

Effective governance

Supporting Pasifika success



Information for school boards of trustees
2013

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*Kia orana, Fakaalofa lahi atu, Talofa lava, Gude tru olgeta,
Taloha ni, Malo e lelei, Talofa, Ni sa bula vinaka,
Warm greetings to you all in all our Pasifika languages*

Acknowledgments

In April 2012, a group of Pasifika trustees was invited to attend a workshop and to develop these guidelines on how boards can implement the *Pasifika Education Plan*, including how to engage with Pasifika students and families.

They shared key insights about the specific challenges faced by Pasifika trustees over effective governance in schools and what strategies could be introduced to improve Pasifika students' outcomes. Their feedback has informed these guidelines for boards on ways to better understand and use the goals set out in the *Pasifika Education Plan 2013–2017*.

In Pacific cultures, there are three perspectives: the perspective of the person at the top of the mountain, the perspective of the person at the top of the tree, and the perspective of the person fishing in the canoe. For any big problem, the three perspectives are equally necessary; the person fishing in the canoe may not have the long or far view of the person at the top of the mountain or the person at the top of the tree, but they are closer to the school of fish.

Adapted from the original quotation
by Tupua Tamasese Tupuola Efi¹

Terminology

Pasifika or **Pacific** (people) are collective terms used throughout this document to refer to people of Melanesian, Micronesian, and Polynesian descent or heritage or ancestry who have migrated to or have been born in Aotearoa New Zealand. The term Pasifika includes recent migrants or New Zealand-born Pasifika people of single or mixed heritage. While identifying themselves as Pasifika, this group may also identify with their ethnic-specific Pacific homeland. Pasifika people are not homogenous and Pasifika or Pacific does not refer to a single ethnicity, nationality, gender, language, or culture.

Unless stated otherwise, the statistics and evidence in this guideline have been drawn from the *Pasifika Education Plan: Monitoring Report 2010* and the *Pasifika Education Plan Mid-Term Review 2011*.

¹ Cited in "Ole Taeao Afua, the New Morning: A Qualitative Investigation into Samoan Perspectives on Mental Health and Culturally Appropriate Services", *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 2005, 9, pages 300–309

Introduction

As a board, you play a vital role in deciding and leading the future direction and performance of your school.

These guidelines are a valuable resource for boards on how to implement the *Pasifika Education Plan 2013–2017*. They will help you understand your governance role and how to fulfil the responsibilities that go with it – in particular, the responsibility to meet the needs and lift the achievement of all students, with a specific focus on your Pasifika students. They should be read together with *Effective governance: Working in partnership* (MoE, 2010) and other governance information available to boards.

These guidelines have been developed for boards of English-medium schools. They outline the different supports available for boards across the country and provide a few examples of how various boards are working to contribute to Pasifika students' achievement. The guidelines are relevant to all schools, from those that have only a few Pasifika students to those where Pasifika students are the majority.

The guidelines provide a starting point for your board's planning, practices, and performance to support your Pasifika students, their families, and their communities. They will help you to build the Pasifika competencies, capabilities, and capacities of your school so that it can be more responsive to your Pasifika students' needs.

Supporting system change

Our education system rates among the best in the world. However, we face a serious and complex challenge: while many of our children receive a high-quality education, a significant number, often referred to as “the long tail of underachievement”, still miss out. This does not have to be the case, and boards have an important role to play in changing the situation.

Aotearoa New Zealand's education system must provide every young New Zealander with the skills, knowledge, and qualifications to succeed in a rapidly changing world. This includes embracing the cultural needs of Pasifika students so that they reach their full potential.

Currently, one in six Pasifika students will not have achieved basic literacy and numeracy skills by the age of ten. Almost one in five will leave school without any qualification; another one in five will leave with NCEA Level 1 only; and around one in five with NCEA Level 2. One in ten will become disengaged from education, employment, or training by the age of seventeen.

To change this situation, we need to change the way we do things. The good news is that, when the education system gets it right and provides deliberate targeted support, Pasifika students can achieve education success. Your board can help your Pasifika students to achieve that success.

Take courage and be bold – ask the difficult questions and challenge the way your board and school operate. Ask whether they work in the best interests of all your students.

Oku 'auha 'a e kakai ko e 'ikai ha visone
Without a vision, the people will perish

Tongan proverb

Pasifika Education Plan 2013–2017

Vision, goals, and priority actions

The *Pasifika Education Plan 2013–2017* sets out the steps needed to ensure that the education system works for Pasifika students. The Plan's vision is "Drive change for Pasifika success".

