

This chapter selects several key indicators to draw some general conclusions about the state of educational participation and achievement in New Zealand's six largest cities. The participation indicators look at the periods before and after compulsory education (ages 5 to 15 years). Achievement focuses on the qualifications of the community as a whole, and the proportion that leave school with no qualifications. There is a significant risk that this latter group will have difficulty participating in the workforce.

The chapter does not provide a definitive analysis of the many factors that affect education - in some cases this first report is only able to highlight areas where our information is insufficient and further research is needed before a clear picture can be developed.

Why this is important...

A high standard of education and of educational achievement is essential for effective participation in society. Global society is increasingly a knowledge-based one, where the physical resources a country possesses are becoming less important than the knowledge, skills, and innovative capacity of its people. This is important both in terms of the overall capacity of economies and of the need to make sure people are not marginalised through low levels of education.

The ability of citizens to re-skill and up-skill during their working lives is needed if they are to keep pace with today's rapidly changing work environment. The nature of jobs has changed to the extent that workers should expect many job changes and must apply a portfolio of skills to many different situations.

A literate and well-educated population is likely to lead to a more vibrant and enlightened society. Ongoing education and learning can be an enriching experience leading to a more fulfilled life.

What's in this chapter?

Indicators include:

- Participation in early childhood education
- School decile ratings
- School suspensions and stand-downs
- Highest qualification gained
- School leavers without qualifications
- Participation in community education

Linking socio-economic factors to educational achievement is a complex area and is not attempted in detail. As this report is about the wellbeing of the community as a whole we have not focused on the highest levels of attainment, since the ability of all members of society to participate in the economy is just as important.

The indicator set includes measures that should give us some early warning of future issues or problems. For example participation in early childhood education can put in place the foundation for a positive learning path for the youngest members of our community.

Impact and relationships with other areas in this report

There are strong links between socio-economic status and the level of educational participation and achievement. Over the long term, poor educational performance at school will tend to make it harder for some groups to achieve good levels of income, with all the implications this has for health, housing quality, and eventually the educational outcomes for their own children.

Key points

The underlying socio-economic status of communities is reflected in big differences between educational outcomes in New Zealand's six largest cities. Participation rates in education pre and post school are generally healthy. Since school age education is compulsory, this has not been measured. An encouraging statistic is the falling levels of school leavers without qualifications in Manukau and Waitakere Cities, which otherwise tend to show poorer levels of participation and achievement.

A higher percentage of residents in the six cities have some form of educational qualification (degree, vocational, or school) than in the rest of New Zealand. However, a significant percentage of young people are still leaving school with no qualifications.



Participation in Early Childhood Education

What this is about...

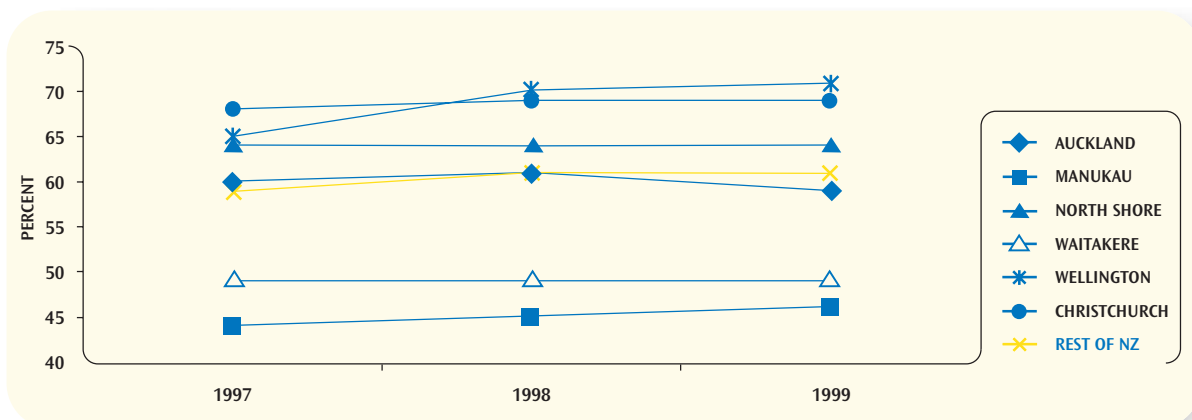
The stimulation of learning at an early age has an important bearing on future educational achievement. Social interaction with other children at pre-schools is healthy and is likely to make the transition to formal schooling easier.

