



Our children, our choice: priorities for policy

Child Poverty Action Group Policy Paper Series
Part Three: Compulsory Schooling and Child poverty

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About Child Poverty Action Group

Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) is an independent charity working to eliminate child poverty in New Zealand through research, education and advocacy. CPAG believes that New Zealand's high rate of child poverty is not the result of economic necessity, but is due to policy neglect and a flawed ideological emphasis on economic incentives. Through research, CPAG highlights the position of tens of thousands of New Zealand children, and promotes public policies that address the underlying causes of the poverty they live in.

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Introduction to Part three: Compulsory schooling and child poverty

In Part three of the Child Poverty Action Group series: *Our children, our choice*, the focus is on compulsory schooling, and in particular how children who are disadvantaged by poverty fare in that sector. While the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) 2013 report *Education at a Glance*¹ reminds us that education impacts health,² we may be more familiar with education's influence on lifetime earnings: "Individuals who have at least an upper secondary education have a greater chance of being employed than those without that level of education."³ That report shows New Zealand is in the lower half of OECD countries for secondary school success.

Largely as a consequence of this lack of success at secondary level, less than 60% of our students entering a tertiary programme will graduate with a first degree, compared to more than 75% graduating in Australia, Denmark, Finland, France, Japan and Spain.⁴ When the high numbers of international students are excluded from consideration, first-time tertiary graduation rates for New Zealand drop disastrously to less than 50%.⁵ Those students who don't graduate are still likely to have incurred a large student loan that will impact negatively on their net incomes and their future ability to save toward a first home or a vehicle. They may also be compromised by a sense of failure at their first adult endeavour.

Since the late 1980s, inequality has increased in New Zealand, largely because average to high incomes grew faster than lower incomes. However, while New Zealand's income mobility is about average for the OECD, as the Treasury (2013) reports, educational mobility is low.⁶

The link between parents' socioeconomic status and a child's educational outcome is very high in New Zealand compared internationally, suggesting that New Zealand's education system does not lean against socioeconomic background as much as the education systems of other countries.⁷

There is no natural mechanism to prevent extreme inequality of income and wealth. As Thomas Piketty (2014) argues:

Historically the main mechanism to reduce inequality has been the diffusion of knowledge, skills and education. This is the most powerful force to reduce inequality between countries; and this is what we have today, with emerging countries catching up in terms of productivity levels with richer countries. Sometimes this can also work within countries if we have sufficiently inclusive educational and social institutions which allow large segments of the population to access the right skills and the right jobs.⁸

The Education Review Office report, *Towards equitable outcomes in secondary schools: Good practice* (May 2014),⁹ presents examples of good practice in student engagement and achievement from a diverse sample of secondary schools, rated decile 5 or below with rolls of 200 students or more. Features in common included:

- Students were first and foremost in their thinking.
- These schools had a relentless commitment to improvement focused on success for each and every student.



- School leaders and teachers used extensive, high quality data to identify students' needs and respond appropriately.
- Students were active members of their school community.
- Whānau, parents and community were involved in their teenager's learning.

A consequence of the student-centred approach in these schools was that few students were stood-down or suspended, and students achieved good academic results.

Successful outcomes from compulsory schooling for our children, particularly for children who are disadvantaged by poverty, depend on a complex but achievable range of conditions. We urge adoption of the following recommendations under cross-party agreements, so they will be applied, monitored, and evaluated in a reflective and ongoing long-term process. Then the system is more likely to deliver better outcomes for all our children, and provide them with improved opportunities for their futures.



Our children, our choice: priorities for policy

Part three: Compulsory schooling and child poverty

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Part three: Compulsory schooling and child poverty

Overview

All state schools in New Zealand are allocated to one of ten deciles, with decile 1 schools having the highest proportion of students from socio-economically disadvantaged communities. The socio-economic status (SES) or relative disadvantage of each school is determined using census information at meshblock level on five indicators: household income, parental occupation, household crowding, parents without qualifications, and parental receipt of income support.¹⁰ The decile rating applies to the school as a whole and does not measure socio-economic disadvantage at the individual family level. SES includes direct measures of relative income poverty but also non-income indicators that have been shown in empirical research to be strongly associated with socio-economic disadvantage.

