

# Our Schooling Futures: Stronger Together

## Whiria Ngā Kura Tūātitini

Report by the Tomorrow's Schools Independent Taskforce

# FAQs



## Background

### *What is Tomorrow's Schools and why is a review necessary?*

Tomorrow's Schools is the name given to the restructure of our schooling system in 1989. The review looks at the way our schooling system works, and whether it meets the needs and aspirations of all learners.

### **Further information about the review is available here:**

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

The Tomorrow's Schools Review is a key aspect of the Education Work Programme set by the Government. A long term vision for education in Aotearoa New Zealand is at the core of the work programme.

### **Further information about the Education Work Programme is available here:**

<https://conversation.education.govt.nz/about/>

### *Who appointed the Independent Taskforce and when?*

The Minister of Education appointed the Independent Taskforce to lead the review of Tomorrow's Schools on 3 April 2018. The Terms of Reference required the Taskforce to conduct a broad-based review and to provide its recommendations on the future arrangements for schooling in New Zealand.

### **Further information about the Terms of Reference is available here:**

<https://conversation.education.govt.nz/conversations/tomorrows-schools-review/about-the-tomorrows-schools-review/terms-of-reference/>

### *Who are the Taskforce members?*

The Taskforce is being led by Bali Haque, Chair, with members Barbara Ala'alatoa, Professor Mere Berryman, Professor John O'Neill and Dr Cathy Wylie.

### **Further information about the Taskforce members is available here**

<https://conversation.education.govt.nz/conversations/tomorrows-schools-review/about-the-tomorrows-schools-review/independent-taskforce-members/>

### ***Who did the Taskforce consult with?***

Over 5 months, the Taskforce met with 200 different groups around the country – students, principals, parents, teachers, Māori and Pacific focus groups, Iwi, trustees, employers, community support groups and Ministry regional staff.

An online survey was completed by 2,274 people, 94 formal submissions were received and there were 319 comments on social media posts.

The Taskforce also accessed a wide range of educational research and analysis.

### ***What will happen with the Taskforce's report and its recommendations?***

The report has been given to the Minister of Education to consider. He now wishes to hear feedback from the public and key stakeholders on the Taskforce's recommendations. Consultation is now open until 07 April 2019.

To make a submission email [tomorrows.schools@education.govt.nz](mailto:tomorrows.schools@education.govt.nz)

Regional Hui and an online survey are also planned for late January-March 2019.

Once consultation is complete, a report will be provided to the Minister by the Taskforce on the feedback they received about their report and recommendations through the consultation process.

## **The Tomorrow's Schools Review report**

The report notes that by some outcome measures, many of our students do well at school. However, the system does not work well enough for our most disadvantaged children and young people.

There is no evidence to suggest that the current self-governing schools model has been successful in raising student achievement. In fact, the performance of our students has plateaued and in some areas deteriorated. The gap between the best performing and worst performing students has widened.

Those most poorly served by the system are children from disadvantaged homes, too many Maori and Pacific families, and those with additional learning needs.

A transformative cultural change is needed to build a schooling system where all learners succeed.

The report looks at eight key issues and makes detailed recommendations on each.

*Below are our answers to some questions you may have about the Independent Taskforce's (the Taskforce) proposals and what they may mean in practice.*

### ***What will change for Boards of Trustees?***

The role of boards will be reoriented so that their core responsibilities are the school strategic and annual plans. These plans and their implementation determine the character and nature of the school. They impact directly on student wellbeing and success, localised curriculum, and assessment practice. The Taskforce strongly believes that these are the things that really matter to parents.

Boards will also have significant involvement in and final approval/veto rights over the employment of principals.

Boards will also have full control of all locally raised funds.



***What will Education Hubs do?***

Education Hubs would work with teachers, principals, Boards of Trustees, iwi and community to achieve the best outcome for all children and young people in their local area.

Education Hubs would be designated Crown Agencies. Their directors would be appointed by the Minister of Education. At least half would be practising educators. Education Hub Boards would be required to have iwi representation.

Education Hubs would have responsibility for partnering with schools. They would replace the existing Ministry of Education (the Ministry) regional offices.

