



TE TARI AROTAKE MĀTAURANGA
Education Review Office

Impact of COVID on ECE, Schools and Kura in August 2022: Pulse check



What intelligence informs these slides?



ERO collected the following intelligence :

1. Survey responses from 63 Evaluation Partners across all regions who work in English Medium schools and early learning services, including
 - 19 EPs who work with over 150 early learning services
 - 44 EPs who work with over 500 schools
2. Structured interviews from:
 - Seven Māori medium kura
 - Ten English medium schools with high Māori populations
3. Interim data collected in late term 2 and term 3 from ERO research looking at:
 - Attendance
 - Embracing Diversity in Schools
 - Disabled learners
 - Good Practice in deploying Teacher Aides



TE TARI AROTAKE MĀTAURANGA
Education Review Office

The impact of Covid-19 in August 2022: Early Learning Services



Staff shortages due to illness and loss of unvaccinated staff is impacting....

... quality of teaching practice

- Relieving staff do not have the same relationships with learners and can have poor teaching practice

... and business operations

- Reduced staffing levels mean services are either dropping licensing numbers or closing on days that they cannot meet licensing requirements
- Smaller services are less financially available.

Kaiako are seeing more stressed whānau, with reports ranging from mild stress to increased domestic violence

- largely driven by financial concerns, but also juggling childcare with employment responsibilities, particularly when sick leave is running out



Children only ever have learnt in a pandemic world

- Increased anxiety, including separation anxiety, illness anxiety, anxiety about stress at home

The impact of COVID on young children has been significant-the pandemic has ruled the majority of their lives. They have seen and lived in a world of heightened stress, anxiety and the unknown. They have spent more time home, living in a state of apprehension and unease. They have had limited contact with extended whanau, impacting on vital relationships that help build connections to a wider world, a world many are now frightened of.

Emerging signs that attendance is declining

- Whanau can't afford the fees, or afford food or clothes to send their child to ECE
- Staff illness causes centers to close, reducing learning and putting pressure on families who are juggling employment with little or no sick leave remaining
- Parents are keeping children home more often when they are unwell

Staffing issues are affecting learners - learners are less settled and less engaged



Teachers are less focussed on the curriculum and learning and more focussed on managing their wellbeing, the wellbeing of children and whānau, and keeping the centre open

Assessment for, and of, learning, planning for progress in learning and evaluating the impact of intentional teaching on outcomes for learners has diminished in quality and regularity. Short staffing means many kaiako do not have the non-contact time, or energy, to complete quality planning and evaluation for the learners. The emotional wellbeing of learners and readiness for learning is impacted by minimal staffing levels and poor teaching due to stressed staff, and at times poor quality relievers. Some services are just surviving and therefore tamariki are not thriving.

Learning delays include:

- Delayed speech and language development due to reduced learning opportunities
- Stress and anxiety hindering essential brain development for under-3s

