Teachers and Curriculum

THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

KAIAKO ME TE MARAUTANGA

VOLUME 11 2009

Teachers and Curriculum

Editor:
Greg Lee

Editorial Committee:
Marilyn Blakeney-Williams
Nigel Calder
Ken Carr
Catherine Lang
Greg Lee
Howard Lee
Merilyn Taylor
Hine Waitere

Cover Design and Illustrations
Donn Ratana

Layout and Design
Barbara Hudson

Editorial correspondence and manuscripts submitted for publication should be addressed to:

Research Manager
Wilf Malcolm Institute of Educational Research
School of Education
The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton 3240.
email: wmier@waikato.ac.nz

Website:
http://education.waikato.ac.nz/research/publication/

Books for review should be sent to:
Research Manager
Wilf Malcolm Institute of Educational Research
School of Education
The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton 3240.
email: wmier@waikato.ac.nz

Business correspondence:
orders, back orders, subscriptions, payments and other enquiries should be sent to:

Teachers and Curriculum
Hamilton Education Resource Centre
PO Box 1387
Hamilton
email: janh@waikato.ac.nz

Subscriptions:
within New Zealand $25 (includes postage)
overseas $40 (includes postage)

Volume 11 2009

Contents

Teachers and Curriculum is an annual publication of the School of Education, The University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand.

It includes articles about curriculum issues, research in the area of curriculum and informed curriculum practice. Reviews of curriculum related books may also be included.

The Opinion item is contributed by a leading New Zealand educationalist.

ISSN 1174-2208

Notes for Contributors

Teachers and Curriculum provides an avenue for the publication of papers that:

- raise important issues to do with the curriculum
- report on research in the area of curriculum
- provide examples of informed curriculum practice
- review books that have a curriculum focus.

This peer reviewed journal welcomes papers on any of these from tertiary staff and students, teachers and other educators who have a special interest in curriculum matters. Papers on research may be full papers, or if time or space is at a premium, research notes, that is a 2,000 word summary.

Submitting articles for publication

The editorial committee encourages contributors to ask colleagues to comment on their manuscripts, from an editorial point of view, before submission for publication.

Length

Manuscripts should not normally exceed 7,000 words, including references and appendices. An abstract must be provided. Abstracts should not be more than 100 words.

Method of submitting a paper

Please provide copy in 12 point type in a font compatible with the use of macrons (preferably Helvetica Maori or Times Maori) with line and a half spacing for the main text, and with 20 mm margins on all edges. Word files are preferred. Please do not include running headers or footers, Follow the style of referencing in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA), 5th edition with references in a reference list at the end of the manuscript, rather than footnotes. Manuscripts not submitted in accordance with the above guidelines will be returned to authors for amendment.

Covering Letter

When submitting a manuscript to *Teachers and Curriculum*, authors must, for ethical and copyright reasons, include in a covering letter a statement confirming that (a) the material has not been published elsewhere, and (b) the manuscript is not currently under consideration with any other publisher.

Date for Submission

Manuscripts may be submitted at any time.

Copyright

Acknowledgement of Reviewers

We wish to thank the following people who reviewed for this volume of Teachers and Curriculum. Asterisks indicate those reviewers who contributed more than one review.

Debbie Hill

Gregory Lee *

Howard Lee *

David McKenzie

Trish McMenamin

Philip Munro *

Anne-Marie O'Neill

Roger Openshaw

Will no child be left behind? The Politics and History of National Standards and Testing in New Zealand Primary Schools

Howard Lee
College of Education
Massey University

Gregory Lee
College of Education
The University of Canterbury

Abstract:

The recently elected National Government has proceeded, under urgency, to pass the Education (National Standards) Amendment Bill, legislation that seeks to provide specific information for both schools and parents about how well every primary and intermediate school student (Years 1 to 8) is progressing in literacy and numeracy compared with other children of the same age and in relation to clear national benchmarks. Readers familiar with the history of New Zealand's education system will doubtless see in the 'new' policy many aspects of what appeared in an earlier policy document released by the then National Government in 1998–Assessment for Success in Primary Schools. This article will outline and explain the historical origins of National Standards and national testing in New Zealand primary and intermediate schools, and will provide a critique of the policy that is about to be launched. We conclude that politicians and others who are intent on pursuing 'quick fix solutions' to very complex educational problems, by embracing the ideological mantra of 'National Standards', appear set to perpetuate the very problems that historians had long though were best consigned to our educational past.

Introduction: The (re)emergence of National Standards

> *Not everything that counts can be counted; and not everything that can be counted counts. (Albert Einstein, n.d.)*

Upon launching its policy on National Standards on 10 April 2007 the National Party outlined three key requirements for all primary and intermediate schools:

1. Clear National Standards in reading, writing and numeracy, designed to describe all the things that children should be able to do by a particular age or year at school. They will be defined by benchmarks in a range of tests.
2. Effective Assessment that will require primary schools to use assessment programmes that compare the progress of their students with other students across the country. Schools will be able to choose from a range of tests, but there will be no national examinations.
3. Upfront Reporting (in plain language) to give parents the right to see all assessment information, and to get regular reports about their child's progress towards national standards. Schools will be required to report each year on the whole school's performance against national standards. (2007 Education Policy on National Standards)

The rationale for National Standards to be introduced into New Zealand schools was signalled clearly in the National Party's education policy manifesto:

> *National Standards will give schools from Kaitaia to Bluff a set of shared expectations about what students should be achieving as they move through primary school. Teachers will use national standards to clearly identify students who are at risk of missing out on basic skills and becoming a permanent part of the "tail" of under-achievement. (2007 Education Policy on National Standards)*

Upon being elected to office in November 2008, the John Key-led National Government wasted no time introducing The Education (National Standards) Amendment Bill into the House on 9 December 2008. Remarkably, this bill was never scrutinised by a parliamentary select committee ("School standards must be raised", 2009, p.B6). Within one week the Bill had received Royal assent. The Act not only tightened the penalties for failing to enrol children at a school (Part 1) but also allowed the Minister of Education (in Part 2) to set national literacy and numeracy standards against which primary and intermediate school students will be assessed (The Education (National Standards) Amendment Bill, 2008). In February 2009 the Minister of Education, Anne Tolley, informed principals that while the National Standards have yet to be set, "the Ministry will be consulting on standards throughout 2009, with a view to implementation in 2010" (Crooks, 2009, p.6). She noted further that the Education Review Office (ERO) had informed a Parliamentary Education and Science Select Committee that "the schooling system as a whole was not using the huge potential of these assessment tools to support the creation of programs [sic] to improve the education of students. We want to make sure all schools use these valuable tools and involve the families as well." (Crooks, 2009, p.6; New Zealand Parliamentary Education and Science Select Committee, 2008, p.14).

Anxious to distance herself from any suggestion that there would be a single national test Tolley announced that

> *Parents want to know how well their children are doing and what they can expect when extra help is needed. This [National Standards] policy is about using effective assessment tools to provide feedback that supports student learning and teacher effectiveness. Consultation will establish who needs access to what information. (Tolley, 2009)*

The public were informed that Ministry of Education staff would be "working with small teams of literacy, numeracy and assessment experts to develop draft standards" and would consult with schools, parents, and the community over a six-week period (25 May to 3 July 2009). (Tolley, 2009). During this time a Standards

Reference Group had met with representatives from the New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI), the Post Primary Teachers' Association (PPTA), and the New Zealand School Trustees' Association (NZSTA). (Tolley, 2009).

Why 'National Standards'?

Following her appointment as Minister of Education Anne Tolley has argued consistently that there is an urgent need to "raise student achievement" (Todd, 2009) and for parents to be better informed about what their children can and can not achieve in literacy (reading and writing) and numeracy at each year of their primary and intermediate schooling. By introducing National Standards—described as being one of the Government's "flagship policies in education" (Tolley, 2009)—and assessing children against such standards, Tolley claimed that parents will know how well their child is doing against each National Standard, how their child compares with others in the same age group, if their child is experiencing any difficulties and how the teacher and school will address this, and the steps that parents can take to support their child's learning in the home (Beaumont & Broun, 2009, p. A1).

The National Standards in literacy (reading and writing) would not only be tied closely to the *Literacy Learning Progressions* but also would "describe the level of complexity and challenge in texts and tasks that students have to work with to meet the demands of *The New Zealand Curriculum* at specified times in their schooling". For mathematics the National Standards would "make explicit the complexity and challenge of the problems and processes that students need to understand" (New Zealand Education Gazette, 2009, p. 3). Each National Standard has three parts: first, a description of what achievement in the standard should look like; second, an exemplar of that level of achievement; and, finally, assessment tasks and tools for measuring that standards (p. 3). In summary, the curriculum can be thought of as providing a range of learning outcomes for each year level that will indicate progression while the National Standards will provide a reference point for achieving these outcomes by specifying what can reasonably be expected of most students by the end of the year (p. 3).

The Minister's rationale for National Standards

The Minister has made no secret of the fact that her endorsement of National Standards owed much to the survey data contained in two ERO reports, both published in 2007, that explored the extent to which primary (and secondary) schools used their assessment information effectively to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Together these reports—*The Collection and Use of Assessment Information in Schools* (March 2007) and *The Collection and Use of Assessment Information: Good Practice in Primary Schools* (June 2007)—provided the Minister with the weight of empirical evidence needed to justify introducing national standards into every primary and intermediate school.

The March 2007 report presented the results of a detailed survey undertaken by the ERO of 314 primary, intermediate, and secondary schools during the first half of 2006. Having evaluated the quality of assessment information provided in 118 full primary, 125 contributing, and 10 intermediate schools (Education Review Office, 2007a, p. 5; Education Review Office, 2007b, p. 2), the report declared that schools' effectiveness in collecting and using assessment information varied widely, with approximately one half of the schools exhibiting effective practice across the whole curriculum (Education Review Office, 2007b, p. 3). Furthermore the data revealed that:

- 58 per cent of schools had developed and implemented an effective, integrated school-wide approach to assessment processes and information;
- over 80 per cent of primary schools had developed effective assessment processes and tools for literacy and numeracy;
- the achievement information in 57 per cent of schools demonstrated students' achievement and progress;
- the interaction of assessment with teaching and learning was effective in 54 per cent of schools;
- in 42 per cent of schools, students used information about their achievement for further learning;
- 43 per cent of schools were establishing and using school-wide information to improve student achievement; and
- 51 per cent were effective in reporting information about students' achievements to the community. (Education Review Office, 2007b, p. 2)

At first glance this data would seem to suggest that there were few assessment-related issues that warranted urgent attention, particularly in the primary sector. For example, more than 80 per cent of the primary schools surveyed were regarded as having developed "effective assessment processes and tools for literacy and numeracy" (Education Review Office, 2007a, p. 27). However, buried deeper in the same report was damning evidence that "most primary schools did not collect and analyse their students' achievements in curriculum areas other than mathematics and English" (Education Review Office, 2007a, p. 21). If one accepts these findings as being reliable and broadly representative of all New Zealand primary schools, then one is left wondering why the Minister should wish to introduce National Standards in literacy and numeracy when the quality and quantity of assessment data being gathered and reported in the other curriculum areas is demonstrably inadequate. Is this but more evidence of the current government's obsession with National Standards in literacy and numeracy at the expense of other curriculum areas that are regarded as being of lesser importance?

