



Equipping schools to fight poverty: a community hub approach

A PAPER FROM THE PPTA NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

1 Schools as hubs

1.1 Schools are important resources for their communities, but they can become even more so. When a school is a community hub it means that through partnerships it builds the wellbeing and social capital of students, their whānau and the community as a planned and systematic part of its role. Schools cannot become a community hub on their own; this relies on long-term commitment from the wider community and the state, which is why this paper calls on the government to commit to supporting the schools as hubs model.

2 The problem: the persistent connection between poverty and educational achievement

2.1 The significant correlation between socio-economic status (SES) of students and their achievement in education is persistent and presents a major challenge for schools, policy makers and society as a whole. In New Zealand we recognise this link to some extent already, with the decile funding system and the targeting of some services based on this.

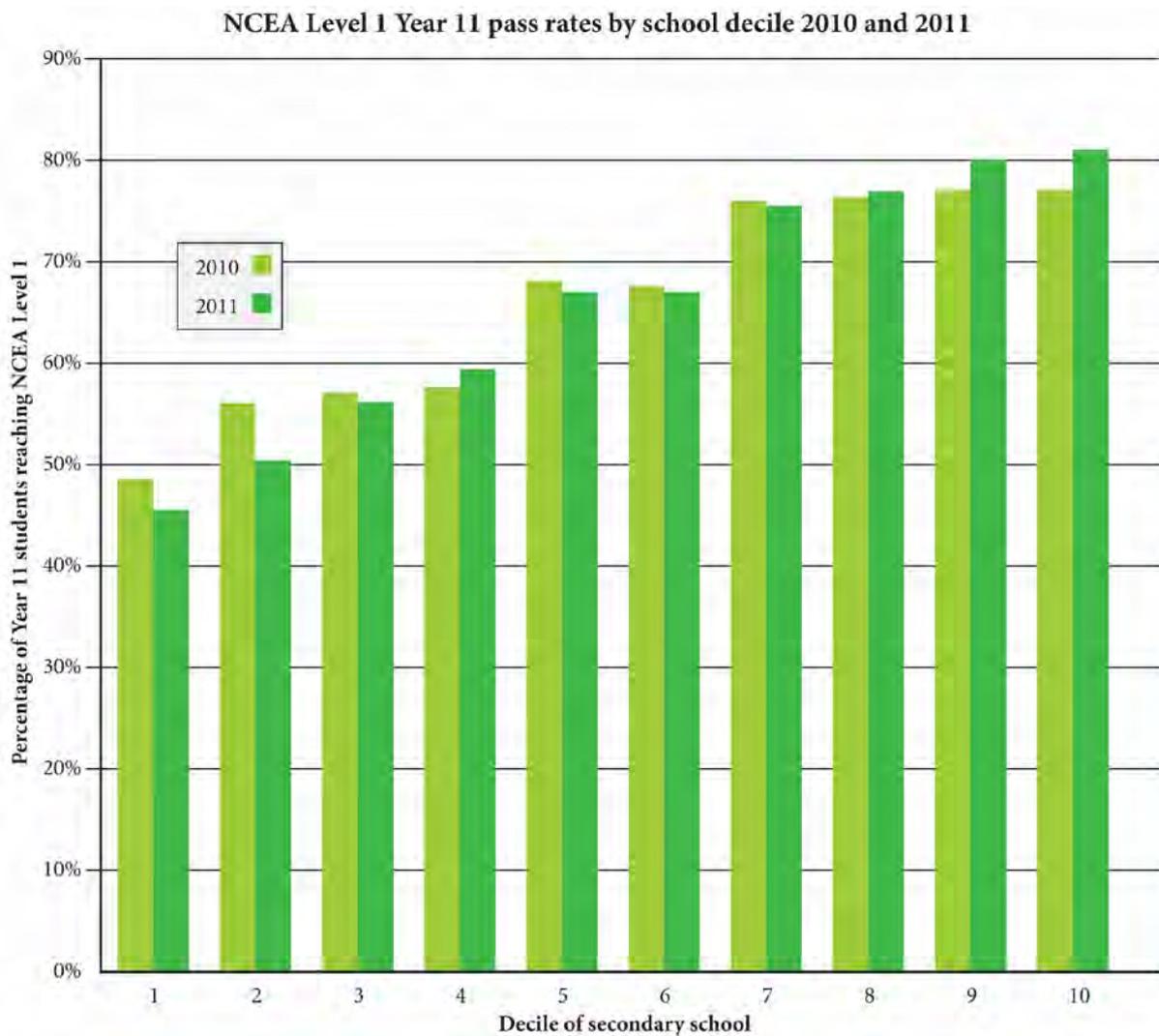
2.2 Despite claims to the contrary, there is no evidence that schools alone can overcome the achievement gap that exists between high and low SES students, but there are policies that can enable the education system to 'push back' harder against this. New Zealand's curriculum and qualification system already provide some elements that enable schools to mitigate the impact of SES, but there are other policy settings, including the competitive model instituted under Tomorrow's Schools, and policies that rely on market mechanisms, such as charter schools, that are working in the other direction.

