Education Review Office
Te Tari Arotake Matauranga

Alternative Education: An Evaluation of the Pedagogical Leadership Initiative

September 2012

Foreword

The Education Review Office (ERO) is an independent government department that reviews the performance of New Zealand's schools and early childhood services, and reports publicly on what it finds.

The whakataukī of ERO demonstrates the importance we place on the educational achievement of our children and young people:

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

In our daily work we have the privilege of going into early childhood services and schools, giving us a current picture of what is happening throughout the country. We collate and analyse this information so that it can be used to benefit the education sector and, therefore, the children in our education system. ERO's reports contribute sound information for work undertaken to support the Government's policies.

In 2011 the Ministry of Education introduced funding for pedagogical leadership in alternative education to improve the quality of teaching and learning. This evaluation examined the impact of that funding initiative by looking at the work of ten clusters providing alternative education. It also identified a set of principles to provide guidance on good practice.

Successful delivery in education relies on many people and organisations across the community working together for the benefit of children and young people. We trust the information in ERO's evaluations will help them in their work.

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Overview

Pedagogical leadership is a new initiative which aims to improve the quality of teaching and learning in Alternative Education (AE). The Ministry of Education introduced funding for pedagogical leadership at the beginning of 2011. The objectives of this funding were to ensure that the provision of AE had:

- tutors with cultural competence in working with diverse students
- programmes that address the identity, language and cultural needs of Māori students
- quality curriculum planning and assessment
- strategies to build engaging learning activities
- suitable self-review processes.[1]

AE is provided across New Zealand by a range of school-based and off-site programmes. It is intended for students aged 13-16 years, who have been alienated from mainstream education. In most cases Private Training Organisations are contracted to provide AE programmes. Students are placed in AE programmes by their schools with the aim that they will, at some later date, go back to mainstream education, training or employment.[2]

The tutors in AE programmes come from a range of backgrounds. While some tutors are registered teachers, many others have a background in youth or community work. ERO's 2010 report on *Good Practice in Alternative Education* identified that while many tutors responded well to the individual pastoral and academic needs of students, their knowledge of curriculum planning and assessment limited the extent to which they could develop innovative, relevant and effective learning contexts. There were also challenges for tutors analysing and using achievement data and building the links between the AE education programme and the career aspirations (and exit transitions) of AE students.

ERO's 2010 report used the catch-all phrase 'pedagogical leadership' to collect up these different teaching and learning challenges in AE. The phrase pedagogical leadership was subsequently adopted by the Ministry and used as a focus for additional AE funding from 2011 onwards.

In 2012, the Ministry asked ERO to evaluate the pedagogical leadership initiative in AE. The focus for this evaluation was on examining the work of ten clusters of providers. Evidence collected by the Ministry suggested that these clusters had developed effective pedagogical leadership practices. The aim of ERO's evaluation was to identify a set of principles that could provide guidance to the AE sector about good practice in pedagogical leadership.

In developing these principles, ERO has recognised that pedagogical leadership is managed differently by each AE cluster. For example, how pedagogical leadership is structured can depend on a cluster's context, including the level of involvement from the managing school and the nature of the working relationship between the AE coordinator and the AE providers.

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[1] See the Ministry of Education's AE funding agreement as downloaded from http://alternativeeducation.tki.org.nz/Kura-Schools-and-teachers/Introduction.
[2] See also the Te Kete Ipurangi website for AE http://alternativeeducation.tki.org.nz/.

The principles identified by ERO have been divided into two groups. *Organisational principles* represent a set of guidelines about the appointment and management of staff in pedagogical leadership roles. The second set of principles – *implementation principles* - outline the key features of pedagogical leadership leading to improved student outcomes. The organisational and implementation principles identified by ERO are summarised under the following seven headings:

The organisational principles:

- Managing schools have a responsibility to support pedagogical leadership
- Managing schools and AE providers need to work in partnership on the organisation and purpose of pedagogical leadership
- Pedagogical leadership needs a high status in AE.

The implementation principles:

- Pedagogical leadership staff need to have credibility and expertise
- Pedagogical leadership must be ethical, creative, strategic and focused on improvement
- Pedagogical leadership needs to use effective professional learning and development processes
- Pedagogical leadership should be part of an effective set of networks.

These principles reflect ERO's observation of how pedagogical leadership has developed to date. Future evaluation and research efforts could develop these principles further.

The findings section of this report discusses the key features of these principles and the detailed indicators, which sit under each of these headings. The overall 'principle framework' is summarised in Appendix 2.

As part of this evaluation ERO also identified a range of challenges that existed to pedagogical leadership. These challenges are discussed within each of the sections detailing the principles of pedagogical leadership.

Next steps

The principles identified through this evaluation should be used by the Ministry of Education to improve the contracting of pedagogical leadership, as well as its professional development and support of AE. In addition, the Ministry should work with AE clusters to address, as much as possible, the various challenges to pedagogical leadership identified in this report.

Managing schools and their AE providers should use this report to review the quality of their pedagogical leadership. A key aspect of this review should be the extent to which pedagogical leadership in their cluster aligns to the principles identified in this evaluation.

Background

What is Alternative Education?

Alternative Education (AE) is an initiative for students aged 13 to 16 years who have become alienated from mainstream secondary education. Many of the learners placed in Alternative Education have been long term truants or have been suspended from one or more schools. A student's placement in AE ideally results in re-engagement and accelerated learning, with them either returning to some form of mainstream secondary or tertiary education. Typically a student may spend 12 to 18 months in an AE programme.

AE can be provided through school-based or 'external' programmes. External courses are often delivered by Private Training Organisations or church-based groups. Many external providers do not use registered teachers as tutors. However, staff may have backgrounds in youth work and community development. Schools receive funding from the Ministry of Education to develop or purchase AE programmes.

Approximately 3500 learners participate in AE each year. Two-thirds of these learners are Māori and two-thirds are male. Destination data collected by the Ministry of Education indicates that just over one-third of those students who leave AE each year return to secondary education, training or employment.[3] There is obvious room for improvement in achieving positive transitions and outcomes for learners through alternative education.

In terms of AE policy, schools that place a student in AE are referred to as *enrolling schools*. Although an enrolling school does not receive EFTS funding[4] for students in AE, these students remain on their roll. Enrolling schools have a legal obligation to maintain an oversight of the pastoral and academic needs of students they have placed in AE. This includes overseeing the transition of students to and from an AE placement, as well as monitoring their educational progress.[5]

Enrolling schools often cooperate to create consortia or clusters. One of the schools is nominated as the consortium lead school or *managing school*. This school has an overall responsibility for managing the relationship with the cluster's external providers of AE.[6]

Pedagogical Leadership and ERO's 2010 report on Good Practice in Alternative Education

In 2010 ERO conducted an evaluation of good practice in the provision of Alternative Education. The 2010 report identified the following factors underpinning good practice.[7]

- The quality of the relationships between staff and students
- The use of a curriculum that matched the individual needs of students

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[3] See for example: ERO (2011) *Secondary Schools and Alternative Education*. Wellington: Education Review Office

[4] Equivalent Full-Time Student funding from the Ministry provided on the basis of attendance at school.

[5] See the AE funding agreement as downloaded from http://alternativeeducation.tki.org.nz/Kura-Schools-and-teachers/Introduction.

[6] See http://alternativeeducation.tki.org.nz/

[7] See ERO (2011) *Secondary Schools and Alternative Education.* Wellington: Education Review Office

- The passionate and compassionate approach of AE staff
- The ability of staff to have students aspire for a more positive future for themselves
- The ability to address the wide range of social and educational needs of students
- The leadership and teamwork of AE providers
- The relationships with schools
- The relationships with whānau/families.