All school communities in the same low decile band are not necessarily disadvantaged in identical ways, and not all families in the same low-decile school are necessarily disadvantaged in identical ways. These qualifications are particularly important when considering claims that some disadvantaged school communities do better than others in helping their poorer students to achieve in what may appear to be very similar socio-economic circumstances. It would be quite wrong, for example, to infer that because 285,000 or one in four children in New Zealand live in poverty,¹¹ or in households at medium or high risk of poor child outcomes,¹² these children all attend decile 1 to 3 schools. Families, and individual children can, of course, overcome disadvantage and often do. The issue is the extent to which the compulsory education system makes that struggle easier or more difficult for all children.

Government's measures of success

New entrants to schooling

How well do today's children who live in poverty fare in the New Zealand compulsory schooling system compared to others who are more advantaged socio-economically? The current Government's Better Public Services early childhood care and education (ECCE) target is that by 2016, 98% of children starting school will have participated in "quality" ECCE.¹³ For children entering decile 1-3 schools, this requires an increase in participation from 89% in December 2012.¹⁴ In the December 2013 quarter, of those children who had participated in ECCE irregularly or only for the last six months or last year, 37.5% entered decile 1 schools, while only 20.5% entered decile 10 schools.¹⁵ In contrast, of those children who had attended ECCE for the previous two, three or four years, 59.9% entered decile 1 schools, compared with 77.0% entering decile 10 schools. While these latter figures are only a snapshot, and no data are provided on the relative quality of the ECCE attended, it seems reasonable to observe that the children in our society who are already the most socio-economically advantaged typically attend ECCE more regularly and for longer than do children who start life in poverty and associated forms of disadvantage.

A significant problem in measuring the consequences of differences in ECCE attendance rates for children in poverty is the absence of national level data on children's cognitive, affective and developmental progress on entry to school, in other words, what are their *educational needs* when

they start school? For some years from the mid-1990s, the Ministry of Education developed and supported the use of a School Entry Assessment (SEA) tool which measured children's awareness of print and books, knowledge of basic numeracy and aspects of oral readiness. Analysis of the 1997-2000 data reported that there was a wide range of children's scores within all deciles: children with low, average and high scores were likely to be found in all schools. However, the average score for children entering higher decile schools was consistently higher than those entering lower decile schools on all three assessment measures, and the proportion of new entrant children with lower scores on all three measures was larger in low decile schools.¹⁶ Educational researcher Cathy Wylie has summarised the magnitude of these differences: average five year olds' reading scores in decile one schools were almost half those of children in decile 7-10 schools, and mathematics scores were on average a third lower.¹⁷ These differences provide the evidence needed to make the decisions on the extra resources needed to mitigate educational disadvantage for the poorest children.

Another potentially useful national monitoring measure of children's educational needs on entry to school¹⁸ is the B4 School Check, administered by the Ministry of Health. In addition to various health indicators, the check includes behavioural and developmental screening using a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire. However, the purpose of the health check is to inform and support parents rather than inform policy at the national level. Without national data on children's educational needs when they enter school it is difficult to see how genuinely equitable resourcing decisions can be made.

RECOMMENDATION 1

Develop culturally appropriate measures of new entrant children's cognitive, affective, behavioural and developmental needs. Use the data to inform decile related school funding allocation decisions.

National Standards have been widely criticised as a narrow measure of outcomes. To have primary school curricula with a narrow focus on the achievement of normative National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics, may be especially limiting for children in poverty. As reported in the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) survey of primary and intermediate schools (2014), "... on the whole principals and teachers did not find that their National Standards work was improving student achievement. They remained sceptical about the Standards achieving this purpose."¹⁹

Children in poverty require meaningful, enjoyable and empowering experiences to address their disadvantage, not a narrow focus on standards.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Abandon National Standards because they seem ineffective while disadvantaging poor children's learning and teaching in low decile schools.

