

# STAnews

The monthly magazine for school trustees throughout New Zealand



**JULY 2019**  
**ISSUE: 294**

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**NZSTA**  
GOVERNING FOR  
WELLBEING

# HELLO, FAKAALOFA ATU AND WELCOME TO THE JULY EDITION OF *STAnews*

**Kia ora tātou! Nau mai ki tēnei *STAnews* mō te marama o Hōngongoi**

This month's edition of *STAnews* revisits some familiar territory such as religion in schools and the Tomorrow's Schools review and explores some new ground like the Wellbeing Budget and what it all means for our schools. Much of our role as trustees is arranging things so that our school is in a position to deal with the difficult things while they're still easy, as Lao Tzu suggests. We hope that the articles you'll find inside this issue will help you to do that and to see the connections between the smaller practical things that we as boards spend much of our time on and the bigger more conceptual things that they represent.

This issue is due to arrive in your school around the same time as we're heading off to Dunedin for our annual conference. If you're joining us, great! If you can't make it, we'll bring you some of the highlights in our August issue.

*Do the difficult things while they are easy and do the great things while they are small.*

*A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step.*

*- Lao Tzu*

*STAnews* is NZSTA's flagship publication and is produced 10 times a year by the *STAnews* editorial team in the office of the President at NZSTA National Office. Each issue contains relevant and informative articles covering the wide range of topics that affect our member boards. Unless otherwise acknowledged, articles are written by the NZSTA President and staff.

If you have any comments about the items you find in *STAnews*, or if you have ideas for future articles, please email the editorial team at [feedback@nzsta.org.nz](mailto:feedback@nzsta.org.nz).

**CONTACT THE EDITORIAL TEAM:** [communications@nzsta.org.nz](mailto:communications@nzsta.org.nz).

**EDITOR:** Lorraine Kerr.

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New Zealand School Trustees Association, Level 8, 142 Lambton Quay, Wellington Central, Wellington 6011 / PO Box 5123, Wellington 6140. [nzsta.org.nz](http://nzsta.org.nz).

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# PRESIDENT'S PEN MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

## NAU MAI, HAERE MAI KI TE WHAKARŌPUTANGA KAITIAKI KURA O AOTEAROA

### HELLO AND WELCOME TO NZSTA!

We have a shared purpose – to lead and strengthen school governance in New Zealand – because a strong and effective governing structure creates the framework for a strong and effective school where teachers are able to focus on being the best teachers they can be and students are able to focus on becoming the best they can be.

This is expressed powerfully in our waiata,<sup>1</sup> which was composed for us by our Kuia Maata Wharehoka:

*He tipu he rea ngā tikanga  
Kia ū, kia ārahi  
ngā kura katoa o Aotearoa.  
Kia kaha, kia māia. Āki āki tonu atu:  
Hei oranga te tipuranga  
mō ngā kura katoa o Aotearoa.*

*Manaakitia ngā kura katoa, manaakitia ngā kura katoa,  
manaakitia ngā kura katoa  
o Aotearoa*

*It is a tender shoot that grows for so many reasons  
Be steadfast, be leaders  
in every school in Aotearoa*

*Be strong, be mindful. Urge and encourage this forever:  
Wellness of future generations  
in every school in Aotearoa.*

*Support every school, respect every school, take care  
of every school  
in Aotearoa*

We're looking forward to sharing the journey with you as steadfast leaders and kaitiaki of our future generations throughout their schooling journey.

## TOMORROW'S SCHOOLS REVIEW – THE NEXT 6 MONTHS WILL BE CRITICAL

Those of you who are new to your school board may have some catching up to do on the progress of the review of Tomorrow's Schools that's currently under way.

This discussion is far from over – the Taskforce's revised report is due out around the same time you receive this issue of *STAnews*. The next stage will involve further discussion, and by the end of this year, we expect the government to announce which of the Taskforce recommendations they intend to adopt.

You can find all the key documents from the Publications page of our website.<sup>2</sup>In particular, we recommend reading:

- the Taskforce's terms of reference
- the summary of the Taskforce report, published in July last year
- the executive summary of our response to the Taskforce report, published in April this year.

## PUBLIC EDUCATION IN NOVA SCOTIA "HAS NOT IMPROVED SINCE GOVERNING BOARDS WERE DISSOLVED"

We like to keep an eye on what's happening for our colleagues on school boards in other parts of the world. One of the places we've been keeping a close eye on is Canada, where each province and territory has its own system for governing schools. Canadian school boards are organised along very similar lines to the hubs that the Tomorrow's Schools Taskforce report has recommended.

And across Canada, there is political pressure from provincial governments to amalgamate those district-level school boards or to dissolve them altogether. Why? For the same reasons the Taskforce wants to amalgamate individual school boards of trustees in New Zealand: the results vary between boards, some districts do better than others ...

Last year, Nova Scotia was the first Canadian provincial government to disestablish school boards entirely, so we were interested to read this in a Canadian School Boards Association newsletter recently:

*The relationships between governing school boards and provincial governments vary across the country, and we have been hearing from members and education partners in different provinces about their experiences. Most recently we heard from Paul Wozney, President of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, and Adam Davies, a former school board member in Nova Scotia ... to share experiences in public education since school boards were dissolved. They have major concerns about transparency, access to information, and the opportunity for community input. But the short story is, public education has not improved since governing boards were dissolved.*<sup>3</sup>

- Laurie French, Canadian School Boards Association President

### CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AT NZSTA

Your organisation has been evolving rapidly over the past couple of years as we've sought to fine-tune and embed organisational changes stemming from our rapid expansion of services and the consequent creation of regional hubs, all of which has created a wealth of challenges and opportunities for the new NZSTA leadership.

