

13 October 2015

Education Report: Evaluation report – Intensive Wraparound Service

Recommendations

We recommend that you:

- a. **note** that the recent evaluation of Intensive Wraparound Service (IWS) shows positive impacts on learning outcomes and key life competency areas for students with complex behavioural and learning needs;
- b. **approve** the release of the IWS evaluation report on the Education Counts website on a date to be determined in consultation with your office.

Approved / Not Approved



Lisa Rodgers
Deputy Secretary
Evidence, Data and Knowledge

NOTED / APPROVED



Minister of Education

6, 11, 15

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Education Report: Evaluation report – Intensive Wraparound Service

Purpose of report

1. This report summarises the key findings from the *Intensive Wraparound Service (IWS)* evaluation report and seeks your approval for the report to be released by the Ministry of Education on the Education Counts website on a date to be determined in consultation with your office.

Background

2. IWS is an intensive, individualised wraparound service based on international best practice of high fidelity wraparound programmes. The IWS supports children and young people with high and complex behavioural and learning needs.
3. IWS psychologists complete a thorough ecologically-based assessment of the student, whānau, classroom, and the community needs. The assessment model has been based on best practice and extensive consultation with Māori and Pasifika focus groups to match the New Zealand cultural context. Once assessment is complete a detailed plan is developed that is designed to change the pathway for the student from an anti-social pathway to a pro-social pathway. IWS supports students, their families, and their local school. Students are at the centre of the model.
4. The evaluation of IWS was carried out by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research. The evaluation involved 28 case studies of students and surveys of IWS team members, teachers and principals. The full report is attached.
5. IWS provides a service for students with the most difficult and highest needs and supports one in every 30,000 young people in New Zealand. As such measuring progress for these students is complex.

Findings

6. Based on the evaluation of 28 student case files the evaluators found:
 - a. All parent/caregivers, but one, were highly positive about IWS for their family/whānau.
 - b. Nearly all saw IWS as a major improvement for their child and their life circumstances with some describing it as a 'life saver'.
 - c. Many students made significant progress while in IWS – progress that was remarkable in a number of cases. The IWS assessment and programme plan aims to collaboratively design a positive pathway but progress for some students takes longer than others.

7. IWS was associated with improved learning outcomes. Over half of principals and more than 40 percent of teachers who responded to surveys reported positive progress in learning outcomes for students receiving IWS.
8. Three-quarters of the students in the case studies made progress in learning and/or independent living skills.
9. Over two-thirds of students made progress in the key life competency areas of Tinana (respect for the safety of others), Hinengaro (mental health) and Mana motuhake (self-concept).
10. Fewer students (less than half) made progress in outcomes related to the key life competency areas of cultural identity, Hononga (friendships) and Ngā takaro (leisure activities). A range of factors relating to students, families or IWS teams made these areas more complex to address or maintain while on IWS but it is anticipated that most of these students will be engaged positively at school, home and in their community.
11. Parents were highly positive about IWS for their family and whānau. NZCER reported that IWS was providing strategies for parents to support their child, and empowering them when working with schools and other government agencies.
12. There is evidence of increased teacher efficacy and confidence in some schools because of IWS. Over half the school principals and over 40 percent of teachers responding to surveys reported increased teacher confidence. Just under half of principals felt there was positive progress in all staff being confident to interact with the IWS student in the school.

Considerations for the delivery of IWS

13. Although good results are being achieved with IWS there are some matters that need to be noted:
 - a. It can be difficult for the teams to balance administrative requirements with the time necessary for therapeutic work.
 - b. Role clarity, particularly for lead workers could be improved.
 - c. Cultural expertise is less available than some teams desire.
 - d. Inter-agency engagement and coordination can be complex and time consuming.
 - e. Transitions between schools and from one home to another can be frequent events that are very challenging for students. Clearer pathways and processes are needed to support students during these times of transition in the future.
 - f. Continuation of support and maintenance of gains once students leave the compulsory school system needs consideration.
14. A final area for consideration is whether the success rate of IWS could be improved by changes to initial assessment (i.e., is IWS right for these children?) and/or can changes be made to IWS that improve outcomes for more children?

Risks

15. Those reading the report may underestimate the complexity of IWS students and expect to see major improvements in all the areas of their lives. Developing positive relationships with peers, whānau and teachers can often take longer to achieve than learning and conduct improvements. To help readers understand and appreciate the complexities involved with such changes, we will place a link to the three case examples on the IWS webpage on the Ministry's website.
16. There is a finding in the evaluation report that for 10 students the transition from a residential special school to a local school was not complete and the evaluators were unable to predict outcomes for most of those students. This may reflect negatively on the residential schools. However, residential schools are a new component in the IWS model and are still bedding in.

