

Secondary-Tertiary Programmes (Trades Academies): What works and next steps



JUNE 2015

Ko te Tamaiti te Pūtake o te Kaupapa

The Child – the Heart of the Matter



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Cover photo provided by Top of the South Trades Academy

Foreword

One of the biggest challenges facing the school sector is the retention and participation of students who for one reason or another are at risk of leaving school without any qualifications that will help them to have a positive future.

Secondary-Tertiary Partnerships (STPs or Trades Academies) play an important part in addressing this risk. STPs provide an alternative pathway for young people to gain skills and qualifications. They enable young people to combine school and tertiary study through a range of trades-based and technology training options. This means that our kids have more choices to explore and more opportunities to achieve.

STPs not only benefit our young people, they also give business and industry more opportunities to connect with education and provide local communities with a skilled workforce.

As this report shows, many kids are prepared to get up early and travel long distances in order to attend. This is a testament to how the students' value the experiences they're having at the STP and also reflects teacher commitment to helping some of our most vulnerable young people to achieve.



Iona Holsted
Chief Review Officer
Education Review Office

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Glossary of abbreviations

CAPNA	Curriculum and pastoral needs analysis
CTC	Canterbury Tertiary College
ERO	Education Review Office
HBSTA@EIT	Hawkes Bay Schools Trades Academy @ Eastern Institute of Technology
ILP	Individual learning plan
ITO	Industry training organisation
ITP	Institute of Technology and Polytechnic
MIT	Manukau Institute of Technology
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCEA	National Certificate of Educational Achievement
NZQA	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
PCC	Pastoral care and coordination
PTE	Private training establishment
SMS	Student management system
STAR	Secondary Tertiary Alignment Resource
STP	Secondary-Tertiary Programme (Trades Academy)
TEC	Tertiary Education Commission
TEO	Tertiary education organisation (which includes ITOs, ITP and PTEs)
TOTSTA	Top of the South Trades Academy
TROQ	Targeted Review of Qualifications
TSTA@EIT	Tairāwhiti Schools Trades Academy @ Eastern Institute of Technology
TTTA	Te Taitokerau Trades Academy
VP	Vocational Pathways

Overview

In this evaluation the Education Review Office (ERO) explored how well 15 of the 24 Secondary-Tertiary Programmes (STPs, also known as ‘Trades Academies’) in New Zealand were meeting the needs of students at risk of not staying or succeeding in education.

An STP is a partnership between tertiary education organisations (TEOs) and schools. STPs aim to meet the needs of students at risk of disengaging from education by raising their achievement levels and promoting positive transitions to further education, training or work. Students attend courses provided by the TEO. Most commonly these operate for one day each week and are trades-based, practical programmes that have relevance to the students’ learning pathways.¹ For the other four days a week, students attend their school and participate in the curriculum available there. Broadly speaking, the partners are funded for the students according to the time spent in each organisation.

Since the first STPs were established in 2011,² they have experienced considerable growth in student numbers and are achieving very positive results. Most students gain qualifications including National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) Level 2, National Certification in trade-related skills or NCEA Level 3 industry standards.

ERO found that the curriculum of the STPs was relevant to most students and its delivery engaged and motivated them. This was instrumental in changing their attitudes to learning and enabled them to see themselves as capable learners. Students developed key skills and competencies in the programmes offered by the STPs and gained an appreciation of the expectations relating to tertiary study and the requirements of a workplace. They understood the value of the theory behind their practical work and that qualifications provided them with opportunities for the future. Students were well supported by teachers at school and the tutors at the tertiary organisations. They generally developed a clear learning pathway which gave them a sense of purpose. Most students experienced positive transitions to further education, training or work.

A student summarises the outcomes well:

I finally have a true vision of what I want to do, by what I know I can do since being on this course, and I am grateful to have had this opportunity to do so.

The STP partnerships between the leaders in schools and TEOs were strengthening, although there were still areas for improvement. Notably, these areas included establishing clear guidelines for STP’s practices, roles and responsibilities, and the development of a curriculum where the tertiary and secondary components informed

1 These learning pathways are often developed using the *Vocational Pathways*. This is a specific tool provided by Youth Guarantee which helps students see how their learning and achievement is valued in the ‘real world’ by aligning the NCEA Level 2 assessment standards and sector specific standards to six industry pathways. This provides a more coherent framework for vocational education; students can develop their own individual education plans, are better informed and able to make better choices to meet their goals and to build a foundation for their chosen vocation.

2 The Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT) School of Secondary Tertiary Studies opened in 2010.

and complemented each other. Effective STP partnerships depended on strong leadership of the director working with leaders in the TEOs and schools. Where strong collaboration was evident, the STP partners had a shared vision and made sound decisions, reliant on strong self-review practices. They recognised the value of an integrated curriculum, informed by the carefully identified needs and learning pathways of their shared students. These STPs were also establishing documentation to promote sustainability and consistency of practice.

STP partners worked together well to understand each other's organisational needs, clarify the impact of the funding models, and to overcome difficulties experienced as a result of different student management systems, structures and reporting requirements. The Ministry of Education continues to support STPs and is focused on enabling what is best for students.

ERO is confident that STPs will continue to meet the educational needs of a significant number of young people who are at risk of disengaging from education or not achieving NCEA Level 2.

NEXT STEPS

ERO recommends that leaders in STPs work more collaboratively by:

- sharing information about programmes of learning to better integrate their respective courses for students
- taking more responsibility for the students in their community, especially related to supporting the role of STPs
- documenting practices and expectations to ensure that STPs are sustainable and practices within them more consistent. Clear expectations would also enable high-quality self review and ensure that decisions made are both timely and fair.

ERO recommends that the Ministry of Education:

- uses the capability of its YG-ART³ team to work with schools and tertiary providers to integrate their programmes, so that learners experience a coherent curriculum and achieve relevant and meaningful qualifications
- works with schools and TEOs to develop and report meaningful and timely individual learning plans
- continues to work with schools to clarify the impact of the funding models and retains the flexibility to address economies of scale and mitigate the few cases where negative impacts occur
- continues to work with the Tertiary Education Commission to minimise the need for double reporting.

3 Ministry of Education. (2014). *Youth Guarantee – Achievement, Retention, Transitions 2013-2017*. Retrieved from <http://youthguarantee.net.nz/achievement-retention-transitions/>

Introduction

Secondary-Tertiary Programmes (STPs, also known as ‘Trades Academies’) give students in Years 11 to 13 opportunities to gain skills and knowledge across a range of trades-based and technology training options. Students combine studies towards their NCEA and a nationally transferrable tertiary qualification at Levels 1, 2 or 3.

The Ministry of Education (the Ministry) asked ERO to review 15 of the 24 STPs operating across New Zealand. The Ministry and ERO selected these as representative of the different models of operation and diversity within the models. ERO visited six of the original STPs, seven of those established since 2011 and both STP Pilots set up in 2014 to trial a different funding model.

Youth Guarantee⁴ defines the intent of STPs:

The purpose of a secondary–tertiary programme is, in respect of all students, but in particular students at risk of disengaging from education and not making effective transitions:

- to increase each student’s retention in education
- to raise each student’s achievement of the NCEA Level 2 qualifications targeted by the Government’s Better Public Service target; and
- to improve transitions from secondary to further education and training and work.

STPs operate as groups of schools and tertiary providers working together to deliver educational programmes to students. These programmes should provide more relevant learning options for young people to remain in education and acquire the knowledge and skills local communities need. Lead providers can be schools, institutes of technology and polytechnics, industry training organisations (ITO) or private training establishments (PTE). STPs deliver programmes in a variety of ways. For example, most students experience the STP learning programme in a secondary and a tertiary organisation. Some students may attend a tertiary campus full time while others may be full time in schools. Since some of the programmes involve work experience, students may also spend part of their time in industry settings.

Almost all STPs appoint a director⁵ to manage the secondary-tertiary programmes, systems and operations. This director reports to the managers of the lead provider (school or tertiary) and liaises with schools and tertiary partners.

The first eight STPs began in 2011. A further 14 have been established since then, together with an additional two STP Pilot academies. Altogether these STPs provide for more than 4,200 students.

4 Youth Guarantee provides fees-free tertiary places for students aged 16 to 19 years who are studying towards a qualification at Levels 1, 2 or 3 on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF).

5 The title of this person varies across the STPs and can be the coordinator or manager.

Models of STPs

There are significant differences both across and within STP models. Lead providers have some flexibility, within broad Ministry guidelines, to shape the structure of the STP to meet local needs and circumstances. More details of these variations are described later in this report.

- **Mixed model providers**

In these STPs the lead provider is either a school or a tertiary education organisation (TEO). Students from a number of partner schools spend most of their week in their school and one or two days at the tertiary provider. This is the most common model, catering for more than 3,000 students. Funding is via the Flexible Funding model (explained on page 6).

