

# Briefing report

## Education Review Office (ERO): Learnings from the Covid-19 Education Experience

Date	22 May 2020
Security Level	N/A
ERO Priority	Medium
ERO Reference	M20-17
Date requested	ERO initiated
Date due	ERO initiated
Proactive release	Recommended

Addressee	Action sought	Deadline
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**Minister of  
Education**

It is recommended that you:

- a) **note** the findings from the student and teacher wellbeing surveys conducted in schools during the first few weeks of term 2.
- b) **note** that a full report about the findings from the student and teacher wellbeing surveys will be released before the end of June 2020 and that we will send the report to your office before publication.
- c) **note** the programme of work being led by ERO to support the education system to learn the lessons from the Covid-19 education experience.
- d) **note** this briefing is recommended for proactive release.



**Attachments:**

***Education Review Office (ERO):  
Learnings from the Covid-19  
Education Experience***



**Comments:**

### Minister's Office to complete

Noted	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seen	<input type="checkbox"/>
Approved	<input type="checkbox"/>
Referred to:	
Date signed by Minister:	



Our Ref: M20-17

**Hon Chris Hipkins**  
**Minister of Education**

## **Learnings from the Covid-19 Education Experience**

### **Purpose**

1. This paper informs you about the:
  - a. findings of the teacher and student wellbeing surveys run by ERO in schools during the lockdown.
  - b. ERO's work programme to support the education sector to learn from the Covid-19 education experience.

### **Background**

2. We provided you with a briefing (M20-15 ERO Reviews in COVID-19 Environment) on 8 May that provided you with some initial results from the student wellbeing survey and our plan to learn from the Covid-19 education experience and the impact it has had on students, whanau, teachers, schools and the education system. Copies of the survey were shared with your office prior to it going into the field. We committed to provide you with further information on the results and the programme of work.

### **Student and teacher lockdown wellbeing surveys**

3. ERO recruited a representative sample of 67 schools to run a wellbeing survey of their students and teachers about their experience of learning and teaching from home during the lockdown. The surveys asked teachers and students about their experience of teaching and learning from home and about their wellbeing during the lockdown. We had 10,000 students and 700 teachers respond to the survey from primary and secondary schools from a mix of roll sizes and school deciles. Students and teachers responded to the survey between week 2 and 4 of term 2 during alert levels 4 and 3.
4. ERO has access to the aggregated survey results from all schools in the survey, but cannot identify an individual school's responses. Schools have been given access to their own survey data to help with their evaluation and planning. The responses of individual students and teachers have been aggregated to keep their responses to the survey confidential.

### **Most students were positive about learning from home, but NCEA students and male secondary students appear to have faced some challenges**

5. Three quarters of NCEA students (years 11-13) felt they were not able to cope as well with the workload and expectations while learning from home, and that the support they required was not readily available.

6. Male secondary students were less likely to agree that they had been able to learn from home (52 percent), compared to female secondary students, where 61 percent agreed they were able to learn from home.
7. Fewer obstacles existed at primary level, with far more primary students receiving good support at home to help them learn, compared to secondary students.

#### **Teachers were also positive about being able to teach remotely**

8. Nine out of 10 teachers agreed they had the tools and resources to teach remotely.
9. However, teachers were less positive about being able to tailor their teaching to individual students remotely. One in four teachers disagreed that they were able to tailor their teaching to individual students.

#### **Access to technology and online learning was an obstacle for primary students and students in low decile secondary schools, but more of these students tuned in to Home Learning TV**

10. About 20% of primary students and 10% of secondary students said they had to share a device. Home Learning TV was more popular for primary students, compared with secondary students. 30% of Primary students said they had watched something on Home Learning TV in the last week, compared with 7% of secondary students.
11. Year 7-13 students in low decile (1-3) schools were more likely to say they had to share a device with others, compared to students in decile 8-10 schools. Nearly one in five secondary school students in decile 1-3 schools said they had to share a device, compared to 1 in 20 secondary students in decile 8-10 schools. However, decile 1-3 secondary students were more than twice as likely to have watched a programme on Home Learning TV.
12. These findings suggest that Home Learning TV has been important to compensate for lack of access to devices for some primary students and students in low decile schools.

#### **Students had been in contact with their teachers, but the majority did not receive adequate feedback from their teachers to help their learning at home**

13. Eight out of ten primary and secondary students said they had been contacted by a teacher to check on their wellbeing. However, less than half of secondary students agreed or strongly agreed that they had received feedback from their teachers that was helping them learn from home.

