



Our Ref: OIA-26-400

17 April 2026

[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Re: Official Information Act request for consultation data for ERO's new school reports

I refer to your email to the Education Review Office dated 18 March 2026 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

- *I am writing to request information under the Official Information Act 1982 regarding the 12 schools and 100 parents involved in the consultation process for the new school reporting framework announced on 17 March 2026. Specifically, I am requesting the following information used to inform the development of these new reports:*
 - *School Details: The names, educational areas (regions), and Equity Index (EQI) ratings of the 12 schools identified as being part of the consultation for the new ERO school reports.*
 - *Parent Consultation Data: To understand the breadth of the consultation, please provide a summary or aggregated list of the locations (towns/cities) and the occupations of the parents who participated in the consultation process.*
- *Consultation Methodology:*
 - *Information outlining what the consultation "looked like" (e.g., were these focus groups, 1-on-1 interviews, online surveys, or workshops?).*
 - *Any summary reports or internal memos that synthesize the feedback received from these parents and principals.*

ERO engaged with schools and parents across Northland, Auckland, Waikato, the Bay of Plenty, Wellington, Marlborough, and Christchurch. The EQI ratings of participating schools ranged from 350 to 525. Engagements included schools in both rural and urban settings and involved a Māori whānau group and a Pacific fono group.

The names of the individual schools have been withheld under section 9(2)(ba)(i) of the OIA, as the engagements were undertaken in confidence. We consider that releasing this information would be likely to undermine schools' willingness to engage openly with ERO in future, which would not be in the public interest.

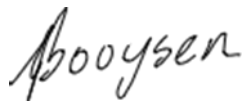
Information about the occupations of participating parents was not collected and therefore does not exist. Engagements with parents were all conducted through focus groups, and all engagements were done face to face. Engagements were undertaken in two rounds. The first was through an external

company in May 2025 where the old reports were discussed. The second round was organised and hosted by schools between December 2025 and March 2025, focussing on the new reports. The summary of our finding is being released to you in part with only the school names withheld, for the same reason stated above. Each box in the second round signifies a different focus group.

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. We do not publish requesters' personal information.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at <http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz> or freephone 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi,



Shelley Booyesen
Deputy Chief Executive – Review and Improvement Services

Round 1 consultation with parents: Existing reports

Brief context, process

4x focus groups held in May 2025, with 23 parents in total

Demographic breakdown:

(note more than one ethnicity can be identified, so sum >23)

Male	Female	Māori	Pacific (not a sampling requirement)	NZ European/ Pākehā	Highest qualification secondary	Highest qualification post- secondary
11	12	8	6	15	12	11

2-3 ERO facilitators at each group

Participants read 2x sample reports and the parent guide as pre-reading. Additionally, sample statements (for content particular to secondary school reports) were shared and discussed in 2x focus groups.

Loosely structured, open-ended questions and discussion prompts focused on 4 key areas:

- **First impressions**/ open sharing
- The **purpose** of the reports – who it's for, why they would look at it, timing of engagement
- The **understandability** of the report – language, phrasing, meaning. (incl specific questioning around the rūmaki/reo rua outcomes section)
- The **structure** of reports – tables, order, headings, length, etc

Findings – what to expect

Synthesis among the 3 facilitators uncovered no conflicts – ‘strong themes’ were consistent across the facilitators and the focus groups.

Findings reflect the views of the participants without judgement.

This pack contains a high-level findings summary table and a more detailed table.

Findings are reported in six topic sections:

1. Purpose
2. Content
3. Understandability
4. Structure
5. Role of parents and whānau

6. Reo Rua/Rumaki

The more detailed findings table presents each topic section in two levels:

- *Strong themes*: views that were repeatedly shared across participants and focus groups, where there was widespread agreement among participants
- *Less strong but notable*: Views that were less consistently shared or agreed, but were considered by the facilitators to be potentially useful for ERO's information.