Government has set some broad and ambitious goals for the engagement and achievement of Pasifika students in all parts of the education system. Consultation for a renewed plan was carried out in 2012, and the Plan was relaunched in November of that year.

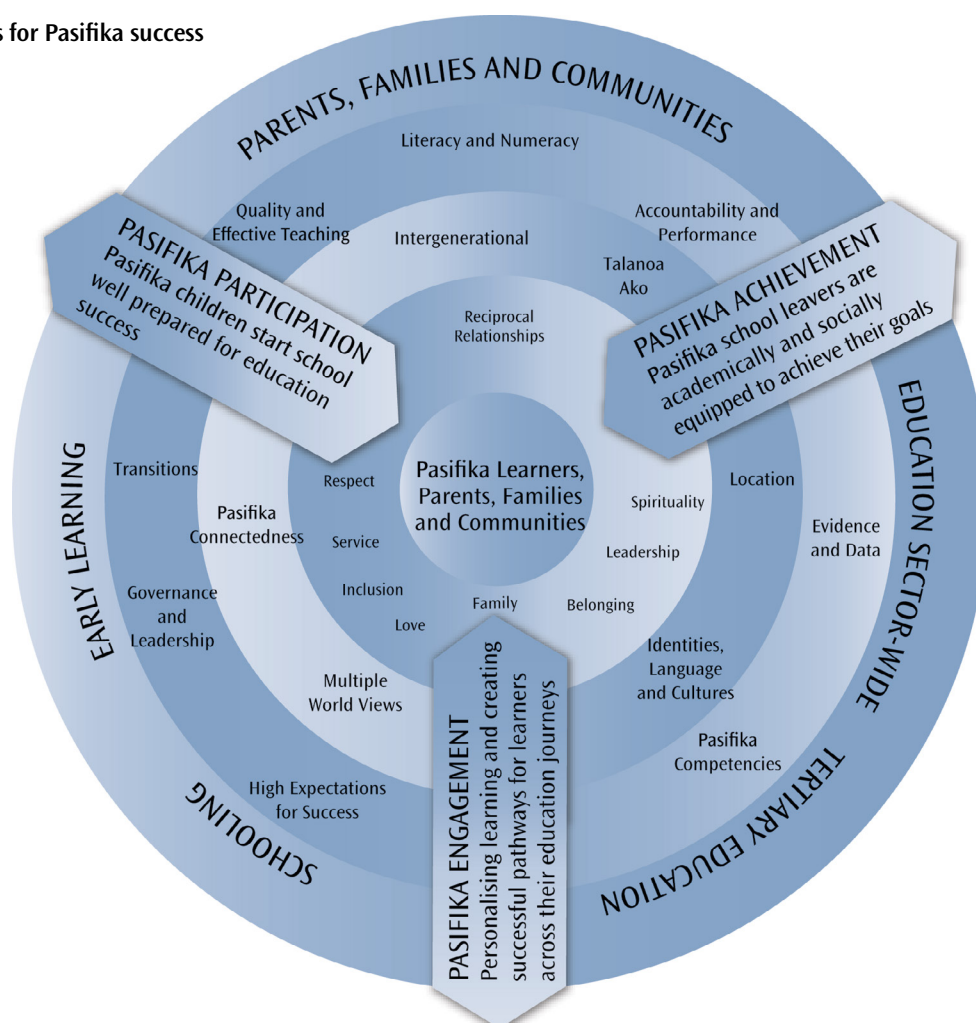
Pasifika students' participation and achievement in education has improved markedly in the last five years.

The *Pasifika Education Plan 2013–2017* aims not just to keep up the momentum but to step up the pace of change.

Your board should be familiar with the *Pasifika Education Plan* so that you can align your school's direction, priorities, and funding with these goals. This will create the best conditions to support educational success for your Pasifika students, families, and communities.

The Plan sets out the priority actions for change across the sector. It also recognises that Pasifika education success requires the active involvement of parents, families, and communities. The responsibility for this sits both with those delivering education and with the parents, families, and communities of students (see the Compass for Pasifika success diagram below).

