# How Policy Travels:
# Making Sense of
# *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success:*
# *The Māori Education Strategy 2008-2012*

Prepared by
**Paul D. Goren**

With funding from the sponsors of the
Ian Axford (New Zealand) Fellowships in Public Policy

July 2009

# Ian Axford (New Zealand) Fellowships in Public Policy

Ian Axford (New Zealand) Fellowships in Public Policy were named in honour of Sir Ian Axford, an eminent New Zealand astrophysicist and space scientist who is patron of the fellowship programme.

Since his education in New Zealand and England, Sir Ian has held Professorships at Cornell University and the University of California, and was Vice-Chancellor of Victoria University of Wellington for three years. For many years, Sir Ian was director of the Max Planck Institute for Aeronomy in Germany, where he was involved in the planning of several space missions, including those of the Voyager planetary explorers, the Giotto space probe and the Ulysses galaxy explorer.

Sir Ian is recognised as one of the great thinkers and communicators in the world of space science, and is a highly respected and influential administrator. A recipient of numerous science awards, he was knighted and named New Zealander of the Year in 1995.

Ian Axford (New Zealand) Fellowships in Public Policy have three goals:

- To reinforce United States/New Zealand links by enabling fellows of high intellectual ability and leadership potential to gain experience and build contacts internationally.

- To increase fellows' ability to bring about changes and improvements in their fields of expertise by the cross-fertilisation of ideas and experience.

- To build a network of policy experts on both sides of the Pacific that will facilitate international policy exchange and collaboration beyond the fellowship experience.

Fellows are based at a host institution and carefully partnered with a leading specialist who will act as a mentor. In addition, fellows spend a substantial part of their time in contact with relevant organisations outside their host institutions, to gain practical experience in their fields.

The fellowships are awarded to professionals active in the business, public or non-profit sectors. A binational selection committee looks for fellows who show potential as leaders and opinion formers in their chosen fields. Fellows are selected also for their ability to put the experience and professional expertise gained from their fellowship into effective use.

and Brian are not only professional colleagues, but have become good friends. I look forward to continuing our conversations long into the future.

I would be remiss if I did not offer my gratitude to the numerous educators in schools, kōhanga reo centres, at the Ministry, and across the sector whom I interviewed for this paper. I appreciate the time they took with me, but most importantly the energy and commitment they put into making improvements in education for and with Māori children. I especially want to thank colleagues who helped me understand the education system in New Zealand, and the work occurring to improve outcomes for Māori learners. Special appreciation is due in this regard to Mere Berryman, and her colleagues at the Ministry of Education's Poutama Pounamu Education Research Centre, Russell Bishop, and Mary Wootton. In addition, my wife and I are extremely grateful to the outstanding educators and administrators at Wellington High School (WHS) and Clifton Terrace Model School (CTMS). Our kids thrived at WHS and CTMS and it was a sincere pleasure to be part of both school communities.

My gratitude goes out to the two other Axford Fellows, and their families, who lived in the flats above us and below us at Chevening on Salamanca Road. Alixe and Dan Bonardi, and their children Olivia and Helen, and Robyn and Jason Dupuis, and their kids Kasey and Truett, became regular fixtures in our day-to-day life in Wellington. We will miss the ease by which our kids, and we, went from flat to flat as neighbours on a regular basis. These two families created a warm and supportive environment for the five of us, something we will cherish into the future, as we will their friendship.

I want to thank my wife Gwen Macsai and our three children - Ruby, Mose, and Kip - for embracing this adventure with enthusiasm and gusto. It is to their credit that they were willing to take six months off of their regular routines to live in a new country, make new friends, and embrace everything New Zealand offers. From our travels to Russell and Cape Reinga, to our tramping outings in Abel Tasman National Park and on the Milford Track, to the new lifelong friends we made in Wellington (Lisa and Jonathan, Tali and Eli, Nell), we could not be more appreciative and thankful for this experience as a family.

At the end of the interview by the Axford Selection Committee, former Prime Minister Jim Bolger asked me what I might bring to Māori if chosen as an Axford Fellow. I answered by talking about my hopes for this project and how I wanted to share the experiences I had growing up on the south side of Chicago and in the United States; the experiences my grandparents had moving to America with their own concerns about language, culture, and identity; how my parents encouraged me to learn both in and out of school; and the lessons I have learned from my work in education over many years. Little did I know how much I would learn about Māori culture and the importance of whānau, along with what I experienced working in and enjoying the way of life and beauty of New Zealand. For that, I am forever grateful.


Paul D. Goren
Wellington, July 2009

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Rurea taitea kia toitu ko taikaka anake…*
*Strip away the bark. Expose the heartwood. Get to the heart of the matter.*

This paper provides observations and commentary on the initial implementation of *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success: The Māori Education Strategy 2008-2012. Ka Hikitia* – which means to step up, to lengthen one's stride, to lift up – has at its foundation the Māori Potential Approach to education, focusing on the potential of all Māori to succeed, the culturally distinct role Māori play in New Zealand as an indigenous people, and the capacity, aspirations and initiative of Māori to be self-determining. *Ka Hikitia's* intent is to transform the Ministry of Education's work in early childhood education, compulsory schooling, and tertiary education. There is a need to increase Māori participation in early childhood programmes, to focus on key transitions of Māori students throughout their schooling, and to improve Māori learners' qualifications for post-secondary options. The Ministry of Education realises that a concerted effort must occur to develop a strong early foundation for Māori children, to engage Māori students while in school, to recognise the importance of Māori language education, and to transform the Ministry so that all staff focus on best practices to improve outcomes for and with Māori children and young adults.

*Ka Hikitia* sets ambitious goals, targets, and desired outcomes in each of these areas. It also points to several levers for change including: focusing on accountable and responsible leadership; increasing whānau and iwi authority and involvement in education; strengthening inter-agency collaboration, and building professional confidence and competence for work on issues related to Māori children. The policy framework pays attention to cultural components within Māori communities by personalising education so that Māori students enjoy education success as Māori.

## Emerging Themes and Commentary

This paper provides formative analysis of the implementation of *Ka Hikitia*. The emerging themes and commentary that follow are intended to clarify where *Ka Hikitia* is on the road to full implementation and what might be adjusted or fine-tuned along the way.

**Urgency.** *Ka Hikitia* and improving Māori achievement is a high and urgent priority for government and Ministry leadership. This policy framework not only survived a shift in government, but has been actively supported by the current government and its Minister of Education. The message is clear that addressing Māori student achievement is a high priority for the sector. This message points to action, but while some are moving forward others are in a 'wait and see' mode. This raises the question of whether or not all the professionals responsible for *Ka Hikitia* consider this framework to be urgent or even relevant to their own work.

**Coherence.** *Ka Hikitia* was launched alongside at least fourteen other Ministry of Education strategic initiatives and actions. Its release came at a time when Ministry staff members were focused on the development of standards for the education sector in response to a key priority of the new government. Although the Ministry and political leadership emphasise the importance of *Ka Hikitia,* it is easy to see how it

could get lost as one of the many issues on the agenda for the education sector. New initiatives will continue to be created by the Ministry annually. The challenge is to prioritise the many strategies in order to get a few, such as *Ka Hikitia,* out in front of all educators, Boards of Trustees, and government agency staff.

**Implementation Logic and Strategies.** As I conducted this work, I frequently heard a call for a theory or logic of implementation on *Ka Hikitia,* to be accompanied by specific implementation strategies. These comments came from Ministry staff and managers, school practitioners, academics, and staff in other governmental agencies. The desire for implementation strategies and plans must be matched by a willingness to execute them. Many of the comments about implementation, by implication, point to Group Māori as the Ministry team responsible for the development of such plans. Yet if *Ka Hikitia* is a policy framework for the Ministry and sector as a whole, then the various Ministry groups and players in the sector have responsibility for designing plans that will ultimately move *Ka Hikitia* from rhetoric to action. In the Ministry, this would mean that the Leadership Team and Senior Managers throughout the agency share responsibility for implementation planning and execution of *Ka Hikitia*. In the field this means depending on expert practitioners who have made demonstrable progress on Māori student achievement.

**Opportunities to Learn Rather than Being Criticised.** Policy can become a lever for change if those who implement it can be convinced, through sensemaking processes, to examine and change their behaviours. Opportunities to learn, and to focus on particular tasks in order to co-construct actions and responsibilities, can help those implementing policy change current practices. Rather than being told what to do or being constantly criticised for lack of commitment or action, many of those I interviewed wished there were opportunities to learn what to do to support *Ka Hikitia* in their context.

It is a challenge to find the correct explanation for these concerns. On one hand, Māori student achievement is a long-standing issue going back to the agreements between Māori and the Crown in the Treaty of Waitangi. Māori have waited over 150 years for responsible and accountable action on issues such as education, and those who claim they need more time to learn can be seen as resistant to such change. On the other hand, much of the literature says that people change when they know their responsibilities and when they have opportunities to construct solutions with others in their professional settings. The challenge is to provide opportunities and sufficient time to learn without losing urgency of action.

**Changing Behaviours or Creating a Tick List.** The challenge with a policy framework like *Ka Hikitia* is to change attitudes, thinking, and behaviours in order to improve outcomes for all Māori learners. This means changing hearts and minds rather than solely instituting new compliance requirements. There have been attempts to change Ministry organisational processes to reflect key *Ka Hikitia* components in areas such as business planning and report writing. Yet, there is concern that *Ka Hikitia* will evolve into a compliance tick list rather than a broad commitment to improve education for and with Māori learners. The challenge in an organisation like the Ministry is to engage in processes that change attitudes, thinking, and behaviours rather than forcing compliance, while adhering to timelines that meet urgent priorities.

**Capturing Success.** There is, however, positive work underway in New Zealand's schools, the Ministry, and across government agencies that reflects the guiding principles of *Ka Hikitia.* There are stories of practitioners and Ministry officials serving the needs of Māori learners across the education sector. These stories point to the role played by teachers who pay close attention to the educational needs of Māori youth while respecting culture, identity and language; the role that principal leadership plays to advocate for Māori student achievement in their schools, communities, and amongst their principal colleagues; and the role the Ministry plays to promote its commitment to Māori learners.

**Time, Transitions, and Training.** Time, transitions, and training surface as important issues in the early stages of *Ka Hikitia* implementation. It takes time for a policy framework to penetrate a sector, for changes to occur in routines and regular day-to-day practices, and for schools to achieve positive results. Student transitions, as emphasised in the *Ka Hikitia* strategy documents, must remain a focus from early childhood to primary school, from primary to secondary school (especially in years 9 and 10) and from secondary into post-secondary opportunities. Training is an essential policy lever to accelerate improvements for Māori students, as stressed in *Ka Hikitia.* Teachers and principals need to know what to do in the many situations they face with the variety of students they teach. They need to know how to create cultural connections and relationships with Māori learners to then execute teaching and learning strategies that reflect Māori potential and the importance of language, culture and identity. Initial training and on-going professional development must be focused on these issues for teachers and school leaders to have the capability to serve Māori children.

**Next Steps**

This report documents issues emerging from *Ka Hikitia's* initial year of implementation. Suggestions for policy recalibration include the following:

- **Maintaining a relentless focus**. Leadership for *Ka Hikitia,* with a relentless push for better outcomes, needs to come from teachers and principals who can take the lead and model programmes that achieve success, Boards of Trustees, the Ministry's Leadership Team, and senior managers throughout the Ministry.

- **Creating conditions for implementation and sensemaking.** Ministry staff members need to decide what to work on in the short-, medium- and long-run as originally recommended by Group Māori, with specific tasks defined and prioritised and leadership responsibility assigned. Creating better conditions for implementation, including inquiry-based processes that lead to sensemaking[1], will require Ministry leadership to reprioritise core functions in schools and the Ministry.

- **Acknowledging the unspoken.** For some, the reasons that Māori lag behind others is a result of long-standing racism. There are others who are reluctant to enter the conversation about race and racism, and need safe places to explore issues and build confidence related to Māori student achievement. Understanding that both perspectives are prevalent in the working

---

[1] Sensemaking involves processes where those who implement a particular policy have opportunities, with colleagues, to interpret and understand its implications for their work.

environments of schools and the Ministry is important, but the challenge is not to make either of them excuses for inaction on Māori student achievement.

- **Lessons learned for policy and practice in the US.** There is much to be learned from *Ka Hikitia* and its early implementation that can be applied to the numerous education policies implemented in the US at local, state, and Federal levels. Perhaps most obvious is that implementation needs as much attention as policy development. Creating opportunities for implementers to make sense of new directives and requirements is more conducive to improvement than merely requiring school professionals to meet compliance requirements.

- **Future actions.** If *Ka Hikitia* is to meet its intended goals by 2012, Ministry staff in particular will need to consider the following next steps.

  – Examine the original priorities for *Ka Hikitia* implementation outlined by Group Māori and designate 5-7 high priority actions to work on, with specific tasks, both in the Ministry and in the field in each of the next three years in order to make significant progress by 2012.

  – Engage outstanding teachers and principals across the country with school-based expertise and a track record of progress on Māori student achievement, to lead professional development opportunities and learning conversations on Māori achievement for teachers, principals, and Boards of Trustees, as well as for Ministry staff.

  – Convene focus groups of Māori students, along with non-Māori students, to understand the issues both groups face in school and to examine what leads to successful school experiences for Māori children.

  – Appoint a high level work team of expert practitioners and Ministry officials to devise several new funding models for the core business of schooling at primary and secondary levels that would include on-going regular support for facilitators like those who work on the Literacy Professional Development Programme, Te Kotahitanga and the Schooling Improvement Cluster.

  – Convene working groups of professional developers and research/development specialists with expertise on improving Māori student achievement; the training of teachers, school leaders, and Boards of Trustees; and on understanding how various education programmes work to lift achievement for all students including Māori. Create incentives to develop new professional development opportunities for school practitioners, Boards of Trustees and government agency staff, and new principal and teacher training programmes that reflect the lessons learned from these experts.

  – Maintain a relentless focus on Māori student achievement, especially through the gathering and analysis of formative and summative data. Ensure that the Measurable Gains Framework initiative stays on target to produce data aligned to *Ka Hikitia* intended outcomes. Conduct more formative implementation reviews, similar to this report, on an annual basis to examine what is working, what is stalling, and what might need to be recalibrated to achieve the goals of *Ka Hikitia*.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## PREFACE

Ka hikitia! Ka hikitia!
Hiki, hikitia!
Whakarewa ki runga rawa.
Herea kia kore e hoki whakamuri mai.
Poua atu te pūmananawa Māori.
He mana tikanga.
Me te uri o māia.
Poipoia ngā mokopuna.
Ngā rangatira mo āpōpō.
Ka tihei! Tihei mauriora!

Managing Success!
Encourage and Support!
And raise it to its highest level.
Ensure that high achievement is maintained.
Holdfast to our Māori Potential.
Our Cultural Advantage.
And our Inherent Capability.
Nurture our mokopuna.
The leaders of the future.
Behold, we move onwards and upwards.[2]

Consider the principal in a primary school which has a student population of over 90% Māori. Recognizing that his students are not performing well on reading and literacy tasks, he develops a focused reading tutoring programme providing structured coaching in both Māori and English for all students. Children struggling with their literacy performance receive direct instruction and help during each school term. Children performing well also receive assistance during at least one term annually as the principal believes that all children need opportunities to improve, regardless of where they are on the performance continuum. To operate the programme, the principal fundamentally restructures professional roles in the school, creating a reading lab staffed by teacher aides who are retrained as literacy coaches. After five years time the results show student performance steadily rising. This principal manages and encourages success for Māori children by creating the necessary conditions and settings for progress.

Sit in a kōhanga reo early education centre as a lead teacher facilitates a lesson in Māori on how plants grow. The three- and four-year old children sing a song followed by both group and individual instruction. The teacher emphasises both the science (stressing how soil needs water) and language (stressing key terms and how to pronounce them correctly). After the group activity each child goes one-on-one with the teacher so she can ensure that the students know the concepts and the correct pronunciation of the terms. Notice the young boy in the corner who is disengaged. The teacher moves on to all of his mates, paying attention to the young boy by modelling for him the individual instruction, yet remains patient until he is ready to participate. She finally calls on him. He quickly comes forward, responds beautifully

---

[2] Opening karakia composed for *Ka Hikitia* by Toka Totoro, Ministry of Education.

to her questions, gets a pat on the back, and then joins his mates on the playground able to tell them that he was successful in the task as well. This teacher takes seriously the charge to nurture the mokopuna.

Picture a typical teacher and principal professional development hui. Close to 100 school professionals in a room listen to an expert talk about making improvements in Māori student performance. After the initial keynote, the principals tell their stories. One talks of looking closely at data and realising that much is needed to be done to improve learning opportunities for Māori children. Another talks about opening a marae on campus and how parents and extended whānau have started to come to school proactively. A third talks about the courage it took to challenge teachers whose classroom practices were not working effectively for Māori children. Watch as the teachers at the hui examine evidence of student performance to decide how instructional practices for Māori students might change to make improvements. And notice that the majority of teachers and principals at this retreat are non-Māori educators showing their commitment to the children they serve. Rather than hoping that things will change, these principals and teachers are able to challenge their own practices, so that they can encourage and support Māori students.

These three stories highlight experiences I have had watching *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success: The Māori Education Strategy 2008-2012* in action. This paper tells the story of how a policy framework travels – how research, data, and practice influence the development of policy and how people in a Ministry setting, schools, and across the sector make sense of it at the early stages of implementation. The development and implementation of any policy framework goes through several stages, from development to enactment, and from early adoption and implementation to more mature execution over time. This report provides commentary and observations on the initial stage of implementation with the hope that Ministry officials and practitioners in the sector can make mid-course adjustments so that the intent of the policy framework – Māori student achievement and success – can be achieved. The stories of the principals, teachers, and learners described above show that it is indeed possible to move onwards and upwards.

