

Kāhui Ako – Beginning the Journey

by

Lisa White

Deputy Principal, Whangaparaoa College and
Leader of the Whangaparaoa Peninsula Kāhui Ako

Sabbatical Term 1, 2017
Report submitted, October 2017

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the TeachNZ team at the Ministry of Education (MOE) for awarding me this sabbatical. Also, I would like to thank my Principal, James Thomas, and the Whangaparaoa College Board of Trustees for allowing me to take leave from my position. Thank you also to the many Principals, Kāhui Ako Leaders and other teachers for giving so freely of their time and sharing resources to assist me in beginning my journey as Leader of the Whangaparaoa Peninsula Kāhui Ako.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The introduction of Kāhui Ako|Communities of Learning is the biggest injection of resourcing into education in New Zealand that I am aware of during my 27 years in teaching. I am excited by the leadership opportunities that this initiative provides and the opportunity for collaboration across education sectors and across communities in general, for the betterment of our children and of society in general for the future. I have consulted with other Kāhui Ako and relevant documentation and have provided a summary of resources available for Kāhui Ako, advice from those already on the journey, an outline of PLD needed for our new and emerging middle leaders, and suggestions of next steps for leaders of Kāhui Ako and MOE.

PURPOSE

As I was recently appointed as Leader of the Whangaparaoa Peninsula Kāhui Ako, the purpose of my sabbatical became focussed on what is working well and what is not working so well in other Kāhui Ako. From the information gathered, I have put together a summary of learning and advice from other Kāhui Ako and a suggestion of next steps for Leaders of Kāhui Ako and the Ministry of Education (MOE) to consider.

RATIONALE AND BACKGROUND

Kāhui Ako (Communities of Learning) are part of the New Zealand MOE Investing in Educational Success (IES) initiative announced in January 2014. “IES aims to raise the achievement of all learners, particularly those at risk of underachieving by:

- encouraging greater collaboration between kura/schools across the schooling system.
- recognising, supporting and using professional expertise across the system where it is needed most.
- enhancing opportunities for teacher-led innovation of new and good practice, to make clearly visible what is possible, new and exciting” (MOE, July 2016).
- “Learner-centred rather than provider-centred, Communities of Learning/Kāhui Ako involve early childhood education me ngā kōhanga reo, schools, kura, and post-secondary providers working together to help every child in that community learn and grow to their full potential.” (MOE, Feb 2017).

IES and Communities of Learning are a reasonably new initiative. The first Kāhui Ako has existed for less than two years, so all Kāhui Ako are still in their beginning stages, however they have all learned some lessons along their journey and those that I approached were all willing to share what they have learned.

METHODOLOGY

I interviewed six Leaders of Kāhui Ako from North and West Auckland and also interviewed the Co-Leads of the first Kāhui Ako, Piratahi, in Blenheim:

- Colin Dale, Leader of the Mid-Bays Kāhui Ako, Principal, Murray's Bay Intermediate School
- Vicki Barrie, Leader of the Northcote Kāhui Ako, Principal, Northcote College
- Kate Shevland, Leader of the Orewa Kāhui Ako, Principal, Orewa College
- Bruce Cunningham, Past Leader of the Takapuna Kāhui Ako, Principal, Belmont Primary School
- Shona Smith, Leader of the Waitakere Kāhui Ako, Deputy Principal, Waitakere College
- Dawn Fenn, Leader of the Whanau ki te Ako: Albany Kāhui Ako, Principal, Ridgeview School
- Karen Stewart, Principal, Marlborough Girls College and Simon Heath, Principal, Renwick Primary School – Co-Lead Principals – Piratahi Kāhui Ako, Blenheim

I also chose to interview the owners/teachers of the five largest Early Childhood Education (ECE) centres on the Whangaparaoa Peninsula:

- Marianne Haines (Senior Teacher) and Linda Wackrow (Owner), Gulf Harbour Preschool
- Stacey Sainty (Senior Teacher), Stanmore Bay Kindergarten
- Robyn Matthewson (Owner) and Sharon Richardson (Senior Teacher), Starfish Preschool
- Tracy Warrington (Senior Teacher), Walbrook Early Learning Centre
- Wendy Simpson (Senior Teacher), Whangaparaoa Kindergarten

Our local RTLB cluster manager and MOE Service manager both indicated interest in being involved with our Kāhui Ako, so I met with them also:

- David Crickmer, Twin Coast RTLB Cluster Manager
- Dr Johan Rall, Acting Service Manager, Psychologist, MOE

I have also accessed Kāhui Ako Achievement Challenge documents from the MOE website to gain some insight into what other Kāhui Ako are identifying as their challenges and their key drivers in their plans for action. Other MOE documents that I consulted are referenced at the end of this paper.

FINDINGS

Resourcing

Resourcing of IES has included:

1. Community of Learning – three new roles (Leader of Kāhui Ako; Across School Teachers, Within School Teachers) to assist schools/teachers strengthening teaching and learning practices to meet their own school and collaborative Kāhui Ako challenges. Release time, inquiry time and networking, induction and travel allowances are also provided.
2. Teacher-led Innovation Fund – resourcing is available that teachers can apply for to fund innovative and effective practice in order to improve learning outcomes.
3. Principal Recruitment Allowance – to attract highly effective tumuaki/principals to areas of need.

Other resourcing that schools or Kāhui Ako can apply for includes:

- Centrally Funded PLD - facilitator hours to deliver professional learning and development.
- Grass Roots Funding – part of the MOE Digital Era Learning, Teaching and Assessment (DELTA) programme.
- Study Awards and Sabbaticals – individual teachers can apply to undertake study or research that may benefit the Kāhui Ako.
- Expert Partners - up to 10 days every 6 months, for up to 2 years.
- Change Managers – can work with a Kāhui Ako for several months .
- Student Achievement Facilitators – have funding that can be used to support the achievement of priority learners.
- Education Excellence Awards – significant sums of money are awarded to schools who are excelling in various areas and sharing their learning.

www.education.govt.nz

One Kāhui Ako Leader I interviewed has gained 4080 hours of Centrally Funded PLD funding.

Some schools are using their inquiry time allocation to employ relief teachers to supervise the practice/mock senior examinations to free up teachers to work on their inquiries.

Leaders of other Kāhui Ako advised that leaders of Kāhui Ako should discuss with principals to roll over to the next year any Kāhui Ako funding not spent, as during the first year you may not spend all allocated resourcing while you are still busy planning.

Kāhui Ako – What’s working well?

General

Leaders and others in each Kāhui Ako I visited were very willing to share their time and expertise to assist others. “Moral purpose” (MOE, 2008) was evident in every person I interviewed. It is invigorating to be reminded that we are all in this profession for the good of the tamariki within our Kāhui Ako and that the professional leaders, the teachers, are all so passionate about making a difference and ensuring that our tamariki become the best that they can be to make a meaningful contribution to society. Some leaders within one particular Kāhui Ako are so passionate about their Kāhui Ako goals and how well the Kāhui Ako is working that they will only apply for other jobs within their own Kāhui Ako.

Conversations have begun across sectors – ECE, primary, secondary, tertiary. Although the Kāhui Ako are only resourced currently to include primary and secondary sectors, most seem to be including ECE representation in some way and a few have begun conversations with at least one tertiary institution. It is exciting that experts across the sectors are conversing with the potential for collaboration. Collaboration is happening on Facebook at a page named: NZ Community of Learning (COL) Leaders & Teachers.

Some Kāhui Ako found that a combined ERO report summarising the aspects of the schools within the community was useful in preparing their Achievement Challenge document.

