

Te Ara Hōu: Māori Achievement Collaboratives (MACs)

Evaluation Snapshot

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This snapshot presents an overview of the findings from an evaluation of the Te Ara Hōu: Māori Achievement Collaboratives (MACs) initiative. It considers the impact of MACs on the attitudes, and consequent changes in practice, of participating principals. This snapshot also examines the Māori Student Achievement shifts in the original 47 participating schools from 2013-2015.

MACs Background

MACs are committed to the goal of Māori educational success as Māori, as defined by Ka Hikitia - Accelerating Success 2013-2017 (Ministry of Education, 2013). MACs' vision of 'A Change in the Hearts and Minds of Principals' reflects an intention to foster collaboration and personal and professional growth, leading to changes in individual school leadership practices aimed at Māori success. MACs have worked to create a critical mass of collective leadership so that positive change is sustainable and enduring and impacts on all members of a school community, staff, students, parents and whānau.

In 2013 MACs formally began as a result of 47 principals across the nation courageously putting their hands up to participate. Six regional clusters were established with fulltime principals appointed as facilitators. These principals were targeted as a result of both their exceptional leadership and their passion, commitment and success in Māori education in 'mainstream' schools. As such, their credibility and mana amongst the profession was imperative to the overall uptake of the initiative. The clusters were located in Te Tai Tokerau, Tāmaki Makaurau, Waikato, Rotorua/Taupo/Tokoroa, Taranaki and Ōtautahi. While the initial contract for the MACs catered for 6 regions and 47 school leader participants, demand for the programme has increased exponentially over 2016/2017. In 2016, with support from the Ministry of Education, Te Pītau Mātauranga, a fulltime National Co-ordinator was appointed. In April 2017 MACs caters for 8 regions (including Ōtepoti and Te Matau-a-Māui) and 157 principals inclusive of 3 preschools. The New Zealand Principal's Federation Executive are now also operating as a MAC cluster with facilitation provided by Te Pītau Mātauranga. Total students involved increased from 16,286 in 2013 to 41,681 in April 2017. The number of Māori students has grown from 6,111 in 2013 to 12,119 (29%) in April 2017. Of the 12,119 Māori students 4,628 (38%) are identified as having learning support needs.

MACs Rationale and Theory of Change

Principals around Aotearoa have voluntarily engaged in MACs to positively influence and impact their personal and professional learning. They work collaboratively to identify, develop, and implement effective school leadership practices that promote and sustain positive Māori student achievement and success as Māori. The ultimate goal of MACs is to establish a critical mass of effective school leaders and leadership practices which challenge status quo strategies that have resulted in inequitable educational outcomes for Māori. These inequitable outcomes are a result of educational challenges such as racism, the competitive nature of self-managing schools; an absence of mātauranga Māori in the New Zealand curriculum; a lack of cultural responsive pedagogy; deficit theorising about Māori students and their whānau; poor teacher-student and school-whānau/iwi/hapū relationships, and most importantly a failure to maximise Māori student cultural capital as a foundation for their learning.

MACs' theory of change has focused primarily on the principal's role in initiating systemic change at the school level to counter historical systems of practice that intentionally or unintentionally result in educational disparities for Māori. Paradies (2006) has previously highlighted the unconscious nature of oppression as systemic in society and unwittingly and unconsciously (re) produced by many people "who have no racist intentions whatsoever..." (p.147). MACs emphasizes the idea that the unfortunate repercussions of racism in schools won't change unless the principal does.

MACs believe that effective school leaders must look to a future where their schools benefit from indigenous knowledge-forming and culturally sustaining pedagogies that value and integrate indigenous knowledge and worldviews. MACs established the following set of goals for its Māori and non-Māori mainstream school principals:

- to provide an education that enhances what it means to be Māori
- to ensure Māori students have access to te ao Māori - access to language, culture, marae, tikanga, and resources
- to guarantee the absolute right for an education that fits Māori learners
- to promote self-learning, strong secure relationships, cultural identity, and whānau-centred practice that is valued as much as academic achievement

Furthermore, it is a shared understanding among the MACs principals that they are operating according to the bicultural Treaty of Waitangi within mainstream schools, and that when schools address barriers to student achievement for Māori students, all students benefit, including Pasifika, students with special needs, and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

To effect MACs vision, principal efficacy and collective action, each regional cluster facilitator organises "engine room" hui *at least* once per school term to enable participating school leaders to identify areas of growth and need. Regional cluster meetings focus on sharing data-driven innovative practices, using disaggregated achievement data to track and monitor Māori student achievement and inform professional development, and sharing "what works" in terms of transformative changes to leader pedagogy, whānau engagement and curriculum. Their meetings are focused on capturing the essence of transformative school practice for Maori student success. Te Pītau Mātauranga works closely with the MACs board, regional cluster facilitators, and now interested Kāhui Ako or CoLs, to actively grow and promote an organisational culture which reflects the values and service philosophy of MACs. Like Kāhui Ako, MACs

clusters work together to help learners achieve their full potential. However, unlike Kāhui Ako, MACs are unapologetically Māori-centric, prioritising the mana of the child, whānau and the wider community and ensuring that courageous principals spearhead school-wide change for Maori success.

Data informing this evaluation

The following questions guided the evaluation into MACS principals' leadership actions to promote Māori success as Māori in mainstream school contexts.

- What does it take in order to be an effective educational leader to improve Māori achievement outcomes?
- What changed in your practice to positively impact student achievement?
- How does your leadership practice positively impact Māori students language, culture and identity?
- What pedagogical changes have occurred in your school that have shifted teacher attitudes and positively impacted Māori student success?
- How has your collaborative involvement within your MACS regional cluster impacted your leadership practice?

To inform this evaluation I have utilised and analysed data that was collected at five out of the six regional clusters, two annual wānanga (Kia Aroha College, Auckland in May, 2014; and Ōwae Marae, Taranaki in May, 2015), 13 individual and seven focus-group interviews, MACS report documents, and three qualitative surveys. One of these surveys centred on principals' leadership practices for improving Māori success [N=45], and the second focused on the outcomes of their collaborative work within regional cluster hui [N=87] and the third focussed on the impact of the MACs programme on principals leadership practices and Maori student achievement rates (N = 47). Each survey yielded a 75-100 percent principal response rate. Qualitative data analysis was then used to identify key themes aligned to the evaluation questions. All instruments (surveys, interview questions), data (survey results, transcripts), and findings were developed or discussed with MACS' core group of cluster facilitators and/or Te Pītau Mātauranga to ensure accuracy and validity.

