# An EDB: What is it and why have one?

## This information is for principals, SAMs and Data Entry Managers.

## What is an EDB?

The EDB (evidential database) is a record of all students who have attended the school in recent years, showing their demographic details and achievement record, for a period of up to seven years.

It differs from the SMS in that it is a historical record that retains the records of leavers, so you can see what student achievement really looks like at your school.

An EDB holds information about student:

* demographics (e.g. NSN, gender, ethnicity, previous school, ESOL status, SEN, date of leaving/destination);
* achievements (e.g. Y9/10 PAT results, NCEA achievement), and
* perceptions (e.g. attitude/motivation and other survey data).

In addition it holds data about school processes for the period relevant to the students in the EDB and that are intended to impact on their achievement (e.g. year academic counselling was introduced, year streaming was abandoned, etc.).

## Why have an EDB?

An EDB enables you to have an overview of achievement and the factors affecting achievement over time, which includes all students who were at the school at the time.

It enables you to answer high level questions such as:

1. How many ethnic groups do we have in the school? (Uses demographic data only).
2. Are different groups experiencing school differently? (Uses demographic and perception data).
3. What is the impact of student demographic characteristics and attitudes on their learning? (Uses demographic, perception and achievement data).
4. Has the introduction of a new school policy impacted on the motivation and results of students from different ethnic groups? (Uses demographics, perceptions, achievement and school processes).

Reports on student progress can be generated and graphed, and used for discussions with the teaching staff, monthly reports to the Board of Trustees and for other interested groups.

In addition, the patterns of achievement contained in the EDB can be used to set data-informed targets for individual students which can then be aggregated to provide targets for year levels/NCEA levels/UE etc. These targets are based on what other students at this school of similar ability have achieved, and not on extrapolation or “better than last year”.

To summarise, the purpose of the EDB is to drive improvement through better use of the wealth of information that schools have about students and their learning.