

The New Zealand Curriculum

# Update



Teaching and Learning

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## Welcome to *The New Zealand Curriculum Update*

Curriculum Updates support school leaders and teachers as they work to design and review their school curriculum in line with the New Zealand Curriculum and with current knowledge and understandings about effective classroom teaching.

Curriculum Updates are published in the *Education Gazette* and are available online at:  
[http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/curriculum\\_updates](http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/curriculum_updates)

**This Update focuses on the place of school planning within school-wide self-review. Readers may find it helpful to also see Update 12, which discusses the role of teaching-as-inquiry within self-review aimed at improving outcomes for learners. Update 20 is also intended for schools and kura that are guided by *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa*.**



## Raising student achievement through school planning

**School planning that is embedded within ongoing cycles of self-review helps lift student achievement.**

Raised student achievement is a critical goal for New Zealand schools and kura. To reach it, school planning must focus on improving the achievement of all learners, especially those who require more support. It is essential that schools and kura identify these learners and the supports they need to achieve their potential.

This is the time of year when schools and kura have submitted their annual charter updates to the Ministry of Education and are finalising their annual reports. Through self-review, each school or kura establishes a shared vision and sets its priorities and targets for improving student achievement, in alignment with *The New Zealand Curriculum* and/or *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* and reflecting community and whānau aspirations. An action plan will outline how these priorities and aspirations will be realised for each school.

Now the focus is on monitoring progress, checking effectiveness, and making changes where required.

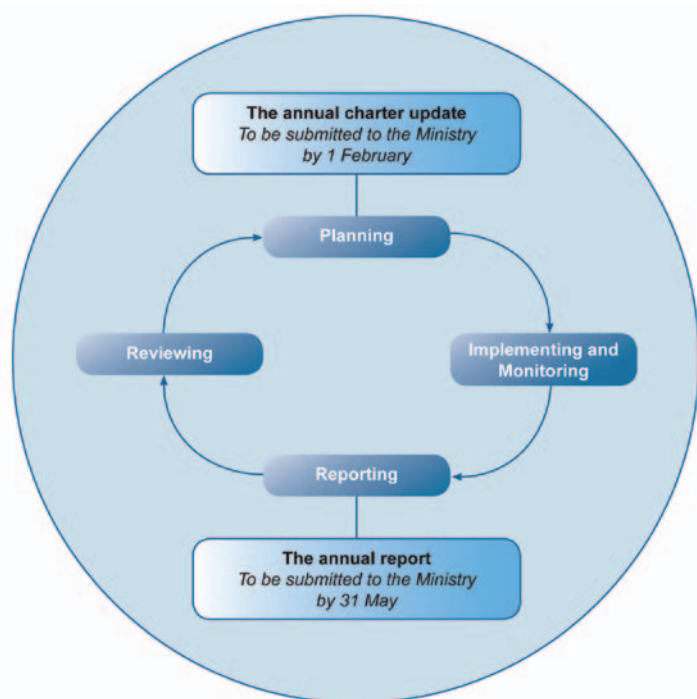
This Update highlights the importance of planning within ongoing self-review aimed at improving student outcomes. It is intended to support schools and kura as they think about the next steps in their self-review cycle and to help them establish shared understandings about planning processes and expected outcomes.

### Guiding questions *He pātai*

- Does everybody in your school or kura community – teachers, students, and whānau – understand the priorities and targets for student achievement and how they will be realised? Does everybody understand the implications for themselves?
- Does everybody understand how the action plan will be monitored and how progress towards goals and targets will be measured?
- How will the action plan be modified if the goals and targets are not being achieved?

# Embedding planning within self-review

Planning has a central role in school and kura self-review. It involves two key documents – the charter and the annual report. The charter outlines the long-term vision, goals, direction, and targets, and the plans for achieving them. The annual report informs the community and Ministry of Education how the school or kura is doing in relation to its goals and targets and what has or hasn't been effective in lifting progress and achievement. Self-review is ongoing: these two documents guide and maintain its focus on continuous improvement. They specify which learners are making expected progress, which need more support, what is being done to provide it, and how progress is being measured.



