

Education Report: Engagement and Participation Indicators 2015

Executive Summary

1. This report provides you with the student engagement and participation indicator results for 2015, which are positive overall.
2. It also asks your agreement to the Ministry publishing reports on the indicators

Engagement indicators – overall a continuing positive trend

3. Stand-downs and suspensions have decreased slightly since 2014. Rates of exclusions and transience have remained the same over this period, while expulsions and early learning exemptions have increased slightly. The trend for all these indicators has shown solid improvement since 2008.

Participation indicator – our changing approach to attendance data

4. Participation, as measured by attendance, has improved between 2014 and 2015. The trend has been relatively level since 2008.
5. This year we have made three changes to our approach to reporting on attendance data:
 - Scope – we have used data from all of Term 2, instead of one week.
 - Measure – we have measured attendance, instead of absence.
 - Analysis – we have analysed the correlation between attendance and achievement of NCEA Level 2, to better inform parents and students.
6. With the new measure, a student is counted as “attending” only when they are present at school and/or participating in a school activity. Justified absences (eg, sickness) are not counted as attendance. A student who attends more than 90% of half-days is classified as “attending school regularly”. This does not mean that we regard 90% as adequate for learning; it is a minimum threshold.
7. During Term 2 of 2015, 69.4% of students attended school regularly. This compares to 68.7% in 2014. The percentage of students attending regularly peaks in 2015 and is 3.1 percentage points higher than in 2013.
8. We are moving towards fuller collection of attendance data through the Every Day Matters initiative, which schools can volunteer to join. We now have nearly 100 schools signed up to send us their attendance data every term.
9. Our intention is to build the data that we have on every learner and integrate it with other data we hold. This will enable better targeted and tailored support for students and better social investment. If we are to take a true learner-centred approach we need data for all students in New Zealand, so we may need to reconsider our policy on voluntary attendance data collection in future.
10. Subject to your agreement, we will publish these indicator reports at a time agreed with your office. A communications plan is attached.

Recommended Actions

We recommend that you:

- a. **note** that the engagement and participation indicators continue an overall positive trend;
- b. **agree** to the Ministry publishing the indicators for 2015 on our website at a time agreed with your office;
- c. **consider** whether you want to put out a media release.

AGREE/DISAGREE

[Handwritten signature]

[Handwritten signature]

Katrina Casey
Deputy Secretary
Sector Enablement and Support

[Handwritten signature]

Dr. Craig Jones
Deputy Secretary
Evidence Data and Knowledge

NOTED / APPROVED

[Handwritten signature]

Hon Hekia Parata
Minister of Education

10/7/16

Education Report: Engagement and Participation Indicators 2015

Purpose of Report

1. This report provides you with the student engagement and participation indicator results for 2015. We ask your agreement for us to publish them at a time agreed with your office.

Engagement indicators – a continued positive trend overall

2. The engagement indicators comprise stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions and expulsions, transience, and early leaving exemptions.
3. Stand-downs and suspensions have decreased slightly since 2014. Rates of exclusions and transience have remained the same over this period, while expulsions and early learning exemptions have increased slightly. Expulsions have increased from 1.2 to 1.6 per 1,000 students, however of these 156 students, 100 of them have gone on to further education.¹
4. With the exception of transient students which have been constant, all the other engagement indicators have shown improvement since around 2008. A data table for 2008 – 2015 is provided in the Appendix.

Stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions and expulsions

5. The stand-down rate² has continued to decrease – from 27.4 in 2008, to 19.4 in 2015.
6. The suspension rate has continued to decrease – from 5.9 in 2008, to 3.6 in 2015.
7. The exclusion rate decreased from 2.3 in 2008 to 1.4 in 2014, and has remained at 1.4 in 2015. Continual disobedience was the main reason for exclusion in 2015.
8. The expulsion rate decreased from 1.7 in 2008 to 1.2 in 2014, however, it increased slightly to 1.6 in 2015.
9. While Māori and Pasifika students continue to have higher rates for these indicators, the overall trend is that their rates are tracking down faster than those of other ethnic groups. The exception is Pasifika expulsion rates, but that could be a reflection of the relatively high retention rates of Pasifika students.

Transient students

10. In 2015, 3,785 (or 4.9 per 1,000) students were considered transient. This is consistent with every year except 2011, which spiked due to the impact of the Christchurch earthquake.
11. Māori learners are most likely to be transient students and females are more likely to be transient than males.

¹ This is a minimum number, as at the April tertiary data return. There may be more.

² All rates are age-standardised per 1,000 students.

