

Addressing Specific Arguments

"The numbers are looking good, aren't they?"

"The government has announced XXXX to recruit new teachers"

We welcome anything that seeks to address recruitment, but these changes don't even address the government's own projections for how many teachers will be needed over the next few years.

Teachers are highly valued in the community. We need to be able to dedicate their time, experience, skills and energy to the children in their care.

Every step the government takes to address workload and the shortage is welcomed, but incremental moves aren't going to address the core problems in education.

The relative pay for teachers has been declining over decades, and that's why people don't see it as a viable career choice.

"What other workers are getting \$10K?" / "This is the best offer in a decade"

We understand 10K is a lot of money, but it's 10K over the life of the agreement. And the context is that the dollar value we assign to the work teachers do has continued to decline compared to other professions. This issue is widely acknowledged, and it's why no-one wants to be a teacher.

We're a union, so we care about every other working person in NZ. We want everybody to have a decent living wage. What we are talking about here is a reset that will get people back into this profession.

Teachers are highly qualified professionals, and we have to be competitive in the job marketplace to attract the best. For example, we have a massive shortage of physics teachers, because physics graduates can earn much more straight out of uni.

"You are being greedy"

We want the teacher shortages fixed. That's only going to happen when teaching is seen as a desirable career path for graduates entering the workforce. Currently, almost every other career path open to them is more lucrative.

"The government can't fix everything overnight"

Our Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has fantastic aspirations for the children of New Zealand. That's great, but there is a mismatch between what she says and what she does. She is doing all of us a grave disservice by saying there is no more money.

We have always thought we were all in this together; working towards the same goals for NZ kids – instead we are being attacked by the government for advocating to bring out the best for every child.

When the government doesn't acknowledge the truth and refuses to act to remedy the issues plaguing education we have to do something to get their attention. Even though it takes us away from the work and children we love and we lose pay.

The wellbeing of young people should be everyone's priority and we can't pretend that's not going to cost money.

The government has the ability to do what needs be done for the children of NZ.

"Why strike now?"

We can't wait any longer.

"What's a strike going to do?"

It demonstrates how dire the situation is. Schools will close and teachers are forgoing pay and a day in the job they love just to hold the government to its own standards.

If it takes 50,000 teachers taking to the streets to convince the government of wellbeing that our children's future is important, what type of government do we have?

We are being driven out of our classrooms.

"What a disruption!" / "When you go on strike I have to pay childcare"

It costs us money to strike. But the bigger disruption is the teacher shortages; a lack of specialist teachers; an epidemic of stressed teachers – teachers who can't bring out the best for their students.

"NZEI didn't achieve anything by striking"

Sadly, this demonstrates that the government isn't listening to teachers. Isn't it terrible? It's so disrespectful to the profession and what we all want for children. We are pleased we can support each other as teachers on May 29.

"What about NZEI claims? They aren't asking for as much"

Primary and secondary teachers have the same aspirations for their children, and that's why it is so important we work together with them. But the details of their negotiations are up to them.

"No one supports what you are doing"

Polling by research shows New Zealanders strongly back teachers in their campaigns to address the issues in education, make teaching a valued profession and ensure New Zealand is the best place in the world to raise a child.

The opinion poll has been conducted regularly since March 2018 and shows consistently strong support for reduced class sizes, more support for children with additional needs, a pay rise for teachers, and more time for teachers to teach.

Key findings from the poll:

- There is a shortage of teachers: 89% agree this is the case for primary teachers and 88% agree this is the case for secondary teachers.
- Teachers need a pay rise: 83% agree this is the case for both primary and secondary teachers.
- Class sizes should be reduced: 76% agree this is the case for primary schools and 73% agree this is the case for secondary schools.
- Teachers need more time for planning, preparation and assessment: 79% agree this is the case for both primary and secondary teachers.
- Teachers are bogged down in administration and this is getting in the way of them teaching: 80% agree this is the case for primary teachers, 78% agree this is the case for secondary teachers.
- More needs to be done to support students with additional needs: 91% agree.

Teachers have it easy. You guys get weeks of holidays.

You know what? Teachers don't get holidays, they get term breaks. Teachers work all year round to give your children a good start in life.

Teachers are thinking every day about your children and what they can do to inspire them in learning and help them reach their potential.