

# Ngā Kura mo te ako o Whangarei (Group 4) Achievement Challenges and Memorandum of Agreement

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## I. Community and School Description

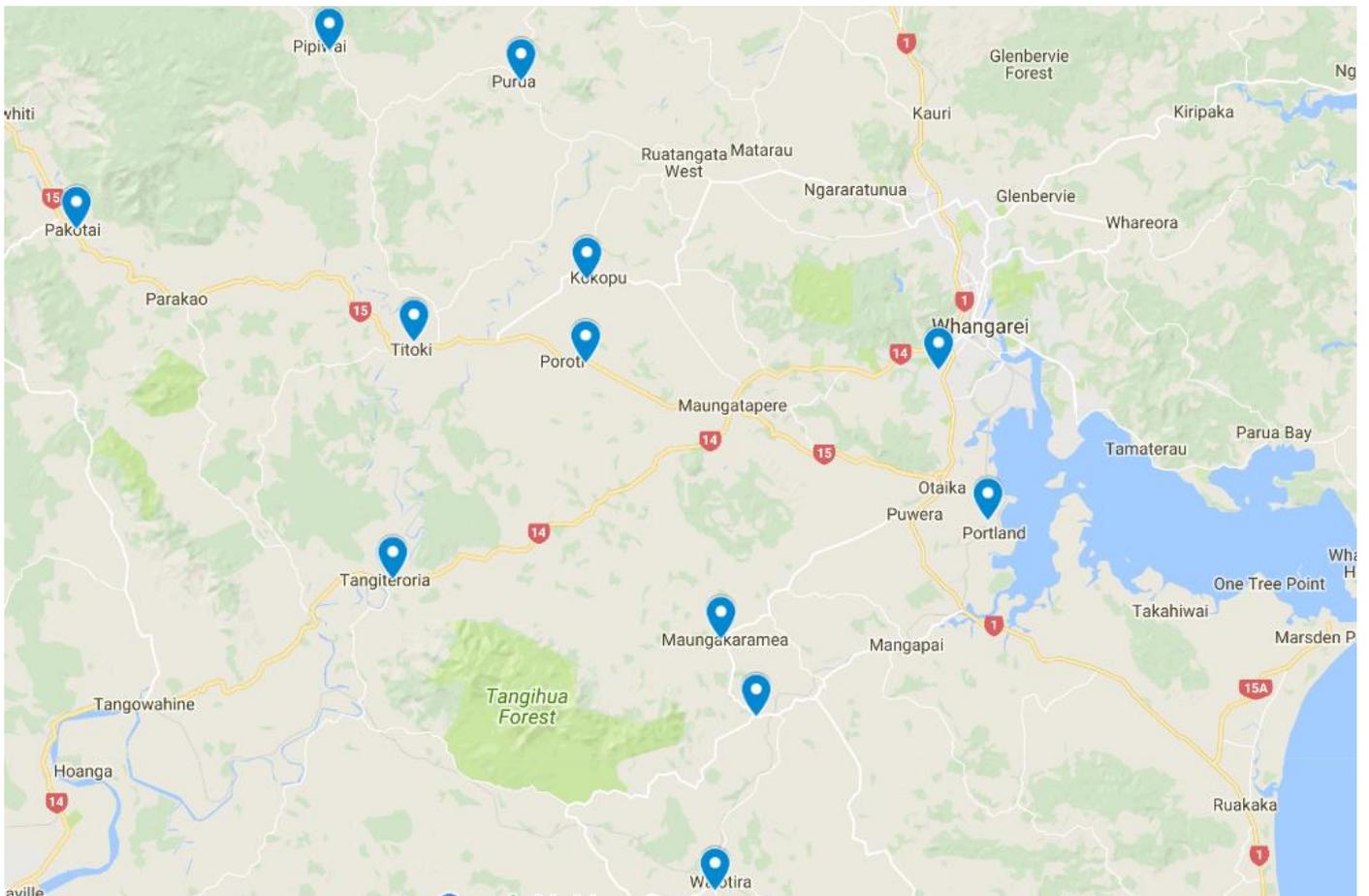
Ngā Kura mo te ako o Whangarei (Group 4) is one of five Whangarei-based Kāhui Ako working closely together in a hub with a shared administrator and plans for coordinated professional development and resourcing.

### Population description

Ngā Kura mo te ako o Whangarei (Group 4) consists of schools in rural Whangarei, located broadly to the West of the city. It has two (Year 0-13) Area Schools, nine primary schools and an urban Teen Parenting Unit. Although based in rural settings, some of the schools attract students from Whangarei City.

Approximately 25% of Whangarei District identifies as Māori (20,000 out of a population of 80,000).

In 2013, the median income for people aged 15 years and over, in Whangarei District \$25,300. This compared with a median of \$28,500 for all of New Zealand.



