



Manurewa High School

Piki atu ki te rangi

24 November 2025

Hon. Erica Stanford
Minister of Education
Parliament Buildings
Wellington 6011
Aotearoa New Zealand

Tēnā koe e te Minita,

Re: Proposed Amendments to the Education Act – Removal of Te Tiriti o Waitangi Commitments

We write on behalf of the Manurewa High School Board of Trustees to express our deep concern regarding your government's proposed changes to the Education Act, which seek to remove explicit references to Te Tiriti o Waitangi from school governance requirements.

At Manurewa High School, Te Tiriti is not a symbolic gesture or an isolated obligation — it is a cornerstone of our educational practice, leadership, and community engagement. Our school proudly operates within indigenous frameworks, guided by Te Ara o Taawhaki, and grounded in the belief that honouring Te Tiriti strengthens outcomes for all aakonga. This approach is not theoretical; it is lived, measured, and seen every day in the success of our students and the unity of our community.

Our Commitment to Te Tiriti is by Design, Not Compliance

Our Board is composed of a co-chair structure that includes Mana Whenua leadership by design, not by requirement. This partnership ensures that decisions are made with integrity, whakapapa, context, and the voices of Māori — and all communities — centred at the forefront of governance. Far from creating division, this structure has enhanced cohesion and clarity of purpose within our kura.

The removal of Te Tiriti from the Act would not reflect the reality of our school, nor would it improve educational outcomes for our region. In fact, it would undermine decades of local effort and partnership that have directly contributed to:

- Increased student engagement and belonging
- Strengthened connections between whānau, kura, and community
- Improved cultural responsiveness and staff capability
- Demonstrated academic uplift through identity-enhancing practices
- A school culture where success is shared, collective, and grounded in mana

This is what we call Manurewa Magic — a thriving ecosystem built on respect, relationships, and the shared aspiration to piki atu ki te rangi.

Te Tiriti Enhances, Not Hinders, Educational Excellence

Our implementation of Te Ara o Taawhaki has empowered students of all backgrounds to see themselves reflected in their learning and to strive for excellence. This framework is not divisive; it is unifying. It recognises our collective responsibilities — Tangata Whenua, Tangata Moana, and Tangata Tiriti — and ensures a strengths-based, world-class education that honours who our students are and where they come from.

We want to be unequivocal:

Removing Te Tiriti from the Act will not strengthen education in Aotearoa.

For schools like ours, it would strip away foundational principles that have guided some of our most significant progress.

Manurewa High School Will Not Be Opting into These Changes

As a Board, we will continue to uphold Te Tiriti commitments in all aspects of governance, regardless of legislative alterations. Our kura has seen the transformative power of this work, and we remain committed to carrying it forward for our 2,300 students (60 different nationalities), their whaanau, and our wider community.

We acknowledge your role and responsibilities as Minister, and we welcome genuine koorero about what is best for all rangatahi. However, we cannot support changes that remove Te Tiriti from the heart of our education system — a system built for and with all New Zealanders.

We invite you to visit Manurewa High School to see firsthand how Te Tiriti-centred practice is not only effective but essential in lifting outcomes and building a stronger, more inclusive Aotearoa.

Ngā manaakitanga,

Tori Ngataki
Board Co-Presiding Member (Mana Whenua)
Manurewa High School Board of Trustees

Talia Brown
Board Co-Presiding Member
Manurewa High School Board of Trustees

Manurewa High School Board of Trustees
Piki Atu ki te Rangi – Manurewa Magic in Action