AN INTEGRATED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

EVERYDAY RESOURCES, PEOPLE, TOOLS AND ASSETS

Parents/families/whānau

Students

WHĀNAU/COMMUNITY/IWI

EVERYONE HAS A ROLE IN SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT

SCHOOLS

- STUDENTS/WHĀNAU
- TEACHERS
- SCHOOL LEADERS/BOARD OF TRUSTEES

CENTRE

- REGIONAL MOE
- NATIONAL MOE/MINISTER

The New Zealand Curriculum

Strategies for equity

Effective governance

Best Evidence Syntheses

IMPROVING PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS

IMPROVING CAPABILITY OF SCHOOLS

LEARNER-INITIATED SUPPLEMENTARY SUPPORTS

SCHOOL-INITIATED SUPPLEMENTARY SUPPORTS

TRIGGER
NEEDS

RESOURCES

Acceleration

CURRICULUM LEVEL

TRIGGER
NEEDS

RESOURCES

Acceleration

CURRICULUM LEVEL

TRIGGER
NEEDS

RESOURCES

Acceleration

CURRICULUM LEVEL

Triangle 1
- Partnerships
- Student agency
- Instructional core
- Teacher agency
- Curriculum
- Partnerships

IMPACT

DESIGN

Triangle 2
- Partnerships
- Student agency
- Instructional core
- Teacher agency
- Curriculum
- Partnerships

IMPACT

DESIGN

Triangle 3
- Partnerships
- Student agency
- Instructional core
- Teacher agency
- Curriculum
- Partnerships

IMPACT

DESIGN

An integrated system of support

Purpose

The most important feature of our education system is the quality of the moment-by-moment and day-by-day interactions that teachers have with students around curriculum (see *Figure 1: The instructional core*). The quality of these interactions is driven by the moment-by-moment, day-by-day decisions that teachers make (along with students, other teachers and school leaders, and parents/family/whānau, hapū, iwi and community) about what has been the result of teaching, what is important to learn next, and what will support students to learn.

Figure 1. The instructional core

It is the system's responsibility to support teachers to make the best possible education decisions and have rich and intellectually rigorous interactions with all students. The principles of equity, effectiveness, coherence, efficiency, transparency, and agency are integral to the improvement story and the design of the initiation processes.

The New Zealand education system: an integrated system of support

The **concept diagram** maps the relationship between the assets, tools, processes, and people in the New Zealand education system. This map is designed to:

- **centre students** and their relationship with others and with what is worthwhile learning in the educational endeavour (see how the assets, tools, processes, and people relate to the students and the local curriculum);
- indicate the **materials, tools, and assets that people use every day in schools** (see the collage of curricula resources, standards, evidence, and people) and in particular the **curriculum, strategies for equity** and the **BES evidence** of what works, why and how;
- highlight the **three tiers of learning support for students,** with the focus on effective classroom experiences (see the system structures and the links to the supplementary supports);
- show how the **layers of system are connected** to support improved outcomes (see the role, responsibilities, and powerful communication and connections);
- illustrate that **inquiry and knowledge-building cycle is the process** common to all layers for bringing about cumulative improvement (see the cycles and the way they are inter-related);
- indicate the **supplementary supports for schools to accelerate progress** —triggered by school self-review data and national achievement data (see the cycles). Some are direct support for learners and others are direct supports for teachers, leaders, BoT, and family/whānau and communities. Both supplement the school focus on improvement; and
- demonstrate that **supplementary supports build the school's knowledge and capability** in a cumulative way that drives continuous improvement (see the arrows between the cycles).

The system's assets and tools combine to form an integrated and dynamic system. Through the processes of analysing need a rapid response will be triggered to support schools to use the evidence about what works and why to accelerate progress.

The education system has been designed with three tiers of support for student learning and achievement. Its structure contains particular roles of governance, policy, operations, resourcing and implementation, each intended to support the quality of the interactions between students and teachers. The learning environment ranges from small rural primary schools to large urban secondary schools, from classrooms to community situations and partner tertiary institutions. These three components provide the context that the integrated system of supports for learners works within.

The big ideas underpinning the *integrated system of supports for learners* are embedded within a range of the assets and tools available to schools. The big ideas and associated resources are described in more detail below.

System vision: Together, the New Zealand Curriculum and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa, point to what is worth learning so that the system can meet its unifying vision "for young people to be confident, connected, actively involved, and lifelong learners". This vision ensures students are at the centre of all educational interactions and decisions.

