

A background image showing four students in a library setting. Two students are seated at a table with laptops, while two others stand behind them, looking at the screens. Bookshelves filled with books are visible in the background.

Commerce Teachers'
Professional
Development Day

Transitioning from NCEA to university

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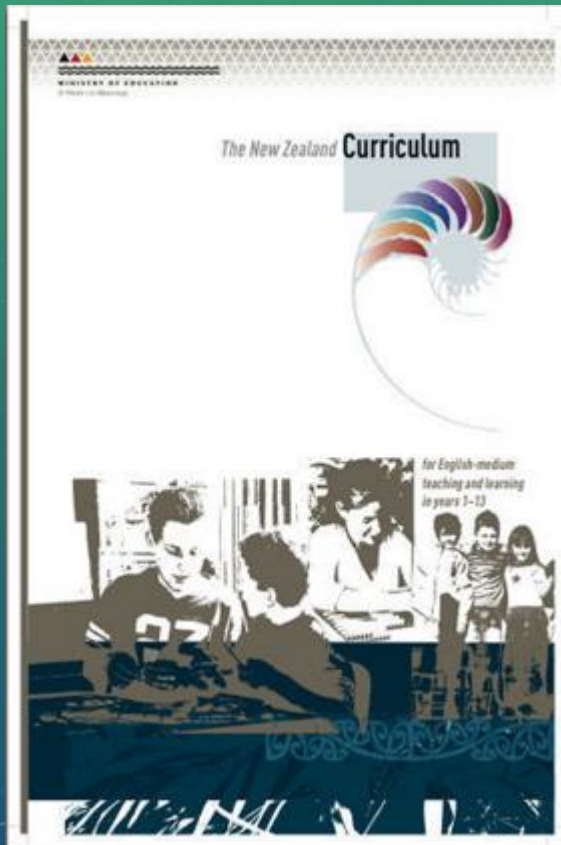
OVERVIEW

1. Where are we at? A review of recent curriculum and assessment policy reforms in NZ
2. What do we know about the transition of NCEA graduates and university success?
3. What steps could support student success?

The background of the slide features a close-up of a person's hands holding a black smartphone. Overlaid on this are several white, hand-drawn style icons: a lightbulb, a flask with bubbles, a brain, two interlocking gears, a flag on a pole, three question marks, a magnifying glass, a hot air balloon, a puzzle piece, and a rocket ship. A solid blue rectangular box is centered over the image, containing the title text in white.

1. WHERE ARE WE AT? A REVIEW OF RECENT CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT POLICIES IN NZ

NZ CURRICULUM REFORM – 2019 – NOW WHICH ONE ARE YOU USING??????



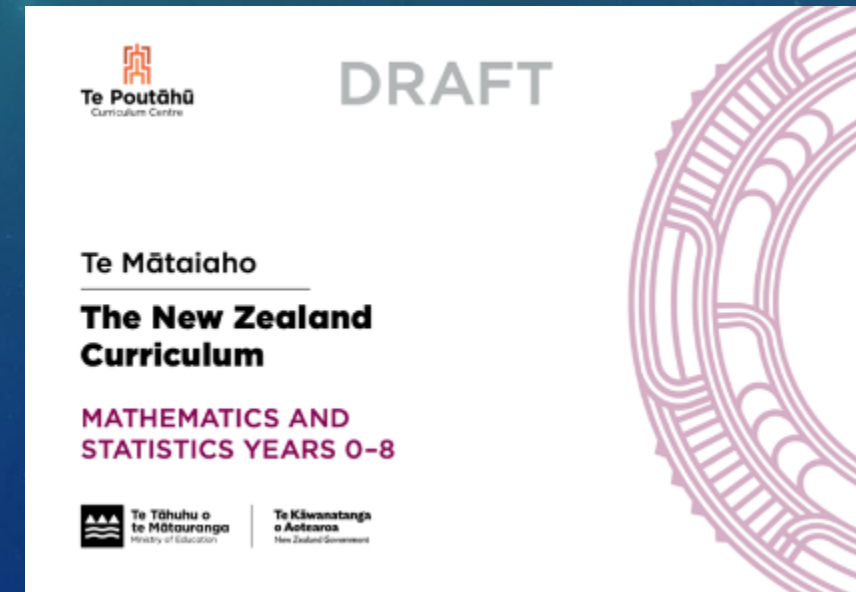
2007-now?



2022 Draft – now removed



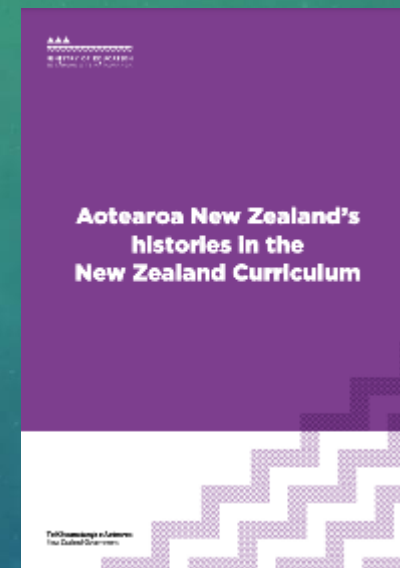
2024 Draft



2024 Draft

CURRICULUM DRAFTS 2022-2023

- Aotearoa NZ History Draft 2020 – in full Nov 2022
 - Social sciences Draft Nov 2022
 - Maths Draft 2023
 - English Draft 2023
-
- All Removed from curriculum site mid 2024



The New Zealand Curriculum

Available for
feedback and use

Required

Learning areas		2024	2025	2026	2027
English	(Years 0-6)				
	(Years 7-13)				
Mathematics and statistics	(Years 0-8)				
	(Years 9-13)				
Science					
Technology					
Health and physical education					
Learning languages					
The Arts					
Social sciences					

NCEA CHANGE PROGRAMME

	2018-19	2021	2022	2023	2024
Curriculum	2019 Aotearoa Histories curriculum announced	Aotearoa Histories Curriculum Draft	Refreshed Social sciences Draft Nov 2022	Refreshed Maths Draft 2023 Refreshed English Draft 2023	Prev drafts removed. 0-6 English and 0-8 Maths Re-Refreshed draft
NCEA	NCEA change programme announced	Level 1 NCEA development work Big Ideas	Level 1 development Pilot year 1	Draft Level 1 Pilot year 2 Development of Level 2 and 3	Level 1 implemented Level 2 and 3 paused for 2 years

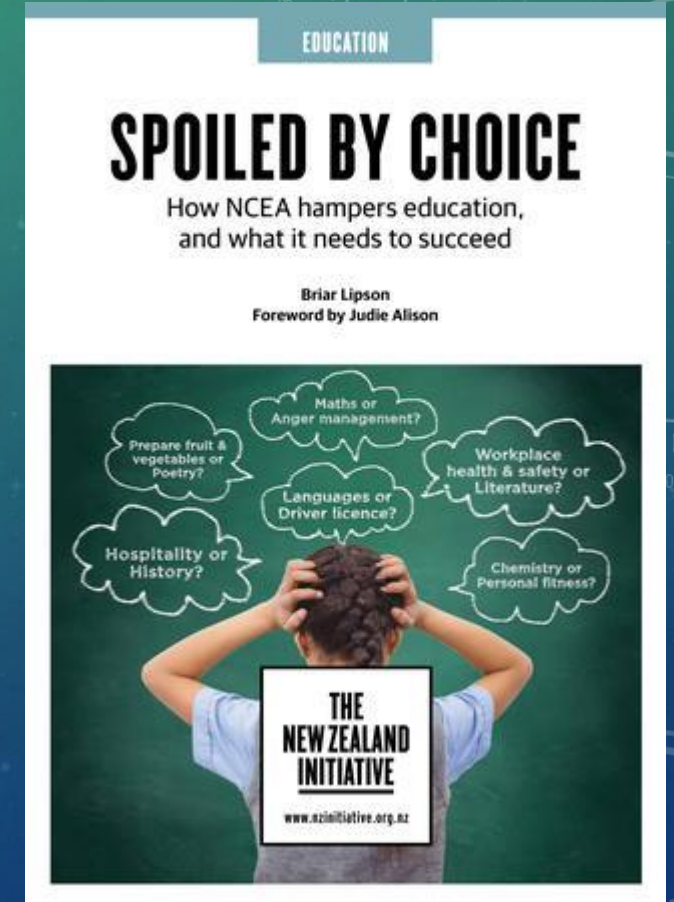


How do we help kids succeed?

