

Briefing report

Education Review Office (ERO): Changes to ERO Reporting

Date	14 February 2019
Security Level	N/A
ERO Priority	Medium
ERO Reference	M19-3
Date requested	ERO initiated
Date due	ERO initiated
Proactive release	Recommended

Addressee	Action sought	Deadline
Minister of Education	<p>It is recommended that you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) note ERO is moving to insights based scheduling from July 2019 onward b) note from 1 March 2019 ERO education reports will no longer include "return times", but will include a clear judgement about school or service performance c) note such judgements will be aligned with ERO's School Evaluation Indicators, or our Quality Framework for the Early Learning Sector 	



Attachments:

***Education Review Office (ERO):
Changes to ERO Reporting***



Comments:

Minister's Office to complete

Noted

Seen

Approved

Referred to: *Education Agency Meeting*

Date signed by Minister: *14.2.19*

Our Ref: M19-3

14 February 2019

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

Changes to ERO Reporting

Purpose

1. This paper follows my recent discussions with you about changes to ERO's reporting in schools and early learning services. These changes arise from:
 - our move towards insight based scheduling rather than our current reliance on historical review return times to determine our school review timetables.
 - a need to fine tune our review approach and reporting in early learning services in response to performance variability in the sector.

Insight based scheduling in schools

2. From 2019 ERO is moving to a new method of determining its annual review schedules. We will be basing our timetabling decisions not only on the previous review history of each institution, but also considering a range of available information about the school, including student achievement and progress, suspensions and stand downs, access to support and interventions, changes in leadership, and staff turnover, among other measures.
3. We have developed an insights based model that gathers and analyses available information and applies a risk assessment tool in order to identify the schools that should be reviewed in any period. We will also work with the Ministry of Education in identifying the schools and the timing of these reviews.
4. The length of time since any previous review and the findings of that review will still be an important consideration, but we hope that by also reviewing more current information we will be better able to target our resources and the nature of our reviews.
5. ERO reports will therefore not include "return times" from March 2019. However, we are aware that return times have become a proxy for quality, and that parents and communities look to ERO for this information. As a consequence of our discussions with you, on the 4th of February, we have taken the decision to introduce a clear judgement about each school's performance in achieving valued outcomes for its students. Schools will be judged on a continuum:

Needs development	Developing	Well placed	Strong
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6. This nomenclature and the criteria for these assessments were published by ERO on its Website in November 2017 and have been referred to in our advice to schools in our documentation on preparing for a review since that time. They have not however been used in our published reports.
7. ERO's judgement will be supported by comment on the key strengths of the school and the next steps for sustained improvement and future learner success. We recognise that all schools are on a journey of continuous improvement, particularly those who seek to sustain performance at the highest level.
8. The Chief Review Officer will shortly write to each of the peak bodies in the school sector to inform them of these changes.

Early Learning Services

9. ERO already applies a continuum of performance judgements in the reviews of early learning services. This continuum will remain in the early learning service education review reports. The only change in these reports will be removing the review times, to bring these reports in line with those in the school sector. As we introduce our new *Quality Framework for Early Learning* we will closely align these performance judgements with the indicators of the framework.
10. The *Quality Framework for Early Learning* responds to the broad changes in the sector, new research insights and the refreshed early childhood curriculum *Te Whāriki (2017)*. When published we intend this framework to become the "steel backbone" for evaluating quality and performance in the early learning sector and a basis for new ways of reporting ERO's findings to its various audiences. The quality framework will provide a resource for service internal evaluation, and for supporting continuous improvement in the sector.

Assurance reviews

11. As previously discussed ERO is introducing a more nuanced approach to our reviews in early learning services. We have been concerned that with considerable and fast growth in the sector an increasing number of new services and some poorly performing services have a limited understanding of the regulatory and legislative obligations that apply to them. In such services an initial review focus on ensuring minimum compliance in respect of these requirements and an emphasis on child health, safety and wellbeing is a more appropriate review approach.
12. We are therefore trialling a new assurance review process which will provide accountability and assurance for the service, parents and communities that minimum standards are being achieved. Services will either be deemed as "meeting" or "not meeting" the standards. Reports will be brief but provide a clear judgement of service performance and next steps.

13. Services that are meeting the standards will then move onto a subsequent quality of education review, based upon the Quality Framework for Early Learning. Services that fail to meet minimum standards will be referred to the Ministry of Education, and in severe cases we will recommend reassessment of their licence.
14. During the assurance review trial we are giving services 4 weeks' notice of these reviews. Once the methodology is finalised, and reviewer training completed it is likely we will reduce the notification period, and in some cases will undertake assurance reviews at very short notice as "spot checks". This responds to concerns voiced in the sector that some services may "window dress" for their scheduled ERO review.
15. ERO will discuss these changes with members of ECAC at their meeting on 6th March. Previous ECAC meetings have included briefings on our work around Assurance Reviews and our proposed Quality Framework for Early Childhood Services.

Recommendations

16. It is recommended that you:

- a) **note** ERO is moving to insights based scheduling from July 2019 onward **noted**
- b) **note** from 1 March 2019 ERO education reports will no longer include "return times", but will include a clear judgement about school or services performance **noted**
- c) **note** such judgements will be aligned with ERO's School Evaluation Indicators, or our Quality Framework for the Early Learning Sector **noted**



Nicholas Pole
Chief Executive

NOTED/APPROVED



Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

14, 2, 19