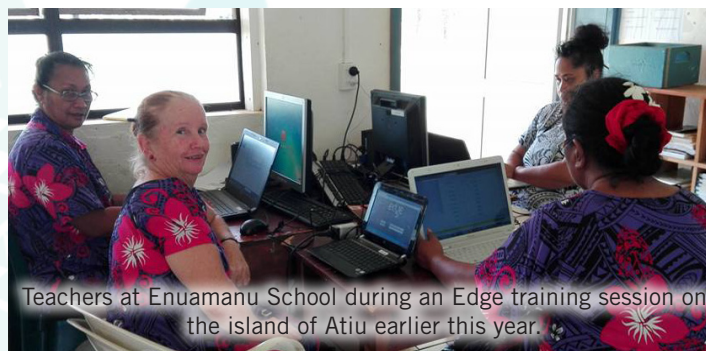


TEACHERS AND ADMIN STAFF ON EDGE

The Ministry of Education has entered into an agreement for access to a cloud based student management platform. “Edge” was recommended to the Ministry by a working group of principals, teachers and staff who researched and investigated student systems over an eight month period. Edge ticked all the right boxes and was open to discussions for a national subscription model. Extra features for the system include an online library module and capacity for cross school reporting. Being web based it can be accessed via browser from any internet enabled device.

The analysis and use of data is central to making good decisions at every level of education.

The rollout of Edge will be over a four year timetable with the first eight schools coming on-board in 2016. Hand in hand with the Edge rollout will be a professional development programming targeting the use of data for leadership, planning, teaching and learning. Teaching and Learning advisors have already started this development in schools and Edge is an excellent tool for enabling and supporting this decision making process. The Ministry ITC team has taken responsibility for provisioning schools and providing both admin and teacher training. The ITC team is backed up by a solid support team in New Zealand and jointly will continue the end user training throughout the rollout.



Teachers at Enuamano School during an Edge training session on the island of Atiu earlier this year.

RENEWAL OF TEACHER REGISTRATION

In December 2012, a new Education Act was passed by Parliament. In this act, sections 61 and 62 refer to the renewal of teacher registration.

Prior to the Education Act (2012), teacher registration was for life unless a teacher was deregistered. It is now required every three years. All practicing teachers received registration when the new Act was passed and these registrations are due for renewal.

Along with the Act, the position description for a teacher was reviewed and a significant pay increase occurred. In the revised position description, an undergraduate degree became a requirement of the position. At the time of the position description revision, the majority of our teachers had diploma qualifications and many were working towards their degree. The Ministry has continued to financially support teachers without a degree to work towards this. Many have since graduated and others are still continuing to study on a consistent semester basis.

Unfortunately, some teachers have not been consistently working to upgrade their original qualification to the degree level. This means they are not meeting the requirements of the position description of a teacher. There are a number of reasons as to why some teachers

have not been studying. A lack of a degree, or consistent work towards one, does not mean a teacher will not be re-registered. It does mean, however, that conditions may be placed on that registration. Such conditions may include, but are not limited to:

- Requiring a person to complete a training course successfully; or
- Requiring a person to be supervised for a stated period; or
- Restricting the subjects or level the person may teach, or both; or
- Restricting the educational institutions at which the person may teach; or
- Restricting the time of registration
- Restricting management functions that may be held.

Working towards a qualification demonstrates a teacher's commitment to their role and their professionalism and accountability towards each other. The Ministry is here to support teachers but the learning and uptake of the opportunity are the teacher's responsibility. The Human Resources Management Division are currently processing renewal applications. Teachers should contact the division if they have any queries.

SPOTLIGHT ON POLICY

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION RESOURCING POLICY

The Early Childhood Education Resourcing Policy was recently reviewed as part of the Ministry's policy review cycle. As a focus area of the Cook Islands Education Master Plan (2008-2023), quality early childhood education continues to be supported by the Ministry by allocating quality personnel and resources to the ECE sector.

This policy achieves quality early childhood education and provides all ECE enrolled children with the best preparation for their entrance into formal schooling.

This policy ensures:

- All funds identified for ECE by the Ministry are spent on ECE resources. This is guaranteed by the Principal along with the main-

tenance of transparent and distinct financial records of all ECE related purchases.

- Appropriate ECE staffing ratio is applied to support the ECE curriculum in schools and centres.
- All ECE teachers and teacher trainees are provided with quality training opportunities.
- All ECE centres comply with the Ministry's Education Fitness for Purpose policy and ensures that school policy cover safety in and out of the classroom, in the playground or on trips, and hygiene.
- All children are protected at all times while attending ECE. There is no tolerance for child abuse in all Cook Islands schools

and centres. For a detailed copy of the Early Childhood Education Resourcing Policy or if you have any questions please contact the Planning and Development division. The Ministry's ECE advisor, Tania Akai, is also available to answer any questions you may have on ECE resourcing, practice and curriculum.



ECE students at Mauke School during a visit earlier this year.