- **Single school model providers**

These operate with a single school and that school is the lead provider. Students either attend school and the TEO, or remain at school all the time, and the tertiary provider comes to the school to run courses. Funding is via the Flexible Funding model.

- **National providers**

These STPs provide courses, including on campus/farm block courses, for students from across the country. In some cases courses are provided at the student's school. The tertiary providers are ITOs and PTEs. Funding is via the Flexible Funding model.

- **Secondary-Tertiary Partnership Pilots**

These STPs operate in the same way as the TEO led, mixed model providers. However, they are funded according to a formula that is very different from the Flexible Funding model.

Table 1: The number of each STP model

STP model	School is the lead provider	Tertiary entity is the lead provider	Number of schools involved in the STP	Approximate number of students (2014)
Mixed model	6	8	Between 2 and 37	1,200 (in school-led STPs) 1,960 (in tertiary-led STPs)
Single school model	5		1	450
National		3	Between 12 and 36	650
STP Pilots		2	Between 4 and 6	66

Flexible Funding model

In 2013, a new funding model was introduced in response to complications noted in the early STPs. The funding components are outlined in Table 2. Students enrolled in the STPs in this funding model are not counted in Ministry calculations for school staffing and operational grant entitlements.⁶ All funding generated by academy students should be used to support the retention, engagement, achievement and effective transitions of these students. However, this was interpreted broadly by the Ministry, allowing expenditure across a wide range of school operational costs.⁷

Table 2: STP (Trades Academy) Flexible Funding

Funding component	Value per student	Conditions
General teaching and learning	\$9,500	Distributed in proportion to the time the student spends with each partner
Trades – funded separately by the government	\$3,500	Must be used for tertiary related education and training – pro rata funded
Pastoral care and coordination	\$1,250	Paid to the lead provider
Student transport costs	On a case-by-case basis	For those with identifiable high transport needs – paid on application

The Ministry explored ways to rationalise the funding to STPs and initiated the STP Pilots for 2014. Schools in the STP Pilots effectively receive less funding per student than in the other models. The school receives staffing and operational grant entitlements for each academy student, less the proportion of the time the student is involved in the STP. For example, a student in the school for four days a week attracts 0.8 of school grant entitlements for a full time student. The tertiary funding component is funded as a bulk rate to TEOs per equivalent full-time students. This includes funding for tuition, pastoral care and travel. This funding is administered by the Tertiary Education Commission in line with the existing funding model and rates for Youth Guarantee fees-free places. Some of the places available in the STP Pilots used fees-free places that had not been taken up for 2014/15.

6 Academy students are, however, still deemed to be enrolled in their schools.

7 Ministry of Education. (2014). *Staffing and Funding Guidance documentation for schools participating in Secondary-Tertiary Programmes 2014/2015*. Version: 2.1 Wellington: Ministry of Education.

Methodology

ERO reviewed 15 of New Zealand's 24 Secondary-Tertiary Programmes (STPs, also known as 'Trades Academies'). The Ministry of Education and ERO selected these as representative of the different models of operation and diversity within the models.

ERO visited nine mixed model providers (five TEO-led and four school-led), three single school model providers, one national provider and two STP Pilots.

In total these 15 STPs provided opportunities for 75 percent of all the students enrolled in STPs at the time of review.

ERO evaluated the effectiveness of the STPs in achieving positive outcomes for students. ERO looked at:

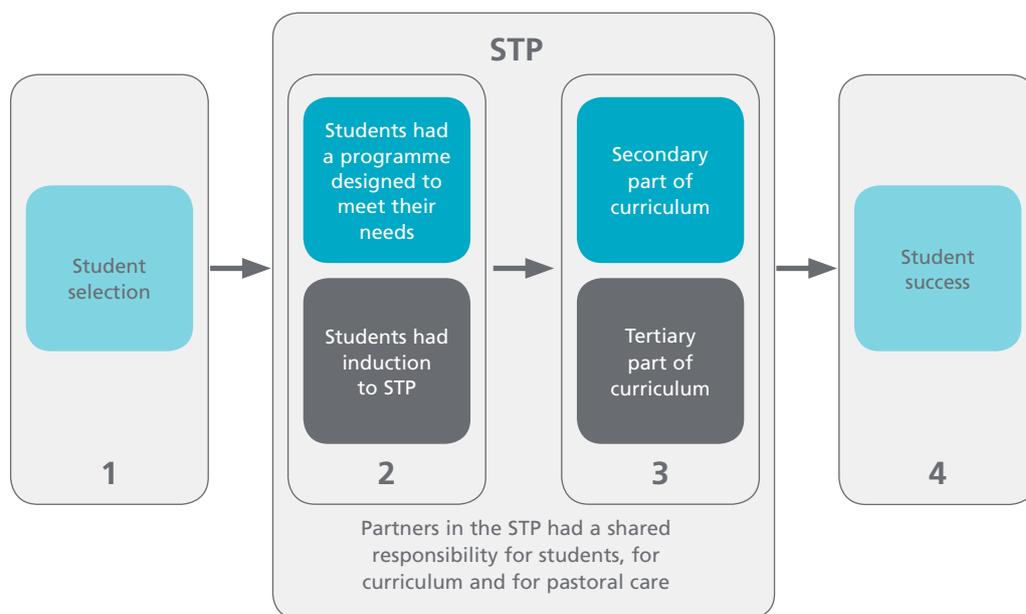
- the quality of the experience for a student, from the selection to completion of time in the STP
- how well the programme improved student outcomes
- the effectiveness of the partnerships established between the schools and tertiary institution
- the impact of participation in the STP on school and TEO processes.

ERO visited and interviewed key personnel in the lead provider of each of the STPs and a sample of their partner schools. ERO interviewed students in the sampled schools. Some additional schools, TEOs and students provided feedback through online surveys.

Figure 2 illustrates the stages of an effective STP from student selection through to student success. It describes how the secondary and tertiary partners should work together to ensure successful outcomes for the students.

The diagram gave ERO review officers guidance in the evaluation process and was used to frame the judgements in this report.

Figure 2: Secondary and tertiary partners **worked together** to maximise each individual student’s potential



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead provider, in consultation with partners, provided agreed guidelines and criteria for selection of the most appropriate students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students had individual learning plans which demonstrated appropriate pathways for them, taking them beyond school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students experienced an integrated curriculum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students were confident learners, taking responsibility for themselves and their learning.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STP was promoted as a valid learning pathway (eg through assemblies, course booklets, careers evening, website). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students participated confidently in the STP; in both the tertiary and secondary environments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The curriculums of the school and the tertiary provider informed and complemented each other. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students achieved NCEA Level 2 with credits relevant to their pathway.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each school followed selection processes and students in the STP met the criteria. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academy students had a valid pathway that fitted with other choices at school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students transitioned from school to purposeful work, training or further education.

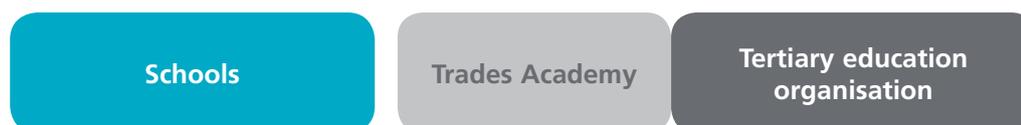
Findings

FROM 2011 TO 2014

Since the inception of secondary-tertiary partnerships (STPs) in 2011, there has been significant progress in establishing a programme that is clearly meeting the needs of a large number of students.

In 2011, students, teachers and tutors talked about students going from school ‘to the Trades Academy’. The term ‘Trades Academy’ became synonymous with going to the tertiary education organisation (TEO). The ‘Trades Academy’ was viewed as a separate add-on to the school curriculum, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: 2011 Trades Academy as an ‘add-on’



ERO found that students often had to cope with their ‘Trades Academy’ work in addition to a full timetable of school work. This proved especially difficult for many as the school curriculum continued even when the students were away from class attending their tertiary programme.

The perception and understanding of the value of STPs had shifted over time. Some schools became more aware that only a limited percentage of their students went on to university. They saw how the academies provided suitable pathways for many of the remaining students. As systems for the STP improved and teachers could see the benefits for students, in terms of improved engagement in learning and achievement, they became more supportive of the academies. By 2014, the overriding enthusiasm and commitment of tutors, schools, teachers and students was evident, as were higher levels of cooperation between schools and TEOs.

ERO noted that the STPs were maturing and the expectation was that academy students were shared. This was further reinforced by the Flexible Funding arrangements for most STPs.

When the partnership was effective, the schools and TEO worked together so that STP students experienced a fully integrated curriculum, with some components delivered by the school and some delivered by the TEO, as shown in Figure 4. Students’ learning plans reflected the partnership and their pastoral care needs were the responsibility of both partners. The STP was an entity in its own right. Students now ‘belong’ rather than ‘go’ to the STP.

