Secondary schools in 2018

Findings from the NZCER national survey

Linda Bonne and Jo MacDonald

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New Zealand Council for Educational Research

2019

NZCER
Rangahau Mātauranga o Aotearoa

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Executive summary

These are the key findings from NZCER's latest survey of secondary schools, conducted in August and September 2018. We have done these surveys every 3 years since 2003. They provide a comprehensive national picture of what is happening in our schools, how things have changed over time, and the impact of policy changes. They also give provide insights into how teachers, principals, trustees, and parents and whānau experience our secondary education system.

Overall patterns

In the 2018 survey responses, there was a general theme of growing demands being made on schools to respond to increasingly complex needs of students. Teachers were feeling hard-pressed to do the job of teaching a student population that has a growing number of needs, including mental health issues. Teachers and principals reported increased stress levels and lower morale, as well as long work hours. Major issues on principals' minds included recruiting quality teachers and having enough funding to meet their school's needs.

A common thread through the different sections of this report are differences associated with school decile, showing that decile 1–2 schools continue to face the deepest challenges in meeting their students' needs. This is especially evident in relation to student wellbeing.

In some areas of the survey, there were indications of respondents' appetite for exploring alternative ways of doing things in schools. Students' wellbeing is an area in which schools were exploring a range of approaches to putting effective supports in place, although they would need time and, in many cases, additional support and external expertise for these to become well embedded. A willingness to explore alternatives was also shown in the combination of teachers' timetabling preferences, where—as well as the status quo of 45–60-minute subject periods—teachers expressed preferences for a wide range of additional timetabling arrangements.

Teacher recruitment and funding are major issues

Recruiting quality teachers was the top major issue facing schools. This issue did not show an association by school decile or school location—it was identified across the board. Many principals are also concerned about providing support for vulnerable students.

Funding was identified as a major issue by nearly two-thirds of principals, compared with half in 2015. The proportion of principals who reported their staffing entitlement is sufficient continues to decline. Taking all the questions about funding together, it appears that funding issues are occurring in schools across the decile range.

Some principals report effective strategies for increasing equity

The achievement of Māori students, Pacific students, and students with learning support needs all continue to be major issues for sizeable minorities of schools, with little change in the picture here since 2015. Many principals of schools that are paying attention to the needs of Māori and Pacific students indicate taking a deliberate focus on tracking and supporting these student groups' learning and wellbeing was the most effective strategy their schools had taken for improving outcomes. Ensuring appropriate staffing topped the list of effective actions schools had taken to improve the integration of students with learning support needs.

Some principals say they need more support for implementing strategies to improve Māori and Pacific students' learning, and differentiating teaching for students with learning support needs. These areas continue to present problems for substantial minorities of secondary schools, indicating needs that cannot be met by asking schools to source their own advice.

More support is needed for student wellbeing, especially mental health

The proportion of principals who say they need, but cannot access, external expertise to help their school work with students with mental health needs increased sharply (62% in 2018, compared with 36% in 2015). Perhaps because of this, school-based supports (such as school counsellors, Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour (RTLB), and health professionals based at schools) were judged more useful by principals for supporting students' wellbeing and behaviour than external agencies. In 2018, slightly more schools had well-embedded approaches to using screening data to identify students' social or mental health concerns. More schools had support groups for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) youth than in 2015.

Although most teachers agree they can refer vulnerable students to receive timely help, actually providing support for vulnerable students was the second most identified major issue facing their school by principals and was in the top 10 issues identified by trustees.

The need for more support for students' wellbeing was most obvious in decile 1–2 schools. At these schools, less use was made of data to plan support for students' behavioural, social, or mental health needs, and fewer teachers were receiving training to recognise mental health warning signs in students. Yet these are the schools that stand to gain the greatest benefit from such approaches. In decile 1–2 schools, fewer teachers can refer students to receive timely support, school-wide processes are less likely to be in place to address behaviour that obstructs learning, and teachers are the most likely to have had student behaviour issues *often* cause serious disruption to their teaching.

In 2018, there are indications that deliberate strategies to promote students' wellbeing are well embedded at some schools. However, in many cases such approaches are still being explored or are partially embedded.

Approaches to promote Māori students' belonging were more evident at decile 1–2 schools

Te reo Māori and tikanga Māori were more likely to be incorporated in teaching to promote Māori students' sense of belonging at decile 1–2 schools, where Māori students tend to be enrolled in disproportionate numbers. Although this is strongest among teachers at decile 1–2 schools, over half of teachers at decile 9–10 schools also incorporated te reo Māori and tikanga Māori.

In 2018, greater proportions of teachers had professional learning that provided practical help for engaging Māori students in their classes than in 2015. There were no decile-related differences related to teachers having this kind of professional learning.

Over half of the principals reported that the school has discussions with iwi about how best to provide for Māori students. A minority of principals reported that the school interacts with local iwi in other ways, suggesting there is considerable opportunity for secondary schools and iwi to work together more. Some principals say they would like more support with this.

Progress with *The New Zealand Curriculum* key competencies largely plateaued in 2018

In 2015, there was evidence of teachers making small shifts towards greater inclusion of students in decisions about their learning. Although there was little further change evident in 2018, more teachers were talking about how they make assessment decisions with their students and co-creating with students their individual NCEA plan related to their goals.

Progress is variable for teachers implementing learning with digital technology

Teachers reported ongoing challenges with access to digital equipment and its reliability, although more had good technical support to deal with problems than in 2015. Many teachers also said they need more professional learning and development (PLD) to keep developing their use of digital technology. Teachers saw the value of using digital technology to support the learning of students with learning support needs, but some teachers remained sceptical about digital technology's benefits for all students' learning.

Compared with 2015, there were increases in some uses of digital technology for students' learning, more specifically, generating multimedia work and playing games or simulations, and to a lesser extent, coding and programming. Many teachers said their students use digital technology for collaborating with others *inside* the school. Around half would like to have their students use it for collaborating and communicating with people *outside* the school.

Kāhui Ako are still developing

In 2015, we sought people's expectations for Kāhui Ako. In 2018, most responding principals were in a Kāhui Ako and most were positive about the learning pathway that they enable. Other benefits to being involved include principals supporting each other more, and principals having a greater understanding of the needs of the community. Under half of principals agree that the time investment is worth it, and many principals think that the way Kāhui Ako are set up needs changing. There are signs of progress towards some of the expectations expressed as Kāhui Ako were getting underway in 2015, but involvement in a Kāhui Ako has yet to lead to changes within the school or for students for many.

Most trustees and principals were positive about how well their school board is doing

The proportion of principals who considered their board is on top of its task has continued to increase since 2012. Many principals see their school board as adding real value to the school, but a sizeable minority consider their board needs a lot of support from school staff.

Almost all trustees think their board is making steady progress or is on top of its task. The majority of trustees would like to change something about their role. More funding for the school topped this list. When we asked trustees what they least enjoy about their role, student disciplinary meetings were mentioned most.

Most parents were positive about their child's secondary school

Most parents were positive about their experiences of their child's secondary school, and their child's teachers. The majority are positive about how well their child's school fosters the development of skills and attitudes that support learning.

Most parents say their child attends their first choice of school, though this is less so for parents with a child at a decile 1–2 school. More parents are using electronic sources to get up-to-date information about their child and the school than in the previous survey. However, this is also related to school decile, with parents with a child at a decile 1–2 school less likely to have online access to information about their child, and also less likely to get information about the school via emailed newsletters. This is consistent with what parents also say about their child's access to the internet at home for school work.

Cost had meant that almost a quarter of parents report their child being unable to do at least one school activity. An overseas trip for a particular subject or class was the activity most often cited. There was very little difference related to school decile. A higher proportion of Māori parents than non-Māori parents indicated their child has been unable to do sport, or do school work at home that they need the internet for, because of the cost.

Just over half of parents responding to the survey have been involved in their child's secondary school in the past year by responding to a survey or attending sports events. This had increased steadily since 2012 and is consistent with an increase in 2018 in parents feeling genuinely consulted by their school.

2.
Introduction

This report presents the main findings from NZCER's latest survey of secondary schools, conducted in August and September 2018. We have done these surveys every 3 years since 2003. They provide a comprehensive national picture of what is happening in our schools, how things have changed over time, and the impact of policy changes. They provide insight into how teachers, principals, trustees, and parents and whānau experience our secondary education system.

These national surveys are part of NZCER's Te Pae Tawhiti grant, funded through the Ministry of Education. We get strong support from sector groups who encourage their members to fill out the surveys, and the Ministry of Education and the sector groups also give us very useful feedback on our draft surveys. We see the role of these surveys as being to provide a resource to inform work in practice, policy, and research.

The NZCER national survey of secondary schools 2018 was conducted against a backdrop of the new Government's significant work programme involving public consultation in relation to setting a vision for education for the next 30 years. This programme included a major review of NCEA, and the "Tomorrow's Schools" schooling system of the past 30 years. As well, the Education Workforce Strategy group worked on both the immediate issues of teacher shortages and workload issues, and planning for the future. The Post-Primary Teachers' Association (PPTA) representing secondary teachers and principals was readying for contract negotiations with the Ministry of Education and signalling the need for considerable salary improvements.

Surveys went to the principal, to the board of trustees chair, and one other trustee (we ask the board chair to give the survey to someone whose opinion might differ from their own) at all 314 state and state-integrated secondary schools in New Zealand; and to a random sample of 12 teachers and a random sample of 20 parents at a cross-section of 188 (60%) of these schools.

We are conscious of the many calls on people's time, and that workload is an issue for teachers and principals. In 2018, we reduced the length of the surveys, in some cases omitting questions that have been included over several survey rounds. Other questions were removed because they are now asked elsewhere.[1] The survey questions are a combination of long-standing questions and new ones, to identify changes over time as well as reflecting current policy initiatives.

In 2018, we made changes to the way we sample teachers and parents, and shifted the trustee survey from paper to an online survey. The principal, teacher, and parent surveys continued to be paper-based.

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1   The Teaching and School Practices (TSP) survey includes a number of items that were included in the national survey of secondary schools in 2015. For more details about the TSP tool, see: https://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/teaching-and-school-practices-survey-tool-tsp

We stayed with paper surveys for principals and teachers because the surveys cover more ground than most online surveys, and paper surveys are easy to complete over several sessions and provide a visual reminder that the survey is yet to be completed.

In 2018, 167 principals completed surveys, a response rate of 53%. There was a slight under-representation of principals at decile 1–2 schools, as there had also been in 2015. The margin of error[2] for the principals' responses is 7.6%.

The response rate for teachers was 31% (*n* = 705), from teachers at 132 schools. Teachers at decile 3–4 schools were somewhat over-represented and, to a lesser extent, teachers at decile 7–8 schools were under-represented in 2018. The margin of error for the teachers' responses is around 3.7%.

The response rate for trustees was 22% (*n* = 138), from trustees on the boards of 97 schools. Trustees at decile 1–2 schools were under-represented, and trustees at decile 7–8 schools were somewhat over-represented. Responses from trustees at rural and town schools were proportionally lower than the national picture of secondary schools. We have therefore chosen not to report differences in trustees' responses that are related to school decile or location. The margin of error for the trustees' responses is around 8.3%.

We received 508 completed surveys from parents and whānau, with children attending 121 schools. This represents a response rate of 14%. Parents with university qualifications were over-represented, with nearly half having at least a Bachelor's degree. Parents with children at decile 1–2 schools were under-represented, and those with children at decile 7–8 schools were somewhat over-represented, although both to a lesser degree than when the previous methodology was applied in 2015. The margin of error for the parent and whānau responses is around 4.3%.

Overall, the characteristics of the schools of the principals, teachers, and parents who responded were representative of the national characteristics of state and state-integrated secondary schools, with the school decile exceptions described above. The relatively low response rates, especially for teachers, trustees, and parents, mean some caution needs to be taken when generalising from the survey findings. Further details of the sampling, margin of error, and survey methodology are in theAppendix

We focus on the overall picture for each respondent group: it is not our purpose to report responses from the principal, teachers, trustees, and parents associated with individual schools.

Reading the report

This report includes findings from principal, teacher, trustee, and parent and whānau surveys. Each survey comprised combinations of mostly closed or Likert-type questions (where respondents use a scale of response options to indicate, for example, how much they agree with a series of statements), with a small number of open questions.

The survey runs every 3 years, and part of our focus is on change from one survey round to the next by comparing responses to questions that are repeated. In some cases, comparisons are made between different groups' responses in 2018.

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2   The margin of error is half the width of the 95% confidence interval for a particular statistic from a survey. If the margin of error for the principal survey is 7.6%, we can be 95% sure that the "true" response of this group lies within 7.6% of the statistics we report (plus or minus 7.6%). The margin of error we report for each survey is the maximum margin of error.

In this report, we also discuss statistically significant differences (p < .05) in responses related to school socioeconomic decile,[3] and, to a lesser degree, school location.[4] These two school characteristics were associated with some different response patterns in the 2015 survey, and we are interested in seeing whether or not these differences are still evident in 2018. A small number of isolated school decile-related differences that are evident in 2018 suggest that some other characteristic or situation of the school may also be playing a role.

We also report statistically significant differences for parents who identify as Māori (n = 52) compared with non-Māori. Apart from those who identify as NZ European/Pākehā, Māori parents were the only ethnicity group with sufficient numbers for this analysis.

Where responses are common across the majority of a respondent group, we use terms such as "nearly all", "most", or "many" respondents. Where there is a smaller group of respondents (around a quarter to half) who report similar practices, perspectives, or suggestions, we use the term "some". To describe changes from one survey round to the next, we use the expression "increased (or decreased) slightly" to refer to changes of around 5–7 percentage points, and "increased (or decreased) somewhat" to describe change of around 8 percentage points or more.[5]

Responses to open questions are quoted to illustrate key themes. The text or grammar of quotes may have been edited or altered slightly to enhance readability.

Report structure

We start with secondary schools' approaches to promoting students' wellbeing and belonging—an area that is receiving serious attention in New Zealand (Section 3). The learning experiences teachers provide for students, including those who develop the key competencies, are the focus of Section 4. The role of teaching and learning with digital technology is also a focus for reporting here. Section 5 reports the current arrangements schools make for curriculum provision in terms of school timetabling and integrating learning areas, and how the roles of *The New Zealand Curriculum* (*NZC*) and NCEA are seen.

Teachers' perspectives on their work, their morale and workload, and changes they would like to make to their work are included in Section 6. Principals' perspectives follow in Section 7, which also reports on the pathways they take to principalship, and the support they draw on for the role.

Principals' experiences of ERO, advice from government agencies, and views on the availability of external expertise are the focus of Section 8. Principals' and trustees' views are both reported in Section 9, which looks at schools' interactions and collaborations, including Kāhui Ako.

We hear more of trustees' perspectives in Section 10, this time focusing on their role. Parent and whānau views about their child's school, the information they receive from the school, and parents' involvement with the school are reported in Section 11.

The final section reports what principals and trustees identify as the major issues facing secondary schools in 2018, and some of the effective actions schools have been taking to address some long-standing equity issues.

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3 School decile indicates the proportion of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, with decile 1 schools having the highest proportion, and decile 10 schools the lowest proportion. We grouped the schools into decile bands for analysis purposes: decile 1–2; decile 3–4; decile 5–6; decile 7–8; decile 9–10. We describe the data as "increasing to" to signify graduated increases from one band to another. We occasionally report larger groupings, such as deciles 5–10, where there is consistency across a larger grouping of deciles.

4 The school location categories we report are: rural schools, schools in towns, schools in small cities, and metropolitan schools.

5 These percentage points apply to the teacher and parent and whānau respondent groups. Principals and trustees are smaller groups, so for their responses we use the expression "increased (or decreased) slightly" to refer to changes of around 10–12 percentage points, and "increased (or decreased) somewhat" to describe change of around 13 percentage points or more.

3.
Promoting students' wellbeing

The value of promoting students' wellbeing has been increasingly recognised in recent government policy and support. Alongside this, a greater understanding of the importance of students' sense of belonging at school has emerged through student voices, particularly those who feel they don't belong, such as many Māori and Pacific young people.[6]

Mental health is receiving serious attention in New Zealand.[7] The Prime Minister's Youth Mental Health Project, launched in 2012, is aimed at preventing the development of mental health issues. It comprises a series of initiatives, designed to improve young people's access to mental health services. These include increases to school-based health services for students, expanding primary mental health services, and online tools and support.

Supporting students' mental and emotional wellbeing and social development goes hand in hand with helping them to meet academic goals. A recent meta-analysis showed that school-based programmes for social and emotional learning produce lasting benefits for students' behavioural and academic outcomes.[8] To build students' wellbeing, a combination of preventive, skill-building, and protective approaches for all students and interventions in response to identified needs is needed.[9]

The findings we report in this section provide some useful information related to these concerns. We focus on:
- school approaches to promoting student wellbeing and belonging for all students
- the role of teachers in promoting students' wellbeing and belonging
- managing behaviour to support students' learning

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6   See the series of reports by the New Zealand School Trustees Association and Office of the Children's Commissioner. (2018), including: *Education matters to me: Key insights*. Available at: http://www.occ.org.nz/publications/reports/education-matters-to-me-key-insights/
7   Government Inquiry into Mental health and Addiction. (2018). *He Ara Oranga : Report of the Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction*. Available at: https://mentalhealth.inquiry.govt.nz/inquiry-report/he-ara-oranga/
8   Mahoney, J. L., Durlak, J. A., & Weisberg, R. P. (2018). An update on social and emotional learning outcome research. *Phi Delta Kappan, 100*(4), 18–23. doi:10.1177/0031721718815668
9   For more details about the different levels of wellbeing and behaviour interventions and planning to promote wellbeing, see Section 5: Supporting students' wellbeing in *Secondary schools in 2015* and *Finding a balance—fostering student wellbeing, positive behaviour, and learning: Findings from the NZCER national survey of primary and intermediate schools 2016*, both available at: https://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/national-survey

- schools' work with external agencies to promote student wellbeing
- the role of trustees in supporting students' wellbeing and behaviour
- parent and whānau views on wellbeing.

We report any notable differences in 2018 and 2015 responses where the same questions were asked.

School approaches to promoting students' wellbeing and belonging

Many approaches to supporting students' wellbeing and belonging are partially or well embedded at most schools

Helping students maintain or strengthen their wellbeing and belonging over the initial transition to secondary school is important. More than half of the principals responding report their school has well embedded approaches to deliberately build the sense of belonging of their Years 9–10 students (see Figure 1). Strategies to build Years 9–10 students' sense of belonging were more likely to be well embedded than strategies to build their leadership skills.

Staff modelling the way they want students to treat each other is a well-embedded approach in half of schools. Somewhat fewer principals (42%) indicate a school-wide health education plan to build students' understanding about areas such as gender identity, consent, cyber-bullying, and sexting is well embedded.

Apart from the approaches already mentioned, the overall trend was for more principals to say an approach is partially embedded than well embedded. Fifteen percent of principals indicate their school has a well-embedded schoolwide plan for active classroom teaching of strategies for managing feelings and emotions. Actively involving students in the development of the school's approaches to wellbeing was also well embedded at 15% of schools. Fourteen percent of principals say regularly reviewing assessment requirements to ensure students are not overloaded is a well-embedded approach at their school. Over two-thirds of principals indicate their school is exploring each of these approaches or has them partially embedded, suggesting that we may see more schools having these well embedded by the next national survey of secondary schools in 2021.

FIGURE 1   **Embeddedness of school approaches to supporting the wellbeing and belonging of all students, reported by principals (*n* = 167)**
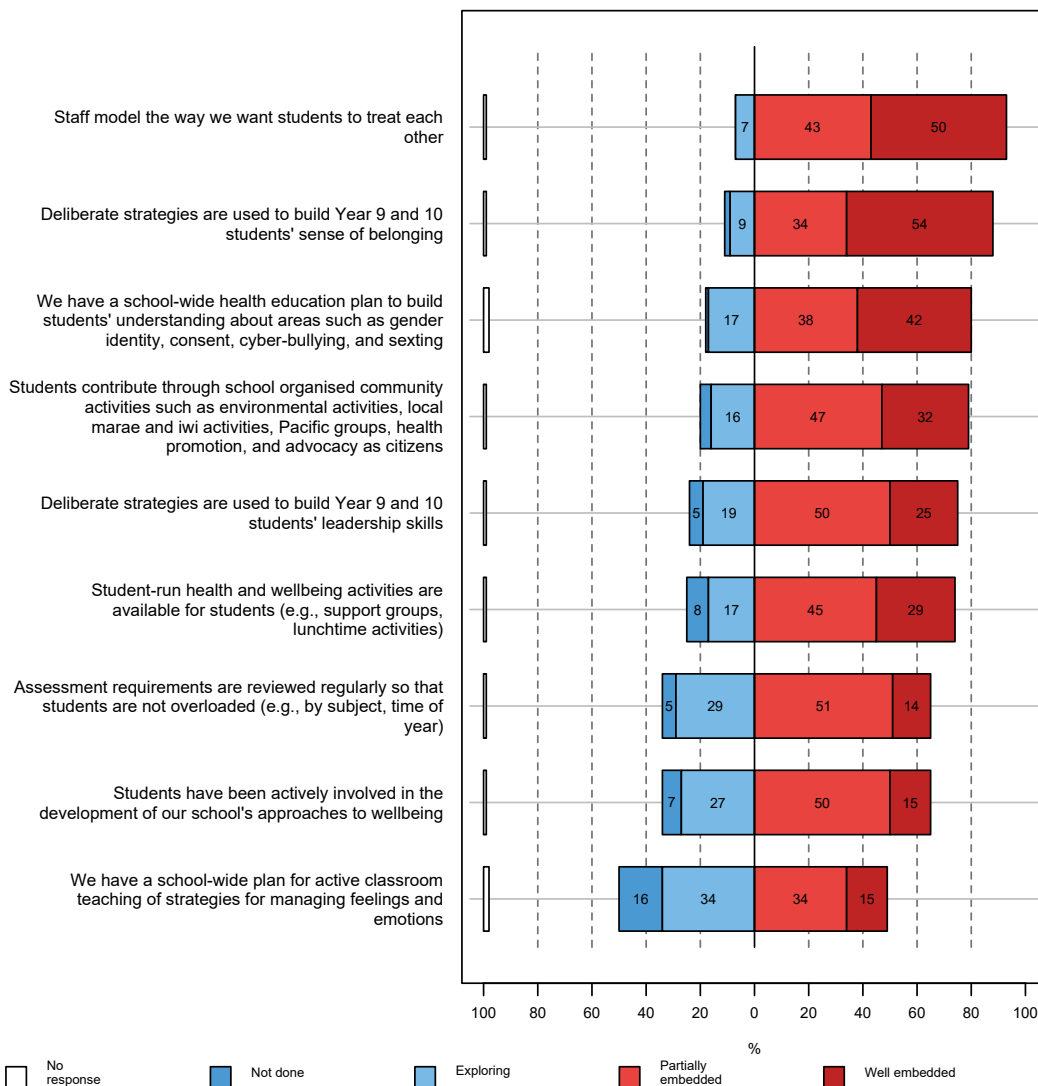
For the approaches to wellbeing shown in Figure 1, the only decile-related difference was for students contributing through school-organised community activities such as environmental activities, local marae and iwi activities, Pacific groups, health promotion, and advocacy as citizens. Fifty-eight percent of principals of decile 1–2 schools say this approach is partially or well embedded, compared with 76% for decile 3–4, and 85% for decile 5–10.

Most principals report using student data to plan for students' wellbeing

As shown in Figure 2, over two-thirds of the principals say using data from contributing schools about students' behavioural, social, or mental health needs to plan support for new students is well embedded at their school. Using data on student wellbeing in the development of a whole-school plan to support student wellbeing is well embedded at fewer schools.

Around half (52%) of principals say using screening data to identify students' social or mental health concerns (e.g., Year 9 Travellers or HEEADSSS screening assessments)[10] is a well-embedded approach in their school (not significantly different from 47% in 2015).

Participating in co-curricular activities helps strengthen students' sense of belonging at school. Monitoring data on this is not as well embedded as other use of student data for student wellbeing.

FIGURE 2   **Embeddedness of the use of student data to support student wellbeing, reported by principals (*n* = 167)**
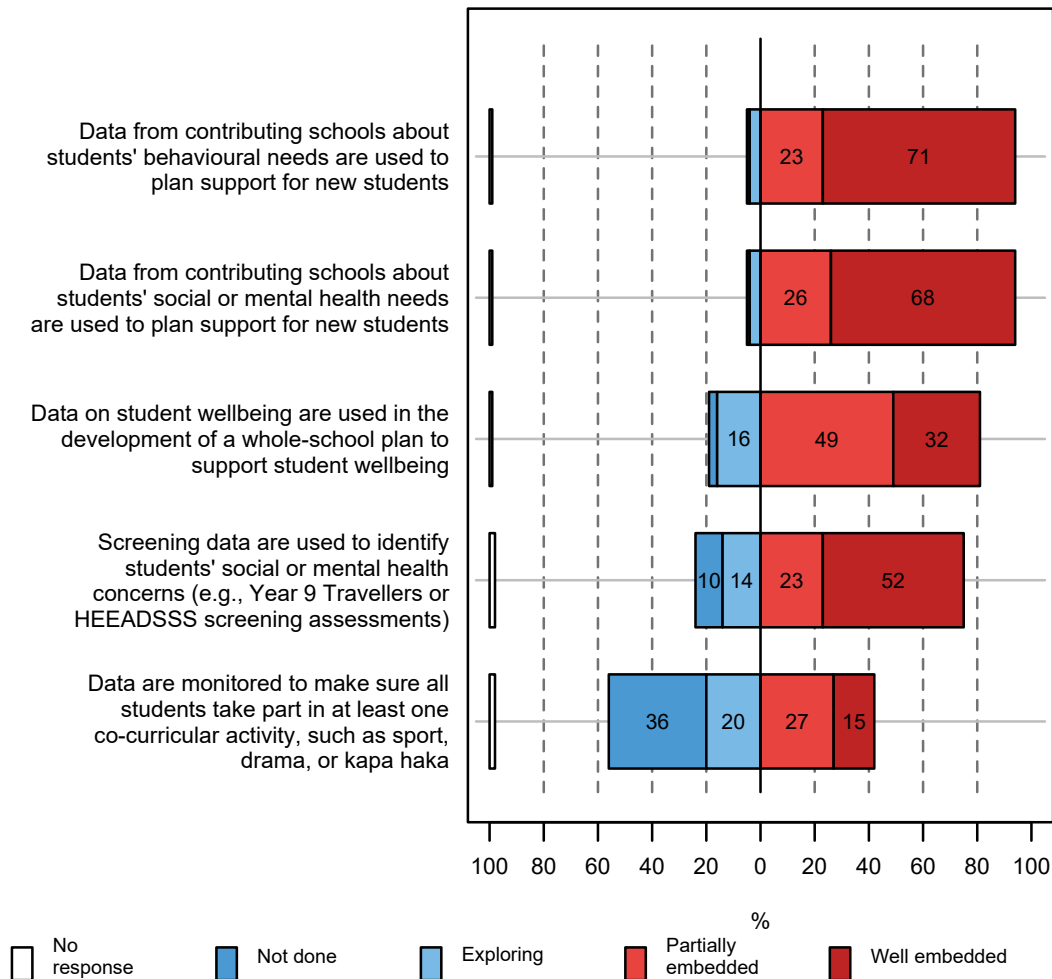
Approaches to support Māori students' belonging and wellbeing tend to be partially embedded

Less than half of the secondary principals say any of the school approaches to supporting the wellbeing of all Māori students shown in Figure 3 are well embedded at their school. Participation in co-curricular approaches is the most commonly well embedded approach, followed by the incorporation of te reo Māori and tikanga Māori in schoolwide practices.

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10 HEEADSSS is the acronym for the Home, Education/Employment, Eating, Activities, Drugs and Alcohol, Sexuality, Suicide and Depression, Safety screening assessment.

Relatively large proportions indicate some of these approaches are partially embedded. What we cannot tell from the survey responses is whether schools have the understanding, confidence, and types of resources and staffing they need for these approaches to become well embedded over time.

FIGURE 3 **Embeddedness of school approaches supporting the wellbeing of Māori students, reported by principals (*n* = 167)**
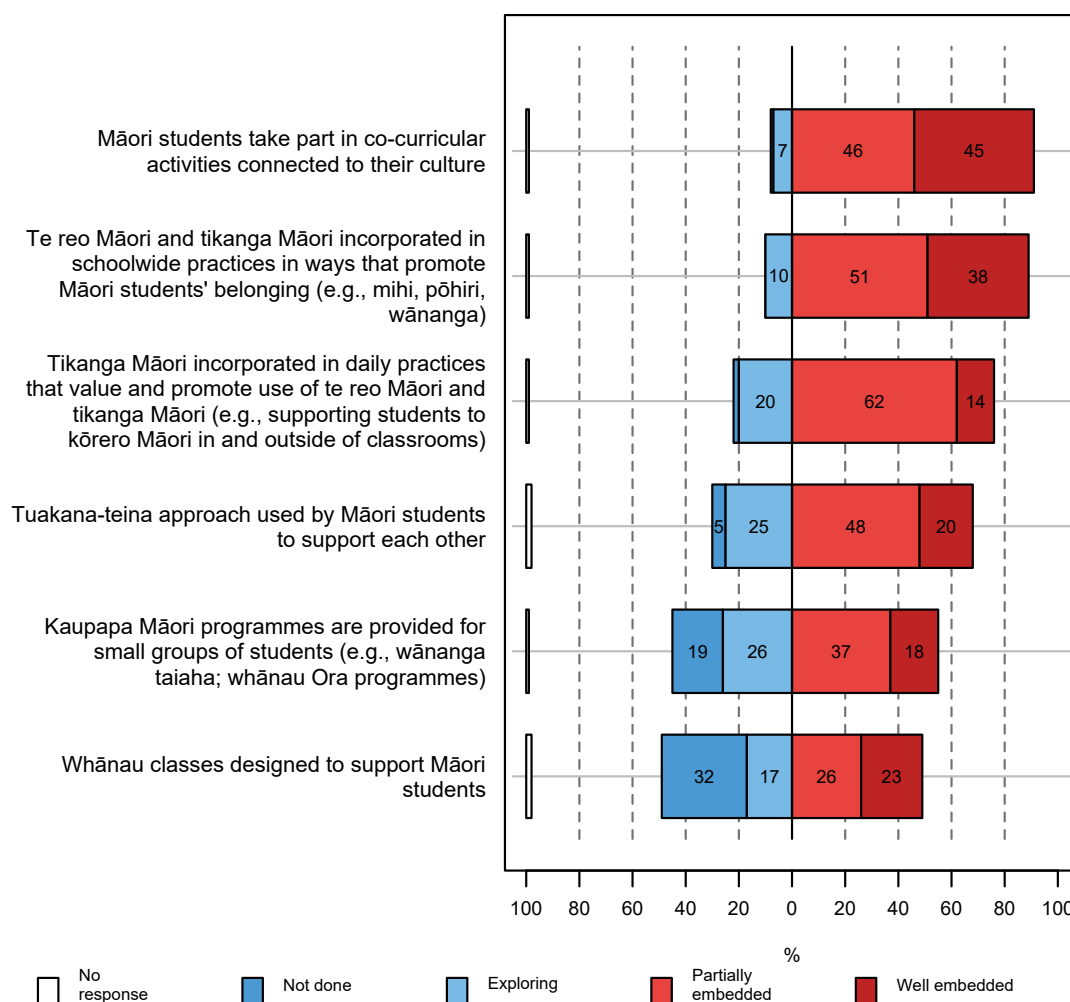
There were two decile-related differences in supporting the wellbeing of Māori students:
- Almost the same proportion of principals at decile 1–2 (57%) and 9–10 (58%) schools say Māori students using a tuakana–teina approach to support each other is a partially or well-embedded approach at their school (compared with 81% for decile 3–4 schools, 63% for decile 5–6 schools, and 73% for decile 7–8 schools).
- Whānau classes designed to support Māori students are partially or well embedded at 27% of decile 9–10 schools (compared with 47% of decile 1–2 schools, 62% of decile 3–4 schools, 50% of decile 5–6 schools, and 55% of decile 7–8 schools).

Schools are exploring or have partially-embedded approaches for the belonging and wellbeing of Pacific students

Over half of the principals say Pacific students taking part in co-curricular activities connected to their culture is either partially or well embedded at their school (see Figure 4). More than half are at least exploring the other three approaches to support the belonging and wellbeing of Pacific students that we asked about.

FIGURE 4   **Embeddedness of school approaches supporting the belonging and wellbeing of Pacific students, reported by principals (*n* = 167)**
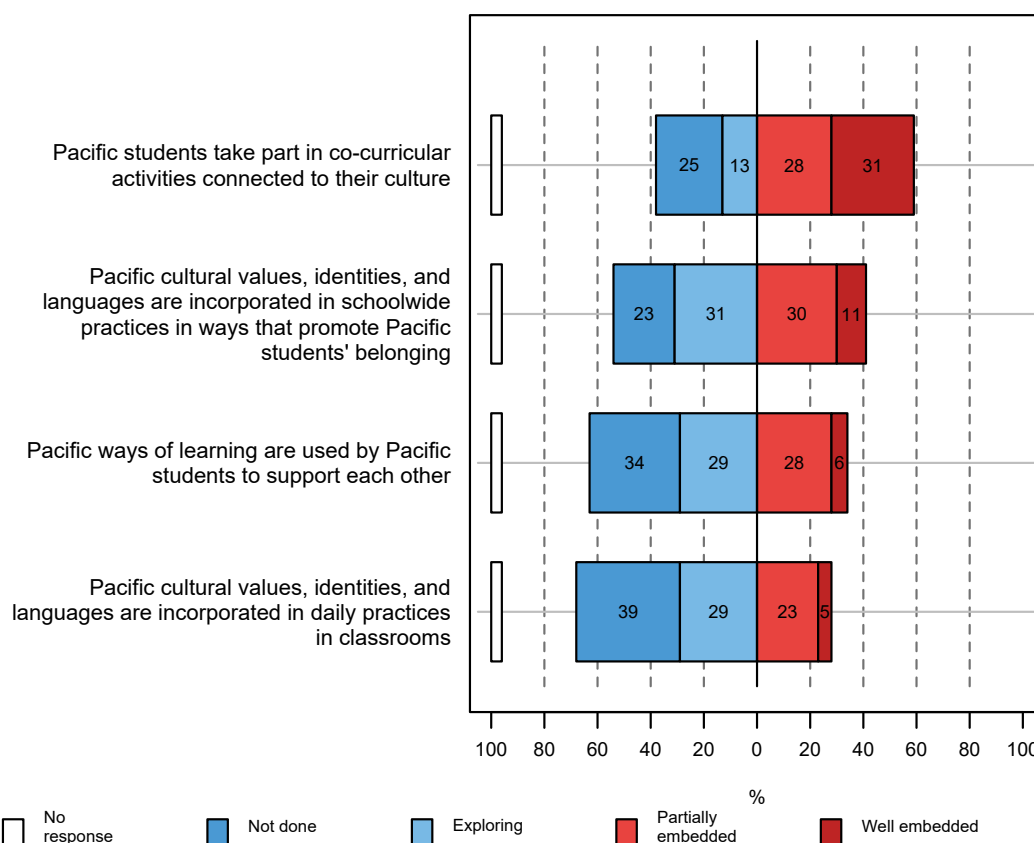
There was just one item for which response differences are significantly related to school decile. For 21% of decile 1–2 schools, incorporating Pacific cultural values, identities, and languages into daily classroom practices was well embedded, decreasing to 3% across decile 3–8 schools and no decile 9–10 schools. This approach was "not done" at half of decile 5–6 schools, and slightly fewer (47%) decile 9–10 schools.[11]

Support groups for LGBTI youth are well embedded at 29% of schools

Just over half the principals say a multi-disciplinary wellbeing and learning support team that collaborates to plan support for individuals or groups of students is a well-embedded approach at their school (see Figure 5). Twenty-nine percent say support groups for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex youth are well embedded at their school, more than double the 13% of principals who said this in 2015.

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11 This is related to the spread of Pacific students across deciles. In 2018, 47% of all Pacific students were enrolled at decile 1–2 schools, 21% at decile 3–4 schools, 11% at decile 5–6 schools, 12% at decile 7–8 schools, and 8% at decile 9–10 schools. This is based on information from 1 July 2018 roll returns, available at: https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/schooling/student-numbers/6028

Least well embedded of the four approaches included in Figure 5 is providing training for teachers to recognise mental health warning signs and provide classroom support or refer students (16%).

FIGURE 5   **Embeddedness of school approaches to supporting the wellbeing of students who need extra support, reported by principals (*n* = 167)**
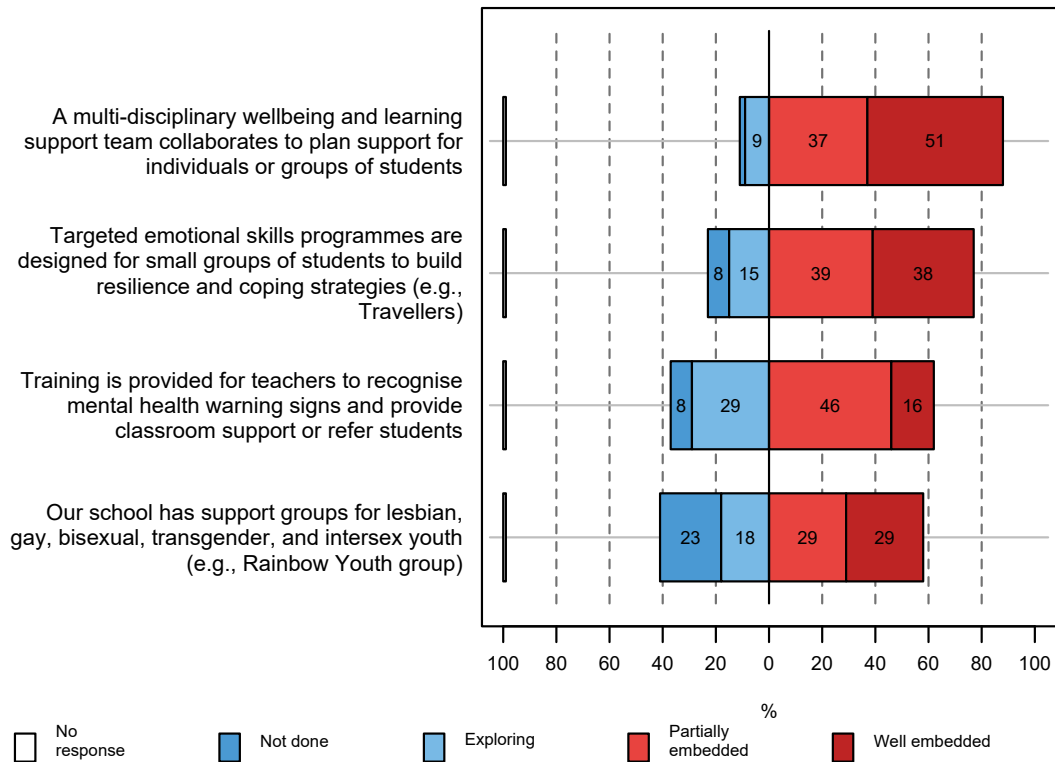
The role of teachers in promoting student's wellbeing and belonging

To find out about secondary teachers' role in developing protective factors at the classroom level, we asked them about teaching strategies to help students manage their wellbeing and support their sense of belonging.

Teachers focus on strategies to manage behaviour more than social and emotional wellbeing

Many teachers incorporate a range of practices to support the wellbeing and positive behaviour of students in their classes (see Figure 6). Over three-quarters of teachers teach strategies to help students manage their behaviour and solve problems, and to help them build friendships. Slightly fewer teachers use interactive and discussion-based approaches to help students develop strategies for managing their social and emotional wellbeing.

Half of the teachers say they deliberately teach emotional skills in class to help students learn about themselves and manage their feelings.

FIGURE 6 **Teaching practices to promote student wellbeing, reported by teachers (*n* = 705)**
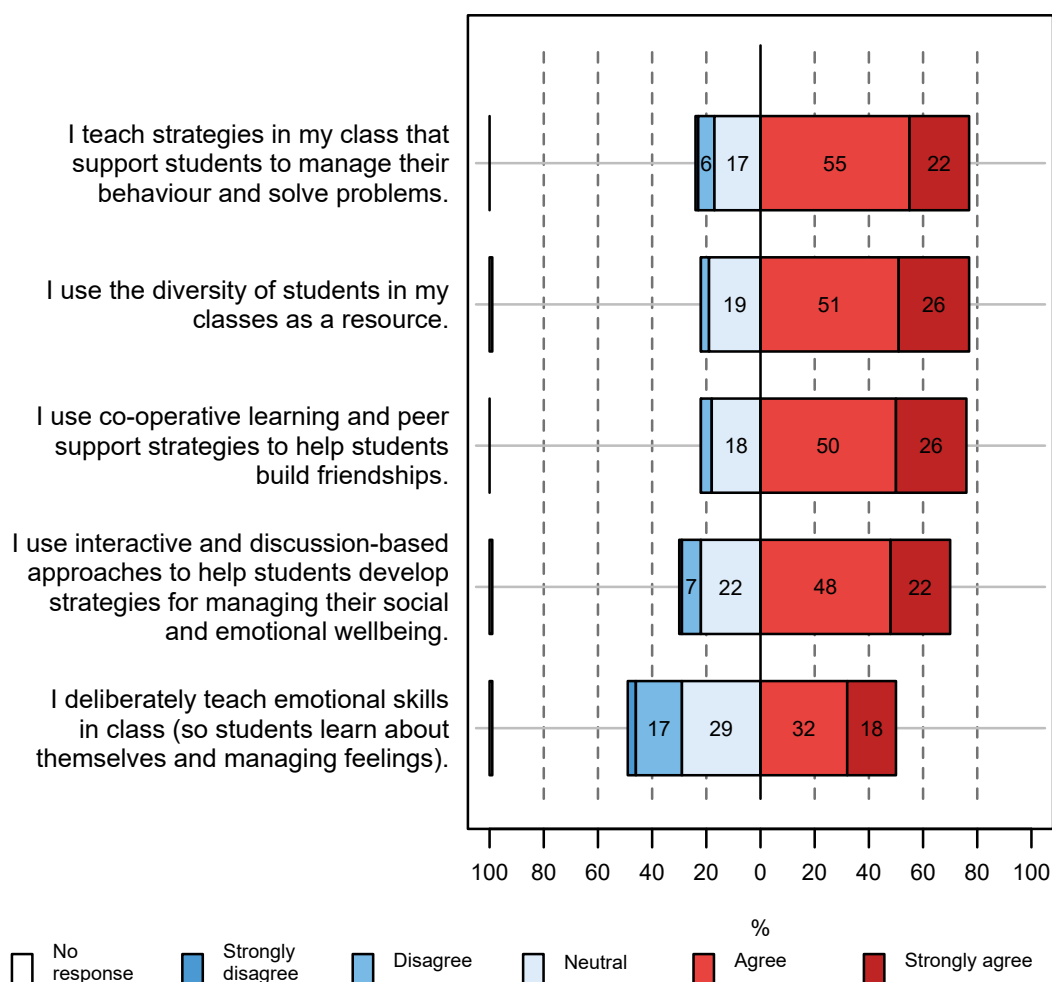
There were no school decile-related differences for the teacher practices shown in Figure 6.

In response to a different question, 54% of the teachers indicated their professional learning over the past 3 years has provided them with practical help for supporting students' social and emotional learning, indicating teachers' interest or school focus in providing such support. Also related to promoting students' wellbeing, around three-quarters of teachers say their professional learning has provided practical help with building relationships with students that have a positive effect on their learning.

Most teachers promote Māori cultural values

Over half of the teachers indicate they promote Māori cultural values with all students and incorporate te reo Māori and tikanga Māori in their teaching in a way that promotes Māori students' belonging. Relatively few of these teachers strongly agree with this (see Figure 7).

FIGURE 7   **Teaching practices to promote Māori students' wellbeing and belonging, reported by teachers (*n* = 705)**
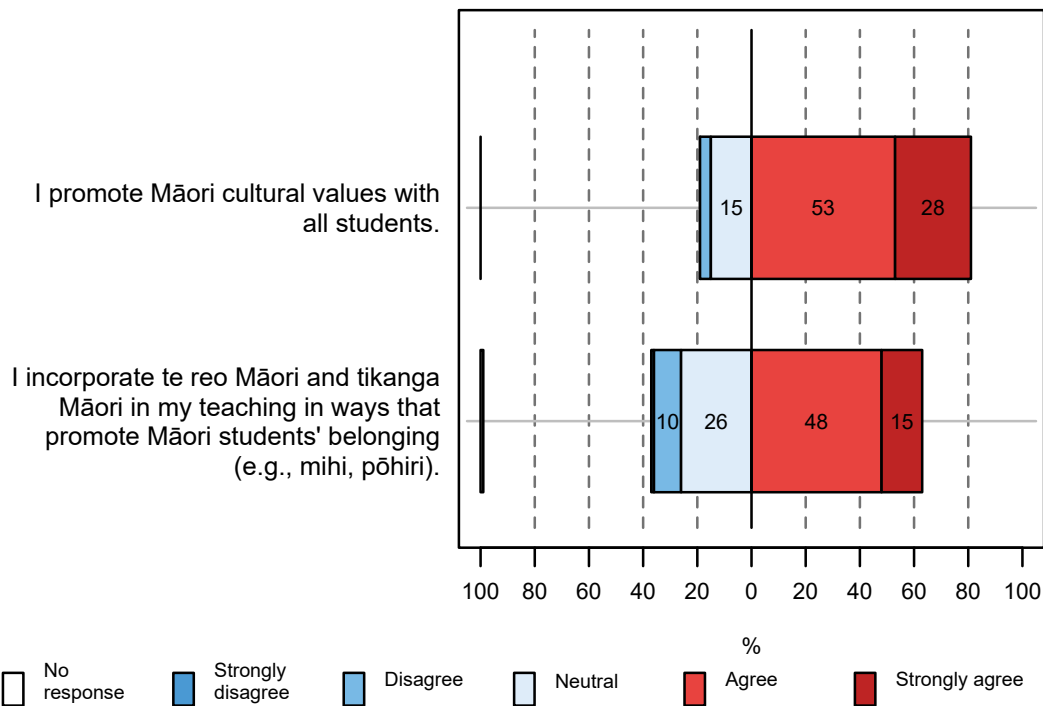
Over half of teachers make a point of identifying their Pacific students' cultures

Sixty percent of teachers agree they make a point of knowing which Pacific culture(s) their Pacific students' families identify with.[12] Slightly fewer provide Pacific students with opportunities to work together and support each other (see Figure 8). Teachers were somewhat less likely to incorporate Pacific students' culture in their teaching in ways that promote belonging.

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12 We are mindful that some teachers might have very few Pacific students in their classes.

FIGURE 8   **Teaching practices to promote Pacific students' wellbeing and belonging, reported by teachers (*n* = 705)**
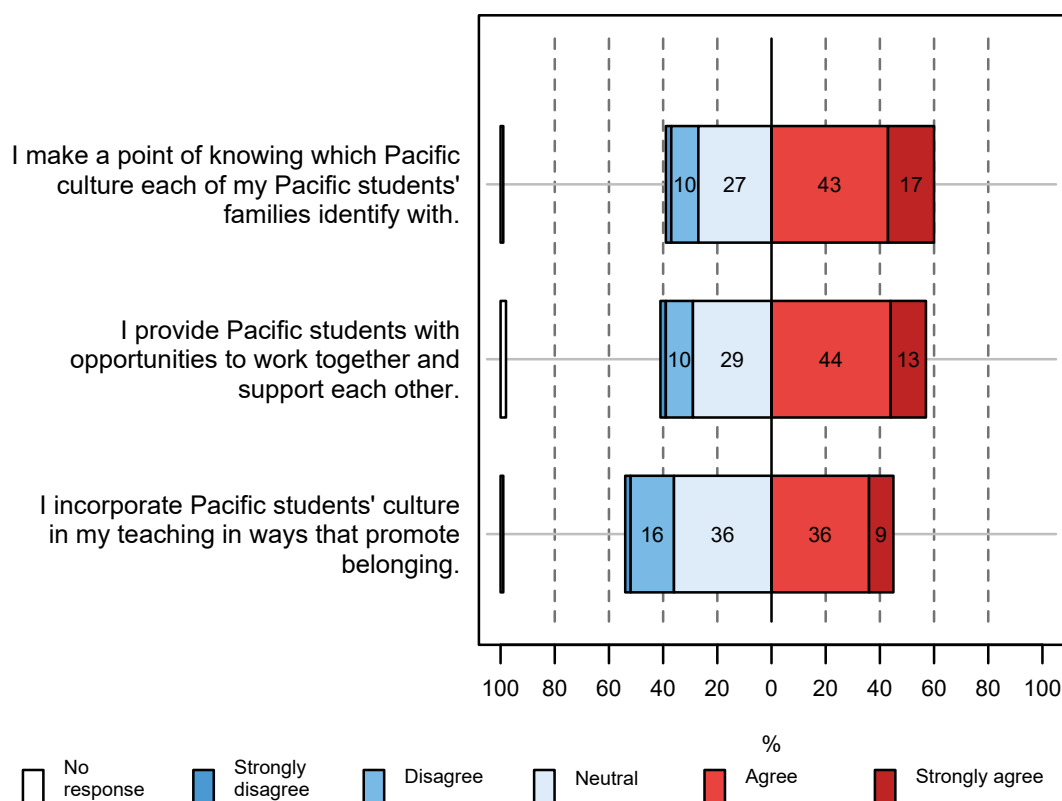
Disproportionate numbers of Pacific students are enrolled at decile 1–2 schools, and teachers at these schools were most likely to use the practices shown in Figure 8. For example:
- 33% of teachers at decile 1–2 schools strongly agree they make a point of knowing which Pacific culture each of their Pacific students' families identify with
- 32% of teachers at decile 1–2 schools strongly agree they provide Pacific students with opportunities to work together and support each other
- 25% of teachers at decile 1–2 schools strongly agree they incorporate Pacific students' culture in their teaching in ways that promote belonging.

Most teachers can refer vulnerable students to receive timely support

Most of the teachers can refer vulnerable students to receive timely school-based or external support[13] and indicate they have some school-wide systems in place to support students' wellbeing and mental health (see Figure 9). However, less than one-third of secondary teachers had received training to help them recognise mental health warning signs in students, suggesting that not all students who need support may be identified for referral. Only 16% of principals indicated the provision of such training is well embedded at their school.

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13 Although most teachers agree they can refer vulnerable students to receive this help, actually *providing* support for vulnerable students was the second most identified major issue facing their school by principals (66%) and was in the top 10 issues identified by trustees (39%) (see Section 12: Issues facing secondary schools in 2018),).

