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## Summary of our Education for Māori reports



Photo acknowledgement:  
The Ti Kōuka artpiece pictured on the cover  
of this report was made by Charlene Fraser.

# Summary of our Education for Māori reports

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# Wāhinga korero

Kua poho kererū te Kāhui Arotake nei kia āwhina ai i ā tātou pīpī ki te whai huruhuru, kia rere ai ki tōna taumata. Mā te kai i te mātauranga ka tika te rere o te hapori. Ka whaiwhai pīhau te pīpī i ōna kātua i te ao mātauranga, i te hauora, ā, i ngā hua ka puta. E kīa nei, ko te manu e kai ana i te mātauranga, nōna te ao.

Kua arotahi ki te mātauranga, arā ki te whakaakoranga o ā tātou mokopuna Māori. I ngā tau o mua kua aro ki te ekenga ki te taumata kua tohungia e te Tāhūhū o te Mātauranga, engari he kaupapa matatini kē. Ka aro kē ki ngā taumahatanga kua tau ia te tau, ia te tau, ao noa mai, pō noa mai. Ki a mātou nei, mā te mahi kē, mā te waiaro kē, mā te whanonga kē e ea.

Ko te pēhitanga, ko te ahurea rerekē, ko te ōhanga, ko te matatika kē me te whanaungatanga te pūtake o te taumahatanga. Kua tirohia kē ēnei ahuatanga i te pūrongo tuatahi. Kua whakaetia whānuitia nō te pūnaha mātauranga te hē. Heoi anō, he hiahia nō te Tāhūhū ki te kimi i te rongoā, ā, ka heke iho ngā taero ā Kupe.

Kua rerekē ngā take mō ngā ōhanga. Ehara i te mea ko te nui o te pūtea te raru engari kē ko te whakapaunga o te pūtea te take. He maha ngā peka e whakapau nei i te pūtea, arā, ko te hauora, ko te ture me te pāpori. Kua whakaetia e tēnā, e tēna o tātou mēnā kotahi tonu te aronga ka pai ake te hua ka puta. E ai ki tēnei pūrongo, me tīni te ao mātauranga i ōna whakaaro ki ngā āhuratanga e pai ake ana ki ngā ākongā me ngā whānau Māori ahakoa nō hea. E kaha tautoko ana tēnei pūrongo i a Ka Hikitia, me mau tonu, me pupuri tonu ki a ia, kua rawa e waiho ki rāhaki kia pērā ai ki te moa, ka mate noa atu. Me whakamana i ia te tangata, i ia te pūnaha kia whai hua ai.

Ehara i te mea he pahupahu noa iho. E rima ngā tau kua wānangahia e Te Mana Arotake i ngā kaupapa rangahau nei, ā, kua hokihoki mai te maha o ngā mahara. Mā te kōrerorero kua wherawheratia hohonutia nei ngā āhuratanga o ngā kura me tōna āhei ki te āwhina, ki te tautoko hoki i ā tātou tamariki, mokopuna ki te eke ki ō rātou karamatamata o te angitu.

Mere Berryman  
Lorraine Kerr  
Angus Hikairo Macfarlane  
Wally Penetito  
Graham Hingangaroa Smith

October 2016

# Foreword

The Māori Advisory and Reference Group has been proud to support the Education for Māori audit programme because it will help produce a society in which every child can thrive physically, academically, socially, and culturally. Education is the most effective means to an equitable society. There are links between a parent's and a child's educational attainment, between education and health, education and income. In short, better education produces better lifelong outcomes.

Our focus is on education and the education of Māori students. In the past, this has often been seen as an achievement gap issue.

The so-called achievement gap is a result of many different interactions. Maybe, as some others already do, we could try instead to think about the achievement gap as a measure of a debt that has accumulated in our education system over many years.

When a person has a debt they can either be preoccupied with how much is owed (the gap) or they can do something about reducing the debt. Hand-wringing won't reduce the debt. Only by changing what you are doing, and changing attitudes and behaviours, will you reduce the debt. Many have been trying to change attitudes and behaviours in Aotearoa/New Zealand, and efforts have gathered pace since about the 1970s.

The debt in our system is made up of colonial, cultural, economic, moral, and social components. The social and cultural debt, despite creaks and groans, has been reducing, and te reo Māori and tikanga Māori are better recognised and supported. We sing our national anthem nowadays in two languages.

The colonial debt has been a focus since the 1970s and Treaty settlement processes have directly addressed this part of the debt. Numerous companies are now owned by iwi and some iwi have assets of more than a billion dollars. More iwi are working towards those same sorts of gains.

There is widespread agreement that the education sector has failed to deliver equitable education outcomes. However, we think the sector is united by a sense of determination to do better. This collective determination helps reduce the moral debt.

The economic debt is challenging. More *effective* use of investment rather than more investment per se will help. Connections are growing between education, health, social, and justice system spending. Many recognise the difference that a holistic, co-ordinated approach focussing on outcomes can make. As this report says, the education sector needs to become smarter about what works to produce better results for Māori students across a very diverse schooling and socio-

economic landscape. Cost-effectiveness evaluation and the removal of ineffective initiatives will help get better value out of expenditure.

As this report also points out, there is a huge opportunity for schools to learn from each other about what is effective. Identifying the specific needs of specific students can also smarten the use of existing investment. Another proven value-building activity is to create effective relationships with whānau and iwi and to review those relationships. This report recommends sticking with the existing strategy Ka Hikitia – and not allowing it to wither on the vine – as another way to get better value out of the investment already made rather than replacing it with something new.

The unmet potential, missed opportunities, and the profound sense of loss of personal status and mana can be devastating and costly.

Like the household that has too much debt everyone shares in some way in the cost of that debt. And like the household that reduces its debt, everyone will share in the benefits.

Preparing this final report has been more than just an imperative to work and talk together. Five years of our group's interactions with the staff of Te Mana Arotake has engendered copious reflections of experiences that have taken place under such terms as "school reform", "effective schools", "systems renewal", and so on. Many of the discussions have been aimed at helping us see, more intently, the school world and how it has the potential to serve tamariki and their whānau, so that the school world can build the capability for future advancement.

Mere Berryman  
Lorraine Kerr  
Angus Hikairo Macfarlane  
Wally Penetito  
Graham Hingangaroa Smith

October 2016

# Auditor-General's overview

Every child in New Zealand deserves to thrive physically, academically, socially, and culturally. However, too many Māori children leave school without the education they deserve. It is the wrong outcome that leads to worse social and economic outcomes and affects every New Zealander.