TEACHER SABBATICAL LEAVE POLICY

The recently endorsed Teacher Sabbatical Leave Policy has been well received by many teachers, encouraging research and innovation. The sabbatical opportunity provides teachers a defined comprehensive period of time in which to extend their understanding in a particular area and produce a piece of research, a school resource or an evaluation of a programme or tool. The Cook Islands model of sabbatical leave suggests that, where possible and appropriate, a professional staff member of the Ministry takes the place of the teacher in the school for whole or part of the period of the sabbatical. This suggested two-way sabbatical modality of the policy provides opportunity for the development of both teachers and education professional staff from the Ministry, helping build the relationships between school and the Ministry. The policy applies to all registered teachers in the Cook Islands who have taught for 4 years in the 5 years preceding the leave. All applications will be evaluated according to the appropriateness and benefits of the activities and

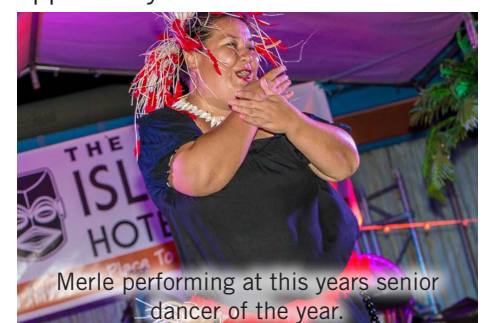
the practicality of attaining the stated goals and outcomes of the proposal. Teachers wishing to apply for sabbatical leave are to complete the application form and submit to HRM along with a current CV and an endorsement letter from the Principal. This exciting opportunity awaits those wishing to engage in

research or other activities that will increase their capacity and support an environment for lifelong learning. For a detailed copy of the Sabbatical Leave Policy contact the Planning and Development division. HRM are also available to answer any questions you may have on the policy or your proposed sabbatical.

SABBATICAL APPLICATION PROCESS

Merle Pukerua is a Performing Arts Teacher at Tereora College and a veteran performer within the local performing arts community. Thanks to the sabbatical opportunity made possible by the MoE she is currently travelling with the Cook Islands National Art Theatre group as a band member to the Festival of Pacific Arts in Guam. Before applying for her sabbatical, she met with the principal to discuss the benefits of her research to her teaching. With the support of her principal she then sent her application to the MoE to await approval or disapproval, a process Ms Pukerua says was fast. For her the sabbatical leave will allow for professional growth and her contribution to the

performance community. During the trip she has been making time to conduct her research, observing the performances of other countries to understand the different styles, movements and their meanings. Excited to apply what she will learn in her classroom, Ms Pukerua would gladly encourage teaching staff to make use of the sabbatical opportunity.



Merle performing at this year's senior dancer of the year.

SICK LEAVE

All full time employees are permitted up to 10 days paid sick leave. Sick leave is taken when needed for illness or accident and is available from the day the employee starts work. A medical certificate must be supplied after the second consecutive day off work, however the Secretary can ask for a medical certificate even for one day if she/he thinks necessary.

Part-time employees' paid sick leave is calculated on the hours usually worked in proportion to a full-time working week.

Sick leave is for the employee or a member of their immediate family and may cover instances where an employee or a member of their immediate family:

- Is ill or injured,
- Is required to travel overseas for medical examination
- Visits a traditional medical practitioner for healing or
- Must be quarantined or isolated

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, teachers are expected to set work for their classes and ensure it reaches the school prior to school commencing when they are absent from work due to illness.

1 Sick Leave Balances

Unused sick leave can be accumulated up to a total of 40 days to provide income security in the event of a major illness. Sick leave must be exhausted before compassionate leave is considered.

1.2 Employee to Notify Principal

Employees must advise their Principal or a member of the Senior Management Team at the earliest opportunity if they are absent from school due to sickness or injury, preferably one hour before normal starting time, but otherwise as early as possible after falling sick/injured.

If the employee is unable to reach the Principal or a member of the Senior Management Team personally, they may leave a message. However, this should be followed up with a telephone call with the Principal at the earliest possible time. Failure to do so may result in the employee being placed on leave without pay. Proof of illness may be required.

The Secretary may require any employee to provide proof of sickness or injury (by providing a medical certificate) to support sick leave absences under certain circumstances:

1. Absence due to illness for more than two consecutive school days, this will be at the employee's cost or;

2. Within two consecutive school days where the Secretary or Principal suspects, on reasonable grounds, that the leave request is not genuine. In this case the Secretary or Principal will inform the employee of their suspicion and that they are required to provide proof. In instances where a pattern in the use of sick leave has been established, a certificate may be required for absences of less than two working days.

If the Secretary or Principal requires a medical certificate, this certificate must state that the employee (or dependent person) has been examined by a doctor and the employee (or dependent person) is, in the doctor's opinion, not fit to attend work (or requires home care) because of illness or injury.

Where possible, any medical certificate issued must relate to a medical examination in person on the day. Where the Principal does not believe a medical certificate is appropriate for a workplace absence, consultation is required with the Secretary of Education or Director of Human Resources who will consult with the Ministry of Health prior to taking any action.

