

## *Foreword*

This report for New Zealand forms part of the OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes (see Annex A for further details). The purpose of the Review is to explore how systems of evaluation and assessment can be used to improve the quality, equity and efficiency of school education. The Review looks at the various components of assessment and evaluation frameworks that countries use with the objective of improving student outcomes. These include student assessment, teacher appraisal, school evaluation and system evaluation.

New Zealand was one of the countries which opted to participate in the country review strand and host a visit by an external review team. Members of the review team were Deborah Nusche (OECD Secretariat), co-ordinator of the Review; Dany Laveault (Professor, Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa; Canada); John MacBeath (Professor Emeritus, Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge; United Kingdom); and Paulo Santiago (OECD Secretariat). This publication is the report from the review team. It provides, from an international perspective, an independent analysis of major issues facing the evaluation and assessment framework in New Zealand, current policy initiatives, and possible future approaches. The report serves three purposes: (1) Provide insights and advice to the New Zealand education authorities; (2) Help other OECD countries understand the New Zealand approach; and (3) Provide input for the final comparative report of the project.

New Zealand's involvement in the OECD Review was co-ordinated by Ms. Ro Parsons, Chief Education Advisor Schooling Policy/Best Evidence Synthesis Programme, New Zealand Ministry of Education.

An important part of New Zealand's involvement was the preparation of a comprehensive and informative Country Background Report (CBR) on evaluation and assessment policy, published by the New Zealand Ministry of Education in 2011. The review team is very grateful to the authors of the CBR, and to all those who assisted them for providing an informative document. The CBR is an important output from the OECD activity in its own right as well as an important source for the review team. Unless indicated otherwise, the data for this report are taken from the New Zealand Country Background Report. The CBR follows guidelines prepared by the OECD Secretariat and provides extensive information, analysis and discussion in regard to the national context, the organisation of the educational system, the main features of the evaluation and assessment framework and the views of key stakeholders. In this sense, the CBR and this report complement each other and, for a more comprehensive view of evaluation and assessment in New Zealand, should be read in conjunction.

The review visit to New Zealand took place on 23-30 August 2010. The itinerary is provided in Annex B. The visit was designed by the OECD in collaboration with the New Zealand authorities. The biographies of the members of the review team are provided in Annex C.

During the review visit, the team held discussions with a wide range of national, regional and local authorities; officials from the Ministry of Education; relevant agencies outside the Ministry of Education which deal with evaluation and assessment issues; teacher and principal unions; parents' organisations; representatives of schools; students' organisations; and researchers with an interest in evaluation and assessment issues. The team also visited a range of schools, interacting with school management, teachers and students. The intention was to provide a broad cross-section of information and opinions on evaluation and assessment policies and how their effectiveness can be improved.

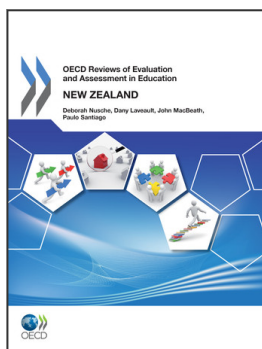
The review team wishes to record its grateful appreciation to the many people who gave time from their busy schedules to inform the review team of their views, experiences and knowledge. The meetings were open and provided a wealth of insights. Special words of appreciation are due to the National Co-ordinator, Ms. Ro Parsons, Chief Education Advisor Schooling Policy/Best Evidence Synthesis Programme at the New Zealand Ministry of Education, for sharing her expertise and responding to the many questions of the review team. The courtesy and hospitality extended to us throughout our stay in New Zealand made our task as a review team as pleasant and enjoyable as it was stimulating and challenging.

The review team is also grateful to colleagues at the OECD, especially to Stefanie Dufaux for preparing the statistical annex to this Country Note (Annex D) and to Heike-Daniela Herzog for editorial support.

This report is organised in six chapters. Chapter 1 provides the national context, with information on the New Zealand school system, main trends and concerns, and recent developments. Chapter 2 looks at the overall evaluation and assessment framework and analyses how the different components of the framework play together and can be made more coherent to effectively improve student learning. Then Chapters 3 to 6 present each of the components of the evaluation and assessment framework – student assessment, teacher appraisal, school evaluation and system evaluation – in more depth, presenting strengths, challenges and policy recommendations.

The policy recommendations attempt to build on and strengthen reforms that are already underway in New Zealand, and the strong commitment to further improvement that was evident among those we met. The suggestions should take into account the difficulties that face any visiting group, no matter how well briefed, in grasping the complexity of New Zealand and fully understanding all the issues.

Of course, this report is the responsibility of the review team. While we benefited greatly from the New Zealand CBR and other documents, as well as the many discussions with a wide range of New Zealand personnel, any errors or misinterpretations in this report are our responsibility.



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