This indicator measures participation rates in early childhood education at state funded pre-schools, as a percentage of the under 5 years population in each city and the rest of New Zealand. A small percentage of children attend private pre-schools that receive no government assistance, and it is difficult to collect statistics on these children as they are not yet legally required to attend school.¹⁰²

What did we find ?

- In most of the six cities, early childhood education levels are stable or increasing slightly. Over the period 1997 to 1999 these were generally around 60% to 70% of the population aged under 5 years, which is average for OECD countries.
- The level of participation for Auckland, North Shore, Wellington and Christchurch Cities was similar to the rate for the rest of New Zealand.
- Waitakere and Manukau Cities were significantly lower than other cities, but both recorded gains in participation rates over the period reviewed. Both of these cities had the highest proportion of under 5 year olds in the 1996 Census.

PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION AGED UNDER 5 YEARS WHO ATTENDED STATE FUNDED PRE-SCHOOL, BY CITY (1997 TO 1999)¹⁰³



Data Source: Ministry of Education. Includes all licensed services (eg creche, kohanga reo) and license exempt services (eg Barnados Family Care).

It is difficult to link this indicator to educational achievement in later life because of the mobility of students, who may achieve qualifications in other parts of the country. It is also difficult to demonstrate the effect of early childhood participation on educational achievement at primary and secondary school because many other factors come into play, including the quality of the education itself and support of parents and caregivers. However, it is accepted that in the formative stages of growth (up to 8 years old), education and socialisation has a significant effect later in life.

102 It is also possible that some children are enrolled at both a kindergarten and an early childhood centre, and this may lead to some double counting. Participation rates are generally for under five years (children are not legally required to attend school until their sixth birthday, but the vast majority commence on or soon after their fifth birthday) at registered early childhood education centres.

103 Total population figures for the 1997, 1998 and 1999 years are based on medium growth projections calculated by Statistics New Zealand for each year.

School Decile Ratings

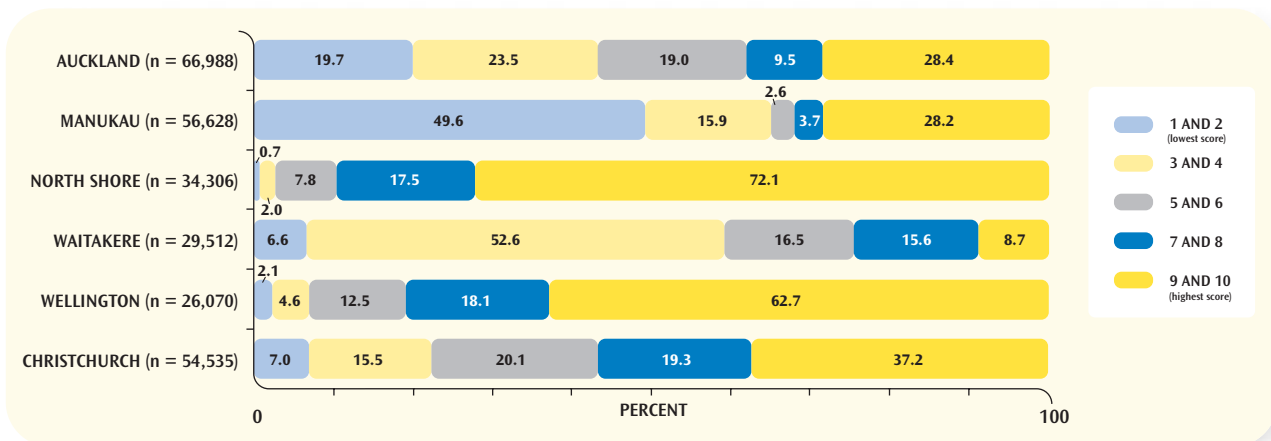
What this is about...

