

National Standards Forum Follow-up

NZEI Principals Council & Primary Teachers Advisory Group

23 November 2009

The NZEI National Standards Forum believes that the national standards policy represents considerable risk to student learning. The academics and researchers present confirmed the practitioner view that the system should not embark upon a course of action such as this without rigorous trials being undertaken first.

Themes –

1. Practitioners are neither engaged with nor have “ownership” this policy.
2. The validity of the standards is untested and presents risk both to the teaching process and to students learning.
3. The short timeframe for implementation of national standards puts schools under undue pressure and thus presents a significant risk to the NZC.
4. The development of appropriate moderation frameworks, processes and exemplars is essential to assist in consistently interpreting what each standard represents.
5. Professional Development that meets the varying needs of staff and trustees is essential for every school prior to embarking on implementation to ensure the process supports quality teaching within the framework of the NZC.
6. Assessment data should be used for the purpose it is collected and/or collated for i.e. focused on appropriate use at school level for teachers, students, parents and the school community. No harm should be done to students and their learning through the generation of league tables.

Action –

That NZEI and NZPF works jointly to present the views of the primary/intermediate sector with the following agreed position –

1. That the National Presidents of NZEI and NZPF make a joint approach to the Minister of Education seeking greater engagement of practitioners in the development and implementation of this policy i.e. to work collaboratively with the sector.

2. That we confirm the New Zealand Curriculum takes precedence over the national standards for planning and implementation in 2010.
3. That NZEI and NZPF continue to prioritise the protection of assessment data as signalled by commitments made by Minister of Education in previous meetings. This discussion should be focused (in the first instance) around the requirements of NAG 2a subsection c.
4. That a trial be undertaken using a limited group of schools i.e. the number of schools who can be supported with focused professional development (as already planned) to support their work.
5. That this trial be undertaken before the policy is implemented on a system-wide basis.
6. That an independent monitoring and evaluation programme runs alongside the trial group to ensure that any risks and/or unintended consequences are identified.
7. That the findings of the evaluation process are acted upon before any further system-wide implementation is undertaken. If this is not possible, the policy should be abandoned.
8. Tailored facilitated Professional Development is a pre-requisite for every school before moving to implement the national standards policy.
9. That NZEI and NZPF works together to identify a work programme around the construction and validity of the standards to inform further work on these as required.
10. That practitioner groups be established in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch to progress both the sector consultation and feed this back in to the national executives of NZEI and NZPF.
11. That NZEI plan for and host follow up fora in 2010 to continue this dialogue with the broader education sector.

Frances Nelson
National President
Te Manukura