



PPCB Professional Coaching, Professional Learning and Wellbeing Support Fund Survey Findings October 2023

Kia ora PPCB e te Whānau,

In 2023 PPCB negotiated a \$6,000 *PPCB Professional Coaching, Professional Learning and Wellbeing Support Fund* for its members. The purpose of the fund is to support and ensure principal leadership development and well-being. The fund is confined to professional coaching that enhances principals' leadership skills and ability to carry out school leadership. Alternatively, a service, experience or activity that supports principals' physical, mental or emotional well-being and has a clear link that enhances or maintains the ability of the principal to function in their role.

The survey was to determine what types of activities principals have engaged in during the first year of the fund, whether they have helped build principals' capability and capacity to carry out their leadership role, and whether the fund had impacted principals' well-being in any way.

Our Findings

The real 'story' behind this research is the comments participants took time to record. There are a huge number covering a large number of issues raised by the questions. We have shared a few that provide the flavour of what many were saying.

General Information about participants

- 114 members participated in the survey or gave information. This represents 33% of our membership
- 84% of participants are non-teaching tumuaki
- The majority of participants are in U4&5 kura - 63%. 8.3% are in U1&2 kura
- Experience as tumuaki varied - 1/2 years-12.8%, 3-5 years-22%, 6-9 years-32.1%, 10-20 years-33%, 20+ years-15.8%
- Time at their current kura also varied widely
- 77.1% were Pākehā, 10.1% Māori, with a variety of nationalities including Pasifika
- 58.7% were female, 41.3% male
- 66.1% were from urban kura, 33.9% rural
- 94.5% of participants are from English medium and the rest are both Māori and English medium

What activities did the participants undertake with the fund?

Participants identified that the primary focus of their considerations in spending the fund met the criteria set out in the guidelines. This was, to meet their professional needs as leaders as well as ensure their wellbeing. The majority noted the need to have control over the fund to ensure high-quality activities were undertaken. They had no issues accessing the fund and their focus did not change over

"To fill my cup - especially around leadership"

"To attend something that would feed my passion, be relevant to my context and allow for wellbeing enhancement."

"Access to professional learning opportunities that I would never normally be able to attend due to being in a smaller rural school that cannot afford to send me to international conferences. I also wanted professional coaching to support me with my current puzzles of practice."

time, even after continued discussions with Presiding Members.

There was a wide variety of activities in the use of the fund but the main activities were:

- Attending conferences
- Collaborative groups, e.g., PLG
- Professional growth cycles
- One-on-one coaching
- One-off courses
- One-off wellbeing activities
- Wellbeing memberships

There was no correlation between the size of the school, urban, rural or tumuaki experience and the activities they chose to undertake.

A number of participants noted that attending conferences was both professional growth and wellbeing.

Many participants collaborated with colleagues on part of the use of their fund and this is borne out by the activities listed above. These collaborations took a variety of forms including conversations, attending conferences together and staying on to debrief, PLG and Kāhui Ako/cluster activities. Others collaborated to ensure they were using the fund wisely and within the spirit of the guidelines.

The majority of participants had Presiding Member (PM)/board support - 96.4%. This is a significant amount and positive for our members. Although PMs were overwhelmingly supportive of the use of the fund, 21% of principals indicated that the discussion they had with their Presiding Members still didn't have an impact on the PM's understanding of their role. The majority indicated that maybe it had. A very small number indicated that their PM was not supportive or resistant.

"Provided an opportunity to not feel guilty about using limited school funds on my own professional learning and well-being. It was nice to prioritize myself for once."

"I was great to know there was putea for me to use with consultation with the Presiding Member for my Growth and Wellbeing. Wellbeing is the priority...."

"Have not been able to use the fund to support wellbeing as PM does not quite see it this way. I was looking to take a day of 2 each term away from school to clear head and refocus."

"My PM is risk averse and wanted to go down the MoE statement on this, so could not quite see how supporting wellbeing was relevant...."

"Due to the limitations on the use of the wellbeing fund, it has just simply been viewed as a cost-saving measure by the Board. They now see no need in me having other PD besides my conferences."

"Principal wellbeing is a standing agenda item at Board meetings. It is also a separate item on the Board work plan"

How was the fund spent?

Not surprisingly the majority of funding was spent on conferences. It was the main activity participated in by participants and conferences, travel and accommodation are expensive. Costing of conferences was one of the reasons the negotiation team ensured it was included in the guidelines, especially for our small school colleagues. Other professional development opportunities, PLD and PGC also had reasonable amounts of money spent on them. This is also because such activities are likely to include course fees, travel and in some cases accommodation.

The fund provided some participants with multiple activities and some participants were carrying part or all the funds over to 2024 for an overseas conference/experience.

The use of the fund was consistent across school sizes.

Our findings demonstrate that principals are being respectful of the intent behind the money and not rushing out to spend it, evidenced by a percentage who have saved the money until 2024 as they have reflected on the best way to use the fund. The fact principals are seeking bespoke opportunities would also support this.

What has been the impact of the fund so far?

86.4% of participants identified that the fund was very *valuable* or *valuable* to their professional growth and wellbeing.

