



5 February 2010

Dear Parents / Caregivers

The following outlines the next steps the Teaching Profession is taking in relation to the proposed National Standards.

You may have read a range of items in newspapers during the holiday period outlining that the Government is determined to proceed with the Standards. A slight softening of approach has been detected with Anne Tolley indicating that during the year she will monitor and adjust the standards if a need is identified.

Teacher Unions and many leading academics still believe that this does not reflect the real concern that it is children that are being trialled with these National Standards, not the Standards. The Ministry has not made a commitment to security of data and the standards could put children's learning at risk.

Some Facts

1. **The validity of the Standards is untested** and presents risk to both the teaching process and children's learning. Children's learning is too important to experiment with.
2. **The short time frame for implementation** of National Standards puts schools under unsustainable pressure. This may risk the successful implementation of the NZ curriculum in 2010.
3. **If Standards are to be fair**, the NZCEA experience shows that appropriate moderation frameworks, processes and exemplars must be developed to support interpretation and be trialled to see that these are appropriate. This has not happened.
4. **National Standards imposes a "one size fits all" approach** onto a Curriculum that encourages the development of locally relevant learning for children.
5. **Professional development that meets the varying needs of staff** and trustees is essential for every school before the Standards are implemented so that Standards support, rather than undermine, the NZ Curriculum. The Government has not made a commitment to this.
6. **Assessment data should be used for the purpose for which it is collected** and/or collated i.e. focused on appropriate use at school level for teachers, children, parents and the school community. No harm should be done to children and their learning through the generation of league tables.
7. **Teachers are at the heart of quality learning and assessment**, but they have not been engaged with National Standards and do not have 'ownership' of this policy.
8. **Leading education academics** and international experience with national testing regimes both **suggest major risks** with National Standards.

"We believe the flaws in this new system are so serious that full implementation of the intended National Standards system over the next three years is unlikely to be successful. It will not achieve intended goals and is likely to lead to dangerous side effects." (Open letter to the Minister from Academics with experience in assessment)

Next Steps

The proposed programme is of such concern to professionals that NZEI is running an **Information Bus** and looking at gaining signatures on a petition to the Government in support of a trial of the National Standards rather than a leap into a process that could have serious detrimental outcomes for our children.

There is also a **Public Forum** evening when Lester Flockton, University of Otago Assessment division, talks to Parents, BOT members and teachers about his concerns with the proposed Standard.

Options for Parents:

1. Go to Kaikorai School on Tuesday 9th February at 10.30 am and sign the petition, or
2. Attend the Public meeting at Macandrew Intermediate at 7 pm.

1. The National Standards Bus
will be outside Kaikorai Primary School on
Tuesday February 9, at 10.30am.

*Come and support our concerns and sign the petition
in support of a Trial of the Standards not your
children.*

2. PUBLIC FORUM

THE GOVERNMENT'S NATIONAL STANDARDS

Why should parents be worried?

With leading educationalist

LESTER FLOCKTON

local Principals and others

7 pm Tuesday 9 February

Macandrew Intermediate

213 Macandrew Road, Dunedin

PUBLIC FORUM

THE GOVERNMENT'S NATIONAL STANDARDS