## INTRODUCTION

The New Zealand Ministry of Education spent close to two years developing a strategy to honour the potential of all Māori learners and to "step up" the performance of the entire education system - from early childhood through tertiary - to improve Māori student achievement. *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success* represents the Ministry's Māori Education Strategy for 2008-2012. Its intent is reflected in the meaning of *Ka Hikitia* – to step up, to lengthen one's stride, to lift up – to ensure that all Māori students reach their highest potential.[3] The commitment to Māori student achievement is evident in the commentary of Karen Sewell, Secretary for Education, when she states that the strategy "…(m)eans working differently. It means making Māori education success the highest priority and doing everything we can – as part of an education sector committed to ensuring all learners succeed – to realise Māori potential in all that we do."[4]

This paper provides observations and commentary on the initial implementation of *Ka Hikitia* in the Ministry of Education with a particular emphasis on the schooling sector. It reflects several months of work while posted in the Ministry's Group Māori as an Ian Axford (New Zealand) Policy Fellow. This is not a formal evaluation paper or research report, but rather an analysis of how a high priority policy framework travels into the schooling sector, and how people responsible for its enactment make sense of it along the way. My hope is that the paper helps those who work in the Ministry, other government agencies, and in schools across the country make even better sense of the *Ka Hikitia* policy framework, towards the ultimate goal of improving Māori student achievement.

The Axford Fellowships in Public Policy provide fellows with an inside perspective on public policy development and implementation in New Zealand. We have the special opportunity to learn from our colleagues in New Zealand and to apply what we know from our own experiences in the US to the work we are doing here. I bring a set of experiences to this project across education practice, policy and research. I have worked across the education sector in the United States as a teacher, an administrator and executive in two public urban school systems, a senior policy analyst and director serving the nation's 50 governors, and as a director and executive in two charitable foundations focused on education improvement. I have helped practitioners use and understand policy analyses and research reports, and assisted politicians and academics to understand the nuances of practice.

In each setting professionals often have divergent ideas of what initiatives might make a difference in education. Players in these different arenas use different languages and tend to talk *at* each other, rather than working *with* each other to design and execute new programmes. The result is scepticism at all levels. Policymakers believe that policies will not be well implemented. Researchers believe that important evidence will not be considered by policymakers or practitioners, and that they will not have sufficient time to generate appropriate analyses and conclusions. And practitioners believe that 'this too will pass' just like every other past policy directive. My goal has always been, as it is for this project, to connect the worlds of practice, policy, and

---

[3] Ministry of Education (2008), *Ka Hikitia-Managing for Success,* p. 10
[4] Ibid. p. 5

research in ways that lead to improvement, bringing together these three communities who at times have different perspectives and competing theories of change.

This report is based on extensive interviews, document review, and discussion with colleagues across the education sector. I conducted 64 interviews involving 72 people, along with one focus group of 30 secondary school students.[5] These interviews were with 34 Ministry of Education staff members (four in regional offices), seven professional development providers, nine academics in New Zealand universities, two Members of Parliament, and seven inter-agency staff from government organizations that work on education related issues. I visited 10 schools in and around Wellington, Tauranga/Rotorua, Auckland, and Hamilton where I observed classrooms and interviewed 13 school practitioners. These schools included a kōhanga reo early education programme, three secondary schools, and six primary schools. One secondary school and two of the primary schools I visited offered Māori medium instruction in bilingual and immersion settings.

In addition I attended a two-day principal/lead teacher professional development hui and a meeting of a school improvement cluster group working on issues related to Māori student achievement. I also attended a pan-iwi educational forum where iwi representatives engaged directly with Ministry staff and the new Minister of Education, Anne Tolley. *Ka Hikitia* provided a platform for dialogue and was central to the discourse amongst all parties at this hui. I regularly attended staff meetings in Group Māori, participated in the Ministry of Education's new employee orientation, attended several Ministry powhiri for new employees, was welcomed in a secondary school powhiri with students singing "Somewhere over the rainbow" in Māori, and stayed overnight in a marae.

I also had a regular weekly review session at the Ministry offices with Cheree Shortland-Nuku, my host mentor in Group Māori, and Brian Annan, from the Ministry's Schooling Improvement Group. I participated monthly in a critical review session on this work with Helen Timperley, Margie Hohepa, and Graeme Aitken from the School of Education at Auckland University along with Brian Annan from the Ministry. As my project progressed, I briefed various groups on emerging findings including the Ministry of Education Leadership Team; senior managers in the Ministry's Schooling Group, Group Māori, and the Early Childhood and Regional Education Group; and policy staff at the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. I also presented the paper in a lunchtime seminar to the Faculty of Education at the University of Auckland.

I have organised this report into several chapters. Chapter 1 provides an overview of *Ka Hikitia* and the underlying concepts of the policy framework. The next chapter provides selected descriptive data that led to the development of the strategy. Chapter 3 discusses several programmes that serve as component parts of *Ka Hikitia* and how practitioners work to make sense of Māori student achievement. This discussion is followed in Chapter 4 by an overview of the emerging themes and observations evident from the initial stage of implementation. The report concludes in Chapter 5

---

[5] In order to preserve confidentiality I promised all respondents that interview comments would be presented anonymously. On a few occasions, I offer direct quotations which have been approved by the individuals quoted.

with suggestions on next steps for *Ka Hikitia* and the implications of this work both for New Zealand and US policy developers and implementers.

There are multiple intended audiences for this paper. I hope that my observations and findings are helpful in New Zealand as work on *Ka Hikitia* and Māori student achievement continues. Across the United States educators and policymakers continuously craft policies to improve educational services for historically underserved children in order to eliminate achievement gaps across racial and ethnic groups. For these colleagues in the United States, and especially those who are designing and executing an unprecedented number of new education policies and programmes under President Obama's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, there are important lessons on policy implementation to be learned from New Zealand's effort to address a high priority set of needs through the commitment to *Ka Hikitia*.

It is important to note that the observations, descriptions, analyses, and conclusions presented in this paper are solely mine and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Group Māori, the Ministry of Education, the Axford Fellowship Committee, Fulbright New Zealand, or the Spencer Foundation. I am grateful to each of these groups for allowing me the opportunity to explore, learn and make sense of *Ka Hikitia* while maintaining my independence.

# 1    LIFT OFF: *KA HIKITIA* BACKGROUND

*Ka Hikitia* is the second nationwide policy framework designed to improve the education of Māori learners. Its intent is to transform the Ministry of Education's work in early childhood education, compulsory schooling, and tertiary education. *Ka Hikitia* specifically focuses on improvements in teaching and learning through establishing culturally responsive contexts for learning where language, culture, and identity count as do productive relationships with whānau and iwi. Although there has been some improvement in outcomes since the first Māori Education Strategy in 1999, there is still room for improvement. The Ministry recognises that it remains of highest importance to develop a strong early foundation for Māori students, to engage Māori students in their schooling processes, to emphasise the importance of Māori language education, and to transform the Ministry in order to improve outcomes and life chances for and with Māori children and young adults. This chapter provides an overview of *Ka Hikitia*, its focus areas, and key concepts that form the foundation of the strategy.

## *Ka Hikitia* development

The Ministry of Education developed *Ka Hikitia* over a two year period, starting in 2006 with an internal document geared to reframe the initial Māori education strategy published in 1999. The previous strategy focused on raising the quality of English-medium education for Māori, supporting the growth of high quality kaupapa Māori education,[6] and supporting greater involvement and authority of Māori in education.[7] It led to several new initiatives and programmes focused on Māori student achievement including the recognition and commitment to iwi education partnerships, specific professional development programmes focused on teaching, learning and leadership; hiring more that 20 Pouwhakataki (Māori information brokers) to serve throughout the country, and increased Māori-medium schooling supports. [8]

Strategies to focus on and improve Māori student achievement are not new. For instance, the 1971 Report of the National Advisory Committee on Māori Education called for the following actions:

- Cultural differences need to be understood, accepted, and respected by children and teachers,

- The school curriculum must find a place for the understanding of Māoritanga, including Māori language, and

- In order to achieve the goal of equality of opportunity, special measures need to be taken. [9]

The first step in the development of *Ka Hikitia* occurred in 2006, when the Ministry of Education's Group Māori developed a consultation paper that explored possible

---

[6] Kaupapa Māori Education is defined as "Māori education that incorporates a Māori worldview and ways of teaching in a range of settings including bilingual and immersion settings (English and Māori)" in Ministry of Education (2008), *Ka Hikitia-Managing for Success*, p. 40
[7] Ibid. p.12
[8] Ministry of Education (2007), *Ka Hikitia–Managing for Success: The Draft Māori Education Strategy,* p. 9
[9] Walker (2004), p. 240

priorities for the new strategy. This paper started the initial thinking on *Ka Hikitia* by engaging feedback from iwi partners and academics, as well as initiating thinking and engagement on Māori student achievement issues across the Ministry. Initial feedback on this priority document showed support for the strategy process; strong agreement for the use of the Māori Potential Approach (see below); and agreement on key concepts such as stepping up the performance of the system, enabling Māori to succeed as Māori, and respecting the concept of Māori as indigenous people. The feedback also highlighted that "while there is clear support for the change process, this support is tempered with scepticism, based on past experience, of the ability of the Ministry to successfully implement this change."[10] During 2007 the Ministry released a draft of *Ka Hikitia* for public consultation and feedback that preceded the official launch of the strategy in April and May 2008. The result is a policy framework that is nested in several key conceptual frameworks – Māori Potential and Māori Enjoying Education Success as Māori – along with strategic focus areas, key levers for change, and stated goals, actions, targets and outcomes.

*Ka Hikitia,* and the Ministry's intent to commit to improving Māori student achievement, is grounded in the Treaty of Waitangi, referred to by Ranginui Walker as "the legitimate source of constitutional government in New Zealand."[11] This is recognised in the introduction to *Ka Hikitia* by the following statement:

> The Treaty of Waitangi is central to, and symbolic of, our national heritage, identity, and future. *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success* acknowledges the Treaty of Waitangi as a document that protects Māori learners' rights to achieve true citizenship through gaining a range of vital skills and knowledge, as well as protecting te reo Māori as a taonga.[12]

## Māori potential

*Ka Hikitia* has at its foundation the concept of Māori Potential, first developed by Te Puni Kōkiri (the Ministry of Māori Development) as a cross-agency strategy. It focuses on the potential of all Māori to succeed, the culturally distinct role Māori play in New Zealand as an indigenous people, and the capacity, aspirations and initiative of Māori to be self-determining.[13] The designers of *Ka Hikitia* looked to the Māori Potential Approach as a mechanism to change attitudes and actions towards Māori children, leading ultimately to improved educational outcomes. Shifting from problems and disparities to opportunities and potential is intended to change how educators approach Māori young people, focusing on success rather than failure.

The Māori Potential Approach provides an alternative perspective to traditional frameworks used in most policy analyses in New Zealand and the US. Typically policy developers identify a problem and then prescribe an intervention or a set of strategies to solve the problem. Rather than considering Māori students and their families and whānau as problems to fix, the Māori Potential Approach highlights the importance of realising the potential, cultural advantages, and inherent capability of

---

[10]Ministry of Education (2007), *Ka Hikitia–Managing for Success: The Draft Māori Education Strategy,* p.12
[11] Walker (2004), p. 98
[12] Ministry of Education (2008), *Ka Hikitia-Managing for Success*, p. 11
[13] Te Puni Kōkiri/The Ministry of Māori Development (2008), *Māori Potential Approach*

Māori as a starting point for policy development and any subsequent analyses and recommendations. Emphasis is therefore placed on investing in Māori rather than on intervening in their lives. The Māori Potential Approach to education is detailed in Table 1.

<u>**TABLE 1**</u>
Māori Potential Approach in Education[14]

| LESS FOCUS ON: | MORE FOCUS ON: |
|---|---|
| • Remedying deficit | • Realising potential |
| • Problems of dysfunction | • Identifying opportunity |
| • Government intervention | • Investing in people and local solutions |
| • Targeting deficit | • Tailoring education to the learner |
| • Māori as minority | • Indigeneity and distinctiveness |
| • Instructing and informing | • Collaborating and co-construction. |

Central to the Māori Potential Approach is the concept of Ako. This concept encompasses effective teaching and learning strategies where teachers and other educators learn from the students they teach in a reciprocal fashion, informed by research-based best practices. Ako includes two key concepts, as noted in *Ka Hikitia*.

- <u>Culture counts</u> – knowing, respecting and valuing who students are, where they come from, and building on what they bring with them, and

- <u>Productive partnerships</u> – Māori students, whānau, hapū, iwi and educators sharing knowledge and expertise with each other to produce better mutual outcomes.[15]

*Ka Hikitia's* focus on Māori potential and success, effective teaching and learning strategies that involve students and teachers as learners, and the importance of identity, language, culture, and partnerships serve as the foundation for the strategic directions of this education strategy, with the intent of achieving better outcomes for and with Māori children.

## Māori enjoying education success as Māori

Another essential concept at the heart of *Ka Hikitia* is a set of ideas on Māori self-determination articulated by Professor Mason Durie of Massey University. In his

---

[14] Ministry of Education (2008), *Ka Hikitia-Managing for Success*, p. 19
[15] Ibid. p. 20

keynote address at the Hui Taumata Mātauranga in November 2001, Professor Durie noted that "Māori education policies should aim to equip Māori children and rangatahi to be citizens of world, to live as Māori, and to enjoy a high standard of living."[16] Durie explained in more detail his notion of Māori self-determination when he wrote the following:

> Māori self-determination is not primarily about a divided country or two nation-states, or the rejection of other cultures. Fundamentally, it is about the realisation of collective Māori aspirations. And despite the many faces of contemporary Māori society and the wide range of views that exist, there is nonetheless a high level of agreement that the central goal of tino rangatiratanga is for Māori to govern and enjoy their own resources and to participate fully in the life of the country. Māori want to advance, as Māori, and as citizens of the world.[17]

*Ka Hikitia* emphasises the importance of Māori enjoying education success as Māori and as citizens of the world in its stated intent, as reflected in Secretary for Education Karen Sewell's introductory comments to the strategy document:

> We know that success in education for Māori relies on them achieving that success as Māori. The two are inextricably linked. Māori success is of course New Zealand's success. *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success* reminds us how critical it is that Māori culture is acknowledged and included in the learning process.[18]

In order to achieve both goals, Māori learners must work collaboratively with educators and their extended families to map out pathways that embrace both the cultural distinctiveness of being Māori and the skills, competencies, and knowledge to participate in today's New Zealand.[19] These points are emphasised as essential components throughout the *Ka Hikitia* strategy documents. Māori enjoying education success as Māori will occur when the following "Broad Student Outcomes," as articulated in *Ka Hikitia*, are achieved:

- Māori learners work with others to determine successful learning and education pathways.

- Māori learners excel and successfully realise their cultural distinctiveness and potential.

- Māori learners successfully participate in and contribute to te Ao Māori.

- Māori learners gain the universal skills and knowledge needed to successfully participate in and contribute to Aotearoa New Zealand and the world.[20]

## Focus areas and key levers

*Ka Hikitia* is organised around four focus areas and five key levers for change. The strategy starts with an emphasis on the *foundation years* to ensure that all children have access to high quality early childhood experiences. This area is geared towards

---

[16] Durie (2001), p. 10
[17] Durie (1998), p. 240
[18] Ministry of Education (2008), *Ka Hikitia-Managing for Success*, p. 5
[19] Ibid. p.18
[20] Ibid. p 15

improving participation rates in early education, creating effective transitions from early childhood programmes into school settings, building strong foundations in literacy and numeracy, and establishing effective partnerships between home and school that are focused on improving learning.[21]

The second focus area concentrates on *young people engaged in learning*. This area emphasises effective teaching and learning processes for Māori students in Years 9 and 10, important transition points when many children become disengaged from formal schooling. This focus area looks to develop and nurture effective professional development programmes and leadership that serve and engage Māori student learners. It intends to increase student involvement in their own education and to support whānau-school partnerships focused on student engagement and achievement.[22]

*Māori Language Education* is the third *Ka Hikitia* focus area. The emphasis is on the creation and support of high quality Māori language options through the establishment of Māori-medium schools, effective teaching and learning of the language, improving the supply and quality of teachers who can teach te reo Māori, and building the evidence base in this area.[23]

*Ka Hikitia* includes *organisational success* as its fourth focus area. The emphasis is on strong education leadership in the Ministry and across the sector as it relates to Māori education success by professionals who are confident to work with Māori on these issues. It also calls for increased accountability for Māori student achievement across the education sector, and continuing to use and to act on best evidence that leads to improved Māori achievement.[24] This area pushes the professionals working in the Ministry and across the sector – and not solely those who are Māori, or those in Group Māori or Māori oriented positions – to take responsibility for the success of Māori students.

*Ka Hikitia* outlines five key levers that will bring about intended improvements:

- Increasing professional learning and capability of teachers
- Focusing on responsive and accountable professional leadership
- Setting and resourcing priorities in Māori language education
- Increasing whānau and iwi authority and involvement in education
- Strengthening inter-agency collaboration[25]

Each focus area has its own set of specific actions, targets, and outcomes expected within five years time. There are 69 total actions, 22 targets, 22 expected outcomes, and the four broad student outcomes highlighted in the strategy document.[26]

---

[21] Ibid. p. 20
[22] Ministry of Education (2008), *Ka Hikitia-Managing for Success,* p. 22
[23] Ibid. p. 24
[24] Ibid. p. 27
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid. pp. 30-37

## Evidence on what works for and with Māori students

The *Ka Hikitia* strategy was shaped by research evidence that provides insights into the education of Māori young people, emphasising what works to improve achievement. A separate booklet entitled "Key Evidence and how we must use it to improve system performance for Māori" accompanies the strategy documents. The booklet provides a summative overview of research pertaining to Māori students written in an accessible 'at a glance' style. Its intent is to provide information and evidence that can influence decision-making, planning, and programme design throughout the education system. The evidence booklet cites research indicating that Māori student achievement can be explained by how Māori students are taught and treated in New Zealand classrooms, that socio-economic status does not explain all the differences in achievement between Māori and non-Māori,[27] and that, in general, understanding the culture and background of Māori leads to better teaching and learning for Māori students.[28]

The booklet provides evidence in each of the four *Ka Hikitia* focus areas, supporting the proposed actions in the strategy document. This includes evidence on issues such as improving Māori access to early childcare services, paying close attention to key transition points for Māori, such as in Years 9 and 10, and how focused professional development programmes for educators, and especially those that personalise learning, lead to better results.[29] The evidence also shows that students in Māori-medium programmes are more engaged in their learning (with lower rates of stand-down, unjustified absence and truancy) than Māori students in English-medium schools, and that increased iwi and whānau engagement can lead to greater success for Māori students.[30]

These findings are supported by Adrienne Alton-Lee, Chief Education Advisor for the Best Evidence Synthesis (BES) Programme. BES publications provide the education sector in New Zealand with research evidence on what works, and why, across a range of topic areas including professional development and effective pedagogy. Alton-Lee notes the following regarding the provision of educational services for Māori children, based on available and substantiated evidence:

> The published BESs provide substantial evidence over some decades of inequitable teaching of Māori learners – low inclusion of Māori themes and topics in English-medium education, fewer teacher-interactions, less positive feedback, more negative desists targeted to Māori learners, under-assessment of capability, widespread targeting of Māori learners with ineffective or even counterproductive teaching strategies such as learning style preference matching, failure to uphold mana Māori in education, inadvertent teacher racism, peer racism, mispronounced names, and so on.[31]

---

[27] Alton-Lee (2007), p. 3, explains the work of Professor Richard Harker who concluded in a quantitative study that Māori student performance is influenced by Māori students' ethnicity over and above that of family socio-economic status.
[28] Ministry of Education (2008), *Key evidence and how we must use it to improve system performance for Māori;* pp. 8-9
[29] Ibid. pp. 20-21,24, 33
[30] Ibid. pp. 36, 38, 49
[31] Alton-Lee (2007), p.1

Alton-Lee stresses that the evidence points to the importance of teaching, leadership, and professional development programmes that have shown positive impact on Māori student achievement as ways of leading to Māori student success.