School leavers

The Government's other headline indicator of successful schooling outcomes is the proportion of school leavers with National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) Level 2 or equivalent (Table 1).

Table 1. Percentage of school leavers with NCEA Level 2 or above, by ethnic group and school quintile (2012)²⁰

Quintile	Total	Gender		Ethnic Group					
		Female	Male	Māori	Pasifika	Asian	MELAA	Other	European
1	58.1	61.8	54.3	49.5	62.6	78.6	72.3	63.2	62.3
2	66.8	70.7	63.4	54.2	63.0	82.2	65.9	67.2	72.0
3	72.7	77.6	67.9	59.2	66.4	82.7	80.7	68.1	76.0
4	82.0	85.6	78.8	67.5	76.7	89.3	82.8	82.9	83.4
5	89.6	92.1	87.0	78.6	80.0	91.6	83.2	85.7	90.4

NCEA level 2 is claimed by Government to be the minimum qualification necessary for successful economic and social participation in adult life.²¹ Table 1 reports NCEA Level 2 achievement levels by quintile, gender and ethnicity. Of students from quintile 5 (deciles 9 & 10), 89.6% gain NCEA Level 2, compared with only 58.1% in quintile 1 (deciles 1 & 2). Socio-economic disadvantage is clearly a major predictor of educational achievement. This is true for boys, girls and within all ethnic sub-groups.

The Government's Better Public Services target is for 85% of all school leavers to reach this benchmark by 2017. For students leaving decile 1-3 schools, this requires an increase from 70.2% in 2011.²² Other decile-related targets over the same period require an increase in the retention of students to age 17 in decile 1-3 schools from 73.6% to 77.4% (compared with an all schools target increase from 80.0% to 82%), and a reduction in suspensions per 1,000 students from 8.5 to 6.9 students (all schools target reduction from 5.2 to 4.8).

Socioeconomic disadvantage

Socioeconomic factors and social class are fundamental determinants of human functioning across the life span, including development, well-being, and physical and mental health. (American Psychological Association Task Force on Socioeconomic Status, 2007)²³

It is clear that there is a pervasive influence of socio-economic disadvantage throughout the schooling system. On the basis of the Government's key education indicators at the beginning and end of compulsory schooling, the schooling system at present does not enable all students to overcome the effects of poverty and socio-economic disadvantage. An obvious question is, what can we do in order to resolve these disparities?

One of the editors' seven key recommendations in *Left Further Behind* in 2011 was to "provide adequate funding for low decile schools to ensure that all children have access to high quality education". The authors of the 2011 schooling chapter, Vicki Carpenter and Martin Thrupp, argued specifically for more careful trialling of any new policies designed to raise student underachievement, and for "sustained" action to improve the supply of high quality teachers to low decile schools.²⁴ Such

observations force us to evaluate the most basic policy settings in our compulsory schooling system. In doing so, we have to face the possibilities that:

- (i) funding to our most disadvantaged schools may be inadequate for its stated purpose;
- (ii) some raising achievement policies may actually harm the very students they are intended to benefit most; and
- (iii) our most disadvantaged school communities may struggle to recruit and retain the best teachers.

If one or more of these is correct, it raises quite disturbing doubts about the extent to which our compulsory schooling system may be regarded as just, a system that distributes schooling resources to children fairly.

A major purpose of compulsory schooling is to prepare children for the most appropriate further vocational education for their aspirations, to confidently enter the workplace and to participate successfully in the society and the economy. Yet children (and their families) in low-mid decile schools may not be able to successfully negotiate the complexities of NCEA course choice compared to their peers in higher decile schools.²⁵ These include exam fees and assessment of eligibility for additional examination support. It makes sense, then, to ensure that:

- (i) any systemic barrier to children who live in poverty succeeding at school is removed; and
- (ii) children who live in poverty are actively supported to make informed decisions about educational and career pathways that are in their best interests.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Provide a 100% government subsidy in all decile 1-4 secondary schools for NCEA and scholarship examination fees; and provide NCEA subject pathway guidance to tertiary study on entry to secondary school.

