

Have your say about updating the Education Act 1989



Our current Education Act became law in 1989, and a lot has changed since then. It's time to bring it up to date and reflect New Zealand now, and for the future. This consultation presents ideas for change to help us get there.

What changes are needed?

One of the biggest changes suggested is to make it clear in our law that children and young people, and raising their achievement, comes first.

The law should help schools, kura and early learning services by setting out a clear direction, saying who is responsible for what, and saying how schools and kura should plan their priorities and report their progress.

The law should also make it easier for schools, kura, Communities of Learning and early learning services and work together more to deliver the best education for every child and young person and to try out great ideas.

It's important for parents, whānau and communities to know how schools are helping their children and young people achieve and what their role is. They should also be helped to understand why certain decisions are made about education.

Have your say

We want to hear your views on:

Making sure everyone knows the goals for education

The current Act doesn't say clearly what the education goals for our children and young people are. It should describe what early learning and schooling should achieve for our children and young people, and say what things are most important to learners, parents, whānau, teachers, education services, businesses and the public.

The Update should establish a way for national priorities about what is most important for education to be made clear, so schools and kura know what is expected of them, and can be sure that their planning is focused on the right things. Early learning services are different because they have their own legislation, but they would need to keep these important things in mind when reporting to parents, whānau and agencies.

Supporting boards to focus on what's important

If children and young people are to succeed, it's important that boards of trustees focus on the things that matter most.

Boards would be more clear about what they should and can do, if their roles and responsibilities were in the Act, as well as expectations about how they are expected to work with other schools, kura and social services.

Improvements can be made to the way school and kura boards plan and report on how they make sure the right things are being taught, how they are informing parents, whānau and communities about what they are doing, and how well children and young people are achieving.

It may also be useful to let groups of schools and kura work together when they are planning and reporting. This would help a community plan more cohesively, share expertise and reduce administration. It could particularly benefit Communities of Learning and small or isolated schools and kura.

With better and more timely information, parents, whānau and communities can have an active role in helping to improve achievement for their children and young people. The Act could allow for a set of indicators to be established so schools and kura know what areas they need to report on. For example how well students are doing, and how the school or kura is managing its money.

The Update could enable schools, kura and Communities of Learning that are doing well to get more freedom and extra decision-making rights. This would be balanced by monitoring schools, kura and

Communities of Learning carefully and clearly saying what will happen if things go off track.

Enabling collaboration, flexibility and innovation

Communities of Learning are an exciting new way of thinking about raising achievement within and between early learning services, schools, kura and tertiary providers. The Update should encourage collaboration and support schools and kura to be more flexible, and to work together more around the learning pathway of children and young people.

As schools, kura and Communities of Learning work more closely together, some may want to share their governance arrangements. The Act currently allows two or more schools to combine into a single board. We want to know what other ways boards, if they agree, could work together, or share their ideas, and how these arrangements might work and be set out in the Update.

Some schools and kura are starting groups of new entrants at one time, for example, at the beginning of a term. This is known as cohort entry. They are doing this to help the child get used to school, to help their planning, and to minimise disruption for existing new entrants. The current Act could be changed to let five-year-olds start school or kura in groups, rather than on their individual birthdays, provided they have consulted with their communities first.

Making every school and kura a great one

Every school and every kura has to be a great one, and while most are doing well, a small number need more help to get there.

Some more options could be put in the Act to help schools and kura get back on track. These could include an improvement notice, or an audit of one part of a school or kura. At the more serious end, a board could be asked to have different people on it.

Making best use of local education provision

We all have a responsibility to make sure that all children and young people in an area are being well served by education, and money is being spent in the right places. This requires an area strategy. When changes are needed because of population shifts or when a different mix of schools is required, it's important that parents, whānau, schools, kura and communities understand why these decisions are made.

The Act could include a clearer process for area strategies. This would help children and young people, parents, whānau and communities understand what will

happen and what they need to do. Better ways of consulting could be established so people aren't frustrated by repeated consultation.

A set of guiding principles for changing schooling arrangements could be put in the Act. These could include responding to the needs of learners, making the best use of schooling, and managing the education system responsibly.

The enrolment scheme parts of the Act generally work well. But the way enrolment schemes are managed could be fine-tuned. These changes would make it clearer to children and young people, parents, whānau, schools, kura and communities how enrolment schemes are managed.



How to have your say

An easy way to make your submission is online at consultation.education.govt.nz

You can email your submission to education.update@education.govt.nz

You can post your submission to:
Education Act Update
Ministry of Education
PO Box 1666
Wellington 6140
New Zealand

Submissions close on **Monday 14 December 2015**

For more information

If you have any questions about making a submission, you can email us at: education.update@education.govt.nz

To find out more about the consultation, please visit www.education.govt.nz/education-act-update