

**RAISING MĀORI STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN  
THE NEW ZEALAND PRIMARY SECTOR:  
PRINCIPALS PERCEPTIONS AND STRATEGIES  
FOR EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP**

BY

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## **ABSTRACT**

The role of the New Zealand primary school principal is fundamental in shaping the learning experiences of primary school students and the environments in which they take place. The decisions these educational leaders make can influence students' opportunities for achievement and success directly, and indirectly. The Ministry of Education reports nearly one in five Māori children will not have achieved the basic literacy and numeracy standards by the time they leave primary school, and more Māori students are likely to disengage from education at year seven (MOE, 2013a). Improving the educational outcomes of Māori students is an ongoing government priority and numerous resources, initiatives and strategies are available to assist educators in raising Māori student achievement. The Ministry documents also demonstrate that school leaders greatly influence the effectiveness of school-wide practices and strategies aimed at improving the educational outcomes of their Māori students.

This qualitative study explores the perceptions that shape the decisions and practices of primary school principals when aiming to raise Māori student achievement in their school environment. It also seeks to understand how these perceptions manifest themselves within the school organisation and the connection they have to the success of Māori students. This study explores the perspectives and leadership practices of five state primary school principals in Wellington, New Zealand. An online survey via Qualtrics and semi-structured interviews were completed and analysed alongside school charters and recent Education of Review Office evaluations from 2013 and 2014.

Through framing the research within a grounded theory methodology, three significant overarching effective leadership themes emerged from the data: **KO AU [ME]** (Leadership of the individual), **KO MĀTOU [US]** (Leadership within the school), and **KO TĀTOU [ALL OF US]** (Leadership within the wider community). These themes provide indicators for effective leadership practices that could assist principals to raise the achievement of their Māori learners and align directly to the research findings.

Some of the major findings include leading schools to raise Māori student achievement requires principals to have a personal and professional commitment to Te Ao Māori as this enhances the likelihood that the learning environment will reflect these values. Effective principals' align learning experiences within Te Ao Māori to a shared strategic plan for raising Māori student achievement with a clear focus on both students and staff as the success of each is inter-related. In addition, there is favour for a shift in current assessment measures in the primary sector to include a broader sense of what constitutes educational achievement, as this will enable principals and schools to focus on developing well-rounded students in an inclusive education system.

This study encourages all educators to reflect on these findings as they have the potential to inform school curriculum and policy, and enhance principals' educational leadership practice to influence, transform, and raise Māori student achievement in the New Zealand primary sector.

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis to my parents.

Steven Tawai Te Huia and Rowena Te Huia-Holmes

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**Ehara taku toa i te toa takitini, Engari he toa takitini.**

Success is not the work of one but the work of many.

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## GLOSSARY OF MĀORI TERMS

<b>Ako</b>	Learn, study, instruct, teach, advise
<b>Hapū</b>	Kinship group, subtribe
<b>Honongotanga</b>	Relational networking
<b>Iwi</b>	Tribe, tribal kin group, nation, people
<b>Ka Hikitia</b>	To step up
<b>Kāinga</b>	Home, village, settlement
<b>Kanohi</b>	Face
<b>Kapa Haka</b>	Māori cultural performing group
<b>Karakia</b>	Prayer
<b>Kawa</b>	Local protocols
<b>Ko Au</b>	Self, I, me
<b>Ko Mātou</b>	We, us, they
<b>Ko Tātou</b>	Everyone, we, us, you
<b>Kōhanga Reo</b>	Language nest, Māori language preschool
<b>Kotahitanga</b>	Collaboration; unity
<b>Kura Kaupapa Māori</b>	School operating under Māori custom and using Māori as the medium of instruction
<b>Manaakitanga</b>	Kindness, caring, hospitality
<b>Māori</b>	Indigenous people of New Zealand
<b>Marae</b>	Tribal meeting ground, village, courtyard
<b>Nga Matatini Māori</b>	Many faces of Māori
<b>Pono</b>	Self-belief, true, valid, honest
<b>Pūmanawatanga</b>	A beating heart
<b>Pōwhiri</b>	To welcome, formal Māori welcome
<b>Rangatiratanga</b>	Leadership, leading
<b>Tangata whenua</b>	Indigenous people of NZ
<b>Tāonga</b>	Something of value, treasures
<b>Tātaiako</b>	Cultural competence

<b>Tātou</b>	Everyone
<b>Te Ao Māori</b>	All things Māori
<b>Te Kotahitanga</b>	Unison/unity
<b>Te Reo Māori</b>	The Māori language
<b>Tikanga Māori</b>	Māori shared practices and principles, correct procedure, custom and social values
<b>Te Tiriti o Waitangi</b>	Treaty of Waitangi (1840)
<b>Wānanga</b>	To discuss, communicate
<b>Whaiwhakaaro</b>	Reflective, reflection
<b>Whakapapa</b>	Lines of descent, connections, genealogy
<b>Whānau</b>	Family, extended family
<b>Whānaungatanga</b>	Relationships, kinship, sense of family connections
<b>Whanonga pono</b>	Values

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>BOT</b>	Board of Trustees
<b>ERO</b>	Education Review Office
<b>FTPP</b>	First Time Principals' Programme
<b>KLP</b>	Kiwi Leadership for Principals
<b>MOE</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>NAGs</b>	National Administration Guidelines
<b>NCEA</b>	National Certificate of Education Achievement
<b>NEGs</b>	National Education Guidelines
<b>NZCF</b>	New Zealand Curriculum Framework
<b>NZ</b>	New Zealand (Aotearoa)
<b>NZSTA</b>	New Zealand School Trustees Association
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Development
<b>OTJ</b>	Overall Teacher Judgements
<b>PD</b>	Professional Development
<b>PPCA</b>	Primary Principals' Collective Agreement
<b>TOW</b>	Te Tiriti o Waitangi 1840 (Treaty of Waitangi)

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi, 1840) is integral to New Zealand's (NZ) national heritage and future. Its principles maintain that there is a responsibility for all educational organisations to protect the rights of Māori students and their respective tāonga by providing education that upholds and enriches the identity, language, culture and aspirations of their Māori learners (MOE, 2013a; Orange, 2011). Recent Ministry of Education (MOE) reports concerning Māori student achievement indicate:

- One in five Māori children will not achieve basic literacy and numeracy standards when leaving primary school (MOE, 2013a).
- Disengagement from school for Māori learners occurs predominantly from Year 7 onwards (MOE, 2013c).
- Less than half of Māori students will leave secondary school with National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) Level 2 or higher (MOE, 2013a).
- Over a third of Māori students will leave school without any qualification at all (MOE, 2013a).

These statistics are significantly lower than the achievement results of NZ European students. The need for schools to improve their practices and become high performing is emphasised by Statistics NZ when they report that the population of Māori youth will rapidly increase over the next ten years, and project by 2030 one third of NZ students will be Māori (Statistics NZ, 2013a). The Education Review Office (ERO) evaluations of school performance indicates a school is high performing when Māori students are actively engaged in their learning, progressing and achieving well and succeeding as Māori (ERO, 2010a).

ERO (2010) reports that some primary schools struggle to promote the success of their Māori students and are not meeting their professional responsibilities under the Tiriti o Waitangi (TOW) whilst others have managed to initiate successful strategies to raise Māori student achievement (ERO, 2010a). Additionally, ERO's Raising Student Achievement in Primary Schools

Report (ERO, 2014) affirms success for Māori learners continues to vary between primary schools. The causes of the discrepancies between schools are widely contested. Some research identifies cultural competency, genuine engagement and working collaboratively with parents, whānau and Māori communities is what is required by some primary schools as these actions have the best potential to transform the current curriculum, teaching and assessment practices (Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh & Teddy, 2007; MOE, 2008a; ERO, 2010; MOE, 2013a). However, it is argued the support primary schools receives to achieve such transformation varies as professional development (PD) for effective strategies and cultural competence within Te Ao Māori is not sufficient. Consequently, some schools fail to have the necessary means to transform (ERO, 2010a; MOE, 2013a).

The NZ government aims to support all primary schools and educators to improve educational outcomes for Māori students. This is evident in the numerous MOE strategies and initiatives which advocate that educational success is fundamental to enabling Māori students to achieve, reach potential and thrive as Māori in Te Ao Māori and the wider world (MOE, 2008a; MOE, 2013a). Within these documents, the role of the school leader is critical in initiating such transformation and providing the necessary knowledge, skills, and leadership to ensure their school is performing effectively.

Central to school leadership within NZ primary schools is the role of the school principal. The principal role is crucial in enabling primary schools to be effective, culturally responsive, and high performing, as the principal is the cultural shaper of the school environment (Lumby & Foskett, 2011; Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005; Richardson, 2001; Southworth, 2004). Primary school principals have internal administrative and managerial responsibilities, external demands to meet national education mandates, and they are encouraged to work in partnership with parents, whānau, and communities (Campbell-Evans, 1993). Additionally, the core responsibility of the primary school principal role is to ensure quality teaching from staff and improved learning for all students.



These wide spread expectations magnify the complex nature of the principal role and draw attention to the multitude of challenges primary school principals may face when leading their schools. Despite the enormity of the principal role, ERO has identified many primary schools in all regions and decile ranges as good or high performing in relation to their evaluation measures. As a result, successful leadership that influences improved educational outcomes for its Māori learners in a high performing primary school is not an elusive scenario.

Ensuring primary school principals are effective in their leadership is the responsibility of the schools Board of Trustees (BOT). The BOT can oversee principal performance through reviewing principal self-reviews, implementing an internal review from the BOT or by sourcing an external review from an outside agency to ensure principal performance meets the relevant professional standards outlined in their performance agreements (NZSTA, 2013). It is the researcher's opinion that the extent to which a primary school principal is able to excel as a leader and meet the vast internal and external expectations relies heavily on the perceptions he or she has surrounding effective teaching and learning. Understanding the specific perceptions that shape principals decision-making and actions when seeking to raise Māori student achievement will provide a much-needed insight into current effective principal leadership practice. This understanding will also offer the opportunity to learn about the challenges and barriers some primary school principals face when leading their school.

### **1.1 Background of the researcher**

Born and raised in Rotorua and being of Māori (Ngati Maniapoto and Ngai Tahu) and European descent, I was fortunate that my primary and intermediate education affirmed my identity of belonging to both ethnicities. During secondary school education, I first began to feel that I did not belong to either ethnicity exclusively and this idea caused me to struggle to fit in to my different peer groups. Nearing the final year of my schooling, I had no idea or direction for the future until several of my Māori female peers and I had to meet with the guidance councillor.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss how to fill out Work and Income NZ unemployment forms as we were failing in several subjects. Embarrassed I pulled a brochure from the nearby shelf and said to her that I am going to be a teacher. She told me it would be too hard and I could not do it. Eleven years of teaching in primary schools within NZ and overseas has provided me with many opportunities and experiences, which personally and professionally inspire my continued interest in Educational Leadership, Māori achievement and primary education. My understanding surrounding Māori identity, teacher expectations, and student achievement continues to grow, and the significance it has for Māori student success resonates strongly within me. As a Māori researcher, I am able to analyse, observe, and view experiences of others and myself through a unique Māori lens, which has an inherent value to research particularly in a NZ context. I believe my European heritage also allows me to reflect upon the challenges someone without Māori heritage may encounter when attempting to engage with this research and interpret different aspects of Te Ao Māori.

## **1.2 Purpose of study**

The main purpose of this grounded research study is to gain understanding surrounding the perceptions and leadership practices of primary school principals as they aim to raise Māori student achievement within the primary sector. Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh, and Teddy (2009) emphasise continued research and understanding in the primary sector could help prevent the negative experiences that some Māori students experience in later education.

This research study aims to contribute to the scholastic endeavour within this field and provide government, policymakers, educational leaders/principals, students, whānau, and communities with an idea of the current perceptions that may shape some principals decision making and actions in the endeavour to raise Māori student achievement. This research study also intends to generate the opportunity for primary school principals to reflect and inquire into their own current leadership practice and actions.

### 1.3 Research questions

Three key questions have been generated in order to assist in meeting the aims of this research study. The three key questions are:

- 1.) What are the current perceptions of principals in mainstream primary schools surrounding Māori student achievement?
- 2.) How do these perceptions contribute to their leadership practice and decision making within their schools?
- 3.) How do principals' gauge or monitor the success of their leadership practice and decision-making?

### 1.4 Thesis organisation

**Chapter 1** discusses the research project, provides a brief background of the researcher, justifies the purpose of this study, and presents the three key research questions underpinning the study.

**Chapter 2** presents a literature review in three sections.

- **Section A** provides a review of current literature concerning Māori as tangata whenua and Māori student achievement.
- **Section B** examines the NZ primary sector and discusses implications for Māori learners and school principals.
- **Section C** explores educational leadership and the importance of culturally responsive leadership.

**Chapter 3** discusses the chosen research methodology, describes the demographics of the participants involved in the study, discusses the data collection techniques that were used, and the methods of data analysis. Three tables present an overview of the coding process, which generated three core themes:

- **KO AU [ME]** (Leadership of the individual).
- **KO MĀTOU [US]** (Leadership within the school).
- **KO TĀTOU [ALL OF US]** (Leadership with the wider community).

The chapter concludes with details of the ethical and validity considerations.

**Chapter 4** analyses the research findings from the survey data, semi-structured interviews, and school documentation and presents a summary of the findings in relation to the three core themes identified in *Chapter 3*.

**Chapter 5** presents the main findings related to the reviewed literature in *Chapter 2*, the three themes identified in *Chapter 3* and the findings from *Chapter 4*. The chapter closes with a possible '**Culturally Responsive Model**' for primary school principals generated from the major findings.

**Chapter 6** summarises the research study, answers the research questions outlined in *Chapter 1*, and highlights the limitations of the project. The chapter concludes with recommendations for further study and presents an overall conclusion.

### **1.5 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has introduced the research study and has outlined its purpose, which is to evaluate primary school principals' perceptions and leadership practice when aiming to raise Māori student achievement. The chapter outlined the research aims, presented the three key questions that underpin the study and provided an overall summary of the thesis organisation.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews literature that has contributed to the growing body of knowledge surrounding Māori student achievement within the NZ education system. This literature informs the research study and provides insight into research that can shape principal practice in NZ primary schools. The chapter is outlined in the following three sections:

- **Section A:** Discusses the significance of Māori as tangata whenua and examines issues surrounding Māori student achievement.
- **Section B:** Outlines the NZ primary education sector and focuses on the implications this has for Māori learners and school principals.
- **Section C:** Explores educational leadership and the importance of the primary school principal role in raising Māori student achievement.

### **2.2 SECTION A: TANGATA WHENUA**

Māori are tangata whenua and were the dominant culture within NZ prior to early European immigration. Increased British immigration eventually led to the 1840 signing of the Tiriti o Waitangi (TOW) between the British crown and Māori Rangatira with the hope the two parties could live peacefully in NZ as one. This treaty became NZ's founding document; however, much debate still surrounds the interpretations of the different Māori and European documentations. The TOW acknowledges the importance of Māori and iwi as its principles state there is a responsibility of the Crown to act honourably and in good faith with a commitment to work in partnership to protect Māori rights and tāonga (MOE, 2013a; Orange, 2011). In education tāonga can pertain to the identity, language, culture and the cultural aspirations of its Māori learners (Orange, 2011). The United Nations Declaration also supports the idea Māori culture and identity must be protected as it pertains to the inherent rights of indigenous peoples (United Nations, 2007).

### 2.2.1 Māori Identity

As a term, identity explains a belonging, links to ethnicity, and a differentiation from oneself to another (Ritchie, 2005; Weeks, 1990). Definition and measure of Māori ethnicity is complex (Houkamau & Sibley, 2002). There have been several attempts to define and measure Māori identity through an individual's language use, religion, and iwi affiliation (Reitz & Sklar, 1997; Ritchie, 1963). Definitions include the 1993 Electoral Act and the 1974 Māori Affairs Act who define Māori identity as a person of the Māori race of NZ and their descendants (Statistics NZ, 2013a). Statistics NZ (2013a) revealed:

- There was 598,605 (14.9 percent) of people identified with the Māori ethnic group (having a cultural affiliation).
- Additionally, 668,724 (17.5 percent) of people indicated they were of Māori descent (linking to ancestry).

These figures indicate many Māori people identify and experience being Māori in a multitude of ways (Durie, 1995; Sleeter, 2011). Durie (1994) describes the diversity of Māori identity as he recognises three Māori sub-groups.

- One group are **culturally** Māori as they understand whakapapa and are familiar with Te Reo and tikanga Māori.
- A second group are **bicultural** and identify as Māori and NZ European.
- A third group of Māori are described as **marginalised** and are not able to relate to Māori or NZ European.

Similarly, Williams (2000) describes four sub-groups that can portray Māori identity:

- One group represents a **traditional Māori** core and are enculturated, often rural dwelling and speak both Māori and English.
- A second group is **primarily urban** and bicultural.
- A third group is **unconnected** and have limited knowledge of their Māori culture and heritage.
- A fourth group are socially and **culturally indistinguishable** from NZ Europeans.

It is also important to note there is a broad spectrum and variations between the identified sub-groups. These views affirm the reality of Māori identity is diverse, varies between individuals, and goes beyond biological determinants such as blood quantum (Broughton, 1993).

Approximately one-third of Māori (33.8 percent) are 15 years or younger (Statistics NZ, 2013a) and the 2014 July school returns indicate approximately 106,105 students in NZ schools identify as being Māori (Education Counts, 2014). Ethnicity data is obtained from student enrolment whereby students are asked to identify their ethnicity. Students may identify as belonging to several different ethnic groups however the MOE reports on one ethnicity per student with Māori ethnicity taking priority over any other ethnicity a student may identify with (Leather, 2009). Such ethnic prioritisation becomes problematic as reports generated from schools and the MOE do not reflect the ethnic diversity and needs of NZ Māori students and can encourage a one size fits all approach for meeting Māori student needs which is unlikely to work (Leather, 2009).

### **2.2.2 Te Reo Māori**

Te Reo Māori is an official language of NZ and is central to Te Ao Māori as it connects people with their identity (Durie, 1998). During the 1980's Māori language was in decline and at the brink of complete loss (King, 2007). The Kōhanga Reo movement became the focus of Māori communities to revive the Māori language. The ability to converse fluently in Te Reo Māori varies between individual Māori and this is reiterated by Te Kupenga, Statistics NZ's first survey of Māori well-being in 2013 (Statistics NZ, 2013b), which reported:

- Fifty thousand (10.6 percent) of Māori aged 15 years and older could speak Te Reo Māori **very well** or **well**.
- There were 56,500 (12.0 percent) could speak **fairly well**.
- Additionally, 151,000 (32.1 percent) spoke **not very well**.
- Overall, 106,500 Māori (22.6 percent of all Māori) spoke Te Reo Māori **fairly well** or **very well**.

The need to include Te Reo Māori as a compulsory learning area in all NZ schools continues to be widely debated. There is currently no national measure to indicate the number of primary schools that are providing Māori language programs and in what capacity they are implemented. The Māori Language Act 1987 emphasises the importance of retaining the Māori language and under the Education Act 5, all schools must provide Māori language programmes to students if requested by parents (Education Act, 1989). Subsequently, the New Zealand Curriculum Framework (NZCF) and numerous MOE initiatives and strategies reinforce the Education Act and links practices that promote Māori language and culture to the positive affirmation of Māori student identity. The MOE (2009a) states:

*“...all New Zealand students can benefit from learning Te Reo Māori” (p.13).*

### **2.2.3 Māori student achievement**

Māori students’ educational needs are not homogeneous as Māori identity is diverse (Durie, 1995). International reports identify NZ school students are high performing on a world scale however, the achievement gap between its highest and lowest performers (predominantly Māori) is one of the biggest from all of the countries surveyed (ERO, 2010b). Such research although alarming is not new as ERO (2010a) states:

*“Although many Māori students have been successful in education, research and national and international testing data continue to show significant disparity in the achievement of Māori and non-Māori students. Improved Māori student achievement has been a key government priority in education over the decade” (p.1).*

Despite national reports continuing to indicate disparity between Māori and non-Māori students, of the programmes, initiatives, and resources that have been implemented over the last twenty years there have been several successful initiatives such as Te Kotahitanga (Bishop, 2008) and He Kakano (University of Waikato & Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi, 2010).



### *2.2.3.1 Te Kotahitanga*

The first phase of Te Kotahitanga began in 2001 and researchers sought the perspectives and classroom experiences of Year 9 and 10 Māori students. The findings from this data helped researchers develop an Effective Teaching Profile (ETP), which aimed to improve teacher capacity and cultural awareness. Phase two provided teachers with PD in order to implement the ETP within their classrooms and schools. The third phase of the project sought to improve Māori students' academic achievement through findings from the previous phases. An evaluation of Te Kotahitanga in 2010 has shown the Te Kotahitanga professional development model can be linked with improved classroom teaching which resulted in better-quality partnerships between educators and students, increased student attendance, and improved behaviour and academic achievement. Te Kotahitanga professional development was effective when supported by school leadership. The evaluation affirmed schools and educators should have a focus on high achievement expectations for all Māori students (Meyer, Penetito, Hynds, Savage, Hindle, & Sleeter, 2010). The research generated from this project has significantly contributed to several MOE initiatives including to Ka Hikitia - Managing for Success and Ka Hikitia - Accelerating Success both of which primary schools can draw from to improve pedagogy and practice.

### *2.2.3.2 He Kakano*

He Kakano is a strategy based PD programme that focuses on culturally responsive school leadership to support Māori students achieving educational success as Māori. The program centres on Māori student well-being and academic outcomes in mainstream secondary schools. An evaluation of the He Kakano programme in 2013 (MOE, 2013) revealed school leaders reported the programme enhanced understandings of their own awareness of Māori student's needs and achievement levels and the participants acknowledged there is a shared responsibility for raising Māori student achievement. The evaluation also indicated that strategies and processes of the PD assisted in a change in some of the school leaders' attitudes and perceptions.

## 2.2.4 MOE Māori student achievement initiatives and strategies

The Governments Statement of Intent 2014 – 2018 (MOE, 2014a) identifies its first priority is to “raise teaching quality and leadership” with the purpose of raising student achievement (p. 14). It also identifies that in order for this objective to be realised schools are required to support and incorporate Māori student needs, identity, language and culture into their learning experiences as this is “critical in addressing disparity” (p. 18). The following documents are a sample of published materials accessible to all educators to improve their pedagogy, practice, and ability to raise Māori student achievement.

The current documentation includes:

- **Ka Hikitia** - Accelerating Success - 2013-2017, (MOE, 2013a)
- **Tau mai Te Reo** - The Māori Language In Education Strategy - 2013-2017 (MOE, 2013b)
- **He Kākano**: Te Awe o ngā Toroa (University of Waikato & Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi, 2010)
- **Tātaiako** - Cultural competencies for teachers of Māori learners (MOE, 2011a)
- **Ka Hikitia** - Managing for Success: Māori education strategy 2008-2012 (MOE, 2008a)
- **Te Kotahitanga** (Bishop, 2008; Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh & Teddy, 2009)

### 2.2.4.1 *Ka Hikitia - Accelerating Success*

The Ka Hikitia – Accelerating Success strategy continues from Ka Hikitia – Managing for success and draws on research from Te Kotahitanga and the Best Evidence Synthesis (Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2009). It provides a guide for educators ‘to make a significant difference for Māori students in education’ (MOE, 2013a p. 6). The document proposes improving educator accountability and capability and raising expectations for Māori students is fundamental to improving Māori student educational outcomes. The following five principles guide this strategy:

- **Treaty of Waitangi** signifies the importance of the TOW principles and highlights how they apply to the NZ education system (p.14).
- **Māori potential approach** emphasises empowering Māori potential instead of concentrating on Māori learners in a deficit way (p.15).
- **Ako** relates to the reciprocity between the learner and teacher and describes a two way learning process (p.16).
- **Identity, language, and culture** reiterates the importance of including Māori language and culture in learning experiences to strengthen and affirm Māori students' identity (p.17).
- **Productive partnerships** highlight the importance of engaging parents, whānau, and community to create relationships through mutual respect and achieve shared goals (p.18).