**The ongoing cycle of self-review:** Reviewing; planning; implementing and monitoring; reporting

Source: *Strengthening Targets: Resource for Boards*, page 2

## Curriculum goals

The national curriculum documents, *The New Zealand Curriculum* and *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa*, envision our young people as competent and confident lifelong learners, connected and secure in their identities, and able to contribute to our country and beyond. Schools and kura, with their students, parents, whānau, and communities, develop their goals and targets in relation to these curriculum outcomes.

A kura or school's charter documents its longer term goals and specific targets for raising student achievement across the curriculum. It states the actions the school or kura will take to achieve these goals and targets and describes how it will monitor progress against them.

Schools and kura report to parents on students' curriculum learning and achievement, including their progress in the key competencies. In years 1–8, the National Standards and Ngā Whanaketanga Rumaki Māori provide reference points or progressions for literacy and numeracy learning within the broader kura or school curriculum.

In their annual reports to their communities and to Government, schools and kura also report kura- or school-wide information against the specific targets they have set for raising student achievement.

## Resources for planning and self-review

- Ministry of Education (2010). *Effective Governance: Working in Partnership*. Wellington: Ministry of Education. Available at [www.minedu.govt.nz](http://www.minedu.govt.nz) under the links "Boards", "Effective governance", and "Publications and resources".
- Ministry of Education (2010). *School Charters: Incorporating National Standards*. Wellington: Ministry of Education. Available at [www.minedu.govt.nz](http://www.minedu.govt.nz) under the links "Boards", "School planning and reporting", and "Planning: Charters".
- Ministry of Education (2011). *Strengthening Targets: Resource for Boards*. Wellington: Ministry of Education. Available at [www.minedu.govt.nz](http://www.minedu.govt.nz) under the links "Boards", "School planning and reporting", and "Planning: Charters".

### ➤ CASE STUDY

## Opotiki College: Planning for success

Planning at Opotiki College exemplifies a strong self-review culture that has led to the predominantly Māori learners at this decile 1 school achieving at or above national averages in NCEA.

*We believe our students can do as well as students anywhere in the country. We prove this with our results year after year.*

Maurie Abraham, Principal

One of the school's strategic goals is to provide a relevant, progressive, and innovative curriculum that meets the needs of all. A purpose-built "curriculum planner" collates information to monitor progress, enhance achievement, and show the relationships between classroom teaching and student learning. Departmental teams revise the school's curriculum in an ongoing process linked to professional development and appraisal. Teachers also meet in three-weekly cross-curricular professional learning groups to reflect on effective teaching in a diverse classroom, the key competencies, and teaching as inquiry.

In the past, the school had a separate strategic plan for improving Māori student achievement, developed and monitored by the Māori Teachers' Forum. Today the strategic planning for Māori is incorporated within school-wide planning. The Māori Teachers' Forum, which holds regular hui with whānau, actively monitors the outcomes for Māori learners, both in English-medium settings and in the bilingual unit.

In line with *Ka Hikitia*, the school focuses on te reo Māori and tikanga, on reinforcing Māori identity, and on student presence and engagement. It supports this focus by participating in Te Kotahitanga and implementing, in partnership with the community, a restorative justice programme. All outcomes are carefully monitored. For example, the attendance strategy focuses on Māori learners in years 9 and 10. School leaders, teachers, and whānau co-operate to meet the targets. Tracking and reporting systems ensure that unexplained absences are followed up immediately.

Opotiki College's approach to ensuring educational success for Māori learners is described at [www.educationalleaders.govt.nz](http://www.educationalleaders.govt.nz) under the links "Leading change", "Māori education success", and "Rangiatea: Case studies and exemplars".

# Achievement for priority groups

All schools must develop plans to raise student achievement – particularly for learners who need additional support. These may include Māori learners, Pasifika learners, and learners with special education needs.