Compass for Pasifika success



You can find the full *Pasifika Education Plan* on the Ministry of Education's website at www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/PasifikaEducation/PasifikaEducationPlan.aspx

The renewed *Pasifika Education Plan 2013–2017* is available at www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/PasifikaEducation/PasifikaEducationPlan2013.aspx

*A fia vave oo lou va'a, alo na o 'oe, ae a fia tuli mamao
le taunu'uga tatou 'alo'alo faatasi*

If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far,
go together

Samoan proverb

Pasifika communities

1 Valuing diversity

The Pacific is a tremendously diverse area. It includes over twenty-two Polynesian, Melanesian, and Micronesian cultures and an even greater number of languages. Adding to Pasifika diversity in Aotearoa New Zealand is the fact that a growing proportion of New Zealand-born Pasifika children are of multiple ethnicities. New and diverse Pasifika identities are emerging, and there is a growing Pasifika influence on New Zealand arts, food, sports, and recreation. For example, Auckland is the largest Polynesian (Pasifika) city in the world and hosts the largest annual Pasifika festival.²

2 Pasifika cultural values

The strong historical links with many Pacific countries and the special relationships between the New Zealand government and Pasifika mean that we need to recognise that Pasifika people should have the same socio-economic opportunities as non-Pasifika.

Pasifika people are the second largest non-European ethnic group in New Zealand, comprising 6.9 percent of the population. The majority of the Pasifika population is under fifteen years of age. According to the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs' publication *Ala Fou – New Pathways: Strategic Directions for Pacific Youth in New Zealand*, strategic priorities for this group are to build cultural confidence, achieve a positive sense of identity, and support Pasifika youth in attaining their aspirations for prosperity.

Pasifika people form a diverse community. Existing language and cultural differences are often intensified by differences in experiences, expectations, and aspirations between New Zealand-born and Pacific-born youth, as well as by intergenerational differences. However, Pasifika people generally share common values that underpin their world view and how they engage and interact with others. Core values include spirituality (religious practices and church affiliation); the importance of the family, community, and the group; reciprocity as the basis for nurturing social relationships; a consensus approach to decision making; respect for elders, authority, and status; and a high regard for community and social structures. Communicating with Pasifika people involves the creation and maintenance of relationships based on trust.

Studies indicate that for Pasifika students, identity (language and culture) is central to learning. We need to explore educational achievement through a cultural lens that sees Pasifika knowledge and practices as valid and valued and not solely as a means to achieving desired school outcomes. Participation in Pasifika activities (customs, practices, and language) builds young people's sense of self-esteem, belonging, and well-being and gives them the confidence to connect to school and out-of-school activities, including education. In the schooling process, the interaction of Pasifika knowledge with knowledge from other cultures presents opportunities for the creation of new knowledge.

Success in education is about positively harnessing Pasifika diversity and multiple world views within an enabling education system that works for young people, their families, and communities.

Ministry of Education, 2011, page 3

² The Pasifika Festival has been an annual event since 1992. It celebrates the art, culture, and lifestyle of the South Pacific. It attracts up to 200,000 visitors and is an iconic event in the Auckland calendar.

Your board's role in Pasifika education success

1 Setting vision and direction

[Strong] school leadership is integral to creating a positive learning culture for learners and staff and the school community. The vision and goals of a school can be successfully achieved if school leadership has the capacity to influence and drive change. The success of individual and groups of Pacific learners is dependent on the expectations school leaders set for [their pupils, school, and community].

Education Review Office 2012, page 14

Your role as the board is to set your school's vision for the future and to develop plans to determine what your school is to achieve. In terms of Pasifika education success, this means:

- designing the future for Pasifika education at your school and allocating resources for this
- being accountable for the performance of your school in relation to Pasifika student achievement
- ensuring that Pasifika stakeholders in your community are represented in your planning and decisions
- ensuring that your school is a good employer by supporting school staff to obtain the skills, competence, understanding, and confidence they need to effectively engage with, teach, and support Pasifika students.

Questions for your board

- Are the majority of Pasifika students at our school achieving educational success while maintaining and enhancing their identity, language, and culture as Pasifika?
- How are they achieving this?
- Do the board members and staff at our school know about and have a good working knowledge of the *Pasifika Education Plan 2013–2017*?
- Do we:
 - use this knowledge to support our planning for Pasifika student success?
 - concentrate on the evidence-based focus areas identified in the plan, which will have maximum impact for Pasifika students?
 - check the impacts we are having on Pasifika student success?

2 Understanding current performance

Because boards and schools have key roles to play in the success of Pasifika students, it is vital to understand how Pasifika students are currently performing. This will enable you to set priorities and targets for the future that focus on lifting Pasifika achievement.

The National Administration Guidelines outline that each board, through the principal and staff, is required to gather assessment information that is sufficiently comprehensive to enable the progress and achievement of students to be evaluated. Boards are expected to then use the assessment information to identify learners and groups of learners who are not achieving, or who are at risk of not achieving, and, identify aspects of the curriculum which require particular attention. They must also develop and implement teaching and learning strategies to address the needs of students and aspects of the curriculum they have identified.