The 2010 ERO report included a set of indicators for high quality AE provision. In addition to the good practice features, two challenges were identified that potentially affected the ability of AE to support students back into mainstream education and training. These were:
- the pedagogical leadership of AE providers
- the quality of exit transitions.

The quality of exit transitions is an issue at the core of AE's purpose. AE providers share a responsibility with enrolling schools to ensure that learners not only achieve while they are in AE, but also transfer that success through to future settings. In broad terms, the importance of all learners achieving at secondary school, including those in AE, has been emphasised in the Government's goal of having 85 percent of 18 year olds achieving NCEA Level 2 or equivalent by 2017. Improving the achievement levels and destination outcomes of learners in AE could make a significant contribution to this goal.[8]

The challenges associated with 'pedagogical leadership' in AE were linked to the management of the curriculum. Many AE tutors struggled to develop consistently high quality teaching and learning contexts because of their relatively limited curriculum and assessment expertise. Many tutors were expert in responding to the individual pastoral and academic needs of students. However, their knowledge of curriculum planning and assessment limited the extent to which they could be innovative in their programmes and develop relevant, engaging and effective learning contexts for AE students. It also affected their ability to use assessment information to improve teaching and learning and to link the educational programmes of AE to, for example, the career aspirations of students.

The introduction of 'Pedagogical Leadership' to Alternative Education

In response to ERO's 2010 review of AE, the government introduced new funding for 'pedagogical leadership' in AE. This funding was initiated at the rate of two full time equivalent teacher (FTTE) days per student place. Hence a managing school with eight student places would receive funding for 16 FTTE teacher days.

In line with this new funding, the Ministry's contract with managing schools set out the following regarding the development of pedagogical leadership:[9]

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[8] For example, if an additional 1,250 AE students achieved NCEA Level 2, this would amount to approximately a two percent increase in the national percentage of school leavers with NCEA Level 2 and above.
[9] See AE funding agreement http://alternativeeducation.tki.org.nz/Kura-Schools-and-teachers/Introduction.

To raise the educational outcomes of students in AE there is an identified need to ensure pedagogical leadership. This ensures:

- *cultural competence in working with diverse students and tutors and, in particular, that programmes address the identity, language and cultural needs of Māori students*

- *quality curriculum, planning, and assessment*

- *strategies to build engaging learning activities based on evidence*

- *programme review based on self review.*

Managing schools are also required to submit a plan to the Ministry about how they will use registered teachers to provide pedagogical leadership in AE. They provide a report to the Ministry about their progress in terms of the four points above. There are no explicit guidelines about the structures managing schools should use to deliver pedagogical leadership. Schools are left to decide, for example, if one person should be appointed as a pedagogical leader or if pedagogical leadership should be managed as a process involving two or more staff as required.

Methodology

In this evaluation ERO looked at pedagogical leadership in ten clusters that were selected by the Ministry of Education. These clusters represented a variety of different AE provision. Large urban and small rural clusters were included in the sample. All of these AE clusters used external AE providers.[10]

The focus of this evaluation was on what was working in pedagogical leadership. A team of two ERO review officers were on-site with each provider for up to two days. During that time the review officers met with staff fulfilling pedagogical leadership roles, examined documentation, and interviewed provider staff, students and staff from the managing schools, including the coordinators and principals. The review team made judgements about the overall quality of pedagogical leadership based on a four-point matrix. This matrix is summarised in the findings section of this report and a full copy of the matrix is set out in Appendix 1.

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[10] One also had a school based programme as part of their consortium.

Findings

The overall quality of pedagogical leadership

ERO classified the quality of pedagogical leadership in terms of a four-point matrix specifically developed for this evaluation. This matrix is summarised below, along with the number of clusters that were judged accordingly.[11]

Table 1: The overall quality of pedagogical leadership

Judgement	Characteristics of the cluster	
Highly effective	Pedagogical leadership supports high quality teaching and/or is making significant contributions to student outcomes and/or the quality of AE teaching, planning, assessment and evaluation. The pedagogical leadership model is sustainable and works for the provider and other stakeholders (ie the managing and enrolling schools). Pedagogical leadership is improving the provider's ability to engage students.	1 cluster
Mostly effective	Pedagogical leadership is providing satisfactory support for the provider although significant change is required in one or two areas - or small changes are required across several areas – to make a consistent difference to the quality of teaching and learning.	6 clusters
Partially effective	Pedagogical leadership is providing satisfactory support across some areas but there may be significant limits related to other aspects.	1 cluster
Limited effectiveness	Pedagogical leadership is providing few, if any, real benefits to the quality of teaching and assessment.	2 clusters

Table 1 shows that most of the AE clusters in this evaluation (eight out of ten) demonstrated a degree of good pedagogical leadership practice. Two clusters had misjudged what was required in providing effective pedagogical leadership. One of these clusters did not provide sufficient support for their provider, while the other had appointed a pedagogical leader who did not have the experience or expertise necessary to effectively undertake the role.

Student outcomes in Alternative Education

The student outcomes data available during the time of this evaluation was variable in quality. Many pedagogical leaders were focused on improving the quality of this data so that they have solid baselines for future analysis. Once the data has improved better conclusions will be able to drawn. Until then the Ministry should be wary of drawing too many conclusions from the current achievement data presented through accountability reporting.

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[11] A full matrix is available in Appendix 1.

Despite this lack of comparable achievement and destination data, ERO also found evidence of improved teaching and learning as a result of the pedagogical leadership initiative. Examples of improved teaching and learning included:

- better programme planning with more focused objectives and teaching sequences
- more specific IEPs for students
- more accurate and useful assessment tools being used (eg asTTle for reading and maths) in the classroom and shared with students
- better use of Te Kura (The Correspondence School) resources and also more use of resources beyond those supplied by Te Kura
- more recognition and provision for teaching of key competencies
- the use of a wider range of teaching resources
- greater emphasis on making learning meaningful and integrated, such as the provider using aspects of mathematics within a carpentry programme
- a broadening range of teaching strategies
- introduction of "teaching as inquiry" practices, including the use of student surveys and reflective journals
- more professional discussions about learning, with regular prompting by pedagogical leaders regarding what students are learning
- greater tutor confidence and professionalism
- more organised and predictable classroom routines.

More examples of effective practice are covered in the discussion of the 'implementation principles' in this report.

The diverse approaches to pedagogical leadership

At the time of this evaluation schools and clusters were in the early stages of implementation, having had approximately 18 months to develop their approach to pedagogical leadership. The Ministry has also provided a broad scope for schools and providers to develop their own processes in line with the diverse ways in which AE operates across the country.

In light of this, ERO found that pedagogical leadership was managed or organised in many different ways across each cluster. These differences included:

- how pedagogical leaders were appointed
- who was involved in the appointment – school personnel, AE coordinators or providers
- the pedagogical leadership objectives
- the focus, approach and background of staff appointed to pedagogical leadership positions
- the status of pedagogical leadership within the AE cluster
- how pedagogical leadership was overseen and supported
- whether or not staff in pedagogical leadership roles had an existing role in AE, such as an AE tutor or coordinator, or were an external appointment.

In summarising the overall ways in which clusters responded to these diverse issues, ERO has identified three different management approaches:

- the managing school develops the cluster-wide objectives for pedagogical leadership and appoints a person to the role of 'pedagogical leader'
- the managing school delegates the cluster objectives and development of the pedagogical leadership function to the coordinator or the provider who also appoints a person/or people in the role(s) of 'pedagogical leader'
- the managing school and provider work together to develop and manage an approach to pedagogical leadership.

