

PRESS RELEASE:

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THE WORK OF THE GES DIRECTOR GENERAL IS NOT PEDAGOGY AND CURRICULUM - TEACHER UNIONS STRIKE UNWARRANTED

We want to encourage teachers that it's time to focus on issues that can improve the state of our profession rather than those that only benefit a small group of privileged individuals. It's important to highlight the malfeasance and self-serving motivations behind the three other unions' proclaimed strike. First and foremost, the new DG's lack of expertise in education is cited as the primary justification for the alleged strike. When asked about educationists, teacher unions continue to dodge the topic because they are unable to describe what an educationist is.

An educationist is defined as "a person who has a special knowledge of the principles and methods of teaching" by the Cambridge Dictionary. The Unions' position becomes problematic and inconsistent if we accept this definition as their position. The work of the DG has been automatically degraded by the unions into theory and practice or pedagogy and curriculum. What then qualifies a pedagogue as a qualified individual to handle GES administrative tasks? Again, in line with the Unions' justification, this implies that even the least qualified teacher could carry out the duties of the DG. If the DG's job could be performed in this manner with such ease, then we would not require any additional qualifications to be considered for selection. Anyone who is intelligent and has a solid foundation in technical knowledge and skill could carry out the same task.

We are unsure of exactly where GNAT and Co.'s interests lie if the administrative tasks cannot be successfully carried out by someone who has experience working as a bank administrator, lecturer and director of tertiary education at the Ministry of Education. It is depressing that teachers must submit to this feeble justification to engage in strike action. This, in our opinion, is unjustified and uncalled for. Strike action must be supported by more proof than a trivial appointment, and union leaders must not give us any cause to think otherwise.

When the teacher union realized that their strike was unnecessary and counterproductive, they quickly distributed information to their members, claiming to have consulted them and including other concerns that ATAG voiced. This raises significant doubts regarding the veracity of the strike and the motivation behind it. Although we have no trouble critiquing appointments, teacher unions shouldn't be driven to only call for strikes with pointless demands.

ATAG thinks that the DG's achievement is a team effort, not an individual endeavour. We are unable to object to the young DG's appointment because he has not yet started working and we are unsure of his value. We urge the teacher unions to choose another route in their pursuit of hearings and redress, to halt the knee-jerk strike, and to at the very least treat teachers with dignity. They must also apologize to their members for launching a strike that dampens rather than energizes them.

...Signed...

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