



COOK ISLANDS

Ministry of Education

Maraurau o te Pae Api'i

EDUCATION GAZETTE

TERM 1 2014

DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE



All schools are expected to develop a discipline policy in line with the Education Act 2012. If a school's policy is outdated it should be reviewed and appropriate clauses added.

It is recommended that schools elect their discipline committee during the Parent Teacher Association AGM. The discipline committee is separate from the school committee. It is recommended that no more than three people be elected onto the committee, not necessarily members of the School Committee. The Principal is automatically part of the discipline committee. All disciplinary matters relating to student stand downs, suspensions, exclusion or expulsion are handled by the committee.

The school disciplinary committee must meet no later than 3 days after the principal suspends any student. Before the hearing the committee must give the student and the parent or guardian written notice of the hearing inviting them to appear at the hearing.

After the hearing the committee may:

- lift the student's suspension either unconditionally or subject to conditions, or
- extend the suspension for a further period subject to appropriate conditions aimed at making the student's return to school, or
- if the committee considers that the student's case needs a very serious response-
 - for a student younger than 16 years of age, remove the student from the school and enroll him/her at another school.
 - for a student aged 16 years or older they may be expelled from the school.



Within 24 hours of making their decision, the committee must give the parent or the guardian of the student written notification of the result of the committee's consideration and indicate how the parent or guardian may apply for a review of the decision reached if required.

Last day for invoices - close off of spending
30th May

ADDITIONAL FUNDING 2014

It was noted that public schools were slow in utilizing their additional funding for FY13/14 relating to ICT (\$30 per student), Maori immersion up to grade 3 (\$25 per student), and Isolation (\$5,000 for northern groups and \$2,000 for southern groups). The majority of schools have come up with a detailed plan as to how they will utilize the balance of the additional funding for their respective school, however, please note that the funds need to be committed by 31st May 2014 as all remaining balances will be lost at year end. Some ways to utilize this funding (but not limited to) are:

ICT allowance

- ✓ Internet usage
- ✓ ICT specific resources e.g. printers, computers, etc.
- ✓ Service and maintenance of ICT resources.

Maori Immersion

- ✓ Printing & Photocopying of Maori teaching resources.
- ✓ Purchase of Maori teaching resources.

Isolation

- ✓ Freight expenditure.

TEACHER EMAIL STATISTICS

26%

Teachers using school email in the last 30 days

29%

Teachers using school email in the last 30 -90 days

45%

Teachers who haven't used their school email in the last 90 days

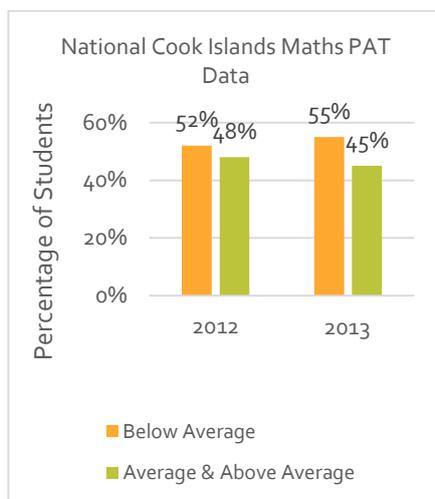
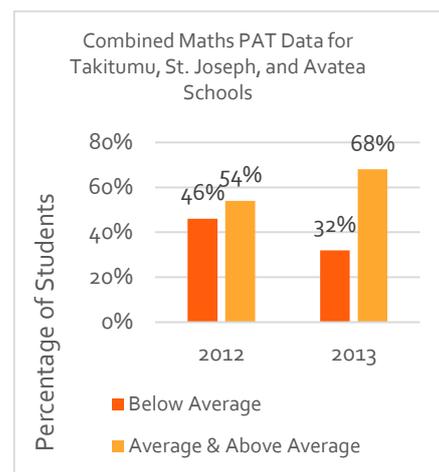
New Cohort of Teachers Enrolled in EDCURRIC 349

By Kathryn Cheval

Over 100 teachers across 17 schools in the Cook Islands have already completed the University of Auckland course "Understanding and extending mathematical thinking". During Term 2, a new cohort of teachers will begin the course which is in its fourth year of up-skilling Cook Island teachers' mathematical understanding and enhancing how they teach in the classroom.

