

24 November 2020

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

c/o Ellen MacGregor-Reid, Ministry of Education

Dear Minister

Thank you again for the continued opportunity to be involved in the NCEA Change Programme through your Professional Advisory Group. Ensuring the Ministry works closely with principals, tuamaki, teachers and kaiako in the implementation of these changes to NCEA remains crucial and I want to acknowledge the contributions and sound advice the membership has provided through this challenging year.

You have asked the PAG to provide advice on the Level 1 subject list. Please find a brief overview summarised below.

The Ministry has engaged with the PAG throughout the NCEA Review, including on both the provisional and final subject lists. We continue to support the change towards a broad and foundational NCEA Level 1, with opportunities for more specialisation at NCEA Levels 2 and 3.

The PAG broadly supports the subject list and believe it represents a significant shift towards meeting the new focus for NCEA Level 1. Individual members hold particular views on the merits of specific subjects, but the PAG as a whole does not recommend any substantive changes to the proposed list the Ministry has provided to you.

Throughout the process we have encouraged the Ministry to provide valid opportunities for feedback and support the extensions provided due to COVID-19 disruption. We also supported the additional engagement on Level 1 Science and the development of additional options for public feedback. Given the challenges around Science and the range of courses currently delivered by different schools, the recommended subjects in Science represents a constructive compromise. It will support teachers to develop a range of effective courses while increasing the consistency and foundational nature of Science teaching and learning.

Some members suggested the subject list could have gone further in decreasing the number of subjects to achieve a foundational qualification, but the PAG recognises that the level of change needs to be manageable for teachers, students, and schools. We continue to have concerns about how to best support disadvantaged students but recognise this is a complex challenge. While a wider range of subjects makes it easier for teachers to design courses that cater to the specific needs of students, it also enables low-quality programmes that do not provide the learning they need to succeed. While comfortable with the recommended list of subjects, we have advised the Ministry that they need to work with teachers to develop Level 1 subjects in a way that supports all learners.

The PAG is also aware that the level of change represented by the subject list will be challenging for many teachers and will have implications on the subjects they are able to teach. It will also require significant re-planning for teachers of subjects which will be consolidated or changed. The Ministry needs to work with the Subject Expert Groups and Peak Bodies to ensure there are sufficient supports for teachers and schools to respond to the changes, otherwise there is a risk of teachers leaving the workforce.

I also understand you requested further advice from the Ministry on Home Economics. The Ministry briefed the PAG on the recommendation to not continue with a Food Science subject. We support the Ministry's rationale to include Home Economics in the Health and Physical Education Learning Area through the subject of Health Education, and believe it reflects the feedback received through the engagement.

We continue to be available should you have any further requests and look forward to working with the Ministry as they look to progress advice on NCEA Levels 2 and 3.

Yours sincerely



Roger Moses
Chair
NCEA Professional Advisory Group

Proactively Released