The decile rating of a school is determined by the Ministry of Education and takes account of a number of factors including the socio-economic status of the families of the pupils at the school.¹⁰⁴ A low decile rating indicates a school with a significant number of disadvantaged children. Children at low decile schools face difficulties other than the level of resources at the school itself. Their families may be disadvantaged and the parents may have difficulty supporting the learning process.

What did we find ?

- Two cities, Waitakere and Manukau, stand out as having a much larger proportion of children in low decile schools. Both have 60% to 65% in decile 1 to 4 schools, compared to the average of 35% across the six largest cities.¹⁰⁵
- While school decile rankings are not directly comparable with socio-economic deciles, there is a high correlation to overall socio-economic conditions in the relevant city.

PERCENTAGE OF PUPILS WITHIN SCHOOL DECILE, BY CITY (1999)



Data Source: Ministry of Education
Percentages are rounded

There may be connections between lower socio-economic status, which is reflected in the school deciles, lower participation in early childhood education, and high levels of school leavers with no qualifications. This applies to Waitakere and Manukau Cities particularly.

104 The decile rating for a school is used to determine school resourcing and is not directly comparable with socio-economic deciles. It is therefore possible that the decile ratings for schools may be more 'polarised' than the decile ratings of the supporting community. The rating is based on families with school age children and includes ethnic makeup, household income, benefit dependency, household crowding, and other factors. Some "cross border" issues may exist, such as boarding schools in main centres with children not normally resident in the area, and (particularly in Auckland) children from one city attending a school in another.

105 We would not expect an exact 10% of all schools or pupils in each decile for the following reasons: the criteria used are not aimed at producing this split as an average across the whole country; the rating is for the school, not pupils and therefore averages across all pupils; and the data above is not for the whole country. Given this, four deciles would theoretically include 40%, so at 35% the figures are comparable.

School Suspensions and Stand-Downs

What this is about...

Suspensions are the formal removal of a student from school until that school's board of trustees decides the next step at a suspension meeting. Stand-downs are the formal removal of a student from school for a specified period. The more formal process for a suspension means that these usually relate to longer time periods away from school, and are usually for more serious matters. Ultimately a student may be expelled from a school, but the school must usually arrange a new school if the child is under the legal leaving age.

There may be substantial differences between the application of these procedures between schools. Both are subject to guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education but are strongly influenced by the policies set by school boards of trustees. It is also possible that some schools may be able to deal with issues at an early stage and so avoid the necessity for these more formal procedures.

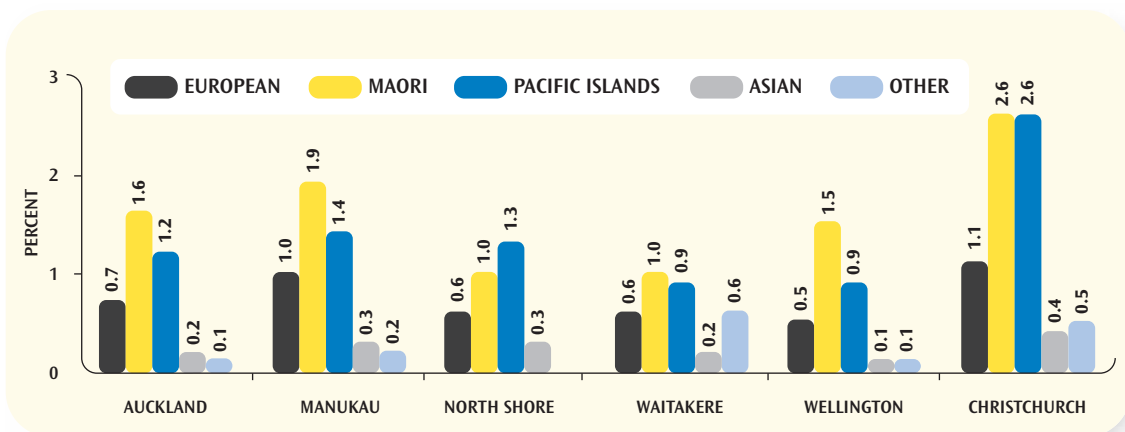
This indicator presents the percentage of the population aged 5 to 15 years in each of the six largest cities who were suspended or stood-down, for the period July 1999 to December 1999.