Exec summary of findings

The purpose of the reports – who it's for, why they would look at it, timing of engagement	ERO reports are potentially useful for shopping for a new school. Reports have little or no function for parents who: - don't have multiple school options to choose from - are already engaged with the school (i.e. their children are already attending). Reports are less useful than an-person visit to the school. Reports are more for schools and the Ministry of Education than for parents.
The content of the reports – what they focus on, how useful it is	Contextual information about how ERO reviews schools is missing/ unclear, which impacts on how the content is viewed (e.g. whether to believe it or take it seriously) An indication of how a school compares to others – neighbouring and/or nationally – is expected but missing. Achievement and progress information is present but not understandable in its current form. Wellbeing matters appear to be deprioritised.
The understandability of the report – language, phrasing, meaning	Reports are not understandable or informative. They seem vague and evasive. Report language is overly formal, is aimed at an educated/academic audience, and contains too much jargon and confusing terms.
The structure of reports – tables, order, headings, length, etc	Tables and visual elements are very useful. Report structure and content is not well signposted. The supplementary parent guidance is useful, although the necessity of that guidance should be reduced through attending to understandability concerns. Having guidance in a separate document can be a barrier.

Their role as parents related to the report – actions, empowerment, partnership with schools/board	Reports do not signal to parents that they have a role in holding the school to account.
Rumaki/Reo Rua Outcomes section	This section is appreciated. Parents who are not actively seeking te reo Māori learning for their child do not consider this section relevant to them. There is a notable difference in tone and positivity between this section and the rest of the report, which should be explained or contextualised. <i>(this may be specific to the sample report provided to the participants)</i>

Detailed findings table

What have we learned about parents' perceptions of...	Themes
The purpose of the reports – who it's for, why they would look at it, timing of engagement	Strong themes ERO reports are for 'shopping' for a school – pre-enrolment. - "It's for picking the school to begin with" - Would put less stock in ERO report than own visit to school - Typically wouldn't look at again if already in a school – feel they have a better sense from just being part of the school at that point - participants highlighted many areas don't have a choice of schools - meaning ERO reports aren't relevant to parents in those areas. "Most of us don't have choice" Reports are for principals and the school first, then parents as a secondary audience.
	Less strong but notable Would like to know whether anything 'happens' from the report – e.g. in the Ministry, and/or within the school Would like to know what the school is doing about their next steps/recommendations. Interested in whether there is a mismatch between what the school looks like to parents and what ERO sees While the purpose of looking at an ERO report would be for choosing a school, they might still engage with their child's school's ERO report: • To hunt for information after becoming concerned about a school – e.g. their school wasn't communicating well with parents and whānau • Out of mild interest or curiosity if the ERO report was announced in a newsletter etc - only a quick glance for red flags Doesn't meet the needs of shopping for a school ERO is to quality-assure provision ERO reports are only based on what principals say, not parents. Schools send out reports on curric areas, and weekly reports on attendance, so the ERO report's content on these areas is less

	helpful and more of a ‘basic overview’ than what they regularly receive from school anyway. In some schools, principal has excellent communication, so less need to rely on things like ERO reports, but more of a need if school is not so good at communicating. Engaging with ERO reports is more for very academic or ‘nerdy’ parents than the general parent population.
The content of the reports – what they focus on, how useful it is	Strong themes Interested in the review process, rules, as context: • how ERO reviews • who ERO talks to (e.g. parents of special needs) • whether the school has warning before the review so can ‘fake things’ • how much of the BAS is audited/verified. Would want to know about the ‘proof’ behind the BAS – how it’s verified, does ERO ‘just believe’ them? • whether the school <i>has to</i> do anything about the next steps/recommendations. (see below also ‘<i>Role as parents</i>’ section) Reports don’t give a ‘feel’ for the school • “Want reports that are not generic and show and tell us what is happening with our kids” • Would like the focus to be on wellbeing and what the school can offer their students, more about the experience and behaviour • “We want to know the basics are covered for all schools but couldn’t see what defined this school and what they were good at, outside of the basics what else are the other strengths and we want to know what they are as well” • “we want a happy kid going to school” Would like to know how a school compares to others - neighbouring and/or nationally • “would want specific information to compare one school to another” • Want to be able to understand how school compares to other schools and against any national standards, benchmarks or expectations • National benchmarks would need to be explained – e.g. what <i>is</i> the attendance target which is referred to in the existing report.

