



EDUCATION REVIEW OFFICE
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga



Strategic Intentions 2026-2030

These Strategic Intentions cover the period 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2030

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Responsible Minister's Statement

I am satisfied that the information on strategic intentions prepared by the Education Review Office | Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga is consistent with the policies and performance expectations of the Government.



Hon Erica Stanford

Minister of Education

Responsible Minister

3 July 2026

Chief Executive's Statement of Responsibility

In signing this statement, I acknowledge that I am responsible for the information on the strategic intentions of the Education Review Office | Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga. This information has been prepared in accordance with section 38 and section 40 of the Public Finance Act 1989.



Tim Fowler

Acting Chief Executive and Chief Review Officer

25 June 2026

Foreword

The Education Review Office plays an important role in New Zealand's education system. We independently review, report on and provide regulatory services in early learning and schooling to support a fair, high-quality system where all children and young people can participate, progress and achieve.

Over the past three years, we have focused on strengthening the quality, consistency and clarity of our work. We have improved how we report on performance, built confidence in our evidence and insights, and become clearer about how our reviews, reporting, regulatory services and evaluations support improvement. This gives us a stronger foundation to play a more deliberate role in system-level change over the next four years.

This Strategic Intentions comes at a time of significant change for both the education system and for ERO. A major shift is the planned expansion of our regulatory role to include early childhood education, private schools and hostels. The legislation to enable this change is underway and if passed it will result in more than an increase in scope. For ERO, it means strengthening our capability, adapting our systems and ways of working, and bringing our review, insight and regulatory functions together so they operate as a more joined-up approach to improvement. If the legislation passes, we will update these Strategic Intentions to reflect this.

We are also moving to a more targeted, risk-based approach in schools. In the past, all schools have often faced similar compliance expectations regardless of performance. Over the next four years, we will reduce unnecessary compliance for providers consistently delivering high-quality education, while focusing more of our effort on areas of higher risk and where improvement is most needed. This will help us use our resources more effectively and strengthen our impact for learners.

Our work has both a direct and a system-wide role. We work with early learning services, schools and kura to assess quality, identify risk, support improvement and hold providers to account. We also bring together evidence from our reviews and evaluations to identify patterns, risks and priorities, and provide trusted insights to government, the sector, parents, whānau and communities.

Our contribution to Māori education is central to this work. Ka Hikitia – Ka Hāpaitia sets out how education agencies will work with services to achieve system shifts and support Māori learners and their whānau, hapū and iwi to achieve excellent and equitable outcomes. It emphasises both excellent outcomes and giving practical effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. These Strategic Intentions reflect that commitment.

The next four years will be important in determining whether the changes already underway lead to sustained system-level improvement. We will be more deliberate in where we direct our effort, more consistent in how we support improvement, and more transparent in how we report on quality and performance. We will focus our effort where it makes the most difference, using our resources effectively and efficiently to deliver on our intentions. Through this, we aim to support better education provision, stronger public confidence, and a more effective education system for all children and young people.



Tim Fowler

Acting Chief Executive and Chief Review Office

Our strategic framework: what we want to achieve

ERO's Strategic Intentions 2026-2030

Ko te tamaiti te pūtake o te kaupapa. The child – the heart of the matter.

Our vision

Education equity and excellence for all children and young people

Education contributes to



All students and children participate in their education



All students and children progress and achieve

Our purpose

We review, report and regulate early learning and schooling to drive high quality education for every child and young person

Our contribution to



Attendance and participation



Progress and achievement



A stronger education system

Our focus

1

Hold schools and services to account for the quality of education through our reviews and reports

2

Improve education quality through our recommendations and decisive action

3

Strengthen the education system through our evidence and insights

Our performance

Our reach

The number of early learning services and schools we license and review

Our response

Focus on early learning services and schools of concern, timeliness of recommendations and enforcement

Our usefulness

Early learning services, schools, parents and decision makers understand and act on our findings

Our organisation

Our people

Our methods and tools

Our partnerships

Our resources

Our expertise in supporting Māori education

Part 1: Introduction

Who are we

Ko te tamaiti te pūtake o te Kaupapa – the child is the heart of the matter.

The Education Review Office (ERO) is the Government's education evaluation agency.

Our purpose is to review, report and deliver regulatory services in early learning and schooling to support a fair, high-quality education system where all children and young people can participate, progress, and achieve.

What we do

ERO drives improved outcomes by independently reviewing education provision, reporting clearly on quality and performance, and regulating to ensure legal, safety and quality standards are met. We also contribute to shifting the conditions for system-level improvement through providing evidence-based advice and insights. This means some parts of our role are direct and operational, while others contribute to change across the education system.

