

100

New Zealand Curriculum: Draft for Consultation 2006 Clyde Quay School Wellington November 2006

## Introduction

The New Zealand Curriculum: Draft for Consultation 2006 (NZC draft) and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa (TMoA) "sets the direction for learning for all students while at school and will ensure that when they leave, they are equipped for life long learning and living in a world where continual change is the norm" (NZC draft, p. 7). It is within this context- the alignment of the NZC draft and TMoA- that Matairangi Clyde Quay School staff has provided feedback.

The positive aspects (and there are many) of the NZC draft and areas that require more attention are elaborated upon in each section of this feedback with its subsequent recommendations.

# **Impressions**

Staff was appreciative of the consultation undertaken which resulted in the NZC draft and notes the consultation was process driven.

Staff was pleased the NZC draft validated many of the school's teaching approaches and what is defined as best practice e.g. students as creators and co-constructors of knowledge (NZC draft, p.11), where the process is the core of what we teach and is the driver rather than just the attainment of knowledge. Staff also notes, if this process of creating and co-constructing knowledge is applied, students are automatically involved in making a difference hence extrapolated further- making a difference in society. It is a basic tenet of teaching approaches the school employs. Likewise, teaching for a diverse student population- the thrust of the NZC draft- is integral to the 'kaupapa' of Matairangi Clyde Quay School. Teaching practice is scrutinised closely against student outcomes for sub-groups with the view to lessening "disparity for its lowest achievers."

Staff was pleased to see biculturalism and multiculturalism emphasised throughout the NZC draft. Notwithstanding this there are particular sections where this focus needs to be made explicit. The specifics of which will be elaborated upon under the relevant sections of this paper. Everyone in the compulsory and non-compulsory sector has to understand emphatically, that biculturalism and multiculturalism, 'is' Aotearoa New Zealand (AoNZ) and that it is incumbent upon all school communities (irrespective of student and community composition) to make connections with this core fabric of AoNZ society hence connections with the rest of the world.

Staff is cognisant of the fact education alone will not solve all society's ills therefore staff is especially concerned about the impact of transient students and their families.

"How can schools make a difference for these 'whanau'? What can be reasonably expected of schools?"

At this point in the paper, staff wants to highlight the point of transient students, "There is anecdotal evidence, at least, that schools are facing a student turnover of 70-90% of students in a year" (NZEI, Special Circular 2006/27, p. 16) This means schools need extra resources/ or support programmes to ensure this group achieves.

### Recommendation

Schools are resourced/ or receive support programmes to ensure transient students are successful.

# **Philosophical Underpinnings**

The NZC draft does not promote one particular model for economic growth however the economic imperative is strong. Matairangi Clyde Quay School staff would not want to see the economic imperative become the main driver for education as enunciated e.g. in the vision, p. 8; designing a school curriculum, p. 26 (bullet points 4 and 5) where the economic imperative is made explicit – globalisation and financial literacy.

Economic models that take the form of corporations and monopolies have proved counterproductive such as Enron, the dot-com phenomenon, and multi-lateral trade agreements. Rather, diversification in the economy and models that encourage sustainability at each level- local, regional, national, global- should be promoted and the variations of economic models at each of these levels. The impetus for this is to counteract economic models negatively impacting on 'huge populations' of people in the long term. Hence it is not surprising; the 'Stern Report on Climate Change' shows the current environmental crisis and economic devastation that will occur as a result of "our" inaction to counter detrimental effects on the environment- inaction predicated on "economic growth with a profit first motive and disregard for sustainability based on environmental impact."

It seems incongruent to promote Asian studies in the section designing a school curriculum (NZC draft, p. 26). The staff concludes that the motive to pursue and highlight Asian studies in this particular section was economically driven whilst this is a not a negative aspect; the emphasis on Asian studies (with a people focus) should be equally positioned in the social sciences. Staff also noted that the Pacific Rim was not exampled in the same way.

One staff member felt strongly- that in the first instance, it was important for AoNZ students to be well versed in AoNZ's rich history. Maybe the respect that comes with nurturing indigenous culture will off-set the problem of AoNZ youth adopting American gangster rapper culture and claiming it as their own.