Areas and populations where the impact is greater

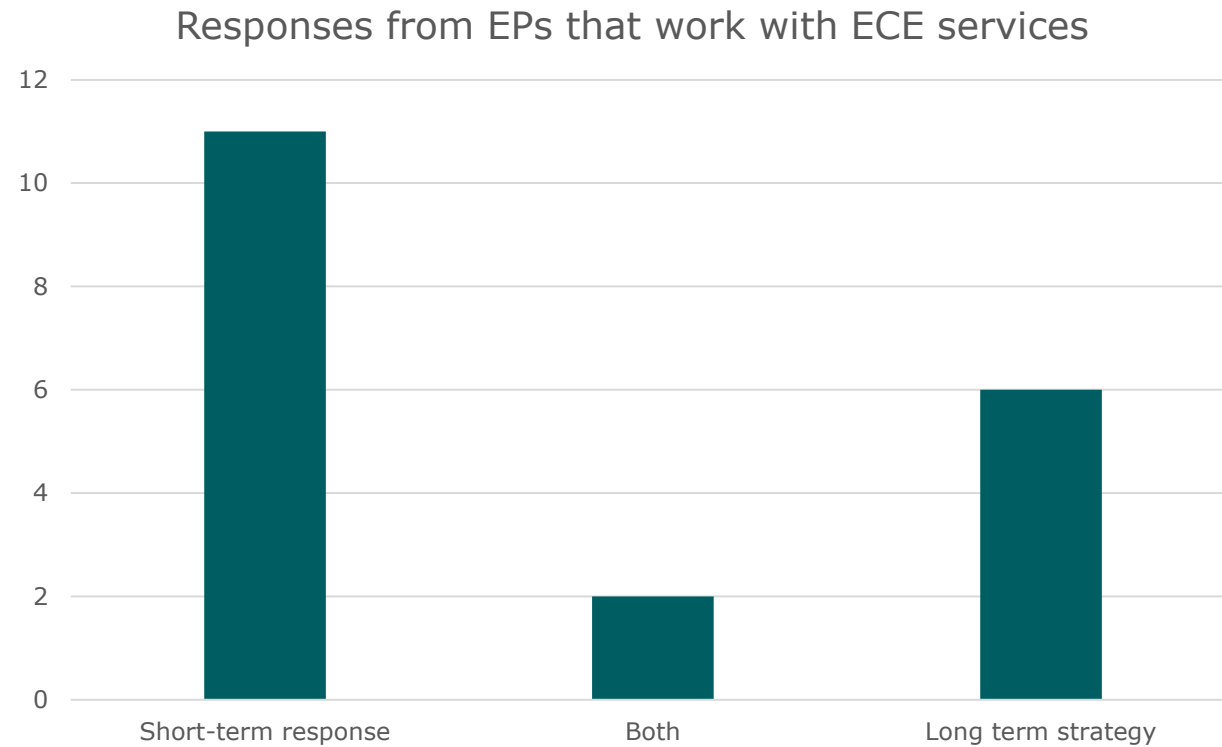


Low socio economic communities harder hit by financial impact of pandemic, leading to risk of decreased attendance – particularly among Māori learners and Under-2s

More children from Pacific communities withdrawn from ECE to protect the high risk elders that they live with

Rural and small stand alone services have had a high impact as they are isolated, not able to get relief staff and were more affected by the vaccination mandate

Hybrid learning – short-term response or a valuable long-term teaching strategy



What has been tried that helps?



The key things that were reported to support services were:

- Provision of technology tools to enable children to continue to learn at home
- PLD webinars that support ECE Kaiako with their progress
- MOE funded teacher only days, which are used to build connections and understanding of the curriculum
- ECE hubs, that work like Kahui Ako, which help support each other
- Regular MOE bulletins and positive relationships with MOE advisors

What new supports may help?



The key things that could support services were:

- Support for whānau to help learners learn at home, including technology
- More research and guidance on what works to address the impact of covid in ECE services
 - Sharing of good practice
 - Hybrid learning modules that support continuity of learning
- Clear messaging and resources to support services to refocus on achievement and learning
- Increasing supply of qualified ECE teachers, including introducing training requirements for relief teachers in ECE

Support the sector (ECE) to regain composure, to help minimise the stress and support them in managing what has become an unsettled new normal.



TE TARI AROTAKE MĀTAURANGA
Education Review Office

The impact of Covid-19 in August 2022: Schooling – English medium



Staff shortages due to illness staff is impacting....

.... Quality of teaching

- Insufficient relieving staff mean learners are being watched rather than taught

..... and teacher wellbeing

- General fatigue and increased staff illness

Increased expectations on teachers, with decreased time to learn themselves

- Teachers having to teach material they are not familiar with due to learning delays
- Teachers own development being impacted, e.g. new teachers not making expected professional growth

Whanau anxiety has increased, particularly about

- Supporting their children who are learning at home
- Health and safety of their children when at school

Concerns in relation to the impact of the pandemic on learners



Attendance issues are widespread and of most concern to schools

- Learners disappearing from schools – kids feeling like they can't catch up so don't go to school
- High rates of absence due to illness, means the **habit of attendance** is lost