It is well known that there is a gap between Māori and non-Māori achievement. This is closing. However, progress is still too slow.

The education sector has an integral role to play in reducing the gap – or education “debt” as my Māori Advisory and Reference Group calls it. My Office has completed five reports, including this one, in the hope that we can make some contribution to reducing the gap or, at the very least, shine a light on this vital issue for New Zealand.

Having analysed the differences in achievement between similar schools, I see a great opportunity for poorer-performing schools to learn from similar but better-performing schools. This might take some breaking down of old attitudes and barriers to collaboration but, in my view, there is huge potential for Māori to enjoy more educational success as Māori. This is not a “pie in the sky” notion. Significant improvement in Māori education is a realistic objective.

There are many good practices and good results in our schools and educational agencies. I would like to see people throughout the education system encourage collaboration and co-operation, and spread good practices to lift the performance of those schools that are lagging behind.

The Ministry of Education's data shows that, in 2015, \$5.0 billion was spent on property, operational, and teaching costs in primary and secondary schools. This equates to \$7,046 for each student or about \$1.2 billion for all Māori students.

Right now, there are too many Māori education initiatives that are not connected or evaluated for cost-effectiveness. A more coherent set of initiatives would probably result in better outcomes. This would be an immense help to everyone in the school system. I know it is difficult to stop programmes, but I hope someone has the courage to try.

The central concept of the Māori education strategy, Ka Hikitia, is “Māori succeeding as Māori”. Getting to grips with the concept does not need to result in hair-splitting about its meaning. In my view, the absence of a clear definition is not a barrier to getting on with it. Many schools are getting on with applying the intent of the strategy in terms of what makes sense to their whānau and their Māori community. Circulating examples of how schools successfully translate the

strategy into action would really help those who are struggling with this aspect and would help to get more value out of a well-researched and widely supported strategy.

The system does frequently get it right. The data tells that story. The great results achieved by some schools, despite challenging circumstances, shows it is possible to govern, manage, and teach in these schools as effectively as in many (but not all) better-off schools.

As expected since I began my five-year audit programme on Māori education, there have been new developments that are intended to improve the system. The Education Act is being updated, and investment is being made to help schools share good practices, use achievement data, and engage with whānau and communities. I hope people apply the lessons from my reports in conjunction with these new developments, to effect change and make improvements.

There are many groups within the education system (for example, associations for principals and teachers) that are beyond my mandate. Everyone has a role in working together in the interests of the student, and there are growing signs of more collaboration occurring.

During the past five years, many people have contributed time and effort to my five reports. I thank the Māori Advisory and Reference Group for their review of the reports and for their ongoing support and guidance. I thank the many whānau, students, school boards, principals, teachers, and members of teacher or principal associations who met with my staff or responded to surveys. I acknowledge the help of staff from various other education agencies and, in particular, staff from the Ministry of Education and the Education Review Office, and thank them for their insights. And last but not least, I thank all my staff who have done sterling work in the gathering of evidence, and writing these five reports.

I trust that our collective efforts will make a difference to the education of our tamariki.



Lyn Provost  
Controller and Auditor-General

4 October 2016

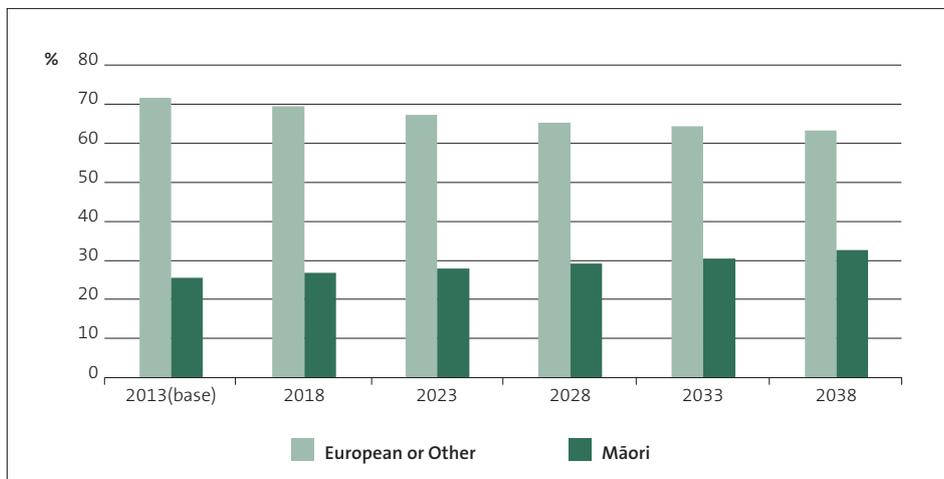
# 1

## Māori educational success is in the interests of all New Zealanders

*Every child in New Zealand deserves to thrive physically, academically, socially, and culturally. Achieving their potential is important for them and for every New Zealander, because our future prosperity depends on an educated workforce. Therefore, it is important that the education system serves all students well.<sup>1</sup>*

- 1.1 Not all school students in New Zealand are achieving their full potential. In particular, Māori students are missing out compared to their peers.
- 1.2 In August 2012, we outlined our intentions to take a thorough look into this significant challenge that New Zealand faces: see *Education for Māori: Context for our proposed audit work until 2017*.
- 1.3 We chose the topic of Māori education because there are still disproportionate numbers of Māori children not reaching their full potential in our education system, even though it is so important for them to succeed.
- 1.4 The number of Māori students is growing. By 2030, the proportion of children who are Māori is likely to increase to about 30%, and this growth is forecast to continue, as shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**  
Population projections for European and Māori aged from 0 to 14 years, 2013-2038



Source: Statistics New Zealand, median ethnic population projections.

Note: The number of Māori children (aged 0-14 years) is projected to remain stable between 2001 and 2016 before increasing by 9000 to 225,000 in 2021. Source: Statistics New Zealand, Future Māori population - summary of latest trends.

- 1.5 Academic results for Māori students are improving. However, without effective action, increasing numbers of Māori children will finish school worse off than their peers. This could adversely affect their quality of life and prevent them from fully contributing to a more equitable and prosperous New Zealand.
- 1.6 In our view, it is important that our education system enables and supports all children, so they achieve their full potential. It is in the interests of all New Zealanders that young Māori thrive and achieve educational success as Māori.

