

**whakamana
tamariki
whakamana
kaiako
whakamana
tangata**

**NZEI
TE RIU ROA**

Whakamana tamariki, whakamana kaiako... whakamana tangata!

He aha te mea nui o te ao? He tangata he tangata he tangata!

Introduction

As one of the oldest educational institutions in Aotearoa, NZEI Te Riu Roa has been working collectively to achieve a world-class education system for a long time. Our whakapapa is woven from the experience and expertise of generation upon generation of educators. These educators have used their powerful collective voice to advocate for positive change and achieve results that will benefit whānau and communities across the motu for generations to come.

While a country's educational needs change over time, we have found that there are a handful of 'fundamentals' that are crucial for setting tamariki up for educational success and happy, fulfilling lives. Many of these, such as the emphasis on language, culture and identity, the call for smaller class sizes and lower ECE ratios, or the insistence on barrier-free, inclusive education, are well established educational best practice. These are all seen most effectively in a child-centred education system. To achieve this, we know there is still work to do, yet we also know that the drivers of success do not all sit within the confines of the school gate.

Beyond creating a world-class education system, NZEI Te Riu Roa wants to see a society in which children's wellbeing, their learning, their rights and voice are central to policy making. A system where parents and whānau are supported and resourced to actively participate in their children's early years while also having genuine choices about their own participation in employment and education or training. This means policies and their implementation need to be aligned and mutually supportive, regardless of the agency responsible for them.

In addition to outlining the 'fundamentals' of a world-class education system, this document proposes a re-think of the current silos in which agencies and policies deliver (among other things) critical supports such as paid parental leave, early childhood education, support for women's access to employment, and addressing the gender pay gap.

In its most basic sense, taking a child-centred approach means seeing tamariki not only as ākonga, but as *tāngata*; as members of their whānau, community, and country whose lives extend beyond the school gate. In recognition of this broader focus, the title of this document extends NZEI Te Riu Roa's well known campaign slogan 'whakamana tamariki, whakamana kaiako' to include 'whakamana tāngata', in reference to the visionary 2019 report of the Welfare Expert Advisory Group, *Whakamana Tāngata: Restoring Dignity to Social Security in New Zealand*.

As political parties contesting this year's general election finalise their policies on education and related matters, NZEI Te Riu Roa is pleased to offer this discussion document for wide consideration and conversation on what is needed to achieve the best education system for tamariki we can.

Language, Culture, Identity

Colonisation casts a long shadow over Aotearoa New Zealand's education system, the effect of which has been to alienate Māori ākonga from their own culture, identity, and schooling environment. The flourishing of Māori medium education over the last 40 years through the establishment of Kōhanga Reo, Puna Reo, Kura Kaupapa Māori and Rumaki Reo within mainstream schools, as well as a proliferation of adult education courses in te reo Māori, represents a major step toward redressing this harm. While things have indeed improved, the legacy of colonisation persists in our classrooms, as Dr Hana O'Regan's important work on the whakapapa of streaming and ability-grouping demonstrates.¹

One of the most important factors in determining a student's educational success, no matter what their cultural background, is their sense of belonging at their early learning centre and school. When students see themselves, their language, culture, and identity reflected and valued in their educational experience, they are more likely to want to be at school and to learn. The evidence shows that students who have teachers from a similar cultural background to themselves are more likely to attend school regularly and succeed.² The recent introduction of a Cultural Leadership Allowance in the Primary Teachers Collective Agreement³ is an important step in building sector capacity around these needs, however there is more work to be done.⁴

Whakamana kaiako Māori

As the *Pūaotanga* review of primary school staffing recommended, we urgently need to increase the number of teachers that are fluent in te reo Māori.⁵ This can be achieved through investment in grants and scholarships that support teachers intending to work in Level 1-3 Māori immersion settings.

Additionally, it is vital to support kaiako already working in these settings, including Kōhanga Reo and Puna Reo, by recognising the contributions they make. One step toward doing this is to increase the Māori Immersion Teaching Allowance (MITA) and extend it to *all* kaiako in Māori immersion settings, including Kōhanga Reo and Puna Reo. Ensuring graduated ratio improvements for all Māori medium settings is likewise vital in supporting kaiako to deliver the best possible teaching.

