



PLANZ report details areas for improvement in PLD system

4 August, 2017

The Professional Learning Association New Zealand Te Māngai Whakangungu Kaiako o Aotearoa (PLANZ) has released a report detailing the professional learning and development (PLD) industry's responses to the recent changes in how schools obtain PLD.

The report was requested by the Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, Matatū Aotearoa, which is set to assume responsibility for the design and management of government centrally-funded PLD for learning organisations from the start of 2018.

The report contains feedback from 14 English medium providers and 8 Māori medium providers who were surveyed in July, in which they outlined their emerging views on the strengths and weaknesses of the new model of PLD provision.

The intention of the new PLD system was to enable leaders of schools, kura and Kāhui Ako (Communities of Learning) to determine the nature of the PLD needed to meet their student achievement goals instead of being limited to pre-defined programmes. It also introduced a system of professional accreditation for PLD facilitators. The PLANZ report is supportive of schools' increased self determination and accreditation but notes that the system has resulted in several undesirable outcomes:

- Engagement with the new system has gotten off to a slow start, with a significant drop-off in allocated hours of PLD in the first months of 2017 compared to previous years. Lack of engagement has been particularly apparent in Māori medium kura and schools. Anecdotal evidence also suggests that engagement has been less than hoped for in the schools/kura that need it most (many of which are lower decile, rural and have significant Māori and Pacific Island student populations).
- Māori medium providers reported that the new model has been particularly challenging in their sector
- The new processes are complex and time consuming, imposing substantial uncompensated costs on both educators and PLD providers. This results in a cumbersome system with much greater transactional costs and many opportunities for error.
- While the new model has the commendable goal of increasing agency for schools/kura, there is an underestimated need to focus on building the capacity of school leaders understanding of how to take an evidence based approach to schooling improvement.

- While the independent accreditation panel appears to have coped with the intense pressure to work within the new process, PLD providers have witnessed a difficulty in appointing new facilitators to the profession who are yet to be accredited as it takes time for them to build a portfolio for accreditation and create demand in the sector for their expertise.
- There has been an increase in competition between providers as they try to survive in a much more flexible and market driven environment

The changes have resulted in facilitators and their employers having less certainty around income and job security, with the eight Māori-medium providers surveyed seeing a 1/3 reduction in the numbers of facilitators employed and the 14 English-medium providers surveyed experiencing a decrease of 22%.

“It is the opinion of PLANZ that a system of accreditation should be positive for all stakeholders, helping to professionalise the provision of PLD and develop trust in consistent provision of professional support,” English-medium co-chair Dr Camilla Highfield said.

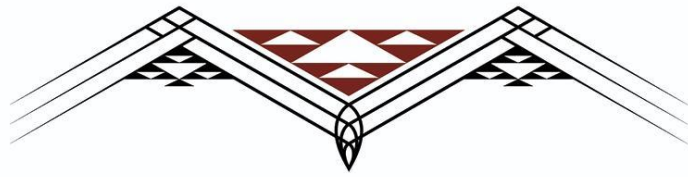
Nichole Gully the Māori Medium co-chair commented “PLANZ looks forward to a constructive partnership with the Education Council that is aimed at building upon the strengths of the new model and working through the challenges of working in the competitive, contractual model to ensure that schools that most need the PLD resource are able to access it to lift achievement for young people in Aotearoa New Zealand”.

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Professional Learning Association of New Zealand

Te Māngai Whakangungu Kaiako o Aotearoa

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