

Release of NCEA data and its uses

Date:	17 April 2018	NZQA Priority:	High
Security Level:	In confidence	Report No.	1119353

	Action Sought	Deadline
Minister of Education	<p>a. note that final 2017 NCEA and University Entrance roll-based attainment statistics are now available;</p> <p>b. note that NZQA is proposing to no longer produce NCEA attainment data using the participation-based measure from 2019 onwards, and is providing that advice and recommendation to the NZQA Board's 30 April board meeting;</p> <p>c. note that we are working through the consequences for schools of removing the participation-based measure, and will report back to you in early May on this;</p> <p>d. note that decisions about the removal of the participation-based measure in our reporting to schools will be communicated to schools when the new enrolment-based measure is introduced to the sector in early June;</p> <p>e. note that NZQA and the Ministry of Education release data in a way that minimises the need for, and the development of, school league tables and will continue to proactively implement this practice;</p> <p>f. agree to release this advice in full after June 2018 when NZQA begins its communications on the enrolment-based measure with the sector.</p>	Immediate

Contact for Telephone Discussion (if required)

Name	Position	Telephone	Cellphone	1 st Contact
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Minister's Office to Complete:

- Noted
- Seen
- Approved
- Needs change
- Withdrawn
- Overtaken by Events
- See Minister's comments
- Declined

Referred to:

Comments:

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Recommended Action

It is recommended you:

- a. **note** that final 2017 NCEA and University Entrance roll-based attainment statistics are now available;
- b. **note** that NZQA is proposing to no longer produce NCEA attainment data using the participation-based measure from 2019 onwards, and is providing that advice and recommendation to the NZQA Board's 30 April board meeting;
- c. **note** that we are working through the consequences for schools of removing the participation-based measure, and will report back to you in early May on this;
- d. **note** that decisions about the removal of the participation-based measure in our reporting to schools will be communicated to schools when the new enrolment-based measure is introduced to the sector in early June;
- e. **note** that NZQA and the Ministry of Education release data in a way that minimises the need for, and the development of, school league tables and will continue to proactively implement this practice;
- f. **agree** to release this advice in full after June 2018 when NZQA begins its communications on the enrolment-based measure with the sector.



Karen Poutasi (Dr)
Chief Executive
NZQA

17/04/18



Craig Jones (Dr)
Deputy Secretary
Evidence, Data and Knowledge
Ministry of Education

17/04/18



Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

8/5/18

NOTED/APPROVED

Release of NCEA data and its uses

Purpose of Report

1. You have asked for advice on the future release of NCEA results data following the implementation of the NCEA enrolment-based measure in January 2019 for reporting 2018 NCEA results, and the work we do to preclude the publication of league tables of school results.

Background

2. Following the recent briefings on the new enrolment-based NCEA measure, Ministers have expressed concern about the misunderstanding and misuse of NCEA data at the school-level. In particular, issues have been raised about the range of different measures, the complexity and possible misinterpretation by users, and the creation of school-by-school league tables.

Comment

New NCEA enrolment-based measure

3. A new NCEA enrolment-based measure has been developed, and in early June officials will be engaging with the sector about the change [CR17158 refers; joint NZQA Ministry briefing]. This measure is for use by the Ministry of Education (the Ministry) and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) for public reporting, and by schools for planning and evaluation purposes.
4. The new NCEA enrolment-based measure is an improvement on existing measures. It involves matching National Student Numbers (NSNs) across NZQA and Ministry data systems to create a more complete student population for the purposes of deriving NCEA and University Entrance attainment rates.
5. The new measure provides a more complete view of secondary schooling attainment. It is based on a total count of domestic students on a school's roll in a given year, including students who leave early in the year [CR1091110 refers; joint NZQA Ministry briefing].
6. When the new measure is introduced to the sector and schools from early June, the Ministry and NZQA will consult with them and seek their feedback on how school-level attainment is reported. We will be seeking their feedback on any unintended consequences of the way school level reporting is presented [CR17158 refers].