These three broad management approaches did not, in themselves, determine the quality of pedagogical leadership. The features that most affected the quality of pedagogical leadership were linked to the background and expertise of those people who were in pedagogical leadership positions.

Organisational and implementation principles for pedagogical leadership

ERO identified two domains for considering the effectiveness of pedagogical leadership. *Organisational principles* are concerned with the various ways pedagogical leadership was organised or managed, in particular the appointment and management of staff in pedagogical leadership roles. *Implementation principles* are concerned with how pedagogical leadership was actually undertaken, and the key features leading to improved student outcomes.

Organisational principles for pedagogical leadership

Despite the diverse ways in which pedagogical leadership was organised, ERO identified that some organisational practices were more likely to contribute to success than others. In evaluating the work of the clusters, ERO identified three key organisational principles:

- Managing schools have a responsibility to support pedagogical leadership
- Managing schools and AE providers need to work in partnership on the organisation and purpose of pedagogical leadership
- Pedagogical leaders need to have a high status in AE.

Managing schools have a responsibility to support pedagogical leadership

This organisational principle supports the existing processes that the Ministry has in place concerning the roles and responsibilities of managing schools. Under the current Ministry contract with managing schools, boards of trustees are responsible for the provision of an AE learning programme that will lead to the:

- improved attendance of AE students
- improved academic achievement for AE students
- improved personal and social skills based on the core competencies of *The New Zealand Curriculum* or the graduate profile in the *Marautanga*
- successful and planned transition into further education and training options for AE students.[12]

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[12] The AE funding agreement between the Ministry and Schools as downloaded from http://alternativeeducation.tki.org.nz/Kura-Schools-and-teachers/Introduction.

Linked to these broad responsibilities is the obligation of managing schools for pedagogical leadership in AE:

> *The Managing School will ensure the use of registered teacher/s to provide pedagogical leadership.*[13]

In meeting its legal responsibilities, managing schools, especially those in larger clusters, may employ an external AE coordinator to oversee their programme. This can have the effect of removing the school's leadership from the day-to-day management of AE. ERO observed examples of effective AE coordinators working in large clusters. While this approach may be necessary in managing the workload of busy school leaders, such an approach does not diminish the responsibilities of the managing school to ensure that the processes around improved learning and transitions of AE students are effective.

There is a risk to the quality of education in AE, if managing schools are too 'hands off' in their management of AE. Managing schools are expected to provide professional knowledge and quality assurance systems to oversee the appointment and professional support of pedagogical leaders, as well as the wider quality of teaching and learning in AE.

The involvement of the managing school should positively contribute to the quality of pedagogy. While there were some managing schools that were removed from much of the running of AE, there were also two schools where their involvement did little to support either pedagogical leadership or the quality of teaching.

Reviewing the quality of pedagogical leadership

As part of this evaluation, ERO did not find any high quality examples of schools or providers reviewing the quality of pedagogical leadership. Over time, schools and providers will need more robust evidence about the quality of their pedagogical leadership. The evaluation of pedagogical leadership should use a similar framework to other evaluations of school-based professional learning and development. ERO has previously reported how such an evaluation can be managed.[14]

Managing schools and AE providers working in partnership on the organisation and purpose of pedagogical leadership

ERO found that more sustainable cluster management practices were likely where schools and providers collaborated on the appointment and objectives of pedagogical leaders. ERO observed a range of practice, including effective pedagogical leadership occurring where managing schools had very little involvement in the appointment and support of pedagogical leaders through to where AE providers had taken full responsibility for this work. However, ERO identified fewer risks where schools and providers collaboratively made decisions regarding the nature and objectives of pedagogical leadership as well as the personnel to be involved.

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[13] The AE funding agreement between the Ministry and Schools as downloaded from http://alternativeeducation.tki.org.nz/Kura-Schools-and-teachers/Introduction.

[14] See for example *Managing Professional Learning and Development in Secondary Schools*. Drawing on the work of Thomas Guskey, Appendix 1 of this 2009 ERO report sets out a framework which could be readily adapted for evaluating the outcomes of pedagogical leadership.

A partnership approach involves schools and providers working together on aspects such as the goals for teaching and learning and the objectives of pedagogical leadership. Such processes worked especially well at one cluster. This cluster's pedagogical leader was also the lead tutor at the AE provider (and a registered teacher). She mentored and supported the development of the other two tutors/teacher-aides in the programme. The partnership approach meant that the managing school was not only well informed about teaching and learning issues in AE, but also actively supported the professional development of this pedagogical leader. As such the pedagogical leader was also included in the school's middle management team and was an active member of the school's professional development community.

Pedagogical leaders need to have a high status in the AE cluster

The various approaches clusters took to pedagogical leadership meant that the staff fulfilling this function had different levels of status. Some pedagogical leaders had clear management status in the cluster. Others were more collegially positioned, for example as fellow tutors in an AE programme. ERO found that pedagogical leadership staff with a relatively low status in a cluster had more difficulty developing 'buy-in' or momentum for their development plans.

Conversely, pedagogical leaders who were seen to be in a management or leadership role had more opportunities to influence teaching quality. While having a high status is not enough on its own to guarantee effective pedagogical leadership, the transformational potential of pedagogical leadership means that is more likely to succeed where it is valued, or seen as important in a cluster.

Teachers' Council Registration

ERO has identified a potential difficulty concerning the teacher registration of a minority of staff in pedagogical leadership positions. While the Ministry has mandated the use of registered teachers in pedagogical leadership roles, there are uncertainties about how staff in these roles actually maintain their registered teacher status. This is especially the case for staff in pedagogical leadership positions who are not regularly teaching.

Additional challenges linked to the organisation of AE

Getting enough hours of pedagogical leadership

One of the challenges facing AE clusters, especially those with fewer student places, is having enough hours of pedagogical leadership to develop a range of suitable strategies and programmes to improve practice. One way in which clusters in this evaluation solved this problem is by working with neighbouring clusters to pool resources and/or collaborate on the appointment of a pedagogical leader.

By combining resources, neighbouring clusters were able to have a pedagogical leader work on a more regular basis, for example 20 hours per week. AE staff subsequently had more opportunity to build relationships with AE tutors and develop a professional learning culture.

The resources available for Alternative Education

AE providers have limited resources with which to improve student outcomes. While the resources which clusters have for AE were not a focus for this evaluation, it is worth noting that per-student funding is not the only useful resource AE providers can draw upon. Through their relationships with managing and enrolling schools, AE providers could expect to have greater access than that which they currently enjoy to library resources, NZQA moderation and assessment tools, science labs and materials, information communication technologies equipment, and careers advice and guidance.

The implementation principles of pedagogical leadership

ERO identified a range of factors that affected the quality of pedagogical leadership. One of the key assumptions of these principles is the 'change-agent' or 'continuous improvement' dimensions to this work. Pedagogical leaders should be focused on improving the education and destination outcomes of AE students.

The four overarching implementation principles of pedagogical leadership are that it:
- has staff with credibility and expertise
- is ethical, creative, strategic and focused on improvement
- uses effective professional learning and development processes
- should be part of an effective set of networks.

Pedagogical leadership staff need to have credibility and expertise

Effective pedagogical leaders brought a range of personal and professional skills to their work with AE tutors and students. They formed good working relationships while also having the skills and disposition to support tutors to improve their practice. ERO identified four aspects that contributed to the credibility and expertise of pedagogical leaders:
- relevant background and experience
- the ability to build effective working relationships
- an extensive knowledge of education theory and practice
- knowledge of how to improve Māori education outcomes.