Each school describes their local curriculum in relation to national curricula. There is widespread support in the sector for the content of curricula documents.[1]

[1] See Sinnema. C. (2011). *Monitoring and evaluating curriculum implementation. Final evaluation report on the implementation of the New Zealand Curriculum 2008–2009.* Wellington: Ministry of Education, p. 2.

System goals: In response to national and international data (such as NEMP, PISA, National Standards data, and ERO reports), we now have clear national achievement goals for all students. These goals act as signposts about the health of the New Zealand education system. The system expects between-group equity; therefore to achieve these goals accelerated improvement for priority groups of learners is required. In order to achieve these goals, all layers of the education system, including schools, need to use the available evidence about what is worth learning, what pace and progress is needed, what practices are work and why, and what is not working.

Progress and pace: The curriculum levels are a constant in the system – eight levels of achievement that span 13 years of schooling. These levels are displayed visually as bands to indicate the range of pathways of ongoing improvement as students progress through primary and secondary schooling.
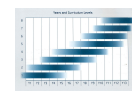
In order to support analysis of student learning nationally developed system resources such as the Literacy Learning Progressions, National Standards in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics, Ngā Whanaketanga Rūmaki Māori, and NCEA Achievement Standards provide clarity, specificity, and signposts for monitoring the pace and trajectories of students' learning and achievement across the curriculum. There are new tools[2] in development that will enable more consistent teacher judgments across the system.

What works and why? What makes a bigger difference?: The responses that school leaders and their teachers make are critical to supporting improvement and acceleration. The messages about 'what works and why' are framed in many ways in the system. The curriculum materials that are published and distributed to schools by the Ministry are an important lever for improvement and are in the hands of teachers on a daily basis. Professional learning and development (PLD) is also positioned as support for schools to learn and practice the 'what works and why' through coaching and feedback cycles.

The substantive scholarship of the BES Programme/Hei Kete Raukura has identified the why and how of what works, with a particular emphasis on what makes a bigger difference[3] for priority groups of students that are under-served in the system. The evidence is presented in a number of ways. The 'why' is the theoretical framework for the focus area of each synthesis. This is built from the literature together with research cases that have been identified and selected for inclusion. The evidence encompasses a description of the educational intervention or the programme of activities that have impacted positively on valued student outcomes. These cases are annotated with commentary around their efficacy and linked to the theoretical framework. In other words, the BES Programme Hei Kete Raukura findings are linked to a substantive body of evidence and not a single item of research.

The BES Programme/Hei Kete Raukura also indicates what approaches are not linked to improvement and some that are harmful.

The BES exemplars/Ngā Kete Raukura describe a range of high-impact practices (such as reciprocal learning and learning logs) in ways that support their implementation. These practices have been explored through several inquiry cycles and are proven to impact on the priority groups of learners and support multiple valued student outcomes. They are not a just set of good ideas; rather, they provide tested, efficient, and effective responses for classroom teachers. Each has a set of implementation alerts that guard against over-assimilation of the research ideas.[4]

All of the BES scholarship is evidence that can impact on a theoretical level in policy, design, and implementation and at the school level with leaders and teachers. It provides empirically tested models for the core of instructional practice. Because the BES concepts and resources are so critical to the integrated system of supports for learners and, in particular, to the quality of the conversations associated with initiating supplementary support, they have been expanded further in the following sections.

Self-review and communication: System improvement is built around an **inquiry and knowledge-building model**. The framework is the *Inquiry and knowledge-building cycle* as described in the Teacher Professional Learning and Development BES[5] provide the process for system improvement.

This framework is used with various derivations for different system layers (for example, Teaching as Inquiry, School Planning and Reporting, the ERO self-review cycle). Each self-review is premised on the use of transparent and high-quality data as evidence in decision-making at all levels. The difference is the level of aggregated data.

Data are not confined to student achievement data. Data will also include information about strengths and needs around leadership and teaching practices, student engagement data, parent/whānau, engagement, and other critical aspects of schooling.

To make sense of the data when asking, "Where are our students at?" and "What do they need to learn next?" requires in-depth pedagogical and evaluative knowledge. To make sense of data when asking, "What are our learning needs?" and "What does our learning look like?" requires in-depth knowledge of system improvement. A key component of the inquiry is communicating action plans and impact statements to stakeholders. The theory of action suggests that just as

[2] Notably, the Progress and Assistance tool (PaCT). For information, see http://assessment.tki.org.nz/Assessment-tools-resources/PaCT-Progress-and-Consistency-Tool

[3] Alton-Lee, A. (April 2012). *The use of evidence to improve education and serve the public good.* Paper prepared for the New Zealand Ministry of Education and the Annual Meeting of the American Educational research Association, Vancouver Canada.

