



# WAIIOPEHU COLLEGE

## PRINCIPALS SABBATICAL TERM 2, 2013

### **PURPOSE**

**'To investigate initiatives / programmes that support enhanced NCEA results for Pasifika students'**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In order to find ideas surrounding successful good practise I visited eight schools in the North Island. Three were in the greater Wellington area and a further five schools covering west and south Auckland. The rolls ranged from 550 – 2,200 and decile rating from 1 – 9, with 5 of the schools designated decile 1, 2 decile 5 and 1 decile 9 school. In the decile 1 schools the Pasifika students made up between 75-90% of the roll. The decile 5 school was made up of 22-30% Pasifika students and the Decile 9 school has 12% Pasifika students on their roll.

### **College A.**

Greater Wellington area, State co-ed.

Roll 550

Decile 1

Pasifika students make up 75% of the roll:

- Samoan
- Cook Islands Māori
- Tokelauan
- Tuvaluan
- Niuean
- Tongan

The College places significant emphasis on developing powerful learners, providing a culturally welcoming environment and engaging with its community.

Retention of Pasifika students is ahead of neighbouring Colleges and 86% are now achieving Level 2 NCEA by the end of Year 13. NCEA results at all levels are slowly but steadily improving.

### **Learning to learn**

The new intake annually typically comprises 61% of students achieving below the National Standard (stanine 4). The learners are shy, passive and reserved. They are highly dependent on the teachers and are very limited in their ability to learn by themselves. There is a great deal of metacognitive teaching around a quite traditional curriculum. However, Samoan is taught to Level 3 NCEA.

The Principal is a strong advocate of teaching correct behaviours and throughout the school there is a focus on behaviours for learning ahead of skills for learning which might include literacy and numeracy.

Since 2010 the college has been involved in PB4L. Restorative practices have been part of the pastoral system for 8-9 years. There are now a number of very skilled facilitators on the staff. Data from PB4L is increasingly used to inform next steps and both initiatives are included in staff appraisal processes. Staff have had ongoing PD in maximizing consistency in making KAMAR entries.

Suspension and stand down rates for 2012 dropped dramatically.

### **The environment and school systems**

An effort is made to showcase Pasifika culture physically within the buildings. There are four Houses and competitions are held between them to promote House spirit. The competition is strong and each House has a Pastoral Leader.

There are 12 Pasifika staff members including two Tokelauan, two Tongan, six Samoan, one Cook Islands Māori and one Niuean.

Polyfest is a focus with some 350 students involved annually. Credits are gained through this performance.

## **The community**

Parental support of the school is strong. Groups of those interested from each Island nation meet once a term under the school umbrella and information around the school and its aims is shared.

Adult classes are held with language tuition offered in Tongan, Niue, Te Reo Māori, Tokelauan and Cook Islands Māori.

The restorative practice focus also gives parents partnership with the College.

Fostering stronger engagement with students, parents and the community is seen as a pivotal key in achieving better outcomes for students.

## **College B**

Greater Wellington area, State co-ed.

Roll 1460

Decile 9

Pasifika students make up 12% of the roll:

- Samoan
- Tongan
- Tokelauan
- Smaller numbers of other Pasifika nationalities

The College places significant emphasis on developing strong relationships with its Pasifika community.

The College closely monitors retention of and achievement of Pasifika students. Data tables indicate strong statistics in both when compared to national averages.

## **Baseline data**

The College has ceased using easTTle and is now concentrating on PAT results to provide student academic profiles in Years 9 and 10.

## **Staff Development**

Professional Learning Groups meet once a week for 1 hour commencing at 8.20am. Topics include achievement of Pasifika, achievement of Maori and teaching and learning as enquiry.

Student voice has been presented at these in the form of video clip interviews with individual Pasifika students telling their personal stories. These are a powerful way of enhancing staff awareness of the backgrounds and circumstances of these students.

## **Community Engagement**

Regular meetings are held with three main community groups: Samoan, Tongan and Tokelauan.

Each group has a nominated leader and this person liaises with one of the Deputy Principals. This DP takes the prime responsibility for the College-Community link for Pasifika students. Similarly, the Principal takes the primary responsibility for Maori students.

