

Towards equitable outcomes in secondary schools:
Good practice

May 2014



Otaki College
McAuley High School
Mount Roskill Grammar School
Opotiki College
Gisborne Boys' High School
Naenae College
Trident High School

Ko te Tamaiti te Pūtake o te Kaupapa

The Child – the Heart of the Matter



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ISBN 978-0-478-43813-0 (print)

ISBN 978-0-478-43814-7 (web)



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The Education Review Office (ERO) is an independent government department that reviews the performance of New Zealand's schools and early childhood services, and reports publicly on what it finds.



Foreword

From time to time, the Education Review Office publishes national evaluation reports that focus solely on good practice. *Towards Equitable Outcomes in Secondary Schools* is one of those reports. It showcases the successes of a small number of secondary schools that are really making a difference for their students.

A key area of concern and focus for the Government and the education sector is the current disparities between those students achieving well and those students that our education system consistently fails.

The report highlights seven secondary schools of decile 5 or below with good student engagement and achievement statistics. It describes what success looks like for their students and the consistent aspects across all seven schools that contribute to such success. These examples show that, despite wider social and economic challenges, schools and communities can work together to keep every student engaged and achieving.

The aspects of good practice highlighted in the report are nothing new – effective leadership, strong parent and community engagement, effective use and analysis of data, self review and programmes tailored to meet the needs of individual students. What makes the big difference in these schools is their culture of care and wellbeing. This culture gives their students a sense of belonging, a sense of purpose and the motivation to succeed. It binds the school and the community together and keeps the students engaged.

Students' success in education relies on many people and organisations across the community working together for the benefit of children and young people. We trust this information will help schools, educators and communities.

Di Anderson
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Education Review Office

May 2014

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Overview

Links between schools in lower income areas and high rates of suspensions and stand-downs¹ with poorer academic results² are evident in New Zealand. In keeping with international data, stand-down and suspension rates drop and achievement rises as the school decile rises.³

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)⁴ reporting recognises that many New Zealand students achieve well academically. However, there remains considerable disparity between the highest and lowest achievers. A disproportionate number of the lower achievers come from the lower decile schools. While non-school factors contribute to this outcome evidence shows that some education systems and some lower decile New Zealand schools are able to achieve more equitable outcomes for their students. Leaders, board trustees and teachers in those schools acknowledge that for every student in their school to achieve well, firstly they need to be present, engaged and motivated to learn.

This report discusses factors that contribute to students' engagement and success at secondary school. The Education Review Office (ERO) identified only nine secondary schools of decile 5 or below with more than 200 students that had good student engagement statistics and good levels of student achievement.⁵ In Term 4 of 2013, ERO visited seven⁶ of these nine schools. This report shares good practices in each of those schools.

ERO found that having relationships which focused on the wellbeing of each student underpinned the school's success in keeping students at school and engaged. Every school leader emphasised the fundamental importance of having deeply caring relationships to establish the school culture they wanted. They all used restorative practices (based on respect, empowerment, collaboration and, when necessary, healing) as the approach to build those relationships.

The principals' leadership was pivotal in successfully managing change so that the whole school community worked with a common purpose. It was clearly focused on positive outcomes for every student enrolled at the school. Trustees and school leaders were committed to relentless improvement, developing the desired culture through continually revisiting school direction, values and expectations. They carefully selected professional development and initiatives, which were then tailored to suit the school vision. The allocation of board resources appropriately supported positive outcomes for all students.

- 1 Referred to collectively as the discipline statistics. These also include the numbers of expulsions and exclusions. See Appendix 3. The discipline statistics of a school are used as an indirect indicator of student engagement.
- 2 Cavanagh, T. (2010). Restorative practices in schools: Breaking the cycle of student involvement in child welfare and legal systems. *Protecting Children* 24(4). pp. 53-60.
- 3 See Appendix 4.
- 4 The OECD based its judgements on the PISA, PIRLS and TIMMS data which is available on the Ministry of Education's website www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications.
- 5 Student achievement levels ranged from above achievement levels for their decile to close to the Better Public Services (BPS) target for 85 percent of all 18-year-olds to attain at least National Certificate of Achievement (NCEA) Level 2. Student engagement statistics were generally much better than the average for the decile range. One school was equal to the average for decile for 2012.
- 6 See Appendix 2.

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Principals ERO visited suggested that developing such a culture takes from three to ten years. Not one principal from the sample schools felt they had ‘arrived’ yet. All were still seeking ongoing improvements for students.

Leaders, teachers and trustees explored alternatives to punitive responses to undesirable behaviour. They recognised that such responses did little to re-engage students in the school community and motivate them to learn. Their vision was to focus on the holistic development of all students as young adults able to succeed, to participate in and contribute to their community. Ceasing the student’s education at their school was rarely seen as an option for dealing with behavioural issues.

A board chairman from one of the secondary schools in the sample said ‘With any exclusion, we try to make it a comma, not a full stop.’

Students ERO spoke with were confident young adults who appreciated the supportive relationships they had with their teachers. They had a clear sense of purpose and direction, taking responsibility for themselves and their actions. School leaders valued and sought their opinions, and students took considerable pride in being a member of their school community.

ERO noted that nine other secondary schools (decile five and below) with the highest discipline statistics had excluded or expelled over eight times as many students as the nine schools ERO selected for this sample. Once students are excluded or expelled it is often extremely difficult for them to re-engage with their education, have a sense of self worth, and achieve the skills and qualifications that will help them in the future.

This report shows that schools are able to use a wide variety of approaches to keep every student engaged, motivated to learn, and experience success in education. The success of all students in our education system can be achieved if more schools develop cultures of care and wellbeing for each student in their schools. Such cultures empower trustees, staff, students and whānau/family to work together to find solutions to address any problems that might hinder a student’s learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For schools

ERO recommends that **boards** focus on how well students are engaged with their learning by:

- scrutinising engagement and achievement data
- using the information to identify what approaches and resources are needed to keep every student experiencing success in education.

ERO recommends that **leaders** manage changes to establish a strong culture throughout the school where:

- expectations for every student's success are high
- relationships within and beyond the school community are carefully nurtured, respectful and supportive
- evidence and research are used to empower teachers to use and reflect on a range of approaches to effectively engage all students in learning
- professional development and interventions are carefully selected and adapted to integrate with the vision and direction of the school.

Introduction

Factors both inside and outside of school contribute to lower student engagement at school. Students from low income communities often face more barriers to learning than students from high income communities.

National data on students' achievement and engagement⁷ show that students in the lowest quintile⁸ schools are more likely to have poorer achievement levels and to be stood-down than students in the highest quintile schools.⁹ Over 80 percent of all standdowns, suspensions and exclusions occur from schools of decile 5 or below. However, these outcomes are not the norm for all lower decile schools.

Student engagement in the school community

Students' success is dependent, among other things, on students having a sense of belonging to and identifying with the school community. Issues which students have previously identified¹⁰ as leading to disciplinary measures include unclear rules, difficulties with work, poor relationships with teachers, and a mismatch with the school culture. If these exist it is hard for students to develop the sense of belonging which is so crucial to engagement and success.

Attitude, perceptions and actions of staff play a significant role in creating a nurturing ethos in schools. Actions of principals and teachers rather than student behaviours have been shown to contribute to the variation in suspension rates in schools.¹¹

How a school uses stand-downs and suspensions makes a difference to outcomes for students. Used punitively, they can alienate students, making it harder for them to re-engage with the learning community and go on to succeed.¹² Alternatively, standdowns and suspensions can be managed in a way that is therapeutic, with a problem-solving focus that raises students' self esteem, sense of worth and place in the community. This makes it easier for students to return to learning. The therapeutic approach usually involves restorative practice. It may also include a focus on academic support, helping to deal with any learning difficulty and so help the students to re-engage and manage any future learning frustrations.

Ministry of Education (Ministry) initiatives¹³ have helped to improve student engagement but have yet to eliminate the disproportionate representation in the discipline statistics of students from lower decile schools, and Māori and Pacific students.

7 Student engagement statistics is the collective term used by the Ministry of Education for the standdowns, suspensions and exclusions statistics.

8 Schools are given a decile rating based on socio-economic factors. There are ten decile groups. When these are aggregated into five groups (e.g. decile 1 and 2 together), these groups are called quintiles.

9 See Appendix 1.

10 Towl, P. (2013) Making opportunity from disappointment: Students, parents and teachers talk about stand-down. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies* 48(1): New Zealand Association for Research in Education.

11 Dharan, V H, L H Meyer and N Mincher. (2012) At the receiving end: Are policies and practices working to keep students at schools? *New Zealand Annual Review of Education* 21: 119141. Wellington: The University of Victoria. Available at www.victoria.ac.nz/education/research/nzaroe/issues-index/2011-2012/abstract_dharan.

12 Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of Practice: Learning, meaning and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

13 Ministry initiatives include Suspension reduction initiatives (SRI) 2001, Student engagement initiatives (SEI) 2003, supported by other programmes such as Kia Kaha, DARE and homework initiatives.

*Many of the current education practices are not working for a large and growing percentage of the student body – indeed they may inadvertently be serving to perpetuate alienation and underachievement for many students.*¹⁴

The Ministry has promulgated two significant initiatives aimed to develop positive school cultures. They are:

- **Restorative Practices** that build on relationships, develop a shared vision of school community and commitment to resolution, and have a solution-focused approach to problems, in contrast to a punitive one.
- **Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) School-wide**,¹⁵ introduced in 2010, and which helps schools to create positive teaching and learning environments. It focuses on staff development, sharing with students, and establishing clear expectations and consistent values.

ERO's previous national reports¹⁶ have shown that parental involvement, academic mentoring and the development of clear learning pathways are further contributors to students' sense of worth and subsequent success.

Student engagement in the classroom

*What helps me learn is a good connection between my teacher and me.*¹⁷

Learning is enhanced when structures for caring, opportunities for collaborative learning, and appreciation of diversity exist in classrooms. Effective teachers help develop strong learning communities through designing tasks that:

- are relevant to their students
- build trust and acceptance
- encourage students to support each other and solve problems together.

This approach has been shown to improve outcomes for all students by increasing their engagement and taking responsibility for their own learning.¹⁸ Students who are alienated from classroom contexts, either because these are not relevant or the students have been absent from the school, can suffer from loss of self esteem, self-discipline issues, increased avoidance behaviours, and subsequent lowered academic success.

Recent teacher professional development has focused on raising students' engagement and achievement. It recognises the need to establish caring relationships with students, to be aware of and affirm their identity as learners. It supports teachers to develop culturally responsive contexts for learning and school leaders to develop organisational structures to enable this tailoring of the curriculum.

