Education Report: NCEA Review- End of public engagement and next steps

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<th>To:</th>
<th>Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education</th>
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<td>Date:</td>
<td>15 November 2018</td>
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<td>Messaging seen by Communications team:</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Round Robin:</td>
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Purpose of Report

This paper confirms the end of the public engagement phase of the NCEA review on 19th October and provides a summary of next actions for the Review, including the progress of the Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) and Professional Advisory Group (PAG), next steps in the co-design process.

Summary

1. The public engagement phase of the NCEA review was launched on the 27th May and closed on the 19th October. There have been approximately 16,000 points of engagement with students, teachers, kaiako, school leaders, parents, whānau, iwi, employers and the wider community over this period. This includes approximately 8,000 submissions via the online survey and approximately 8,000 points of engagement via workshops, interviews, focus groups, or other in-person engagements.

2. We engaged NZCER to collate and analyse the feedback provided during engagement. NZCER’s draft report is attached for your information as annex 1. The report shows that while NCEA is deemed a valuable qualification there are areas where it could be strengthened. Given the high level of public interest in the Review we recommend release of the final NZCER Report and any long form submissions from groups and organisations on 30 November.

3. The Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) on NCEA and the Professional Advisory Group (PAG) are progressing their work. Both groups have met several times over the past two months and both are beginning to appreciate the complexity and range of inputs required in order to reach conclusions about the priorities which will inform recommendations.

4. In December we will hold a two day co-design workshop. This event will engage the Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG), the Professional Advisory Group (PAG), the NCEA Reference Group, and a variety of users of the qualification to:
• Provide visibility of all the feedback, comments and long form submissions which have been submitted.

• Consider the feedback received during engagement and use this to explore, define and assess potential ways to strengthen NCEA.

5 The participants for both days have been carefully selected to ensure that the voices of students, teachers, parents, whānau, employers and other users of the qualification are part of developing recommendations for the future of NCEA.

6 We would like discuss the outputs of the co-design process with you following the December event and have engaged with your office to find a suitable time for this.

Recommended Actions

The Ministry of Education recommends you:

a. **Note** the draft report from NZCER detailing analysis of the feedback received during the engagement phase of the review.

   **Noted**

b. **Note** that the Ministry intends to release the final NZCER report and long form submission from groups & organisations on or before the 30 November 2018.

   **Noted**

c. **Note** the arrangements underway for a Co-Design Laboratory on 5 and 6 December to consider options for change for the qualification in the light of the feedback received during consultation.

   **Noted**

d. **Note** we are working with your office in regards to your attendance at the December co-design event.

   **Noted**

e. **Note** Hon Tracey Martin, Associate Minister of Education, has indicated interest in attending the December co-design event.

   **Noted**

f. **Note** the Ministry’s recommendation that you invite Hon Nikki Kaye and David Seymour MP to the Co Design Laboratory.

   **Noted**
g. **Agree** to the proposed cross-party engagement outlined below in paras 25-26

   **Agree** / **Disagree**

h. **Agree** that this Education Report can be proactively released

   **Release** / **Not release**

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Pauline Cleaver  
Associate Deputy Secretary  
Early Learning and Student Achievement  
15/11/2018

Hon Chris Hipkins  
Minister of Education  
23/11/18

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Proactively Released
Background

1. The public engagement phase for the NCEA Review was launched on 27 May and has now closed (METIS 1121402 and 1139065 refer). This engagement around NCEA formed a part of the wider Education Conversation | Kōrero Mātauranga. Engagement was intended to be in-depth and far reaching with both a national and regional focus, and both general and targeted events.

2. At the commencement of the review a Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) was formed to challenge traditional thinking on senior secondary education (METIS 1097330 refers). In September a Professional Advisory Group (PAG) was formed to enable secondary principals and teachers to bring their technical expertise and deep knowledge of the sector to the review (METIS 1139065 refers).