For the last 12 months I have been filling the role of Acting CEO as well as President. What was supposed

to be a stopgap for a month or so has stretched to a year, and this has been one of the big challenges as we have worked through some of the loose ends that needed resolving before we were ready to make a new appointment. People have come and gone over that period, and we now have a very new and different senior leadership structure.<sup>4</sup>

We're now well through the forming and storming stages in the development of our new leadership structure and looking forward confidently to reaping the benefits of the improved consistency, quality and range of services from consolidating the innovations of the past 2 and a half years.

Our current strategic direction is seeing us develop greater integration between the various aspects of NZSTA's operational services to boards and a sharper focus on the complementary aspects of our operational and membership activities. We have a keen eye to the future in all of this, and you will see that reflected in some of the new approaches and technologies we are rolling out in our online resources and professional development this year.

### TELL US WHAT WORKS FOR YOU

In all of these endeavours, our main purpose is to meet the needs of our member boards of trustees. Please let us know at any time what is working well or not working well for you. You can provide feedback, positive or otherwise, at any time by emailing [feedback@nzsta.org.nz](mailto:feedback@nzsta.org.nz).

## PRESIDENT'S DIARY

See what Lorraine has been up to in June

4 June Taupo Nui-a-Tia College board meeting

7 June NZSTA and MOE fortnightly meeting

11 June Holidays Act Sector Working Group meeting

12 June EWSG Workshop 8

13 June Lorraine Kerr (NZSTA) and Suze Strowger (MOE) catch-up

17 June Kuratau School board meeting

18 June PB4L Sector Reference Group meeting

21 June NZSTA and MOE fortnightly meeting

22 June NZSTA board meeting

26 June Otago Regional Executive Networking Event: Oamaru

27 June Otago Regional Executive Networking Event: Dunedin

<sup>1</sup> You can find an audio file of the NZSTA waiata on our website at [www.nzsta.org.nz/assets/Our-organisation](http://www.nzsta.org.nz/assets/Our-organisation)

<sup>2</sup> [www.nzsta.org.nz/our-organisation/publications/](http://www.nzsta.org.nz/our-organisation/publications/)

<sup>3</sup> June 2019 President's Bulletin Canadian School Boards Association / L'Association canadienne des commissions/conseils scolaires [www.cdnsba.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/June-2019-Presidents-Bulletin](http://www.cdnsba.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/June-2019-Presidents-Bulletin)

<sup>4</sup> Our organisational chart (harakeke) and staff chart are both available to view at [www.nzsta.org.nz/assets/Our-organisation](http://www.nzsta.org.nz/assets/Our-organisation)



# **THE WELLBEING BUDGET AND THE TASKFORCE REPORT – WHAT ARE THE REALLY IMPORTANT CHANGES FOR EDUCATION?**

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Budget 2019 clearly showed us what the government thinks really needs fixing in education. It was quite a different focus from the Tomorrow's Schools Taskforce report, although there were some obvious overlaps such as disability and learning support (what used to be known as 'special education').

Budget 2019's priorities for education included several key areas that NZSTA and other sector groups have expressed concern about: the cost to parents of a supposedly 'free' state education, the shortfall in resources to cater to disability and learning support, workforce issues and the condition of school property.

It's noticeable that, despite the recent Tomorrow's Schools Taskforce report, school boards of trustees are not on the list of things that Budget 2019 says need fixing.

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*Actions speak louder than words, and the government's actions so far show that they are probably of the same opinion as us – that it's not boards of trustees that need fixing, it's the myriad of problems they currently deal with*

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What's been lost from our education system is the wholehearted commitment to provide what every student needs to ensure their own personal success.

#### **THE FUTURE FOR BOARDS OF TRUSTEES**

*We'd like to recognise the important work done by returning officers around the country. Thank you.*

It's clear that New Zealanders as a whole still believe in the value of school boards of trustees.

Over 13,600 candidates across the country stepped forward for election this year. Around half of the schools registered on NZSTA's elections database went to a vote for their parent trustees. Just under half filled their vacancies without needing to hold a vote. Our records show that there were more candidates than vacancies in every region around the country, from 3,400 candidates to fill 2,400 vacancies in Auckland to 450 candidates to fill 400 vacancies in Southland.

We are pleased but not surprised by the strong turnout. We know that boards of trustees do make a real and positive difference to their schools. As boards of trustees, we can't fix everything and we don't expect to be perfect (although we try to be). But we do help to make a better world for the kids in our neighbourhood

by working with the principal and staff to make sure they get the best education we can give them. Like we said, it's not perfect, but it's a lot better with us than it would be without us. Many ordinary people – like all of you – still want to be part of that.

The Tomorrow's Schools Taskforce has recommended that boards of trustees should hand over their authority over some of the most important aspects of school governance – although for some reason, they seem to think we would still be responsible for them, even if they remove our power to make that happen. We're not sure how that's supposed to work. There's been a lot of resistance to those ideas though, not only from trustees themselves but from principals' groups and teacher unions as well.

There are many other aspects of the schooling system that the Taskforce has made recommendations on as well. Some of them, in areas the Taskforce has more expertise in, are very sensible, and we hope they're followed up. These will also be debated, developed and refined over the rest of the year. We'll keep you posted on developments, so watch this space.

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*There's still a lot of water to go under the bridge before we know which of the Taskforce's proposals the government will choose to run with.*

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#### **WELLBEING IS ESSENTIAL TO EDUCATION**

Meanwhile, Budget 2019 (the Wellbeing Budget) marked a step change in the way governments prioritise and evaluate the effect of their decision making on people's lives, including education. What's changed is not just on the surface but the whole process of how we value our children, our communities and what makes a healthy society and a healthy economy.

