who directly support individuals or groups of students
- classroom and teaching support (including library and ICT support staff)
- student and whānau support staff
- administrative staff who support the efficient running of the school (for example, school secretaries, executive/clerical staff and secretarial/typing staff).

Non-teaching staff who maintain and manage the physical environment of the school, such as caretakers/ground staff, are not in the scope of this project.



The Phase One report

In Phase One of this project, the Working Group concluded that school systems and practices needed to enable leaders, teachers and support staff to “collectively make resources count” to optimise student learning outcomes.

On the basis of a review of relevant literature of workplace productivity (a small amount of international research on non-teaching staff in schools and their collective knowledge of schools) the Working Group concluded that it was likely that gains in the efficiency and effectiveness of support staff could be made through attention being given to:

- induction and training of support staff
- role definition, guidance, support and mentoring
- right person/right job specialisation
- teamwork and culture
- productivity
- capability for change.

The Working Group recognised that there was little data about these practices in schools and, indeed, patchy information about the nature of support staff themselves and their experience of their employment. The Working Group recommended that in Phase Two further research should be carried out to provide better information on the basis of which judgements could be made about possible strategies to enhance the productivity of the workforce.

The Phase One report is available on the websites of the Ministry of Education, NZEI Te Riu Roa and NZSTA⁶.

The Phase Two report

This Phase Two report has three parts:

1. A description of the research processes undertaken.
2. A description and analysis of the findings of our Phase Two research.
3. Some reflections on other matters of interest that have arisen during Phase Two.

⁶ <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/Schools/PublicationsAndResources/SupportStaffWorkforceStrategy.aspx>
<http://www.nzei.org.nz/Support+Staff/Workforce+Strategy.html>
<http://www.nzsta.org.nz/board-as-employers/employment-conditions/support-staff/support-staff-workforce-strategy/>

Research processes

Given the Working Group's expectation that a number of management processes within schools are key to ensuring appropriate productivity of the support staff workforce, the Working Group chose to explore how these processes are currently carried out in schools so that they could ascertain where there were strengths in practice and where there was perhaps a need for improved practice.

The Working Group chose a survey methodology to provide broad information about practices within a representative sample of schools. It was considered important to hear from principals about their intentions and practices, and from support staff about their experience of practices. Two complementary surveys were therefore developed.

The Working Group wanted to have a more secure knowledge of the characteristics of support staff than was available to assist with thinking about possible strategies to be developed. The Working Group's recognition that support staff have been something of 'an invisible workforce' also provided the motivation to provide an up-to-date picture of the workforce to schools in general, support staff themselves and policy makers. The survey of support staff therefore elicited this information.

The Working Group considered that it would be useful to look at a small number of schools in more depth and decided to do some case studies for a small number of schools. In particular, the Working Group decided to focus on examples of good practice within those schools so that the case studies could be of possible assistance to principals and support staff of other schools.

Surveys

It was found in constructing the survey questionnaire that the focus areas listed in the Phase One report (see page 9 of this report) were not mutually exclusive nor in some cases sufficiently concrete for our purposes. The surveys therefore were more broadly constructed.

The support staff survey sought demographic information about individual support staff members. It also sought information about what they thought and felt about the job: how they thought they contributed, the best aspects and the challenges of the job, and what changes they would like to see in their school to help them do their jobs.

Principals were asked for their views about whether support staff are being well used in their schools, about the challenges facing support staff, what they considered would most help them in the management of support staff, and whether they outsourced support functions or shared them with other schools.

Both support staff and principals were asked about systems and processes in the schools related to the management of support staff, particularly:

- recruitment
- job descriptions
- induction
- performance appraisals
- development plans
- professional development and learning.

The survey questionnaires are attached as appendices 4a and 4b.

Surveys were sent to principals and support staff in 250 schools. (Information about the selection of schools for surveys is in Appendix 4c.) Principals from 110 schools responded, while 588 support staff from around 1447 schools did so (92 primary and 52 secondary schools). Seventy-five schools provided responses from both principals and support staff. From information provided by the principals who took part, the numbers of support staff in their schools ranged from two to 53, with most primary schools employing between two and 11 support staff and most secondary schools employing between 12 and 19.

Support staff perform a wide range of roles in schools. Support staff who responded to the survey provided their titles, on the basis of which each respondent was allocated to one of a number of categories of support staff for purposes of analysis. These are listed below with an indication of the proportion of respondents who appear to fit into each category⁸:

Category	Proportion of respondents
Administrative /executive staff	29.2%
Teacher aides — special needs	25.0%
Teacher aides — classroom	14.1%
Specialist support staff (e.g. librarians, laboratory technicians and ICT specialists)	13.1%
Student and whānau support (e.g. nurses, careers office staff)	2.7%
'Other' support staff	6.3%
Support staff: 'combined positions'	7.0%
Insufficient information provided	2.6%

⁷ It is not possible to be exact about the number of schools support staff responses came from: data is missing with respect to 35 support staff respondents.

⁸ The proportion of administrative/clerical staff to all support staff is consistent with the national figure. The proportion of types within the rest of the workforce may not be mirrored by the respondent patterns.

The focus was on support staff and principals. Teachers were not surveyed. The practice and experiences of teachers in relation to support staff and their opinions about issues associated with support staff therefore remain a gap in our knowledge about the support staff workforce.

Case studies

Case studies were chosen as part of the research methodology to allow us to demonstrate in a rich way, good practice with regard to the utilisation of support staff.

The selection of case study schools and the processes by which the case studies were developed are described in Appendix 5. The principals of 14 schools were interviewed and from these, seven schools were selected for the development of full case studies. The case study schools were:

- Kapanui School
- Nelson College for Girls and Nayland College
- Porirua College
- Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Ngā Tapuwae
- Wairarapa College
- Wellington Girls' College
- Windley School.

In addition to the surveys and the case studies, the Working Group:

- looked at the project report of the Pay and Employment Equity Review of the Compulsory Schooling Sector⁹
- reviewed the responses relating to support staff received in the 2010 NZCER Primary and Intermediate Schools National Survey
- looked at responses to informal surveys carried out at NZEI Te Riu Roa's regional conferences of support staff during 2010
- discussed with sections of the Ministry of Education their work on projects which are relevant to the work of support staff and their management; areas of work included property, Novopay, broadband, Special Education and Kiwi Leadership for New Zealand Principals.

The Working Group also reviewed literature explored during Phase One of its work, especially the 2007 report on schools' operational funding as it relates to non-teaching staff¹⁰.

⁹ Pay and Employment Equity Review 2008 – Compulsory Schooling Sector. This review was undertaken as part of the Government's Pay and Employment Equity Plan of Action to improve pay and employment equity for women. The review was undertaken by project coordinators and a Steering Committee comprising NZSTA, NZEI Te Riu Roa, PPTA, SFWU and PSA.

¹⁰ See page 9 of this report and the March 2010 Phase One report of the Working Group.

Our experience in setting up the research

Our experience of trying to identify potential case study schools with effective practice around support staff utilisation was instructive. The workforce was somewhat invisible. There was very little comment about support staff in documents generated by the Ministry, in ERO reports or in schools' public documents. Knowledge held informally by the Ministry, NZEI Te Riu Roa or NZSTA was variable. The limited information on and discussion about support staff suggests that the effective utilisation of this workforce is not generally seen as a priority.

On the other hand, there were a number of school principals approached about being involved in case studies who were immediately enthusiastic about the spotlight being turned in this direction and/or who expressed strong beliefs about the critical role that support staff play in their schools. They said such things as:

- “They are the critical infrastructure within which teachers teach.”
- “The way we use support staff makes us able to be the sort of school we want to be.”

Limitations of the research

The case studies, obviously, cannot represent the diversity of New Zealand schools, but neither were they intended to. On the other hand, with one exception¹¹, the Working Group attempted to achieve a representative return from the surveys.

Of the 250 schools invited to participate in the surveys:

- forty-five per cent of principals completed the questionnaire
- an estimated 25% of potential support staff from 141 schools completed the questionnaire
- the number of support staff who responded from individual schools ranged from one to 17; most often one to four support staff questionnaires were received from individual schools
- seventy-three per cent of the secondary schools invited to participate and 52% of the primary sample provided at least one respondent.

Principals completing the questionnaire were a reasonable representation of principals across school types, size, deciles and urban/rural locations in New Zealand.

However, it is not so certain that support staff respondents are fully representative of support staff throughout the country. There were roughly equal numbers of support staff responding from primary and secondary schools. However, very many more support staff respondents were from urban schools and large schools than rural and small schools, reflecting where greater numbers of support staff are employed.

¹¹ Māori medium schools were not included in the survey sample since they were not considered likely to be typical of support staff use. One case study, however, was of a Māori medium school and illustrates well how the kaupapa of the school flows through to its use of support staff.

Support staff respondents also had more years of service than the Ministry's payroll data for all support staff indicates. It is possible that support staff with certain characteristics might have been more motivated to complete the survey and that, as well as staff retention data being skewed, there may also have been a bias towards those staff:

- with more hours of employment per week
- who identify more strongly with their jobs and have a high commitment to making a contribution through their work.



Although the proportion of support staff respondents whose job titles suggest that they are administrative/executive staff (28%) is consistent with payroll data about types of positions within the support staff workforce, it is possible that other categories of support staff roles are not representative of the workforce as a whole.

Findings of the research

The findings of the research draw on the surveys and case studies undertaken. Detailed survey results are presented in Appendix 3. The full case studies have been published on the Educational Leaders' website, www.educationalleaders.govt.nz.

The survey data provides a clear picture of the particular group of support staff and principals who responded to the surveys. However, the highlights given below and in Appendix 3 should be read keeping in mind the comments about the possible skewing of our sample as indicated above (page 13).

Who support staff are

1. Job satisfaction

- a) There is a high level of overall job satisfaction expressed by support staff.
- b) Support staff particularly value seeing children learn, simply being around young people, having the opportunity to work with dedicated teachers, being part of “the life that flows through the school”, the feeling of achievement and the work-life balance that many support staff positions allow.
- c) There is a lesser level of satisfaction overall with their terms and conditions of employment.

2. Recruitment

- a) More than a quarter of the respondents were already associated with their school, either as an employee or as a volunteer, when they got their current jobs. Another quarter heard about the position from someone in the school.

3. Length of service

- a) Nearly 67% of staff have worked as support staff in the school sector for five years or more.
- b) Nearly 48% of staff have worked in their current school for that period.

4. Career progression

- a) Thirty-one per cent of respondents indicated that they have moved from a different role over the course of their school employment.
- b) For about 20% of those who have moved roles, the role of the teacher aide has been the entry-level position.
- c) It appears that the most frequent move between positions is from teacher aide positions to administrative/clerical positions and specialist positions.
- d) Administrative/clerical staff tend to move to more senior executive/administrative positions.

- e) Some staff, especially specialist staff, regretted that there was not more career progression available and suggested that this factor would cause them to 'move on' at some time.
- f) Many staff indicated that there was plenty to challenge them in the changing life of the school and that they were continually undertaking new tasks or expanded roles.

5. Qualifications

- a) The most common qualification level of support staff is School Certificate/NCEA Level 1 (28.2% of respondents).
- b) Twenty-six percent have university degrees or vocational diplomas.
- c) A further 14.5% have a trade or National Certificate qualification.
- d) Sixty-two per cent of respondents considered that they had qualifications relevant to their position.

6. Employment status

- a) It was indicated by 80.3% of respondents that they were in a permanent full-time or part-time position.
- b) Temporary positions for this year only, were held by 11.6% of respondents. Only one administrative/executive support staff member was in this category.
- c) Over 70% of those in temporary positions were at least reasonably confident that they would be employed in the next year.

7. Hours of work

- a) Sixty-nine per cent of respondents worked between one and thirty hours per week as their normal fixed working hours. There were 5.1% of respondents who worked 10 or fewer hours. Thirty-three per cent of respondents had up to 20 normal fixed working hours weekly. The most common fixed working hour range was 26–30 hours—18.2% of respondents worked these hours.
- b) Administrative/executive staff tended to be employed for the highest number of hours, specialist staff and student support staff slightly less.
- c) Around 50% of teacher aides were employed for more than 20 hours per week.
- d) Some support staff experienced fluctuating hours over a year and between years, as envisaged in their collective agreements.
- e) Most support staff work only during term time or at certain times of the year. This finding is consistent with data derived from Education Payroll, as provided in the Phase One report¹².
- f) Teacher aides were less likely to be paid for additional hours than other types of support workers.
- g) Irrespective of type of position held, support staff reported doing more hours of work than they are contracted for. In many schools, according to support staff, this is compensated for by arrangements such as time in lieu.
- h) Around 15% of respondents reported doing additional hours that are neither paid nor compensated for by arrangements such as time in lieu. In most instances, this appears to be voluntary in the sense that the school has not requested that they do so. Rather the practice arises because staff want to do their job well and make a worthwhile contribution.

¹² <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/Schools/PublicationsAndResources/SupportStaffWorkforceStrategy.aspx>, page 21.

The concerns of support staff

Commonly expressed concerns of support staff were:

- workload pressures and the inability to achieve what they see is needed in the hours available to them
- relationships with teachers when teachers do not do forward planning and when there is inconsistency between teachers
- the challenges of interactions with students, particularly those with high needs or with challenging behaviours
- lack of materials and resources to do their jobs as they would like (for example, insufficient teaching resources, inadequate technology, lack of space)
- lack of time to plan for and tailor resources to individual student needs.

Although many support staff consider that they work in very supportive environments where they are valued and respected, there are also significant numbers who have concerns related to pay, status and school cultures. The insecurity of their hours and ongoing employment is an issue for many that is exacerbated when they consider they are left out of communications and not consulted about decisions concerning them.

The support staff who responded to the survey present a picture of a workforce that is better qualified, more stable and more committed than the pervading view that the support staff workforce has of itself (as being somewhat casual).

The Working Group notes that some of the information provided through the surveys (namely the retention of staff on temporary employment agreements over an extended period, and the lack of clarity between work expected in terms of the job description, and contract and voluntary work) reflects concerns about school practices that are expressed in the Pay Equity and Employment report. It seemed to the Working Group that some staff were perhaps not clear about the terms and conditions under which they operate, for example whether they were permanent staff, whose hours and/or period of work could be changed annually, or temporary staff.

Collectively making resources count

In Phase Two, the Working Group found it necessary to reframe the focus areas identified in Phase One, so that their extent and relationship to each other was expressed more clearly. In Phase Two, we defined our areas of focus as:

- the explicit positioning of support staff as integral to the whole school's collective achievement of educational goals, rather than regarding support staff as individuals who have tasks to do that are separate from the central purpose of the school
- the establishment of complementary roles for principals, teachers and support staff that allow principals and other leaders and teachers to increase their focus on teaching and learning
- getting the right people for jobs
- the design of support staff roles that maximise the contribution they are able to make and utilise their specialist skills and knowledge
- the establishment of inclusive practices in the schools with respect to support staff
- the consistent use of systems and processes that ensure that support staff know what they are doing and are supported and developed to do it, and that teachers understand their role in this.

These focus areas were reflected in the development of the surveys and approach to case studies. The findings of the surveys and case studies in relation to these focus areas are set out below.

Support staff as an integral input to the school's collective achievement

The Working Group sought case studies to illustrate how some schools have embarked on a journey to shape and integrate their support staff workforce collectively and more explicitly in ways which will allow it to contribute better to achieving the schools' vision. The benefit of doing so is that the workforce becomes something more than the sum of its parts, as represented by the individual tasks that staff carry out.

Below are brief pictures of four schools that, in one way or another, are strengthening or changing the roles and expectations of support staff so that they are more integral to the schools' circumstances and vision. (Go to www.educationalleaders.govt.nz to read the full case studies.)

Porirua College

Porirua College is a decile 1, state secondary school that has predominantly Māori and Pasifika students. The college recognised that the involvement of parents was critical to the success of the school and its students. The teachers could not do this on their own.

To assist in building the bridge to the community, the college has deliberately tried to recruit staff who are parents of students at the college or live in the community. It can be difficult to find teachers who fit this bill, but it is easier with support staff. Local networks have helped the school find the right people. The result is a diverse group of support staff, many of whom are Māori or Pasifika. These support staff contribute in many ways that go beyond their formal job descriptions. They bring knowledge and understanding that staff from outside the community are unlikely to have. Support staff from the local community also subtly coach and challenge teachers. It has led to a culture of much greater understanding and respect.

The level of engagement and trust with the local community has risen markedly. This has made teachers' jobs easier, it has made support staff jobs more interesting and it has helped students succeed.