Where the Secretary does not believe a medical certificate is appropriate for a workplace absence, she will consult with the Ministry of Health prior to taking any action.

If the employee does not provide proof when requested without reasonable excuse, the Secretary has the right to withhold the payment for the sick leave period until proof of sickness is provided.

1.3 Domestic Care

An employee may use his/her sick leave entitlement to remain at home to care for an immediate member of the family who is sick. This includes providing care for the employee's spouse or children. Such leave is treated as sick leave. A medical certificate may be required.

1.4 Sick Leave Forfeited

All sick leave is forfeited and not paid out when an employee leaves the Public Service.

Sick leave will not be provided for an employee suffering from sickness caused by over indulgence in alcohol or drugs.

exOLVO SELF-SERVICE | 4.1



Hello,

Menu

Home
Active Items
My Details
My Leave

My Leave

Balances
New Request
View Requests
Projected Balance
Calendar

Leave type	Type of units	Balance (as at close of last pay)	Leave approved not paid	Applied not yet approved
Annual leave	Hours	5.46	0.00	0.00
Sick leave	Hours	0.00	0.00	0.00

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Logout

NOTES FROM FINANCE

Operational spending

By now all public school principals should have received year to date (YTD) variance report for their respective schools indicating balance of funds (if any) to be utilized before the end of the current Financial Year. Please note all invoices should reach finance before 10th June 2016, this will ensure sufficient time is available to meet year end requirements. If any of the public schools have reimbursements pending since 1st July 2015 to date then please submit this to finance before the above mentioned date as well. Any invoices received after the 10th of June 2016 relating to the current financial year would have to be absorbed by the school.

Online leave requests

All public school staff should have an ESS (online payroll) login by now. Please note that it is very important for staff to log their leave online for the period they are away from school/work place and the Principals needs to ensure that they approve all staff leave request on a timely manner. Staff can access their pay slips here as well.

Annual Asset Stock take

It's that time of the year again where Finance will be going around schools to conduct a full physical stock take of school assets to confirm existence. Expected start is either late June or early July and Principals will be provided a schedule one week before the visit. Any queries in regards to the above, please contact the Director of Finance at fali@education.gov.ck

BLUESKY DEAL BENEFITS STUDENT LEARNING

It's been almost a month since the internet agreement between the Ministry of Education and Bluesky Cook Islands came into effect. While some schools are still in the transitioning stage before being able to fully utilise the perks of the agreement, some have already made the internet more accessible to students for school projects. For students at Apii Avarua, Tereora College and Araura College the agreement has allowed

for more in class research using a wider scope of educational sites and access to online text books. For Araura College Principal Tracy Spiers the agreement has resulted in classes becoming more visual as teachers are now using more online resources with less limitations. Students participating in the after school homework club now have access to the internet to continue their research.

BLUE SKIES AHEAD FOR COOK ISLANDS STUDENTS

The Ministry of Education has entered into an agreement with Bluesky Cook Islands that covers all of Education. The agreement supports Education's goal for enhanced student outcomes through equitable access to quality education and will provide unlimited internet data for all schools in the Cook Islands. This will allow schools to give students unlimited access to internet services to support learning in class. It provides greater opportunities for students to utilize internet services for inquiry, collaboration, learning programs and to improve digital literacy.

With greater internet access teachers have increased opportunities to collaborate with the global teaching community, conduct research, find resources and investigate innovative teaching and learning methods.

The Ministry of Education has many internet based initiatives running in schools and is excited about the possibilities to expand their support via the internet. Some of the current initiatives include:

- The online school Te Kura Uira that provides distance learning opportunities to the Pa Enua. This currently delivers programmes to year 9 and 10 in Mitiaro, Manihiki and Penrhyn. Increased data provides the potential to extend this to a wider range of subject areas that may not be accessible on island.
- The Cook Tertiary Training Institute is utilizing internet tools for the delivery of trade programs to the Pa Enua.
- Access to a large number of online learning courses at the both secondary and tertiary level.
- Ministry teacher professional development and training programs are supported via online resources and meetings.
- IT Integration across the curriculum which sees students utilizing IT in every day work - building their skills in this area which will be prominent in their future workplaces or further study.



Philip Henderson - Bluesky Country Manager



This agreement and solution has been a while in the making, working closely with the Ministry to understand their requirements and develop a solution that leverages the technology that Bluesky has deployed across the country. The consolidation of all services enables the Ministry to manage the capability and ensures it is efficiently directed where they need it most. Bluesky will continue to work with the Ministry to further refine the solution and support other initiatives that enhance educational performance through the use of communications technology.

Gail Townsend - Secretary of Education



This agreement supports the Ministry in two ways. Firstly it allows us to increase efficiency at the Ministry level by consolidating communication costs. Secondly, and more importantly, it allows our teachers and students improved access to the wide range of learning and resources available online. A computer, and internet access, will never replace the teacher - but a teacher with access to relevant technology can expand the learning of every child in their classroom. The Ministry acknowledges the team at Bluesky and are encouraged by their support in sharing our vision for ongoing quality education in the Cook Islands.

