

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

16 January 2019

### **Trustees organisation supports discussion on how to support parents or caregivers in sensitive situations**

Jude Barback's [article](#) (Education Central, 16 Jan) has raised a considerable range of challenges on the interactions across the education system and the roles of parents, teachers, principals, boards, the Ministry and other agencies.

Her painful account of the long-held concerns over serious incidents, some of which took place ten or twenty years earlier, is a powerful reminder of further improvements we all seek.

NZSTA also experiences these matters at the sharp end. Through our role in supporting boards of trustees we become involved in difficult, and complex, matters and incidents that have occurred in schools. Our role has been to help support, train and equip boards with the skills and knowledge so they can carry out their functions effectively of foremost being accountable for student achievement, meeting their legal obligations, ensuring delivery of the curriculum and acting as the employer of staff, including appointing and managing the performance of the principal.

In supporting boards, NZSTA provides confidential advice to boards on often difficult and sensitive matters where due to personal circumstances, the details cannot be disclosed. The 40,000 calls to our support service each year will range from simple support request to serious allegations that need further investigation. These are given the highest priority.

“Jude Barback’s source believes that NZSTA encourages stonewalling and un-cooperation.

“In my ten years as President of NZSTA I’ve seen a full picture of many incidents. NZSTA has endeavoured to work with often impassioned people to seek investigation of what has occurred, mediation and resolution,” says NZSTA President Lorraine Kerr.

“It is pleasing to see that Jude notes there are boards who ‘handle difficult situations admirably, fighting hard for students’ rights, following protocol to the letter, and acting in the best interest of students and staff.’ This is the more balanced outcome from the efforts of all parties to resolve complex incidents.”

The Tomorrow’s Schools Review gives us the opportunity to rethink how best to provide support to parents or caregivers who find themselves dissatisfied with the board’s decision

*In our children lies our future - E tipu e rea*

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making. These issues need further discussion. NZSTA will continue to support this discussion because in our children lies our future – E tipu e rea.

## **Ends**

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