	• “Would like to know better idea about how the school is performing against what has been identified by ERO or national criteria” Progress against previous ERO reports is unclear - not easy to see what areas the school has made progress in, or how much (since last report) • “I’m interested what the progress the school has made against last reports – speaks to change and improvement, want to know good things they are doing now, what that is and what has been focused on” • “Would be good to know what the school is doing – is it meaningful changes.” Wellbeing (social climate, values, bullying, behaviour) of students is not highlighted strongly enough. Happiness of students is a primary concern. • “We want happy kids going to school and this is what parents want, when you have a happy kids you have better attendance and engagement and don’t see that in these reports” • “[we want to know] are the kids happy, do they have the opportunities they need?” • Pastoral care at secondary – one parents’ experience of two schools showed very different approach/quality of this and no indication in ERO reports – both schools were indicated as ‘meeting the standard’ required for pastoral care
	Less strong but notable Would like to know what the school is doing about their next steps/recommendations. Want reports to include clear, actionable, detailed, specific information about what the school does well, what needs improvement, what next • e.g. ‘is it reading?’ • “Details are important. What the school needs to do that e.g. resourcing. Want to see the progress being made and how are they going about achieving this. What does the government need to do support this school to achieve these targets.” Would like to see some parent voice [not just from Board parents], and student voice included (e.g. narrative style)

	Want to know about zone, enrolment availability, how full the school is (noted that the roll number itself doesn't tell them whether that is a full/empty school) Looked 'familiar,' what they would expect to see from an ERO report.
The understandability of the report – language, phrasing, meaning	Strong themes Very difficult to understand, vague, meaningless - “no actual substantial info” “It sounds like you asked a politician a question and they didn't want to answer it” “You could read a whole paragraph and you'd be no better off” “A lot of words and nothing answered” Language too technical, bureaucratic, too much jargon - e.g. “It reads like a bunch of buzzwords” “Six pages in, my brain is numb from trying to decipher it” - some definitions are not able to be found in accompanying guide Too much insider language. Noted confusing words or terms: • ‘Priority learner’ (some thought it meant high achieving or gifted) • Equitable • ‘Embedded’ “Embedded, what does this mean...couldn't find it in the guide, what does this capture, okay with other terms, just say used consistently across the school rather than embedded” Not plain language, too formal, traditional. • “It doesn't feel like it's written for parents at all” • “The reports are not written for parents, formal, not right for us” • Written for educated, English-lang audience • e.g. one parent pointed out example school had large Asian demographic, without explanation of te reo terms Wanted specific detail and explanation about what is in the reports - particularly related to how the school's picture compares to others • “I want to detail are they doing, is it normal for only 1/3 of students to do STEM?” • “Is this tailored to the school our kids are at, we want to know how many kids at this school are on track to go to university”