FIGURE 9 **School approaches to student wellbeing, reported by teachers (*n* = 705)**
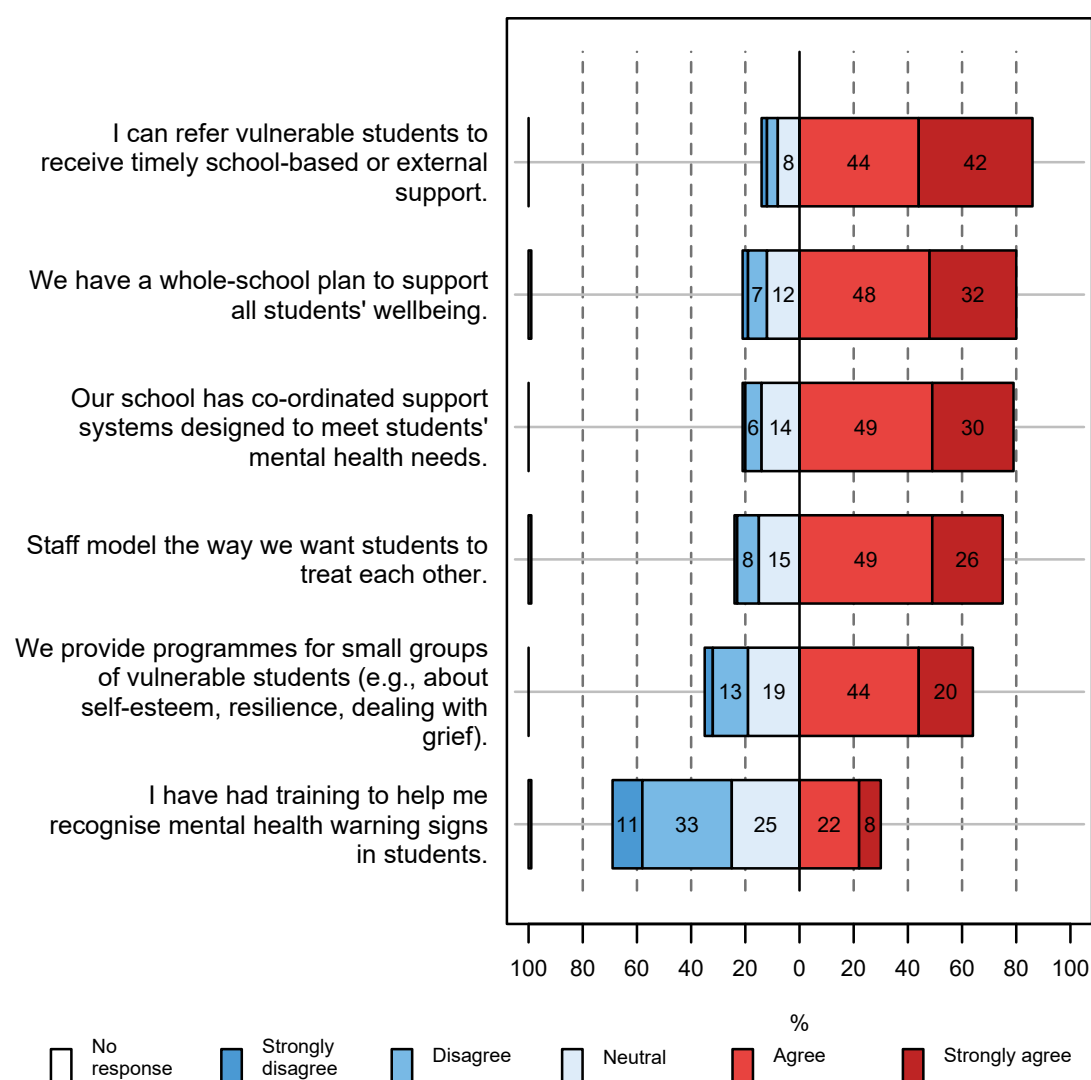
For five of the six approaches shown in Figure 9, differences related to school decile are evident in teachers' responses. (There is no significant decile-related difference for responses to "We provide programmes for small groups of vulnerable students".) Across these five items, the lowest levels of agreement are from teachers at decile 1–2 schools, and the highest are from teachers at decile 9–10 schools. Teachers' agreement that they have had training to help them recognise mental health warning signs in students has the widest decile-related differences, with 19% of teachers at decile 1–2 schools, around 30% of teachers at decile 3–8 schools, and 41% of those at decile 9–10 schools agreeing or strongly agreeing. Additionally, fewer teachers at decile 1–2 schools (73%) say they can refer vulnerable students to receive timely school-based or external support, increasing to 92% of teachers at decile 9–10 schools. From teachers' responses, it appears that some of the schools in which these approaches to students' wellbeing are most needed are the least likely to have them.

Six percent of the teachers (*n* = 41) expressed concern about students' wellbeing or behaviour in answer to our final question asking them if they had any overall comments about their work as a teacher.

My rural decile 1 has just started to see 'P babies' arriving with serious behavioural/social/learning problems, including serious violence.

We deal with huge issues on a day to day level, e.g., sick kids, suicidal kids, bullying, aggression, no gear, no food, kicked out of home, not wanting to learn.

I spend a lot of time not actually teaching but surviving the abusive behaviour of my students.

The real pressing issues for myself and other senior managers are the increasing types of problems students are bringing to the school. We are dealing with major social issues that we are ill equipped to solve and we also carry a vast amount of disturbing information and have no outlet to offload this burden.

Managing behaviour to support students' learning

The downward trend in student behaviour being a major issue has halted

Principals' responses to previous surveys showed a downward trend in student behaviour being a major issue in secondary schools (33% in 2009, 26% in 2012, and 15% in 2015). But in 2018 the trend does not continue, with 22% of principals identifying student behaviour as a major issue facing their school.

In 2015, there had been clear differences related to school decile: principals most likely to identify student behaviour as a major issue were at decile 1–2 schools. The patterns associated with school decile were somewhat different in 2018, with the highest proportions of principals at decile 3–4 schools identifying student behaviour as a major issue for their school (38%, compared with 21% for decile 1–2 schools, 30% for decile 5–6 schools, 10% for decile 7–8 schools, and 7% for decile 9–10 schools). This pattern was also reflected in the responses of trustees, with 44% of trustees at decile 3–4 schools identifying student behaviour as an issue.[14]

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14 SeeSection *12: Issues facing secondary schools in 2018* for more details.

PB4L initiatives are in around half of the secondary schools

The Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) suite of initiatives has been the government's main plank of support for building learning environments that promote positive behaviour that fosters students' wellbeing and achievement. Collectively, these initiatives are a long-term, systemic approach to address behaviour that can get in the way of learning.[15]

Over half of the principals say their schools are part of PB4L School-Wide, with somewhat fewer saying they are part of PB4L Restorative Practices (see Table 1). Most of these have been involved for 3 years or more. Just over half of principals say their school is part of other whole-school restorative practices. Fifteen percent of the principals responded "not currently" or "don't know" to all three of the initiatives we asked about.

TABLE 1 **Involvement in initiatives that support students' behaviour and wellbeing, reported by principals (*n* = 167)**

Initiatives	Yes, for 3 years or more	Yes, for less than 3 years	Not currently	Don't know
PB4L School-Wide	44	11	40	1
PB4L Restorative Practices	28	16	49	1
Other whole-school restorative practices	40	12	28	4

Schools of all deciles have joined the two PB4L initiatives. Although these initiatives were targeted at lower decile schools for some years, a current criterion for being part of PB4L is that a school's key goal is to improve student behaviour. In 2018, a higher proportion of principals in decile 1–2 schools indicate their schools are involved in PB4L School-Wide (74%, compared with 64% for decile 3–6 schools, 45% for decile 7–8 schools, and 30% for decile 9–10 schools). Likewise, a higher proportion of principals at decile 1–2 schools are involved in PB4L Restorative Practices (74%, compared with 46% for decile 3–8 schools, and 13% for decile 9–10 schools). There was no significant decile-related difference for involvement in other whole-school restorative practices.

External expertise to help improve student behaviour was something 38% of principals say was not needed in 2018—up from 20% who said this in the previous survey.[16] Principals of decile 7–10 schools were the most likely to say this (57%, compared with 30% at decile 1–2 schools, and 13% for decile 3–4 schools).

Most secondary schools have well-embedded approaches for managing behaviour

Figure 10 shows that almost three-quarters of the secondary principals say a team approach is used to keeping students at school by making sure all other consequences for behaviour are tried before students are stood down, suspended, or expelled, and that this approach is well embedded at their school. This is unchanged since 2015.

Over two-thirds of the schools have clear processes well embedded for addressing racist comments or behaviour by students or staff. Fewer schools (40%) have a well-embedded school-wide process to teach all students how to resolve conflicts.

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15 See Boyd, S., & Felgate, R. (2015). *"A positive culture of support": Final report from the evaluation of PB4L School-Wide.* Wellington: Ministry of Education.

16 See *Section 8: Principals' perspectives on external review, advice, and expertise* for more on principals' responses about the external expertise their schools need.

FIGURE 10 **Embeddedness of school approaches for addressing behaviours that might get in the way of learning, reported by principals (*n* = 167)**
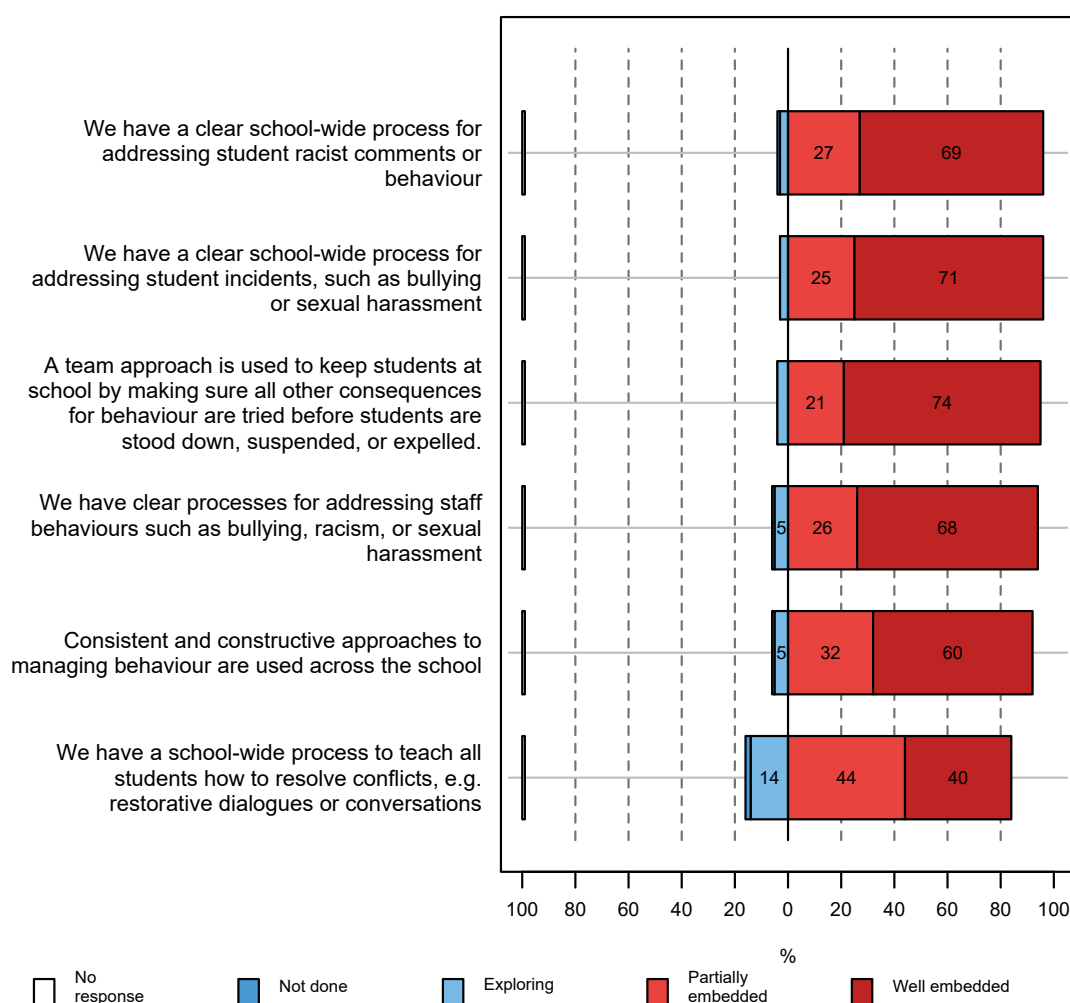
Almost a fifth of teachers say student behaviour often seriously disrupts their teaching

In 2018, somewhat more teachers often experienced student behaviour that caused serious disruption to their teaching (18%, up from 11% in both 2015 and 2012). Thirty-nine percent report experiencing this sometimes (similar to 2015 and 2012), and 42% rarely or never experience this sort of behaviour (down from 50% in 2015, and similar to 40% in 2012).

Serious disruption to teaching was experienced *often* by 35% of the teachers at decile 1–2 schools (decreasing to 5% at decile 9–10 schools). This was somewhat more than the 27% of teachers at decile 1–2 schools in 2015. One of the main things teachers at decile 1–2 schools would like to change about their work as a teacher is to have more support for them to teach students with behaviour issues (41%, about the same for teachers at decile 3–6 schools, 25% at decile 7–8 schools, and 16% of teachers at decile 9–10 schools).

Teachers' responses in Figure 11 show at least half indicate various approaches used at their school to address student behaviour that might get in the way of teaching and learning.

A quarter of teachers indicate they do not have clear processes in their school for addressing staff behaviours such as bullying, racism, or sexual harassment.

FIGURE 11 **School approaches to addressing behaviour that might get in the way of teaching and learning, reported by teachers (*n* = 705)**
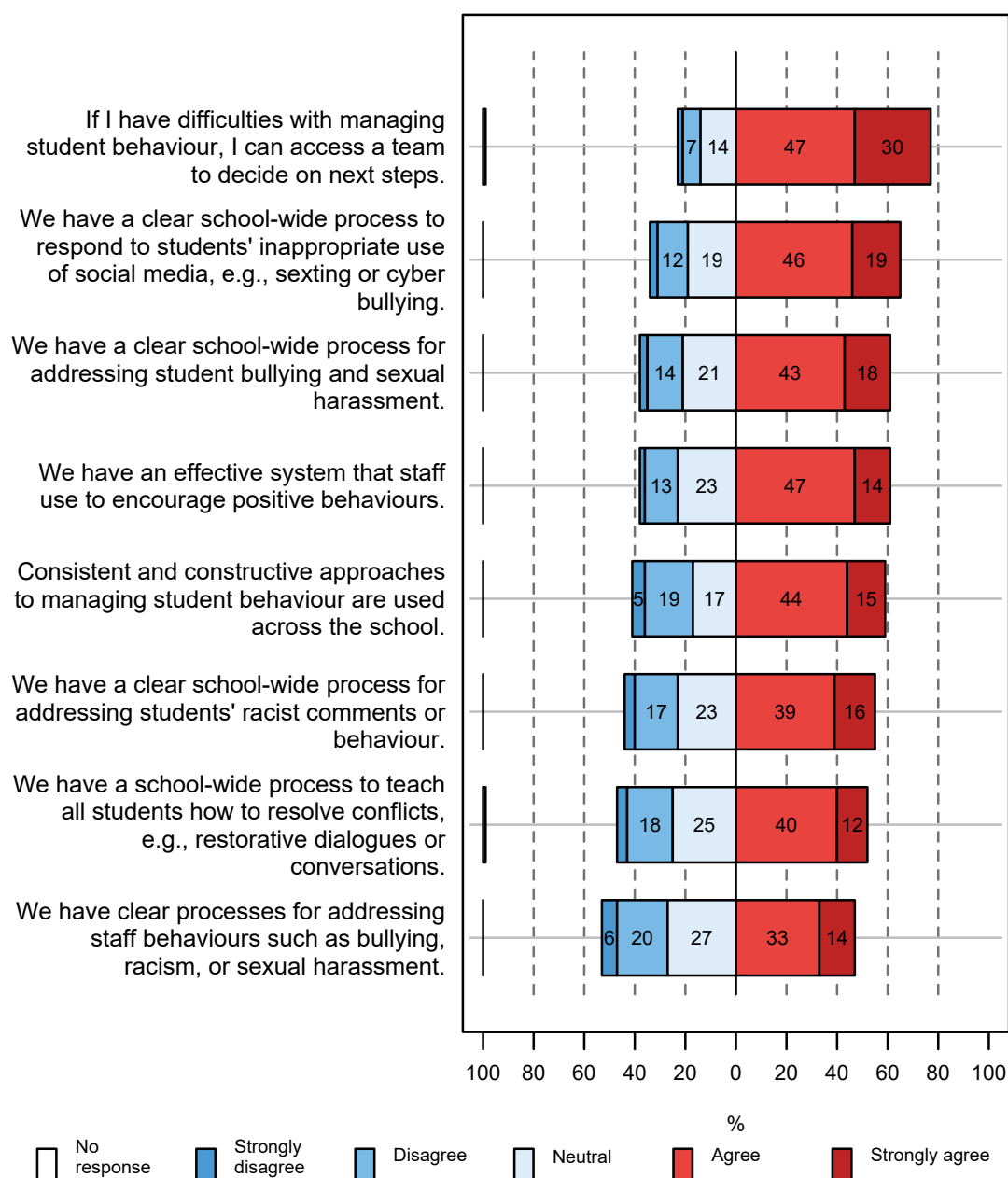
School decile was related to the teachers' responses to most of the items in Figure 11. (The two exceptions were teachers' agreement with the bottom two statements in the figure, with which around 50% of all teachers agreed.) Teachers at decile 1–2 schools tended to express the least agreement, and teachers at decile 7–10 schools, the most. For example, 59% of teachers at decile 1–2 schools can access a team to decide on next steps. Seventy-five percent of teachers at decile 3–4 schools say they can do this, 71% at decile 5–6 schools, and 86% at decile 7–10 schools. Teachers at decile 1–2 schools were also less likely to say that consistent and constructive approaches to managing student behaviour are used across the school (38%, compared with 52% at decile 3–4 schools, 55% at decile 5–6 schools, 73% at decile

7–8 schools, and 70% at decile 9–10 schools). Overall, teachers' responses indicate that supports that encourage positive behaviour are less likely to be established in decile 1–2 schools—the schools where other responses suggest these approaches are currently most needed.

Schools' work with external agencies to promote student wellbeing

Principals were asked about the usefulness of the support they have had for students' wellbeing and behaviour, both based in their school and from external agencies they might call on for advice. At least 60% of the principals had used the sources included in Figure 12, and less than 60% had used those shown in Figure 13.

School counsellors provide the most useful support for students' wellbeing

Figure 12 shows clearly that principals think the most useful support for their students' wellbeing and behaviour has been from school counsellors; every principal who has a school counsellor (97% of all principals responding) rated their support as "useful" or "very useful". Three of the four most useful sources of support are school-based (although RTLBs might be based at another school), which is consistent with the research finding that students' health and wellbeing benefit from having services based on-site.[17]

At the other end of the scale, more than 40% of principals say their school has had "not very useful" or "not useful" support from Oranga Tamariki, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), and the attendance service—agencies that are likely to be needed to support students with some of the highest needs.

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17 Denny, S., Grant, S., Galbreath, R., Clark, T., Fleming, T., Bullen, P., . . . Teevale, T. (2014). *Health services in New Zealand secondary schools and the associated health outcomes for students.* Auckland: The University of Auckland.

FIGURE 12 **The usefulness of support for students' wellbeing and behaviour used by at least 60% of schools, reported by principals (*n* = 167)**
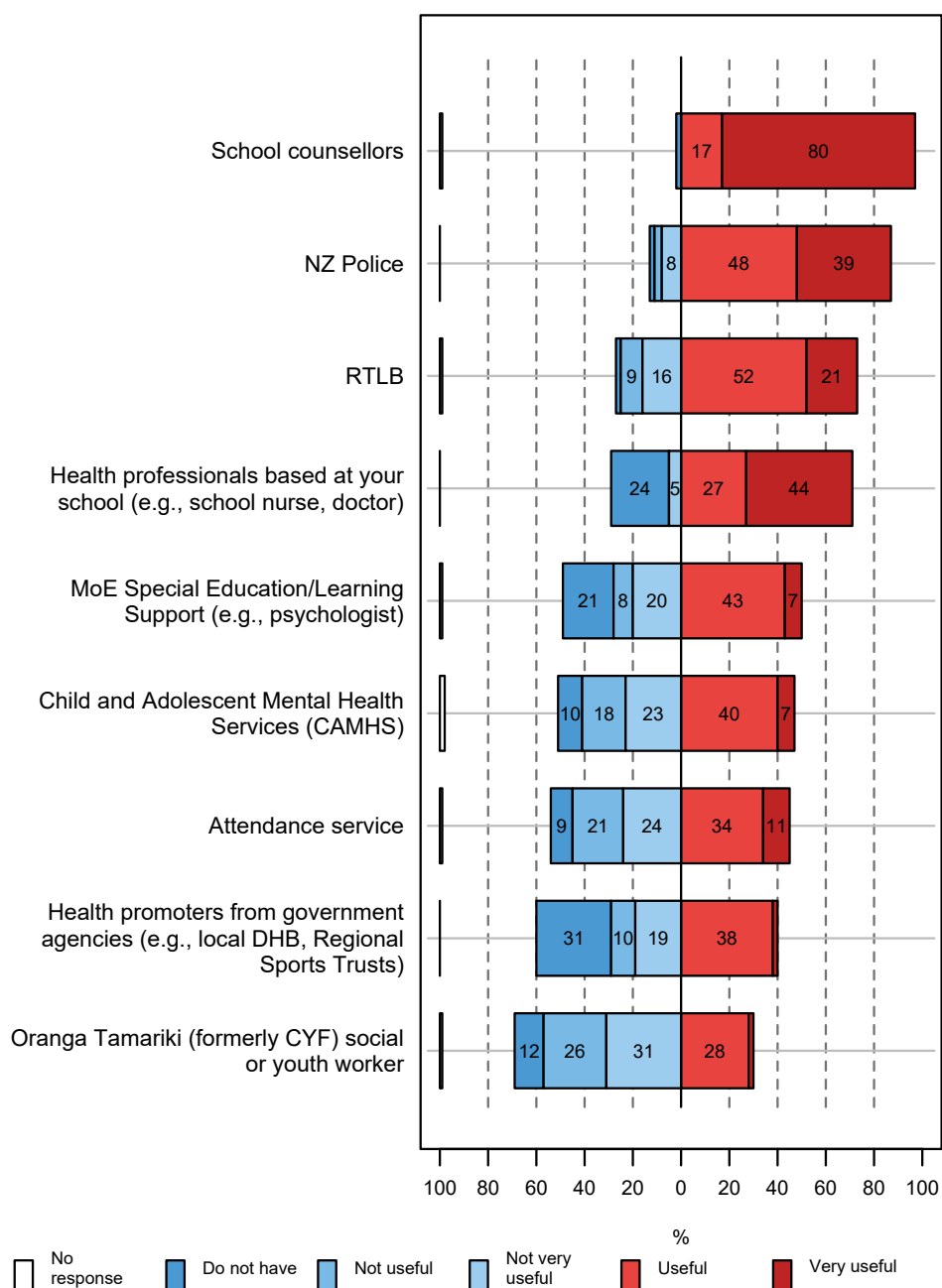
The single school decile-related difference was for NZ Police. Half of principals at decile 1–4 schools say the support they have from NZ Police is very useful, compared with 34% of principals of decile 5–10 schools.

Less than 60% of the principals report having received support from the sources shown in Figure 13. Most of those who had used the supports shown were positive about their experience. For example, only 29% have had support from a school-based social worker. However, more than three-quarters of these principals think this on-site support for students' wellbeing and behaviour was "useful" or "very useful". Proportionally, this is higher than the usefulness ratings for similar off-site support from Oranga Tamariki social or youth workers (see Figure 12).

FIGURE 13 **The usefulness of support for students' wellbeing and behaviour used by less than 60% of schools, reported by principals (*n* = 167)**
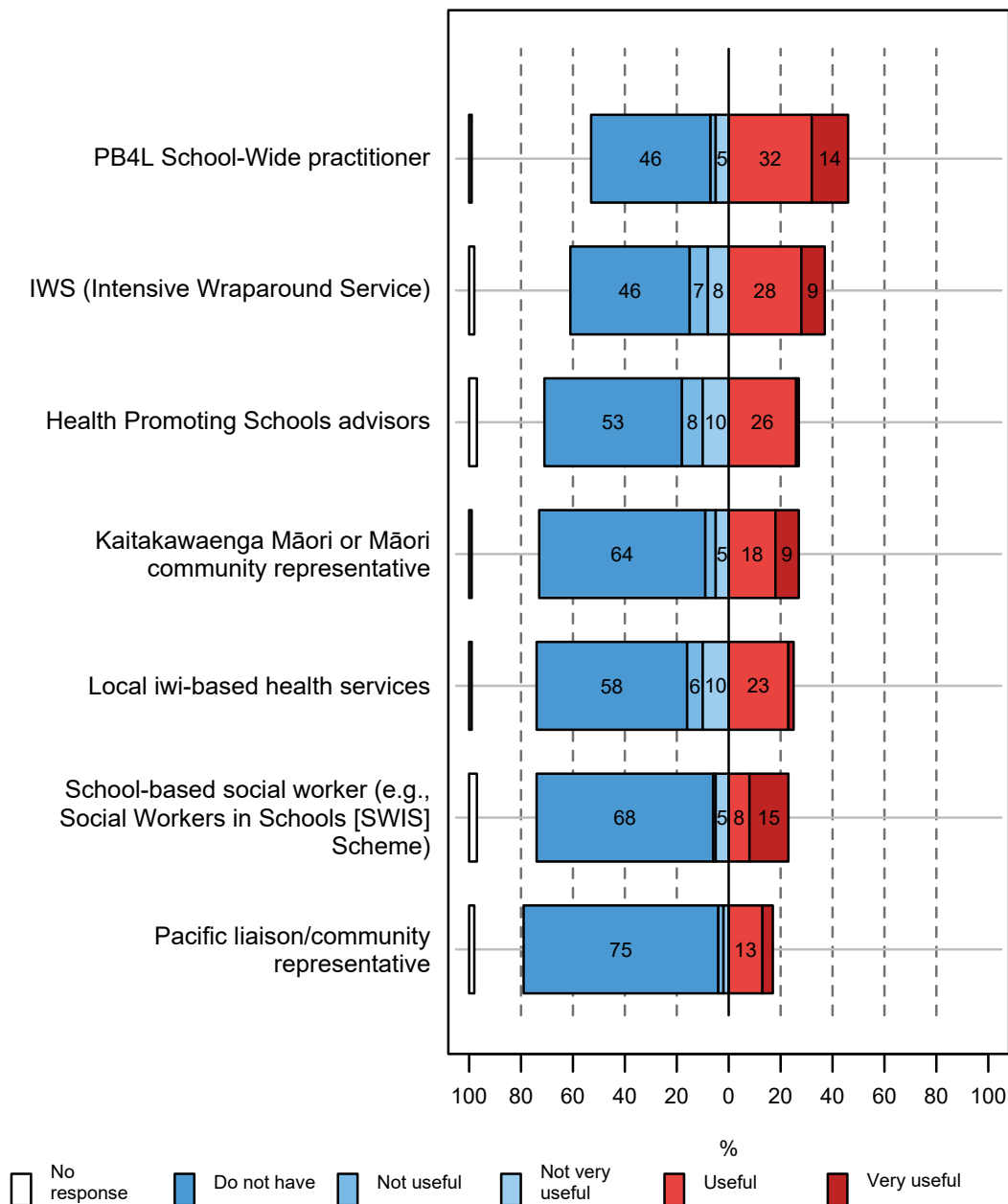
Eighty-one percent of principals whose school has been part of PB4L School-Wide think they have had useful or very useful support from a PB4L School-Wide practitioner. The same view is held by 77% of those whose school has been part of PB4L Restorative Practices.

The support agencies included in Figure 13 are used more by decile 1–2 schools, and very little or not at all by decile 9–10 schools. For example, 80% of decile 5–10 schools do not have a school-based social worker, and neither do 57% of decile 3–4 schools and 26% of decile 1–2 schools. Because of this, lower decile schools were more likely to rate these as useful or very useful.

Sixty-two percent of principals cannot access the mental health expertise they need for students

The report from the recent Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction highlights that school counsellors and teachers "are overwhelmed by the number of students in distress, the complexity of their issues and the incidence of acting out via problem behaviours in class".[18] The same report underscores the importance of students learning about mental health as part of the health curriculum in schools. The survey findings we report add to some of the material included in the Inquiry's report.

We asked principals what external expertise their school needs in order to keep developing, and whether they could access this, as reported in *Section 8: Principals' perspectives on external review, advice, and expertise*. In 2018, 62% of principals said they could not readily access expertise to support students with mental health issues, a considerable increase from 36% in 2015. Putting this together with less than half of principals saying they get useful advice from agencies such as CAMHS and Oranga Tamariki points to gaps in the mental health support for students, making it difficult for some schools to put support approaches in place. It is also possible that schools are tending to use school-based services (where these are available) in preference to external agencies, because of the timeliness and availability of on-site help.

Access to external expertise to keep improving student wellbeing was needed but not readily accessible for 27% of principals, up from 8% in 2015.

Some schools need more funding to keep building students' wellbeing

The 78% of principals (*n* = 131) who say their school needs support in order to keep building students' wellbeing were asked to describe the support they need. Almost half of these principals think their school needs more funding, including time for teacher professional learning (see Table 2). Eighteen percent of this group specifically identify support for students' mental health as a need for their school.

Around a quarter say their school needs timely, quality support from external agencies, or more or better on-site services.

TABLE 2 **Support needed to keep building student wellbeing, described by principals**

Support needed	Principals who say their school needs support (*n* = 131) %
More funding, including time for professional learning	46
Timely, quality support from external agencies (including CAMHS), and inter-agency communication/co-ordination	27
Provide more/better on-site services, including more staff with appropriate qualifications (social workers, counsellors, youth workers, school nurses)	23
More/better support for students' mental health, in particular	18

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18 See page 49 of Government Inquiry into Mental health and Addiction. (2018). *He Ara Oranga : Report of the Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction*. Available at: https://mentalhealth.inquiry.govt.nz/inquiry-report/he-ara-oranga/

The following quotes reflect principals' views about the need for more funding to build students' wellbeing.

> Staffing ratio adjustment OR tagged staffing for counsellors over and above roll-based entitlement staffing formula. Need for counsellors has ballooned in recent years as mental health concerns have 'blown out' yet NO ADJUSTMENT has been made to school resources. I have DOUBLED my counsellor HR level totally at board expense. (Not sustainable)

> Ring-fenced funding to provide additional supports (e.g., we do not have support access to mental health services or wellbeing programmes).

> Much more resourcing around mental health services on-site!

The role of trustees in supporting students' wellbeing and behaviour

Around half of the trustees reported that, during 2018, parents and whānau had raised issues with them related to students' behaviour or bullying, much the same as in 2015. With 34% of trustees, parents had raised issues related to students' mental health and wellbeing.

Among the written resources trustees said they had used for their role over the past 12 months, three related to supporting students' wellbeing and behaviour. Use in 2018 was lower than in 2015.
- Hautū—Māori cultural responsiveness self-review tool (NZSTA, n.d.[19]), used by 14% of trustees (compared with 26% in 2015)
- the Ministry of Education's (2015) *Bullying prevention and response: A guide for schools*, used by 8% (compared with 16% in 2015)
- ERO's wellbeing guidelines, used by 16% (11% in 2015).

The use of these three resources did not vary with school decile.

Attending disciplinary meetings is what trustees enjoy the least

In response to an open question about what they enjoyed least about their role, one-quarter of trustees said attending disciplinary meetings and supporting students who have been excluded is what they enjoy least.

> Disciplinary meetings (students). I feel that we are ill-equipped as parent reps to be able to make life-altering decisions for students. This is made even more difficult when there is a lack of support services within our community.

> Having to attend disciplinary/exclusion meetings as this means we may have 'failed' the individual.

> Can be difficult attending student hearings when parents are known or friends.

The main things trustees would change about their role included having clearer guidelines to make disciplinary decisions (16%) and reducing their role in disciplinary decisions (14%).

Parent and whānau views on wellbeing

Parents' views were sought about their child's sense of belonging at school, and how well they think their child's school uses various approaches to help support their child's wellbeing. These approaches include helping their child develop social skills, self-awareness, and positive attitudes, and encouraging their child's participation in co-curricular activities.

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19 NZSTA. (n.d.). *Hautū—Māori cultural responsiveness self-review tool.* Retrieved 14 March 2019, from: https://www.nzsta.org.nz/assets/Maori-student-achievement/Hautu.pdf

Most parents are positive about their child's secondary school

Most parents and whānau responding indicate their child feels safe, feels they belong at school, and enjoys going to school (see Figure 14). However, 10% of parents do not think their child enjoys school and a further 17% gave a "neutral" response.

FIGURE 14 **Parent and whānau (*n* = 508) views of their children's sense of belonging at school**
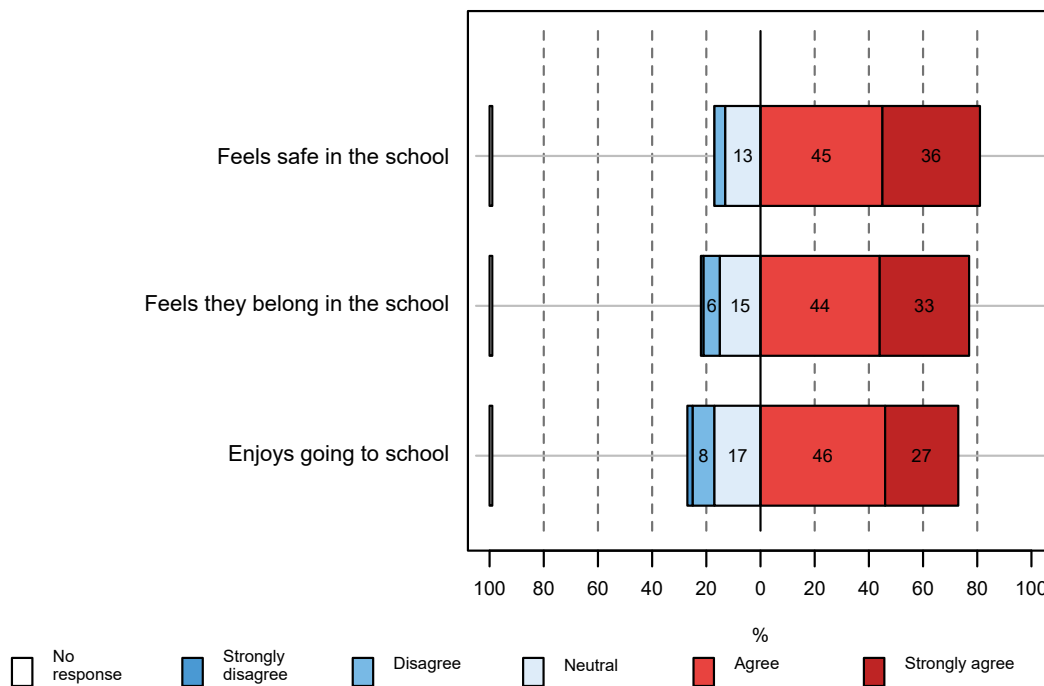
School decile was related to differences for the top two items in Figure 14. While 76% of parents whose child attends a decile 1–6 school say their child feels safe at school, 87% of those with a child at a decile 7–10 school say the same. Seventy-one percent of parents with a child at a decile 3–6 school say their child feels they belong in the school, compared to around 82% of parents with a child at a decile 1–2 or decile 7–10 school.

The importance of belonging in school has been brought to the fore in research that asks Māori students what matters to them.[20] Māori parents responding to this survey had much the same responses as other parents.

The majority of the parents responding think their school does well or very well at helping their child develop pride in who they are and recognising and managing their feelings (see Figure 15). Somewhat fewer parents think the school does well or very well at helping their child develop other personal skills, with 53% of the parents thinking their school does well or very well at helping their child feel confident about change, and 61% at dealing with hard emotional situations.

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20 See, for example, the series of reports by NZSTA and Office of the Children's Commissioner (2018), including: *Education matters to me: Key insights*. Available at: http://www.occ.org.nz/publications/reports/education-matters-to-me-key-insights/

FIGURE 15 **Parent and whānau (*n* = 508) views of how well the school helps their child to develop personal skills and attitudes**

	No response	Not sure	Not at all well	Not very well	Well	Very well
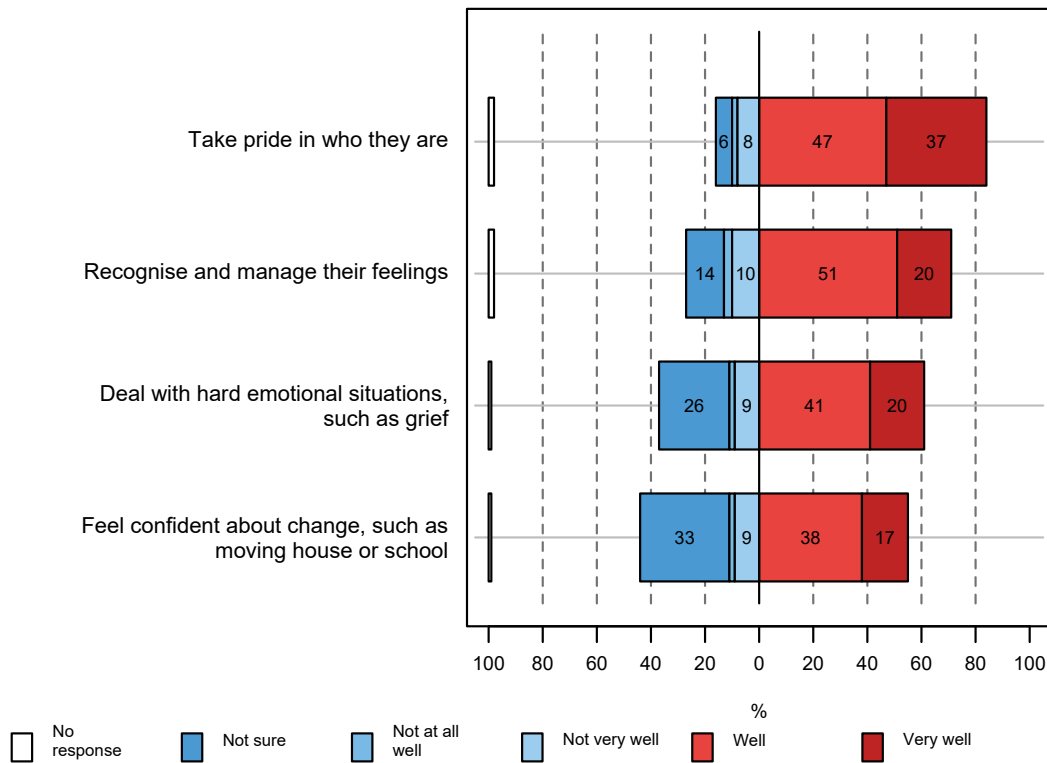
Most parents think their child's school does well or very well with helping their child develop the social skills shown in Figure 16.

FIGURE 16 **Parent and whānau (*n* = 508) views of how well the school helps their child to develop interpersonal skills**
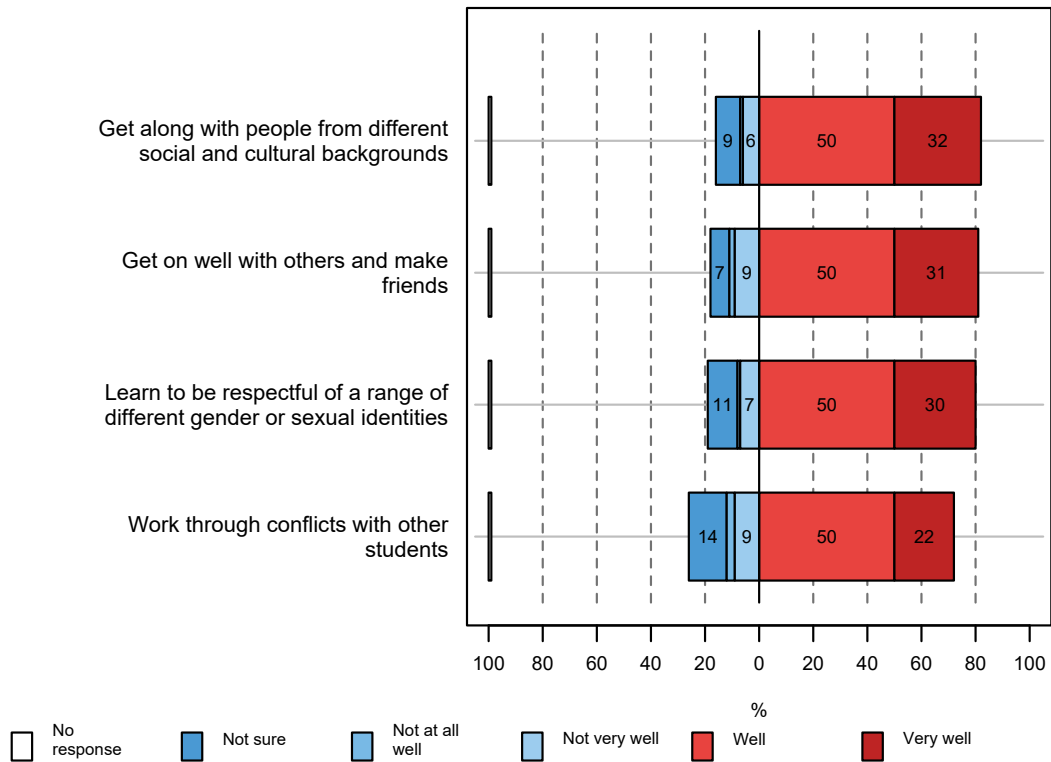
Although a small number of school decile-related differences were evident here, these did not show a consistent trend.

When it came to the school helping students to learn about making good decisions, slightly more parents think the school does "well" or "very well" at helping their child make good decisions about healthy choices, than about relationships and sexuality or dealing with social media issues (see Figure 17).

FIGURE 17 **Parent and whānau (*n* = 508) views of how well the school helps their child to learn to make good decisions**
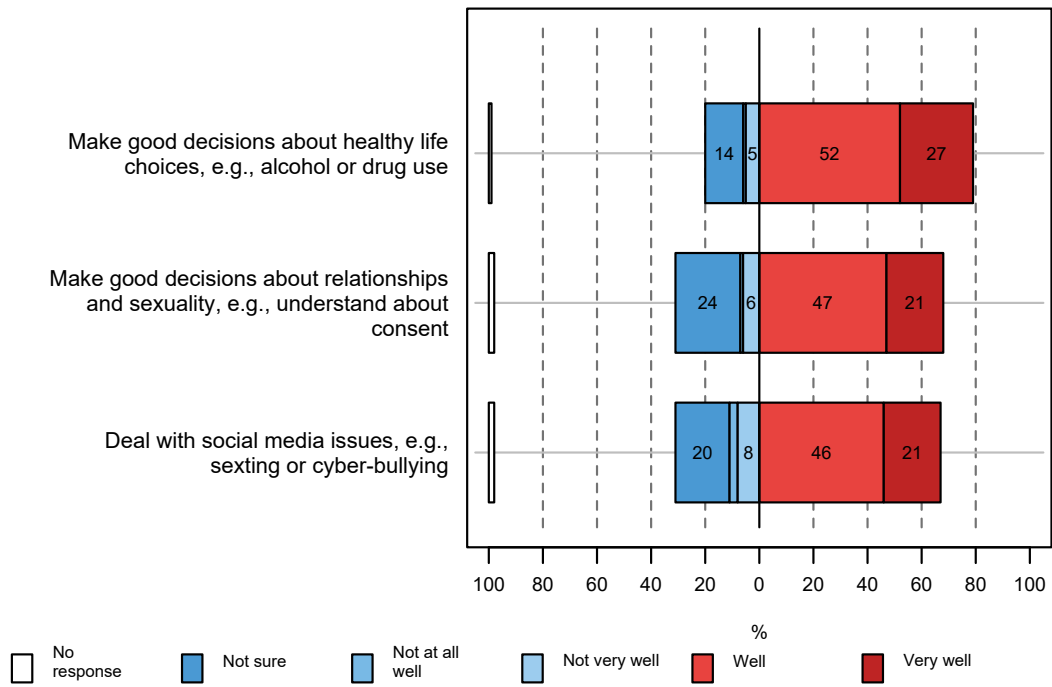
Figure 18 shows that many of the parents agree the school encourages their child to take part in sports and physical activity. Somewhat fewer agree that the cultural identity of their child is recognised and respected, or that the school encourages their child to take part in cultural activities.

FIGURE 18 **Parent and whānau (*n* = 508) agreement that the school uses a range of approaches to support their child's wellbeing**
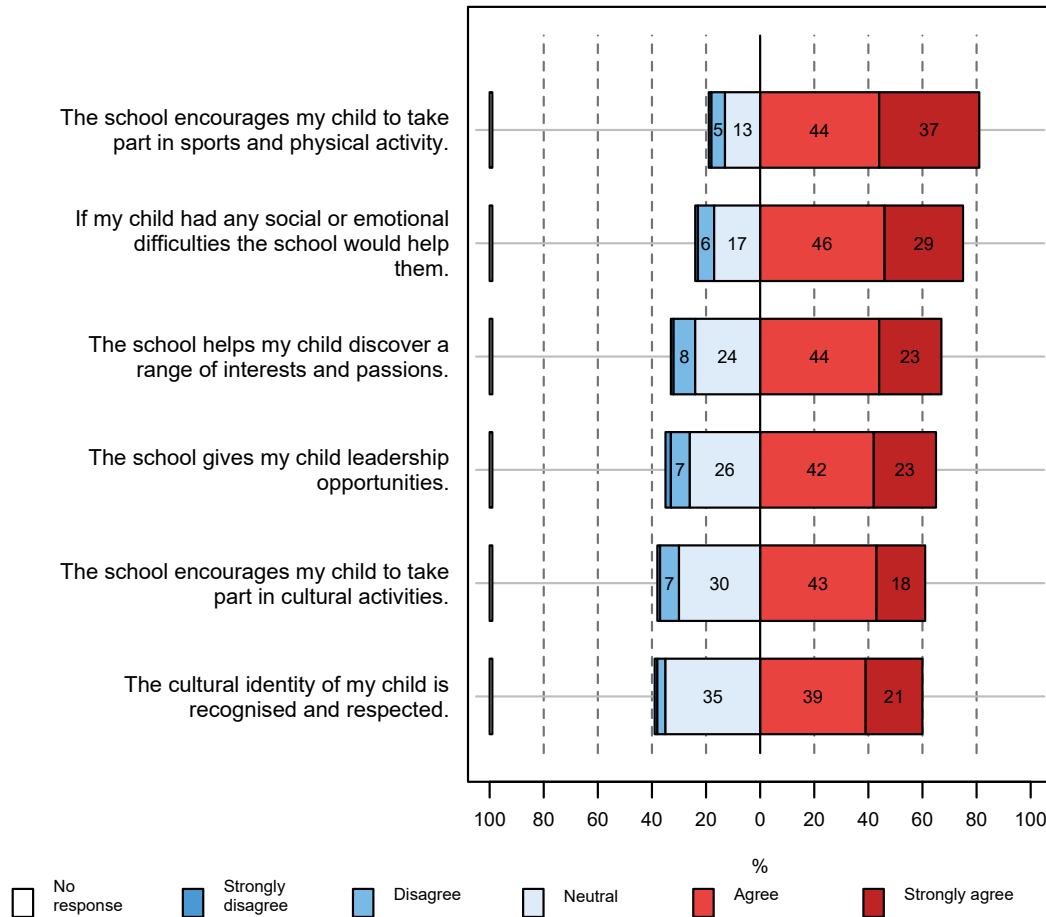
Parents whose child attends a decile 5–6 school were less likely to say the cultural identity of their child is recognised and respected at school (51%, compared with 58% for decile 3–4 and 7–8 schools, 65% for decile 1–2 schools, and 75% for decile 9–10 schools).

Māori parents were more likely to say their child's cultural identity is recognised and respected (73%, compared with 59% of non-Māori parents who said this).

In the overall comments parents wrote in response to an open question about their child's secondary schooling, 4% (*n* = 22) voiced their concern about students' wellbeing or behaviour. Some comments express the need for greater support for students' mental health, and others highlight students' high stress levels associated with their workloads.

> I feel like the overall interactions between teacher/pupil/parent are sadly lacking. This year (2018) I have found that the physical, emotional, mental, and sexual safety of students is deteriorating. And the school's response to these issues has been to 'whitewash' things that are not happening. I do not feel that my child is currently having the best educational experience possible but am limited to change schools without moving out of our community.

The behaviour of students seems to have a major effect on the teachers. They need major support from what we are hearing, from our son.

I am pleased overall with the school but very unhappy about the lack of discipline for the naughty kids. The smokers and those that are breaking the rules and being ignored. It's a well-known fact these lads are getting away with it.

My child is in her second year at this school. From a child who loved school she now hates the idea of going. We have had 2 years of bullying which I have had to push the school to try and resolve. Like many parents I know or know of, I am currently looking for a new school out of district and hope to have her in a safer environment next year.

I do feel that the amount of homework is a bit harsh and out of balance at certain times, creating high stress levels which impacts emotional stability.

The school needs to boost sports performance and participation for the physical and mental health of its students.

Summary and discussion

Principals' and teachers' responses indicated an awareness that students' wellbeing and belonging matters, and that this is complex for them to effectively support. Principals report needing more funding and access to external expertise to support the school's work in this area. A particular area in which principals say they need more help is students' mental health. There are also signs that student behaviour might be a growing concern for some schools. In 2018, there are indications that deliberate approaches to promote students' wellbeing are well embedded at some schools. However, in many cases such approaches are being explored or are partially embedded.

School-based supports—school counsellors, RTLB, and health professionals based at schools—were generally judged more useful by principals for supporting students' wellbeing and behaviour than external supports. Most teachers can refer vulnerable students to receive timely school-based or external support and their schools have some school-wide systems in place to support students' wellbeing and mental health. In 2018, more schools have support groups for LGBTI youth than in 2015. There was also an increase in the number of schools where students' social or mental health concerns are identified by using screening data.

Practices for identifying students' mental health needs are inconsistent across schools. In some schools, teachers are provided with training to recognise mental health warning signs in students, and in others, screening data are used to identify students' mental health needs. Nearly half the 78% of principals who indicate their school needs support to keep building their students' wellbeing identify more funding as the support they need, with some saying this would enable more teacher professional learning that could include identifying mental health warning signs in students.

Overall, the need for more support for students' wellbeing was most obvious in decile 1–2 schools. At these schools, using data from contributing schools to plan support for new students' behavioural, social, or mental health needs was less likely to be well embedded, and fewer teachers receive training to recognise mental health warning signs in students.

Yet these are also the schools in which teachers are least likely to say they can refer students to receive timely support, where fewer school-wide processes are in place to address behaviour that might get in the way of learning, and where teachers are the most likely to have had student behaviour issues *often* cause serious disruption to their teaching.

To a degree, this echoes what principals say about the embeddedness of related approaches, which were more likely to be partially embedded than well embedded.

Approaches that promote the belonging of Māori and Pacific students are more evident at decile 1–2 schools, where Māori and Pacific students tend to be enrolled in disproportionate numbers. Te reo Māori and tikanga Māori were more likely to be incorporated in teaching at decile 1–2 schools, to promote Māori students' sense of belonging. Although this is strongest among teachers at decile 1–2 schools, over half of teachers at decile 9–10 schools also incorporate te reo Māori and tikanga Māori.

Sixty percent of all teachers know which Pacific culture(s) each of their Pacific students' families identify with. Decile 1–2 schools were the most likely to have well-embedded approaches to incorporate Pacific cultural values, identities, and languages into daily classroom practices. More teachers at these schools also include teaching practices that promote Pacific students' wellbeing.

Most parents are positive about their child's secondary school and think the school does well with helping their child develop a range of social skills. The majority of the parents think their school does well at helping their child develop pride in who they are and recognising and managing their feelings. Somewhat fewer parents agree that the cultural identity of their child is recognised and respected, and think the school does well at helping their child feel confident about change and dealing with hard emotional situations. Many parents indicate their child's school encourages their child to take part in sports, while fewer report the school encouraging participation in cultural activities.

4.

Teaching and learning in secondary schools

We begin this section with some of the strategies secondary schools have in place to support students during the transition to secondary school. The focus then shifts to all students, and learning experiences that incorporate the key competencies—how important do teachers think these are, and how frequently do teachers provide these kinds of learning experiences?

Learning with digital technology was a focus for the first time in the 2015 survey, and some of these questions were repeated in 2018 to identify change. We also asked teachers for their views about the effects of using digital technology for learning.

Supporting students during the transition to secondary school

Three-quarters of principals get good information about new students' academic strengths and needs

Most of the principals (89%) indicate they pay close attention to the academic progress of their Years 9 and 10 students (see Figure 19). Slightly fewer (78%) say they get good information about students' academic strengths and needs when they enter their school. These response patterns were much the same in 2015.

There was one change from 2015: in 2018, fewer principals indicate NCEA plays an increasing part in their Years 9 and 10 curriculum (29%, a considerable decrease from 55% in 2015). This might suggest that the level of NCEA inclusion in the early secondary years is settling down somewhat and is less likely to still be "increasing".

Around 40% of the principals indicate most of their students gain some NCEA credits in Year 10, and that Vocational Pathways are part of their Years 9 and 10 curriculum.

