

Education Review Office (ERO): Reforming ERO's School Reports

To:	Hon Erica Stanford, Minister of Education		
Date submitted:	3 December 2025	Deadline:	
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Attachments:	Appendix A: Slides on improved reporting of school reviews		

Actions Sought

Addressee

Minister of
Education

Action sought

It is recommended that you:

- a) **Note** that this briefing provides you with an update on ERO's work to reform our school reports.
- b) **Discuss** proposed changes to ERO's school reporting at our meeting on 11 December.

Reforming ERO's School Reports

Purpose

1. This briefing sets out proposed reforms to ERO's school reports. These changes are currently being piloted and refined before being finalised.
2. We have provided a slide pack as Appendix A which provides an overview of what the new reports could look like.

Why reform school reports?

3. ERO reviews and reports on the performance of schools and kura across the country. ERO's reports play a critical role in accountability and driving improvement in education.
4. School reports serve for three distinct purposes:
 - 1) For **parents** – so they know the quality of education their children are receiving, they can make choices about schools, and they can support and challenge their school.
 - 2) For **schools** – so that they know where they are strong and where they need to improve and can identify actions they can take to strengthen education quality.
 - 3) For **Ministers and the Ministry** – so that they can make timely and informed decisions about whether additional support and interventions are needed and what will be most effective.
5. In recent years, ERO has had a strong focus on ensuring that school reports deliver for school boards and leaders and are useful to drive school improvement. This has meant making improvements to both the reports and the review process so that it drives real change.
6. However, parent feedback is that parents do not find ERO's school reports consistently useful. Parents report that:
 - Language used is too coded – it is hard to understand ERO's judgement on performance of the school.
 - Language used includes too much jargon – making it hard for parents to understand the strengths and weaknesses of schools.
 - Judgements are not comparable across schools – making it hard for parents to make informed choices of schools (instead relying on other sources e.g. rankings on NZ Herald, Stuff, Metro Mag).
 - Actions are not easy to understand – making it hard for parents to support and challenge their child's school.
7. In addition, the Ministry has told us that ERO's reports do not always provide clear recommendations that enable the Ministry to deploy the right interventions and support, or the clarity of evidence required to justify an intervention (without the Ministry collecting additional information).

Why reform reporting now?

8. Updating reporting to be more useful to parents is a key priority for ERO. This has included new ECE reporting being rolled out in July 2024 and revised school reports for primary and intermediate schools being rolled out in Term 4 2024.
9. The Education Reform Work Programme makes reforming ERO's reporting a priority as:
 - Schools are required to provide greater transparency for parents on their children's progress.
 - ERO reports will be able to be explicitly used legally as a basis for interventions.
 - The Ministry will be required to decide actions based on ERO's reports and formally inform the Minister and CRO.

What reforms is ERO proposing?

10. ERO is proposing to focus on two key changes to school reports:
 - a) Empowering Parents - by clear, comparable information on school performance and a Parent Guide.
 - b) Basis for action – by clear, consistent actionable next steps and recommendations for intervention when needed.

Empowering parents

11. ERO is proposing to reform school reporting so parents receive:
 - A **Summary** that is comparable across schools which shows how the schools is scoring across areas on a four-point scale and an overall statement.
 - A **Report Card** that is comparable across schools setting out ERO's judgement of the schools' performance on 13 key domains.
 - A **Parent's Guide to Schools** which sets out how they can use the Report to understand their child's school's performance, inform their choice of school, and the questions they can ask of their school.
12. Appendix A shows what these new products could look like.

Basis for action

13. ERO is proposing to reform school reports so schools receive:
 - **Improvement Actions** that set out clear next steps that can be used for Board planning and reporting. The actions will be from a new Action Bank to ensure consistency.
 - **Recommendations** that set out clearly if statutory intervention is recommended (along with the evidence to support it).

How will ERO's reports maintain impact in schools?

