

Cabinet Paper material

Proactive release

Minister & portfolio	Hon Erica Stanford, Minister of Education
Name of package	Implementing Regular and Consistent Assessment and Reporting of Student Progress and Achievement
Date considered	24 June 2024
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These documents have been proactively released:

Implementing Regular and Consistent Assessment and Reporting of Student Progress and Achievement

Date considered: 24 June 2024

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Date considered: 19 June 2024

Author: Committee Secretary

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Date considered: 24 June 2024

Author: Secretary of the Cabinet

Material redacted

Some deletions have been made from the documents in line with withholding grounds under the Official Information Act 1982. Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

The applicable withholding grounds under the Act are as follows:

Section 9(2)(f)(iv) to protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials

Some deletions have been made from the documents as the information withheld does not fall within scope of the Minister's portfolio responsibilities, and is not relevant to the proactive release of this material.

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<http://legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1982/0156/latest/DLM64785.html>

In Confidence

Office of the Minister of Education

Cabinet Social Outcomes Committee

Implementing regular and consistent assessment and reporting of student progress and achievement

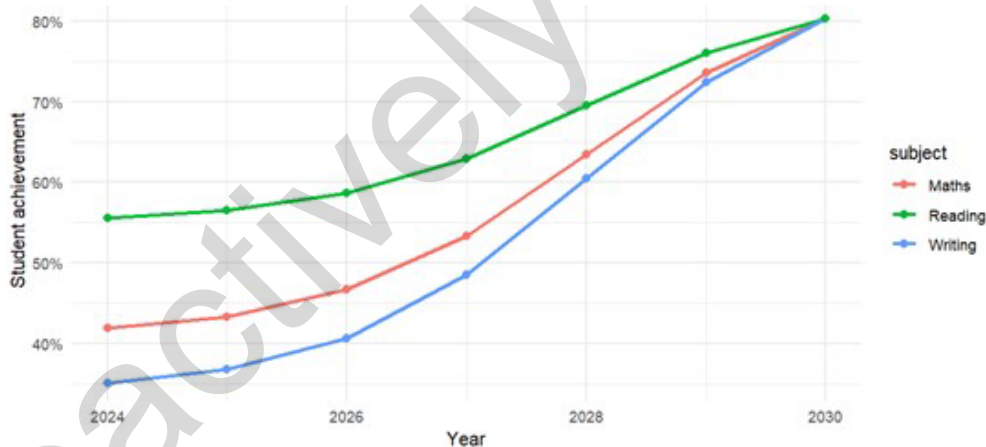
Proposal

- 1 This paper provides an update on work to strengthen assessment and aromatawai¹ and reporting of student progress and achievement against the national curriculum (*The New Zealand Curriculum* and *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa*).

Relation to government priorities

- 2 We have set a target of 80% of Year 8 students being at or above the expected curriculum level for their age in reading, writing, and maths, by December 2030. My six education priorities are designed to work together towards achieving this target [SOU-24-MIN-0026 refers].

Figure 1: Percentage point increases required to meet estimated improvement trajectory



- 3 The graph above and table below² illustrate how we will report iteratively on progress towards meeting the target to Cabinet Strategy Committee (STR)³ to inform further action required from the education work programme to achieve this.

¹ Aromatawai is the equivalent of assessment for Te Marautanga o Aotearoa. There are contextual differences, but both assessment and aromatawai share the same need for rigorous, reliable evidence to demonstrate how young people are progressing and achieving in their learning.

² The graph and table show how the proportions of students would track to reach 80% by 2030 based on a sigmoid curve (where increases are initially exponential, and then eventually slow down and plateau). This growth is not based off historical trends in the data or the specific effect from the interventions currently planned. It instead uses the assumption that the goal of 80% by 2030 will be reached. The 2024 value is estimated to be the last known historic proportion of each subject.

³ National Monitoring Study of Student Achievement (NMSSA) 2012–2022, a national sampling study which assessed reading, writing and maths every 5 years. This has been replaced by the Curriculum Insights and Progress Study (CI&PS) which assesses annually.

Table 1: Percentage point increase in student achievement over time (%)

Year	Writing	Maths	Reading
2024	35%	42%	56%
2025	37% (2% á)	43% (1% á)	56% (0% á)
2026	41% (4% á)	47% (4% á)	59% (3% á)
2027	49% (8% á)	53% (6% á)	63% (4% á)
2028	60% (11% á)	64% (11% á)	70% (7% á)
2029	72% (12% á)	74% (10% á)	76% (6% á)
2030	80% (8% á)	80% (6% á)	80% (4% á)

- 4 One of my key priorities that supports lifting student achievement and closing the equity gap is “implementing consistent modes of monitoring student progression and achievement” [SOU-24-MIN-0026 refers], and progress against this priority area will be regularly reported back to Cabinet STR.