Te Kura Māori o Ngā Tapuwae

Te Kura Māori o Ngā Tapuwae is a year 1–13 wharekura based in Mangere East in Auckland. The vision of Ngā Tapuwae is for the students to achieve and to be strong in their Māori identity. To accomplish that, everything the kura does is geared towards teaching and learning. The whānau is an integral part of the vision and philosophy of the school and the success of students depends on the involvement of whānau.

Having staff who understand and value the kura and the community is important for Ngā Tapuwae. The tumuaki of the kura has designed roles and recruited for them to match the kura's aspirations for its learners.

Wellington Girls' College

Wellington Girls' College is clear that support staff belong at the heart of the school's business of teaching and learning. The college has clear teaching and learning goals. They are not just looking to their teachers to help deliver these, but also to their support staff. To support student achievement they are rethinking the way they design work and involve non-teaching staff. This is particularly evident at this stage in the work of the librarians, ICT staff and their business manager.

In part they were 'pushed' into doing this by recognising the wasted potential of these roles, but also 'pulled' by the massive technological changes occurring in and out of the classroom. The result has been a strategic shift to recognise support staff as parallel and contributing professionals. They are expected to work in partnership with teaching staff to meet the school's goals. The terminology will change from 'support staff' and 'teaching staff', to just 'staff' who each contribute in different ways.

This is a continuing journey. No-one in the school would claim that they have yet achieved the optimum integration and use of support roles but in many areas of the school the changes and benefits are already evident.

Unnamed school

Another school (which did not become a full case study school) was deliberately looking to diversify their workforce. The principal saw the issues that many of his male pupils had as one of engagement rather than learning difficulties — they have little experience of learning being a positive activity or of men interacting in positive ways.

He has started to deliberately alter the demographic profile of the teacher aides in his school. He headhunted some former pupils and paired them with pupils from their ethnic group who were in difficulty.

Although it is too soon to know what the full benefits are, he has seen signs of improvement such as fewer behavioural issues, improved academic interest and better attendance. And the teachers have noticed benefits in class.

Complementary roles for principals/teachers and support staff

The Working Group was interested to explore the extent to which schools think strategically about shaping complementary roles for support staff and leaders/teachers so that teachers and principals can optimise their focus on teaching and learning¹³.

Both support staff and principal questionnaires contained sections exploring perceptions of support staff contributions to achieving learning outcomes.

The majority of support staff (especially those with roles directly with students) consider that they contribute to student learning outcomes. However, most support staff appeared to have some difficulty articulating how they contributed, except at the level of a list of tasks they undertake.

Some principals appeared not to connect what their administrative staff did with student learning even indirectly, suggesting that they see administrative functions and teaching/learning activities as two quite independent aspects of the school operations rather than as having an interdependent role in achieving the school's purpose. This was mirrored in some of the support staff responses.

A few principals and support staff responded in a way that reflects that a key function of support staff is to relieve leaders and teachers of workload that reduces the amount of focus that they can give to teaching and learning.

Some examples of responses will illustrate a wide range of understandings about the interconnectedness of parts of the schools' operations and the contribution of all parts to the whole:

- “The position does not really help because it is involved with administration not learning situations.” (principal's personal assistant)
- “I don't know. I don't think I am thought of in that way.” (administration assistant)

¹³ The Working Group is aware of work on managing time and administration so that leaders can use their time where it will be most effective. Education Leadership in Action provides a case study of one principal (Denise Torrey from Somerfield School, Christchurch) who set out very deliberately to make herself more time for pedagogical leadership by organising administrative responsibilities differently in the school. <http://www.educationallleaders.govt.nz/Leading-change/Educational-leadership-in-action/Principalship-in-40-hours-a-week>

- “Student outcomes are the focus of every decision made.” (business manager)
- “Mainly administration but I would like to think I facilitate learning.” (administration assistant)
- “Through what we do daily we reinforce the school values for students.” (school secretary)
- “As I take a greater role as curriculum leader and teach more, the administration officer will be required to do more for me.” (school principal)
- “Sometimes I wonder if payroll is meant to be part of my job. I think it should be the principal’s job.” (administration assistant)
- “Relieving the principal to enable her to focus on achieving good outcomes for our students.” (administration assistant)
- “I help in the sense that doing my job efficiently helps the teachers to concentrate on their jobs.” (administration assistant)

Some principals commented that they recognised that changes in roles and processes were desirable but that the difficulties in overcoming a reluctance to change among some support staff made it difficult to introduce more effective ways of doing things.

One principal has communicated to the Working Group that, “In the past year, I have become more efficient and effective in my job due to new procedures and systems put in place between myself and my office managers, who handle my diary, much of my paperwork and most of the ‘footwork’ that I used to do. They are fantastic! They have undertaken professional development alongside me and have further developed their ‘personal assistant’ skills to enable me to focus on my role as instructional leader.”

The teacher/support staff relationship was frequently raised throughout the survey responses by both principals and support staff, particularly by teacher aides and librarian staff, but by the wider group of support staff as well.

“ How much I help is entirely up to how individual teachers wish to use their teacher aide time. I have a couple of classes where students are most definitely helped ... but the majority of my time is merely a babysitting role.”

Of principals, 65.7% considered that teacher aides are used in the best ways “to a large extent”, and 33.3% said “to a moderate extent”. In contrast to the 48.9% of support staff who thought that they were being well used, 29.4% thought they could contribute better to learning outcomes. The majority of these were teacher aides. Most respondents in this group considered that it was in the way that teacher aides and teachers worked together where gains could be made in their effectiveness.

Teacher aides particularly noted that a lack of forward planning and a lack of involvement of the teacher aides in planning hampered their effectiveness. Similar comments came from specialist support staff, particularly librarians.

Some principals also commented that in some instances there is an absence of an effective relationship or arrangements between teachers and the aides in their classroom. They further commented that the role of child minder is the role that some teacher aides are most comfortable with or that it is given to them by teachers who do not know how to use teacher aides appropriately.

Principals indicated through the surveys that changes have been made, are being made or are being planned that will allow a more effective contribution to be made by teacher aides working constructively with teachers:

- Clearly defining the role of the teacher and teacher aides and making sure that it is understood and actioned.
- Support staff having specific tasks and clear guidelines focused on student development.
- Ensuring that teachers are well organised and that programmes are planned with support staff in mind.
- Promoting inclusive classroom environments where teacher aides have the opportunity to reflect on and discuss programmes with teachers and management.
- Using teacher aides to support the whole class rather than giving them hard-to-teach individuals or groups.
- Regular reviewing of the allocation of teacher aides to ensure their most effective use.
- Measuring the difference that teacher aides make to ensure that the investment does make a difference.
- Better targeting of teacher aides and the matching of individuals' strengths to students, programmes, curriculum areas or classrooms where the greatest difference can be made.
- Empowering support staff to suggest ways they can be better used.

Two of our case studies illustrate effective partnerships between teachers and teacher aides.

Windley School

Windley School is a multicultural, full primary, decile 1 school in Porirua.

One of the changes being made at Windley is to make sure that the teacher aide role is more focused on teaching and learning. They have moved from a place where teachers would be wondering what to do with a teacher aide — of 'finding them jobs' — to an expectation from school management that teacher aides will be actively involved in classroom planning and providing feedback on student progress. The intended role of the teacher aide is expected to be documented in teachers' plans.

The aim is for the teacher aide and teacher relationship to be collegial and cooperative. “The changes in the last four years are dramatic. It has moved from a place where teacher aides in the classroom were an extra pair of hands to do things like make the glue, to now being part of the discussions around IEP for specific children. Our opinion about progress is now actively sought.” (teacher aide)

Te Kura Māori o Ngā Tapuwāe

The kura recognises that for the kaiarahi i te reo to contribute fully, both they and the teachers they work with need to know what is expected of them and how to best utilise this resource. To help, clear guidelines have been developed for teachers on working effectively with their kaiarahi i te reo. Teachers are encouraged to formally negotiate and document expectations, share their approach to managing their classroom, have regular timetabled meetings to review progress and to work with the kaiarahi i te reo to foster students’ independent learning. As the deputy principal said, “The most important part of using the kaiarahi i te reo is the way teachers involve them in the classroom programme and how they communicate with them.”

Getting the right people for jobs

There is good reason for having a broad range of applicants for any position. The State Sector Act explicitly requires that a vacancy should be notified in a manner sufficient to enable suitably qualified people to apply and that preference be given to the person who is best suited to the position. Open advertising of positions by one or more of a range of means (for example, newspapers, school newsletters, tapping into local networks) can provide principals with a greater choice of skill sets and attributes, and more opportunity to think about how a range of applicants could be utilised to support the school’s goals. An employer’s assumptions about what attributes would be best for the preferred candidate can often be usefully revised by unexpected applicants.

Open advertising is also a more equitable way of filling positions as it provides more opportunities for people to put themselves forward.

Schools appear to be flexible in their approach to recruitment practices to meet the circumstances of the particular need they have at various times.

There is evidence of a reasonably high incidence of employers seeking to make an appointment from a wider pool. Of support staff, 48.7% said the job they hold was advertised; 45.7% of principals said that they advertised externally. There is also much evidence of people, including existing staff, being invited to take up positions without them being advertised in some way.

It is clear that the school community is an important source of support staff and that word of mouth is an important means of getting vacancies known.

Principals provided examples of a number of instances in which they were less likely to advertise. These included:

- small number of hours
- remote school with travel time an issue
- the job being administrative at a basic level
- if they knew of someone who fitted a very specific need, for example language skill
- someone needed in a hurry.

There was some indication that a job would be more likely advertised if it were:

- a skilled administrative job, for example office management/finance
- a permanent position.

Few schools have minimum educational requirements for support staff, though the support staff surveys suggest that many staff are well qualified.

There is little evidence from the surveys that support jobs are difficult to fill, except perhaps in some remote locations and for some positions needing advanced levels of skills, such as in ICT¹⁴.

Principals were asked to rank eleven suggestions¹⁵ for how schools might be assisted to maximise the benefit of support staff in their schools. The least highly ranked was “guidelines for recruiting support staff”.

¹⁴ This is a different result from the 2010 NZCER survey of teachers and principals in primary and intermediate schools. In that survey, only 52% of principals said they had no difficulty in finding suitable support staff. Both surveys confirmed that areas of difficulty included finding teacher aides to work with students with special needs and in the area of ICT.

¹⁵ See Question 27 of the Survey of Principals attached as Appendix 4a. Principals were asked to comment on the usefulness to schools of guidance relating to job specifications, recruitment, induction, management and development of support staff, education and training of support staff, exemplars of good practice, and opportunities for networking about good practice.

Utilising the specialist skills and knowledge of support staff

Support staff value schools recognising and utilising experience and skills that are outside the core aspects of their job.

Porirua College

The college has recognised and tapped into specialist skills and knowledge that many of the support staff have, whether they are the groundsman, the caretaker, doing data entry or a teacher aide.

These staff are contributing to key groups in the school such as the Multicultural Committee, the PB4L — an initiative about setting school-wide behaviour expectations — and the Whānau Advisory Group. They help develop and drive many of the protocols and cultural processes of the school. Some contribute to extra-curricular activities, such as supporting students participating in the local PolyFest or travelling to sports events.

They contribute to the development of programmes for students. With a recent important learning initiative for boys in the school, more support staff were involved in the development and presentation of the programme than teachers.

When asked how they feel about taking on these different roles, teacher aides replied:

- “It’s good. It gives us more development in different areas. It gives us variety.”
- “Being involved is about being acknowledged.”
- “We get to seek out our passions and find opportunities to share them.”

Inclusive practices

Developing inclusive practices with support staff have a number of benefits:

- Support staff are able to contribute their talents and knowledge to planning and problem solving when they are involved.
- Good communication with support staff allows them to be more efficient and effective.
- Being included facilitates relationships with colleagues and is a learning opportunity.
- Being included communicates that they are valued as part of the whole school system.

Communications

It is clear that many principals understand the importance of continuous communication with all staff, including support staff. Principals appear to have recognised that a range of communication channels is important for support staff because many do not work full-time and may not be available for regular staff meetings. The surveys identified a wide range of systems and practices that are in place to keep support staff informed. These practices include bulletins, newsletters, daily verbal notices and staff meetings,

distribution of minutes from meetings, noticeboards and email when support staff have adequate access to computers. Some support staff said that they attended staff meetings in unpaid time rather than go without information because of the impact that 'not knowing' has on their ability to do their job well.

Of the support staff respondents, 23.7% said that they thought their schools definitely did a good job in keeping them informed and up to date about things that are happening in the school. A further 52.9% were mostly satisfied; 19.2% did not think the school was doing a particularly good job of keeping them informed and 4.0% said they definitely did not think the school did a good job.

Many support staff who were not particularly satisfied with the level of communications ascribed it to the fact that they were part-time, and either not available for meetings or not paid to attend them. Some support staff ascribe the lack of communication to a poor attitude in the school to support staff. Others simply think they get overlooked.

Some support staff said that support staff themselves need to take responsibility for being informed in the absence of good systems. Some support staff say that they find they have to be proactive in seeking out information, but find it worthwhile to do so.

Planning and whole-school training activities

The majority of support staff (61.5%) said that they were hardly involved at all or never involved when school leaders and teaching staff do planning for the year or term ahead. Those staff who are most likely to be involved in school-wide planning are executive support staff.

Also, 32.2% of support staff said they were often involved in planning in areas relevant to their role, for example education programmes for individual students, sports events, purchasing of resources.

Around 22% of support staff have been involved in whole-of-school professional development in the last year. There is a mixed response to being included. Some found it irrelevant, some were unable to go because of lack of payment for the time or the time being unsuitable. Some appreciated being involved. Of those who did not have the opportunity to join teachers in training, some expressed regret at not having the opportunity to learn, while others specifically commented on the act of exclusion as they saw it. Some schools provide some parallel learning experiences for support staff on 'teacher only' training days and these tend to be welcomed by support staff.

As with the issue of communications, the fact that support staff are often part-timers was frequently given as a reason by principals for support staff not being involved in planning discussions or training, even though they may be invited to do so on either a paid or unpaid basis.

There were indications that many support staff wish to be more involved in planning at all levels, whether in relation to individual students, classrooms, departments or school-wide planning. Some reported that they "pushed their way" into planning, some said they get annoyed at the fact that planning about their use is done without consultation, some resent being observers only. Some expressly said that

they considered they had contributions to make that the school was missing out on, while a good number indicated that their lack of involvement was evidence of a 'them and us' culture in the school.

Principals who responded to the survey offered little comment about support staff involvement in whole-of-school strategic planning. One respondent said that it is one of the two things he/she would like to do more of. Some case study schools provided examples of where some or all support staff were involved in strategic planning.

Involvement in problem solving

Case studies illustrate the benefits of support staff being involved in developing solutions to problems.

Kapanui School

Kapanui School is a full primary, decile 8 school in Waikanae, north of Wellington.

Teacher aides were feeling frustrated that sometimes they would turn up to a class and the teacher and children would not be there. The teacher aide could then spend a lot of time trying to find the class or the SENCO to find out what they should be doing. A system to address the issue was developed by one of the teacher aides.

Now when the situation occurs, the teacher aide will go to the Yellow Cards instead.

The Yellow Cards are in individual pockets on a notice board in the staff room. Each Yellow Card has the name and classroom of a child on it, and in one case a group of children's names. These children have been identified by the teachers as those who would benefit from receiving the assistance of a teacher aide, even though they don't normally get it.

When a teacher aide finds they have unexpected time available, they will get a Yellow Card and go to the child's classroom and work with the child. In the classroom there is a box with all the information and resources they need to work with that child. The information will have a very specific learning intention on it.

The teachers like the Yellow Card system as it helps children benefit from some additional help. One comments, "I like the Yellow Card system; kids really benefit as a result. In another school I worked at, I sometimes had to manufacture jobs for the teacher aide when the child was away... it means our teacher aides feel valued... they're not given all the scuzzy jobs like cleaning art brushes."

The teacher aides like it because they feel they are contributing to the school and have more control over their time. "It helps to reduce wasted time... we are not wandering around wondering what to do."

Wellington Girls' College

The deputy principal at Wellington Girls' College meets with the senior support staff representatives (administration, library, IT) once a fortnight to actively engage them in whole-of-school issues. They have found that this has improved planning and the implementation of major projects in that the issues, impacts and solutions are considered at an early stage from all perspectives.

Systems and processes that guide staff contributions

Staff anywhere need to know what they are responsible for and how they fit in to their work place, how the place works, why things are done the way they are, how well they are doing, how they can do better. Without systems and processes that support this knowledge, it is more difficult for employees to perform effectively, display initiative and commitment, and contribute their best to the enterprise.

This section explores how relevant management processes are being applied to support staff in schools.

Induction and initial training

Induction is important groundwork for enabling any staff member to become effective. Good induction would include:

- making them feel welcomed and comfortable
- showing how they fit into the school's big picture
- introducing them to the people that will support them and who will rely on them
- giving information about how the school operates
- giving a good sense of the purpose of their job
- showing how their contribution fits with the contributions of others
- telling or showing people what they have to do and how to do it
- assessing together what initial training or support a person needs to get started productively.

