NZCER 2010 Primary & Intermediate Schools National Survey

A snapshot of overall patterns and findings related to National Standards

Cathy Wylie and Edith Hodgen

NEW ZEALAND COUNCIL FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
TE RŪNANGA O AOTEAROA MŌ TE RANGAHAU I TE MĀTAURANGA

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1. Introduction

NZCER national surveys of primary and intermediate schools have run since 1989, at generally three-yearly intervals, to give a national picture of what is happening in schools, and the impact of any policy or social changes. The surveys give us the ability to spot emerging issues, to track trends over time and explore reasons for those shifts. The national surveys are used by policy makers and the sector. They are funded through NZCER's purchase agreement with the Ministry of Education, and have the support of the New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI), the Principals' Federation and the New Zealand School Trustees' Association (NZSTA). Draft surveys are circulated to the Ministry of Education and these sector groups for feedback, as well as being trialled with a small number of principals, teachers, trustees and parents: the groups we survey.

The 2010 NZCER National Survey went to a random sample of 350 schools in late July 2010; and went additionally to parents at a cross-section sample of 35 of these schools. Principals were sent their own survey and sufficient teacher surveys to cover half of their teaching staff, with guidance on how to distribute these randomly to their staff. Board chairs were sent, via the school, their own survey and one other to give to another trustee. Schools that took part in the parent survey were sent sufficient surveys for a one in seven sample, with guidance on how to send these out randomly.

We received completed surveys from:

- 210 principals (a response rate of 60 percent)
- 970 teachers (an estimated response rate of 41 percent, based on an estimate of teacher numbers at each school according to the national average teacher:student ratio)
- 257 trustees (a response rate of 37 percent; 51 percent were board chairs)
- 550 parents (an estimated response rate of 35 percent).

We weighted the responses to provide as representative a response as previous NZCER national surveys of New Zealand primary and intermediate schools (Appendix A). The margin of error for the principals' responses is around 5.8 percent; for teachers' responses, around 2.4 percent; for trustee responses, around 6.2 percent; and for parents, around 4.5 percent.

We have used unweighted data in the cross-tabulations, where the purpose is to see whether group differences are associated with differences in experiences and views.

The school characteristics we checked were school socioeconomic decile, referring to the socio-economic community served by the school, roll size, proportion of Māori enrolment (the

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proportion of students who are Māori), location (rural or urban) and school type (primary or intermediate).

With teachers, we also checked to see whether the year level they taught or their role in the school might make a difference to their experiences and views. With trustees, we checked to see if board chairs and those who had just come onto their school board had different views from others. With parents, we checked for any differences in views related to parent qualification levels and ethnicity, and year level of their youngest child (about whom they answered some questions). We also checked for differences related to school characteristics, though this comes with the caveat that the parent sample is from 35 schools only, and so we have just a few numbers of each school kind.

The new National Standards policy marks a major change for primary education, and we therefore included questions about what it meant for schools and teachers in their everyday work, for school trustees in their role and we also asked parents about their experiences of school reports this year, as well as related questions about the quality of their child's schooling. We also asked principals, teachers and trustees for their views of the likely impacts of the National Standards policy. To develop our questions, we drew on the aims of the policy, the issues that were raised during the parent and sector consultation in 2009 (Ministry of Education, 2009; Wylie, Hodgen, & Darr, 2009), critical commentary as the National Standards were released (Hattie, 2009; Crooks, Flockton, Hattie, & Thrupp, 2009), sector reactions (e.g., NZEI and New Zealand Principals' Federation media releases), material about the purpose of the National Standards and guidance in relation to it available from the Ministry of Education, and discussions with individual principals and teachers as they started to work with the Standards in 2010. We asked about purposes and issues even though these are early days in the implementation of the National Standards, so that trends over time could be tracked, and to provide information for the implementation as it continues.

The NZCER national surveys are comprehensive. We have given priority to reporting the National Standards findings as soon as possible to provide some research evidence, which can be put alongside other research, evaluation and analysis, such as the Education Review Office (ERO's) recent report (Education Review Office, 2010), to support discussion of the most fruitful path forward in what is a more complex change than many outside education realise.

We report these findings on National Standards in the context of the key findings from the national survey programme as a whole. The repeated nature of the survey allows us to see, for example, that primary and intermediate schools are coming to their work on National Standards with more use of assessment information to improve student learning, and more school practices where teachers are collaborating to use data and share knowledge and ideas to do so, than they were three years ago.

We start with an overview of the survey's main findings, reporting the experiences and perspectives of trustees, principals, teachers and parents. The second section of this report

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provides more detail about experiences and views of the early implementation of the National Standards.

Notes on the report revision

This year was the first time we used weights to ensure that the responses we reported were representative of all state and state integrated primary and intermediate schools in the country. This led to a complication that was not picked up until we were working on the analysis for the second report from the 2010 national survey. The SAS macro we had developed at NZCER to provide a more user-friendly form for the data from survey questions where more than one response is possible (we ask people to "*Please tick all that apply*") needed further work to use with weighted data. We found that the percentages had been calculated on the number of respondents , not, as they should have been, by the sum of the weights.

In most cases the differences between the percentages reported for these questions in the report we released in late October and in this revised report, which gives the percentages based on the sum of the weights, are sufficiently small to be well within the margin of error. However, they are larger in some cases. These larger differences occurred where there were large differences between the sum of the weights and the number of responses (where the school characteristics of our responses (e.g., decile) differed most from the national school characteristics).

All the percentages reported in the first edition of the report for questions where respondents could choose only one answer, e.g., the material used in the figures in this report, were correctly calculated and reported then, and have not changed.

We have also taken the opportunity provided by the revision to improve the clarity of some sections.

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2. Overview

Trustees

While financial management and school property continue to feature in the top three areas on which boards spend their time, monitoring school performance now heads the list. It was the third area in terms of time spent on it in 2007, and the sixth area in 2003.

Providing strategic direction for the school is the key element in their role for most trustees, a perception that has increased since 2007. Over half (58 percent) see a key element is to support the school staff or principal; followed by representing parents (44 percent), scrutinising school performance (41 percent) and overseeing school finances (36 percent). Around a fifth focused on the employment or oversight of the principal, and 12 percent saw acting as the Government's agent as a key aspect of their role.

Sixty-eight percent of trustees think that the overall responsibility asked of them in their role is about right. There has been a marked drop in the proportion who think that the overall amount of responsibility asked of school trustees is too high: 14 percent of primary and intermediate trustees thought this in 2010, down from 20 percent in 2007, and 36 percent in 2003. Secondary trustees are much more likely to think their overall amount of responsibility is too high (67 percent in the NZCER 2009 and 2006 surveys).

In 2010, primary and intermediate school trustees gave an average 2.8 hours a week to their governance role. This is somewhat less than what has been a fairly consistent average of 3.4 hours since 1991.

Changes trustees would like to see in their role are headed by wanting more funding for their school (66 percent identified this; and only 13 percent of the trustees overall thought that their government funding was enough to meet their school's needs). Just over a third (38 percent) would like to improve their knowledge or training. Other changes identified by between 20–30 percent were to receive more support from parents, work more with other schools, have more guidance on how to use achievement data to inform board decision making, have a clearer distinction between governance and management, reduce compliance costs relating to education legislation, reduce Ministry of Education expectations of what the school could provide for the funding it received and to receive more support or advice from independent education experts.

Over 90 percent of the trustees thought their board had a good relationship with the school principal, and good working relations existed among the trustees. Eighty-four percent thought

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their board regularly scrutinised the school's performance, much the same as in 2007, with the same proportion saying it was easy to see whether the school was making progress on its goals from the information they received from the principal. Information about student achievement was generally easy to understand (82 percent), the information needed to make good decisions was received by most (71 percent) and few received information at the last minute (13 percent). Just under a fifth thought their board did spend too much time on minor issues, however.

Only 10 percent of trustees did not have ready access to information at the school to help them in their role; 61 percent could use a library of relevant material, and 64 percent could look at archives or records of previous board papers. Fifty-eight percent of trustees who came onto the board since the May 2010 election had had an induction pack, or folder about the school and board, and the way it worked. This is somewhat more than in 2007.

Printed guidance was still more likely to be used than Internet material, particularly from NZSTA (64 percent), the *Effective governance—working in partnership* resource that was sent to all boards by the Ministry of Education mid-year (51 percent) and other Ministry of Education printed material. The school principal and staff were mentioned by 65 percent of trustees, and around a third each mentioned discussions with ERO during its review of the school and guidance and information from other trustees on the board.

Only 11 percent of the trustees responding had had no formal training or support for their work over the past 12 months. Formal training often consisted of single sessions, whether in the form of cluster meetings (34 percent), or a session focused on their own school (24 percent). Twenty-six percent had taken part in Ministry of Education webinars (participation could be single sessions or part of a set). Trustees who had had training were mostly positive about it, whatever the form.

Patterns of trustee contact with parents were much the same as they had been in 2007. Eighty-seven percent of the trustees had some direct contact with parents, most often informal discussions with parents who were friends, and 62 percent were satisfied with their level of contact with parents. Just over a third (38 percent) helped or worked at the school. (The survey did not go to staff representatives, so this does not include them.) Parents also contacted trustees to discuss school policy or their child, and 28 percent said that parents had come to board meetings. It is rare for trustees to discuss school progress on its targets with parents (6 percent), or for parents to raise student achievement as an issue with their school board (8 percent said this had happened this year).

Most trustees' boards had consulted with their community in the past 12 months, usually through questionnaires (59 percent), questions in school newsletters (50 percent), public meetings or workshops at the school (42 percent) and invitations to parents to attend board meetings or workshops (32 percent). A third of the trustees thought their methods of consultation had generally been successful, and 40 percent, successful for some issues. On average, they estimated that 33 percent of their school's parents had taken part in their board's consultations over the past year.

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Reporting to parents (42 percent), national standards (39 percent), the strategic plan (37 percent) student achievement (35 percent), and the New Zealand Curriculum (31 percent) were the main issues of this consultation. Other issues included provision for Māori students (27 percent), followed by student health and wellbeing (23 percent), ways of working with the parent/whānau community (21 percent), property (21 percent), school uniform (20 percent), school culture (19 percent), student safety (18 percent) and progress on the school's annual plan (18 percent).

Financial skills, and skills in property maintenance and repair were the main areas of expertise within the trustees' boards (80 percent), followed by education (67 percent), governance (64 percent) and strategic planning (60 percent). Only 14 percent of trustees thought their board had all the expertise it needed, with a wide range of areas identified; legal skills (32 percent), strategic planning (25 percent), governance (21 percent) and understanding assessment data (21 percent) headed the list. However, most thought their board was making steady progress or was on top of its task (86 percent). Thirty-one percent of the trustees said their board regularly reviewed its own board processes.

Financial management and improvement of grounds or buildings were among the top five achievements of their board that trustees identified for the past year—but so too were good quality teaching, and improvement in student achievement (66 percent cf. 49 percent in 2007), and keeping good staff.

Two issues dominated those identified as the major issues facing the trustees' schools: funding (65 percent), and the introduction of National Standards (52 percent).

Trustees' replies to a question about the roles their closest Ministry of Education office could play in supporting them indicate interest in Ministry of Education support for schools to work together professionally, professional discussions on annual reports and school targets to feed into school discussion of strategies related to student achievement. Around half would like, or already get, advice from professional experts to help with principal appointment and appraisal. Views are more divided in relation to Ministry of Education advice and support on the appointment of a principal.

Most of the trustees responding had paid employment (82 percent). Of those with paid employement, many had support from their employer for their board work: 33 percent of those employed could use paid work time for board work; 27 percent could use paid work time for board work if they made up the time; 26 percent could use work equipment. Nine percent of those working were self-employed.

As in previous surveys, trustees often have higher educational qualification levels than the general population. Twenty percent of those responding to the 2010 survey had a postgraduate degree or diploma, and 29 percent a Bachelor's degree, giving a total of 49 percent with a university qualification, which is higher than for the population overall.

Over half the trustees responding were aged 40 or more (58 percent were aged between 40 to 49, 13 percent 50 years or more). Few were under 30 (2 percent).

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Women made up 49 percent of the trustees responding (though only 42 percent of board chairs). Ninety percent identified as Pākehā/European, 12 percent as Māori, 2 percent as Pacific, 1 percent as Asian and 3 percent with other ethnic categories; 8 percent identified with two ethnic groups.

Principals

Few principals consider that the government funding for their school is enough to meet its needs (11 percent, an increase from the 4 percent in 2007). However, fewer principals than in 2007 thought that 2010 was looking much the same as the previous year, and more said that the current year was looking worse than 2009 because of cost increases (39 percent cf. 26 percent in 2007). In total, 49 percent of principals said 2010 was looking worse in financial terms than 2009, and 9 percent that it was looking better.

One major change since 2007 is the increase in the proportion of principals who consider their staffing entitlement is enough to meet their school's needs: 48 percent in 2010 cf. 27 percent in 2007. This marked improvement may reflect the provision of approximately 760 additional full-time teacher equivalents from 2009 to support the transition of new entrants into school. These additional positions may be why in 2010 only 48 percent of principals said they were using locally raised funds to employ additional teaching staff cf. 66 percent in 2007. Those who were not employing additional staff with the school's own money were more likely to say that their staffing entitlement was sufficient. Teachers funded by schools were mainly employed to provide literacy or numeracy support, focus on special needs or students needing learning assistance or to take a class.

Forty-two percent of principals said their schools had difficulty finding suitable teachers, an improvement on the 53 percent who had difficulty in 2007—although this is still high. Twenty percent said they generally had difficulty, 13 percent experienced difficulty finding suitable teachers to take some year levels and 11 percent for some curriculum areas.

Twenty-two percent of the principals said their school had difficulty finding suitable teachers for senior or middle management roles; again, an improvement since 2007, when 39 percent expressed difficulty.

Finding registered day relievers with a current practising certificate (needed to allow teachers to undertake some professional development, use their classroom relief time or when teachers are on leave) was more often a difficulty (11 percent frequently, 52 percent occasionally).

Just over half the principals responding reported no difficulty finding suitable support staff for their school. Finding teacher aides to work with students with special needs was the most frequent challenge (31 percent). Fifteen percent of the principals thought the school had sufficient funds to employ enough support staff to meet its needs, and this is unchanged since 2007.

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The revised New Zealand Curriculum was published in 2007, giving schools time to become familiar with it and develop their own approach, before it became required this year. A quarter of the principals thought their teachers were very confident in using the revised New Zealand Curriculum, and 63 percent, quite confident. Most schools' exploration of the New Zealand Curriculum had been done as a whole staff. Around a fifth had yet to explore the achievement objectives or learning area statements. More than two-thirds of the schools had already made changes, or were making them in terms of the overarching aspects, such as reviewing school values and existing ways of doing things to ensure a fit with the New Zealand Curriculum, developing a stronger school-wide focus on shared pedagogies and developing a stronger focus on supporting students to be self-managing lifelong learners. Ninety percent were using school data to further develop programmes to meet the needs of particular student groups.

Most schools operate a range of approaches and activities to support student wellbeing; there seems to have been a growth in these approaches over the last four years, in keeping with the student-centred focus of the New Zealand Curriculum, underpinned by knowledge of the importance of student wellbeing for student engagement and achievement. Very few principals report that their school does not have a strengths-based focus, involve students in promoting school values and in developing strategies to manage their interactions with fellow students, or recognise students' different cultural backgrounds in school-wide practices. Seventy-five percent of principals report that their school organises peer support for students with special needs. Restorative justice is used in half the schools, and 57 percent were using peer mediators/playground monitors.

Schools are also reported to be tracking student engagement over time, using student absence and truancy information (85 percent), behaviour incident data (80 percent), student views on the school climate and culture (52 percent) and health data (49 percent).

While more schools were part of clusters with other schools (80 percent in 2010 cf. 67 percent in 2007) and shared specialists (48 percent cf. 35 percent in 2007), there was no increase in the sharing of professional development (73 percent) or resources (57 percent) with other schools, and the sense of being in competition with other local schools had increased, from 30 to 42 percent.