## School Demographics

As at 1 July 2017 Ngā Kura mo te ako o Whangarei (Group 4) had a school-based student population 990, with 415 Maori, 534 European/Pākehā, 12 Pasific and 29 other students.

| <i>School</i>                | <i>Type</i> | <i>Roll Total</i> | <i>Māori Roll</i> | <i>Other and Asian students</i> |
|------------------------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| Waiotira                     | 0-6         | 35                | 16 (46%)          |                                 |
| Portland                     | 0-6         | 32                | 19 (59%)          |                                 |
| Kokopu                       | 0-8         | 104               | 31 (30%)          | 3 (3%)                          |
| Pakotai                      | 0-8         | 11                | 11 (100%)         |                                 |
| Tangiteroria                 | 0-8         | 39                | 7 (18%)           | 2 (5%)                          |
| Poroti                       | 0-8         | 30                | 25 (83%)          | 2 (7%)                          |
| Te Horo                      | 0-8         | 44                | 44 (100%)         |                                 |
| Maungakaramea                | 0-8         | 41                | 13 (32%)          | 1 (2%)                          |
| Tauraroa AS                  | 0-13        | 539               | 165 (31%)         | 21 (4%)                         |
| Mangakahia AS                | 0-13        | 73                | 66 (90%)          |                                 |
| He Matariki Teen Parent Unit | 10-13       | 15                | 10 (67%)          |                                 |
| Purua                        | 0-6         | 29                | 6 (21%)           |                                 |
| <i>Total</i>                 |             | 990               | 415 (42%)         | 29 (3%)                         |

In addition, three Early Childhood Education (ECE) centres are members of the Kāhui Ako, Maungakaramea and Mangapai Play Centres and Portland Kindergarten.

## Kāhui Ako Journey

Following the announcement of the Investing in Educational Success strategy that included the formation of 'Communities of Schools' in 2014, a large number of Whangarei schools entered discussions as to how this opportunity would best benefit the students of our district. It was recognised that:

- The expected pathways from local primary to intermediate to secondary schools was complex in Whangarei, with many students travelling to schools other than their nearest.

- Large schools in Whangarei have committed to supporting the many small schools in the district, who may have access to very limited resources through the Kāhui Ako funding model.
- Specialised expertise and experience relevant to Achievement Challenges may be accessed across groups within the Hub
- Shared Achievement Challenges have the potential to significantly impact on learning across the wider community, regardless of which school(s) are attended
- Shared resources will allow for combined administrative assistance and professional development for teachers (eg 'Jumbo Days', engaging presenters who would be otherwise unaffordable).
- Engagement with Iwi through a single body will be more effective and efficient than each of the five Kāhui Ako initiating consultation.

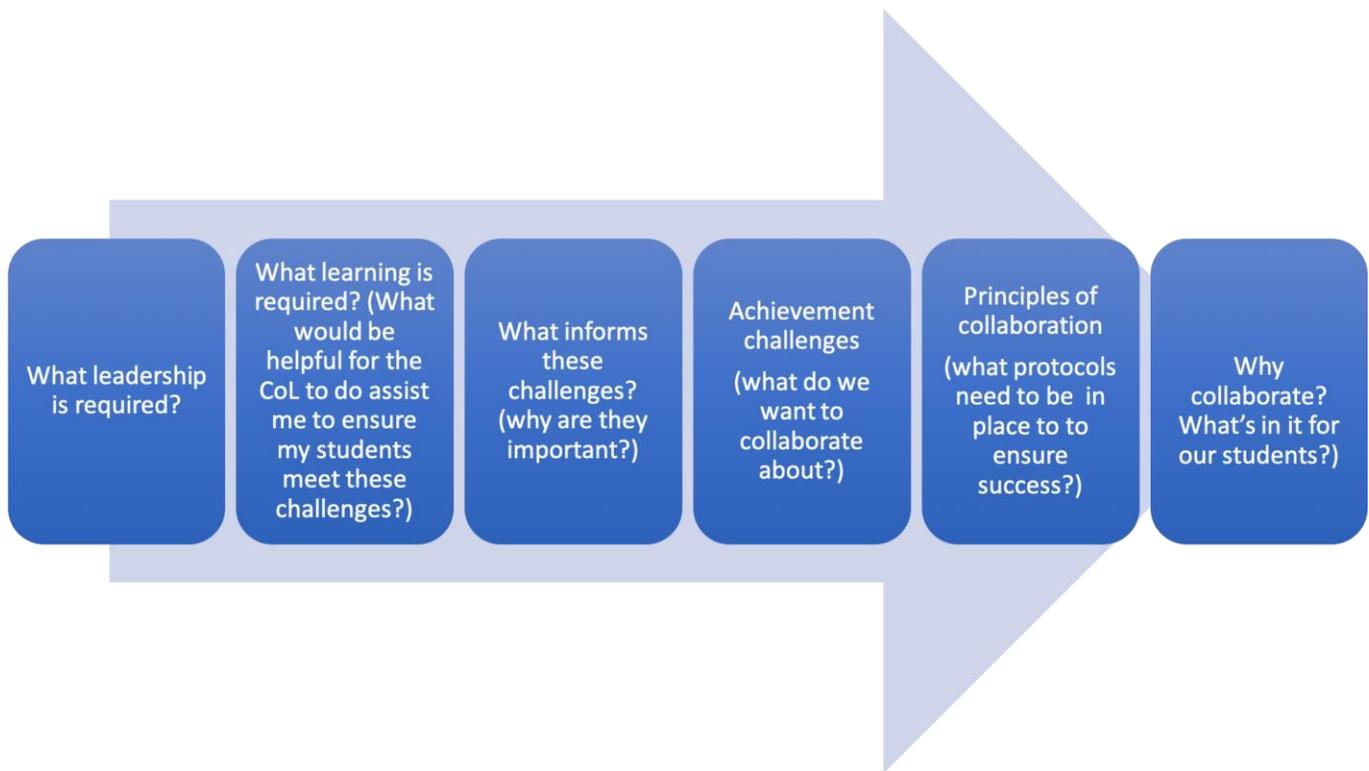
The proposal to form a very large CoL was rejected by the Ministry of Education in November 2016, so a structure of cooperation among smaller CoL was designed, evolving from an 'Umbrella' model to the development of a 'Hub' model.