14 Macfarlane, A H and V Margrain. (2011). He Tapuwae o Mua: Footsteps towards responsive engagement with challenging behaviour. In V.M.A.H Macfarlane (Ed.), *Responsive pedagogy: Engaging restoratively with challenging behaviour*. Wellington: NZCER.

15 See Appendix 5.

16 ERO (2010) *Secondary Schools: Promoting Pacific Student Achievement: Schools' Progress*; (2012) *Careers Information, Advice, Guidance and Education (CIAGE) in Secondary Schools*; (2013) *Pathways for future education, training and employment*; and (2013) *Making connections for Pacific learners' success*. Wellington: Education Review Office.

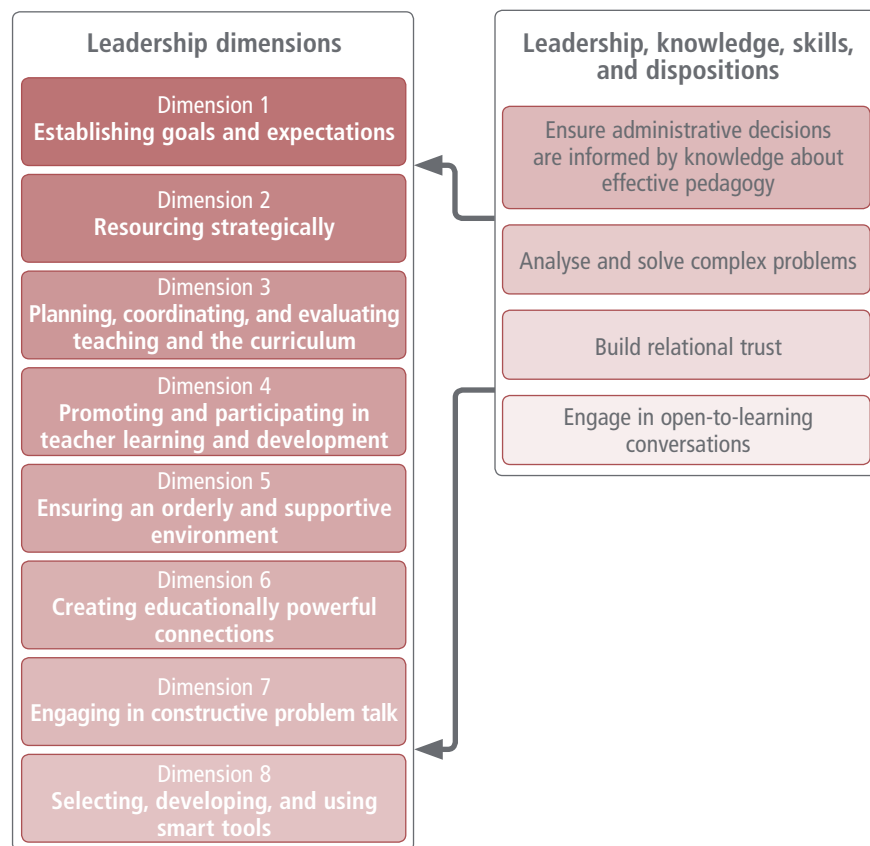
17 Cavanagh, T. (2010). Restorative practices in schools: Breaking the cycle of student involvement in child welfare and legal systems. *Protecting Children* 24(4). pp. 53-60.

18 Alton-Lee, A. (2003). *Quality Teaching for Diverse Students in Schooling: Best Evidence Synthesis*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.

Leadership

Effective leadership is the key to developing a learning community where all systems and structures work together towards a common purpose, focusing on what is best for students. Robinson *et al* identify eight key dimensions to leadership and the knowledge, skills and dispositions that underpin these.

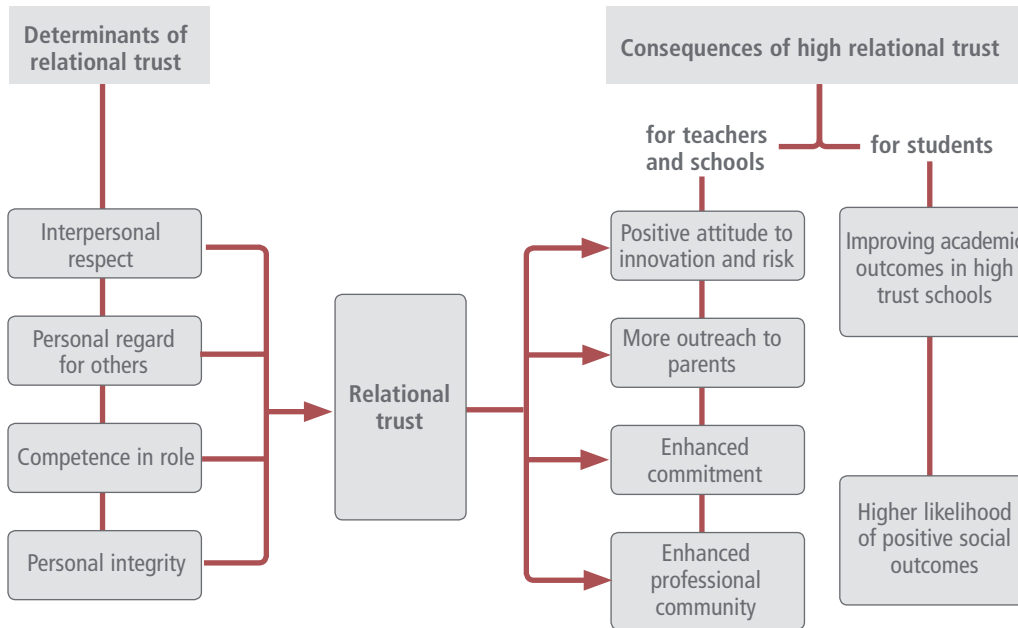
Figure 1: The knowledge, skills and dispositions underpinning the leadership dimensions ¹⁹



Principals have to be consummate change managers, always in *determined pursuit of goals* (Robinson, 2009: p.202). Developing the systems and processes that are most effective in raising student achievement across a school can be a challenge. Schools that succeed in this have developed the internal capacity to manage change. The leadership is strong and teachers work together in a climate of support and trust. The impact of such a climate on teachers' performance and students' outcomes is illustrated in the diagram below.

¹⁹ Robinson V., Hohepa M., and Lloyd, C., (2009) *School Leadership and Student Outcomes: Identifying What Works and Why Best Evidence Synthesis*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.

Figure 2: How relational trust operates in a school²⁰



It is clear that the social elements of the school have considerable importance in contributing to a successful school. Chapman suggests that if schools ignore social elements then any change tends to be short lived and not necessarily effective. Furthermore, he identifies one of the key challenges to developing sophisticated school improvement as contextualising those improvements; *matching improvement strategies to [the] individual needs of the school*.²¹

As advisor to the board of trustees, the principal keeps trustees informed of progress for students, how effective any initiatives have been, how well students are achieving, what else needs to be done, and what resources are needed to effect the improvement. The role of the principal and other leaders in the school is pivotal.

Governance

High functioning boards have reliable self-review practices, with rich data to interrogate and so determine what is effective for their students. In this context, trustees should be interrogating attendance data, disciplinary data, achievement data and leavers' destinations, paying special attention to priority learners to inform their decisions about resources needed to keep every student in the school engaged and achieving success.

20 Robinson V., Hohepa M., and Lloyd, C., (2009) *School Leadership and Student Outcomes: Identifying What Works and Why Best Evidence Synthesis*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.

21 Chapman, C. (2009, January) *From within- to between- and beyond-school improvement: A case of rethinking roles and relationships*. Paper presented at the International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement, Yogyakarta. Retrieved from www.icsei.net/index.php?id=1677.

Methodology

ERO looked for secondary schools, decile 5 and below, with more than 200 students, with low disciplinary statistics and whose National Certificate of Achievement (NCEA) Level 2 data showed good achievement levels. Of the possible 140 secondary schools with the required decile and roll size, ERO identified only nine schools that met the achievement criteria. ERO considered additional information including the most recent ERO review reports in making the selection of schools to visit. ERO was able to visit seven of the schools late in Term 4, 2013.

The sample includes single sex schools, an integrated school, and urban and provincial schools with ethnically diverse rolls ranging from 400 to 2200 students.

ERO sought to answer the following question:

What are the key attributes of the school that enable the engagement and success of students?

Findings

As part of the selection process, ERO took the 2012 exclusion and expulsion rates of the nine schools identified for the sample, and compared these with the rates of nine other secondary schools, decile 5 or below, that had the highest rates of exclusion and expulsion. The nine schools with the highest rates had excluded or expelled over eight times the number of students as the nine schools ERO identified.

Many students who are excluded or expelled, continue their education with Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu, The Correspondence School. This model of distance learning provides few opportunities for the face-to-face pastoral support which is so critical for every student to succeed and an absolute imperative for these most vulnerable students.

When looking at the sample schools, ERO found many common attributes. All schools identified, with their school community, a clear vision of what they wanted for the young people in their care. At the heart of each vision was building strong relationships with their students, enabling them to learn.

ERO found that all seven schools visited had significant strengths in the following four areas.

School culture

- Relationships formed the foundation for success and focused on a culture of care and wellbeing for students.
- Expectations for success were clearly stated and permeated the school community.
- Responsibility for problems was shared by staff, students and families/whānau.
- The responses to problems were solution-focused.

Students

- Students talked with pride about being a member of the school learning community.
- Students that ERO spoke with were confident young adults who appreciated the relationships they had with their teachers.
- They had a clear sense of purpose and direction, taking responsibility for themselves and their actions.
- Many demonstrated their commitment to the school community through their leadership in a variety of forums.
- School leaders sought and valued student opinion.

Learning

- Teachers were very well informed about and responsive to the needs and interests of each of their students.
- Carefully targeted professional learning played a key part in the ongoing improvement in the schools. Principals used Ministry initiatives²² well, tailoring them to suit the school's strategic direction.
- The schools had strong links with their community that extended the educational opportunities for their students and involved whānau in their teenager's learning.

Leadership

- The principals were crucial to the school's success and actively involved in implementing the school's vision. They were knowledgeable, skillful and exhibited the dispositions necessary for powerful leadership.²³
- The senior leaders worked effectively as a team, all having clearly defined roles according to their strengths.
- A relentless drive for ongoing improvement was informed by rich data and deep analysis of that data. Decision making was evidentially based and grounded in research. Principals had brokered strong and effective relationships in their school's community.

