

Principal sentiment snapshot 2023

Survey finding summary

Sample

The NZEI Te Riu Roa Principal Sentiment Snapshot received 629 responses, representing a 1/3rd (32.4%) of principals in the primary sector, meaning that the survey findings are a good representation of principal sentiment across the sector.

There was a mix of school size and principal experience represented in the sample, covering U1 to U10 schools, and principals in their first year in the role to principals with over 30 years' experience.

Retention

Nearly half (47%) of new principals – those in their first or second year in the role – said that they intend to leave the role within the next five years.

Support and role demands

None of the 629 respondents said they felt well supported in the role, while more than 91% said they felt 'not particularly well' or 'poorly' supported. Only 9% felt the supports in place were about right.

Only 0.6% of respondents said that they find the demands of their role manageable and have all the staffing and resourcing that they need to meet the needs and aspirations of ākonga in their school/kura.

At the other end of the scale, 79% said that the demands of their role were 'difficult' or 'impossible' to manage with the staffing and resourcing available. This was much higher for U1 and U2 school principals, 88% of which said that the demands of their role were 'difficult' or 'impossible' to manage with the staffing and resourcing available.

Change in role demands

93% of survey respondents said that the demands of the role had increased in the past 10 years (or since their first principal role if less than this), while 67% said that demands had increased 'very significantly'.

What will help?

More teaching staff, more management staffing, and increased access to specialists for children with additional needs were ranked the top three respectively in terms of what would make the biggest positive difference to the role.

1. How long have you been a principal in Aotearoa New Zealand?

Less than one year	6%
I am in my second year	9%
Over 2 and up to 5 years	20%
Over 5 and up to 7 years	13%
Over 7 and up to 10 years	12%
Over 10 and up to 20 years	25%
Over 20 and up to 30 years	11%
More than 30 years	4%

2. What is the U grade of your school?

1	9.9%
2	10.7%
3	13.5%
4	26.3%
5	23.1%
6	11.5%
7	3.7%
8	0.5%
9	0.3%
10	0.5%

3. How long are you intending to remain a principal in Aotearoa New Zealand?

I want to leave by the end of this year	10%
I intend to leave within the next two years	20%
I intend to leave within the next five years	30%
I intend to leave within the next ten years	20%
I intend to remain a principal for more than the next ten years	19%

4. Which of these sentiments best describes how you feel about your role?

Well supported with good pay and conditions	0.0%
Generally well supported with good pay and conditions although some things could be improved	8.9%
Not particularly well supported, with pay and conditions that are not adequate.	46.9%
Poorly supported, with very inadequate pay and conditions.	44.3%

5. Which of these sentiments best describe how you feel about the demands of your role?

I find the demands of my role manageable, and I have all the staffing and resourcing available	0.6%
I find the demands of my role are usually manageable but there are some challenges	20.7%
The demands of my role are difficult to manage with the staffing and resourcing available	56.6%
The demands of my role are impossible to manage with the staffing and resourcing available	22.1%

6. To what extent do you think the demands of your role of changed in the last 10 years (or since your first principal role if you have been a principal for less than 10 years)

They have increased very significantly	67%
They have increased to some extent	23%
They have increased slightly	4%
They are about the same	5%
They have reduced slightly	0%
They have reduced to some extent	1%
They have reduced significantly	1%

Ends.