

## 5.

# Supporting students' wellbeing<sup>34</sup>

**There are strong links between a student's mental and emotional wellbeing, their social behaviour and learning outcomes. Supporting students' wellbeing and social development goes hand in hand with meeting academic goals.<sup>35</sup> An awareness of these links is important as this can help improve support for students with mental health issues.**

Mental health problems can surface in behaviour that is disruptive in a classroom. Disruptive behaviour can be an obstacle to students achieving their academic potential, and is increasingly associated with poorer academic outcomes as students grow older.

In the national survey we asked questions that relate to each of the three tiers of the intervention or proactive triangle shown in Figure 18. The triangle is based on a public health approach to prevention. Those who explore effective ways of managing student behaviour<sup>36</sup> and those who advocate for social and emotional learning as a way of building mental health and addressing problem behaviours<sup>37, 38</sup> offer

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34 Sally Boyd contributed substantially to this chapter. She is the leader of the NZCER evaluation of PB4L School-wide: Boyd, S., & Felgate, R. (2015). *"A positive culture of support": Final report from the evaluation of PB4L School-wide*. Wellington: Ministry of Education. Sally also led the development of the *Wellbeing@School* survey, which the Ministry of Education funded to support schools (see <http://www.wellbeingatschool.org.nz/>).

35 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.

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

37 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.

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

the intervention triangle as a point of reference for making decisions about what emphasis might be placed on different types of activities. The intervention triangle has also been used in New Zealand in the implementation of the Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) suite of initiatives.<sup>39</sup>

FIGURE 18 **The intervention triangle: Planning to promote wellbeing**

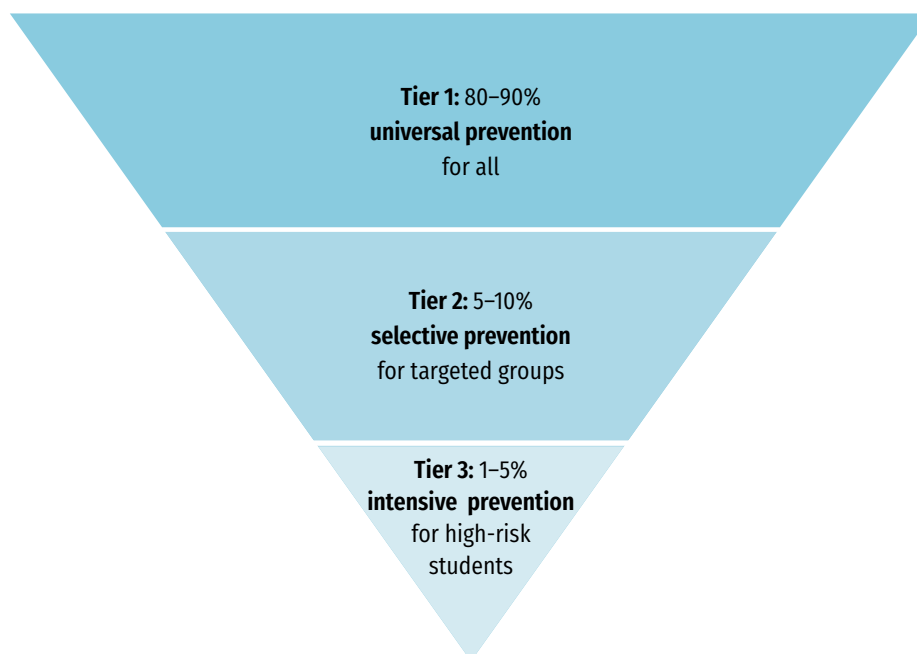


Diagram adapted by Boyd<sup>40</sup> to suit a New Zealand context from CASEL<sup>41</sup> and Chafouleas et al.<sup>42</sup>

The three tiers of the intervention triangle are differentiated by the nature of the intervention and the group or individuals who are the focus. An underpinning principle is that not all effort to support wellbeing and mental health should be directed at individuals, as this ignores the group context of behaviours. In the triangle, most effort (80–90%) is invested in prevention that is universal and therefore targeted at the whole school or all students. PB4L School-Wide is an example of a Tier 1 universal initiative.

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

- Tier 1, universal prevention: a mix of proactive universal approaches aimed at all students to assist in building wellbeing (e.g., PB4L School-Wide (first layer), planned social and emotional learning for all students, activities that build belonging at school)
- Tier 2, selective prevention: small group targeted approaches for those with extra needs (e.g., support groups, Year 9 Travellers screening assessment)
- Tier 3, intensive prevention: intensive approaches for crises and students with very high support needs (e.g., mentoring, counselling and other forms of individual specialist support).

<sup>39</sup> For more information about PB4L, see <http://pb4l.tki.org.nz/>

<sup>40</sup> Boyd, S. (2012). *Wellbeing@School: Building a safe and caring school climate that deters bullying overview paper*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.

<sup>41</sup> 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.

<sup>42</sup> Chafouleas, S., Riley-Tillman, T., & Sugai, G. (2007). *School-based behavioral assessment: Informing intervention and instruction*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Our questions were largely about proactive approaches schools were taking to support students' wellbeing. For example, we asked about opportunities schools provided for students to contribute to the school community and the extent to which schools monitored students' uptake of such opportunities (a Tier 1 approach). We also asked about how well embedded support groups for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth were (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 mental health issues, we asked about principals' and teachers' experiences of working with external agencies to which they can refer high-risk students (part of Tier 3).

Proactive approaches can strengthen protective factors that “enhance the likelihood of positive outcomes and lessen the likelihood of negative consequences from exposure to risk”.<sup>43</sup> Protective factors at the system, school, classroom and individual student levels can help students build skills and competencies to manage the risk factors associated with students' psychological wellbeing and behaviour. Protective factors that can enhance students' wellbeing include a sense of belonging and being socially connected, having access to health support and having strategies to cope with difficulties and failure. For students with emotional or behavioural problems, establishing protective factors at all levels is important, with individualised support also an essential component for students with high needs. We were also interested to see what proactive approaches secondary schools were taking to enhance protective factors for students' mental and emotional wellbeing, social skills and engagement with school.

