

## **Media release: National Standards**

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A new survey looks at National Standards in primary and intermediate schools, almost seven years on from their introduction.

The New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) surveyed principals and teachers in state primary and intermediate schools in August and September this year. Some trustees and parents and whānau were also surveyed.

The report *National Standards in their seventh year*, released today, found that National Standards were an integral part of school decision-making, used to set goals for student achievement and for teaching and learning. However, principals and teachers had serious questions about the effect of National Standards on student achievement and motivation, whether there were differences in how standards were interpreted across schools, and whether the rest of the curriculum was being squeezed out.

Forty-four percent of principals said they supported National Standards in principle, up from 38% in 2013. However, less than a quarter (23%) thought National Standards provided a valuable picture of student learning. This was down from 37% in the last survey in 2013.

Teachers' support in principle for National Standards remained around the same as 2013, at just over a third. However, only 16% of teachers thought National Standards had had a positive impact on students' achievement overall. Just under half (48%) thought National Standards data provided a reliable picture of student performance at their school.

“Support and guidance around the use of standards remains problematic - more than half the principals and teachers who responded did not think it had been sufficient,” report author Dr Linda Bonne said.

The survey revealed growing concern among teachers that some students were anxious about their National Standards performance. This was more so among teachers of older students.

Only a small proportion of teachers thought the standards had helped them motivate students to take on new challenges (20%).

Another theme was concern that National Standards had little to offer students with additional learning needs. Concern about the negative effects of labelling these students' performance – often as ‘below’ or ‘well below’ National Standards over the long term – was particularly clear.

More positively, 71% of teachers reported that there was a shared understanding of the standards at their school, enabling them to make consistent overall teacher judgements (OTJs). Almost three-quarters of the teachers reported gaining insights into their practice from moderating OTJs with other teachers. There were also indications of schools having a sharper focus on students achieving below or well below the standard than in 2013.

Fifty-one percent of parents and whānau agreed or strongly agreed that National Standards provided a valuable record of student learning and more than 80% said they understood the information they received about their child's achievement in relation to National Standards.

The full report is available here: <http://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/publications/national-standards-their-seventh-year>

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