Education Policy

The Green Party supports an inclusive, accessible, and democratic education system that enables lifelong learning, empowering people to develop the skills and knowledge to participate effectively in a changing world. Learners can access quality free education that responds to the diverse needs and aspirations of people and their communities. The education system will honour te Tiriti o Waitangi, prioritising te ao Māori, mātauranga Māori, and cultural competence of all staff. Connections between education organisations and health and social services agencies will be strengthened, ensuring that education is accessible to all.

Vision

Lifelong learning for all empowers people to benefit humanity and the planet.

Values and Principles

Aotearoa New Zealand's education system must be consistent with the following values and principles:

- *Honoring Te Tiriti o Waitangi* - Educational systems must support Māori voice and agency in governance and decision making. Education must protect and strengthen access to te reo Māori, tikanga Māori, mātauranga Māori, and the history of Aotearoa.

- *Manaakitanga* - Educational systems must be safe, inclusive, and nourishing for everyone in them to thrive.

- *Ōritetanga* - Educational systems, policies, and practices need to equitably support all learners to enable full and lifelong participation in learning.

- *Kotahitanga* - Education must support holistic learning and development, connected to communities and local environments.

- *Rangatiratanga* - Education must be shaped by communities to meet their educational and learning needs.

- *Whakamana tāngata* - Education must build skills, confidence and awareness to meet future global challenges. It must nurture connection and care for each other and the natural world.

Strategic Priorities

The Green Party's strategic goals include:

> *"...inclusive education will be available to all."*

Actions in this policy that will help achieve this include:

- Embedding a Te Tiriti centric education system that empowers learners to succeed in all learning environments. (1.1.3)

- Investing in education that builds understanding and appreciation for diverse cultures, including ethnic, religious, rainbow, and disability communities. (2.1.2)

- Providing fully funded free ECE for all pre-school aged children. (2.5.1)

- Providing fees-free tertiary education and writing off all student loan debt. (2.7.1 & 2.7.3)

- Establishing a single agency to coordinate and resource specialist supports for learners with health and disability support needs. (3.8.3)

- Developing a more representative, democratic, and transparent governance model for all education organisations, where staff, students, communities, unions, and Māori representatives work together on governing bodies. (3.10.3)

Connected Policies

Children and Youth must be supported to thrive at home and at school. This includes having access to healthy Food at school and learning in healthy environments (see our Housing and Sustainable Communities Policy). Access to Education is a Human Right, and all learners should be able to experience inclusive education with appropriate support - see our Kaupapa Māori, Tagata Moana, Disability, Health, and Rainbow Policies, for example. Inclusivity and accessibility may involve use of Digital technology. This policy is also highly connected to our Workforce, Research, Science, and Technology, and Media, Arts, and Cultural Heritage Policies.

Policy Positions

1. Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Issues

The education system has been colonised to the extent that the system does not uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Tino Rangatiratanga and does not recognise that we live in bi-cultural society.

Actions

1.1. Decolonise education for a future Aotearoa in which tikanga Māori, te reo Māori, and mātauranga Māori thrive in the way promised in Te Tiriti of Waitangi, including by:

1.1.1. Providing adequate Crown funding and support for Māori-led education organisations and initiatives;

1.1.2. Incorporating Te Reo Māori, tikanga, mātauranga Māori, and the history of Aotearoa New Zealand throughout all levels of the education system; and

1.1.3. Embedding a Tiriti-centric education system that empowers learners to succeed in all learning environments.

2. Equitable educational outcomes

Issues

Too many people leave the education system poorly equipped to confidently navigate the ever changing systems that govern our lives. They have limited options for economic and societal participation, which perpetuates economic and social inequities.

Actions

2.1. Support learners to develop knowledge, skills, and values that equip them to participate effectively in an ever changing world including by:

    2.1.1. Strengthening civics education within the curriculum, covering Te Tiriti o Waitangi, our political system, the law, human rights, and Aotearoa New Zealand's place in the world;

    2.1.2. Investing in education that builds understanding and appreciation for diverse cultures, including ethnic, religious, rainbow, and disabled communities; and

    2.1.3. Promoting holistic development through programmes that help learners develop a strong sense of identity, resilience, and connection.