Since the last national NZCER secondary survey in 2012, there have been new initiatives in New Zealand to support secondary school students' wellbeing. The Prime Minister's Youth Mental Health Project was launched in 2012. This collaborative initiative involves the Ministries of Education, Health and Social Development, and Te Puni Kōiri. The Youth Mental Health Project co-funds 26 different initiatives—a number of which are delivered in schools or target school-aged students (e.g., PB4L School-Wide for secondary schools; SPARX—a free online tool for young people; and mentors for students). There has also been considerable resource development in related areas, including publications to help with issues of youth suicide,<sup>44</sup> bullying behaviour<sup>45</sup> and mental health.<sup>46</sup> In addition, a 2012 memorandum of understanding formalised an intention between the Ministry of Education and CYF to work collaboratively to ensure the safety of vulnerable children and young people, and to help them succeed educationally.

In 2013, with funding from the Youth Mental Health Project, ERO published a draft set of indicators for student wellbeing,<sup>47</sup> which were then used in a national evaluation of how wellbeing was promoted in schools. The subsequent ERO (2015) report<sup>48</sup> on wellbeing of secondary students identified 16% of the 68 secondary schools sampled had cohesive systems for promoting and responding to student wellbeing,

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43 World Health Organisation. (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](http://www.who.int/hiv/pub/me/en/me_prev_ch4.pdf)

44 Ministry of Education. (2013). *Preventing and responding to suicide: Resource kit for schools*. Retrieved 11 March 2016, from <http://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/School/Traumatic-incidents-and-emergencies/SuicidePreventionOCT2013.pdf>

45 Ministry of Education. (2015). *Bullying prevention and response: A guide for schools*. Retrieved 11 March 2016, from <http://www.education.govt.nz/school/student-support/student-wellbeing/bullying-prevention-and-response/bullying-prevention-and-response-a-guide-for-schools/>

46 Ministry of Social Development on behalf of The Prime Minister's Youth Mental Health Project. (2015). *Guidelines: Supporting young people with stress, anxiety and/or depression*. Retrieved 11 March 2016, from <https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/brochures/guidelines.html>

47 Education Review Office. (2013). *Wellbeing for success: Draft evaluation indicators for student wellbeing (draft) 2013*. Retrieved 2 March 2016, from <http://www.ero.govt.nz/Review-Process/Frameworks-and-Evaluation-Indicators-for-ERO-Reviews/Wellbeing-for-Success>

48 Education Review Office. (2015). *Wellbeing for young people's success at secondary school*. Retrieved 2 March 2016, from <http://www.ero.govt.nz/National-Reports/Wellbeing-for-Young-People-s-Success-at-Secondary-School-February-2015>

and a further 57% had some good practices in place. Twenty-six percent of this group of schools were facing major challenges that impacted on their ability to promote student wellbeing. The report made a number of recommendations, including that schools: deliberately map and review the opportunities students have to explore wellbeing issues and develop key competencies and leadership skills; review students' assessment workloads; and involve students more in decisions that affect them at school.

In this chapter, we begin with the overall picture of student behaviour in schools, then look at teacher reports of the proactive behaviour approaches used in their school. Then we look at principals' reports of how their school gathers information on student engagement, behaviour and wellbeing and whether these aspects were reflected in annual plan targets. Later in the chapter, the views of parents and whānau and school trustees are included.

Some of the following sections describe approaches that might be used at multiple tiers of the intervention triangle; where appropriate, we indicate in which tier an approach was likely to fit.

## Supporting students' social behaviour is improving

In 2015, students' behaviour was much less of a major issue for schools than it had been in 2012 and 2009. This suggests that the emphasis and support given around student behaviour and engagement in the past few years is paying off. Table 13 gives the details, and also shows that student behaviour remained a major issue for people in decile 1–2 schools, especially teachers.

TABLE 13 **Student behaviour as a major issue facing their school, 2015, 2012 and 2009; school decile differences**

	All schools 2015 (2012, 2009) %	Decile 1–2 schools 2015* (2012, 2009) %	Decile 9–10 schools 2015 (2012, 2009) %
Principals	15 (26, 33)	40 (45, 50)	0 (9, 7)
Teachers	27 (44, 48)	64 (65, 70)	4 (24, 21)
Trustees	11 (27, 37)	26 (56, 44)	3 (4, 12)
Parents and whānau	21 (38, 37)	59* (39, 44)	13 (40, 24)

\* In each case, the 2015 percentage for decile 1–2 schools decreased gradually to the figure shown for decile 9–10 schools.

+ This percentage represents responses from 39 parents and whānau, and should be interpreted cautiously.

While student behaviour has generally improved, 37% of the teachers sometimes had their teaching seriously disrupted by students' behaviour, slightly down from 41% in 2012 and 45% in 2009. Eleven percent of teachers indicated this happened often, down from 18% in 2012 and 16% in 2009.

Serious disruption to teaching was experienced *often* by 27% of teachers at decile 1–2 schools (decreasing to less than 2% at decile 9–10 schools). One of the main things teachers at decile 1–2 schools would like to change about their work as a teacher is to have more support for them to teach students with behaviour issues (34%, decreasing to 9% of teachers at decile 9–10 schools).

How schools deal with disruptive behaviour was of concern to some parents and whānau, who made comments like this one:

There needs to be more support around behaviour issues. Children excluded from other schools can change the whole culture of a settled, well-functioning class, and create a high level of stress for teachers and children wanting to learn.

