



educational transitions

'24-7' youth mentoring initiative

MacroAuckland Research - Evidence of Need

Research shows that there are a number of factors that influence student achievement in schools, particularly in low decile communities.

Transience – often caused by financial stress and housing problems – can mean students attend more than three schools within one calendar year. This can cause behavioural problems that lead to truancy, stand downs, suspensions and expulsions, which further interfere with a student's ability to achieve well at school, and can be precursors to youth offending and unemployment. Truancy alone is six times higher amongst students in low decile schools.

Maori and Pacific students, particularly males aged 13-15 years, are most affected by these types of disrupted schooling, and this is reflected in the overall lower achievement rates for these students. This issue is compounded by the fact that Auckland families face both real and perceived cultural and socio-economic barriers to engaging with education.

Evidence shows that strong role models and family encouragement support students to develop clear academic goals and expectations. Engaging with children's culture to support their learning and school-teacher-family collaborations are shown to be effective methods of improving attendance and attainment.

Action on Issues

Dream Youth Centre Extreme (DYCE) is a youth-driven arm of the Dream Centre Trust (formerly known as the Harvest Group Trust) operating in South Auckland. DYCE has a vision of developing sustainable services and programmes that empower Maori and Pacific youth aged between 12-21 years to make a positive, life changing impact on their lives.

DYCE provides a team of eight youth mentors in an Auckland High School. The mentors work in a 'hub' at the school, supporting high needs students with school-based issues that affect their educational achievement, and family issues that may be affecting their education and their personal development.

The 24-7 programme works intensively with students to identify and address the issues that are influencing their underachievement. The mentors then guide the students to realise their potential in positive ways, helping them to develop socially and educationally through:

- Engaging students with youth-led events
- Encouraging participation in sport, art and music
- Holding one-to-one sessions with students that work on self-esteem
- Providing homework support

The mentors focus on raising the education and career aspirations of the students, following this up with support around progression routes towards further education.

Collaboration

The youth mentoring scheme relies on strong collaboration between students, DYCE mentors, teachers and families. In addition, DYCE mentors bring in support from a plethora of organisations who can add valuable support to the young people.

Organisations involved in the programme to date include Career Services, Field of Dreams, Youth Transition Services, New Zealand Police, Counties Manukau Sport and Brothers in Arms, Suicide Prevention Information New Zealand as well as tertiary and alternative education providers and the New Zealand Mentoring Network.

Funding

Funding would enable DYCE to place more teams of youth mentors in high schools and colleges, to address educational underachievement in urban schools. The scheme would be rolled out to other schools in the South Auckland area, with a view to taking the scheme Auckland-wide.

Funding of \$25,000 would provide one youth mentor in a school, with a full team of eight costing \$200,000 per annum.

Sustainability

The Trust's business plan includes an economic development arm with profits to be fed back into social services.

For more information about this project, please contact Mark Bentley or Kat Stanier on 09 277 8833 or visit the MacroAuckland website www.macroauckland.org.nz