Achievement Challenge: Far North Community of Learning

*Our aim is to maximise the achievement of valued outcomes
for taitamariki through community collaboration.*

Context

The 'Far North' or 'Te Hiku' district is one of New Zealand's earliest inhabited areas, with a proud history, sweeping and beautiful landscape, and a rich heritage of peoples and activities. The five iwi of 'Te Hiku o te Ika' (the tail of the fish) are **Ngāti Kuri**, **Te Aupouri**, **Ngāi Takoto**, **Ngāti Kahu and Te Rarawa**. Te Hiku has a population of about 22,000 people, which accounts for about forty per cent of the whole Far North District. Centred on Kaitaia, Te Hiku extends from Te Rerenga Wairua (Cape Reinga) down to the North Hokianga harbour in the west, and south as far as Mangonui on the East coast. Te Hiku also includes Kaeo, linked historically as a special interest area. A map of Te Hiku is presented below, also showing the distribution of our schools.

The Far North Community of Learning (FNCoL) comprises twenty schools, of which three include secondary level students: one of these is a Secondary school, one is a Composite Area school and the third is a Composite, State Integrated school. Of the remaining seventeen, a large number (12) are Full Primary schools, including one State Integrated. One Intermediate and four Contributing primary schools make up the group.

Many of our schools are relatively isolated and significant numbers of students are from remote rural schools. Driving distance from our northern-most school (Te Hapua) to Herekino in the southwest is 126km; or from Te Hapua to the south-eastern most school, is about 160 km (2 ¼ hours). Thus the combination of school size and geographical isolation is a significant feature for us to consider.

Of positive help, however, is the fact that ten schools within the CoL have worked for the past three years as part of the Muriwhenua Learning Change Network (LCN) and have an established a culture of working collaboratively. We see this as a significant enabling factor as we begin the work of this CoL together, anticipating that the early learning from

this group will serve as a positive starting place for effective collaboration amongst the whole group.

Our Learners

The total number of students in the CoL schools is about 3100: with an estimated 1900 in primary school phase (up to year 8) and the remainder (1000) in the secondary stage. The average size for all our primary schools is 88 students, with the full primary schools being slightly smaller (81). Te Hiku has a larger proportion of Māori than nationally. About seventy percent of our learners are Māori, with fewer than national average being of ethnicities other than NZ European, which category makes up most of the remaining thirty percent. The 'Summary Table' in the Appendix gives further breakdown of schools by type.

Considering the wider community, the Far North is characterised by high levels of unemployment and teen births, low wages and poor health issues, and is over represented in most social deprivation statistics. Students overall, including Māori students, are not achieving as well as students nationally in relation to both National Standards and National Certificate in Educational Achievement (ERO, 2016). This ERO Report for our CoL also identified student retention rates, high rates of suspension and exclusion (in some schools), high staff turnover, high student transience, lower ECE participation rates, and school size and geographical isolation as significant factors for us to consider.

One key challenge for schools in our unique context is the recruitment and retention of effective teachers. Complexities attached to our context, in particular our geographical isolation, perhaps often combined with a pessimistic perception of the rohe by those who have not lived here, make recruitment of staff difficult; and retention, for periods longer than three years, the exception rather than the norm.

In contrast to these challenges, which the ERO Report also notes, there is a strong sense of identity and belonging provided by whānau connections, and the community values of ngatanga and manaakitanga, which are also seen as strengths. Similarly the *Make it Happen Te Hiku* report (Ministry of Social Development, 2014), based on extensive community consultation, identified five key aspirations for the community. The report

identifies five community-wide visionary outcomes as: "culturally strong and proud; peaceful, safe and connected; prosperous and progressive; clean and has a sustainable environment; and healthy and well" (p. 6). In accord with such positive aspirations, and with the New Zealand Curriculum aim, to generate young people who will be confident, connected, actively involved life-long learners (MoE, 2007), the Far North Community of Learning aspires to work collaboratively amongst our schools so as to improve learning outcomes for our young people.

In this collaborative effort we see contributions from other community stakeholders as pivotal to our success. In particular our partnership with the iwi of the Muriwhenua – Te Rarawa, Te Aupouri, Ngai Takoto, Ngāti Kuri and Ngāti Kahu – are seen as crucial in overcoming the challenges attached to whānau engagement, contextualising the curriculum and fostering stronger cultural identity and pride within our rohe. In addition, Far North REAP has aims compatible with the CoL and has expressed a commitment to work with us. Although we have not finalised our working arrangements with the ECE sector in the far north, a widely representative group of leaders from the sector have worked collaboratively since 2012, and are well placed to contribute towards improving successful transitions and other issues relating to successful well-being and learning for all children prior to school age. We intend to keep local ECE institutions appropriately involved and to communicate with them throughout the journey.

Learning Needs

We believe that barriers to student well-being in our region, such as the deprivation issues mentioned above, are impacting significantly and negatively on student achievement generally; perhaps more so than in many other regions. We feel strongly that we must incorporate into our work some focus on aspects of student well-being that are likely to help reduce such barriers as we simultaneously embark more directly on addressing our student achievement challenges. We think that also focussing on a culture of well-being throughout the CoL is likely to enhance our endeavours to raise student achievement. We see student, and whānau, engagement as important components of improving student achievement; and therefore as likely key strategies. We think both of

these may be within the scope of schools to influence, and that this component of student well-being reinforces a sense of commitment to our purpose.

