



## Report: *System Monitoring and Reporting Improvements* updated for Cabinet SOU

To:	Hon Erica Stanford, Minister of Education		
Date:	4/08/2025	Deadline:	6/08/2025
Security Level:	In-Confidence	Priority:	High
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### Why are we sending this to you?

- The attached Cabinet paper seeks Cabinet agreement to mandate school participation in system monitoring studies and to include micro-credentials in reporting requirements via the Education and Training (System Reform 9(2)(f)) Amendment Bill (ERB).
- We are providing this final draft Cabinet paper for your agreement to finalise and lodge in time for Cabinet Social Outcomes Committee (SOU) on 13 August 2025.

### What action do we need, by when?

- We are seeking your agreement to finalise the Cabinet paper for lodging.
- Please return the signed paper by 6 August 2025.

### Key facts, issues and questions

- The finalised Cabinet paper needs to be lodged on or before 10.00am on 7 August 2025 so that it can be considered by SOU on 13 August 2025. This timeline will enable drafting instructions to be issued and worked through ahead of ERB's planned introduction.
- The paper has, where appropriate, incorporated feedback received through departmental consultation and discussions with peak bodies. We received some support for the proposals from departments, and mixed reactions from targeted discussions with peak bodies.
- Talking points and Questions and Answers are attached to this report to support your discussion at SOU.

## Alignment with Government priorities

1. This report aligns with the Government's priority to lift student achievement. Assuring New Zealand's continued participation in system monitoring studies aligns with your education priority for better use of data. Ensuring that students are properly recognised for earning micro-credentials supports the system to drive achievement.

## Background

2. On 16 July, we provided you with a draft Cabinet paper that seeks Cabinet agreement to mandate school participation in system monitoring studies and to include micro-credentials in reporting requirements. You agreed to the Ministry undertaking Ministerial and agency consultation from 22 July – 1 August 2025 [METIS 1350929 refers]. You also requested that we informally reach out to peak bodies about the system monitoring studies proposal [METIS 1349962 refers].
3. The consultation period has now ended. All feedback received has been considered and amendments made where appropriate, as outlined below.

## Feedback from Consultation

### Departmental consultation

4. We sent the draft Cabinet paper to the following agencies: The Public Service Commission, Treasury, Education Review Office, Parliamentary Counsel Office, Ministry for Regulation, Stats NZ, Social Investment Agency, New Zealand Qualifications Authority, Tertiary Education Commission, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment, Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children, Department of Corrections, Ministry of Justice, New Zealand Police, Department of Internal Affairs, New Zealand Defence Force, the Ministry of Defence, and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.
5. Of these agencies, Public Service Commission, Social Investment Agency, Stats NZ, Tertiary Education Commission and Department of Corrections supported the proposals.
6. The Tertiary Education Commission noted that implementation for the micro-credentials proposal will be in consultation with them. This has been checked with NZQA added to paragraph 33 of the draft Cabinet paper.
7. The Ministry for Regulation suggested that the Cabinet paper could mention the target sample size of key system monitoring studies to provide Cabinet with a reasonable idea of the total effort involved in participation nationwide. They also suggested better highlighting the additional burden placed on certainty schools (those that are selected for samples all the time or most of the time). We have incorporated this feedback in paragraphs 42 – 43 of the draft Cabinet paper.

### Informal discussions with peak bodies on mandating participation in system monitoring studies

8. The Ministry reached out to the Secondary Principals' Association of New Zealand (SPANZ), the New Zealand Principals' Federation (NZPF), and Independent Schools New Zealand (ISNZ) to highlight concerns about the low levels of participation in system monitoring studies and to get their thoughts on the proposal. We did not hear back from SPANZ.
9. NZPF did not support the proposal to mandate participation in system monitoring studies. They did not agree that the international studies can inform educational improvement for

ākonga in New Zealand, stating that the international studies provided no useful information that would support individual student improvement. Instead, they advocated for national sampling aligned with the New Zealand Curriculum. Wider concerns identified include loss of school autonomy, increased administrative burden, cultural misalignment, and lack of clarity around enforcement and applicability to diverse school types.

10. The Ministry met with Guy Pascoe, the Chief Executive of ISNZ who stated that as an organisation, ISNZ believes that it is critical that independent and private schools contribute to the conversation about New Zealand's education system performance and are represented in the data. However, ISNZ had not had the opportunity to test the proposal to mandate participation with stakeholders and therefore could not provide their views. The ISNZ representative stated that most schools see value in system monitoring, though concerns remain about the administrative burden.
11. The conversation with ISNZ highlighted that some private schools believe that the Ministry chooses which schools are sampled and that private schools are selected to 'inflate' New Zealand's scores. The Ministry will clarify that sampling is done independently by the studies' governing bodies as part of the communications plan.
12. We have not consulted any iwi or Māori education bodies, including Te Rūnanga nui o ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori o Aotearoa and Ngā Kura ā Iwi o Aotearoa, because the proposal currently excludes KME from the mandate. We intend to consult with Māori education bodies before any extension of the mandate to include KME.

## Talking points

13. Annex 2 provides you with talking points to support your discussion of the Cabinet paper, 'Education and Training Act: system monitoring and reporting improvements' at SOU on 13 August 2025. We have also provided you with some QAs.

## Next Steps

14. We are now providing you with the finalised Cabinet paper (Annex 1) which seeks Cabinet agreement to amend the Education and Training Act 2020 (the Act) to:
  - 14.1. mandate the participation of schools in relevant system monitoring studies when they are selected by the studies' governing bodies to participate;
  - 14.2. include micro-credentials in the report requirements to the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA).
15. We propose the following timeline as set out below.

Date	Activity
7 August 2025	Cabinet paper lodged for SOU
13 August 2025	SOU
18 August 2025	Cabinet
30 June – 7 October 2025	Drafting by PCO

## Annexes

The following are annexed to this paper:

- Annex 1: Final draft Cabinet paper - Education and Training Act: system monitoring and reporting improvements (attached separately)
- Annex 2: Talking points to support SOU on 13 August 2025.

**Annexes withheld under section 9(2)(g)(i) of the Act**

## Recommended Actions

The Ministry of Education recommends you:

- a. **note** that support for the proposal to mandate participation in system monitoring studies was mixed from the small number of peak bodies the Ministry informally reached out to.

**Noted**

- b. **agree** to lodge the attached finalised Cabinet paper, 'Education and Training Act: system monitoring and reporting improvements,' on 7 August 2025.

**Agree / Disagree**

### Proactive Release:

- c. **agree** that the Ministry of Education release this paper once final Cabinet policy decisions have been made, with any information needing to be withheld done so in line with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982.

**Agree / Disagree**



Sophie Smith  
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**Te Pou Kaupapahere**

04/08/2025

Hon Erica Stanford  
**Minister of Education**

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