For years – decades even – we've been seeing schools trying to hold back the tide of things that just aren't working for our students right across society. For years, it hasn't worked. For years, we've been saying that schools can't do this alone. We've got used to the idea that each year it's going to be same meat, different gravy – nothing's really going to change, it's just going to get a bit of a spruce up or a different name.

This budget is based on Treasury's Living Standards Framework, and that is something genuinely different. The big change is in how officials calculate the pros and cons of new initiatives.

*As well as the traditional 'standard of living' indicators that depended largely on where money changes hands, like*

income, spending or employment, this system includes a broader idea of what success looks like for New Zealand society,

including things like :

- civic engagement (i.e. how much ordinary citizens participate in society)
- cultural identity
- environment
- social connections
- subjective wellbeing.

These are the very things that boards of trustees, teachers and parents have been saying need to be taken into account when we measure success for our students and our schools. Having these things recognised formally in the budget process and reporting on outcomes for sectors like education is likely to have a profound impact. For example, it gives officials a framework that for the first time might assess the value that boards of trustees add to their schools rather than the \$55/\$75 per meeting that IRD specifies as the tax-free limit on expenses.

New Zealand has been underinvesting in our education system for decades. Alongside that, there's been a strong undercurrent of criticism along the lines of Albert Einstein's famous comment:

"Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted."

In other words, just because you can measure it, that doesn't make it more important than the things you can't measure.

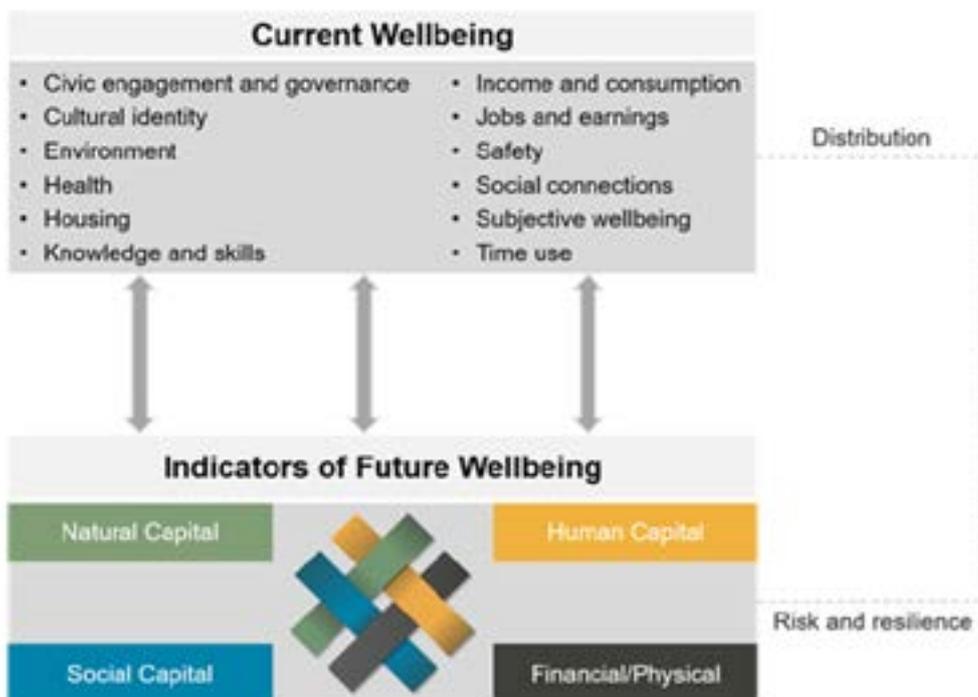
We hope and trust that, when it comes time for the government to consider the final version of the Tomorrow's Schools Taskforce report, they will be using the principles of the Living Standards framework: counting what matters, not just what's easily measured.

With both the wellbeing focus of the Living Standards Framework and the review of Tomorrow's Schools, whatever shape that finally takes, we're entering a phase of nurturing new growth and clearing away the overgrowth from previous seasons. It will take more than one or two Budget cycles, more than one or 2 years of ngā kura ātahirā.<sup>1</sup>

This is not a fairy tale, and there's no magic wand. Real transformation takes time, but we have no doubt that real transformation is already germinating all around us. So grab your gumboots and pull on your gardening gloves, because boards of trustees will be at the forefront of it.

## The LSF

The LSF defines three elements – *current wellbeing, future wellbeing, and risk and resilience* – and the diagram below explains how these elements interact with each other.



<sup>1</sup> Ātahirā = the day after tomorrow

# CONFLICTS OF INTEREST



From time to time, a board of trustees may be challenged around a decision that it has made and how it reached that decision. The most common challenge to how the board reached its decision is around not having followed a sound and fair process, and often this is around trustees who have a conflict of interest.

### WHAT IS A CONFLICT OF INTEREST?

A conflict of interest exists where a trustee's work as a board member overlaps, coincides or butts up against their other interests, so it may be perceived to interfere with their ability to operate in the public interest (the interest of the school community). In carrying out their work as part of the board, school trustees have an obligation to put the public interest ahead of their personal or private interest. This must not only be done, it must also be seen to be done.

That conflict can be actual (it clearly already exists), potential or perceived (where others could reasonably think that it exists). For school trustees, conflicts usually fall into one of two categories:

- Pecuniary interest – where there is potential for the trustee or someone close to them to gain (or lose) financial benefit.
- Some other personal interest where they have a motive around the decision to be made.

There is plenty of scope for other people to see a motive to make particular decisions in a certain way or not approach them with an open mind. When conflicts of interest also coincide with high-stakes situations such as complaints, a staff disciplinary issue or a student suspension, trustees can find themselves tip-toeing through a minefield.

