



EDUCATION REVIEW OFFICE
TE TARI AROTAKE MATAURANGA

From education to employment

Questions to ask at school



Who is this booklet for?

The Education Review Office (ERO) has written this booklet for parents, school trustees and students. The word 'parent' is used here to refer to anyone caring for a child.

As a **parent**, you are the most important out-of-school influence on your child's educational success. Being interested and involved in your child's education is a key to boosting their achievement levels.

As a **trustee**, you set priorities for the school and ensure the school provides the best possible education for its students. If you are a secondary school trustee, your school leavers should leave as confident young adults, with the qualifications they need to be successful.

This booklet is about how you and the school can help to prepare your child for life beyond school. It identifies what employers are looking for. It shows how your school can prepare students for when they leave secondary school.

This booklet includes questions that you can ask to make sure students are on the right path, and ways you can help.

There are websites listed that you and your child could visit and use to help talk through ideas for their future.

For **students** – you could use this booklet to talk with your parents and teachers about how your school is supporting you to prepare for your future.



The journey from education to employment

Education should equip our young people to be successful in meeting the many challenges of the future and to contribute to New Zealand's economy.

Good qualifications give students better opportunities for further education, employment, and a better quality of life. Students must also have life skills and the right attitudes to move successfully into the world of learning and work beyond school.

Schools should have systems to help students develop those skills and their own learning pathway to success.

Career education is a requirement in all New Zealand schools from Year 7 upwards. It plays an increasingly important role in preparing students to make the right choices and to develop the ability to manage their own career. This, with key skills, helps to build confident learners able to cope with the uncertainties of the future.

Businesses and schools – working together

When businesses and schools work together with community and iwi, it is better for students. Schools can tailor parts of their curriculum to meet local employment opportunities, and businesses might offer time, skills and resources to support the curriculum. Students benefit by:

- seeing how communities and workplaces operate
- having work experience opportunities
- having clearer ideas about their career possibilities.

Why do parents and trustees need information about career pathways?

Parents: Students are keen to learn when they know their own strengths, achieve success and have a direction to work towards. Your daughter/son needs to choose subjects/courses which are right for them and keep their options open. As a parent, your involvement in making decisions helps to focus students on success.

Trustees: Together, trustees and school leaders make policy decisions, set targets and allocate funds to achieve the best results for all students. Every school is unique so it will set its own goals and choose how it will best support students on their career pathways. Having good information as a trustee helps you work with your school to keep lifting expectations and improving what it does, especially in terms of 'future-proofing' your students.

Where does ERO fit in?

The Education Review Office reviews all schools in New Zealand and publishes education reports on its website: www.ero.govt.nz. As part of its review procedure, ERO looks at how well the school's curriculum helps students to learn, how engaged students are, and how well they are achieving. ERO wants to know how schools find out what each student needs to learn and achieve, and where they want to go in the future. ERO is then interested in what is done to help students get there. Students are motivated and have a real sense of purpose if they have a clear learning pathway.



The Six Dimensions of a Successful School

ERO uses this diagram when it reviews schools. Each of the six aspects is described in terms of how well students are being prepared for their future beyond school.

Teachers are confident in teaching the curriculum, including the key competencies. They model expected behaviours. Teachers link their teaching to the real world. Students are mentored and supported to achieve what they need to.

School leaders design the curriculum to meet the needs of all students. School systems and processes support different learning pathways and opportunities. Leaders have high expectations for student achievement and success.

Trustees set policy and targets and allocate resources to support students' success, including the development of key competencies and learning pathways. Board planning is focused on the learner. Trustees are well informed about progress towards targets set and about what school leavers go on to do.

Relationships in the school are respectful. Key values are identified and modelled throughout the school. Students have a secure environment in which they gain self confidence, develop resilience and can seek advice and support.

The school communicates well with families and values their opinions. Families are involved in decisions about learning pathways for students and support them in reaching their goals.



WHAT DO EMPLOYERS LOOK FOR?