Induction doesn't just happen on 'day one'. It normally requires a programme over a period of time, with readiness to absorb new information being an aspect of its timing. A secondary and more limited induction is likely to be required when staff shift jobs within an organisation.

Indications from the survey suggest most support staff do not receive good induction. Their induction is largely limited to "telling or showing them what they have to do and how to do it".

Even the "what they had to do" was pretty minimal in many cases; words like "dropped in it" were quite common in the support staff responses.

There is some indication that staff of longer standing think that new staff now get better induction than in the past. This is illustrated most clearly in one response:

“ I feel our school used to do a 'baptism of fire'. I have seen the baptism of fire begin to change; there is now a clearer orientation plan for newcomers.”

Support staff made many suggestions about how their introduction to the school could have been better. Many support staff commented on the need for more of the sort of information that puts their job in a broader context and makes them familiar with the way schools in general work and how their particular school works.

Fifty-five per cent of principals said that support staff are “always” provided with induction/training when they start, and 36% say they “often” are.

Of the support staff, 41.6% found the information and support they received on starting the job “very helpful” and a further 28.6% “quite helpful”. A total of 27.5% found their experience not very helpful or that initial induction was non-existent. There was evidence of some useful practices, particularly around the provision of written material, such as a desk file, a manual or an introduction booklet.

Despite these hopeful figures, it appears that, with very few exceptions, induction programmes and processes are not systematic. The responses appear to reflect an understanding of induction that is limited to “initial training” and “showing what needs to be done”.

When principals were asked, “What two key things would you do (or like to do) if you were trying to improve processes to help support staff better understand what is expected of them?”, only seven out of 77 responses mentioned induction.

Schools, generally, do not seem to consider good induction for all support staff as an activity requiring a planned allocation of time and resources. The Working Group acknowledges the difficulty of establishing good induction for individual staff members who may join the staff at any time during the year, but believes that establishing systems to make it happen would have benefits for the individual and the school.

Several schools involved in case study discussions suggested that an example of a well organised and run induction programme would be useful. Eighty-four per cent of principals who completed surveys said that “guidelines on the induction and on-the-job training of support staff” would be likely to be of real or some value to their school. The response may, however, have reflected their concern about initial training more than about wider induction.

Job descriptions

A job description is the basic tool for setting expectations about what an employee delivers through their work. Job descriptions need to talk about the purpose of the job, what will be achieved through the position, what areas of responsibility the person has, key activities, and how it relates to other jobs and roles. A job description should not be a straightjacket for either employee or employer. Rather than being very detailed, it needs to leave room for some initiative in achieving the purpose of the job and for adjusting to changing circumstances.

Job descriptions appear to be available to the majority of staff and they are valued by them. In many instances, support staff said they had job descriptions but that they could hardly be called up to date and did not fully reflect the role they were now doing. Some respondents said they had never had a job description.

Some support staff noted that they would like their job descriptions to be realistic and honest. There was some feeling that job descriptions outline teacher aide positions as they are meant to be, but the reality is that a lot more is demanded of them.

There was evidence that many staff are involved in a review of their job description, often in conjunction with an annual performance review.

There appear to be differing expectations of what a job description should do—should it be higher level so that it does not need to change when new tasks are added to a person's duties, or should it be accurate and up to date at the level of tasks rather than at the level of responsibilities/task groups?

When asked, "What two key things would you do (or like to) if you were trying to improve processes to help support staff better understand what is expected of them?", 10 out of 77 principal respondents said they would like to improve job descriptions. Thirty-three out of 89 principals (37%) said that they would find guidelines on drawing up job specifications for support staff to be of real value and a further 41 (46%) said they would find guidelines of some value.

Appraisals and development plans

Appraisals are important processes for rewarding and acknowledging staff efforts over a period of time, for shaping the work that staff will do in the period ahead and communicating expectations about future performance. Appraisal sessions review existing agreements about work programmes and performance. They should be a joint endeavour with a staff member evaluating their own performance, raising concerns and expressing aspirations for the future, and the appraiser contributing their point of view.

Appraisals ideally are a more formal interaction that sums up less formal interactions over a longer period. Development plans are an agreed course of action that provides for the staff member to continue to contribute or enhance their contribution in the future. The results of these processes should be recorded and used for ongoing review.

Wairarapa College

For support staff at Wairarapa College, performance appraisal is now a regular part of their year. It has been normal practice for teachers. The principal then raised the question, "Why are we not doing the same for support staff?"

The results have benefited staff, their manager and the school. Support staff report, "It's great... a chance to voice fears or dissatisfactions or concerns... You know where you are going."

For the executive officer and manager of most of the support staff, it has helped build ongoing relationships, gain a better understanding of her staff's jobs and to recognise and respond to changes. For the school, it has helped to monitor workloads so they can adjust duties and hours to better match the needs of the school and the staff.

In many organisations, performance appraisals become a 'tick box' affair that has to be done and got out of the way. Wairarapa College has managed to design, and keep it, a meaningful tool.

It appears that the carrying out of performance appraisals for support staff is rather patchy. Nearly a quarter of support staff respondents say that they do not have regular performance appraisals. Some support staff report that reviews are started but not completed ("don't get to the 'face-to-face' stage") or that they involve "a five minute chat" or that they are a 'tick box' affair, or that they are done on paper and never discussed. Others commented that the person doing the appraisal is not familiar with their work and the teacher with whom they work most closely is not involved.

The reporting of the systematic carrying out of appraisals is fairly consistent between principals and support staff, though it is possible principals believe they are being carried out more than they actually are.

About half of the 75 principals who commented about appraisal systems said that all support staff are treated similarly, some emphasising that the process was aligned with the appraisals of teachers. It seems from the reports of other principals that support staff who have more direct contact with teaching staff and student learning are more likely to have performance appraisals than administrative staff. Those staff who were in leadership roles, or finance staff, staff who were permanent, or staff who worked full-time or close to full-time, were also more likely to have appraisals.

The lack of consistency about performance appraisals within schools is what stands out. One principal wrote:

“ Teacher aides do not usually have performance reviews. Admin staff do.
As I type this, I think, 'Why is this? Perhaps we need to rethink!'”

Where appraisals do take place, it seems that most meetings also discuss staff development goals. Principals offered no comment about development plans and when they were asked to identify the two key things that they would like to do better or more of to improve processes to help support staff contribute more, development plans did not feature.

Better appraisal systems were identified as one of the two things they would like to do better by 15 out of the 77 principals who responded to the relevant question. Better job descriptions were often seen as a necessary partner to improvements in appraisals.

Coaching and problem solving

Effectively, coaching and problem solving activities between a staff member and their manager is the evolution of the induction process once a staff member is established in their position. Ideally, it happens on a regular, usually one-to-one, basis as with the mentoring of teachers. It is a mechanism for developing and supporting staff and showing that it matters that they are on track and comfortable with what they are doing.

There was little evidence from the surveys of regular individual meetings for coaching and problem solving purposes, except perhaps between some teachers and teacher aides. Most support staff reported that they discussed work problems on an 'as required' basis or casually when the opportunity presented.

Many support staff do, however, participate in support staff meetings and these meetings are valued by support staff. Such meetings were mentioned by 10 (out of 77) principals as things that they would like to see occurring as possible improvements for guiding the understanding and contribution of support staff.

Training and professional development

Training and professional development is most effective when it is tied to the needs of an organisation and to the contribution that individuals can make to the organisation. Training and professional development can take place on the job, or can be sector organised and sector-specific training, or can be more generic across sectors.

For support staff generally, the surveys indicate that a wide variety of widely sourced training is undertaken by support staff. For teacher aides, the wider Special Education sector is an important source of training opportunities. They appear also to have some access to training that is relevant to pedagogical areas such as literacy/numeracy and ESOL. For administrative staff, financial and computer skills courses appear to be the most commonly accessed. Ministry of Education courses relating to systems and new initiatives are also common. There has been some evidence from interviews with schools beginning to introduce broadband, that teacher aides can easily be overlooked for IT training, because their potential in maximising the pedagogical advantages of IT has not registered with teachers or leaders.

Senior administrative staff may have access to professional development through the activities of the nine local branches of the School Executive Officers' Association and an annual national conference. Eligibility for membership of this group is restricted to support staff who have responsibility for finance, property or staff management. NZEI Te Riu Roa provides opportunities for support staff to attend support staff conferences for professional development opportunities. In addition, there are very many self-directed groups of support staff throughout the country who meet for professional development, with the support of NZEI Te Riu Roa funding.

There is a notable absence of sector-specific training for support staff that leads to any sort of qualification with the exception of courses for teacher aides, which many staff responding to the survey have accessed.

One of our case study schools puts an emphasis on home-grown training and professional development, given the absence of specifically relevant external opportunities. The case study also suggests that collaboration between schools is a useful strategy for the provision of professional development opportunities for support staff.

Wairarapa College

The manager of support staff and the support staff have found different solutions depending on the needs of the individual and their role. These have included:

- getting skilled staff to run workshops for their colleagues
- attending cluster meetings at neighbouring schools
- participating in networks related to their area of work, with their time and travel paid for
- investigating how other schools do things
- setting up buddying systems to share skills.

The manager is clear that although there is a place for training courses, cluster groups and networks usually provide the greatest value and are the most cost effective.

When principals were asked to rank eleven suggestions¹⁶ for how schools might be assisted to maximise the benefit of support staff in their schools, principals rated training highly. “Increased training for support staff in carrying out their regular duties” was rated as “likely to be of real value” by 61.8% of principals and “likely to be of some value” by 31.5%. “More educational opportunities for support staff” was rated at 40.2% (“real value”) and 37.9% (“some value”).

Likewise, when principals were asked what two things they would do to help support staff better understand what is expected of them, the most frequent response was, “Provide more and better professional development.”

There is some evidence that training opportunities are offered to support staff which do not always arise from an assessment of need, but may occur as the result of principals wanting to make staff feel valued by offering opportunities. This may be particularly the case with ad hoc opportunities that arise.

The survey results indicate, on the whole, that principals recognise that professional development is valued by support staff. Many support staff, especially teacher aides and specialist staff, mentioned the lack of professional development as a disappointing aspect of a job they want to do well. A significant number of support staff report that they have had no professional development opportunities in the last year provided by their school. Some support staff welcomed job rotation and job extension as ways of continuing to develop new skills. A small number indicated that they had arranged their own professional development, in their own time and at their own expense.

¹⁶ See Question 27 of the Survey of Principals attached as Appendix 4a. Principals were asked to comment on the usefulness to schools of guidance relating to job specifications, recruitment, induction, management and development of support staff, education and training of support staff, exemplars of good practice, and opportunities for networking about good practice.

The desire for more training was also reflected in the 2010 Review of Special Education. About 20% of the 1,382 responses discussed the need to improve the professional development opportunities available to teacher aides. Generally, respondents wanted teacher aides to be well trained and to have access to a qualification structure.

The Review also highlighted the need for whole-school systems of professional development, based partly on the experience of implementation of training for the Tips for Autism programme.

School personnel policies

The State Sector Act (Part 7A) sets out the personnel provisions in relation to the education service. Alongside that, the National Administration Guidelines (NAG 3) set out the requirements to “develop and implement personnel and industrial policies, within policy and procedural frameworks set by the Government from time to time, which promote high levels of staff performance, use educational resources effectively and recognise the needs of students”. The NAG 3 further identifies that this is “applying to teaching and non-teaching staff”.

It appears that staff recruitment and management policies of many schools do not specify different practices for their support staff workforce even when actual practices may differ.

Other findings from the research

Collaboration and outsourcing

The Working Group was interested to explore the extent to which schools outsource or collaborate with other schools with regard to support functions and support staff.

Support functions were outsourced by 51.7% of school principals in the survey over the last year. The functions they outsourced were almost exclusively aspects of financial management and information technology.

There is little indication from our surveys that schools share outsourced arrangements. Two principals indicated that they did so with respect to accessing IT technicians. However, the Working Group believes that such arrangements are becoming more common and that the introduction of broadband is likely to drive this practice.

There were instances where the same person employed by one school was also employed by another in the same capacity but in these cases the staff members had separate contracts with each school. They were not set up as a shared arrangement.

One case study illustrated the potential value to schools of a collaborative and outsourced arrangement with regard to IT services.

Nelson College for Girls and Nayland College

These colleges have outsourced the management of their server and worked collaboratively to buy better technology and support than they would have been able to do alone.

With the introduction of fibre optic fast broadband an opportunity to work together more closely was identified. By pooling their purchasing power the schools were able to make their money go further, buy a more robust server and contract someone to manage the server on their behalf. This has allowed the ICT functions within the schools to be more focused on providing support to teaching roles and administrative functions.

The IT support roles in the school have shifted in focus to working closely with the teaching and administrative staff end users. Support staff say, "Our roles have become increasingly important. A teacher cannot wait for hours for support if they have a class full of students with them waiting for the technology to work."

Teacher education and teacher aide training

It is clear that the roles of teacher aides have evolved over time. Both principals and support staff talk about the ineffectiveness of having teacher aides operating simply as child minders. There are positive indications in the case studies and surveys that more deliberately planned collaborative approaches between teachers and teacher aides are being developed to get better benefits from the resource. The case study of Windley School illustrates this well. (See Appendix 6 and the full case study on www.educationalleaders.govt.nz.)

A document has been recently developed for parents by Special Education¹⁷ within the Ministry which explains the desired collaboration between teacher aides and teachers (see Appendix 6). Although focused on teacher aides employed to support teachers with special needs learners in their classes, much of this document is also relevant to other teacher aides.

Both principals and support staff had some concerns about the willingness or ability of some teachers to use support staff effectively to improve student outcomes, and the willingness and ability of teacher aides to contribute at this level.

Some survey respondents commented that neither initial teacher education nor some of the teacher aide training available have recognised the changed needs of both teachers and teacher aides in the training they offer and the fact that there are pedagogical aspects of what teacher aides do.

The Working Group thinks, in particular, that teacher education should prepare teachers to have teacher aides in their classrooms and to make effective use of them.

Property issues

A number of case study schools and a number of survey responses indicate that limitations of accommodation are considered to create barriers to the effective use of support staff. One principal commented that the current priority on expenditure on teaching spaces limited his ability to create more effective working spaces for administrative staff. Administrative staff are sometimes dispersed across the school in available space rather than being located where more effective teamwork could occur.

Teacher aides quite frequently commented on there being no space or only inadequate or crowded space available to them to carry out preparation activities for their work with students and to do one-on-one work with students.



¹⁷ The Role of the Teacher's Aide, June 2010-June 2011, Information for Parents and Caregivers series

The term 'support staff'

The term 'support staff' is not one that is enjoyed by some support staff. In their view, it implies that they are of inferior status and promotes the 'us/them' culture that a considerable number of support staff perceive in their schools. A suggested alternative from some staff was to develop a generic group title such as 'resource staff'.

It is interesting to note from the Wellington Girls' College case study that the school is shifting the emphasis and terminology from 'support staff' and 'teaching staff', to just 'staff' who each contribute in different ways.

Other matters of interest

Some other matters have become evident to the Working Group during Phase Two.

Impact of technology on productivity

Discussions with some case study schools and with Ministry staff involved in the roll-out of broadband to schools have highlighted the potential for technology to impact positively on the organisation of work within schools. Technology in many instances will allow schools to deploy support resources closer to teaching and learning processes. The Nelson Girls/Nayland case study previously cited is a case in point. The capacity for librarians to use the National Library catalogue also can release librarians to spend time assisting teachers and students to access resources relevant to learning programmes.

Resources for principals

A number of resources are available for schools and principals to guide their practices in employing and managing staff in schools. NZEI Te Riu Roa provides a Principals' Kit¹⁸ and NZSTA provides a Trustees' Handbook¹⁹ for its members and employer resources on the NZSTA website²⁰. The extent to which principals apply these to support staff as well as to teachers is a little unclear.

It is possible that in their response to Question 27 of their questionnaire (see footnote 15) principals were indicating that they would value resources that are more immediately applicable to the management of support staff specifically. Responses to this question indicate that more assistance in some areas would be valued. Some case study schools also seemed to indicate that this is the case.

¹⁸ NZEI Te Riu Roa Principals' Kit <http://www.principalskit.org.nz/>

¹⁹ <http://www.nzsta.org.nz/news-and-publications/publications/>

²⁰ <http://www.nzsta.org.nz/board-as-employers/>

Ministry change initiatives

The Working Group met with a number of Ministry of Education staff to discuss initiatives for the schooling sector that are relevant to the roles of some support staff or relevant to the principals' roles in relation to support staff. Relevant areas of the Ministry of Education included property, broadband, payroll and principal professional development.

