

REPORTING OF NATIONAL STANDARDS DATA

The National Government has been re-elected with an education manifesto that includes an increased emphasis on reporting student achievement at both school level and system level. There will be a requirement for Boards to "publish annual plans, provisional targets, and achievements by 28 February each year". The National Party says it will "shift the resourcing model, so it incentivises performance," with Education Minister Anne Tolley reported as saying this means paying top performing schools more.

In an environment where high stakes league tables are to be published and school resourcing may be linked to student achievement results, NZEI, BTAC and NZPF recommend that:

1. The purpose of assessment

Boards should carefully consider their policies on the reporting of student achievement information to the Ministry of Education, placing priority on their obligations under the Education Act to use quality assessment to provide quality teaching and learning for their students.

2. Reliability

Boards should consider including contextual information and/or "information warnings" to both their parent community and the Ministry of Education about the quality and integrity of their National Standards data, including a statement of concern about the inconsistency of implementation, lack of moderation and variability involved in coming to overall teacher judgements using the Standards.

3. Format of data

Boards should consider adopting the style and format of reporting that best protects their students and supports their community rather than the template offered by the Ministry of Education. This might include only reporting whole-school data and reporting the numbers and proportions of students at, above, below and well below in one or a combination of the following ways:

- * graphically (pie charts or bar charts);
- * in te reo or Pasifika languages;
- * using fractions or text rather than percentages;
- * using narrative rather than tables

4. Student privacy

Boards are encouraged to take on board the legal advice offered in the attached barrister's letter and err on the side of caution when reporting achievement data in order to protect students' privacy. While there is no "safe" minimum number in terms of the group size that is reported on, and NAG2A requires only school-level data to be reported, we note that policy in other countries suggests minimum group sizes of 5 or 10¹.

Regards

Ian Leckie
President
NZEI Te Riu Roa

Peter Simpson
President
NZPF

Perry Rush
Spokesperson
BTAC

¹ For example, British Columbia policy states: "To prevent the possibility of associating statistical data with any identifiable individual, when reporting personal information, numbers or percentages are suppressed if they are elements of a population that are **less than ten.**"

In the United States the "No Child Left Behind" law required states to "establish rules for the smallest number of students in a subgroup (e.g., category) that can be disaggregated *without revealing personally identifiable information about an individual student*". Wisconsin considers a group too small to report if the number of students in the group **is five or less** but points out that "*indirect disclosure occurs when data are reported both for all students in a group and for a large subset of this group leaving only a small subset not reported. Data about groups larger than five are sometimes not reported to avoid possible indirect disclosure of confidential information about the smaller group*". American Samoa and Texas have adopted a similar policy, while in the state of Hawaii, performance data is reported outside the school only if there are **10** or more students in a cohort.