In 2017 the MOE approved the formation of five Kāhui Ako - named Ngā Kura mo te ako o Whangarei (Groups 1-5), ranging from 1000 - 4000 students and 4 - 12 schools. Subsequent discussions, led by a steering committee of five principals, developed a model of close cooperation among 4-5 proposed Kāhui Ako in the Whangarei District. The intent was to enable each Kāhui Ako ('Group') to retain its independence, while being able to contribute to and receive benefit from links with the other Kāhui Ako.

Once the formation of the Hub and the structure across the district was confirmed, principals and board members of Ngā Kura mo te ako o Whangarei (Group 4) met monthly from June 2017 to begin to develop their Achievement Challenges. As a part of these discussions it was recognised that appointing: An Expert Partner, and the Lead Principal would assist the development and finalisation of the achievement challenges. For the appointment of the Lead principal a Stewardship Group was established. This group consisted of two board members, two principals and the MoE advisor. The Expert Partner, Jacqui Patuawa, was appointed in August 2017 and the CoL/Kāhui Ako leader, Grant Burns, in November 2017.

Since coming together:

- Principals and the designated MoE adviser met for an initial full day to discuss how we would work together and what our focus of the work would be (see diagram below). This day was led by our Expert Partner so all principals could participate. This meeting crystalised the areas of focus and provided a platform for future work together



- Principals (post the meeting) have shared the outcomes with their individual boards and staff and gleaned feedback and further ideas.
- Principals have met regularly, continuing the development and refinement of the Achievement Challenges
- Principals have led discussions at staff and board meetings have continued on a regular basis.
- The Lead Principal has visited each school at least once to better understand the implications of the achievement challenges for individual contexts.
- Principals have surveyed their school communities to inform the development of Achievement Challenges, particularly in relation to student wellbeing.
- The lead principal has successfully applied for PLD funding to gather data and access PLD for the writing achievement challenge.
- Completed the diagnosis of the 'Write That Essay' assessment in all schools in the group.
- The Kāhui Ako has held a student photo competition and exhibition (with support from a local Rotary club), to begin celebrating the collaborative partnership. This linked to the science and environment focus in our achievement challenges and is to continue as an annual event (in 2019 commemorating the sescentennial of James Cook's first visit to NZ).

### Management Structure

Ngā Kura mo te ako o Whangarei (Group 4) remains committed to the intent of the Whangarei Hub. (See below). Representatives of the five Whangarei Kāhui Ako groups (the 'Hub') meet once a term to develop joint strategies. A part time Hub administrator was appointed in 2017 to assist with organising and minuting Kāhui Ako meetings and any other duties.

Principals of the Kāhui Ako Group 4 schools meet once a term, with additional email and phone communications as required. The Chair of the Stewardship Group and the Ministry of Education adviser are kept up to date with all CoL/Kāhui Ako communications. The nature of this Kāhui Ako, involving a large number of teaching principals, makes more frequent meetings difficult.

The stewardship group will be reconvened upon the approval of these Achievement Challenges to appoint the Across School Leaders for the Kāhui Ako. The final structure will then finally be determined. With numbers small, available positions will be considered in the best interests of learners and gaining momentum in our achievement challenges, possibly combining 3.3 within-school roles to create a second across-school leadership position.

The development of a CoL logo in 2019 will further strengthen and clarify the shared vision for the Kāhui Ako and its community.

## II. Our Purpose

### Hub Statement of Intent

As previously mentioned, member schools are committed to the collective Whangarei approach. Collectively, it is believed that a greater impact can be made on raising student achievement across our community and a seamless educational experience for all learners can be created.

Ngā Kura mo te ako o Whangarei (Groups 1-5 ) support the well-being and success of students to improve achievement and lifelong learning, and enhance the values shared as a community.

The Hub will support effective, student-centred, culturally responsive teaching practice, with powerful and effective whanau engagement.

### Ngā Kura mo te ako o Whangarei (Group 4) statement of intent

*Ngā Kura mo te ako o Whangarei (Group 4) will raise student achievement through effective collaboration between and within schools.*

Because this Kāhui Ako consists mainly of small rural schools, a number of obstacles and opportunities are presented. The voice of each school is valued and essential for effective collaboration. Rural isolation and the workload of teaching principals need to be accounted for. The inclusion of a Teen Parent Unit, two Play Centres and one Kindergarten is valued.

*Ngā Kura mo te ako o Whangarei (Group 4) believe through collaboration we will more effectively:*

- Raise achievement for all students, including accelerated learning for priority learners
- Reduce disparity in achievement levels between Maori and other students; boys and girls
- Create opportunities for 'kid collaborators' across schools - more face to face contact for students from other schools

- Improve collection, analysis and use of data to build greater coherence in, between and across schools
- Build confidence and competence for staff through sharing and strengthening expertise and learning opportunities across the Kāhui Ako
- Build better pathways and transitions for students (inclusion of ECEs) within and between schools
- Strengthen relationships between schools through celebrating unity and community
- Share physical resources across schools in the interests of our learners
- Energise, encourage and coordinate collective efforts

The member schools of Ngā Kura mo te ako o Whangarei (Group 4) value the opportunity for collaboration that Kāhui Ako bring. We do not want to limit our efforts to the stated Achievement Challenges, instead, we wish to belong to a learning community in which all participating schools are able to benefit and contribute. Mutual support and co-operation will ensure a meaningful and sustainable framework in which responsive and effective initiatives will impact positively on all teachers' professional growth and student learning.