It was evident to the Working Group that although planning for implementation of some projects took good account of the roles of support staff in schools, others did not.

The Working Group has come to the view that it should be a mandatory part of Ministry projects to be implemented in schools, whether they affect pedagogical or administrative practice, that the following issues are considered at an early stage of designing implementation:

- The ways in which support roles in schools can support change.
- Opportunities for increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of support staff.
- The impacts on support staff roles, workloads and relationships with teachers and school leaders.

Appendix 1

Members of the Support Staff Working Group

Ministry of Education

Fiona McTavish *Group Manager, Education Workforce*
Ming-Chun Wu *Manager Strategy, Projects, Special Education*

NZEI Te Riu Roa

Geraldine Ryan *Executive Officer, NZEI National Office*
Helen Burnet *Office Manager, Clyde Quay School, Wellington*
Vicki Signal *Media Centre Manager, Rhode Street School, Hamilton*

New Zealand School Trustees Association

Colin Davies *Manager, Service Delivery, New Zealand School Trustees Association*
James Abernethy *Principal, Arahunga School, Wanganui*
Peter Gall *Principal, Papatoetoe High School, Papatoetoe, Manukau*

Working Group support

Maryann Nesbitt *Project Coordinator, Education Workforce, Ministry of Education*
Dawn Brook *Principal Advisor, Education Workforce, Ministry of Education*
Alf Kirk *Economist*

Appendix 2

Terms of Reference for the Support Staff Working Group

Introduction

1. Support staff are employed by boards to deliver effective and efficient support services for teaching and learning and the day-to-day running of schools. Their work contributes to education services equipping all students with knowledge, competencies and values to be successful citizens in the 21st century.

Purpose

2. The parties (the Ministry of Education, New Zealand Educational Institute Te Riu Roa, and New Zealand School Trustees Association) agree to establish a tripartite work programme on support staff workforce strategy.
3. The parties undertake to:
 - identify and assess whether there are potential workforce issues which are seen to hinder the effective use of support staff, using a process of research and consultation
 - seek to identify attainable workforce change initiatives that will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the support staff workforce, and
 - write a report to the Secretary for Education with their findings.
4. The focus of this work programme is about what improvements can be achieved with what we have, within the existing operating model of self-managing schools.
5. The work programme will provide a forum for the parties to work through the process in a consultative, cooperative and constructive manner. The parties are committed to undertaking this work together in good faith and completing it in a timely manner.

Guiding principles

6. Any recommendations arising from the Working Group will reflect:
 - current Government policy, and that
 - support staff are employed in self-managing schools.
7. The principles outlined below describe the essential characteristics of education services and will be used as a gauge with which to test options for improvement. The principles are:
 - a) Education equips all students with the knowledge, competencies and values to be successful citizens in the 21st century.

- b) Education must lift the levels of literacy, numeracy and qualifications attainment for every student, and particularly Māori and Pasifika students.
- c) Education must provide value for money and deliver the best outcomes for every student.
- d) All involved have a shared responsibility to work effectively and collaboratively to achieve the best outcomes for students, especially those students with special education needs.
- e) To achieve a capable and competent workforce, roles and accountabilities must be well defined and contribute to educational outcomes.
- f) All staff are appropriately skilled for their role and managed consistently and fairly by their supervisors, managers and school leaders.
- g) Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the support staff workforce will be cost neutral and within existing funding.

Education workforce strategy: context

- 8. An effective and efficient education workforce is vital for supporting teaching and learning and the day-to-day running of schools. The Government's intent is that all schools are appropriately staffed, ably led, and have a high quality and productive teaching and non-teaching workforce.
- 9. Workforce planning supports medium to long-term change in response to Government priorities, internal education sector needs and external change drivers.
- 10. The support staff work programme will be managed as a separate initiative under the Ministry's workforce strategy umbrella. The Ministry expects that the findings of the Working Group will inform future policy.

Background

- 11. With the Government focus on value for money across the public sector, along with shifts in educational policy and a new curriculum, it is timely to review the contribution of the support staff workforce and look for opportunities to improve effectiveness and productivity.
- 12. The support staff workforce in schools is large and diverse, covering many different occupational groups and falling broadly into two areas: positions that support teaching and learning, and positions supporting school administration and management. Since 1990, numbers have substantially grown to over 20,000 support staff in schools. Anecdotally, the biggest occupational group in terms of numbers are teacher aides, and this is also where the workforce has experienced the most growth.

13. A number of factors have influenced the growth and shape of the support staff workforce employed by schools in the last two decades—the biggest factors have been the introduction of self-managing schools and Special Education 2000 which saw the mainstreaming of students with special education needs.
14. Support staff are employed by each board to meet the identified and specific need of their school. As with any workforce, Government and boards continue to monitor the level of outputs received for the investment made, and consider ways to increase productivity, value for money and student outcomes.
15. In 2008, the Government provided just over \$1 billion in operational funding and boards raised an additional \$560 million locally. Approximately \$400 million of operating budgets is spent on support staff salary and wages each year, representing a major investment for the Government and boards.
16. All schools will benefit from increasing productivity and efficiency in their support staff workforce. The rapid growth over the past 20 years reflects increasing expectations from Government and the community, and the high value that boards place on this part of their workforce.

Scope

17. The initial scope is to establish a better understanding of issues relating to the efficiency and effectiveness of the support staff workforce. For example, issues may relate to achieving consistency in the use of this workforce, availability of appropriate professional development, and effective supervision and mentoring.
18. The work programme will be structured so that it builds on information from other reviews but does not duplicate any work. Related work includes:
 - the Review of Special Education, established in response to public concern around the delivery of education services to children with special education needs, and
 - recent operational grants reviews.

Out of scope

19. The general areas of funding and remuneration have been extensively researched and reported on in previous years and are out of scope for this work programme.
20. The following specific topics are out of scope:
 - Remuneration and pay structures.
 - Terms and conditions within collective agreements.
 - Review of the funding model for the support staff workforce.
 - Duplicating activities in the Special Education Review.

21. The review may touch on boundaries between teaching and non-teaching roles and effective professional relationships with teachers and school leaders. It is not intended that the focus of the Working Group is diverted away from the support staff workforce.

Working Group membership

22. The proposed membership is:
- Ministry of Education: Fiona McTavish, Ming-chun Wu, Maryann Nesbitt
 - NZSTA: Colin Davies and two NZSTA representatives
 - NZEI Te Riu Roa: Geraldine Ryan and two NZEI Te Riu Roa members.
23. External quality assurance advice will assist the Working Group in achieving high quality analysis and well considered findings that meet the principles described here. Advice will be requested from a senior academic in a relevant area of public policy, workforce planning, human resources or organisation design with a good general knowledge of the education sector.
24. Academics, researchers and practitioners with particular subject expertise will also be invited to contribute to investigation of specific issues.

The proposed approach

25. It is proposed that this review will be carried out in two phases:
- Phase One will scope issues and make a recommendation on whether there is sufficient agreement to proceed to Phase Two.
 - Phase Two will develop strategy and policy recommendations.
26. Phase One scoping—this phase includes the following activities:
- Agree milestones, activities and time requirements.
 - Agree approach to issues analysis.
 - Information gathering on existing workforce issues and best practice.
 - Identification of existing best practice in:
 - support staff roles in supporting teaching and learning
 - support staff roles in supporting the day-to-day running of schools
 - support for school leadership
 - leadership and management of support staff roles
 - identification of emerging trends in employer requirements.
27. Analysis of issues will be evidence based and will take account of differing perspectives.

28. Expected outputs from Phase One include:
 - a summary report on key issues
 - a progress report to the Secretary for Education with a recommendation on whether to proceed with Phase Two
 - a joint substantive communication to be released to NZEI Te Riu Roa members, NZSTA boards and the Ministry of Education.
29. The starting point for Phase One includes the following areas: how support staff can best contribute to improving educational outcomes for students, best-practice models of delivering support services, describing skill sets identified to best perform the role(s), professional development, career pathways, workforce quality, accountability and how to address these within existing funding.
30. Phase Two strategy development—this phase will include the following activities:
 - Agree milestones, activities and time requirements.
 - Develop assessment model and prioritise initiatives.
 - Assess benefits of possible workforce change initiatives.
 - Estimate one-off implementation costs.
 - Identify how to fund initiatives within existing funding levels.
 - Test approaches with key sector stakeholders and focus groups.
31. Expected Phase Two outputs include:
 - progress reports to NZEI Te Riu Roa members, NZSTA and the Ministry
 - separate issues papers, if agreed to be useful
 - a recommendations report to the Secretary for Education, and
 - a joint final report for publication.

Note: the decision to publicly release the recommendations report rests with the Secretary for Education.

Working group process

32. Each party will manage the selection process for their representatives.
33. Purchasing external quality assurance services is the Ministry's responsibility and will be carried out in consultation with NZEI Te Riu Roa and NZSTA.
34. The working group will seek input from boards, principals, Secondary Principals' Association of New Zealand, New Zealand Principals' Federation, Post Primary Teachers' Association, New Zealand Teachers Council and other interested parties.
35. Information gathering activities will include:
 - reviewing national and international research

- input from sector groups and academic expertise, for example:
 - data gathering, for example surveying, exploratory studies
 - testing assumptions and conclusions from different perspectives
 - further analysis of existing data
 - use of school visits to contextualise the research findings
 - information sharing with concurrent reviews, such as Special Education.
- 36. An escalation process will be developed to manage decisions on scope arising during the work programme. Overlapping boundaries with other workforce reviews will be managed by the Ministry.
- 37. An agreed process will be established for releasing communications on progress to members of NZEI Te Riu Roa, NZSTA and the Ministry. The final terms of reference will be provided to the Service and Food Workers Union.
- 38. Any recommendation must be workable within existing funding and funding processes and consistent with:
 - Government policy
 - the school self-managing model
 - advice from the Special Education Review, and
 - preferred directions for change shown by research and experience.

Time frames

- 39. The parties expect to complete Phase One work activities by the end of March, with the Phase One report completed by the end of April 2010. The Phase Two final report to the Secretary for Education will be completed by the end of 2010.
- 40. This timetable will be revised, if necessary, once the Terms of Reference are approved and the first working group meeting scheduled.

Work programme funding

- 41. The Ministry will fund the secretariat for this work programme, including reasonable travel costs for NZEI Te Riu Roa and NZSTA representatives, and reasonable research and consultation costs associated with the work. Budgets for travel and associated costs will be agreed before the Working Group commences. Budgets for specific research and consultation activities will be agreed before work is commissioned. Purchasing processes will comply with the Ministry's purchasing policy.

Terms of Reference approval process

- 42. Once the draft Terms of Reference are agreed, each organisation will manage its own approval process.

Appendix 3

Analysis of surveys of principals and support staff

Who support staff are

Employment status

Of the 569 support staff who responded to this question:

- there were 80.3% in a permanent full-time or part-time position
- there were 11.6% in their position for this year only
- there were 2.3% employed on a casual as required basis.

Another 5.8% said they fitted none of these categories: these were mostly teacher aides whose funding is attached to a specific child or some of those on annual contracts which have been rolled over for many years such that they felt somewhat permanent.

Only one administration/executive staff member said their position was for this year only. In contrast, 21.8% of teacher aides (special needs) and 24% of other teacher aides said their positions were for one year only.

Of those not on permanent contracts, 27.6% expected to be employed by the school in the following year, 40.9% thought they probably would be employed and 38% said they did not know.

This sort of comment was not unusual: “There always seems to be some way in which the teacher aides in the school can be employed. It somehow feels permanent, even though we are on yearly contracts. We simply assume we will be back in February.” While some staff had learned to be optimistic about being renewed, others indicated that the lack of job security is of concern to them both in terms of annual renewal and in terms of consistency of hours per week.

Some staff were permanent for one of their roles but for one or more other roles were employed on a temporary basis.

Hours of work

The number of hours for which support staff are employed varies greatly as shown below:

- A total of 5.1% work fewer than 11 hours.
- A total of 27.9% work between 11 and 20 hours.

- A total of 36% work between 20 and 30 hours.
- A total of 12.2% work between 31 and 35 hours.
- A total of 18% work 36+ hours.

The most common working hour range is 26–30 hours—18.2% worked these hours.

Hours worked by position held

The figures below show the percentage of support staff of each type who work within bands of hours.

Position	No. of staff	< 5	5–10	11–15	16–20	21–25	26–30	31–35	36+
Admin/exec	172			5		26		22.1	34.3
Teacher aides – SN	147	3	5	10	30	30	20.4	3	
Teacher aides	83	2	7	23	19	23	16	6	
Specialist	77	2	2	12	13		19.5	21	18
Student support	16	6.25		19	12.5			25	25
Other	37			5.4	22	18	18	8	27
Combined	41				24	24	12		5

Administration/executive staff, student support and specialist staff are typically employed for longer hours than teacher aides but around 50% of teacher aides are also employed for more than 20 hours per week.

Additional hours

Over 21% of support staff sometimes worked additional paid hours and 10% often did so. Teacher aides were less represented among those who were paid for additional hours than other types of support workers.

Irrespective of type of position held, support staff often seem to be doing regular unpaid extra hours. In some cases, it seems that schools are agreeable to staff taking time in lieu or being flexible about their hours when there are other demands on their time. This does not seem to be the standard practice.

Mostly the reason for working additional unpaid hours seems to be that there is simply more work that is relevant to their role than can be managed within the hours they are allocated. A few respondents expressed the view that they were happy to do it “for the love of it”. A few respondents expressed displeasure at the situation. Most respondents expressed no opinion about the practice. It seems likely from the comments that much of this additional time being volunteered is somewhat invisible except perhaps to the people they work most closely with.

Qualifications

The most common qualification level for the 560 support staff responding to the question, “What is the highest level of education you have completed?” is School Certificate/NCEA Level 1. This is the highest qualification of 28.2% of respondents. Nevertheless 26% have university degrees or vocational diplomas and a further 14.5% have a trade or National Certificate qualification.

Approximately equal proportions (about 53%) of administration/executive staff and special need teacher aides staff have qualifications above this level. Around 43% of the general teacher aides have qualifications above that level. Nearly 70% of the specialist support staff are more highly qualified and nearly 50% of them have university degrees or vocational diplomas. Over 30% of the support staff who are in student or whānau support roles have university degrees and vocational diplomas.

As reported in the Phase One report, Department of Labour data tells us that the proportion of teacher aides who have certificates or diplomas or bachelor degrees or higher grew by seven per cent between the years 2001 and 2006.

Three-hundred and sixty-four of the 588 support staff (62%) who answered the question, “Please state educational qualifications or training certificates you hold that are directly related to your current position” considered that they had such qualifications.

Of the 98 executive and administrative staff who responded to this question about five per cent have full business degrees. About 20% have mid-level certificates or diplomas in business management or administration and about the same have qualifications in office skills such as typing.

Of the 155 teacher aides who responded to this question, about 40% have a certificate in teacher aiding. Approximately another 13% have other social service certificates, or nursing qualifications, or are qualified in teaching including in early childhood education.

Fifty-five responses were from people with jobs in a ‘specialist’ category. Sixteen out of 28 people holding librarian positions had professional library qualifications. Of 17 people who described themselves as science or laboratory technicians, 16 had degrees, part degrees or national certificates in some science area.

Of all other 56 support workers answering this question, several were registered nurses, several had teacher aide certificates, librarian qualifications or other social service qualifications, or relevant degrees.

Length of employment as a support staff worker

The following chart indicates how long staff have been employed as support workers.

	How long they had worked in <i>current position</i> in this school (N = 562)		How long they had worked as paid support staff person in <i>any school</i> (N = 557)	
	N	%	N	%
< 1 year	31	5.5	17	3.0
1–2 years	100	17.8	60	10.8
3–5 years	161	28.6	107	19.2
6–10 years	141	25.1	149	26.7
11–15 years	72	12.8	122	21.9
16–20 years	30	5.3	55	9.9
21–24 years	16	2.8	27	4.8
25+ years	11	1.9	20	3.6

Nearly 48% of staff have worked in their current school for more than five years. Nearly 67% have worked in this or other schools for more than five years.

Seven support staff members had worked in the same school for more than 30 years, while six respondents had worked as a support staff member in more than one school for a total of 30 to 38 years.

Career paths within schools

It appears in many instances that the role of the teacher aide is the entry level position to support staff roles. Of 177 respondents who indicated shifts in roles, at least 37 clearly indicated that they had shifted from teacher aide positions to administrative positions (the highest single group of changers). A further 15 had moved from teacher aide to specialist positions. There were numbers of specialists who moved from one specialist position to another. And there was a slight indication that aides move from being special need aides to more general classroom aides. There is an indication also that office staff sometimes progress to alternative positions within administration and to more senior administration roles.

