

Wairarapa College Education Review

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About the School

Location	Masterton	
Ministry of Education profile number	241	
School type	Secondary (Years 9 to 13)	
School roll	942	
Number of international students	6	
Gender composition	Male 54%, Female 46%	
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā	69%
	Māori	22%
	Asian	3%
	Samoan	2%
	Other ethnic groups	4%
Special Features	School hostel	
Review team on site	October 2013	
Date of this report	14 January 2014	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	November 2010
	Education Review	October 2007
	Education Review	June 2004

The Purpose of an ERO Report

The purpose of ERO's reviews is to give parents and the wider school community assurance about the quality of education that schools provide and their children receive. An ERO school report answers the question "How effectively is this school's curriculum promoting student learning - engagement, progress and achievement?" Under that overarching question ERO reports on the quality of education and learning outcomes for children and for specific groups of children including Māori students, Pacific students and students with special needs. ERO also reports on the quality of the school's systems for sustaining and continuing improvements. The report answers four key questions about the school.

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1 Context

What are the important features of this school that have an impact on student learning?

Wairarapa College, in Masterton, is a co-educational secondary school for students in Years 9 to 13. The roll is 942 students, with 22% who identify as Māori. This year, the head boy is Māori and the head girl is Samoan.

Twelve percent of students board in the school hostel. A school farm provides students with hands-on learning about agriculture and horticulture.

Trustees have worked with an external facilitator to revise the school's strategic plan and charter. Consultation with staff, students and families has informed decisions about the revised school values and new strategic goals. The school has set targets to improve student attendance, retention and academic outcomes.

Whole-staff professional learning and development in 2013 has focused on use of the student management system, appraisal, and information and communications technologies. The school is in the first year of a Positive Behaviour for Learning contract to develop a consistent approach to behaviour management.

In the last three years there have been a restructuring of the senior management team with new appointments. The hostel manager is also recently appointed.

2 Learning

How well does this school use achievement information to make positive changes to learners' engagement, progress and achievement?

Teachers are making increased use of student achievement data to inform teaching and learning.

Development of the student management system has provided teachers with better access to data, including academic, pastoral and attendance information. A web portal shares information with parents about their child's progress and achievement. Information about courses is also available. The school now has a process for closer monitoring of attendance and retention to promote student engagement.

Other initiatives to make positive changes to learners' engagement, progress and achievement include:

- a group teacher system in which one teacher works with a specific group of students over a period of time. This provides opportunities for the group teacher to get to know each student and the student's family well
- additional teacher-led tutorials and academic conferences to meet identified learning needs
- teachers sharing the purpose of lessons and giving students increased feedback about their learning
- class assessment profiles to inform teachers' planning
- mentoring of students by other students.

The school's 2012 National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA) results, overall, were the same at Levels 1 and 3 as those for schools of a similar type nationally, and higher at Level 2. Since 2010, retention at Year 13 has increased, but Level 3 results have decreased.

Overall, 2012 Māori students' achievement at NCEA Level 2 was similar to that of their non-Māori peers, but significantly lower at Levels 1 and 3. There are very small numbers of Pacific students in Years 11 to 13. In 2012, most of these students achieved at levels lower than their peers. Senior leaders have identified the need to increase merit and excellence endorsements. ERO agrees that this should be a priority, along with the need for consistently improved outcomes for Māori and Pacific students.

Results gathered from Year 9 and 10 literacy and numeracy assessments show that a

significant number of students are performing below expectation for their year and age. Students identified with high literacy learning needs are provided with targeted assistance through language support programmes.

Parents receive useful information during the year about their child's progress in relation to the gaining of NCEA credits. Reports to parents of students in Years 9 and 10 should be strengthened to show how students are progressing in relation to the levels and expectations of The New Zealand Curriculum.

Senior managers have identified the need to develop a more consistent and effective approach for the analysis and use of data, particularly in Years 9 and 10. This includes tracking of students' progress over time. Some good models are emerging in a few departments. A focus on accelerating progress is required, particularly for priority students.

Another important next step will be to develop and set specific and measurable achievement targets for Year 9 and 10 students, Māori and Pacific students and those students who are underachieving. This would support the focus on improved outcomes for all students. It would also enable the principal to regularly monitor and report to the board and others about students' progress against the targets during the year.

3 Curriculum

How effectively does this school's curriculum promote and support student learning?

The school offers a broad curriculum, with a good range of academic, sporting and cultural activities to promote and support learning.

Senior students have access to multiple subject choices and pathways. There is a flexible approach to supporting students with decisions about subject choices. Useful guidance is provided by deans, group and subject teachers and the careers advisor. Strong links to the business community enable students to access meaningful work experiences. A useful course booklet guides students as they make subject and course choices related to each level of learning.