### WHY DOES IT MATTER?

School boards of trustees are public authorities under the Bill of Rights Act 1990. Every person has the right to natural justice from any public authority that has the power to make a decision about their rights, obligations or interests. The key principles here are:

- freedom from bias on the part of the person making the decision
- fairness of procedure.

This means that boards must:

- ensure that no decision maker has a conflict of interest
- keep an open mind until it has heard from everyone involved
- look at all relevant information and disregard all irrelevant information.

If a trustee has been involved in any way in a matter prior to its escalation to the board, their fairness may be open to question. That means that, if they participate in the process they are seen to have a potential conflict of interest about, their involvement could open any board decision up to challenge.

This can happen all too easily. Trustees and the people

who voted for them and elected them to the board may see their role as being that of an advocate. Not so – at least not when that might prevent them from being open-minded and free from bias.

### WHAT DOES THE BOARD NEED TO DO?

It is good practice for every board of trustees to have a conflict of interest policy. An example policy can be found in the NZSTA Governance framework (policy B4) at [www.nzsta.org.nz/governance-framework-2018](http://www.nzsta.org.nz/governance-framework-2018).

It is also good practice for each board to maintain a register of potential conflicts for its members. This should be established in the first few meetings of a new board taking office. The chair should also call for declarations of conflicts at the start of each board meeting.

### WHEN SHOULD TRUSTEES BE EXCLUDED FROM MEETINGS?

Any trustee with a (potential) conflict of interest should declare it. This includes the board chair, even if it results in them not being able to preside over a meeting or part of a meeting. In this case, another trustee should take the chair while that matter is dealt with.

The Education Act 1989 (schedule 6 clause 40) is very clear and sets out a range of circumstances when parent, staff and student representatives must be excluded from board meetings.

- A trustee with a pecuniary or any other interest that could influence them must be excluded from the board meeting while the board discusses, considers, considers anything relating to or decides the matter.
- A staff representative must be excluded while the board discusses, considers, considers anything relating to or decides anything relating to their employment or a complaint against them as a member of the board's staff.
- A student representative must be excluded while the board discusses, considers or considers anything relating to them as an individual student.

In these cases there is no discretion, no judgement call is required and there are no exceptions to these requirements.

### CAN WE STILL GET OUR BUSINESS DONE?

Sometimes it is difficult to convene a quorum of non-conflicted trustees. Boards do have some options around resolving this:

#### COMMITTEES

- Ad hoc committees to deal with one-off issues or standing committees established at the start of the year or after a triennial trustee election.
- Board committees must comprise at least two members, at least one of whom must be a current trustee.

- All committees must have written terms of reference outlining their purpose, membership and delegated authority.
- All delegated members must be given their delegations in writing.
- Good practice would be for the board to maintain a current register of delegations, which is reviewed annually or as new trustees join the board and cross-referred with the board's potential conflicts of interest register.

#### **CO-OPTION**

- If all board members are conflicted, the board may have the option to co-opt someone for the purpose of forming a delegated committee. The board must ensure that this option is available to it (particularly in the case of state-integrated schools where the number of proprietor's appointees may preclude it).

#### **ENGAGING EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE**

- If all board members are conflicted and there is no capacity for co-option, the board will need to seek external assistance.
- This will be at cost to the board.

Public perception has the potential to jeopardise the work of the board. If trustees are not seen to be open-minded and without conflicts of interest, it may give rise to a perception that the school has 'closed ranks' and that the board is acting unjustly. The onus is on the board to conduct its business transparently and to be open to and welcoming of community engagement and public scrutiny of the decision-making process (except where there are matters that need to be dealt with confidentially as public-excluded business).

#### **THERE ARE TWO FINAL POINTS TO NOTE**

- If a trustee declares a conflict of interest and is excluded from decision making, the board cannot pass a resolution via electronic means. This is because a resolution that is carried electronically must be assented to by all board members.
- Any board member may access minutes of a meeting or part of a meeting from which they have been excluded. It is only participation in the decision making that they are excluded from.

If you have any further questions about conflicts of interest, please contact our Advisory and Support Centre.