Respondents were not asked to explain the shifts. Possible explanations that could be inferred from other data are that specialist and particularly office positions are more secure than teacher aide positions, possibly they are more attractive to support staff for other reasons such as being more autonomous, or being able to remove themselves to a degree from student behaviour issues.

Some staff regretted that there was not more career progression and some of these indicated that this would probably cause them to move away from the school environment. Rather more staff indicated that there was plenty to challenge them in the changing life of the school and that they were continually undertaking new tasks or expanded roles. A few, however, said they felt they were in a rut, were bored and unstimulated, or at a dead end.

Processes and systems: getting the right people and enabling them to be effective

School policies

In the survey, principals were asked if their employment policies have specific statements about support staff (rather than including support staff in more general statements about school staff overall policies).

Of the principal respondents, 37% indicated that they did have specific statements, 29% said they did not, and six per cent were unsure. Few comments were added to the response to this question, but those that were added seem to suggest that the principal had not until the question was asked thought about whether that would be a useful thing to do.

“This policy is under review and we will certainly look at the type of support staff we would like to employ to suit the culture of the school.”

Recruitment practice

Of the support staff respondents, 135 (48.7%) indicated that the job they hold was advertised.

When they got their current job, 26.4% of job holders were either already employed in the school or were volunteers in the school. Before taking up their current position, 27.9% of support staff respondents indicated that they had worked in the school as volunteer. (Their roles varied widely from being on the board or PTA to coaching sport to being a parent helper.) With regard to how they heard about the job, 28.5% heard about it from someone in the school.

Of the principals surveyed, 45.7% said they advertised externally (newspaper or online) always/nearly always, while a further 41.3% said they sometimes did. School newsletters were also frequently used (70%).

Of the principals, 70% said they at least sometimes offered a job to a volunteer, and 96% said they always/nearly always/sometimes invited existing support staff to apply for jobs. Principals also used the following methods of recruiting support staff; they:

- let other schools know
- approached an RTLB or Special Education for recommendations
- followed up with people who have sent in CVs throughout the year.

Schools tend not to use recruitment agencies for the recruitment of support staff. While 2.6% said they did so always or nearly always, 97.4% said they seldom or never used them.

Responses from support staff indicate that it is not unusual for people to be invited to take up positions without it being advertised. Sometimes those recruited have been in the school in another capacity (for example, during their training as teacher aides, as PTA or board members) or are simply known to school staff. Some have approached the school, enquiring about vacancies and have been subsequently contacted.

Principals provided examples of a number of instances in which they were less likely to advertise, which were:

- small number of hours
- remote school with travel time an issue
- the job was an administrative job at a basic level
- if they knew of someone who fitted a very specific need, for example language skill
- someone needed in a hurry.

There was some indication that a job would be more likely to be advertised in the following circumstances:

- Skilled administrative jobs, for example office management/finance.
- Permanent positions.

It seems that few schools have preferred minimum qualifications for their support staff. Only 5.7% said that they had them for teacher aides and only 11.5% for administrative staff. There was little by way of comment about this area of the employment of support staff. A handful of principals indicated what their preferred level was (for example, higher school leavers' qualifications, and teacher aide qualification), a couple of others said it depended on the job type and another said that experience rather than an educational qualification was preferred. Others said that specifying either or both qualifications and experience was not always an option.

Some general conclusions were able to be drawn about recruitment processes:

- The school community is an important source of support staff.
- Word of mouth is an important means of getting vacancies known.
- Schools appear to be flexible in their approach to recruitment practices to meet the circumstances of the need they have.
- There is evidence of a reasonably high incidence of contestable recruiting.

Induction and initial training

Of the principals surveyed, 55% say support staff are “always” provided with induction/training when they start, and 36% say they “often” are.

Of the support staff surveyed, 41.6% found the information and support they received on starting the job “very helpful” and a further 28.6% “quite helpful”. A further 27.5% found their experience not very helpful or non-existent.

It does not appear that systematic and broad induction programmes and processes are common. Words like ‘orientation’, ‘induction’ were seldom used. The responses of support staff to the question, “What sort of information and support did you receive when you first started in your current position to help you know about your school, how you fitted in and what you had to do” suggest that support staff usually get a lot of support around “what they had to do” but that very little wider induction occurs. Many support staff appeared to expect and anticipate no more than that and are happy when that is what they get. Even the “what they had to do” level of induction was somewhat minimal in many cases. Words like “dropped in it” were quite common in the support staff survey.

Most support staff report being shown what to do by colleagues or the person departing from the job. Most found their new colleagues very helpful over the settling in period and it seems that most of people’s information came from their colleagues, and colleagues in an informal way also made people feel welcome. Some people were provided with school handbooks, or with a deskfile or manual, or introduction booklet, but this was not very common.

There is some indication that staff of longer standing think that new staff now get better induction than used to occur. This is illustrated most clearly in one response: “I feel our school used to do a ‘baptism of fire’. I have seen the baptism of fire begin to change; there is now a clearer orientation plan for newcomers, that is, a walk around the school and an information manual is given out.”

Support staff made many suggestions about how their introduction to the school could have been more helpful. Many support staff commented on the need for more of the sort of information that puts their job in a broader context and makes them familiar with the way schools generally, and their own school specifically, work.

Help with “teacher jargon” was suggested as another improvement. A selection of quotes on this issue:

- “I would have liked a basic starting pack about school policies and procedures, a tour of the school, some history, an attempt to build working relationships with people I need to interact with and rostered breaks with someone else—I worked alone and ate alone.”
- “It would have been beneficial to know reasons why things were done and not just told this is the way it is to be done.”
- “More of the politics—who it is appropriate to ask to do what for you.”

There was also a significant level of comment that more written reference material would have been helpful—good job descriptions, manuals, information booklets, for example.

Teacher aides wanted more initial time with the teacher, and more information about the children they were working with. A comment was made that just as beginning teachers have mentors, perhaps beginning teacher aides to be effective also need a mentor.

When principals were asked, “What two key things would you do (or like to do) if you were trying to improve processes to help support staff better understand what is expected of them?”, only five out of 77 responses mentioned induction.

Thirty-three per cent of principals said that, “Guidelines on the induction and on-the-job training of support staff” would be likely to be of real value to their school and 51% said they would be likely to be of some value.

Job descriptions

Of the support staff surveyed, 71.3% said they have up-to-date job descriptions and 21.7% said they did not. Sixty-eight per cent of principals said that support staff always have up-to-date job descriptions, and 30% of principals said they often had them.

In many instances, support staff said they had job descriptions but that they could hardly be called up to date and did not fully reflect the role they were now doing. Some people said they had never had a job description. Some job descriptions were described as being very general or basic; in the words of one respondent, “It could be interpreted as *do what needs to be done*.”

Some support staff noted that they would like their job descriptions to be realistic and honest. There appeared to be some concern that job descriptions outline teacher aide positions as they are meant to be, but the reality is that a lot more is demanded of them.

There is evidence of good practice occurring with job descriptions being available to staff and being reviewed with them on a regular basis, often in conjunction with an annual performance review.

There was evidence that job descriptions are important to support staff. There were several reports that they had to ask for job descriptions. In the absence of one being provided or of it being up to date, quite a few staff reported writing their own or updating one themselves.

There appear to be differing expectations of what a job description should do—should it be higher level so that it does not need to change when new tasks are added to a person’s duties, or should it be accurate and up to date at the level of tasks rather than at the level of responsibilities/task groups?

Thirty-eight per cent of principals said that they would find guidelines on drawing up job specifications for support staff to be of real value and a further 49% said they would find guidelines of some value.

Appraisals and development plans

Of the support staff surveyed, 72.3% report having regular appraisals and 20.2% said they did not have regular appraisals. Similar proportions of staff report that they have the opportunity to discuss development goals. Some support staff say they have never had an appraisal or have not had one for years. Practices seem to often change or lapse with new school leadership.

Many staff value the opportunity to have a performance appraisal. But some support staff report that reviews are started but not completed (“don’t get to the ‘face-to-face stage’”) or that they involve a “five minute chat” or that they are a “tick-box” affair, or that they are done on paper and never discussed. Some support staff do not value appraisals done without the appraiser ever having observed them at their job.

Of the principals surveyed, 58.5% said that support staff always have appraisals, others said appraisals were often conducted (28.3%), and a lesser number said that they were seldom conducted (13.2%).

Of the principals, 28.3% said that development plans were “always” in place for support staff; 39.4% said that they were “often” in place, 23.2% said “seldom” and seven per cent said “never.” Principals offered no comment about development plans and it was not specifically included among any suggestions for the two key things that they would like to do better or more of to improve processes to help support staff better understand what is expected of them.

About half of the 75 principals who commented about appraisal systems said that all support staff are treated similarly, some emphasising that the process was aligned with that of appraisal of teachers.

According to principals’ reports, it seems that support staff who have more direct contact with teaching staff and student learning are considerably more likely to have performance appraisals than administration staff, though there were a few instances where the emphasis was the other way round.

Those staff who were in leadership roles, finance staff, staff who were permanent, or who worked full-time or close to full-time, were more likely to have appraisals.

Where appraisals do take place, it seems that most meetings also formally discuss staff development goals.

It seems likely that some support staff, particularly teacher aides, do not have any single person in the school designated formally as their manager, which is likely to lead to difficulties in conducting a performance appraisal.

Regular meetings

There seem to be few instances of regular one-on-one meetings occurring except perhaps between teachers and teacher aides. Many reported that they discussed their work and/or solved problems on an “if and when” basis or casually when the opportunity presented.

On the other hand, it does seem that team meetings with more senior staff are more frequently held, particularly among teacher aides, though it is not clear whether these are primarily information meetings or problem solving meetings. Most seem to be short, held in form time or at morning break.

While around equal proportions of staff say they do (42.3%) and don't (46.3%) have regular one-on-one meetings, comments from staff suggest that the incidence of such meetings is overstated. Positive responses often appear to reflect that the support staff have easy access to more senior people when they need to solve problems, rather than that they have regular meetings. Some staff reported no need for regular meetings because they were in such constant contact with school management.

A few support staff members said they had had no contact with any senior staff member for some considerable time.

Training and professional development

Principals said that the key reasons for training were to develop specific skills (97.8%), promote essential capability in the schools (79.1%) and to show support staff that they are valued (56.5%).

Other reasons for providing professional development were to:

- fulfil the culture or direction of the school
- align with strategic direction
- give equal opportunity to all staff
- increase staff participation.

Addressing underperformance was rarely the reason for professional development.

Principals say that priorities for training are set with reference to:

- needs of students
- changes in roles
- changes in school priorities
- needs and focus of the school
- staff needs—as result of appraisal
- expressed staff needs.

Principals report quite a wide range of opportunities for teacher aides to participate in training and there appears to be a commitment to enabling staff to attend training that is offered, particularly where it relates to knowledge of special needs, literacy/numeracy and ESOL. Teacher aides report similarly about opportunities.

Training appears to be sourced widely. Teacher aides may be included in school-wide training. There is evidence of internal training being made available to teacher aides by principals, teachers and SENCOs. RTLBs and RTLits also provide training to support staff. Some staff are provided with professional development by observing at other schools. Some staff access training delivered by ACC and Special Education. Some teacher aides access specific Teacher Aide Certificate courses at polytechnics or teacher education providers. In some cases, schools support this training financially. Others encourage teacher aides to do it but do not provide financial support.

Principals report a range of training which is provided to administrative and clerical staff. The list includes first aid, time management, financial and computer skills courses, as well as Ministry of Education courses relating to systems, and conferences. Support staff confirm this range of opportunities.

For specialist support staff, the main source of training appears to be industry training relating to the specialist positions, for example from the National Library, nursing educators, SPARC. Cluster meetings of such staff also seem to be a feature of the professional development made available. Some staff were also undertaking relevant university papers.

Of support staff, 22.4% have been involved in whole-of-school professional development in the last year. Some appreciated it, while some said it was irrelevant to their jobs. Some chose not to go because it was unpaid or at an inconvenient time. Rather more commented that, for professional development, whole-of-school tends to mean 'whole of teaching staff'. Some really regretted the loss of opportunity to learn, while others specifically commented on the act of exclusion, as they saw it.

Despite this plethora of training which is cited by principals and support staff, significant numbers of support staff report that they have had no professional development opportunities in the last year provided by the school. A small number indicated that they had arranged their own professional development, partially or fully in their own time and at their own expense.

Some support staff welcome job rotation and job extension as ways of continuing to develop new skills.

It is clear that schools do try to make training and professional development available to support staff. In some schools, each staff member seems to be entitled to a specific level of professional development, selected by the staff themselves. The professional development seems to be valued by support staff.

On the whole, however, the survey results give the impression that participation in professional development is patchy, and not attached to considered development plans. Many support staff mentioned the lack of professional development as a disappointing aspect of a job they want to do well.

Principals rated training for support staff as high among those developments which would most maximize the benefit they gain from their support staff. “Increased training for support staff in carrying out their regular duties” was rated as “likely to be of real value” by 61.8% of principals and “likely to be of some value” by 31.5%. “More educational opportunities for support staff” was rated at 40.2% (“real value”) and 37.9% (“some value”).

Communication to support staff

Of support staff respondents, 23.7% said that they thought their schools “definitely did a good job” in keeping them informed and up to date about things that are happening in the school. A further 52.9% were mostly satisfied. Another 19.2% did not think the school was doing a particularly good job of keeping them informed and four per cent said they definitely did not think the school did a good job.

There is a mixed picture from principal respondents about communication with support staff. The fact that support staff are often part-timers was frequently given as a reason for them not being involved in information meetings, either because they were said to have other commitments at the hours when meetings are held or because the school does not pay time taken to attend such meetings. Many support staff who were not particularly satisfied with the level of communications ascribed it to the fact that they were part-time, and either not available for meetings or not paid to attend them.

Support staff and principals themselves identified a wide range of systems and practices that are in place that keep them informed. These practices include emails, bulletins, newsletters, daily verbal notices and staff meetings, distribution of minutes from meetings, and noticeboards. Some of these methods are not practical for all support staff, for example those without computers have less access to emailed information. Support staff value team meetings. In smaller schools, communication is often done at a personal level.

Some support staff say themselves that support staff need to take responsibility for being informed in the absence of good systems. Some support staff go out of their way to get information. For example, some support staff will attend staff meetings in unpaid time rather than go without information. Others say that they find they have to be independent in seeking out information, but find it worthwhile to do so.

Some support staff were quite critical of the lack of communication or the selective nature of communication and ascribe it to a poor attitude to support staff. Others simply think they get overlooked. In both cases, support staff noted that there are risks to the reputation of the school in poor communication to support staff. For example one administrative staff person rang a parent to find out why their child was not at school, only to find that the student had been suspended. Other staff commented that they frequently do not know of events happening in the school resulting in their time and effort being wasted.

A minority of support staff talk about getting information through ‘Chinese whispers’ or second and third hand. A few say that students are their main source of information and a few say that they learn most about what is happening in the school they work in by the information their children bring home from the school.

Support staff clearly value being informed about what is happening in the school, partly because it can be important to the success of roles they play, partly because it facilitates relationships with colleagues and visitors. They see having systems established so that they can be informed, even if they can not attend meetings, as a sign of being valued as part of the whole school system. Not receiving important information is a sign of “being forgotten”.

Involvement in planning

The majority of support staff (61.5%) said that they were hardly involved at all or never involved when school leaders and teaching staff do planning for the year or term ahead.

A further 32.2% said they were often involved in planning in areas relevant to their role. And 3.5% said they were involved in all school-wide staff planning.

The picture given by school leaders and by support staff themselves about planning is consistent.

Those staff who are most likely to be involved in school-wide planning are executive support staff. Some staff may be asked to contribute expertise or information to planning processes, for example supplying budget figures, but are not part of direction setting.

Other support staff tend to be involved in planning related to their particular jobs or the departments in which they work, for example programmes for individual students, sports events, purchasing of resources.

As with the issue of communications, the fact that support staff are often part-timers was frequently given as a reason by principals for support staff not being involved in planning discussions. Some support staff reported being invited to be involved in planning, but are either unable to because of the timing or choose not to because their attendance would be unpaid.

There were indications that some support staff wish to be more involved in planning at all levels, whether in relation to individual students, classrooms, departments or school-wide planning. Some reported that they “pushed their way” into planning, some said they get annoyed at the fact that planning about their use is done without consultation, some resent being observers only. Some expressly said that they considered they had contributions to make that the school was missing out on, while a good number indicated that their lack of involvement was evidence of a “them and us” culture in the school.

Helping support staff to understand what is expected of them

The most common response of principals to the question of how to better help staff understand what is expected of them was that they would like to be able to provide more training and professional development opportunities. The need for buddying and mentoring by someone in the school or someone from a neighbouring school was also mentioned.