The presentation of evidence as part of the *Ka Hikitia* strategy documents serves multiple purposes. It highlights work that points to the potential of all Māori youth to achieve at higher levels if the education system responds to their needs. It also provides a challenge to Ministry staff and all educators to understand and use evidence to support efforts to improve Māori student outcomes. This is noted in the evidence booklet by the following statement:

> *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success* is primarily a strategy for Ministry staff as we work with others in the education sector. Everyone of us has the responsibility for making the strategy work in everything we do. Essentially, the message of *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success* is that we must pay attention to what the evidence shows works for and with Māori, and we must develop the capacity and capability so that we deliver what *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success* promises.[32]

---

[32] Ibid. p. 10

## 2    MAPPING THE TERRAIN: POLICY CONTEXT

*Ka Hikitia* is a comprehensive policy framework grounded in key concepts that reflect both a Māori worldview and evidence of what works to improve the educational achievement of Māori children. This chapter provides selected descriptive background information and data that help frame the context in which *Ka Hikitia* was introduced along with a sample of student voices talking about the experiences they face as Māori learners in New Zealand schools.

## Background data

### Population and income

According to the New Zealand Census, 4,027,947 people lived in New Zealand as of 2006. Māori at that time numbered 565,329 or 14% of the overall population.[33] The Māori population is expected to reach 760,000 by 2021, an increase of 34% over reported 2006 figures.[34] The overall population of New Zealand is expected to grow to 4.607 million in 2021, representing a 14% increase from 2006.

Population projections by ethnic group for 2021 with predicted percentage increases from 2001 follow in Table 2.

**TABLE 2**
Projected Population in New Zealand in 2021
(Increase in Population from 2001)[35]

| European/Pākeha | 3,230,000  (+5% from 2001) |
| --- | --- |
| Māori | 760,000  (+29%) |
| Asian | 670,000  (+145%) |
| Pacifika | 420,000  (+59%) |

The Māori population is younger than the overall population and remains at lower socio-economic levels than the rest of the country. In 2006, the median age for all people in New Zealand was 35.9 years; the median age of Māori was 22.7 years. Over 35% of the Māori population in 2006 was under 15 years of age as compared to 21% of all people in New Zealand being under 15.[36] The median income in 2006 for all people over 15 years of age was $24,400. The median income for Māori over 15 in 2006 was $20,900. Eighteen percent (18%) of all New Zealanders over 15 have an income of over $50,000 compared to just over 10% of Māori over 15 having the same.

### Student learners

In 2007 there were 190,907 students enrolled in early childhood education programmes in New Zealand (18.7% of whom are Māori), along with 480,609 primary students and 279,297 secondary students.[37] The total number of student

---

[33] Statistics New Zealand (2007), *QuickStats National Highlights*, p.1
[34] Statistics New Zealand (2005), *National Ethnic Population Projections*
[35] Ibid.
[36] Statistics New Zealand (2007), *QuickStats National Highlights*, pp. 2-3
[37] Ministry of Education (2008), *Ministry of Education Annual Report*, pp. 10, 11, 15

learners in 2007 by ethnic group in primary and secondary schools is presented in Table 3.

**TABLE 3**

| Māori | 164,020 (21.6% of total) |
|---|---|
| Pasifika | 69,888 (9.2%) |
| Asian | 62,867 (8.3%) |
| European/Pākehā | 436,717 (57.5%) |

Total Student Learners in NZ Primary and Secondary Schools (2006)[38]

By 2026 close to half of the school-age population in New Zealand will be Māori or Pasifika. Māori will make up 29% of the youth and school age population, while Pasifika will comprise 18% of the same group.[39]

**Key education indicators related to *Ka Hikitia***

Overall data show that on average, high achieving New Zealand students perform at the highest levels in the world in reading, mathematics, and science. Even with a higher proportion of students achieving school qualifications after secondary school and fewer students leaving with minimal qualifications than in other countries, a significant number of New Zealand students do not acquire core skills in numeracy and literacy. In comparison to other high performing countries, New Zealand has a higher proportion of students who achieve at the lower levels of literacy and numeracy. Māori and Pasifika students, in particular, are less likely than others to reach reading benchmarks. On the whole, New Zealand's education system performs less well for Māori students.[40]

In this context, there are several key indicators that pertain to Māori student success. This information includes the degree to which Māori are accessing early childhood opportunities, the extent to which Māori are engaged in their schooling processes, and the opportunities that Māori students have for further education upon completing secondary school. Selected examples of the *Ka Hikitia* targets with regard to these data are presented below. All these data show improvements for Māori students over time, yet the gaps between Māori and other New Zealand students persist.

*Ka Hikitia* stresses the importance of the foundation years, where young learners need to participate in early childhood education. Table 4 shows the percentage of Year 1 learners who participate in early childhood education. **The *Ka Hikitia* target is to move Māori participation in early childhood from 90% to 95% by 2012**.

---

[38] Ministry of Education (2008), *Ngā Haeata Mātauranga/Annual Report in Māori Education*, p. 65
[39] Statistics New Zealand (2008), *National Ethnic Population Projections:2006-2026*, p. 2
[40] Ministry of Education (2008), *Briefing to the Incoming Minister*, pp. 4-5

**TABLE 4**
Percentage of Year 1 Learners
Who Attended Early Childhood Education[41]

|       | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Māori | 85.3 | 86.5 | 88.4 | 89.3 | 89.9 | 89.9 | 90.6 |
| All   | 93.2 | 94.0 | 95.1 | 95.5 | 95.6 | 96.0 | 96.0 |

Māori students represent 18.7% of all children in early childhood settings. Only 8.1% of all certified early childhood teachers in licensed settings are Māori.[42]

Once children and young people are enrolled in school, the intent is to engage them so that they can achieve at the highest possible level. The indicators that follow provide evidence of the extent to which students ultimately become disengaged in their schooling. There are multiple ways to interpret data on stand-downs and suspensions. Obviously from a school practitioner's perspective it is necessary to have procedures to manage behaviour in a school setting. Yet the data in Tables 5 and 6 indicate that a disproportionate percentage of Māori youth are missing out on their opportunity to learn in secondary school.

**TABLE 5**
Stand-downs per 1000 Learners[43]

|       | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Māori | 52.7 | 53.8 | 56.6 | 55.8 | 57.9 | 59.3 | 55.3 |
| All   | 25.9 | 26.3 | 28.3 | 28.6 | 30.4 | 31.3 | 29.3 |

**TABLE 6**
Suspensions per 1000 Learners[44]

|       | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Māori | 17.4 | 17.1 | 16.3 | 15.0 | 16.2 | 15.4 | 14.4 |
| All   | 7.3  | 7.3  | 7.0  | 6.7  | 7.2  | 7.0  | 6.6  |

The evidence further indicates that Māori students leave school with limited or no qualifications at rates that exceed other ethnic groups. In New Zealand, 15-year-old students can apply for an exemption to leave school early. In 2007, Māori students seeking early exemptions (73 per 1000 students) far exceeded that of Pasifika (33 per 1000 students), European/Pākehā (23 per 1000 students), and Asian 15-year-old students (1 per 1000). [45] In 2007, 62.6% of all Māori students stayed in secondary school past 16.5 years of age, with only 39.5% of Māori students staying past 17.5 years of age. ***Ka Hikitia* sets a target of having 50% of all 17.5 year old Māori students staying in school by 2012.[46]**

Another key indicator of student success is the extent to which young people earn qualifications to enter tertiary educational institutions. Table 7 indicates the status of

---

[41] Ibid. p. 39
[42] Ibid. p. 41
[43] Ibid. p.74
[44] Ibid.
[45] Education Counts (2008), *Early leaving exemptions,* p. 3
[46] Education Counts (2009), *Retention of students in senior secondary schools*

Māori students compared to all others who had little or no formal attainment when leaving secondary school.

**TABLE 7**
Percentage of School Leavers with Little or No Formal Attainment[47]

|       | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
|-------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Māori | 30.2 | 25.4 | 25.0 | 21.8 | 10.1 |
| All   | 15.3 | 12.8 | 12.9 | 11.1 | 4.9  |

Table 8 shows the percentage of school leavers who have obtained qualifications to attend university.

**TABLE 8**
Percentage of School Leavers Qualified to Attend University[48]

|       | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
|-------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Māori | 8.9  | 11.7 | 11.9 | 14.8 | 18.3 |
| All   | 28.7 | 32.1 | 32.9 | 36.3 | 39.0 |

Table 9 indicates the percentage of school leavers with National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) Level 2 qualifications upon leaving secondary school. **The *Ka Hikitia* target is to have 55% of all Māori student leavers achieving at or above NCEA Level 2 by 2012.**

**TABLE 9**
Percentage of School Leavers with NCEA Level 2 or Above[49]

|       | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
|-------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Māori | 28.8 | na   | 32.7 | 36.7 | 43.9 |
| All   | 52.6 | na   | 57.1 | 60.2 | 65.5 |

It is interesting to note that in 2007, 82.7% of Māori students at Māori-medium schools met the literacy and numeracy standards for NCEA Level 1 as contrasted with 65.5% of Māori students meeting the same standards in other schools. Similar results were evident in 2005 and 2006.[50] Instruction that focuses on language, culture, and identity may explain these findings.

Although the selected data in this section are not exhaustive of the information gathered and used to frame *Ka Hikitia* they do show both the progress made and the work to be done to improve outcomes for Māori young people throughout the New Zealand education system.

## Ministry context

The Ministry of Education, as an organisation, underwent a dramatic change in structure and operations in 1989 when the Tomorrow's Schools reforms changed the

---

[47]Education Counts (2008), *Percentage of school leavers with little or no formal attainment*. The substantial decrease in 2007 is a result of changing the way School Leaver data are now calculated.
[48] Ministry of Education (2008), *Ngā Haeata Mātauranga/Annual Report in Māori Education* , p. 74
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid. p. 112

way schools in New Zealand operated. Prior to 1989, the New Zealand Department of Education was responsible for education policy and the operation of all New Zealand public schools. Primary schools were governed by Department of Education controlled regional education boards. Secondary schools had elected Boards but operated under the watch of the Department. The Department directly paid teachers and could earmark operating funds for specific purposes. Accountability oversight occurred when Department Inspectors visited schools to rate the school and its teachers while providing assistance on teaching and learning matters. Students attended school primarily in their home attendance zone. The Department of Education established and governed the curriculum nationally.

After 1989, the Department shifted into the current much smaller Ministry of Education with its primary focus to provide policy advice to the sitting Minister of Education. Schools became individual, self-governing entities, overseen by locally elected school boards. The Ministry funds schools through block grants, paying most teacher salaries directly. Accountability shifted from the Inspectors to an independent Education Review Office which publically monitors and reports on school performance. Parents and students have the choice of what school to attend, including schools out of their home attendance zone. On curriculum and other policy issues, the Ministry creates frameworks and statements that schools enact within their self-governing authority.[51]

Policy frameworks such as *Ka Hikitia* provide guidelines for schools but given that authority for governance has devolved to self-governing schools such frameworks are not necessarily considered mandates for action. The challenge for the current Ministry is to provide direction for change in an environment where schools make their own decisions. As one top ministry official mentioned in an interview: "we have to be very good in the art of the indirect." [52] That said, schools are obligated to enact government policy as denoted by the National Education Goals (NEGs), which set desirable achievements and policy objectives, and the National Administrative Guidelines (NAGs), which provide directions to Boards of Trustees related to school management, planning and reporting. Policy frameworks like *Ka Hikitia*, if they are embedded in the NAGs and NEGs, become part of the rules and regulations governing New Zealand's primary and secondary schools.

During the 2007/08 year the Ministry developed and began implementation of at least 14 strategic programmes and actions, releasing documents on the following issues, according to the Ministry of Education Annual Report:[53]

- New Zealand Curriculum (The curriculum provides directions for key competencies and achievement objectives in the arts, English, health and physical education, mathematics and statistics, science, social science, and technology for English-medium teaching and learning in years 1-11. Curriculum guidelines for teaching and learning Te Rēo Māori in English-medium schools were released in early 2009.)

- Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success: 2008-2012

---

[51] Fiske and Ladd (2000), p. 36.
[52] Author interview, 26 February 2009
[53] Ministry of Education (2008), *Ministry of Education Annual Report*, p. 7

- Pasifika Education Plan 2008-12

- Schools Plus

- New Zealand Skills Strategy

- Tertiary Education Strategy 2007-12

- International Education Agenda 2007-12

- New Zealand Disability Strategy: Making a World of Difference – Whakanui Oranga

- Sustainability (a shared work plan on waste reduction, reducing carbon emissions, energy efficiency, and procurement)

- Free Early Childhood Education

- Initial Teacher Education

- Industrial Relations (13 collective bargaining settlements were settled in 2007/08).

- Leadership in Schools

- Best Evidence Synthesis

Several new and very significant initiatives will be released to the education sector in 2010. The Ministry is currently developing achievement standards for the sector in literacy and numeracy. The standards will be coupled with release of updated NEGs and NAGs.[54] The standards, NEGs, and NAGs will be policy frameworks that will govern New Zealand schools in the years to come.

The Ministry of Education spent $10.2 billion in the delivery of education services in 2007/08.[55] The development and implementation of *Ka Hikitia* cost the Ministry $817,000 from its early development in 2005-06 through its release in the 2007-08 fiscal year. Costs included payments for staff salaries, consultants, meetings and broad consultations, and printing.[56] Included in these costs were expenditures for badges that the Ministry distributed to schools nationwide. The badges, displaying popular phrases, were intended to help teachers and principals engage Māori students in discussions about their school experiences and to demonstrate educator commitment to Māori student success. The badges arrived at schools in the middle of principal bargaining rounds and quickly became a proxy for those who criticise how the Ministry uses its resources. For instance, the Otago Daily Times reported the following on 19 June 2008:

> The Ministry of Education is defending printing badges to promote its new Māori education strategy, a move derided by some principals as gimmicky and infantile… Principals have complained about the badges, which sport phrases such as "I love Māori success" and "Wassup!."… Ministry deputy secretary for Māori (Education), Apryll Parata, said she was disappointed in the principals' criticisms. The badges had been designed to prompt discussion and

---

[54] Ministry of Education (2007), *The New Zealand Curriculum*, p. 43
[55] Ministry of Education (2008), *Ministry of Education Annual Report*, p. 45
[56] Ministry of Education (2009), *Summary Worksheet, Costs Involved in Funding of Strategy: Ka Hikitia-Managing for Success*

engagement between teachers and students, using language young people used. They promoted the underlying message of the strategy – realising Māori potential. "And on the badges it simply says things like I love Māori success. If that's considered gimmicky then I think we've got bigger problems than we may have thought in education," Ms Parata said… Secondary Principals Association president Peter Gall said the costly packs came at a time schools were crying out for money. "Don't get me wrong. *Ka Hikitia*, I believe, is a really good, solid strategy," he said. While some of the material in the packs was useful, the marketing material and badges were a "load of nonsense." "Quite frankly I think it's infantile."[57]

Despite the criticisms of the *Ka Hikitia* badges, concerns regarding the overall purpose of the strategy were not voiced publically or in the press.