Annually in April/May a Pasifika evening is organized at the College. Guest speakers include the local MP (who is Pasifika), the available University and Polytech Pasifika Liaison officers along with representatives from other major employers and four successful Pasifika past students. These ex-students are successful academics as opposed to sportspersons. Invitations are sent to the families translated into Samoan or another language as appropriate. This evening is well supported by the community. Entertainment provided includes the school Pasifika group and Hip Hop performances.

Most years at mid year the College holds a Pasifika careers Expo in the evening. In 2012 some 120 parents and students attended. Additionally Years 9, 10 and 11 students receive advice as part of the school programme.

## **Student Support**

The College is committed to Restorative Practices which it is confident are working well. The involvement of the families has positive benefits. Mentors (senior Pasifika students) will be assigned to at risk Year 9 and 10 students.

Two curricular activities in the College that engage Pasifika students positively are Music and Sport.

Pasifika students engage strongly with both and the school has performed with outstanding distinction in both. This involvement is monitored closely by the relevant tutors with strong academic discipline insisted upon. Both activities have really assisted academic progress of individual students.

## **College C**

Greater Wellington area, State co-ed.

Roll 970

Decile 5

Pasifika students make up 30% of the roll:

- Samoan
- Cook Island Maori
- Tokelauan
- Smaller numbers of other Pasifika nationalities

Like College B the College places significant emphasis on developing strong relationships with its Pasifika community.

The College has several key people both on the staff and in the community.

### **Curricular Support**

Engagement with the college is enhanced by a particularly strong vocal music programme in the school. Acknowledging the importance and value of congregational singing for the families the College encourages participation in its chorus and barbershop quartets. These have both enjoyed huge success.

In the senior school Achievement Standards are available through the Barbershops, Polyfest and this is now being extended to Stage Challenge.

The College has established an “Academy” which is headed by a Samoan teacher qualified in English.

This offers a programme of integrated studies in the senior school. Achievement Standards are on offer in Samoan studies. Students are accessing credits in areas beyond singing and dancing.

The College staff includes several teachers of Samoan descent in a range of curricular areas.

## **Community Links**

The college has a liaison person linking to the Pasifika community. While this person is the wife of one of the ministers she also works in the College as an ESOL teacher aide.

A Pasifika Fono represents a huge asset to the school and its community. One of the Deputy Principals is the Senior Management contact. The Pasifika Fono meets regularly and is regularly provided comprehensive and up to date data around attendance, achievement and readiness to learn.

The annual Pasifika Fono Achievement Award evening in December celebrates the achievements of Pasifika students in a range of endeavours. The College also celebrates the Samoan Independence day.

## **College D**

West Auckland area, State co-ed.

Roll 2200

Decile 5

Pasifika students make up 22% of the roll:

- Samoan
- Tongan
- Cook Island Maori
- Tuvaluan
- Smaller numbers of other Pasifika nationalities

## **Curricular and School Systems Support.**

The situation in the College up until 2006 saw the achievements matching national statistics. The College had good engagement with its students, and its Pasifika staff were an integral part of this.

In 2007 a move was made to academic counseling and this immediately transcribed into significantly better NCEA results. It was most marked at Levels 1 and 2. This counseling was carried out by the 10 House deans (2 per House).

The improvement noted going into 2008 has been maintained through to 2011 but took a slight dip in 2012. At this point the release time available to deans had been reluctantly reduced due to less resourcing available. Also possibly contributing was the College's move to an approximately even number of internal versus external credits whereas the balance had historically favoured internals.

The process involves a student-dean meeting in term 1 to consider goal setting and also begin the establishment of positive relationships at this level. A follow up is held in term 2. Each student is seen 3-4 times in a year and this time became available by dropping a class from the teaching load of each dean.

In addition reporting to parents involves a written invitation from the principal to parents with a time to meet with the form teacher. The College closes for one and a half days so these might occur. The first of these is held at the start of term 2. A lot of effort is made to confirm the attendance of parents at the interviews and the participation rate is above 70%. This is a huge improvement from the subject teacher based interviews the school moved away from. Refreshments are provided.

Senior students still see their subject teachers at the mid-year interviews.

The partnership between teacher, students and parents is actively fostered.

The Associate Principal has the responsibility for Pasifika students and he interviews every Year 11 student at the start of the year. At Pasifika assemblies he regularly updates the students with achievement data updates. One of the Deputy Principals produces copious amounts of current achievement data which is constantly being referred to provide tracking and monitoring information.