From the Starpath Project in one of our secondary schools we are aware of the Academic Counselling model. We understand that it has had some success and intend to extend this model, although we also wish to build on it to ensure that the quality of those conversations is more likely to become effective and genuinely 'agentic' for the students.

We therefore challenge ourselves to support the development of a culture of wellbeing throughout the Community of Learning, which we believe will enhance our other endeavours to raise student achievement.

In conjunction with this focus on well-being we intend to directly address our achievement challenges through professional learning, sourced according to the needs of schools identified by our CoL leaders and teachers, and provided and led by them; or possibly by external providers as recommended.

Our analysis of achievement data in National Standards and in NCEA has highlighted:

- National Standards achievement data (measured as percentage of students achieving At or Above) is significantly and consistently lower than national averages (over the last two years; 2013-14)

- National Standards writing achievements (of students achieving At or Above) as significantly and consistently lower than for reading and mathematics (over the last two years); by an average of nearly 8%

- Our trends in National Standards writing are not improving either and the most recent trend may even be slightly negative[1]

- Schools have reported in 2015, a wider range of percentages of students At or Above standard for writing than for reading or mathematics (30 – 80%; a 10% wider range).

- Roll based NCEA data is consistently lower than the national average over the last three years. Level 3 and UE performance has an average disparity, when compared

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[1] *Subject to final confirmation of 2015 data, however that is mostly completed now.*

nationally, of 20%. Level 1-2 results also fall well below the national average with Level 2 results in 2015 falling almost 20% short of the BPS target.

- Overall NCEA trends indicate little to no shift in the disparity that currently exists between overall results in the FNCoL vs. National and the results of our Māori tamariki compared to other disaggregated groups.

- ECE participation rates seem to be improving slightly, although these remain below the national average

[Charts underpinning this analysis are included in Appendix 1]

Following from these analyses, and from our work in student agency through the LCN schools, and in view of our community's aspirations to maximise the achievement of valued outcomes for taitamariki through community collaboration, we believe that we can make the most difference by prioritising our efforts on students' writing, (at primary and perhaps early secondary levels), and on raising achievement at NCEA Level 2. We believe we will be able to improve NCEA (Level 2) achievement through better aligning our curriculum to meet student aspirations and career pathways. Simultaneously we intend to strengthen student engagement by continuing to foster greater student agency within our schools, and to strengthen whānau engagement by further enhancing our shared role as key partners in supporting the learning and career pathways of our taitamariki. Inclusive of three achievement challenges underlined above – we commit to add a fourth challenge in 2018 once we have worked to embed the first three in 2017. These Achievement Challenges are described in detail in the next section.

Achievement Challenges

As outlined above, from the work of ten of our schools within the LCN, and from the ERO Report on FNCoL, and from student achievement data supplied by the Ministry, our recent meetings have identified three main areas that we believe have the potential to maximise valued student outcomes. These are formulated below. In addressing these challenges we think it is important to emphasise the following points:

- The context within which we intend our challenges to be addressed is one cognisant of student well-being; best addressed through student and family engagement

- Because we are a large community of schools, we think this implies the need for somewhat 'higher level' goals; ones which allow some degree of adaptation at the level of individual schools. Thus we identify, for example, 'all writing' as a focus, even although for the CoL schools *on average* this is likely to be more pertinent for Māori, or for boys, (or both). We intend that schools will examine their own writing achievements in detail and may adopt such specific goals as appropriate, without departing from the overall focus on writing. Goal progress would nevertheless be measured across the whole CoL.

- We have selected the end of 2019 as our target date to allow three full years for this work to have an effect and for changed practices to become embedded; implicit in our goals is learning for everybody involved. We need to ensure time for this to happen. Our aim is to "learn fast in order to implement well under a variety of conditions and contexts."[2]. Nevertheless we expect improvements to become evident sooner than 2019 and have included Interim Targets for monitoring progress throughout the period.

- We see this process as being based on an 'inquiry cycle' model such that we will evaluate effectiveness of initiatives from the outset and adapt our work accordingly. For instance in our efforts to improve NCEA Level 2 attainment rates, we expect to monitor the effects of curriculum re-alignment work and student engagement regularly to ensure that we can reach our targets

Achievement Challenge 1:

The intent of Achievement Challenge 1 is to influence student achievement at an overarching level by:

- carrying out a community-wide review of challenges posed by students' disengagement in learning in the Far North CoL
- identifying factors which contribute to positive student agency specific to the Far North CoL schools

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[2] Quoting Anthony Bryk of ...Downloaded from http://er.aera.net on June 15, 2016

- using the review data and deliberate use of student voice to re-examine our curriculum and align it closely with the needs of the community

The central question surrounding Achievement Challenge 1 concerns the influence of teaching on emotions, motivations, mindsets, and behaviours that we associate with student agency.

"Agency is the capacity and propensity to take purposeful initiative – the opposite of helplessness. Young people with high levels of agency do not respond passively to their circumstances; they tend to seek meaning and act with purpose to achieve the conditions they desire in their own and others' lives." (Ferguson, Phillips, Rowley & Friedlander, 2015).

Achievement Challenge 1 is overarching of all our efforts to raise and influence student achievement, affecting all other areas of student learning processes. In line with current literature we see the notion of student engagement and student agency, as multifaceted and complex, but at the same time quantifiable and measurable. Evidence presented by Russell Quaglia shows that when students believe they have a voice and that teachers listen and learn from them, they are significantly more academically motivated. In saying this Quaglia also found that 53% of the students who participated in the research felt like they didn't have a voice in decision making at school (Quaglia, 2014).