Ehara i te whakakahore i nga hitori o Ahia engari ki timata ke i nga hitori o AoNZ o nga moutere ano hoki. E mohio ai nga hunga tamariki no iwi ke i nga whakapapa korero o te whenua nei. Katahi ka timata te whatoro atu ki nga korero tahuhu o era atu iwi o te ao. He tika hoki te nuinga o te rarangi tamariki ki konei no rawahi."

## Recommendation

Scrutinise all sections of the NZC draft and ensure that economic growth and sustainability mean 'diverse economic models' and sustainability takes into account the finality of natural resources and environmental impact.

#### Vision

The omission of the Treaty of Waitangi (ToW) is stark. "Education empowers our young people to stand tall as New Zealanders..." (NZC draft, p. 8, para 1, last sentence). Crucial to this is the ToW; this partnership (between the tangata whenua and the crown) is what makes this country unique. AoNZ's founding document should be made explicit. The ToW is crucial to an AoNZ identity.

Staff understands that the NZC draft and TMoA set the direction for learning (NZC draft, p. 7). It would be inconceivable that TMoA, implicitly/ or explicitly, would make the ToW invisible. This being the case, the NZC draft should be aligned to TMoA as regards te reo Maori and the ToW. It is staff's belief that this is also morally and ethically right.

The vision has to take into account sustainability of the earth's resources; this is pivotal when "contributing to growth of its [the AoNZ] economy" (NZC draft, p. 8, line 4]. This aspect of sustainability has to be given more prominence.

Under the heading confident (NZC draft, p. 8); the responsibility of "service" is omitted. Including "service" for the public good accentuates a core value and responsibility of any society; it is also an essential characteristic in building confident youth.

One staff member felt that nationalistic sentiments "stand tall as New Zealanders" (p. 8) was an outmoded idea, subservient to prevalent ideas that all citizens of the world are members on one indivisible planet<sup>1</sup>.

## Recommendations

- 1. Make the ToW explicit in the vision statement.
- 2. Wherever 'New Zealand' appears in the NZC draft, it should be preceded by Aotearoa hence "Aoteraroa New Zealand".

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Staff does not think this is at odds with AoNZ bicultural identity and the ToW, rather it is integral to the concept of all people belonging to 'one humanity'.

- 3. Include "service" under the heading confident (NZC draft, p. 8).
- 4. Advance the concept of one humanity, under the heading connected p. 8. Restate "Able to relate well to others" with "Able to relate well as citizens of the world."

# **Principles**

# Cultural Heritage

All students should have the opportunity to experience a curriculum that reflects and values te ao Maori not just Maori. In addition, unless this change is made, staff knows that many schools- even if they do have Maori students- will by pass the principle altogether. A number of teachers have experienced this in their teaching career. Many have had "to confront resistant staff" to vigorously argue the case for the right to include "te ao Maori" in the school context.

The current New Zealand Curriculum Framework (NZCF) and the curriculum statements make explicit that, "All programmes will be gender inclusive, non-racist, and non-discriminatory, to help ensure that learning opportunities are not restricted" (NZCF, p. 7). The NZC draft is deafeningly silent on this aspect.

#### Recommendations

- 1. Change sentence two under cultural heritage (NZC draft, p. 9) to read: "All students should have the opportunity to experience a curriculum that reflects and values te ao Maori."
- 2. Make explicit in the principles (NZC draft, p. 9) under the heading equity that "All programmes will be gender inclusive, non-racist, and non-discriminatory" or "All programmes will be consistent with the Human Rights Act 1993."

# Learning Areas

### Arts

Overall the staff supported the essence statement particularly the section on 'What are the arts about?' It was staff's opinion a glossary was required to define "role, action, time and space, tension and focus" (NZC draft, Drama, column 2, p. 14).

Staff noted the emphasis on the 'historical' aspect of the arts (NZC draft, Visual Arts, p. 15; Achievement Objectives by Level, end section) which was received favourably.

#### Recommendation

A glossary is required to define such terms as "role, action, time and space, tension and focus" (NZC draft, Drama, column 2, p. 14).

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The ToW underpins this statement.

## English

In terms of the essence statement under the heading 'How is the learning area constructed?' staff was pleased to see, making meaning and creating meaning, highlighted. Staff was positive about the corresponding achievement objectives by level (AO's) where AO's were more specific.

