



# The Secondary School Budget

## Investing in Secondary Achievement

### Tenā koe,

I am delighted to release Budget 2026, which invests **\$2.1 billion** to continue building a world-leading education system that sets Kiwi students up for success.

In the previous two Budgets the Government made substantial investments into literacy and mathematics, teacher supply, infrastructure, and learning support. Those investments are multi-year, and continue to roll out across the country. We're already seeing early improvements in student achievement, and Budget 2026 continues to invest in the foundational areas of reading, writing, and maths.

Budget 2026 moves the focus to secondary achievement and assessment, as we begin the reform of our secondary qualifications. It invests significantly in the new secondary curriculum, providing resources for students and essential professional development for teachers.

The Budget also substantially expands vocational education and training, reflecting the importance of supporting students going into the trades. I can't overstate the importance of this boost to vocational education and training. Not only does it equip individuals with practical, job-ready skills but it provides talent that businesses and industries need to grow.

Our increased contribution to Industry Skills Boards is designed to ensure the new vocational education and training aligns closely with real-world labour market demands.

And of course, Budget 2026 continues critical investment into the priority areas of supporting the school workforce, investing in school property and increasing operating funding for schools. To our school leaders and teachers, this budget is to continue to back the incredible work you are doing in classrooms everyday to raise student achievement.



**Hon Erica Stanford**  
Minister of Education

### Highlights

- **\$61 million** to develop resources for the up to 240,000 students using the new secondary curriculum subjects in the refreshed New Zealand Curriculum and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa and enhance the curriculum website, Tāhūrangi.
- **\$20 million** to provide professional learning and development across five days for all 32,000 secondary teachers to support them to implement the refreshed subject curricula and new national qualifications for Years 12-13.
- **\$15 million** to enable Industry Skills Boards to develop at least eight new industry-led secondary subjects, each focused on a specific industry (e.g. construction or primary industries). These new subjects will support 10,000 more students get high-quality vocational education and training while at secondary school.
- **\$69 million** to double the number of places in Trades Academies to 20,000 by 2030. Trades Academies provide a secondary-tertiary programme that is industry-focused learning, providing vocational education and training for secondary students.
- **\$160 million** in additional operating grants to support our schools and the 840,000 students that attend.
- **\$559 million** total funding invested into growing and maintaining school property.
- **\$201.6 million** into various initiatives that support the school workforce, including \$157 million in additional KiwiSaver contributions.



# Investing in Primary Learning

## Over \$131 million for further Literacy and Maths support

Embedding and sustaining the reforms and investments made to date, strengthening support where it is most needed, and helping more learners develop the literacy and maths skills they need to succeed.

All investments are for both the English and Māori Medium curricula.

**\$29.7 million** > Including the establishment and initial trial of Maths Hubs, hands-on Maths equipment for every Year 0 to 8 classroom, a new times table and division check, an additional 36 full-time equivalent teachers for targeted Maths support.

**\$38.7 million** > Provides Writing and Tuhituhi workbooks for over 130,000 students in Years 4 to 5 and a universal digital writing tool that will benefit over 200,000 students in Years 6 to 8 each year.

**\$19.4 million** > Structured literacy and decodables for older readers, an End of Year 2 Literacy, an Accelerated Literacy | Te Reo Matatini Programme, and a new Effective Literacy | Te Reo Matatini Teaching Programme for Years 0 to 10 to embed effective literacy practices aligned to the new curriculum.

**\$43.5 million** > To provide professional learning and development for smarter data use by school leaders, and high-impact explicit teaching practices that deepen students' learning.

## Our Investment Journey supporting students at every stage



Building an education system that enables all students to reach their full potential

# Investing in Secondary Achievement

Driving stronger secondary outcomes through curriculum delivery and vocational pathways.

## Strengthening Assessment

**\$29.5 million** > Funding to deliver a more modern IT infrastructure, integration with the wider education and social sector and to better secure 4.4 million student records.

NZQA - Strategic Technology Enhancement Project

**\$8.4 million** > Funding to implement the new secondary school qualification, including testing internal and external assessments for the new Year 11-13 subjects.