Principals noted that it had taken time, anything from three to ten years, to develop the school cultures that enhance student success, and it takes considerable ongoing effort and commitment to maintain those cultures. The cultures were established through the following:

Governance

- Trustees worked in close collaboration with the principal, were very well informed and allocated resources appropriately to provide an environment that supported the school's approach to learning.
- Self-review practices were strong throughout the school and contributed to sound decision-making.

Vision

- The board had a clear vision for the school that focused on the holistic development of students as young adults able to succeed, participate in, and contribute to their community.
- The vision was predicated on developing good relationships throughout the school community.

22 All schools are Restorative schools and five use Positive Behaviour for Learning. Five of the seven schools are participants in Te Kotahitanga (see Appendix 5) or He Kākano (A programme initiated in 2009 specifically for school leaders and including coaching and mentoring). These programmes increase school-wide capability regarding culturally responsive curriculum and enhance the leadership of change. The Te Kotahitanga schools use aspects of the Effective Teacher profile (see Appendix 5) as part of their appraisal tools. Principals in these schools particularly appreciated the input of the programme facilitators and mentors.

23 Robinson V., Hohepa M., and Lloyd, C., (2009) *School Leadership and Student Outcomes: Identifying What Works and Why Best Evidence Synthesis*. Wellington: Ministry of Education. See also Appendix 3 for leadership dimensions and effect sizes.

- Every principal had used sabbatical leave to research an aspect relating to their school vision. The result of their research informed practice in the school.
- The principal was a highly effective leader with a strong leadership team, trusted and with the capacity to play their part in achieving the vision.

Values and expectations

- Values and expectations were clearly promoted and reinforced in every aspect of the school.
- Transition into the school was seen as a critical point and induction programmes played a major part in students learning about what was expected of them in the school.²⁴

Communication

- Each school used their student management system (SMS) extensively, and rich qualitative and quantitative data was collected and responded to.
- Communication throughout the school was effective and responses to families/whānau were rapid.

Staff

- Trustees and school leaders were careful in appointing staff to new positions; paying particular attention that the philosophy of new employees aligned well with the school culture and expectations.
- Staff were regularly reminded of the school culture so that it was always to the fore.

Principals discussed some ongoing challenges, some of which related to their ability to readily access high quality support when they needed it. This was especially the case for at-risk students transferring to a school mid-year. ERO also heard that the provision of information from some agencies, and the quality and timeliness of support varied across regions.

²⁴ The schools in this sample, which used stand-downs and suspensions, found these tend to occur in Term 1 as Year 9 students settle into the school ways. Subsequent disciplinary actions more often involve students who have arrived at the school after the formal induction programme at the start of the year.

Examples of good practice

ERO recognises good practice in schools is not ‘one-size-fits-all’. Every school in the sample has a strong commitment to their students’ engagement and exhibited the broad characteristics identified above which lead to academic success. However, every school is different with its own contexts, features and practices.

The following examples highlight positive features and practices in each school that contribute powerfully to keeping all students present, engaged and achieving academic success. These are in addition to the broad characteristics outlined above.

TRIDENT HIGH SCHOOL, WHAKATANE

Background

Trident High School is a decile 5²⁵ co-educational secondary school in the Bay of Plenty, with a roll of approximately 1200. Students at Trident High School have consistently achieved above decile 5 and national averages in NCEA Levels 1-3. Much of the success experienced by students at Trident High School is a consequence of the strong foundation the school provides for students’ learning and achievement.

In the 1990s, Trident had a reputation for being a caring school, but its academic results had room for improvement. The principal decided that the school could have a greater focus on academic success by building on the caring foundation. He has effectively coordinated the changes that have occurred in order to achieve that.

The school motto: *Kia Manawa Nui* translates as *Be Courageous*. It challenges students, within the safe environment, to achieve excellence, develop a sense of self worth, and become motivated and responsible citizens. These aspirations are clearly seen in the school-wide emphasis on **Quality work** and **Respect for others**.

Pastoral care

The board gives priority to provide all-round care for the student community. One deputy principal has overall responsibility for pastoral care. Trustees have allocated additional resources and the school is structured so the students are supported by 10 deans; a senior leader committed to transitioning new Year 9 students; two guidance counsellors; and a dedicated Student Services Centre with a receptionist, nurse, clinics for a doctor, a physiotherapist, a sexual health nurse, and a chaplain. Trustees also employ a person who makes home visits as necessary and has additional expertise in drug rehabilitation programmes.

25 The decile rating for the school changed in 2005 from decile 3 to decile 4 in keeping with Ministry changes in criteria. It was revised again in 2008 to decile 5. This rating is an average and the school still draws from decile 1-10 socio-economic backgrounds providing a very diverse population.

The guidance team play a central part in the establishment of the overall school culture, based around the core values²⁶ of **Quality work** and **Respect for others**. The core school values are clearly expressed and include detailed statements about what they look like and sound like in practice. These provide excellent direction for both staff and students.

Teaching staff and counsellors recognise and use the school values and *The New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC) key competencies to talk with students about their actions and learning. This helps students appreciate how the competencies and values are relevant to them.

The counsellors work with teachers to familiarise them with the values, which assists them with strategies that help students to reflect on and develop their capabilities. This professional focus establishes a shared language among teachers and students that is used when having learning conversations, restorative chats and when implementing PB4L.

Students experience consistency of expectations and interactions through the school and as learners they increase their self esteem and resilience. They take responsibility for and pride in the part they play in the school community.

School culture

The school culture is one of relentless, ongoing improvement and relies on students having the pastoral and academic support they need to succeed.

The board chairman identified two key questions that drive improvement in the school. They are: ‘*How can we get these children to succeed?*’ and ‘*What can we do better?*’ This latter question, evident throughout the school in its self-review practices, is the one also used when students fail to meet expectations. The response is not about blame or punishment but one of highlighting problems to be solved. It is about the adults taking responsibility for what they can do to return the students to school and help them to become engaged with their learning and experience success.

Expectations

We believe by showing personal courage and self-belief, all students at Trident High School will achieve success. Furthermore, when individuals are respected by others and supported in their endeavours they have a greater chance of reaching their goals and gaining success. In turn, these individuals are better placed to support those around them, building courage and respect and assuring community success.

School charter

26 These align with the development of some of *The New Zealand Curriculum* key competencies.

There is no deficit thinking. All students can succeed and they are expected to do their *'best first time'*. If students are underachieving, the teacher is underachieving. If students do not achieve a minimum standard in class then they return in their own time until it is achieved. This is not a punishment. The standard is simply regarded by both teacher and student as a milestone that must be passed and accepted as such. Students appreciate the faith that teachers have in their ability to succeed. They report that it is motivating and gives them confidence to keep working.

Initiatives

Ministry initiatives

The school has used Restorative Practices since 2006 and has complemented this with PB4L since 2010. These play an important role in supporting the school values and establishing the accepted school culture.

Curriculum initiatives

The school offers a very broad curriculum. Beyond the normal opportunities,²⁷ students may opt for:

- *Te Aka Motuhake*: This is a reverse ratio classroom where 60 percent of the students are Māori to provide a different cultural dynamic in the classroom
- *A Bring Your Own Device class*: In this class, teachers can rely on students to have their own netbook or tablet and can plan lessons accordingly to include e-learning
- *A five week learning experience on Great Barrier Island*: The core curriculum and skills are taught in an authentic setting together with survival skills and experience of a range of outdoor activities
- *The Trades Academy*: This is led by Trident High School in partnership with local schools, Waiariki Institute of Technology and local businesses
- *The Service Academy*: This academy is approved by the Ministry to start in 2014
- *A forestry course*: This course was established with a local provider.

Branding and values

The school uniform and what Trident High School stands for are taken very seriously. They are seen as an important part of providing students with a sense of pride and belonging to the school. The school logo, the motto, and the school values are all very visible, from the branding on the posted envelopes containing values certificates; expectations and notices throughout the school; to the minibuses labelled with the school name, logo and *'Education on the move'*.

²⁷ Normal opportunities would cover: a good selection of courses, particularly at senior level: Secondary and Tertiary Alignment Resourced (STAR) courses to gain credits directly relevant to their career pathway courses; and a GATEWAY programme to enable workplace experience with local businesses, all while still studying at school.

School newsletters include celebration of Student of the Month, with the values they have demonstrated to earn their recognition. The values are talked about explicitly, what they look like in action, and how to build on them. Students have ownership of these values, comfortably using the language of the values in discussions with ERO. The values pervade everything.

Students

The foundation of high quality pastoral care is also seen as essential for the all-round development of the student, empowering them as active members of the school community. Student leaders talked about how they make things better from year to year and take on real responsibility in the school. Examples include:

- mentoring younger students through the Tuakana-teina programme, which they manage with guidance from a staff member
- deciding which junior students receive the two most prestigious prizes, awarded annually at senior prize-giving. Deans nominate the students for the awards, but it is the student leaders who interview the nominees, focusing on how they demonstrate the school values, and make the final decision.

Teachers

Teachers know the students and care for their achievement. They make learning relevant and use high quality data to respond to students' individual strengths and needs.

Teachers mentor students, helping them to set goals and establish suitable pathways towards meaningful qualifications. Parents are involved in these decisions; formal invitations to attend parent meetings are posted out, followed by a summary of the outcomes of the interview after the meeting. Students report that these three-way meetings are important to their success.

Deans at each year level monitor each student's progress towards NCEA achievements, intervening where necessary.

Journey to Trident

The induction of staff new to the school includes a symbolic trip from Ruatoki²⁸ to Whakatane, hosted at several marae en route. This enables staff to fully appreciate where many of the students come from each day and what they bring to their schooling.

²⁸ Ruatoki is in the tribal area of Tuhoe, located some 20 kilometres west of Whakatane.

The school sets an annual focus for teachers to promote learning. This focus is in keeping with the values and is intended to meet the needs identified by the leadership team. The leadership team provides teachers with professional development and strategies to engage students as active members of the learning community and so raise student achievement. In the past the foci have included:

- Purpose – Performance – Pride
- Engaged Active Learners
- Hauora – Resilience, Thoughtful, Resilient Learners
- A Persistent and Consistent Approach – Best First Time.

In addition, the school-wide targets form a part of every teachers' appraisal and are included in the agenda of every formal meeting. This strategy ensures that key aspects for consideration are kept to the fore and staff are not distracted from them by the day-to-day administration of the school.

MOUNT ROSKILL GRAMMAR SCHOOL, AUCKLAND

Background

Mount Roskill Grammar School (MRGS) is a decile 4, co-educational secondary school with a roll of 2200. The school has a culturally diverse student population, over 50 percent of whom are Asian, (mostly Indian and Chinese) and almost a quarter are Pacific students. The school shares a campus with a primary and an intermediate school.

