

**Western Springs College Whānau  
Information Evening: Term 3 2023**

# **A Two-Year Journey to Level 2 NCEA**

2024



# The New Zealand schools dropping NCEA Level 1



By [Amy Wiggins](#)

12 May, 2023 04:45 PM · 6 mins to read



# Burnout from 'over-assessment' sees more schools ditching NCEA Level 1



[Gianina Schwanecke](#) and [Tatiana Gibbs](#) | May 26, 2023

Concerns about over-assessment contributing to burnout and higher rates of stress among students has seen an increasing number of schools ditching NCEA level 1.

This allows for more depth of learning and reduces stress for students. My school made this change 3 years ago and we weren't the first.

EDUCATION

# Why are so many schools ditching NCEA level 1

From [Nine To Noon](#), 9:40 am on 1 June 2023

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An increasing number of secondary schools around the country are ditching NCEA Level One - ahead of a refresh to the qualification that's being introduced over the next few years.

and private schools ditching NCEA in Year 11

# NCEA Level 1 not worth the 'stress' (in students), decides Marlborough college

Andy Brew · 15:29, Jun 20 2023



Marlborough

## Nothing new...

Questioning the merits of students pursuing all three levels of NCEA assessment predates the current media focus.

Many schools have been operating NCEA assessment structures without Level 1.

One of the things we have been doing is investigating some of these schools and their experience of a qualification journey that does not include a Level 1 certificate.

What Ivan Davis asked our teachers back in 2020:

“How many of our students leave school with Level One NCEA as their highest qualification?”

# The national issue

A survey of 5,761 New Zealand secondary school students aged between 15 and 18, by NCEA study platform StudyTime was conducted back in 2017. When asked to identify challenges to their learning, 66 per cent identified stress/anxiety about assessments. When asked to narrow this down to the most challenging aspect, 21 percent identified stress/anxiety about assessments.

## Falling out of love with NCEA as stresses mount on New Zealand students

Jessica Long · 05:00, Jul 24 2018



**Falling out of love with NCEA**

Two-thirds of New Zealand secondary students identify stress and anxiety about assessments as a challenge to learning, and about half believe they are not taught how to study or deal with exams, according to a new survey of nearly 6000 students.

The online survey of 5,761 New Zealand secondary school students aged between 15 and 18, by NCEA study platform StudyTime, was conducted between August and October.

Comments and explanations given by students followed themes of: not feeling prepared for life after secondary school; not being well advised about university options; being taught how to "earn credits, not taught how to learn", and not feeling supported in issues of mental health or learning difficulties.

**S Digby Werthmuller** Palmerston North Boys' High School head prefect

New Zealand students have the highest rates of anxiety around exams of any country in the OECD been claimed. Should the NCEA be changed?

News

*If New Zealand has fallen out of love with NCEA, could be a factor.*

## Procrastinating and demotivated, 2 in 3 NCEA students cite anxiety or stress

School News

2 minutes read



# Key recommendations from Assessment Working Group in 2016 (including MoE, ERO, NZQA and PPTA):

- Teach more, assess less.
- Focus assessment in Years 12 and 13: how much assessment is needed at Year 11?
- Grade quality is more important than quantity.

## Managing NCEA workload professionally

**Why?** Overassessment has adverse effects on student wellbeing and on teacher workload. It's also poor professional practice.

**How?**

- Encourage learning, not 'teach learning'**
- Teach more, assess less**  
Aim for fewer than 20 credits in each course
- Focus assessment on Years 12 and 13**  
Consider how much assessment your teachers need at Year 11
- Minimise your marking**  
One set of work can provide evidence for more than one standard within the subject or even curriculum
- Quality is more important than quantity**  
Provide guidance about how much is enough, don't let your students go overboard with evidence
- Adjust your programme to your students**  
Establish at the start of the year a suite of standards that may be assessed, then adjust as the year progresses
- Reduce the need for further assessment opportunities**  
Assess your students when they're ready or by gathering evidence over time
- Collaborate across institutions with colleagues**  
Conversations on student work at public hearings can be evidence of shared practice

