



Briefing report

Education Review Office (ERO): Learning in Residential Care: Findings and Recommendations

Date	10 June 2021
Security Level	N/A
ERO Priority	Medium
ERO Reference	M21-57
Date requested	ERO initiated
Date due	ERO initiated
Proactive release	Recommended

Addressee	Action sought	Deadline
<p>Min Davis Associate Minister of Education</p> <p>Min Tinetti Associate Minister of Education</p>	<p>It is recommended that you:</p> <p>a) Note the attached near final draft reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Learning in Residential Care: They knew I wanted to Learn.</i> • <i>Education Provision in Oranga Tamariki Residential Care: Kingslea School.</i> • <i>Education Provision in Oranga Tamariki Residential Care: Central Regional Health School.</i> • <i>Education Provision in Oranga Tamariki Residential Care: Barnardo's.</i> <p>b) Note that ERO intends to release these reports before the end of June 2021.</p> <p>c) Note that ERO will release accompanying guides for different audiences.</p> <p>d) Note that this briefing is recommended for proactive release after the publication of the reports.</p>	



Attachments:

**Education Review Office (ERO):
Learning in Residential Care:
Findings and Recommendations**



Comments:

Minister's Office to complete

Noted	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seen	<input type="checkbox"/>
Approved	<input type="checkbox"/>
Referred to:	
Date signed by Minister:	



Our Ref: M21-57

10 June 2021

Hon Kelvin Davis
Associate Minister of Education

Hon Jan Tinetti
Associate Minister of Education

Learning in Residential Care: Findings and Recommendations

Purpose

1. We have previously discussed with you our provisional findings from our evaluation of education for students in Oranga Tamariki residential care. This work is now completed. In it we identify a range of areas that need strengthening. This briefing sets out the findings of the reports, recommendations to strengthen education for these priority students and plans for publication.

Background

2. There are approximately between 700-800 tamariki and rangatahi in Oranga Tamariki residential care every year. They are some of our most vulnerable students. Māori make up two-thirds of the population at any given time.
3. Education is critical for these students. They are more likely to have challenges around school engagement and achievement and often have additional learning needs. The evaluation found that learning in residential care can be an opportunity to re-engage these students in education. Students in care who achieve NCEA Level 2 are much more likely to have better future outcomes including higher levels of employment and lower levels of long-term benefit dependency.

The Reports

4. ERO's evaluation answered:
 - What are the education outcomes for these students?
 - How good is education provision for these students?
 - How strong are the supports for these students' education?

5. ERO intends to release 4 reports, and a summary, with the findings of the evaluation. These reports are:
- ***Learning in Residential Care: They knew I wanted to learn.*** The main report sets out the overall findings and recommendations for improvement. A near final draft of this report is attached at Appendix A.
 - ***Three Provider reports (Kingslea School, Central Regional Health School and Barnados)*** these cover the eight residential sites operated by the three education providers. Final drafts of these reports are attached at Appendix B. These have been fact checked with the providers.

Findings

6. ERO's evaluation found seven major findings:
- i. Students in residential care are positive about their learning. Their pass rate of NZQA assessments attempted is high when in residence but they are often studying credits with limited pathways.
 - ii. Students' learning is disrupted and disconnected as they transition between provision.
 - iii. There is no agreed education model or a clear picture of what high quality education looks like for these students.
 - iv. The model of education provision in residences makes it harder to grow expertise and is contributing to high levels of variability of provision and, in some cases, confusion on access to learning support services.
 - v. There is a commitment to improving outcomes for Māori and culturally responsive practice, but practice is variable.
 - vi. There is some good practice and some workforce capability to support positive educational outcomes.
 - vii. There is a lack of opportunities for whanau and caregivers to connect to their children's learning.
7. Across the eight sites ERO found:
- Two sites were assessed as mainly developing/ further action.
 - Four sites assessed as mainly developed/developing.
 - Two sites were assessed as mainly well established/developed.
8. ERO has required follow up action to be taken by the two weakest sites.

