

National Report Summary

ERO publishes evaluation reports on education issues of national importance. This handout is a summary of a recent national report - it captures the key points and highlights findings which you may find useful. The full report is available on our website - www.ero.govt.nz

Making Connections for Pacific Learners' Success (November 2013)

This report discusses secondary schools where Pacific learners are achieving at or above the national norms for all students. It includes details of initiatives and good practice and how these work together to get great results.

Nationally only 66 percent of Pacific school leavers gain NCEA Level 2 qualifications, in comparison to 80 percent of Pākeha students.

The Ministry of Education (the Ministry), the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs (MPIA) and the Education Review Office (ERO) have all developed plans to address this disparity.

The Ministry's target is that, by 2017, 85 percent of all school leavers, including Pacific, will have gained at least the NCEA Level 2 qualification.

MPIA has been working with 25 secondary schools with a high Pacific roll to:

- strengthen initiatives that are raising Pacific learners' achievement
- share good practice
- support the implementation of new programmes focused on success for Pacific learners.

All but one of these schools are in Auckland and together they account for approximately half of all Pacific secondary students in New Zealand.

In support of MPIA, ERO conducted an analysis of available data on these 25 schools to:

- identify what initiatives were working well
- find good practice
- recommend next steps to raise achievement for all Pacific learners.

What we found

Five of the 25 schools already achieve high levels of success for their Pacific learners as their Pacific leavers attained NCEA Level 2 close to, at or above the 85 percent target set. ERO found that these five schools had a clear vision for success. In particular overall strengths were identified in:

- **leadership** that focused on improvement and with the capacity to bring the school vision to life through aligning school practices to achieve improvements
- **review and improvement practices** that relied on high quality achievement data to inform decisions about curriculum, resourcing, and the effectiveness of initiatives, enabling refinements to be made as necessary
- **a curriculum** that was relevant and tailored to the needs and aspirations of Pacific learners and their parents. Teachers were sensitive to the cultural needs and strengths of these students.
- **relationships** with Pacific families and the community that were capitalised to best support learners and make their learning relevant. Learners were mentored and developed clear educational pathways.

The **recommendations** in this report all relate to supporting school leaders to develop the confidence and capacity in their schools so that all Pacific learners can achieve similar successes.

Self-review questions for schools

Leadership

- How and what do our board and school leaders know about Pacific learner achievement?
- How well do we use the information we have to set targets and allocate resources to improve Pacific learner achievement?
- How are senior leaders in our school helped to better support Pacific learners?
- How do we foster our vision and high expectations for success throughout the school?
- How well do performance management and professional development systems align with our school goals and targets for Pacific learners?

Review and improvement processes

- Who is responsible for tracking and responding to engagement and achievement data about Pacific students?
- Do we get this information quickly enough to act on and make a difference?
- What processes do we have in place to respond quickly to students falling behind?
- What do the retention, suspension, stand down, exclusion and expulsion statistics tell us? (These can be good indicators of how well students are engaged in their learning.)
- How well do our school leavers do? Do they all go to further education or employment?
- How do we identify what is working well and what needs to be improved?
- How well do our academic, pastoral and administration systems work together to improve outcomes for Pacific learners?

Curriculum

- How well are our actions engaging culturally with Pacific learners in all aspects of the school?
- How can we tell what successful engagement looks like in the classroom and around the school?
- How are our curriculum choices and contexts meeting the needs and interests of Pacific students?
- How are we helping students to develop key competencies to make them independent learners?
- In what ways is the curriculum flexible enough to allow Pacific learners to take part in extra vocational or academic courses, outside of school?

Relationships

- How well are students supported to develop a learning pathway through school – to make the right subject choices, set academic targets and keep their future options open?
- How is the students' sense of belonging nurtured? Who really knows each student?
- How are parents involved in discussions and decisions about their child's progress?
- How well do we work with our Pacific community to develop our understanding of their hopes for their children and to work together to support Pacific learners?
- How well do we use partnerships within the community to extend students' learning? (This could include work placements, visits to workplaces, visiting speakers talking about what their work involves, mentors for students, Youth Enterprise Schemes, tertiary providers.)

(See also ERO's Frameworks and Indicators for School Reviews - www.ero.govt.nz/Review-Process/Frameworks-and-Evaluation-Indicators-for-ERO-Reviews)

FIND OUT MORE

For more ideas and information, you can read the full report online at www.ero.govt.nz/national-reports

Ko te Tamaiti te Pūtake o te Kaupapa
The Child – the Heart of the Matter