3. The Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) and Professional Advisory Group (PAG) have been regularly meeting to formulate their views, and create options and prototypes for possible changes to NCEA. The Ministry has supported both groups with secretarial services and technical support.

Public engagement phase outcomes

4. We asked all New Zealanders to share their views and experiences of NCEA – the challenges, the successes, what they like, and how NCEA can better serve our young people. We wanted to make sure that everyone’s voice has been heard.

5. We have seen a significant amount of interest and engagement. There have been approximately 16,000 points of engagement, with about 8,000 people completed a survey or made a detailed submission. Approximately 8,000 people attended a workshop, meeting, hui, fono, focus group, in-depth interview or debate.

6. Participation has been diverse; over a quarter of survey responses were from young people, around 1,500 points of engagement have been recorded with principals, and over 3,500 teachers have attended a workshop, meeting, completed a survey, or made a submission.

7. About 240 students participated in the Make Your Mark competition that aimed to engage the student voice on NCEA. The winning entries were exhibited at Parliament and the Wellington Central Library in October.

8. Through targeted engagement activities, we have listened to members of our society who aren’t always heard and who have not always been well served by the education system. These groups included:
   a. students of NCEA in diverse settings
   b. students of NCEA in correctional facilities
   c. NCEA students who have learning support needs
   d. Māori, Pacific and Asian communities
   e. refugee and migrant communities
   f. Rainbow Youth and the LGBTQI community
   g. Pacific Realm countries.

9. We engaged the New Zealand Council of Education Research (NZCER) to collate and analyse the feedback provided during engagement. NZCER have identified 31 key findings addressing what is currently working well with NCEA, what isn’t, and what could be strengthened within the current qualification. NZCER’s draft report is attached for your
information as annex 1, including a summary of these findings. We are working with NZCER to finalise this report, including addressing errors of fact and seeking a fuller discussion of feedback provided by teachers and school leaders, as well as feedback from people in Māori medium education settings.

10. These findings show that while most people feel they understand how NCEA works, a large number of users are unsure about its value, whether it works well, and whether it supports good teaching and learning to happen.

11. We believe there will be a significant amount of public interest in NZCER’s report and suggest it is proactively released upon its completion in late November. Additionally, we have received over three hundred and sixty long form submissions from individuals, groups and organisations during the engagement phase. This represents a significant body of effort from the wider public to engage on the future of the qualification. We propose those submissions which are from groups and organisations are also proactively released alongside the report.

Recent meetings of the Ministerial Advisory Group and the Professional Advisory Group

12. The Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) have met three times over September and October. These meetings have focused on consideration of background briefs prepared by the Ministry to support both groups in the provision of advice on the future of the qualification.

13. The Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) have reported that it is beginning to appreciate the complexity and range of inputs required in order to reach conclusions about the priorities which will inform recommendations. To date discussions have had particular focus on NCEA Level 1, Literacy and Numeracy, coherence and equity issues within NCEA, and the critical role of the National Curriculum.

14. The Professional Advisory Group (PAG) has traversed a similar set of topics across four meetings.

15. The Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) and Professional Advisory Group (PAG) have identified some key outcomes to work towards, including improving workload for students and teachers and increasing the coherency of programmes of learning. On 14-15 November, the groups will meet together to jointly continue developing their thinking and shape up ideas for change in preparation to make recommendations to you.

The December Co-Design Laboratory

16. We are making a real effort to bring together as many people to help co-design the future of NCEA for our young people. That includes principals, teachers, parents, tertiary organisations, employers, children and young people, iwi, Māori, Pacific people, Asian New Zealanders, and the LGBTQI+ community, along with people with disabilities and learning support needs.

17. By seeking out a diverse range of people to be involved in the conversation around the NCEA Review and enabling them to take part in nation-wide conversations, the Government will gain a far greater understanding of what is important to New Zealanders about the future and vision for education for the next 30 years.
18. This collaborative, co-design approach is important as it allows the NCEA Qualification and wider education system to be shaped in a way that is inclusive and ensures it meets the needs of the modern world.