Executive Summary

- 5 Assessment and aromatawai (assessment for learning for those learning in te reo Māori) are vital to quality teaching and monitoring progress. I am concerned that not enough schools are using robust tools that will consistently measure progress – which risks students falling behind and not being identified early enough. This could exacerbate inequalities and achievement gaps for our most vulnerable groups of learners. Likewise, there is limited data on how all students within New Zealand are progressing for core skills for most of primary, intermediate and early secondary school.
- 6 This means we may not be identifying soon enough where children are falling behind until senior secondary school, and thus inadequately responding with either policy settings or funding and supports to meet their needs. We need sufficient data to support good decision-making at all levels, and the education system to have a cohesive whole-of-pathway approach to assessment and monitoring.
- 7 I am updating Cabinet on my approach to delivering commitments related to assessment and reporting, as previously advised when setting out my priorities [SOU-24-MIN-0026 refers]. I have six immediate foci which make up this work programme:
- 7.1 Restarting work on a school entry assessment that was paused in mid-2023.⁴
- 7.2 Introducing phonics checks for students in their first year at school from term 1, 2025.
- 7.3 Developing a foundational skills check in numeracy and literacy at Year 2 to replace the current six year net.⁵

⁴ Officials have advised me funding for the School Entry Kete project was reprioritised through Budget 2023.

7.4 Building the habit of regular assessment through setting expectations for twice-yearly assessment for Year 3 to 8 students using standardised tools – including making improvements to the tools available within the short-term.

7.5 9(2)(f)(iv)

7.6 Improving the consistency and quality of regular reporting to parents and guardians.

- 8 I recognise there may be anxiety in the sector about the shift towards more national consistency in assessment, aromatawai, and reporting, and the purposes to which any data that is collected. I want to be very clear my focus is to ensure we can provide students with the right support to accelerate or extend their learning, and that we understand the level of impact policy changes have so we can refine where needed.
- 9 I am also taking steps to strengthen monitoring across the curriculum pathways of our education system through expanding the Curriculum Insights and Progress Study to assess core skills every year. Likewise, my work on the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) will provide greater clarity and ensure it continues to be a robust qualification.
- 10 Along with my other changes to strengthen the national curriculum for schooling [SOU-24-MIN-0051 refers], I expect that introducing robust, regular and consistent assessment will help us to reach our achievement target.

Case for change

Robust assessment is integral for quality teaching and monitoring progress, but is not being used consistently

- 11 Assessment and aromatawai (assessment for learning for those learning in te reo Māori) are an integral part of quality teaching. However, in our current system, the first view we have of actual student achievement through a nationwide standardised assessment tool is at secondary school, with NCEA corequisite assessments. It is much too late to learn in Year 10 or 11 that students have not been adequately prepared with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed at NCEA.⁶ This happens because there is not a coherent system of assessment being used throughout the schooling pathway.
- 12 Robust, standardised tools for assessment are one critical part of reaching our achievement targets. Teachers can use this information to inform whether their students are progressing against the national curricula and see if any changes to

⁵ The standardised Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement is commonly known in New Zealand as the six year net. It is used after one year of school instruction (generally age six in New Zealand) to determine a student's grasp of basic reading and writing concepts and skills, and to pinpoint any gaps in understanding.

⁶ For example, in 2023, 36% of students (the majority of whom were in Year 10) who sat the NCEA corequisite did not achieve writing assessment and 38% did not achieve the numeracy assessment (these are set at curriculum Level 4–5, comparable to the curriculum expectations for a Year 8/9 student): <https://ncea.education.govt.nz/NCEA-corequisite-standards-Results>.

teaching, or extra support, are required. Regardless of where they live in New Zealand, the school or kura they attend, or their teacher, all students deserve equal opportunities to benefit from high quality assessment and aromatawai to measure their progress, including through use of standardised assessment tools.