In addition to these principles the Ka Hikitia - Accelerating Success strategy identifies two critical factors that are essential to Māori student educational success (see **Figure 1**).



Figure 1: The Critical Factors of Ka Hikitia (MOE, 2013a p. 23)

#### *2.2.4.2 Tau mai Te Reo - The Māori Language Strategy*

Tau Mai Te Reo (MOE, 2013b) informs and supports the Ka Hikitia Accelerating Success and provides support for educators to strengthen their use of Māori language in educational settings. The vision for Tau Mai Te Reo is to “support Māori language in education by delivering a strong and coordinated effort and investment” (p. 4). The document provides a list of desired outcomes within the English medium sector and the document can, assist in planning, monitoring, assessing, and reshaping their Māori language programs and provisions. This document suggests the demand for Māori language specialists within all sectors outweighs supply and puts the onus on all educators to use Te Reo Māori to assist in remedying supply issues.

#### *2.2.4.3 Tātaiako – Cultural competencies for Teachers*

The Tātaiako - Cultural Competencies for Teachers of Māori Learners supports both Ka Hikitia strategies and aligns with the Graduating Teacher Standards and Registered Teacher Criteria developed by the New Zealand Teachers Council (NZTC, 2010). The main objective of the document is to improve teacher pedagogy and capacity to effectively teach students, particularly Māori learners.

For school leaders the focus is on leading and engaging educators in a way that affirms Māori culture while providing the resources to enable this to happen. The document provides five competencies that include a set of indicators and outcomes that differentiate between a graduating teacher and a registered teacher. The five competencies Tataiako (MOE, 2011 p. 4) identifies are:

- **Wānanga:** Describes participating with learners and communities in robust dialogue for the benefit of Māori learners’ achievement.
- **Whānaungatanga:** Expresses actively engaging in respectful working relationships with Māori learners, parents and whānau, hapu, iwi and the Māori community.
- **Manaakitanga:** Refers to showing integrity, sincerity, and respect towards Māori beliefs, language, and culture.

- **Tangata Whenuatanga:** Explains affirming Māori learners as Māori. Providing contexts for learning where the language, identity and culture of Māori learners and their whānau is affirmed.
- **Ako:** portrays taking responsibility for their own learning and that of Māori learners.

The competencies and philosophies within the Tātaiako - Cultural Competencies for Teachers of Māori learners' framework (see Figure 2) link to each other through values and meanings.



Figure 2: Tātaiako Summary (MOE, 2011a, p. 16)

### 2.2.5 Challenges surrounding implementing MOE strategies

The MOE strategies and initiatives that have been reviewed emphasise the need for NZ educators and school leaders to affirm Māori culture, language, and identity in order for Māori student achievement to improve. Research indicates some educational organisations and educators are unsure how to use the wide variety of strategies and resources and access to the PD that is needed appears to be limited (ERO, 2010).

This was evident when the NZ Office of the Auditor General (2013) summary of findings relating to implementing Ka Hikitia: Managing for Success (MOE, 2008a) as they indicated:

*“The MOE did not explain clearly to schools what response it expected. Guidance to schools in the Ka Hikitia documents was not clear. Schools did not understand the relationships between Ka Hikitia and other Ministry strategies and initiatives” (p. 26.)*

The MOE recommends Ka Hikitia documentation can offer the best advice for schools to improve Māori student achievement (Hemara Hollings, personal communication July 31, 2014). However, there is no mandate for this strategy to be enforced and implemented. Consequently, this has led to some schools using MOE documentation to improve their practice, pedagogy and students’ achievement, whilst others struggle to understand, provide resources or implement MOE initiatives within their schools (ERO, 2010a; Fitchett, 2010; Tito, 2011). Such research highlights there is currently no national mechanism to identify or evaluate what PD, MOE strategies or other initiatives primary schools are utilising to raise Māori student achievement.

### **2.3 SECTION B: THE NEW ZEALAND PRIMARY SECTOR**

All state primary education is free and is compulsory from the age of six years old yet many students start at the age of five. There are three different categories of primary educational settings: Contributing primary (Years 1 – 6), Full primary (Years 1 – 8) and Intermediate schools (Years 7 – 8). Currently, there are approximately 1961 state primary schools (Education Counts, 2014). The MOE provides all primary schools with National Educational Guidelines (NEGS), National Achievement Guidelines (NAGS), and the NZCF, to direct schools towards achieving national educational goals (Education Act, 1989; MOE, 2003). These goals inform a schools policy framework and school charter. Since the Tomorrow’s Schools (1988) reforms, primary schools have become self- managed crown entities governed by an elected Board of Trustees (BOT). Within the BOT, the school principal has the role of the executive chief member and the remaining board members consist of parents

or whānau and a staff representative. The BOT is accountable to students, parents and whānau, the wider community and the MOE for school management, systemic processes, and student achievement (NZSTA, 2009). Education Counts (2015) emphasises Māori representations on the BOT is essential to ensure schools policies and charters are appropriate and effective for Māori learners.

### **2.3.1 Enrolment scheme and school deciles**

Some schools have enrolment schemes, which limit the school roll to prevent overcrowding and inadequate resourcing. Each scheme has a zone with boundaries families must live in in order to attend that school. Enrolment schemes can create some challenges for families who live in low-socio-economic zones as parent choices of educational organisations could be limited (Thrupp, 2007).

A school decile is representative of the socio-economic community a student resides. The decile system provides an indicator for government funding. Decile 1 schools have the highest proportion of students from low socio-economic communities and decile 10 schools have the lowest proportion. NZ state primary schools receive an operations' grant from the NZ government, which pays for all costs involved with the operation of the school including staff PD (MOE, 2013a). Low decile schools receive more government funding to assist in meeting the diverse socio-economic factors that could affect their students' needs. A schools decile does not reflect a schools capacity for providing opportunities for educational success (MOE (2015a).

### **2.3.2 The New Zealand Curriculum Framework**

The NZCF underpins and provides direction for teaching and learning within NZ state funded schools. The framework includes:

- A clear vision
- A set of values
- Principles
- Key Competencies
- Achievement Objectives for eight expected learning areas

The aim of the framework is for students to become “confident, connected, actively involved, lifelong learners” (MOE, 2007, p. 7). Māori language and culture is significant feature within the NZCF particularly in the Health and Physical Education Curriculum area as it has adapted Durie’s (1994) Whare Tapa Whā (four-sided house) model (**see Figure 3**) (MOE, 1999, p.31).

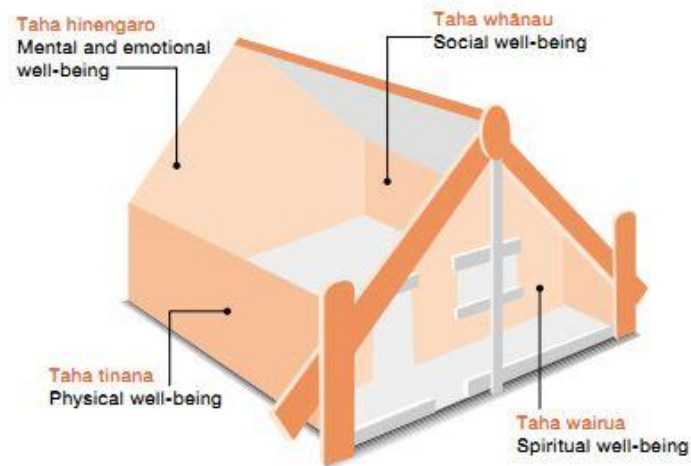


Figure 3: Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie, 1994, p. 70)

Based on the NZCF primary schools create their own curriculum in response to their student needs and educational context. While school curriculums must align with the NZCF the document provides schools with the flexibility and the power to go beyond the NZCF to ensure the values of all students exist within students’ educational experiences (Giroux & Penna, 1983). For that reason, how a primary school chooses to implement experiences that are inclusive of Te Ao Māori is dependent on what each primary school values. This highlights the significant role schools have in identifying what knowledge is important to implement within their curriculum. Schools that do not include Māori knowledge, teaching methods, assessment, and practices could limit equitable learning experiences for Māori learners within primary school classrooms (Thrupp, 2006).

Within a classroom context, the teacher interprets the school’s curriculum, which results in the creation of a classroom curriculum. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) report a fourth ‘hidden curriculum’ exists within all classrooms. The hidden curriculum involves the underlying values and



attitudes that educators create through their social interactions. Subsequently, students have learning experiences from the teacher that do not directly link to the school or NZCF. Educational leaders and educators need to understand how the hidden curriculum operates within their classrooms in order to stop reproduction of any existing inequality or deficit theorizing (Cairns & Gardner, 2001; Giroux & Penna, 1983; Gramsci, 1992).

### **2.3.3 Assessment in the primary sector**

NZ primary schools use a range of assessment tools to inform teaching, reporting, and measurement of student achievement. There is no formal national testing for NZ primary students', however primary schools are mandated to use National Standards to measure student achievement.

The introduction of National Standards in 2010 provided NZ primary schools with a linear progression of expected achievement in reading, writing, and mathematics by age and year level. Teachers' Overall Teacher Judgements (OTJ) categorise students as achieving well below, below, at or above the National Standard. In accordance with the NEGs, every primary school must provide regular accounts of achievement in relation to the National standards with parents, whānau twice a year and with the MOE via an annual report.

The use of National Standards is widely contested as those in favour welcome a national form of measuring primary student performance, whereas those opposed state National Standards are not national or standardised, as they are not moderated, and the four criterion teachers use are unfair and do not consider individual needs (Thrupp, 2013). In its 2012 evaluation, ERO found that 50 percent of the 439 schools in the sample were still developing their systems and processes to work with the National standards, as there were issues with school leaders' understanding of the exact purpose and use of the standards (ERO, 2012).

### **2.3.4 Measuring Māori student achievement**

The MOE (2008a) achievement goal of "Māori enjoying and achieving education success as Māori" (p. 11) is a prominent feature in MOE initiatives and strategies to raise Māori educational outcomes yet this becomes

problematic when widely reported comparative data between individual Māori and non-Māori students creates shared expectations of levelled achievement in literacy and numeracy. The importance of literacy and numeracy is widely agreed by many researchers however, Thrupp (2013) warns focussed assessment on literacy and numeracy could narrow curriculum delivery, and this will not have an effect of closing inequality within the NZ education system. ERO (2007) reports there is a strong focus on literacy and numeracy across most schools yet they state:

*“Many schools still need to establish school-wide assessment policies, procedures, and practice across all aspects of students’ learning” (p. 45).*

Bishop and Glynn (1999) suggest the nature of western individualised assessment practices creates challenges for some Māori students who have cultural beliefs and values that are collectivist and associate success with the achievement of many. Penetito (2010) implies measuring Māori student achievement and success through an individual approach could conflict with some Māori students’ values that encompass whānau, hapū, and iwi.

The NZCF features other important areas that provide foundational skills that can lead to student success in education and in life such as the Key Competencies (MOE, 2007, p. 12). The five Key Competencies are:

- **Thinking:** Thinking is about using creative, critical, and metacognitive processes to make sense of information, experiences, and ideas (p. 12).
- **Using language, symbols, and texts:** Using language, symbols, and texts is about working with and making meaning of the codes in which knowledge is expressed (p. 12).
- **Managing self:** This competency is associated with self-motivation, a “can-do” attitude, and with students seeing themselves as capable learners. It is integral to self-assessment (p. 12).
- **Relating to others:** Relating to others is about interacting effectively with a diverse range of people in a variety of contexts

- **Participating and contributing:** This competency is about being actively involved in communities. Communities include family, whānau, and school and those based, for example, on a common interest or culture (p. 13).

Achievement against the Key Competencies as opposed to the National standards that focuses on reading writing and math broadens opportunities for students to succeed outside of current achievement measures that are culturally situated within a Western framework of what constitutes success. Likewise, a student does not necessarily require literacy and numeracy skills or an individualised approach to acquire the Key Competencies successfully (Hook, 2007; Thrupp, 2006). Hattie (2012) proposes the primary concern of assessment is to add value to all students by attaining personalised outcomes. Similarly, Gilmore (1998) states:

*“Assessment must primarily be in the interests of the student and his or her immediate whānau and not simply as a means of identifying one student over another” (p. 14).*

Research advises some whānau feel schools can limit what success means and that success needs to be defined in a way that includes cultural, spiritual, and social achievement which the Key Competencies advocate as current measures are primarily focused solely on academic targets (Bishop, 2000; MOE, 2011a). Therefore, it is important that schools listen to the aspirations that parents and whānau have for their children (MOE, 2013a).

### **2.3.5 Culturally responsive leadership**

It has been suggested that a culturally responsive approach to leading NZ schools could improve any existing educational inequalities (Brown & Trevino, 2006). Research suggests, culturally responsive leadership in a NZ context requires principals to be culturally competent and acknowledge Māori learners cultural references in all aspects of the learning environment. Additionally, cultural responsive principals should review the existing school environment to ensure learning opportunities within Te Ao Māori exist and that any known

barriers that could hinder Māori achievement and perpetuate inequality are removed (Bishop, 2010; Durie, 2006; Metge, 1995).

Rata (2012) argues emphasising a curriculum based on socio-cultural knowledge as opposed to disciplinary knowledge can limit students' educational experiences and that a cultural solution contributes to Māori underachievement as schools should provide experiences that are new for students. This notion indicates that there is possibly confusion surrounding the meaning of culturally responsive learning when schools focus solely on socio-cultural knowledge to improve Māori student achievement. Her research implies the high proportion of Māori youth, elevated Māori roll numbers, and social factors relating to socio-economic hardship attributes to current Māori under achievement trends.

However, research by Bishop and Berryman (2006) indicate the culture of learners does count and the importance of Māori culture and its relevance in every facet of a school organisation is fundamental to raising Māori student achievement, as students are more likely to achieve when a school environment reflects and affirms their identity. Additionally as Māori identity is diverse, learning opportunities within Te Ao Māori have the potential to introduce previously unknown content to Māori students.

### **2.3.5 Raising Expectations**

The majority of Māori students attend English-medium mainstream schools. An ERO report identified that some mainstream schools had limited plans in place to raise Māori student achievement (ERO, 2007). Subsequent reports have indicated mainstream schools have made some improvements to improve their practice yet it remains predominantly within this sector that the education system struggles to be culturally responsive (ERO, 2010a). In their research, Bishop and Glynn (1999) suggest some of the issues within the mainstream sector include some mainstream teachers frequently mispronounce the names of Māori students, have low expectations for Māori students, assess student achievement inappropriately, and give Māori students less praise.

Turner, Rubie,-Davies, Christine and Webber's (2015) research confirms deficit theorizing and stereotyping of Māori students continues to prevail in some NZ schools, as findings from fifteen secondary school mathematics teachers indicated teacher expectations were highest for Asian students, followed by European and Pasifika students and then Māori. Further statements within the research also highlighted some educators continue to negatively stereotype Māori students. Similarly, Hokowhitu (2007) affirms Māori (particularly males) have become stereotyped in a way that limits their success to sporting activities due to teacher perceptions concerning their assumed sporting ability which results in lowered academic expectations. Bishop (2010) calls for all leaders and educators to raise their current expectations, cease such deficit views, and commit to becoming a part of the solution that enables equitable outcomes for Māori students by reflecting on current practice and teaching assumptions.

### **2.3.6 School performance**

ERO reports on the quality of education NZ schools provide, and their reports are made public on their website ([www.ero.govt.nz](http://www.ero.govt.nz)). On their website, they stated:

- On average ERO evaluates primary schools' every three years.
- Where there is poor school performance, ERO will work with the schools BOT and return within one to two years.
- High performing schools are reviewed less frequently and can be reviewed within a four to five year period.

ERO does not consider any school to be high performing unless the school can demonstrate that most of their Māori learners are progressing well and succeeding as Māori (ERO, 2010a). Student learning, engagement, progress, and achievement remain at the centre of their review. An ERO (2014) report on Raising Achievement in Primary schools revealed the need for some primary schools to do more to promote success for their Māori students in order to become successful and high performing. In addition to the mandatory government ERO reviews, the performance of a primary school can be internally reviewed or externally reviewed by an outside agency.

## 2.4 SECTION C: NZ PRIMARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

### 2.4.1 Educational leadership

Northouse (2007) defines leadership as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (p. 3). Thornton (2014) supports this definition when stating, “Leaders are those who inspire and influence others to work towards a shared vision or purpose and demonstrate leadership” (personal communication, April 12, 2014). Within a Māori worldview, Royal (2007) contends that **Ranga- tira-** tanga (leadership), is “the art of weaving groups together into a common purpose or vision” (p. 9). Within the concept of leadership, educational leadership has emerged as a way to guide and improve practice in schools (Elmore, 1995). This draws a parallel to the described definitions of leadership however, what differentiates educational leadership is the distinct purpose to lead and motivate others with the goal of improving teaching and learning in an educational context. Research from Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris & Hopkins (2006) claims school leaders significantly influence student learning and that school leadership is ‘second only to classroom teaching’ (p.4).

In the NZ primary sector, the role of principal is key to the effectiveness of a schools leadership team as they are ultimately responsible for their learning environment. This is affirmed by Campbell-Evans (1993) who states “it is the principal who binds together the various threads of values, leadership, vision and culture” (p. 110). A principal may incorporate several leadership styles and approaches when leading however, the overarching notion is that they are educational leaders (Thornton, personal communication, April 12, 2014). The Primary Principals’ Collective Agreement (PPCA) outlines the employment conditions of primary school principals. The BOT prepares annual performance agreements with their principal to evaluate their performance under these terms and school principals are responsible for monitoring and appraising staff performance alongside BOT guidance (MOE, 2011c). Brooking (2007) explains any NZ registered teacher can become a principal in the primary sector as there are “no mandated requirements for prior experience or leadership credentialing” (p.3).

## **2.4.2 MOE leadership initiatives and strategies**

The importance of the primary school principals' role is reflected in the numerous MOE documents, strategies, and PD that aims to improve the efficacy of educational leaders. A brief explanation of the most recent initiatives provides an insight into current MOE funded initiatives that primary school principals can draw from to improve their pedagogy and practice.

The MOE documentation includes:

- Investigating in Educational Success (IES) (MOE, 2014b)
- National Aspiring Principals Programme (NAPP) (MOE, 2014c)
- The First-Time Principals programme (FTTP) (MOE, 2014d)
- Kiwi Leadership for Principals (KLP) (MOE, 2008b)
- Professional Leadership Plan (PLP) (MOE, 2009b)

### *2.4.2.1 Investigating in Educational Success*

The NZ government has recently invested an extra \$359 million over the next four years to help raise student achievement in NZ schools. The IES initiative has created four new roles that include the role of an Executive Principal, Expert Teacher, Lead Teacher, and Change Principal. These roles create the opportunity to share expertise across a community of up to ten schools and the BOT makes the decision to join (MOE, 2014b). An Executive Principal will direct a community of schools during two days release a week to assist in their network. In addition, they will receive a \$40,000.00 salary increase (MOE, 2014b). A Change Principal will work in struggling schools with the objective of transforming them and will receive an additional \$50,000.00 (MOE, 2014b). Initially 93% of the primary sector opposed the top down initiative and suggested funding would have more effect on raising student achievement if it was directly benefiting students as opposed to principals and teachers (New Zealand Educational Institute, 2015a). Recently an agreement has been made by the MOE and primary sector to build an alternative model that is child-centred in the hope of encouraging more primary schools to become a part of the community of schools (Education Aotearoa, 2015).

#### *2.4.2.2 The National Aspiring Principals Programme*

Te Toi Tupu Leading Learning Network (contracted by MOE) has led the National Aspiring Principals Programme since 2002 and continues to provide teachers who aspire to be school principals the opportunity to learn with other aspiring principals over a twelve-month period (MOE, 2014c). Participants critically reflect on a leadership for learning through personal inquiry. The program includes a specific aim of raising the achievement of students in the school, with a particular focus on Māori, Pasifika and students with special needs. An evaluation of NAPP conducted by Piggot-Irvine and Young (2011) showed the program was sound in delivery and that primary-sector participants rated the course more positively than secondary participants did. Teachers from the survey also reported principal encouragement and support to apply for NAPP resulted in the programme being “more relevant and applicable” (p. 1).

#### *2.4.2.3 First Time Principals Programme*

Since 2002, the University of Auckland Centre for Educational Leadership (UACEL) has delivered an optional induction programme for first time NZ principals in all areas and decile ranges (MOE, 2014d). The programme presents a model that shapes the activities within the FTTP curriculum and it presents specific dimensions and capabilities of instructional leadership practices that suggest the greatest impact on student achievement. The model promotes and describes student-centred leadership as:

- Ethical
- Distributed
- Culturally responsive
- Inclusive of all students
- Highly contextual

In 2013, an evaluation of the program by the UACEL revealed 80% of First-time Principals viewed the FTTP as very or extremely important in supporting them during the first 18 months in the role of principal (Patuawa, Viviane Robinson, Bendikson, Pope & Meyer, 2013).



#### 2.4.2.4 Kiwi leadership for principals

The KLP document (MOE, 2008b) “presents a model of leadership that reflects the qualities, knowledge and skills required to lead New Zealand schools from the present to the future” (p. 5). It is based on principal experiences such as those from the FPPP as well as national and international research including the Educational Leadership Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration (Robinson et al., 2009). The KLP has a clear focus on how to improve educational and social outcomes for all students and it presents a model of educational leadership (**see Figure 4**). The model identifies four educational leadership qualities that are situated within a Māori worldview and underpin what is necessary for a principal to lead their school.



Figure 4: Model of educational leadership (MOE, 2008b p. 12)

This model has been described as the core of NZ’s Professional Leadership plan (MOE, 2009b). In an interview for the Education Gazette (2015) John Young, a principal from St Joseph’s School in Upper Hutt said:

*“I like its coherent approach to principals’ professional learning. It shows a professional progression for leaders, a pathway, and I think that’s what has been missing. I like the fact that the plan is based on leadership and not principalship.”*

The reviewed MOE leadership strategies reiterate the importance of effective leadership in improving student achievement. Most of the initiatives emphasise effective leaders should have an understanding of Māori pedagogy and ideologies as this is fundamental for culturally responsive leadership which is needed in a NZ context (Alton-Lee, 2014; Bush, 2011).

### 2.4.3 Culturally responsive frameworks

Macfarlane’s (2004) Educultural Wheel framework supports culturally responsive practices and draws on research from Te Kotahitanga. The framework aims to increase the development of cultural competency and effective teacher practice with Māori students. The Educultural Wheel encompasses five interrelating concepts **Whānaungatanga** (Building relationships), **Kotahitanga** (Ethic of Bonding), **Manaakitanga** (Ethic of care), **Rangatiratanga** (Teacher effectiveness), and **Pumanawatanga** (General classroom morale, pulse, tone). This framework highlights that raising Māori student achievement requires primary school principals to understand and value Māori perspectives and practices before being able to influence others (Fullan, 2001; Waitere, 2008). In addition, Macfarlane, Glynn, Cavanagh, and Bateman (2007) provide a model for ‘Creating culturally safe school environments that draws on Māori concepts as identified by Macfarlane’s (2004) Educultural Wheel. This model describes **Whānaungatanga** (relationships) as the central element to a culturally responsive approach for improving learning environments for Māori students (see Figure 5).