# MINISTRY OF EDUCATION GUIDELINES ON RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN SCHOOLS

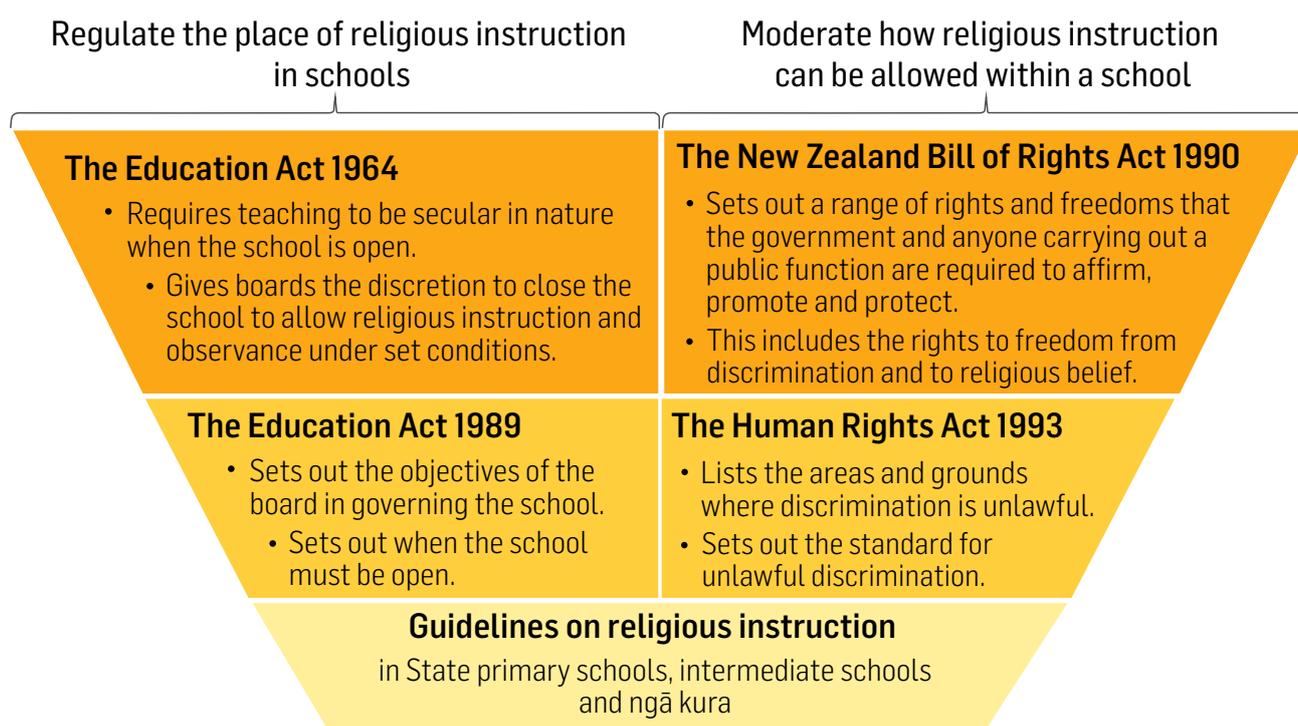
For many decades in New Zealand, all teaching at primary state schools in New Zealand has been required to be “of a secular character”. Boards have discretion to close the school to allow religious instruction and observances, yet in the 50 years since this provision came into law, New Zealand has become increasingly diverse in religious thought and belief. At the same time, boards’ responsibilities to honour the Treaty of Waitangi (Article 4) and to represent and engage with their school communities has meant increasing recognition of the place at schools for karakia and other religious-based observances. Into the mix as well has come the Human Rights Act 1993, whose prohibited grounds of discrimination include religious and ethical belief (meaning “the lack of a religious belief”).

It is not surprising that issues around religious instruction and observances have resulted in uncertainty for schools, complaints to the board and

at times serious conflict between schools and their communities. The Ministry of Education’s *Guidelines on religious instruction in state primary schools, intermediate schools and ngā kura* are now finalised. Their focus is primarily on religious instruction (not observances), but nonetheless, they provide a clear outline of the board’s responsibilities when deciding whether to permit or continue to permit some form of religious instruction at their school or kura.

The Ministry developed a careful process around the draft guidelines. This included its online consultation process last year, to which NZSTA responded on behalf of member boards. You can view and download a summary of submissions received and the finished guidelines at <http://education.govt.nz/school/running-a-school/religious-instruction-guidelines>. The guidelines offer boards much-needed certainty in this continually evolving space.

This diagram shows how the different pieces of legislation work together to shape how boards can allow religious instruction to be offered to students in state primary schools.



Source: *Guidelines on religious instruction in state primary schools, intermediate schools and ngā kura* (page 15).



# 10 STEPS TO MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

*By Dr Sven Hansen, Founder, Resilience Institute (resiliencei.com)*

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We are waking up to the suffering and cost of mental illness. The World Health Organization estimates that 1 in 4 of us will suffer from mental illness at some point in our lives.<sup>1</sup> Affecting 450 million people today, it is the leading cause of illness. The cost to business is USD \$1 trillion.

Simple mental health initiatives at work return \$4 to \$10 for every \$1 invested.

Each one of us – whether personally concerned, as a caring family member or as a colleague at work – can apply these 10 steps to secure mental wellbeing and rediscover our joy.

## 1. UNDERSTAND WHERE MENTAL ILLNESS COMES FROM

Genes, early environment, adverse events and our personal behaviours all contribute in complex ways. We have much to learn. It appears that a positive, nurturing early environment is protective even when we inherit recognised gene patterns.<sup>2</sup> Learning to deal with adversity early in life is helpful. Learning the practices of resilience is definitely protective and part of recovery. In tragic or traumatic events, it is normal to feel anxious or sad. In most cases recovery starts within 2 weeks. Extreme events can have long-term consequences including anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Destructive childhood experience, extended social media time (greater than 2 hours per day), sleep disturbance and increased temperature are thought to be causative. Heat, weather events and human conflict increase the risk of violence, anxiety, depression and PTSD.<sup>3</sup> Anxious parenting, excess sensitivity, reduced activity, limited outdoor time and isolation are correlated.<sup>4</sup>

## **2. RECOGNISE DISTRESS AS A NORMAL PART OF DEALING WITH ADVERSITY**

Every organism needs to know what is good and what is dangerous. This is how life has been so successful. In overwhelming threat, it is appropriate to withdraw, collapse or burst into tears. This is called the freeze reaction and is associated with sadness. In conflict, it can be appropriate to shout, bite or hit. This is called the fight reaction and is driven by anger. When it is possible to run away or avoid a conflict, we trigger the flight reaction driven by fear. These reactions can save our lives in acute and serious events. If repeated, such as war, regular weather events or natural disasters, we can be left with PTSD.

Our fast-paced, digital modern life assails us with small, continuous threats and has reduced the time we have to recover, sleep and reconnect with loved ones. Some experience sadness as they feel worn down, dominated, isolated or abused. This can become depression. Some experience fear under continued threat or risk. This can become anxiety. Others get angry as they flail against difficulty. This can become hostility and rage.

