



Education

Education is the greatest investment we can make in our future.

A National Government will prioritise lifting academic achievement for all New Zealand children – no matter their background or ability. We will provide better support for children with additional learning needs, so that each child in New Zealand is able to get the start in life they deserve. National will continue to improve the quality of teaching, promote innovation and increase parental choice so that more children can receive an education that makes sense for them. National will make the largest investment in repairing, rebuilding and redeveloping our schools in a generation, to make sure every child has the chance to learn in a fit-for-purpose education environment.

Policy highlights

In Early Childhood Education (ECE)

National will:

- Progressively improve the adult-to-child ratio for under two year olds in ECE.
 - Strengthen spot-check monitoring of ECE services so parents can be confident when they drop their children off at their chosen ECE centre.
 - Improve parents' access to information about the quality of ECE services on offer in their area, and ensure parents are directly informed of any concerns about the quality of their child's ECE service.
 - Work with ECE providers to ensure the ECE funding system is fair, simple and transparent and supports both quality and parental choice.
- Establish a \$160 million per year fund to support children with additional learning, behavioural and physical needs – allocated based on school roll and need – so schools can invest in the initiatives they believe are appropriate for their student community.
 - Invest \$150 million over four years to fund an additional six million hours of teacher aide support in classrooms, equivalent to around 1500 new teacher aides (at 25 hours per week), or an average of 600 hours per school each year.
 - Deliver smaller class sizes by progressively reducing student-to-teacher ratios in primary schools. This will reduce teacher workloads and make sure children get more focused teacher attention in their foundation years.
 - Establish at least 25 new partnership schools by 2023, including some focussed on high-priority learners such as Māori and Pasifika; children with additional learning needs; and in specialist education areas such as Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM).
 - Abolish the annual registration fee that teachers are currently required to pay to the Teaching Council for certification to teach.

In Primary and Secondary Education

National will:

- Invest an additional \$4.8 billion in school infrastructure, including \$2 billion over five years for the Fix New Zealand's Schools Alliance, and another \$2.8 billion over a

decade for new classrooms and schools to accommodate growth and reduce the need to impose restrictive zoning requirements.



Early Childhood Education

Child development and the first 1000 days

There is a growing body of evidence about the significance of a child's first 1000 days on their later development. We believe in an holistic approach to child development that both recognises the vital role parents play in supporting their child's healthy development and allows parents to have confidence their children's developmental needs are being met both at home and in ECE settings.

National will:

- Provide parents with an additional \$3000 in individualised funding to spend on services to meet their and their baby's needs during the first 1000 days. This could include participation in parenting groups such as SPACE, Playcentre and Kōhanga Reo, or more ECE hours for older siblings.
- Establish a National Centre for Child Development, headquartered at one of the country's universities, that will bring together the best of child health, neuroscience and education research. The Centre will ensure higher quality parenting resources and support are available in our communities.
- Introduce enhanced screening, including a revamped B4 School check at age three – to be delivered on-site by medical professionals at ECE centres – to identify developmental concerns and trigger early intervention services where needed. Early childhood educators will be given additional opportunities for input into these screening programmes.
- Establish a system of child passports, an enhanced version of the current Well Child Tamariki Ora book with electronic record-keeping that will record needs identified through screening and track progress to key physical, emotional, developmental and education milestones. It will be used to ensure that, where required, early

action is taken to address issues or additional needs.

Lifting quality

Most ECE services in New Zealand do a great job at teaching and caring for New Zealand children. However, there is evidence that not all ECE services are meeting expected quality and education requirements. From 2013 to 2018 the number of formal complaints about ECE services rose from 246 to 430. National will strengthen monitoring of ECE services to ensure quality requirements are being met.

National will:

- Introduce spot-checks of ECE services to ensure standards are being met. This will ensure parents can be confident when they drop their children off that they are receiving high quality care and education.
- Implement tighter deadlines for ECE services to make improvements when they are placed on provisional licenses.
- Inform all parents by letter and email if their ECE service has been placed on a provisional license.
- Cancel ECE licenses for any service that is placed on a provisional license for a third time.

National supports high-quality ECE that allows families to choose the education and care arrangements that suit their circumstances and supports their children to thrive. Quality early learning opportunities support families to balance their employment and caregiving responsibilities, encourage children's social and emotional development, and help prepare children for school. National will support the retention and training of qualified, registered ECE teachers.