When seeking funding for the 2014 cohort, numeracy advisors Strickland Upu and Kathryn Cheval looked for evidence that this professional development opportunity has had a positive impact on student achievement. They found such evidence when they analysed data from the Cook Islands Maths PAT.

below show a significant increase from 2012 to 2013 in the percentage of Year 6 students at Takitumu, St. Joseph's, and Avatea Schools who achieved a score at or above average. This data strongly suggests completion of this course can positively impact on student achievement.



A first look at the National data above shows a decrease from 2012 to 2013 in the percentage of students who achieved a score at or above average. However, the numeracy advisors did a closer inspection of the data to see what was happening in schools in which the majority of teachers have taken EDCURRIC 349. They identified three schools where more than 80% of teachers have completed the course: Takitumu, St. Joseph's, and Avatea Schools. The data

EDCURRIC 349 is designed to provide teachers with strong foundational knowledge in mathematics. Concepts build on from each other: early counting strategies lead to place value concepts which lead to decimal fraction understandings. A broader contextual knowledge helps teachers to notice, understand, and respond more quickly to what children are doing in the classroom. Numeracy advisors Strickland Upu and Kathryn Cheval will again serve as tutors for this year's cohort, which will include 18 teachers on Rarotonga, 3 on Mitiaro, and 4 on Mangaia. This year Gail Ledger, professional teaching fellow at the University of Auckland's Faculty of Education, will travel to Rarotonga in September. She will deliver three of the lectures and will also model in classrooms so that teachers can see what they have learnt through the lectures in action with their students.

The P&D education review schedule is now confirmed for Term 2 and the listed schools will be sent a formal letter a month prior to the visit informing them of planned dates, what the review officers expect to see and also requesting a staff observation timetable. Terms 3 and 4 education review visits have yet to be confirmed. Schools will know if they are scheduled for a 2014 visit or if they have been told a supplementary visit will be made.

The Principal is expected to spend some time with the review officers on their first day of the visit. This is when the Principal can present their vision of the school, the good things happening, problem areas and plans for improvement. The Principal should highlight school responses to the needs of their students and stakeholders, show the changes made to assure the school achieves its educational goals for students, explain how staff are utilized to maintain students' learning and how staff are supported in maintaining standards and ensuring professionalism.

At the end of each day the review officers will hold a feedback session either with the Principal or the Principal and senior management team to give a report on what was seen and noted on that day. The school is encouraged to provide immediate responses to these comments and remedy any omissions if possible. The daily syntheses continue until the last day when the review officers give an overview of the school's performance as they see it. During the week the review officers may also request meetings with school committee members, staff or students.

Within two weeks of the visit the review officers write a draft review and send it to the school for their response.

TERM 2	
Week	School
1	
2	Avatea
3	
4	Rutaki
5	
6	Nukutere
7	
8	Te Uki Ou
9	
10	Mitiaro
11	
12	Enuamanu

Terms 3/4 Tentative: Creative Centre, Aitutaki Schools, Northern Group, Titikaveka College and Avarua

School Annual Report 2013

P&D would like to commend those principals who handed in their 2013 annual reports at the end of the school year. Unfortunately there were some schools who handed their reports in late. The completion of an annual report by the due date is part of the principal's job description.

P&D is aware that a number of principals query the value of writing, compiling and sending to the MoE their annual reports. We would like to highlight some of the ways annual reports are useful for you and used by the MoE.

For the Principal and school

- A chance to review the year in terms of goals and planning
- A chance to celebrate students' achievements
- A chance to share with the MoE your high and low moments
- An opportunity for your staff to communicate their experiences and challenges, especially those who are HoDs or syndicate leaders.
- A chance for the Chairperson of the PTA to express the parents' view of the school year.
- A chance to request publically support of any type from the MoE
- A stocktaking opportunity with a reminder of those further actions which might need to be taken concerning assets or finances.

For the Review Team and MoE

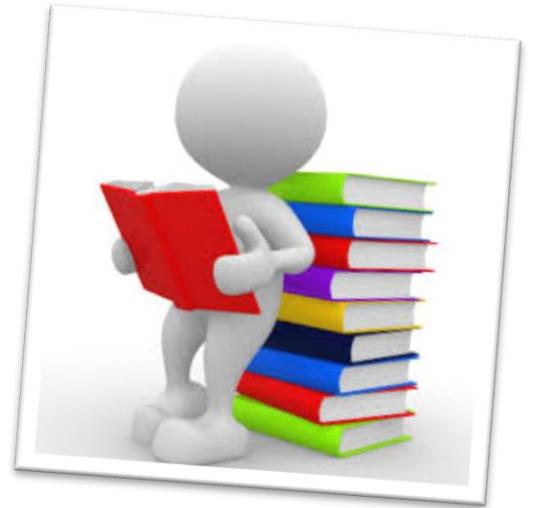
- A chance to share what the school is celebrating
- A chance to follow a school's progress towards its goals
- An understanding of issues which the school is experiencing
- An opportunity to identify common issues and set in place steps to remedy them when possible. This can involve PD recommendations or support such as in the IT area.

