



SPANZ

SECONDARY PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION OF NEW ZEALAND INC.

The New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) Overview - October 2007

The New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) has been signed off by Cabinet and is now in the final design and printing stages before launch in November. Planning and initial work is well underway for the implementation strategy. This three year project will support schools as they give effect to the NZC based on a collective vision for our young people as confident, connected, actively involved life-long learners. The support will help schools to take account of the spirit and intent of the curriculum and to enact it in a way that best suits the diverse learning needs of their particular students and the expectations of their communities.

The project is based on the understanding that implementation of the NZC will have the greatest impact on outcomes for students if, at the school and system level, there is a sustained focus on:

- putting students first;
- enhancing professional practice;
- building partnerships to support students' learning; and
- sustaining learning communities.

Key Elements of the Implementation Strategy

Regulation and Policy

- Policy is being developed to ensure that it is clear what is expected of schools in relation to the requirements of the NZC.
- Schools will be informed of the requirements of the NZC in 2007 and given a clear timeframe to move towards implementation before a decision is made on when the NZC will become mandatory.
- ERO will need to report to the Minister of Education on schools' readiness for full implementation prior to mandating.

Communications and Provision of Information

There will be:

- a communications strategy based around the launch of the curriculum to inform and engage the wider community and interested groups;
- post-launch workshops for principals, coordinated by the SSS in each region, to provide initial support for principals in leading the implementation process within their schools. The key focus of these workshops will be developing a common understanding of the curriculum and enabling schools and their communities to engage and begin planning. The *Engaging and Planning* resource pack will be a key resource for these workshops;

- a series of three resource packs, *Engaging and Planning*, *Supporting Professional Practice* and *Sustaining Development*, will be sent to schools throughout the three years of implementation. These will build awareness and understanding of the NZC, help schools to plan and implement changes in school and classroom practice to give effect to the NZC, and assist them in developing strategies for ongoing improvement within their school and community;
- additional material to support any specific requirements of the learning areas that will become available in web and print formats;
- resources to support the development of key competencies and school curriculum (primary and secondary). These will be developed before June 2008 to provide consistent advice and guidance to schools; and
- a range of web-based and print resources and tools to support effective professional leadership and professional practice as schools develop their curriculum to address the principles, key competencies, values and learning areas of the NZC.

Learning Communities

- A group of 100 sector leaders, spread across all regions, will facilitate opportunities for principals, boards of trustees and teacher representatives to come together in terms one and two 2008 to share and build on experiences in schools. These sector leaders will be selected to include a mix of secondary and primary leaders.
- The existing curriculum project website is being reshaped to provide a coordinating, referencing site for all strands of the project. The site will also provide a range of opportunities for sharing professional practice and disseminating the findings from exploratory studies.

School-based Support

- There will be targeted, externally provided, school-based support that is coordinated and designed regionally and provides quality and tailored professional development. This support will be provided through the School Support Services providers (SSS) across all regions.

Research and Development

- There will be a national programme of exploratory studies to establish a research and development evidence base to inform schools practice. The focus of the exploratory studies will be coordinated nationally and schools selected to be involved will be required to share their findings with others. A mix of schools will be involved and the studies designed in flexible ways depending on the nature of the issues being explored. Priorities for exploratory studies will be established with stakeholders based on the collective needs of schools.
- The Ministry will work with ERO to monitor schools' progress towards being ready to meet mandatory requirements.
- The Ministry will monitor and identify issues and trends from schools' Planning and Reporting reports.

System Alignment

- Elements of the wider system that will impact on schools as they implement the NZC (eg NCEA and ERO) will be aligned.

Key messages for schools are:

- This is about improving learning and teaching for all students, particularly those not currently succeeding.
- Schools will be supported to review their programmes and make necessary changes.
- Schools will build on what they already do.
- Existing programmes are still relevant.
- NCEA achievement standards will be aligned with, and based on, the new curriculum.
- The achievement standards will be available when teachers and schools need them to enable schools to implement a smooth, well-supported transition.

Conclusion

The NZC sets the direction for learning in schools and establishes a framework for schools, families, whanau and the wider community to develop relevant and engaging learning opportunities that meet the needs of their children. Giving effect to the NZC will involve teachers, professional leaders and boards of trustees, in consultation with families and whanau, exploring and implementing school and classroom practices that support every student to be present at school, engage in learning and achieve worthwhile outcomes.