- ☐ Cambridge Examinations
- ☐ **NCEA** **X** **FAIL**
- ☐ International Baccalaureate

Source:

<https://i.stuff.co.nz/national/education/101824114/ncea-is-damaging-kids-learning-and-breaking-teachers-thinktank-report-finds>



https://issuu.com/nzinitiative/docs/spoiled_by_choice

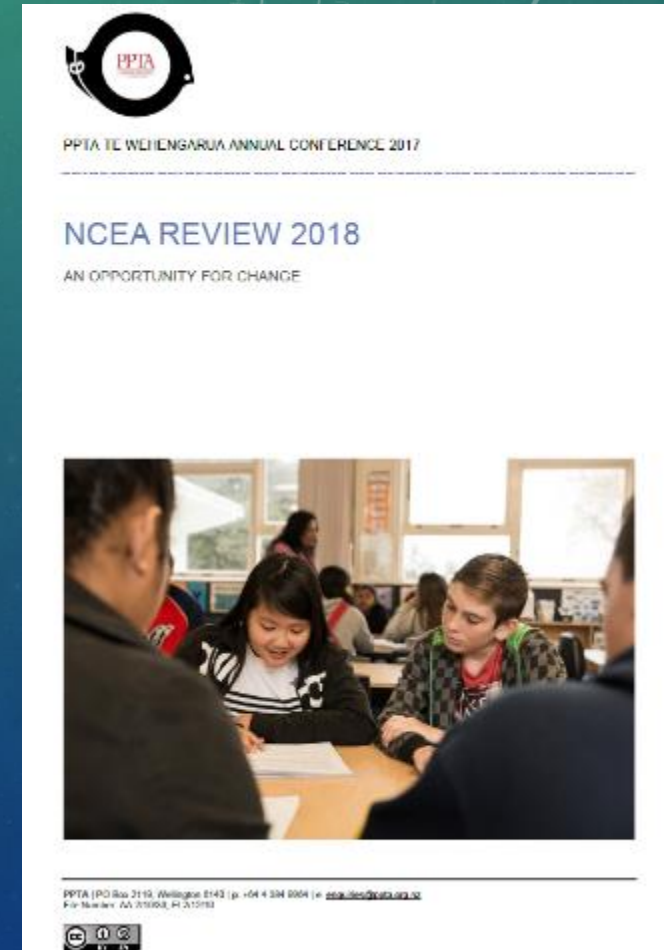
NCEA CRITIQUE BY PPTA (2017)

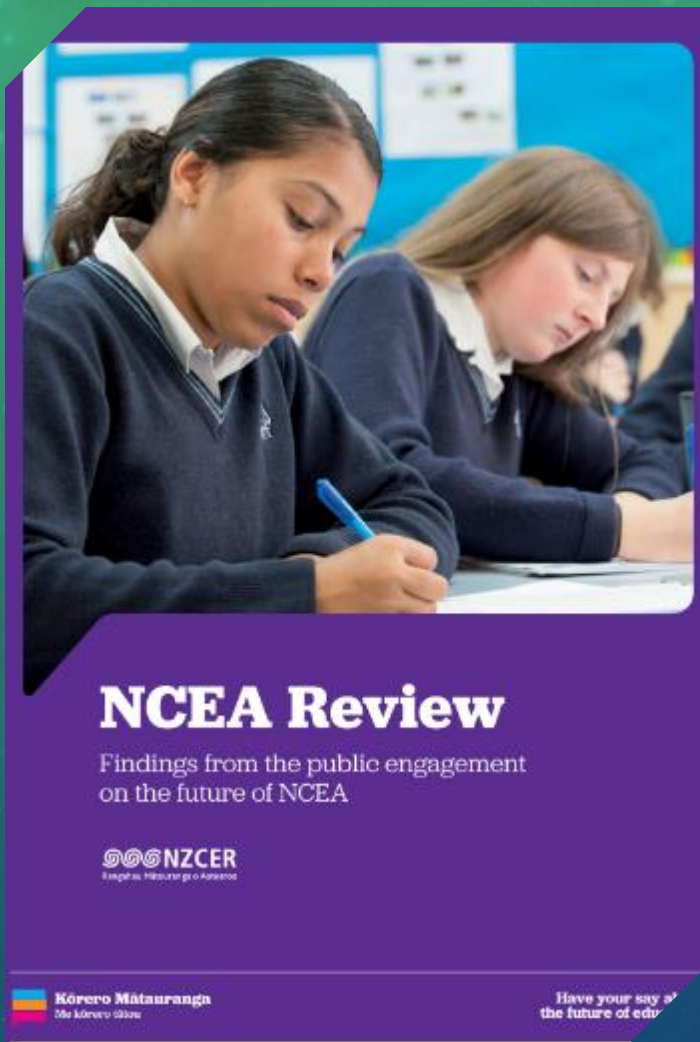
- i. Manageable
- ii. Inclusive
- iii. Constructive
- iv. Motivating
- v. Cumulative
- vi. Fair
- vii. Clear
- viii. Coherent

The biggest area in which the NCEA still falls short is manageability. Over-assessment is rife through all secondary schools – plus for 3 years

Probably no secondary teacher would disagree that the pendulum in the senior secondary school has gone too far towards assessment, at the expense of curriculum.

The worst of these was the government decision in 2012 to set a target of 85 percent of 18 year olds achieving NCEA Level 2 or an equivalent qualification by the end of 2017. This exacerbated an existing trend towards schools focusing on credits achieved rather than high quality learning





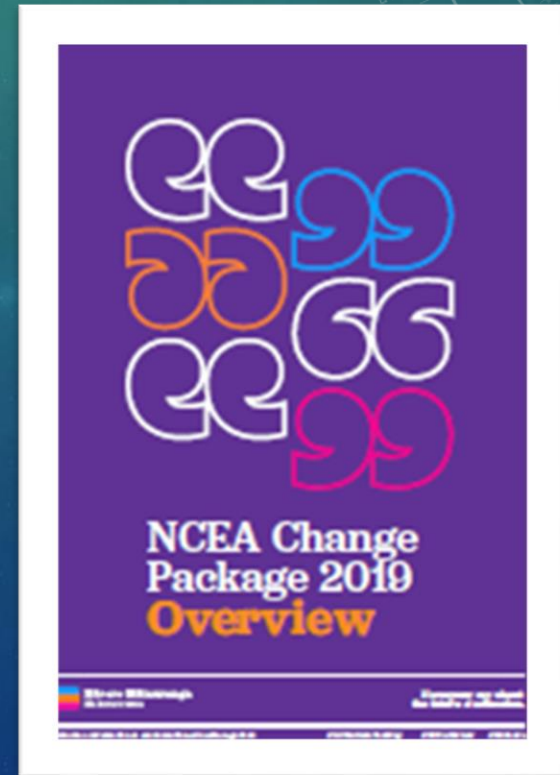
Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) identified 6 Big Opportunities:

1. Re-imagine NCEA Level 1 for powerful learning
2. Strengthen and clarify our expectations for literacy and numeracy attainment
3. Ensure NCEA Levels 2 and 3 prepare young people for further study, work, and life
4. Provide support for teachers, schools, and kura to enable real learning and coherent programmes
5. Strengthen and enhance the Record of Achievement so it provides a full picture of what young people have achieved
6. Remove barriers to achieving NCEA, starting with fees, process for accessing Special Assessment Conditions, and access to quality curriculum support materials.