2.2.1 Correlation between poverty and under-achievement in education

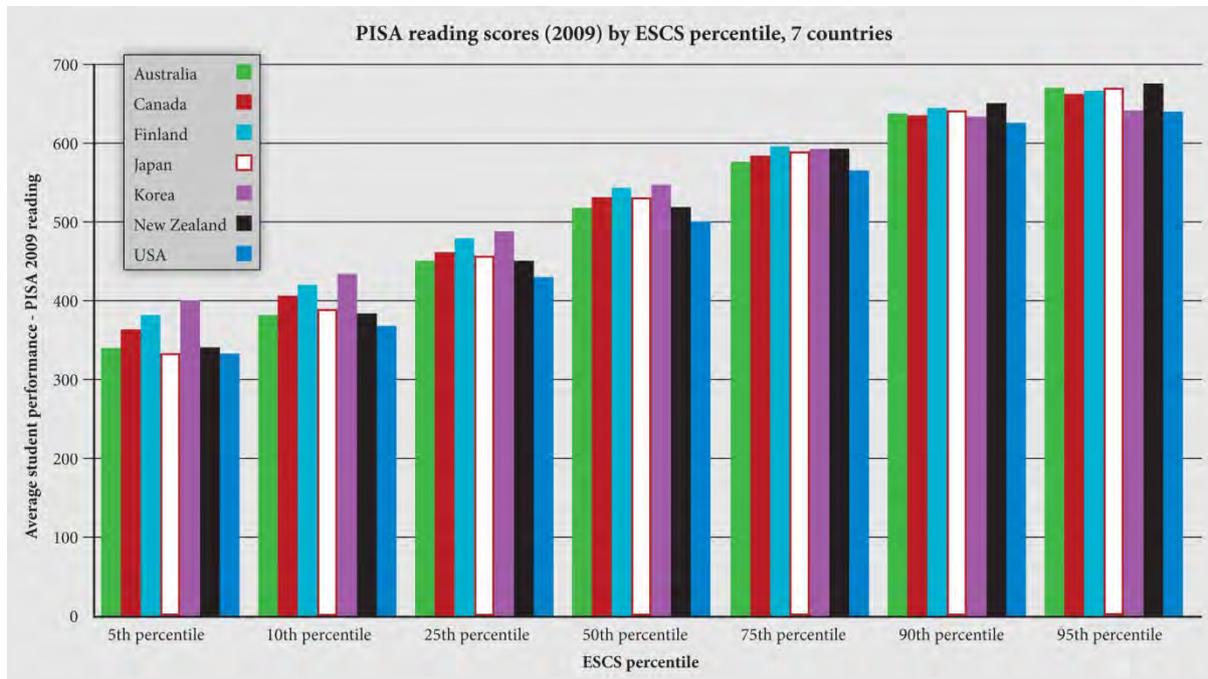
Poverty and wealth are not destiny. Just as there are smokers who have lived long healthy lives and never suffered from lung cancer, there are people who have grown up in the most deprived situations and gone on to be productive, happy and high-achieving members of society. Nevertheless, as the following graphs show, on a statistical



basis the correlation between SES and educational achievement is extremely strong.¹



¹ Note that in the graph, PISA stands for Programme for International Student Assessment and ESCS for Economic, Social and Cultural Status.



2.2.2 There are four basic arguments advanced to explain this correlation:

i. Family investment in children’s learning experiences

This argument is based on the fact that wealthy families have more resources to put towards their children’s education and other experiences that contribute to their learning and cognitive development. As the research commissioned by PPTA into the claim of ‘One in five children failing’ showed, many family investments such as number of books in homes, access to computers, expenditure on education and so forth are strongly predictive of achievement in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).² On the other side of the equation, students who live in crowded or chaotic homes from a young age are likely to suffer negative cognitive effects.³

ii. The negative effect of stress on families can affect learning

Low income, whether relative or absolute, exposes families to stress, which can impact on the development of children. From pregnancy, when a mother’s chronic stress can have an impact on the physiology of their baby’s brain development, to childhood experiences of uncertainty around food and housing or experiences of crime, these have been well documented to

² Gordon, 2013, pp 43-44

³ Willingham, 2012, p 34



have an impact on cognition.⁴ As Wilkinson and Pickett demonstrate in *The spirit level: Why more equal societies almost always do better*⁵, more unequal societies create greater stress in individuals, and New Zealand has become significantly more unequal in the last 30 years.⁶

- iii. The diseases of poverty including inadequate nutrition can affect learning

Diseases of poverty, from rheumatic fever to skin infections, are more prevalent in parts of New Zealand than other comparably wealthy OECD countries.⁷ The impacts on young people's education from being ill, both in terms of missing school and being unable to concentrate properly when at school, are significant. Poor nutrition means children are less likely to attend school or be able to concentrate and learn when they do. A Ministry of Health survey found that 20.1% of families with school age children did not have enough food for active and healthy living.⁸

