

National Report Summary

ERO publishes evaluation reports on education issues of national importance. This handout is a summary of a recent national report - it captures the key points and highlights findings which you may find useful. The full report is available on our website - www.ero.govt.nz

Supporting school improvement through effective teacher appraisal (May 2014)

In 2013 the Education Review Office (ERO) evaluated schools' approaches to teacher appraisal, using online surveys and information from 200 school reviews.

What is the purpose of teacher appraisal?

Appraisal can meet two purposes:

- **improvement** - appraisal supports a teacher's personal development and a school's capability to meet student outcome goals
- **professional accountability** - appraisal provides assurances to the wider community that teaching standards are being rigorously applied.

How do schools meet both purposes?

ERO found that 20 percent of primary schools and four percent of secondary schools had high quality appraisal systems which contributed to improvements in teacher capability and which valued student outcomes.

These schools:

- looked deeply into student achievement results to determine the impacts of changes in teaching practice and to decide what aspects of their teaching they needed to improve
- often used the *Teaching as Inquiry* process to identify the necessary teaching improvements that contributed to their appraisal goals
- balanced a professional accountability with a strong desire to make improvements for their students.

What made the difference?

ERO identified the factors associated with an appraisal system's quality and grouped these into four inter-related dimensions:

- school culture focused on improvement
- coherence across school self-review components
- guidance in policy and procedures
- organisational support for appraisal.

School culture focused on improvement

What made a difference was where conversations about teacher practice included frank and open discussions about the impact on learning and achievement of all students.

Staff demonstrate a genuine commitment to make a difference for all students. Collegiality inspires individuals and teams to aim higher. They have created a shared responsibility for professional learning. The principal and deputy principal drive teaching and learning and have planning interviews with teachers to monitor each teacher's personal and professional development. (Primary school)

Coherence across school self-review components

In the schools with high quality teacher appraisal the system was implemented as part of their planning and reporting cycle. It was linked to the strategic plan, the annual plan, the principal's performance management system, and to decisions about teacher professional development (PLD).

School goals and student targets, appraisal and PLD are clearly linked. Once staff goals and actions are decided, appropriate PLD and support are identified. Each teacher chooses a professional learning group where they regularly discuss what they are doing and the impact on students. The PLD team of eight, including two Specialist Classroom Teachers, has overview of PLD needs and identifies in-school expertise to meet these. (Secondary school)

Professional leadership

In schools with highly effective teacher appraisal, ERO found a strong relationship between the rigour schools used for teacher attestation and registration and the quality of their appraisal process. These schools had leaders who knew how to embed appraisal into an improvement-focused self-review system.

This table shows the relationship between the factors for teacher appraisal. Most schools had factors that were necessary but not sufficient for appraisal to be considered **improvement focused**. These factors were the **foundation** for compliant appraisal. Other factors were only observed in schools with **improvement focused** appraisal systems and were **what made the difference**.

Schools can review their own practices by using the self-review questions on the right.

<i>Dimensions of appraisal</i>	<i>Foundation factors- necessary but not sufficient</i>	<i>Factors that made the difference</i>	<i>Self-review questions</i>
A school culture focused on improvement	Collaborative practices	Principals had high expectations for all students and all teachers The analysis of teacher practice included discussions about the impact on learning and achievement of all students	Do we really believe that appraisal can be used to improve teacher capability and student outcomes? When we talk about teacher practice is there a willingness to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seek negative evidence (i.e. seeking evidence where students are not doing well) • see the impact of teaching on all students, to improve teaching • be open to new practices that make a difference?
Coherence across school self-review practices	Alignment of charter goals, student targets, and teacher professional learning and development (PLD) A range of evidence used in discussion about practice	Leaders knew how to embed appraisal into an improvement focused self-review system Teacher goals were the connection between student targets and teacher PLD Leaders had a deep understanding of self-review processes such as evaluation and <i>Teaching as Inquiry</i>	Do we, as leaders, model coherence through our own appraisal processes? Are we aligned in our planning and reporting documentation and self-review actions so that teachers see and experience coherence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • from charter goals and student targets • to principal and teacher appraisal goals • to PLD • then to teacher actions and student outcomes? Do we spend enough time together to make sense of our student and teacher data to know group and individual strengths and to identify how to meet needs?
Guidance in policy and procedures	Guidance in appraisal policy and documentation	Guidance in appraisal policy and documentation included details about using a range of data, setting goals and using <i>Tātaiako</i>	Is our guidance thorough in the areas that we have identified as difficult to do e.g. setting appraisal goals that are both challenging and measurable, and connect school targets with teacher PLD?
Organisational support for appraisal	Organisational support such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training for appraisers • someone with responsibility for the quality and completion of tasks across the school • time • templates for particular tasks 	Leaders understood the organisational support needed to implement robust appraisal across the school Timely, high quality feedback was a feature of the process School systems ensured every teacher's appraisal focused on improved practice	Do we know what organisational support we need for appraisal to contribute to improvements? What opportunities have we provided teachers to design the appraisal system? How do we ensure all teachers receive timely and high quality feedback about the impact of their practices?