All employers who ERO spoke to emphasised that the qualifications needed are specific to each particular job. It is important that students can apply the knowledge they have gained from qualifications.

It also helps if a student has some awareness about the world of work and what is involved in potential career options they are looking at.

There are many key competencies and values (soft skills) that employers look for in prospective employees.

Employees need to:

- have literacy and numeracy skills
- have a positive attitude – be hard working and keen to learn
- be reliable, honest and able to be trusted
- be able to make decisions, be a critical thinker and problem solve
- be able to plan and organise
- manage their time well and show initiative
- be flexible and resilient
- be self aware with the confidence to communicate well orally
- be able to listen, take criticism, follow instructions, lead, negotiate and influence
- be confident users of technology
- be able to balance rights, roles and responsibilities
- work well in a team
- understand how communities work.

The New Zealand Curriculum identifies the **skills or key competencies** which schools help students to develop. These are also referred to in the Vocational Pathways. For more information about Vocational Pathways see the Youth Guarantee website.

The Ministry of Education describes **career management competencies** and these build on the key competencies. These are outlined later in this booklet.



QUESTIONS PARENTS COULD ASK ABOUT...

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE CLASSROOM?

How do teachers find out about my child's strengths and interests?

- Teachers use assessment information and talk with students. At least one adult in the school should have an overview of your child. It might be the class/form teacher, a mentor, a dean or another adult. You can ask to speak with them about your child.

How do I know that my child is making progress?

- Teachers monitor and report student achievement, for both academic and skills development and can share this information with you. You can ask the person mentoring your daughter/son about how well they are doing.
- For students in Years 11-13, the mentor should have an overview of NCEA credits gained. Your teenager can go online to check what is on their record of learning with NZQA.

How do teachers help students develop the skills and values they need for the future?

- Effective teachers work consciously to develop skills and build self confidence in their students. Teachers will encourage students to:
 - question and be critical thinkers
 - understand how they think and learn
 - work to their strengths and improve in other areas
 - learn from mistakes
 - express themselves clearly in front of an audience
 - take responsibility for their own learning.
- Teachers will:
 - provide times when students work on their own and in groups
 - teach students how to do research, organise ideas, and write essays and formal reports
 - help students to reason, apply simple numerical concepts and develop an understanding of how money works in the world.
- You can ask how well your child is developing these skills and how you can help.

How do teachers help my child understand why they need to learn?

- Teachers should talk about how students' learning links to the real world and how it ties into different careers. You can ask about where your child's interests might lead.

Are students given opportunities to develop their career management competencies? (these are explained later in this booklet)

- As the world of work is changing so fast, young people need to learn how to manage themselves in their lives and careers. Students need to develop the skills to select the right course, weigh up study options and look for work.



QUESTIONS PARENTS COULD ASK ABOUT...

HOW DOES THE SCHOOL HELP STUDENTS PREPARE AND FOLLOW A CAREER PATHWAY?

How does career education happen in this school?

- Ideally career education is in all classes and doesn't just rely on a careers advisor or department working with your teenager. The careers advisor in a secondary school will be able to tell you what resources they use. There should also be careers and course information meetings which you can attend with your teenager.

How well does the school curriculum meet the different needs of students?

- Students should have a wide choice of academic and vocational courses which may include opportunities to learn outside of school. Ask to see the overview of all the courses available. It will show you the links between courses and how students can progress smoothly to the next level of study.

How do students' decide what subjects to take?

- Students' interests and preferences should guide subject choice. In some schools, choices are made from Year 7. Subject choices should lead on from year to year and keep students' options open. By Year 11, a course should be decided with credits that are worthwhile and relevant to the student (not just collecting credits). You can ask the careers advisor or teachers working with your teenager for advice.

How can I be sure what my child chooses will lead to the career they want?

- You and your teenager can talk with advisors at school, and visit websites (Careers and Youth Guarantee) to help think about the future and what is the best learning pathway to follow. If your child is not yet sure what they want to do, the best advice is to keep subject choices as broad as possible. This keeps their options open for when they decide what they want to go on to.