- iv. The quality of teaching affects learning

It is also claimed that the teachers of students from low SES families tend to be of lower quality than the average. This is an argument often used by politicians to avoid doing anything about the other factors, and ignores evidence to the contrary such as the PISA 2009 responses of New Zealand students who achieve at the lowest level *still* rating their teachers just as highly on a range of variables as those students who are achieving well rate their teachers.⁹ This also flies in the face of the experience of New Zealand teachers. The one area in which there is evidence of difference in terms of workforce between high and low decile schools is in attracting and retaining experienced teachers; as Cathy Wylie notes "Although there are many dedicated teachers in low decile schools, the intensity of this work can be draining."¹⁰

Professor Jonathan Boston recently wrote that if government is serious about enhancing equality of educational opportunity, closing the achievement gap between wealthy and poor students and even raising the average level of achievement for

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009

⁶ Rashbrooke, 2013

⁷ NZ Herald, Feb 20 2012, "Disease Figures a National Embarrassment"

⁸ Expert Advisory Group, 2012, p 60

⁹ Gordon, 2013

¹⁰ Wylie, 2013, p 137



all students, “reducing child poverty and material deprivation must be an integral part of any strategy”.¹¹ Understanding the reasons why poverty affects learning is important in order to address it. And despite poverty’s persistence, there are policies that can exacerbate or mitigate its effect on learning.

2.3 Three policy options

- 2.3.1 So, what are the policy options to address this gap? Helen Ladd, in the paper *Education and Poverty: confronting the evidence* proposes a range of possible responses for policy makers to this persistent link.
- 2.3.2 First, one can deny the correlation and demand that schools overcome the achievement gap on their own. An argument often advanced for this is that some schools appear to do it, so why shouldn’t all? Minister Parata has made this claim regularly,¹² along with the claim that deciles are often used as an “excuse” for poor performance.¹³ Ladd writes that: “believing that one can simply extrapolate from these few success stories to the system as a whole requires a wilful denial of the basic empirical relationship between SES and educational achievement”.¹⁴ This is characteristic of the US education system under the ‘no excuses’ approach of No Child Left Behind, and unfortunately seems increasingly popular here.
- 2.3.3 A second option is to directly address the problem by reducing the incidence of poverty in society over all. PPTA’s 2011 Conference Paper *There Is Always a Reasonable Alternative* presented an economic model which placed the needs of all New Zealanders as central, and not the needs of the 1% of top income earners. Arguably in countries such as Finland, the low incidence of poverty and high social equity contributes significantly to the high educational achievement – achievement which is marked by a narrow range of achievement between the top and the bottom SES deciles.
- 2.3.4 Finally, Ladd suggests that a third option is to equip schools to directly address the challenges faced by low SES learners. This is what Alan Johnson of the Salvation Army described to the PPTA Issues and Organising conference in 2013 as making every school into an ‘oasis of opportunity’ for low SES learners. The OECD report *PISA 2009 Results: Overcoming Social Background* recommends for countries like New Zealand that both educational interventions and provision of additional resources (for example, transfer payments to

¹¹ Boston, 2013, p 2

¹² NZ Herald, July 9 2013, ‘Schools Divided Along Wealth Lines’

¹³ Stuff, 1 July 2013, ‘Minister: I don’t like deciles’

¹⁴ Ladd, 2012, p 13



families, free lunch programmes and free transport) targeted at students' socio-economic status would be advisable.¹⁵

- 2.3.5 PPTA's preference is that the government initiate action on both the second and the third of these policies. As the Children's Commissioner writes, "Addressing the root causes of disadvantage is preferable to working out how to mitigate it. However, protective and remedial policies can and should be developed simultaneously."¹⁶

3 Addressing poverty within progressive universalism

- 3.1 Progressive universalism is the concept of universally accessible support and development with greater access and assistance for those in greatest need.¹⁷ This paper argues that the government should equip secondary schools with the support, resources and expertise to develop their role as community hubs on this basis.

3.1.1 Why schools as community hubs?

Strong connections between schools, families and communities have long been recognised as crucial for the success of the broad social mission of education. Even in terms of the narrow achievement goals that are politically mandated to be the top priority for teachers today, these connections are recognised as important.¹⁸

- 3.1.2 In the Office of the Children Commissioner's *Solutions to Child Poverty* (2012), there are several school-focussed recommendations. The authors recognised that the education system cannot solve the problem of poverty, but that with the right policies it can mitigate its effects. These policies include a collaborative food in schools programme, extending teen parent units, sustained funding for youth-friendly health and social services, and provision of after school opportunities and holiday programmes.¹⁹ All of these fall under the umbrella of schools as community hubs.

