

MEDIA RELEASE

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Tomorrow's Schools review is the right thing at the right time.

Public anxiety about the future of school boards of trustees under the review of Tomorrow's Schools is misplaced, the New Zealand School Trustees Association believes.

The terms of reference for the review released yesterday contained no surprises and are broad enough to ensure that any changes recommended by the taskforce can take the whole system into account, not just isolated parts of it.

The terms of reference reflect the priorities that Minister Hipkins announced previously, and contain no surprises for trustees, according to NZSTA President Lorraine Kerr.

The 1989 reforms established the whole structure of the sector as we know it now, including the Ministry of Education, the Education Review Office, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA), and the Teaching Council (NZTC) which has since been re-formed into the Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand as well as the current structure of tertiary and Early Childhood Education.

Ms Kerr says that NZSTA “definitely has the courage of its convictions” in terms of the positive effect that school boards have had on the New Zealand school system, and there is an increasing body of evidence that effective school governance makes a real difference.

“The 1989 reforms, as enacted, were built on the idea of competition driving success by letting some schools, universities, or polytechs fail while the ‘best’ survived. In fact, standing aside and allowing a school to fail their students has never been an acceptable option in New Zealand. That basic contradiction has created ongoing problems, including a focus on ‘bums on seats’ and academic league tables.

“The terms of reference for this review are looking good, and as we’ve already said elsewhere, NZSTA is looking forward to it and the opportunity to present boards’ perspectives to the review panel on what’s working well and what needs to be looked at again,” she says.

“So far as we are concerned, this is the right thing at the right time.”

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