



Long-Term Insights Briefing:

Summary of submissions and topic decision

June 2022



Part One: Topic decision

This document provides a summary of submissions and a decision on the subject matter and scope of the Education Review Office's 2022 Long-Term Insights Briefing.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to provide a submission. Your input will help build and strengthen our Long-Term Insights Briefing paper.

On 1 April 2022, we completed our initial public consultation on a proposed topic for the Education Review Office's (ERO) Long-Term Insights Briefing (LTIB). We asked the public for feedback on the topic: *Responding to Diverse Cultures: Schools' Practice*.

We received 21 submissions, 18 on behalf of organisations and three from individuals. The organisations comprised groups with a specific ethnic, cultural, or religious affiliation, as well as pan-ethnic, religious, or education groups.

Submissions were overwhelmingly supportive of our efforts to understand the experiences of this group of learners and their families in the education system. There was broad support for our proposed subject matter and scope.

Having taken the consultation feedback into consideration we have changed the title of our LTIB to: *Embracing Diverse Cultures: School Practices*. The word 'embracing' was chosen as it better aligns with the New Zealand Curriculum expectations for an inclusive and responsive curriculum. Whereas the original wording, 'responding to', could be seen as reactive and creating a division between the school, the learner and their families.

The proposed scoping questions are adopted with three changes (see box). Question one now includes examining how changes in diversity may impact schools. Next, whānau voice is included in question three. This recognises the importance of schools working in partnership with parents and

whānau. This question also now explicitly refers to the importance of learner outcomes.

1. How has diversity changed in schools, how might it change going forward and what impact could this have on schools?
2. What are the education experiences, with a focus on learner outcomes, of diverse students and their whānau?
3. What is good practice in meeting the needs of learners from diverse backgrounds and their whānau?
4. How can schools prepare for a more diverse future and how can they be supported?

Several submissions provided detailed suggestions for areas that we could explore under the existing scope. These have been noted and our team will use them to develop further insights as the work unfolds.

When looking at diverse learners' and their families' education experiences we will look at the full range of learner outcomes: learning and achievement; wellbeing and belonging; and engagement.

Finally, we confirm that the LTIB will focus on ethnic communities, as defined by the Ministry for Ethnic Communities:

- African
- Asian
- Continental European
- Latin-American
- Middle-Eastern

Part Two: Summary of submissions

Background

Long-Term Insights Briefings (LTIB) are a new requirement for the New Zealand public service. Introduced in the Public Service Act 2020, the briefings need to be submitted at least once every three years. The briefings are think-pieces on the future – they are not government policy. Chief executives have a statutory duty to produce the briefings independent of Ministers. There is more information on the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet website ([see here](#)).

Our engagement approach

On 3 March 2022, ERO published our LTIB consultation document, [Responding to Diverse Cultures: Schools' Practice](#).

This document proposed four main questions to guide our approach.

1. *How has diversity changed in schools and how will it change going forward?*
2. *What are the education experiences of diverse students and their whānau?*
3. *What is good practice in meeting the needs of learners from diverse backgrounds?*
4. *How can schools prepare for a more diverse future and how can they be supported?*

We sought feedback on the proposal through written submissions from external stakeholders – asking the following three questions of respondents:

1. *Do you agree with the topic and proposed scope of the Long-Term Insights Briefing?*
2. *Are there any other questions/focus areas you think we should consider?*
3. *Would you like to participate in this work?*

Public consultation ran from 3 March to 1 April 2022. The consultation document was presented in English, Te Reo Māori, Spanish, Simplified Chinese, Hindi, Arabic and Korean. It was hosted on www.ero.govt.nz and was linked through the Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission's website, which lists all government LTIB consultations.

The consultation was communicated using ERO's existing channels and through our partner networks. This included invitations to 169 organisations representing different ethnic, religious, or cultural groups, as well as peak bodies in education, and government agencies including the Ministry for Ethnic Communities, the Ministry of Education, and the Human Rights Commission.

The following summarises what we heard.

Summary of responses

We received 21 submissions by email over the consultation period, 18 on behalf of organisations and three from individuals. The organisations comprised groups with a specific ethnic, cultural, or religious affiliation, as well as pan-ethnic, religious, or education groups.

We are grateful for the time and effort spent by submitters in engaging with our proposal and contributing to our approach to investigating this topic. We heard people's input around the importance of the topic, the value of collaboration and engagement, additional areas for focus, and where our scope could be expanded or refined.

Submissions were overwhelmingly supportive of our efforts to understand the experiences of this group of learners and their families in the education system.

Submitters were generous in sharing their personal experiences as well as identifying issues relevant to their community and the initiatives undertaken to support their families and children.

Here is a summary of the responses to the three questions we asked.

Question 1: Do you agree with the topic and proposed scope of the Long-Term Insights Briefing?

There was broad support for our proposed topic, with the large majority of submissions agreeing to the topic and scope of the project as stated.

"We are really excited about this initiative that has potential to make a difference to the physical, mental, social and cultural wellbeing of our children/tamariki, rangatahi, their families/whānau and their future."

