



Education Review Office, Long-Term Insights Briefing 2023

Report of the Education and Workforce Committee

June 2023

Contents

Recommendation.....	2
About long-term insights briefings and this report.....	2
The Education Review Office’s findings	2
Possible ways to combat bullying	3
Bullying experienced by other students	3
Work by the Ministry of Education	3
Learning community hubs.....	4
Identifying students who need help.....	4
Cultural competency of teachers	5
Work by the Teaching Council	5
Teacher certification	5
Other initiatives.....	5
Our response to the long-term insights briefing	6
Appendix.....	7

Camilla Belich
Chairperson

Education Review Office, Long-Term Insights Briefing 2023

Recommendation

The Education and Workforce Committee has considered the Education Review Office, Long-Term Insights Briefing 2023, and recommends that the House take note of its report.

About long-term insights briefings and this report

The Public Service Act 2020 requires chief executives of government departments to each develop and publish a long-term insights briefing at least once every three years. The briefings must be produced independently of the relevant Minister, and the chief executive must consult the public on the subject matter of the report.

The purpose of the briefings is to inform the public about medium- and long-term trends and future risks and opportunities facing New Zealand. The briefings should provide information, impartial analysis, and potential policy responses to the challenges they identify.

On 14 March 2023, the Education Review Office (ERO) presented its first long-term insights briefing to the House of Representatives. The briefing's title is *Education For All Our Children: Embracing Diverse Ethnicities*.¹ Given the topic, the Governance and Administration Committee referred it to us for consideration. We held hearings with ERO and the Ministry of Education to discuss the briefing.

The Education Review Office's findings

ERO said ethnic communities are a growing part of New Zealand's school population. On the surface, members of ethnic communities are educationally successful. They are more likely to do well at NCEA, get NCEA endorsements, and much more likely to gain university entrance and go to university. However, ERO found that within ethnic communities:

- one in five students had experienced bullying on the basis of their ethnicity
- half of students had seen someone bullied because of their ethnicity
- a third of students said they did not think their school took racist bullying seriously
- a third of students felt lonely at school
- many people are "deeply confused" by NCEA pathways
- more than a quarter of secondary school students felt that the courses recommended to them by teachers were influenced by their ethnicity
- parents are underrepresented on school boards; for example, only 2 percent of parent representatives on school boards are Asian, but 14 percent of students are Asian

¹ Education Review Office, [Education For All Our Children: Embracing Diverse Ethnicities](#), 14 March 2023.

- students' treatment by teachers is affected by their ethnicity. Half of teachers surveyed did not feel confident to engage with families of students from ethnic communities.

ERO expressed disappointment at its findings. We share this disappointment.

We asked about the relationship between discrimination and attendance rates. ERO said it does not have data that would enable it to link these variables. However, it said that students' sense of belonging is an important determinant of whether they attend school.

Possible ways to combat bullying

To improve the situation, ERO said:

- ethnic communities should not be treated as homogenous
- schools have a large role to play in supporting inclusion, multiculturalism, and teachers to improve their teaching practice
- the languages curriculum could be reconsidered
- parents should be engaged in their children's learning.

ERO found that "teachers' understanding of cultures is not keeping up with our changing population. The teaching workforce does not reflect learners' ethnicities." We asked whether there is any work being done to increase the ethnic diversity of the teaching workforce. ERO said it was not aware of a dedicated work programme, but that it notes that the teaching workforce needs to change as demographics change.

We asked about ERO's engagement with peak bodies in the education system, such as the New Zealand School Trustees Association. We heard peak bodies have "really engaged" with ERO and its report. We are pleased to hear this, given the leadership of peak bodies is critical.

Bullying experienced by other students

We asked whether ERO had any insight into the extent to which neurodiverse, LGBTQI, or disabled students are being bullied. ERO said there are no comparable statistics for these groups, so it could not say if bullying was worse for students from ethnic communities.

Work by the Ministry of Education

We asked for and received oral evidence from the Ministry of Education. We wanted to hear from the ministry because of its important stewardship role in the education system. We asked the ministry what it is doing in response to the recommendations ERO made in its report.

First, the ministry noted that section 127 of the Education and Training Act 2020 requires that school boards take "all reasonable steps to eliminate racism, stigma, bullying, and any other forms of discrimination within the school".

The ministry said who teachers are, and what they are teaching, are important factors. It said it is seeking to increase the diversity of the teaching workforce by providing TeachNZ scholarships. These scholarships help trainee teachers cover the cost of course fees or can

be used like an allowance. For 2023, applicants from diverse ethnicities are being prioritised (as well as applicants planning to teach certain subjects or in certain settings). We heard 41 Asian scholarships and 6 Middle Eastern, Latin American, and African scholarships have been awarded in 2023.² The ministry also said the ongoing refresh of the New Zealand Curriculum should ensure students see themselves in what they are taught.

The ministry said it is broadly addressing the issues of bullying and racism through the Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) initiative and the ENGAGE programme. The ENGAGE programme teaches students how to manage their feelings and behaviour, which should reduce aggression and bullying. We heard the PB4L initiative is currently being revised, which includes checking whether it aligns with trauma-informed practice.