FIGURE 19 **Aspects of Years 9 and 10 provision, reported by principals (*n* = 167)**
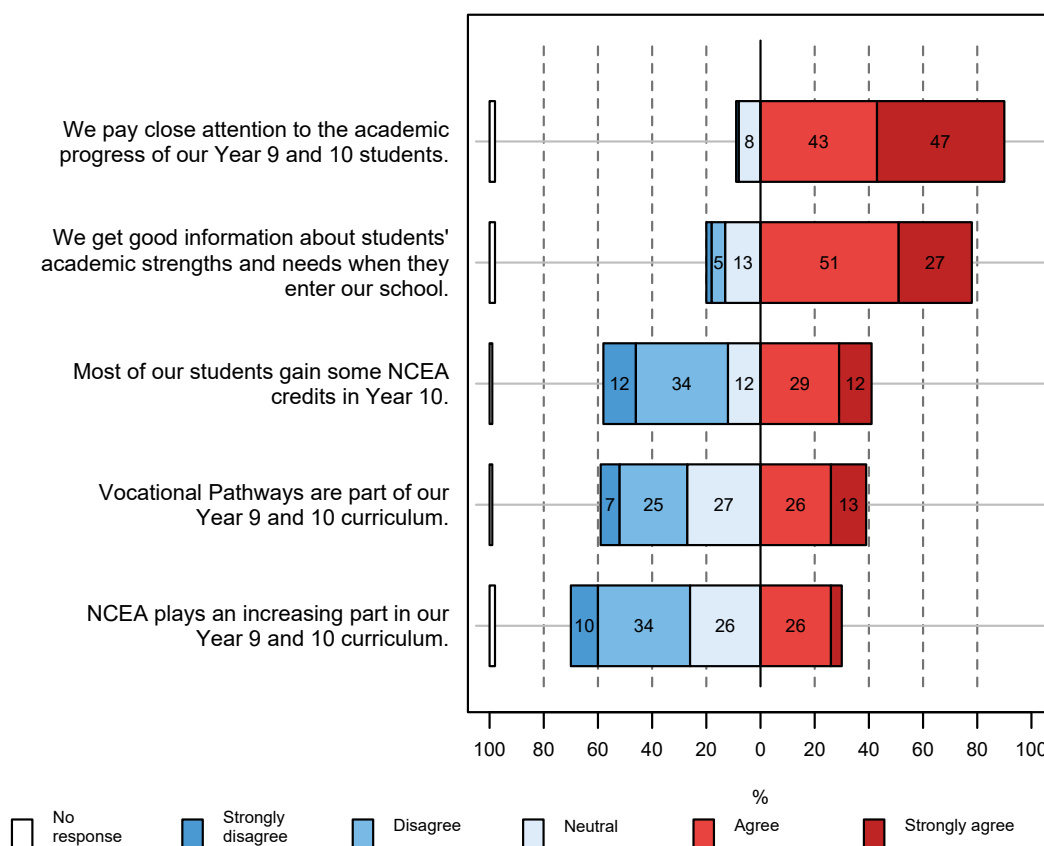
A higher proportion of the principals of decile 9–10 schools say most of their students gain some NCEA credits in Year 10 (63%, compared with 30% for decile 7–8 schools, 43% for decile 5–6 schools, and 38% for decile 1–4 schools).

Key competency learning experiences for students

Key competencies are the capabilities people have, and need to develop, to live and learn, today and in the future. *The New Zealand Curriculum*[21] identifies five key competencies that schools should deliberately cultivate in their students:

- Thinking
- Relating to others
- Using language, symbols, and texts
- Managing self
- Participating and contributing.

The provision of opportunities for all students to develop these key competencies has been of ongoing interest in the national survey.

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21 See: http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/The-New-Zealand-Curriculum

Teachers value the key competencies and give students opportunities to develop them

We asked teachers how important they thought learning experiences focused on students developing the key competencies were, and how often their classes have these learning experiences. Figure 20 shows that, generally, teachers thought these experiences are important, with half or more reporting that most of these occurred quite often or most of the time in their classes.

As in 2015, the learning experience that received the lowest ratings for both importance and frequency in 2018 was "Work together on a project/activity that will make a difference to their class/local environment or community".

The three learning experiences in Figure 20 with the biggest differences between teachers' importance and frequency ratings[22] (each exceeding 40 percentage points) are:
 • Work together on a project/activity to make a difference to their class/school/local environment or community (difference of 46 percentage points)
 • Make explicit connections to learning from other subjects/learning areas (difference of 44 percentage points)
 • Investigate their own questions (difference of 41 percentage points).

Forty-seven percent of teachers think it is very important for their students to hear about how they made their assessment decisions, and 36% do this most of the time for their classes. These have both increased since 2015, when they were 38% and 26%, respectively.

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22 This is based on a comparison of the proportions responding "Very important" and "Important", and those responding "Often" and "Most of the time".

FIGURE 20 **Importance and frequency of learning experiences, reported by teachers (*n* = 705)**
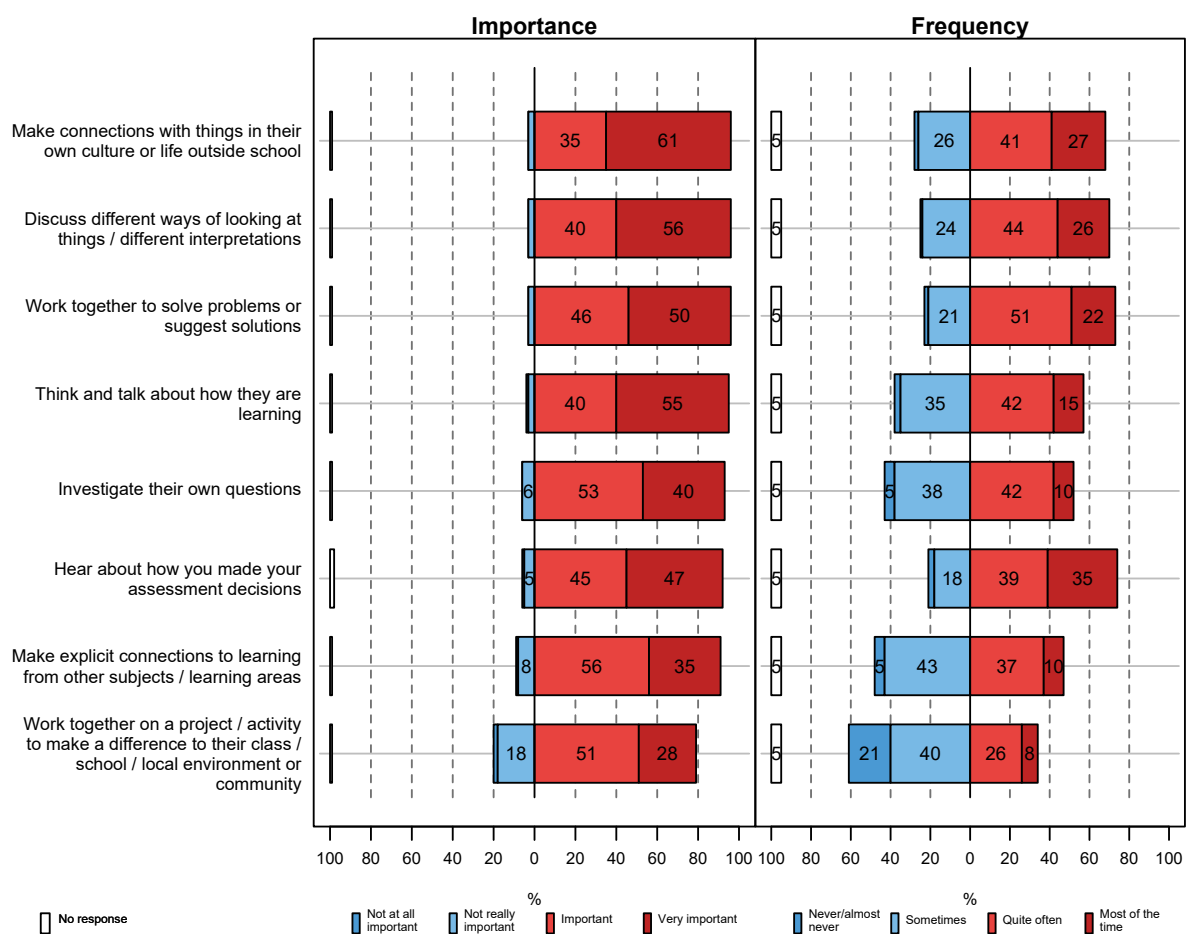
School decile-related differences are evident in how important teachers think some of these learning experiences are. Higher proportions of teachers in decile 1–2 schools rated as "very important", their students having learning experiences that provided opportunities to:

- think and talk about how they are learning (70%, compared with 49% to 59% for schools in the decile 3–10 range)
- make connections with things in their own culture or life outside school (70%, compared with 62% for decile 3–8 schools, and 50% for decile 9–10 schools).

When it came to how frequently teachers' classes do these things, there was only one school decile-related difference. Teachers in decile 1–4 schools were less likely to indicate their students "quite often" or "most of the time" discuss different ways of looking at things or different interpretations (63%, compared with 74% for decile 5–10 schools).

Learning experiences differ between subjects

Some subject-related differences are evident in the importance teachers attributed to some of these experiences, and the frequency with which teachers say students do some of them.[23] Teachers of

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23 For analysis and reporting purposes, teachers' subject areas were combined into the same groupings used for the 2015 survey: Mathematics and Science (33% of teachers responding); English and Languages (21%); Social Sciences, the Arts, and Commerce (19%); Technology, Health and PE, Transition, Careers, and Special Education (shortened to Technology, Health and PE, 24%); and other areas (3%).

Mathematics and Science were the least likely group to say their students sometimes or often have learning experiences in which students:

- work together on a project or activity to make a difference to their class, school, local environment, or community (26%, compared with 32% for English and Languages; 35% for Social Sciences, the Arts, and Commerce; and 44% for Technology, Health and PE, Transition, Careers, and Special Education). Teachers of Mathematics and Science were only marginally less likely than teachers of English and Languages and Social Sciences, the Arts, and Commerce to rate this "very important" (25%, compared with 26%–27% for the other two groups). For teachers of Technology, Health and PE, the figure was 36%.
- investigate their own questions (45%, compared with 49% for English and Languages; and 60% for the two remaining subject groups). Thirty-four percent of Mathematics and Science teachers think this learning experience is very important for their students (closely followed by 35% of English and Languages teachers; 44% for Technology, Health and PE; and 53% for Social Sciences, the Arts, and Commerce).
- make connections with things in their own culture or life outside school (55%, compared with 67% for Technology, Health and PE; 74% for Social Sciences, the Arts, and Commerce; and 84% for English and Languages). Just over half of Mathematics and Science teachers rate this "very important" (52%, compared with 57% for Technology, Health and PE; 68% for Social Sciences, the Arts, and Commerce; and 74% for English and Languages).
- discuss different ways of looking at things or different interpretations (62%, compared with 67% for Technology, Health and PE.; 76% for English and Languages; and 81% for Social Sciences, the Arts, and Commerce).

Collectively, these differences tend to support a view of Mathematics and Science (somewhat more than other subjects) as subjects in which developing students' key competencies is not a high priority.

Metatalk opportunities contribute to the development of key competencies

In an analysis of teachers' responses to the 2012 secondary survey, Hipkins[24] identified a particular set of these items about learning experiences that comprised a key factor she referred to as 'metatalk'—"talk a teacher uses in order to direct students' attention to specific aspects of the learning action as it is unfolding, and as the teacher wishes it to proceed" (p. viii). We look at teachers' responses to some of these metatalk items in 2018 compared with the previous two surveys to see how work with the key competencies is progressing in secondary schools.

Although more teachers rated metatalk opportunities as very important, not all these opportunities were more frequent

The five items in Table 3 represent metatalk opportunities for students which contribute to development of the key competencies. The proportions of teachers who viewed these opportunities as "very important" (and presumably hoped to include them in their teaching) increased from 2015 to 2018. The ranking of these items has changed very little over the three survey rounds.

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24 Hipkins, R. (2015). *Learning to learn in secondary classrooms.* Wellington: NZCER Available at: https://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/national-survey

TABLE 3   **Metatalk opportunities teachers rated as "very important"; 2012, 2015, and 2018**

Metatalk opportunities	2012 (*n* = 1,266) %	2015 (*n* = 1,777) %	2018 (*n* = 705) %
Make connections with things in their own culture or life outside school	56	50	61
Discuss different ways of looking at things/different interpretations	47	52	56
Think and talk about how they are learning	48	45	55
Hear about how you made your assessment decisions	35	38	47
Make explicit connections to learning from other subjects/learning areas	32	30	35

In 2018, more teachers were giving students opportunities "most of the time" to hear about how they made assessment decisions, and to make connections with things in their own culture or life outside school (see Table 4). However, the frequency with which teachers provided the three remaining metatalk opportunities was little changed since 2012.

TABLE 4   **Metatalk opportunities teachers reported their classes doing "most of the time"; 2012, 2015, and 2018**

Metatalk opportunities	2012 (*n* = 1,266) %	2015 (*n* = 1,777) %	2018 (*n* = 705) %
Hear about how you made your assessment decisions	27	26	36
Make connections with things in their own culture or life outside school	23	20	27
Discuss different ways of looking at things/different interpretations	28	27	26
Think and talk about how they are learning	18	18	16
Make explicit connections to learning from other subjects/learning areas	13	12	10

There is little change in experiences that help students take responsibility for their learning

Learning to learn is a foundation principle in *NZC*, and students taking responsibility for their own learning is integral to the key competencies. This can be supported by providing students with opportunities to be involved in assessment processes and goal setting.

Students monitoring their own progress towards a qualification contributes to learning to learn. Almost two-thirds (64%) of principals responding to the survey indicate that students being supported to track their progress towards a qualification is an approach that is well embedded at their school, and an additional 34% of principals say this is partially embedded. This was much the same in 2015.

Figure 21 shows that most teachers report their students having various experiences to help them learn to take responsibility for their learning, "sometimes" or more frequently. The most frequent experience—students assessing their own work against set criteria—is reported to be happening quite often or most of the time by 54% of teachers, similar to 2015 and 2012.

Close to one-third of teachers indicate their students never or almost never co-create their own NCEA plan related to their career or academic goals. Another third did this quite often or most of the time, showing a gradual increase from 22% in 2012, to 28% in 2015, to 32% in 2018.

Whereas in 2015 there had been evidence of teachers making small shifts towards greater inclusion of students in decisions about their learning, little further change was evident in 2018.

FIGURE 21 **Frequency of experiences that help students learn to take responsibility for their learning, reported by teachers (*n* = 705)**
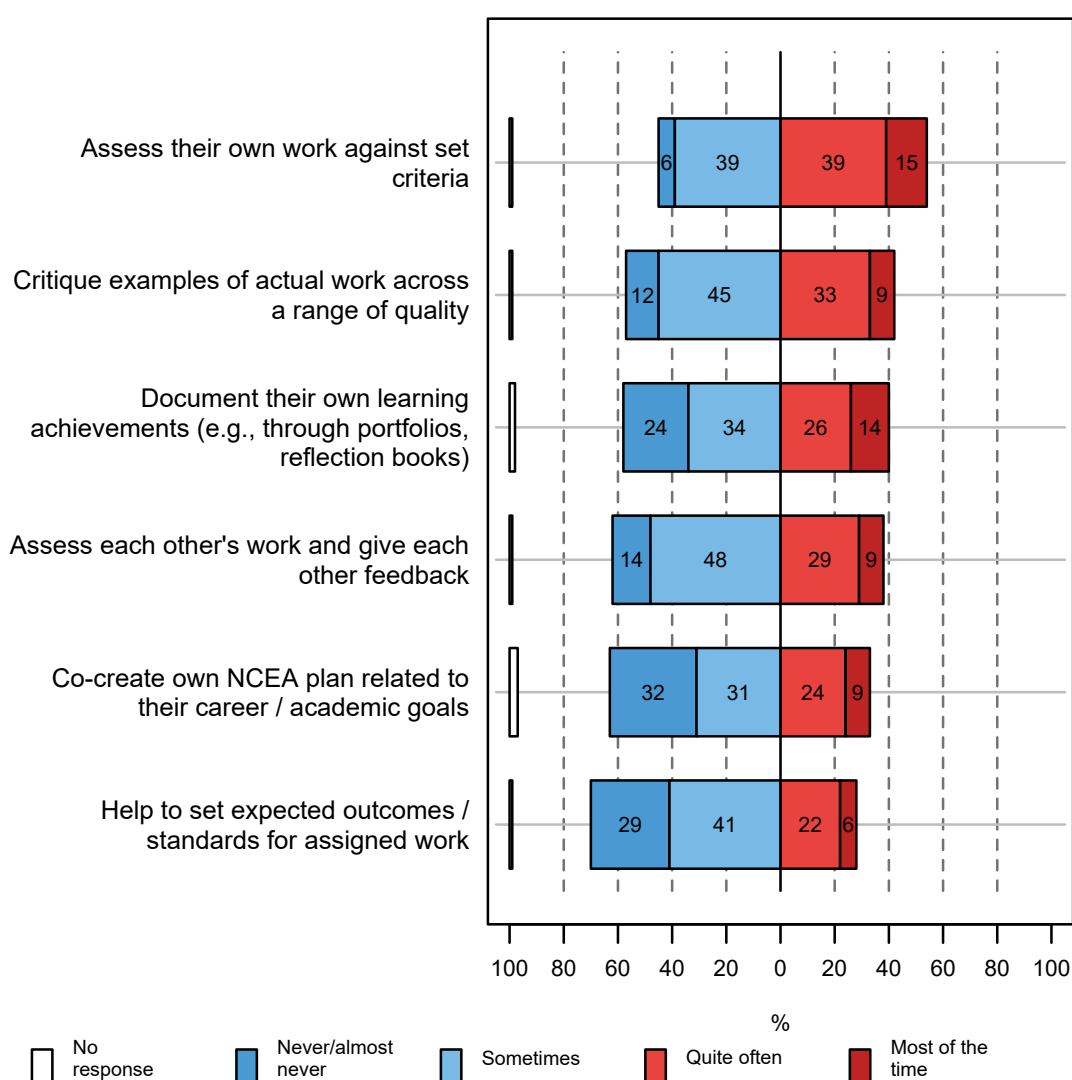
Students in decile 1–2 schools had less frequent opportunities to assess each other's work and give each other feedback (20% of teachers say they do this quite often or most of the time, increasing to 47% of teachers at decile 9–10 schools).[25]

Close to one-third of teachers of Mathematics and Science, and Technology, Health and PE, say students in their classes quite often or most of the time:
- assess each other's work and give feedback (compared with 42% for English and Languages, and 47% for Social Sciences, the Arts, and Commerce)
- critique examples of actual work across a range of quality (compared with 52% for Social Sciences, the Arts, and Commerce, and 63% for English and Languages).

Over half of teachers of Technology, Health and PE say their students quite often or most of the time document their own learning achievements (57%, compared with 44% for Social Sciences, the Arts, and Commerce; 37% for English and Languages, and 28% for Mathematics and Science).

As we see in the next section, some subject-related differences are also evident in teachers' experiences of and views about digital technology.

Teaching and learning with digital technology

Since 2015, the technology learning areas in *NZC* and *Hangarau Wāhanga Ako* in *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* have been revised to strengthen digital technologies. Two new technological areas have been introduced: Computational thinking for digital technologies and Designing and developing digital outcomes. Since mid-2018, the Government has invested substantially in supporting teachers' understanding of the new Digital Technologies curriculum content, and how they can integrate this into teaching and learning programmes by 2020.

How have students' opportunities to learn using digital technology changed since 2015? Are more teachers feeling well equipped to incorporate digital technology in their teaching? Do teachers think learning with digital technology supports deeper learning for students? And do teachers have what they need to implement learning with digital technology?

Around half of teachers say their school's digital technology is adequate and reliable

Some of the practical support teachers have for implementing learning with digital technology is shown in Figure 22. Around half the teachers responding to the survey indicated their school's equipment is adequate and reliable, or available whenever their students need it for their learning. Clearly, a lack of these supports is still making implementation problematic for some.

In 2018, more teachers have good technical support to deal with problems (68%, up from 57% in 2015). A smaller increase is evident in teachers agreeing their school's equipment is adequate and reliable (54%, compared with 46% in 2015).[26]

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25 Perhaps contributing to this finding, there was a slightly higher proportion of responding teachers of English and Languages at decile 1–2 schools (30%, compared with 15%–24% for other decile bands). Slightly smaller proportions of teachers at decile 1–2 schools taught Social Sciences and the Arts, or Technology, Health and PE, Transition, Careers, and Special Education than in the other decile bands.

26 The third item in Figure 22, about the availability of digital technology, was new to the survey in 2018.

FIGURE 22 **Practical support for implementing learning with digital technology, reported by teachers (*n* = 705)**
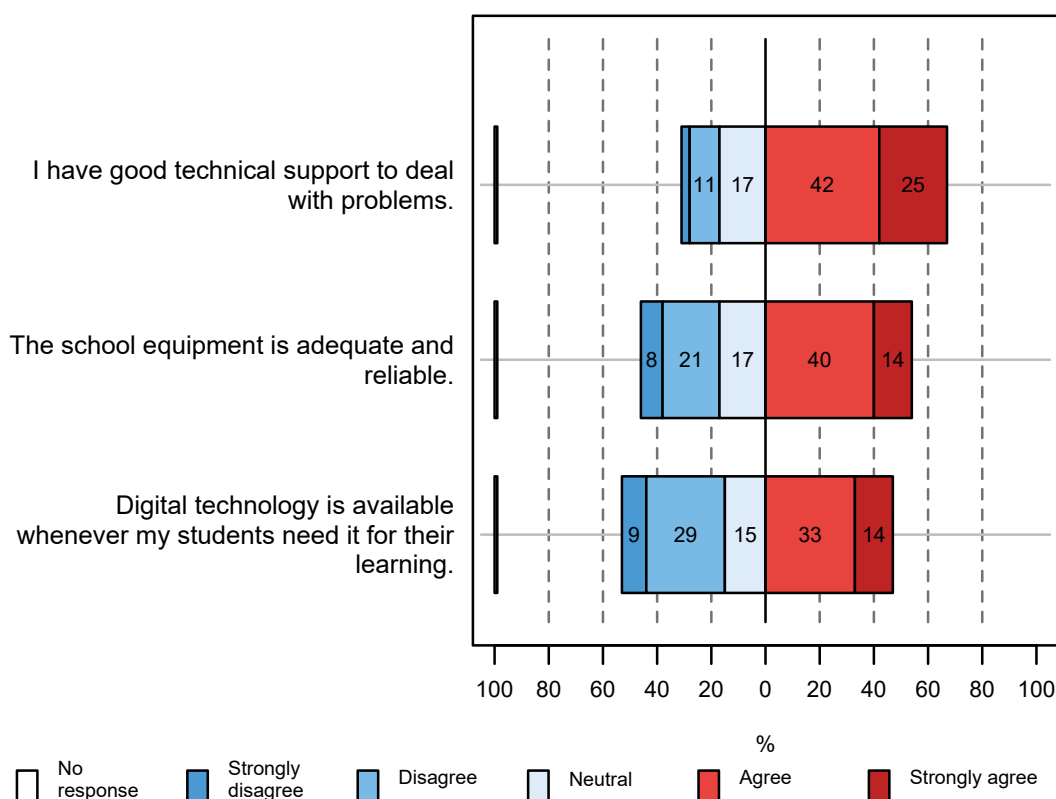
There were school decile-related differences for the practical supports included in Figure 22, although response patterns varied slightly for each one. The widest variation was in teachers who say digital technology is available whenever their students need it for their learning (32% of teachers at decile 1–2 schools, around 36% for decile 3–6, 57% for decile 7–8, and 70% for decile 9–10). Forty-two percent of teachers at decile 1–2 and decile 5–6 schools have school equipment that is adequate and reliable (compared with 51% at decile 3–4 schools, and around 67% at decile 7–10 schools). It was teachers at decile 5–6 schools who were least likely to say they have good technical support to deal with problems (54%, compared with 62% of teachers at decile 1–2 schools, 70% at decile 3–4 schools, 85% at decile 7–8 schools, and 77% at decile 9–10 schools).

The cost of maintaining and replacing digital technology is a major issue for more than half of principals

Maintaining a school's digital technology is an ongoing consideration for schools, and for some schools is a particular challenge. The cost of maintaining and replacing digital technology was identified by 55% of principals and 28% of trustees as one of the major issues facing their school in 2018.

Another major issue related to digital technology was dealing with inappropriate use of technology, such as mobile phones and social networking sites. This was identified as a major issue by 48% of principals (compared with 38% in 2015) and 17% of trustees (similar to 2015).

Neither of these issues varied significantly with school decile.

Over half (58%) of principals indicate their school's use of digital technology for learning depends on parents providing devices.[27] This was more likely to be the case at decile 9–10 schools (80% of these schools, compared with 75% for decile 7–8 schools, 60% for decile 5–6 schools, 32% for decile 3–4 schools, and 37% for decile 1–2 schools).

Fifty-nine percent of teachers have the knowledge and skills they need to provide learning with digital technology

Figure 23 shows teachers' experiences of leadership, teacher knowledge, and ongoing PLD related to learning with digital technology. The proportion of teachers who reported they have the knowledge and skills they need to provide learning with digital technology is up somewhat from 52% in 2015 to 59% in 2018. However, this leaves 40% who do not agree that this describes them.

Just under half indicated they have good access to ongoing PLD and support to continue developing their use of digital technology.

FIGURE 23 **Leadership and teacher learning in digital technology, reported by teachers (*n* = 705)**
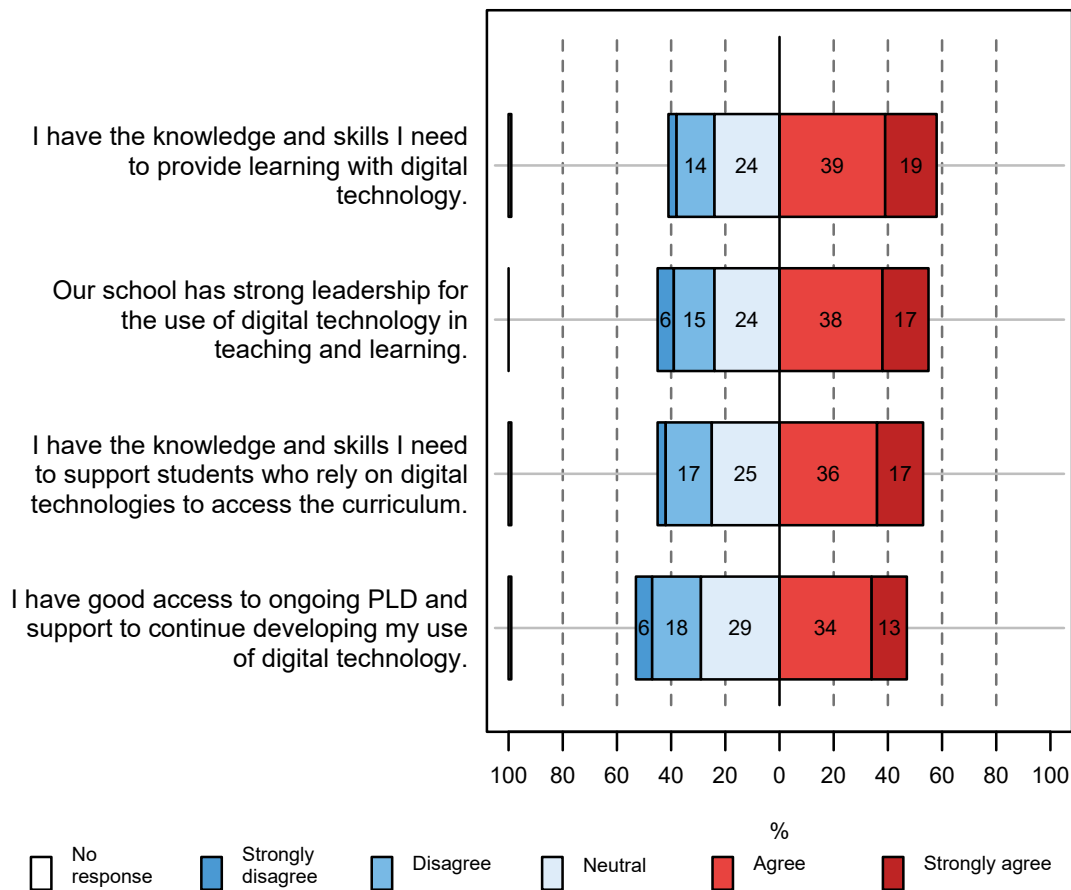
Teachers at decile 9–10 schools were more likely to say they have the knowledge and skills they need to provide learning with digital technology (70%, decreasing to 51% of teachers at decile 1–2 schools). Almost as many (68%) teachers at decile 7–10 schools say their school has strong leadership for the use of digital technology in teaching and learning (compared with 50% of teachers at decile 3–6 schools, and 32% at decile 1–2 schools).

Looking at their professional learning over the past 3 years, 58% of the teachers say their school has enabled them to develop the knowledge and skills they need to provide learning with new or emerging digital technologies. This comprises 46% of the teachers at decile 1–2 schools, increasing to 65% of those at decile 9–10 schools.

More than two-thirds of teachers collaborate online with other teachers

A potential avenue for teachers' professional learning is online courses. Figure 24 shows that almost half of teachers sometimes or often take part in online learning opportunities. More teachers go online to collaborate with teachers in their own school (89%) or download resources such as lesson plans and teaching materials (88%).

In 2018, there were increased proportions of teachers reporting often or sometimes going online to collaborate with teachers beyond their school (67%, compared with 60% in 2015) and take part in online learning opportunities (48%, compared with 39% in 2015). Otherwise, the proportions were similar to 2015.

There were no differences related to school decile in the reported frequency of teachers' online activities.

FIGURE 24 **Frequency of teachers' online activities, reported by teachers (*n* = 705)**
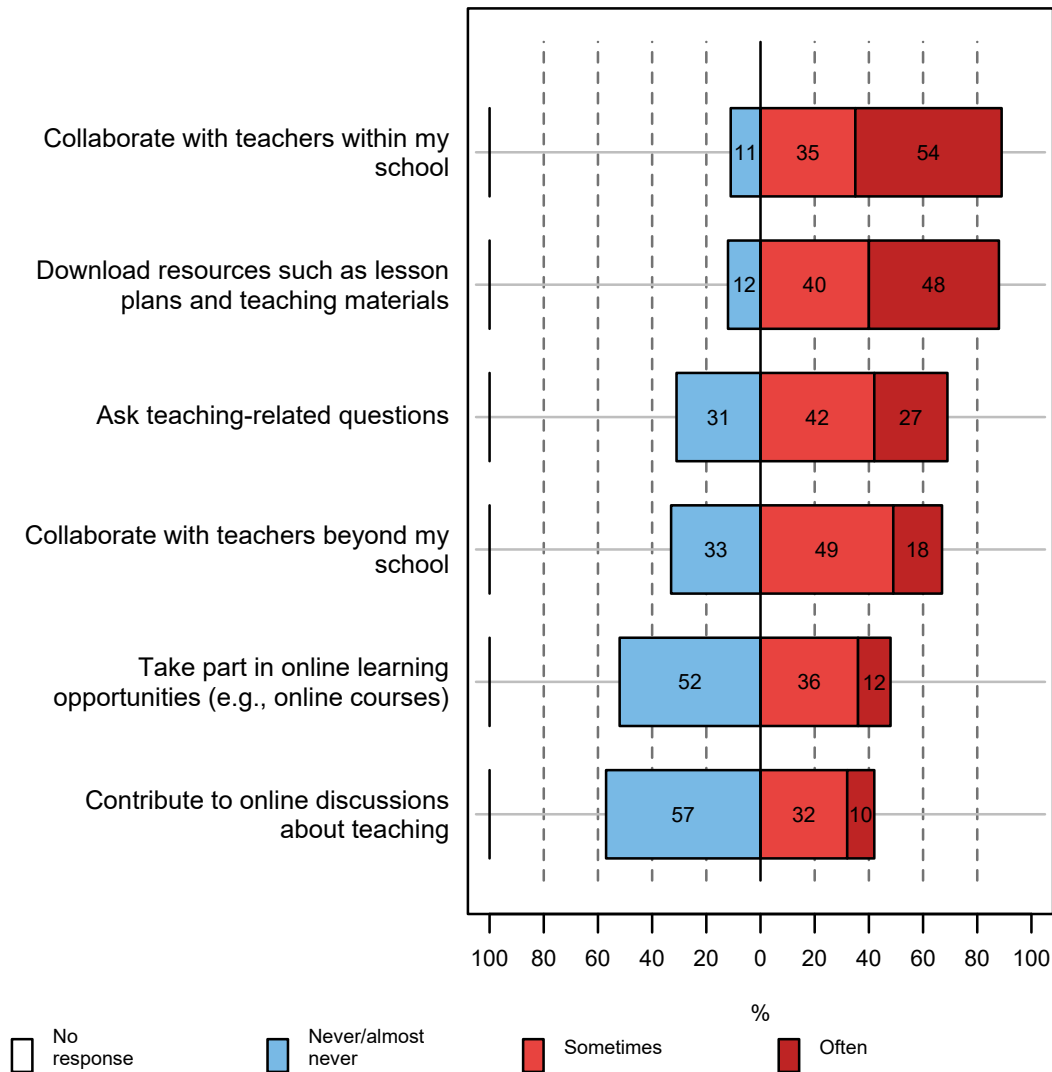
Two-thirds of teachers say their students use digital technology to collaborate within the school

In 2018, there are three learning experiences using digital technology that more than half of teachers provided sometimes or often (see Figure 25). These experiences are focused on learning *inside* the school. Seventy percent of the teachers indicate their students use digital technology to generate multimedia work. Slightly fewer (68%) report their students using digital technology to collaborate with others inside the school. Digital technology is being used by 55% of teachers for their students to share evidence of their learning achievements in private online communities or e-portfolios, which are likely to be restricted to teachers and parents.

The learning experiences that the greatest proportions of teachers indicate don't happen and they would like to include, are both associated to connecting with people *outside* their own school: collaborating with others beyond the school on shared projects (59% of teachers don't but would like to) and communicating with people beyond the school (48%).

Generating multimedia work has increased in 2018 (70%, up from 59% in 2015). The other increase was in students having learning experiences that involved playing games or simulations (43%, compared with 30% in 2015).

A small proportion of teachers said their students' learning experiences include coding or programming (14%, up slightly from 9% in 2015). Although half of teachers said they *would not* want to include this, another 31% said they *would* like to.

FIGURE 25 **Frequency of students' learning experiences using digital technology, reported by teachers (*n* = 705)**
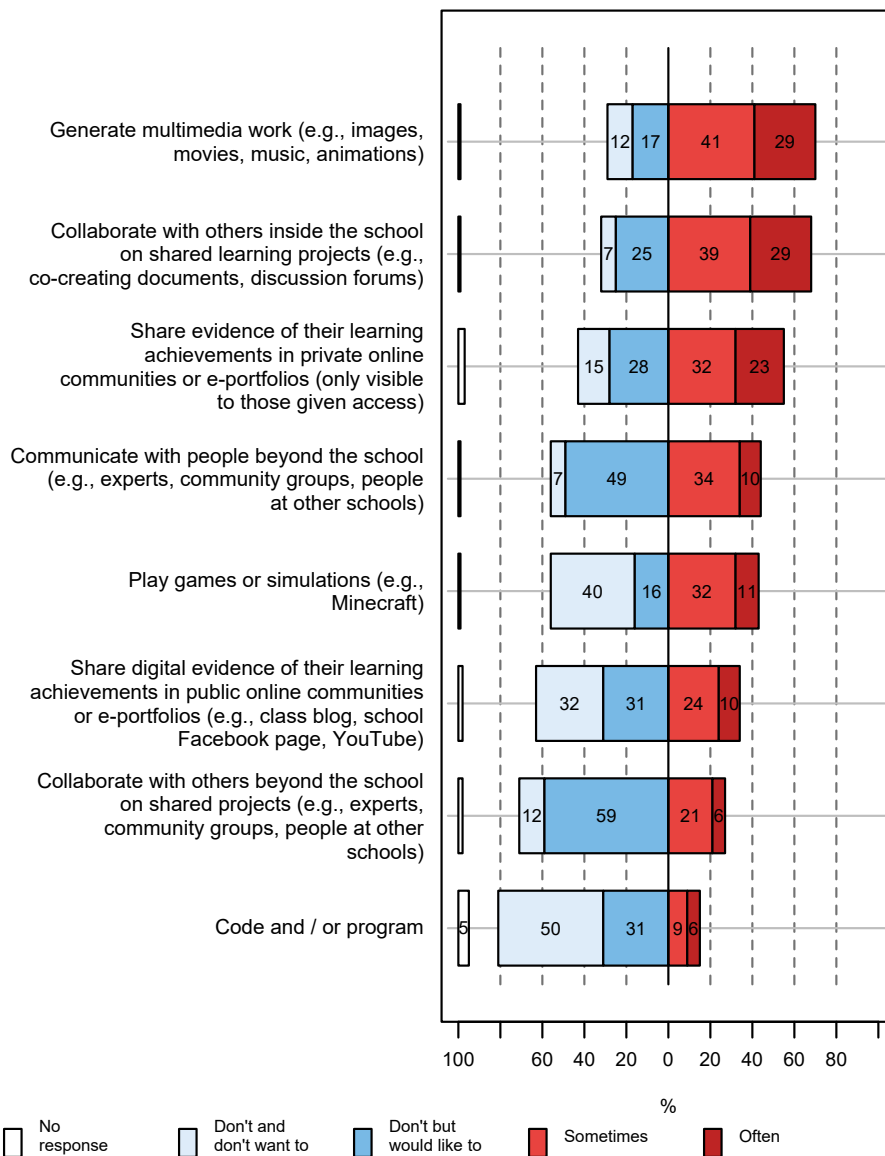
Looking at differences related to school decile, 75% of teachers at decile 9–10 and 5–6 schools provide students with learning experiences that involve generating multimedia work using digital technology, compared with 67% of teachers at decile 7–8 and 3–4 schools, and 59% at decile 1–2 schools. A further 33% of teachers at decile 1–2 schools don't do this but would like to.

When it comes to coding and/or programming, similar proportions of teachers across school deciles do this with their students. The difference lies in those who don't do this but would like to: 42% of teachers at decile 1–2 schools, 36% at decile 3–4 schools, and 27% of those at decile 5–10 schools.

There are several differences here related to teachers' subject areas. As we might expect, a higher proportion of teachers in the subjects group that includes Technology (as well as Health and PE, Transition, Careers, and Special Education) indicate their students use digital technology sometimes or often for coding or programming (23%, compared with 14% for Mathematics and Science, 10% for English and Languages, and 8% for Social Sciences, the Arts, and Commerce.)

Teachers of Mathematics and Science:
  • were more likely to say their students sometimes or often use digital technology to play games or simulations (52% of this group, compared with 37% of teachers in the other three subject groups)
  • were less likely to say their students sometimes or often generate multimedia work (59%, compared with 74%–80% for the other groups).

Teachers of Mathematics and Science and those who teach English and Languages were the least likely to say their students sometimes or often use digital technology to:
  • collaborate with others beyond the school on shared projects (20% and 24%, respectively, compared with 32% of teachers of the other two subject groups)
  • communicate with people beyond the school (35%, compared with 51% of teachers of Technology, Health and PE, and 51% of teachers of Social Sciences, the Arts, and Commerce).

Teachers have mixed views about the effects of using digital technology for learning

Figure 26 shows teachers' views about some of the effects on teaching and learning of using digital technology. Most teachers agree the use of digital technology has led them to experiment with new approaches to teaching and learning and that it supports students with learning support needs.

However, 41% do not agree that using digital technology helps students go deeper into their learning, including 25% who responded "neutral".

FIGURE 26 **Teachers' views (*n* = 705) of the effects on teaching and learning of using digital technology**
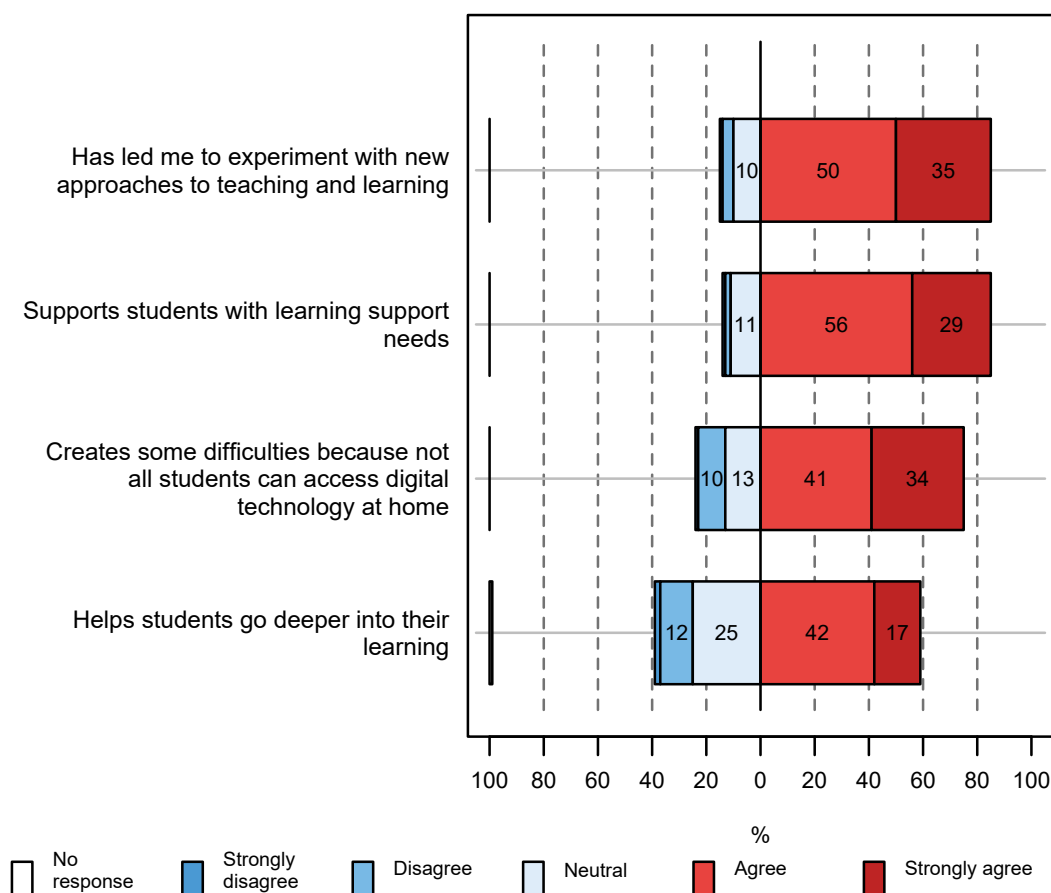
More than three-quarters of teachers at decile 1–8 schools say students' access to digital technology at home creates difficulties

There was an important difference related to school decile here. Just over half (53%) of teachers at decile 9–10 schools say that using digital technology for learning creates some difficulties because not all students can access digital technology at home, compared with more than three-quarters of teachers at schools of other deciles (77% of those at decile 7–8 and 3–4 schools and 86% of those at decile 5–6 and 1–2 schools). For at least three-quarters of teachers at decile 1–8 schools, students' access to digital technology at home is creating difficulties.

Some teachers are still unconvinced that digital technology helps student learning

Teachers were also asked to comment about how their students are using digital technology for learning (see Table 5) and 48% (*n* = 335) wrote comments. The theme that emerged most often was concern that digital technology is not benefiting students' learning. This included comments about: digital technology being detrimental to students' reading and writing skills and their critical thinking; students being distracted from their learning by social media and games; and a lack of research that convincingly shows that using digital technology improves outcomes for students. While 16% of teachers voiced these concerns, 4% wrote positive comments about the benefits for students' learning of using digital technology.

TABLE 5   **Themes emerging from teachers' comments about how their students are using digital technology for learning**

Themes	Teachers (*n* = 705) %
Concern that digital technology is not benefiting students' learning	15
Access issues (e.g., BYOD unreliable, insufficient laptops available, equity of access)	9
Names a specific use of digital technology (e.g., presenting work as vlog; using Te Kura online resources)	8
Described digital technology as a 'tool' (e.g., its value is dependent on how it's used; it needs to be balanced with other modes)	8
Positive comment about current or potential uses of digital technology	6
Limited or no use of digital technology in their classes	4
Teachers need more/better PLD, or PLD related specifically to their learning area	4
Digital technology is benefiting students (e.g., developing their research skills; supporting student agency)	4

I have moved away from paper as far as possible for most of the standards I teach and my students are digitally assessed for most of their standards. This allows each student to take ownership of their work as they need to verbally analyse and evaluate their work. It also means they have a clearer idea of what they are doing.

In some cases, my students' learning has regressed because of digital technologies. They copy and paste without paying any attention to the validity of the source or the richness of the content. Many are distracted by apps, social media, or games on their devices. A simple task like making a poster may take a lot less time constructing digitally; however, the students who take time to source the cardboard, think about the layout and design, the relevance of the pictures or annotations often do better than those using digital technology to 'quickly' get the work done. Similarly, students who carefully plan with pen and paper, 95% of the time, produce better paragraphs/essays than those who do it all on computers.

There are definite positives and negatives. I have seen an increase in engagement, depth of research, variety of presentation methods. Conversely, I have also seen a reliance on devices as the only means of searching for info etc. Also, the cunningness of students who are watching other stuff when they should be working. They are crafty and clever!

Most parents say their child can use the internet at home for school work

Although 90% of the parents[28] responding indicate their child has access to the internet *at home* for their school work, 8% say their child's access is limited, and a small number (1%) have no access.

Parents whose child is attending a decile 1–2 school were the most likely to say their child does not have access to the internet at home for their school work (7% of these parents, decreasing to no parents with a child at a school in the decile 7–10 range). Seventy-four percent of parents whose child attends a decile 1–2 school say their child has full access to the internet at home, compared with 91% of parents with children at decile 3–10 schools.

Most parents (90%) think it is of high or medium importance for their child to use digital technology as part of their learning *at school*. For 9% of parents, this was of low importance. In 2015, parents' responses to this item were much the same.

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28 Note that the responding parents are a more highly qualified group than the population as a whole.

In response to an open question about their child's secondary schooling, a handful of parents (*n* = 5) raised issues related to the use of digital technology, including social media.

> I feel the school could educate children about computers—time, breaks, exercises. To balance devices with other activities and look after their eyesight and health.

> I struggle with the girls using their own devices in the classroom as they are often on social media. [The school] should have a much better array of devices for the girls to use and software to ban Facebook/ Instagram and Snapchat at school. My daughter was bullied through social media by girls in the class/ school during class time!

> There is no alternative to the Chromebook program. Google should not be trusted with children's private data. But Chromebooks are obligatory for all students.

Summary and discussion

In 2015, there was evidence of teachers making small shifts towards greater inclusion of students in decisions about their learning, but little further change is evident in 2018. The only noteworthy change in this area was an increase in teachers thinking it is very important for students to hear how they make assessment decisions, plus more teachers doing this most of the time for their classes. A gradual increase over time is evident in students co-creating their own NCEA plan related to their goals.

There are a number of subject-related differences in the frequency with which teachers provide learning experiences that incorporate key competency development. Collectively, these differences support a view of Mathematics and Science as subjects in which developing students' key competencies is not a high priority.

Teachers' interest in working with the key competencies is not always matched by what is available to them: as we will see later in the report, less than a quarter of principals indicate that being part of a Kāhui Ako has led to their school doing some interesting work on developing students' key competencies.

In relation to learning with digital technology, teachers report ongoing implementation challenges relating to accessibility of equipment and reliability, although more have good technical support to deal with problems than in 2015. Many teachers also say they need more PLD to support them to keep developing their use of digital technology. Teachers see the value of using digital technology to support the learning of students with learning support needs, but some teachers remain sceptical about digital technology's benefits for all students' learning.

Compared with 2015, there are increases in some uses of digital technology for students' learning, more specifically, generating multimedia work and playing games or simulations, and to a lesser extent, coding and programming. Many teachers say their students use digital technology for collaborating with others *inside* the school, and around half would like to have their students use it for collaborating and communicating with people *outside* the school.

Some school decile-related differences that were identified in the 2015 survey remain. Teachers at decile 1–2 schools are less likely to be as well equipped to implement learning with digital technology, both in terms of their professional learning and the availability of digital technology when their students need it. Neither are teachers at these schools as likely to have the practical support they need for implementing learning with digital technology.

In 2018, teachers at decile 1–2 and 5–6 schools are the most likely to encounter difficulties with using digital technology because not all their students can access this at home. Teachers at these schools are also the least likely to report having school equipment that is adequate and reliable.

5.

Arrangements for curriculum provision

In 2018, questions about arrangements for timetabling and the integration of learning areas were included in the survey for the first time, to shed light on how schools organise their curriculum for students. Little is known about nationwide patterns for these practices in schools, and these new questions were aimed at gaining an initial picture for further research.[29]

A major review of NCEA was being conducted in 2018,[30] raising its profile and provoking discussion. Because the review was underway at the time of the survey, the ongoing focus on NCEA in previous NZCER national surveys of secondary schools was significantly reduced in the 2018 survey.

School timetabling

We sought to learn more about who has main responsibility for the development of secondary school timetables, as well as who else contributes, the nature of current timetables, and teachers' preferences for timetabling arrangements in their school.

Secondary schools are increasingly being expected to develop timetables that enable a diversity of learning pathways, making this a complex logistical task. In 2018, 47% of the principals and 36% of the trustees identified timetabling to support a growing range of student learning opportunities as a major issue facing their school.

In response to a question about their timetabling experiences, 41% of principals wrote comments, some of which underline the complexity of this task. Almost half of their comments (from 20% of all principals) indicate some frustration with developing timetables that meet the needs of all, and that some principals want help with this. The following comments are illustrative of the range of factors principals and their timetable developers have to consider:

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29 Responses to items about timetabling in secondary schools will help shape future developments in the project "Timetabling for life-worthy pathways". For more information about this project, see: https://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/timetabling_lifeworthy_pathways Responses to items about integrating learning areas will inform another new project, "Researching pedagogy for curriculum integration".
30 The review's findings are available at: http://www.conversation.education.govt.nz/conversations/ncea-have-your-say/

> You do the best you can, the difficulty is to individualise within an artificial (timetable) constraint. To meet the needs of the students, wishes of the community, and collective agreements is hard.

> Timetabling to include MLE[31] spaces, in line with school philosophy, places immense constraints on the staff/student timetables for non-MLE spaces, creates an extremely long and complex timetabling process.

> Teacher contact hours create significant constraints. Bus systems create the greatest level of constraint. And impact on learning opportunity.

A further 8% of the principals commented that their school is currently working on reviewing their timetabling arrangements, 5% said they have changed their timetable, and 3% that they are happy with their current timetable.

In response to a separate question, 77% of the principals reported that their school had been experimenting with their timetable over the past 5 years. This comprises 70% of schools where this experimentation has resulted in timetable changes being made or retained, and 7% where no changes were retained.

In 22% of schools, no experimenting had occurred. This included 17% of schools whose principals would like to try some different timetabling arrangements.

Deputy principals tend to have the main responsibility for timetable development

Who has the main responsibility for timetable development in secondary schools, and who else contributes? Principals' responses indicate that deputy principals have the main responsibility for timetable development in 69% of schools, and principals themselves have this responsibility in 38% of cases (see Table 6).

TABLE 6   **The main person(s) responsible for developing schools' most recent timetables, reported by principals**

Main person(s)*	Principals (*n* = 167) %
Deputy principal/s	69
Principal	38
A teacher	32
Head of department or head of learning area	27
Associate principal/s	22
Other	13
Administrative staff	5
Careers adviser	4

* Principals were asked to tick all that apply.

The "Other" responses include 10% of principals who give non-role-specific responses, some of which indicate a collaborative approach (e.g., timetabler, or timetable team/committee).

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31 MLE is the acronym for Modern Learning Environments, which are intended to be high-quality, flexible learning spaces.

The most likely reasons for a staff member having this responsibility are their experience (81% of principals indicated this) or skill (79%). Being available for the task or having this included in their job description is the basis for 71% of staff members being the main person developing the school timetable. A smaller proportion of principals (40%) indicate a person's willingness to undertake this work is a basis for having this responsibility, and 9% of the principals said their school's timetabler is doing this out of necessity, because there is nobody else suitable or available.

School leaders and senior managers have the greatest input into timetabling

While one or two people usually have the main responsibility for timetable development, they need to work with the input of a range of others. Table 7 shows the input of various people who did *not* have the main responsibility for developing the school's most recent timetables. Those in senior management and leadership roles had the greatest involvement in timetable development. The patterns of involvement for teachers and students were fairly similar, with over 60% of each group having at least some input. Tertiary education organisations had some input in 14% of cases. Other external groups and organisations were less likely to have any input into a school's timetable.