Additional operating dollars were not set aside to implement *Ka Hikitia*. Those who crafted the policy framework have strong beliefs that the work of *Ka Hikitia* is part of the core business of the Ministry and New Zealand schools and should therefore be funded out of core operating expenses. *Ka Hikitia* is not intended to be a specialised programme, added on to regular education offerings. Rather, *Ka Hikitia* provides a framework for all educators, especially teachers and principals, to conduct their core business responsibilities as professionals with the resources regularly allocated to them. The intent is to decouple achievement gains from being contingent solely on additional resources. As Apryll Parata, Ministry of Education Deputy Secretary for Māori Education told me, *Ka Hikitia* is "not about a shift in resources, but a shift in behaviour and attitudes. We have to use the money we have."[58]

## Political context

*Ka Hikitia* was developed and then launched both at Parliament and in the broader community when the New Zealand government was led by Helen Clark's Labour Party. The Minister of Education at that time, Chris Carter, along with then Minister of Māori Affairs and Associate Minister of Education, Parekura Horomia, initially launched *Ka Hikitia* at Parliament in April 2008. Minister Carter, in his speech at the Parliament launch stated that "Māori learners have potential, they are culturally advantaged, they are inherently capable. They need to be successful and they have the right to do so as Māori."[59] He went on to note that *Ka Hikitia* is "the core business of the whole education system, a professional response. All schools, all teachers, all communities must step up."[60]

In May 2008, the second part of the dual launching of *Ka Hikitia* occurred at a community education forum hosted by Ngāti Whakaue in Rotorua. The Ngāti Whakaue iwi, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, had made significant investments in schools in the Rotorua region primarily for programmes geared to improve student literacy and numeracy, and its work in education reflected the guiding principles of *Ka Hikitia*. Associate Minister Horomia attended the event,

---

[57] 'Ministry Defends 'Infantile' Māori Education Badges,' *Otago Daily Times Online*, 19 June 2008
[58] Author interview, 4 March 2009
[59] "Launch of *Ka Hikitia-Managing for Success*" (2008) speech by Minister of Education Hon Chris Carter
[60] Ibid.

along with the Ministry of Education's entire leadership team, iwi, whānau, hapū, Board of Trustee members, students, teachers and principals, and local and national government officials.[61] The dual launchings, and especially the community event, celebrated the bicultural context of *Ka Hikitia*, signalling the importance of the strategy to the education sector and all New Zealanders. Minister Horomia noted the importance of the community launching by stating that "the community, and Māori in particular, were integral in developing *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success*. It is appropriate therefore to bring the strategy into the community through this launch."[62]

The New Zealand Government shifted in November 2008 with the election of John Key as Prime Minister, bringing the National Party to power. The first actions of the new Prime Minister with regard to education focused specifically on improving outcomes through his intent to establish national standards and to institute direct reporting to parents on how well their children are doing according to the standards.[63] Government support for the standards was indicated by the current Minister of Education, Anne Tolley, when she stated that standards development is a "first step in the implementation of one of this government's flagship policies in education," emphasising that "the standards will set clear and consistent expectations for students' achievement in literacy and numeracy in English and Māori-medium settings." [64]

In February and early March 2009 Ministry of Education staff worked closely with Minister Tolley to build her understanding and support of *Ka Hikitia*. In briefing materials Ministry officials pointed out that the education system is not working for Māori learners. They noted that the system must change to meet the needs of Māori learners, and that *Ka Hikitia* serves as the master plan for such improvement. Through education sector ownership, leadership and accountability for *Ka Hikitia*, Ministry staff argued that Māori students will achieve the new national standards in numeracy and literacy.[65] Ministry staff crafted key messages for the Minister that stressed Māori student achievement as an urgent issue for New Zealand, focusing on the need to change the education system to meet learner needs, and emphasising that what works for Māori students will work for all New Zealand students.[66] *Ka Hikitia's* focus on outcomes and actions matched the new government's interests, resulting in Minister Tolley endorsing the policy framework and speaking widely on its behalf.


## Student voices

*Ka Hikitia* directly reflects the voice of Māori students who are enrolled in New Zealand primary and secondary schools. During the consultation phase that contributed to the development of *Ka Hikitia,* students provided feedback on their experiences in school and their hopes for the future as a way to shape the policy framework. A 17-year-old secondary student from Waikato noted the importance of succeeding in school:

[61] Ministry of Education (2008), *Ka Hikitia-Managing for Success Community Launch and Materials, May 2008*

[62] 'Strategy Launch Reflects Community Focus,' *Scoop Independent News*, 15 May 2008

[63] New Zealand National Party (2009), "*Delivering on our election promises – Our first 100 days*" p. 2

[64] "*Consultation Dates on National Standards: Minister of Education Hon Anne Tolley*," (2009)

[65] Ministry of Education (2009), *Ministerial Briefing: Māori Education*, Slide 5

[66] Ministry of Education (2009), *Ka Hikitia-Managing for Success: Ownership, Leadership and Accountability, 6 March 2009,* Appendix pp. 1-8

I think being successful is a thing Māori are good at, they just need to realise their potential. I also think that there is a higher risk of Māori teens who think that if they fail, well there is no use in trying again. I feel being successful as Māori is being proud of who you are and the decisions you have made. And creating the inspiration to let you dream out loud. I feel I am successful because I am trying as hard as I can to reach my goals and in years to come I hope to help not just Māori in particular but others as well.[67]

A 14-year-old secondary student from Wellington noted the importance of identity when stating the following:

I feel proud and (am) not afraid of what people think. Māori have come a long way to where they are today. I am one of the only Māori students at my school and I am just as good as all the Pākehās at my school both school wise and sports wise.[68]

A 14-year-old secondary student offered commentary on what schools could do to improve student outcomes:

Schools should listen to our ideas more and hear us out because we don't like how they teach. Schools could let them (whānau) know what's going on a lot more and communicate because I personally got away with not doing anything most of my school life though lack of communication… Well I got expelled at year 10 twice in two terms. Teachers didn't listen and yet again (it) came down to lack of communication. They seem not to bother and just ignore students like me even if we did ask for help and guidance.[69]

Positive relationships with teachers are critical components of success according to one 15-year-old student from Waikato:

Currently I am not doing very good in subjects. It is because of my attitudes towards the teachers teaching it. I know that should not be the problem. But no matter what… succeeding is having a teacher I like. Some of my teachers have made me feel differently about their subject they are teaching me. For example if I don't like the teacher I do not do as well as I could be doing. So, if relationships with teachers were better I wouldn't mind teachers so much.[70]

In their book, *Culture Speaks*, Russell Bishop and Mere Berryman provide parallel narratives from students on their experiences in school. The selections below provide the voices of students on teachers needing to understand more about Māori culture, setting high expectations for every student, and engaging Māori youth. For instance, one student notes the importance of teachers knowing and understanding Māori culture and knowing how to connect with Māori students:

The teacher I liked best wasn't Māori, but he could have been. He knew all our stuff. Like, he knew how to say my name. He never did dumb things like sitting on tables or patting you on the head [laughter]. He knew about fantails in a room. He knew about tangi. He never stepped over girls legs. All that sort of stuff. He never made us sit with people we didn't want to and he never made a fuss if the girls couldn't swim or do PE. He expected us to work and

[67] Ministry of Education (2007), *Ka Hikitia Feedback Folder*, Student Feedback - 12 October 2007
[68] Ministry of Education (2007), *Ka Hikitia Feedback Folder*, Student Feedback - 8 November 2007
[69] Ministry of Education (2007), *Ka Hikitia Feedback Folder*, Student Feedback - 29 October 2007
[70] Ministry of Education (2007), *Ka Hikitia Feedback Folder*, Student Feedback - 12 October 2007

behave well… He always came and saw our whānau at home, more than once during the year. He invited the whānau into our room anytime. We went on picnics and class trips, and the whānau came along. We always planned our lessons together. He was choice.[71]

Another student commented on different expectations teachers have for students:

Well, most of the teachers -- they tell Pākehā kids that their work is not to standard, and they'll need to see their parents if it doesn't improve. They don't say that to us! It's like they don't expect our whānau to get us going. Nah! It's not like that, they just don't think Māori have the brains to do better. Nah! They're scared of the whānau or think it will be a waste of time.[72]

Students also want to be respected for what they know and experience as Māori, as noted by one student talking amongst a group of students:

We do a unit on respecting other's cultures. Some teachers who aren't Māori try to tell us what Māori do about things like a tangi. It's crap! I'm a Māori. They should ask me about Māori things. I could tell them why we do things in a certain way. I've got the goods on this, but they never ask me. I'm a dumb Māori I suppose. Yet they asked the Asian girl about their culture. They never ask us about ours. Some of us here have been brought up by the olds [Nana, Aunty, Koro]. We know about this stuff. We can explain it better than the teacher can. They don't think we know anything.[73]

I had the opportunity to talk to a group of Māori students in a secondary school near Auckland. The young people provided comments that reflect the students' contributions to the development of *Ka Hikitia* provided above and what Bishop and Berryman discovered through their more extensive conversations. For instance, one student noted the support she receives from her teachers at her school:

Our teachers give us faith for the future, for our opportunities. (Our) teachers make sure we are doing what we should do… Teachers are open, the teachers are like second parents.[74]

Student voice as well as classroom observations are key components of programmes geared to improve Māori achievement, as discussed in the following chapter.

---

[71] Bishop and Berryman (2006), p 10
[72] Ibid. p 33
[73] Ibid. p76
[74] Author interview, 27 March 2009

# 3    CIRCUITOUS ROUTES: THE INFLUENCE OF PRACTICE ON POLICY

Often policy travels in circuitous routes. Rather than following the rational top-down plan where policy is issued from a central authority to be implemented by practitioners, policy is frequently influenced by experience and expertise grounded in school and classroom practice. Evidence from school level programmes and interventions help shape policy directives developed by ministries and education departments. This chapter provides two examples of programmes that helped shape *Ka Hikitia* by showing progress for Māori students, as well as a third approach that principals and lead teachers are taking to make improvements on Māori student achievement. The chapter concludes with an overview of the common components of these programmes and how they contribute to what several New Zealand- and US-based academics refer to as *sensemaking*[75] in policy and practice.

One of the three following examples, Te Kotahitanga, combines improvements in teaching and learning through the establishment of culturally responsive contexts for learning. The other two examples, the Literacy Professional Development Programme and the Schooling Improvement Cluster, provide insights into instructional practices that ultimately focus on Māori student achievement without directly addressing culturally appropriate contexts for learning. All three examples reflect guiding principles of *Ka Hikitia*, yet combining instructional improvement with classroom and school contexts that are culturally responsive, particularly for Māori students, remains a challenge in the implementation journey of *Ka Hikitia*.

## Literacy Professional Development Programme

The Literacy Professional Development Programme (LPDP) provides opportunities for primary school teachers to work directly with facilitators to examine student performance, classroom practices and beliefs, and survey data from students, principals and school literacy leaders on the teaching and learning of literacy. In a typical LPDP setting, the facilitator leads school-based professional learning with teachers, the literacy leader, and school leadership for two years, with the expectation that the school practitioners will lead these processes thereafter. The facilitators help teachers see the difference between classroom goals for student learning and actual student performance. When teachers see, through the use of assessment data, classroom observations and survey data, that they are not reaching classroom goals, they then work with the facilitators to develop action plans for changes in their classroom practices.[76] As noted in the LPDP evaluation, this programme is focused on establishing "inquiry into learning – building an informed knowledge, evidence, and professional learning base… building knowledge and implementing change through active learning… and evaluating and sustaining change."[77]

LPDP demonstrated significant positive results on student achievement in 2006/07. All groups of children showed greater than expected outcomes in literacy, with the rate of progress for the lower 20% of students twice that of the entire group of

[75] Sensemaking involves processes where those who implement a particular policy have opportunities, with colleagues, to interpret and understand its implications for their work.
[76] Timperley, Wilson, Barrar and Fung (2007), pp. 235-237
[77] Learning Media Ltd. (2006), p. 6

students. All ethnic groups showed progress in reading that exceeded expectations, except for Year 6 and 7 Māori students. Schools with a writing focus showed rates of progress exceeding expectations for Māori in all age groups. The performance data for schools with a reading *and* writing focus indicate that although the rate of progress for Māori 5 and 6 year olds is similar or better than the cohort group as a whole, the mean score for Māori at this age level is one year behind the cohort on all tasks other than letter identification and word reading.[78] These data show progress beyond expectation in many areas for all students while highlighting areas that need more attention such as reading for Māori students in Years 6 and 7. These sorts of data help LPDP facilitators, literacy leaders and teachers understand where they are making progress, and where they need to focus attention in their instruction to make further improvements.

This particular programme provides an evidence- and inquiry-based approach to professional development for teachers responsible for literacy. It challenges educators to examine their own beliefs and practices through a facilitated process, developing new practices and tools to push beyond deficit thinking about young people not succeeding. One LPDP facilitator described the process to me as follows:

> There are loads of data. (We ask) what are our core beliefs – if all kids can achieve, then what do the data tell us? (LPDP) is getting schools to notice beliefs and practices. (We) can get performance to change by building an evidence base (and asking), where is my underachievement and what can I do to change this?[79]

The LPDP also creates opportunities for educators to be problem solvers. When I asked another colleague associated with the programme to describe what happens when data such as those on Māori students in Years 6 and 7 become available, I was told:

> A couple times growth is not there. As soon as we see it, it is an issue. At some grade levels the Māori increase wasn't as great. Because (LPDP) is an inquiry process, (there is) an immediate response… (We are) moving from ticking boxes to doing focused conversations… There is a feedback loop throughout the project.[80]

The Teacher Professional Learning and Development Best Evidence Synthesis (BES), issued by the Ministry of Education, summarises how the LPDP works, and how teachers make it work, to improve practice.

> The teachers were engaged and had involvement in all aspects of the professional development. Through the needs analysis process they identified their common learning needs, developed an action plan to address these, and evaluated and re-evaluated their practice through observations and feedback and in light of student performance. The facilitator's role was to support this process by analysing and presenting relevant data, directing teachers to appropriate resources, and training key personnel so that they could maintain the momentum of the new learning. The theory that teachers developed during the process evolved in response to new knowledge applied within their

---

[78] Learning Media Ltd. (2008), p. 21
[79] Author interview, 3 March 3 2009
[80] Author interview, 26 March 2009

classroom contexts. Teachers were motivated to review not only their day-to-day teaching, but also the beliefs underpinning it, and worked together as a learning community with a common goal and focus.[81]

## Te Kotahitanga

Te Kotahitanga is a professional development programme at the secondary level that emerged from the work of Russell Bishop and Mere Berryman, who gathered Māori student narratives on how Māori experience school for their book *Culture Speaks*. Bishop and Berryman recognised that teachers frequently stereotype Māori students, using deficit theory to attribute academic performance difficulties to home environments and socio-economic status. They began with the assumption that if they could gather the voices of Māori students, their whānau, their teachers, and their principals they may learn more about the challenges Māori students face in school environments. What they found is that students and their whānau need more effective learning relationships between students and teachers, described by the authors as a "culturally appropriate and responsive context for learning in the classroom."[82]

Bishop and Berryman discuss in detail their own learnings from analysis of the narratives that make up *Culture Speaks* and that led them to create Te Kotahitanga:

> …(W)e learnt that positive classroom relationships and interactions were built upon positive non-deficit thinking by teachers about students and their families. This kind of thinking sees the students as having a rich store of experiences that are relevant to classroom interactions. Teachers see themselves as being able to solve problems that come their way, and as having recourse to skills and knowledge that can help all of their students. They take the position that all of their students can achieve, no matter what.

> …We learnt that this positive thinking was fundamental to the creation of learning contexts in classrooms where young Māori people were able to be themselves as Māori. In these classrooms, Māori students' humour was acceptable, students could care for and learn with each other, and being different was acceptable. The power of Māori students own self-determination was fundamental to classroom relations and interactions.

> …(T)eachers were very clear that their ability to teach and interact effectively with Māori students in their classrooms was closely tied to their having positive, non-judgmental relationships with Māori students; seeing Māori students as being self-determining, culturally located individuals; and seeing themselves as being an inextricable part of the learning conversations, not only as the speaker, but as one of the participants.[83]

Out of this effort, they created the Effective Teaching Profile (ETP) that drives the Te Kotahitanga professional development programme. The ETP stipulates that effective teachers of Māori students: "positively and vehemently reject deficit theorising as a means of explaining Māori students' educational attainment levels" and "know and understand how to bring about change in Māori students educational achievement and

[81] Timperley, Wilson, Barrar and Fung (2007), p. 237
[82] Bishop and Berryman (2006), p. 273
[83] Ibid. p 268

are professionally committed to doing so."[84] Effective teachers of Māori students practice the following in their classrooms:

- **Manaakitanga** – They care for students as culturally located human beings.

- **Mana motuhake** – They care for the performance of their students.

- **Whakapiringatanga** – They are able to create a secure, well-managed learning environment by incorporating routine pedagogical knowledge with pedagogical imagination.

- **Wānanga** – They are able to engage in effective teaching interactions with Māori students in Māori.

- **Ako** – They can use strategies that promote effective teaching strategies and relationships with their learners.

- **Kotahitanga** – They promote, monitor, and reflect on outcomes that lead to improvements in achievement for Māori.[85]

The Te Kotahitanga professional development programme is now in its sixth phase. Participating schools attend a three-day hui at the beginning of each phase to review narratives such as those noted in the previous chapter, and to learn how to apply the Effective Teacher Profile in their settings. This hui and subsequent professional development activities provide participating practitioners with opportunities to reflect on, and not bypass, their own assumptions and values about Māori student learners, leading to shifts in classroom practice.

The initial hui is followed by classroom observations by school-based Te Kotahitanga facilitators four times a year. Facilitators use an observational tool based on the Effective Teaching Profile. Teachers receive direct individual feedback from the observations on their practices and approaches to Māori students from the facilitators, followed by individual and group co-construction meetings to set goals and determine next steps in their classrooms. Teachers also have the opportunity for targeted shadow coaching on particular strategies they are implementing. The information gathered through the observations, co-construction meetings, and shadow coaching is explicitly not used to evaluate teacher performance. Similar to the LPDP, Te Kotahitanga has created a regular inquiry process using data and tools to help teachers reflect upon and improve their practices.[86]

The programme benefits from the essential role played by the kaumatua whakaruruhau for the Te Kotahitanga Research unit – Rangiwhakaehu Walker, Morehu Ngatoko and Mate Reweti. These three individuals provide guidance for the programme to ensure that it is culturally safe, reflective of Māori knowledge, and able to meet the needs of Māori students. They also help connect the programme broadly to the Māori community.

Data reported from Te Kotahitanga schools in 2004/05 show Māori students more engaged in their classrooms (78% of Māori students engaged in 80-100% of lessons, up from 59%); attendance up and unexcused absences down; stand-downs decreasing

---

[84] Bishop and Berryman (2006), p. 273
[85] Ibid.
[86] Bishop, O'Sullivan and Berryman (2009 - in press), p. 20

in six schools, and suspensions decreasing across all of the schools. In 2006, the first group of students in Te Kotahitanga schools were in Year 11, the year when students take the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) exams. Year 11 Māori students in Te Kotahitanga schools reaching NCEA Level 1 qualifications in 2006 represented a 16.4% increase over similar students the previous year. Bishop recently presented data stating that "we now have evidence that there is a statistically significant correlation between changes in teacher-student interactions and Māori student numeracy and literacy achievement in both Phase 3 and Phase 4 (Te Kotahitanga) schools."[87]

The Teacher Professional Learning and Development Best Evidence Synthesis (BES) summarises how Te Kotahitanga works, and how teachers and other school-based practitioners make it work, to improve practice.