However, only 8 percent of principals were not interested in establishing new working relationships with another local school or schools, with another 8 percent unsure.

Principals continue to show an interest in having (and for quite a few, continuing to have) support or advice from their local Ministry of Education office in relation to property work, support for schools to work together professionally and consultation on local or regional changes affecting schools. Seventy-one percent would like their local Ministry of Education office to work with principals to establish local priorities for action (including 18 percent for whom this already happens). Fifty-eight percent would like or already have professional discussions related to their annual report and targets, and 34 percent do not want such discussions. A similar pattern is evident when it comes to the Ministry working with principals to establish a local pool of

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accredited principal appraisers. Views are evenly divided on whether the Ministry of Education should provide advice or support to school boards on their appointment of a principal.

Most principals thought their last ERO review had focused on the school's goals and progress towards those goals, and had been of use to affirm their approach, reassure parents about the quality of the school and to fine-tune systems. However, views were mixed about whether ERO review results were consistent across schools (23 percent thought they were, 40 percent were unsure and 36 percent thought they were not), and whether ERO review reports were a reliable indicator of the overall quality of teaching and learning in a school (40 percent thought they were, 29 percent were unsure and 30 percent thought they were not). Seventy-four percent thought that ERO's new self-review guidelines were useful, with a further 20 percent unsure. Just under half thought that ERO's new framework would improve the usefulness of ERO reviews for their school, with a further 43 percent unsure. Forty-eight percent of the principals thought that formative accountability processes based on the school's annual plan would be more useful to their school than the three to five-yearly ERO review; 41 percent were unsure and 10 percent disagreed.

Many schools have some form of home–school partnership activities (73 percent), and 66 percent of the principals said that most of their interactions with parents were about learning; they were about discipline, however, for 17 percent.

While principals are generally positive about their school boards, 57 percent have experienced some problem with board members in their role as principal, either at their current school or another school. This is an increase from the 46 percent reporting experience of problems in 2007. Most of these problems were minor (40 percent); 19 percent had experienced major problems. Primary principals are divided in their views about the level of board of trustees' responsibility: 51 percent think they are asked to take on too much, 45 percent think it is about the right level, and 3 percent think they have too little responsibility. This pattern was much the same in 2007.

All but 7 percent of the principals have made some use of Ministry of Education-funded support for their role over the past three years, particularly electronic resources through the Educational Leaders website (65 percent), NZSTA advisers and helpdesk (67 percent have used one or both of these services) and School Support Services Leadership and Management Advisers (47 percent). Forty-three percent have taken part in Ministry of Education webinars.

Eighty-five percent also took an active role in principal networks or groups that are not funded by the Ministry of Education.

Around 80 percent of principals thought they had good access to assessment tools to set and monitor student learning goals, and data management systems and expertise at the school level to provide the supporting analysis for this work. Just over half thought they had good guidance about the most effective and affordable ways to raise achievement in the school.

Principals' average hours per week were 58. The pattern is much the same as in 2007, with an indication of somewhat more working less than 50 hours a week now (12 percent cf. 7 percent).

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Only 23 percent of principals have no teaching role in their school. Forty-four percent relieve for absent teachers, 26 percent model lessons for teachers and 26 percent have full responsibility for a class every day.

Most principals agreed that their overall morale was good (27 percent strongly agreed and 60 percent agreed). We asked about morale in a somewhat different way in 2007 and 2003; the overall picture looks comparable to 2007 (2003 showed a somewhat higher level of morale overall) with indications of a slight increase at the lower end (in 2010, 10 percent of principals disagreed that their overall morale was good, and in 2007, 6 percent rated it poor).

Thirty-seven percent of principals described their typical stress level for 2010 as high or extremely high; this is high for any profession. Principals' stress levels have not changed overall since 2007. However, 36 percent of principals now thought their workload was not manageable cf. 25 percent in 2007. Forty-seven percent also thought they could not sustain their present workload (this was a new question in 2010).

The median age of the principals was 55; 14 percent were less than 40 years old and 17 percent over 60. Forty-one percent had been principals for less than six years, an increase since 2007, when 25 percent had less than six years' experience in the role. A third had been at their school for less than three years cf. 21 percent of the principals in the 2007 national survey. Fifty-one percent were male. Ninety-two percent were Pākehā/European, 8 percent were Māori, with 2 percent identifying with other ethnic groups and less than 1 percent a Pasifika group. Three percent identified with more than one ethnic group.

Teachers

Over 90 percent of teachers enjoyed their job, and morale levels were good for 86 percent. Most thought they got the support they needed to do their job effectively. Around 60 percent thought their workload was manageable and sustainable. Estimated average hours spent on work outside timetabled or school hours have increased since 2007, from 15.7 hours to 16.5 hours a week.

The main things teachers would change about their work were to decrease their administration or paperwork, have smaller class sizes, more time to work with individual students, more support staff and better pay. These were also main changes identified in the 2007 survey.

Nearly three quarters (71 percent) included improvements in student achievement among their main achievements as a teacher in the past three years. Other main achievements included increasing their own knowledge and skills, improving the learning environment and teaching programme and better meeting the needs of individuals or groups. This pattern is similar to 2007.

Around three-quarters of the teachers had had professional development in reading, writing or numeracy over the past three years; only 7 percent had not had any professional development in these three core areas. Many who took part in professional development in these areas said it had

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improved their practice. Other common topics for professional development included student inquiry learning (78 percent); the key competencies (part of the New Zealand Curriculum), experienced by 59 percent of the teachers; using a new assessment tool, such as PAT or AsTTle (57 percent); student engagement (50 percent); school inquiry or professional learning groups (48 percent); ICT professional development clusters (48 percent); and learning conversations (47 percent). Most who took part in these professional development initiatives thought their practice and/or thinking had changed as a result.

Professional development was least commonly experienced in the form of study at a graduate level (MEd or similar)—13 percent had done this in the past three years; through Extending High Standards Across Schools (EHSAS) Clusters (21 percent); or focused on particular student groups, such as Māori (23 percent), Pasifika (16 percent) or gifted and talented (27 percent).

Student behaviour often caused disruption to teaching for 11 percent of the teachers, and sometimes for 40 percent. However, most felt safe in their class. Ten percent did feel unsafe in their class occasionally, and 1 percent frequently. The picture was similar in the playground, with 12 percent occasionally feeling unsafe, and 0.5 percent frequently. This is the first survey round we have asked teachers these questions.

In 2010, teachers were much more likely to report collegial practices of sharing, discussion and support than in 2007. There appears to be a stronger focus on analysis of data to improve student achievement. At the same time—and not unrelated—there is a higher level of reports that schools are good at developing leadership skills among teachers, and that teachers feel supported to take risks and innovate. Generally, three-quarters or more of the teachers responding reported that there was a good level of the practices we asked about (these practices have been identified in previous research about effective practices that support learning).

While 90 percent thought they could discuss any teaching problem they had with a more expert colleague, it was less common to have good opportunities to observe effective colleagues (this would mean arranging cover for one's class): 57 percent had this. Fifty-two percent had regular meetings with their manager about their work that supported their work or gave them new insights. Sixty-one percent thought that their school's goals really did guide their day-to-day work.

There was sometimes a tension with the time available—24 percent thought they did not have enough time to get together and plan their work. However, this is lower than in 2007. Thirty percent thought their teaching time was not protected from unnecessary interruptions.

Fifty-one percent thought that career progression was available at their school, an increase from the 31 percent in 2007. Fourteen percent of teachers expressed interest in becoming a principal in future, and another 16 percent were unsure, much the same figure since 2003.

Thirty-one percent of the teachers responding said they were very confident about using the revised New Zealand Curriculum, and 55 percent said they were quite confident. Most of the teachers were working in schools that had reviewed the school's vision, values and existing ways

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of doing things, to ensure a fit with the New Zealand Curriculum, which came into effect at the start of 2010. Most were also in schools that, through their work on the New Zealand Curriculum, were using school data to further develop programmes to meet the needs of particular student groups, and had a stronger focus on supporting students to be self-managing lifelong learners than they had had before. In line with such support, most teachers reported student involvement in goal setting, assessment and review, particularly for reading, writing and mathematics (but not so much science, which has had less national-level focus and is not included in the National Standards). Many classes also had students taking an active role, with their teacher and parents/whānau, in goal setting at the start of the year, and in the mid-year and end-of-year review of their progress.

Many of the ways in which learning can be made more engaging and deeper, providing the interweaving of knowledge, skills and attitudes which are key to the revised New Zealand Curriculum, appear to be occurring in primary and intermediate classes, more at the "quite often" level rather than "most of the time". Over 80 percent of the teachers said that students in their class quite often or most of the time experienced hands-on or practical activities, could make connections with things in their own culture or life outside school, think and talk about how they were learning and discuss different ways of looking at things, different interpretations. Fewer than half reported classes where students worked quite often or most of the time on inquiry projects (on their own or with others), could direct their own learning pace or context or learn te reo and tikanga Māori.

Almost all the teachers made some use of ICT for learning. Most saw student use of ICT in their class as an essential or routine aspect of learning (76 percent), particularly because it made learning more engaging, changed the way they taught and students learnt, allowed the recognition of a wider range of student strengths, helped deeper learning and led to a more collaborative classroom environment. Where ICT was used often, it included searching independently for information (41 percent, up from 29 percent in 2007), and for practising skills such as addition (38 percent, up from 22 percent in 2007) and creating documents or slideshows (29 percent).

Funding tops teachers' list of the major issues facing their school (58 percent), with the next top issues being the introduction of National Standards (52 percent) and assessment workload (48 percent).

The teachers responding included beginning teachers (11 percent had been teaching for less than three years) and veterans (42 percent had been teaching for more than 15 years). The median length of teaching experience was 13 years. Sixteen percent held senior school management roles (deputy or assistant principal), 40 percent held middle school management roles (curriculum/syndicate leader, senior teacher or receipt of a management unit), 3 percent were subject specialists and 39 percent were classroom teachers. Most were women (88 percent). Eighty-seven percent identified as Päkehä/European, 8 percent as Mäori, 3 percent as Pacific, 2 percent as Asian and 4 percent another ethnic group. Five percent identified more than one ethnic group. The median age was 44.5 years.

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Parents

The parents who took part in the 2010 National Survey were positive about their child's schooling experiences, with at least three-quarters agreeing with the 19 statements about these experiences that we asked them about, and most of the remainder saying that they were not sure. The items we asked about included whether their child's teacher motivated them to learn, was aware of their child's strengths and weaknesses and provided clear feedback to their child on their work. Forty-one percent of the parents agreed strongly that they were pleased with their child's progress this year, 40 percent agreed and 11 percent were unsure; only 5 percent disagreed. Twenty-eight percent of the parents agreed strongly that they got good ideas from the school on how to help their child's learning, 42 percent agreed, 20 percent were unsure and 8 percent disagreed.

Parents responding were also positive about how well their child's school was helping their child gain the skills and attitudes that are included in the New Zealand Curriculum's key competencies. These are skills and attitudes that allow lifelong learning, and fit with the "soft skills" that are valued in employment and social participation, such as the ability to problem solve, work well with others and self-manage.

While 84 percent of the parents would definitely recommend their child's school to other parents, 40 percent would like to change something about their child's education at the school. This is a little less than the 49 percent in 2007. As in previous national surveys, the main changes that parents want (expressed by 21 to 14 percent each) are headed by a desire for smaller class sizes and more individual help for students, along with more communication about their child's progress, more information to support learning at home, more challenging work for students, or higher expectations, and more teaching resources.

Nineteen percent of parents would like more say in some area of their child's school (somewhat up from 13 percent in 2007) with a further 11 percent unsure. What they would like some say in varies widely. Forty-nine percent of the parents thought their child's school genuinely consulted them about new directions or issues (slightly less than the 54 percent in 2007) and a further 25 percent were unsure.

Parents' main sources of information about their child's school continue to be weekly newsletters, (75 percent). Newsletters that came out less often than once a week were mentioned by 25 percent. School websites were mentioned by 37 percent, though most of these parents made only occasional use of their school's website. Sixteen percent mentioned their school's most recent ERO review (a decrease from 27 percent in 2007) and 15 percent the school's annual report. Other parents are a source of information about their child's school for 49 percent of parents.

Other parents are also one of the main sources of information about education in general (52 percent). Friends (51 percent) and family (50 percent) are also important, as is the newspaper (49 percent), Internet searches (46 percent) and television (44 percent). ERO was mentioned by 24 percent, and the Ministry of Education by 19 percent. The diversity of these sources, and the low proportions using government agencies to gain information about education, points to the

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challenge of communicating changes in education, and the reasons for those changes, particularly where changes may appear simple, like the introduction of National Standards, yet are in fact complex.

When it comes to choosing their child's school, parents rely most on their own experience, the experience of others they know personally and its proximity. Twenty-three percent had looked at ERO reviews when they were making their choice. Eighty-nine percent of the parents said their child was attending their first choice of school, and 8 percent said they were not. This pattern has stayed much the same since 2003. Sixty percent were attending the school closest to them, which was their first choice, and 29 percent had chosen a school that was not their closest.

Forty-seven percent of the parents had voted in the board of trustees' elections held in May this year, and 7 percent said there was no election at their school. This is much the same proportion as we had in 2007, and much higher than the national voting rate then.

Thirty-nine percent of the parents thought they had enough contact with their school's board of trustees, with a further 25 percent unsure, much the same as in previous national surveys.

Funding for their school topped the issues that parents identified (46 percent), followed by keeping good teachers at the school (31 percent) and the introduction of National Standards (18 percent).

Most of the parents responding were women (84 percent). Three-quarters (73 percent) were Päkehä/European, 13 percent were Mäori, 13 percent were Asian, 5 percent were Pasifika and 3 percent from other ethnic groups. Seven percent identified more than one ethnicity. Thirty-nine percent had a university degree; 9 percent had no school qualifications, indicating that parent responses to the national survey were more likely to come from those with higher educational levels than parents as a whole.

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3. The first year of the National Standards

Background

Funding has always headed the list of issues facing their school that is identified by all four groups surveyed, and has usually appeared way ahead of any other issue. This year, the introduction of National Standards came close to funding at the top of the issues identified by principals, trustees and teachers, indicating just what a major change it has signalled to schools.

National Standards were the main plank in the National Party's education policy for the 2008 elections, indicating regular assessment of primary and intermediate students against the new standards, and reporting to parents in plain English, supported by targeted funding to support students who did not reach the Standards, and a refocusing of the Ministry of Education and ERO to support schools to improve literacy and numeracy.

The National Standards policy allowed schools to continue to use their existing assessments of student achievement and progress. Most schools had already been using standardised assessment tools, which give comparisons with performance of New Zealand students as a whole, or tools that provide a measure of performance against benchmarks for different ages or year levels. They have also been using evidence from student work in class, and teacher observations of how students go about their work—what learning strategies they use, for example, to gauge what support individual students need to develop their knowledge and skills.

What is new about the National Standards is that they provide a set of benchmarks for each year level that have been devised by curriculum experts in literacy and mathematics, using their knowledge to decide what benchmark or level of achievement in, say, Year 4, would see a student safely on track for gaining NCEA Level 2, which is considered to be a sound platform for further education and employment. These benchmarks had to be developed very rapidly in 2009, and have not been established through empirical work on actual student trajectories over time.

Thus the National Standards policy involves teachers using assessments and information to make a judgement of individual student performance in terms of these benchmarks. This "overall teacher judgement" (OTJ) is to be made for Years 1–3 students at the end of each 12-month period they have been at school (reflecting the fact that in New Zealand students start school on or near their individual birthday), and at the end of the school year for students in Years 4–8. It also involves teachers making judgements through the year as to the progress of individual students towards these end-of-year or anniversary benchmarks, so that they can identify students who may

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not reach the benchmark, and work with them to increase their rate of literacy or mathematics learning to improve their likelihood of reaching the benchmark.

