



Briefing report

Education Review Office (ERO): *Learning in a Covid-19 World: The Impact of Covid-19 on Teachers and Principals*

Date	18 November 2021
Security Level	N/A
ERO Priority	Medium
ERO Reference	M21-113
Date requested	ERO initiated
Date due	ERO initiated
Proactive release	Recommended

Addressee	Action sought	Deadline
Associate Minister of Education	<p>It is recommended that you:</p> <p>a) Note that ERO intends to release the attached report (<i>Learning in a Covid-19 World: The Impact of Covid-19 on Teachers and Principals</i>) on Thursday 2 December.</p> <p>b) Agree to forward this briefing and the attached reports to the Minister for Covid-19 Response Hon Chris Hipkins, and your other education colleagues: the Hon Kelvin Davis and Hon Aupito William Sio as Associate Ministers of Education.</p> <p>c) Note this briefing is recommended for proactive release at the time of publication of this report.</p>	



Attachments:

***Education Review Office (ERO):
Learning in a Covid-19 World: The
Impact of Covid-19 on Teachers
and Principals, Media Release***



Comments:

Minister's Office to complete

Noted

Seen

Approved

Referred to:

Date signed by Minister:



Our Ref: M21-113

18 November 2021

Hon Jan Tinetti
Associate Minister of Education

Learning in a Covid-19 World: The Impact of Covid-19 on Teachers and Principals

Purpose

1. This briefing provides you with a near final draft of the latest in ERO's series of reports on the impact of Covid-19 on the education sector, attached as Appendix A. We intend to publish the report on Thursday 2 December.
2. This report looks at the impact of Covid-19 on teachers and principals, includes suggestions on how schools can prepare for 2022, and sets out ideas on support for teachers and principals.

Background

3. ERO has been looking at the impact of Covid-19 on schools and students since the first national lockdown in 2020. Our work has shone a light on how schools have responded to the Covid-19 crisis, what lessons have been learnt, and the challenges going forward.
4. In the past 18 months ERO has:
 - a. Last year:
 - i. carried out 750 interviews with principals, board chairs, and teachers
 - ii. surveyed, cumulatively, 14,772 students, 1,380 teachers, and over 1,800 principals
 - iii. conducted 36 focus groups with teachers, trustees, students, and whānau
 - b. This year:
 - i. followed up with the same students, teachers, and principals in Term 2 about the ongoing impacts of Covid-19 and how prepared they were feeling about another lockdown
 - ii. talked to a selection of schools about their experiences of the recent Level 4 (and ongoing Level 3) lockdown.
5. To date we have produced a range of reports and guides on the impact of Covid-19 on schools and students and how schools can support students. This new report focuses on the impact on teachers and principals. In 2022 we will be providing you with reports looking in more depth at the impact on Māori and Pacific students.

Overall findings

6. We know that Covid-19 has had a big impact on teachers and principals. They have had to react quickly and adapt the way they work. This research has found many examples of how teachers and principals have innovated to meet the needs of their students and communities. But this has come at a cost.

Impact on teachers and principals

7. Covid-19 has impacted on teachers' and principals' wellbeing.
 - a. Teachers' and principals' enjoyment of work declined between September 2020 and June 2021.
 - b. Just over a quarter of principals reported needing further support for their wellbeing *before* the 2021 lockdown.
 - c. During the most recent lockdown, principals reported that they and their staff were experiencing increased anxiety, exhaustion, and stress, exacerbated by the uncertainty around lockdown duration.
 - d. Principals of smaller schools and younger teachers were struggling the most.
8. There has also been an impact on teachers' and principals' workload.
 - a. Teachers and principals were increasingly concerned about their workload in June, with only a third of teachers and a fifth of principals reporting that their workload was manageable.
 - b. This has also been exacerbated during the most recent lockdown, with principals particularly having to take on many roles at once and making multiple complex and high-stakes decisions.
 - c. Younger and female principals and teachers, and principals of smaller schools have found their workload less manageable.
 - d. Staff vacancies may be contributing to workload, with lower decile schools and secondary schools reporting it hard to find the teachers they need.
 - e. Teachers' wellbeing and workload has also been impacted by their concerns about student behaviour. In June and July, a third of teachers and principals reported that student behaviour was worse than they would have expected for that time of the year.
9. The impact in Auckland, where there have been more disruptions, has been greater than in other parts of the country.
 - a. Principals in Auckland were less likely to report that their communities had recovered financially.
 - b. Schools in Auckland have been slower to recover from disruptions.
 - c. Teachers in Auckland have been more impacted.
 - d. Māori and Pacific students are more likely to be in schools that have faced greater disruptions (Auckland schools, also smaller schools for Māori students).

Innovation of teaching practices

10. Schools have adjusted practices in response to the Covid-19 disruptions.
 - a. In 2020, the three most common shifts in practice that schools reported were:
 - i. increased whānau engagement in children's learning
 - ii. more student agency and self-directed learning

- iii. increased use of digital technology for teaching and learning.
- b. Of these, the increased use of digital technology had endured most.
- c. Hoped-for gains in student agency do not seem to have been widely realised.
- d. Previous whānau relationship-building and greater familiarity and use of digital technology did support schools to adjust to the 2021 lockdowns quickly.

Future challenges

- 11. Looking forward, we have identified likely challenges for teachers and principals from:
 - a. Implementing hybrid/blended learning (teaching both onsite and online).
 - b. Short but sudden school closures.
 - c. Increased staff absences.
 - d. Reduced student engagement and attendance.
 - e. Increased student anxiety.
 - f. Increased learning gaps.
- 12. ERO is suggesting that schools will be well placed to meet these challenges if they plan now to:
 - a. Prepare for hybrid/blended learning.
 - b. Support learning catch-up and accelerated progress.
 - c. Actively support re-engagement.
 - d. Target students' wellbeing.
- 13. To do this, ERO is proposing the broader system support teachers and principals by:
 - a. Supporting availability of teachers in all schools.
 - b. Creating opportunities to share effective approaches.
 - c. Making use of Te Kura's expertise in digital learning.
 - d. Supporting principals' wellbeing through stronger networks and access to expert support.

Publication

- 14. ERO intends to publish this report on **Thursday 2 December 2021** to enable schools to learn from the findings before the start of Term 1, and for teachers and principals who participated in the research in June to see the results. Teachers and principals have welcomed our Covid-19 reports to date as an opportunity to share their experiences and learn from their peers.
- 15. We plan to share the report with key groups through:
 - a. An ERO media release on the morning of publication (Appendix A).
 - b. Publication of the reports on the ERO website.
 - c. Sending the reports to peak bodies in the English-medium education sector.
 - d. Delivering an online forum early in Term 1 on the key findings and actions schools can take.

Recommendations

16. It is recommended that you:

- a) **Note** that ERO intends to release the attached report (*Learning in a Covid-19 World: The Impact of Covid-19 on Teachers and Principals*) on Thursday 2 December.
- b) **Agree** to forward this briefing and the attached reports to the Minister for Covid-19 Response Hon Chris Hipkins, and your other education colleagues: the Hon Kelvin Davis and Hon Aupito William Sio as Associate Ministers of Education.
- c) **Note** this briefing is recommended for proactive release at the time of publication of this report.

Noted

Agreed disagreed

Noted



Jane Lee
Acting Chief Executive

NOTED/APPROVED



Jan Tinetti
Associate Minister of Education

28/11 /2021