# Achievement in Boys' Schools 2010–12

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# Executive summary

In 2012, 28 percent of boys leaving state and state-integrated schools came from 43 boys' schools.

Analysis of New Zealand male school leaver qualifications from 2010 to 2012 show that boys' schools have higher qualification achievements than co-educational schools. In 2012, boys' schools had a median school proportion of 42 percent of their leavers attaining University Entrance, 83 percent with at least NCEA Level 2 or its equivalent, and 8 percent without a qualification. In 2012, co-educational schools had a median school proportion of 23 for the percent of their male leavers attaining University Entrance, 69 percent with at least NCEA Level 2 or its equivalent, and 17 percent without a qualification.

Some differences in student achievement between the two types of school can be expected, given their different socioeconomic profiles: 32 percent of the boys' schools are decile 9 or 10 compared with 9 percent of the co-educational secondary schools, and only 5 percent are decile 1 or 2, compared with 20 percent of the co-educational secondary schools.

Further analysis of school leaver achievement within decile groups also showed higher qualifications for boys' schools, as well as showing decile-related differences within each type of school.

- Decile 1–8 boys' schools' median school proportion of school leavers achieving University Entrance was about 10 percent higher than their co-educational counterparts. The difference was much higher for decile 9–10 schools: 30 percent.

- Decile 1–8 boys' schools' median school proportion of school leavers achieving at least NCEA Level 2 or its equivalent as about 8 percent more, and decile 9–10 schools, 12 percent more, than their co-educational counterparts.

- The median school proportion leaving school without a qualification decreased from 18.5 percent in decile 1–4 boys' schools to 2.7 percent in decile 9–10 boys' schools. In co-educational schools, decile 1–4 schools saw 24.4 percent of their boys leave without a qualification, decreasing to 9.4 percent in decile 9–10 schools.

The analysis also shows wider ranges of achievement levels among co-educational schools than boys' schools, with some co-educational schools having higher achievement levels than all the boys' schools in their decile group.

Māori and Pasifika school leavers in boys' schools were more likely than their counterparts in co-educational schools to gain qualifications. Within the boys' schools, Māori and Pasifika school leavers' qualifications did not show the increase with school decile evident in looking at boys in the schools as a whole.

Analysis of course endorsements for 2012 shows a more mixed pattern, in relation both to school decile and type. Course endorsement for Year 11 students for NCEA Level 1 showed this occurred more for boys' school students than their counterparts in co-educational schools, more so for those in decile 1–6 schools. Course endorsement for Year 12 students for NCEA Level 2 saw more excellences and merits for boys from co-educational schools than those from boys' schools in decile 1–4 schools. For Year 13 boys gaining NCEA Level 3, course endorsement occurred more for boys in co-educational decile 1–8 schools than those from boys' decile 1–8 schools.

All three kinds of standards—externally examined achievement standards, internally assessed achievement standards, and unit standards—were used in both school types for NCEA credits. In 2012, after the first standards-curriculum alignment work, use of NCEA Level 1 standards amongst males was less likely to include unit standards in boys' schools than co-educational schools, other than decile 7–8 schools. There was a similar pattern for use of NCEA Level 2 standards. Use of externally assessed standards was much the same for both school types in decile 3–4 and 7–8 schools. Use of NCEA Level 3 standards saw similar proportions of boys sit standards through internal assessment in both school types; higher proportions of boys in boys' schools sit these standards through external assessment other than deciles 3–4 schools, and higher proportions of boys in co-educational decile 1–4 schools sit NCEA Level 3 standards through unit standards than their boys' school counterparts.

Within the boys' schools, there is a range of achievement between schools both across deciles and within decile groups. There was some overlap among decile groups, with some decile 1–4 boys' schools achieving as high a proportion of University Entrance or at least NCEA Level 2 and equivalent as some decile 5–6 schools and one decile 7–8 school. Decile 7–8 schools had the widest range of University Entrance achievement.

Analysis of school achievement between 2010 and 2012 identified a highly performing boys' school for each of the four decile groups. Interviews at these schools with school leaders focused on their strategies and approaches to engage boys in learning and gain high achievement. These included:

**Student-centred**

- Ensuring first-year students identify with the school and its values, often giving senior students a role here.

- Providing a range of sporting, cultural, and service co-curricular activities so that there was opportunity for every boy to experience the need for effort before achievement; the value of working toward goals; success and enjoyment in something that mattered to them; relate to each other as 'brothers'; get to know and trust teachers in other settings: all these were also useful for classroom engagement and achievement.

- Leadership roles for senior students that invest them in the school's wellbeing and success as well as their own individual success.

- Identifying student need early on and responding to it, particularly with targeted literacy and numeracy support in junior years; and later, identifying students at risk of not achieving qualification goals sufficiently early in the school year to improve their work.

- Making the most of the NCEA structure—openness, goal setting, progress marking, greater range of achievement, and public recognition opportunities.

- Publicly recognising academic achievement, so it is 'cool'.

### Goals-focused

- Framing high expectations of achievement in terms of effort and student goals related to meaningful qualification and career pathways, and backing all students with support.

- Including sporting, cultural, and service goals within those to be identified by each boy, so that there is a holistic development.

- Openness around student goals and progress so that parents can better support their child and students have a clear framework for their learning.

### Coherence from a values base

- Threading core school values through the school day and in the way teachers and school leaders relate to the boys.

### Sound basis for teaching practice

- Ongoing reviews of class achievement and school operations in order to improve practice.

- Evolutionary change on the basis of careful inquiry using data related to students.

- Leading to change through sufficient professional development so that teachers are confident and committed to the change.

- Making the most of teaching time.

# 1.  Introduction

NZCER was contracted by the Association of Boys' Schools of New Zealand (ABSNZ) to undertake an analysis of student achievement in New Zealand boys' schools, and to identify approaches and strategies used by high-achieving boys' schools.

In 2012, 28 percent of boys leaving school came from boys' schools: a total of 7,439 students, increased somewhat from 7,390 in 2010.

The quantitative analysis provided here compares the achievement of boys in state and state-integrated boys' secondary schools with the achievement of boys in state and state-integrated co-educational secondary schools over the period 2010–12. It uses data on secondary qualifications, namely:

- achievement of University Entrance
- achievement of NCEA Level 2 and above
- no qualification gained
- achievement of Scholarship
- course endorsements
- type of NCEA standard used.

We have mainly used schools as our unit of analysis, because within each kind of provision (boys' schools and co-educational), achievement levels vary across schools, mainly in relation to the socioeconomic profile of a school's community, summarised by its decile rating, but also within deciles. At the national level, boys' schools have a much higher socioeconomic profile than co-educational schools: 32 percent of the 43 boys' schools are decile 9 or 10, compared with 9 percent of the co-educational secondary schools, and 5 percent are decile 1 or 2, compared with 20 percent of the co-educational secondary schools. This difference in the national socioeconomic profile has some bearing on the national picture; it means also that it is important to compare schools of like decile, which is what we do in the analysis.

There are other factors that can also influence what schools can provide their students, such as size (58 percent of boys' schools have rolls of 750 or more, compared with 42 percent of co-educational secondary schools). Boys' schools include more integrated schools (47 percent compared with 10 percent of co-educational secondary schools), which may be able to attract parents with an existing commitment to school values, and readiness to provide financial and other support. This report compares qualifications for boys in boys' schools and co-educational schools and between schools within each type without taking into account such additional factors that may contribute to differences between schools.

The analysis in this report focuses mainly on individual school leaver data provided by the Ministry of Education, since these data allow the clearest picture of secondary qualifications. These data allow us to include achievements through routes other than NCEA, such as Cambridge examinations, after integrating NZQA-provided data with the other data. The school leaver data also allow us to describe qualifications for schools of different decile, and to analyse any differences related to student ethnicity within different decile groups.

We use NZQA data to analyse NCEA course endorsements and types of standards used. These data are both more limited and complex. The data available to us on NCEA course endorsements are at the aggregated level only, so we cannot link individual student achievement to their school. We can only compare course endorsements by aggregating the proportion of courses in each school that were achieved, endorsed with merit, or endorsed with excellence to provide a mean for each decile level. The data cover course endorsements for students who achieved NCEA Level 1 in Year 11 or earlier, NCEA Level 2 in Year 12, and NCEA Level 3 in Year 13. This omits students who achieve an NCEA level later than the usual year (which is more likely to happen in low-decile schools).

The NZQA data available to us on types of standards used are also at the aggregate level but, unlike the endorsement data, do not allow us to exclude other types of schools where students take NCEA. Thus, these data include private schools among the boys' and co-educational schools, and area schools among the state schools.

A description of the data used and the work undertaken to provide the qualifications database needed for the analyses reported here is given in Appendix A.

# 2.  Overall picture of student achievement

Table 1 compares the median school proportion of school leavers with no qualification, at least NCEA Level 2, and University Entrance, including those who gained it through non-NZQF qualifications such as Cambridge International or International Baccalaureate, for boys' schools and boys from co-educational schools. It shows overall that boys' schools have higher proportions of boys gaining qualifications, particularly for University Entrance.

Table 1  **Boys' qualification achievement at the national level**

| Qualification | Median of school leaver proportions across schools | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Year | Boys' schools (N = 43) | Co-ed schools (N = 225) |
| **University entrance** | 2010 | 39 | 20 |
| | 2011 | 41 | 22 |
| | 2012 | 42 | 23 |
| **At least NCEA Level 2** | 2010 | 78 | 63 |
| **(or equivalent)** | 2011 | 80 | 65 |
| | 2012 | 83 | 69 |
| **No qualification** | 2010 | 10 | 22 |
| | 2011 | 10 | 20 |
| | 2012 | 8 | 17 |

Scholarship achievement is analysed in terms of the number of boys who gained Scholarship in three or more subjects. This was the data available to us from the school leaver data set. We analyse the proportion of school leavers nationally, rather than by school, since the numbers who gain three Scholarship subjects are often low or non-existent at the individual school level. Fifty percent of boys' schools had at least one boy gain a Scholarship in three or more subjects, as did 25 percent of co-educational schools.

A higher proportion of school leavers from boys' schools have gained scholarships in three subjects from 2010 to 2012. We have not analysed this further by decile, since the numbers of individuals as well as the numbers of schools are too low to analyse further, but it is likely that the higher numbers reflect the higher proportion of decile 9–10 schools amongst boys—and the higher proportion of students at these schools: 35 percent of the 2012 school leavers from boys' schools were from decile 9–10 schools, compared with 17 percent from co-educational schools.

Table 2  **Boys' achievement of scholarships in at least three subjects at the national level**

| Year | Boys' school leavers | | Co-ed school male leavers | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | n | % of boys school leavers | n | % of co-ed school male leavers |
| **2010** | 67 | 0.91 | 76 | 0.38 |
| **2011** | 97 | 1.31 | 71 | 0.35 |
| **2012** | 90 | 1.21 | 77 | 0.41 |

# 3.  Analysis of student achievement by decile

In this section we show the results of analysis comparing boys' schools with co-educational schools within decile. Because of the small number of boys' schools, particularly in decile 1–2, we have grouped schools: decile 1–4; decile 5–6; decile 7–8, and decile 9–10. The decile 1–4 grouping is not as internally consistent across the two school types as the other decile groupings, since the boys' school decile 1–4 grouping includes only two decile 1–2 schools (25 percent of this group), and the co-educational school decile 1–4 grouping includes 45 decile 1–2 schools (45 percent of this group).

We give the results of this analysis in 'box and whiskers' graphs, because these show the range of achievement across schools, as well as the median school proportions of achievement. In these graphs, the 'box' shows the spread of levels for the middle of the range of schools, and the horizontal line is the median. The median line will occur half way up the box if schools are evenly spread around it; but it will occur closer to one end if that is where most of the scores are bunched. For example, in Figure 1, the median proportion of male school leavers with University Entrance in co-educational decile 1–4 schools in 2010 is 13.4 percent with around a quarter of the schools achieving between 10 to 12 percent; and in boys' decile 1–4 schools, the median is 22.9 percent, with around a quarter of these schools achieving between 18 to 20 percent. The single dots in each graph show individual outlier schools.

## University Entrance

This section examines the proportions of students attaining University Entrance (UE) among the school leavers from boys' and co-educational schools. This includes leavers who may have achieved UE through a non-NZQF pathway such as Cambridge or International Baccalaureate.

The higher the school decile, the higher is the proportion of boys leaving with U E. Within decile groups, boys' schools had higher proportions of school leavers with this qualification. The patterns in each decile group across the years show some variation.

Table 3 shows the 2012 median proportion for each school type, within each of the four decile groups.

Table 3  **Boys' University Entrance achievement at the national level**

| | Median school percentage of male school leavers | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Decile group | Boys' schools (N = 43) | Co-ed schools (N = 225) |
| 1–4 | 25.4 | 15.2 |
| 5–6 | 35.8 | 23.7 |
| 7–8 | 47.4 | 36.5 |
| 9–10 | 71.0 | 41.4 |

We start with the decile 1–4 group of schools. Figure 1 below shows that boys' schools have higher proportions of school leavers with UE over the three years 2010–12. It also shows a dip in the median school proportion for boys leaving with UE between 2011 and 2012 in boys' schools, while showing a steady and gradual increase in the median school proportion of boys from co-educational schools leaving with UE. Some co-educational schools achieved higher rates than all the boys' schools in this decile group.