The data also indicated that there was room for improvement in other aspects of assessment. For instance barely one-half of the schools had initiated effective, school-wide assessment processes and information, could demonstrate students' achievements and progress, could relate assessment to teaching and learning, and were able to report information about their students' achievements to their communities effectively (p. 2). Not surprisingly, perhaps, there was a statistically significant difference between low- and high-decile schools, with low-decile schools performing poorly in all of the areas investigated (Education Review Office, 2007a, pp. 18, 29, 33, 44).

Aware of the ERO's criticism that schools were underperforming in terms of gathering, documenting, and disseminating assessment information the Minister nevertheless has chosen to single out for special attention the inadequate reporting by schools of achievement information to their communities (Laugesen, 2009). In almost all of her numerous public pronouncements on National Standards, as reported in the national media, the Minister has been unswerving in her claim that parents want clearer information about how their children are achieving at school.

Such an observation is hardly radical, given that it would be the rare parent who would be disinterested in his or her child's achievements at school.

The Principals' and NZEI Responses

With all of the heightened publicity that has surrounded the introduction of National Standards, how have the nation's primary school principals and teachers responded to the Minister's initiative?

While some principals have welcomed the new National Standards as a tool to assist teachers in evaluating what level their students should be working at, most have expressed grave concern over reporting such data to the Ministry of Education. Moreover, many of them believe that it is highly likely that this data could be compiled and/or manipulated in such a way as to create league tables (Todd, 2009). Echoing this view Philip Harding, Principal of Paparoa Street School in Christchurch, observed that whilst schools would still be able to use a variety of assessment tools to measure children's achievements under the new National Standards, the American and British experience clearly revealed that because "you get what you measure, you better be sure that what you want to measure matters most" (Todd, 2009). For Denise Torrey, President of the Canterbury Primary Principals' Association, the new National Standards were antithetical to the focus of the new curriculum that sought to give teachers greater autonomy to respond to and plan for the learning needs of their students (Todd, 2009). Ernie Buutveld, President of the New Zealand Principals' Federation that represents approximately 2300 schools throughout New Zealand, observed that

> *Britain is just realising its mistake in narrowing its curriculum and undermining its curriculum with testing. New Zealand does not want or need its curriculum undermined by short-sighted election promises. This is an area where the NZPF has grave concerns–concerns around how school data will be used by the media and in relation to performance based pay. These could become the shell holes in a no man's land without winners…. Given the speed with which it is being pursued, the urgent will drive out the important. (New Zealand Principals' Federation, 2009)*

The NZEI President, Frances Nelson, remained optimistic that the new National Standards would be a marked improvement on those assessment tools used in schools already. Having been told by Mary Chamberlain, Group Manager of the Ministry of Education, that about 84 per cent of Year 1 children would be expected to achieve the numeracy standards set for that age group, compared with a figure of 61 per cent for Year 8 boys and girls (Hunt, 2009a, p. 1), Nelson seemed unconcerned because, she reasoned, the achievement rates were based around an average which not all students were capable of achieving (p. 2).

By June 2009, however, Nelson appeared decidedly more pessimistic about National Standards, noting that they would be acceptable to the profession only if they put children's learning first and they supported high quality teaching ("Strong NZEI turnout", 2009, p. 1). She was adamant that any steps taken to make school assessment information available nationally for the purpose of league tables comparisons would be "destructive and [would] defeat the purpose of implementing the standards", because league tables shifted the focus away from the learning needs of children across a broad range of areas to ranking schools solely on literacy and numeracy results (p.1).

Echoing the NZEI's position, Geoff Lovegrove, the Editor of the New Zealand Principals' Federation monthly magazine—*NZ Principal*—reminded his fellow principals of the former Prime Minister's address to the World Convention of Principals in Auckland in 2007 where Helen Clark had given an assurance that under a Labour Government there would be "No National Testing; No League Tables" (Lovegrove, 2009, p.2). Juxtaposing that view with the current government's agenda Lovegrove then alerted his readers to the British scene where primary school teachers were steadfastly refusing to administer national tests, declaring these high stakes tests to be driven politically rather than educationally (p. 2). His editorial concluded with a clear warning to educationists about the ongoing political tension between reporting student achievement and National Standards:

> *We have a duty to assess thoroughly, interpret, and use the results to enhance teaching and learning. That is the only reason to test. Our duty includes reporting accurately and honestly to parents on the actual progress and achievement of our students. An informed school community will be supportive of our stand on any national testing regime. Politicians will play games that encourage people to vote for them, and keep them in power…. We want to attract and retain the very best people to teach our students, and belting them around the ears with league tables, in the guise of "national standards" will not help. (p. 2)*

Defending National Standards

When interviewed by *The Press* during her visit to Christchurch in early April 2009, the Minister predicted that while individual pupil achievement details probably would not be passed on to the Ministry of Education information about each school's performance will be sent (Hartevelt, 2009). Pressed for her views about comparing schools with one another and how this might be prevented and/or managed, the Minister conceded that the Government was in fact powerless to prevent the media from accessing information and compiling and publishing their own league tables. Nevertheless she was adamant that communities had the right to access all of the achievement information available on the grounds that "the more information that's out there the better… The best disinfectant is fresh air" (Hartevelt, 2009). Six weeks later the Minister resorted to the by now all too familiar canon that any information obtained had to be used responsibly "to raise student achievement", and that "just what information is needed and who needs to have access to it is a matter for discussion during the consultation period" (Todd, 2009).

National and international critiques of National Standards

However, some New Zealand-based assessment specialists remain much less confident than the Minister about the purported benefits of National Standards. Lester Flockton, formerly co-director of The University of Otago's NEMP (National Education Monitoring Project) unit, claimed that the speed with which the new National Standards were being introduced "bordered on craziness" and, moreover, that the argument that "standards raise standards" was simply mythological (Hunt, 2009a, p. 1). Flockton was adamant that the move to introduce National Standards was politically motivated—the Ministry "had a mind-numbingly tough and highly pressured timeframe to formulate and package up standards"—and that it ignored the overarching reality that the strongest predictor of student achievement were socioeconomic factors (Flockton, 2009, p. 30; Hunt, 2009a, p. 1). Significantly Flockton stopped short of identifying the potential for National Standards to lead to a system of national tests, as has been the case in Britain and the United States, albeit at the state-wide level.

Others, however, were more forthcoming about the lessons to be learned from the international experience in general and from national testing in particular. At the international assessment symposium held in Queenstown on 16-17 March 2009, attended by the Minister, experts had advised caution before launching a National Standards strategy (Laugesen, 2009). Jim Popham, an Emeritus Professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, declared that the No Child Left Behind Act (2002) in the United States—wherein existing state-wide accountability systems are aligned with specific state education standards, and where states are legally responsible for developing content and performance standards, measuring improvement, implementing and administering assessment (including assessing students with limited English proficiency), reporting this assessment data, and applying sanctions when performance goals are not met (United States Department of Education, 2002)—had resulted in schools becoming fixated on tests scores rather than providing a broader curriculum and learning experience for their students (Laugesen, 2009, p. 24). Having listened to the Minister's "very thoughtful analysis of what was possible in [New Zealand] and what they were going to avoid", Popham felt confident that there was a "very strong recognition of the perils of ill-conceived national testing" (p. 27).

Terry Crooks, formerly co-director of The University of Otago's NEMP unit, added a further dimension when he stated that in setting a standard all that is identified is a child who is either above or below that standard (Laugesen, 2009, p. 26). In order to avoid recording and reporting a child's achievements merely in terms of success or failure Crooks advocated using five bands of achievement–well above average, above average, average, below average, and well below average (p. 26). Tolley, it appears, was persuaded by that view. Recent iterations of the National Standards in fact include five broad levels of achievement: well above standard, just above standard, at expected standard, just below standard, and well below standard (Ministry of Education, 2009a).

From rhetoric to reality: Consultation to implementation

During the consultation phase (25 May to 3 July 2009) vigorous debate continued about the merits (or otherwise) of National Standards and the particularly tight timeline allowed for their introduction. It was envisaged that after public consultation the draft National Standards would be refined further and published in October in readiness for implementation in schools by early 2010. However, throughout the six-week consultation period school principals, individually and collectively, took every opportunity to publicise their concerns about National Standards. By late June 2009 for example, the NZEI, the Canterbury and Otago Principals' Associations, and the New Zealand Principals' Federation had urged the Minister to delay implementing the National Standards on the ground that approximately 90 per cent of primary schools used a range of nationally and internationally recognised assessment tools already to monitor their students' achievement (Lewis, 2009, p.3). Moreover, they feared that the information gleaned from the National Standards would enable schools to be compared by way of league tables, thereby creating the scenario of 'winning and losing' schools (Beaumont, 2009a, p. A17).

When asked for his views about whether the information could legally be withheld the Ombudsman, David McGee, informed the Education and Science Select Committee in June that it was highly probable that schools' National Standards results would have to be made available to the public, even if they were retained by individual schools and not forwarded to the Ministry of Education (Hunt, 2009b, p.1). Citing the Official Information Act McGee acknowledged the situation wherein the public could argue legitimately that it was in "the public good" for data to be released by individual schools and/or the Ministry, unless the government legislated to stop league tables from being compiled and disseminated (p.1).

Anxious to be seen perhaps as successful in breaking the current impasse between the Minister and principals over obtaining information that could be used to construct league tables that would "pitch wealthy schools against those from low decile areas", the Labour Party's education spokesperson, Trevor Mallard, proposed that the law be changed to prevent the release and subsequent publication of school-level achievement data. If this change in law eventuated then parents still would receive information about their children's progress and principals would obtain information to assist with teachers' professional development, he declared. There would be "clear nationwide measures of progress to hold ministers to account" ("Labour suggests law change", 2009).

The professional versus public critique

Two days later the Editor of *The New Zealand Herald*, in an article entitled "Govt mustn't give way on league tables", defended the Minister's stance on league tables as follows:

> *League tables are a perfectly legitimate tool from the parents' point of view. A good school for their child is one where high standards are maintained and if pupils come with advantages, so much the better. If some schools have to work harder than others to bring most of their pupils to the desired standards, so be it. Parents want results….*
>
> *Comparative school ratings are not the primary purpose of the tests, but they are a useful byproduct. National must not give way to the principals. Education has been dominated for too long by a profession which treats parents as children incapable of reading a league table or much else….*
>
> *Parents like league tables. They are helpful when it comes time to choosing a school. They are also helpful in keeping the pressure on all schools to perform to the best of their ability. If the profession dislikes that pressure, or considers it unhelpful to educational effort, its customers disagree. And ultimately the customer, even of public education, is always right. ("Govt mustn't give way", 2009)*

The following day, *The Dominion Post* Editor echoed a similar stance regarding the medical profession's insistence that it be consulted about any planned changes to the public health system. Opening with the claim that "some trade unions do not appear to have grasped that the government changed last November", the Editor then proceeded to berate the NZEI for "[having] rebelled at the Minister's plan to tell parents how well their children's schools are doing. They are forgetting that schools are run for the benefit of pupils and parents, not those who work in them" ("Patients must come first", 2009, p. B4).