- 13 In our current system, the use of assessment and aromatawai tools and approaches, and how progress and achievement is reported, is variable.⁷
- 14 The table below provides an overview of school and kura Term 1 2024 usage of standardised tools for assessment provided by the Ministry of Education (the Ministry) and the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER). It shows that only 19% of schools use a consistent tool for assessing writing tuhituhi, and around 60% for reading pānui and mathematics pāngarau.⁸

Curriculum area	Schools and kura using tools in Term 1 2024 ⁹
Mathematics and pāngarau	61% (1547/2548)
Reading and pānui	60% (1518/2548)
Writing and tuhituhi	19% (493/2548)

- 15 I am concerned that not all schools and kura use standardised tools for assessment, as this could mean they do not have a reliable understanding of students' progress against the national curricula. This is worrying, as without a reliable understanding of students' progress against the national curricula there is a risk that gaps in learning may not be identified early enough for accelerative support to be provided, and students will fall behind. Consistent progress monitoring is also important for those children who are transient, to enable receiving schools to know where the student is at in their learning journey.
- 16 This exacerbates inequalities and achievement gaps for our most vulnerable groups of learners. It results in too many children not being at curriculum level when they begin secondary school and impacts future education and employment opportunities. Furthermore, children who would benefit from additional support are not being consistently identified, and interventions to accelerate and extend their progress are not being routinely provided.
- 17 Schools and kura currently have a high degree of flexibility about what, when, and how they assess, including the tools used. Evidence shows that while there has been an increase in the use of standardised tools between 2007–2017,¹⁰ further work is required to make sure all schools use assessment effectively to benefit all students. Ministry analysis indicates that within-school usage varies, and not all Year 3 to 8 students may be tested regularly.

⁷ Education Review Office (2018), *Evaluation at a Glance: A Decade of Assessment in New Zealand Primary Schools – Practice and Trends*.

⁸ Analysis looked at the Ministry's e-asTTle tool (maths, pāngarau, reading, pānui, writing and tuhituhi) and NZCER's Progressive Achievement Tests (maths and reading comprehension) and STAR tool (reading).

⁹ Note that Ministry analysis indicates that within-school usage varies, and not all Year 3 to 8 students may be tested regularly.

¹⁰ ERO (2018), *A Decade of Assessment in New Zealand Primary Schools*.

This means parents and the Ministry are not always getting the information they need about students' progress

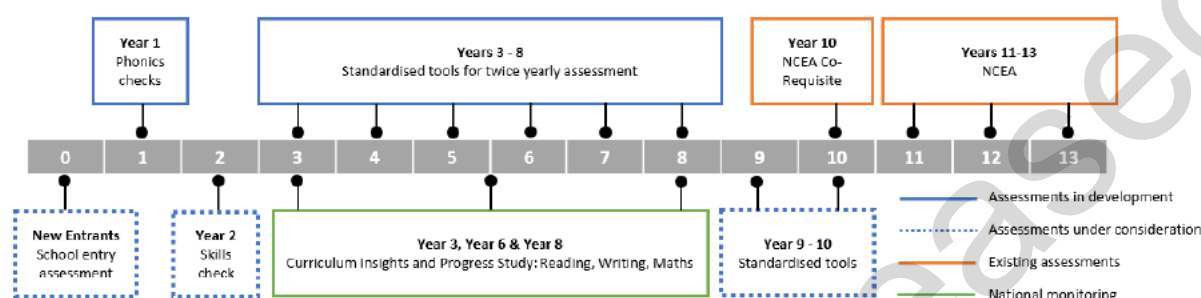
- 18 Too often parents and guardians are unsure about the progress their child is making. This is because of a lack of reliable, valid assessment information; because the information provided is not timely, clear, and detailed; and because formats for reporting vary widely between settings. For example, previous Ministry engagement found that only 49% of parents and guardians felt the information they received helped them understand their child's learning well or very well.¹¹
- 19 At the system level, the Ministry has no overall assessment and aromatawai framework in place. This impacts the Ministry's ability to guide strategic direction and alignment, implementation and use of resource, or cohesive analysis of data and insights to support continuous improvement and better progress and achievement outcomes for students.
- 20 For example, the Ministry holds very limited information about student progression for primary, intermediate, and lower secondary students. Prior to the newly introduced corequisite assessments (Year 10/11 literacy and numeracy, te reo matatini and pāngarau), we had no real national-level picture of student achievement, other than sampling like the former National Monitoring Study of Student Achievement (NMSSA). Without a coherent system approach to assessment in place, we risk not discovering children are falling behind until the point of senior secondary school and thus inadequately responding with either policy settings or funding and support to meet their needs.
- 21 I have already repurposed funding within the Ministry to continue to build and develop existing tools for ensuring we understand children's progress against the national curriculum and lift achievement. This will mean we have better assessment and aromatawai information to inform effective decision-making at every level of our schooling system.
 - 21.1 **System-level** data informs national priorities, directs investment/resource decisions, demonstrates the impact of policy settings, and guides system improvements.
 - 21.2 **School-level** data supports school planning, assessment capability and reflective practice, professional development decisions, and the allocation of resources and interventions to meet student need.
 - 21.3 **Classroom-level** data informs teachers about student progress and achievement and next steps in learning. This data supports teachers to reflect on and modify their teaching practice and planning to meet student needs.
 - 21.4 **Student-level** data supports teachers to communicate with parents and guardians, providing crucial information about their child's education progress and drive formative feedback between teachers and students.