## Our work on Māori education since 2012

- 1.7 When we started our work on Māori education, we were under no illusions that improving the education system to support Māori students to reach their full potential is a big and complex challenge – many people have tried and many, thankfully, are still trying. To understand the challenge and how we could add value, we prepared a set of questions as a framework to guide our selection of audit activity under one over-arching and important question:

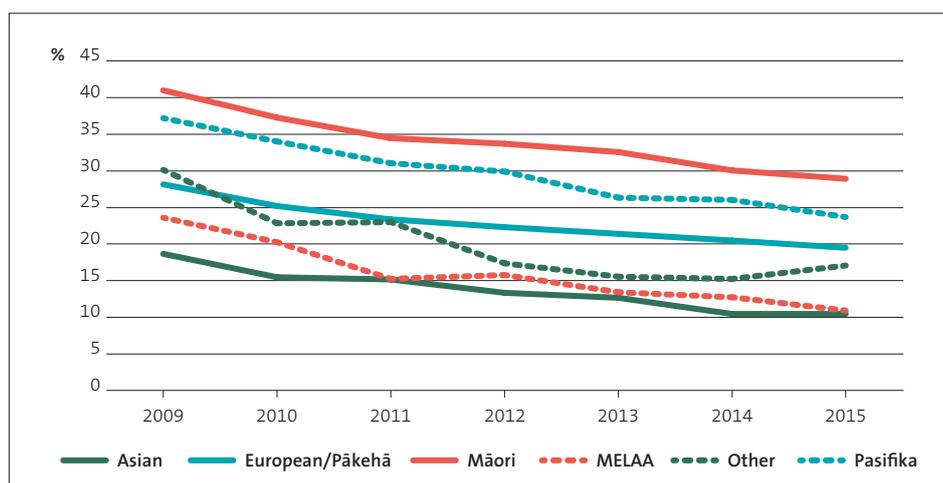
***How well does the education system currently support Māori students to achieve their full potential and contribute to the future prosperity of New Zealand?***

- 1.8 Our work has resulted in five reports, including this final summary report, which brings together what we have learned and what the education system has done to improve Māori student achievement in recent years, as well as what lessons and challenges remain. The other four reports in the series are:
- *Education for Māori: Context for our proposed audit work until 2017* (2012);
  - *Education for Māori: Implementing Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success* (2013);
  - *Education for Māori: Relationships between schools and whānau* (2015); and
  - *Education for Māori: Using information to improve Māori educational success* (2016).
- 1.9 During our work on Māori education, we built enduring relationships and experienced rich and enlightening dialogue with agencies and people within and close to the education system. For the first time, we reached out directly to schools and whānau to get their views about school-whānau relationships, and we drew on the insights and wisdom of our esteemed Māori Advisory and Reference Group.
- 1.10 During this time, we have seen advances in the education system to support Māori student achievement, heard ideas and plans, and seen the commitment of people who want to make a difference to outcomes for Māori students. We made recommendations in two of our reports and have seen some of those already being used to encourage good practices.

## Gains in Māori student achievement since 2008

- 1.11 Since the Government's main education strategy for improving Māori achievement, Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success (Ka Hikitia), was launched in 2008, there have been gains in Māori student achievement. The latest data available shows that:
- The percentages of Māori students achieving at or above the National Standards between 2013 and 2015 have progressed from 68.7% to 68.8% in reading, from 64.6% to 65.4% in mathematics, and from 60.8% to 61.6% in writing.
  - In National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) results, the percentage of Māori school leavers with a Level 2 qualification increased from 45.7% in 2009 to 62.2% in 2015, a gain of 16.5 percentage points in six years. This can be compared to increases for European/Pākehā school leavers with Level 2 NCEA qualifications – up from 72.8% in 2009 to 83% in 2015, and Asian school leavers – up from 82.7% in 2009 to 90.6% in 2015.
  - Since 2009, Māori students displayed the largest improvement (up 7.2 percentage points) in the proportion of students remaining at school until age 17. The gap in retention between Māori and non-Māori has closed by 2.8 percentage points since 2009. Nevertheless, in 2015, the lowest proportion of students remaining at school to age 17 (69.8%) were Māori.
- 1.12 Figure 2 shows the percentage of students by ethnic group who leave school with less than an NCEA Level 1 qualification.

**Figure 2**  
Percentage of students leaving school with less than NCEA Level 1



Source: Ministry of Education, Education Counts.  
Note: MELAA refers to Middle Eastern/Latin American/African.

## Our overall conclusions

- 1.13 In our view, significant improvement in Māori student achievement is a realistic objective.
- 1.14 However, progress on Māori education is still too slow. The disparity between Māori and non-Māori is too great, and too many Māori students are still leaving our school system with few qualifications.
- 1.15 We urge the education sector to:
- do more to enable greater and faster gains in Māori student achievement;
  - share and learn from the better-performing schools;
  - properly implement the Ka Hikitia Māori education strategy in all schools;
  - continue to support the growth of better relationships between schools and whānau;
  - make better use of information to help improve Māori student achievement; and
  - lead a more co-ordinated effort to share good practices and to collect and use information to inform decisions and better support Māori students.
- 1.16 We discuss these matters in more detail in the rest of this report.

# 2

## There is more to do to enable greater and faster gains in Māori student achievement

- 2.1 There have been modest gains since the slow and unsteady introduction of the Government's main education strategy for improving Māori achievement, Ka Hikitia, in 2008.
- 2.2 There have also been positive signs of improvement in individual schools, either self-initiated or arising from the abundance of initiatives available to schools under Vote Education. These initiatives aim to improve student outcomes and include many initiatives targeted at or emphasising Māori students.
- 2.3 The education sector, led by the Ministry of Education, needs to consolidate and multiply these gains throughout the education system.

### Agencies need to continue to work together

- 2.4 As we said in our 2013 report, *Education for Māori: Implementing Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success*:  
*In our view, tangible improvements in the success of Māori students will require concerted and collaborative work to put Ka Hikitia into effect in the day-to-day work of the entire education system.*
- 2.5 Agencies, including the Ministry of Education as the lead agency in education; the Education Review Office; the New Zealand Qualifications Authority; the Tertiary Education Commission; the Education Council (formerly the Teachers Council); Te Kura (the Correspondence School); and Careers New Zealand need to collaborate.
- 2.6 Our work has highlighted that collaboration at a strategic level has improved in some areas. For example, education agencies worked in partnership for the “refresh” of Ka Hikitia in 2013 and on regional relationships.
- 2.7 In our 2013 report about implementing Ka Hikitia, we identified that education agencies were working better than they had before with Police, Health and Housing agencies, district health boards, the Ministry of Social Development, and local authorities. Sharing knowledge and resources has enabled better support for Māori students and promotes complementary work between these agencies.
- 2.8 However, in our 2016 report *Education for Māori: Using information to improve Māori educational success*, we noted that the Ministry of Education, the Education Review Office, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority, and Careers New Zealand have their own individual strategic commitments to improve Māori student achievement. We could not find a connected strategy or plan about how these agencies would share and use information. In our view, this means that the education sector is not using information as effectively as it could to support decision-making.