Background and experience

ERO found that pedagogical leaders benefited from having previous teaching experience in such settings as special education, residential schools and youth work. Staff with pastoral care and academic leadership experience also had useful context knowledge for this work. AE tutors face many pastoral and academic challenges working with students, and pedagogical leaders needed to relate to this context and then knowledgably discuss how improvements could be made.

Where staff had experience in settings comparable to alternative education, ERO found that it was easier for them to establish themselves as leaders. While the organisational principles above highlight the need for pedagogical leaders to have a high status in a cluster, staff in

these roles also needed the background knowledge and expertise to be accepted as leaders by AE tutors. The following quotes reflect the opinions of a group of AE staff towards the input of their pedagogical leader.

Quotes from the tutors in one of the clusters about the support provided by their pedagogical leader

The Pedagogical Leader has helped us to get direction.

Without the PL we would be really struggling to find students' appropriate level of learning.

This is a whole new world for me.

She has brought mana to the AE programme.

We can now speak about our programmes, assessments, planning and student achievement like any other school.

ERO also found instances where pedagogical leaders did not have sufficient experience in AE-type settings. This limited their confidence and effectiveness in the role. These staff had to spend time understanding the social and behavioural issues of some AE students, as well as the specific teaching and learning dynamics in such a setting. The limited knowledge of AE-type settings also made it difficult for these staff to be accepted as leaders by AE tutors.

Building effective working relationships

ERO identified that pedagogical leaders needed to establish effective professional relationships with AE tutors and create joint goals and plans for improving teaching and learning. ERO observed pedagogical leaders were more likely to be effective when they listened to AE tutors, understood their issues and worked with them in developing a professional development programme.

The importance of building effective working relationships with AE staff was underlined when many of the pedagogical leaders were first appointed. In most of the clusters, ERO found that many AE tutors and managers expressed initial reservations about the appointment of a pedagogical leader. Subsequently, pedagogical leaders needed to 'prove' themselves to provider staff before they could all work confidently and constructively towards better student outcomes. In this regard, where pedagogical leadership had been effective, AE staff reported to ERO that it had increased the professionalism of their work.

Knowledge of educational theory and practice

Pedagogical leadership benefitted from staff having a sound understanding of educational theory and practice.   For example, pedagogical leaders with backgrounds in counselling, special education, adult literacy and teacher education demonstrated the sorts of knowledge of educational theory and practice that supported work in AE.

The sort of educational knowledge that was useful included, for example, an accurate understanding of how young people learn, why AE students have succeeded and failed in the past, and the type of learning activities that will engage diverse AE students. ERO found that it was also advantageous if pedagogical leaders had an awareness of learning issues for students with special needs, including when specialist help may be needed to improve a student's literacy, eyesight, hearing and other aspects of their health and wellbeing.

Improving Māori education outcomes

Māori make up approximately two-thirds of the students in AE. Therefore, pedagogical leaders need to have a good understanding of Māori education issues. This includes how AE tutors can respond to the diverse range of abilities and interest in te reo Māori and Māori knowledge and culture, as well as recognising learners' strengths, abilities and aspirations.

An example of effective practice with Māori students involved the work of a provider at a main urban centre. A high proportion of the students at this provider were Māori and had an interest in urban street culture and music. The pedagogical leader, in combination with other AE tutors,[15] involved local musicians and artists and developed a programme that not only aligned with student interests, but also allowed them to achieve NZQA credits.

Pedagogical leadership is innovative, ethical, creative, strategic, and focused on improvement

As ERO observed in the more effective cases, pedagogical leadership that has these features supports AE to improve learner's academic, social and destination outcomes. In this section, distinct aspects of pedagogical leadership are discussed. These are:

- developing innovative practice
- an emphasis on student outcomes
- creative, flexible and persistent leadership
- ethical values and action
- the strategic use of data to inform change.

Developing innovative practice

In ERO's 2010 report *Good Practice in Alternative Education*, one of the pedagogical challenges facing AE providers was linked to developing authentic learning opportunities. Such activities are a way to make education more relevant to learners and provide greater links between learner's career aspirations and their classroom activity.

This challenge remains. While ERO observed some innovative programmes during this current evaluation, pedagogical leaders need to consistently support teaching that is linked to learners' interests, strengths and aspirations. Similarly, pedagogical leadership should support approaches that give learners opportunities to learn in interesting and relevant ways.[16]

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[15] In this cluster, the provider had been given the job of identifying a pedagogical leader. They used a registered teacher from their own staff and also drew on support from a national provider of education for at risk youth.
[16] See ERO (2011) *Secondary Schools and Alternative Education.* Wellington: Education Review Office.

An important feature of pedagogical leadership involves a focus on continuous improvement. Effective pedagogical leadership involves understanding the priorities for improvement and finding ways to work with tutors to make these changes.

Emphasis on student outcomes

Approximately 40 percent of the students who leave AE go on to either further education or training or employment. The low proportion of students returning to school is, at least to some extent, linked to the relatively limited engagement of some enrolling schools once students have been enrolled in AE.

ERO found that the most effective pedagogical leaders were clearly focused on improving student outcomes, including student destination outcomes. In essence, pedagogical leaders saw it as their role to improve the quality of the academic, social and destination outcomes of students. In line with this obligation, pedagogical leaders worked with tutors to set clear goals and develop suitable strategies for reaching these goals.

For example, in one cluster the pedagogical leader worked with provider staff to identify their individual areas for improvement with an emphasis on numeracy and literacy teaching. With the help of analysed achievement information and the feedback from classroom observations, the pedagogical leader worked with tutors to identify how each of them could develop their teaching. Strategies were also put in place to support this development, such as observing high quality numeracy and literacy teaching at the managing school and providing time for AE tutors to meet together and discuss effective teaching and learning strategies.

> *I've got goals I want to achieve now. I want to be able to do my NCEA and get a job.*
> (Comment from an AE student about the change in the quality of teaching in AE since the pedagogical leader started working with tutors)

While academic outcomes are widely understood in terms of success in curricular and, arguably, extra-curricular activities, it is not always clear what the social outcomes of Alternative Education refer to and what, if any, role there is for AE providers to support students to develop positive social outcomes.

In the context of this report, social outcomes relate to the range of emotional, health and interpersonal skills and dispositions that support the wellbeing of young people in Alternative Education. AE providers typically provide a considerable amount of pastoral support for young people in an attempt to build both a student's sense of themselves as learners and as a basis for the positive transition of students to further education, training or employment.

Positive social outcomes are an established part of *The New Zealand Curriculum* through, for example, the key competencies of Managing Self, Relating to Others and Participating and Contributing. Positive social outcomes also link to a student's success in dealing with drug or alcohol addiction, as well as issues arising from physical, mental or reproductive health. In the case of a student dealing with serious social issues, it is expected that a provider and/or managing school would seek the support of the appropriate agencies.

Creative, flexible and persistent leadership

Pedagogical leaders need to be able to respond quickly and constructively to the variety of issues or situations that can occur in AE. The context of AE means that there are a variety of social, academic and logistical issues that can complicate the professional development of tutors. Pedagogical leaders need to work around these issues, yet retain their focus on how learners' outcomes can be improved. The variety of backgrounds of staff and students, including the high level of social need of some learners, also means that innovative or novel approaches may be required.

ERO observed pedagogical leaders who were facilitating professional development and support for tutors, some of whom were trained teachers, while others were experienced AE tutors without a teaching qualification. The diverse capabilities of these tutors required quite different approaches in developing cluster-wide approaches to Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for learners or the development of numeracy and literacy teaching. AE staff were also found to have different capabilities in terms of dealing with material such as Te Kura learning materials.