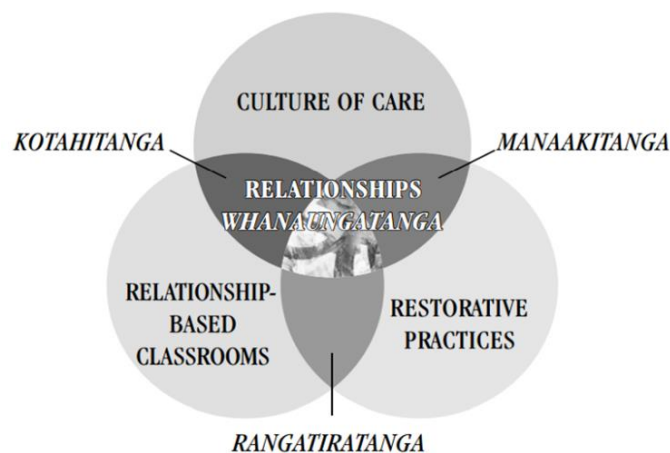


Figure 5: Creating culturally safe schools for Māori students (Macfarlane et al., 2007, p. 70).

#### **2.4.4 Principal values and vision**

Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, and Flowers (2004) assert leadership requires individuals to genuinely understand themselves first. Subsequently a primary principal's values, ethics, and educational beliefs are integral to their leadership decisions and actions (Day, Sammons, Hopkins, Harris, Leithwood Gu & Brown, 2010). Values are a central part of culturally competent leaders as they relate to their purpose and leadership actions (Freeman, Martin, Parmar, Cording & Werhane, 2012). Through modeling and communicating their values and vision principals share with students, staff, parents, and whānau who and what is important (Bishop, 2010; Brown & Trevino, 2006; West-Burnham, 2011). A schools vision should incorporate the needs and voice of all stakeholders, as it is the vision that gives students, staff, and whānau a sense of purpose and the opportunity to transform practice (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Davies and Brighouse's (2010) research emphasises the importance of enacting on values alongside a shared vision as they assert:

*“Values without implementation do little for the school. It is in the tackling of difficult challenges to change and improve, often by confronting unacceptable practices, that passionate leaders show their educational values”*  
(p. 4).

These ideas suggest, for Māori student achievement to have any positive improvement within the learning environment the principal should communicate the value and importance of working towards such a goal and build a vision to be worked towards by all stakeholders (Day et al., 2010; Johnson, 2008). Additionally, effective leaders should provide a learning environment that encourages such ongoing transformation to occur.

#### **2.4.5 Leading and building partnerships**

Building relationships is an ongoing process that requires commitment, communication and trust from all members (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Waitere, 2008). Creating effective learning partnerships between students, staff, parents, and whānau requires leaders who can use their skills and knowledge

to influence others (Cardno & Collett, 2004; Lueder, 1998; Riordan & Walker, 2010). The following sections outline the importance of principals leading and building relationships with students, staff, parents, whānau and community.

#### *2.4.5.1 Leading students*

Principals who know and value their learners make decisions that intentionally seek to strengthen student voice and provide a school environment where students can share their perspectives and values in a variety of learning areas and experiences (Bishop, 2010; Eales, 2012; Shields, 2010). Therefore, understanding and having knowledge related to Te Ao Māori is important for all educators particularly when the cultural diversity of principals and teachers does not reflect the diversity of students within NZ primary school classrooms.

The MOE (2011b) Teaching Staff report revealed:

- From 2410 principals **1981** (82%) principals' identified as NZ European.
- From 2410 principals **325** (13%) principals' identified as NZ Māori.
- From 52460 teachers **39440** (75 %) teachers' identified as NZ European.
- From 52460 teachers **5090** (10%) teachers' identified as NZ Māori.

These statistics highlight educational leaders need to take ownership of providing tools and PD for all key members to actively engage in Te Ao Māori, have opportunities to understand Māori learners beliefs and values in order to improve relationships and strategically meet Māori students' needs (Bishop, 2008; Bishop & Glynn, 1999; MOE 2011a). McKenzie & Singleton (2009) notes:

*“The culture of the child cannot enter the classroom if it has not entered the consciousness of the teacher” (p. 5).*

#### *2.4.5.2 Leading staff*

A significant objective of the school principal role is leading staff to improve the educational outcomes of the learners. For principals this highlights the importance of establishing an effective educational partnership with staff in order to lead effectively. Relationships between the principal and staff are less likely to occur if there is no validity or trust from either party (Robinson, 2007).

Building a working partnership based on trust can improve teacher satisfaction (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009), increase commitment, help retain high-quality teachers (Ladd, 2009) and provide support associated with reduced teacher burnout (Weng, 2004).

Consequently, understanding the needs of staff is just as important as identifying their needs of learners. The 2009 ERO report of Professional Learning and Development in Schools identified from a sample group of 100 primary schools, less than half of the principals used teacher appraisals to identify school's professional learning and development (ERO, 2009). Using some form of appraisal to address staff needs allows opportunities for school leaders to develop PD that aligns with the school vision enhancing genuine engagement from staff to improve their efficacy (Leone, Warnimont & Zimmerman, 2009). Identifying teacher strengths and needs enables the principal to support teachers to become effective teachers and develop future leaders that can grow leadership capacity within the school and encourage the development of future NZ principals which is an important as research suggests the role has become unappealing to many teachers (Sugrue, 2003).

#### *2.4.5.3 Leading with parents, whānau and community*

Building relationships with parents and whānau models Whānaungatanga which Barrett-Aranui (1999) describe inter-relationships and connections. Research emphasises whānau influence is significant in the educational achievement of Māori students as a result of this establishing effective educational partnerships with parents, whānau and Māori community is vital (Bishop, 2010; McKinley, 2000; MOE 2011a; Te Puni Kokiri, 1994).

It has been suggested improving school and whānau relations can be achieved through regular and genuine communication and consultation on important matters that affect the school and their learners (Lueder, 1998; Robinson et al., 2009). When schools welcome parents, whānau and community and provide purposeful opportunities to engage and have a voice they are more likely to be involved (Bishop, et al., 2007; Macfarlane et al., 2007). Ultimately, educational leaders acknowledge expertise regarding student achievement can derive from others (Harris, 2008).

Communication with local iwi is very important and requires leaders to go *kanohi ki te kanohi* (face to face) to seek guidance, strengthen knowledge of their community and be a leader “who gets out in front and leads the people deriving mana from them” (Tuara, 1992, p 50). When principals model a commitment to Te Ao Māori, parents, whānau have an opportunity to believe, and trust the school is committed to raising Māori student achievement (Riordan & Walker, 2010). The MOE (2000) Guidelines for Boards of Trustees and Schools on Engaging with Māori parents, whānau, and communities states:

*“The choice is not whether schools develop a relationship with Māori communities but what the quality of relationships will be” (p.7).*

Primary schools can further strengthen their community network by belonging to a cluster which is a community of schools based around the schools geographical area and is facilitated by the MOE. Principals from clustered schools meet for various purposes as part of a formal network. The cluster networks can build collegial relationships between schools, provide support, and pool resources to meet shared school goals. Schools can choose to participate in a cluster however, participation is not mandatory. ERO (2008) reports that ‘there is still some way to go to get consistent, fruitful engagement across the range of school and community settings’ (p.10).

#### **2.4.6 Reflective practice**

Reflective practice is seen as a necessary tool for all educators to employ in order to understand the rationale behind their practice, learn from these experiences and make changes for the future (Goleman, 2013; Brookfield, 1995). This implies principals need time and opportunities to reflect regularly on what is happening within the school to continuously learn from their actions and deliver improved results. Cardno and Fitzgerald (2005) emphasise continued learning as a principal can only occur if there is BOT support with time and opportunity to do so. Similarly, Hitt, Tucker, and Young (2012) affirm principals need the time for “reflection, growth, and renewal” (p. 11) through individualised processes that can draw on a variety of tools.

### 2.4.7 Primary school principal challenges

This review has revealed there are several challenges for primary school principals as they aim to improve the achievement of their Māori learners. Some of these challenges include acquiring the knowledge and skills to lead culturally responsive practices while managing the extensive principal workload. Leading a culturally responsive school that improves student achievement necessitates time, resources, and multiple sources of expertise and can require principals to lead staff to raise their own cultural competency. Leithwood (1992) warns:

*“Even principals who acknowledge their responsibility to foster teacher development often claim that it is not a function they feel capable of performing well” (p. 86).*

Improving the cultural competency of staff can be challenging for principals particularly if their knowledge and understanding relating to Te Ao Māori and improving educational achievement is insufficient. Principals need to be aware that change is complex and although necessary for building better learning environments it can cause counter-productive emotional responses (Le Fevre, 2010). Macfarlane (1997) suggests expecting educators to achieve full bicultural competence is a much-needed yet difficult step to achieve. This idea reiterates such a policy is too difficult to achieve whereas a responsive approach is less problematic as it focuses on principals and teachers learning how to improve their leadership and teaching. Another challenge of the principal role is managing the extensive workload. Some research indicates that NZ principals spend almost twice as much time on administration tasks than others internationally. These administrative demands can increase and intensify the pressure of the principal role making the job stressful and unappealing (Hodgen & Wylie, 2005; Apple, 1988). A 2005 report commissioned by the NZ Principal Federation (NZPF) conducted by Livingstone (1999) found that:

- A high proportion of teaching principals described their stress level as ‘high’ or ‘extremely high’.

- The main causes of stress were increased paperwork and pressure from ERO reviews. Approximately, 40% would leave teaching in the next 12 months if given the opportunity.

In 2002, Collins (2004) replicated the same survey with teaching principals in the central regions district of the North Island and the results indicated:

- Principals' had a high workload in their first or second year on the job (an average of 65-hour per week). Approximately 17.5% indicated they would prefer to leave teaching in the next 12 months if given the opportunity.

This data affirms the importance for principals to build positive relationships and partnerships in and out of school as these networks can share leadership responsibilities and ensure principals are supported to remain in the leadership position (Brock & Fraser, 2001).

#### **2.4.8 Chapter Summary**

This literature review highlighted the complexity of the primary principal role when aiming to raise Māori student achievement. The first section of this chapter provided a review of current literature surrounding Māori as tangata whenua and Māori student achievement. This section described the diversity of Māori students' identity and educational needs and considered some of the MOE initiatives and strategies that could be utilised to improve learning experiences for Māori learners and the subsequent challenges for primary principals that could be faced when aiming to implement these initiatives and strategies. The second section examined some of the significant features of NZ primary school education system and the implications it has for Māori learners and primary principals. This section described how the NZCF incorporates Māori ideologies and perspectives and explained the current assessment measures. Finally, the third section explored educational leadership and discussed some of the current MOE initiatives and strategies that are available to assist school principals to improving their leadership efficacy. This section concluded with an analysis of some of the challenges primary school principals face as an educational leader.



## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the research process and describes the qualitative and grounded theory perspectives, which provided the fundamental guidelines underpinning the chosen research methodology. It clarifies the participant-sampling strategies used, the procedures for data collection and explains how school documentation, anonymous survey, and semi-structured interviews were utilised to obtain the research data. Following this a brief discussion of the core themes, which emerged from the coded data, is presented. These themes are:

- **KO AU [ME]** (Leadership of the individual).
- **KO MĀTOU [US]** (Leadership within the school).
- **KO TĀTOU [ALL OF US]** (Leadership with the wider community).

The chapter concludes with examining the ethical considerations of the research project and discusses the measures used to ensure the integrity of the research process and outcomes.

### **3.2 Methodology**

Methodology describes the processes and methods used by the researchers to gain knowledge to answer their research questions (Creswell, 2012). The research method is dependent on the research questions and objectives, as researchers must identify the best process to generate and obtain new knowledge and data (Egan, 2002).

Qualitative research allows researchers to explore the human experience through examining interactions and insights that can assist in understanding individual behaviour and actions (Merriam, 2009). The benefits of qualitative research includes the process as it involves the participant's perceptions, and experiences which guides the research exploration. This approach is beneficial, as it does not solely focus on the data outcomes (Creswell, 2012).

Common criticisms of qualitative research include smaller sample sizes can potentially limit generalisations and the fact that the data from narrative accounts relies on researcher interpretations and opinions. Such criticisms highlight it is important to be aware of researcher bias and that the analysis of the gathered data should remain neutral when reporting the participant responses (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

As the purpose of this research study was to gain insight from primary school principals, a qualitative method of inquiry was utilised as it provided an effective way for the researcher to enter the participant's lives and obtain their values, beliefs, ideas and leadership actions surrounding Māori achievement by using their voice (Stainback & Stainback, 1988).

### **3.3 Grounded theory**

Grounded theory is methodical process and is a commonly used technique in qualitative analysis to explain human phenomena through inductive reasoning (Elliott & Lazenbatt, 2005; Gibbs, 2010; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The rationale for utilising a grounded theory approach was due to its ability to generate theory systematically from a process of data collection, coding, and analysis without requiring previous research to work from (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

The benefits of a grounded theory approach is that the process, data collection, analysis, and emerging theory are closely related. Findings and results that emerge are data driven and not based on a hypothesis or a preconceived theory or research (Ezzy, 2002; Glaser, 1998; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Some criticisms of grounded theory suggest that it can be overly exhaustive, as the coding process and memo writing can be time consuming and requires constant revisiting (McKenzie, Powell & Usher, 1997).

In following grounded theory methods, completion of the literature review occurred after analysing the gathered data to limit researcher assumptions and the analysis process was given adequate time in order to constantly revisit the coding process (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

### 3.4 The research process

The research study took place in mainstream primary schools in the Wellington region. Wellington has the fourth largest population of Māori in NZ (9.7 %) (Statistics NZ, 2013a). A purposive sample was utilised to identify appropriate primary schools for inclusion in this study. Purposive sampling allows researchers to select participants based on their suitability (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000).

The sampling process used the following criteria:

- Primary schools situated in an urban geographic location within the Wellington region.
- State co-educational primary schools (Years 0 – 8) with an ERO report from 2013 or 2014.
- Primary schools with a student roll of 10% or more of students who identify as Māori.

One school from the data set could not participate due to a conflict of interest with the researcher's employment. A sample frame of all possible primary schools within the Wellington region created a list in order to target many respondents. From this sample frame of 61 schools, 25 schools met the sampling criteria and became potential participants. Schools in this initial data set represented a broad range of decile ratings and percentages of Māori student ratios.

All schools that met the criteria received an email to participate in the research study. Initially four primary school principals consented to participate, representing 16% of the sample group. A second attempt was made to increase the sample of participants. This involved targeting principals from the initial data set who did not reply to the first email. One more principal consented to participate increasing the participating sample group to 20%. The five participating primary school principals provide different contexts to gather and obtain data. Table 1 presents their respective demographic. The table is organised according to the participants experience in the role of principal ranging from the most experienced to the least.

Table 1: Participant demographic

	Gender	Ethnicity	Principal experience	School type/decile	Māori Student roll numbers
<b>James School 1</b>	M	NZ European	20+	Contributing primary Decile 6	12%
<b>Paul School 2</b>	M	NZ European	14 years	Contributing primary Decile 10	15%
<b>Bryan School 3</b>	M	NZ European	10 years	Intermediate Decile 8	14%
<b>Kim School 4</b>	F	NZ European	2 years	Contributing primary Decile 6	12%
<b>Cathie School 5</b>	F	NZ European	2 years	Full primary Decile 9	15%

### 3.5 Data collection Summary

This research study utilised three data collection sites. These included recent ERO reports and school charters, anonymous survey via Qualtrics and semi-structured interview responses.

#### 3.5.1 Method of Documentation analysis

Document analysis is a form of qualitative research that allows interpretations and analysis of specific documents (Bowen, 2009). Recent school ERO reports and individual school charters provided an additional source of data that assisted in the triangulation process and provided the researcher with background information of the each participant's current school performance and context.

The benefits of using document analysis include the low cost; the fact that documentation provides a good source of background information and that it potentially provides the researcher with additional unknown data.

Some disadvantages of document analysis include the potential of data being inapplicable, out of date and/or inaccurate (Bowen, 2009). The school charters provided the research study with applicable data relating to each schools' current values, aims, strategic goals, and plans. The ERO reports were useful as they were from 2013 or 2014 and they provided an insight into how each school was currently performing as evaluated by ERO's evaluation criteria, which specifically evaluates how effectively a school promotes educational success for Māori, as Māori.

### **3.5.2 Method of Survey**

Surveys provide a standardised method of collecting data and assist in the researchers understanding of some of the variables within participant responses (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). This study utilised an anonymous survey to gather extra data relating to the three key questions outlined in *Chapter 1* and to gather initial data about:

- Extra details of how each school operates.
- Provisions each school has for Professional Development (PD) surrounding raising Māori student achievement.
- The perceptions the participating principals have surrounding raising Māori student achievement and leadership.

Anonymous online surveys allow respondents to answer more freely and honestly, which in this case possibly increased the participants' responses (Ackroyd & Hughes, 1981). In addition, other benefits of using an online survey include there being no cost involved, it is an efficient form of data gathering and as all questions are the same for all respondents, the findings can be more generalizable. Some disadvantages of using surveys include the fact differing responses are subjective making comparisons between responses difficult to interpret as the researcher is unable to ask further questions and clarify participant responses (Ackroyd & Hughes, 1981).

Once the Participant consent form (**see Appendix B**) from each participant was signed and obtained, a survey (**see Appendix C**) in the form of a questionnaire was individually distributed via email through Qualtrics (online

survey software and insight platform). The survey consisted of open and closed questions and all questions were relevant to the three key questions underpinning this study (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Participants had a four-week period to complete the survey. Questions in the survey were not leading and participants could choose not to answer or stop at any time. The analysis package from Qualtrics collated the survey responses and enabled the raw data to be reduced to frequency tables and graphs.

### **3.5.3 Method of semi-structured interviews**

Once the period for all online surveys had closed, a second email was sent to all participants inviting them to participate in a follow up interview to generate more data. The rationale for using interviews to gather information within this research study was due to its capability to allow participants to share their perceptions in a shared experience with a relevant purpose (Merriam, 1998). All five participants opted to participate in a semi-structured interview.

The benefits of using semi-structured interviews include the ability to use predetermined questions alongside the opportunity for further unplanned questions to be asked (McLeod, 2014). Some criticisms of semi-structured interviews suggest some interviews can be restricted by time, interviewees are busy and finding time to meet can be challenging (McLeod, 2014; Willis, 2007).

Participants were asked to choose the time, date and place of their interview. All participants chose to meet at his or her school. The interviews had a semi-structured approach (Bush, 2007) (**see Appendix D for Semi-structured Interview Questions**) and the interview questions were open-ended and stemmed from the three research questions outlined in *Chapter 1*. Use of a digital voice recorder guaranteed that all information gathered for transcribing was accurate and easily accessible. Interviews began with the researcher sharing the overall aims of the interview and research study and followed with questions that allowed the participant to share their background. This approach eased the participants into the focus of the interview and let them feel relaxed as building rapport and trust was vital in engaging the participation of the interviewee (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999).

Following this, the main questions guided the semi-structured interview and responses from the participants were accepted in a non-judgemental, leading, or threatening way. Due to the flexibility of semi-structured interviews, there was opportunity to ask unplanned questions that enabled the researcher to delve deeper into a particular facets of the conversation (Newby, 2010). The interview concluded with an opportunity for participants to ask any questions or provide further comments. Participants were able to receive their full transcripts if requested.

### **3.6 Data analysis techniques**

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) states that “there is no one single or correct way to analyse and present qualitative data” (p. 461). For each schools documentation to be analysed, the school charters were obtained directly from each school’s website and their most recent ERO report was retrieved directly through the ERO website (<http://www.ero.govt.nz>). This did not require participant permission or input. The documentation was printed out and information related to school practice surrounding Māori achievement was highlighted alongside the date each school was to be evaluated next by ERO as this provided an indication of current school performance.

Analysis of the survey data began with downloading the raw qualitative data to the researcher’s computer directly from Qualtrics. To analyse data gathered from the semi-structured interviews, the digital recordings were uploaded from the digital recorder and transcribed. Both sets of data were printed out and kept in a password-protected file case.

A grounded theory process was used to analyse the survey and interview data. Both data sets were initially read, then re- read with early thoughts and ideas scribed in the right margin. Participant quotations from the data were highlighted in the initial coding process as they illustrated the key ideas and initial codes (Creswell, 2012). Open coding began by assigning key words and phrases that accurately described the codes that emerged from the data (Creswell, 2012; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This led to axial coding which examined the data to find patterns and identify relationships among the open codes.

An inductive process narrowed the data into eight interrelating themes (Gibbs, 2010).

These themes are:

- **Whanonga pono** (Commitment to Te Ao Māori)
- **Wānanga** (Communicates vision)
- **Whaiwhakaaro** (Reflective practitioner)
- **Rangatiratanga** (Leading the school )
- **Ako** (Learns within Te Ao Māori)
- **Whānaungatanga** (Builds strong relationships)
- **Honongotanga** (Builds supportive networks)
- **Kotahitanga** (Works within a collective)

Further reduction of the themes led to selective coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Through selective coding three core themes of effective leadership emerged (Creswell, 2012; Johnson & Christensen, 2012).

These themes are:

- **KO AU [ME]** (Leadership of the individual).
- **KO MĀTOU [US]** (Leadership within the school).
- **KO TĀTOU [ALL OF US]** (Leadership with the wider community).

These themes have been expressed within Te Ao Māori to position the knowledge of Māori ideologies and perspectives in the space of academia and to reflect the inter-relationship of the themes.

Throughout the analysis, it was important to understand the codes and themes were created from multiple interpretations and influenced by researcher knowledge and experience (Thomas, 2006). Meeting with the research supervisor allowed for the checking of bias and researcher assumptions throughout the analysis process (Merriam, 1988). Tables 2, 3 and 4 provide an overview of the coding process that led to the selection of the interrelating codes and the three core themes. The tables do not present all of the data.



