

## 4.2 A learning community

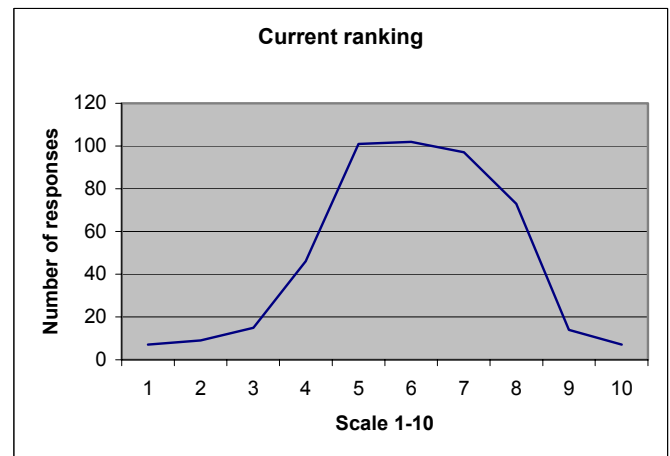
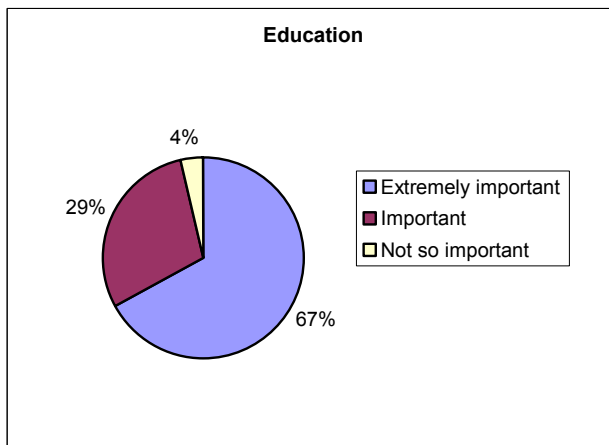
***A region that values and supports learning, ensuring that education services reflect our local needs and circumstances.***



Participants were asked to think about education and learning within our community. They were asked how important this goal was to them, and how well they thought the region was currently achieving it.

67% of respondents classed this outcome as 'extremely important', 29 % as 'important' and 4% of respondents indicated this outcome was 'not so important' to them.

471 respondents indicated on a scale of 1-10, (with 10 being the best), how well they felt the region was currently achieving this goal. The average response was 6.0.



Participants were asked to think about what things may stop us reaching the above goal, and about services that may be lacking in the region to help achieve this outcome. There was opportunity to comment on education and learning in general.

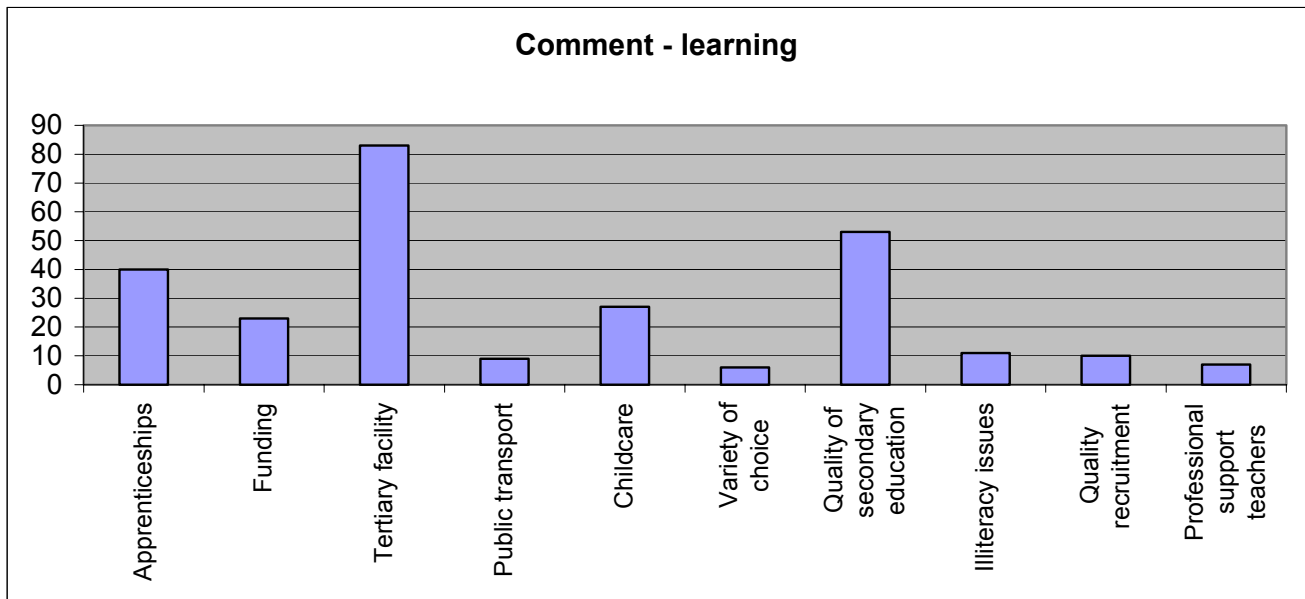
Buller people considered that a local polytechnic or university facility providing tertiary training at a local level in Westport, would be of benefit to the region. The lack of tertiary training options was considered to be a factor in the young people of the region leaving to further their education elsewhere. A shortage of skilled trades' people was noted across the district, and vocational training and provision of apprenticeships was viewed as essential to address these skill shortages to the region. Additional comments included the need for career guidance to be provided for school leavers to ensure that they went on to appropriate training, and the necessity for a business needs analysis for the district, to ensure that we were teaching skills locally that would lead to employment, and would fill skills shortages in the region.