## Proactive approaches to enhancing protective factors

### School-wide protective factors (Tier 1)

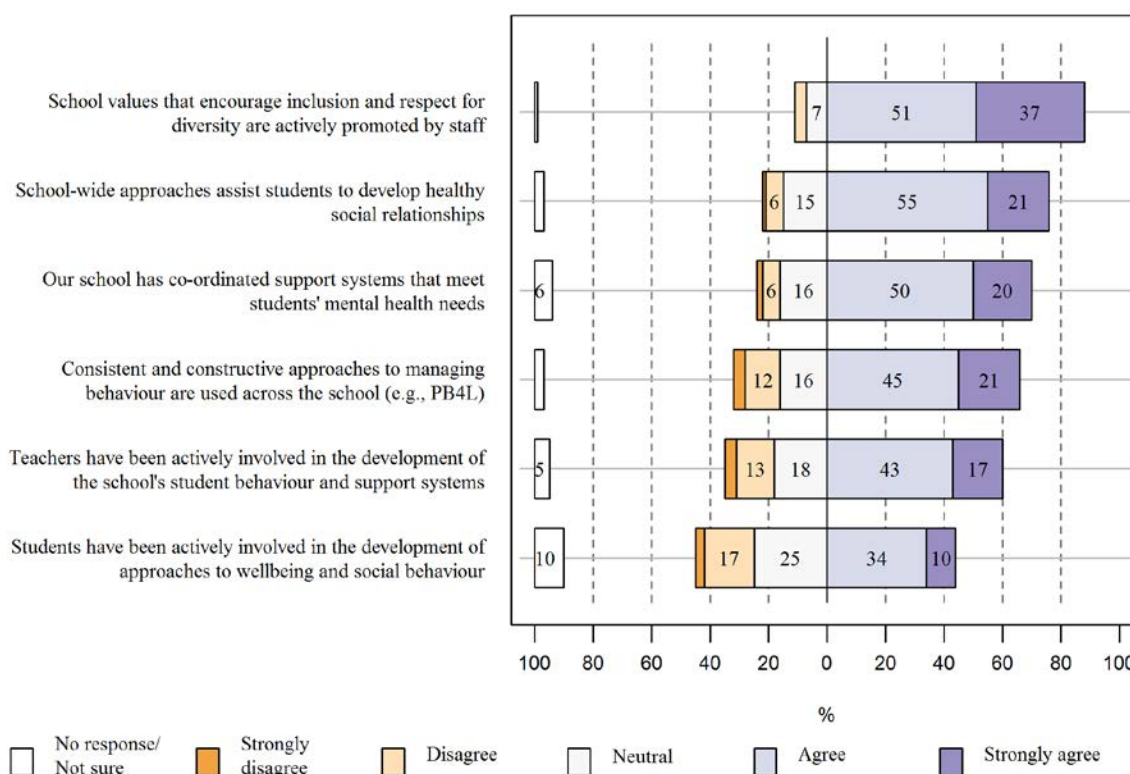
Helping students maintain or strengthen their wellbeing over the initial transition to secondary school is important. Most principals (91%) and teachers (78%) agreed they have deliberate strategies in place at their school to build Years 9 and 10 students' sense of belonging. Nearly three-quarters of principals agreed they get good information about their students' non-academic strengths and needs when they enter the school. A rather lower 39% of teachers agreed with this.

Teachers were asked about school-wide approaches that support students' wellbeing (see Figure 19). More than three-quarters agreed the school staff actively promoted school values that encourage inclusion and respect for diversity, and that they had school-wide approaches to assist students to develop healthy social relationships.

Actively involving staff and students in developing student behaviour and support systems creates belonging and ownership. This was less common practice across schools.

Within overall school-wide approaches, schools can also target groups of students with particular needs. Slightly fewer teachers agreed their school has co-ordinated support systems that meet students' mental health needs (Tiers 2 and 3).

FIGURE 19 School-wide approaches to supporting students' wellbeing, reported by teachers ( $n = 1,777$ )



Compared with 2012, slightly fewer teachers agreed that school-wide approaches assisted students to develop healthy social relationships (76%, compared with 81% in 2012). The proportion who reported their school has co-ordinated support systems that meet students' mental health needs was 70%, compared with 72% in 2012. This lack of increase suggests that recent initiatives in the Youth Mental Health package have yet to gain traction in some secondary schools.

Teacher involvement in developing their school's student behaviour and support systems was linked to their role, ranging from 54% of subject teachers to 62% of heads of department and 84% of those in AP/DP roles.

Students were reported by 44% of the teachers to have been involved in developing approaches to wellbeing and social behaviour in their school. Teachers at smaller schools were more likely than those at large secondary schools to report students having an active role in this.

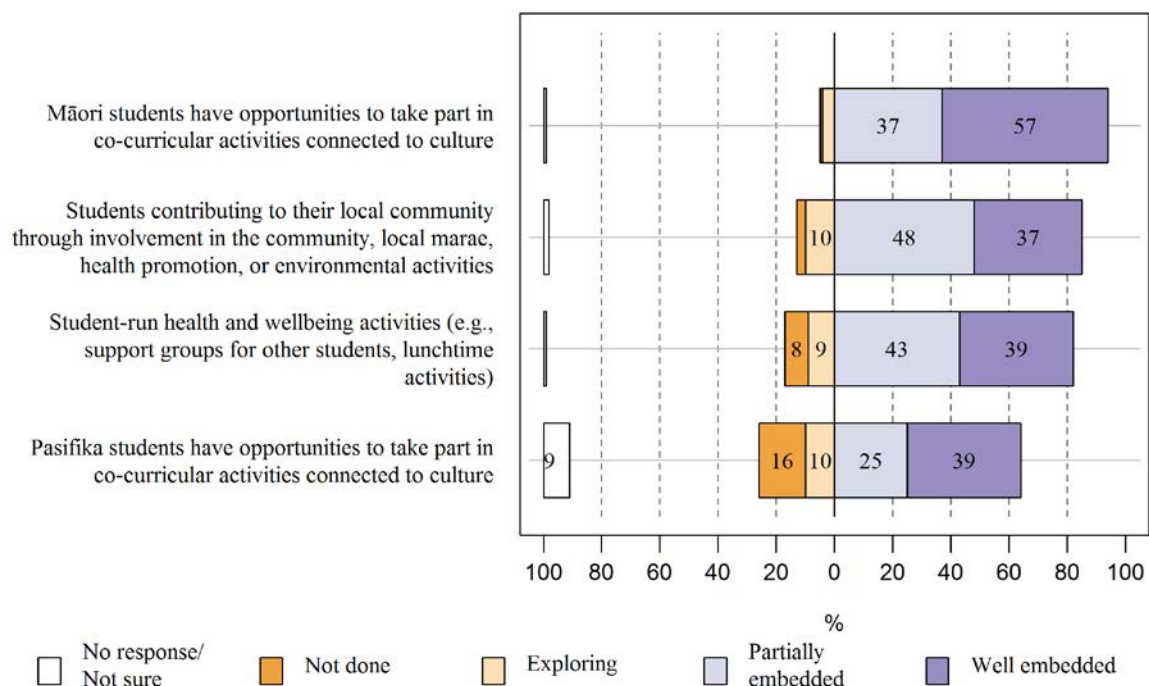
### **Belonging, contributing and participating (Tier 1)**

One protective factor that can enhance students' wellbeing is a sense of belonging. A sense of belonging can be created through providing opportunities for students to be socially or culturally connected at school.

Most principals indicated that approaches were partially or well embedded at their school to ensure Māori students were provided with opportunities to take part in co-curricular activities connected to their culture (see Figure 20). Just under two-thirds indicated an equivalent approach for Pasifika students was at least partially embedded.