Some AE staff had not had regular professional development opportunities in the past. Pedagogical leaders in such a context required some finesse in identifying the specific next steps of staff, and also patience in working to develop a professional learning culture. This included having staff become accustomed to being observed as well as receiving feedback. Experience in establishing or maintaining a professional learning cluster in the past is useful knowledge for someone offering pedagogical leadership in AE.

Ethical values and action

Underpinning the different qualities of pedagogical leadership is the importance of applying ethical approaches to teaching and learning in AE. As ERO has found in other evaluations,[17] the ethical qualities of teachers and leaders can be a key factor in their drive to improve education and ensure that others follow their example. Features underpinning the ethical values and action of pedagogical leaders include their:

- commitment in the face of challenges (persistence)
- aroha or caring towards AE students and tutors
- belief in the potential of each student to succeed.

The strategic use of data to inform change

The use of data to identify professional development priorities is a key way in which pedagogical leaders can help improve AE. ERO observed pedagogical leaders working with AE tutors to use analysed achievement data and other self-review material, including classroom observations, to improve outcomes for students. Effective pedagogical leaders were found to be contributing to a stronger self-review culture in AE.

Pedagogical leadership uses effective professional learning and development processes

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[17] For example ERO (2010) *Including Students with High Needs*. Wellington: Education Review Office.

Effective professional development and support processes are needed for pedagogical leaders to support continuous improvement in AE. The principles of effective PLD for teachers and schools have been well promulgated through the Ministry of Education's *Teacher Professional Learning and Development: Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration (BES)*.[18] These principles include the need for PLD to:

- be focused on student outcomes, with links between classroom activity and the desired outcomes
- use assessment information about the performance of teachers and students to make a difference in the classroom
- provide many different sorts of activities for teachers to learn and apply newly acquired knowledge
- work with and challenge teacher assumptions about learning.[19]

Integration with PLD plans of provider

Clusters need to ensure that the work of pedagogical leaders enhances the professional learning and development plans of AE providers. ERO found increased professional development momentum where AE providers and pedagogical leaders collaborated on specific priorities and worked together to achieve specific improvements in teaching and learning.

Ministry of Education professional development courses

ERO found that almost all of the clusters expressed doubts about the usefulness and/or quality of the Ministry's professional development courses on offer. This was an area for frustration for some pedagogical leaders, as the messages coming from these PLD courses were not aligned with plans they had developed for their clusters. In the future, better links between the pedagogical leadership plans of the clusters and the professional development providers could lead to better PLD processes and better teaching and learning for students.

Release time for tutors

Some pedagogical leaders were frustrated that their efforts to support provider staff had to take place outside of normal school hours. This situation suggests that insufficient value is placed on the work being done to support improved pedagogy in AE. Release time for tutors should be considered as part of the overall professional development process and planned and budgeted for by managing schools, AE coordinators and provider management.

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[18] Ministry of Education (2007) *Teacher Professional Learning and Development: Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration (BES)* and Timperley, H. (2008). *Teacher professional learning and development.* Perth: International Academy of Education.

[19] A fuller set of principles is set out in the overall indicators of effective pedagogical development in Appendix 2.

Improving Qualifications for tutors

AE tutors have a variety of different qualifications, many of which are not actual teaching qualifications. ERO has also found that pedagogical leadership has clearly helped to improve the knowledge and ability of some AE tutors. There is the potential for more formal recognition for the skills and abilities which AE tutors develop with the support of pedagogical leaders. Such recognition could provide a professional pathway for tutors and also support the retention of skilled staff.

In light of this, a challenge for the development of AE is how more formal qualifications could be developed via on-the-job or workplace assessment processes. Potentially such a programme could work in tandem with other forms of learning and qualifications and would recognise the growing professionalism of many AE staff.

Pedagogical leadership should be part of an effective set of networks

ERO found that pedagogical leadership was more likely to make a difference for learners when all stakeholders in a cluster fulfil their obligations to the AE programmes. For example, clusters are more likely to be effective for learners if the pedagogical leader can concentrate on their leadership and support functions and not be involved in carrying out tasks that might more readily be undertaken by the AE coordinator or the enrolling school. Similarly, where pedagogical leaders can work with other education specialists, including Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour, Group Special Education, staff of Te Kura (The Correspondence School), there is more likelihood of the cluster having an effective network that will support better teaching and, subsequently, improved learner's outcomes.

It was also the case that some pedagogical leaders were at risk of working without suitable mentoring and support. This was much more likely to occur where there was just one pedagogical leader. One very large cluster had several pedagogical leaders and, rather than isolation being a challenge, this cluster faced challenges in terms of coordinating their work. In most clusters, however, where there was a single pedagogical leader, there were limited opportunities to discuss their professional development requirements or to even clarify the key tasks required in their role.

Managing schools

Managing schools have some defined roles and responsibilities under the AE contract with the Ministry of Education. In addition to these formal duties, there are other ways in which managing schools can support pedagogical leaders with their work of facilitating improved outcomes for students.

One way in which these responsibilities are met is in ensuring that AE providers have access to special education specialists, including RTLBs. Other ways include supporting the professional development of pedagogical leaders. For example, one of the managing schools in this evaluation included the pedagogical leader in both the school's middle management team and its school-wide professional development processes.

Enrolling schools

The key roles of an enrolling school in AE are set out in the Ministry's Memorandum of Agreement for AE.[20] This document states that:

> *The enrolling school retains overall responsibility for the student who is in an AE programme including the provision of the curriculum and for ensuring the environment is physically and emotionally safe as per the National Educational Goals and National Administration Guidelines, and all other legislative requirements pertaining to schools. Literacy and numeracy must be provided for all students.*
>
> *All students in their 11th year of schooling must have access to the National Qualifications Framework, including NCEA.*

Specific obligations also described in the Memorandum include that:

> *Enrolling schools will:*
> - *report to their boards of trustees at least once a term on the progress and achievement of AE students*
> - *investigate the opportunities for the student to return to mainstream education*
> - *ensure an appropriate diagnostic assessment is carried out that defines learning and behaviour needs and develop an Individual Education Plan which outlines the goals and success measures for the student.*

By fulfilling these obligations enrolling schools contribute to the fundamental purpose of AE – the transition of learners into mainstream education, training or employment. ERO did not, however, observe any examples of enrolling schools' good practice (other than those that were also managing schools). In two cases ERO found that managing schools were recorded as the default enrolling school for all AE students in the cluster. These students were removed from the roll of the schools that had sent these students to AE, thereby releasing these schools from their enrolling school obligations. The end result for the student means that they are not supported by their original enrolling school and were essentially blocked from returning to mainstream education via this path.[21]

Despite this, there are also some significant issues that complicate the efforts by enrolling schools to support students in AE. The first occurs when a student has been excluded from his or her previous school. This often means that the managing school 'places' a student in AE and thereby becomes the enrolling school and the link back to the 'initial' enrolling school is lost.

The second issue relates to the lack government funding for enrolling schools to carry out their support role for students they have placed in AE. A student placed in AE goes onto the non-resource role of the enrolling school and the funding of their AE placement is directed

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[20] The AE funding agreement between the Ministry and Schools as downloaded from http://alternativeeducation.tki.org.nz/Kura-Schools-and-teachers/Introduction.
[21] These findings align with those in ERO's 2011 report *Secondary Schools and Alternative Education* which found that most enrolling schools did not provide enough support for the students they had placed in AE.

through the managing school to the AE providers. While managing schools may retain up to ten percent of this funding for administrative purposes, enrolling schools are expected to support the transition of a student to and from AE from their own resources.

Both of these issues may be a factor in the relatively low level of engagement from enrolling schools. The resolution of these issues may improve the enrolling schools' engagement and the destination outcomes of students in AE.

