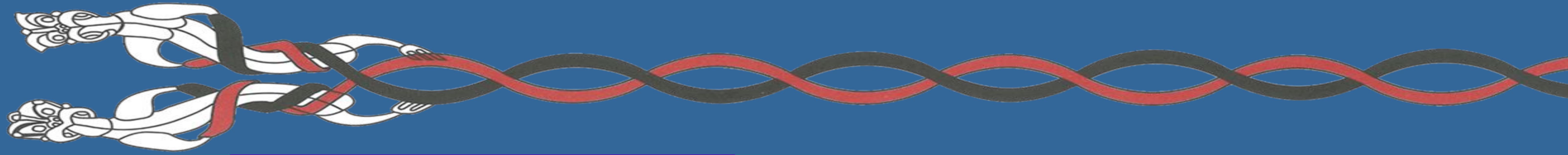


# Te Ara Hōu: Māori Achievement Collaboratives (MACs) Evaluation Snapshot



## 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 when MACs formally began, there were 6 regional MACs clusters, each with regional facilitator (a fulltime principal). The clusters were located in Te Tai Tokerau, Tāmaki Makaurau, Waikato, Rotorua, 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 in 2016/2017. With support from the Ministry of Education in 2016 for a fulltime National Co-ordinator, MACs now caters for 8 regions (including Ōtepoti and Te Matau-a-Māui) and 156 principals inclusive of 3 preschools. 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 transformative 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 initiate systemic change at the school level to counter historical systems of practice that result in educational disparities for Māori. 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. In doing so, 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

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 Māori student success.

## 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 have impacted on the attitudes of staff and created optimal school learning environments for fostering Māori success as Māori. Some of the key influences are:

### ➤ Collective leadership

MACs principals position themselves on the front line in leading schools in the process of change. They learn strategies from other principals in their cluster about how 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. More than one principal stated that "MACs is about stepping up personally" to effect positive change. For many 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 students, whānau, hapū and iwi and/or other teachers. The spirit of "stepping outside of my comfort zone" and leading by example suggests that highly localised critical and conscious leadership is taking place in MACs schools.

### ➤ 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. MACs clusters engaged in "purposeful peer interaction" (Fullan & Scott, 2009, p. 153), which works best when the broader values of the schools 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 have made substantial progress in reframing the mainstream school experience for Māori students through enthusiastic participant involvement, collaboration, collective leadership and honesty. 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 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. 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, "brave" 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

MACs has motivated school leaders to implement activities that enable Māori students to understand and value their Māori identity, language and culture. MACs school leaders report a surge in activities such as kapa haka, waiata, pepeha, and use of karakia in their schools. Embellishing the school's environment with waharoa, pou and other Māori visual representations, and even changing the school name, have also been implemented to improve the cultural wellbeing of Māori students and their whānau and an overall demonstration of the school's commitment to affirming and acknowledging Māori identity as the norm and not an exception. Such practices are reported to have resulted in a growth in Māori student confidence, engagement and capability. 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. 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

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. MACs principals have also fostered stronger partnerships with whānau hapū and iwi to identify ways of improving how their schools provide education for their tamariki. 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.

### ➤ Critically conscious and courageous leadership

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. To effect conscious and critical change, there has also been a major emphasis in MACs on "asking iwi to co-construct curriculum with local stories and tribal knowledge". One principal stated, "As a school we have really learnt about our whenua, 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 in Ōtautahi".

## MACs impact on Māori Student Achievement

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. There have been some achievement gains in MACs schools in spite of an unexpected spike in the student population growth across all clusters.

### ➤ MACs impact on National Standards Achievement: Writing 2013-2015

The MOE's 2015 Writing (English Medium) data shows that 61.6% of all Māori Students nationally were At or Above national standard, compared with 65% of Māori students in MACs schools. 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). 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.

### ➤ MACs impact on National Standards Achievement: Reading 2013-2015

The MOE's 2015 Reading (English Medium) data shows that while 68.8% of all Māori Students nationally were At or Above national standard, 65% of Māori students were in MACs schools. However, between 2013-2015 there has still been a 3% growth in the number of 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.

### ➤ MACs impact on National Standards Achievement: Maths 2013-2015

The MOE'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 were in MACs schools. However, between 2013-2015 there has still been 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.

## Concluding Comments

The MACs programme of collaboration, shared expertise, 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



