

# HANDS UP FOR LEARNING!

KIA MAU KI TE WHAKAAKO

NZEI TE RIU ROA  
NEW ZEALAND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE



14 June 2010

## SURVEY PAINTS BLEAK PICTURE OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

A survey of primary and intermediate school principals shows they are under immense pressure to implement National Standards but have very little confidence in doing so.

More than 700 principals responded to the online survey carried out by the education sector union NZEI Te Riu Roa. The survey aimed to get an overview of how principals and their schools are responding to the Government's National Standards policy and how well prepared they are to implement it.

The overwhelming message is that schools feel implementation is being rushed, professional training has been inadequate, the Standards don't align with the curriculum and don't fit with current assessment tools.

94% of principals said they had concerns about National Standards and their implementation and only 10.1% thought National Standards would make a positive difference to student learning.

When asked how confident they were that they'd had enough time and professional learning to implement the National Standards policy, only 2.5% said they felt very confident, while 75% said they were not very confident or severely lacking in confidence.

There were also significant levels of dissatisfaction with the National Standards professional development training. Of the 82.5% of principals who said they'd attended one of the Ministry of Education sessions, 66.5% were not very satisfied or dissatisfied with the training programme.

In terms of where schools are at with implementation, the survey shows 68% are taking some steps towards implementation, but 17% or 119 schools are either not implementing or deferring implementation.

"What this survey so clearly illustrates is that six months after they were rolled out, there is still a lot of confusion and principals lack belief and confidence that National Standards will make a difference. The results are very telling," says NZEI President Frances Nelson.

"We have a situation where schools are complying out of a fear of breaking the law - not because they have any professional confidence or commitment to the National Standards policy. One principal commented in the survey that they were 'creating an illusion of compliance' while others said they were implementing reluctantly or doing as little as possible within the legal requirements."

Frances Nelson says the number of principals who participated in the survey paints a meaningful picture of what's really happening in schools with National Standards.

"It's not too late to listen to the voice of principals, teachers, schools and parents, and acknowledge that the Standards are flawed and are being rushed. To move forward the Government must find a healthier and more productive way of implementing change and working with schools and their communities."

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

NZEI SPOKESPERSON: National President Frances Nelson

MEDIA CONTACT: Liz Brown