	• “Where is the data that backs that up? This would have more real meaning than saying ‘a small majority’, this is wishy washy” • “If missing the targets, how far behind are they?” • Re: <i>The school has some supports for learners in Year 9 and Year 10...</i> “what are those supports?” • NCEA achievement levels – how does this compare [to other similar schools/national targets etc] Unclear about judgement terms e.g. equitable, most • “No information on what that [‘working towards’] is or what it means,” “How are you quantifying that?” “What does successful embedding look like, what does excelling mean, in terms of other schools?” “How do you measure ‘satisfactory’?” “Rather than having descriptors that relate to percentages, why not just have the percentages?” Less strong but notable Found reports okay to read but aware this might not be the same for others in their school communities Disliked the ambiguous meaning of achievement statements, “just use the percentages” – “less than half range is 34-49% (from guide)” [is a large range and could mean quite different things depending on what end of range] Suggested links to external information – e.g. government priorities/targets are referenced, but report does not say what the actual targets are (could be upfront/in intro information) EQI definitions/information is in the guide, but not included in reports Preference for a narrative style report Suggested 2 version of ERO reporting one for parents and one for the school/MOE/sector Secondary school report in particular – too generic, need for more specifics, and comparative information, e.g. around whether tracking and pathways information is ‘normal’, ‘good’ Wanted definitions (in brackets) for technical terms and for the first time kupu Māori were used Noted they <i>think</i> they know what terms related to undefined groups of students (like ‘<i>priority learners</i>’ or ‘not yet equitable for all <i>groups of learners</i>’) means, but worried about making assumptions, or making incorrect assumptions
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	There is some improvement in understandability from previous ERO reports parents have engaged with Interested in strengths and weaknesses (beyond basics of literacy, numeracy) - e.g. more info about strengths in cultural, sporting areas
The structure of reports – tables, order, headings, length, etc	Strong themes The thresholds table is very useful - can ‘see at a glance’ - strongly preferred the table to the non-table version More visual, at-a-glance components would be useful - E.g. traffic lights, graphics, charts, visual representations Would be good to have more guidance at the start of the report, with a clear and consistent structure The guidance was considered useful, with some concerns: - Some key definitions missing - Disliked having to flip between the guidance and the report - unwieldy, not user-friendly. - “You shouldn’t need a special guide to just read a report” - Would prefer links to guidance before the information, rather than after - Would prefer in-text explanations in the main report to having to go between two documents. The better of use plain, simple and more direct language would reduce the need for the guide. Should explain common terms that will be used. Less strong but notable A summary of what the report includes would be useful • “Expect to have a summary of what is going to be in the report at the start so know what is in it and it’s good to have table at the front” Lengthiness of the reports noted in relation to lack of meaning – “Six pages in, my brain is numb from trying to decipher it” “had to read through the whole thing to find the information” Uneven structure, font Having recommendations/actions in last section gets a bit lost Reading it on a phone is difficult Didn’t like the drop-down statements

	• “it felt too cookie cutter responses that each section you might fit into 1 of 4 options, everything was prewritten, and you just pick the one, not enough specifics”
Their role as parents related to the report – actions, empowerment, partnership with schools/board	Strong themes Would not see the ERO report as something that would prompt action or questions from parents (for them to see but not act on) - “Me as a parent can’t do much about it [the action areas]” - Some parents would not write off taking action from an ERO report, but were unclear about what they can or should do with the report’s information (i.e. not clear what steps they could take with it) Lack of clarity in the report means they don’t know what’s good/bad. E.g. “It’d be good to know, if they’re below ‘embedded’, how much risk?” If schools are not achieving, parents want to know: • A summary of why/why not – more descriptions after the fact • What actions the school is taking to address them. They want to see that school is making attempt to address (ideally closely located in the report, rather than having to dig around for it) ○ “what is the actual plan [to address this]?” • And what parents can do to support / how they can make a difference – more information directed at parents could prompt them to engage Less strong but notable Some cultures/countries assume schools are always right, so parents’ role in questioning a school needs to be clarified Because of the limited school choices in some areas, negative ERO reports could be confronting. E.g. the ‘thresholds table’ presentation would be alarming to a parent if the school was not performing well (e.g. if the Manawa Intermediate example report was less positive) – would be concerning for parents if they didn’t feel they could do anything about it or had no choice of school. Parents could have a role in supporting the school to improve and could there be next steps or recommendations that are relevant to families, not just school leadership.