Recommendations

9. To strengthen education for these priority students, ERO's evaluation has identified three areas for improvement:
- Area 1: Improving the quality of the students' education while in residence.
Area 2: Growing expertise and reducing variability of provision.
Area 3: Students having access to high quality education when they move out of residence.
10. On 12 May 2021, you met with officials from ERO, the Ministry of Education and Oranga Tamariki to discuss ERO's findings and requested the three agencies identify high level options for improvement to education in residential care.

11. Agencies have met and discussed high level options for improving education in residential care. Each of these options will require further cross-agency consideration and detailed policy development including costings. Based on this discussion ERO's report includes seven recommendations:

Action area	Ministries considers
To improve quality of education in residences	1. Developing a quality practice framework
	2. Making available specialist training and professional networks
	3. Enabling information to follow the student
To increase reducing variability of provision	4. Re-examine the model of provision and develop options including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a Tuakana-Teina model • a Networked Providers model
To increase access to education after leaving residences	5. Creating education navigators to support student pathways
	6. Earlier planning for pathways after residence
	7. Additional in-school support for students

12. Further detail on the recommendations are set out below.

Action Area One: Improving the quality of education in residences

A quality practice framework

13. ERO's evaluation found that there is currently no agreed education model or clear picture of what high quality education looks like for these students, but there is a strong evidence base about what is quality provision.
14. To increase the quality of education in residences ERO recommends that the three agencies (Ministry of Education, Oranga Tamariki and ERO) in consultation with experts, whānau, iwi, providers, and government agencies develop a quality practice framework for education in residences. The framework should:
- Be adaptable to working in a range of residential care settings.
 - Draw on Māori education frameworks.
 - Include best practice approaches to connecting whanau to students learning.
 - Include information sharing, assessment of education need, and pathway planning.
15. A key part of the framework would be connecting Whanau and caregivers to students' learning, Oranga Tamariki could work with the education providers in residences to create practice guidance on connecting Whanau and caregivers to children's learning while in residence and ensuring the environment supports this.
16. To ensure sustained improvement across the three agencies ERO recommends there be clear responsibility for keeping the framework up to date, embedding it into practice and monitoring provision against it.

Make available specialist training and professional networks

17. ERO's evaluation found teaching these students requires expertise, and teachers would benefit from more support to improve their skills and opportunities to learn from each other.
18. To meet this need, ERO recommends the Ministry of Education work with providers to:
 - Ensure the availability of specialist training including teaching neuro-diverse students, trauma informed practice and working in multi-disciplinary teams.
 - Support teachers to have professional networks across different residences for example through a Community of Practice, annual conference, joint training and sharing of expertise.

Enabling information to follow the student

19. ERO's evaluation found that there are currently barriers to sharing education information about students across agencies, with families and between transitioning schools. This has led to students' learning being disrupted and disconnected as they transition between provision.
20. To support timely information-sharing ERO recommends the Ministry of Education identify options to link residences with Te Rito and/or other IT systems used by schools. This will enable education providers in residences to access up to date. ERO recognises that more detailed technical work would be required on how it can be put into practice.

Area 2: Reducing variability of provision

Re-examine the model of provision

21. ERO's evaluation found that the model of education provision in residences makes it harder to grow expertise and is contributing to high levels of variability of provision. Throughout the last decade of ERO reviews, students continue to receive variable quality, and in some cases, inadequate education depending on where in the country they are placed.
22. The most well-developed provision is within the provider that was dedicated to teaching in residential schools. With a concentration of teachers and expertise there was greater opportunity to share good practice. Isolated providers and teachers had weaker education provision. ERO also found that providers are largely working in isolation of each other and the broader teaching community.
23. In order to reduce variability of provision ERO recommends that the Ministry of Education re-examine the model of provision and develop options for ministers on new models of provision including:
 - A **Tuakana-Teina** model where a single virtual school (Tuakana) oversees locally tailored providers (Teina). The Tuakana would be required to have a strong Te Ao Māori focus, and the localised providers (Teina) to work in partnership with mana whenua.
 - A **Networked Providers** model where there remain multiple providers but they are required to form a network, take part in regular cross-provider networking opportunities, share practice between providers, have shared PLD in commons areas of interest and follow a single Quality Framework. This is more closely aligned with the existing model.