Strengthen community connections

Strengthening community connections between schools and whānau, hapū and iwi is not only vital, it is a requirement of the Education and Training Act 2020.⁶ This needs to be supported through additional funding to compensate community members who regularly contribute to their local school or early learning centre. This would

¹ Tokona te Raki, *Kōkirihiā: A plan for removing streaming in our schools*, Ōtautahi: Tokona te Raki, March 2023. pp.10-13.

² McGregor, Alexandra and Andrew Webber, *He Whakaaro: School attendance and student wellbeing*, Wellington: Ministry of Education, February 2020.

³ Primary Teachers Collective Agreement 2023 – 2025, 3.37. A total of 1200 Cultural Leadership Allowances will be available from the beginning of 2024. Allowances are valued at \$5000 each.

⁴ As a country, Aotearoa New Zealand has a responsibility under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to ensure that Māori experience success as Māori - https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf

⁵ Pūaotanga Independent Review Panel, *Pūaotanga: Realising the potential of every child*, Wellington: NZEI Te Riu Roa, June 2021. pp.67-70.

<https://www.nzeiteriuoroa.org.nz/campaigns/puaotanga>

⁶ Section 127, Education and Training Act 2020.

reciprocate the value of the strong ties of identity, culture and aspiration invested in schools by their communities.

End harmful streaming and ability grouping practices

NZEI Te Riu Roa has formally opposed the practice of streaming and ability grouping in schools since our National Executive and Te Reo Areare voted to support the position in March 2021. We believe the time is overdue to move away from these practices and to transition our education system toward more inclusive and supportive approaches that support our children's learning and success.⁷

⁷ *Kōkirihiā*, p.35.

Improve teacher to child ratios

In large classes, students can develop a sense of alienation and disengage from education. On the other hand, smaller class sizes allow teachers to meet the individual needs of ākongā and build trusting relationships with them. In short, this makes for better teaching and better learning. Smaller class sizes are also an important step in making school a place tamariki want to be. Recent international research on the relationship between attendance and class size found that 'class size reductions significantly reduce the frequency of chronic absence'.⁸

Pūaotanga, the independent review of primary school staffing, made recommendations for a graduated improvement in teacher to student ratios in primary schools. In April 2023, the government began to move on these recommendations when it announced improvements in staffing entitlement ratios for years 4-8.⁹ A Ministerial Advisory Group is currently being set up that will look to further staffing improvements across the compulsory sector. Additionally, ratios in Early Childhood Education are abysmal and need to be urgently improved.

Pūaotanga recommendations

Apart from a reduction at Year 1 and the recently announced improvements for year 4-8 ratios, primary teacher to student ratios have remained unchanged since 1996. At present the primary school year-level ratios are: Year 1 = 1:15, Years 2-3 = 1:23 and Years 4-8 = 1:29. Reducing year-level ratios will have an immediate and positive effect on class sizes and teacher workloads, enabling teachers to meet students' needs more fully. *Pūaotanga* recommends that by the end of 2030, curriculum staffing is increased to:

Year 1 = 1:15,

Years 2-3 = 1:20 and

Years 4-8 = 1:23.¹⁰

Pūaotanga also recommended improving support for school leadership, with guaranteed minimum professional leadership staffing, an increased weighting for roll-generated management staffing, and an additional weighting for roll-generated management staffing based on specific equity criteria.¹¹ This is consistent with the Tomorrow's Schools Review which told government in 2018 that more needed to be done to develop and support leaders. The Review said the role of principals/tumuaki is extremely demanding, and principals/tumuaki can find themselves spending too much time and energy on matters not directly related to the core business of teaching and learning.¹²

Early Childhood Education

There are several factors at play when it comes to ratios in early childhood education.

⁸ Tran, Long and Seth Gershenson (2021) 'Experimental Estimates of the Student Attendance Production Function', *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 20(10), p.13.

⁹ <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/smaller-class-sizes-improve-teaching-and-learning-outcomes>

¹⁰ *Pūaotanga*, p.63.

¹¹ *Pūaotanga*, p.66.

¹² Ministry of Education, *Our Schooling Futures: Stronger Together - Whiria Ngā Kura Tūātitini. Report by the Tomorrow's Schools Independent Taskforce*, Wellington: Ministry of Education, 2018, page 18; pages 111-115.

First, the last 23 years has seen a significant growth in private provision of ECE, which has altered the overall composition of the sector. Through successive legislative priorities, the early childhood sector is now a market-based model with services in competition with one another.

Second, under the current funding system, ratios are one of the factors used to calculate the rate of funding services receive. Currently these minimum ratios are 1:5 for under 2's and 1:10 for 2-year-olds and over. These are unmanageably high ratios and are not fit for purpose¹³. Many centres (community based in particular) staff above ratio, which has funding implications for staff salaries and other operational costs which can result in costs being passed onto whānau and reducing accessibility.

In addition to these factors, the growth of private ECE provision has led to disparities in the sector. It is time for quality public provision to be a stated priority for government, with the goal of 100% qualified teachers and a comprehensive workforce development plan for kaiako, support staff and learning support specialists.

He taonga te tamaiti, Every child a taonga, the early learning action plan for 2019-2029 commits to moving to a teacher to child ratio of 1:4 for under 2's and 1:5 for 2-year-olds over the life of the plan.¹⁴ This needs to happen immediately and accompanied with a graduated plan for further reducing under 2 ratios to 1:3. So far, we have seen no movement on these ratios in the 4 years the plan has been in place. Our tamariki deserve better.

¹³ Dalli, C., White, E.J., Rockel, J., Duhn, I., with Buchanan, E., Davidson, S., Ganly, S., Kus, L., & Wang, B. 'Quality early childhood education for under-two-year-olds: What should it look like? A literature review.' Report to the Ministry of Education, 2011, page 6-7.

¹⁴ Ministry of Education, *He taonga te tamaiti, Every child a taonga: Early learning action plan 2019-2029*, Wellington: Ministry of Education, December 2019, p.17.

Barrier-free access and inclusion

In line with the Article 28 in the Convention on the Rights of the Child,¹⁵ Section 33 of the Education and Training Act (2020) guarantees the right to free enrolment and free education at any State school for all tamariki from the age of 5. Importantly, the Act states that 'students who have special educational needs (whether because of disability or otherwise) have the same rights to enrol, attend, and receive education at State schools as students who do not.'

We take this to mean that there is an obligation for the education system to meet the needs of all learners and remove all barriers to access, no matter how complex. Recent research conducted at the Institute of Education at Massey University has concluded that in New Zealand schools 'there appears to be irrefutable evidence that the reported prevalence of additional needs is increasing over time, both in total numbers of reported need and for certain needs in particular'.¹⁶

There is a long standing and unacceptable gap in provision for Māori with learning support needs. In 2022, NZEI Te Riu Roa Te Reo Areare members told Parliament's Māori Affairs Committee *Inquiry Into Learning Support For Ākonga Māori*, learning support provision is not fit for purpose for Māori.¹⁷ Interventions and specialist support and resources have not been designed for how tamariki Māori learn and engage, and there is a desperate need for te reo Māori speaking learning support specialists. Budget 2023 showed the first sign that this call has been heard, with \$40.42 million set aside for learning support coordination in kaupapa Māori and Māori medium schooling.

Our education system needs to grow its capacity to meet this unmet need. NZEI Te Riu Roa's Ngā Aukaha campaign has set out five achievable 'asks' that, if implemented, would make substantial progress towards this goal.

*Ngā Aukaha campaign asks:*¹⁸

1. Fund a dedicated Learning Support Coordinator or SENCO in every school and early childhood centre.
2. Expand the ORS criteria and increase the funding available so that it is based on need, rather than a fixed amount of funding available.
3. Increase dedicated teacher aide funding in early childhood centres and schools.
4. Increase the number of specialists (e.g. psychologists, physiotherapists and resource teachers) to meet student need.
5. Develop and provide greater professional development (including career pathways) and specialist opportunities for educators to develop their understanding of learning support, including Initial Teacher Education.

¹⁵ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child> ;article 24 <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-24-education.html>

¹⁶ Bourke, Roseanna, Philippa Butler, John O'Neill, *Children with additional needs, Final Report*. Palmerston North: Massey University, Institute of Education, February 2021, p.59.

¹⁷ See <https://vimeo.com/688655546>. NZEI Te Riu Roa at 1 hour 53 mins, 35 seconds, of the hearing.

¹⁸ <https://www.nzeiteriuoroa.org.nz/about-us/media-releases/budget-2023-needs-to-unlock-funding-for-learning-support>

Holistic approach to teacher education

Initial Teacher Education (ITE) plays a vital role in our education system. It prepares future teachers with the knowledge and skills they need to begin teaching. It also feeds the latest developments in pedagogy and practice back into the sector, as a crucial interface between pedagogical theory, research, and classroom practice.

Likewise, Professional Learning and Development (PLD), serves a critical role in supporting the ongoing learning of kaiako. When ITE and PLD are well supported and in conversation with each other, an education system can be agile; shifting with the changing needs of learners and incorporating evidenced best practice to deliver optimum outcomes for learners.

Over the past decade there has been a steady decline in ITE enrolments, starving our capacity to meet teacher demand with domestic supply. Signs that enrolments had turned a corner might have been premature as recent figures show a decline for 2022.¹⁹

Unfortunately, ITE and PLD in Aotearoa is currently delivered through a fragmented and competitive system with provision of mixed quality across the motu. NZEI Te Riu Roa's thinking about how to move beyond this system is outlined in the *ITE 2040* discussion document. Importantly, *ITE 2040* argued for an innovative approach to fixing this problem by drawing together 'hapū, iwi and rūnanga to hear their vision, acknowledge their priorities and support their engagement for a redesign of ITE on a genuinely bicultural basis'.²⁰ It will involve drawing on the breadth and depth of local knowledge and expertise within the education system and sharing the exemplary practices that already exist.

The key asks of *ITE 2040* are:

1. The establishment of a genuinely bicultural ITE system, grounded in Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
2. All teachers will be capable of working in level two immersion, meaning that 51–80% of the programme is delivered in te reo Māori.
3. Greater support for ITE partner schools and centres, including funding, coaching and mentoring qualifications for mentor teachers, and building networks for associate teachers to enhance their development.
4. Greater collaboration and support for first year teachers, including the removal of fixed-term contracts, additional resourcing for advice and guidance schemes.
5. The creation of a compulsory post-graduate programme for beginning teachers to complete in their first two years.

Whakamana tangata

Beginning in 2019, the Ka Ora, Ka Ako Healthy School Lunches Programme is admirable in its recognition of the importance of meeting the basic needs of ākonga as a prerequisite for educational success. It is arguably one of the most important education policies to be adopted in recent years because it recognises this need and responds to it in a practical and effective way. We commend the government's decision in Budget 2023 to continue the programme.

Unfortunately, a lack of food on the table is just one of many needs that go unmet for tamariki in Aotearoa. According to the Child Poverty Monitor, 11% of tamariki live in

¹⁹ <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/491804/teacher-education-programmes-report-hundreds-fewer-enrolments>

²⁰ NZEI Te Riu Roa, *ITE 2040 Discussion Paper*, Wellington: NZEI Te Riu Roa, November 2021. <https://www.nzeiteriuoroa.org.nz/help-advice/knowledge-base/ite-2040-discussion-paper>

households experiencing material hardship.²¹ That's roughly 2 to 3 children in every classroom. These rates double for mokopuna Māori and disabled children, and for Pacific children, it's three times as high. About one in four Pacific children are in households in material hardship. Our poor housing stock contributes to high levels of preventable illness, particularly for ākongā who live in rental properties.²² In 2020/21, 6% of children lived in homes with major dampness or mould problems. Again, the numbers are far worse for Māori (10%) and Pacific (12%) tamariki.

While the government's focus on understanding and addressing child poverty is commendable, it is important to recognise that child poverty is a symptom of adult poverty. Moreover, it is not just the children of the unemployed that suffer; around half the children in households in material hardship come from households whose main source of income is the market (i.e. 'working households').²³

In 2019, the Welfare Expert Advisory Group (WEAG) released a landmark report on the failure of our social security system to support our most vulnerable citizens.²⁴ In their report, WEAG outlined the principles of 'whakamana tāngata', which aims to move from a 'safety net' system to one that upholds the mana and dignity of all New Zealanders. We believe this to be crucial to supporting tamariki to thrive both within and outside schools and call on the government to immediately implement the WEAG recommendations.

