

## Highlights

- **Pay parity in early learning**
- **Fairer funding by replacing deciles with an Equity Index**
- **Rolling out the Free and Healthy School Lunches programme**
- **Completing the reform of vocational education**

COVID-19 showed us the importance of supporting schools and their leaders and exposed and magnified the existing inequities in our system. We must continue to address these inequities over the next decade to avoid unacceptable economic and social repercussions across our nation. Our approach to addressing inequities will be based on supporting our quality public education system.

Our plan is built around five key objectives: learners at the centre; barrier free access; quality teaching and learning; future of learning and work; and world class inclusive public education.

## Labour's achievements to date

Labour's plan for Education is built on the foundation of our achievements through our first term in government. We have made schooling more affordable, and school buildings more modern and welcoming, which has given parents the assurance our schools are ready to prepare our kids for the challenges ahead.

### *In response to COVID-19:*

When New Zealand went into lockdown, in Government we moved quickly to ensure students could continue learning from home including by:

- Setting up two television channels to broadcast education-related content – for English and te reo Māori audiences, as well as content targeted to Pacific and other communities.
- Increasing the number of students who have internet access and devices.
- Making changes to NCEA to make sure this year's students weren't disadvantaged.
- Establishing a student support package to help tertiary students continue their studies, including immediate support through the temporary increase in course-related costs from \$1,000 to \$2,000.

### *Before COVID crisis:*

We reduced costs to families and whānau by providing \$150 per child to decile 1-7 schools who don't ask parents for donations benefiting the families of over 416,000 students. We also removed NCEA exam fees benefiting more than 145,000 households.

New Zealanders have been calling to know more about our history and identity, so we committed that New Zealand history will be taught in all schools and kura by 2022.

By far the most important asset in New Zealand's education system is our teachers. Great teachers hold a special, sometimes lifelong, place in the memories of their students. That's why we're proud to have increased the number of teachers in the country by 2,000 over two years, to have created a brand new workforce of learning support coordinators to help students with additional learning needs, to have finally

provided pay equity for teacher aides, and to have given the largest pay increase in a decade for teachers in primary and secondary schools and kindergartens. We also restored democracy to the Teaching Council.

As well as investing in our teachers, we also invested in the schools themselves. We have invested in over a thousand new or upgraded classrooms for 32,000 students across the country. Since October 2017, around 120 redevelopment projects, and approximately 60 expansion projects, have been undertaken.

Since we came into Government, we've also:

- Boosted student loans and allowances by \$50 a week and made the first year of study fees free
- Restored a higher funding rate for early learning services that employ fully qualified and registered teachers.
- Boosted funding for te reo Māori initiatives in schools, and funded a number of initiatives to ensure te reo Māori is accessible and there are enough reo Māori teachers.
- Funded support for Kiwi kids with complex needs, as well as deaf and hard-of-hearing and low-vision students.
- Abolished the failed National Standards, which were neither national nor standard, and integrated Charter Schools into the public schooling system.
- And we're particularly proud to provide free, healthy, school lunches for kids who need them – children simply can't learn if they're hungry.

## Objective one: Learners at the centre

Labour will continue to put learners with their whānau at the centre of education. We will:

- Establish an independent mechanism to help school students and their whānau raise and resolve complaints about their learning.
- Build the cultural competency of the education workforce, to meet the needs of Māori learners (including through Te Hurihanganui and Tataiako) and Pacific learners (including through the Action Plan for Pacific Education and Tapasā).
- Continue to implement the 10-year Early Learning Action Plan and meet the needs of the youngest children in particular.

## Objective two: Barrier free access

Great education opportunities and outcomes must be within reach for every learner.

- Labour will expand the Free and Healthy School Lunch programme to cover 200,000 students in 2021.

We know that children learn better on a full stomach and providing a free and healthy lunch at school is one way to help make New Zealand the best place in the world to be a child and to make that difference immediately. Labour will expand the Free and Healthy School Lunches programme so that 1 in 4 school aged children will have access to a free healthy lunch every day. This is one of the many initiatives Labour is implementing to tackle child poverty.

We'll target the expansion at schools with the highest level of disadvantage, giving students the energy and nutrition they need to learn right through the school day, and creating around 2,000 jobs along the way.

- Labour will scrap the blunt and outdated decile system and implement the Equity Index for schools and early learning services, and increase the proportion of funding that is allocated on this basis. The Equity Index increases the resources going to some of our most disadvantaged students and communities. It will assess the level of disadvantage in a school or early learning service by considering the whole student population. We want every child no matter who they are or where they come from to have the opportunity to fulfil their potential and live life to the fullest. This is a huge step towards addressing the inequities in our public education system.

