



**NZEI  
TE RIU ROA**

# Winning job security for teacher aides at Election 2026

**Kimi Haeata – for valuing educators fairly, for Te Tiriti, for a teacher aide in every classroom and for quality ECE – is our call as 50,000 NZEI Te Riu Roa members that all tamariki in Aotearoa deserve an inclusive, engaging education which meets their needs.**

By standing strong together in our union, from late 2024 to early 2026 support staff pushed the government in bargaining from initial offers of what amounted to zero pay increases for more than 85% of teacher aides, to a pay offer comparable to that offered to teachers and improvements in other areas like mileage and PLD.

We have achieved some of what we need in collective bargaining – and now we need to step up to win further and more sustainable change politically.

## The teacher aide funding review

The current teacher aide funding model is unpredictable, contestable, and time-limited and leads to poor outcomes for teacher aides and tamariki alike.

There are two main sources of funding for employing teacher aides – learning support funding streams (such as ORS) and the school operational grant (where funding for teacher aides competes with all the other running costs a school has).

The current funding model leads to insecure employment for teacher aides, lack of investment in their career development and frequent use of fixed term contracts.

A new model was designed by an education sector reference group that included NZEI Te Riu Roa support staff members and principals, PPTA, NZAIMS, NZASA, SPANZ, MOE, NZSTA, NZPPA, NZPF and Te Akatea Principals Association.



## A better model for teacher aide funding

The funding review group unanimously recommended that teacher aide resourcing be delivered via a two-part “hybrid” resourcing model as a fully funded form of staffing entitlement, where:

- schools receive a base level of predictable, formula driven teacher aide resourcing each year, and
- schools continue to receive responsive, individualised teacher aide resourcing on an individual needs’ basis through specific learning support initiatives.

The group recommended retaining some responsive, individualised resourcing in order to strike a balance between predictability and responsiveness. Very simply, it means centralising more of the funding so the funds are stable and predictable.

The group considered that some of these resource streams would be best delivered as a form of staffing entitlement, with the others remaining a cash grant.

A summary of their model is below:



### **When this model was tested with the sector – consultation showed strong support for a fully funded form of staffing entitlement for teacher aides.**

The diverse stakeholder group recommended the Ministry work with the Kaupapa Māori and Māori medium sector to explore how the group’s recommendations align with work to strengthen Kaupapa Māori and Māori medium education and what further changes to resourcing might be needed.

They also recommended the Ministry work separately also with specialist schools, ORS fundholder schools, and Te Aho o te Kura Pounamu to develop bespoke teacher aide resourcing models for these settings.

## Winning the change – for teacher aides and for tamariki

The sector has done the heavy lifting on finding a solution to teacher aide job security – now its time for decision makers in government to deliver. We can do this by

- Calling on all parties this election to commit to implementing job security for support staff – starting with implementing the teacher aide funding review.
- Invite MPs to walk in our shoes for the day – spend a day job shadowing a teacher aide to see what our work is really like
- Getting a teacher aide funding review across the line – and then immediately seeking commitments also for job security for other support staff such as administration, library and science technicians.