¹¹ Martin Jenkins report for the Ministry of Education. 2018. Curriculum, Progress and Achievement: 2018 sector engagement by the Reference Group.

Summary of my actions to deliver improvements to assessment

- 22 This paper outlines actions I am taking to address these challenges by introducing a strategically driven, coherent, whole-of-pathway approach to assessment, aromatawai and monitoring. This will ensure that good quality data about students' learning is available to inform decision-making at every phase of schooling, at every level of the education system.

Figure 2: Proposed assessment and monitoring coverage for the schooling pathway (Years 0 to 13)



- 23 Key features of the work programme to introduce standardised tools for assessment and aromatawai and consistent reporting will include:
- 23.1 Introducing school entry assessments to help teachers identify and respond to children's learning needs in key foundational areas as they transition into school and kura.^{9(2)(f)(iv)}
- 23.2 Introducing phonics checks from term 1 of 2025 as part of requirements to use structured literacy and te reo matatini approaches.
- 23.3 Introducing a Year 2 foundational skills check in literacy and numeracy, te reo matatini and pāngarau.^{9(2)(f)(iv)}
- 23.4 Implementing expectations for the use of standardised tools to assess the learning of students in Years 3 to 8. These tools are already widely employed in classrooms across New Zealand. Schools and kura will be provided an interim choice of two assessment tools to use.
- 23.4.1 e-asTTle (both the New Zealand Curriculum and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa), or
- 23.4.2 Progressive Achievement Tests (PAT)¹² (for the New Zealand Curriculum), or
- 23.4.3 Te Waharoa Ararau (TWA)¹³ (for Te Marautanga o Aotearoa).

¹² **PAT** are a suite of standardised tools that were developed by NZCER, specifically for learners in Years 3 to 10. These assessments have been carefully developed for use in Aotearoa New Zealand English-medium contexts and are available in online, paper-based and computer adaptive formats. Each assessment can be used at multiple year levels and achievement is reported on a common measurement scale. Schools pay NZCER to access the assessments and associated online reporting.

9(2)(f)(iv)

23.5 Guiding schools and kura to interpret, act on and report the results from standardised tools for assessment and aromatawai to parents and guardians in consistent and meaningful ways so that parents are connected to their children's learning at each step of the way. Having student learning recorded in consistent ways also means that when students move schools, their new teachers have consistent and useful student achievement information.

23.6 9(2)(f)(iv)

23.7 9(2)(f)(iv)

23.8 Introducing an assessment and aromatawai strategic framework within the Ministry to guide the approach to the design and implementation of all assessment and aromatawai policy.

23.9 Engaging with sector groups and education peak bodies about this work programme along with the other curriculum developments to support integrated implementation and build trust with the education sector.

24 This paper provides an update on these key features.

Using assessment data for system monitoring

25 The ERO have reported the extent to which formal assessments are used and understood by school leaders and teachers is variable.¹⁶ To date, anxiety about the use of student data has affected our ability to harness the power of assessment and

¹³ TWA is not a standardised tool for assessment, but it has been included so that there is also a choice of tool for Te Marautanga o Aotearoa. PAT is not suitable for use with Te Marautanga o Aotearoa. TWA works as a judgment tool to support kaiako (teachers) to understand how ākonga (learners) are progressing based on a range of evidence they have gathered. Tools in TWA have been test equated to support reliable judgements.

¹⁴ 9(2)(f)(iv)

¹⁵ 9(2)(f)(iv)

¹⁶ ERO (2018), *A Decade of Assessment in New Zealand Primary Schools*, p. 28

aromatawai, and develop a consistent, coherent system approach. However, effective sharing of high-quality student progress and achievement information is crucial for continuous improvement in our education system.