We work at two levels:

- **We work with individual providers** – we work directly with early learning services, school and kura. We drive change in education provision by holding early learning services, schools and kura to account. We assess quality, deliver regulatory services, identify risks, and support improvement through clear findings, recommendations and follow up actions.
- **Across the education system** – we contribute to wider system change by bringing together evidence from provider reviews and national-level evaluations to identify patterns, risks, opportunities and priorities, and provide trusted insights to providers, parents, whānau, Ministers and decision makers.

Our work also supports *Ka Hikitia – Ka Hāpaitia*, the Māori Education Strategy, which sets out how education agencies will work with education providers to achieve system shifts in education and support Māori learners and their whānau, hapū and iwi to achieve excellent and equitable outcomes. Its guiding principles include 'Excellent outcomes: We will support Māori learners and the whānau to achieve excellent education outcomes' and 'Te Tiriti o Waitangi: We will give practical effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi in the education system'.

Strengthening our foundations for improvement

Over the past three years, ERO has strengthened the capability and confidence needed to move from activity to impact. We have improved the quality of our work, strengthened performance reporting, and become clearer about how our reviews, reporting, regulation and insights support improvement. This gives us a stronger foundation for a more deliberate role in system-level change.

Key changes over the past three years include:

- Providers better understand what is expected of them
- Parents have more transparent information about how early learning services, schools and kura are performing
- Policy decisions have been influenced by our insights, grounding them in evidence

- Our review, insight, and regulatory functions are now working towards being a single improvement engine

The next four years will determine whether these early shifts translate into sustained system-level improvement. This will require ERO to be more deliberate in where we focus our effort – prioritising higher risk providers, improving how our functions work together, and using our resources where they will have the greatest impact for learners.

Two key changes underpin our contribution over the next four years:

1. **Risk-based review approach** – Historically, ERO has taken a broadly uniform approach to reviewing providers, with similar compliance expectations regardless of quality. We are shifting to a risk-based approach, reducing compliance for providers that are performing well. It will also allow us to apply more active follow up and regulatory attention where risk is highest and where improvement is needed most and focusing effort on those needing support to meet quality thresholds.
2. **Regulatory reform** – There are plans to expand ERO’s regulatory role to include early childhood education, private schools and hostels. The legislation to enable this change is underway and if passed, it will require us to strengthen capability, systems and ways of working so we can deliver well across a broader regulatory scope.

Who we work with

ERO works with a range of stakeholders across the education system to support safe, high-quality education – including education providers, education system partners, and Government and Ministers.

Education providers

We work directly with early learning services, schools, and kura, as well as their leaders and governing bodies. Our role is to independently review and regulate, identify where quality is strong or where improvement is needed, and provide clarity about expectations and next steps.

Education system partners

We work with other education agencies and organisations that contribute to lifting education in New Zealand, including the Ministry of Education, the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority. These relationships help ensure evidence is used well and that the system responses are informed and co-ordinated.

Government and Ministers

We work closely with the Minister of Education and across Government by:

- Providing independent information about how well education is performing in New Zealand
- Sharing system-level evidence and insights to inform policy and investment decisions
- Publishing public reports that strengthen transparency and accountability

Part 2: Government targets and Ministerial priorities

ERO works with the Government and the Minister of Education to help improve the education system for children and young people across New Zealand.

One of our key roles is to support Government targets and priorities by independently checking how well the system is working and where it needs to improve.

Our work focuses on the three long-term system priorities:



Attendance and participation



Progress and achievement



A stronger education system

Government targets for education

The Government has set targets to improve education outcomes and give children and young people the skills they need for the future.

The Government's targets for education are:

- **Increased student attendance:** 80% of students attending school for more than 90% of the term by 2030.
- **More students at expected curriculum levels:** 80% of Year 8 students at or above expected curriculum levels in reading, writing and maths by 2030.

To help achieve these targets, ERO's work supports the Minister's six key education priorities.

1. Clearer curriculum

Establishing a knowledge rich curriculum grounded in the science of learning

ERO supports a clearer, knowledge-rich curriculum in schools and kura by independently evaluating how well it is being implemented in practice and identifying where quality is strong and where improvement is needed.

We do this by:

- evaluating curriculum delivery
- identifying gaps, risks and improvement priorities
- providing system-level insights to inform curriculum refinement and support improvement

2. Better approach to literacy and numeracy

Implementing evidence-based instruction in early literacy and maths

ERO supports stronger literacy and numeracy outcomes by evaluating how effectively evidence-based teaching approaches are used in practice, particularly for learners at risk of falling behind.