Participation-based NCEA attainment measure

7. The participation-based NCEA attainment measure has historically been provided to schools by NZQA and published in the NZQA Annual Statistics Report. It focuses on students participating in NCEA and shows attainment for those students who are entered for enough credits to obtain an NCEA qualification in the relevant academic year. Attainment under this measure is considerably higher than for other measures because it is based on a subset of potentially eligible students. The participation-based measure was introduced to recognise that many schools have programmes that cater for students who are not following a regular NCEA pathway of Year 11 NCEA Level 1, Year 12 NCEA Level 2 and Year 13 NCEA Level 3. This includes students who are in Alternative Education units, Teen Parent units, ESOL students and those who have special needs.

8. There are differing views in the sector about the use of this measure. Some principals use the measure for the reasons highlighted above, while others believe it is misused to artificially inflate apparent achievement at the school-level.

Releasing data

9. Neither NZQA nor the Ministry releases NCEA attainment data as a league table. However, both agencies are generally required to release school-level information if requested. This requirement stems from legislation such as the Official Information Act 1982, and government policies such as the Government's Open Government and Data Programme.
10. In order to ensure a more well-informed discussion about attainment, both agencies proactively release secondary school attainment information, along with analysis and interpretation of results. As well as helping to ensure a more informed debate, the proactive release of information is considerably more efficient in terms of staffing resources, timeliness and quality.

NZQA

11. NZQA releases aggregate and unit record data through a secure portal to schools; it is not accessible by the public. The systems allow a school to investigate its performance and compare its results to a selected school, or schools of a similar nature. The data released includes qualification, endorsement and standards attainment data. This data is widely used by schools for academic planning and reporting purposes.
12. As part of the NCEA public release, NZQA releases consolidated reports. These are csv files of aggregate attainment, and include attainment for each school (sorted by school number). The consolidated report on qualification attainment only includes the results as a rate; it does not include the numerator or denominator. To assist with analysis, it does indicate where the measure is based on a small cohort.
13. To date the consolidated reports include both NCEA roll-based and participation-based measures, as does the NZQA Annual Statistics Report. The intention is that from 2019 these reports will be focussed on the NCEA enrolment-based measure; NZQA is proposing to discontinue producing participation-based attainment data and will recommend this change to the NZQA Board at the Board's 30 April meeting. This will help reduce some confusion caused by a range of differing publicly available attainment statistics and assist people in being able to interpret data.
14. The recommendation to the NZQA Board will include the proposal to no longer produce reports for schools using the participation-based measure once the new enrolment-based measure is introduced. However, NZQA needs to carefully work through the consequences for schools if they can no longer access a participation-based measure of NCEA attainment from NZQA.
15. It is important that schools who support inclusive education through, for example, Teen Parent Units and Alternative Education Units, can easily access reporting that provides meaningful views of both students who are on the NCEA pathway and students who are on alternative pathways in a way that minimises additional reporting workload for those schools. We need to ensure that the data features that are made available to schools enable this. We will report back to you on how we propose to do this in early May .

The Ministry of Education

16. The Ministry does not currently release NCEA data. It does compile and release school leaver qualification information, which makes heavy use of NCEA data, but also includes non-NCEA qualifications such as the International Baccalaureate. The Ministry releases this data by school on *Education Counts' Find a School* pages. However, we have deliberately not included any functionality that allows users to select multiple schools to display and compare results.
17. The Ministry also releases detailed pivot tables of school leaver data. However, it does not include school as one of the variables in the tables.
18. In recent years the release of school leaver data has been coordinated with the release of other data (around August) in an endeavour to present a broad and coherent picture. This is called the Public Achievement Information release. A range of products are produced at the same time to assist with public interpretation and understanding of the data. These include bespoke posters designed for parents, simple descriptive analysis such as education sector indicators, and high-level data tables. Again, there are no individual school by school comparisons.

Proactive release of advice

19. We recommend that this advice is released in full after June 2018. NZQA will begin its scheduled communication work with the sector on the new enrolment-based measure in June. This will give NZQA enough time to provide a detailed briefing to peak bodies and provide information to schools before the briefing is released.