#### Te Reo

Te Reo has been included within learning languages therefore (it is staff's understanding) this learning area is voluntary. There are two issues in this regard. First, te reo Maori should sit alongside English (made explicit and distinct) as having equal status to English. Second, te reo Maori for English-medium schools should also be made explicit and have the same status as all other learning areas.

One staff member's strong feeling is encapsulated in the following commentary:

"If the schools were serious about te reo Maori, bilingual units would be in every English-medium school. Most schools say 'no' to bilingual units however the ones who give it a-go see the benefits in the tamariki in the long run.

If you want to learn te reo Maori in the school and make it successful, the emphasis should be giving te reo Maori its own status. Te reo Maori is the first language of this country but we have lost sight of it. It is a language that almost became extinct. Maybe English-medium schools can play their part to help restore and keep alive that which is truly part of us all.

Kia kaha whanau, in keeping our tamariki informed and proud to live amongst such rich history. Because not knowing where you are from is like a tree without roots; a tree without roots shall wither away."

Making te reo Maori (in Maori-medium and English-medium schooling) a distinct learning area- is consistent with the ToW. In addition, making such modifications:

- provide congruence with the underpinnings of the TMoA document;
- recognise te reo Maori as an official language of AoNZ;
- ❖ are consistent with Maori education philosophy as articulated in Mason Durie's principles the right: to live as Maori, to actively participate as citizen's of the world and to enjoy good health and a high standard of living<sup>3</sup>;
- ensure Maori are visible and that being a citizen of AoNZ means recognising this country's bicultural identity and that it is based on the partnership between the crown and tangata whenua;
- offer an alternative pedagogy/ or ways of viewing the world- 'Te Ao Maori';
- give due status to the founding document of AoNZ- the ToW;

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> This framework underpins MoE: Maori education policy.

> \* make us a truly bilingual nation, as by government policy e.g. te reo Maori is recognised in courts of law and banking.

#### Recommendations

- 1. The 'Te Reo' document (for Maori-medium) sits alongside the English learning area not as a subset of 'Learning Languages'.
- 2. The 'Te Reo' document (for English-medium schools) is identified as a separate learning area.

## Health and Physical Education

Staff was positive about the essence statement but noted the omission of individual team activities, personal goals, gender stereotypes, students' cultural perspectives and customs, drug education and education outside the classroom.

#### Recommendation

Include these aspects "individual team activities, personal goals, gender stereotypes, students' cultural perspectives and customs, drug education and education outside the classroom" into the relevant sections of the essence statement on health and physical education.

# Learning Languages

Staff had a number of queries:

- Schools could be confused about the voluntary nature of teaching a second language since it is a distinct learning area in the NZC draft and the achievement objectives span levels 1-8. This implies teaching a second language starts at Y0 and is compulsory.
- A Making clear the definition, status and position of a second language i.e. if you teach Maori in English-medium schooling do you have to teach an additional language as well?
- ❖ If learning a second language is voluntary, does it mean students can opt out of sessions?

There is major workload and resourcing implications since this is an additional curriculum area. Staff is at a loss about how to fit in another curriculum area especially if learning languages loses its voluntary status. Staff prefers a staged introduction to learning languages coinciding with professional learning and development. Staff also expects the current MoE funding- enabling schools to employ language assistants- to continue and the funding levels increased.

As stated in the English section of this document (p. 5) under the heading Te Reo; making te reo Maori (in Maori-medium and English-medium schooling) a distinct learning area is consistent with the ToW. In addition making such modifications:

- provide congruence with the underpinnings of TMoA document;
- recognise te reo Maori as an official language of AoNZ;

6

- ❖ are consistent with Maori education philosophy as articulated in Mason Durie's principles the right: to live as Maori, to actively participate as citizen's of the world and to enjoy good health and a high standard of living;
- ensure Maori are visible and that being a citizen of AoNZ means recognising this country's bicultural identity and that it is based on the partnership between the crown and tangata whenua;
- offer an alternative pedagogy/ or ways of viewing the world-'Te Ao Maori';
- give due status to the founding document of AoNZ- the ToW;
- \* make us a truly bilingual nation, as by government policy e.g. te reo Maori is recognised in courts of law and banking.