We do this by:

- assessing the quality of literacy and numeracy teaching
- identifying practices that support progress and achievement
- reporting on what is working, where improvement is needed, and for whom

3. Smarter assessment and reporting

Implementing consistent modes of monitoring student achievement and progress

ERO supports smarter assessment and reporting by evaluating how well assessment information is used to understand learner progress and support improvement.

We do this by:

- examining how assessment and reporting are used
- identifying whether data is informing teaching, leadership and governance decisions
- providing a national view of assessment and reporting practice and its effectiveness.

4. Improved teacher training

Developing the workforce of the future, including leadership and development pathways

ERO supports improved teacher training by examining the quality of teaching and leadership and identifying workforce-related strengths and gaps that affect learner outcomes.

We do this by:

- evaluating teaching and leadership practice and its impact on learners
- identifying system-level issues relevant to professional learning and development
- providing insights to inform workforce development and leadership pathways.

5. Stronger learning support

Targeting effective learning support interventions for children with additional needs

ERO supports stronger learning support by evaluating how well learners with additional needs are identified, supported and included in education.

We do this by:

- assessing the quality of support provided to learners with additional needs
- identifying where support is effective and where gaps remain
- reporting on system-level patterns to inform more targeted responses.

6. Greater use of data

Using data and evidence to drive consistent improvement in achievement

ERO supports greater use of data by providing independent insights into how data is used to identify risk, monitor progress and inform improvement.

We do this by:

- examining how schools and services use data to support decision making
- analysing system level information to identify trends and emerging risks
- using evidence to focus attention on areas of greatest need.

Part 3: Our focus areas

ERO's focus areas set out how we contribute to delivering the Government's education targets and the Minister's priorities.

ERO's vision is that New Zealand has education provision that delivers equitable and excellent outcomes. This means:

- all students and children participate in their education
- all students progress and achieve.

To make this happen, we have three focus areas where we have the greatest ability to influence improvement directly and contribute to wider system performance:

1. Hold schools and services to account for the quality of education through our reviews and reports
2. Improve education quality through our recommendations and decisive actions
3. Strengthen the education system through our evidence and insights

For each of these focus areas we have strategic priorities for the period 2026 to 2030 that will drive our work.

Across our focus areas, our performance will be measured through three key aspects:

- **Reach** – the number of schools and services we review
- **Response** – focus on schools and services of concern, timeliness of recommendations and enforcements
- **Usefulness** – schools, services, parents and decision makers understand and act on our findings

Focus area one: Hold schools and services to account for the quality of education through our reviews and reports

What we do

We independently review schools, kura, and early learning services to assess the quality education provision and to check that legal, safety and quality standards are being met.

We identify what is working well, where there are risks, and what needs to improve. We keep track of progress over time, especially where there are concerns, and step in if improvement is too slow or not happening.

We also publish clear, easy-to-understand reports so parents, whānau and communities can see how well providers are performing across the areas that matter most for education outcomes.

Our reviews are increasingly risk based, meaning we apply greater focus to providers where risk is higher, while reducing compliance and review burden for providers consistently delivering high quality education.

Why this matters

By working directly with providers, ERO supports accountability by making the quality of education provision more visible and better understood.

Clear expectations and transparent reporting help providers understand what good looks like and what they need to do to improve. Public reporting strengthens trust and confidence in the system and supports informed decision making by parents, whānau and communities.

A risk-based approach allows us to prioritise our effort, focusing more time and attention where quality is lower or risks are higher, and reducing unnecessary burden on high performing providers.

Overall, this supports earlier identification of issues and more timely responses, so all learners, no matter where they are, receive a good education.

What success looks like

- Providers are held to account for improvement, and progress is sustained, with fewer issues becoming long running or recurring
- Problems identified early – supported by a risk-based approach to ensure we are focusing on the providers that need more help
- Clear public reporting enables timely action by providers and governing bodies, and timely/appropriate support from MOE
- Good education provision is identified and ERO enables other providers to replicate this
- Learners are better protected, and education quality, progress and achievement improve over time
- Public reporting is trusted, widely used and strengthens confidence, transparency and accountability
- ERO's work contributes to improving system-level outcomes (such as attendance, learner participation and achievement) over time

Our priorities 2026-2030

- Review services and schools – with a strong focus on attendance, progress and achievement
- Strengthen public reporting – so that quality, risks and required actions are clear and drive improvement
- Apply risk-based scheduling and follow up – so our effort is focused where need is greatest
- Reduce repeat cases of concern – find underperformance sooner and ensure our findings lead to sustained improvement
- Strengthen expectations for quality education and use reviews to reinforce accountability of leaders and governing bodies

