

Brief description of group: purpose and objectives

The New Zealand Principals Federation (NZPF) is the largest principals organisation in the country, representing the professional interests of 2578 mostly primary school principals. NZPF also provides information, professional resources, a helpline and legal support and advice for school principals. In addition NZPF publishes *New Zealand Principal*, a quarterly magazine for members, a regular flyer to keep members updated and a range of other ad hoc publications.



Vision ~ The most respected and influential advocate for principals.

Mission ~ Providing a collective and professional voice for New Zealand school principals as they lead learning in the 21st century.

Values

- Professionalism: leadership, integrity, loyalty, honesty, knowledge, trust, wisdom.
- Manaakitanga: care, respect, aroha, altruism.
- Kotahitanga: accord, coalition, solidarity, unity, togetherness, inclusiveness.
- Whanaungatanga: relationships, kinship, humour

Established in 1982, the NZPF operates from a set of **core beliefs** shared by the members.

- Advocacy for principals should always be consistent with the best interests of all children
- Supporting and empowering principals in their leadership role is critical to the quality of education in New Zealand
- Sustaining a professional organisation is important for advancing educational aims in New Zealand schools
- There should be equity of access to quality lifelong learning for all principals, teachers and students.

State and integrated schools must be fully supported through state-funding, highly skilled professionals and co-ordinated social policy.

Principals can become NZPF members by applying in writing to NZPF. Membership approval is sanctioned by the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the organisation. An executive committee of thirteen members, a President and Vice President are democratically elected by the NZPF membership annually to represent members at a national level.

NZPF is represented on a wide range of educational and political groups and regularly meets with the Minister, the Secretary for Education and the CEO of the Education Review Office. Principals also have a separate representation system at their local or regional level. NZPF recognises the autonomy of regional and local principals associations to pursue their own agenda derived from their own local educational and community issues and supports them in their work. NZPF is a membership driven organisation and the work of the NZPF is directed through the federation's AGM, the members and the national executive.

Goals for Pathways to the Future for Education in Aotearoa New Zealand

- Social Policy/Responsibility: Children will live in safe, nurturing environments that maximise educational opportunity and motivation to learn.
- Teacher Capability: New Zealand schools will be staffed by highly skilled teachers who are committed to student learning on-going professional development and educational achievement.
- Curriculum: That New Zealand schools deliver an authentic curriculum that reflects UNESCO's four pillars; learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be.
- Professional Development: New Zealand principals and those aspiring to principalship will have the opportunity to access high quality professional development which enables them to be effective school leaders.
- Resourcing: New Zealand schools will receive fair, equitable and adequate resourcing to achieve agreed educational aims and outcomes.

Comment on the strengths of the evaluation and assessment framework in New Zealand: what is working well and why

In NZ primary schools there is a tradition of extensive formative assessment with less emphasis on summative assessment and reporting. Teacher judgement is valued and student assessment is used predominately in deciding on the next teaching episode. This tradition has allowed teachers and schools to respond to the individual learning needs of students while largely avoiding the perverse effects of high-stakes testing on teaching and learning as seen in England, the US etc.

The Education Review Office reviews school performance to identify effective or poor practice. Although ERO would appear to be subject to political influence, the current framework encourages schools to match the curriculum to the needs of their own community. In addition the National Education Monitoring Programme provides authentic samples of attainment in specific curricula which schools use to benchmark their own data. NZ Council for Educational Research also makes available nationally benchmarked tests for schools to use.

Comment on successful evaluation and assessment policy initiatives and reasons for their success

Every year since 1995 the National Education Monitoring Project (NEMP) based at the University of Otago has been reporting on what NZ primary school children know and can do, covering all areas of the curriculum over consecutive four-year assessment cycles. New Zealand has been well served by NEMP's ability to work productively with teachers to monitor achievement over time and provide many kinds of assessment information to inform policy and practice.

Separately, the *Ariki Project* – a principal and school development project, managed by NZPF and funded by MoE enables principals to evaluate the connection between leadership intents, teacher behaviour and student outcomes. It facilitates regular assessment of progress towards stated goals. Its success, currently by 40 schools with approximately 600 teachers, is related to the identification of the participants with the values of the project (collegial obligations, reflective inquiry and discourse, evidence based professional practice, and professional discretion). Evaluation and assessment become an integral part of tracking intents in the daily life of the school. Evaluation (appraisal) of the principal is clarified with on-going data that stimulates and summarises professional dialogue.

Comment on the major evaluation and assessment policy challenges in New Zealand

The main challenge is to avoid the adverse effects of performativity that are associated with high-stakes forms of assessment like National Standards (NS). Performativity not only changes organisations but brings about new subjectivities: when it comes to teachers it not only changes their work but changes what it actually means to be a teacher. In the case of NS we would expect greater anxiety around NS performance leading to a narrowed teaching focus. Schools and teachers will come to measure their worth and value by NS. Schools towards the top of the NS hierarchy will find it easy to recruit new staff, whereas schools with poorer NS results will tend to further discourage applicants for positions in lower socio-economic schools. A NS economy will develop in schools where energies and funding are directed to NS and away from other areas. Educational triage and commodification of pupils will ensue. Professional identities will change as NS become the bread and butter of the job.

With NS we also anticipate important problems for learners because curriculum narrowing is not going to help most children. NS will also affect teacher expectations. Frustration about underachieving children will translate to them even if nothing is said. NS will decrease pupils' internal motivation and undermine their identities as learners. NS also threaten other important and successful assessment practices. There are large areas of world leading practice in NZ schools including NEMP, tests from NZCER, AsTTle etc which are now at risk by a poorly thought out and badly implemented NS policy. The real tensions are between our extremely devolved school system and the need for continuous and useful outcome data by the centre. Currently politicians don't seem to trust a sampling approach.

Comment on the issues and debates in the area of evaluation and assessment

NS are widely opposed in the sector both because of the inflexible, stigmatising and time consuming form of assessment involved and because they have been implemented too quickly and with insufficient genuine consultation with teachers and principals and representative organisations. NZ does face issues around the low achievement levels of about 10% of students, There is little evidence NS will address the needs of this group but they will put at risk valued approaches to assessment, teaching and learning that have served most children in New Zealand primary schools well for many years. They will also diminish many of the further gains which could be made through New Zealand's latest curriculum which, unlike NS, was the product of extensive consultation.

More recently different interpretations as to the purpose of evaluation and assessment have emerged. Currently, there is an overarching ideology of economic progress dominating the political scene. This includes the general lack of recognition of the life empowering nature of education and learning. The links between E & A and improved student outcomes are poorly defined. There seems to be a misplaced lack of confidence in teacher effectiveness and a lack of understanding of the nature of schools as collaborative institutions.