#### Recommendations

- 1. Make the voluntary or compulsory nature of learning languages explicit in the essence statement.
- 2. The MoE ensures a plan for professional learning and development on learning languages is put in place and current funding for employing language assistants is reviewed.
- 3. The MoE makes modifications so that the 'Te Reo' document (for Maori-medium) sits alongside the English learning area not as a subset of 'Learning Languages'.
- 4. The MoE makes relevant changes so the 'Te Reo' document (for English-medium schools) has equal status as all other learning areas.

# **Mathematics** and Statistics

Staff was positive about the essence statement particularly linking maths to other thinking skills (NZC draft, heading two, para 2, p. 19). As regards the corresponding achievement objectives by level, staff was positive about the inclusion of statistical literacy.

The MoE has given no explanation for separating out mathematics and statistics; in light of this, it is difficult to provide feedback about this change. It is staff's opinion that this needs to be explained.

## Recommendation

MoE informs schools of the reasons for separating out mathematics and statistics.

#### Science

Staff was pleased that the essence statement and achievement objectives by level validated the school's approach to science.

## Social Sciences

Staff viewed the essence statement in a positive light. The less prescriptive nature provides more flexibility. However there is a glaring omission of the ToW and tangata whenua. Both these essential elements should be made explicit and woven through sections of the essence statement.

Final

Submission- NZC draft Matairangi Clyde School Mt Victoria Wellington November 2006.

In the section under 'Why study the social sciences?' it states, "Students explore the unique nature of New Zealand society and its bicultural heritage." The uniqueness of AoNZ is- the ToW partnership and te reo Maori. Therefore the sentence should be replaced with: "Students explore the unique nature of Aotearoa New Zealand society and its bicultural identity that recognises tangata whenua."

#### Recommendation

Under the heading 'Why study the social sciences?' The new sentence should be restated and read: "Students explore the unique nature of Aotearoa New Zealand society and its bicultural identity that recognises tangata whenua."

# **Technology**

Staff came to the conclusion that despite the condensing of the essence statement and the changes to the achievement objectives by level; this curriculum area remains problematic even after nearly eleven years<sup>4</sup> of technology in schools. The language employed in the technology curriculum is dense and unhelpful. Staff believes it could be reduced and simplified. Since technology continues to be problematic, it would make sense to again offer co-ordinated professional learning and development at a national level.

# Information Communication Technology

It is unclear where ICT fits within the learning areas though it is emphasised under e.g. effective pedagogy (NZC draft, E-learning and pedagogy, p. 11) and planning for the development of the key competencies (NZC draft, p. 29). The position of ICT within the NZC draft needs further clarification.

Staff agrees that ICT "has transformed the world..." (NZC draft, p. 25) however there are still a number of workload and resourcing issues to be addressed. It is Matairangi Clyde Quay School's experience that having a staff member- employed to specifically oversee ICT programmes- has been most advantageous. Having a designated ICT person has:

- increased use of ICT schoolwide;
- resulted in the integration of ICT across curriculum;
- improved skills amongst staff and students e.g. staff and students are more motivated to use video, digital cameras, web camera conferencing and has started to merge these across curriculum;
- progressed the effective use and maintenance of hardware.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Ministry of Education, (1995). Technology in the New Zealand curriculum. Learning Media, Wellington.

Staff was concerned that resourcing for ICT had to be equitable for all those within the compulsory sector of schooling from decile 1 schools through to decile 10 schools.

#### Recommendations

- 1. Identify the position and status of ICT within a learning area of the NZC draft "Technology is a logical place."
- 2. Reduce and simplify the technology essence statement and corresponding achievement objectives by level.
- 3. Ensure schools are allocated sufficient human and material resources to embed ICT and its pedagogy into school curriculum.
- 4. The MoE should again offer nationally co-ordinated professional learning and development on the technology curriculum.
- 5. The MoE ensures all schools- deciles 1 to 10- have equality of opportunity in accessing ICT resources.

# **Effective Pedagogy**

This section is crucial and staff is heartened to see its inclusion. Staff is also aware that the headings- Encouraging reflective thought and action; Making connections; Providing multiple opportunities to learn; Enhancing the relevance of learning; Creating a supportive learning environment; E-learning and pedagogy- are a précis of Alton-Lee, (2003)<sup>5</sup>.