It is a truism that New Zealand society outside school is very unequal.²⁶ Our children are born into diverse family and community circumstances. The quality of life they enjoy as children varies enormously as a consequence not only of the family's disposable income, but also the love, care and nurture their parents provide to them, and the ability of the family to negotiate life's challenges on their behalf and to prepare them to negotiate their own life challenges. Income or material poverty does not alone determine schooling failure; the reasons for success or failure at school are socially constructed and many factors contribute to a particular child succeeding or failing "against the odds".²⁷

Nevertheless, compulsory schooling provides an opportunity for the state to mitigate the worst effects of the arbitrary and unnecessary inequalities of life chance that are associated with income poverty, its antecedents and its consequences.²⁸ In this sense, schooling can contribute to greater justice: it can redistribute financial resources so that those who live in:

- (iii) material poverty, and / or
- (iv) poverty of development,

do not fall further behind their more advantaged peers. The first of these is a question of financial resources; the second of learning resources.

A schooling system that values children

The Harvard philosopher, Michael Sandel, identifies three approaches to justice: maximizing utility or welfare; freedom of choice; and “cultivating virtue and reasoning about the common good”.²⁹ Of the three, Sandel favours the latter approach on the grounds that “justice is not only about the right way to distribute things. It is also about the right way to value things”.³⁰ In this sense, questions about how we should approach decisions regarding educational funding, increasing achievement and improving teaching are also fundamentally questions about the right way to value children.

One of the comments often made about the much-vaunted Finnish schooling system is that it places the needs and interests of all children at the centre of educational decision-making. Whether we regard compulsory schooling more as a taxpayer expense to be minimized, than as an investment in the collective future; learning more as an outcome to be measured, than as an experience to be enjoyed for its own sake; or whether we regard teachers more as servants of the government, than as members of their local school community, how we value all children will be reflected in the compulsory schooling policy settings that we decide to, or permit to be, put in place.

These are undoubtedly challenging value judgments for our society to make, yet in 2014 arguably we are in a more informed position to be able to do so because of three significant poverty and inequality public policy oriented projects undertaken since the 2011 version of this chapter was written: In 2012, the Expert Advisory Group on Solutions to Child Poverty (EAG) was established by the Children’s Commissioner and produced a landmark report challenging the New Zealand Government to meaningful action on child poverty.³¹

In 2013, the first child poverty monitoring report was published, providing annual updates on changes in child poverty on the nature and extent of child poverty via a range of internationally accepted measures.³² Also in 2013, the journalist Max Rashbrooke published an edited collection of papers on inequality in New Zealand, accompanied by a national lecture tour and website.³³ Together these contributions have helped to create a popular agenda for eradicating child poverty, an evidence-based language and set of policy solutions to promote it, and indicators to evaluate Government commitment, funding priorities and policy effects.

One of the EAG working papers was devoted to evidence-based education solutions.³⁴ It reported that children from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds gained most from good quality ECCE in terms of their cognitive and social-emotional development, that their parents and communities also benefited from good quality ECCE and multi-agency social, educational and health services, and that some parents and families would benefit from additional targeted information and support for the ECCE to school transition.

This suggests very strongly that we cannot consider the schooling needs and interests of children in poverty apart from their ECCE needs and interests, nor can we consider the needs and interests of children in isolation from those of their families and communities.³⁵ Nor, indeed, can we consider the effects of politicians and policy makers separately from those of teachers and other education professionals, families and students who have to enact policy decisions in educational settings. This line of argument is for a complex view of educational success and failure, one which in turn calls for complex, multi-layered education policy solutions that may take more than a few years to demonstrate significant, measurable beneficial effects.³⁶

The schooling solutions advocated by the EAG were similarly multi-faceted and complex, notably bringing together education, health and welfare services in a local community setting to address deeply entrenched social and economic challenges that affect schooling access, participation, engagement and achievement. The proposed solutions included: a food in schools strategy involving public, private and philanthropic funding sources.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Free breakfast and lunch in decile 1-4 schools.