National will:

- Strengthen training for new ECE teachers, and increase access to professional learning and development for existing teachers.
- Invest in professional development programmes that support the



development of self-regulation in children. Self-regulation will be included in the B4 school check as part of the expanded Tamariki Ora / Well Child programme.

- Work with teachers and ECE providers to reduce red tape and bureaucracy and free-up resources for frontline services.
- Reprioritise funds currently tagged for around 10 per cent of ECE centres hiring 100 per cent qualified staff, and use these to improve the adult-to-child ratio for under two year olds across all funded ECE services.
- Work with police to ensure prospective ECE teachers are vetted within 20 working days, to provide certainty for ECE centres around hiring and recruitment.
- Continue to lift minimum pay requirements for qualified ECE staff in Government licensed services.
- Abolish the annual registration fee that teachers are required to pay to the Teaching Council for certification to teach.

Supporting parental choice

Parents are best placed to decide what's best for their children. National supports an ECE system that gives parents choice. The existing system for funding ECE services is unnecessarily complex, it lacks transparency for parents, and has created inequities for some types of ECE services, including Playcentres and Kōhanga Reo. National will simplify the ECE funding system and ensure it is transparent and fair.

National will:

- Ensure the ECE funding system is fair, simple and transparent, and supports quality and parental choice.
- Improve the funding model for Playcentres so they remain financially sustainable. This will ensure funding levels better reflect the contribution these services make to supporting children's education, as well as the role these services play in supporting families and communities.

- Ensure home-based ECE services are funded fairly as a quality ECE choice for families.
- Work over time to reduce the funding gap between kindergartens and non-kindergarten ECE services.

Not all family situations are the same. Regardless of whether parents prefer to care for their children at home, or choose to take advantage of ECE, we want to ensure all parents have the access, opportunities and information they need to make the right decisions for their children.

National will:

- Improve parents' access to information about the quality of ECE on offer in their area, and ensure parents are directly informed by letter and email if the Ministry of Education or Education Review Office (ERO) has serious concerns about the quality of their child's ECE service.
- Explore ways to ensure disadvantaged children are enrolled in and consistently attend high quality ECE, including by partnering with community organisations to overcome participation barriers.
- Require all new school builds to consider co-locating new ECE services onsite.



Primary and Secondary Education

Making our education system work for children with additional needs

National is the party of equal opportunity. We want all children in New Zealand able to access a high quality education that gives them the best chance to succeed.

As many as one in five young people require some additional support for their learning, which encompasses disability, learning difficulties, and physical, mental health or behavioural challenges.

One of the most common complaints we hear from parents and schools is that children with a low to moderate level of additional need sometimes struggle to access the specific support and funding they need and can fall through the cracks.

Through better identification and a significant investment in support for children with additional needs of all levels, we can help to address the long tail of underachievement and give every child the education they deserve.

National will:

Step 1 - Better and earlier identification of needs

- Introduce a revamped B4 School check for all children at age three. This will be delivered on-site by medical professionals at ECE centres and will identify developmental concerns, screen for trauma, brain injury and foetal alcohol syndrome, and trigger early intervention services where needed.
- Information from these B4 School Checks will be recorded in Child Passports – an enhanced version of the existing Well Child Tamariki Ora book that will record each child's needs and be used over time to track progress to key physical, emotional, developmental and education milestones.

Step 2 - Individualised learning plans

- Ensure every child identified as having additional needs, including learning, physical, behavioural or mental health needs receives an individualised learning plan before they start school.
- This plan will build on the information identified through the enhanced screening programme, and will capture input from parents, teachers, medical professionals and other specialists.

Step 3 - Learning support funding boost

- Invest \$480 million over our first four years in Government to boost learning support. Once fully implemented, this will provide a new \$160 million per year funding allocation that will be ring-fenced for spending that supports children with additional learning, behavioural or mental health needs.
- Funding will be allocated to schools based on need according to a transparent funding formula that takes into account school roll, need, and other relevant information, including whether a school has been identified locally as a centre of best practice for special education.
- Schools will be given a high level of discretion about how they invest their allocation based on the specific needs of their community and student body. For example, they could choose to spend their allocation on:
 - Specialist support such as educational psychologists
 - Professional development and training for teachers
 - Physical resources such as sensory aides or learning materials
 - Additional teacher aide hours
 - More support from the Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour Service
 - Student counselling or mental health services



- Until the needs-based funding system is fully operational, the familiar decile system will be used to determine the amount of additional funding each school will receive.
- This would mean, for example, a typical decile 4 primary school with a roll of 200 students would receive around \$60,000 per year in additional funding, while a large decile 6 secondary school with 1000 students would receive an additional \$200,000.
- National will also continue funding for Learning Support Coordinators (LSCs) but ensure schools have maximum control over this resource, with flexibility to directly hire LSCs if that is their preference, and work with schools to evaluate the effectiveness of the current scheme before rolling out the second tranche.