### **Literacy and Transition to College**

One Samoan staff member plays a key role in liaising with Pasifika families. This begins when Year 8 students enroll and one of the aims is to address low literacy levels the College is aware of in this incoming cohort. Each family (there can be up to 130 students) is visited over the summer by this staff member. This teacher supervises the college's Pasifika Literacy Programme. This is available to the incoming Year nines. They start the school day with an hour of literacy, working individually in small numbers. This programme is seen as very important and critical in minimizing more complex interventions later.

The College runs two Wednesday homework centres targeting Pasifika students. One is held in the Library for Years 9-11 and the other is for year 12-13s in a dedicated Pasifika space. Further to this two other homework centres also assist Pasifika students. The Health and PE centre targets overdue assignments, especially picking up boys. The fourth centre generally targets boys, particularly Pasifika ones, who do not have their university literacy. This center is open three times a week.

Teachers staff these programmes as part of their co-curricular commitment.

## **College E**

South Auckland area, State co-ed.

Roll 1000 (Year 7-13)

Decile 1

Pasifika students make up 80% of the roll:

- Samoan
- Tongan
- Cook Island Maori
- Tuvaluan
- Smaller numbers of other Pasifika nationalities

### **Curricular and School Systems Support**

The college NCEA data indicates achievement of students here is comparable to the national averages for decile 4 schools.

A large emphasis is placed on improving reading comprehension at Years 7 and 8. SOLO taxonomy is being used throughout the junior school and in the senior school efforts are being made to increase the numbers of external Achievement Standards on offer. All the major Pasifika languages are taught.

Restorative justice practices are utilized extensively and there is a deliberate effort to instill positivity and self-belief in the students. The students now expect to be engaged by the teaching and learning programmes. Part of the engagement process has been achieved by the adoption of a non-confrontational approach to issues such as lateness, thereby avoiding negative interactions which will impact negatively on the building of good relationships.

### **Achievement Data**

Senior management track and monitor these data intensively. Monthly tables and graphs are constructed and the progress conveyed to the College community. Students are informed of general progress through assemblies. The need to achieve is constantly being reinforced.



## **Academic Counseling**

This was introduced some 4 years ago. Academic deans operate at Year 9 to 13 levels. Their work with students includes doing progress predictions and course planning. Progress to date is discussed in detail.

## **College F**

East Auckland area, State co-ed.

Roll 650

Decile 1

Pasifika students make up 70% of the roll:

- Samoan
- Tongan
- Niuean
- Smaller numbers of other Pasifika nationalities

## **Academic Counseling and Mentoring**

The college places a focus on good achievement at Level 1. Student credit accumulation is tracked closely with the aim of each student having achieved 4 credits or more in each subject by the end of term 1. Students are asked to set a goal for themselves by nominating the number they will have at the end of term 1. Successful students are then paid \$1 per credit accurately predicted, funded by a benefactor. Students not quite tracking satisfactorily will be assigned a mentor for the remainder of the year.

This year the early term 2 credit achievements are indicating 3 times more students than at this point in 2012 are tracking on target. In August 2012 a data check identified 149 students that were in need of mentoring. This was put in place with 2 meetings per week carried out until the end of the year making for an intensive lead into NCEA. The result of this is the programme now in place at Level 1.

Interviews are done over a two day period early in the year and the school closes for these. Parents meet with the tutor teacher for 20 minutes. These have developed pleasingly and there is now good discussion about the learning of the students as opposed to other matters such as discipline.

In addition the Principal will visit the homes of the students most likely to not succeed as part of strengthening the school-home relationship. The Principal acknowledges milestone credit achievements (10 and 15) with letters home.

Academic coordinators operate at Year 11 to 13 levels. Their work with students includes credit tracking and monitoring progress.

Pass rates at levels 1, 2 and UE are tracking upwards.

### **Curriculum and School Systems**

Each junior student has a netbook purchased via a lease to own programme. This is an initiative that involves the College and a cluster of contributing schools. Teachers can see each child's Google docs folder and they can communicate through this. As the school neighbourhood is serviced by a dedicated wireless network this communication can occur outside of school hours. Students may work from home and there is anecdotal comment that boys are engaging better. Significant PD is targeting eLearning.