- 2.9 In our 2013 report about implementing Ka Hikitia, we identified that the Ministry of Education could improve the way its people work together (for example, taking steps to strengthen management and accountability). Similar issues were noted in the Ministry's 2011 Performance Improvement Framework (PIF) report. In our view, the Ministry needs to continue making improvements, such as those noted in our 2013 report and in the report from a PIF follow-up review, also published in 2013. For example, producing a joined-up and strategic approach that transforms how information is collected, used, and shared within the Ministry; becoming more data-driven; and working out where to place resources to have the biggest impact on outcomes.<sup>2</sup>

### Action on our recommendations

- 2.10 We made recommendations in two of our reports – about implementing Ka Hikitia and using information to improve Māori educational success. The full recommendations are listed in the Appendix to this report.
- 2.11 In our 2013 report about implementing Ka Hikitia, we said that we expected to see progress on each recommendation by 2015. This included recommendations for the Ministry of Education to ensure that the lessons learned from the initial rollout of Ka Hikitia were used to improve implementation of a “refresh” of the strategy.
- 2.12 We have not done formal follow-up audit work on how effectively the Ministry of Education has acted on our recommendations. However, we have checked with the Ministry about its progress and note that it has identified a wide range of responses to each of our recommendations. Responses include initiatives such as the At Risk of Not Achieving initiative, the Ka Hikitia Express to Success Hubs, and the Māori and Pasifika Operations Board. Many of the responses are recent, and either the Ministry is still working through implementation or, for those that are in place, it is too early to see results.
- 2.13 We will be following up on how the Ministry of Education and other agencies have responded to all recommendations from our body of audit work on Māori education at an appropriate time.

### Transformation of the education system

- 2.14 As we prepare to publish this report, there is public discussion about the transformation of education in New Zealand. We hope that, as part of this transformation, the education sector can use the reflections and challenges outlined in this report to improve the outcomes for Māori students.

<sup>2</sup> Controller and Auditor-General (June 2016), *Education for Māori: Using information to improve Māori educational success*, page 51, and State Services Commission, the Treasury, and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (May 2013), *Performance Improvement Framework: Follow-up Review: Ministry of Education*, page 4.

- 2.15 In our view, to better implement Ka Hikitia, the education sector should give more priority to promoting “success as Māori” (see paragraphs 3.5-3.9 and 6.26-6.29). It should also include better incentives for schools to work together and share practices that help Māori students to succeed.
- 2.16 The creation of Communities of Learning is one of the new initiatives intended to encourage schools to work together, develop shared goals, pool resources, and share good practices. We have not audited this initiative, and it is too soon to see any results. It is important that any new work takes on board the lessons from the past, including addressing issues such as poor communication with schools, as happened with the implementation of Ka Hikitia.
- 2.17 Other initiatives that have started since we began our audit work on Māori education include:
- The Education Review Office’s revised School Evaluation Indicators, which contain an evidence-based set of conditions for what schools need to do to help their Māori students succeed as Māori. The evaluation approach uses the schools’ Public Achievement Information, as published by the Ministry of Education, and other school-based data, in relation to the achievement of Māori students.
  - The Student Information Sharing Initiative is intended to improve information sharing by schools.

# Schools prove it can be done – great opportunity for all schools to improve Māori educational success

# 3

- 3.1 Our analysis of National Standards and NCEA data for Māori students shows that some schools are able to achieve much better results in similar circumstances. This presents a significant learning opportunity to achieve better overall results for Māori students.

## **Māori students are likely to attend schools with challenging environments and settings**

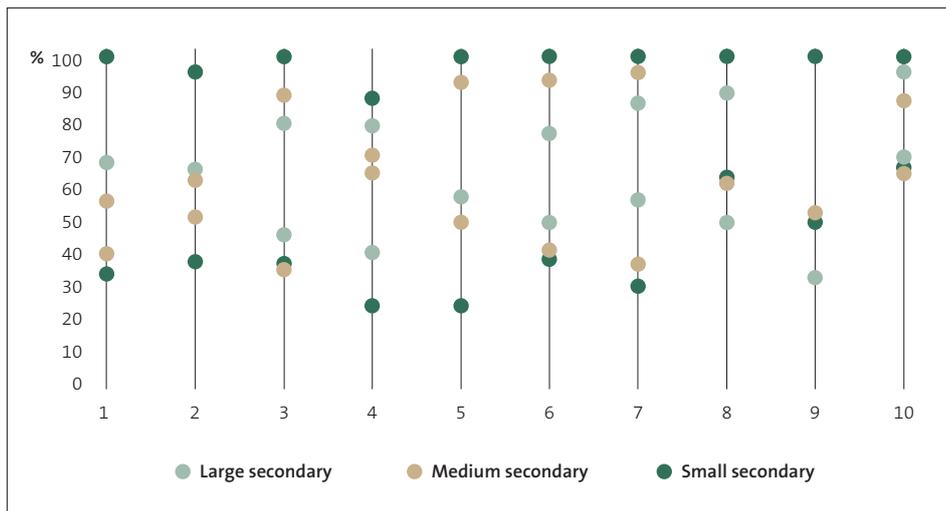
- 3.2 The school a student attends can have an effect on their achievement. The distribution of Māori students throughout the school system presents challenges to raising achievement. This is because, typically, many Māori students:
- attend schools where they form a small proportion of the total roll, which can make giving attention to Māori students and their whānau, and raising these students' achievements more of a challenge;
  - attend small schools that are more likely to have fewer overall resources and where responsibility is placed on fewer teaching staff to achieve improved results; and
  - attend low-decile schools that are more likely to have greater challenges and fewer community resources.

## **Opportunity for schools to learn from “similar” but better-performing schools**

- 3.3 Figures 3 and 4 show that Māori students in schools with roughly similar<sup>3</sup> settings and communities can achieve very different academic results. For example, in Figure 3, the achievement rate for the best-performing decile 1 small secondary school is almost three times better than the poorest-performing decile 1 small secondary school. This shows that some schools are able to achieve more in similar circumstances. Poorer-performing schools could learn from “similar” but better-performing schools.
- 3.4 In our view, addressing this variation in educational success is an opportunity to improve achievement results for all Māori students, who should all have the same opportunities to succeed, regardless of the school they attend.