MRGS leaders identify five linked features of the school as being key factors in '*engaging students for success*'. These include:

- clarity of expectations for students and staff
- maintaining a climate that is conducive to learning
- growing leadership capacity in teachers and students
- enhancing teaching
- improving connections with the community.

Capacity building, teaching and community links are always sharply focused on how these improve outcomes for students.

Expectations

Staff at MRGS hold the belief that students can succeed and they will because the culture nurtures them to do so. MRGS has a central philosophy focusing on positive relationships through clear expectations of respect for others.

We don't have rules, we have expectations of respect. We talk about people going outside the expectations, not breaking the rules. Deputy principal

This philosophy is supported by the underpinning values of manaakitanga and whanaungatanga.²⁹ The expectations are actively promoted, using a range of opportunities and practices in the classroom and across the school.

Teachers and school leaders hold high expectations for the achievement of all students. These expectations extend to students' personal presentation, and uniform is seen as being important in developing group identity and pride.

Learning climate

The school has an extensive pastoral network with 10 deans, four guidance counsellors and three nurses. Students are grouped in vertical form classes³⁰ and all teachers have a responsibility for the holistic wellbeing of their students, to support them to be *'fit and ready to learn.'* The board's use of funding reflects this priority by resourcing 11 additional staff,³¹ notably in the pastoral care area.

A restorative ethos, developed over 14 years, underpins the focus on relationships. More than 50 staff are now trained in restorative practices. A commitment to restorative practice is a key criterion when appointing deans. When students fail to meet learning or behavioural expectations the response is *'What can we do differently to solve this? How can we return this student to learning?'* Students now comfortably use the language of restorative practices – *'our kids get it.'* Staff have integrated PB4L with the restorative approach, adapting it, as with other external initiatives, to meet the particular context and ethos of the school.

Student safety remains paramount and school leaders do not hesitate to take decisive action if behaviour presents a risk for other students.

Leadership capacity

Distributed leadership is a characteristic of the school, with a clear focus on growing leadership capacity. The philosophy is that *'leadership is about influencing another's thoughts or actions; anyone can lead.'* Teachers are supported through a mentoring/coaching programme and aspiring leaders participate in a leadership group to develop potential.

29 Manaakitanga: being caring and supportive of each other and Whanaungatanga: taking a genuine interest in the person to build their capacity.

30 Form classes made up of students from every year level.

31 Staff appointed over and above those funded by the Ministry's Full Time Teacher Equivalents (FTTE) allocation.

The principal's professional learning fellowship had a positive impact on the school's ongoing development. In 2011, he investigated growing teacher leadership through staff professional development. A revised model of this, using lead teams, is now well established at MRGS. Examples of the teams include a writing lead team, e-learning lead team, data lead team, and mentoring lead team. In 2014, a sabbatical will focus on modern learning environments.

Leadership is not viewed as resting only with the adults. The counsellors support a wide range of student-led initiatives that promote student resilience and wellbeing. The student leaders confidently described how these initiatives work and how valuable the support groups were for those involved.

- *Peer mediation*: The school has 240 trained peer mediators.
- *Peer sexuality support group*: Nine senior students are trained to give individual support to students and also assist with the Year 10 health classes.
- *Body Image*: Student leaders are trained to provide peer education and support, and to teach workshops in the Year 10 health programme.
- *Working for Change*: Trained student leaders promote an awareness of the effects of violence and help other students to cope with its aftermath.
- *Skittles*: This is a support group for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex students run by the students for students.

Teaching

Leaders articulate a clear philosophy for teaching and learning, '*every learner can succeed and will.*' Teachers follow an inquiry-based approach to teaching and learning. They use achievement information to identify students in need of support and then provide targeted support.

There is a strong focus on priority learners at all levels of the school. A specific process supports Māori students, with nine staff, mostly deans, participating in a kaupapa of culturally responsive mentoring. Students are able to receive further support through participation in school-based homework centres, including separate centres to cater for the particular needs of Māori and Pacific students who are identified as at risk of disengaging.

High quality self review, informed by evidence and research, is an integral part of all initiatives. Each student's progress towards acquiring NCEA credits is closely monitored and excellent reporting keeps students fully informed about what they have achieved and what they have yet to do, including for course endorsements.³² Achievement data (with other aspects of student wellbeing) are closely monitored

through the use of the student management system and teachers are expected to respond promptly to this data at an individual, course, departmental, and school level.

Leaders have an ongoing focus on improving teacher effectiveness. Staff are encouraged and supported to trial and use innovative practices in their classrooms. These include creative uses of information and communications technology (ICT)³³ and flipped classrooms.³⁴ Leaders promote initiatives that have clear expectations and yet are sufficiently flexible for staff to tailor implementation to the strengths and the needs of their students. All staff are expected to use the self-review process (based on Clarke-Peter model of Professional Growth)³⁵ as part of their own inquiry into their teaching.

Extensive use is made of the lead teams to grow '*pools of quality*', teacher-inquiry initiatives to improve aspects of teaching practice. These '*pools*' eventually interconnect, some leading to school-wide goals which further enhance teacher effectiveness. Staff involvement in improvements has meant that they 'own' the changes and are implementing them in the classrooms. This uptake is monitored through the appraisal process.

All teachers are required to mentor five students. Teachers are supported by professional learning and development (PLD) that provides clear guidelines and expectations for the process. Each student is assisted to select a meaningful learning pathway and to develop goals that are then broken into manageable next steps.

Cross-campus collaboration

All three schools on the Mount Roskill campus work together for the benefit of each of their students and ensure they are well supported as they transition through the schools. All share a common goal to raise student achievement at NCEA Level 2 to 85 percent. Achieving this goal is strengthened by a cross-campus initiative known simply as MERGE. The MERGE coordinator leads the process supported by a Pasifika liaison officer, a campus Māori achievement coordinator and a campus kaumātua.

Developing and maintaining a collaborative learning environment is a priority for the three schools and is assisted by cross-campus curriculum lead teams. Currently, writing is a particular focus. Teachers are developing a consistent language for the teaching of writing across the schools. The common language helps students' learning as they progress from year to year and between the schools.

The collaborative learning culture is further fostered by:

- cross-campus, annual teacher meetings that include student speakers

33 Such as using QR codes, YouTube and Facebook.

34 'Flipped classrooms' refer to classrooms where teachers use videos or similar to pre-teach ideas to students outside of class time then use class time for collaborative work and individual tutoring to master concepts.

35 See Appendix 7.

- the development of a campus-wide Māori education plan targeting Māori student achievement
- teacher aides and learning support assistants meeting each term to share effective practice.

MERGE and whānau involvement

MERGE also encompasses a wide range of cross-campus, student-centred activities. These activities are central to a MRGS goal of increasing parent/whānau participation in their child's learning. The three schools share a campus whare. A Māori graduation evening, attended by students from all schools, celebrates students' transition between schools and ultimately back to whānau. This latter initiative presents older students as strong role models and has seen a significant increase in retention of Māori and whānau in the life of the schools. Other cross-campus activities include a concert and Matariki celebrations. Leaders identify that growing parent/whānau participation is still in its early stages.

Connection with the wider community

Students benefit from the support of external agencies providing specialised programmes for students at risk. Students selected for two of these programmes are often identified while still at the intermediate school and continue their participation during the first year at the high school. One aim is to provide students with a consistent person who traverses the four social worlds of the students (school, home, peers and broader community) and who supports students to move between those worlds. These external mentors have ongoing informal interactions with their students across a range of social, sporting and learning situations. *'We are there not to cure but to care.'*

Another initiative, 'Circle of Life', runs for one hour a week. It is designed to build resilience. Many students begin the programme during their time at intermediate. At Year 10 a further programme reinforces the messages explored in the Year 9 programmes for those students identified at risk of disengaging with learning.

Other community supported initiatives include:

- a police project that caters for students at risk of being involved in gangs to develop their awareness of potential legal consequences
- a regular breakfast programme, facilitated by external sponsorship, and opportunities for students to access and prepare food for themselves in breaks during the school day.

OTAKI COLLEGE, KAPITI

Background

Otaki College is a co-educational secondary school, catering for students from Year 7, with just over 400 students. Forty-three percent of students on the roll are Māori and 44 percent are Pākehā. It is in the rural town of Otaki and is rated as a decile 4 school.

Relationships and community connections

Everything that happens at the college is underpinned by the relationships built up within the college and between the college and the community.

Change management

When the current principal joined the college in 2007 as deputy principal in charge of discipline, little data was recorded; attendance, disciplinary statistics and achievement levels were not good, particularly for Māori students. The Ministry's Pouwhakataki³⁶ interviewed every Māori student in the college and it was clear that Māori students did not feel connected to the college and that this contributed to their poor levels of engagement and achievement. This was the impetus for change.

The college introduced Te Kawa o Te Ako³⁷ and Ngāti Raukawa tikanga which now underpin college events. These, together with new Māori carvings and a college marae, have all resulted in an increased sense of belonging for Māori students and their whānau.

The principal, working with the staff, explored the student and teacher behaviours that were hindering learning and together they identified strategies for changing them. Staff ownership of the problem and involvement in developing the solutions helped to establish a culture of care within the college. The culture they developed is solution-focused, strength-based and aims to keep everyone's mana intact. This culture has resulted in increased accountability (staff and students) for achievement throughout the college. Students are now more focused in class and teachers are able to spend more time teaching. Teachers are also more open to individual and peer-review feedback in appraisal, which further strengthens the professional community. The change has taken time and is ongoing. Stable staffing helps to embed these practices.

The charter aspirations are for every student to: be Respectful; to have Otaki College pride; be an Active learner and be Responsible (ROAR). These are clearly

36 Liaison person between the school and the Māori community.

37 Translates as "Ways of Learning".

evident in the college and are supported through the college's implementation of Restorative Practices and participation in PB4L and He Kākano.³⁸ The college was an early adopter of these programmes, as well as the Student Engagement Initiatives; recognising the value of the support available to meet their intentions. The principal especially appreciated the impact of the PLD facilitators working with the college.

Data is well recorded and staff are encouraged to make full use of the student management system: *'If it's not on KAMAR, it didn't happen.'* This increased staff accountability, enabled transparency of processes, and staff can now rely on comprehensive information about the student concerned.

Maintaining connectivity with families and the community is seen as a critical part of the success of Restorative Practices. Phone calls from parents are returned with urgency. Responses to situations as they arise are rapid and often involve the community beyond the college.

ERO spoke with students who had experienced suspension or stand-down. They, and their parents, spoke appreciatively of the experience and the support they received. These students said they were now far more focused on their learning.