The majority of principals (85%) reported students at their school contributing through involvement in the community, local marae, health promotion or environmental activities. Most schools also have students involved in running health and wellbeing groups and activities for their peers. These two approaches were more likely to be partially embedded than well embedded.

FIGURE 20 Opportunities for students to contribute, reported by principals (n = 182)



The only decile-related difference was that principals at decile 5–6 schools were less likely to indicate their schools had embedded approaches to students contributing to their local community (74%, compared with 97% at decile 9–10 schools, and 82–88% for other decile bands).

Metropolitan school principals reported more of these opportunities embedded at their schools than those in other locations. Overlapping somewhat, more principals of large schools reported embedded opportunities for Māori and Pasifika students to take part in co-curricular activities connected to their cultures (100% and 89%, respectively, compared with 71% and 14% for small schools).

Fewer schools had well-embedded monitoring of data to ensure all students took part in at least one co-curricular or community service activity (23%, with another 34% having this monitoring partially embedded).

## The role of data, monitoring and targets to support student wellbeing and behaviour

Most secondary schools tracked student absence, behaviour incidents and student views on the school climate and culture over time. Somewhat more secondary schools were now tracking student engagement and belonging at the school. Just under half tracked student health.

Table 14 shows 2015 and 2012 patterns.

TABLE 14 Student engagement and wellbeing data collected and tracked over time; principals' responses in 2012 and 2015

Type of data	2012 (n = 177) %	2015 (n = 182) %
Student absence/truancy	96	92
Behaviour incident data	89	89
Student views on school climate and culture	74	81
Survey of student engagement or sense of belonging at school	67	76
Health (e.g., illness, school sores/impetigo, dental records)	49	45
Other	14	6

Setting targets for students' engagement, behaviour and wellbeing is a proactive approach some schools were taking. Ten percent reported they had no targets of this nature (much the same as the 12% in 2012). Table 15 shows that nearly two-thirds said their school's 2015 annual plan included a target related to student engagement in learning and school, slightly less than in 2012. Over half the schools had targets related to students' attendance, with fewer than in 2012 targeting the reduction of student absence/truancy. Just under a third sought to build students' social and emotional competencies and wellbeing.

TABLE 15 Student engagement and wellbeing targets in annual plans; principals' responses in 2012 and 2015

Engagement and wellbeing targets	2012 (n = 177) %	2015 (n = 182) %
Related to student engagement in learning and school	70	64
Attendance-related	52	56
Reduction of student absence/truancy	36	31
Building students' social and emotional competencies and wellbeing	*	31
Reduction of behaviour incidents	24	26
Reduction in stand-downs, suspensions, expulsions	24	21
Health-related	6	10
Other	7	4

\*Not asked

There were distinct decile-related differences in schools' targets. Principals of decile 3–4 schools were the most likely to have targets for student engagement and wellbeing, decreasing to those at decile 9–10 schools. Decile 3–4 schools were also the most likely to have annual targets focused on attendance, reducing absence/truancy, reducing behaviour incidents and stand-downs, suspensions and expulsions. Twenty-seven percent of decile 7–8 schools had no targets relating to student engagement and wellbeing, as did 17% of decile 9–10 schools. Targets did not vary significantly according to school size.



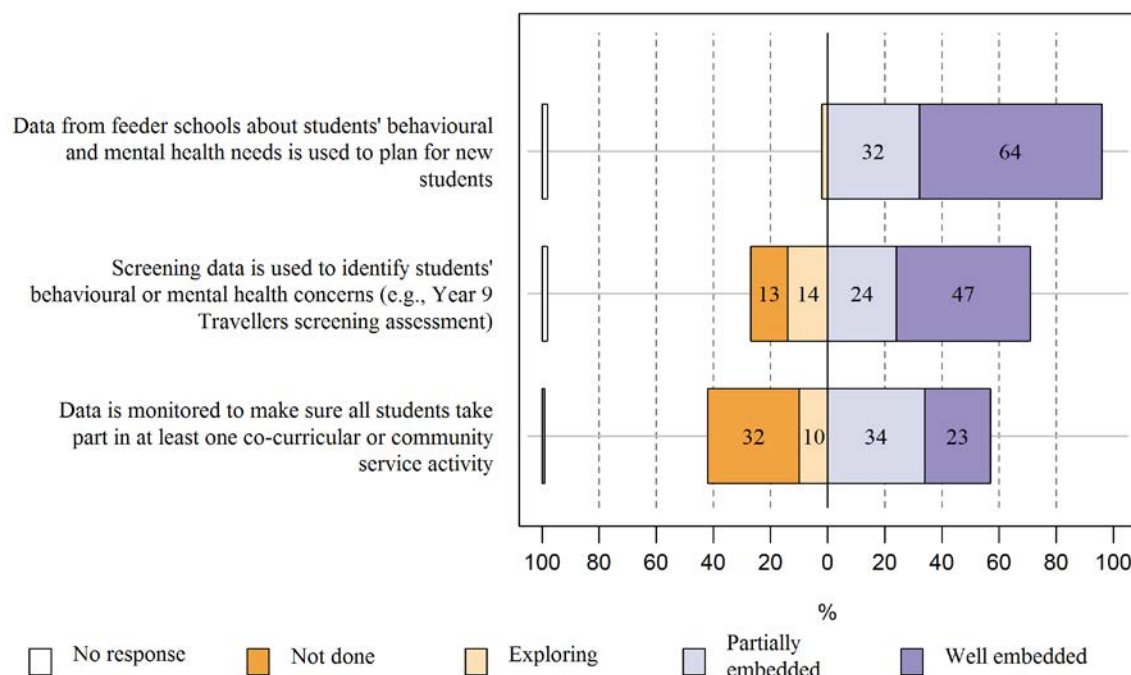
TABLE 16 Student engagement and wellbeing targets in annual plans; differences in principals' responses associated with school decile

	Decile 1-2 schools %	Decile 3-4 schools %	Decile 5-6 schools %	Decile 7-8 schools %	Decile 9-10 schools %
Attendance-related	70	71	64	41	31
Reduction of absence/truancy	35	50	34	24	11
Reduction of behaviour incidents	25	48	26	24	3
Health-related	25	14	2	6	14
Reduction in stand-downs, suspensions, expulsions	20	38	22	15	6
No targets related to	5	5	2	27	17

### Other uses of student data to support wellbeing

Just under two-thirds of the principals reported that they used data from their feeder schools about behaviour and mental health needs to plan for their incoming students, with fewer having well-embedded screening data to identify students' behavioural or mental health concerns. Less well embedded in secondary schools was the use of screening data to identify students whose behaviour, wellbeing or mental health might be at risk (Tiers 2 and 3); or the monitoring of data to ensure all students took part in co-curricular activities (Tier 1).