- Labour will continue to address the digital divide in New Zealand schools. Digital learning is becoming part of everyday life for student. This was particularly clear during the COVID-19 lockdown. We will continue to reduce the divide between those with and without access to technology and make sure schools in all our communities are able to deliver quality online learning to all their students if we have another outbreak. This will build on the programs we rolled out early this year to provide more internet access and devices to students, and provide more online resources to learners and parents.

- Labour will continue to roll out our Budget 2020 boost to Adult and Community Education, including a modern approach to revitalising night classes. Our Adult and Community Education programme provides a wide range of courses to better support people displaced from work by COVID-19. It also supports people facing barriers to entering the labour market. People of all ages deserve opportunities to learn throughout their lives, which is why Labour will ensure New Zealanders have access to more courses throughout the country, including night classes.

Labour will also:

- Strengthen support for learners with additional learning support needs, including by continuing to implement the new learning support coordinator roles.
- Ensure that any school enrolment scheme is fair, and focussed on ensuring all students can access their local schools, whilst making best use of available schooling provision.

## Objective three: Quality teaching and leadership

Quality teaching and leadership is what makes the difference for learners/ākonga and their whānau.

- Labour will continue to work towards pay parity between teachers in education and care centres and their counterparts in schools and kindergartens.

A significant pay gap between education and care centre teachers and other teachers in schools and kindergartens has built up over time. The previous National Government stopped the practice of passing on increased kindergarten funding rates that met the cost of pay settlements to education and care services, as had been done previously. The lowest paid education and care teachers have already received a pay boost to bring them in line with kindergarten teachers' pay from 1 July this year.

- Labour will support student achievement by developing tools to better understand children and young people's learning progress, renewing the curriculum to make clear the learning that is too

important to leave to chance, and implementing changes to NCEA to strengthen literacy and numeracy requirements

New Zealand's curriculum is acknowledged by many to be world leading but there needs to be a stronger focus on wellbeing, identity, language and culture. We're keeping our national curriculum regularly up to date, so that it is easier to use, and is clearer about the learning that every child and young person needs and that should not be left to chance. We are also making improvements to make NCEA more relevant for students, including a new, more robust literacy and numeracy assessment that can be offered to students from Year 9 onwards.

- Labour will continue to support and encourage more te reo Māori teachers and continue to integrate te reo Māori in our schools

Te reo Māori is part of what makes New Zealand unique and as Labour remains committed to our aspirational goal of supporting a strong, healthy, thriving Māori language in New Zealand; Kia māhorahora te reo – everywhere, everyway, for everyone, every day. An important way of achieving this is by further integrating te reo Māori into our schools. In our first term we have already trained over 1,200 te reo educators and staff and Labour will continue to build on this work.

Labour will also:

- Continue to work to attract and develop a strong, culturally competent education workforce that is capable, supported, valued and connected, including through changes to improve Initial Teacher Education.
- Support a qualified early learning workforce by reinstating the higher funding band for services that employ a fully qualified and certificated teaching workforce (the '100% funding band') from 1 January 2021.
- Help home-based early childhood education to meet strengthened quality requirements.
- Implement a more visible support system for school leadership, including a national Leadership Centre and a network of leadership Advisors working with schools.
- Strengthen school governance with better training for Board members, and consider making training mandatory, and also support greater Māori involvement in school governance.
- Establish a national Curriculum Centre within the Ministry of Education to provide much needed curriculum leadership and expertise, with an initial focus on New Zealand history.
- Establish Centres of Vocational Excellence to drive innovation and excellence in teaching and learning, building on the new centres for the primary sector and building and construction.

## Objective four: Future of learning and work

Labour is committed to ensuring that the education system delivers learning that is relevant to the lives of New Zealanders today and throughout their lives.

- Labour will provide free access to all apprenticeships and to many trades training courses for the next two years.

Tens of thousands of learners are eligible to save between \$2,500 and \$6,000 a year under this policy, making it easier for them to gain skills that will lead them into work. This policy also provides businesses

with a reliable pipeline of apprentices and trainees at a time when the COVID rebuild ramps up. This is a wise investment where everybody wins - learners face less barriers to gaining new skills and better jobs, employers get a better workforce for the big projects they're starting, and New Zealand as a whole gets a head start on the building and infrastructure work the country needs.

We will also continue to provide temporary financial assistance for employers to retain and support their apprentices.

Labour will retain the first year of the fees-free programme, but not extend the programme into additional fees-free years. The COVID-19 pandemic and its economic fallout means the priority for this term is making apprenticeships and targeted areas of vocational training free.

- Labour will complete the reform of the Vocational Education system

We are moving from a sector that was broken and had lost its way, to a world-leading approach that actively engages and meets the needs of industry and empowers learners to move freely between work-based and classroom-based training. As the country rebuilds and more people are looking to retrain, it's now more important than ever that we have a vocational education system that's responsive to the needs of industry and learners.