The 2010 Education Review Office report on *Promoting Success for Māori Students* recognises the notion of engagement as a key factor that promotes success for Māori students. High performing schools that maintained high levels of engagement implemented a variety of initiatives to engage Maori students in learning (Education Review Office, 2010). Achievement Challenge 1 seeks to understand and inform what these factors should be for schools across the Far North CoL.

Quantifying Measurement of Student Agency within the CoL
While we can reliably measure achievement outcomes through summative and formative assessment methodology, there is growing agreement that standardised testing of academic skills provides incomplete measures of the important things that students learn from their teachers. (Ferguson, Phillips, Rowley & Friedlander, 2015). Evaluating the engagement of students and teachers provides rich data to identify and explain trends

and issues in school. The results can be used to inform and guide improvement at the school, year, subject or student levels (University of Canterbury, 2016).

Ferguson, Phillips, Rowley & Friedlander (2015) present evidence that untested learning outcomes are measureable and specific components of teaching influence them in nuanced and interesting ways. In the New Zealand context such measures can be found in the *Me and My School Survey* (NZCER) which is used to seek student's views on their engagement in school and learning. The Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring at Canterbury University provide a range of tools to assess student and teacher engagement for Year 7-13 students. From an international perspective, the *7Cs of Effective Teaching* is an evidenced based tool to help schools gather student ratings of teaching quality. The 7Cs of Effective Teaching is found to be a good predictor of achievement gains, and student ratings of teaching quality were found to be more reliable than either test score gains or classroom observations by trained professionals (Ferguson, Phillips, Rowley & Friedlander, 2015).

Achievement Challenge 1 provides a very strong rationale and purpose for positively influencing students' learning journeys through the CoL. Schools in our Muriwhenua LCN made good progress with their focus on increasing student agency and we wish to build on that success with the other schools now collaboratively working together in the Far North CoL.

Goal 1: To strengthen students' engagement with their schooling.

Target 1.1: Increase student agency in the learning process through:

> 1.1.1 identification and evaluation of factors which contribute to positive student agency across FN CoL schools

> 1.1.2: deliberate and planned use of factors which contribute to positive student agency including the use of student voice

Target 1.2: Improve the degree of alignment of curricula with student pathways.

1.2.1 Simultaneously re-examine our curriculum, with the intent of aligning it more closely with the needs of the community, and with the voice of our tamariki

We expect that this goal will entail – for many leaders, teachers, and whānau – significant learning about the wide field of student engagement, and how to measure it, as we work to improve it.

Actions towards targets in 2017/18:

We will undertake a community-wide review of challenges posed by attendance rates; whānau engagement with student learning; key student transitions between ECE, schools and tertiary institutes; learning pathways; and transience. We will do this through the accumulation of shared knowledge to create a baseline of understanding in the field of student agency, to influence widespread pedagogical change. In 2017 and 2018 we will do this by:

2017 Actions to Achieve Targets	
Term:	Action:
1	• With the support of relevant literature - all EC centres and schools will develop a collective understanding of the notion of student agency with their staff through critical conversation – and capture their journey in a narrative. • All schools will complete the *NZCER – Me and My School Survey* – and carry out a school and community wide evaluation of the results. • The CoL will form a student reference group to seek views of student engagement and capture the outcomes in a narrative. • Appoint CoL Leader by the end of Term 1 • Once the Leader is appointed the CoL will host a 'launch' event at Kaitaia College with all teachers and leaders. The event will emphasise student

	agency as a key lever to raise achievement in writing and NCEA Level 2
2	• On the basis of the student agency data gathered in Term 1, the CoL will complete a GAP analysis to establish the steps required to ensure widespread pedagogical change and the development of positive student agency in each school. • On the basis of the GAP analysis - the CoL will form up a CoL PLD application to complement the steps required for widespread pedagogical change. • Linked to CoL PLD application above – the CoL will seek to complete a workshop with NZCER focused on the purposeful use of engagement and learning data generated by _Me and My School Survey_ – and to increase the overall evaluative capability of the CoL. • Appoint CoL Lead teachers – and link their work to the strategic goals of the CoL (see GAP analysis and related plan). Ensure strong and ongoing support is in place for these roles. • As an initial task to induct and mobilise _Leaders Across Schools_ – the teachers will form and facilitate _Professional Learning Clusters_ across the CoL with _Leader Within_ teachers. These teachers will focus on building the capacity of teaching pedagogy related to positive student agency. The clusters can be supported by the MOE Student Achievement Function Practitioner aligned with the CoL. • CoL progress update – CoL Leads and school leaders will complete a midpoint evaluation of progress gained and barriers encountered - including an interim assessment of data in writing and NCEA.
3	• The CoL will host a conference for all teachers and leaders with an emphasis on the development of student agency to influence achievement. Speakers and workshop leaders to be confirmed. The conference will ensure case studies from CoL teachers and leaders, who are experiencing strong pedagogical shifts, are shared with participants to influence change.

	• The CoL Leader and Leader Across teachers will begin a curriculum re-examination based on the data and learning opportunities described above – with a focus on pedagogical approaches required to influence positive student agency and achievement gains.
4	• Re-evaluate CoL base line data that informed the initial GAP analysis to assess shifts in knowledge, understanding and application in the classroom. Cut this re-evaluation with an analysis of CoL achievement in writing and NCEA Level 2 to assess trends as influenced by pedagogical change across the CoL. • An action plan for curriculum change will be distributed for critique to all CoL schools in preparation for implementation in 2018 – and to signal potential shifts in strategic planning for schools. • A CoL PLD application will be submitted for the 2018 academic year based on above evaluation.