The College is working hard at strengthening its community links. There are separate monthly meetings for specific groups; Samoan, Tongan and Niuean. Part of the purpose is to promote better parenting in the community. The college also runs workshops for parents to enhance understanding of NCEA.

In the senior school Trades Academy and a Services Academy are on offer. In the Trades students are involved in Building, Catering and Automotive. In 2012 27 of 30 achieved Level 2. There has been a much greater uptake this year with 60 students involved. The partnership is with MIT and lecturers deliver programmes on the school site.

## **College G**

South Auckland area, State co-ed.

Roll 870

Decile 1

Pasifika students make up 90% of the roll:

- Samoan
- Tongan
- Cook Island Maori
- Niuean
- Smaller numbers of other Pasifika nationalities

### **Curricular and School Systems Support**

The College places great importance on establishing close and positive relationships with parents. Contacts into the community are actively fostered and effort is put into getting the parents into the school for functions celebrating dance, music, Polyfest etc. Parental participation supporting a range of co-curricular activities including sports teams is encouraged.

Twice a year the newsletter is posted home to help make parents aware of happenings and successes within the College.

Several Pasifika languages are taught to NCEA Level 3; Samoan (through to Scholarship), Tongan, Cook Island Maori. French is also available as an optional language.

### **Staff**

The College is fortunate in having a multi ethnic teaching staff. It includes a high number of Samoans plus teachers of Tongan and Cook Island Maori descent.

In the main office the presence of a Pasifika staff member is a welcoming sight for many of the parents and potentially overcomes language barriers for some.

A liaison person employed by the school will make home visits to check on student absences and other pastoral issues.

## **Academic Counseling**

This has been in place for several years. Form teachers have 20 minute interviews with student and parents with the main discussion focusing on academic progress. These take place twice a year. Academic deans operate at Year 9 to 13 levels. Their work with students includes doing progress predictions and course planning. Progress to date is discussed in detail.

## **College H**

South Auckland area, State co-ed.

Roll 1000

Decile 1

Pasifika students make up 80% of the roll:

- Samoan
- Tongan
- Niuean
- Smaller numbers of other Pasifika nationalities

## **Curriculum and School Systems**

The College places a focus on good achievement at all levels of NCEA. Students do credit predictions each term as part of an academic achievement planner. At level 1 the curriculum is designed so that in the first term an assignment is available in each subject to get students under way with credit accumulation. An NCEA evening is held for parents and was attended by 135 in early 2013.

“Credit Club” certificates are presented at assemblies for the achievement of 20, 30 and 40 credits.

Central to the College’s link with its community are the beliefs that relationships are critical and that student voice is invaluable. There are Samoan, Tongan, Maori and Chinese teachers represented on the teaching staff.

Seniors stay on at “Summer School” once externals start. Invitation to do this is by letter and targets those who are in a position to achieve with extra support. The invitation itself is considered valuable by the parents and thus the further participation is well supported by the home. Students stay until such time as they have achieved all the internal credits on offer in their course. Only small numbers of students that are achieving very poorly are not invited.

The College has set goals to get 60% pass rates at Levels 2 and 3 this year.

The College is involved in a partnership with the Counties Manakau DHB. A Health Sciences Academy has been developed in site and allows seniors from Levels 1, 2 and 3 to enhance their studies prerequisite to professional careers in Health. Currently there are some 25 students at each of the three levels in the Academy.

### **Academic Counseling and Mentoring**

The Tutor teacher is the mentor. Tutor time lasts half an hour each day and time is thus available for discussions with individuals around academic progress.

Interview structure reflects the importance the College places on the three way partnership of student, parents and school. They are held over a two day period from 8.30am to 3.15pm. Twenty minute slots are used to have full discussions with parents about the progress of the student. These interviews are achieving an 80-85% attendance rate.

For junior students the discussion will centre around the College’s Record of Learning. In booklet form this will be given to parents alongside the report.

An academic dean closely tracks the progress of NCEA candidates.

## **Conclusion**

Schools are employing a wide range of strategies which can be broadly divided into four areas of attention:

- Students
- Teachers
- School systems
- Parents and Community

Areas of commonality that schools have found to be working well include:

- Academic mentoring
- Credit predicting and tracking
- Intensive and structured parent interviews
- Planning decision making based on accurate and reliable data
- Robust goal setting with detailed analysis and consideration of outcomes

Barry Petherick  
Principal  
Waiopahu College