May 29, 2014

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in regards to the excellent report, *Effectiveness of Te Kotahitanga Phase 5, 2010-12*, which I hope is widely circulated and read. This report provides sound evidence that can guide policy decisions relative to the national effort to raise Māori student academic achievement, as expressed in *Ka Hikitia*, which aims toward “Māori students enjoying and achieving education success as Maori.”

Notably, *Effectiveness of Te Kotahitanga Phase 5, 2010-12* finds that: “the achievement of Māori students (as measured by NCEA levels 1–3) in Phase 5 schools improved at around three times the rate of Māori in the comparison schools,” “the proportion of Māori students coming back into year 13 increased markedly in Phase 5 schools,” and “by 2012 the number of year 13 students achieving NCEA level 3 in Phase 5 schools was nearly three times what it had been four years earlier.” These results are clearly in line with the goals of *Ka Hikitia*.

I was a member of the team that conducted the external evaluation of Te Kotahitanga, Phases 3 and 4. Our data were very clear about the following: the program was producing a marked shift in classroom pedagogy; teachers were overwhelmingly enthusiastic about the value of the program’s professional development; Māori students overwhelmingly felt good in classrooms of Te Kotahitanga trained teachers; Te Kotahitanga schools were retaining Māori students at a much higher level than were comparison schools; academic results in Phase 3 were starting to appear; and teachers as well as principals saw these changes as a direct result of the Te Kotahitanga program.

The report *Effectiveness of Te Kotahitanga Phase 5, 2010-12* shows that the academic impact we could begin to see in Phase 3 schools became much stronger as the program moved into Phase 5. The analysis in *Effectiveness of Te Kotahitanga Phase 5, 2010-12* also finds, as we did, Māori student satisfaction with school, and particularly with being Māori in school. All of this is precisely what *Ka Hikitia* aims to bring about.

Te Kotahitanga was a gem of a program from an international perspective, not only for its sound theoretical basis, its well-conceptualized model of teacher professional development, and its positive impact on Māori student outcomes, but also for its consistently wise use of research. Earlier this year, I published an article in the U.S. journal *Educational Researcher* reporting an analysis I did of the nature of research on
teacher education and teacher professional development in the four leading teacher education journals internationally, in 2012. Out of 196 articles, only 11 reported the impact of a program on student outcomes, and only 2 used large-scale mixed methods. Bishop, Berryman, Wearmouth, Peter, and Clapham (published in Teaching and Teacher Education) was the only one of the 196 articles to do both. The significance of this is that Te Kotahitanga has been one of the very few teacher professional development programs worldwide to gather varied kinds of data that link program processes with student outcomes, and that use methodologies that enable findings to be generalized. In addition, the program has used its data to learn and improve with each phase, which is why the analysis of Phase 5 is so important. Phase 5 is not simply a replica of Phases 3 and 4, but represents the result of several specific improvements in the program based on data from the earlier phases.

Thus, as New Zealand moves forward with Ka Hikitia, I would hope that data, particularly data on student outcomes, will drive policies, and that the data reported in Effectiveness of Te Kotahitanga Phase 5, 2010-12 will be considered carefully.

Sincerely,

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