2018 Actions to Achieve Target	
Term:	Action:
1	• Implement the action plan described above across all CoL schools to further build capacity of teaching pedagogy and specific skills to raise achievement in writing, NCEA 2, *and the addition of a further academic based Achievement Challenge determined by achievement data in 2018 (see comment under Achievement Challenge 4 on page 13 below). • Beginning of Year CoL launch event celebrating progress from 2017, and signalling goals and direction for the following year.
2	• Implementation of PLD across CoL • Ongoing work according to action plan • Progress update – CoL Leads and school leaders complete a midpoint

	evaluation check of progress gained and barriers encountered – including an interim assessment of data in writing and NCEA
3	• The CoL will host their annual conference for teachers and leaders with an ongoing emphasis on needs and aspirations expressed through evaluation. Speakers and workshop leaders to be confirmed. The conference will continue to ensure case studies from CoL teachers and leaders, who are experiencing strong pedagogical shifts, are shared with participants to influence change. • Ongoing work according to action plan
4	• Re-evaluate CoL base line data that informed the action plan to assess shifts in knowledge, understanding and application in the classroom. Cut this re-evaluation with an analysis of CoL achievement in writing, NCEA Level 2 and other priority curriculum areas to assess trends as influenced by pedagogical change across the CoL • Continue ongoing inquiry loop as carried out over the previous two years

Achievement Challenge 2:

Students' writing stands out as the weakest achievement area, on average, across our schools; the top three challenges against National Standards for this CoL all pertain to writing achievements (see Appendix, Figure 2). To improve this situation we have set the following goal.

Goal 2: To lift the achievement of all students in writing.

Target 2.1: To lift the achievement of all students in writing from 65.4% (1121/1714)[3] to 85% (1457/1714) at or above expected level by the end of 2019. This goal will therefore be focused on approximately 336 students[4].

Actions towards Target 2.1: We anticipate that progress towards this goal may not be linear, given that teachers and schools, as well as whānau, may need time

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[3] *These figures are based on final published data for 2015 and differ slightly from Figure 2.*

[4] *This number is likely to change also over the years ahead, according to enrolment levels.*

to learn new skills for improved focus on students' writing. Interim targets will be used and are set out in Table 2.

Achievement Challenge 3:

While Level 3 and UE results currently lag significantly behind national averages, we feel that Level 2 achievement is the gateway to further opportunities in employment, education and/or training and, as such, needs to be an explicit focus of our kura.

Goal 3: To lift achievement at NCEA Level 2.

> **Target 3.1:** To increase the percentage of all school leavers gaining NCEA Level 2 from 67% (2015) to 85% by the end of 2019.
>
> This goal is expected to focus on approximately 90 students (2014 numbers).

Achievement Challenge 4:

* The FN CoL wants to commence its collaborative efforts in 2017 with a focus on the three Achievement Challenges described above because of the extent of work required to implement Achievement Challenge 1 - to make the significant pedagogical shifts required across all schools to influence widespread change. The CoL will add a further Achievement Challenge after the first 12 months of implementation of this plan to include a fourth Achievement Challenges from 2018 onwards. The fourth Achievement Challenge will be academic based and informed by 2017 achievement data.

Measurement of Achievement Challenges

- In writing we will use National Standards data, especially the combined percentage for students At and Above (and the corresponding percentage of Below and Well Below) but also further analysis as appropriate. Initial analysis of the 2015 data identifies the distribution of our tamariki across the CoL, school by school (See Table 1 below).

- At years 9 and 10 we anticipate the identification of a suitable tool for measurement of progress in writing. We will be investigating possible use of the PaCT tool.

- Goals related to NCEA will be measured on roll-based statistics within the rōpū. Our definition of 85% achievement includes all disaggregated groups, including Māori and Pasifika, achieving at or above this level.

- Indicative measures for engagement (and agency) are of interest in our CoL and we intend to continue to explore options here, including student surveys, observation and attendance data as well as pastoral data. We wish to utilise existing tools (such as, for instance, the NCER survey) for measuring student engagement and will begin by establishing baseline data. This will require some (rapid) investigation and adoption of suitable tools, for the start of 2017.

- We are aware of measures used in the Starpath project for the 'Academic Counselling' meetings (at secondary schools) and will consider ways to adapt those for use in our 'Pathways' meetings. Measurement would be via student and whānau surveys and qualitative data.

- We intend to also develop interim (proxy) measures (e.g., use of e-asTTle) if needed, to allow students, teachers and whānau to have more up-to-date (indicative) information about expected future achievements; especially where other measures tend to be more summative (e.g., final external papers for NCEA subjects). We wish to know how students' learning is progressing before it is too late to help.

Key Data

National Standards data for each of our primary and intermediate schools has been gathered from 2015 and is presented in Table 1 below. The purpose of the table is to identify the distribution of our target students: those currently attaining a 'Below' or 'Well Below' standard in writing, across years 1 to 8.

NCEA achievement data will be the focus for Goal 3.