Figure 1  **Proportion of boys leaving with University Entrance in decile 1–4 schools (boys' schools N = 8, co-ed schools N = 101)**
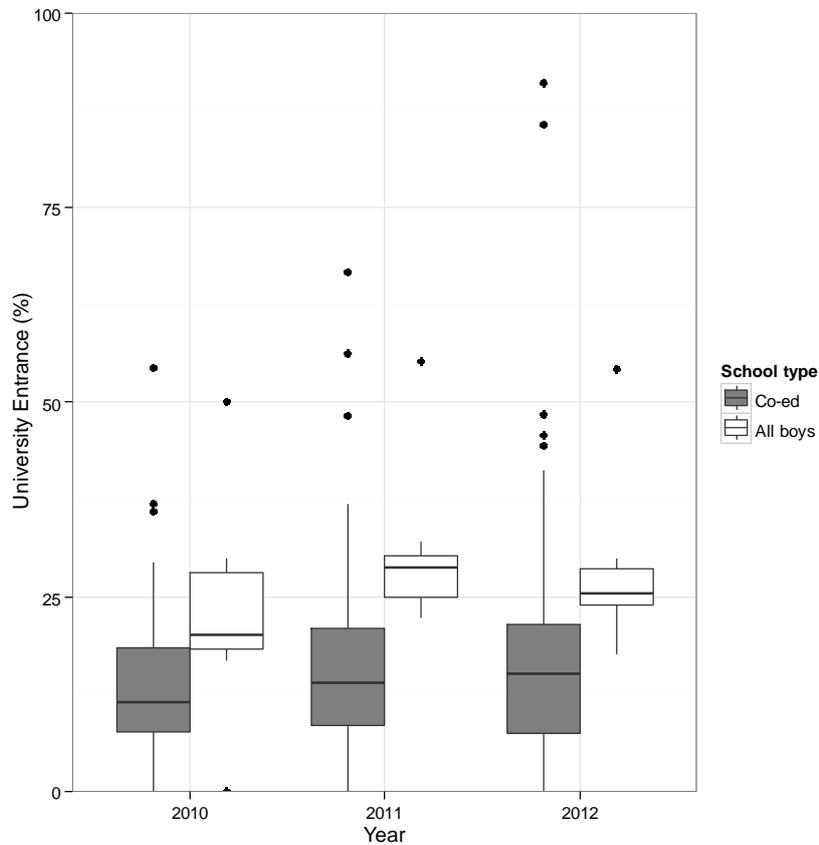
Figure 2 shows the proportions of boys leaving with UE from decile 5–6 schools. The decile 5–6 boys' schools show a wider range of UE achievement than their decile 1–4 counterparts. The co-educational school outlier with no leavers with University Entrance in 2010 is a small rural school; the achievement level was much higher for this school in 2011 and 2012. There is an overall increase between 2011 and 2012 in the achievement of UE in the decile 5–6 boys' schools. The co-educational schools show a lower median, with gradual increases between 2010 and 2012.

Figure 2 **Proportion of boys leaving with University Entrance in decile 5–6 schools (boys' schools N = 11, co-ed schools N = 56)**
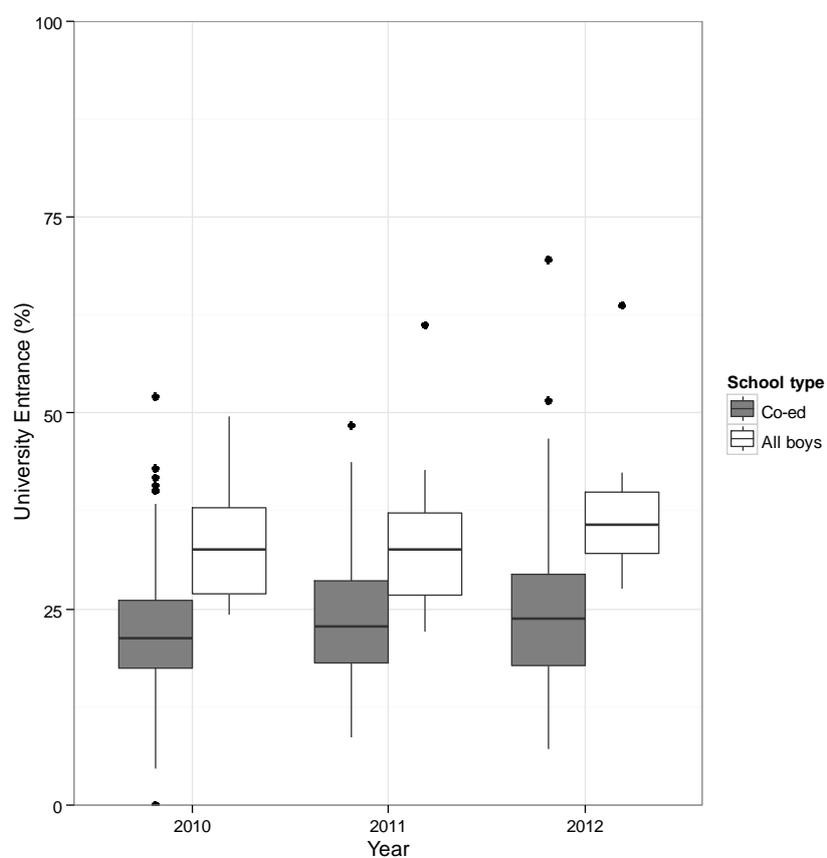
Differences between boys' schools and co-educational schools are evident but were less marked among decile 7–8 schools than for the decile 1–6 schools, shown in Figure 3. The range among each school type for the proportion of school leavers with UE is much wider than for decile 1–6 schools. Both school types show a dip in the median school proportion of leavers with UE between 2010 and 2011, and picking up again in 2012.

Figure 3  **Proportion of boys leaving with University Entrance in decile 7–8 schools (boys'**
            **schools N = 11, co-ed schools N = 44)**
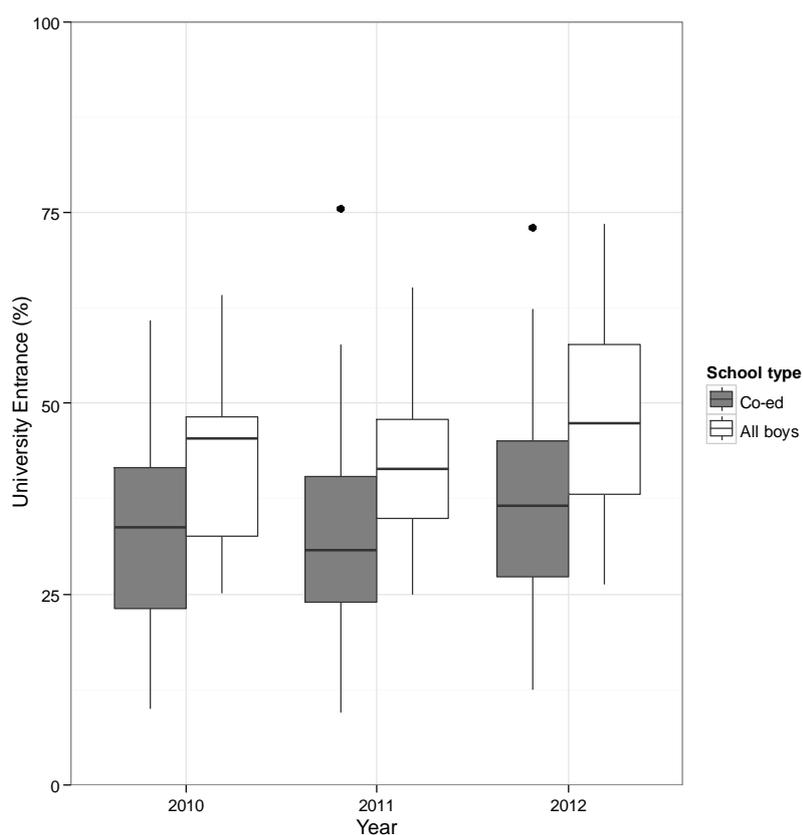
Decile 9–10 boys' schools had increasingly higher rates of UE achievement over the years 2010 to 2012, and higher than decile 9–10 co-educational schools. Decile 9–10 co-educational schools increased the proportions of leavers with UE between 2010 and 2011, then dipped a little in the median proportions for 2012, but also reducing the proportion of schools with lower UE achievement rates. The outlier co-educational school in 2010 was a new school with a low roll and no Year 13 students. This school's roll increased in 2011, and the outlier in 2011 and 2012 is another new school with a small roll and a low number of leavers.

Figure 4    **Proportion of boys leaving with University Entrance in decile 9–10 schools (boys' schools N = 13, co-ed schools N = 23)**
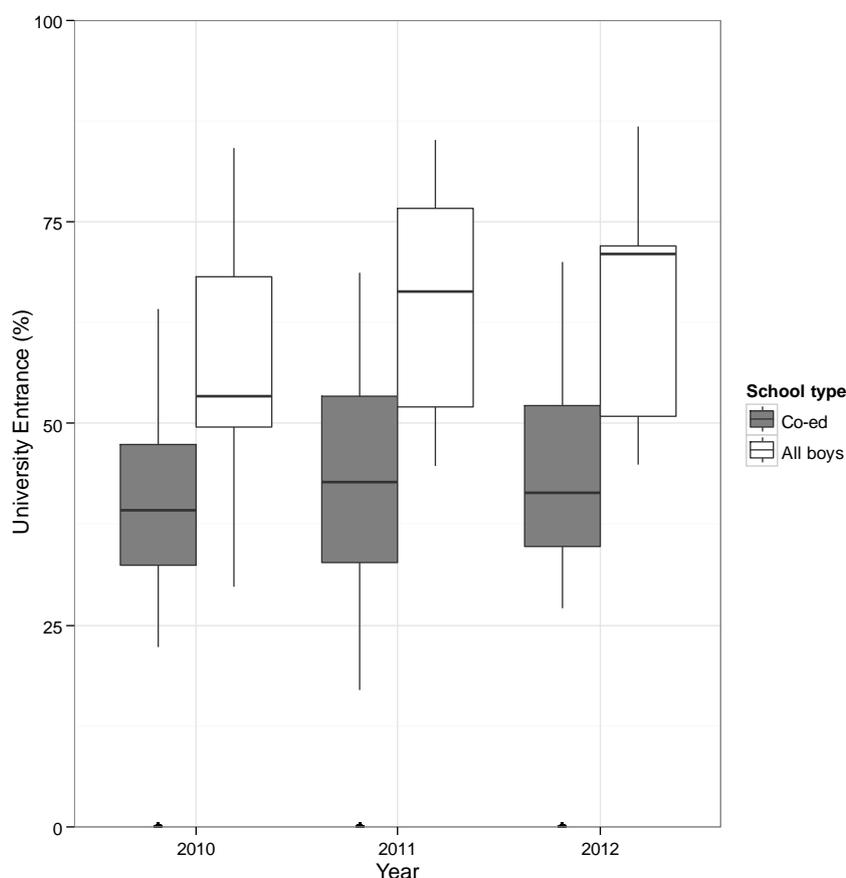


## NCEA Level 2 (or equivalent) and higher

In this section we look at the proportion of school leavers with at least NCEA Level 2 or its equivalent. The 'equivalent' qualifications included are Cambridge International examinations at Year 12 and Year 13, and International Baccalaureate Year 13. Other NZQF qualifications that are not part of NCEA were included if a student also had University Entrance, which included students with National Certificate Level 4 and Other Level 3 NZQF Qualification.

Boys' schools have a higher median school proportion of boys leaving school with at least NCEA Level 2 or equivalent than co-educational schools, within each of the four decile groups. Table 4 shows the 2012 median proportion for each school type, within each decile group.

Table 4  **Boys' achievement of at least NCEA Level 2 or equivalent**

| | Median percentage of school leavers per school | |
|---|---|---|
| **Decile group** | **Boys' schools (N = 43)** | **Co-ed schools (N = 225)** |
| 1–4 | 69.9 | 61.1 |
| 5–6 | 76.7 | 69.4 |
| 7–8 | 85.7 | 78.7 |
| 9–10 | 93.0 | 80.7 |

Figure 5 shows that the range of proportions among the decile 1–4 boys' schools is smaller than it is for the decile 1–4 co-educational schools (perhaps because of the smaller number of decile 1–2 schools amongst the boys' schools in this group). The median proportion of leavers achieving at least NCEA Level 2 increased from 2010 to 2011, but then declined a little from 2011 to 2012. The co-educational schools show steady increases from 2010 to 2012. As with University Entrance, some co-educational schools had higher proportions of at least NCEA Level 2 or equivalent than all the boys' schools in this decile group.

Figure 5   **Decile 1–4 male school leavers with at least NCEA Level 2 or its equivalent (boys' schools N = 8, co-ed schools N = 101)**
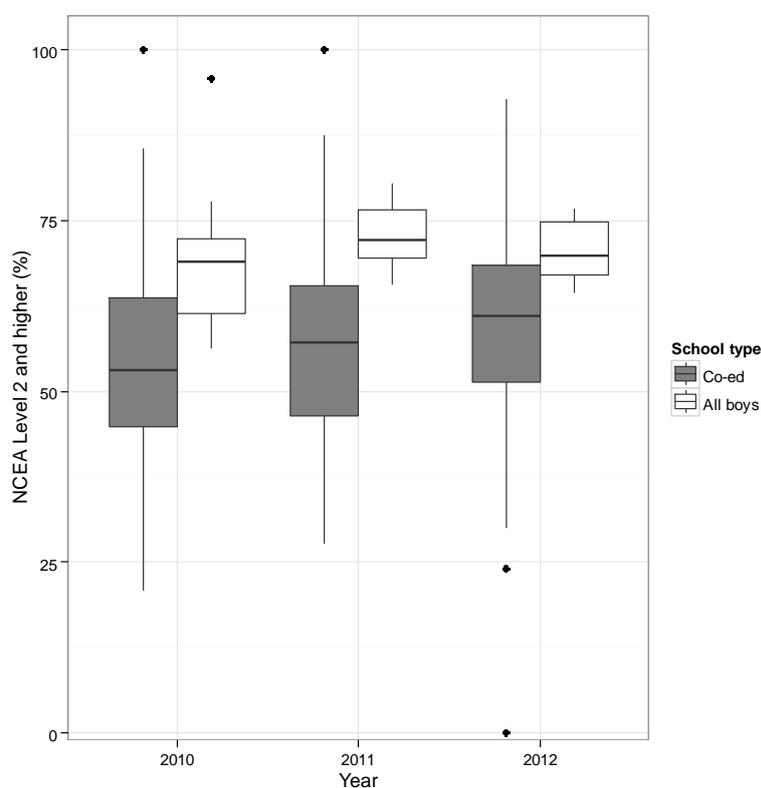
Both boys' and coeducational decile 5–6 schools increased the proportions of their students achieving at least NCEA Level 2 or its equivalent over the 2010–12 period. The decile 5–6 boys' schools showed a steady increase; the decile 5–6 co-educational schools showed a marked increase from 2011 to 2012.

