

# Secretary of Education's: Principals' Meeting 2009 Address

Wednesday, 15 April 2009

Ei akamata ia tatou i teia mua mataiti, ka pati au kia oki tatou kia akamaara. Kia akamaara ia ratou te au taunga puapii tei takoto ake nei ki te moeanga roa. Te tu nei tatou i teia ra te au taunga puapii katoatoa, no ratou tei rave maroiroi, e tei angai marie i tera uki e tera uki, ma te akakoromaki. No ratou oki tatou i tu rangatira ai ki o tatou nei paepae. Auraka tatou kia ngaropoina ia ratou. Te akaaroa.

- Papa Munokoa Pepe
- Papa Tunui Tangaroa
- Mama Mere Paitai
- Helen Puapii
- Tauturu Hosking

We who are here today are shaped by our past, and the present in which we now live, is what shapes the future of those who will come after us.

Those who have passed away may have parted into the next world, but their contribution, their spirit lives in all of us.

From the past we gain wisdom. In the present we learn new and revisit old knowledge. It is from that base that we can effectively grow and strive with a vision.

The Cook Islands Education Master Plan 2008-2023 provides that vision for us today.

Turou. Kia orana tatou te Are Taunga Puapii Maata katoatoa. Welcome to another year of new challenges.

A warm kia orana to our new principals and new staff. And as I said in my first message to you earlier this week, 2009 promises to be a very big year for the country as whole. Unfortunately, the signs are that there will be many disruptions.

While winning medals at the Mini SPGs will be important for our athletes, I ask you all as fellow professional leaders in your own right, to stay firm, to stay on course, and ensure that all teachers in our schools, remain focused on the business of learning and teaching in the classroom. As professionals, that is our first responsibility. We are duty-bound to our students and our people. In giving our support for the MSPG, we must not deviate and lose sight of what our first priorities are as educators.

In reflecting on the Minutes of our first Principals meeting last year on Thursday 7 February 2008, I noted the message from our Orometua Strickland Upu which underlined the need for three (3) important leadership qualities for those of us who teach.

First, the willingness and second, the eagerness to serve, and finally, to lead by example.

I ask you all to take time out to reflect on this same message. If I may say so colleagues, this same message is as relevant as ever in 2009.

In presenting an overview of 2007 in February last year, the focus of my comments was on those activities and projects which were in my view, highlights for the Ministry as a whole.

Towards this end, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to senior management, advisors and staff in Head Office, and, specifically, to you Principals as professional leaders in our schools with your teachers, school committees and the community at large.

I have observed with keen interest the increased level of collaboration between schools and their communities and across different sectors of the economy. While this growth in community-partnerships is positive, I would like to ask that this partnership commitment be given clear direction and purpose to ensure the provision of quality learning opportunities at all times, because this is the premise upon which our Education Master Plan is based.

{mospagebreak title=Highlights from 2008&heading=Secretary's Address}2008 Highlights

## NCEA Results, Planning & policy Development

NCEA Examination Results: They have been generally very pleasing 489 students from 7 Accredited schools. Based on these results, and in comparison with the New Zealand Overall success rate at levels 1, 2 and 3, they have been very encouraging.

- Level 1 61.5% 49.8%
- Level 2 64.2% 70.1%
- Level 3 52.5% 60.0%

## Cook Islands Education Master Plan 2008-2023

Officially launched in July last year.

Education Act Review New Draft 2008:

Principals are asked to discuss with staff relevant sections of the Act e.g. Monitoring Teachers Performance/School Associations. This document will provide the legal mandate for education in the Cook Islands.

Education Sector Advisory Board:

Members on the Board, represent different sectors of the community. They comprise of Professor Ron Crocombe (Elder Educator), Teresa Manarangi Trott (Chamber), Tevai Matapo (Adult Students), Angeline Tuara (Women), Teina Napa (CITI), Kevin Iro (Sports Helath), Vania Kenning (Youth), Michael Tavioni (Culture/Arts), Imogen Ingram (Aronga Mana) and Rod Dixon (Tertiary Education). The Board will function in an advisory capacity to the Minister of Education through the Secretary of Education.