We see this as part of a wider, more holistic approach to policy that upholds the wellbeing, rights and voice of tamariki. Critical to this is improving the social, emotional, physical and cognitive development and wellbeing of babies and toddlers by ensuring strong attachment and time with their parents and whānau in their first year in particular. This means giving whānau the financial and emotional support to be great parents, supporting more active and equal roles in parenting by men, improving gender equality in paid and unpaid work, and working to create a better work/life balance for parents and whānau.

Paid Parental Leave (PPL)

PPL was taken up by only around half of the parents of babies born in 2017, and by only 1% of men. We need to re-design paid parental leave to be a more effective and generous income replacement, replacing at least 50% of prior earning, and more for those on low incomes. It also needs to be extended to 52 weeks to allow parents to focus on their tamariki in their first year. Dedicated paid leave for partners needs to be established to support more active and equal participation of men in the first year of their children's lives. International evidence finds that leave for partners, in particular fathers, needs to be well-paid, dedicated and statutory in order for it to be taken by men.²⁵ This could be achieved through a social insurance scheme similar to ACC, or a commitment to a series of phased improvements to the current scheme.

²¹ <https://www.childpoverty.org.nz/>

²² Ingham Tristram (2019) 'Damp mouldy housing and early childhood hospital admissions for acute respiratory infection: a case control study', *Thorax*, 74(9). pp.849-857.

²³ Bryan Perry, *Child Poverty in New Zealand: The demographics of child poverty, survey-based descriptions of life 'below the line' including the use of child-specific indicators, trends in material hardship and income poverty rates for children, and international comparisons – with discussion of some of the challenges in measuring child poverty and interpreting child poverty statistics*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development, October 2022, pp.87-89.

²⁴ Welfare Expert Advisory Group (2019) *Whakamana Tāngata: Restoring dignity to social security in New Zealand*. Wellington: Welfare Expert Advisory Group.

²⁵ <https://www.waikato.ac.nz/news-opinion/media/2022/fewer-than-1-of-new-zealand-men-take-paid-parental-leave-would-offering-them-more-to-stay-at-home-help>

Gender pay gap

The gender pay gap has sat relatively unchanged at around 9% for the last five years.²⁶ There is an even larger pay gap for Māori, Pasifika and Asian women. While our Mana Taurite – Pay Equity mahi directly takes this on, settlements so far have impacted relatively few women and have taken years to resolve and implement. Existing funding structures inherited from the ‘neo-liberal’ thinking of the 1990s, make maintaining pay equity after settlement difficult, requiring frequent review and adjustment. The government needs to put in place a cross-agency strategy that commits to eliminating the gender pay gap, with clear timelines and deliverables.

Flexible working arrangements

Despite the experience of COVID lockdowns and ‘work from home’, genuinely flexible working arrangements remain relatively niche. Without normalising flexible working for all types of roles, such arrangements can simply reinforce stereotypes about women’s caring obligations – i.e., that they are less interested or able to take on challenging work or senior roles. Flexible working is included in the Employment Relations Act 2020, however is ultimately at the discretion of the employer. More strongly worded legislation is required to ensure that this opportunity is extended beyond those jobs most amenable to flexible work.

Women’s participation in the workforce

Women’s participation in the workforce has increased by more than 50% since 1986, but women remain disproportionately unemployed, working part time or under-utilised compared to men.²⁷ While men and women spend similar amounts of time on productive activities (labour force activities, household work, child and family care, purchasing goods and services, and community services), men spend most of their time paid for this work (63%), while women are unpaid for most of it (65%) according to the 2010 Time Use Survey 2009/10.²⁸

²⁶ <https://women.govt.nz/women-and-work/gender-pay-gap>

²⁷ <https://women.govt.nz/women-and-work/labour-market-participation>

²⁸ <https://catalogue.data.govt.nz/dataset/time-use-survey-2009-10/resource/6cbd5fec-c6e3-474f-b871-911463d1fbaf>