> The teachers started by evaluating the effectiveness of their practice for their students, accepting responsibility for the effect of their teaching, becoming more self-critical, and taking greater agency. The Effective Teaching Profile provided a clear focus for teacher and facilitator efforts. It was used as a source of knowledge and to inform observations and follow-up discussions. Teachers had sufficient time to make the necessary changes, as well as support that helped them to maintain focus and refine practice. Rather than implement a programme, they reconstructed their practice based on new principles, knowledge, and understandings.[88]

Te Kotahitanga facilitators play a key role in the success of this programme, especially as they learn to have courageous conversations with their colleagues after observing classroom practice. One facilitator reflected on their role in the following manner: "You have to build a relationship (with the teacher you are observing). I am there to support and we are all learners." [89] Another facilitator noted:

> Facilitators challenge respectfully. We have to be able to relate in a personal and professional relationship to encourage risk. All is based on evidence – what is seen in the classroom. The (observation) tools help dialogue in a way that is safer. Facilitators are people who care about people, and keep mana in tact.[90]

## Schooling improvement cluster

The Ministry of Education supports clusters of schools to work on initiatives to improve student achievement. These schooling improvement projects focus on numeracy and literacy. During my fellowship I met with, interviewed, and observed principals and the facilitator of one schooling improvement cluster focused on Māori student achievement. This cluster includes six primary schools, one intermediate school, and one secondary school serving students across the socio-economic spectrum. Four of these schools implemented the LPDP to improve literacy achievement. The cluster lead team includes lead teachers and principals from each

---

[87] Bishop (2009), *Te Kotahitanga Leadership Hui, 6-8 May 2009,* Powerpoint Slide 21

[88] Timperley, Wilson, Barrar and Fung (2007), p. 262

[89] Author interview, 24 March 2009

[90] Author interview, 24 March 2009. Mana is an all-encompassing term which in this context refers to one's integrity or self-esteem.

school, along with the cluster facilitator and Ministry of Education representatives from Schooling Improvement. The principals and lead teachers are responsible for cluster focused work at their individual schools.

This particular cluster chose improving Māori student outcomes as one primary objective, focusing on improving literacy. The cluster adopted an inquiry model, parallel to the inquiry work described above that underlies the LPDP and Te Kotahitanga programmes. The overall purpose of this cluster is highlighted in the contractual agreement between the participating schools and the facilitator.

> The overall purpose of this project is to re-position principals and lead teachers into a much more critically challenging instructional leadership role. This also means the… facilitator's role will change to one of critiquing and monitoring the roles of principals and lead teachers… Work over the past few years with (this) cluster has supported teachers and school leaders to learn how to analyse information, which has created an excellent knowledge and skill base for inquiry learning… To achieve the accelerated achievement gains, the cluster work needs to be more challenging. Cluster leaders need to include challenge and critique of their own and their teachers' practice in order to get those gains… This direction setting fits with the intent to step up things for Māori students via *Ka Hikitia*, which is a critical framework for the many Māori students involved (in) cluster work… (The) facilitators have an important role to play in creating a more critically challenging culture. Facilitation services will aim to accelerate achievement gains by mainly monitoring the skills and knowledge development of principals and lead teachers.[91]

This cluster established a Māori design team to focus specifically on Māori student achievement. The design team, with the facilitator, adapted an inquiry cycle originally developed by University of Auckland Professor Helen Timperley to guide their work on Māori student achievement. This inquiry process asked cluster participants the following questions and encouraged the following actions.

- **What are the learning needs of the cluster's Māori students?**
  - What do we know about Māori students' literacy achievement? Patterns, strengths, areas of concern?
  - How does the data compare with cluster benchmarks, national norms and curriculum expectation?

- **What are the leaders' own learning needs?**
  - How have we contributed to the existing Māori literacy student achievement data?
  - What do we need to know more about so that we can respond to the Māori student achievement data?
  - What sources of evidence/knowledge can we utilise?
  - What do we, as leaders, need to learn more about to lead further inquiry?

---

[91] Ministry of Education (2009) Schooling Improvement Internal Documents, *Agreement to Provide Services in Relation to Evidenced-Based Inquiry Professional*, 4 March 2009

- **Engagement in further leadership/literacy learning to deepen knowledge.**
    - Leadership meetings.

- **Leadership Actions**
    - In our own schools
    - Across the cluster

- **What has been the impact of our changed actions?**
    - How effective has what we have learned and done been in promoting the learning our Māori students: in our own schools; across the cluster.[92]

The cluster leadership team asked schools to gather and analyse data on student achievement, classroom interactions and observations, student voice, and on the quality of school/whānau interactions. They also pushed themselves to ask what they might do differently if they used a culturally responsive lens. Data reported in notes from cluster leadership and from the facilitator indicate improvement in a variety of literacy domains (including word recognition, sentence comprehension, paragraph comprehension, and vocabulary range) across cluster schools and across grade levels for Māori students. Even though mean stanine[93] levels in literacy increased for Māori students at all levels in the primary schools, these levels lagged behind mean stanine levels for all students in the cluster.[94]

The inquiry process has led practitioners in the cluster to ask fundamental questions about classroom practice. Cluster leaders are exploring the extent to which instructional practices, the use of particular texts, and assignments in general are culturally relevant for all students. The facilitator noted that cluster leadership is now prepared to ask "what are we doing for New Zealand European students that works for those kids, and how do we change our practice to make a difference for others?"[95] One of the cluster leaders noted that the inquiry process results in schools "using data and evidence to inform decision making… Inquiry will lead to action and follow-through."[96]Another principal noted the following about the focused attention on Māori student achievement in the cluster:

> We needed to develop values and beliefs as a school, values and beliefs that are culturally responsive… (recognizing that) what works for Māori works for all… Although we are aware that Māori student achievement is lower, the unpacking in detail is essential. We realise that we have to turn this around.[97]

The cluster's strategic plan for 2009 is focused on ensuring that all students make the transition to secondary school prepared to succeed, closing evident achievement gaps in literacy, and embedding inquiry-based practices across all cluster schools. Cluster

---

[92] Ministry of Education (2009), Schooling Improvement Internal Documents, *Leader inquiry and knowledge building cycle, Cluster Leadership Group*, March 2008
[93] Stanine levels provide test score rankings for students in comparison to other students taking the same test on a scale of one to nine, with a low of one and a high of nine.
[94] Ministry of Education (2009), Schooling Improvement Internal Documents, *Cluster notes* provided by facilitator, 4 March 2009
[95] Author interview, 4 March 2009
[96] Author interview, 3 March 2009
[97] Author interview, 3 April 2009

schools will work to enact effective teaching practices, use evidence and data to drive decisions, develop leadership to support improved teaching and learning, and establish better partnerships with whānau and community members.[98]

## Understanding practice and policy through sensemaking processes

The three examples above use an inquiry- and evidenced-based approach to school improvement. Te Kotahitanga focuses on the importance of Māori culture and identity stressing how practitioners need to re-position themselves to provide culturally responsive instruction. The LPDP and the Schooling Improvement Cluster start with literacy instruction and achievement, building reflective practices that can result in practitioners addressing Māori student achievement. In each case practitioners reflect on their own classroom practices and beliefs, examine classroom observational and outcome data, make necessary changes to their practices, act on these changes, and then reflect again on data that emerges from the changed practices.

Facilitators play key roles in the inquiry cycle of all three programmes, with the capacity to critique and challenge current practices, to help co-construct new approaches, and to frame challenges that must be addressed in order for improvements to occur. The facilitators are boundary crossers in that they help schools to examine and analyse individual classroom and schoolwide practices, how administrative actions might affect instruction and achievement, and how schools might learn from other school's experiences. The inquiry approach to school improvement, with the assistance of facilitators, helps to establish processes and routines that can help educators make sense of their work and their practices, leading ultimately to success for children. These reflective processes lead to what is referred to by academics as *sensemaking* in policy and practice.[99]

The academic literature on education policy implementation in both New Zealand and the United States offers several possible explanations for how these inquiry processes lead to sensemaking by practitioners, suggesting what might be necessary as the implementation of *Ka Hikitia* continues. Spillane, Reiser, and Reimer frame sensemaking in education as follows.

> ..(A)gents will need to make sense of a policy. Thus it is not enough to simply communicate the policy. There is a critical need to structure learning opportunities so that stakeholders can construct an interpretation of the policy and its implications for their own behaviour.[100]

Furthermore, the way education practitioners make sense of policy directives or new programme requirements is through collective work grounded in particular contexts. Coburn discusses these concepts in an analysis on how teachers executed new reading policies in an elementary school setting:

> Sensemaking is not solely an individual affair, but is social in two important aspects. First, it is *collective* in the sense that it is rooted in social interaction and negotiation. People make sense of messages in the environment in

---

[98] Ministry of Education (2009), Schooling Improvement Internal Documents, *Schooling Improvement Cluster Strategic Plan, 2009*

[99] Spillane, Reiser, and Reimer (2002), Coburn (2001), Timperley and Parr (2009 – in press)

[100] Spillane, Reiser, and Reimer (2002), p. 418

conversation with their colleagues, constructing what I call "shared understandings" - organization and workplace specific culture, beliefs, and routines - along the way… Second, sensemaking is social in the sense that it is deeply situated in teachers' embedded contexts.[101]

Examining the LPDP, Te Kotahitanga, and the Schooling Improvement Cluster, it is obvious that the educators involved have opportunities to participate in structured, collective learning opportunities to examine their behaviours in the context of specific tasks and the environments in which they work. Time is set aside for sensemaking activities, with assistance from skilled facilitators. Timperley and Parr have noted, in their analysis of the LPDP, the essential role facilitators play in the sensemaking process:

> While policymakers and project leaders were pivotal in formulating the bigger picture of the project, the translation of the messages into practice was clearly dependent on the expertise of the visiting facilitator who spanned system boundaries and helped the practitioners make sense of the change messages.[102]

The sensemaking processes practitioners are following in the programmes described above are leading to changed practices and improved outcomes that provide important lessons for policy implementation. Policy frameworks such as *Ka Hikitia*, when instituted by the Ministry of Education and throughout the education sector, do not follow a straight road from the central authority through the various ministerial management groups and then down to the schools. Instead, policy initiatives and frameworks take a circuitous pathway depending on how they are interpreted and understood in their specific contexts and settings. Spillane, Reiser and Reimer help to explain how those who implement policy need to partake in sensemaking processes to change their regular practice and ultimately improve outcomes.

> Policy ideas work as levers for change only if policymakers convince implementing agents to think differently about their behaviour, prompting them to raise questions about their existing behaviour and encouraging them to construct alternative ways of doing business.[103]

Creating collective opportunities to make sense of a policy framework like *Ka Hikitia* and how it might be applied to one's specific context is something that must be considered as it continues its implementation journey. The sensemaking that needs to occur is multi-dimensional given that *Ka Hikitia* is a policy framework that requires particular attention to be paid to Māori potential, culture, language, and identity to improve outcomes for an indigenous people. The circuitous route of *Ka Hikitia's* implementation must travel through these socio-cultural dimensions to ensure that the needs of Māori learners are ultimately being met.

---

[101] Coburn (2001), p. 147
[102] Timperley and Parr (2009 – in press), p. 26
[103] Spillane, Reiser, and Reimer (2002), p. 421

# 4 STRAIGHTAWAYS, CURVES, AND BUMPS ALONG THE WAY: EMERGING THEMES AND COMMENTARY

Over the past six months I have met with Ministry officials, practitioners in schools throughout the country, professional developers, elected officials, inter-agency partners, and academics to gather insights on the early implementation of *Ka Hikitia*. Several key issues and concerns emerge from these conversations, interviews and observations. Since this paper provides formative analysis of *Ka Hikitia* implementation, the emerging themes and commentary that follow are intended to help clarify the point at which I perceive *Ka Hikitia* to be on the road to full implementation.

## Urgency

There is clear evidence that *Ka Hikitia* and improving Māori achievement is a high priority for government and Ministry leadership. This policy framework not only survived a shift in government, but has been actively supported by the current government and its Minister of Education. Minister Anne Tolley refers directly to *Ka Hikitia* in her speeches, indicating to educators in the sector the importance the current government places on improving Māori achievement. In a speech on 19 March 2009 to honour the launch of curriculum guidelines for the teaching and learning of te reo Māori in English-medium schools, the Minister said:

> The Government is strongly committed to raising system performance, so Māori enjoy success as Māori. *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success* is the plan to raise Māori achievement. A key focus of *Ka Hikitia* is providing te reo Māori to all students in English-medium schools, and prompting te reo in our schools and wider communities. The guidelines launched today will be of real assistance to schools. They will help schools take action on meeting the goals of *Ka Hikitia.* [104]

In another recent speech welcoming the audience to the Taumata Whanonga behaviour summit, the Minister emphasised the significance of *Ka Hikitia*:

> The Government wants to bring in changes that help all students to stay engaged, learn, and achieve success. However, the system is currently underperforming for too many Māori learners, too early in their educational journey. *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success* is the plan to see the system step up its performance for Māori to achieve education success… The Government is not seeking a special response for Māori, but a professional one. There is strong evidence that what works for Māori has been shown to work well for everyone. What works for learners is recognition of their language, culture and identity, personalised teaching and learning, the concept of teacher as learner."[105]

The Minister's support of *Ka Hikitia* is reflected in the following message from Secretary for Education, Karen Sewell, to the Ministry's senior leaders and managers, after meeting with the Minister and the Associate Ministers of Education on *Ka Hikitia*:

---

[104] *Launch of te reo curriculum guidelines: Speech by Minister of Education, Anne Tolley, 19 March 2009*

[105] *Taumata Whanonga: Speech by Minister of Education, Anne Tolley, 16 March 2009*

With the launch of *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success* last year we challenged ourselves to step up education system performance for and with Māori learners. While some of us have heard the call and are committed to using *Ka Hikitia* to make a difference, other parts of our organisation have been slower to take up the challenge, preferring to "wait and see." I am very pleased to report that earlier this week we met with the Minister, Hon Anne Tolley, and Associate Minister, Hon Dr Pita Sharples to brief them on *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success*. We emerged from that meeting with a clear directive that this government is absolutely committed to lifting Māori student achievement, with a very firm mandate from the Minister that *Ka Hikitia* must be at the heart of everything that we do.[106]

Sewell echoed these comments in a message that she sent via the Ministry's website to the sector as a whole on the first anniversary of *Ka Hikitia's* launch. In that message she noted:

The Government is absolutely committed to lifting Māori student achievement. Minister Tolley is looking for action and results. As the lead agency responsible for implementing *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success* we need to ensure every decision we make improves the outcomes for Māori learners. For 'Māori to enjoy success as Māori', we need an education system that provides all Māori learners with the opportunity to gain skills and knowledge to realise their unique potential and succeed in their lives. As we consider our business planning for the coming year, we need to use the strategy to shape our activities and to support the sector to use it in their work.[107]

Interviews with Ministry officials and educators in the field also reflect the urgency to act on improving Māori student achievement. One Ministry official noted that "Māori have waited 150 years"[108] while a colleague from another government agency stressed that "if we don't get it right, they will be the workforce and if we don't invest in them we will be stuffed."[109] Sewell expressed the importance of acting now by stating the following in her opening message on *Ka Hikitia*:

The next five years are critical years for the Ministry of Education – as they are for the whole sector. It is our time to make the difference for our country by significantly improving education outcomes for and with Māori. It is time for us to use the knowledge we have about what we can do to realise the potential within Māori learners and take action to make it happen.[110]

The message is clear from Ministry and political leadership. Addressing Māori student achievement is a high priority for the sector. The message points to action, yet as noted above some are proceeding while others are in a 'wait and see' mode. This raises the question of whether or not all the professionals responsible for *Ka Hikitia* consider this framework to be urgent or relevant to their own work.

---

[106] Ministry of Education (2009) *Ka Hikitia-Managing for* Success; Internal Email
[107] Ministry of Education (2009), *Our News and Event-From Karen: Ka-Hikitia One Year Later*
[108] Author interview, 10 March 2009
[109] Author interview, 13 March 2009
[110] Ministry of Education (2008) *Ka Hikitia-Managing for Success,* p. 5

## Coherence

*Ka Hikitia* was launched alongside at least fourteen other Ministry of Education strategic initiatives and actions, some more important than others and several that reflect revisions of regular Ministry business documents. Its release also came at a time when Ministry staff members were focused on the development of standards for the education sector in response to a key priority of the new government. Although the messages above note the clarity by which Ministry and political leadership emphasise the importance of *Ka Hikitia,* it is also easy to see how it could get lost as one of the many issues on the education agenda. One principal, struggling to find *Ka Hikitia* as he showed me a box where he kept the many documents and strategic plans received from the Ministry noted that "we have so many initiatives – (like) a flavour of the month."[111] A Ministry official noted the same:

> We have high aspirations and goals, and a sense of what a difference we can make, and yet we have a whole lot of initiatives… (We have) lots of fragmented programs, but not an integrated game plan.[112]

For the school principal or department head, education initiative documents fall on their desks one after the other without instructions for integration or suggested steps for implementation. For Ministry staff working in a particular substantive area or niche, the release of simultaneous strategies without a clear sense of coherence results in acknowledgement of these strategic efforts but minimal action unless the strategy falls directly in one's specific set of responsibilities. A Ministry official noted that "all of the initiatives – Standards, *Ka Hikitia*, Pasifika – have to be tied all together"[113] if any progress is going to be made. One professional developer who has worked over the years with the Ministry stressed the importance of coherence through the following questions:

> How does the Ministry help others see alignment of its projects? How does the Ministry help develop the map? Where is the programme of work (so that the) Ministry can push alignment and coherence?[114]

A Ministry manager stressed the importance of coherence in the following manner:

> We have multiple strategies. Do we need separate strategies? Or do we need to say – This is the story. The story we tell has to join up for the 2500 principals. We should tell them the integrated story… We must link standards to curriculum, to Māori kids, and to Pasifika – those who are underrepresented. We have to reshape all of this in a coherent way.[115]

Without a plan that stresses how the various initiatives and frameworks complement and inform each other, the numerous moving parts take over without a guarantee of any progress. As one researcher told me – "things that come from the Ministry – unless they are linked into other levers they won't go anywhere. Principals say here we go again."[116] When there are too many simultaneous initiatives, people tend to get lost or find ways not to get involved. This is true for the numerous Ministry frameworks as well as the various component parts of the *Ka Hikitia* framework.