Community

The principal has close personal ties with local iwi and was elected chairman of Te Kahui Matua, the college's whānau advisory board, long before he became principal at the college. He and his deputy principals often make home visits and, if appropriate, restorative meetings take place on the marae. Local iwi use the college facilities for classes which many staff attend. Parents and whānau are now more likely to come into college to talk with staff and are more engaged in their teenager's learning and co-curricular activities in the college.

The principal has a longstanding and extremely effective working partnership with the local police and their sergeant. They share a common goal to have youth engaged in and succeeding at school. The sergeant and the principal communicate openly with each other and recognise the significance of the college as part of the wider community. Any incident in the community involving students is seen as the business of the college. Similarly, the sergeant and his officers are frequently involved in restorative conversations initiated by the college. Interagency meetings work well in supporting the college community.

38 He Kākano – A programme initiated in 2009 specifically for school leaders and including coaching and mentoring.

Links with local industry, businesses and tertiary education providers extend students' learning and employment pathways. The Gateway programme strengthens pathways for students from college to further education, training or employment. Many and varied local, real-life opportunities engage students and promote their learning.

One such opportunity is the collaboration with the Otaki Clean Tech Centre. Year 12 chemistry students participate in a Clean Tech project to develop sustainable bio fuel.

All these initiatives have strengthened the relationship with the community, to the advantage of both the students and the community. The board see the development of the college as a community hub as a high priority.

NAENAE COLLEGE, LOWER HUTT

Background

Naenae College is a decile 2, co-educational secondary school, located in Lower Hutt. The roll is nearly 750 and is ethnically diverse, including more than 40 different nationalities. Māori students make up 31 percent of the school roll and 22 percent of the roll are Pacific students.

Te Whānau Tahi and timetabling

In 2007, a new principal was appointed and a new board of trustees elected, taking over from two statutory managers, appointed by the Ministry in 2004 and 2005. There remained considerable concerns about student safety and poor levels of academic achievement.

The board and principal made the conscious decision to improve the social interactions in the college; to promote core values that recognised the diversity of the school population as a strength and to build on that. To maximise students' academic achievement they focused on developing a college characterised by solution-focused attitudes, strong teamwork based on culturally respectful relationships and suitable behavioural management strategies to support those.

Te Whānau Tahi – The United Family

Te Whānau Tahi (the name of the college marae and kapa haka group) and the

school motto of *Kia Ihi, Kia Maru* (*Be strong, Be steadfast in your identity*) reflect the important concepts that are a daily part of the college. They acknowledge the bicultural and multi-cultural make-up of the college community. Everyone is valued, everyone is important and the tenet is that all can respect and learn from each other.

Te Whānau Tahī is about all students being engaged and achieving. It makes use of a Māori philosophical approach. At its heart is how people in the college community interact with each other. Each interaction is clearly identified and staff are provided with suggestions of how that translates into their actions.

The interactions are:

- *Whanaungatanga*: taking an interest in the person, promoting self management
- *Manaakitanga*: being caring and supportive of each other
- *Rangatiratanga*: providing opportunities for leadership
- *Kotahitanga*: learning to work together
- *Pūmanawatanga*: nurturing a positive and respectful atmosphere in the classroom.

Initiatives that have supported the development of Te Whānau Tahī include:

- *Multicultural day*: when each one of the 44 nationalities that make up the college is recognised, celebrated and its flag displayed in the school hall
- *Ako*: reciprocal learning and teaching in a spirit of partnership and acknowledging the richness of what students bring to the classrooms
- *High expectations*: the absolute belief that college can and will make a difference for students, regardless of socio-economic status or other perceived deficit. Key goals include raising attendance, retention, engagement and achievement (AREA)
- *Te Whānau Tahī*: also the name given to the programme to raise the levels of achievement for Māori and Pacific students. The programme draws on the work of Te Kotahitanga, He Kākano and Ako Panuku³⁹ contracts
- *Staff professional learning*: focused on cultural capital so teachers can appreciate, value and use that capital as the basis for extended learning
- *The Rock and Water programme*: delivered to Year 9 and 10 students, through the Health curriculum. This programme raises student self belief, extends social connections, empowers students, and defines expectations for ‘how we behave’ at Naenae College

³⁹ Ako Panuku is a Ministry programme initiated in 2009. The goal of Ako Panuku is to support Māori teachers in ways that enhance their professionalism, and acknowledge the contribution they make to education and to the achievement of Māori students.

- *Regular promotion of values:* throughout the college systems, clear and focused paperwork and professional learning.

Senior leaders are well aware that changes in a school community evolve over time. They carefully monitor progress towards their goals, refining processes as they grow.

Timetabling

Senior leaders recognise that Naenae College students respond well when good relationships are established within the school community. To encourage this, changes have been made to the timetable, creating time for teachers to develop more meaningful learning relationships with their students.

- *100 minute periods:* One of these takes place every day and provides teachers with the opportunity to be more flexible in their teaching; for example to use the inquiry learning approach, to engage in deeper classroom discussions, or to work more with students one-on-one.
- *40 minute rōpū⁴⁰ sessions:* Four of these each week allow Learning Advisors (LA) to deliver the LA programme that reinforces restorative practices together with the standards set around AREA and PB4L goals. Learning Advisors monitor student progress and guide them on their learning journey through Naenae College. They are the first point of contact between whānau and the school.
- *Professional learning:* One morning each week staff have an hour timetabled for professional development. Everyone participates in the professional learning programme to build toward a vibrant, literate learning community in the college.

GISBORNE BOYS' HIGH SCHOOL, EAST COAST

Background

Gisborne Boys' High School (GBHS) is a secondary school, decile 3, located in the provincial city of Gisborne. The roll of 750 boys, including 63 percent of students of Māori descent.

Tū Tāne and learning initiatives

Tū tāne – Stand a man

Senior leaders decided that one way to improve the overall performance of students at GBHS was to increase the boys' engagement both in the school and in their learning. They wanted to achieve this by improving the boys' sense of self

⁴⁰ Rōpū are year groups of 16-20 students, each with an LA who stays with the same students throughout their schooling. Year 12 and 13 students act as mentors for the junior rōpū.

worth, their ability to actively contribute to the community and develop their sense of responsibility for it. They decided to do this through a values education approach, actively promoting perseverance, loyalty, respect, courage and honesty. These values are supported by the school's involvement in Te Kotahitanga and Restorative Practices professional learning.

Senior leaders identified Year 10 students as being at particular risk of not succeeding in school. They noted this was the year when many boys seemed to have poor self esteem, exhibit challenging behaviours and disengage from learning. The boys are often exposed to negative media images of teenagers and it is a time when they will test the limits of authority. *'Fourteen year old boys will argue with a road sign,'* said one leader.

The Tū Tāne programme was developed to instil the school values and help a boy develop into a responsible young man with a strong sense of himself and his place in the community. The programme is designed⁴¹ to be a series of rites of passage into manhood and includes:

- seven key stages,⁴² each with its own ceremony
- practical and theoretical lessons
- strong links with the community, including support from the Gisborne Police who provide mentors for the Year 10 classes
- *Tāne Uetika*, the mentor ceremony⁴³ where each boy has a 'good man' to stand for him.

Work with the students in Tū Tāne complements the work with teachers in Te Kotahitanga; providing both groups with tools to establish mutually respectful and productive relationships throughout the school.

ERO spoke with a student about his experience of being suspended. He said the principal *'listened to me'* and that after he returned to school support was put in place to reintegrate him into learning. He described *'getting on well'* with four teachers, including the one he had defied.

Senior students are now *'the upholders of the values'* established in the school leading younger students as mentors and by example. The first group of students to participate in Tū Tāne were in Year 13 in 2013. They were described by the principal as the most connected, most respectful and best prefect group he had experienced in his time at the school. Stand-down and suspension statistics have dropped dramatically since the introduction of the programme in 2009.

41 Drawing from Steve Biddulph's work and *The Rite Journey*. See www.theritejourney.com.au/.

42 These focus on personal identity, relationships, societal attitudes and values, identity, sensitivity and respect, challenges, and social/cultural factors.

43 The school has achieved in excess of 95% attendance at this ceremony. Boys will have their father, uncle, member of the extended whānau, policeman or teacher stand for them.

Learning initiatives

Senior leaders have introduced several key initiatives that clearly support each boy's engagement and success in their learning. The main ones are:

- *The Schools of Learning:*⁴⁴ The establishment of four schools of learning has meant students stay on at school as fully engaged members of the learning community. The range of opportunities meets students' learning strengths and needs onsite.
- *The whakairo class:*⁴⁵ This class operates as a multi-level class, catering for students in Years 11 to 13. Students can work toward achieving a National Certificate in Whakairo. Students are engaged in their carving, learning in an emotionally and culturally secure environment.

The Head of Māori Studies is critical to the success of the whakairo class, and indeed for significant increases in student numbers studying te reo Māori. He designed a programme that builds on students' strengths, celebrates achievements and enables academic successes.

Occasionally a Year 9 or Year 10 student may join the class for a short period. This is used as a 'time out' from other classes, allowing tuakana-teina relationships to develop where the senior students help to settle the junior students back on track and also gives the younger students something to aspire to in Year 11.

- *Achievement across the curriculum:* The Head of Māori Studies recognises the learning occurring in the whakairo class and sees opportunities to transfer that learning into other curriculum areas where students can gain NCEA credits. For example: students' descriptions of their work can be extended to gain NCEA credits in Literacy; design work completed can be used towards achievement standards in Graphics and Visual Arts, and skills learnt are directly transferrable to the School of Construction.

44 The School of Construction, the School of Catering and Hospitality, the School of Outdoor Pursuits and the School of Mechanical Engineering.

45 Whakairo - Māori traditional art of carving in wood, stone or bone.

MCAULEY HIGH SCHOOL, AUCKLAND

Background

McAuley High School is a decile 1, Catholic, integrated secondary school for girls, located in Otahuhu, South Auckland. Eighty-eight percent of the roll of 688 students are Pacific students. In keeping with the ethos of the Sisters of Mercy, McAuley High School aims to provide an education that *enables young people to rise above the barriers of poverty and to achieve to their potential regardless of their background.*

The tone in the school is respectful and purposeful. The girls achieve high levels of success academically. Their achievement rate of 85.2% for NCEA Level 2 in 2012 was well above the figure for decile 1 schools (58.8%), above the national figure for girls (78.2%), and exceeded the Better Public Service (BPS) target of 85 percent of all 18-year-olds achieving NCEA Level 2.

Community links and resourcefulness

Community

McAuley High School has extremely effective systems in place to build links with the community and gain a deep understanding of the backgrounds and circumstances of its students. Senior leaders act on the information gained to ensure that all students arrive at the school in full uniform, fully equipped and ready to learn. When students start school they already have a sense of belonging and wear their uniform with pride.