Organisational aspects

- Organised meeting schedules planned for the year in advance to enable schools to plan around meetings.
- When a Deputy Principal is the Leader of the Kāhui Ako it seems it has been easier to release 0.4 of their workload to enable them to carry out the Leader role by passing on some of the portfolio. In contrast, some principals leading Kāhui Ako seem to be trying to “do it all”.
- Many Kāhui Ako use newsletters for sharing information/news within the Kāhui Ako. Some had different newsletters for different levels within the Kāhui Ako – eg 3 levels – leadership team, within school teachers, all staff.
- Three Kāhui Ako chose to appoint a Data person to collate and analyse the data from the schools within the community. (Two Kāhui Ako appointed an Across Schools Teacher as a Data person; One made a Within Schools Teacher a Data person, utilising one of the “extra” Within School Teacher positions that the Principals could allocate to a particular school).
- One Kāhui Ako appointed an Across Schools Teacher to Organisational matters - eg timetabling.
- Six of the Kāhui Ako Leaders interviewed believed it was more important to appoint good people to the Across and Within School positions and then sort specific jobs/tasks/roles later.

- Most had ECE inclusion/representation, with a variety of state and private ECE involvement. Where only one ECE was involved, it was a state kindergarten. Some had included an ECE because they had been approached by the ECE, rather than the Kāhui Ako seeking representation. Primary schools have been asking for an ECE “report” for learners to assist with transition. Some ECEs, but not many, have been providing this.
- In one Kāhui Ako, the ASTs work in pairs coaching other teachers. Teachers request assistance with their inquiry when they want it. Interestingly, the ASTs in that Kāhui Ako don’t observe teachers as the principals apparently do that.
- Self-review – each school seems to be reviewing Kāhui Ako goals as part of their own review process in some Kāhui Ako, however each Achievement Challenge document outlines how monitoring and evaluation will occur across the Kāhui Ako.

Professional Learning and Development (PLD)

Orewa, Northcote and Waitakere Kāhui Ako found the Developing Communities of Learning PLD sessions offered by the University of Auckland’s Kohia Centre very useful in their early stages.

All Kāhui Ako in this study seem to be starting small and moving slowly - either working to achieve one goal at a time – once achieved, move on to the next; or working with one or two year levels at a time. Kāhui Ako that have been around the longest feel like they are “just starting to get some traction” after one to two years.

Every school in a Kāhui Ako doesn’t have to do the same thing. For example, in the Piratahi Kāhui Ako they have clusters of PLD taking place:

- 2 colleges working on “Write that essay”
- 4 schools focussing on visible learning
- 7 schools working on new pedagogies for deep learning
- 5 schools focussing on digital literacy

The Devonport Kāhui Ako has PLD cluster groups setup and anyone interested can opt in:

- Maori/Pasifika
- Literacy
- Numeracy
- ICT
- Pastoral
- Boys
- A4L

Some Kāhui Ako have all ASTs/WSTs meet regularly together – eg fortnightly at Northcote. In contrast, the Piratahi Kāhui Ako ASTs visit WSTs twice per term. WSTs report to a Deputy Principal as well as to an AST in some Kāhui Ako.

Most Kāhui Ako have had a Teacher Only Day together and intend to plan this annually. This day seems to have been very valuable for teachers getting to know teachers in other schools within their community and for sharing expertise. I attended the recent Whanau ki te Ako: Albany Kāhui Ako One Day Conference, along with three others from my own Kāhui Ako. Within minutes of teachers meeting each other in small groups at this conference, they were sharing email addresses, sharing resources on Google Docs and discussing similarities in their inquiries.

Finding time for teacher PLD is always a challenge. Marlborough Girls College have no learners until 10 am on a Wednesday. This is PLD time for teachers. "Staff building relationships with each other is so beneficial for the kids." We all know Monday after school not ideal for teacher/PLD meetings, however many schools continue with this.