Early leaving exemptions

12. The early leaving exemption rate has dropped from 11.0 in 2008 to 6.5 in 2014. In 2015 it was similar, at 6.7.
13. This positive trend over the years has been similar for all ethnic groups.

Participation – improvements to analysis and presentation of attendance data

14. The Ministry monitors student attendance at school annually by means of a voluntary survey. Attendance has improved between 2014 and 2015. The trend has been relatively level since 2008.
15. This year we have significantly increased the insight gained from our annual voluntary survey by changing our approach to reporting on attendance data. We have changed to a wider scope and a new measure.

A wider scope has enabled more insight

16. Last year we noted to you the limitations of the one-week scope for attendance reporting [METIS: 926246]. For the 2015 survey report, we have made use of data for all of Term 2. We have collected Term 2 data from participating schools since 2011. Now that we have observed sufficient continuity and integrity in this dataset, we are using it for reporting.
17. The wider scope of a whole term's data opens up greater opportunities for useful analysis and insight. For example, it can show us whether a school's poor attendance rate is caused by a lot of students being absent a little, or a few students being absent a lot. It can also be used to identify correlations – eg, between attendance and achievement.

The new measure is more learning-focused and accurate

18. The new measure focuses on attendance, because attending provides the opportunity to learn and is a 'positive' measure. The previous measure used the national absence rate.
19. A student is counted as "attending" when they are present at school and/or they are participating in a school activity (eg, a sports exchange). Justified absences (eg, sickness) are not counted as attendance.
20. For the purpose of the 2015 report, a student who attends more than 90 percent of half-days is classified as "attending school regularly". Ideally each student would attend 100% of the time, however we have used 90% as a minimum threshold for this attendance measure in acknowledgement that sometimes students are unable to attend for unavoidable reasons, such as sickness or bereavement.
21. This does not mean that the Ministry considers 90% attendance is adequate; it is not. A student with 90% attendance potentially misses a year's learning over their schooling lifetime.
22. We are now reporting on student attendance in half days over the entire term, which aligns better with how schools record attendance.

Insights enabled by the new approach

- 23. During Term 2 of 2015 69.4% of students attended school regularly. This compares to 68.7% in 2014.
- 24. Between 2011 and 2015, the percentage of students attending regularly peaks in 2015 and is 3.1 percentage points higher than in 2013.

Figure 1: Students Attending School Regularly, Term 2

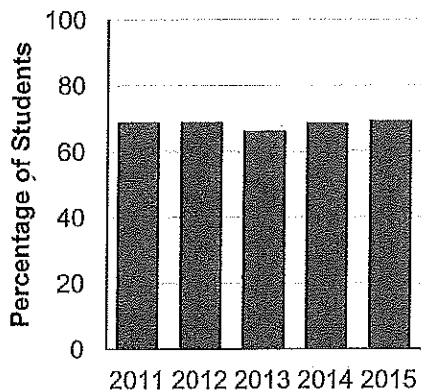
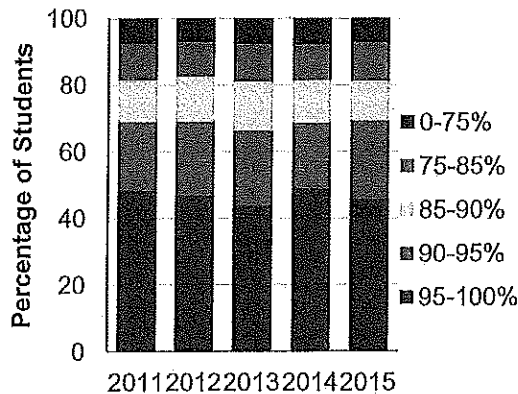


