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Media release: Report shows high achievement in New Zealand boys' schools

A new report analyses achievement in state secondary boys' schools and explores the top strategies used by high-performing schools.

The analysis from 2010 to 2012 shows school leavers from state boys' schools had higher qualifications than their male counterparts who attended state co-educational schools.

The report was carried out by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) for the Association of Boys' Schools of New Zealand.

In 2012, 28 percent of boys leaving state or state-integrated schools came from 43 boys' schools. This study gathered data from each of the boys' schools on the percentage of their school leavers who attained University Entrance, at least NCEA level 2 or equivalent, or left school without a qualification. Medians were then calculated for each qualification category for boys' schools, and comparable data gathered from state and state-integrated coeducational secondary schools for male school leavers.

For boys' schools, the median University Entrance attainment was 42 percent, the median attainment for at least NCEA Level 2 or equivalent was 83 percent, and there was a median of 8 percent of schools leavers without a qualification. For coeducational schools, the median attainment for University Entrance was 23 percent, there was a median of 69 percent for school leavers with at least NCEA Level 2 or equivalent, and a median of 17 percent leaving without a qualification

The researchers said some differences in student achievement could be expected as a result of the different socio-economic profile for boys' schools and coeducational schools. Of the 43 boys' schools, 32 percent are decile 9 or 10 compared with 9 percent of the co-educational secondary schools. Five percent of boys' schools are decile 1 or 2, compared with 20 percent of the co-educational secondary schools. For this reason, the report also contains comparisons between boys' schools and coeducational schools in the same decile bands.

For example, the table below shows the median percentage of school leavers achieving NCEA Level 2 or higher, according to school type and decile band.

Boys' achievement of at least NCEA Level 2 or equivalent

Decile group	Median percentage of school leavers per school	
	Boys' schools (N = 43)	Co-ed schools (N = 225)
1-4	69.9	61.1
5-6	76.7	69.4
7-8	85.7	78.7
9-10	93.0	80.7

Māori and Pasifika school leavers from boys' schools were more likely than their counterparts in co-educational schools to have qualifications.

The research included interviews with leaders of boys' schools identified as highly performing in each decile band. NZCER chief researcher Cathy Wylie said the schools had thought hard about how to work with their students.

“What was really interesting was how the high-performing schools stressed the importance of a student-centred approach, offering co-curricular activities alongside academic programmes for holistic development, and developing self-managing students who set high goals for themselves.”

Other strategies mentioned by the high-performing schools included: providing leadership opportunities for senior students; identifying student need early on, particularly with targeted literacy and numeracy strategies; close tracking of student achievement in relation to student goals; and threading core school values through the school day.

The report is available on the NZCER website at:

<http://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/publications/achievement-boys-schools-2010-12>

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