



**Te Tāhuhu o
te Mātauranga**
Ministry of Education

Changes to school board objectives and removing the NELP from legislation

Consultation document

Contents

Have your say	1
Proposal 1	1
Make educational achievement the primary objective for school boards with the other current objectives retained as necessary for the achievement of the primary	1
Questions	2
Proposal 2	2
Introduce a new objective for school boards to take all reasonable steps to ensure the attendance of the students enrolled in their school	2
Questions	2
Proposal 3	3
Introduce a new objective for school boards to ensure that the school's principal and staff use good quality assessment and aromatawai information to monitor and evaluate students' progress and achievement, including from any assessment and aromatawai specified in a foundation curriculum policy statement.	3
Questions	3
Proposal 4	3
Remove the objective that requires school boards to give effect to relevant student rights set out in the Education and Training Act 2020, the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 and the Human Rights Act 1993.	3
Questions	4
Proposal 5	4
Moving the requirement for schools to achieve equitable outcomes for Māori students to the front of the Tiriti/Treaty clause in section 127	4
Questions	4
Proposal 6	4
Strengthening the focus on the national curriculum by replacing the term 'local curriculum' in section 127	4
Questions	5
Proposal 7	5
Remove the Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities from the Act	5
Questions	6
Question	7
How to have your say	7
Purpose of feedback	8
Annex	9

Have your say

The Government's vision for the education system is that every child is inspired and engaged in their learning so they can achieve to the best of their ability and gain the skills and qualifications that will support them into further study and employment.

This is why the Government's targets, priorities, and related work programmes are focused on lifting student achievement and attendance. You can read more about this on [Improving achievement – Education in New Zealand](#)

To help schools and kura focus on the right things so that every child gets the opportunity to achieve to the best of their ability, the Government is proposing to **clarify the obligations on school boards by amending section 127 of the Education and Training Act 2020 (the Act) to:**

1. Make **educational achievement the primary objective** for school boards, with the other objectives in section 127 included as necessary for the achievement of the primary objective.
2. Introduce **a new** objective for school boards to take all reasonable steps **to ensure the attendance** of the students enrolled in their school.
3. Introduce **a new** objective for school boards to ensure that the school's principal and staff use good quality assessment and aromatawai information **to monitor and evaluate students' progress and achievement**, including from any assessment and aromatawai specified in a foundation curriculum policy statement.
4. **Remove the unnecessary objective that requires school boards to give effect to relevant student rights** set out in the Act, the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 and the Human Rights Act 1993. School boards already have to comply with the rights set out under these Acts.
5. **Move the requirement that schools achieve equitable outcomes for Māori students to the front of the Tiriti/Treaty** clause to increase its visibility.
6. Strengthen the focus on the national curriculum by **replacing the term 'local curriculum'** with 'teaching and learning programmes'.

In addition, the Government is proposing to **remove the statement of National Education and Learning Priorities (the NELP)** from the Act, so that schools can focus on what matters most (as required in the Act and curriculum statements).

This discussion document seeks your feedback on proposed changes.

Proposal 1

Make educational achievement the primary objective for school boards with the other current objectives retained as necessary for the achievement of the primary

Section 127 of the Act currently sets out four primary objectives for all State schools. In summary, these are that:

- Every student is able to attain their highest possible standard in educational achievement.
- The school is physically and emotionally safe.
- The school caters to different learning needs.
- The school gives effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi | the Treaty of Waitangi.

These are legislative obligations and schools are required to give effect to them. See the school board objectives in full in the annex or on: [Education and Training Act 2020 No 38 \(as at 30 June 2024\), Public Act 127 Objectives of boards in governing schools – New Zealand Legislation](#)

The Government proposes to make educational achievement the primary objective for school boards (i.e. the first current objective listed above). **The other** objectives would be expressly retained as necessary to the

achievement of the primary objective. In other words, to meet the primary achievement objective, school boards would still need to give effect to Te Tiriti/ the Treaty and the other objectives that will be included in section 127.

This is intended to refocus schools on their primary role, which is to provide every child with the opportunity to achieve to the best of their ability.

Questions

Question 1

Do you agree with the proposal to make student achievement the primary objective, with the other objectives included as necessary to achieve the primary objective?

CCNZ holds the view that all activities that can improve student achievement are required. As our membership base are employers we routinely hear students are not well enough equipped on leaving schools in language, literacy or numeracy (LLN).

Moving the teaching focus towards this, embedding LLN into teaching methodologies and enhancing contextualised teaching has the potential for school to be a better place of learning with school leavers better prepared for the world of work.