Some children may have been suspended or stood-down more than once during this period but the numbers are likely to be small because the figures are for six months only. Figures for suspensions and stand-downs have been aggregated because suspensions are relatively few on a per school basis and thus there may be a significant margin of error.

What did we find ?

- There appears to be broad consistency in the application of stand-down and suspension policies across cities, because the percentages are comparable.
- Proportions of suspension and stand-downs are higher among Maori and Pacific Islands children.
- Asian students are rarely stood-down or suspended.

PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION AGED 5 TO 15 YEARS WHO WERE SUSPENDED OR STOOD-DOWN, BY ETHNICITY (JULY TO DEC 1999)¹⁰⁶



Data Source: Ministry of Education

There is no evidence of a relationship between socio-economic status of cities and rates of suspensions and stand-downs. There may be a connection however, between high rates and subsequent juvenile offending rates. For example, Christchurch shows the highest level of suspensions and stand-downs over this period and has high levels of juvenile offending (refer page 83).

¹⁰⁶ Proportion has been calculated using 1996 Census ethnicity data and the proportion is per ethnic grouping. There may be some differences between the 1996 Census data and ethnicity identified by the students when a suspension or stand-down is recorded.

Highest Qualification Gained

What this is about...

The level of qualifications in a population is related to employment take-up. An educated population adds to the vibrancy and creativity of the community and is needed to remain competitive in the global economy.

This indicator measures the highest qualification gained within the New Zealand population aged 15 years and over. It is useful as an indicator of the capability of a workforce to meet the labour demand.¹⁰⁷ Because this is a measure of the whole population it will reflect qualifications that were gained over the previous 40 to 50 years.

The level and quantity of study for a degree is now defined by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority and tertiary institutions. The difference between a 'degree' and 'vocational' qualification, is becoming less distinct as a much wider range of degree qualifications has developed, and many courses can now be recognised as part of a degree qualification.

What did we find ?

- Between 1991 and 1996 there was a significant drop in vocational qualifications and rise in degree qualifications. This may reflect changes in national qualification standards during that period.
- The percentage of the population who have no qualifications dropped but the shift is small over a five year period where the importance of a well-qualified workforce has been increasingly recognised.
- There are significant differences in achievement at the higher level between New Zealand's six largest cities. In particular, the percentage of the population with degree qualifications varies widely from 4% in Manukau to 18.9% in Wellington.
- The proportions of people with no qualifications in the six largest cities are lower than in the rest of New Zealand. Among the six cities however, Manukau, Waitakere, and Christchurch Cities have relatively high levels of people aged 15 years or over who have no qualifications.

PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION AGED 15 YEARS
AND OVER WHO HAVE GAINED QUALIFICATION, BY CITY (1991 AND 1996)¹⁰⁸

	Degree (%)		Vocational (%)		School (%)		None (%)	
	1991	1996	1991	1996	1991	1996	1991	1996
Auckland	8.9	12.3	23.8	18.6	20.9	24.2	21.0	18.4
Manukau	2.7	4.0	20.4	16.3	18.1	22.4	26.2	25.6
North Shore	6.3	8.8	27.6	21.7	24.7	27.7	18.1	17.8
Waitakere	3.2	4.4	23.5	18.4	20.9	24.0	24.2	23.6
Wellington	15.4	18.9	24.4	19.5	21.8	25.2	15.0	14.0
Christchurch	5.7	7.4	24.2	19.5	21.8	26.5	24.7	24.2
Rest of NZ	3.4	4.4	21.7	18.4	19.1	22.6	27.0	27.1

Data Source: Statistics New Zealand

It is difficult to draw conclusions on the linkages between educational participation and quality at progressive stages of the lifelong learning process. One reason for this is the difficulty of 'tracking' population groups as they become more mobile (for example, seeking university education in different parts of the country from the place of normal residence).

