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ISEA

ISEA NEWS

REPRESENTING TEACHING AND NON-TEACHING STAFF IN INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

## From the Employment Officer's Casebook



### Redundancies

The last few weeks of the 2009 school year were filled with the need to support a large number of our members who were made redundant from the end of term.

Firstly, of course, was the large group of staff from Corran School, which we had known about and prepared for with them, as the school changed ownership and style. We are grateful that the Saint Kentigern Board kept these staff and ISEA informed throughout the process, and that at the end they received the full compensation payments to which they were entitled.

However, we also dealt with several other schools where redundancies seemed to be the order of the day. At one Auckland school no less than 10 staff, both teaching and support staff, have been affected by redundancy proposals. At a second, also in Auckland, there were similarly at least six affected, and there were several others in other schools around the country.

We were concerned that not all employers correctly followed due process, which requires that a staff member must be informed that there is a possibility of redundancy, and be invited to a discussion of possible alternatives. This must happen before any firm decision is taken. In several cases we felt the decision had already been made, and although a conversation may have taken place, it gave the impression of a gesture to fulfil the requirements, rather than a genuine effort to find an alternative.

This was especially so in the case of two members who were made redundant while on parental leave. In this case it is even more important that the staff member be fully informed, and called to a meeting to discuss the issues, before any formal decision has been made. A person who is on leave, often by this time unpaid leave, is particularly vulnerable and should be treated with extra sensitivity and care.

Staff in those schools who had good redundancy conditions written into their employment agreements were a great deal better off in dealing with the unexpected and traumatic situation. Their compensation payments allowed them to seek alternative employment without quite the same feeling of panic, as those where such conditions were not in place.

We do not believe that the economic situation has yet recovered sufficiently to protect employees from similar situations this year. We cannot emphasise enough how important it is to belong to ISEA, and to make use of us in any difficult situation such as redundancy. We were able to ensure on our members' behalf that they were being offered the correct compensation, and did receive support from the school during the process.

Mairi Ferguson  
Employment Officer

## SOUTH ISLAND SUPPORT

Last year, your Executive recognised the need for increased support for our South Island members. This need arises out of increased membership at more schools as well as a number of new collectives. As CEO, I am pleased that our Secretary Treasurer, Malcolm Walker, has agreed to act as our South Island Support Representative for ISEA. Malcolm will continue to perform his current secretarial duties along with this new role. Many members will already know Malcolm and value his professionalism and expertise in education and employment matters.

Of course, Malcolm and members will continue to receive support from the staff based in Auckland. However, we hope that Malcolm's role in Christchurch will provide a more timely and efficient response to members' issues.

Malcolm's new role complements the decision to expand on the range of ISEA resources and support for our school representatives generally. These include new posters (for school noticeboards), postcards and fridge magnets. In addition, a resource site is being developed on the ISEA website.

Malcolm can be contacted on [secretary@isea.org.nz](mailto:secretary@isea.org.nz)

**Is Honorary Membership for YOU? - see page 4**



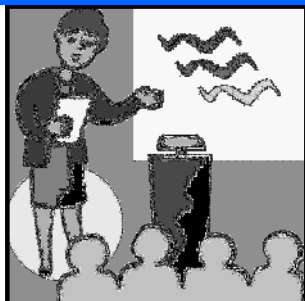
## FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

### School Annual Meetings: Its that time of year again!

Greetings for 2010 and I hope that everyone is settling back into school life. Over the next few months, I am looking forward to attending as many ISEA school AGMs as possible. Our members' democratic participation in ISEA is an important aspect of our ability to represent you to government and the employer. Therefore, we are encouraging all schools to hold Annual General Meetings early in the year and confirm their ISEA School Representative. The school representative is your link to the ISEA Executive and staff team. So, a formal election process confirms and strengthens the membership's relationship with those acting on your behalf. The AGM does not have to be an onerous meeting and in fact the election can be the single main item on the agenda. Your Executive decided to provide a membership fee discount scale to encourage participation, increased membership and in an attempt to partly compensate school representatives for their time. This is based on the number of members at the school and the form of employment agreement. Confirmation of the details of the formula will be circulated later in the term.