FIGURE 21 Use of student data to support their mental health, behaviour and participation; principals' views (n = 182)



Sixty-four percent of teachers agreed they can readily access class data that help them notice trends and manage behaviour.

## Teaching strategies to support wellbeing (Tier 1)

To find out about teachers' role in developing protective factors at the classroom level, we asked them about whether they taught strategies to help students manage their wellbeing. Just over two-thirds of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they taught strategies in their classes that help students to manage their social and emotional wellbeing; 31% either disagreed or gave a neutral response. Just over half the principals (53%) reported that active teaching in everyday classes of strategies for managing feelings was well or partially embedded at their school. Just over one-quarter of principals (26%) indicated this was not done at their school.

Together, teachers' and principals' responses suggest that the extent this protective factor is planned for varies considerably between schools. Looking at differences associated with subject groups, 78% of teachers in the group that comprises Technology, Health and PE, Transition, Careers and Special Education agreed they taught strategies that help students manage their wellbeing, compared with 58% of those teaching Mathematics and Science classes. Students' wellbeing is explicitly included in the Health and PE learning area curriculum, and is also likely to be a focus in Special Education, whereas it is not an explicit curriculum expectation for the Mathematics and Statistics learning area. There were no differences associated with teachers' roles.

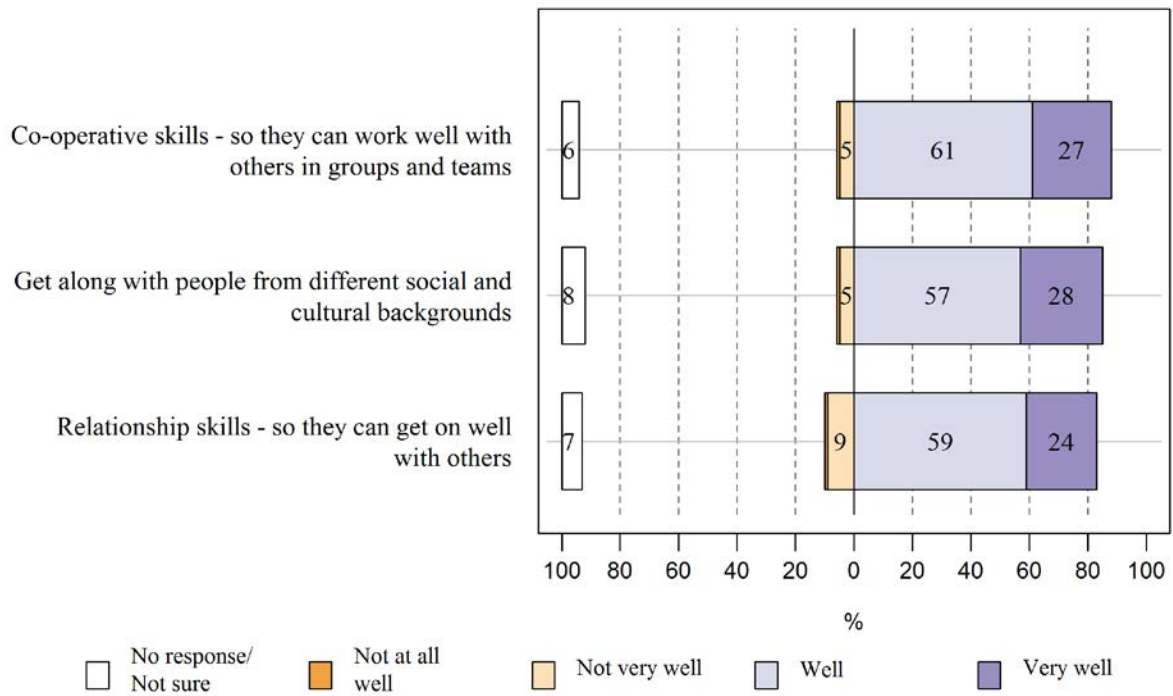
In comments about their work as a teacher, a small number (around 4%) expressed concern about students' wellbeing and learning:

I am very happy but I do think about the very fast pace of life now for students, their anxiety and mental health issues. Most senior students already have part time work to help out their families. We need to take care of our young people.