In the wake of this critical media attention the New Zealand Principals' Federation held its annual conference in Palmerston North. Invited to address the conference the Minister immediately dismissed any suggestion of a law change to prevent the National Standards data being translated into league tables, believing that it was vitally important for parents to have access to all information about their children's progress. She also sternly rebuked the Federation for having spread misleading information about the Government's policy on National Standards. "National standards

do not mean standardised national testing", the Minister declared. "They are about consistent assessment throughout the country" (Torrie, 2009, p. 3). Having listened to the Federation's President, Ernie Buutveld, outline the principals' concerns over National Standards, the Minister's made it abundantly clear to the 400 delegates that "the Government will not resile from National Standards. Parents want them, they have a right to them and this government is going to deliver them" ("Tolley firm on standards", 2009; Torrie, 2009, p.3; Wood, 2009, p. A3).

The Minister's resolve contrasts sharply with the findings of a comprehensive Standards Survey undertaken by the Principals' Federation, the key points of which were summarised by Ernie Buutveld at the July conference. Of the 1000 primary school principals surveyed 23 per cent reported being opposed inexorably to National Standards with a further 72 per cent expressing serious reservations about their introduction, the potential for the data to be captured in league tables, and the very short timeline allowed for their implementation (Buutveld, 2009a). Asked what they would do if instructed to report data that the media could use to compile league tables 2 per cent of principals said they would comply fully, 20 per cent would comply because they were legally required to do so, and 77 per cent indicated that they would comply partially by maintaining their current planning and reporting policies (Buutveld, 2009a; Torrie, 2009, p. 3). The survey also asked whether boards of trustees and school communities would support their principal's stance regarding National Standards. Of the 56 per cent of boards who had discussed the principal's stance 96 per cent affirmed their support; of the 32 per cent of communities who had discussed the issue 91 per cent said they would support their principal (Buutveld, 2009a). Data such as these only served to harden the resolve of the principals to boycott the Government's National Standards policy.

Within a few days of the Principal's conference the Minister dismissed the NZEI's claim that the Government was now being forced to backtrack on its timeline to introduce National Standards in literacy and numeracy by agreeing to postpone their implementation for another twelve months, until 2011. In an attempt to clarify the situation Tolley explained that schools would phase in the National Standards in 2010, with reporting to begin in 2011 (Wood, 2009, p. A3).

Clearly frustrated at the Minister's ongoing refusal to acknowledge that National Standards would result invariably in high-stakes assessment and league table reporting by the media, Ernie Buutveld took the Federation's arguments to a wider audience. In an opinion piece published in the *New Zealand Herald* on 9 July, Buutveld agreed that parents deserved access to all of the assessment information gathered about their children's achievements and progress. He stated that the Federation would fully support any process that involved reporting individual student's achievements to parents and the provision of aggregated data to the boards of trustees (Buutveld, 2009b).

Not surprisingly Buutveld's article attracted the immediate wrath of *The Dominion Post* Editor, who made it plain that the Minister "should stick to her guns" over National Standards and that parents had every right to "march [their children] off to a school that is performing better, taking the state funding attached to him or her with them" ("Better to make it plain", 2009, p. B4). Clearly oblivious to all of the arguments raised thus far by school principals, the Editor posed the rhetorical question: "What is it exactly that teachers and principals so fear? What is wrong with sharing with taxpayers—those who pay to keep state schools operating—just which schools do well and which do not?" (p. B4).

Other advocates of National Standards (and league tables) also weighed into the public debate, citing the need for greater monitoring, control, and accountability of teachers and schools. Deborah Coddington, for example, asserted that "the militant teacher unions had gone spastic [sic]" because "this will expose teachers who are thick. You and I know them: we've read their totally illiterate reports and listened to their bureaucratic bovine manure at parent-teacher interviews. We tried to be patient but eventually we removed our kids from the school" (Coddington, 2009). Pamela Stirling advanced an equally critical view of teachers and principals in her *New Zealand Listener* editorial when she wrote that because teacher unions and the Principals' Federation represent the interests of teachers and principals respectively, they engage in politics on behalf of their members and not their pupils (Stirling, 2009, p.5). She further suggested that, at the time of writing, while there was no guarantee that National Standards data would in fact end up in a league table, they could help to identify schools experiencing problems and needing additional assistance. The great advantage of league tables, Stirling surmised, was that they provided an excellent incentive for schools to compare their performance with neighbouring schools of a similar decile and, in so doing, "to lift their standards" (p. 5).

Other media commentators also joined in the debate by inviting the public to answer the question: who controls the schools—the teachers or the public? Karl Du Fresne, writing in the *Manawatu Standard*, reprimanded teachers for believing that they should somehow be "absolved from the performance measurements and competitive pressures that other industries and professional groups are subject to" (Du Fresne, 2009, p.14). According to Du Fresne teachers need to understand that they are "paid servants of the education system, not its masters", and that league tables would enable parents to make intelligent choices about which school would be best for their children to attend (p. 14).

An independent research-informed voice

In an effort to separate the message from the messenger the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER)—an independent education research organization—forwarded a short (4-page) submission to the Ministry of Education that addressed three issues regarding National Standards: their use, the timing of their introduction, and the need for ongoing research into how the National Standards policy is being translated into practice (New Zealand Council for Educational Research, 2009). The NZCER claimed that, done well, National Standards had the potential to act as a catalyst for improved learning and teaching (p. 1). However, concern was expressed about the validity of using these standards to identify schools that needed to improve their students' levels of achievement, owing to the imprecision of the standard—that is, a student is above, at, or below it—and the potential for the standards' results to be reported in simplisticleague tables that were acknowledged as being an unreliable and invalid indicator of educational quality (p. 2).

The NZCER submission also called for the National Standards to be "road tested" for at least one year prior to their introduction, citing the need to consider their likely impact on the implementation of *The New Zealand Curriculum* (2007):

> *Much work is still needed to implement the curriculum in schools, and the considerable investment and gains made so far should not be jeopardised. Literacy and numeracy are important, and occupy a fundamental place in The*

> *New Zealand Curriculum, but it would be a mistake to narrow professional development and support for schools to literacy and numeracy, or to make literacy and numeracy the sole focus of school accountability. Given the tight fiscal situation, and depending on the uses to which national standards will be put in judging schools, there is a danger of that occurring and of schools consequently feeling unsupported in the task of implementing the wider curriculum. National standards must not become a straitjacket that prevents schools from providing students with engaging and enriching curricula…. (p. 3)*

Also identified in the submission was the need to design and phase in systems and processes that schools will require in order to "bed in" the standards and, furthermore, to develop a purpose-built independent and secure student management system capable of storing any data generated by schools and accessible only by the schools (pp. 3-4). The NZCER's final recommendation—that a robust and continuing programme of research be undertaken—was intended to bring the Ministry and teachers together, and to allow student performance and teacher workloads to be monitored and evaluated longitudinally (p. 4).

The NZCER's submission was warmly welcomed by the NZEI and the Principals' Federation, both of whom felt that the consultation process had simply been an information-sharing exercise and that their views had been ignored (Hunt, 2009c, pp. 1-2). It is noteworthy that, to date, the Minister has made no public comment about the NZCER's submission, despite the fact that the NZCER had been contracted by the Ministry of Education not only to assist in the development of National Standards but also to analyse and report on the submissions following the public consultation process (p.1).

The National Standards timeline

Despite repeated calls from educationists for the implementation of National Standards in primary and intermediate schools to be delayed by one year ("National standards for schools", 2009, p.4) the Minister insisted that the standards would still be gazetted and distributed to schools in October 2009, with boards of trustees being expected to embed them in their 2010 Charters. From 2010 schools would be required to use the Standards to guide teaching and learning; to report children's progress and achievements against the Standards to parents; and to include baseline data and targets in their 2011 Charters (Hunt, 2009d, p.3). Nonetheless the Minister made one important concession: having listened to the feedback from the education sector she agreed to postpone until 2012 the reporting annually of school-level National Standards' data to the Ministry (p.3).

In making this concession it would appear that the Minister had finally grasped the significance of some of the concerns the principals had been raising for several months. A former school inspector and education commentator, Kelvin Smythe, takes a very different view however. He maintains that the Minister's "concession" was a purely pragmatic one, given that the Ministry of Education has encountered problems in "mapping" the standardised tests, the curriculum levels in *The New Zealand Curriculum* (2007), and National Standards with the asTTle (Assessment Tools for Teaching and Learning) assessment tools (Smythe, 2009).

John Hattie's critique of National Standards

The debate took another turn in early August when John Hattie—the architect of asTTle—launched a concerted attack on National Standards. Hattie asserted that they were likely to force teachers to teach students according to their school year, rather than their ability level (Laxon, 2009). He also argued that the National Standards were fundamentally at odds with a levels-based curriculum; that they would lead to a clash between age-based standards and ability-based learning; and that this situation would encourage mediocrity because students who met a minimum standard would invariably move mechanically through all subjects at the same pace, as evident in the United States of America. Hattie concluded that most teachers would "teach to the test" and, in so doing, "set education back 50 years" (Laxon, 2009). His views doubtless resonated with many educators, including school principals, the Principals' Federation, teachers, and the NZEI.

Post-consultation resistance

On the eve of the release of the NZCER report for the Ministry of Education on the National Standards consultation phase (Wylie, Hodgen, & Darr, 2009) some principals announced that they would deliberately "fudge the results" by finding the easiest test possible to boost their results, thereby undermining the Government's National Standards policy (Beaumont, 2009c, p.A4; Hunt, 2009e, p.3). Predictably the media were quick to respond. The possibility that some principals even dared to suggest subverting the Government's "flagship" education policy clearly outraged the *Dominion Post* Editor who sought to remind readers that teachers, whose job is to prepare youth for the future, "believe they are at the wheel. They need to be bluntly disabused of that notion" ("Listen and learn, teachers", 2009, p. B4). The Editor hoped that by "unmasking" those principals who sought to derail the Minister's plans, the public would begin to question why these "public servants" should retain their jobs (p. B4). Citing research that revealed that 90 per cent of prison inmates were "functionally illiterate", the Editor then asked why this had occurred when most prisoners had received at least a primary school education. The explanation offered by the Editor was simple—teachers knowingly had failed children—as was the suggested remedy: ensure that all children "learn the basics at primary school, rather than have the taxpayer pay for remedial education later in life" (p. B4).

