

Briefing report

Education Review Office (ERO): NCEA Observational Studies

Date	13 June 2019
Security Level	N/A
ERO Priority	Medium
ERO Reference	M19-25
Date requested	ERO initiated
Date due	ERO initiated
Proactive release	Recommended

Addressee	Action sought	Deadline
Minister of Education	<p>It is recommended that you:</p> <p>a) note the attached national evaluation report: <i>NCEA Observational Studies</i></p> <p>b) note that ERO intends to release this report in July 2019</p>	



Attachments:

**Education Review Office (ERO):
NCEA Observational Studies**



Comments:

Minister's Office to complete	
Noted	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seen	<input type="checkbox"/>
Approved	<input type="checkbox"/>
Referred to:	
Date signed by Minister:	

Our Ref: M19-25

13 June 2019

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

NCEA Observational Studies

Purpose

1. This is to inform you of the report ERO has written illustrating how the use of the National Certificate of Education Achievement (NCEA) impacted on different types of schools and tertiary education organisations (TEOs).
2. This research was used to provide insights to the Ministerial and Professional Advisory Groups when making their recommendations as a part of the review of NCEA.
3. It serves an additional purpose in showing school leaders how a variety of schools and providers manage their use of NCEA.

Background

4. This research was jointly funded by the Ministry of Education (the Ministry) and ERO in response to a Ministry request.
5. The Ministry asked ERO to generate 12 profiles to exemplify different school and provider types and to focus on the impact of NCEA on their:
 - Curriculum design
 - Pedagogy
 - Assessment practices
 - Resourcing
 - Pastoral care and wellbeing.
6. ERO identified triumphs, innovations and challenges in each aspect.

ERO's evaluation

7. ERO selected nine schools and three TEOs which were visited by specialist teams to gather information.
8. ERO spoke with school leaders, teachers and students and drew additional evidence from ERO's regular review files and evidential files from the *What drives learning in the senior secondary school?* national evaluation.

9. ERO used data from the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) to explore patterns in the use of NCEA.
10. ERO prepared a brief, 12 profiles and a report for the Ministry. This report is ERO's publication drawn from that material.

Key findings

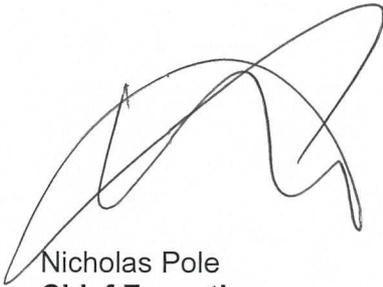
11. NCEA can be an effective tool to support and verify students' learning when leaders and teachers:
 - place students' interests first
 - value learning above credit acquisition
 - integrate assessment into learning pathways
 - provide students with a suitable range of pathways for success without privileging academic pathways.
12. Schools and TEOs are complex places. Different schools and TEOs faced different challenges and had different ways to overcome them.
13. ERO noted variability in practice, particularly in schools, that did not always serve students well, such as:
 - requiring students to sign a commitment to have at least 80 percent attendance or forfeit the right to attempt external assessments
 - entering only those students expected to pass an Achievement Standard
 - 'credit farming' where assessments do not align with a clear learning pathway.
14. ERO posed some provocations for consideration including:
 - What do we value as success in learning?
 - Does schools' use of NCEA impact positively or negatively on quality learning?
 - Are schools making the right choices of assessment for their students? (Low decile schools enter students in more internally assessed standards and fewer Achievement Standards than high decile schools.)

Recommendations

15. It is recommended that you:

- a) **note** the attached national evaluation report: *NCEA Observational Studies* **noted**

- b) **note** that ERO intends to release this report in July 2019. **noted**



Nicholas Pole
Chief Executive

NOTED/APPROVED

Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

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