



# Briefing report

## Education Review Office (ERO): **Attendance: Getting Back to School**

|                   |                  |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Date              | 14 February 2023 |
| Security Level    | N/A              |
| ERO Priority      | Medium           |
| ERO Reference     | M23-02           |
| Date requested    | ERO initiated    |
| Date due          | ERO initiated    |
| Proactive release | Recommended      |

| Addressee                    | Action sought  | Deadline |
|------------------------------|--|----------|
| <b>Minister of Education</b> | <p>It is recommended that you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <b>Note</b> that ERO intends to release the attached report (<i>Attendance: Getting Back to School</i>) on Tuesday 28 February.</li> <li>b) <b>Agree</b> to forward this briefing and the attached report to the Associate Minister for Education, Hon Kelvin Davis, and Parliamentary Under-Secretary to the Minister of Education, Hon Jo Luxton.</li> <li>c) <b>Note</b> this briefing is recommended for proactive release at the time of its publication.</li> </ul> |          |



Attachments:

- Education Review Office (ERO):**
- **Attendance: Getting Back to School (report)**
  - **Draft Media Release**



Comments:

| <b>Minister's Office to complete</b> |                          |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Noted                                | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Seen                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Approved                             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Referred to:                         |                          |
| Date signed by Minister:             |                          |



Our Ref: M23-02

14 February 2023

**Hon Jan Tinetti**  
**Minister of Education**

### **Attendance: Getting Back to School**

#### **Purpose**

1. This briefing provides you with a near final follow-up report from ERO's research on school attendance, attached as Appendix A. We intend to publish this report on Tuesday, 28 February 2023.
2. This study looked at the views that parents and learners have about school, and about attending school across Aotearoa New Zealand, in English-medium schools.

#### **Background**

3. Covid-19 has badly disrupted attendance, but even before the pandemic, New Zealand had lower attendance than other countries. Alarming, attendance is falling – twelve percent fewer learners were going to school regularly in 2019 than were in 2015.
4. ERO has been working very closely with the Ministry of Education to understand the drivers of school attendance and how we can change them.
5. To date we have produced a report and summary on what drives attendance in Aotearoa New Zealand, in English-medium schools (Briefing ref: MM22-62). It found that four in ten parents (41 percent) are comfortable with their child missing more than a week of school in a term, and that a third of learners (33 percent) don't think going to school every day is important.
6. This follow-up report updates the existing report by identifying which drivers of attendance are most important.
7. We will also publish guides for parents/whānau, secondary schools, and primary schools, that include examples and ideas of how to improve and support attendance. We have highlighted the resources available through the Ministry of Education and Te Mahau.

## Overall findings

8. ERO has identified the most important drivers of attendance and non-attendance for parents and learners. A key concern relates to parental comfort with their child missing school – parents who are comfortable with their child missing more than a week of school in a term are **twice as likely** to have a child who does not attend regularly.
9. The most important drivers for parents are:
  - How comfortable they are with their child missing school.
  - How likely they are to keep their child home:
    - if their child is being bullied,
    - if their child is unable to participate in school activities,
    - for a family or special event,
    - or for mental health reasons.
10. For learners, the most important attitudes are:
  - If they see going to school every day is important.
  - If they see school as helpful for their future.
11. Attitudes aren't the only factors that influence attendance. What happens in school matters as well. For learners the most important school-based factors are:
  - How hard they find their schoolwork.
  - If they can participate in activities.
  - If they like or don't like the people in their class.
  - If they like or don't like their teacher(s).
  - If they like or are interested in what they are being taught.
12. Given what we know about what drives attendance, along with international evidence, the three key actions schools can take are:
  - Increasing parents' awareness of attendance and its impact.
  - Making learning engaging and school a great place to be.
  - Identifying and tackling specific barriers.
13. The new School Attendance Turnaround Package will also support schools to tackle attendance.

## Publication

14. ERO intends to publish this report on **Tuesday 28 February 2023** to enable parents and schools to use the findings during Term 1 as learners return to school after the summer holidays.
15. We plan to share the report with key groups through:
  - An ERO media release on the morning of publication (Appendix B).
  - Publication of the reports on the ERO website.
  - Sending the reports to peak bodies in the English-medium education sector.
  - Delivering an online forum 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 (*Attendance: Getting Back to School*) on Tuesday 28 February.

**Noted**

b) **Agree** to forward this briefing and the attached report to the Associate Minister for Education, Hon Kelvin Davis, and Parliamentary Under-Secretary to the Minister of Education, Hon Jo Luxton.

**Agreed** ~~Disagreed~~

c) **Note** this briefing is recommended for proactive release at the time of publication of this report.

**Noted**



Nicholas Pole  
**Chief Executive**

NOTED/APPROVED



Jan Tinetti  
**Minister of Education**

22 / 02 / 2023