#### Principles underpinning this collaboration

Ngā Kura mo te ako o Whangarei (Group 4) is committed to working with the wider Whangarei Kāhui Ako Hub .

Our conversations and decisions are based on mutual respect, honesty and trust, acknowledgement of strengths and needs, a willingness to change and adapt and a commitment to community engagement. The schools in the Kāhui Ako will acknowledge and respond to the various strengths and needs of members and will meet agreed commitments and undertakings. The Kāhui Ako will be effectively managed and will maintain open communication between all members.

### **III. Rationale for Achievement Challenges**

ERO (July 2017) identified, through a summary report, that in recent years, 75 percent of all students in Years 1 to 8 achieved at or above the National Standard in reading. In writing and mathematics, achievement was lower, with 70 percent of all students at or above the standard. A significant disparity in achievement is evident between Māori and non-Māori students in literacy and mathematics (see baseline data on p11 of this document).

In all schools with Year 1 to 8 students there is a significant gender difference in achievement. Overall, girls achieved significantly better in National Standards reading, writing and mathematics.

National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA) information indicates that NCEA Levels 1 to 3 qualification attainment is better than both national and regional averages. NCEA data for 2013 to 2016 show a significant lift in many areas. Improved outcomes for Māori students are evident, particularly at NCEA Level 2 where the disparity between Māori and non-Māori has significantly reduced over the three years period.

At Level 3 success levels are also increasing, but 2016 data show that in University Entrance attainment

disparities still exist, with Māori achievement significantly less than that of NZ Pākehā. Gender disparities are also evident for leavers with Levels 2 and 3, and Vocational Pathway Awards. At Level 2 in 2016 girls were significantly more successful than boys.

Retention rates for Māori students staying at school until at least their 17th birthday have increased significantly and are comparable with national averages. 2017 data shows a reduction across the CoL in the number of stand-downs, suspensions and exclusions, although rates are higher than NZ averages. Maori were not significantly over-represented. Total stand downs were at a rate of 29.7 per 1000 students (NZ: 23.5 per 1000) and exclusions were 3.4 per thousand (NZ: 1.6 per 1000). Further information for this Kāhui Ako can be found on the Ministry of Education's 'Education Counts' website (<https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/know-your-col/col/student-engagement/exclusions?col=99183&district=2&region=1> )

*Common strengths were identified as:*

- good use of the rural environment for authentic and relevant learning experiences
- the emphasis on student wellbeing
- a growing understanding of success as Māori
- the culturally affirming and responsive relationships between adults, students and whānau
- determined leadership and governance for ongoing improvement
- growing leaders' and teachers' capability in the effective use of data to inform teaching practice.

*Areas for improvement were identified as:*

- reducing the disparity in achievement for Māori learners and for male learners at all levels
- building schools' capability to use student achievement information effectively to prioritise and accelerate student progress, particularly those achieving below expectations
- building teachers' capability in evaluation and teaching as inquiry through relevant professional learning and development
- involving whānau in closer partnerships to support students' learning and achievement as they progress through the education system

Agreement has been reached that the Hub will support a Whangarei-wide focus on hauora / well-being. We are committed to a collective achievement challenge direction with individualised Kāhui Ako flexibility and responsiveness. Student wellbeing, hauora, is critical to effective learning and is the agreed shared Achievement Challenge direction across the five Kāhui Ako contributing to the Whangarei Hub. We acknowledge that social wellbeing (connectedness) needs to be considered along with physical, mental and social well-being.

Ngā Kura mo te ako o Whangarei (Group 4) will work towards meeting **three Achievement Challenges**:

1. **Wellbeing / Hauora:** Facilitate student learning and development through the provision of an environment that fosters wellbeing
2. **Writing:** Raising achievement and increasing progress for all student groups, with an extra emphasis on Year 5 - 8 boys, and all Year 9 - 10 students, in particular for Māori boys
3. **Science and the Environment:** To create a coherent learning pathway through the Kāhui Ako to raise science achievement and develop deeper environmental knowledge.

**To enhance and support progress towards our Achievement Challenges Ngā Kura mo te ako o Whangarei (Group 4) will emphasise the following in its approach:**

- *Play-based learning* (primary classes). This approach is developmentally appropriate to the development of oral language, problem-solving and socialisation skills. It provides a platform on which to build coherence with our early childhood education centres. Several schools in the Kāhui Ako have researched and adopted the PBL approach and are willing to share their work in this area with others.
- *Performing and visual arts*. The arts provide opportunities for cooperative and collaborative learning activities between and within schools. The creation of art supports and enhances many aspects of personal and shared learning and development. The arts provide opportunities for the expression of learning in all curriculum areas. The arts provide means for making connections between the self and the world, communities and ideas
- *Culturally responsive pedagogy* (including engagement with whanau)  
“Identity, language and culture count, it is important that our students feel they can bring their culture through our school gates. Productive partnerships fostered between students, whanau and educators make a difference. Knowing, respecting, and working with Māori learners and their whanau and iwi so their worldview, aspirations and knowledge are an integral part of teaching and learning (Tātiako cultural competencies) will ultimately improve results. What works for Māori works is said to work for everyone – but what works for everyone does not necessarily work best for Māori” (Culture Counts – Relationship based learning).
- *Improving student transitions to school, within school, between schools and from school*. Students’ wellbeing and learning must be maintained as they transition from ECE Centres to primary school and from primary to secondary schools. Moreover in many of our rural schools students are required to make transitions from one teacher to another on a regular basis. A student’s transition can be complicated by the social, emotional and physiological changes that can negatively impact on their learning. Teachers that understand how these changes impact on their students are better placed to help students make positive adjustments to their new school.(ERO, 2012)