Figure 4: 2014 Secondary-Tertiary Partnership



ERO noted the following examples of progress since 2011 in partnership formation, collaboration and processes, which all support that move towards the STP identity.

The features outlined in the ‘towards fully effective STPs’ column were observed to varying extents across STPs. Two of the STPs visited⁸ had these features substantively in place. Other STPs have their strengths and areas for further development.

From ‘Trades Academies’	Towards fully effective STPs
The lead provider or TEO made most decisions.	A collaborative group of all partners made decisions.
TEOs offer a list of courses for schools to select from.	Collaborative, student-centred decisions meant that courses offered responded to the needs identified.
A single tertiary provider was involved in the STP.	
STPs worked in isolation from their communities.	Links with the community, in terms of identifying needs and opportunities, played an important part in the development of the STP curriculum.
Most students were expected to engage in a full course at school while also involved in the STP.	The STP was recognised as a valuable part of students’ planned learning pathways.
Students ‘missed’ school work when they are away from school.	School timetables and school and TEO curriculums were adapted to ensure students’ participation in the STP fitted with their learning in other subjects.
TEO’s course was a standalone addition to the student’s course at school.	
Schools’ and TEOs’ teachers and tutors worked independently of each other.	Tutors and teachers worked more cooperatively, planning curriculum and sharing lessons learnt from best practice about what engages, motivates and develops confident learners.
Schools made disciplinary decisions without considering the TEO, and vice versa.	Decisions about ‘our’ students were shared.
Funding model was inflexible and clearly disadvantaged some schools while being generous to others.	Funding recognised the complexity of the models and the unique contexts for some school and lead providers.
Separate and different reporting requirements to the Ministry and TEC.	Common formats used for reports and general aspects of memorandum of understanding (MoU). Data reported was useful and used. (At the time of review, reporting still responded to two sets of legislation for roll returns).

8 These were the Top of the South Trades Academy and Tairāwhiti Schools Trades Academy, the winner and runner up in the Prime Minister’s Excellence Award for Education Focus, 2014.

STUDENT SUCCESS

In this evaluation, ERO's judgements were focused on how well the STPs served students. The findings highlight student success, then discuss the selection processes in place and students' experiences in STPs including the pastoral care provision.

ERO found the most significant outcomes were students gaining qualifications and the development of capabilities and competencies that prepared them for the future and helped them to make smooth transitions to further education, training or work.

The Ministry of Education's 2013 data shows the STPs were meeting their intended purpose (see *Appendix 2*). ERO found that programmes resulted in overwhelmingly positive outcomes for students.

Just what they need to get **over the hurdle** of Level 2 for many of them.

School principal

Some students said they could not see the point of some of the school curriculum before they were in the STP.

ERO noted that belonging to the STP influenced positive changes in:

- students' attitudes to learning and their maturation
- students' achievements and subsequent transitions to employment, further training or tertiary study.

Improved attitude to learning

Because tutors related theory to practice, balancing hands-on practical work with theory, students appreciated the place of theory in their learning. They were given the autonomy and time to focus on their projects and learnt by working through challenges they might encounter. Students gained belief in themselves as learners, got to know when they needed to ask for help and developed a real sense of pride in their work. This is consistent with best practice evidence which clearly shows that responsive curriculum engages students and allows them to develop as confident learners.

It was mostly the TEO-based curriculum that contributed to the changes in attitude. However, the improved attitude of many students carried over to school as indicated by improved attendance, motivation and achievement.

This is the **first positive** for some of them in their learning.

TEO Director

Students learnt from their mistakes, demonstrated resilience and recognised that they were developing skills and competencies that prepared them for the future. Tutors treated students as young adults and held them to workplace expectations. Students worked in mixed-age settings, often developing tuakana-teina⁹ relationships. All of these factors helped them establish a mature work ethic.

A **saving** for lots of students who would have dropped out.

School dean

(We) seed something in students' minds, often **turns them around**.

TEO tutor

Many students reported that they could now see a clear pathway and future for themselves. They chose to stay at school, now seeing a point in it, and gained qualifications:

Thought I'd be a farm worker – not a **manager!**

...someone who can talk to you about what work is like and **guide** you

The longer periods allow us to **take responsibility** for ourselves

...can make more decisions, take risks, **free to fail**

They treat us like **adults** – they **trust** us

Once we put on the overalls we are **men**

Time is more **precious**

Improved achievement

Most students were confident, articulate young adults with qualifications (NCEA Level 2 and National Certificates), work skills, clear learning pathways and, above all, belief in themselves as learners. Those who chose to pursue tertiary education made smooth transitions as they were already familiar with that environment.

Trades Academy students are **more motivated** than the same age, pre-trade students who have already left school.

TEO Head of faculty

Most of the STP students achieved NCEA Level 2 or became more engaged and motivated as learners (see *Appendix 2*). In 2013, just under half of all students attained NCEA Level 2 in their first year of the STP programme and over 80 percent achieved it if they completed the full programme (which for some was a two-year programme). Some students did not complete their time in the STP – these students left to take up

⁹ Tuakana-teina refers to the relationship between an older or more knowledgeable person (tuakana) and a younger or less knowledgeable person (teina). It comes from teaching and learning in the Māori context and the tuakana helps the teina to develop.

employment, an apprenticeship or full time tertiary study, or decided it did not suit them and returned to school. A few left school altogether without going straight to employment.

Māori and Pacific students who were either still involved in the STP programme or had just completed it had a higher achievement rate than students who identified as Pākehā. Many factors may have influenced these outcomes, including aspects of the selection process and whether the schools had developed learning pathways specifically suited to engage and extend Māori and Pacific students.

Many of the students' comments reflected an emphasis on their working with a purpose, other than just gaining NCEA credits. The opportunity to get a head start on their career pathway, at no cost to them, was also an important consideration for many students.

You know, I'm really **good at something** after all

Carpentry made me **realise** that I needed to concentrate more on maths at school

Realise that we **need school** qualifications so that we can get on an apprentice course

We can get **Level 3** (industry) qualifications without having to pay for them

Referring back to Figure 2, page 8 to summarise:



- Students were **confident learners**, taking responsibility for themselves and their learning ✓ This has been met

- Students achieved **NCEA Level 2** with credit relevant to their pathway ✓ This has been met

- Students **transitioned** from school to purposeful work, training or further education ✓ This has been met

STUDENT SELECTION

Processes for and decisions about student selection varied considerably across and within the STPs. This variability meant that students selected in one school might not have had access to the STP if they had attended one of the other partner schools. The variability also meant that ERO could not determine how many of the students selected were at risk of disengaging from education or not making effective transitions. Most STP students indicated that they were now more engaged in education, many also that they would have left school without the STP. A few, however, viewed their work in the STP as developing skills that could support them through university.

Sometimes schools were limited in the numbers who could attend the STP by the size of the school van available to transport the group.

While it is important for schools to be able to select according to their specific contexts and needs, this must be achieved without denying students the opportunity to access whatever is the most appropriate learning pathway for them. STPs should determine agreed criteria for selection, while still maintaining the flexibility to enrol students on a case-by-case basis.

Guidelines and criteria

Most STPs had no specific guidelines for schools, or agreed selection criteria and left the selection entirely to the schools. The selection criteria varied enormously across all of them (irrespective of which model) and within those STPs with multiple partner schools. Students accepted were mostly Year 12. Where the STP offered a two-year programme, student numbers from Year 13 were similar to Year 12.

One STP director identified the students they enrolled.

We enrol **three types** of students:

- the intelligent, focused ones
- the intelligent, bored ones and
- the bored ones who think they are not intelligent.

Director of TEO led STP

Schools selected primarily on interest, commitment (especially when the programme was two years) and who they thought would benefit the most, although this was rarely clearly defined. Those who would most benefit ranged from students clearly at risk of not gaining NCEA Level 2 (some had not yet gained NCEA Level 1) to students fully intending to study engineering at university and who 'would benefit' from the practical experience.

As well as attributes, selection criteria included qualifications and school-based judgements. The following table outlines the criteria and the attributes that were most commonly sought. However, ERO found that all STPs tended to be flexible in practice.

Student attributes	School criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCEA Level 1 desirable, certainly Literacy and Numeracy, although exceptions were made. • Student interest in the vocational pathway, either as a definite career or as a taster to help make decisions. • Student commitment. • Parent, family or whānau support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students at risk of not staying at school. • Students at risk of not gaining NCEA Level 2. • Students likely to gain the most from enrolment in the STP. • Students likely to succeed, often citing self-management strategies.

Very few TEOs turned students away who had been approved by the school, even if the quota for STP-funded students was filled. Schools and TEOs found ways to support these students either through fees-free places that had not been filled (as in the STP Pilots) or, more commonly, through Secondary Tertiary Alignment Resource (STAR) funding.¹⁰

There were only a few instances where STPs were unable to cater for all students who applied. One STP had a waiting list.