- 3.1.3 To some extent a systematic schools as community hubs policy would simply be recognising and making explicit an already existing reality. Cummings, Dyson and Todd write that:

¹⁵ OECD, 2010, p 105

¹⁶ Office of the Children's Commissioner, 2013, p 4

¹⁷ Progressive universalism - the state paying "something for everyone, but more for the poor" (Donald Hirsch) See also Hatherley, S. (2011) Sustainable public spending: The choice between universalism and targeting.

<http://www.assemblywales.org/ki-024.pdf>

¹⁸ ERO, 2011

¹⁹ Office of the Children's Commissioner, 2012. <http://www.occ.org.nz/>



Schools can ignore what lies beyond their gates but they cannot escape it. Students bring with them ... everything that has happened to them elsewhere in their lives. Families and communities are present in classrooms as are students themselves. The choice is not whether to allow the outside world into the school. It is whether to do so openly and thoughtfully, embracing the challenges and opportunities it presents, or pretend against all the evidence, that the outside world does not exist.²⁰

- 3.1.4 These links to the 'world outside' can provide mutual benefits as well. The needs and wishes of families can be addressed in terms of education, recreation or access to services through schools as community hubs as well, and this need not come from a viewpoint of social deficit and 'fixing' people and communities. Instead schools as community hubs can help to build vibrant communities and a healthy society whether in communities that are rich or poor.

3.2 The schools as community hubs concept: Nothing new under the sun

- 3.2.1 In different countries and at different times there have been various terms used to describe this concept. In the 1920s in Cambridgeshire, England, Henry Morris established Village Colleges, which he described in a manner which still remains a powerful expression of what these schools might be:

As the community centre of the neighbourhood it would provide for the whole person, and abolish the duality of education and ordinary life. It would not only be the training ground for the art of living, but the place in which life is lived...The village college could lie athwart the daily lives of the community it served; and in it conditions would be realised under which education would not be an escape from reality but an enrichment and transformation of it.²¹

- 3.2.2 Morris's concern at this time was to provide a centre and social infrastructure for rural communities that were rapidly urbanising and losing their traditional ways of life. Around the same time in the USA a different set of challenges led to the creation of a similar model there. In cities with many poor and often marginalised migrants, John Dewey's concept of school as a 'social centre' led to public schools in some cities, such as Flint, Michigan, becoming the "social, educational and recreational anchors of their communities".²² In the 1970s the US Congress passed the Community Schools Act to

²⁰ Cummings, Dyson & Todd, 2011, p 231

²¹ Morris, 1924, in Cummings, Dyson & Todd, p 8

²² Blank, Melaville & Shah, 2003, p 3



provide funding and support for schools in deprived urban areas; support which was withdrawn under the Reagan administration.

3.3 Different terms and what they reveal

3.3.1 Full service and extended schools

A major educational policy of the Blair Labour government in the UK was the 'Full Service and Extended Schools' (FSES) project, which ran 2003 to 2006. These were defined as schools which:

... work with the local authority and other partners to offer access to a range of services and activities which support and motivate children and young people to achieve their full potential. These services and activities are:

- a varied menu of activities, combined with childcare in primary schools
- community access to school facilities
- swift and easy access (referral) to targeted and specialist services
- parenting support.²³

The service provision aspect of this model is about what is available to students and their families at school. 'Extended' refers to both the extension of time that schools are open to students and communities, both before and after school and during holidays, as well as extension of the school into the community, and vice versa. FSES schools were located in the areas of highest deprivation in each Local Education Authority.

3.3.2 Community schools

The broad idea of the community school has had many iterations. The US based Coalition for Community Schools says that they are:

...both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and other community resources.... Using public schools as hubs, community schools knit together inventive, enduring relationships among educators, volunteers and community partners.²⁴

These schools take very different forms based on the needs of the communities they are in, but reflect a common set of principles which are about partnerships, shared accountability for all and building on the strengths of the community.²⁵

²³ HM Government, 2007, p 2

²⁴ Blank, Melaville & Shah, 2011, p 2

²⁵ Ibid



3.3.3 Schools as core social centres

One of the models that the OECD presented as an option for the future of secondary schooling in an exercise that in New Zealand took the form of 'Secondary Futures' was the school as a core social centre. This was one of the two preferred options of PPTA at the time.²⁶ Under this model the school would be largely defined by collective and community tasks and there would be "extensive shared responsibilities between schools and other community bodies..."²⁷ It was recognised by the OECD that this would require, "Significant investments [in] the quality of premises and equipment in general to open school facilities to the community and ensure that the divides of affluence and social capital do not widen."²⁸

3.3.4 Schools as community hubs

PPTA believes that this term is most suitable for the New Zealand context. It recognises the purpose and principles of all the above, but does not define or limit itself to service provision. Hubs can be defined as a conveniently located place that is recognised as a gathering place for people, their activities and events²⁹ – in many ways this is already the role of most New Zealand secondary schools. In particular, the first community that schools serve is their students, and accessing services is part of what they do at school. The concept of community hub schools builds on what we already have.