While freeze, fight and flight force a reaction, the feelings of sadness, fear and anger can linger. Sadness is telling us to seek safety and reconnect with love and joy. Fear is telling us to move towards safety and calm. Anger is telling us to disable the threat.

These are normal emotions designed to protect and support you.<sup>5</sup> We can learn to notice them and respond skilfully to the message. We can get stuck in these destructive emotions. Unpleasant and repeating physical, emotional and thinking experiences dominate our being. When they become inappropriate to the context and inhibit normal function, we have to consider clinical depression, anxiety disorders or hostility disorders.

## **3. KNOW THAT WE CAN RECOVER AND TREATMENT IS EFFECTIVE**

Recovery, over time, is the normal outcome. Even in the case of schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, sensible life management and treatment is effective. In the case of depression, anxiety and hostility, firm and caring support, lifestyle improvement, counselling, meditation, positivity and thinking skills can be curative. Medication should not be the default treatment.<sup>6</sup>

## **4. RECOGNISE, UNDERSTAND AND COUNTER ANXIETY**

Address through the three lenses of body, emotion and mind. The body wants to run – heart rate increases, blood flows to legs (from skin and gut), breath rate increases, adrenaline in the body, nor – adrenaline in the brain and eventually cortisol increases. We feel this through the emotion of fear (nervous, anxious, terrified or horror). The mind is caught in loops of worry about future consequences.

Understanding this allows us to move about, relax our muscles, slow our breathing and seek safe, reassuring spaces – gentle music, nature, touch and sleep help. We can watch carefully for the first signs of fear and immediately remember calm, safe and peaceful images. This counters the fear with calm. Finally, we can watch for worries, write them down and challenge them. As we get better, we can redirect our attention to the present moment.

## **5. RECOGNISE, UNDERSTAND AND COUNTER DEPRESSION**

In depression, the body wants to withdraw, collapse and be supported – posture slumps, head and eyes drop downwards, fatigue increases, tears and early waking may occur. Cortisol increases. We feel disappointed, sad, isolated and hopeless. Our thoughts are trapped in personalising blame (“everything bad always happens to me”). We ruminate on negative thinking about the past. Optimism fades.

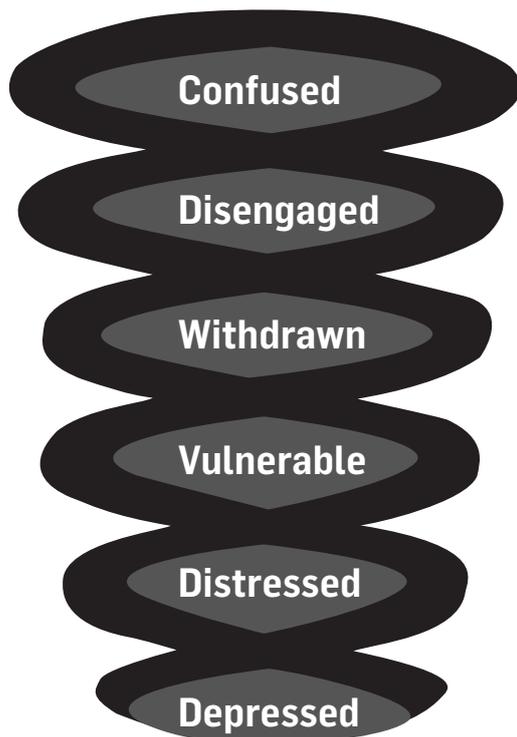
Understanding this allows us to sit up, look up and seek comfort from others. Exercise, fresh air, nature and a good sleep can help. We can acknowledge our sadness and push firmly towards happy thoughts, appreciate small things like sunshine and beauty and seek joy and a smile. We counter sadness with appreciation, gratitude and joy. Counter the negative rumination by remembering that you are not alone and there are things to appreciate, and nurture hope and resolve that you will feel better soon. Being present to the moment helps.

## **6. LEARN THE PRACTICAL STEPS OF RAPID BOUNCE**

Mastering bounce is your key to resilience – both sustaining your optimal life and growing from adversity (post-traumatic growth). Use this diagram to help you recognise how resilience fails. Learn how you experience each level. Then practise specific practical actions that you can do to reverse the downward spiral.

## **7. TAKE CARE OF YOUR BODY**

Your body and your physical wellbeing is ‘ground zero’. Thoughts and emotions have been designed to help the body deal with adversity and seek a positive state of living. Taking good care of your body is the core of a good life, prevention, resilience and recovery. It is proven to treat mental illness. Secure enough sleep at the right time. Be physically active every day. Eat well –



**SIMPLIFY - What is the one key task to attend to**

Be disciplined about defining and completing each activity. Remove distractions.

**REFRESH - Notice the mind drift and take a break**

Stretch, coffee, break, low card snack, walk about, get in sun or fresh air.

**CONNECT - Notice withdrawal and seek a safe connection**

Talk to someone, call a friend, take time for yourself.

**RENEW - Be firm about taking defined renewal steps**

Get to sleep early, long weekend with no devices, well-being initiatives, massage.

**SEEK HELP - Define and understand the symptoms**

Clear diagnosis, counselling, exercise, yoga, massage, meditation and sleep.

**GET HELP - You must define and understand your situation**

Diagnosis, counselling, positivity, reframing, exercise, sleep, support and medication.

less sugar, more vegetables and more Mediterranean. Get out in nature and sunshine most days. Stretch every morning. Slow your breathing and relax for at least 8 minutes per day.

**8. CULTIVATE POSITIVE EMOTION**

Positive emotions activate vagal tone, improve health, increase happiness and improve our thinking. Stimulating happiness (even a chopstick between your teeth) counters depression. Calm relaxation counters anxiety. Kindness and compassion counter hostility. Gratitude, appreciation, contentment, passion, joy, serenity and enthusiasm are others. Every time you find a way to take time for a positive feeling, you are more mentally fit.