Table 1: Distribution of Target Students across schools for National Standards Writing, 2015

School Name	Total Students (Yrs 1 – 8) [1]	Total Numbers Below or Well Below	Maori Students Below or Well Below	Male Students Below or Well Below	Students in Yr 1-4 Below or Well Below	Students in Yr 5-8 Below or Well Below
Abundant Life Sch.	120	24	15	15	8	16
		20.0%	*18.5%*	*25.4%*	*13.1%*	*27.1%*
Ahipara School	214	50	47	36	19	31
		23.4%	*28.1%*	*29.5%*	*16.7%*	*31.0%*
Awanui School	43	30	30	20	16	14
		69.8%	*71.4%*	*80.0%*	*61.5%*	*82.4%*
Herekino School	26	18	18	14	12	6
		69.2%	*69.2%*	*66.7%*	*80.0%*	*54.5%*
Kaingaroa School	84	40	21	30	26	14
		47.6%	*52.5%*	*75.0%*	*65.0%*	*35.0%*
Kaitaia Intermediate	182	56	43	37	0	56
		30.8%	*30.9%*	*43.0%*	*0%*	*30.8%*
Mangonui School	164	68	40	50	43	25
		41.5%	*43.0%*	*54.3%*	*40.2%*	*43.9%*
Ngataki School	26	8	X	X	X	X
		30.8%	*X*	*X*	*X*	*X*
Oruaiti School	61	36	22	20	12	24
		59.0%	*62.9%*	*80.0%*	*52.2%*	*63.2%*
Oturu School	142	63	63	43	24	39
		44.4%	*44.4%*	*54.4%*	*33.3%*	*55.7%*
Pamapuria School	115	36	28	23	10	26
		31.3%	*33.3%*	*38.3%*	*18.5%*	*42.6%*
Paparore School	159	36	32	23	21	15
		22.6%	*27.1%*	*26.7%*	*19.4%*	*29.4%*
Peria School	41	19	14	11	11	8
		34.1%	*63.6%*	*57.9%*	*61.1%*	*34.8%*
Pompallier Catholic	150	36	20	27	13	23
		24.0%	*23.0%*	*33.8%*	*17.3%*	*30.7%*
Pukepoto School	52	22	22	14	16	6
		42.3%	*43.1%*	*50.0%*	*44.4%*	*37.5%*
Taipa Area School	81	37	33	23	14	23
		45.7%	*47.1%*	*59.0%*	*48.3%*	*44.2%*
Te Hapua School	26	8	X	X	X	X
		30.8%	*X*	*X*	*X*	*X*
Te Kao School	14	3	X	X	X	X
		21.4%	*X*	*X*	*X*	*X*
Waiharara School	14	3	X	X	X	X
		21.4%	*X*	*X*	*X*	*X*

Note. [1] This is the total number of assessed students, as at 1/11/15, x=Data has been Redacted

What is our plan of action?

To successfully address these challenges we have summarised our overarching strategies as:

1. Employ our best leaders and teachers into the new FNCoL positions to design and share good practice effectively across the schools so as to improve valued student outcomes in our Achievement Challenge areas.

    a. Recruitment and retention was earlier identified as a key challenge related to our context. As such, there is a strong feeling from all of our kura within our roopu that this needs to be factored in, by ourselves and by the Ministry, prior to the commencement of the FNCoL's work. Boards are concerned that they will find it incredibly difficult to recruit staff to replace any specialists used by the CoL. This challenge alone may lead to some of our kura opting to remain outside of the CoL if we cannot address it. As a roopu we believe we need to consider:

        i. Providing some level of enticement for teachers looking to transfer to our rohe as a result of CoL needs. This could take the form of removal expenses, a one off recruitment payment, a longer (3 year?) tenure for replacement teachers, and/or some form of regular salary increase.

        ii. Providing the CoL with the flexibility to re-conceptualize the resourcing when releasing teachers is undesirable. This may take the form of providing the CoL with funding, rather than FTTE, to engage a provider with the work between schools.

2. Working collaboratively as a community to share knowledge and resources so as to allow CoL students equal opportunities and to improve outcomes in our Achievement Challenge areas; particularly through:

    a. partnering with key community stakeholders, such as iwi and the wider commercial sector, to accelerate progress as a collective,

b. strengthening cluster-wide alignments of certain measures to help ensure consistency of those measures,

   c. strengthening cluster-wide links between primary, intermediate and secondary schools, through communications and systems to improve student transitions between schools,

   d. strengthening links with our local ECE sector to improve student transitions into schools, and to discuss and share good practice in writing, as relevant to ECE, as this develops,

   e. strategically targeted supportive interventions, determined through well-aligned baseline data for individual schools,

   f. recognising and celebrating student and school successes,

   g. maintaining open and full communication with the wider community, including interested agencies, using available media and processes.

3. Building on the 'student agency' focus already begun by several of our primary schools in the local Far North LCN. At this stage we see 'agency' as guiding students to be self-directed learners; through inclusive teaching that involves students knowing the point of learning; and owning that learning, including the direction it is taking.

4. Improving engagement between schools and homes such that teachers will know their learners and whānau; working together through frequent targeted conversations about the learning and its direction. Through such communication we intend that families will understand that they have a significant influence on their children's learning, and that communication and understanding will promote better student engagement.

5. Teachers enquiring deeply into target students' learning capabilities and challenges, and sharing their findings (appropriately) within and between schools, as necessary, to promote student learning.

6. Utilise the CoL leaders and team to identify and share best practice and to promote the expertise necessary for teachers to facilitate learning in the achievement areas and to better make accurate judgements (OTJs) against criteria for assessing progress.

7. Utilise the CoL leaders and team to promote the quality and strength of 'pathways' conversations (including academic and vocational) between students, whānau, leaders and teachers so that individual achievements are maximised and fit-for-purpose.

8. When and as necessary, to engage with external experts to increase the organisational capacity and capability of the COL to accelerate outcomes for our taitamariki.