4 Schools as community hubs: What happens here now?

4.1 The current situation in regards to schools as community hubs is piecemeal and inconsistent. Many schools offer some services and act as a hub for their community to a certain extent, but few would consider what they are able to do completely meets the needs of their students, or fulfils the potential of partnership with their community and other agencies. Reasons for this inconsistency are:

4.1.1 Government agencies not coordinated

From right at the top level the 'silo' effect of policy making and funding has an impact on how resources are allocated and decisions are made. Health, Social Development and Education each have their own outcomes that they are responsible for, and there is little coordination. The Expert Advisory Group recommended that across

²⁶ PPTA, 2007

²⁷ Ibid, p 14

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Graves, 2011, p 7



government planning and monitoring needs to occur to solve the problem of child poverty.³⁰

4.1.2 The different priorities and practices of other agencies

Partnerships with social and health sector groups or government agencies sometimes are short-lived as a result of changing priorities from these organisations, or the different funding models that they are resourced under. Often schools have been cautious about dealing with agencies that have quite different ways of working, or don't understand the needs of schools; doing things like taking students out of class at random times, or making referrals on to other agencies without informing the school. Some areas have strong partnerships between schools and district health boards or primary health organisations, and some have very little. A simple example of the way in which the social and education sectors can talk past each other is that the decile ratings work in the opposite direction; in social services 10 is indicative of the lowest SES communities.

4.1.3 The chaotic state of the community sector

Many communities have dozens of social and health sector agencies that have some interaction with or responsibility for children and young people. In the Porirua basin the Shine initiative identified 195 providers.³¹ Coordinating between schools and these various providers is often complicated and time-consuming. In this area relational trust is particularly important and in the context of regular change this is often hard to build. Poor training, oversight and support for some of these agencies means that their personnel do not have the capacity that they should for working with young people.

4.1.4 Lack of resources in terms of facilities

To provide a hub for social and health services schools need to have the physical space available. Many schools do not have suitable spaces for one-on-one or group therapy sessions, which can mean that services like drug and alcohol counselling will be unable to be offered. Some schools have modern and high quality 'wellbeing' or health centres, and often these are built in partnership with other local agencies, but these are not the norm. Too many high schools have basic facilities where nurses or outside agencies work in sub-standard rooms that are used for many different purposes and are unsuitable for their specialised work.

³⁰ Expert Advisory Group, 2012

³¹ Shine, 2013



4.1.5 Lack of resources in terms of personnel

Access to specialised services is often poor. Gluckman points out that there is a shortage of people trained and skilled at working in adolescent mental health.³² Recent reports of guidance counsellors being stretched in their roles is further testament to this.³³ In regards to the educational aspect of schools as community hubs, Adult Community Education cuts in 2009 meant that many schools lost the capacity to run these programmes. School pastoral teams are often stretched in terms of their interactions with outside agencies and find this aspect of coordination a challenge. In schools which have funds to employ a sports coordinator, an administrator for working with outside agencies or a community liaison officer, these positions are considered invaluable, but these roles are not the norm.

4.1.6 Three examples of schools acting as community hubs

Despite these challenges, many schools have done what they can to become a community hub, often assisted by local initiatives and sporadic central government funding and support. Some of these examples include:

i. Riccarton High School's Community Library

This partnership between the college and the local city council led to the construction of a modern library on the edge of the school grounds that is used by students from the high school and the general public. With a café on site, adult and community education classes and staying open until 8pm weeknights and 4pm on weekends, this library leads to close connections between the community and the school.

Joint signage pointing out NCEA-level appropriate texts as well as the usual public library information helps adult library users learn about the work that students do at school, and a computer lab in the library has 30 computers that can be booked for classes during school hours, and used by the public afterwards. Students can stay and do homework at the library after school. This is the only urban example of a joint school/local authority run library in New Zealand.³⁴

ii. Links@Aurora and other initiatives at Aurora College

Like many secondary schools, Aurora College recognised the value of having its health and social-service provision based in

³² Gluckman, 2011, p 16

³³ Manawatu Standard, 30 April 2013 'Too few school counsellors, say advocates'; Bay of Plenty Times, 17 July 2013 'More students seeking counselling'.

³⁴ Eskett, Jefferson & Simpson, unknown date



one part of the school in a purpose built facility. At Aurora College, with plenty of space in the grounds and a supportive Board of Trustees this meant an investment of over \$100,000 in transforming a pre-fab classroom into a waiting room, kitchenette, health consultation room, counselling rooms and rooms for agencies to use when they visit students at the school. Next door are the Service Academy and the local Resource Teachers learning and Behaviour (RTLB) cluster. The receptionist/administrator who greets students when they come to the facility works between the RTLB service and the school coordinating with outside agencies and managing bookings for the health professionals who visit regularly. At a small secondary school like Aurora she also gets to know many of the students well and can help 'triage' them when they come to see a counsellor or nurse. A service that was offered for a time through Links@Aurora was a WINZ officer one day a week, who came to work with families in this decile 2 community to make sure they were getting their entitlements. This was discontinued when WINZ stopped funding it.