STP Promotion

STPs were well promoted in the partner schools and sometimes through advertising by the TEOs. Students found out about the STP from a variety of sources, including school staff, students currently participating in the programme and their school's course choice booklet.

Students identified their reasons for enrolling in STPs as being advised to (including by parents) because it related directly to a career students were interested in pursuing, wanting some more hands-on experiences, their friends recommended it, or thinking it would be a good way to get out of school. Not one student who spoke with ERO, or who responded by survey, said they regretted entering the STP.

¹⁰ STAR funding is used to facilitate transition to further education, training and employment by providing or purchasing tertiary-type courses. The intent is that such courses will better meet students' needs and help them to achieve their full potential. STAR funding may also be used to support students to explore career pathways and help them make informed decisions about their schooling and future work or study. Some schools used STAR to pay for non-STP funded places and/or to equip students with uniforms and safety clothing required in the STP.

Just came here for a day off school, realise it is **opening doors** now and it's worth it

Careers teacher has opened up **choices** for us

...because I wanted to **discover** what it was like and if I wanted it as a career option

I **heard** it was good

Selection processes

Several schools in the STPs refined their selection criteria yearly as they became more familiar with the STP and which students could most benefit. Interviews helped students make pathway choices leading into Year 12. These school-based decisions often involved the careers adviser, form teacher, dean or mentor, and a technology teacher.

Improved capacity and use of student management systems¹¹ (SMS) over recent years enabled staff to better monitor students' progress in Years 9 and 10. This data formed the basis of identifying students at risk of disengaging from education. A high proportion of the schools also made use of *Vocational Pathways*¹² to help identify students' learning pathways. Many schools had started the learning pathway process with Year 10 students which helped to identify possible STP candidates.

Several STPs recognised that Year 10 was a critical year for many students, as this is often when they start to disengage from learning.

To help students look to the future:

One school had provision for Year 10 Māori students to participate in a carving course and for disaffected Year 11 students to be involved in 'Build a Bach' projects – both led to the STP in Year 12.

Another school was one of several that had planned placements with local businesses for Year 10 students to help them develop career goals. Others used *Gateway*¹³ placements in Year 11 as a 'taster' for possible pathways.

Parental involvement in the selection processes was a key contributing factor in success for many students.

11 For example: KAMAR – In Manurewa High School this was supplemented by the use of the Schoolpoint *Pathways* to focus students and staff on finding the most appropriate learning pathway for students, providing a platform for students to set targets to achieve their goals.

12 *Vocational Pathways* were developed through a partnership between the government, industry and education. Their aim is to support young people, along with their families and teachers, to make informed decisions about their learning choices. The decisions should lead to future career choices and transitions to ongoing learning or employment. All STP programmes are obliged to deliver credits recommended in the *Vocational Pathways*.

13 Gateway is a fund provided to schools by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) to enable students to access structured workplace learning.

STPs in South Auckland had worked hard to engage parents and whānau to help them understand what the STP was about and the opportunities it offered students. This was particularly important if the concept of an STP was new to parents and whānau, if parents and whānau had not experienced tertiary education themselves, were not in employment or had quite different aspirations for their children. Once reassured, most parents and whānau were happy to have their students involved in the STPs.

Pathway to employment is what is really getting whānau buy-in.

School liaison teacher

The learning pathways constructed with parent and whānau involvement had the most impact on student success. This is in keeping with ERO's findings¹⁴ about the positive impact of involving parents and whānau in academic counselling. ERO recommended that academic counselling should start early in secondary schooling, and this is especially important for early identification of students at risk of disengaging from education. Students enrolled in STPs at the last minute had less well-considered pathways and tended to be less successful than others.

All the applicants for STPs were interviewed, whether at school as a part of their regular academic counselling, at a careers or deans meeting, or by the STP coordinator at the school or staff at the TEO. Many TEO personnel commented that the formal interview helped to sharpen the focus and commitment of the students to the programme and especially so if parents and whānau attended.

14 Education Review Office. (2013). *Making connections for Pacific Learners' Success*, (2013) *Secondary Schools: Pathways for future education, training and employment* and (2014) *Raising achievement in Secondary Schools*. Wellington: Education Review Office.

Targeting students at risk of disengaging	Students at risk of poor educational outcomes
<p>STPs generally targeted students who were at risk of disengaging from education if their only choice was school and the school curriculum was not sufficiently developed to meet their needs.</p> <p>These students were often Māori and Pacific learners and in particular, Māori boys. In the partner schools associated with one STP, for example, 45 percent of students on their rolls identified as Māori. In the STP itself 65 percent of students enrolled identified as Māori.</p> <p>These proportions are consistent with ERO's findings across all of the STPs. Nationally, students who identify as Māori make up 19 percent of students in Years 11-15. Students who identify as Pacific make up nine percent. In STPs almost 40 percent of students identify as Māori and 11 percent as Pacific.</p>	<p>These are groups of students who have been identified as historically not experiencing success in the New Zealand schooling system.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Several STPs have students enrolled accompanied by teacher aides or support personnel to assist with learning. ERO found examples where these students had succeeded in the STP environment. One STP established a specific course this year to cater for special needs students. 2. One school had identified a target group of 20 students, Māori boys at risk of disengaging. They had been enrolled in the STP as a group and were progressing well.

... **never** used to come to school

Trades work is **keeping** me at school

Smaller group, more **personal**, tutors are really good

If you're **passionate** about your work you learn quicker

excited about learning

More **confident** – definitely

Opportunities in school

In 2013, ERO noted¹⁵ that very few schools were developing courses specifically targeted to increase the numbers of Māori and Pacific students gaining University Entrance. Such courses would take into account the teaching and learning best suited to the cultures and needs of these students. ERO's concern was that there is a risk that the processes used to select courses for Māori and Pacific students may, in some instances, limit their choices and their sense of worth as learners.

Many Māori and Pacific students were clearly succeeding in the vocational courses offered in the STPs. To make sure that these are the best choices for students, STPs should explore the underlying reasons behind the higher proportion of Māori and Pacific students who participate in STPs compared with overall school populations.

Student selection summarised:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead provider, in consultation with partners, provided agreed guidelines and criteria for selection of the most appropriate students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ Clear criteria have not been established
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> STP was promoted to staff, students and parents and whānau as a valid learning pathway (eg assemblies, course booklets, careers evening, website) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ This has been met
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each school followed selection processes and students in the STP met the criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ This has been met (in that processes resulted in students meeting the Ministry's broad criteria – see Appendix 1).

CURRICULUM

The curriculum for the STPs is an area that needs considerable further development. Generally, STP partners did not work closely together to identify the overall curriculum experienced by each student.

ERO found examples of close collaboration where the curriculum offered by each partner complemented the other, but these were the exception. Each aspect of the students' experience in the STP is addressed individually below.

15 Education Review Office. (2013) *Secondary Schools: Pathways for future education, training and employment*. Wellington: Education Review Office.

Individual learning plans

Individual learning plans (ILPs) varied considerably in relation to timeliness, quality and usefulness. Overall the construction of meaningful ILPs is an area for further consideration. In the absence of clear guidelines, the value and purpose of ILPs designed specifically for STPs are not clear. Many ILPs that were developed simply to meet legislative requirements were of little use.

Some TEO lead providers gathered useful information during their enrolment interviews. This covered any learning difficulties students had and support they may require. This information was then passed onto the TEO's support network who took the necessary actions. Many schools already had robust systems to help students develop learning pathways, although goal setting was often completed part way through Term 1, well past the 31 March deadline for completion of ILPs.¹⁶

Current school and TEO processes should be aligned to reflect best practice, to establish valid learning pathways, personal goals, and record achievement (both academic and competencies) and any support the student may require. These should come together in one place, forming the ILP (or Learning Pathway) and then be shared with relevant STP partners. This would sensibly occur before students started the programme. Best practice shows that parents should be involved in the process.

Student confidence in the STP

Confidence in the STPs was a consistently positive feature for students. While many spoke of the two different worlds of secondary and tertiary education, they were comfortable with and appreciated the differences.

Most TEOs had an enrolment interview and an induction programme to orient the students to the tertiary environment. Some TEOs also ran tertiary-specific study skills and personal development programmes which helped new students to settle in and meet the expectations of tertiary study.

ERO found most TEOs selected tutors suited to work with young adults and many provided professional training to help them learn to work with academy students. The relationships that students developed with their tutors helped to motivate them in their learning.

¹⁶ A requirement of the Memorandum of Understanding with the STPs and either the Ministry of Education or TEC.

You can bond with tutors more than teachers because you are **together** all day
Gave me more independence in **decision**-making
Increased **self understanding** and self management
Parents see that we are more **grown up**
More **confident**, definitely

Curriculum integration

ERO found that the curriculums of the schools and the TEOs rarely informed or complemented each other. The courses were not integrated and tended to stand alone; with each programme taught completely on one partner site or the other. Students most often made the connections for themselves between the learning in each place.