Table 2: Theme 1 KO AU

Sample of Participant key words and phrases	Open codes	Axial codes	Selective codes and Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “It goes to the heart of how we think...”</li> <li>• “It’s what we value ...living in NZ...”</li> <li>• “Māori culture is important...”</li> <li>• ‘Value you place on things...’</li> <li>• “We show we value...”</li> <li>• “Review of our school values...”</li> </ul>	Valuing Māori culture/tikanga	Personal values <b>Whanonga pono</b>	<b>KO AU</b>  Leadership of the individual
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Keep having those high expectations...”</li> <li>• “I can see myself in the school...”</li> <li>• “I need to push that out more...”</li> <li>• “I need to work at...”</li> <li>• “I need to be much more clear</li> </ul>	High expectations of self		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I nurture...I am committed...”</li> <li>• “I need to commit to ...”</li> <li>• “Get better at doing what we are doing...”</li> <li>• I need to commit</li> </ul>	Commitment to leading school		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I have to model first...”</li> <li>• “Doing better by our kids...”</li> <li>• “We needed to do a better job for our Māori kids...”</li> <li>• “How can our curriculum be more engaging...”</li> </ul>	Knowing what to lead		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having a real strong knowledge of our kids</li> <li>• Share my knowledge</li> <li>• Improve my knowledge</li> <li>• Discuss with my team</li> <li>• Through current reading</li> <li>• “In my experience...”</li> </ul>	Sharing knowledge	Communicate <b>Wānanga</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “If we are never wrong we are not learning...”</li> <li>• “How can I do better...?”</li> <li>• “I can do it better next time”</li> </ul>	◦ Reflecting on practice	Reflective practice <b>Whaiwhakaaro</b>	

Table 3: Theme 2 KO MĀTOU

Sample of Participant key words and phrases	Open codes	Axial codes	Selective codes and Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Create a shared vision...what is important to us...”</li> <li>• I hold a very strong vision about learning</li> <li>• I try to walk the talk and model the vision</li> </ul>	Shared vision	Shares and builds a vision	<p><b>KO MĀTOU</b> Leadership within the school</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Lessen emphasis on deficits...”</li> <li>• “It’s about choosing the teacher that has the mana... “Individual inquiry...”</li> <li>• “We recognise as a staff that it’s part of our commitment ...”</li> <li>• “Activating staff in to a space where the can genuinely make that shift...”</li> </ul>	Leading staff Raising expectations Distributed leadership	Leading the school to raise student achievement with multiple views of success <b>Rangatiratanga</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “We need to improve our Cultural lens...”</li> <li>• ““working on Kawa</li> <li>• “Starting to explore tikanga and Te Ao Māori...”</li> <li>• “High expectations in the class and the teachers...”</li> </ul>	Māori language and tikanga learning opportunities Success for Māori as Māori	Inclusive learning experiences within Te Ao Māori <b>Ako</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Relationships being key to being successful educators...”</li> <li>• “Key thing for any child particularly Māori students is that they can see themselves in the organisation...”</li> </ul>	Building relationships with students	Relationships and partnerships <b>Whānaungatanga</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Strong relationships are key...”</li> <li>• “Everybody supporting each other to be better and get better...”</li> <li>• “We encourage teachers to see others practice...”</li> </ul>	Building relationships with staff		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “We have a genuine commitment to whānau partnerships...”</li> <li>• “We are developing this relationship and some trust...”</li> <li>• “Building those relationships so that they do feel like they can give me feedback...”</li> </ul>	Building relationships With whānau		

Table 4: Theme 3 KO TĀTOU

Sample of Participant key words and phrases	Open codes	Axial codes	Selective codes and Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Strong desire to learn...”</li> <li>• “Working with whānau ... other schools in our cluster ...”</li> <li>• “Kawa amongst our community...”</li> <li>• “It does point to the fact that having a relationship is important...”</li> <li>• the constant challenge is people with expertise</li> </ul>	<p>Meeting National assessment standards</p> <p style="text-align: right;">→</p> <p>Working with local iwi/hapū</p> <p style="text-align: right;">→</p> <p>Working with other schools/agencies</p> <p style="text-align: right;">→</p>	<p>Building supportive networks to learn from others</p> <p><b>Honongotanga</b></p>	<p style="text-align: right;">→</p> <p><b>KO TĀTOU</b> Leadership in collaboration with school, whānau and wider community</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Discuss Ideas about what constitutes success...”</li> <li>• “We need a Te Ao Māori lens in Eurocentric system ... challenge the conceptions of success...”</li> </ul>	<p>Measuring student achievement</p> <p style="text-align: right;">→</p>	<p>Meeting expectations School , community and national – working as a collective</p> <p><b>Kotahitanga</b></p>	<p style="text-align: right;">→</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think and believe, teachers try and do better than what they are doing at the moment</li> <li>• should have a Māori connection</li> <li>• Taking ownership of the curriculum and about them.” So we changed a few things around curriculum delivery</li> </ul>	<p>Meeting National curriculum expectation</p> <p style="text-align: right;">→</p>		

Further examination of the selective codes against the initial survey data reinforced the validity of the interpretation (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). When analysing the data the researcher sought to be as unbiased, professional, accurate, and systematic as possible utilising consistent methods when analysing the data (Bulmer, 1979; Cohen et al., 2000).

### **3.7 Trustworthiness and Validity**

Krefting (1991) asserts 'many different strategies are employed in qualitative research to establish trustworthiness' (as cited in Law, Letts, Pollock, Bosch, & Westmorland, 1998). Triangulation is one method for increasing the validity of findings through collating data from a wide range of sources and comparing the findings from them (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Triangulation of school charters and 2013 /2014 ERO reports, anonymous survey and semi-structured interview responses provided a variety of perspectives and data that strengthened this analysis (Creswell, 2003).

Validity of grounded theory occurs if others can relate their own experiences to its content (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Therefore, when analysing the data it was important to report honestly. The trustworthiness of this study was increased due to researcher knowledge and understanding of Māori culture and primary school contexts due to personal experience. When analysing the data and its findings the process was sought to be valid and reliable (Creswell, 2012; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

### **3.8 Ethical considerations**

Ethical issues are important for qualitative research, as its approach involves entering the participant's world (Punch, 1998). The researcher is responsible for the research ethics and has a moral and professional obligation to respect research participants and not cause harm (Neuman, 2011). This research project received ethical approval from the VUW FOE Ethics Committee and the study adhered to the New Zealand Association for Research in Education (NZARE, 2010) research conduct.

#### **3.8.1 Informed consent**

Participation was voluntary and participants received an information letter (**see Appendix A**), which outlined the aims of the research, key questions underpinning the research study, risks and benefits of their involvement and the intention of the study to contribute to a greater understanding of raising Māori student achievement. The participants were also provided with the

researchers contact details alongside the research supervisor's details. This allowed participants to ask any questions about the research study.

Participants consented to be involved in this study by signing and returning a consent letter (see **Appendix B**) either electronically or by hard copy.

### **3.8.2 Confidentiality**

Confidentiality protects the rights of the participants and respects the integrity of the research study. The researcher has a vital role in ensuring the research study and process is ethical. It was made clear in all correspondence with the participants that their participation and the data they provided was confidential.

Once the data was collected, the electronic transcripts, survey data, audio files, and consent forms were password-protected to ensure only the researcher had access to these files. To ensure anonymity to people outside of the researcher, all participants were assigned pseudo names. This strengthened the internal validity of this research project and protected participant's anonymity when reporting the findings. Participants could withdraw from participating at any stage of the research project up to March 1<sup>st</sup> 2015.

### **3.9 Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented an overview of the methodological framework underpinning the research study. The framework included qualitative and grounded theory perspectives and the chapter described in detail the three data collection phases. This was followed with an explanation of how the data was analysed and coded using a grounded approach. The chapter concluded with an explanation of the ethical considerations of the research project and outlined the importance of trustworthiness and validity during the research process.

## CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter reports the findings from the research study and collates the perceptions and leadership practices surrounding raising Māori student achievement from five primary school principals in the Wellington region. The participants demographic and the pseudonyms used in this report have been presented in *Chapter 3* (**see Table 1 p. 39**).

The quantitative data from the anonymous survey (**see Appendix C**) and the school documentation provided information of each school context. The qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews (**see Appendix D**) provided insight into individual principal leadership perceptions and leadership practice relating to raising Māori student achievement.

Data was gathered to answer three key questions that were presented in *Chapter 1* (**see p. 5**).

- 1.) What are the current perceptions of principals in mainstream primary schools surrounding Māori student achievement?
- 2.) How do these perceptions contribute to their leadership practice and decision making within their schools?
- 3.) How do principals' gauge or monitor the success of their leadership practice and decision-making?

The findings are reported under the three sources of data collection

- School documentation
- Anonymous survey data
- Semi-structured interview

This chapter concludes with a summary of the key findings and makes connections to the three identified themes that were presented in *Chapter 3* (**see p. 44**).

## 4.2 School documentation findings

### 4.2.1 School charter findings

Each participating schools charter was obtained from their school website and the data was analysed to gather information relating to each participating schools context. **The school charter findings are reported verbatim** from its original source and is presented using the following headings:

- School values within the school charter.
- Statements related to a commitment to the Tiriti o Waitangi.
- Strategic goals and plans for Te Reo Māori and tikanga Māori.
- Strategic plans to raise Māori student achievement.

#### Values within the school charter

Each school has identified values that are inherent to what is believed important for their learners and school community. Four schools have identified Māori concepts as a part of their values. The following data presents a culmination of the participating schools values. The Māori terms and their meaning are presented verbatim. The school values include:

- **Māia** – Confidence
- **Mana** – Respect
- **Manaakitanga** – Caring about each other
- **Tautoko** – Supporting each other
- **Tino rangatiratanga** – Respect/taking responsibility
- **Tutuki** – Success
- **Whakawhirinaki** – Partnerships with community
- **Whānaungatanga** – Community

#### Commitment to the Tiriti o Waitangi (TOW)

Three of the participating schools have identified a specific commitment to the TOW and link specific school actions that align to upholding TOW principles in a variety of ways.

Table 5: Commitment to the Tiriti o Waitangi - Charter statements

	<b>Charter Statement</b>
<b>School 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One of the key skills in life is the ability to get on with others even though they may be different to us in many ways.</li> <li>• We will work on achieving this by respecting and valuing the place of the Treaty of Waitangi.</li> </ul>
<b>School 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No reference was made to the TOW</li> </ul>
<b>School 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No reference was made to the TOW</li> </ul>
<b>School 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our goal is to develop and maintain programmes and an ethos that reflects New Zealand's cultural diversity and, in particular, the unique position of Māori as the tangata whenua.</li> <li>• We achieve this by raising staff understanding and awareness of New Zealand's cultural diversities, especially that of the Treaty of Waitangi.</li> </ul>
<b>School 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will seek to honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi and its principles, co-operation, inclusion, protection, integrity, justice, and fairness.</li> <li>• This commitment is incorporated through strategic aims and goals to: Celebrate the partnership of Te Tiriti o Waitangi through the recognition of Māori identity and learning needs, and the expression of Te Reo and Tikanga Māori as a normal part of school life.</li> </ul>

### Strategic plans for Te Reo Māori and Tikanga Māori

Provisions and statements for the inclusion or development of Te Reo Māori and tikanga Māori was evident in the majority of the school charters strategic goals/aims and annual plans. The following table collates the data pertaining to each schools specific goals or plans for Māori language and culture and where applicable the person or persons who the charter outlines as being responsible for overseeing that specific goal is also presented (**see Table 6**).



Table 6: Strategic plans to include Te Reo Māori and Tikanga Māori

	<b>Charter Statements</b>	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>
<b>School 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We provide opportunities for students to learn Te Reo Māori and Tikanga as parents request this and as it is reasonable to do so.</li> <li>Provide opportunities to learn about cultures from all parts of the world, including Māori, Pasifika, Asian, African and European</li> <li>Continue development of Ako (reciprocity) and teina/tuakana learning roles.</li> <li>Different cultures in the school will be recognised, included, and celebrated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Principal</li> <li>Syndicate leaders</li> <li>Staff</li> <li>Class teachers</li> <li>Culture/Arts Active team</li> </ul>
<b>School 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our dual cultural heritage and the unique position of Māori culture is demonstrated through school policy and curriculum delivery, the functioning of the Whānau support group and programmes in Tikanga Te Reo and Kapa Haka</li> </ul>	
<b>School 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Live a Te Reo me ona tikanga Māori culture</li> <li>Grow independent, collaborative learners who are increasing their skills in Te Reo and their understanding of tikanga Māori</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Principal</li> <li>Staff</li> </ul>
<b>School 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide instruction in tikanga Māori and Te Reo Māori for all students in our school.</li> <li>Develop plans and policies that are sensitive to varying cultures, and incorporating relevant aspects, especially Tikanga Māori</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BOT</li> <li>Principal</li> <li>Staff</li> </ul>
<b>School 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure Te Reo, Tikanga Māori content is evident in planning in the curriculum</li> <li>Provide resources that promote Māori language and culture</li> <li>Develop staff skill and confidence in Te Reo and Tikanga Māori by using a teacher 'expert'</li> <li>Visit Te Papa to learn about Tikanga Māori</li> <li>Approach local community to locate an appropriate Kaumātua to support in implementing more Te Reo and cultural activities such as kapa haka</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board of Trustees (BOT)</li> <li>School Leadership Team (SLT)</li> <li>Class teachers</li> <li>BOT/Principal</li> </ul>

## Strategic plans to raise Māori student achievement

Targeting and raising Māori student achievement was evident in the majority of the schools strategic goals/aims and annual plans. The following table outlines how each school specifically focuses on Māori student achievement and where applicable states who is responsible for this area as identified within the school charter (**see Table 7**).

Table 7: Strategic plans to raise Māori student achievement

	<b>Charter Statements</b>	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>
<b>School 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actions in relation to Writing, Mathematics, and Cultural Focus will be planned in from the outset.</li> <li>• Partnership between parents and the school is critical to helping our students. We do this by holding hui and cultural meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal</li> <li>• Staff</li> </ul>
<b>School 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on success for 'Māori as Māori'</li> <li>• A particular emphasis will be placed on Māori achievement and Māori boys' writing achievement</li> </ul>	
<b>School 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase staff knowledge and understanding about meeting the needs of Māori students</li> <li>• Examine Tātaiako – cultural competencies</li> <li>• Work with Māori liaison teacher to create action plan for year and consult with Māori families</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom teachers</li> <li>• Teacher with responsibility for Māori</li> </ul>
<b>School 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage Māori parents and community to take an active part in the school community to assist in raising Māori achievement levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BOT</li> <li>• Principal</li> <li>• Staff</li> </ul>
<b>School 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Track Māori students' achievement and analyse three times each year and support as needs identified.</li> <li>• PD related to <i>He Reo Tupu, He Reo Ora</i>.</li> <li>• Teachers gain further understanding of Māori worldview from exploring the Enviro-Schools kit.</li> <li>• Invite and encourage parents and school community members to share their expertise on Māori culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff</li> <li>• Principal</li> <li>• BOT</li> <li>• Classroom teachers</li> <li>• Teacher with responsibility for Māori</li> </ul>

The **key findings** from the **school charters** indicate:

- Māori concepts are included in the majority of schools values and most schools identify a commitment to the TOW.
- Some schools charters are specific and deliberate in their actions to provide opportunities surrounding Te Reo Māori and tikanga Māori.
- Those responsible for overseeing the schools strategic goals and plans predominantly involves the principal role however the responsibilities are also shared with a variety of different school members.
- There is variance between schools having a functioning Whānau support groups and staff capability to lead Te Reo and tikanga Māori programmes.
- Some schools charters are more specific and deliberate in their actions to track, monitor academic progress, and raise Māori student achievement.

#### **4.2.2 ERO Report findings**

Each participating schools most recent ERO report has been analysed to gauge current school performance. ERO reports evaluate four key areas and a corresponding question guides their review. The following analysis is presented under the same headings with, specific focus placed on data relating to Māori students learning and achievement. The four areas and guiding questions are:

- **Context** - What are the important features of this school that have an impact on student learning?
- **Learning** - How well does the school use achievement information to make positive changes to learners' engagement, progress, and achievement?
- **Curriculum** - How effectively do schools promote educational success for Māori, as Māori?
- **Sustainable Performance** - How well placed is the school to sustain and improve performance?

## Context

### **What are the important features of this school that have an impact on Māori student learning?**

Table 8: Important positive features that impact student learning

	<b>2013/2014 ERO Report findings</b>
<b>School 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides opportunities for parents and whānau to participate and support students' learning and belonging within the school community</li></ul>
<b>School 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Has a sustained positive reporting history with ERO and there is continuity in strong professional leadership</li></ul>
<b>School 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Positive and trusting relationships are at the centre of efforts to promote student wellbeing and create a sense of connection and belonging</li></ul>
<b>School 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parents and whānau actively participate in a variety of ways to support children's learning. The school hosts regular consultation meetings.</li></ul>
<b>School 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Has been through significant change and there is currently a new principal since the last review.</li></ul>

## Learning

### **How well does the school use achievement information to make positive changes to Māori learners' engagement, progress, and achievement?**

Table 9: Use of school achievement data to make positive changes

	<b>2013/2014 ERO Report findings</b>
<b>School 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Māori student achievement is comparable with that of other students</li><li>• The BOT receives regular reports on student trends, patterns and progress</li></ul>
<b>School 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Māori learners experience high levels of success in reading. School improvement targets are becoming more responsive to the needs of students, including Māori learners.</li></ul>
<b>School 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Comparisons between ethnic groups and measurement of progress are explicitly shared and discussed. Target groups include Māori students who are not achieving as well as other students in some areas</li></ul>
<b>School 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Māori students are achieving at similar levels as the rest of the cohort.</li><li>• School leaders use student achievement information to identify groups of priority learners and set appropriate targets for improvement.</li></ul>
<b>School 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There has been a deliberate, strategic approach to improvement.</li><li>• Most students across all ethnic groups achieve at and above the National Standards in literacy and mathematics.</li></ul>

## Curriculum

### **How effectively do schools promote educational success for Māori, as Māori?**

Table 10: Curriculum effectiveness and educational success

	<b>2013/2014 ERO Report findings</b>
<b>School 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural backgrounds and strengths of students and families are valued and celebrated. Māori students participate fully and enjoy success in all aspects of school life and Māori Students' have opportunities to celebrate and learn through their language and culture.</li> <li>• A whānau support group gives Māori parents opportunities to influence school programmes and future direction. Relationships among students and teachers are positive and there is strong community support for the school's Kapa Haka group.</li> </ul>
<b>School 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The BOT and staff are committed to the principles of the TOW.</li> <li>• School kawa for pōwhiri, karakia, waiata, and poroporoaki have become embedded and a large Kapa haka group provides leadership opportunities for students. Students are encouraged to investigate their culture and identity.</li> <li>• Two lead teachers provide support for staff to use Te Reo Māori. Students participate in an extension programme in Te Reo Māori.</li> <li>• The whānau group provides ongoing support and suggested strategies that encourage Māori learners to experience more success as Māori.</li> </ul>
<b>School 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school is showing greater commitment to strengthening its provision for Māori students. Appointment of a staff member with expertise in Te Reo me ngā tikanga Māori supports curriculum. The school has a Kapa Haka group that is supported by whānau.</li> <li>• Relationships with local iwi and the Māori community group, is a key priority that the principal is responding to.</li> </ul>
<b>School 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School leaders are consulting with the community to enable the curriculum to more effectively reflect the presence and aspirations of Māori students</li> <li>• Māori students participate fully and enjoy success in all aspects of school life.</li> <li>• Māori parents and whānau are consulted about school programmes and future direction. School leaders are committed to the ongoing development of a culturally responsive curriculum that reflects and promotes Māori language, culture and identity</li> </ul>
<b>School 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good systems and strategies have been put in place for identifying students learning needs.</li> </ul>

## Sustainable performance and further recommendations

### How well placed is the school to sustain and improve its performance?

Table 11: Overall school performance and ERO recommendations

	Sustainable performance and ERO recommendations
<b>School 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school is well placed to sustain and improve its performance. ERO is likely to carry out the next review in <b>three</b> years.</li> <li>It is timely for leaders to evaluate how effectively Te Ao Māori is promoted and reflected in the school and class environment.</li> </ul>
<b>School 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school is very well placed to continue to improve student learning. Strong, collaborative school leadership provides a cohesive and clear direction. ERO is likely to carry out the next review in <b>four-to-five</b> years.</li> <li>It is timely for the BOT and staff to review how the school curriculum caters for and is culturally responsive to key groups including Māori learners.</li> </ul>
<b>School 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ERO is likely to carry out the next review in <b>three</b> years</li> <li>Development of a more strategic and cohesive plan for Māori success should be guided by a clear vision of success for Māori, as Māori, developed in partnership with local iwi and whānau, and in reference to Ka Hikitia - .Accelerating Success.</li> <li>Use of Tātaiako: Cultural Competencies for Teachers of Māori Learners should support the development of teachers' capacity to be more culturally responsive in their practice.</li> </ul>
<b>School 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school is well placed to sustain and improve its performance. ERO is likely to carry out the next review in <b>three</b> years</li> <li>ERO confirms ongoing development of a culturally responsive curriculum that reflects and promotes Māori language, culture and identity is an important next step.</li> </ul>
<b>School 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Several indicators are positive for sustaining and improving outcomes for students. ERO is likely to carry out the next review in <b>three years</b>.</li> <li>The school should seek advice for consulting with Māori students' whānau about their aspirations for their children and ensure that the planned curriculum review includes how the language, culture, and identity of Māori children can be acknowledged and responded to.</li> </ul>

The **key findings** of the **ERO reports** indicate:

- Some schools have strong leadership that provides a cohesive and clear direction and all schools are well placed to sustain and improve their performance. One school is identified as high performing as their next review will be in 4-5 years' time.
- Most schools have systems in place to target, track and monitor Māori learners. Māori students at most schools are achieving at similar rates as their cohort in reading with some schools reporting similar rates in all areas.
- All schools communicate in some form with Māori whānau and community about student learning. ERO acknowledges school leaders at School 4 consult their Māori Whānau regarding the aspirations for their children and some schools need to improve on this aspect.
- ERO recommends the use of Tataiako and Ka Hikitia for one school to develop a strategic approach to meet their Māori learners' needs.
- Four schools provide opportunities to learn Te Reo Māori. Some schools have expertise to assist their ability to promote Māori language and culture programmes within the school.
- ERO recommends the majority of schools need to reflect on how their curriculum responds to the needs of their Māori learners.

#### **4.3 Anonymous survey data**

All five principals responded to the anonymous survey (see **Appendix C**). As the survey is anonymous, the responses are not assigned to a school or principal. The responses are ordered in sequence by the date they were received and **have been presented verbatim**.

#### **Questions 1 and 2: Key attributes for effective leadership and personal leadership style**

Each participant was asked to identify five key attributes that make an effective principal. This question was followed by asking the principals to describe their leadership style.

Table 12: Attributes of an effective principal and leadership style

	Five key principal attributes	Personal leadership style
<b>Anonymous Response 1</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Good relationships</li> <li>2. Being calm</li> <li>3. Being strategic and visionary</li> <li>4. Be prepared to change views</li> <li>5. Enjoys working with diversity</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I do try to be distributive and give opportunities to others.”</li> <li>• “I try to be inclusive of diversity and to be an active listener.”</li> <li>• “I prefer to work alongside people develop relationships and listen.”</li> </ul>
<b>Anonymous Response 2</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Positive relationships</li> <li>2. Knowledge of Effective pedagogy</li> <li>3. Creating a shared vision</li> <li>4. Coaching and support staff</li> <li>5. Solving complex problems</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I grow leaders! I support everyone to be the best that they can be.”</li> <li>• “I look for staff strengths and build on those.”</li> </ul>
<b>Anonymous Response 3</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mature- taking the long view</li> <li>2. Authentic</li> <li>3. Fair</li> <li>4. Humble</li> <li>5. Quirky</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I hold a very strong vision about learning and direct people to grow in their own understanding ... great leaders enable others to lead.”</li> <li>• “I try to walk the talk and model the vision.”</li> </ul>
<b>Anonymous Response 4</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Like working with children</li> <li>2. Can form good relationships</li> <li>3. Up to date with current pedagogy and technologies</li> <li>4. Able to make and explain tough decisions</li> <li>5. Visionary and strategic</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I try to be open about decision- making and listen to others’ ideas.”</li> <li>• “I ask questions to illicit responses to understand what is going on.”</li> <li>• “I wait and never act without agreement of key players.”</li> <li>• “Let those with delegated responsibilities make decisions.”</li> </ul>
<b>Anonymous Response 5</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Has been an effective educator</li> <li>2. An effective communicator</li> <li>3. Organisational capability</li> <li>4. Enjoyment of the vocation</li> <li>5. Evaluative capability</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I build a relationship and professional culture with a clear sense of purpose.”</li> <li>• “Portray enthusiasm, energy, and a willingness to help where needed.”</li> </ul>

**Questions 3 and 4: Goals and vision for raising Māori student achievement and principal perceptions of what is critical to making it happen**

Principals were asked to describe their goals and vision for their school in terms of raising Māori student achievement. This question was followed by asking the principals to describe what was critical in meeting these goals in their context.



