

Schools' Commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi

NZEI Te Riu Roa is an organisation fully committed to meeting its obligations under Te Tiriti of Waitangi. The union has a dual governance model with its governing National Executive complemented by Te Reo Areare, the governance body representing the Miro Māori members of the union.

In the furtherance of its development as a genuine Te Tiriti-based organisation, the union has adopted a Mōku te Ao approach to all of its operations.

Mōku te Ao is the name NZEI Te Riu Roa is giving the whawhai (challenge) we have taken up: to change the education system so that it recognises and uplifts Māori and leads to success for tamariki Māori. We believe a system based on Rangatiratanga centres children and their rights to control their own aspirations and destinies – and that such a system would work better for all children and benefit everyone in Aotearoa.

Mōku te Ao is based around eight pou – of rangatiratanga, whakamana, manaakitanga, whanaungatanga, whakapapa, wairuatanga, kaitiakitanga and tikanga. These pou are values that guide our work and empower and encourage us to ask if what we are doing is consistent with the pou, will work for mokopuna Māori, can be re-conceptualised using a Māori framework, is centred on upholding rangatiratanga, or will benefit Māori.

We are using Mōku te Ao as the lens through which we re-conceptualise our organisation internally, work with and between members in our formal structures and broader membership, our campaign and professional work and our external relationships in the sector and with iwi and hapū.

Schools' professional obligations

As the educational hubs of the areas they serve, all schools in Aotearoa New Zealand have a key role to play in building the understanding of and commitments to Te Tiriti o Waitangi amongst their students and school communities. For principals, those obligations extend to ensuring that those understandings and commitments are shared and promoted by all staff within their school.

In some communities, this may involve schools as the driving force behind changing entrenched reluctance to embrace the move to a genuinely bi-cultural education system. Such attitudes will not change overnight, but schools will become the most effective agents of community change by encouraging students to embrace learning opportunities in a school which reflects local tikanga Māori, mātauranga Māori and te ao Māori and builds their familiarity with te reo Māori.

Schools' legal obligations

Schools' legal obligations with regards to Te Tiriti are set out in the Education and Training Act 2020.

[This is an excerpt from the Ministry of Education's website.](#)

School boards to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Under the Act, one of the primary objectives for Boards is to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi by:

- working to ensure their plans, policies and local curriculum reflect local tikanga Māori, mātauranga Māori and te ao Māori
- taking all reasonable steps to make instruction available in tikanga Māori and te reo Māori and
- achieving equitable outcomes for Māori students.

The new Tiriti board objective provision commenced on 1 January 2021. There was a lead in time following the enactment of this legislation so that boards had time to understand and prepare for the changes they needed to make to their school to give effect to the new objective.

The Government is taking practical steps to support the growth of te reo Māori capability in the education workforce through initiatives such as [Te Ahu o te Reo Māori](#), [Te Aho Ngārahu](#) and the TeachNZ Scholarship programme.

School boards will need to work with their communities to ensure their plans, policies and local curriculum reflect local tikanga Māori, mātauranga Māori and te ao Māori. Ministry staff will be able to provide advice on how to initiate these conversations.

Supports and tools to help with this include:

- [Rapua Te Ara Tika | the Local Curriculum Design Tool](#), which helps communities to build a shared marau ā-kura and local curriculum across the education pathway;
- [Tātaiako cultural competencies for teachers of Māori learners](#) which help teachers personalise learning for, and with, Māori learners;
- [Professional Learning and Development](#) on cultural capability, local curriculum design, and assessment for learning in English medium;
- [Te Hurihanganui](#) to help participating schools and communities build effective partnerships to support learner outcomes.

Other resources

[NZSTA also has advice on Te Tiriti and school governance.](#)