Figure 6   **Decile 5–6 male school leavers with at least NCEA Level 2 or its equivalent (boys' schools N = 11, co-ed schools N = 56)**
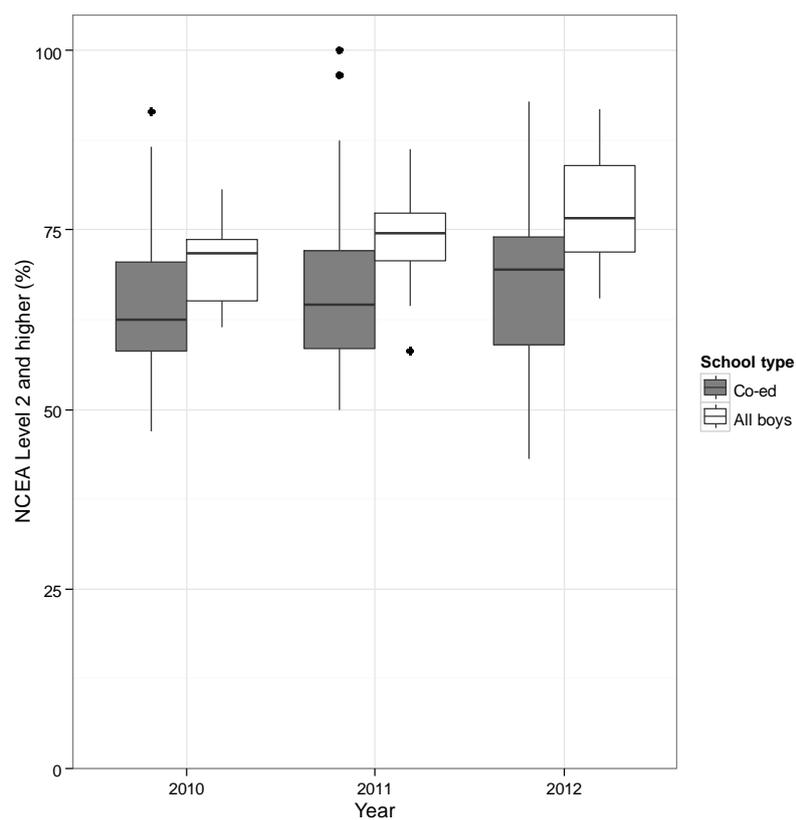
Figure 7 shows co-educational decile 7–8 schools increase in the proportions of boys leaving with at least NCEA Level 2 or its equivalent from 2010 to 2012, bringing them closer to the higher boys' school median. Some co-educational decile 7–8 schools had higher proportions of boys achieving this by 2012 than the decile 7–8 boys' schools as a whole.

Figure 7 **Decile 7–8 male school leavers with at least NCEA Level 2 or its equivalent (boys' schools N = 11, co-ed schools N = 44)**
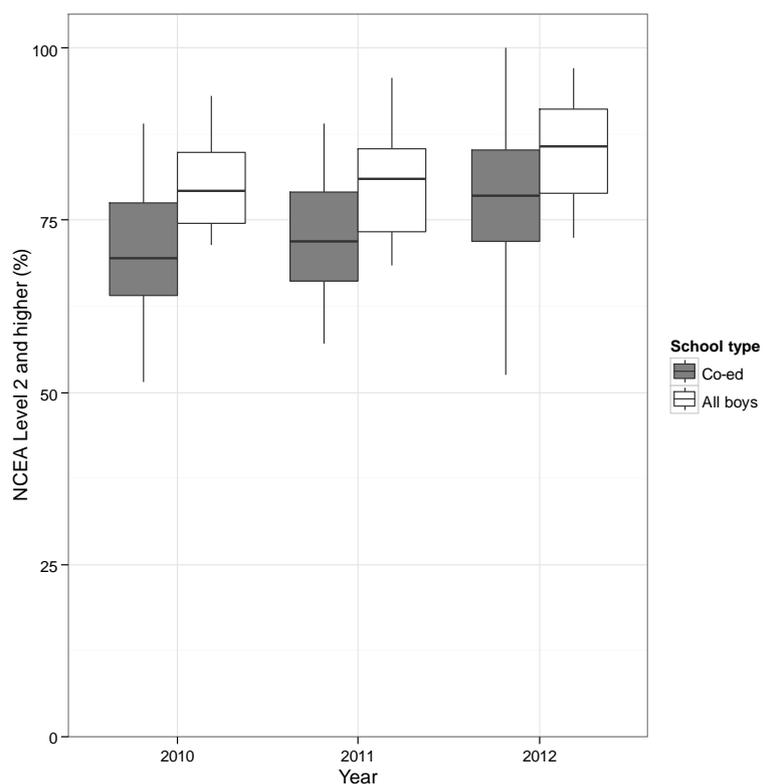
The decile 9–10 boys' schools had clearly higher proportions of school leavers getting NCEA Level 2 or equivalent than the decile 9–10 co-educational schools. Both school types showed increases between 2010 and 2011, followed by a slight increase for co-educational schools and a slight decline for boys' schools between 2011 and 2012.

The outliers for decile 9–10 co-educational schools are the new schools with a small number of leavers (between three and 25).

Figure 8  **Decile 9–10 male school leavers with at least NCEA Level 2 or its equivalent (boys' schools N = 13, co-ed schools N = 23)**
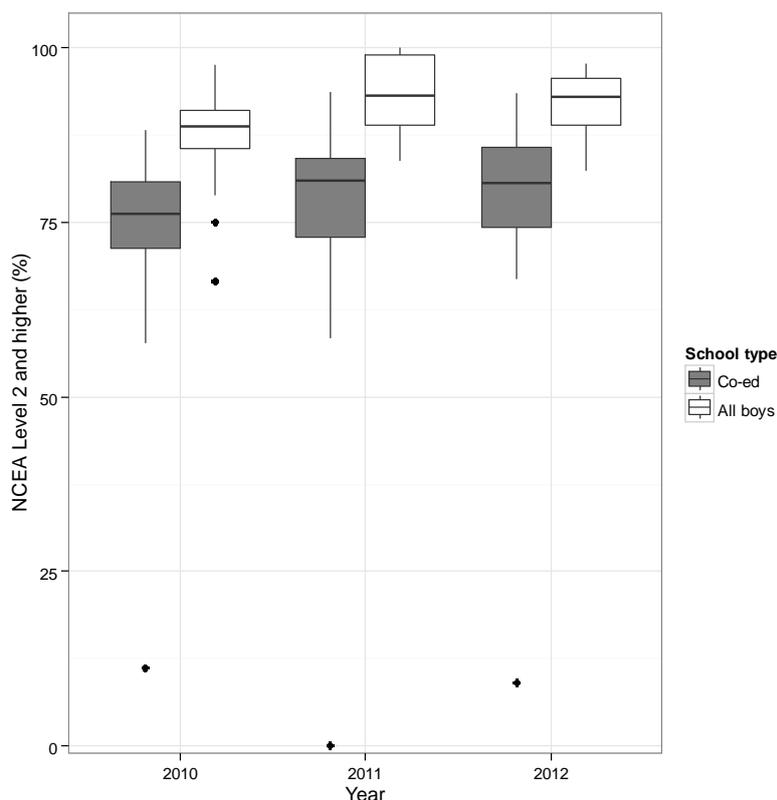


## Leaving with no qualification

We now look at the proportion of boys who leave school without any qualification, whether NQF or a qualification such as Cambridge International. The higher the school decile, the lower is the proportion of boys leaving without any qualification. Within decile groups, boys' schools had lower proportions of school leavers without a qualification. The higher the decile, the larger was the gap between boys' schools and co-educational schools.

Table 5 shows the 2012 median proportion of school leavers without a qualification, for each school type, within each decile group.

Table 5 **Boys leaving with no qualification achievement at the national level**

| Decile group | Median percentage of school leavers per school | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | Boys' schools (N = 43) | Co-ed schools (N = 225) |
| 1–4 | 18.5 | 24.4 |
| 5–6 | 10.3 | 17.5 |
| 7–8 | 5.8 | 10.9 |
| 9–10 | 2.7 | 9.4 |

We look now at patterns within each decile group, over the years 2010 to 2012.

Figure 9 shows that co-educational decile 1–4 schools have a much wider range, in relation to the proportions of boys who left without a qualification, than boys' schools. The schools with the highest proportions are all co-educational, as are those with the lowest proportions. Between 2010 and 2012, co-ed decile 1–4 schools generally reduced the proportions of boys leaving without qualification, whereas the boys' decile 1–4 schools show a slight increase in the median proportion of boys leaving without qualification between 2010 and 2011.

Figure 9   **Decile 1–4 male school leavers without a qualification (boys' schools N = 8, co-ed schools N = 101)**
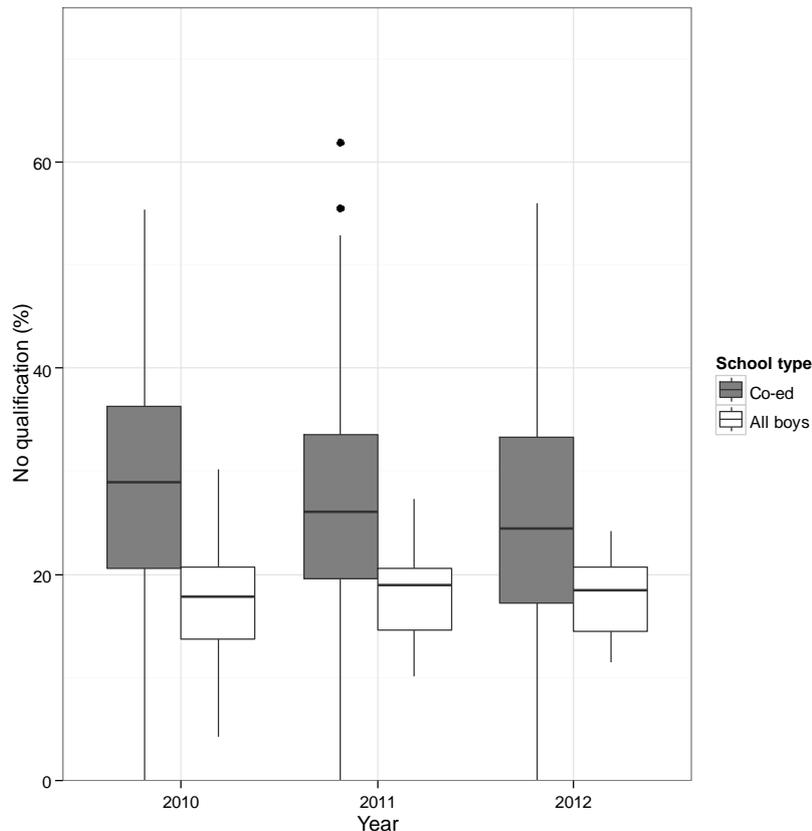
In decile 5–6 schools, we find that the median proportion of those leaving without a qualification over the last 3 years has reduced for both school types. It has reduced somewhat more for boys' schools than co-educational schools, and there is also less variance between them by 2012 than there is for the co-educational schools, where the variance increased over the 3 years.

Figure 10 **Decile 5–6 male school leavers without a qualification (boys' schools N = 11, co-ed schools N = 56)**
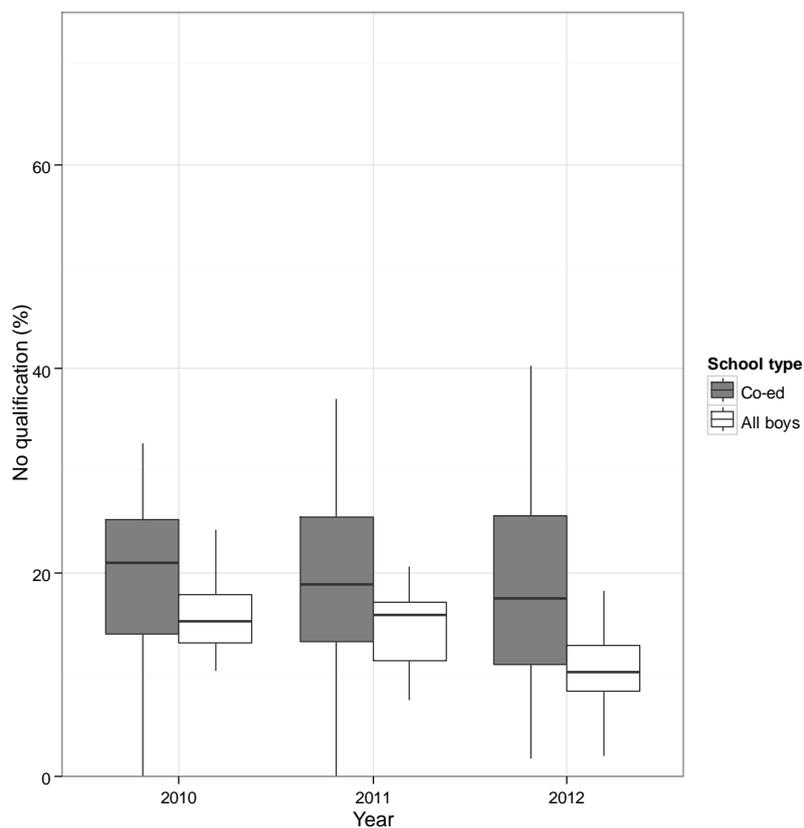
Figure 11 shows decile 7–8 co-educational schools decreasing their proportions of boys leaving without qualifications, particularly between 2011 and 2012, although the variation between them also increases. The decile 7–8 boys' schools show a slight increase in the proportions of boys leaving without a qualification between 2010 and 2011, before a marked decrease between 2011 and 2012.