Principals identified that the activities they participated in impacted all the areas of leadership capabilities with the top five being:

- Building and maintaining positive relationships with staff and learners
- Building and maintaining positive relationships with the school community
- Ensuring the delivery of high-quality teaching practice and curriculum across the school
- Establishing and maintaining a clear shared vision, strategic direction and goals for the school
- Providing direct coaching for teachers to improve performance

It is for our Wellbeing, as long as we can spend it on this for memberships that relate to us the fund is working. When Boards see it as a professional fund for conference and other professional membership then it doesn't achieve the drive of wellbeing.

I'm not aware of any other initiatives that have required a tumuaki to take care of themselves and been funded to do this.

I have found the ability to connect with my local colleagues and knowing I am connecting with international colleagues highly refreshing and has given me a new insight into different ways of working. The coaching with a highly experienced professional coach has also been outstanding.

Given the areas of growth that principals note have been impacted, it is fair to conclude that the provision of the fund has contributed to leadership development and professional growth. This would also apply to the benefits available to students, communities, and staff as a result of the principals' use of the fund to further their leadership.

There were indications from some participants that the fund was 'timely' in helping them stay refreshed and remain in their roles.

It was clear the fund was a "game changer" for many small and rural school participants.

What have participants planned for the use of the fund in 2024?

- Some participants have not yet used any of the 2023 funds; overwhelmingly, 70% intend to attend conferences with the fund in 2024 and many of those conferences are overseas.
- Collaborative groups are also seen as an important use of the fund next year but participants have also identified that in 2024 they wish to participate in or continue to participate in one-to-one coaching. Coaching was the original intention of the fund and the research on its impact on skills and wellbeing was used in negotiations along with other wellbeing research.
- Many participants were looking for alternative, bespoke leadership professional learning opportunities in the future.
- Wellbeing activities were also identified as another use but 20% had not yet made a decision about the use of funds in 2024.

"There is now a deeper level of discussion about the impact of our well being in our personal and professional practice."

"In my time as a Principal, the well-being of a Principal has never really been discussed. To have this discussed BoT level is great, I normally talk about my staff not me!"

"Now we don't have to feel guilty about growing and supporting ourselves by taking money out of the far to small PLD budget. No one else thinks about us (not even the MOE), so in order for that to occur, we have to do it ourselves."

What did participants want to see to support the principals' access to and the use of the fund?

The main response to this question was greater clarity on what the fund can and cannot be used for and examples of best practice. It was also clear participants wanted this information to be shared directly with Presiding Members as well as PPCB members.

Participants still wanted a focus on wellbeing and some or greater flexibility in the choice of activities. There was a caution to ensure the guidelines were not too prescriptive as to lose this flexibility.

A number mentioned that they would have preferred this fund directly into their salary, a lump sum to them personally, a mixture or paid as concurrence.

Many mentioned they would like boards to understand the role of the principal better and why principals have chosen to spend the funds the way they have.

Some concerns were raised by participants as to the professional decisions when some colleagues are choosing to spend the fund. It appears this is partly fueled by comments on social media, concern about what the auditor will say and how it will be interpreted if the media gets hold of certain information.

I have overseas opportunities, to Australia, Canada, Rarotonga & England planned for next year. Having these opportunities has created an increasing level of loyalty and commitment to my school and community. I see tremendous opportunities for my school based on my experiences in other educational contexts. This fund has reinvigorated my zest for Leadership.

Without the fund I would not have attended the conference this year or next year. So thank you for PPCB.

There was no chance of securing a coach/supervision without this support and we have insufficient budget to allow for attendance at distant conferences.

It is an awesome initiative in that it is solely for the Principal and had so much flexibility around it. Was wonderful to be able to get out of NZ and hear from gurus in the field to reignite my fire 🔥

Recommendations

1. PPCB collect more detailed information about their membership e.g. gender, ethnicity, rural, urban, teaching, non-teaching and years of experience and store this on our database. This database will ensure that PPCB researchers have this information about all their members for future research.
2. It became clear in this round of funding that clearer guidelines and best practices in the use of the fund be given to members. This was reiterated by the participants although flexibility is still important to our members.
3. That PPCB meets, with some urgency, with the Office of the Auditor General to get clarity around some uses of the fund that might not meet the threshold of the Sensitive Expenditure rules. We would also like to have clarity from the OAG as to what was shared with school auditors and the impact this will have on members.
4. Ensure this information from the OAG meeting, along with the new guidelines, is shared with members and directly to the Presiding Members prior to 2024.

Conclusion

It is clear from the participants' responses that the fund has already had an impact on both leadership capability, capacity and wellbeing. Responses will also help us shape the data collection for next year when we delve deeper into the ongoing impact of this valuable resource.

The challenge ahead is to reshape the guidelines to ensure that PPCB's intent in negotiating the fund is upheld, give some flexibility as well as meeting the requirements of the Sensitive Expenditure rules.

This survey provides important data for PPCB to act on members' behalf in future negotiations to ensure the **Professional Coaching, Professional Learning and Wellbeing Support Fund** becomes embedded in the Collective Agreement. This will be increasingly important with the change of government and the fears raised in some quarters that cost-cutting might see the fund become a casualty or severe restrictions placed upon its use.

I'd like to thank all the participants for their contribution to the survey. We appreciate the insights from your comments and the time you took to give us this information.

A special thanks to Susan Jennison from Westburn Te Kura O Hereora for her help with the data crunching.

Nga mihi,

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