This comparison of every child with a year-level (or years-at-school) benchmark, and the need to place every child into one of the four categories of performance in relation to these benchmarks introduces a uniformity of expectation for every child that has not existed in the New Zealand education system for over 50 years, and which does not exist within the wider New Zealand Curriculum, in which the National Standards fit. The New Zealand Curriculum is levelled, but it allows for children in a given year to be performing at a range of curriculum levels.

While the National Standards policy has explicitly steered away from the introduction of uniform national tests, the language used to refer to student achievement against the Standards appears more judgemental than found in other education systems (e.g., the United States, which uses benchmarks to measure student performance). New Zealand is using the terms "well below", "below", "at" and "above", rather than, for example, "basic", "proficient", "advanced". Recent Ministry of Education guidance has suggested that these terms do not need to be used with students and parents, but the material used in the 2009 consultation and earlier guidance, and in current guidance to boards of trustees, indicates otherwise, leading to mixed expectations among parents as well as schools.

The increased uniformity of expectation and the emphasis on consistency of judgements has shone a spotlight on how teachers make their judgements. In some schools represented in this national survey, it is evident that there has been a systematic, collective approach for some years, so that teachers have been using the same set of assessments and/or benchmarks. These teachers and schools are used to discussions of student work and about the results of assessments to ensure that teachers within the school are consistent in their analysis of performance—and student need. In these schools, the introduction of National Standards has led to a comparison of the National Standards benchmarks with the school's own, sometimes resulting in critique of the National Standards benchmarks as either unrealistically high for particular year levels, or as too low (particularly in schools serving high socioeconomic communities). In other schools, the survey evidence suggests that the introduction of National Standards has meant substantial changes to the way teachers work together, as well as revisiting the assessments used. These changes take time to embed—they require teachers to understand what different assessments can tell them about student performance, as well as to understand the National Standards, and they require them to learn how to moderate their judgements. The schools that already had a systematic approach to the use of assessment data usually developed their approach over a period of several years, in a less pressured context, and often through working consistently with advisers.

The New Zealand self-managing schools context, where schools make their own decisions about how they will give effect to national policies, has provided uneven ground for the introduction of the National Standards. On the one hand, most schools have endeavoured to put the National Standards into effect. However, not every school has started their work on National Standards with the same readiness, or at the same pace or with the same understandings. New Zealand

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schools have had considerable latitude in their practice, and also variability in support. This makes the introduction of the National Standards more complex than if the New Zealand education system was one where schools were used to working within common frameworks, and, in terms of ensuring consistency between schools, used to working with each other, or within a local system where support and expertise were shared (Wylie, 2007). This variability among schools in their assessment practice, and reporting to parents, has raised the question of how to support schools to ensure consistency across schools in the judgements teachers make about where to place individual students with respect to the Standards, as well as how soon that consistency can be realistically expected. Originally, schools were to report where their students were performing in relation to the National Standards in 2011. That has been shifted to 2012. The material reported below, while early in the implementation phase, would suggest that date may also be too soon, if the expectation is that all judgements in respect of the Standards will be sound and consistent, both within and between schools.

School views of the National Standards, and the support given for their implementation

Most schools had started work on the National Standards by late July 2010; 91 percent of the principals, and 86 percent of the teachers reported that their school had begun work to implement the National Standards.[1] The picture from this survey is consistent with ERO's evaluation from their school reviews in Terms 1 and 2 this year (Education Review Office, 2010) that 80 percent were prepared to work with the National Standards (19 percent were well prepared and 61 percent had preparation underway).

We asked teachers and principals whose schools had started work on the National Standards to give their views on the introduction of the National Standards by expressing their agreement (or not) with a set of 17 items.

On some items, there were clear patterns. Most thought the time frame for the introduction had not been long enough for them to really make sense of the National Standards before using them, that they had not had sufficient guidance and support, that it had not been easy for boards and parents to understand the National Standards and that they needed Ministry of Education support to work together, to ensure consistency.

On other items, such as the robustness of the basis for where the Standards had been set, and even more so for some Web-based resources, there was a wider range of views. More negative than positive views are expressed, but there were also quite a few opting for the "don't know/neutral" option in our questions, suggesting uncertainty, or lack of knowledge or use, or a desire not to

[1] There is substantial but not total overlap in the schools of principals and teachers. Of the 350 schools sampled, we have information about 262 schools. We had both principal and teacher responses from 190 schools, principal only responses from 20 and teacher only responses from 52.

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express an opinion. The "don't know/neutral" responses were highest for the Ministry of Education updates on the National Standards, through the "frequently asked questions" site and its self-review tools related to the National Standards.

Details are given in Figures 1 and 2 below.

Figure 1 **Principals' perspectives on the introduction of National Standards (*n*=196)**

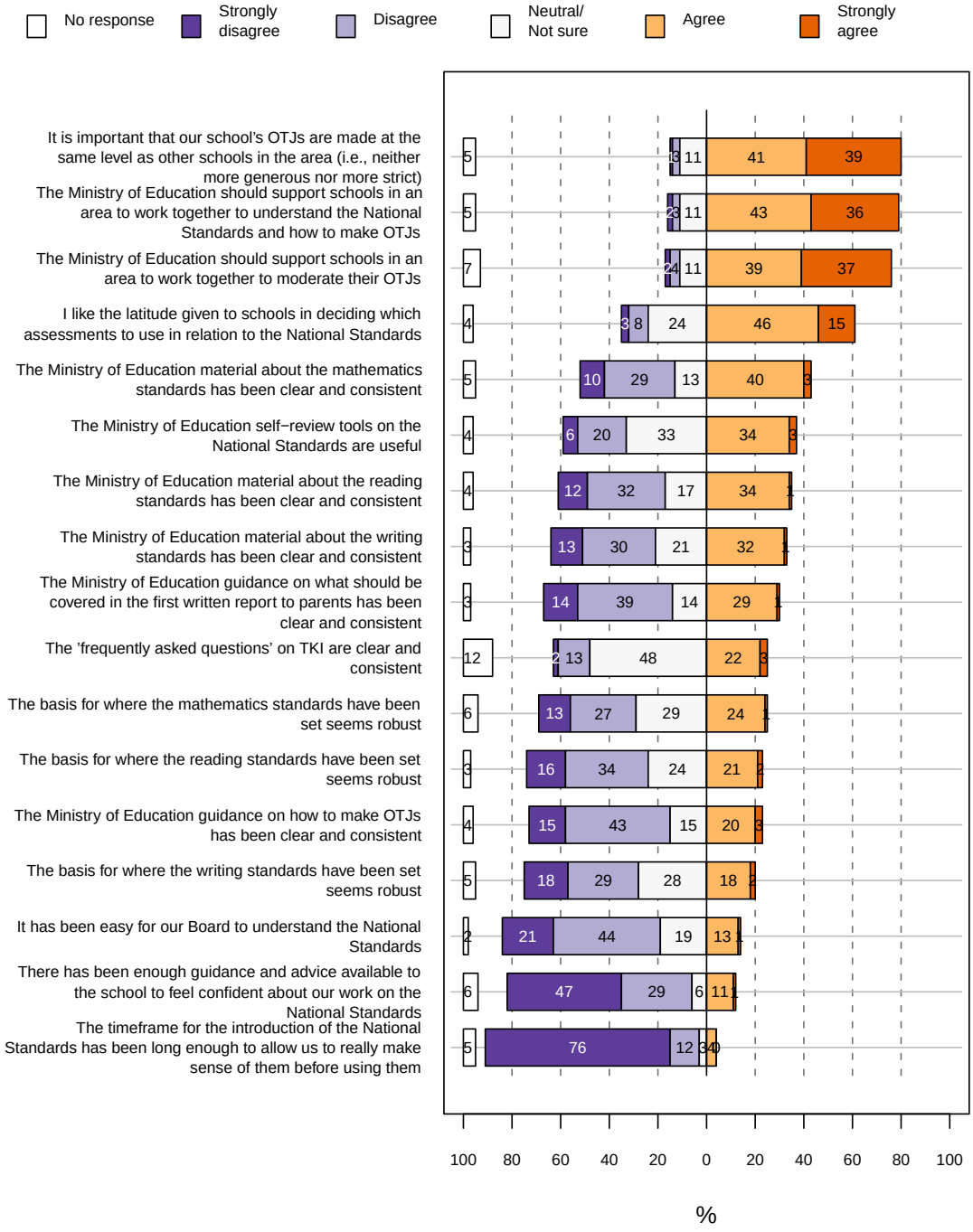

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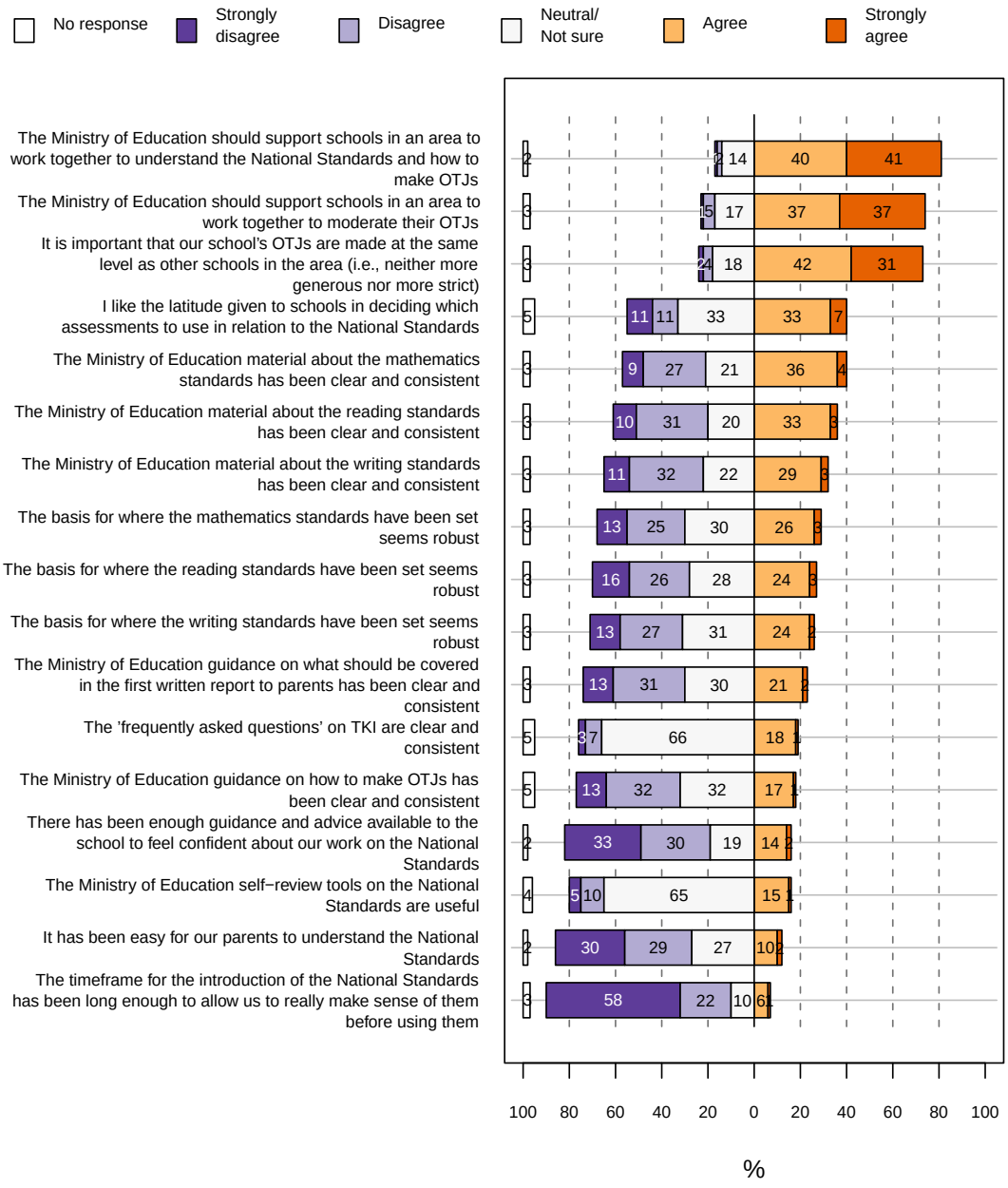
Figure 2 **Teachers' perspectives on the introduction of National Standards (*n*=829)**



There were only a few differences in views of the introduction of the National Standards that were related to school or teacher characteristics.

Principals of low-decile schools were somewhat more positive than others: they were more likely to think that the Ministry of Education material had been clear and consistent; 24 percent thought their school had had enough guidance and advice to make the school feel confident about their work on the National Standards; and 12 percent thought the time frame for the introduction had been long enough. A similar pattern was evident with the overlapping category of high Māori enrolment schools, other than in relation to the time frame.

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Low-decile school teachers were more likely to say that the Ministry of Education guidance on what should be covered in the first written report to parents was clear and consistent (38 percent cf. 22 percent of teachers in other schools). They were also most likely to say they had had enough guidance and advice available to the school to feel confident about its work on National Standards (28 percent cf. 15 percent of teachers in other schools), and that there had been enough time to allow their school to make sense of the National Standards before using them (14 percent cf. 6 percent of teachers in other schools). Perhaps this greater confidence is related to the greater likelihood that low-decile schools have been taking part in Ministry of Education interventions, and receiving Ministry of Education or Ministry of Education-funded guidance.

Principals of high-decile schools were most likely to report sharing ideas and examples with other schools (33 percent c.f. 16 percent of principals of low-decile schools).

Principals of small schools were also more positive about the National Standards, but appeared to make no more use than other schools of the electronic resources, the FAQs or the self-review tools. Nineteen percent of the small school principals felt their school had had enough guidance and advice to feel confident about their work on the National Standards. But they were no more likely than other principals to think the time frame for implementation had been long enough.

Views about whether the school had had enough guidance and advice to feel confident about their work on the National Standards were unrelated to the principal's views of the confidence levels of the school's teachers in relation to the New Zealand Curriculum. New Entrant-Year 3 teachers were more likely than Years 4–8 teachers to think that the Ministry of Education guidance on the reading standards was clear and consistent (44 percent cf. 30 percent). This may be because there are long-established assessment resources for use at the junior school levels. Their views on the robustness of the reading standards was much the same as others', however 29 percent thought they were robust.

Professional development related to the National Standards

Thirty-seven percent of the teachers had experienced professional development on the National Standards funded by the Ministry of Education, and taking place outside their school. Of those who had taken part in this professional development, 69 percent said it had had no or little impact on their practice, 24 percent said it had changed their thinking for the better, 6 percent that it had improved their practice and 1 percent that it had both changed their thinking and practice.

Thirty-six percent of the teachers had experienced whole-school professional development on the National Standards run by an adviser selected by the school. (We did not ask about whole-school sessions run by school staff themselves.) Of those who had taken part in this professional development, 60 percent said it had had no or little impact on their practice, 30 percent said it had

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changed their thinking for the better, 8 percent that it had improved their practice and 2 percent that it had changed both their thinking and practice.[2]

Those who reported some positive impact from professional development, in or outside their school, were more likely to think that the Ministry of Education material about the Standards was clear and consistent, the basis for the Standards seemed robust and that they would provide better data for decision making.

Implementing the National Standards

Principals' perspectives

Table 1 shows what was happening in the work around National Standards in the schools whose principals said they had started to implement them. Discussion of what the National Standards meant appeared to precede decisions on the sources of evidence to use to make OTJs.