A number also mentioned the need for better appraisal systems based on solid job descriptions.

Principals also tended to think that staff would have a better appreciation of expectations of them if they were more involved in school planning and staff meetings and if they met more regularly with senior staff.

Better induction was also mentioned by a few.

Support staff provided indications of measure that would assist them to better understand what was expected of them; they are:

- more information about school goals and focus
- better induction and initial training
- relevant job descriptions and greater clarity of role
- more feedback and appraisals
- meetings for better communication
- more timely planning by teachers and communication so that support staff can be prepared
- more collaboration and consultation and more involvement in decisions, based on a trusting relationship
- more information about children they are dealing with
- better professional development.

They also say that attention to some other matters would help them be more productive, like:

- better working spaces and better equipment
- better working arrangements with teachers
- more knowledge about what is happening in the school.

Perceptions of support staff contribution to school outcomes

Principals were asked:

- whether they considered that support staff were currently being used in the best ways for helping teaching and leadership staff achieve optimal learning outcomes
- what are the schools' main challenges in ensuring the effective use of support staff, and
- whether their schools were currently taking any steps to change the ways support staff were being used.

Support staff were asked:

- how they saw their roles contributing to student learning
- how they could be used better and
- what changes they are experiencing.

Support staff report their perceptions of their contribution as follows:

- Of support staff respondents, 61.2% see that their job “definitely helps” the school achieve good learning outcomes for students.
- Another 23.8% say they think they help “quite a lot” or “a little bit”.
- However, 12.3% say their role is for a different purpose and does not really help with student achievement.
- A further 2.6% said they did not think about their role in that way.

Forty-one per cent of all support staff respondents are those who might be expected to see a strong connection (that is, they are teacher aides, or have student and whānau support roles). Thus at least 20% of support staff who are perhaps not so closely connected to students (administrative staff and specialist support staff) also recognise that they definitely help with the achievement of good student outcomes. However, the great majority of the group who said their role was for a different purpose or who were not sure whether they contributed to learning outcomes were administrative and executive staff.

Comments indicate that teacher aides and those who are involved with student issues and welfare generally find it easy to relate their roles to educational outcomes, while administrative support staff appear to find it more difficult to connect their roles with learning outcomes.

Examples of answers received about how they contribute illustrate a wide range of understandings about the interconnectedness of parts of the schools' operations:

- “I definitely help because ‘nurture, inspire and empower’ is at the core of everything, that everybody at our school does.” (principal's personal assistant)
- “The position does not really help because it is involved with administration not learning situations.” (principal's personal assistant)

- “I don’t honestly know how the work that I do makes a difference. How is it measured?” (specialist support worker)
- “I don’t know. I don’t think I am thought of in that way.” (administration assistant)
- “Student outcomes are the focus of every decision made.” (business manager)
- “Mainly administration but I would like to think I facilitate learning.” (administration assistant)
- “Children know when they see me they have to use manners and talk in a respectful way.” (school secretary)
- “Through what we do daily we reinforce the school values for students.” (school secretary)

Many recognised that they made contributions directly to the learning of individual students and groups of students. People in teacher aide positions were the most likely to recognise that they also contributed indirectly through their roles allowing teachers to concentrate on teaching and learning. It was less common for administrative staff to indicate a recognition that their roles allowed the principal and teachers to focus more strongly on teaching and learning. One administrative assistant says, “Sometimes I wonder if payroll is meant to be part of my job. I think it should be the principal’s job.” On the other hand, another administration worker says her role is “relieving the principal to enable her to focus on achieving good outcomes for our students”. Another administrative assistant says: “I help in the sense that doing my job efficiently helps the teachers to concentrate on their jobs.”

Some principals appeared not to connect what their administrative staff did with student learning even indirectly, suggesting that they see administration functions and teaching/learning activities as two quite separate aspects of the school operations rather than as having an interdependent role in achieving the school’s purpose.

Support staff were also asked whether they thought better use could be made of them, and what changes their schools were currently making in what support staff did and how they did it.

There was 49.3% of support staff who did not think they could be used more effectively because “things were OK as they are”, and 14.6% said learning outcomes were not very relevant to their roles.

There was 65.7% of principals who considered that teacher aides are used in the best ways “to a large extent”, 33.3% said “to a moderate extent.” For support staff other than teacher aides, the parallel figures were 57.1% and 35.7% respectively.

In contrast to the 48.9% of support staff who thought that they were being well used, 29.4% thought they could contribute better to learning outcomes. The majority of these were teacher aides. Most respondents in this group considered that it was in the way that teacher aides and teachers worked together where gains could be made in their effectiveness. “How much I help is entirely up to how individual teachers wish to use their teacher aide time. I have a couple of classes where students are most definitely helped but the majority of my time is merely a babysitting role.”

Teacher aides particularly noted that a lack of forward planning and lack of involvement of the teacher aides in planning hampered their effectiveness. Support staff frequently also said that more involvement in things at a planning stage would help them contribute better.

Some teacher aides noted that they could be much more effective if they had preparation time so that they could contribute better in the classroom. Alternatively, some support staff said that they did not see it as their role to prepare resources (though they frequently did so to provide appropriate assistance to a student or students) but that they should be available through the school or the individual teacher.

Some staff also wanted more feedback as a way of sharpening their contribution. A number of support staff also thought that they had additional skills and knowledge in curriculum areas and in organising that were not recognised and utilised.

Training and professional development were also said to be needed for making a better contribution.

A number of library staff said they could contribute better to student achievement if the library was accorded more importance in the schools and teachers worked more closely with the library staff so that resources were available to support learning in the classroom.

When principals commented on the reasons why they might not say that support staff contribute “to a large extent”, there are three trends in their comments.

One trend, rather than to comment about the effective use of the support staff they do have, is to comment that the hours they can afford are inadequate and account for the shortfall in potential contribution of support staff.

Another but less common comment is about the difficulty of providing professional development to teacher aides because of funding and time constraints and because of teacher aide reluctance to involve themselves or to change what they do or how they do it.

A rather more common response from principals is that some teacher aides are most comfortable with, and/or are given by teachers, the role of child minder, and that in some instances there is an absence of an effective relationship or arrangements between teachers and the aides in their classrooms. Thus they mirrored the concern noted by many teacher aides themselves.

In their responses to a number of questions, principals indicated that changes have been made, are being made or are being planned that will allow a more effective contribution to be made by teacher aides, like:

- measuring the difference that teacher aides make to ensure that the investment does make a difference
- regular reviewing of the allocation of teacher aides to ensure their most effective use
- better targeting of teacher aides and the matching of individual’s strengths to students, programmes, curriculum area or classrooms where the greatest difference can be made

- clearly defining the role of the teacher and teacher aides and making sure that it is understood and actioned
- using teacher aides to support the whole class rather than give them hard to teach individuals or groups
- support staff having specific tasks and clear guidelines focused on student development
- ensuring that teachers are well organised and that programmes are planned with support staff in mind
- promoting inclusive classroom environments where teacher aides have the opportunity to reflect on and discuss programmes with teachers and management
- empowering them by encouraging support staff to suggest ways they can be better used
- using the appraisal system to ascertain development needs
- teacher aides undertaking more specific professional development, including ICT, so that they can support learning strategies.

Many principals reflected that a well functioning administrative group allowed principals and other senior staff to focus more effectively on their pedagogical leadership role. Principals commented on administrative staff who did not have a positive attitude to change, as they did with teacher aides. There was some reference to the need to restructure and to employ staff with higher competency levels to relieve principals of administrative work, but also some reluctance to make unwelcome change.

Principals also mentioned changes to increase effectiveness such as:

- trying to increase the staff's ability to initiate independently
- targeted professional development and
- balancing workloads.

On the whole, however, despite appearing to suggest that they were less satisfied with the contribution of administrative staff over all than they were with teacher aides, there was less indication from principals' comments about the nature of their concerns and what is being done or is planned to address them.

When support staff were asked about the nature of change in support staff roles, most of them responded about changes to their specific role (for example, change of hours) and did not talk about change in terms of any bigger picture. Sometimes they said they had no idea why the change was being made. Their responses suggested that a lot of small scale changes are happening fairly constantly.

Quite a number of support staff mentioned changes that were occurring in the jobs that relate to increased use of IT and changes to IT business systems.

Other staff clearly understood that the school was making changes to increase efficient and effective use of resources. “Each person’s role in the office is being more defined to reduce a crossover of tasks and double-up.” These changes sometimes involved creating new roles (for example, a bursar role) and redistributing others.

A number of staff reported that they were being asked to take on additional or expanded tasks, for a variety of reasons, for example more job satisfaction, relieving the principal, efficiency.

There were some instances of non-teaching roles of teachers being scaled back and taken over by expanding the roles of support staff. There were also some instances of more rigorous processes being adopted to decide on the allocation of teacher aides across the school.

Issues and challenges for schools

Principals were given a number of opportunities to talk about challenges in the employment and management of support staff.

Funding

School principals frequently said they would have more support staff in their schools if they could afford them. Principals regretted that they were constrained by budgets both in the numbers of support staff they could have, and in the way they dealt with support staff. For example, some felt unable to pay people what they were worth, and were not able to pay them to attend meetings or to get professional development. Some felt constrained in what they could ask support staff to do by the remuneration they could afford to offer.

Demands on leader time

Principals also mentioned time as a major challenge. Many recognised that there was a need for effective systems and procedures to keep support staff effort on track and that school leaders should spend time with support staff, but that lack of time prevented this from occurring as well as it might.

Ability to recruit

Most principals did not have difficulty recruiting or were “blessed” with a very stable support staff group. Some consider they have been lucky and wonder if their luck will last.

A few principals said that recruitment of quality staff (“high quality work ethic”) was made more difficult by the pay levels and the insecurity of tenure. Remoteness and isolation was also noted as an issue by one.

A few principals mentioned specific roles or specific situations in which recruitment was difficult.

These were:

- high special needs teacher aides
- teacher aides for boys with behaviour needs
- Māori speaking support staff in a remote area.

Retention and turnover

Principals were asked about the main challenges they faced in retaining support staff. The challenges noted included:

- conditions: perceived instability of positions and hourly rate of pay leading to staff moving to more stable or full-time employment
- remoteness and travel time means the job becomes unattractive
- burnout of teacher aides with challenging children
- job provides some people with increased skills and confidence which enables them to move to a more attractive position
- by the nature of the jobs, they attract people who have other priorities that come into conflict with staying in the job.

In answer to the question, “What do you consider to be the main challenges you face in retaining support staff?” 24 out of the 90 principals who responded said that they had no difficulties with retaining support staff.

It was also noted that some staff can not be retained because of the disappearance of funding through roll fluctuations and changes in ORRS entitlements.

Principals noted a number of practices which they believe assist with retaining support staff, like:

- the need to value the staff and show it
- the need to balance their workloads for relief.

Inclusion and valuing of support staff

The fact that the jobs were often part-time presented challenges to principals. It made it more difficult to involve support staff in meetings, match them with professional development opportunities and provide opportunities for teachers and support staff to plan and review together effectively. Matching support staff hours with school needs was described as something of a juggling act.

Ensuring that the positions and job holders were valued within the school was another theme coming from principals. Specifically they referred often to difficulties in the teacher and teacher aide relationships.

Change management

Principals also talked about the difficulty of effecting change with support staff. Some support staff, they reported, are set in their ways, are task focused rather than looking at the bigger picture, do not use their initiative, and do not welcome change or make it easy to achieve change. In particular, principals mentioned teacher aides who do not have an appropriate understanding of what their roles should be and are reluctant to comply with directions about what that role should be.

Professional development

The survey did not provide principals a specific opportunity to comment on the difficulties of providing adequate professional development for their support staff. There were, however, some brief comments about a shortfall in funding, and in the difficulties of accessing timely and targeted professional development.

Issues and challenges for support staff

The view of principals

Principals were asked what they considered to be the greatest challenges that support staff typically face in their roles. The word ‘challenge’ was broadly interpreted as both ‘issues’ that are important to support staff, and the most difficult aspects of the job and those things that get in the way of staff doing the job well.

Many principals consider that it is an issue for support staff that their pay rates are low and that their positions are often insecure. Some principals also fear that support staff do not feel valued sufficiently by teaching staff and/or that there is insufficient acknowledgement by teaching staff of the contribution support staff make. They also suspect that there is a danger that support staff do not feel part of the bigger team.

According to principals, support staff often do not get respect from teaching staff, in that they fail to take them into account in their planning, both in terms of teacher aide time in the classroom and in terms of the untimely demands put on office staff for administrative support.

Principals see managing relationships as a major challenge for support staff. For teacher aides, this means managing relationships with teachers, students and sometimes with parents. Principals see a particular challenge in relationships with teachers, particularly when teacher aides are working with

a number of teachers who may have different understandings of the teacher/teacher aide roles. Some teachers do not use teacher aides effectively and this creates a challenging situation for an aide. It is also a challenge for teacher aides not to have enough shared time with teachers to plan and review student progress.

There was some comment that teacher aides may find it a challenge to accept their role in the classroom, for example to accept that they are teacher aides and not student aides.

Principals acknowledge the challenge that some student behaviour presents to teacher aides as well as to administrative staff.

For administrative staff, principals acknowledge the wide range of student, parent and community relationships they manage daily. Principals also note these staff tend to be constantly interrupted and are prevented from getting work finished in an efficient way.

Principals also see the challenge support staff face in managing their workloads and in recognising that they can not do everything they see needs doing within the hours they are paid to work. There was no comment from principals about the challenge involved in working additional unpaid hours which staff frequently identified as a problem.

Being in the school's information loop was also seen as a challenge for support staff, who often have to seek out information independently because they miss out on other opportunities for getting appropriate information.

Principals sometimes found support staff are challenged in accepting the busy-ness of a school and to accept that the environment is a changing one on a day-to-day basis. Some principals noted that staff who have been in a school for many years find it a challenge to accept that things need to be done in different ways.

Principals also suggest that having clear job descriptions and there being mutual clarity of expectations is important for meeting some of the workload challenges support staff face. Good informal and formal feedback and appraisal systems were seen to be important. Having an approachable and supportive manager who is open to acting on support staff recommendations was also described as important.

The view of support staff

Many staff said there were no big challenges in their jobs and a few said they wished there were more!

Administrative staff, in particular, but not exclusively, talked about work load pressures. (Only one respondent said there was a problem with what to do "in quiet times".) They often expressed frustration that work could not be completed or was not done to high standards. This situation was said to be exacerbated by other staff making unreasonable, unpredictable and untimely demands, often as a result of their own poor organisation.

Support staff confirmed the principals' perceptions of the relationships with teachers being an issue at times. It was felt that there was a lack of understanding among other staff of the pressures on support staff. There were several instances of support staff saying that if teachers understood what support staff did, they might be more inclined to adjust their behaviours towards support staff and to comply with policies and procedures, getting information to support staff in on time and accurately. As has been previously mentioned, many teacher aides (and librarians) are frustrated by the lack of communication with teachers about their classroom plans, and their lack of involvement in forward planning of classroom activities.

Support staff also said that it was a challenge to be productive when there are so many interruptions. Some saw that to be in the nature of the work, but some suggested that there must be means of making it possible for there to be uninterrupted time and a quiet place to get work done properly.

Many teacher aides face challenges with their interactions with students. Their comments range from students who do not act with respect towards support staff and teachers, students with behaviour challenges and students who have needs which the teacher aides do not feel equipped physically or pedagogically to deal with. Teacher aides say that the intensity of working with a student with special needs is often hard to manage.

Teacher aides often said they were frustrated at the lack of readily available resources for dealing with students with different learning needs and the lack of time to prepare resources. Others said that their own lack of knowledge of curriculum areas was also a concern to them.

Many support staff are frustrated by what little they can achieve in the hours available to them. They see so much else that they could do to assist teachers, students and the school generally. Some support staff consider that they do not get enough direction and would like to get more feedback about whether they are making a difference to students.

The other major challenges that support staff have relate to pay, status and school cultures. By no means all support staff express these issues. Many feel that they are in wonderfully supportive environments where they are valued and respected.

Many support staff commented that they consider they are underpaid for what they contribute and, for many, the insecurity of their hours and ongoing employment is an issue. It concerns them that when the budget gets tight, it often seems to them that it is support staff that are considered the dispensable item. When they also feel that they do not have a voice in the school, that they are left out of communications and that they are not consulted about decisions that concern them, then they tend to consider that they are undervalued by management.

Outsourcing and sharing

Of the school principals surveyed, 51.7% said they had outsourced support functions over the last year. The functions they outsourced were almost exclusively aspects of financial management and information technology:

- IT—systems, troubleshooting/technical support, network management, infrastructure, audit.
- Financial services including preparation of annual and financial reports.