Figure 11 **Decile 7–8 male school leavers without a qualification (boys' schools N = 11, co-ed schools N = 44)**
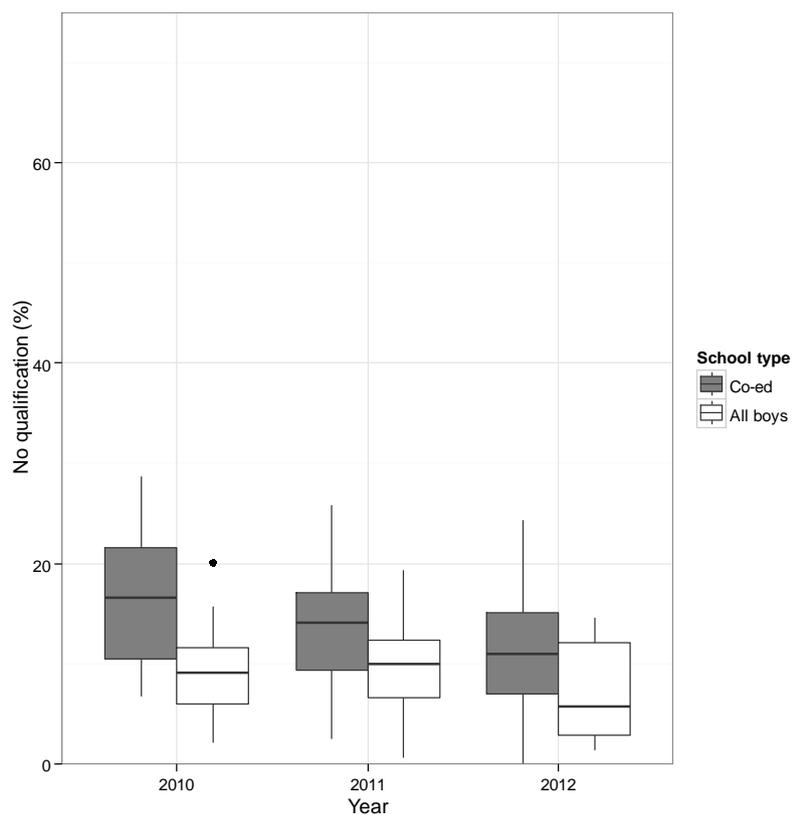
The difference between boys' and coeducational schools in terms of the proportions of boys leaving without a qualification is the most marked in the decile 9–10 schools, with little reduction in this difference over the years 2010–12.

The proportions of students leaving without a qualification between 2010 and 2011 lowered for both types of schools, with co-educational schools showing a further decrease to 2012. Variability is a little higher among the co-educational schools, with a couple of outliers in 2011. The two new schools with small numbers of leavers again appear in these outliers, with quite high proportions of leavers with no qualification.

Figure 12  **Decile 9–10 male school leavers without a qualification (boys' schools N = 13, co-ed schools N = 23)**
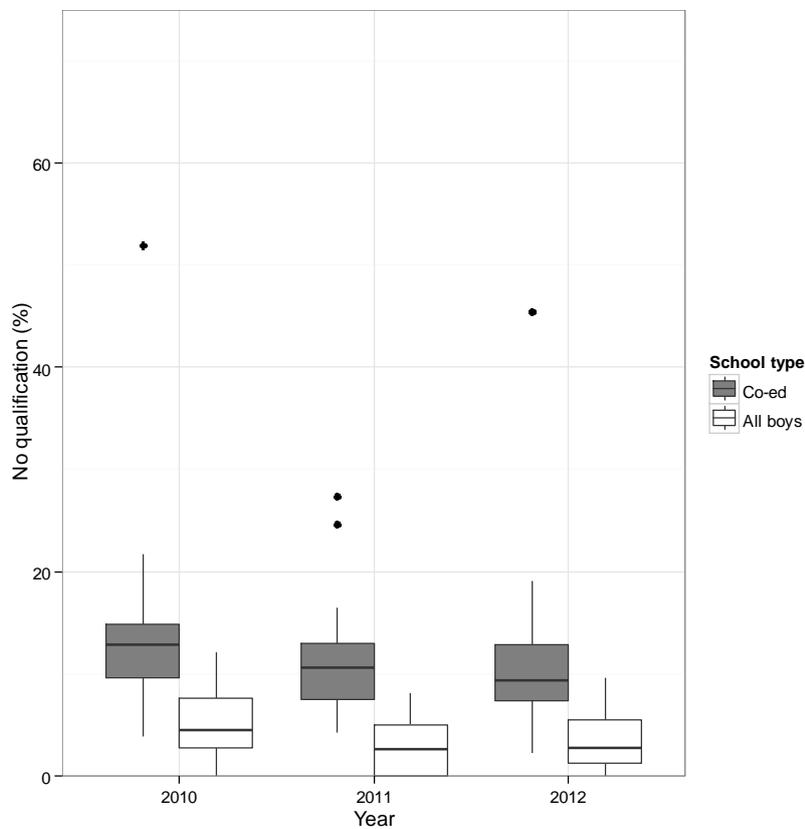


Overall, there is an obvious decile trend for both school types, with the proportions of students leaving school with no qualification decreasing as school decile increases. The range of proportions of students leaving school with no qualification decreases as decile increases for co-educational schools, but the range between schools is similar in different decile groups for boys' schools.

# 4. Achievement of Māori and Pasifika students

Māori and Pasifika students are two of the Government's groups of priority learners. In this section, we compare Māori, Pasifika, NZ European, and Asian achievement rates of male school leavers in 2012 for boys' schools and co-educational schools, within the four decile groups.

Māori students comprised 14.8 percent of boys' schools' school leavers in 2012 (N = 1,100), and 21.7 percent of co-educational schools' boy leavers (N = 4,295). Pasifika students comprised 9.3 percent of boys' schools' school leavers in 2012 (N = 692), and 10 percent of co-educational schools' boy leavers (N = 1,972).[1]

Because the numbers of Māori and Pasifika students vary considerably between schools—some have very few, and some have many—the analysis using schools as the unit of analysis that we reported in the previous section could produce a misleading picture. Therefore, in this section we have focused on achievement for each of the four main ethnic groups within each decile group, using school leavers as the unit of analysis.

We start this section with an overview of the leaving qualifications for each of the four main ethnic groups for boys from boys' schools as a whole, shown in Table 6.

The proportion of Māori and Pasifika students leaving with UE was similar, and around half that of NZ European students. Māori students were less likely than Pasifika students to be leaving school with at least NCEA Level 2 or its equivalent.

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[1] While some students give more than one ethnicity, we use prioritised ethnicity here so that we are only counting students in a single category. This ascribes individuals to only one ethnicity, giving priority to Māori (all those who identify as Māori are included in this category only), then Pasifika (all those who identify as Pasifika unless they have identified also as Māori), then Asian (all those who identify as Asian unless they have identified also as Māori or Pasifika), then 'other', including Middle Eastern, Latin American, and African, and then NZ European.

Table 6    **Leaving qualification for 2012 boys' school leavers, by ethnicity**

| Qualification | Ethnicity | Boys' school leavers | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % |
| UE | Māori | 287 | 26.1 |
| | Pasifika | 164 | 23.7 |
| | Asian | 592 | 76.1 |
| | NZ European | 2,465 | 52.5 |
| NCEA Level 2 or higher | Māori | 743 | 67.5 |
| | Pasifika | 534 | 77.2 |
| | Asian | 712 | 91.5 |
| | NZ European | 4,042 | 86.1 |
| No qualification | Māori | 187 | 17.0 |
| | Pasifika | 95 | 13.7 |
| | Asian | 47 | 6.0 |
| | NZ European | 289 | 6.2 |

Overall, the general pattern already described of higher qualification rates in the boys' schools applies when we focus on ethnicity. Thus, Māori boys in boys' schools and Pasifika boys in boys' schools were more likely than their counterparts in co-educational schools to be leaving school with a qualification, but this was not always the case. Numbers of boys within each ethnic group are, however, low when they are analysed within the four decile groups, and so these comparisons should be treated as indicative.

Tables 7–9 show the qualification rates of school leavers in terms of the proportion of the ethnic group in a particular decile group. We give as well the number of boys of each ethnic group within the decile group achieving the qualification (the n column), showing how small some of these numbers are.

## University Entrance

Māori school leavers from boys' schools were more likely than their counterparts in decile 1–4, 5–6, and 9–10 schools to gain UE, but UE achievement was much the same across both school types for decile 7–8 schools. Māori school leavers' achievement of UE within boys' schools was at much the same rate for decile 1–4, 5–6, and 7–8 schools (21–24 percent), with a marked increase for Māori school leavers in decile 9–10 boys' schools (44 percent).

Pasifika school leavers from boys' schools showed a somewhat different pattern: much the same rate of gaining UE in decile 1–4 and 5–6 schools (19 percent), a marked increase to 33 percent in decile 7–8 schools, but a slight decrease from that in decile 9–10 schools (28 percent).

Table 7    **University Entrance—2012 school leavers**

| Decile (grouped) | Ethnicity | Boys' school leavers | | Co-ed school male leavers | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | n | % |
| 1–4 | Māori | 74 | 21.1 | 183 | 8.2 |
| | Pasifika | 61 | 19.4 | 161 | 11.6 |
| | Asian | 29 | 55.8 | 307 | 43.8 |
| | NZ European | 80 | 40.6 | 476 | 21.9 |
| 5–6 | Māori | 72 | 22.0 | 129 | 12.7 |
| | Pasifika | 24 | 19.4 | 24 | 10.8 |
| | Asian | 80 | 65.6 | 101 | 44.1 |
| | NZ European | 496 | 40.1 | 886 | 27.7 |
| 7–8 | Māori | 54 | 24.2 | 104 | 22.3 |
| | Pasifika | 52 | 32.9 | 55 | 25.9 |
| | Asian | 119 | 76.8 | 270 | 63.5 |
| | NZ European | 700 | 48.3 | 1,240 | 40.1 |
| 9–10 | Māori | 87 | 43.9 | 55 | 24.0 |
| | Pasifika | 27 | 28.1 | 16 | 18.8 |
| | Asian | 364 | 81.1 | 359 | 64.3 |
| | NZ European | 1,189 | 65.5 | 934 | 45.2 |

## At least NCEA Level 2 or its equivalent

Table 8 shows that Māori and Pasifika school leavers from boys' schools were more likely to gain at least NCEA Level 2 or its equivalent than male school leavers from co-educational schools, in each of the four decile groups

Māori school leavers from boys' schools' achievement of at least NCEA Level 2 or its equivalent was much the same if they attended a school in decile groups 1–4 and 5–6 (60 percent and 63 percent respectively); it was also much the same whether they attended a decile 7–8 or 9–10 boys' school (76 percent and 78 percent respectively).

A similar two-step pattern was evident for Pasifika school leavers from boys' schools: at decile 1–4 schools, 72 percent gained this qualification level, and at decile 5–6 schools, 73 percent did; at decile 7–8 schools, 86 percent gained this qualification level, and at decile 9–10 schools, 84 percent did.

Table 8  **At least NCEA Level 2 or equivalent—2012 school leavers**

| Decile (grouped) | Ethnicity | Boys' school leavers | | Co-ed school male leavers | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | n | % |
| 1–4 | Māori | 211 | 60.1 | 1,072 | 48.3 |
| | Pasifika | 226 | 72.0 | 772 | 55.8 |
| | Asian | 49 | 94.2 | 566 | 80.7 |
| | NZ European | 156 | 79.2 | 1,420 | 65.4 |
| 5–6 | Māori | 208 | 63.4 | 514 | 50.7 |
| | Pasifika | 91 | 73.4 | 136 | 61.3 |
| | Asian | 106 | 86.9 | 168 | 73.4 |
| | NZ European | 973 | 78.7 | 2,245 | 70.1 |
| 7–8 | Māori | 170 | 76.2 | 290 | 62.1 |
| | Pasifika | 136 | 86.1 | 141 | 66.5 |
| | Asian | 146 | 94.2 | 366 | 86.1 |
| | NZ European | 1,229 | 84.9 | 2,420 | 78.3 |
| 9–10 | Māori | 154 | 77.7 | 156 | 68.1 |
| | Pasifika | 81 | 84.4 | 53 | 62.4 |
| | Asian | 411 | 91.5 | 482 | 86.4 |
| | NZ European | 1,684 | 92.7 | 1,693 | 82.0 |

# No qualification

Table 9 shows that, in 2012, Māori and Pasifika leaving boys' schools were less likely than boys leaving co-educational schools to take no qualification with them.