	Would appreciate prompts e.g. what they can ask teachers about the reports. More depth on the performance/quality of the board would be good – are they tracking well? Do we need to get different people in there? What is the teachers’ perspective?
Rumaki/Reo Rua Outcomes section	Strong themes Participants who did not feel Māori language, reo rua, or rumaki Māori was relevant to their family skip over or skim this section. Acknowledged the importance of reporting in this area, affirmed it provided good clear information. Participants were more positive about this section than the rest of the report. The judgements in this section appeared notably more positive than the rest of the report. <i>[This may be specific to the sample report that was provided to the focus group – Manawa Intermediate.]</i> - If this part of the school is going well but the rest isn’t, that difference/lack of transfer should be explained - if there are different ways of grading or different marking criteria, this should be explained in the report - “My brother had read an ERO report and was concerned about the school, his son was going into the rumaki, and they had specific data for the rumaki and that had higher success rates than the school is overall” <i>Note - Very few participants were strongly interested in this section of the report – if RIS require more info or detail, we suggest a targeted follow-up specifically with parents and whānau of students in rūmaki or engaging in reo rua education.</i> Less strong but notable Should explain how it is blended and integrated in the school Liked the use of te reo Māori in the reports and saw it as a positive reflection of cultural inclusion Need for translations or explanations alongside Māori terms to ensure all parents’ understanding.

Round 2 consultations: New reports

Summary of Feedback from parents and whānau

New report seen as more detailed and comprehensive

- Parents and whānau consistently commented that the pilot report offers greater depth and detail than earlier ERO reports. It expands on key domains such as leadership, curriculum, and teaching/learning, providing a fuller narrative of the school context.

Clearer language and more family-friendly than previous formats

- The new format is viewed as easier to read, with clearer language and a more family-friendly tone than the current/previous ERO reports.

Would like progress and comparison with previous ERO reports

- Parents want the report to show clear progress and comparisons with previous ERO reviews. They would like easy-to-understand explanations for changes and improvements over time.

Overall clarity and readability of the report

- Reports are generally easy to read, with parents appreciating clear layouts, colour coding, short paragraphs, and accessible language.
- Some parents prefer more visual elements (graphs, pie charts) to help interpret progress and achievement.

School identity and contextual information

- Parents want more information about school context, such as staff retention, class sizes, support structures, and what makes the school unique.
- Some feel that values and context are better accessed through the school website, while others want this upfront in the report.
- Desire for stronger sense of 'school experience' or 'vibe', including student voice and culture.

Data, judgements, and progress

- Parents want clearer explanations of judgements, including what categories mean and how close a school is to the next performance level.
- Interest in more explicit progress measures, including trends over time, longitudinal progress, and visual comparisons with previous reports.
- Requests for clearer breakdowns of groups of learners (e.g., juniors vs seniors, boy's vs girls, Māori medium indicators).

Snapshot, overview, and structure

- Parents value the snapshot but want tighter alignment between snapshot, overview, and full report (e.g., matching colours, headings, ordering).

- Some note the snapshot could risk becoming a league table and prefer descriptions alongside visuals.

Holistic and wellbeing-focused information

- Strong appetite for more content on wellbeing, inclusion, and support systems (e.g., pastoral care, bullying prevention, mental health services, support for additional needs).

Equity and fairness

- Parents appreciate introduction of the Equity Index but want clearer explanations of what it means and how to interpret it.
- Some parents raised concerns around complex context schools and how data weighting may affect perceptions.

Going forward

- Add bilingual headings to increase inclusiveness.
- Include government targets for context.
- Provide specific next steps and more actionable improvement information.
- Support publishing of progress updates and/or reports.
- Support accompanying guidance for parents.