As well as the AGM, I am planning a number of informal evenings for School Representatives in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. These will be geared to encourage discussion so that we can further learn about members' issues and how we can better assist our school representatives

Elsewhere in this newsletter we announce Malcolm Walker's new role as our formal representative in the South Island. This complements the decision to expand on the range of ISEA



Members can download resources as well as order hardcopies from the ISEA admin officer.

2010 looks already to be a difficult year for our members as the recession bites. We aim to increase the value of our service so that we are well placed to assist where necessary. The best resource is our membership and we hope that everyone strives to welcome new members into our association. The stronger we are, the stronger you are.

In the meantime, please contact ISEA if you would like the CEO or one of the Executive or staff to attend your AGM or a meeting at any other time during the year.

All the best for the year

Grant Gillon  
Chief Executive Officer

## NATIONAL STANDARDS SURVEY

Members will have seen a heated debate in the national media over the government's introduction of National Standards. The NZEI is running a campaign around national standards called "Hands up for Learning". The reason for the NZEI campaign is that they are concerned about the claims from parents, educational experts, principals and teachers that the Standards are untested. They claim growing support for the Standards to be trailed before they are implemented nationwide.

However, the government says National Standards will help our children do better by raising the achievement of Maori, Pasifika and children with special education needs. It is also claimed that the overall performance of our education system will improve.

Many of our ISEA members have also expressed concern about the implementation of the system without first trialling the standards. ISEA has started to survey our members' schools to check first how many are planning to implement National Standards and whether our members support their introduction or otherwise. Discuss this issue with your ISEA school representative and get your views forwarded in the survey.

## HONORARY MEMBERSHIP

Going on Parental or long term leave, or retiring this year?

Don't forget to change your membership category to that of Honorary Member to keep your benefits alive.

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resources and support for our school representatives generally. These include new posters (for school noticeboards), postcards and fridge magnets (for the lunchroom fridge or metal lockers). In addition, a resource site has also been developed on the ISEA website.

# FROM THE PRESIDENT



Welcome to the first issue of the Newsletter for 2010. This issue goes to all teachers and support staff in independent schools, whether a member or not. We invite you to read it. For further information about ISEA check our website [www.isea.org.nz](http://www.isea.org.nz)

## First Executive Meeting:

The National Executive has held its first meeting for the year. The Executive meets three times a year with a very full agenda each time. Starting around 9.30am and finishing at 4.30pm, with lunch and coffee breaks we cover a wide variety of issues and policy discussion for your benefit.

## Employment Issues:

Employment issues continue to take up a great deal of our time and reinforce the need for all teachers and support staff to be members. You just never know when things might go wrong in the best of schools. As I have written before, ISEA membership is very much like an insurance policy, it's better to have it and not need it, than to need it and not have it. One never knows what problems are going to arise. We have the resources and the legal backing to cover all contingencies.

We invite you to familiarize yourself with the various benefits that are available. They are all worth while considering and we believe give value to our membership. These benefit details are in the membership packs that were distributed to all schools at the beginning of the year, but are also available on the website.

## Collective Bargaining

It will be a busy year for us with collective bargaining. Many of our schools now have collective agreements, rather than individual agreements, and more support staff are going on collective agreements. Belonging to ISEA means that we negotiate on your behalf according to your instructions. It means that individuals are not compromised by having to be the spokesperson for the rest of the staff. Remember too, that we will also give advice on individual agreements.