Increased anxiety and decreased enjoyment of learning

- Increased learner anxiety due to covid, financial stress at home
- Less fun learning activities and reduced education outside of the classroom

Decline in relationships

- More students falling below the radar of their teachers
- Less time for whanau and teachers to build learning partnership

Tension between health and safety and comfortable learning environment

- Parents more comfortable sending children to school when they are wearing masks
- Teachers see masks as a barrier to seeing learners' expression
- Learners do not enjoy wearing masks and cold classrooms makes learning uncomfortable

It feels like we are always in catch-up mode because as soon as students show any sign of sickness they are sent home and are missing large chunks of work. Teachers aren't offering as meaningful programmes because their focus is split between supporting students home sick, supporting the school when we are short staffed, and providing a programme for students in front of them. – School



Learners who have spent all or most of their schooling during pandemic have never had a 'normal' schooling experience

Attendance issues are widespread

- Delays in new entrants starting school, and reduced support for new entrants transitioning from ECE centres
- Inconsistent messaging about illness means learners are kept home more often (e.g. hayfever related coughs and sniffles)
- Parents believing its easier to catch up younger years so more comfortable with keeping learners' home

Instructional learning required for introduction to reading and numeracy not possible in hybrid model

Less time with peers means less social and emotional development leading to increased behavioural issues

Very concerned about year 1 to 3 in all schools as reading data shows decreased capability also [concerning] behaviour trends, particularly transition to school children - many anxious and or lacking social skills, EP



Year 13s entire secondary qualifications disrupted by pandemic. Year 11's entire secondary schooling disrupted by pandemic, Year 9s starting secondary school with disrupted primary school learning

Our biggest concern lies with our year 11 students whom, since year 9, have had their learning impacted by Covid. They're the ones who have felt it the most and this is reflective in their motivation and current NCEA achievement. - School

Attendance issues are widespread and students are leaving school

- Increased 'period-skipping' or staying at home to complete assessments
- Lack of access to careers advice so students are making choices based on what is best for them now – e.g. Trades people standing at gate offering learners apprenticeships
- Learners having to work to support family, or being asked to cover shifts during school hours due to staffing shortages
- Learners so far behind they do not think there is any point in continuing to attend school

Students showing signs of stress and anxiety

- Stress around completing internal assessments and preparing for external assessment
- Stress around being prepared for the next year of study – from Year 9 to Year 13



- Social and emotional wellbeing is being prioritised over achievement, and schools are not always fully aware of the impact on students achievement
- Subjects requiring materials cannot be taught by hybrid learning so students are doing less practical learning (e.g. science laboratories, materials technology)
- Loss of perspective on what normal achievement is – from continuing to test when learners haven't learnt the material, to not knowing whose learning is delayed
- In primary schools, junior learners are well behind in their achievement – significant drop in literacy and numeracy
- In secondary schools:
 - Covid credits means learners may not have learnt the prerequisite material
 - Learners can't see a pathway to achieve the credits they need to get their qualifications

Areas and Populations where the impact is greater



- Low socio economic communities face greater challenges - learning in more affluent areas more likely to be back to pre pandemic as parents have been better able to support them with their learning and have access to technology

Students are opting to work to support their whanau. Being in a low socioeconomic area means many whanau have struggled through the waves that Covid brings. Lockdowns have encouraged this and we are getting many students not completing their full educational potential - School

- Pacific students attendance and returning to learning is declining. This is consistent with national figures, which show Pacific students attendance declining at a faster rate the Māori*.
- Lack of clarity on how to support immunocompromised learners meaning disabled learners more likely to be absent

*Source: [RAPID RESPONSE \(educationcounts.govt.nz\)](https://educationcounts.govt.nz/)



Of the ten schools we talked to:

- **6** identified **engagement** one of their top concerns. Types of issues raised ranged from dealing with behavioural issues, to the impact relivers had on students participation in learning
- **5** identified **attendance**. They mentioned repeated absences due to sickness circulating through schools impacting continuity of learning, students having to balance work and learning and students not showing up
- **4** identified the **financial and social security issues** affecting whānau impacting in the classroom. Students having to work to help support family, or leave school to work
- **4** identified balancing **health and safety** requirements with attendance, including having to close schools because of no teachers, multigenerational families keeping children at home to keep elders safe
- There was a recurring theme of teacher burnout, with some seeking to **leave the profession**

The impact on achievement in these schools was variable. However, almost all said their children who came from their lowest socio-economic families were the hardest hit.

