

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

Wellbeing for Young People's Success at Secondary School (February 2015)

Teenagers explore relationships with others to determine who they fit in with. They want to successfully navigate the risks that come with increased freedom and independence to determine which risks they are comfortable with, which cause harm and which lead to greater opportunities. They want their friends, family, teachers and other important adults to value and accept them, care for them and be trustworthy. They do this with much humour, creativity and panache.

Most teenagers in New Zealand thrive during these years – but 20 percent exhibit behaviours or emotions or have experiences that put their wellbeing at risk.

ERO evaluated how well secondary schools promote and respond to student wellbeing. By understanding and improving this, it is hoped that all young people will experience a higher level of wellbeing during their teenage years.

What are effective schools doing?

Leaders at the most effective schools understood that students needed opportunities to:

- develop relationships with peers and adults that were based on mutual respect
- learn and take risks in a safe environment
- develop goals and experience success
- develop leadership skills and a sense of their own ability
- be “confident, connected, actively involved, and lifelong learners

Students in these schools were seen as inherently capable and expected to contribute to, and be accountable for, the experiences of others. Students said they felt supported by teachers and that they valued being treated as resourceful young adults.

These schools had cohesive systems to ensure school values, curriculum and responses to wellbeing issues were designed in consultation with the school community. These systems were adequately resourced to be a key part of day-to-day practice and were regularly reviewed to monitor their effectiveness.

What are the issues?

In many secondary schools the only people who understood the school curriculum and competing demands on them, were the students.

Assessment overload

Students in all schools were experiencing a very assessment driven curriculum and assessment anxiety. Achieving academic success is a part of wellbeing but is not the only factor. Very few schools were responding to this overload by reviewing and changing their curriculum and assessment practices.

Opportunities to explore wellbeing issues

For most students, the health curriculum is only up to Year 10 and is no more than two hours a week. Because of the subject choices older students make many do not have opportunities to explore wellbeing themes outlined in *The New Zealand Curriculum*.

What can secondary schools do?

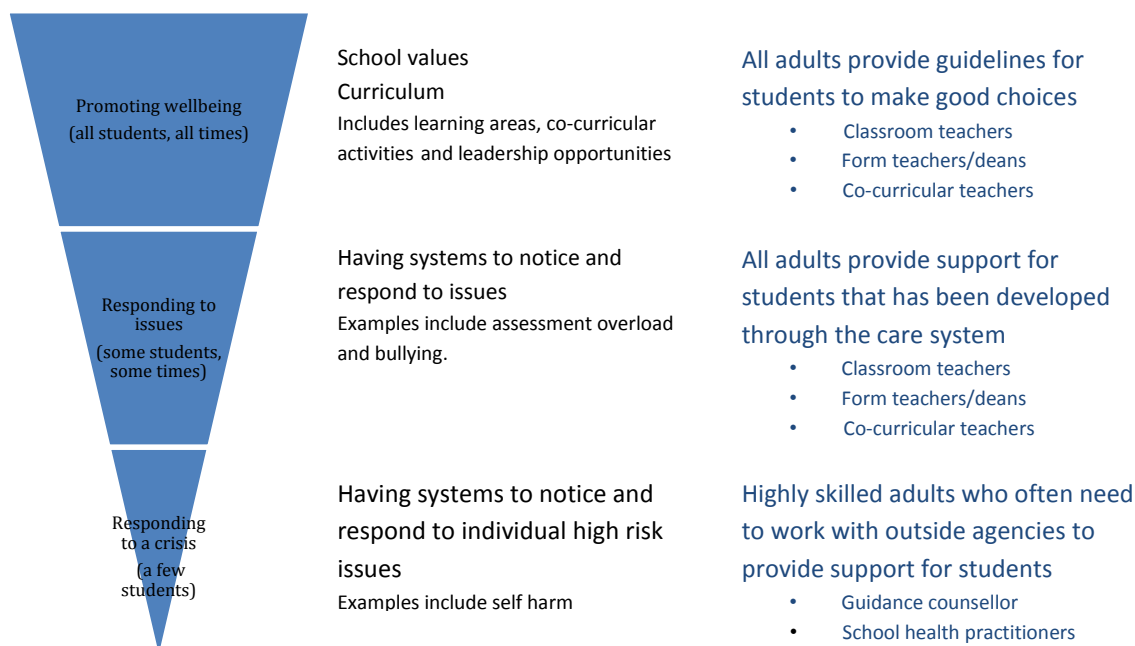
Develop a definition for student wellbeing

Schools, with their school community, could use the *Wellbeing for Success: Draft Evaluation Indicators for Student Wellbeing (draft) 2013* to develop a wellbeing definition that works for them.

Develop a framework for promoting and responding to student wellbeing

The 'promoting and responding triangle' (discussed in the draft indicators), that describes the provision of support for all students (see Figure 1) was used as the framework to evaluate the secondary schools for this report. Schools may find it a useful framework to explore in their context.

Figure 1: Secondary schools' promotion of and response to student wellbeing



Review, implement and monitor

Secondary students would benefit from their school leaders and teachers:

- involving students in reviewing and making decisions about the quality of their school experiences
- reviewing their curriculum using *The New Zealand Curriculum*, in particular the key competencies and the health and physical education learning area, and senior secondary guidelines
- reviewing their NCEA assessment programme
- connecting learning areas with sport, culture and leadership opportunities
- deliberately mapping and reviewing the opportunities for students to explore wellbeing issues, and develop and use key competencies and leadership skills
- engaging parents, family and whānau in decisions that affect the wellbeing of their young people
- finding solutions within the school community
- reviewing the effectiveness of actions by looking for patterns and trends.

The draft indicators are found on <http://ero.govt.nz/Review-Process/Frameworks-and-Evaluation-Indicators-for-ERO-Reviews/Wellbeing-Indicators-for-Schools>).

➔ 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