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Media Release

Single-sex schools provide a significant advantage for boys in New Zealand



A newly-released independent report by Dr Michael Johnston, Faculty of Education at Victoria University of Wellington, compares the performance of young men in Years 11 – 13 at single-sex schools with those at co-educational schools. It clearly shows that over the period from 2013 to 2015, young men from single sex boys' schools gain NCEA qualifications, University Entrance and New Zealand Scholarship passes in greater proportions than their counterparts at co-educational schools (This supports the findings of statistics from 2010-2012).

The report was completed for the Association of Boys' Schools of New Zealand and the data illustrates there is a clear nationwide trend for young men who are in boys' single-sex schools to achieve better academic results in all deciles and also significantly, across ethnicities including NZ European, Asian, Maori and Pasifika.

The study looked at boys' qualifications in terms of numbers attaining University Entrance, NCEA Level 2 equivalent, as well as those who left school without a qualification.

In all three years (Years 11 – 13) the median percentages of NZQF qualifications and University Entrance attainment were higher for single-sex schools than for co-educational schools, while median percentages of students leaving with no qualifications were significantly lower.

TABLE 1 (UE, Level 2 and no qualification)

Comparison of median percentages of male school leavers at boys' and co-educational schools attaining University Entrance, a minimum of a Level 2 qualification and no qualification.

Qualification	Year	Boys' schools	Co-ed schools
		(n = 49)	(n = 448)
University Entrance	2013	47	30
	2014	49	25
	2015	48	28
At least NCEA Level 2 (or equivalent)	2013	85	73
	2014	90	77
	2015	90	78
No qualification	2013	6	13
	2014	4	11
	2015	3	10

The report also shows there is a clear advantage for students of single-sex schools across all decile groups in gaining school leaving qualifications; the greatest advantages evident in low-decile (1 – 4) schools.

TABLE 3 (UE attainment by decile)

Comparison of median percentages of male school leavers at boys' and co-educational schools attaining University Entrance, disaggregated by school decile group.

Year	Decile Group	Median percentage of male school leavers	
		Boys' schools (n = 49)	Co-ed schools (n = 448)
2013	1-4	30	17
	5-6	39	27
	7-8	50	42
	9-10	74	52
2014	1-4	29	15
	5-6	37	17
	7-8	44	36
	9-10	66	52
2015	1-4	32	15
	5-6	33	23
	7-8	46	40
	9-10	75	54

Data collected in this three year research evidences advantages for students in single-sex schools for all four ethnicities researched: Maori, Pasifika, Asian, European.

TABLE 7 (UE attainment by ethnicity)

Table 7. Comparison of median percentages of male school leavers at boys' and co-educational schools attaining University Entrance in 2015 disaggregated by school decile group and ethnicity.

Decile group	Ethnicity	Boys' school leavers		Co-ed school male leavers	
		n	%	n	%
1-4	Māori	81	22.7	244	7.6
	Pasifika	88	24.0	172	10.3
	Asian	36	62.1	410	47.3
	European	120	45.6	708	23.1
5-6	Māori	63	16.8	87	9.3
	Pasifika	20	14.7	27	13.4
	Asian	78	58.6	143	42.7
	European	439	37.5	766	26.5
7-8	Māori	107	29.2	112	19.2
	Pasifika	71	37.6	46	20.4
	Asian	145	68.7	352	64.6
	European	886	49.3	1143	37.9
9-10	Māori	100	51.5	73	28.6
	Pasifika	49	44.1	28	29.2
	Asian	501	85.6	406	75.3
	European	1390	74.9	1446	51.3

TABLE 9 (No qualifications by ethnicity)

Table 9. Comparison of median percentages of male school leavers at boys' and co-educational schools attaining no qualifications in 2015, disaggregated by school decile group and ethnicity.

Decile group	Ethnicity	Boys' school leavers		Co-ed school male leavers	
		n	%	n	%
1-4	Māori	36	10.1	875	27.3
	Pasifika	32	8.7	293	17.5
	Asian	1	1.7	64	7.4
	European	11	4.2	530	17.3
5-6	Māori	77	20.5	203	21.7
	Pasifika	15	11.0	25	12.4
	Asian	5	3.8	32	9.6
	European	96	8.2	275	9.5
7-8	Māori	23	6.3	92	15.8
	Pasifika	9	4.8	33	14.7
	Asian	2	0.9	27	5.0
	European	42	2.3	211	7.0
9-10	Māori	5	2.6	28	11.0
	Pasifika	6	5.4	8	8.3
	Asian	20	3.4	16	3.0
	European	30	1.6	125	4.4

This independent research concludes that the advantages for young men at single-sex schools are consistent across all decile groups; the greatest advantages evident

for low-decile (1 – 4) schools, especially for Maori. It recommends that more investigation should be sought by the New Zealand Ministry of Education, as well as by independent researchers, to gain further insight into the single-sex advantage which is, as the author describes, “as a phenomenon, unequivocal.”

About The Association of Boys’ Schools

Founded in 2006, the Association of Boys’ Schools in New Zealand is a community of educators who are dedicated to the education and development of boys. ABSNZ holds national conferences each year at member schools to promote the very best in boys’ education.

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