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## **To the Parents and Community of Mount Aspiring College**

These are the findings of the Education Review Office's latest report on **Mount Aspiring College**.

Mt Aspiring College students enjoy the advantages of studying in one of New Zealand's most spectacular environments. Students from Years 7 to 13 learn through a variety of contexts including many experiences linked to the outdoor pursuits and tourism opportunities within the town and surrounding area. The school roll is increasing at the rate of 10% per year, putting pressure on buildings and other resources. Students and teachers take pride in their school and the achievements of individuals and groups in sporting, music and academic pursuits. At the time of the review, a music group had just won best song in the annual New Zealand-wide Rock Quest competition.

Since the last review a new principal has been appointed. He had been acting in the role for a year. The board and teachers had made good progress on implementing the recommendations from the last review. These related to the performance management system, and using teaching and assessment practices and information to better meet the needs, interests and abilities of all students.

Students do well compared with national expectations. In 2007 most students in Years 7 to 10 were at or above national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2007 100% of students achieved their numeracy credits and 94% their literacy credits towards National Certificates in Educational Achievement (NCEA). These figures are well above those for similar schools. Students gained NCEA qualifications in 2008 at a rate well above similar schools at Levels 1 and 3, and close to similar schools for Level 2.

In most of the classes ERO observed students related well with their teachers and other students. They are encouraged wherever possible to be responsible for their own learning and behaviour in line with the school's goal for self-responsibility. These values are reflected in the schools' low numbers of stand-downs and suspensions and low levels of bullying. Students are able to choose from a wide variety of options across and within subject areas.

Students ERO spoke to said that they often get individual and small group attention in class and extra help and extension when they need it. In most cases they experience a good variety of learning opportunities.

The board identified and ERO confirmed that the learning experiences for students in science need to be improved.

Since the onsite stage of the review the board has developed and begun to implement an action plan to address these concerns.

The school has many strong leaders, and opportunities are made for and taken by students and teachers to take on leadership roles and develop their potential. The collaborative approach in the senior management team means that the strengths and skills of many individuals contribute to the smooth running of the school. Trustees are knowledgeable about their role and are working to improve the governance of the school. They have reviewed a number of aspects of school operations. The next step is to make better use of student achievement information in its planning and decision-making.

### **Future Action**

ERO is confident that the board of trustees can manage the school in the interests of the students and the Crown and bring about the improvements outlined in this report.

ERO is likely to review the school again as part of the regular review cycle.

### **Review Coverage**

ERO reviews do not cover every aspect of school performance and each ERO report may cover different issues. The aim is to provide information on aspects that are central to student achievement and useful to this school.

If you would like a copy of the full report, please contact the school or see the ERO website, <http://www.ero.govt.nz>.

Isabell Sinclair Irwin *Signed*  
Area Manager  
**for Chief Review Officer**