Where some integration was evident, courses were developed together by partners. Sometimes this resulted in partners sharing delivery of the STP curriculum.

One STP had run a National Certificate course which included a First Aid component. As a result of some changes in the time available for the course, they were no longer able to meet all the course requirements in the TEO. They talked to partner schools and agreed that the schools would deliver the First Aid course. This meant that students were instructed for the requisite hours and could still gain their National Certificate in the one year they attended the STP.

An exceptional example of cooperation was seen in one STP where staff developed a curriculum that enabled students to work on the STP programme in their school. Students also had good work experience placements through other programmes, such as *Gateway*, which complemented their study.

One hospitality tutor had worked closely with the teacher at their partner school. Together they developed a course that could be delivered in the school environment and within the school's timetable constraints. The hospitality tutor helped to source high quality equipment for the high school through TEO suppliers. The school was accredited to deliver the hospitality course and the TEO assessed it. By effectively raising the capacity of the local school, the hospitality tutor was also able to maximise the use of the TEO facilities for students from other schools. The teacher and tutor reported that, although students did not spend a great deal of time onsite at the TEO, students still made smooth transitions to tertiary study from the school-based arrangement.

Examples of collaboration were apparent when:

- schools and TEOs worked together to avoid any duplication of standards being offered
- schools developed maths and English classes targeted to academy students
- a school designed a science course and specifically contextualised the learning to the STP course work
- schools elected to run a separate class for all STP students and so all followed the same curriculum with the intent to support trades learning. (Most schools who had tried this model moved away from it in response to individual students not wanting their choice of subjects in school to be so restricted.)

ERO found some examples of work completed in the tertiary part of the STP that was shared with schools to benefit students.

Cross-curricular credits	Understanding learning in STPs
<p>In one STP, kaumatua¹⁷ teach students in a Māori performing arts programme. A student completed eight pages of research in relation to the history of a particular waiata¹⁸ and how it is used in various parts of tangi.¹⁹</p> <p>The tutor shared this work with the wider staff in the school who were able to identify links to assessment opportunities in both English and history.</p>	<p>An STP coordinator gave ERO an example of powerful learning when it has a clear purpose. An agriculture student calculated the cost of seed needed to sow a particular paddock.</p> <p>When his maths teacher saw the calculations he was initially surprised and then impressed at the boy's ability. The student's sense of worth and confidence as a learner increased as a result.</p>

These examples were not the norm. More deliberate sharing of students' work between the partners could lead to increased benefits for students and more integration.

Students who experienced complementary curriculums found it easier to make progress as they could see the relevance of their learning. Schools need to explore more ways to engage and motivate students. For instance, they could consider the duration of lessons, the relevance and delivery of the curriculum, practical learning opportunities, and assessment as an integral part of the learning. Some schools had already made changes along these lines and in keeping with best practice.

17 Kaumatua are respected elders in Māori communities

18 A traditional Māori chant

19 Tangi or tangihanga refers to the grieving process for someone who has died.

Some teachers and tutors visited each others' classrooms/workshops to gain a better understanding of the learning that takes place in the secondary and tertiary setting. This led to increased confidence in each other's professionalism and opportunities for collaboration.²⁰ For example, some students were unmotivated to attempt credits at school as they had gained sufficient for NCEA Level 2 at the TEO. Teachers and tutors negotiated a balance of credits being offered so that students remained motivated in both settings. However, schools need to explore ways to engage students in learning regardless of whether or not there are credits on offer.

Whole day on one topic, feels like we are **going somewhere**

I get to **learn** in a fun way like how I want

Poly helps us **understand** the theory

Get a taste of what work is **really** like

Real life opportunities for later

Classmates help a lot

Students' wellbeing is also promoted when the curriculum is both integrated and relevant to students. ERO noted²¹ the importance to wellbeing when curriculum opportunities provide a range of options that build on students' strengths, interests and aspirations, enabling them to experience success and develop the skills necessary to become "confident, connected, actively involved and lifelong learners".²²

Approaches to curriculum

ERO found an important difference in the approach to curriculum and assessment between many schools and the TEOs. TEOs tended to view the curriculum as the learning required for a vocational pathway. Students could see a clear purpose for the learning and where it led to. Assessment happened incidentally on the way. The final direction for the learning was often a qualification – National Certification in a trade.

Schools tended more towards focusing on gaining credits. The curriculum was often divided up into the Assessment Standard chunks, rather than taking the bigger overview of student learning intended by *The New Zealand Curriculum* or NCEA.

Students appreciated when their assessment was an integral part of their learning rather than when the learning was targeted to an assessment.

More work on developing learning pathways for students should provide a more cohesive sense of direction for their curriculum, in school and in the TEO.

20 This had been an issue in 2011. Some teachers thought that standards were easier to get in the Institute of Technology and Polytechnic and were surprised to find that standards are moderated across the STP, just as they are in schools.

21 Education Review Office. (2015). *Wellbeing for Young People's Success at Secondary School*. Wellington: Education Review Office

22 Ministry of Education. (2007). *The New Zealand Curriculum*. Page 8

...a lot easier to get credits here because they are a **part of whole** course
Credits that are easy because you **enjoy** them

Curriculum decisions

The curriculum offered in STPs was essentially defined by the courses offered by TEOs. This took into account the requests from their partner schools and the needs and opportunities in their communities. However, many TEOs could not respond quickly to requests for new courses, often because course approval had to go through the TEO academic council. Several TEOs are exploring ways to speed up this process.

Forward planning for courses was further complicated because of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA)'s Targeted Review of Qualifications (TROQ). Any changes in National Certification will have implications for the secondary and tertiary programmes. The timing of changes is critical, as students usually make learning pathway decisions late in Term 3 of the school year.

Programme structures varied considerably across the STPs. STP directors and principals spoke of a growing need for more STP opportunities and most were exploring ways to meet that need.

There was an increasing demand in terms of continuity of courses, NCEA Level 3 qualifications and semester courses. A few schools wanted to see more possibilities for Year 11 students. The differences in the course opportunities offered were generally in response to local contexts or decisions made by the TEO.

- Some STPs ran only single year courses. Due to demand for opportunities for ongoing learning, these were being reviewed.
- Some offered semester courses (as well as their longer duration courses) and many students used these as 'tasters' to find out if a particular vocational pathway suited them.
- Some STPs expected students to commit to a two-year course from the outset. Typically the two-year courses offered National Certification in a trade as well as contributing to NCEA Level 2 and sometimes Level 3 credits.
- Time spent in the STPs ranged from one day a week (the most common), through to two days a week, block courses, and sometimes as long as two terms. Several schools had moved away from the two day and block courses as their students were losing touch with the school community and some, when the curriculum was not integrated, found it too hard to keep up with school work.

The STPs should explore the merits of providing a range of opportunities for students. Those who were at risk of disengaging from education in the first place were often unenthusiastic about returning to full-time schooling after just one year of STP. However, sometimes those same students were not fully prepared to move onto further training or employment.

Dovetailing STP and school

Partners in most STPs have worked together so that their systems better enabled students to move between the secondary and tertiary environments and avoided negative impacts on learning in either place. Most students thrived in each environment, taking pride in belonging to the STP while still being members of the school community.

They **experience** the outside world but maintain the security of school.
TEO learning support worker

Some schools changed their systems to accommodate an STP line in the timetable. This enabled students to work on written components of their STP programme and ensured that participating in the STP did not impact on other course work.

Most teachers understood and helped STP students, which is a considerable improvement in attitude since 2011. ERO found that although most schools still had students' other courses timetabled on the day that these students were away from school, teachers generally did not introduce new material or run assessments on that day.

Used to be a lot of **resistance** but benefits of Gateway and the Trades Academy have become evident.
School coordinator

Overall I think the Trades Academy is **wonderful** – seen too many successes for me not to be happy. It's about the kids.
School subject teacher

While the overwhelming response from students was that the STP experience was positive, there were some negative comments. Some were unavoidable, such as those related to long days for some students who had to travel considerable distances to their courses. There was occasional dissatisfaction about a tutor's delivery and ERO found a few challenges relating to the timing of course work for students, especially if this broke into their weekend. This could create pressure on parents and whānau and had the potential to curtail students' connection to school through their involvement in sport. However, overall responses were very positive and any inconvenience was generally outweighed by the advantages.

Summarising the students' experiences of the STP curriculum:

Students had a programme designed to meet their needs

Students had induction to STP

2

- Students had **individual learning plans** which demonstrated appropriate pathways for them, taking them beyond school
- This has been **partially met**

- Students **participated confidently** in the STP; in both the tertiary and secondary environments
- ✓ This has been **met**

Secondary part of curriculum

Tertiary part of curriculum

3

- Students experienced an **integrated curriculum** where the curricula of the school and the tertiary provider informed and complemented each other
- This is **rarely met**

- Academy students had a valid pathway that **dovetailed** with other choices at school
- ✓ This is **mostly met**

PASTORAL CARE

Students benefitted from pastoral care provisions in the STPs. Most STPs received pastoral care and coordination (PCC) funding.²³ STPs spent this in different ways but there were clear commonalities across the models.