Next steps and Ministry comment

17. Overall, the evaluation underlines that the initiative is having a positive impact on improving behaviour and educational outcomes for students with the highest needs. However, there are opportunities to revisit assessment and processes within the IWS to ensure the best possible results are being achieved for the students.
18. The Ministry is using the findings from the report to look at current assessment and internal processes. These include how to:
 - a. Improve transitions for students in and out of residential special schools.
 - b. Strengthen IWS and Ministry Special Education support for these students.
 - c. Improve bicultural approaches to support students and their whānau.
 - d. Continue to improve and maintain links and alignment across agencies such as CYF, CAMH and processes such as Strengthening Families.
19. A low key release is planned with the evaluation report being made available on the Education Counts website. We will work with your office to determine the date and time of the release. Draft Q and As on major aspects of the report have been prepared. Please see attached.

Evaluation Report Prepared by NZCER on the Intensive Wraparound Service (IWS)

Questions and Answers

Who gets IWS?

IWS is for young people who have complex mental health, behavioural, and special education needs. These students typically have involvement in multiple child-serving agencies and their families would benefit from coordination of effort across those systems. The IWS service is currently available for only the students with the highest needs. NZCER estimates that wraparound services are available for 1 in 30,000 New Zealanders whereas in America wraparound services are available one in every 1,000 Americans. In comparison, IWS is for students with a higher level of needs and challenging behaviours than many of the wraparound services in the USA.

What problems do IWS students have and does IWS help?

All, except one parent, in the NZCER survey group were highly positive about IWS for their family and whanau. Nearly all saw IWS as a major improvement for their child and their life circumstances. Some parents described inclusion in IWS as a "life saver". NZCER reported that IWS was providing strategies for parents to support their child, and giving them agency when working with schools and other government agencies. The NZCER survey has shown that when high needs students are referred to IWS, their needs are so great that often their problems co-occur with other difficulties including mental health problems, learning problems and other challenging behaviours. Multiple problems make it challenging for these young people to engage positively within their school, family and communities.

Why was NZCER asked to evaluate IWS one year after starting?

IWS was part of a broader Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) evaluation. The Ministry of Education (MoE) thought it was important to get an evaluation of how this new work had started. It was anticipated that the evaluation findings would inform future development of IWS.

Has the evaluation looked at what happens to students after IWS has finished?

The evaluation was not able to look at the outcomes one or two years after IWS finished. The IWS plans are for three years, two years supported by IWS psychologists and additional funding for student individual plans, as well as designing one year post IWS plan for locally based support (lead worker and local funding resources).

Why has the evaluation shown that not all targeted improvements for IWS students were achieved within the two years on IWS?

The aim of IWS is to work collaboratively with the young person, whanau, teachers and key community members to design a programme to start young people on a positive pathway. Some outcomes, for example developing positive relationships, often take longer than two years to develop. Many IWS students have had years of negative and antisocial relationships with peers and adults, and changing these patterns of behaviour can take more

time than the two years on IWS. The aim of a wraparound plan is to help the young person and those people around that young person to develop the capacity and capability to support and develop a positive pathway for the young person for the future. This pro-social pathway (especially establishing positive relationships) can take longer than the two years on IWS.

Why is IWS funding and specialist support only for two years if the IWS students have such high needs?

The aim of IWS is to have the young person engaging positively within their local community. For young people with such high needs, those interacting with them often need to develop new skills to be able to engage positively with an IWS student. The aim of IWS is to deliver an intensive service for two years, increase the capacity and capability of the whānau, school and community so the young person can continue to be positively engaged within the community. If the young person is to continue to be successful, then the community needs to use their local resources to cater for their young person in the medium to long term. The IWS support most often starts at a high and intense level then is gradually reduced. It is planned that after two years the young person will be able to be successfully supported by locally based resources. Providing an intensive service, gradually reduced over two years, enables new students to be given the opportunity to receive the targeted resources and funding available to IWS.

What are the risks associated with the release of this report?

The key risk associated with this report is that readers may underestimate the complexity of IWS students and expect to see major improvements in all the areas of their lives. Developing positive relationships with peers, whānau and teachers can often take longer to achieve than learning and conduct improvements.

To help readers understand and appreciate the complexities involved with such changes, below is a link on the Ministry's website referring to three cases on the IWS webpage.

<http://www.education.govt.nz/school/student-support/special-education/intensive-wraparound-service-iws/case-studies-and-results-of-the-intensive-wraparound-service/>

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