



# Briefing report

## Education Review Office (ERO): Supporting the Attendance and Engagement Strategy

Date	M22-30
Security Level	N/A
ERO Priority	Medium
ERO Reference	M22-30
Date requested	ERO initiated
Date due	ERO initiated
Proactive release	Recommended

Addressee	Action sought	Deadline
<b>Associate Minister of Education</b>	<p>It is recommended that you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <b>Note</b> that ERO has research underway on the drivers of attendance which will support the Attendance and Engagement Strategy.</li> <li>b) <b>Note</b> that from Term 3 2022, ERO Evaluation Partners will be exploring with schools the issues of attendance with a view to building responses to this into the school's improvement cycle.</li> <li>c) <b>Indicate</b> if you want to discuss this report with ERO officials.</li> <li>d) <b>Note</b> this briefing is recommended for proactive release.</li> </ul>	

 Attachments:

**Education Review Office (ERO):  
Supporting the Attendance and  
Engagement Strategy**

 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: M22-30

27 June 2022

**Hon Jan Tinetti**  
**Associate Minister of Education (School Operations)**

## **Supporting the Attendance and Engagement Strategy**

### **Purpose**

1. This briefing provides you with an update on ERO's research work on attendance and how it will support the Attendance and Engagement Strategy.

### **Background**

1. Attendance is a very significant concern. From 2015 to 2019 regular attendance has declined from 70% to 58%. There is also a strong evidence base showing the impact attendance has on a range of learner outcomes.
2. In May last year ERO met with you to discuss our planned research project examining the causes of reducing attendance rates and the good practice on increasing attendance.
3. This research was due to start in August 2021 but was delayed due to the outbreak of Delta and subsequent lockdowns, school closures and disruptions. In the meantime, our *Learning in a Covid World* series has identified increasing concerns about attendance, particularly for some groups of priority learners including Pacific learners.
4. The Government on 9 June 2022 announced the new Attendance and Engagement Strategy. This will include a strong focus on changing societal and parental attitudes to the importance of attendance. Understanding the drivers of attendance will be important to the success of the Strategy. Government's strategy has also committed to ERO reviewing individual school's responses to attendance as part of its regular review process.

### **ERO Research**

5. On 15<sup>th</sup> May we provided you with an information update on the range of work that ERO is taking to support the Attendance and Engagement Strategy. As part of this ERO is restarting our planned research, which was disrupted by COVID-19. The first phase will focus on understanding in depth the drivers of attendance and non-attendance. The key research questions are:
  - a. How do whānau view school attendance – why and when do they support/not support attendance?
  - b. How do students view school attendance – why and when do they attend/not attend?

6. We will answer these questions through:
  - a. In-depth surveys of whānau and students.
  - b. Online focus groups with whānau and teachers.
  - c. In-person focus groups with students.
7. The research tools are being designed to allow us to both understand in detail the drivers of attendance/non-attendance and also to track across years how these change overtime.
8. The research has also been designed to complement the Ministry of Education's work, understanding broader societal awareness of the importance of attendance and engagement in learning to track how far the campaign raises awareness. ERO's research will build on this to provide a more in-depth picture of whānau and student drivers of attendance. Together the workstreams will provide Ministers and Cabinet with a more complete picture and the two agencies will continue to work closely on this.

### **Work ERO is doing in the field on student attendance and engagement**

9. The government has accepted the recommendations of the Education and Workforce Committee to have ERO monitor student attendance as part of our school evaluation practice. ERO's school evaluation processes and practices currently support a focus on student attendance and engagement. ERO's Methodology and Professional Practice team is developing guidance for our Evaluation Partners when they are working with schools.
10. ERO evaluation practice currently supporting an attendance and engagement focus includes:
  - a. Board assurance audits to ensure legislative and regulatory compliance.
  - b. An evaluation focus on equity and excellence.
  - c. Evaluation activities that explore school conditions and student outcomes.
  - d. Evaluation resources that support school improvement.
  - e. Support for school strategic and annual planning.
11. To further strengthen the attendance and evaluation lens in ERO's work in the field, professional guidance resources are being developed to support reviewers to pursue relevant lines of inquiry, to consider ways of reporting attendance and engagement as school improvement priorities, and to provide direction for schools through our partnership. This work will commence with the schools we are currently working with from the commencement of Term 3, 2022.
12. ERO will work with the Ministry of Education to ensure all ERO Evaluation Partners understand the Attendance and Engagement Strategy and the programmes of support available to schools. Additionally, ERO will review the current Board Assurance Statement and associated evaluation activities to ensure attendance monitoring targets are included from 2024, and schools are responding to this new requirement.
13. Our work in the field will also provide insights into those strategies and approaches which are found to be effective in addressing or turning around the attendance picture in schools.

### Further work

14. We would welcome the opportunity to also discuss with you further opportunities to evaluate key elements of the attendance system as it is currently operating.

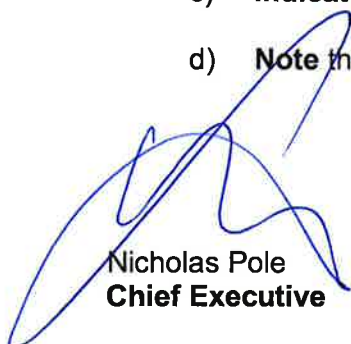
### Publication

15. ERO will publish our research findings in Term 4 this year and include links for both whānau and schools on resources from the Ministry of Education and ERO on practical actions they can take to support attendance.

### Recommendations

16. It is recommended that you:

- |  |               |
|--|---------------|
| a) <b>Note</b> that ERO has research underway on the drivers of attendance which will support the Attendance and Engagement Strategy.  | <b>Noted</b>  |
| b) <b>Note</b> that from Term 3 2022, ERO Evaluation Partners will be exploring with schools the issues of attendance with a view to building responses to this into the school's improvement cycle. | <b>Noted</b>  |
| c) <b>Indicate</b> if you want to discuss this report with ERO officials.  | <b>Yes/No</b> |
| d) <b>Note</b> this briefing is recommended for proactive release.   | <b>Noted</b>  |



Nicholas Pole  
Chief Executive

NOTED/APPROVED



Jan Tinetti  
Associate Minister of Education (School Operations)

03/07/2022