Table 1 **School work related to OTJs**

School work	Reading % of principals (*n*=196)	Writing % of principals (*n*=196)	Maths % of principals (*n*=196)
Discussed our interpretation of the National Standards	78	79	75
Decided which sources of evidence to use (to make OTJs)	70	68	65
Practised making OTJs	62	62	58
Used OTJs in mid-year report to parents	62	60	60
Moderated OTJs at year level to ensure in-school consistency in the same year/age level	35	48	31
Moderated OTJs across year levels to ensure in-school consistency	29	39	27

Moderation, where teachers check and discuss their OTJs with each other, was not occurring in every school that was already using OTJs to report to parents. It occurred more often for writing, where there has been an emphasis on the use of exemplars and moderation, through Ministry of Education-funded professional development and resources, over the past five or so years. Even so,

[2] The proportions of those reporting some change from their professional development on the National Standards is lower than the proportions reporting change from other professional development we asked about, which may reflect both the nature of the professional development (one-off workshops cf. the more ongoing inquiry-based nature of professional development associated with gains for teaching) (Timperley, Wilson, Barrar & Fung, 2007), and the topic

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moderation across teachers working with students at the same year level was more likely than moderation across teachers working with students at different year levels, though such moderation would be an important activity with standards like the National Standards, which are based on the idea of a linear progression.

Around sixty percent of the principals whose schools had started work on implementing National Standards said their schools had used OTJs in their mid-year reports to parents. Moderation of writing within a year level occurred in 69 percent of the schools using OTJs for writing in the mid-year reports, and moderation across year levels, in 53 percent of these schools. Around half of schools that used OTJs in reading and mathematics in their mid-year reports to parents also moderated these judgements at the same year level, and around 40 percent, across year levels. This suggests that the OTJs used so far are a work in progress—that OTJs produced within a school may change as the school uses and develops its moderation processes, so that these first OTJs may not be comparable with those made later this year or next year, and so on.

Principals of low-decile schools were less likely to report that their school had started implementing the National Standards (84 percent cf. 95 percent of mid- and high-decile schools). On principals' reports, high-decile schools were most likely to have decided which sources of evidence to use to make OTJs, to use OTJs in mid-year reports to parents and to moderate them.

Small schools were also less likely to have started implementing National Standards (81 percent). Moderation for OTJs in reading and mathematics was least likely within the small schools across year levels (these schools would not have more than a single class at each year level), but 24 percent were working with other schools to moderate their OTJs (cf. 11 percent overall). Large schools were more likely to moderate OTJs made for writing. Rural schools were also somewhat less likely to have undertaken work on OTJs (68 percent cf. 84 percent of urban schools), but their moderation practices were much the same as urban schools.

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National Standards in the context of the New Zealand Curriculum

2010 also saw the requirement for schools to give effect to the revised New Zealand Curriculum. The process leading up to this was quite different from the development of the National Standards. Schools have had several years to develop their understanding of the revised New Zealand Curriculum framework, which was released in its final form in 2007, after a lengthy period of collaborative consultation. This framework provides principles and guidelines, with descriptions of the objectives of each of the eight curriculum levels across the eight curriculum areas and key competencies, but it asks each school to put its own particular flesh on these bones.

By mid-2010, a quarter of the principals thought that their school's teachers were now very confident in using the revised New Zealand Curriculum. A further 63 percent thought their school's teachers were "quite confident". Only 2 percent thought the school's teachers had no confidence in using the New Zealand Curriculum (at all) and 9 percent were unsure.

Principals of low-decile schools were less likely to report their staff had high confidence levels in using the New Zealand Curriculum (8 percent); this was the only difference associated with school characteristics.

Teachers' reports of their own confidence in using the revised New Zealand Curriculum were somewhat more sanguine, though it should also be remembered that some teachers responding came from schools where the principal did not respond to the survey, and vice versa. Thirty-one percent reported that they were very confident in using the New Zealand Curriculum, 55 percent were quite confident, 8 percent were not sure and 1 percent not confident. There were no differences related to school characteristics. Confidence levels were highest in those who had senior school management roles (49 percent of deputy or assistant principals were very confident). There were no differences in confidence levels related to differences in school characteristics.

Concern had been expressed about the impact of the introduction of the National Standards on schools' work with the New Zealand Curriculum, which principals and teachers generally value, but which does ask them to do considerable work in schools to develop.

Principals were asked what effect the introduction of National Standards was having on their school's developmental work with the New Zealand Curriculum. Most schools appeared to be continuing with their New Zealand Curriculum developmental work, albeit with some tensions, including cutting back some of this work, and having less advisory support for that work. Positive

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impacts from National Standards work for parts of the New Zealand Curriculum were reported by 26 percent of the principals.[3]

Table 2 **National Standards and school developmental work on the New Zealand Curriculum**

School experience	Principals (*n*=210) %
Priority being given to aligning National Standards with existing New Zealand Curriculum developmental work	41
Advisory support for the development of other aspects of the New Zealand Curriculum is now difficult to access	34
Some other New Zealand Curriculum work cut back	34
National Standards introduction is not having an effect because school priority given to New Zealand Curriculum developmental work, not National Standards	25
School work on National Standards helped New Zealand Curriculum developmental work in reading, writing and mathematics	23
Too soon to tell/not sure	15
School put its New Zealand Curriculum developmental work on hold for the year	14
School work on National Standards helped integration across curriculum areas	11

Low-decile schools were less likely to cut back on some of their other New Zealand Curriculum work (16 percent) to work on the National Standards, and more likely to say it was too soon to tell what effect the introduction of National Standards would have on their school's development work on the New Zealand Curriculum—probably reflecting the lower proportions of these schools whose principals said they had made a start on National Standards.

Principals of small schools (up to 100 students) were more likely to report positive impacts related to National Standards work for their New Zealand Curriculum developmental work (33 percent in relation to New Zealand Curriculum work in reading, writing and mathematics cf. 19 percent of the large schools[4]), and integration across curriculum areas (24 percent cf. 1 percent of the large schools). Rural school principals[5] were more likely to say they were giving priority to aligning

[3] Adding together those who said their work on the National Standards had helped their New Zealand Curriculum work in the three curriculum areas covered by the National Standards, and those who said it had helped integration across curriculum areas, and allowing for the fifth of this group who reported both impacts.

[4] In this analysis, "small" refers to schools with rolls of 100 or less; "small-medium" to schools with rolls of 101–200; "medium-large" to schools with rolls of 201–350; and "large" to schools with rolls of 351 or more. The average school roll is 220 (intermediates are larger: their average roll is 462; full primary schools, offering Years 1–8 are smaller, with an average of 159 students), and contributing primary schools, offering Years 1–6, have an average roll of 263 students.

[5] The "urban" category includes provincial towns and cities, as well as major urban areas.

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the National Standards with their existing developmental work on the New Zealand Curriculum (54 percent cf. 35 percent of urban principals).

Teachers' perspectives

In this section, we describe the changes in teachers' work reported from the 86 percent whose schools had started work on the National Standards.

For quite a few of these teachers (33 percent), the work on National Standards at this early stage of their implementation had meant no real change in their own work. This does not mean they were doing nothing in relation to National Standards. Those who thought there had been no real change in their work were more likely to be using the same assessment information they had used before than others who were more aware of change in their work.

Schools were often bridging their National Standards work from their existing approaches to student assessment and reporting of student performance: 58 percent of the teachers were using the same assessment information they were using in 2009 and 65 percent were doing much as before, but using the National Standards where they would have used the school's existing progressions, to identify student strengths and learning needs. Most of those who were using the same assessment information had changed the progression framework they had used to the National Standards.

Few teachers thought they were spending more time now on teaching reading, writing and mathematics (these curriculum areas were already dominant in primary schools' timetables), but 43 percent did think they were spending less time on other learning areas of the New Zealand Curriculum, and 27 percent were finding that with their literacy work, they were spending more time teaching reading and writing print texts and less on the other literacies that came into prominence with the New Zealand Curriculum, such as creating and interpreting visual, audio, gestural, spatial and multimodal texts.

The reason why these other areas of the New Zealand Curriculum may be receiving less attention for some teachers may be because 42 percent said they were spending more time on assessment, and 47 percent more time on the mid-year reporting to parents (though only 22 percent thought they were more focused and careful with comments on these reports than in 2009). Thirty-five percent said their school's mid-year report included information on student achievement in relation to age or year level for the first time. (We did not ask whether such information had been included in previous *end*-of-year reports.) Forty-two percent were also working more with students to set goals based on their assessment results.[6] These teachers were also more likely to report that they were spending more time on assessment.

[6] ERO's recent report expressed concern at the level of student involvement in assessing their learning, setting relevant learning goals and knowing their next steps for learning (Education Review Office, 2010, p. 2).

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Teachers who said they were spending more time on assessment were also more likely to say they were spending more time teaching print literacy rather than the other literacies in the New Zealand Curriculum, and to have less time for other New Zealand Curriculum areas. But there was no relationship with the number of sources used to make OTJs, or whether they moderated all their OTJs with another teacher.

Spending less time on New Zealand Curriculum areas other than reading, writing and mathematics was associated with teacher morale levels (51 percent of those with low morale levels were doing so cf. 32 percent of teachers with high morale levels). Fifty-nine percent of teachers who strongly disagreed their workload was manageable also said they had less time to spend on learning areas other than reading, writing and mathematics as a result of the introduction of National Standards cf. 32 percent of those who strongly agreed their workload was manageable. Similar trends were also evident in relation to views about the manageability of work-related stress and the sustainability of workload.

Teachers who were incorporating information on achievement levels in mid-year reports for the first time were no more likely than others to be having to collect more evidence of student achievement and progress than before. They were only somewhat more likely than those who had included such information previously to say they were spending more time on assessment (49 percent cf. 38 percent), suggesting that most had used such information before in their teaching. However, including information on achievement levels for the first time in mid-year reports did not mean that these teachers were more likely now to work with students to set goals in relation to assessment results. This work with students, using assessment results to set goals, so that students are involved in thinking and actions around making progress, was one of the aims of the National Standards policy as it developed, and is included in Ministry of Education guidance.

Spending more time on the mid-year reporting to parents was linked to spending more time on assessment (68 percent of those who strongly agreed they were spending more time on this reporting, decreasing to 21 percent of those who strongly disagreed they were spending more time).

More time on assessment as a result of National Standards was associated with teacher morale levels (51 percent of those with low morale levels were spending more time on assessment cf. 36 percent of those with high morale levels). Spending more time on assessment was also related to views of the manageability of workload. Those who disagreed that their workload was manageable were also the least likely to say they were spending more time on mid-year reporting to parents (39 percent cf. 57 percent of those who strongly disagreed that their workload was manageable). Similar trends in relation to spending more time on assessment and mid-year reporting to parents were also evident in relation to views about the manageability of work-related stress and the sustainability of teachers' workload.

Forty-nine percent of the teachers whose schools had started implementing National Standards thought they had discussed them in enough depth to make sure they understood them. Those who thought so were more likely to also report that they were being more systematic in their collection

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of evidence of progress, that most of their professional development for 2010 was focused on the National Standards and that they were working with teachers in other schools to help each other with them. Teachers who thought their school had discussed the National Standards in enough depth to make sure they understood them were also more likely to think that the Ministry of Education information on them, making OTJs and reporting to parents was clear and consistent (e.g., 47 percent thought this in relation to the reading standards cf. 26 percent of those who did not think they had discussed them in enough depth to ensure understanding), and that the basis for the National Standards was robust (e.g., 36 percent thought the basis for the reading standards was robust cf. 20 percent of those who did not think they had discussed the National Standards in enough depth to make sure they had understood them). Discussion in depth is associated, then, with more positive views about the National Standards and the information about them, though these positive views were not universal among those who had had such opportunities and thought they understood them.

Forty-six percent of the teachers said that most of their professional development this year had been about implementing the National Standards.

Implementing National Standards had fostered closer working relations with other teachers in the school for 28 percent of the teachers, and 20 percent were also working with teachers in other schools to help each other with the National Standards.

Only 13 percent of the teachers whose schools had started work on the National Standards thought they were gaining more insight from the use of the National Standards into their students' learning needs than they had had from the assessments they were using in 2009. Yet teachers who thought they were gaining more insight from the use of the National Standards were no more likely than others to say they had made changes in assessment or reporting practice related to the National Standards, or that they thought they had discussed them in enough depth to understand them.

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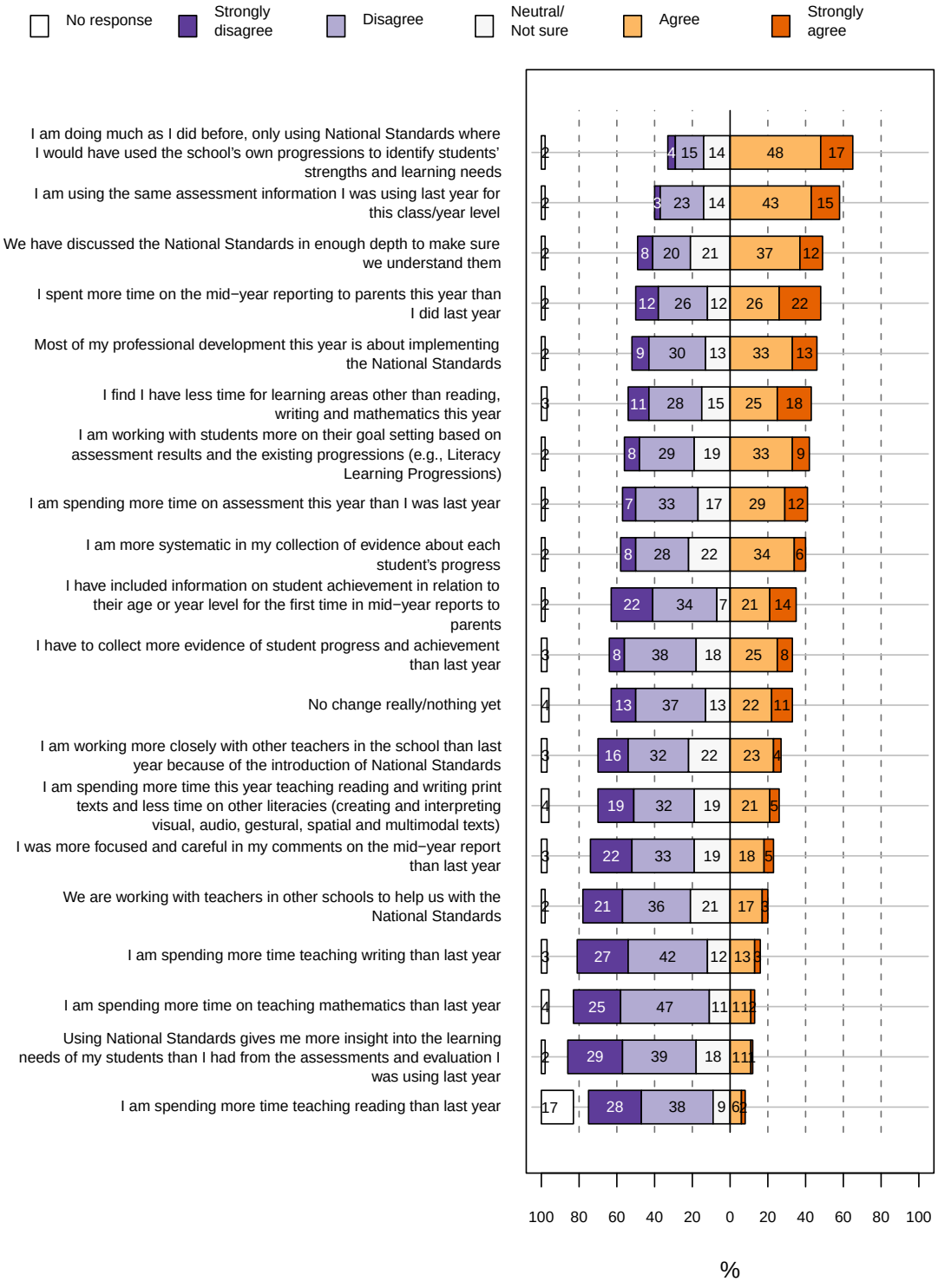
Figure 3 **Teacher reports of changes in their work related to the introduction of National Standards**



Years 7–8 teachers were most likely to say that they were working with students more on goal setting, based on assessment results and existing progressions (55 percent cf. 36 percent of New

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Entrant/Year 1 teachers). They were also most likely to say they were spending more time on print-based literacy rather than the other literacies that are included in the New Zealand Curriculum (35 percent cf. 24 percent of New Entrant/Year 1 teachers), and that they were more focused and careful in their comments in mid-year reports to parents (33 percent cf. 17 percent of New Entrant/Year 1 teachers). New Entrant/Year 1 teachers were less likely to say that using the National Standards had given them more insight into their students' learning needs (7 percent cf. 15 percent of Years 2–8 teachers).

