

# PASADENA INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL BOT

MEETING - TUESDAY 16 OCTOBER 2009 7.00PM

## REPORT - NATIONAL STANDARDS

### GOVERNMENT POLICY

National Standards aim to lift achievement in literacy and numeracy (reading, writing, and mathematics) by being clear about what students should achieve and by when. This will help students; their teachers and parents, families and whānau better understand what they are aiming for and what they need to do next.

### INTRODUCTION

The National Standards come into effect in English-medium schools with pupils in years 1 to 8 in 2010.

The National Standards set clear expectations that students need to meet in reading, writing and mathematics in the first eight years at school.

Consultation and trialling of Ngā Whanaketanga Rūmaki Māori – the Māori-medium standards will begin in term one 2010.

The standards describe reference points or signposts of achievement at each year level. Assessing progress and achievement in relation to the standards will be an integral part of teaching and learning across the New Zealand Curriculum from 2010.

Teachers will:

- assess individual students' progress and achievement in relation to the standards

- support students to use assessment information to inform their own learning goals and their next learning steps

- use a range of assessment information

- provide regular report to parents in plain language about their children's progress in relation to National Standards, including twice a year in writing.

### TIMELINE

#### November - December 2009

The National Standards are distributed to schools.

Schools prepare to work with the National Standards from Term 1, 2010.

Teachers, principals, and boards can participate in web seminars on the National Standards and request an information session in their region.

#### 2010

National Standards come into effect in English-medium schools with pupils in years 1 to 8.

Schools report to parents at least twice a year in writing about their child's progress and achievement in relation to the National Standards.

Schools include targets for student achievement in relation to the National Standards in their 2011 charters.

#### 2011

Schools continue to work with the National Standards and to report to parents about their child's progress and achievement in relation to the standards.

Schools work to meet the targets for student achievement set out in their 2011 charters

#### 2012

Schools' annual reports show their progress in relation to their targets for student achievement.

### IMPLEMENTATION

For the successful implementation of the National Standards during 2010, teachers, principals, and boards will:

- develop their understanding of the links between the National Standards and *the New Zealand Curriculum*

- deepen their understanding of assessment and its role in supporting individual students and in planning teaching and learning programmes

- use self-review processes and tools at classroom, school, and governance levels

- ensure that their plain-language reporting gives parents, family, and whānau the information they need to support their child

- prepare specific school-wide targets for student achievement in relation to the standards for inclusion in their school's 2011 charter.

### Links between the National Standards and the New Zealand Curriculum

Assessing progress and achievement in relation to the National Standards will be an integral part of teaching and learning across the New Zealand Curriculum.

The New Zealand Curriculum Online has information about the National Standards that will be regularly updated and expanded. It will also link to examples of tasks, texts, and problems that clarify the links between the standards and the curriculum.

## **The role of assessment**

Teachers will use assessment information gathered from a variety of sources to form an overall teacher judgment about each student's progress and achievement.

The assessment information will enable Teachers and School Leaders to:

- evaluate individual students' progress and achievement in relation to the standards, help the students to understand their progress, and make clear what they need to learn next
- report in plain language twice a year to parents, family, and whānau about their child's progress and achievement
- involve parents, family, and whānau in supporting their child's learning at home.

Principals will ensure that the school's assessment and moderation processes are sound and that overall teacher judgments are robust and consistent.

The primary purpose of assessment is to improve students' learning and teachers' teaching as both respond to the information it provides. Assessment for learning is an ongoing process that arises out of the interaction between teaching and learning.

What makes assessment for learning effective is how well the information is used.

Principles of assessment for learning -

- Learning to learn
- Building students' assessment capability
- Engaging and motivating
- Content knowledge
- Planned and communicated
- Progressive and cumulative
- Supports teaching and learning goals
- Recognises social and cultural aspects of assessment
- Teaching inquiry

Assessment is central to teaching and learning..

Most assessment is informal and 'of the moment'.

There is, though, a need for occasional, more formal assessment.

Formal assessment ensures consistency in the interpretation of both progress and achievement by students and teachers. It also helps to ensure that other stakeholders in education (including syndicates or departments, senior school management, boards of trustees, parents and family, and the Ministry of Education) get the types of information that they need in order to be able to support teaching and learning. These assessments use formal tools, and are often conducted across classes, cohorts or whole school.

It is the responsibility of teachers and schools to choose formal assessment tools which will provide the most valid and reliable information on student learning.