Our Plans for Collaboration

We believe that our degree of success in this venture will be directly dependent on genuine collaboration between schools, families and whānau, and more widely with the communities involved, to be facilitated by the CoL leaders, teachers and advisors. This will be necessary at all levels of organisations, within and between those, as well as across time and locations. We see collaboration as meaning that we will work together to realise our shared goals. Our work together will be based on, and guided by, an open, shared analysis of evidence and improvement strategies, in such a way that everyone involved feels able to contribute and that they are being listened to. This analysis of evidence and strategies will be contingent on genuine shared inquiry, robust testing of validity, and honest and open sharing. In this way we wish to allow appropriate freedom for schools to contribute to the goals in various ways, according to their particular circumstances. This will require high quality communications throughout our work; and involve, and hopefully build, high levels of trust.

We think it is important that the CoL operates as a 'learning organisation'; that is to say that we learn to address tough issues together, in an environment that promotes honesty and thinking critically to resolve obstacles to student learning.

Successful collaboration will depend on strong communications. The inherent geographical challenges will require particular attention. Our plan for communications includes periodic group meetings, face-to-face small group or individual meetings, and digital communication based around 'Google Groups' and 'Google Docs' software. We recognise that significant travel between schools will also be required.

We also recognise that there are already a number of structured and informal networks which are contributing positively and we wish to work with and support any of those which may be useful or appropriate.

This communication plan is ultimately intended to serve the students in our Community of Learning, as well as other community participants, such that, so far as possible, we are all aware of the direction and focus of our CoL in the 'Te Hiku o te Ika' ('The Tail of the Fish').

Monitoring and Reviewing

We expect to develop, with our Col Leaders and between member schools, an on-going monitoring and review system, based on an effective and shared peer review of our efforts, in such a way that builds trust and promotes the evolution of shared professional accountability for maximising the achievements and success of students in our region.

Improvements against National Standards in writing are likely to be non-linear because new learning necessitated by collaborative work takes time (Robinson, 2011). We see this crucial phase as the 'joint work that challenges thinking and practices' (Katz & Earl, 2010) and therefore an important component of monitoring and reviewing progress towards our goals will be the use of interim targets. At this stage the members of the working group for the CoL think that interim targets such as those below (Table 2) could be appropriate. We wish to review and finalise these once our CoL Leaders have been appointed and before the work begins in earnest at the start of 2017.

Table 2: *Interim Targets for National Standards in Writing*

Year End	Percentage at or above standard by end of year	Approximate *additional* student numbers in each year[1] *(Cumulative Total)*		Approximate total students At or Above in that year[2]
2015	65%	Baseline		1,121
2016	67%	27	*(27)*	1,148
2017	69%	34	*(62)*	1,183
2018	75%	103	*(165)*	1,286

2019	85%	171	*(336)*	1,457

Notes. 1. Based on 2015 data: total number of target students needed to reach 85% was 336.

2. Percentages calculated out of Total students in 2015: i.e., 1714

Finance

Subject to further confirmation as schools continue to meet and feedback into these plans, it is the intention of the founding trustees to recommend that:

- the Far North COL member schools will pool the $1000 funding allocation per school and this combined fund be administered by Far North REAP.

- the Far North CoL Governance group will be delegated by the members to make financial decisions for the allocation of any such shared FNCoL funding towards the Achievement Challenge goals (noting that Boards of Trustees of course retain their own financial autonomy otherwise). We expect this would initially be a potential combined pool of approximately $20,000 p.a. (20 schools pooling $1000 each) for set-up and establishment costs (including appointment processes during 2016).

- Far North REAP will provide secretarial and physical resources to support the COL wherever possible. Far North REAP will be paid an annual fee (to be agreed in due course) for the provision of secretarial and financial administration services and the hire of meeting and seminar rooms.

- In principle, trustees will be able to be paid, as requested, a travelling allowance (74 cents per km) and a meeting fee of $50 for meetings.

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Robinson, V. M. J. (2011). Student-Centered Leadership. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

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Appendix 1

[The following data and charts have been compiled with the assistance of the MoE.]

Table of Schools in FNCoL

Name	Type	Authority	July Roll 2015	Decile
Ahipara School	Full Primary	State	209*	
Awanui School	Contributing	State	46	2
Herekino School	Full Primary	State	28	3
Kaingaroa School (Kaitaia)	Full Primary	State	85	3
Kaitaia Abundant Life School	Composite (Year 1-15)	State: Integrated	234	2
Kaitaia College	Secondary (Year 9-15)	State	851	2
Kaitaia Intermediate	Intermediate	State	214	1
Mangonui School	Contributing	State	179	3
Ngataki School	Full Primary	State	26	1
Oruaiti School	Full Primary	State	70	2
Oturu School	Full Primary	State	155	1
Pamapuria School	Full Primary	State	127	2
Paparore School	Contributing	State	157	3
Peria School	Full Primary	State	50	3
Pompallier Catholic School	Full Primary	State: Integrated	150	3
Pukepoto School	Contributing	State	57	1
Taipa Area School	Composite (Year 1-15)	State	235	3
Te Hapua School	Full Primary	State	22	1
Te Kao School	Full Primary	State	38	2
Waiharara School	Full Primary	State	13	1