While less inclined to attack teachers for allegedly failing their students Joanna Black, writing in the *New Zealand Listener*, nevertheless echoed the popular view that because parents are seldom in any position to evaluate school quality they need "real information" about how well schools are doing in relation to National Standards (Black, 2009, p. 94). Were principals to withhold National Standards' results then parents could not gain a well-informed view of a school's overall performance, she opined.

What was missing from *The Dominion Post* and *New Zealand Listener* commentaries—indeed, from almost all of the media reports—was any robust research-based *evidence* that National Standards would deliver in practice the much hoped for improvements in students' literacy and numeracy abilities.

The NZCER consultation report

In response to the Ministry of Education's public consultation exercise from late May to early July, a total of 4968 responses (representing 9526 individuals) were received by the Ministry of Education regarding the proposed National Standards for literacy and numeracy (Wylie, Hodgen, & Darr, 2009, p. v). The Ministry contracted the NZCER to analyse these submissions and to report their findings in relation to four key themes: stakeholder understanding on the intent of National Standards; areas of concern and/or areas for improvement; barriers to the implementation of National Standards; and the information that parents need in order to engage with their children's education (pp. 5-9).

While space precludes a detailed analysis of the responses from the different sectors some overall patterns are evident in the submissions. Respondents' opinions differed over whether the criteria to evaluate student achievement in the draft National Standards were set at an appropriate level. Concern was also expressed by 23 per cent of respondents about the potential identification and subsequent labeling of students, particularly for those who were making progress but not at the level required to meet or to exceed the expected standard (pp. vii, 7, 38: Table 12). One in five respondents thought that the emphasis on National Standards would lead inevitably to a narrowing of the school curriculum and to the consequent loss of school autonomy that underpinned *The New Zealand Curriculum* (2007) (Wylie, Hodgen, & Darr, 2009, pp. viii-viii, 7, 38: Table 12). Despite assurances by the Minister that the Government did not want comparative league tables of schools' performance in the literacy and numeracy standards to be constructed, one third of all respondents still expressed considerable apprehension over the potential for the media to compile such tables and for parents and school communities to make unfair comparisons between schools without acknowledging their different demographic contexts (pp. viii, 7, 36: Table 11).

In summary then, the submissions on National Standards indicated strong support across all sectors for providing parents with information they could understand and use to support their children's progress (p. 6). Given that schools are supposed to have autonomy regarding which assessment tools they can utilise, an overarching concern is whether all schools would in fact be measuring the same things, in the same way, for all students. Moreover, the wide screening nature of many of the assessment tools commonly used in schools tends to provide insufficient diagnostic information about *why* students are not achieving in literacy and mathematics. In short the data that is produced might well be invalid and unreliable, and therefore of little use in determining whether or not a child has met the prescribed standard of achievement.

Looking back: Some lessons from the New Zealand primary school standards

Those who are familiar with the history of New Zealand education will know that the Education Act of 1877 launched a national system of curriculum and examination "standards" for all state primary schools. In seeking to make primary education "free, compulsory and secular" in the 1877 Act, the legislators of the day were confronted with the reality that to ensure the education system would truly be universal a common prescription of work had to be specified for all school-age pupils—one that could be audited externally. To this end, an elaborate system of "education standards" was formulated early in 1878 and gazetted in September of that year (New Zealand Gazette [NZG], 1878, pp. 1309-1312). These standards, coupled with the arrival of the standards examinations from mid-1879, provided the Department of Education with a means by which to gauge the performance of the nation's primary schools in general and the "efficiency" of individual teachers in particular. The results of the schools' annual standards examinations were publicised, discussed, and compared widely. A direct curriculum-examination relationship was thus forged, one in which mere *instruction* rather than *education* was likely to result from the relentless pursuit of national primary school examination passes in late nineteenth century New Zealand society.

The standards regulations, as they came to be called, were designed principally to *classify* Standard 1 to 6 pupils according to their attainments on measured scholastic tasks. Every school subject for each of the six standards was broken down into performance tasks to be mastered annually before individual pupils were allowed to advance to the next standard class. In so doing, the central Department of Education could claim confidently that "in every part of the colony the same standard of education was maintained" because all primary school pupils were taught the *same* subjects and subsequently evaluated on a *uniform* basis (NZG, 1878, p.1309; New Zealand Parliamentary Debates [NZPD], 1877, p.32). This was a legitimate expectation, given that the primary schools were now publicly funded institutions. Moreover, the concept of a centrally prescribed national primary school curriculum appealed to the colonial egalitarian ethos of the time wherein children from a town school would (theoretically) receive the *same* education as would children attending a small, often remote, one-teacher country school.Having introduced the Education Bill into the New Zealand House of Representatives on 24 July 1877 its sponsor, Charles Bowen, the Minister of Justice, could not possibly have predicted how the schools, teachers, parents, pupils, school inspectors, and even Department of Education officials would later respond to his scheme of standards examinations. Originally intended solely as a "check" upon the accuracy of teachers' estimates of their pupils' abilities, the 1878 regulations further required that the inspectors make twice-yearly visits to each primary school: a 'surprise' inspection visit, and an annual examination visit wherein all pupil promotions were decided for the following twelve months. Pupils under the age of exemption (13 years) who failed the inspector's examination were obliged to remain in that standard for a further year, at the end of which they would again sit the examination and, if successful, be promoted to the next standard (NZG, 1878, p. 1312).

Educational Standards

Anxious to maintain educational standards the Department outlined in minute detail the subject requirements for each of the six standards classes in the 1878 regulations. The prescription for Standard 2 Arithmetic, for example, was both precise and comprehensive. It read:

> *Numeration and notation of not more than six figures; addition of not more than six lines, with six figures in a line; short multiplication and multiplication by factors not greater than 12; subtraction; division by numbers not exceeding 12, by the method of long ...and short division, mental problems adapted to this stage of progress; multiplication tables to 12 times 12. (NZG, 1878, p. 1310)*

As pupils advanced through the standards the syllabus requirements became more demanding. Not surprisingly, rote learning masses of often imperfectly understood facts and prescribed tasks to be reproduced on examination day soon became the defining characteristic of teaching and learning in New Zealand primary school classrooms. The prize was a pass in whatever standard class the child was enrolled. The punishment was failure and repetition of the work in the following year.

Having clearly specified the curricular objectives to which all teachers would have to adhere, and by which their pupils' attainments would soon come to be judged by the inspectors, parents, public, and employers alike, William Habens, the Inspector-General of Schools (1878-1899), wrote and issued a pamphlet entitled *The Standards* (1881) containing detailed notes on the 1878 standards requirements. The pamphlet also warned teachers against "cramming" (rote learning) facts in preparation for the inspector's examinations. It began:

> *Teachers should always remember that the standards represent "the minimum of attainments of which the Inspector will require evidence at each stage". . . .*

> *The process known as "cram" applied to one standard will render further "cram" necessary for the next and the next. . . . [T]he standards are not meant to be used as a rack, to extort from children a broken utterance of the last facts and ideas that have begun to take hold of their memory and intelligence. [Children] are not sent to school to pass in the standards, but to be educated. (Department of Education, 1881, pp. 2-3, Note 6(1))*

Habens concluded with the telling observation that the regulations were "designed to discourage the mere learning of lessons that are not understood [and] to promote instruction calculated to cultivate the intelligence of children" (p. 18, Note 14(1)). Although he implored teachers to set meaningful work for their pupils, Habens' concerns were promptly forgotten in the "drive for results". By the early 1880s Habens and his Departmental staff knew they were powerless to correct the situation whereby only that which was examinable was valued and taught. The race for "percentage passes" had now begun in earnest.

Measuring School 'Efficiency'

While primary school teachers and the Department of Education struggled to cope with burgeoning enrolments from 1878, the standards examinations began to assume a new importance. As early as 1879 the Minister of Education, William Rolleston, had identified the efficacy of using the results of the annual standards examinations to assess the efficiency of individual schools when he declared:

> *Other things being equal, the best school in a district was the school which passed a larger proportion of children than any other in the district; and at a lower age; and a district was making progress if year by year the proportion of passes increased and the average age of passing became lower. (Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives. [AJHR], H-1A, 1880, p. 12)*

Given that schools' reputations stood or fell on the results of the inspectors' annual examinations, fierce rivalry existed between schools to produce the highest percentage of passes (Ewing, 1970, pp. 140-141; McKenzie, 1976, p. 34; McKenzie, 1983, pp. 20-34). Indeed competition was openly and actively encouraged by some education boards, with one Napier school announcing that it would pay a bonus to their teachers in line with their students' performance in the annual standards examination ("Advertisement", 1882, pp. 190-191). Ambitious teachers often quoted favourable examination statistics when applying for positions, secure in the knowledge that this would impress appointment committees (Ewing, 1970, p. 58).

The Inspectors and the Standards Examinations

Three years after the introduction of the standards regulations William Hodgson, the Nelson and Marlborough Education Board Inspector, began to witness mechanical, highly prescriptive, formal teaching and learning methods. Concluding his report for 1881, Hodgson lamented both the "sweet simplicity of a list of passes and failures" and

> *the growing tendency, not only on the part of the general public but on the part of many teachers who ought to know better, to gauge the success or failure of a school exclusively by the tables of results…. The undoubting faith with which the majority of mankind will bow down before an idol of their own setting-up is simply astounding. The [examination results] of an Inspector … are almost universally accepted as though they gave a mathematical demonstration of the exact status of any given school. (AJHR, E-1B, 1882, p. 16)*

Two years later the ever-perceptive Hawke's Bay (Napier Education Board) Inspector, Henry Hill, noted that "much of the standard work in the [region's] schools is prepared on a kind of examination-probability basis", resulting in "great and lasting injury to both teachers and pupils" (AJHR, E-1B, 1884, p. 8). Hill's Wanganui counterpart, William Vereker-Bindon, recorded similar misgivings in his report for 1884. The standards examinations, he observed, exerted their influence "in all subjects, all standards, and the majority of schools" to such an extent that pupils were being "forced like so many hot-house plants" to regurgitate answers on inspection and examination day, with no thought about whether or not the pupils actually understood what they were rote learning (AJHR, E-1B, 1885, p. 12). Significantly, when pupils failed their annual examinations (and many did), the inspectors promptly identified the teachers' lack of knowledge of the syllabus rather than any inability or laziness on the part of the pupils as being the chief explanation for their failure (AJHR, E-1B, 1885, p. 7; AJHR, E-1B, 1886, pp. 12-18).

Despite their protestations the inspectors' criticisms were short-lived. Barely ten years after the standards regulations had been promulgated high examination pass rates had become the sole arbiter of school "efficiency" and "effectiveness", with all of the nation's education boards and newspapers now reporting standards pass percentage rates. Thus, teachers and headmasters were appraised by the simple expedient of whether or not they got most, if not all, of their pupils through the standards examinations. Rolleston's earlier vision of an examination results-based "ready reckoner" of teacher competence and accountability was one that could not be ignored easily.