MACs impact on the attitudes and consequent changes in practice of school leaders

There are a number of leadership actions that MACs principals are currently engaged in that create optimal school learning environments for fostering Māori success as Māori.

→ Collective leadership

MACs principals position themselves on the front line in leading schools in the process of change, walking alongside their staff and leading from the front to tautoko staff to be courageous in prioritising Māori student needs. Many MACs principals lead by example by deliberately role modelling the learning of te reo and tikanga (and leading the school in waiata, karakia, karanga, whaikōrero) throughout their daily interactions with teachers, students, and whānau. One principal stated that “MACs is about stepping up personally and getting out of my comfort zone” to effect positive change. For all MACs principals, there has

been a basic shared understanding that school leadership involves the provision whakahihi pai – pride and confident leadership of others, *and* hūmarie – having the humility to know when it is you who should be led by Māori whānau, hapū and iwi. For example, a number of the MACs principals stated that, as a result of their participation in MACs, their board of trustees had re-visioned their school charters and annual targets to be more Māori student-centric, and many teachers had adapted their appraisal goals, to better reflect the MACs objectives. According to what we have learned thus far, MACs school leadership actions:

- improve students' learning experiences - "Students are taking more ownership of their learning journey as they monitor their levels of expectations and share their journey with peers, staff, and whānau"
- represent and advocate for the voices of those within and beyond the borders of the school (e.g., whānau, hapū, iwi, kaumātua, and community members) - "Ensuring parents and whānau are listened to and action is taken in relation to what is heard"
- serve as a compass in facilitating learning for leaders and teachers that is inclusive of te ao Māori - "Open honest heart with a willingness to learn, listen, be humble and show reverence to people. Role model your own personal value of Māori and have that expectation of your staff."
- respond productively to challenges and opportunities created by integrating te ao Māori within mainstream school contexts - "It is important to be seen to lead and promote te reo and tikanga Māori and discussions around success as Māori", "Recognition that Māori students need a whānau atmosphere to learn and providing that in the school."

The spirit of "stepping outside of one's comfort zone" and leading by example suggests that highly localised critical and conscious leadership is taking place in MACs schools. Principals' report that their levels of confidence and efficacy with regard to leading their schools, and allowing opportunities for the school to "be led" by Māori students, whānau and community members, is increasing. According to one principal, MACs "affirms my beliefs, leadership style and allows me to be courageous and serve all my ākongā"

➔ **Collective agency, efficacy and support**

From the beginning, MACs has focused on establishing and maintaining effective networks for Māori and non-Māori principals to learn from each other. These networks have focused on developing tailored approaches to professional learning and development, and school improvement, which have been unique and localised to all participating schools - regardless of their specific challenges, starting points, and identities. MACs clusters engaged in "purposeful peer interaction" (Fullan & Scott, 2009, p. 153), which works best when the broader values of the school and those of the leaders and teachers mesh, when information and knowledge are shared openly, and when monitoring mechanisms are embedded to detect poorly implemented actions and highly effective practices.

All clusters perceive that they have made substantial progress in reframing the mainstream school experience for Māori students through enthusiastic participant involvement, collaboration, collective leadership and honesty. MACs' regional cluster design has created much interest, better communication, better understanding, and a substantial leap in hope and belief in the possibility of improved educational achievement for Māori students among collaborative and supportive school leaders. A key theme that emerged from the data was the importance of "building a positive and collegial school culture ... moving away from working in our separate cells to working more collegially to raise Māori student achievement".

The data paint a clear picture of the range of new strategies employed to increase Māori student achievement via increased collaboration and interschool networking including "problem solving, sharing practice, sharing understandings, supporting each other...and making sense of our new reality and our future". Other participants spoke of sharing ideas and success stories, collective leadership and support, and a general willingness by other MACs schools to participate in transformative practices. The data also indicated that the process of involvement in the clusters enabled MACs school leaders and other key staff to become more confident and more effective at meeting Māori students' learning needs. MACs principals spoke of their own professional growth through reciprocal learning opportunities created by engagement with other MACs schools. One non-Māori school leader from an isolated rural school stated "if you are in a school similar to mine don't worry because [in the MACs project] you are not alone". Another principal stated, "The 'group' helps change the 'group' - Together we can make a difference".

➔ Esteeming Māori identity, knowledge and belief systems

Māori identity can encompass both traditional Māori concepts that locate identity within whānau, hapū, and iwi, as well as social identity approaches that focus on how students "feel" about being Māori across a range of key contexts. According to the Ministry of Education (2013), "Schools and kura that work in partnership with parents, whānau, hapū, and iwi ... can also create learning environments that reinforce the identity, language and culture of Māori students" (p. 41). School is a particularly powerful context for positive Māori identity development. Despite negative stereotypes being prevalent and powerful in the lives of many Māori students, a strong Māori identity may enhance their resilience, providing them with the capacity to prevent negative pressures from interfering with their educational engagement (Webber, 2012).

According to the data, MACs has motivated school leaders to implement activities that enable Māori students to understand and value their Māoriness, including their identity and culture, allowing them to connect with core Māori values. Throughout the clusters, MACs school leaders reported the importance for Māori student expression of identity and cultural growth of activities such as kapa haka, waiata, pepeha, and karakia. Embellishing the school's environment with waharoa, pou and other visual representations of Māoriness, and even so much as changing the school name, have also been implemented to improve the cultural wellbeing of Māori students and their whānau and the overall expression of the school's commitment to affirming and acknowledging Māori identity as the norm and not an exception. As an example, one school has promoted their school's values by designing pou to represent connections to Maniapoto and by renaming classrooms in te reo "to link reflecting growth such as purapura whetū for our new awakening through to tū māia which is about standing confident as seniors".