The higher the school decile, the more likely it was that teachers reported that they were spending more time on mid-year reporting to parents (35 percent of low-decile school teachers cf. 56 percent of high-decile school teachers). Nineteen percent of low-decile school teachers said they were spending more time teaching mathematics than last year cf. 10 percent of high-decile school teachers.

Teachers in small schools were most likely to say that most of their professional development in 2010 was about implementing the National Standards (83 percent cf. 43 percent of teachers in other size schools). The smaller the school, the more likely it was that teachers were working with colleagues in other schools to help them with the National Standards (50 percent of teachers in small schools were doing this cf. 13 percent of those in large schools). Discussion of the Standards to make sure teachers understood them was most likely to be occurring for teachers in small schools (67 percent cf. 52 percent in large schools and 45 percent in medium schools).

Overall Teacher Judgements

OTJs are used to decide how individual student performance fits with the descriptions of the National Standards. These judgements draw on a range of evidence, rather than a single test. Making a sound OTJ requires an understanding of what the standard means, and how that matches with the evidence, so it also means understanding the nature of that evidence.

Seventy-nine percent of the teachers whose schools had started work on the National Standards had some experience in relation to making OTJs.

Fifty-two percent of the teachers whose schools had started work on the National Standards were in schools where discussion was continuing to make sure they were understood. Thirty-eight percent had practised making OTJs. Twenty-four percent could use a chart that the school had developed to show how the different assessments they used lined up with each standard. Five percent said their school's senior management would make the OTJs.

In these early days of implementation, 53 percent had made and used OTJs in their mid-year report to parents. While there is now guidance that teachers will make OTJs at either the end of the year (for students in Years 4–8) or the anniversary of their starting school (for students in Years 1–3), teachers also have to report interim progress; and it is probably difficult to see how to do that without making an OTJ.

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School characteristics showed just some differences here: teachers from low-decile schools were most likely to have practised making OTJs (52 percent). A similar pattern in relation to practising making OTJs is also evident in comparing teachers in urban schools (40 percent) with those in rural schools (24 percent).

Many teachers who had some experience with OTJs reported that it was clear where all their students were in relation to the reading standards (64 percent) and mathematics (63 percent). Judging writing against the National Standards was not so easy to decide: 49 percent said it was clear where all their students were.

Around 17 percent had difficulty putting together different pieces of evidence to make an OTJ in reading or mathematics, and 24 percent for writing. Teachers who experienced difficulties in putting together different sources of evidence to make an OTJ were more likely to also report they were spending more time on assessment.

School characteristics were unrelated to reports of either ease making OTJs, or difficulty piecing together different kinds of evidence. New Entrant/Year 1 teachers were most likely to think it was clear where each of their students was in relation to reading (80 percent thought so, decreasing to 55 percent of Years 7–8 teachers). This pattern was not evident in relation to writing or mathematics. The difference could be because early reading is about the acquisition of skills rather than applying skills to a widening range of material, and because there has been a long tradition now in New Zealand of graded readers for the early school years, and assessments associated with the 6-Year Net.

Teachers who were still discussing the National Standards as a school to make sure they understood them were more likely to say it was not clear to them where their students were, and to have difficulty putting together different pieces of evidence to make an OTJ. Practice making OTJs did not have such a clear relationship with the ease of making OTJs. Neither previous practice nor ongoing discussion about the National Standards were related to the time taken to make an OTJ. One might expect there to be some relationship: what this quantitative pattern suggests is that it is the quality of the discussion and practice that are important in whether they support teachers to make OTJs. It would be useful to follow this up in a qualitative study.

Sources of evidence for making OTJs

Most of those with some experience of OTJs used at least four kinds of assessment evidence to make their OTJs, as shown in Table 3. Only 5 percent were using less than four kinds of assessment evidence. Forty-two percent were using six or seven sources, and 18 percent eight or nine sources. It would be useful for more qualitative study of the value of having so many sources feeding into an OTJ.

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Table 3 **Sources of evidence for making OTJs**

Source of evidence	Teachers in schools using NS (*n*=769)[a] %
Classroom work	94
My observations	92
Assessment such as Probe, PM Benchmarks, ARBs, Literacy Learning Progressions, NUMPA	91
Standardised assessment (e.g., PAT, AsTTle, STAR, NEMP, Observation Survey)	89
Writing benchmarked against Ministry of Education exemplars	71
Writing benchmarked against the school's exemplars	62
Student self-assessment	48
Peer assessment	31
Other evidence	5

[a] Percentages out of those who had started implementing national standards and had also done some work on making OTJs

New Entrant/Year 1 teachers and Years 2–3 teachers were somewhat less likely to use standardised tests than those who taught Years 4–8 (78 percent, 84 percent and 94 percent respectively). Use of school exemplars to assess writing was less common among Years 7–8 teachers (45 percent). Use of student self-assessment increased with year level (from 40 percent of New Entrant/Year 1 teachers, to 60 percent of Years 7–8 teachers), as did peer assessment (from 19 percent of New Entrant/Year 1 teachers, to 41 percent of Years 7–8 teachers).

Teachers in urban schools were more likely to use the school's own exemplars to benchmark writing work (63 percent cf. 48 percent of rural teachers). Teachers in small schools may be using student self-assessment (33 percent) and peer assessment (17 percent) a little less than others.

Teachers in schools that had charts showing how the different assessments used by the school were related to the Standards had much the same pattern of the kinds of evidence they were using—for example, they were just as likely to use teachers' observations or student self-assessment as others. We do not know what was covered by these school charts, but having these charts did not seem to make a difference to how easy it was to make an OTJ, or the time taken to make one.

Teachers who had used OTJs in their mid-year reporting to parents on average spent an hour more a week on their work than others (bearing in mind that we asked for an estimate across the year, and not for the period when teachers were providing parents with mid-year reports).

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Estimates of time taken to make OTJs

We asked teachers to give us an average length in minutes of the time it took them to form an OTJ for each student in their class, including any moderation. Teachers probably did not find this a straightforward question to answer: only 69 percent of those who listed their evidence sources for making an OTJ gave us times here.

The range of times varied from a minute to 240 minutes (for writing), indicating that different teachers may have understood this question differently—some as simply making a judgement at a defined time, and some as including the assessments they used to form the judgement, or assembling the material, for example. Some gave us times in terms of hours for their class as a whole, but since we did not have the size of their class, we could not covert that into minutes. So the estimates given here are very much estimates, on the conservative side. We use median times rather than means, so that outlying times such as a minute or 240 minutes would not distort the estimate. When considering reporting the mean length of time we trimmed the data, removing the outliers (highest 5 percent and lowest 5 percent). The trimmed means were close to the untrimmed values, so what we report here are the untrimmed medians for the weighted responses. The weighted medians were in fact the same as the raw medians for reading and mathematics, with some difference for writing. We use the unweighted medians in looking at whether estimates of time taken to form an OTJ vary by school or teacher characteristics.

We calculated medians for each standard area separately, and also calculated the total time taken by individual teachers. The median of these totals is slightly more than the sum of the medians for each separate area.[7]

Table 4 **Estimates of median time taken to form OTJs (*n* =528)**

Standard	Median in minutes
Reading	20
Writing	20
Mathematics	15
Total for individuals	60

If we think of an average class size of 22, then OTJs could take on average, around 22 hours for each teacher.

However, these are early days in the implementation of the National Standards, so one can expect OTJs to take longer than they will when the Standards are clearer to teachers, and teachers have experience in their use.

[7] This is what we would expect as the median finds the number that is in the middle of the measurements, and so there is no algebraic relationship between the four medians.

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Years 7–8 teachers had a shorter estimated median time to form an OTJ (45 rather than 60 minutes), and the same pattern was evident in the overlapping category of those teaching in intermediates (though they had the same median time to form an OTJ in relation to writing). Other school characteristics were unrelated to how long it took to form an OTJ.

We also looked at patterns related to the number of sources of evidence used to form an OTJ, and experiences of moderation. These do not show clear patterns, and do not suggest that the number of sources used or the use of moderation will always add to the time taken to form an OTJ. For example, the shortest median time of 50 minutes was for those who used five sources of evidence—not for those who used fewer than five. Those who used eight or nine sources of evidence had a median time of 60 minutes, but so did those who used six sources. The highest median time was for the teachers who strongly disagreed that they moderated the OTJs for all their students with another teacher (70 minutes).

However, the overall median times to make OTJs were related in similar ways to teacher views about the manageability of their workload, the manageability of work-related stress and the sustainability of workload. For example, those who strongly disagreed that their workload was manageable had the highest median time to make all the OTJs for each student: 90 minutes, decreasing to 45 minutes for those who strongly agreed that their workload was manageable.

Moderation

Eighty-four percent of the teachers whose schools had started work on implementing the National Standards had had experience of using benchmarks or progressions to assess how well students were progressing prior to the introduction of National Standards.

Moderation—where teachers discuss their judgements of student work to check judgements made against benchmarks or progressions (which provide descriptions of what performance at each level looks like)—was also not new to many of these teachers. They were more likely to have experienced this in relation to school benchmarks or progressions in writing (77 percent), than in relation to reading (55 percent) or mathematics (53 percent).

Around half the teachers had some current experience of moderation in relation to the National Standards:

- Forty-nine percent of the teachers whose school had started implementing the National Standards worked together to make OTJs for a range of students in each class, and discussed the results so there would be a consistent approach across the school.
- Forty-nine percent of the teachers said their schools were moderating OTJs (21 percent were not sure or neutral, 24 percent said their school was not moderating OTJs and 6 percent did not answer this question).
- Thirty percent had moderated all their OTJs with another teacher. Most, however, focused on borderline cases, or those where they were unsure (52 percent). There was some overlap here:

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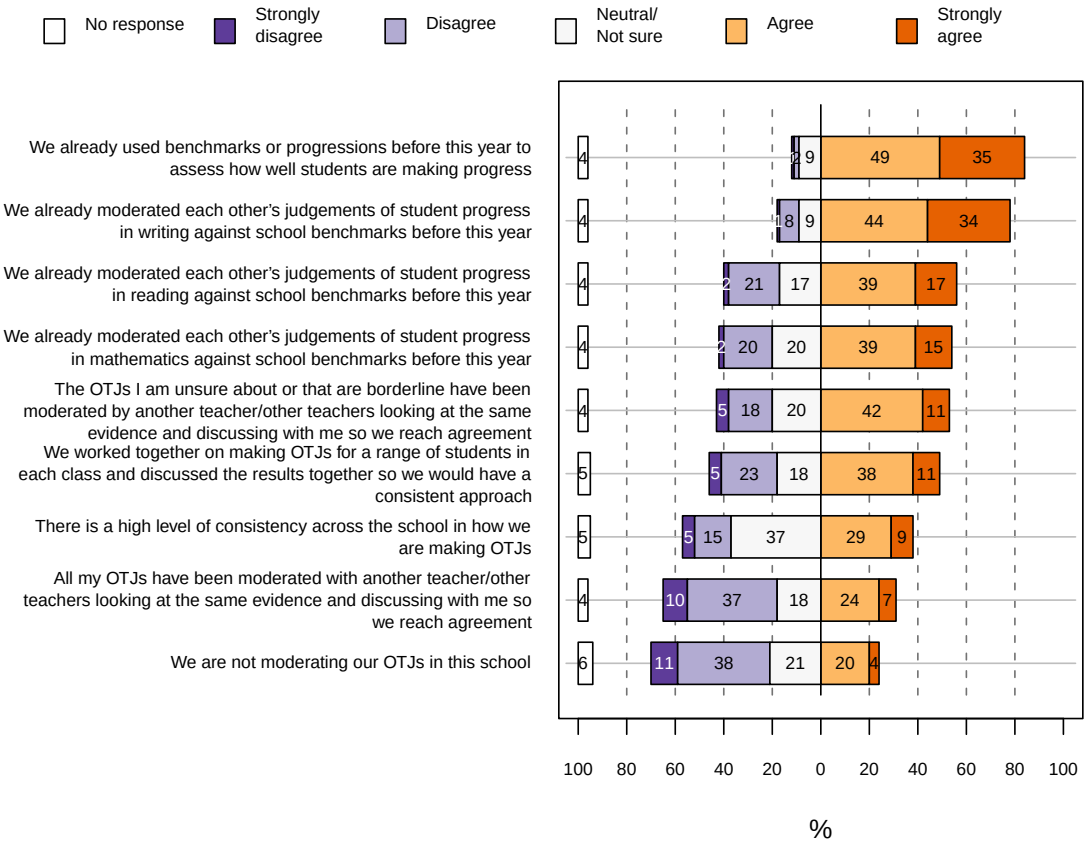
almost half those who said they focused on borderline cases also said they were moderating all their OTJs with another teacher.

- Thirty-seven percent of those who were making OTJs thought that there was a high level of consistency in the OTJs being made across the school; a further 37 percent were unsure. Teachers who thought there was consistency in their school's OTJs were more likely to be in schools that moderated OTJs (66 percent). The fact that some in this group did not think their school had consistent OTJs indicates that the quality of in-school moderation is variable. Interestingly, there was more use of borderline moderation and working together on making OTJs for a range of students and discussing the results among those who saw in-school consistency than of moderating the OTJ for each individual student (80 percent, 78 percent and 54 percent respectively). Previous experience of moderation also showed more association with school consistency in OTJs (for example, 93 percent of those who saw consistency in their school OTJs also reported prior use of school benchmarks to measure progress).

Figure 4 **Teacher experiences of moderation of OTJs (*n*=769)**



Years 7–8 teachers were less likely to be moderating their OTJs (32 percent). They were also less likely to have moderated judgements of student progress than teachers of New Entrants to Year 6.

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Moderation practice was related to school decile: 37 percent of low-decile school teachers took part, increasing to 55 percent of high-decile school teachers. This was not a reflection of less previous moderation experience occurring in low-decile schools, whose teachers were just as likely as others to report previous moderation experience, and slightly more so for reading (66 percent cf. 55 percent of teachers in high-decile schools). The proportion of those in low-decile schools who moderated all their OTJs with another teacher was in fact similar. High-decile school teachers were slightly more likely to moderate only their borderline OTJs (62 percent cf. 53 percent of teachers in mid- and low-decile schools).

Teachers in small schools were less likely to report previous use of moderation in their school (e.g. in reading, 25 percent were in schools that used moderation cf. 53 percent of teachers in larger schools). They were just as likely to moderate all their OTJs with another teacher, but less likely to moderate only borderline cases (25 percent cf. 51 percent of teachers in larger schools).

Rural school teachers were less likely to report that teachers in their school had worked together making OTJs for a range of students and discussed the results to get a consistent approach across the school (38 percent cf. 52 percent of urban teachers).

Reporting to parents

Schools have broad outlines of what is expected of them in the way of reports on student progress in relation to the National Standards. Reading the guidance currently available on TKI would not provide any principal, teacher or parent with a standard format of what to include in a report. Schools are expected to "…report to students and their parents in relation to the National Standards, in writing at least twice a year" (Ministry of Education guidance on TKI).

Around two-thirds of the principals of the schools that had started work on National Standards were making some use of the National Standards in their mid-year reporting to parents. They reported student achievement and progress in a range of ways.