TABLE 7 **Input to the development of the school's most recent timetable from people who do *not* have the main responsibility, reported by principals (*n* = 167)**

	(No response) %	None or almost no input %	Some input %	Involved in most or all aspects %
Principal	1	2	52	45
Deputy principal	10	12	40	39
Heads of department or heads of learning areas	3	5	80	12
Students	11	26	56	6
Associate principal/s	57	12	24	6
Teachers in your school	9	20	68	4
Careers adviser	17	42	38	4
Whānau, parents, and caregivers	20	50	28	3
Tertiary education organisations (e.g., polytechnics, ITOs, wānanga, PTEs, universities)	20	65	14	0
Administrative staff	21	66	13	0
Teachers in other schools	22	72	7	0
Local or regional employers	20	74	6	0
Iwi organisations or trusts	22	75	4	0
Social enterprises or community trusts (e.g., Youth Enterprise Scheme; Fletcher Challenge Trust; Watercare)	22	77	1	0

Most secondary school timetables include 45–60-minute periods

Principals were asked to indicate which timetabling arrangements were included at their school. Most—but not all—principals report their school's timetable includes subject periods of 45 minutes to an hour (see Table 8). Timetables in half of schools provide students with opportunities to combine different kinds of options, such as sciences and arts, or vocational and academic options within their overall programme of learning.

Overall, principals' responses reflect a core timetable arrangement of 45–60-minute periods around which there is a diversity of timetabling arrangements: vertical grouping of students, study-style lessons with a teacher on-hand, and longer blocks of subject time are each included in timetables at over a third of schools. Almost a quarter of principals say their timetables include shorter days for students than days of about 9am–3:30pm, allowing teachers more planning and marking time. Slightly fewer co-ordinate their school timetabling with other schools or providers to make use of courses, facilities, or staff.

TABLE 8 **Current timetabling arrangements in secondary schools, reported by principals**

	Principals (*n* = 167) %
Subject periods of about 45 minutes to one hour	85
Opportunities for students to combine different kinds of options (e.g., sciences and arts; vocational and academic)	50
Vertical grouping of students (i.e., different ages together according to ability or interest)	43
Study-style sessions with a teacher on hand to assist students as and when required	41
Blocks of subject time that are longer than one hour	36
Un-timetabled time for students to pursue their own interests, play, or rest	27
Shorter days for students than days of about 9am–3.30pm (i.e., more teacher planning and marking time)	23
Co-ordinated timetabling with other schools or providers to make use of courses, facilities, or staff	20
Short break times to manage student behaviour issues	19
Something else	10
Weekly cycles that include day-long periods of time (e.g., single line days)	10
Some or all days for students *starting* no earlier than 10am and *finishing* at or later than 5pm	5
Longer days for students than days of about 9am–3.30pm (i.e., more time for structured learning)	4

The "Something else" responses included 3% of principals who said their current timetable includes pastoral groups, wellbeing programmes, or mentoring.

Teachers' preferences for timetabling arrangements vary

Teachers' preferences for timetabling arrangements in their school, if they were free to choose, are shown in Table 9. Just over half indicate a preference for subject periods of 45 minutes to an hour, and opportunities for students to combine different kinds of options. A large minority (44%) are keen to have blocks of subject time that are longer than an hour. Otherwise, there is a wide range of arrangements for which teachers express a preference.

TABLE 9 **Teachers' preferences for timetabling arrangements in their school**

Preference[32]	Teachers (*n* = 705) %
Subject periods of about 45 minutes to one hour	53
Opportunities for students to combine different kinds of options (e.g., sciences and arts; vocational and academic)	51
Blocks of subject time that are longer than one hour	44
Study-style sessions with a teacher on hand to assist students as and when required	40
Shorter days for students than days of about 9am–3.30pm (i.e., more teacher planning and marking time)	30
Vertical grouping of students (i.e., different ages together according to ability or interest)	26
Co-ordinated timetabling with other schools or providers to make use of courses, facilities, or staff	24
Un-timetabled time for students to pursue their own interests, play, or rest	17
Weekly cycles that include day-long periods of time (e.g., single line days)	15
Some or all days for students starting no earlier than 10am and finishing at or later than 5pm	14
Short break times to manage student behaviour issues	14

Ten percent of teachers want something else (such as subject periods of less than 40 minutes, 4-day weeks with longer school days, single-sex classes in co-ed schools for some subjects, or timetabled professional learning time for teachers) and 3% want longer days for students than days of about 9am–3:30pm (i.e., more time for structured learning), 5 days per week.

There are several differences related to subject areas. Sixty-four percent of teachers of Mathematics and Science expressed a preference for 45–60-minute subject periods (compared with 56% for English and Languages, and 44% for Technology, Health and PE, and Social Sciences, the Arts, and Commerce). Teachers of the last two groups of subjects were more likely to prefer:
  • blocks of subject time longer than an hour (56%, compared with 38% for Mathematics and Science, and 30% for English and Languages)
  • weekly cycles that include day-long periods of time (19%, compared with 10% for Mathematics and Science, and English and Languages).

Looking at teachers' preferences for timetabling arrangements and the current timetabling arrangements that principals report raises questions about why only half of teachers seem keen on the 45–60-minute

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32 Teachers were asked to select up to five options. Some respondents chose more than five, all of which are represented here.

periods that are prevalent in secondary schools. Teachers' views on vertical grouping of students also seem out of kilter with current timetabling arrangements.

Integrating learning areas

The new survey items about the integration of learning areas (subjects) within a course sought to identify how widespread this approach is in secondary schools and why some schools have chosen not to do this. We also asked teachers who have integrated learning areas about their experiences.

Learning areas integrated in 61% of schools, decreasing with year level

Sixty-one percent of the principals report that teachers at their schools have integrated two or more learning areas in the past 3 years. Table 10 shows that integration of learning areas tends to decrease with year level, when gaining formal qualifications increasingly becomes a focus. Noticeably fewer principals report three or more learning areas being integrated within one course, especially in Year 11 and beyond.

TABLE 10   **Number of learning areas integrated by year level, reported by principals (*n* = 101)**

Year level	Number of learning areas integrated				
	2 %	3 %	4 %	5+ %	No response %
Year 9	29	24	11	13	24
Year 10	26	13	10	9	43
Year 11	26	7	1	3	63
Year 12	23	5	2	2	68
Year 13	21	2	2	2	73

Three-quarters of principals whose school has integrated learning areas say it was successful

Of the principals whose teachers had integrated learning areas, 76% rated the school's experience as successful or very successful, 8% as not very successful, and 1% as not at all successful. For 12% of these principals, it was too soon to tell.

Timetabling is cited as a barrier to integrating learning areas

Principals of schools that had not integrated learning areas in the past 3 years (*n* = 66) indicated various reasons for this, using a list of response options (see Table 11). Over half of these principals used the "Other" response to give their reasons,[33] which included their school is currently exploring/investigating/ planning integration of learning areas (20%, *n* = 13), and they currently have other priorities (9%, *n* = 6). Principals who gave "Other" reasons also expressed scepticism about the effectiveness of integration; voiced concern about the impact on staff, particularly teacher workload; or said they had not considered it (each 5%, *n* = 3). Together, these five categories represent responses from around 34% of the principals who had not integrated learning areas.

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33 This question was new in 2018, and the codes that emerged from the "Other" responses will shape additional response options, should it be used in future surveys.

Being too hard to timetable was the reason given by 30% of these principals, with concern that subject coverage would be too superficial expressed by 23%.

TABLE 11 **Principals' reasons for not integrating learning areas at their school**

Reason	Principals (*n* = 66) %
Other	55
It is too hard to timetable	30
Subject coverage will be too superficial	23
There are no teachers interested in trialling learning area integration	17
It does not work with NCEA	15
It will be too much work to assess	5

Most teachers have not recently been involved in integrating learning areas

Seventy percent of teachers have not been involved in integrating learning areas in the past 3 years. When asked why they did not integrate learning areas, teachers' reasons were often related to doing justice to the demands of the learning area(s) they teach (see Table 12). Overall, teachers' responses echoed those given by principals. For example, around a quarter of the teachers and principals who had not integrated learning areas were concerned about the depth of subject coverage. Eighteen percent of the teachers and 15% of the principals who had not integrated learning areas did not think it would work with NCEA.

Support and interest by colleagues at teachers' schools is also a factor. Around a quarter think integration is not supported by their school leaders, and an eighth said they were unable to find other teachers to work with on integrating learning areas.

Like the principals, teachers used the "Other" response to give reasons that were not included as response options in this new question. Thirteen percent of the teachers who had not been involved in integration say it is not on their radar or there's been no opportunity. An additional 8% point to insufficient time for the collaboration that is needed as a reason for not integrating learning areas. Fewer than 5% of teachers who had not integrated learning areas cited additional reasons that included:
  • integrating learning areas being logistically difficult due to department structures or timetabling issues
  • being unconvinced that there was a need for integrating learning areas or any potential benefits to students
  • teachers' lack of expertise in other learning areas meaning they would need professional learning
  • causing concern about including and assessing their learning area
  • they were planning to do this or were exploring the possibility.

TABLE 12   **Reasons teachers gave for not integrating two or more learning areas**

Reason	Teachers (*n* = 491) %
Other reasons	39
I will not be able to cover the subject(s) I teach in enough depth	25
It is not supported by leaders at our school	24
It does not work for the learning areas I teach	20
It does not work with NCEA	18
I cannot find other teachers to work with on integrating learning areas	12
It will be too much work to assess	11
I am not interested in integrating learning areas	10

Teachers' experiences of integrating learning areas

Thirty percent of teachers (*n* = 211) indicated they had been involved in integrating two or more learning areas in the past 3 years. The number of learning areas that were integrated by these teachers is shown in Table 13. As we saw with principals' responses, the overall trend was for integration to happen less as year level increased.

TABLE 13   **Number of learning areas integrated by year level, reported by teachers (*n* = 211)**

Year level	Number of learning areas integrated				
	2	3	4	5+	No response %
Year 9	28	13	7	6	46
Year 10	28	9	2	6	56
Year 11	21	6	2	1	69
Year 12	19	4	2	2	74
Year 13	14	5	1	2	78

Over two-thirds of teachers who have integrated learning areas say their experience was successful

Teachers who had tried integration rated their experiences of doing so, with 68% of this group reporting them to have been very successful or successful, 15% said they were not very successful, and 2% said they were not successful at all. Ten percent thought it was too soon to tell.

These teachers' views about the effects on students of integrating learning areas, compared with teaching a single subject, are shown in Figure 27. Just over three-quarters think that integrating learning areas provides students with opportunities to build meaningful relationships between learning areas. The teachers are less likely to agree students learn more about the nature of different subjects or have better learning outcomes when learning areas are integrated, compared with being taught as single subjects. For instance, while 48% of teachers agree overall students' learning outcomes are better when learning areas are integrated, a further 38% gave neutral responses here (11% disagreed or strongly disagreed).

FIGURE 27 **Effects on students of integrating learning areas compared with teaching a single subject, reported by teachers (*n* = 211)**
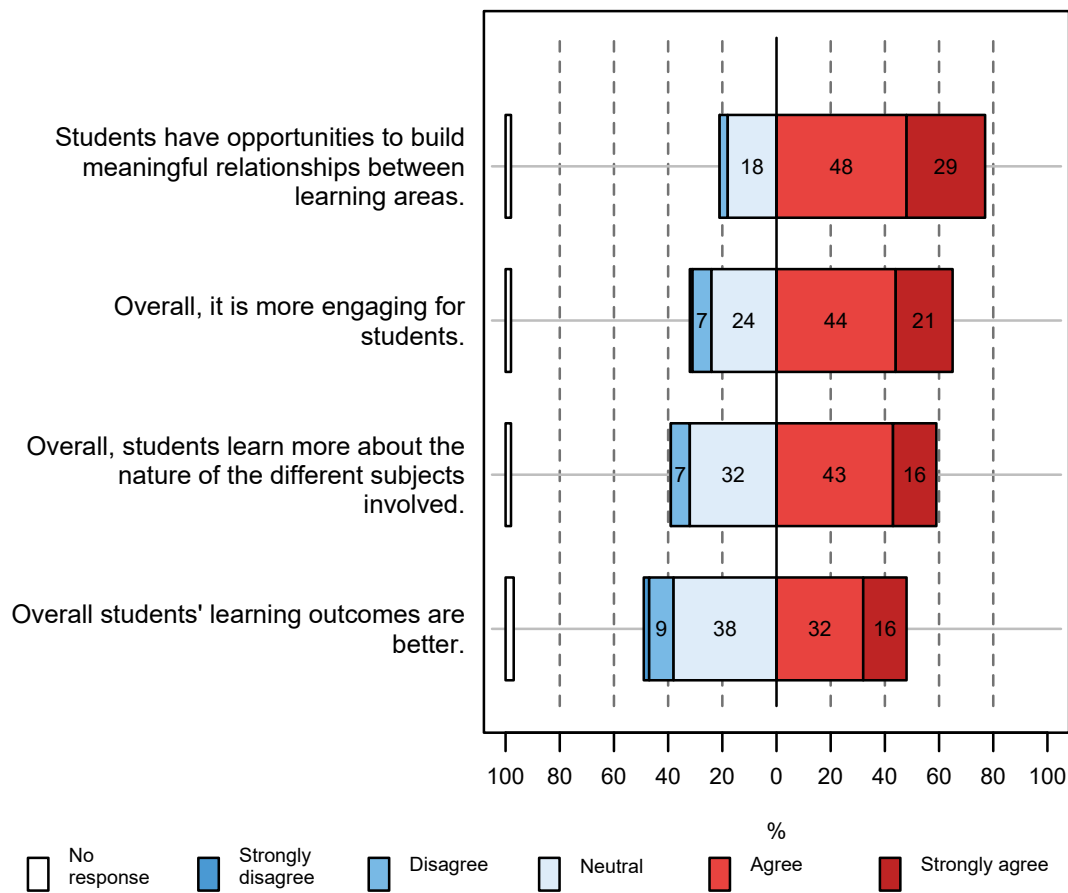
The views of this subgroup of teachers about the effects for themselves of integrating learning areas, compared with teaching a single subject, are shown in Figure 28. More than half of these teachers indicated they had found it more stimulating to work with another teacher, it was easier to explore authentic issues and contexts, and they found it more engaging. Between 36% and 48% agreed they experienced difficulties related to alignment, coverage and timetabling, and workload-related issues. While 36% agree or strongly agree that integrating learning areas is more work to assess, almost as many disagree or strongly disagree (33%).

FIGURE 28 **Effects on teachers of integrating learning areas compared with teaching a single subject, reported by teachers (*n* = 211)**
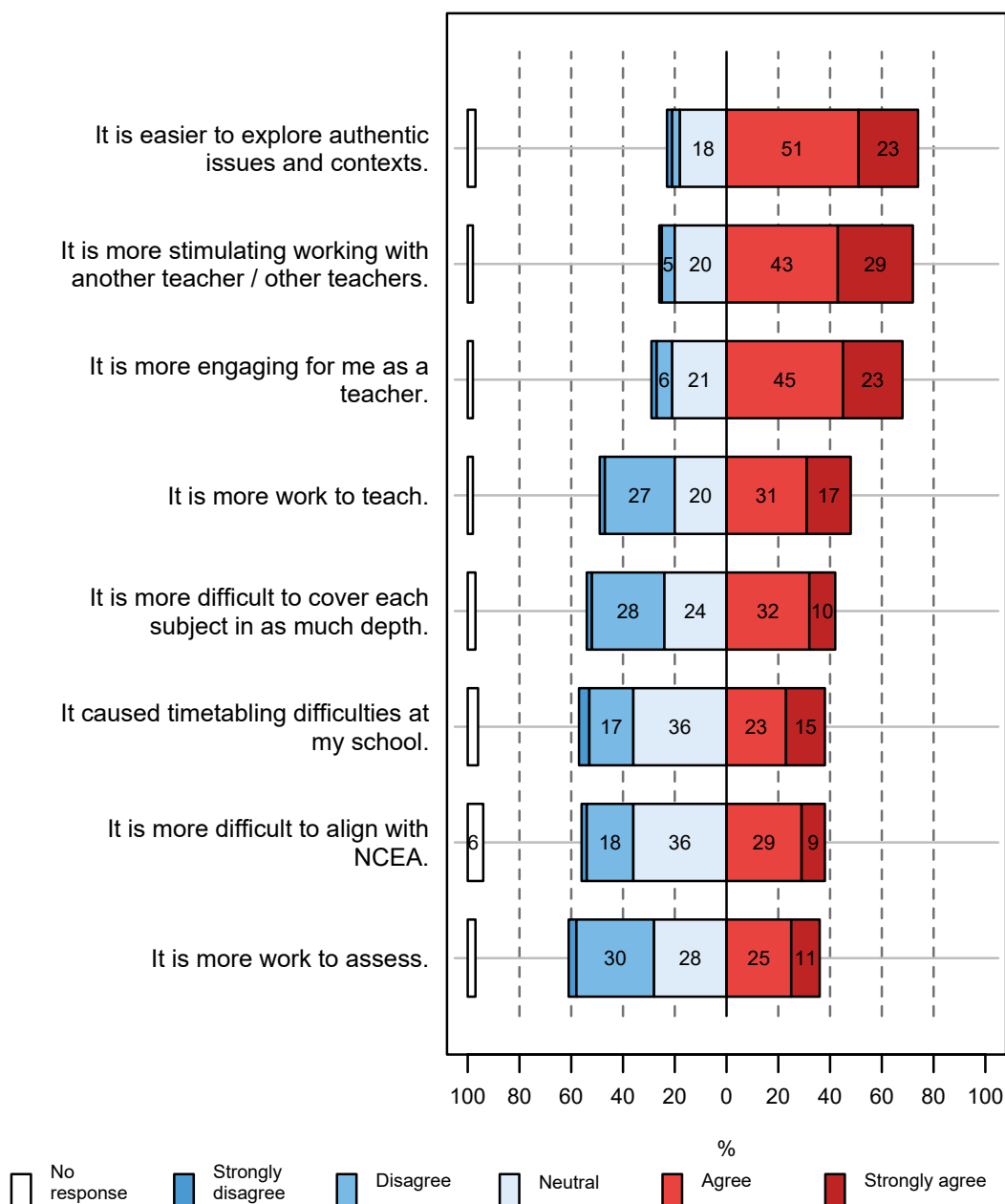
Teachers of Mathematics and Science were the most likely to say it is more difficult to cover each subject in as much depth (55%, compared with 33% of teachers of English and Languages).

NCEA and *The New Zealand Curriculum*

The New Zealand Curriculum has two sections. The front section of *NZC* applies to all learners from Years 1–13, and explicitly frames purposes for learning. These purposes are particularly important for secondary teachers to understand when the subjects they teach might not easily slot into the learning area structure that is described in the back sections of *NZC*. As well, NCEA standards are separately described. We therefore asked about the relationship between the two.

Principals and teachers tend to see NCEA as setting the senior secondary curriculum

Teachers and principals indicated which of the statements in Table 14—or combinations of these—best describe the relationship between NCEA and *NZC* in their senior classes. A greater proportion of principals than teachers think NCEA sets the senior secondary curriculum, and that *NZC* informs the school's vision and values but is not used in day-to-day subject planning.

TABLE 14 **Teachers' and principals' views of the relationship between NCEA and *NZC* in their senior secondary classes**

	Teachers (*n* = 705) %	Principals (*n* = 167) %
NCEA sets the senior secondary curriculum	43	62
NZC frames the purpose for each subject, with the NCEA standards filling in the detail	35	33
NZC informs our vision and values, but I/we* don't use it in day-to-day subject planning	19	26
Subject design is based on *NZC*, then I/we find NCEA standards to fit	18	19

* "I" was used in the teacher survey, and "we" in the principal survey.

Perceptions that NCEA is a credible qualification dropped

Respondents' views about the credibility of NCEA in the wider community are shown in Table 15. This item was added to the survey in 2009 so can now be tracked over four survey rounds. Perceptions that NCEA is a credible qualification in the wider community improved steadily up to 2015. However, 2018 saw this fall back again, especially for principals and teachers, perhaps reflecting the NCEA review drawing attention to some of its drawbacks. Again, principals are the group most likely to agree with this statement.

TABLE 15 **Perceptions of the credibility of NCEA by respondent group; 2009, 2012, 2015, and 2018**

NCEA is a credible qualification in the wider community (agree/ strongly agree)	Parents and whānau %	Trustees %	Teachers %	Principals %
2009 responses	37	48	47	81
2012 responses	51	56	58	82
2015 responses	59	63	66	92
2018 responses	52	59	54	80

Support for NCEA was cooler in 2018

In 2018, there is a slight cooling of support for NCEA across all groups, compared with 2015 (see Table 16). After being fairly stable from 2009 to 2015, support among trustees, teachers, and principals decreased to the same level it was in 2006. Although parents' support decreased somewhat in 2018, it still remains considerably above the 2006 level.

Over the years, principals have consistently voiced the strongest support. Teachers and trustees follow.

TABLE 16 **Support for NCEA by respondent group; 2003, 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015, and 2018**

I support NCEA (agree/ strongly agree)	Parents and whānau %	Trustees %	Teachers %	Principals %
2003 responses	44	Not asked	65	87
2006 responses	37	58	60	89
2009 responses	45	68	69	95
2012 responses	54	73	68	94
2015 responses	55	69	69	95
2018 responses	50	58	60	89

In 2018, slightly greater proportions of teachers and principals say they personally support NCEA (60% and 89%, respectively) than think it is a credible qualification in the wider community (54% and 80%, respectively).

Responses to the Big Opportunities

As part of the review of NCEA, the Ministerial Advisory Group released a discussion document: *NCEA Review discussion document, Big Opportunities*. Rather than duplicate questions about NCEA that this document encouraged readers to think about, we asked about people's involvement with the review process and their views about the six Big Opportunities, which were:

1. Creating space at NCEA Level 1 for powerful learning
2. Strengthening literacy and numeracy
3. Ensuring NCEA Levels 2 and 3 support good connections beyond schooling
4. Making it easier for teachers, schools, and kura to refocus on learning
5. Ensuring the Record of Achievement tells us about learners' capabilities
6. Dismantling barriers to NCEA.[34]

Respondents were somewhat cautious about the Big Opportunities

How many people had read the discussion document? Ninety-two percent of principals, 46% of teachers, 43% of trustees, and 13% of parents said they had done so. We asked these respondents two further questions, one of which sought to gauge their enthusiasm for the Big Opportunities, and the second, whether they thought the Big Opportunities would make much difference.

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34 For more details about the Big Opportunities, see: https://conversation.education.govt.nz/conversations/ncea-have-your-say/big-opportunities-he-aria-nui/

Figure 29 gives a picture of how much respondents who had read the discussion document are excited by the Big Opportunities. Overall, more agree than disagree in all groups. Parents' and trustees' views were somewhat similar, although more parents responded "strongly agree". Teachers' and principals' responses were more cautious. Around a third of each group gave a "neutral" response.

FIGURE 29 **Responses by those who had read the NCEA Review discussion document, about being excited by the Big Opportunities**
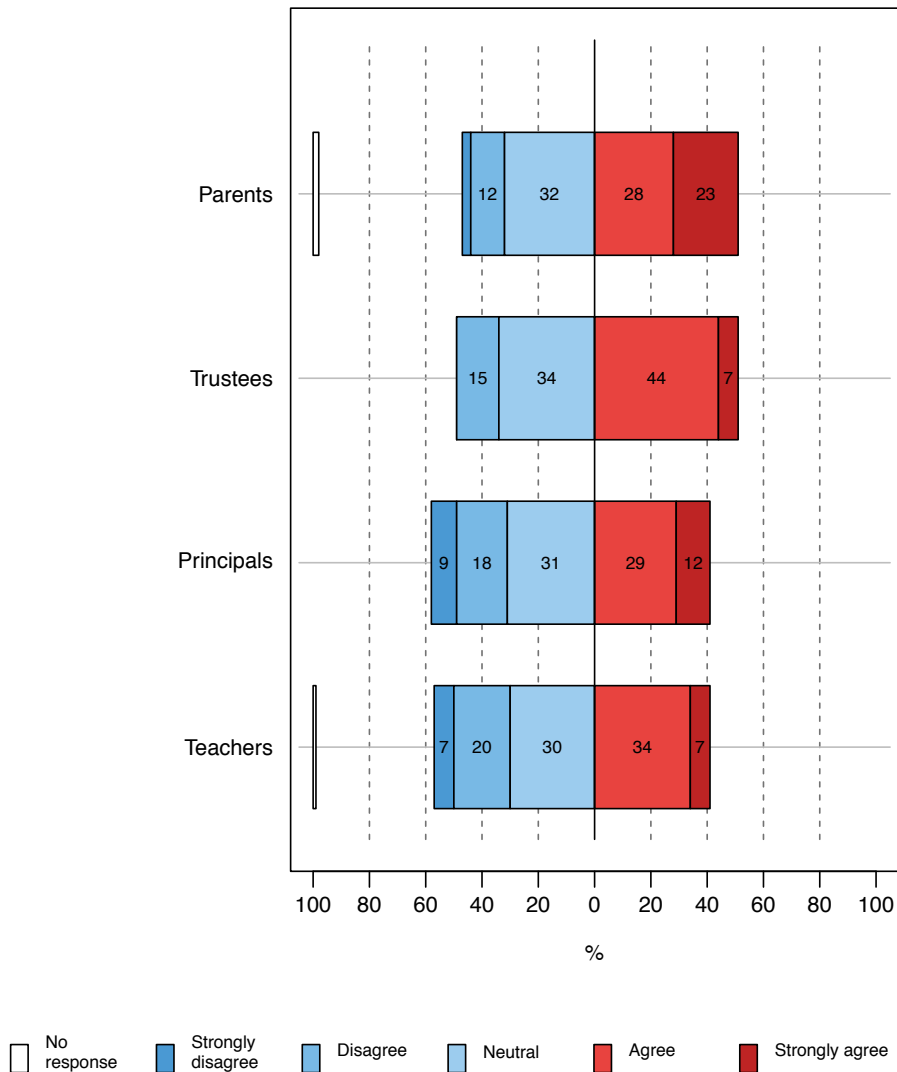
Did people who had read the NCEA Review discussion document think the Big Opportunities would actually make a difference to teaching and learning? Table 17 shows that close to half of principals, teachers, and trustees who had read the discussion document do think these would make a difference. Fewer parents shared this view. At least a quarter of those in each group gave "neutral" responses.

TABLE 17 **Responses by those who had read the NCEA Review document, about the likely effect of the Big Opportunities**

I think that the Big Opportunities will <u>not</u> really:	Strongly agree/ Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree/ Strongly disagree %
• make much difference to teaching and learning in this school (Principals, *n* = 154)	29	25	46
• make much difference to my teaching (Teachers, *n* = 323)	26	27	44
• make much difference to teaching and learning in this school (Trustees, *n* = 59)	27	31	42
• change anything for my child (Parents and whānau, *n* = 65)	48	26	22

Summary and discussion

In relation to school timetable design and integration of learning areas, there were signs of interest in doing things differently, as well as some preferring the status quo.

Developing a timetable for a secondary school is a complex task, with many constraining factors that schools do their best to accommodate. Some principals expressed frustration with the challenge of developing timetables to meet the needs of all students, and some would like help to do this. Deputy principals tend to be the person with main responsibility for developing school timetables, usually because they have experience and skill in doing so. Others who contribute are more likely to be principals or heads of department/learning areas, with teachers and students also having at least some input in many schools.

Subject periods of 45–60 minutes are included in the current timetable of the majority of schools, and just over half of teachers express a preference for these, if they were free to choose. Many teachers also said they would like opportunities for students to combine different kinds of subject options. Principals reported a diversity of additional arrangements that sit around the widely used 45–60-minute subject periods, indicating that there is quite a lot of exploration of alternative timetabling arrangements.

Timetabling difficulties are a reason some principals give for not integrating learning areas at their school. However, more than half of principals say they have integrated some learning areas at their school over the past 3 years. This typically decreases with students' year level.

Less than a third of teachers had been involved in integrating learning areas in the past 3 years. The gains many of these teachers saw in integrating learning areas, compared with teaching standalone subjects, included integration proving more professionally stimulating and engaging as a teacher. Although those who had been involved in integration also saw some benefits for student engagement and building relationships between learning areas, they were less convinced that integrating learning areas resulted in improved learning outcomes for students. They expressed concern that integrating learning areas is more difficult to align with NCEA and is more work to assess, compared with teaching single subjects. The main concern of teachers who had not been involved was the depth of subject coverage that would be possible, a concern shared by some principals. A lack of support from leaders in their school was another reason some teachers gave for not integrating their learning area with at least one other.

NCEA was seen as setting the senior secondary curriculum by many principals and teachers. In the same year as a major review of NCEA, support is cooler than in previous surveys and fewer respondents see it as a credible qualification in the wider community. Those who have read the review discussion document tended to be cautious about whether the Big Opportunities are likely to make a positive difference to teaching and learning, although almost half the parents who had read the discussion document think the Big Opportunities would *not* change anything for their children.

6.

Teachers' perspectives on their work

Teachers' perspectives were sought about the following work-related areas: their morale, workload, and job satisfaction; experiences of professional learning; and experiences of mentoring provisionally certified teachers. We asked them to identify the things they would like to change in their work and to indicate what they thought the future might hold for their career. At the end of the survey, teachers were given an opportunity to comment about their work as a teacher, and nearly half (*n* = 333) did so. Their comments are included throughout this section

Teaching experience and roles

Fifty-seven percent of the 705 teachers who completed the survey[35] were under 50 years old, and 30% were under 40. The proportion of teachers aged more than 50 was 43%. Six percent of the teachers responding were over 65 years old. The ages of the responding teachers varied little from those who responded in 2015.

Overall, the group of teachers who responded in 2018 was slightly more experienced than the group who responded in 2015. Fifty-two percent of teachers had more than 15 years' experience, compared with 47% of respondents in 2015. Thirty-two percent had between 6 and 15 years' teaching experience, and 16% had 5 years or less (much the same as 2015). In 2018, a smaller proportion of teachers had less than 3 years' teaching experience (6%, compared with 9% in 2015). A greater proportion of the teachers at decile 1–4 schools had 5 years' experience or less (22%, compared with 12% of teachers at decile 5–10 schools).

Ninety percent of the sample were class/subject teachers, compared with 75% in the previous survey.[36] Thirteen percent of respondents were teaching Years 7 or 8, and between 64% and 72% were teaching students in each of Years 9 to 13. Similar to 2015, 17%–19% each taught English, Mathematics, Social Science, Science, or Technology.

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35 Information about how the teacher survey was distributed is included in the Appendix, along with more details of the teacher sample. The main points to note about the teachers who responded in 2018 are that those at decile 3–4 schools were somewhat over-represented and, to a lesser extent, teachers at decile 7–8 schools were under-represented. Teachers at Years 7–15 schools were slightly under-represented, and those at Years 9–15 were, to a lesser degree, over-represented. The response rate was 31%, and the margin of error for teachers' responses is around 3.7%.

36 This could be related to the changes in the teacher survey's distribution in 2018, described in the Appendix.

Additional/other roles they held (with the two notable differences to 2015 shown) were:
- form teacher/tutor teacher/academic mentor (58%, compared with 50% in 2015)
- holder of management unit(s) (47%, compared with 38% in 2015)
- head of learning area (HOLA)/head of department (HoD)/faculty leader/ teacher in charge (TIC) (43%)
- other (16%)
- dean (13%)
- associate teacher for student teachers on practicum (11%)
- AP/DP (6%)
- specialist classroom teacher (SCT) (5%)
- careers adviser/transition teacher (3%)
- staff rep on the school board (2%)
- guidance counsellor (1%).

Teachers' "Other" responses included 3% of teachers with co-ordination roles, and 3% who have Kāhui Ako roles.

For analysis and reporting purposes, teachers' subject areas were combined into the following prioritised groupings (e.g., a teacher may be a Mathematics and Technology teacher, and we include them only in the Mathematics and Science category):
- Mathematics and Science (30% of teachers responding)
- English and Languages (22%)
- Social Sciences, the Arts, Commerce (20%)
- Technology, Health and PE, Transition, Careers, Special Education (24%)
- Other areas (3%).

The proportion of responding teachers who were in permanent positions was 92% (similar to 2015 and 2012). The remainder were largely on fixed-term contracts of a year or more (7%), with a small number on shorter contracts.

Morale, workload, and job satisfaction

Teachers' morale was slightly lower

In 2018, teachers' morale levels were slightly lower than in 2015. A smaller proportion rated their overall morale as a teacher as good or very good (62%, compared with 69% in 2015). A greater proportion rated their morale as poor or very poor (13%, compared with 8% in 2015). Twenty-three percent reported having satisfactory morale.

Teachers at decile 5–6 schools report slightly lower morale, with half saying their morale is good or very good, compared with 63%–70% of teachers at schools of other deciles.

Workload is a concern for a substantial minority of teachers

Around one-third of the teachers reported fair and manageable workloads, and manageable stress levels (see Figure 30).[37] More than a quarter indicated their high workload meant they felt they were unable to do justice to their students.

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37 The "neutral" option was added to the response scale for this item bank in 2018, meaning that response patterns across the scale cannot be directly compared with previous years' responses. We compare only "strongly agree" responses, to give an indication of change, and this should be cautiously interpreted.

FIGURE 30 **Workload and work-related stress, reported by teachers (*n* = 705)**
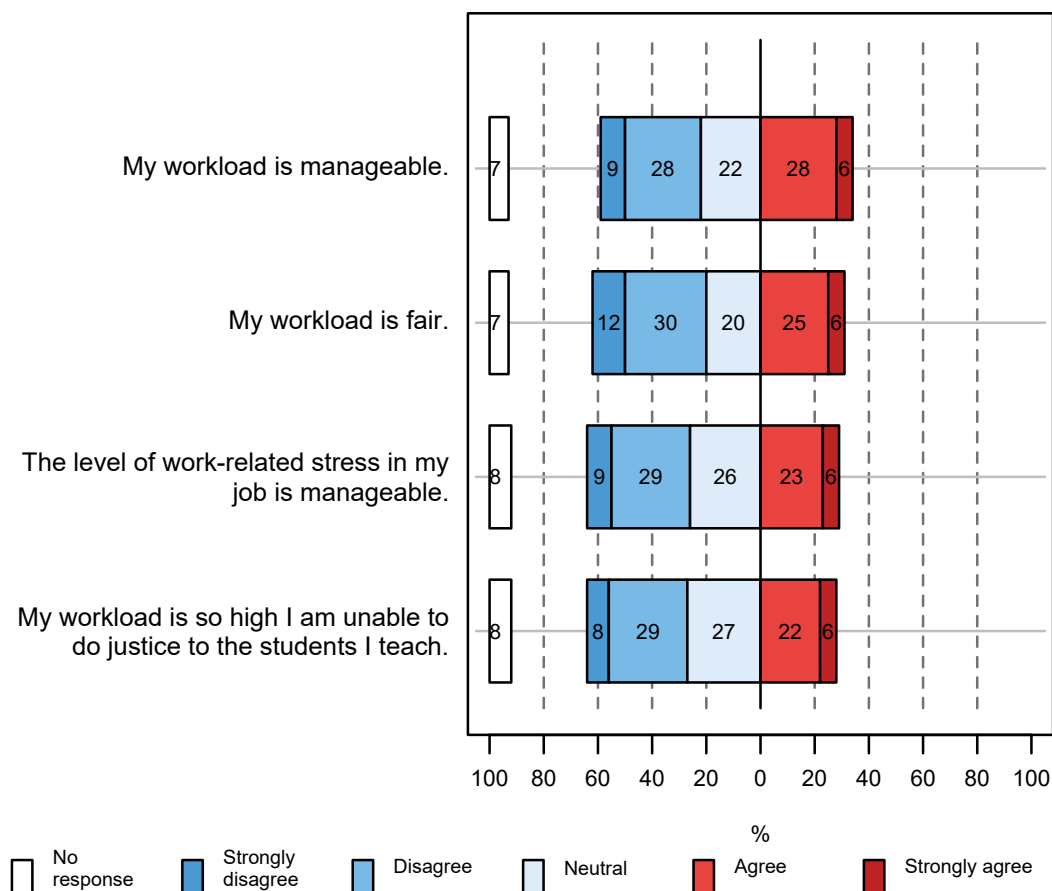
Figure 30 suggests workload is of concern for a substantial minority of secondary teachers. Concerns about the intensification of expectations, workload, and associated stress levels were voiced by 24% of teachers (*n* = 170) in their response to the open-ended question asking for any overall comments on their work as a teacher. This was the strongest theme in teachers' comments, as it was in 2015 when it was evident in 21% of comments.

> The workload is insane, if it was just about teaching it could be manageable. I am a 4th year teacher and see myself leaving. There is just not enough time to prepare properly, to look at research, to network, to do what is expected.

> I begin work at 7:15 to set up for the day. I coach sport after school from 4pm x 3 days per week (and in summer, during every lunchtime), and then need to work at least 2 hours every night. Holidays are marking—usually Internals. This year I reduced my hours—dropped a class. Year 13 Statistics takes an incredible number of hours. Looking back, I am not sure how I fitted it in. And before that I was a dean. After 12 years I realised I could not sustain that amount of energy needed.

> My work as a teacher this year is onerous. All was going well, until a colleague resigned and although the position was advertised three times, it was not filled. No further advertising is happening this year. So I now have my timetable minus 6 hours, am given 3 hours to plan and prepare for relief lessons to be taken by a reliever for the other now non-existent teacher. Basically, I am doing about 1.6 teachers' jobs— no extra pay other than that for a TIC as I previously received … I cannot do any more! Near exhaustion and what is it doing to my health?

I don't have a life outside of teaching and I am exhausted every single day. Weekends are for planning for Monday and getting paperwork done (e.g., inquiry cycle or e-portfolio) and for trying to catch up on sleep. There's no time for anything else due to all the extra paperwork and pre + post-school meetings.

As my role is a Deputy Principal, my major issue is not one of classroom management or planning. The real pressing issues for myself and other senior managers are the increasing types of problems students are bringing to the school. We are dealing with major social issues that we are ill equipped to solve, and we also carry a vast amount of disturbing information and have no outlet to offload this burden. We need 'supervision' like the guidance counsellors. The pressures staff face are passed onto us, and we are not only having to juggle student issues, but stressed staff issues and demanding parents. Especially parents who disagree with the schools and now take ridiculous legal action. Senior managers are not given any training for the job; this needs to change. The stress as a senior manager is high, with low support and low remuneration.

Six percent of teachers (*n* = 44) wrote comments about the challenges related to having a reasonable work–life balance, which often also mention stress, and give some insight into teachers' wellbeing.

I think it is unsustainable. It is becoming harder and harder to disconnect from school and the school community. I feel like teaching is my identity.

We need to contain the workload to within reasonable hours. TEACHERS are PEOPLE TOO! We need a home life! We need to model what it is to live a balanced life to the students we teach! We need to ensure we care for our own wellbeing! No doubt if this is done we will retain and recruit teachers in a far more sustainable way!

I love my job—I love working with young people and see the light come on. But my work load is unsustainable—it is unfair on my husband and 2 daughters. The work-related stress affects our family. I love teaching. It is who I am but I could not continue for the foreseeable future if my workload was not lessened.

Underpaid, undervalued, underappreciated. I take so much work home at night and at weekends that I have less time with my own children. This is why I am strongly considering leaving teaching and am undertaking postgraduate study.

Teachers' work hours have increased slightly

Twenty percent of teachers were working more than 20 hours per week outside the times when students are required to be on-site. Figure 31 summarises teachers' responses about these hours in 2009, 2012, 2015, and 2018. The overall picture in 2018 was of a slight increase in the total hours teachers were working outside the times when students are required to be on-site. For example, in 2015, 15% of teachers were working less than 6 hours outside these times, compared with 9% doing this in 2018. At the same time, the overall picture in 2018 was of fewer teachers working in excess of 20 hours per week than in 2012.

FIGURE 31 **Hours teachers reported working outside times when students were required to be on-site; 2009, 2012, 2015, and 2018**
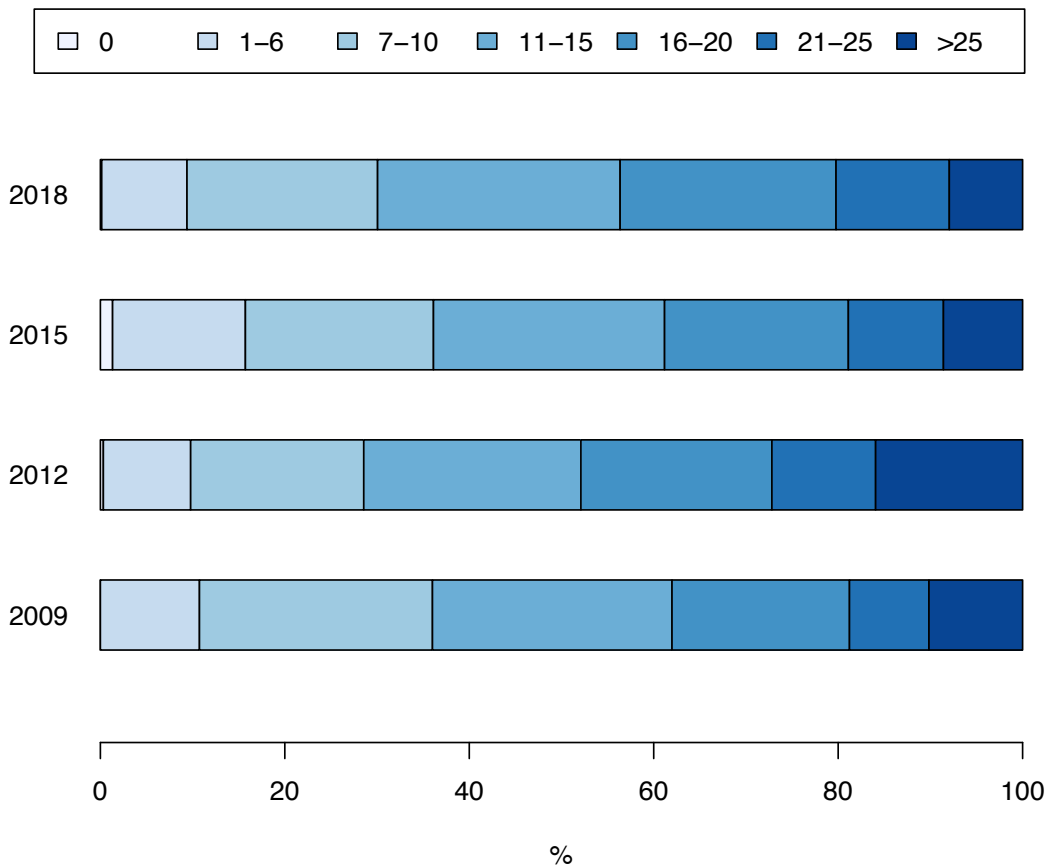
The slight overall increase in hours teachers reported working was accompanied by a slight decrease in teachers' enjoyment of their work, as we see next.

Most teachers enjoy their job

Eighty-one percent of teachers agree they enjoy their job (see Figure 32). A further 8% responded "neutral" and 4% disagree.[38] Seven percent chose not to respond to this question. The proportion who strongly agree they enjoy their job was smaller in 2018 (38%, compared with 47% in 2015).

Just under two-thirds of teachers agree they get the support *inside* the school, and two-fifths agree they get the support *outside* the school, that they need to do their jobs effectively. The proportion strongly agreeing with the latter was slightly smaller in 2018 (10%, compared with 15% in 2015).

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38 See earlier note about the addition of the "neutral" response option.

FIGURE 32 **Job satisfaction and support, reported by teachers (*n* = 705)**
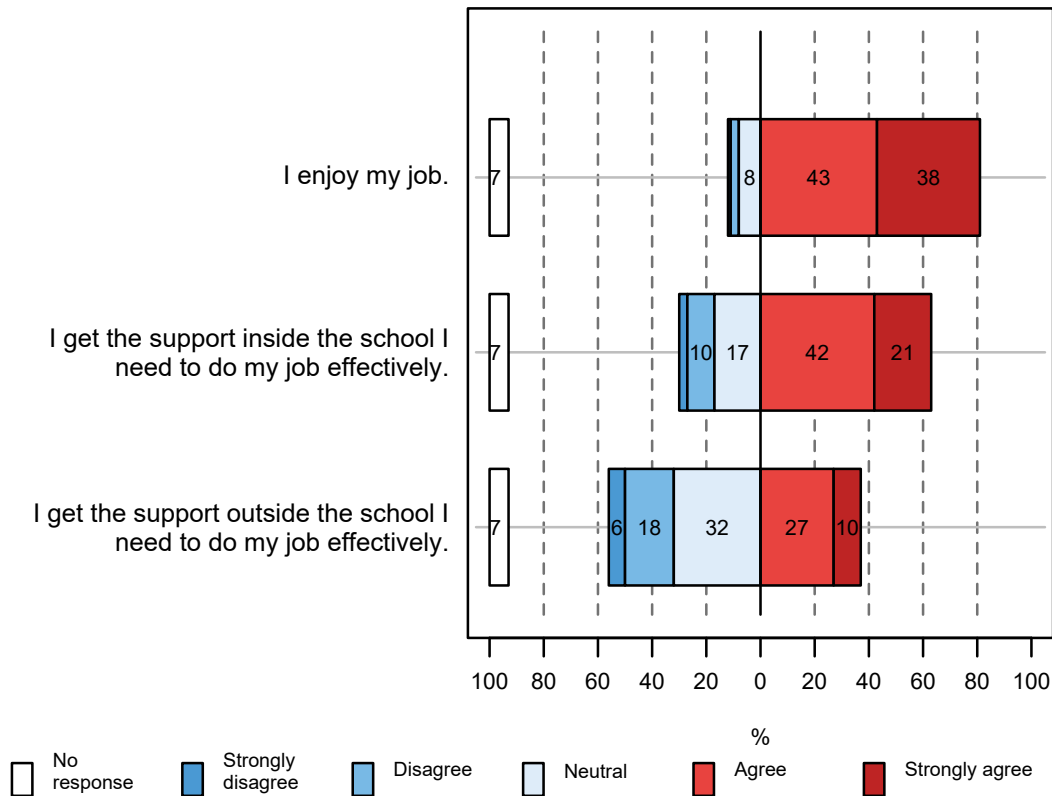
Teachers at decile 9–10 schools were the most likely to strongly agree they enjoy their job (48%, compared with 41% for decile 7–8 schools, 33% for decile 3–6 schools, and 36% for decile 1–2 schools).

Twenty-two percent of teachers wrote a positive comment about their work as a teacher, at the end of the survey.

> Teaching is a stressful, full on job. I love my teaching subject, and I am blessed to be teaching in an excellent school with great students, staff and a supportive senior management and pastoral team.

> I really love what I do. I am a primary trained teacher working in a secondary school Special Needs Unit. I would not be able to do the job I am doing in a primary school, so I am very privileged. I don't do my job for the money! I am passionate about what I do and enjoy the challenge.

> I am very fortunate to work in a supportive college, where students are supported to succeed, firstly by being valued and respected as individuals as part of a diverse learning culture. There is a collaborative and mutually respectful teaching and learning environment, which has led to a massive turn around in success in all areas, including extra-curricular fields and NCEA achievement rates. Thus, there is a pretty high student and teacher morale—students say they feel it is 'their place'. My mostly positive responses to this survey reflect the fact that I am well established and feel supported, appreciated and loved by my students and colleagues at this college.

Teachers' positive comments about enjoying their work tended to be followed by a description of negative experiences of the role.

The classroom is like a haven for me. I love the interaction with the kids, love their questioning, their interest. Their sense of humour, their challenges. The relationship between teacher and class is why I keep going back every day; is why I'll spend weekends marking their work and giving feedback. The rewards are sometimes tangible, but more often not so obvious—but I get enormous pride and pleasure when my students have success. BUT, what sucks the energy from my very core, is the enormous increase in analysing, reporting, compliance, incessant meetings of spurious use, seemingly simply to tick an ERO box! These are the top-down requirements over which we, as individual teachers, have little control. There has been a growing lack of trust in us as teachers—a trust in doing the best every day because we are passionate about what we do. Just let us teach please!!!

I love teaching. I find it to be very satisfying and fulfilling most times. I feel that I am always improving myself, as a result of what I do and the students I teach. However, I do not feel that we value education enough in this country. By value I mean removing ALL restrictions to resourcing schools with everything they need to meet student/teacher needs. This would be a long-term investment that would not only save the country billions of dollars but earn them as well (for those financially minded). Top-notch education, health and social structures are the only way to make a country great but they require heavy social investment. Teachers are constantly ALL overworked and leaving the profession because of what they have to face.

Teachers' career plans

Table 18 gives the picture of teachers' career plans for 2018 compared with the three previous surveys. The proportion of teachers (40%) who plan to continue as they are now was similar in 2015 and 2009. Of the items included in previous surveys, two have shown a gradual change since 2009: slightly fewer teachers intend to apply for a study award/sabbatical/fellowship, and a slightly greater proportion are planning to retire.

Those planning to retrain or change to a career outside education increased slightly (14%, up from 8% in 2015). This may be related to the teachers' concern about the intensification of expectations and workload.

TABLE 18 **Teachers' career plans for the next 5 years; 2009, 2012, 2015, and 2018[39]**

What teachers plan to do	2009 (*n* = 871) %	2012 (*n* = 1,266) %	2015 (*n* = 1,777) %	2018 (*n* = 705) %
Continue as I am now	38	33	37	40
Build my leadership skills	*	*	*	22
Apply for a study award/sabbatical/fellowship	25	23	21	16
Retire	11	13	14	16
Take on senior management role	*	*	*	15
Begin or complete a postgrad qualification	*	16	15	14
Change schools	15	18	14	14
Retrain/change to a career outside education	10	10	8	14
Take on leadership role with management units	*	*	*	12
Take on middle management role	*	*	*	10
Change careers within education	12	10	9	10
Other	3	2	2	9
Leave teaching for personal reasons (e.g., travel, family)	10	5	9	9
Not sure	6	6	7	4

* Not asked.

Four percent or fewer plan to change their current position, either to one that is permanent, part time, or full time.

In 2018, the proportion of teachers with "Other" plans in mind rose to 9%. These plans included wanting to reduce their hours or level of responsibility, or developing other interests (e.g., starting their own business, or writing a book).

The single decile-related difference was in teachers' plans to apply for a study award/sabbatical/ fellowship (24% of teachers at decile 3–4 schools indicate planning this, compared with around 15% of teachers at decile 5–10 schools, and 9% at decile 1–2 schools).

In a separate question, teachers were asked about their interest in becoming a principal in the future. Twelve percent of teachers indicate interest in this possibility, much the same as in 2015, but lower than the 19% who indicated interest in 2012. Seventy-five percent of teachers indicate they are not interested in this role, and 12% are unsure.

Somewhat greater proportions of teachers at decile 5–10 schools say they are not interested in principalship in the future (around 80%, compared with 64% of those at decile 1–4 schools). Teachers at decile 1–4 schools were more likely than those at decile 5–10 schools to say they are unsure (17%) or are interested (16%).

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39 Teachers could give multiple responses here.

The proportion of teachers already in formal leadership roles who expressed interest in becoming a principal differed little from teachers not in these roles, apart from those in AP/DP roles; 27% of these were interested in becoming a principal, and a further 24% were unsure.

Teachers' experiences of professional learning

School-based professional learning

As shown in Figure 33, 67% of teachers have good opportunities to see and discuss the work of other teachers in their school when they want to do things differently. Forty-seven percent have good opportunities to explore deeper ideas and theory that underpin new approaches.

