

Submission to the Ministry of Education on Schools Plus

This submission is the result of work undertaken by members of the Auckland, North Shore, Otago and Waikato branches.

Question 1:

What key factors have the greatest impact on students' participation, engagement and achievement in school?

Home:

- Parents/caregivers who foster children's love of learning from an early age and encourage their children to finish whatever they start
- Students who can read and write easily and well
- A place where students can study and do homework

School:

- Well balanced programmes which include academic, cultural and sporting activities based on students' interests and presented in a way which makes them want to participate
- Realistic assessment of literacy and numeracy skills, practical skills and other abilities, as well as on going monitoring of student's progress
- Regular one on one discussion between teacher and parent focussed on the students learning and achievement and contribution to school life.

Community:

- The school needs to be seen as part of the community with appropriate community resources from employers, NGO's, churches and sporting and recreational bodies being used to include, promote and enthuse young people.

What support should they get and from whom?

- Support should come from the home, school and community. Students who have this support are more likely to participate and achieve in the various activities provided by the school/community.
- Such support and acceptance, can lead to respect and trust, the development of self esteem, confidence and a sense of belonging instead of the alienation which can result when student are suspended.
- People from students' support structures need to participate in active education plans. The foundation for this needs to be laid when students enter secondary school and be developed over the following years by people who knows individual students well including fields of interest. The personal involvement of each student is the key.

Question 6:

What do employers see as the key barriers to providing on going learning and training opportunities to young employees?

- The use of apprentices and trainees is helpful in meeting company needs but only if employers have the skills and commitment to attract the right people and manage their skills within the company.

- While trainees provide additional labour there is additional cost in time and money due to the training and supervision given by experienced staff.
- Poor skills appear to lead to poor outcomes in terms of quality of apprentices and trainees while investment of skills and time leads to high quality outcomes that may significantly add value to the company.
- Barriers may also be poor attitude to work, lack of job interest, family background, work-related habits and the inability to relate to a work situation.

Refer Erica Smith (2007) Australian employers' strategies to improve the quality of apprentices. *Education & Training*, 49(6), 459-473. Retrieved May 13, 2008 from ABI/INFORM Global data base (Document ID: 1332901261)

Question 7

From a business perspective, what is the best way to deliver on going learning and training to young employees?

- Large scale investment is needed to combine theoretical instruction and on-the-job training suited to the nature of the work e.g. structured tuition followed by learning by doing.

Refer David Gibbons-Wood, Thomas Lange (2000). Developing core skills – lessons from Germany and Sweden. *Education and Training*,42(1),24-32. Retrieved May 13 2008, from ABI/INFORM Global database.

Question 8

What is the role of employer's in ensuring that a young employee's education plan is acted on?

- Companies/businesses need to be very clear about why they are employing the young people and the development strategies that will be put in place.
- The employer needs to needs to show enthusiasm about the partnership. make sure that the education plan is supervised. In Germany young employees have a work record book which is signed off as employees complete parts of the course, both theoretical and task orientated, successfully. This workbook goes with them for the rest of their lives.

Refer paper by Erica Smith above.

Question 9

From the employer's perspective what are the critical factors in establishing and strengthening partnerships with schools, families, whanau, tertiary education organisations and community organisations?

- The organisers of training programmes must be adequately trained and culturally competent. They also need to be aware of career prospects available rather than just "a job".
- Employers need to acknowledge that adult basic education, remedial education and English as a second language programmes are essential to workforce development systems. The process of education delivery needs to be made as easy as possible.

- If families become involved with employers and family functions are arranged greater loyalty to the firm and support for the trainees is likely to result. Both the employers and employees will benefit.

Refer

Downer Edi Works Limited leadership programme

Anne C Lewis (2007). Lessons from the Jobs Initiative. Tech directions,67(5),5-6. Retrieved May 13,2008 from ABIINFORM Global database.

Question 10

How can tertiary education organisations and schools work together to offer high quality and relevant learning opportunities for senior secondary students?

- Have evenings at school where parents and students can talk to staff from tertiary institutions and local businesses about achievements which could lead to further education and training opportunities, and later a job
- Continue with open days at university/wananga/polytechnic and help students to establish points of contact with staff and students e.g. tertiary students invite secondary students to participate in their research as subjects, observers, recorders
- Encourage senior students to attend open lectures and enrol for summer school courses at special rates

Question 11

How can tertiary education organisations and schools work together and best support young people in making good decisions about their options in education?