Education Review Office, 2012 , page 8

Presence and achievement data

Your board should receive regular reports that include an analysis of the performance of your school in terms of Pasifika student presence and achievement.

This analysis will include:

- how Pasifika students are progressing at your school
- how the school is responding to the current status of Pasifika achievement at the school
- updates on the effectiveness of programmes designed to improve Pasifika student achievement.

These reports should identify the status of attendance, stand downs, suspensions, exclusions, and lateness for Pasifika students at your school. The reports should also identify how the school is responding to areas of concern and how well the response is working.

This information needs to be specific to the Pasifika students at your school rather than provide generic achievement or programme data. While generic programmes may benefit Pasifika students, they are less likely to address the disparities between the achievement levels of Pasifika students and other students or the learning challenges that Pasifika students may face. Programmes should be tailored for Pasifika students.

Analysis of the achievement data by your principal and staff should identify trends and patterns in achievement.

Pasifika data

Given that a key outcome of the *Pasifika Education Plan 2013–2017* is that Pasifika students succeed in school, it is also important to know how many Pasifika students at your school are:

- learning a Pasifika language (across the entire Pasifika student population – not just those in immersion or bilingual units)
- participating in programmes and activities designed to build understanding of Pasifika identity, culture, and customs (for example, Poly clubs or homework centres).

A robust assessment process is essential for any process of improvement. Schools need good data to better understand the challenges for their Pasifika learners, both at an individual and group level. Schools need to carefully analyse that information and use it to inform future action.

Education Review Office website (www.ero.govt.nz)

Partnership data

Productive partnerships have been identified as a critical factor for Pasifika education success. It is important to understand:

- how many Pasifika families and community groups are engaged with the school on a regular basis
- what type of engagement these groups have with the school
- what the goals are for these interactions and how (or if) they are supporting Pasifika student achievement
- how satisfied these groups are with the engagement.

Questions for your board

- What is the current status of attendance and achievement of Pasifika students at our school?
- What are the current engagement levels in Pasifika languages or Pasifika education for Pasifika students at our school?
- What is the current status of our school's engagement with the Pasifika families and communities at our school?

3 Planning for Pasifika educational success

If you fail to plan, then you plan to fail.

Harvey MacKay

Your board is responsible for planning for the success of all students at your school. This planning is reflected in your school charter and evaluated in the school's annual report. Your school charter is the key planning document for your school. It should outline how your school intends to raise progress and achievement for Pasifika students who are a priority or a concern.

To meet the requirements of the Education Act 1989, your charter should include plans, aims, and targets for areas of priority for your Pasifika students. Exactly what these areas are will depend on current capability and practice in your school. For example, you may develop plans for improving policies and practices so that they reflect your Pasifika students' cultures or ensure that teachers have the chance to learn about Pasifika cultures.

To reflect the vision and goals of the *Pasifika Education Plan 2013–2017*, your charter could incorporate the following evidence-based concepts for Pasifika student success:

- a focus on your Pasifika students and support for their academic success, with specific targets for their presence and achievement
- a focus on engaging in productive partnerships with Pasifika families and communities
- goals for maintaining and enhancing the **identity, language, and culture** of Pasifika students at your school.

Your charter should also give consideration to the focus areas outlined in the *Pasifika Education Plan* (if these apply to your school). Evidence shows that these areas have the biggest impact on Pasifika student achievement. They are:

- the foundation years (first years at primary school)
- young people engaged in learning (years 9 and 10)
- Pasifika language education.

To make your school charter relevant to the local community, it is important to consult with your local Pasifika parents, families, and communities. For more information, see "Reciprocal relationships with Pasifika communities" on page 15 of this booklet.

Where to go for help

For more information on preparing your charter, see the Boards section of the Ministry of Education website (www.minedu.govt.nz/Boards.aspx).

4 Effective teaching – supporting your staff

Effective teaching is the most significant influence in achieving positive learning outcomes for students. Your principal is responsible for developing and maintaining an effective professional development and appraisal programme for all staff. Support for this should be part of the board's annual planning process.

Teacher effectiveness also involves building strong relationships with Pasifika parents, families, and communities.