Strong links with the community are established in many ways.

- *Meetings:* The principal or senior leaders and Year 9 student ambassadors visit the local Catholic churches and each of the 26 feeder schools. The school chaplain visits the homes of many girls coming to the school. Invitations to meetings are posted to all families and followed up with phone calls, resulting in 90 percent attendance at meetings in Years 9, 11, 12 and 13.⁴⁶ Responses to parental contact are quick with the preference being that they result in face-to-face meetings.
- *Staffing:* The board appointed Samoan and Māori liaison personnel. The head of the Samoan department leads a Malaga trip to Samoa every two years. This includes teachers, girls and their mothers, and helps to develop a keen understanding of the girls' culture.

⁴⁶ The principal reports that parents do not seem to place so much importance on attending the Year 10 meetings.

Where possible, the principal employs staff to reflect the ethnicities and the identified needs of the community. The school has Pacific language speakers on staff who are often the first point of contact for families.

- *Role models:* Past pupils are invited back to the school as aspirational role models. Senior students talk at parents' meetings to explain what works for them and what their parents do to support their learning.

The school maintains a positive relationship with the Police, having an officer as a regular presence on campus. Initially this role was to help curb violence in all South Auckland schools. The current, visible presence now helps to provide students with an excellent role model who can help and support them, and also bridges the gap between the community and the police.

Resourcefulness

The board and senior management have led change over the past 10 years. Previously, the school had stand-downs and suspensions due to physical violence. Overall student achievement was poor. The school needed to focus on making the school a secure place to be so that work could then be done on raising achievement. The success of this is evident in the academic results that exceed the BPS target and very low number of stand-downs and suspensions.

Good use was made of funding from the Ministry, tagged to address gang issues. This and the subsequent work with the community to transition the girls and their families into the school culture have contributed to the safe environment for students.

The trustees and proprietor's representatives supported professional learning that resulted in teachers moving away from deficit thinking to holding high expectations for each student's success and knowing that they can make a difference to student outcomes. The carefully targeted resourcing and vision of the board has enabled senior leaders to attend key conferences overseas. On their return they worked together to apply their learning to effect change tailored to their school.

The principal spends a significant amount of time accessing additional resources and funding to support students' wellbeing and learning. She has raised considerable sums of money to pay for uniforms, trips, equipment, and lunches so that girls from the most disadvantaged backgrounds can participate in their education on an equal footing with their peers. She actively promotes students for growth opportunities

such as the Prime Minister's Youth Programme and Future Leaders' programme, and sources substantial scholarships for school leavers going on to further study. One of the office staff, working closely with management, discretely administers welfare payments to those students who need support.

OPOTIKI COLLEGE, BAY OF PLENTY

Background

Opotiki College is a decile 1, co-educational, secondary school based in the provincial town of Opotiki. It has a roll of nearly 450 students and 83 percent are Māori.

The language of learning

School leaders recognised that focusing primarily on each individual student can make a difference to their outcomes. They quote the findings of the ERO report *Increasing Educational Achievement in Secondary Schools* (August 2013) and the notion that *every child deserves a champion: an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists they become the best they can possibly be.*⁴⁷

As a result of their focus, school leaders targeted the following:

- individualised learning and support for each student
- careful tracking and monitoring of each student's achievement
- positive relationships developed with each student and their families
- robust review and improvement of teaching and support initiatives.

Leaders made subtle but significant changes across the school. For example: a student's poor attendance was no longer a problem in itself but seen as a barrier to learning. The 'champion' adult in that student's life would explore the problems leading to the absences and often, when these were fully understood, a solution could be found and the student re-engaged with their learning.

Learning (across all curriculum areas) is now the primary focus. Changes to the structures and to the language used around the school reflect this emphasis.

- Heads of Departments are now Leaders of Learning (LOL), form teachers are Learning Advisors and form classes are Learning Advisories.

⁴⁷ Pierson, R. See www.ted.com/talks/rita_pierson_every_kid_needs_a_champion.html.

- Class times are now 100 minutes long,⁴⁸ providing three classes a day. This allows more time for teachers to focus on learning strategies in the context of the subject being studied.
- Learning Advisories meet twice a week for 100 minutes and twice for ten minutes. Learning Advisors work from a Kete Āwhina handbook. This is a handbook containing comprehensive material to define expectations and guide practices.

The Learning Advisor is the academic and pastoral mentor for each of their students and remains with them as their guide through their time at Opotiki College. The Learning Advisor has 16-20 students from different year levels and acts as a support network for these students. The Learning Advisor is responsible for a variety of aspects involving relationship building and care for their students, including:

- tracking the learning of each student across all subjects
- working with students, either individually or in groups, to maximise their learning
- academic counselling to determine, with students and whānau, the most appropriate learning pathway and qualifications for each student (attendance at these parent teacher meetings has risen from 20 to 80 percent since the counselling started)
- setting goals with students, determining the steps needed to achieve them, and then monitoring progress towards the goals
- leading learning about the school values: what it means to be respectful, responsible and resilient
- counselling students and having restorative conversations or conferences as necessary.

Students spoken to particularly appreciate the learning support provided to them as senior students.

Additional support is provided for students identified at particular risk of not achieving. The support may vary, including providing morning tea to a group of boys. This is an incentive for them to attend school, improves their ability to focus on learning and enables key staff to mentor the boys during each day.

Accurate collection of data, its analysis, and strong self review are essential to the success of the processes within the school. The principal and senior leaders are well aware that improvements are a work in progress and intend making refinements in 2014 to further enhance practices throughout the school.

As in the other schools, the student management system and its everyday, efficient use plays a central role in monitoring the success of students and of initiatives, and in supporting good communication throughout the school.

⁴⁸ This is a relatively new initiative and self review indicates the need to refine the timetable to enable teachers to meet with their subject classes more frequently than a 15 period week allows.

Conclusion

All of these schools are effectively keeping students at school and engaged in their learning. They are demonstrating that exciting learning communities can be built over time; communities that provide all students with a sense of belonging, a sense of purpose and the motivation to succeed.

All of these schools believe that each of their students can and will succeed, and that it is their job to help them to do so; no matter what challenges may present themselves, there is a way. Staff and students work together to succeed, supported through appropriate resourcing from trustees, strong senior leadership and whānau involvement.

These schools are places of learning for all members of the community: trustees, principals, senior leaders, teachers, parents, whānau, but above all for students. No one aspect makes them succeed, they are a sum of all their parts. Those parts are held together by a strong vision, a vision owned and upheld by the whole community. Each community is built on a foundation of care; respectful and truly caring relationships exist between the members of the school.

It takes excellent leadership, extending beyond the principal through to key personnel in the school, to achieve this coherence, to manage change and to maintain the momentum and commitment to continuous improvement. Members of the community are empowered and energised. High relational trust exists in the schools, staffing is stable and the passion for young people and their learning is a tangible characteristic of the schools.

These schools have an unswerving focus on each student's learning and hence to improving their outcomes. Students are the heart of the school. Senior leaders in the school make extensive use of the student management system's capabilities to suit their needs. Data, both qualitative and quantitative, is extremely well recorded. Teachers, senior leaders and the board engage with this data, analysing it to identify needs, and to monitor progress and achievements across all levels of the school. Such scrutiny leads to sound self-review processes, informed both by evidence and research, and decisions are made that better tailor programmes and initiatives to meet the needs of individual students and the school.

Students in these schools are respected and empowered as learners. They achieve sound academic qualifications and are nurtured with a strong set of values to take into the world beyond school. All of this is achieved despite the fact that so many of their students come from low income families and is clearly against the trends shown for lower decile schools. Such respect, empowerment and success should be the right of all students in all New Zealand schools.

Recommendations

For schools

ERO recommends that **boards** focus on how well students are engaged with their learning by:

- scrutinising engagement and achievement data
- using the information to identify what approaches and resources are needed to keep every student experiencing success in education.

ERO recommends that **leaders** manage changes to establish a strong culture throughout the school where:

- expectations for every student's success are high
- relationships within and beyond the school community are carefully nurtured, respectful and supportive
- evidence and research are used to empower teachers to use and reflect on a range of approaches to effectively engage all students in learning
- professional development and interventions are carefully selected and adapted to integrate with the vision and direction of the school.

Appendix 1: Ministry data showing achievement and discipline statistics

Table 1: Ministry of Education: Qualification achieved by Year 12 students, 2011*

Decile rating	NCEA Level 2		No qualification	
	Number of students	%	Number of students	%
1	1116	46	723	30
2	1832	58	775	24
Lowest quintile	2948	52	1498	27
3	1877	62	625	21
4	3158	61	1073	21
5	3814	70	986	18
Decile 5 and below	14745	59	5680	23
9	5509	80	596	9
10	5418	82	485	7
Highest quintile	10927	81	1081	8
National totals	37979	68	8814	16

* At time of writing this data is listed as provisional and 2012 data was not available. The use of % refers to the percentage of total students in the decile, quintile or total group referred to. All percentage figures are to the nearest whole number.
Source: www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/schooling/senior-student-attainment/ncea-attainment/ncea-qualifications-attainment (24 Jan 2014)

Table 2: Ministry of Education: National student discipline statistics, 2012

Stand-downs	Suspensions		Exclusions		Expulsions	
	Number of students**	%	Number of students	%	Number of students	%
	1277	2.4	294	0.6	109	0.2
	2386	4.8	490	0.8	143	0.2
	3663	3.6	784	0.7	252	0.2
	1670	3.1	329	0.6	99	0.2
	2256	3.5	520	0.8	189	0.3
	2094	3.0	453	0.6	164	0.2
	13346	3.4	2870	0.7	956	0.2
	829	0.9	154	0.2	47	0.1
	686	0.7	109	0.1	38	0.0
	1515	0.8	263	0.2	85	0.1
	16712	2.5	3357	0.5	1117	0.2

** Figures are for total observed stand-downs, suspensions and exclusions (expulsions are too few to record as percentage) and relate to all state and state integrated schools. Most occur in the 13-15 year age bracket. The use of % refers to the percentage of total students in the decile, quintile or total group referred to. All percentage figures are to one decimal place. Source: www.educationcounts.govt.nz/indicators/main/student-engagement-participation/80346 (24 January 2014)

Appendix 2: School profile data

Schools in sample

School	Decile rating	School type	Location	Roll number as at July 2013	Percentage Ethnic makeup as at July 2013 <i>Showing only those percentages greater than 5 (whole numbers)</i>	
McAuley High School	1	Secondary (Years 9-15) Integrated Girls' school	South Auckland	688	Māori	6
					Pasifika	88
Opotiki High School	1	Secondary (Years 9-15) Coeducational	Opotiki	488	Māori	83
					Pākehā	14
Naenae College	2	Secondary (Years 9-15) Coeducational	Lower Hutt	745	Māori	31
					Pasifika	22
					Asian	12
					Pākehā	18
					Other	7
Gisborne Boys High School	3	Secondary (Years 9-15) Boys' school	Gisborne	756	Māori	63
					Pākehā	30
Mt Roskill Grammar School	4	Secondary (Years 9-15) Coeducational	South Auckland	2209	Māori	6
					Pasifika	22
					Asian	54
					Pākehā	11
Otaki College	4	Secondary (Years 7-15) Coeducational	Otaki	434	Māori	43
					Pasifika	7
					Pākehā	44
Trident High School	5	Secondary (Years 9-15) Coeducational	Whakatane	1193	Māori	49
					Pākehā	48

Appendix 3: Stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions and expulsions

The Education Amendment Act⁴⁹ (the Act) allows for schools to stand-down, suspend, exclude or expel students from a state school.⁵⁰ The Act's purpose is to provide the school with a range of responses when students' behaviour may result in serious harm or constitute a harmful or dangerous example to others. The intent is to deal with students in a way that is fair and minimises disruption to their learning. Every stand-down, suspension, exclusion and expulsion must be reported to the Ministry of Education. Students under 16 years of age may be removed or excluded from a school indefinitely, whereas if a student over 16 years of age is denied access to the school they are deemed to be expelled. Principals are obliged to arrange for an excluded student to attend another local school where possible.