Focusing on boys' schools, the pattern for Māori and Pasifika school leavers here is somewhat different from the patterns we saw for the achievement of at least NCEA Level 2 or equivalent, or UE.

There is a steady decline in the proportion of Māori school leavers without a qualification associated with school decile, from 25 percent in the decile 1–4 group, to 9 percent in the decile 9–10 group.

There is a decline in the proportion of Pasifika school leavers without a qualification associated with school decile—up to the decile 7–8 group, from 16 percent in the decile 1–4 group, to 8 percent. The proportion then rises for the decile 9–10 group, to 13 percent. This is consistent with the declines we saw in qualification achievement for Pasifika students between decile 7–8 and 9–10 schools.

Table 9    **No qualification—2012 school leavers**

| Decile (grouped) | Ethnicity | Boys' school leavers | | Co-ed school male leavers | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | n | % |
| 1–4 | Māori | 87 | 24.8 | 755 | 34.0 |
| | Pasifika | 50 | 15.9 | 410 | 29.6 |
| | Asian | 2 | 3.8 | 80 | 11.4 |
| | NZ European | 25 | 12.7 | 430 | 19.8 |
| 5–6 | Māori | 55 | 16.8 | 325 | 32.1 |
| | Pasifika | 20 | 16.1 | 56 | 25.2 |
| | Asian | 13 | 10.7 | 43 | 18.8 |
| | NZ European | 113 | 9.1 | 495 | 15.5 |
| 7–8 | Māori | 28 | 12.6 | 113 | 24.2 |
| | Pasifika | 13 | 8.2 | 42 | 19.8 |
| | Asian | 7 | 4.5 | 35 | 8.2 |
| | NZ European | 98 | 6.8 | 309 | 10.0 |
| 9–10 | Māori | 17 | 8.6 | 36 | 15.7 |
| | Pasifika | 12 | 12.5 | 15 | 17.6 |
| | Asian | 25 | 5.6 | 39 | 7.0 |
| | NZ European | 53 | 2.9 | 178 | 8.6 |

# 5. Course endorsements

We analysed course endorsements for 2012, using NZQA data. These data provide information on students attaining each NCEA level in and up to the expected year. The focus here is on the grade of their achievement.

Figure 13 shows the distribution of NCEA Level 1 courses that were endorsed with excellence, endorsed with merit, or not endorsed for each of the four decile groups, for boys in each school type who achieved NCEA Level 1. As the proportions of course endorsements shown are averages over school proportions, the endorsement groups (no endorsement, merit, and excellence endorsement) will not add up to 100 percent.

Clearly evident is the usual decile-related pattern of increasing achievement with decile, though there is not much difference between decile 1–4 and decile 5–6 in relation to the average school proportion of courses given an excellence endorsement, for both boys' and co-educational schools. Decile 1–4 and 5–6 boys' schools' Year 11 boys gained more merit endorsements, on average, for NCEA Level 1 in 2012 than did their co-educational counterparts. This was also true of those in decile 7–8 and 9–10, but the difference in relation to co-educational schools was smaller.

Figure 13 **Course endorsements 2012, Year 11, NCEA Level 1 (N = 43 boys' schools, 225 co-ed schools)**
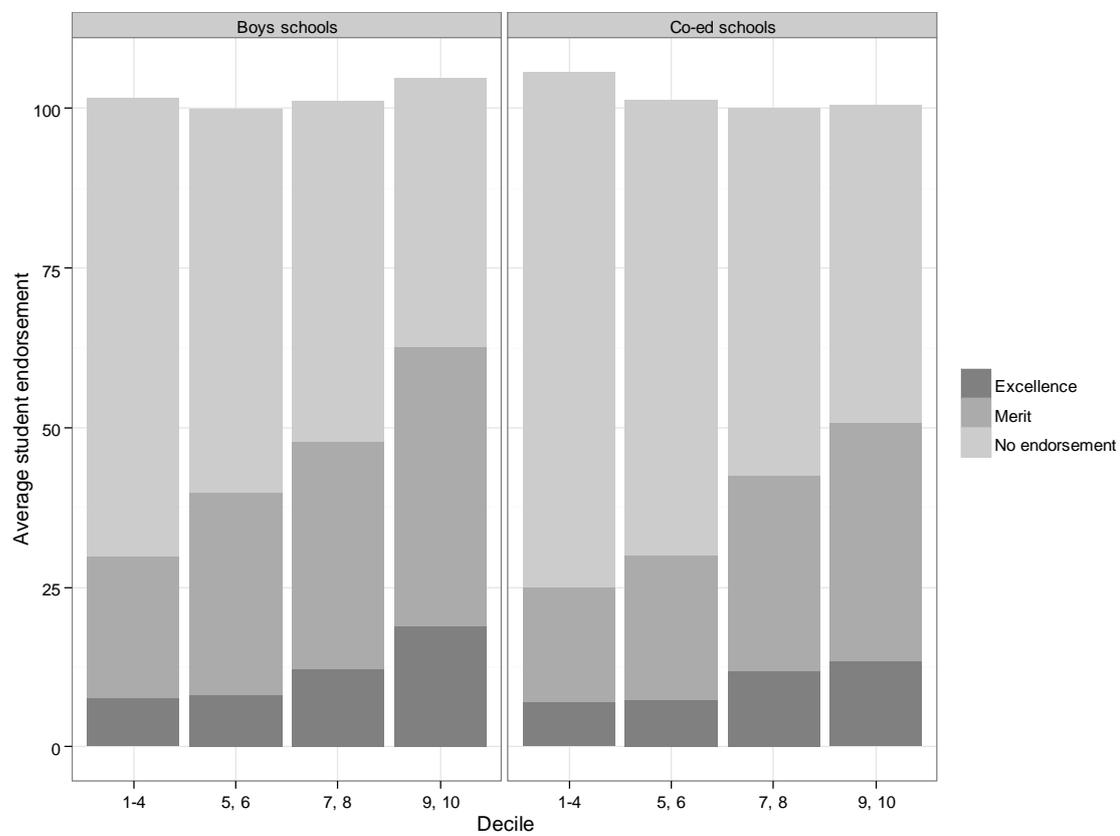
At NCEA Level 2, we see boys from decile 1–4 co-educational schools gaining more excellences and merits on average than their counterparts from boys' schools. Otherwise, the patterns favouring boys' schools are evident.

Figure 14 **Course endorsements 2012, Year 12, NCEA Level 2 (N = 43 boys' schools, 225 co-ed schools)**
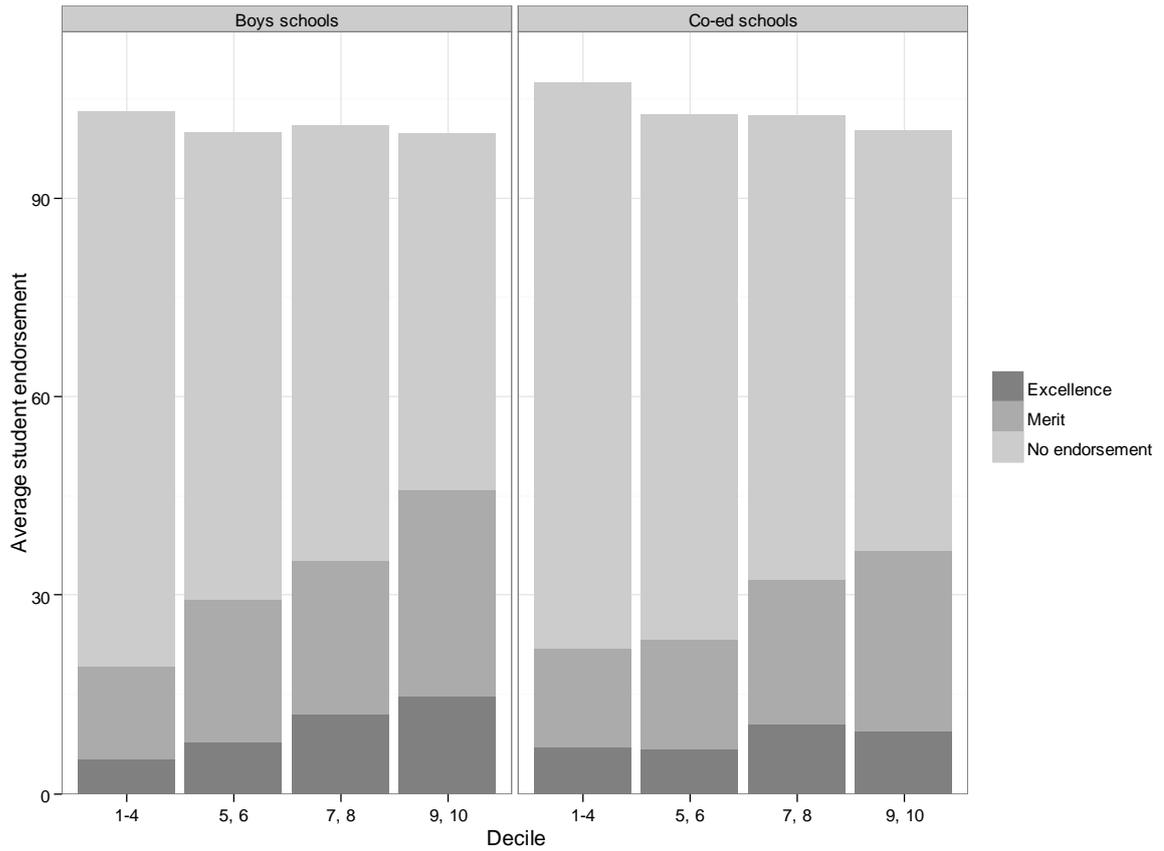
At NCEA Level 3, we see an interesting mix of patterns. Year 13 boys in decile 1–4, 5–6, or 7–8 boys' schools were less likely to gain an excellence or merit than their counterparts in co-educational schools. It was only the Year 13 boys in decile 9–10 boys' schools who were somewhat more likely on average than their counterparts in co-educational schools to achieve merit or excellence.

Figure 15 **Course endorsements 2012, Year 13, NCEA Level 3 (N = 43 boys' schools, 225 co-ed schools)**
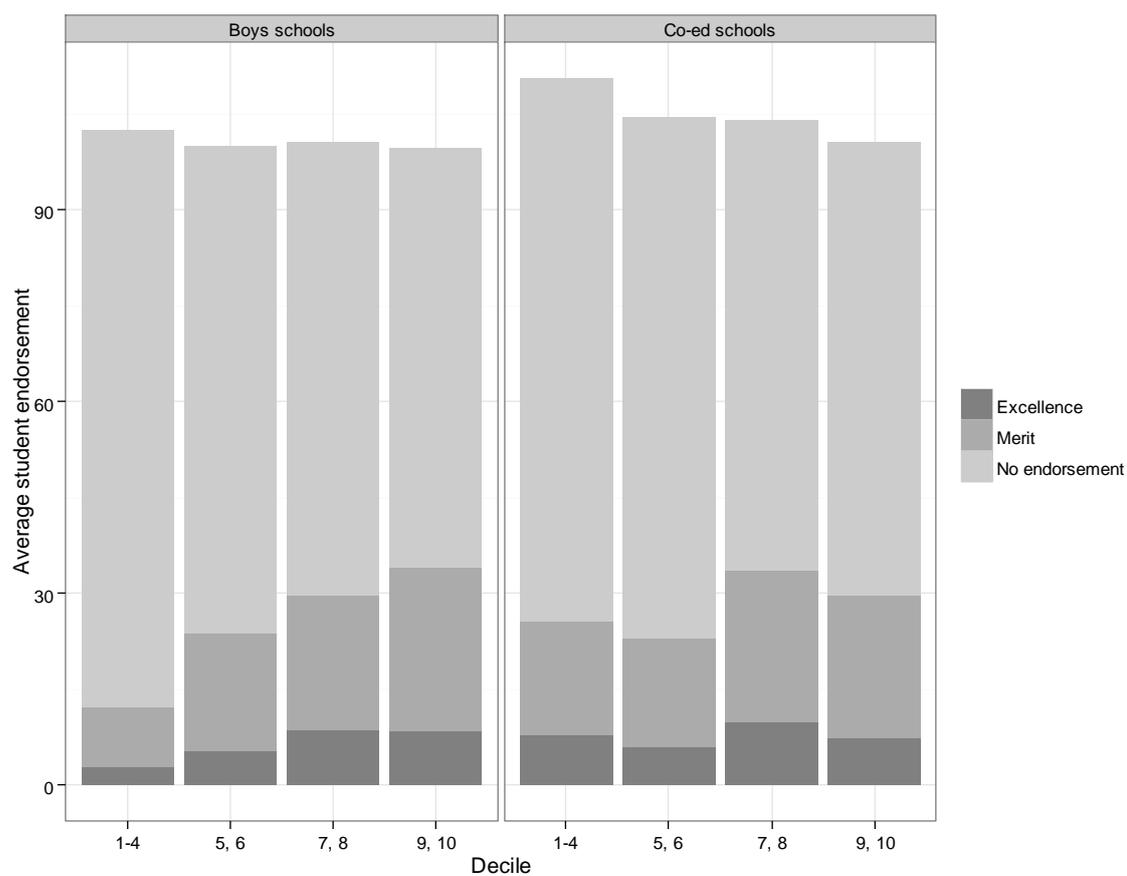
# 6.  Standards

NCEA credits can be achieved through three kinds of standards. The mix of standards offered by a school reflects the subjects and pathways it offers. All standards are moderated, whether marked externally or not, or attempted through examination or production. Here we focus on the mix of standards used. This comparison includes area and private schools.

