



2014 SABBATICAL REPORT

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While on Sabbatical my investigations were centred on three key areas of significance to Cambridge High School. The first looking at developing more relevant curriculum pathways for the growing number of students who are now remaining at school through to the end of year 13 but who will not be attending University. Secondly, and closely associated to the first, looking at the benefits of developing a closer relationship with our local Polytechnic, and finally looking at ways to entrench the gains made regarding Māori achievement and how further improvement can be made in the future.

CURRICULUM PATHWAYS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS

A significant development at Cambridge High School over the past five years has been the significant increase in our student retention rates into year 13 which have increased from 75% to 91% during this period. At the same time improved student achievement rates at year 12 have meant that the vast majority of students have completed an NCEA Level 2 qualification before entering year 13. The challenge for the school is to ensure that viable pathways and courses are available to ensure that all students can gain the NCEA level 3 qualification. The school does offer a small range of level 3 vocational courses, it makes good use of the STAR and Gateway programmes and has limited involvement with our local Trades Academy. This change is also occurring at a time when the Ministry's new initiative around Vocational Pathways is being introduced.

The schools I have visited varied considerably in their approach to this issue from offering a traditional range of subjects right through to those who are highly proactive and were working intensively with this group of students.

When contemplating change the following factors need to be considered:

1. It is important that this group of students is targeted much earlier, at least in year 11, and that their decisions around subject choice are made in a well-planned way and with family involvement. This will give the school a clearer indication of the number of students involved and their preferred subject options as the school will require time to put these in place.
2. The Career Pathways initiative being introduced by the Ministry of Education will provide a valuable tool that will enhance the planning process and promote student progress.
3. We need to take a more holistic approach with these students and make sure that opportunities offered through Transition, Gateway, STAR, Wintec, offsite providers as well as existing and new courses of study can be packaged together to meet their



needs. This should include the development of IEPs for this targeted group of students.

4. Given the experience of other schools, there is scope for increasing the range of subjects offered by the school. This could include the SPEC Programme Agriculture/Horticulture, Tikanga Māori, level 3 Automotive, Sport and Recreation, and increasing the opportunity to study year 13 Outdoor Education.
5. The advantage of adopting courses offered by outside providers, for example, retail training through The Warehouse and Mitre 10, our digital provider Computer Solutions, and Fairview Motors for level 3 Automotive Engineering to name just a few.
6. Increase the opportunity for more students to be involved with Wintec's Trade Academy. Presently we have 20 students involved, this could easily be increased to 40 especially as more courses become available.
7. The possibility of establishing a year 13 Transition class that would work independently of the present school timetable. This would allow a more effective integration of Gateway, STAR and Trades Academy courses while giving students more individual support back at school. This would also mean that more intensive short term courses could be introduced to meet student needs, especially around literacy and numeracy.

DEVELOPING CLOSER RELATIONSHIPS WITH POLYTECHNICS

Cambridge High School enjoys a good relationship with Wintec and has been involved with its Trades Academy since its establishment. Our present model has students out of school for one day a week and due to our geographical location this involves a major transport commitment. I was interested to see if there was an opportunity for a greater and more flexible involvement in the future.

I visited Wanganui Park High Secondary College, Shepperton, Victoria, Australia and its local TAFE. The Australian qualification system is similar to ours in that it allows students to study vocational subjects and use these results towards their formal State Educational Qualification. It would appear from the Shepperton situation that there is a far greater range of options available to secondary students in regards to when and where they study.

Most Wanganui Park students study at their local TAFE much the same way as our present Trades Academy students do here in New Zealand and the subjects offered included Construction, Automotive Engineering, Hair Dressing and Beauty Care. Students work towards gaining their Pre-trade Training Qualification and often this involved additional study at TAFE during the holiday breaks in order to meet the course requirements.

A neighbouring high school delivers a TAFE Digital Technology course one afternoon a week that Wanganui Park students attend and this gives all secondary school students in the area the opportunity to use the facilities and staff expertise at that school.



Where a need can be established, actual centres can be established on school grounds using state funding or a mixture of state and TAFE funding. Presently the township of Shepperton has been given approval for the establishment of a Construction Trades Centre at a local high school site, this will cover all construction trades including computing, plumbing and electrical. This facility will be funded by the state and the local GOTAFE, the courses and staff provided by GOTAFE while the town will be provided with state of the art facilities which will be easily accessible to all schools.

GOTAFE also has a number of courses delivered by secondary schools on site and by their staff. The main advantage here is the ability of the schools to fit these courses into their existing timetable. The TAFE charges a reasonable sum to cover the course development and the moderation of results.

GOTAFE states that their relationship with the secondary sector is positive and this has resulted in the seamless development of pathways between the two sectors. Students go on to study at their local TAFE while employers recognise and value the courses being offered. This is clearly reflected in offers of employment.

Based on the above it is important that Cambridge High School works with Wintec to enhance its present relationship. This could occur by:

1. Cambridge High School taking greater advantage of opportunities offered through the Trades Academy.
2. Investigating the possibility of delivering Wintec courses here at school.
3. Using our present facilities to allow Wintec to deliver courses to secondary schools in our local area, thereby reducing the transport requirements and time out of school.

MĀORI ACHIEVEMENT

Cambridge High School has been an active member of the He Kākano programme for the past three years, and in this time the school has made real progress across a wide range of areas including academic attainment, attendance, discipline, developing positive relationships with whānau and with Māori students feeling valued at school. With the He Kākano programme coming to an end I am concerned that the school has not had time to entrench these changes. As part of the Sabbatical process I was able to visit a number of schools including those involved in He Kākano, and Te Kotahitanga as well as those who are addressing this issue in their own way. The following was found to be common between these schools:

1. The issue of Māori attainment can only be effectively dealt with through the adoption of a truly holistic approach including the Board, senior management, staff, whānau and the students themselves. A strong ongoing focus needs to remain on this for the foreseeable future.



2. Having Māori achieve as Māori needs to be the priority and this should be reflected in school goal setting right from the Strategic Plan and Charter through the faculty and individual teacher levels.
3. Goals must be based upon a range of accurate data including NCEA results, entry tests, progress in the junior school, literacy and numeracy rates as well as student and whānau feedback.
4. Monitoring student progress on an ongoing basis throughout the year is essential, as is having students working towards clearly established goals.
5. Staff must be convinced that they have the power to make a difference. It is important to address issues with them such as equity versus equality, the importance and the nature of their relationship with the individual Māori student as well as their responsibilities resulting from the Treaty of Waitangi. These issues must be addressed and revisited on an ongoing basis and when new staff arrive at the school.
6. A positive relationship between school and whānau is a must and it is important that school and whānau work collectively and collegially to support each other. This should be reflected in the way whānau groups are introduced and welcomed into the school, with the interaction with whānau groups, reporting to whānau on the schools progress against set goals and the establishment of specific events to meet whānau needs such as prize givings and careers evenings.

While already well on track, Cambridge High School will:

1. Be an active participant in the MOE's Communities of Practice initiative and the Building on Success PD programme. This will allow further support for at least another three years thereby allowing changes within the school to become more entrenched.
2. Use the MOE's Achievement Retention and Transition (ART) programme to effectively monitor Māori student progress on a regular basis.
3. Make changes to the Dean/Senior Leadership structures to ensure that a key member of staff has both the time and responsibility to monitor student progress and to work with the Deans and individual teachers.
4. Review our school curriculum to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our Māori students.
5. Make sure that relevant data is available so that informed decisions can be made.
6. Put in place orientation programmes for new staff and whānau so that they are aware of our school goals and what we have to offer.



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Principal

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