There is little indication of schools sharing in outsourced arrangements. Two principals indicated that they did so with respect to accessing IT technicians.

There were instances where the same person employed by one school was also employed by another in the same capacity but it was not a shared arrangement.

Appendix 4a

Support Staff Workforce Strategy

Survey of principals

Support staff make up a large part of the workforce in New Zealand schools. They play an essential part in the education and well-being of students of all ages.

But although they play such an important role, we do not have a clear picture of the nature and extent of the contribution that support staff make. For this reason, the Ministry, NZEI Te Riu Roa and NZSTA are undertaking this survey to gather information which can be used to build on the strengths of the support staff workforce, and better assist schools to achieve their objectives.

For the purposes of this project it is important to note that certain categories of support staff are not being included. Details of who are included, and who are not, are given in 2 below.

The key questions the project is looking at are:

1. How can schools best use their support staff to support leadership and teaching staff to achieve optimal learning outcomes for students?
2. How do schools integrate support staff into the overall plans or vision for their school?

We would greatly appreciate your contribution to the project. We would like to get views from as wide a range of principals in the primary and secondary sectors as possible. This will help us to have better information about how schools use their support staff and will provide the basis for helpful feedback to schools.

For a more comprehensive picture of the support staff workforce in New Zealand schools and the contribution that they make, we will also be surveying a range of support staff themselves in participating schools early in Term 4.

Completing the questionnaire

Some questions simply require you to tick the most appropriate option(s) from your point of view, while other questions ask you to write in a comment.

We anticipate that the survey will take around 15–20 minutes to complete. You may respond to the survey by completing this questionnaire and returning it (postage free) to:

FREEPOST Authority No.
155998
Research Division
Ministry of Education
PO Box 1666
Thorndon
Wellington 6140

Alternatively, you may wish to answer online. If so, please go to:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/PX3S299> to link to the survey form.

Return date

Please return the completed questionnaire or online form on or before **Wednesday, 20 October 2010**. At the end of this project, we will send a summary of results to all participating schools.

Confidentiality

Any information you provide is strictly confidential. No individuals or schools will be identified in any way when the results of this research are reported.

Survey of principals

Q.1 Please enter your school code number and/or school name in the space provided.
(If you are not sure of the number, you will find it stated in the email/letter you were sent to tell you about this survey.)

School no:

and/or school name: _____

Please note that we are only asking for school code numbers/names so that we can:

- a) consider overall results by school size and type
- b) ensure that we don't send out reminders to those who have already completed the survey.

Support staff in your school

Q.2 Currently, how many support (that is, non-teaching) staff does your school have on the staff payroll in each of the following broad categories?

Important note: Exclude anyone contracted for one-off or occasional, specific services (that is, who are not on regular staff payroll), staff responsible for the care of students in school boarding establishments, and also school caretakers and groundskeepers.

Support staff role/category	People currently in this role (include full-time, part-time, and casual staff)	
	No. of people (Headcount)	FTEs
Administrative/executive staff		
Teacher aides with a focus on students with assessed special education needs		
Teacher aides with a focus on teacher or classroom support		
Specialist support staff (e.g. laboratory technician, IT specialist, librarian)		
Student and whānau support staff (e.g. nurse, community liaison)		
Other support staff (please indicate roles): _____ _____		

School planning and communication

Q.3 How well, in broad terms, do each of the following statements describe the situation in your school in relation to support staff? (Please tick (✓) one box in each line.)

	To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Does not
We think about how we allocate support staff when we do school-wide planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support staff receive school-wide communications along with other staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support staff are involved in school-wide professional development along with other staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q.4 Are there some types of support staff who are more—or less—involved than others in school planning and information meetings? Who are they (that is, role types), and why is this the case?

Support staff most involved and reasons for this:

Support staff less involved and reasons for this:

Support staff contribution to achievement of the school's learning objectives

Teacher aides

Q.5 In general, do you consider that teacher aides in your school are currently being used in the best ways for helping teaching and leadership staff achieve optimal learning outcomes for students? (Please tick (✓) one box.)

To a large extent To a moderate extent To a small extent Not sure

Please give reasons for your answer:

Q.6 Is your school currently taking any steps to change the ways in which it uses teacher aides?

Yes No Other (please specify):

Q.7 If you answered *Yes* to Q.6, what main changes is your school looking to achieve and why? (Please specify if some teacher aide roles are affected more than others.)

Support staff other than teacher aides

Q.8 In general, do you consider that support staff (excluding teacher aides) in your school are currently being used in the best ways for helping teaching and leadership staff achieve optimal learning outcomes for students? (Please tick (✓) one box.)

To a large extent To a moderate extent To a small extent Not sure

Please give reasons for your answer:

Q.9 Is your school currently taking any steps to change the ways in which it uses support staff (excluding teacher aides)?

Yes No Other (please specify):

Q.10 If you answered *Yes* to Q.9, what main changes is your school looking to achieve and why?
(Please specify types of support roles affected.)

All support staff

Q.11 What are your main challenges in ensuring that support staff roles overall best help leadership and teaching staff achieve the highest possible educational outcomes for students? (When identifying any challenges, please indicate whether they are more relevant to particular groups of support staff than others.)

Recruitment of support staff

Q.12 Does your board of trustee's employment policy include specific statements for support staff (that is, rather than including them in more general statements about school staff overall)?

Yes No Other answer (please specify):

Q.13 When recruiting support staff, how often does your school do this in each of the following ways? (Please tick (✓) one box in each line.)

Recruitment method	Staff are recruited in this way...			
	...always/ nearly always	...sometimes	...seldom	...never
Support staff already in the school are invited to apply	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School newsletter invites applications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Position is offered to a volunteer at the school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The position is advertised in a local newspaper or online	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A recruitment agency is used to identify suitable applicants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other means (please specify): _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q.14 Do the ways in which you recruit support staff tend to differ for different support staff roles? If yes, please comment where differences mainly occur and for which roles.

Q.15 Does your school have a preferred minimum educational qualification for teacher aides?

- Yes (please specify what this is): _____
- No
- Other answer (please specify): _____

Q.16 Does your school have a preferred minimum educational qualification for administrative support staff?

- Yes (please specify what this is): _____
- No
- Other answer (please specify): _____

Q.17 On the whole, are you able to recruit appropriate people for your support staff positions? (In your answer, please identify whether this is easier for some groups of support staff than others.)

Q.18 What do you consider to be the main challenges you face in retaining support staff? (Do any of these challenges apply to some groups of support staff more than others?)

Expectations/performance reviews

Q.19 Thinking about how support staff know what is expected of them, to what extent do each of the following processes apply in your school? (Please tick (✓) one box in each line.)

Process by which support staff learn what is expected of them	Always	Often	Seldom	Never	Not Sure
They have an up-to-date job description	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
They are provided with induction/training when they start	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development plans are in place for them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
They have regular meetings with more senior staff to receive feedback and support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
They participate in regular appraisals/performance reviews	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q.20 Are the processes listed in Q.19 more likely to occur for some support staff roles than others? (In your answer please specify relevant support staff roles.)

Q.21 What two key things would you do (or like to do) if you were trying to improve processes to help support staff better understand what is expected of them?

Support staff training and support

Q.22 In the last one to two years, what main opportunities have each of the following groups of support staff in your school had to develop their capability in the job? (Please give brief details about nature of opportunities—such as provision of computer training, extending finance skills, and so on.)

Teacher aides:

Administrative and executive support staff:

Specialist support (IT, librarian), and student and whānau support (for example nurse) staff:

Q.23 When training opportunities are made available for support staff in your school, in general, what are the **key reasons** for this? (Please tick (✓) one *or* two boxes in each line as appropriate.)

Reason for providing training	Primary reason	Secondary reason	This does not count as a key reason
To address underperformance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
They are provided with induction/ training when they start	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To promote essential capability throughout the school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To show support staff in the school that they are valued	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other reason 1 (please specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other reason 2 (please specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q.24 How do you prioritise training opportunities for support staff? (Please indicate, for example, if some support staff roles are more likely to receive training opportunities than others, and why this is.)

Q.25 What in your view most helps support staff understand how they contribute in the school to key educational outcomes for students? (Please answer separately for teacher aides and ‘all other’ support staff.)

Teacher aides:

Other support staff (excluding teacher aides):

Q.26 What do you consider to be the biggest challenges that support staff typically face in their roles? (Please answer separately for teacher aides and ‘all other’ support staff.)

Teacher aides:

Other support staff (excluding teacher aides):

Enabling support staff to contribute to school learning objectives

Q.27 To maximise the benefit of your support staff, which of the following would your school find most useful? (Please tick (✓) one box in each line.)

Options	Likely to be of real value	Likely to be of some value	Likely to be of little direct value	Not sure/hard to know
a. Guidelines on drawing up job specifications for support staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Guidelines for recruiting support staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Guidelines on the induction and on-the-job training of support staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Pre-service educational opportunities to equip individuals to take up support staff positions in a school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Increased availability of training to help teachers and support staff best achieve complementary working relationships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Increased availability of training to help leadership/management and support staff best achieve complementary working relationships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Increased training opportunities for support staff in carrying out their regular duties (e.g. for administration staff, so they can free up principal from certain administrative tasks)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. More educational opportunities (e.g. tertiary level courses, including online) available for support staff to help them extend their skills/experience within the role they are in	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Guidelines on management and development of support staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Increased opportunities to network with other schools on good practice in using support staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Exemplars of good practice (e.g. for how to achieve a consistent, school-wide approach to the recruitment and overseeing of support staff)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. Other (please specify): _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q.28 Of the above options, which one would you give greatest priority to in the first instance (Please just write in the relevant option letter, e.g. **b** or **f** or **l**)?

If you wish, please nominate your second priority:

Outsourced and shared support functions

Note: Please only include work carried out on an ongoing basis or with an expectation that the outside expertise will be called on regularly (that is, exclude one-off contracts for a non-recurring need).

Q.29 Over the last year, has your school outsourced work to (that is, contracted) individuals or organisations to provide non-teaching related specialist input (for example, financial, IT systems support)?

Yes No *If you answered 'No', please skip to Q.32*

Q.30 What are the areas of work you cover through outsourcing? (For example IT, including setting up databases/computer systems within the school; and financial matters):

Q.31 Do you share resource with other schools for particular outsourced roles or areas of work? If yes, for what sort of roles, and what sort of arrangements are in place?

A little bit about you

Q.32 How long have you been a principal...

at this school? _____ years

in total? _____ years

Q.33 How many years in total have you worked in the teaching profession?

- 3–5 years
- 6–10 years
- 11–15 years
- 16–20 years
- 21–25 years
- More than 26 years

Thank you very much for completing this survey. We appreciate your contribution.

We would also like to say again that any information you have offered is treated as strictly confidential and that no individuals or schools will be identified in any reporting of results.

Our aim is to develop a body of knowledge, based on a representative collection of views from the sector that will be a valuable resource for building on the contribution that support staff already provide in schools.

Appendix 4b

Support staff workforce strategy:

Survey of support staff

20 October 2010

School no:

An invitation from the Ministry of Education, NZEI Te Riu Roa and NZSTA Support Staff Workforce Strategy Working Group

Dear support staff member,

We are writing to invite you to take part in a survey about support staff in schools. Your school has been randomly selected to be part of the project and we have already approached your school's principal to complete a similar survey from a principal's perspective.

Support staff are a large and important part of the workforce in New Zealand schools. The Working Group wants to improve our understanding of the work that support staff do, and how they are supported to do their work effectively and efficiently.

We would very much appreciate your participation in this survey, as it is important to obtain responses to our questions from a representative range of support staff.

How to take part

You can either:

- complete and return the attached survey questionnaire, or
- participate online.

We estimate the questionnaire will take around 20 minutes to complete.

If you choose to complete the attached questionnaire, please return it in the freepost envelope provided to:

FREEPOST Authority No.
155998
Research Division
Ministry of Education
PO Box 1666
Thorndon
Wellington 6140

To link to the online questionnaire, please go to:
<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/KPDRZKZ>

Response date

We would be grateful if you could return your completed (paper or online) questionnaire on or before Wednesday, 10 November 2010.

Confidentiality

Any information you provide is strictly confidential. No individuals or schools will be identified in any way when the results of this research are reported.

You may have noticed that your school code number is on this questionnaire. Please note that we are only including school code numbers so that we can look at overall results by school size and type.

At the end of this project, we will be sending a summary of results to all participating schools. You will also be able to request your own copy from the Ministry's Research Division by contacting us at the address given above or by emailing us at research.surveys@minedu.govt.nz

Thank you very much.

Yours sincerely,

Maryann Nesbitt, on behalf of
The Support Staff Workforce Strategy Working Group
Ministry of Education, NZEI Te Riu Roa, NZSTA

You can find out more about the work and aims of the Support Staff Workforce Strategy by going to:

<http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/Schools/PublicationsAndResources/SupportStaffWorkforceStrategy.aspx>

<http://www.nzei.org.nz/Support+Staff/Workforce+Strategy.html>

[http://www.nzsta.org.nz/board-as-employers/employment-conditions/support-staff/support-staff-workforce-strategy-\(2\)/](http://www.nzsta.org.nz/board-as-employers/employment-conditions/support-staff/support-staff-workforce-strategy-(2)/)

And if you have any questions about this survey please don't hesitate to contact us:

Maryann Nesbitt

Project Manager—Education Workforce

Ministry of Education

Telephone: (04) 463 1584

Email: maryann.nesbitt@minedu.govt.nz

Shelley Kennedy

Senior Research Analyst—Research Division

Ministry of Education

Telephone: (04) 463 8301

Email: shelley.kennedy@minedu.govt.nz

Completing the questionnaire

Some questions simply ask you to tick the most appropriate option(s) from your point of view, while other questions ask you to write in a comment.

Some background information

The following questions (Qs. I–II) ask for information about you and the position that you currently hold. The reason for asking these questions is that we would like to get a better idea of the range of positions support staff in New Zealand schools currently hold and about the people who hold those positions.

Q.1 What position do you hold in the school?

Q.2 What are your normal paid working hours per week in this position? (Please tick (✓) one box only.)

- | | | |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Up to 5 hours | <input type="checkbox"/> 5–10 hours | <input type="checkbox"/> 11–15 hours |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 16–20 hours | <input type="checkbox"/> 21–25 hours | <input type="checkbox"/> 26–30 hours |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 31–35 hours | <input type="checkbox"/> 36 or more hours | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please explain) _____ | | |

Q.3 How often, in this position, do you work additional paid hours in a week? (Please tick (✓) one box only.)

- Often Sometimes Only very occasionally Never

Please add any comments you would like to make about your working hours:

Q.4 Which of the following best describes your work situation in the school this year?
(Please tick (✓) one box only.)

- I am in a permanent position (either full-time or part-time) *(Please skip to Q.6)*
- My position is for this year only
- I am employed on a casual, 'as required' basis
- Some other arrangement (please say what):

Q.5 If your current position is not a permanent one, do you expect to be able to carry on in the position when your current contract has expired? (Please tick (✓) one box only.)

- Yes, definitely Yes, probably Definitely not I don't know at this stage

Please add comments on your answer:

Q.6 How long have you worked in your current position in this school?

_____ years _____ months

Q.7 Have you worked in this school in a different position at some other time?

- Yes (please say what this position was): _____
- No

Q.8 Before taking up your current position, had you worked as a volunteer in the school?

- Yes (please say what was involved in your volunteer role): _____
- No

Q.9 In total, how long have you worked as a paid support staff person in any school, including your present school?

_____ years _____ months

Q.10 What is the highest level of education you have completed? (Please tick (✓) one box only.)

- University degree/postgraduate
- Vocational diploma
- Trade or national certificate course
- Bursary/NCEA level 3 secondary school qualification
- University Entrance/NCEA level 2 secondary school qualification
- School Certificate/NCEA level 1
- Completed up to the end of Year 10 (Form 4)
- Something else (please say what): _____

Q.11 Please state educational qualifications or training certificates you hold that are directly related to your current position.

Recruitment

Q.12 How did you find out about or apply for your current position?
(Please tick (✓) as many boxes as apply.)

- I applied for a position I saw advertised by the school
- I was put forward to the school by a recruitment agency
- Someone in the school suggested I apply
- I was already an employee in the school
- I was a volunteer in the school
- Some other way (please say what this was): _____

School communication and planning

Q.13 How are you kept informed and up to date about things that are happening in the school?

Q.14 In general, do you think the school does a good job of keeping you well informed and up to date about things that are happening in the school? (Please tick (✓) one box only.)

- Yes, definitely
- Yes, mostly
- Not really
- Definitely not
- Not sure

If you would like to add a comment about your answer, please do so here:

Q.15 How are you involved when school leaders and teaching staff do planning for the year/term ahead? (Please tick (✓) one box only.)

