



**Te Tāhuhu o
te Mātauranga**
Ministry of Education

Laydan Mortensen

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17 June 2026

Tēnā koe Laydan

OIA: GEMS-48450 – Evidence supporting Minister’s claim that parents do not understand NCEA grades

Thank you for your email of 1 June 2026 to the Ministry of Education (the Ministry) requesting the following information:

Under the Official Information Act 1982, I request copies of any reports, research, surveys, polling, focus group findings, briefing papers, aide-memoires, Cabinet papers, communications advice, talking points, draft media lines, or other advice relating to parental understanding of NCEA grading terminology.

In particular, I request any information used to support the statement made by Minister for Education Erica Stanford on 4 August 2025 that:

“Parents can’t help their children improve their grades when they don’t know what they mean.”

This request specifically concerns evidence relating to understanding of the grading labels "Not Achieved", "Achieved", "Merit" and "Excellence", rather than broader understanding of the NCEA system, qualification structure, endorsements, credits, literacy/numeracy requirements, or university entrance requirements.

If any research or advice distinguished between:

- (a) parental understanding of NCEA grading terminology, and*
- (b) parental understanding of the wider NCEA system, I request copies of that distinction.*

I also request any comparative analysis, modelling, polling, or advice regarding whether the proposed A+ to E grading scale would be easier for parents to understand than the current NCEA grading terminology.

If no evidence, research, or advice exists specifically supporting the claim that parents do not understand the current grading terminology, I request confirmation of this.

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

We have determined that the information requested is not held by the Ministry but is believed to be held by, and more closely connected with the functions of, the Minister of Education. As such, I have transferred your request to the Minister of Education in accordance with sections 14(b)(i) and 14(b)(ii) of the Act.

We are extending the 10-working-day time limit available to make this transfer, to 17 June 2026, in accordance with section 15A(1)(b) of the Act, as the consultations necessary to make a decision on the request were such that a proper response could not reasonably be made within the original time limit.

You may expect a response from the Minister of Education directly concerning your request.

Nāku noa, nā



Helen Walton

Senior Advisor, Government, Executive and Ministerial Services

Te Pou Rangatōpū | Corporate