

Dear parents, whanau and caregivers,

As you may be aware, through articles in the media over the past few days and feedback from your daughter, the year 11 Algebra external exam last week was extraordinarily difficult. We would like to reassure you that your daughter's feeling that the exam was really hard was valid and we would like to join with you in expressing our support for her and our extreme disappointment in NZQA's processes.

The Wellington Maths Teachers' Association called an emergency meeting on Monday night and there was a large turnout. At that meeting we heard that Maths Associations up and down the country feel exactly the same as we do. At our meeting, it was agreed that a delegation put our questions and concerns to a NZQA, which they did yesterday.

Our four main concerns and requests were:

1. That NZQA acknowledge that the Algebra exam was not set at the right level of the NZ curriculum, and apologise to students, teachers and parents for the stress and anguish that this exam has caused
2. That schools have the option of using a student's derived grade exam mark as their final grade
3. That they provide us with clarification as to what level the Graphing and Geometry exams that students will be sitting at the end of the year are pitched at, and if they are significantly different to previous years, as the MCAT was, that sample papers are provided
4. That they undertake a review of the Algebra level 1 standard with Mathematics teacher input

We are pleased to report, that at the meeting yesterday, NZQA were very conciliatory and it would appear that they are taking responsibility for a poorly set exam. NZQA have also been in contact with Julia Davidson and some other Principals and we have been made to feel that they will work very hard to resolve this issue before the end of the week.

We would like to join with you in reassuring your daughter that she has learnt valuable mathematical skills this year and despite the experience of this exam, she must remain confident and continue with her study for the end of year exams.

If you, or your daughter, feel that you would like to express your displeasure about the Algebra exam, please take the time to fill out the on-line complaints form on NZQA's website <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/make-a-complaint/make-a-complaint-about-nzqa/>

We also invite you to join us in writing to the Minister of Education asking her to help us discover what went wrong in the writing of this exam by issuing an investigation into the matter and bringing forward the review of the Level One Algebra standard with an assurance that Mathematics teachers will be involved in the review.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Priest and the Wellington Girls' College Mathematics Department