

Finding a balance—fostering student wellbeing, positive behaviour, and learning

Findings from the NZCER national survey of primary and intermediate schools 2016

Sally Boyd, Linda Bonne, and Melanie Berg

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Contents

Acknowledgements	iii
Key findings	1
1. Introduction	5
Why is student wellbeing important?	5
What is wellbeing?	5
Links between wellbeing, behaviour, and learning outcomes	7
Supporting wellbeing in school settings	8
Resources and guidance relating to wellbeing	8
Promoting wellbeing and positive behaviour and responding to concerns	10
About the national survey	13
The focus of this report	14
2. Building a strategic approach to foster wellbeing	15
Principals' views on building a planned and strategic approach to wellbeing	15
Using data to plan and promote wellbeing	17
Teachers' views on building a strategic approach to wellbeing	18
3. Practices and programmes that foster wellbeing (Tier 1)	20
Principals' views on practices and programmes that foster wellbeing	20
Fostering wellbeing through student leadership, input, and partnerships	22
Fostering wellbeing in the classroom	22
Fostering the wellbeing of Māori and Pasifika learners	25
4. Providing extra support to vulnerable students (Tiers 2 and 3)	30
Most schools had systems for supporting vulnerable students	30
Access to external support and expertise	32
Teachers' views on extra support	35
5. Approaches to fostering positive behaviour	38
Schools' approaches to fostering positive behaviour	38
Teachers' perspectives on behaviour	40
Using data to promote positive behaviour	42
Availability of support for behaviour needs	43
Addressing bullying behaviour	46
6. Parent, whānau, and fanau views on wellbeing and behaviour	47
Most parents think their child's teachers and school promote wellbeing	47
Most parents consider their child has a sense of belonging in school	48
Parents think schools help children develop skills to manage wellbeing	51
School information about their child's wellbeing and behaviour	54
7. Trustees' role in students' wellbeing and behaviour	55
Interactions with the community about students' wellbeing and behaviour	55
How did trustees view wellbeing and behaviour?	55
8. Discussion	57
Promoting wellbeing was a focus at all types of schools (Tier 1)	57
The majority of schools had systems to foster positive behaviour (Tier 1)	58
A strategic focus on wellbeing and behaviour was not fully embedded	58
Responding to needs was less consistent between schools (Tiers 2 and 3)	59
Changes over time	60
Looking to the future	60

Appendix

Factor analyses for teacher survey items relating to student wellbeing and behaviour	62
Methodology	62
Results	63
Regression models	65
Summary	66

Tables

TABLE 1.	Principals' reports of useful support for wellbeing and behaviour	33
TABLE 2.	Principals' reports of less useful support for wellbeing and behaviour	34
TABLE A.1	Loadings from the factor solution for items about school approaches to supporting student wellbeing	63
TABLE A.2	Loadings from the factor solution for items about school approaches to fostering positive behaviour	64
TABLE A.3	Loadings from the factor solution for items about classroom approaches to supporting student wellbeing and behaviour	65

Figures

FIGURE 1.	Te Whare Tapawhā	6
FIGURE 2.	The intervention triangle: Planning to promote wellbeing and behaviour	11
FIGURE 3.	Principals' views on planning that supports students' wellbeing	16
FIGURE 4.	Teachers' views on school-wide planning that supports students' wellbeing	18
FIGURE 5.	Principals' views on practices and programmes that support wellbeing	21
FIGURE 6.	Teachers' use of classroom social and emotional learning practices	23
FIGURE 7.	Teachers' use of classroom practices that support student leadership and physical wellbeing	24
FIGURE 8.	Principals' views on school approaches that support Māori students' wellbeing	26
FIGURE 9.	Teachers' views of practices that support Māori students' wellbeing	27
FIGURE 10.	Teachers' views of practices that support Pasifika students' wellbeing	28
FIGURE 11.	Principals' views of providing extra wellbeing support	31
FIGURE 12.	Teachers' views on providing extra wellbeing support	36
FIGURE 13.	Embeddedness of approaches to fostering positive student behaviour, reported by principals	39
FIGURE 14.	Teachers' views on school approaches to behaviour	40
FIGURE 15.	Teachers' and students' input into behaviour approaches at the school	41
FIGURE 16.	Teachers' agreement they can use their school's SMS in relation to student behaviour	42
FIGURE 17.	Parents' views on how their child's school promotes wellbeing	48
FIGURE 18.	Parents' views of their child's wellbeing at school	49
FIGURE 19.	Parents' views of how often their child participates in school activities that can foster belonging	50
FIGURE 20.	Parents' views about how well the school helps their child develop skills to manage their wellbeing	52
FIGURE 21.	Parents' views of how well the school helps their child make good decisions	53

Key findings

Over the past decade there has been a growing awareness of the inter-relationships between wellbeing, behaviour, and learning. There are now more supports for schools that aim to promote wellbeing and positive behaviour such as Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) initiatives and ERO resources. Given this growth in awareness and support, what can the findings from the 2016 NZCER national survey of primary and intermediate schools tell us about current approaches to student wellbeing and behaviour in schools?

Schools had a multi-dimensional approach to promoting wellbeing

Responses to the national survey show that schools have a wide range of activities in place that promote wellbeing. We classified these activities into three tiers:

- Tier 1 is proactive approaches aimed at **all students**.
- Tier 2 is prevention and support for **small groups of students** with extra needs.
- Tier 3 is prevention and support for **crises** and **individual students** with high needs.

Teachers' and principals' responses suggested approaches that aim to promote wellbeing for all students (Tier 1) occurred across all types of schools regardless of school decile, location, or size.

School approaches to wellbeing incorporated the four dimensions of hauora or wellbeing in Te Whare Tapawhā (**social, mental and emotional, spiritual, and physical wellbeing**).

- Practices that promote **social and mental and emotional wellbeing** were a focus at a school-wide and classroom level at most schools. For example, most teachers reported their school had an effective plan to support student wellbeing and belonging (85%), and that they deliberately teach emotional skills in class (86%).
- **Spiritual wellbeing** was promoted at most schools through shared school values and the fostering of students' identities and cultures. For example, nearly all principals (93%) reported their school had school-wide approaches that fostered te reo and tikanga Māori in ways that promote Māori students' belonging. Around half (47%) had school-wide approaches that fostered Pasifika students' cultures, and in 2016 more principals indicated these approaches were well embedded (24%, up from 8% in 2013). Practices that promoted the belonging and wellbeing of Māori and Pasifika students were more common at decile 1–2 schools.
- Schools had varied approaches to the different dimensions of **physical wellbeing**. Physical activity was promoted at most schools with 90% of principals reporting their school had a plan that ensured student access to physical activities they enjoyed. An actively used school healthy eating policy was in place at fewer schools (73%).

Offering students opportunities for input and leadership were less common than many of the other wellbeing-related practices, suggesting these opportunities could be further developed in schools. For example, only 20% of principals reported their school had well embedded processes for consulting students about new ways to foster wellbeing, and only 13% of teachers strongly agreed that their school sought student input when developing approaches to wellbeing. Opportunities for student input and leadership have multiple benefits. They foster belonging and **social wellbeing**, and build students' competencies to contribute to their own and others' wellbeing.

Most parents thought teachers and schools promoted their child's wellbeing

Parents, whānau, and fanau (collectively referred to as parents) were generally positive about how teachers and schools promoted the wellbeing of their child, and built their child's competencies in managing their wellbeing. Most (86%–90%) considered their child had a sense of wellbeing and safety at school, and had opportunities to engage in activities that promoted a sense of belonging. Only very small numbers of parents (2%–3%) disagreed these things were happening for their child.

In terms of identity development, at least 80% of parents indicated schools did well or very well at helping their child take pride in who they are and discover a range of interests and passions. In 2016, more parents thought the cultural identity of their child was recognised and respected (79%, compared with 67% in 2013). Parents whose child attended a decile 1–2 school were more likely to report that the school promoted students' cultural identities.

Most parents reported their child had learning experiences in the classroom that assist them to build the competencies needed to manage their wellbeing and behaviour. Parents were less sure whether school assisted their child to deal with hard emotional situations (55%, with 36% unsure).

In terms of their own experiences, most parents felt welcome at school (89%) and comfortable talking with their child's teachers (93%). Most also thought teachers would respond to any concerns they had (88%).

A strategic approach to wellbeing was partially embedded in schools

Individual school activities that fostered different dimensions of wellbeing were not necessarily part of an embedded and planned school-wide approach that maximised the use of data for improvement. We divided schools into three groups depending on the extent to which they had embedded seven school-wide approaches to planning for wellbeing. This showed wide variation, suggesting that more strategic attention to student wellbeing may be required:

- 5–7 practices—26% of schools (many well embedded approaches)
- 2–4 practices—47% of schools (some well embedded approaches)
- 0–1 practices—27% of schools (one or no well embedded approaches).

Finding a balance between fostering learning, wellbeing, and positive behaviour appears to be a challenge for some schools. Many principals (40%) reported that the current focus on literacy and mathematics had taken attention away from other aspects of the curriculum. Principals who held this view were more likely to report their school had fewer well embedded school-wide approaches to wellbeing. Of those who indicated their school has one or no well embedded approaches, 54% reported a focus on literacy and mathematics was taking attention away from other aspects of the curriculum. In contrast, only 25% of those with many well embedded approaches reported the same.

In relation to National Standards more specifically, in 2016 more teachers reported some students were experiencing anxiety in relation to their National Standards performance that was affecting their learning (63%, up from 41% in 2013).

For trustees, students' wellbeing and behaviour were among their many areas of responsibility. Their boards spent most of their time on governance and student achievement. Reflecting the time boards spent, trustees reported boards' main achievements were mostly related to financial monitoring, governance, staffing and teacher quality, and student achievement. Student wellbeing and behaviour were less of a focus, and student behaviour was identified as a major issue for their school by only 14% of trustees. Trustees reported relatively low rates of individual use of professional learning or resources that could support them in the areas of student wellbeing and behaviour. Trustees' answers suggest some boards may be missing out on opportunities to play a more active stewardship role in relation to student wellbeing and behaviour.

Schools had varied supports for students with extra wellbeing needs

The majority of principals reported their school had partially or well embedded systems for identifying groups of students, as in Tier 2 (86%), or individuals, as in Tier 3 (76%), who might need extra wellbeing support, and a team approach to designing solutions for these students (80%). The nature of the extra wellbeing support offered to students varied considerably between schools. For example, many schools (70%) had targeted emotional skills programmes for vulnerable students. However, 28% were still exploring or did not have these programmes.

Reflecting student needs, decile 1–2 schools had more focus on responding to wellbeing needs than schools of other deciles. This pattern was evident across many of the Tiers 2–3 practices in the survey, and in the responses of principals, teachers, and parents. For example, more decile 1–2 schools offered targeted approaches aimed at supporting vulnerable students, and joined initiatives such as PB4L School-Wide.

Schools' main unmet need was for mental and emotional wellbeing support

Support for working with students with mental health issues was principals' largest unmet need for external expertise, with 38% reporting they want, but cannot access, this. For teachers this need has become more pressing since 2013 with more teachers disagreeing that their school had co-ordinated support systems that are able to meet the mental health needs of students (29%, up from 18% in 2013). More training may be needed to raise awareness of the signs of mental distress. Only 20% of teachers indicated they had access to this training, and only 34% of principals reported this training was in place at their school.

Related to students' mental and emotional wellbeing is the issue of bullying behaviour. Teachers' and principals' reports suggest that more than 10% of schools did not have a clear school-wide process for addressing bullying behaviour. In a further 30% of schools, these systems were partially embedded, suggesting an area for additional support. Just over half of schools (56%) had a well embedded safe reporting system for students.

Most schools had systems for fostering positive behaviour

A majority of principals (over 70%) reported having some well embedded, consistent approaches and systems at their school for fostering positive student behaviour, and over three-quarters thought one of their main student-related achievements in the past 3 years was that student behaviour had stayed positive or improved.

Nevertheless, some principals (21%) thought student behaviour was a major issue facing their school, a marked increase from the 12% who thought this in both 2013 and 2010. Fifteen percent said external expertise was needed to keep improving student behaviour, but that they could not readily access this.

The use of wellbeing and behaviour-related data had increased

Use of Student Management System (SMS) to monitor and improve achievement was reported by around three-quarters of teachers. Somewhat less common was the use of SMS data to monitor and improve approaches to wellbeing and behaviour (used by around two-thirds of teachers). However, use of SMS has increased over time, particularly to track behaviour data. Some aspects of data use were less common and may require more support. Only 21% of teachers indicated they could use their SMS effectively to track each student's school-organised extracurricular activities, and 39% of principals reported this practice was in place. In the mid-year information about their child that parents received from school, they were less likely to get clear information about the child's overall wellbeing (53%) than their achievement (around 85%).

Principals and teachers had mixed views about support for wellbeing and behaviour

Most teachers and principals reported they have access to support in relation to wellbeing or behaviour and have professionals to whom they can refer students. However, principals rated the usefulness of many external professionals as mixed. Those that were rated as useful by 50% or more users were mostly attached to a school or a cluster of schools, or were part of a service designed for schools. Useful supports included school nurses or social workers, Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour (RTL), and PB4L School-Wide practitioners. Support that was rated as less useful was mostly provided by non-education government agencies and groups.

Most teachers (80%) rated the quality of timely support if they encounter a problem with student behaviour as a very good or good aspect of their school's culture. This proportion has not changed since the 2010 survey. However, around one-quarter of teachers could not access timely RTL support. Likewise, a similar proportion of principals rated the RTL service as of mixed use.

We looked to see if PB4L initiatives were supporting schools to promote wellbeing and positive behaviour. Teachers' responses suggested PB4L School-Wide and Incredible Years Teacher are assisting in improving student behaviour. Principals' responses suggested PB4L School-Wide is assisting schools to embed systems that promote positive behaviour and support vulnerable students. However, only a relatively small proportion of schools (around one-quarter) in the national survey had joined PB4L School-Wide.

Finding a balance between focusing on learning, wellbeing, and behaviour

The national survey findings suggest more strategic attention and action is needed by policy makers, government agencies, and in schools, in regard to students' mental and emotional wellbeing. Another area of need for around one-fifth of schools is support to assist with student behaviour.

The findings also provide some clear messages for policy makers about aligning policies, support, and messaging to better enable schools to fulfil the intent of the New Zealand curriculum. Perceived pressures from policies relating to literacy and numeracy achievement appear to be creating tensions for some schools as they try to provide a holistic and balanced curriculum that promotes wellbeing and positive behaviour together with learning and achievement.

1.

Introduction

Why is student wellbeing important?

A sense of wellbeing is central to students' success at school and in life. The importance of students' wellbeing is acknowledged in the vision of the New Zealand curriculum¹ in the statements about developing young people who are “confident ... positive in their own identity ... resilient ... able to relate well to others ...” (p. 8).

However, New Zealand students face considerable challenges to their wellbeing and health. In terms of social and emotional wellbeing, New Zealand students report more experiences of bullying behaviour than students from other countries² and we have high rates of youth suicide.³ In terms of physical wellbeing, many primary students take part in a range of sports and active recreation opportunities,⁴ but our young people also have high rates of obesity.⁵

We know that promoting wellbeing for all students, and using proactive approaches (prevention) when students are younger is more effective than later intervention⁶ when patterns or issues may have become more entrenched. This is one reason why primary and intermediate schools can be vital locations for promoting wellbeing and fostering the competencies and strategies students need to manage their wellbeing at and beyond school. This report explores how schools are fostering these competencies, promoting wellbeing, and responding to concerns about wellbeing and behaviour.

What is wellbeing?

Wellbeing has many definitions, most of which emphasise that wellbeing is multi-dimensional. To assist us to define wellbeing for New Zealand students, we drew on Te Whare Tapawhā model of hauora developed

1 Ministry of Education. (2007). *The New Zealand curriculum*. Wellington: Learning Media.

2 Ministry of Education. (2017). *PISA 2015 New Zealand students' wellbeing report*. Wellington: Author. Caygill, R., Hanlar, V., & Harris-Miller, C. (2016). *New Zealand's school climate for learning: What we know from TIMSS 2014/15*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.

3 OECD. (2009). *Doing better for children*. Paris: Author.

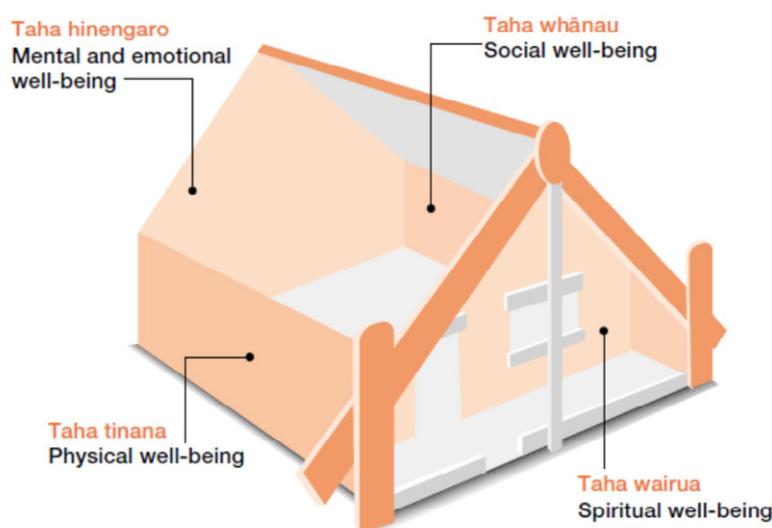
4 Sport New Zealand. (2012). *Sport and recreation in the lives of young New Zealanders*. Wellington: Author.

5 Ministry of Health. (2015). *Understanding excess body weight: New Zealand health survey*. Wellington: Author.

6 Gluckman, P., Low, F., Franko, K., et al. (2011). *Improving the transition: Reducing social and psychological morbidity during adolescence. A report from the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor*. Wellington: Office of the Prime Minister's Science Advisory Committee.

by Mason Durie.⁷ An interpretation of Te Whare Tapawhā is well known in school settings, and hauora is one of the underlying concepts of the Health and Physical Education learning area of *The New Zealand Curriculum* (see Figure 1). In this learning area, hauora is described as a Māori philosophy of wellbeing. Te Whare Tapawhā uses the metaphor of a whare or house to describe wellbeing. Each of the four walls represents a dimension of wellbeing. All are inter-dependent and necessary to maintain the overall structure.

FIGURE 1. Te Whare Tapawhā⁸



In the national survey we asked a few questions about each dimension. Our main focus for each dimension was:

- **Social wellbeing:** Practices that promote belonging, inclusion, and connectedness to school, and support students to learn how to build relationships and friendships.
- **Mental and emotional wellbeing:** The teaching of strategies to support students to express and manage their feelings; school access to support for vulnerable students who may be experiencing emotional distress.
- **Physical wellbeing:** Students' access to opportunities to be physically active and learn about factors such as nutrition that might impact on their wellbeing; school access to health agencies and support services.
- **Spiritual wellbeing:** The extent to which shared values and beliefs that determine how people live, and which include Māori and Pasifika values, are reflected in the culture of schools; and approaches that support all students to develop positive personal identities, and Māori and Pasifika students to develop positive cultural identities.⁹

As noted above, the different dimensions of wellbeing are inter-dependent. Practices that embody shared values and beliefs, enabling all students to develop positive personal identities, are an aspect of spiritual wellbeing. Practices that are inclusive of Māori and Pasifika values can support Māori or Pasifika students

⁷ Durie, M. (1994). *Whaiora: Maori health development*. Auckland: Oxford University Press.

⁸ Ministry of Education. (1999). *Health and physical education in the New Zealand curriculum*. (Diagram from p. 31.) Wellington: Learning Media.

⁹ Information from the 2016 NZCER national survey about school approaches to supporting Māori students' learning and wellbeing will be the focus of an upcoming report, to be available at <http://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/national-survey>

to develop positive cultural identities. Positive self and cultural identities are connected to mental and emotional wellbeing. Actions that foster positive personal and cultural identities also promote belonging to school, and thus are connected to social wellbeing.

Links between wellbeing, behaviour, and learning outcomes

There are strong links between a student's behaviour, their wellbeing, and learning outcomes.¹⁰ For example, studies tell us that schools may not know who is at risk (in terms of emotional distress), and challenging behaviour might be what schools see first. This behaviour can contribute to early school leaving and poorer long-term health and education outcomes for students. This relationship was illustrated in the New Zealand Youth 2007 study of Years 9–13 students.¹¹ This study found 30% of the students in their sample had symptoms of emotional distress which were associated with higher rates of truancy, as was problem behaviour. The students with the highest truancy rate had a mix of both behaviour and emotional and social issues. Although this study was conducted with secondary school students, some of these students were in Year 9, suggesting these patterns may have started at primary school.

An awareness of the inter-relationships between wellbeing, behaviour, and learning is important because it can help improve support for students, as well as their educational experiences at school. In the past decade, understandings about these inter-relationships have strengthened in the education sector. In New Zealand the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) reports released in 2008¹² acted to raise awareness of the importance of student wellbeing. TIMSS showed that 9-year-old students from New Zealand reported experiencing more bullying behaviour than students from other countries. Experiences of bullying were associated with lower rates of achievement.

In 2009, the cross-sector Taumata Whanonga behaviour summit was another turning point at which concerns were aired about managing challenging and disruptive student behaviour and the negative consequences of high levels of exclusion and expulsion for some groups of students. This summit created a momentum for change that led to the education sector investing in the suite of Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) initiatives.¹³ These initiatives all incorporated an understanding of the inter-connections between processes and practices that enhance positive behaviour and those that create school or classroom cultures that fostered wellbeing and learning.

A further driver that has increased awareness about the need to focus on wellbeing in school settings had been ongoing concerns about young people's mental wellbeing as they reach adolescence,¹⁴ which has led to initiatives such as the Youth Mental Health Project.

10 See, for example, Anderson, S. (2005). The relationship between student psychological wellbeing, behaviour and educational outcomes: A lesson from the MindMattersPlus demonstration schools. *Australian Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 15(2), 235–240.

11 Denny, S., Galbreath, R., Grant, S., & Milfont, T. (2010). *Youth '07: The health and wellbeing of secondary school students in New Zealand. Students who truant: What makes a difference?* Auckland: The University of Auckland. From <https://www.fmhs.auckland.ac.nz/assets/fmhs/faculty/ahrg/docs/2007-truancy-report.pdf>

12 Martin, M., Mullis, I., & Foy, P. (2008). *TIMSS 2007 international science report*. Chestnut Hill, MA: TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center.

Mullis, I., Martin, M., & Foy, P. (2008). *TIMSS 2007 international mathematics report*. Chestnut Hill, MA: TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center.

13 Including initiatives such as PB4L School-Wide and Incredible Years Teacher and self-review tools such as the Wellbeing@School toolkit (see <https://www.wellbeingatschool.org.nz/>).

14 Gluckman, P., Low, F., Franko, K., et al. (2011). *Improving the transition: Reducing social and psychological morbidity during adolescence. A report from the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor*. Wellington: Office of the Prime Minister's Science Advisory Committee.

Supporting wellbeing in school settings

There are many government and non-government agencies that offer support to schools relating to student wellbeing. Some of these supports have been in place for a number of years, and others are more recent. In 1999, in acknowledgement of the extra needs of low decile schools, targeted resources in the form of Social Workers in Schools (SWIS) were made available to some schools. SWIS support is now available for decile 1–3 primary and intermediate schools, which serve the most disadvantaged communities. Schools can also access local public health nurses and Health Promoting Schools' resources and facilitators.¹⁵

Since the last NZCER national survey of primary and intermediate schools in 2013 there has been further growth in New Zealand initiatives that support students' wellbeing. The Youth Mental Health Project¹⁶ was launched in 2012. This collaborative initiative involves the Ministries of Education (MOE), Health, Social Development, and Te Puni Kōkiri. The Youth Mental Health Project co-funds 26 initiatives, mainly aimed at young people aged 12 to 19 years. A number are delivered in schools or target school-aged students.

One recent initiative is Healthy Families,¹⁷ which was launched in 2015 by the Ministry of Health. This initiative focuses on 10 communities and includes goals relating to improved nutrition, increased physical activity, promoting smokefree behaviours, and reducing alcohol-related harm. Schools are identified as one of the key sites for promoting change in these communities.

Resources and guidance relating to wellbeing

In the past few years, in response to the growth in awareness about the need to promote student wellbeing alongside learning, there has also been considerable resource development in wellbeing-related areas, including publications to help schools develop approaches to youth suicide,¹⁸ bullying behaviour,¹⁹ mental health,²⁰ sexuality education,²¹ relationship education,²² drug education,²³ and physical activity.²⁴ Resources developed for school trustees include a 2017 ERO booklet to help trustees ask questions about areas such as student wellbeing.²⁵

In 2013, with funding from the Youth Mental Health project, ERO published a draft set of indicators for student wellbeing,²⁶ which were then used in a national evaluation of how wellbeing was promoted in schools. The 2015 evaluation report²⁷ about approaches used to foster student wellbeing at 159 primary and intermediate schools identified that:

- 11% of schools had an **extensive focus** on wellbeing woven throughout all actions
- 18% had student wellbeing **well promoted** through the curriculum and a good response to wellbeing issues

15 <http://hps.tki.org.nz/HPS-Approach>

16 <http://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/mental-health-and-addictions/youth-mental-health-project/youth-mental-health-project-initiatives>

17 <http://www.healthyfamilies.govt.nz/#hom>

18 Ministry of Education. (2013). *Preventing and responding to suicide: Resource kit for schools*. Wellington: Author.

19 Ministry of Education. (2015). *Bullying prevention and response: A guide for schools*. Wellington: Author.

20 Ministry of Social Development. (2015). *Guidelines: Supporting young people with stress, anxiety and/or depression*. Wellington: Author.

21 Ministry of Education. (2015). *Sexuality education: A guide for principals, boards of trustees, and teachers*. Wellington: Author.

22 Ministry of Education. (2015). *Relationship education programmes guide for schools*. Wellington: Author.

23 Ministry of Education. (2010). *Promoting student health and wellbeing: A guide to drug education in schools*. Wellington: Author.

24 Ministry of Health. (2017). *Sit less, move more, sleep well: Physical activity guidelines for children and young people*: <https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/physical-activity-guidelines-for-children-and-young-people-may17.pdf>

25 Education Review Office. (2017). *School trustees booklet*. Wellington: Author.

26 Education Review Office. (2013). *Wellbeing for success: Draft evaluation indicators for student wellbeing*. Wellington: Author.

27 Education Review Office. (2015). *Wellbeing for children's success at primary school*. Wellington: Author.

- 48% had **reasonable promotion** of, and response to, student wellbeing with positive cultures and respectful relationships
- 20% had **some promotion** of, and response to, student wellbeing but also had an over-reliance on behaviour management
- a few schools (3%) were **overwhelmed** by wellbeing issues.

The report made two main recommendations; that schools:

- use a set of agreed goals and targets, and school data to guide all actions and reviews to ensure they meet the curriculum vision of fostering students who are “confident, connected, actively involved, lifelong learners”
- strengthen teachers’ understandings about student partnership to ensure students can actively contribute to school life and their education.

From this evaluation, two resources about effective practice in promoting wellbeing have been published by ERO.²⁸

In 2017, ERO published a report on nutrition and physical activity in New Zealand schools and early learning services.²⁹ This report found 74% of the 46 primary schools included in the review were “doing well” in equipping students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need to make healthy choices about food, nutrition, and physical activity. The other 26% were “not doing so well”.

The primary schools that were “doing well” had strategic leaders who made use of school data to suggest needs and review and improve approaches, and provide professional learning and development (PLD) for teachers that matched identified needs. The schools had clear policies and procedures, a vision for students’ success, and a focus on holistic wellbeing. These schools had a high level of consistency in the messages students received, effective modelling by teachers, and made efforts to ensure all students were included in activities and active learning that related to their needs, interests, and cultures.

This current report considers ERO’s findings and recommendations in the light of what the 2016 national survey data tell us.

Resources and support for behaviour

For schools that need assistance with fostering positive behaviour, RTLB are often the first port of call. The suite of PB4L initiatives are also available for schools and include School-Wide, Restorative Practices, and Incredible Years Teacher. School-Wide started in New Zealand in 2010 and initially targeted low decile schools and schools with identified concerns. School-Wide is managed by the MOE and is partially funded through the Youth Mental Health Project. An evaluation of Tier 1 of School-Wide³⁰ showed the initiative fostered a range of changes including: wellbeing outcomes such as enhancements to school culture; learning outcomes such as student engagement and on-task behaviour; and behaviour outcomes such as decreases in classroom disruption and major behaviour incidents. An evaluation of Incredible Years Teacher³¹ reported enhancements to student engagement, social behaviours with peers and teachers, and behaviour outcomes such as self-management. The findings from these two evaluations illustrate the intertwined nature of wellbeing, behaviour, and learning outcomes.

28 Education Review Office. (2016). *Wellbeing for success: Effective practice*. Wellington: Author.

Education Review Office. (2016). *Wellbeing for success: A resource for schools*. Wellington: Author.

29 Education Review Office. (2017). *Food, nutrition and physical activity in New Zealand schools and early learning services: Effective practice*. Wellington: Author.

30 Boyd, S., & Felgate, R. (2015). “A positive culture of support”: *Final report from the evaluation of PB4L School-Wide*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.

31 Wylie, C., & Felgate, R. (2016). *Use of IYT learning in New Zealand: Incredible Years Teacher programmes—NZCER Evaluation Report 3*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.

Evaluation data also suggested that change in school cultures takes time and is assisted by training and support personnel. The PB4L School-Wide evaluation (which included schools that received the 2010–14 support models) suggested that the initiative could take around 3–5 years to embed.

Some initiatives aim to provide more individual support to students, or support at times of high need, such as the PB4L Intensive Wraparound Services, Tiers 2 and 3 of PB4L School-Wide, and the MOE Support and Behaviour Crisis Response Service and Interim Response Fund, both of which are intended to help schools following a crisis event.³²

There have been recent additions to the support aimed at helping teachers respond to behaviour issues. Recognising that there are times when school staff may be faced with unsafe situations that have the potential to further escalate, the MOE published the resource *Guidance for New Zealand Schools on Behaviour Management to Minimise Physical Restraint* (2016).³³ Funding to support children with behavioural issues, communication problems, or a challenging family environment was recently announced by the Government in 2017. This new social investment package provides funding aimed at “children who are most at-risk of poor lifetime outcomes”.³⁴

Promoting wellbeing and positive behaviour and responding to concerns

In the national survey we asked questions about schools’ proactive approaches aimed at fostering wellbeing and positive behaviour, as well as how schools intervene when students need more support.

We used the intervention triangle shown in Figure 2 to help classify approaches. The triangle is based on a public health approach to prevention. This triangle is used by those who advocate for social and emotional learning as a way of fostering students’ wellbeing, competencies, and achievement,³⁵ as well as by those who aim to create school cultures that foster positive behaviour.³⁶

32 For more information, see <https://www.education.govt.nz/school/student-support/special-education/behaviour-services-to-help-schools-and-students/behaviour-crisis-response-service/>

33 See <https://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/School/Managing-and-supporting-students/Guidance-for-New-Zealand-Schools-on-Behaviour-Mgmt-to-Minimise-Physical-....pdf>

34 From p. 1 of Fact sheet—budget 2017 social investment package: <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Fact%20Sheet%205%20-%20Social%20Investment%20Initiatives.pdf>

35 CASEL. (2008). *Social and emotional learning (SEL) and student benefits: Implications for the Safe Schools/Healthy Students core elements*. Washington, DC: National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention, Education Development Center.

Merrell, K., & Guedner, B. (2010). *Social and emotional learning in the classroom: Promoting mental health and academic success*. New York: The Guilford Press.

36 Chafouleas, S., Riley-Tillman, T., & Sugai, G. (2007). *School-based behavioral assessment: Informing intervention and instruction*. New York: The Guilford Press.

FIGURE 2. **The intervention triangle: Planning to promote wellbeing and behaviour**

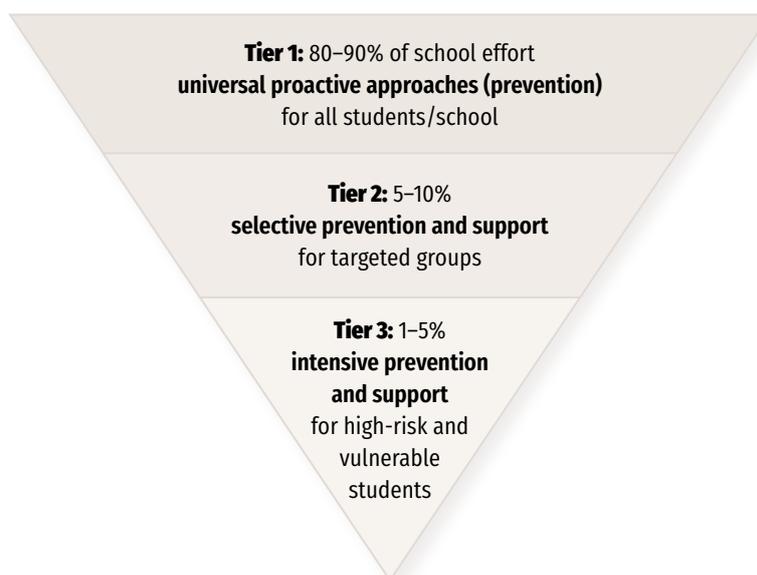


Diagram adapted by Boyd³⁷ to suit a New Zealand context from CASEL³⁸ and Chafouleas et al.³⁹

The triangle can be used as a point of reference for making decisions about what emphasis might be placed on different types of activities. To best support student wellbeing, schools need a culture and practices that promote wellbeing as well as respond to wellbeing needs.⁴⁰ One core principle underpinning the triangle is that “prevention is better than cure”. Therefore building a proactive approach to promoting wellbeing and positive behaviour, that is aimed at all students and builds their competencies, will lead to fewer students needing extensive support. Another principle is that not all effort to promote wellbeing and positive behaviour should be directed at individuals, as this ignores the social context of behaviours.

Schools can be strategic and deliberate about supporting students by having some approaches at all three tiers. Such approaches might include:

- **Tier 1, universal prevention and proactive approaches:** A mix of activities aimed at **all students** to assist in building wellbeing and positive behaviour (e.g., activities that build a sense of belonging to school; planned social and emotional learning in Health and PE; initiatives such as PB4L School-Wide)
- **Tier 2, selective prevention and support:** Approaches targeted at **small groups of students** with extra needs (e.g., groups to assist students who are having difficulty with grief or anxiety)
- **Tier 3, intensive prevention and support:** Intensive approaches for **crises** and **individual students** with very high support needs (e.g., RTLB, social workers, and other forms of individual specialist support).

37 Boyd, S. (2012). *Wellbeing@School: Building a safe and caring school climate that deters bullying overview paper*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.

38 CASEL. (2008). *Social and emotional learning (SEL) and student benefits: Implications for the Safe Schools/Healthy Students core elements*. Washington DC: National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention, Education Development Center.

39 Chafouleas, S., Riley-Tillman, T., & Sugai, G. (2007). *School-based behavioral assessment: Informing intervention and instruction*. New York: The Guilford Press.

40 Education Review Office. (2016). *Wellbeing for success: Effective practice*. Wellington: Author.

Activities relating to the four dimensions of Te Whare Tapawhā can be located at Tier 1 to Tier 3. Our questions were mostly about the proactive approaches schools used to foster students' wellbeing (Tier 1). We also asked whether practices, such as small-group approaches to assist vulnerable students to build self-esteem and resilience, were well embedded (a Tier 2 approach). Recognising that there are instances when it may be beyond a school's capacity to provide effective support for a student's health and wellbeing issues, we asked principals and teachers about their access to external professionals to whom they can refer vulnerable students (part of Tier 3).

Proactive approaches (Tier 1) can strengthen **protective factors** that act to “enhance the likelihood of positive outcomes and lessen the likelihood of negative consequences from exposure to risk”.⁴¹ We were interested to see what proactive approaches schools were taking to enhance protective factors that are associated with students' wellbeing and engagement with school. Protective factors at the system and school level can provide support to students, and those at the classroom and individual student levels can help students build skills and competencies to manage their wellbeing. Risk and protective factors tend to co-occur; that is, many wellbeing-related risk and protective factors are also related to positive behaviour and engagement in learning.

Some of the known protective factors that enhance students' wellbeing (and often also achievement), and which can be influenced by schools, include a positive school climate,⁴² a sense of connectedness or belonging to school,⁴³ access to comprehensive health support at school,⁴⁴ caring relationships with teachers,⁴⁵ classroom social and emotional learning experiences,⁴⁶ and fair and consistent systems for addressing behaviour concerns.⁴⁷

We were also interested in how schools manage known risk factors such as bullying behaviour and inconsistent or punitive school discipline systems. As one example of the impact of different styles of school discipline, young people in an Australian study⁴⁸ identified inconsistent or punitive systems at secondary schools as a risk factor or challenge that was related to disengagement at secondary school and could contribute to mental health issues and stress. Findings from the PB4L School-Wide evaluation showed that teacher fairness, positive behaviour management systems, and opportunities for students to contribute are also important for primary and intermediate-aged students and enhanced their feelings of community at school.⁴⁹

41 World Health Organization. (2004). *FINAL DRAFT—March 2004 1 Chapter 4: Determinants (Risk and protective factors) Indicators*. Retrieved 4 April 2016, from http://www.who.int/hiv/pub/me/en/me_prev_ch4.pdf

42 Denny, S., et al. (2011). Do schools influence student risk-taking behaviors and emotional health symptoms? *Journal of Adolescent Health, 48*(3), 259–267.

43 Jose, P., & Pryor, J. (2010). Does social connectedness lead to a greater sense of well-being in New Zealand adolescents? Findings from The Youth Connectedness Project. *Psychology Aotearoa, 2*(2), 94–97.

Resnick, M., et al. (1997). Protecting adolescents from harm. Findings from the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health. *Journal of the American Medical Association, 278*(10), 823–832.

44 Denny, S., et al. (2014). *Health services in New Zealand secondary schools and the associated health outcomes for students*. Auckland: University of Auckland.

45 Pienaar, F. (2010). *New Zealand children's experiences of stress and coping*. Unpublished thesis for a Doctor of Philosophy in Social and Community Health, University of Auckland.

46 Durlak, J., Weissberg, R., Dymnicki, A., Taylor, R., & Schellinger, K. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development, 82*(1), 405–432.

47 Randall, L., Morstyn, L., & Walsh, K. (2012). *Two way street: Young people informing improvements to schools and youth services*. Melbourne: Youth Affairs Council of Victoria.

Boyd, S., Hotere-Barnes, A., Tongati'o, L., & MacDonald, J. (2015). *“It's who we are”: Stories of practice and change from PB4L School-Wide schools*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.

48 Randall, L., Morstyn, L., & Walsh, K. (2012). *Two way street: Young people informing improvements to schools and youth services*. Melbourne, VIC: Youth Affairs Council of Victoria.

49 Boyd, S., Hotere-Barnes, A., Tongati'o, L., & MacDonald, J. (2015). *“It's who we are”: Stories of practice and change from PB4L School-Wide schools*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.

About the national survey

This survey was conducted from August to early September 2016 and was sent to a representative sample of 349 English-medium state and state-integrated primary and intermediate schools (20% of all these schools in New Zealand).⁵⁰ At these schools, surveys were sent to the principal and to a random sample of one in two teachers. Surveys also went to the board of trustees' chair, who was asked to give a second trustee survey to someone likely to have a different viewpoint from their own. Additionally, surveys were sent to a random sample of one in four parents at a cross-section of 36 schools. The response rates were 57% for principals ($n = 200$), 38% for teachers ($n = 771$), 25% for trustees ($n = 176$), and 32% for parents, whānau, and fanau ($n = 504$).

The survey returns for principals, teachers, and trustees were generally representative of schools in the sample, with the following small variations:

- Principal returns showed a slight over-representation of large schools, and metropolitan schools. Decile 8–10 schools were somewhat over-represented, as were schools in the Auckland region.
- In the schools from which teachers returned surveys, there was a slight under-representation of large schools, and an over-representation of small–medium and small schools. Slight under-representations were evident of decile 1 schools and schools in the Auckland and Hawke's Bay/Gisborne MOE regions.
- The schools from which we received trustee surveys reflected some over-representation of large schools and under-representation of decile 1 schools.

The maximum margin of error⁵¹ for the principal survey is 6.9%, for the teacher survey around 3.5%, and for the trustee survey around 7.4%. Sometimes we report results for smaller groups of respondents within each survey; the maximum margin of error reported for each survey does not apply to these groups. Calculating the margin of error relies on random sampling and because we rely on schools to select the teachers and trustees to complete surveys, we cannot guarantee that these samples are random. Therefore, the margins of error for the teacher and trustee surveys should be regarded as approximations. The parent and whānau sample is not a random sample; therefore we do not calculate a margin of error for that survey.

We report only statistically significant differences associated with school characteristics (most differences were by school decile band⁵² or location,⁵³ with a smaller number related to school size⁵⁴), unless otherwise stated. As wellbeing is a growing focus for the national survey, there are only a small number of questions where we compared 2016 findings to equivalent findings from 2010 or 2013.

50 For further details about the sample and methodology, see Berg, M. (2017). *NZCER national survey of primary and intermediate schools 2016: Methodology and sample information*. Available on the project web page: <http://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/national-survey>

51 The maximum margin of error added to and subtracted from a proportion gives a confidence interval. We can say there is a 95% chance that the proportion is inside this range of numbers.

52 We grouped schools into decile bands for analysis purposes: decile 1–2, decile 3–4, decile 5–6, decile 7–8, and decile 9–10.

53 Each school was classified as being in either a rural, town, small city, or metropolitan location.

54 Schools with 100 students or fewer were categorised as small; those with 101–200 students as small–medium; 201–350 students as medium–large; and 351 students or more as large.

The focus of this report

In this report,⁵⁵ we look at how student wellbeing is promoted in schools and approaches to student behaviour. For a few areas we have tracked over time, we consider whether practices have changed since our surveys in 2010 and 2013. The questionnaires included some separate items about wellbeing and behaviour, and a smaller number in which the two focuses were interwoven. Therefore, wellbeing and behaviour responses are generally reported separately.

We present the views of principals, teachers, trustees, and parents, whānau, and fanau. We begin with principals' and teachers' reports of how wellbeing is positioned at a strategic school-wide level. Then we explore actions by teachers in the classroom that aim to promote wellbeing. Following this we consider the structures schools have in place to provide extra support for vulnerable students.

Following this we consider school-wide approaches to behaviour, and schools' access to behaviour support. We then turn to parents' views of their child's wellbeing and behaviour at school. Finally we consider the role that trustees play in setting directions and offering strategic support for schools in terms of wellbeing and behaviour.

Some sections describe approaches that might be used at each tier of the intervention triangle. In these sections we consider activities aimed at all students (Tier 1) as well as those that support identified groups (Tier 2) or vulnerable students who require individualised support (Tier 3).

Throughout the report, we have included comments made by principals, teachers, or parents in response to a range of open-ended survey questions. Most quotes come from teachers in response to an invitation to comment about supporting student wellbeing and behaviour at school. A relatively small number of teachers (30%) commented, and those who did talked about many different areas. Therefore, rather than report patterns of responses to this question, we have used these comments to illustrate themes that emerged.

⁵⁵ The national survey is comprehensive. Further reports on other topics are available on the project web page: <http://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/national-survey>

2.

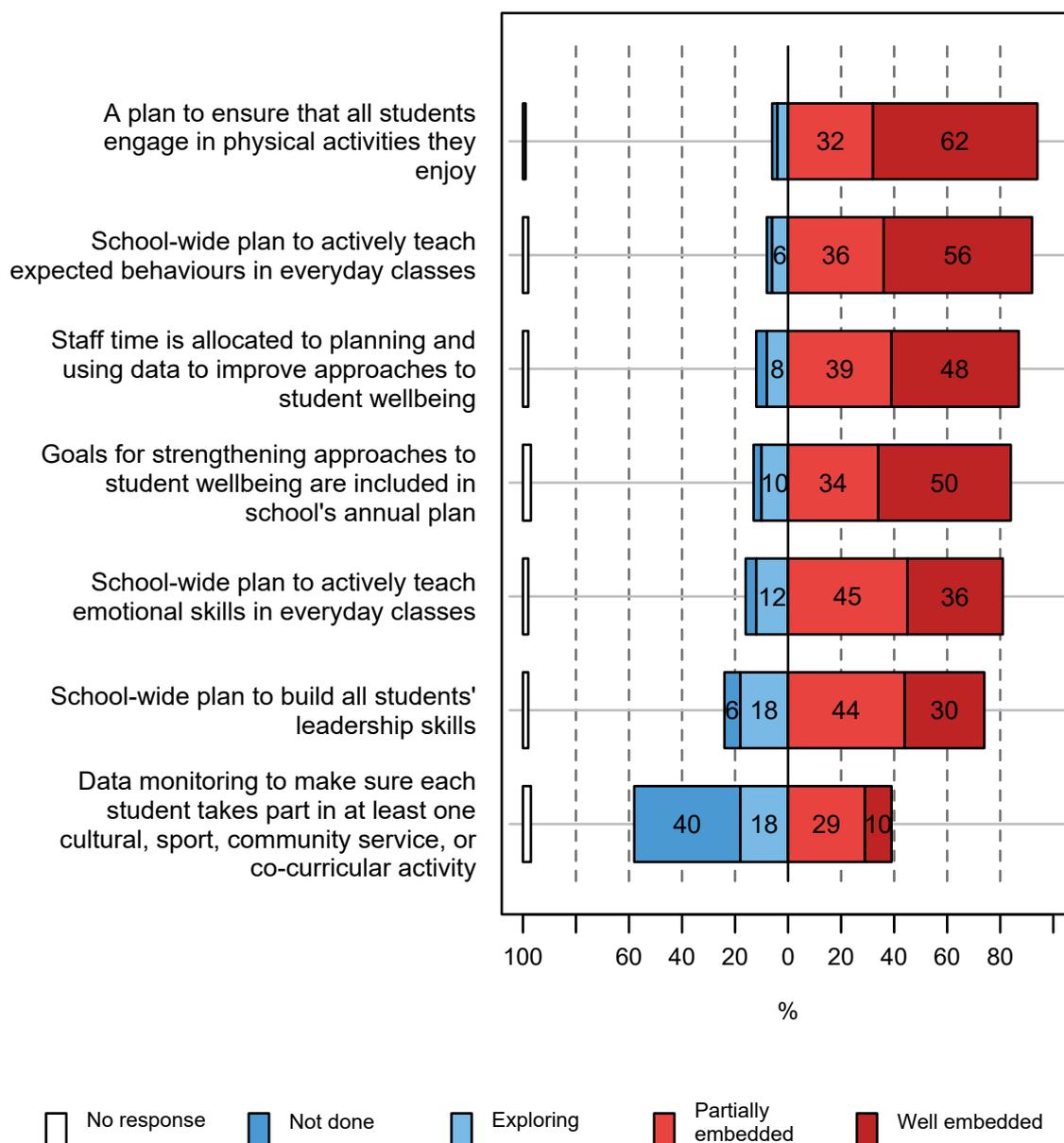
Building a strategic approach to foster wellbeing

Principals' views on building a planned and strategic approach to wellbeing

One way schools foster wellbeing is through planning activities that aim to create a protective climate around all students (Tier 1), and then monitoring these activities. We asked principals about the extent to which their school had embedded seven practices that are likely to be part of a planned and strategic school-wide approach to fostering students' wellbeing (see Figure 3).

The most common well embedded practices were a plan to ensure that all students engage in physical activities they enjoy (62%) and a school-wide plan to actively teach expected behaviours in everyday classes (56%). The least well embedded practice was data monitoring to ensure each student takes part in at least one cultural, sport, community service, or co-curricular activity (10%).

FIGURE 3. Principals' views on planning that supports students' wellbeing (n = 200)



Other practices that were well embedded in about half of schools included: having goals for strengthening approaches to student wellbeing in the school's annual plan (50%); and staff time allocated to planning and using data to improve approaches to student wellbeing (48%).

The extent to which a planned school-wide approach to wellbeing was well embedded was similar across different types of schools (decile, location, size), suggesting that practices that promote student wellbeing occur in all types of schools. One exception was that more large and medium-large schools (45%) than small and medium-small schools (19%) reported having a well embedded school-wide plan to actively teach emotional skills in everyday classes. Another exception was that a well embedded school-wide plan to actively teach expected behaviours was more common in schools at which PB4L School-Wide was well embedded (79%, compared with 52% of principals whose school was not part of PB4L School-Wide). A system for whole school teaching of expected behaviours is one of the core features of School-Wide.

We divided the principals into three groups, depending on how many of the seven practices they reported were well embedded. There was wide variation between schools, suggesting that more strategic attention to student wellbeing may be needed:

- 5–7 practices—26% of schools (many well embedded approaches)
- 2–4 practices—47% of schools (some well embedded approaches)
- 0–1 practices—27% of schools (one or no well embedded approaches).

Where schools' attention is focused appears to be impacting on the extent to which wellbeing-related approaches are well embedded. Schools with fewer well embedded approaches were more likely to also report a focus on literacy and mathematics was taking attention away from other aspects of *The New Zealand Curriculum*. Of the principals who indicated their school has one or no well embedded approaches, 54% reported a focus on literacy and mathematics was taking attention away from other aspects of the curriculum. For those with some well embedded approaches the figure was 39%, and for those with many well embedded approaches, 25%. A theme that was evident in respondents' comments was that National Standards policies and practices were narrowing the curriculum and, in some schools, could be a barrier to developing holistic approaches to learning and wellbeing.

...National Standards are a useful tool, especially for 'raising the bar'. My concern has always been with the self-esteem of children being at risk, if the children need a longer period of time to catch up...
...there is a concern that it does not cater enough for emotional intelligence, creativity, social and physical wellbeing etc. (*Principal*)

All learning is important; however, schools are not doing enough to reach all our children and engage all our children. Schools need less focus on National Standards and more on the wellbeing of our children. Schools need to emphasise the value of our uniqueness. (*Parent*)

Using data to plan and promote wellbeing

As shown in Figure 3, nearly half (48%) of principals noted that allocating staff time to planning and using data to improve approaches to student wellbeing was well embedded at their school. Over half (57%) of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they use student data to help support students' social and emotional development. For 68% of teachers, the analysis of student attendance, behaviour, and wellbeing data was a good or very good aspect of their school's culture. More (79%) thought the analysis of student achievement data to improve teaching and learning was a very good or good aspect.

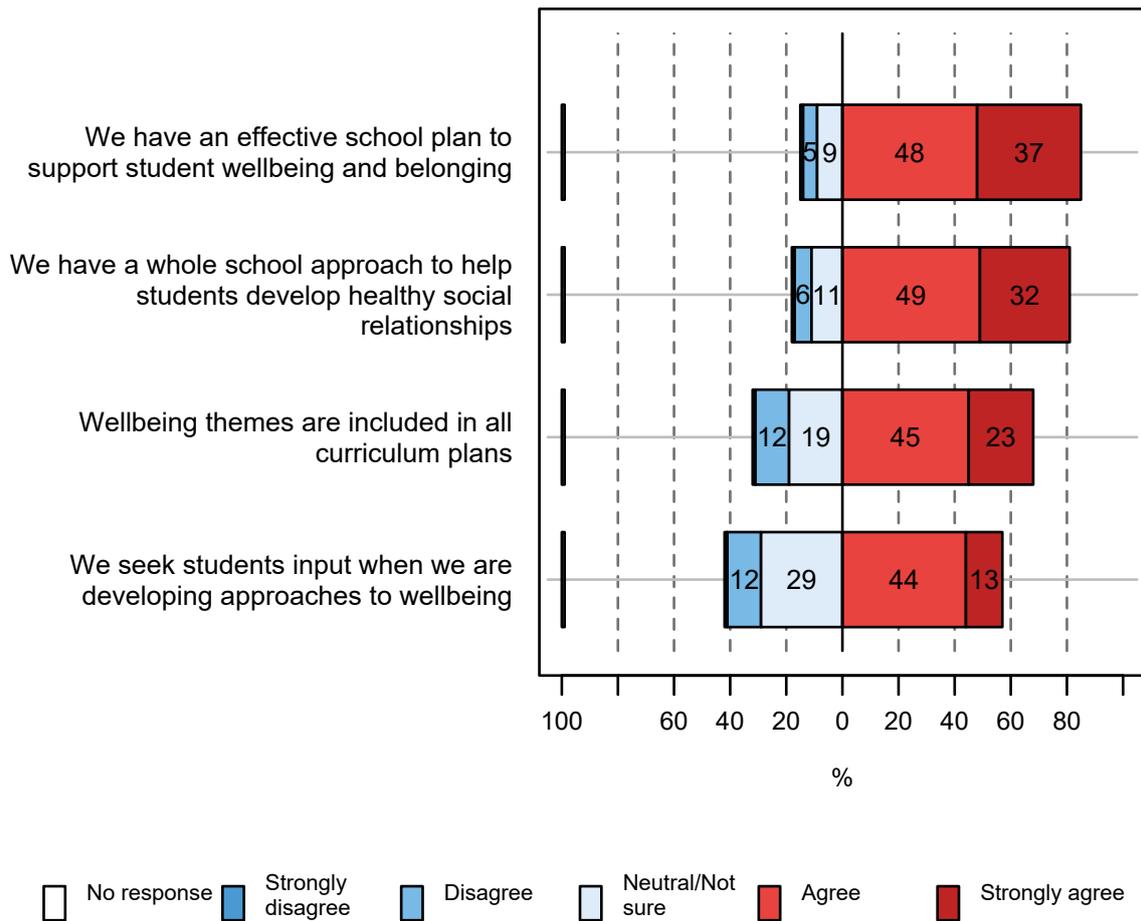
Ensuring students take part in extracurricular activities is a known way of fostering a sense of belonging and connection to school and positive relationships with adults outside the classroom. Extracurricular activities were common in schools. As shown in Figure 3, 94% of principals reported their school had a partially or well embedded plan to ensure all students engage in physical activities they enjoy. Using data monitoring to track each student's school-organised extracurricular activities was not common. Only 39% of principals noted this monitoring was partially or well embedded and only 21% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed they could effectively use their SMS to track this information. Tracking extracurricular activities was more common in large and metropolitan schools than small and rural schools. Overall, large and metropolitan schools made more use of data for a range of purposes.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ For details of the other purposes for which teachers were using their school's SMS, see the upcoming report *What was happening for teachers in 2016?* to be added to the web page: <http://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/national-survey>

Teachers' views on building a strategic approach to wellbeing

Like principals, most teachers agreed or strongly agreed that their school had a range of planned approaches in place that aimed to foster wellbeing (Tier 1) (see Figure 4). Most teachers agreed or strongly agreed their school had an effective plan to support student wellbeing and belonging (85%) and a whole school approach to help students develop healthy social relationships (81%).

FIGURE 4. Teachers' views on school-wide planning that supports students' wellbeing (n = 771)



The practices shown in Figure 4 formed a factor,⁵⁷ which suggests they all contribute to the same underlying construct related to school-wide approaches to supporting students' wellbeing. This means the practices are inter-related; for example, teachers who strongly agreed their school had one of the practices in place also tended to strongly agree the other practices were in place.

Again, like principals, the extent to which teachers agreed school-wide approaches to wellbeing were in place was similar across different school characteristics (decile, location, size), suggesting that these practices that promote student wellbeing occur across all types of schools.

⁵⁷ School-wide planning that supports students' wellbeing was one of several factors in a regression model that investigated whether these factors were associated with being in a PB4L School-Wide school. Although the relationship was significant, being a PB4L School-Wide school explained only a small amount of the variability in this factor. Details of the factor analysis are presented in the Appendix.

Teachers tended to select 'agree' rather than 'strongly agree' to the planning questions. The comments of some suggested that individual activities are in place, but are not necessarily part of a planned or strategic approach.

This [wellbeing focus] ... is an extremely important thing to do because children need to feel happy, comfortable, and safe in a classroom environment. However, the pressure to meet standards may mean that this is not done as well as it should be as it is seen as taking away teaching time. I believe that if student wellbeing is a high priority, and a focus, good learning will occur as the students will be in a mind-frame to learn. *(Teacher)*

It is a positive approach but unco-ordinated across the school. *(Teacher)*

3.

Practices and programmes that foster wellbeing (Tier 1)

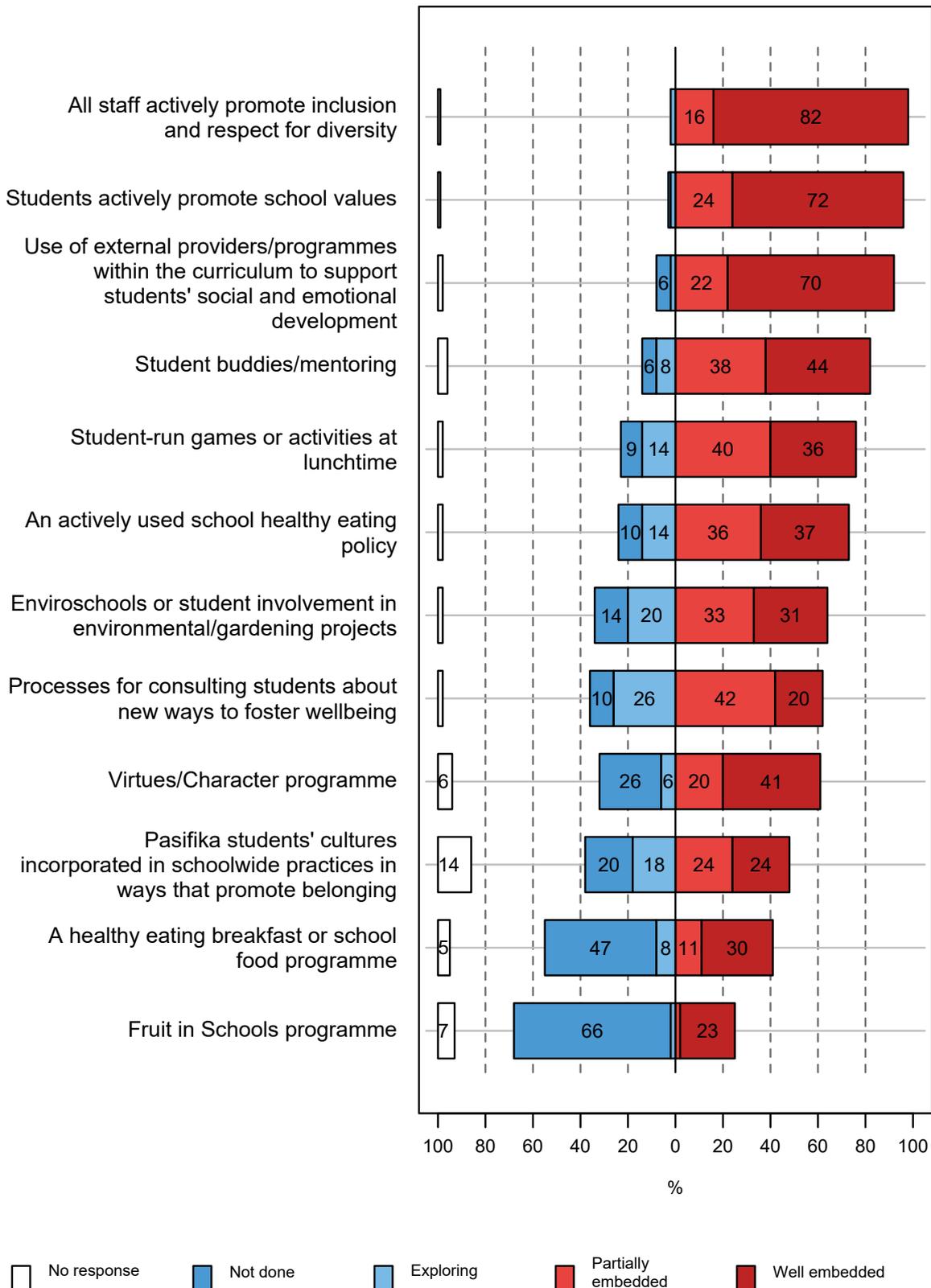
Principals' views on practices and programmes that foster wellbeing

We asked principals about some of the practices and programmes that were in place at their school to foster wellbeing (Tier 1) (see Figure 5).

A number of practices that aim to foster **social or mental and emotional wellbeing** were well embedded at many schools, including all staff actively promoting inclusion and respect for diversity (82%), and using external providers/programmes within the curriculum to support students' social and emotional development (70%).

3. Practices and programmes that foster wellbeing (Tier 1)

FIGURE 5. Principals' views on practices and programmes that support wellbeing (n = 200)



Healthy eating is one aspect of **physical wellbeing**. An actively used school healthy eating policy was well embedded at only 37% of schools. Reflecting the needs of their students, and targeted government funding, principals from lower decile schools were more likely to report their school had healthy eating programmes such as Fruit in Schools (97% of decile 1–2, compared with 7% of decile 3–10 schools) or a healthy eating breakfast or school food programme (63% of decile 1–4, compared with 11% of decile 5–10 schools).

Fostering wellbeing through student leadership, input, and partnerships

Providing students with leadership roles or opportunities to give input, or design new approaches at school, are ways of fostering belonging and **social wellbeing** and building students' competencies. Practices that related to student input and leadership were less common than many of the other wellbeing-related practices. Principals' responses suggest that practices that are likely to be staff designed and guided are more embedded in schools than those that are built on student–teacher partnerships. One example of a practice that is likely to be staff designed and guided is students actively promoting school values. This practice was reported as well embedded by the majority of principals (72%) (see Figure 5 above). Another example is the use of student buddies/mentoring (reported as well embedded by 44%).

Using students' ideas to design new approaches is a way of partnering with students to promote wellbeing. Only 20% of principals reported their school had well embedded processes for consulting students about new ways to foster wellbeing. A smaller proportion of teachers (13%) strongly agreed that their school seeks student input when developing approaches to wellbeing (see Figure 4 earlier).

Principals' and teachers' responses suggest that approaches to student leadership are also not well embedded across schools. Principals reported that student-run games or activities at lunch-time were well embedded at 36% of schools (see Figure 5), and only 26% of teachers strongly agreed they have a plan to build leadership skills through classroom opportunities (see Figure 7).

In their 2015 report on *Wellbeing for Children's Success at Primary School*, ERO⁵⁸ recommended that schools strengthen teachers' understandings about student partnership to ensure students can actively contribute to school life and their education. The national survey data suggest that this strengthening could occur at a leadership level as well as in the classroom.

Fostering wellbeing in the classroom

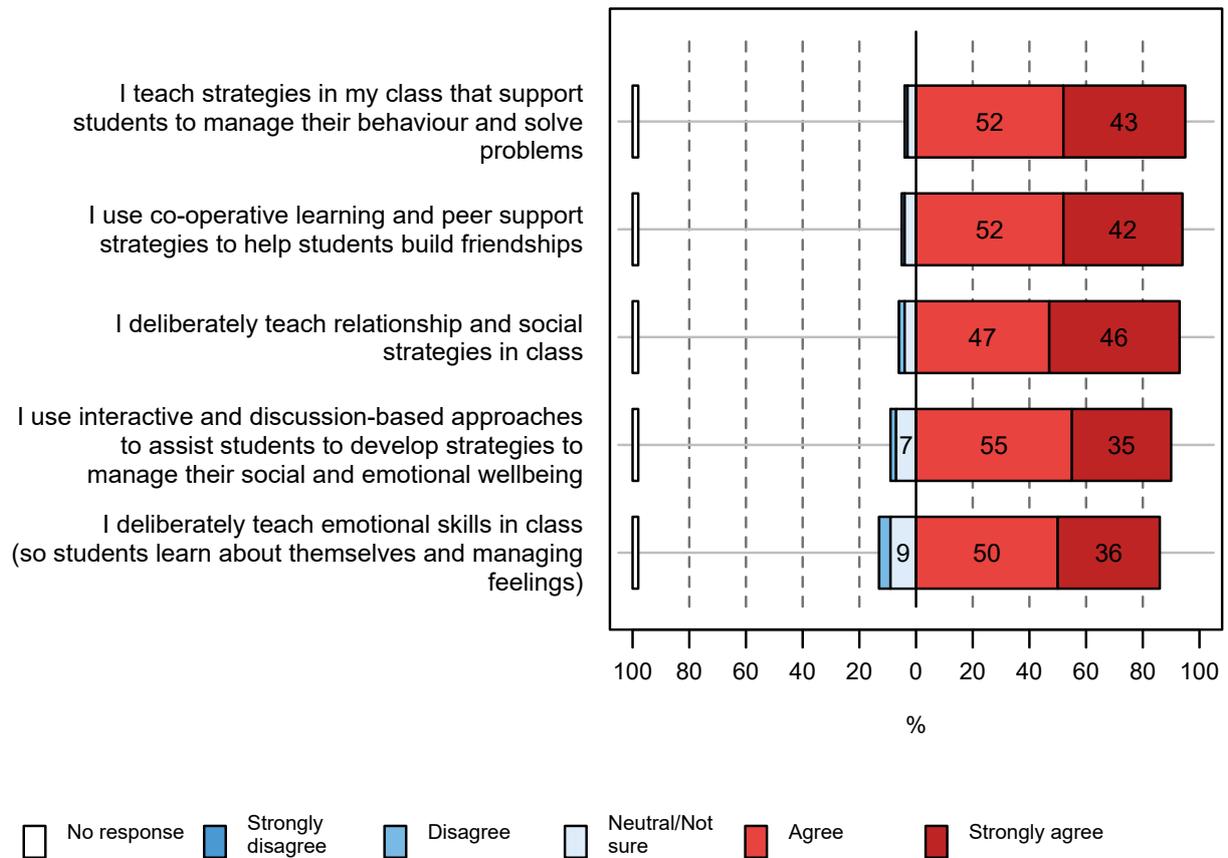
We asked teachers about a range of classroom practices that can be used to foster wellbeing (see Figure 6). Nearly all teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they used approaches to foster students' **social** and **mental and emotional** wellbeing in their classroom. Among the most common practices were those aimed at supporting students' **social wellbeing**:

- I use co-operative learning and peer support strategies to help students build friendships (94%)
- I deliberately teach relationship and social strategies in class (93%).

58 Education Review Office. (2015). *Wellbeing for children's success at primary school*. Wellington: Author.

3. Practices and programmes that foster wellbeing (Tier 1)

FIGURE 6. Teachers' use of classroom social and emotional learning practices (n = 771)



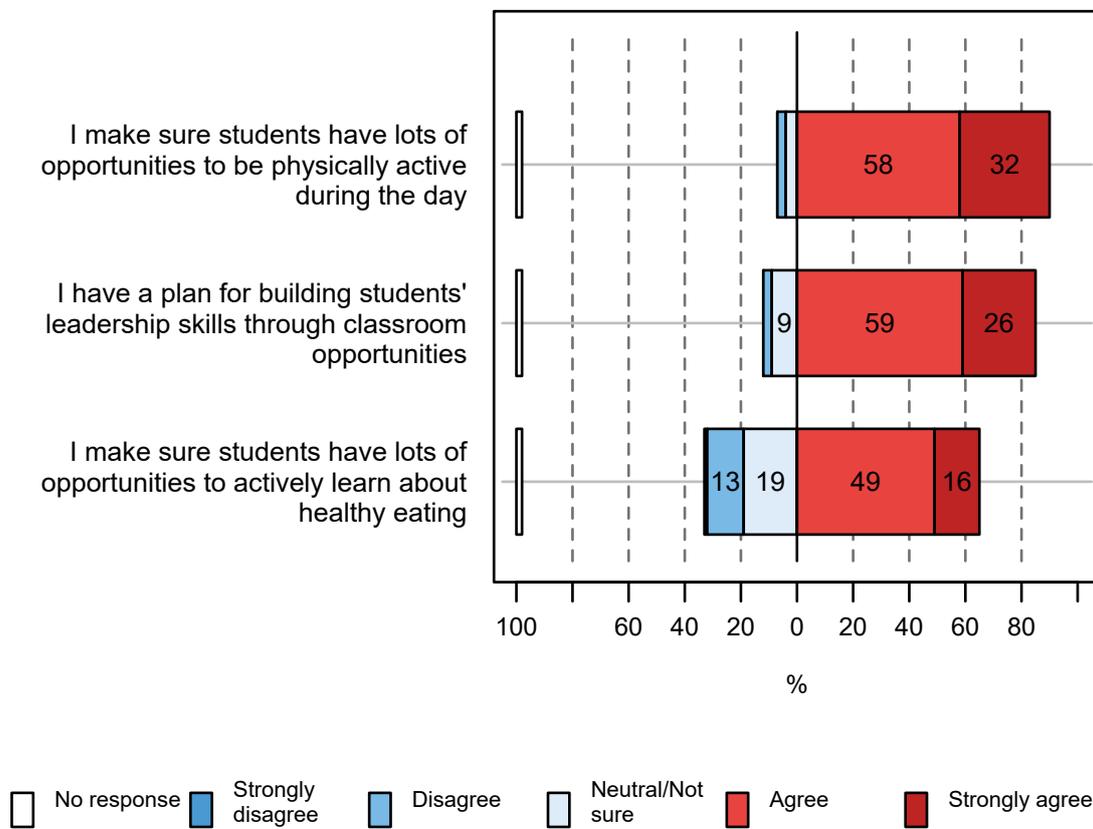
The practices shown in Figure 6 formed a factor⁵⁹ which suggests they contribute to the same underlying construct related to active social and emotional teaching and learning. This means the practices are inter-related; for example, teachers who strongly agreed they used one of the practices also tended to strongly agree they used the other practices. Social and emotional learning is embedded in the achievement objectives of the Health and PE learning area of *The New Zealand Curriculum*. Two-thirds of teachers (67%) reported they had PLD in the past 2–3 years which provided practical help with supporting students' social and emotional learning. This suggests that ongoing development in this area is occurring at many schools. PB4L Incredible Years Teacher (IYT) is one example of PLD that supports teachers to develop approaches to social and emotional learning. A total of 45% of principals noted their school had accessed support from IYT (see Table 1).

⁵⁹ Active social and emotional learning was one of several factors in a regression model described in the Appendix.

A focus on social and emotional learning is likely to have many benefits for students. International literature syntheses⁶⁰ suggest that well-designed opportunities for social and emotional learning are connected with a broad range of positive outcomes for students. Some outcomes are wellbeing-related, such as enhanced self-esteem or improved competencies in relationship skills, self-management, or managing mental distress or anxiety. Other outcomes include improved academic achievement.

Teachers’ approaches to other aspects of wellbeing were more varied (see Figure 7). In terms of **physical wellbeing**, nearly all teachers agreed or strongly agreed they made sure that students have lots of opportunities to be physically active during the day (90%). However, fewer made sure students had lots of opportunities to learn about healthy eating (64%).

FIGURE 7. Teachers’ use of classroom practices that support student leadership and physical wellbeing (n = 771)



Teachers’ responses to the statements in Figures 6 and 7 did not vary significantly by school characteristics (decile, location, size), suggesting that classroom practices that aim to foster **social, mental and emotional, and physical wellbeing** occur across different types of schools. **Spiritual wellbeing** is discussed next.

60 Durlak, J., Weissberg, R., Dymnicki, A., Taylor, R., & Schellinger, K. (2011). The impact of enhancing students’ social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development, 82*(1), 405–432.
 Payton, J., Weissberg, R., Durlak, J., Dymnicki, A., Taylor, R., Schellinger, K., & Pachan, M. (2008). *The positive impact of social and emotional learning for kindergarten to eighth-grade students: Findings from three scientific reviews*. Chicago, IL: Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning.
 Sklad, M., Diekstra, R., Ritter, M., Ben, J., & Gravesteyn, C. (2012). Effectiveness of school-based universal social, emotional, and behavioral programs: Do they enhance students’ development in the area of skill, behavior, and adjustment? *Psychology in the Schools, 49*(9), 892–909.

Fostering the wellbeing of Māori and Pasifika learners

The wellbeing of Māori and Pasifika students is supported by school approaches that develop positive cultural identities and reflect cultural values. One example of this connection is shown in a study by Arama Rata⁶¹ that explored the relationships between Māori cultural engagement, Māori identity, and the psychological wellbeing of Māori students in secondary schools. Her findings showed that higher levels of Māori cultural promotion at school were associated with Māori students having stronger ethnic identities. Enhanced Māori identities were associated with increased psychological wellbeing in students.

The promotion of positive cultural identities and values is an aspect of the **spiritual wellbeing** dimension of Te Whare Tapawhā. These practices are also connected to **social and mental and emotional wellbeing**. Questions about how schools promoted these aspects of wellbeing for Māori and Pasifika learners were included in the national survey. A fuller analysis of school practices that support Māori learners is reported separately.⁶²

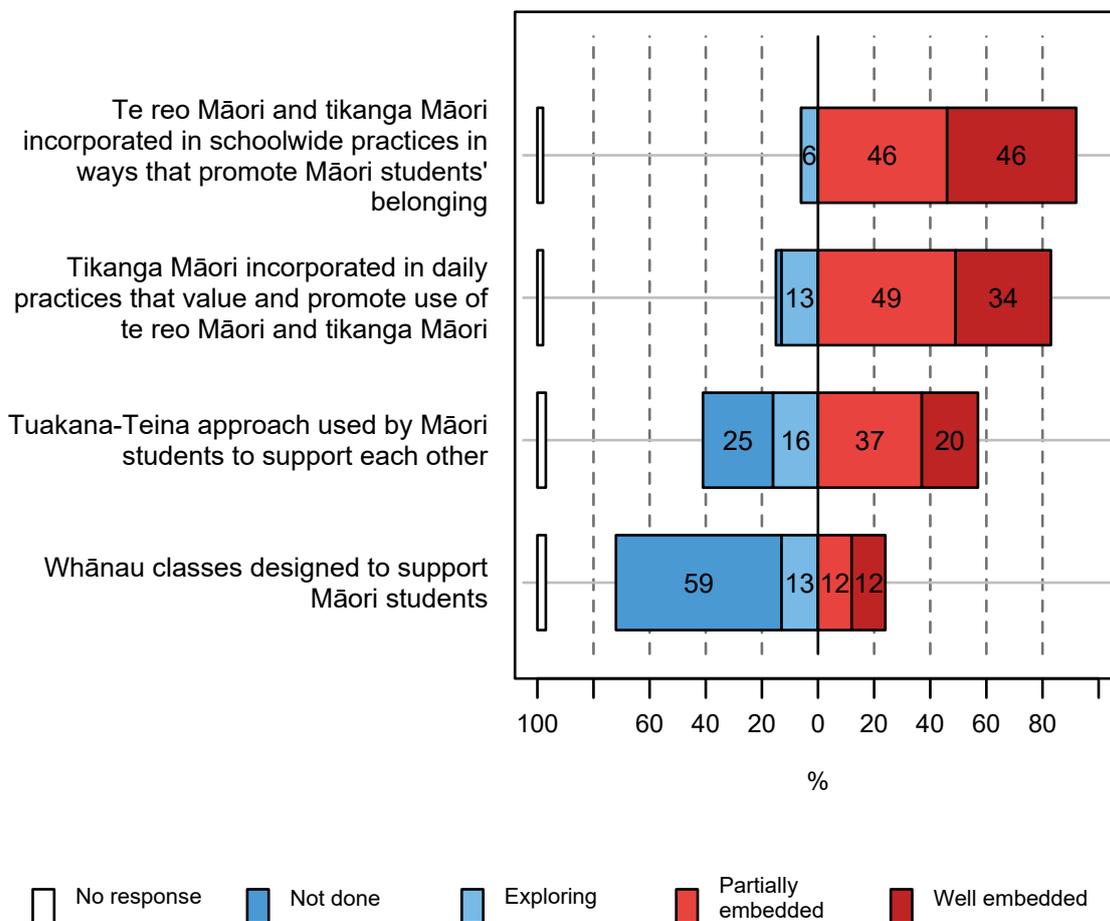
Principals' views on fostering the wellbeing of Māori and Pasifika learners

We asked principals four questions about the way Māori students' cultural identity and values are promoted at school (see Figure 8). Their responses suggest that some practices occur in most schools. Nearly all (93%) reported their school had partially or well embedded approaches to incorporating te reo Māori and tikanga Māori into school-wide practices in ways that promote Māori students' belonging. Other practices were less common, with only 25% of principals reporting that whānau classes that are designed to support Māori students were partially or well embedded.

⁶¹ Rata, A. (2012). *Te pītau o te tuakiri: Affirming Māori identities and promoting wellbeing in state secondary schools*. Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology thesis, Victoria University of Wellington.

⁶² More about *Ngā ākonga Māori* will be available in a separate report, which will be added to the NZCER National Survey page. Sign up for report alerts at <http://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/national-survey>

FIGURE 8. Principals' views on school approaches that support Māori students' wellbeing (n = 200)



Use of approaches that incorporated Māori students' cultural identity and values was more common at decile 1–2 schools. Almost half (47%) of decile 1–2 school principals reported tuakana–teina approaches were well embedded, compared with 13% of decile 3–10 school principals, and 28% of decile 1–2 school principals reported whānau classes were well embedded, compared with 9% of decile 3–10 school principals.

We are a small kura. Tuakana–Teina plays an essential role in our kura... [We] have established a 'whānau vibe' in our kura. (Teacher)

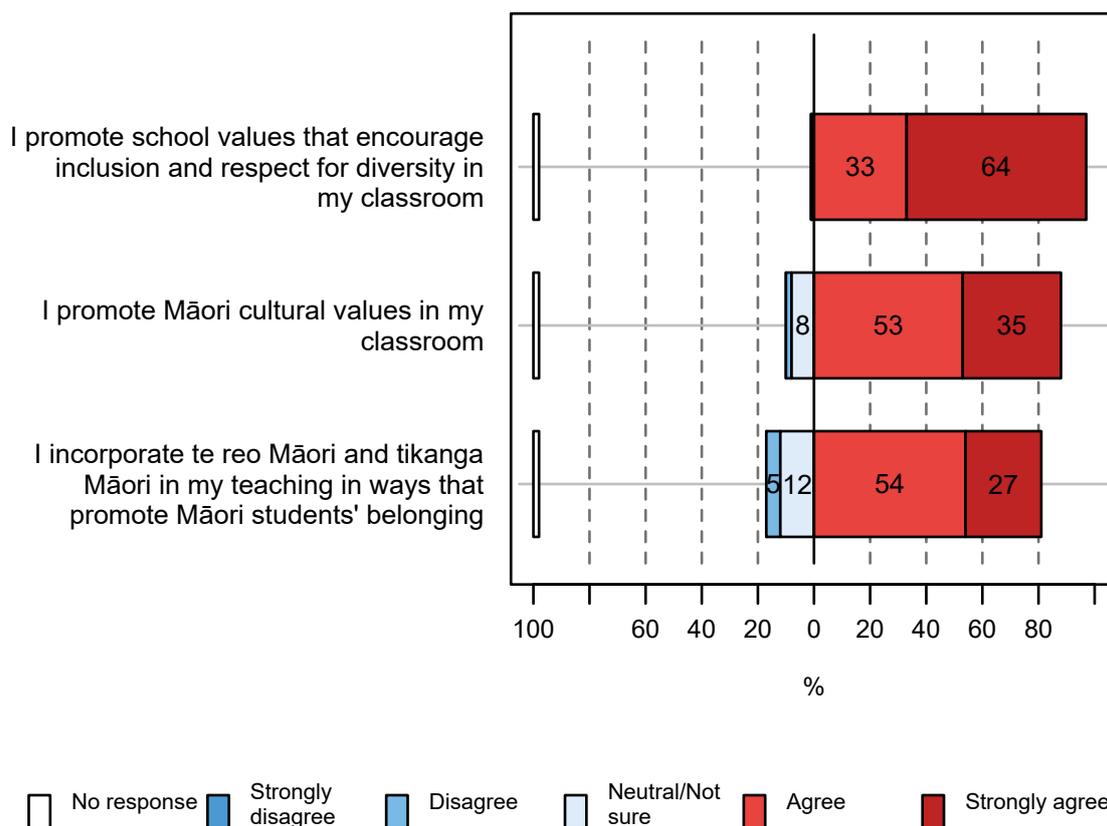
Approaches to promoting Pasifika students' cultural identity were less common across schools than approaches for Māori students. Slightly less than half of principals (48%) reported their school had partially or well embedded approaches to incorporating Pasifika students' cultures in school-wide practices in ways that promote wellbeing. There was a positive change over time in the number of principals who reported this practice was well embedded (24%, up from 8% in 2013). Well embedded approaches were more common in metropolitan schools which tend to have higher proportions of Pasifika students (32% of metropolitan schools, compared with 15% of schools in other locations).

Teachers' views on practices that support Māori and Pasifika students' wellbeing

The majority of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they promote Māori cultural values in their classroom (88%), and incorporate te reo Māori and tikanga Māori in their teaching in ways that promote Māori students' belonging (80%) (see Figure 9).

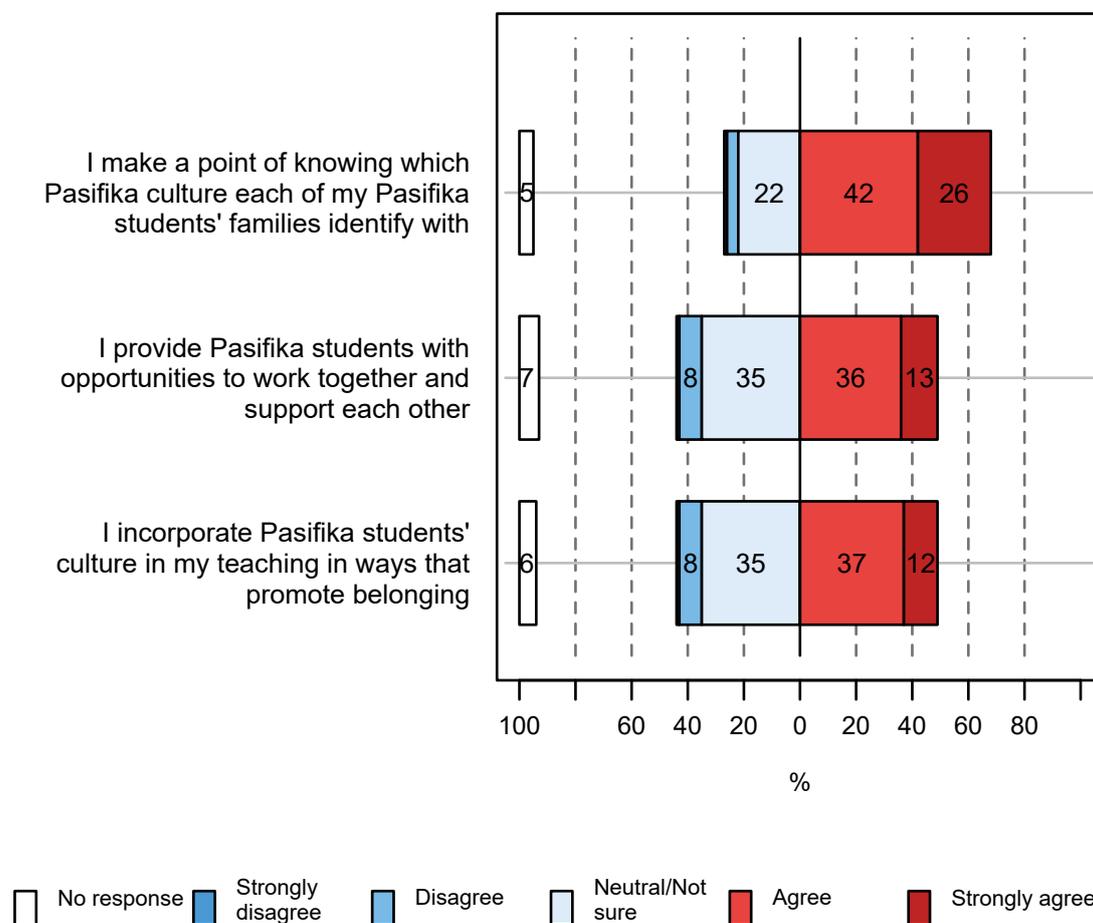
Teachers' views were similar across different types of schools (decile, location, size) suggesting these practices occur across most schools. These practices may not be common across all teachers. There was a group of 10%–17% of teachers who disagreed with, or were neutral/not sure about, these statements.

FIGURE 9. Teachers' views of practices that support Māori students' wellbeing (n = 771)



Teachers' responses also suggested that approaches that promote Pasifika students' cultural identity were less common than approaches for Māori students. Around half of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they incorporate Pasifika students' culture in their teaching in ways that promote belonging (49%), or provide Pasifika students with opportunities to work together and support each other (49%) (see Figure 10).

FIGURE 10. Teachers' views of practices that support Pasifika students' wellbeing (n = 771)



Many teachers were neutral or not sure about these questions. One reason for this pattern is likely to be that teachers may not have Pasifika students in their class. The three teacher practices in Figure 10 were more common in decile 1–2 and metropolitan schools which tend to have higher proportions of Pasifika students. For example, 69% of teachers in decile 1–2 schools agreed or strongly agreed they incorporate Pasifika students' culture in their teaching in ways that promote belonging, compared with 46% of teachers in decile 3–10 schools.

The practices shown in Figure 10 formed a factor,⁶³ suggesting they are all associated with the same underlying construct related to supporting Pasifika students' wellbeing. This means the practices are inter-related; for example, teachers who strongly agreed they used one of the practices also tended to strongly agree they used the other practices.

63 Supporting Pasifika students' wellbeing was one of several factors in a regression model described in the Appendix.

Looking to the future: Supporting Māori and Pasifika students' wellbeing

Principals' and teachers' responses indicate that practices that aim to promote Māori students' cultural identity and values occur across most primary and intermediate schools. Practices that aim to promote Pasifika students' cultural identity and values were less commonly reported, but were more of a focus than in 2013.

Practices that promote the wellbeing of Māori and Pasifika students were more commonly reported by those in decile 1–2 schools, suggesting that schools with higher proportions of Māori or Pasifika students have a greater emphasis on these practices. This variation raises questions about whether students in some decile 3–10 schools are missing out on practices that might foster their cultural identities and strengthen their wellbeing. For schools with small numbers of Māori students, this raises a concern about whether they are on track to achieve the vision of the Māori education strategy *Ka Hikitia* for students to enjoy and achieve education success “as Māori”.^{64, 65} Similarly, these data suggest that schools with fewer Pasifika students may be finding it harder to achieve the vision of the *Pasifika Education Plan* for students to be “secure in their identities, languages and cultures” (p. 3).⁶⁶

64 Ministry of Education. (2013). *Ka Hikitia—Accelerating success 2013–17: The Māori education strategy*. Wellington: Author.

65 More discussion of national survey findings about the wellbeing of Māori students will be included in a separate report, to be available at <http://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/national-survey>

66 Ministry of Education. (2013). *Pasifika education plan 2013–17*. Wellington: Author.

4.

Providing extra support to vulnerable students (Tiers 2 and 3)

We asked principals and teachers a number of questions about the extent to which their school had embedded approaches to providing extra wellbeing support to vulnerable groups (Tier 2) or individual students (Tier 3).

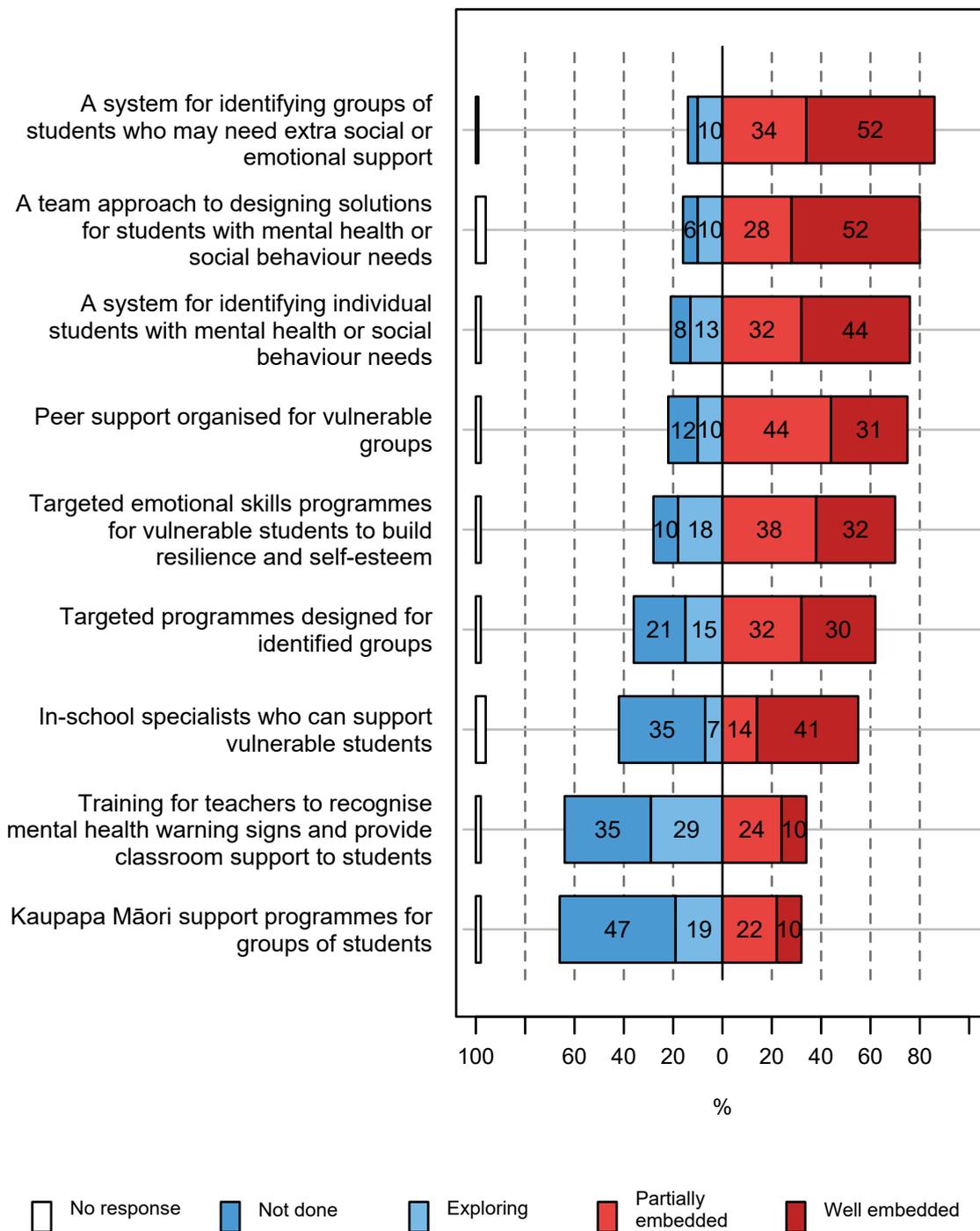
Over half the principals (56%) thought one of their main student-related achievements as a principal in the last 3 years had been an increased focus on meeting individual students' wellbeing needs or targeted groups' needs. We compared the responses of principals at schools where School-Wide was well embedded ($n = 42$) with those of principals whose school had not been part of PB4L School-Wide ($n = 135$). The PB4L School-Wide schools ranged from low to high decile. Principals at schools where School-Wide was well embedded were more likely to select this focus as one of their main student-related achievements (69%, compared with 52% of other principals).

Most schools had systems for supporting vulnerable students

The majority of principals reported their school had embedded or partially embedded systems for identifying groups (86%) or individual students (76%) who might need extra support, and a team approach to designing solutions for these students (80%) (see Figure 11).

The nature of the extra support offered to students varied between schools. Many schools (70%) had targeted emotional skills programmes for vulnerable students. However, 28% of principals said they were exploring or did not have these programmes. Likewise, 55% of schools had in-school specialists to support vulnerable students, but 42% did not. The least well embedded approaches were training for teachers to recognise mental health warning signs (64% did not have or were exploring this) and kaupapa Māori support programmes for groups of students (66% did not have or were exploring this).

FIGURE 11. Principals' views of providing extra wellbeing support (n = 200)



Lower decile schools had more supports in place than higher decile schools. As one example, 77% of decile 1–4 schools had well embedded in-school specialists to support vulnerable students, compared with 21% of decile 5–10 schools. More decile 1–4 schools (20%) also had well embedded kaupapa Māori support programmes, compared with decile 5–10 schools (4%).

Rural schools had fewer systems in place to identify vulnerable individuals or groups, and fewer supports in place for these students. For example, 27% of rural schools had well embedded systems for identifying individual students, compared with 54% of metropolitan schools. Similarly, 36% of rural schools had well embedded systems for identifying groups of students who might need extra support, compared with 65% of metropolitan schools. Only 17% of rural schools had well embedded targeted programmes designed for identified groups, compared with 38% of metropolitan schools.

There was also variation associated with school size.⁶⁷ Larger schools were more likely than smaller schools to have systems and supports in place.

Extra support for vulnerable students was associated with a school's involvement in PB4L School-Wide. Compared with principals whose school was not part of PB4L School-Wide ($n = 135$), principals who indicated PB4L School-Wide was well embedded at their school ($n = 42$) were more likely to say the following aspects of practice were well embedded:

- in-school specialists who can support vulnerable students, such as Social Workers in Schools or a school nurse (60%, compared with 36% of principals not at School-Wide schools). Some of this difference could have been related to school decile. Many PB4L School-Wide schools are low decile and therefore receive targeted government funding for social workers. However, the schools at which PB4L School-Wide was well embedded ranged from low to high decile
- targeted programmes designed for identified groups (43%, compared with 27% of principals not at School-Wide schools).

Access to external support and expertise

Schools access a range of external supports to assist with approaches to student wellbeing or behaviour. We asked principals and teachers about their access to external support.

Most principals reported they had accessed some form of support to assist with wellbeing and behaviour. However, they had mixed views about the usefulness of this support. We classified the support they accessed into two groups. The first group was support perceived as useful or very useful by **50% or more** of those who used it (see Table 1). In Table 1 the supports are ordered by perceived usefulness.

⁶⁷ There is an association between school size and location. Rural schools tend to also be small.

TABLE 1. Principals' reports of useful support for wellbeing and behaviour

Form of support	Had used this support n (%)	Rated useful/ very useful by users %	Rated as of mixed use by users %
PB4L—School-Wide practitioner	46 (23)	85	13
Professionals based at school (e.g., school nurse, social worker)	83 (42)	83	14
PB4L—Incredible Years (Teacher)	90 (45)	76	22
RTLB	196 (98)	65	27
MOE Special Education (e.g., psychologist, speech language therapist)	177 (89)	57	34
Health promoters from government agencies	143 (72)	57	38
Health promoting schools advisers	92 (46)	54	35
PB4L—Intensive Wraparound Service	30 (15)	53	37

Some forms of useful support, such as RTLB (used by 98%) and MOE Special Education staff (used by 89%), were widely accessed. Other forms of useful support, such as PB4L—School-Wide practitioners (used by 23%), were less widely accessed. Although RTLB were widely accessed, a considerable group of principals who had used this service rated it as being of mixed use (27%). A 2016 survey from NZPF also showed that over one-third of principals had concerns about the support and advice provided through this service as well as its timeliness.⁶⁸

Overall, support that was perceived as useful was mostly attached to a school or cluster (e.g., RTLB, school nurse or social worker), or was part of a service or initiative specifically designed for schools and teachers to improve behaviour or promote wellbeing (e.g., PB4L School-Wide practitioners). There were few differences from 2013 in principals' views of support; however, in 2016, more principals rated professionals based at school as useful.

SWIS is the best support but is severely under resourced for hours. We also run free health clinics with the local iwi.
(Principal)

Lower decile schools were more likely to access a wider range of useful supports. Reflecting targeted government funding for social workers in lower decile schools, only 20% of decile 1–4 principals reported they **did not have** professionals such as nurses or social workers based at their school. In contrast, most (78%) decile 5–10 schools did not have these professionals. Low decile schools also reported more use of health promoting schools advisers, and health promoters from government agencies.

Principals of rural schools reported lower usage of the useful supports than those in other locations. Most (85%) reported they **did not have** professionals based at school such as nurses or social workers compared with 46% of schools elsewhere. A similar pattern was evident for small schools (70% did not have these professionals). In contrast, medium–large schools were more likely to make use of

68 New Zealand Principals' Federation. (2016). *Special education survey. November 2016*. Wellington: Author.

professionals based at school and PB4L supports (School-Wide practitioners and Incredible Years Teacher) than schools of other sizes.

Principals found support from non-education agencies or organisations less useful

Table 2 shows principals' views on the group of supports that were perceived as useful or very useful by **less than 50%** of those who had used them. Less useful support mostly came from non-education government agencies or organisations. The least useful support came from Child, Youth and Family (CYF) and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Less than a third of the principals who had used these supports rated them as useful or very useful.

TABLE 2. Principals' reports of less useful support for wellbeing and behaviour

Form of support	Had used this support n (%)	Rated useful/ very useful by users %	Rated as of mixed use by users %
Pasifika liaison or Pasifika community representative	21 (11)	48	43
Attendance service	136 (68)	44	32
Health promoters from NGOs (e.g., Heart Foundation)	110 (55)	44	48
PB4L—Incredible Years (Parents)	45 (23)	38	60
Kaitakawaenga Māori or Māori community representative	39 (20)	36	54
Local iwi-based health services	48 (24)	35	50
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)	116 (58)	29	56
CYF—Social or youth worker	119 (60)	28	48
CYF—other support	117 (59)	16	50

Some of the less useful supports were used by more than half of schools. However, principals' responses showed a range of views of the usefulness of these services. For example, 56% of those who had used CAMHS, and 48% of those who had used CYF social or youth workers, rated these services of mixed use. Usefulness is likely to be related to accessibility, timeliness, quality, or consistency. Teachers' and principals' comments about the support that was not useful tended to focus on a mix of difficulties to do with accessibility, timeliness, and quality.

Agencies outside of the school such as CYF and Mental Health are very slow to respond and offer very little help. Most children need support in the classroom and more often than not, no one can finance it. *(Teacher)*

Although less than half (44%) rated the attendance service as useful, this was a larger proportion than in 2013 (30% of those who had used this service), suggesting the quality or timeliness of this service is improving.

Principals of decile 1–4 schools were more likely to access many of the services perceived as less useful, including CYF support, Kaitakawaenga Māori or Māori community representatives, Pasifika liaison or Pasifika community representatives, and local iwi-based health services.

Principals at rural schools reported lower usage of the less useful supports. Most (83%) did not use PB4L Incredible Years Parents, compared with 69% of schools elsewhere. Just over half (59%) also reported they did not use CYF social or youth workers, compared with 29% of schools in other locations. A similar pattern was evident for small schools (many of which are also rural); for example, 54% of principals of small schools did not use CYF social or youth workers.

Overall, principals' responses suggest that schools were getting less value from some of their connections with external agencies and organisations, particularly if these services were not education-based. Rural schools—that are likely to be more isolated—accessed less external support. Decile 1–4 schools—that are likely to have the greatest need—were making the most use of external support. However, many principals perceived the usefulness of many of the supports they did access to be mixed.

Principals want more external expertise to support students' mental health

We asked principals about the external wellbeing or learning expertise their school needed in order to keep developing, and whether they could access this support. Only 14% of principals noted they could not readily access the external support they needed to improve student wellbeing. Principals' largest unmet need in relation to the 16 areas we asked about was for external support to work with students with mental health issues. In 2016, 38% needed this expertise and could not access it, and in 2013, 46% of principals reported they could not readily access this expertise.

There were no patterns relating to school decile for this question, suggesting external support for student mental health is an area of need across all deciles. Principals from large and non-rural schools were more likely to report this was an unmet need, compared with those from small or rural schools.

Teachers' views on extra support

Teachers' views varied on whether their school had systems in place to offer extra support to students if needed (Tiers 2 and 3). Figure 12 shows that, in terms of **physical wellbeing**, many teachers agreed or strongly agreed they were able to refer students to health professionals if needed (78%: Tier 3). Being able to refer students was more common in decile 1–2 (86%) than decile 9–10 schools (76%).

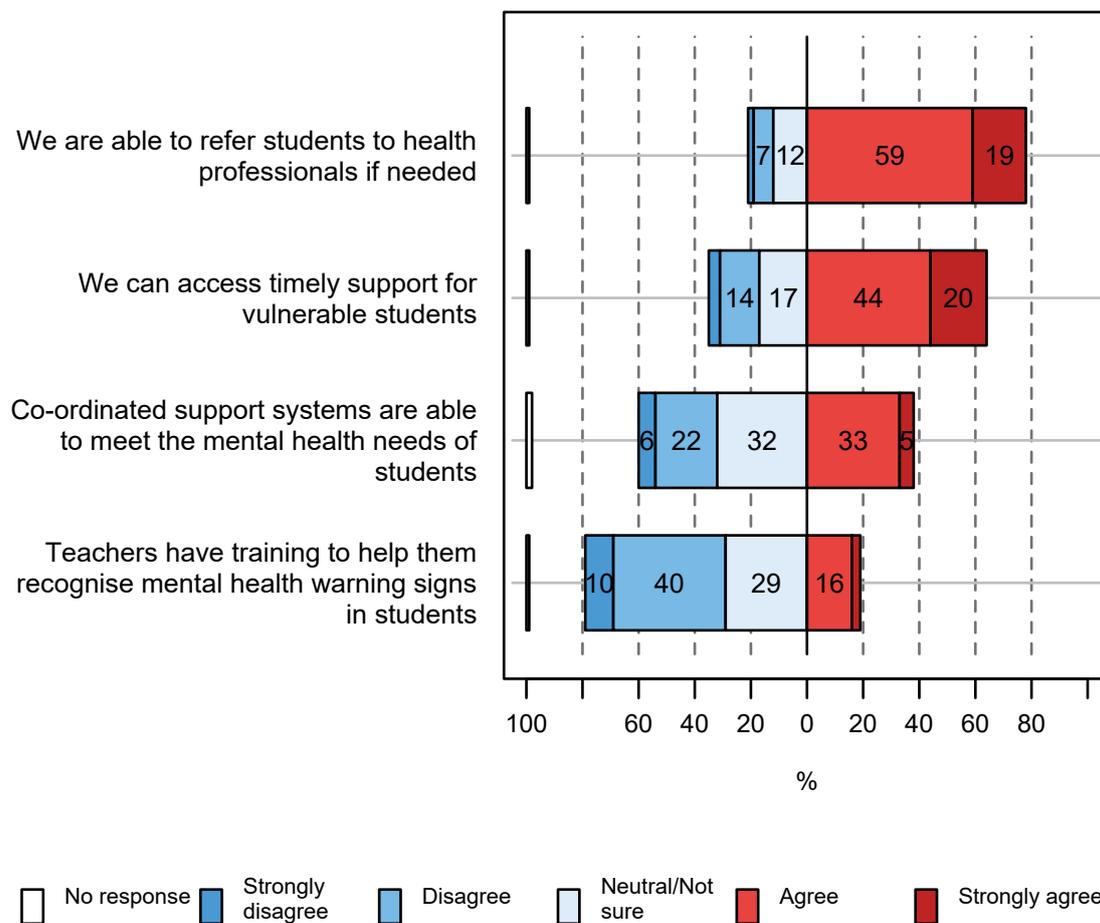
Our school connects with local agencies to ensure the wellbeing of our students (e.g., the local district nurse works closely with our school and has Health Clinic on Wednesday most weeks). *(Teacher)*

In terms of **mental and emotional wellbeing**, around two-thirds of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they could access timely support for vulnerable students (64%: Tier 3) and that their school provided programmes for small groups of vulnerable students to develop coping skills, self-esteem, and resilience (69%: Tier 2). These programmes were more common in decile 1–2 (78%) than decile 9–10 schools (58%).

The practices shown in Figure 12 formed a factor⁶⁹ which suggests they contribute to the same underlying construct related to providing extra wellbeing support. This means the practices are inter-related; for example, teachers who strongly agreed their school had one of the practices in place also tended to strongly agree the other practices were in place.

69 Extra wellbeing support was one of several factors in a regression model described in the Appendix.

FIGURE 12. Teachers' views on providing extra wellbeing support (n = 771)



Schools appeared to have fewer systems in place to support individual students who might be showing signs of mental distress (Tier 3). Less than half of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that their school had co-ordinated support systems that are able to meet the mental health needs of students (38%). In 2016, this need appears to be more pressing with more teachers **disagreeing** or **strongly disagreeing** that their school had these systems in place (29%, up from 18% in 2013).

Little or no RTLB support and things have to be [formally escalated] before any support is (rarely) gained. Few options beyond RTLB for mental health services support. (Teacher)

I don't think there is enough emphasis on mental health. Also, there is a trans-student at our school and I don't think that their needs are being met by the school or the agencies that they have been referred on to. (Teacher)

Another area of increasing concern for teachers was assessment anxiety in relation to National Standards.⁷⁰ In 2016, 63% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that anxiety about their performance on National Standards has negatively affected some students' learning, compared with 41% in 2013. A greater

70 Bonne, L. (2016). *National Standards in their seventh year: Findings from the NZCER national survey of primary and intermediate schools 2016*. Wellington: NZCER. Available at <http://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/publications/national-standards-their-seventh-year>

4. Providing extra support to vulnerable students (Tiers 2 and 3)

proportion of teachers of Years 4–8 students agreed or strongly agreed (70%) than those teaching Years 0–3 students (57%).

Only one-fifth of teachers (20%) agreed or strongly agreed that they have training to help them recognise mental health warning signs in students. This training was more common in decile 1–6 (23%) than decile 7–10 schools (16%). Similarly, only 10% of principals reported this training was well embedded at their school and a further 25% reported training was partially embedded.

All staff need to be trained to ask the 'why' question. Mental health is an area that we want to support students in, but the how is the big question. *(Teacher)*

At times we are dealing with student emotional/mental issues which we have no training in. *(Teacher)*

Overall, decile 1–2 schools had more programmes and approaches in place to support vulnerable students than higher decile schools. However, teachers in decile 1–2 schools also had more general concerns about students' learning and wellbeing. Only 33% of those at decile 1–2 schools agreed or strongly agreed that no student 'falls through the cracks' at their school compared with over half of teachers at decile 3–10 schools.

5.

Approaches to fostering positive behaviour

In 2016, 77% of principals thought one of their main student-related achievements as a principal in the last 3 years was that student behaviour had stayed positive or improved, much the same as in 2013. This achievement was selected by the greatest proportion of principals, along with an increased focus on meeting individual students' learning needs or targeted groups' needs (also 77%).

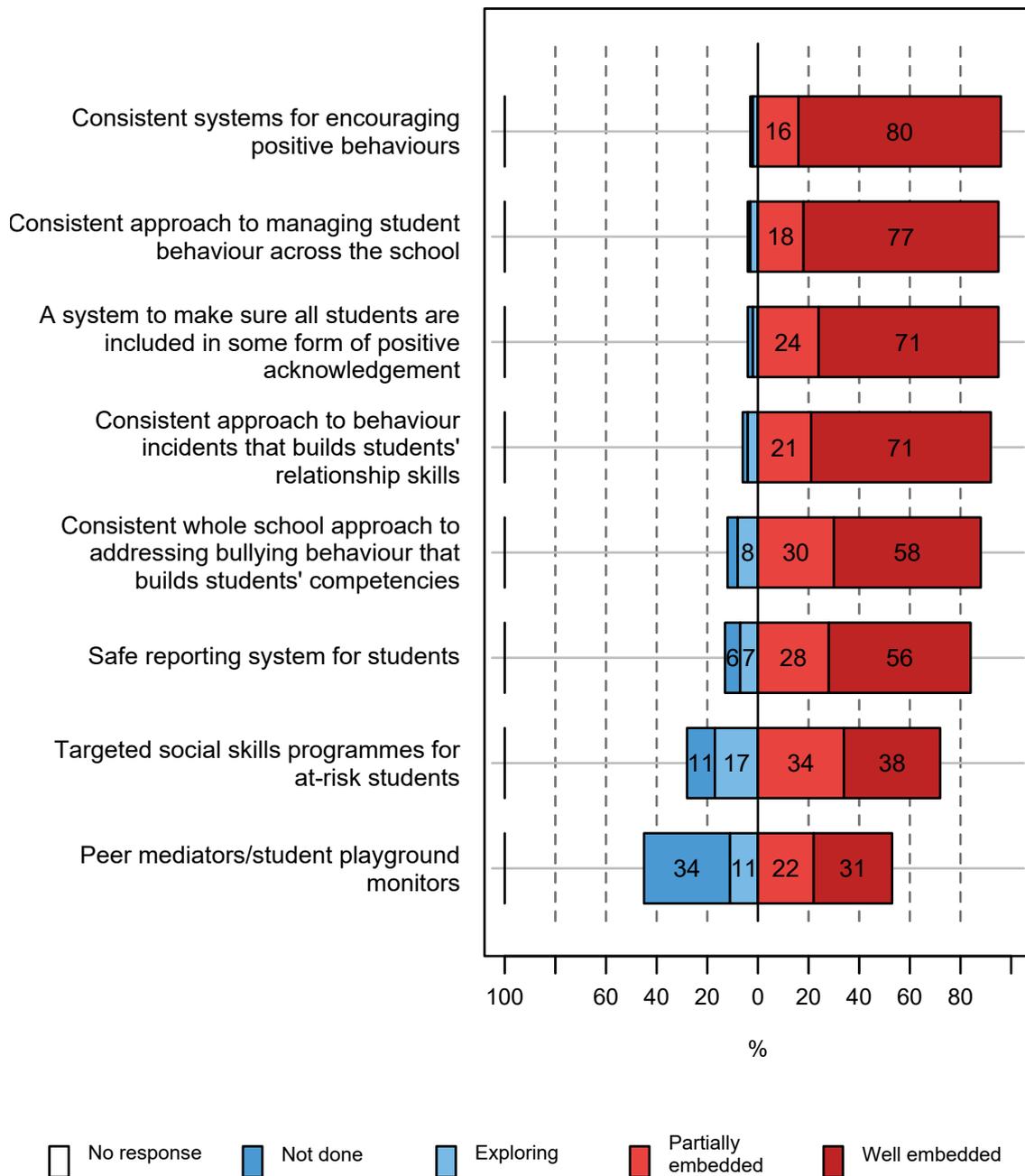
At the same time, 21% of principals thought student behaviour was a major issue facing their school. This has jumped from the 12% of principals who identified improving student behaviour as a major issue in 2013 and 2010, suggesting an increased need for schools to be well supported to address behaviour issues. For some principals, this is likely to go hand-in-hand with the need for accessible external support to work with students with mental health issues.

Schools' approaches to fostering positive behaviour

Figure 13 shows a majority of principals (over 70%) reported having some well embedded consistent approaches and systems at their school for fostering positive student behaviour (mostly Tier 1). A slightly smaller proportion (58%) indicated their school had a well embedded whole school approach to addressing bullying behaviour that builds students' competencies, and this was partially embedded at 30% of schools. Just over half of schools (56%) had a well embedded safe reporting system for students. A system of peer mediators/student playground monitors was well embedded at less than one-third of schools.

Targeted social skills programmes for at-risk students (Tier 2) were well embedded at 38% of schools.

FIGURE 13. Embeddedness of approaches to fostering positive student behaviour, reported by principals (n = 200)



The extent to which the approaches included in Figure 13 were embedded did not vary significantly by school decile.

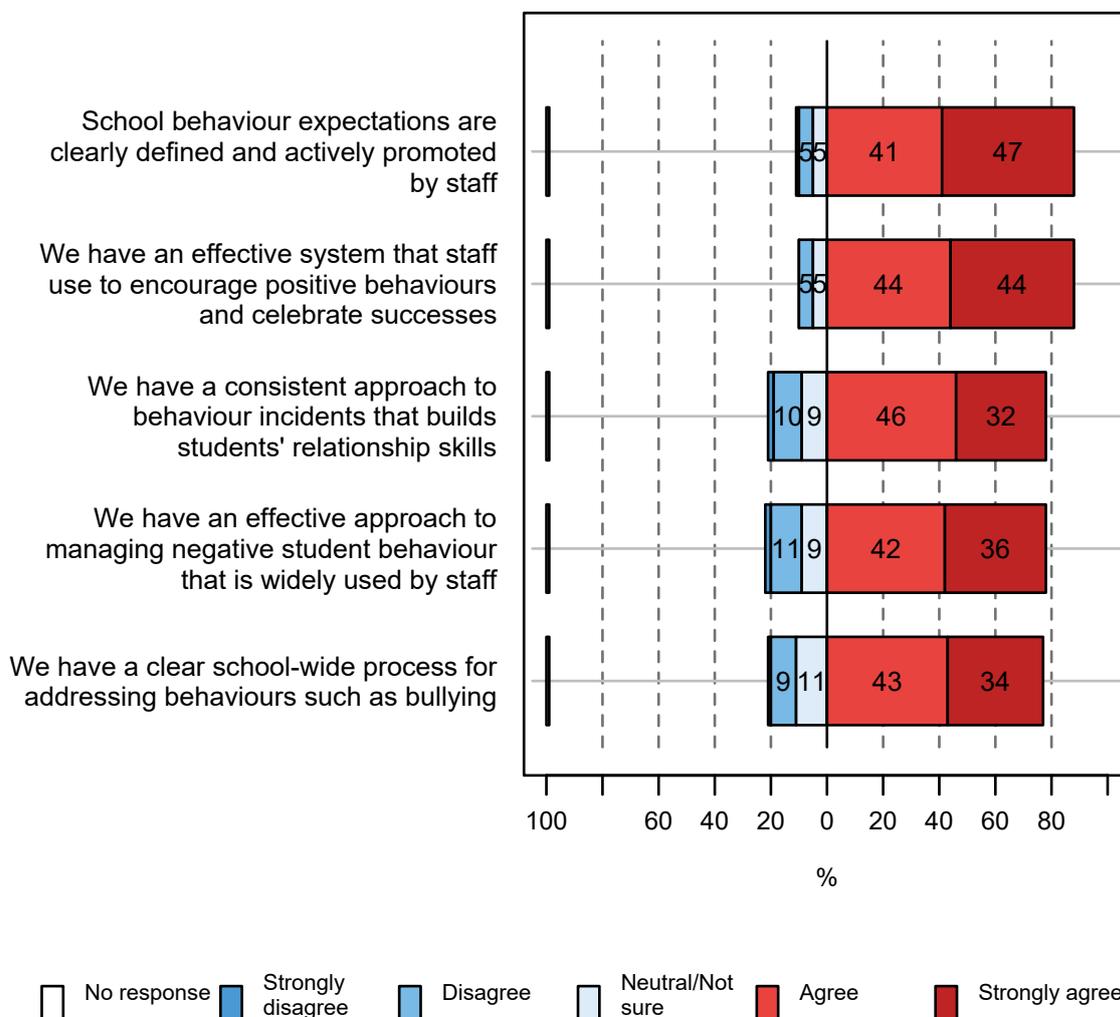
In the 2013 survey, we asked principals about the extent to which four of these approaches were embedded. For each of these, principals' responses in 2016 were much the same as in 2013: consistent systems for encouraging positive behaviours; consistent approach to managing student behaviour across the school; targeted social skills programmes for at-risk students; and peer mediators/student playground monitors.

Teachers' perspectives on behaviour

In 2016, 42% of all teachers identified the improvement of student behaviour as one of their main achievements, little changed since 2013. However, 25% also identified student behaviour as one of the main issues facing their school and 17% said they often experienced student behaviour that caused serious disruption to their teaching. An additional 38% reported experiencing this sometimes. This was also much the same in 2013. The proportion of teachers often experiencing student behaviour that disrupted their teaching varied according to school decile (29% at decile 1–2 schools, decreasing to 11% at decile 9–10 schools).

More than three-quarters of teachers agreed or strongly agreed with the statements about their school's approaches to behaviour, included in Figure 14. This suggests that many schools had coherent school-wide approaches to fostering students' positive behaviour. Teachers' responses to each of the five statements in Figure 14 contributed to a factor,⁷¹ effective school-wide approaches to behaviour. This means the practices are inter-related; for example, teachers who strongly agreed their school had one of the practices in place also tended to strongly agree the other practices were in place.

FIGURE 14. Teachers' views on school approaches to behaviour (n = 771)



71 Details of the factor analysis are in the Appendix.

5. Approaches to fostering positive behaviour

At least 20% of teachers did not agree with the bottom three statements in Figure 14, relating to consistent approaches to behaviour incidents, managing unwanted behaviour, and behaviours such as bullying. This suggests that some schools lack these school-wide and consistent approaches to behaviour. Teachers' comments also reflected differences in schools' approaches to fostering positive behaviour.

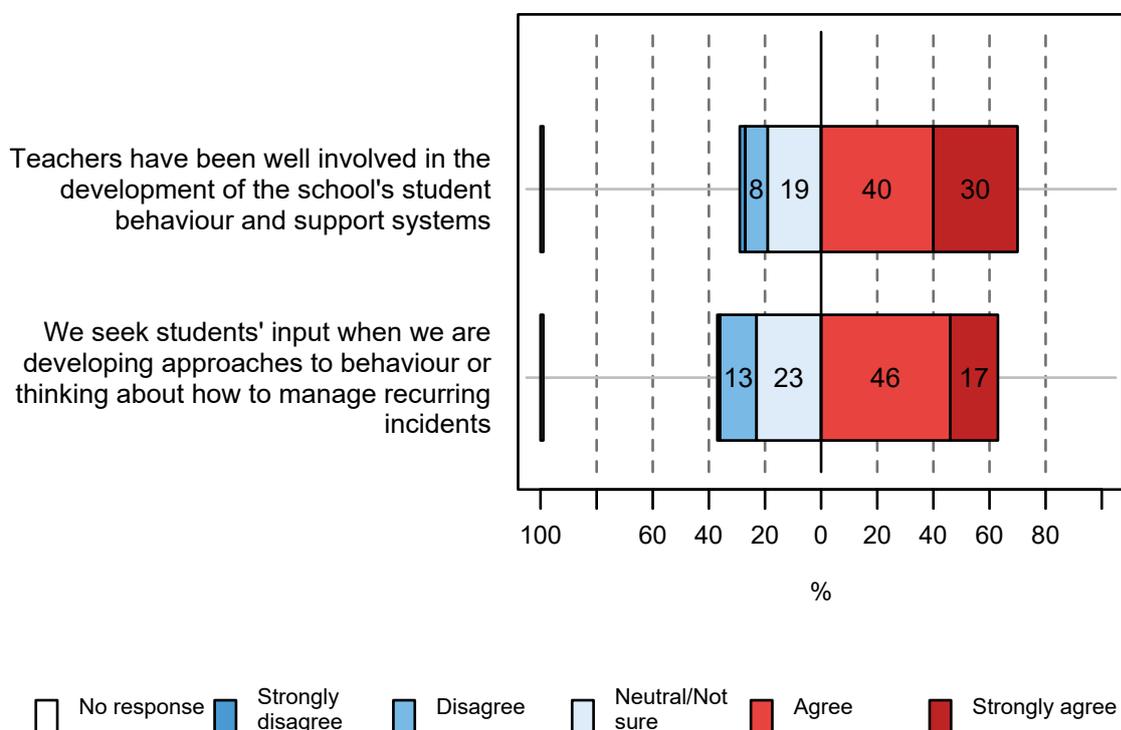
We have an extremely strong behaviour management programme which is consistent across Years 0–6 and is an effective approach to managing behaviour in a positive manner. *(Teacher)*

It has a long way to go. Teachers are not on same 'wavelength' re disciplinary situations... *(Teacher)*

Teachers' responses to the two statements at the bottom of Figure 14 were associated with school decile, with teachers at decile 5–8 schools the most likely to agree or strongly agree with these. For example, 84% of teachers at decile 5–8 schools agreed or strongly agreed they have an effective approach to managing negative student behaviour that is widely used by staff, compared with 75% of those at decile 9–10 schools, and 72% of teachers at decile 1–4 schools. In relation to having a clear school-wide process for addressing behaviours such as bullying, the differences were slightly less marked, but still statistically significant. Seventy-two percent of teachers at decile 1–2 schools agreed or strongly agreed this was the case at their school, increasing to 81% of those at decile 7–8 schools, and 77% of those at decile 9–10 schools.

Teachers were less sure about the involvement of teachers in, and students' input to, behaviour and support systems at their school, as shown in Figure 15.

FIGURE 15. Teachers' and students' input into behaviour approaches at the school ($n = 771$)



Using data to promote positive behaviour

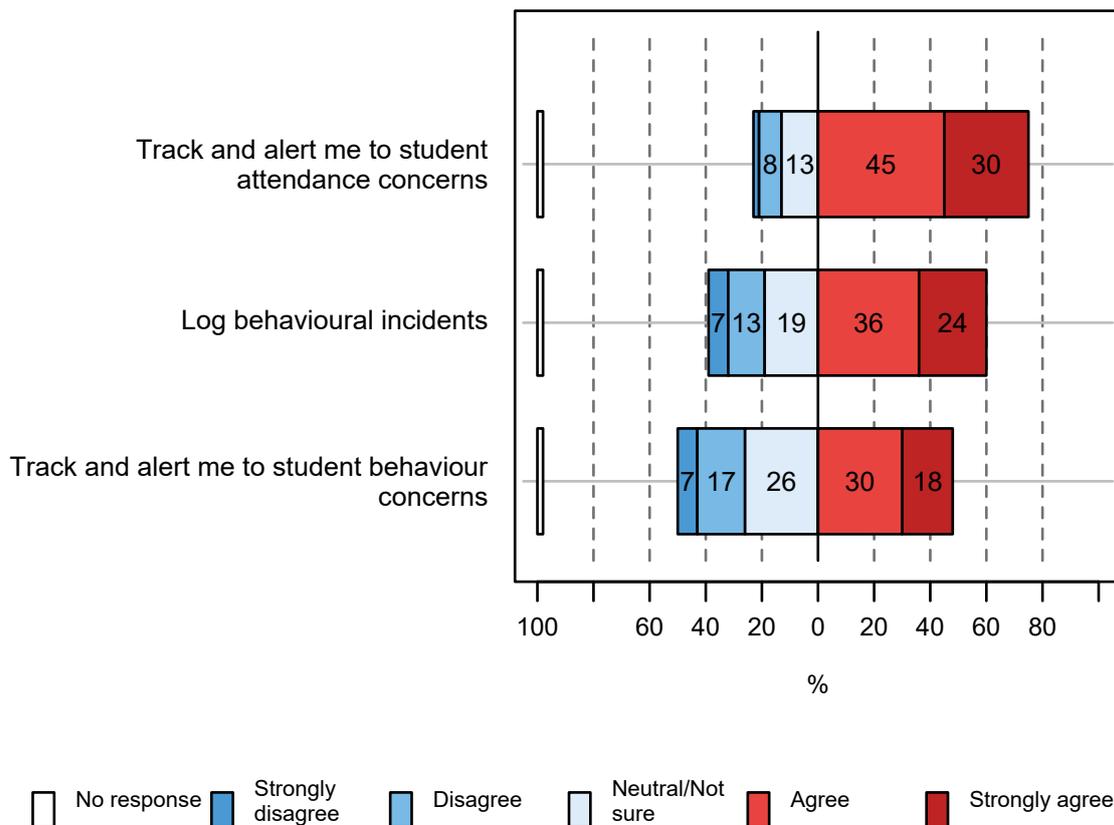
Not quite half (49%) of teachers indicated that, at their school, teachers use class data to help improve their approaches to managing behaviour. Teachers at decile 9–10 schools were least likely to agree or strongly agree they do this (36%, compared with 47%–60% for those at schools of other deciles). The following quotes show differences between schools in terms of data systems for promoting positive behaviour.

I think all schools should have an electronic form of collecting data re: behavioural and emotional, e.g., etap, KAMAR etc. To address issues... (Teacher)

Management are very supportive and follow through with the students who are brought to them. I also like [how] they monitor behaviours through the class behaviour book ([all] incidents no matter how minor are recorded) and this is looked at each week. Also more severe incidents—incident report is filled out via google docs and any conversations with parents are recorded on a google doc. (Teacher)

We also asked teachers how much they could use their school’s SMS to track different aspects of behaviour. Figure 16 shows three-quarters of teachers agreed or strongly agreed they can use their SMS to track and alert them to attendance concerns. Less than half could use their SMS to track and alert them to student behaviour concerns.

FIGURE 16. Teachers’ agreement they can use their school’s SMS in relation to student behaviour (n = 771)



Using SMS data to monitor behaviour has become more common over time. In 2016, noticeably greater proportions of teachers than in 2013 agreed or strongly agreed they could effectively use their school's SMS to:

- track and alert me to student attendance concerns (75%, compared with 55% in 2013)
- log behavioural incidents (60%, compared with 46% in 2013)
- track and alert me to student behaviour concerns (48%, compared with 34% in 2013).

Putting this in the context of teachers' wider use of their SMS, there were also increases in the proportions of teachers who indicated they could effectively use their SMS for some achievement-related purposes, although these tended to be smaller. For example, 69% of teachers could use their SMS to track the achievement of their class as a whole, compared with 61% who could do this in 2013.

School location was associated with different response patterns, with smaller proportions of teachers at rural schools agreeing or strongly agreeing they can effectively use their SMS for these behaviour-related purposes. For example, 29% of teachers at rural schools indicated they can effectively use their SMS to track and alert them to behaviour concerns. For teachers at schools in other locations, the proportions were 47% to 60%. This difference is likely to reflect the smaller roll sizes at rural schools allowing staff to be aware of individual students' behaviour without adding this information to their SMS. Indeed, school size was also associated with similar patterns; teachers at small schools were less likely than those at bigger schools to use their SMS for logging and tracking concerns about students' behaviour. However, adding this information to the SMS provides a record over time for individual students who may change schools, and a whole school picture, irrespective of a school's location or size.

Teachers ($n = 219$) whose school had been part of PB4L School-Wide⁷²—either during 2016 or previously—were more likely to agree or strongly agree they could effectively use their SMS to log behavioural incidents (66%, compared with 56% of teachers whose schools were not part of PB4L School-Wide). This is consistent with PB4L School-Wide's emphasis on schools developing their capacity to log these data, along with other systems and practices that support positive behaviour.⁷³ Using the SMS for tracking and alerting teachers to attendance concerns was not a focus in PB4L School-Wide, and was not significantly different for teachers in PB4L School-Wide schools.

Availability of support for behaviour needs

Most teachers (80%) rated the quality of timely support if they encounter a problem with student behaviour as a very good or good aspect of their school's culture. For 15% of teachers, it was satisfactory and for 5% it was poor or very poor. This response pattern has been stable since the 2010 national survey.

Around half (51%) of teachers agreed or strongly agreed their RTLB was readily available to help teachers work with students with behavioural issues. A quarter of teachers, though, disagreed or strongly disagreed this was the case, and one-quarter responded neutral/not sure. School size and location made a difference here. Teachers at small schools were the most likely to agree or strongly agree their RTLB was readily available to help them work with students with behavioural issues (60%, decreasing to 41% for teachers at large schools). Looking at school location, teachers at schools in small cities were the most likely to agree or strongly agree (72%, compared with 46% for those at metropolitan schools and around 57% of those at schools in towns or rural locations). Teachers' responses did not vary with school decile.

72 The Positive Behaviour for Learning School-Wide framework supports schools to build a learning environment that is consistently positive and supportive, and includes an emphasis on making data-informed decisions. For more information, see <http://pb4l.tki.org.nz/>

73 See Boyd, S., & Felgate, R. (2015). "A positive culture of support": Final report from the evaluation of PB4L School-Wide. Wellington: Ministry of Education.

When invited to comment about supporting student wellbeing and behaviour, teachers voiced concern about variability in the consistency and quality of support for very challenging students and those with additional learning needs, echoing comments made by some principals.

Having a student with significant behavioural needs who is volatile and unpredictable is difficult when MOE teacher aide funding is given, then taken away, then given, then taken away. (Teacher)

RTLB services not readily available due to lengthy wait times. (Teacher)

Principals were asked to indicate whether their school needed external expertise in order to keep improving student behaviour, and 45% said they did not. Thirty-eight percent indicated this support was needed and that they could access it. However, 15% of principals said external expertise was needed to keep improving student behaviour, but that they could not readily access this.

PB4L initiatives assisted schools to foster positive behaviour

Overall, 28% of principals indicated their school had some involvement with PB4L School-Wide. At 21% of schools, PB4L School-Wide was well embedded, at 4% it was partially embedded, and 4% were exploring use of the initiative. Just over two-thirds of schools had not been involved with School-Wide.

Being part of PB4L School-Wide varied by school location, with 78% of principals at rural schools indicating they had **not joined** PB4L School-Wide, compared with 63% of non-rural schools.

Involvement in PB4L School-Wide also varied by school decile. Schools of all deciles had joined PB4L School-Wide, although lower decile schools were more likely to join the initiative.⁷⁴ Across school deciles, principals who indicated being a PB4L School-Wide school was well embedded at their school ($n = 42$) were more likely than principals whose school had not been involved in School-Wide ($n = 135$) to also say their school had well embedded approaches to behaviour. For example:

- consistent systems for encouraging positive behaviours (93%, compared with 80% of principals whose school was not part of PB4L School-Wide)
- a consistent approach to managing student behaviour across the school (88%, compared with 79% of principals not at School-Wide schools)
- a consistent approach to behaviour incidents that builds students' relationship skills, such as restorative or problem-solving approaches to behaviour (83%, compared with 71% of principals not at School-Wide schools)
- a consistent whole school approach to addressing bullying behaviour that builds students' competencies (74%, compared with 58% of principals not at School-Wide schools).

Just over one-quarter of the teachers responding (27%, $n = 205$) were at schools that were part of PB4L School-Wide (Tier 1 or Tiers 1 and 2). Sixty-two percent of teachers were at schools that were not part of PB4L School-Wide. Ten percent of teachers did not respond to this question.

Of those teachers whose school was part of PB4L School-Wide ($n = 205$), nearly half (47%) had been involved for less than 3 years, and 38% had been involved for 3 years or more. An additional 14% of this group of teachers was unsure. Teachers at decile 1–2 schools were more likely to indicate their school was part of PB4L School-Wide; 46%, compared with 27% of those at decile 3–8 schools, and 15% at decile 9–10 schools.

⁷⁴ PB4L School-Wide was targeted at low decile schools for some years (see Boyd & Felgate, footnoted on previous page).

We examined teachers' responses to see if those at schools that have joined PB4L School-Wide showed different response patterns compared with teachers at schools that had not.⁷⁵ The largest group of teachers at PB4L School-Wide schools were from decile 1–2 schools, so we compared the responses of these teachers ($n = 57$) to teachers in decile 1–2 schools that had not joined the initiative ($n = 53$). There were few differences in terms of practices between these two groups of schools. However, when asked about their main achievements as a teacher in the last 3 years, more teachers at the decile 1–2 School-Wide schools (58%) selected improvement of student behaviour compared with other decile 1–2 teachers (40%). This suggests that a greater proportion of teachers in decile 1–2 School-Wide schools perceive they are making improvements to student behaviour than those in other decile 1–2 schools.

We do have students displaying challenging behaviour but this is well addressed through PB4L/RTLB support/MOE support and Tier 2 [PB4L] practices. *(Teacher)*

Similar to principal reports about the usefulness of PB4L School-Wide and Incredible Years Teacher (see Table 1), most teachers who mentioned PB4L School-Wide were positive, with some saying it is time for a refresh. A small minority held less positive views.

The PB4L system works well in our school, but is important that all staff have training and 'buy into' the scheme! Sometimes the principal does not back up what is happening with classroom teachers, and undermines the process. [There] needs to be consequences for children who constantly don't follow rules etc. *(Teacher)*

We have recently become involved school wide with PB4L. The staff are extremely positive and I think that this will bring greater clarity, consistency, and school systems that will improve how we address the issues. *(Teacher)*

PB4L team very supportive—a consistent approach by all staff has been invaluable. *(Teacher)*

PB4L Incredible Years Teacher was also mentioned in teachers' comments.

All staff need to work as a team and support each other. Our entire staff has benefited from the Incredible Years programme and made everyone reassess their approach and strategies to deal with behaviour issues at school. Our pastoral care is extremely strong and important in our school and community. Our children's wellbeing is at the forefront of our teaching. A child who is happy and supported at school is a child who will learn. *(Teacher)*

Our school does a brilliant job of supporting student wellbeing and behaviour at school. I am currently attending Incredible Years for teachers, which is also an amazing course which the majority of our junior teachers have attended. It makes a difference for us all to have the same 'grounding' with IYT. *(Teacher)*

⁷⁵ Teachers' responses to questions about school-wide approaches to fostering positive behaviour were one of several factors in a regression model that investigated whether these factors were associated with being in a PB4L School-Wide school. Although the relationship was significant, being a PB4L School-Wide school explained only a small amount of the variability in this factor. Details of the factor analysis are presented in the Appendix.

Addressing bullying behaviour

We included a small number of questions in the 2016 survey about schools' approaches to addressing bullying behaviour.

Over half (58%) of principals indicated their school has a well embedded, consistent, whole school approach to addressing bullying behaviour that builds students' competencies. A further 30% of principals reported this was partially embedded. This approach was more common at schools where PB4L School-Wide was also well embedded. In at least 10% of schools, there were no approaches to address bullying behaviour.

The extent to which safe reporting systems for students (e.g., for bullying behaviour) were embedded echoed the pattern for approaches to addressing bullying behaviour: 57% of principals said safe reporting was well embedded, 29% that it was partially embedded, and 7% were exploring this. Principals' responses to these two items did not vary with school decile, size, or location.

As we saw in Figure 14, 77% of all teachers who completed surveys agreed or strongly agreed their school had a clear school-wide process for addressing behaviours such as bullying.

Trustees can be involved in school responses to bullying behaviour. During 2016 the most frequently reported issue that parents and whānau raised with school boards was discipline/student behaviour/bullying (reported by 18% of trustees).⁷⁶ This was much the same as in 2013 and 2010, and did not vary with school decile.

Trustees were asked to rank the overall amount of time their board had spent on a list of 11 board responsibilities, including student behaviour/discipline/bullying cases. The overall picture from their responses suggests that boards seemed to be working mostly, but not always, at the level of governance. Activities on which boards spent the greatest amount of time were student progress and achievement, and property/maintenance. Student behaviour/discipline/bullying cases was ranked tenth out of the 11 main responsibilities. Just 7% of trustees reported using the Ministry resource, *Bullying Prevention and Response: A guide for schools*,⁷⁷ over the previous 12 months.⁷⁸ For trustees at decile 1–2 schools, the proportion was considerably higher at 24%.

76 For more about trustees' views, see: Stevens, E., & Wylie, C. (2017). *The work of school boards—trustees' perspectives*. Available at <http://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/national-survey>

77 Ministry of Education. (2015). *Bullying prevention and response: A guide for schools*. Available at <https://education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/School/Bullying-prevention/MOEBullyingGuide2015Web.pdf>

78 Board of trustee elections were held in May 2016, so when trustees responded to the survey in August/September, they may have been in the role for only a short time.

6.

Parent, whānau, and fanau views on wellbeing and behaviour

We now turn to exploring parent, whānau, and Pasifika fanau views of their child's wellbeing and behaviour at school. In this section, we call this group 'parents'.

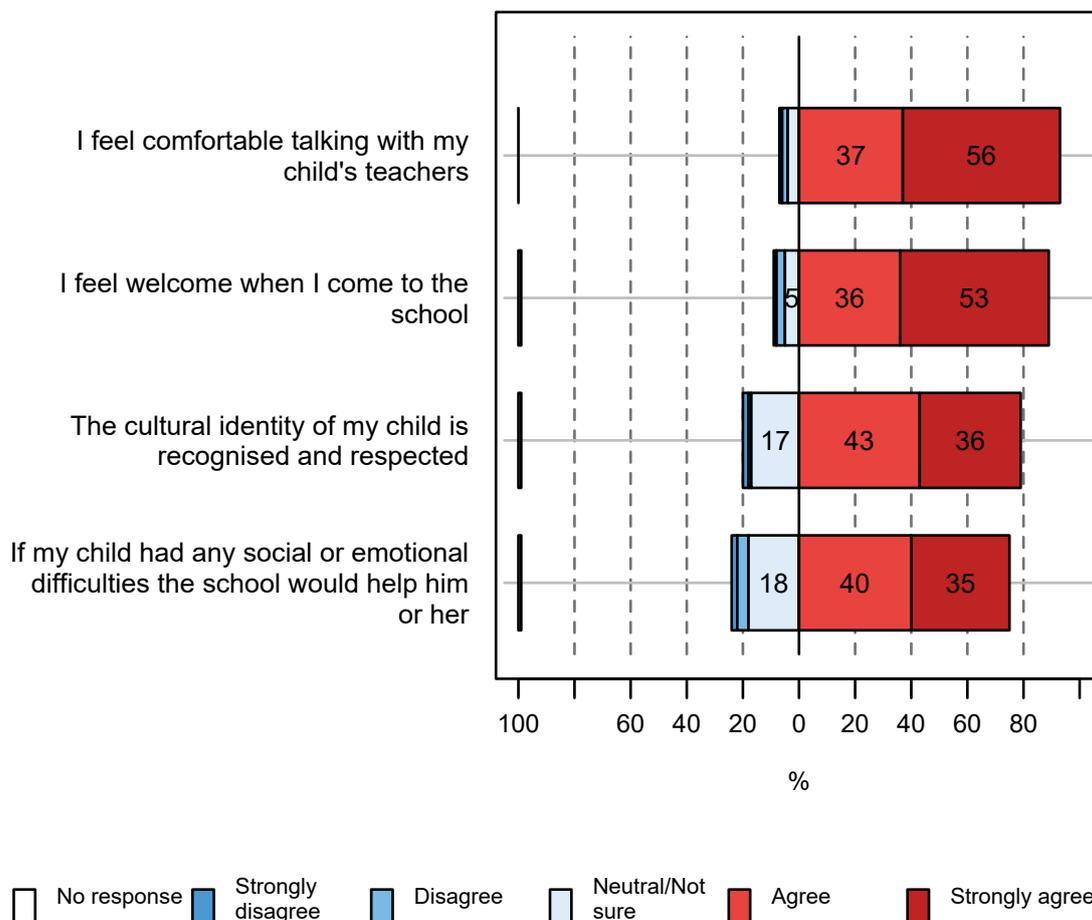
Most parents think their child's teachers and school promote wellbeing

Most parents reported positive experiences with teachers in terms of their child's wellbeing. Most agreed or strongly agreed that they feel comfortable talking with their child's teachers (93%), and that teachers think about their child's wellbeing as well as learning (86%), and respond to any concerns they might have as parents (88%). Only a few (3%–4%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with these statements. Nearly three-quarters (72%) of parents thought teachers make an effort to understand things about their family and culture (22% were unsure and 6% disagreed). In 2013, 66% of parents held this view.

Parents mostly expressed positive views about how schools promote wellbeing. Figure 17 shows that most agreed or strongly agreed that they felt welcome at school (89%). Slightly fewer agreed or strongly agreed that, if their child had any social or emotional difficulties, the school would help (75%). A sizeable group (18%) were neutral or not sure about this question. This could be because they had not experienced this situation.

Over three-quarters (79%) of parents agreed or strongly agreed that the cultural identity of their child was recognised and respected. In 2013, 67% of parents expressed this view.

FIGURE 17. Parents' views on how their child's school promotes wellbeing (n = 504)



Parents' responses suggest that, since 2013, teachers and schools have been developing new approaches to seeking information about family cultures and backgrounds and promoting students' cultural identities.

Most parents consider their child has a sense of belonging in school

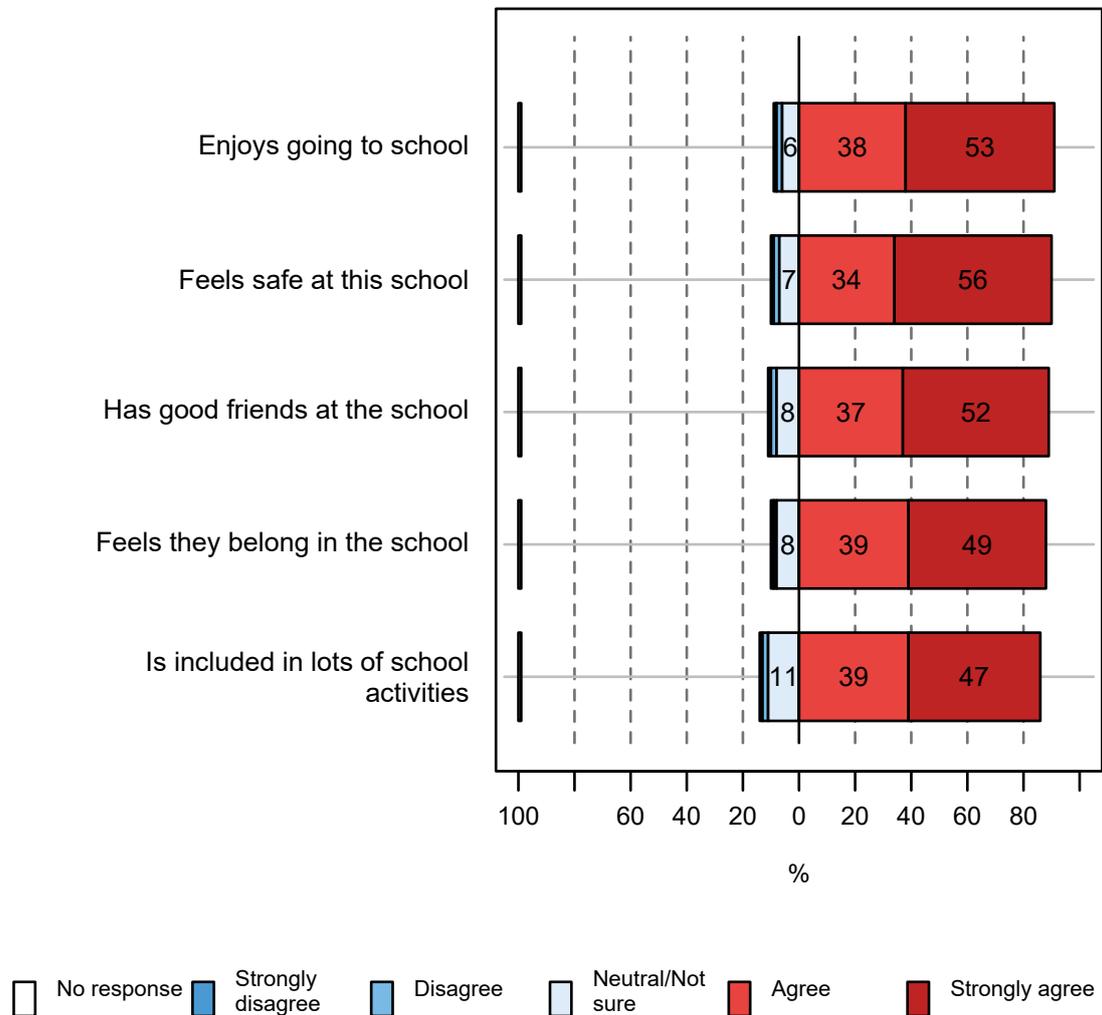
Parents' responses mostly paint a positive picture of their child's experiences at school, with most agreeing or strongly agreeing with all the statements about their child's general wellbeing at school (see Figure 18). Almost all thought their child feels they belong in school (89%), feels safe at school (90%), has good friends at school (89%), and is included in lots of school activities (86%). Parents' views were similar across different types of schools (decile, location, size). This lack of variation aligns with the teacher and principal responses, which suggests that school-wide actions to promote belonging and wellbeing occur across different types of schools.

One exception to this was that a greater proportion of parents from decile 3–10 schools strongly agreed that their child has good friends at school (54%, compared with 38% for decile 1–2). This may be related to the higher mobility of students in decile 1–2 schools, which could result in them spending shorter lengths of time at a school to form friendships. Parents with children at decile 1–2 schools were less likely to select their child having friends at a school as a factor that influenced their decision in choosing a school.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ For 11% of parents with a child at a decile 1–2 school, their child's friends going to the school was a factor in their choice of school, compared with around 35% of those with a child at a decile 3–8 school, and 26% of those with a child at a decile 9–10 school. A more detailed report that includes parents' views about their child's schooling will be added to the project website: <http://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/national-survey>

A very small proportion of parents (around 3%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with each statement in Figure 18, and a small group (around 6%–11%) were also neutral or not sure about these statements. These responses suggest there is a small group of students who have less positive experiences of school.

FIGURE 18. Parents' views of their child's wellbeing at school (n = 504)

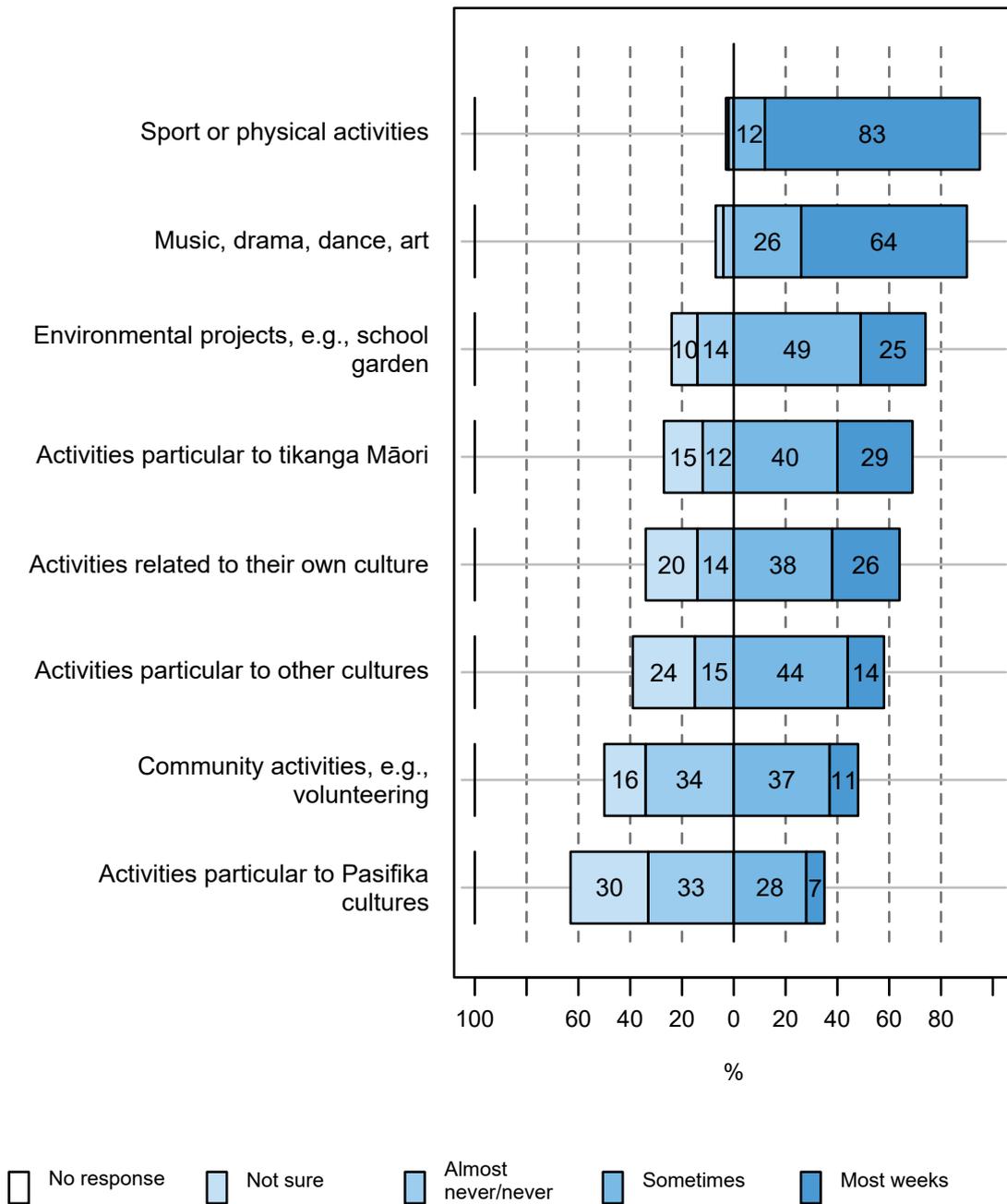


Most parents report their child has access to activities that foster belonging and social wellbeing

We asked parents about their child's opportunities to take part in a range of activities that are likely to create a sense of belonging to school, including playing sports for school teams, being part of school drama or dance productions, and volunteering (see Figure 19). These types of activities also assist students to develop positive relationships with their peers and adults, including teachers.

The majority of parents reported their child had participated most weeks in sport or physical activities (83%), and music, drama, dance, or art (64%). Participation in other activities was less frequent, according to parents. The majority reported their child at least sometimes took part in environmental projects, activities particular to tikanga Māori, and activities relating to their own culture. The activities that parents were least likely to say their child participated in were those particular to Pasifika cultures.

FIGURE 19. Parents' views of how often their child participates in school activities that can foster belonging (n = 504)



I have watched my daughter's confidence in herself soar, due to teachers encouraging her in areas of singing/arts/drama. She is a very sensitive child and does her best to do well at school. But her love is not academic, her love is for the arts. Thanks to the teachers supporting my child in this area, she has blossomed in her learning and now enjoys the academic side of things. I could not have asked for more from her school and I appreciate the time and effort each staff member has made to encourage her as an individual. *(Parent)*

I wish she had opportunities to learn music, singing, and other arts. I would also like to see all the children becoming more involved in the garden and other outdoor activities which provide 'real life' learning opportunities (not just sports). I would like to see subway and junk food taken off the school lunch options and proper healthy eating promoted. Children should also learn more about cooking real food. *(Parent)*

There was variation in the activities supported by schools of different deciles. Parents from decile 1–2 schools were less likely to report that, most weeks, their child engaged in sport or physical activities (67%, compared with 86% for decile 3–10). They were more likely to report their child participated most weeks in:

- activities particular to tikanga Māori (47%, compared with 26% of decile 3–10)
- activities particular to Pasifika cultures (23%, compared with 4% of decile 3–10)
- community activities (23%, compared with 8% of decile 3–10).

These responses suggest that decile 1–2 schools place more emphasis on working to make connections with Māori and Pasifika students and their communities.

Parent reports support principal and teacher responses, which suggest that activities relating to Māori students' culture are relatively common across all schools, whereas those relating to Pasifika students' culture are not. Parent responses also support findings that suggest the promotion of positive cultural identities for Māori and Pasifika students is more common at low decile schools.

[My child gets] Little exposure to diverse cultural groups due to overwhelming Pakeha demographic. *(Parent)*

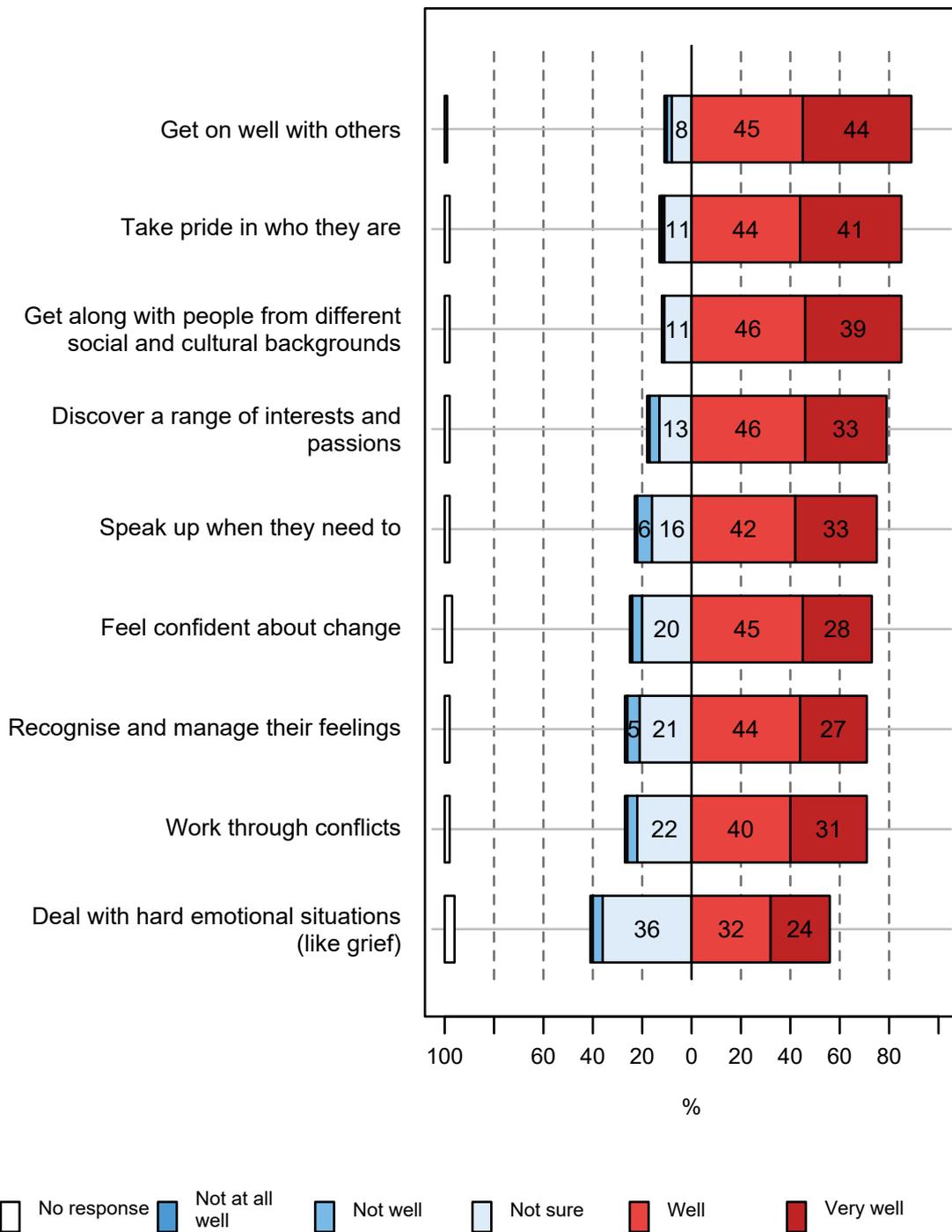
...there could be more of a Pacific focus (geographic, different peoples within the Pacific; cultures) but I understand that Māori needs a strong foothold—I agree with a strong Māori focus. *(Parent)*

Parents think schools help children develop skills to manage wellbeing

Learning the skills and attitudes to manage your wellbeing, and a sense of identity and self-esteem are aspects of Health and PE learning. Most parents reported schools did well or very well at helping their child to develop a range of skills and attitudes relating to students' **social wellbeing**, and their sense of identity (an aspect of **spiritual wellbeing**) (see Figure 19).

Only small numbers thought schools did not well or not at all well at supporting their child's development in these areas. Knowing whether their child is developing these skills at school may be something that is hard for parents to 'see'. Accordingly, quite a few parents selected the response 'not sure' for some of these questions.

FIGURE 20. Parents' views about how well the school helps their child develop skills to manage their wellbeing (n = 504)



In terms of **social wellbeing**, most parents thought school did well or very well helping their child get on well with others (89%, with 8% not sure) and get along with people from different social and cultural backgrounds (85%, with 11% not sure). In terms of identity development, most parents reported schools did well or very well at helping their child take pride in who they are (86%, with 11% not sure) and discover a range of interests and passions (80%, with 13% not sure).

6. Parent, whānau, and fanau views on wellbeing and behaviour

Parents of children at decile 1–2 schools were more likely to report their school did very well at supporting their child get along with people from different social and cultural backgrounds (53%, compared with 37% of decile 3–10), and take pride in who they are (54%, compared with 39% of decile 3–10). This finding suggests that decile 1–2 schools are placing emphasis on promoting diversity and positive cultural identities.

Parents were less clear about whether their child’s school was supporting them to develop skills in managing their **mental and emotional wellbeing**. Over two-thirds thought school did well or very well at helping their child recognise and manage their feelings (71%, with 21% unsure) or feel confident about change (73%, with 20% unsure). Parents were less sure that school did well or very well at assisting their child to deal with hard emotional situations, such as grief (55%, with 36% unsure). Parents’ reports appear to be aligned with teachers’ and principals’ views about the need for more support for schools and students in relation to **mental and emotional wellbeing**.

We asked parents how well their child’s school helped them make good decisions about their wellbeing. Figure 21 shows that most parents thought the school did this well or very well. More parents from decile 1–2 schools reported the school did very well at assisting their child to make good decisions about healthy eating (42%, compared with 28% of decile 3–10). This difference is likely to reflect the greater emphasis on nutrition initiatives at decile 1–2 schools, as discussed earlier.

FIGURE 21. Parents’ views of how well the school helps their child make good decisions (n = 504)



When asked to identify areas of school life in which they would like to have more say, 9% of parents and whānau identified student behaviour. A somewhat larger proportion (17%) identified student behaviour as a major issue facing their school. Parents whose child was at a decile 1–2 school were more likely to see

student behaviour as a major issue facing the school (29%, compared with 11%–16% for parents at schools of other deciles).

Five percent of parents wanted to have more say about how students' cultural identity is supported at school. For 4%, responding to cultural diversity was a major issue facing their school.

School information about their child's wellbeing and behaviour

Over two-thirds of parents rated the information they received from school as good or very good in regard to their child's social development (68%) and their participation in school activities (72%). Slightly more parents (76%) thought the quality of information they received about their child's behaviour and attendance/lateness was good or very good. The same proportion gave these ratings to the information they received about their child's achievement in relation to the National Standards.

Fifteen percent of parents confirmed they have online access to school information about their child's attendance or lateness, with a further 29% being unsure. Just over half (53%) did not have online access to this information.

As part of their child's mid-year report or parent-teacher conference, 71% of parents reported receiving clear information about their child's attitudes or behaviour at school, and 59%, their relationships with other children. Just over half (53%) said they received clear information about their child's overall wellbeing. Overall, reports were more focused on achievement than wellbeing, with around 85% of parents indicating they received clear information about where their child is in relation to the National Standards in reading, writing, and mathematics.

7.

Trustees' role in students' wellbeing and behaviour

Interactions with the community about students' wellbeing and behaviour

Almost half of trustees (48%) reported that parents had raised an issue with their board in 2016.⁸⁰ The two issues raised with the greatest proportions of trustees were wellbeing and behaviour related—discipline/student behaviour/bullying (reported by 18% of trustees) and health and safety (reported by 16% of trustees).

Most trustees (86%) said their board had consulted their community over the last 12 months. Student achievement was trustees' main focus, reported by 38% whose boards had consulted parents. Student health and wellbeing was the fourth most common topic, reported by 27% of trustees whose boards had consulted their community. Other topics relating to student wellbeing and behaviour, that were included in board consultations, were school culture (25% of trustees whose board consulted its community), safety of students (15%), and student behaviour (13%).

Student behaviour and health and safety were the two issues raised with the greatest proportions of trustees, and student health and wellbeing was a common consultation topic. However, trustees seemed to have relatively low rates of individual access to PLD or resources that could support them in these areas. In the last year, 22% had accessed professional development on the Vulnerable Children Act (Health and Safety), 10% had accessed guidelines from ERO about student wellbeing, and 7% had accessed the bullying prevention and response guide from MOE.

How did trustees view wellbeing and behaviour?

Overall, 14% of trustees perceived student behaviour as a major issue facing their school. Trustees tended to be more concerned with issues such as property maintenance and development (43%), staffing levels (36%), and funding (34%). Similarly, when asked about their board's main achievements in the last year, the most common responses (selected by 51%–56% of trustees) were good financial monitoring, teacher

⁸⁰ For a more detailed report of trustees' responses, see Stevens, E., with Wylie, C. (2017). *The work of school boards—trustees' perspective*. Wellington: NZCER. Available at <http://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/national-survey>

quality, improved governance processes, and improvements in student progress and achievement. Smaller proportions reported achievements relating to student wellbeing and inclusion (18%), or improvements in student behaviour (15%).

When asked to rank 11 areas in order of the time their board spent on them, the top four ranked areas reflected trustees' concerns and achievements. They were: student progress and achievement, property maintenance, review (e.g., policies), and financial management. Student behaviour/ discipline/bullying cases were ranked 10th overall, with a wide range of ranks, indicating that this varies quite widely between schools.

Trustees' responses suggest students' wellbeing and behaviour are a major focus for a small proportion of boards. However, boards' greater focus on student achievement and school resources may mean opportunities are being missed to play a more active stewardship role in relation to student wellbeing and behaviour.

8.

Discussion

So what can the national survey data tell us about students' wellbeing and behaviour at school? To best support student wellbeing, schools need a culture and practices that promote wellbeing and respond to needs.⁸¹ The national survey results suggest that most schools had a wide variety of approaches in place that aim to promote all students' wellbeing and belonging and positive behaviour (Tier 1), as well as some approaches for groups (Tier 2) or individuals (Tier 3) who may need more support. The survey findings also raise a few areas for strategic consideration by schools, boards, and policy makers, which are summarised below.

Promoting wellbeing was a focus at all types of schools (Tier 1)

In terms of questions about how schools were promoting wellbeing (Tier 1), the patterns from parents, teachers, and principals were similar across different types of schools (decile, location, size), suggesting that approaches that aim to promote student wellbeing occur across all types of schools.

Most parents were positive about how school promoted the wellbeing of their child. Most considered their child had a sense of wellbeing and safety at school, and had opportunities to engage in activities that promoted a sense of identity, pride, and belonging. Only very small numbers of parents (2%–3%) disagreed these things were happening for their child. In terms of their own experiences, most parents felt welcome at school and comfortable talking with their child's teachers.

Most parents reported their child had learning experiences in the classroom that assist them to build the competencies needed to manage their wellbeing and behaviour. Parents were less sure whether school assists their child to deal with hard emotional situations.

If we look at the four dimensions of Te Whare Tapawhā, national survey data show **social wellbeing** and belonging is a focus at a school-wide and classroom level at most schools. Most teachers (86%) reported they deliberately teach **emotional** skills in class, and two-thirds had accessed PLD in the past 2–3 years which provided practical help with supporting students' learning in relation to **social and emotional wellbeing**. This suggests that ongoing development in this area is occurring in a number of schools.

Schools had varied approaches to the different dimensions of **physical wellbeing**. Physical activity was promoted at most schools, and healthy eating was more of a focus at lower decile schools. **Spiritual wellbeing** was promoted at most schools through shared school values and fostering of students'

⁸¹ Education Review Office. (2016). *Wellbeing for success: Effective practice*. Wellington: Author.

identities and cultural values, particularly in making connections with Māori tikanga and te reo. Practices that promoted the belonging and wellbeing of Māori and Pasifika students were more common at decile 1–2 schools.

Practices that related to student input and leadership were less common than many of the other wellbeing-related practices. A similar finding was noted in the ERO report, *Wellbeing for Children's Success at Primary School*.⁸² Building stronger partnerships with students is a way of enhancing school approaches to wellbeing, and strengthening students' competencies in managing their wellbeing and contributing to others' wellbeing.

The majority of schools had systems to foster positive behaviour (Tier 1)

A majority of principals (over 70%) reported having some well embedded, consistent approaches and systems at their school for fostering positive student behaviour, and over three-quarters thought one of their main student-related achievements in the last 3 years was that student behaviour had stayed positive or improved. Principals who indicated that PB4L School-Wide was well embedded were also more likely to say their school had well embedded consistent approaches to behaviour, in comparison to principals from schools that had not joined PB4L School-Wide.

Despite the majority of schools having systems to foster positive behaviour, a sizeable proportion of principals (21%) indicated that student behaviour was a major issue facing their school. This has increased from the 12% of principals who identified similar issues in 2013 and 2010.

Responses of more than three-quarters of teachers indicated their school had coherent school-wide approaches to fostering students' positive behaviour. However, 17% of teachers often experienced student behaviour that caused serious disruption to their teaching, and an additional 38% reported experiencing this sometimes. This was much the same in 2013.

A strategic focus on wellbeing and behaviour was not fully embedded

Principals' responses suggest that, although schools have many ways of promoting wellbeing, a school-wide and planned approach based around strategic school goals was not fully embedded at most schools. We divided the schools into three groups, depending on how many of seven school-wide wellbeing-related practices principals reported were well embedded. This showed wide variation suggesting that more strategic attention to student wellbeing may be needed:

- 5–7 practices—26% of schools (many well embedded approaches)
- 2–4 practices—47% of schools (some well embedded approaches)
- 0–1 practices—27% of schools (one or no well embedded approaches).

There is a range of reasons why approaches to wellbeing may not have been fully embedded. One is that understandings about the inter-relationships between wellbeing, learning, and behaviour are still growing over time. Another reason is that finding a balance between fostering learning, wellbeing, and positive behaviour appears to be a challenge for some schools. The national survey findings show 40% of principals considered the current focus on improving students' literacy and numeracy achievement is impacting on their ability to offer a holistic curriculum. Principals who held this view were more likely to report their school had fewer well embedded wellbeing-related practices.

School-wide approaches to behaviour were more embedded than wellbeing approaches. However, some schools were finding it difficult to access effective support in relation to student behaviour. Teachers'

82 Education Review Office. (2015). *Wellbeing for children's success at primary school*. Wellington: Author.

comments indicated that PB4L School-Wide and Incredible Years Teacher were assisting them to improve student behaviour. Principals' responses suggested PB4L School-Wide was assisting schools to develop well embedded systems that promote positive behaviour and support the wellbeing of vulnerable students. However, only a relatively small proportion of schools (around one-quarter) in the national survey had joined PB4L School-Wide. These findings suggest schools could benefit from more systems-level support that assists them to both promote wellbeing and foster positive behaviour.

For trustees, students' wellbeing and behaviour were among their many areas of responsibility. The main achievements they reported, as well as their issues of concern, were mostly related to funding, governance, property, staffing, and student achievement. Student wellbeing and behaviour were less of a focus. Boards' greater focus on student achievement and school resources may mean opportunities are being missed to play a more active stewardship role in relation to student wellbeing and behaviour.

Responding to needs was less consistent between schools (Tiers 2 and 3)

The majority of principals reported their school had partially or well embedded systems for identifying groups of students (86%: Tier 2) or individuals (76%: Tier 3) who might need extra wellbeing support, and a team approach to designing solutions for these students (80%). However, the nature of the extra support offered to students varied considerably between schools. Many schools (70%) had targeted emotional skills programmes for vulnerable students. However, 28% were exploring or did not have these programmes. Likewise, 55% of schools had access to in-school specialists to support vulnerable students, but 42% did not.

One ongoing unmet need was support for students with mental health needs. This was a strong theme that ran through the principal and teacher responses. For teachers this need has become more pressing since 2013 with more teachers disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that their school had co-ordinated support systems that are able to meet the mental health needs of students (29%, up from 18% in 2013). Support for working with students with mental health issues was principals' largest ongoing unmet need for external expertise with 38% reporting they want, but cannot access, this support. The findings also suggest more training is needed to raise awareness of the signs of mental distress. Only 20% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they had access to this training, and only 34% of principals reported this training was partially or well embedded at their school.

Related to students' social and emotional wellbeing are the issues of assessment anxiety and bullying behaviour. In 2016 more teachers reported some student anxiety affecting learning in relation to their National Standards performance (63%, up from 41% in 2013). Teachers' and principals' responses suggest that more than 10% of schools did not have a clear school-wide process for addressing bullying behaviour. In a further 30% of schools, these systems were partially embedded.

Decile 1-2 schools had more focus on responding to wellbeing needs than their higher decile counterparts. This pattern was evident across many of the Tiers 2-3 practices we asked about in the survey, and in the responses of principals, teachers, and parents. Overall, more decile 1-2 schools offered targeted approaches aimed at supporting vulnerable students, accessed in-school and external expertise to support wellbeing and behaviour, joined initiatives such as PB4L School-Wide, and offered teachers PLD and training relating to student wellbeing. However, teachers at decile 1-2 schools also had more concerns about students 'falling through the cracks'.

Most teachers and principals reported they can access external support in relation to wellbeing or behaviour and have professionals to whom they can refer students. Only half of teachers said an RTLB was readily available when they needed support to work with students with behaviour issues. Principals rated the usefulness of many external professionals as 'mixed'. Those who were the most useful tended to be

attached to a school or a cluster of schools or were part of a service designed for schools (such as school nurses or social workers, RTL, and PB4L School-Wide practitioners). Support that was less useful was mostly provided by external non-education government agencies and groups. The least useful support came from CYF and CAMHS—with less than a third of those who had used these supports rating them as useful or very useful.

Changes over time

There were some differences between 2013 and 2016 wellbeing and behaviour responses relating to school practices. One difference was a positive change in parents' and principals' reports about cultural responsiveness. In 2016, 79% of parents agreed that the cultural identity of their child was recognised and respected at school (compared with 67% in 2013). Seventy-one percent thought teachers make an effort to understand things about their family and culture (compared with 66% in 2013).

In 2016 more principals reported that school-wide practices that promote Pasifika students' cultural identity were well embedded (24%, up from 8% in 2013). This is an important shift, particularly in the current environment which is focused on literacy and numeracy achievement. The responses also suggest there is room for further development, as these practices were partially or well embedded in around half of schools (48%). Practices that promote Pasifika students' cultural identity were less common than similar approaches for Māori students—which were common across the majority of schools (partially or well embedded in 93%).

Schools that had fewer Māori or Pasifika students (such as high decile schools) also tended to have less emphasis on promoting cultural values and practices. Although parent and principal responses suggest that schools are making positive changes in this area, these data still raise questions about whether some Māori or Pasifika students are missing out on experiences that foster their cultural identities and strengthen their wellbeing. Other students may also be missing out on experiences that promote understanding about diversity. Schools with small numbers of Māori students appear to be finding it harder to achieve the vision of *Ka Hikitia* for students to enjoy and achieve education success “as Māori”.⁸³ Similarly, schools with small numbers of Pasifika students may be finding it harder to achieve the vision of the *Pasifika Education Plan* for students to be “secure in their identities, languages and cultures” (p. 3).⁸⁴

A further difference was that, in 2016, teachers were making more use of their school's Student Management System to track student attendance and behaviour information, although this was less common in rural schools. However, the number of teachers who indicated that analysing these data to improve approaches was a good or very good aspect of their school's culture showed little change from 2013. This suggests there is still some way to go until all schools are making use of the data they are collecting. Use of data to identify concerns needs to go hand-in-hand with readily available support to help teachers address students' identified needs.

Looking to the future

Looked at together, the findings suggest schools of all types have approaches in place that aim to promote all students' wellbeing and belonging (Tier 1), but these approaches may not be well embedded or part of a planned school-wide focus. Approaches to fostering positive behaviour were more embedded.

The introduction to this report described a range of systems-level investments aimed at improving wellbeing and behaviour. Responses to the national survey indicate a gap in wellbeing-related support

83 Ministry of Education. (2013). *Ka Hikitia—Accelerating success 2013–17: The Māori education strategy*. Wellington: Author.

84 Ministry of Education. (2013). *Pasifika education plan 2013–17*. Wellington: Author.

and initiatives aimed at primary-aged students. Schools could benefit from further strategic action to assist them to support vulnerable students who are experiencing emotional distress. A strain on support services and the possibility for schools to play a greater role in mental health education are themes mentioned in the recent crowd-sourced *People's Mental Health Report*.⁸⁵ The Gluckman report⁸⁶ states that evidence shows early intervention is important for mental health. However, most of the recent Youth Mental Health initiatives are aimed at older youth.

Student behaviour was an issue for around one-fifth of school principals, suggesting that a second gap is systems-level support that assists schools to foster positive behaviour in ways that also promote wellbeing. Although there are supports in this area that are making a difference, such as the PB4L suite of initiatives, these initiatives are not accessed by all the schools that might benefit from them.

The national survey findings provide some clear messages for policy makers about aligning policies, support, and messaging to better enable schools to fulfil the intent of *The New Zealand Curriculum*. Schools are experiencing tensions as they try to offer a holistic curriculum that promotes wellbeing and positive behaviour together with learning and achievement.

85 Elliott, M. (2017). *People's mental health report*. Wellington: ActionStation Aotearoa.

86 Gluckman, P., et al. (2011). *Improving the transition: Reducing social and psychological morbidity during adolescence. A report from the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor*. Wellington: Office of the Prime Minister's Science Advisory Committee.

Appendix

Factor analyses for teacher survey items relating to student wellbeing and behaviour

Three exploratory factor analyses were carried out with data from the teacher questionnaire in the NZCER national survey of primary and intermediate schools 2016. The focus of these analyses was teachers' responses to items about student wellbeing and behaviour.

We conducted these analyses to investigate the number of factors⁸⁷ influencing the variables for which we had collected data. A secondary purpose was to use the estimated factor scores from these analyses to test hypotheses about the relationships between the wellbeing and behaviour factors, and a school's involvement in Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) School-Wide.

In the survey, the relevant items were grouped into three item banks: school approaches to support student wellbeing; school approaches to support student behaviour; and classroom approaches to support student wellbeing and behaviour. A separate factor analysis was carried out on each of these item banks.

Methodology

The variables used in these analyses were items with Likert-type response scales. Respondents were asked to indicate how much they agreed with each statement by ticking one of: strongly agree, agree, neutral/not sure, disagree, and strongly disagree.

Exploratory factor analyses were carried out with the statistical computing software R, utilising the 'factanal' function and maximum likelihood estimation to extract the factors. The extracted factors were rotated with the varimax method to aid interpretation of the results.

Several criteria were used to decide how many factors to retain in each analysis. A rule of thumb is to retain factors with an eigenvalue⁸⁸ of ≥ 1 , or to utilise a scree plot to show where the slope of the plotted eigenvalues levels out (or forms an 'elbow'). A factor that loads⁸⁹ on too few variables (a rule of thumb is at least three variables) is an indication that the result has too many factors. Most importantly, the factors making theoretical sense is an indication that the factor solution is a reasonable one.

In addition to deciding how many factors to retain, whether or not to keep every variable in the analysis needed to be considered. High uniqueness (or conversely low communality)⁹⁰ for an item indicates that item shares little common variance with other items.

87 A factor is an unobservable variable that influences the observed responses on survey items.

88 The eigenvalue of a factor is the total amount of variance accounted for by that factor.

89 A 'factor loading' is the degree to which each variable is 'caused' by the factor.

90 The communality of a variable the extent to which a variable is 'explained' by the factors extracted in the factor analysis. Uniqueness is equal to communality.

If no factor is loading very highly (i.e., loadings are less than ~.4) on a given variable, or two factors are cross-loading⁹¹ on a variable, this is an indication that the variable does not fit the factor solution. This in turn can affect the number of factors in the solution—and so finding a reasonable factor solution in an exploratory factor analysis is an iterative process.

Results

School approaches to supporting student wellbeing

To investigate the factor structure of items related to school approaches to supporting student wellbeing, an initial factor solution with 10 variables and three factors was examined. Applying the criteria outlined above resulted in one factor and two variables being dropped from this analysis.

Table A.1 shows the survey items and the final two-factor solution, with loadings < 0.2 suppressed. The lowest communality was 0.33, showing that each item shared some common variance with other items. Fifty-one percent of the total variance in the variables in this analysis is explained by this factor solution.

The four variables with Factor 1 loadings of at least 0.5 were associated with school-wide approaches to supporting student wellbeing (Tier 1). Those with Factor 2 loadings of at least 0.5 were associated with approaches to supporting the wellbeing of individual students (Tier 3).

TABLE A.1 **Loadings from the factor solution for items about school approaches to supporting student wellbeing**

Survey items (variables)	Factor 1	Factor 2
We have an effective school plan to support student wellbeing and belonging	0.81	
Wellbeing themes are included in all curriculum plans	0.68	0.20
We seek students' input when we are developing approaches to wellbeing	0.55	
We have a whole school approach to help students develop healthy social relationships	0.73	0.20
We can access timely support for vulnerable students	0.28	0.62
Teachers have training to help them recognise mental health warning signs in students	0.25	0.61
Co-ordinated support systems are able to meet the mental health needs of students		0.85
We are able to refer students to health professionals if needed		0.59
Eigenvalue	2.14	1.96

The variables that were dropped were:

- We provide programmes for small groups of vulnerable students to develop coping skills, self-esteem, and resilience
- Teachers use student data to help support students' social and emotional development.

⁹¹ When an item loads to a substantial degree on more than one factor after factor rotation, this is called cross-loading.

School approaches to fostering positive behaviour

To investigate the factor structure of items related to school approaches to supporting student behaviour, an initial factor solution with nine variables and three factors was examined. Applying the criteria resulted in two factors and four variables being dropped from this analysis.

Table A.2 shows the final one-factor solution, with loadings < 0.2 suppressed. The lowest communality was 0.63, showing that each item shared common variance with other items. Sixty-eight percent of the total variance in this analysis is explained by this factor solution.

This factor was associated with school-wide approaches to fostering positive behaviour (Tiers 1 to 3).

TABLE A.2 **Loadings from the factor solution for items about school approaches to fostering positive behaviour**

Survey items (variables)	Factor 1
We have an effective system that staff use to encourage positive behaviours and celebrate successes	0.76
School behaviour expectations are clearly defined and actively promoted by staff	0.81
We have an effective approach to managing negative student behaviour that is widely used by staff	0.90
We have a consistent approach to behaviour incidents that builds students' relationship skills	0.87
We have a clear school-wide process for addressing behaviours such as bullying	0.79
Eigenvalue	3.42

The variables that were dropped were:

- We seek students' input when we are developing approaches to behaviour or thinking about how to manage recurring incidents
- Teachers use class data to help improve our approaches to managing behaviour
- Our RTLB is readily available when we need them to help us work with students with behavioural issues
- Teachers have been well involved in the development of the school's student behaviour and support systems.

Classroom approaches to supporting student wellbeing and behaviour

To investigate the factor structure of items related to classroom approaches to student wellbeing and behaviour, an initial factor solution with 14 variables and three factors was examined. Applying the criteria outlined above resulted in one factor and six variables being dropped from this analysis.

The final two-factor solution is presented in Table A.3. Seventy-six percent of the total variance in the variables in this analysis is explained by this factor solution.

The five variables with Factor 1 loadings of at least 0.5 were associated with active social and emotional teaching and learning that supports student wellbeing (Tier 1). Those with Factor 2 loadings of at least 0.5 were associated with classroom approaches to supporting the wellbeing of Pasifika students.

TABLE A.3 **Loadings from the factor solution for items about classroom approaches to supporting student wellbeing and behaviour**

Survey items (variables)	Factor 1	Factor 2
I deliberately teach relationship and social strategies in class	0.79	
I use interactive and discussion-based approaches to assist students to develop strategies to manage their social and emotional wellbeing	0.75	
I deliberately teach emotional skills in class (so students learn about themselves and managing feelings)	0.80	
I teach strategies in my class that support students to manage their behaviour and solve problems	0.82	
I use co-operative learning and peer support strategies to help students build friendships	0.73	
I make a point of knowing which Pasifika culture each of my Pasifika students' families identify with		0.74
I incorporate Pasifika students' culture in my teaching in ways that promote belonging		0.86
I provide Pasifika students with opportunities to work together and support each other		0.78
Eigenvalue	2.04	1.74

The variables that were dropped included two items related to Māori values, and te reo and tikanga Māori:

- I promote Māori cultural values in my classroom
- I incorporate te reo Māori and tikanga Māori in my teaching in ways that promote Māori students' belonging (e.g., mihi, pōhiri)
- I make sure students have lots of opportunities to be physically active during the day
- I have a plan for building students' leadership skills through classroom opportunities
- I make sure students have lots of opportunities to actively learn about healthy eating (e.g., making shared healthy lunches)
- I promote school values that encourage inclusion and respect for diversity in my classroom.

Regression models

Linear regression was used to investigate a relationship between teachers being in a school involved in PB4L School-Wide, and the factors described above that represent deliberate approaches to supporting student wellbeing and behaviour in the classroom and in the school.

Teachers responded to the question “Is your school part of PB4L School-Wide?” with either: “Yes (Tier 1—whole school)”; “Yes (Tiers 1 & 2)”; “We were, but are not active now”; or “No”. Teachers also indicated whether their school had been in PB4L School-Wide for less than 3 years, or 3 years or more. These two variables were combined to create three categories: ‘yes for less than 3 years’, ‘yes for three years or more’, and ‘no’.

Five linear regression models were fitted, with each extracted factor as the dependent (response) variable, and whether or not the respondent was in a PB4L School-Wide school (including for how long, as described above) and school decile (grouped into quintiles) as the independent variables. All hypothesis tests were carried out at the 5% significance level.

The first two models investigated a relationship between factors that described school approach to supporting student wellbeing and being in a PB4L School-Wide school, with school decile to control for a socioeconomic effect. There was no evidence⁹² of a relationship between teaching in a school that was involved in PB4L School-Wide, and either of the two factors related to school approaches to supporting wellbeing (p -value = 0.08, p -value = 0.89, for models with Factors 1 and 2 as dependent variables respectively).

The third and fourth models investigated a relationship between factors that described classroom approaches to supporting student wellbeing and behaviour and being in a School-Wide school, again with school decile as an independent variable. There was no evidence of a relationship between teaching in a school that was involved in PB4L School-Wide, and Factor 1 from the analysis with items related to a classroom approach to student wellbeing and behaviour (p -value = 0.26). There was evidence of a relationship between Factor 2 and being in a School-Wide school (p -value < 0.001); however, the adjusted R-squared⁹³ for this model was only 0.045, indicating that this model explains only 4.5% of the variability of Factor 2.

The final model investigated the relationship between the factor related to school approaches to supporting student behaviour and being in a PB4L School-Wide school. There was evidence of a significant relationship between the factor and being in a school-wide school (p -value < 0.001). However, the adjusted R-squared for this model was only 0.043, indicating that this model explains only 4.3% of the variability of the factor.

Summary

We carried out exploratory factor analyses on three banks of items from the national survey teacher questionnaire, and explored potential relationships between the resulting factors and two variables of interest with linear regression.

Overall, there were significant but weak relationships between teachers being in a PB4L School-Wide school, and factors associated with active social and emotional teaching and learning, and school approaches to fostering positive behaviour. This suggests that being in a PB4L School-Wide school is one of the potential reasons for variation in these two factors.

These analyses indicated areas for improvement in future surveys. To further investigate the factors we identified, we could refine the focus of current items or add additional items for the survey that would better explain these factors.

For regression analysis, we would investigate relationships between factors and a larger set of theoretically important variables to increase the explanatory power of our regression models. Our regression analysis included teachers being in a PB4L School-Wide school as a variable. There are many other contributors to the variation in the factors. One possible contributor is another PB4L initiative, the Incredible Years Teacher (IYT) programme. IYT focuses specifically on approaches to responding to disruptive behaviour that foster a positive learning environment. In a future survey, it would be useful to investigate associations between teachers being part of IYT and the factors identified here—particularly the factors related to fostering positive behaviour, but also those related to students' wellbeing—to see if this might explain more variability in teachers' practices.

⁹² The null hypothesis being tested is "School-Wide and school decile do not explain any more of the variation in 'deliberate school and classroom approaches to wellbeing' than a model without these predictors". With the significance level set at 0.05, any value ≥ 0.05 means there is no evidence to reject the hypothesis.

⁹³ R-squared is the percentage of the dependent variable variation that is explained by a linear model.

