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## National teacher strike: What's going on today – and why

Sapeer Mayron · 05:00, Mar 16 2023

CHRISTEL YARDLEY

Marcia Martin works multiple jobs just to stay afloat amid rising interest rates and cost of living increases.

**Teachers across the country strike on Thursday, seeking better pay and working conditions. About 50,000 teachers and principals are expected to walk off the job in what's shaping up to be the biggest teaching strike since May 2019. So how did we get here and what could happen next?**

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## The breakdown

- Negotiations between the Ministry of Education and two unions have been going on since May. Those two unions represent 66,000 members.
- The latest offers from the Government include an 11.7% pay rise over two years for **new primary school teachers** and a 7.6% increase for highest paid primary teachers.
- Two days before the strike, the Government **held urgent last-minute talks** with primary teachers to prevent their strike action, but those failed.
- The Post Primary Teachers' Association (PPTA) rejected the last offer in October 2022 on the grounds it barely addressed their claims and suggested pay rises below the cost of living, which on average was about a **6.7% pay rise over two years**.
- Rallies and marches are happening in multiple places on Thursday, including a gathering at Parliament in Wellington at midday. In Auckland, teachers will march from Fort St to Aotea Square from 11am.
- Nationwide, teachers will be emailing MPs, picketing on roadsides and outside the electoral offices of MPs, as well as handing out leaflets. In Tauranga, teachers will be marching to Education Minister Jan Tinetti's office.

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- \* **[Where political parties sit on teacher pay and conditions as thousands prepare to strike](#)**
- \* **['Crying out for help': Principal says more funding needed to support primary schools](#)**
- \* **[Teachers explain in their own words why they're striking on Thursday](#)**

Each union is lobbying for slightly different terms for their next collective agreement contracts. But they all want salary offers which meet inflation and encourage educators to stay in the industry. In particular:

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- Kindergarten teachers want more paid sick leave than the 10 days in their contracts. It's one of the sectors with the highest illness rates in the country.

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students with mental health and home issues.

STUFF

About 50,000 teachers are walking off the job on Thursday. (File photo)

## Who does what

- The New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI) represents primary school teachers and kindergartens ([kindergartens negotiate their collective agreement with the government](#), unlike other early childhood education centres which are not participating in this industrial action).
- The Post Primary Teachers Association (PPTA) represents secondary school teachers.

## Who said what

- Education Minister Jan Tinetti said she had “huge respect for the work our teachers do and am disappointed about the breakdown in negotiations”.
- Prime Minister Chris Hipkins, the former education minister, said he hoped strike action could be averted, saying: “The pay increases that teachers have

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what it was like to be on the front line of education. We need all politicians to come together in a consistent, evidence-based approach that would support the best education for children”.

- PPTA acting president Chris Abercrombie said some politicians “may need a wee bit more education themselves about the reality of being in education”.

STUFF

Teachers will take to the streets on Friday for better pay and conditions. (File photo)

## What next?

- Many schools will be closed all day, but some may be providing child supervision.
- **Employers are not required to give staff time off to look after their children,** leading to tens of thousands of parents and caregivers having to work from home, **use their holiday allowance or take unpaid leave.**
- There will be **rallies, demonstrations and even a few sausage sizzles** throughout the strike nationwide.