Summary Table of Schools by Type

School Type	State	State: Integrated	Grand Total	Ave. Roll (Type)
Composite (Year 1-15)	235	234	469	234
Kaitaia Abundant Life Sch.		234	234	
Taipa Area School	235		235	
Contributing	439		439	110
Awanui School	46		46	
Mangonui School	179		179	
Paparore School	157		157	
Pukepoto School	57		57	
Full Primary	823	150	973	81
Ahipara School[1]	209		209	
Herekino School	28		28	
Kaingaroa School (Kaitaia)	85		85	
Ngataki School	26		26	
Oruaiti School	70		70	
Oturu School	155		155	
Pamapuria School	127		127	
Peria School	50		50	
Pompallier Catholic School		150	150	
Te Hapua School	22		22	
Te Kao School	38		38	
Waiharara School	13		13	
Intermediate				214
Kaitaia Intermediate	214		214	
Secondary				503
Kaitaia College	851		851	
Totals	**2562**	**384**	**2946**	

Notes.
1. Roll number (2015) to be confirmed

FNCoL National Standards Achievements: All students

	Reading	Writing	Maths
2013	74.8	67.9	68.9
2014	72.0	66.6	70.7
2014 NZ	78.0	75.2	71.1
2015	73.8	64.3	70.6

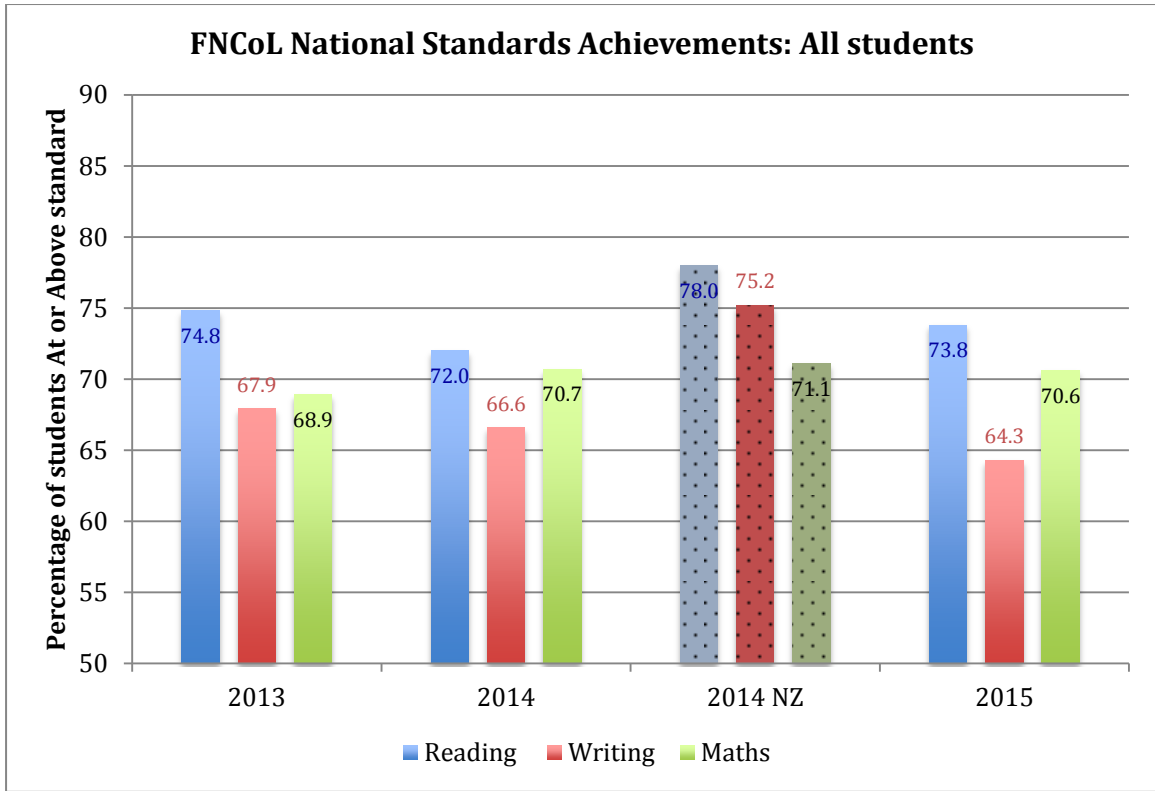**Figure 1: FNCoL 2013–15 and NZ national averages in 2014.** Data for 2015 is incomplete and based on currently available numbers.