<sup>3</sup> We have statistically controlled for decile, size of school, and type of school, so that the resulting groups can be referred to as similar. There are many other aspects other than decile, size of school roll, and school type that could also be used to describe groups of schools as similar.

**Figure 3**  
**Range of highest to lowest results for NCEA Level 2 for Māori students, by school size and decile, 2014**

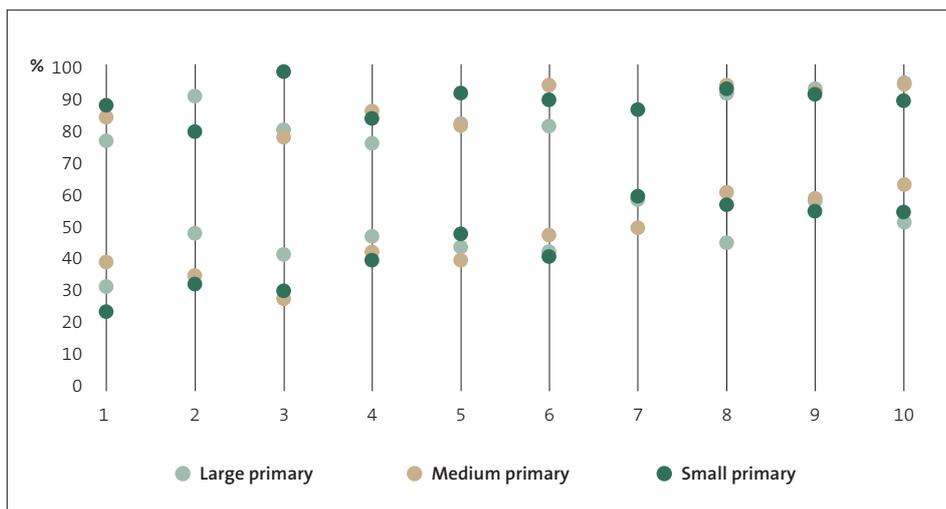


Source: Our analysis of the Ministry of Education’s NCEA data.

Note 1: This excludes schools with fewer than 30 Māori students.

Note 2: In some instances, there was only one school of a particular type in our analysis. For example, there is only one large decile 1 secondary school in Figure 3. In those instances, there is only one dot, representing both highest and lowest.

**Figure 4**  
**Range of highest and lowest results for National Standards (average of reading, writing, and mathematics) for Māori students, by school size and decile, 2014**



Source: Our analysis of the Ministry of Education’s National Standards data.

Note 1: This excludes schools with fewer than 30 Māori students.

## Educational success as Māori is more than academic achievement

*... success (for Māori) is not derived from simply teaching students the content of a curriculum or satisfying the requirements of a national assessment unit. We saw success as “mana-tangata” or “person-making” ...<sup>4</sup>*

- 3.5 New Zealand needs educated, technically capable, and civic-minded citizens. It is important for our society and future prosperity that our citizens are confident, socially minded, and grounded in their language, culture, and identity.
- 3.6 Measuring “success as Māori” is an important element of Ka Hikitia and for creating future prosperity. However, it is not easy to measure, and we saw schools struggling to apply the strategy.
- 3.7 It is important to recognise that Māori student voices are an important source of information about what helps them to succeed. At a system level, we are aware of past and current research between the Ministry of Education and the New Zealand Council for Educational Research to include student voices as part of a study of student well-being. At an individual school level, we noted in our 2016 report about using information to improve Māori educational success that better-performing schools use student feedback to inform planning and assess how the school is meeting the students’ needs.
- 3.8 For example, a kura we visited in the Waikato region pays special attention to its relationships with students, whānau, and the community. This provides those groups with a strong voice in the direction of the school, and the school with a range of information that contributes to the school’s good results for Māori students. As the Education Review Office noted in its 2013 report about this school:
- There is a well-established tripartite partnership between students, kaimahi<sup>5</sup> and whānau who work effectively together to ensure that individual student needs and passions are well catered for. Partnerships with the wider community are strong. These contribute to the development of student’s learning pathways. Students have work experience related to their chosen career pathway and are mentored with experts in their chosen field ...*
- 3.9 Many of the Māori students we met knew what good teaching meant for them and what they needed. They had good knowledge about their own progress and how their teachers and their families could and should support them. The students we talked to were optimistic about the future and were proud to be Māori. Almost all believed that Māori cultural needs were valued in their school as an important part of their learning.

4 Controller and Auditor-General (2013), *Education for Māori: Implementing Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success*, page 3.

5 Kaimahi means staff.

# 4

## Every school needs to implement Ka Hikitia

- 4.1 Every school needs to implement Ka Hikitia to lift Māori student participation, engagement, and achievement.
- 4.2 In our view, and the view of the Auditor General's Māori Advisory and Reference Group, Ka Hikitia is a sound strategy. It is a well-researched and well-consulted document that has the backing of Māori.
- 4.3 The overall goal of the Ka Hikitia strategy is to enable Māori to enjoy and achieve educational success as Māori. The Ministry of Education has described this as being when "Māori students are succeeding in our education system and achieving equitable results while maintaining and enhancing their identity, language, and culture as Māori".
- 4.4 There were some implementation problems with Ka Hikitia, and there has been only modest improvement overall in Māori students' academic results since Ka Hikitia was launched. Nevertheless, the strategy has been helping to create the conditions for improved Māori student success.
- 4.5 The Ministry's information shows that the strategy document is still being distributed to people throughout the education sector. Of some concern to us was that we did not hear many references to Ka Hikitia during our audit work for our 2016 report about using information to improve Māori educational success.
- 4.6 To focus long-term investment and effort, Ka Hikitia needs to be used more effectively to shape thinking in schools and throughout the system.
- 4.7 Education agencies and schools need to implement Ka Hikitia and use the flexible and strategic focus it offers to maintain a sustainable and long-term approach to raising Māori educational achievement.
- 4.8 We also expect schools with lower rates of Māori student achievement to examine, and if necessary, improve their implementation of Ka Hikitia. These poorer-performing schools could learn how to better implement Ka Hikitia from similar but better-performing schools. Better-performing schools should also continue to review and improve their Māori students' achievement.

