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Principals Unimpressed by National's Return to the 3Rs

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The announcement of the National Party leader, Mr Luxon, to lift literacy and numeracy achievement by returning to the out-dated, failed national standards regime, has astonished and disappointed principals across the motu.

President of the New Zealand Principals' Federation (NZPF), Leanne Otene, said, "I can't believe we've just been presented with national standards mark two".

The national standards were roundly seen as a reason for the halt in progress of the excellent New Zealand Curriculum document, resulting in a decade of negative achievement. Only now, with the Curriculum Refresh poised for implementation, is the sector beginning to make progress again.

"No standardised system of teaching and assessment can possibly be useful in a context of high diversity as we have," said Otene. "The learning support needs of the tamariki coming in our school gates is extensive and growing," she said.

"We have Akonga with autism, alcohol fetal syndrome, P babies, anxiety, trauma, dyslexia, dyspraxia, and our highest needs akonga, who make up about 5% of our extreme behavioural needs, present with violent and highly disruptive behaviours.

"What we most need is a Counsellor in every school and funding for psychologists, trauma trained teachers, specialists and therapists. What we most definitely don't need is another round of national standards," she said.

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