Alternative Education providers

The support of those who manage AE providers is crucial in developing a collaborative approach to pedagogical leadership and improved teaching and learning in AE. Ideally, AE provider management should ensure that they are able to actively support pedagogical leadership. This could include such initiatives as providing time and support for professional development processes. In one large cluster, for example, a range of AE providers worked together to ensure that the different pedagogical leaders from across the cluster had times and places when they could meet to share effective strategies and discuss the specific challenges they were facing.

Working with Te Kura

The suitability of distance learning materials for learners in AE has been previously questioned in ERO's 2010 report. While the disadvantages of distance learning for at-risk learners are accepted, there are, potentially, opportunities for greater collaboration between AE providers, pedagogical leaders and Te Kura. AE staff reported to ERO that they had developed good liaison with the regional coordinators of Te Kura, but had experienced variable levels of communication, responsiveness or flexibility from the teachers of Te Kura. A challenge identified in this report is the development of a greater partnership between AE tutors and the staff of Te Kura.

The current model assumes that, to some extent, the Te Kura teacher's sole relationship is with the individual learner in AE. The teacher at Te Kura sends material out to the learner, which the learner is then to complete and return. It typically takes two weeks for learners to receive back work which they completed and sent to the teacher at Te Kura. This process is far less speedy than the feedback cycle which a student in mainstream education would receive, and arguably too slow to sustain the engagement of AE students.

Te Kura reports that many AE centres do not have access to computer technology. This limits the way Te Kura can increase interaction with their students. All AEs should have the appropriate technology so they can have access online learning and other 21st century learning opportunities.

ERO suggests that Te Kura could develop a model of working more directly with AE pedagogical leaders and tutors. Potentially, pedagogical leaders could support the curriculum knowledge of AE tutors and help them develop systems whereby more immediate feedback can be given to learners. Te Kura could develop teaching materials based on a context identified by staff and learners in AE. Such an approach would alter the relationship from that focused on the Te Kura teacher and the AE learner, to a different model that involves the collaboration of Te Kura staff, AE staff, pedagogical leaders and learners. Such a teaching

model could be pertinent and useful for learners enrolled in Te Kura not only from AE, but also from a wider variety of education settings.

Conclusion

Pedagogical leadership is, fundamentally, a professional development and support process for Alternative Education (AE). Pedagogical leadership is not about the work of just one person, but requires all those with a responsibility for learner outcomes to be involved and actively working together to accelerate the learning of these students.

This evaluation has found that AE clusters have taken a diverse range of approaches to pedagogical leadership and, even at this early stage, a range of outcomes is evident. This variety is, to an extent, to be expected in an area as complex and diverse as AE. Moreover, it is expected that different clusters will continue to manage pedagogical leadership in quite different ways in line with the different objectives of their programmes and the varying needs of their students.

Despite these differences, some key principles can be identified from the work of those clusters studied in this evaluation. These organisational and implementation principles have been split into two basic types: 'Organisational principles' set out aspects connected to the management of pedagogical leadership. This includes how pedagogical leadership is established and who oversees this work. The other set – 'implementation principles' – deals with the actual work of staff in pedagogical leadership positions. The implementation principles outline the knowledge and approach required to make pedagogical leadership a transformational process – one that aims to continuously improve the academic, social and destination outcomes of AE students.

These principles reflect ERO's observation of the early development of pedagogical leadership. Future evaluation and research efforts could develop these principles further.

Next steps

The principles identified by this report should be used by the Ministry of Education to improve the contracting of pedagogical leadership, as well as its professional development and support of AE. In addition, the Ministry should work with AE clusters to address, as much as possible, the various challenges to pedagogical leadership identified in this report.

Managing schools and their AE providers should use this report to review the quality of their pedagogical leadership. A key aspect of this review should be the extent to which pedagogical leadership in their cluster aligns to the principles found in this evaluation.

Appendix 1: Evaluation matrix for pedagogical leadership

4 **Highly effective – A professional and supportive practice**	Pedagogical leadership supports high quality teaching and/or is making significant contributions to student outcomes and/or the quality of AE teaching, planning, assessment and evaluation. The pedagogical leadership model is sustainable and works for the provider and other stakeholders (ie the school). Through the pedagogical leadership process the provider is, for example, increasingly effective (innovative or risk-taking), in engaging students. Staff in pedagogical leadership roles have a highly effective relationship with tutors which includes a recognition and use of tutor strengths to enhance the outcomes for students (eg during students' transition back to school). There is specific and provider-wide professional learning and development as required. These align with the principles of high quality professional learning and development as required in line with the BES and ERO indicators of good practice. There is a clear understanding of the role of pedagogical leadership and what counts as the desired high quality outcomes. Pedagogical leadership promotes reflection and improvement and may even bridge the expertise of the AE tutors back into schools.
3 **Mostly effective with one or two significant improvements required**	The pedagogical leadership model is providing satisfactory support for the provider although significant change is required in one or two areas - or small changes across several areas – to make a consistent difference to the quality of teaching and learning. It may be too early to tell if there are substantial benefits and/or there may be limited innovation, change or success as a result of the pedagogical leadership.
2 **Partially effective – some significant improvements needed**	The pedagogical leadership model is providing satisfactory support across some areas, but there may be significant limits related to other aspects and improvements are needed. Pedagogical leadership is, for example, making only occasional differences despite the fact that there are significant ways in which it could support teaching at one or more providers.
1 **Limited effectiveness – not helping**	The pedagogical leadership model is providing few, if any, real benefits to the quality of teaching and assessment. There may be some elements that are even unsupportive.

Appendix 2: Principles of pedagogical leadership in AE

The indicators below represent a broad structure of good practice in pedagogical leadership in Alternative Education. They are designed to be used alongside other ERO AE indicators as prepared for the reports *Good Practice in Alternative Education* (Appendix 3) and *Secondary Schools and Alternative Education* (Appendix 4).

ORGANISATIONAL PRINCIPLES	
Managing school responsibility	- The managing school actively ensures that pedagogical leadership contributes to improved social, academic and exit outcomes for students in AE - Managing school ensures that there are processes in place to review (and continuously improve) the effectiveness of pedagogical leadership - Managing school personnel actively and positively contribute to pedagogical leadership plans for the consortium and/or school-based AE programme - The managing school ensures that staff in pedagogical leadership roles are suitably appraised and have access to effective professional development and support
Partnership between schools and providers	- Managing school personnel work with providers in the appointment of staff in pedagogical leadership roles - The goals or objectives for pedagogical leadership are developed in consultation with AE providers
The status of pedagogical leadership	- Pedagogical leadership is valued across the cluster for its role in improving student outcomes in AE - Pedagogical leadership is supported with withdrawal time for tutors and cluster-wide professional development and support processes
IMPLEMENTATION PRINCIPLES	
Pedagogical leadership staff with credibility and expertise	
Background and experience	Staff in pedagogical leadership roles have teaching experience beyond the mainstream classroom. This could include, for example, special education, pastoral leadership positions, residential schooling, social or youth work or activity centres.
Building effective working relationships	- Staff in pedagogical leadership roles have the social skills (emotional intelligence) to build positive working relationships with AE tutors and managers - Staff in pedagogical leadership actively listen to AE tutors, identifying their strengths and development areas - Staff in pedagogical leadership roles work constructively with teachers and leaders from managing and enrolling schools - Pedagogical leadership is authoritative but not authoritarian or coercive in working with AE tutors and students
Educational theory and practice	- Staff in pedagogical leadership roles have a good understanding of educational theory and practice, including an understanding of the teaching and learning issues faced in settings such as Alternative Education (see also ERO's indicators of Good Practice in Alternative Education, especially Pedagogy for At-Risk students) - Staff in pedagogical leadership roles help develop the numeracy and literacy skills of AE tutors while also supporting the development of innovative and relevant teaching and learning, including that linked to students' study/career paths after AE
Māori pedagogy	Staff in pedagogical leadership roles appreciate the pedagogical issues associated with teaching the diverse Māori students in AE and can support tutors to respond to