**9. NOTICE AND DIRECT YOUR THOUGHTS**

Cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) has proven to be as effective as medication in depression. It can be applied to all forms of adversity. In essence, it is simple:

- Pay attention to the content of your thoughts – write them down.
- Challenge your thinking – test whether the thoughts are accurate.
- Reframe the thoughts in more constructive terms.

*For example, in depression, you may notice the thought: "Everything bad always happens to me." Counter with: "Well, not everything. Yesterday was a good day. Others have challenges too."*

*In fear, you may notice: "How will I ever meet the deadline?" Counter with: "If I don't, we will get by. If I turn my focus to what I need to do right now, we might get there. No point in worrying."*

**10. BE KIND AND CONSIDERATE TO OTHERS**

Seek joy and fulfilment by doing good things for others. Altruism (thoughtful, genuine kindness to others) helps you as much or more than those you help.

Start by being kind to yourself. Many of us are self-critical and hard on ourselves. Be gentle on yourself. Remember your goodness. Take time to enjoy and celebrate. To get started, sit quietly breathing slowly. As you inhale, bring kindness inwards. As you exhale, let your goodness radiate out.

Use your altruism to be involved in a charity, helping someone in need or choosing a job that does good things for others. Even sitting quietly and radiating out peace, love and joy to everyone you can think of has a powerful positive on every aspect of wellbeing – even the structure and function of your brain.

Contact us for further information:  
[www.resiliencei.com](http://www.resiliencei.com)  
[jeremy.kannemeyer@resiliencei.com](mailto:jeremy.kannemeyer@resiliencei.com)

<sup>1</sup> [www.who.int/en/news-room/detail/13-04-2016-investing-in-treatment-for-depression-and-anxiety-leads-to-fourfold-return](http://www.who.int/en/news-room/detail/13-04-2016-investing-in-treatment-for-depression-and-anxiety-leads-to-fourfold-return)

<sup>2</sup> Robert Sapolsky, Behave, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> David Wallace-Wells, The Uninhabitable Earth, 2019.

<sup>4</sup> Jean Twenge, i-Gen, 2017.

<sup>5</sup> Antonio Damasio, The Strange Order of Things, 2018.

<sup>6</sup> Johann Hari, Lost Connections, 2018.



# WHAT THE LAW CURRENTLY SAYS ABOUT RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION (RI) IN SCHOOLS

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Times have changed since 1964, when the law about religion in schools was drafted. Some aspects of the legislation have also changed, but the basic framework for religion in schools is still based on the provisions of the Education Act 1964. It is the only part of that Act that is still in force.

### 77 TEACHING IN STATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS MUST BE SECULAR

Teaching in every State primary school must, while the school is open, be entirely of a secular character. (Education Act 1964)

Under the Education Act 1964, all teaching at primary state schools in New Zealand (except special character schools with a religious affiliation) has to be of a secular character.

In the 1960s when the law covering religion in schools was written, being seen at church was a strong indicator of social acceptability (and employability) in middle-class New Zealand society. If someone asked you your religion, they were asking whether you were Catholic or Protestant, not whether you were Christian, Muslim or Hindu. Many state schools held daily or weekly school assemblies that included Christian hymns and prayers. Through until the 1970s, many schools issued school hymn books with the school crest on the cover and the school's most regularly used hymns and prayers printed in them, so students would be able to join in if they didn't already know the words.

In this context, the Education Act 1964 made provisions that allowed schools to close for up to an hour each week during normal school hours to allow religious instruction and observances.

### 78 RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION AND OBSERVANCES IN STATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

*(1)... if the school's board ... after consultation with the principal, so determines, any class or classes at the school, or the school as a whole, may be closed at any time or times of the school day ... exceeding in the aggregate neither 60 minutes in any week nor 20 hours in any school year ... for the purposes of religious instruction given by voluntary instructors approved by the school's board and of religious observances conducted in a manner approved by the school's board or for either of those purposes; and the school buildings may be used for those purposes or for either of them. (Education Act 1964)*

The Minister could authorise a school to offer additional religious content if he (it was always a 'he' in 1964) was satisfied that the majority of parents wished it and it would "not be to the detriment of the normal curriculum".

*78A ... in any case where the Minister is satisfied that the majority of the parents of pupils attending a school wish their children to receive religious instruction additional to that specified in the said section 78 and he is satisfied that such additional religious instruction will not be to the detriment of the normal curriculum of the school, he shall ...after consultation with the school's board, authorise the additional religious instruction up to such an amount and subject to such conditions as he thinks fit. (Education Act 1964)*

There was a presumption in 1964 that most decent law-abiding citizens would want their children to benefit from regular religious instruction and observance, but parents who did not want this for their children were able to opt out by notifying the school in writing. The legislation was silent on what those students should do while RI or religious observances such as a traditional school assembly were under way.

## SECULAR EDUCATION

Providing a secular education means that a school does not express a view about which religious or spiritual beliefs might have value.

This is not the same thing as being atheist (a belief that there are no gods) or agnostic (a belief that god might or might not exist). Being secular simply means the school's teaching has no connection with any religious or spiritual opinions – the school remains neutral territory.

It does not mean that a school needs to ban students or staff from practising their own religious or spiritual beliefs. It means that the school environment should remain completely neutral about religion or spirituality. Any person should be free to practise their own religion or spirituality – or to remain untouched by such things – so long as they do not impinge on anyone else.