Questions for your board

- Are the vision, mission statement, and values in our school charter relevant to our Pasifika students?
- Do the vision, mission statement, and values in our school charter take account of Pasifika students?
- Is our planning for Pasifika students positive and focused on potential and growth?
- Does our planning include a focus on achieving productive partnerships with Pasifika families and communities?
- Do our strategic goals reflect the incorporation of identity, language, and culture across the curriculum and include specific targets for academic achievement and Pasifika education for all Pasifika students?
- Does the annual plan developed by the principal, with staff, include specific actions to support the engagement and success of Pasifika students at our school?
- Are the relevant focus areas of the *Pasifika Education Plan* reflected in our planning?

5 Aligning budget to priorities

In addition to developing goals and plans that focus on raising Pasifika achievement, boards need to ensure that a fair proportion of the school's budget is set aside to make these goals and plans happen. The amount required, and how it should be spent, will vary according to the number and needs of Pasifika students at your school, as well as the identified priorities. To evaluate this, you'll need to have a good understanding of the current performance of your school (as discussed earlier in this section).

Factors to consider include:

- What percentage of the students at your school identify as Pasifika?
- How are Pasifika students doing at your school in terms of presence (attendance, suspensions, etc.) compared with other students?
- How are the Pasifika students at your school doing in terms of academic success compared with other students?
- How are the Pasifika students at your school doing in terms of Pasifika languages and Pasifika education (including those in English-medium schooling)?
- Which of the focus areas in the *Pasifika Education Plan* are relevant to your school?
- What is your school's current level of engagement with Pasifika families and communities? Are they happy with the quality and level of this engagement? Is this engagement supporting Pasifika students in their education?
- Which of your school's current support, activities, or programmes are specifically focused on Pasifika students?

Questions for your board

- Is the proportion of our school budget that is spent on Pasifika students fair, considering the number and needs of Pasifika students at our school?
- Is the proportion of our budget that is spent on Pasifika students prioritised to the areas that will have the biggest impact on their success?
- Are we allocating funding to engage in productive partnerships with Pasifika families and communities?
- Is an appropriate proportion of our budget being spent on activities and programmes that specifically support Pasifika students (rather than on generic activities and programmes)?

6 Monitoring performance

Your school's annual report is used to capture progress against the aims outlined in your charter. This report needs to include specific information on the progress of Pasifika students against the goals you've set. This will show the effectiveness of the things the school has done to try to reach those Pasifika goals.

Your board is responsible for reviewing and approving the annual report to ensure that it achieves this purpose. You are also responsible for using the information to inform your school's future planning and resourcing.

Questions for your board

- Are we monitoring and evaluating our activities to support Pasifika students?
- Does our school's annual report specifically report on the progress of Pasifika students against the goals and actions we set?
- Are we using the information we have to inform our future planning?

Unpacking assumptions about Pasifika people

Our assumptions about groups of people can affect our expectations of how they will behave or respond in certain situations. In the case of Pasifika peoples, these assumptions can have a direct effect on Pasifika students' educational achievement.

Here are some commonly held assumptions about Pasifika people, with some suggested responses your board, principal, and staff might consider.

Assumption: Pasifika students' low levels of literacy are because of their family background.

Response: Try to find out more about your Pasifika students' culture and families, engage with and personalise your Pasifika students' learning issues and challenges, reflect and critically analyse your own practice, and let others know what support you need to work more effectively with Pasifika students.

Assumption: Poor educational achievement is a result of a lack of parental interest and involvement in schooling.

Response: Try establishing reciprocal relationships, working with families to improve parents' participation and contribution, regardless of the family's economic situation. Communication is the key and will result in a better partnership and outcomes between school and the home.

Assumption: Pasifika parents do not speak or are "silent" when engaging with teachers and schools.

Response: Try to empower and educate Pasifika parents to contribute to decision-making processes. First, provide activities where Pasifika parents feel welcome to come to school and talk about education. These should be held at times when most people can attend. Next, take steps to ensure parents understand the issues and purpose of the meeting before they are asked for their views. Promote discussions in ethnic-specific groups. Ask if they would like a support person from their community as an advocate and/or interpreter.

The New Zealand School Trustees Association offers the following advice:

Cross-cultural communication

One of the things many of us can start to do to raise our game is to become better at communicating across the range of cultures in our school community.

Cross-cultural communication is about learning to translate the often unconscious messages about proper behaviour that shape our social interactions.

Silence, for example, may imply quite different things in different cultures or circumstances, for example: respect or disrespect, agreement or disagreement.

When to speak, and when to make eye contact are other important factors that can mean very different things to people from different backgrounds.

One relatively easy starting point is to make a commitment, as a board, to finding out more about cross-cultural communication.

