

Tolley turns deaf ear to teachers ^[1]

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Education Minister Anne Tolley yesterday told teachers she would be "appalled" if they told parents their children were failing National Standards.

The face-off came in front of 500 early childhood teachers, primary school teachers and principals at the New Zealand Educational Institute's conference in Rotorua. She told them the standards were here to stay.

Kay Hume, a Year One teacher at decile 5 Puni School, south of Pukekohe, said working with the new standards had been heartbreaking. The revised benchmarks were "drawing an unrealistic line of achievement".

The conference heard that just one child in Miss Hume's class of 21 was close to meeting the required standards in reading.

"You are setting up our children to fail," she told Mrs Tolley.

Last term she started showing parents how their children were faring against the National Standards in reading.

"They asked, 'Is my child a failure?' I said, 'According to National Standards, yes, but according to me they are doing exactly what they are supposed to be doing'."

Miss Hume asked Mrs Tolley: "Will you listen to the experiences of the sector this year and call a halt to the implementation of National Standards while these fundamental flaws are addressed?"

Mrs Tolley replied: "The answer is no, we will not stop, and I'm appalled that any teacher would say to any parent that their child is a failure."

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- reprinted from the New Zealand Herald

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