Aurora College also has an onsite Playcentre, which has a separate entrance from the school, and students from the college regularly interact with the Playcentre through curriculum based activities. As a year 7 to 13 school Aurora College also receives funding for an after school centre from the Ministry of Education; the funding for this goes to pay teachers to supervise a fun and comfortable space three days a week where students can come and do homework, get a meal and socialise. The principal, Robyn Hickman, says that for students coming to the centre "It's the start for some kids of learning how to relate to teachers. The venue, the environment allows for that."³⁵

iii. Victory Village

Perhaps the most well-known community hub school in New Zealand is Victory Primary. The partnership with the Victory Community Health Centre and development of the Victory Village concept has been well documented in a glowing and comprehensive report from the Families Commission.³⁶

The community centre which doubles as the school hall and base for all sorts of community services and activities is crucial to this initiative. Though there are many services directly accessible there, what the report says is that "...the hub-ness

³⁵ Personal communication, interview with the principal 11 July, 2013

³⁶ Stuart, 2010



of the centre and school was less about a centralisation of services and more about being the centre of a network of services, resources and activities. The centre and school were the link to other services located both near and far. The centre benefited from the school being a junction for parents. One participant described the centre as a fish bowl surrounded by human activity.”³⁷

4.1.7 A promising initiative: The Social Sector Trials

This recent development in the area of partnerships between education and other agencies shows some promise. The Social Sector Trials involve the Ministries of Health, Education, Justice, Social Development and the Police working together on a local service delivery project. Most of these projects have a youth focus and are aimed at reducing truancy, youth offending and drug and alcohol use, and increasing participation in education, training and work.

A national governance board with the appropriate Ministers and Chief Executives has ultimate responsibility for the trials, and then there are local governance groups which include the local mayor, ministry representatives, principals and leaders of relevant NGOs. Six trials began in 2011, and a further 10 started in July 2013.

The Kawerau Youth Action plan, which began in 2011, developed a facility for the delivery of a wide range of health and social services at Kawerau College (now Tarawera High School), with the collaboration of an iwi health provider and other agencies.³⁸ Similarly, through the partnerships that the Action Plan enables, they developed mentoring for students, and when the new school opened in January 2013 all students were provided with free school uniforms and stationery packs. Kevan McConnell, the project leader of the Kawerau plan, says that the school has “a captured audience” of the young people being targeted. The plan has meant that all the agencies can see what the areas of need are, and as a result they have done things like employ a full-time truancy officer, when previously it was only a 0.2 position. “It’s linked everyone together, so everyone can see the issues,” says McConnell. “If there’s a resource, they know what is available.”³⁹

The Social Sector Trials are a promising example of what can be achieved with coordination and partnership between services, and linking education into the rest of the social sector is crucial for this.

³⁷ Ibid, p 51

³⁸ Unknown author, 2011

³⁹ Personal communication with the author, 22.July 2013.



5 Secondary school community hubs: moving forward

5.1 The nature of secondary school community hubs

5.1.1 There are two particular differences between primary and secondary school hubs. One is in regards to the nature of the students and the other the nature of the schools. Firstly, adolescents to some extent have different behaviours and challenges from younger children, and to an extent are a particularly vulnerable group. New Zealand teens have a high incidence of risky behaviour including binge drinking and sexual activity, and a high suicide rate.⁴⁰ The Prime Minister's Youth Mental Health Plan, which includes several provisions for secondary schools, shows some recognition of this. The services that they will need access to on a regular basis are different than for younger children, and confidentiality and trust are crucial.

5.1.2 Secondary schools generally have a far wider range of facilities and therefore opportunities available for the community than primary schools. From ICT facilities or technology suites to gymnasiums and swimming pools, there are a wide range of opportunities for community recreation and learning that they provide. The dramatic cuts in Adult Community Education in 2008 ended much of the opportunity for this to occur – but a school as community hub approach may enable it to rise again.

5.2 Schools as hubs: opportunities to improve education and strengthen school communities

5.2.1 Services and activities that schools offer can be targeted at their students, the families of their students and at the wider community. They can be provided primarily through or by the school and its staff, or through partnerships with other organisations and individuals. The table below lists some of these, some of which are commonplace, some rare, and some are not yet provided in schools in New Zealand though have been provided internationally.

