New Zealand’s school climate for learning
What we know from TIMSS 2014/15

Students’ perceptions of school climate

Students’ sense of belonging

» On average, nine out of ten Year 5 students and seven out of ten Year 9 students were positive about their schools, teachers and classmates. Two-thirds of Year 5 students and nearly half of Year 9 students had a high sense of school belonging.

» Compared to 2010/2011, in 2014/15 more Year 5 and Year 9 students agreed that they felt safe at school and liked being in school.

» Students who had a high sense of belonging had higher mathematics and science achievement than those with a lower sense of belonging.

Students experiencing bullying behaviours at school

» Even though most students felt safe at school, they experienced bullying behaviours at school more frequently than students in many of the other participating countries.

» Compared to 2010/11, there was a decrease in the proportion of Year 5 students experiencing some of the behaviours such as being made fun of or called names, being hit or hurt (e.g. shoving, hitting, kicking) by other student(s), or having something stolen from them. However, compared to the previous cycle, more Year 9 students reported experiencing the individual bullying behaviours at school.

» Economically disadvantaged schools had a bigger proportion of students than the less disadvantaged schools who experienced bullying behaviours about weekly.

» In general, students experiencing bullying behaviours more often had lower mathematics and science achievement, on average, than those experiencing them less often.

Year 5 parents’ perceptions of school climate

» Parents had very positive perceptions of their child’s school; nearly all who completed the questionnaires agreed that their child’s school provided a safe environment for learning.

» Although, parents felt that schools were doing a better job in helping the students to become better in mathematics or reading than in science, compared to 2010/11, in 2014/15 more parents agreed that their child’s school did a good job in helping him/her become better in science.

» Overall, students whose parents were more satisfied with their child’s school had higher mathematics and science achievement than those whose parents were less satisfied.

1 TIMSS 2014/2015 was conducted in New Zealand and other southern hemisphere countries in 2014, and in northern hemisphere countries in 2015.
Teachers’ perceptions of school climate

» According to teachers, the majority of primary schools in New Zealand (about 80% of Year 5 students) had high or very high emphasis on academic success. At the Year 9 level, around 60% of students were in schools with high or very high emphasis on academic success.

» Higher school emphasis on academic success was associated with higher mathematics and science scores, both in New Zealand, and internationally.

» Almost three-quarters of Year 5 students, and more than 90% of Year 9 students, had teachers who reported that their school was very safe and orderly. Higher school safety was associated with higher mathematics and science achievement.

Principals’ perceptions of school climate

» According to principals, the majority of New Zealand primary and lower secondary schools (about 80% of students in both year levels) had high or very high emphasis on academic success.

» We stood out with one of the largest proportions of students in schools with high or very high emphasis on academic success, compared with other participating countries, including the most high-achieving countries.

» Principals were very positive about their teachers’ role in the school’s academic success, and less positive about parents’ support and involvement in school life.

» Overall, principals’ perceptions of their school’s academic climate don’t appear to have changed much since 2002/03. The only significant changes were a decrease on parental support for student achievement in primary schools, and an increase in teachers’ degree of success in implementing the school’s curriculum and teachers’ expectations for student achievement in lower secondary schools.

» Students studying in schools with higher emphasis on academic success had higher mathematics and science achievement, on average.

» Fewer primary principals reported school discipline problems, compared with lower secondary principals. Over two-thirds of Year 5 students attended schools where the principal reported hardly any problems with school discipline, while at the Year 9 level this proportion was just under one-third.

» Compared to 2010/11, more lower secondary schools reported hardly any problems with school discipline in 2014/15, while there has been no change in the proportions in primary schools.

» Being in a school with fewer disciplinary problems was associated with higher average achievement in mathematics and science.

References:


