

# 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](http://www.ero.govt.nz)

## Guidance and Counselling in Schools: Survey Findings (July 2013)

The Prime Minister's Youth Mental Health Project aims to improve the mental health of young people aged 12 to 19 years. One initiative is a national evaluation of the current provision of guidance and counselling in schools. This will contribute to an evidence base for the Ministry of Education's policy and programme development to improve the quality of guidance and counselling for young people in schools.

This report from ERO presents the findings from phase one of a two-phase evaluation. The first phase included three online surveys of school leaders, guidance counsellors and students in Term 1, 2013. Phase two involved ERO visits in Term 2 to 49 schools/kura to evaluate their provision of guidance and counselling. A report on this will be published later in the year.

### Findings of online surveys

In the surveys ERO asked what makes guidance and counselling in schools work well. School leaders, guidance counsellors and students all agreed that having the right people is central to this.

For **school leaders and guidance counsellors** this meant staff having appropriate professional knowledge. For **students** this meant that those responsible for guidance and counselling should be supportive and understanding, ensure confidentiality, be a good listener, and be non-judgemental. This focus on confidentiality and trust, along with accessibility, was reflected in

guidance counsellors' and school leaders' comments about knowing students and the community.

School leaders considered a school culture that valued a collegial approach to student wellbeing also underpinned effective guidance and counselling. For guidance counsellors this was reflected in supportive relationships with school leaders and teaching staff. For students, it was important that the people responsible for guidance and counselling found a solution and took action.

### Challenges identified by respondents

The challenges for providing good guidance and counselling identified through the ERO surveys included:

- the **increasing and diverse workload** in guidance and counselling
- **increasingly complex mental health needs** of students and the wider community, particularly in low income communities
- inability to be as proactive as school leaders and guidance counsellors would like because of **increased reactive counselling** and crisis management
- poor and limited access to, and response from, **external agencies and support services**
- the **stigma attached to mental health** that inhibited young people from seeking appropriate help.

## What ERO asked in the three online surveys

The **survey for students** was developed in conjunction with the Ministry of Youth Development and focused on:

- characteristics of good guidance and counselling
- models of practice – what works well in schools, and what doesn't work as well
- access to, and approachability of, guidance and counselling staff
- suggested changes to improve guidance and counselling in schools.

The **survey for school leaders** focused on:

- their approach to guidance and counselling support
- their use of the Guidance Staffing Entitlement
- hours allocated to guidance and counselling and teaching for guidance counsellors
- professional supervision for guidance counsellors
- qualifications and professional membership of guidance counsellors
- policies and procedures – employment decisions, complaints, ethical practices, and conflicts of interest relating to guidance and counselling
- staff other than guidance counsellors responsible for guidance and counselling – allocated hours, professional supervision, qualifications, professional membership, policies and procedures relating to their role in guidance and counselling
- self review regarding students' access to good guidance and counselling
- reporting to the board of trustees about students' access to good guidance and counselling
- effective practice and challenges relating to guidance and counselling.

The **survey for guidance counsellors** focused on:

- key aspects and responsibilities of their position
- hours allocated to guidance and counselling and teaching
- professional learning and development
- professional supervision
- management and appraisal of their position
- policy guidance and procedures
- reporting to the board of trustees about guidance and counselling
- working relationships – both with staff, students and parents/whānau (internal) and with external agencies
- professional membership and qualifications relating to guidance and counselling
- effective practice and challenges relating to guidance and counselling.

### FIND OUT MORE

For more ideas and information, you can read the full report online at [www.ero.govt.nz/national-reports](http://www.ero.govt.nz/national-reports)