Although the New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI) and numerous committees on primary education matters argued that the publication of percentage passes should be abandoned immediately, all twelve education boards continued to tabulate the pass rates of individual schools in their annual reports. Adamant that examination results indicated the relative "efficiency" of its schools the Otago Education Board in 1890 adopted the policy that "in schools with a staff of three or more teachers, a percentage of failures exceeding 20 is considered evidence of inefficient teaching. In schools with a smaller staff, a failure of 25 is similarly judged" (Otago Education Board, 1890, p. 498). Although the Board abandoned the publication of pass rates in its annual reports three years later (Lee, 1991, p.12)—local newspapers, however, did not—the Otago Inspectors still maintained that such publicity provided the "chief lever of improvement in the schools" (p.12).

Examination-Beating Strategies

Remarks such as these, however, ignored the realty that the rising percentage pass rate might well be explained by less scrupulous teachers and pupils becoming increasingly proficient in the use of a variety of examiner-beating tactics to outwit the inspector. For example, children's artwork occasionally was "touched up" by their teachers and special attention was paid to rote-learning paragraphs in the prescribed texts so that they could be regurgitated on examination day (Ewing, 1970, p. 61).

The earliest official acknowledgement of "examination beating" strategies came in 1882 when William Edge and James Cumming, North Canterbury Education Board Inspectors, investigated the reason why so many children were absent on the examination day. They discovered that "backward children are not only encouraged, but, in some cases, actually forbidden to be present" (AJHR, E-1B, 1883, p. 22). Given the status attached to examination results by the education

bureaucracy, teachers often were tempted to use the system to their own advantage by ensuring that only those pupils most likely to succeed on examination day would be allowed to be present. Although an unforeseen consequence of the standards examinations scheme (NZG, 1899, p. 2301, Clause 11), this practice nonetheless continued to plague the educational world for decades to come (Lee & Lee, 2000a).

In the face of mounting criticism the 1894 National Conference of Inspectors, while acknowledging that "grave disadvantages attend the existing system of testing the work of our schools mainly by means of standard passes", nevertheless strenuously opposed the abolition of the standards examinations (AJHR, E-1c, 1894, pp. 19-20). However, the Inspector-General of Schools agreed to one important concession in recognition of the growing professionalism of the nation's primary teachers. Prior to 1894 only the inspectors could examine and promote pupils in the standards, but in June 1894 regulations were gazetted allowing head teachers to determine passes for Standards 1 and 2 (Lee, 1991, p.14; NZG, 1894, p. 945, Clause 3). Five years later the concession was extended to Standard 5, now the legal standard for exemption from school attendance (Lee, 1991, p.15; NZG, 1899, p. 2314, Clause 31). Thus, from 1900, those who knew the pupils best and who had been responsible for their academic progress were now able to classify them instead of having to accept unquestioningly an inspector's judgement. From this point on, the only examinations under the direct control of the inspectorate were those pertaining to exemption certificates in Standard 5 and the all-important Standard 6 (Year 8) Proficiency Certificate (NZG, 1899, p. 2303, Clauses 14-15).

Homework

Another outcome of the 1878 standards scheme was the practice of "keeping in" children after school hours in the weeks leading up to the inspector's annual examination (Ewing, 1970, p. 60; Lee, 1991, p. 18; Otago Education Board, 1893a, 1893b, 1895). Furthermore, complaints regarding "slavery" to unreasonable amounts of homework that increased significantly as children progressed through the standards were voiced frequently (AJHR, E-1, 1883, pp. xvii-xviii, 19-20, 38; Ewing, 1970, pp. 59-61; Otago Education Board, 1893b). Although the Otago Education Board notified teachers in 1893 that it was no longer prepared to tolerate children being "kept in" at school after 3.00 pm, in reality it was powerless to intervene because many parents insisted that children be prepared to pass examinations (Otago Education Board, 1893a). While this outcome had clearly not been anticipated when the standards requirements were first promulgated, teachers who were mindful of their future career prospects would never have dared risk departure from the examination syllabus. In fact they did everything they could to maximise their pupils' chances of success in the examinations. Accordingly, only those pupils were who known to be capable of passing were permitted to be present on the day of the examination.

"Pupil Retardation"

One method commonly adopted to boost examination pass rates was that of "retardation"—a practice that had been identified by the North Canterbury Education Board Inspectors as early as 1882. Twenty-seven years later the retardation of academically "slow" or "difficult" children in the lower standards until such time as they attained the age of exemption (14 years) was widespread: the Department of Education's annual report for 1909 revealed that about 38 per cent of all pupils left primary school at age 14 without passing Standard 5 (Ewing, 1970, p. 141). This practice did not escape the notice of the Southland Education Board Inspectors, James Hendry and Alexander Wyllie, whose report for 1910 highlighted the "greater caution on the part of teachers in sending up poorly prepared candidates" (AJHR, E-2, 1911, p. ii).

Retardation, however, was not confined to Southland or to North Canterbury schools. By 1920 the Otago Inspectors readily admitted that many pupils in fact were being held back in the standards longer than was necessary. Moreover, they identified the "educational leakage" that occurred between Standards 1 and 6 as being the result of "slow promotion", whereby children remained in a particular standard longer than a year because their teachers were "too exacting in their promotions" ("Report of the Otago Education Board Inspectors", 1920, p.8). Such a strategy, the Inspectors observed, meant that children quickly became disgruntled with school and left as soon as was legally possible.

"Examination Coaching"

The extent to which instruction in examination subjects had overshadowed all other classroom activities was revealed at the General Education Conference convened by the Inspector-General of Schools, George Hogben, in February 1910. Hogben's worst fears were confirmed finally when the Headmaster of Westport District High School, James Harkness, produced evidence indicating a marked increase in the number of teachers "cramming" and "driving" their Proficiency Certificate candidates through the examination syllabus out of school hours (AJHR, E-10, 1910, p. 19). In opening the Conference, Hogben had noted that the Department of Education was powerless to intervene in such matters because legally it had no authority over what teachers chose to do outside official school hours (pp. 6-7).

Ironically, although educationists had singled out the standards examinations for particular criticism these same educationists also knew that it was these examinations that had been responsible for the remarkable expansion of the nation's primary schools following the Education Act of 1877. This reality, coupled with the public's seemingly insatiable appetite for examination passes, meant that for the time being the rigid standards curriculum and examination system would remain remarkably resilient to repeated assaults by those reformers who sought its immediate abolition.

The rocky road to abolition

Throughout the 1920s there was much debate about the appropriateness of the standards based primary school curriculum in general and the nature and purpose of annual examinations in particular. The Standard 6 (Form 2/Year 8) Proficiency Examination—an examination that the NZEI had long believed should be abolished (Lee & Lee, 1992, pp. 28-30)—was singled out for particular criticism. In 1931, with the full backing of the Labour Party the NZEI President, Henry Penlington, urged the government to abolish the examination on the grounds that many teachers found difficulty freeing themselves from its "shadow" and that parents regarded the annual "full-dress examination as the only bona fide test and guarantee of a child's progress". Penlington concluded that "the examination had to be passed, a battle had to be won. If the child is successful, his is the glory and victory; if not, defeat with consequent discredit" (Penlington, 1931, p.228).

Five years later the newly installed Labour Government abolished the examination, albeit not without criticism from conservative quarters who alleged that it was the teaching profession (i.e., the NZEI) and not the public who wanted Proficiency (and the other standards examinations) abolished (NZPD, 1936, p. 1041). Other

commentators expressed concern that education standards would decline as a consequence of abandoning a "measuring rod" that gauged the academic ability of primary school children (NZPD, 1936, pp. 987, 1043). The private school authorities similarly were worried that they could no longer demonstrate their teaching efficiency, vis-a-vis high pass rates, alongside the state primary schools (Lee & Lee, 1992, p. 29). In truth, what these critics had lost was the key means by which the nation's primary school teachers could be held accountable and therefore controlled.

Curriculum reform

The abolition of Proficiency and the standards examinations meant that schools were no longer "mere machines" for processing pupils for examinations (NZPD, 1936, p. 247). Freed from the constraints imposed by examinations, schools could now experiment with broader curricular programmes adapted to the varying capacities of individual pupils (Lee & Lee, 1992, p. 29). From 1943 the Department of Education, in keeping with modern thinking on curriculum development, embarked upon a programme of "rolling revision" wherein each of the primary school subjects was revised in consultation with the teachers rather than the former practice of overhauling the entire primary school curriculum periodically, as was the case in 1904, 1919, and 1929 (Ewing, 1970, pp. 164-165; Lee & Lee, 1992, p. 30).

Surveying 'standards': The 1962 Currie Commission

After World War 2 allegations about lowered standards of school achievement persisted to such an extent that they could no longer be ignored ("Annual meeting", 1950, p.4). With public feeling running so high Philip Skoglund, the Minister of Education, resigned himself to the inevitability of appointing an independent Commission on Education to "take stock of the educational situation" (Commission on Education in New Zealand, 1962, p. 3).

Appointed in February 1960, and chaired by Sir George Currie, the eleven-person commission explored the contentious issue of "modern education methods". The Commissioners concluded that there was no longer a place in New Zealand primary schools for those teachers who rejected the "cardinal ideas of variation in ability and attainment" and who "narrowed all achievements to success in the three R's" by deliberately withholding children from progressing through the system "until they had reached each year some fixed level or standard of attainment" (pp. 27-28).

In answering the criticism that "standards had declined" in the nation's primary school classrooms, the Commissioners recommended that the NZCER be contracted to prepare and administer national standardised tests in the form of "checkpoints of attainment" in the basic subjects at five-yearly intervals, "to allow valid comparisons of achievement to be made at particular points [Standards 1, 4, and Form 2] in the primary school curriculum" (pp. 37, 372). The Commissioners also emphasised that these "checkpoints" should *supplement* the estimates of class teachers who were uniquely placed to take account of various factors affecting the ability and performance of pupils (pp. 37, 258-263, 372).

Education standards post-Currie

Following the publication of the Currie Commission's report in 1962 the Minister of Education, Arthur Kinsella, in 1965 invited the NZCER to construct "standardised group tests of attainment in basic school subjects" based on the New Zealand syllabuses for all classes (Elley, 1967, pp. 63). Four years later, the first standardised tests were published by the NZCER and sent to all primary schools (Ewing, 1970, p. 270).

In the decades that followed, several committees of inquiry and working parties explored ways in which to evaluate the achievement levels of New Zealand primary school students. Three of these—Learning and Teaching (1974), the Royal Commission on Social Policy (1988), and the Reports of the Ministerial Working Party on Assessment for Better Learning (1989-1990)—had investigated national monitoring of educational attainment specifically. National monitoring of different areas of the primary school curriculum was occurring already owing to New Zealand's participation in some comparative surveys of educational achievement undertaken by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement. These surveys compared and analysed the achievements of New Zealand school children alongside learners from other countries, and provided some indication of the performance of pupils in the New Zealand school system. Other achievement information, albeit covering selected areas of the New Zealand primary school curriculum, came from the standardised Progressive Achievement Tests, developed and periodically re-normed by the NZCER.