FIGURE 33 **School-based opportunities for professional learning, reported by teachers (*n* = 705)**
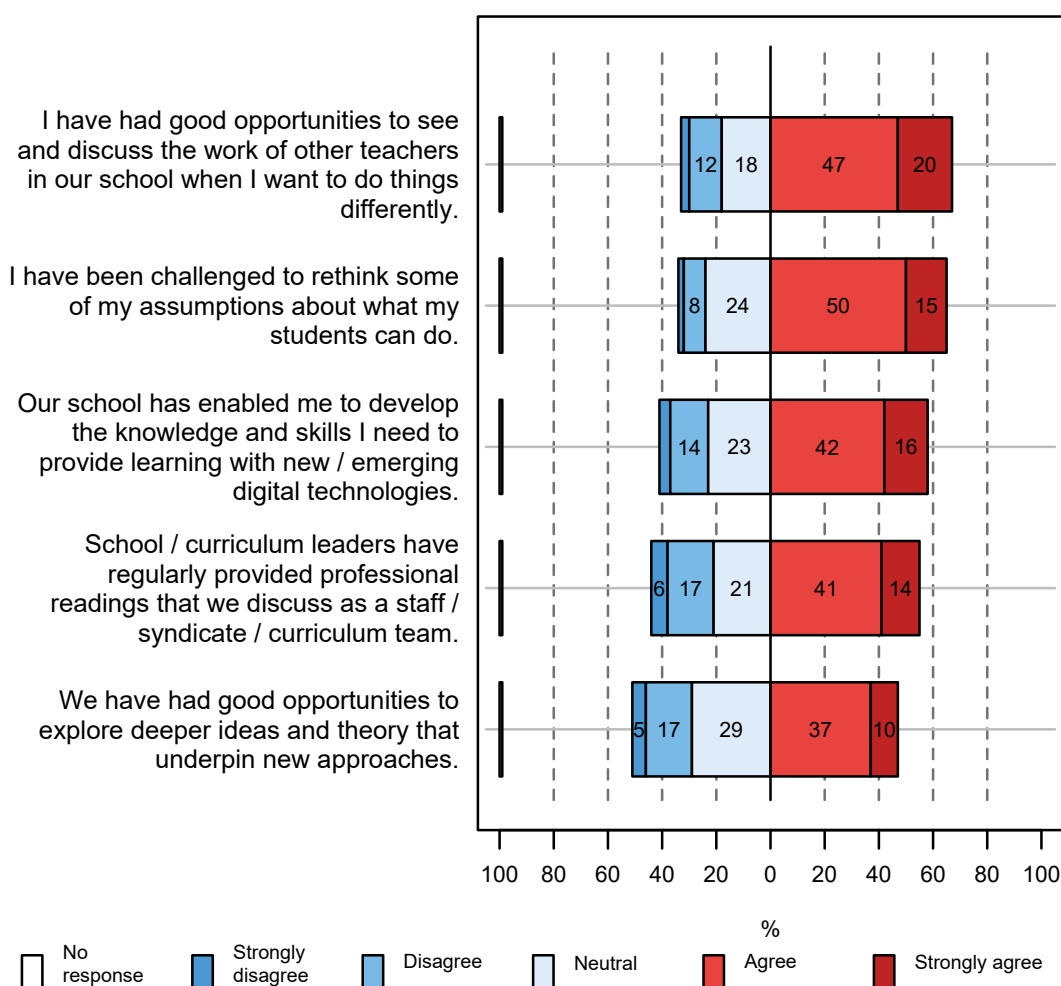
The two items mentioned above are the only items in Figure 33 that teachers responded to in a noticeably differently way, compared with 2015. Table 19 shows continued growth in opportunities for teachers to see and discuss the work of teachers in their school when they want to do things differently, but at the same time, a decrease in opportunities to explore deeper ideas and theory, compared with 2015.

TABLE 19 **Opportunities for teachers' professional learning; teachers' "agree" and "strongly agree" responses for 2012, 2015, and 2018**

School-based opportunities	2012 (n = 1,266) %	2015 (n = 1,777) %	2018 (n = 705) %
I have good opportunities to see and discuss the work of teachers in this school when I want to do things differently	47	56	66
We have good opportunities in this school to explore deeper ideas and theory that underpin new approaches	40	62	48

Slightly fewer teachers are able to access specialist advice outside the school

Over half the secondary teachers reported that they could easily access a helpful network of teachers and found their subject association really useful (see Figure 34). Forty percent have been able to easily access specialist advice outside the school when they need it, down from 46% in 2015.

FIGURE 34 **Access to external support and advice, reported by teachers (n = 705)**
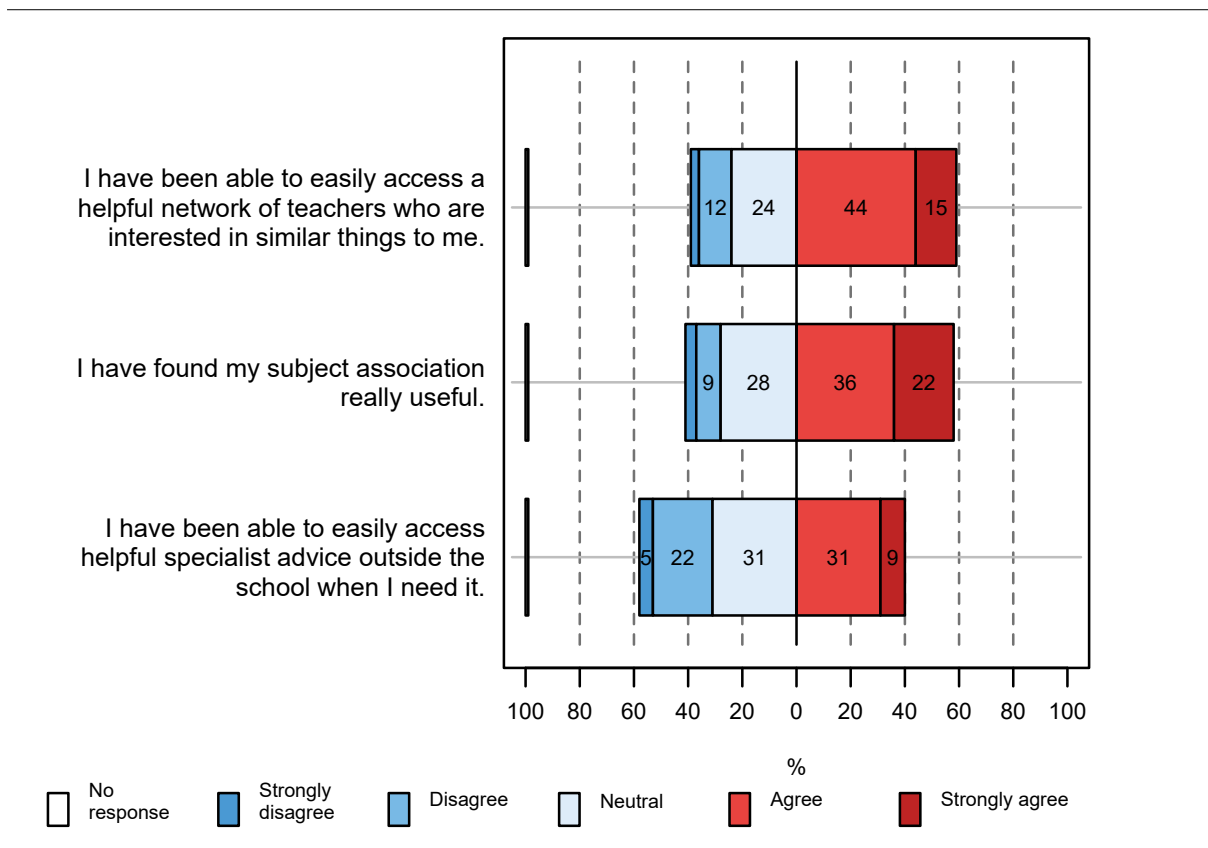
Practical help from professional learning has helped meet students' needs

For around half to three-quarters of the teachers, professional learning in the past 3 years had provided practical help for various aspects of working with students and their parents (see Figure 35), including supporting students' social and emotional learning.[40]

40 These are new questions to the national survey.

FIGURE 35 **Teachers' agreement that their professional learning has provided practical help with these areas (*n* = 705)**
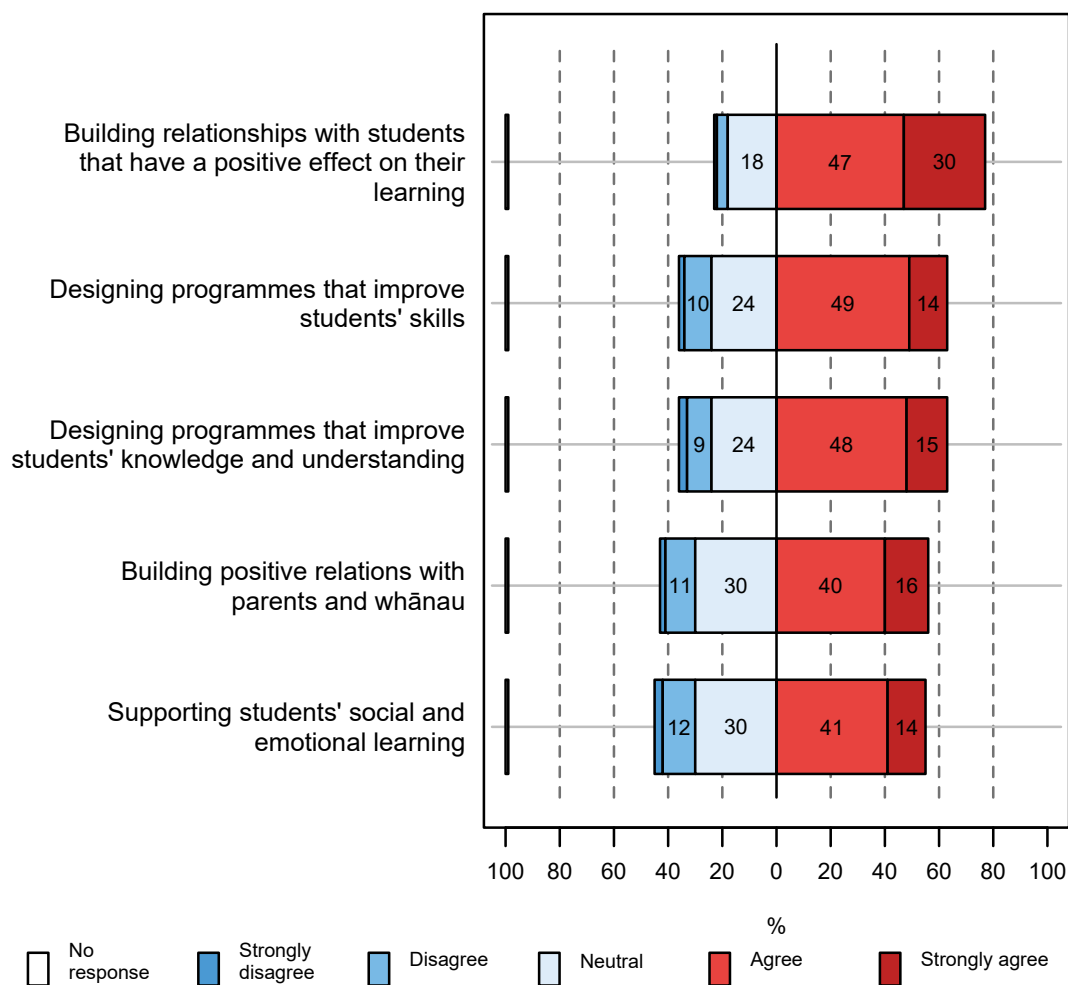
Increased practical help for engaging Māori students and Pacific students

For at least half of the teachers, professional learning had provided practical help for engaging Māori students and those with learning support needs (see Figure 36). Slightly fewer had professional learning that gave them practical help with making curriculum adaptations for students with disabilities or engaging Pacific students.

FIGURE 36 **Teachers' agreement that their professional learning has provided practical help in these areas, relating to specific groups of students (*n* = 705)**
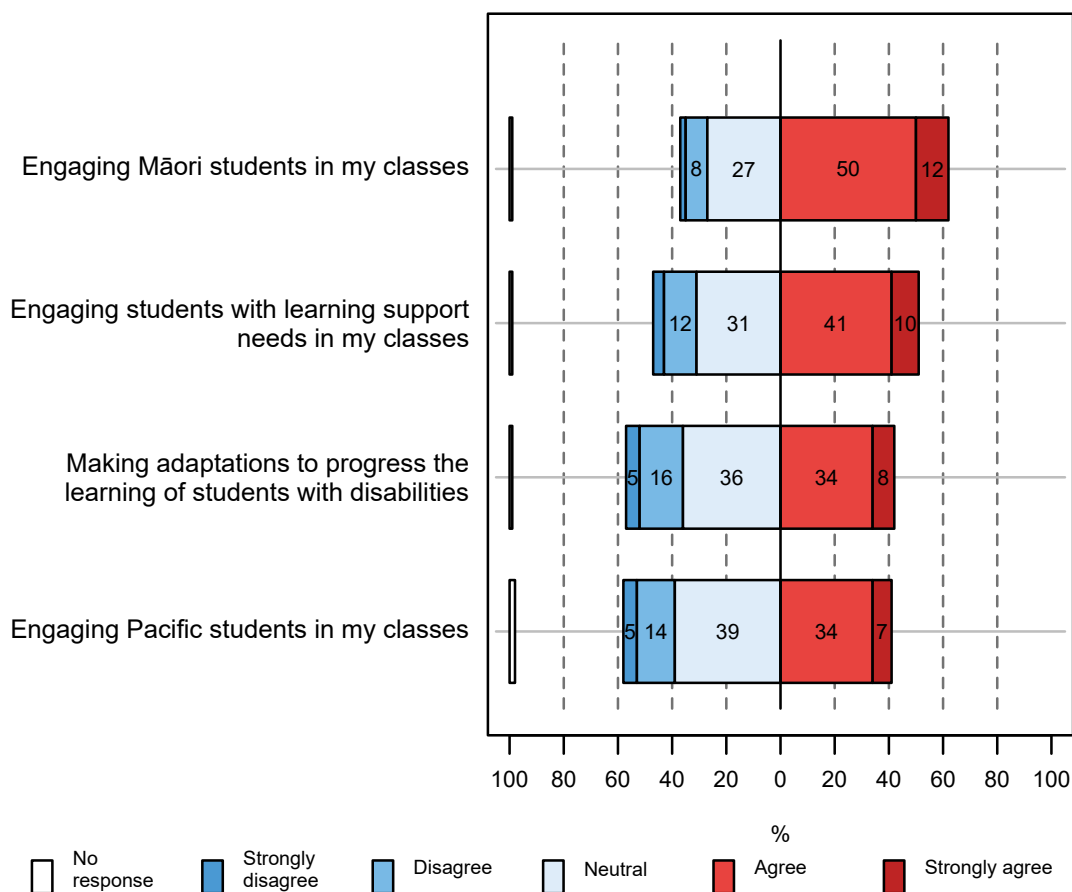
In 2018, greater proportions of teachers had professional learning that provided practical help for engaging Māori students in their classes (62%, up from 50% in 2015) and engaging Pacific students in their classes (41%%, up from 32%).

There were no differences related to decile for teachers having professional learning that provided practical help for engaging their Māori students. For Pacific students and those with learning support needs, the following differences related to decile were evident:

- Teachers in decile 1–2 schools were more likely to indicate their professional learning had provided practical help for engaging Pacific students in their classes (55%, compared with around 36% of teachers at decile 3–6 and decile 9–10 schools, and 46% of those at decile 7–8 schools).
- Teachers in decile 1–2 schools were less likely to indicate their professional learning had provided practical help for engaging students with learning support needs in their classes (39%, compared with around 49% of teachers at decile 3–4 schools, 43% at decile 5–6 schools, and 60% of those at decile 7–10 schools)

In response to the open-ended question asking for overall comments on their work as a teacher, 5% of the teachers wrote comments related to wanting more, or better quality, professional learning.

> In our school we have no real control over our professional development. It is all about spiral of inquiry which is not real research and does not allow or require robust training in identified areas. It is a financial cop out.

Disappointed about lack of support from NZQA regarding moderation BP workshops—everything seems to be financially driven rather than what works best. Need more opportunities to get together with teachers of subject area outside association to invent and run—more PD should be given by [the Ministry of Education].

I personally feel that given the tools and ongoing support plus PD will help me become a more effective teacher. If I was given more support/acknowledgement from management I would feel more empowered and appreciated. Teaching is becoming more demanding and stress-related incidents are more common. Teaching at high school is so much more than just teaching a subject. The emotional/social wellbeing of a child is just as important. Not to mention those with a disability, special needs, learning difficulties to name a few. I value my job and am very passionate about helping our children. I am just not equipped to be the best teacher I could be due to the circumstances outside my control. I want to have or be given the opportunity for me to personally grow and become the best I can. I need money, resources and time.

Teachers in mentor roles

Sixteen percent (*n* = 110) of the teachers responding to the survey are mentor/tutor teachers for a provisionally certificated teacher.[41] Of these teachers, most think they understand their role as a mentor (see Figure 37). Fewer indicated they have had useful professional learning focused on being an effective mentor (38%). Over a quarter (28%) feel left to "sink or swim" in their mentoring role.

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41 A small number of items about teachers' experiences of mentor roles were included in the secondary survey for the first time in 2018.

FIGURE 37 **Teachers' experiences of a mentoring role (*n* = 110)**
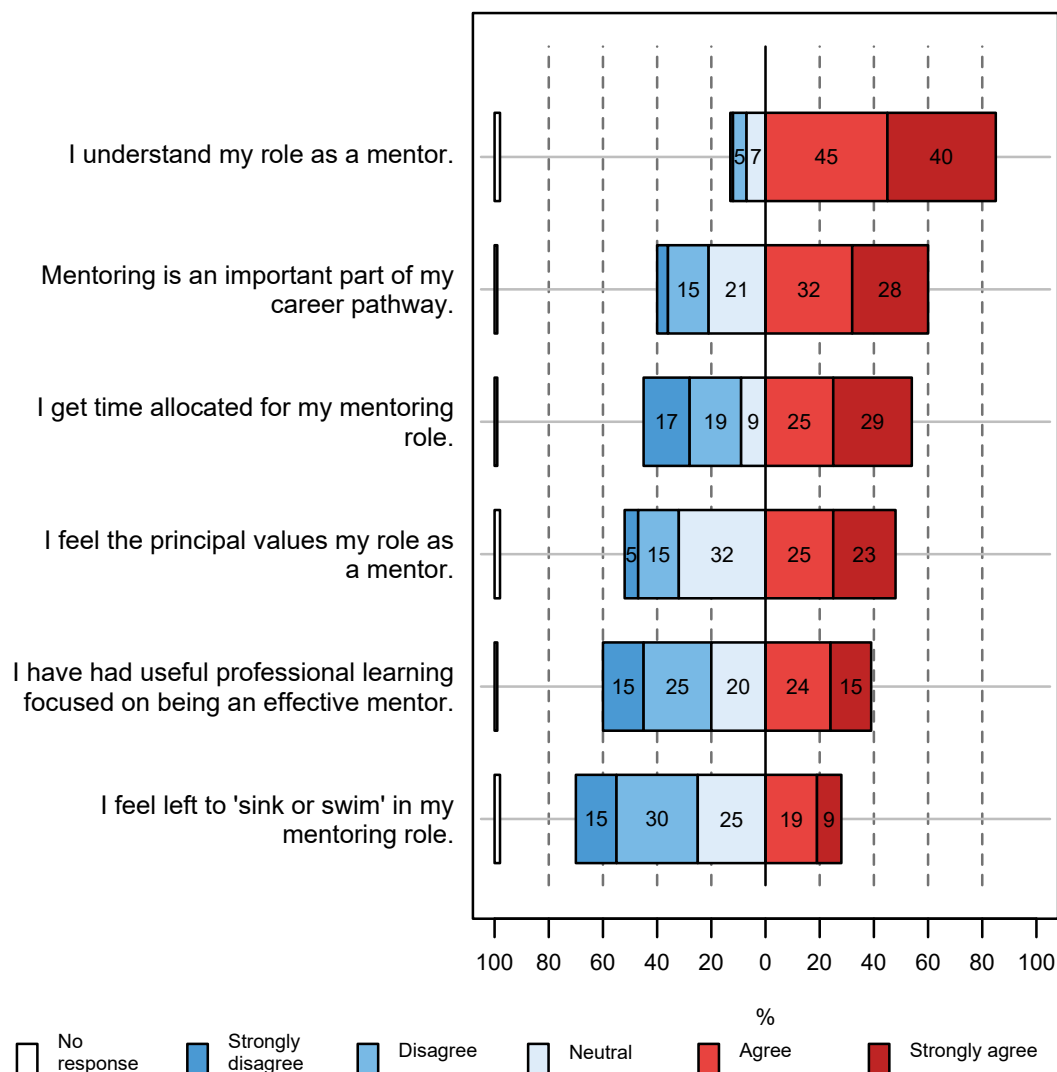
There were no differences related to school decile in teachers' experiences of mentoring.

Changes teachers would make in their work

In 2018, the median number of changes teachers wanted to make to their work was seven, compared with six in 2015, eight in 2012, and nine in 2009.

Looking at what teachers said they would like to change (see Table 20), better pay and reducing administration and paperwork remained the top two items in 2018. The survey was conducted when teachers' contract negotiations were underway, and the proportion of teachers wanting better pay was higher than in 2015. Overall, 2018 saw higher proportions indicating they would change in many of the items in Table 20 (apart from "Nothing"). There were increases of at least nine percentage points in teachers wanting reduced class sizes, more support staff, more support for teaching students with behaviour issues, and more support to adapt *NZC* for students with special needs. Taken together, this

suggests that teachers—even this slightly more experienced group than in 2015—are facing increasing challenges working with students.

Not everything saw a marked increase in 2018 though. There was no significant increase in teachers wanting more appreciation of their work from their school's management, or wanting to reduce pace of change.

TABLE 20 **Things teachers would change about their work as a teacher; 2009, 2012, 2015, and 2018**

Things teachers would change	2009 (n = 871) %	2012 (n = 1,266) %	2015 (n = 1,777) %	2018 (n = 705) %
Better pay	44	40	60	76
Reduce administration/paperwork	62	63	64	75
More time to reflect/plan/share ideas	59	65	57	62
Reduce assessment workload	47	51	46	56
More non-contact time to work with other teachers	46	46	51	55
Reduce number of initiatives at any one time	43	48	45	55
Improve teachers' status in society	*	*	*	55
Reduce class sizes	47	45	41	53
More sharing of knowledge/ideas with teachers from other schools	37	38	38	43
More support staff	35	34	29	39
More appreciation of my work from my school's management	26	33	27	29
More support for me to teach students with behaviour issues	*	29	22	34
Reduce pace of change	30	38	23	27
More support for me to adapt NZC for students with learning support needs	*	10	11	20
Other	2	4	4	10
Nothing	-	1	1	0

* Not asked.

The "Other" changes teachers would make include resolving issues with colleagues, having more non-academic support for students, and reducing the time they spend on extra-curricular activities or compensating them financially for this, having more non-contact time (for purposes other than working with colleagues), or improving the facilities at school (each around 1%).

Over half wanted teachers' status in society to be improved, and this was also evident in comments made by 11% of teachers, at the end of the survey. Some teachers also linked this to being paid more.

> I do think we need to raise the profile of teaching in NZ, but not through industrial action but through shared vision and passion for learning and progress. Teachers need to be both celebrated and at the same time held to account. The key to raising the profile is inspired and passionate teachers leading learning and knowing/owning their impact.

> Good and satisfying career, barring public perception, and lack of market-related remuneration, concomitant with qualifications and experience.

> Teachers can earn more in the private sector, have more time to themselves without the community judging them. A teacher never has down time in a small community as they are always being judged.

There were some decile-related differences in things that teachers would change about their work. Those in decile 3–6 schools were among those who showed the most interest in having more support for teaching students with behaviour or learning needs. More specifically:
- 42% of teachers at decile 1–6 schools would like more support for them to teach students with behaviour issues, as would 25% of teachers at decile 7–8 schools, and 16% at decile 9–10 schools
- 48% of teachers at decile 3–6 schools would like more support staff, as would 35% of teachers at decile 1–2 schools, and 29% at decile 7–10 schools
- 25% of teachers at decile 3–6 schools would like support for them to adapt *NZC* for students with learning support needs, as would around 15% of teachers at schools of other deciles.

Eighty-three percent of teachers at decile 5–6 secondary schools would like to reduce administration/paperwork, with fewer (around 73%) at decile 3–4 and 7–10 schools, and 65% of teachers at decile 1–2 schools expressing this view.

However, there were no decile-related differences in teachers' views for most of the items in Table 20, such as saying they would like better pay, improving teachers' status in society, or reduced class sizes.

Summary and discussion

In 2018, secondary teachers report slightly lower morale, accompanied by slightly higher stress levels than in 2015 and increased work hours for some. Workload is a concern for a large minority of teachers. The intensification of expectations, workload, associated stress levels, and work–life balance was the prevalent theme in teachers' written comments. It should come as no surprise that, in 2018, slightly more teachers are looking at moving to a career outside education.

More teachers wanted to make a number of changes to their work as a teacher, compared with 2015. In particular, more teachers would like better pay, less administration, less assessment, fewer initiatives at a time, and smaller class sizes. Over half would also like to improve teachers' status in society.

The overall picture from all of teachers' responses, including comments they wrote, is of teachers feeling increasingly hard-pressed to do a good job of teaching a student population that has a growing number of needs—such as mental health issues—that require more support to address than it is a teacher's role to provide.

The findings relating to teachers' professional learning are somewhat mixed. Greater proportions of teachers report having had professional learning that gave them practical help for engaging Māori students and Pacific students in their classes than in 2015. At the same time, there are indications that fewer teachers have access to the support from outside the school they need to do their job than they did 3 years ago. Well under half of teachers who are mentoring a provisionally certificated teacher report having useful professional learning focused on being an effective mentor.

As we will see later in the report, recruiting teachers is the major issue most frequently identified by principals. The effects of this issue for teachers who *are* in classrooms are likely to be reflected in some of the responses reported here. Growing stress levels among the existing teacher workforce will not add appeal for those considering joining the profession.

7.

Principals' perspectives on their work

This section presents the principals' perspectives on their work. It starts with a discussion of principal pathways, and their likely career plan over the next 5 years. The section also discusses principals' perspectives on the support they get, workload and morale, and changes principals would like to see in their role.[42]

Principal pathways

Most have been a principal for more than 3 years

In 2018, 23% of the principals are in their first 3 years as a principal, down slightly from the 28% in 2015. Most (77%) have been a principal for more than 3 years, including 35% who have had the role for more than 11 years.

Two-thirds of the principals are in their first principalship

Two-thirds of the principals (67%) have been principal of only their current school (slightly down from 73% in 2015). A quarter (26%) have been principals of two schools (20% in 2015), and 6% of three or four schools.

Many principals intend to stay in their current school for the next 5 years

When asked about their likely career plans over the next 5 years, principals' responses have been similar since 2009, with some increase in interest in sabbaticals and in the proportion of principals who say they are unsure of their plans. Table 21 shows that many secondary principals intend to stay in their current school over the next 5 years (62%). Table 21 also shows that if secondary principals feel the need to move on from being a principal, they are more likely to seek a job within education than leave it. Twenty-two

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42 Information about how the principal survey was distributed is included in the Appendix along with more details of the principal sample. In 2018, there was a slight under-representation of principals at decile 1–2 schools, as there had also been in 2015. In other respects, the principal respondents were largely similar to the principal respondents in 2015. The response rate was 53% (*n* = 167). The margin of error for principals' responses is 7.6%.

percent are thinking of retirement—a proportion that has remained much the same since 2009, even though in 2009, 19% of principals completing the survey were aged 60 or more, compared with 34% of secondary principals in 2018.

Compared with 2015, a higher proportion of principals are not sure of their career plans over the next 5 years (16%, compared with 8% in 2015).

TABLE 21   **Likely career plan for secondary principals over next 5 years; 2009, 2012, 2015, and 2018**[43]

Career plan	2009 (*n* = 187) %	2012 (*n* = 177) %	2015 (*n* = 182) %	2018 (*n* = 167) %
Continue as principal of current school	65	65	62	62
Apply for study award/sabbatical/fellowship	34	36	32	40
Retire	19	20	19	22
Change to a different role within education	21	17	19	21
Lead another school	22	14	23	20
Not sure	8	10	8	16
Take on a Kāhui Ako/Community of Learning leadership role	Not asked	Not asked	12	9
Retrain/change to a different career	7	5	4	8
Return to classroom teaching	4	2	2	4

There are differences related to school decile in whether a principal is planning to continue at the same school for the next 5 years, but no clear pattern. Principals in decile 9–10 schools (87%) are more likely to say they intend to remain in their current school, and principals in decile 7–8 schools less likely (45%).[44]

Stability of school leadership

Half the principals have been at their current school for 3–10 years

In 2018, just over half of the principals responding to the survey have been principal at their current school for 3–10 years (see Table 22), compared with 43% in 2015. Sixteen percent have led their school for more than a decade. This is a little less than the 20% in 2015 and 24% in 2012, and much the same as the 18% in 2009.

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43 In 2018, 61% of principals gave more than one answer here, indicating they thought several pathways were possible, or that they were thinking of two pathways consecutively over the next 5 years.
44 Fifty-three percent of principals in decile 1–2 schools, 58% of principals in decile 5–6 schools, and 70% of principals in decile 7–8 schools intend to remain in their current school.

TABLE 22 **Principals' years at their current school**

Number of years	Principals (*n* = 167) %
Under 3 years	34
3–5 years	23
6–10 years	28
11–15 years	9
16+ years	7

Principal turnover data show little change since 2009

Stability of school leadership is important, and low principal turnover is a reasonable sign of school health. The number of principals that a school has had in the past 10 years remains very similar to the 2015 figures, and shows little change since 2009. In 2018, just under a quarter (23%) of schools had had just one principal in the past 10 years, just under half (47%) had had two principals in the past decade, and a quarter (25%) had had three principals (see Table 23). In 2015, we reported that 9% of the schools had had four or more principals in that time. In 2018, this figure has returned to the 5%[45] reported in 2012 and 2009.

TABLE 23 **Number of principals at the school in the past 10 years, reported by principals**

Number of principals	Principals (*n* = 167) %
1	23
2	47
3	25
4	4
5+	2

Schools with more than three principals in the past decade have a higher proportion of newer principals, with less than 3 years' experience (36% of principals of these schools have less than 3 years' experience, decreasing to 10% of principals in these schools having more than 15 years' experience).

Support for the principal role

The most used Ministry of Education-funded support is provided through NZSTA

Table 24 shows principals' use of Ministry of Education-funded support for their role, including from NZSTA. In 2018, a higher proportion of principals than in 2015 said they had support from the NZSTA helpdesk and slightly more through NZSTA professional development: support for their management functions rather

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45 The total of 6% in Table 23 is due to rounding.

than educational role. Use of the Educational Leaders website dropped markedly in 2015 and continues to decline, although it is still the third most used support.

Since 2015, there have been changes to the support for aspiring or new principals, which are reflected in responses. The National Aspiring Principals Programme concluded at the end of 2016 and there is currently no nationally-funded programme for aspiring principals. The First-Time Principals Programme was replaced in 2017 with the Evaluation Associates contract to provide Beginning Principals with the support of an adviser and a mentor for 2 years.

The proportion taking sabbaticals may indicate the attraction of time out from the school as well as the opportunity to focus on an issue that is relevant to the school's and the principal's development.

TABLE 24 **Secondary principals' Ministry of Education-funded support for their role over past 3 years; 2009, 2012, 2015, and 2018**

Support	2009 (*n* = 187) %	2012 (*n* = 177) %	2015 (*n* = 182) %	2018 (*n* = 167) %
NZSTA Human Resources and Industrial Relations advisers	68	67	63	65
NZSTA Helpdesk	*	48	52	62
Educational Leaders website	71	70	52	44
NZSTA professional development	*	*	31	37
First-Time Principals' programme	43	37	40	33
Sabbatical	*	33	30	29
Leadership and Assessment professional development	*	17	17	11
Aspiring Principals course	11	11	11	5

* Not asked.

Many principals use support from SPANZ and former principals

Most principals also use other support (see Table 25). The most used non-Ministry of Education-funded support was SPANZ (68%, up from 59% in 2015), and consultants who are former principals (60%, up from 44% in 2015). A small proportion of the principals (4%) had not used any of these sources of support over the past 3 years, down from 9% in 2015.

TABLE 25 **Secondary principals' non-Ministry of Education-funded support for their role over past 3 years; 2015 and 2018**

Support	2015 (*n* = 182) %	2018 (*n* = 167) %
Secondary Principals' Association of New Zealand (SPANZ)	59	68
Private consultant/adviser—former principal	44	60
PPTA	30	32
Private consultant/adviser—not former principal	30	29
Postgraduate study	12	12
Nothing	9	4

Most principals have face-to-face professional contact with other principals

Most principals also have contact with other principals (see Table 26). Regular meeting attendance is most frequent, along with attending conferences, and discussion of common issues. All these types of professional contact were reported by a higher proportion of principals than in 2015. However, a smaller proportion of the principals said they provided mutual support (46%, down from 60%).

In 2018, we asked for the first time about professional learning groups (PLGs). Forty percent of the principals are in either a PLG they facilitate themselves, or a PLG facilitated by an external consultant. The small proportion of principals working together in inquiry projects has remained at the 2015 figure, half of what it was in 2012. Digital technology is also used by just a small proportion, with no change since 2015.

TABLE 26 **Secondary principals' professional contact together; 2012, 2015, and 2018**

Type of professional contact	2012 (*n* = 177) %	2015 (*n* = 182) %	2018 (*n* = 167) %
Attend regular meetings	81	75	87
Attend conference	73	68	82
Discuss common issues	62	64	78
Provide mutual support	60	60	46
Part of PLG we facilitate ourselves	*	*	22
Part of PLG facilitated by external consultant	*	*	20
Mentor another principal	13	13	17
Mentored by another principal	13	11	17
Critical friendship based on structured visits to each other's schools	22	19	16
Part of an inquiry project to improve practice	13	6	6
Use Twitter to get advice/ideas	*	4	4
Online discussion forum	*	5	2

* Not asked.

Principals' annual performance reviews have potential to be more useful

Annual performance reviews are intended to provide principals with the opportunity to gain important feedback and challenge, to support their ongoing development and the development of the school. Although most principals gain something from their annual performance review (just 3% said they gained nothing), Table 27 shows that there is plenty of scope to make more of annual performance reviews. There has been little improvement in the usefulness of these since 2009. Only three types of gain from annual performance reviews are reported by more than half of the principals.

TABLE 27 **Gains from secondary principals' most recent performance review; 2009, 2012, 2015, and 2018**

Gain	2009 (*n* = 187) %	2012 (*n* = 177) %	2015 (*n* = 182) %	2018 (*n* = 167) %
Good acknowledgement of my contribution to the school	75	73	68	77
Agreement on goals that will move the school forward	50	58	60	58
Agreement on goals that will move me forward	47	55	53	56
Opportunity for frank discussion of challenges facing the school and joint strategic thinking	43	46	39	46
Opportunity for frank discussion of issues at the school and joint problem solving	37	36	38	45
New insight into how I could do things	32	31	26	34
Nothing, it was not professionally done	*	*	*	3

* Not asked.

Workload and morale

Two-thirds of the principals work more than 60 hours a week

Figure 38 shows the hours that the principals report they work in a week, including meetings, contact with trustees, and contact with parents and whānau. Only 3% of secondary principals report working less than 50 hours a week. Thirty-one percent work from 50 to 60 hours in an average week, and 24% from 61 to 65 hours a week. A sizeable minority (41%) report working at least 66 hours in an average week.

FIGURE 38 **Hours worked by principals per week; 2015 and 2018**
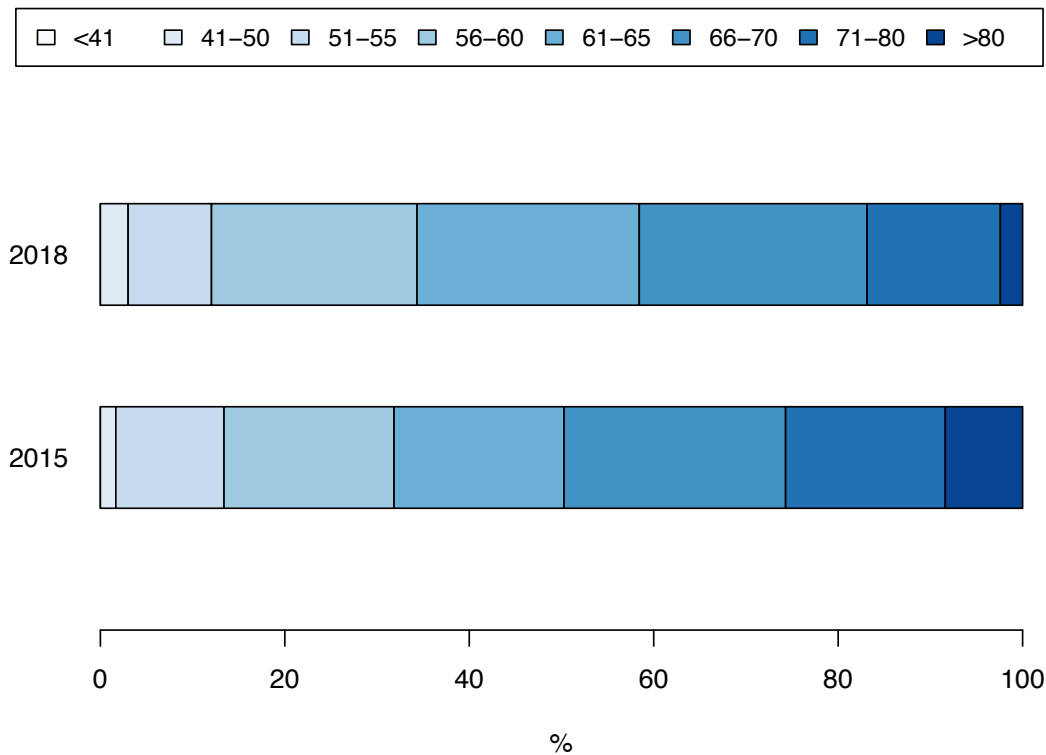
The slight differences between the hours worked by principals in 2015 and 2018 are not statistically significant. There were no differences related to school decile in 2018 (in 2015, some differences were reported).

Levels of stress have increased since 2015

Stress levels also remain high, with an increase from the levels reported in 2015. In 2018, 46% of principals report high typical stress levels (up from 39% in 2015), and 11% extremely high typical stress levels (up from 5%).

Most principals describe themselves as healthy

As in 2012 and 2015, most principals describe themselves as being healthy, with just 4% saying their health is not good. However, few principals manage to follow the general fitness guidelines of 30 minutes or more exercise a day: 8% did so on 6 to 7 days during the week in which they did the national survey, 26% did so on 3 to 5 days that week, and 44% on 1 or 2 days that week. Twenty-two percent had not undertaken any fitness activity that week. These figures are almost identical to those reported in 2015.

Morale continues to decline but most principals remain optimistic

Fewer principals now describe their morale as "very good" or "good" (61% in 2018, compared with 77% in 2015, and 80% in 2012). The decline is particularly in the proportion who describe their morale as "very good" (22% in 2018, compared with 33% in 2015, and 44% in 2012). At the other end of the scale, the proportion of principals describing their morale as "poor" or "very poor" has stayed around 7%. There were no differences related to school decile in the 2018 data (in 2015, some differences were reported).

In 2018, 77% of the principals describe themselves as feeling very optimistic or optimistic about their life and role as a principal (the same proportion as said they were very optimistic or quite optimistic in 2015—the wording changed slightly). However, there is a decrease in the proportion that are very optimistic: just 13% in 2018 (compared with 26% in 2015, and 36% in 2012).

Almost all the principals enjoy their job but many have workload concerns

Figure 39 shows that secondary principals continue to enjoy their jobs.[46] However, fewer principals are positive about their workload than in 2015. In 2018, 22% said their workload was manageable (36% in 2015), 19% said their work and personal life was balanced (not significantly different from 2015), and 16% that their workload was sustainable (26% in 2015). Only 22% thought they could schedule enough time for the educational leadership part of their job. Over half (57%) would like more career options in education beyond being a principal, and 22% sometimes feel stuck in the principal role.

Most secondary principals feel supported by strong school management teams, and report they have the internal support they need to do their job effectively. Fewer get the external support they need: 45%, down from 58% in 2015.

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46 There was a small change to this question in 2018, with no option for principals to say they were not sure about a statement. The "not sure" option was selected by a small number of principals in relation to only two statements in the 2015 survey ("I sometimes feel stuck in the principal role" and "I would like more career options in education").

FIGURE 39 **Secondary principals' views of their work (*n* = 167)**
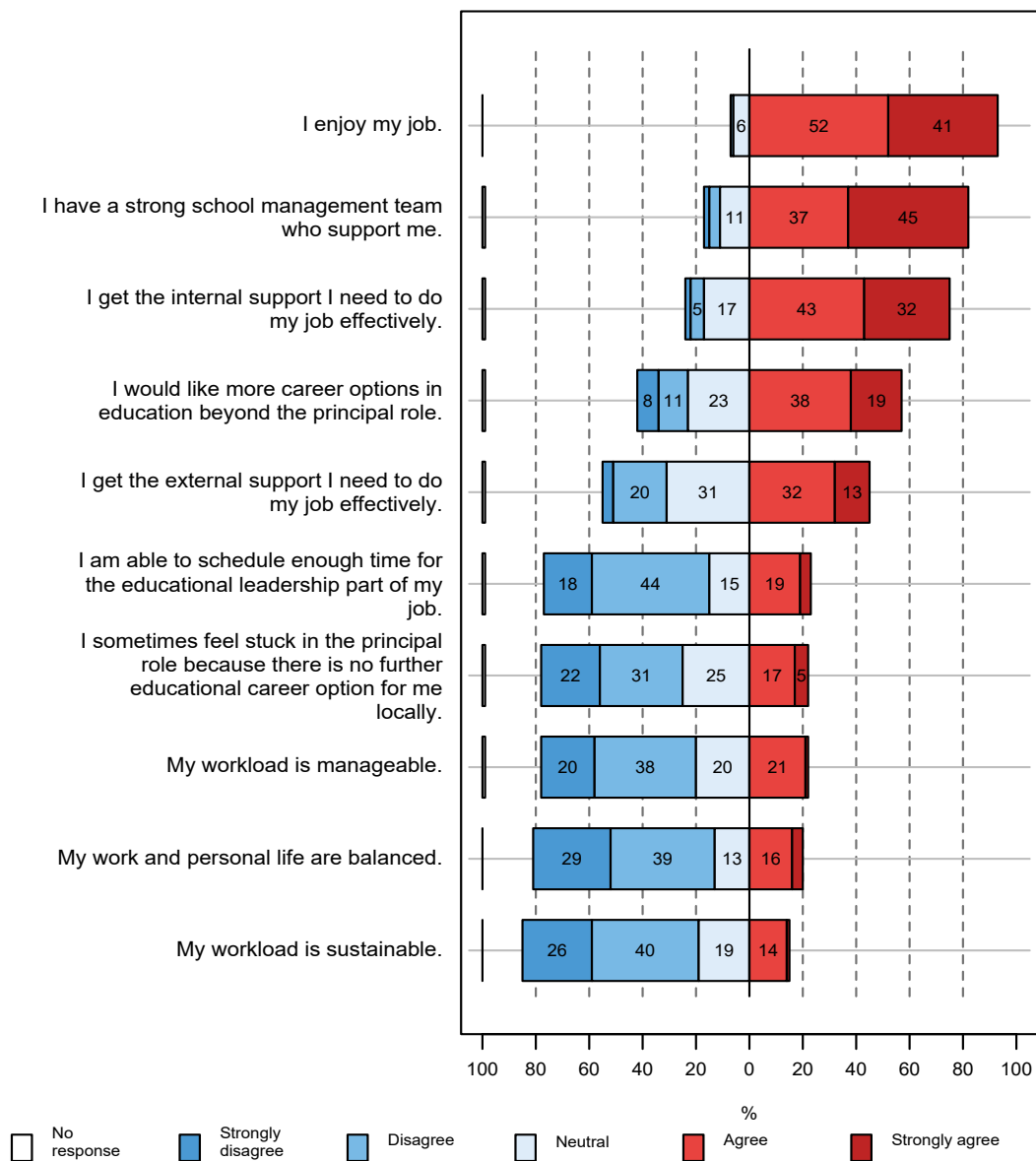
Changes principals would like in their work

Principals want more time to focus on educational leadership

Only 22% of the principals agreed they could schedule enough time for the educational leadership part of their job (see Figure 39). Time to focus on this was also a change many principals wanted to see in their role (see Table 28). Related to this is more time to reflect/read/be innovative.

Table 28 shows there is an increase from previous years in those who seek a higher salary. There is also an increase in the proportion of principals who would like to reduce demands on them: demands about property and HR, demands from external agencies, and demands from parents and whānau (which increased to 21% from under 10% in previous years).

TABLE 28 **Changes secondary principals would like in their work; 2012, 2015, and 2018**

Change	2012 (*n* = 177) %	2015 (*n* = 182) %	2018 (*n* = 167) %
More time to reflect/read/be innovative	*	73	86
More time to focus on educational leadership	72	81	83
More balanced life	57	67	71
Reduce administration/paperwork	61	54	50
Reduce human resource management demands	35	30	47
Higher salary	38	34	46
Reduce external agencies' demands/expectations	41	30	44
Reduce property management/development demands	34	31	37
Reduce parents' and whānau demands	7	9	21

* Not asked.

Principals from higher decile schools are most likely to want to reduce parent and whānau demands (38% of decile 7–8 schools, and 27% of decile 9–10 schools, compared with 5% of decile 1–2 schools, 11% of decile 3–4 schools, and 15% of decile 5–6 schools).

Summary and discussion

Secondary principals report high levels of enjoyment of their role, but it remains a role with long work hours and high stress levels. Morale and stress levels have worsened since 2015.

Many secondary principals intend to stay in their current school over the next 5 years. This figure has been consistent since 2009. If secondary principals feel the need to move on from being a principal, they are more likely to seek a job within education than leave it. Over half say they would like more career options in education beyond being a principal.

Two-thirds of the principals who responded to the survey are in their first principalship. Most principals say they feel supported by a strong school management team, and that they get the internal support they need to do their job effectively. However, less than half agree they get the external support they need. The new Leadership Strategy[47] developed by the Teaching Council is timely: what support there has been from the system is limited and often focused on school management rather than educational leadership.

The increase in the proportion of principals accessing NZSTA support, support from SPANZ, and from former principals working as consultants suggests principals are looking for support. Most principals also meet other principals regularly, but only a minority work closely with other principals, and the trend here has not improved since 2012. One way in which principals may work with other principals is through participating in a Kāhui Ako. In *Section 9: Interactions and collaborations, including Kāhui Ako* we report principals' views on working in Kāhui Ako.

There were no differences related to decile and no notable differences related to location for how likely a principal was to use support or to have professional contact with other principals.

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47 See: https://educationcouncil.org.nz/content/leadership-strategy

8.

Principals' perspectives on external review, advice, and expertise

In this section we start with principals' views of their schools' experiences of the Education Review Office (ERO), the government agency responsible for external evaluation of individual schools and providing advice through their reviews and national overviews of the quality of provision in schools. Then we turn to principals' perceptions of their interactions with government agencies and national bodies, and their access to external expertise.

Experiences of ERO

We asked principals three questions about recent ERO reviews: When was the school last reviewed by ERO? What was the return time given after the *most recent* ERO review? What was the return time given after the *previous* ERO review?

As context, Table 29 shows when the school was last reviewed by ERO. For 71% of principals this was within the last 2–3 years at the time of completing the survey (2016, 2017, and 2018).

TABLE 29 **Last ERO review, reported by principals**

Year	Principals (*n* = 167) %
2018	16
2017	28
2016	28
2015	20
2014	8
2013	1

Principals who responded to our survey were slightly less likely to lead a school on a 1–2-year return time than schools nationally. Four percent of the principals said their school had been given a 1–2-year return time at their most recent ERO review, 65% said their school had been given a 3-year return time, and 29% said their school had been given a 4–5-year return time.[48] School decile was associated with whether schools are currently on a 4–5-year review return, increasing from 5% of decile 1–2 secondary schools to 67% of decile 9–10 schools. A notable change from 2015 is that most decile 1–2 schools are now on a 3-year return (90%). In 2015, 30% of decile 1–2 schools were on a 1–2-year review return.

There is movement across adjacent ERO return time status

No principals who responded to the survey led schools that had moved from a 1–2-year return to a 4–5-year return, or in the other direction from a 4–5-year return to a 1–2-year return. However, there was movement between adjacent return times.

Moving to a *more* frequent ERO review:
- 43% of those currently on a 1–2-year return had previously been on a 3-year return[49]
- 6% of those currently on a 3-year return had previously been on a 4–5-year return.

Moving to a *less* frequent ERO review:
- 14% of those currently on a 3-year return had previously been on a 1–2-year return
- 54% of those currently on a 4–5-year return had previously been on a 3-year return.

Most principals are positive about their interactions with ERO

Most secondary principals are positive about their interactions with ERO and ERO reviews (see Figure 40). Many had used their last ERO review report to improve their own review and planning, and to make changes that improved teaching and learning in the school. Just over half the principals said their school made changes as a result of ERO's national reports on secondary schooling. As in 2015, there is less agreement from principals about the reliability of ERO review reports as an indicator of the overall quality of teaching and learning in a school (44% of principals agree or strongly agree).

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48 This is close to ERO national figures as at late December 2016: 9% of secondary schools were in the 1–2-year review return category, 63% of secondary schools were in the 3-year review return category, and 26% of secondary schools were in the 4–5-year review return category. (Data from ERO's Annual Report 2017/18, available at: https://www.ero.govt.nz/assets/ Uploads/ERO-Annual-Report-2018.pdf)
49 Note that there are small numbers here, with only seven principals responding to the survey leading schools on a 1–2-year return.

FIGURE 40 **Principals' views of ERO and use of ERO reviews and reports (*n* = 167)**
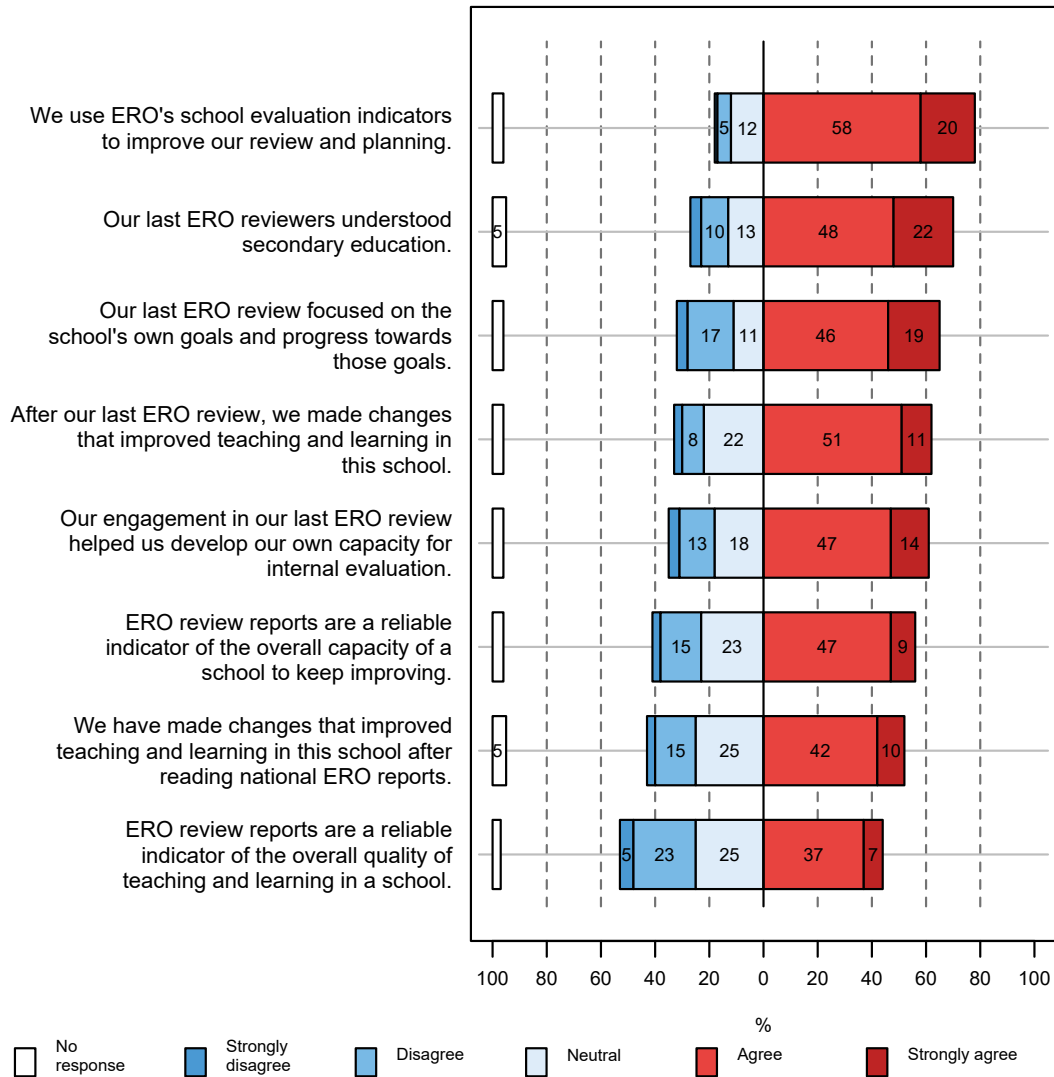
Principals in schools on a 4–5-year return time are more likely to agree with three of the statements in Figure 40:

- ERO review reports are a reliable indicator of the overall quality of teaching and learning in a school (63% of principals leading a school on a 4–5-year return agree, compared with 37% of principals in a school on a 3-year return, and 29% of principals in a school on a 1–2-year return).
- ERO review reports are a reliable indicator of the overall capacity of a school to keep improving (75% of principals leading a school on a 4–5-year return agree, compared with 51% of principals in a school on a 3-year return, and 29% of principals in a school on a 1–2-year return).
- We use ERO's school evaluation indicators to improve our review and planning (79% of principals leading a school on a 4–5-year return and 78% of principals in a school on a 3-year return agree, compared with 57% of principals in a school on a 1–2-year return).