In the feedback letter sent to all schools which provide timely reports, P&D acknowledge the school principal's punctuality. We also more importantly try to provide positive and constructive feedback on parts of the report that warrant a response or require an improvement. Punctuality is important so that the schools can use the MoE feedback to improve on the next school year's work plan when necessary. It also allows the MoE to plan school support programmes and workshops where there is a common need. Principals receive feedback letters on their annual reports via the internet. When schools send in their reports late their arrival is registered but there will be no formal feedback.

Purposeful Silent Reading - getting the most out of SSR

By Tracey Ellery

Teachers are always looking for sustainable and easy to implement strategies for improving reading levels amongst their students. Daily silent reading has long been one such universally used strategy. Silent reading programmes such as SSR (Sustained Silent Reading) and DEAR (Drop Everything And Read) are very popular in schools around the world. The general idea being that, for a set period each day, students and teachers will sit in class and read silently. The role of the teacher is to model good reading behaviour and it has been assumed that the act of reading, and increasing reading mileage is one way to improve both decoding and reading comprehension. Unfortunately, research into silent reading programmes (National Reading Panel, 2000) show that this is not usually the case. However, do not despair and throw your silent reading programme out the window. Instead I urge you to rethink your programme and make SSR purposeful.



Hiebert and Reutzel (2010) encourage teachers to provide some structure for their silent reading programmes by incorporating the following four conditions into their classroom practice:

1. **Student self-selection vs. teacher guidance:** Allow students to select their own texts to read, but provide some guidance to ensure they are selecting texts at an appropriate level and that they are reading a range of genres. Students will not gain anything if what they are reading is too difficult or too easy. Teachers also need to ensure their students are being exposed to a range of fiction and non-fiction texts. Provide graphic novels, magazines (e.g. National Geographic), newspaper articles, and poetry books as well as the usual novels, biographies and picture books. Display texts attractively and make sure that students have easy access to texts.
2. **Accountability:** This means students need to actually prove they have read their text. Accountability can take the form of filling in reading logs, completing reading responses, answering text-specific questions (e.g. SRA), creating book reviews, writing blurbs for texts or telling the rest of the class why they should read this book!



3. **Interactions:** Instead of modelling reading, teachers should spend this time talking with individual students about what they are reading. This may take the form of formal conferencing or alternatively, teachers may roam the room having casual chats with students. This is also a good opportunity to have students read aloud to you, ensuring they are reading at the correct level and are understanding their chosen text. Either way, it's important to engage your students in conversations about what they are reading. Examples of questions to ask are:

- Tell me about your favourite character in this story?
- What is one thing you have learnt from reading this?
- What's your favourite part?
- Why did you choose this particular text?
- What do you think might happen next?

4. **Engagement:** Ensure students fully engage with the text they are reading by giving them short activities to complete during reading time. Elaine McEwan (2011) refers to this as 'mindful silent reading'. Her suggestions for engagement include:

- While you are reading find two words that are new to you or that you are unsure about (what they mean or how to pronounce them). Students can write them down in a notebook for dictionary work later on.
- Write a sentence to summarise the main idea of what you have read today.
- What is a question you would like to ask the author of your text?
- Draw a picture relating to what you have read today.
- Write a sentence explaining how you connect to your text (provide sentence starters for this activity)

You can also keep the motivation for silent reading high by introducing reward systems. One idea is to provide maps of the Cook Islands and have your students read their way around each island. Each page read can equate to 1km and rewards can be given for reading around 3 islands, or the most kilometres read each week, etc..... You may also like to give rewards for the most genres read or to students willing to create book reviews or read aloud a passage to the rest of the class.

Lastly, many schools now own SRA Labs. These are an excellent resource to use for silent reading. Proper use of the lab ensures students are reading at the correct level, vocabulary and comprehension activities are already provided, a range of fiction and non-fiction texts are included and students are rewarded by seeing themselves progress through the levels.