By 1997, the then National-New Zealand First Coalition Government was convinced that important "information gaps" existed in terms of the lack of clear "performance outcomes" for primary school students. Their solution was simple—introduce a system of national tests for all primary school students. The Labour Party caught many off guard when its spokesperson on Education, Trevor Mallard, a former teacher, declared that externally referenced mandatory national testing would improve the achievement levels of New Zealand primary school children significantly (Burge, 1998, p.A1). Citing the mediocre performance of a sample of 9-year-old (Year 4-5) New Zealand school children who had participated alongside 9-year-olds from 26 other countries in the 1994 TIMSS (Third International Mathematics and Science Study), Mallard proposed that all Standard 2, 4, and Form 2 children should be tested annually in English or Reading, Mathematics, and Science in order to identify the relative strengths and weaknesses of individual teachers. Such data, he argued, could then be used to censure poorly performing schools and to remove "incompetent" teachers (p.A1). Mallard apparently approved of parents having access to schools' test scores so that they could choose the "best" school for their children. Primary school teachers and principals viewed the matter very differently, however. In the face of overwhelming criticism regarding the validity of such tests Labour withdrew its support for compulsory national testing.

The Green Paper on primary school assessment

Within hours of Labour announcing its opposition to national testing the then Minister of Education, Wyatt Creech, informed the press that the Government would soon issue its own green paper on primary school assessment ("Tests to measure schools' failure", 1998, p.1). Released on 7 May 1998 with a three-month deadline for public submissions, the 38-page Green Paper on *Assessment for Success in Primary Schools* and the accompanying "Brochure for Parents" outlined a number of proposals for assessing and monitoring the performance of primary school age children against national achievement objectives.

While the Green Paper acknowledged teachers' access to several Ministry-sanctioned initiatives—for example, School Entry Assessment; Six Year Net; Assessment Resource Banks; Progressive Achievement

Tests; and the National Education Monitoring Project—it downplayed their importance and sophistication deliberately in order to support the introduction of national, externally referenced, tests that schools could use to "compare their performance with others and identify both where they are doing well and not so well" (Ministry of Education, 1998, p. 3).

National exemplars

The Green Paper also advocated the nationwide introduction of well-designed exemplars of student work and associated assessment activities, linked directly to the *New Zealand Curriculum Framework's* achievement objectives, to provide teachers with a further means with which to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching and learning programmes. What was less clear, though, was the capacity of the exemplars to provide information "to help teachers to identify whether their judgements about students' achievements are consistent with national standards" (p. 21). Significantly, the Green Paper's authors failed to provide *evidence* of the educational benefits accruing to individual students by assessing them against "nationally consistent standards" and ignored the reality that national exemplars of student work constituted a de facto compulsory curriculum because teachers would use them as "benchmark" indicators of student achievement.

New externally referenced tests

Compulsory externally referenced and administered testing proved the most contentious of the assessment proposals outlined in the Green Paper. The document proposed that initially every Year 6 and 8 student— about 110,000 boys and girls—would sit national externally set and marked pencil-and-paper tests, based on the achievement objectives in literacy (or English) and numeracy (or Mathematics), and that Year 4 children would be tested later (Ministry of Education, 1998, pp. 25-26). It envisaged an external agency being contracted to administer the tests; to set the test papers; to mark, analyse, and report on the test results; and to return the papers, marking schedules, and school and national reports to individual schools (p. 27).

The Green Paper suggested that three types of report be made available: one to the government, detailing national and group achievement levels; another to each individual school, comparing its students' achievements with national levels of achievement and those of similar student groups nationwide; and a third report for schools to distribute to parents (p. 24). The information gleaned from these reports was intended to "help teachers to identify which programmes are most effective for specific groups of students . . . which factors may contribute to that success . . . [and] which programmes need most improvement for particular groups of students" (p. 25).

The case for national testing was made all the more problematic from the outset, however, owing to the Green Paper's confusion regarding the exact *purpose* of the national tests they advocated. Readers were told that "teachers need information to help them to identify whether their judgements about achievements are consistent with national standards", at the same time as being informed that externally referenced tests would "help [teachers] to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching and learning programmes" (p. 23). The first purpose clearly involved assessment being used for reasons of *accountability* whereas the second involved assessment to *improve teaching and learning*.

Limitations of national testing

The Green Paper did concede that no single assessment system could provide the last (or definitive) word on children's achievements—it warned that the range of objectives able to be tested (i.e., numeracy and literacy) would be "limited" necessarily to those assessable by paper-and-pencil tests (pp. 24-25). The authors also appreciated that the results from schools with small rolls would need to be reviewed "with caution" (p. 25); that students should not be "labelled" on the basis of a "one off snapshot" of their achievements in two curriculum areas (p. 25); and that "valid comparisons between schools . . . need to be based on valid measures of the overall achievements of its students". (p. 26) There was further recognition that written tests might be culturally inappropriate for Māori who emphasise oral traditions (p. 29); that low school scores compared with national norms did not mean necessarily that the school was not effective (p. 27); and that the publication of test results for particular groups of students could reinforce low expectations for students who were not achieving highly (p.28). Additionally the authors acknowledged the complex relationship between educational achievement, ethnicity, and socio-economic status, and understood that "simply to compare schools serving certain communities . . . with national norms is to misuse the information" (p. 27).

League tables

Although they identified several problems with national testing, the Green Paper's authors ignored these conveniently when they concluded that only through *mandatory* testing could a "comprehensive range of reliable comparative data" be generated (p. 26). Collecting this data was intended to help parents "identify the effectiveness of their school's programmes compared with similar schools and national achievement trends" (p. 19) and "to provide information to schools that will enable teachers, principals, and boards to evaluate the achievement of their children in comparison to national and group levels of achievement . . . [via] externally set and marked tests . . . in a standardised way to maximise . . . validity [and] comparisons" (pp. 23-24). Nevertheless it is abundantly clear from the overseas literature that when the relative performance of neighbouring schools becomes more widely known, the publication of national "league tables" occurs inevitably.

The Green Paper authors also failed to acknowledge the consequences of reporting the range of relative school performance in graphic form (p. 23). Overseas research—for example, in Canada, the United States of America, and the United Kingdom—demonstrates that such a format not only makes the compilation of league tables a simple and straightforward task but also allows, if not encourages, schools with "good" results, albeit based on a single test, to publicise their achievements widely in their promotional material (Broadfoot et al., 1993; Goldstein, 1997; Goldstein & Lewis, 1996; Willms, 1992). In light of today's increasingly competitive compulsory schooling environment, New Zealand primary schools would seize upon league tables quickly as furnishing objective evidence of their effectiveness, with only those individuals and groups with an understanding of educational assessment reading the New Zealand tables for what they really were—a compilation of misleading (if not invalid and unreliable) scores on a poorly designed national test limited solely to two curriculum areas.

High stakes testing

Curiously absent from the Green Paper's analysis of national testing was any mention of the consequences of "high stakes testing". Our earlier discussion of the standards examinations has revealed that in a high stakes environment teachers boosted their annual class percentage pass rates by "teaching to the test" and by

excluding "slow learners" from the examinations. Only those types of tasks (and content) assessable in the national tests were taught while areas not assessed formally were ignored. Such homogeneity of instruction today would contradict the *New Zealand Curriculum Framework's* philosophy of breadth and balance in curriculum coverage directly

Green Paper submissions

Following the Green Paper's release in May 1998 a three-month consultation period was provided, during which time Ministry staff met with individuals and groups. These submissions were analysed subsequently by an independent research team led by Alison Gilmore, and a final report was released in November 1998 (Gilmore, 1998). During the consultation period the Minister of Education began to sense the public's growing unease with national testing and announced consequently that the introduction of the tests would be postponed until 2000 to allow further consultation to occur (Cassie, 1998a, p.5).However, this did nothing to dissuade the School Trustees' Association and some 1400 primary school principals from publicly rejecting national testing (Cassie, 1998b, p.3; Gerritsen, 1998, p.1; New Zealand Principals' Federation, 1998, p. 1). The Gilmore Report detected a similar trend—the Green Paper's national testing proposal was opposed by 72.8 per cent of respondents on the grounds that such tests had a negative effect on children, teachers, and schools. Moreover they were of limited validity, and fostered misleading comparisons and competition between schools (Gilmore, 1998, pp. 25-68).

In late September 1999 the new Minister of Education, Nick Smith, reiterated the National Government's unswerving commitment to national testing in a speech to the NZEI Annual Conference (Smith, 1999, pp. 8-10). Declaring that New Zealand was "behind the pace [because] every State in Australia has National Assessment. So too do England and the vast majority of states in Canada and America", and that opponents of national testing are "swimming against the tide of education internationally", the Minister launched his government's "robust and comprehensive" *Information for Better Learning* assessment policy that mirrored those of the Green Paper, although the national literacy and numeracy tests were now to apply to Year 5 and 7 students (Ministry of Education, 1999; New Zealand Education Gazette, 1999, p. 14; Velde, 1999, p.14). The Executive Director of the Independent Schools' Council, Jan Kerr, praised the government for persisting with compulsory national testing in the interests of "raising standards" (Giddens, 1999, p.6).

The Labour Party, for their part, affirmed its strong opposition to the compulsory national testing of primary school children and, upon becoming the government in late November 1999, announced that national tests for 9- and 11-year-olds would now be abandoned (Cassie, 1999a, p.4; Cassie, 1999b, p.1; Clark, 1999, p. 3; Lewis, 1999, p.1; Mallard, 1999). Eight months later Trevor Mallard, as Minister of Education, announced that The University of Auckland had won the contract to develop new tools for assessing literacy and numeracy for pupils in Years 5 to 7 inclusive ("Briefs", 2000, p.4; Giddens, 2000a, p1; Giddens, 2000b, p.3; Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 4). Unlike the last government's compulsory testing proposal, the new (asTTle) assessment initiative would be voluntary: schools were to be sent a CD-ROM containing hundreds of closed-and-open-ended items indexed to the National Curriculum documents, from which teachers could compile specific items to assess students' skills, concepts, and knowledge (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 4). The voluntary and open-ended nature of these asTTle test items would minimise the likelihood that individual schools would be ranked and that league tables would be compiled as is commonplace in England where, since 1989, children have been tested formally at ages 7, 11, 14, 16, and 18 with national testing at ages 7, 11, and 14 in three key subjects: English, Mathematics, and Science.