## Views of parents and whānau

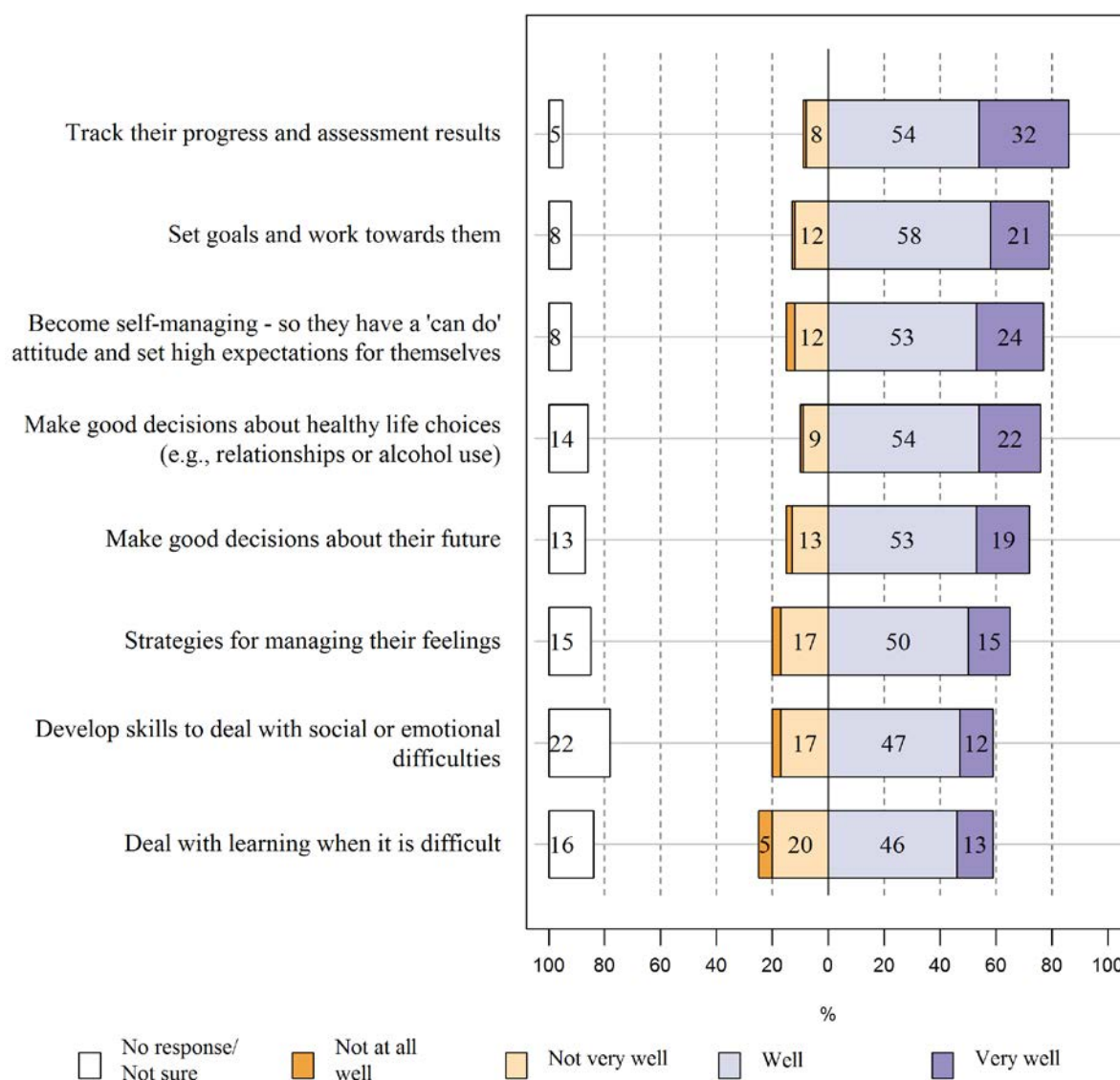
We asked parents and whānau how well their child's school helped them develop relationship and self-management skills. Figure 22 shows that most parents thought their school was doing well or very well in helping their child to develop skills that would help them get along and co-operate with others.

FIGURE 22 Parent and whānau views about how well their school helped their child develop relationship skills (n = 1,242)



Many parents also thought their school was helping their child develop self-management skills, and social and emotional skills that support wellbeing and learning. Figure 23 also shows that there was a little more uncertainty about the school's work here, and a minority of parents and whānau who thought their child's school was not helping them to deal with learning when it was difficult, or skills and strategies around managing feelings and social and emotional difficulties.

FIGURE 23 Parent and whānau views about how well their school helped their child develop self-management skills (n = 1,242)



Most parents and whānau (77%) thought their school was doing well or very well in helping their child develop pride in who they were. Most (81%) also thought the school gave them the opportunity to take part in sport and cultural activities. Just under two-thirds (63%) agreed that their school gave their child leadership opportunities through things like the school council, arts and sport. Over half (53%) thought the school did well or very well in helping their child discover a range of interests and passions.

In the comments parents and whānau wrote at the end of their questionnaires, some voiced their concern about the limited range of co-curricular options for students:

I would like to see a widened focus on sports + funding to include basketball and rugby. Too much focus on rowing + forgetting sports that other parents put hard work into coaching.

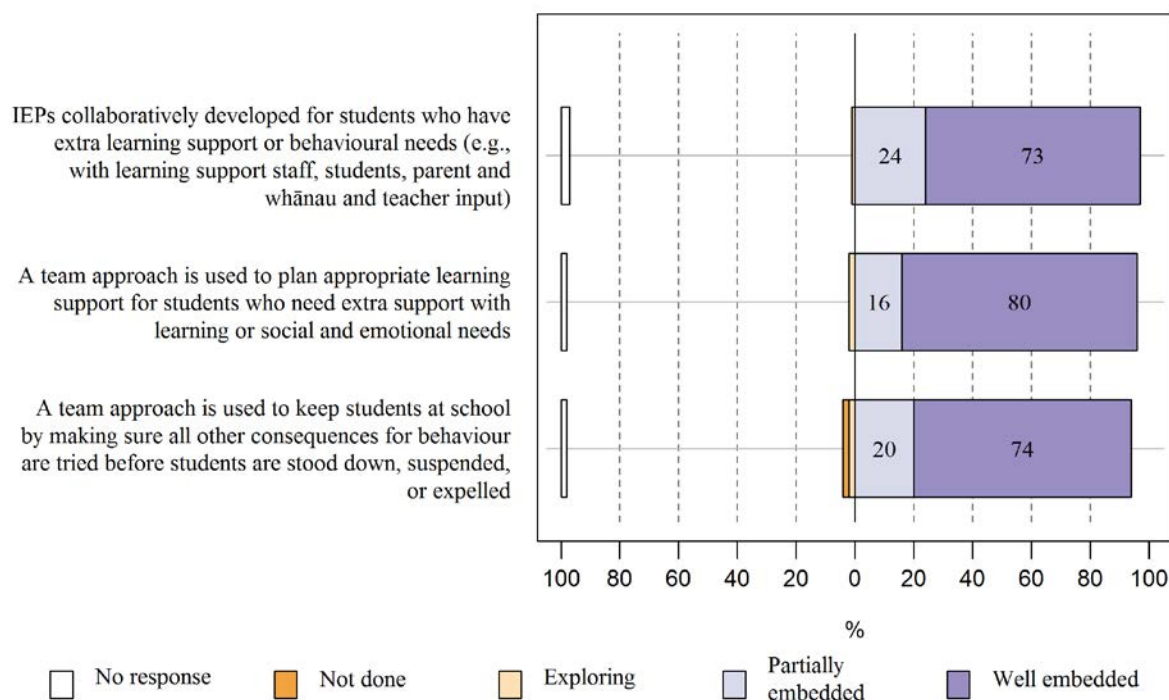
I feel the balance between sport and cultural activities is reflective of a rural community as it is a very sport oriented school. However, the cultural/artistic opportunities are lacking.

More cultural activities!! Not just one required ONE, to keep the families happy. I feel the school is culturally insensitive (just my opinion).