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Table 5 **Use of National Standards in 2010 mid-year reports to parents**

Reporting of student progress	Principals (*n*=196)[a] %
Judged how well students were on track to meet the National Standards for their year level by the end of the year	42
Judged how well students were currently meeting the National Standards for their year level	36
Used the terms "above, at, below, well below"	35
Reported same way as school did in 2009, with an eye to the National Standards	22
Reported same way as in 2009, reporting performance against national norms	21
Progress against National Standards was not reported	18
Used the "best fit" approach, reporting the standard met by student, regardless of the year level of the standard	11

[a] Percentages of those who had started work on National Standards

While many schools were using the National Standards in their mid-year reporting to parents, they were less likely to use the terms associated with performance against them ('above', 'below' etc). High-decile schools were least likely to have used the terms in their reporting to parents (16 percent had done so cf. 36 percent of low-decile schools). Current Ministry of Education guidance available on TKI does not comment on whether this language needs to be used in interim judgements. It states that schools do not have to use the four-point scale ("above, at, below, well below") in reporting to parents, families and whänau (they must do so in their board of trustees' annual report), but they do need to make some statement about their performance in relation to the standard for their year level, or the standard for the year which is the "best fit" for the student.

Most schools had made some changes to the format for their first written report to parents this year, and were looking to make changes also to the format for their end-of-year written report to parents. Few schools were using the templates offered on TKI, the Ministry of Education-funded resource website.

Table 6 **Changes to written reports on student progress to parents**

Report format	1st written report in 2010 % of principals (*n*=196)[a]	End-of-year report 2010 % of principals (*n*=196)
School designed a new format	43	41
Same format as 2009, with addition of reporting in relation to National Survey	26	27
Depends on feedback from parents on mid-year report	n/a	21
Adapted TKI template	12	10
Same format as 2009	12	7
Switch to a TKI template	5	1

[a] Percentages of those who had started work on national standards.

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Parent perspectives

We asked the parents taking part in the survey how they got information about their child's mid-year progress in 2010, and what information they got.

Mid-year reporting on children's progress was divided between written reports and discussions. Two-thirds of the parents had received a written report describing their child's learning progress; 53 percent had a discussion with the child's teacher and the child at a set time; and 32 percent a discussion with the child's teacher at a set time.

What kind of information did parents get in mid-year reporting? Most parents responding thought they got some clear information on their child's progress, whether or not it was couched in terms of the National Standards. There had been some concern that school reports would focus only on the National Standards, leaving aside their behaviour, but that does not appear to have happened widely—though it has happened. We included science as one of the New Zealand Curriculum areas other than literacy and mathematics, and one of the curriculum areas where it is more complex to map progress over time, to compare with the emphasis on literacy and mathematics both in existing assessment resources and professional development, and in the National Standards. Parents were much less likely to receive information about their child's progress in science than in literacy or mathematics.

Table 7 **Information parents received from schools about their child's mid-year progress**

Information received	Parents (*n*=550) %
Clear information about child's progress this year	72
Clear information about child's attitudes/behaviour at school	63
Clear information about where child is in relation to the National Standards—reading	63
Clear information about where child is in relation to the National Standards—mathematics	59
Clear information about where child is in relation to the National Standards—writing	52
Clear information about child's learning goals for rest of year	50
Helpful ideas to support child's learning	49
Clear information on what school is doing to help child achieve their learning goals	33
Clear information about their progress in science	14
Less information on their learning as a whole than in last year's mid-year report	7

Parents of children in Years 7 or 8 were most likely to receive a written report (87 percent cf. 48 percent of parents with children in New Entrant or Year 1), and to have a discussion with the child and teacher at a set time (75 percent cf. 38 percent of children in New Entrant or Year 1). These parents were also the most likely to say they had clear information in relation to reading and writing standards, and their progress in science (26 percent).

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Two of the 35 parent sample schools appeared not to have made a start on the implementation of National Standards. The 38 parents from these schools were just as likely as those in schools that have started National Standards to think they got good or very good information about their child's learning progress and programme. They were more likely to have received a written report than others. They were less likely to think they had had clear information about their child's learning goals for the rest of the year, or helpful ideas they could use to support their child's learning. Intriguingly, they were just as likely as others to think they had clear information about their child's performance in relation to the National Standards; it could be that these two schools were using results from assessments with national norms.

Seventy-four percent of the parents rated the information they received about their child's learning progress as good or very good, 19 percent rated it as satisfactory and 6 percent as poor. A similar pattern was evident for parent ratings of the information they got about their child's overall learning programme: 72 percent rated this information as good or very good, 21 percent as satisfactory and 7 percent as poor. Parent perceptions of this information have been rising since 2003, when 61 percent rated information on the learning programme as good or very good; and in 2007, 67 percent did so; in terms of information on their child's learning progress, 66 percent of parents responding rated this as good or very good in 2003, and in 2007, 68 percent).

Most parents were positive about their child's experience in school. For example, 81 percent were pleased with the progress their child was making so far in 2010; 87 percent thought their child's teacher motivated them to learn, 85 percent that the teacher was aware of their child's strength and weaknesses and 78 percent that the teacher provided clear feedback to their child about their work.

In the context of a question about involvement in school activities, we also asked parents whether they had attended an information session on the National Standards at their school. Few had done so: 16 percent. Fourteen percent had attended a session for parents to learn how to help their children's learning, and 10 percent an information session on the New Zealand Curriculum

Use of National Standards for planning

Aggregate student assessment information has commonly been used for school planning and reporting since 2003, when schools were required to take a more systematic approach, and include targets for student learning. Coupled with the requirement for schools to use the National Standards to set their 2011 school targets, and then report against these targets in board of trustees' annual reports in 2012, this meant that many schools were already using information from their National Standards work in school planning. Just over half were using it to review curriculum planning, aspects of their school programme, and to decide priorities for teacher professional learning.

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Table 8 **Use of National Standards for school planning**

Use	Principals (*n*=196) %
OTJs used to identify students at risk	38
No use of National Standards in school planning	31
Started to use experience implementing National Survey to decide priorities for teacher professional learning	30
Started to use OTJ data to review some aspects of the school programme	27
Started to use National Standards to review curriculum planning	20
Compared OTJ data with 2009 student achievement data	19

Principals of low-decile schools were most likely to have started to make use of the National Standards in a planning context, particularly to identify students at risk (44 percent) and to review aspects of the school programme (36 percent). Low Māori-enrolment schools were most likely to have compared OTJ data with 2009 student achievement data (30 percent). Small schools were more likely to have started to use their experience implementing the National Standards to decide priorities for teacher professional learning (38 percent).

Views of likely impact of National Standards in the short term

We asked teachers and principals in schools using the National Standards to express their level of agreement with 16 statements about the potential impact of the National Standards, for their own school.

Most thought the use of National Standards in their school would not change patterns of student achievement because they already identified individual student need and worked hard to increase rates of learning progress.

Sixty percent or more also thought that use of National Standards would not change patterns of student achievement much because they would need additional support to really change rates of learning progress; that they were seeing more anxiety in some parents; that the National Standards meant more workload for little real gain; and that the impact of the National Standards at their school would depend on whether they could keep them in perspective or integrate them into their school programme, and on whether student performance on National Standards became the main measure of school performance.

Around 60 percent disagreed that the introduction of National Standards in their school would improve the engagement in their child's learning in positive ways of parents of children identified as "below" or "well below" the standard, and that teaching practice would change because their

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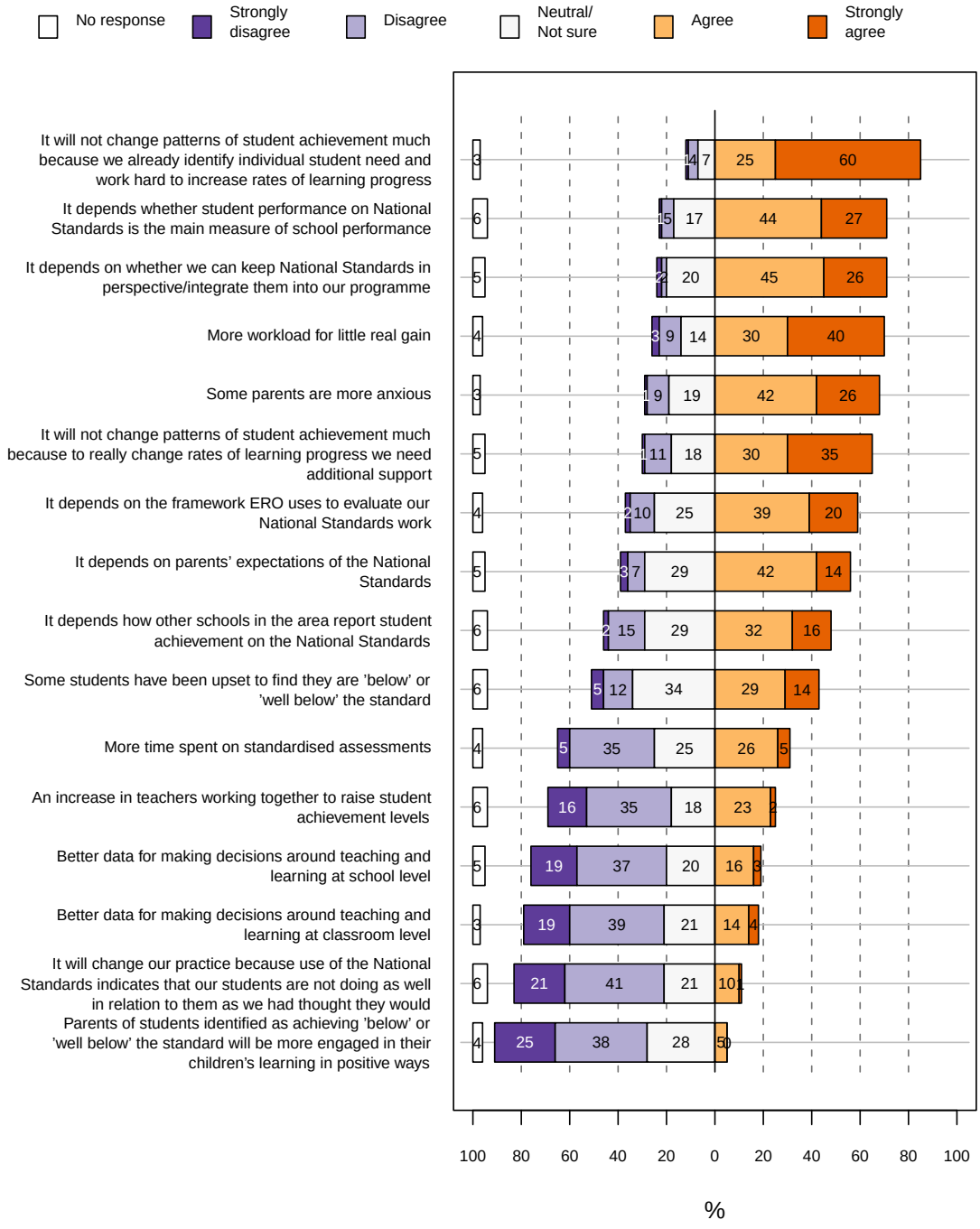
use of the National Standards was indicating that student performance was lower than they had thought.

Details are given in Figures 5 and 6 below.

Figure 5 **Principal views of the short-term impact of National Standards on their school (*n*=196)**



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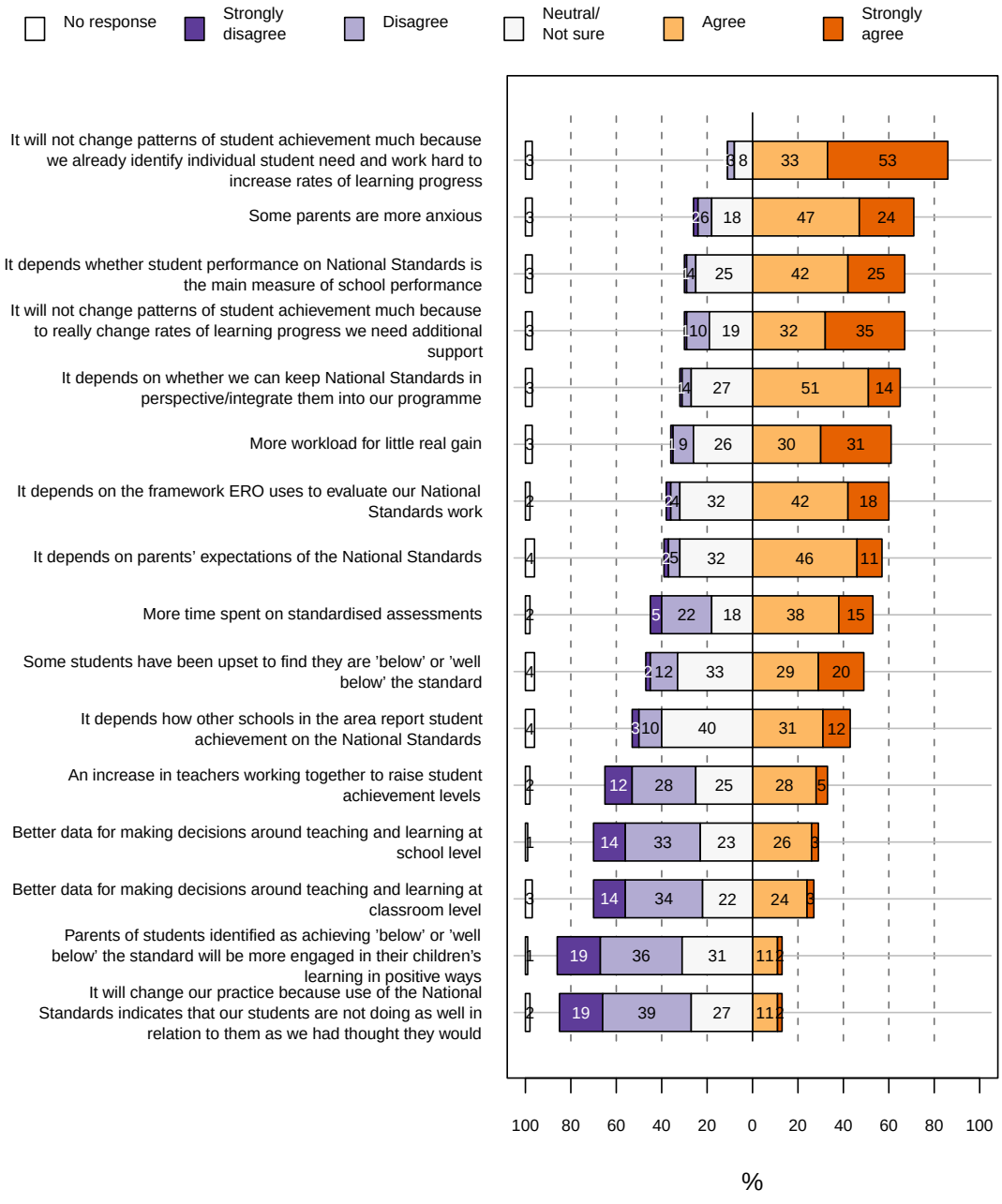
Principals of low-decile schools were less likely to think that the use of National Standards would not change patterns of student achievement because needs were already identified and teachers worked hard to increase rates of learning progress. This was the only item where school characteristics showed any difference in response.

Figure 6 **Teacher views of the short-term impact of National Standards on their school (*n*=829)**



Deciles 1–4 school teachers were more likely to report that their use of the National Standards would change their practice because students were not doing as well in relation to them as they thought they would (18 percent cf. 11 percent of deciles 5–10 school teachers). A similar trend

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was evident in relation to the proportion of Mäori enrolment (17 percent of teachers in medium-high and high Mäori enrolment schools thought this cf. 9 percent of those in low to low-medium Mäori enrolment schools).

Decile 1–2 school teachers were slightly less likely than others to report that some parents were more anxious (62 percent cf. 74 percent of deciles 3–10 school teachers). These teachers were also less likely to see the National Standards as providing more workload for little gain (45 percent cf. 63 percent of others).

Teachers in low and low-medium Mäori-enrolment schools were more likely to say they were spending more time on reporting to parents at mid-year (59 percent cf. 39 percent of those in medium-high and high Mäori-enrolment schools).