Many people who come into civil construction roles are neurodiverse and we are keen to see that a teaching focus shifts towards identifying learners who are neurodiverse (for example; dyslexia and dyscalculia) and supporting their learning journey at school. Teachers needs to be trained and supported for this to occur.

Question 2

Do you have any views or comments to make on this proposal?

See above.

Proposal 2

Introduce a new objective for school boards to take all reasonable steps to ensure the attendance of the students enrolled in their school

Lifting regular attendance is a top priority for this Government. There is a clear correlation between going to school regularly and doing well in the classroom. Regular attendance rates in New Zealand have declined since 2015 and this decline accelerated further during and since the COVID-19 pandemic.

School boards are currently required by section 36(2) of the Act to take all reasonable steps to ensure all that the school's students attend the school when it is open.

To strengthen the focus of school boards on their attendance responsibilities, the Government is proposing to add this requirement to section 127 of the Act. Placing this requirement in section 127 would require schools to focus on attendance in their strategic planning and reporting processes.

Questions

Question 3

Do you agree with the proposal to introduce a new objective for school boards to take all reasonable steps to ensure the attendance of the students enrolled in their school?

No.

Question 4

Do you have any views or comments to make on this proposal?

The term “all reasonable steps” is not reasonable and some definitions need to be provided.

Greater emphasis needs to be placed on the parents as well as the students to attend school. Schools need to take reasonable steps but these need to be with the others as noted.

Proposal 3

Introduce a new objective for school boards to ensure that the school’s principal and staff use good quality assessment and aromatawai information to monitor and evaluate students’ progress and achievement, including from any assessment and aromatawai specified in a foundation curriculum policy statement.

Regular and robust assessment is crucial to understand student progress and lift student achievement. Implementing consistent modes of monitoring student progress and achievement is a key education priority for the Government.

Schools are currently required to monitor and evaluate student performance through other provisions in the Act and regulations, including the Education (School Boards) Regulations 2020 and the Education (School Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2023.

Including this objective in section 127 will make assessment more visible to school boards as a clear focus area for lifting achievement. It will also link the board objectives to the use of these standardised assessment tools once these requirements come into effect.

Questions

Question 5

Do you agree with the proposal to introduce a new objective for school boards to ensure that the school’s principal and staff use good quality assessment and aromatawai information to monitor and evaluate students’ progress and achievement?

No.

Question 6

Do you have any views or comments to make on this proposal?

Schools should use consistent assessment methodology.

The inclusion of the concept of aromatawai is nebulous and is likely to reduce consistency of assessment or become the default position for assessment should consistency not be achieved. Aromatawai is an ideological concept and structurally it will not support good academic performance. The inclusion of this is against coalition Government priorities. If the inclusion of aromatawai is experimental, as it seems to be at face value, the experimental nature should be acknowledged, and it should not be introduced at scale.

Proposal 4

Remove the objective that requires school boards to give effect to relevant student rights set out in the Education and Training Act 2020, the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 and the Human Rights Act 1993.

The current requirement for school board to give effect to relevant student rights is unnecessary. School boards already have to comply with requirements under the Education and Training Act 2020 that relate to student rights and those in the Bill of Rights Act 1990 aspects of the Human Rights Act 1993.

The Government proposes to remove this objective to simplify the obligations in section 127. However, school boards will continue to be legally required to protect the rights sets out in these Acts.

Questions

Question 7

Do you agree with the proposal remove the objective that requires school boards to give effect to relevant student rights set out in the Education and Training Act 2020, the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 and the Human Rights Act 1993?

Yes.

Question 8

Do you have any views or comments to make on this proposal?

No.

Proposal 5

Moving the requirement for schools to achieve equitable outcomes for Māori students to the front of the Tiriti/Treaty clause in section 127

The Government has clear expectations for strengthened educational outcomes and achievement for tamariki and rangatahi Māori.

As part of giving effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi, section 127 requires schools to achieve equitable outcomes for Māori students.

To increase the visibility of this requirement and clarify that schools are required to deliver equitable outcomes for Māori learners, the Government is proposing to shift the requirement up to the front of the clause. This is intended to clarify and strengthen schools' focus on lifting educational achievement for Māori students.

Questions

Question 9

Do you agree with the proposal to move the requirement for schools to achieve equitable outcomes for Māori students in a more visible place in the Tiriti/treaty clause in section 127?

We are neutral in this regard.

Question 10

Do you have any views or comments to make on this proposal?

Equity in this regard implies that there are different actions that need to be delivered based on racial status. We do not support this approach as all learners should be allowed to learn and achieve well at school.