According to one of the MACs principals, such practices have resulted in a growth in Māori student confidence and capability, which is starting to impact their learning. One principal proposed that schools should ask themselves, “how do Māori students see and hear themselves in your school and ... can they connect with things Māori in your school and how visible and audible is Māori in your school?”. MACs schools also have an expectation that staff continue to improve their knowledge and proficiency of te reo Māori by attending te reo language development courses, as well as build their understanding of implementing tikanga in classrooms. One principal is offering PLD to staff to ensure that teachers understand how they are operationalising manaakitanga, whanaungatanga and wairuatanga in their classrooms. Many of the MACs schools regularly hold pōwhiri to welcome new staff, parents, and students at the beginning of the school year; begin staff hui with whakataukī, karakia, and waiata (many are iwi specific); and focus on a kupu or phrase of the week to encourage staff to improve their reo fluency. In speaking of the progress made in her school, one school leader commented that, “They had a few waiata but no kapa haka, they had no signage, they had nothing really and they’ve got it all now” .”

→ Whānau, hapū and iwi leadership in schools

Within school settings, MACs principals have fostered consensus building and elicited valuable input from staff, whānau, hapū, iwi, and the local community to better understand what works best for Māori learners. According to the Ministry of Education (2013): “Education professionals must recognise and value the contribution of whānau, hapū and iwi, and build connections with them both inside and outside of school” (p. 41). Through whakawhanaungatanga, principals sought whānau perspective and voice through kōrero (e.g., kanohi ki te kanohi), surveys, hui, informal gatherings, and building links with their local marae in order to integrate students’ whakapapa within their schooling experience. Engaging with whānau has enabled principals and their schools to better meet the spiritual, social, physical and educational needs of their tamariki by developing Māori-centric graduate profiles; while, at the same time, supporting whānau to improve student learning within the home. For whānau engagement to occur, principals noted the importance of having an “open door” policy to create a welcoming environment for mātua to feel invited to serve as equal partners in their children’s education. Principals’ active presence at special gatherings and events at their schools, their families’ homes or at the local marae has been instrumental in fostering more personal relationships with their students. Ensuring that kaumātua and whānau not only felt welcome within the school, but were invited to join key representative groups and committees, including boards of trustees, to inform school practices or even provide PLD to improve teachers’ reo and tikanga was another common Treaty-based strategy employed by MACs principals. Over the course of the 3 years of MACs, data suggests that greater numbers of principals across the MACs clusters have moved from establishing the need for whānau engagement to implementing community-informed practices that establish strong whānau partnerships for supporting student learning

MACs principals have fostered stronger partnerships with whanau, hapū and iwi to identify ways of improving how their schools provide education for their tamariki, resulting in much improved student attendance and parent and whanau attendance at school-organised events. Some principals did this by ensuring tangata whenua sat on their boards of trustees, or by consistently consulting with hapū and iwi to inform school decision-making, or a combination of both. Some principals also provided a designated office space for hapū or iwi within the school and invited education representatives or kaumātua to provide

teachers with PLD to make curriculum more localised and relevant to their tamariki. Establishing productive hapū and iwi partnerships continues to be a key MACs priority.

➔ Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

There is a rigorous body of research-based literature on culturally responsive pedagogy that is germane to Aotearoa New Zealand where the majority of Māori learners are being taught in mainstream schools (Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Bishop et al., 2009; Durie, 2001; Macfarlane, Glynn, Cavanagh, & Bateman, 2007). This literature is unique to other research on culturally responsive pedagogy because, in Aotearoa, there are Māori educational contexts where whakaaro Māori are normalised (e.g., kōhanga reo, kura, wānanga). Within these contexts, teaching is not “responsive”, but rather ‘normal’, and it represents the ‘everyday’ of what teachers and leaders do. This is the direction the MACs principals are taking. Drawing from the work of Bishop et al. (2009), there are clear links between the kaupapa of Te Kotahitanga at the secondary level and MACs at the primary and intermediate levels. For one, MACs principals have focused on purposefully rejecting deficit theorising as an explanation of Māori student achievement in order to “value, engage with, respect and embrace students’ history, who they are, their struggle and their victories, as well as cultural practices”. Principals and schools have embraced mana motuhake by “helping students to understand and value their Māoriness - identity, culture and allowing them to connect with our core values and living these values as Māori”; by promoting whakapiringitanga by designing and creating “Māori art, pou for the school entrance, artwork for school gardens, and kapa haka uniforms”; and by integrating ako via noho marae, wānanga, and culturally responsive pedagogy to build and strengthen teacher–student and student–student reciprocal relationships (e.g., tuakana–teina strategies). McKenzie & Singleton (2009) have noted that “*The culture of the child cannot enter the classroom if it has not entered the consciousness of the teacher*” (p. 5) and to effect conscious and critical change, there has also been a major emphasis in MACs on bringing in “local iwi to inquire into our history to develop a more culturally responsive and localised school curriculum”, as well as “asking iwi to develop curriculum with local stories and tribal knowledge”. There was multiple mention of drawing knowledge and history from whānau as a source of legitimate knowledge to advance the National Standards curriculum and “improve whānau engagement in learning”. One principal stated, “As a school we have really learnt about our place, the history of our place ... and the children have really started to get into and understand who they are, where they are from and the history of our area here is Ōtautahi”. MACs leaders continue to incorporate knowledge from Māori researchers and local role models from which to draw and develop their curriculum by “identify[ing] and invit[ing] key skilled community members to share experiences.” Most recently, MACs clusters have begun investigating A Critical Guide to Māori and Pākehā Histories of Aotearoa as a curriculum programme resource for mainstream and Māori medium pathways (Hanly, 2015). They also express a strong commitment to the implementation of both Te Takanga o Te Wā – Māori Histories Curriculum Guidelines (Ministry of Education, 2013) and Tau Mai Te Reo – The Māori Language in Education Strategy 2013 – 2017 (Ministry of Education, 2013). In addition, many of the principals and their staff are enrolled in the Wananga o Aotearoa ‘He Papa Tikanga’ course.

