

Supporting all schools to succeed

Reform of the Tomorrow's Schools system

Information for learners | ākongā

All schools should be great places to learn. We're resetting the system that governs, manages, administers, and supports schools so that all learners have the same chance to succeed.

Thirty years ago, the Tomorrow's Schools reforms changed New Zealand's schooling system, creating a system intended to better engage parents, whānau and communities with their local schools.

While the current system has strengths, it is inadequately serving some of our learners, in particular Māori, Pacific, people with disabilities and/or learning needs, and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Now, New Zealand has the opportunity to reset the education system with a greater level of resource and expertise at the front line where it is needed.

This reset is significant. Changes will require ongoing investment of time and resource, and will need to be managed in a coherent and connected way over the next ten years.

Boards of Trustees focusing on student outcomes

The changes will broaden the focus of your school Boards. The Boards will not only be focused on students achieving the highest possible educational standard, but also on making sure your school is inclusive. This means catering for all students with differing needs, and reflecting the Treaty of Waitangi and the rights of all students.

Meeting the needs of Māori

The system needs to support and value the wellbeing, identity, language and culture of every learner/ākongā.

The reforms emphasise the power of collaboration and partnership; and the value of working closely with iwi and Māori to lift the performance of the education system, so ākongā Māori enjoy and achieve education success as Māori.

The development of a Māori Medium Network Plan for the next decade has been commissioned, as well as an Education Workforce Strategy to ensure teacher supply for the Māori medium pathway.

There will be greater engagement by Māori/iwi in school governance. The Ministry of Education will develop advice about how this can be achieved by June 2020.

A new process to resolve serious disputes with schools

If you have an issue, it should be raised with your school. However, if you and your school cannot agree, then an independent panel will be made available free of charge that has the right balance of community representation, knowledge and skills.

The panels will resolve serious disputes in a localised, inclusive, culturally appropriate and timely manner. These panels will be created over the next 2 to 4 years.

Complaints about teachers will continue to be within the jurisdiction of the Teaching Council.

Enhancing the student voice in school governance

While there is already a student representative on your school board, hearing and involving more children and young people in school governance is important.

The changes mean that the Children's Commissioner will carry out work to review the requirement for student participation in school governance and to provide recommendations on what improvements can be made. This will take into account the United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child.

What does this mean for learners/ākonga?

If we stick with conventional approaches to education, young people risk being left without the necessary skills, tools, and resilience they need to respond and thrive now and in the future.

New Zealand was recently ranked 33 out of 38 developed countries for its overall educational inequity. This is the legacy of a system that has failed to invest the necessary resources in achieving equity and excellence for all learners.

Changes are needed to provide barrier-free access for every child and young person, with specific resources available to those who need them, and a system that supports their aspirations in a rapidly changing world.

What's next?

The Government acknowledges that this is a significant change to further strengthen the education system. Changes related to governance and management of schools need to work in a complex system that includes early learning and tertiary education. The changes require ongoing investment of both time and resource, and will need to be managed in a coherent and connected way over the next ten years.

A detailed timeline can be found in Appendix 1 of the Government's position document, *'Supporting all schools to succeed: Reform of the Tomorrow's Schools system'*.

Website: <https://conversation.education.govt.nz/conversations/tomorrows-schools-review/>