2018 NCEA REVIEW

2019: NCEA CHANGE PACKAGE

- The Minister of Education has announced the NCEA Change Package which will strengthen NCEA for all our young people.
- The seven changes are:
- [Make NCEA more accessible](#)
- [Mana ōrite mō te mātauranga Māori](#)
- [Strengthen literacy and numeracy requirements](#)
- [Have fewer, larger standards](#)
- [Simplify NCEA's structure](#)
- [Show clearer pathways to further education and employment](#)
- [Keep NCEA Level 1 as an optional level](#)



NCEA CHANGE PROGRAMME

	Achievement Standard 1	Achievement Standard 2	Achievement Standard 3	Achievement Standard 4
Standard Title	Demonstrate understanding of how context changes verbal language use	Demonstrate understanding of specific aspects of studies text	Develop ideas in writing using stylistic and written conventions	Demonstrate understanding of significant aspects of unfamiliar texts
Mode of assessment	Internal	Internal	External	External
Credits	5	5	5	5

Level 2 and 3

<https://ncea.education.govt.nz/english/english?view=assessment>

NCEA CHANGE PROGRAMME 2018-2024

- April 2024: NCEA change programme cancelled
<https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/government-rephase-ncea-change-programme>
- Whole NCEA MOE team made redundant (17 April, 2024))
- Most of NZ Curriculum team made redundant (17 April, 2024)
- Approx 35% of all schools have dropped NCEA level 1

5 April, 2024

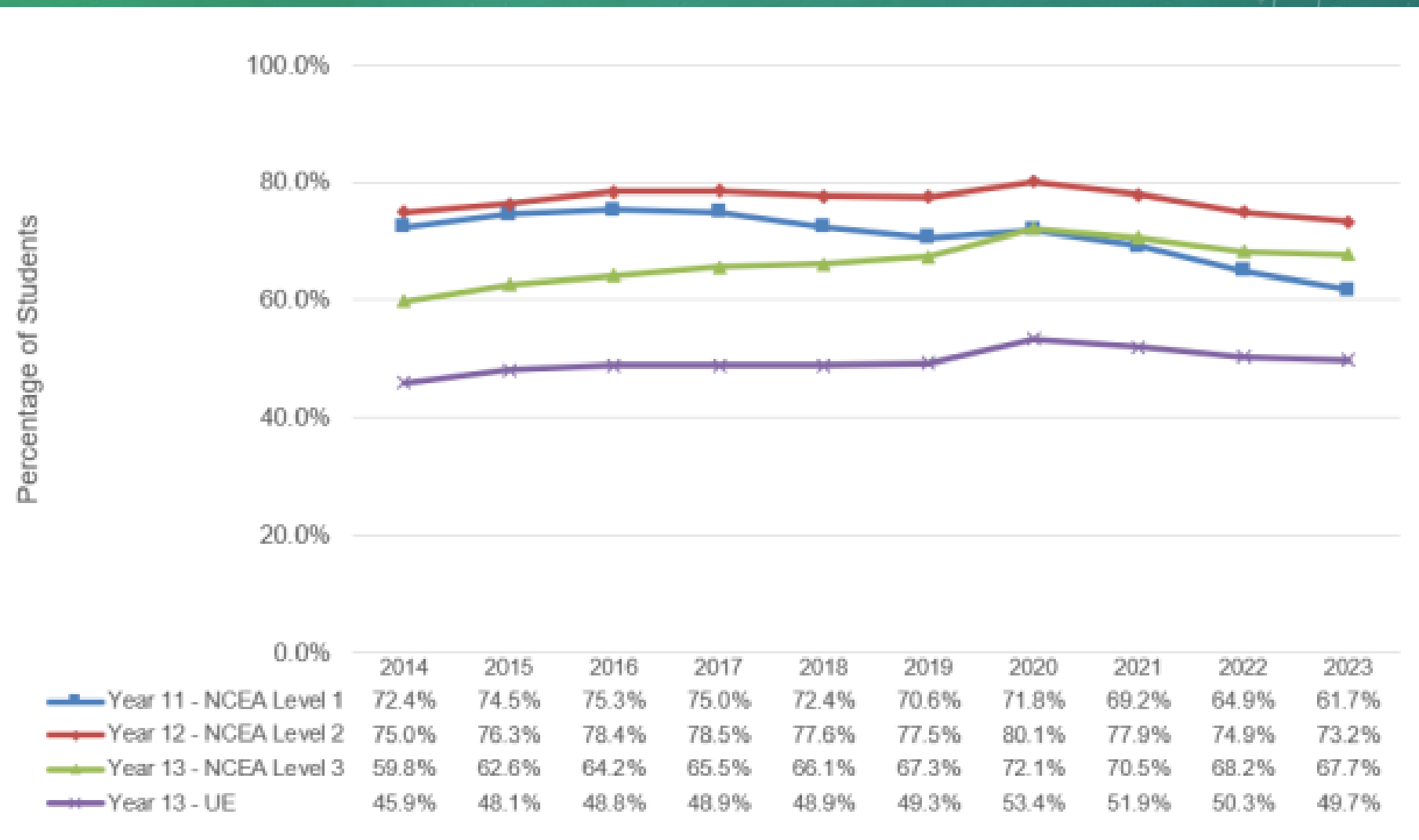
“The Government will be rephasing the NCEA Change Programme to develop the secondary curriculum of Year 11-13 subject areas before introduction of new assessments.”

As a result of this the NCEA Change Programme will be delayed by two years. During this time key actions will support the more effective implementation of our National Qualification;

- A review of the new NCEA Level 1 will be undertaken by the Education Review Office documenting key learnings
- Additional review of other aspects of the NCEA Change Programme, including the methods for external assessments, periods of study leave, and moderation practices
- The senior secondary curriculum for Year 11-13 students will be developed
- An implementation plan will reflect learnings from ERO’s evaluation of Level 1
- NCEA Level 1 (revised) and NCEA Level 2 will be fully implemented by 2028
- NCEA Level 3 will be fully implemented by 2029

UE ATTAINMENT 2013-2023

Less than half
of NZ students
achieve UE,
with only two-
thirds passing
NCEA Level 1
April 2023



Source:
[NZQA](https://nzqa.govt.nz/)

2024 - LEVEL 1

Percentage of students leaving school with at least NCEA level 1 qualification by year

