



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga

STATE OF EDUCATION

IN NEW ZEALAND 2006



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga

Published By:
Strategy and System Performance
Ministry of Education

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December 2006

ISSN 1177-6374 (Print)
ISSN 1177-6382 (Online)

www.educationcounts.edcentre.govt.nz

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FOREWORD MINISTER OF EDUCATION

State of Education in New Zealand 2006 charts the progress of New Zealand's education system across the early childhood, schooling, and tertiary sectors.

By any measure our education system is world class.

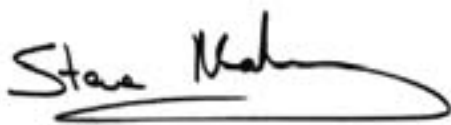
At a school level, student achievement continues to improve, with Kiwi students performing as well as, or better than, students in other OECD countries.

In early childhood, quality and participation are at record levels, with around 94 percent of New Zealand children now taking part in early childhood education before starting school.

And our tertiary system is meeting the needs of more New Zealanders. The proportion of students going directly from school to tertiary education has increased by more than a fifth since 1999.

The indicators in this report help us to monitor, and continually improve our education system. As time progresses new indicators will be developed and existing ones improved to provide a clearer picture of how our education system is performing.

I look forward to seeing our continued progress in future State of Education publications.



Hon. Steve Maharey

Minister of Education





FOREWORD SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION

State of Education in New Zealand 2006 is a new annual publication to provide an overview of our education system.

It complements and builds on the Ministry's initiative to develop and make available a set of education sector indicators to:

- provide a system-wide assessment of key aspects of the education system and of education outcomes that can be monitored over time
- highlight national trends in various aspects of education and consider how New Zealand compares with other countries in education and skills development
- help identify key issues to inform strategic planning, policy, research, and information priorities.

This report provides a synthesis of material already publicly available on the Ministry's website for statistics and research – *Education Counts*. Detailed data that underlie the indicators, associated publications and other resource materials that have been drawn on can be accessed on: www.educationcounts.edcentre.govt.nz.

The goal of *Education Counts* is to increase the availability and accessibility of information about education statistics and research, including:

STATISTICS:

various collections of statistical information obtained through Ministry of Education processes, including data on achievement, participation, and resourcing

PUBLICATIONS:

such as research and evaluation, Best Evidence Synthesis reports, regular monitoring reports, and specialised analysis

ANALYSIS:

including education sector indicators and detailed examination of key education themes

REFERENCE LISTS:

including address and service details of New Zealand's education institutions

TECHNICAL INFORMATION:

to support the use and interpretation of data and information, including data dictionaries, glossaries, and defined standards

I hope this report and the *Education Counts* website will stimulate interest in using our evidence base and help us all to gain a clear understanding of how our education system is performing.

Karen Sewell

Secretary for Education

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Participation in early childhood education (ECE) contributes to a child's later development and future learning. The number of children attending early childhood education services, and the time they spend in these, have been steadily increasing for all children across all ethnic groups over the past 15 years (SEE CHAPTER ONE). Accessibility, including affordability, does not appear to be a systemic problem (SEE CHAPTER TWO).

Primary schooling builds on the concepts gained in early childhood. Young New Zealanders are, as a whole, performing as well as or better than their peers internationally (SEE CHAPTER FOUR).

Similarly, secondary schooling builds on the achievements of primary schooling. The knowledge and skills young New Zealanders gain at secondary school are critical to their likelihood of successful participation in tertiary education and/or future employment. International studies show that New Zealand secondary school students perform at a high level compared with students from other countries (SEE CHAPTER EIGHT). More secondary students are leaving school with qualifications than in previous years (SEE CHAPTER NINE).

Participation in tertiary education allows people to develop the knowledge and skills to live in a modern society and knowledge-based economy. Participation in tertiary education opens up career opportunities, and has a range of positive impacts on income, standards of living, and health. New Zealand's open tertiary system and flexible learning opportunities for people to study have helped see a substantial increase in enrolments (SEE CHAPTER ELEVEN) while qualification completion rates have been maintained (SEE CHAPTER TWELVE).

While the general education picture for New Zealand is very positive, there are disparities when different groups of the population are compared. Generally early childhood education services and schools that draw their children/students from communities with the greatest socio-economic disadvantage have the worst rates for participation, numeracy and literacy, and qualification attainment. Similarly, Māori and Pasifika students often have worse results than their peers, which mirror the over-representation of Māori and Pasifika in socio-economically disadvantaged communities.

Over recent years Māori and Pasifika students and students from low socio-economic communities have tended to improve at relatively higher rates than other groups, for early childhood education participation, numeracy and literacy, and schooling qualifications, implying disparities are reducing.

Retention of students who 'engage' with their schooling communities has positive effects on their future education and employment. Students who disengage from schooling, and in particular leave school early, face a life time of disadvantage. Students from socio-economically disadvantaged communities and Māori students have relatively poor rates of school participation and engagement (SEE CHAPTERS SIX AND SEVEN).

INTRODUCTION

This report provides an overview of our education system, as seen in 2006 but with most data relating to the previous year (2005). It provides a system-wide assessment of key aspects of the education system and of trends.

Our aim is to provide a composite picture of the education sector, in sufficient detail that analysis and conclusions can be tracked back to base data. There are limitations in the picture that we can provide at this time, mainly because of a historical lack of base data in specific areas. As an important example, there is still a lack of system-wide information on how the sector is meeting the needs of special education students.

It should be recognised that this report provides a picture of the education sector overall and of how that sector is delivering for particular population groups. This report in no way attempts to assess and compare performance across particular providers.



