

National Report Summary

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

Wellbeing for Children's Success: Primary Schools (February 2015)

All young people want the same things. Things like being included, learning, taking risks and experiencing success, having friends who value and accept them, and feeling competent and confident. They want teachers to be interested in them, to care for them and be trustworthy.

Likewise, parents want similar things for their children. To be happy at school, to feel safe, to be understood, to be well cared for by other adults, to relate well to others and become independent, and to experience success. They want to know that, if something goes wrong for their children at home or school, teachers will help them develop strategies to make things right again.

These things reflect the desired outcomes for student wellbeing.

What is a cohesive approach to wellbeing?

In schools with a cohesive approach wellbeing was woven through all actions.

An agreed set of goals that emphasised student wellbeing guided all actions, reviews and improvements.

Students found school deeply rewarding. Their ability to make and take accountability for their own choices was a key factor. Students had opportunities to develop leadership, self efficacy, and resourcefulness while participating with others within a high-trust culture and through a stimulating curriculum.

The school curriculum promoted wellbeing and reflected the intent of *The New Zealand Curriculum* to use local contexts to encourage and model its values and to develop its key competencies. Leaders, with teachers, actively monitored student wellbeing and reviewed the effectiveness of the approaches taken.

What should all schools be aware of?

Leadership capability to respond to a particular event determined whether a school was on a trajectory of rapid improvement or rapid decline in the way they promoted or responded to student wellbeing.

Primary schools' promotion of and response to the wellbeing of **Years 7 and 8 students** needs to reflect the greater risks students this age and older may face. These students' outcomes are the cumulative effect of wellbeing needs not being met in the earlier years.

Most schools would benefit from exploring what they mean by '**student voice**'. In some schools it meant gathering student views through surveys or focus groups. In other schools it meant students actively participating in school decision making. The difference depended on how well the school promoted student leadership and students being in charge of their learning.

Improved wellbeing practices of many teachers and leaders of primary school-aged young people would support more students to be better prepared for adolescence and be **confident, connected and actively involved lifelong learners during their school years and beyond.**

Schools may find it worthwhile exploring the perspectives on wellbeing of students, parents, family and whānau, teachers and leaders. For example, check with students that they can say the following about themselves

Belonging and connection

- I am valued and accepted and have opportunities to make a positive contribution to my wellbeing, learning and culture of my school.
- I feel proud to be part of my school.
- I have lots of different friends at school.
- I like my school, my teachers and my friends.

Achieving

- Learning is interesting and fun.
- I have a say in what I learn about and how.
- I know when I am working well.
- I am achieving my learning goals and my teacher helps me when I'm stuck.
- My teachers celebrate the things I am good at.

Resilient

- I am learning skills to help me feel better when I am down.
- I get on well with lots of different people at school.
- It's OK to have a go at things I haven't done before.
- I know what to do when I have a problem.
- I learn from my mistakes.
- I know if things are tough I have support to help me keep going.
- There are teachers at school that help me when I am sad or upset.

Socially and emotionally competent

- I make sensible decisions.
- I have good relationships with my friends, my teachers, leaders at school and at home.
- I know what to do when I see someone else needing help.
- I know what I am good at and what others are good at.
- I know what pushes my buttons and have the strategies to improve my situation.
- I can communicate what sort of help I need.
- I am a leader at school.
- I am confident and organised.

Strong sense of identity

- My language, culture and identity are acknowledged, valued and celebrated.
- I am treated fairly and have the same opportunities that other kids have.
- My mana remains intact at all times.
- I like my teachers and can talk to them about things that matter to me.
- My teachers respect, accept and celebrate all the things that make me, me.

Active

- There are lots of spaces where I can play, exercise, dance and relax.
- I have the skills to look after my body, including my diet, hygiene and physical activity.
- I am encouraged to participate and feel safe to go outside my comfort zone.
- I treat my body with kindness and respect.
- There are lots of activities that I can participate in with my friends.
- I am part of a school team, club or interest group.

Nurtured and cared for

- My teachers and friends at school are there for me when I need them.
- All my teachers are trustworthy, fair, good listeners, non-judgemental and keep me safe.
- My teachers care about me and all the other kids in our class/school.
- My teacher listens to me and makes time to talk with me about lots of things.
- My teachers tell me when I have done a good job.
- I feel comfortable and confident to get help from a lot of adults at school if I am down, or experiencing hard times.

Safe and secure

- I feel safe at school; all the spaces and people at school are friendly and safe.
- I feel confident to ask for help when I am in trouble or upset.
- I know the routines in class and at school.
- I feel supported by lots of adults at school.
- I know what is expected of me.
- The adults at school do something when I tell them there is a problem.
- I know what to do when I see someone else who is making unsafe decisions.

Included

- My opinions matter.
- My friends include me.
- I am invited to birthday parties and other activities that my friends go to.
- I see other kids like me in leadership, art, sport, academic and cultural activities.
- There are opportunities to get help with my learning or extension to challenge myself.
- I am part of a team or group that shares my interests.
- There are lots of options, groups and people at school that can help develop what I am good at.
- I am involved in decisions about my health and wellbeing.

➔ FIND OUT MORE

For more ideas and information, you can read the full report online at www.ero.govt.nz/national-reports

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