	this in line with good practice (see also ERO's indicators of Good Practice in Alternative Education, especially Pedagogy for At-Risk students)
Ethical, creative and strategic leadership focussed on improvement	
Emphasis on student outcomes	• Pedagogical leadership is focused on improving the social, academic and destination outcomes for students in AE • Pedagogical leadership models enthusiasm and optimism about making a difference for students
Creative, flexible and persistent leadership	• Staff in pedagogical leadership roles understand that AE can differ from mainstream schooling and may require an eclectic, innovative and creative approach to improving student outcomes • Staff in pedagogical leadership roles are able to flexibly respond to the variety of social, academic, logistical and professional development issues that can arise in AE • Persistence is used alongside creativity and flexibility in working through the complex educational, social and logistical issues facing AE tutors
Ethical values and action	• Staff in pedagogical leadership roles model inclusive practices and emphasise the potential of all students to achieve and make positive transitions from AE • Pedagogical leadership recognises the importance of pastoral care in support of student academic, social and destination outcomes • Pedagogical leadership supports the development of an inclusive culture and approach in the provision of AE • Staff in pedagogical leadership positions are able to both build good relationships in the cluster while also challenging the status quo in terms of student achievement levels and accepted practices
The strategic use of data to inform change	• Pedagogical leadership improves the analysis of achievement information and the quality of self review, which in turn helps identify strategies for the ongoing improvement of the social, academic and exit outcomes for students in AE • Pedagogical leadership is strategically concentrated on areas that will make the greatest contribution or difference to social, academic and exit outcomes for students in AE
Using effective PLD practice	

Effective PLD methods and approaches	• Pedagogical leadership processes are consistent with effective PLD practice, for example those in the Ministry of Education's Teacher Professional Learning and Development: Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration (BES).[22] Pedagogical leadership development processes for AE tutors will therefore:
	  o be focused on student outcomes, with links between classroom activity and the improved social, academic and exit outcomes for students in AE
	  o use assessment information about the performance of tutors and students to make a difference in the classroom
	  o involve many different sorts of activities for tutors to learn and apply newly acquired knowledge
	  o work with and challenge tutor assumptions about learning
	  o allow tutors to work with others to explore and develop their new knowledge about teaching

[22] See also Timperley, H. (2008). *Teacher professional learning and development.* Perth: International Academy of Education.

	o draw on experts (including subject teaching experts) who can facilitate tutors to develop their own understandings of new ideas o have active provider management who can create a vision for professional learning as well as lead and organise staff learning o maintain momentum in improving AE delivery and outcomes
Aligned with PLD plans of providers	• Pedagogical leadership and the specific PLD plans of providers complement one another in supporting the development of tutor expertise
Pedagogical leadership as part of an effective set of networks	
Managing schools	• Managing schools support pedagogical leadership with access to educational resources, including careers support and guidance, in line with their contractual responsibilities and the need to improve the social, academic and destination outcomes of students in AE
Enrolling schools	• Enrolling schools are active participants in managing the transitions of students they place in AE - both into and out of AE
AE providers	• AE providers are active partners in working to improve teaching and learning, the Professional Learning and Development culture, and the social, educational and destination outcomes of students
Pedagogical leaders	• Pedagogical leaders build effective relationships with RTLBs, RT:Lits and Special Education Services etc in support of specific student learning needs • Pedagogical leaders have suitable professional mentoring and support relationships

Appendix 3: Indicators of good practice in AE

Student outcomes	
Educational outcomes	• Students show signs of meaningful progress during their time at the provider • Students are engaged and enjoy learning • Students are achieving in national qualifications (age 14+) • Work samples provide evidence that students are achieving • Families/whānau are satisfied with their child's achievement • High priority is given to achievement in literacy and numeracy • Planning in literacy and numeracy is appropriate for meeting the specific requirements of each student • Students initiate aspects of their own learning
Social outcomes	• Students are healthy with any significant social or health issues supported by appropriate agencies
Teaching programmes, practices and pedagogy	
Quality of curriculum, planning and assessment	• Planning reflects the need to identify and develop the interests and strengths of students • Educational activities involve authentic problems that are relevant to students • Topics and themes link to situations outside the classroom context and are relevant to students • Students are able to investigate their own questions • Resources are appropriate, accessible and enhance the programme • Classroom activity is engaging and challenging for students, rather than 'dumbed-down busy work' • Students receive high quality feedback on their learning • High quality career education and guidance is given with an emphasis on transition to the workplace or further education/training
Identifying student needs	• The provider uses valid and reliable approaches to identify the educational strengths and weaknesses of students • The provider has sought and used the student's point of view with regard to what supports their learning • The provider has processes in place for identifying and supporting the needs of students in relation to any physical, sensory, psychological, neurological, behavioural or intellectual impairments • The provider has culturally responsive processes to identify and support the needs and aspirations of Māori and Pacific students and their whānau/families
Individual Education Plans (IEPs)	• IEPs have clear goals for learning or development • IEPs explain the processes to be used to support students to reach their goals • IEPs are integrated into the exit transition of the student • IEPs are regularly reviewed and revised in line with student progress and needs • IEPs contain a plan for future education/employment • IEPs contain an understanding of the student's exit transition and what has to happen to support that transition • IEPs include an indication of what the young person wants to achieve in the residence to prepare them for their future; education/employment

Pedagogy for at risk students	• Educational activities involve authentic problems, and are relevant to students • There are non-authoritarian and non-coercive classroom structures where power is shared between the student and teacher, eg classroom rule sharing, negotiated outcomes (excellence) • Staff support the development of student self-management • Staff apply strategies to limit negative behaviour • Topics and themes link to situations outside the classroom context and have some immediate relevance and meaning to students • Students are able to investigate their own questions • Students are able to work together in some situations, discussing ideas, reaching conclusions and teaching each other • Students are taught to evaluate their own learning and are aware of their achievements and next steps • Classroom activities take into account the individual needs of students • There are clear goals and expectations for classroom activity and student work • Staff have high expectations and express these often • Learning is valued by staff and students • There are close relationships between staff and students with adult educators operating as respected leaders and role models • Staff understand and affirm the cultural backgrounds of the students (ie they are appreciated for their understanding of a variety of protocols, such as Māori, Pacific, teenage) • Classroom activity is engaging and challenging for students, rather than 'dumbed-down busy work'
Pedagogical culture and environment	• There is a warm, nurturing and safe atmosphere • Humour is used to support the development of positive relationships among staff and students • Teachers recognise that previous structures have not worked for these students • Teachers recognise that motivation is likely to be a bigger challenge than ability for many students • Teachers assume that students can succeed and are not fatalistic or judgemental about what a student may bring (socially or culturally) to the classroom • Staff are compassionate, actively listening to students and reflecting their points of view • Students express a sense of security and comfort with the environment • Staff show enthusiasm about making a difference for students • Staff demonstrate the importance of social and pastoral care as a pathway to support the achievement of students
Student engagement	• Students are engaged in discussions about their learning processes • Students have an opportunity to explore their interests and strengths • Students have clear and challenging goals or expectations for learning • Students take responsibility for their own learning • Students state that they enjoy their work and can say how it is relevant to their ongoing achievement

