

# **Education (Charter Schools Curriculum) Amendment Bill**

Member's Bill

## **Explanatory note**

### **General policy statement**

This Bill aims to restore quality and confidence in New Zealand's education system by requiring partnership schools kura hourua ("charter schools") to teach a broad and balanced curriculum. Charter schools are not required to teach the New Zealand Curriculum or Te Marautanga. This raises serious concerns about the quality and direction of charter schools. There is a serious risk that students at charter schools will be delivered narrow curricula of a low quality that are irrelevant to the society to which they belong.

All students in New Zealand schools should be taught a broad and balanced curriculum. The existing New Zealand curriculum is recognised as one of the best in the world. It is a significant concern that charter schools will not have to teach to the existing curriculum; subjects such as science may be distorted to fit the beliefs of school owners, rather than ensuring that students gain a solid understanding of established scientific principles.

Ostensibly, exempting charter schools from teaching the New Zealand Curriculum or Te Marautanga is aimed at raising the achievement of underperforming students in New Zealand. Yet this overlooks the reality that the New Zealand Curriculum and Te Marautanga are world leading curricula that have been developed to provide students with the best possible education in the 21st century. The Labour Party does not believe that New Zealand children's education should be sacrificed for the narrow beliefs of charter school providers or for private profits.

### **Clause by clause analysis**

*Clause 1* contains the Bill's title.

*Clause 2* states the commencement date.

*Clause 3* says that the Act being amended is the Education Act 1989 (“EA”).

*Clause 4* amends section 158G of the EA, which deals with the duties of sponsors of charter schools. Currently, one duty of a sponsor is to ensure that the charter school delivers a curriculum that is in line with any foundation curriculum policy statement, which is just one kind of national education guideline that may be issued under section 60A of the EA. The amendment to section 158G expands the duty, so that a sponsor must ensure that the charter school delivers a curriculum that is in accordance with any applicable national education guidelines.

*Clause 5* amends section 158U of the EA, which lists the sections of the EA that apply to charter schools. Currently, the list does not include section 60A. The amendment adds section 60A to the list.

*Hon Phil Goff*

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### **The Parliament of New Zealand enacts as follows:**

- 1 Title**  
This Act is the Education (Charter Schools Curriculum) Amendment Act **2015**.
- 2 Commencement** 5  
This Act comes into force on 1 January **2016**.
- 3 Principal Act**  
This Act amends the Education Act 1989 (the **principal Act**).
- 4 Section 158G amended (Sponsor's duties)** 10  
In section 158G(b), replace "that is in line with any foundation curriculum policy statements published under section 60A(1)(aa)" with "in accordance with any applicable national education guidelines published under section 60A(1)".

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**5 Section 158U amended (Application of this Act to partnership schools  
kura hourua)**

- (1) In section 158U(1), after “33,” insert “60A,”.
- (2) In section 158U(2), after “33,” insert “60A,”.