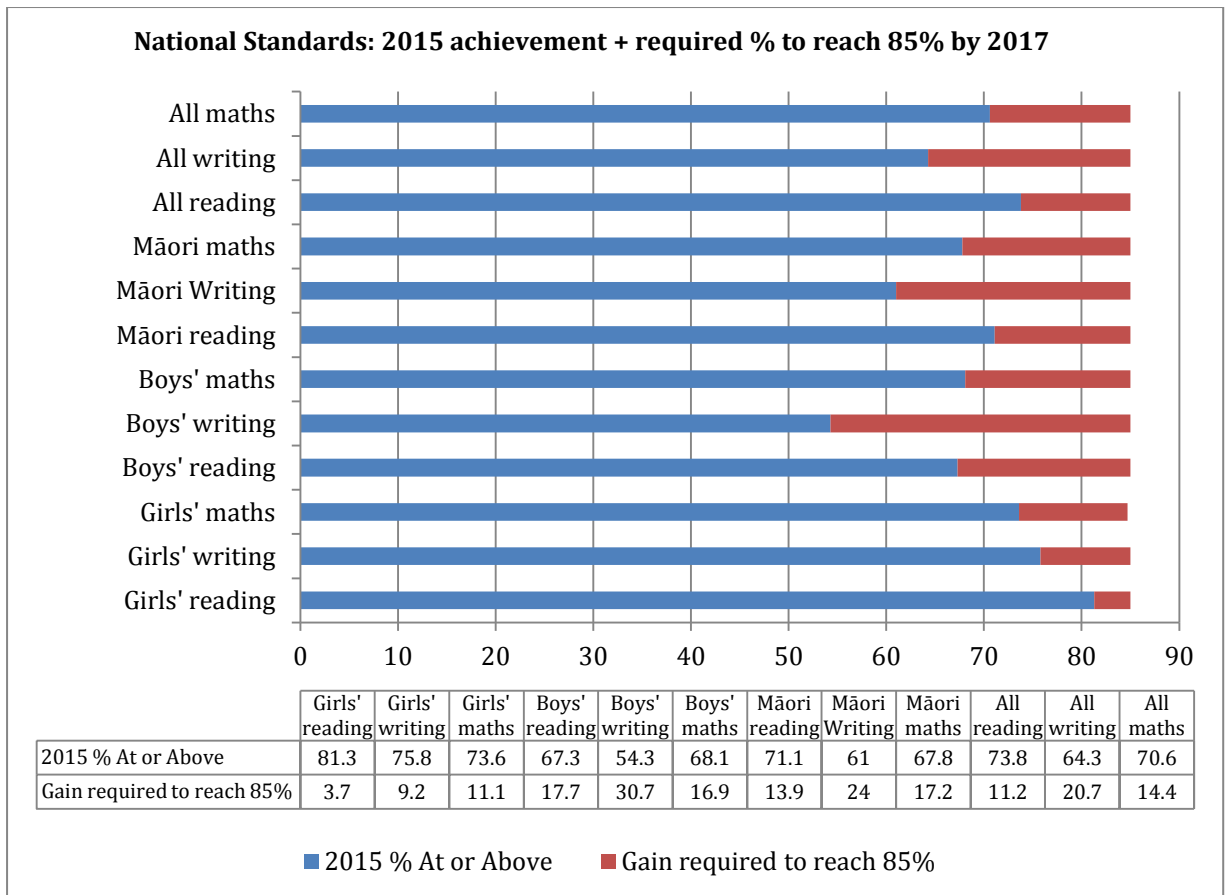**National Standards: 2015 achievement + required % to reach 85% by 2017**

	Girls' reading	Girls' writing	Girls' maths	Boys' reading	Boys' writing	Boys' maths	Māori reading	Māori Writing	Māori maths	All reading	All writing	All maths
2015 % At or Above	81.3	75.8	73.6	67.3	54.3	68.1	71.1	61	67.8	73.8	64.3	70.6
Gain required to reach 85%	3.7	9.2	11.1	17.7	30.7	16.9	13.9	24	17.2	11.2	20.7	14.4

■ 2015 % At or Above   ■ Gain required to reach 85%

Figure 2: FNCoL: Relative Challenge to reach BPS target. Summarises required gains across three areas, by three demographics.

Students with NCEA Level 2

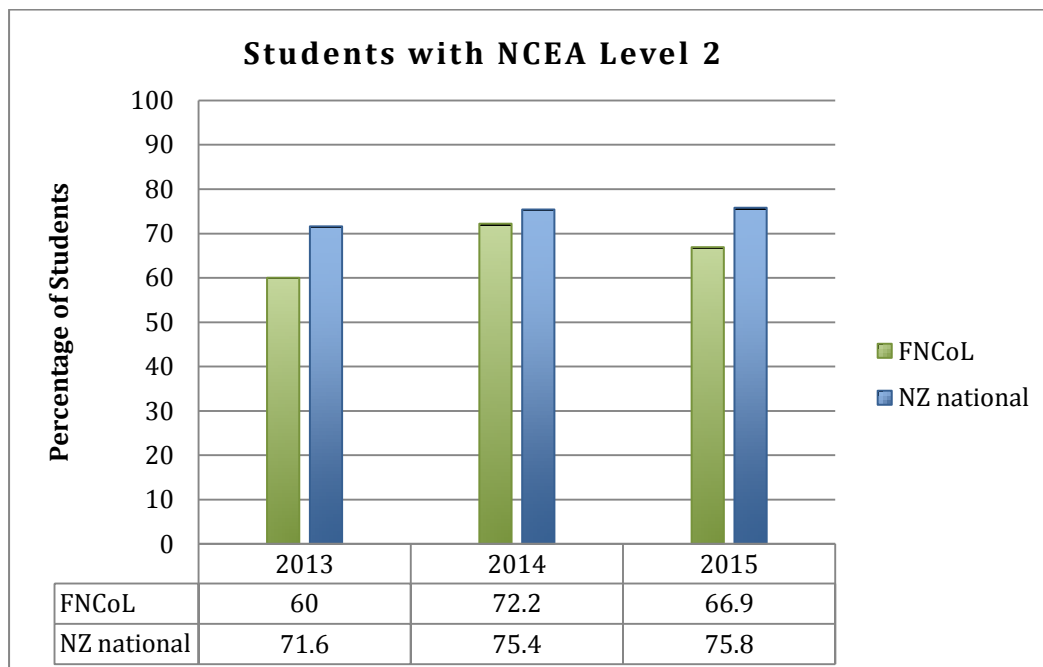|	2013	2014	2015
FNCoL	60	72.2	66.9
NZ national	71.6	75.4	75.8

Figure 3: NCEA Level 2 rates compared to NZ national

[Please note: Figures 4 – 7 containing school level NCEA data have been redacted]