Poor youth health statistics show needs not being met by existing primary care services. From 2008 funding was provided for school nurses or school-based health services in the secondary schools attended by young people of highest need: in decile 1 and 2 secondary schools, teen parent units and alternative education facilities. This was extended in 2013 to decile 3 schools. Simon Denny et al's recent survey of the health services in a random sample of 125 secondary schools³⁷ revealed that 12% of secondary schools report no health services beyond the minimum requirement of first aid provision; in 56% of schools, health service provision is by visiting health professionals; 20% have an on-site health professional (a school nurse); and 12% have a collaborative team of health and other professionals on site for most of the week.

The survey found that schools with an on-site school nurse or health team were more likely to have more facilities, to be better integrated with the school, the community and local Primary Health Organisations, and to provide more routine comprehensive health assessments.³⁸ Importantly, there was significantly less depression and suicide risk where the school health services had health professionals on site; where the hours of health professional time per week per 100 students was higher; where the health professionals were trained in youth health and well supported through professional peer review; and where the health professionals were well integrated with the school and with the local community. In schools that provided sexual health services and where the health professionals had received training in youth health, there was better contraceptive use by female students; and there is also evidence that high quality school health services lessen students' use of hospital A & E. But full school health services are not available in all secondary schools. "Further investment and resourcing of school health services could have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of secondary school students in New Zealand".³⁹

The EAG proposed solutions also included: expansion of the Positive Behaviour for Learning programme; academic counselling and target setting to improve outcomes for Pasifika students; extension of kura kaupapa Māori and wharekura to more communities; extension of school-local community collaborative social support initiatives; and proliferation of the 'school as community hub' model of multi-agency services delivery. The latter would include social workers, health workers, alternative education programmes and providers and teen parent units; and before and after school and school holiday programmes.

RECOMMENDATION 5

Make all decile 1-4 schools community hubs with a single governance board to cover the integrated provision in the local community of education, health, parenting, budgeting, community law and social services.

RECOMMENDATION 6

Provide before and after school and holiday clubs at all decile 1-4 schools.

The EAG also called for more targeted school to tertiary education and school to vocational transitions for children living in poverty. It should be emphasised that these are evidence-based not ideologically-driven solutions in the sense that they have been shown to work in New Zealand and elsewhere for children in poverty. They either remove barriers to educational success, or enable higher levels of educational success, or both.

RECOMMENDATION 7

Affirm entitlement to free state education until the age of 18 for all students and encourage diversity of free vocational education pathways.

Decile funding

Even within Vote Education appropriations of \$10.1 billion in 2014-2015 for the ECCE and schooling sectors,⁴⁰ the schooling policy solutions recommended above would constitute a significant cost. This brings us back to the question about the right way to value our children. What are the right things to do in compulsory schooling if we are to be fair to all children? Jonathon Boston has usefully identified different forms of equality: equality before the law, equal liberties, equality of opportunity, equal outcomes, and social equality.⁴¹ He concludes that formal equality (before the law or of opportunity) is important but insufficient. We must also promote what he calls substantive or effective equality by giving people the means to enjoy and take advantage of their freedoms.

If we examine New Zealand compulsory schooling law and policy we may see these various forms of equality being promoted to some degree, notably the view that a common curriculum and credential framework provides equality of opportunity for all, that the Education Act 1989 provides equal right to enrol at a state school of one's choice and the equal right to free public schooling, that the Better Public Services targets demand equality of educational outcome, and so on.