## The School Representative

Do you know who your ISEA school representative is? You should do. The school representative is a vital link between the school and ISEA administration. To compensate for the work involved we have subscription rebates for school representatives, which in some way compensates for the role they play. In addition, ISEA is organising a gathering of Auckland school reps early in term two. This will take the form of a wine, cheese and nibbles function in the after school period with the purpose of discussing activities and issues for the year ahead. We are planning similar events in Wellington and Christchurch later in the year and hope this to be the first of many.

## Inhouse Unions

A number of schools have 'inhouse' unions. The staff have formed a union under the provisions of the Employment Relations Act to negotiate their collective agreements. The

disadvantage of the inhouse union is that its members have to do the negotiating and they are not big enough, nor do they have the resources to assist when things go wrong. We already have two inhouse unions who have now joined our ranks and we have been approached by members from two more to explore options. The National Executive has been considering carefully a process of affiliation for inhouse unions. A rule change to the constitution is proposed to allowing ISEA some flexibility in working with inhouse unions.

## Website

Please make use of our website. It has a wealth of information about ISEA and education issues. It is constantly updated for your benefit and should be checked on a regular basis. Thanks to Executive member James Hart and CEO Grant Gillon, it is now an interactive site with the opportunity to chat, blog, share videos and surveys etc. Most of the website is freely available, but some is available to members only. If you are having problems getting access, contact admin. Check us out regularly.

Finally, after more than ten years as your President, I formally indicated to the National Executive that I would not be available to continue as President after this year. Though ISEA continues to grow from strength to strength and I am proud to be part of all that we have achieved, it is important that the leadership changes. The Executive has been discussing a process of succession and I am confident that ISEA will be in good hands next year.

Bruce Owen  
President

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# INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

Every year, when the National Executive is considering our budget, we discuss whether to continue our membership of Education International (EI) and every year we decide it is worth the small outlay. Education International is an umbrella organisation representing teachers' organisations worldwide. We are currently one of 402 member organisations representing over 29 million teachers and education workers from pre-school to universities in 173 countries and territories. It is the world's largest global union federation. Other New Zealand teacher associations such as PPTA and NZEI also belong.

EI has its headquarters in Brussels with regional offices representing Europe, Africa, Latin America, North America-Caribbean and Asia-Pacific. It aims to protect the rights of every teacher and education worker and every student they educate. They also aim to assist the development of democratic organisations for teachers and education workers; to help combat racism and discrimination in education and society and foster good relations between education workers in all countries. Education International is the voice for the education sector worldwide.

Some of the actions they have been involved with have included assisting with education programmes on AIDS for both teachers and students in African schools; lobbying against the dismissal from teaching of the president of the Fijian Teachers' Association by the military government there; helping with trauma counselling for Haitian teachers following their devastating earthquake this year which killed over 1100 Haitian teachers and assisting teachers in several countries who have been put on trial by authoritarian governments for expressing views the governments do not like or being involved in union activities.

Some of these issues have been highlighted before in the International News articles in ISEA Newsletters and a lot more detail can be obtained on the EI website: [www.ei-ie.org/en/](http://www.ei-ie.org/en/). We believe it is important to keep links with such an important education body and to do our little bit to assist teachers in other countries who are having difficulties just doing their basic job of educating the adults of tomorrow.



Mark Cleaver

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANT

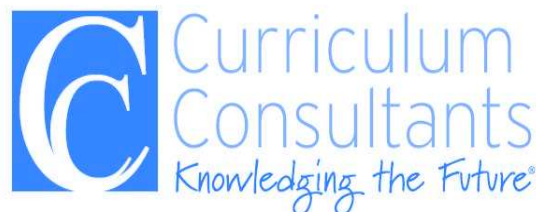
Applications are invited from members for the Professional Development Grant. The grant allows for support in any area of professional development that is not fully funded by other sources. Criteria for the award of the grant are on the website - [www.isea.org.nz](http://www.isea.org.nz) and click on Publications and Forms. Applications can also be made through the administrator Jill Brookes at [admin@isea.org.nz](mailto:admin@isea.org.nz).

*Have you visited our website yet?*

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