

Tapu

Religious Studies Teachers Association
of Aotearoa New Zealand



Newsletter (1): August 2012

Dear colleagues

As I write the big storm is buffeting the country, and in Wellington, while we have not had snow (yet) we have had wind gusts up to 200kph. Our thoughts are with all who have suffered damage or loss. The time of Matariki, however, reminds us that the days will soon be lengthening, which for me is definitely connected to hope and faith.

The following message has just been received from the Ministry of Education. It gives the news we have been waiting for about the timing for the consultation on the Religious Studies Achievement Standards, starting on 12 July, for 4 weeks.

“The Ministry of Education, in association with NZQA, is reviewing the Levels 1-3 religious studies achievement standards. The focus of this review is to ensure that the standards meet quality design principles for achievement standards and recognise worthwhile outcomes that relate to the key competencies of The New Zealand Curriculum. These achievement standards were originally developed in 2007 and 2008 and are now due for review to ensure that they continue to be fit for purpose. These standards need to be able to be used by people with a specific religious affiliation as well as by those who have none, but wish to acquire “religious literacy”.

A working group with members drawn from diverse religious backgrounds and diverse types of school met on 5-6 June to begin this review. **Schools and other stakeholders will be consulted on the draft Religious Studies matrix and the reviewed standards for a four week period beginning on 12 July 2013.**

It is currently being proposed that all the standards continue to be assessed internally because this provides more opportunity for authentic assessment activities to be developed that relate to relevant religious contexts.

Conditions of Assessment are being developed for the standards and will be included in the July/August consultation package.

God is that
to which
your heart
clings and
entrusts
itself.

Martin Luther
King

PTO

The standards will be registered on NZQA's Directory of Assessment Standards in December 2013 and may be used from 2014 onwards. There will be a transition period during which the existing achievement standards may continue to be used."

We know that you will be interested to take part in the consultation, and suggest that you mark a time in your diary now when you will be able to consider the material. The consultation period starts on the last day of term, and finishes two weeks into the new term, so this should enable you to have a good think about the proposed adjustments.

It is really important that every school sends in its own response, not just rely on group responses, for instance from the Association.

I am in contact with the Ministry of Education, and can express a viewpoint about what is being proposed, but I am not a practitioner, and it is your views that matter. I will be very interested to read what you think of the information that will come in the consultation package if you care to email me, and I will do my best to represent your thoughts, but it is important that your (or group) sends in its own response.

Some random thoughts:

In an effort to educate myself a little better about Religious Studies, as distinct from Religious Education, I recently did a web search. Wikipedia was a revelation. We function in a complex area, and our ability to hold a breadth of knowledge and vision is crucial as we work to provide the best education we can for our students.

I considered finding a new quotation for the front page of the newsletter, but having come across the following website I found it so interesting that rather than choose one quotation from it I simply give you the source. You may find it stimulating, fun, or of relevance to others—or perhaps it is a source of inspiration that you have already discovered.

http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/topics/topic_religion3.html.

Religious Studies Teachers Association
PO Box 12307, Wellington 6144
T: (04) 496-1739 | E: s.apathy@nzceo.org.nz



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