Figure 16 below shows something of the decile-related differences in subjects and pathways evident through different mixes of standards used: decile 9–10 schools have the lowest proportion of unit standards, which are less likely to be used for university-bound pathways. The proportion of externally assessed achievement standards rises with school decile in both boys' and co-educational schools.

Figure 16 also shows that NCEA Level 1 standards at boys' schools were less likely than NCEA Level 1 standards at co-educational schools attempted by boys to include unit standards, for all decile groupings except deciles 7–8. It was more likely to include externally assessed achievement standards. At least half of the standards attempted by Year 11 boys for NCEA Level 1 came from internally assessed standards, more so in co-educational schools, with similar proportions for each decile grouping, whether or not boys went to boys' or co-educational schools.

Figure 16 **NCEA Level 1 standards used at Year 11 in 2012 (N = 43 boys' schools, 225 co-ed schools)**
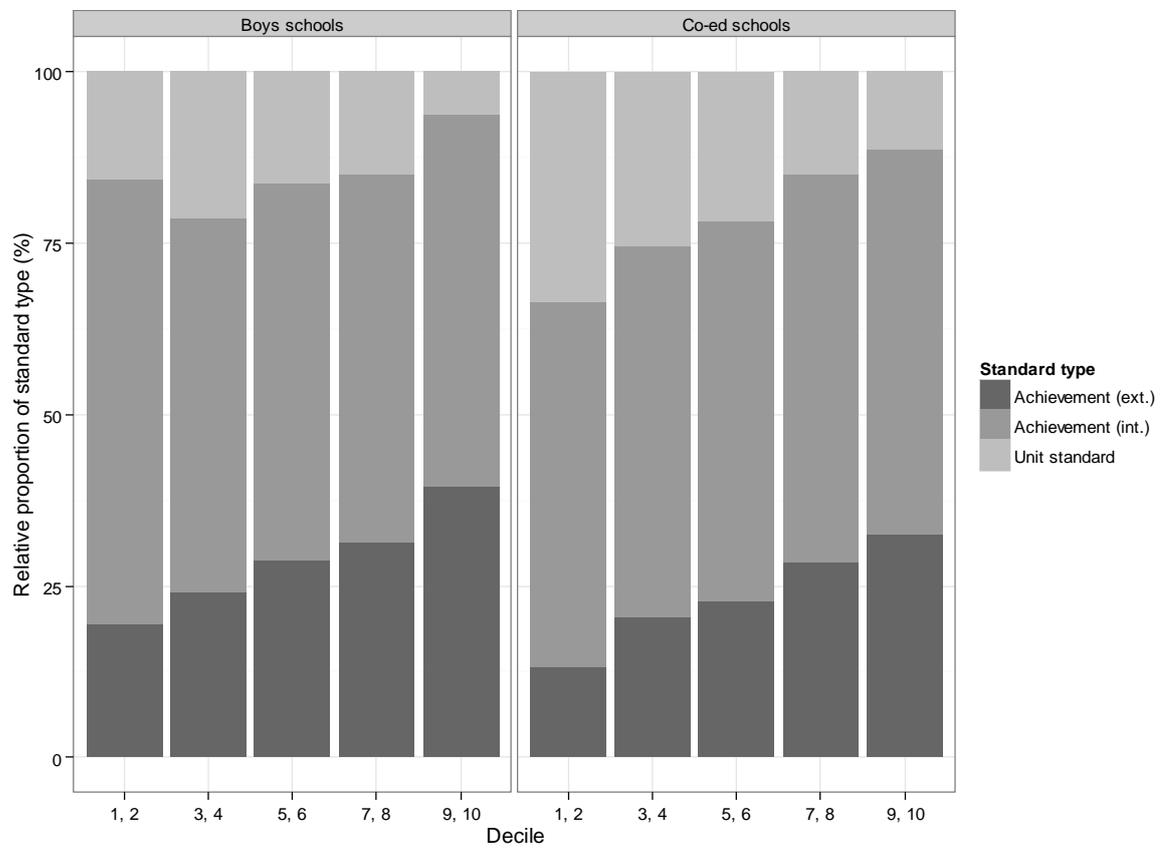
At Year 12, the NCEA Level 2 standards attempted showed some different patterns. More boys attempted standards through unit standards at Year 12 than Year 11 (this may reflect the cumulative rollout of the new standards aligned with the curriculum). The use of unit standards was more evident for boys attending co-educational schools, though the difference for decile 7–8 schools is small. The use of externally assessed standards was much the same for boys in decile 3–4 and decile 7–8 schools, whether they went to a boys' or co-educational school.

Figure 17 **NCEA Level 2 standards used at Year 12 in 2012 (N = 43 boys' schools, 225 co-ed schools)**
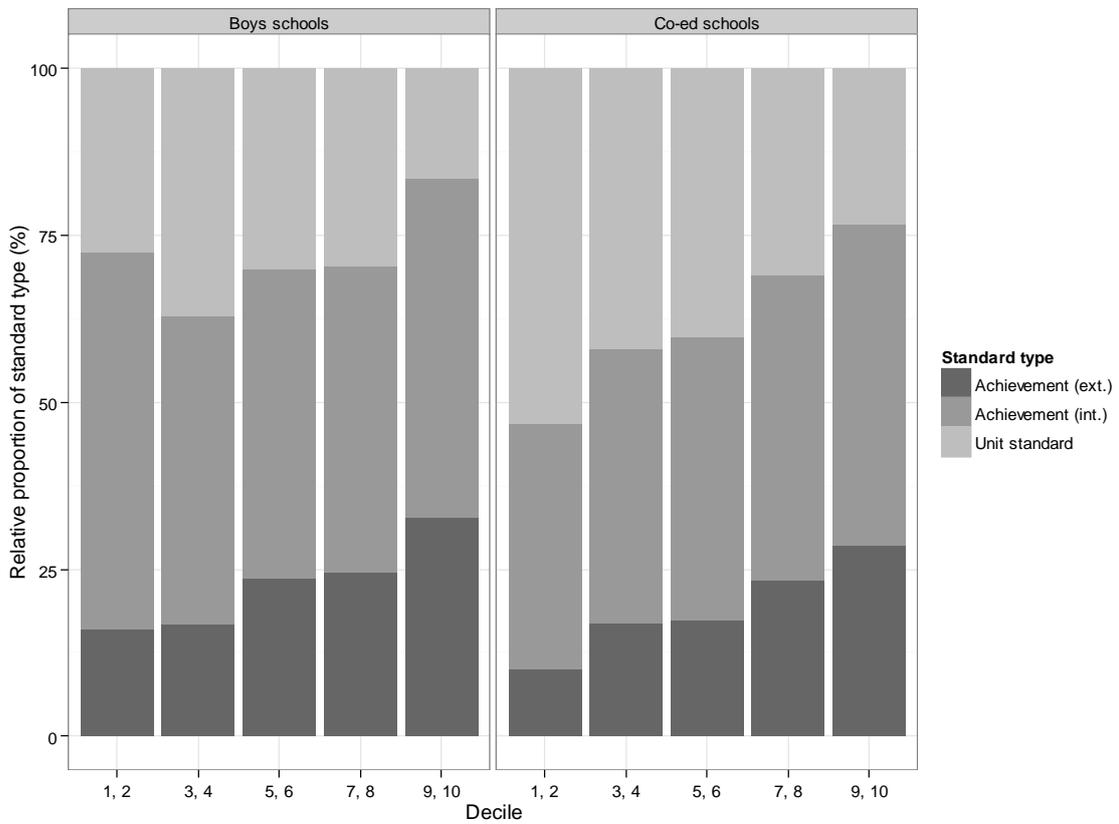
Boys' schools and co-educational schools were just as likely to include internally assessed standards towards NCEA Level 3 for all decile groups other than 1–4. In decile 1–4 schools, co-educational school leavers were more likely to have used standards through unit standards than their boys' schools counterparts. School leavers from boys' schools were more likely than their counterparts from co-educational schools to have used standards through external assessments, apart from decile 3–4 schools.

Figure 18 **NCEA Level 3 standards used at Year 13 in 2012  (N = 43 boys' schools, 225 co-ed schools)**
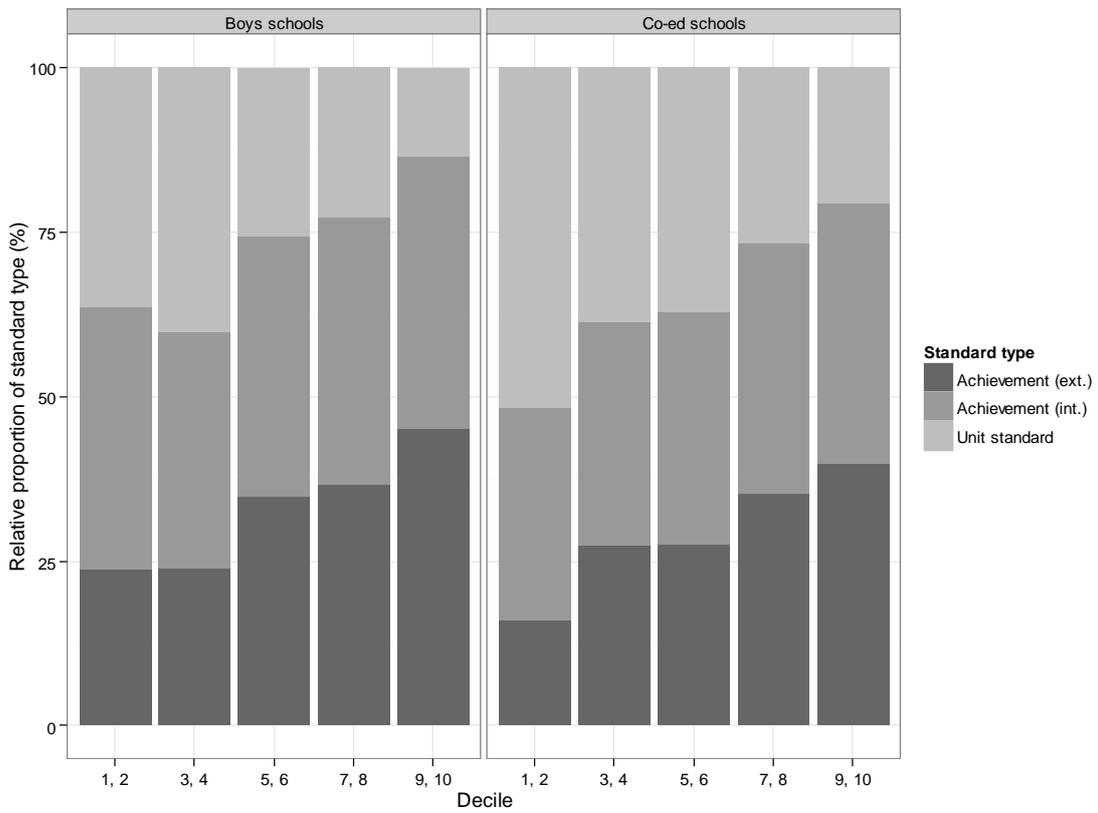
# 7. Variation in achievement among boys' schools

The quantitative analyses in Chapter 3 showed that, while there were higher qualification levels among boys' schools as a group overall and within decile groups, the performance of individual boys' schools did vary within each decile group. In this chapter, we start by looking at variation across and within the four decile groups for the 42 ABSNZ member schools. This is a slightly different set from the set used in the first chapter, since it includes three independent schools and two composite schools.

Figure 19 shows the range of achievement of UE in 2012 at individual boys' schools. Decile 5–6 schools show the smallest range among the decile groups, and decile 7–8 the largest range (from 20 percent to nearly 80 percent achievement of UE among school leavers). Interestingly, there is some overlap among the first three decile groups, with some decile 1–4 schools achieving as high a proportion of UE as some decile 5–6 schools, and one decile 7–8 school.

Figure 19 **School leavers with UE, 2012, ABSNZ schools (N = 42)**

Next we look at the patterns for achievement of at least NCEA Level 2 or its equivalent (including Cambridge International and International Baccalaureate) in 2012. Again, we see some overlap in achievement among decile groups, particularly marked between decile 1–4 and decile 5–6. The decile 9–10 schools are closer together than schools in the other decile groups.

Figure 20 **School leavers with at least NCEA Level 2 or equivalent, for 2012, ABSNZ schools (N = 42)**

Finally, we look at the range amongst boys' schools in terms of the proportion of their 2012 leavers who had no qualifications. Again, we see some overlap in the decile 1–4, 5–6, and 7–8 groups, and one decile 9–10 outlier with a higher proportion of leavers without a qualification than the other decile 9–10 schools.

Figure 21 **School leavers with no qualification, 2012, ABSNZ schools (N = 42)**



Thus, within each decile group there are schools that show higher achievement than others in that decile group; and there are some schools in lower decile groups that match the achievement of schools in higher deciles.

# 8. Strategies and approaches of high-performing boys' schools

One of the purposes of our work was to find out more about the strategies and approaches of high-performing boys' schools. We used graphs like the ones shown in the previous chapter, covering the years 2010 to 2012, to identify schools that were consistently performing above others in their decile group, or whose performance increased over those years to become particularly highly performing. We looked for schools that were particularly highly performing on all three of our main measures: UE, at least NCEA Level 2 or its equivalent, and (the inverse), low proportions of boys leaving without a qualification. Some schools do well on the first two measures, but not so well on the last. This analysis identified four schools:

- De La Salle College, a decile 1 Years 7–13 school with a predominantly Pasifika enrolment. It is an integrated Catholic school.
- Rongotai College, a decile 6 Years 9–13 school with significant Pasifika, Asian, and Māori enrolment.
- Sacred Heart College, a decile 8 Years 7–13 school with around two-thirds NZ European enrolment. It is an integrated Catholic school.
- Hutt International Boys' School, a decile 10 Years 7–13 integrated school, with predominantly NZ European enrolment.