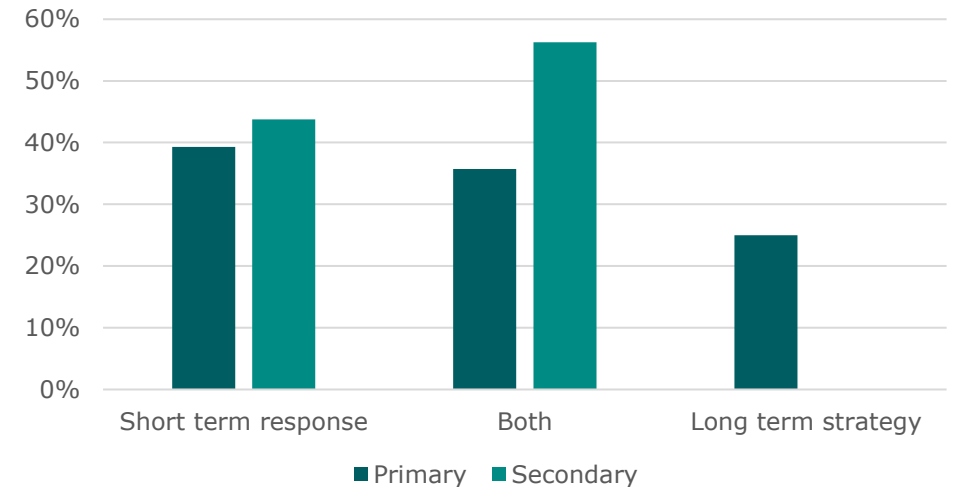
Spotlight: Hybrid learning – short term response or a valuable long-term teaching strategy



Hybrid learning is often driven by practical considerations, not what is best for the learner

- works for students with agency, others struggle and the family doesn't know how to support them
- senior secondary school students more likely to be asked to hybrid learn as they can be at home alone
- Low socio economic communities less able to support hybrid learning e.g. schools with high Māori rolls talked about the need to have hard packs as whānau preferred them and they didn't require Wi-Fi
- Schools are not yet integrating at home and in person learning, and so having to set up at home learning is putting pressure on teachers

EPs that work in schools



60% of our community do not have connectivity and our primary learning management system requires connectivity. We capitalised on the government's distribution of devices. However, without connectivity, we were unable to deliver meaningful learning programs.

What has been tried that helps?



We heard that these approaches had helped:

Improving quality of hybrid learning

- Training teachers on how to make it work
- Improving access to at home learning by paying for Wi-Fi and providing printed out packs
- Including whānau in decisions on whether and how hybrid is included in students learning
- Monitoring students who are hybrid learning

Monitoring and planning learning programmes that lead to qualification attainment

- Tracking progress towards qualifications
- Credit days to help learners catch up
- Teaching different standards online, based on what can be best achieved online
- NZQA changes to timing and achievement requirements

Supporting literacy and numeracy

- Boosting literacy programmes across school (better start literacy, ALL/ALiM, structured literacy) programmes) and focussing teacher capability building in priority areas

Increased communication between school and whānau

- Multiple channels, and providing more opportunities for whānau to talk to the schools

What new supports may help?