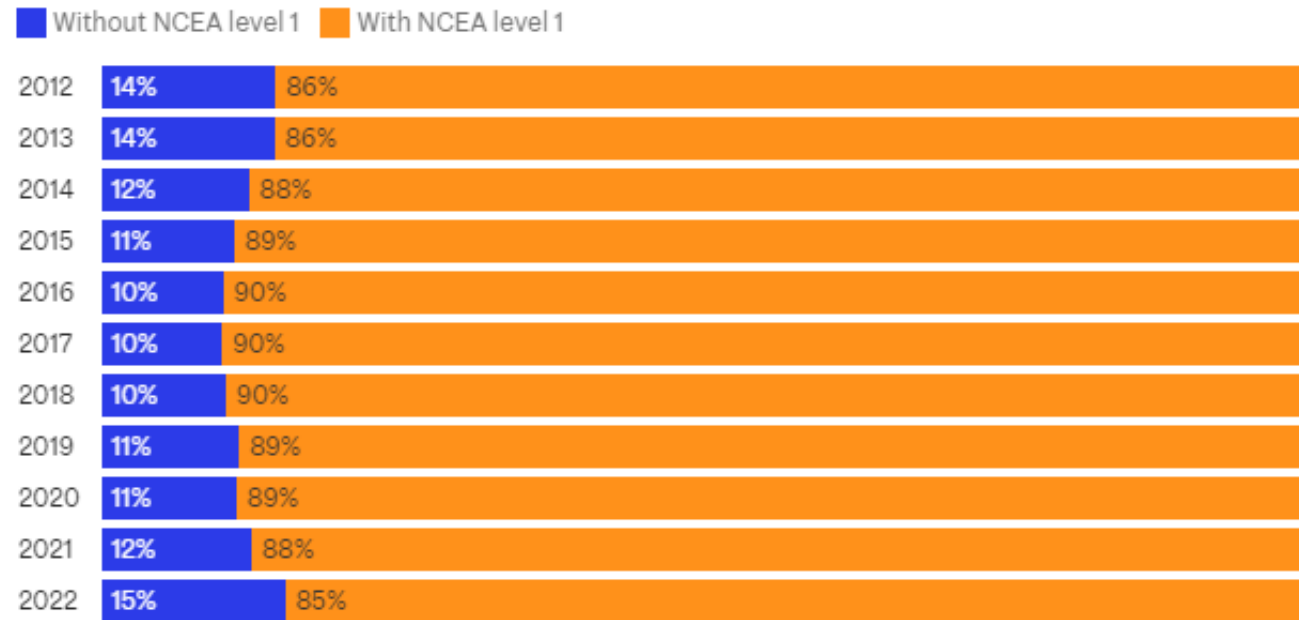


Chart: Gabrielle McCulloch • Source: [Ministry of Education](#)

- Level 1 NCEA continues – but...
- “A survey of schools by NZQA in late 2023 showed that 25% of schools were not planning on offering a full assessment programme leading to NCEA Level 1 for their Year 11s this year. While it is optional for schools to offer NCEA Level 1, it remains the highest qualification held by around 10% of school leavers,” Jann Marshall, NZQA says.



WHAT HAVE
YOU BEEN
NOTICING AND
EXPERIENCING?

A photograph of three students in school uniforms sitting at a desk. The student in the foreground is a young woman with dark hair in a ponytail, wearing a green sweater over a white collared shirt. She is looking down and writing with a green pen. Behind her are two other students, also in green sweaters, looking down at their work. The background is blurred, showing a classroom setting.

2. WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE TRANSITION OF NCEA GRADUATES AND UNIVERSITY SUCCESS?

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN NCEA AND UNIVERSITY-BASED ASSESSMENT

NCEA	University
Students can pick and choose both assessments (à la carte) within courses	Assessment is almost always compulsory and you need to do all assessments to pass
Lots of teacher support	Less teacher/lecturer support (but it is there!)
NCEA Achievement Standards break subjects into discrete parts for assessment	Wholistic assessment is common – generally need to know the whole course (esp. for exams)
Grades – Achieved; Merit; Excellence	% based assessment; A-E grades
Writing is often instrumental to pass a standard	Academic writing can be more about developing a critical, creative argument, not reaching a standard.
Students can re-sit assessments	No re-sits
Referencing is not generally required	Referencing is essential.

POSITIVE IMPACT OF NCEA ON STUDENT PREPARATION FOR UNIVERSITY

VUW
survey of
1656 Y1
students
in 2017

- Flexibility of NCEA supported by students and teachers: course choices; assessment tasks
- Mix of internals and external standards: spreads study load; encourages consistent work across the year; matches university model of internal and final exams
- Internals: encourage self-management; potential for authentic learning & assessment tasks
- Externals: exam preparation (though avoided by some)
- Learning and study behaviours (esp. merit/excellence students): e.g., critical essays, reports, oral presentations; develop research and academic skills, such as citations; develop critical analysis, able to justify stance, apply knowledge.
- Personal development: start to believe in self; agency and self-responsibility; manage workload, time management, stress levels; be strategic; work independently.

- Assessment (credits) are driving behaviour, not learning
- Impact on learning: learning compartmentalised and fragmented; loss of breadth of knowledge;
- Heavy workload: too much assessment; little room for thinking more widely; discourages risk-taking
- Internals: false sense of achievement; taught how to take the test; gaining NCEA without externals
- Externals: Focus on less to achieve excellence; (3 hours for 1 – 3 standards); avoided.
- Resubmissions: students rely on resubmissions rather than doing best work to start with; unrealistic expectations of resubs at school; resubs not available at university
- Grades: A for achieved v A grade at uni; E for excellence v fail grade at uni
- Emotional impact: often high anxiety and stress, exhaustion;
- Pressure on schools / teachers: scaffolding internals; spoon-feeding students; credit harvesting.

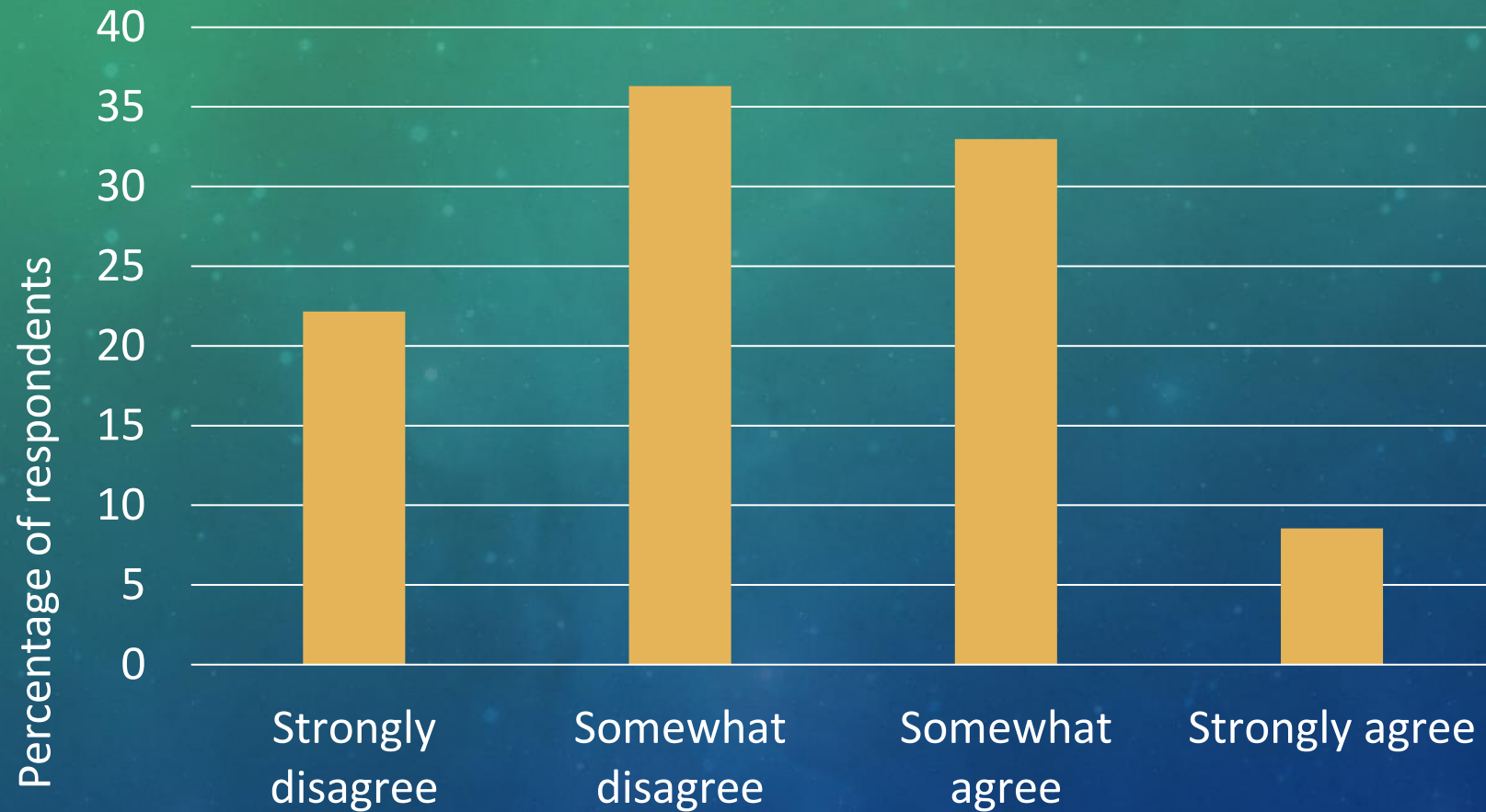
PROBLEMATIC INFLUENCE OF NCEA ON STUDENT PREPARATION FOR UNIVERSITY

WHAT DO STUDENTS SAY ABOUT ASSESSMENT ?