However, these policy settings appear to promote mostly formal equalities, and the public policy commitment to them is equivocal: free state schooling is increasingly subsidized by so-called voluntary donations by families;⁴² access to over-subscribed state schools is determined by private mortgage; the introduction of national benchmark standards of achievement by set age points has disproportionately narrowed both the curriculum and the quality of learning for children in disadvantaged school communities;⁴³ and equality of treatment is used to argue both that families whose children attend private schools should also receive significant public tuition subsidy or scholarship, and that failing private schools should be integrated into the state system.⁴⁴ If, however, education policy settings were to be governed by considerations of substantive or effective equality, then they might begin to look quite different.

RECOMMENDATION 8

Reduce class sizes in all decile 1-4 primary schools (if necessary by proportionately increasing class sizes in decile 8-10 schools) and provide salary incentives to encourage the best teachers to teach in these schools.

RECOMMENDATION 9

Use the Investing in Success funding to build collaborative school and teacher clusters across the socio-economic spectrum.

An equitable schooling system

What appears to be missing from the compulsory schooling policy agenda is a necessarily unambiguous, non-partisan political commitment to substantive or effective equality for children in poverty. The state distributes Vote Education resources to promote some important equalities but not those which would be most costly and which would demand either a significant increase in general taxation or a major redistribution of funding to children in poverty, in other words more targeting of existing funding to lower decile communities. Either or both of these seem to be regarded as folly in the current political environment but one could reasonably argue that they are essential if we are to provide substantive or effective equality for all children in poverty.

It is equally difficult in the current policy environment to predict which way the Government will go next in terms of compulsory schooling policy. For example, the Government has signalled a desire to move away from decile-based funding,⁴⁵ which allocates a proportion of operational funding to schools based on overall community disadvantage (Table 2).

Table 2. Per pupil operational grants (\$) distributed according to selected decile⁴⁶

Grant	Decile 1	Decile 5	Decile 10
Targeted Funding for Educational Achievement	\$810.20*	\$113.49	\$0
Special Education Grant (+ \$1,380.43 per school)	\$72.49	\$58.00	\$37.30
Careers Information Grant (Y9-15 pupils)	\$36.58	\$26.54	\$15.06

* Mean rate for Decile 1A-Decile 1C schools

While this weighting of operational funds according to decile may appear to be a significant redistribution of resources to promote greater equality, the reality is that Government tacitly requires schools to rely on family voluntary donations, local fundraising, investments and fees income from international students to supplement state grants. In 2010 (the latest year available) all state schools raised 9% of revenue from non-government sources. Total decile 10 state schools revenue from all sources was \$638 million compared with \$501 million for decile one schools.⁴⁷ One may reasonably predict on this basis that higher decile schools raise more non-government funds per school than lower decile schools. In this respect, children in poverty remain disadvantaged irrespective of limited Government redistribution efforts (Table 3).

Table 3. 2010 revenue and expenditure (\$) for state and state integrated schools by selected decile, per school and per student⁴⁸

	Decile 1	Decile 5	Decile 10	NZ Total
Revenue	\$525,709,188	\$647,546,104	\$748,521,055	\$6,350,281,440
Expenditure	\$526,160,018	\$647,649,182	\$743,431,097	\$6,338,191,582
Surplus (Deficit)	\$ (450,830)	\$ (103,078)	\$5,089,958	\$12,089,858
Number schools July	280	252	276	2,577
Number students July	54,331	73,931	116,124	762,400
Expenditure per school	\$1,879,143	\$2,570,036	\$2,693,591	\$2,459,523
Expenditure per student	\$9,684	\$8,760	\$6,402	\$8,313

Table 3 shows that lower decile schools as a whole operate with a financial deficit, whereas the higher decile schools as a whole generate a financial surplus. Higher decile schools are also larger, and therefore more able to generate economies of scale. If state funding to lower decile schools remains insufficient to compensate for inequalities in school income from other sources, it may not be all that surprising that lower decile schools find it difficult to reduce inequalities of educational outcome. Typically the current Government and its officials have asserted that quality teaching makes the most difference within the school, and that setting high standards of achievement, and monitoring them closely, will reduce inequalities of outcome in a relatively short period of time. However, this seems too glib a policy response. Children in poverty do not leave the effects of poverty and forms of social disadvantage commonly associated with poverty at the school gate. Achieving substantive or effective equality for children in poverty will require a more informed and committed Government response.

