



June 17, 2010

Dear Parents/Caregivers,

I am writing to help support you before you attempt to make sense of your child's first report under the newly introduced *National Standards* regime.

From our recent consultation/feedback from a group of parents it is clear that parents:

- value the intent of 'plain english reporting' and want to be actively involved in their child's education;
- want to know more about National Standards and have any current misunderstandings clarified;
- recognise the workload/time commitment associated with ongoing reporting, including but not limited to, written reports;
- have divided opinion (and for some, reserved opinion) on whether National Standards are in fact useful or desirable.

Thank you to those who provided reaction to newsletter information, responded with feedback on our fictitious report or in any other way you have participated. This information has been critical in re-shaping our approach.

Since the launch of National Standards, RSS staff and Board have given significant attention to the wave of resources and information consistently being sent out. We have had robust debate about some of the driving forces of National Standards, have critically evaluated aspects of our programme and have worked/re-worked guidelines especially around reporting. At all times we have kept, as a focus, the needs of the learner and the new National Administration Guidelines, which we must comply with.

To assist you we have put together a 'Frequently Asked Questions' factsheet and have sent home an example of a report, so you can begin to consider the nature of National Standards and the report format. *This is a start*—we fully recognise that there will be other questions and for that reason we invite you to forward them to office@russellst.school.nz so that we can add them to this file. Please note a copy of these will be placed on our website for future reference.

So, when will the report be sent home? The report will be sent home along with the portfolio at the next Student Led Conference (SLC) in Week 2 of Term 3. At the SLC the teacher will briefly introduce you to

this. After taking it home and considering it some more, if there are any questions, we invite you to email or chat with the teacher at an appropriate time. Please note bookings for SLC's will be open from June 20.

It is also timely to advise you that we are arranging a series of three follow up parent workshops focused on getting started in reading (learning to read), getting hooked on reading (developing reading as a habit) and getting to the point of being able to use reading to enhance other learning. More details will be advertised through the TNB.

As with any innovation or new idea, I fully expect there to be a settling in phase, during which time we will need to work hard at clarifying the intent of the new National Standards and Reporting to Parents framework to you. It also has to be said that this is very much a 'work in progress for us'. Like you, it is our 'first go' and we have been working under significant time constraints. Even at the time of writing a vitally important guiding document has yet to arrive in the school.

And finally a reminder that we will be seeking feedback on the full reporting framework at the end of the year.

Please ask if there is any query you have about the report or National Standards. For 'bigger picture' questions please direct these to one of our 'Think Tank' Leaders, either Elly, James, Deb, Julie or David.

Yours faithfully,

David Reardon
Principal