24. ERO's view is that a Tuakana-Teina model is more likely to lead to consistent provision and the depth of expertise gained from scale, and a Networked Providers model is more likely to lead to locally tailored provision. Both of these models may have cost implications and require a change to existing contracting arrangements.

Area 3: Increasing access to education after leaving residences

25. ERO's evaluation found significant issues with students transition out of residence including a lack of understanding about educational options available for students, challenges in finding schools that will accept the students, and students not being able to continue the subjects/courses they are already studying. This means that gains in education engagement and learning made in residence risk being lost.

Education navigators

26. Social workers currently find it challenging to find schools who are willing to take these students. They are not always aware of all the educational options, which will best meet the students' education needs or how to navigate them. As the average age increases of students in residences there is an increasing range of secondary-tertiary options that the social workers are not always aware of. The Ministry of Education and Oranga Tamariki are aware of this issue and have work underway to consider a broker or navigator role.
27. ERO recommends that the Ministry of Education and Oranga Tamariki develop options for a new education navigator function that could build relationships with local schools and tertiary providers and works with social workers and the Youth Court to find the best education placements for these students. Having experts to fill this brokerage role can lead to better education pathways for students.
28. Further work will be needed to ensure the education navigator function complements and does not duplicate existing roles. It would also require additional funding.
29. The education navigators could be supported by the quality practice framework setting out how providers should plan for students' education pathways from residences – including early assessment of need and identifying from the outset education pathways after residence.

Additional in-school support for students

30. Through the evaluation ERO heard consistently from teachers that while these students may be ready to leave residential care, they still often have additional needs and can struggle in a normal school classroom without additional support.
31. To address this ERO recommends the Ministry of Education investigate options for supporting these students in school after they leave residences. This could include, for example, a support from the education navigator role, targeted additional support or intensive wraparound service for those students with complex needs. Further work will be needed to ensure it aligned with other support for students with additional needs.

Next Steps

32. These recommendations have the potential to significantly improve education (and so later life) outcomes for students in residences. The recommendation are high level and require a work programme jointly led by the Ministry of Education and Oranga Tamariki, and supported by ERO, to develop more detailed options for Ministers including costing.

Publication

33. ERO intends to publish the four reports (Learning in Residential Care and Provider Reports) on its website on the 24th June. To enable students and their whanau to understand the findings and providers to learn from the findings ERO will:

- Publish a short summary.
- Publish four tailored guides for students, whanau, providers and social workers.
- Hold a Forum to share with providers and key stakeholders the findings of the report and to highlight models of good practice.

34. It is recommended that you:

a) **Note** the attached near final draft reports:

Noted

- *Learning in Residential Care: They knew I wanted to Learn*
- *Education Provision in Oranga Tamariki Residential Care: Kingslea School*
- *Education Provision in Oranga Tamariki Residential Care: Central Regional Health School;*
- *Education Provision in Oranga Tamariki Residential Care: Barnardo's.*

b) **Note** that ERO intends to release these reports before the end of June 2021.

Noted

c) **Note** that ERO will release accompanying guides for different audiences.

Noted

d) **Note** that this briefing is recommended for proactive release after the publication of the reports.

Noted



Nicholas Pole
Chief Executive

NOTED/APPROVED

Kelvin Davis
Associate Minister of Education

___/___/___

NOTED/APPROVED



Jan Tinetti
Associate Minister of Education

___/___/2021