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Making secondary schools great

A hard-hitting new book says New Zealand can tackle educational disparity and make our secondary schools great.

But author Bali Haque says it requires a completely different approach to education reform than in the past.

Mr Haque has been a secondary school principal and is a former deputy chief executive of the New Zealand Qualification Authority. He says major educational reforms such as Tomorrow's Schools and NCEA were poorly planned, implemented and evaluated over many years. He's also critical of the quality of school leadership from principals.

In *Changing our secondary schools*, published by NZCER Press this week, he says a package of carefully designed and tested measures is needed to move secondary schools from good to outstanding. He hopes the book will stimulate debate and encourage a more coherent approach to education reform.

Chapters explore school effectiveness, school decile and the impact of socio-economic factors on education. He analyses the move to NCEA and the challenges and compromises that shaped it over a number of years. Though he concludes it is now a credible qualification, he says it had a deeply troubled start.

In a blueprint for change, Mr Haque urges New Zealand to:

- Address economic and social disparities
- Find new tools to measure school effectiveness
- Do more to support and develop great teachers
- Change the way schools are structured and reduce the number of schools
- Bulk fund teachers' salaries to increase flexibility
- Reorganise the education bureaucracy

Bali Haque has led successful change in four secondary schools and has just finished a three year assignment leading the National College in Rarotonga.

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The book is published by NZCER Press. For further information or for help getting hold of the author, contact NZCER communications manager Sarah Boyd on sarah.boyd@nzcer.org.nz or 027-231 4300