13.

Issues facing secondary schools in 2015

We asked all four groups surveyed what they thought were the major issues facing their school, if any, and gave each group the same set of 19 items. These give a good overview of common concerns. Principals identify the greatest number of issues, followed by teachers. A third of the parents responding did not identify any issues facing their child's school.

Table 51 brings together the picture from all four groups, with the "top 10" issues for each group in bold. Changes from responses in 2012 and 2009 are also shown.

Most notable changes over the past 6 years are that funding is no longer the top issue identified across the board—as it had been previously for more than a decade—and that concern about student behaviour has been dropping since 2009, probably reflecting the emphasis and support given to schools to rethink their approach with the PB4L strategy.

What is foremost for *principals and teachers* is the weight of assessment, and associated with that for teachers, motivating students.

Resources are the two prime concerns for *trustees*: property and funding.

Parents are concerned that their school can provide good curriculum options, attract and keep good teachers, and about student behaviour.

While the adequacy of digital technology and Internet access is less of a concern than in 2012, dealing with the inappropriate use of technology was a shared concern across all four groups in 2015.

TABLE 51 **Major issues facing secondary schools**

Issue	Principals (*n* = 182) %	Teachers (*n* = 1,777) %	Trustees (*n* = 232) %	Parents (*n* = 1,242) %
NCEA workload for teachers	65++	51–+	16–	8
Assessment driving the curriculum	**56++**	**49^+**	**8-**	7
Funding	51––	29––	37	14––
Property maintenance/development	**49+–**	**26––**	44+–	**11^–**
Providing good curriculum options for all students	42	30	22	24^
Parent and whānau engagement	**40**	21^^	20	**11^^**
Motivating students	**39^–**	**53^+**	18^-	**21––**
Dealing with inappropriate use of technology	38	46	11	17
Student achievement levels	36^^	31^–	19––	12––
NCEA workload for students	**34**	**39**	7	10
Staffing levels/class sizes	34	**31^+**	15^^	**12^^**
Adequacy of digital technology and Internet access	30––	**37–^**	21––	**13^+**
Good-quality professional learning and development	28–	22–^	**8––**	**12**
Attracting and keeping good teachers	26	23–^	18	**23–+**
Joining a Community of Schools	25	8	10	3
Student behaviour	15––	27––	**11––**	**21––**
School culture	6	12	5	**8**
Principal's leadership	1–	16–^	9^^	**7–**

Figures in bold are the "top 10" issues for each group.
+ 2015 figure higher than previous survey round. (For example, NCEA workload for teachers is seen as an issue for their
 school by 65% of principals, and the ++ that follow this number refer first to the 2012 survey and next to the 2009 survey. If
 only one mark follows a figure, it refers to the 2012 survey round.)
^ 2015 figure much the same as previous survey round.
– 2015 figure lower than previous survey round.

School socioeconomic differences

Across all four groups, there were consistent associations between the kinds of major issues identified
and the school socioeconomic decile. At decile 1–2 schools, the major issues are core ones of motivation,
engagement and achievement. At the other end of the range, the major issues at decile 9–10 schools are
more to do with the weight given to NCEA assessment.[85]

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85 Hipkins, Johnston, and Sheehan provide an invaluable analysis of NCEA (see *NCEA in context* (In press). Wellington:
 NZCER Press).

Among *principals,* it was those leading decile 1–2 schools who had the highest proportions reporting issues of:
- student achievement levels (90%, decreasing to 11% of the principals of decile 9–10 schools)
- motivating students (65%, decreasing to 8% of the principals of decile 9–10 schools)
- student behaviour (40%, decreasing to none of the principals of decile 9–10 schools).

The principals of decile 9–10 schools had the highest proportions reporting issues of:
- NCEA workload for teachers (86%, decreasing to 45% of decile 3–4 and 55 % of decile 1–2 school principals)
- assessment driving the curriculum (72%, decreasing to 25% of decile 1–2 school principals)
- NCEA workload for students (69%, decreasing to 12% of decile 3–4 and 20% of decile 1–2 school principals).

Among *teachers,* it was those at decile 1–2 schools who had the highest proportion reporting that their school faced issues of:
- motivating students (80%, decreasing to 32% of decile 9–10 school teachers)
- student behaviour (64%, decreasing to 4% of decile 9–10 school teachers)
- student achievement levels (62%, decreasing to 14% of decile 9–10 school teachers)
- parent and whānau engagement (49%, decreasing to 7% of decile 9–10 school teachers)
- providing good curriculum options for all students (39%, decreasing to 24% of decile 9–10 school teachers)
- attracting and keeping good teachers (37%, decreasing to 13% of decile 9–10 school teachers)
- the principal's leadership (29%, decreasing to 7% of decile 9–10 school teachers) and the school culture (28%, decreasing to 6% of decile 9–10 school teachers).

Decile 9–10 school teachers had the highest proportion identifying major issues for their school as being:
- NCEA workload for teachers (58%)
- assessment driving the curriculum (57%)
- students' NCEA workload (54%)

They had the lowest proportion identifying funding as an issue (15%).

Trustees of decile 1–2 schools had the highest proportion identifying these issues:
- student achievement levels (41%, decreasing to 10% of decile 9–10 school trustees)
- student behaviour (26%, decreasing to 3% of decile 9–10 school trustees)
- parent and whānau engagement (44%, decreasing to 5% of decile 9–10 school trustees).

And, with decile 3–4 school trustees:
- motivating students (33% of decile 1–2 trustees and 42% of decile 3–4 school trustees, decreasing to 6% of decile 7–8 trustees and 10% of decile 9–10 school trustees).

However, decile 1–2 school trustees had the lowest proportion identifying funding as a major issue for their school (15%).

Decile 9–10 school trustees had the highest proportion identifying NCEA workload for teachers as a major issue (33%).

More *parents* whose child attended a decile 1–2 school identified issues than others, particularly around:
- student behaviour (59%)
- student achievement (31%)
- school culture (23%)
- parent and whānau engagement (23%).

Their principal's leadership was more of an issue for parents with a child in a school that was decile 1–4 (13%). Motivating students was less of a school issue for parents with a child in schools that were decile 7–10 (17%, compared with 29% of those with a child in schools that were decile 1–6).