

# Bright bunch at Bream Bay College achieves highest NCEA pass rate in Northland

Bream Bay College's 2008 year 12 students achieved the highest level 2 NCEA pass rate in Northland, whichever way you look at the statistics.

The 60 students in Year 12 at the college on the 1 July last year gained a 91.7% pass rate with 11.7 percent gaining merits and 5% gaining excellence.

This pass rate was equalled only by Whangarei's Christian Renewal College, which had only 12 students in its 2008 Year 12 class.

Looking at the statistics just for students who sat the NCEA examination, Bream Bay College gained a 91.4% pass rate. Te Kura Kaupapa Maori o Kaikohe recorded a 100% pass rate but at this school only one of five students in Year 12 sat Level 2 NCEA examinations.

At the traditionally high achieving schools of Kerikeri High School - the pass rate was 81.3% and Pompallier College - the pass rate was 88.2% (looking at the *those who sat the exam* statistics).

Eric Hansen, the college's Deputy Principal, said last year's Year 12, (this year's year 13 students) are a particularly bright bunch.

"We have a core of very academic students in that year and they influence all the other students. Amongst that group of kids to study hard and succeed is seen as normal."

He said the school staff and board are attempting to instil a *cool to succeed* culture throughout the school.

We now have a Junior Diploma, which starts in Year 7 giving our students an incentive to succeed all the way through school. There is the 100 plus club where students who gain over 100 credits towards this diploma are acknowledged and rewarded.

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Mr. Hansen also attributes the exam success to the hard work of the school's teachers.

"If you came in to school on a Saturday during NCEA exams you would have thought it was a school day. There were so many teachers doing tutorials. Teachers were going way beyond the call of duty and giving up their own time to prepare their students for their exams."

He said in country schools teachers often know personally the families of the children they teach and are motivated to do the best they can for their students.

The year 11 NCEA Level 1 70.6 percent pass rate was also well above the Northland (60.2 %) and New Zealand (63.7%) average pass rates.

The year 13 Level 3 result, at 50% fell below the Northland (52.9% and national 54.8% rate but can be explained by the fact that 7 of the 34 students in the 2008 Year 13 class left for jobs or training prior to sitting their NCEA examinations. Reading *the only those who sat the examinations* statistics the pass rate for Year 13 Level 3 was 73.9%.

As with most New Zealand secondary schools, girls did a lot better than boys. Just 57.6% of boys in Year 11 in 2008 at Bream Bay College achieved level 1 NCEA qualifications compared to 82% of girls. In year 12 (2008) 81.8% of boys gained NCEA level 2 qualifications while 97.4% of girls were successful and in year 13, just 31.6% of boys passed compared to 73.3% of girls (again the year 13 results are distorted by the fact seven students - mostly boys joining the navy - left prior to sitting their exams.

Bream Bay College Principal Wayne Buckland points out that girls at Bream Bay College achieved at a higher rate than did the students of Whangarei Girls High school where the pass rate was: Year 11 - 73% Year 12 - 77.5% and Year 13 - 61.3%. This, he says, belies the argument that girls do better at an all girls school.

Asked if Bream Bay College is doing anything to help its boys to do better, Mr. Hansen said the school's Heads of Departments had set up a special project this year to look at the subject of boys' education.