Step 4 - More teacher aides in classrooms

- Invest \$150 million over four years to fund an additional six million hours of teacher aide support in New Zealand classrooms, which is equivalent to around 1500 new teacher aides (at 25 hours per week), or an average of 600 hours per school each year.

Step 5 - Improved mental health skills training

- Strengthen mental health skills training for teachers so they are better equipped to deliver mental health skills to children.
- Ensure schools are delivering mental health skills to children as part of the curriculum.
- Instruct the ERO to explicitly evaluate the performance of schools in delivering mental health skills to students.

Step 6 - Simplified and streamlined learning support funding

- Simplify and streamline the process for applying for learning support funding, to ensure support gets to the children who require it with as little friction as possible. We will also make sure learning support spending is tailored to need by giving parents greater control over how their funding entitlement is spent.

- This will reduce the form-filling and hoop-jumping for families and schools applying for learning support funding for their children, reduce regional variation in funding levels, and provide greater long-term funding certainty for parents.

Step 7 - Multi-disciplinary teams in schools

- Expand trials of multi-disciplinary teams of specialist support personnel in secondary schools.
- These teams, made up of professionals such as GPs, nurses, guidance counsellors and mental health workers to provide enhanced support to secondary school students, have been successfully trialled in a small number of schools with impressive results.
- We will ensure this sort of innovation can be rapidly scaled up wherever it proves effective at supporting students with additional needs.

Step 8 - Enhanced school choice

- Invite applications for Partnership Schools specifically targeting children with additional learning needs.
- Consider applications for special character status from schools that cater specifically to children with additional learning needs, and have proven track records of delivering improved education results for these children.
- Affirm every child's right to have their additional needs catered to at their local school, while also providing families of children with additional needs more choices about the school their child attends.
- We will make it easier, where appropriate, for families of children identified with a high level of additional need to enrol their children in state or state-integrated schools with expertise in catering to children with additional needs, where they would otherwise be prevented from doing so due to school zone restrictions.



Driving student achievement and progression

National wants to lift student achievement and ensure all children are making progress at school. We want parents to be actively engaged in their child's learning, to be informed about how their child is progressing, and be empowered with that information to encourage and help their children succeed. While most New Zealand schools do a great job, we are concerned that as many as one in five children still leave school without the skills and qualifications they need to succeed. We are determined to address this tail of underachievement.

National will:

- Work with school boards and teachers to ensure all parents have access to plain English reports on their child's progress over the school year, including reporting on their progress towards the achievement of key literacy and numeracy milestones identified through assessment tools such as running records, e-aTTle and other methods commonly used by teachers to support formative assessment.
- Instruct education officials to identify which schools are having the greatest positive impact on student achievement, including for specific learners such as Māori or Pasifika students, to identify those schools where students may not be making adequate progress and to intervene where necessary to improve this.
- Task the ERO with identifying what high-impact schools are doing differently, and how this can be replicated to lift achievement in other schools with similar student bodies.

In addition to empowering parents with better information about their child, and using available tools and resources to lift performance across the school sector, National will ensure all of our children are given the tools and knowledge they will need to be successful in life.

National will:

- Legislate to ensure all children have the opportunity to learn at least one second language at primary and intermediate school. School boards would be required to consult with their school community to decide which of 10 priority languages they would choose.
- Provide a funding boost of \$40 million per year for the development and provision of second language learning resources, and to support the training and recruitment of specialist teachers and language assistants. A key focus of this policy would be to increase access to Te Reo in primary schools for those who want to learn it.
- Lift the capability of teachers to deliver literacy, numeracy and STEM subject instruction through ongoing professional development and learning opportunities.
- Invest in decodable text resources for early reading instruction.
- Work with schools, community groups and business partners to address the digital divide and ensure families with school aged children are able to access the internet for online learning purposes at home.
- Require secondary schools to teach financial capability to their students.

Supporting quality teaching and school leadership

All parents understand the impact a great teacher can have on their child's education and love of learning. We know one of the most important factors in lifting achievement for our children is the quality of teaching in schools. National will support quality teaching at each stage, from recruitment and training through to ongoing professional development and career progression.