We do not see how strengthening this focus will improve overall educational performance which should be the aim of any change to education settings.

Proposal 6

Strengthening the focus on the national curriculum by replacing the term 'local curriculum' in section 127

Section 127(1)(d) requires schools to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi by working to ensure that its plans, policies, and **local curriculum** reflect local tikanga Māori, mātauranga Māori, and te ao Māori. The Government is proposing a minor change to wording in this section¹ to replace “local curriculum” with “teaching and learning programmes”.

There are concerns that the term ‘local curriculum’ may cause confusion and lead some schools to think that ‘local curriculum’ is separate from the national curriculum – meaning they may not be adequately covering the national curriculum in their teaching and learning programmes.²

The proposed change updates the language in section 127 so that school board objectives are better aligned with board responsibilities for teaching and learning programmes. It does not change the meaning of the section. Boards must still work to give effect to Te Tiriti/The Treaty, including working to ensure that schools reflect local tikanga, mātauranga Māori, and te ao Māori in their teaching and learning programmes.

Questions

Question 11

Do you agree with the proposal to change the term ‘local curriculum’ to ‘teaching and learning programmes’?

If this leads to consistency, then we accept that proposed change.

Question 12

Do you have any views or comments to make on this proposal?

A focus on improving academic achievement can only occur when an emphasis on language, literacy and numeracy is the basis for teaching and assessment.

We are concerned that ideological teachings will still occur even with this clarification.

Proposal 7

Remove the Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities from the Act

The Act enables the Minister to issue a statement of National Education and Learning Priorities (NELP) for early education and schooling.

The Government proposes to remove this from the Act as we consider there is sufficient strategic direction provided, including through:

Section 5(4) which specifies the overall objectives for education and learning.

The school board objectives in section 127 of the Act.

Curriculum statements (section 90 for schools) and frameworks (section 23 for early childhood services).

The NELP’s introduction in the Act in 2017 was in response to an identified need at the time for greater strategic direction for the sector. Since then, the school board objectives in section 127 have been further refined and clarified, and the Curriculum statements are being increasingly used to provide the detailed direction schools need. In early learning the full framework for Te Whāriki (Early Childhood Curriculum) has since been issued providing greater direction on early learning programmes. Any additional priorities in a

¹ And as a consequence, from section 9 of the Act.

² Section 164 of the Act requires schools to develop and implement teaching and learning programmes that give effect to the national curricula. Schools can give life to the national curricula using global, national, and local contexts.

NELP have the potential to over-burden and confuse the sector and detract from a school's primary focus on student achievement.

The Minister of Education can consider and determine for themselves whether they have any need for any other strategic statements to the sector. These do not need to be enabled by provisions in the Act. The existing NELP (as issued by the previous Government) will expire in 2025.

Questions

Question 13

Do you agree with the proposal to remove the Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities from the Act?

We consider that some NELP should be removed but not all. Particularly we have concerns with the removal of NELP 4 and objective 7.

Question 14

Do you have any views or comments to make on this proposal?

The primary function of the schooling system should be to prepare the student for the world of work. The linkages between education and employment is what school is meant to be doing.

The NELP objective four Future of Learning and Work; learning that is relevant to the lives of New Zealanders today and throughout their lives; and priority 7; collaborate with industries and employers to ensure learners / ākonga have the skills, knowledge and pathways to succeed in work is an area we wish to comment on. We believe this needs to remain and become incorporated into the Act.

School curriculum does not currently have vocational teaching pathways and that means that the 70% of students not likely to attend tertiary studies could be further disadvantaged to learn about the world for work through lack of exposure directly to industry. Whether this is through industry visiting schools, gateway programmes or trades academy this link between industry and school is critical for New Zealand's workforce capability.

Civil construction is not currently well connected with the education system, or well served by it. This is a gap that both industry and teachers see yet find difficult to bridge. Students leaving school are not currently equipped to enter work on civil construction sites. To provide an example, few leave with the understanding of what a plate compactor is, let alone how to move one around a work site safely, which would be a basic expectation of an employer looking to hire a civil trades trainee.

Gateway and Trades Academy learning is something that we should be doing more of to prepare our learners for the world of work. Students will be happy to engage and learn if they understand "the why" and can see how this can benefit them and their overall employability opportunities. Both of these programmes support skills development and build communications skills and responsibility which are needed on leaving school.

This objective is good for the school system, industry and community and there are some excellent actions proposed for how the objective could be met. If schools were to focus on this objective alone it would likely enhance learner engagement and performance, and school leavers would have more work ready skills which support employability and productivity outcomes. Students could see why they are learning what they are learning, industry can support the teaching objectives and the real world experience can allow a trial run at school for a particular vocation.

The government have an ambitious infrastructure strategy, how does it see meeting the targets if this objective is removed? Schools will need to self-determine how they will prepare students for the world of work. This might need to some innovative ways of connecting students to industry however, some guidance is likely to be required. There are already too many NEETS that if the school system had better supported by

raising vocational opportunities and emphasising academic achievement would be in employment. If it is important to focus on this to support New Zealand's productivity and financial success and ensuring our job seekers are gainfully employed earlier on in their career journey.

We may need to ask schools to update or renew their strategic plans

Every three years, schools develop strategic plans in which they set out their goals for meeting these primary objectives. If changes to section 127 are enacted by Parliament, the Government may want to ask schools and kura to update their strategic plans outside of their standard three yearly cycle. This would enable schools to plan to achieve the new board objectives sooner than when they are next required to develop their strategic plans.

Depending on when any changes to section 127 are enacted by Parliament, this may require (for example):

- the 2026 strategic plans to be delayed by a year to 2027. This would mean the current strategic plan will remain in effect until December 2026 and the 2027 strategic plan would need to be in place for a two-year period (rather than the usual three). This is so we can realign the strategic planning cycle with the school board elections, which take place around six months before a strategic plan comes into effect; or
- schools and kura could be asked to update their strategic plans to take account of the new objectives once the proposed changes become law. This would likely mean that schools would complete their 2026 strategic plans and shortly after, would be required to update them again.

Question

Question 15

What do you think would be the best way to get schools to update their strategic plans to reflect any changes to the school board objectives?

New Zealand is widely acknowledged to need infrastructure workers. There are huge opportunities for hands-on civil tradespeople, as well as civil and environmental engineers. Students should therefore be prepared for the infrastructure work they could be doing, during their time at school. But too often schools do not prioritise infrastructure construction learning.

We encourage schools to build infrastructure construction into their learning objectives, and work with their industry partners to ensure that the connections between industry and education are not lost with this reform. There are various ways this could be achieved and we would be happy to raise these when we speak to our submission.

CCNZ members have raised that experienced workers are often skilled trainers, and may be able to relay their skills to students as teachers or by dedicating some time to support classes.

How to have your say

Submissions will be open from 02 September to 14 October 2024 and will inform advice to the Minister on final policy proposals that would be submitted to Cabinet. You can make a submission on any of these proposals online on the Ministry's website at [Open consultations – Education in New Zealand](#)

You can also email your submissions to Legislation.Consultation@education.govt.nz or write to:

Education Consultation

Ministry of Education

PO Box 1666

Wellington 1640

Purpose of feedback

We are asking your views on the suggested changes discussed above to help us make better informed decisions about changes to the Act.

Please be assured that any feedback you provide will be confidential to those involved in analysing the consultation data. We will not identify any individuals in the final analysis or report writing unless you expressly give permission for this. However, submissions, including submitters' name, and documents associated with the consultation process may be subject to an Official Information Act 1982 request.

Annex

Annex: Education and Training Act 2020, section 127 - Objectives of boards in governing schools

(1) A board's primary objectives in governing a school are to ensure that —

- (a) every student at the school is able to attain their highest possible standard in educational achievement; and
- (b) the school—
 - (i) is a physically and emotionally safe place for all students and staff; and
 - (ii) gives effect to relevant student rights set out in this Act, the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990, and the Human Rights Act 1993; and
 - (iii) takes all reasonable steps to eliminate racism, stigma, bullying, and any other forms of discrimination within the school; and
- (c) the school is inclusive of, and caters for, students with differing needs; and
- (d) the school gives effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, including by—
 - (i) working to ensure that its plans, policies, and local curriculum reflect local tikanga Māori, mātauranga Māori, and te ao Māori; and
 - (ii) taking all reasonable steps to make instruction available in tikanga Māori and te reo Māori; and
 - (iii) achieving equitable outcomes for Māori students.

(2) To meet the primary objectives, the board must —

- (a) have particular regard to the statement of national education and learning priorities issued under section 5; and
- (b) give effect to its obligations in relation to—
 - (i) any foundation curriculum statements, national curriculum statements, and national performance measures; and
 - (ii) teaching and learning programmes; and
 - (iii) monitoring and reporting students' progress; and
- (c) perform its functions and exercise its powers in a way that is financially responsible; and
- (d) if the school is a member of a community of learning that has a community of learning agreement under clause 2 of Schedule 5, comply with its obligations under the agreement; and
- (e) comply with all of its other obligations under this or any other Act.



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