

# EDUCATION & TRAINING (SYSTEM REFORM) BILL

## Submission Guide

### What is the Education & Training (System Reform) Bill?

The bill contains changes to a number of systems that affect secondary teachers and principals, in ways that seek to significantly increase the powers of the Minister of Education in the education sector. The two things that are of most concern are:

- Giving the Minister of Education the ability to make changes to the curriculum without consulting the sector.
- Moving the professional standard setting functions from the Teaching Council to the Ministry of Education, giving further political influence over the profession.

There is a very short submission period at an incredibly inconvenient time for the sector, but the Bill represents such an unprecedented politicisation of the education system, it is vital that teachers have their say.

### How do I make a submission?

This guide will support you in making a submission to the Education and Workforce Select Committee on the bill. By making a submission, you can make your voice and perspective as an educator heard on issues which have wide-reaching implications for our profession and communities.

Submissions are only open until midday January 14, 2026 via the [Parliamentary Website](#)

**MAKE YOUR SUBMISSION NOW**

### Suggested Writing Structure

#### 1 Introduce yourself or your group

Give information that explains why this Bill is important to you, and what your relevant skills and experience are. This could be your school, your subject area, and your teaching experience. Remember that submissions are published on the parliamentary website, so don't include details that you don't want to make public. This part of submission is just as important as addressing the content of the Bill. Your stories and experiences make your submission powerful and effective.

#### 2 Identify your recommendations

Identify what you are asking the select committee to do. This could be a change or action regarding the bill. Keep this succinct - one sentence, one ask. You can have multiple asks - separate each one as a new paragraph.

#### 3 Provide detail for your recommendations

Address each "ask" in detail. Each ask is a new paragraph or section. Keep your language factual and professional. Give your reasoning and include research, references, and/or your own or your colleagues' experiences. **Pages 2-5 of this document give you more information on the details of the bill and things that you might want to consider.**

#### 4 Identify what is at stake

End your submission with a statement about what is at stake from this bill. Make it personal - how does this bill affect you? Consider this as a teacher and what it means for your students.

# The bill – explained

## 1. CURRICULUM CHANGES

You can address this section generally as well as targeting how the changes will affect your curriculum area.

The Bill proposes to give the Minister of Education the power to directly set curriculum statements without a curriculum review or advice from the Ministry of Education.

These curriculum statements will replace the current democratically and professionally shaped national curriculum statements.

The amendment introduces a regular review process for curriculum statements but gives the Minister the power to change curriculum statements at will and without review or consultation.

These changes constitute a significant increase in political influence in curriculum setting and give unprecedented power to the Minister of Education to dictate curriculum.

### Current legislation vs Proposed Changes

AREA	CURRENT	PROPOSED CHANGES
Curriculum setting	<p>The Minister has the power to make broad curriculum policy statements.</p> <p>The Minister may give direction to the way curriculum and assessment are managed in schools, but there is flexibility for local context.</p>	<p>The Minister has the power to make prescriptive curriculum statements (what is taught, how it's taught, and what is prioritised). Reference to local context is removed.</p>
Teacher Professionalism	Teachers interpret broad curriculum statements; significant discretion; limited mandated review cycles.	Curriculum statements specify teaching approach and assessment/aromatawai methods; mandatory 5-year review cycle.
Teaching Programmes	Programmes designed around broad curriculum and local priorities.	Programmes must reflect detailed expectations and priorities.

### The proposed changes do not align with PPTA's principles of curriculum policy development

#### Principle 1: Te Tiriti is valued and is visible

Centralising curriculum statements and reducing local flexibility may limit schools' ability to embed local tikanga and iwi priorities in teaching programmes. This could weaken visibility of Te Tiriti obligations in practice.

Schools will need to advocate for culturally responsive approaches within nationally prescribed expectations.

#### Principle 2: Learners are at the centre so that the curriculum is inclusive and equitable

Increased compliance and prescriptive curriculum statements reduce adaptability for diverse learner needs, especially in secondary schools with varied pathways.

Teachers have less scope to tailor programmes for equity unless national statements explicitly prioritise inclusion.

# 1. CURRICULUM CHANGES continued...

## **Principle 3: The curriculum is manageable, well resourced, coherent, and well communicated**

Frequent reviews and amendments create instability and workload pressure, making curriculum less manageable and harder to communicate clearly to communities.

Schools will need robust systems and resourcing to keep programmes coherent during ongoing changes.

## **Principle 4: Teachers are valued as curriculum designers and their expertise and specialisation are recognised**

Detailed expectations and priorities in curriculum statements narrow teacher discretion, reducing their role as designers and limiting professional autonomy.

Professionalism could shift toward compliance rather than innovation unless implementation processes actively involve teachers and take into account their lived experiences.

## **Other things to consider when it comes to curriculum**

- The curriculum is regularly reviewed through research on effective practice to make sure it is fit for purpose
- The mandatory 5-year review cycle aligns with this principle by using evidence and international practice.
- However if reviews are top-down and not co-constructed with educators, they may fail to reflect classroom realities and effective local practice. Also, if international practice/research is considered ahead of relevant research from Aotearoa New Zealand then the resulting recommendations will not necessarily meet the needs of the local context.

