

Senior free places are tenable at secondary schools, district high schools, and technical high schools up to the age of nineteen, and at technical classes other than technical high schools for three or in some cases four years. The means of qualification for senior free places are the Intermediate or other equivalent examinations, or the recommendation of the Principal or Director of the school or classes attended based on the school records and examination results, or the recommendation of an Inspector of Secondary Schools, or in the case of district high schools of the Senior Inspector of the district, or in part on such a recommendation and in part on the results of a special examination.

The provision for qualification for senior free places on the recommendation of the Principals of secondary schools, which was partially suspended in 1916, was again reverted to in 1917, and 1,047 pupils were thus granted senior free places, twenty-two, in addition, receiving partial exemption from examination, and being required to submit to a test in English and arithmetic only.

The following are some of the figures for 1916 and 1917 in regard to free places in secondary schools :—

	1916.	1917.
Number of secondary schools giving free tuition ..	31	32
Roll number of these schools	6,585	7,106
Number of free-place holders at end of year ..	5,826	6,231
Average number of free-place holders during year ..	6,045	6,468
Free-place holders as a percentage of roll number ..	92 per cent.	91 per cent.
Total annual payment by Government for free places ..	£74,380	£78,567
Cost to Government per free pupil	£12 6s. 10d.	£12 2s. 11d.

In order to arrive at the total number of pupils in New Zealand receiving free secondary instruction it will be necessary, however, to include also 104 holders of scholarships or exhibitions carrying free instruction not otherwise enumerated, which are granted by the secondary schools included above or by endowed secondary schools not coming under the conditions for free places, 2,044 free-place holders at district high schools, 96 Maori pupils receiving free education in Maori secondary schools, and 2,150 holders of free places in technical high schools. Consequently, there were approximately 10,625 pupils receiving free secondary education in the Dominion, exclusive of those holders of free places in technical schools (mostly evening students), who, while not taking full-day courses, were nevertheless receiving free education of secondary grade.

The following table gives a summary of the various secondary free places in 1916 and 1917 for which payment was made by Government :—

FREE PLACES IN DECEMBER, 1916 AND 1917.

	1916.			1917.		
(i.) Secondary schools—	Boys.	Girls.	Total.	Boys.	Girls.	Total.
(a.) Junior free pupils ..	2,283	2,013	4,296	2,327	2,257	4,584
(b.) Senior free pupils ..	818	712	1,530	910	737	1,647
Totals ..	3,101	2,725	5,826	3,237	2,994	6,231
(ii.) District high schools—						
(a.) Junior free pupils ..	873	909	1,782	836	971	1,807
(b.) Senior free pupils ..	80	121	201	103	134	237
Totals ..	953	1,030	1,983	939	1,105	2,044
(iii.) Maori secondary schools ..	43	58	101	41	55	96
(iv.) Technical high schools—						
(a.) Junior free pupils ..	798	897	1,695	906	1,005	1,911
(b.) Senior free pupils ..	81	139	220	102	137	239
Totals ..	879	1,036	1,915	1,008	1,142	2,150
Grand totals ..	4,976	4,849	9,825	5,225	5,296	10,521