Differences in the assessment systems

- That there **aren't any re-do's** of assessments once it's done, its done
- The structure of how they examine students in the assessments. **They are not as flexible as teachers with marking,**
- School was easier by far, at University there are **no second chances** so if you mess up say, in an assignment or mid-term test, you could potentially get a far lower grade than what you were hoping for, with no option to better the grade
- The amount of work, and I mean that in **the way that the assessments are so close together and are worth so much more** than any assessment was at high school
- **School made it almost impossible to fail as they gave you multiple times to resit** papers whereas your lectures don't have as much of a connection to you passing or failing
- The **marking at uni was hard to comprehend** at first compared to NCEA.

I have difficulty coping with the reading and/or writing required for my university work



I have difficulty coping with the mathematical skills required for my university work

I have difficulty coping with the reading and/or writing required for my university work

My time management skills need improvement

I have a hard time making new friends and feeling like I belong

It seems like everyone else has university figured out but me

I struggle to keep up with the amount of work my courses requirements

I often prioritise my friends and social life over my university work

Strongly disagree Disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

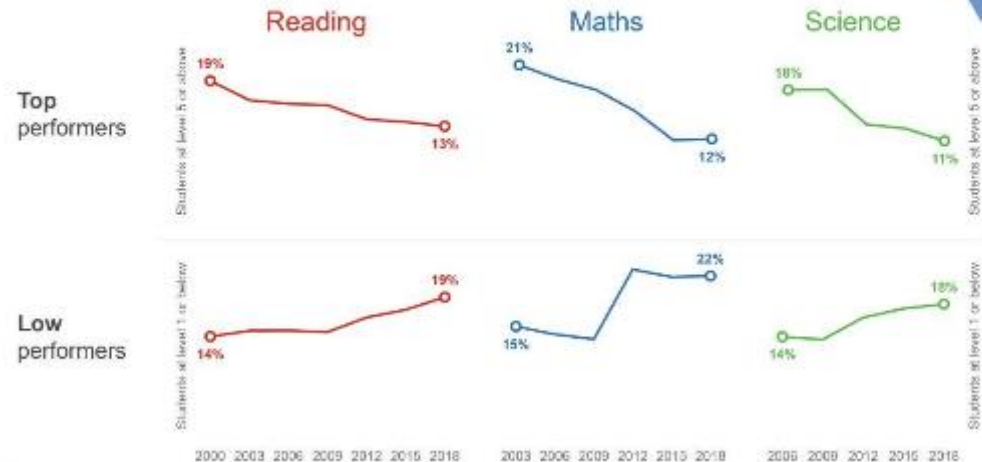




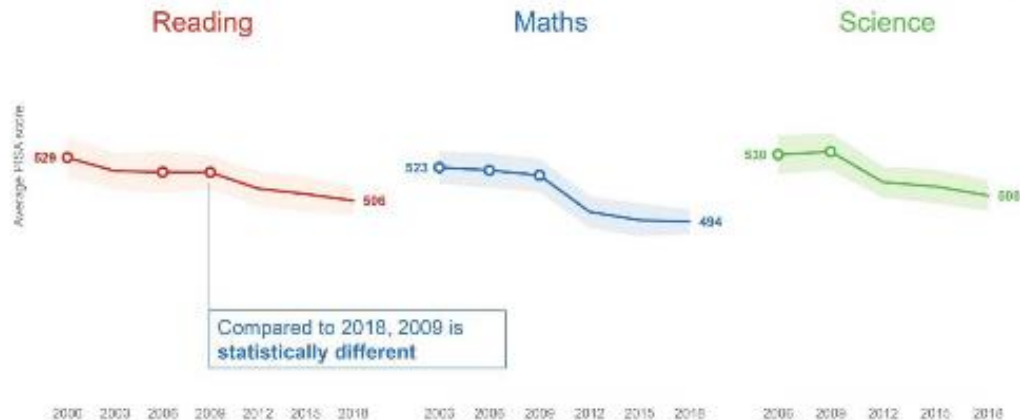
FRAGMENTATION AND LOSS OF KNOWLEDGE

- Universities noticed a decline in student ability arriving at university around 2014
- Science and maths – long critique with how NCEA cuts up subjects into bits (loss of wholistic learning) (Elley, Hall & Marsh, 2004)
 - Avoidance of difficult achievement standards (all credits are equal?)
 - Aaron Wilson ‘**Opportunities to learn**’ – greatly reduced for low SES students and for lower streams within higher decile schools
- Stage 1 Engineering (*also Chemistry and maths) – almost complete repeat of Year 13 needed now so many ‘difficult’ credits are not done.
- Social science and humanities less influenced by NCEA fragmentation
 - See example Biology and history by Johnston, Hipkins and Sheehan (2017).

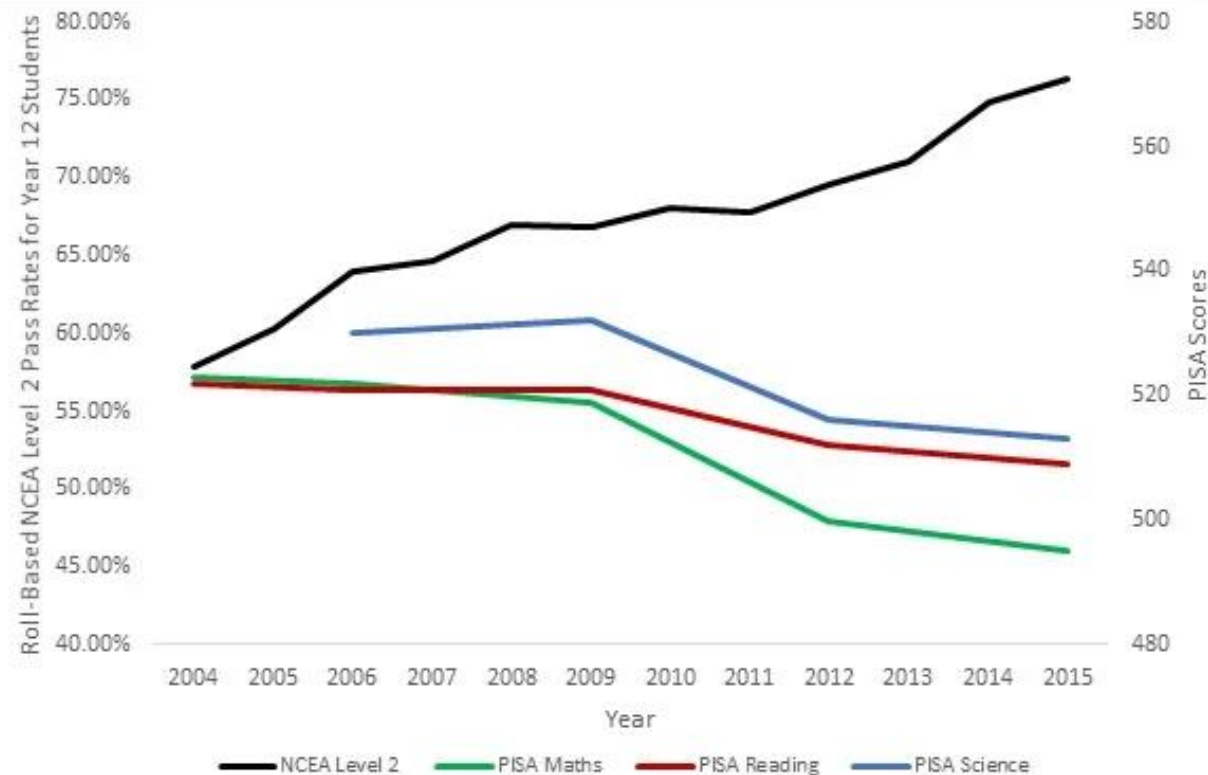
The long-term declines have been happening across the distribution