#### IV. Achievement Challenge: Writing

*Raising achievement and increasing progress for all student groups, with an extra emphasis on Year 5 - 8 boys, and all Year 9 - 10 students, particularly Māori boys*

##### *Rationale*

In recent years, 75 percent of all students in Years 1 to 8 (in our Kāhui Ako) achieved at or above the National Standard in reading. In writing, achievement was lower with 70 percent of all students at or above the standard. A significant disparity in achievement is evident between Māori and non-Māori students.

In all schools with Year 1 to 8 students there is a significant gender difference in achievement. Overall, girls achieve significantly better in National Standards reading and writing.

In order to lift achievement in writing for all year 5 - 8 boys, and for Year 9 - 10 students, in particular for Māori boys, we need to bring about change in teacher practice and pedagogy. With improved writing performance at all year levels from junior primary, we will see a sustained lift in performance in all secondary year levels.

The development and written expression of higher order thinking skills by students will equip them to progress towards future qualifications, employment and community participation. An inability to write effectively in all subject areas will limit access to future learning and career possibilities.

##### *Baseline Data:*

##### Writing: Years 0 - 8

| COMBINED     | At or Above Expected Curriculum Level/ National Standards Writing 2017 |             |    |          |             |    |          |             |    |          |             |    |                  |             |    |
|--------------|--|-------------|----|----------|-------------|----|----------|-------------|----|----------|-------------|----|------------------|-------------|----|
|              | Yr 0 - 2   |             |    | Yr 3 - 4 |             |    | Yr 5 - 6 |             |    | Yr 7 - 8 |             |    | Yr 1 - 8 (total) |             |    |
|              | <i>n</i>   | At or Above | %  | <i>n</i> | At or Above | %  | <i>n</i> | At or Above | %  | <i>n</i> | At or Above | %  | <i>n</i>         | At or Above | %  |
| All Students | 111  | 86          | 77 | 131      | 97          | 74 | 168      | 101         | 60 | 132      | 71          | 54 | 542              | 355         | 65 |
| Boys         | 54   | 39          | 72 | 54       | 34          | 63 | 84       | 41          | 49 | 63       | 23          | 37 | 255              | 137         | 54 |
| Girls        | 57   | 47          | 82 | 77       | 55          | 71 | 84       | 54          | 64 | 69       | 48          | 70 | 287              | 204         | 71 |
| Māori Boys   | 16   | 10          | 63 | 20       | 14          | 70 | 28       | 9           | 32 | 24       | 7           | 29 | 88               | 40          | 45 |
| Māori Girls  | 21   | 18          | 86 | 17       | 12          | 71 | 22       | 13          | 59 | 24       | 14          | 58 | 84               | 47          | 56 |

*Baseline data years 9-10*

The table below shows the percentages of students at Years 9 and 10 who were assessed using e-asTTle as 'Below' or 'Well Below' the expected curriculum levels in Years 9 and 10.

| Year Level | Overall | Girls | Boys | Māori | NZ European |
|------------|---------|-------|------|-------|-------------|
| 9          | 41.8    | 24.1  | 69.2 | 43.7  | 45.7        |

| Year Level | Overall | Girls | Boys | Māori | NZ European |
|------------|---------|-------|------|-------|-------------|
| 10         | 44.6    | 37.5  | 46.9 | 73.3  | 29.4        |

The Kāhui Ako has recently gathered 'clean' data regarding the quality of writing across Years 3 – 13 using the "write that Essay diagnostic". This analysis of this will be the driver for targeted intervention, ongoing analysis of practice, and teacher development. Analysis of the 'Write that Essay' diagnostic (with a standardised writing test) for 658 students (August-September 2018), from Year 3 through to Year 11, reveals:

- The average sentence was 26 words. This is too long and the writing is too dense.
- The sentence length increases in the junior years
- Fluency is low - the majority of sentences written were simple sentences with 29% of those sentences being incomplete.
- 38% of our students (43% boys & 32% Girls) were considered 'struggling writers' because 50% or more of all their sentences were incomplete.
- Students writing lacked precision - this compounds the writing gap in the senior school.

*Our initial inquiry about why this is happening suggests:*

- Some teachers expressed concerns about their own writing ability and the impact that this has on their teaching of writing
- Pedagogical approaches lack coherence across our schools.
- Surface features of writing - including punctuation are too often not well taught and focussed on.
- The assessment of writing is largely subjective in nature and there has been little opportunity for analysis and moderation within and across schools
- We have noticed a decline in the levels of oral language on school entry
- There is considerable variation in students' readiness for school
- We have struggled with finding appropriate PD providers
- We have noticed an increase in coordination delays (physical aspect of writing)

- We are concerned about the increasing of technology on oral language, reading and writing.

### *What do we plan to do*

We are aiming to raise the quality of writing of all students, with particular focus on Y5-8 boys and all Y9-10 students. We will be assessing progress in the areas of sentence length, paragraph length, fluency capacity, complete sentences, expansion of ideas, logic skills, repetition and precision.