With a little bit of planning and structure your students will be making great gains in their decoding and comprehension. I look forward to visiting schools during term 2 and learning about your new and improved silent reading programmes.

NEW PAYROLL SYSTEM

You will all be aware that we have migrated to a new payroll system from the start of 2014. MFEM is now in the process of setting up the ESS - Self Service function of the payroll system where each staff member will be given login details to view their pay slip (at the moment all pay slips are coming to the Ministry and MOE payroll officer is responsible for forwarding these to respective staff and schools via email). The ESS will also enable us to enter timesheets online. Each school administrator will be responsible for entering timesheets online for their teachers, which will then go to the principal for approval, Director HRM & Executive Director for review and finally approval by HOM before sending to MFEM for processing. Other features of the system includes the management of leave (meaning if you intend to take leave, you will have to go online and apply for this).

The diagram below depicts approval levels for self-service function regarding uploading timesheets:

For Public Schools (With School Secretary as Timesheet Administrator)



For Public Schools (With Principal as Timesheet Administrator)



Note that we will still continue with the current system until the new self-service function has been tested. We intend to provide training for all school staff assigned to administer the new function.

SELF REVIEW

The P&D Review Officers acknowledge the hard work Principals and staff put into preparing school annual plans and programmes. Each school has its own challenges, some similar to other schools, some different, so, we the Review Officers' therefore feel it is more 'profitable' and 'appropriate' to introduce you to self review processes and

STAKEHOLDERS:
Principal, staff, school committee, students, community if possible include Religious Advisory Council, Council members, Aronga Mana, Health staff and parents

through understanding the process, in turn, do the same in your schools.

Self review is a key element to an effective cycle of improvement and accountability. The purpose of self review is to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The process engages stakeholders to analyse data and other evidence to examine progress towards priorities and targets. This enables the school to identify both successful practices and outcomes and areas where practices and outcomes may require actions to improve.

Focus on **learning** – How successful have we been in achieving quality learning and well being for all learners, staff and parents?

Think **systematically** – How successfully do our systems and processes support teaching and learning and the achievement of standards?

Share **leadership** – how effective have we been in sharing and building leadership capacity to drive our improvement agenda?

Attend to **culture** – how effectively does the school culture support learners, staff and parents to achieve high quality outcomes?

Listen and respond – how successfully do we recognize and respond to current and future needs of learners and stakeholders?

Make **data** count – how effectively do we analyse and use data and evidence to drive improvements in practice and outcomes?

Set **direction** – how successful are we in living our values and making progress towards the achievement of our vision and purpose? Be global citizens, ensure sustainability of life style.

Target **resources** – how effectively do we target resources to achieve our stated goals and support the improvement agenda?

Continuously **improve** – how effective are our plans and processes in creating sustainable improvements and achieving quality standards?

POLITICS

The political neutrality policy has been distributed to all schools. The Office of the Public Service Commissioner reiterates the need for all public servants to be conscious of appropriate behavior during the election period.

It is important for all staff to conduct themselves in a professional manner and ensure that Educational resources are not utilized for political purposes or gain.

The most common targets are:

Premises (buildings, halls)

Computers, printers, copiers, and internet

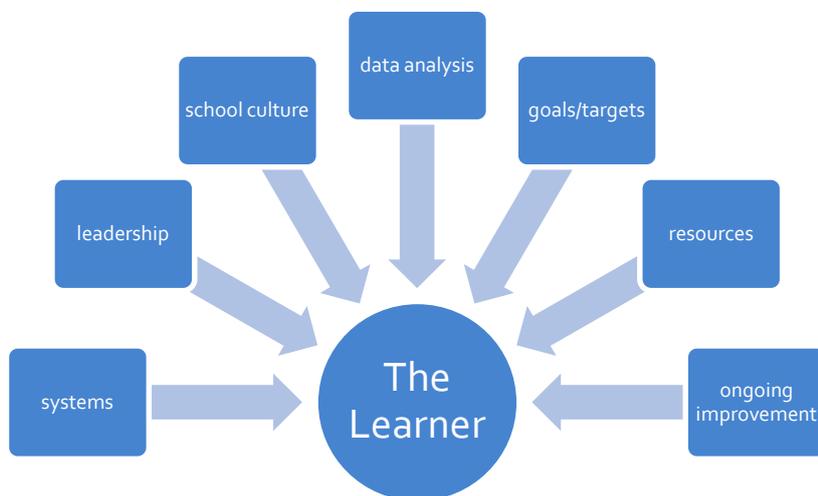
Vehicles

Stationary and supplies

Using staff during work hours

Email

Staff should contact their Principal or the HOM if there is any doubt regarding a situation and its adherence to the policy.