107 The categories of qualifications were updated between the 1991 and 1996 censuses. They have been grouped into similar qualification types to allow clearer reporting. The category "None" includes those aged 15 years and over who are still at school with no qualifications, although this group is not large (1.0 to 1.5% of the total population). 1996 categories are: Degree - Higher and Bachelor Degrees; School - Higher School, Sixth Form, School Certificate, Overseas School Qualifications; Vocational - Advanced Vocational, Intermediate Vocational, Skilled Vocational, Basic Vocational Qualifications; None - No Qualification.

108 Percentage calculated using 1991 and 1996 Census population counts.

School Leavers without Qualifications

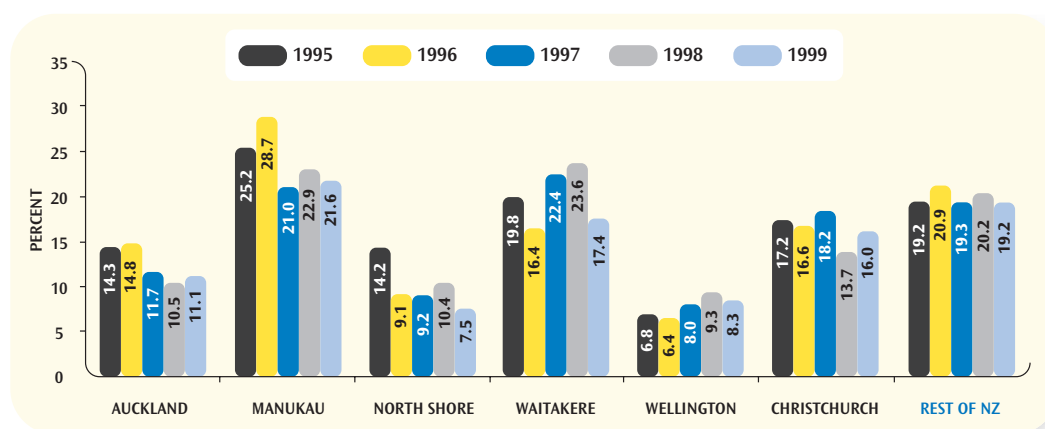
What this is about...

As the economy and the labour market change, there is an increasing demand for a skilled labour force. School-level qualifications are an indirect indicator of a level of literacy and skill. School leavers without qualifications are more likely to have difficulty finding sustained and skilled employment than those who leave school with qualifications. Individuals who leave school without qualifications may find employment or acquire alternative qualifications at some stage, but measuring school leavers with no qualifications as a percentage of total school leavers in a year helps identify the job readiness of the future labour force.

What did we find ?

- Over the last five years, the percentage of school leavers without qualifications as a percentage of all school leavers has fallen across the six largest cities, with the exception of Wellington City.
- Auckland, North Shore and Wellington Cities have the lowest proportion of school leavers with no qualifications.

SCHOOL LEAVERS WITH NO QUALIFICATIONS AS A PERCENTAGE OF ALL SCHOOL LEAVERS (1995 TO 1999)



Data Source: Ministry of Education

In many cases Maori and Pacific Islands school leavers are over-represented among those leaving without qualifications. For example, in Auckland in 1999 Maori made up only 8.6% of school leavers, but were 23.1% of those without qualifications. In Waitakere the figures were 16% and 32.6%, and in Manukau 15.7% and 30.6%. In Auckland 20.3% of school leavers in 1999 were of Pacific Islands ethnicity, but they made up half of the 617 students who left with no qualifications.

Asian students tend to be under-represented among those leaving without qualifications. For example in 1999 in North Shore City, 555 school leavers were Asian, but only 19 left without qualifications.

There is a critical link between leaving school without a qualification and youth unemployment. Young people lacking skills, qualifications and work experience are vulnerable to unemployment. Research has shown that young people without a minimum of a secondary school level qualification can expect to encounter employment problems throughout their working lives.¹⁰⁹ As employers increasingly demand skilled labour in specific areas, high numbers of school leavers without qualifications points to a possible mismatch between the needs of employers and the skills of the labour force. This may have implications for the local economy in the longer term.