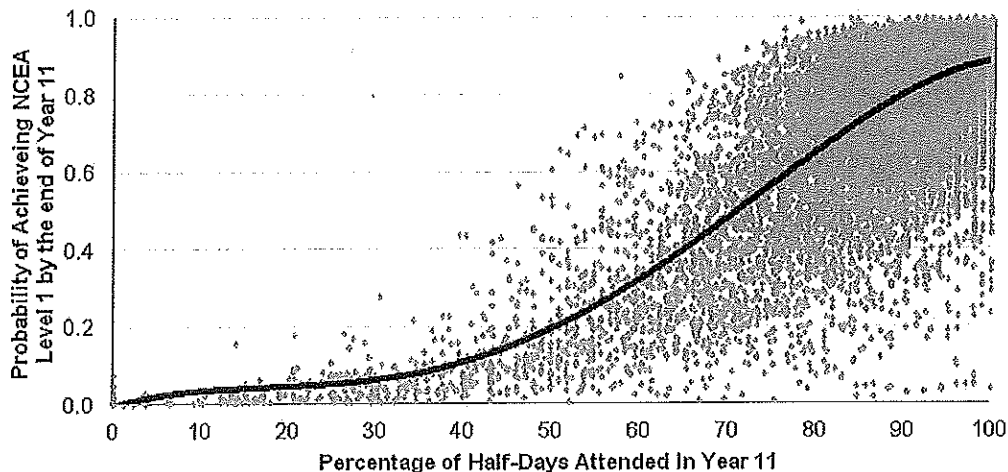
Figure 2: Half-Day Attendance, Term 2



We can see a correlation between attendance and achievement

- 25. Because we are focused on the student we can start to model how attendance impacts on students' outcomes. Included in the Attendance in New Zealand Schools 2015 report is a simple model that predicts, for Year 11 students in 2015, the probability of achieving NCEA Level 1, given their attendance in Term 2 of Years 7 to 11.
- 26. The model finds that there is a positive relationship between attendance and the probability of achieving NCEA Level 1. The strongest predictor is the attendance in Year 11, but attendance in Years 9 and 10 also contribute.

Figure 3: Probability of Year 11 Students in 2015 Achieving NCEA Level 1, by Attendance at School in Term 2



27. This type of analysis is just the beginning of what is possible by linking attendance with achievement and other data.
28. We want to be able to detect trends and patterns and move to address signs of concern early. If full attendance data for all students was available, it would enable us to identify students at risk of not achieving, earlier than we can currently. Lateness and poor attendance are manifested much earlier than other risk indicators such as stand downs and suspensions. This would also help identify a lot of students who are at risk but do not show it in terms of behaviour at school.
29. If we could add individual attendance data to the Student Journey Story approach currently used by ARoNA³, this approach could be used from the early primary years to identify students at risk and ensure the right support is provided at the right time.
30. Individual attendance data would be of great value to the work of the Vulnerable Children's Hub and the Children's Teams. Poor attendance, in association with other vulnerability factors, can be a strong indicator of risk.
31. Our objective is to eventually include this data in the Integrated Data Infrastructure so that it is available for analysis and for supporting social investment.
32. Quantifying the link between attendance and achievement has many benefits, particularly for the Ministry and schools. For example, we will be able to produce easily understood evidence-based materials (eg, infographics) for principals to use in conversation and communications with parents.

Insights from using Term 2 data

Average attendance rates fall over the course of the term

33. The average school attendance rate is highest in week 1 of term and progressively declines till the last week of term.
34. From the Social Sector Trial data (where we have Terms 1 – 4) we know that this happens every term, with each term starting with a higher attendance rate than the end of the previous term, but lower than at the start of the previous term. This means that, overall, the attendance rate decreases over the course of the year.

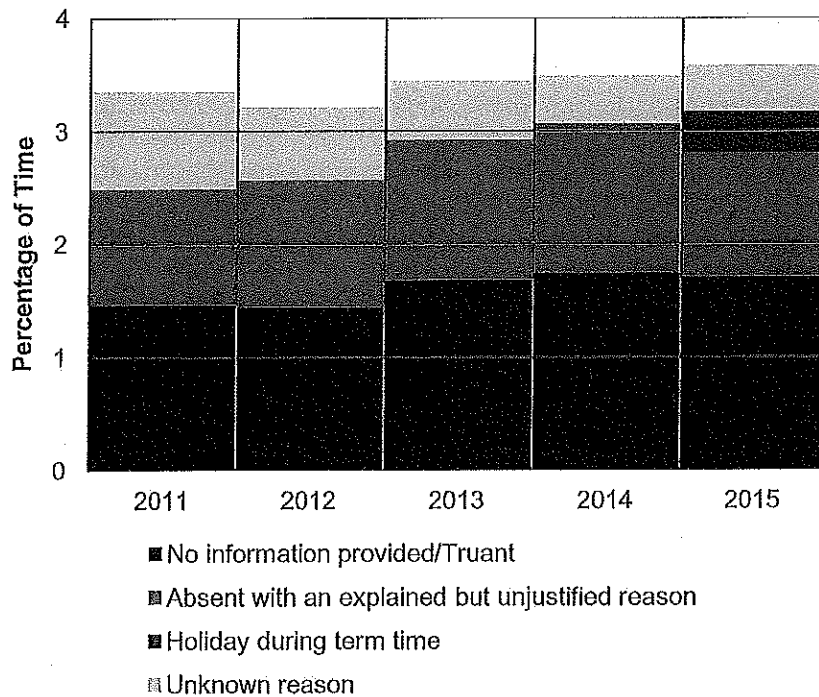
Holidays during term time are now quantifiable

35. In 2015 schools started coding absence from school due to term-time holidays.

³ At-Risk of Not Achieving (ARoNA) is a project to support Māori students to achieve NCEA Level 2. It correlates a range of education data information about an individual student to enable their level of risk and need to be better understood and addressed.