Key Quotes from parents and whānau

Clarity, readability, and layout

- *“Yes, very easy report to read and understand... the pilot is far more comprehensive than current reporting.”*
- *“Like the colourful boxes – good snapshot... really clear.”*
- *“Like that the paragraphs are short and easy to read.”*
- *“So far, easy to read – like the colour coding.”*
- *“Visually, it is good but doesn’t work. Prefer the overview – just as visual – like the descriptions.”*

Understanding the data and judgments

- *“Need to be more explicit about embedding, excelling – what do these mean?”*
- *“Want to know if the school is at bottom or top of ‘working towards’.”*
- *“Statement is still vague – write the numbers but use the banding.”*
- *“Very clear – too many red blocks... relate to the colours, we know.”*

Context and school identity

- *“Would like to know... if teachers feel supported... information on the number of classes would be helpful.”*
- *“No where that talks about the heart of the school... want to feel the teachers know them.”*
- *“If you want to know what a school is like, go and visit. It’s a taste.”*

Progress, improvement, and comparison to previous reports

- “Would like to see more of a reference to the previous report... the progress the school has made.”
- “Could do two pie graphs... ‘this review’, ‘last review’ so can compare.”
- “Improvement on existing SR.”

Wellbeing, inclusion, and what parents value

- “Whānau appreciate the inclusion and wellbeing component... holistic approach is missing from the current reporting format.”
- “Want to see more about what is in place for mental health... counselling.”
- “Foster social relationships – good citizens... want to feel the teachers know them.”

Expectations, needs, or improvements suggested

- “Could unpack what ‘requires improvement’ means.”
- “Would be useful to include some information on how ERO undertakes a review.”
- “Could we add things about what the school is... not just grade – a community.”

Strong support for the new format and accessibility

Parents valued the snapshot front page, colour coding, and layered design, finding the report clearer, easier to navigate, and more engaging than previous ERO reports—particularly useful for quickly understanding a school and for school choice decisions.

Clearer language and explanations are needed

While overall understanding improved, parents found some terms and judgements unclear or overly technical (e.g. “equity”, “accelerated”, “explicit teaching”), and asked for plainer language, clearer explanations, and supporting detail such as percentages alongside achievement banding.

Judgement labels raised concern

Some parents were uncomfortable with the sense of schools being judged or compared, noting that judgement terminology could feel competitive rather than informative. There was a preference for judgements to be clearly explained and closely linked to narrative context.

School context should be clearer and earlier

Parents wanted key contextual information (e.g. school overview, roll size, timing of last review) presented early and clearly separated from evaluative content, with stronger alignment between colour coding, judgements, and narrative to improve coherence.

Overall positive reception

Parents responded positively to the visual design, particularly the use of colour, images, and the clear presentation of strengths and next steps. Compared with previous ERO reports, the new format was seen as more detailed and informative, although it requires careful reading to fully understand.

Clarity and Comparability as generally easy to read, parents wanted clearer explanations of how judgements are made, including how ERO undertakes reviews. They suggested stronger comparative context, such as how a school is performing relative to similar schools, regional or national benchmarks, and previous ERO reports and more explicit indicators of how far a school is from moving to the next performance level.

Parents valued detail over high-level statements and the **use of data and judgements** but also wanted, clearer positioning within judgement categories (e.g. whether a school is at the top or bottom of “working towards”).

They suggested more practical information on what schools need to do to improve, ideally presented alongside each judgement area. And Visual tools (such as charts or percentages) to support understanding of performance and progress.

Progress Over Time and Equity Parents were particularly interested in:

- Clearer explanations of change since the previous review, including reasons for improvement or decline.
- Better visibility of trends over time, potentially through visual comparison with earlier reports.
- More information about equity and learner groups, including how well different groups (e.g. boys) are being supported and extended.

School Context

The opening contextual overview was valued for providing an immediate sense of the school. However, parents felt that detailed descriptions of school values were less necessary. Reports should acknowledge that significant change can occur during a long review cycle.

Parents and whānau strongly support the new report format and consistently described it as clearer, more accessible, and more useful than current ERO reports. The pilot is seen as a significant improvement in helping families understand school performance and quality.

Improved clarity and accessibility

The report is considered easy to follow, with brief sections, a straightforward layout, and helpful visuals. Parents found it much simpler to understand compared to earlier ERO reports and did not struggle with confusing language. Visual summary features were especially appreciated for giving a quick overview.