A range of initiatives promote schoolwide consistency in teaching and learning, behaviour management and leadership expectations. These initiatives have led to increased professional conversations amongst staff about teaching and learning.

Teachers use a range of good quality teaching strategies. They have good subject knowledge and provide useful oral feedback to students. They are well organised and have high expectations of students. Positive and respectful relationships are evident. In classrooms where these strategies are well implemented, students are highly engaged.

Students' success is celebrated in assemblies and newsletters. Their views are regularly sought and responded to. They have a range of opportunities to take leadership roles.

The school is in the second year of a Pacific careers project. This focuses on engaging Pacific students and their families in discussions and decision making about course choices. Increased collaboration between the school and these families has resulted.

Students with high learning needs continue to be well catered for in the Supported Learning Centre. The centre staff are well focused on the students' individual needs, and family and whānau are fully involved in their child's learning.

How effectively does the school promote educational success for Māori, as Māori?

The deputy principal has initiated the establishment of a Māori student leadership group. Students in the group are leading specific initiatives to promote success for Māori as Māori. The head boy takes a significant role in this group.

Hui with whānau and iwi have been held in 2013. Māori parents are fully involved in student

subject choices and pathways. A next step is to continue to be proactive in developing partnership with Māori whānau.

It will now be useful for the school to carefully consider Ka Hikitia-Accelerating Success 2013-2017 at board, department and classroom level. This should lead to increased understanding of the place of Māori language, culture and identity in students' learning and success as Māori. It should also assist increased inclusion of te ao Māori in the school's curriculum and inform direction setting for improving educational outcomes for Māori students.

4 Sustainable Performance

How well placed is the school to sustain and improve its performance?

The school is in a phase of change, led by the deputy principal and the senior management team. Heads of departments and teachers are engaged in a range of positive initiatives to improve outcomes for students. They are undertaking professional learning and development to enhance leadership across the school.

The process for appraisal of teachers' performance has been strengthened. It includes goal setting and seeking students' views to support improvement in teaching. It is timely to review provisions for mentoring and tutoring of provisionally registered teachers to ensure that their needs are met.

The board of trustees is committed to the new strategic direction for 2013 – 2017. The charter outlines a clear vision, principles and goals to guide improvement and enhance outcomes for students in the next five years.

Involvement in Positive Behaviour for Learning is further developing a positive schoolwide culture that reflects the vision of "a thriving student-centred culture that educates students for their future".

While there is a planned cycle of department review, the quality of school self review is variable. It is important to build a schoolwide understanding of self review so that the process is better understood and implemented. In particular, the board needs to strengthen the identification of priorities for improvement, monitoring of progress, and evaluation of the outcomes for students and teachers. The board needs to formalise self review against the school's goals and annual achievement targets.

Provision for international students

Wairarapa College is a signatory to the Code of Practice for Pastoral Care of International Students (the Code) established under section 238F of the Education Act 1989. At the time of this review there were six international students attending the school. The school has attested that it complies with the Code.

Students are welcomed into the school. They are given good orientation information and pastoral support to help them successfully integrate into the college. Students receive appropriate levels of support for English language learning, based on their individual aspirations and needs. They are keen participants in school and local activities during their time in New Zealand. The board receives comprehensive reports about international students' learning and involvement in the school.

ERO's investigations confirm that the school's self-review process for international students is thorough.

Provision for students in the school hostel

The co-educational school hostel, College House, accommodates 112 students, 12% of the school roll. It is owned by the Wairarapa College Board of Trustees. The hostel manager and staff continue to take all reasonable steps to provide a safe environment that supports students' learning. Appropriate day-to-day management procedures support students' learning, wellbeing and safety. Students are:

- encouraged to develop good relationships with each other and with staff to create a family-like atmosphere
- provided with clear boundaries
- supported with their learning through supervised evening study
- provided with good health care that is well monitored by the matron
- encouraged to make the most of the opportunities provided through participation in a range of on and off-site recreation, cultural and sporting activities.

Good relationships are maintained between hostel management, the board and school management. Regular meetings are held and trustees receive monthly reports that keep them well informed about provision for students in College House.

Board assurance on legal requirements

Before the review, the board of trustees and principal of the school completed the ERO Board Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklists. In these documents they attested that they had taken all reasonable steps to meet their legislative obligations related to:

- board administration
- curriculum
- management of health, safety and welfare
- personnel management
- financial management
- asset management.

During the review, ERO checked the following items because they have a potentially high impact on student achievement:

- emotional safety of students (including prevention of bullying and sexual harassment)
- physical safety of students
- teacher registration
- processes for appointing staff
- stand-downs, suspensions, expulsions and exclusions
- attendance.

When is ERO likely to review the school again?

ERO is likely to carry out the next review in three years.

Joyce Gebbie
National Manager Review Services
Central Region (Acting)

14 January 2014