Vaccinations

The following instructions have been issued to principals. Schools are asked to reflect these instructions in your policies and ensure the vigilant monitoring and adherence to them **immediately**:



- 1 No child is to receive any form of vaccination without written parental consent - verbal consent is not acceptable.
- 2 No member of the Ministry of Health is to be left in the presence of children while administering vaccinations without a teacher or principal present.
- 3 When Ministry of Health wish to come into your schools to administer vaccinations, an appropriate and fully worded letter must be sent to parents advising them of the vaccination details including any possible side effects, age of children to whom this should be administered, follow up vaccinations, etc. This letter should be accompanied by a consent form which must be signed by the parents and returned to the school prior to any vaccinations being administered.
- 4 The principal is to ensure that a list of those children for whom written consent has been received, is prepared and that an accompanying teacher/principal ensures that only those children are vaccinated.
- 5 Ministry of Health are not to have access to any other students for the purpose of administering vaccinations.



No longer will it be permissible to seek parental consent by way of **telephone conversation** - **no written consent means no vaccination.**



PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE IN EDUCATION POLICY AND PLANNING

As part of its policy of promoting professional development among teachers and educational administrators in the Cook Islands, the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the University of the South Pacific (Institute of Education) is seeking enrolments for the Professional Certificate in Education Policy and Planning.

Entry

To be eligible for entry you should -

- (1) Hold a first degree and teaching qualification, OR
- (2) Have experience as the head of a primary or secondary school, or as a head of department or as an educational administrator; OR
- (3) meet mature age student admission criteria

If you do not have a degree please apply for mature age entry

Program components and scheduling

- EDPO₁ Pacific Principles in Educational Leadership
 - 28 July – 8th August, 2014
 - Dr Seuula Jonassen-Fua
- EDPO₂ Educational Policy Studies in the Pacific
 - 6- 17 October, 2014
 - Dr Helen Tavola
- EDPO₃ Educational Planning in the Pacific
 - 5 - 17 January, 2015
 - Dr Seuula Jonassen-Fua
- EDPO₄ Financing Education in the Pacific
 - 6 – 17 April, 2015
 - Dr Donasino Ruru

Fees

Scholarships covering the costs of fees will be available for all successful applicants.

Outer Islands Participation

Teachers and principals in the outer islands are especially encouraged to apply for enrolment. The airfares of outer islands participants will be paid for by the Ministry of Education.

How to apply

Copies of the application for enrolment form are available from the USP Cook Islands office in Takamoa, or by emailing sheron.subhasni@usp.ac.fj or phone 29415

Teacher Aides

MOE/EMP output 2: Learning and Teaching

This output focuses on improving teaching and learning across all aspects of the education system and for all learners. A specified deliverable is the provision of equitable access for all learners to quality learning programmes. A current priority is the promotion of learning in the very young.

In light of the above, the review team will be considering the educational contribution being made by teacher aides in schools. Teacher aides currently have specific functions. They are either employed to support children with special needs in the classroom or they have been allocated a specific role in school administration.



We will be looking at the different roles being played by teacher aides in schools and the

contribution they are making to improved student learning. In schools where one or more teacher aides are employed, the review team will be looking for job descriptions and appraisal documentation. Interviews will be conducted with the teacher aides, their classroom teachers and principals. Information gathered and conclusions drawn will be reported on at the end of the year.



COOK ISLANDS

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School Committee Participation

MOE/EMP Output 3: Learning and the Community

The work of this output considers both the role of the community in education, especially that of parents as an important stakeholder, and the involvement of the wider community in lifelong learning and participation in ongoing educational opportunities. The MOE would like to see increased participation of school committee members and close ties and relationships with the community. The reality we see in the schools

is different. Historically parents' role in the schools was to help raise funds to assist with projects. Today their role has increased to decision making, creating policies, looking at the safety and well-being of everyone in the school and so on. It is believed that if there is a high level of community involvement in determining quality educational outcomes, the student results will improve. This year P&D will look at how effective school committees are in the school. We are looking at ways to strengthen the capacity of school committee members.

Schools that are on P&D review schedules for this year will be asked to have all school committee management documents, minute books, financial statements etc available. The review team will want to meet with members, especially the chairperson and the executive committee during school reviews. The review officer will analyse and report on outcomes at the end of the year.