➤ **Critically conscious and courageous leadership**

Freire (1970) promulgated the notion of growing a critical mass of progressive like-minded thinkers to push back on injustices faced by the systemically underserved, where decolonisation is the aspiration of the group. Here in Aotearoa, Smith (2003) and others, including MACs principals, are engaged in similar work with a ‘Māori success as Māori’ focus to transform education, schooling, and leadership. According to the data, MACs is, as one school leader put it, “an excellent vehicle for starting conversations and exploring the possibilities”. MACs provides safe spaces for school leaders to come together to be inspired by others, to network, to hear about and share what works in other schools, and to support each other. As one school leader notes of MACs, “I have gained inspiration, knowledge, mentors and connections. Excellent!”

MACs’ vision of “changing hearts and minds” is an act of critical conscientisation - one that MACs principals need to negotiate either internally, through their own journey of serving Māori communities, or externally, through shifting current systems of practice positioned in mainstream school settings to foster Māori success as Māori. MACs principals noted the challenges with negotiating these two worlds, but expressed strong conviction to confront the barriers before them and courageously lead their schools for change. For Māori principals, the kaupapa of MACs is nourishing in a schooling climate seemingly focused on competition, autonomy and narrow definitions of academic achievement. For non-Māori principals, this has been an opportunity to embrace their own identities (e.g., Pākehā, Samoan, Cook Island), take on a critical race theory lens, and work alongside their Maori colleagues, and passionately lead their communities in dispelling deficit-based stereotypes towards Māori, Pasifika, and other marginalised student populations.

MACs impact on Māori Student Achievement

The role of the school leader is fundamental in shaping the learning experiences of primary school students and the environments in which they take place. The decisions these school leaders make can influence Māori students’ opportunities for achievement and success directly, and indirectly. The Ministry of Education has reported that 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). Consequently, improving the educational experiences, engagement and outcomes of Māori students is an ongoing government priority and MACs demonstrates that courageous school leaders can positively influence the effectiveness of school-wide practices and strategies aimed at improving the educational outcomes of Māori students.

➔ **MACs impact on National Standards Achievement: Writing 2013-2015**

In 2015, 65% of all MAC Māori students were achieving At or Above in writing and 35% at Below or Well-Below. Nationally 10% of the MAC Māori student population featured in the well-below category. The Ministry of Education’s 2015 Writing (English Medium) data shows that 61.6% of all Māori students nationally were At or Above national standard. Māori students in MACs schools are collectively achieving at least 3% ahead of the rest of the country. Moreover, in MACs schools between 2013 and 2015, there was an 11% growth in the number of students achieving at and above the national standards in writing (from 2038 students to 2567 students). Subsequently, there was a 11% reduction in the number of students achieving below and well-

below. This improvement is significant given the unexpected spike in the MACs student population and the statistics that show writing as the lowest scoring learning area nationally as measured by national standards. Qualitative survey data from the principals suggests that the increased interest and achievement in writing by Maori students could be a result of the improved cultural contexts of writing tasks. A number of principals commented on the integration of localised iwi knowledge and history into the curriculum which had “improved students interest and engagement in writing”.

As evidenced in Table 1 (see Appendices), Christchurch had a 5% overall improvement and is the only region to exceed the National MAC statistic. Three of the remaining five MAC regions improved their overall position with Te Tai Tokerau improving by 12%; Rotorua by 11%; and, Tāmaki by 4%. Waikato fell by 7% however, it also had the highest roll growth (38%) over the three years. The Taranaki region student population growth of 8% has seen a subsequent 8% decrease in those at and above and increase by the equivalent 8% in those below and well-below.

➔ **MACs impact on National Standards Achievement: Reading 2013-2015**

In 2015, 65% of all MAC Māori students were achieving At or Above in reading and 35% at Below or Well-Below. Nationally 10% of the MAC Māori student population featured in the well-below category. The Ministry of Education’s 2015 Reading (English Medium) data shows that 68.8% of all Māori Students nationally were At or Above national standard. However, 65% of Māori students in the MACs schools were achieving At and Above. This difference in achievement needs to be considered in the context of increased student numbers because between 2013-2015 there was still a 3% growth in the number of MACs Māori students achieving at and above the national standards for reading (from 3,859 to 4510). There has been a subsequent 3% reduction in the number of students achieving below and well-below. This improvement has been in spite of student population growth in MACs schools and significant population transience. The exceptional progress and achievement across all NS areas, Reading, Writing and Maths (as evidenced in Table 4), particularly in Te Tai Tokerau, is very significant given these circumstances.

As evidenced in Table 2 (see Appendices), three regions - Ōtautahi, Te Tai Tokerau and Waikato exceeded the national picture. Rotorua is equivalent to the national picture and Tāmaki and Taranaki are below the national percentages. Taranaki has the lowest percentage at and above (61%) and the highest percentage (39%) well-below. Christchurch has the highest overall achievement with 73% At and Above and 27% below (19%) and well-below (8%). However, it also has the lowest number of Māori students. Te Tai Tokerau has the highest number of Māori students and the 2nd highest growth between 2013 – 2015 **yet** has made a 9% overall improvement. It has the lowest percentage of those achieving well-below although by number they have a minimum of 34 more than any other region in this category. At a National level, analysis by number shows an increase of 553 at and above (23%) and an increase of 98 below and well-below (7%) in spite of a 17% (681) increase in the Māori student population.

➔ **MACs impact on National Standards Achievement: Maths 2013-2015**

In 2015, 62% of all MAC Māori students are achieving at or above in Maths and 38% at below or well-below. Nationally 10% of the student population feature in the well-below category. The Ministry of Education's 2015 Maths (English Medium) data shows that while 65.4% of all Māori Students nationally were At or Above national standard, 62% of Māori students in MACs schools were achieving At or Above. Between 2013-2015 there was a 2% growth in the number of students achieving at and above the national standards for reading (from 2,291 to 2,907). There has been a subsequent 2% reduction in the number of students achieving below and well-below. This improvement has been in spite of student population growth in MACs schools.