## Ka Hikitia has helped schools to focus on improving Māori student outcomes and has provided lessons from its implementation

*It is clear that Ka Hikitia has contributed to schools sharpening their focus on improving outcomes for their Māori students. The schools my staff visited were carrying out a range of activities and programmes to lift Māori participation, engagement, and achievement using Ka Hikitia and other related tools and materials.<sup>6</sup>*

- 4.9 The implementation of Ka Hikitia was originally flawed by a slow and unsteady introduction by the Ministry of Education. As a result, the introduction of Ka Hikitia was not as effective as it could have been, and it could have had more of an effect in raising Māori educational achievement. This was a missed opportunity.
- 4.10 Ka Hikitia was not effectively communicated to schools. The effort to engage schools did not match the aspirations of Ka Hikitia or take into account how many schools there are. This resulted in a mixed response from schools, with varying degrees of action to put Ka Hikitia into effect.
- 4.11 We heard from a senior staff member of the Ministry of Education that the implementation of Ka Hikitia was faulty because it relied too much on goodwill and devolved responsibility. However, the Ministry's communications to other education agencies brought a positive response, with each agency identifying how it intended to contribute to Ka Hikitia.
- 4.12 Despite clear messages given within the Ministry when Ka Hikitia was its highest priority, having several initiatives and actions happening at the same time contributed to Ka Hikitia being put into effect slowly. For some schools, it became lost in the complexity of many other strategies and actions.
- 4.13 In 2013, some Ministry of Education staff told us: "There are too many initiatives and we need to pull back and think about what's best."

## Implementation could be more effective with fewer and better-connected initiatives

- 4.14 The complexity at a system level also flows into schools. Schools decide how initiatives work together and how to prioritise them. This gives schools flexibility to meet different community and school management needs. However, it sets up a daunting challenge for schools that might not have the capability or resources to implement, integrate, monitor, and report on the outcomes of several different initiatives.

- 4.15 We documented many of these initiatives in our 2016 report on using information to improve Māori educational success. In our view, the range of initiatives creates implementation problems and leads to confusion about how the different initiatives fit together. They are also potentially a waste of resources.
- 4.16 Efforts to improve Māori student achievement will benefit from a smaller and better-integrated range of initiatives and from initiatives that are shown to be effective for a range of outcomes. This would mean less internal competition for resources and attention, leading to simpler and less expensive implementation, support, and monitoring of initiatives that work together.

## Schools need to engage with whānau and other schools better

- 5.1 Through our audit work on Māori education, we have seen a high correlation between better Māori student achievement and schools having effective partnerships with whānau and other schools. Effective partnerships require strong relationships between schools and whānau, and collaborative working between schools.
- 5.2 For example, a school we visited in the Wairarapa effectively addressed issues with low student achievement, poor student behaviour, and falling rolls. Led by its principal, the improvements were in part a result of the quality of the relationship the school built with whānau and the community. This included the school clearly and consistently communicating with students and whānau. A noticeable benefit of this improved relationship and focus has been the dramatic improvement in NCEA results at the school.

### **Schools need to give ongoing attention to building and maintaining strong relationships with whānau**

- 5.3 A main finding in our 2015 report about relationships between schools and whānau was a risk that some schools do not focus enough on improving their relationships with whānau, because they think they have better relationships with whānau than whānau think they do. This risk appears greater for high-decile schools and schools with a low proportion of Māori students.
- 5.4 In our view, schools should periodically check whether their opinion of the quality of the relationship matches families' opinions. This will help show schools where they are doing well and where they can improve.
- 5.5 We saw some examples of strong engagement between schools and their communities. These examples include introducing whānau-teacher-student conferences to help the school community work together for the students' success. Some schools we visited stressed the importance of outreach to their Māori whānau in different ways.
- 5.6 It is important that schools listen to the views of their community and students to help shape Māori students' learning. This feedback should inform successful practices and should remain a focus.
- 5.7 Many of the schools we visited that were achieving better results for Māori students had a strong relationship between the school, students, and the community. Some of these schools used student and whānau surveys to evaluate their teaching practices and were working hard to understand their students and the wider community.

- 5.8 Some small schools with small numbers of Māori students might struggle to form relationships with whānau because of resourcing issues, or because there are only a few whānau who are part of the school community. In these circumstances, building effective relationships still needs to be a priority. Schools or clusters of schools need to continue to seek opportunities to work directly with whānau and iwi. Building relationships with whānau, iwi, and hapu who have the expertise in identity, language, and culture can help more Māori students to “succeed as Māori”.

### **More schools need to work collaboratively**

- 5.9 Schools often focus on their own activities, rather than what they can learn from each other. However, despite this, we found examples of schools collaborating to improve outcomes for their Māori students. These include:
- holding joint Matariki festivals;
  - visiting other schools to view practices;
  - sharing ideas at school cluster hui and conferences; and
  - collaborating in Māori student mentor programmes with the secondary school, primary school, or early childhood education centre that their students came from or went to.
- 5.10 It is clearly important that more schools collaborate and share good practices with each other as a useful and supportive way of improving outcomes and achievement of Māori students.

# Information needs to be used better

6.1 An effective education sector learns from its performance and uses information to make changes. Our work has shown that schools and the Ministry of Education can more effectively support Māori student achievement and target resources at what works by using information better.

## Schools need to be more consistent in their use of information

6.2 Our analysis raised questions about whether support for using information is getting to where it is needed.

6.3 Teachers are collecting information, but many are not effectively using performance information to improve student achievement. Our work indicated that the major contributors to schools not effectively using information are:

- variability in leadership and purpose in schools; and
- lack of capability and capacity in schools to effectively use information to measure performance.

6.4 In our view, there is significant potential for improvement in the achievement of Māori students through more consistent practices by schools.

6.5 Common areas for improvement include using appropriate separate and aggregated data about Māori students, identifying trends or patterns, setting targets, and, importantly, teachers using performance information effectively to improve their teaching.

6.6 The variety of schools' student management systems do not always support schools to collect, use, and share information. Student management systems that are able to interact with one another will help to prevent the manual transfer of information about transferring students, many of whom are Māori. Also, student management systems that are capable of collecting softer<sup>7</sup> information could be used in schools and for national purposes.

6.7 The Ministry of Education is aware of these issues and has set up a special project to improve student management systems. Improvement is not only about having a computer-based process; it is also important to understand how information is used in schools.

<sup>7</sup> Softer information can be, for example, information about a student's goals, aspirations, family circumstances, and extracurricular activities.