Numeracy and literacy development	• Planning in literacy and numeracy is appropriate for meeting the specific requirements of each student • Resources are appropriate, accessible and enhance the programme • Students are positive about the progress they are making • Students initiate aspects of their own learning • Diagnostic assessments describe each young person's ability in reading (especially in decoding and comprehension), writing and numeracy • A variety of relevant activities are used to support and increase student reading, writing and numeracy • Oral language strategies are used to support language development • Students receive positive feedback about their work • Progress in numeracy and literacy is recognised and recorded in IEP documentation
External relationships	
Relationships with external agencies	• The provider's staff work collaboratively with agencies such as health, iwi, and Non Government Organisations (NGO) to support the multiple needs of students
Relationships with the enrolling schools	• The provider works with the enrolling school to ensure the best possible outcome for each student • Processes are in place to provide the enrolling school with information about a student's progress at the provider • The provider and the enrolling school work together in developing an IEP and career pathway for each student
Relationships with the managing school	• The provider and the managing school form a supportive partnership in working through issues relevant to the Alternative Education service
The use Te Kura	• The use of Te Kura supports students to develop the knowledge, attitudes and skills required to positively transition from the Alternative Education provider
The links to other training providers	• The Alternative Education provider has positive relationships with other training providers that support students to have a positive transition from Alternative Education
Links with families	• Whānau/families are included so that they can support the ongoing development of their child or young person • The exit transition includes adequate support for whānau/families to provide suitable support for the ongoing development of students once they have left the provider
Exit transition	• The student's destination is monitored and recorded • The exit outcomes of students are analysed to inform the quality of future exit processes for students • Exit transition planning is based on the progress students have made • The exit transition planning details the types of support students will receive for their ongoing learning and development • The exit transition includes clear roles and responsibilities for the student and those supporting the student after they leave the provider

Appendix 4: Secondary schools and AE indicator framework

The indicators below outline the characteristics of good practice for schools' use of Alternative Education. These indicators are not an exhaustive list but are designed to provide an outline of the quality expected from schools in their use of Alternative Education.

Alternative Education within the school's strategy for engaging students	

Alternative Education's place	• The school's use of AE is part of an overall approach which is predominantly effective at identifying and removing significant barriers to learning. The features of this system include:
	   o high quality processes for transitioning new students into the school, especially at Year 9
	   o low levels of truancy, stand-downs and suspensions and any other indicators showing low student engagement
	   o processes which identify students at risk of disengaging as early as possible
	   o identifying and attempting to resolve the root causes for a student's lack of engagement
	   o initiatives which work with those students who are identified to be at risk of disengaging (this could include buddy or mentor programmes, the support of teachers, guidance counsellors or deans, involvement in extra-curricula activities, strategies with families and caregivers, careers support, interagency support)
	   o significant efforts to adapt teaching to the needs of students, such as the development of an Individual Learning Programme, Individual Education Plan and attempts to engage students on the basis of their strengths and interests
	   o a clear understanding of how to teach diverse learners, including the Māori and Pacific students, boys and girls, and students with special needs
	   o a curriculum, pedagogy and professional development programme which is developing high quality teaching across the school ie, teaching that is engaging and effective for diverse students
	• AE is NOT an easy option for removing a troublesome student but is used as an extension of the school's approach to meet the individual needs of students.

School decision-making	• AE is NOT an easy option for removing a troublesome student but is used as an extension of the school's approach to meet the individual needs of students. • Robust referral and decision-making occurs to place a student in AE, including looking at other options. • A placement in AE is part of a wider plan to re-engage the student in education or some other positive outcome (see below to judge the quality of these transitions).
Transition into and out of Alternative Education	

Transition into AE	• The AE provider should receive information from the enrolling school on:
	   o current levels of academic achievement (including literacy and numeracy)
	   o social and behavioural profile (including involvement with specialist services such as RTLBs, GSE, specialist mental health services: CAMHS/CAFS etc)
	   o significant school staff who are able to contribute to the development of an individual plan

	- other relevant information e.g. current Individual Education Plan (IEP) if applicable - reason for the referral to AE. - IEPs are developed with representatives from the provider and the enrolling school. IEPs should: - have family or caregiver commitment - include an outline of the student's strengths and interests and how these can be used to support his or her learning within AE - have clear goals for learning and development - address how any barriers to learning will be addressed with the support of external agencies, this may include drug and alcohol dependency, anger management issues, learning problems - clearly set out the processes to be used to support students to reach their goals, including who will carry out what tasks and by when - have regular review times built in - be linked to a plan for the transition to a positive outcome after AE - have an indication of what the young person wants to achieve in AE and what they want to achieve in the future for education and/or employment. - There are processes in place for inducting students into the provider - The school and provider guide the student into AE. This includes letting the student know what is expected, welcoming the student
Transition from AE to positive outcomes	- The exit transition from AE is back to mainstream education, school-based training (Gateway), tertiary training or employment - The student's whānau/family or caregivers are involved in the development of the exit plan and are clear on how they will support the student's future development - The transition includes strategies for supporting the student to succeed - these strategies must be realistic, considered and likely to be effective - The exit transition includes clear roles and responsibilities for the student and those supporting the student after they leave AE - The exit transition involves support from external agencies as required (for instance for any ongoing health and welfare issues) - The exit transition is based on the progress students have made in AE
Schools and providers working in partnership	
Partnership	- AE providers and schools keep a student linked to school social, sporting, pastoral care and support, and cultural activities as is appropriate - The enrolling school's newsletters, publications, ID cards are provided to the student while at AE - As appropriate, the enrolling school makes links with Group Special Education and the AE provider to support the learning and progress of individual students - The enrolling school and AE provider work in partnership to resolve any behavioural, learning or attendance issues posed by students - The enrolling school and provider work with external agencies to resolve issues for students - Personnel from the school and the provider work together to discuss student learning and progress - Teachers from the enrolling school support their colleagues in AE with advice, guidance or resources (and vice versa) both academic and pastoral

Monitoring and evaluating the progress and achievement of students in AE	
Monitoring academic achievement	• Student achievement information is regularly provided to the school board and leadership (for instance monthly) • Enrolling school leadership makes visits to the providers to collect anecdotal and observational information regarding student performance • Enrolling school representatives attend any reviews of a student's IEPs
Monitoring social progress	• Student attendance information is provided to the enrolling school (this information needs to be timely to allow the enrolling school to respond to any issues) • Student behaviour and engagement is reported to the enrolling school regularly and/or as is necessary
Evaluating student performance	• The enrolling school uses achievement information to make judgements about the student's eventual transition • The information on student performance is used to reconsider a student's place in AE if required
The performance of providers	

Direct evidence of performance	• Self reviews carried out by the provider and/or evaluations undertaken by the managing school. These evaluations should include:
	  o data and analysis on student academic achievement
	  o an overview of the programme with evidence about which aspects have been effective and which have not
	  o an overview on the quality of teaching, including the qualification status of staff
	  o next steps for improving the quality of education
	  o next steps for improving the quality of support for students
	  o information which accurately portrays the financial position of the provider
	  o an overview of how the provider is performing against key policies for personnel management, health and safety etc
	• Enrolling schools make visits to the providers to collect anecdotal and observational information regarding student performance and any issues affecting teaching and learning
	• Informal/anecdotal reports from managing schools about the performance of providers

Indirect evidence of performance	• Effective protocols are in place to manage the relationship between enrolling and managing schools for the benefits of students • The enrolling school receives student evaluations and feedback • The enrolling school receives information on student attendance at AE • Any documentation about student progress and achievement (such as plans, IEPs, reports and so on) the school receives from the providers