⁴⁰ Gluckman, 2011



	Provided by school	Provided through partnerships
Services – youth focussed	Mental health counselling Careers guidance Breakfast clubs Mentoring Lunch clubs Social skills/resilience programmes Chaplain Gateway STAR (Secondary tertiary Alignment Resource) Academies Homework centres School uniform provision Attendance programmes	Nurses Doctors Drug and alcohol counselling Mentoring After school care Social skills/resilience programmes Family group conferences Speech therapists Occupational therapist Physiotherapists Chaplain Police partnerships Homework centres School uniform provision Hearing/eyesight specialists Sexual health specialists Dental clinics
Activities – youth focussed	Sports Cultural activities Holiday programmes School gardens	Sports Cultural activities
Services – family/community focussed	Adult community education Technology training for whānau Adult ESOL classes	Social work Child-care Family group conferences Parent advice centres Technology centres for whānau Language programmes Child health nurses Whānau Ora coordinator Banking services WINZ/Social Welfare officers
Activities – family/community focussed	Use of halls Use of sports facilities Family breakfast/bbq Community art projects	Sports Cultural activities Community library Cultural centres School gardens Volunteering programme Parents groups Books in homes programmes Computers in homes programmes Refugee/migrant support Playgroups Community fitness/health programmes



5.3 Schools as community hubs need space and facilities

- 5.3.1 In order to act as a hub for the community and provide a wide range of social, health and community services to students and families, schools require the spaces to enable this. Some schools have well resourced and equipped wellness centres or health clinics, often built in partnership with community organisations. In order to access services provided by outside agencies schools often need to be able to provide the appropriate facilities for them. In some cases lack of these facilities means that the service cannot be offered – for example in the Wellington region WellTrust which provides drug and alcohol counselling for youths is not able to provide services to schools that cannot offer them an appropriate private space to use. This is far from unique.
- 5.3.2 Facilities are not only about space. Being able to access online databases is also important for itinerant health and social service workers in order to do the data entry that is required of them. Often schools cannot offer them a secure computer, which means that recording has to be done on paper and then data entry done when they return to their offices, wasting valuable time.
- 5.3.3 Current property provisions for school-based service delivery or schools to work as hubs are inadequate. The Ministry of Education's Modern Learning Environments tool has one narrow question about facilities for medical, counselling or other services to students, but does not recognise the possibility of provision to or in partnership with the wider community. Similarly, in the School Property Strategy 2011–2021 there is nothing concrete in the document about links to or partnerships with other agencies.

5.4 Why greater resourcing is required for community hubs

- 5.4.1 The extended provision that a community hub school requires cannot simply be expected of schools under the current resourcing model. Progressive universal provision must mean that there is increasingly greater support available for those who need it most. Wylie writes that research shows students from poor homes need 40 to 100 percent more funding in order to provide equitable learning opportunities,⁴¹ yet in New Zealand the decile funding system nowhere near achieves that.
- 5.4.2 There are a number of areas in which this resourcing may be required to assist schools in developing their community hub role. These include staffing costs; which may be used to offer extra payments to teachers to take on responsibilities such as running

⁴¹ Wylie, 2013.



homework centres or planning after-school activities, or to employ the extra staff required. There will also be extra management costs, for employing people in roles such as community education coordinators. Also there will be costs associated with staying open longer hours such as utility bills and insurance costs. These are alongside the facility costs described above, which include capital costs and ongoing maintenance.⁴² These costs need not necessarily all come from new spending from the Vote Education budget line. With partnerships and better coordination of services, as the Social Sector Trials are beginning to show, some of these sorts of costs can be met from other sources.

5.5 Information sharing and student welfare groups

- 5.5.1 The tension between sharing information about at-risk young people and their right to confidentiality is one that many professionals who work in medical and social care have to navigate constantly. An extra challenge in environments like schools where there are professionals from different disciplines working together is that they often have different standards or requirements of confidentiality and sharing or reporting on information they gather.
- 5.5.2 There seem to be three things that enable these tensions to be resolved and information to be shared that needs to be. They are relational trust, clear processes and procedures, and regular dialogue. The first of these is most important, and often hard to achieve when there is regular turn-over of staff involved. The processes and procedures that should be followed must be established in clear agreements or memorandums of understanding when different professionals work in schools, with clarity from the outset about things like lines of reporting and who does referrals on to other agencies. Finally, the regular dialogue that happens in things like school pastoral team meetings is vital. The Finnish model of 'student welfare groups' to some extent occurs already in many New Zealand schools, though less often with regular attendance from the range of non-teaching professionals that is the norm in Finland. Sabel et al describe this model thus:

In most schools the SWG includes the principal or head teacher, who chairs the group, along with the full or part-time school psychologist, the school nurse, and the special education teacher—and depending upon the issue being discussed it might also include the classroom teacher, a social worker, and a student advisor. Other professionals, such as the school doctor, also participate when needed. The SWG typically meets once or twice a

⁴² Department for Education and Skills, 2005.



month, but in large urban schools meetings might be weekly. The meetings are used to integrate information about the school and students from different sources, to discuss school-wide challenges, and make plans.⁴³

5.6 Guidance counsellors and schools as hubs

- 5.6.1 The role of the school guidance counsellor is crucial for a New Zealand model of community hub secondary schools. Guidance counsellors already work at a nexus between students, their families, the school and outside agencies. Many schools run their student health centres or hubs under the management of the guidance counsellor, a role that is well placed to understand the requirements of the different parties, and communicate between teachers and health or social workers. The current review of guidance counselling being undertaken by ERO may provide insight into this role, but members should be wary of plans to weaken or undermine school-centred guidance counselling.