Average scores are statistically unchanged since 2012, but the long-term trend has been downward



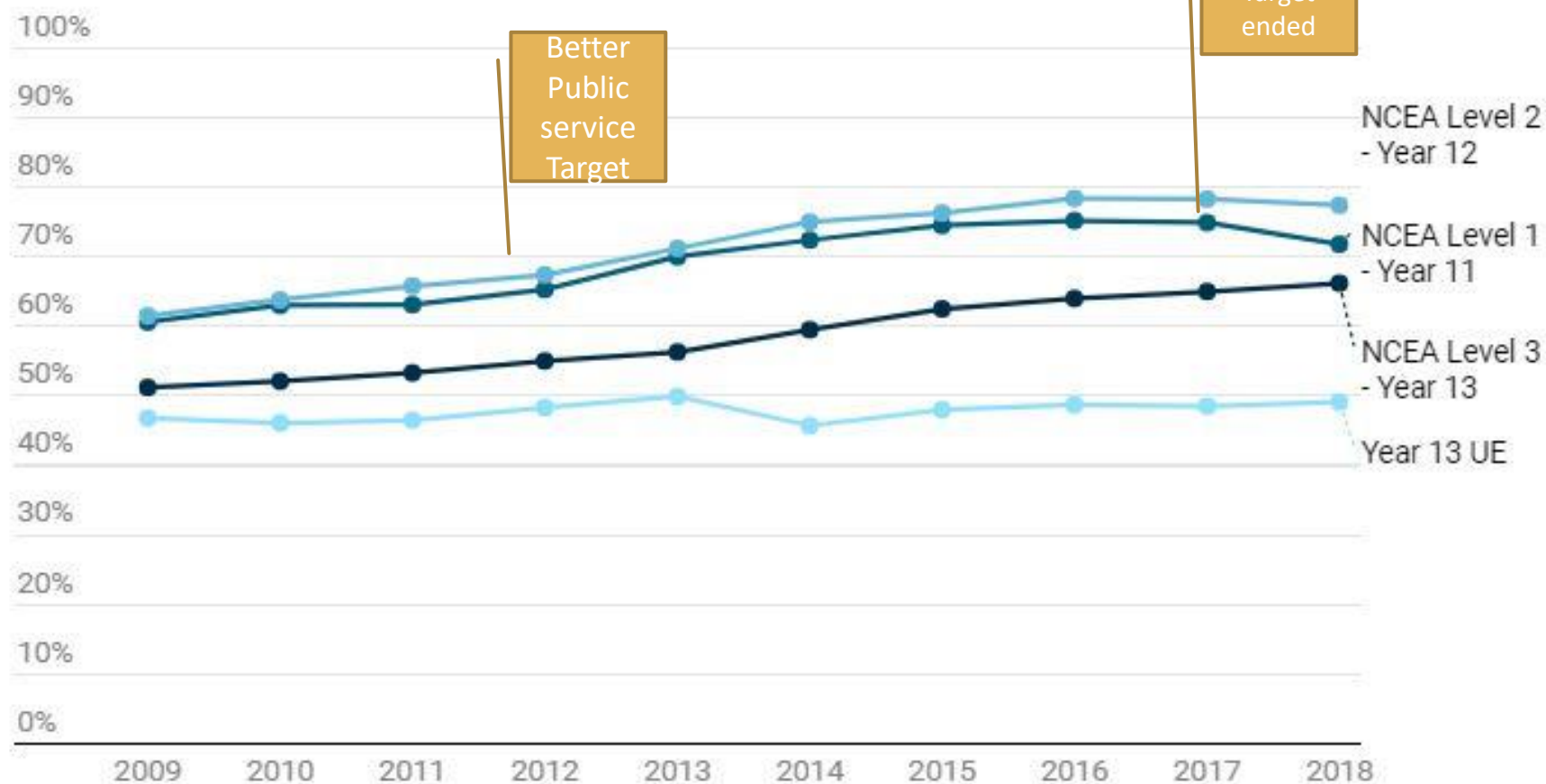
Secondary school declines in literacy and numeracy – but increase in NCEA????



Issue #3: Gaming for Credits

NCEA attainment

Percentage of students achieving each level



- Increase in all NCEA achievement (until 2018)
- **Between 2011 and 2017** the number of 18 year olds attaining NCEA Level 2 had increased by **almost 11%** to 85.2%, from 74.3%.
- No rise in UE
- Evidence of increase in excellence awarded achievement standards – esp **internal** – not external

PATTERNS OF NCEA PERFORMANCE

	Entries	Number of Assessed Results	Not Achieved	Achieved	Merit	Excellence
Externally Assessed Achievement Standards	1,048,110	744,644	21.9%	37.4%	27.5%	13.2%
Internally Assessed Achievement Standards	2,132,289	2,056,638	15.5%	35.0%	24.6%	24.9%
Unit Standards	732,650	696,746	9.0%	88.1%	1.3%	1.6%