14. To ensure ERO's School Reports continue to lead to action in schools, ERO is proposing to:

- Continue with the existing four-point scale as it is widely accepted:
 - a) Excelling – for high quality provision.
 - b) Embedding – for good provision.
 - c) Working Towards – when provision is progressing but not yet at the level required.
 - d) Improvement needed – when provision is not adequate.
- Not to move to a single overall judgement that can lead to league tables – the experience in other jurisdictions is this can reduce more granular insight into what is and isn't working and limit buy-in and therefore impact in schools.
- Provide a context section that enables ERO to reflect a school's performance in the context of their students' prior attainment and barriers – enabling schools that "out-perform" given their context to be celebrated and schools that "cruise" to be highlighted.

Next Steps

15. ERO is currently piloting prototype reporting with 20 schools and seeking feedback from 50 parents. In January, we will report to you on the feedback and proposed final Reformed Schools' Reports.
16. If you agree, we will discuss these proposed changes with you at the officials meeting on 11 December.

Recommendations

17. It is recommended that you:
- a) **Note** that this briefing provides you with an update on ERO work to reform our school reports. **Noted**
 - b) **Discuss** proposed changes to ERO's school reporting at our meeting on 11 December. **Yes/No**



Shelley Booyesen
DCE, Review & Improvement Services

Hon Erica Stanford
Minister of Education

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Reforming ERO's School Reports