2.2. Ensure the education curriculum reflects the interconnectedness of environmental, societal, and economic wellbeing, including by:

    2.2.1. Requiring teaching of ecological sustainability at all levels of the New Zealand Curriculum;

    2.2.2. Supporting educational programmes that promote respect and empathy towards animals and ecosystems; and

    2.2.3. Facilitate partnerships that help educational organisations teach environmental awareness and ecological literacy.

2.3. Enable learners to access educational experiences that meet their individual needs and aspirations, including by:

    2.3.1. Resourcing schools and support agencies to better understand learner needs and support their learning journeys;

    2.3.2. Embedding collaboration between support agencies, schools, and whānau; and

    2.3.3. Providing teaching environments that support health, wellbeing, and accessibility for all learners.

2.4. Ensure that rural and isolated learners have access to education and training, including by:

    2.4.1. Adequately staffing and resourcing rural schools and kura to respond to changing population and community needs;

    2.4.2. Providing safe and available transport services for learners who are distant or isolated from education providers; and

    2.4.3. Funding quality distance and blended learning options at all educational levels.

2.5. Ensure that high quality Early Childhood Education (ECE) is accessible to all, including by:

    2.5.1. Providing fully funded free ECE for all pre-school aged children;

    2.5.2. Transitioning ECE provision to community-based, not-for-profit providers; and

    2.5.3. Creating an accessible model for early childhood care and education that reflects the importance of the first thousand days of a child's life.

2.6. Fully fund all costs and resources associated with compulsory education, including by:

2.6.1. Increasing funding to schools with higher proportions of students with socio-economic disadvantage; and

2.6.2. Removing costs to learners and their whānau for resources, technology, and activities.

2.7. Ensure equitable financial access to tertiary, vocational, and community adult education for all New Zealanders, including by:

2.7.1. Providing fees-free tertiary education;

2.7.2. Introducing a universal student allowance for tertiary students that covers their needs, including participation in society; and

2.7.3. Writing off all student loan debt.

2.8. Ensure that learners are not exploited or financially penalised when engaging in compulsory work placements, including by:

2.8.1. Introducing paid training allowances during compulsory work placements; and

2.8.2. Regulating work placements to ensure equity and transparency for learners.

3. Inclusion and sense of self

Issues

Learners can feel isolated and alienated by their educational experience, if it does not respect their worldviews. Too many learners leave compulsory education without the self-esteem, confidence, and skills they need to build the life they want.

Actions

3.1. Ensure that all learners have a safe and inclusive learning environment, including by:

3.1.1. Requiring all schools and early childhood providers to create an inclusive culture that addresses prejudice, racism, bullying, intimidation, sexual harassment, and violence.

3.1.2. Funding training, support, mentoring, and leadership that support whole-school restorative practices.

3.2. Align the educational system with international obligations, including by:

3.2.1. Legislating an enforceable right for all learners to a quality and inclusive education

3.3. Ensure that the diverse needs of all disabled learners are recognised and responded to in all areas of education, including by:

3.3.1. Developing a plan to move away from reliance on specialist education settings, particularly residential schools, by providing:

3.3.1.1. Well-resourced pathways for learners and their whānau into inclusive education settings; and

3.3.1.2. Learning access centres in mainstream schools.

3.3.2. Providing sufficient Learning Support Centres to fully meet the needs of students;

3.3.3. Resourcing schools to effectively implement Universal Design for Learning approaches; and

3.3.4. Empowering learners and their whānau to co-design personalised learning plans.

3.4. Ensure that the diverse needs of Māori learners are met in all areas of education, including by:

3.4.1. Prioritising te ao Māori-based teaching and learning approaches throughout the education system;

3.4.2. Incentivise Te Reo speakers to train for and teach in kura, kōhanga reo, total immersion, and bilingual schools to meet demand; and