As evidenced in Table 3 (see Appendices), three regions: Christchurch, Rotorua and Te Tai Tokerau exceed the national picture. Rotorua has the lowest percentage in the well-below (8%) and Taranaki the highest (13%). Waikato has had the highest student population growth of 204 (38%). Analysis by number of students rather than percentage paints a very different picture. Growth of numbers in the At and Above category range from 15% in Te Tai Tokerau to 39% in Rotorua. All but one region shows the increase of numbers featuring an increasing number of students in the At and Above category. Nationally in 2013 there were 2291 where in 2015 this number had increased to 2,907 – an increase of 27% (228). There has also been an increase in students featuring in the below and well-below criteria, however it needs to be considered in light of significant student population growth in MACs schools.

Concluding statement

The Governments Statement of Intent 2014 – 2018 (MOE, 2014) 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). MACs has provided a tangible means for attaining these lofty goals because of its emphasis on building a critical mass of empowered, brave and courageous leaders. In addition, the Ministry of Education has established Communities of Learning/Kāhui Ako as a means of encouraging clusters of schools to set shared goals or achievement challenges, based on the particular needs of its learners; and students, their parents, whānau, iwi and communities are being encouraged to work collaboratively to help schools achieve those challenges. These activities are already being operationalised by MACs clusters, except that the achievement challenge is always improved Maori student attendance, engagement and achievement; authentic whānau, hapū, iwi and hāpori involvement; and challenging but supported learning opportunities for teachers and school leaders to learn about, and use, te reo, tikanga and hitori Maori in their practice. MACs clusters already operate in ways similar to Kahui Ako and therefore fully funding MACs regional facilitators, alongside Te Pītau Mātauranga, to work within or alongside CoLS would undoubtedly work to the benefit of more Māori students. A fully funded “scaled up” version of MACs could have a significant impact on the cultural responsiveness of school leaders practice and much improved partnerships with whānau and hāpori Maori. It would enable the ongoing impact and sustainability of the initiative to have further reach. It is clear from three years of evaluative data that MACs is much needed intervention in New Zealand schools given its rapid growth in participant numbers and the continued requests from schools to participate.

The slow but steady improvements in National Standards data shows that MACs is having a small but positive impact on Maori achievement (see Table 4). MACS principals were also keen to remind the researcher that the educational success of Māori students is a multifaceted phenomenon that encompasses far

more than academic achievement. Other important aspects, as evidenced by MACs principals comments include factors connected to the acquisition of positive school and social identities, including Māori students' feelings about the role of their cultural identity at school and their connectedness to the learning content in the school context. These socioemotional aspects of the educational experience have important consequences on whether Māori students attend, engage and respond to opportunities to learn. MACs principals have also recognized the important influence these factors have on Māori whanau engagement, attendance at and support for school events. MACs principals realise that educating Māori students must involve encouraging them, and their whānau, to take their language, their cultures and their knowledge with them on the learning journey.



The MACs philosophy of “leaders helping leaders to become better leaders” has resulted in some shared values that are best expressed from a Maori worldview. MACs Te Pītau Mātauranga , Hoana Pearson, is esteemed among MACs principals, and acts as the *karu atua* of the MACs waka. That is, she acts as the spiritual eyes of the MACs waka and leads the collective, setting its path and the transformative, bicultural vision for moving forward. She ensures that MACs is “he waka eke noa” – that everyone is aboard the waka and everyone agrees with the collective vision of the waka and its destination. In essence, the MACs initiative of collaboration, shared expertise, honest conversations and collective action has resulted in a critical mass of principals committed to:

- Achieving excellence "Kia arotahi ki te kōtihi" – Focussed on the reaching the summit (of excellence)
- Working collaboratively "Kia ngātahi te waihoe" – Rowing together in unison
- Learning respectfully "Kia ngākau tapatahi te whai koha" – Unified towards respectful relationships
- Supporting each other "Kia mahi-tahi te tautoko" – Mutual support and cooperation
- Remaining aspirational "Kia whai-tahi te tūmanako" - Combined pursuit towards realising collective goals

Where to next?

The next ‘in depth’ iteration of the MOE evaluation of MACs is due in June. I have decided that it would be useful to write between 3-6 case studies of schools where Maori student achievement gains have been significant. The case studies will utilise student and whanau voice, alongside principal and teacher perspective, to highlight the factors positively impacting Maori achievement in the case study settings. The final evaluation will also endeavour to include confirmed 2016 National Standards data, New Zealand Principals Federation perspective and another disaggregated analysis of achievement data by region.

Table 1: National MACs clusters – National Standards Data 2013 to 2015 – WRITING (ENGLISH MEDIUM)