[4] Over-assimilation occurs when educators believe they are enacting new practices when, in reality, they are only making superficial changes. In the same way, policymakers can use evidence in symbolic ways. They may simplify evidence or use it to create legitimacy for solutions that are already shaped or favoured. See Coburn, C., Honig, M., & and M.K. Stein (in press), What's the evidence on districts' use of evidence? In J. Bransford, L. Gomez, D. Lam, & N. Vye (Eds.) *Research and practice: Towards a reconciliation.* Cambridge: Harvard Education Press.

[5] Timperley, H., Wilson, A., Barrar, H., and Fung, I. (2007). *Teacher professional learning and development: Best Evidence Synthesis iteration [BES].* Wellington: Ministry of Education. The latest BES iteration, shown here, guides users to think about educationally powerful connections for all students in the first inquiry rather than as an afterthought. Sector leaders requested this change.

there is a cumulative building of capability to deliver a coherent and effective curriculum, there is a corresponding **building of evaluative capability.**[6]

The system has various models to support self-review of curriculum delivery and templates for communicating with stakeholders (for example, ERO indicators, Student Achievement Function rubrics, and Tātaiako guide review foci). Recently published inquiry tools such as *Ruia* and the Measurable Gains Framework ask challenging and principled questions of schools and their communities as they collect and analyse data for their inquiry into student outcomes.

Initiating Supplementary Supports Inquiry

The *initiating supplementary supports inquiry* focuses on ensuring all students achieve at or above curriculum expectations, by providing support in a timely and contextualised manner. Some supports are designed to directly target students and supplements effective classroom teaching. These supports can be remedial or preventative. Other supports foregrounds teacher and leader learning and supplements a school's improvement plan. All supplementary supports need to be part of a dynamic system that is efficient and connected to classroom practice, always adding capability to a school's response to diverse (all) students. It is the system's responsibility to both provide and use support that causes improvement and leads to social equity of improved outcomes for all students as shown in *Figure 3: Using supplementary supports to accelerate progress*. There are three key ideas shown in this figure:

1. Accelerating the progress of students whose achievement is below or well below the expected curriculum level of *The New Zealand Curriculum (The NZC)* is a priority for **all** New Zealand schools. This means there is an expectation that students will be achieving at the expected level for every learning area (years 1 - 10) and the specialist areas for pathways to success (years 11-13).
2. Standards derived from *The NZC*, specifically NCEA achievement standards and National Standards, support expectations of progress and achievement.
3. All students have access to effective classroom teaching but at some stages some students will need effective Tier 2 and/or Tier 3 support for successful outcomes.
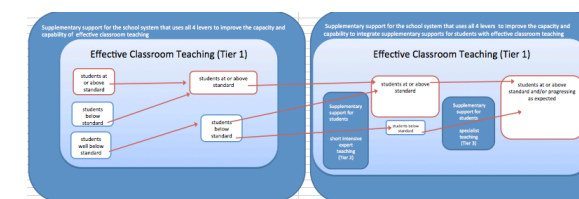

Figure 2. Using supplementary supports to accelerate progress

The use of Teaching as inquiry as a model for decision-making ensures that the student support is not business-as-usual but instead is timely and supplements the classroom teaching and learning programme. See *Figure 4. Teaching as inquiry – meeting the needs of all students* for what this looks like in the classroom. The focus is on all students achieving, without exception. This means there needs to be targeted and supplementary supports for some students. Those providing supplementary support must themselves engage in teaching as inquiry processes to understand impact on the targeted supports.
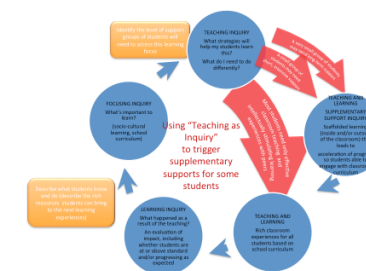

Figure 3. Using "Teaching as inquiry" to trigger supplementary supports for all students

Where to find the tools and support.

The tools provided on http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/System-of-support support the initiation process.

[6] See the draft ERO's Approach to Reviews in Early Childhood Services (2012) pages 10–15 for details of education evaluation capability. Downloaded from http://www.ero.govt.nz/ early childhood methodology.