- 26 I recognise there may be anxiety in the sector about the shift towards more national consistency in assessment, aromatawai, and reporting, and the purposes to which any data that is collected. I want to be very clear my focus is to ensure that we can provide students with the right support to accelerate or extend their learning, and so that we understand the level of impact that Government policy changes have on student achievement. High-performing data and evidence will enable us to make continuous improvements, better targeting resources to need and directing supports to particular groups of learners (e.g., those from low socioeconomic backgrounds).
- 27 My intent is that information from standardised tools is used to inform our understanding of how the system is performing for learners. I want to reiterate that it is not about 'testing for the sake of testing,' or identifying individual students or teachers.
- 28 This can complement the data we get from national monitoring which is based on relatively small samples. Together they may contribute rich data to track how we are progressing towards the target of 80% of year 8 students at or above the expected curriculum level by December 2030. The use of this data will not be used by the Ministry in ways that identify individual schools.
- 29 I am taking steps to ensure the Government has access to consistent assessment data to track student achievement across the learning pathway and inform improvements to the performance of the education system. This includes a review of data sharing practices (including privacy and data security reviews) across all standardised tools for assessment and aromatawai to ensure they are fit for purpose, with clear communications to schools and kura – and consultation with education peak bodies – about how student data is to be used and who will have access to each type of data.

I am taking a phased approach to implementing expectations for the use of standardised tools for assessment in Years 3 to 8

- 30 9(2)(f)(iv) [REDACTED]
- 31 I have also been advised that, regardless of the desire for nationally consistent data, existing standardised tools for assessment need updating and/or replacing to maintain their usefulness into the future, take advantage of digital affordances, and provide for close alignment to the updated national curriculum.
- 32 Given this, I am taking a phased approach that will transition schools and kura towards greater consistency in the use of standardised testing tools:

9(2)(f)(iv) [REDACTED]

32.1 Phase one (2024 – 2025); Encourage schools and kura to use one of the tools identified below twice a year with all Year 3 to 8 students whilst running professional development for teachers in the use of these tools and investing in the strengthening of the digital platforms:

32.1.1 e-asTTle (both the New Zealand Curriculum and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa), or

32.1.2 Progressive Achievement Tests (PAT)¹⁸ (for the New Zealand Curriculum), or

32.1.3 Te Waharoa Ararau (TWA)¹⁹ (for Te Marautanga o Aotearoa).

32.2 9(2)(f)(iv)

[Redacted]

32.3 9(2)(f)(iv)

[Redacted]

33 A phased implementation approach will provide time for those not already using the tools to participate in professional learning to build their confidence and grow their capabilities, and to establish in-school policies and procedures.

34 There are still some risks with this approach, so I have asked the Ministry to complete technical improvements on the identified tools by the end of 2024 so that they are fit-for-purpose, comparable, and technologically stable ready for wide use. I have also asked for work to be completed by the end of 2024 to make sure that results from e-asTTle, PAT and TWA can be triangulated (i.e., made comparable with each other – known as an equating study) based on a common understanding of how they align to the national curriculum, and to support consistent reporting to parents and secondary-analysis at the system-level.

35 9(2)(f)(iv)

[Redacted]

¹⁸ **PAT** are a suite of standardised tools that were developed by NZCER, specifically for learners in Years 3 to 10. These assessments have been carefully developed for use in Aotearoa New Zealand English-medium contexts and are available in online, paper-based and computer adaptive formats. Each assessment can be used at multiple year levels and achievement is reported on a common measurement scale. Schools pay NZCER to access the assessments and associated online reporting.

¹⁹ **TWA** is not a standardised tool for assessment, but it has been included so that there is also a choice of tool for Te Marautanga o Aotearoa. PAT is not suitable for use with Te Marautanga o Aotearoa. TWA works as a judgment tool to support kaiako (teachers) to understand how ākonga (learners) are progressing based on a range of evidence they have gathered. Tools in TWA have been test-equated to support reliable judgements.

9(2)(f)(iv)

[Redacted]

9(2)(f)(iv)

I am planning to introduce the phonics checks in term 1 of 2025

- 36 Phonics is an important foundational skill in learning to read. A phonics check is a simple test that helps teachers assess how well a child can read words by sounding out letters. Students who are identified as not yet being at the expected level of phonics competency should receive extra support from their school or kura to improve these foundational skills.
- 37 The Ministry has investigated the best options for standardised phonics checks and will be providing two phonics checks, one for use in English and one for use in te reo Māori. Both checks will be trialled in Term 4 2024 ahead of introducing them for all schools from the beginning of Term 1 2025. Feedback from teachers will be used to support effective implementation. Administration of the phonics check data will initially be manual, moving to online by the beginning of 2026 (or earlier if it proves possible). While this is not ideal, I do not want Year 1 students next year to have to wait for an effective long-term administration solution to be in place.