3.4.3. Resourcing "by Māori, for Māori" education services.

3.5. Ensure that the diverse needs of Tagata Moana learners are met in all areas of education, including by:

3.5.1. Embedding Tagata Moana learning and knowledge systems throughout the New Zealand Curriculum, in collaboration with Tagata Moana communities;

3.5.2. Promoting the use, revival, and protection of Pasifika languages in schools; and

3.5.3. Providing a culturally appropriate learning environment where extended families can be involved in their children's education and have access to the resources they need to help with their children's learning.

3.6. Ensure that all Rainbow learners have a safe and inclusive learning environment, including by:

3.6.1. Providing resources for local, accessible, and culturally appropriate Rainbow spaces, including for setting up Rainbow and diversity groups in schools;

3.6.2. Giving parents of Rainbow children the tools they need to fully advocate for their children's rights, dignity and protection; and

3.6.3. Requiring schools to adopt policies and practices that support trans and non-binary students to fully and safely express their gender, including regarding names, pronouns, clothing, and gender-neutral bathrooms.

3.7. Ensure that the diverse needs of learners from marginalised ethnicities are met in all areas of education, including by:

3.7.1. Respecting students' rights to individual religious practices, while prohibiting state schools from engaging in religious instruction or observances;

3.7.2. Providing resources that support learners for whom English is not their first language; and

3.7.3. Providing culturally appropriate interconnected support services for refugee, new migrant, and international students to enable them to engage successfully in our education system.

3.8. Ensure that learners at risk of harm at home or in the community are recognised and their holistic needs are met, including by:

3.8.1. Providing culturally sensitive consent, sexuality, and relationships education; and

3.8.2. Training educational staff to recognise and respond appropriately to the signs of abuse, neglect, and trauma.

4. **Staff and governance resilience**

Issues

There is a high level of burn-out as teachers, governors, and leadership of educational organisations experience stress and exhaustion, self-doubt, and disengagement resulting from not being resourced to effectively meet the needs of all learners.

Actions

4.1. Ensure that tertiary organisations can attract and retain academics, provide high-quality, equitable and wide-ranging education, and produce world-class research, including by:

4.1.1. Establishing an equitable, stable funding formula that prioritises and supports quality teaching, pastoral care, and research; and

4.1.2. Redesigning tertiary education to enable collaboration rather than competition between providers.

4.2. Ensure that educators are confident and competent to lead learning, including by:

4.2.1. Requiring evidence-based training and development for tertiary educators;

4.2.2. Strengthening training for educators in behavior management, conflict resolution, inclusive education, rainbow diversity, and culturally responsive teaching methods; and

4.2.3. Requiring that educational organisations employ sufficient teaching, support, and administrative staff to keep workloads manageable.

4.3. Ensure that all educational organisations have effective and responsive governance processes, including by:

4.3.1. Establishing an independent dispute resolution service to resolve disputes between schools and learners or their whanau;

4.3.2. Creating a national agency with regional networks to provide support and services to schools and boards; and

4.3.3. Developing a more representative, democratic, and transparent governance model for all education organisations, where staff, students, communities, unions, and Māori representatives work together on governing bodies.

4.4. Enable flexibility and innovation in our education system, while ensuring all publicly funded educational institutions are publicly accountable including by:

4.4.1. Phasing out state funding for private schools and reinvesting that into public education;

4.4.2. Abolishing charter schools, while providing the option for charter schools to become public schools subject to meeting the criteria for state funding; and

4.4.3. Supporting well-regulated public schools that focus on particular learning, community or cultural needs within society.

4.5. Ensure education sector agencies are democratic and responsive to the needs of the communities they serve, including by:

4.5.1. Commissioning an independent review of the function, structure, and decision-making processes of all education sector agencies.

4.5.2. Ensuring agencies function using evidence-based, democratic decision-making processes that reflect community needs.