

Supporting school issues through a whole-school approach

Theme

| Police district | School name | School demographics | Submitted by |
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| Western | Pohutukawa College | Decile range 1-3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Const I M Keen (School Community Officer) Jane Brown (Deputy Principal) |

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| Summary | Improving student achievement through addressing drug abuse, and encouraging healthy bodies and healthy minds. |
| Issue | <p>Surveys of students and parents, and referrals to BOT for suspensions, stand-downs or expulsions, show that drug availability and use in the school has increased. Reports of drug use in the student management system (SMS) have gone up, but this is likely to be under-reported, as staff don't feel competent to identify drug use, or to use the SMS. Police report that drug-related youth crime in the local community has also gone up.</p> <p>This issue may be associated with decreased student engagement and increased unexplained absences. Achievement in NCEA Level 2 is down.</p> |
| Identification and prioritisation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BOT: Drug-related suspensions/expulsions rose from 1 per term to 6 last term. SMS: 15% increased reports in SMS of student disengagement. Attendance: Unexplained absences increased by 3% in the current year. College staff: Requested information about drug behaviour and identification. Parents: 20% more concerns to the Dean/DP re drug issues than last year. Survey: Parents/students indicated that drug use is a problem in the college. Police: 15% increase in drug-related crime in local community over the last year; 7 cases last month of youths stealing re drug debt (up from 1 a month). |
| Short-term goal | Increased reporting of students impacted by drugs (use or supply). Measured through reporting by staff into the student management system (SMS) during Term 4, after the intervention is implemented. |
| Long-term goal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decreased reports of students impacted by drug (use or supply) by at least 50%. Measured by reports entered into the SMS for one term a year after the intervention, compared to the initial number of reports. Decrease in students attending health services due to drug use, from 6 per term to 2 per term a year after the intervention. |
| Prevention activities | <p>Activities that occurred within a whole-school approach included:</p> <p>School ethos and environment (policies; skilled staff; safe environment)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed a revised 'Alcohol and Other Drugs' policy, based on the policy format in 'Bullying prevention and response: A guide for schools'. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicated the key points of the revised policy to students, staff and parents. • Produced protocols for reporting students affected by drugs into the SMS, and provided staff training. • Produced a roles and responsibilities document. • Provided a PLD programme on drug user behaviour and identification, restorative practices, and on teaching strategies to build students' social and emotional learning. • Provided opportunities for teachers to observe other staff using SEL strategies, and to discuss and learn from the observations during teacher PLD sessions for departments and the whole staff. • Produced examples of internally assessed achievement standards that could use drugs as a learning context. <p>Community connections (consultation; collaboration; model parents)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Followed-up Wellbeing@School surveys of students. • Developed an assessment matrix and response guide to clarify severity of incidents, and a response process to them. • Involved agencies when incidents met specific severity levels, e.g. working with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DHB funded AoD counselling ○ drug testing company to support 'return to school' contracts after suspensions ○ Police to share information and support alternative action rather than Youth Court. • Informed parents through the college's e-newsletter. • Provided a parents evening to discuss the revision to the policy and the planned actions in this intervention. • Involved parents of Year 9/10 students through homework tasks in the health unit 'Pohutukawa – My Future , my Choice'. <p>Curriculum teaching and learning (taking action for: myself; my friends; my community)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 9/10 health teachers used SEL teaching strategies in 'Pohutukawa – My Future, my Choice', in which students came up with and carried out proactive actions to make the college: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a caring environment ○ a place where they feel safe ○ a place where they look after other students ○ a place where "showing concern by telling about drug use is ok". • In Year 11/12 pastoral care time, students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ applied critical thinking to explore how drugs are socialised in NZ ○ explored impact of drugs on personal and community hauora ○ explored decision-making in scenarios ○ applied safety skills to enact personal resolutions about drugs to prevent harm from their use. • Peer support leaders ran student-led activities on reducing harm from drug use. |
| Impact | <p>The short-term goal of increased reporting by staff into the SMS was achieved. A count in Term 4, after the intervention had been implemented, showed reports of students impacted by drugs (use or supply) had increased by 20% from the same time last year. This indicated that more staff were inputting data, and thus enabling earlier intervention to take place.</p> |

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| Next steps | <p>The next steps towards the long-term goals include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at the end of October, reviewing our safety education plan for modifications for next year • next year (ie, a year after the intervention), monitoring over one term the number of reports entered into the SMS of students impacted by drugs, and comparing this to the initial number of reports • next year (ie, a year after the intervention), monitoring the number of students attending health services due to drug use. |
| Obstacles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some staff in the school felt that dealing with drug abuse was just the role of the deans, and that if teachers had to put time and effort into this issue, it would distract from direct effort on student achievement. This was dealt with through robust PLD so that staff accepted that work on building student engagement would influence achievement. • A few parents felt that the restorative practice response to cases of drug abuse were 'soft', and keeping offenders at the school could endanger their own children. This was dealt with by individually communicating with the parents concerned. |
| Improvements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bringing student voice beyond providing data through surveys, to being more actively involved in developing the intervention plan itself. • Appointing one staff member to be in charge of communications through the media, to promote this intervention in a positive way at every opportunity. |
| Conclusion | <p>The school had initially thought the issues could be dealt with by just an education programme. However, as a result of this intervention, they now feel they have addressed the issue in a much deeper way, and are pleased that the effort to do so is resulting in real impacts on the issue that classroom education alone would never have been able to achieve.</p> |

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