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# ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL

*Hato Hohepa*

Monday 6 August 2018

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

## **St Joseph's School closed on Wednesday 15 August due to Strike Action**

The NZEI has advised the Board of Trustees that the principal and teachers at our school will be taking strike action on Wednesday 15 August 2018.

The Board has carefully considered the availability of teaching staff, and unfortunately, as our entire full time staff are union members, we have decided that we can't provide normal teaching services during the strike, and we will need to close the school for the day.

It is important that you make alternative arrangements for the care of your child/children on the day of the strike.

Whilst we understand this is inconvenient for parents and students alike, please be assured student safety is our main concern.

The board fully supports the teachers and their desire to improve the quality of education that your child receives, and we encourage our community to do the same.

Thank you for your understanding.

Yours sincerely,

Jason Wanden  
Chair Board of Trustees



Dear Parents and Caregivers,

During August, your child's teacher is likely to be involved in some form of industrial action. This letter is to help shed some light on why the teaching profession is moved to action, and why we need your help and support.

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

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

We call this the 40% problem:

- **40% of teachers are due to retire in the next 10 years**
- **40% less teachers are being trained!**

Up until recently, the crisis has been most serious in Auckland, but now other parts of the country are finding themselves in the same position Auckland was in only a short few years ago. The issue in our cities in particular, is compounded by the huge number of teachers who are leaving the cities to seek refuge in other parts of the country where their wage will go further.

**When we take this aspect in to account along with the 40% problem, our profession is haemorrhaging teachers.**

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

- **Significant groups of teachers are leaving in the first 5 years of teaching.** Teachers no longer stay in the profession for life. High workloads and stress, combined with comparatively low wages (with other professions), mean teaching is no longer a lifelong career choice for many.
- **There are fewer and fewer people applying for jobs.** In many cases, schools are getting NO applicants.
- **Support for children with learning and behavioural needs is under resourced.** We have increasing numbers of children arriving at school with significant learning and behavioural needs, and only the most severe of these are able to access additional resourcing, placing additional pressure and workload on teachers to manage the range of diverse needs in front of them. We are not trained social workers or counsellors, yet increasingly we are expected to perform these roles as well as teach.
- **Finding a classroom teacher is hard but, finding a reliever is even harder!** (Those wonderful and essential beings that come into your school to teach a class when the day to day teacher is sick or attending professional development).

## So what exactly are we asking for?

Our claim with the Ministry is not just about pay, but ensuring teachers work conditions are such that teaching once again becomes an attractive profession to join, and that once recruited, we are able to retain teacher in the teaching workforce.

- **More teachers** – so your kids can get more attention
- **More resources/specialist staff** to support children with additional learning needs
- **A pay jolt to salaries** for teachers to address the teacher shortage – so that your children will have a teacher in the future

It is **our students, the next generation, who are being impacted** right now by this crisis. It is only because schools are being creative that things are 'sort of' ticking along. It is a Band-Aid at best and that Band-Aid has run out of stickiness! **Teachers and leaders have had enough.**

The last time we went on strike as a profession was in the 90's. We do not like causing disruption to our students and their families but things must change.

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

Please show your support to our profession.

Thanks.

The Teachers of St Joseph's School.