---

[111] Author interview, 3 March 2009
[112] Author interview, 11 March 2009
[113] Author interview, 23 March 2009
[114] Author interview, 3 March 2009
[115] Author interview, 1 April 2009
[116] Author interview, 6 April 2009

Several people, who noted their support for *Ka Hikitia*, stated that it contains too many combined targets, goal statements, strategies and actions for those who are looking for a place to start. An education professor I interviewed shared this concern about the *Ka Hikitia* document, suggesting that Ministry officials must "reduce the complexity (of *Ka Hikitia)* by simplifying the requirements… people can only hold three to five ideas or actions."[117] A Ministry manager stated something similar – "for our team, we need to chunk it down… (It is) too much. We need to focus."[118]

New initiatives will continue to be created by the Ministry. The challenge is to prioritise the many strategies in order to get a few top priority items out in front of all educators, Boards of Trustees, and government agency staff. Communicating clearly about how the top priority strategies inform, complement, and interact with each other is essential. Coherent messages, actions, and responsibilities can lead to better execution and results, yet many of those interviewed also expressed the need for explicit implementation strategies and plans associated with *Ka Hikitia*.

## Implementation logic and strategies

Over the course of this project, I frequently heard a call for a theory or logic of implementation on *Ka Hikitia,* to be accompanied by specific implementation strategies. These comments came from Ministry staff and managers, school practitioners, academics, and staff in other governmental agencies. A secondary school administrator explained her concerns:

> The frustration is that the document -- *Ka Hikitia* -- is flicked out, (with a) fancy launch, then the belief and expectation is that it will happen.[119]

A Ministry staff member echoed these comments:

> People think it is developed and then instantly implemented… (We) have to have a theory of implementation in the design phase. Implementation managers have to work from the start rather than coming along at the end of design.[120]

Another Ministry staff member noted the problems with implementation at the Ministry and specifically with *Ka Hikitia*:

> It is not clear in the Ministry who implements what. Not clear how it works. No clear rules of what to do. It is hard to figure out. (There is) a complete lack of thought on how to help things happen. Without implementation, nothing will happen. Implementation should be part of design. If people are involved in implementation planning they can then adjust their work.

I asked several academics who have worked on education policies in New Zealand to comment on this issue. In a group interview, one lecturer noted the need for coherence and a theory of implementation on policy frameworks like *Ka Hikitia*.

> The Ministry's rapid fire policy initiatives compete against each other. There is a need for an implementation infrastructure – an integrated strategy with

---

[117] Author interview, 27 March 2009
[118] Author interview, 25 March 2009
[119] Author interview, 3 April 2009
[120] Author interview, 1 April 2009

support for sensemaking. The model at the Ministry does not invite coherence. It invites competition.[121]

Several respondents talked specifically about *Ka Hikitia*, adding their perspective on the need for implementation strategies. One Ministry official said:

> Go to the action plans for *Ka Hikitia*. There are sixty-four things to do on *Ka Hikitia*. But what is missing? Where is the intervention logic? How will we make *Ka Hikitia* a reality, not just the sixty-four points? … (We need to) work on an intervention framework to move the interventions faster and quicker.[122]

Another Ministry staff member suggested that *Ka Hikitia* should have included opportunities within the Ministry to shape its implementation rather than pointing specifically to targets at the outset.

> On *Ka Hikitia* I wouldn't have had targets. We needed to develop them together. The guiding goals and policy statements (of *Ka Hikitia*) are fantastic. As soon as we got the targets, people pointed to who is responsible for them. We dived into the targets but not implementation. There needs to be an implementation plan to drive decisionmaking.[123]

A manager from another agency also noted that an implementation and intervention logic for *Ka Hikitia* was missing.

> There are targets and outcomes but (*Ka Hikitia*) needs an intervention logic. If we want a culture change, we need an action plan to move people. This takes time and commitment. It has to be the priority. That work for implementation did not take place. There is no suite of programmes in *Ka Hikitia*. It is a collection of things rather than an organised plan with an implementation logic.[124]

A staff member from one of the Ministry's regional office asked for clear directions on how to enact *Ka Hikitia*.

> Staff want more direction, want to be told what to do, want to have specific focus. At the moment there is a heap of things across the teams. Lots of things happening – relies on managers and team leaders… *Ka Hikitia* answered all our questions for policy, but not for implementation… I would like to see a planned approach, tied down. That plan, with check points… that we are all accountable to.[125]

There is evidence, though, that an implementation plan was proposed in the early stages of *Ka Hikitia*. An internal memo in Group Māori written in late July 2007 entitled "Challenges to implementing *Ka Hikitia* priorities for action" suggested the following:

> The successful implementation of *Ka Hikitia* depends on all members of the Ministry taking responsibility both personally and professionally for realising the actions in the strategy… Group Māori has always taken a collaborative process to developing *Ka Hikitia*. We engaged with others across the Ministry and with external stakeholders in the development and refinement process of

---

[121] Author interview, 25 March 2009
[122] Author interview, 5 March 2009
[123] Author interview, 21 April 2009
[124] Author interview, 9 April 2009
[125] Author interview, 25 March 2009

the conceptual framework. In developing the action plan, we established a cross Ministry working party and responded with iterative meetings with key managers and decision makers across the Ministry including the Leadership Team, seeking their input, guidance and feedback to refine the priorities in the plan… Now that Cabinet has agreed to the priorities for action, we are beginning the implementation planning alongside the public co-ordination role supporting wider Ministry groupings and personnel (who have direct expertise and responsibility) to plan how the actions are best implemented.[126]

Group Māori was responsible for designing the *Ka Hikitia* framework, yet its implementation depended on leaders throughout the Ministry embracing its concepts, focus areas and actions. Group Māori staff suggested the following structure to facilitate implementation:

We propose to establish an implementation process much like the Budget process. We need each Deputy Secretary to directly sponsor the actions and each team to have primary responsibility for developing an implementation plan for the actions relevant to them. Such a process would require clear sponsorship of each action by Deputy Secretaries, allocation of responsibilities to Managers and then to staff. Each Group would need a *Ka Hikitia* coordinator to manage the process within the groups. These coordinators would meet regularly with the *Ka Hikitia* team within Group Māori and report to the Deputy Secretaries. To achieve momentum and commitment, we need a strong and structured process with clear, shared deadlines for drafts, peer reviews, approvals, etc. We could benefit from having one template for the implementation plans, although a list of things the implementation plan needs to cover off might be more flexible. As there are 64 actions, we propose to prioritise them according to the probable size of their effect. Internal work pressures on all Ministry staff suggests that we do not try to develop implementation plans for the lowest priority actions at this stage.[127]

In addition, Group Māori staff created a hierarchical rubric of the sixty-four *Ka Hikitia* actions that might have been used by an implementation team to prioritise implementation. These actions were divided into four categories from low priority to high priority – incremental, environmental, fundamental, and transformational.[128] The extent to which Ministry staff, other than those in Group Māori, knew about or used this rubric when considering their responsibilities for *Ka Hikitia*, is not evident.

The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) provides one example of how to create an implementation strategy tied to a policy framework. The Authority introduced its Māori Strategic and Implementation Plan for 2007-2012 in May 2007. This report combined strategic plan and implementation processes into one. There are sixteen action steps (with various sub-steps), specific outcomes for each action, and timelines attached to actions and outcomes. This example may not reflect the complexity of issues raised by *Ka Hikitia,* and indeed there is no evidence as yet that the NZQA model is or will be successful, but it can serve as a general framework and structure for *Ka Hikitia* as it is fine-tuned or recalibrated. Indeed this example may

---

[126] Ministry of Education (2007), *Challenges to implementing Ka Hikitia priorities for action*, p. 1
[127] Ibid. p. 3
[128] Ministry of Education (2008), *Ka Hikitia Plan of Actions*

serve as a prototype for how management groups throughout the Ministry of Education might frame their responsibilities for *Ka Hikitia* in the future.

Concern regarding implementation led Ministry leadership to create a *Ka Hikitia* Programme Office reporting directly to the Secretary for Education. The intent of this office is to strengthen ownership, leadership and accountability for *Ka Hikitia* across the Ministry rather than solely in Group Māori and the Programme Office itself. Programme Office staff were charged in the short-run with conducting an internal Ministry review of *Ka Hikitia* implementation and ultimately are required to develop and implement strategies so that *Ka Hikitia* will be owned and led by staff throughout the Ministry. Secretary for Education Karen Sewell stated the following on the Ministry's website regarding the importance of the Programme Office:

> The next 18 months are critical if we as a Ministry are to implement *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success* successfully and get the results that Māori learners need and deserve. There is still an urgent need for us all to strengthen our ownership, leadership and accountability for implementing the strategy throughout the ministry… The establishment of the Programme Office not only signals the Leadership Team's absolute commitment to *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success,* it also ensures the responsibility for its success rests with *all* of us. Every one of us has a part to play in ensuring Māori enjoy success as Māori.[129]

The long-term goal for Group Māori and the Programme Office with regard to *Ka Hikitia* is made explicit in an internal Ministry memo from Māori Education Deputy Secretary Apryll Parata to the Ministry Leadership team. She states:

> The role and responsibility of Group Māori is to provide clear direction for action in strategy, policy and relationships. Group Māori affirms authentic iwi and Māori culture, language, and identity as an essential ingredient in Māori learners' education success, through the exchange of knowledge, experience, and expertise. The policy team in Group Māori has lead responsibility to develop Māori education policy and strategy. While Group Māori led the development of *Ka Hikitia* to implementation phase, its core business remains to recalibrate policy to inform Māori education direction setting… The long term aim is that *Ka Hikitia* is embedded into the Ministry's systems, processes, implementation and people. The role of the Programme Office will be to support each group to prepare for the time when there is complete responsibility for *Ka Hikitia* across the organisation.[130]

The clarification of roles on *Ka Hikitia* implementation is essential if responsibility for its success rests with staff throughout the Ministry rather than solely in Group Māori. Deputy Secretary Parata noted her concerns about early implementation by stating the following in an internal memo to the Ministry Leadership Team:

> I have become increasingly concerned about *Ka Hikitia* being "Lost in Translation" and the very general and generic approach that is being taken. The brand is being used but the thinking that sits behind and in it is not, and nor do we have a real focus on the outcomes sought at either a learner or

---

[129] Ministry of Education (2009), *News and Events: From Karen, 9 February 2009*
[130] Ministry of Education (2009) *Ka Hikitia Programme Office and Group Māori-Outlining Roles and Responsibilities*, Internal Memorandum

system level. I am also worried about the paralysis that seems to take hold once this matter is brought to the attention of our respective staff members, the lack of ability to recognise that this is the case, the resentment that follows and the overall apathy towards resolving what presents.[131]

The desire for implementation strategies and plans must be matched by a willingness to execute them. Many of the comments about implementation, by implication, point to Group Māori as the Ministry team responsible for the development of such plans. Yet if *Ka Hikitia* is a policy framework for the Ministry and sector as a whole, then the various Ministry groups and players in the sector are responsible for designing plans that would move *Ka Hikitia* from rhetoric to action. In the Ministry, this means that the Leadership Team and Senior Managers throughout the agency share responsibility for implementation planning and execution of *Ka Hikitia*. In the field this means depending on expert practitioners who have made demonstrable progress on Māori student achievement. Progress in schools is also dependent on engaging Boards of Trustees and principals in learning conversations with Ministry officials and other experts about Māori student achievement so that they can embrace *Ka Hikitia* and establish local goals that mirror the intent of the policy framework.

## Opportunities to learn rather than being criticised

As noted in the previous chapter, policy can become a lever for change if implementers can be convinced, through sensemaking processes, to both examine and change their behaviours.[132] Opportunities to learn, and to focus on particular tasks in order to co-construct actions and responsibilities, can help policy implementers change current practices. This is a message I received from many respondents. Rather than being told what to do, rather than being constantly criticised for lack of commitment or action, many wished there were opportunities to learn what to do to support *Ka Hikitia* in their contexts.

For someone in my role, as a visitor and an analyst, it is a challenge to find the correct explanation for these concerns. On one hand, Māori student achievement is a long-standing issue going back to the agreements between Māori and the Crown in the Treaty of Waitangi. Māori have waited over 150 years for responsible and accountable action on issues such as education, and those who claim they need more time to learn can be seen as resistant to such change. There is a history of Pākehā resisting Māori education reforms under the claims that "we are all New Zealanders; we are all one people."[133] Yet the current data and evidence are clear, as is the current government's commitment to improving outcomes for Māori young people. The urgency for Māori calls for a 'just do it' attitude. On the other hand, much of the literature says that people change when they know their responsibilities and when they have opportunities to construct solutions with others in their professional settings. The challenge is to provide opportunities to learn without losing urgency of action.

A schools facilitator noted to me the importance of creating professional learning opportunities and having a safe place to learn by stating the following:

---

[131] Ministry of Education (2009), *Concerns,* Internal Email, 10 March 2009
[132] Spillane, Reiser, and Reimer (2002), p. 421
[133] Walker (2004), p. 241

As a Pākehā in New Zealand, I need Māori to help me. I need people sitting with me who are Māori. When we addressed Māori student achievement (at the school) two or three people did not feel safe to talk… We included *Ka Hikitia*; got all the Māori student achievement data. All the people wanted answers; *Ka Hikitia* offered no answers… Where is the infrastructure of support to help move forward on *Ka Hikitia?*[134]

These comments were echoed by a Ministry official who described what is needed to make changes that reflect *Ka Hikitia*:

What I would need is information, evidence, a chance in a safe place to look at the information, and a chance to try new things out.[135]

A Ministry official attempted to explain the concept of safe places when she stated that: "A safe place is an issue. Part of the issue – people who are in Māori education have a strong sense of purpose on Māori education. They feel passionate and at times frustrated, and people react to that."[136] When I asked a government official involved in Māori issues about this concept of providing a safe space, the reaction elicited the following: "I have so little tolerance (for these concerns)… This is multigenerational failure."[137]

One principal took his concerns regarding professional development opportunities for *Ka Hikitia* directly to the Minister and Associate Minister of Education through email correspondence. He wrote the following on 10 March 2009 to Minister Tolley and Associate Minister Sharples.

Some feedback from a person busting to get on and do something about *Ka Hikitia*. There seems to be absolutely no assistance for *Ka Hikitia*. You have launched a very important document but haven't put any PD behind it for the schools. I had a meeting with 12 principals this morning and 1 has given the document to his DP to "look at" and the others haven't opened it. I am most concerned. And I want help, so imagine what schools who haven't opened the document are doing – nothing. I need synthesis with the NZC (New Zealand Curriculum) document and want to build *Ka Hikitia* to our community needs/collaboration and consultation part of the revised school curriculum that we are working on. The fear I have is that while schools are looking at NZC and consulting with communities etc. they are not doing this collaboratively with *Ka Hikitia*. Schools need help with this document, principals need support with this document, or it will be more lip service and the goals for the "next five years" will never be reached. To stick a bunch of resources on a website and call it support is not on. To collaborate without face to face is also very un-Māori. Perhaps the most concerning thing from the MOE is that they can't even have a person we can ring for support, an email address and website is it. This to me shows the commitment to PD for *Ka Hikitia*. Sort it out please. The launch wasn't a great success but the lack of PD is the real failure. Its dying a natural death like so many Māori initiatives before (sorry, this is

---

[134] Author interview, 4 March 2009
[135] Author interview, 5 March 2009
[136] Author interview, 10 March 2009
[137] Author interview, 31 March 2009

the truth from my perspective). You may be hearing the great success stories in there at the MOE but the reality is different.[138]

Ministry staff members noted the importance of conducting learning conversations on how to understand and implement *Ka Hikitia* as a way to engage professional colleagues. One staff member claimed:

> We have to create learning opportunities otherwise they will not take this on. People may want to embrace *Ka Hikitia*, but if you don't have all the tools you cannot progress without learning, you cannot expect everyone to be on the same wavelength without learning. Resistance comes if you cannot participate in a meaningful way.[139]

Several other Ministry staff members offered similar perspectives. One noted the importance of learning in a supportive environment:

> I agree it is all our responsibility, but you can only do what you know how to do. You need support and challenge. If people are being criticised people will put their heads down. You want people to ask what does this mean for my work; rather than being judged and told off. You have to take people with their beliefs and values and move people on. A national policy will work by taking people with you.[140]

Learning through implementation is a messy process that requires patience as explained by another Ministry staff member:

> Implementation (of *Ka Hikitia)* requires a change of thinking all the way through. (You) have to get away from blame. Implementation is messy. You have to engage in a positive way, need to have a learning conversation and then test out. At the moment people feel bruised and battered. There is no lack of willingness, but people feel battered.[141]

Creating more opportunities to learn may accelerate progress toward achieving the expected outcomes of *Ka Hikitia*, yet it remains important to sustain focus and pressure on improving Māori student achievement so that these learning conversations and opportunities are not conducted in vain.

Group Māori spent a significant amount of time sponsoring workshops, issuing communications, and engaging people across the Ministry in sensemaking on *Ka Hikitia*. It created a range of tools, recommendations, and work priorities that could assist in the transition from policy development to implementation. The challenges *Ka Hikitia* faced in early implementation reflect less on what Group Māori did or did not do and more on what typically happens when policy is implemented in complex settings like schools and ministries. Professor Ben Levin underscores the challenges of implementing changes in educational institutions:

> A considerable amount of writing on change lays out the things people need to do differently. It has less to say about *how* to do those things. One of the challenges in education, as in other policy fields, is that the pizzazz is around

---

[138] Ministry of Education (2009), *Ka Hikitia,* Internal email correspondence, 5 March 2009. Permission to use the email granted by principal on 3 June 2009
[139] Author interview, 1 April 2009
[140] Author interview, 21 April 2009
[141] Author interview, 6 April 2009

having the seemingly new idea, whereas the real work is in making it happen. While innovations tend to get the profile, the slog work of implementation is what makes the difference in the end, and this work gets much less attention in the literature on educational change. As many business analysts would agree, having a new idea is less important to success than getting ordinary things done correctly and efficiently. Moreover, governments, schools, and systems tend to be much bigger on announcing new initiatives then they are on putting in place all the mechanisms necessary for those new announcements to turn into reality and become permanent features of the landscape.[142]

The challenge is for each of the management groups in the Ministry, and not Group Māori alone, to create the opportunities to learn and the mechanisms necessary for effective implementation.