Table 13: Principals goals and perceptions to raise achievement

	Goals and Vision	Critical to achieving the goals
<b>Anonymous Response 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“I have previously worked with local Māori to develop a strategic plan. We are developing that here.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“<b>Relationships</b> develop trust, care, and understanding and then get into the teaching and learning.”</li> </ul>
<b>Anonymous Response 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“I want our teachers to thrive in teaching so that our Māori students will be the best they can be. I want our Māori students to thrive in a positive learning environment.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Quality teaching and learning.”</li> <li>“<b>Positive relationships</b> with students and whānau.”</li> <li>“Knowing your learner and what they connect with.”</li> </ul>
<b>Anonymous Response 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“We aim for our Māori achievement to reflect norms of the whole school cohort.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Implementation of the <b>whānau</b> based suggestions.”</li> <li>“Ensure Māori lens through curriculum.”</li> </ul>
<b>Anonymous Response 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“All of our Māori students achieve to the best of their ability across the curriculum.”</li> <li>“Māori students are able to be themselves and feel they belong.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Increased teacher acceptance, understanding. Teachers that can recognise their own cultural lens.”</li> <li>“<b>Genuinely working with parents</b>, being honest and listening.”</li> </ul>
<b>Anonymous Response 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Personalised learning for all students so they are able to make meaning.”</li> <li>“Culture is an important part of this to respect and develop.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Respect, confidence, success, and community. Developing and finding opportunities to develop these attributes.”</li> <li>“<b>Everything should have a connection and a clear sense of purpose.</b>”</li> </ul>

### Question 5: PD to raise Māori student achievement

All of the participants were then asked if they had any PD as a principal that specifically concentrated on raising Māori student achievement. This was followed by asking what that PD entailed. Principals were also asked for specific information relating to any provisions for PD for staff related to raising Māori achievement.

Table 14: PD in school to raise Māori student achievement

	Principal PD	Principal PD description	Staff PD	Staff PD description
Anonymous Response 1	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Core Ed session at ICOT conference (less than an hour).”</li> <li>“Registered for a seminar last year that was cancelled due to lack of interest.”</li> </ul>	No	
Anonymous Response 2	No		No	
Anonymous Response 3	Yes	“Outside expert PD over two years in school.”	Yes	The same PD
Anonymous Response 4	No		No	
Anonymous Response 5	No		Yes	“PD that has an impact on all including Māori.”

### Question 6: Deliberate principal actions to raise Māori student achievement

All of the principals were asked what deliberate actions as principal they have made to raise Māori student achievement.

Table 15: Principal actions to raise Māori student achievement

	Principal actions to raise Māori student achievement
Anonymous Response 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Strategic development and employing the right people.”</li> <li>“Involving the community and showing that we can listen.”</li> <li>“Given our <b>community a sense of belonging</b> in our school.”</li> </ul>
Anonymous Response 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Supporting teachers to have quality teaching and learning.”</li> <li>“<b>Positive relationships</b> with students and whānau.”</li> <li>“A belief that all children can learn and progress.”</li> <li>“<b>Ensuring staff know their learners</b> and what they connect with.”</li> </ul>
Anonymous Response 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“A focused commitment to attend all whānau hui.”</li> <li>“Designing and resourcing targets for Māori students.”</li> <li>“Modeled a commitment to develop my Reo particularly my whaikōrero.”</li> <li>“Ensured kawa is developed and protocols used is a part of what we do.”</li> </ul>
Anonymous Response 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Te Reo Rima - 5 min slot every staff meeting to increase staff capability in Te Reo Māori and whānau hui - held at least every 6 months.”</li> </ul>
Anonymous Response 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Read heaps including Ka Hikitia, Tātaiako, and Best Evidence Synthesis and ERO best practice booklets.”</li> </ul>

## Questions 7 and 8: Māori student identification and school funding

Principals were asked how Māori students are identified in the school. They were also asked to share how much funding per year they allocate towards Māori achievement.

Table 16: Māori student identification and school funding

	Māori student identification systems	Funding for Māori Student achievement
<b>Anonymous Response 1</b>	• “Through School Master System.”	• \$5000.00 +
<b>Anonymous Response 2</b>	• “Through the enrolment process.”	• \$100.00 - \$500.00
<b>Anonymous Response 3</b>	• “Parents identify students as Māori when they enrol.”	• \$5000.00 +
<b>Anonymous Response 4</b>	• “Enrollment information supplied by parents.”	• \$100.00 - \$500.00
<b>Anonymous Response 5</b>	• “On enrolment School Master System.”	• Did not respond to this question

## Questions 9, 10: School use of MOE documentation, PD for staff to teach/learn Te Reo Māori

Each participant was asked to identify use of MOE documentation in his or her school to assist in raising Māori student achievement. This question was followed by asking the principals to describe if there are provisions for staff to have PD related to learn Te Reo Māori.

Table 17: Use of MOE documentation and professional development

	Is there use of MOE documentation in school?	Is there PD for staff to learn Te Reo Māori?
<b>Anonymous Response 1</b>	Yes. Ka Hikitia docs	Yes. In staff meetings
<b>Anonymous Response 2</b>	No	No
<b>Anonymous Response 3</b>	Yes. Tātaiako	Yes. In staff meetings
<b>Anonymous Response 4</b>	No	Yes. In staff meetings
<b>Anonymous Response 5</b>	Yes. Student Achievement Function SAF in 2011/12	No

## Question 11: Principal Support

Principals were asked if they feel supported in their role as principal to raise Māori student achievement.

- Two principals specified they did not feel supported in their role to raise Māori student achievement.

## Question 12 and 13: Areas of success and development

Principals were then asked to identify and describe the things that they think are working well in their school relating to improving Māori achievement. This question was then followed by asking principals to explain what they think needs to be developed in their school to raise Māori achievement.

Table 18: Areas of success and future development – survey responses

	Areas of success	Areas of development
<b>Anonymous Response 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Our Māori students are now getting a sense of being valued at school.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>“Teaching pedagogy.”</b></li> </ul>
<b>Anonymous Response 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Quality teaching and learning, <b>positive relationships</b> with students and whānau.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>“Engaging with our whānau.”</b></li> </ul>
<b>Anonymous Response 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Key protocol/celebration in place.”</li> <li>• “Māori language extension resourced and available.”</li> <li>• <b>“Committed Whānau group.”</b></li> <li>• “Diverse vision, embracing difference and response to Māori as Māori.”</li> <li>• “Targeting Māori achievement in the core learning areas.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Activate development plan around Māori succeeding as Māori.”</li> <li>• “Our Whānau Group identified developing/owning school kawa, enabling links to iwi/hapū; <b>develop school community</b> and many doors to learning.”</li> </ul>
<b>Anonymous Response 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “A <b>focus on</b> the data.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>“Cultural competence</b> of teachers.”</li> <li>• “General <b>lifting of teacher expertise</b> across the board.”</li> </ul>
<b>Anonymous Response 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “We cater for diversity of all kinds very well as evidenced by our ERO Reports.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Keep finding ways of making connections cultural and linguistic.”</li> </ul>

## Questions 14 and 15: Gathering and using Māori student Assessment data

The survey then asked principals to describe how the school gathers student assessment data. Following this, the principals were asked to explain and how assessment data is then used within the school.

Table 19: Gathering and using Māori assessment data

	<b>How is Māori student assessment data gathered</b>	<b>How is assessment data used within the classroom?</b>
<b>Anonymous Response 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Through SMS and assessment tools.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I don’t think it has yet.”</li> </ul>
<b>Anonymous Response 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Whole school data is analysed and discussed with staff, board.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Teachers use it to identify where they need to go next, <b>principals use it to provide appropriate and relevant PD.</b>”</li> </ul>
<b>Anonymous Response 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The same way it does for the general cohort using the usual summative tools and teacher judgment to frame National Standards OTJ’s.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Teachers analyse gaps and trends and this <b>informs a school wide picture</b> and localised target setting for each student.”</li> </ul>
<b>Anonymous Response 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Assessment information stored in SMS - range of assessment information collected according to school wide schedule.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Teachers identify target students in their class and monitor closely.”</li> <li>• “Teachers expected to analyse results and comment.”</li> </ul>
<b>Anonymous Response 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “We are required to consider Māori achievement as per NS by the Ministry.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>“If there are patterns as identified in achievement we make teachers aware</b> of this to include in their planning.”</li> </ul>

The **key findings** from the **anonymous survey** data include:

- Most principals identified forming positive relationships and creating a shared vision as important attributes of an effective principal. Commonly shared leadership approaches included distributing leadership and growing leaders.

- Deliberate acts of leadership to raise Māori student achievement included involving whānau and community, being strategic in approach, modeling commitment and raising staff cultural competency.
- Most schools allocate funds specifically for raising Māori student achievement. The amounts allocated vary between the schools.
- Most principals identified improved teacher pedagogy is critical to raising Māori student achievement. Some principals identified their school does not have provisions for PD to raise Māori student achievement however PD concerning Te Reo Māori is provided by most schools within staff meetings and is facilitated by staff members.
- Two of the five schools currently use MOE documentation within the school to assist in raising Māori student achievement. The documents used are Ka Hikitia and Tataiako. Most principals do not specify MOE directives to their areas of school development.
- Most principals reported areas of success included increased efforts to ensure Māori students belong and have a place in the school. Principals also shared success was evident in their strategic plans as they provide increased opportunities for Māori student to succeed.

#### **4.4 Semi-Structured interview findings**

All five principals accepted the invitation to participate in a follow up semi-structured interview. The following data outlines their responses to the interview questions (see **Appendix D**).

##### ***Question 1: The principal role when raising Māori student achievement***

The first question asked principals to describe what specific actions they undertake as principal when aiming to raise Māori student achievement.

Table 20: Role of the principal when raising Māori achievement

	Principal responses
<b>James</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “A good school is one that everybody knows what it stands for, and that is seen in the behavior of everybody.”</li> </ul>
<b>Paul</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The personal commitment as principal is to try and model some commitment.”</li> <li>• “It is about physically being there. It is about showing support for whānau initiatives ...”</li> </ul>
<b>Bryan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “It was important that I was keen and that I was doing it, because then I was actually saying it is important to me as a principal and it should be important to you as a teacher.”</li> <li>• <b>“One of the things I said to staff was do you know who your Māori students are, do you know what iwi they are from and what do you know about them...”</b></li> <li>• “I think we have employed someone really well... I couldn’t have seen the progress we have seen this year without that person...”</li> </ul>
<b>Kim</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I do believe if I model the way it feels good for me and it feels good for that person.”</li> <li>• “I talk a lot about knowing our children. It is about knowing our children as learners and people...”</li> <li>• “I believe that I have supported teachers to grow as leaders.”</li> </ul>
<b>Cathie</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Surprisingly the school had never spent time thinking about who is in my class... they did not know who was in their class. I have given them things to do.”</li> <li>• <b>“One of the best things I have done is I have employed someone to mentor me.”</b></li> </ul>

The **key findings of Question 1** indicate:

- Modeling personal and professional values, vision, and expectations is a common act of effective leadership to raise Māori student achievement. Most principals encourage staff to know their learners in order to meet their individual needs and improving staff teaching and leadership capacity is seen as an important leadership act as it strengthens a schools ability to lead and raise Māori student achievement. Employing teachers who are capable in teaching within Te Ao Māori has been beneficial for some schools.

## Question 2: School-wide focus on raising Māori student achievement

The next question asked principals how much focus is placed school wide on raising Māori student achievement.

Table 21: School-wide focus on raising Māori student achievement

	Principal responses
<b>James</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “We have a very clear bi-cultural base to what we do...just about everything we do has a connection to that”</li> <li>• “We have themes in our charter which are Māori. Tutuki is a part of the things we do. These are things we reflect on and value.”</li> </ul>
<b>Paul</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>“We have got goals within our charter this year about improving our Māori student achievement.”</b></li> <li>• “I think most schools would say its part of the structural expectations but does it really happen... it really happens because I agree it is important.”</li> <li>• “Our whānau group did look at what constitutes success for Māori.”</li> </ul>
<b>Bryan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “What we ended up doing is we put together a plan – <b>Accelerated Māori achievement</b> ...I then gave this document to Ngati toa to have a look at and then I gave it to Mana Tiaki.”</li> </ul>
<b>Kim</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “We are always making sure <b>we have a good strategic focus on our Māori students</b>...as a Board we have decided we are going to make sure we are connecting with our Māori families.”</li> </ul>
<b>Cathie</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Certainly, the junior school have done a lot I think and they have really made an effort.”</li> </ul>

The **key findings of Question 2** indicates:

- All schools focus on raising Māori student achievement.
- Some schools leaders are driven by a personal and professional commitment to raising Māori student achievement.
- Some of the principals described their focus on Māori student achievement is evident in their school charter and strategic plans.
- Two principals described a focus on Māori student achievement is evident in all areas of their school.
- One principal has developed an Accelerating Māori Achievement strategic plan and sought feedback from their local Māori community.



### Question 3: Decision making relating to Māori student achievement

The third question asked principals who makes the decisions relating to Māori student achievement within the school.

Table 22: Decision-making related to Māori student achievement

	<b>People assisting principals decision-making</b>	<b>Principal response</b>
<b>James</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior leadership team</li> <li>• BOT – Māori representation</li> <li>• Whānau support group</li> <li>• Cluster network</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “We have been fortunate to have quite a lot of Māori leadership and input, within school although that has just changed. Our associate principal last year was Māori. We have had various Māori staff members.”</li> </ul>
<b>Paul</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Māori student voice through survey</li> <li>• Staff member responsible for Tikanga and Te Reo Māori</li> <li>• Whānau support group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “We had a really lovely decisive conversation with our Māori students about what does success mean for you as Māori. Over 80% stated that they really valued being Māori and they valued knowing more ...that has helped confirm for us that we have got a job to do to find ways to help them.”</li> <li>• “Working with our whānau group is really critical.”</li> </ul>
<b>Bryan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two staff members responsible for Tikanga and Te Reo Māori</li> <li>• Māori committee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “We put together a group of Māori parents that met with ERO ... it was so affirming for me. <b>I didn’t really care what ERO thought...but for me to hear what the parents said.</b>”</li> <li>• “We were able to appoint some staff members ...talk about a turnaround...it is great we get her on board.”</li> </ul>
<b>Kim</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BOT – Māori Chair</li> <li>• Staff member responsible for</li> <li>• Māori parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I listen a lot and my Board Chair. She is very strong in her Māori culture and understanding.”</li> </ul>
<b>Cathie</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Māori student voice through survey</li> <li>• Staff member responsible for overseeing Tikanga and Te Reo Māori</li> <li>• Whānau support group</li> <li>• Cluster network</li> <li>• Mentor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Our senior leadership team in terms of a DP and a syndicate leader have been really supportive. They are thinking people, they have initiative, and they are not working against me.”</li> <li>• “On my very first month here I had a Mum come in and her mother came with her and they were clutching the ERO report and they said what you are going to do for my boy. She was great. She is perhaps the best person because she is driving our whānau group and getting others involved. I think without that key person it would not have happened.”</li> </ul>

The **key findings of Question 3** indicate:

- All principals have support with their decision making relating to raising Māori student achievement. Support in decision making is provided from either students, staff, parents and whānau, whānau support group, BOT, cluster network or an external mentor. The majority of principals' value Māori parent and staff expertise and two schools have Māori representation on their BOT.
- Cathie, Paul, and Bryan said they have staff members who have a management unit, which equates to \$4000.00 increase to their salary to lead the school in Te Reo Māori and Tikanga Māori.

#### **Question 4: Perceptions surrounding what is necessary for raising Māori student achievement**

The fourth question asked the principals what they believe is necessary for raising Māori student achievement.

*Table 23: Principal views of what is necessary to raise achievement*

	<b>Principal responses</b>
<b>James</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>"I think the key is first of all a child has to feel they belong..."</b></li> </ul>
<b>Paul</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Every term there's a formal Powhiri and every kid in the school, every new parent to the school is invited to attend. The whole point being for every member coming into the school community has a formal welcome."</li> <li>• "If you are not genuinely really engaged in being drawn into living the Māori experience, into Māori values, Māori ways of thinking, if you are not doing that as a school, I seriously doubt whether you are going to get anywhere."</li> </ul>
<b>Bryan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "We give kids a <b>sense of belonging</b>... we give them mana for what they do."</li> </ul>
<b>Kim</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "I want Māori students to feel that this is their place and that they <b>belong</b> here."</li> <li>• "There have been some really good shifts in teaching. I still do not believe there has been very many shifts in beliefs. That is still going to be something we are working on."</li> </ul>
<b>Cathie</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "I want Māori students to feel happy at school, challenged in their learning and thinking, but also comfortable and feel that this is their place and that they <b>belong</b> here."</li> <li>• <b>"I think one of our biggest needs is around pedagogy of teaching...I want to see the way we teach change."</b></li> </ul>

The **key findings of Question 4** indicate:

- All of the principals described providing and encouraging a sense of belonging for their Māori learners is important to building relationships and raising student achievement. Some principals believe improved teacher pedagogy and practice is necessary to raising Māori student achievement.

### Questions 5, 6 and 7: Areas of success and future development

The next three questions asked principals to explain what areas within the school they think are working well and what needs to be developed in order to create aspirations or the future relating to raising Māori student achievement.

Table 24: Areas of success and future development within the school

	<b>Areas of success</b>	<b>Areas of development &amp; Future aspirations</b>
<b>James</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Whatever you see in the school should have a Māori connection of some kind.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “We want to do something about but not get sucked into National Standards.”</li> </ul>
<b>Paul</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Our protocols, processes, and aspects of our Kawa. We have been very driven and consistent about making that part of the fabric of how we do things”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “We know our Māori achievers and our Pasifika achievers whose stats and data don’t match the general cohort. That is a concern and we would not like that to be the case.”</li> </ul>
<b>Bryan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “We have extension Māori, we now have Pōwhiri and we have a school wide haka and waiata competition”</li> <li>• “We are doing staff PD, our Kapa Haka group is sensational this year, and we have had a couple of whānau evenings.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>“I would love to hear Te Reo used more. I would like to see it more in teacher appraisal and in signage.”</b></li> <li>• “You know for someone like me I struggle with the language. It is the language I have to sort it out.”</li> </ul>
<b>Kim</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “We always have a Māori perspective coming through....”</li> <li>• “I see my key role as improving student outcomes and I have done that...”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The biggest thing is how to connect with those families who we don’t see because I do have a belief that parents are the first teachers of their children.”</li> </ul>
<b>Cathie</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “In every class, in most classes there is something and most teachers are doing more than I personally would have managed I think that is really good. “</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I would like us to not just do the karakia at the start of the lesson and not just have a few words. I want to see the way we teach change.”</li> <li>• “We are thinking that we can put a stake in the ground and say that by the time children leave here they will be at least level two [in Te Reo Māori].”</li> </ul>

The **key findings of Questions 5, 6 and 7** indicate:

- All schools report some level of success related to raising student achievement. Such reported success included explicitly implementing school wide programs related to Te Ao Māori that reinforce a Māori perspective through multiple learning areas. How these programs improve the achievement of its Māori learners is not clear.
- Some principals acknowledge providing provisions to increase learning Te Reo Māori is needed however, the PD to enable such learning to enhance classroom practice is not sufficient in the current allocated time slots.
- One principal acknowledged current assessment measures narrow Māori student achievement and there is a need to discuss and utilise different assessment methods.

### **Questions 8 and 9: School wide programmes and Te Ao Māori within the school**

Questions eight asked principals what specific initiatives or programmes are used in terms of raising Māori student achievement. This question was followed by asking principals to describe what these initiatives entail.

*Table 25: Planned student experiences relating to Te Ao Māori in 2015*

	<b>Pōwhiri</b>	<b>Kapa Haka</b>	<b>Te Reo Māori classes</b>	<b>Planned Celebrations</b>	<b>Noho Marae</b>	<b>School Inquiry</b>
<b>School 1</b>	✓	✓		• Cultural inquiry/festival	✓	✓
<b>School 2</b>	✓	✓	✓	• Matariki • Poroporoaki	✓	✓
<b>School 3</b>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
<b>School 4</b>	✓					✓
<b>School 5</b>						✓

### **Powhiri**

Four schools have regular powhiri as a part of their school practices to welcome students, staff, parents, and community to their school.

- Bryan discussed the importance the event had as it modeled to students that Māori culture is valued within the school. He emphasised wearing a korowai and participating in whaikorero modeled his commitment to integrating Te Ao Māori within the school.
- Paul also shared the value of powhiri in his school. His school has powhiri each term and they are currently encouraging students to participate in whaikorero and speak alongside him on the pae.

### **Kapa Haka**

Three schools have a Kapa Haka group that perform within their schools and in local areas.

- Bryan stated funding has been allocated towards new uniforms and students have been given opportunities to learn during Noho Marae.
- Paul explained his school encourages Kapa Haka and students have external support to guide their practices and performances.
- Kim indicated their school has a part-time teacher who comes in and works with the Kapa Haka group. Kim described some of the feedback from parents informed her that it was not good. Kim invited that parent to get involved and assist the group.

Both Cathie and James do not currently have a Kapa Haka group.

- Cathie revealed she has currently sourced external support to assist with developing a school Kapa Haka group. She explained the need to do so was reinforced by parent request.
- James shared his school has had a Kapa Haka group in the past. The school has attempted to seek external expertise. James explained sourcing and sustaining external support is a challenge.

### **Te Reo Māori**

All principals acknowledge the importance of teaching and learning Te Reo Māori and encourage staff to implement programs within the classrooms in accordance to curriculum and school expectations.

- Paul described extension Te Reo Māori is offered to his students by a non-Māori teacher who is not fluent but is close. She takes students every week for a couple of hours in more of an immersion setting.
- Bryan also stated a Māori staff member who is fluent in Te Reo Māori facilitates his schools extension Te Reo Māori programme. Forty students are divided into two classes and they meet once a week.
- Cathie shared provisions to learn Te Reo Māori should be available to senior students. She stated most teams start their day with a simple karakia together and that there are simple expectations that teachers are asked to implement.
- James acknowledges that Te Reo Māori is a part of the curriculum but its something of a resource that teachers are able to use or not able to use.
- James added teaching Te Reo Māori is encouraged and some teachers do better than others do.

### **Noho Marae**

Two schools provide Noho marae based learning experiences for their students and or staff.

- Paul discussed providing opportunities for Noho marae with staff and the whānau support group. Paul shared that next year the schools teacher only day would be marae based. Paul said although it is not compulsory the expectation is to attend.
- Kim shared that there school is planning to have Noho Marae however they are currently working with the board chair to be able to do that.

### **Inquiry**

All of the principals described providing opportunities for learning through inquiry and they described this approach can support and promote Māori perspectives.