We interviewed the leaders in these four schools, using the interview schedule in Appendix B as a base. From these interviews we identified some common themes in the approaches or principles underlying what the schools were doing to engage boys in learning, identify with the school and its purpose, and achieve high qualification levels for their decile group. What we found in these interviews is consistent with the picture given in ERO's 2008 report *Boys' Education: Good Practice in Secondary Schools*.

## An overview

These approaches could be summarised as:

**Student-centred**

- Ensuring first-year students identify with the school and its values, often giving senior students a role here.

- Providing a range of sporting, cultural, and service co-curricular activities so that there was opportunity for every boy to experience the need for effort before achievement; the value of working toward goals; success and enjoyment in something that mattered to them; relate to each other as 'brothers'; get to know and trust teachers in other settings: all these were also useful for classroom engagement and achievement.

- Leadership roles for senior students that invest them in the school's wellbeing and success as well as their own individual success.

- Identifying student need early on and responding to it, particularly with targeted literacy and numeracy support in junior years; and later, identifying students at risk of not achieving qualification goals sufficiently early in the school year to improve their work.

- Making the most of the NCEA structure—openness, goal setting, progress marking, greater range of achievement, and public recognition opportunities.

- Publically recognising academic achievement, so it is 'cool'.

**Goals-focused**

- Framing high expectations of achievement in terms of effort and student goals related to meaningful qualification and career pathways, and backing all students with support.

- Including sporting, cultural, and service goals within those to be identified by each boy, so that there is a holistic development.

- Openness around student goals and progress so that parents can better support their child and students have a clear framework for their learning.

**Coherence from a values base**

- Threading core school values through the school day and in the way teachers and school leaders relate to the boys.

**Sound basis for teaching practice**

- Ongoing reviews of class achievement and school operations in order to improve practice.

- Evolutionary change on the basis of careful inquiry using data related to students.

- Leading to change through sufficient professional development so that teachers are confident and committed to the change.

- Making the most of teaching time.

The approaches these four schools used often served two or more purposes at once. For example, they provided a range of opportunities to achieve in a co-curricular activity in a framework that also emphasises brotherhood, or mutual support for a collective goal, and underpins how larger goals can be achieved through consistent effort on smaller steps. These experiences provided a confidence and habits that can transfer to academic work. They also provided opportunities for students and teachers to get to know each other and build trust; again, something that could be transferred to academic work.

They were hard-working cultures that ensured strong pastoral support and the development of student self-management and commitment to the school and its values so that teachers could focus on teaching. The hard work took place within relationships of respect, safety, and support as well as challenge.

The schools were led by principals with clear vision and determination, who worked closely with senior school leaders as a team. School leaders chose only one or two areas of school-wide development each year, taking an evolutionary approach to change that gave teachers the understanding and confidence they needed before introducing new approaches. Careful gathering of evidence was done in choosing what to focus on, and changes were evaluated. Feedback was sought from teachers and students, with provision for new ideas to come forward to be considered.

Systematic use was made of data on student achievement and self-management to enlist student and parent commitment to pathways that would enable achievement success, and to review and change their own work as teachers and school to support student achievement and development. The NCEA structure has proved well-suited for the goal setting and tracking of performance that these schools used.

The schools emphasised qualification success within a wider framework of achievement and development of interests and skills, and of contribution. Achievement was publicly recognised in ways that would encourage younger students to aim high and work hard. The NCEA framework has also proved well-suited for public recognition of 'academic' achievement as well as sporting or cultural, offering merit and excellence and course endorsement, and covering a wider number of boys than the traditional dux and prize winners.

We outline these approaches below, with illustrations from the schools to show the actions taken by school leaders to provide strong learning environments. The shape they take differs in each school, according to the school tradition and context. We start with looking at approaches to engagement, followed by approaches to academic achievement, the ongoing development of teaching practice, and the enlistment of parent support and understanding.

## Approaches to engagement

## The importance of the first year, and cross-year groupings

The student's first year was deliberately framed to bring them into the school 'family', and give them a sense of enjoyment in activities, safety, and identity with it. All the schools ensured that first-year entrants experienced a welcoming pōwhiri from the rest of the school, sometimes including old boys or religious brothers who provided a living link with the school's history. First-year entrant classes would have older boys to link with, sometimes taking an active role in camps that would take the new entrants through the first of their many encounters with the school values and rules. (The leaders of the four schools emphasised the importance of repetition and reinforcement of these values in everyday school and class life.) Camps also gave the opportunity for their teachers to engage with them outside the classroom, and for the boys to see themselves as a group. All the schools also provided some ongoing vertical grouping through houses that competed against each other in a variety of ways; in this competition there was usually an emphasis on maximum participation as one of the metrics, so that house rewards were not gained from the efforts of a few high performers.

Sacred Heart College Year 7s did a unit of work called 'My School', so they understood its history and values, and how the current buildings, grounds, and opportunities they enjoyed were owed to hard work and vision, and service to others.

All these schools had halls big enough to have whole-school assemblies as well as year-level groupings, and these assemblies were used to recognise and celebrate achievement, and show younger students what they could do and be. Rongotai College, for example, uses the first whole-school assembly of the year to name prefects and to recognise NCEA achievement. "As we say to the boys, the first two groups across the stage are our leaders and high achievers. Every boy that got an endorsement goes across the stage. Excellence gets an honour, on par with the top culture and sports performers. We now award more academic honours than sporting, in a sporting-focused school."

Assemblies were also used to talk about the importance of achievement, how school achievement related to satisfactory adult pathways, and how achievement was related to school values. Old boys who could exemplify these messages spoke at assemblies, with schools looking to provide current students with examples from a range of occupations and with regard to sporting, cultural, and service achievement as well as academic success. De La Salle College uses student achievement success to underline the message that "there is no excuse for you guys not to achieve".

Year 13 students could also demonstrate their leadership in school assemblies, sometimes by talking, sometimes by giving out awards, and being seen alongside the school principal and senior staff.

## Boys as leaders

Senior students were given responsibilities to work with younger year groups, sometimes coaching sports teams, attached as a mentor to a particular class, or leading and supporting them in house activities and competitions. Some schools continued to have prefects, with more of these having pastoral roles than the traditional image of the prefect.

Senior students are asked to exemplify the school values, to be those the younger boys would look up to and wish to emulate.

Some of the schools cast their Year 13s' final school year in terms of legacy: using the emphasis on goal setting to ask them to decide what they would want to be known for, to have achieved for themselves and the school when they came to the end of that year. Several of them made this the focus of an initial retreat or planning for these students. Hutt International Boys' School had the most systematic approach to this multi-purpose framing, positioning the Year 13s as "middle management". "Working back from the end of the year, you're sitting on stage, what do you want them to say about you as a group, you as an individual, what sort of Hutt International Boys' School do you want to be known for? They often come up with similar things, a safe environment, respectful, tolerant, want to have some fun, be well-rounded. At the end of the year they're all stood up, and their contribution in their time at the school is read out, and it's a huge thing for young guys: what will they say about me when I stand up there? What have I done, contributed, achieved? It's a reinforcement for the young ones and a carrot for the Year 13s."

## Provision of co-curricular activities

Three of the schools had strong sporting traditions; all offered a wide range of sports, particularly emphasising team sports. They also provided a range of cultural options; for schools with significant numbers of Pasifika and Māori students, this included participation in Polyfest and kapa haka. School leaders believed that co-curricular participation attached students to each other and to their school in positive ways, and gave teachers the opportunity to get to know and be known by their students, building trust that would pay dividends in the classroom. Analysis by several schools showed that a boy's detachment from the school, or the likelihood of being stood down or suspended, could be linked to their non-participation in co-curricular activities, particularly sport. De La Salle College consciously set out to find an involvement for every student, whether sports, culture, enviroschools, or service, as well as in its camps and annual retreats; this sometimes meant that staff created opportunities for external involvement in goal-related activities, such as setting up an inter-school chemistry competition.

In some schools the number of sports teams fielded meant that they needed to call on senior boys, old boys, parents, and volunteers: something that had spin-offs for the sense of the school as a community. Cultural and service activities also called on other support, and enlarged the school community.

There was also some care taken to align co-curricular activities with the continual emphasis on achievement. Values of perseverance and resilience needed in schoolwork could be reinforced by experiences with developing and using sports knowledge and skills. Values of loyalty and team work could cross over into support for peers to do well in the classroom.

Sport was not allowed to dominate the start of the year (one school leader spoke of encountering a team from another boys' school who had spent only 8 of the first 20 days of the school year in the classroom). Nor did De La Salle College, which has done well in Polyfest, allow it to dominate, as they thought it did in other schools in their city. Rongotai College set baseline attendance rates for participation in tops sports teams and gaining honours for that participation, gradually raising the bar from 80 percent attendance to 90 percent attendance: "they won't get [honours] if their attendance drops, because, particularly in senior sports, they are key role models, they are modelling attendance at the school". Players and coaches had then voluntarily brought in a rule that players who missed practice because of a detention would not be able to play, paving the way for this to become a school-wide rule. "It makes them responsible for being at school and being well-behaved. They can see it as being in their best interest."

De La Salle College and Rongotai College had to pay more attention to reducing absenteeism than the higher decile schools, though Sacred Heart College spoke of paying attention to any lateness to school, to reduce the possibility of a drift away from engagement in school. Over a 3-year period, De La Salle College had reduced its truancy rate from 11 percent to 1 percent through the concerted attention of its assistant principal of pastoral care and the pastoral team, including two social workers, and ensuring that students had co-curricular activities, sometimes service-related, so that they "could get a buzz out of helping people" if they were returning to school after suspension or stand-down, to secure their ongoing engagement. This reduction in truancy was accompanied by an increase in NCEA achievement in the school.

## Pastoral care

The schools used feedback from students, sometimes in the form of standardised surveys of wellbeing, sometimes through focus groups or discussions. Rongotai College had a student advisory group composed of boys representing the spectrum of engagement and across the year levels, which met with the principal several times a year to provide a sounding board, their views about the school and how it did things, and what they would do to improve things.

Schools took care that every student had regular contact with form or homeroom teachers or tutors; and they framed wider pastoral care roles in the school to be more proactive than reactive. In De La Salle College, the learning day starts four days a week with 15 minutes in homeroom classes of around 18–20 students, with a homeroom teacher who is also usually one of their subject teachers. This time fulfils several purposes. The boys are welcomed into the school day, a prayer frames the day, the roll is taken, daily notices given, and sometimes a discussion linked to school values. It allows teachers to know students as individuals, developing mutual trust, as well as providing a daily continuity and repetition of core values and sense of collective identity.

It was important that class teachers should share any concerns they had about a student with the form teachers and pastoral leaders; the schools had a team approach to identifying students who needed individual attention and support through a social worker or counsellor, or the support of specialists, with several talking of regular meetings to track needs and progress. There is a systematic approach to pastoral care. But class teachers were not expected to take on major pastoral roles, to work with students on issues in their lives, or ensure that a student got the support they might need from government agencies; their role was to engage the student in learning and support them to achieve their best. The schools also had distinct staff roles at the senior and year level for pastoral and academic responsibilities.

Hutt International Boys' School's pastoral team went out into the school grounds 10 minutes before the end of lunchtime, asking "guys, are you getting ready for learning, are you getting your books prepared?", so that the students would arrive in class ready to learn, rather than take the first 10 minutes to "transition into the learning environment".

## Approaches for academic achievement

The four schools take care that each student's goals and progress are known and checked, and that timely support is provided. In stressing to the boys that they expect them all to achieve well, they also stress that they will provide support for them to achieve. They frame support as something positive, enabling and working with students to achieve their individual goals. This is helped because achievement is framed as the result of effort towards individually valued goals; as well as relations between students framed as supportive brotherhood in which each student seeks to do their best.

Hutt International Boys' School described what they sought to provide so that all students could achieve: "It's important that young guys who struggle have an emotionally safe environment, where they're not belittled in the classroom if they ask a stupid question or want to answer something. If that happens, they get scared and sit back and get further and further away from learning. These guys' experiences here are positive, so if they get something wrong they're not afraid to put their hands up and have another go at it. We reinforce it with the Year 13s: if you guys are going to work as a leadership team, it means that someone can offer a suggestion without someone else taking the mickey out of you—if you think it's a good thing, take the risk to say it, don't wait for peer affirmation."

Goal setting was undertaken in a context where staff talked with students about what they wanted to do, linking school with a purpose beyond it, including pathways to desired tertiary subjects and careers. Goals could then play a part in motivating students, and enabling them to track their own progress towards something meaningful to them.

De La Salle College and Sacred Heart College started career education at a low level in Years 7 and 8, and from Year 9 onwards used a careers adviser role to help boys identify a desired

pathway and link that clearly to the subjects they would need for that pathway, and the level of achievement within those subjects. Sacred Heart College had introduced the digital Dreamcatcher program, enabling boys to log their academic goals and their achievement towards those goals, their career pathway, and their extracurricular experience related to that pathway. They found this a very useful tool, and one that they saw enabling boys and parents to discuss the boy's goals and progress, thus enlisting focused parental support.

Rongotai College included a module on careers in its Year 9s' introduction to the school. Year 9 introduction had a 'carousel' approach at the start of the year so that every boy had a taste of all subject areas, enabling them to identify those that they wanted to carry on with. Senior student feedback was that this had been valuable in opening their eyes to areas they had not known much about and given them better options for their school pathway. In Year 10, all students developed their own career profile in social studies classes, and that was used to track their progress, through the portal shared by students and teachers and parents.

