



Hon Anne Tolley

Minister of Education

17 February 2010

Media Statement

Independent advisory group for National Standards

Education Minister Anne Tolley has appointed five respected figures to an independent technical advisory group which will support the implementation of National Standards in reading, writing and maths.

“This group, which has an outstanding mix of education and public policy experience, will be vital in this bedding-in year,” said Mrs Tolley.

“It will provide me with independent, free and frank advice on assessment practices in schools and on any refinements that could enhance the effectiveness of the Standards.

“This shows we are serious about lifting achievement levels for all children in New Zealand, and addressing the unacceptable fact that up to one in five students are leaving school without the basic reading, writing and maths skills that they need to succeed in life.”

The advisory group members are:

Professor Emeritus Gary Hawke (Chair)
Professor Tom Nicholson
Professor John Hattie
Dr Tony Trinick
Dr Avis Glaze

The appointment of the advisory group is in addition to the three-year National Standards independent monitoring and evaluation project which has been put in place by the Ministry of Education.

“It’s important that we get National Standards right to benefit all our young people,” said Mrs Tolley.

“If adjustments need to be made then we will make them, but we cannot continue to stand by while up to 150,000 children are failing in our school system.”

National Standards were introduced in primary and intermediate schools at the start of this term. Schools will assess a student’s progress against the Standards, or benchmarks, and report to parents in plain language at least twice a year. The Standards will help identify which students need more help, so that additional support can be given. Government has allocated \$36 million for this, in addition to the resourcing which currently goes towards students who are struggling. The Standards will also enable school boards to assess if their current recovery programmes are effective and represent value for money.

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National Standards independent advisory group

Members:

Professor Emeritus Gary Hawke – Independent Chair

Professor Hawke is a Senior Fellow of the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research, with expertise in public policy and New Zealand economic history. He was a Professor of Economic History at Victoria University of Wellington from 1974 to 2008, Director of the Institute of Policy Studies from 1987 to 1998 and Head of the School of Government from 2003 to 2008.

Professor Tom Nicholson

Professor Nicholson is co-director of the Centre of Excellence for Research on Children's Literacy (CERCL) and a Professor of Literacy Education at Massey University. He has authored over 160 publications (including 16 books) and has a particular research interest in improving the literacy progress of pupils with reading difficulties. He has teaching and research interests in reading and language development, phonological awareness, the effects of extra literacy tutoring, reading attitudes, motivation to read, and assessing children's language and literacy.

Professor John Hattie

Professor Hattie is a Professor of Education at Auckland University and Director of Visible Learning Laboratories. His area of interest is in measurement models and their applications to educational problems. Professor Hattie is chief moderator of the Performance Based Research Fund, President-elect of the International Test Commission and associate editor of the British Journal of Educational Psychology.

Dr Tony Trinick

Dr Trinick has held teaching positions in the primary, intermediate, secondary and tertiary sectors. He is currently the Associate Dean Māori in the Faculty of Education at the University of Auckland. He was involved in the development of the Māori-medium curriculum Te Marautanga o Aotearoa, especially in the Numeracy (Pāngarau) learning area, and has been involved in the development of the Māori-medium National Standards.

Dr Avis Glaze

Dr Glaze is a highly-respected Canadian educator and played a pivotal role in introducing standards to raise achievement in reading, writing and maths in Ontario schools. She was Ontario's first Chief Student Achievement Officer and founding CEO of the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat. Dr Glaze has extensive experience in international education and has assisted educational reform in South Africa, as well as working with educators in Australia,

England, Finland, Singapore, Ireland, Scotland, Germany, the Caribbean and many parts of the United States.

Questions and Answers:

Why are you setting up an independent advisory group?

The Independent Advisory Group will advise on the technical and educational aspects of the National Standards and assist with any refinements during this first year of implementation. The members are well-regarded experts in their fields and bring a range of experience and perspectives to the table.

What will its role be?

The Independent Advisory Group will provide independent, free and frank advice to the Minister on the design of the standards and the assessment practices used by teachers and schools to assess against them.

This will include technical and educational advice (in the form of both analysis and recommendations) in the following areas:

- assessment approaches to support the implementation of National Standards
- changes to be made to the design of the Standards on the basis of assessment information and their own knowledge and expertise

The Independent Advisory Group will provide advice on English-medium standards only. Nga Whanaketanga Rūmaki Māori – the Standards for Māori-medium schools – have a different implementation process and timetable.

When will the group start work?

The Independent Advisory Group will begin work immediately, with its first meeting to be held as soon as possible.

When will the group provide advice to the Minister?

The Group will provide advice on an ongoing basis, as and when they feel they have comments to make.

How much are the group members being paid?

Fees are in accordance with the usual public service guidelines.

What other monitoring of the National Standards will there be?

The Ministry of Education has a three-year monitoring and evaluation programme in place. This will gather information on the implementation of the Standards and is being run by Maths Technology Limited.

This will allow us to share and strengthen what's working, as well as informing any necessary adjustments that need to be made. Teachers and principals will have the opportunity to provide feedback as part of this evaluation.

Information from the monitoring programme will be published on the Ministry website at key points over the next three years.

In addition, ERO will review the implementation of the National Standards.