Staff agrees with the MoE that this section is vital considering AoNZ's changing demographics which reveal an increasingly diverse student population. Consequently schools are expected to lessen the wide disparity between the highest and lowest 20% of achievers. Staff notes that this expectation to "lessen the wide disparity between the highest and lowest 20% of achievers" is assumed. Staff understands that attending to the characteristics of 'Effective Pedagogy'- or more specifically Alton-Lee's (2003) ten research-based characteristics- will go a long way to achieving this goal of lessening disparity. However, this interpretation cannot be assumed. Neither can the MoE assume all schools and teachers have a shared understanding of what the characteristics of effective pedagogy mean and look like in practice. This being the case, it may be a good idea to convey to schools and teachers that the result of effective pedagogy means addressing and lessening the disparity between the highest and lowest 20% of achievers'.

Additionally, since no one can assume schools and their teachers actually have a shared understanding/ or what Alton-Lee's (2003), ten research-based characteristics mean for teaching practice; this section has fundamental workload and resourcing

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Alton-Lee, A. (2003). *Quality teaching for diverse students in schooling: Best evidence synthesis.* Ministry of Education, Wellington New Zealand.

implications. Specifically, professional learning and development that unpacks Alton-Lee (2003) has to be on offer nationally.

This section on effective pedagogy, is the lynch pin for all other sections in the NZC draft and it is pivotal all schools and teachers know what Alton-Lee (2003) means for teaching practice.

## Recommendations

- 1. The section on 'Effective Pedagogy' (NZC draft, pp. 24-25) should be referenced to Alton-Lee, A. (2003). *Quality teaching for diverse students in schooling: Best evidence synthesis*. Ministry of Education, Wellington New Zealand.
- 2. That the expectation of "lessening disparity for the lowest 20% of achievers" is conveyed in the section 'Effective Pedagogy'.
- 3. That the MoE co-ordinates professional learning and development to unpack Alton-Lee (2003): the ten research-based characteristics of quality teaching and what it means for teaching practice.

# Designing a School Curriculum

All stakeholders in a school community are expected to have input into planning the curriculum. However it is not clear to what extent the MoE expects parents and boards of trustees (the Board) to participate in curriculum design- clarification is required.

It is obvious to staff that such an exercise requires much planning:

- organising meetings to present the NZC / or surveys to gain opinion;
- dissemination of written material- final NZC and corresponding materialcurriculum plans, charter, strategic planning, policies, national education goals and national administration guidelines etc;
- collation of material and gaining approval about the 'design' from all stakeholders;
- other associated administrative costs.

## Recommendations

- 1. The MoE provides a resourcing plan so school communities can fulfil the goal of including all its stakeholders in planning the curriculum.
- 2. The MoE clarifies its expectation about the extent of parent and Board involvement in designing the curriculum.

## Planning with a Focus on Outcomes

"The long view is taken: each student's ultimate learning success is more important than the covering of particular achievement objectives" (NZC draft, column 2, last

bullet point, p. 28). This being the case, staff expects the MoE to work towards ensuring changes to policy; regulations and legislation reflect this view.

The one fundamental change that would nullify "The long view...." is mandated national testing/ or its derivatives e.g. all schools are to be online with student management systems by 2008. In light of this, it only needs a directive from the secretary of education to make the reporting of AssTLe results (for instance) a requirement of annual reports that are currently submitted to the MoE.

Staff is equally aware that the MoE cannot prevent any government making changes to legislation nevertheless it would be reasonable for schools to expect the MoE to foreward schools' views re: mandatory testing/ or its derivatives to incoming governments.

#### Recommendations

- 1. The MoE notes mandated testing/ or its derivatives would nullify: "The long view is taken: each student's ultimate learning success is more important than the covering of particular achievement objectives" (NZC draft, column 2, last bullet point, p. 28).
- 2. The MoE notes Matairangi Clyde Quay School staff is implacably opposed to mandated national testing/ or its derivatives.
- 3. Matairangi Clyde Quay School staff expects the MoE to convey its opposition to national testing/ or its derivatives to current and future governments.

## Planning for the Development of the Key Competencies

Staff noted the key competencies (NZC draft, p. 11) have been aligned to Te Whariki (NZC draft, Planning for Coherent Pathways, p. 33). This makes sense and reminds schools to be cognisant of the importance of pre-school education and to review practice so transition to schooling is smooth. It also gives long overdue recognition to Te Whariki.