## Extra support for small groups of students (Tier 2)

Almost all principals reported as partially or well embedded several collaborative approaches to identifying and planning for additional wellbeing, behaviour and learning needs (see Figure 24). These collaborations could involve a student's parents and whānau, and might additionally draw on external expertise.

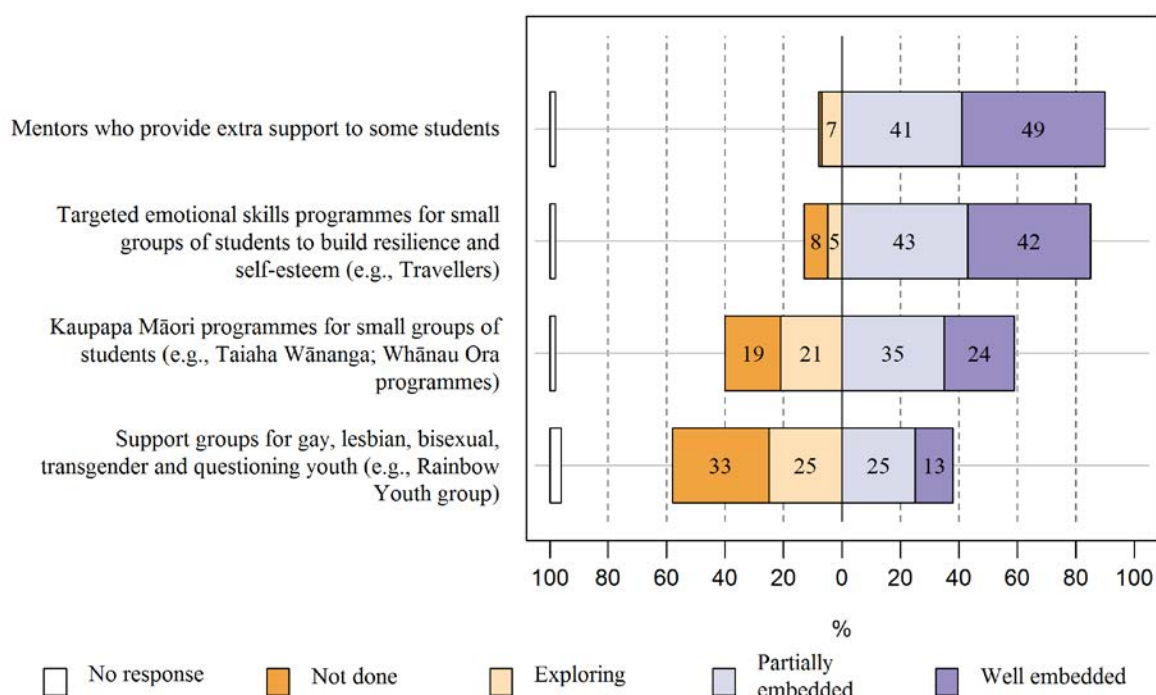
FIGURE 24 Working collaboratively to support individual students' wellbeing, behaviour and learning needs; principals' views ( $n = 182$ )



We asked principals about the initiatives in place for small groups of students who might have an identified need for extra support (see Figure 25). Approaches that were partially or well embedded in the majority of schools were mentoring and providing emotional skills programmes to build resilience and self-esteem for small groups of students.

A smaller proportion (38%) of principals indicated that support groups for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth were partially or well embedded at their school. Large schools and metropolitan schools were more likely to have these support groups in place.

FIGURE 25 Targeted support for small groups of students to manage their own wellbeing; principals' views (n = 182)

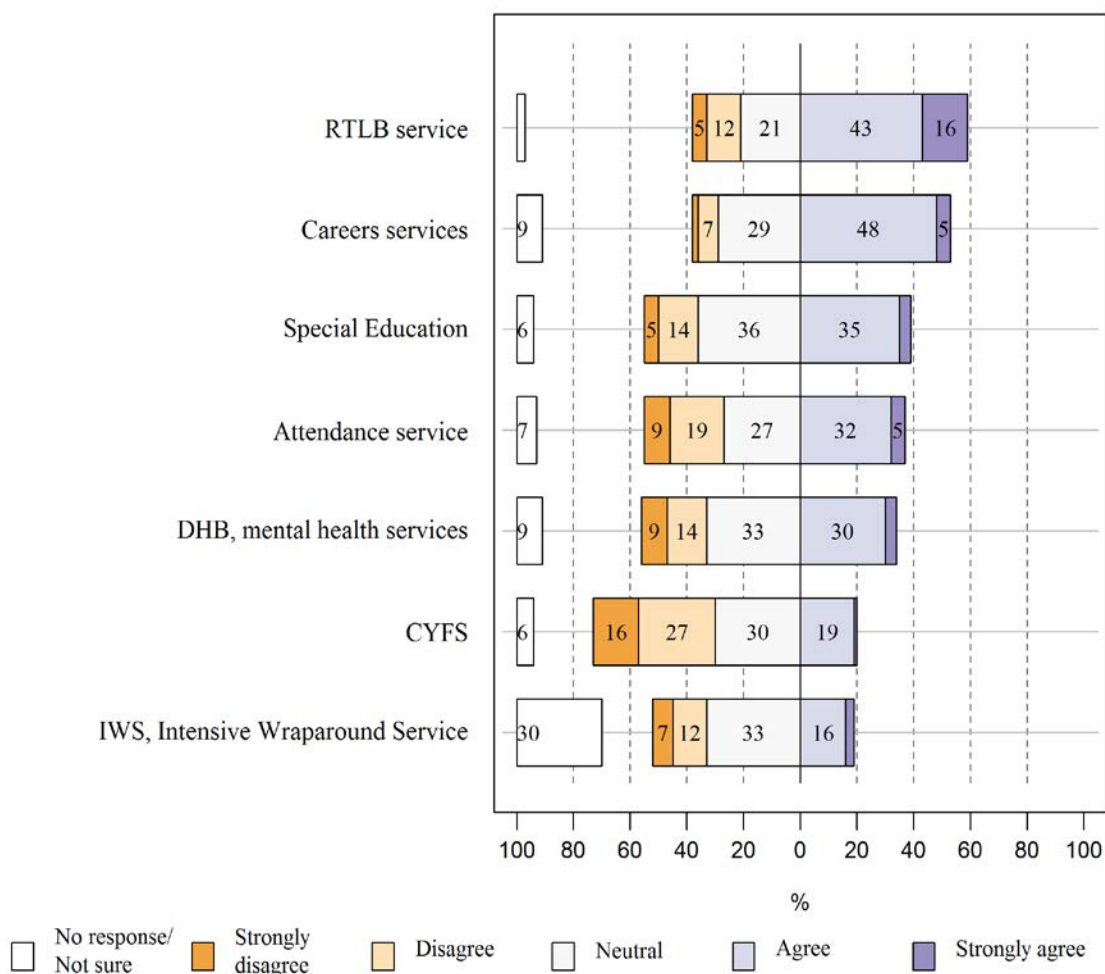


### Schools working with external agencies

Close to half the principals (46%) reported they had regular meetings of schools as a group with social agencies. Twenty-nine percent worked with local schools to reduce truancy. This figure was higher for principals in decile 3–4 schools (52%, and 35% for those at decile 1–2 schools, decreasing to 3% for principals of decile 9–10 schools).