38 9(2)(f)(iv)

Timing of the check

- 39 The Literacy Guarantee indicated that phonics checks would be required for Year 2 students. I have considered advice from the Ministry that literacy interventions are most impactful in the first year of schooling and that comparable international jurisdictions use them earlier than Year 2. Based on this, I consider that it will be more impactful on learner progress if schools and kura run a phonics check with students after 20 weeks of schooling and again after 40 weeks.
- 40 The first phonics check time point will facilitate timely early interventions, and the second time point will support teachers to confirm progress as well as system monitoring, because phonics achievement at that timepoint is more predicative of later reading achievement than earlier checks.

41 9(2)(f)(iv)

Making sure the check is inclusive for all students

- 42 There are some students for whom the standardised phonics checks will not be an appropriate measure of their reading and pānui skills. The Ministry will be making sure that alternative and inclusive reading and pānui assessments are developed to

provide equitable learning opportunities for disabled, Deaf and neurodivergent students. To support teachers to understand and meet students' specific needs, the Ministry will work with the disability community and specialist education experts as it develops the phonics checks and. Guidance on using phonics checks will also reflect that progress can be different for second-language learners.

Schools and kura will be supported to report quality progress and achievement information to parents and guardians

- 43 Schools and kura are required to report to parents on progress twice a year under the Education (School Boards) Regulations 2020 (the regulations). Under the existing regulations parents and guardians will get the information on the results of any required assessments. Schools will still, however, have flexibility in terms of how they report against the learning expectations set out in the national curriculum.
- 44 Work underway to update the national curriculum provides an opportunity to design a more consistent approach to reporting. The Ministry will provide schools with clear expectations for what student achievement and progress information is to be included in reports to parents. Clear expectations for reporting will ensure the results from standardised tools are reported to parents and guardians in consistent and meaningful ways ^{9(2)(f)(iv)}

I am expanding our nationwide study that monitors student achievement

- 45 The Curriculum Insights and Progress Study (CI&PS) provides a national picture of student progress and achievement in literacy and numeracy in Years 3, 6, and 8 in relation to the refreshed New Zealand Curriculum. This will support monitoring against our target of 80% of Year 8 students being at or above expected curriculum level for their age in reading, writing, and maths by 2030.²¹
- 46 I am expanding this study to assess reading, writing and maths every year rather than alternating years, with the intention for other learning areas to be assessed at regular intervals. This expanded monitoring provides high quality information about student progress and achievement. This will inform improvements across the education system and provide insights for teachers to enhance teaching and classroom practice. ^{9(2)(f)(iv)}

47 ^{9(2)(f)(iv)}

Implementation

- 48 A full implementation plan for the curriculum changes and assessment resources is in development to support progress towards the achievement target. In relation to actions

²¹ CI&PS gathers data from a representative sample of approximately 6,000 students per year, from around 80 English-medium schools at Years 3, 6, and 8.

strengthening assessment, the plan will include steps to support teachers and schools:

- 48.1 Teachers and leaders will have access to resources, guidance, and self-paced professional development on Tāhūrangi, the online home of curriculum and assessment. They will also have access to frontline support.
- 48.2 Targeted and tailored professional learning and development (PLD) to grow teachers' assessment and aromatawai capabilities is already available from existing providers, and a new national PLD offering will be developed and made available for the beginning of 2025 9(2)(f)(iv)
- 48.3 There will be clear guidance on identifying and responding to concerns about student progress, including how to access additional supports.
- 49 9(2)(f)(iv) Monitoring of implementation will be informed by ERO review and evaluation activities, insights from teacher self-reporting in the new Curriculum Insights and Progress Study, monitoring and evaluation of PLD impacts, and NZCER insights from their Teaching and School Practices Survey.

Cost-of-living Implications

- 50 There are no cost-of-living implications associated with this work.

Financial Implications

- 51 Initial work (including the development of phonics checks and technical improvements to stabilise e-asTTle) will be funded through existing Ministry funding. 9(2)(f)(iv) Any additional investment needed will be subject to future Budget decisions consistent with the Government's Budget Strategy and ongoing fiscal sustainability programme.

- 52 9(2)(f)(iv)

Legislative Implications

- 53 There are no direct legislative implications for the proposals in this paper.

Impact Analysis

Regulatory Impact Statement

- 54 There are no immediate regulatory proposals in this paper, therefore Cabinet's impact analysis requirements do not apply at this stage.

