



Briefing Note: NCEA review Ask Me Anything – debrief

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| To: | Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education | | |
| Date: | 18 July 2018 | Priority: | Medium |
| Security Level: | In Confidence | METIS No: | 1138793 |
| Drafter: | Tom O'Brien | DDI: | s 9(2)(a) OIA |
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| Messaging seen by Communications team: | No | | |

Summary

- This Briefing Note summarises in detail responses to, and the outcomes of, your AMA session on Reddit on 9 July.

Pauline Cleaver

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Acting Deputy Secretary
Early Learning and Student Achievement

17/7/18

Background

1. Between 3.15pm and 4.15pm on Monday 9 July, you ran an Ask Me Anything (AMA) session on Reddit focused on the NCEA review. The AMA was hosted on /r/newzealand, the subreddit (sub-forum) for Reddit's New Zealand community.

Results of AMA event

2. As of the time of drafting, the AMA thread had 113 comments on it and was 91% upvoted (i.e., 91% of votes on comments in the thread were positive, and 9% of votes were negative). The thread has been viewed 14,400 times. We also saw significant engagement through Facebook, both on the Ministry's Facebook page and your page. The AMA event also appeared to result in a significant increase in traffic to the NCEA review website (over 50%) on the day of the AMA, with a smaller increase in traffic across the remainder of the week.
3. The levels of positive response to comments were similar to AMA events run by Jacinda Ardern (87% upvoted) and Andrew Little (93% upvoted) in February 2017. While the number of comments received was smaller than for those AMA threads (which received 214 and 346 comments respectively), this would be expected given the narrower focus of your AMA, which related only to the NCEA review – in comparison to other political AMAs, which typically cover a wide range of political and personal matters.
4. Overall, the calibre and constructiveness of the comments was impressive. The overwhelming majority of the comments displayed insight about NCEA and senior secondary education, and with a few exceptions, commenters appeared appreciative of the opportunity to engage with you. A few commenters expressed frustration about a lack of commitment to detailed policy responses in your answers; but these comments were few, and a number were responded to by other users explaining that the review process is ongoing.

Major themes

5. The AMA showcased variable perspectives and areas of focus from commenters – though as noted above, commenters were generally well informed about the review and the education portfolio. Major themes in questions included:
 - a. Overassessment and excessive workload.
 - b. Curriculum integration and fragmentation.
 - c. The role of the teaching profession in the review.
 - d. The relative merits of NCEA compared to the Cambridge and International Baccalaureate systems.

Next steps

6. Given the success of this event, we recommend proceeding with the planned further AMA currently scheduled for 20 September.

7. This AMA is currently planned to use Facebook Live, similar to your Q&A interview with the Education Council. As discussed in our previous Education Report *NCEA Review – Ask Me Anything and Public Debate Engagement* (METIS 1130993 refers), this would provide an opportunity for a platform with a wider audience base than Reddit, though questions may show less prior knowledge and sophistication.
8. At this stage we recommend you still use Facebook Live for your next AMA to encourage more diverse engagement opportunities, however, this event could be repurposed as a second Reddit event if you would prefer.

Proactive Release

9. It is intended that this Briefing 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.

Agree / Disagree

Proactively Released