Buller residents want to achieve a high standard of education for their children and young people. The provision of high quality education was a priority across the region, with concerns regarding the current quality of secondary education provided in the district. Comments related to concerns over the current image and reputation of secondary facilities, a lack of goal setting at secondary level, and the need to actively cultivate an academic ethic and raise expectations of students working at this level. Residents want to see a positive focus and a change to what they describe as a current culture of non-achievement.

There was strong community support for apprenticeships and cadetships to assist with job provision for school leavers and to help fill regional skills shortages. Comments included the need for financial support to make this a viable option for employers. Promoting strong links between businesses, schools and educational or training institutions was a consistent theme.

Provision of quality childcare in the region was seen as limited, particularly in rural areas where options were extremely limited or lacking. The lack of quality childcare in rural areas affected early learning opportunities for children, but was also seen as impacting on parents ability to pursue education options, due to a lack of support for childcare when attending classes.

Some residents felt that the low population numbers in the Buller affects the provision of high quality education services in the region, through a direct link to funding and government support. 9% of respondents felt that central government funding support for the district was inadequate.



Other comments relating to this outcome included the lack of public transport (particularly from rural areas to main centres) to enable people to fully participate in learning opportunities. Some believed there was a lack of choice

in learning options, particularly mentioned were subjects such as outdoor education, culture, art and dance. Buller residents were concerned about illiteracy, both generally, and within the school setting. Recruitment of high quality teachers, and professional support for ongoing development for teachers were also supported.

### **What Buller people said.....**

*“Education is not valued by the community.”*

“There is more free assistance and opportunity to learn work skills here in Buller than there is in Auckland.”

*“We need to provide for mentoring and management assistance for Buller High School senior staff to assist them in overcoming identified lack of quality management (ERO Review).”*

“More effort devoted to assessing local training needs by using user views, not assuming a ‘we know best for them’ attitude.”

*“Work alongside the polytech etc, in order to address industry shortage and keep training opportunities appropriate.”*

“Could the high school change its teaching style and courses for kids needing alternative education options?”

*“What about capitalising on outdoor education?”*

“There is a lack of advice and options for school leavers.”

*“We need a better method of identifying what our children are going to do in the workforce.”*

“High School education is well below average. Principals should be more accountable.”

*“Traditionally many West Coast/Buller children leave for higher education and work elsewhere. Care must be taken not to narrow our focus too much.”*

### **Who might help achieve this outcome....**

Education Review Office	Tai Poutini Polytech
Federated Farmers	Buller iwi and hapu
Maori education providers	Buller Principals Association
Ministry of Education	Te Puni Kokiri
Ministry of Social Development	Buller district schools
Buller District Council	Buller REAP
Buller Business Association	Work and Income NZ