#### **Teachers were not confident that learners were engaging in their learning and were finding it difficult to track their progress while students were learning from home**

14. One in four teachers agreed or strongly agreed that their students had positively engaged in learning from home in the past week. However, nearly half of teachers only 'somewhat' agreed with this statement and one in four teachers disagreed that their students had positively engaged.
15. The main reasons teachers gave for students not positively engaging were students not participating in learning (65 percent), distractions at home (48 percent), students

not being able to access online tools and resources (45%) and a lack of support from parents and caregivers (32 percent).

16. Monitoring student progress appears to have been a challenge while students learnt from home. Only about one-third of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they had been able to monitor student progress remotely.

**Most students felt supported at home, were able to connect with their friends and kept busy doing a range of activities during the lockdown**

17. Most students said they had an adult at home that they could talk to and were still able to connect with their friends, despite the lockdown. Primary and secondary students also agreed they felt safe at home from the Covid-19 virus.
18. Students have not just been watching screens during the lockdown. Eight out of ten students said they had done some exercise in the last week. Over half of students said they had read a book or played a game (not video) and many students said they had fun with their family.

**Most teachers felt they had been able to manage their personal wellbeing, and provide support for people in their lives, during the lockdown period**

19. Teachers reported that they felt connected to, and supported by, their school leaders and colleagues.
20. There were some teachers who were concerned about their wellbeing. One in ten teachers said their biggest concern during the lockdown was their own mental wellbeing (13 percent teachers). This is a finding that will require further analysis and understanding, as we do not have a pre-COVID baseline for this finding.

**ERO's work programme to learn from the Covid-19 education experience**

21. These survey results, whilst positive about the overall experience, raise concerns that:
  - a. Some students will need additional support going forward as their learning has stalled or even regressed. Teachers may need to return to earlier concepts and re-establish critical foundations for learners in order to address these issues and prevent increasing disparities between their attainment and that of their peers. We need to understand more about who these students are, the ongoing impact on their learning and how best to support them.
  - b. For older students there is the risk of early disengagement and some students not in fact returning to school. This may be a higher risk for boys who overall found remote learning harder to engage with.
  - c. There is potential for increased levels of mental health and anxiety among some learners. One in five students said that they disagreed or strongly disagreed that they had enjoyed learning at home and 2-3% of students said they did not feel safe at home from the coronavirus.
22. ERO is undertaking a programme of work to support the education system to learn the lessons from and continue to respond to the Covid-19 education experience. The work programme will address three questions:

- a. How effectively have NZ schools responded to the Covid 19 crisis, and what lessons can be learned?
- b. What impact has the disruption to education had on educational outcomes for learners? Which groups of learners were most affected and how well have schools managed re-engagement and learning recovery for these students?
- c. To what extent has the education system been able to capture successful adaptation, innovation and learning from the crisis? What has changed as a result? What needs to change to be prepared for future events?

23. This programme of work will involve a mix of surveys and interviews with schools, teachers, students, parents and whanau and includes seven workstreams:

	<b>Workstream topic</b>	<b>Information to be collected</b>
A	Conditions at the school	Interviews and engagement with schools about the challenges and opportunities during the lockdown and recovery
B	Change in the conditions at schools (during the lockdown and recovery)	Interview and engagement with schools about what they had to prioritise during lockdown and recovery and how this has impacted on their strategic plans going forward
C	Principal wellbeing and leadership	Interviews with principals and boards about how they are managing their wellbeing and what support they have needed supported by pulse check surveys
D	Teacher Wellbeing and Resilience	Interviews and with principals, school leaders and teachers about the strategies that schools have employed to address teacher wellbeing supported by pulse check surveys
E	Learner wellbeing and engagement	Interviews with schools on the strategies that teachers and schools have employed to address student wellbeing and engagement issues due to the lockdown  Interviews and focus groups with students, parents and whanau and student pulse check survey
F	Learner progression and achievement	Interviews with schools on the strategies that teachers and schools have employed to address learning progression and achievement, and equity of learning outcomes for students  Interviews and focus groups with students, parents and whānau  Use of existing student data, such as attendance and learning assessment (eg NCEA)
G	Distance / remote learning insights and innovation	Insights on how well the education system is positioned to support learners through these events and any areas for improvement from interviews with schools and review of the local and international evidence

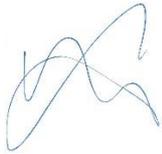
## Recommendations

24. It is recommended that you:

- a) **note** the findings from the student and teacher wellbeing surveys conducted in schools during the first few weeks of term 2. **noted**
- b) **note** that a full report about the findings from the student and teacher wellbeing surveys will be released before the end of June **noted**

2020 and that we will send the report to your office before publication.

- c) **note** the programme of work being led by ERO to support the education system to learn the lessons from the Covid-19 education experience. **noted**
- d) **note** this briefing is recommended for proactive release. **noted**



Nicholas Pole  
**Chief Executive**

**NOTED**/APPROVED



Chris Hipkins  
**Minister of Education**

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17 6 2020