One school just completed a six-monthly survey of staff. They felt they were talked "at" too much by outside people. When working with outside providers, plan the PLD with them to ensure that it meets the needs of your team. We need to think carefully before bringing in outside experts. What do we want to achieve? Can we use expertise within the Kāhui Ako and/or within each school?

Models of Inquiry and other Key Drivers

Piratahi Kāhui Ako have agreed to all use the Spirals model of inquiry. Other Kāhui Ako allow teachers or schools to choose the model that works for them. However, all agree that inquiry is central to improvements in teaching and learning. All Kāhui Ako have teachers working on their own inquiries. Some also have collaborative inquiries taking place focussed on what might make the biggest difference to teaching and learning? and/or to learner achievement?; what are the best, most evidence-based interventions?; which PLD providers are making the biggest difference?

Schools and Kāhui Ako are recognising that wellbeing is at the heart of everything and that good relationships are very important. Many schools now have some form of academic counselling taking place and someone overseeing wellbeing of learners and staff.

Although ECEs don't have formal/comparative assessment data as such, they do have a common curriculum – Te Whaariki. ECEs are keen to share information in the form of learner portfolios to assist with learner transition to primary school. They believe they can get parents to sign permission to share this information either when learners enrol with them or prior to them leaving the ECE.

Key competencies are important across the sectors. Whangaparaoa Kindergarten focuses on:

- Readiness
- Socialisation
- Managing self in a group – and the ability to say stop it, I don't like it
- Looking after belongings
- Holding a pencil

Ministry of Education support has been great from Ministry Advisers and CoL Senior Advisers, therefore some Kāhui Ako Leaders interviewed felt that an expert partner probably wasn't needed in the setup stage. However, expert partners can be useful as a kaiarahi/mentor for the Leader of the Kāhui Ako, which is how Whangaparaoa Peninsula Kāhui Ako is utilising the expertise of Micheal King. Expert Partners, Anne Hines and Helen Temperley, are working with the teachers in the Piratāhi Kāhui Ako, leading professional development.

Kāhui Ako are identifying what drivers/strategies they believe are going to make the biggest difference to their learners. The key drivers for the Kāhui Ako in this study are listed below:

Kāhui Ako Name	Key Drivers
Whangaparaoa Peninsula Kāhui Ako	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hauora 2. Effective Teaching 3. Community and Transitions
Mid-Bays Kāhui Ako	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Productive methodology/Appreciative Theory • Collaborative Inquiry – Writing/Mathematics • Collaborative Leadership • The use of effect size to measure achievement and impact
Orewa Kāhui Ako	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Inquiry Model 2. Effective Practice for Improved Learner Outcomes – School Evaluation Indicators <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Whanaungatanga b. Ako c. Mahi tahi d. Manaakitanga e. Learners/akonga f. Leadership g. Stewardship h. Professional Capability and Collective Capacity
Northcote Kāhui Ako	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A consensus of valued outcomes 2. Culturally responsive curriculum 3. Effective Pathways and Transitions 4. Educationally powerful connection and relationships 5. Professional learning
Piratāhi Kāhui Ako	The Wellbeing Kete including Modern Learning Practices
Devonport Kāhui Ako	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cycle of Inquiry 2. Leadership and teaching and learning pedagogies that are effective for engaging and accelerating the learning of all

	<p>students with a focus on Maori, Pasifika and males.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Effective system wide collaboration 4. Effective transition between schools
Waitakere Kāhui Ako	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culturally responsive pedagogies • Collaborative Inquiry – Reading/Writing/Mathematics/NCEA L2 & Maori retention • Effective transition between schools
Whānau ki te Ako – Albany	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Effective transitions 2. Student agency 3. Culturally responsive pedagogies (incl. Relationships) 4. Collaborative learning 5. Community involvement 6. Teacher effectiveness

Commonalities in the key drivers that Kāhui Ako believe will make the difference for their learners include hauora/wellbeing, effective teaching including collaboration and inquiry and effective PLD, smooth transitions between schools, student agency and community involvement.