As progression targets, we will increase the number of Year 9 and 10 students working at or above expected curriculum levels (ECL).

- The target for Y9 girls will be 80%, Y9 boys 75% (31%). In doing so, the number of Y9 Maori currently working at or above ECL will be significantly increased from the current 57%. In Y10 we will target an increase to 75% for girls and boys, a significant growth on the current 27% for Maori, by the end of the 2021 school year.
- The target for all Year 5 to 8 students will also be 75% working at or above ECL by 2021, an increase from the current 57%. There will be a particular focus on boys, of whom 44% are currently working at or above ECL.

Initially, we will inquire more deeply into the causes of the persistent underachievement in writing of our target cohorts - which are Years 5 - 8 boys and all Years 9 - 10 students. Currently, within Ngā Kura mo te ako o Whangarei Kāhui Ako Group 4 there is variation in assessment tools and overall teacher judgements. A priority for our Kāhui Ako has been the gathering of 'clean' data on the quality of writing in Years 5 – 10. This will inform targeted intervention and teacher development. The Write that Essay approach will assist us to achieve this.

From that analysis we will develop a detailed strategy for improvement plan to address the identified needs (action plan), in collaboration with the Across School and Within School Teachers on their appointment. The implementation of that action plan will ensure that writing is taught effectively across all learning areas and curriculum levels to ensure later success with NCEA Level 1 and 2 and beyond. Using the inquiry process to identify a focus for centrally funded PLD will enable leaders and teachers to 'get underneath' their achievement data to learn what is contributing to current results. In this way, we will focus on changes and improvements that will lift outcomes in priority areas. Using an approved (June 2018) Ministry of Education Professional Learning and Development (PLD) funding (400 hours), the Kāhui Ako has adopted the 'Write That Essay' programme to build teacher capacity.

To maximise learning opportunities, we will develop and use a common language to improve writing skills across the Kāhui Ako. This will increase the ability of students to transition successfully (within and between schools) and transfer their new skills into all learning areas.

Using strategies from 'Write That Essay', teachers will provide effective feedback and feed forward to students, be responsive to the needs of Māori learners and develop high engagement within authentic contexts.

We will further create learner agency to understand the skills and knowledge required to be an effective writer and communicator.

Teachers will use an inquiry learning cycle to better understand the nature and effectiveness of their own practice. There will be opportunities for teachers to collaborate across schools in these inquiries.

*Review and evaluation:*

1. Repetition of testing for students in years 3-11 and analysis through the use of the 'Write That Essay', diagnostic will occur annually and show accelerated and sustained improvement.
2. Consistent and ongoing assessment of student work by classroom teachers, is expected to show sustained, measurable improvement at all year levels.
3. NCEA results in all subject requiring written responses will reflect a growing number of subject endorsements.

## **V. Achievement Challenge: Science and the Environment**

*Rationale:*

We believe that scientific thinking and knowledge, particularly in relation to our whenua, are essential to our tamariki and growing their understanding of kaitiakitanga (guardianship). Science has particular relevance and importance in our rural communities.

Using our links with the environment, this Achievement Challenge will have strong connections with student writing and wellbeing.

Our schools share a concern that the status of Science in the curriculum has been devalued in recent years. The outcomes of this, as evidenced through our inquiry into current scientific understandings of our learners, are:

- There is a lack of scientific knowledge and vocabulary for many learners
- There is a lack of scientific / critical thinking in many of our learners
- That the current curriculum approach, particularly in primary schools, has been less focussed on fostering curiosity about the world around them
- There is little evidence of a progressive science curriculum being delivered in our schools, resulting in a fragmented pathway. This impacts on successful transitions to secondary school
- There is currently a lack of data gathering and this has hindered analysis of student achievement in science
- There has been reduced professional development and support for teachers in and of science
- Many teachers express a reduced confidence and competence in teaching science

*Current position of our Kāhui Ako*

There is a desire from our schools to address the above issues, drawing on our strengths:

- Rural location, 'land-rich' campuses with strong connections to the environment and easy access to farms, forests, maunga and awa
- 'Enviroschools' established in many schools
- Some outstanding science teachers and science teaching resources within the Kāhui Ako and the wider Whangarei Hub
- Rich cultural knowledge of our whenua by Iwi and other sources

*What we plan to do:*

The Kahui Ako will create a coherent learning pathway to raise science achievement and develop deeper environmental knowledge.

An initial target, using NZCER's Thinking With Evidence, is for students to perform at (or better than) NZ averages of 23% 'Below', 54% 'At' and 23% 'Above' expected curriculum levels in Years 7-10. While this is an initial target, we will revisit this once we have clearer data across more year levels.

At November 2018 our student achievement as assessed through 'Thinking With Evidence' was

| <b>%</b>   | <b>Below</b> | <b>At</b> | <b>Above</b> |
|------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| <b>Y7</b>  | 45           | 55        | 0            |
| <b>Y8</b>  | 28           | 60        | 13           |
| <b>Y9</b>  | 33           | 53        | 13           |
| <b>Y10</b> | 27           | 52        | 22           |

Further inquiry is needed into how effectively the NZ Science Curriculum is being delivered across our Kāhui Ako. Tools from NZCER's 'Thinking with Evidence' (Y7-10) and Team Solutions science assessment will be used to find:

- What is being taught / learned?
- How is it being taught?
- How is it assessed?
- What are the current levels of achievement?
- What do students do well? What are they struggling with? Where are the gaps?
- Are teachers equipped at all year levels with scientific knowledge and pedagogy?