The education standards debates in England, Wales, and USA

Looking to England, there are some important lessons that ought to be learned from their experience following the passage of the Education Reform Act of 1988 that ushered in the national curriculum.The Conservative's commitment to "standards" was spelled out clearly in 1991 when the Department of Education and Science (DES) launched the *Parents' Charter.* This Charter required comparative "league tables" of examination and national curriculum test results to be compiled and published for each educational institution (school) and local education authority (LEA), to assist parents in deciding which schools to enrol their children at (Department of Education and Science, 1991). These league tables listed students' average achievement rankings on a school by school, local authority by local authority, basis using national curriculum test results at ages 7, 11, and 14 years, along with similar scores for 16-year-olds undertaking the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and 18-year-olds taking their A levels (Wolf, 1995). The research evidence demonstrates that the 1988 curriculum reforms, along with the *Parents' Charter*, have had a profound influence on both the content and style of schooling in England and Wales, to the extent that they have reshaped and redefined the culture of the classroom and the culture and work of teachers. Teachers endorsed the idea of attainment levels in the National Curriculum initially because they provided clear descriptors of what pupils at each of the different levels should attain (Hargreaves, 1989; Kelly, 1990). That support evaporated by the early 1990s, however, once teachers witnessed first hand the way that performance (assessment) indicators came to dominate classroom instruction (Aldrich & White, 1998; Kelly, 1990; Torrance, 1997). The recently released (February 2009) *Cambridge Primary Review* presents further disturbing evidence that the overemphasis on testing in literacy and numeracy (i.e., reading, writing, and mathematics) has resulted not only in a seriously overcrowded and micromanaged curriculum—with "basic skills" consuming more than 50 per cent of classroom time—but also in a marked diminution in students' natural curiosity, imagination, and in their love of learning (Cambridge Primary Review, 2009).

This outcome is hardly surprising, given that teachers work in an environment where few other adults witness the quality of their work directly and where they have had to confront the political reality that test results provide one of the few available public (and ostensibly objective) indicators of their performance.The price to be paid for the introduction of a national testing regime in England and Wales, it seems, has been its hegemonic stranglehold over the school curriculum.

Much the same conclusion was reached by Firestone and colleagues in their three-year study of New Jersey's testing policy. Noting that it is extraordinarily difficult to separate the discourses of education reform, accountability and national testing—in particular, the No Child Left Behind policy of the Bush administration—(Firestone, Schorr, & Monfils, 2004, pp. vii-7), they conclude that:

> *Whereas critics see testing as a disease that plagues our education system, advocates see it as central to the current panacea—standards based reform—that is expected to save the American educational system. The ambiguity of practice is that test preparation turns out to have elements of both…. Taken as a package, however, nothing suggests that the kind of state and local policies*

and practices [we] observed are likely to overcome the achievement gap between New Jersey's rich and poor children. (p. 159)

The future of National Standards in New Zealand

The question needs to be asked: Will the Government's National Standards' initiative provide achievement information that is meaningful to teachers and parents? We believe that this question can be answered best by first acknowledging that over the past two decades a culture of *performativity* has pervaded the New Zealand primary and secondary school sectors, driven by the political appetite for ever-increasing monitoring, reporting, and accountability mechanisms to ensure a heightened degree of external control and surveillance over school in general and teachers in particular (Lee, 2003; Lee & Lee, 1992, 2000a, 2000b, 2001). These demands, as Kenneth Rowe and others have argued convincingly, are deeply symptomatic of a market ideology of education and educational provision wherein there will be "winners" and "losers" (Fiske & Ladd, 2000; Rowe, 2000). The "standards" mantra is in fact central to any major reform initiatives that embrace narrowly defined, instant quick fix, homogenizing models of accountability.

As a blueprint for educational assessment in the twenty-first century the National Standards' policy is deeply worrying. Far from being visionary this policy blatantly disregards most, if not all, of the important lessons that have emerged from the many decades of experience that New Zealand and other countries have amassed in relation to national curriculum and assessment systems. More disturbing still is the historical amnesia that has surrounded the debates about National Standards in New Zealand. To date there has been no mention by educationists or politicians of the 1998 Green Paper on primary school assessment, nor has any reference been made to the substantial body of literature that has analysed the history of the primary school standards (and accompanying examinations) in New Zealand. With nearly six decades of national primary school testing experience to draw upon, New Zealanders need to be reminded that the system was abandoned finally in 1936 because there was widespread acknowledgement that most if not all of what was worthwhile educationally was being driven out by the narrow focus on "the tests". To suggest, as the current Minister of Education does, that National Standards offer a ready made solution to raising students' literacy and numeracy achievements and that they should be (are) introduced into primary and intermediate school classrooms is, we believe, disingenuous educationally. What is forgotten is that New Zealand primary schools have "been there" and "done that", historically (Lee & Lee, 2000a).Perhaps the final word on National Standards belongs to the late Theodor ("Dr Seuss") Geisel whose children's book, *Horray for Diffendoofer Day* (1998), completed by Jack Prelutsky after Geisel's death in 1991, depicts the scene where staff at Diffendoofer School must demonstrate that they have taught their students how to think or have them sent to another school. The future of Diffendoofer rests, therefore, with the success of its students in the forthcoming test:

> *All schools for miles and miles around must take a special test,*
> *To see who's such and such, to see which school's the best*
> *If our small school does not do well, then it will be torn down,*
> *And you will have to go to school in dreary Flobbertown.*
> *Not Flobbertown! We shouted, and we shuddered at the name*
> *For everyone in Flobbertown does everything the same. (pg 21)*

Dr Howard Lee is Professor of Educational Policy and Leadership and Head of the School of Educational Studies at Massey University College of Education, Private Bag 11 222, Palmerston North 4442, New Zealand. E-mail: H.F.Lee@massey.ac.nz

Dr Gregory Lee is Professor of Education History and Policy and Head of the School of Educational Studies and Human Development at The University of Canterbury College of Education, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch 8140, New Zealand. E-mail: Gregory.lee@canterbury.ac.nz

References

Advertisement. (1882, July). In H. Hill (Ed.), *New Zealand Schoolmaster: A Monthly Educational Journal and Review, 1*(12). Napier: P. Dinwiddle & R. T. Walker.

Aldrich, R., & White, J. (Eds.). (1998). *The national curriculum beyond 2000: The QCA and the aims of education*. London: University of London Institute of Education.

Annual meeting of the NZEI. (1950, February). *National Education: The Official Journal of the New Zealand Educational Institute*, *32*(341), 4.

Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives [AJHR]. (1880, 1882, 1883, 1884, 1885, 1886). E-1B. Reports of Inspectors of Schools.

Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives [AJHR]. (1880). H-1A. Annual Report of the Minister of Education.

Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives [AJHR]. (1883). E-1. Annual Report of the Minister of Education.

Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives. [AJHR]. (1894). E-1c. *Education: Minutes of Conference of School Inspectors*, *1894*. Wellington, February 1-9, pp. 1-22.

Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives [AJHR]. (1910). E-10. *Report of the General Education Conference, 1910*. Wellington, February 10-12, pp. 1-38.

Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives [AJHR]. (1911). E-2, Appendix C. Reports of Inspectors of Schools.

Beaumont, N. (2009, June 20). Teachers balk at league table approach to schools. *The Dominion Post*, p. A17.

Beaumont, N. (2009, July 23). Council call to put off school standards. *The Dominion Post*, p. A8.

Beaumont, N. (2009, August 31). Threat to fudge exam results. *The Dominion Post*, p. A4.

Beaumont, N., & Broun, B. (2009, May 19). Setting ABC standards. *The Dominion Post*, p. A1.

Better to make it plain. [Editorial]. (2009, July 9). *The Dominion Post*, p. B4.

Black, J. (2009, September 12). That's education, baby. *New Zealand Listener*, *217*(3618), p. 94.

Briefs—New assessment pilot announced. (2000, August 4). New Zealand Education Review, 5(14), 4.

Broadfoot, P., Dockrell, B., Gipps, C., Harlen, W., & Nuttall, D. (Eds.). (1993). Policy issues in national assessment. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Burge, K. (1998, March 23). Labour supports national tests. *The New Zealand Herald*, p.A1.

Buutveld, E. (2009a, July 3). *Generating futures: Presidential address to the annual meeting of the New Zealand Principals' Federation*, Palmerston North. Retrieved August 3, 2009, from www.nzpf.ac.nz

Buutveld, E. (2009b, July 9). Govt plans for schools won't tell full story. *The New Zealand Herald*.

Cambridge Primary Review. (2009, February). *Towards a new primary curriculum: A report from the Cambridge primary review*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 2009. Retrieved July 31, 2009, from www. primaryreview.org.uk

Cassie, F. (1998a, July 22). Minister admits dangers of primary testing. *New Zealand Education Review*, *3*(12), 5.

Cassie, F. (1998b, August 5). Trustees say no to assessment. *New Zealand Education Review*, *3*(14), 3.

Cassie, F. (1999a, March 26). Labour says no to testing. *New Zealand Education Review*, *3*(43), 4.

Cassie, F. (1999b, December 10). Attitude tack. *New Zealand Education Review*, *4*(31), 1.

Clark, H. (1999, March 16). *Prime Minister's speech to the Auckland Primary Principals: Speech Notes*. Wellington: Author.

Coddington, D. (2009, July 12). Teach school big shots a lesson in parent power. *New Zealand Herald*. Retrieved August 3, 2009, from www.nzherald.co.nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1objectid=10563885

Commission on Education in New Zealand. (1962, July). *Report of the Commission on Education in New Zealand* (The Currie Commission). Wellington: Government Printer.

Crooks, T. (2009, February). Will national standards lift student achievement? *NZEI Rourou*, *19* (18), 6.

Department of Education. (1881, June 23). *The standards: Annotated by the Inspector-General Rev. W. J. Habens*. Wellington: Government Printer.

Department of Education and Science. (1991). *The parents' charter*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

Du Fresne, K. (2009, July 22). Dirty words offend many teachers. *Manawatu Standard*, p. 14.

The Education (National Standards) Amendment Bill. (2008). Retrieved May 7, 2009, from: http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2008/0108/latest/whole.html

Education Review Office. (2007a, March). *The collection and use of assessment information in schools*. Wellington: Author.

Education Review Office. (2007b, June). *The collection and use of assessment information: Good practice in primary schools*. Wellington: Author.

Einstein, A. (n.d.). Quotation cited in A. Calaprice (Ed.). (2000). *The expanded quotable Einstein* (p.13). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Elley, W. B. (1967). Standardised test development in New Zealand: Problems, procedures and proposals. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies, 2*(1), 63-77.

Ewing, J. L. (1970). *The development of the New Zealand primary school curriculum: 1877-1970*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.

Firestone, W.A., Schorr, R.Y., & Monfils, L.F. (2004). *The ambiguity of teaching to the test: Standards, assessment and educational reform*. New Jersey: Laurance Erlbaum Associates.

Fiske, E. B., & Ladd, H. (2000). *When schools compete: A cautionary tale*. Washington: Brookings Institution Press.

Flockton, L. (2009, June). School lines. Who is "minding" a good education for our children? Politicians? Policy makers? Principals? *NZ Principal*, *24*(2), 29-30.

Geisel, T. (Dr Seuss). (1998). *Horray for Diffendoofer day*. New York: Albert Knopt. (Book completed by J. Prelutsky and illustrated by L. Smith.)

Gerritsen, J. (1998, September 23). ERO looking at level testing. *New Zealand Education Review*, *3*(21), 1.