How we will measure progress

Performance measure	Indicator	Target/Standard
Coverage	The number of published reports from ERO reviews. Percentage of providers ERO reviews that meet the quality threshold.	Maintain or improve
Timeliness of reviews and reporting	Percentage of schools and services of concern that receive timely follow up and next steps for improvement.	Maintain or improve
Usefulness and understanding of reports	Percentage of providers that report ERO's review findings are useful and influence their decisions or actions.	Maintain or improve

Focus area two: Improve education quality through our recommendations and decisive actions

What we do

Our reports provide clear, targeted recommendations to providers based on our reviews, focusing on actions most likely to improve education quality and learner outcomes. These recommendations are tailored to each provider's context and level of risk. We assess not just where providers are but how they are progressing and improving over time.

We set expectations for improvement and actively follow up on progress. If progress is too slow or not happening, we take proportionate, timely and decisive action, including increased monitoring. Where needed, we also raise concerns with the Ministry of Education, Ministers, or other agencies.

We use what we see across our reviews to identify common challenges and share what works well, supporting improvement across the system.

Why this matters

Clear recommendations, combined with follow up on progress, strengthens the link between review and improvement.

This approach shifts the focus from compliance to continuous improvement, supporting providers to make sustained improvements over time.

Taking earlier and more decisive action where needed helps prevent poor performance becoming entrenched and supports faster progress, especially for those facing the biggest challenges.

Applying a risk-based approach allows us to target our effort where it will have the most impact, while reducing unnecessary burden on high performing providers. This supports a more effective use of resources and contributes to improved outcomes across the system.

What success looks like

- Providers respond promptly to our recommendations and required actions, with clear improvements in practice and outcomes
- Improvement is sustained over time, with fewer providers returning to concern or needing repeat intervention
- Escalation is timely and effective, with underperformance addressed early before it becomes entrenched
- Learner safety and wellbeing risks are identified and addressed promptly
- ERO's recommendations and actions contribute to improved system performance over time

Our priorities 2026-2030

- Strengthen the quality, clarity and consistency of recommendations and required actions, with clear and timebound expectations for improvement
- Embed active follow-up and progress monitoring so that recommendations lead to timely and sustained improvement
- Apply proportionate and earlier escalation where progress is too slow, including stronger use of intervention and referral pathways
- Reduce repeat cycles of concern by identifying underperformance earlier and ensuring decisive action leads to sustained improvement

How we will measure progress

Performance measure	Indicator	Target/Standard
Improvement progress for priority providers	Percentage of schools that implemented our next improvement steps	Maintain or improve
Measurable improvement for schools of concern	Percentage of schools of concern that show sufficient improvement in expected timeframes.	Maintain or improve
Implementation and impact of recommendations	Fewer schools and services of concern, and fewer of the same providers remaining in concern over time.	Maintain or improve

Focus area three: Strengthen the education system through our evidence and insights

What we do

We collect and analyse evidence from our reviews, national evaluations, and other work to understand how the education system is performing.

We produce national and thematic reports that identify what is working well, where there are risks or gaps, and where and how improvement can happen. We bring together findings from across all our reviews to identify patterns, and emerging priorities.

We provide clear, practical insights to schools, and advice to Government, other agencies and policymakers to support better decisions for education outcomes.

We share this information publicly to promote transparency, shared understanding and encourage system-wide improvement.

Why this matters

This work enables ERO to contribute beyond individual providers to the performance of the education system as a whole.

By identifying patterns, risks and opportunities, we support more informed and targeted decision making by Government, agencies and the sector.

Our evidence helps ensure that responses to system challenges are grounded in what is happening in practice and helps the Government and the sector understand what is working, who it is working for, and where change is needed most. It also supports more effective and timely action.

Public reporting of insights also strengthens transparency and builds a shared understanding of what quality looks like across the system and supports a more equitable education system and outcomes for all learners.