School qualifications are undergoing major changes which, together with raising the school leaving age to 16 years, is hoped will impact positively on the rates of school leavers without qualifications.

109 OECD research, cited in Te Puni Kokiri. 2000. Progress Towards Closing Social and Economic Gaps between Maori and Non-Maori.

Participation in Community Education

What this is about...

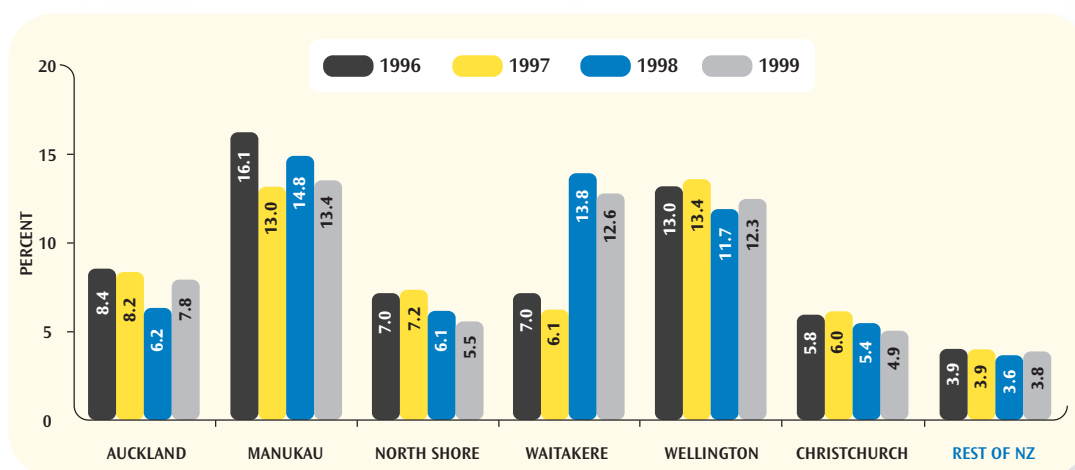
In recent years, on-going education and learning have become increasingly regarded as significant contributors to life enrichment and as essential requirements for competitive advantage. The changing nature of the economy means that it is important that people up-skill and re-skill to retain their employment position. No or low qualifications can restrict a person's employability and their ability to generate a livable income.

This indicator shows percentage of the population aged 15 years and over who have participated in community education. Community education includes study post secondary school, but not study for degree or higher level qualifications.¹¹⁰

What did we find ?

- Participation rates across the six largest cities vary widely and are generally higher than in the rest of New Zealand.
- There was a decline in participation in North Shore and Christchurch Cities between 1995 and 1999.
- The proportion of adult population participating in community education appeared to double between 1997 and 1998 in Waitakere City. This may be due to data collection or recording issues.

PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION AGED 15 YEARS OR OVER WHO PARTICIPATED IN COMMUNITY EDUCATION, BY CITY (1996 TO 1999)¹¹¹



Data Source: Ministry of Education

Data breakdowns for gender show that participation rates for females are universally higher, and that they are particularly high in the cities of Waitakere, Wellington and North Shore. Some investigation may be warranted to find out why this difference exists.

Levels of educational achievement in the six cities show that participation rates are high in cities that already have residents with more qualifications, the notable exception being Waitakere City.

110 Community education data is collected by the Ministry of Education and covers a wide variety of subjects, for example: **English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)**, **School subjects** - e.g. School Certificate English and Sixth Form Accountancy, **Art, music and crafts** - e.g. pottery, guitar, carving and photography, **Business office skills** - e.g. word processing and spreadsheets, **Fitness sport and recreation** - e.g. aerobics and self defense, **Transport certificates** - e.g. defensive driving and boatmasters.

111 Total population figures for the 1996 year are taken from 1996 Census and for 1997, 1998 and 1999 years are based on medium growth projections calculated by Statistics New Zealand for each year.