

The True Cost of Qualification Reform

PPTA
Te Wehengarua

Research, carried out by BERL for PPTA, into the projected implications and costs of the new secondary school qualifications system raises significant concerns about the impact on students, particularly those who are Māori, Pasifika, vulnerable, disadvantaged and have high needs.

The current design of the changes risk increasing failure, reducing student engagement and widening inequity.

PPTA is not opposed to reform. We are calling for changes that are properly resourced and designed to protect flexibility, engagement and equity.

Modelling shows that, in addition to the



18,000

students who did not achieve Level 2 NCEA in 2025,

15,000

more students are potentially exposed to failure under the new qualification requirements.

Risk exposure is strongly linked to school disadvantage:

56%

of students achieving Level 2 NCEA in schools whose communities have high levels of socio economic disadvantage are now at risk

36%

of achieving students in communities with moderate levels are at risk

18%

of achieving students in school whose communities have lower levels of disadvantage are at risk.

Poorer outcomes for Māori and Pasifika



4,400 Māori and **2,300** Pacific learners, who would have achieved Level 2 NCEA, are at risk of failing the new NZ Certificate of Education each year.

Modelling of some of the main costs such as relief teacher coverage, principal and leadership time, learning resources, and school implementation activities, suggests that conservatively, the costs could amount to:



\$29-34k

for a small school



\$102-121k

for a medium-sized school



\$222-260k

for a large school

These costs are likely to be felt disproportionately by the smaller schools, especially schools with fewer than 100 students.

This group may suffer a one-off cost 'hit' of **1.35%** of their annual running costs.

Compared to **0.55%** for a large school.