As well as working collaboratively with other schools, principals were asked about the advice they have had from external agencies they might call on to advise them on supporting students' wellbeing (see Figure 26). Only for the RTLB service and Careers services did more than half the principals agree they have had helpful advice. In relation to receiving helpful advice from the district health board (DHB) mental health services and CYF—the agencies that support students with the highest needs—principals' agreement rates were quite low (35 and 20%). More disagreed than agreed they had received helpful advice from CYF (43%, compared with 20%). The fairly large proportions of "Neutral" responses may indicate that the school does not use these agencies or that the principal in many schools may not be the person who interacts with these agencies.

FIGURE 26 Principals' views of the helpfulness of agencies supporting work with individual students (n = 182)



We asked principals what external expertise their school needs in order to keep developing, and whether they could access this, as reported in *Chapter 11: Support and challenge*. Relevant here is that 36% of principals said they could not readily access expertise to support students with mental health issues. Putting this with the low rates of principals saying they get helpful advice from agencies such as CYF and DHB mental health services points to gaps in the mental health support for students, making it difficult for some schools to put Tier 3 approaches in place.

Principals had greater access to external expertise relevant to Tier 1 approaches: 79% could readily access this to improve student wellbeing, and 68% to improve student behaviour. Eight percent of principals said that ready access to external expertise for improving student wellbeing and behaviour was unavailable.

Half of the decile 9–10 principals said their school did not need external expertise to help them improve student behaviour, compared with 7–18% for all other decile bands (including 15% for decile 1–2 schools). There was no association between school decile and principals' responses about external expertise for improving student wellbeing or working with students with mental health issues.

Principals of schools in towns were the most likely to report being unable to access the external expertise they need for working with students with mental health issues (56%, compared with 35% for schools in small cities, 31% for metropolitan schools and 22% for rural schools).

As was shown in Figure 24, 94% of principals reported a partially- or well-embedded team approach being used to keep students at school by making sure all other consequences for behaviour are tried before students are stood down, suspended or expelled.

## The role of trustees in supporting students' wellbeing and behaviour

As detailed in *Chapter 8: Trustee perspectives and the work of school boards*, most trustees (82%) had consulted with their community in the past 12 months. Just under one-quarter of these trustees indicated their boards consulted their communities in the past year about students' health and wellbeing, and school culture. Fewer (around 15% each) reported consulting their communities about student attendance, student behaviour and safety of students. Half of the trustees on boards of decile 1–2 schools who had consulted their communities did so with a focus on student attendance. This proportion decreased to 3% for decile 9–10 schools.

Forty-seven percent of trustees reported that, during 2015, parents and whānau had raised issues with them related to student behaviour, discipline or bullying. For 26% of all trustees, improvements in student behaviour were one of their board's main achievements over the past year.

Among the written resources trustees said they had used for their trustee role over the past 12 months, three related to supporting students' wellbeing:

- Hautū—Māori cultural responsiveness self-review tool (New Zealand School Trustees Association, n.d.<sup>49</sup>), used by 26% of trustees
- the Ministry of Education's (2015) *Bullying prevention and response: A guide for schools*, used by 16%
- ERO's wellbeing guidelines, used by 11%.

The use of the wellbeing guidelines by trustees on boards of decile 9–10 schools (28%) was more than twice the rate of use for other deciles (ranging from 5 to 11%).

## Summary and discussion

Overall, there was some evidence of improvement since 2012 in the way secondary schools are supporting students' wellbeing. There was a range of proactive approaches to supporting students' wellbeing and social behaviour embedded at some schools. Some of these were aimed at all students (Tier 1 of the intervention triangle) and other approaches were targeted towards students who might have greater support needs (both Tier 2 and Tier 3). The latter group tended to be generally less well embedded in secondary schools than Tier 1 approaches.

Students at most schools had opportunities for contributing to their community. These opportunities have the potential to strengthen students' sense of belonging and are recognised as a protective factor for wellbeing. There was less evidence that schools strategically monitored these activities to ensure all students took up the provided opportunities.

At the school level, the data schools were most likely to be collecting and tracking over time related to attendance and behaviour, rather than students' mental and emotional wellbeing. In particular,

49 New Zealand School Trustees Association. (n.d.). *Hautū—Māori cultural responsiveness self-review tool*. Retrieved 14 March 2016, from <http://www.nzsta.org.nz/media/192019/hautu-full.pdf>



decile 3–4 schools were the most likely to have annual targets around student attendance and truancy, and reducing the number of behaviour incidents and stand-downs, suspensions and expulsions. There were signs of students in some schools having input into their school's approaches to wellbeing and social behaviour, in line with ERO's recommendation for schools to involve students more in decisions that affect them at school.

At the classroom level, most teachers were teaching strategies to help students manage their social and emotional wellbeing. Teachers working in the subject group of Technology, Health and PE, Transition, Careers and Special Education were most likely to do this.

The survey responses revealed some areas of potential focus. Schools varied as to the extent to which they had Tier 2 and Tier 3 initiatives in place to support small groups of students or individuals who are likely to be the most in need. One group of potentially at-risk students for whom there were support groups in fewer than half of schools is gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth. Such support groups were more likely to be in place in large or metropolitan schools and less likely in schools in small or in rural locations.

Principals reported relatively low levels of access to mental health support, and in particular to helpful advice for students with mental health issues. Their survey responses suggest that further strengthening or resourcing is required to enhance the effectiveness of the collaboration between the Ministry of Education and CYF for ensuring the safety of at-risk students for whom schools' approaches fall into Tier 3.