**Next steps**

- Use a scheduled staff meeting to ensure everyone knows the real expectations
- Use the 'NCEA myth' on the [nqa.govt.nz](http://nqa.govt.nz) website as the starting point for your discussion
- Ensure there is consistency across all departments/faculties in your school, and if in doubt, contact NZQA



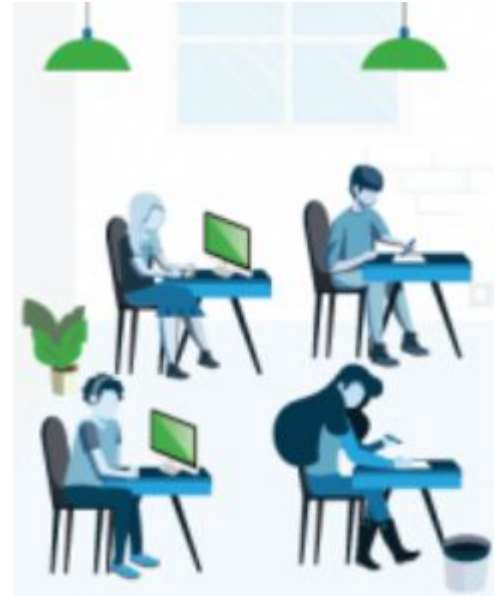


**While the media have emphasised an angle that certain schools ‘do not have confidence’ in the new Level One standards, this is not our position. Our plan to remove Level 1 from our qualification journey is based on the following reasons:**

The  
rationale  
for  
change

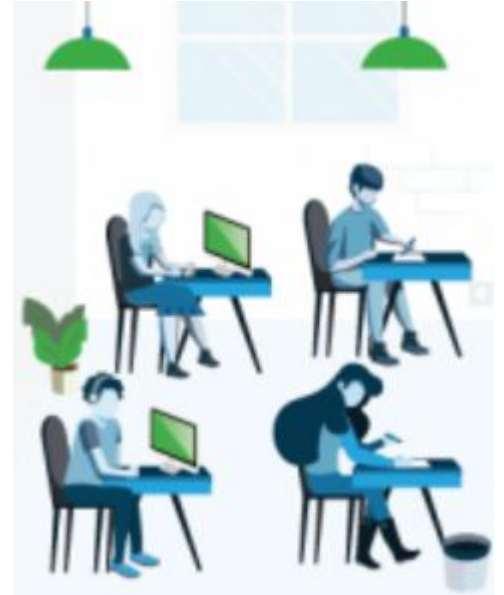
# Student wellbeing: reduced anxiety and assessment overload:

- Nationally, reported anxiety for our young people is increasing with pressure of assessment cited as a primary driver
- Three levels of formal assessment equates to around 68 Achievement standards for our students; two levels would reduce that to around 44 (based on six courses at Year 11 and 12 and five at Year 13, each assessing four standards)
- Fewer formal assessments would reduce assessment-fueled stress and ‘pinch points’
- Less likelihood of assessment burnout (being ‘over it’: boredom, fatigue, demotivation) when it really counts at Level 2 and 3



# Teacher effectiveness:

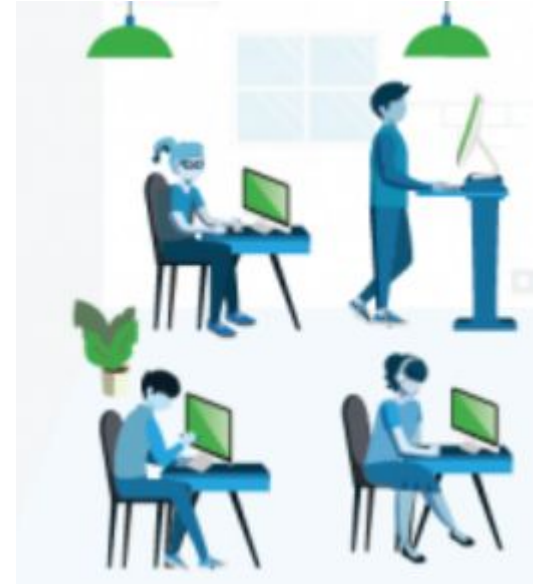
- Teaching and planning for learning more than assessing
- Time taken up with the administration and moderation of formal assessment can be channelled into creative and responsive learning opportunities