Views of external advice

Secondary schools use a range of advice and support as they navigate their way through legal and moral responsibilities, including the core curriculum and assessment, finances and property, and student wellbeing and welfare. We asked principals how helpful they had found the advice they received from some government agencies and national bodies (see Figure 41).

Over half of principals got helpful advice from NZSTA and Ministry regional offices

Overall, principals are less positive in 2018 about having had helpful advice than they were in 2015.[50] Many are neutral, which may suggest that they did not have a reason to seek advice from a particular agency, or that their experience was mixed. The only agencies that more than half of principals agree had given helpful advice are the Ministry's regional office (57% of the principals, but down from 73% in 2015) and NZSTA (59% of the principals, also down from 73% in 2015). Forty-three percent of the principals agree they received helpful advice from the Education Council, up from 33% in 2015 when it was the Teachers Council/ EDUCANZ. Just over a third of the principals agree they had helpful advice from ERO and the Ministry's national office.

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50 Note that the scale changed slightly with no option for "not sure" in 2018. As the proportion of principals selecting "not sure" in 2015 ranged from 0.5% to 2.2% we do not think this was a factor in the decline in the proportion of principals agreeing.

FIGURE 41 **Principals' level of agreement that they received helpful advice from government agencies (*n = 167*)**
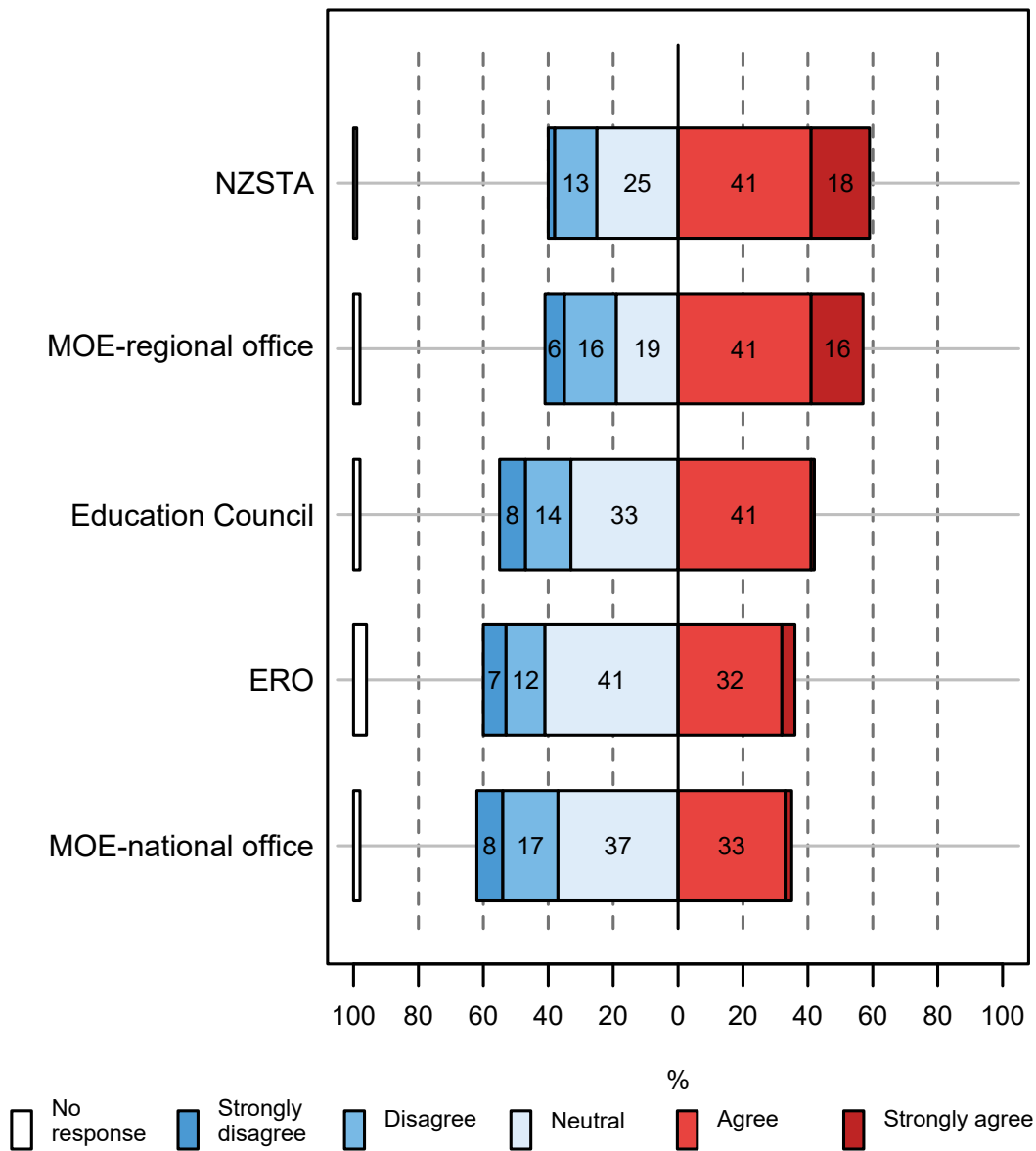
Access to external expertise

Over half of the principals cannot access support for working with students with mental health issues

Most secondary principals thought they could access external expertise needed by their school across the wide range of areas we asked about, from improving student behaviour to analysis of student achievement data to learning with digital technologies. However, there were notable areas were a sizeable group cannot access support, or where a higher proportion cannot access this support in 2018 compared with 2015:

- working with students with mental health issues (62%, up from 36% in 2015; in 2012, 51% could not access this support)

- engaging parents, whānau, and Pacific fanau (34%, a new question for 2018)
- reliable strategies for Māori student learning (35%, up from 20% in 2015) and Pasifika student learning (28%). Principals in deciles 5–8 are more likely to say they need but cannot access this support
- improving student wellbeing (27%, up from 8% in 2015)
- differentiating teaching for students with learning support needs (27%).

There was one notable improvement in school access to external expertise since 2015: making the best choices on a tight budget (14% could not access this expertise in 2018, down from 28% in 2015).

Summary and discussion

Most principals are positive about their interactions with ERO. Many make use of ERO review reports and indicators to make improvements in their school. Principals in schools on a 4–5-year return time are more likely to agree that ERO review reports are a reliable indicator of the overall quality of teaching and learning in a school or the capacity of a school to keep improving.

Overall, principals are less positive in 2018 about having had helpful advice from government agencies and national bodies than they were in 2015. There were no decile-related differences in principal views of the helpfulness of the advice they got from government agencies and support bodies, or in their use of ERO reports or their views of interactions with ERO.

There are also notable areas where some principals report they cannot access the external expertise they need. Of particular note is the increase to 62% of principals who need, but cannot access, support for working with students with mental health issues.

Sizeable minorities of principals also report needing more support for engaging parents and whānau, implementing strategies to improve Māori and Pasifika student learning, and differentiating teaching for students with learning support needs. These areas continue to present problems for substantial minorities of secondary schools, indicating needs that cannot be met by asking schools to source their own advice.

9.

Interactions and collaborations, including Kāhui Ako

This section reports the principals' and trustees' perspectives on their involvement in Kāhui Ako.[51] Kāhui Ako or Communities of Learning began forming in mid-2015, as part of a major new policy, Investing in Educational Success.[52] The initiative seeks to make more of the knowledge held within each school and ensure that knowledge about each student is shared as they moved onto the next education level. The schools making up each Kāhui Ako identify shared achievement challenges and work together to improve teaching and learning outcomes.

In the 2015 national survey we included questions about people's expectations of Kāhui Ako. At that point, almost two-thirds of secondary school principals were interested in their school joining a Kāhui Ako, and a further quarter were unsure. Many principals were expecting Kāhui Ako to improve transition to secondary school, lead to more sharing of useful knowledge for teaching and learning, and bring more traction on tackling issues around student achievement and engagement. Teachers' views were more mixed, including positive expectations as well as concerns about possible negative impacts for teachers and schools. Three years on, we explore the extent to which principals' original expectations have been borne out.

Before focusing on Kāhui Ako, we discuss the extent to which schools interact and work collaboratively with other schools, post-secondary education providers, employers, and iwi.

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51 In 2018, no Kāhui Ako-related questions were included in the teacher questionnaire, in the interests of managing the questionnaire's length.
52 In 2015, these were called Communities of Schools, and subsequently changed to Communities of Learning | Kāhui Ako.

Principals' views on their interaction and work with others

Joint work between schools is most likely to involve principals sharing leadership practices, visiting other schools, and sharing PLD

We asked all principals what joint work their school currently does with other schools (see Table 30). Most principals (85%) say they share and reflect on leadership practice at the principal level. This is a new item in the 2018 survey. Most also visit other schools to learn from each other (82%, up considerably from 54% in 2015), and share PLD (80%, asked for the first time in 2018). Kāhui Ako are likely to be having an impact here.

Many of the principals also work with other schools to support a subject teacher who is the sole subject provider in their school (68%), share challenges and approaches around getting change in pedagogy (59%), and discuss school achievement data (53%).

Some principals discuss student engagement or wellbeing data (41%), work together to place students who are having difficulty in one school into other school (40%), have regular meetings of schools as a group with social agencies (36%, continuing to fall from just over half in 2012), and work with local schools to reduce truancy (20%).

TABLE 30 **Current joint work with other schools, reported by principals; 2012, 2015, and 2018**

Kind of joint work	2012 (*n* = 177) %	2015 (*n* = 182) %	2018 (*n* = 167) %
Share and reflect on leadership practice at the principal level	*	*	85
Inter-school visits to learn from each other	41	54	82
Share professional learning and development	*	*	80
Support for teachers if sole subject provider in school	63	63	68
Share challenges and approaches around getting change in pedagogy	*	*	59
Discuss our individual school achievement data	*	*	53
Discuss our individual school student engagement or wellbeing data	*	*	41
Work together to place students having difficulty in one school into another school	42	36	40
Regular meetings of schools as a group with social agencies	51	46	36
Work with other local schools to reduce truancy	29	29	20

* Not asked.

Most principals report their school interacts with post-secondary education providers

Interactions with post-secondary education providers are common and have remained much the same since 2015. Most of the principals (91%) report using these providers for STAR courses; for liaison about student pathways and student understanding of options (87%); or for Gateway courses (81%). Ten percent of the principals reported some competition with these providers, 4% had either no or limited contact, or no local post-secondary education providers.

Just over one-third of the principals say they interact with post-secondary education providers to share information about students. A decile-related difference is that over half of decile 1–4 principals say they do this, decreasing to 13% of decile 9–10 principals.

Most principals report their school has some interaction with local employers and community organisations

We asked for the first time in 2018 about schools' interactions with local employers and community organisations (see Table 31). Almost all (94%) of the principals report that some students work with local employers or community organisations as part of their programme. This was reported by all principals of decile 1–4 schools.

Three-quarters (76%) of the principals report that they invite employers and organisations to talk to students about potential post-school pathways, and over half say employers provide taster sessions for students.

Less common is ongoing work with local employers or community organisations.

TABLE 31 **Interactions with local employers and community organisations, reported by principals**

Type of interaction	Principals (*n* = 167) %
Some students work with local employers or community organisations as part of their programme	94
We invite local employers and community organisations to talk to students about potential post-school pathways	76
Some employers provide taster sessions for students	58
We actively seek engagement with local employers to understand the skills and knowledge students will need	53
Some students undertake innovative projects with local employers or community organisations	44
I am part of local networks that include employers	30
We are co-constructing some programmes with local employers or community organisations	26
We invite local employers to give us feedback on our programmes	22

Over half of principals report their school has discussions with local iwi

Another new question in the 2018 survey asked principals about the interactions their school has with local iwi (see Table 32). Eighteen percent have no interaction with local iwi, and 4% used the "Other" response to say that they have limited interaction with iwi.

The most common interaction is discussions with iwi about how best to provide for Māori students (59% of principals). Some (22%–32% of principals) report that iwi have input into strategic planning, co-construct some student support, or co-construct some programmes.

One-fifth of the principals selected "Other" in response to this question. Seven used this category to say they had limited interaction with iwi (but more than no interaction). This included a desire to have more interaction, and some hesitancy about knowing how to progress this. A few principals also used the "Other" category to say they had iwi representation on the board of trustees (four principals) or iwi involvement in a whānau group (two principals).

TABLE 32   **Interactions with iwi, reported by principals**

Type of interaction	Principals (*n* = 167) %
We have discussions with iwi about how best to provide for Māori students	59
Iwi have input into our strategic planning	32
Iwi co-construct some student support with us	26
Iwi co-construct some programmes with us	22
No interactions	18
Iwi provide feedback on our annual report	4
Limited interaction with iwi	4

Principals from decile 1–2 schools are least likely to report they interact with iwi about how best to provide for Māori students (32%, compared with 58%–76% of principals leading schools of other deciles).[53]

Principals from metropolitan schools are more likely than principals of other schools to say they have no interaction with local iwi (25%, compared with 11% of principals of town schools, and no principals of schools in small cities or rural schools). Five of the six rural principals say that iwi have input into the school's strategic planning (compared with 22%–38% of principals of schools in town or cities). Four of the six rural principals say that iwi co-construct some programmes (compared with 16%–32% of principals of schools in towns or cities).

Principals' views on Kāhui Ako

Most schools are in a Kāhui Ako and principals report some benefits

Kāhui Ako are in their early days, and the findings from this 2018 survey will provide a useful baseline for understanding how they develop over time. In 2018, most (82%) of the principals responding to the survey are in secondary schools in Kāhui Ako (considerably more than the 63% who expressed interest in joining a Kāhui Ako in 2015). Over two-thirds of these principals (69%) are a member of a principals or stewardship group that meets regularly; and 37% are a member of a similar group that meets when needed. Fourteen percent are a Kāhui Ako leader, and 4% have no formal role in their Kāhui Ako.

Principals report benefits from being in a Kāhui Ako (see Figure 42). Two-thirds of principals from schools in a Kāhui Ako agree that principals support each other more, 62% agree that principals have a greater understanding of the needs of the community, and almost half (49%) agree that sharing professional development with teachers from primary schools has been beneficial.

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53 The greatest proportion of decile 1–2 schools are metropolitan schools, which might account for this difference.

FIGURE 42 **Changes in relationships and increased inter-school sharing, as a result of Kāhui Ako, reported by principals in a Kāhui Ako (*n* = 137)**
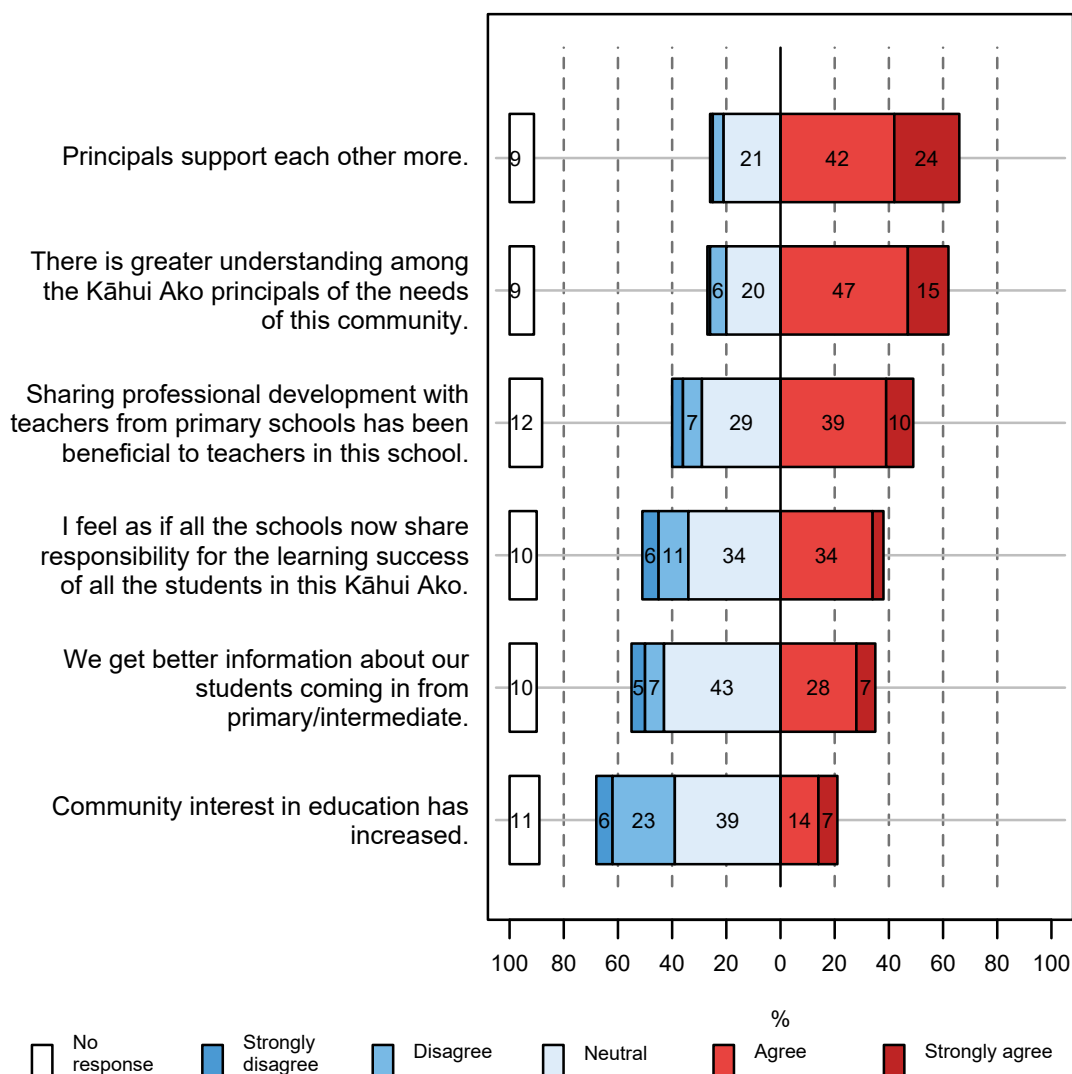
Looking back at some of the expectations principals expressed in 2015, 65% of principals thought Kāhui Ako would lead to improvement in student transition to secondary school. Something that would support improved transition is secondary schools getting better information about students coming in from primary/intermediate schools. In 2018, 35% of principals in a Kāhui Ako say they are getting better information, with a further 43% responding "neutral". As we saw earlier,[54] there has been little change in the proportion of principals who say they get good information about students' academic strengths and needs when they enter their school (78% indicate this happens at their school, compared with 75% in 2015), suggesting this could be a fruitful area for some Kāhui Ako to strengthen.

In 2015, 23% of the principals expected the Kāhui Ako approach to lead to better professional support for principals. In 2018, two-thirds of the principals in a Kāhui Ako say principals support each other more—one form of professional support for school leaders.

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54 See *Supporting students during the transition to secondary school* in *Section 4: Teaching and learning in secondary schools.*

Some principals are starting to see changes within their school or for students as a result of being in a Kāhui Ako

Most Kāhui Ako are in their early days, as indicated by the lower proportions of principals in one reporting changes within the school or for students (see Figure 43). Forty-six percent agree they are doing some things differently, and 39% agree they are getting some traction in improving work with students they prioritise.

FIGURE 43 **Gains in schools from Kāhui Ako participation, reported by principals in a Kāhui Ako (*n* = 137)**
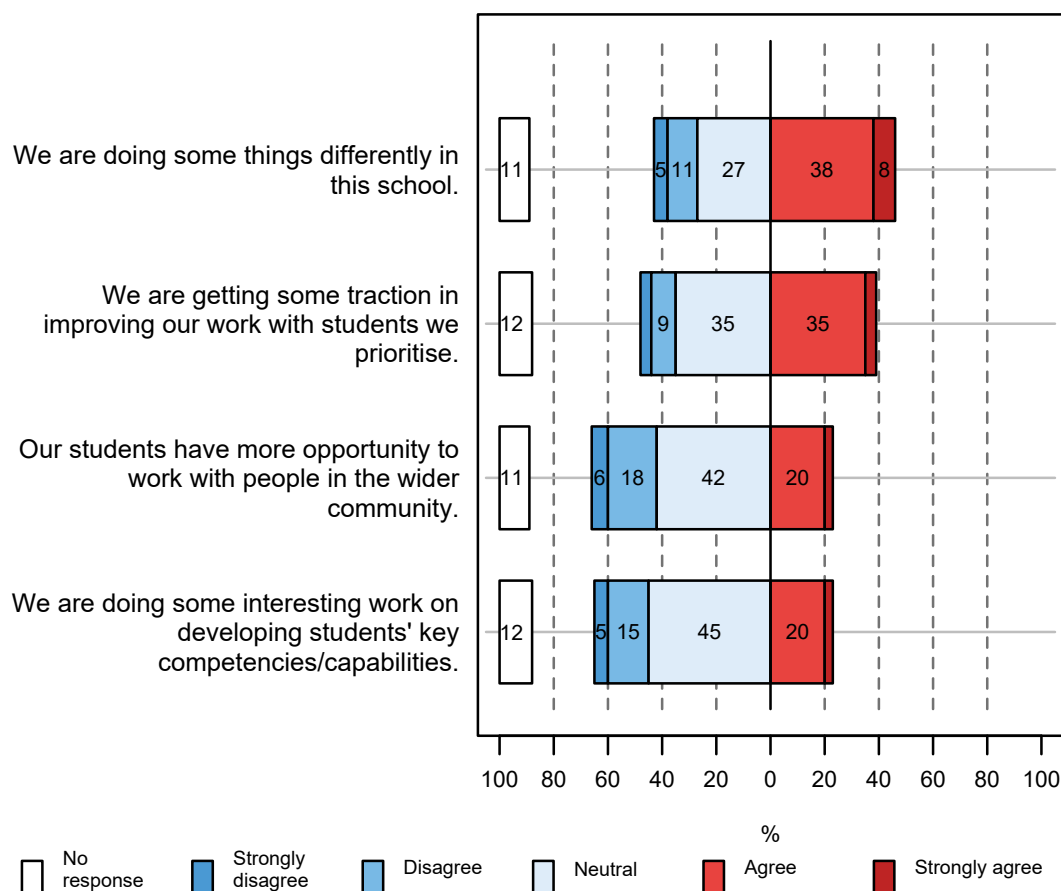
Almost two-thirds of the principals in a Kāhui Ako consider that the way Kāhui Ako are set up needs changing

We also asked principals in a Kāhui Ako what they think about Kāhui Ako overall (see Figure 44), rather than specifically the one their school belongs to. Principals are most positive about the learning pathway that is enabled by Kāhui Ako—55% of the principals in a Kāhui Ako agree that the learning pathway framework is valuable. Forty-five percent agree that Kāhui Ako are worth the time investment, and just under 40% see Kāhui Ako as essential for improving teaching and learning, and better meeting the needs of students who don't currently succeed.

Almost two-thirds of the principals (64%) think that the way Kāhui Ako are set up needs changing, and half (51%) think that too much is expected of Kāhui Ako.

FIGURE 44 **Principals' views of Kāhui Ako, reported by principals in a Kāhui Ako (*n* = 137)**
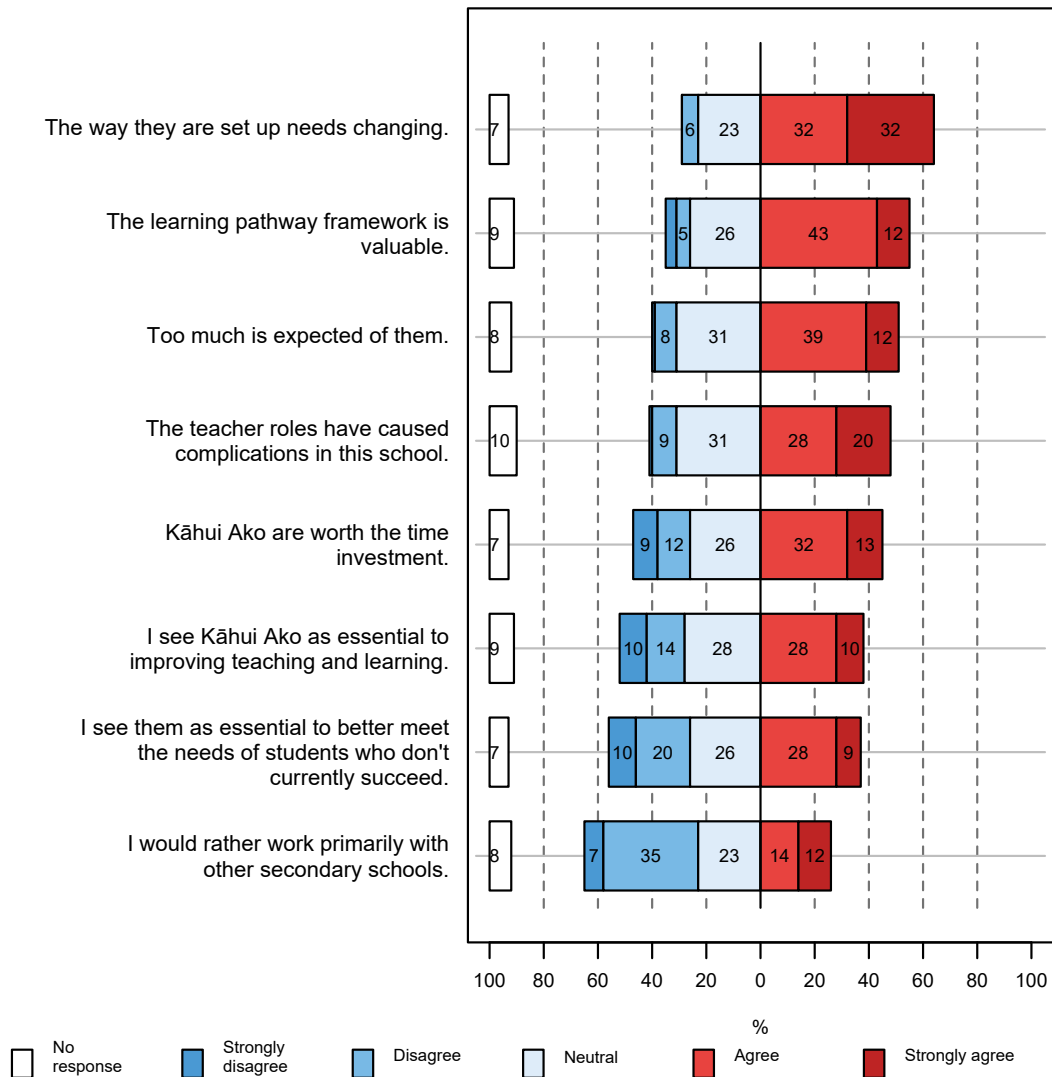
All principals were also given the opportunity to provide comments about Kāhui Ako, and 114 (68% of all principals responding to the survey) did so. Consistent with the finding above that almost two-thirds of principals in a Kāhui Ako think the way they are set up needs changing, the most common theme (in comments from 21% of all principals) was principals' concerns about the Kāhui Ako structure or model, including those who preferred previous ways of working as a cluster.

Thirteen percent of principals expressed funding-related concerns. In 2015, 35% of principals expected working in a Kāhui Ako would afford them better opportunities to access new funding sources. We cannot tell from principals' responses in 2018 the extent to which this has eventuated. What we can say is that funding continues to be an area causing concern for some principals.

Around 10% of principals made comments about each of the following themes: being unconvinced of the value of Kāhui Ako; having concerns about roles; still being in the throes of setting up their Kāhui Ako; or feeling it is too soon to say. Smaller proportions of comments (around 5%) were from those who had encountered difficulties working in a Kāhui Ako, including primary schools dominating, difficulty finding relievers, or concern about workloads.

Some principals used this open question to write a positive comment about Kāhui Ako. Thirteen percent of comments were principals positive about sharing expertise and learning together. Four percent of comments were from principals optimistic about the future of Kāhui Ako.

These quotes illustrate the key themes in principals' comments about Kāhui Ako:

> We meet as a cluster of schools and do much of what is seen as beneficial for Kāhui Ako without the stringent structures. The way Kāhui Ako are structured needs freeing up and greater autonomy given to clusters to set up in a way that better suits their needs but still with good accessibility to resources.

> Vertical integration of PD and teaching from primary to secondary will only strengthen outcomes for students. We have to be braver to overcome the doubts.

> Too much bureaucracy/administration. Too 'leadership heavy'. Not the model the sector would have developed if we were given the opportunity.

> The structure is flawed, in every respect. The goal is valid and important, but the reality of the structure means that it will not succeed as it should.

> It is too early to tell how successful they might be.

> Building the relationships between teachers in all the schools in our rural community has been really valuable. Sharing of data across the Kāhui Ako has been a great way for us all to develop an understanding of the needs of students within our community. Sharing PD opportunities has led to shared understanding across the schools within our community.

Trustees' views on Kāhui Ako

In the 2015 survey, we asked trustees if their school was interested in joining a Kāhui Ako. Three years later, we asked if their school belonged to a Kāhui Ako, and if so, how well this was working.

The majority of trustees responding to the survey are in a school that belongs to a Kāhui Ako (80%). These trustees were asked to what extent they agreed with five statements about this Kāhui Ako (see Figure 45).

Most trustees from a school in a Kāhui Ako agree their board gets good information about it

Most trustees from a school in a Kāhui Ako agree their board gets good information (70%). There is less agreement about all other aspects, with 42% of trustees agreeing (and 45% neutral) that the school is benefiting from the Kāhui Ako work. Again, this may be because many Kāhui Ako are just getting going. Less than a third say the board chairs of their Kāhui Ako meet on a regular basis.

FIGURE 45 **Trustees' views of their Kāhui Ako (*n* = 110)**
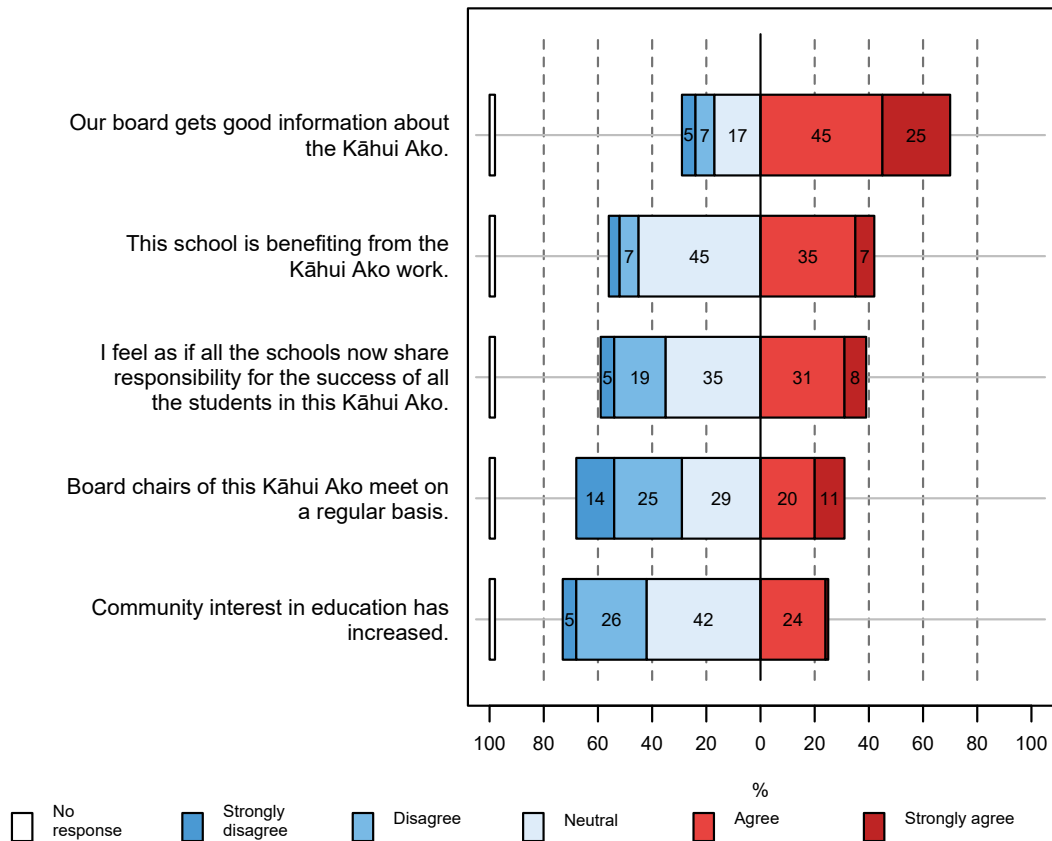
Over half the trustees from a school in a Kāhui Ako agree that Kāhui Ako are worth the time investment

In a second question, trustees were asked to what extent they agreed with six statements about Kāhui Ako overall. Over half of the trustees agree that Kāhui Ako are worth the time investment, are essential to improving teaching and learning, and that the learning pathway framework is valuable. For the other three items that are more about the operation of the Kāhui Ako, around half of trustees selected the neutral option, perhaps because they do not know, or do not have a strong view.

FIGURE 46 **Trustees' views of Kāhui Ako overall, reported by trustees from schools in Kāhui Ako (*n* = 110)**
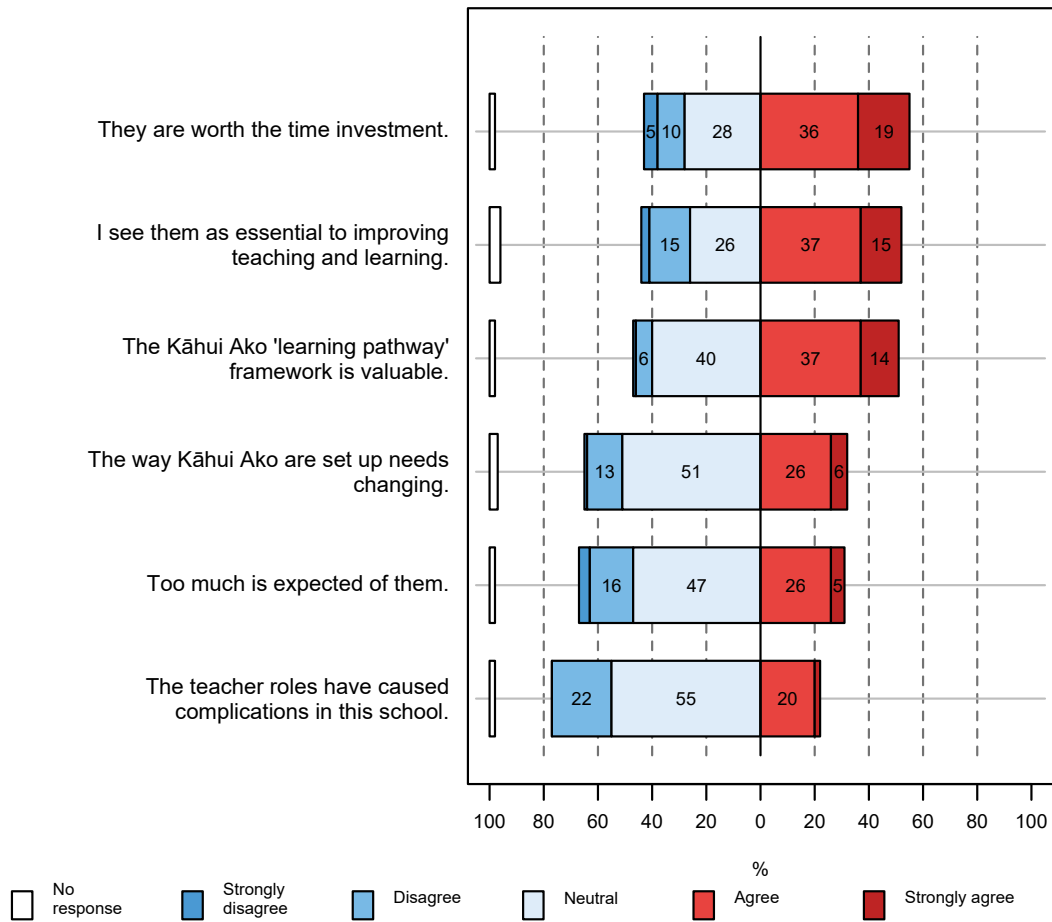
Summary and discussion

Schools interact and collaborate with many other schools and organisations in their community. Joint work between schools is most commonly initiated at the principal level, with principals sharing and reflecting on leadership practice. Most principals also report that their school visits other schools to learn from others (up considerably since 2015), and shares PLD. Kāhui Ako may be having an impact here. Interactions between schools and post-school education providers are common. Most principals also report their school interacts with local employers and community organisations.

Nearly 60% of the principals report that the school has discussions with iwi about how best to provide for Māori students. A minority of principals report that the school interacts with local iwi in other ways, suggesting there is considerable opportunity for secondary schools and iwi to work together more. Some principals say they would like more support with this. This is the first time we have asked about interactions with local iwi, and these data will be a useful baseline.

In 2015, we sought people's expectations for Kāhui Ako. The 2018 survey was the first to include a close look at their impact on schools and students, again setting an important baseline. Most schools whose principals responded to the survey are in a Kāhui Ako and principals report some benefits to being involved, including principals supporting each other more, and principals having a greater understanding of the needs of the community. It is early days for many Kāhui Ako, and involvement in a Kāhui Ako has yet to lead to changes within the school or for students for many. There were no decile-related or location-related differences in principals' views on Kāhui Ako.

Principals are most positive about the learning pathway that is enabled by Kāhui Ako, but under half agree that the time investment is worth it, and many principals think that the way Kāhui Ako are set up needs changing. This was borne out in their comments. Alongside this, a sizeable proportion of principals selected the neutral response to questions about Kāhui Ako, adding weight to the view that it is too soon to see some of these things happening. Although there are signs of progress towards some of the expectations expressed as Kāhui Ako were getting underway in 2015, others have yet to be realised.

10.

Trustees' perspectives and the work of school boards

This section presents school trustee perspectives on their role and the work of school boards. In the NZCER national surveys, we write to the board chair via the school. We send two letters and ask the chair to complete the survey themselves and give the other letter to another board member,[55] preferably one who might have a different view on some issues.[56] This year we moved from sending paper surveys to a link to the online survey, in the letter. The response rate for trustees was 22% (*n* = 138). The margin of error for trustees' responses is around 8.3%.

Previous surveys have found differences related to decile in trustee experiences and views, so we continue to analyse trustee responses by school decile. However, because of the low number of trustees responding from decile 1–2 schools this year[57] (nine trustees, compared with 28 to 38 trustees for each of the other quintiles), any apparent differences related to decile would need to be very cautiously interpreted, so we have not reported them this year. Neither have we reported differences related to school location, because the proportion of responses from trustees at rural and town schools are lower than the national picture.

Fifty-five percent of trustees who responded in 2018 were board chairs. Any marked differences in the views of chairs and other trustees are reported in this section. Principals' views of the key elements in the role of boards and their views of how their school board is working, are also included in this section.

Trustee experience and pathways to the trustee role

Around half of the secondary school trustees have experience on other boards

Almost half (48%) of the secondary school trustees come to their role with previous experience of serving on a primary or intermediate school board of trustees. Over half (57%) have experience on the board of another organisation such as a business or voluntary organisation.

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55 Other than the principal or teacher representative.
56 Details of the responding trustees are in the Appendix. Overall, the trustees responding in 2018 were more highly qualified than those who responded in 2015. Slightly fewer trustees were under the age of 50, and fewer were from rural or town schools.
57 The low response rate from trustees in decile 1–2 schools may indicate that trustees at these schools do not have the online access that other trustees have.

Almost all trustees are also in paid employment

Almost all secondary trustees who responded to the survey are also in paid employment; 62% as employees and 33% self-employed. Some board members get support from their employment for their school trustee role: 40% can use some paid time for their role, 37% can use some work equipment, and 34% can use work hours flexibly.

Board chairs have longer experience on the board than other members

Trustees responding to the survey had been on their board for a median time of just over 3 years, very similar to the median time in the 2015 survey, and a year less than the 4.3 years found in the 2012 national survey. Board chairs had longer experience: a median of 5 years, compared with a median of 2.3 years for other board members.

Forty-six percent of trustees intend to stand again at the next trustee election (for many schools, in June 2019), and a further 27% are unsure. Overall, the picture of interest in continuing in the role is much the same as in previous years.

Trustees' views on their role

Board members are motivated to contribute to their community

Table 33 shows that the main driver for taking on school board responsibility is to contribute to the community. A quarter of trustees want to improve their school's achievement levels. Not many went onto a school board to change things at the school, or because they felt the school lacked leadership.

Table 33 also shows that the drivers or attractions of school board membership have been pretty stable over time. Comparing 2018 and 2015, there is a drop in those who want to help their child/children, and in those being asked to stand for election or join the board, and an increase in those who joined because they have particular skills that are useful.

TABLE 33 **Trustees' reasons for joining their secondary school board; 2012, 2015, and 2018**

Reason	2012 (n = 289) %	2015 (n = 232) %	2018 (n = 138) %
To contribute to the community	78	83	81
I have particular skills that are useful	56	54	66
To help my child/children	55	56	47
I was asked	44	54	41
I wanted to learn how the school operated	*	28	30
I wanted to improve achievement levels	26	27	25
I wanted to change things at the school	16	12	14
Not many people were standing	*	8	6
Leadership at the school was lacking	5	6	5

* Not asked.

Many trustees think the amount of responsibility the board has is about right

Many secondary school trustees (70%) think that the amount of responsibility asked of school boards is about right; 28% of trustees think too much is asked of trustees. This pattern has stayed much the same since 2009.

More chairs than other trustees think the amount of responsibility asked of school boards is too much: 40% of chairs, compared with 15% of other trustees. The proportion of board chairs who think the responsibility is too much has risen from 29% in 2015.

Most (83%) of trustees spend under 6 hours a week on their board work. Board chairs spend more time: only 11% carry out their role in less than 2 hours a week, compared with 69% of other trustees. A quarter of the chairs spent at least 6 hours a week in their role.

Trustees most enjoy having positive relationships with the school and the opportunity to contribute to student outcomes

New questions in the 2018 survey asked trustees what they enjoyed most and least about their role. These were open questions.

Almost all the trustees (98%) wrote at least one thing they enjoyed the most about the role. Two themes were the strongest: enjoying and valuing positive relationships with the school and the community (commented on by 30% of trustees); and having the opportunity to contribute to improving student outcomes and achieve the best for students (commented on by 29% of trustees). Other aspects trustees enjoyed were the community service, and opportunity to "give back" and contribute to the local community (23% of trustees); making a difference (22% of trustees); getting the opportunity to contribute to setting the school's strategic direction (18% of trustees); and the trustee's own learning (13% of trustees).

> Feeling like you can make a difference for your community in how our secondary students achieve in education. Supporting the school management team in an increasingly difficult job.

> Helping to ensure our school remains a great place for all kids in our community to grow and learn.

> Being part of the strategic direction of the school and contributing to the community.

> Supporting the school to achieve the very best results, academic and other, for its students. In particular Māori and Pasifika students—seeing their rates of achievement improve—and celebrating that.

Trustees least enjoy having to attend disciplinary meetings about students

Almost all trustees also wrote at least one thing they enjoyed the least about the role (126 responses, 91% of trustees). One theme emerged most strongly—disciplinary meetings and supporting students who have been excluded (commented on by 25% of trustees).

> Disciplinary meetings for students. I feel that we are ill-equipped as parent reps to be able to make life-altering decisions for students. This is made even more difficult when there is a lack of support services within our community.

From 6%–9% of the trustees also made comments on each of the following themes:
- Dealing with the Ministry of Education
- The extent of responsibilities
- Employment and personnel issues
- The time and workload involved in the trustee role
- Property issues
- Inadequate school funding.

The role of boards

Principals and trustees agree that providing strategic direction is a key element of the board role

Table 34 shows how trustees and principals answered the question: "What do you think are the key element(s) in the role of the board of trustees?"

Providing strategic direction was selected by the highest proportion of both trustees and principals. The pattern of responses from trustees and principals is the same, with one exception: 60% of the trustees see it as the board's role to oversee the principal's performance, compared with 26% of the principals.

TABLE 34   **Trustees' and principals' views on the key elements of the board of trustees' role**

Key element of board role	Trustees (*n* = 138) %	Principals (*n* = 167) %
Providing strategic direction for school	96	86
Supporting the principal	78	81
Representing parents and whānau in the school	74	80
Overseeing school finances	65	61
Scrutinising school performance	63	62
Employing the principal	36	47
Overseeing the principal's performance	60	26
Agent of government/representing government interest	8	10

In 2018, the proportion of trustees selecting each element is much higher than in 2015, for nearly every element. For example, 60% of trustees say a key element of their role is overseeing the principal's performance, compared with 16% in 2015; 78% selected supporting the principal, compared with 46% in 2015; and 65% selected overseeing school finances, compared with 34% in 2015. There was a very slight change in question wording which may have contributed to this.[58]

Trustees report that boards spend the most time on student progress and achievement

When we asked trustees to rank a range of board activity by the amount of time spent on it, student progress and achievement topped the list (see Figure 47). Attention to financial management and property/maintenance followed. This is a similar picture to 2015. Two differences from 2015 are that student behaviour is higher up the list (moving from position 7 to position 5 in the ranking), and day-to-day management has fewer trustees ranking it as highly (the median ranking remained at 9, but the upper quartile moved from 5 to 7).

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58 The core question was identical. The only difference was that in 2015 trustees were asked to tick the most important, and in 2018 they were asked to tick the most important *that apply* [italics added]. This may have encouraged trustees to select more items. In 2018, just 2% of trustees only selected one item from the list; in 2015, 32% of trustees selected only one item. In 2018, trustees selected a median of five items; in 2015 the median was three items.

FIGURE 47 **Main activities of boards in terms of time,[59] reported by trustees (*n* = 138)**
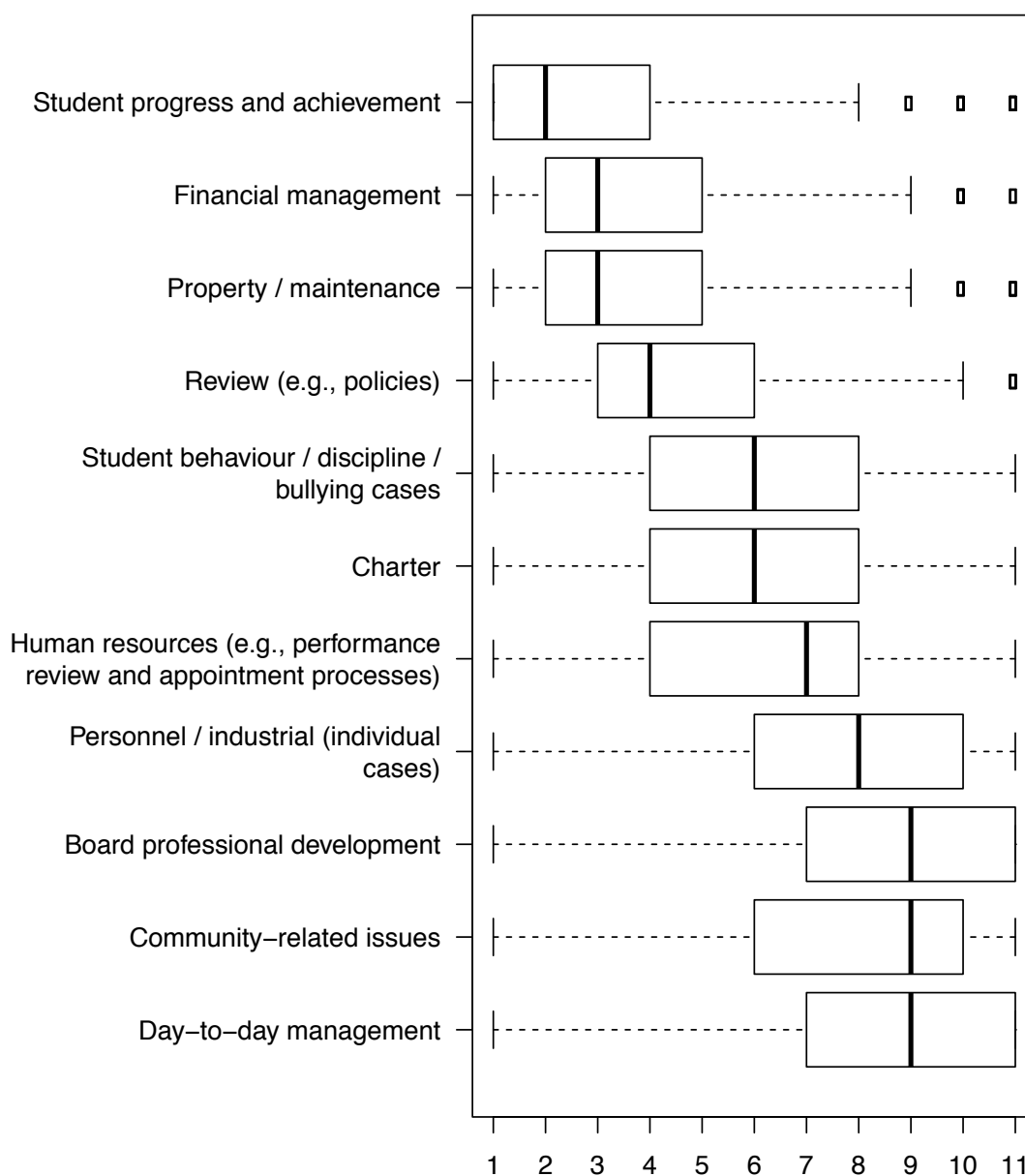
Figure 47 shows also the wide range between boards in how much time they give to particular aspects of their role (or, in the case of day-to-day management, what they should not be doing as the school's governing body). All the aspects we asked about have at least one trustee saying that was what their board spent most of its time on over the past year, and one trustee saying that was what their board spent least time on.

59 In order of the median ranking given. The figure is a "box and whiskers" graph, with the line in the middle of the box showing the median ranking (on a scale of 1–11), and the left hand side of the box indicating the spread of the 25% of scores above the median, and the right hand side of the box indicating the spread of 25% of scores below the median, with the single bars indicating the full range, and dots, extreme outliers.

Most principals agree that the board scrutinises school performance and uses student achievement data in decision making

We asked principals, as the school's professional leader employed by the board, for their perspectives on how their board worked. Figure 48 shows that most of the principals report that their board regularly scrutinises school performance and actively pays attention to achievement data in making decisions. The proportion agreeing drops for statements about use of data about students with additional learning needs and about Pacific students.

