



MEDIA RELEASE

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Focus on students the main thing in Partnership Schools debate

2018 promises many changes for the school sector, including changes to the status of Partnership Schools which is currently before parliament.

“For us, the most important thing is what works for the students in those schools,” says NZSTA President Lorraine Kerr. “We understand that other people have very strong views about the Partnership Schools model, but NZSTA has always taken the view that our main concern is the students in those schools. How the schools are organised or funded is an issue we remain neutral on.

NZSTA will offer governance and HR support to all Partnership Schools to transition effectively to whatever their new status may be, should this be required.

“So long as Partnership Schools exist, we will do our best to support them so that they are well governed. Should they transition to State or State Integrated schools, we will support them to do that in a way that preserves the things they have been doing well, and causes the least possible disruption for their students and staff.”

“Whether they function under the Partnership Schools model or as State or State Integrated schools or any other model, the fact remains that some students and whānau choose to attend them in preference to other options. We need to respect that, and to do everything we can to ensure that those students get a good quality education, in an environment that suits them.

“We have a very diverse and innovative schooling sector in New Zealand, including within the State sector. There’s no question that Partnership schools can function within the State schooling system, if that’s what parents and whānau want.”

“A change of government always brings new energy and the opportunity to take a fresh look at what we are doing and how and why we do it,” says Lorraine. “That works in students’ favour when we don’t let ourselves get distracted by point-scoring or finger-pointing. It’s always valuable to take a reality check, and that requires an open mind.

“Our students are the reason schools exist, and making sure that every student in every school gets the best education we can give them is the touchstone for everything that boards of trustees do,” she says.

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Enquiries regarding this release can be made to Lorraine Kerr, President, NZSTA at 0276875606

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NATIONAL OFFICE

LEVEL 8, 142 LAMBTON QUAY, WELLINGTON 6011 | PO BOX 5123, WELLINGTON 6145 | NEW ZEALAND

DDI: 04 471 6422

PHONE: +64 4 473 4955

FAX: +64 4 473 4709

www.nzsta.org.nz