We heard that new supports would be welcomed in:

More staff in schools

- Literacy specialists, relief teachers and teacher aides were three consistently mentioned. This will enable teachers to refocus where they spend their time. Relief teacher fund was helpful, but not in areas where there are no relief teachers available

Recovery learning for all levels

- Having a focus on recovery learning, suspending other longer-term strategies while staffing shortages continue
- All children have a learning plan, including plans to get qualifications, making interventions like Te Kura available to support that plan (including options other than summer school when learners may need to work)
- Literacy and numeracy strategies for all years, including secondary schools, that deal with learning delays, and further boosting of programmes that support literacy and numeracy

Focus on transitions

- Students transitioning into school, or into secondary school, will have delayed learning. They will need extra support. Their teachers will need to take more time understanding where their learning is at, and planning classes to help them catch up



We heard that new supports would be welcomed in:

Better support for attendance issues

- Boost attendance service, sharing ideas on how to get learners back in school, lining up health and education messaging so its clear to everyone when a child should be at home or in school

Support for hybrid learning

With students having to stay out of school for longer due to cold and flu symptoms, schools are likely going to have to continue offering learning that can be accessed at home. The following supports may help:

- Access to a national school that runs through TV is not reliant on connectivity
- Dealing with connectivity issues and other digital barriers to learning
- Resources for whānau to help them know what to look for when supporting home learning
- After testing for suitability, subsidised licenses for online learning tools
- Tutoring and community hubs that support whānau to help their child with their learning



TE TARI AROTAKE MĀTAURANGA
Education Review Office

The impact of Covid-19 in August 2022: Māori medium - Kura and Wharekura

Te Tāhū Whare



Tumuaki and kura leadership identify that the influence of COVID varied and complex with major impacts on whānau hardships and social issues has resulted in:

- **Pressure on Kaiako:**
 - Increased workload and longer work hours
 - Anxiety around the inevitable possibility of tamariki low achievement an added pressure
 - Ongoing concern for tamariki and whānau from vulnerable backgrounds
 - Coping with the stresses of work as well as that of their own whānau
 - Compromised mental health and increased anxiety
- **Commitment by kura governance and leaders to:**
 - Work with and provide support to whānau who are stressed and concerned about their children's education
 - Monitor and respond to tamariki and whānau wellbeing
 - Monitor tamariki learning and progress
 - Support whānau of tamariki with additional needs
 - Establish the kura as a hub for whānau who require ongoing social, emotional and financial support.

Concerns in relation to the impact of the pandemic on learners?



Disrupted learning ..

All tumuaki report, disruptions to learning is prevalent. Tamariki have had to adapt quickly through the pandemic and continue to feel the effects of the first lockdown. A major impact has been low attendance.

We have some students and whanau who are dealing with anxiety, do not want to come to kura. The impact on their progress and achievement is major.

The students who did not engage in learning activities have fallen behind or stagnated in their progress and achievement.

There could be long term impacts in terms of re-engagement into kura. Not having support programmes may mean they [tamariki] never have the opportunity to achieve expected levels of progress and achievement.

Transitions and NCEA

The progress of students from Year 7 up was of concern in particular those doing NCEA. Kaiako were not able to be appropriately responsive to student needs and next steps for learning. It was problematic supporting students transitioning within the kura to do so in a seamless and stressless way.

Year 8 students who will be transitioning to Wharekura have not been adequately supported and prepared because of the length of time and frequency of COVID disruptions.



Kaiako are the heroes ...

All tumuaki praise the dedication of the kaiako and recognise the pressures and stresses they experience, especially those kura that did not close during the second lockdown. The only incentive driving their commitment is their duty of care to the tamariki and the whānau of the kura.

The biggest impact is workload. Overworked teachers are constantly chasing up and the administration workload for form teachers is huge. The pastoral monitoring must be constant for students to get work in on time or just to attend school.

The biggest impact to the learner is the burnt out, tired kaiako trying to manage their health, own whanau, response to covid and while a large percentage of the country is working from home, kaiako still front emotionally challenged, tired, anxious tamariki whose parents do not want them at home because they have to work from home.

There needs to be the opportunity to give early feedback to NZQA about the implications of the NCEA changes especially with the lit/reo matatini – num/pāngarau requirements. Instead of reducing teacher workload and addressing mokopuna stress and wellbeing they are going to do the exact opposite.

The changes to NCEA are going to impact negatively on teacher workload and learner wellbeing.

The changing demands from MOE, the impact of digital comms and working... teachers feel they are glued to the keyboards as opposed to being available for the Tamariki.