"Schools are an essential part of our lives and education is one of the fundamental keys to impacting social changes. The New Zealand education system needs to ensure the quality of the practice is inclusive, understanding different strengths and needs of students and their whānau, which then enhances the academic success rates and helps more New Zealanders to flourish."

"We agree our ethnic and cultural diversity is increasing in New Zealand society and recognise the importance of planning and responding to this so that we are better placed to support education that is responsive and inclusive of all learners."

"Yes, I agree with the Long-Term Insights topics. This report is a welcome move, as it is long overdue."

One submission suggested alternative wording for the topic.

"I would have to disagree with the topic because the word "responding" itself is already marking a division between the school and the learners. A friendlier and more inclusive topic proposal would be "Connecting with the Diverse Cultures". It's relevant to your Long-term Insights Briefing because the purpose of your proposed topic is to learn about the cultures of the learners in order for the schools to provide long term positive experience for the learners."

Having taken this feedback into consideration, we have changed the title of the LTIB to: *Embracing Diverse Cultures: School Practices*. The word 'embracing' was chosen as it better aligns with the New Zealand Curriculum expectations for an inclusive and responsive curriculum.

One submission also raised the possibility of including socio-economic factors in our analysis.

"While I agree with the proposed scope, I think there is a need for an additional layer of analysis around socioeconomic backgrounds. Not differentiating between different "diverse" groups will mean that some problems will escape the observation and remain unnoticed."

Another highlighted the importance of including school boards in our approach.

"We note that boards are not included in this research, yet school boards are an integral group of school leadership."

Both these suggestions can be explored under the existing scope. Our team has noted them and will use them to develop further insights as the work unfolds.

Three of the 21 submissions did not specifically answer this question.

Question 2: Are there any other questions/focus areas you think we should consider?

Most submissions offered support for identified areas and suggestions for additional focus areas. Key themes emerging from the submissions were how schools address the following areas.

Support students from diverse cultures

- Addressing bullying, abuse, racism, and religious discrimination incidents and supporting mental health of students from diverse cultures.
- Identifying unconscious biases and stereotypes against diverse groups and eliminating stigmas/stereotypes about ESOL/ELL services.
- Providing accessible support systems for students from diverse cultures and helping build their confidence, sense of identity, and self-esteem.
- Helping students and families navigate between cultural expectations of home, school, and the wider community.
- Tracking children's previous academic records.

Connect with families and ethnic communities

- How schools are linked to and engage with ethnic communities within their catchment.
- Building relationships with non-English speaking families.
- Having a focus on migrant families and helping them to understand the importance of the Treaty of Waitangi.
- Supporting refugee families.
- Ensuring diverse parent representation and participation on school boards.

- Helping communities to access resources and facilities for language learning.

Building teachers' cultural awareness and competence

- Ensuring a culturally competent workforce and providing professional development and learning to build teachers' cultural awareness and knowledge.
- Promoting collaboration and cross-pollination between mainstream schools and community/ethnic schools to learn about effective strategies and approaches.

Ensuring a curriculum that reflects diverse cultures

- Supporting language learning – both home and host languages.
- Including students' diverse cultures in the curriculum.
- Educating students about multiculturalism to create a more inclusive environment and provide cohesive learning at schools.
- Taking a lead in preparing students for diversity by reflecting the diversity of their school communities and learning about religions within the curriculum.

These suggestions can be explored under the existing scope. Our team has noted them and will use them to develop further insights as the work unfolds.

Question 3: Would you like to participate in this work?

Nearly all respondents indicated they would like to participate further in our project. Proposed involvement included:

- approaching people to participate in the research
- hosting of focus groups
- participating in workshops
- facilitating feedback

- discussing changes to address critical improvements
- sharing of reports and research information.

We look forward to engaging with these and other groups throughout the development of the LTIB content.

Other feedback to support our approach to engagement

Several submissions stressed the importance of how we engage with ethnic communities, including the importance of engaging with families and gathering a wide range of perspectives from diverse communities.

"To understand the experiences of learners from diverse backgrounds you will have to ask those learners and their families."

"Focus groups and surveys will need to be widely published so communities have the opportunity to respond."

ERO values authentic learner voice. We want to hear directly from ethnically diverse learners and their families about their experiences. To do this we will hold focus groups and conduct

online surveys. These will be widely disseminated through a number of channels.

We were grateful that several submitters shared personal stories from their own families' lived experiences.

Several submissions gave feedback about other aspects to consider in the gathering of data. These included:

- how the current categories for identifying ethnicity do not adequately capture complexity and ways in which ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity intersect and co-exist
- considering people with refugee backgrounds as a specific form of diversity

"We consider ERO can play a role here by recognising refugee backgrounds as a specific form of diversity and their unique experiences and challenges"

- being aware that children may feel reluctant to voice any minor transgressions against cultural and religious norms.

Part Three: Next steps

We will continue engaging with stakeholders as we develop the draft LTIB.

In September 2022, we plan to publish a draft LTIB and will again seek public feedback. This is another opportunity for you to contribute to our Long-Term Insights Briefing.

We aim to publish the final LTIB by November 2022.

You can sign up for updates or other opportunities to be involved by emailing LTIB@ero.govt.nz