5.7 Workload implications: teacher involvement crucial

- 5.7.1 A common experience of schools offering extended provision, whether breakfast clubs, mentoring programmes or after-school homework clubs is that staff pick up extra duties over and above their usual workload. This is not a realistic option for long-term, sustained change. Community hub schools with a full range of services available should not mean more work for teachers.
- 5.7.2 UK research into initial trials of the extended schools model looks in some detail at the impact on teacher workload, morale and PLD needs. In terms of workload there was evidence of both increases and decreases, with a lot of reporting of voluntarism i.e. 'only teachers who want to' getting involved.⁴⁴ This is not an acceptable response from PPTA's point of view, both because of what it may imply in terms of 'good teachers' who support the initiative versus others, and also because too often this leads to unsustainable programmes. The UK's largest education union, the National Union of Teachers (NUT), produced a paper on the Full Service and Extended Schools model which stakes out the importance of teachers being involved in their development to ensure that this does not happen.
- 5.7.3 PPTA reiterates the call from the NUT that in developing community hub schools here:

⁴³ Sabel et al, 2011, p 35

⁴⁴ Wilkin et al, 2003



Teachers must be motivated and have ownership of any major initiative of this kind, if the desired changes are to be implemented. It would also be essential to ensure that adequate resourcing is available to all schools, at least at the same levels as is available for those involved in previous pilot schemes, if schools are to be able to take on such additional responsibilities.⁴⁵

5.8 Research into schools as community hubs

- 5.8.1 There is no secondary school focused research into schools working as community hubs in the context of Aotearoa/New Zealand. The Best Evidence Synthesis, *The Complexity of Community and Family Influences on Children's Achievement in New Zealand* (2003)⁴⁶, provides a theoretical starting point for further research in this area, but it has not been followed up since.
- 5.8.2 Schools are crying out for examples of good practice in this area. How to run breakfast clubs, models of effective memorandums of understanding between schools and agencies, examples of how to make homework clubs sustainable are called for, but not provided by the Ministry of Education. The Office of the Children's Commissioner has begun doing some valuable work in this area, but it has been at a national policy level so far and of no immediate practical use for schools.
- 5.8.3 PPTA has a role in providing resources and information to its members and the education sector. Researching and publicising the examples of schools working in this way already and what can be done to make this more the norm will be valuable to members. It could also provide examples of the creative, local solutions that teachers and communities are coming up with, countering arguments that secondary schools are unresponsive, hidebound and failing to keep up with change.

6 Community hub schools take us beyond the fruitless 'no excuses' rhetoric

- 6.1 Convincing teachers that the community hub concept is worthwhile is not the main challenge. For decades, many schools and teachers have tried to accomplish this. Instead, the challenge with making community hub schools the norm is that it has often seemed unreasonable or simply impossible to overcome the problems of lack of resourcing and poor coordination along with meeting all the other responsibilities that schools have. However, with sustained and sufficient resourcing, and with the help of agencies working with schools

⁴⁵ NUT, unknown date.

⁴⁶ Biddulph, Biddulph & Biddulph, 2003



and communities, it can be done. As Ladd writes, schools must be equipped to do this, it cannot simply be expected of them.

- 6.2 A message that teachers keep hearing from the current government is that talking about students' backgrounds and poverty is simply making excuses. Minister Parata is saying as much when she talks about "not liking deciles"⁴⁷ and tells schools to concentrate on teaching and what they can affect. This paper proposes a way around this unresolvable argument. As Cummings, Dyson and Todd write, schools that have gone down this path believe that:

...they could not make much more progress even with the limited business of raising students' achievement unless they offered a wider range of services and activities. They believed that they need to tackle 'the barriers to learning' faced by their students and that this might involve tackling issues in their families and communities. They believed that establishing an array of services and activities in and around the school would enable them to tackle these issues, so their students achieved more highly. At the same time, students, their families and local communities would enjoy greater well-being and enhanced life chances. In all of the schools we studied it was possible to identify multiple cases where the assumptions underpinning such theories were proved to be correct.⁴⁸

These are the same beliefs shared by many teachers here. Equipping them to do these things can help mitigate the worst effects of poverty and connect all schools in positive ways to their communities.

7 Recommendations

1. That the report be received.
2. That PPTA supports schools as community hubs and therefore increased provision of health, social and community services to students and their families on school campuses.
3. That PPTA calls on the Ministry of Education to support schools to work in partnership with other agencies in developing and sustaining community hub models.
4. That PPTA advocates for Ministry of Education school building regulations and funding to include resourcing and provision for school-based health, social and community facilities.

⁴⁷ Stuff, 1 July 2013, 'Minister: I don't like deciles'

⁴⁸ Cummings, Dyson & Todd, 2011, p 103



5. That PPTA calls for the government to commit to expansion of the Social Sector Trials focused on youth wellbeing and to work in partnership with schools to roll these out nationwide.
6. That PPTA conducts research into good practice in secondary schools working as community hubs.

All recommendations carried - 2013 Annual Conference Minutes



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