## **Boards of trustees need to show strong leadership and use information effectively**

- 6.8 Boards of trustees need to have a clear understanding about Māori interests. They need to show effective leadership by having goals and objectives for Māori student achievement in school charters.
- 6.9 These goals and objectives are important for all schools. To understand what progress a school is making towards its goals and objectives, clear performance information must be available to the boards of trustees.

## **The Ministry of Education needs to promote sharing of good practices between schools**

- 6.10 There are publications, including many from the Education Review Office, about school performance and effective practices that allow schools to learn how to collect and use information, and to use the good practices that are improving outcomes for Māori students. However, more opportunities are needed to identify and share good practices in the education sector.
- 6.11 Our analysis from our 2016 report on using information to improve Māori educational success showed that, at times, achievement varies significantly between similar schools in similar circumstances.
- 6.12 Schools have a lot to gain from learning how other schools collect and use information. From our audit work, we identified some important areas where schools could focus their learning on:
- leadership in focusing on better outcomes for Māori students;
  - creating a culture of inquiry and ways to effectively challenge current practices;
  - building capacity and capability to collect and use information; and
  - building strong and positive relationships with whānau and the wider community.
- 6.13 We saw examples where schools supported their Māori students well. An effective way to improve outcomes for all Māori students is to harness those good practices and share them between schools. To share good practices and to re-use hard-earned lessons, the Ministry of Education and other agencies need to encourage and build further capability in schools.
- 6.14 For example, a college we visited in West Auckland took part in an initiative that aimed to improve educational outcomes for students who are currently not meeting educational criteria for entry into degree-level study. The initiative included these strategies:
- academic counselling or coaching of students;

- using data to set academic targets, and track and monitor student learning and academic progress; and
  - enhancing family/whānau engagement.
- 6.15 The school reported that, although it used data to challenge and change current teaching practices, it was still difficult to shift some entrenched views about, for example, the reasons for student truancy. However, staff reported that involvement in the initiative and using data and analysis was contributing to improved results for Māori students.
- 6.16 A primary school we visited in north Christchurch was collaborating with other schools to build better relationships with whānau and to share information. The school reported stronger relationships with whānau and huge interest in Māori studies and kapa haka throughout the school.
- 6.17 One commentator said when referring to the findings from our 2016 report on using information to improve Māori educational achievement:
- There are fairly easy steps the Ministry could make that would help schools to tell where they are succeeding and where they are failing relative to comparable peers, rather than as compared to pass-rate benchmarks that are far too easy for some and impossible for others.*
- 6.18 The Ministry of Education has an important role in helping schools to share good practices. The Ministry's overall view of the school system means it can provide suggestions about what works in similar schools.
- 6.19 However, our work indicates that more needs to be done between and within schools so that schools can lift their performance to the best levels achieved by other similar schools. If successful, the benefits to Māori students throughout schools could be significant.

## The Ministry of Education needs to evaluate and target initiatives more effectively

- 6.20 The Ministry of Education could not accurately identify the funding for all programmes focused on Māori students. In our 2016 report on using information to improve Māori educational success, we included a list of the many programmes and initiatives that support student achievement, including Māori student achievement.
- 6.21 A Ministry of Education stocktake identified that evaluation information on the effectiveness of programmes is scarce. Of the relevant programmes, only three had evaluation information available. Two recent reports<sup>8</sup> have noted

<sup>8</sup> Udahemuka, M (2016), *Signal Loss. What we know about school performance. The New Zealand Initiative*, page 6, and Ministry of Education (2015), *Ka Hikitia: A demonstration report*, page 15.

similar concerns to ours that, throughout the education sector, there is a lack of systematic evaluation or the use of too many initiatives that are not linked in a coherent way.

- 6.22 In our view, because it uses public money to fund programmes and initiatives, the Ministry of Education needs to work out how much these activities cost, whether they are effective, and whether they add any value overall and to Māori students in particular. Understanding cost and effectiveness will enable the education sector to make more informed decisions about future investment and how this can be targeted to have the greatest effect.
- 6.23 We noted in a 2011 report that many public entities have difficulty measuring cost-effectiveness.<sup>9</sup>
- 6.24 Ministry of Education officials explained to us that it was difficult to “unbundle” funding to identify how much is associated with Māori students.
- 6.25 We still expect the Ministry of Education to improve its ability to monitor the effectiveness and efficiency of its programmes and initiatives that are designed to improve the achievement of Māori students.

### **The education sector needs to improve its understanding about educational success as Māori**

- 6.26 There is no single definition of what achieving educational success as Māori means. However, some schools were successfully collecting and using information based on what they understood Māori succeeding as Māori means.
- 6.27 For example, one teacher said that it means “what Māori people value”. The school where this teacher works used a wide range of indicators to encourage success as Māori. This included:
- options programmes (learning Te Reo and about Māoritanga);
  - marae stays;
  - pōwhiri at the beginning of term, led by a kaumatua;
  - two tiers of kapa haka;
  - assessing confidence speaking at a pōwhiri as an example of achieving success as Māori;
  - the quality of feedback from whānau about charter consultations; and
  - high attendance by Māori whānau and students at student-involved conferences.
- 6.28 Iwi are also taking a role to improve schools’ understanding about the meaning of educational success as Māori. An iwi in Manawatu works with eight primary

schools to provide consistent advice and support from a Māori perspective. The facilitator of the Manawatu collaboration contacted us after reading our reports, to say how they would use our advice:

*The specific focus now is to produce, for each individual school, a culturally responsive learning framework to guide school wide practice to meet the learning needs of Māori learners and the needs of their whānau, hapū and iwi. This has come about from the intentions and goodwill of schools but they don't have any guidance, no markers or reference points to help them understand. So we have come up with a common framework. I learned that the makeup of every school is not the same. They may have the same goals, the same curriculum, but what was different is the learning needs of the children and the aspirations of whānau, when it comes to education and well-being.*

- 6.29 Information about educational success as Māori is varied and is not aggregated throughout the education sector or used to evaluate overall success. This is a significant gap in information that the education sector will need to address. The guidance we saw does not clearly and consistently set out what is required, and can be improved.

# 7

## Sharing good practices

7.1 In Figure 5, we provide examples of good practices shared with us during our audit work on Māori education. We also describe examples of capability that enable schools to achieve better results for their Māori students. We have grouped these examples in line with the three broad topics of each of our reports but many of the practices are related. We hope that sharing these examples is helpful and encourages more sharing of everyone’s best efforts.