STA News, issue 224, June 2012

O le ala I le pule, o le tautua
The pathway to leadership is through service

Samoan proverb

A recipe for success

It's often been said that if you keep doing what you've always done, you'll keep getting what you always got. If your Pasifika students are not achieving as they should, then you need to try something different.

As discussed earlier, Pasifika students are culturally diverse, so "one size" does not fit all. Here are examples of what some schools are doing.³

1 Case studies

Case 1: Decile 10, North Auckland

- Inquiry is at the heart of this school's organising ethos.
- "Tutor time" has been established as a way of supporting the inquiry process.
- To promote relationship building, the school has created tutor groups of up to fifteen students at years 11–13.
- Pasifika students are encouraged to set aspirational goals and are monitored on their progress.
- Pasifika students are discussed collegially by the teaching staff and are actively encouraged and supported to achieve.
- Students remain with the same tutor/teacher/teacher aide for the duration of their time at the school. This enables the formation of strong, school-focused relationships.

Case 2: Decile 4, Central Auckland

- All teachers use self-reflective learning logs in which they monitor their professional learning and development (PLD).
- Teachers take on mentoring roles with small groups of five to seven Pasifika students. Within these mentor groups, teachers and students set specific, concrete, measurable, and achievable goals. Teachers are required to then monitor these students and to set up tuakana–teina⁴ relationships between students as necessary.
- The school finds culturally appropriate mentors from the wider school community to help students to achieve their goals.
- Staff-led PLD on adolescent learning and the needs of Pasifika students informs the provision of pastoral care.

Case 3: Decile 9, Central Auckland

- Priority for Pasifika students to achieve their potential and to feel a sense of cultural belonging has been implemented from board level in the school's strategic and annual plans and is practised school-wide, right down to classroom level.
- A student Pasifika committee has been established.
- The school has a Pasifika parents committee (Komiti Pasifika) that is representative of all the cultures within the school's Pasifika population and has a wide range of high-calibre expertise.
- The Komiti Pasifika provides cultural advice and guidance to the school's senior management team and the Pasifika students' committee.

³ Sourced from the Ministry of Education (2012) *Pasifika Professional Development Project: Auckland Secondary School Sector*, Black Friars Company

⁴ The tuakana–teina relationship, an integral part of traditional Māori society, provides a model for buddy systems. An older or more expert tuakana (brother, sister, or cousin) helps and guides a younger or less expert teina.

Case 4: Decile 6, Wellington

- One teacher has been appointed as Pasifika dean to reflect the importance given by the school to the responsibilities associated with Pasifika students.
- The school has a Pasifika values-based programme in which Pasifika teachers run:
 - goal-setting sessions, followed by monitoring of the students' progress against their goals
 - a weekly homework centre
 - a Pasifika book club
 - a biannual mentoring/role-model day
 - an annual Pasifika parent liaison day
 - extension support for senior Pasifika students
 - monthly meetings of the Samoan Parents Association to provide cultural advice on programmes and funding support to teachers and school management
 - outreach programmes with local tertiary providers.

Case 5: Decile 1, Wellington

- The school's strong pastoral care systems help students to feel safe and supported at school.
- Student peer mediators have a high profile in the playground and take responsibility for the well-being of their fellow students.
- The principal's consultative approach and high visibility have contributed to a collaborative professional environment for staff.
- Achievement information is collated and extensively analysed by the deputy principal in collaboration with teachers.
- Teachers are encouraged to participate in professional learning and are empowered to take responsibility for school initiatives.
- Teacher-aide assistance is provided for students who are at risk of underachieving.

2 The results of focusing on Pasifika success

What happens when schools focus on success for their Pasifika students? Below are key findings from four schools in the Auckland region.

Parents and communities were actively involved in their children's learning.

Students enjoyed school and wanted to be there.

The principal focused on high achievement levels for Pacific students and gave visible support.

Senior leaders and teachers had a strong focus on achievement and a sound understanding of the learning needs of Pacific students. They used effective teaching strategies to engage students.

Boards were well informed and knowledgeable about their responsibilities related to Pacific student achievement.

Education Review Office, 2009, page 21

la ifo le fuiniu l le lapalapa

As to each coconut leaf belongs a cluster of young nuts, so each individual belongs to a family

Samoan proverb

Reciprocal relationships with Pasifika communities

1 Effective community engagement

Engagement with Pasifika parents, families, and wider local Pasifika communities, along with ongoing maintenance of relationships, is critical to the success of Pasifika students.