Trust and usefulness for families

Parents felt the report better supports informed decision-making about their child’s education. The inclusion of a School Improvement Statement was positively received and aligned with what families look for when judging school quality.

Desire for clearer overall judgements

Parents consistently asked for a clear overall judgement of school performance, similar to what they previously relied on in older ERO reports (e.g. “school is well placed”). There is strong appetite for clarity on where a school sits within improvement categories, not just the category label itself.

Greater transparency in data and progress. Parents want clearer explanations of what judgements mean in practice (e.g. what “requires improvement” looks like). There is strong interest in:

- Showing how close a school is to the next performance boundary
- Including percentages alongside narrative statements
- Making progress over time more visible, especially comparisons with the previous review

Consistency and structure Parents noted some confusion where section titles and headings were inconsistent between the snapshot, overview, and full report and would prefer in them in order. Some tables were seen as dense, with suggestions to strengthen visual hierarchy (e.g. bolder improvement priorities).

Cultural and system considerations: Te Tiriti and bicultural visibility

Parents observed that Te Tiriti o Waitangi was not explicitly referenced in the report and expressed the view that its inclusion would be important. Additionally, there was interest in incorporating bilingual section headings to better represent New Zealand’s bicultural context, as some parents felt that the report was too focused on English and did not adequately reflect the country’s dual heritage.

Parents felt that information about the **school’s context and identity was not essential for this report**, as they could find it on the school’s website. They suggested that system measures, like the equity index, should be explained more clearly, perhaps with brief descriptions or links.

School identity and sense of “heart”

Parents and whānau felt the report did not clearly show the heart, values, and lived experience of the school. They wanted a stronger sense of what makes the school special, including relationships, student voice, wellbeing, and how the school supports young people to be good citizens and feel known by their teachers.

Clarity and accessibility of information

Overall, the layout was seen as clear and easy to navigate, particularly the use of colour coding and ladder-style progress visuals. However, parents wanted clearer explanations of jargon, key terms (including te reo Māori), and more explicit guidance about what matters most in the report, so information is not vague or ambiguous.

Use of data, colour coding, and judgements

Achievement data and judgements were considered clear, but many parents felt there were too many red indicators, which created a sense of concern or dread. They wanted more emphasis on progress, movement, and improvement over time, including celebrating gains and momentum, not just current status.

Progress, improvement, and next steps

Parents valued seeing progress over time and liked the overview of improvement ladders. They wanted summaries placed more prominently, clearer explanations of what the school is doing in response to challenges, and stronger visibility of how much work is underway to support learners and improvement.

Information families use to choose and trust a school

Families reported using ERO reports alongside other information when choosing schools. They wanted clearer context about discipline, behaviour, wellbeing, equity, attendance (including actual percentages), and the impact of wider factors such as poverty. Links to previous reports and regular progress updates were also suggested to build trust and transparency.

Overall clarity and usefulness

Parents and whānau generally found the report clear, easy to read, and informative. The summary document was especially valued for its accessibility, and many felt the report gave a useful high-level picture of the school, with enough information to decide whether to read further.

Language and accessibility

There was strong feedback about language use. Parents preferred plain, non-technical language and found some terms confusing, particularly in the Intermediate report. Terms such as “accelerated progress,” “disparity,” and “cohorts” were seen as needing clearer explanation, ideally in the school information or summary sections.

Context and school information

Parents valued contextual information that helps them understand what a school is like day to day, such as class sizes, staffing, specialist programmes, and supports. While the report was seen as a helpful “taste” of the school, many felt a visit would still be essential to fully understand school culture and values.

Judgements, data, and transparency

Judgements were generally seen as clear and trustworthy. Parents appreciated knowing both strengths and areas for improvement and felt transparency was important, especially where there are concerns such as achievement gaps, attendance, or bullying. They wanted assurance that issues are identified and that systems and responses are in place.