- Kim described inquiry within her school ensures texts that are used support Māori world-views.

- James explained school inquiry is modeled on their class waka analogy to launch, explore, discover, and use. James noted a European approach to inquiry is about individuals, the Māori approach to inquiry is about a group ethos, and learning opportunities at his school are provided using both approaches. Paul mentioned his school has been examining the Māori lens that is throughout their inquiry is coherent.

The **key findings of Questions 8 and 9** indicate:

- All of the principals acknowledge the importance of providing learning experiences within Te Ao Māori. However, how these experience directly linked to improving the achievement of their Māori learners was not clear.
- Several schools provide Te Reo Māori classes for students. The quality of facilitation varies between the schools. Use of an inquiry approach to teaching was prominent in all schools. Some schools ensure their inquiry approach incorporates a Māori perspective or lens.
- Some schools have the ability and knowledge to provide a wide variety of experiences whilst three principals stressed they did not have the capability to achieve what they wanted.

### **Question 10: Staff Professional Development (PD)**

Question 10 asked principals about to describe the PD that is available for all staff to learn Te Reo Māori.

*Table 26: PD related to learning Te Reo Māori*

	<b>Principal PD</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>James</b>				
<b>Paul</b>	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With whānau group and staff</li> </ul>	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PD occurs during Monday staff meetings for 15 minutes. A teacher facilitated this</li> </ul>
<b>Bryan</b>	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As per staff PD</li> </ul>	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 min slot every staff meeting. A teacher facilitates this.</li> <li>• Staff PD at the start of the year looked at deficit thinking</li> </ul>
<b>Kim</b>				
<b>Cathie</b>	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As per staff PD</li> </ul>	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 min slot every staff meeting. A teacher facilitates this.</li> </ul>

## **Learning about Tikanga and Te Reo Māori**

The majority of principals have some form of PD for staff to improve their ability to speak and teach Te Reo Māori. Bryan said his staff has a good attitude to professional learning and they are keen to develop but it is a matter of giving them the time to do so. Paul agreed time was also a factor in getting everything achieved. He expressed interest in gaining a better understanding of genuinely activating a commitment to Te Ao Māori. He reiterated the importance of living Te Ao Māori with his staff.

*“You cannot be a teacher where you are teaching youngsters to take risks and be brave unless you do it yourself.” (Paul)*

## **Question 10 b: Use of MOE documentation**

Principals were asked to identify the MOE documentation related to raising Māori student achievement that was used within the school.

*Table 27: Participant use of MOE strategies*

	<b>Ka Hikitia- Accelerating Success</b>	<b>Tātaiako</b>	<b>Tau mai Te Reo</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>James</b>	✓	✓		✓
<b>Paul</b>	✓	✓		
<b>Bryan</b>	✓	✓		
<b>Kim</b>				
<b>Cathie</b>	✓			

## **Use of MOE documentation related to raising student achievement**

The majority of principals shared they have read Ka Hikitia, Tataiako and ERO reports on raising achievement however few principals described they are yet to be shared with staff. Cathie expressed she had only read Tataiako for the purpose of our interview. Since reading the document, Cathie has decided to use it at the teacher only day in 2016. She acknowledges everyone has MOE



documents but questions how many have looked at them. Bryan mentioned reading several MOE documents. He shared he had several concerns with Ka Hikitia. He said:

*“You know Ka Hikitia is the most beautifully written and presented document but it does not actually tell me anything about what to do. It does not say develop a shared staff understanding of good teaching practice for Māori. Start the year with pōwhiri for Year 7 students, new year 8’s, and for new staff members. It does not tell me that we should be developing that notion of Turangawaewae. It does not tell me what that is or how do we do that. We give kids a sense of belonging we give them mana for what they do. It does not tell me that.” (Bryan)*

Bryan added:

*“If you are talking about simplified and prescriptive then everyone jumps up and down and says oh well or this is not right for our school or context. We are a self-managing school...they can’t win nor can we in that respect.” (Bryan)*

The **key findings of Question 10** indicate:

- Ka Hikitia documentation is being read by most of the principals however, it is not commonly shared with staff and its use for one principals is insufficient in providing specific strategies. Most principals acknowledge their responsibility to raise Māori student achievement and provide PD for staff however, their skills, knowledge, and actions to do so varies. The PD that has been available to some educators to learn Te Reo Māori or raise Māori achievement varies in time and quality of delivery.
- The principals did not refer to using Tau mai Te Reo or any MOE leadership initiatives or documentation.

## Question 11: Staff expectations of Māori students

Question eleven asked principals if they believed their staff have high expectations for their Māori students.

Table 28: Staff expectations of Māori students

	Do staff have high expectations?	How do you know?
James	"Yes."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "I see it when I walk through the classes."</li> </ul>
Paul	"Yes"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "I think we spend a long time talking about how we do better."</li> <li>• "Our commitment to Māori students and our whānau group work together... <b>we care about it and this is what it means to be at our school.</b>"</li> </ul>
Bryan	"Still developing"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>"To embed takes a number of repetitions, it takes time, and that's that whole thing again, we are in a rush."</b></li> <li>• "Everyone on the whole has been pretty good ... the staff know that it is important for me."</li> </ul>
Kim	"Yes"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "There is one or two teachers that I am really supporting to be able to keep having those high expectations."</li> <li>• "Through every classroom we talk to the children and say does your teacher think you are a good learner."</li> </ul>
Cathie	"Not at all"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Our expectations are not high enough for anyone let alone our Māori children."</li> </ul>

The **key findings for Question 11** indicate:

- The majority of principals explained observing teacher practice and having discussions with staff and students allowed the principals to gauge student and staff expectations.
- The need to continue to support teachers to raise their expectations for Māori learners remains a need for two schools.

## Question 12: Engaging Māori parents, whānau, and community

The next question asked principals to share how their school involves Māori parents and whānau in the school.

Table 29: Engaging parents, whānau and the community

	<b>How are parents, whānau, and the community involved within the school?</b>	
<b>School 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whānau hui</li> <li>• Celebrations</li> <li>• Festivals</li> <li>• BOT rep</li> </ul>	
<b>School 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whānau hui</li> <li>• Whānau support group</li> <li>• Celebrations</li> <li>• Festivals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Our whānau group has a push on certain aspects, and then we bring that through into the program and change it accordingly. We talk about how we support those celebrations and how the whānau group can play a role and they are wonderful.”</li> </ul>
<b>School 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whānau hui</li> <li>• Celebrations</li> <li>• Māori committee</li> <li>• Local iwi</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “It is about getting good people together and having a Māori committee for them being able to work well with parents”</li> </ul>
<b>School 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whānau hui</li> <li>• School groups</li> <li>• Celebrations</li> <li>• BOT chair</li> <li>• Kapa Haka support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>“Our parents are the experts, they are the ones we need to be listening to and working things out with.”</b></li> </ul>
<b>School 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whānau hui</li> <li>• Whānau support group</li> <li>• Kapa haka support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>“We are quite reliant I think on our whānau group and those parents for direction.”</b></li> <li>• In reference to whānau hui: “We were going to do them every term but we haven’t managed.”</li> </ul>

The **key findings from Question 12** indicate:

- All schools involve Māori parents, whānau, and community within the school and most principals acknowledge and seek their expertise within the school. The roles parents and whānau have differ within each school. Some principals shared the importance of having Māori BOT representation. One school has invited local iwi input to help shape the direction of school policy and charter planning.

### **Question 13 and 14: Measuring Māori student achievement**

Question 13 asked principals how they measure Māori achievement in their school. Question 14 asked principals how that data is used within the school and classrooms. .

Table 30: Using Māori student achievement data in the school

	How is the data used in the school?
<b>James</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I have broken that down to see what has happened here.”</li> <li>• “I’m really tempted not to share national standards data as I don’t want to give national standards credence.”</li> <li>• “NS goes on the website - I also put the PAT test.”</li> </ul>
<b>Paul</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “For the last couple of years we have been sharing our student achievement data with our whānau group we are not particularly good at pushing all that data out to our community. Some schools post that on websites and things like that I think we have got a job to do there.”</li> </ul>
<b>Bryan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I do collect more regular data “</li> <li>• “We have got 54 students that we have targeted and at least half of them would be Māori...some teachers have told them you are one of my target students I don’t know if they are particularly taken with that...”</li> <li>• “At the moment, our staff meetings have been very relational based but I do want to talk student achievement with them.”</li> </ul>
<b>Kim</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “We have targeted student mentoring where a couple of times a term we meet with teachers and we talk about their students who are not meeting expectations.”</li> <li>• “I do share achievement results with the whole community via newsletter. “</li> <li>• “Some teachers are formatively assessing all the time some other teachers need support to do that so we are having a staff meeting and say hey let’s have a look at your class data and unpack it.”</li> </ul>
<b>Cathie</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “We shared the Māori achievement at our whānau Hui specifically. We have done that, we will keep doing that, and we are interested in that.”</li> </ul>

The **key findings from Questions 13 and 14** indicate:

- All schools reported using the same tools as they would with the general cohort. These tools include nationally referenced tests, National standards (NS) and summative and formative tools that frame an OTJ. Some principals expressed concern with using National standard data to measure student achievement.
- Most principals share their Māori student data with parent, whānau groups, and staff. Some principals stated staff then are encouraged to use this data to inform their teaching.

### Question 15: Collaboration with other schools and wider community

The next question asked principals if they collaborate with any other schools, networks or wider community to inform or assist them in raising Māori student achievement.

Table 31: Collaboration with other schools and wider community

	School networks	Description
James	Cluster network of schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“We are close because of what happens in our area and our group of kids ...we sat down and said ok we want to get money from the government from this 365 million so we decided to have a crack at it.”</li> </ul>
Paul	Principal network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Networking with other schools is a hurdle in a devolved system like the one we have... <b>It does point to the fact that having a relationship is important.</b>”</li> <li>“I am part of a professional learning community with other principals nationally a group of 12 principals from around NZ we meet every term...we have shared some of our strategies for Māori achievement...”</li> </ul>
Kim	Cluster network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“I keep saying to our cluster we have to be able to share this data, we have to be able to <b>talk openly because those principals there are the only other people in this whole community who know how my job is.</b>”</li> </ul>
Cathie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cluster network</li> <li>Mentor</li> </ul>	<p>“It was like actually there is all these tricky little things going on and we could keep still dealing with those tricky little things and I could still be dealing with them in ten years, and I don’t want that.”</p>

The **key findings from Question 15** indicate:

- Most principals belong to a cluster of local schools network. James has met with his cluster of schools to discuss the IES initiative
- Paul discussed the importance of building relationship with local schools however he identifies there are challenges in forming them without a relationship. Paul belongs to a principal network.
- Cathie has sourced an external mentor to assist in helping her lead as a principal. Some principals describe working with other principals is beneficial as they are aware of what the role of principal entails.

## **Question 16: Principal challenges surrounding raising Māori student achievement**

The final question asked principals to share some of the challenges and difficulties they face as a principal in relation to raising Māori student achievement. The principals identified four aspects. These were meeting the diverse needs of Māori learners, leading and managing change, sourcing expertise to assist school programmes and meeting MOE expectations.

### **Meeting the diverse needs of Māori learners**

Most principals shared an awareness of the diversity of Māori identity. Some principals explained schools now have an increased responsibility to provide learning opportunities to strengthen Māori identity as for some of their learners such knowledge may not exist at home.

*“Identity is important to parents, but sometimes when I hear parents talk about what they want in terms of their Māoriness for their children. I go ok. Some of them do not have a strong Māori identity either...they want the school to be a part of providing that education. It is a bit of a worry.” (Cathie)*

Paul shared similar views. He said:

*“In terms of our whānau group it is very small. Most meetings there would be a regular 8 – 10 and you are talking about 15% of Māori students out of 500 kids. I mean there is a good 60 - 75 kids. With 8-10 parents, showing up for whānau meetings there is an awful lot of Māori that are just hidden inside the sort of general picture of what constitutes New Zealand and do not necessarily see themselves as wanting to contribute to that conversation...” (Paul)*

Bryan stated:

*“A lot of our Māori kids are disconnected with who they are.” (Bryan)*

James also made similar statements. He said

*“The sad thing about Māori students is because they have been assimilated by the dominant culture they have lost a lot of their language and culture and even their parents don’t have that. So how is that going to translate through if their parents have lost it?” (James)*

### **Sourcing expertise to assist school programmes**

Some of the principals, expressed concern with not having the expertise or resources to provide learning opportunities they believe could enhance their ability to raise student achievement. Paul said:

*“The constant challenge is getting people with expertise. We struggled over the years to find fluent speakers. We have had fluent speakers come in and work with us but it is just so hard to commit, to get people to commit to a relationship for a long period of time.” (Paul)*

Similarly, Bryan said:

*“The biggest problem facing schools is not a lack of intent or a lack of goodwill it’s a lack of staffing capability. We don’t have the staff.” (Bryan)*

James affirmed both of these statements. He said:

*“We don’t have anybody to do that, there is nobody around. We even tried to get a Kapa haka tutor, we tend to use siblings, but you need a teacher because the teacher is the one that knows how to work with kids.” (James)*

## **Leading and managing change**

Most of the principals communicated an important part of their role related to improving and growing teacher pedagogy and practice to raise Māori student achievement. This idea reiterates principals need to be able to manage change.

Bryan shared during Te Reo Māori PD staff were asked to share their pepeha and one staff member refused. Bryan said it caught him unaware and he was surprised how uncomfortable some staff were around things Māori.

*“There is a part of me that is a wee bit bloody minded about it. I had to front. I had to learn it. We are all different but how different is that to our expectations of kids in class...” (Bryan)*

Cathie stated an important part of her role is to manage change. She shared she made people feel uncomfortable which she has attributed to leading ongoing change within the school.

*“...I have made people feel uncomfortable; I have done that really well. I have made them change and they are still changing...not the way that I am supposed to. I know you are supposed to consult, and you are supposed to take people with you but actually, if people are comfortable they are not interested in going where you want to go.” (Cathie)*

Paul had a different view to Cathie. He explained change does not occur if it is imposed.

*“It’s not about forcing people it’s not about fear it’s not about setting expectations and checking up because that never achieves anything...it’s about space to make sense of things, it’s about sharing how practice is changing in an open way, it’s absolutely about clear expectations.” (Paul)*



Paul also added:

*“If you want to change something, you have to change people’s hearts and if you want to change people’s hearts, you have to engage them in a genuine process of accepting that Māoritanga is intensively valuable.” (Paul)*

### **Meeting MOE expectations**

The majority of principals expressed concern with using National standards to measure Māori student achievement. James expressed concern with the National Standards. He said:

*“I think the problem with National Standards is that they are aspirational. The whole thing is a complete misnomer. They have a linear model but kids do not learn in a linear fashion. The whole thing is just a farce really....We play the national standards game because we have to. I am totally opposed to national standards. I do it because I am required to do it.” (James)*

Paul shared similar views with James. He said:

*“You may be aware of my severe distrust of national standards data and the reliability of national standards judgements. There is a reluctance in me to not value that too much by putting that in the face of the community....I really want to hear next year that we are talking a whole lot less about that constant national standard downwards driven pressure into learning.” (Paul)*

In reference to Ka Hikitia and National Standards Bryan said:

*“We have got this document about Ako and about collaboration and about working together for Māori student achievement yet you develop a competitive educational model that doesn’t encourage that at all.” (Bryan)*

Paul and James expressed the need for transformation in achievement measures within the NZ education system.

Paul said

*“I’m not certain that we have actually understood that the education system in a genuinely culturally responsive way. The education system should have multiple conceptions of what constitutes success for learners...I hate the idea that success is just about academic ability, just about kids that can read and write and do math... You never want to give up on the idea that we want all kids to be literate and numerate and I am not for a minute suggesting that. I’m just suggesting that we also lessen the stress around it...As a government the capacity for these ideas to win support is challenged but ill shout it from the rooftops, let’s come up with a diverse concept of human capability not a narrow one size fits all concept.” (Paul)*

James asserted:

*“We are still using The OECD European individual assessment to say these Māori kids are not achieving...I think one of the things we have lost sight in and society is using the National Standards as the be all and end all...I keep reiterating the National Standards is one of the key competencies in the curriculum. We have gone down a track where we are ignoring four of the key competencies and concentrating on academics. I think that is false and the key competencies is what we should be looking at.” (James)*

The **key findings** to the final question indicate:

- Some principals acknowledge Māori identity is diverse and there are challenges related to catering for this diversity within the school and meeting parent and whānau expectations and needs.
- Sourcing external expertise to assist school programmes related to Te Ao Māori remains a struggle for some principals and the ability to employ staff with expertise in Te Ao Māori is seen as an effective leadership action.
- Three principals do not agree with the use of National Standards to measure the success of their students.
- Two principals described transformation in the current forms of national measures of achievement could broaden what constitutes student success and achievement. James shared future school assessment measures will focus on the Key Competencies as they support all students to achieve success in a variety of areas.

#### **4.5 Summary of findings**

The following section summarises the findings of *Chapter 4* and shows how the findings correlate to the three core themes identified in *Chapter 3*.

##### **KO AU [ME]** (Leadership of the individual)

Most of the schools participating in the study had clearly stated values presented in Te Reo Māori which link to Māori concepts. These values align with some of the principals personal values and vision and they are communicated in school charters, in personalised commitments to the TOW, in strategic goals and with students, parents, whānau, and staff. Raising Māori student achievement requires principals to:

- Create a shared vision with all stakeholders and model a commitment within Te Ao Māori.
- Form strong relationships with all stakeholders, raise staff cultural competency and develop the leadership capacity within the school.

- Have a strategic approach to assess, evaluate, and reflect on progress against leadership actions.

All of the principals from this study receive and value support in their decision making related to raising student achievement. The sources of support can include students, staff with expertise within Te Ao Māori, Māori parents and Māori BOT representation and the wider community including local school clusters or principal networks. Most principals shared that learning from other principals was beneficial, as those in the role understand what that role means. The findings indicate the PD that is offered to support principals and educators to raise Māori student achievement is limited and insufficient. Consequently, managing any necessary change and transformation within the school can be challenging. Learning on the job and reflecting on successes and challenges surrounding Māori student achievement is common practice.

### **KO MĀTOU [US] (Leadership within the school)**

The majority of principals reported their staff have high expectations for their learners however; some principals identified improving teacher cultural competency remains a necessary part of their role. The data indicates the PD that most schools provide for their staff does not address this need.

All of the principals' reinforced opportunities to learn within Te Ao Māori was beneficial for the school as experiences can strengthen and enhance Māori identity, exemplify the importance of Te Ao Māori and support Māori to succeed as Māori. The opportunities schools in this study provided were identified in ERO reports and some school charters. Most schools have systems in place to target, track and monitor Māori student achievement and some schools use this data to inform school wide goals and set student targets. Most schools share student achievement data with parents, whānau groups, and staff and the MOE. Some principals did not agree with the National standards and were reluctant in sharing this data.

Some principals shared student achievement measures should include provisions beyond reading, writing, and mathematics and encourage a

collective approach between schools rather than a competitive model that could divide schools.

All of the principals described the importance of building relationships with all educational stakeholders. Some principals shared forming strong relationships with students can enhance a sense of belonging for learners and provide opportunities for students to share their needs. The principals described building relationships with staff enables them to share responsibilities to assist in raising Māori student achievement, manage any changes effectively, enhance teacher capability and encourage self-directed learning. Most principals explained building relationships with parents and whānau encourages genuine opportunities to engage in discussion surrounding their child's achievement and provides some principals with much needed support to implement programs within Te Ao Māori as sourcing the necessary expertise to assist school programmes related to Te Ao Māori remains a struggle for some principals.

### **KO TĀTOU [ALL OF US] Leadership with the wider community**

The principals shared building supportive networks was important however how the networks between each school varied.

- Most schools belonged to a cluster network of local schools within their area.
- Three schools work with a whānau group.
- One principal is a part of a national principal network.
- One principal has worked with local iwi.
- One principal has sourced an outside mentor.

The importance of working with a local network of school reiterate the need to form relationships which some principals describe as challenging in a devolved system. Most of the principals' work within a cluster of schools however, the principals have shared there is a need for increased focus on Māori achievement and sharing strategies to support this area. Most principals identified working with other principals was beneficial as they are aware of the challenges of the principal role.

## **4.6 Chapter Summary**

This chapter reported the findings of the study, which were a result of analysing the participating school charters, 2013 or 2014 ERO reports, anonymous survey results, and semi-structured interview responses. The common threads between each of the participants' responses and school documentation is evident and powerful in identifying effective leadership approaches to raise Māori student achievement. The findings also emphasise that the responses from the five principals illustrate there is still some confusion over what constitutes an appropriate approach that leaders can undertake in their schools to improve Māori student achievement. The next chapter will attempt to discuss in further depth the importance and impact these key findings can have for primary school principals as they aim to raise the achievement of their Māori students.

## **CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the findings of the study, which aimed to answer the following three key research questions:

- 1.) What are the current perceptions of principals in mainstream primary schools surrounding Māori student achievement?
- 2.) How do these perceptions contribute to their leadership practice and decision making within their schools?
- 3.) How do principals' gauge or monitor the success of their leadership practice and decision-making?

The discussion is considered in the three core themes that have been identified in *Chapter 3* (see p. 44). These themes explore the literature in *Chapter 2* alongside the key findings that emerged from *Chapter 4*. As previously stated these themes have been expressed within Te Ao Māori to position the knowledge of Māori ideologies and perspectives in the space of academia and to reflect the inter-relationship of the themes. To conclude this chapter, a possible model for primary school principals is presented. This model provides a tool that could be used to orientate any leader traversing in a landscape to aspire to cultural responsiveness within the primary sector (see **Figure 11**).

### **5.2 KO AU [ME] (Leadership of the individual)**

The theme **KO AU** relates to the principal as an individual and describes three key areas that this research study suggests could be important for principals when implementing cultural responsiveness in their schools. The areas are:

- **Whanonga pono** (Commitment to Te Ao Māori)
- **Wānanga** (Communicates vision)
- **Whaiwhakaaro** (Reflective practitioner)

### 5.2.1 Whanonga pono (Commitment to Te Ao Māori)

The values of a leader are significant in understanding the decisions and actions they make (Day et al., 2010; Freeman et al., 2012). The majority of principals' within this study revealed there were similarities between their personal and professional values related to raising Māori achievement. There was unanimous agreement that a commitment to Te Ao Māori was commonly valued. However, what that commitment meant differed between the participants. Each schools stated commitment to Te Ao Māori was evidenced in their school charters and throughout the transcripts where the principals described modeling their commitment within their school environment.

*“If you are not genuinely really engaged in being drawn into living the Māori experience, into Māori values, Māori ways of thinking, if you are not doing that as a school, I seriously doubt whether you are going to get anywhere.” (Paul)*

*“I do believe if I model the way, it feels good for me, and it feels good for that person.” (Kim)*

*“It was important that I was keen and that I was doing it, because then I was actually saying it is important to me as a principal and it should be important to you as a teacher.” (Bryan)*

These comments and other findings support the view that a genuine commitment to Te Ao Māori exemplifies to students, staff, parents and whānau that there is an expectation of transformative change within some of the schools. This act of cultural responsiveness is supported by the concept of Manaakitanga in Tataiako (MOE, 2011a) where leaders' “Demonstrate integrity, sincerity and respect towards Māori beliefs, language and culture” (p. 10).