A principal may also invoke section 27 of the Act and exempt a student from attendance -

(1) If satisfied that a student's absence was or will be justified, the principal of the school may exempt the student from attending the school for a period of no more than 5 school days.

These absences must be recorded in the school, but do not have to be reported to the Ministry. Hence, the number of section 27s do not feature in their statistics.

The Ministry states that:

Stand-downs, suspensions, and exclusions help provide indications of where engagement in productive learning may be absent and behavioural issues may be present.

Stand-downs, suspensions and exclusions are not measures of student behaviour but measures of a school's reaction to behaviour. What one school may choose to suspend for another may not.⁵¹

This is also the case for section 27. Some of the schools in this sample respond to some student behaviours using section 27, having few to no stand-downs. Others confine their responses to the more formal stand-downs, suspensions and exclusions. These are discussed in the findings. However, all schools in this investigation use section 27 or stand-downs primarily as invitations to restorative practices, to talk with the family and student to resolve issues rather than use them as punitive measures.

49 The Education Amendment Act (No 2) 1998 (1998 No 118).

50 Students under 16 years of age may be removed or excluded from a school indefinitely, whereas if a student over 16 years old is denied access to the school they are deemed to be expelled. Principals are obliged to arrange for an excluded student to attend another local school where possible.

51 www.educationcounts.govt.nz/indicators/main/student-engagement-participation/80346

Appendix 4: Stand-down and suspension rates

Source: www.educationcounts.govt.nz/indicators/main/student-engagement-participation/80346, retrieved 24 January 2014.

Figure 1: Age standardised stand-down rates by ethnic group and school quintile (2012)

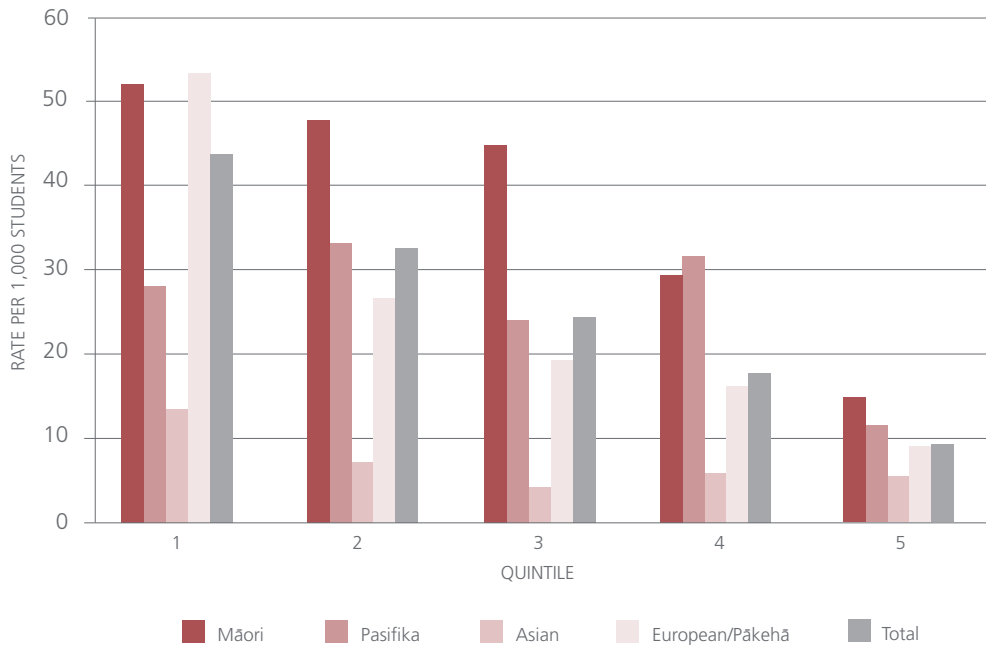
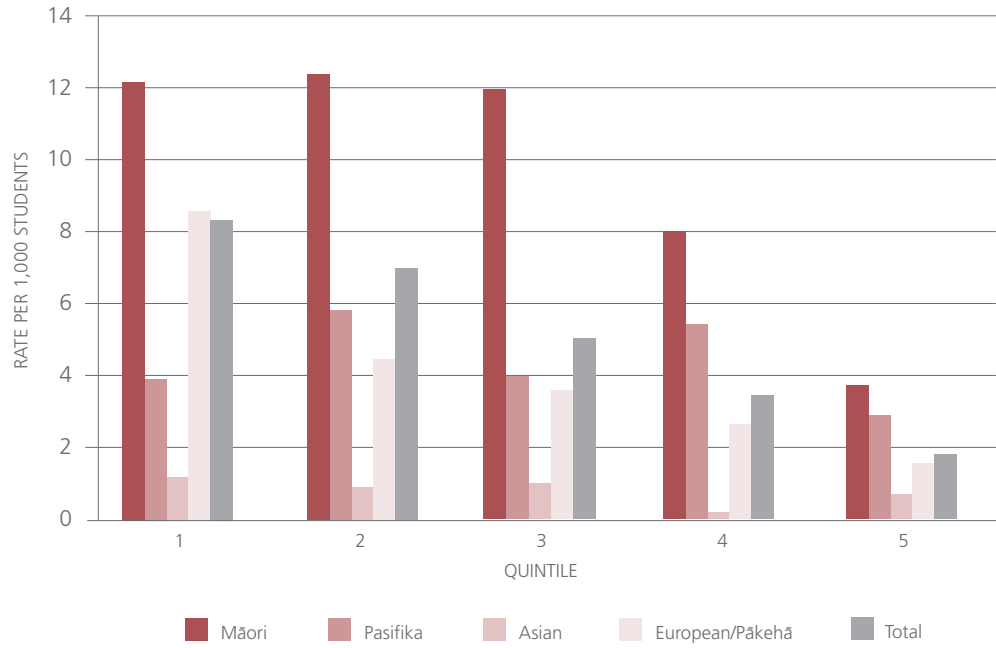


Figure 2: Age standardised suspension rates by ethnic group and school quintile (2012)



Appendix 5: Ministry of Education: School-based Initiatives

Restorative Practice and Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L)

All schools in this sample use restorative practices, some tailoring them to align with their specific school values. Five of these seven schools use PB4L School-Wide and the other two have programmes already in place successfully targeting school culture and behaviour.

PB4L School-Wide

Positive Behaviour for Learning – School-Wide (PB4L School-Wide) is a framework that schools can use to develop a social culture that supports learning and positive behaviour. Based on international evidence, it looks at behaviour and learning from a whole-of-school as well as an individual child perspective.

PB4L School-Wide takes the approach that opportunities for learning and achievement increase if:

- the school environment is positive and supportive
- expectations are consistently clear
- children are consistently taught desired behaviours
- children are consistently acknowledged for desired behaviours and responded to in a fair and equitable way.

PB4L School-Wide takes 3-5 years to put in place. Over this time, schools should see:

- incidents of problem behaviour decline
- the behaviour of students improve
- teachers spending more time teaching
- students more engaged and achieving.

Priority is given to secondary schools, low-decile schools with high numbers of Māori and Pacific Island students on their roll and schools that can be part of a School-Wide cluster.

PB4L-Restorative Practice (PB4L RP) model

Two of the schools in this sample are pilot schools for an integrated PB4L RP model.

Restorative Practice is defined by these three components:

- *Restorative Essentials* are the everyday, informal interactions between adults and students in a school. Restorative Essentials emphasise relationships; respect, empathy, social responsibility and self-regulation, focusing on *'keeping the small things small'*.
- *Restorative Circles* are semi-formal practices requiring some preparation. Restorative Circles support teachers and their students to build and manage relationships and create opportunities for effective teaching and learning time.

- *Restorative Conferencing* is a range of formal tools to help schools respond to misconduct and harm. These tools include mini conferences, classroom conferences and formal restorative conferences. Conferencing is most often facilitated by a school's management and pastoral staff.

Te Kotahitanga and He Kākano

Five of the seven schools are participants in Te Kotahitanga or He Kākano (the programme initiated in 2009 specifically for school leaders and including coaching and mentoring). These programmes increase school-wide capability regarding culturally responsive curriculum and enhance the leadership of change. Principals in these schools particularly appreciated the input of the programme facilitators and mentors and valued their expertise and input as external critical friends.

The Te Kotahitanga schools use aspects of the Effective Teaching Profile as part of their appraisal tools.

The Effective Teaching Profile⁵²

The *Effective Teaching Profile* consists of six elements:

Manaakitanga – teachers care for their students as culturally located human beings above all else.

Mana motuhake – teachers care for the performance of their students.

Ngā whakapiringatanga – teachers are able to create a secure, well-managed learning environment.

Wananga – teachers are able to engage in effective teaching interactions with Māori students as Māori.

Ako – teachers can use strategies that promote effective teaching interactions and relationships with their learners.

Kotahitanga – teachers promote, monitor and reflect on outcomes that in turn lead to improvements in educational achievement for Māori students.