The questions staff raised were:

- what resources or exemplars will be available so that teachers can monitor, assess, moderate and level key competencies?
- \* what professional learning will be offered in order to realign current school policy and best practice to the key competencies?
- ❖ what exactly do the key competencies mean when woven through the achievement objectives by level, at the back of the NZC draft?

Weaving key competencies through the achievement objectives by levels, gives the impression staff is expected to level, assess and monitor key competencies in the same manner as achievement objectives. If this is the case, key competencies become a main driver in all planning and schools will want to see descriptors for key competencies and exemplars from levels 1-8.

In relation to the current NZCF, staff notes that in practice schools and teachers probably emphasised the achievement objectives for each strand more than essential skills (now the key competencies). Staff is unsure whether the NZC draft gives equal weighting to the key competencies and achievement objectives by level or not-this needs to be made clear.

#### Recommendations

- 1. The MoE notes the resourcing implications required to realign current school policy and best practice to focus on key competencies (NZC draft, p. 11 & p. 29).
- 2. The MoE clarifies the intent of key competencies that are woven through the achievement objectives by level at the back of the NZC draft.
- 3. The MoE makes explicit whether key competencies and achievement objectives by level have equal weighting or not.
- 4. If the key competencies have equal weighting, the MoE provides descriptors and exemplars at each level 1-8.

## Planning for Purposeful Assessment

Staff received this section most favourably: "The primary purpose of assessment is to improve students' learning and teachers' teaching as both student and teacher respond to the information that it provides. With this in mind schools need to consider how they will gather, analyse and use assessment information so it is effective in this purpose" (NZC draft, p. 30).

Notwithstanding this, staff is blatantly aware that a singular change in MoE policy/ or legislation to mandated testing/ or its derivatives will totally undermine this focus. As stated under the heading planning with a focus on outcomes (p. 10 of this paper), staff is implacably opposed to mandated testing/ or its derivatives therefore the following recommendations need reiterating.

## Recommendations

- 1. The MoE notes mandated testing/ or its derivatives would nullify: "The primary purpose of assessment is to improve students' learning and teachers' teaching as both student and teacher respond to the information that it provides. With this in mind schools need to consider how they will gather, analyse and use assessment information so it is effective in this purpose" (NZC draft, p. 30).
- 2. The MoE notes Matairangi Clyde Quay School staff is implacably opposed to mandated national testing/ or its derivatives.
- 3. Matairangi Clyde Quay School staff expects the MoE to convey its opposition about national testing/ or its derivatives to current and future governments.

# Inductees into the profession

It was the considered opinion of the student teacher on staff that the NZC draft on its own; did not provide enough detail enabling provisionally registered teachers to plan and staff agreed.

The implications for the MoE, initial teacher education and schools, are evident. Some implications are:

- the MoE ensures schools have access to all secondary resources that support the final NZC document;
- secondary resources need to be issued to all schools and updated regularly;
- initial teacher education institutions will also have to know about and be able to access these secondary resources;
- schools will have to be cognisant of the fact that inductees entering schools may have little knowledge and understanding of the changes (NZC draft) in the interim;
- the need for the MoE to continue offering professional learning and development in the numeracy and literacy projects;
- the MoE organising professional learning and development on the final NZC document at a national level.

### Recommendations

- 1. The MoE ensures schools and initial teacher education institutions have access to all secondary resources that support the final NZC document.
- 2. The MoE needs to continue a cycle of professional learning and development on the numeracy and literacy projects.
- 3. The MoE needs to co-ordinate professional learning and development on the final NZC document at a national level.

# **Concluding Remarks**

Staff appreciates the extent of the MoE's consultation to include as many stakeholders as practicable into the revision of the NZCF and the national curriculum statements resulting in the NZC draft.

Staff is equally aware that the success of the final NZC (the document) depends on what policies, regulations and legislative changes are invoked to give the document credibility as intended. The document has to be the driver for changes to policies, regulations and legislation not the opposite. If the contrary does occur then it would be reasonable to expect schools and school communities to lose faith in this process and the system.

# Clyde Quay School Staff Submission NZC Draft for Consultation 2006

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Final Submission- NZC draft Matairangi Clyde School Mt Victoria Wellington November 2006.