Trustee perspectives

Most of the trustees responding reported that their board had discussed the National Standards, and that their board had a clear picture of what school staff were doing in relation to the National Standards. However, they were less sanguine about whether their board had a good understanding of the Standards. Most did not seem to expect National Standards to lead to major changes: in student achievement, in how things were done at the school or in parental engagement in their child's learning. Just under half thought that their school would not have the resources to support all its students identified as performing below standard unless it cut spending in other areas, or got more government support. While only just over a quarter thought that the National Standards were difficult to put into place, few agreed that the timeline for introducing them was realistic. Just over half thought that comparisons of schools would unfairly damage some schools' reputations.

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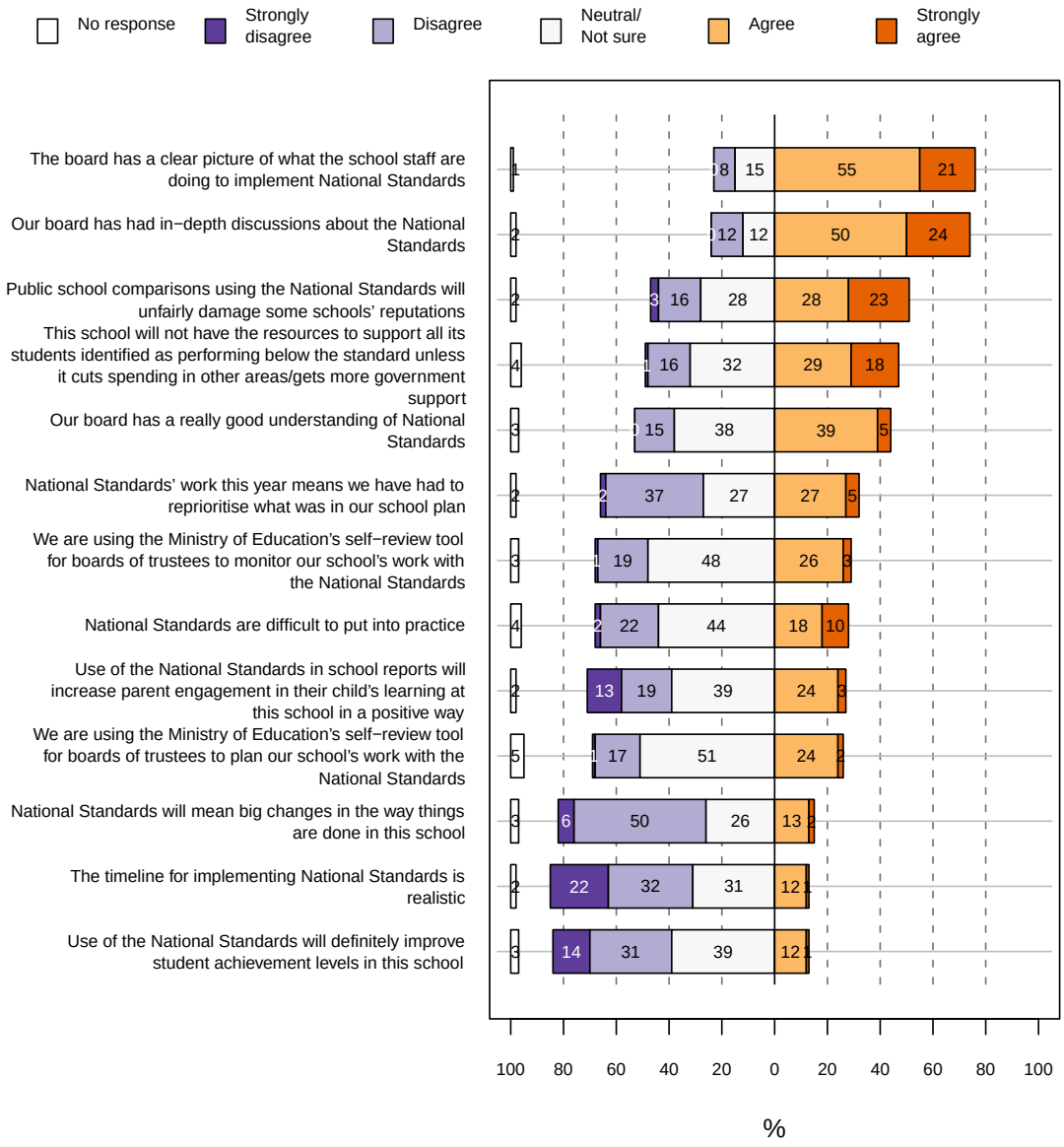
Figure 7 **Trustee reports of board work on National Standards and views of their likely impact (*n*=257)**



One of the reasons why most trustees did not seem to be expecting major changes from the introduction of National Standards may be that most were positive about the student achievement data they got as a board (81 percent said it was easy to understand), achievement data (already) played a key role in board decisions about staffing and resources (77 percent) and it was easy to see from the information they got from the principal if the school was making progress towards its goals (84 percent).

School meetings about the National Standards were not common: 17 percent of the trustees said they had taken part in a school meeting with parents about the National Standards, and 12 percent about the revised New Zealand Curriculum.

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On the whole, school characteristics were unrelated to trustees' views and experiences related to the National Standards. Trustees in low-decile schools were less likely to think that it was difficult to put the National Standards into practice (17 percent cf. 39 percent of those in high-decile schools). They were also more optimistic that use of the National Standards would definitely improve student achievement levels in their school (32 percent agreed cf. 15 percent of trustees in mid-decile schools and 10 percent in high-decile schools). But trustees in low-decile schools were also more likely to agree that their school would not have the resources to support all its students identified as performing below the standard unless it cut spending in other areas, or got more government support (58 percent cf. 35 percent of trustees in high-decile schools).

Trustees in small schools were less likely to think that National Standards would definitely improve student achievement levels in their school, or agree that the time frame for their introduction was realistic (both 4 percent cf. 17 percent of trustees in schools with rolls of more than 100). But they were also less likely to agree that the National Standards were difficult to put into practice (17 percent cf. 32 percent of trustees in schools with rolls of more than 100).

Rural trustees were more likely to disagree that their board had a really good understanding of National Standards (23 percent cf. 12 percent of urban trustees).

Reprioritisation of school plans because of the introduction of National Standards was reported most by trustees in low Māori-enrolment schools (41 percent cf. 26 percent of those in high Māori-enrolment schools). Few of the former expected improvement in student achievement in their school (2 percent cf. 20 percent of trustees in other schools). Trustees at high Māori-enrolment schools were less likely to think that National Standards were difficult to put into practice (15 percent cf. 35 percent of those in other schools).

Trustees who were new to their school board were more likely to disagree that National Standards would improve student achievement in the school (52 percent cf. 27 percent of those who had served longer). There were no differences in the patterns of views for those who were board chairs and those who were not.

Comments on the National Standards

Each of the surveys included an open question, *Any other comments you would like to make on the National Standards?* Those who chose to do so sometimes expressed support or opposition to the National Standards in bald form but, more often, they (also) identified issues that concerned them about the manner of implementation, effects (what they were seeing already, or thought likely) or expressed queries about the Standards and their reporting. We report the main trends for each group, and give some illustrations of the range of comments made, since these show something of the range of people's experience to date, and the range of different understandings of the National Standards. The figures reported in this section should not be read as giving the equivalent results to an opinion poll, where everyone is asked to respond to the same questions.

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Parents

Comments were made by 38 percent of the parents (*n*=211).

Fourteen percent said they had no knowledge or experience yet of the National Standards. Ten percent expressed confusion about the National Standards, or said they needed more information about them in order to understand them.

There are several different strands of issues that parents commented on. On the one hand, there are concerns about negative effects. Fifteen percent expressed concern that National Standards work was occurring at the cost of support for students, actual teaching (as opposed to reporting or recording) and/or a broad curriculum. Seven percent were concerned with negative effects for children, particularly if they saw themselves as failing if they did not reach a standard. The term "standard" appears to be interpreted also as something which can be failed, and something which can be spelt out in particular terms, perhaps like a driver's licence, by other parents: 11 percent wanted more specificity, and found the categories used in relation to the National Standards were too broad. Other parents criticised their child's mid-year report, or wanted fuller information than they received.

Simply positive comments without qualification were made by 26 percent of these parents, and simply negative comments by 10 percent.

It was clear from reading the range of comments that parents' experiences to date of the National Standards could be quite different, depending on how their school had reported to them, as well as their own expectations of what "National Standards" means. The range of what parents had received in the mid-year reports also points to unevenness in the readiness of schools to provide reports using the National Standards, and in some schools, perhaps decisions to try to control the workload by limiting what was reported to just the National Standards. The range of parent expectations also indicates some of the tensions that schools face in their work on reporting the National Standards and their purpose, when some parents see them as rigid pass/fail—test-like—hurdles. It would be useful to undertake further work on parents' reactions to the end-of-year reports they receive from schools, and what they understand by—and expect from—the National Standards, in the context of what they are given by schools. Parent responses also indicate the need for further work with parents on the intent of the National Standards, in the context of what we know about what supports motivation for learning and learning gains. The comments below indicate the range of experiences and queries that parents had. We have reported only one example of simply positive comments, since these were much the same:

> Fantastic. Finally a benchmark for all to aspire to and achieve.
>
> I think it causes children to be labelled and is not a positive thing, My son was 'below the level' in reading and I was informed this after 4 months at school, given no advice on how to rectify this and felt like the Standards were negative as my child is smart but does not do well in pressurised situations. I need to know at the start of the year what is expected by the end so I can support his learning.

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Reports show asTTle levels (expected by end of year) and national standard—the National Standards are ahead of asTTle levels. I don't know why. I am more interested in my son's progress over the year and even 2 years at intermediate than National Standards.

The new National Standards need to be explained. Sorry, I am a teacher (secondary) myself and would like to understand things a bit more. What do the levels mean? Are you sure that when you tell a parent that their child is on level 3 for reading and they are in year 3, that will be enough? For kids who are behind, it's difficult to understand how behind they are.

From a meeting at school it appears the new National Standards are not as clear cut and comparative as I thought they would be. I am all for change if there is a benefit but unsure this will be a useful tool for schools. I do like the way our school produces their reports now in light of the new standards.

It would be helpful to know what those standards are, clear guidelines to what needs to be achieved. Neither the school nor the ministry's website seems to be able to tell us that.

I am concerned that as it stands, the National Standards system in its current form will narrow the focus in classrooms to just three areas, unfairly label the more vulnerable children and perhaps mislead them into thinking they are failures. Children are not going to reach milestones at the same time.

I find them a challenge to get my head around and really need to study them to understand them and what they are telling me about my child.

The report was confusing until the teacher explained what the numbers and letters mean. If I did not attend the interview it would have meant nothing to me.

Achievement categories are too broad e.g., below, at, above. Only require reporting in 3 areas reading, writing, maths. Reporting does not appear to be very detailed.

I believe 'bench-marking' is good. It must be applied in a good way. I think the younger children—who learn at varying rates—need this measurement to be very subtle. As they get older it can be a useful tool to motivate—again, it must be applied in a positive way.

I hope that the new National Standards in schools will receive extra funding and support and not just be all talk. Back it up with extra educators otherwise the teachers have an impossible task—many children need extra support to get to the required levels.

My child has been identified as one of the 'failing' students. The school caters well for his specific learning needs with extra help. I am more interested in whether he is making progress than where he is against the National Standards. The teachers reported 'National Standards' to me at the interview. I would have rather spent the time discussing my son's progress.

While its good to know where our children are compared to the National Standards—do the mid-year progress talks reflect that it is a mid-year or are the children being measured at where they should be by the end of the year? Would also like to know how my child rates within the classroom.

The report told us exactly where our child was in relation to the National Standards expectations in writing/reading/maths but no personal information like social skills etc.

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> Compared with the reports previously, they offered a fantastic insight into exactly how they were doing in the classroom with the school peers and teachers etc. (The more detailed reports previously used.)
>
> Reporting was complicated (e.g., coding difficult to keep referring back to). Simplified report in plain terms, i.e., meet national standard and/or above or below would suffice.
>
> I would like to know whether my child is achieving at an age–appropriate level. Indicators are useful but I don't understand them for; e.g., 'Patrick can image'—what does that mean? 'Patrick can skip count'—what does that mean? Also unless I have a matrix of all the indicators I have no way of knowing whether he is missing lots of them and only achieving some of them.
>
> Entirely unspecific and unhelpful! Attaining a goal or exceeding? Attainment is clear but when child exceeding—how and by how much is not clear.

Trustees

Fifty-one percent of the trustees (n=130) made comments. Trustees were more aware than parents of school experiences in implementing the National Standards, and their comments were more about this process, or how the Standards compared with what the school had previously been doing in relation to the use of assessment data for learning and reporting. Fewer trustees than parents made bald statements of support for the National Standards.

Eleven percent of the trustees who commented were unequivocally positive about the National Standards. Sixty percent described some issues with the implementation process or nature of the Standards. Fourteen percent had concerns about negative consequences for children or schools, and 14 percent of those who commented were unequivocally against the National Standards.

Most of the issues seen around the implementation were related to the shortness of the time frame and what that had meant for grasping the Standards, lack of support for schools, time taken to make changes, queries around the Standards themselves and uncertainty about what the Standards would provide, given that the schools were already using assessment for learning and reporting:

> [In general, not this school] Parents want to understand where their child is at. Prior to National Standards teachers have had the ability to hide this behind 'nice' words to minimise parent involvement. Teachers are currently creating a 'fog' over assessment and the implementation of standards. Much of what is required is already being done and National Standards just provide a name and performance guidelines.
>
> Our school only had to make minor changes to accept National Standards. The changes that have been made have added to the professionalism of the school.
>
> They should have been trialled first. They should be aligned with commonly used testing methods such as AsTTle. In saying that, though, a good school was doing what the Standards require anyway. It is our main priority as a board to focus on and improve student achievement for all students.

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I agree with the sentiment and idea behind National Standards. However, the practicalities of putting in place the Standards can be mindboggling for both the board and staff. We have excellent systems in place to monitor student achievement already, so I am concerned about how much extra resource (teacher time) this is taking.

It is sad that more consultation and 'buy-in' was not undertaken and achieved. Have MoE training staff out at meetings (with BOTs) who did not have the answers because the decisions/info were not made/did not exist, was not a good look! The objective may be a good one, but the process has not been. As time has gone on, it is clear much was not in place when the process was started and therefore there is a feeling of working with 'moving goalposts'.

I believe the theory behind National Standards could be good but the implementation and the delivery/resourcing to staff has not been though. Unfair pressure being put on schools and in particular staff. Concern the New Zealand Curriculum implementation will suffer as a result of National Standards pressure.

The huge amount of time the teachers are having to take to implement and report on the National Standards can't help but detract from the quality and quantity of their time teaching the children. The National Standards may very well indicate which children are not meeting the Standards (which any school worth its salt already knows), but doesn't do anything towards actually helping the children identified.

National Standards do appear to be causing some anxiety within the classroom, especially in the New Entrant to Years 1–2. Difficulties getting children up to the required standard when some come into school unable to write name, etc.

Bigger difficulty will be moderation—within a school, across schools and nationally. This is why I greatly fear the 'tables' of achievement which I have no doubt will happen.

There hasn't been enough clear information given to the parents nationwide, this has been left to each school—which, in turn, leaves areas for interpretations.

Great tool to generate dialogue between parents and teacher. But too easy to focus on the 'line' and not the softer measures of success.

There seem to be many issues with parents thinking their children are 'failing'. As they cannot grasp that the National Standards are for expectations at the 'end' of the year, many parents get very upset and confused.

Implementation is too fast. Loss of professional development opportunities for staff in areas other than numeracy/literacy. Waste of teachers' time when we already set school expectations and provided support for children who needed it. Money being spent on National Standards would be better spent on directly helping children at risk. Has led to improvements in our school reports—around area of how parents can help children.