Climate Implications of Policy Assessment

55 There are no climate implications as a direct result of this paper.

Population Implications

56 New Zealand has long-standing excellence and equity challenges and is not yet consistently delivering education success for Māori, Pacific peoples, transient learners, children in care, and those students who are disabled, have learning difficulties or support needs, or are from low socio-economic backgrounds. Alongside other actions across the education and wider social sector, I anticipate the work outlined in this paper will help to close gaps over time and improve achievement results. It enables teachers, schools and kura to provide teaching that is responsive to students' needs and to identify promptly where additional learning support is needed. It also enables schools, kura and regional and national decision-makers to understand population group impacts to better target investment.

57 The disability community will want assurance that assessment and reporting are accessible and meet the needs of Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people, including the use of universal design principles and appropriate accommodations. This includes, for example, a modified structured literacy approach and associated phonics check for Deaf and hard of hearing students, and approaches and use of standardised tools that make visible the progress and success of students who need more support. As work progresses, the Ministry will work with the disability community and experts in specialist education, including Ko Taku Reo (Deaf Education New Zealand) and BLENNZ (Blind and Low Vision Education Network NZ).

Human Rights

58 This proposal is consistent with human rights obligations set out in the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 and the Human Rights Act 1993. The right to education is also set out in several international treaties which New Zealand has ratified.²²

Treaty of Waitangi Implications

59 Implementing regular and consistent assessment and reporting against the national curriculum will help actively promote and protect achievement for ākonga Māori, through the contribution it makes to responsive teaching, prompt identification of student support needs, and regional and national investment decisions. It will also provide consistent information to whānau about their child's progress and achievement and make it easier to analyse system information in ways that help hapū and iwi to understand how well the system is performing for ākonga Māori.

60 Work includes having assessment and aromatawai options available that reflect the needs of those learning in te reo Māori which support Te Marautanga o Aotearoa. These changes may, however, be perceived as limiting the agency of kaupapa Māori education providers. I am progressing discussions with kaupapa Māori education providers, including with Te Rūnanga Nui o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori o Aotearoa, Ngā Kura ā Iwi o Aotearoa, and kura motuhake (unaffiliated kura) to understand their

²² E.g., The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child.

needs and interests before making any final decisions that may significantly affect them.

Use of External Resources

- 61 9(2)(f)(iv) [REDACTED] The use of contractors allows for careful management of our commitments to resourcing so as not to commit the Ministry to more permanent roles and expenditure than can be sustainably managed 9(2)(f)(iv) [REDACTED]. In addition, the Ministry has one contracted position which provides deep specialist expertise to the planning and design phases of actions to strengthen assessment and aromatawai.

Consultation

- 62 The following agencies have also been consulted and their feedback incorporated where applicable: the Treasury, Education Review Office, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Justice, Ministry for Pacific Peoples, Ministry for Women, New Zealand Qualifications Authority, Te Puni Kōkiri, Teaching Council, Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People, Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children, Ministry of Youth Development, Office of the Ombudsman, and Statistics NZ. The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet was informed of this paper. The New Zealand Council for Educational Research has also been consulted.

Communications

- 63 I am planning to communicate the approach and timelines for work implementing regular and consistent assessment and reporting of student progress and achievement. This will provide teacher, schools and kura with clarity on what will be expected of them when, and what supports will be available.
- 64 The Ministry will also communicate through its usual channels, provide other support to schools and kura (including through regionally based Curriculum Leads), and continue to engage with Te Rūnanga Nui o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori o Aotearoa, Ngā Kura ā Iwi o Aotearoa, and kura motuhake.

Proactive Release

- 65 I intend to release the material within this Cabinet paper within 30 days after decisions have been made by Cabinet, subject to any redactions as appropriate under the Official Information Act 1982.

Recommendations

The Minister for Education recommends that the Committee:

- 1 note that assessment and aromatawai are essential to responsive teaching and identifying students who need extra support, but schools and kura are not assessing students' learning against the national curriculum in consistent ways, there is insufficient data to support good decision-making at all levels, and the education

system lacks a cohesive whole-of-pathway approach to assessment and monitoring;

- 2 note that I intend to introduce phonics checks in term 1 of 2025 as part of requirements to use structured literacy and te reo matatini approaches with:

- 2.1 separate phonics checks for English and te reo Māori, to recognise differences in the languages and sequence of phonological development;
- 2.2 teachers running a phonics check with students after 20 weeks of schooling and again after 40 weeks;

2.3 9(2)(f)(iv)