NZQA - Implementing the New Secondary School Qualification

**\$5.6 million** > Funding for schools and kura for the administration costs of NCEA co-requisite external assessments undertaken by more than 100,000 students in 2025.

School and Kura administration of NCEA Co-requisite Assessments

**\$2.1 million** > Piloting artificial intelligence and machine learning in our national qualification, to support marking, moderation and exam development.

NZQA Piloting AI and machine learning

**\$44.5 million** > Addressing the cost pressure for NZQA to deliver NCEA and Scholarship qualifications.

NZQA

## Resourcing the New Curriculum

**\$20.1 million** > Supporting professional learning and development for all 32,000 secondary teachers to deliver the refreshed senior secondary curriculum and the new national secondary qualifications.

Teacher Professional Learning and Development for the Refreshed Curriculum for Years 11-13

**\$61.2 million** > Developing resources for all secondary subjects in the refreshed New Zealand Curriculum and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa to better support around 240,000 students.

Resources to support the Refreshed Curriculum for Years 9-13

## Boosting Vocational Education and Training

**\$68.9 million** > Expanding Trades Academies places by 10,000 by 2030 to deliver industry focused learning for secondary students to around 20,000 places in total.

Expanding Vocational Education and Training opportunities for secondary students

**\$15.0 million** > Funding Industry Skills Boards to develop at least eight new industry focused subjects, expanding high quality vocational learning in secondary schools.

Industry Skills Boards - new industry-led secondary school subjects



# Other Key Investments

## Backing the Workforce

**\$157.2 million** > Funding the additional employer contributions for KiwiSaver for teachers and staff in schools.

**\$18.1 million** > Establishing a new regulatory function within the Ministry to set high standards for the teaching profession and initial teacher education.

**\$14.0 million** > Enabling work to calculate and prepare to pay ~\$225 million in Holidays Act remediation for 2013-2025, and establishing a pathway for future payroll compliance.

**\$9.5 million** > Upgrading the core payroll technology for schools, to a secure, cloud-based platform, with service continuity to ensure we're properly paying the 102,000 teachers and other staff in 2,500 schools.

**\$0.6 million** > Adding 4% to the tertiary fee subsidy for 528 trainee teachers per year.

## Core Investments

**\$164.8 million** > Funds a 1.5% increase to ECE subsidy rates from 1 July 2026, in response to cost pressures and to maintain quality and affordable learning that support over 190,000 children in over 4,000 ECEs.

**\$160.4 million** > Increasing the School Operations Grant by 2% from 2027 to continue supporting our more than 836,000 (2027 forecast) students.

**\$2.9 million** > Increasing the operating funding for the Trust in response to cost pressures. This will help the Trust support over 400 Kōhanga Reo nationwide.

## Student Support

**\$213.3 million** > Funding the delivery of the Healthy School Lunches programme and some programme innovations delivering lunches to 240,000 students in over 1,000 schools and 8,500 students in early learning.

**\$22.0 million** > Funding volume pressures and providing teacher aide support for students with a significant health condition to attend school including 100 additional students for teacher aide support.

**\$12.1 million** > A pilot supporting children and young people to attend and engage in school, improving stability and qualification outcomes.

**\$10.0 million** > One year's funding for schools to meet increased demand for English for Speakers of Other Languages programmes for an additional 12,000 students.

**\$8.2 million** > Establishing mandatory training for 20,000 core children's workers over two years to strengthen workforce safety and implement review recommendations.

**\$3.0 million** > Funding cost and volume pressures for deaf education services in schools and for deaf parents (of children) to access interpreters to attend more educational events.

## School Property Investment

**\$334.3 million** > Building hundreds of new classrooms for thousands of students across New Zealand, including more Learning Support classrooms and land for future school sites.

**\$164.8 million** > Maintaining and upgrading the school property portfolio, to ensure warm, safe and dry classrooms, including large scale redevelopments and learning support modifications.



For a full list of initiatives scan the QR code:  
[www.education.govt.nz/budget-2026](http://www.education.govt.nz/budget-2026)



**New Zealand Government**  
Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa