



NEW ZEALAND COUNCIL FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

TE RŪNANGA O AOTEAROA MŌ TE RANGAHAU I TE MĀTAURANGA

Media Release

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Research provides insights into students who move school often

Research on students who change schools frequently shows little difference in achievement rates and attitudes towards schooling when these students are compared to their less mobile classmates.

The research was conducted by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research, in the second phase of a much wider study called *Building Attachment in Communities and Families Affected by Transience and Residential Movement*, led by CRESA and funded by the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology (see backgrounder). It was presented today at a forum organised by the office of the Commissioner for Children.

Mobility is high in New Zealand: around a quarter of the students in the year groups NZCER sampled were frequent movers. A few had been to 10-15 different schools.

The report backs up earlier findings by NZCER that led researchers to probe more deeply into the reasons why. They argue that student mobility is a problem for schools because of the way people in the education system think about schools. Schools see themselves as being like “families”. This idea captures schools’ learning and socialisation functions, and works well in a stable environment. But when students leave and new ones arrive, the school family’s sense of cohesion is upset.

“We need to think about school in new ways and find different ways of organising learning in schools so that mobility can be seen in a positive light,” say the researchers Ally Bull and Jane Gilbert.

They say the curriculum seeks to prepare students for a world in which continual change is the norm. “Students who move a lot have first hand experience of change and their presence in schools has the potential to expose less mobile students to different experiences and ways of looking at the world.”

Organising the curriculum around significant themes, with an emphasis on the big picture, would be one way of valuing mobility. “If the emphasis moves from how much knowledge students have to what they can do with knowledge then learning becomes much more transportable.”

The researchers say the families of mobile students also need to be made aware of this approach, so they can draw on their experiences to complement learning in the classroom.

For further information or to interview Jane Gilbert or Ally Bull, contact NZCER communications manager Sarah Boyd on 04-8021468 or 027-2314300

About NZCER

The New Zealand Council for Educational Research is New Zealand's only independent, educational research organisation. Established in 1934 through grants from the Carnegie Corporation, it became a statutory body in 1945 and now operates under its own Act of Parliament. Its key focus is to provide educators, students, parents, policy makers and the public with innovative and independent research, analysis, and advice. NZCER is not formally attached to any government department, university or other educational organisation.

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