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Media release: Survey of primary and intermediate schools

Primary and intermediate schools teachers enjoy their jobs and report high morale levels in the latest national survey of the sector by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER).

However, their morale has slipped since the last NZCER survey in 2010 and their stress levels have increased.

- 92 percent of principals and 94 percent of teachers surveyed said they enjoyed their job.
- 72 percent of principals said their morale was high or very high, down from 87 percent in 2010.
- 74 percent of teachers reported high or very high morale, compared with 86 percent in 2010.
- 48 percent of principals reported high or very high stress levels, compared with 37 percent in 2010.
- Principals reported working 56 to 60 hours a week on average, much the same as a decade ago.

The survey shows a marked decline in the number of principals who think their school's teaching staff entitlement is adequate: 29 percent in 2013, down from 48 percent in 2010. Only 11 percent think their school's operational funding is enough, which is unchanged from the last survey in 2010.

The survey was conducted in July and August 2013 and the report written by NZCER chief researcher Cathy Wylie and senior researcher Linda Bonne. Dr Wylie says the results on a range of measures such as managing workload, stress and slipping morale suggest primary and intermediate school teachers and principals are being stretched too thin on the job.

Parents questioned in the survey were positive, with 89 percent saying they were happy with the quality of their child's schooling. Parents of children in decile 1-2 schools were the most satisfied with their child's experience across a range of measures. Parents of Year 7-8 students were less positive than parents of younger students about most of the aspects of their child's experience.

The survey also asked a series of questions about National Standards. This analysis was published in a conference paper and media release in December 2013 and is available on the NZCER website at: <http://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/publications/national-standards-what-difference-are-they-making>

The NZCER primary and intermediate school survey questioned principals, teachers and trustees at a representative sample of schools, and sought the views of a random sample of 1 in 4 parents in 36 of these schools.

In all, the survey gathered data from 180 principals, 713 teachers, 277 trustees and 684 parents. Full details of the response rate and sampling methodology are available on the NZCER website.

<http://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/national-survey>

For a copy of the report or to arrange an interview with one of the authors, please contact NZCER communications manager Sarah Boyd on sarah.boyd@nzcer.org.nz or 027 231 4300.