

18 December 2008

Teaching kids money skills goes down well

A trial to teach young people money skills at school has been overwhelmingly positive, according to Retirement Commissioner Diana Crossan.

The trial ran in ten schools last term to test a framework to help teach students about managing everyday money. The country's banks helped fund the trial.

"The world of finance is changing rapidly and is increasingly complex. The Retirement Commission is working towards young people having the necessary skills and information to make informed and wise decisions about money when they leave school.

"The programme is designed to teach younger students basic concepts about where money comes from and how to look after it. Older students are taught about managing risk, long term planning and analysing the different types of debt," said Diana Crossan.

"Teachers involved in the trial feel that financial education is a critical learning area that cannot be left to chance. Many have successfully integrated the learning into existing programmes. They found that students were motivated and interested in the learning because it was relevant to their everyday lives."

As one 12-year-old put it, "It prepares us for the real world. It completely changed my thinking. Now I put my money in a savings account instead of spending it at the dairy. It's life-like and has been a fun challenge".

The trial is being independently evaluated and the findings will be shared with the Ministry of Education early next year. The Ministry is currently considering how the teaching of financial literacy can contribute to achieving the outcomes for New Zealand students set out in the vision, principles, and values of the New Zealand Curriculum.

Note: The ten schools involved in the trial are: Alfriston College, Onehunga High, Otahuhu College and Mangere Central Primary in Auckland; Hampton Hill Primary, Tawa Intermediate and Scots College Prep in Wellington; Ranzau Primary, Brightwater School and Brooklyn Primary in Nelson/Tasman.

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