## Māori learners

The National Administration Guidelines require all schools to set targets in 2012 for improving the achievement of Māori learners and to report against these targets in 2013. This year, kura using *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* have set targets for year 1–8 learners in relation to Ngā Whanaketanga Rumaki Māori. Now they will be reviewing and monitoring progress for the learners who need extra support and ensuring that strategies for improved achievement are developed. Most Māori learners in years 1–8 are in schools that use mainly *The New Zealand Curriculum*, so their targets will relate to the National Standards.

*Ka Hikitia* will have strongly influenced schools' expectations for Māori learners – for example in deciding that their systems and processes should reflect and be responsive to Māori cultural identity and aspirations.

## Pasifika learners

A goal of the *Pasifika Education Plan 2009–2012* is to improve schools' responsiveness to Pasifika learners' achievement through planning and reporting. The Plan encourages schools to set and monitor specific targets for Pasifika learners. It also emphasises the diversity of Pasifika learners. A school may decide to focus its planning and reporting on specific Pasifika groups – for example, its Tongan learners – or on Pasifika students who are English language learners (ELLs).

Schools with year 1–8 learners are expected to report the progress and achievement of all students, including ELLs, in relation to the National Standards. The assessment tools for measuring this have been normed for native speakers of English. This means that ELLs must have appropriate levels of English language proficiency before their progress and achievement can be assessed accurately using these tools. The *process* that teachers use to make judgments against the National Standards is similar for all learners; the *gathering* and *analysis of data*, may be different. For example, information gained from applying the English Language Learning Progressions may inform their judgments.

## Resources for reviewing and monitoring the progress of ELLs

- Ministry of Education (2005). *ESOL Progress Assessment Guidelines*. Wellington: Learning Media. These guidelines provide information about appropriate assessment tools for ELLs.
- Ministry of Education (2008). *The English Language Learning Progressions*. Wellington: Learning Media. This resource describes the pathways ELLs typically follow as they acquire proficiency in English. Familiarity with the progressions builds understanding of these learners' language learning needs. Available at <http://esolonline.tki.org.nz/ESOL-Online/Student-needs/The-English-Language-Learning-Progressions>
- Ministry of Education (2011). "National Standards Factsheet 9". This fact sheet outlines the revised guidelines for ELLs. Available at <http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz> under the links "National Standards", "Key information", "Fact sheets", and "English language learners".

## Ruia: Focusing on Māori student achievement

Ruia, an upcoming new resource for principals and other educational leaders, will consist of two websites, one on school–whānau partnerships and another on teacher appraisal. They are intended to support schools in ongoing self-review and inquiry to raise Māori student achievement.



## Special education needs

All schools and kura set targets in relation to the relevant national curriculum. The expectations for some learners with special education needs will be the same as those for all learners at the same year level. For others, they will relate to finer-grained progressions at a particular level of the curriculum, recorded in their individual education plans (IEPs). Collaborative development of IEPs with built-in self-review supports these learners to achieve success.

Update 18 focuses on inclusion for learners with special education needs.

## Resources for individual education plans

- IEP Online (<http://seonline.tki.org.nz/IEP>) is a website that provides resources to support the development and implementation of IEPs.
- Ministry of Education (2011). *Collaboration for Success: Individual Education Plans*. Wellington: Learning Media. This new resource, available at IEP Online (<http://seonline.tki.org.nz/IEP>), helps users identify the learning goals and support required for learners with special education needs.

## Transitions and pathways

The planning documentation of schools and kura contains a wealth of information about learners' aspirations and progress, which can be shared to facilitate smooth learning pathways for learners.

Update 9, is designed to help secondary schools review their curriculum to ensure that all learners experience effective pathways throughout their learning.



