

Student Achievement Webinar Question and Answers



Overview

Here are the answers to the questions we received from our Student Achievement Webinar.

If you need more information or support, please get in touch with our Advisory and Support Centre on 0800 782 435 or govadvice@nzsta.org.nz.

If you would like to provide feedback on your webinar experience, please email us at pdadvice@nzsta.org.nz.

Supporting Resources

- [Student achievement workbook](#)
- [Webinar recording](#)
- [Webinar presentation](#)

Questions and Answers

1. How does physical activity improve student learning?

Regular physical activity plays an important role in children and young people's health and wellbeing.

Not only does it contribute to a healthy heart and body, but it is also associated with positive psychological and cognitive benefits such as concentration and memory.

The Health and Physical Education area of the National Curriculum covers more than just physical activity.

It also encompasses things like mental health, sexuality education, body care and physical safety. The curriculum focuses on the well-being of the students themselves, of other people, and of society through learning in health-related and movement contexts.

[You can read more about this area of the curriculum here.](#)

2. What are the key differences between the board's and the school's role in student achievement?

The board's role is to:

- Set strategic goals focused on student achievement.
- Approve the principal's annual implementation plan.
- Monitor how the school is progressing against the plan.
- Provide funding, if needed to support programmes of learning, learning support, etc
- Review the data about student achievement provided and ask questions to better understand the information.
- Report to the school community and the Secretary for Education on the progress made against the plans set.

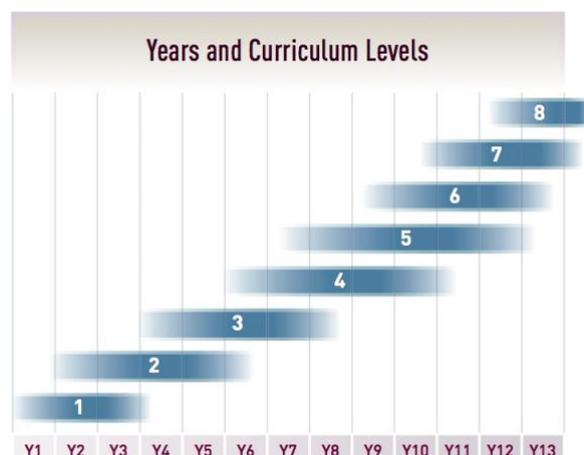
The principal's role is to create and implement the annual implementation plan and provide student achievement data to the board throughout the year. You can read more about this in our [Student Achievement Workbook](#).

3. Can you please explain how the objectives work in the New Zealand Curriculum?

The **achievement objectives** found in *The New Zealand Curriculum* set out selected learning processes, knowledge, and skills relative to eight levels of learning. These desirable levels of knowledge, understanding, and skills represent progress towards broader outcomes that ultimately amount to deeper learning.

When designing and reviewing their curriculum, schools choose achievement objectives from each area to fit the learning needs of their students.

Some achievement objectives relate to skills or understandings that can be mastered within a particular learning level. Others are more complex and are developed with increasing



sophistication across a number of learning levels. The broader and more complex an objective, the more significant it is likely to be for a student's learning.

4. **What questions can we ask to be assured that all our students and staff are in a safe environment?**

There are several ways your board can seek assurance in this area and the approach you take will depend on the context of your own school.

[The Ministry of Education](#) has information and resources to support and promote the health, safety and wellbeing of your staff and students.

We recommend that boards conduct [workplace surveys](#) annually. Student wellbeing surveys and other methods to gauge student voice may also be used.

If you would like further advice regarding either designing a survey or how to consider information received from a survey, please contact us.

5. **Some schools are on a very tight budget. How do these boards support their school if they do not have a lot of surplus funds?**

This is a common issue faced by many boards and whilst paying for extra resources may seem like the only solution, sometimes there may be other options available.

Some questions your board could ask are:

- Are we receiving all the funding available to us?
- Have we budgeted for spending in the right areas?
- Does the spending align with the Annual Plan?
- What does our long-term financial planning look like?
- Is the school maximising the resources and time available to them?
- Do staff need professional learning and development?
- What professional development is available at little or no cost to the school?
- What support does the school need from the board to improve in the areas identified?

6. **Is it common practice in secondary schools to report on true curriculum levels or are schools assuming for example, that Y9 students are at CL4 and reporting Below, at or above in relation to that?**

All schools should be accurately reporting on student achievement levels.

Speak to your principal about how the students are being assessed in your school.

7. **How do we deal with/understand the exceptions/anomalies in the data? They can skew the bigger picture of results.**

When looking at data, understanding any outliers is key to getting a true sense of the results.

Some questions your board could ask are:

- What do the outliers mean?
- What is being done to address them?
- How do they impact the overall results?
- What are the 'stories' behind the data?
- What other factors are there at play that could be impacting the data?

8. **How do we best make sure that middle-to-high achieving students are “able to obtain their highest possible standard”?**

Boards are responsible for the achievement of every student in the school. As well as ensuring there are interventions and support for those not achieving, schools should also have plans in place meet the needs of students who require extension.

9. How do we measure student achievement in a way that is objective and meaningful?

By looking at more than just the numbers.

