

Media Release	June 29th, 2009
From NZEI Te Riu Roa	For immediate use

ANGER OVER NATIONAL STANDARDS CONSULTATION

The education sector union NZEI Te Riu Roa is calling on the government to push out the timeframe for the implementation of national standards and says schools will actively oppose any centralised reporting of the standards data.

Ministry of Education consultation meetings on the proposed national standards are nearing an end. Schools are expected to have the standards in place by the beginning of next year.

However NZEI says the overwhelming message it has had from the thousands of teachers and principals who attended the meetings is that the timeframe is too tight and they are angry over the consultation process.

NZEI President Frances Nelson says they feel like the consultation process has simply been an information-sharing exercise, and their views have not been listened to.

She says the deadline for having the new national standards in place and being used as a tool to report back to parents should be extended for at least another year.

“The government needs to learn the lessons from NCEA and acknowledge that time is an important ingredient in successfully bedding down any new system. Schools are in the midst of implementing the revised curriculum and do not want to compromise that by rushing through the new national standards. The risk is that neither will be implemented properly,” she says.

There has also been extensive feedback from NZEI members that they are firmly against any centralised collection of standards data and will actively oppose it. Currently assessment data is reported to Boards of Trustees and school communities, not nationally. The Minister has indicated that schools which don't send in their data will be acting against the law.

Ms Nelson says “this clearly means the government intends changing the law to enable data collection which will lead to the creation of league tables which is not in the interests of children's learning.”

NZEI will be closely monitoring what comes out of the national standards consultation process to see whether the government takes the views of the sector on board ahead of their implementation.

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