Giddens, P. (1999, November 8). ISC welcomes national testing announcement. *Eduvac: The Education Weekly*, *10*(399), 6.

Giddens, P. (2000a, August 21). Auckland University develops new tools for pupils. *Eduvac: The Education Weekly*, *11*(430), 1.

Giddens, P. (2000b, August 21). Minister confirms opposition to compulsory testing. *Eduvac: The Education Weekly*, *11*(430), 3.

Gilmore, A. (1998, November). *Assessment for Success in Primary Schools: Report of the submissions on the Green Paper.* Wellington: Ministry of Education Research Division.

Goldstein, H. (1997). Assessment, accountability and standards: Using assessment to control the reform of schooling. In A. H. Halsey, H. Lauder, P. Brown, & A. S. Wells (Eds.), *Education: Culture, economy, society* (pp. 320-331). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Goldstein, H., & Lewis, T. (Eds.). (1996). *Assessment: Problems, developments and statistical issues*. New York: John Wiley.

Govt mustn't give way on league tables. [Editorial]. (2009, July 1). *The New Zealand Herald*. Retrieved July 14, 2009, from www.nzherald.co.nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1objectid=10581711

Hargreaves, A. (1989). *Curriculum and assessment reform*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Hartevelt, J. (2009, April 7). Govt to fast track school league tables. *The Press*. Retrieved May 27, 2009, from www.stuff.co.nz/national/education/2319002/Govt

Hunt, T. (2009a, May 22). Optimism and "craziness"–govt releases draft standards. *New Zealand Education Review*, *14*(19), 1-2.

Hunt, T. (2009b, June 19). No stopping league tables but damage control possible. *New Zealand Education Review*, *14*(23), 1.

Hunt, T. (2009c, July 17). Delay national standards, says research body. *New Zealand Education Review*, *14*(27), 1-2.

Hunt, T. (2009d, August 7). National standards to begin next year. *New Zealand Education Review*, *14*(30), 3.

Hunt, T. (2009e, August 28). Plans to scuttle national standards are mooted. *New Zealand Education Review*, *14*(33), 3.

Kelly, A. V. (1990). *The national curriculum: A critical review*. London: Paul Chapman.

Labour hardens school policy. (1998, March 23). *New Zealand Herald*, p. A1.

Labour suggests law change over primary standards. (2009, June 29). *New Zealand Herald.* Retrieved July 7, 2009, from www.nzherald.co.nz/primary-education/news/article.cfm?=288&objectid=10581428

Laugesen, R. (2009, April 4). No child left behind? *New Zealand Listener*, *217*(3595), 24-27.

Laxon, A. (2009, August 1). Education 'set back 50 years' by reforms. *New Zealand Herald.* Retrieved August 1, 2009, from www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10587936

Lee, G. D., & Lee, H. (1992). *Examinations and the New Zealand school curriculum: Past and present*. (Delta Research Monograph No. 12). Palmerston North: Massey University Faculty of Education.

Lee, G. D., & Lee, H. (2001). Teacher education in New Zealand, 1920-1980: Curriculum, location, and control. *Education Research and Perspectives*, *28*(1), 83-104.

Lee, H. F. (1991). *The credentialled society: A history of New Zealand public school examinations, 1871-1990*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Dunedin: The University of Otago.

Lee, H. F (2003). Outcomes-based education and the cult of educational efficiency: Using curriculum and assessment reforms to drive educational policy and practice. *Education Research and Perspectives,* 30(2), 60-107.

Lee, H. F., & Lee, G. D. (2000a). Back to the future? Compulsory national testing and the Green Paper on Assessment for Success in Primary Schools (1998). *Waikato Journal of Education,* 6(1), 63-86.

Lee, H. F., & Lee, G. D. (2000b). The National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA): Fragile–handle with care. *New Zealand Annual Review of Education*, *10*, 5-38.

Lewis, G. (1999, September 29). National testing to go under Labour. *Hamilton Press*, p.1.

Lewis, J. (2009, June 20). Govt urged to delay initiative. *Otago Daily Times*, p. 3.

Listen and learn, teachers. [Editorial]. (2009, September 2). *The Dominion Post*, p. B4.

Lovegrove, G. (2009, June). Standards? *Absolutely!* League tables? *Absolutely not! NZ Principal*, *24*(2), p. 2.

McKenzie, J. D. S. (1976). The changing role of the teacher in New Zealand schools. In C. J. Wright (Ed.), *Aspects of school organization* (Year Book of Education, No. 6, pp. 29-39). Wellington: New Zealand Educational Institute.

McKenzie, J. D. S. (1983). Politics and school curricula. In W. J. D. Minogue (Ed.), *Adventures in curriculum* (pp. 20-34). Sydney: George Allen & Unwin.

Mallard, T. (1999, December 10). *Minister of Education*: *Press release.* Wellington: Author.

Ministry of Education. (1998, May). *Assessment for Success in Primary Schools* (Green Paper). Wellington: Author.

Ministry of Education. (1999, September). *Information for better learning. National assessment in primary schools: Policies and proposals*. Wellington: Author.

Ministry of Education. (2000, July). *Curriculum Update*, *42*, 4.

Ministry of Education. (2009a, August). National standards–Reporting to parents example. Retrieved August 28, 2009, from www.minedu.govt.nz/~/media/MinEdu/Files/NationalStandards/ReportingToParentsExampleA3.pdf

Ministry of Education. (2009b, August). Timeline for implementing national standards. Retrieved September 1, 2009, from: www.minedu.govt.nz/the Ministry/Consultation/NationalStandards/TimeframeForImplementation.aspx

National standards for schools deadline concerns. (2009, June 16). *Manawatu Standard*, p.4.

New Zealand Council for Educational Research. (2009, July). *Submission on national standards*. Retrieved August 25, 2009, from: www.nzcer.org.nz/pdfs/nzcer-submission-national-standards.pdf

New Zealand Education Gazette. (1999, October 4). Notice: Information for better learning. National assessment in primary schools: Policies and proposals, *78*(17), 14.

New Zealand Education Gazette. (2009, May 25). Draft national standards–It's time to have your say, *88*(9), 3.

New Zealand Gazette. (1878, September 24). Regulations defining standards of education, and for inspection of schools. *New Zealand Gazette* [*NZG*], *2*, 1309-1312.

New Zealand Gazette. (1894, June 19). The Education Act, 1877—Regulations for inspection and examination of schools. *New Zealand Gazette, 1*, 945-951.

New Zealand Gazette. (1899, December 16). The Education Act, 1877—Regulations for inspection and examination of schools. *New Zealand Gazette, 2*, 2299-2314.

New Zealand National Party. (2007). *2007 Education policy on national standards*. Retrieved June 15, 2009, from: www.national.org.nz/Article.aspx?Articleid-9908

New Zealand Parliamentary Debates [NZPD]. (1877, 1936).New Zealand Parliamentary Education and Science Select Committee. (2008, February). *Report of the Education and Science Select Committee: Inquiry into making the schooling system work for every child*. Wellington: Author. (Chairperson: Brian Donnelly.)

New Zealand Principals' Federation. (1998, October). *Federation Flyer.* Wellington: Author.

New Zealand Principals' Federation. (2009, March 8). *Minister of education missing in action, says NZPF*. Retrieved June 8, 2009, from: www.nzpf.ac.nz

Otago Education Board. (1890). P. G. Pryde, Otago Education Board Secretary, to Southland Education Board Secretary, April 22. In Otago Education Board Letter Book. (1890). Volume 35, p. 498. Dunedin: The University of Otago Hocken Library.

Otago Education Board. (1893a, June 19). *Otago Education Board Circular Book,* Circular No. 9/93. Dunedin: The University of Otago Hocken Library (Otago Education Board Archives).

Otago Education Board. (1893b, October 23). *Otago Education Board Circular Book,* Circular No. 12/93. Dunedin: The University of Otago Hocken Library (Otago Education Board Archives).

Otago Education Board. (1895, March 27). *Otago Education Board Circular Book*, Circular No. 10/95. Dunedin: The University of Otago Hocken Library (Otago Education Board Archives).

Patients must come first. [Editorial]. (2009, July 2). *The Dominion Post*, p. B4.

Penlington, H. L. (1931). NZEI presidential address. *National Education*, *13*(136), 228.

Report of the Otago Education Board Inspectors. (1920, September 24). *The Evening Star*, p. 8.

Rowe, K. J. (2000). Assessment, league tables and school effectiveness: Consider the issues and 'Let's get real'! *Journal of Educational Enquiry*, *1*(1), 73-98.

School standards must be raised. [Editorial]. (2009, January 2). *The Dominion Post*, p. B6.

Smith, N. (1999, September 22). *Minister of Education*: S*peech Notes*. Wellington: Author.

Smythe, K. (2009, August). *The real reason why national standards have been delayed*. Retrieved August 25, 2009, from: www.networkonnet.co.nz/index.php?section=latest&id=134

Stirling, P. (2009, July 11). Hide and seek. *New Zealand Listener*, *217*(3609), 5.

Strong NZEI turnout at national standards consultations. (2009, June). *NZEI Rourou*, *19*(20), 1.

Tests to measure schools' failure. (1998, March 25). *New Zealand Education Review*, *2*(43), 1.

Todd, R. (2009, May 21). Fear standards could limit rich education. *The Press*. Retrieved May 21, 2009, from: www.stuff.co.nz/national/education/2428248/Fear-standards-could-limit-rich-education

Tolley, A. (2009, April 6). Consultation dates on national standards. Retrieved June 11, 2009, from: www.beehive.govt.nz/release/consultation+dates+national+standards

Tolley firm on standards. (2009, July 4). *New Zealand Herald*. Retrieved July 14, 2009, from: www.nzherald.co.nz/primary-education/news/article.cfm?c_id=288&objectid=10582439

Torrance, H. (1997). Assessment, accountability, and standards: Using assessment to control the reform of schooling. In A. H. Halsey, H. Lauder, P. Brown, & A. S. Wells (Eds.), *Education, culture, economy, and society* (pp. 320-331). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Torrie, B. (2009, July 4). Tolley snaps at principals, *Manawatu Standard*, p. 3.

United States Department of Education. (2002, June 14). *Draft guidance on the comprehensive school reform program*. Washington, DC: Author.

Velde, M. (1999, October 4). Testing times. *New Zealand Education Gazette*, *78*(17), 4.

Willms, J. D. (1992). *Monitoring school performance: A guide for educators*. Washington, DC: Falmer Press.

Wolf, A. (1995). *Competence-based assessment*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Wood, S. (2009, July 4). Principals in threat to boycott standards. *The Dominion Post*, p. A3.

Wylie, C., Hodgen, E., & Darr, C. (2009, August). *National standards consultation analysis. Report for the Ministry of Education*. Retrieved August 31, 2009, from: www.minedu.govt.nz/theMinistry/Consultation/NationalStandards/SummaryOfResponses/EducationSector. aspx