Cluster	2013					2014					2015					COMMENTARY
	Above	At	Below	Well-Below	Total Students	Above	At	Below	Well-Below	Total Students	Above	At	Below	Well-Below	Total Students	
Otago	28 (10%)	139 (51%)	73 (27%)	33 (12%)	273 + 15 NO DATA	38 (14%)	150 (52%)	67 (23%)	33 (11%)	288 minus 1 school	32 (11%)	166 (55%)	81 (27%)	22 (7%)	301	<p>Christchurch: A student population growth of 13 between 2013 – 2015. An overall 5% increase at & above and a reduction below and well-below by 5%. A 5% reduction in those achieving well-below. Analysis by number shows an increase of 31 at and above (10%) and a decrease of 3 in below and well-below.</p>
	61% At and Above (167)		39% Below and Well-below (106)			66% At and Above (188)		34% Below and Well-Below (100)			66% At and Above (198)		34% Below and Well-Below (103)			
Rotorua	56 (10%)	235 (40%)	222 (38%)	71 (12%)	584	69 (12%)	237 (41%)	225 (39%)	46 (8%)	577	82 (14%)	267 (47%)	184 (32%)	36 (7%)	569 + 118 NO DATA	<p>Rotorua: A student population growth of 165 between 2013 – 2015. An 11% increase in those achieving at and above and a 11% reduction of those achieving below and well-below. Analysis by number shows an increase of 58 at and above (20%) and a decrease of 73 (25%) in below and well-below.</p>
	50% At and Above (291)		50% Below and Well-Below (293)			60% At and Above (344)		40% Below and Well-Below (233)			61% At and Above (349)		39% Below and Well-Below (220)			
Tamaki	34 (7%)	247 (49%)	144 (28%)	82 (16%)	507	45 (9%)	249 (49%)	141 (28%)	69 (14%)	504 + 47 NO DATA	51 (9%)	311 (51%)	162 (27%)	81 (13%)	605	<p>Tamaki: A student population growth of 98 between 2013 – 2015. A 4% increase in those achieving at and above and a 4% decrease in those achieving below and well-below. Analysis by number shows an increase of 81 in at and above (22%) and an increase of 17 in below and well-below (+7.5%).</p>
	56% At and Above (281)		44% Below and Well-Below (226)			58% At and Above (294)		42% Below and Well-Below (210)			60% At and Above (362)		40% Below and Well-Below (243)			
Taranaki	54 (10%)	241 (45%)	161 (30%)	83 (15%)	539	42 (7%)	247 (44%)	210 (37%)	66 (12%)	565	48 (8%)	227 (39%)	198 (34%)	111 (19%)	584	<p>Taranaki: A student population growth of 45 (8%) between 2013 – 2015. An 8% decrease in those achieving at and above and an 8% increase in those achieving below and well-below. Analysis by number shows a reduction of 20 (7%) in those assessed at and above and an increase of 65 below and well-below (27%).</p>
	55% At and Above (295)		45% Below and Well-Below (244)			51% At and Above (289)		49% Below and Well-Below (276)			47% At and Above (275)		53% Below and Well-Below (309)			
Te Tai Tokerau	122 (8%)	655 (43%)	538 (36%)	197 (13%)	1512 + 167 NO DATA	235 (13%)	605 (33%)	828 (45%)	154 (9%)	1822	122 (7%)	895 (56%)	470 (30%)	102 (7%)	1589 + 278 NO DATA	<p>Te Tai Tokerau: A student population growth of 188 (11%) between 2013 – 2015. A 12% increase in those achieving at and above and a 12% decrease in those achieving below and well-below. A 4% reduction in those achieving well-below. Analysis by number shows an increase of 330 at and above (42%) and a reduction of 362 below and well-below (39%).</p>
	51% At and Above (777)		49% Below and Well-Below (932)			46% At and Above (840)		54% Below and Well-Below (657)			63% At and Above (1,107)		37% Below and Well-Below (572)			
Waikato	62 (17%)	165 (46%)	106 (29%)	30 (8%)	363 + 175 NO DATA	75 (12%)	325 (49%)	214 (32%)	49 (7%)	663 + 34 NO DATA	48 (8%)	318 (48%)	203 (30%)	89 (14%)	658 + 87 NO DATA	<p>Waikato: A student population growth of 207 (38%) between 2013 – 2015. An overall 7% drop in those achieving At & Above and a subsequent increase of 7% in those achieving below and well-below. Analysis by number shows an increase of 139 at and above (61%) and an increase of 156 in the below and well-below (114%). In this it is important to consider a student population growth of 38%.</p>
	63% At and Above (227)		37% Below and Well-Below (136)			61% At and Above (400)		39% Below and Well-Below (263)			56% At and Above (366)		44% Below and Well-Below (292)			
Total	356 (9%)	1,682 (45%)	1,244 (33%)	496 (13%)	3,778 + 357 no data	504 (11%)	1,813 (41%)	1,685 (38%)	417 (10%)	4,419 + 81 no data	383 (19%)	2,184 (46%)	1,298 (25%)	441 (10%)	4,306 + 483 no data	<p>National: An overall student population increase of 654 Māori students (16%). A national increase of 11% achieving at and above and a subsequent 11% drop in those achieving below and well-below. This includes a reduction by 3% of those achieving well-below. Analysis by number shows an increase of 529 at and above (26%) and a reduction by 1 in those below and well-below in spite of a 16% growth in student numbers.</p>
National Picture	54% At & Above (2038)		46% Below & Well-Below (1740)			57% At & Above (2,317)		48% Below & Well-Below (2,102)			65% At & Above (2,567)		35% Below & Well-Below (1,739)			

Table 2: National MACs clusters – National Standards Data 2013 to 2015 – Reading (ENGLISH MEDIUM)

