

Our policies so far

Education

National is in the process of developing policies across the sector. Some of the specific policies we have already announced include:

NATIONAL EDUCATION STANDARDS

National's policy is to lift education standards in all primary and intermediate schools by introducing National Education Standards. This will include:

- Setting clear national standards in reading, writing, and maths. The standards will describe all the things children should be able to do by a particular age or year at school. They will be defined by benchmarks in a range of tests.
- Requiring primary schools to use assessment programmes that compare the progress of their students with other students across the country. Schools will choose from a range of tests that a majority of schools are already using, but there will be no national exams.
- Giving parents the right to see all assessment information, and to get regular reports about their child's progress towards national standards.

TRADES IN SCHOOLS

National believes that trades and industry training should be put back into our schools. Our initiatives include:

- Piloting a school-based apprenticeships scheme like the one run in Australia.
- Funding select schools to run "Trades Academies".
- Giving schools more flexibility to run trades training classes outside their school gates.
- Tackling the technology teacher crisis.
- Ensuring the technology curriculum includes the need for students to make things, build things, and produce things.
- Encouraging business to help schools with resources for trades training.

YOUTH GUARANTEE

National's policy is to provide a universal education entitlement for all 16- and 17-year-olds. This will allow them to access, free of charge, educational study towards school-level qualifications at approved institutions.

This new entitlement will be on top of, not instead of, the education entitlements they have now.

Most will stay at school. But others might be more motivated and might achieve more if given the opportunity to learn in a non-school setting. They might choose to continue their education at, for example, a polytechnic, a wananga, a private training establishment, or through an apprenticeship.

Young people who aren't working and who fail to take up their educational entitlement will not be eligible to receive a benefit.

EARLY REPAYMENT BONUS FOR STUDENT LOAN BORROWERS

National's policy is to keep interest-free student loans for tertiary students and to introduce incentives for people to repay their student loans and get out of debt sooner.

Under this policy, students will be given a 10% bonus on a loan balance for voluntary lump-sum payments of \$500 or more. The incentive would apply in the 10 years following the start of repayments by the borrower.

For example, if a borrower pays \$800 off their student loan in a lump sum above and beyond the compulsory requirement, the Government would take \$880 off their loan balance.

By helping people repay their student loans more quickly, we can help them realise their educational ambitions.

For more information about our policies, please visit www.national.org.nz or email our Education Spokeswoman Anne Tolley at anne.tolley@national.org.nz