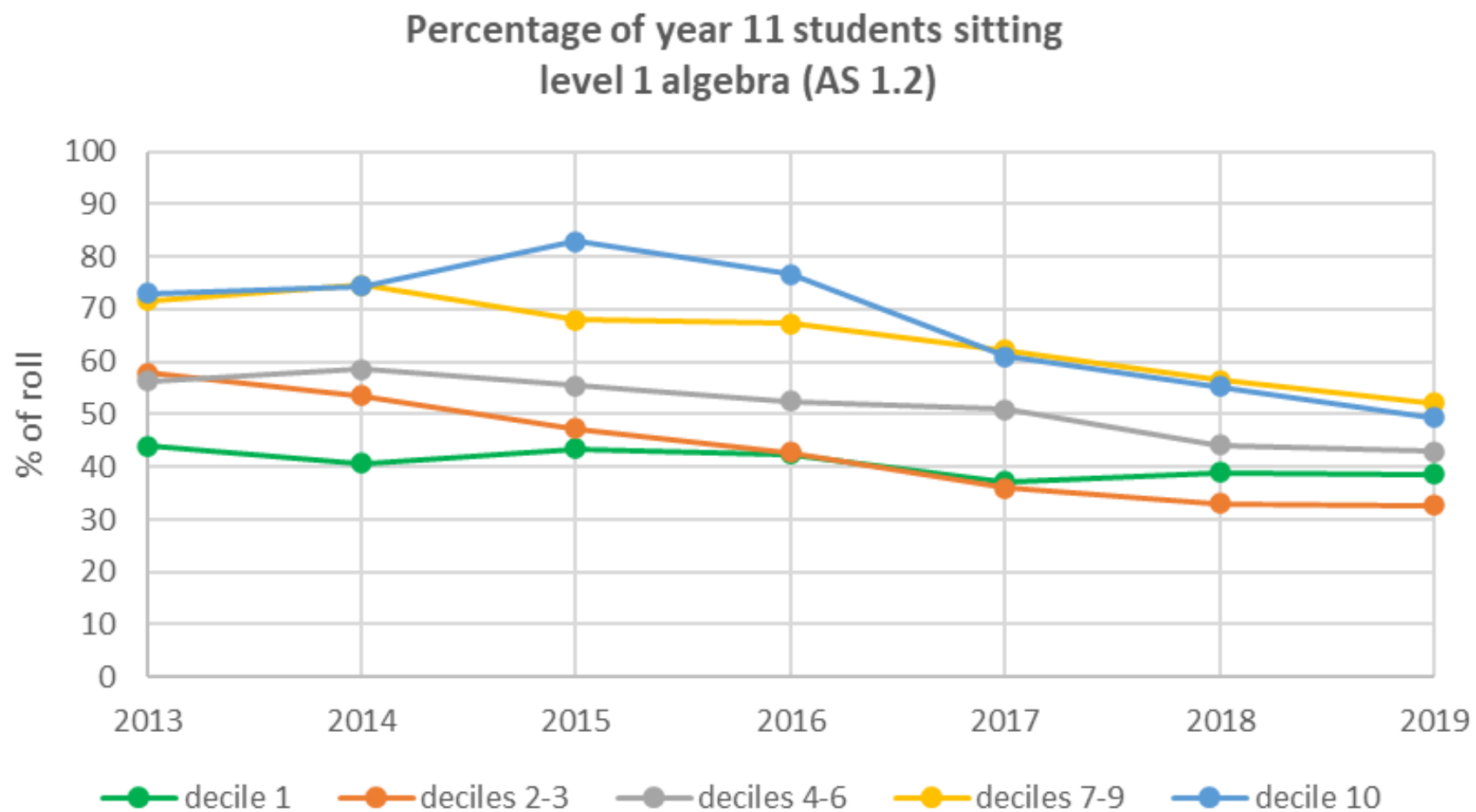
Table 14. Percentage distributions of results for secondary school students in Externally assessed Achievement Standards, Internally assessed Achievement Standards, and Unit Standards in 2022. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

- The majority of credits are derived from internal assessment. Only about 30% of credits derived are from **external** exams.
- There is a disproportionate level of excellence grades derived from **internal** assessments compared with internal assessments – approx. **half the amount**. NZQA acknowledge this is a problem related to the rigour of the qualification and was one of the reasons of the new proposed focus on greater weight on externals.

	Number of Credits	Not Achieved	Achieved	Merit	Excellence
Externally Assessed Achievement Standards	3,398,351	21.1%	37.1%	27.7%	14.0%
Internally Assessed Achievement Standards	8,098,942	15.5%	34.3%	24.6%	25.6%
Unit Standards	2,474,921	9.6%	86.7%	1.6%	2.2%

Table 15. Percentage distributions of credits for Externally assessed Achievement Standards, Internally assessed Achievement Standards, and Unit Standards in 2022.

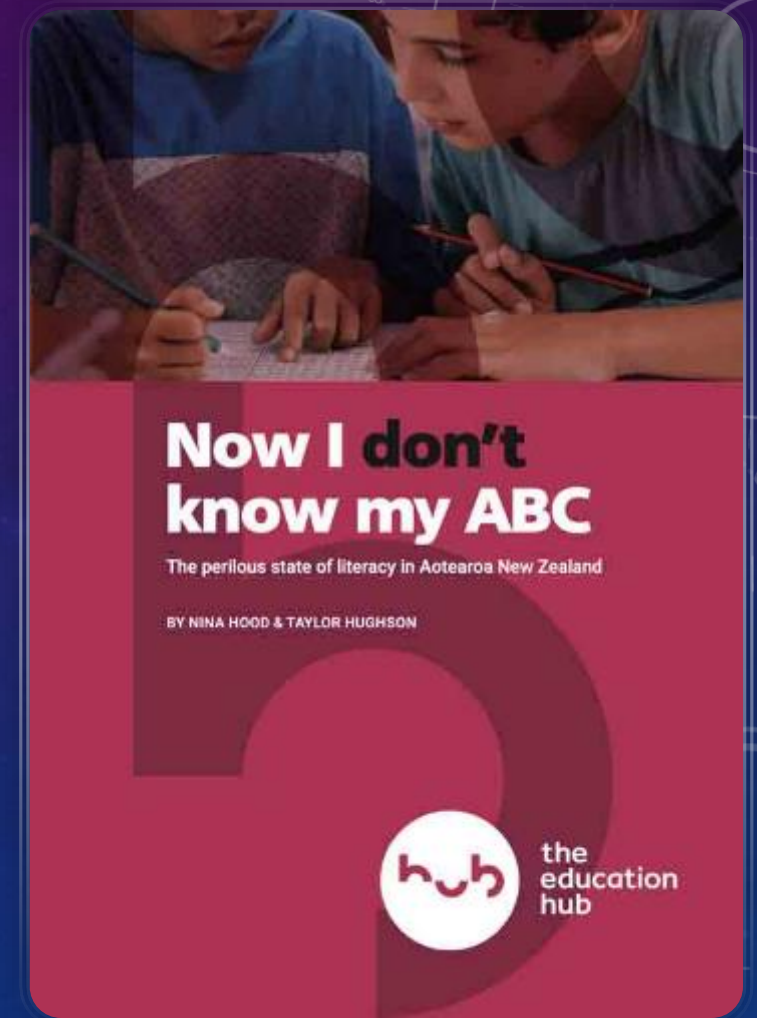
NCEA ALGEBRA – LEVEL 1



Source: Howell
(2021)

DECLINING LITERACY AND NUMERACY RATES

- “deeply worrying levels of literacy decline in NZ” – [Now I don't know my ABC](#) (March 2022)
- Only 64.6% of 15 yr olds had basic proficiency in reading and maths.
- NZ National data: Year 8 (age 12-13) 65% of children below expected level of writing proficiency; 44% below the expected reading level ([NMSSA, 2019](#))
- [NZ data: E-asTTle data](#) – Year 10 – very large variation in writing/reading – as much as 2 curriculum levels (4 yrs) between children at same level.
- NCEA data showing declining rates of literacy and numeracy in low decile schools (2022)





RESEARCH EVIDENCE ON NZ'S OPEN CURRICULUM EXPERIENCE

1. Concern that students were missing out on learning they were entitled to (Curriculum, Progress and Achievement Ministerial Committee, 2019)
2. Eclectic and weak curriculum content choice – e.g. In history the history of surfing – or avoidance of 'difficult' histories – e.g. land wars in NZ; in SST: A hit and miss approach to topic choice (Wood & Sheehan, 2020; Harcourt, 2021).
3. In English - priority given to student choice over 'valuable' literature that might extend horizons (Hughson, 2020)

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY AND LEARNING: RESEARCH EVIDENCE NZ