From that analysis we will develop a detailed strategy for improvement plan to address the identified needs (action plan). This will include strategies for consistent data collection and analysis across our CoL schools.

We will identify clear learning progressions that define agreed 'essential knowledge' at each curriculum / year level.

PLD to support teachers to develop confidence and competence in delivering effectively assessing science will be sought (e.g. Paul Callaghan)

Integral to our focus on science is a belief that any approach should:

- Integrate science and tikanga where appropriate (Matakokiri).
- Nurture a sense of Kaitiakitanga (guardianship) of the natural world, to further protect the environment.
- Use Science as a means of increasing student agency and wellbeing, and whanau engagement
- Using science as a source and motivator for writing and other creative arts
- Leverage the benefits of Play Based Learning to foster curiosity, understanding and creativity in learners
- Continue or increase schools' commitment to Enviroschools (Northland Regional Council), and Northpower Tuna Project
- Increase collaboration, drawing on the excellent practice evident already in many of our schools (eg Mangakahia AS 'Green Gold' status, Tauraroa 'Wai Restoration', Tangiteroria native bush monitoring)
- Provide opportunities for contributions to whanau and community through enterprise (eg Young Enterprise Scheme, Future Problem Solving)

*Review and Evaluation:*

1. Learning progression in Science will be developed and applied by Kāhui Ako schools.
2. Consistent data gathering and analysis tools will be implemented across the CoL (e.g. NZCER's Thinking with Evidence).
3. Enviroschools' Awards will continue to recognise the achievements of schools using this programme.
4. Over time, the implementation of the above strategies will be expected to have a positive impact on NCEA results in Science, Biology, Chemistry and Physics

## **VI. Achievement Challenge: Well being / Hauora**

*Facilitate student learning and development through the provision of an environment that fosters wellbeing*

*Rationale:*

'Student wellbeing is strongly linked to learning. A student's level of wellbeing at school is indicated by their satisfaction with life at school, their engagement with learning and their social-emotional behaviour. It is enhanced when evidence-informed practices are adopted by schools in partnership with families and community. Optimal student wellbeing is a sustainable state, characterised by predominantly positive feelings and attitude, positive relationships at school, resilience, self-optimism and a high level of

satisfaction with learning experiences...Wellbeing is vital for student success. The ethical responsibility of teachers, leaders and trustees is to consider, promote, balance and respond to all aspects of the student, including their physical, social, emotional, academic and spiritual needs. '

(Wellbeing for Success: a resource for schools. ERO 2016)

In common with other Kāhui Ako in the Whangarei Hub, we see student Wellbeing/Hauora as being a key component of success and growth for our tamariki. We will continue to support our akonga to gain the skills, knowledge, values and character to enable them to engage effectively at school and be contributing members of the wider community.

Three aspects of hauora that may be challenges to our tamariki are:

- Mental Health
- Attendance & Truancy
- Transience

|                           | <b>Mental Health</b>   | <b>Attendance &amp; Truancy</b>   | <b>Transience</b>  |
|---------------------------|--|---|--|
| <b>Issues</b>             | Anxiety<br>Trauma - neglect/abuse<br>Severe behaviours<br>Lack of resilience/grit<br>Friendship problems<br>Online issues: social media, gaming (and related bullying and tiredness) | Not seeing school as relevant<br>Family condoned truancy<br>Poverty (access to transport, inability to meet school expenses)      | Students changing schools 2 or more times in a year or frequently through their schooling<br>Lack of long term social networks<br>Disrupted learning programmes<br>Deep learning (eg Bloom's taxonomy) can't be address before basic needs are met (Maslow hierarchy)<br>Long settling in period (a year +).<br>School data gathering.<br>Rural workers often very transient |
| <b>Measuring tools</b>    | Special needs register<br>Rubrics<br>Student voice (eg Wellbeing @ School)<br>School enrolment and attendance data   | Stand downs & suspensions data<br>Attendance data<br>No. & % students attendance < 90% and 65%<br>Student voice                   | MOE attendance data<br>School surveys (see results below)  |
| <b>Solutions/ support</b> | <u>Preventative actions:</u><br>Learner qualities - values look beyond ourselves ('Own it, Fix it, learn from it')   | As with transience, plus School as a safe and stimulating environment where students <i>want</i> to be.<br>Co-construct learning. | Establish common process/ documentation to track and support students who do transition.<br>Build effective induction process, esp for high needs students and whanau.   |

|  |  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|
|  | <p>Growth mindset.<br/>Learning pit.<br/>Input from outside agencies, mentors<br/>Mindfulness techniques<br/>PB4L strategies</p> | <p>Nurture curiosity, passions and interests.<br/>External agencies (Attend Services)<br/>Netsafe resources</p> | <p>Student 'buddies' for new students<br/>Prompt data gathering and diagnosis (21 days max) at new school.<br/>Discourage easy changing of schools (not accepting responsibility for improving student behaviour).<br/>Learning support / OR / RTL / ORRs / atnd services: confusion through poor communication and overlapping services must be cleared.<br/>Building relationships with parents, eg use of Technology to stay in touch (See-saw, texts) with positive things;<br/>Off-site contact with home visits, marae hui</p> |
|--|--|---|--|

*Current position:*

A September 2018 survey of our Kāhui Ako schools on transience and attendance (September 2017 to August 2018) found:

- 67% of students had greater than 90% attendance (measured by half days)
- 96% of students had greater than 65% attendance
- 1% of students completed their enrolment at school from New Entrant to graduation without transitioning (NB the largest survey sample was from a Y0-13 Area School)
- 6% of students enrolled then left their school during the 12 month survey period
- 23% of students attending our schools on 31 August, had been enrolled for less than 12 months

(Note: Schools responding to the survey represented 85% of students in our Kāhui Ako.)