FIGURE 48 **The role of student data in board decision making, reported by principals (*n* = 167)**
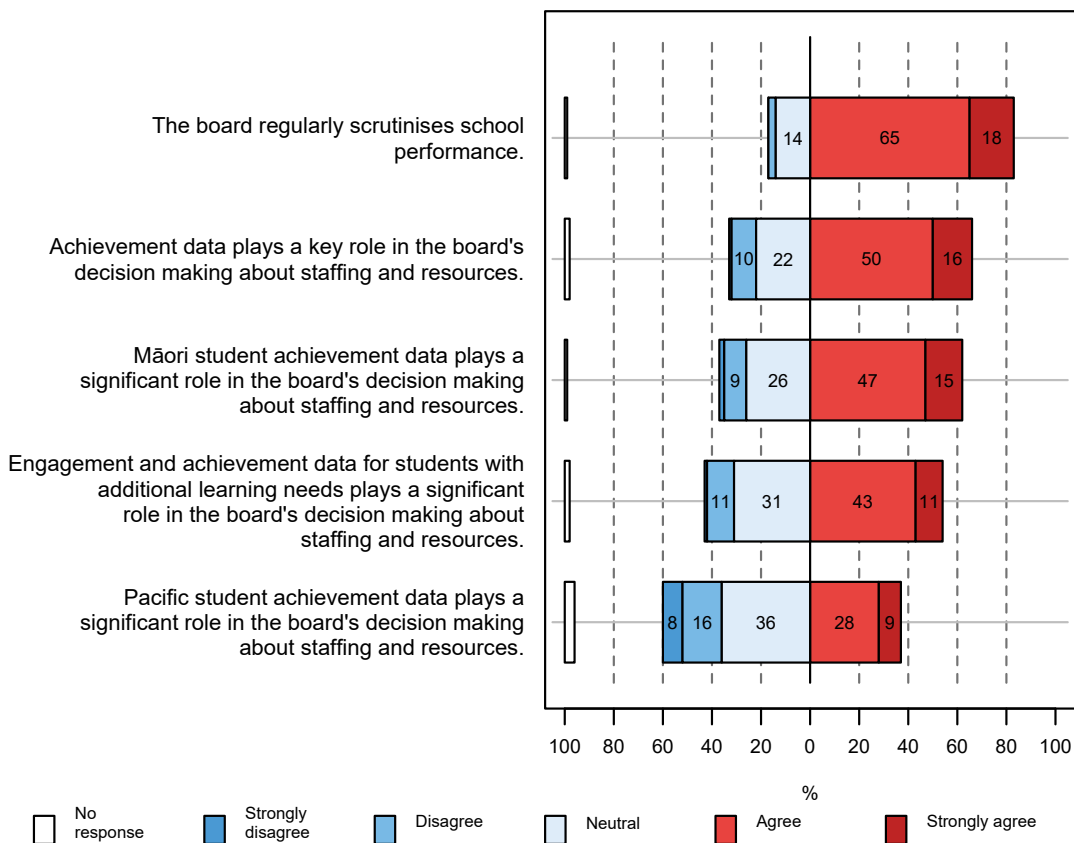
Half of trustees report that parents raised student behaviour issues with the board

Sixty percent of the trustees said that parents had raised issues with the board in the 2018 year (70% of trustees had experience of this in the 2015 year). The issues raised are wide ranging (see Table 35). As in previous national surveys, student behaviour and dissatisfaction with a staff member remain top issues. This year they are joined by mental health and wellbeing, and school uniform.

TABLE 35   **Issues raised by parents with their secondary school board, reported by trustees (*n* = 83)**

Top issues—more than 30% of trustees in schools where parents have raised issues say parents have raised this issue	• Student behavior (51% of trustees in schools where parents have raised issues say parents have raised this issue, 47% in 2015, 35% in 2012, 43% in 2009) • Mental health and wellbeing (34%, not asked about in the 2015 survey) • School uniform (33%, up slightly from 29% in 2015) • Dissatisfaction with staff member (30%, down from 44% in 2015—back to a similar level as 2012 and 2009)
10%–20% of trustees in schools where parents have raised issues say parents have raised this issue	• Provision for students with learning support needs • Student achievement • Funding • Provision for Māori students • Placement of students • Costs for parents and whānau • NCEA (13%, up from 7% in 2015) • Digital technology • School zone/enrolment scheme
Under 10% of trustees in schools where parents have raised issues say parents have raised this issue	• Modern learning environments • Curriculum • Transport • Homework • Grounds/maintenance • Theft/vandalism • Provision for Pacific students • Co-curricular provision • Class sizes

Board capability

Almost half of principals consider their board is on top of its task

Most of the trustees and principals are positive about how well their school board is doing (see Table 36). The overall picture has remained much the same since 2009, with 47% of principals seeing their board as being on top of its task in 2018. Principals are more likely than trustees to consider the board is coping or struggling.

TABLE 36   **Trustee and principal views of how their board is doing**

View	On top of its task %	Making steady progress %	Coping %	Struggling %
Trustees (*n* = 138)	37	57	4	1
Principals (*n* = 167)	47	35	13	5

Twenty-six percent of the decile 1–2 principals think their board is on top of its task (up from 5% in 2015), compared with 68% of the decile 7–8 principals, and 60% of the decile 9–10 principals. While no decile 1–2 principals think their board is struggling, they are more likely to say their board is coping (32%, compared with 7%–15% of principals leading schools of other deciles).

Thirty-one percent of the trustees say their board regularly reviews its own processes, as recommended (down from 41% in 2015), and 59% say they do this sometimes (up from 47% in 2015).

Many principals see their board adding real value to the school but a sizeable minority say their board needs a lot of support

Figure 49 shows that many (72%) of the principals see their school board adding real value to the school. A sizeable minority feel the board needs a lot of support (42%, up from 34% in 2015). As in 2015, just under half of principals (49%) agree that the board mainly acts as a sounding board for them.

FIGURE 49 **Principals' views of their board (*n* = 167)**
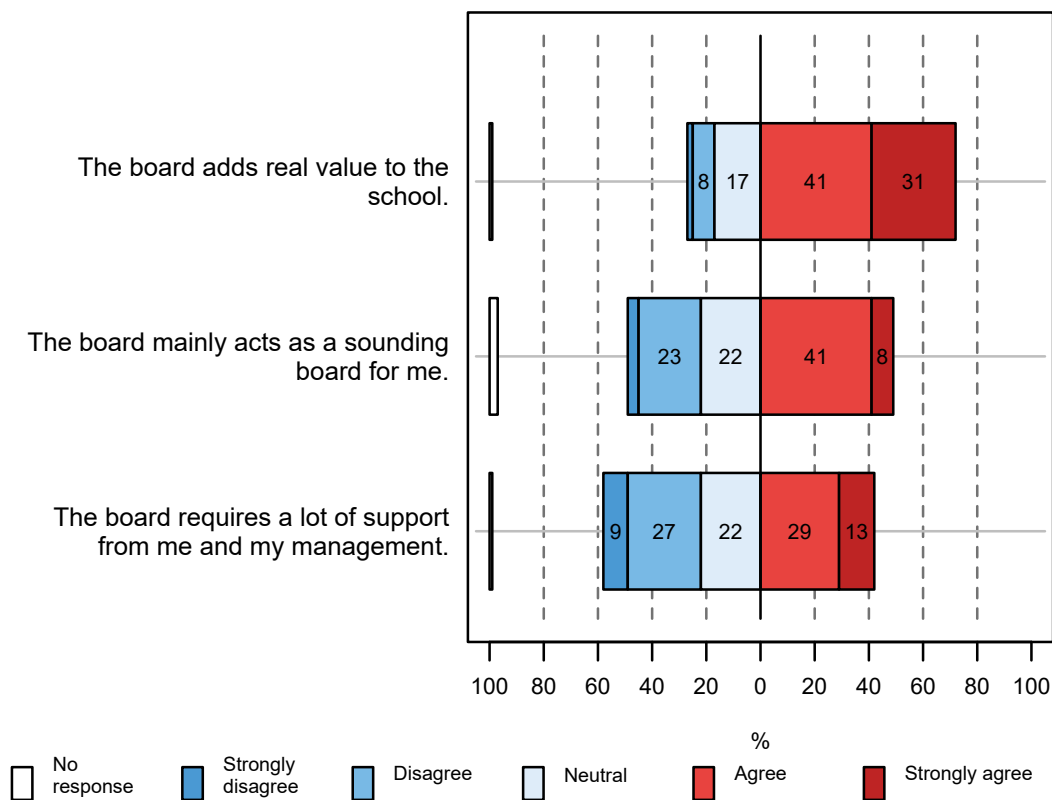
While principals' views of their board are largely unrelated to their school decile, the principals of decile 1–2 schools are the most likely to agree that their board requires a lot of support (63%, compared with 43% for decile 3–4 schools, 50% for decile 5–6 schools, 35% for decile 7–8 schools, and 13% for decile 9–10 schools).

Support for the trustee role

Nearly all trustees received advice for their role in the past year

Nearly all trustees responding (99%) had some advice to help them in their role. Table 37 shows that most of the trustees got advice from their principal and other school staff (78%, up from 66% in 2015), and their own colleagues on the school board (73%, not significantly different from 2015). Just under half had taken part in NZSTA workshops, 41% had sought advice from the NZSTA Advisory and Support Centre, and a smaller proportion had used other NZSTA services. We can't compare these NZSTA options with 2015 responses as NZSTA services have since been reorganised and renamed.

TABLE 37   **Advice trustees have had for the role in the past 12 months**

Advice	Trustees (*n* = 138) %
Guidance and information from principal/school staff	78
Guidance and information from other trustees on the school board	73
Took part in NZSTA workshops	49
Advice from NZSTA Advisory and Support Centre	41
PLD in their own paid work	40
Advice from regional Ministry of Education office	35
Advice from NZSTA Employment Adviser	28
Advice from ERO	23
Advice from NZSTA Governance Adviser	20
Advice from other schools' trustees	18
NZSTA online modules	17
NZSTA conference	11
Other	10

The most frequently used resources for trustees are produced by NZSTA

NZSTA, the Ministry of Education, and ERO have all published guidance for school boards; some of it overlapping, or exemplifying core principles applied to different priority areas. National reports produced by the Ministry of Education, ERO, and NZQA are also useful sources of information and understanding. Table 38 shows that the most used written or digital resources that we asked about are those that come regularly from NZSTA. NZSTA resources are in bold in the table, with Ministry of Education material in italics, and ERO resources underlined. Overall, 92% of the trustees had used one or more NZSTA resource, 55% had used one or more Ministry of Education resource, and 55% one or more ERO resource.

The picture is similar when compared with 2015. One notable increase in use is ERO national reports (used by 35% of trustees, up from 21%).

The Hautū resource saw a decrease in reported use between 2015 and 2018 (used by 14% of trustees in 2018, down from 26% in 2015).

TABLE 38 **Trustees' use of written or digital resources in past 12 months**

Resource	Trustees (*n* = 138) %
STA News	75
Trusteeship—a guide for school trustees	47
NZSTA operational updates via email	43
NZSTA handbook	35
NZSTA members' memos (Membership Matters) via email	35
ERO national reports	35
Effective governance—working in partnership (MoE)	28
Effective governance—how boards work (MoE)	28
ERO indicators	27
NZQA website	23
Material on good governance in other sectors	23
Ka Hikitia	18
NZSTA guidelines for principal appointment	16
Wellbeing guidelines (ERO)	16
Effective governance—supporting education success as Māori	14
Hautū	14
Other	12
School trustees—helping you ask the right questions (ERO)	11
Effective governance—recruiting and managing school staff (MoE)	9
Effective governance—building inclusive schools (MoE)	8
Bullyingfree.nz website or Bullying prevention and response guide for schools (MoE)	8
Guidelines to assist boards of trustees to meet their good employer obligations to Māori (PPTA and NZSTA)	6
Effective governance—supporting Pasifika success (MoE)	4
Pacific Education Plan	4
NZ Schools—Minister of Education's annual report to Parliament	1

Changes trustees would make to the role

Nearly two-thirds of trustees would like more funding for their school

Only 1% of the trustees say they would make no changes to their role. Table 39 is shaded to highlight the changes selected by up to 10%, 10%–19%, 20%–29%, and 30%–39% of the trustees. More funding for their school topped the list by a considerable margin (64% of trustees, up from 55% in 2015). Thirty-seven percent would also reduce Ministry expectations of what the school can provide for the funding they get (up from 28% in 2015). A third of trustees would like improvements in their own knowledge or training.

We have already reported that the aspect of their role trustees say they least enjoy is disciplinary meetings. Sixteen percent would like clearer guidelines to make disciplinary decisions, and 14% would like to reduce their role in disciplinary decisions.

TABLE 39 **Main changes trustees would make in their role**

Change	Trustees (*n* = 138) %
More funding for the school	64
Reduce Ministry expectations of what we can provide for the funding we get	37
Improve my knowledge or training	33
More support for community consultation	30
More time to focus on strategic issues	28
More support/advice from Ministry of Education	27
More advice about modern learning environments	27
Work more with other schools	25
More remuneration	25
More guidance on how to use achievement data to inform board decision making	22
More support to meet community expectations	21
More support/advice from independent education experts	21
More support from parents and whānau	18
Better information from school staff to inform our decisions	17
Clearer guidelines to make disciplinary decisions	16
Reduce role in disciplinary decisions	14
Clearer distinction between governance and management	9
Better communication between board members	9
Reduce workload/paperwork	9
More support/advice from NZSTA	8
More support for property issues	5

Summary and discussion

Secondary school boards of trustees draw on parents and others who are motivated primarily by wanting to contribute to their community. Trustees most enjoy having positive relationships with the school and the opportunity to contribute to student outcomes. Many secondary school trustees bring with them other governance experience, through serving on primary school boards, voluntary organisations, or business boards. Almost all those responding are in paid employment. A significant minority can use or give themselves some support from their employment for their trustee role. This picture is unchanged from previous surveys.

While the majority of non-chair trustees spend less than 2 hours a week on their role, a quarter of board chairs give at least 6 hours a week to their role. A higher proportion of board chairs than other trustees think the amount of responsibility asked of school boards is too much.

Trustees and principals all identified that the key role for boards is to provide strategic direction for the school, followed by supporting the principal. Consistent with the main focus on strategic direction, student progress and achievement topped the list of the things boards generally spent their time on, followed by financial management and property/maintenance. Most principals report that the board regularly scrutinises school performance, with achievement data playing a key role in board decision making about staffing and resources.

Parents also raise issues themselves with school boards. As in previous years, student behaviour is the most common issue raised, but this year this was joined by mental health and wellbeing.

Most trustees and principals are positive about how well their school board is doing. The proportion of principals who consider their board is on top of its task has continued to increase since 2012. Many principals see their school board as adding real value to the school. However, a sizeable minority consider their board needs a lot of support from school staff. Trustees report getting advice for their role from the principal and other school staff, and each other. They also use written and digital resources from NZSTA, the Ministry of Education, and ERO.

Almost all trustees would like to change something about their role. More funding for the school topped this list, and was selected by nearly two-thirds of the trustees. Around a third of the trustees would like to improve their own knowledge or training, and have more support for community consultation. When we asked trustees what they least enjoy about their role, disciplinary meetings were mentioned most.

11.

Parent and whānau perspectives

The parent and whānau responses represent the views of a cross-section of all parents of secondary school students in New Zealand, with sufficient numbers of parents with different social characteristics, such as ethnicity and qualification levels, to encompass a broad range of perspectives. However, one caution in the picture following is that we have an over-representation from parents with degrees. Survey responses from 508 parents are reported here, a 14% response rate.[60] The margin of error for the parent and whānau responses is around 4.3%.

Looking at respondents' characteristics, the majority were women (82%). Age-wise, the biggest group was between the ages of 40 and 49 (60%), with a further 29% between 50 and 59 years. Seventy-three percent identified themselves as NZ European/Pākehā, 10% as Māori, 6% as Pacific peoples, and 5% as Asian. An additional 12% of parents identified with other ethnicities, such as African, Latin American, 'New Zealander' and 'Kiwi'. A relatively high proportion of the parents who responded to the survey had degree qualifications (46%).[61] Six percent of respondents had no formal qualification.

The survey comprised mostly closed-response questions, focused on a parent's youngest child at the school (if they had more than one child there, as did 38% of parents[62]). Fifteen percent of parents had a child in Years 7 or 8[63]; between 23% and 27% had a child in Years 9, 10, 11, or 12; and 20% had a child in Year 13 or above.

At the end of the survey, parents and whānau were invited to add a comment about their youngest child's secondary schooling. Around 37% wrote comments, some of which are included throughout this section to further illustrate their perspectives.

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60 The Appendix has details about how the parent survey was distributed, along with more details of the parent sample, including their highest qualification. Parents with a child attending a decile 1–2 school were under-represented, and those with a child at a decile 7–8 school were somewhat over-represented, although both to a lesser degree than when the previous methodology was applied in 2015.
61 For instance, 36% of parents who responded to the 2015 survey had degree qualifications.
62 Thirty-four percent of parents had two children attending their school, 4% had three children there, and less than 1% had four children or more at their school.
63 The secondary schools in the sample included Years 7–15 schools as well as Years 9–15.

Choosing their child's secondary school

Most parents responding to the survey (90%) said their child attends their first choice of school. This figure was the same in the 2015 and 2012 surveys. In 2018, this comprises 59% for whom this is also their closest secondary school, and 30% for whom it is not, much the same as in 2015.

How did parents and whānau access their first choice of school? The most likely way was to live within the school's zone (51% of this group of parents). Smaller proportions got into the school because there was no enrolment zone or by meeting the special character criteria for the school (both 17%). Eight percent say their child was drawn from the ballot for their school, and 7% had been on the priority list for the school[64] (up from 3% in 2015). Eight percent of parents gave other reasons, including the school being the only local secondary school.

Eight percent of parents (*n* = 38) say their child does not attend their first choice of school. The main reasons for not attending parents' first choice of school were that the child did not want to attend the school their parents preferred (14 parents), the school has an enrolment zone which the family lived outside (11 parents), cost (five parents), and a lack of transport (also five parents). Eight parents gave other reasons.

There were some school decile-related differences here. Parents with a child attending a decile 1–2 school were more likely to say this was not their first choice of school (16%, compared with 2% at decile 9–10 schools). Parents and whānau whose child got into their first choice of school because:

- the school has no enrolment zone, were more likely to have their child attending a decile 3–4 school (32%, compared with 24% at decile 1–2 schools, 19% at decile 5–6 schools, and 9% at decile 7–10 schools)
- they met the special character criteria for the school, were more likely to have their child attending a decile 7–8 school (30%, compared with 28% for decile 1–2 schools, 20% for decile 9–10 schools, 7% for decile 5–6 schools, and 1% for decile 3–4 schools)
- they were on the school's priority list, were more likely to have their child attending a decile 9–10 school (14% of these parents, decreasing to none at decile 1–2 schools).

Most parents have positive experiences of their child's school and teachers

Most parents who responded to the survey have had positive experiences of their child's school (see Figure 50). Around two-thirds say they feel they are in partnership with the school and their child's teachers, and that if their child had difficulty in learning, the school would help him or her. Just over half say they get good ideas from their child's teacher for ways to help their child's learning.

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64 Where an applicant lives outside a school's zone, they might still be accepted according to a priority list (e.g., because they are enrolling for a special programme the school runs, or have a sibling already attending the school). More details of the priorities list are available at: https://parents.education.govt.nz/primary-school/schooling-in-nz/enrolment-schemes-zoning/

FIGURE 50 **Parent and whānau experiences of their child's school (*n* = 508)**
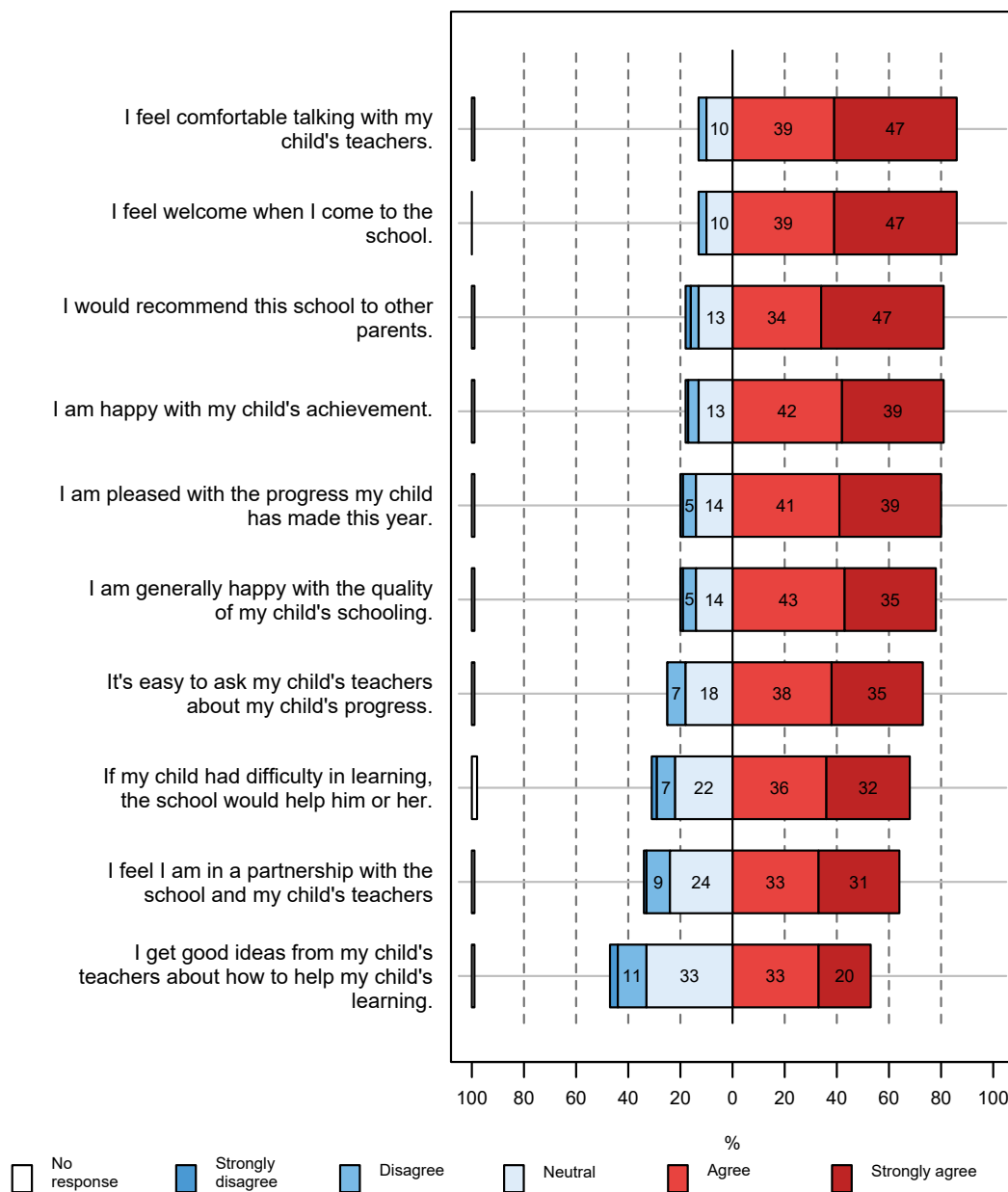
There were no significant school decile-related differences here. Parents' responses to items in Figure 50 that were also included in 2015 were largely the same.

Eighteen percent of parents wrote positive comments about their own experience of the school, often coupled with a comment about their child's experience.

> We are really happy with the balance of physical/social/academic skills our youngest has acquired at school. The staff really know the children, even though the roll is high. For a big school, it's great to be a 'familiar face', a name and not a number.

> This school is good for my child's learning, and also it is close to us. It saves money, saves time and especially helps us a lot. The teachers are kind, respectful and well educated.

> She is an enthusiastic student with interests in a variety of curriculum areas. Her needs and interests have been well catered for by [school's name]. It is both a safe and challenging environment—good preparation for tertiary study/employment.

> Very good school, I'm glad my son was given the opportunity to attend [school's name]. He's doing well in his core subjects, social studies, science and physical education. The administration and management of the school are very helpful and supportive if I need questions answered.

Five percent of parents made negative comments about their experience of their child's secondary school.

> I have been really disappointed with the school's lack of openness and willingness to consult/collaborate with regard to parental issues and consult about the children's access to devices and unrestricted contact during the school day. Our children are not being adequately protected by the school, nor are appropriate boundaries established.

> Lack of consistency between teachers in senior school—their teaching methods are so different and often very confusing for students. Not enough actual teaching. Learning opportunities are affected by children in class who don't want to learn. Feel there's not enough clear feedback + direction about their actual strengths/weaknesses regarding training pathways. This school focuses too much on sport.

> In enrolling our daughter here, I had thought secondary education would be very different now, to when I experienced it in 1970s. It is not (sadly). My daughter experiences the same power imbalance with teachers I remember—where teachers' views matter more and students' views are not listened to, particularly when there is conflict or clashes of personality with a teacher or disengagement in class due to poor classroom content e.g., Year 9—doing a social studies where a country is selected to study and producing artefacts for it (daughter commenting this was done in Year 4/5).

Many parents and whānau express positive views about their child's teachers (see Figure 51). They are less sure that teachers make an effort to understand things about their family and culture (46% agreed or strongly agreed). However, this was higher than the 38% of parents who expressed this view in 2015.

FIGURE 51 **Parent and whānau views of their child's teachers (*n* = 508)**
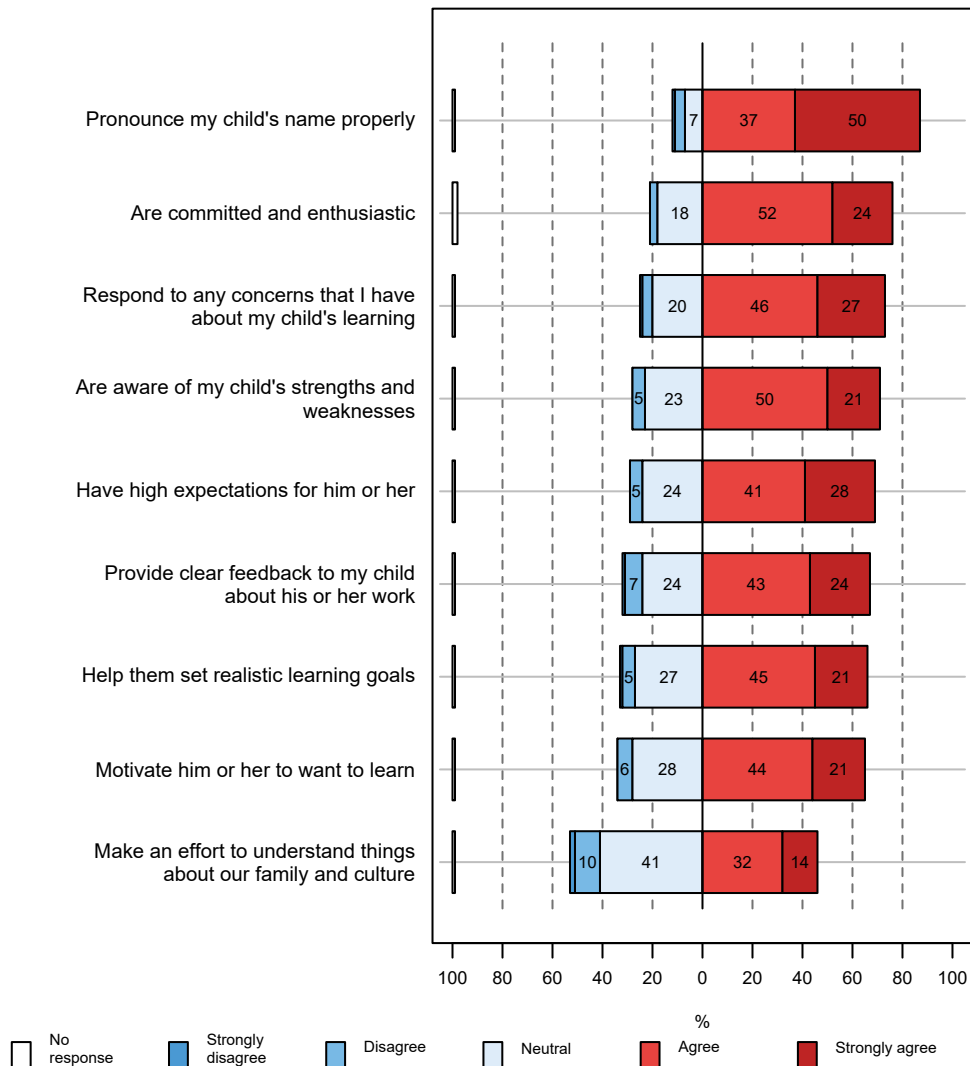
Māori parents' responses to the items in Figure 51 did not vary significantly from those of non-Māori parents. Neither did the responses of NZ European parents vary significantly from non-NZ European parents' responses. There were no decile-related differences.

In the overall comments parents wrote about their child's secondary schooling, 7% included a positive comment about teachers or school leaders.

> The teachers are very encouraging and supportive and also generous of their time to those that need or want help. Each child is watched carefully in regard to their performance and results.

> The principal is an inspiring leader to the girls at this school.

> Our youngest child is happy, well adjusted, loves attending school, looks at the bigger picture in life working towards it. Teachers are aware, supportive, encouraging, knowledgeable about things regarding this. Excellent school. :)

A smaller proportion (4%) wrote negative comments about staff members, sometimes following a positive one.

I am unhappy with the quality of teaching from some of the teachers and concerned that teaching practice at this school ignores the different needs of boys and girls, to the detriment of boys.

One of the school teachers has taken a particular dislike to my youngest child this term. So much so that he will not even fill out their weekly report. It is a poor reflection on their inability to do a job they have chosen and a poor example to set. He [the teacher] is getting full support from the school with this which is very disappointing.

There are some very good teachers at [school name] but most give the impression that they don't want to be there and have told my child that! Bad attitude carries on from there—starts at the top!

Parents' views of their child's learning at school

Figure 52 shows that nearly three-quarters of the parents responding think their child can take the subjects they want to take or has school work with the right amount of challenge. Fewer parents agreed or strongly agreed their child finds school work interesting or has a good idea of how their subjects will lead into work they want to do.

FIGURE 52 **Parent and whānau views of their child and their school work (*n* = 508)**
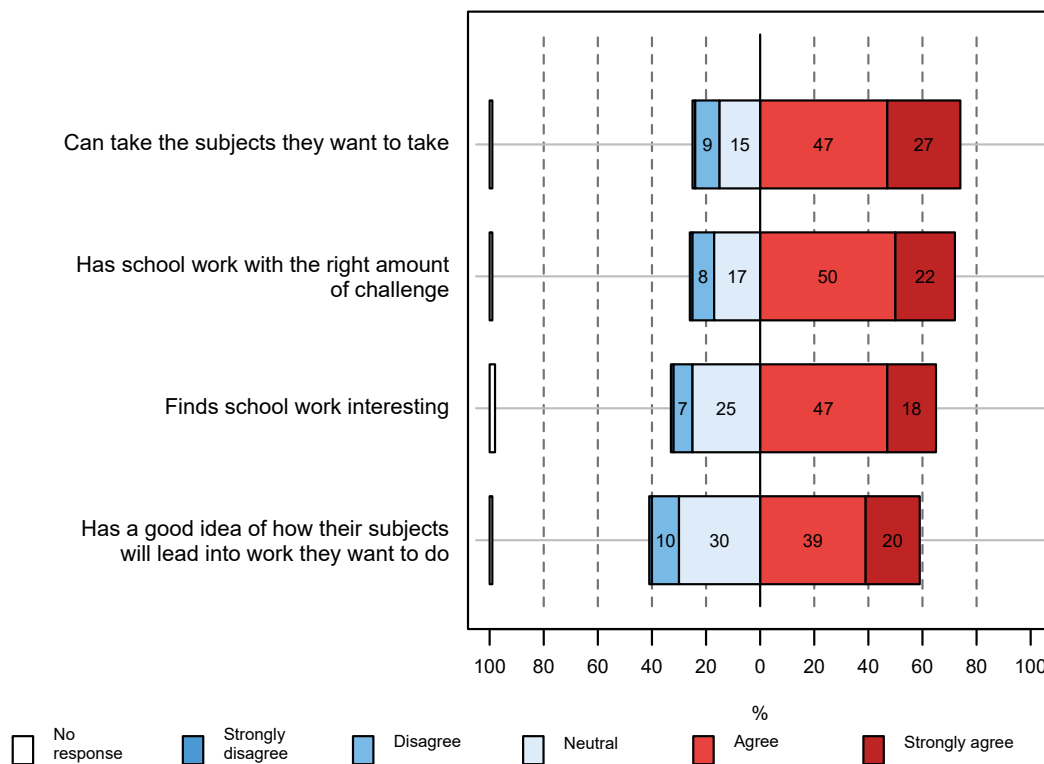
Parents' view of their child being able to take the subjects they want to take is varied across school deciles. Parents whose child attends a decile 3–4 school are the least likely to agree or strongly agree their child can do this (64%, compared with 75% for decile 5–8 schools, 81% for decile 1–2 schools, and 84% for decile 9–10 schools).

Most parents are positive about how well their child's school fosters the development of skills and attitudes that support learning (see Figure 53).

FIGURE 53 **Parent and whānau views of how well their child's school fosters the development of skills and attitudes that support learning (*n* = 508)**
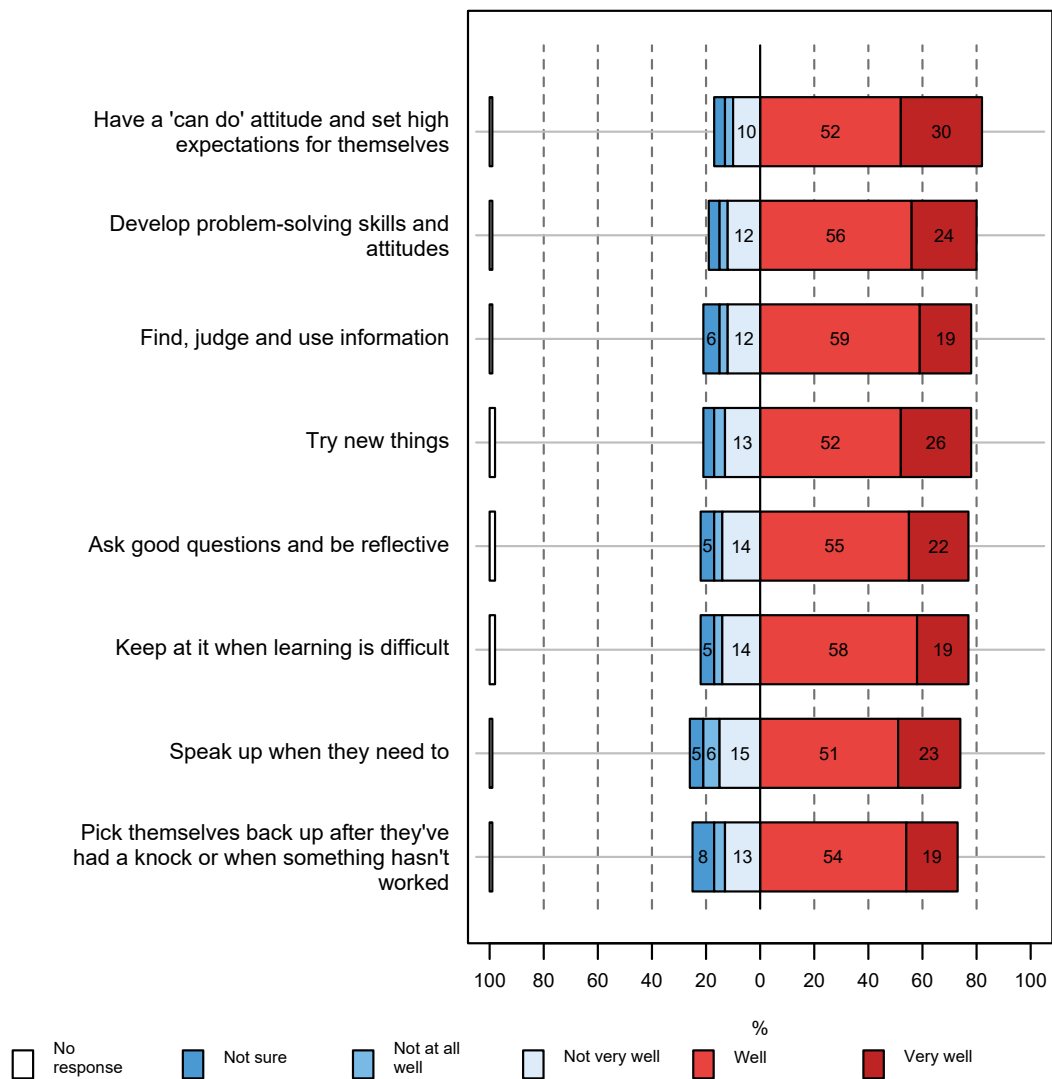
Figure 54 shows parent and whānau views of how well the school helps support their child's learning pathways. Seventy-one percent of parents responding say the school does well or very well at helping their child understand the different learning pathways available to them. We also saw in Figure 52 that 59% of parents say their child has a good idea of how their subjects will lead into the work they want to do.

FIGURE 54 **Parent and whānau views of how well their child's schools help support their learning pathways (*n* = 508)**
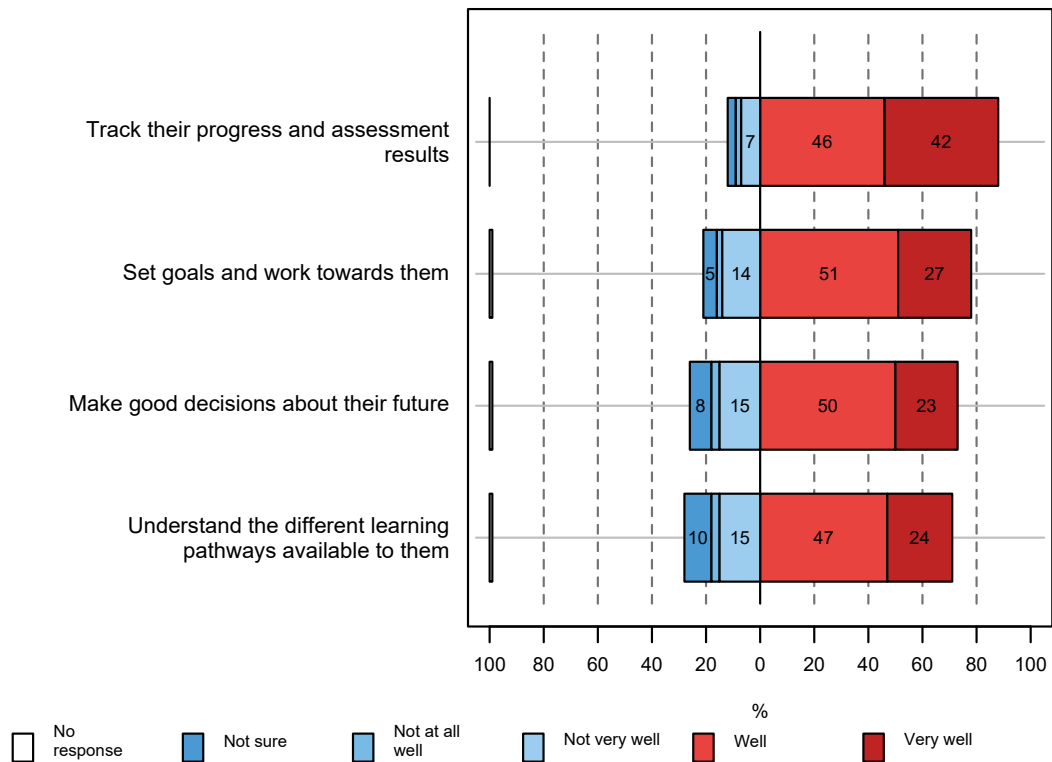
Figure 55 shows there are two school or class activities that more than half of parents say their child takes part in on at least a weekly basis: sport and music, drama, dance, or art. Less than a quarter of parents say their child speaks te reo Māori with the same frequency.

At least two-thirds of parents indicate their child never or almost never takes part in the remaining activities, or they are unsure if they do.

FIGURE 55 **Frequency with which their child takes part in school/class activities, reported by parents and whānau (*n* = 508)**
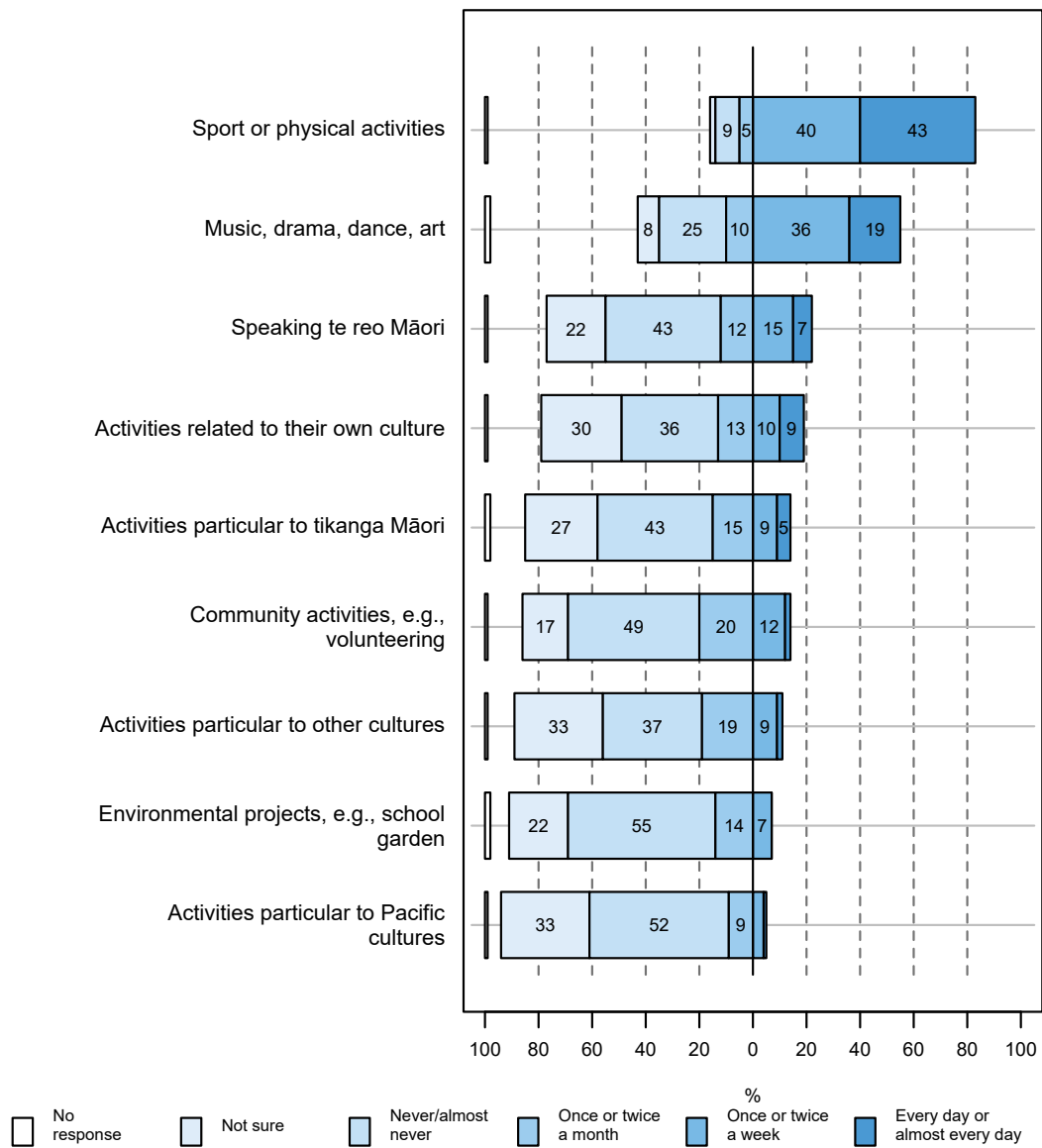
Differences related to decile showed that parents of children at decile 1–2 schools were more likely to say their child takes part *at least* once a week in:

- speaking te reo Māori (42% of these parents, decreasing to 18% for decile 7–8 schools and 23% for decile 9–10 schools)
- activities particular to tikanga Māori (39%, decreasing to 8% for decile 7–10 schools)
- activities particular to Pacific cultures (32%, compared with 6% for decile 7–8 schools and 3% of schools of other deciles)
- environmental projects (e.g., school garden) (19%, compared with 7% for decile 3–10 schools).

Māori parents were more likely than non-Māori parents to say their child takes part at least once a week in the following school activities:
- speaking te reo Māori (54%, compared with 18% of non-Māori parents)
- activities particular to tikanga Māori (44%, compared with 10% of non-Māori parents)
- activities related to their own culture (42%, compared with 17% of non-Māori parents).

Six percent of parents (*n* = 33) wrote comments expressing a variety of concerns about their child's learning. These include wanting more support for their child's learning needs or a greater degree of challenge for them, as well as concerns about learning pathways and the school's limited subject offerings.

> My Year 9 boy is not feeling challenged at school, but as it's a small college I understand it is difficult to cater to all levels of academic ability. He has been given some extension work, particularly in Maths where he has a very good teacher who pushes him. I think the school does extremely well overall, but is limited for options due to roll size. Limited options make it hard to keep a bright teenage boy interested in all aspects of schooling.

> As a child who has come from an English as a second language culture, the school overall has only been interested in slotting the child into a class. More emphasis is placed on uniform and minutiae rather than finding out who the child is, what they know, where they are likely to head. Emphasis is placed on NCEA credits. The child has covered the work previously. No effort to extend. Inflexible about NCEA level.

School activities cost too much for some parents

Twenty-four percent of parents and whānau indicate at least one school activity has cost too much for their child to be able to do. Fifteen percent of parents say their child has been unable to go on an overseas trip for a particular subject/class because it costs too much. This was similar to 2015. Other activities that parents say cost too much for their child to do were:
- sport (6% of parents)
- camp (5%)
- use a digital device at school (4%)
- field trip (4%)
- do school work at home that they need the internet for (3%)
- select a subject/class that they wanted to do (3%).

Only one of these items varied with school decile. Eight percent of parents with children at decile 3–4 schools say their child has been unable to do school work at home that they need the internet for, compared with 3% whose children attend decile 1–2 or 5–6 schools, and 2% at decile 7–8 schools. None with a child at a decile 9–10 school indicated their child had been unable to do this due to cost.

A higher proportion of Māori parents indicate their child has been unable to do the following school activities because they cost too much:
- sport (14%, compared with 5% of non-Māori parents)
- do school work at home that they need the internet for (10%, compared with 2% of non-Māori parents).

School information for parents and whānau

In this section, we look at the nature of information parents and whānau receive from the school, and their online access to school information related to their child.

Many parents get good/very good information about their child's attendance, progress, and behaviour

Parents' ratings of the information they receive from their child's school (see Figure 56) are similar to those given by parents in 2015. Of the parents who receive information from the school about their child's attendance/lateness, progress, and behaviour, around three-quarters of parents rate it as good or very good.[65]

Around half gave ratings of good or very good to the information they receive about their child's social and emotional development, what their child needs to do to achieve the qualification they would like, and how their subjects are linked to study or work options when they leave school. At least 10% of parents say the information they receive relating to these three areas is poor or very poor.

FIGURE 56 **Parent and whānau ratings of the information they receive from their child's school (*n* = 508)**

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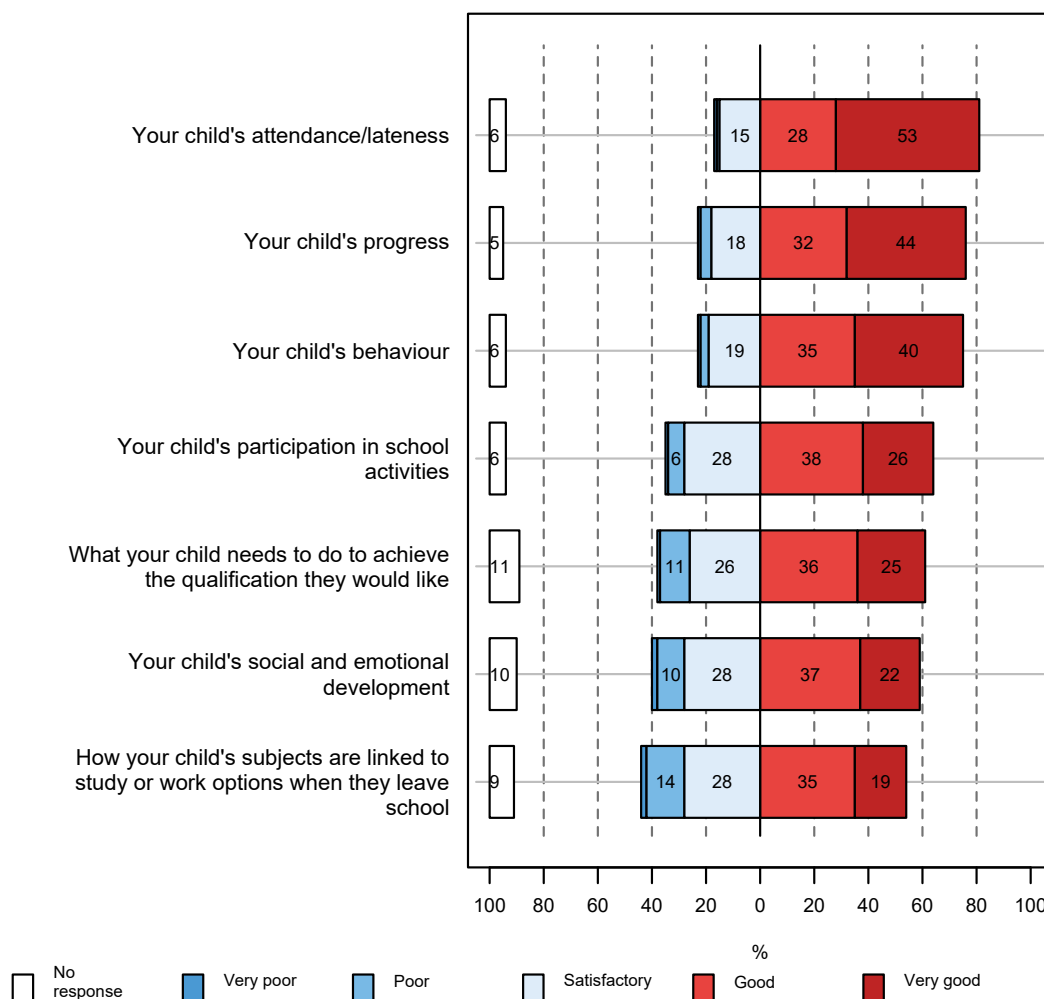
65 Figure 56 excludes parents who indicated they do not receive these kinds of information. Small proportions (5% or less) of parents indicated they do not receive some information. Larger proportions reported they do not receive information from the school about:
   • how their child's subjects are linked to study or work options when they leave school (16%)
   • what their child needs to do to achieve the qualification they would like (14%)
   • their child's social and emotional development (11%).

Parents' online access to school information about their child is increasing

In 2018, greater proportions of parents and whānau have online access to their child's assessment results, and information about school events and trips (both around 75%, compared with 63% in 2015). Seventy-nine percent have online access to information about their child's attendance/lateness. Close to 10% say they do not have access to these kinds of information, and 12% were unsure if they do.

School decile is related to differences in the information to which parents say they have online access. Fewer than half of parents whose child attends a decile 1–2 school have online access to information about their child's attendance/lateness (48%, increasing to 88% for decile 7–10 schools). Parents whose child attends a decile 1–2 school were also the least likely to have online access to information from the school about their child's assessment results (55%, increasing to 88% for decile 7–8 schools and 84% for decile 9–10 schools), and school events and trips (58%, increasing to 83% for decile 9–10 schools). For each of these three kinds of information, around 20% of parents with a child at a school in the decile 1–4 range say they are not sure whether they have online access (compared with 5%–12% for decile 5–10 schools).

Just over half of the parents have online access to their child's learning at school

Parents and whānau were less likely to have online access to the learning their child was doing at school than to information about their child's assessment results and school events. Fifty-four percent of parents have online access to work their child has done, 24% say they do not, and 21% are unsure. Still fewer (23%) have online access to information about what their child is doing in the classroom (e.g., video, blog), with 46% saying they do not have access to this, and 30% unsure.

Parents and whānau have multiple sources of information about the school

To get up-to-date information about the school, parents and whānau are using the sources shown in Table 40. In 2018, more parents were getting information about the school electronically:
- Since 2012, receiving newsletters via email has increased, while receiving paper newsletters has decreased.
- The school website was used by more parents as an information source in 2018 than 2015, returning to a similar level as 2012.
- Digital media (including School App and the school's Facebook page) was a source of information about the school for 16% of parents (compared with 4% in 2015).

However, there were only two digital information sources that more than two-thirds of parents say they used in 2018 to get information about their child's school: newsletters that were emailed to them, and the school website.

Ten percent or fewer parents use the information available to them in the school's annual report or latest ERO report, as was also the case in 2015.