The principals described modeling a genuine commitment positioned them in the role of the learner therefore, sourcing staff, parent and whānau support was critical in increasing their knowledge surrounding Te Ao Māori and their



ability to converse in Te Reo Māori confidently. Harris (2008) who notes improving provisions within a school can be derived from the expertise of others supports the shift with cultural knowledge. The principals described developing this commitment was a personal journey and not linked to specific professional development within the school. This finding suggested that a commitment to Te Ao Māori was not something that the principals saw as an extra requirement of their leadership role rather it was a significant part of being an effective leader in NZ.

### **5.2.2 Wānanga (Communicates vision)**

The principals acknowledged communication is an important leadership attribute, as the principal role requires the participants to engage in dialogue in a multitude of ways with a wide variety of people surrounding the achievement of their learners. This element of cultural responsiveness is supported by the concept of Wānanga in Tataiako (MOE, 2011a) where a leader “Participates with learners and communities in robust dialogue for the benefit of Māori learners’ achievement” (p. 13).

The principals described regularly communicating with students formally and informally enabled them to gauge insights into the needs of their learners.

*“We survey Māori pupils to ascertain our success and areas for improvement.” (Paul)*

*“We talk to the children and say does your teacher think you are a good learner....The kids will always give their perspective if we allow them the opportunity to talk and share.” (Kim)*

These views and similar findings are supported by several literature findings that suggest effective leaders provide a school environment where students can share their perspectives and values (Bishop, 2010; Eales, 2012; Shields, 2010). Additionally, they align to suggestions made by Barnes et al., (2012) that learners should be included in decisions about the school.

The principals described communicating with staff, parents and whānau formally and informally enabled them to share their values and vision, build relationships centered on improving the learning environment, and provide all stakeholders with the opportunity to engage in open discussion and provide guidance surrounding raising Māori student achievement. Robinson et al., (2009) and Leuder (1998) support these views as their research suggests communication related to important school matters can improve the relationship between schools, parents, and whānau

*“....I talk and I listen a lot and my Board Chair. She is very strong in her Māori culture and understanding.”  
(Kim)*

*“I had a lovely push from the whānau group this year where they said to me we would like to meet and have a talk about this question of success for Māori as Māori.” (Paul)*

*“On my very first month here I had a Mum come in and she brought, her mother with her and they were clutching the ERO report and they said what are you going to do for my boy. She is perhaps the best person because she is driving our whānau group and getting other parents of Māori children in. I feel like we are starting to build some bridges with the community.”  
(Cathie)*

These views highlight ensuring open lines of communication with all stakeholders is an important leadership action as it can generate genuine support and guidance within the school and encourage a safe environment where the knowledge and skills of all stakeholders is shared. Although the principals widely agreed that communication with all stakeholders is important there were mixed approaches when principals communicated the achievement results of their learners to the community outside of MOE expectations.

*“We shared the Māori achievement at our whānau hui specifically. We will keep doing that and we are interested in that.” (Cathie)*

*“For the last couple of years we have been sharing our student achievement data with our whānau group we are not particularly good at pushing all that data out to our community.” (Paul)*

*“I’m really tempted not to share national standards data cos I don’t want to give national standards credence.” (Bryan)*

Although the findings indicated communication with all stakeholders is crucial within the school environment, the focus of what is communicated with their communities varies between the participants. These findings suggests principals’ value their students’ achievement results differently.

It is evident that some principals do not value the National standards as a measurement tool and avoid making efforts to share this achievement data, as there are concerns with the reliability of the results particularly when compared with other schools. Additionally, for some principals raising Māori and all students achievement meant more than attaining a National standard.

### **5.2.3 Whaiwhakaaro (Reflective practitioner)**

Reflection is an essential part of effective leadership as it enables principals to understand how effective their actions and decisions are within the school environment (Brookfield, 1995; Timperley et al., 2007). Most participants of this study shared reflecting on what is happening in the school is an ongoing individualised action rather than a structured process. The principals shared reflection related to their actions surrounding raising Māori student achievement allowed them to identify areas that were successful, need development, or could have been handled differently.

*“I think possibly the biggest mistake or the thing in reflection that I’d do differently is possibly have a wee bit more patience with people around it.” (Bryan)*

*“I always see these things in reflection and think I can do it better next time.” (Kim)*

These views and similar findings suggest reflection encourages leaders to position themselves as learners which aligns to the cultural responsive element of Ako which Tātaiako (MOE, 2011a) describes as taking “responsibility for their own learning and that of Māori learners” (p.16).

Although it was evident in all data findings that the principals are reflective in their practice, it was not clear what the reflective process involved or looked like for each participant. What was evident in the transcripts is that the main area the participants reflected on was how they could be doing better as a principal.

It is acknowledged that time to reflect in an already multifaceted role can be challenging. However, in the researcher’s opinion, principals need to be supported to have ongoing structured times to reflect in order to evaluate their effectiveness as a leader. This view is supported by Cardno and Fitzgerald (2005) as they suggest a significant action of schools BOT is to support and enable principals to have the time and opportunity to engage in reflection, which encourages continued leadership learning.

Additionally, the ERO evaluations for each of the participating schools outlines the majority of schools need to reflect on how their curriculum responds to the needs of their Māori learners. Again, without providing principals the necessary and adequate time to critically reflect such recommendations are less likely to be achieved.

### **5.3 KO MĀTOU [US] (Leadership within the school)**

The theme **KO MĀTOU** relates to how effective principals lead within the school to include provisions to learn within Te Ao Māori and work in

partnership with their students, staff, parents, and whānau to raise Māori student achievement. This theme encompasses three inter-related key areas:

- **Whānaungatanga** (Builds strong relationships).
- **Ako** (Learns within Te Ao Māori).
- **Rangatiratanga** (Leading the school).

### **5.3.1 Whānaungatanga** (Builds strong relationships).

All of the principals agreed building relationships with students, staff, parents and whānau is important for their learning environments to be effective for students learning. This is supported by several studies, which reveals forming strong relationships with parents, and whānau can positively enhance their school environment (MOE 2011a; Ruru, 2001; Cardno & Collett, 2004; Lueder, 1998; Riordan & Walker, 2010).

The majority of principals identified building strong relationships with students is more likely to occur when students can feel that they are an important part of the school and that the school is a place where they can belong. In addition the school charters and ERO evaluations highlight the principals deliberately plan experiences in the school to encourage a sense of belonging for their Māori students.

*“I think the key thing for any child particularly Māori students is that they can see themselves as being an important part of the organisation.” (James)*

*“We give kids a sense of belonging. We give them mana for what they do.” (Bryan)*

The principals discussed strengthening the relationships between students and the school supported the relationship between the students and staff. Some principals shared that they encouraged the staff to build the relationships they have with students by asking specific questions related to their learners’ background and through setting tasks to ensure staff were working towards meeting these expectations.

*“I said to staff do you know who your Māori students are? Do you know what iwi they are from? What do you know about them?” (Bryan)*

*“I talk a lot [to staff] about knowing our children. It’s about knowing our children as learners and people” (Kim)*

*“They never spent some time thinking about who is in my class. It was a huge thing. I gave them some things to do.” (Cathie)*

The principals described relationships with staff was vital in their learning environments in order for teaching and learning to be effective and for any change in practice to be valued. These views affirm there needs to be a good relationship between the principal and staff in order for these discussions to occur and for set expectations to be met. It is important to note that with the diverse nature of Māori student identity, knowledge of iwi and hapu may not exist. Therefore, it is important that leaders encourage educators to ask students about their families values and practices in order for the student to benefit from the sharing as opposed to only the teacher.

Boethel (2003) states, “Relationships are the foundation of parent involvement in schools” (p. 71). The principals communicated forming positive relationships with the parents and whānau of their Māori learners in highly valued as it provided schools with an understanding of how to meet their students’ needs.

The principals mentioned forming positive relationships increased their ability to connect with their families and to provide authentic learning experiences within Te Ao Māori. The principals described parental involvement led to the development of whānau groups, and opportunities for students to participate in Kapa Haka. Research supports these actions as engaging parents in meaningful ways in the school environment is critical for relationships to be strengthened (Bishop, 2010; Durie, 2006; Metge, 1995; Pihama, 2001).

*“Our parents are the experts, they are the ones we need to be listening to and working things out with.”  
(Kim)*

*“It is about physically being there. It is about showing support for whānau initiatives. It is about encouraging a sense of ownership of the school out of the whānau group.” (Paul)*

Although the majority of principals agreed that forming positive relationships with parents and whānau of their Māori learners is valuable Kim highlighted that engaging parents and whānau within the school can be challenging. Kim described a strategic approach was required to focus the school towards finding solutions to connect the school with all of their parents and whānau which was an expressed challenge. It is the researchers’ opinion that engaging parents and whānau requires more than a strategic plan it requires principals and educators to go into the community, lead from the front and create learning environments where parents feel welcome, have a presence, place value on their role, and strengthen their voice in all aspects of the school. Tuara (1992) who suggests leaders get “out in front and leads the people deriving mana from them” supports this view (Tuara, 1992, p 50).

### **5.3.2 Ako** (Learns within Te Ao Māori)

The concept of Ako, in Ka Hikitia (MOE, 2008a), describes the teaching and learning relationship between educators and students as reciprocal. Tataiako (MOE, 2011a) extends on this definition and relates Ako to culturally responsive actions where educators “Participate with learners and communities in robust dialogue for the benefit of Māori learners’ achievement” (p. 13). Although there are differences, both definitions align to the concept of Ako through their value and meaning.

*“You can’t be a teacher where you are teaching youngsters to take risks and be brave unless you do it yourself. So be a learner...” (Paul)*

Paul has strategically planned future PD to be at a local Marae for students, staff, parents, and whānau to experience authentic learning within Te Ao Māori led in conjunction with the schools whānau group. Such leadership practice encourages staff to have opportunities to genuinely improve their cultural competency and learn from parents and whānau, which also relates to Ako.

*“Our dual cultural heritage and the unique position of Māori culture is demonstrated through school policy and curriculum delivery, the functioning of the Whānau support group and programmes in Tikanga Te Reo and Kapa Haka.” (Charter statement, school 2)*

Most principals provide opportunities for students, staff, and themselves to learn within Te Ao Māori through many ways as evidenced in the ERO reports, school charters, and transcripts. However, the characteristics of these learning experiences vary in quality, time, and consistency between the schools. ERO evaluations of the participating schools affirm there are differences in the quality of learning experiences the schools provide. This inconsistency between schools may be due to the level of expertise schools had to effectively lead these experiences and a lack of PD that is implemented to support staff to provide learning experiences within Te Ao Māori. These ideas are supported by research from Bishop and Berryman (2006) as they emphasise principals must source and provide the necessary PD to enhance staff cultural competency in order for all members to have the necessary skills and ability to affirm Māori student identity.

### **5.3.3 Rangatiratanga (Leading the school)**

Research suggests there is a clear connection between effective leadership practices and student achievement, when there is a focus on teaching and learning (Bush, 2003; Cardno & Collett, 2004; Robinson et al., 2009; Starratt, 2003). Consequently, effective leaders keep teaching and learning at the core of their principal role when aiming to raise the achievement of their Māori learners.



*“I want teachers to generate a research question and I want that research question to be personal to their practice, centered inside our vision.” (Paul).*

*“We meet with teachers and we talk about their students who are not meeting expectations. We brainstorm ways to help the teachers to help the children.” (Kim)*

This narrative highlights effective leaders identify ways in which staff can work towards achieving the schools vision and goals surrounding Māori student achievement through innovate ways that go beyond formal and traditional teacher appraisal processes. Some principals identified there is a need to improve teacher pedagogy and staff cultural competency in order for Māori student achievement to be raised within their school. However, PD that enabled staff to improve their cultural competency was only apparent in two schools. Contrary to these findings, ERO reports and school charters indicate Māori students at most schools are achieving at similar rates as the general cohort in several learning areas. This finding was unexpected and it suggests positive Māori achievement results may occur in learning environments that are not necessarily culturally responsive to the needs of their Māori learners. It also highlights if the learning environment was culturally responsive could Māori achievement be even further enhanced? The researcher acknowledges due to the small sample size these findings cannot be confirmed or generalised, however, it is still interesting.

Three of principals reported their staff have high expectations for their learners. These principals shared observing teachers in the classroom and talking with students evidenced this. In contrast one principal identified his staff is still developing in having high expectations of their Māori learners and one principal shared she believed her staff did not have high expectations at all. These views reiterate a significant part of the principal's role is to encourage teachers to ensure high expectations for all learners is maintained in all classes at all times. This position is strongly supported by several

research studies (Bishop, 2010; Hattie, 2012; Leithwood, 2006; Robinson, 2007).

The majority of principals described managing change required principals to have explicit expectations of why change was needed and they needed to be patient and give staff time. The principals all acknowledged managing change was an important part of their role however there were mixed approaches when making changes within the school environment.

*“I’ve made them change and they are still changing. Not the way that I am supposed to. I know you are supposed to consult, and you are supposed to take people with you but actually, if people are comfortable they are not interested in going where you want to go.”*  
(Cathie)

*“If you want to change something, you have to change people’s hearts and if you want to change people’s hearts, you have to engage them in a genuine process of accepting that Māoritanga is intensively valuable.”*  
(Paul)

This view and other findings suggest principals are aware that changes within the learning environment are necessary, however, these principals have not been provided with a clear means of implementing education reform that could improve Māori student achievement and they have been positioned to find the answers themselves. These conflicting approaches may achieve different results for their staff and more importantly their learners. For this reason, principals must have the skills to manage change effectively if the outcome are to be positive. This affirms research by Le Fevre (2010) who suggests principals need to be aware that change is complex and although necessary for building better schools it can cause counter-productive emotional responses when change is not managed well. Consequently, leaders need to be committed to providing genuine opportunities, which Paul strongly advocates for any change to be valued and embedded. Specific MOE directives and school ERO evaluations support the need for primary school

principals to lead change the findings indicate some of the principals from this study do not seem to sure how to put it into practice. The support principals receive to assist in leading change is not sufficient.

#### **5.4 KO TĀTOU [ALL OF US]** (Leadership within the wider community)

The theme **KO TĀTOU** relates to how the principal as an effective leader aims to raise Māori student achievement with the support of the wider community.

This theme encompasses two inter-related key areas:

- **Honongotanga** (Builds supportive networks).
- **Kotahitanga** (Works within a collective).

##### **5.4.1 Honongotanga** (Builds supportive networks)

The principals described building supporting networks as an effective leadership action as it can enable collegial support from those who understand the challenges and demands of the principal role. Similar findings from the MOE (2000) support these views, as building networks can enhance the principals' and schools ability to raise Māori student achievement.

*“One of the best things I have done is I’ve employed someone to mentor me. Because I realised actually, I’ve got all these things going on and I don’t know how to deal with them.” (Cathie)*

The view above highlights sourcing and building supportive networks can support individual principals' needs that may not be available within the school. The principals in this study identified the networks they are a part of include a cluster of local schools, a national principals network and an externally sourced mentor. Becoming a part of these networks is an optional choice made by the principal and BOT.

*“We meet as a group of principals two times a term. We discuss student data and things like that so as principals we are becoming better. I have really pushed for our meetings not to be admin based. We expect our*

*teachers to share practice. We expect our teachers to be challenged. We need to be doing that ourselves and model that at that level.” (Kim)*

The principals who identified working within a cluster of schools described differences between how each cluster operates. The majority of principals described their cluster has as having a literacy focus. James explained that within his cluster there was a specific focus on Māori student achievement by sharing data and strategies that could improve school practice related to focussing on Māori learners. These views highlight improving Māori student achievement can only be supported within a cluster network if it is a shared focus. It is the researchers’ opinion that for a longstanding national goal to be achieved it must be a national focus. Without communicating, the importance of raising Māori student achievement and sharing strategies, success, and challenges there is little hope of this goal being achieved if it is not a shared focus.

The ERO report findings and school charter documentation revealed school and iwi relationships is an area of development for the majority of the schools. It is important for all principals to build relationships with iwi in order to understand and value their community. Additionally relationships’ with iwi could strengthen the learning environment to be culturally responsive. Ka Hikitia- Managing for success (2008a) supports building relationships with iwi as it suggests improving Māori student achievement could be realised with increased iwi involvement.

#### **5.4.2 Kotahitanga (Works within a collective)**

The MOE provides all primary schools with National Educational Guidelines (NEGS), National Achievement Guidelines (NAGS), a New Zealand Curriculum Framework (NZCF) and numerous resources and initiatives to direct schools towards achieving national educational goals (Education Act, 1989; MOE, 2003). The principals described there are some challenges with achieving the national goals as they identified some MOE initiatives that focus on raising Māori student achievement are unable to be realised alongside the mandated National standards.

*“We have got this document about Ako and about collaboration and about working together for Māori student achievement yet you develop a competitive educational model that doesn’t encourage that at all. You know it’s almost like a bi-polar education system in that respect.” (Bryan)*

*“I think in a way it comes down to what the purpose of schooling is and I think one of the things we have lost sight in is society is using the national standards as the be all and end all....They have got a linear model but kids don’t learn in a linear fashion. It’s not national standards because it is not nationally moderated. The whole thing is just a farce really.” (James)*

*“It’s very hard to value a kid who might be an amazing orator, who can nail communicating ideas or has a personality that compels people to follow them. Both of which will find them amazing success in the work force in this century. It is hard to aggregate that success statistically and prove performance. As a government the capacity for these ideas to win support is challenged but ill shout it from the roof tops lets come up with a diverse concept of human capability not a narrow one size fits all concept.” (Paul)*

The ERO (2012) Working with National Standards to Promote Students’ Progress and Achievement evaluation affirms these findings as research found some principals were opposed to the National standards for similar reasons. Although the principals have shared their concerns with the National standards, they all report on them as mandated. The principals discussed finding a variety of different ways to provide their students, staff, parents, and whānau with achievement results that were outside of the national standards, as they did not want them to be the sole focus of achievement yet all of the

principals did not have or suggest an alternate complementary assessment process.

*“Although the key competencies are very difficult to measure you can assess them...we have just taken them out because of national standards but we are going to put them back in. We have developed some sub categories for each of them that we are going to assess.” (James)*

These views suggest there is a preference for national measures on student achievement to be reported on outside of reading, writing, and mathematics. This transformation could assist schools in delivering a well-rounded curriculum that could support more of an equitable NZ education system where student achievement is nationally recognised in a multitude of ways. These findings are similar to the research from Thrupp, (2013) who identifies a narrowed curriculum will not promote an equitable curriculum. Until there is national coherence supporting multiple conceptions of student success, Māori students' will continue to be measured within an individualised European construct. The findings suggest that continuing with National standards to measure student achievement potentially limits what achievement and success for all students in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century could be.

### **5.5 The Landscape of Culturally Responsive Leadership**

The suggested model described over the following pages draws on aspects from Tātaiako, He Kakano, Ka Hikitia documents, and Macfarlane's (2004) Educultural Framework for inspiration and guidance. Additionally, this model reflects the pathways principals have chosen to raise Māori student achievement. The corresponding map orientates the reader through a landscape of culturally responsive leadership practice. This map provides leaders, within the primary education sector with a reflective tool that could be used to support other educational leaders to ascend to higher educational attainment for Māori students.

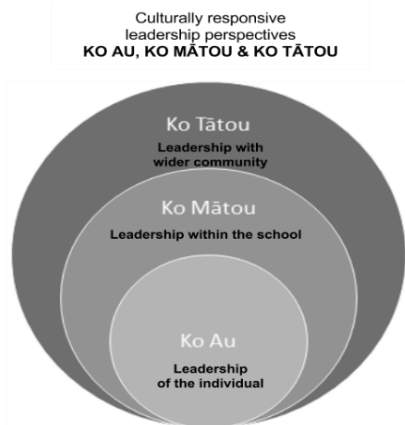


Figure 6: Leadership perspectives description

Leadership perspectives	
Te Tiriti o Waitangi - Treaty of Waitangi	<p><b>KO TĀTOU</b></p> <p><b>Kotahitanga</b> (Works within a collective)</p> <p><b>Honongotanga</b> (Builds supportive networks)</p>
	<p><b>KO MĀTOU</b></p> <p><b>Whānaungatanga</b> (Builds strong relationships)</p> <p><b>Ako</b> (Learning within Te Ao Māori)</p> <p><b>Rangatiratanga</b> (Leading the school to raise student achievement)</p>
	<p><b>KO AU</b></p> <p><b>Whaiwhakaaro</b> (Reflective practitioner)</p> <p><b>Wānanga</b> (Communication, problem solving &amp; innovation)</p> <p><b>Whanonga pono</b> (Principles &amp; values)</p>

Figure 7: Culturally responsive leadership perspectives

The first part of the journey requires principals' to walk the one pathway with three distinct perspectives (see Figure 6). These perspectives are **KO AU** – leadership of the individual, **KO MĀTOU**, leadership within the school and **KO TĀTOU** – Leadership within the community. These perspectives exemplify leadership is multi-levelled.

The first signpost is at the base of the Maunga and enables the leader to check they have the necessary equipment and know all of their options (see Figure 7). These options are:

**KO AU** – encompasses three key leadership actions. *Whanonga pono* relates to values the leader has, *Wananga* refers to the skills and knowledge to lead and *Whaiwhakaaro* describes the leader as a reflective practitioner.

**KO MĀTOU** – incorporates three key leadership actions. *Rangatiratanga* describes leading the school, to raise achievement, *Ako* describes the reciprocity of leading and learning, and *Whānaungatanga* describes building strong relationships' with all stakeholders.

**KO TĀTOU** - includes two key leadership actions. *Honongotanga* refers to building supportive networks to lead and learn from and *Kotahitanga* describes working within a collective. All three perspectives embody the perspectives of the principals of this study and inter-relate with each other, as all three are perspectives held within the one individual. In addition, the perspectives are connected with the TOW, as it is significant to leading culturally responsive practice within a NZ context.

<i>Broad Objectives</i>
<p>Leaders work in partnership with whānau , iwi, hapū, local schools and the MOE towards a shared goal of improving the educational outcomes for all learners.</p>
<p>Leaders form strong relationships with students, staff, parents and whanau.</p> <p>Leaders provide learning opportunities for students and staff within Te Ao Maori.</p> <p>Leaders develop staff capacity to raise Maori student achievement.</p>
<p>Leaders reflect on their actions to ensure decisions are effective and strategic.</p> <p>Leaders communicate a vision and direction for the school.</p> <p>Leaders model a commitment to Te Ao Maori.</p>

Figure 8: Broad Objectives

The second signposts directs the leader towards multiple pathways with three main objectives (**see Figure 8**). These objectives are:

Within **KO AU** – The objectives identify possible goals for leaders to focus on to when enhancing their own ability as an individual to be culturally responsive. These goals include modeling a commitment to Te Ao Māori, communicating a vision for the school and reflecting on actions. All of which highlight best practice as identified by the research findings and literature.

Within **KO MĀTOU** – The objectives focus on goals surrounding culturally responsive leading within the school. These goals include raising staff capacity to be culturally competent, provide learning experiences within Te Ao Māori for all stakeholders and form strong relationships with students, parents, and whānau. Parents and whānau have been situated within the school, as they are a significant part of the school environment.



Within **KO TĀTOU** – the objective focus on goals that relate to leading and learning with iwi, local schools and the MOE. The findings revealed this was challenging for the participants particularly as working with iwi was not evident. Consequently, some of these goals reflect areas that are yet to be achieved in some primary schools in this study.