› CASE STUDY

## Plimmerton School: Embedding planning within ongoing self-review

At Plimmerton School, school-wide planning takes place within a culture of reflection and self-review focused on raising student achievement. This approach ensures coherence between the school's aims and targets; its programmes for teaching, learning, and professional development; and its processes for monitoring and measuring progress. Importantly, coherence is also maintained over time. Principal Maurice Laird explains:

*We use self-review to prioritise areas for development so we're not just jumping from one bandwagon to the next. We'll stick with a focus for as long as it takes to sustain the improvements in student achievement.*

One example is the school's long-term focus on literacy, with professional development being led by expert members of staff (with external help when necessary). This professional development is linked to the school's learning about assessment, the New Zealand Curriculum, and the National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Delving into the National Standards has helped teachers become more discerning in their analysis of assessment information and also more critical and reflective, while deepening collegiality. Writing has emerged as requiring especially close monitoring within syndicate teams and across the school.

Learning in the school's priority areas of literacy and numeracy is linked to an integrated, thematic approach across curriculum areas. Syndicate teams co-operatively plan, teach, and evaluate these units to ensure smooth learning pathways.

Parents, families and whānau, and the community are partners in planning and self-review. A draft strategic plan prepared by staff and the board of trustees was shared with the wider community, who provided feedback via the school's website or by email. Biennial surveys seek parents' opinion on what the school does well and areas for improvement. As the school's Māori parents prefer a kanohi ki te kanohi approach, staff visit the local marae regularly. The school is careful to monitor and report on progress for Māori learners.

At the beginning of each year, families and teachers meet to share information about learners and discuss their hopes and aspirations. There are also three-way interviews in which the teacher, student, and family discuss progress in relation to the key competencies, revising and reviewing learning goals. These interviews are repeated in term 3 to consider the mid-year data. At the end of the year, a summative report is prepared for each learner.

These linked self-review processes ensure that the school knows its learners and is aware of the effectiveness of its strategies to improve their progress, including its individualised programmes for learners with special education needs. These programmes are planned and monitored by the deputy principal in collaboration with the learners and their families, whānau, teachers, teacher aides, and support agencies.

*It is this positive approach to self-review, I believe, that has made 2011 the most productive of my 15 years as principal at Plimmerton School.*

The school's major thrusts for 2012 are to review and reshape its curriculum and renew its focus on numeracy. The literacy focus will continue to emphasise writing. The school's new student management system is also intended to foster improvement, by making the process of tracking student achievement information easier and more efficient. Maurice is currently investigating methods of analysing school-wide student achievement data more deeply to inform judgments about programme effectiveness.

### Guiding questions He pātai

- At what stage is your school or kura in its self-review cycle?
- How are you progressing towards your aims and targets? What changes have occurred over time? Are there any groups of learners who need additional support?
- In the light of these changes, what is your school or kura doing differently this year?
- What processes and resources does your school or kura have to support staff and whānau to improve systems, teaching practice, and ways of fostering partnerships?



You will find curriculum and other useful resources in the online version of this update.

The New Zealand Curriculum

# Update

## > *Helpful resources*

- > ***The New Zealand Curriculum***  
<http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/Curriculum-documents/The-New-Zealand-Curriculum>
- > ***Te Marautanga o Aotearoa***  
<http://tmoa.tki.org.nz>
- > ***The New Zealand Curriculum: Reading and Writing Standards for Years 1–8***  
<http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/National-Standards>
- > ***The New Zealand Curriculum: Mathematics Standards for Years 1–8***  
<http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/National-Standards>
- > ***Ngā Whanaketanga Rumaki Māori***  
<http://www.minedu.govt.nz/theMinistry/EducationInitiatives/NgaWhanaketangaRumakiMaori.aspx>
- > ***Ka Hikitea – Managing for Success: The Māori Education Strategy 2008–2012***  
<http://www.minedu.govt.nz/theMinistry/PolicyAndStrategy/KaHikitia.aspx>
- > ***Pasifika Education Plan***  
<http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/PasifikaEducation/PasifikaEducationPlan.aspx>
- > ***Success for All – Every School, Every Child***  
<http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/SpecialEducation/OurWorkProgramme/SuccessForAll.aspx>

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