Cluster	2013					2014					2015					COMMENTARY
	Above	At	Below	Well-Below	Total Students	Above	At	Below	Well-Below	Total Students	Above	At	Below	Well-Below	Total Students	
Otago	90 (33%)	102 (37%)	46 (17%)	35 (13%)	273 + 15 NO DATA	97 (34%)	114 (40%)	39 (13%)	39 (13%)	289	93 (31%)	126 (42%)	57 (19%)	25 (8%)	301	Christchurch: A student population growth of 13 between 2013 – 2015. An overall 3% increase at & above and a reduction below and well-below by 3%. A 5% reduction in those achieving well-below. Analysis by number shows an increase of 27 at and above (14%). Increase of 1 in below and well-below.
	70% At and Above (192)		30% Below and Well-Below (81)			74% At and Above (211)		26% Below and Well-Below (78)			73% At and Above (219)		27% Below and Well-Below (82)			
Rotorua	77 (16%)	202 (40%)	149 (30%)	67 (14%)	495 + 53 NO DATA	83 (15%)	261 (45%)	186 (32%)	47 (8%)	577	118 (21%)	253 (44%)	142 (25%)	56 (10%)	569 + 118 NO DATA	Rotorua: A student population growth of 139 between 2013 – 2015. A 9% increase in those achieving at and above and a 9% reduction of those achieving below and well-below. Analysis by number shows an increase of 92 at and above (33%) and a decrease of 18 in below and well-below (8%).
	56% At and Above (279)		44% Below and Well-Below (216)			60% At and Above (344)		40% Below and Well-Below (233)			65% At and Above (371)		35% Below and Well-Below (198)			
Tamaki	111 (21%)	226 (43%)	128 (25%)	57 (11%)	522	109 (22%)	224 (44%)	95 (19%)	76 (15%)	504 + 47 NO DATA	90 (15%)	287 (47%)	148 (24%)	80 (13%)	605	Tamaki: A student population growth of 54 between 2013 – 2015. A 2% decrease in those achieving at and above and a 1% increase in those achieving below and well-below. Analysis by number shows an increase of 40 in at and above (12%) and increase of 43 in below and well-below (23%).
	64% At and Above (337)		36% Below and Well-Below (185)			66% At and Above (333)		34% Below and Well-Below (171)			62% At and Above (377)		37% Below and Well-Below (228)			
Taranaki	150 (28%)	223 (42%)	105 (19%)	61 (11%)	539	109 (19%)	256 (45%)	147 (26%)	56 (10%)	568	132 (23%)	217 (38%)	142 (24%)	89 (15%)	580	Taranaki: A student population growth of 41 between 2013 – 2015. A 10% decrease in those achieving at and above and a 9% increase in those achieving below and well-below. Analysis by number shows a decrease of 9 at and above (2%) and an increase of 65 below and well-below (39%).
	70% At and Above (374)		30% Below and Well-Below (166)			64% At and Above (365)		36% Below and Well-Below (203)			61% At and Above (349)		39% Below and Well-Below (231)			
Te Tai Tokerau	402 (24%)	565 (34%)	481 (29%)	218 (13%)	1666	405 (22%)	779 (42%)	462 (25%)	195 (11%)	1841	308 (17%)	893 (50%)	475 (26%)	123 (7%)	1799 + 69 NO DATA	Te Tai Tokerau: A student population growth of 202 between 2013 – 2015. A 9% increase in those achieving at and above and a 9% decrease in those achieving below and well-below. A 6% reduction in those achieving well-below. Analysis by number shows an increase of 234 at and above (24%) and a reduction of 101 below and well-below (14%).
	58% At and Above (967)		42% Below and Well-Below (699)			64% At and Above (1,184)		36% Below and Well-Below (657)			67% At and Above (1,201)		33% Below and Well-Below (598)			
Waikato	89 (24%)	159 (44%)	89 (24%)	27 (7%)	364 + 175 NO DATA	127 (19%)	322 (49%)	152 (23%)	62 (9%)	663 + 34 NO DATA	139 (21%)	293 (45%)	163 (25%)	61 (9%)	656 + 86 NO DATA	Waikato: A student population growth of 203 between 2013 – 2015. An overall 2% drop in those achieving At & Above and a subsequent increase of 3% in those achieving below and well-below. Analysis by number shows an increase of 184 at and above (74%) and an increase of 108 in the below and well-below (93%). In this it is important to consider a student population growth of 37%.
	68% At and Above (248)		31% Below and Well-Below (116)			68% At and Above (449)		32% Below and Well-Below (214)			66% At and Above (432)		34% Below and Well-Below (224)			
Total	919 (24%)	1,477 (38%)	998 (26%)	465 (12%)	3,859 + 243 no data	930 (21%)	1,956 (44%)	1,081 (24%)	475 (11%)	4,442 + 81 no data	880 (19%)	2,069 (46%)	1,127 (25%)	434 (10%)	4,510 + 273 no data	National: An overall student population increase of 681 Māori students (17%). A national increase of 3% achieving at and above and a subsequent 3% drop in those achieving below and well-below. This includes a reduction by 2% of those achieving well-below. Analysis by number shows an increase of 553 at and above (23%) and an increase of 98 below and well-below (7%).
National Picture	62% At & Above (2,396)		38% Below & Well-Below (1,463)			65% At & Above (2,886)		35% Below & Well-Below (1,556)			65% At & Above (2,949)		35% Below & Well-Below (1,561)			

Table 3: National MACs clusters – National Standards Data 2013 to 2015 – Maths (ENGLISH MEDIUM)