Hutt International Boys' School's students set goals at the start of each year in relation to academic achievement, and also in relation to their contribution to their school house, sporting goals, cultural goals, and service goals. The goals are likely to include getting merit or endorsement. In week 6 of the year there is a quick check of these goals in relation to the internal assessment happening that week; and a teacher–parent–student meeting afterwards to review progress towards the goals, and supports at home, "such as do you have a wall-planner, have you got the assessments written on it, are you working backwards from the dates of those assessments rather than forwards, so you're not arriving a week out and thinking, jeepers, I've got four assessments next week and I haven't prepared for any of them".

This early parent–teacher–student discussion and ongoing digital communication with parents and alerts from teachers to parents to say a boy is falling behind has superseded the traditional mid-year meetings.

Rongotai College extended form periods once a month, to work with each student to first set academic and co-curricular goals and, at the start of each term, used these form periods for students to reflect on their progress towards these goals over the previous term. Once a month these periods are used to work on study skills, at each year level.

Sacred Heart College uses Habits of Mind to focus on key competencies, bringing them in across the school after 2 years professional development so that all teachers were confident to make the links in their subject work, and once a term to focus more deeply on the particular habit of mind.

## Identifying those in need of particular support

All the schools undertook standardised assessments of their first-year entrants, some assessing them the year before they entered the school, to identify students with low literacy or numeracy levels as well as to structure classes. All the schools employed additional teachers with primary or intermediate teaching experience to improve these levels, and kept classes small. Schools also

kept classes as small as they could throughout the school, with most classes around 23–25 on average, though this meant some larger classes in some subjects for De La Salle College. All the schools had evidence of the success of this approach, with De La Salle College finding its students made 3 years' gain over 2 years. Several schools had extended this additional support from Years 7 and 8, or Year 9, into subsequent years. The general approach is to early on identify and address needs that are likely to hamper the achievement of qualifications. It is to give boys the experience of achievement, and show them the value of effort, in a supportive environment.

Hutt International Boys' School provided additional support in its mathematics classes by having one extra teacher shared between the two classes whose student scores put them in the lower half of their year group, spending one week with one class, one with the other. This approach was less effective for English, when students could be doing silent reading, and the role developed into a full-time student support head of department. This gave the school a role that could support teachers to work more effectively with students with special needs, providing information tailored to that student's need. This has also led to discussion of teaching practice in relation to specific student needs in teacher cluster meetings. The example given was of dyslexic students, and the identification and then take-up of practical supports such as advanced organisers, which were also seen as benefiting other students.

All the schools also tracked student progress over the course of the year in relation to their achievement of NCEA credits, and self-management and goals, to identify students who needed additional support. Sharing this information with students and parents also provides a way to enlist their attention, and support from parents.

Rongotai College included a grade for key competencies in two of its reports to parents, along with the aspects that were included in each, derived from subject teachers. Hutt International Boys' School included a similar grade for motivation, diligence, and how well work was presented, again from subject teachers. It used these grades to identify students who needed extra support, and also as a carrot, since those with top motivation grades would be recognised in school-wide assemblies.

Sacred Heart College academic deans for each year identify in February boys who struggled the year before, and give them immediate support, making sure they are gaining the credits needed to achieve their desired pathway through NCEA. This has proved increasingly successful.

Starting in Term 2, Rongotai College looks at each Year 11, 12, and 13 student's attendance record, the proportion of credits achieved that they aimed for in the previous year, the standards they have achieved to date, and the ones they are aiming for to identify those who need academic mentors in term 3—"those who go on the radar as being at risk of not achieving their goals".

Twice a term at least, records of learning are produced for each student, or at any time they request it from their form teacher showing where they are—it is also available through the parent portal, and more and more are using it.

Analysis of NCEA results one year showed quite a few students with "near misses" in their qualifications. Rongotai College revised its approach to the traditional end-of-year study leave, and made it conditional: students well on track could take it to prepare for external examinations, with the support of subject teachers being available at the school at set times for drop-in advice. Those who were at risk of not achieving worked on revision or internal subjects with teachers, with the normal timetable continuing. This allowed more focused attention, with smaller classes. Qualification rates improved markedly.

In term 4, De La Salle College teachers provide students with tutorials and all-day workshops after school and on Saturdays.

Individual and class achievement was not something private. Achievement levels of one cohort could be used to set a challenge for the year coming after it to exceed them. De La Salle College posted each boy's achievement of NCEA standards and other measures on class walls. To raise the bar for its students, it changed its end-of-year recognition of school leavers, giving graduating certificates only to those who succeeded in NCEA. The school shared its analysis of who was likely to do so with the Year 13 boys. The boys' response was framed in terms of "brothers all together", wanting the whole year level to graduate together. They met as a group, to motivate and support those who were likely not to achieve the NCEA qualification they aimed for. "They talked to the boys and they realised it was the boys' own attitude, the school had done all it could." This approach and support from peers gave the push needed for some of these boys to succeed.

## Ongoing development of teaching practice

Because the schools were tracking individual student performance over time through using the same standardised assessments, and then NCEA achievement, they were also able to share that information across different subject teachers, and look at class profiles to identify needs. They could then compare progress of groups of students in different classes and subjects, which was useful data to spur review of the approach taken, leading to departmental goals linked to the school's strategic goals.

Schools were also using NCEA data to identify classes with lower than expected achievement levels, and involving the school's academic leaders or heads of departments in discussions with teachers of those classes to review what they did and how their practice can improve. At Sacred Heart College, these discussions had sometimes identified the use of standards that had low national achievement rates, and led to the decision to use different standards of comparable value. Students take six subjects in Years 12 and 13, and seven in Year 11, and courses usually cover 18 to 20 credits so that students (and teachers) do not spread themselves too thinly trying to cover the 24 credits per course that NCEA began with.

Rongotai College uses staff meetings for ongoing self-review of school operations, focusing on three or so key areas each year. Last year the review included a focus on lifting the number of course endorsements, and the discussions identified strategies generated by teachers that were used to almost double the number of course endorsements.

## Enlistment of parent support and understanding

The schools saw parents as playing a sometimes crucial role in their boy's success. They shared achievement and engagement information with them in a timely way; along with ideas for how parents could support their son's achievement. Staff email addresses were shared so that parents could initiate communication easily. Schools with Pasifika students had found ways to overcome many Pasifika parents' sense that they had no role in their son's learning or goals: that they should leave this to the school. They had used Pasifika boys' achievement as a cause for communal celebration with their parents, which allowed them to then share information in a respectful way about NCEA, the importance of internal assessments, and planning and making time for external examination preparation, and how NCEA success related to the pathways they identified for their sons. Rongotai College had Samoan and Māori parent groups that had discussed what they wanted for their sons to achieve, which fed into the school strategic plan. These groups met regularly with senior staff to give feedback and to discuss how they could support their sons and the school.

# Appendix A

## School leaver data

School leaver data provided by the Ministry of Education were used to provide the highest leaving qualifications for boys in boys' schools, and boys in co-educational schools. The data used are from 43 boys' schools and 224 co-educational state and state-integrated secondary schools (Years 7–15 and 9–15), covering 3 years, 2010–12.

The data given to us for each individual student cover three different aspects of qualifications:

- NZQF qualification from NZQA data, which assigns each student into one of five categories: NZQF Level1, NZQF Level 2, NZQF Level 3, NZQF Level 4, or no NZQF qualification. This is recorded at the end of the year when they left school. So for this variable, most of the 640 boys who in 2012 gained a Year 13 Cambridge International qualification are recorded as having no NZQF qualification.
- Information from school records of their leavers' final qualification. An individual student can fit one of 32 categories. As well as NCEA Levels 1, 2, and 3, it includes partial achievement, such as '30+ credits at Level 2 or above' each level, credits at each level with or without Level 1 literacy and numeracy credits, non-NZQF qualifications: Cambridge International, International Baccalaureate, and Accelerated Christian Education are included.
- University Entrance attainment. Each student had two kinds of information: whether they had attained UE as well as an NZQF qualification (thus excluding those who had, say, Cambridge International), and whether they had University Entrance standard. This variable covered those had UE or NCEA Level 3, and by checking the two variables together we could identify those who had UE without having an NZQF qualification (such as school leavers who had a Cambridge International qualification).

Our analyses focus on the attainment of UE, at least NCEA Level 2 or its equivalent, or leaving without qualification. We inspected all the cases where there was some discrepancy for these three aspects of qualifications; for example, removing a student who had UE but no NZQA qualification from the 'no qualification' category.

All students with Cambridge International, International Baccalaureate, Accelerated Christian Education, or Other Overseas Award at Year 12 and above were included in the category 'at least NCEA Level 2 or its equivalent'.

Students in the 'no qualification' category include all those without any formal attainment, and all those with some credits, sometimes including Level 1 literacy and numeracy, but no NZQA qualification. The greatest difficulty in assigning a highest leaving qualification came where the student's achievement was one of '30+ credits at Level 2 or above' or '30+ credits at Level 3 or above'. For the former category, the Level 2 half-way category, the equivalent highest qualification for a student in their leaving year was either a Level 1 NZQF qualification or no NZQF qualification. Advice from the Ministry of Education was that a student in this half-way category could not be assumed to have a Level 1 NZQF qualification. Therefore, a student whose qualification from the data compiled from school records was 30+ credits at Level 2 or above, but with no NZQF qualification registered on the NZQA data, was assigned to the no qualification category for highest leaving category. Similarly, we used the highest qualification registered on the NZQA data to decide where to categorise students whose school recorded data gave them 30+ credits at Level 3 or above.

In summary, students were assigned a highest leaving qualification of NZQF Level 1, Level 2, or Level 3, no NZQF qualification or an 'other' qualification which accounted for all students with a non-NZQF qualification such as Cambridge. When looking at students who had achieved NCEA Level 2 or higher, students with Cambridge, International Baccalaureate, Accelerated Christian Education, or Other Overseas Award at Year 12 and above were included.

## Leaving year

Leaving year is the year that a student leaves school, regardless of the time of year. The Ministry's reporting of school leaver data excludes students as leavers from a particular year if they were enrolled in school for less than 20 days after 1 March. For a student leaving school early in the year, it is likely that their final qualification is the qualification achieved in the previous year. For the analyses in this report, students who attended school in their leaving year for less than 20 days after 1 March were included as leavers for the previous year. This amounted to between 737 and 774 students for each year the dataset covered.

However, note that a student's leaving qualification can be updated after they have left school in the same year (i.e., their final leaving qualification is their highest qualification at the end of the year that they left school). So some of these students we have assigned to the previous year could have left school in March and gone elsewhere to gain a higher NZQF qualification in the course of that year than the one they gained in the previous year. While this is theoretically possible, we cannot tell the actual incidence from the data we have.

## NZQA data

NZQF data were obtained by accessing publicly available data from the NZQA website. These data were used to investigate course endorsements attained with NCEA levels, and the relative proportions of different kinds of standards being used in schools.

The course endorsement data are from 43 boys' schools and the 225 co-educational state and state-integrated secondary schools. (Years 7–15 and 9–15). The standards data publicly available did not include school-level information, so this data set also includes boys from private and area schools.

The course endorsements reported are in relation to those students who achieved an NCEA level in the expected year (i.e., NCEA Level 1 in Year 11, or earlier ['cumulative NCEA achievement']). Thus the proportions reported are for those who gained an NCEA qualification: it shows the mix of achieved, endorsed with merit, or endorsed with excellence among those who gained a qualification in the expected year.

The standards data did not include any student-level information, such as year level, or the mix of standards that a student is sitting. Therefore, results reported for standards at each NCEA level are not related to student year level or the pathway a standard might be used for.

The standards data represented in this report were obtained from the NZQA website early in 2013. As NZQA has changed its presentation of publicly available data, these standards data would no longer be obtainable. The endorsement data were accessed from the NZQA website after this change was made, so the endorsement data shown in this report are still publicly accessible.

# Appendix B

## Interview questions for particularly highly achieving schools

The purpose of these interviews is to gain some insights into approaches and strategies used in particularly highly achieving boys' schools.

The interviews will be with the school principals and, if they choose, their senior leadership team.

Before the interviews, we'll ask for any documentation that the school can share that may be relevant (e.g., showing the curriculum and extracurricular options available).

1. What are your key strategies for ensuring success for your students?

2. Are these different for different kinds of students? (e.g., those likely to aim for university cf. those who may be more interested in trades; those coming in with low reading levels; the Government's priority learner groups)

3. What do you do in students' first year of school here to attach them to the school?

4. What is your approach to behaviour and discipline?

5. What pastoral support is in place?

6. What is the role of extracurricular activities in engaging and developing your students?

7. What have you put in place that has been particularly successful in increasing the *engagement* of your students in learning? Why do you think this worked well?

8. Is there anything you have tried in relation to increasing student engagement that did not work very well? If so, what was it? Why do you think it did not work?

9. What have you put in place that has been particularly successful in increasing the *achievement* levels of your students? Why do you think this worked well?

10. Is there anything you have tried in relation to increasing student achievement that did not work very well? If so, what was it? Why do you think it did not work?

11. Are there any students you have had in the school that your approach does not seem to work for?

    What kinds of expectations or needs have they had?

12. What do you look for in recruiting new staff—what's most important to you in meeting the needs of boys?

13. What do you emphasise in ongoing professional learning for staff in relation to boys' learning?

14. What strategies does the school use to enlist parent support for their boys' engagement and achievement?

15. What haven't I asked about that you think is important to ensure boys' engagement in learning and success at school?