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Tēnā kōrua

TESOLANZ, the national association of teachers of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) in Aotearoa NZ, considers that there is an urgent need for English language learners' (ELLs') education to be included more deliberately in the current refreshment of the New Zealand Curriculum. We are seeking involvement in the curriculum and assessment review to support the Ministry of Education's goals of enhancing learner literacy.

While provisions for the large numbers of ELLs may be inferred in broad terms like *diversity* and *literacy*, more specific recognition of learning English as an additional language is needed. We need to support more equitable outcomes for the many students who join our education system at different year levels and with differing degrees of literacy in diverse languages. The expertise held within our professional body will be useful to curriculum designers as *diversity* and *language* remain in focus for an equitable curriculum.

Curriculum design that is inclusive of ELLs is critical for these students in schools. ELLs include approximately 78,000 students who were identified as needing ESOL funding from the Ministry of Education ([MoE, 2024](#)). Further, there are many learners who come from bilingual and multilingual backgrounds who are still learning English language after the funding period ceases. International foreign fee-paying students make up another significant number of ELLs. There were 14,125 who attended schools in Aotearoa last year ([Education Counts, 2023](#)). Given the numbers of ELLs coming into the school system at different year levels and the speed with which they need to catch up in developing their English language, TESOLANZ is concerned about the lack of recognition of this large group of students.

TESOLANZ can inform guidance related to this significant proportion of the school population. We have noted in the [Ministerial Advisory Group Report March 2024 \(MAG Report\)](#), that there is only one mention of cultural diversity and no mention of linguistic diversity. There appears to be an assumption that all students start school in New Zealand and that their learning is cumulative from Year 1. In the *Aligning assessment and aromatawai to our updated national curriculum (Update 1, July 2024)* information sheet sent to schools by MoE on 3 July, there is again no mention of the idea that many students arrive at school already literate in their home language(s), but not yet literate in the English language or Te Reo Māori. Many of the 20% of Year 8 students who are not at or above target levels in English literacy are likely to be ELLs. Voices from TESOLANZ would add depth to the development of approaches to literacy and related assessment for this group of learners. TESOLANZ can contribute through the process outlined in the recommendations in 4.1 of the *MAG Report* (page 21).

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TESOLANZ supports the MOE's shift to development of curriculum preceding the review of achievement standards. It is therefore important that TESOLANZ is involved in decision-making about the status of ESOL in the secondary curriculum context. In the 2021 [*Technical Report - Final NCEA Level 2 and 3 Subject List for the NZC*](#) (MoE) it was announced that the development of the subjects of ESOL and Comparative Languages was 'deferred' in spite of strong support from teachers and TESOLANZ. Because curriculum comes before assessment, there is an urgent need for ESOL to be recognised as a subject in secondary schools.

In conclusion, TESOLANZ offers expertise in curriculum development around literacy for learners from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in both primary and secondary schools. TESOLANZ also requests involvement in the review of curriculum and assessment with regard to the status of ESOL in the secondary school context.

Ngā mihi

Gwenna Finikin