- Labour will strengthen our youth transitions system and modernise career advice in schools

Too many students are leaving schools without the support they need to make successful next step, and often without a clear idea of what they want to do. We need a stronger and more joined-up youth transitions 'safety net', particularly for those young people at risk of falling through the cracks. Labour will also ensure practical and consistent careers advice for all school students, starting from a younger age.

- Labour will continue to support the revitalisation of te reo Māori and implement the aspirations set out in Maihi Karauna

Labour recognises the importance of te reo Māori as a taonga and the responsibility we have to protect its status, Maihi Karauna is an important part of this. Labour will continue to work to achieve the aspirations in Maihi Karauna, including that by 2040:

- 85% of New Zealanders (or more) will value te reo Māori as a key part of national identity.
- One million New Zealanders (or more) will have the ability and confidence to talk about at least basic things in te reo Māori.
- 150,000 Māori aged 15 and over will use te reo Māori as much as English.

- Labour will expand the Creatives in Schools programme.

The Creatives in Schools programme gives Kiwi primary and secondary school students the opportunity to learn from professional New Zealand artists in the fields of dance, drama, music, and visual arts. It is designed to enhance student wellbeing, improve skills in communication, collaboration and creative thinking and raise awareness of creative careers.



- Labour will continue the Strategic Recovery Plan for the International Education sector to ensure the sector is rebuilt following the impacts of COVID-19.

In Government, we have developed a long-term recovery plan for the international education sector. The plan sets out our intentions to focus on stabilising the international education sector, strengthening the system and accelerating our transformation of the sector. This will help the sector to recover, while also transforming it into a more diversified, resilient and higher value sector and ensure we can welcome international students back as soon as it is safe to do so.

Labour will also:

- Review the tertiary education funding system, including for degrees, to introduce a stronger focus on work-integrated learning across a broader range of disciplines.
- Continue work to make NCEA more robust, consistent, inclusive and accessible.
- Develop a Māori Medium Network Plan for the next decade to strengthen the Māori-medium education pathway.

## Objective five: World class inclusive public education

We will ensure that the New Zealand public education system is trusted, equitable and sustainable.

- Labour will establish a new regionally based Education Service Agency

This will be part of a redesigned Ministry of Education. The Education Service Agency will be designed to provide responsive, efficient and meaningful support for all schools and ensure that collaboration rather than competition is encouraged and that equitable outcomes for all is the focus.

- Labour will continue to upgrade around 180 existing schools over the next 10 years, improving facilities for more than 93,000 students.

This is the most ambitious school redevelopment programme by a New Zealand government, creating thousands of jobs and providing construction firms with a reliable pipeline of work. We will continue to upgrade and better equip our existing schools to provide the right environment for our children for decades to come. It is one more way Labour is working to make New Zealand the best place in the world to be a child.

- Labour will continue its programme to build brand new schools and classrooms for 100,000 students.

For the first time ever we have committed to a long-term growth plan for school property, so that students aren't learning in overcrowded classrooms. In Government, we have already set aside funds to cover this programme for 48,000 students in the largest investment in school property by a New Zealand government. As part of this programme, we're also committed to providing new and modern learning environments for the increasing number of Māori medium schools.

- Labour will continue to invest up to \$400,000 in almost every state school to help them upgrade their facilities.

Schools can use the funding for classroom upgrades, improving their outdoor facilities, installing energy efficient heating and lighting, and fixing up their existing buildings. It's the biggest capital injection for school

maintenance funding in at least 25 years. As of 30 June, 2,222 projects at over 1,200 schools have had over \$220m of essential construction and maintenance work approved.

Labour will also:

- Introduce a managed network approach for early learning services, with a more robust establishment process while strengthening access for children in under-served communities.

## Fiscal Summary - Labour's New Initiatives in Education

Description	Four year operating cost (\$m)
Free and Healthy School Lunches (outyear funding)	375 (from 2022/23)
Replace deciles with the Equity Index	320
Digital access (next steps)	15
ECE – Pay Parity	600
Student achievement – curriculum, progress and NCEA	10
Reform of the Tomorrow's Schools system, including:	400
- Education Service Agency	
- Independent complaints mechanism	
- School leadership	
- Strengthened governance	
- Curriculum Centre	
- Māori Medium Network Plan	
- Early learning network approach	
<b>TOTAL New Initiatives</b>	<b>1,720</b>

These new initiatives are in addition to business-as-usual cost pressures such as volume increases and annual cost adjustments to funding rates across early learning, schooling, learning support and tertiary education, which are funded through the Budget process.

## Further reading: background documents on Government policy in the Education portfolio

[Early Learning Action Plan](#)

[Supporting all schools to succeed: Reform of the Tomorrow's Schools system](#)

[Learning Support Action Plan](#)

[NCEA Change Package Overview 2019](#)

[Reform of Vocational Education: Summary of Change Decisions](#)

[Ka Hikitia \(the Māori Education Strategy\)](#)

[Action Plan for Pacific Education](#)

[International Education Strategy](#)