National will:

- Invest \$340 million over four years to progressively reduce student-to-teacher ratios in primary schools, delivering smaller



class sizes, reducing teacher workload, and lifting student achievement.

- Lift entry requirements over time for people entering new teacher training, with more intensive screening, testing and interviewing of applicants.
- Strengthen teacher training programmes and increase practical in-class course requirements to lift the quality of new teachers entering the profession.
- Address teacher shortages through initiatives such as voluntary bonding agreements for teachers in hard to staff locations or subjects.
- Abolish the annual registration fee that teachers are currently required to pay to the Teaching Council for certification to teach.
- Support expansion of the Teach First NZ programme.

An excellent principal is critical to the success of a school – not only in terms of the performance of its teachers and the academic achievement of its students, but also in the wider role that schools often play as enablers for strong local communities. National will train, support and empower our principals so that they are in the best possible position to lead their schools, inspire their teachers, strengthen our communities, and lift achievement for all of our children.

National will:

- Identify and train more aspiring young principals– and ensure outstanding talent is identified, nurtured and promoted to positions of leadership in our schools.
- Provide principals with more control over decision making at their schools, to empower them to meet the specific requirements of their student body, and to best serve the needs of their school and wider community.
- Continue to support the Leadership Advisor programme to provide mentorship, training and a support network for new principals.

- Support opportunities for principals to study and upskill.

Unleashing innovation and enabling choice

Encouraging innovation and diversity in education is key to driving progress and continual improvement. A one-size-fits all approach to education doesn't benefit anyone. We want parents and students to have access to choice in education because not all children are the same, and not all will respond in the same way to different approaches or learning environments. National will continue to support a strong state education system, along with a range of other education options including state-integrated, special character, private and partnership schools.

National will:

- Allow state integrated schools to open or expand in areas of high roll growth with demonstrated demand so that more families are able to choose state-integrated education.
- Reverse the Government takeover of zoning and enrolment schemes, and return this responsibility to local school boards.
- Limit the need for new more restrictive school zones and enrolment schemes by supporting the expansion of fast-growing existing schools, and the creation of new schools with an additional \$2.8 billion in growth-targeted education infrastructure funding.
- Establish at least 25 new partnership schools by 2023, including some focussed on specific learners such as Māori and Pasifika, specialist areas such as education for children with additional learning needs, or particular subject areas such as science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM).
- These schools will be funded on the same per-child basis as new state schools. They will not be permitted to charge fees and won't receive grants to build privately held assets. They will also be subject to an enhanced evaluation programme



to monitor their effectiveness, and disseminate findings across the wider school network.

- Continue per-child operational funding for independent schools.

It's important to recognise that young people learn in different ways in different environments. Modern Learning Environments (MLE) – or open-plan classroom designs – are popular with some parents and students, but they do not work for everyone, with some parents raising concerns over their impact. Schools and local communities are in the best position to choose the learning environments that are appropriate for their students, while parents should have a choice over the type of school they believe will be best for their child.

National will:

- Ensure school boards are not forced to adopt open-plan or modern learning environments, and ensure they have genuine choice about the design of new school buildings.
- Provide schools with greater flexibility to use their property funding to meet the needs they identify as being most important for their students. For example, a school may choose to build a new library rather than converting their existing classrooms to the MLE format.
- Instruct the Ministry of Education to continue to evaluate the effectiveness and limitations of different learning environments, particularly with regard to children with additional learning or behavioural needs.

Supporting Māori achievement

National is committed to ensuring the education system delivers to all learners. We want schools to provide fair opportunities and results for Māori and we want our education system to wherever possible give whānau choices about the kind of education their children receive. We will be relentlessly focused on lifting student progress and achievement including for Māori learners. National is

confident that all of our education policies will improve outcomes for Māori.

National will:

- Focus on lifting achievement and qualification rates for Māori learners.
- Support Māori-medium education including through supporting fair funding for kōhanga reo (Māori medium early childhood education services), kura kaupapa (Māori medium schools) and kura reorua (bilingual and Māori language immersion classes in mainstream schools), and taking applications for partnership schools targeted at Māori learners.
- Work with iwi and other Māori community organisations to co-develop education solutions that provide greater educational choice for young Māori.
- Invest in greater access to Te Reo in primary and intermediate schools through our second language policy.
- Continue support for the development of curriculum resources to support schools' teaching of New Zealand history, including Māori history, Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the New Zealand Wars.

