

Student Perspectives on Attendance

Sector Hui

June 2026

Nau mai, haere mai!

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou
katoa. Nga mihi nui ki a koutou katoa

We look forward to speaking with you
shortly.

Please note we will be providing a copy
of the slides and a recording of the
session.

Please pop any pātai in the chat.

Ngā mihi nui 😊

Ka Hikitia Karakia Tīmatanga (opening)

Ka Hikitia! Ka Hikitia!
Hiki, Hikitia!
Whakarewa ki runga rawa
Herea kia kore e hoki whakamuri mai
Poua atu Te Pūmanawa Māori
He Mana Tikanga
Me Te Uri o Māia
Poipoia ngā mokopuna
Ngā Rangatira mo āpōpō
Ka tihei! Tihei mauriora!

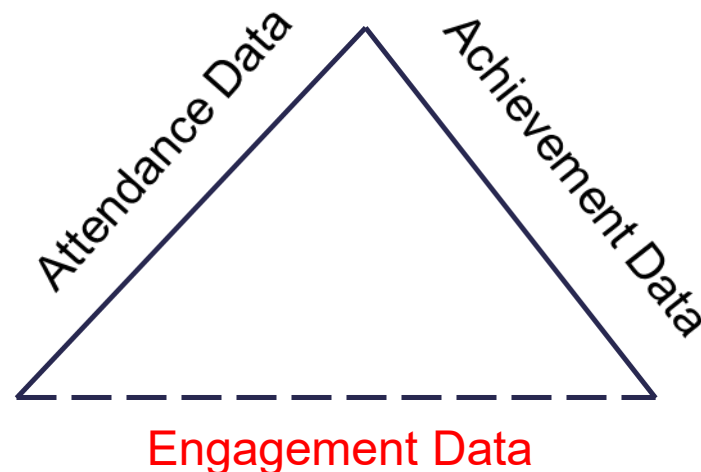
Encourage and support!
And raise it to its highest level!
Ensure that high achievement is
maintained
Hold fast to our Māori potential
Our cultural advantage
And our inherent capability
Nurture our young generation
The leaders of the future
Behold, we move onwards
and upwards!

Agenda

- Why student voice matters for attendance
- Insights from the March 2026 pilot
- Key findings
- Implications for schools
- Pātai / questions

Why student voice matters for attendance

- Attendance data provides information on attendance patterns and recorded reasons for absence
- Student perspectives can provide additional context on the factors influencing attendance, helping to build a richer understanding of attendance behaviors
- Existing evidence, other surveys and longitudinal studies may not consistently capture the experiences of all learner groups or the local factors influencing attendance
- Timely and actionable insights can help schools to better understand attendance barriers and inform local responses



Exploring student perspectives on attendance

- Student voice was used to gather insights on attendance, engagement, wellbeing and belonging
- Students were asked about self-reported absence and factors influencing attendance
- The pilot explored how student perspectives can complement existing attendance information
- Findings provided additional context on attendance barriers and enablers across different learner groups
- The results illustrate the value of student voice as another source of evidence alongside attendance and wellbeing data

Key elements of the pilot



27 schools,
including 16 with
lower attendance
outcomes and 11
reference schools



Schools represented
a range of regions,
EQI bands,
locations and school
types



Participation
across students
from Years 7-13



Responses from
4,929 students,
including a diverse
range of learner
groups

What students told us from the pilot

- The most commonly reported reasons for absence were illness, fatigue, family responsibilities, caring responsibilities and family holidays
- Self-reported absence rates increased through secondary school, particularly in the senior year levels
- Students with higher absence were much more likely to report low energy levels and less positive experiences of teaching and learning
- Attendance schools and reference schools reported similar reasons for absence, suggesting common attendance challenges across different school contexts
- Student perspectives highlighted factors influencing attendance that may not be visible through attendance data alone



Student perspectives across learner groups

Whānau Māori

Overall: responses were broadly similar to the overall student population, including on culture and identity measures

Areas for attention:

- Lower agreement that they had enough energy for the school day
- Lower levels of trust and supportive relationships with peers and teachers
- Fewer opportunities to connect with other Rainbow students
- Lower agreement that they could access all areas of the school

→ **Implications:** relationships, belonging and wellbeing in the classroom as well as the wider school may be important factors influencing attendance for some Māori students

Tangata o le Moana

Overall: responses were broadly similar to the overall student population, including on culture and identity measures

Most positive experiences:

- Wellbeing information and strategies
- Support to manage schoolwork
- Family involvement in school
- Ability to take breaks and access healthy food

Areas for attention:

- Correct pronunciation of names
- Cultural expression and culturally significant items
- Ability to express gender and sexual identity

→ **Implications:** Strong wellbeing and whānau connections appear to be protective factors

Whānau Hauā / Tangata Whaikaha

Overall: Reported less positive experiences than the overall student population across several measures

Areas for attention:

- Teaching supports learning
- Having enough energy for the school day
- Ability to express gender and sexual identity

→ **Implications:** consistent with broader findings showing students with disabilities and learning support needs report higher levels of absence

Takatāpui / Rainbow Students

Overall: Least positive of all groups surveyed

Areas for attention:

- Ability to express gender and sexual identity
- Emotional safety and being themselves at school
- Having enough energy for the school day

→ **Implications:** Safety, inclusion and belonging may be important attendance-related factors for Rainbow students

Refugee and Migrant Students

Overall: Most positive responses of all groups surveyed

Most positive experiences

- Communication in different languages
- Teaching supports learning
- Feeling safe to share ideas
- Ability to take breaks



Implications: Positive perceptions of learning and inclusion may support engagement and attendance



Pātai

Key takeaways

- Attendance is influenced by a combination of health, wellbeing, learning and family factors
- Student perspectives can provide insights that are not visible through attendance data alone
- Fatigue, belonging, relationships and learning experienced emerged as important themes associated with attendance
- Experiences differ across learner groups, highlighting the importance of understanding local student needs
- Schools may wish to consider how existing student voice, wellbeing and attendance information can be used together to inform attendance improvement efforts

Further Resources

- [Student Voice survey questions](#)
- [Understanding student wellbeing in the educational setting | Education Counts](#)
- [ERO's 5 Best Practices for Lifting Attendance Report](#)
- [ERO's Raising Attendance Five Good Practices - Webinar \(includes section on belonging\)](#)

Ka Hikitia Karakia Mutunga (closing)

Kua hikitia te kaupapa

Kua takoto te wero

Me hoe tahi i runga i te whakaaro kotahi

Tiaki tō tāua oranga

Kia kaha ai mo te tuku taonga

Kia tutuki ngā hiahia mō Ka Hikitia

Tihei mauriora!

Ki te whai ao!

Ki te whai oranga e!

Mauriora!

We have come to an awareness

The challenge lies before us

Let us work together as one

Stay well so that we have the ability

to manage success

Behold, here is the pathway

to enlightenment and well-being

What a positive feeling!



**Te Tāhuhu o
te Mātauranga**
Ministry of Education



**Te Tāhuhu o
te Mātauranga**
Ministry of Education

He mea tārai e mātou te mātauranga
kia rangatira ai, kia mana taurite ai ōna huanga.

We shape an education system that delivers
equitable and excellent outcomes.



**Te Kāwanatanga
o Aotearoa**
New Zealand Government