- Find ways of helping all parents to learn about the options so they can contribute confidently to discussions about their children's future (e.g. provide food at meetings)
- Ensure that school careers advisers are kept up to date with new university courses and trade training opportunities
- Expand on-line aptitude tests specifically applied to university courses
- Have longer and more frequent discussions with tertiary institution liaison officers

Question 16

Which students are likely to need support to remain in education, skills or structured learning?

Students who

- Have not engaged with regular curriculum subjects
- Think that school and learning is boring
- Have difficulty with reading and maths
- Come from a home environment that does not value education, understand the qualifications and assessment system or encourage their young people in the learning process
- Only want to earn money and be independent
- Do not know what to do and how to get help
- Have difficulty in concentrating on tasks

What support should they get and from whom?

Support needed/given

- Devise curriculum subjects that allow them to 'engage' with their own learning and recognize every step of progress made
- Develop programmes in partnership with trades, tertiary institutions, business and employers that will allow young people to have hands-on experiences through work experience in a work place
- Provide careers options from Year 7 on so that young people see how Years 9 – 12 lead to better opportunities for themselves even if it means being in an apprenticeship
- Build literacy and numeracy skills into vocational courses (e.g. English as a second language in a hospitality course)
- Provide opportunities for parents/whanau to know how school and work experience can assist young people to become engaged in choosing a career path that is right for their child
- Encourage parents/whanau to support their young person in all educational activities and to understand the NCEA and assessment processes.
- Schools need to recognize when there is a home environment that is not able or is unwilling to support a young person and look for other means of support, including, where necessary, financial support
- Schools should ascertain if there is a real learning difficulty (hearing, sight, dyslexia etc) and seek assistance for the young person to address the problem
- Schools will need to have flexible timetabling to accommodate individualized learning programmes

Question 17

What are some good examples of schools and non governmental organisations working together for young people?

- Te Roopu O Wai Ora in North Shore City: Two male social workers work regularly on request with students referred by teachers at Northcote College. The emphasis is on helping boys with their personal and social development e.g. self esteem and the ability to make the right decisions
- *Project K* is a programme designed to inspire 14-15 year-olds to maximise their full potential. Through the 14-month programme that consists of three core components, Wilderness Adventure, Community Challenge and Mentoring, students learn self-reliance, team building, self-confidence perseverance, goal setting, good health and life skills

Evaluation shows Project K students have increased self-esteem, stay in education longer, achieve goals and have improved attitudes and behaviour.

The long term benefits include a healthier youth population who are better educated, have enhanced employment prospects, greater self esteem and focus, are empowered and activated and will contribute to society

- Refer '*Too many holes in the safety net*' Weekend Herald Saturday May 3 2008

Summary

The Education Act 1089 (Part 1.3) states that every person who is not a foreign student is entitled to free enrolment and free education at any state school during the period beginning on the person's 5th birthday and ending on the first day of January after the person's 19th birthday.

There will need to be an increasing number of constructive private/public partnerships between schools and the community e.g. tertiary institutions, NGOs and employers in order to create a much wider range of study and employment opportunities for students. School timetables will need to be more flexible to allow for individualised learning programmes. More teachers able to use different learning styles will be needed.

More community one-on-one parenting courses for men and women who need help to develop better parenting skills and anger management techniques would also be helpful to students. It is well known that aggressive parental behaviour often results in undesirable behaviour in school by students. Bullying can lead to an inability to cooperate in class and an increased likelihood of drop out.

To be successful *Schools Plus* needs adequate funding. It may well be that even though this initiative opens doors and opportunities for employers as well as employees there may need to be financial incentives for more employers to become involved.

Students with the capacity but not the aspiration for university studies should be encouraged to stay at school longer instead of making an early move into the paid trade-based work force. They need to have the chance to acquire the appropriate levels of maths, language and science for them to have career choices and not be pigeon-holed too early into narrow jobs.

All 16-18 year olds are entitled to a fully resourced, personalised programme overseen by secondary schools. These programmes need to include a range of learning opportunities, supported by guidance and mentoring to help students achieve a successful transition from school to further education and work.

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