ICT Report:

Just completed by Ken Matheson, former Secretary of Education. It will serve to advise on future policy in schools, including the One Laptop per Child (OLPC)

{mospagebreak title=School Activities}Schools Activities

Science Fair

Science Education is gaining impetus with many schools. Students are engaged in the investigation and discovery of the wonders of Science and Technology.

Tauhunu School, Nikao School and Titikaveka staged successful Science Fairs for 2008 &ndash; there is so much more to learn and it is a lot of fun. Congratulations.

Culture Festival

Rarotonga schools celebrated Maori culture by staging performances in pee, drum dance, action song and ute at the Are Karioi-very pleasing standard in the performances.

Transition Programmes for Senior Students

Senior students at Tereora College earned credits towards the National Certificate of Educational Achievement in hospitality, automotive engineering and electrical courses.

Under the management of the Department of Human Resources Development, adult students continue to make good progress in the above fields. Congratulations

School Library Upgrade

Capacity of school libraries to provide an effective and efficient service is enhanced through the up-skilling of Literacy Lead Teachers which involved attachment to the NZ National Library & School Support Libraries, workshops with teachers conducted by consultants from NZ (Dyane Hosler National Library Manager-Northland; and Alice Heather-Library Advisor). New books were also purchased.

Guidance Counsellor for Tereora College

The appointment of a Guidance Counsellor at Tereora is a first. Sarah Milne is intent on enhancing the well being of students so that they are best placed to learn more effectively.

Early Childhood Education Centres Edible Gardens

&lsquo;Healthy foods, healthy bodies and minds&rsquo; is the message as children at the Nikao, Takitumu and Blackrock ECE centres got their hands soiled in good soil to plant vegetables of all sorts in their gardens.

The project was a successful partnership between the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Agriculture and the parents.

This focus exposed children, not only to good health, but also to learning across all curriculum areas.

Tertiary Qualifications for Teachers

#### CITTC Graduation:

Te Arapoti Maeva; Atingata Messine; Tuikairoro Ngametua Diploma in Primary Teaching. Charlie Hosking: Graduate Diploma in Secondary Teaching. Thank you Principals for your guidance and support.

#### Te Rei Qualification:

for Maori teachers in secondary schools. Progress has been slow, now with Papa Rangī Moekaa in Auckland. Urianga aro noku ki taku pito enua. Akapapuanga korero naku.

#### University of Auckland Graduate Diploma of Education:

10 MoE personnel (principals, middle managers and MoE staff) are expected to graduate in May 2009

#### Post Graduate Certificate in Leadership:

Danielle Cochrane (Advisor in Social Science) enhances her qualifications through her recent award from the university.

#### USP Certificate in Early Childhood Education:

Tangianau Ngari, Ana Andrew, Mavis Brothers & Barbara Mateariki. Congratulations.

#### BEd:

Jane Taurarii (Science Advisor) and Peter College

{mospagebreak title=Education Media Promotion}Education Media Promotion:

Cook Islands News Features & Cook Islands Television & Radio

#### International Literacy Day:

Fathers must devote quality reading time with their children, especially with their sons.

The Radio Talk Back captured public views on parents as first teachers and the importance of reading in the home.

#### World Teachers Day:

The 5th of October each year is celebrated world-wide. The 2008 year's theme focused on 'Teachers Matter'. The Ministry celebrated with a commemoration church service and 'Reflections' by the teachers (current & retired); newspaper feature with a focus on two of Cook Islands prominent icons in education, Papa Taira Rere MBE and Papa Te Rau Mana Strickland BEM.

The TV presentation looked at the perceptions of effective teachers by three successful young people – Elizabeth Wright Koteka, Vania Kenning and Metua Vaiimene.

#### Science & Technology Education

The Science & Technology Challenge and Women in Science & Technology featured in the Cook Islands News.

The creativity, intuition, intellect and team work of students from Rarotonga & Mauke Schools were exemplified in the 'Challenges' given to them.

{mospagebreak title=Annual Events}Annual Events

#### Careers Expo 2008

Careers Expo continues to be a highly successful event with students exposed to an array of career choices and possibilities. For the first time, students from the Northern Group (Rakahanga, Manihiki & Penrhyn) had the experience of their life with their participation at the expo and in the work places.

#### Women in Science & Technology

Young women taking Science learn and mentor alongside successful women in Science & Technology careers.