Education Review Office

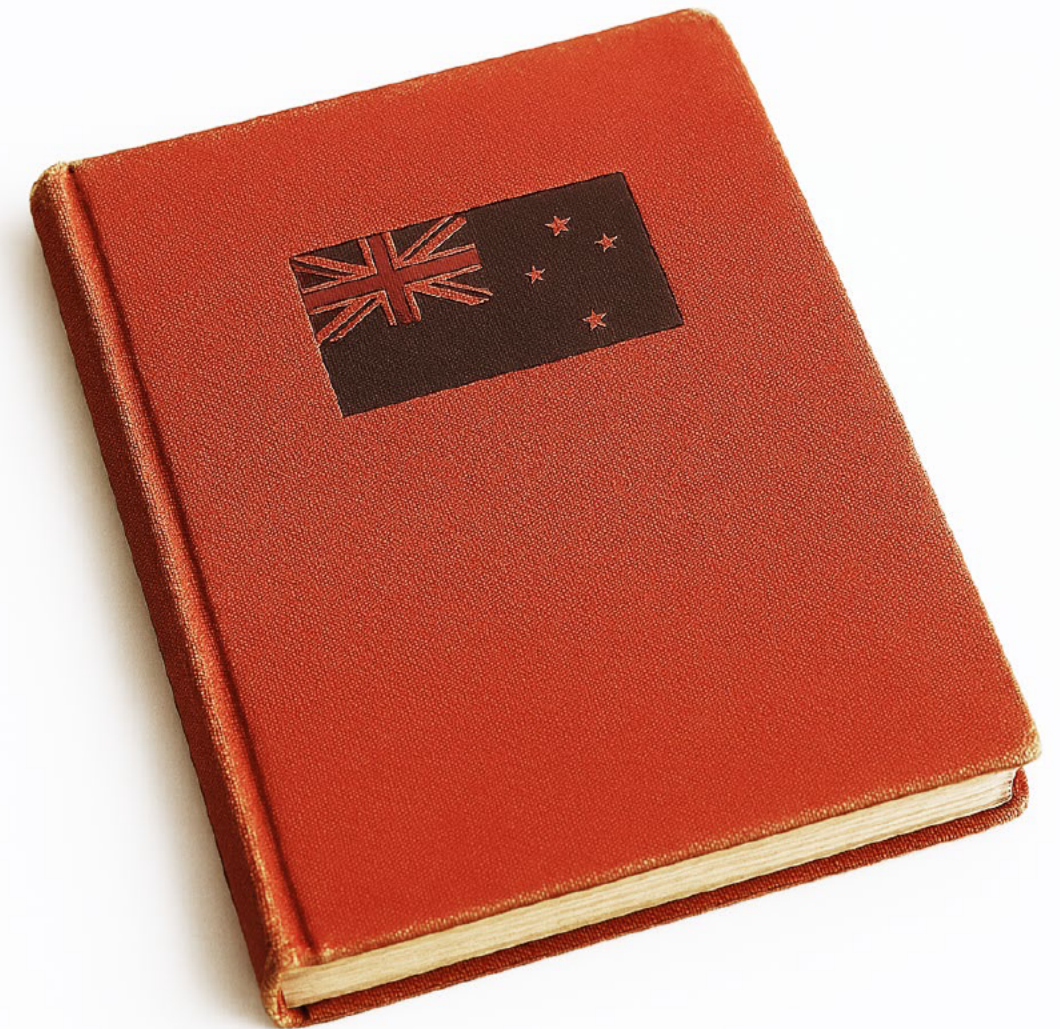
December 2025



EDUCATION REVIEW OFFICE
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga

We are reforming our school reporting

- To provide parents with a **clear, accessible, and comparable school report.**
- To provide Boards with **actionable next steps** that can inform school planning.
- To provide the Ministry and Ministers with **recommendations** that can be basis for interventions.



Proposal: A comparable summary

School Report for School X	
(address and ref number)	
Category	Number of areas
Excelling	2
Embedding	8
Working towards	1
Improvement needed	1
Student Health and Safety	Takes all reasonable steps

PLUS – A “Summary statement” for all schools

Proposal: Comparable judgements on 13 domains

School Report for School X (address and ref number)		
Outcomes		
Learner achievement	Embedding	Overall outcomes are below expected levels but students make significant progress at school.
Reading and writing	Embedding	Most learners are at expected levels in reading and writing.
Mathematics	Working towards	Less than half of learners are at expected curriculum levels in mathematics.
Attendance	Embedding	The large majority of learners attend school regularly, attendance is improving.
Inclusion and wellbeing	Embedding	Students at the school feel supported and bullying is low.
Equity	Embedding	Student groups are increasingly achieving at similar levels.
School conditions		
Leadership	Excelling	New leadership is working very well to improve student outcomes
Teaching and learning	Embedding	Teaching practice is improving and becoming more consistent.
Curriculum	Embedding	Learners have the sufficient opportunity to learn across the breadth and depth of the curriculum.
Assessment	Embedding	Assessment is reliable and appropriate and used to inform teaching.
Provision for learners with additional needs	Improvement needed	Not all learners with additional needs receive the support required to make meaningful progress.
School improvement	Excelling	Leadership relentlessly work towards goals in their strategic plan to improve learner outcomes.
Governance	Embedding	Governance practices are well established and support ongoing improvement and monitor progress against goals.
Student Health and Safety	Takes all reasonable steps	The School Board is taking reasonable steps to ensure student health and safety.