Principals

Forty-five percent of the principals (n=94) made comments. Like the trustees, these comments were mainly focused on experiences of implementation, and the Standards themselves. Seven

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percent made positive comments on the National Standards. Thirty-nine percent made comments that suggested difficulty with the specifics of the National Standards rather than the concept per se. Principals' comments also included issues with the rapid introduction of the National Standards, the need for greater support for schools, as well as statements that the school was already using assessment for teaching and reporting (with some indications of frustration that some media and public perceptions assumed that the introduction of National Standards meant that schools had not been doing so), and queries related to the ultimate purpose of National Standards, to raise student achievement, with comments that other approaches were more likely to achieve this aim. Fifteen percent of those commenting thought that National Standards were introduced for political, not educational, reasons. Principals were also concerned with consistency across schools in judgements in relation to the National Standards:

> We already identify students below and well below National Standards will make little difference to what we do but they may enhance teacher understanding of NZC as you can't assess against National Standards unless you have a good knowledge of New Zealand Curriculum.
>
> Like most people, not really against the idea, just concerned re the moderation, the rush and the trial process. They may well be flawed and that is my biggest concern.
>
> Our school already used a number of good assessment tools and so the Standards don't alter the fact that we use good tools, assess, identify student needs and then put in support and monitor progress of students.
>
> I am disappointed with the rush to implement this change. To make sustainable, robust initiatives work well there needs to be a well advertised process which has a comprehensive set of information supporting the implementation. This is not the case with National Standards. There has been insufficient information—trainers don't have the answers and we've had to put information out to our community without any surety that this is accurate or indeed will be consistent across the nation.
>
> I agree with the idea of plain language reporting. It is clear that many parents/caregivers feel they have not had clear/transparent information. Unfortunately the National Standards do not solve this. The global statement is global, not specific and the key characteristics/illustrations used to flesh out the standard are vague and ambiguous. It is likely that parents fed this stuff will be less certain about exactly what the child's needs/strengths are. Lack of consultation from sector to get National Standards right (unlike New Zealand Curriculum). Half-baked rushed implementation of National Standards counterproductive.
>
> There needs to be across the board education for the public on what assessment is, the different types, where National Standards fit. The Government has brought in what seems a simple idea to improve achievement. The public don't understand the complexity of assessment.
>
> It has been a shambles. We are only now getting the info we needed at the beginning of the process and it's August!

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We have not begun implementing National Standards due to the lack of documentation and professional development. We are beginning to look at the material distributed of late and its links to the New Zealand Curriculum and what we currently do.

I am wholly in agreement with the idea of country-wide expectations that are challenging but achievable, that have been worked on over time, have a research basis etc. They have been introduced with undue haste. They redefine the term 'average' by saying that all but DRRs and ESOL children are expected to achieve them. They ignore the serious social, financial inequalities in our society—get rid of or reduce these inequalities and I guarantee an increase in achievement.

The training in general has been of limited value, the advisors seem ill-prepared and unable to answer very simple questions about the practical implementation of the Standards. A lot of material/resources is not available at the time of training, but will be available 'soon'. We are still waiting 2 months on. The 'aspirational' aspect of the Standards has surprised many parents, especially those who are below the standard. This is particularly the case in maths at the Year 2 and Year 4 level.

The documents and training have been useful to develop 'shared understandings' with our staff about progress and achievement generally. Having a standard will not make the difference but what teachers, in partnership with their students, other staff and whānau will. Using National Standards to develop league tables will probably increase the gap between high- and low-achieving schools, and reduce collaboration. I hope this doesn't happen. The Standards are problematic in that they imply students should learn at a similar rate/level and they don't. This can lead to unnecessary anxiety for all stakeholders.

Teachers

Fifty percent of the teachers (n=481) who took part in the survey made comments. Seven percent made positive comments about the National Standards. Others were concerned at the lack of support—particularly professional development and/or the short time frame in which they were asked to implement the National Standards (42 percent). They also thought they had already got a good system in their school of using assessment for learning and reporting, which raised queries of why they needed to change (19 percent). A quarter of the teachers commenting had queries about the Standards themselves. Teachers also commented on possible negative consequences for students and to note that, in their experience, children did not all follow the same linear development path (12 percent each). Some wondered why teachers' expertise appeared not to have been used in the development of the Standards (8 percent). Teachers commenting also wondered whether the Standards would result in any gains for students (15 percent thought National Standards would not lead to raised achievement—that additional support would be needed), and expressed concern at what the attention to National Standards was doing to their attention to teaching and other aspects of the New Zealand Curriculum:

The school where I teach has always reported in full honesty to parents and has in the last 10 years ensured all parents know whether their child is above, at or below expectation for their year level. Expectation levels were discussed and set as a staff and were based on the skills

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and expectations as indicated through the curriculum levels and exemplars etc. These levels required very little adjustment when related back to the National Standards.

I actually like the National Standards. They are clear and show a reasonable progression through the levels. I do not like the way they have been rolled out. They feel rushed (I saw them for the first time in November 2009), inconsistent in training provider messages, and a belief in the media that no school has been assessing in any meaningful way before National Standards came in.

I don't have a problem with there being a National Standard as long as it has been rigorously established with consistent assessment tools and teacher interpretation of the results.

The introduction of National Standards for our school was taken on as a new 'challenge'. Our teachers wanted to try our best to get the students to their expected level. OTJs were confusing. We felt that our own personal judgement differed too much from other teachers making it inconsistent. There wasn't enough time to really sort it out properly before the first 'reporting to parents'. We felt that it was not our job to try and sort everything out. It should have been sorted by the MoE and then passed on to us.

They have helped foster teacher discussions, which is always good. Increased moderation has been carried out. It would have been extremely beneficial if this system had been carried out in a few schools first. From there, report templates provided, assessment materials provided (e.g., reading across the curriculum). Implementation of Standards seemed very rushed and little support provided to schools. Increased work load for teachers in gathering data, and carrying out reporting (mid-year).

All schools have been forced into re-inventing the wheel. A considerable amount of time has been spent in developing rubric/progress indicators. The resources from the MoE should have been in schools before the implementation was required. (It will be very frustrating to find that next year schools receive support material that duplicates the work that was needed at the start of the process.)

My Year 2 students (2) told me that their parents were angry with them for not doing well, being below expected age. This is not on! Why should we be failing these students at such an early age? They have come such a long way since starting school at 5 and are achieving well! Positive attitudes = lifelong love of learning. Despite letters going out with reports explaining National Standards parents seem to be slow at catching on to the concept. Children starting school with us come in so low, poor language and a general lack of support in many cases.

There has been a lot of confusion from parents as we reported earlier in the year on PATs and told them their child was 'average' (stanine 5) and now they are failing. All teachers have a different interpretation of the Standards therefore it is not consistent reporting. It is more work for no benefit to teaching the child in the classroom.

There really hasn't been enough time for teachers to understand them. It is a frustrating experience when we are expected to use National Standards when they are so unclear and ambiguous. It feels like nobody including the MoE knows exactly the requirements of National Standards and what they mean. It has not been outlined clearly how they will raise student achievement.

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The more work the leadership team and teachers at our school do on the National Standards, the more we feel that there is still a lot of changes that need to be made to: how schools will moderate with one another and the untested/trialled Standards themselves.

From a parent's view, it is great but I am concerned about the ever increasing workload and how the implementation of the Standards will be successful. I am also concerned that while a lot of money has been poured into implementing the Standards, I don't see any money coming to help the children who are 'failing'. Where is the professional development for teachers to support these children? Where are the resources? And most importantly, where is the time to support them in a class of 30 or more and a crowded curriculum?

I'm most concerned about the children. Some children will be labelled as 'below' or 'well below' for their entire schooling career. Thinking back to my childhood, that would have destroyed me. My confidence would be shattered and I would adopt an attitude of 'why bother'.

I am of the view that having National Standards is good, ultimately. My biggest concern is that they have been rushed upon teachers and we are expected to be ready to deliver them without sufficient time to develop robust systems within our own schools, let alone be in tune with other schools in our own neighbourhood—not to mention 'nationwide' comparisons/moderation etc.

It is all about fitting children into boxes—they don't fit. Parents are under the impression that all children will reach the standard for their age group—wrong. Parents have come in and asked for their children to be kept back a year—very unusual!

I spent hours on the mid-year reports and then the follow-up parent interviews were ones of disappointment stating a) reports were not personalised enough, b) their child's achievement was difficult to interpret, c) the best parts of the report were 'other areas' e.g., social skills (key competencies). My efforts in reporting on National Standards has affected my teaching programmes—so much has gone into supposedly getting it right, at the expense of my teaching!!! How ironic is that?

We have just completed our first written reports in relation to National Standards, followed by parent/student conferences. Most of the feedback we have received from parents has been negative which is very deflating as it has required a huge amount of time and effort. I also feel that the amount of time required to produce these reports is taken away from valuable planning/teaching time as there isn't enough time in the day. If parents find the reports of little or no use I struggle to see the point as our school is already focused on bettering student outcomes.

The difficulty is when assessing children who are up to half-way in age and are moving at different rates. Some children take a long time to get going but will make a spurt when they start to make connections and relate learning to other experiences. Often boys will be slower but given the right environment and encouragement will progress more quickly from 7 years on, particularly if their learning is scaffolded properly.

As a teacher with a number of students with special educational needs I feel it is extremely disappointing that their achievement is measured in terms of where they sit in relation to their peers as opposed to measuring their progress over time. In our mid-year reporting process, some of these children were very disheartened. Not because they were only just

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realising they were ‘below’ but because they felt that their efforts and progress held little value on paper.

They seem very unhelpful. They do not measure progress taking other relevant factors into account. For example, my Pākehā nephew entered a decile 10 school able to read and write already. Many of my students at a decile 1 school enter school not knowing how to hold a book, or to read from left to right, but their progress is being judged in exactly the same way as my nephew. There is no way they will be in the same place as him after one year at school, despite amazing progress. They work so hard, only to get told they are not achieving properly and are in fact below or well below the National Standards. It’s very damaging to their self-esteem and does not help their learning at all.

Comments from parents have been that they didn’t understand National Standards and so it had been about educating them as well as myself. They were very concerned because we had a majority ‘below’ standard in maths and writing and yet many of them were also at or above the national asTTle mean.

In the short time I have been teaching in this school ‘National Standards’ has been mentioned every day by one teacher or another in the staffroom. General impression—teachers probably happy to implement with proper training and if they can be convinced that they will advantage our children. However, attitude of being ‘forced’ to adhere to National Standards without the above is prevalent in most of the teachers. PS: I have an extension class (Year 7) who are quite eloquent and in discussion revealed that we ‘over-test’ students now.

National Standards were taught to at our school (e.g. King Birthday was the big book daily for 3 weeks before children were tested). What a fake result!!! Not really beneficial to child but makes teacher look OK.

The pressure of achieving National Standards takes the enjoyment out of learning. Students learn at their own pace. They learn to read by reading. Old fashioned drilling methods (‘barking’ at print and flashcard drill of basic facts, before a student has one-to-one correspondence established) are returning to the classroom, in order to push the children to achieve.

We already knew who the children were who were not doing well—the money would have been better spent on them to give them support instead of spending it on National Standards which just makes those children and families feel worse.

Discussion

When we undertook this round of the NZCER National Survey, it was less than a year since schools had first seen the final version of the National Standards. Despite widespread reservations about the nature, use and value of the Standards, most of the schools responding to this survey had made an effort to understand them and start to use them. Indeed, around half of the schools were already using OTJs of student performance in relation to the Standards in mid-year reporting to parents. But fewer than 20 percent of teachers and principals thought that their school had had

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enough guidance and advice to feel confident about their National Standards work, less than half of those already undertaking OTJs were moderating them within the school, only 37 percent of teachers making OTJs were confident that there was consistency in OTJs across their school and only a small proportion were moderating their OTJs with another school. This strongly suggests that variation will exist in what these OTJs actually mean, and how consistent they would be both within and across schools. Parent comments on the information they have received in mid-year reporting related to the National Standards also indicate considerable variability. The extent of variability evident in the survey responses would indicate that it is timely to identify what schools need if they are to set meaningful school goals for 2011, and for National Standards OTJs to be confidently used as accurate and consistent judgements in school and sector reports and initiatives in 2012, and indeed, to assess how realistic these time frames are for the use of National Standards.

The recent ERO report on school use of the National Standards also found considerable variability in the use of assessment data and teacher confidence in making judgements about student performance in relation to the National Standards (Education Review Office, 2010, pp. 9–10).

Another overall impression from the national survey responses about experiences in these early days of the implementation of the National Standards is that the rapid pace of implementation has left variability and confusion in its wake, with many educators yet to be convinced, and many trustees uncertain, that what they are doing by using the National Standards will make a positive difference to student learning.

In this first year of the implementation of National Standards, many educators see little gain for student achievement from their use, and few feel they have gained new information about students as a result of making judgements on student performance in relation to the National Standards. Trustees expected little change in school practices as a result of the information from using the National Standards.

Thus it is timely to take a fresh approach to the way schools can be supported to make the most of the National Standards. Principals and teachers are interested in working across schools to understand the National Standards, and to moderate their National Standards OTJs. Such joint work would need to be supported by clear framing of how to form an OTJ at different levels, and how to report to parents in ways that are clear, while providing them with the knowledge they need to understand what is not as straightforward a measurement as it may have appeared. Use of expertise and examples from the schools that are furtherest ahead in providing clear, sound and consistent judgements and reports to parents, and some work on how to make valid OTJs effectively and efficiently that could then be used to support schools, would be useful.

In thinking of a fresh approach to the next phase of the implementation of the National Standards, some leaves could be taken out of the more developmental approach to introduction of the New Zealand Curriculum, and of the NCEA. Both of these took place over a longer time period, allowing evolution as experience showed the need for some changes. Both also used a coherent conceptual approach, while involving educators working with curriculum and assessment experts

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to develop guidance and resources. Both also gave more provision for professional development (e.g., every secondary teacher had two "Jumbo" days to start their work on NCEA).

Variability in what parents expect from the National Standards also needs to be addressed. This is not an easy task, but without clarity for parents that the National Standards are not primarily about labelling children, and without framing of guidance on ways parents can support their child's learning, the intention that they would engage parents more in their child's learning in ways that would accelerate learning for those who need it, may well be undermined.

In this next phase of the implementation of National Standards, it will also be important to address the lack of conviction about the value of the National Standards that is evident in educators' responses. It will be important to gather empirical evidence about the use made of them for children's learning, and about how well the initial National Standards descriptions fit with children's actual trajectories through schooling, and to use this evidence in further development, as has been done for the NCEA.

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Appendix A: Notes about the sample and sample weighting

In previous rounds of the primary and intermediate national survey we have stratified the state and state-integrated schools by school roll and socioeconomic decile, and selected the same proportion from each of these strata to form our sample. When we compared the proportions in each group defined by the school characteristics of decile, location, size group, type and authority with the matching proportions in the same groups in the population from which we drew the sample, we found that the proportions of schools represented by the responses in each of the surveys (principals, teachers, board of trustees and parents) closely match those in the original sample, and so match the national school profile. We have therefore never used weights to get "better" estimates of the population percentages, but have discussed which characteristics are slightly over- or underrepresented in each of the samples, and any effect this may have on the sample results.

In this round of the survey, the algorithm used to select the sample was wrong, so that the proportions in the strata in the sample were not such a good match for those in the population (and the other proportions, for example the type of school, were also not so good a match). This was only noticed at the time of analysis. To correct this, we have used a single set of weights, applied to each school, to correct for this sample bias. The weight for each stratum was the number of schools in the stratum that *should have been* selected divided by the number in the stratum that *were* selected. The weighted sample proportions are now equal to those in the population for decile and school roll, and close for the other characteristics. We were satisfied that a single set of weights would give an adequate correction to all the samples, since we found, as we had before, that the proportions in the returns (in terms of school characteristics, not individual teachers and parents) were a relatively close match with those in the sample originally selected.

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