As well as progress against the curriculum, consider other factors that can impact on student achievement such as:

- Demographics of the school, students, staff, and community.
- Student wellbeing, engagement, and participation.
- Attendance, behaviour management, support and guidance programmes.
- Staff, student, and community perceptions of the school.

10. How can we as a school make learning fun and relevant so our kids want to be learning?

Student engagement is key to our tamariki wanting to learn and achieving their potential.

Some questions your board could ask are:

- How well is the design and delivery of our local curriculum meeting the needs of our students?
- Are there any other factors contributing to our students being less engaged in learning?
- What support does the school need from the board to improve in this area?
- How are we ensuring that students at our school/kura have agency (a voice)?

11. How do you ensure student achievement in education is met when lockdown presented our Kura with so many missed opportunities?

COVID has impacted so many of our students, staff and whānau, particularly those who have experienced extended periods of lockdown.

Some questions your board could ask are:

- What did our students achieve this year?
- How did we ensure our students were engaged?
- How did we meet the needs of our whānau/community during this time?
- Has their achievement been impacted by lockdown?
- What can we do to better support student achievement if we are put into lockdown again?
- How can we support our Kaiako to support our students?
- What plans does the school have in place for students at risk of not achieving their potential because of lockdowns?
- What support does the school need from the board to implement these plans?

12. Does achievement always have to be literacy and numeracy? What does achievement for Neurodiverse/ESOL/high needs look like?

Literacy and numeracy (reading, writing and math) are core skills that all learners need to have to succeed at school and later on in the life. This is why there is a strong emphasis on this particularly in the early years.

There are eight learning areas in the National Curriculum (English, the arts, health and physical education, learning languages, mathematics and statistics, science, social sciences, and technology).

From 2022, Aotearoa New Zealand's histories will also be taught in all schools.

All students undertake learning across all areas of the curriculum, you can read more about [the New Zealand Curriculum here](#).

The MoE has a [range of resources](#) available to address the learning needs (and consequent assessment for these learners) Inclusive Education | Inclusive Education (tki.org.nz) and ESOL Online / English - ESOL - Literacy Online website - English - ESOL - Literacy Online (tki.org.nz), including a guide around the role of the board in inclusive education

13. How is this supportive of those with diverse learning needs?

The National Curriculum Levels provide guidance and signposts for how the “average” student may progress in their learning.

Many students do not fit this pattern for a variety of reasons. Every student is different, each with their own potential.

One of the board’s primary objectives is to ensure that every student at the school can attain their highest possible standard in educational achievement.

The board should seek assurance that the school has identified the potential of each student and is providing the appropriate support, guidance and learning programmes to help them reach their potential.

Those with special educational needs should have individual learning plans in place. A school’s SENCO may also report to the board on the work being done in this area. See Q12 for links to relevant support services.

14. How does a board gauge achievement? There are so many acronyms used.

Gauging the level of achievement should be via the data presented and the commentary/analysis that sits around that data. Any information provided to your board should be presented in a way that you can easily understand. A board should expect to have the information relayed to them in ‘plain English’ and to have any jargon/acronyms clearly explained as a matter of course. If this isn’t the case, talk to your principal about changing the format or providing more detail such as a glossary and an explanation of the terms used.

15. What is the best place to find comparative or benchmark data to compare with our school results?

It depends on the types of data you want to compare, and the assessment tools and systems used by your school.

Boards should work with their own school to find out what information is available and what data you want to see.

Most Kāhui Ako collect this information and the Ministry of Education’s - [Education Counts](#) website publishes lots of statistical information and reports.

16. How do we ensure our school is equipped to help students with autism?

The Ministry of Education provides a range of services and support for children, students, teachers and schools as part of their [learning support](#).

The TKI Inclusive Education site [Inclusive Education | Inclusive Education \(tki.org.nz\)](#) has further information for neurodiverse learners.

As a board, you should be seeking assurance that the school is working with the whānau and the Ministry to access all the learning support options available for those students who need it.

17. How do we encourage our school to partner with whānau to help children achieve?

This could be a great strategic goal for your board to consider. Having a strong relationship between the school and whānau to support learning is key to a student achieving their potential.

It’s so important, it has been included in the NELP (National Education Learning Priorities).

“Have high aspirations for every learner/ākonga, and support these by partnering with their whānau and communities to design and deliver education that responds to their needs, and sustains their identities, languages and cultures.”

Like any partnership, communication and mutual respect are vital to maintaining an effective relationship. There is no “right way” to engage all the different groups in your community, every school is different.

You can get some ideas from the following sources

- [NELP \(National Education Learning Priorities\)](#)
- [Connecting with Māori Communities](#)
- [Strengthening Pacific community engagement to support student learning](#)
- [Ka Hikitia – Ka Hāpaitia – Education in New Zealand.](#)

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18. What is the role of the board in ensuring that the most effective teaching practices are being used? or does the board put trust the principal?

Whilst the board is ultimately accountable, as the professional leader of the school, the principal is responsible for fostering quality teaching and learning outcomes.

It can be useful to have the following policies in place to ensure that everyone is clear about their respective roles and responsibilities.

- [D1 Responsibilities of the principal sample policy](#)
- [D2 Curriculum delivery sample policy](#)