What if my child can't do the subject or course they want to at school?

- Schools make use of Secondary Tertiary Alignment Resource (STAR) funding, Gateway programmes, Trades Academies, Correspondence School, and Virtual Learning Networks to provide more choice. Ask what your school offers. For more information visit the websites listed on the last page of this booklet.

How do students learn about the way that communities work?

- Schools may run civics classes, financial literacy seminars, Education4Enterprise, Young Enterprise Schemes, enterprise education, student-run school fairs or fundraisers, or have time when students work together to solve a real community issue.
- Many schools have developed innovative partnerships with the community which help students better appreciate how communities work.

How do students learn what workplaces are like and what is expected?

- Many schools arrange workplace visits or placements. Other schools have people come and talk about what they do in their work and the opportunities available.

Use of terms: *Subject* is an area of study eg mathematics, *course* generally refers to the collection of subjects studied together, and *pathway* is the overall direction taken. In some schools, *course* is used to describe a collection of lessons within a subject area eg a six month course in financial literacy.

QUESTIONS TRUSTEES COULD ASK ABOUT...

HOW DOES THE SCHOOL SUPPORT CAREER EDUCATION?

What policy, expectations and goals are there for career education in the school?

- As well as having high expectations for student success, as a board you should set priorities for all students to develop skills and successful pathways which prepare them for leaving school. The principal will tell you how the school does that. You should be receiving information about vocational pathways as well as academic ones.

How do I know how well the school is providing career education?

- Career education should occur throughout the school. When done well, it increases student motivation and achievement. Attendance, retention and disciplinary statistics all indicate how well students are engaged in their learning and will help answer this question. The board might invite someone to meet with them to discuss the career strategies used in the school.

- As part of their self review, many schools use the careers' benchmarks as a tool to assess and improve the quality of their career education programmes and services. (See the Careers New Zealand website for these.)

What qualifications should students leave school with?

- Students need to gain NCEA Level 2 or its equivalent. This qualification is the minimum that gives students opportunities for further learning and employment. You should ask the school how well different groups of students are doing. You need to know that anyone at risk of not succeeding is identified and gets extra support and mentoring.

How do I know how many students go on to further education, training or employment?

- Good schools collect leavers' data which can tell you if leavers are following a clear pathway, set at school. Their destinations will show you if this is successful. If students are leaving school early, with no job or training to go to or with poor qualifications, they are not being well prepared for their futures. You, as trustees, should explore what your leavers' data is signalling.



THINKING ABOUT...

LINKS WITH THE COMMUNITY

How do partnerships with the community help students?

- Close partnerships with the community can provide support for some students. Working with family, whānau, iwi, community and businesses gives students opportunities they may not otherwise have through school. This can increase students' motivation to succeed.
- **Partnerships with parents and whānau:** You, your family, friends and contacts can help by talking to students about your work and what skills or qualifications you needed to get to where you are. Your ongoing interest in your teenager's strengths and goals is always important.
- **Partnerships with local iwi:** Iwi can provide advice about a culturally rich curriculum and support Māori learners. They may have a clear iwi plan with educational goals, and iwi can work in partnership with the school to help students achieve.
- **Partnerships with businesses:** Students have opportunities to learn about the world of work. They can visit workplaces, have work experience, have mentors, listen to 'champions' talk about their career pathways and appreciate how education is valued beyond school. Businesses may also provide some resources to schools.
- **Partnerships with regional authorities and economic development agencies:** These partnerships can help teachers understand the local economy and the opportunities for growth and employment. Schools should develop a curriculum that responds to what is happening locally, nationally and internationally. These agencies can also help schools to connect with local businesses.
- **Partnerships with other education providers:** Many secondary schools are now partnering with local tertiary organisations to provide a broader curriculum. This can include trades and services academies. Polytechnics and universities can arrange for some students to study tertiary level courses while still at school.
- **Partnerships with former pupils:** Many schools invite previous pupils to talk to current students. Celebrating success stories can motivate students.
- **Partnerships with agencies:** Agencies such as Studylink, Careers New Zealand and people from banks can come in to advise students.