RECOMMENDATION 10

Retain the decile funding system principles, based on need and equality of outcome.

Conclusion

There is unequivocal research evidence that the major predictor of educational success is socio-economic circumstances at birth.⁴⁹

Since the early 2000s successive Governments and their officials have argued that the quality of classroom teaching is the most effective way to reduce the inequalities of educational outcomes that exist between children who begin life in material disadvantage and those who do not.

Whatever the relative merits of each argument and each set of evidence, there remain 285,000 children in New Zealand who live twenty four hours a day in poverty and with the consequences of poverty. Morally, Governments are required to do whatever they can now to mitigate the effects of everyday child poverty because if they do not, the chances are that these 285,000 children will lead less happy, productive and successful lives than they otherwise could. This is simply unjust.

In order to gauge the extent of the challenge facing the education system, we need much better data on children's educational needs (broadly defined) when they start school. This is necessary to make evidence-based intervention decisions and needs-based resourcing decisions for the remainder of their 13 years at school.

The discussion and recommendations in this chapter are based on a simple reality of childhood that seems all too often to escape ministers and their officials: children in poverty do not leave their daily life circumstances at the school gate, and whatever the child learns at school will not change those daily life circumstances in the short term. Children's identities, capabilities, capacities, aspirations and well-being are formed through their lives both inside and outside school. To improve their life chances, education policy has to address the conditions of both.

This means that Governments must think beyond the 'quality teaching' mantra to develop, resource and enact complex multi-agency education and education-related strategies that simultaneously address the poverty of material circumstance in which too many of our children are forced to subsist outside school.

If we consider children in poverty's lives inside and outside school holistically, and through a lens of social justice, we inevitably arrive at a much broader set of educational challenges that must be addressed. In response to recent very powerful arguments and evidence from groups throughout society, the current Government has begun to take modest steps in some of the right multi-agency, multi-strategy education policy directions. Politicians on all sides now need to have the collective courage and commitment to do far more if we are to ensure that the compulsory schooling rights and interests of children in poverty are met.

Full list of recommendations

1. Develop culturally appropriate measures of new entrant children's cognitive, affective, behavioural and developmental needs. Use the data to inform decile related school funding allocation decisions.
2. Abandon National Standards because they seem ineffective while disadvantaging poor children's learning and teaching in low decile schools.
3. Provide a 100% government subsidy in all decile 1-4 secondary schools for NCEA and scholarship examination fees; and provide NCEA subject pathway guidance to tertiary study on entry to secondary school.
4. Provide free breakfast and lunch in decile 1-4 schools.
5. Make all decile 1-4 schools community hubs with a single governance board to cover the integrated provision in the local community of education, health, parenting, budgeting, community law and social services.
6. Provide before and after school and holiday clubs at all decile 1-4 schools.
7. Affirm entitlement to free state education until the age of 18 for all students and encourage diversity of free vocational education pathways.
8. Reduce class sizes in all decile 1-4 primary schools (if necessary by proportionately increasing class sizes in decile 8-10 schools) and provide salary incentives to encourage the best teachers to teach in these schools.
9. Use the Investing in Success funding to build collaborative school and teacher clusters across the socio-economic spectrum.
10. Retain the decile funding system principles, based on need and equality of outcome.

Audio-visual resources

Catriona MacLennan (2014) *Child Poverty in Aotearoa Episode 5: Education* at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wWt2R35XvhM>

NZEI Te Riu Roa (2014) *How the Government plans to spend \$359 million*, at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nO5UGJmVpmg>

UNICEF UK video (2012) *Pupils speak out about UK child poverty*, at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aBVYA-3ASt0>

Endnotes

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