As a board, you must aim to bring together the perspectives of all groups who have an interest in the success of your students. It is important for you to consult with your school's Pasifika communities about your policies, plans, and targets. Pasifika families and other Pasifika stakeholder groups will provide you with important insights and perspectives to help you govern in the best interests of the school and your Pasifika students.

Although evidence shows that while quality teaching has the biggest influence on Pasifika student success, learning is more effective when Pasifika families are valued partners in the education process and when educators and Pasifika families are open to learning from one another. As a board, you are responsible for ensuring that your school is focused on engaging with the key groups in your local Pasifika communities.

The Pasifika individuals and groups you will want to engage with will depend on your local area but may include:

- Pasifika parents and families of students at your school
- local Pasifika leaders, businesses, church ministers and churches, and social or cultural groups who may be interested in the achievement of Pasifika students at your school
- your local Ministry of Education Pasifika Education Co-ordinator.

For engagement to be effective, it is important to consult Pasifika groups at critical points (for example, before planning, during activities, and when reporting back on progress). It is also important to view this as a long-term relationship, which will be developed through continuous, varied, and relevant activities and through your sincere intentions to work together in respectful partnerships for the benefit of students.

Questions for your board

- Does our board consult with our Pasifika families and communities before making plans? Do we report back to them against the targets we have set?
- What mechanisms (if any) do we have or need to establish to ensure ongoing dialogue and engagement with our Pasifika families and communities?
- Do we engage with Pasifika parents only when we want them to support our fundraising?

2 Pasifika voice on the board

Boards often try to fill the need to consult with Pasifika communities by having at least one member of Pasifika descent who has been either elected or co-opted into the position to fill a skill gap (such as understanding a Pasifika language and culture or knowledge of local Pasifika groups).

While there is tremendous value in having a Pasifika member on the board, evidence suggests that having one representative will not necessarily lead to effective engagement with Pasifika communities, or to the effective incorporation of Pasifika views and perspectives into planning.

In addition, if you rely on a single Pasifika board member to convey the views of all Pasifika groups, there is a risk that this one voice will be overshadowed by the rest of the board. If that board member was co-opted, there is also a risk that they do not represent the views of all Pasifika individuals and groups.

Further, other board members may rely on that individual to be the cultural conscience for the board as opposed to all members taking responsibility. There is a responsibility for **all** board members to engage with Pasifika families and communities.

Boards that have been the most successful in engaging Pasifika families and communities tend to consult widely and regularly, using a variety of methods for gathering information.

Factors that may contribute to the Pasifika voice being effectively heard by the board include:

- the appointment of a board sub-committee responsible for monitoring and improving Pasifika student success
- having more than one board member of Pasifika descent
- the employment of a board-appointed Pasifika expert to work with the school and report back to the board
- regular reports to the board providing information on Pasifika student achievement and the views of Pasifika students, teachers, families, and the wider community
- extensive consultation with Pasifika students, staff, families, and the wider community on the school's future direction and targets, with regular reports on progress
- face-to-face, one-to-one consultation with Pasifika families
- improving the board's knowledge and understanding of issues affecting Pasifika students' achievement (in general, and specifically for your school)
- having at least one Pasifika staff member in the school's senior leadership team
- having an alternative board constitution that allows for greater Pasifika family and community involvement in the school. You can learn more about alternative governance structures at www.minedu.govt.nz/Boards/EffectiveGovernance/FlexibilityBoardStructures/SchoolingStructuresAndGovernanceOptions.aspx

The Careers New Zealand website gives the following advice on how to gain the support, understanding, and involvement of Pasifika aiga and community leaders in your school:

Improve communication with Pasifika communities

Use accessible language in communications to homes, and avoid professional jargon that might work to isolate or disempower families.

Build greater understanding in the community about school activities by providing a rationale. The more parents know about school activities, the lower their barriers to school involvement.

Advise families on the protocol of parent evenings or subject selection evenings (for example, whether the family is expected to ask questions or simply receive information).

Use bilingual community liaison people to help bridge language and cultural differences between homes and school.

Get parents involved in planning and management (for example, as teacher aides or on boards of trustees).

Make it easier for Pasifika students to take part in learning activities

Have a curriculum that reflects the culture, values, interests, experiences, and concerns of the community.

Use home-based learning activities in situations where parents are working long hours and have limited time for involvement in school activities.

Provide workshops to help parents develop home-based support strategies and learning activities they can do with their children.

Arrange childcare, transportation, and weekend activities to increase parental involvement.