They used the fund to cover:

- administrative costs, including ancillary help
- database development
- marketing, including printing and advertising
- professional training
- overheads, such as telephone bills and in some cases office premises
- meeting costs, including travel, staff relief payments, venue hire and catering
- celebrations of student successes, for example certificates, prizegiving or graduation ceremonies
- allocations to STP partners for pastoral care. These funds usually went into the general budget and were not specifically accounted for.

Two STPs had a clear breakdown of how the PCC fund was spent, providing transparency to the partner schools and tertiary organisations involved. Most schools reported they were happy with the allocations received.

ERO found that the PCC formula per student resulted in an apparent inequitable provision of the resource, with the larger school-led STPs generally being better funded than their smaller counterparts. While the larger STPs were certainly more complex they experienced economies of scale, particularly for administration costs. Since this evaluation, a review of the formula has been undertaken.

ERO found that pastoral care was a strength of the TEO-led STPs. Two of these used the PCC fee to pay the salaries of support staff based at the TEO. Each support person had responsibility for a group of students and was the first point of contact for students, schools and parents. Any concerns the TEO had were first raised with the school, and then with parents if appropriate. Support staff had regular, timetabled meetings with their students. Their role was to oversee the wellbeing of each of their students, to provide mentoring and guidance, to review students' progress and arrange any additional support that was needed. Their support work varied, including helping some students with mental health issues, such as self-harming, and coping with serious family issues.

²³ The STP Pilots are not included as they receive funding for tuition, pastoral care and travel as part of a bulk rate per equivalent full-time student.

In one of these STPs, support staff also delivered the TEO's personal development programme which included:

- career development
- life skills
- time management and study skills
- literacy and numeracy testing and support
- assistance with school work.

In the other STP, the support person followed up on students' destinations, providing ongoing support during 90-day employment trial periods and worked to ensure that promised apprenticeships were properly signed off.

Schools and TEO staff were all very positive about the effectiveness of the support staff, and students found them encouraging and helpful.

The [support person] **followed us closely** and offered help or would find someone who would help with any problem that we had.

Participating schools were comfortable with this use of the PCC resource, based on positive feedback from students about the level of care and support they received. They saw the support staff as significant adults with a strong ethos of care and a sound influence over students.

Students in STPs based in tertiary organisations had full access to their facilities, including the health services, library, gymnasium and pastoral care.

The national academy lead provider used its PCC funds in very much the same way as the TEO-led academies. The academy employed field officers who, as well as interviewing students, were responsible for liaising with providers and schools. These field officers had an important mentoring role. They got to know the students, were responsible for work placements and, for students moving on from the STP and school, helped them find employment.

Key features necessary to support students in STPs

ERO identified key features that contributed to overall success of the STPs in raising student engagement, achievement and effective transitions. These were:

- Leadership and partnership
- Funding and staffing
- STPs' engagement with the wider community.

LEADERSHIP AND PARTNERSHIP

ERO found several aspects of leadership within the STPs that were working well and some aspects that could be strengthened. These came under four broad headings: leadership in schools, leadership in the TEO, partnership and self review.

School leadership

When TEO and school leaders were closely involved in the STP decision making, the partnerships were stronger and collective decisions determined the courses offered.

Most TEOs held an annual meeting with representatives from partner schools to talk about the past and future programmes. The increasing complexity of opportunities for students made it critical that school leaders²⁴ were closely informed of the progress made and any tensions that arose between the STP and the school. Effective school leaders found solutions to the tensions, ideally in consultation with their TEO partners.

School leaders supported and improved the STPs by having good systems in place to:

- identify students at risk
- develop meaningful learning pathways (or ILPs) through academic counselling
- enhance parent and whānau involvement
- share the ILPs with the TEO partner before the students started the programme
- lead curriculum change in the school and curriculum integration in the STP
- monitor STP effectiveness in terms of student outcomes
- plan ahead in response to findings.

No schools in this review had all these features in place.

TEO leadership

Generally the leaders within the TEOs were very supportive of the STPs and responsive to difficulties as they arose. However, there were examples of things that arose that were not discussed with the partner schools. Clarification of expectations and responsibilities should be negotiated with partners and clearly documented to guide future practice to maintain and promote the partnerships.

²⁴ Typically the careers advisers were responsible for the academy students but had no mandate to make strategic decisions about the STP.

Whether or not the TEO was a lead provider, it was a considerable advantage to have a designated person with responsibility for the STP partnership. When there was no such person, as was the case for one TEO, problems arose both internally and with partner schools. People did not know who to contact in the first instance, who was responsible, or who had authority and the limitations of that authority.

Partnerships

ERO found schools and TEOs worked together to develop stronger partnerships. Effective partnerships depended on strong leadership, particularly by the STP director working with TEO and school leaders. As the STPs matured, staff involved have taken opportunities to enhance their partnerships and deal with challenges that arose.

Examples of challenges addressed:

Reporting to schools – often the final assessment was at the end of a long-term project and by then it was too late to discover that a student had been struggling. Many TEOs changed and reported progress part way through the project. This signalled whether any intervention was required and students were then supported appropriately.

Delays in registering standards – when there were delays in registering standards gained by students it made it hard for anyone to monitor students' progress in real time. The TEOs changed their practices and passed information more promptly to the schools.²⁵

Disciplining a student – often, when a school disciplined a student, they did not take into account the implications for the student in the STP. Some STPs found that communication between the TEO and the school improved when coordinators travelled with students. This meant that most discipline or pastoral issues were dealt with promptly and collaboratively.

Students are not your students or my students, they are **our students**.

Director TEO led STP

Some challenges are yet to be resolved and leaders in schools and TEOs need to negotiate solutions for other issues:

If students wanted to exit the programme or transfer fully to tertiary – funding agreements differed between TEC and the Ministry. This created some tension in how secondary and tertiary chose to deal with the transfer and the resulting change in funding.

²⁵ The New Zealand Qualification Authority (NZQA) charges \$1.50 for each credit entered by an ITP. To avoid this cost ITPs pass the details onto schools to enter, increasing the workload in schools.

Issues with the tutors changing – in some cases, changes of tutors seriously compromised the relationships necessary for adolescent students to succeed.

The TEO was unable to meet its work placement commitments for some students or when a tutor was absent – students had to stay at school where there was nothing planned for them.

Information was not shared between the school and the Institute of Technology and Polytechnic (ITP) – information transfer was difficult between the schools and ITP because of the different SMS used. ILPs were commonly not completed in time and literacy and numeracy information was not always available for the ITPs or accurately measured.²⁶ ERO questions the need for any ITP test if the ILPs are properly developed and literacy and numeracy information shared between partners.

ERO found that the memoranda of understanding between the lead providers and the schools or tertiary providers were generally limited, formal documents that did not define roles and responsibilities or guide practices within the partnership.

Self review

Self review was an area where the partnerships could be strengthened and information better used to inform future planning. However, ERO noted that providers expressed uncertainty over a number of issues that made long-term planning for sustainability difficult. Uncertainty arose around funding structures (generated in part by the introduction of STP Pilots), TROQ, the courses that could be offered and student numbers changing from year to year.

Robust, formal self-review processes were evident in most of the TEO-led STPs but otherwise they were not common. ERO found that two of the TEO-led STPs had particularly well-embedded self-review cultures. These STPs understood the benefit of focussing on continuous improvement. Both STPs interviewed students during the course of the year. They additionally measured students' progress against their ILPs and responded appropriately to that information.

Most other STPs relied on whatever processes existed in their partner schools for self review and the quality of this was variable. Several schools clearly monitored the success of the STPs in terms of student outcomes. However, this was not necessarily reported to the board of trustees nor used to inform any ongoing improvements either within the school or the STP. It would be timely to do this, given that the academy students were often the ones in the school most at risk of disengaging from education and given the overall impact the STP had on school funding and entitlements.

26 TEC requires TEOs to test all of their students using the Literacy and Numeracy for Adults Assessment Tool. This was at an inappropriate level for adolescents and particularly inaccessible for those for whom English was a second language (ESOL). At the time of writing, TEC had recognised this and the new youth version is now available and an ESOL version under review.

A stand-out practitioner was TOTSTA.²⁷ Unlike other STPs, this STP had strong formal collaboration among its schools. The programme design is school driven and based on the needs of the students and local contexts.