Education Hubs would provide ongoing high quality curriculum, learning, assessment and pedagogy (teaching methods) advisory services and support to teachers. They would provide Leadership Advisers for principals.

Education Hubs would assume many of the current 'business' Governance duties of school Boards of Trustees. Hubs would have responsibility for employing school principals and teachers, enrolment schemes, 5YA (five year agreements) for Property, financial management and reporting, and health and safety.

Education Hubs would also monitor the performance of schools on an ongoing basis, provide support as necessary, and ensure whanau and parents have access to quality information about every school in the Education Hub.

***With the new Education Hubs, are the Boards still really able to impact on the school?***

Yes, very much so as the role will focus on learning and teaching decisions for their schools which directly affects the welfare of students: localised curriculum and assessment, student success and wellbeing. Boards will also have a say and final approval/veto in the Principal appointed to their school.

Boards would still be consulted on property and matters but would not need to manage this directly themselves - this would be done by the Education Hubs.

***What will principals do? How much support will they receive?***

Principals would lead all matters relating to teaching and learning in the school and would work closely with their Boards and the Education Hub.

They would have full control of their staffing entitlements and appoint their own teachers.

Principals would also control and have full discretion of the use of their operational grants.

Principals would be supported on an ongoing basis by leadership advisers employed by the Education Hub. A National Leadership Centre would champion a coherent and planned approach to school leadership and support for school leaders nationally.

Principals will be provided with ongoing employment with the Education Hub and be appointed to particular schools on 5 year contracts.

***What if a school is very keen to continue to look after their 5YA for Property and does not want any help from anyone - is that OK?***

Although the Education Hubs will assume 5YA responsibilities, control of these funds could be delegated to principals if they meet national risk and capabilities guidelines criteria.

Given schools would control their operational grants and staffing, does this mean they still have to do their own accounting, maintenance procurement, and payroll for support staff they employ?

Not necessarily. Schools could choose to use Education Hub services to carry out some or all these tasks, but this will be their choice.

***What support will the teachers get?***

The Education Hub would provide or broker a comprehensive advisory service to teachers. This means much more support for ongoing professional learning and development for all teachers.

Providing teachers with more support to improve their own learning will mean they are better equipped to meet the diverse needs of their students.

The Taskforce also recommends a coherent national schooling workforce strategy, more flexible guidelines for initial teacher education, teacher appraisal and collaboration across schools, and guaranteed employment for newly qualified teachers.

***Will teachers be properly trained and qualified?***

Yes, absolutely but the Taskforce recommends more flexible training opportunities including school based models. The Taskforce also recommends that school support staff and teacher aides become 'para professionals' with high status and more opportunities to support teachers in their work.

***How many Education Hubs will there be?***

The aim would be to ensure that each Education Hub is able to work in close partnership with all of its schools. The Taskforce recommends that Education Hubs work with an average of 125 schools though this will vary depending on locality and need.

***What about Kaupapa Māori settings?***

The Taskforce recommends that consideration be given to establishing a national Education Hub which will be dedicated to Kaupapa Māori education settings. It should be co-designed and established with Māori to ensure connected and parallel learning pathways for Māori.

***How is the performance of Education Hubs monitored?***

It is recommended that a new independent Education Evaluation Office (EEO) take responsibility for providing regular reports to Parliament on Education Hub performance. Education Hubs will have to be education and learner focused organisations that work in partnership with schools and will be held to the highest standards of performance.

The Ministry of Education will also have a monitoring and oversight role.

***How is the performance of schools monitored?***

The Education Hubs would monitor the performance of schools on an ongoing basis, provide support as necessary, and ensure whānau and parents have access to quality information about every school in the Education Hub.

***Will there be a complaints and advocacy system for parents?***

Yes, parents and students will have access to a local and responsive formal advocacy and complaints service via their Education Hub. If parents or students need to resolve an issue with their school, the Education Hub would provide the independent service to ensure the complainant is provided with a support person.

***How does this impact on the New Zealand School Trustees Association (NZSTA)?***

Education Hubs will be responsible for much of the advisory work currently contracted to the NZSTA by the Ministry of Education. It is expected that NZSTA will have a different advisory and support function for the reoriented school boards at national and regional levels.

***What will be different for our children?***

Everything in this report, and every single recommendation, is focussed on improving the wellbeing and success of all our children, particularly those not currently well served by the system.

***Will children and young people have a right to attend their local school?***

Yes.

***What will happen to equity funding?***

The decile system is widely recognised as being problematic.

The Taskforce supports a new Equity Index, developed by the Ministry of Education. This new index would target additional resources to schools better than the current decile system does. The Taskforce recommends implementing the Equity Index and increasing equity funding to a minimum of 6% of total operational and staffing funding.

***Is there going to be more money for schools?***

The Taskforce found that current resourcing is insufficient. In particular, smaller schools often miss out. Costs have also risen because there is more digital technology in classrooms, the inclusion of Te Reo in English schools, greater demand in Māori-medium schools, and better identification of children with complex learning needs.

***How can we reduce unhealthy competition between schools and improve access to high quality schooling?***

To achieve equity, we must focus on:

- » More active planning and management of the schools in an area. This will be based on the needs of the 'network' of schools rather than the needs of individual schools; and
- » Getting funding and resourcing right so that schools serving disadvantaged communities are better resourced.

***Are you bringing in compulsory hard zoning?***

No, the Taskforce believes that parents need to be able to choose the school that best meets the needs of their child. However, school choice is too often based on misconceptions about school quality.

The Taskforce does recommend limits on out of zone enrolments, more oversight by Education Hubs to ensure existing and new enrolment zones are fair and equitable, and more consistent application of transport and enrolment regulations for state integrated schools.

***Does the Taskforce recommend continuing with Kāhui Ako in its current form?***

Kāhui Ako has worked well in some areas to encourage community collaboration but other schools have found the current model of community responsibility and professional learning challenging. The Taskforce recommends that the Kāhui Ako model include more flexibility with clustering of schools, achievement requirements and how staffing and funding resources are used.

***Is the Taskforce suggesting an end to intermediate schools?***

Yes, in the long term.

The Taskforce recommends a schooling transition structure that better meets the developmental needs of students. This model could be:

- » Primary schools (year 1-6), middle schools (years 7-10), and senior college (years 11-13)
- » OR full primary schools (years 1-8) and secondary schools (years 9-13).
- » Or composite (Y1-13) schools, particularly in rural areas.

***Will schools be open during the evenings and weekends?***

Yes. Schools have valuable and often under-utilised property assets. We recommend that school facilities should be used more intensively by schools and their communities.

***What will the new Education Evaluation Office (EEO) do?***

The EEO would have responsibility for evaluating the performance of the New Zealand education system based on agreed national goals and measures.

The EEO would monitor Education Hub performance against their KPIs and report directly to Parliament. The EEO will also evaluate the performance of the Ministry of Education and will be responsible for the quality assurance functions currently carried out by NZQA.

The EEO would not have responsibility for monitoring the performance of individual schools because this would be done by the Education Hubs.

***How would the Ministry of Education's role change?***

It is important that our national Ministry is valued by all those who work in and use the schooling system. The Taskforce recommends a reconfiguration of the Ministry so that it has a major focus on Curriculum, Learning, Assessment and Pedagogy. The Ministry would also focus on high level educational research, policy development, and data analysis for system improvement.

***How would the role of the Teaching Council change?***

The role of the Teaching Council would expand to include a new Leadership Centre to operationalise the Leadership Strategy and Capabilities Framework.

This would set national guidelines for leaders, including principals, in the sector.

***Why disestablish the Education Review Office (ERO) and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA)?***

The current configuration of agencies has resulted in overlapping and confused functions and responsibilities. This is particularly so for quality assurance, review and evaluation and curriculum and assessment issues.

The Taskforce recommends that the Education Hubs should take responsibility for reviews and quality assurance of schools in their area as well as system wide evaluation.

Curriculum and assessment policy development and implementation – including NCEA assessments conduct, writing and operation of examinations – should sit with the Ministry.

***How will all this be implemented?***

The Taskforce recommends that an Establishment Group composed of experts, practitioners and government officials which has a three to five-year life leads the implementation process.

The changes proposed by the Taskforce are transformative and significant. They will need to be carefully planned, co-designed and have cross party political support.