Engaging with Pasifika,
Careers New Zealand website

Consider and involve the wider community
Think “family” rather than “parent” when planning activities.

Engage the support of local churches and leaders in the Pasifika community. This is particularly helpful in regions with fewer Pasifika people.

Provide career education to promote higher aspirations among families.

Collaborate with other schools where appropriate and practical to do so. For example, with the primary and intermediate schools that students come from.

Engaging with Pasifika,
Careers New Zealand website

The target for Pasifika board representation in the *Pasifika Education Plan 2013–2017* is calculated on the number of Pasifika pupils at that school.

... “Pasifika representation should be at least the same as the proportion of Pasifika learners at that school”. As at 1 December 2011, only 32.9% of schools with sufficient number of Pasifika students to expect Pasifika representation on the schools’ board of trustees had such representation. The forecast falls well short of the target of 100%.

Ministry of Education, 2010, page 42

Questions for your board:

- Do we use a range of approaches to ensure a Pasifika perspective is heard at board level?
- Are the measures we have in place effective in allowing Pasifika input in board matters?
- Should we have a recruitment strategy to attract Pasifika representation?

3 Encouraging school engagement with Pasifika families

The engagement of Pasifika families and communities to support students’ education is a management concern to be addressed by the principal, but boards need to ensure that priority is given to this through the planning process. It is also the board’s responsibility to ensure that an appropriate level of funding is allocated to this area and that engagement levels are monitored to ensure programmes and initiatives are having a positive impact.

Questions for your board:

- Does our school’s planning and reporting reflect a focus on engagement with Pasifika families and community?
- Are our school’s Pasifika families and community satisfied with the current level and type of engagement with the school?

4 Appropriate engagement with Pasifika communities

Pasifika principles

Respect for Pasifika values, identities, languages, and cultures; importance of family, spirituality, and reciprocity; acknowledging multiple world views

Adapted from the *Pasifika Education Plan 2013–2017*

When engaging in relationship building with Pasifika communities, or any group, it is vital that the way you approach them and what you expect them to do is appropriate, respectful, and mindful of the experiences they bring. It is important to consider:

- personal preferences for engagement (for example, face-to-face or group based)
- suitable timing (for example, time of day, week, term, or year) acknowledging personal pressures and preferences
- the background of the person or group and their personal experiences with schooling
- what the benefit will be to the people you are engaging with
- the type of family or groups your school is engaging with (for example, the common family situations identified as “distressed”, “child-centred”, and “parent-centred” all require different engagement strategies⁵ and the fact that, on average, Pasifika women have children at a younger age than European/Pākehā and Asian women⁶)
- the personal situation of individuals involved (for example, consider the age, sex, and preferences of the individuals, and the financial, time, or other commitments you are asking them for, and also identify barriers to engagement and help to break these down)
- the culturally appropriate actions for different situations.

⁵ *Parents and Learning* (2000). Sam Redding, International Academy of Education

⁶ *Pasifika Education Plan: Monitoring Report 2009*, page 4

Questions for your board:

- Is the way we engage with Pasifika respectful, considerate, and appropriate for our local Pasifika families and communities?

Where to go for help

There are a number of guidelines that provide information and examples of how schools can effectively engage with their local Pasifika communities.

ASB Community Trust's publication *He Akorangi He Aratohu*:
www.asbcommunitytrust.org.nz/education-initiative/lessons-learned

Careers New Zealand:
www.careers.govt.nz/educators-practitioners/planning/engagement/pasifika

City of Manukau Education Trust COMET:
www.comet.org.nz

Education Counts literature review on the effective engagement of Pasifika parents and communities in education:
www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/pasifika_education/5907

Education Review Office:
www.ero.govt.nz/National-Reports

Medical Council of New Zealand's publication on best health outcomes for Pacific Peoples:
www.mcnz.org.nz/assets/News-and-Publications/Statements/Best-health-outcomes-for-Pacific-Peoples.pdf

Ministry of Education local or national office and website about training and support for school boards:
www.minedu.govt.nz/Boards/SupportForBoards/SchoolSupport.aspx

New Zealand Qualifications Authority:
www.nzqa.govt.nz/audience-pages/pasifika

NZSTA website or contact the NZSTA helpdesk on 0800 STAHELP (0800 782 435):
www.nzsta.org.nz

Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector's Good Practice Participate:
www.goodpracticeparticipate.govt.nz/working-with-specific-groups/related-resources

Tertiary Education Commission:
www.tec.govt.nz/Site-information/Search/?q=pasifika+strategy

Helpful resources and references

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