Targeting improvement

Our education system works well for most but still fails too many. In our last term in Government, National made significant progress in addressing some of these entrenched issues through our pioneering Social Investment approach. We set NCEA achievement targets for Māori secondary school learners, and increased the proportion leaving school with at least NCEA Level 2 from 46 per cent to 69 per cent. We had similar success for Pasifika students, increasing the proportion leaving school with NCEA Level 2 from 56 per cent to over 76 per cent. Unfortunately, these rates of success declined in both 2018 and 2019 under Labour. National will reintroduce clear targets for achievement and ensure investment is targeted to frontline education where it can do the greatest good.



National will:

- Reintroduce clear and measurable targets for educational achievement, including for the proportion of Māori and Pasifika students leaving school with NCEA.
- Continue to adjust the education funding system to align with the Social Investment approach, with more funding being allocated on the basis of student need.
- Continue shifting away from the decile-funding system and towards an equity index, eventually using this as a mechanism for allocating funds currently tagged to the school donation scheme.
- Reshape the Food in Schools pilot in response to concerns about the high cost and other practical issues for schools delivering it, by partnering with local businesses and community organisations to provide food in a more targeted way to ensure it gets to students who might otherwise go hungry.
- Ensure more funding for education is directed towards frontline education services rather than expanding the centralised bureaucracy at the Ministry of Education.

Investing in education infrastructure

National will make sure every New Zealand child has the chance to learn in a fit-for-purpose education environment. Many New Zealand schools require work to repair leaky buildings, conduct earthquake strengthening, address mould and dampness issues, improve classrooms and make health and safety improvements. New Zealand school buildings have an average age of 45 years and too often fall short of modern standards for temperature, humidity, air quality, acoustics and lighting. They also weren't designed to support today's flexible and technology-rich teaching and learning methods.

National will:

- Direct the Ministry of Education to develop a project alliance for a five year

programme to repair and redevelop our schools.

- Allocate a budget of \$2 billion for the five-year period of the alliance.
- Make sure lead contractors are incentivised to use local sub-contractors and apprentices to create local employment and stimulate small businesses.

As well as upgrading our existing schools, it is crucial that we get ahead of the curve by building new classrooms and schools to accommodate population growth. Schools are often forced to wait too long for the additional classrooms they need to accommodate clearly projected roll growth. Not only can this lead to overcrowded rooms, but it can also mean spaces such as libraries and halls are converted into teaching spaces. This can have a negative impact on teaching and learning and reduces the facilities that should be available to the school.

National will:

- Develop a 30-year school growth plan.
- The plan will include regional projections for roll growth and new school builds.
- It will be reviewed and updated annually to maintain the 30-year outlook.
- Fully fund the first ten years of the school growth plan.
- The Ministry of Education projects 100,000 extra student places will be needed by 2030 but the Government has only allocated funding for less than half of these.
- National will fully fund the first ten years of the plan and continue to allocate funding for education infrastructure on a rolling ten-year basis to provide certainty for planning purposes.
- This will create a more stable, long-term project pipeline that enables the construction sector to gear up for delivery.
- Front-load the first ten-year spending allocation.



- National will direct the Ministry of Education to front-load spending where possible to kick-start the ten-year programme and deliver new schools in areas that need them urgently.
- This will accelerate economic recovery and support jobs in the design and construction sectors.

Additional spending (\$m)

Operational

Policy	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Four year total
Lower ECE adult-child ratios for under two year olds	Reallocated				-
Accelerated B4 School Check (on-site at ECE centres)	Reallocated				-
Empowering parents funding for the first 1000 days	192	192	192	192	768
Child passports	5	5	5	5	20
National Centre for Child Development	4	4	4	4	16
Smaller primary school class sizes	0	57	113	170	340
Support for children with additional needs	53	107	160	160	480
Resourcing for second language learning	0	40	40	40	121
Additional teacher aide hours	38	38	38	38	150
Abolish teacher registration fees	0	16	16	16	48
Voluntary bonding for teachers in hard to staff areas or subjects	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	2
Total	292	459	569	625	1945

National will continue to increase operational funding for schools and ECE providers each year we are in Government, and have allocated funding for this in our fiscal plan.



Capital

	2021 -22	2022 -23	2023 -24	2024 -25	2026 -27	2027 -28	2028 -29	2029 -30	2030 -31	Total
Fix NZ Schools Alliance	400	400	400	400						2000
School Growth Plan	400	400	400	300	200	200	200	200	200	2800
Total	800	800	800	700	200	200	200	200	200	4800