Learning community hubs

We heard about learning community hubs. The ministry runs the hubs, which bring families from ethnic communities together to learn about the education system. These hubs arose from ethnic families' and communities' feedback that they want:

- to know more about the education system
- to be more involved in their children's educations
- their language, culture, and identity to be valued and reflected in the education system
- their children to be physically and emotionally safe.

We heard there are now 35 hubs across New Zealand, supporting 59 different ethnic communities and schools and nearly 1,000 families.

We asked whether there are learning community hubs in small and rural communities. We note that these communities sometimes lack, or struggle to access, in-person services. The ministry said the hubs are currently held in-person and based in urban centres. We heard the ministry hopes to provide more hubs in small and rural communities; in the meantime, it tries to meet the needs of these communities within its budget.

There is distrust of the ministry among some ethnic communities so we asked how communities have responded to the hubs. We heard that ethnic communities have responded well. This has resulted in the number of hubs increasing from 5 pilot hubs in 2020 to 35 permanent hubs in 2023. We heard more communities are on the waiting list to establish their own hubs. The ministry emphasised that the hubs are community-led.

Identifying students who need help

Bullying and racism can lead to serious mental health problems and endanger the physical safety of students. We asked how best to identify students who need help before mental health problems or physical harm occur. The ministry said it uses a range of tools to identify issues. These include the two surveys Wellbeing at School and GoodSpace. We heard the ministry is developing student wellbeing measures that are more attuned to the New Zealand context. The ministry said this work is in its pilot phase.

² We do not support the use of the acronym MELAA. Middle Eastern, Latin American and African peoples should not be lumped together. The ministry said it is not a term it uses, but it was used in the ERO report.

Cultural competency of teachers

We asked what is being done to improve the cultural competency of the teaching workforce. We heard teachers receive targeted professional learning and development, and programmes such as Talanoa Ako and Te Hurihanganui that are designed to address racism. The ministry said the Education and Training Act 2020 sets very high expectations for the teaching workforce. The ministry acknowledged there is more work to do, as demonstrated by ERO's report.

We asked whether the ministry is working with entities such as the New Zealand School Trustees Association. We heard that it is, and that it is also working with the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand and the New Zealand Principals' Federation. The ministry said it is not enough to just set expectations in legislation. It said it also needs to support teachers to meet those expectations.

Teachers trained overseas

We asked whether the ministry has considered cultural competency courses for teachers who were trained overseas, especially in relation to teaching Māori and Pasifika students. The ministry said it believes there is work under way on this matter.

Work by the Teaching Council

We asked for and received written evidence from the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand. The council is the regulatory body for teachers. It maintains standards for qualifications that lead to teacher registration. We were interested in teacher certification as it relates to cultural competency.

Teacher certification

At the beginning of their teaching careers, teachers are issued with a provisional practising certificate. This is also the first certificate a teacher trained overseas will be issued when they register with the council.

Teachers who hold provisional practising certificates are required to undergo induction and mentoring, which focus on ensuring they meet Teaching Council standards (Ngā Paerewa). These standards include “teaching practice that is responsive and adaptive within a teaching environment that ensures learners can be confident in their identities, languages, cultures, and abilities”. When teachers are fully certified, their professional development also focuses on ensuring they continue to meet these standards.

When applying for a provisional practising certificate, teachers must commit to developing and practising their knowledge of te reo and tikanga Māori. When renewing their practising certificates, teachers must attest that they have upheld this commitment.

Other initiatives

The council informed us about its *Unteach Racism* initiative, which supports teachers to “identify, confront and dismantle racism in education”. The council is also developing a competency framework to support inclusive teaching.

Our response to the long-term insights briefing

We thank ERO for its report, and the Ministry of Education and the Teaching Council for providing evidence. We understand that ERO's work has been well received by some schools with diverse ethnic communities. Students' experiences of bullying and racism, as described in ERO's report, are disturbing and unacceptable. It is important that education is inclusive of all ethnicities. We urge all parts of the education sector to continue to focus on eliminating racism, stigma, bullying, and any other forms of discrimination, as required by law.

National Party and ACT Party members of the committee value the insights in ERO's report, but question why ERO did not choose to do its long-term insights briefing on the topic of academic achievement.

Appendix

Committee procedure

We met between 29 March and 21 June 2023 to consider the 2023 long-term insights briefing from the Education Review Office. We received evidence from the Education Review Office, the Ministry of Education, and the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Committee members

Camilla Belich (Chairperson)
Chris Baillie
Jan Logie
Ibrahim Omer
Angela Roberts
Dan Rosewarne (until 3 May 2023)
Penny Simmonds
Lemauga Lydia Sosene (from 3 May 2023)
Erica Stanford

Evidence received

The documents we received as evidence are available [on the Parliament website](#).

Recordings of our hearings are also available online:

- [5 April 2023 hearing with the Education Review Office](#) (from roughly 20:00 mins to 44:00 mins)
- [31 May 2023 hearing with the Ministry of Education](#) (from roughly 17:00 mins)