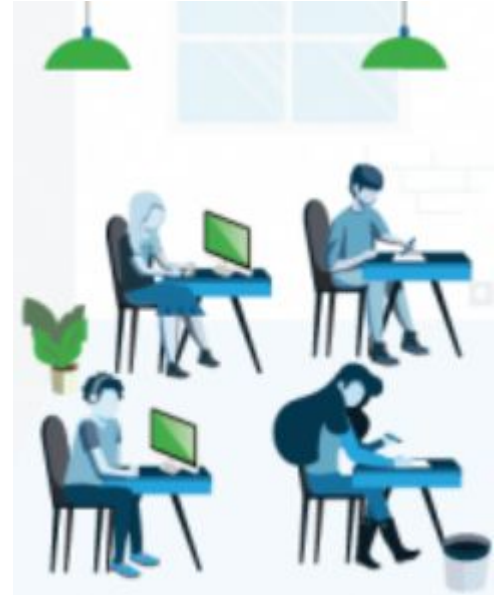
# Teacher effectiveness:

- More time to 'breathe' between assessments with students more likely to feel fully prepared going into an assessment task
- Opportunities for more formative feedback and response to learner needs
- Sustained and wide-ranging learning that is not limited by the narrow demands of a particular standard
- More of an emphasis on developing Key Competencies and transferable skills such as critical thinking and managing self that transcend subjects and secondary school



# The limited value of NCEA Level One as a qualification:

- Level 1 as a stand-alone qualification leads directly to few pathways; it is superseded when a higher level is gained
- In 2022, 99.2% of our Year 13s had gained at least a Level 2 certificate



# The primary goal: achievement

We believe that a more complete development and embedding of knowledge and skills is possible in a year where the learning activities are not driven by assessments that have a narrow curriculum scope. It is a way to better prepare students to fulfil their potential at Level 2 when it really matters.

We can also emphasise grade quality rather than grade quantity over a greater span of time.

**Ultimately, this is a plan to achieve better outcomes for students at Levels 2 and 3.**

# Why now?

The implementation of the new standards has again been delayed. Level 1 is available in 2024 *but* the new Level 2 standards are not ready until 2026. Year 11s completing a set of the *new* Level 1 standards will be an ineffective preparation for a shift to the *current* Level 2 standards in Year 12. The delay in the rollout has made the removal of Level 1 even more important.

**There is no 'status quo'**

	Level ONE	Level TWO	Level THREE
2023	Full Pilot	Resourcing	
2024	Implement	Trialling	Resourcing
2025	Established	Full Pilot	Trialling
2026	Established	<b>Implement</b>	Full Pilot
2027	Established	Established	Implement

# Ngā Puna o Waiōrea in 2024:



Ākonga will work towards the new Level 1 standards in Pāngarau, Te Reo Rangatira and Pūtaio from Te Marautanga Aotearoa along with Te Reo Māori and Te Reo Pākehā from the New Zealand Curriculum. These form a Waiōrea core programme. In addition to this core, Waiōrea ākonga will select Year 11 options from the Western Springs College programme.

# Preparation: what's been happening?

As a whole teaching staff and in departments, we have been engaging with the significant changes that have already come through the Curriculum Refresh. The aim has been to focus on programmes of learning that fulfil the Curriculum and offer rich and engaging experiences for our students. Formal NCEA assessment (Achievement Standards) can fit within this but the key is that they do not *drive* the learning.