Areas and Populations where the impact is greater



Concern for our people is the driver...

Tumuaki from different contexts provided insights on their situations and the barriers they face as a result of COVID.

Vulnerable whānau. In South Auckland the drop in attendance and the increase in the complexities of whānau hardship and social issues has created serious risk to students and whānau. Mental health issues have become extreme.

Over 38% of our senior students hold down an after-school job to help pay the bills or are the caregivers for their siblings so that their parents can work two jobs.

The impacts we are experiencing are ripple affects our whānau and tamariki are experiencing, especially now with interest hikes and the cost of living rising.

Male students of all ages – mental health issues, social awkwardness, disengagement and feeling vulnerable.

Female students that are in challenging homes with domestic violence and unsafe sleeping arrangements with overcrowding and lack of food and clothing.

Isolated kura. Geographically isolated communities with unstable or unavailable connectivity were seriously disadvantaged.

Impacted negatively on students who were unable to use devices at home for hybrid learning.

Isolation and or feelings of disconnection to learning and knowing where students are and next steps.



Not a priority

Mostly all tumuaki did not consider hybrid learning as an effective long term strategy for teaching and learning. They articulated issues that are realities for their tamariki and whānau.

The hybrid model creates a number of additional challenges and responsibilities for whānau – it is particularly challenging if they are also trying to work from home.

There are too many distractions for it to be a complete learning tool to serve our students in the long run. Hybrid learning adds further stress and anxiety mentally and financially, for whanau.

Kaimahi provide an education that responds to the emotional and intellectual needs and conditions of their community. Teaching and learning pedagogy are based purely on face-to-face learning. It is a long-term strategy that are both theoretically and philosophically Māori. The staff believe this is the best strategy to get them through the pandemic .

We are cautious that a hybrid option will further instil the issues of non-attendance with tamariki not having pastoral care at home to support their independent online engagement.

I do not think the current PLD process is efficient or equitable. We were invited to participate in a hybrid workshop provided by a mainstream provider.....wondered why provision hadn't been made for a Māori medium audience.

What has been tried that helps?



Home-grown solutions

There were many lessons learnt from the first lockdown which initiated solutions based decision-making. Tamariki learning was at the centre of these decisions.

Our kāhui ako has been granted some funding recently to support re-engagement in Kura.

In the senior school we run a flexible timetable which enables us to be more responsive to what mokopuna need most.

It has been very helpful with responses to my letters for help and support for our MME students. I have been extremely impressed with the support from our Tamaki office (Ministry of Education).

We stayed open except for the expected Lock down times. We have put into place learning support to catch tamariki up.

The content and missed learning required a focussed approach balanced with an understanding that our tamariki needed to be in a familiar environment. For some of them, kura is the only stable environment they have.

The strength of our kura is that we know our tamariki intimately. Knowing their whakapapa, tuākiri, maunga, awa, nō wai rātou, we have been able to have important conversations in addressing barriers but ensuring their [whānau] mana remains intact.

Waikato Tainui provided resources that aligned to our context.

What new supports may help?



Self-determining

Most responses were based on providing appropriate funding for each kura to support systems and resources that is timely and relevant to their contexts.

The kura would be better placed to support student learning in literacy and numeracy if more funding was made available to do so.

... give us funding for more people to HELP the wellbeing of tamariki.

Kura lead projects. There are plenty of them out there that have been or are being developed outside of the MOE supports, and mostly due to the poor resourcing from MOE. This is particularly in regard to kura kaupapa Māori.

Funding for priority student tutoring in literacy and numeracy.

I am sure there are MANY other useful APPS, tools being used across Aotearoa that the govt could invest in for all learners to use at home, at kura, on the bus... by making these FREE .

More SWIS positions, more RTLB Maori. Funding to Kura for a dedicated pastoral care person to navigate with whanau and tamariki.



TE TARI AROTAKE MĀTAURANGA
Education Review Office

Ko te Tamaiti te Pūtake o te Kaupapa | The child – the heart of the matter