A fresh approach to education

Labour believes education gives our young people the freedom and opportunities to be the best they can be and contribute to making New Zealand an even better place to live.

National has chosen to undermine quality as a cost-saving measure. After nine years of being under resourced and overstretched, our education sector is under immense pressure and the quality of education is suffering. The result is a narrowing of the curriculum, more burnt out teachers, and falling tertiary education participation.

More costs are being pushed on to parents and students. ECE fees have risen by an average of 25 per cent under National, while so called voluntary school donations have risen by 50 per cent. Tertiary fees are up over 40 per cent and student debt has topped $16 billion.

Labour will:

- Invest an extra $4b over four years to deliver a modern education system

This funding includes $1.8b to deliver more teachers, better professional development, more learning resources, and help the sector meet the rising costs they face each year.

In addition to this, Labour will invest in initiatives to improve the quality of education, and make it more accessible and affordable. These include:

**Early Childhood Education**

- Reinstate extra funding for ECE centres that employ 100 per cent qualified and registered teachers
- Require all ECE centres to employ at least 80 per cent qualified teachers by the end of our first term
- Actively support establishing new public early childhood centres in areas of low-provision through targeted establishment grants.

**Schooling**

- Ensure that schooling is genuinely free by offering an extra $150 per student to state and state integrated schools that don’t ask parents for donations
- Establish a comprehensive plan to ensure that all school students have access to mobile digital devices
- Rebuild out-dated and worn out school buildings so that every school has modern classrooms by 2030.

**Tertiary Education**

- Progressively introduce 3 years of free post-school education, allowing access to university, polytechnic or on-job training for young New Zealanders and those who have not studied before
- Encourage employers to take on unemployed young people as apprentices by giving them a wage subsidy equivalent to the unemployment benefit
- Reinstate funding for programmes - like night classes - that support adult learners to adapt to the changing world.

See the manifesto chapter for a full list of initiatives.

This investment will mean more teachers in front of our kids, better classrooms, and less cost for parents. More of our young people will go on to tertiary education and get the skills they need for work, with less debt.

By investing in education, the next generation of Kiwis will be better qualified and ready to take on the rapidly changing world. They will be equipped to help build a better New Zealand.

In total, Labour will invest an extra $4b in education over the next four years above what National has committed. This funding will come from the money saved by cancelling National’s tax cuts, which would deliver $400m a year to the top 10 per cent of earners, and the unallocated operating and capital allowances in each Budget.