

2 August 2018

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

If you have been following the news media today you will have heard that the Primary School Teacher's Union, the NZEI, have announced a **full day nationwide teacher's strike for Wednesday 15 August**. As all of our teachers are members of this Union, Methven Primary will be closed on this day. This is the first time that this has happened since 1994.

While there may be some forthcoming media and political spin to say that this is all about teachers wanting more money (which I firmly believe they deserve); it is, in fact, about so much more. The following is my principal's perspective on the whole thing.

You may think that a significant pay rise is directly aimed at existing teachers, and partly it is, but more significantly it is about attracting the right people into the job in the first place. In September of each year we advertise our teacher vacancies for the following year. Five years ago, I received in excess of 50 applications for these jobs, last year we received a mere fraction of that number. In line with this there has been a 40% drop in the number of people training to be teachers. Most new teachers don't make it to the 5-year mark before they realise that there is more money and better conditions in jobs outside of education. The very real fact of the matter is that unless we can attract more of the right people to the profession now, education in New Zealand will suffer in the future. Our children deserve more than just someone with a pulse in front of them!

Teachers, by their very nature are caring, nurturing folk. I get frustrated as a principal when I hear about them dipping into their own pockets to provide things for classes. I can't think of another profession where this happens regularly. In this vain many of the claims in the teachers' campaign are about making the outcomes for the students better. The teachers want more resources and staff to support children with learning and behavioural needs; they want better access to specialist support to help them understand how best to cater to the children in their care, they also want more time so that they can work on the things that will make them better at what they do.

I know that this strike day will inconvenience many of you but things, in education, are fast approaching crisis point. We need to make sure that MPS, and New Zealand as a whole, can continue to deliver a world class education long into our future. I thank you, in advance, for your support around this.

To further complicate things, our Community of Learning teachers only afternoon for this term is scheduled for Tuesday 14 August; a date that was chosen at the end of last year. **In effect school will finish at lunch time (1pm) on Tuesday and reopen on Thursday morning normal time (8:30am).**

Summary Points

- **There will be a nationwide Primary teachers' strike on 15 August**
- **School will close at 1pm Tuesday 14 August (for a planned Teacher Only Afternoon)**
- **School will reopen at 8:30am Thursday 16 August**
- **This strike is about:**
 - **Valuing teachers for the work they do**
 - **Making teaching an attractive career**
 - **Supporting students by providing more expertise, resources and time**

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Murphy".

Chris Murphy