<i>Deliberate Leadership Actions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Meet with local iwi and hapu formally and informally.</li> <li>● Build relationships with local schools to share strategies to raise achievement and build support networks.</li> <li>● Seek local iwi and hapu expertise within the school.</li> <li>● Collaborate with MOE personnel and documentation to enhance school efficacy.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Create a shared vision with all stakeholders.</li> <li>● Meet regularly with students, staff, parents and whanau formally and informally.</li> <li>● Provide resources for students and staff surrounding learning within Te Ao Maori.</li> <li>● Lead staff to develop their own cultural competency through inquiry based on individual needs and link this to their formal appraisal.</li> <li>● Provide opportunities to develop staff leadership capacity within the school and community.</li> <li>● Align all actions to a strategic plan to raise achievement.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Understand the personal and professional values that underpin your own leadership actions and decision making.</li> <li>● Immerse yourself in Te Ao Maori as a learner and korero Maori with students, staff and whanau.</li> <li>● Align values to a clear direction and vision for the school.</li> </ul>

The third signpost sets challenges for the leader to achieve the three broad objectives (**see Figure 9**).

The actions that have been described reflect many of the practices the principals of this study have utilised when leading their schools. This part is also supported by the findings in the reviewed literature. The researcher acknowledges there are possibly many actions that could contribute to this description.

*Figure 9: Deliberate Leadership actions*

<i>Reflective Questions</i>
<p><b>What beliefs do we share?</b>  <b>What do we value collectively?</b>  <b>What support do I need?</b>  <b>What support can I give others?</b>  <b>What is our shared vision for all learners?</b></p>
<p><b>Who are our students?</b>  <b>Who are our families?</b>  <b>What beliefs do we share?</b>  <b>What do we value collectively?</b>  <b>What are our student, staff and whanau strengths and needs?</b>  <b>How can I provide more opportunities within Te Ao Māori for students, staff and whanau?</b>  <b>Do I have high expectations of students and staff?</b></p>
<p><b>What do I value?</b>  <b>What are my strengths and weaknesses?</b>  <b>What is my purpose as the school leader?</b>  <b>Do my actions provide equitable learning opportunities for all students and staff?</b>  <b>What can I do better?</b></p>

*Figure 10: Reflective questions*

The fourth signpost is a pit stop where the leader can look back and return to where they were if they are off track or continue if the path is clear (see **Figure 10**)

The questions that are presented link to the questions the principals of this study ask of themselves as evidenced in their responses to the semi-structured interview questions.

The questions directly link to each of the three foundation perspectives therefore there is a clear progression of reflection that initially focusses on individual leadership actions, then to areas within the school and finally within the wider school community.

Each part of this model can stand-alone and have a positive effect on enhancing culturally responsive leadership, however the model is strengthened when all parts are connected.

The combination of all five parts provides a final map that reflects the pathways the principals of this study traversed (see **Figure 11**).

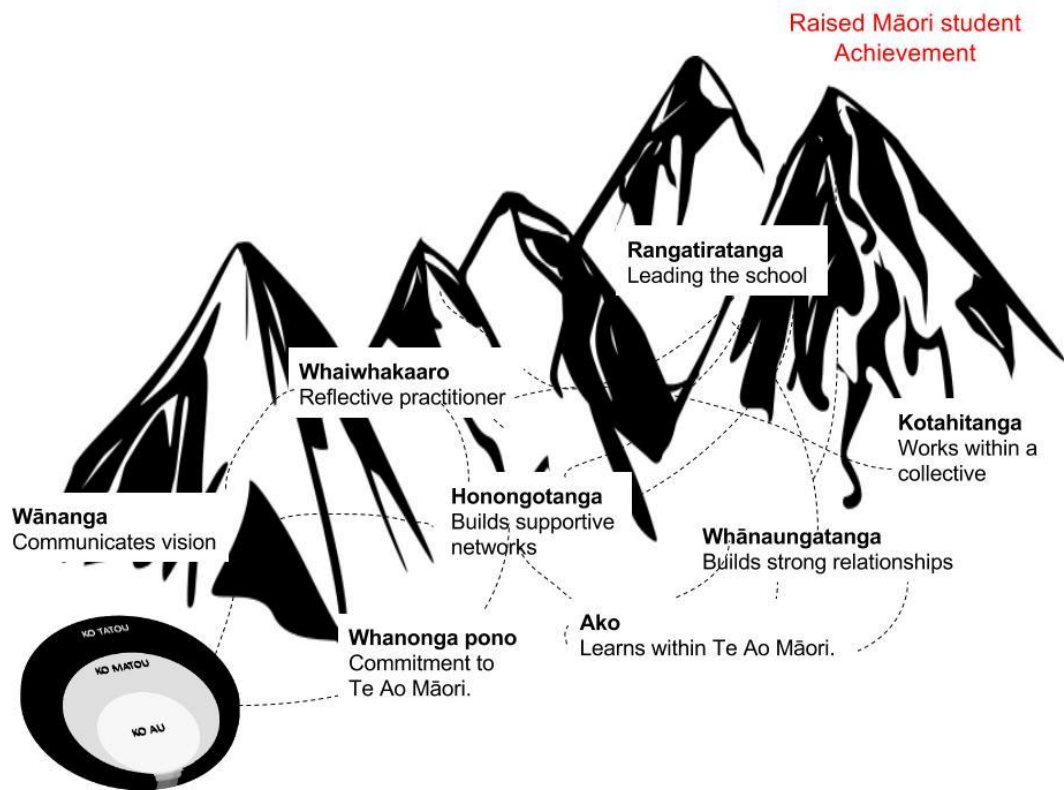


Figure 11: Landscape of Culturally Responsive Leadership

The three leadership perspectives **KO AU**, **KO MĀTOU**, and **KO TĀTOU** are at the base of the Maunga as this represents the leaders' kāinga. Before taking the first step leaders must acknowledge their strengths and weakness to foresee any personal barriers before progressing on the journey.

The pathways leading from the kāinga can be taken in any direction, as there is no right pathway as the leader must follow a direction that takes them to where they want to go. Leaders may trek backwards and forwards if obstacles are present until they find other ways to climb.

Upon this journey, leaders are asked to be deliberate in their actions and reflect on them in order to learn from their mistakes. The journey could be supported if personnel is prepared around the leader. Therefore, the more prepared the personnel, the more successful the outcome of the journey.

## 5.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has highlighted and summarised the key findings of this research project alongside the reviewed literature. The perceptions and strategies of the five participating principals have been shared throughout this chapter and they were utilised to identify the common themes.

The three core themes are:

- **KO AU [ME]** (Leadership of the individual).
- **KO MĀTOU [US]** (Leadership within the school).
- **KO TĀTOU [ALL OF US]** (Leadership with the wider community).

These themes signify three leadership perspectives of the primary principal role. All three perspectives have an important part in raising Māori student achievement if aligned to culturally responsive leadership practices. Within each theme, three major findings have been identified.

**KO AU:** Leading schools to raise Māori student achievement requires principals to have a personal and professional commitment to Te Ao Māori as this enhances the likelihood that the learning environment will reflect these values.

**KO AU:** Effective principals' align learning experiences within Te Ao Māori to a strategic plan for raising Māori student achievement with a clear focus on both students and staff as the success of each is inter-related.

**KO MĀTOU:** There is favour for a shift in current assessment measures in the primary sector to include a broader sense of what constitutes educational achievement, as this will enable principals and schools to focus on developing well-rounded students in an inclusive education system.

## **CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides a summary of the research aims and answers the three key questions that underpinned the research study. Following this the limitations within the project are identified, opportunities for further research are suggested and recommendations for educators and the MOE are presented. Finally, an overall conclusion closes the chapter.

### **6.2 Summary of the research aims**

The main purpose of this grounded research study was to gain understanding surrounding the perceptions and leadership practices of primary school principals as they aim to raise Māori student achievement within the intention of generating the opportunity for primary school principals to reflect and inquire into one's own current leadership practice and actions. Three key questions guided this research.

In terms of the first research question:

#### **What are the current perceptions of principals in mainstream primary schools surrounding Māori student achievement?**

The role of the primary school principal is vital in making a difference to the achievement of Māori learners as supported by the reviewed literature (ERO, 2010a; MOE, 2013a; MOE, 2013b; Robinson et al., 2009; Southworth, 2004). Findings in this study revealed a number of similarities in the perceptions principals have surrounding leading the school environment to raise Māori student achievement. It was evident in the findings that the principals have a personal AND professional focus when aiming to raise Māori student achievement. The personal focus includes a commitment to Te Ao Māori. The professional focus includes providing a learning environment that reflects these values by providing opportunities for students and staff to learn within Te Ao Māori in order to enhance and strengthen student identity, create a sense

of belonging, form relationships and create a culturally responsive learning environment in the hope of raised Māori student achievement.

The majority of principals revealed engaging parents and whānau within the school was an important part of their leadership role. Some principals reported difficulties in catering to the diverse needs of Māori students as the ability to strengthen Māori identity and student achievement could not be fully realised without help from home. The principals reiterated that there is concerted effort to provide learning opportunities within Te Ao Māori however; expertise to support such initiatives is dependent on staff ability as external support to assist schools is hard to find and sustain. Some principals shared that they simply do not have the staff capability. Although parent and whānau involvement and learning within Te Ao Māori was highly valued, there was no evidence to support engaging with local iwi when forming relationships or any provisions for professional development to enhance staff ability to meet these identified needs.

An important finding to emerge in this study is the principals insight into the perceived restrictions they have regarding measuring student achievement in the primary context. This study reveals most principals support the argument for a change in current measures of student achievement to go beyond the National standards in order for achievement to be recognised in a multitude of ways. For some principals measuring success against the NZCF Key competencies is the preferred option.

In the investigation of the second research question:

**How do these perceptions contribute to their leadership practice and decision making within their schools?**

The principals' from this study seek student, staff and parent and or whānau input to assist in their decision-making. The study revealed the principals acknowledge that they do not always have the cultural knowledge or expertise required to lead change and rely predominantly on their staff to assist in their decision-making.

Principals also acknowledged their role requires them to structure and create deliberate attempts to enhance staff cultural competency and responsiveness. Consequently, some principals have strategically hired staff to ensure the school has the capacity to deliver opportunities within Te Ao Māori for students and staff. The findings indicate more professional development is needed for school leaders and educators surrounding leading change to raise Māori student achievement

The principals identified forming whānau groups with staff and parents and whānau was important in building a genuine relationship with the school. However, the purpose and rationale of such group needs to be explicit and purposeful in order for it to have any effect on positively enhancing the learning environment and for the relationship to be sustained. One principal highlighted whānau meetings became less frequent as there was no direct purpose. The principals who have operating whānau groups shared being a member of the whānau group reiterates a commitment of the group.

The principals who identified issues with National standards deliberately focus on and share other assessment data with their parents, whānau, and community such as PAT achievement results. For one principal emphasis is placed on the Key competencies with the purpose of ensuring parents and whānau are presented with data that focusses on the whole learner rather than reading, writing and math.

In relation to the third research question:

### **How do principals gauge or monitor the success of their leadership practice and decision-making?**

The principals who participated in this study made no reference to any summative forms of appraisal BOT, ERO, or other to inform their leadership success. Overall, the principals reported success as a leader is evaluated by continuously observing and measuring what is happening in their school.

Some principals described leadership success is measured by asking students directly how they feel in the school as this can provide needed future direction

for schools to implement. Most principals reported feedback from parents and whānau enable leaders to reflect on what is going well and how changes can be made within the school to meet parent and whānau needs. Some principals added that parent and whānau feedback was more important than an external ERO review.

Leadership success was also assessed through observing teacher practice in classes as this informed the quality of teaching and learning and informed principals of what they need to focus on with individual staff in order to meet school wide goals. Although some principals indicated, there were issues with the National standards one principal reported that National standards provided data that enabled them to identify positive shifts in achievement, in turn indicating school success.

### **6.3 Limitations of the study**

The research presented here could be strengthened by collecting a larger sample size. The participants of this research study represent a small sample of primary school principals from schools ranging from decile 6 to 10 in Wellington, NZ. Including a larger number of participants from a wide range of school deciles and regions in NZ could have strengthened the focus. Of interest is if the findings of this study are different from other regions in NZ. Additionally, a larger number of participants could have provided greater external validity and improved the reliability of the findings.

Further to this, another way of strengthening this study would be to include additional data from other school leaders, teachers, and whānau and students perspectives as this study only focussed on the role the school principal as the school leader. Obtaining these perspectives could have provided comparative data of leadership perceptions and actions yielding more data to widen the scope of this research study.

### **6.4 Further research opportunities**

The identified limitations indicate there is opportunity for research opportunities that could lead to a wider understanding of primary school



principal perceptions and leadership practice relating to raising Māori student achievement. These include:

- Further research surrounding culturally competent leadership practices within the primary sector in all areas of NZ that focusses on principals' decision-making and practice throughout an entire school year and correlating that with Māori achievement results in a variety of learning areas would yield more data and provide insight of possible causal actions and relationships. These findings could significantly add value to the primary education sector and provide leaders with data to inform their practice and enhance their school environments and learning opportunities.
- More research in culturally competent and high performing schools that are identified to be working effectively with parents, whānau, iwi, and hapū to could provide evidence based strategies to enable other schools to develop and improve their community, home, and school relationships. Research within the intermediate sector would be particularly beneficial as the participant that works in this area described developing and sustaining fruitful relationships in a two-year span is difficult.
- Increased research surrounding the use of MOE initiatives in particular Ka Hikitia – Accelerating Success, Tau mai Te Reo and Tātaiako by NZ primary schools could provide insight into how the initiatives are planned for, developed and measured alongside identifying what PD is necessary to support these initiatives to be implemented effectively.
- The completion of this research project has seen the beginnings of the MOE IES initiative that aims to bring schools closer together with the aim of improving the achievement of all its learners. Further research into the impact or affect this initiative has had on improved achievement for Māori learners could encourage more primary schools to join a community of schools.

## 6.5 Recommendations

The findings of this study have produced several recommendations for school principals and leaders within the NZ primary education sector and the MOE. The recommendations may be beneficial for all educational stakeholders to consider when leading their schools to be high performing and successful in attempting to raise the achievement of their Māori learners. These recommendations are guidelines based on the reviewed literature and research findings. Some of these recommendations are not original as they have been expressed by many researchers however, they are reiterated again as they are still to be realised in some primary schools throughout NZ.

- Principals should model a commitment to Te Ao Māori by learning and integrating Te Reo Māori within the school. Any internal PD that focusses on Māori language and tikanga needs more than a ten-minute slot during a staff meeting is insufficient and unlikely to have a difference in improving staff cultural competency.
- Principals need to continue to work collaboratively with staff to improve teaching and learning. Principals should provide structured ongoing PD that focuses on improving staff cultural competency and integrate this as a part of appraising overall teacher performance. In addition to improving staff cultural competency, the focus of school leaders should continue to focus on teaching, learning, and improving the success and achievement of all students. School leaders should consider school wide professional learning within Te Ao Māori in and out of school for the experiences to be genuine and lived.
- Principals should have a presence with its Māori community and continue to seek the advice and guidance of its Māori parents, whānau, and local iwi to inform and assist in decision making within the school.
- There is an overwhelming need for principals to have the time to reflect and evaluate on the decisions and actions they make in the school. Principals should have allocated time to refine their leadership skills, reflect on the needs of their school environment, and extend their ability to raise the achievement of all their learners.

- Primary school leaders have a key role to play however, it appears that while the commitment may be there some leaders are unsure how to proceed. Primary principals need to know how to lead change and understand how to implement educational reform. This emphasises the need for increased MOE and government support and PD to assist primary school principals to lead change and education reform as a part of a collective body as opposed to finding the necessary solutions needed for change in isolation.
- For Māori to achieve as Māori the government and the education sector should look beyond the current forms of student achievement measures that are based on individual attainment, are heavily focussed on literacy and numeracy, situate within a western framework, and include provisions for achievement opportunities that reflect the culturally responsive environments in which they advocate.

## **6.6 Conclusion**

This research study has provided current perceptions and actions that shape the decisions and leadership of some primary school principals in the Wellington region as they aim to raise the achievement of their Māori learners. The findings indicate the participants of this study had similar perceptions surrounding raising Māori student achievement, however, it revealed there were multiple differences in practice. These similarities and differences provide the reader with an insight into the reality of the NZ primary principal role when aiming to raise Māori student achievement and the opportunity to reflect on one's own practice. The participants' perceptions alongside the presented literature reiterate a culturally competent principal should not be seen as an exceptional leader rather they should be what is seen in all NZ primary schools. It is the researcher's belief that we need school leaders' who are culturally competent, committed to Te Ao Māori, and able to lead and manage education reform in order to see improved Māori student achievement on a national level. Stepping up to this challenge as an educational leader is not an easy one however there is a responsibility by all leaders and educators to protect our tāonga and raise the achievement of our Māori learners.

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## APPENDIX A: Principal Information Sheet



Dear Principal,

My name is Vanessa Te Huia and I am currently studying towards a Master's in Education (by thesis) at Victoria University. As an experienced teacher, I have been employed in a number of positions within the primary school sector and have had the opportunity to be a part of teacher exchanges in both Zambia and Tokelau. During this time, I have observed the important role of leadership and how important it is in regards to student achievement. I understand this is a very busy time of the year and I appreciate you taking the time to read this.

### **Project description and invitation**

This letter is an invitation for you to be involved as a participant in research that I will do as part of my thesis. The topic for my thesis is 'Principal perceptions and leadership practice for raising Māori student achievement in the New Zealand primary school sector'. The main purpose of this grounded research study is to explore the perceptions that shape Principals decisions and practice to raise Māori student achievement. It will examine successes within your school in order to ascertain more understanding about what is happening in the primary sector.

The research aims to answer three key questions, which underpin the research project: Firstly, what are the current perceptions of Principals in mainstream primary schools surrounding Māori achievement and how do these perceptions contribute to their practice. Secondly, how do the above perceptions manifest within the school organisation. Finally, how do Principals' gauge or monitor the success of their decisions? The hope is this study will inform MOE, policymakers, Educational leaders/Principals, students, whānau, and community of the current perceptions, which shape the decisions and actions in a primary educational sector by sharing the successes and reality of what, is happening within your school.

### **Participant identification**

You will be required to fill out a consent form (either hard copy or electronically) in order to participate in this research project (see attached). When the consent form is returned all participants will be sent an e-mail with a link to an anonymous online questionnaire to be completed. I am able to come in and collect consent forms if this is easier for you. Following this survey, you may be contacted to arrange a follow up interview at a time and place of your choosing. You may choose to participate in the survey only. The interview will be audio-recorded and will be transcribed. A copy of the transcript will be given to you for checking, requesting deletions and adding new information if you choose.



Participants will not be identified by name in any publications or presentations arising from this research. In all analysis and reporting of data, participants and schools will be assigned a pseudonym.

In line with the ethical requirements of Victoria University, you would have the right to withdraw from the research at any point up to March 1<sup>st</sup> 2015. In this instance, you would need to contact me directly on [REDACTED] or via e-mail **tehuivane@myvuw.ac.nz**.

### **Dissemination of results**

The findings of this study will be presented in my Master's thesis. Findings may also be used later to prepare papers and conference presentations on this research. I will provide all principals and schools with a verbal and written summary of the findings on completion of the study, if requested. All written material (questionnaires, interview notes, etc.) will be kept in a locked file and access is restricted to the researcher/supervisor. All electronic information will be kept in a password-protected file and access will be restricted to me. All data will be destroyed after the conclusion of the research.

The Faculty of Education Human Ethics Sub-committee under delegated authority from the Victoria University Human Ethics Committee has approved the research. If there are any ethical, questions about this research please contact the Chair of the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee, Dr Allison Kirkman, **Allison.Kirkman@vuw.ac.nz**.

I hope that this letter provides enough information for you to make an informed choice. If however you feel that more detail is needed, I would be happy to be contacted. Alternatively, you could contact the research supervisor Dr Craig Rofe (04) 4639539 or via email **Craig.Rofe@vuw.ac.nz**. I look forward to hearing from you.

Nga mihi,

Vanessa Te Huia

## APPENDIX B: Participant Consent Form



### Consent for Principals to Participate in Masters Research project

Dear Principal,

You have been invited to participate in a research study conducted by Vanessa Te Huia from Victoria University of Wellington. You have been asked to take part in this study to ascertain your perceptions and leadership practice for raising Māori student achievement in your school. Your participation is voluntary and you may be contacted for a follow up interview after the initial survey.

Furthermore;

- I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research project.
- I have had an opportunity to ask Vanessa Te Huia any questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction.
- I understand that I may withdraw (or any information I have provided provided) from this project (before data collection and analysis is complete) without having to give reasons or without penalty of any sort.
- I understand that any information that I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher and the research supervisor, the published results will not use my name or my school's name.
- I understand that the online anonymous data and or interview data will be deleted after the completion of the project.
- I understand that information or data I provide through survey or follow up interviews will not be used for any other purpose without consent.
- **I have read the agree to take part in this research (please tick)**

Name of Principal: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School : \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX C: Survey Questions



Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey.

- Q1. What five key attributes do you believe make an effective principal?
- Q2. Briefly describe your leadership style as a school principal.
- Q3. What are the goals and vision you have for your school in terms of Māori student learning and achievement?
- Q4. What is critical to raising Māori achievement in your school?
- Q5. Have you had any professional development (as a principal) or for staff that has concentrated on raising Māori achievement?
- Q5 b. If yes, who ran the professional development and in what year was it implemented?
- Q6. What actions as Principal have you taken to raise Māori student achievement in your school?
- Q7. How are Māori students identified in your school?
- Q8. How much funding per year do you allocate to Māori achievement?  
a) \$1 – 100 b) \$101 – 500 c) \$500 – 1000 d) \$1000 – 5000 e) \$5000 +
- Q9. Does your school use any Ministry of Education (MOE) initiatives to specifically focus on raising Māori achievement? If yes, which specific documents?
- Q10. Do you have professional development within your school that enables staff to teach Te Reo Māori (Māori language)?  
a) Yes b) No
- Q11. Do you feel supported in your role as principal to raise Māori achievement?
- Q12. What are the things you think needs development in your school relating to Māori achievement?
- Q13. What are the things that you think are working well in your school relating to improving Māori achievement?
- Q14. How does your school gather assessment information to inform the academic achievement of its Māori students?
- Q15. How does this assessment data change classroom practice?

## APPENDIX D: Semi-structured Interview Questions



### Pre-interview rapport building questions;

- How long have you been in the education sector?
- What led you to your decision to become Principal of ...?
- What are the three best things you think you have done since you have become Principal, and what might be three mistakes?

### Main questions:

1. What do you do as principal to raise Māori student achievement in your school?
2. How much focus is placed school wide on raising Māori student achievement?
3. Who makes the decisions relating to Māori student achievement?
4. What do you believe is necessary for raising Māori student achievement?
5. What are the things that you think are working well in your school to raise Māori student achievement?
6. What are the things that need development?
7. What aspirations or goals do you have for your school in terms of raising Māori student achievement?
8. What specific initiatives or programmes do you use in terms of raising Māori student achievement/why?
9. What do these initiatives entail?
10. Is Te Reo and tikanga Māori included in staff professional development programmes?
11. Do members of staff have high expectations for Māori students? How do you know?
12. How does the school involve Māori parents and whānau people in the school?
13. How do you measure Māori achievement in your school?
14. How does the school use this information to improve the academic achievement of students?
15. Do you collaborate with any other schools, networks or wider community?
16. What challenges and difficulties do you face as principal in relation to Māori achievement?