Cluster	2013					2014					2015					COMMENTARY - Mathematics
	Above	At	Below	Well-Below	Total Students	Above	At	Below	Well-Below	Total Students	Above	At	Below	Well-Below	Total Students	
Christchurch	42 (15%)	122 (45%)	78 (29%)	31 (11%)	273 + 15 NO DATA	48 (16%)	150 (52%)	72 (25%)	21 (7%)	291 Excludes 1 School	51 (17%)	161 (53%)	60 (20%)	29 (10%)	301	<p>Christchurch: A student population growth of 13 between 2013 – 2015. An overall 10% increase at & above and a reduction below and well-below by 10%. Further analysis indicates that the number of students At and Above increased by 48 (29%) while the number below and well-below reduced by 20 (18%).</p>
	60% At and Above (164)		40% Below and Well-Below (109)			68% At and Above (198)		32% Below and Well-Below (93)			70% At and Above (212)		30% Below and Well-Below (89)			
Rotorua	50 (10%)	225 (44%)	175 (35%)	57 (11%)	507 + 76 NO DATA	47 (8%)	316 (55%)	170 (30%)	43 (7%)	576	85 (12%)	371 (54%)	183 (27%)	48 (7%)	687	<p>Rotorua: A student population growth of 104 between 2013 – 2015. An overall 12% increase at & above and a reduction below and well-below by 12%. A 4% reduction in those achieving well-below. Analysis by number indicates an increase of 181 (39%) featuring in the at and above and a reduction of 1 in the below and well-below in spite of an overall increase of 104 (18%) Māori students.</p>
	54% At and Above (275)		46% Below and Well-Below (232)			63% At and Above (363)		37% Below and Well-Below (213)			66% At and Above (456)		34% Below and Well-Below (231)			
Tāmaki	51 (12%)	245 (59%)	96 (23%)	25 (6%)	417 + 105 NO DATA	64 (13%)	249 (50%)	128 (25%)	63 (12%)	504 + 47 NO DATA	71 (12%)	319 (53%)	153 (25%)	62 (10%)	605	<p>Tāmaki: A student population growth of 83 (14%) between 2013 – 2015. An overall 6% decrease at & above and a consequent 6% increase in those below and well-below. A 4% increase in those achieving well-below. Analysis by number indicates an increase of 94 students (31% at and above). There has however been an increase by 94 (31%) in the below and well-below.</p>
	71% At and Above (296)		29% Below and Well-Below (121)			63% At and Above (313)		37% Below and Well-Below (191)			65% At and Above (390)		35% Below and Well-Below (215)			
Taranaki	70 (12%)	269 (46%)	180 (31%)	65 (11%)	584	56 (9%)	269 (44%)	210 (35%)	71 (12%)	606	47 (7%)	278 (45%)	216 (35%)	79 (13%)	620	<p>Taranaki: A student population growth of 36 between 2013 – 2015. An overall 6% decrease at & above and a subsequent 6% increase in below and well-below. Analysis by number indicates a reduction in those at and above by 14 and an increase in those below and well-below of 40.</p>
	58% At and Above (339)		42% Below and Well-Below (245)			53% At and Above (325)		47% Below and Well-Below (281)			52% At and Above (325)		48% Below and Well-Below (295)			
Te Tai Tokerau	198 (12%)	787 (47%)	486 (29%)	204 (12%)	1675	165 (9%)	978 (53%)	496 (27%)	208 (11%)	1847	155 (9%)	979 (54%)	515 (29%)	147 (8%)	1796 + 69 NO DATA	<p>Te Tai Tokerau: A student population growth of 190 (11%) between 2013 – 2015. An overall 4% increase at & above and a reduction below and well-below by 4%. A 4% reduction in those achieving well-below. Analysis by number indicates an increase of 149 (15%) at and above and a decrease of 28 (4%) in spite of a 190 (11%) increase in the Māori student population.</p>
	59% At and Above (985)		41% Below and Well-Below (690)			62% At and Above (1,143)		38% Below and Well-Below (704)			63% At and Above (1,134)		37% Below and Well-Below (662)			
Waikato	55 (15%)	177 (48%)	108 (30%)	25 (7%)	365 + 174 NO DATA	74 (11%)	355 (54%)	182 (27%)	52 (8%)	663 + 34 NO DATA	67 (10%)	323 (50%)	186 (28%)	80 (12%)	656 + 87 NO DATA	<p>Waikato: A student population growth of 204 (38%) between 2013 – 2015. An overall 3% decrease at & above and a consequent increase of 3% below & well-below. However, an increase of 158 (68%) of students featuring in the above and at and an increase of 100% (133) in the below and well-below. This is in the context of a population increase of (38% - 204 students).</p>
	63% At and Above (232)		37% Below and Well-Below (133)			65% At and Above (429)		35% Below and Well-Below (234)			60% At and above (390)		40% Below and Well-Below (266)			
Total	466 (12%)	1,825 (48%)	1,123 (29%)	407 (11%)	3,821 + 370 NO DATA	454 (10%)	2,317 (52%)	1,258 (28%)	458 (10%)	4,487 + 81 NO DATA	476 (10%)	2,431 (52%)	1,313 (28%)	445 (10%)	4,665 + 156 NO DATA	<p>NATIONAL: A Māori student population growth of 630 (15%) nationally. An overall improvement of 2% featuring in the at and above and a subsequent reduction of 2% in those below and well-below. However, analysis by number indicates a 27% (2097/2291) increase in the numbers achieving at and above as well as 228 (15%) increase in the number of below and well-below. The number featuring well-below has improved by 1%.</p>
60% At & Above (2,291)		40% Below & Well-Below (1,530)			62% At & Above (2,771)		38% Below & Well-below (1,716)		62% At & Above (2,907)		38% Below & Well-below (1,758)					

Table 4 : NATIONAL MAC ORIGINAL CLUSTERS (6) NATIONAL STANDARDS DATA COMPARISON 2013 - 2015

NATIONAL MAC ORIGINAL CLUSTERS (6) NATIONAL STANDARDS DATA COMPARISON 2013 - 2015													
	Total Māori Students	READING				WRITING				MATHEMATICS			
		Above	At	Below	Well-Below	Above	At	Below	Well-Below	Above	At	Below	Well-Below
2013	Reading (3,859) Writing (3,778) Maths (3,821)	919 (24%)	1,477 (38%)	998 (26%)	465 (12%)	356 (9%)	1,682 (45%)	1,244 (33%)	496 (13%)	466 (12%)	1,825 (48%)	1,123 (29%)	407 (11%)
		2,396 (62%) At and Above		1,463 (38%) Below and Well-Below		2,038 (54%) At and Above		1,740 (46%) Below and Well-Below		2,291 (60%) At and Above		1,530 (40%) Below and Well-Below	
2014	Reading (4,442) Writing (4,419) Maths (4,487)	930 (21%)	1,956 (44%)	1,081 (24%)	475 (11%)	504 (11%)	1,813 (41%)	1,685 (38%)	417 (10%)	454 (10%)	2,317 (52%)	1,258 (28%)	458 (10%)
		2,886 (65%) At and Above		1,556 (35%) Below and Well-Below		2,317 (52%) At and Above		2,102 (48%) Below and Well-Below		2,771 (62%) At and Above		1,716 (38%) Below and Well-Below	
2015	Reading (4,510) Writing (4,306) Maths (4,665)	880 (19%)	2,069 (46%)	1,127 (25%)	434 (10%)	383 (19%)	2,184 (46%)	1,298 (25%)	441 (10%)	476 (10%)	2,431 (52%)	1,313 (28%)	445 (10%)
		2,949 (65%) At and Above		1,561 (35%) Below and Well-Below		2,567 (65%) At and Above		1,739 (35%) Below and Well-Below		2,907 (62%) At and Above		1,758 (38%) At and Above	

Narrative summary of important points - Analysis of data:

Reading: Between 2013 and 2015 the Māori student participation grew from 3,859 to 4,510. An increase of 651 Māori students (16.8%). The data identifies that in 2013, 62% (2,396) of all Māori students were achieving at and above the national standards for reading. In 2015 this had increased to 65% (2,949), an overall improvement of 3%. By number the increase over the three-year period was 553 – an additional 23%.

Writing: Between 2013 and 2015 the Māori student participation grew from 3,778 to 4,306. An increase of 528 Māori students (13.9%). The data identifies that in 2013 54% (2,038) of all Māori students were achieving at and above the national standards for writing. In 2015 this had increased to 65% (2567), an overall improvement of 11%. By number the increase over the three-year period was 529 – an additional 25.9%.

Mathematics: Between 2013 and 2015 the Māori student participation grew from 3,821 to 4665. An increase of 844 Māori students (22%). The data identifies that in 2013 60% (2,291) of all Māori students were achieving at and above the national standards in mathematics. In 2015 this had increased to 62% (2,907), an overall improvement of 2%. By number the increase over the three-year period was 616 – an additional 26.8%.