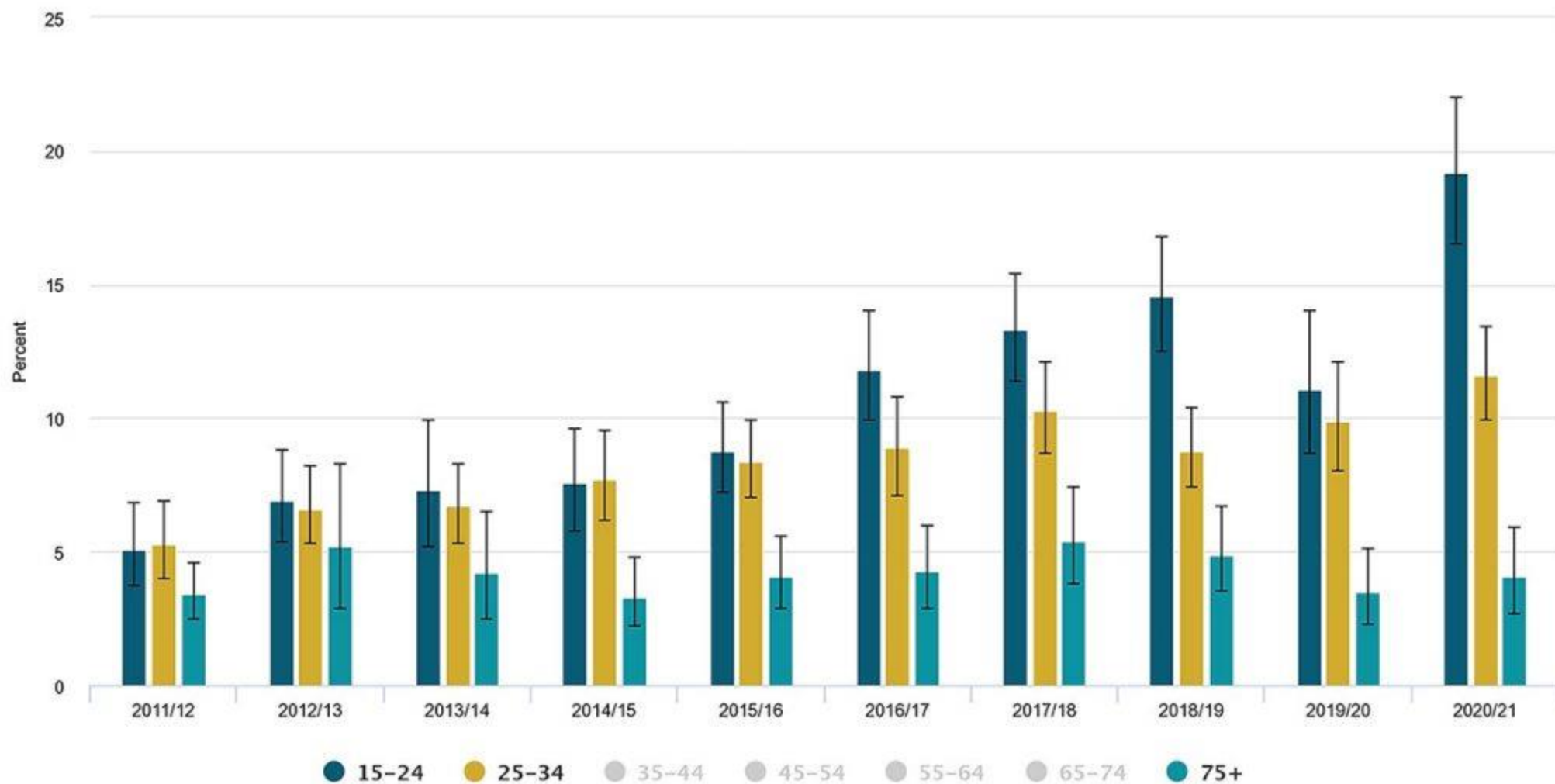
NZ Data on digital tech in secondary schools (Sutcliffe, 2020)

- Most students had access to devices at school, but most types of devices were negatively associated with PISA scores, even after controlling for student factors. This was particularly the case for tablets and interactive whiteboards.
- "Digital devices have the potential to enhance learning, but there are few situations where this happens currently and many in which learning may be hindered."
- <https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/schooling/pisa-2018-digital-devices-and-student-outcomes>

COVID - LINGERING EFFECTS

- Nearly half (43 percent) of principals saying that learning is worse than they would expect at this time of year, a substantial increase from 27 percent in 2021. A quarter (26 percent) of principals say their struggling learners are two or more curriculum levels behind.
- Principals and teachers are most concerned about **writing**, with half (51 percent) of principals and nearly half (44 percent) of teachers surveyed reporting writing as the learning area of biggest concern.
- NCEA attainment has fallen. Attainment rates for NCEA Level 2 are below where they were in 2019, before the pandemic. From 2020 to 2022, modifications were made to award additional Learning Recognition Credits. If these were not in place, attainment in 2022 would have been even lower.
- Principals and teachers in schools in **poorer communities** are much more concerned about their learners' progress. Over half (53 percent) of principals from schools serving poorer communities say that student learning is worse than expected compared to a third (31 percent) of principals serving schools in better-off communities. Struggling learners are behind by two curriculum levels or more (46 percent compared to 14 percent).
- NCEA Level 2 attainment has fallen for learners in poorer communities. The gap between schools in poorer and better-off communities has widened from 14.5 percentage points in 2019 to 17.8 percentage points in 2022.

Percentage of people who reported high or very high levels of psychological distress in the past four weeks, by age



A photograph of a classroom with students sitting at their desks, focused on their work. The students are diverse in age and appearance. A blue rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing white text.

3. WHAT STEPS COULD SUPPORT STUDENT SUCCESS?

LITERACY CO-REQUISITE FROM 2024

- All learners need to achieve a 20-credit co-requisite specific to te reo matatini or literacy and pāngarau or numeracy skills to be awarded any level of NCEA. The co-requisite is a one-off requirement.
- The requirements are formally separated out from the certificate at Levels 1-3 and the 20-credit co-requisite becomes mandatory from 2024.

Focus	Pass Rates – 55,000 students 2024, May
Numeracy	46%
Reading	59%
Writing	56%

QUESTION ONE

Write between 150 and 250 words.

Your local council will be developing a large, outdoor community space. The council has three options and would like community feedback.

Write an email to the council to suggest why ONE of these options would benefit your community:

EITHER a children's playground, *OR* a community garden, *OR* a skate park.

In your answer, you should:

- identify your chosen option
- describe what features you would like it to include
- explain why you think this option is a good choice for your community.

You will be marked on:

- length: writing a minimum of 150 words
- ideas: providing information and details that are appropriate for your audience and purpose
- structure: organising your ideas clearly and appropriately, with a clear beginning, middle, and ending
- language choices: choosing words and sentences that are appropriate for your audience and purpose
- accuracy: using correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

Glossary:

community garden – a garden where people in the community grow food to share.

DOING THE 'HARD STUFF'

:

1. Expose students to complex language – including more abstract vocab, concepts and language – be intentional in teaching this.
2. Do the External - our research shows these have a huge impact on future success – esp for STEM and economics (see [Johnston et al, 2022](#))
3. Do maths – a significant predictor of future success – esp calculus
4. Don't allow AI – encourages laziness and lack of critical thought (reduces literacy)

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF EDUCATION?

- The point of education is that students learn **something**, that they learn it for a **reason**, and that they learn it **from someone**. Whereas the language of learning is a process language that, at least in English, is an individual and individualising language, education always needs to engage with questions of content, purpose and relationships. (Biesta, 2015, p. 75)
- The purpose of schooling is to be exposed to what you do not already know – a pedagogy of encounter and a pedagogy of interruption. (Biesta)



- Resilience only develops when students encounter something difficult – and overcome it.





DISCUSSION — IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMERCE TEACHERS?

- Challenges?
- Opportunities?

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Tēnā koutou katoa and welcome to SocCon 2025

We are delighted to welcome you to Te Whanganui-ā-Tara, Wellington for the 10th Social Sciences Conference from the 14 to 16 of April, 2025. The conference will be held at Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington's Pipitea campus – right in the heart of Aotearoa's civic space.

Equipping Critical Citizens
Te Pae Tawhiti - Kei te mauritau te hunga nei?

<https://confer.eventsair.com/soccon-2025/>





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