Good formal assessment is valid (based on what students have learned) and reliable (results can be replicated) and should provide information on what students have learned, what they need to learn, and, where appropriate, how they measure up against expectations for their cohort.

Assessment is done with the student, not to the student.

Teachers should always involve students in assessment.

## **Meeting the Standard**

Teachers are required to use several sources of evidence in order to make a sound judgment about whether a student meets the standard.

The overall teacher judgement (OTJ) will be made either at the end of the year or around the anniversary of the student's school entry.

The standards for Years 1-3 are for the anniversary of the student's school entry (for example *after one year at school*). This means that for Years 1-3, teachers will make their overall teacher judgements (OTJs) about students' achievement in relation to the standards at different times throughout the year. Because of this some schools may choose to stagger written reports for students in Years 1-3 throughout the school year based on when the student entered school, so that they will align with the timing of the OTJs. Alternatively, OTJs may be conveyed as part of regular communication with parents, families and whānau.

The standards for Years 4-8 are for the end of the school academic year (for example, *by the end of Year 4*). This means teachers will make their OTJ at the end of the year.

OTJs in relation to the National Standards for the time at school or the year level are expressed as

**Above, At, Below, or Well Below a standard for that year,**

depending on which describes the best fit for that student's achievement.

Supporting assessment information should be used to show parents, families and whānau how the overall teacher judgement was determined.

These judgements can be displayed in a number of ways. The display needs to be clear, yet not so prominent that it dominates and masks the story of learning.

## **Reporting about achievement and progress**

### **The Context For Reporting**

The vision of The New Zealand Curriculum is for our young people to be confident, connected, actively involved, lifelong learners.

Communicating clear, dependable information about progress and achievement provides a basis for building a strong partnership between the child, the teacher and the child's parents, family and whānau to support learning and improve student outcomes.

The purpose of reporting to parents, families and whānau is to provide information about a child's learning, progress and achievement that can then be used to support further learning.

### **School Reports**

Teachers should communicate each student's progress and achievement in relation to the National Standards throughout the year, using a range of formal, informal, oral and written means. This can ensure that any concerns are attended to promptly.

As a part of this process, the National Administration Guidelines now require schools to report to parents, families and whānau in plain language, in writing about their children's achievement and progress in relation to National Standards, at least twice a year.

There is no specific requirement for the format of these reports, but there are good practices already in place in many schools that can provide guidance:

An interim report shows the student's progress towards the learning goals which were made at the beginning of the year and identifies next steps.

An end-of-year report is the culmination of a year of goal setting, planning, reviewing and reflection on the part of the student, the teacher, and the parents, family and whānau. It's a statement that sums up the year, celebrates what has been learned and sets the framework for the next year.

The standards for Years 4-8 are for the end of the school academic year. This means teachers will make their OTJ at the end of the year.

### **Reporting Principles**

Reporting should be consistent with the characteristics of effective assessment from The New Zealand Curriculum

- benefit students
- involve students
- support teaching and learning goals
- be planned and communicated
- be suited to the purpose
- be valid and fair

### **Reporting Content Criteria**

#### **What Has Been Learnt**

A clear description about what has been learnt over the period in reading, writing and mathematics.

This can convey three main ideas through succinct description:

#### **1. What the student has learnt and can do**

This may be written in a variety of ways, such as narrative or bulleted statements. Narrative takes longer to write than check lists of key indicators, but provides a rich description of what the student has learnt. It should use clear language that is meaningful to the audience and be free of educational or technical jargon.

The text itself can be built up over the course of the reporting period. As learning is observed, the teacher can make notes that are then edited into a final report, or compile notes for a portfolio.

#### **2. The rate or progress of learning**

Teachers can combine a description of the rate of learning with some results from a formal measurement tool or continuum (e.g., New Zealand Curriculum level, or a PAT or e-asTTle score).

Whatever is used can be individualised to show progress that is relative to that student.

A student who has made no shifts on gross measures of progress (such as curriculum levels) can have their actual progress captured in narrative and/or scores from diagnostic assessment that more accurately describes their progress.

A learner who is well behind National Standards in one year but makes better than normal progress the next can have this described and displayed to celebrate and motivate.

A learner who experiences the opposite doesn't benefit by having that struggle put on display. If good progress for a student is the increase in the number of sight words they recognise at the end of the year, then this can be made visible and celebrated.

Similarly, for a child who is making exceptionally fast progress the narrative can capture this appropriately.

