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NZEI TE RIU ROA
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NEW APPROACH TO STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT MAKES MOCKERY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

The Government's announcement of a major new approach to lifting student achievement makes a mockery of National Standards, says the education sector union NZEI Te Riu Roa.

According to the changes schools will receive more support from new Ministry of Education achievement specialists, new intervention programmes will help support failing children and professional development contracts will be opened up to a range of organisations.

"The Government should have focussed on these sorts of initiatives from the beginning rather than wasting \$36 million on a set of untried and untested National Standards," says NZEI President Frances Nelson.

Principals, teachers and schools have been asking for this sort of extra support and resourcing for years because they know that building capacity and capability within the teaching profession is what improves student outcomes.

"We will want assurances that this new team of Education Ministry achievement specialists which will be going into schools is not simply a National Standards SWAT team bent on compliance checks around implementation of the Standards. It must be part of a genuine attempt to deliver better support and resourcing to schools, teachers and students," says Ms Nelson.

More resourcing for children who are struggling is welcome but schools don't need National Standards to identify those students. They have always been able to identify them through current assessment practices.

"It is good to see the Government responding to what schools actually need to improve student achievement which are tailored and focussed programmes and resourcing for teachers and students."

"If it had adopted this approach earlier it could have saved a lot of money and discontent. These are the sort of things which will make a difference to teaching and learning, not National Standards," says Frances Nelson.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

NZEI SPOKESPERSON: National President Frances Nelson 0272542255

MEDIA CONTACT: Liz Brown 04-3822703(w) or 0272683291