## **Questions to address in your submission**

- Professional Autonomy and Role - Will the proposed changes affect your ability to design programmes that reflect your professional judgment and creativity? (Does this shift your role from curriculum designer to implementer of centrally prescribed content?)
- What impact would reduced local flexibility have on your ability to embed local tikanga, iwi priorities, and culturally responsive practices in your teaching? (Consider Te Tiriti obligations and local context.)
- How might mandatory review cycles and compliance requirements change your workload and professional focus? (Will this increase administrative tasks at the expense of teaching and innovation?)
- Impact on Learners - How could prescriptive curriculum statements limit your ability to adapt teaching for diverse learners, including neuro-divergent students and those with unique pathways? (Does this compromise inclusivity and equity?)
- Will the proposed changes support or hinder your ability to meet the needs of your ākonga and whānau? (Think about wellbeing, engagement, and culturally sustaining practices.)
- Do you believe the proposed approach genuinely gives effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi in classroom practice? Why or why not?
- Systemic and Practical Concerns - What risks do you see in frequent curriculum reviews and amendments for stability and coherence in your programmes? (How will this affect planning and communication with communities?)
- What additional resources or support would be required for you to implement these changes effectively? (Is there a realistic plan for PLD and resourcing?)
- How might these changes influence your ability to meet the Teaching Standards, particularly those related to Te Tiriti and learner-centred practice?

# The bill – explained

## 2. TEACHING COUNCIL CHANGES

The Bill shifts the responsibility from the Teaching Council to the Secretary for Education for establishing and maintaining: teacher registration criteria, teacher education qualification standards, teaching standards, practising certificate criteria and the code of conduct.

The Bill also reduces the size of the Council with ministerial appointments the majority, and only has a total of 3 elected sector members (1 ECE, 1 primary, and 1 secondary representative, respectively).

PPTA has a long and varied relationship with the Teaching Council and its predecessors. It is PPTA policy that the Teaching Council should have greater, not lesser, sector representation. It is also our policy that the Teaching Council should have reduced functions and focus on their core business. However we believe this core business includes all the teacher registration criteria, standards, and the code of conduct, as it is vital that these remain with an independent body and away from political interference.

### **This Bill gives unprecedented political control of the profession to the Minister**

The government has identified that it has limited ability to regulate teaching practice and is seeking to increase this power.

- Moving the professional functions from an independent teaching body to the Ministry is about political control.
- The Minister wants to use teaching workforce regulation to enact government education policies and priorities.
- Government control of standards has risks, such as frequent disruption and the potential for politicisation of the standard-setting process.

### **Professional Independence**

The standard setting and code of conduct for the teaching profession, teacher qualification and registration criteria and criteria of practicing certificates will no longer be independent.

- Most teachers and principals strongly value the independence of the Teaching Council
- No consultation has been undertaken; this has been directed by the Minister
- Limiting professional-led regulation risks losing professional autonomy
- Shrinking the Teaching Council board to three elected representatives reduces sector voice drastically.

### **Other concerns**

- Teacher blaming. The Minister is justifying these changes by claiming the problem they are solving is the high variability, and unacceptable levels of achievement within and between schools in NZ. Teacher variability is being blamed for variance in student performance, instead of addressing systemic barriers and ongoing equity issues.
- Continued change. Teacher education providers and teachers will have more change to manage in adapting to the standards and assurance processes. The implementation timeframes are, as usual, far too short and under resourced.

# The bill – explained

## 2. TEACHING COUNCIL CHANGES continued...

- Capability and capacity of the Ministry of Education. There is no evidence to suggest that the Ministry has the workforce or resources to be able to effectively administer these functions. Their implementation of the curriculum changes has been under resourced and ineffective, do they have the capacity for these additional responsibilities?

## 3. SCHOOLS OF ‘SERIOUS CONCERN’

- The Bill requires ERO to notify the Minister “within 2 working days of forming a view that a school may be of serious concern.” This might seem like a positive move for schools who are struggling to meet the needs of their rangatahi. Unfortunately, it also opens the door to forced conversion to charter school status.
- The use of language such as “of serious concern” is itself of serious concern in that it does not define how this “view” may be formed. Will attendance issues be enough? Are NCEA or other assessment outcomes going to be the trigger? This is not outlined in the law.

## 4. CHARTER SCHOOLS CHANGES

- The Bill strengthens the charter school model by allowing sponsors to hold a single contract for multiple charter schools (multi-school contracts). In the United Kingdom, we see gigantic trusts overseeing chains of schools. Business models and centralised curriculum resources take autonomy away from communities, and create a cookie cutter model – the opposite of innovation under the guise of “best practice”.
- It also provides a pathway for State schools who have converted to Charter status to revert back to the State sector. This is a win for public education! State schools have expressed concern with a lack of assurance of being able to revert and reopen as a new State school. This reinforces our assertions that our public schools do not wish to be privatised.
- However in (re)-establishing a state school we are concerned about the impact on staff. Provisions for the transfer of staff in the event of a reversion are not included. If the charter school closes because they run out of funding, this could leave staff without redundancy or holiday pay. If the charter school closes and a new state school opens, all staff will need to reapply for their positions.
- We are also concerned that the Minister has an incredible amount of power with this Act, and may choose not to reopen a State school in the event of a charter school. The Minister may do this even if there was widespread community support for the “replacement” school.

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