## Science & Technology Challenge for Schools

Sand-watch Project: Sand-watch Project was introduced to Manihiki and Rakahanga for the first time. The Cook Islands will represent the Sand-watch project at the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, Bonn, Germany. Jane Taurarii will present the Sand-watch Exhibition at the conference.

Mathematics Quiz Competition: Students' intellect, mental capacity, team spirit and cooperation were challenged at this year's competition. Excellent turnout of parents Professional Development Initiatives

Principals' Workshop Northern Group: Principals from the Northern Group of Penrhyn (Omoka), Manihiki (Tukao, Tauhunu), Rakahanga, and Pukapuka (Niuia) and including primary principals from Aitutaki enhanced their pedagogical and curriculum leadership skills at the start of the year.

## Curriculum Advisory Support for Niua School

CAU team of Kathy George (Literacy), Christopher Story (English), Katie Rogers (Health & PE) and Danielle Cochrane (Social Science) adopted a team approach to the up-skilling and professional development of teachers with key focuses on literacy, language, social science and health & physical Education and using appropriate pedagogical practices. The Audit Officer, Ana Katoa, also travelled with the team.

## Early Childhood Education (ECE) National Workshop:

Teachers and teacher aides from all ECE centres attended this workshop. The challenge for the teachers was embraced in the workshop theme: 'If there was no change, there would be no BUTTERFLIES'

## Review of the Special Needs Education Policy

This review consists of consultation workshops on Rarotonga and in the Outer Islands with the intent of producing an all-embracing and inclusive policy. Leading the consultation is the Inclusive Advisor, Laisiasa Merumeru.

## Performing Arts in the Schools

Performing Arts featured in schools for the first time.

The Performing Arts Advisor, Nancy Fulford engaged teachers in performing arts awareness workshops through music, drama and dance.

## {mospagebreak title=Area's of Concern}Some Areas of Concern

The recruit of Cook Islands graduate teachers from New Zealand for 2009 was not as successful as for 2008. However, we have now built up the Ministry's data-base which should help in future.

I would like to make a request of Principals to review the number of school 'fund-raisers' for this year. The proper keeping of PTA Funds in some schools also need improved monitoring.

Only 7 Principals of schools on Rarotonga have submitted their Annual Reports for 2008.

This document is a requirement which should have already been submitted to the Ministry. If you have not submitted your report, I would appreciate your giving attention to this important document.

The lack of progress made so far, on the construction of the new MoE Administration is a matter of some concern. The responsibility for advancing this project has now been transferred from the CIIC to Planning and Infrastructure, who will liaise with MoE and AMD

## {mospagebreak title=Challenges for 2009}Some Challenges to Consider in 2009?

I suggest that during this year, the Education Sector as a whole will need to remain focused on teaching and learning. Indeed, I have been encouraged by the initiatives already taken by several schools to remain disciplined and focused on the educational needs of our students. We all need to be more proactive and recognize the resources within our schools, within our parents and within the wider community.

If your school have not already done so, I would like to ask that these principals may like to consider the possibility of holding at least one (1) meeting with your staff during the year, to discuss the Code of Ethics of the Teaching Profession.

Another possible initiative, again if you have not already done so, would be to start sending 2, 3, 4 or 6 newsletters to parents and caregivers in your respective communities.

Parents, caregivers and other stakeholders are more likely to play a more active role in the affairs of your schools when they are kept informed.

Congratulations to the 7 schools which have kept staff in the Ministry updated on programs and activities in your school communities via your newsletters.

The Ministry is also interested in the recommendations from the Principals sub-committee which was elected by principals at their meeting at Papaaroa School last year. I am confident that your recommendations, when you have confirmed them, will contribute and give support for the enhancement and professional development of our Principals in Schools.

On that note and once again, I would like to commend Principals and teachers for the many contributions that you made during 2008. The progress made and the achievements accomplished last year would not have been possible without your sustained effort.

This year, we can all look forward to many more new challenges, not only within the four walls of our classrooms with our students, but also in our effort to build bridges with parents and other stakeholders in many communities throughout our small country.

Staff in the Head Office of our Ministry, join me in wishing you all the strength, energy and resourcefulness to achieve bigger goals in 2009.

Akamaroiroi. Na te Atua tatou e tiaki e tauturu mai.