What success looks like

- System-wide risks, trends, and issues are identified early and clearly
- ERO's evidence and insights are trusted, widely used, and inform decisions and actions by Government, agencies, and the sector
- Insights prompt timely and targeted system responses to areas of greatest need

- Public reporting strengthens transparency and confidence in the education system
- ERO's evidence contributes to improving education quality and outcomes across the system over time

Our priorities 2026-2030

- Establish a coherent, timely view of system performance to identify emerging risks and priorities
- Systematically synthesise intelligence from reviews and evaluations to generate clear system-level insights
- Deliver targeted national and thematic evaluations on the key drivers of education quality and improvement
- Make ERO's evidence accessible, practical, and action-focused so it can be readily used by decision-makers, the sector, and the public

How we will measure progress:

Performance measure	Indicator	Target/Standard
Coverage and depth of system insights	Extent to which national evaluations deliver comprehensive & actionable insights into emerging risks and opportunities to support system-wide improvement.	Maintain or improve
Timeliness of system reporting	Percentage of reports delivered in time to inform key decisions (policy, funding, or planning).	Maintain or improve
Uptake and influence of insights	Key audiences report that ERO's national evaluations are informative & useful for identifying or planning improvement within the system or its component part.	Maintain or improve

Part 4: How we operate as an organisation

How we operate

ERO has expert staff across the country and at ERO's national office whose work contributes to driving a better education system for all children and young people in New Zealand.

- **Review and Improvement Services** – Carry out evaluations of early childhood centres, schools and kura in English-medium to provide information on their performance and to support ongoing improvement for high quality education.
- **Māori Review and Improvement Services** - Carry out evaluations of schools and kura in Māori-medium to provide information on their performance and to support ongoing improvement for high quality education.
- **Performance and Implementation** – Helps ERO put its strategy into action by designing the systems, tools and measures that guide how we work and track our progress. It supports high-quality delivery by improving data, reporting and processes, leading change so new ways of working are embedded across the organisation, and ensuring strong evaluative methods and consistent professional practice underpin how work is carried out.
- **Evaluation and Policy** – Draw on ERO, local and international research to build a stronger evidence-base to better support decision-makers at all levels of our systems, including through providing policy advice to Ministers. Evaluate the performance of the education system, the effectiveness of programmes and interventions, and shine a light on good practice.
- **Corporate Services** – Provide essential statutory and corporate functions that enable the organisation to operate effectively, fulfil our statutory obligations, and deliver on strategic aims. Ensure ERO staff have access to the tools and infrastructure needed to achieve our functions as a government agency.

Leadership and governance

ERO has clear leadership and governance arrangements to ensure:

- Delivery on Government and Minister priorities
- Sound regulatory decision making
- Risk assurance and oversight
- Confident investment and organisational performance management

Building our capability for the future

ERO has a strong focus on building internal capability and aligning our people, systems and resources to our strategic priorities. This ensures we are well placed to carry out our statutory role and support improvement across the education system.

Our capability building focuses on strengthening the organisational foundations that enable:

- Review and delivering regulatory services
- System insights
- Effective performance

Why this matters

Delivering a complex and evolving work programme for the education system requires ERO to be focused, deliberate, and disciplined in how we build capability and use our resources.

Strong organisational capability - aligned to clear priorities - helps ERO work effectively at scale, apply our effort where it is most needed, and adapt as system expectations and risks change. It supports consistent and credible review and regulatory activity, timely and trusted insights, and clear reporting that is useful to providers, whānau and decision makers.

Aligning organisational capability and resources to priorities also supports value for money, reduces delivery risk, and underpins public trust in ERO's independence and effectiveness.

Our priorities

To strengthen the organisational capability needed to deliver our system priorities, ERO will focus on:

- **Lifting organisational performance and culture**, so our workforce is supported, focused and able to deliver consistently across all functions.
- **Strengthening data, analytics and supporting systems**, including digital, HR and finance systems, to enable sound decision-making and effective use of resources.
- **Improving how we engage with providers, whānau and system partners**, so our work is informed, credible and well connected to system needs.
- **Building the consistency and quality of recommendations and system insights**, so they are clear, targeted and focused on the most significant risks and priorities.
- **Improving the clarity and accessibility of our reporting**, so it is easy to understand and supports action by providers and whānau.
- **Strengthening Māori capability, integration and partnerships**, to ensure Māori perspectives are embedded across how ERO works and how improvement is supported.

Our enablers

These priorities are supported by a set of core organisational enablers that sustain delivery and allow ERO to adapt over time.

Our people

A skilled, experienced and credible workforce, supported by clear expectations, effective systems and a positive culture.

Our methods and tools

Fit-for-purpose methods and tools that support consistency, quality and adaptability.

Our partnerships

Trusted relationships with providers and system partners that strengthen confidence in ERO's work and extend our influence.

Our insights and resources

High-quality, timely insights and resources that support evidence-based decision-making.

Our expertise in supporting Māori education

Strong capability in te reo Māori and te ao Māori, with Māori perspectives embedded across ERO's work to support improvement for Māori learners.