Implications:

- Many students (1/3 of total) are absent from school on average for 0.5 or more days per week
- A small number of students (4%) have a very high level of absenteeism (more than 1.5 days per week)
- **Almost all students (99%) transition out of their school prior to completion.** This means, during their schooling, students change schools for a reason other than graduation. This figure did include students who left the surveyed Area School before the end of Year 13 (possibly for employment or further training). However, removing that figure showed that just 7 (2.6%) out of the 267 students in the primary schools completed their primary education in the school in which they began.
  - Transition has been shown to impede student progress
  - Reliable data gathering on student progress is difficult, due to the ongoing changes in cohorts
- Although our schools deliver programmes for at least six, eight or thirteen years (with the exception of the Teen Parent Unit), at the time of the survey nearly a quarter of students had been at the school for less than 12 months. One school had 46% of students in this category. Although there will

be a proportion of New Entrant students in this figure (and it can be a sign of roll growth), this again shows the difficulty of producing reliable progress data.

- Getting to know students well can be a difficult challenge for teachers and principals
- Establishing school culture, values and routines takes ongoing effort and reinforcement

A survey of teachers across the 5 Whangarei Hub Kāhui Ako found some common themes, identifying areas where intervention and action could impact meaningfully:

- Cyber bullying and inappropriate social media use
- Increasing numbers of students presenting with high levels of anxiety
- Rates of absenteeism / attendance (chronic in some students) and retention
- High rates of stand down, suspension and exclusion/expulsion.
- Teachers (and school leaders) feeling unsupported when confronted with students requiring specialised and intensive intervention for severe behaviours
- Transience. Relatively large numbers of students will attend more than two or more schools in a year.
- Poverty: increasing numbers of students are suffering from the effects of poor housing, diet, medical attention and other aspects of healthy lifestyle expected in a modern western community.
- Students being raised by grandparents, solo parents or in blended families
- Disproportionate suicide rates in Northland. Each event triggers serious and negative consequences for a large number of students, across school communities.
- Interventions by: He Oranga Tamariki, Youth Justice, Te Roopu Kimiora. These interventions are often uncoordinated, under-resourced or delayed
- Drug and alcohol abuse (students and whanau)
- Lack of timely social, behavioural, learning and psychological / psychiatric support for students in need
- Increasing numbers of students presenting with limited social skills

What are schools already doing?

- Providing in-school pastoral care
- Engaging and partnering with whanau / families
- Using restorative practices to reduce suspensions and exclusions
- Strengthening learning-focussed teacher-student relationships
- Supplementing designated funding and staffing for learning support
- Providing professional learning for staff on dealing with severe behaviours
- Improving systems for tracking and monitoring student progress, pastoral care and support
- Working with external agencies
- Supporting the effective transitioning of students from school to employment, through mentoring, 'Gateway' work placements and other initiatives

This Kāhui Ako surveyed parents (March 2018) revealing high levels of satisfaction with the way in which their children are taught at school. However, greater involvement of parents in conversations about students' learning would be appreciated.

*Next Steps:*

Respond holistically to all aspects of student needs, including their physical, social, emotional, academic and spiritual (ERO Well-being for Success) so that children have a sense of wellness and resilience, understanding their own mana-atuatanga – uniqueness and spiritual connectedness (Te Whaariki).

While a broad and holistic approach to wellbeing is developed, measuring the impact of our initiatives will focus on the wellbeing aspects of *mental health, attendance/truancy and transience*.

Nga Kura mo te ako o Whangarei (Group 4) will:

- Reduce stand downs / suspensions / exclusions across the Kahui Ako from 30 / 5 / 3 (2017) to 15 / 3 / 1 by 2021
- Increase the number of students attending 90%+ of half days from 67% (2018) to 80% by 2021
- Partner with other schools and Kāhui Ako in the Whangarei Hub, inquiring further into students' wellbeing/hauora and participating in related professional learning and development.
- Through our Kāhui Ako, will inquire with increasing depth into the state of student wellbeing in our schools. The NZCER wellbeing survey 'Wellbeing @ School' will be used for further baseline data.
- Individually, and through the Whangarei Hub, we will engage with Iwi (particularly Ngati Wai, Ngati Hine and Ngapuhi), to further strengthen effective cultural responsiveness of our schools and work with existing Iwi organisations and structures for the benefit of whanau and akonga.
- Engage with Early Childhood Education centres to improve students' readiness to transition to school
- Further develop data collection systems to gather student, parent, teacher and support staff voice and trends in student wellbeing
- Identify, share and sustain good practice
- Ensure expert teachers for the across school and within school roles are identified, appointed, coached and mentored

#### *Review and Evaluation*

1. Reduced stand downs, suspensions and exclusions
2. Higher rates of attendance - at least 75% of students to attend 90%+ of half days
3. Improved transition strategies
4. Student voice to reflect positively on mental health via Wellbeing@School survey