If a high achieving student experiences a falling rate of progress, this could be identified. Appropriate action can then be taken to ensure the student is sufficiently challenged to ensure continued motivation to learn.

Teachers should indicate what significant barriers exist to further learning, so that this can inform problem solving and goal setting for the following period. For instance, this might well be the case if a child has had poor attendance or has found it difficult to engage effectively with learning.

As a child progresses through the school some comment should be made about their rate of progress in comparison to previous years.

The unique nature of the student should be visible in the report so that parents, family and whānau recognise their child.

### **3. The extent to which the relevant standards for that child have been reached**

If it is an interim report, there should be a description of the student's progress in relation to the National Standards.

If it is a report at the end of the year or around the anniversary of the child's school entry, it must include clear overall teacher judgements (OTJs) about the student's achievement in relation to a National Standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

OTJs in relation to the National Standards for the time at school or the year level are expressed as **Above, At, Below, or Well Below a standard for that year**, depending on which describes the best fit for that student's achievement.

Supporting assessment information should be used to show parents, families and whānau how the overall teacher judgement was determined.

These judgements can be displayed in a number of ways. The display needs to be clear, yet not so prominent that it dominates and masks the story of learning.

#### **Next Learning Steps**

Reports should indicate next steps of learning, especially in reading, writing and mathematics (if these are not covered elsewhere within the reporting cycle). For more information on next steps, see the Principles of assessment for learning .

#### **Ways to Support learning**

Reports should indicate clear and specific ways parents, family and whānau can support learning, especially in reading, writing and mathematics (if these are not covered elsewhere within the reporting cycle).

It is vital that the ways of supporting next learning steps at home are appropriate and effective for the child and the parents, family or whānau. If they do not take account of the community's resources, they may not be practical. If ways of supporting next steps are not appropriate, parents, family or whānau may disengage from supporting their children's learning.

#### **Extra Support**

If necessary, teachers may also include any measures the school is taking to address any identified learning needs. This must be included for children assessed as below or well below a standard for that year.

#### **Learning Areas and Key Competencies**

Reporting can also include information about the Learning Areas and Key Competencies in The New Zealand Curriculum.

#### **Engagement**

Reporting can indicate the extent to which the student has been present and engaged with the learning process. This may be in relation to specific learning areas if needed (for instance, as part of the commentary about progress), or a more general statement about the child's attitude towards learning.

#### **Preparing Reports**

Reports should be written in clear, plain language.

The contents should be relevant and clear, with no jargon - in plain language .

The test of this is the extent to which parents, family, whānau and students describe the reports as clear, meaningful, easy to understand, and meeting their information needs.

Reports should be balanced.

The purpose of the report is to document, communicate and celebrate learning. There needs to be an appropriate visual balance between what has been learnt and National Standards judgements. Similarly, a description of what has been learnt needs to have an appropriate balance between strengths and areas for improvement.

Reports should hold no surprises for students, parents, family or whānau

Students who feel ownership of their reports will be familiar with the contents before it's made available to their parents, family and whānau. This, combined with communication throughout the year, should ensure no surprises for students or their parents, families and whānau.

Reports should have a clear description of their purpose

The purpose might be contained in the title or may be a separate paragraph.

For example, 'End of year report to celebrate learning and achievement'.

This shows the report is not describing what the student has succeeded and failed in, but captures what has been learnt and some of the characteristics of that learning.

What a report shouldn't have

In order to avoid damaging a child's engagement and motivation to learn, a report must **not**:

imply fault or failure.

For example, 'Michael is lazy', 'He needs to apply himself more if he is to reach the standard'.

Only contain information about the extent to which a National Standard has been reached. If a report is devoid of commentary and celebration about what has been learnt, it conveys the message that reaching the standard is all that's important. If the student has not reached the standard, this will not motivate them to continue to learn.

use standardised measures of progress over time that are inappropriate for that child's learning.

For example, if a child has been well below the standard for many years, presenting this information as a graph or table will not show progress. Written comments may be more appropriate to show finer-grained progress.

contain judgements that compare the child's performance competitively with other children in the class or school.

For example, 'Michael's exam results place him last in the class'.

*When reporting includes information about progress in relation to National Standards it has to be constructed so that that low-achieving students will have a desire to return to school the following year and engage meaningfully with learning. The reporting should focus on and celebrate areas the child can legitimately feel proud of. Everything that has been learnt should be a source of pride.*

*This does not mean that areas for improvement should be obscured. Parents, family and whānau need clear and accurate information about these areas so that they can support students to address them.*