36. Previously, we could not tell how much absence was due to holidays. Schools sometimes recorded holidays as justified absences and sometimes as unjustified. Ministry policy is that holidays during term time are unjustified absence. The percentage of absence recorded as holidays is shown in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4: Time Not Attending Class for Unjustified Reasons, Term 2



37. Holidays during term time accounted for 10.2% of time unjustifiably absent and 0.4% of all class time. All other unjustified absences have decreased or remained static since 2014.
38. As this is a new code and not yet in full use, we have been cautious about using this data for fine-grained analysis. Once it becomes standard practice, we will be able to look at correlations with progress and achievement.

Collecting attendance data for every day of the year

39. Last year we reported to you our intention to move towards full collection of attendance data [METIS: 963293].
40. Poor attendance can be an early indicator of disengagement from education and our aim was to enable students at risk to be identified earlier. Full attendance data would also enable us to better evaluate the effectiveness of the various attendance-related interventions available to schools.
41. Earlier this year the Ministry introduced Every Day Matters, an initiative to assist schools to turn attendance data into insights. Schools can volunteer to join the initiative and send us their attendance data for every term. They receive customised attendance reports for their school in return. The data is presented in an intuitive way, which will be enhanced over time, to assist schools with the development of their attendance strategy.

42. As a result of advertising in the School Bulletin we now have nearly 100 schools signed up to the initiative. This gives us the critical mass to test our systems and processes to deliver on a larger scale. Later this year we would like to promote the initiative more broadly.
43. Our intention is to build the data that we have on every learner and integrate it with other data we hold. This integration of data enables far richer analysis, evaluation and research, and also better targeted and tailored support for students.
44. The *Education (School Attendance) Regulations 1951* require schools to report attendance data to the Ministry. However, for many years we have not compelled schools to fulfil this requirement; instead we have collected data on a voluntary basis. If we are to take a true learner-centred approach to attendance, and collect data for all students in New Zealand, we may need to reconsider our approach in future.
45. We have continued to report on the one-week snapshot, using the previous measure of the national absence rate (both justified and unjustified absences), to provide continuity. The one-week snapshot result for 2015 was 9.9% or 73,400 students absent per day. This compares to 10.8% in 2014.

Next steps

46. Subject to your agreement, we will publish these engagement and participation indicators for 2015 on our website at a time agreed with your office.
47. A communications plan is attached, and a media release for your consideration.

Appendix

Engagement Indicators 2008 - 2015

Age-Standardised standdown rates		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Maori	n	8,622	8,584	8,399	7,656	7,173	6,655	6,325	6,364
	rate per 1000	51.7	50.9	49.1	44.6	41.7	38.4	36.0	35.7
Pasifika	n	2,287	2,469	2,485	2,182	2,018	1,942	1,818	1,818
	rate per 1000	32.3	34.0	33.6	29.2	27.1	26.3	24.5	24.4
Asian	n	471	535	477	443	413	378	343	329
	rate per 1000	7.4	8.1	6.9	6.3	5.8	5.3	4.7	4.4
Other	n	449	427	365	282	291	233	228	180
	rate per 1000	28.0	25.2	21.5	16.7	17.4	13.8	13.7	10.7
European/Pakeha	n	8,448	8,128	7,759	6,989	6,812	6,301	5,722	5,506
	rate per 1000	20.0	19.5	18.9	17.3	17.2	16.1	14.7	14.2
NZ Total	n	20,277	20,144	19,485	17,552	16,708	15,509	14,437	14,198
	rate per 1000	27.4	27.2	26.3	23.8	22.9	21.3	19.8	19.4

Age-Standardised suspension rates		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Maori	n	2,100	2,357	2,082	1,895	1,765	1,541	1,353	1,304
	rate per 1000	12.7	14.0	12.2	11.1	10.3	8.9	7.7	7.3
Pasifika	n	487	556	470	391	321	308	283	315
	rate per 1000	6.9	7.7	6.4	5.2	4.3	4.2	3.8	4.2
Asian	n	74	81	64	56	49	53	31	65
	rate per 1000	1.2	1.2	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.4	0.9
Other	n	106	121	80	62	46	39	35	30
	rate per 1000	6.7	7.2	4.7	3.7	2.8	2.3	2.1	1.8
European/Pakeha	n	1,607	1,640	1,528	1,343	1,175	1,141	990	904
	rate per 1000	3.8	3.9	3.7	3.3	2.9	2.9	2.5	2.3
NZ Total	n	4,374	4,754	4,224	3,747	3,356	3,082	2,692	2,618
	rate per 1000	5.9	6.4	5.7	5.1	4.6	4.2	3.7	3.6