WHAT ARE THE CAREER MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES?

The Ministry of Education has a model for career education and guidance. This model includes career management competencies that students need to maximise their career opportunities. The competencies are:

- **Developing self awareness**
Skills that help young people to understand themselves and what influences them.
- **Exploring opportunities**
Skills that help young people to look into opportunities in learning and work, and relate these to themselves.
- **Deciding and acting**
Skills to help young people make plans and adjust them, manage change, and choose the right things to do.

RELATED WEBSITES

CAREERS NEW ZEALAND

To start thinking about what you want to do now and in the future, **visit www.careers.govt.nz**

For information about career education benchmarks, go to the Careers New Zealand website and put **career education benchmarks** in the search box.

Phone: 0800 22 27 33

YOUTH GUARANTEE

For developing a vocational profile and planning a vocational (career) pathway, visit **www.youthguarantee.net.nz**

The Youth Guarantee scheme provides opportunities for 16 and 17 year olds who are not at school or in training to re-engage with education in a tertiary rather than school-based setting. For more details visit **www.tec.govt.nz/Funding** and **youthguarantee.net.nz/fees-free/**

Phone: 04-463 8000

or contact your regional Youth Guarantee advisor



WHAT ARE VOCATIONAL PATHWAYS AND WHO USES THEM?

Making a good career decision can be difficult. That is why businesses and people in education have developed the vocational pathways and the profile builder – an online tool to help students with their career journey.

The pathways show the links between students' learning, the qualifications they need and potential employment.

There are currently five pathways, one for each of five broad industry sectors. These are:

- construction and infrastructure
- manufacturing and technology
- the primary industries
- the service industries
- social and community services
- *creative industries will be added in 2014.*

The pathways help students see what qualifications suit each of the industry sectors. Each pathway includes a wide range of career possibilities, from those needing minimal qualifications through to those needing post-graduate study.

Visit the Youth Guarantee website for more information about vocational pathways.

Who will use the vocational pathways?

- **Schools** can use this information to plan learning programmes to meet the different needs, strengths and interests of their students.
- **Students** can use the Youth Guarantee website to develop a Vocational Profile. This helps them to identify their interests and strengths and see where their learning could lead.
- **Teachers, mentors and parents** can work together to develop a learning pathway with each student. This would tie in with the student's Vocational Profile.
- **Employers** can use the information on the website to get a clear understanding of the NCEA assessment standards and a student's achievements related to their sector.



Ko te Tamaiti te Pūtake o te Kaupapa The Child – the Heart of the Matter

Other useful resources

→ EDUCATION REVIEW OFFICE

For individual school reports and national reports on education issues.

Two related national reports: *Careers Information, Advice, Guidance and Education in Secondary Schools (August 2012)* and *Secondary Schools: Pathways for future education training and employment (July 2013)*
www.ero.govt.nz

→ MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

For information about careers education in schools, visit

nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/index.php/Curriculum-resources/Career-education

For the Virtual Learning Network, visit

www.vln.school.nz

For the New Zealand Curriculum, visit

nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz

For STAR funding, visit

www.minedu.govt.nz (Put STAR in search box)

For Trades Academies, visit

youthguarantee.net.nz/trades-academies



Education to employment: Designing a system that works.

Available at **mckinseysociety.com/education-to-employment**

→ FURTHER EDUCATION

For general information about tertiary education, visit

www.tec.govt.nz

For the Gateway Programme visit

www.tec.govt.nz

For distance learning, visit

www.correspondence.school.nz

For information about finance and support for students while studying

www.studylink.govt.nz

→ CAREERS

For information about income, fees and job prospects for young people entering 40 occupations

www.dol.govt.nz/occupation-outlook

To help students think about their future direction.

www.careers.govt.nz

Supporting future-oriented learning and teaching: A New Zealand perspective.

Available at **www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/schooling/109306**