Progress, wellbeing, and inclusion

Parents wanted more information about progress over time and what improvement looks like in practice. Inclusion, wellbeing, mental health supports, and support for learners with additional needs were seen as critical for decision-making. Some felt the report did not fully capture school culture, values, or how children are supported to thrive beyond academic achievement.

Next steps and presentation

The “next steps and actions” section was considered important, particularly when improvement is required. Parents wanted this information to be more visual and easier to interpret, such as using colour coding, graphs, or a continuum. Clear plans and progress check-ins were seen as reassuring and motivating.

Overall Impression

Whānau found the pilot report easy to read, clearly laid out, and more detailed than current reports. The language was family-friendly and accessible, though some parents needed to reread the opening summary pages to fully understand the information. Overall, the format supported understanding rather than feeling overwhelming.

Understanding of Judgements and Guidance

Parents consistently asked for clearer explanations of key terms and judgements, particularly the

EQI index and what “embedding” and “excelling” mean. Whānau felt that explicit guidance on how to interpret these judgements would make the report more useful and reduce confusion.

School Context and Identity

Whānau valued the broader picture of the school but wanted more contextual information to support decision-making. Suggested additions included staffing information, staff retention or turnover, class numbers, and insight into how supported teachers feel and how whānau might contribute.

Data, Progress, and Improvement

The report was seen as giving a strong picture of what the school is doing well and where improvement is needed. However, parents wanted clearer differentiation of judgements (for example, across different groups of learners) and stronger links to previous reports to better show progress and improvement over time.

Overall Impressions of the New Report

Parents and whānau were generally positive about the new report format, describing it as accessible, easy to read, and visually appealing. The use of colour coding and the overall layout were well received, and many felt the new report was an improvement on previous ERO reports. There was strong support for providing different layers of information so parents can choose how deeply they engage with the content.

Snapshot, Overview, and Structure

While the snapshot section was seen as visually appealing, parents expressed concern that it could oversimplify complex information or be interpreted as a league table. Many preferred the overview section and suggested making the structure of the report more explicit by clearly explaining the purpose and relationship between the snapshot, overview, and full report. Suggestions included adding clearer labels or wording within the snapshot to improve meaning and usefulness.

School Identity and Context

Parents wanted the report to better reflect each school’s unique identity and context. There was a strong desire to see what sets a school apart, including curriculum focus, ongoing extracurricular opportunities, partnerships, and overall “vibes.” Participants felt this contextual information was critical to understanding the data and judgements presented and wanted it made more explicit and school-specific.

Clarity of Language and Concepts

Although the report was generally seen as clear, parents identified several terms and concepts that were confusing or insufficiently explained. These included distinctions between teaching and curriculum, the meaning of formative assessment practices, and the framing of teaching quality. Parents also noted overlaps between indicators and suggested explicitly acknowledging where measures are integrated or connected.

Progress, Improvement, and Next Steps

Parents were unclear about how the report showed progress over time, particularly improvement since the previous ERO visit. There was interest in more longitudinal indicators, such as progress bars or clearer references to change over time. The purpose of the “Next Steps” page was questioned, with parents wanting clearer links to progress, stronger school voice, and more specific, plain-language actions rather than generic statements.

Equity, Consistency, and Weighting of Judgements

Some parents raised concerns about how indicators are weighted and whether schools in more complex contexts could be disadvantaged. There were also questions about consistency across different school types, such as Māori-medium or secondary settings, and whether variations in indicators might skew judgements or comparisons.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Partnerships

A couple of parents noted the absence of a clear and explicit focus on Te Tiriti o Waitangi. They wanted greater visibility of where Treaty commitments sit within the report, including clearer measures and a partnerships section that reflects relationships with whānau, iwi, and the wider community.

Presentation and Usability

Practical suggestions for improvement included clearer and more consistent headings, increased font size or use of bolding, and stronger alignment between the overview and full report sections. Overall, parents valued the accessible and progressive nature of the new report but wanted refinements to improve clarity, meaning, and trust.