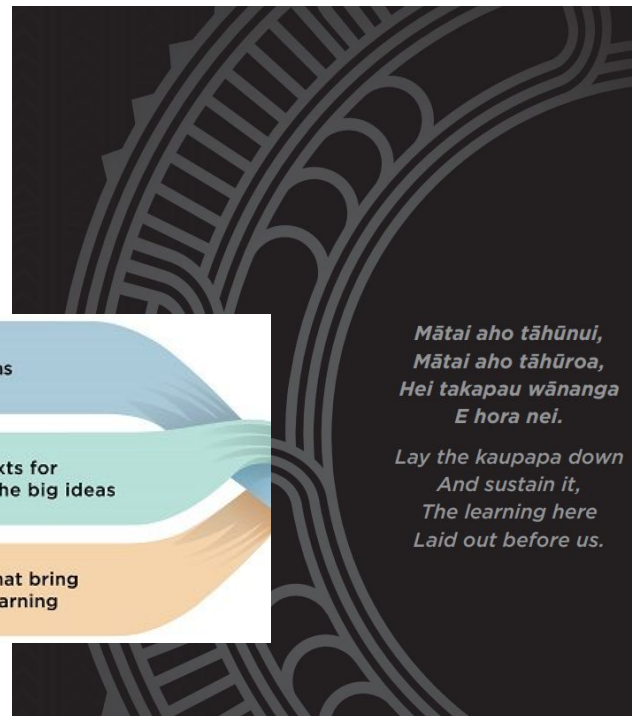


# The Curriculum Refresh

While the refresh of NCEA assessment demands our attention, the full renewal of the NZC is something more far-reaching and significant.

Our work on a two-year Level 2 journey is an opportunity to put the Curriculum at the centre of our thinking.

Our focus can be on what 'foundational learning' is in (and across) our departments and how we will deliver it.



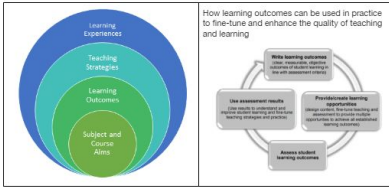
- Know 20 parts of the human body in Latin.
- Interview an older relative about an important event in their life and write their experience up as a newspaper story.
- Understand how statistics can be manipulated.
- Make a satisfying hot beverage.

Revist the Learning Matrices, Key Competencies and NCEA Subject pages; find commonalities, connections and relationships

- How can these be distilled into a small number of key Learning Outcomes?
- A good way to focus on learning, not context and product
  - Not tied to any one assessment event
- A piece of work can provide evidence for more than one LO

English: a task that has students connecting self-selected texts (like AS Explain significant connections across text using evidence) could give evidence for LOs centred on:

1. Perspectives: both personal and from beyond
2. Language: how it relates to purpose and audience:
  - Describe and explain how language relates to audience and purpose.



Begin with this umbrella statement that sits above all learning outcomes: **Students will be able to:**

Checklist for LOs

- Uses one or two active verbs in the present tense
- Can be demonstrated by a diverse range of learning and assessment activities
- Is a single sentence with a full stop

	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>Writing craft and accuracy test #1:</b> Information for L2 readiness <b>Writing Workshop #1:</b> Sustained creative writing in response to one of the texts from the 'Introduction' with emphasis on key conventions, grammar and self-editing.								
<b>Investigating the world through texts:</b> How texts (including from Aotearoa) reveal significant insights into humanity, society, culture, history etc. and how these can be connected. Looking at texts through 'critical lenses' as a way to broaden understanding.								
<b>Forging Connections</b> Students determine their own connection and explore and select texts to illustrate their thinking about it. Perspectives are considered through a focus critical literacy and awareness of audience. They present their findings in a seminar.								
<b>Term 3</b>		<b>Graping the Unfamiliar:</b> Engaging with texts particular to Aotearoa and developing strategies to overcome obstacles as they read.	<b>The Power of Literature: sustained literature study:</b> Students study a text(s) in depth to fully understand the elements of structure, character, setting and theme. Emphasis on the power of the literature to move, inspire, confront and entertain us.					
<b>Term 4</b>		<b>Campaign</b> Deciding on an aspect of social justice in Aotearoa that moves them, students investigate it and design a campaign for awareness and the enactment of a plan to bring about change.	<b>Self-reflection on work:</b> Learning and readiness for Level 2. Forming a personal English action plan to share with whānau.		<b>Action Plan</b> Students are supported to pursue their action plan for Year 12.			