- A Governance Group, made up of representative principals and the Chief Executive Officer of the Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology, met twice a year to establish direction for TOTSTA, set policy and oversee the financial management.
- Policies were reviewed annually and the management documents were reviewed and amended this year.
- A Management and Curriculum Advisory Group, made up of school STP coordinators, tertiary partners' liaison staff and programme leaders met to consider curriculum matters, management issues, local and national labour needs, and student outcomes and to provide advice to the Governance Group, TOTSTA and tertiary partners.
- Every course had a curriculum alignment meeting which responded to feedback to improve content and delivery.
- Students' feedback was actively sought twice a year.
- School coordinator's role was clearly defined and included monitoring student progress and reporting to the TOTSTA.
- Teachers and tutors were developing a shared understanding and appreciation of each others' worlds.

As in many of the STPs, the director was a critical appointment and key driver of success of the programme. This STP was planning for the future and ongoing sustainability. It was negotiating with the Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology to establish and clarify how to best meet the pastoral care and learning needs of its students. The staff plan to consult with their partnership schools and then formalise the system that has worked effectively over the past two years. This should ensure, as they grow, that there are robust systems in place and will help reduce the dependence on key individuals.

ERO recognised that such collaboration is not always possible in other STPs; that geography and numbers can make combined meetings very difficult. However, where such meetings had occurred, ERO found stronger shared visions that led to positive student outcomes.

²⁷ This STP won the Education Focus Prize in the Prime Minister's Education Excellence Awards in 2014.

STPs delivered effective secondary-tertiary programmes in many different ways. For example, sound self-review processes resulted in some STPs delivering programmes in a block of time while other STPs moved from blocks to one or two days a week. In each case, the decision was responsive to the local context. Similarly, there were advantages of having school-based tertiary programmes where teachers could monitor students and had a clear understanding of the learning happening. There were also advantages to travelling to another site, ideally a city, where students had more opportunities for socialisation and to become familiar with the tertiary setting.

FUNDING AND STAFFING

Flexible Funding

For many schools, this funding model enhanced school budgets and meant they could better resource their schools. Resourcing choices were frequently equipment, personnel or transport for students.²⁸ Not all schools used their funding to support the academy students. The guidelines for spending this money allows schools to allocate it according to their needs.

The funding model itself appears simple. However, schools found it hard to calculate the overall impact of participating in the STP, when taking into account loss of staffing and other entitlements. School leaders had to consider the effects on staffing and their capacity to offer some courses. The effects of the funding model generally had more impact in the smaller schools. Lead providers and schools welcomed help from the Ministry of Education to understand the overall funding. They particularly appreciated having continuity of contact with people who had a deep knowledge of Youth Guarantee and STPs. The Ministry also exercised discretion to assist some schools to access the STPs. This was important, for example, for those schools distant from the STPs who also sent a staff member to accompany students.

In two of the single school model STPs ERO visited, students' experiences were limited by the available physical resources and equipment. Students were still engaged in their learning but they did not enjoy the same opportunities as students in well-resourced workshops.

Although most TEOs did not report any direct financial advantage through involvement in the STPs, they saw them as an investment in the future. Many full-time enrolments have come from ex-STP students.

²⁸ STPs could apply for transport costs for students. Many received assistance with transport which was very important for them. Some chose to provide school transport, even if not eligible for Ministry of Education funding, as it helped to ensure students' attendance.

STP Pilots

ERO found clear funding difficulties for both of the STP Pilots. While there was a very strong commitment to the concept of an STP, the funding posed a barrier to some schools' participation and presented a risk to sustainability. One director noted that they could not afford to increase student numbers under this model and described their involvement as a "leap of faith".

The Pilots sought additional funding from community sources and one used the Student Achievement Component (SAC) funding to resource an Agriculture course. It was considerable local goodwill that enabled this STP model to operate in its initial stages.

Workload

ERO noted that participation in the STP increased the workload for school and TEO coordinators and tutors.

Being part of an STP generally involves additional work for the careers adviser. Staff organised and monitored students, liaised with the lead provider and/or TEO, entered NZQA data and frequently acted as mentors. While ERO found that some schools employed administrative support, more commonly this role was undefined, with no formal recognition of the extra time involved.

I keep **hearing** I'm in charge.

Teacher in charge of careers

Tertiary tutors' workloads rose as they improved reporting student progress to schools. Reporting STP roll numbers to comply with the different legislative requirements of the Ministry of Education and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) created additional work for the TEO coordinators.

Furthermore, the incompatibilities of the two different SMSs (secondary and tertiary) complicated the sharing and transfer of information for coordinators.

STPS' ENGAGEMENT WITH THE WIDER COMMUNITY

Some STPs were working closely with their communities and developing courses in response to local needs and opportunities. For example, TOTSTA offers popular programmes on aquaculture and aviation engineering, the MIT runs courses in refrigeration and logistics, and the Canterbury Tertiary College (CTC) has an emphasis on construction.

The government's Youth Guarantee policy encourages different parts of the education sector and industries to work together innovatively to meet the needs of students.

While STPs have a clear vision of preparing students for employment opportunities within their local community, under the Youth Guarantee Scheme, some regions have developed a coherent, community-based approach that incorporates STPs. The STPs in these regions are an integral part of local initiatives committed to meeting the wider needs of their communities. The common goal is to develop employment opportunities, and the skills needed for these, that would allow young people to remain in the community. The TEOs in these areas have developed a strong sense of their social responsibility to support this goal. Secondary schools, TEOs, representatives of industry and, sometimes, local politicians worked together to enhance future opportunities for the region's young people.

Two examples of STPs operating with particularly strong community links follow:

- Taranaki, where the STP is an integral part of community strategic planning.
- Tairāwhiti, where the community has worked with the STP to make sure that the STP is supported and meets the needs of the community as well as its students.

Taranaki

The Taranaki Trades Academy functions as a part of a wider Taranaki strategy that brings together schools, tertiary providers and local industry. It is one of a number of local initiatives for the benefit of students in Taranaki. The *Taranaki Futures Education Consortium*, which is driven by the local Member of Parliament, brings together industry leaders, tertiary providers and schools to ensure that clear pathways leading to local employment are available and are understood by students.

Its mission is to:

“create a clear line of sight from education to employment here in Taranaki..... employers who work with local education providers to facilitate, develop and provide programmes and initiatives across a range of industries and employment categories”.

The local council's strategic-planning expert has assisted the group.

A related Youth Guarantee initiative is the *Skills Squad*. In partnership with schools, tertiary providers and industry partners, the *Skills Squad* provides annual, hands-on learning projects that offer vocational pathways for secondary school students. The 2014 project, *Build a Bach*, is one of these. Local businesses donated all the materials and students received pastoral support and gained NCEA credits in the process of building their bach.

The mayor's task force also promotes community development models based on the predicted demographic needs of the region. These models include the education community.

Tairāwhiti, Gisborne²⁹

Hawkes Bay Schools Trades Academy at the Eastern Institute of Technology has developed a very effective STP in Tairāwhiti through strong community connections. This academy is branded the Tairāwhiti Schools Trades Academy @ EIT (TSTA).³⁰

The close, collaborative relationship established between all schools and EIT has been fundamental to the success of the academy. Strong leadership of the schools, bringing them together to work as a group, and EIT's commitment and responsiveness to requests have all contributed to the sense of community and common purpose. Using community contacts, the EIT engaged two additional providers for Tairāwhiti and has been able to meet the requests of the schools, including offering an agriculture course on the East Coast. Learning tasks, taught in the community³¹, are often defined by the needs of the community providing authentic learning for students. Some tasks, such as working on the Gisborne Operatic Society's building, gave students a sense of pride in contributing to their community. Tutors have been especially effective in finding these opportunities for students.

Given the geographical isolation of the East Coast schools, engagement with parents and whānau is challenging and yet important for the demographic of mainly Māori and Pacific families. TSTA has two main strategies to achieve this. TSTA runs a Trades Academy Field Day at Ruatoria in October. Each course arranges a series of activities to showcase a "day in the life of an academy student". Hospitality students cater for this event. Parents and whānau can talk with TSTA tutors and see the projects being worked on and the day generates ongoing community interest and pride. A graduation ceremony at the end of each year further enhances community engagement.

Attendance and participation had been an issue in this area. EIT and Tolaga Bay Area School worked closely together on a number of initiatives that address these concerns. One example is providing breakfast to help students who may travel considerable distances to reach school and may have to start as early as 4.30am on STP days. Pastoral care money is used to reduce student to tutor ratios, helping to establish supportive relationships. A support person interviews and monitors all students, ensuring that all ILPs are completed. Her timely follow up of any concerns and the personal contact has resulted in significant improvements throughout the academy. Student outcomes have been extremely positive.