- I'm involved in all school-wide staff planning over a broad range of matters
- I'm often involved in planning but only in areas that are relevant to my role
- I'm hardly involved at all
- I'm never involved

If you would like to add a comment about your answer, please do so here:

Contribution to school goals

The next few questions are to help us learn more about how support staff think about the work they do.

Q.16 In your opinion, what are the main ways in which you personally help your school as a whole operate efficiently and effectively?

Q.17 Do you feel that the work you do in your current position helps your school—either directly or indirectly—achieve good learning outcomes for the students? (Please tick (✓) one box only.)

- Definitely helps
- Helps quite a lot
- Helps a little bit
- Doesn't really — my role is for a different purpose
- Not sure/don't know — don't really think about my work in that way

If you would like to add a comment about your answer above, please do so here:

Q.18 What is it that you do that most helps the school achieve good learning outcomes for the students?

Q.19 Do you think the school could make better use of you to help—either directly or indirectly—achieve good learning outcomes for the students? (Please tick (✓) one box only.)

- Yes
- No, things are all right the way they are
- No, because learning outcomes for students as such are not really relevant to what I do
- Not sure

If you answered 'Yes', how do you think you could be better used to help achieve good learning outcomes for students?

Q.20 Is your school currently taking any steps to change what you are asked to do in your position or how you do things? (Please tick (✓) one box only.)

- Yes
- No (skip to Q.22)
- Not sure (skip to Q.22)

If you answered 'Yes' ...

...what main changes are being looked at?

...what is the school hoping to achieve by making these changes?

Q.21 If you answered ‘Yes’ to Q.20, are you generally happy with the possible changes to your position?
(Please tick (✓) one box only.)

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Please give reasons for your answer:

Expectations, feedback, support, appraisals, professional development

Q.22 What sort of information and support did you receive when you first started in your current position to help you know about your school, how you fitted in and what you had to do?

Q.23 How helpful did you find the information and support you received when you first started in your position? (Please tick (✓) one box only.)

- Very helpful
- Quite helpful
- Not very helpful
- Not applicable — did not really receive particular support
- Other answer (please give details):

Q.24 What further information and support (if any) would you have liked to receive when you first started in your position?

Q.25 Do you have an up-to-date job description? (Please tick (✓) one box only.)

- Yes No
 Other answer (please give details): _____

Please comment on your answer:

Q.26 Who do you report to formally? (Please give position title(s), for example, DP, teacher in the class you work in.)

Q.27 Do you have (or expect to have) regular appraisals/performance reviews?
(Please tick (✓) one box only.)

- Yes No
 Other answer (please give details): _____

Please comment on your answer:

Q.28 Is it always clear who you report to on a day-to-day basis in relation to your work?
(Please tick (✓) one box only.)

Yes No

Other answer (please give details): _____

Please comment on your answer:

Q.29 Do you have regular meetings with more senior staff to discuss your work and solve problems?
(Please tick (✓) one box only.)

Yes No

Other answer (please give details): _____

Please comment on your answer:

Q.30 Do you have the opportunity, at least once a year, to formally discuss goals for your development and contribution to the school either as part of your performance appraisal or separately?
(Please tick (✓) one box only.)

Yes No

Other answer (please give details): _____

Please comment on your answer:

Q.31 Is there an opportunity for promotion/career advancement as a support staff member in your present school? (Please tick (✓) one box only.)

Yes No Not sure

Please comment on your answer:

Q.32 This year, what main opportunities have you had to develop skills in your job? (Please give brief details about the nature of any opportunities—such as provision of computer training, extending finance skills, learning particular new skills for your work with students, and so on.)

Q.33 This year, have you been involved in whole-of-school professional development? (Please tick (✓) one box only.)

Yes No
 Other answer (please give details): _____

Please comment on your answer:

Q.34 What two main things would you like your school to do to help you ...

... better understand what is expected of you?

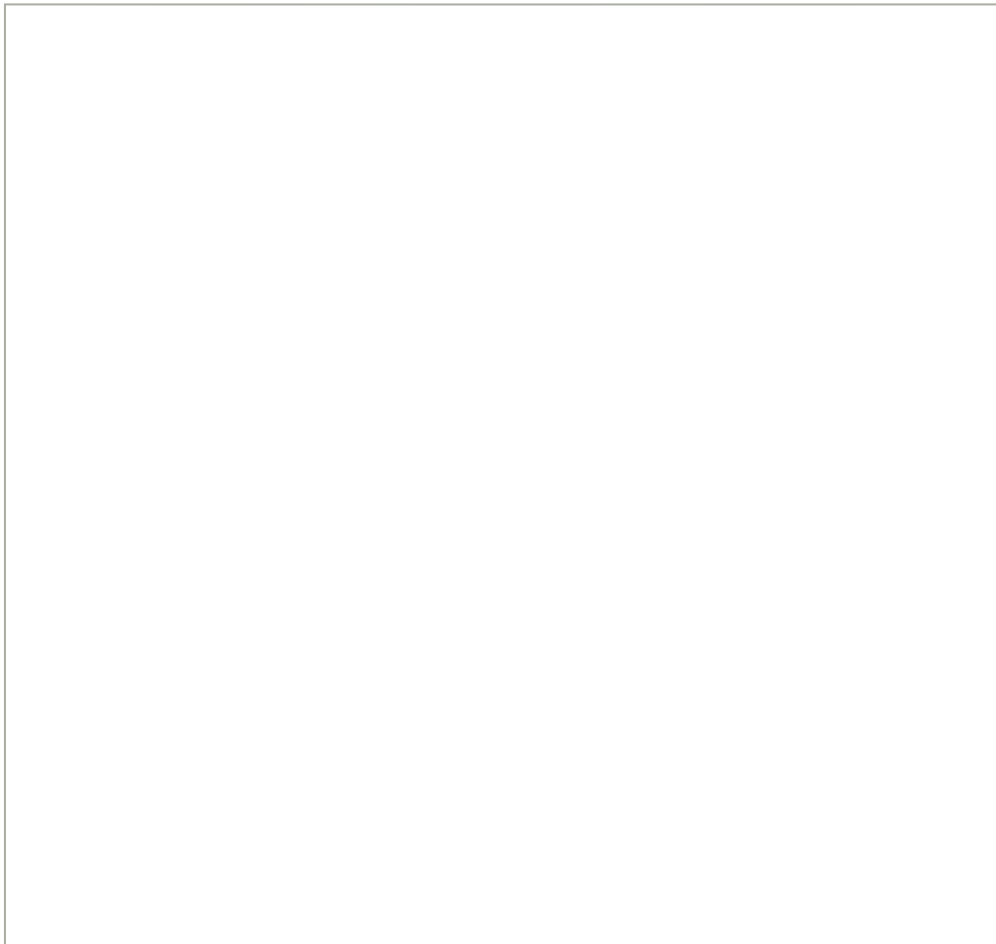
... carry out the work required by your current position?

Q.35 What are the best things about your current position?

Q.36 What are the biggest challenges that you face in your current position?

Finally...

Q.37 If there is anything else you would like to add about your work as a support staff member, please do so here.



Thank you very much for completing this survey. We appreciate your contribution.

We would also like to say again that any information you have offered is treated as strictly confidential and that no individuals or schools will be identified in any reporting of results.

Our aim is to develop a sound information base, from a representative collection of views from support staff and principals, that will be a valuable resource for building on the contribution that support staff already provide in schools.

Appendix 4c

Selection of schools for surveys

The sample of schools was chosen to be representative of the three school types (that is, primary, intermediate, secondary), and of decile and roll size.

The schools were first ordered according to school type, and then within that category, ordered by school decile and roll size—so that the achieved sample would be broadly representative of all such schools in New Zealand with those characteristics.

The list of schools (excluding special schools and kura kaupapa Māori/Māori immersion schools—which it had been agreed would not be part of the study) were then assigned a random number. The school with the lowest random number was chosen first, and then in the case of primary schools, every 10th school thereafter chosen (for a total sample of 10% of primary schools). In the case of secondary schools, every 15th school was chosen for a 15% sample.

The representativeness of responses is set out in the tables below.

Representatives of sample — by school decile

Grouped decile	Nationally	Principal responses received	Staff responses received
1 to 2	20.6%	21.1%	20.2%
3 to 8	59.7%	62.4%	61.5%
9 to 10	19.7%	16.5%	18.3%

Representativeness of sample — by school type

School type	Nationally	Principal responses received	Staff responses received
Primary	77.0%	73.4%	47.1%
Intermediate	5.2%	5.5%	9.6%
Secondary	17.8%	21.1%	43.3%

Representativeness of sample — by schools in urban/rural areas

Urban area	Nationally	Principal responses received	Staff responses received
Main urban >30,000	51.7%	56.0%	64.4%
Secondary urban 10,000 to 30,000	6.5%	6.4%	8.7%
Minor urban 1,000 to 9,999	12.0%	15.6%	18.3%
Rural < 1,000	29.8%	22.0%	8.7%

Representativeness of sample — by school roll size

School size	Nationally	Principal responses received	Staff responses received
Small (0 – 87 students)	25.3%	20.2%	6.7%
Medium (88 – 205 students)	24.9%	25.7%	20.2%
Large (206 – 401 students)	24.9%	26.6%	26.0%
Very large (402 – 3,062 students)	24.9%	27.5%	47.1%

Representativeness of sample — by region

School size	Nationally	Principal responses received	Staff responses received
Northland	5.9%	4.6%	6.7%
Auckland	19.7	22.9%	30.8%
Bay of Plenty	6.3%	2.8%	3.8%
Waikato	12.4%	7.3%	11.5%
Gisborne	2.2%	5.5%	2.9%
Hawkes Bay	5.1%	5.5%	3.8%
Manawatu-Wanganui	8.3%	10.1%	8.7%
Taranaki	3.9%	6.4%	3.8%
Wellington	9.7%	15.6%	12.5%
Tasman	1.3%	0.9%	1.0%
Marlborough	1.3%	1.8%	1.0%
Nelson	0.8%	0.0%	1.0%
Canterbury	11.8%	1.8%	1.9%
West Coast	1.5%	4.6%	3.8%
Otago	6.1%	4.6%	4.8%
Southland	3.5%	5.5%	1.9%

Appendix 5

The development of case studies

The Working Group's initial goal was to develop six case studies, including a case study of a kura. For preference, schools were to be in the wider Wellington region to minimise costs. They were to be as representative as possible of school size, type and location (city/suburb/rural) while providing appropriate illustration of key themes.

Fifteen schools were sent letters inviting their participation. The 15 schools were chosen on the basis of Education Review Office (ERO) reports that illustrated strong educational leadership and general high performance, and on the basis of informal knowledge within the Working Group of good practice with respect to the utilisation of support staff.

Eleven schools agreed to participate and our researchers (Top Drawer Consultants Limited) arranged to meet with their principals for a preliminary interview. Some principals involved other senior staff in this discussion. The initial interviews assisted some principals to clarify for themselves, for a range of reasons, that they did not think it a good time for their school to be featured in case studies about the utilisation of support staff. The interviews were designed to allow the researchers to understand how principals thought about support staff in their schools and to ascertain the likelihood that there was good systematic practice in their management and/or innovative practice in the utilisation of staff. The researchers identified five schools which would provide a good balanced set of case studies.

The original 11 schools who agreed to participate did not include a kura. Subsequently a kura was identified who was willing to participate. Two further schools who share aspects of their IT systems management agreed to participate to illustrate the option for schools to share and outsource a support function.

The researchers proceeded to visit six individual schools and the two collaborating schools. The visits, over one to two days, included:

- more in-depth discussion with principals
- focused discussion with other senior staff, including senior staff responsible for support staff
- discussions with support staff themselves, individually or in small groups
- perusing supporting documentation.

The case studies were then written up from notes made during the visit.

Once written up, the case studies were returned to the principal for comment and further discussion where appropriate.

All principals agreed to the publishing of the case studies and did not require that their schools should be anonymous.

June 2010 – June 2011



The role of the teacher's aide

One of the best ways to help your child to join in and learn is if everyone works together as a team to meet your child's needs. This includes your child's class teacher and education specialists working together with you and your family and whānau.

Your child's teacher's aide will be an important part of this team. They will work under the direction of the class teacher to support your child to make the most of every learning opportunity.

The following information is to help you understand:

- ▶ how your child's teacher's aide will work
- ▶ their relationship with the other people who support your child
- ▶ the most effective ways of working.

What teachers' aides do

Teachers' aides work in different ways, depending on the needs of

the child they are employed to support. While they're an important part of your child's team it's the teacher who remains responsible for your child's learning and behaviour. The teacher's aide will support them with this.

In general, your child's teacher's aide will:

- ▶ carry out learning activities with your child
- ▶ help your child's teacher by using strategies to manage your child's behaviour
- ▶ work with other students in the class and encourage students, including your child, to play and work together and learn

from each other – this can boost your child's learning and social skills

- ▶ take over some of the class teacher's duties so they have time to work more directly with your child.

If your child has special health or physical needs, a teacher's aide can help with medicines, feeding, toileting, moving about the school, using specialised equipment, and keeping a record of these things if this is important.

How your child's class teacher and teacher's aide work together

Your child's class teacher is responsible for the learning and behaviour of every student in their class, including your child. The class teacher will work with your child – your child won't be supported only by their teacher's aide.

The class teacher will:

- ▶ work with your child's education specialists, you, your family and whānau to develop your child's learning programme and decide how the teacher's aide will support this
- ▶ work out how your child's teacher's aide will work with your child
- ▶ decide what duties the teacher's aide can do to free them up to work with your child
- ▶ keep an eye on your child's programme and how well the teacher's aide is supporting this
- ▶ give the teacher's aide good feedback so their work is as effective as possible
- ▶ decide when and how to involve classmates in helping your child to learn and behave appropriately
- ▶ arrange the class furniture and programme so your child is

physically and socially included in all classroom activities

- ▶ get the teacher's aide to work with other students in the class right from the start, so that your child doesn't feel singled out for attention and can learn to be independent.

The class teacher will meet with your child's teacher's aide weekly. This is to go over your child's programme, look at what's working well, decide what changes might be needed and to look at whether everyone is on track to meet the goals set out in your child's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

It's important that these meetings take place to ensure the best possible use is made of your child's teacher's aide time. The meetings could be held before school, at lunchtime or straight after the children leave at the end of the day.

The way a teacher's aide works with your child

Your child's class teacher will work with their teacher's aide to:

- ▶ use specific strategies that will help your child to learn and manage their own behaviour
- ▶ help build your child's independence by knowing when to stand back and let your child try things on their own

(your child will quickly become dependent on them if they do too much for them or stay right beside them for long periods)

- ▶ praise your child in a way that encourages or rewards them when they:
 - stick with something they're working on for a bit longer
 - stick with something they're working on even if it's difficult or they're uncertain
 - learn something new
 - remember something they've learned the day before or week before
- ▶ use natural supports, such as including your child in a group of three or four others who are working together on a task where your child can make a contribution
- ▶ cut back the number of prompts they give your child over time to encourage the idea of working with less support
- ▶ help with any personal care needs or with using special equipment, such as standing frames or hoists.

It's good for a child if a different teacher's aide supports them in the playground, if it's necessary, so there's less risk of becoming too dependent on one person.



The relationship between the specialist/s and your child's teacher's aide

Specialists work with the rest of your child's team to set goals that are specific to your child, are achievable for them and can be measured to see how they are progressing. This is done at your child's Individual Education Plan (IEP) meeting.

They also provide information and support to the class teacher, including how to use the teacher's aide time, what training the teacher's aide needs and how the class teacher can meet their responsibilities.

The role of your child's school principal

The principal provides professional leadership. They take overall responsibility for making sure your child, together with all the other students, is included in the life of the school and is able to learn.

The principal, along with the class teacher and teacher's aide, plans what professional training your

child's teacher's aide will get and approves funding for this.

The principal also approves funding for the teacher's aide to be paid for the weekly meetings with the class teacher.

Who to talk to if you have any concerns about your child

The class teacher has the main responsibility for your child's progress and for discussing this with you. However, if your concerns are about the class teacher, then the best person to talk with is the principal.

Contact us

If you have any questions about the support your child receives, please ask. Start by talking with those who work most closely with your child. You can also talk with staff at your local Special Education office or call the Special Education information line on 0800 622 222.

You can get more detailed special education information on our website: www.minedu.govt.nz/Parents/YourChild/SupportForYourChild/ExtraSupport.

If you're deaf or have a hearing impairment, you can also contact Special Education through the New Zealand Relay Service on 0800 4 711 711 or go to www.nzrelay.co.nz.

Your feedback is important. By letting us know what's going well – and what we can do better – we can improve what we do to support all children with special education needs.

Contact details for my local Special Education office:

