



SUBMISSION ON THE REVIEW OF TOMORROW'S SCHOOLS

Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand

1. The Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand (the Council) is the independent professional body for teachers from early childhood education through to primary and secondary schooling in English and Māori medium schools and centres.
2. There are currently more than 131,000 registered teachers in New Zealand.
3. The statutory purpose of the Council set out in section 377 of the Education Act 1989 is “to ensure safe and high-quality leadership, teaching and learning ... through raising the status of the profession”.
4. We act in the interests of teachers to:
 - enable and support leadership for teachers and direction for the teaching profession, including teacher education and continued professional and leadership development;
 - establish and maintain criteria for teacher registration, standards for ongoing practice and criteria for the issue of practising certificates;
 - monitor and maintain the requirements relating to teacher conduct, competence and impairment;
 - establish and maintain the Code of Professional Responsibility for teachers.

A profession-led education system

5. Teachers and leaders are the most significant change agents in our early childhood centres, kura and schools. Building and sustaining this professional capital is the essence of a profession-led system. It was this concept that led to the establishment of the Council as an independent body with broad professional functions, to provide direction and leadership in education and to lift the status of the teaching profession.
6. The Council was mandated with functions to explicitly enable the teaching profession to self-manage, strengthen teachers’ accountability for their performance, grow the quality of their practice and provide direction for future teaching and learning. Over the past three years we have worked alongside the profession to build the professional identity of teachers and leaders and to support excellence in teaching and educational leadership by strengthening quality and excellence across the whole system.
7. We have done this by developing, with teachers, professional expectations and standards to make sure the right people enter and stay in teaching. The aim has been to shape a self-regulating profession which demands the highest standards and behaviours of itself. The Council has fostered this professionalism by providing direction for teachers and developing the Code of Professional Responsibility (the Code) and the Standards for the Teaching Profession (the Standards) which describe the expectations for being a teacher in Aotearoa New Zealand, and the Draft Leadership Strategy for the

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Teaching Profession (the Leadership Strategy) which promotes leadership at all levels in all settings. The Leadership Strategy is attached for your reference.

8. When supported by Kāhui Ako, clusters and networks of learning, the Code, Standards and Leadership Strategy have the potential to build professional capital in our system, bringing an explicit layer of professionalism into education which inspires new ways of responding to our diverse learners. While this work is still in the early stages, the Council has established the groundwork for a profession-led system which is what we believe will address the inequities we are grappling with in education. The challenge now is to build and sustain these conditions for developing high-quality professionals who reflect the public interest in educational outcomes.
9. As the only organisation that engages both early childhood and school education in Māori and English mediums and with a direct link to every one of our 131,000 registered teachers, the Council strengthens a connected system which supports teaching quality across all settings. This system-wide engagement provides coherent outcomes for learners in both early childhood and school education, that are truly equitable with teachers supporting all our children and young people in a localised, contextualised way.
10. With teachers we have started the journey for system-wide transformation to achieve excellence and equity in education by enabling agency by teachers to build quality and effective teaching practice in Aotearoa New Zealand. We fully endorse any future decisions from the review that build on the work we have begun and that will enable an even stronger professional body. We want to do everything we can to raise learner achievement, and having an explicit professional body supporting teachers and profession-led teaching quality, is how our education system can do that.

A profession-led system puts quality teachers and learning at the heart of education.

Recommendations for creating a profession-led education system

11. The Governing Board of the Council makes three specific recommendations for the review of Tomorrow's Schools to enable a profession-led system that will improve outcomes for all learners in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Recognise that high-performing education systems invest in their teachers as empowered professionals who have significant impact on learner achievement. The profession is positioned at the heart of the education system in culturally unique and diverse Aotearoa New Zealand.

12. A profession-led system puts quality teachers and learning at the heart of education, empowering their professionalism to make the best decisions and implement the best teaching practice as they interact with learners every day. A profession-led system is enabled by the profession:
 - setting agreed professional standards;
 - building teacher capability through initial teacher education and professional development that is responsive to necessary functional and attitudinal shifts over each teacher's professional life;
 - supporting teacher wellbeing and resilience with emotional and intellectual support;
 - privileging teacher time for collaboration, learning and development;
 - building a body of professional knowledge together over time that empowers professional judgement;
 - taking collective responsibility for quality teaching and accountability to standards and behaviours;



- developing leadership in a systematic way across the broader education environment;
- being part of a professional body that is supported in its end-to-end system responsibilities;
- providing coherence for the interdependencies in the system among teaching settings, sectors and education agencies.

It is important that we continue on this path to building a more responsive and culturally intelligent profession truly committed to equity and excellence in education.

Acknowledge that excellence and equity in education is best supported by profession-led leadership that stimulates and grows teacher professional practice, responsibility and collaboration in education and the wider community, rather than by structural change to the education system.

13. The work done by the Council and teachers in establishing agreed professional standards, building teachers' own body of professional knowledge and shaping collective professional judgement, has been enabled by leadership from the Council and from within the profession itself. It is this leadership, within schools and centres, within professional networks, and within communities that recognises all teachers as agents of change with collective responsibility for the success of all our learners.
14. The Council's statutory purpose to ensure safe and high-quality leadership in education is explicitly expressed in the Leadership Strategy, where we seek to enable leaders to engage collaboratively, connect leaders to networks and encourage leaders to build their leadership within their wider communities. It is the activating of this collaborative approach to leadership that will drive effective system change to achieve excellence and equity in education. This is not a structural shift or implementation of an additional "hard" middle layer in the education system between education agencies and schools. Instead it is a deliberate cultivation of sustainable partnerships, communities and networks collectively responsive to the needs of learners which manifests as a "soft" middle layer in the system.
15. With the profession we have already identified the capabilities essential for effective educational leadership in different settings, contexts and spheres of influence. These capabilities will strengthen best practice and expertise across the profession for improving teaching and outcomes for learners. Expectations and development of the capabilities should not be imposed centrally or regionally. Real transformation will come from leaders who are connected and accountable to their peers and their communities, and over time this impact will become evident as it has in international contexts.

Value the purpose of the Council as a distinct professional body, providing a professional and regulatory service that gives teachers voice, direction and leadership to grow quality teaching practice that will strengthen outcomes for all learners in a culturally rich Aotearoa New Zealand.

16. The Council was established to lift the status of the teaching profession through the delivery of both regulatory and professional functions supporting specialised knowledge and teaching practice and addressing any concerns that might be raised about a teacher's conduct or competence.
17. By delivering on our statutory functions, we have realised significant achievements in collaboration with the profession to provide the conditions for high-quality teaching, leadership and responsibility. We have developed considerable experience in strengthening professionalism by building expectations and trusted relationships with teachers and balancing the autonomy of the profession with the public interest.
18. To achieve excellence and equity, this review must focus on the design of an education system that enables the Council to continue to deliver these interconnected functions because when delivered



together, they are the functions necessary to support all teachers to be professionals who can lead learning right across the system. Teacher professional learning and development is also universally accepted as crucial for strengthening teacher performance and effectiveness, and so it too should be recognised an essential part of this set of functions.

19. Accountability to government and the public is an important feature of professions and through the Code and Standards, teachers have pledged a commitment to their profession, to learners, to whānau and to society. Collectively we acknowledge and understand the roles of our different stakeholders, and through the stewardship of the Council, teachers are engaging in deeper collaboration to meet the expectations on them individually and on the broader teaching profession.
20. The government cannot change education itself. A professional body is, in our view, the appropriate structure to build and sustain a profession-led system that is responsive and responsible for using its expertise and commitment to serve the public interest by helping all learners reach their highest potential. Our leadership vision captures the responsibility of the teaching profession to ensure more equitable educational outcomes so that we have socially and economically healthy children, young people and communities.
21. Our leadership has cultivated new ways of thinking in education through more explicit participation of teachers and leaders in defining what a profession-led system means. It is important that we continue on this path to building a more responsive and culturally intelligent profession truly committed to equity and excellence in education.

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