19. In February and July we conducted Co-Design Laboratories focused on synthesising and socialising the views of these varied users, and on helping our key stakeholders and users to better understand the system through the perspective of others. Feedback from these events suggests that they have helped participants:

a) Understand others’ perspectives on NCEA, building empathy.

b) Build shared conceptions of the challenges different people face working with NCEA, and the opportunities for improvement through the NCEA Review.

c) Share ideas for possible changes, and develop a sense of which hold most promise.

d) Build confidence in participating in the review and having robust debates about the future of the qualification.

20. We are now preparing a third Co-Design Laboratory in the first week of December to consider the feedback provided during the engagement phase and explore options for change. This workshop will bring together three distinct perspectives on NCEA to explore how the qualification can be improved:

a) The perspectives of students and NCEA’s other diverse users expressed through the public engagement.

b) The expertise of the teaching profession in understanding how NCEA functions in practice in schools and kura; and of the tertiary profession who deliver NCEA.

c) What the data, research and evidence tells us about how we should build a high performing assessment system; in the context of devolved system.

21. The December Co-Design Laboratory will be held over two days on the 5th and 6th of December at Westpac Stadium in Wellington. The detailed agenda for this event in currently in development.

22. We expect approximately 100 participants to attend the first day made up of NCEA Regional Engagement Leads (a group of secondary school principals who have championed engagement with the review), Kāiārahi (who we have engaged with to provide advice on how to best engage Ākonga Māori communities in their region and to assist in understanding local patterns that emerge in the engagement phase), and the NCEA Reference Group. This day will focus on sharing the findings of the engagement phase and capturing input from these groups.

23. The second day of the event will expand the number of participants to also include the Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG), Professional Advisory Group (PAG), Youth Advisory Group (YAG), as well as students and teachers. Discussions on this day will be focused on areas of enquiry and potential change put forward by the Ministerial and Professional Advisory Groups and the Ministry.

24. The outputs of these discussions will be synthesised and provided to the Advisory Groups to inform their recommendations to you, as well as informing the Ministry’s advice on the future of the qualification which will be provided in February 2019.
25. You signalled your intent for cross-party involvement in the NCEA Review to the Ministry back in February. Since then you invited Hon Nikki Kaye as education spokesperson for the National Party and David Seymour MP as education spokesperson for the ACT Party to meet with Ellen MacGregor-Reid, Deputy Secretary, Early Learning and Student Achievement at the Ministry of Education and with Jeremy Baker, chair of the MAG. Following this meeting you have indicated your desire for, and Hons Kaye and David Seymour MP have requested, further opportunities to engage with the NCEA review as it proceeds (Metis 1119350 refers).

26. We suggest you invite Hon Nikki Kaye and David Seymour MP to the Co Design Laboratory in December and provide them with the NZCER Report to review ahead of its formal release date. With your agreement, we will work with your office to draft correspondence to this effect.

Next Steps

27. We will work with your office regarding your availability to attend the December Co-Design Laboratory event.

28. We intend to release the final report from NZCER on the feedback received during engagement, as well as the long form submissions from groups and organisations, prior to the end of November.

29. In February 2019, the Ministry will provide recommendations for changes to NCEA for your consideration.

Proactive Release

30. Proactive release of Education Report

   a. "It is intended that this Education Report is proactively released as per your expectation that information be released as soon as possible. Any information which may need to be withheld will be done so in line with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982."

Annexes

Annex 1: The NCEA Review – Findings from the public engagement on the future of NCEA (DRAFT)

Annex 2: The NCEA Review – Summary of findings from public engagement on the future of NCEA

Annex 3: The NCEA Review – What are people’s experiences?

Annex 4: The NCEA Review – People engaged in many ways

Annex 5: The NCEA Review – How can NCEA be strengthened?

Annex 6: The NCEA Review – What do people think about the 6 Big Opportunities?