Age-Standardised exclusion rates		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Maori	n	659	769	707	672	602	538	464	445
	rate per 1000	4.4	5.1	4.6	4.4	3.9	3.5	3.0	2.8
Pasifika	n	173	196	179	139	121	105	102	107
	rate per 1000	2.8	3.1	2.8	2.1	1.9	1.7	1.6	1.7
Asian	n	16	17	19	7	12	20	7	20
	rate per 1000	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.3
Other	n	35	43	28	25	16	12	16	10
	rate per 1000	2.6	3.0	1.9	1.8	1.1	0.8	1.1	0.7
European/Pakeha	n	481	472	487	469	366	389	311	301
	rate per 1000	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.3	1.1	1.1	0.9	0.9
NZ Total	n	1,364	1,497	1,420	1,311	1,117	1,064	900	883
	rate per 1000	2.1	2.3	2.2	2.1	1.8	1.7	1.4	1.4

Age-Standardised expulsion rates		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Maori	n	41	42	65	52	54	47	47	57
	rate per 1000	2.7	2.6	3.7	2.8	2.9	2.4	2.4	2.8
Pasifika	n	43	43	38	33	23	26	18	32
	rate per 1000	4.9	4.5	3.8	3.3	2.3	2.5	1.7	3.1
Asian	n	14	12	9	16	4	3	7	15
	rate per 1000	1.4	1.2	0.8	1.5	0.4	0.3	0.6	1.3
Other	n	12	15	9	8	5	8	9	6
	rate per 1000	5.2	6.3	3.6	3.1	1.9	3.2	3.7	2.5
European/Pakeha	n	44	78	80	51	50	53	35	46
	rate per 1000	0.8	1.4	1.4	0.9	0.9	1.0	0.6	0.8
NZ Total	n	154	190	201	161	136	137	116	156
	rate per 1000	1.7	2.0	2.0	1.6	1.4	1.4	1.2	1.6

Early Leaving Exemptions		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Māori	n	312	268	179	204	168	204	184	224
	rate per 1000	25.0	21.2	13.5	15.7	13.0	15.6	14.2	16.5
Pasifika	n	35	31	26	20	18	24	16	17
	rate per 1000	6.6	5.7	4.8	3.6	3.2	4.4	2.9	3.0
Asian	n	4	0	2	2	1	0	2	1
	rate per 1000	0.8	0.0	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.0	0.4	0.2
MELAA	n					0	0	0	0
	rate per 1000					0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	n	7	7	7	2	3	2	2	2
	rate per 1000	6.5	5.4	5.3	1.6	9.6	6.2	8.6	7.3
European/Pākehā	n	296	264	202	159	123	191	162	146
	rate per 1000	8.3	7.6	5.9	4.8	3.8	5.9	5.2	4.6
NZ Total	n	654	570	416	387	313	421	366	390
	rate per 1000	11.0	9.6	7.0	6.6	5.4	7.3	6.5	6.7

Transient students		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Māori	n	2,065	2,139	2,336	2,016	2,082	2,127	2,141
	rate per 1000	12.4	12.7	13.8	12.0	12.2	12.3	12.1
Pasifika	n	479	567	627	550	532	552	554
	rate per 1000	5.7	6.6	7.2	6.3	6.0	6.2	6.1
Asian	n	108	125	146	121	110	125	146
	rate per 1000	1.5	1.7	1.9	1.6	1.4	1.5	1.7
Other	n	19	17	17	14	21	17	12
	rate per 1000	3.5	3.2	3.3	2.8	4.2	3.4	2.4
MELAA	n	40	35	69	45	54	42	55
	rate per 1000	2.9	2.5	4.8	3.1	3.7	2.8	3.5
European/Pākehā	n	1,628	1,683	2,361	1,582	1,515	1,442	1,517
	rate per 1000	3.4	3.5	5.0	3.3	3.2	3.0	3.1
Total	n	3,813	3,929	4,889	3,759	3,736	3,691	3,785
	rate per 1000	5.1	5.2	6.5	5.0	5.0	4.9	4.9