## In your departments

1. Explore the resources and construct a draft list of your ten non-negotiables for a year 11 programme.

2. Construct a programme of learning for Year 11 that incorporates those non-negotiables.

Significant Learning	
<b>Maori voices</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maori creators provide an important perspective on living and participating in Aotearoa New Zealand and the world.</li> <li>• The study of Maori texts plays a role in the process of honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi.</li> </ul>	Students will learn about the unique nature of Aotearoa New Zealand through the study of Maori voices and perspectives in literature.
At Curriculum Level 6 students will show a developed awareness of how aspects of te ao Maori are woven through texts by reading a range of Maori literature.	Students will learn how Maori storytelling comes from te ao Maori and creates meaning in culturally specific ways.
At Curriculum Level 6 students will show a developed awareness of how aspects of te ao Maori are woven through texts by reading a range of Maori literature.	At Curriculum Level 6 students will learn to describe and explain how aspects of Maori storytelling shape texts.

Make a programme that is true to the vision for young people and true to what you know matters in your subject.

Make it without any NCEA Achievement Standards.

## To work:

1. Reconnect with Curriculum resources
2. Discuss and debate the key elements
3. Identify the key elements that need to go in your course outline
4. Begin shaping the Subject Statement, Course Statement and Learning Outcomes
5. Critique and edit the drafts
6. Decide on the final wording
7. Submit as a Google Form

**2024 Year 11 Coursebook Entry**

Put your final detail in here.

[douglas@wss.school.nz](mailto:douglas@wss.school.nz) [Switch account](#)

Your email address will be recorded when you submit this form.

**\*Required**

Department \*

Your answer

Name of course \*

Your answer

Use a 'critical friend' from another department

# Department work: moving towards 2024

# Why base things on Learning Outcomes?

## Well constructed LOs are:

- Curriculum based: a direct line should connect a learning outcome to the curriculum
- Broad in focus and generic: not tied to a specific assessment event, context, task or product
- Clear, precise and transparent: able to be understood by students and whānau
- Able to provide a way for teachers to legitimately judge (and communicate) learning

They cover the learning that *should* happen as outlined in a subject's curriculum.

The plan:  
what this  
would mean  
in practice  
for our  
students



# 2024 (no change to current Level 2 standards)

**Year 10:** A first opportunity to sit the external numeracy and literacy assessments worth 10 credits each.

**Year 11:** Start the first year of a two-year Level 2 journey with the current Year 12 programme. In 2024 these students would gain up to six current Level 2 standards (a maximum of one standard per subject for a range of somewhere between 15-30 credits). Most courses will be offering one Level 2 standard assessed towards the end of Year 11.

**Year 12:** Complete NCEA Level 2.

**Year 13:** Complete NCEA Level 3.

## 2025 (no change to current Level 2 standards)

**Year 12:** Complete the second year of their two-year Level 2 journey. In 2025 these students would gain between 15 and 18 credits to complete their Level 2 certificate.

**Year 13:** Complete NCEA Level 3.



## 2026 (new Level 2 standards apply)

**Year 11:** Complete up to six (one per subject) Level 2 standards worth five credits each, totalling a maximum of 30 credits (the aim is to extend our students and maintain grade quality at Merit and Excellence).

**Year 12:** Complete either two or all three of the remaining Level 2 standards for a maximum of 90 credits (in addition to up to 30 from the previous year).

# A vision: Students begin Level Two NCEA in Year 11 and complete it by the end of Year 12

## The bottom line needs to be:

*The gains of a two-year Level Two qualification outweigh the perceived 'loss' of Level One.*

- Overall achievement of the Level 2 certificate is higher than with a one-year journey
- The quality of achievement (Merit and Excellence endorsements) is better than with a one-year journey
- Success is experienced by all groups
- Students are less anxious and more resilient
- Students are well prepared for Level 3 and remain positively engaged in their learning
- Teachers channel energy into maximising learning potential
- Our curriculum emphasises transferable capabilities and competencies, and empowers students to use them across learning contexts
- Our curriculum is engaging and relevant and it responds to needs and opportunities
- The school is able to communicate student learning in a way that is transparent and constructive

## Your pātai

*What  
questions to  
you have for  
us?*

