



1 April 2021



Tēnā koe 

Thank you for your email of 28 February 2021 to the Ministry of Education requesting the following information:

- *Any briefings, analysis or advice about potential weaknesses of the proposed "Equity Index" (<https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/information-releases/issue-specific-releases/equity/>) produced by the Ministry since October 2017 that are not already publicly available.*

Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

The Ministry has published formal documentation on Education Counts and the Education website that outlines potential weaknesses associated with the previous iteration of the equity index. We have not provided any other briefings, analysis, or advice further to this.

As such, we are refusing your request under section 18(d) of the Act as the information you have requested is already publicly available.

A technical report from September 2019 titled *He Whaakaro: Accounting for educational disadvantage* has specific sections relating to "Future work to improve the model" as well as "Operational considerations/constraints" (see pages 28 to 30) that you may be interested in.

You can find the report here:

<https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/series/he-whakaaro/he-whakaaro-accounting-for-educational-disadvantage>.

The Ministry of Education website also includes an issue-specific page with advice produced by the Ministry around the equity index from 2018 onwards:

<https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/information-releases/issue-specific-releases/equity/>

Please note, as development of the index has progressed, some of the work to improve the model has already taken place. Some of the key improvements to the model are outlined below:

- The dependent variable has been updated from a binary 'pass/fail' measure to a continuous measure of 'score weighted credits from NCEA Level 1 and 2'. This is consistent with findings from the 2019 technical report referenced above.

- The index now looks at the average level of disadvantage in each school, rather than identifying the proportion of students at each school who are among the top 25% most disadvantaged children in New Zealand. Using a school's mean equity index reflects the average level of socio-economic barriers a school's community faces. This takes into account the circumstances of all students at the school and is more reflective of a school's socio-economic profile as a whole.
- General refinement of variables included in the model.

Please note, the Ministry now proactively publishes OIA responses on our website. As such, we may publish this response on our website after five working days. Your name and contact details will be removed.

Thank you again for your email. You have the right to ask an Ombudsman to review this decision. You can do this by writing to info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Nāku noa, nā



Dr Andrea Schöllmann
Deputy Secretary
Education System Policy