- 3 note that I am progressing a phased approach to implementing expectations for the use of standardised testing tools in Years 3 to 8:

3.1 Phase one (2024 – 2025); Encourage schools and kura to use one of the tools identified below twice a year with all Year 3 to 8 students:

3.1.1 e-asTTle (both the New Zealand Curriculum and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa), or

3.1.2 Progressive Achievement Tests (for the New Zealand Curriculum), or

3.1.3 Te Waharoa Ararau (for Te Marautanga o Aotearoa);

3.2 9(2)(f)(iv)

3.3 9(2)(f)(iv)

- 4 note that I intend to introduce a Year 2 foundational skills check in literacy and numeracy, 9(2)(f)(iv)

- 5 note that, to support whole-of-pathway coverage, I am also considering my approach to school entry assessments and providing access to assessment tools for Years 9 and 10 students, 9(2)(f)(iv)

6 9(2)(f)(iv)

- 7 note that the Ministry will undertake privacy reviews for the tools so that there is clarity about what data will be used by the Ministry and for what purposes;

- 8 note that I will engage with kaupapa Māori education providers to understand their needs and interests before final decisions that may significantly affect them are made.

Authorised for lodgement

IN CONFIDENCE


Hon Erica Stanford

Minister for Education


Proactively released

IN CONFIDENCE

9(2)(f)(iv)

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9(2)(f)(iv)

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Proactively released



Cabinet Social Outcomes Committee

Minute of Decision

This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.

Implementing Regular and Consistent Assessment and Reporting of Student Progress and Achievement

Portfolio Education

On 19 June 2024, the Cabinet Social Outcomes Committee:

- 1 **noted** that assessment and aromatawai are essential to responsive teaching and identifying students who need extra support, but schools and kura are not assessing students' learning against the national curriculum in consistent ways, there is insufficient data to support good decision-making at all levels, and the education system lacks a cohesive whole-of-pathway approach to assessment and monitoring;
- 2 **noted** that the Minister of Education (the Minister) intends to introduce phonics checks in term 1 of 2025 as part of requirements to use structured literacy and te reo matatini approaches with:
 - 2.1 separate phonics checks for English and te reo Māori, to recognise differences in the languages and sequence of phonological development;
 - 2.2 teachers running a phonics check with students after 20 weeks of schooling and again after 40 weeks;
 - 2.3 9(2)(f)(iv) [REDACTED]
- 3 **noted** that the Minister is progressing a phased approach to implementing expectations for the use of standardised testing tools in Years 3 to 8:
 - 3.1 Phase one (2024 – 2025) - encourage schools and kura to use one of the tools identified below twice a year with all Year 3 to 8 students:
 - 3.1.1 e-asTTle (both the New Zealand Curriculum and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa); or
 - 3.1.2 Progressive Achievement Tests (for the New Zealand Curriculum); or
 - 3.1.3 Te Waharoa Ararau (for Te Marautanga o Aotearoa);
 - 3.2 9(2)(f)(iv) [REDACTED]

3.3 9(2)(f)(iv)

- 4 **noted** that the Minister intends to introduce a Year 2 foundational skills check in literacy and numeracy, 9(2)(f)(iv)
- 5 **noted** that, to support whole-of-pathway coverage, the Minister is also considering the approach to school entry assessments and providing access to assessment tools for Years 9 and 10 students. 9(2)(f)(iv)
- 6 9(2)(f)(iv)
- 7 **noted** that the Ministry of Education will undertake privacy reviews for the tools so that there is clarity about what data will be used by the Ministry and for what purposes;
- 8 **noted** that the Minister will engage with kaupapa Māori education providers to understand their needs and interests before final decisions that may significantly affect them are made.

Jenny Vickers
Committee Secretary

Present:

Rt Hon Winston Peters
Hon David Seymour
Hon Chris Bishop
Hon Dr Shane Reti
Hon Erica Stanford
Hon Paul Goldsmith
Hon Louise Upston (Chair)
Hon Mark Mitchell
Hon Melissa Lee
Hon Nicole McKee
Hon Casey Costello
Hon Penny Simmonds

Officials present from:

Office of the Prime Minister
Officials Committee for SOU



Minute of Decision

Report of the Cabinet Social Outcomes Committee: Period Ended 21 June 2024

Out of scope

SOU-24-MIN-0060

Implementing Regular and Consistent Assessment and Reporting of Student Progress and Achievement

Portfolio: Education

CONFIRMED

Out of scope

Out of scope



Rachel Hayward
Secretary of the Cabinet

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