### **79 Attendance at religious instruction or observances not compulsory**

*(2) No pupil enrolled at a State primary school shall be required to attend or take part in any such instruction or observances if any parent or guardian of the pupil does not wish the pupil to take part therein and makes his or her wishes known in writing to the principal of the school.*

*(3) Any parent or guardian who has given such an indication of wishes may at any time withdraw it.*  
*(Education Act 1964)*

In 1964, teachers were expected to be pillars of the community, and being a pillar of the community generally included regularly attending church and, preferably, taking an active part in church committees and services. To resolve the issue of state education remaining secular while maintaining the social protocols that regarded church attendance as an integral part of being a decent member of society, the law allowed teachers to step outside their secular teaching role for up to half an hour a week to role model to their students how a good citizen might discharge their obligations to the church. This might be taking prayers in assembly, for example, or assisting with religious instruction. The teacher was then expected to step back out of their religious role and into their secular teaching role.

### **80 Teachers may be freed from duties to take part in religious instruction or observances**

*Any teacher at a State primary school shall, if the school's board for the school district in which the school is situated so approves, at his request be freed from school duties for up to 30 minutes a week to allow him to take part in his own school in religious instruction and religious observances or either, but no person shall directly or indirectly bring any pressure to bear on a teacher to induce the teacher to take any such part, and the position of any teacher and his opportunities for appointments and for promotion shall not be adversely affected because he does not take part in religious instruction and religious observances or either.*

*(Education Act 1964)*

The provisions for religious observance and instruction were limited to state primary schools. Secondary students were old enough to have already formed a view, having been given religious instruction throughout their primary years through attendance at Sunday School and 'Bible in Schools' programmes.

### **81 Schools other than public schools not affected**

*Nothing in this Act shall affect religious instruction or religious observances in schools other than State primary schools. (Education Act 1964)*

# WELLBEING@SCHOOL TOOLKITS

The Wellbeing@School website is designed to support schools to engage with the whole school community in a process of self-review.

The website provides access to practical evidence-based tools, resources and services, a 5-step self-review process and information about how to get started.

There are two toolkits to choose from. Both of these toolkits can be used by schools to confidentially store data, access data reports, find suggestions for next-steps actions, and track changes over time.

## **Wellbeing@School Self-Review Toolkit (W@S)**

The W@S self-review tools explore how different layers of school life contribute to creating a safe and caring climate that deters bullying.

Use this toolkit if your school wants to:

- improve social wellbeing and relationships for all
- create a safer climate that deters aggressive and bullying behaviour.

## **Inclusive Practices Self-Review Toolkit (IPT)**

The inclusive practices tools explore the extent to which school practices are inclusive of all students.

Use this toolkit if your school wants to:

- think critically about and improve the way your school includes all students and, in particular, those who have extra support needs.

To find out more about the Wellbeing @ School toolkits, visit

[www.wellbeingatschool.org.nz](http://www.wellbeingatschool.org.nz)



# NZSTA 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference 2019

*School Trustees: Creating Educational Success  
– The next 30 years*



President's invitation

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY SCHOOL BOARDS OF TRUSTEES

Greetings, and welcome to the 30th Conference with New Zealand School Trustees Association!

Nau mai, haere mai ki te nei huihui mai nei o te Whakarōputanga Kaitiaki Kura o Aotearoa!

2019 marks thirty years of community-led governance in New Zealand's self-managing schools.

We have much to celebrate together, and as a member of NZSTA in 2019, your board will be in the forefront of our celebration, we have a lot to celebrate, wow!!!!

For many of us, this is "the way it's always been". Those of us who remember the days before Tomorrow's Schools - when we had school inspectors instead of ERO, and a Department of Education that made every decision for us, from the colour of paint on classroom walls to what teachers would and would not teach, to approving sick-leave - have clear memories of the liberation that came with the new era of community leadership.

2019 will be a year of challenge, change and opportunity for us as the country comes to terms with the results of the Task force reviewing the Tomorrow's Schools system (an education system designed to be inclusive of community voice) and decides how to reinvent that system for the twenty-first century. Again, membership of NZSTA puts your board at the leading edge of that process. What might this look like? Have you had your say?

If you're new to your role as a Board of Trustee member - WELCOME we will do all we can to awahi /support you, in this important role.

As school trustees, we know better than anyone how much work goes into governing a school, and we at NZSTA work tirelessly to support every board to govern effectively and, for our member boards, we work equally hard to advocate for better recognition of the work you do, and to present your collective voice to others in the sector, and to the politicians and policy-makers who oversee the system we are part of. The NZSTA Annual Conference is one of the best ways to acquire the skills that will equip you with the tools, knowledge, skills and confidence to be the best that you can in order to support your Principal and staff to ensure that all our children have access to quality education that is relevant and reflects who they are as young people.

Thank you again to the many thousands of you who donate your time and energy pro bono to provide strategic leadership and support for your principal and staff, your students, and our future. You get very few thanks for the commitment and the huge responsibility you have accepted. So, from me personally and from all of us here at NZSTA, a very heartfelt thank you.

He kapiti hono, he tatai hono  
That which is joined together becomes an unbroken line  
Noho ora mai

Na  
Lorraine Kerr MNZM  
President



Spaces Are Limited  
& Filling Fast!

**HAVE YOU  
REGISTERED FOR THE  
CONFERENCE YET?**

REGISTER AT:  
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#### Registration/Accommodation

Julie McFetridge  
+64 27 472 1805  
[nzsta@eventmergers.co.nz](mailto:nzsta@eventmergers.co.nz)

#### Conference & Sponsorship Enquiries

Kimberley Leckie  
+64 27 424 0406  
[Kimberley@eventmergers.co.nz](mailto:Kimberley@eventmergers.co.nz)

[eventmergers.](http://eventmergers.co.nz)