

PPTA

NEW ZEALAND POST PRIMARY
TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

TE WEHENGARUA

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SUBMISSION

on the

Education Amendment Bill

due 24 January 2013

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To the Education and Science Select Committee

This submission is made on behalf of Te Huarahi Māori Motuhake opposing the changes to the Education Amendment Bill, in particular the section establishing charter schools.

The Post Primary Teachers' Association (PPTA) represents 17,000 secondary teachers across state and integrated secondary schools, area schools including wharekura, and teachers of technology in years 7 and 8. Te Huarahi Māori Motuhake is the Māori sector of the PPTA which represents over 1,000 Māori teachers.

Te Huarahi Māori Motuhake submits that:

1. Te Huarahi endorses the PPTA submission and opposes the establishment of charter schools in New Zealand, particularly those elements of the proposed bill that exclude charter schools from the requirements to operate transparently and absolves them from accountability for the use of public money.
2. In addition, Te Huarahi wishes to raise a concern about the association of charter schools in USA with increased socio-economic and ethnic polarisation. Given the concern the government has with addressing under-achievement, especially that of Māori boys, care should be taken in advancing policies that are certain to have unintended effects.
3. For example, research in USA shows that KIPP (Knowledge is Power Programme) schools appear to succeed because they are controlling their intakes. The same thing will happen with charter schools in New Zealand, because the proposal to establish them with a maximum roll, not a home zone as in other schools, means they will be, in effect, choosing their students. It will be those parents who are most motivated who will make the effort to enrol their children or enter them for the ballot. If the KIPP practice is followed, parents will be "interviewed" and asked to make a commitment to supporting their children's learning. This may not be a bad thing but it presents a sharp contrast with surrounding public schools who must do their best by every child who arrives (with or without a uniform and basic supplies) on the first day of school.

4. The second process involves systematically removing students who present problems. Research¹ has shown that:

“Between grades 6 and 8, the size of the KIPP grade cohorts drops by 30%. The actual attrition rate is likely to be higher since some of the KIPP schools do fill in some of the vacated places after grade 6. When these figures are further broken down by race and gender, we can see that a full 40% of the African American male students leave KIPP schools between grades 6 and 8. Overall a higher proportion of African American students than other ethnic groups leave the KIPP schools, and girls are much more likely to remain in the KIPP schools across all ethnic groups.”

5. There is no reason to conclude that charter schools will behave any differently. They will be under considerable pressure to demonstrate dramatic achievement gains in a short time frame in order to keep the funding and profits flowing. The only way that can be done is by manipulating the data.
6. Te Huarahi is also concerned about the impact of charter schools on Māori students who remain in the surrounding public schools and which lose funding and staffing when some students leave to attend the charter school. These schools will be left with the most educationally-disadvantaged students but with less funding to meet their needs. Choice for the favoured few will damage the educational options for all other students.
7. Te Huarahi believes it would be a far better use of public money to fund New Zealand-based professional development programmes like Te Kotahitanga which

¹ Gary Miron, Jessica L. Urschel, and Nicholas Saxton College of Education and Human Development Western Michigan University. What Makes KIPP Work? A Study of Student Characteristics, Attrition, and School Finance. <http://www.edweek.org/media/kippstudy.pdf>

have been shown to work for Māori learners yet have been systematically deprived of funding.

8. To be successful, educational improvement needs to be considered, contextualised and coherent. Finland, for example began the project that has turned that nation into a world leader in achievement thirty years ago and worked systematically on addressing inequality of outcomes. High rates of achievement came as a by-product of the quest for equality. The Finns did not waste time and money looking for a miraculous school structure that was going to magically lift achievement. Instead, they sought to address the range of factors that impact on under-achievement; housing, health, provision of food, and welfare services as well as the professional aspects such as teacher selection, training and professional development. They eschew competition between schools in favour of a collaborative national structure that seeks to meet the needs of all students, not just the chosen few who manage to get into "popular" schools.

9. It has been suggested that New Zealand has nothing to learn from Finland because it is a more homogenous society than New Zealand. The question Te Huarahi would ask, in respect of that response, is which elements of the Finnish approach won't work with Māori students? Everything Finland has done has a strong basis in research, and indeed, in common sense.

10. Neither Māori students nor Māori teachers deserve to be subject to the unfortunate political experiment that is charter schools – particularly when there are indigenous programmes that have been trialled here and have been shown to make a difference for students.

11. Te Huarahi challenges the Select Committee to reject the fruitless search for educational "pockets of success" and instead provide the sort of leadership that will provide enhanced opportunities for all Māori students in New Zealand.

Thank you for considering our submission.

Te Huarahi would like to speak to the Selection Committee about their submission.