Proposal: a four point scale

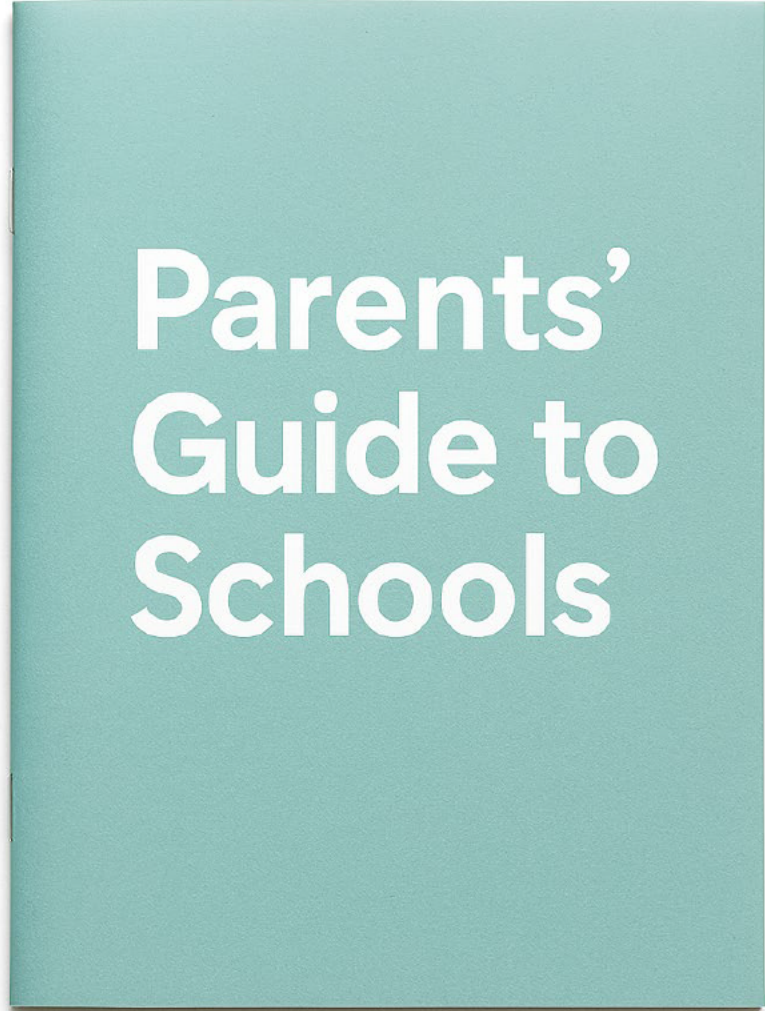
Improvement needed	Working towards	Embedding	Excelling
Not meeting standards; lacks capability; critical weaknesses present with the need for urgent, immediate and targeted action.	Not meeting standards, though there is clear intent and early progress. However, consistency is lacking and significant further development is required.	Meets expected standards and shows growing consistency and confidence. Systems are established and increasingly effective, with the school actively refining its work in response to evaluation and feedback.	Exceeding standards; consistently strong, innovative, and impactful. The school sustains excellence through continuous improvement and actively contributes to sector innovation and advancement.

- ✓ EROs four-point scale provides simplicity for stakeholders and reduces complexity in reporting and decision making.
- ✓ A four-point scale drives judgements – it forces a decision on whether schools are “above the line” (top two judgements) or “below the line” (bottom two judgements) and prevents judgements all sitting in a middle (not good or bad) category.
- ✓ The four-point scale is robust as it draws directly from the evidence-based School Improvement Framework where ERO makes judgements on an 8-point scale.
- ✓ ERO has measured the four-point scale on a set of school reports and is confident the distribution will be credible (i.e. not disproportionately in embedding or excelling).

Proposal: 13 internationally comparable domains

Domain	International comparator – Ofsted
Learner achievement	Achievement domain (and a separate Sixth Form domain for Yr 12 and Yr 13)
Reading and writing	
Mathematics	
Attendance	Attendance and Behaviour domain
Inclusion and wellbeing	Personal Development and Wellbeing domain
Equity	Inclusion domain
Leadership	Leadership and Governance domain
Teaching and learning	Curriculum and Teaching domain
Curriculum	
Assessment	
Provision for learners with additional needs	Inclusion domain
School improvement	Leadership and Governance domain
Governance	

Proposal: Parents' Guide to Schools



Parents' Guide to Schools

- ✓ Inform parents on what are the key things to look at when considering schools, and what questions to ask.
- ✓ Explain the outcomes and conditions that matter when seeing how schools perform.
- ✓ Explain how to use ERO reports.
- ✓ Provide information on how parents can ask questions of their schools and information on where to go if they are concerned, such as how to talk to school board.

Next steps

Prototype new reports are being piloted in Term 4 2025.

- Schools who are part of the trial will provide feedback.
- Parent testing will ensure language is clear, with no jargon or ambiguity.

The speed of roll out will depend on the feedback received.