## Changing behaviours or creating a tick list

The challenge with a policy framework like *Ka Hikitia* is to change attitudes, thinking, and behaviours in order to improve outcomes for all Māori learners. This will require more than the institution of new compliance requirements. Over the past year there have been attempts to change Ministry organisational processes to reflect key *Ka Hikitia* components in areas such as business planning and report writing. The *Ka Hikitia* Programme Office review will provide insights into processes that support the framework across the Ministry. Yet, the concern that has emerged implicitly from the interviews I conducted is that *Ka Hikitia* will evolve into a compliance tick list rather than a broad commitment to improve education for and with Māori learners that leads to authentic work by educators and government officials. One senior manager highlighted the importance of the Ministry making a commitment to Māori student achievement:

> (*Ka Hikitia*) is trying to change deeply embedded attitudes, a system that valued only one way. We still have managers who debate it, who don't see the value. They know the top priority but their view of change is different. *Ka Hikitia* is trying to change hearts and minds… The organisation has to change to better support Māori (rather) than asking them to change.[143]

A Ministry consultant I interviewed offered a perspective on how to build the commitment necessary to change 'hearts and minds':

> *Ka Hikitia* is a new wind blowing… With no money to fund programmes that carry it, we must reprioritise programmes, which means ceasing funding to particular places. We need processes and structures… to enable people to be courageous to change… Without data people will hide. Quantitative (data) and in narratives that pushes values and beliefs… People need to know how to get *Ka Hikitia* into their heads.[144]

I heard similar comments from a Ministry manager who noted the importance of processes that go beyond compliance as a way to effect change, especially in New Zealand's primary and secondary schools:

---

[142] Levin ((2008), p. 5
[143] Author interview, 26 February 2009
[144] Author interview, 10 March 2009

Think (about) the linear rational model – set the end point, monitor the stages, evaluate. This is not good for complex systems with 2500 autonomous leaders. Have to have different processes. Have to set the conditions for sensemaking, inquiry, the use of data – more professional behaviour and not compliance.[145]

The same manager elaborated on specific concerns about keeping *Ka Hikitia* from becoming a compliance activity:

You have to keep the intent in mind rather than having a checklist. Think about the intent. Then it is a constant process of trying, reflecting, adjusting, and learning. This is not a tick list. That is the challenge.[146]

The challenge in an organisation like the Ministry is to engage in processes that will help change attitudes, thinking, and behaviours rather than forcing compliance, while sticking to timelines that meet the urgent priorities of initiatives.


## Capturing success

There is, however, positive work underway in New Zealand's schools, the Ministry, and across government agencies that reflects the guiding principles of *Ka Hikitia.* The stories highlighted in the preface to this report involve three examples of practitioners directly serving the needs of Māori learners. These stories point to the role played by teachers who pay close attention to the educational needs of Māori youth while respecting culture, identity and language, and the role that principal leadership plays to advocate for Māori student achievement in their schools, communities, and amongst their principal colleagues.

Group Special Education (GSE) in the Ministry has made a concerted effort to embrace *Ka Hikitia* in its service delivery to Māori youth and families nationwide. GSE's *Te Hikoitanga: The Journey* document highlights pathways for Māori student success through personal, team, and organisational actions. *Te Hikoitanga: The Journey* explicitly uses *Ka Hikitia* in its marketing materials for all Special Education service providers as noted below:

*Te Hikoitanga: The Journey* provides a framework for practitioners, service teams, and our whole organisation to be successful in delivering responsive services to Māori. Responsive services are described as those that are accessible, of high quality, are culturally relevant, and flexible enough to meet the diverse realities of tamariki and whānau. They also take a Māori potential approach by acknowledging the right of tamariki and whānau to help determine the best service outcomes for them. *Te Hikoitanga: The Journey* challenges us to think and do things differently in our individual practice, teams, and organisational management and systems. It is both aspirational and builds on the work we are already doing. *Te Hikoitanga: The Journey* is one tool of many toward organisational success, a key focal area in *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success.*[147]

In April 2009 the Ministry's Strategy and System Performance (SSP) Group started work on the *Ka Hikitia* Measurable Gains Framework (MGF) in response to a request

---

[145] Author interview, 1 April 2009

[146] Ibid.

[147] Ministry of Education (2008), *Te Hikoitanga: The Journey*, Group Special Education.

from Group Māori issued when *Ka Hikitia* was launched. The intent of the MGF is to measure, monitor and evaluate progress on *Ka Hikitia* across the Ministry as recommended in the section in *Ka Hikitia* on measuring success. Although it took one year after the *Ka Hikitia* launch to establish the MGF working team, tracking progress on *Ka Hikitia* and embedding this information into the regular Ministry reporting processes is underway.[148] Progress in the Ministry is also evident in other ways as the examples that follow indicate. Various regional offices of the Ministry have established *Ka Hikitia* working teams. The Ministry's latest Statement of Intent has as one of its six priority areas, 'Māori enjoying education success as Māori'.[149] Business planning throughout the Ministry has shifted to include *Ka Hikitia* implementation in all planning documents. In late May 2009, Group Māori's Manager of Māori Education Strategy and Policy was seconded to the Schooling Group to work on issues related to Māori student achievement. This is an important opportunity to link the group that developed the policy framework with one of the groups responsible for its implementation in schools.

An emphasis on Māori student achievement and *Ka Hikitia* is also evident across the education sector. The Education Review Office (ERO) has created a new set of questions for its review officers that reflect *Ka Hikitia*. Review officers are gathering evidence on the extent to which schools are familiar with and are using *Ka Hikitia* in current school practices and in future planning activities. In addition they are exploring the conditions for Māori student success in evidence at schools, focusing on Māori attendance, engagement, and achievement. ERO will be reporting on these issues as part of their regular public reporting responsibilities, with specific attention on the use of *Ka Hikitia* in school settings.[150] An ERO staff member told me how the agency is embracing *Ka Hikitia*:

> Managers said we are committed. We have to move hearts. We talked about non-threatening ways to embrace *Ka Hikitia*. With a range of schools we have to practice why this is important and not be defensive.[151]

Similarly, staff members in Career Services are also using *Ka Hikitia* to address the issues and needs of Māori. As one staff member there told me: "*Ka Hikitia* gives me even more license. I jumped on that."[152]

Many individuals I interviewed talked about using evidence to inform their practices. Facilitators working on Te Kotahitanga, the LPDP, and the Schooling Improvement Cluster use data and evidence to frame their conversations and critique of school level processes. The *Ka Hikitia* documents focus on research evidence, data on student performance and engagement, and best practices for instruction that lead to improved outcomes. The work on developing the Measurable Gains Framework will be based on evidence of progress towards established targets. The emphasis on evidence provides professionals across the sector with information they can use to both understand their practices and improve upon them.

---

[148] Ministry of Education (2009), *Measurable Gains Framework, Ka Hikitia: Overall Project Plan*
[149] Ministry of Education (2009), *Statement of Intent 2009-2014*
[150] Education Review Office (2009), *Information for Reviewers, Success for Māori Students: Progress*
[151] Author interview, 11 March 2009
[152] Author interview, 13 March 2009

As noted in Chapter 2, *Ka Hikitia* received strong support from the new education Minister, even though it was developed under the previous government. The test of any policy initiative or framework is whether or not it can endure a leadership change, a budget crisis, or the introduction of new priorities. The focus on Māori student achievement endured as the National Party took control of New Zealand's government, signalling the importance of this issue to the education sector.

There is evidence of progress on *Ka Hikitia* implementation. The challenge is to keep a focus on *Ka Hikitia* as other policies and initiatives are introduced in the years to come in order for it to be successful by 2012.

## Time, transitions, and training

Three other issues of importance emerged through my examination of the early stages of *Ka Hikitia* implementation. Time is an important concept in understanding how long it takes for a policy framework to penetrate a sector, how long it takes for changes to occur in routines and regular day-to-day practices, and how long it takes for schools to achieve positive results. Recognising that political time lines are necessarily short – three years in New Zealand and four years in the United States – it often takes five or six years of steady work to reform a typical school. The principal highlighted in this paper's preface who created a successful reading programme needed five years for his school to turn around. Success documented through the LPDP or Te Kotahitanga occurred after at least three years of programme execution. This paper documents several positive ways that *Ka Hikitia* is penetrating Ministry efforts after only one year of implementation. Although results need to be evident to meet political needs and to ensure that a generation of children is not subject to inadequate schooling, time is needed to do the steady and regular work over several years to change hearts and minds and to show results required by *Ka Hikitia.*

*Ka Hikitia* specifically calls for a concerted focus on key transition points in the lives of Māori students. This is especially important in the early primary school preparation Māori students receive, and in years 9 and 10 when many Māori students become lost in the transition to secondary school resulting in unsuccessful experiences and limited opportunities to advance beyond compulsory schooling. At several primary schools I visited principals and lead teachers were distressed by the many Māori students who come back to visit after they had progressed to a new school in year 9, wishing that they had never left the primary school. These school leaders were emphatic about how hard they worked to engage students, to keep them in school, and to make links with their extended whānau. Yet once their children went on to secondary school more often than not these children struggled to make the transition academically and socially. In these cases the high schools were reluctant to change their practices, which led to struggle and disappointment for Māori students. Key transitions, and the overall quality of the schooling experience for Māori, must be kept in mind as *Ka Hikitia* continues down the road of implementation and as other programmes and strategies are introduced that have an impact on Māori student achievement.

Training is an essential policy lever to accelerate improvements for Māori students, as noted in the *Ka Hikitia* strategy documents. Teachers and principals need to know what to do in the situations they face and with the variety of students they teach. They need to know how to create cultural connections and relationships with Māori learners

to then execute teaching and learning strategies that reflect Māori potential and the importance of language, culture and identity. Initial training and on-going professional development has to be focused on these issues so that teachers and school leaders have the capacity to serve Māori children. The inquiry-based professional development models used in Te Kotahitanga, the LPDP, and the Schooling Improvement Cluster also need to become part of routine training and professional development for teachers and principals to avoid dependence on heroic practitioners and leaders. For sensemaking processes focused on Māori student achievement to become embedded not only in regular school routines, but in the routines of those who work in the Ministry, focused professional development and training on these issues for professionals in the Ministry and for Boards of Trustees will also be necessary.

# 5 FUTURE DESTINATIONS: NEXT STEPS AND BROADER IMPLICATIONS

This report documents the background and context that led to *Ka Hikitia,* highlighting several issues that emerged in the first year of implementing the strategy. As a formative study it provides a mirror on how the Ministry and educators in the sector are embracing a high priority effort to improve student achievement for Māori youth. It also provides an opportunity to reflect on how education policy in the United States is designed and executed, applying lessons learned from the *Ka Hikitia* experience to the many high priority initiatives of school districts, the fifty states, and the US Department of Education. There are many roads that *Ka Hikitia* implementation may take in the years to come, especially given fiscal uncertainties and the impending rollout of standards, National Education Goals, and National Administrative Guidelines in 2010. This concluding chapter offers commentary on the issues surfaced in this study with the intent of helping colleagues in the education sector in New Zealand choose the best ways for *Ka Hikitia* to travel in the years to come.

## Maintaining a relentless focus

There is a risk with every policy framework that it will fade away after initial implementation or get lost in the stack of new initiatives being generated over the years. The image of the principal I talked to who strongly supported efforts for Māori student achievement but could not find his copy of *Ka Hikitia* in the box of Ministry issued reports reflects the feeling of many schools practitioners given their day-to-day responsibilities. As one educator noted, the Ministry tends to create "policy on a production line, with no theory of execution."[153] *Ka Hikitia* will soon stand alongside Ministry priorities on National Standards, Education Goals, and Administrative Guidelines. The call for coherence, ensuring that Ministry priorities such as *Ka Hikitia* complement and inform future policies and initiatives rather than compete with them will be a continuing challenge, especially as resources become even more limited due to the global recession.

A sustained focus on the key themes of *Ka Hikitia* will be necessary to keep attention on it. One Ministry of Education official noted the importance of continually pushing colleagues to improve Māori student achievement:

> We have waited, we have been patient. Now we have to get better outcomes. The Ministry must model and own issues. (It must) provide leadership. And be accountable for what we are asking the sector to do.[154]

Leadership for *Ka Hikitia,* with a relentless push for better outcomes, has to come from teachers and principals who can take the lead and model programmes that achieve success, professional networks of educators, Boards of Trustees, the Ministry's Leadership Team, and senior managers throughout the Ministry.

*Ka Hikitia* is driven by data and evidence. Documenting student performance, analysing the data, and then acting on these results contribute to the maintenance of a relentless focus on Māori student achievement throughout the sector. Using

---

[153] Author interview, 26 March 2009
[154] Author interview, 18 February 2009

performance and observational data to stimulate both inquiry and action on classroom and school practices, similar to the processes used by Te Kotahitanga, the LPDP and the Schooling Improvement Cluster help sustain focus on Māori student achievement. The challenge is to generate the information and then to set aside the time both to make sense of it and take action.

## Creating conditions for implementation and sensemaking

Implementation of education policy is a complex challenge in a system like New Zealand's where the governing authority for schools rests at the local level. The Ministry can directly address implementation issues internal to the organisation; yet for schools and the sector it is managed indirectly. Given these operating parameters, there are several steps in the near future that the Ministry could consider to create conditions for *Ka Hikitia* implementation and sensemaking.

As Ministry staff consider any sort of policy recalibration for *Ka Hikitia,* it is important to pay attention to the concerns raised in many of the interviews I conducted. Many respondents remarked that there are too many actions, goals, and outcomes to act upon or find one's place to contribute. Rather than getting lost in numerous actions and targets, it is necessary for Ministry leadership to stress the core focus areas of *Ka Hikitia,* and the key levers for change. All of this information is currently in the strategy documents, yet may need to be simplified so that colleagues throughout the sector can focus their own implementation efforts.

Along with simplifying what is already in the *Ka Hikitia* strategy documents, Ministry staff and leadership will need to decide what to work on in the short-, medium- and long-run as originally proposed by Group Māori. These tasks need to be defined and prioritised with the appropriate Ministry management group taking the lead on specific assignments. Once priorities are stated, cross-Ministry working teams will need to be assigned the responsibility to make sense of their *Ka Hikitia* tasks and to ensure that these efforts complement work underway to implement the new curriculum and to establish the New Zealand literacy and numeracy standards. Without defined and actionable priorities, authentic work tasks rather than compliance activities, and opportunities to learn and make sense of the work along the way, *Ka Hikitia* runs the risk of being an important document unable to achieve its stated outcomes.

Priorities for what schools can do to address *Ka Hikitia* also need to be articulated by the Ministry in collaboration with expert practitioners currently working to improve Māori achievement. Principals and teachers require guidelines on how to proceed in one or more of the *Ka Hikitia* focus areas, with opportunities to learn from colleagues who have tried and learned from different strategies geared towards improving Māori student achievement. Creating opportunities for professionals to learn and to participate in collective sensemaking activities must be done in conjunction with particular tasks. There is a danger, though, that this commentary will simply result in the creation of task forces on implementation, or establishment of sensemaking teams at schools or in the Ministry. Rather, it is essential to be clear about priorities and defined actions and then have particular tasks that professionals work on in their school or agency contexts to progress on Māori student achievement.

Several longer term system levers need to be addressed to ensure commitment to the *Ka Hikitia* goals. Inquiry-based activities that lead to sensemaking in school settings or government agencies require new ways of conducting core business. At the school level, inquiry-based processes involving facilitators, performance and observational data, and opportunities to co-construct solution strategies require time along with human and financial resources. At the Ministry level, reflecting on policy implementation, as I have done for this project, along with setting aside opportunities to learn about and work together on particular tasks will also require appropriate resources, capacities, and time. In an era of economic uncertainty where recovery from the current recession is optimistically foreseeable in no less than five years, this sort of resourcing has to be done by re-prioritising core functions and current budgets.

This re-prioritising will call for a new theory on how to resource schools to ensure that inquiry-based professional development is embedded in regular and routine operations. Policy development at the Ministry level will also need to be accompanied by implementation planning and execution, which may require staff members with different capacities than may currently exist to ensure both. As the economic crisis causes schools and Ministry leadership to examine what is most important in the core business of schooling, creating the conditions for implementation and sensemaking in these settings will need to be considered part of this core. This will force these leaders to decide what they might not do as part of core operations to support such efforts. Practically, this means figuring out how to support facilitators at the school level, regional staff with capabilities to work with groups of schools on Māori student achievement, and implementation experts at the Ministry level, without the luxury of additional funding.

In the long-run, teachers and principals must be equipped with the skills, competencies, and confidence to work in the diverse settings of New Zealand's schools given *Ka Hikitia's* charge to improve achievement for Māori students. Focused attention to improving the training and on-going professional development of principals and teachers is needed so that they can help Māori students build competency in literacy and numeracy and achieve higher qualifications, while respecting language, culture, identity and Māori potential. As programmes like Te Kotahitanga and the LPDP continue to show progress, along with other efforts across the country, lessons learned from these programs about reflective and culturally sensitive practice, data analysis and interpretation, and professional problem solving need to be drawn and then embedded in regular teacher and principal training programmes. The future generation of school practitioners has to consider the principles of *Ka Hikitia* as part of their professional responsibilities when serving Māori youth in New Zealand classrooms and schools.

## Acknowledging the unspoken

During my interviews I heard many comments that were told in confidence. These often reflected opinions difficult to confront in public discourse. For some, the reasons that Māori lag behind others is a result of long-standing racism. As one school leader stated:

> Māori student achievement is a very complex issue. I have taught 30 years in low decile schools. I taught 10 years in bilingual schools. I taught Māori language… Very few teachers believe Māori kids can be successful. And

many believe that Māori should not be successful. This is institutional racism. (We) have to reject deficit theorising. We have to be relentless for the huge shifts in thinking with massive implications for New Zealand.[155]

There are others who are reluctant to enter the conversation about race and racism, as well as those who need, as referred to in the last chapter, safe places to explore issues related to Māori student achievement without the pressure of being identified as racist. These are complex issues and both perspectives have merit – calling it what it is and then working to make change versus providing space to make change without being accused of historical wrongdoing. Understanding that both perspectives are prevalent in the working environments of schools and the Ministry is important, yet the challenge is not to make either of them excuses for inaction on Māori student achievement.

One lead facilitator in a secondary school stressed the importance of reflective practice in her own approach to teaching, learning, and working with and for Māori. She noted how liberating it was, as a Pākehā, to understand that she did not have to become an expert in everything Māori. Rather, she needed to listen and learn from the experiences of Māori students and their extended whānau:

> If I am responsive to Māori culture, I don't have to be an expert… Culturally responsive is not being an expert but listening to experts.[156]

A sign in the facilitators' work room in this particular school noted a different way to think about instruction for Māori children than the traditional 'stand and deliver' mode practiced by many secondary school teachers. It stated:

> If you don't learn the way I teach, then perhaps I should teach the way you learn.[157]

Changing long standing teaching practices or reflecting on interactions across race and culture can be difficult. Not acknowledging these sorts of issues, and leaving them unspoken, can hamper or prevent opportunities for progress.