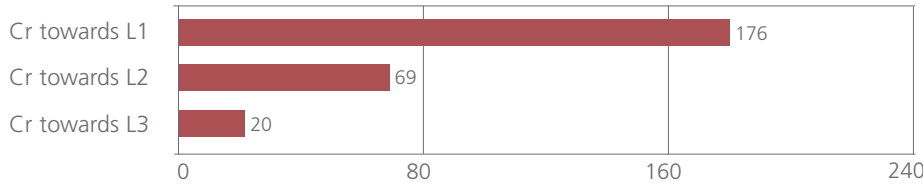
The *Effective Teaching Profile* was implemented in the classroom of participating teachers in 2004 and 2005 by means of the Te Kotahitanga Professional Development Programme. This programme consists of an initial induction hui, which is followed by a term-by-term cycle of formal observations, follow-up feedback, group co-construction meetings, and targeted shadow-coaching. Other activities that support this programme, such as new knowledge, new teaching strategies and/or new assessment procedures are introduced on a 'needs' basis.

52 Sourced from <http://tekotahitanga.tki.org.nz/About/The-Development-of-Te-Kotahitanga/Effective-Teaching-Profile>

Appendix 6: Mount Roskill Grammar School tracking

Figure 1: Tracking sheet for NCEA credits, exported from the student management system

My Progress towards NCEA (80 credits needed*)



Do I already have L1 NCEA? **Yes** I have: 176 towards L1 NCEA
 For L1 I need 80 including L1 Literacy and Numeracy

Do I already have L2 NCEA? **No** I have: 69 towards L2 NCEA
 For L2 I need 80 (including no more than 20 L1 credits)

Do I already have L3 NCEA? **No** I have: 20 towards L3 NCEA
 For L3 I need 80 (including no more than 20 L2 credits)

*L1 also requires L1 Literacy and Numeracy. Up to 20 of the credits towards Levels 2 and 3 may be from lower levels.

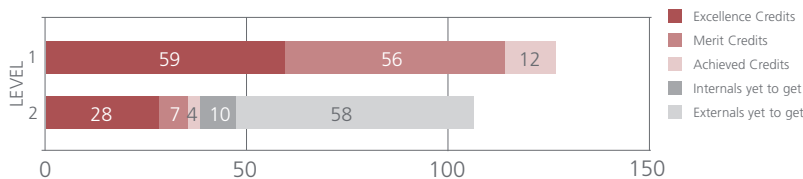
My Progress towards Level 1 Literacy and Numeracy (10 needed)

Do I already have Level 1 Literacy? **Yes (AS)** Do I already have Level 1 Numeracy? **Yes (AS)**

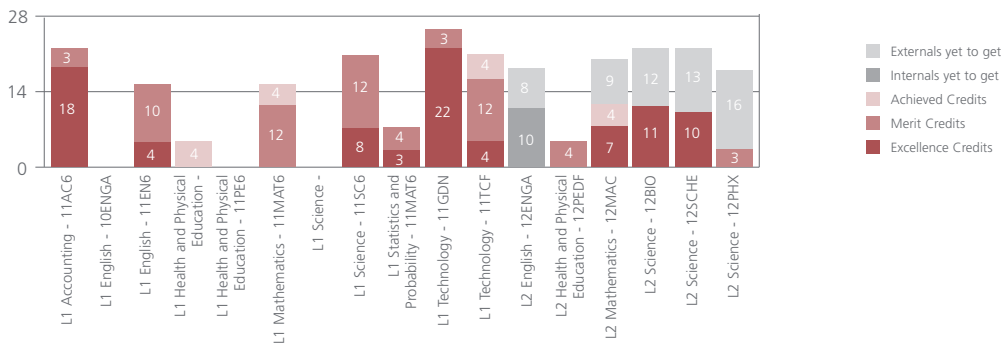
The Quality of my Credits

Confirmed Credits

I have: 127 credits at L1
 I have: 49 credits at L2
 I have: 0 credits at L3



My Subject Credits



University Entrance

Do I already have UE Literacy? **Yes**

For these, the targets change to 10 credits each in 2014

Do I already have UE Numeracy? **Yes**

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Figure 2: Data merged to show course pre-requisites and whether they are met or not met

Name:

Level 2 Prerequisites:

Accounting:	L1 ACC 10+ credits incl 90976 or 90978 AND L1 Literacy	L2 Accounting prereq NOT MET
BCATS:	7 cr from L1 TCM or maths and 3English cr	L2 BCATs prereq NOT MET
Biology:	8 Science Credits incl 90948	L2 Biology prereq NOT MET
BSP:	L1 Literacy	L2 BSP prereq MET
Chemistry:	8 Science Credits incl 90944	L2 Chemistry prereq NOT MET
Classics:	Total of 16 cr in History or English	L2 Classics prereq NOT MET
Computing:	14 cr in Computing or ICT including 1 external	L2 Computing prereq NOT MET
DES, PHT, PNT:	Has done Visual Arts before	L2 DES, PHT & PNT prereq NOT MET
Economics:	L1 Literacy	L2 ECS prereq MET
English A:	12 English Credits at Merit or Excellence	L2 ENGA prereq NOT MET
EA1:	10 English Cr	L2 EA1 prereq NOT MET
DAN DRA:	12 Dance or Drama Credits	L2 DAN & DRA prereq NOT MET
French:	14 cr in L1 French	L2 French prereq NOT MET
Geography:	12 cr in one of GEO or ENG or HIS	L2 Geography prereq NOT MET
Health:	Has Done Health before	L2 Health prereq NOT MET
History:	16 cr from either HIS or ENG	L2 History prereq NOT MET
ICT/DTT:	16 cr from L1 ICT or DTT, including 1 external	L2 ICT/DTT prereq NOT MET
Japanese:	14 cr in L1 Japanese	L2 Japanese prereq NOT MET
Media:	12 English or Media Credits	L2 Media prereq NOT MET
DVC:	12 DVC/GDN credits	L2 Media prereq NOT MET
Physics:	8 Science Credits incl 90940	L2 Physics prereq NOT MET
Sports Science:	11SPS: 11cr or 10 each from ENG and SCI	L2 Sports Science prereq NOT MET
TCE:	11TCE: 12 cr	L2 TCE prereq NOT MET
TCF:	11 TCF: 8 cr	L2 TCF prereq NOT MET
TCM:	11TCM: 12 cr	L2 TCM prereq NOT MET
Māori:	11MAO: 12 cr including 6 credits from externals	L2 Māori prereq NOT MET

2012 Subjects: 2013 Subjects:

2013 Course Confirmed?

Change Needed?

If a change is needed, choose a new course with your Academic Dean and get approval from the relevant HoDs. Then see Mrs. Barker.

Figure 3: Overall progress towards NCEA Level completion

Name:

Level 2 NCEA Progress:

L2 NCEA already achieved?? Age (as of 31 Oct 13):

Credits Towards L2

Still Needed for L2

Level 2 or Higher Credits Still available: Internals External

L2 or Higher Credits Obtained: 20 L2 or L3 credits Y or N

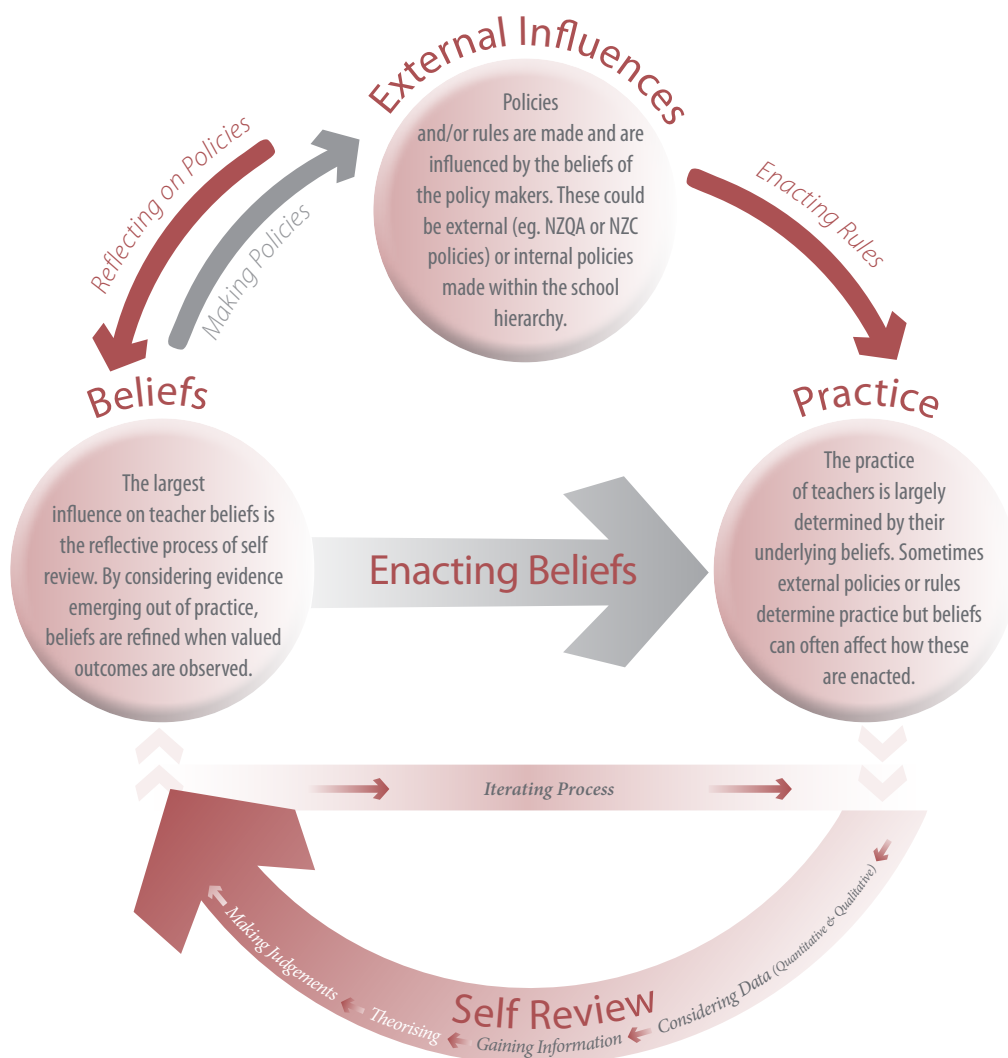
L2 or Higher Credits failed: L2 or L3 Cr Attempted

Current Action Point Expected Cr towards L2 NCEA

L2 Expected Y or N

(Modified for publication purposes)

Appendix 7: Self-review cycle, acknowledging the impact of beliefs held by teachers



(Based on the Clarke–Peter Model of Professional Growth, 1993)

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Mount Roskill
Opotiki College
Gisborne
Maenae College
Trident