



05 SEP 2016

Dr Robert Shaw
fyi-request-4386-0e242342@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Dr Shaw

Thank you for your email of 7 August 2016 to the Ministry of Education requesting the following information:

- *What is the government doing to advance us in the various mathematics competitions?*
- *How much government money has been spent in the last 5 years to support our competitors?*
- *Is the government satisfied with what has been achieved in this competition to date?*
- *Does the Ministry or the Government have specific policies and goals regarding mathematics competitions?*

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

The Ministry's response to each part of your request is set out below. We have interpreted your reference to "government" as referring to the Ministry of Education.

What is the government doing to advance us in the various mathematics competitions?

In New Zealand mathematics is compulsory from Years 1 to 10. The numeracy requirements for NCEA Levels 1-3 mean virtually all school leavers continue with mathematics, in some form, past Year 10. In 2014, 95.4% of all school leavers engaged in a mathematics programme to at least at NCEA Level 1. (Most students complete NCEA Level 1 in Year 11).

The Ministry sees mathematics as an important area for students to succeed in, for them to have great options for their chosen pathways beyond school. Amongst these, the key areas of focus for raising achievement in mathematics are to ensure a consistently high quality of teaching, and for students to have a positive experience in this area throughout their schooling, so they see themselves as able to succeed in this subject at the highest levels.

The Ministry is spending approximately \$20m a year on programmes to lift achievement in mathematics, including: Professional Learning and Development, Accelerated Learning in Mathematics, Mathematics Support Teachers, Communities of Mathematical Inquiry and the E-Ako Maths online tool. In 2014/2015, approximately \$100,000 was also provided to continue the development of resources in mathematics and statistics specifically targeting gifted and talented students. These are available at <http://nzmaths.co.nz/gifted-and-talented>.

The New Zealand Association of Mathematics Teachers is sponsored at \$27,000 a year to support the running of Maths Week. Some of this funding is used by the Association to support regional mathematics competitions.

School Boards of Trustees are self-governing and Schools make their own curriculum-based decisions about students' involvement in a range of competitions both international and national/regional. Among these are:

- The International Mathematical Olympiad,
- The Australian Mathematics Competition,
- The Casio Senior Mathematics Competition, and
- Otago Junior Maths Competition (which despite its name is a national competition).

How much government money has been spent in the last 5 years to support our competitors?

The Ministry does not have a centrally held fund specifically allocated to supporting competitors in the various mathematics competitions. Therefore, we cannot quantify the amount of government money that could be argued to have supported competitors in mathematics competitions.

While schools may choose to allocate some of their teacher resourcing, and perhaps other resources to support competitors, the Ministry does not hold information on this aspect of schools' use of funds. I am therefore refusing this part of your request under section 18(g) of the Act as the information you have requested is not held by the Ministry.

***Is the government satisfied with what has been achieved in this competition to date?
and
Does the Ministry or the Government have specific policies and goals regarding mathematics competitions?***

While the Ministry encourages and applauds success in the various mathematics competitions, the Ministry does not have any specific policies and goals regarding these competitions. Nor does the Ministry hold any information which expresses a view, positive or otherwise, on achievement in mathematics competitions. For this reason, I am also refusing these parts of your request under section 18(e) of the Act as the information you have requested does not exist.

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

Yours sincerely



Karl Le Quesne
Associate Deputy Secretary
Early Learning and Student Achievement