29 The runner up in the Prime Minister's Excellence Award for Education Focus, 2014.

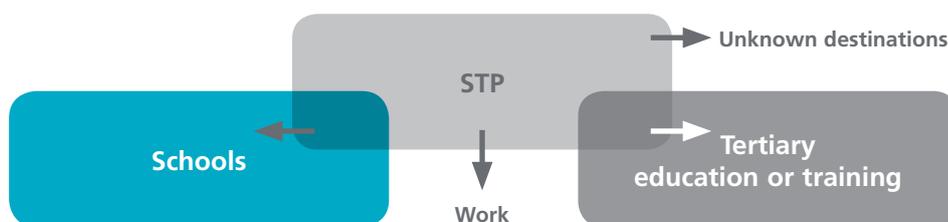
30 TSTA operates mostly in Gisborne, in facilities upgraded by the EIT to meet the STP's needs.

31 For example on local farms, in gyms for Health and Fitness, in salons for Hair and Beauty services, and on marae for Trades Skills and Building and Construction.

Conclusion

Secondary-Tertiary Programmes (STPs, also known as ‘Trades Academies’) were providing effective programmes for many students who might otherwise not have succeeded in secondary school. Student outcomes were very positive both in terms of achievement and competency development. There were many examples of good practice that could be shared across all the models to enable them to operate more efficiently and responsively to the needs of students.

Students transitioned smoothly from STPs back into school or into tertiary education, further training or employment. Only a very few left without a known destination, or NCEA Level 2 qualification.



The STPs all responded to their partnership communities in their own ways and, with the exception of the STP Pilots, were generally well positioned to consolidate their processes and cater for more students. The Flexible Funding model generally worked well for the larger STPs and schools. There were some concerns for the smaller STPs and smaller, rural or area schools. ERO found there was inequity of funding for pastoral care and coordination given the economies of scale some school-led STPs experience.

The most effective STPs had developed strong partnerships. Leaders from the partner schools and tertiary providers were involved in the decision making for the STP with the STP director. These people were in positions to make a difference in their organisations. The school leaders managed change in their schools, the tertiary leaders worked to deliver the courses requested and the director made sure operations ran smoothly.

Collaborative, robust self review helped to identify and strengthen current good practice. ERO acknowledges that there are difficulties with future planning given the uncertainties of funding from year to year, student numbers and the New Zealand Qualification Authority (NZQA)’s Targeted Review of Qualifications.

Above all else, the staff involved in the STPs are enthusiastic and committed to providing the best possible opportunities for their students.

We do it for **love**.

School careers coordinator

The director was the key appointment in most STPs and was pivotal to the success of the STP. However, in terms of sustainability, this could pose a risk, as most STPs did not have strong systems in place should they lose that key person. Few STPs had clear processes, which could lead to inconsistencies in practice and may disadvantage some students.

Significant improvements have been made in many areas since 2011. Many features were still being worked through as both schools and TEOs come to terms with the new ways of working and leading necessary to make a partnership flourish.

Areas for ongoing improvement remain related to:

- developing true partnerships
- developing an integrated STP curriculum
- developing sound learning pathways (or ILPs)
- sharing of information between the school and TEO partners
- inclusion of parents, families and whānau in academic counselling
- self-review practices to strengthen future planning
- documenting processes to provide clarity of expectations and formalise good practice
- consistency of practice to ensure equitable access and outcomes for students.

ERO found challenges for STPs remain in the complexity of the funding, especially when offset against the loss of roll-based entitlements, and the rationalisation of funding, legislative, assessment and reporting requirements between the Ministry, the Tertiary Education Commission and NZQA.

Nevertheless, ERO is confident that the STPs will continue to meet the educational needs of a significant number of young people who are at risk of disengaging from education or not achieving NCEA Level 2.

If it weren't for Trades Academy, I would be back in my bad old ways
Former STP student, now in his second year of an apprenticeship

Appendix 1: The purpose of Secondary-Tertiary Programmes (STPs)

2. *The purpose of a secondary–tertiary programme is, in respect of all students, but in particular students at risk of disengaging from education and not making effective transitions:*
 - 2.1 *to increase each student’s retention in education*
 - 2.2 *to raise each student’s achievement of the NCEA Level 2 qualifications targeted by the Government’s Better Public Service target; and*
 - 2.3 *to improve transitions from secondary to further education and training and work.*

[extracted from the Funding Provision Agreement between Secretary for Education and *name of STP*].

Students at risk of not achieving NCEA Level 1 were unlikely to be accepted into an STP. However, these students have an alternative pathway available to them, with the option of accessing a Youth Guarantee fees-free place at a tertiary education organisation.

Appendix 2: National Outcomes 2013³²

1. Final Outcomes – 2013 – National – All Student Summary

- 81.1% (1,588) of the 1,958 students who completed their programme achieved a minimum of NCEA L2 at the end of 2013
- 82.4% of all students exiting their programme in 2013 made a positive transition

Student Outcomes		2013 Trades Academy Programme Year End Student Outcomes			
		Continuing in programme	Left without completing full programme	Completed full programme	Total
Number of Students		1166	916	1958	4040
Attendance	% who achieved targeted attendance rate of 80%	79.1%	36.7%	83.7%	71.7% (All)
Achievement	% of students who attained NCEA L2 at year end 2013	46.7%	44.8%	81.1%	62.9% (All)
Transitions	% of students who made an effective transition	N/A	74.4%	86.8%	82.4% ³³

³² These tables were provided by the Ministry of Education.

³³ Transitions figures exclude the 1,166 students who are continuing in the programme.

2. Final Outcomes – 2013 – National – All Māori Student Summary

- 83.1% (541) of the 651 Māori students who completed their programme achieved a minimum of NCEA L2 at the end of 2013. This percentage is higher than the national achievement rate.
- 74.3% of all Māori students exiting their programme in 2013 made a positive transition

Māori Student Outcomes		2013 Trades Academy Programme Year End Student Outcome			
		Continuing in programme	Left without completing full programme	Completed full programme	Total
Number of Students		461	417	651	1529
Attendance	% who achieved targeted attendance rate of 80%	70.7%	25.9%	79.9%	62.4%
Achievement	% of students who attained NCEA L2 at year end 2013	48.8%	44.6%	83.1%	62.3%
Transitions	% of students who made an effective transition	N/A	69.4%	79.1%	74.3% (Excludes 461 students continuing)

3. Final Outcomes – 2013 – National – All Pasifika Student Summary

- 87.4% (216) of the 247 Pasifika students who completed their programme achieved a minimum of NCEA L2 at the end of 2013. This percentage is significantly higher than the national achievement rate.
- 85.9% of all Pasifika students exiting their programme in 2013 made a positive transition

Pasifika Student Outcomes		2013 Trades Academy Programme Year End Student Outcome			
		Continuing in programme	Left without completing full programme	Completed full programme	Total
Number of Students		123	87	247	457
Attendance	% who achieved targeted attendance rate of 80%	74.0%	26.4%	72.1%	63.9%
Achievement	% of students who attained NCEA L2 at year end 2013	43.9%	33.3%	87.4%	65.4%
Transitions	% of students who made an effective transition	N/A	75.0%	90.2%	85.9%

Student outcome category descriptions

Continuing in programme – the student has not completed or exited the programme (i.e. intention to return the following year to complete programme).

Left without completing the whole programme – the student did not complete the full programme and has exited the programme (i.e. student left part way through the year moving into employment).

Completed full programme – the student has completed and exited the full programme (i.e. student upon completion of programme returns to school/other tertiary study).

Effective transitions: A positive destination is a transition which includes returning to school, entering tertiary education, or obtaining employment/apprenticeship. Destination data is recorded at the time of the student exiting the programme.

Education Review Offices

NATIONAL OFFICE – TARI MATUA

PO Box 2799
Wellington 6140
Phone: 04 499 2489 Fax: 04 499 2482
info@ero.govt.nz

TE UEPŪ Ā-MOTU

Māori Review Services
c/o National Office
Phone: 04 499 2489 Fax: 04 499 2482
erotu@ero.govt.nz

NORTHERN REGION – TE TAI RAKI

Auckland
PO Box 7219, Wellesley Street
Auckland 1141
Phone: 09 377 1331 Fax: 04 499 2482
auckland@ero.govt.nz

Hamilton

Private Bag 3095
Hamilton 3240
Phone: 07 838 1898 Fax: 04 499 2482
hamilton@ero.govt.nz

CENTRAL REGION – TE TAI POKAPŪ

Napier

PO Box 742
Napier 4140
Phone: 06 835 8143 Fax: 04 499 2482
napier@ero.govt.nz

Whanganui

PO Box 4023
Whanganui 4541
Phone: 06 349 0158 Fax: 04 499 2482
whanganui@ero.govt.nz

Wellington

PO Box 27 002
Marion Square
Wellington 6141
Phone: 04 381 6800 Fax: 04 499 2482
wellington@ero.govt.nz

SOUTHERN REGION – TE WAIPOUNAMU

Christchurch

PO Box 39045
Harewood
Christchurch 8545
Phone: 03 359 4814 Fax: 04 499 2482
christchurch@ero.govt.nz

Dunedin

PO Box 902
Dunedin 9054
Phone: 03 479 2619 Fax: 04 499 2482
dunedin@ero.govt.nz