TABLE 40 **Sources of information about their child's school, reported by parents and whānau; 2012, 2015, and 2018**

Information sources	2012 (n = 1,477) %	2015 (n = 1,242) %	2018 (n = 508) %
Newsletters emailed to me	66	76	79
School website	64	59	67
Other parents and whānau	28	22	21
Newsletters on paper	43	30	20
Other	6	7	20
Local community newspaper	19	13	11
Annual report	13	7	10
Latest ERO report	16	9	7
"Find a School" website	*	5	3
Class blog	2	3	2

* Not asked.

In 2018, 16% of parents used the response "Other" and described various forms of digital media, such as Facebook, email, School App, and text (4% had done this in 2015). An additional 2% responded "Other", explaining they were getting information from their own child.

Parents and whānau with children at decile 1–2 schools are less likely to get information electronically

A difference between those receiving email or paper newsletters was related to school decile. Forty-eight percent of parents with children at decile 1–2 schools received up-to-date information about the school from newsletters on paper, and the same proportion received information from newsletters emailed to them. In contrast, 15% of parents with a child at a school in the decile 5–10 range and 25% at a decile 3–4 school get information from paper newsletters, while more than 78% of parents with a child attending a school in the decile 3–10 range gets information from email newsletters. Getting up-to-date information from the school website is also decile related: 48% of parents with a child at a decile 1–2 school get their information here, increasing to 77% of those with a child at a decile 9–10 school.

Parent and whānau involvement with their child's school

In Table 41 we compare parents' involvement with their child's secondary school over the three most recent surveys. In 2015, we saw increased parental involvement in most aspects we asked about, compared with 2012.

In 2018, the proportion of parents and whānau who say they had been involved with their child's school by responding to a school survey has increased again. To a lesser extent, so has the proportion of parents attending school plays, choir, or orchestra. Otherwise, there were only minor differences compared with 2015.

TABLE 41 **Parent and whānau involvement with their child's secondary school; 2012, 2015, and 2018**

Involvement	2012 (*n* = 1,477) %	2015 (*n* = 1,242) %	2018 (*n* = 508) %
Responded to school survey(s)	37	43	52
Attending sports	34	50	51
Fundraising	28	32	33
Attending school plays, choir, or orchestra, etc.#	21	26	33
Coaching/helping with sports	17	17	22
School trips	13	20	21
Consultation	9	10	14
PTA/school council/BOT	4	6	9
Other	6	6	6
Attending kapa haka†	*	5	5
Attending Polynesian group	*	*	2
Classroom help	1	2	2
Canteen/school lunches	2	1	2
Coaching/helping with school plays, choir, or orchestra, etc.	6	4	2
Supervision around grounds during school hours/duty	<1	1	1
Coaching/helping with kapa haka†	*	1	1
Building repairs and maintenance	1	1	1
Library, helping	<1	1	1
Coaching/helping with Polynesian group	*	*	1

In 2009 and 2012, this item also included kapa haka.
* Not asked.
† In 2012, kapa haka was included with "School plays/choir/orchestra/kapa haka etc." for both "attending" and "coaching/helping" items.

Looking at parents' involvement in school activities, there are several differences related to school decile:
- 11% of parents whose children attend decile 1–4 schools have attended kapa haka (compared with 5% or less for other deciles)
- 10% of parents with children at decile 1–2 schools have helped in the classroom (compared with 2%–3% for decile 5–10 schools, and none for decile 3–4 schools)
- 7% of parents whose children attend decile 1–2 schools have helped with Polynesian group (decreasing to 1% for decile 5–6 schools, and none for decile 7–10 schools).

Greater proportions of Māori parents have been involved with their child's secondary school by:
- attending kapa haka (21%, compared with 3% of non-Māori parents)
- coaching/helping with kapa haka (8%, compared with less than 1% of non-Māori parents).

In a separate question, parents were asked about whether they think their school genuinely consults them. In 2018, more parents think this is the case (56%, compared with 47% in 2015, 41% in 2012, and 34% in 2009). A further 19% think the school does not do this, and 24% are unsure. The steady increase in parents feeling genuinely consulted by the school mirrors increases in the proportions who have responded to school surveys.

Summary and discussion

Most parents say their child attends their first choice of school, though this is less so for parents with a child at a decile 1–2 school. Most parents were positive about their experiences of their child's secondary school, and their child's teachers. Slightly more parents say their child's teachers make an effort to understand things about their family and culture than in 2015, although this remains under half. Parents generally agree that the school fosters skills and attitudes that support their child's learning and supports their child's learning pathway. They are less sure their child understands how their subjects will lead into the work they might want to do.

More parents are using electronic sources to get up-to-date information about their child and the school than in the previous survey in 2015. However, this is related to school decile. Parents with a child at a decile 1–2 school are less likely to have online access to information about their child, and are also less likely to get information about the school via emailed newsletters. Instead, almost half of this group of parents get their information about the school via paper newsletters. This is consistent with what parents also say about their child's access to the internet at home for school work.

Cost had meant that almost a quarter of parents report their child being unable to do at least one school activity. An overseas trip for a particular subject or class was the activity most often cited. There was very little difference related to school decile. Compared with non-Māori parents, a higher proportion of Māori parents indicate their child has been unable to do school work at home that they need the internet for, or participate in sport, because these activities cost too much.

Just over half of parents responding to the survey have been involved in their child's secondary school in the past year by responding to a survey or attending sports events. This had increased steadily since 2012 and is consistent with an increase in 2018 in parents feeling genuinely consulted by their school. Parents and whānau with a child at a decile 1–2 school were the most likely group of parents to attend kapa haka, help in the classroom, and help with Polynesian group.

Māori parents' views about their children's teachers did not vary significantly from those of other parents. However, there were several different response patterns for Māori parents, closely related to Māori culture. Greater proportions of Māori parents have been involved with their child's secondary school by attending or coaching/helping with kapa haka. Māori parents were more likely to say their child takes part at least once a week in speaking te reo Māori, activities particular to tikanga Māori, and activities related to their own culture.

12.

Issues facing secondary schools in 2018

In this section we look at key aspects of school viability in terms of funding, staffing, competition for student numbers, and school buildings. Stability in student numbers allows the stability in funding and staffing that also supports stable development of teaching and learning. Growth in student numbers can also support ongoing development of schools' core work, provided it occurs at a manageable pace. We also report on what principals and trustees think are the major issues facing their school. The section concludes with what principals say are the most effective things their schools have been doing to address some long-standing equity issues for schools: what can be done to improve outcomes for Māori students and Pacific students, and to improve the integration of students with learning needs.

Funding

A small minority of the principals say government funding is enough to meet their school's needs

In 2018, 8% of principals consider their school's government funding is enough to meet its needs.[66]

Sixty percent of principals (*n* = 100) said they had to reduce spending in 2018, up from 46% in 2015. These reductions had negative effects on schools':
  • provision of co-curricular experiences (63% of those who had cut school spending)
  • quality of curriculum resourcing (54%)
  • practical components of courses (43%)
  • curriculum options offered in Years 11–13 (37%)
  • curriculum options offered in Years 9 and 10 (24%).

Many principals (86%) say they have some students left out of co-curricular experiences when parents are asked to pay the cost of these experiences.

Over half (55%) of all principals responding say their school relies on attracting international students so that it can provide a good breadth of courses, very similar to the proportion in 2015.[67] In 2018, we asked for the first time if the school would be in financial difficulty without this income. Fifty-five percent of the principals also agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

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66 This is not significantly different from 14% of principals in 2015, 5% in 2012, and 3% in 2009.
67 The scale changed in the 2018 survey, with the addition of a "Neutral" response. Eleven percent of principals selected this option. The proportion of principals who strongly agreed or agreed remained similar to 2015.

More principals report stability in school finances, but fewer report improvement

The proportion of principals reporting that their school finances were looking much the same as the previous year continues to increase (57% in 2018, 48% in 2015, 22% in 2012). Thirty-eight percent reported that their financial situation looked worse than in 2017 (similar to the 35% in 2015), and 5% that it looked better (down from 17% in 2015).

Differences related to school decile

Overall, there were fewer decile-related differences in what principals said about their schools' financial situations in 2018 than in 2015. In 2015, financial stability increased with school decile (i.e., higher decile schools had the most stable financial situation), but this association was not apparent in the 2018 data.

A higher proportion of the principals of decile 7–10 schools say they rely on income from international students than principals of decile 1–6 schools.[68] Seventy-three percent of principals leading decile 9–10 schools agreed or strongly agreed that they rely on income from this source to provide a good breadth of courses,[69] compared with 70% of principals of decile 7–8 schools, 55% of principals of decile 5–6 schools, 38% of principals of decile 3–4 schools, and 32% of principals of decile 1–2 schools.[70] Principals from higher decile schools are also more likely to report that the school would be in financial difficulty without income from international students (78% of principals of decile 7–8 schools and 70% of principals of decile 9–10 schools, compared with 21% of principals of decile 1–2 schools).

Eighty percent of principals of decile 9–10 schools strongly agreed that the school's use of digital technology for learning depends on parents providing devices, as did 75% of principals of decile 7–8 schools, and 60% of principals of decile 5–6 schools. This compares with 37% of principals of decile 1–2 schools, and 32% of principals of decile 3–4 schools.

In 2015, there was an association between school decile and the proportion of principals who reported that some students missed out on co-curricular activities when parents were asked to pay costs. This year there was no decile-related difference. Neither did a decile-related difference remain for whether a principal reported they had had to reduce spending in 2018.

Staffing

A minority of secondary principals consider their school's teaching staffing entitlement is enough to meet the school's needs

The proportion of principals who report their staffing entitlement is sufficient continues to decline. In 2018, 13% report this down from 24% in 2015 and the lowest proportion since 2003.

Many (78% of the principals) employed more teaching staff than their entitlement. In many cases, these additional staff taught a learning area (83% of these schools, up from 72% in 2015). Other roles undertaken by these additional staff were:
  • working with students whose English was an additional language (45%)
  • working with international students (39%)
  • working with students with additional needs or needing learning assistance (39%)
  • providing literacy or numeracy support (32%)

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68 There is also an association with school location, with principals of metropolitan schools more likely to strongly agree that they rely on income from international students than those in other locations.
69 This is somewhat less than the 81% in 2015.
70 This is a large increase from 5% of decile 1–2 principals in 2015. However, small numbers are involved—these data represent just one principal in 2015 and six principals in 2018.

- pastoral care (31%)
- te reo Māori support (15%)
- Gateway or careers work (14%)
- music or other arts tuition (13%).

Over half the principals have difficulty finding teachers of te reo Māori

In 2018, we asked principals if they had difficulty finding teachers of te reo Māori, and if so, at which language levels: 8% have difficulty finding those who can teach te reo Māori at a high level, 38% have difficulty finding those who can teach the language at a basic level, and 35% have difficulty finding those who can teach the language at a moderate level. Overall, 61% have difficulty finding te reo Māori teachers: 19% at all language levels, 11% at two of these levels, and 31% at one of these levels.[71] Difficulty finding te reo Māori teachers was unrelated to school decile or location.

School roll and competition

Almost two-thirds of secondary schools have places for all students who apply

Most secondary schools (81%) are directly competing with a median of four other secondary schools for students. This is unchanged since 2012. Sixty-four percent of schools have places for all students who apply. The number of schools with an enrolment scheme remains around 40%: this year it is 44%, with another 4% thinking about it (this is the first year we have included the response option, "thinking about it").

While a quarter of these schools with enrolment schemes draw only up to 5% of their students from beyond their zone, 28% draw 6%–20% of their students from beyond their zone, 20% draw 21%–40% and 20% draw more than 40% of their students from out of zone.

Differences related to school decile and location

Competition for students is experienced across all school deciles, although lower decile schools are more likely to have places for all students who apply (see Figure 57). Compared with 2015, more decile 9–10 schools have places for all who apply than was reported in 2015 (47%, compared with 28%), and fewer decile 5–8 schools have places for all who apply.[72]

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71 These proportions are higher than those who reported difficulty in finding te reo Māori teachers in 2015, but this may in part be because the survey question changed from being a question about finding suitable teachers across a range of areas, to a question only about te reo Māori teachers. In 2015, 31% had difficulty finding te reo Māori teachers, 9% at all three language levels, 3% at two of these levels, and 19% at one of these levels.

72 Documentation of how low-decile schools have lost students over the past 20 years and high decile schools have grown is given in Gordon, L. (2015). 'Rich' and 'poor' schools revisited. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies, 50*(1), 7–22.

FIGURE 57 **Secondary schools with places for all students who apply, by school decile**
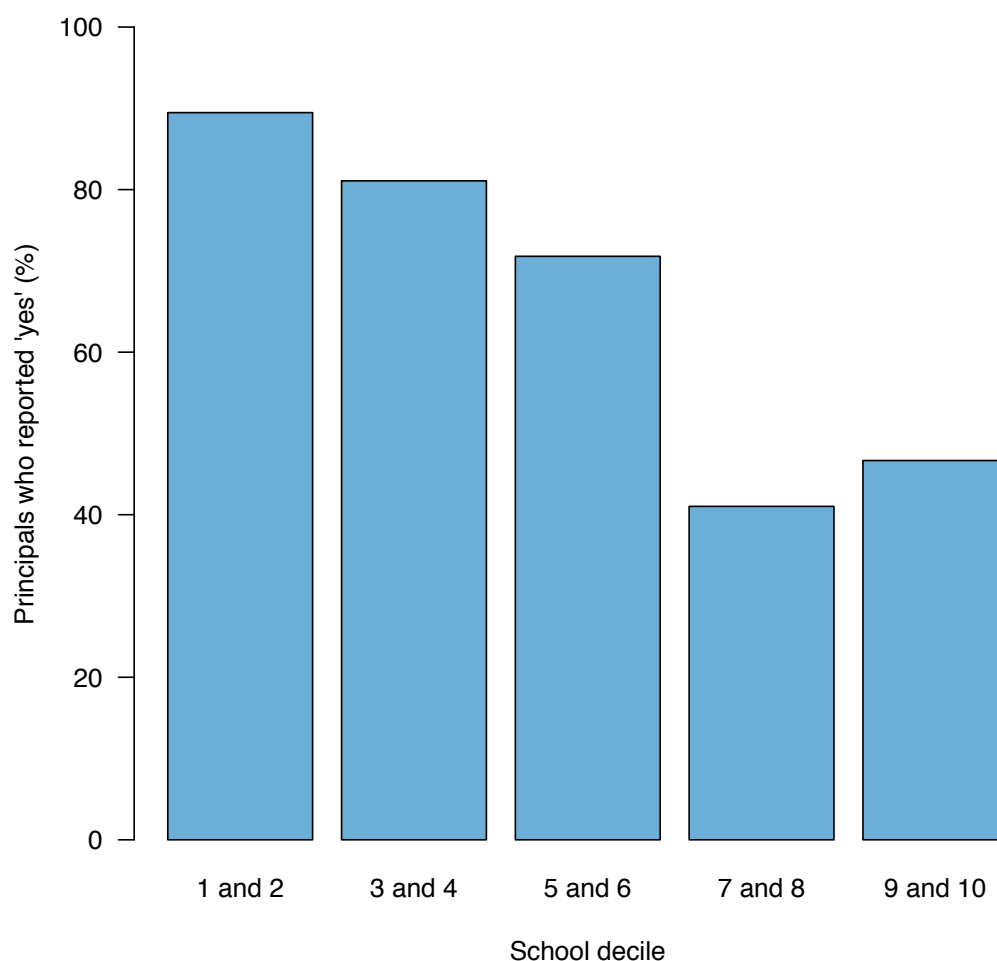
Enrolment schemes also followed school decile, ranging from 87% of the decile 9–10 schools having one (up from 72% in 2015), to 21% of the decile 1–2 schools (no change from 2015).

One-third of metropolitan schools did not have places for all the students who applied to them, compared with 22% of small-city schools. Just one town school and one rural school did not have places for all students who applied. Fourteen percent of town schools, a third of small-city schools, and 60% of metropolitan schools had an enrolment scheme. No rural schools did.

School property

A new set of questions in 2018 asked principals about the current picture of their school buildings (see Figure 58).

Just under half of the principals are positive about the condition of their school buildings

Principals are fairly evenly split about whether their buildings are in good condition: 45% agree they are, and 38% disagree, and 17% are neutral.

A small minority (11%) have modern learning environments throughout the school, and only 28% of secondary principals agree they have sufficient flexibility for teaching and learning needs (a fifth are neutral, and half disagree). Just over half of principals agree they have sufficient space for all classes.

FIGURE 58 **Principals' views on their school buildings (*n* = 167)**

Legend:
No response | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree

Data shown in figure:

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
We have sufficient space for all our classes.	10	19	16	38	15
Our buildings are in good condition.	13	25	17	35	10
Our buildings have sufficient flexibility for our teaching and learning needs.	19	31	20	23	5
We have Modern Learning Environments throughout the school.	51	29	6	8	

Differences related to school decile

Two statements show differences related to school decile. Principals of decile 1–2 schools are more likely than principals from schools of all other deciles to agree that they have Modern Learning Environments throughout the school (32% agree, compared with 3%–13% of principals from other deciles). The level of agreement with having sufficient space for all classes shows a clear pattern based on school decile: 79% of principals of decile 1–2 schools agree they have sufficient space, declining to 68% of principals of decile 3–4 schools, 55% of principals of decile 5–6 schools, 35% of principals of decile 7–8 schools, and 40% of principals of decile 9–10 schools. This is consistent with the earlier finding that lower decile schools are more likely to have places for all students who apply.

Major issues facing schools

We asked principals and trustees which of 19 items they thought were the major issues facing their school. They could select as many issues as applied to their school. Table 42 brings together the picture from both groups, with the "top 10" issues in bold. Principals identified more issues than trustees.[73] Nine of the top 10 issues are the same across both principals and trustees.

Two issues that are new to the survey are foremost for principals: recruiting quality teachers, and providing support for vulnerable students (e.g., with wellbeing or mental health needs). Both are about provision that enables and provides a strong foundation for teaching and learning within the school. Resources—physical, human, and financial—are the prime concerns for trustees: property, recruiting quality teachers, and funding.

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73 Principals selected a median of eight issues, and trustees a median of six issues.

Recruiting quality teachers is the top issue identified by principals

In 2015, recruiting and retaining quality teachers was combined into one issue, "attracting and keeping good teachers". In 2018, this was separated into two issues—recruiting quality teachers and retaining quality teachers. Recruiting quality teachers was the top issue for principals (identified by 73%), and second issue for trustees (identified by half of trustees).[74] Retaining quality teachers is less of an issue than recruiting quality teachers.

Providing support for vulnerable students is the second issue identified by principals

Providing support for vulnerable students was the second most identified issue by principals (66%); and in the top 10 for trustees (39%). This has emerged as a key theme throughout this report.[75]

Funding is an issue for more principals and trustees in 2018

Funding is identified by a higher proportion of principals and trustees than it was in 2015 (64% of principals, compared with 51% in 2015; 47% of trustees, compared with 37% in 2015). However, it is still not as high as in 2009 when it was identified by 86% of principals and 84% of trustees, and 2012 when it was identified by 76% of principals and 68% of trustees.

Issues related to digital technology remain in the top 10 for both groups: cost of maintenance and replacement, and dealing with the inappropriate use of technology.

The downward trend in student behaviour being a major issue for schools has not continued

In 2015, we reported that concern about student behaviour has been dropping since 2009,[76] probably reflecting the emphasis and support given to schools to rethink their approach with the PB4L strategy. In 2018, while student behaviour remained quite far down the list of issues for principals and trustees, the downward trend does not continue, with 22% of principals and 23% of trustees identifying student behaviour as a major issue facing their school. Student bullying was identified as an issue by the lowest proportion of principals and trustees (11% and 7%).

Table 42 below gives the full set of issues identified by principals and trustees, with the top 10 for each group in bold.

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74 Compared with 26% of principals and 18% of trustees who selected "attracting and keeping good teachers" in 2015.
75 See Section *3: Promoting students' wellbeing*.
76 Thirty-three percent of principals in 2009, 26% of principals in 2012, and 15% of principals in 2015 identified student behaviour as a major issue facing their school.

TABLE 42 **Major issues facing secondary schools in 2018, reported by principals and trustees**

Issue	Principals (n = 167) %	Trustees (n = 138) %
Recruiting quality teachers	**73**	**50**
Providing support for vulnerable students (e.g., wellbeing or mental health needs)	**66**	**39**
Funding	**64**	**47**
Too much being asked of schools	**61**	**26**
Cost of maintenance and replacement of digital technology	**55**	**28**
Property maintenance or development	**53**	**59**
Dealing with inappropriate use of technology	**48**	17
Staffing levels/class sizes	**47**	**26**
Timetabling to support a growing range of student learning opportunities	**47**	**36**
Parent and whānau engagement	**41**	**39**
Retaining quality teachers	40	22
Māori student achievement	38	**39**
Providing good curriculum options for all students	38	**29**
Achievement of students with learning support needs	28	23
Good quality PLD	27	12
Student achievement	26	23
Student behaviour	22	23
Pacific student achievement	21	19
Responding to cultural diversity	19	13
Using modern learning environments effectively	19	13
Student bullying	11	7

Note: Figures in **bold** are the "top 10" issues for each group. For trustees, there were two issues in tenth place.

Differences related to school decile

There are associations between the kinds of major issues identified and school decile.

Among principals, it is those leading decile 1–2 schools who are most likely to report issues around:
- student achievement levels (48%,77 decreasing to 7% of the principals of decile 9–10 schools)
- parent and whānau engagement (63%, decreasing to 17% of the principals of decile 9–10 schools).

The principals of decile 3–6 schools are most likely to report that student behaviour is a major issue for their school (38% of principals of decile 3–4 schools and 30% of principals of decile 5–6 schools, compared with 21% of decile 1–2 principals, 10% of decile 7–8 principals, and 7% of decile 9–10 principals).

The principals of decile 7–10 schools are most likely to report that staffing levels and class sizes are an issue for their school (67% of decile 9–10 principals, and 53% of decile 7–8 principals, compared with 40% of principals of decile 5–6 schools, 46% of principals of decile 3–4 schools, and 16% of the principals of decile 1–2 schools).

Effective actions schools are taking to increase equity

In 2018, there was almost no change in the proportions of principals identifying the achievement of Māori students (39%) or the achievement of Pacific students (19%) as a major issue for their school. Nearly one-quarter of principals identify the achievement of students with learning support needs as a major issue (23%). To help identify actions schools had taken in the past 3 years that had proven effective in improving outcomes for Māori students, and Pacific students, and integrating students with learning support needs, principals were asked three open questions.

Focusing on Māori students' learning and wellbeing is the most effective thing half the schools have done to improve Māori students' outcomes

The most effective things[78] principals think their schools have done in the past 3 years to improve outcomes for Māori students are summarised in Table 43, followed by more details where needed. Ninety-five percent of principals wrote a response to this question.

TABLE 43 **The most effective things schools have done in the past 3 years to improve outcomes for Māori students, reported by principals**

Most effective things	Principals (*n* = 167) %
Focusing on Māori students' learning and wellbeing	56
Considering the needs of Māori students when making staff appointments and decisions about professional learning for existing staff	33
Involving whānau, iwi, or local marae to support Māori students	26
Increasing access at school to te ao Māori, for all students	21
Including goals for Māori students in the school's strategic plan	4
The board of trustees prioritising equity (e.g., co-opted Māori/iwi members); insisted on laptops for all students so none are disadvantaged	3

77 Although this is down from 90% of decile 1–2 principals in 2015 who identified student achievement as an issue.
78 Although principals were asked to name the single most effective thing, some provided a short list of things, all of which are represented in Table 43.

Over half of principals' responses indicate taking a purposeful focus on Māori students' learning and wellbeing was the most effective strategy used to improve outcomes for Māori students. Learning and wellbeing tended to be used together in principals' responses, and are closely connected, so they have been included in a single category here. The focus on Māori students' learning and wellbeing included closely monitoring the achievement of Māori students and supporting those who are identified as being at risk of under-achieving. Some principals named specific programmes that supported this focus, such as Rangatahi Ora, that aimed to support both the learning and wellbeing of Māori students. Other effective strategies principals identified as supporting their focus on Māori students' learning and wellbeing were Whānau Pūmanawa classes, tuakana–teina arrangements, mentoring, and culturally-responsive pedagogy.

One-third of principals say staffing decisions, including building their existing staff's capabilities, had been their most effective strategy for improving outcomes for Māori students. Some had appointed Kaitiaki Hauora (translates as 'guardians of health'), teachers of te reo Māori, or designated specific staff time to support Māori students' academic success. Also mentioned here were several professional learning initiatives, such as Te Kākahu, Kia Eke Panuku, and Poutama Pounamu.

For slightly fewer principals (26%), involving whānau, iwi, or local marae was the most effective thing their school had done to improve outcomes for Māori students.

Principals cited a number of ways their school had increased access to te ao Māori for all their students. These included increasing the visibility of te ao Māori in the environment, embedding Matariki as a school celebration, kapa haka, and using te reo Māori across the curriculum.

Focusing on Pacific students' learning and wellbeing is the most effective thing almost one-third of schools have done to improve Pacific students' outcomes

The most effective things principals think their schools have done to improve outcomes for Pacific students are summarised in Table 44. A smaller proportion (77%) of principals wrote responses to this question than to the same question relating to Māori students. This included 16% who commented that there was no need at their school to improve outcomes for Pacific students, some because they were on par with other students.

The actions principals identify as being effective for improving outcomes for Pacific students are similar to those they say have been effective for Māori students, although the proportions of principals who have taken these actions are smaller.

TABLE 44 **The most effective things schools have done in the past 3 years to improve outcomes for Pacific students, reported by principals**

Most effective things	Principals (*n* = 167) %
Focusing on Pacific students' learning and wellbeing	32
Considering the needs of Pacific students when making staff appointments and decisions about professional learning for existing staff	20
Involving fanau and community members to support Pacific students	16
Increasing access at school to Pacific cultures, for all students	11
The board of trustees prioritising equity (e.g., co-opted Pacific members)	2
Including goals for Pacific students in the school's strategic plan	1

Focusing on Pacific students' learning and wellbeing involved the same sorts of strategies described as effective for Māori students: tracking and supporting Pacific students' achievement; showing Pacific cultures are valued in the school; mentoring programmes; and building teachers' culturally-responsive pedagogy. An effective action one principal described was "introducing a Pasifika Studies course that has been effective in promoting a strong sense of identity".

One-fifth of principals report having their Pacific students' needs in mind when making staff appointments (e.g., Pacific teachers, dean of Pacific students) and working to improve staff's cultural competency/awareness.

For 16% of principals, involving Pacific fanau and community members to support Pacific students is the most effective thing their school had done to improve outcomes for these students.

Increasing access to Pacific cultures for all students was fostered through Pacific performing arts groups or participation in Polyfest, as well as introducing a Pacific Studies course, mentioned earlier.

Pacific students are sometimes included in approaches aimed at Māori students

Some principals' responses indicate they use largely the same approaches for Pacific students as they do for Māori students, often involving one-to-one mentoring, and building relationships with the student and their fanau.

> We have very few Pasifika (2%). They are supported in our Māori achievement plan.

> We only ever have 1 or 2 Pasifika students. We monitor their progress closely. Usually collate with Māori student data.

In half of schools, ensuring suitable staffing was the most effective thing to improve the integration of students with learning support needs

Finally, what was the most effective thing the school had done to improve the *integration* of students with learning support needs? This elicited responses from 87% of principals, summarised in Table 45. To improve the integration of these students, half of principals say the most effective thing in their school has been having suitable staffing (SENCOs, teacher aides to support these students), with some of these principals also commenting they had increased the number of teacher aides the school employs.

TABLE 45 **The most effective things schools have done in the past 3 years to improve the integration of students with learning support needs, reported by principals**

Most effective things	Principals (*n* = 167) %
Ensuring suitable staffing (e.g., SENCOs and teacher aides support these students)	50
Focusing on these students' learning and wellbeing	40
Prioritising or increasing funding to support these students	14
Work with external others, including other schools/Kāhui Ako on IEPs for transition, and RTLBs	12
Involving parents and whānau	7

For students with learning support needs, focusing on their learning and wellbeing included adapting curriculum resources, using provisions for special assessment conditions, providing a suitable digital device, and closely monitoring and supporting their learning and wellbeing.

Fourteen percent of principals report making funding decisions that prioritised the integration of students with learning support needs.

> We have been strong in this area for years. We pay for extra staffing out of our donations and some parents pay for extra assistance for extreme cases that don't qualify for funding.

> Employed a SENCO/special needs HoD. Funded additional teacher aides from board reserves.

For slightly fewer principals (12%), the most effective thing their school had done in the past 3 years to integrate students with learning support needs was to work with others, in addition to the school's SENCO and teacher aides. These included RTLBs, and educational psychologists, as well as people at contributing schools, a local special school, and other schools in the same Kāhui Ako.

Summary and discussion

Only 8% of principals consider their school's government funding is enough to meet its needs. Compared with 2015, more principals say they have had to reduce spending, and the impact of this reduced spending on curriculum options is more noticeable. Funding is identified as an issue by a higher proportion of principals than in 2015, now approaching two-thirds compared with half in 2015. Just over half the schools are also reliant on non-government resources, particularly international students. The proportion of principals who report their staffing entitlement is sufficient continues to decline.

In 2015, higher decile schools had the most stable financial situation, but this decile-related difference was not apparent in the 2018 data. Taking all the questions about funding together, it appears that funding issues are occurring across the board.

Most secondary schools are directly competing with a median of four other secondary schools for students. This is unchanged since 2012. Although competition for students is experienced across all school deciles, lower decile schools are more likely to have places for all students who apply.

A new set of questions in 2018 asked principals about the current picture of their school buildings. Responses show considerable variation, with similar proportions of principals agreeing and disagreeing that their school's buildings are in good condition. Modern Learning Environments throughout a school are not common.

Recruiting quality teachers was the top major issue facing schools. This issue did not show an association by school decile or school location—it was identified across the board. Many principals are also concerned about providing support for vulnerable students. This has been a key theme in the 2018 survey findings. In 2015, we reported 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. Although it still sits outside the "top 10" in a ranked list of issues, in 2018, student behaviour moved higher up the list for principals and trustees.

The achievement of Māori students, Pacific students, and students with learning support needs all continue to be a major issue for sizeable minorities of schools, with little change in the picture here since 2015. Many principals of schools that are paying attention to the needs of Māori and Pacific students indicate that taking a deliberate focus on tracking and supporting these student groups' learning and wellbeing was the most effective strategy their schools had taken for improving outcomes. In some schools, the small numbers of Pacific students are being included in initiatives designed for a larger group of Māori students. Ensuring appropriate staffing topped the list of effective actions schools had taken to improve the integration of students with learning support needs.

Survey methodology and respondent characteristics

Introduction

This is the sixth cycle of the NZCER national survey of secondary schools. In 2018, we were looking for efficiencies in running the survey that would maintain the research project's track record of collecting the views of representative groups of principals, teachers, and trustees, and a cross-section of parents and whānau.[79]

In 2018, we were mindful of the context in which the survey would run: 2018 was especially busy in the secondary sector, with a major review of NCEA underway and contract negotiations also a focus. During the development phase, there was some concern among stakeholder groups about a perceived proliferation of surveys of teachers and principals.

To reduce respondent burden and to manage the cost of the survey, we planned to reduce the length of the teacher and principal surveys, to investigate the feasibility of sampling fewer teachers, and to shift one of the four paper-based surveys to an online delivery.[80] These changes are described in more detail below where we provide information about the survey sampling and procedures for each respondent group. This is followed by a description of the survey respondents and their schools.

Survey sampling and procedures

In 2018, changes were made to the survey methodology for three respondent groups—teachers, parents and whānau, and trustees—as follows:
- teachers were sampled differently
- the trustee survey moved from a paper to online delivery mode
- parents and whānau were sampled differently.

No methodological changes were made to the principal survey in 2018.

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79 Ideally, we would also survey students, but this is beyond the budget for this project.
80 Time was spent during the project review process in 2017 investigating the possibility of online surveys. This included: a scan of relevant research literature; identifying trends in the four groups' response rates for previous rounds of the survey; comparing costings for both options; and considering how we might contact potential respondents with no up-to-date lists of, for example, secondary teachers' email addresses. To inform the decision making, we had asked respondents to the 2016 national survey of primary and intermediate schools whether they would prefer a paper or online survey; their responses were mixed. We therefore took a cautious approach to moving to an online survey, and decided to move only the trustee survey in 2018.

Principals

The same procedures that have been used for the principal survey since we began surveying secondary schools in 2003 were used again in 2018. The survey went to the principal at all 314 state and state-integrated secondary schools in New Zealand. The principal survey is comprehensive (comprising 69 questions) and was paper-based.

In the previous three secondary surveys, response rates for principals have ranged from 55% to 59%. We conservatively estimated the principal response rate might be around 45% (n = 141) in 2018. The actual principal response rate was 53% (n = 167), close to the response rates for previous surveys. The margin of error for the principals' responses is 7.6%.

Teachers

In previous surveys, teacher surveys were sent to one in four teachers at every secondary school and more than 1,700 teachers responded—more than are needed to be able to report robust findings from a largely representative group of teachers. In 2018, we aimed to reduce the number of teachers being asked to complete surveys, and still collect sufficient survey responses from teachers.

Based on response rates for our previous surveys of secondary teachers, we estimated that sending out 2,256 teacher surveys (for 12 teachers at each of a cross-section of 188 schools, 60% of secondary schools [81]) should enable this. Schools' office administrators were sent guidelines for randomly identifying which 12 teachers they should distribute surveys to.[82] The teacher response rate in 2018 was 31% (n = 705). The margin of error for teachers' responses is around 3.7%.[83]

Trustees

Previously, all four surveys were paper-based. We wanted to administer one of the surveys online to see if this less expensive delivery mode would still yield robust findings. Two surveys were short enough to be conducted online: the trustee survey (32 questions) and the parent and whānau survey (26 questions). We were making changes to how we sample parents and whānau and did not want any effects of a change in sampling to be confounded by the possible effects of a change in delivery mode. Also, we thought that online access could be an issue for some parents. For these reasons, we chose to administer only the trustee survey online in 2018.

Shifting the trustee survey to an online platform (SurveyMonkey) was the only methodological change for the trustee survey. In 2018 (paper) letters that included a survey link were sent to the board chair and one other trustee (we asked the board chair to give one letter to another trustee whose opinion might differ from their own) at all 314 state and state-integrated secondary schools in New Zealand. In previous years, the same distribution process has been used for paper surveys.

In the previous three secondary survey rounds, response rates for trustee surveys were between 37% and 45%. The trustee response rate in 2018 was 22% (n = 138). The margin of error for trustees' responses is around 8.3%

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81 In 2018, the characteristics of schools that were asked to distribute the teacher, and parent and whānau surveys were approximately representative of all secondary schools, reflecting the profile of all secondary schools by school decile, location, and school type (Years 9–15, or Years 7–10, for instance).

82 Reply-paid envelopes were sent out with every paper survey, enabling each one to be returned directly to NZCER.

83 Random sampling is needed in order to calculate the margin of error. Because we have no control of how the instructions for random sampling are actually followed in a school, this cannot be called true random sampling. These figures are therefore approximations.

Parents and whānau

For previous secondary surveys, the parent and whānau sample has been based on a sample of 35 schools, selected to provide a good cross-section of schools according to decile bands, and roll size within the decile bands. Previously, we have recruited each school by talking to the principal about their school participating in the parent survey, offering them a short summary of their parents' responses by way of incentive. When a principal declined, another school with similar characteristics was contacted. Making direct contact with principals proved a time-consuming process. Also, schools that participated sent surveys to every fifth family with a child attending the school, meaning the number of parent surveys we sent to schools was proportional to the school's roll. This meant more parent surveys were sent to larger secondary schools.

In 2018, we sent 20 parent surveys to each of the same 188 schools that received teacher surveys (a total of 3,760 parent and whānau surveys were sent to schools). These were accompanied by guidelines for randomly selecting 20 families to send surveys to.

Response rates to the parent and whānau survey in the previous three secondary surveys ranged from 25% to 33%. The parent response rate in 2018 was 14% (n = 508). Although this was low, there were sufficient responses to support reliable data analysis. The margin of error for parents' responses is around 4.3%.

Additional strategies to maximise response rates

To maximise response rates and mitigate the potential negative effects of changes in our methodology, in 2018 we promoted the survey with the sector via NZCER's newsletter and Facebook page, the *Education Gazette*, and via communications sent out by PPTA, NZSTA, and SPANZ to their members.

Initially, the survey ran during August, early in the third term of the school year. The closing date for the survey was extended to mid-September, and we included data from surveys received for a further fortnight after this date. Surveys—mostly from teachers and parents—were still being returned well after the survey had closed and all scanning and data entry had been completed and were therefore excluded from the dataset.

The survey respondents and their schools

The following sections present details about the principals, teachers, trustees, and parents and whānau who completed surveys. Because of the changes made to the survey methodology in 2018, we have included more detailed information about respondents than in 2015. Characteristics of each respondent group in 2018 are compared with the characteristics of the corresponding respondent group in 2015.

Responding principals' schools

The schools being led by principal respondents were broadly representative of the overall demographic profile of all state and state-integrated secondary schools in New Zealand. As Table 46 shows, in 2018 there was an under-representation of principals at decile 1–2 schools, as there was in 2015.

TABLE 46   **Profile of principal respondents by school decile bands compared with all secondary schools; 2015 and 2018**

Decile bands	All state and state-integrated secondary schools (*n* = 314)	Principals 2015 (*n* = 182) %	Principals 2018 (*n* = 167) %
1–2	15	11	11
3–4	21	23	22
5–6	25	28	24
7–8	22	19	24
9–10	18	20	18

Table 47 shows that the schools being led by principal respondents in both 2018 and 2015 were largely representative of all secondary schools in terms of location.

TABLE 47   **Profile of principal respondents by school location compared with all secondary schools; 2015 and 2018**

School location	All state and state-integrated secondary schools (*n* = 314)	Principals 2015 (*n* = 182) %	Principals 2018 (*n* = 167) %
Rural	5	5	4
Town	10	9	11
Small city	21	21	22
Metropolitan	65	64	63

The principals

Sixty-one percent of the principals were male, very similar to 63% in 2015. One principal used the response option "Gender diverse" that was added to the survey in 2018.

Table 48 shows that, in 2018, around two-thirds of principals who responded were aged under 60. Compared with respondents in 2015, we saw more principals in the 40–49 and over-60 age ranges responding, and fewer in the 50–59-year range.

TABLE 48   **Principal respondents by age; 2015 and 2018**

Age	Principals 2015 (*n* = 182) %	Principals 2018 (*n* = 167) %
Under 40	2	2
40–49	15	21
50–59	53	44
60–64	23	25
Over 65	7	9

The majority of principals identified as NZ European/Pākehā. In 2018, slightly fewer principal respondents than in 2015 identified as Māori (see Table 49).

TABLE 49   **Principal respondents by ethnicity; 2015 and 2018**

Ethnicity	Principals 2015 (*n* = 182) %	Principals 2018 (*n* = 167) %
NZ European/Pākehā	90	90
Māori	12	9
Asian	1	1
Pasifika	2	1
Other	6	4

NB. Respondents could identify with more than one ethnic group.

Responding teachers' schools

Teacher surveys were received from 705 teachers in 132 schools, which were approximately representative of all secondary schools. Table 50 shows that there was an over-representation of teachers at decile 3–4 schools and a slight under-representation of teachers at decile 7–8 schools, compared with the distribution of all secondary teachers by school decile band.

TABLE 50 **Teacher respondents compared with the distribution of all secondary teachers by school decile band[84]**

Decile bands	All state and state-integrated secondary schools (*n* = 314) %	All secondary teachers in NZ (*n* = 20,974) %	Responding teachers 2018 (*n* = 705) %
1–2	15	10	10
3–4	21	18	25
5–6	25	23	25
7–8	22	26	21
9–10	18	22	20

Table 51 shows an over-representation of teachers at small city schools and an under-representation of teachers at metropolitan schools, compared with the distribution of all secondary teachers by school location.

TABLE 51 **Teacher respondents compared with the distribution of all secondary teachers by school location**

School location	All state and state-integrated secondary schools (*n* = 314) %	All secondary teachers in NZ (*n* = 20,974) %	Responding teachers 2018 (*n* = 705) %
Rural	5	2	3
Town	10	8	6
Small city	21	14	24
Metropolitan	65	76	66

Looking at responding teachers' schools by a combination of quintile and location, there was under-representation of decile 1–2 schools in metropolitan areas (5%, compared with 9% of all secondary schools) and over-representation of decile 5–6 schools in towns (10%, compared with 6% of all secondary schools).

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84 Because of the change in sampling teachers in 2018, we cannot directly compare them to the teacher respondents in 2015, in terms of school characteristics.

The teachers

Sixty-one percent of the teachers were female, similar to the 2015 respondents. One teacher used the response option "Gender diverse" that was added to the survey in 2018.

Table 52 shows that there were only slight differences in the distribution of teachers' ages in 2018 compared with 2015.

TABLE 52 **Teacher respondents by age; 2015 and 2018**

Age	Teachers 2015 (*n* = 1,777) %	Teachers 2018 (*n* = 705) %
Under 40	34	30
40–49	25	27
50–59	25	26
60–64	11	11
Over 65	4	6

Over the past decade, the proportion of teachers responding to the survey who identify as NZ European/ Pākehā has shown a gradual decline from 88% in 2009 to 79% in 2018 (see Table 53). Ten percent of the teachers identified as Māori, around 5% as Asian, and 3% as Pacific people (Samoan, Tongan, Cook Islands Māori, and Niuean). The proportion of teachers identifying with other ethnic groups was 12%. This group included teachers who gave their ethnicity as European, North American, South African, Middle Eastern, and New Zealander/Kiwi.

TABLE 53 **Teacher respondents by ethnicity; 2015 and 2018**

Ethnicity	Teachers 2015 (*n* = 1,777) %	Teachers 2018 (*n* = 705) %
NZ European/Pākehā	81	79
Other	14	12
Māori	8	10
Asian	4	5
Pasifika	2	3

NB. Respondents could identify with more than one ethnic group.

The teachers who identify with Māori, Indian, Samoan, or Tongan ethnic groups were more likely to be at decile 1–2 schools (17%, 10%, 7%, and 4%, respectively, of the teachers at this group of schools). The responding teachers at decile 1–2 schools were less likely to be NZ European/Pākehā (58%, compared with around 81% of teachers at schools of other deciles).

In 2015 and 2018, teachers' subject areas were combined into groupings for analysis and reporting (see Table 54). These groupings were largely similar in both survey years. Compared with teachers' subject groupings in 2015, there were slightly more Mathematics and Science teachers and slightly fewer English and Languages teachers in the 2018 teacher respondents.

TABLE 54 **Teacher respondents by subject groupings; 2015 and 2018**

Subject groupings	Teachers 2015 (*n* = 1,777) %	Teachers 2018 (*n* = 705) %
Mathematics and Science	29	33
English and Languages	26	21
Social Sciences, the Arts, and Commerce	22	19
Technology, Health and PE, Transition, Careers, and Special Education	21	24
Other areas	3	3

In 2018, these subject groupings are used to report different response patterns in *Section 4: Teaching and learning in secondary schools* and *Section 5: Arrangements for curriculum provision*.

Responding trustees' schools

Trustee surveys were received from 138 trustees on the boards of 97 schools. Compared with all secondary schools, the 2018 trustee respondents were not a close fit (see Table 55). In particular, trustees at decile 1–2 schools were under-represented, and trustees at decile 7–8 schools were somewhat over-represented.

TABLE 55 **Profile of trustee respondents by school decile bands, compared with all secondary schools; 2015 and 2018**

Decile bands	All state and state-integrated secondary schools (*n* = 314) %	Trustees 2015 (*n* = 232) %	Trustees 2018 (*n* = 138) %
1–2	15	13	7
3–4	21	18	25
5–6	25	27	20
7–8	22	27	28
9–10	18	16	20

NB. Numbers in some tables may not add to 100, due to rounding.

Table 56 shows that, in 2018, the trustee respondents' school locations varied slightly from the national picture. Compared with the national picture and the group of trustees who responded in 2015, there were fewer trustees from rural and town schools, and more trustees from small city and metropolitan schools.

TABLE 56   **Profile of trustee respondents by school location, compared with all secondary schools; 2015 and 2018**

School location	All state and state-integrated secondary schools (*n* = 314)	Trustees 2015 (*n* = 232) %	Trustees 2018 (*n* = 138) %
Rural	5	6	4
Town	10	11	6
Small city	21	22	24
Metropolitan	65	60	66

The trustees

In 2018, 55% of trustees who responded were women, consistent with the national proportion of women trustees.[85] In 2015, 52% of trustee respondents were women.

Table 57 shows there were slightly more trustee respondents in the 50–59 age bracket in 2018 than in 2015.

TABLE 57   **Trustee respondents by age; 2015 and 2018**

Age	Trustees 2015 (*n* = 232) %	Trustees 2018 (*n* = 138) %
Under 40	6	4
40–49	40	37
50–59	47	52
60–64	3	4
Over 65	4	1

Table 58 shows slightly greater proportions of trustee respondents in 2018 identified as NZ European/Pākehā and as Māori.

TABLE 58   **Trustee respondents by ethnicity; 2015 and 2018**

Ethnicity	Trustees 2015 (*n* = 232) %	Trustees 2018 (*n* = 138) %
NZ European/Pākehā	84	88
Māori	14	17
Asian	2	1
Pasifika	2	2
Other	7	4

NB. Respondents could identify with more than one ethnic group.

85 As at 1 December 2018, 54% of trustees on boards of composite and secondary schools were women, according to: https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/schooling/board_of_trustees

The trustee respondents in 2018 were a highly-qualified group, and were more highly qualified than those responding in 2015 (see Table 59). In 2018, a greater proportion of trustee respondents had a National/ NZ Diploma or higher qualification (75%, compared with 66% of trustees in 2015). In particular, 19% of the trustees had a Master's degree or PhD, compared with 11% of respondents in 2015.

TABLE 59 **Trustees' highest qualification; 2015 and 2018**

Ethnicity	Trustees 2015 (*n* = 232) %	Trustees 2018 (*n* = 138) %
No formal qualification	2	3
School Certificate passes, National/NZ Certificate Level 1, NCEA Level 1	6	2
Sixth Form Certificate, National/NZ Certificate Level 2, NCEA Level 2	9	2
University Entrance, Scholarship, Higher School Certificate, National/NZ Certificate Level 3, NCEA Level 3	7	8
National/NZ Certificate Level 4, Advanced Trade Certificate	6	5
National/NZ Diploma	9	12
Bachelor's degree, postgraduate diploma, or graduate certificate	32	32
Honours degree, postgraduate diploma, or postgraduate certificate	14	12
Master's degree or PhD	11	19
Overseas secondary qualification	1	1
Other	1	4

Responding parent and whānau schools

In 2018, we sent the same number of parent surveys to each school in a sample of schools chosen to be largely representative of all secondary schools. We received responses from parents with children at 121 schools.

Parent respondents are compared with the distribution of all students by school decile band in Table 60.[86] The distribution of parent respondents fairly closely reflects the distribution of all students by school decile bands.

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86 Because of the change in sampling parents in 2018, we cannot directly compare them to the parent respondents in 2015, in terms of school characteristics. Student numbers are used here only as a proxy for the distribution of parents, as family size could vary by school decile and location, for example.

TABLE 60 **Parent and whānau respondents compared with the distribution of all secondary students by decile bands**

Decile bands	All state and state-integrated secondary schools (*n* = 314) %	Students (*n* = 268,015) %	Parents 2018 (*n* = 508) %
1–2	15	9	6
3–4	21	17	21
5–6	25	23	23
7–8	22	27	27
9–10	18	23	20

Parent respondents are compared with the distribution of all students by school location in Table 61. There was an over-representation of parents with children enrolled at small city schools, and an under-representation of those with children at metropolitan schools.

TABLE 61 **Profile of parent and whānau respondents compared with the distribution of all secondary students by school location**

School location	All state and state-integrated secondary schools (*n* = 314)	Students (*n* = 268,015) %	Parents 2018 (*n* = 508) %
Rural	5	2	5
Town	10	7	6
Small city	21	12	24
Metropolitan	65	78	66

The parents and whānau

The majority of parent respondents (82%) were women, the same as 2015.

Table 62 shows that parents' distributions by age in 2015 and 2018 were fairly similar.

TABLE 62 **Parent and whānau respondents by age; 2015 and 2018**

Age	Parents 2015 (*n* = 1,242) %	Parents 2018 (*n* = 508) %
Under 40	11	8
40–49	57	60
50–59	28	29
60–64	1	1
Over 65	1	1

The proportions of parents who identified with the ethnic groups shown in Table 63 were similar in 2015 and 2018.

TABLE 63 **Parent and whānau respondents by ethnicity; 2015 and 2018**

Ethnicity	Parents 2015 (*n* = 1,242) %	Parents 2018 (*n*= 508) %
NZ European/Pākehā	75	73
Māori	10	10
Asian	8	10
European (excluding NZ European)	6	6
Pasifika	4	5
Other group	<1	1

NB. Respondents could identify with more than one ethnic group.

In 2018, 46% of responding parents had degree qualifications, compared with 37% of parents who responded in 2015 (see Table 64).

TABLE 64 **Parents' highest qualification; 2015 and 2018**

Ethnicity	Parents 2015 (*n* = 1,242) %	Parents 2018 (*n* = 508) %
No formal qualification	5	6
School Certificate passes, National/NZ Certificate Level 1, NCEA Level 1	11	7
Sixth Form Certificate, National/NZ Certificate Level 2, NCEA Level	2	8
University Entrance, Scholarship, Higher School Certificate, National/NZ Certificate Level 3, NCEA Level 3	8	7
National/NZ Certificate Level 4, Advanced Trade Certificate	8	8
National/NZ Diploma	12	8
Bachelor's degree, postgraduate diploma, or graduate certificate	24	28
Honours degree, postgraduate diploma, or postgraduate certificate	8	9
Master's degree or PhD	5	9
Overseas secondary qualification	4	4
Other	1	4

No recent comparable national figures are readily available, but a comparison of 2013 Census figures for mothers aged 30 to 64 years—albeit a much wider group than the parents of current secondary students—gives some indication of the over-representation of parents with high-level qualifications, and under-representation of those with no qualifications. The Census data show around 17% without a qualification (compared with 6% of the parents responding to this survey in 2018) and 17% with a Bachelor's degree as their highest qualification (compared with 28% in this survey).

In summary

Some methodological changes were made to the survey in 2018. Asking fewer teachers to complete surveys still gave sufficient responses to support the types of analysis we wanted to do (e.g., differences related to school decile). We sampled parents and whānau differently and had a low response rate, although the decile distribution was more even than in 2015. We changed the trustee survey from a paper survey to online, and the response rate for this survey was also lower than in previous years. Because of this we have not reported decile-related differences in trustees' responses. The principal response rate was similar to previous years. Overall, the relatively low response rates for teachers, trustees, and parents mean some caution needs to be taken when generalising from the survey findings.

Our respondent groups had some different characteristics in 2018. Some differences related to respondents' schools compared with all secondary schools, and other differences were related to the profiles of respondent groups in 2015 and 2018.

- **Principals**: In 2018, there was a slight under-representation of principals at decile 1–2 schools, as there had also been in 2015. In other respects, the group of principal respondents was largely similar to the principal respondents in 2015.

- **Teachers:** Those at decile 3–4 schools were somewhat over-represented and, to a lesser extent, teachers at decile 7–8 schools were under-represented in 2018. Teachers at small city schools were over-represented, and those at metropolitan schools were somewhat under-represented. Otherwise, the teacher respondents in 2018 had a largely similar profile to those in 2015.

- **Trustees:** Overall, the trustees in 2018 were more highly qualified than those who responded in 2015. Slightly fewer trustees were under the age of 50, and fewer were from rural or town schools. Trustees on boards of decile 1-2 schools were under-represented and those on decile 7-8 school boards were somewhat over-represented.

- **Parents and whānau:** Like the trustees, the parents who responded in 2018 were more highly-qualified than those who responded in 2015. Parents with children at decile 1–2 schools were under-represented, and those with children at decile 7–8 schools were somewhat over-represented, although both to a lesser degree than when the previous methodology was applied in 2015. Parents with children at small city schools were over-represented, and those at metropolitan schools were somewhat under-represented.

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