## Applying lessons learned to policy and practice in the United States

Visit any public school district in the United States serving diverse populations of students and you will see numerous new initiatives and programmes created to improve outcomes and decrease achievement gaps. For instance, the new superintendent of the Denver Public Schools announced in January 2009 five focus areas for his new administration:

- Retaining, attracting, rewarding and empowering the most effective people to serve as teachers and principals,

- Advancing the district's instructional reforms,

- Empowering schools to meet high expectations while holding them accountable for improving results with their students,

---

[155] Author interview, April 3, 2009
[156] Author interview, April 28, 2009
[157] Sign in a secondary school facilitators' workroom, observed April 28, 2009.

- Deepening the engagement of families and communities in the success of students, and

- Securing the financial future and increasing financial transparency of the district and its schools.[158]

Similarly, the School District of Philadelphia announced a parallel effort to Denver's on 15 April 2009 with the release of its new strategic plan for its schools called *Imagine 2014*. This plan focuses on five goals: student success, quality choices, high quality and diverse staff, adults accountable for their performance, and world-class operations.[159]

At the state level, the 50 state school commissioners and superintendents who met with President Barack Obama in March 2009, agreed to move forward with the Obama Administration on reform initiatives across the states focused on standards, assessment and accountability; improved data systems; teacher quality and distribution initiatives; and school improvement programmes. At the Federal level, the US Department of Education (USDOE) currently is providing unprecedented support to states and school districts as part of the overall plan for economic recovery in the United States. USDOE is making available over $US53 billion in State Stabilization Funds and other additional resources for education innovation, work on standards and accountability, and efforts to improve teacher quality.[160] No doubt all of these efforts will include new initiatives and programmes to be implemented in short timelines with the expectation of improved outcomes.

There is much to be learned from this analysis of *Ka Hikitia* and its early implementation that can be applied to the numerous education policies implemented in the US at local, state, and Federal levels. Perhaps most obvious is that implementation needs as much attention as is expended on policy development. Creating opportunities for implementers to make sense of new directives and requirements is more conducive to making improvements than solely requiring education professionals to meet compliance requirements.

Improvements for Māori students documented in this report primarily occur through inquiry-based programmes that have a learning agenda attached to programmatic parameters. Although most school and system reform efforts in the US traditionally have an evaluation component that generates summative data at the end of a specified period, formative and summative analyses of progress over time, with opportunities to reflect and change practice in mid-stream is extremely important. Opportunities to learn about what is occurring and being accomplished during the implementation process, and especially early on, can assist in recalibrating policy programmes towards intended goals. In the long-run school systems, state departments of education, and the USDOE have to become learning organisations where they can reflect in a routine manner on evidence about their practices and the outcomes they are producing.

---

[158] *Superintendent's Priorities: Five Focus Areas* (2009), Denver Public Schools, 22 January 2009.
[159] *Imagine 2014: Building a System of Great Schools* (2009), School District of Philadelphia
[160] *State Stabilization Fund Update* (2009), Washington DC: United States Department of Education

## Future actions on *Ka Hikitia*

The next stages of implementation for *Ka Hikitia* come as the Ministry of Education will be releasing National Education Standards, National Education Goals, and National Administrative Guidelines for Education, while continuing the implementation of the New Zealand Curriculum. In order for *Ka Hikitia* to meet its intended goals and outcomes by 2012 and in response to many of the issues raised in this report, it is essential to move forward in several ways. The ideas presented below respond to the needs expressed earlier in this report to identify the highest priority actions of *Ka Hikitia;* to create opportunities for school-based practitioners, leaders (including Boards of Trustees), and government agency staff to make sense of *Ka Hikitia* through learning conversations and on-going professional development; to pay attention to the voices of students; and to keep a relentless focus on Māori student achievement. In this regard, Ministry staff in particular could consider the following next steps.

- Examine the original priorities for *Ka Hikitia* implementation outlined by Group Māori and designate 5-7 high priority actions to work on both in the Ministry and in the field in each of the next three years in order to make significant achievements by 2012. At the Ministry, assign the priority actions to Ministry management groups with accountability resting with the Group Deputy Secretary and one Senior Manager.

- Engage outstanding teachers and principals across the country with school-based expertise and a track record of progress on Māori student achievement to lead professional development opportunities and learning conversations on Māori achievement for teachers, principals, Boards of Trustees, and Ministry staff. These professional development opportunities will need to be focused on particular tasks that lead to improvements in teaching and learning and the provision of culturally responsive classroom and school settings.

- Convene focus groups of Māori students, along with non-Māori students, to understand the issues both groups face in school and to examine what leads to successful school experiences for Māori children.

- Appoint a high-level work team of expert practitioners and Ministry officials to devise several new funding models for the core business of schooling at primary and secondary levels. This team will devise funding models for the on-going support, as part of regular school staff, of facilitators and "sensemakers" like those who work on the Literacy Professional Development Programme, Te Kotahitanga, and the Schooling Improvement Clusters. This team would determine how to fund inquiry-based professional development that is embedded and facilitated in the regular routines of schools and what then not to fund as part of core operations.

- Convene working groups of professional developers and research/development specialists with expertise on improving Māori student achievement; on the training of teachers, school leaders, and Boards of Trustees; and on how various education programmes work to lift achievement for all students including Māori. Create incentives to develop new professional development opportunities for school practitioners, Boards of Trustees, and government agency staff, and new principal and teacher training programmes that reflect

the lessons learned from these experts and specially address Māori student achievement.

- Maintain a relentless focus on Māori student achievement, especially through the gathering and analysis of formative and summative data. Ensure that the Measurable Gains Framework initiative stays on target to produce data aligned to the *Ka Hikitia* intended outcomes. Conduct more formative implementation reviews, similar to this report, on an annual basis to examine what is working, what is stalling, and what might need to be recalibrated to achieve the goals of *Ka Hikitia.*

Implementing *Ka Hikitia* will create the opportunity for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers to actually work together, combining their expertise and knowledge to make a difference for Māori children and all New Zealand students. The opening karakia for *Ka Hikitia* provides the charge for the work ahead − onwards and upwards!


Kua hikitia te kaupapa
Kua takoto te wero
Me hoe tahi i runga i te whakaaro kotahi
Tiaki tō tāua oranga
Kia kaha ai mo te tuku taonga
Kia tutuki ngā hiahia mō
Ka Hikitia
Tihei mauriora!
Ki te whai ao!
Ki te whai oranga e!
Mauriora


We have come to an awareness
The challenge lies before us
Let us work together as one
Stay well so that we have the ability to manage success
Behold there is the pathway to enlightenment and well being
What a positive feeling![161]

---

[161] Closing karakia composed for *Ka Hikitia* by Toka Totoro, Ministry of Education.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alton-Lee, A. (2007), *Notes Toward a Policy Brief-Ka Hikitia: Using the Evidence about Comparative Magnitude of Impact to get a Substantial and Systemic Step Up for Māori Learners in English and Māori Medium in New Zealand, 23 April 2007,* Ministry of Education Iterative Best Evidence Programme

Author Interviews (2009) conducted February 18 and 26; March 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 13, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27; and April 1, 3, 6, 9, 21, 28

Berryman, M., T. Glynn, P. Woller, and M. Reweti (2009), *Māori Language Policy and Practice in New Zealand Schools: Community Challenges and Community Solutions*, Wellington: Ministry of Education Group Special Education Poutama Pounamu Education Research Centre

Bishop, R. (2009), *Te Kotahitanga Leadership Hui, 6-8 May 2009,* Powerpoint Presentation*,* Hopuhopu, Ngaruawahia

Bishop, R. and M. Berryman (2006), *Culture Speaks*, Wellington: Huia Publishers

Bishop, R., D. O'Sullivan and M. Berryman (2009–in press), *Scaling up: The politics of potential*

Coburn, C. (2001), "Collective Sensemaking about Reading: How Teachers Mediate Reading Policy in Their Professional Communities," *Education Evaluation and Policy Analysis Summer 2001, Vol. 23, No.2, pp. 145-170*

*Consultation Dates on National Standards: Minister of Education Hon Anne Tolley, 6 April 2009* (2009), New Zealand Government: beehive.govt.nz Retrieved on 15 May 2009 from: http://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/consultation+dates+national+ standards

Durie, M. (2001), *The Hui Taumata Mātauranga: Progress, and Platforms for Māori Educational Advancement, 11 November 2001,* Turangi/Taupo

Durie, M. (1998), *Te Mana, Te Kāwanatanga: The Politics of Māori Self-Determination,* Auckland: Oxford University Press

Education Counts (2009), *Retention of students in senior secondary schools (January 2009)* Retrieved on 2 March 2009 from http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/ Indicators/student_participation/schooling/1955

Education Counts (2008), *Early leaving exemptions,* Retrieved on 22 April 2009 from: http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/9963/simu15-Early_leaving.pdf

Education Counts (2008), *Percentage of school leavers with little or no formal attainment, by ethnic group (1993-2007)* Retrieved on 2 March 2009 from: http:// www.Educationcounts.govt.nz/_nzdata/assets/file/0018/7191/data_table-dsau3.xls

Education Review Office (2009), *Information for Reviewers, Success for Māori Students: Progress*. Wellington: Education Review Office

Fiske, E. and H. Ladd (2000), *When Schools Compete: A Cautionary Tale*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press

*Imagine 2014: Building a System of Great Schools* (2009), School District of Philadelphia. Retrieved 29 May 2009 from:
http://www.phila.k12.pa.us/announcements/Image_2014_041509.pdf

*Launch of Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success: Speech by Minister of Education Hon Chris Carter 15 April 2008* (2008), New Zealand Government: beehive.govt.nz. Retrieved 20 April 2009 from: http://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/launch+ka+hikitia +%E2%80%93+managingsuccess

*Launch of te reo curriculum guidelines: Speech by Minister of Education Hon Anne Tolley 19 March 2009* (2009), New Zealand Government Retrieved 22 May 2009 from http://www.behive.govt.nz/speech/launch+te+reo+curriculum+guidelines

Learning Media Ltd. (2008), *Literacy Professional Development Project Evidence of Improved Student Outcomes (March 2008)*, Wellington: Learning Media Ltd.

Learning Media Ltd. (2006), *Literacy Professional Development Project (March 2006)*, Wellington: Learning Media Ltd.

Levin, Ben (2008), *How to Change 5000 schools: A Practical and Positive Approach for Leading Change at Every Level,* Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press

'Ministry Defends 'Infantile' Māori Education Badges', *Otago Daily Times Online,* 19 June 2008 Retrieved 20 April 2009 from: http://www.odt.co.nz/print/10180

Ministry of Education (2009), *Concerns,* Internal email to Ministry of Education Leadership Team from Apryll Parata, 10 March 2009

Ministry of Education (2009), *Ka Hikitia*, Internal email to Minister Anne Tolley and Associate Minister Pita Sharples from school principal, 5 March 2009

Ministry of Education (2009), *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success*; Internal Email to Ministry Leadership Team and Senior Managers from Karen Sewell, 6 March 2009

Ministry of Education (2009), *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success: Ownership, Leadership and Accountability, 6 March 2009*, Internal Education Report to Minister of Education

Ministry of Education (2009), *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success: Strengthening Consistency of Advice;* Internal memorandum to Leadership Team from Apryll Parata, March 2009

Ministry of Education (2009), *Ka Hikitia Programme Office and Group Māori-Outlining Roles and Responsibilities;* Internal memorandum to Leadership Team from Apryll Parata, 20 February 2009

Ministry of Education (2009), *Measurable Gains Framework-Ka Hikitia: Overall Project Plan, July 2009-2013*; Ministry of Education Internal Documents, Strategy and System Performance Group

Ministry of Education (2009), *Ministerial Briefing: Māori Education,* Powerpoint Presentation, 2 March 2009

Ministry of Education (2009), *Our News and Events-From Karen: Ka Hikitia Programme Office Established, 9 February 2009* Retrieved 4 June 2009 from: http://tetahuhu.moe.govt.nz/ourNewsandEvents/newsindex/FromKaren/09Feb ProgramOffice.aspx

Ministry of Education (2009), *Our News and Events–From Karen: Ka Hikitia - Managing Success One Year On*, *15 April 2009* Retrieved 22 May 2009 from: http://tetahuhu.moe.govt.nz/ourNewsandEvents/newsIndex/FromKaren/15AprFrom KarenKHTurns1.aspx

Ministry of Education (2009), Schooling Improvement Internal Documents: *Schooling Improvement Cluster Strategic Plan; Cluster Notes; Agreement to Provide Services in Relation to Evidence-Based Inquiry Professional Development; and Leader Inquiry and knowledge building cycle*

Ministry of Education (2009), *Statement of Intent 2009-2014*, Wellington: Crown/Ministry of Education

Ministry of Education (2009), *Summary Worksheet, Costs Involved in Funding of Strategy: Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success;* Ministry of Education Group Māori Internal Documents

Ministry of Education (2008), *Briefing to Incoming Minister, November 2008*, Ministry of Education Internal Documents

Ministry of Education (2008), *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success Community Launch and Materials, May 2008*, Ministry of Education Internal Documents

Ministry of Education (2008), *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success: Māori Education Strategy 2008-2012,* Wellington: Crown/Ministry of Education

Ministry of Education (2008), *Ka Hikitia Plan of Actions*; Ministry of Education Group Māori Internal Documents

Ministry of Education (2008), *Ministry of Education Annual Report: Te Tāhuhu o Te Mātauranga,* Wellington: Crown/Ministry of Education

Ministry of Education (2008), *Ngā Haeata Mātauranga: Annual Report on Māori Education 2007/08*, Wellington: Crown/Ministry of Education

Ministry of Education (2008), *Key Evidence and how we must use it to improve system performance for Māori.* Wellington: Crown/Ministry of Education

Ministry of Education (2008), *Statement of Intent 2008-2013*, Wellington: Crown/Ministry of Education

Ministry of Education (2008), *Te Hikoitanga: The Journey.* Wellington: Ministry of Education Group Special Education

Ministry of Education (2007), *Challenges to implementing Ka Hikitia priorities for action, 30 July 2007*; Internal Group Māori memorandum

Ministry of Education (2007), *Ka Hikitia Feedback Folder, 9 November 2007*, Ministry of Education Group Māori Internal Documents

Ministry of Education (2007), *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success: The draft Māori Education Strategy 2008-2012, Draft Strategy for Consultation, August-October 2007*, Ministry of Education Group Māori

Ministry of Education (2007), *Ngā Haeata Mātauranga: Annual Report on Māori Education 2006/07*, Wellington: Crown/Ministry of Education

Ministry of Education (2007), *The New Zealand Curriculum,* Wellington: Learning Media Ltd. for Crown/Ministry of Education

New Zealand National Party (2009), *Delivering on our election promises: our first 100 days* Retrieved on 2 April 2009 from http://www.national.org.nz/files/2009/our_first_100_%20days.pdf

Spillane, J., B. Reiser, and T. Reimer (2002), "Policy Implementation and Cognition: Reframing and Refocusing Implementation Research," *Review of Educational Research, Fall 2002, Vol.72, No. 3, pp. 387-431*

*State Education Leaders Stand Ready to Help Deliver the President's Call for Reforms, 11 March 2009* (2009), Council of Chief State School Officers, Washington DC. Retrieved 29 May 2009 from: http://www.ccsso.org/Whats_New/Press_Releases/13096.cfm

*State Stabilization Fund Update* (2009), Washington DC: United States Department of Education. Retrieved 29 May 2009 from:
http://www.edgovblogs.org/Duncan/2009/04/state-stabilization-fund-update/

Statistics New Zealand (2008), *National Ethnic Population Projections: 2006-2026 (December 2008)* Retrieved on 17 June 2009 from http://www.stats.govt.nz/people/population/population+projections/projections-overview/national-ethnic-population-projections.htm

Statistics New Zealand (2007), *QuickStats National Highlights (August 2007)* Retrieved on 9 May 2009 from http:www.stats.govt.nz/census/2006-census-data/national-highlights/2006-census-quickstats-national-highlights-revised.htm

Statistics New Zealand (2006), *QuickStats about culture and identity 2006 Census (March 2006)* Retrieved on 2 June 2009 from http://www.stats.govt.nz/NR/rdonlyres/ 5F1F873C-5D36-4E54-940534503A2C0AF6/0/quickstatsaboutcultureandidentity.pdf

Statistics New Zealand (2005), *National Ethnic Population Projections 2001(base)-2021 update (April 2005)* Retrieved on 3 June 2009 from http://www.stats.govt.nz/NR/rdonlyres/D9A5C6F4-ABB3-4C6D-BC9C-8A94C58FA98C/0/nationalethnicpopulationprojections01base21updatehotp.pdf

'Strategy Launch Reflects Community Focus,' *Scoop-Independent News,* 15 May, 2008 Retrieved 16 June 2009 from http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PA0805/ S00244.htm

*Superintendent's Priorities: Five Focus Areas* (2009), Denver Public Schools. Retrieved 29 May 2009 from: http://communications.dpsk12.org/newsroom/ superintendent-s-priorities/superintendent/

*Taumata Whanonga: Speech by Hon Minister Anne Tolley 16 March 2009 (2009),* New Zealand Government: beehive.govt.nz. Retrieved 22 May 2009 from: http://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/taumata+whaanonga

*The Māori Strategic and Implementation Plan for the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (2007)*, Wellington: New Zealand Qualifications Authority

Te Puni Kōkiri/The Ministry of Māori Development (2008), *Māori Potential Approach* Retrieved on 23 February 2009 from http://www.tpk.govt.nz/en/about/mpa/

Timperley, H., A. Wilson, H. Barrar, and I. Fung (2007), *Teacher Professional Learning and Development: Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration*, Wellington: Ministry of Education.

Timperley, H. and J. Parr (2009–in press), "Chain of Influence from Policy to Practice in the New Zealand Literacy Strategy, Accepted for publication in special issue on *International Literacy Policies in Research Papers in Education*

Walker, R (2004), *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou: Struggle Without End*, Auckland: Penguin Books.