**Figure 5**  
**Good practices and capability checklist**

<b>Use of information</b>
<b>Good practices we saw ...</b>
Experienced principals leading their schools to value, collect, use, and improve information that helps lift Māori student achievement.
Active questioning of achievement data by the school’s board of trustees.
Teachers as a group examining achievement data because it encourages robust discussion of the issues.
Acknowledgement in a school’s strategic documents of the importance of using information to improve education outcomes.
<b>You might like to check that you have in place ...</b>
A clear inquiry cycle focused on improvement.
A critical mass of teachers able to investigate and comprehend achievement data.
Information provided to whānau about the progress and achievement of Māori students in a school.
Coherent professional planning and mentoring support for staff to use the “teaching as inquiry” approach.
Teachers who are willing and have the disposition to question information about their teaching.
Information technology that makes it easy to integrate and share multiple information sources.
The public display of school performance information.
A student management system that:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• provides security and integrity of information;</li><li>• allows longitudinal analysis of student performance; and</li><li>• allows management of different pieces of assessment.</li></ul>

<b>Building relationships</b>
<b>Good practices we saw ...</b>
School leaders who value Māori and raising Māori achievement.
Collaboration with whānau and iwi.
Open and honest communication.
A flexible approach to relationship building.
Policies on building relationships with whānau.
Visiting whānau at home.
Telephoning whānau with reports of good progress.
Being present at school sports to connect with whānau in a more informal context than the “parent-teacher” interview.
At the beginning or the end of the school day, being at the school gate to chat with whānau.
<b>You might like to check that you have in place ...</b>
Holistic academic counselling for Māori students.
Ways to collaborate and share resources and information with other schools. Examples include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• holding joint Matariki festivals;</li> <li>• visiting other schools to view practices;</li> <li>• sharing ideas at school cluster hui and conferences; and</li> <li>• running Māori student mentor programmes with the secondary school, primary school, or early childhood education centre that students came from or went to.</li> </ul>
<b>Supporting Ka Hikitia</b>
<b>Good practices we saw ...</b>
Co-ordination between agencies to use their mandate and focus to provide co-ordinated support for Ka Hikitia.
School leaders making strong efforts to lead their managers and staff to identify improvements that would benefit their Māori students.
<b>You might like to check that you have in place ...</b>
A joint effort between principal, senior staff, chairperson of the board of trustees, and Māori parent representatives to drive a focus on Māori students and their achievement.
Boards that have a working knowledge of the intent and goals of Ka Hikitia and an understanding of how well their school is progressing to improve Māori student achievement.

# Appendix

## Our previous recommendations on Māori education

### Recommendations from *Education for Māori: Implementing Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success* (2013)

In our view, tangible improvements in the success of Māori students will require concerted and collaborative work to put Ka Hikitia into effect in the day-to-day work of the entire education system.

The Ministry of Education, as the lead agency in education, needs to take care not to rush or under-resource the push for Ka Hikitia. It is particularly important that the next “refreshed” phase of Ka Hikitia avoids repeating the mistakes made earlier.

Some of our recommendations are specifically for the **Ministry of Education**. Some are for the **education agencies** referred to in this report (the Ministry of Education, the Education Review Office, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority, the Tertiary Education Commission, and the Teachers Council [now the Education Council]) and also Te Kura (the Correspondence School) and Careers New Zealand. Others are for **all public entities involved in education**, including schools.

We would expect to see progress on each recommendation by 2015, in the middle of our five-year audit programme.

### Our recommendations for the Ministry of Education

1. We recommend that the Ministry of Education apply what it learned from the introduction of Ka Hikitia to ensure that the next phase of implementation is effective, including:
  - thoughtful planning and engagement with those expected to deliver the next phase of Ka Hikitia, with adequate resourcing;
  - clear leadership and management responsibilities for embedding Ka Hikitia into day-to-day business in the Ministry and throughout education agencies; and
  - improved accountability and reporting mechanisms.
2. We recommend that the Ministry of Education identify and target resources to support the activities that have been the most effective in putting Ka Hikitia into effect.

### **Our recommendations for education agencies**

3. We recommend that all education agencies better co-ordinate efforts to support improvements in schools, including:
  - building understanding of, commitment to, and action on the aims of Ka Hikitia in schools; and
  - schools setting up and sharing teaching practices that are effective in improving Māori students' educational success.
4. We recommend that:
  - the New Zealand Teachers Council use its approval mechanisms for initial teacher education qualifications and programmes and the Tertiary Education Commission use its purchasing of these qualifications and programmes to ensure that student teachers and newly qualified teachers have the right skills to engage effectively with Māori students; and
  - the New Zealand Teachers Council use its influence and approval mechanisms to ensure that monitoring and appraisal processes for teacher registration lead to improved teaching practices and engagement with Māori students and their whānau.

### **Our recommendation for all public entities involved in education**

5. We recommend that all public entities involved in the delivery of education engage and consult Māori students, in ways that are respectful and safe for the students, to ensure that the experiences and opinions of Māori students contribute to improving the education they receive.

### **Recommendations from *Education for Māori: Using information to improve Māori educational success (2016)***

1. We recommend that the Ministry of Education work with schools to establish a framework for collecting cultural information (for example, a student's ties with their iwi) and other information (for example, a student's goals and aspirations) about Māori enjoying educational success as Māori.
2. We recommend that the Ministry of Education help those schools that do not have enough understanding about what Māori enjoying educational success as Māori means, by providing better guidance and information that they can use to measure Māori enjoying educational success as Māori.

3. We recommend that the Ministry of Education use currently available information to investigate the variation in Māori educational achievement of similar schools in similar circumstances and help the lower-performing schools to do better.
4. We recommend that the Ministry of Education work with education agencies and schools to ensure that there is effective leadership and common understanding of the purpose and use of information to improve outcomes for Māori students. This includes:
  - ensuring that school charters have targets for Māori achievement, where appropriate;
  - having a planned approach to improve the quality and use of information;
  - taking stock of information the education sector has and how it is used; and
  - encouraging the education sector to work together to ensure that staff have the capability to use information effectively.
5. We recommend that the Ministry of Education improve practices to collect, analyse, use, and share information about Māori educational achievement. Priority should be given to:
  - sharing effective collection and analysis practices throughout the education system to improve Māori student achievement;
  - sharing practices so that schools use information and enquiry effectively to improve Māori student achievement;
  - improving the way schools collect student ethnicity data, which should include updating the Ministry of Education's ethnicity data collection guidance and examples; and
  - improving the availability of important and relevant cost information to inform decisions about investing in initiatives to improve Māori student achievement.

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