Community Engagement

Food and drink (wine/beer) brings in the parents - Bangers and Maths evenings, or Sunday Siesta with learning workshops – one school had 100% parent turnout! Also engagement is better when parents are approached one to one. Parents are encouraged or rewarded if they bring a friend (another parent) next time. One school held their strategic planning consultation evening on the same night as a school disco. A wine reward was offered for each contribution to the plan, with a maximum of three drinks allowed. (Substantial food was also provided).

Another school got the parents in and worked through the lessons (writing/maths) with them; showed them how to use the online portal that the learners are using and got them to work through the same work, so that they can help their kids at home. Parents can interact/comment on learners' work online.

At Marlborough Girls' College, learners struggling with reading were in a year long programme which included being taken to the school library regularly. Learners developed very good relationships with the librarian. This resulted in one girl bringing her illiterate mother into the library regularly.

Kāhui Ako – What hasn't gone so well, or still needs clarity?

Two Kāhui Ako leaders advised that setting up communication protocols in the beginning would be very important, as they had not done this and it had caused some issues. In particular they talked about ensuring that the Assistant and Deputy Principals in each school were not overlooked and were included in communication. Events should be open to all leaders, not just those with Kāhui Ako roles.

Some communities are still unclear about what a Community of Learning is and how the resourcing is being used. Some Kāhui Ako have held public community meetings including parents, BoT, community members, to ensure that communication about the Kāhui Ako, its purpose and how community members could be involved was made clear.

Some school finance personnel have had issues with working out with MOE finance personnel how to code some funding and organise when some funding would be paid to schools. Shona Smith, Leader of the Waitakere Kāhui Ako, was particularly helpful in providing information on how to access funding and what codes to use.

Applying for funding, particularly Centrally Funded PLD and TLIF is very time consuming as detailed plans are required. Working with your Ministry Adviser is useful when applying for funding.

A few Kāhui Ako leaders mentioned that there is substantial administration with the role of leader. One leader I spoke to resigned as leader due to this. However, another leader thought that the leader role wasn't too much work, even in the beginning as "you can't go too fast".

In one particular Kāhui Ako, there was evident competition amongst schools. The leader stated that therefore teachers are hesitant to share or truly collaborate. Some data is hidden from other schools within that Kāhui Ako. Another Kāhui Ako leader spoke about the varying levels of interest/involvement that some schools within their Kāhui Ako have in their community. Some schools are very keen to collaborate. Others are happy to receive the resourcing, but prefer to do their own thing mostly. Some schools are quite protective and don't like to be referred to as "one school" or "one community" – they still want their own patch. Some schools allegedly think they are "shit hot" and not so open to learning from others. Some principals within one particular Kāhui Ako are allegedly gatekeeping and/or not passing Kāhui Ako information on to their ASTs and WSTs, making communication difficult.

Initially, a lot of setup time is needed for a Kāhui Ako. I was lucky enough to have been awarded a sabbatical just prior to being appointed leader of the Kāhui Ako, so simply changed the focus of my sabbatical to be more focussed on Kāhui Ako. This resulted, however, in me working full time for most of the time during the sabbatical period. Other principals/leaders spent a lot of unpaid time setting up in the beginning, which must have been either at the expense of the time they would have spent on other school tasks, or at the expense of their personal life. One major advantage of having the sabbatical was that I spent a substantial amount of time initially visiting the other schools within my Kāhui Ako – hanging out in the staffroom and playground at break times getting to know teachers, visiting classrooms, mixing with learners in the playgrounds. This enabled me to develop relationships and build trust that would have been much more difficult had I been in my Deputy Principal role.

Leaders told me that some schools did not want to lose their best people to work across schools. Primary schools, in particular, feel they have to convince parents that it is OK/better for their child's teacher to be out of the class for 0.4 of the time,

working for the good of all the schools in the Kāhui Ako. Schools are having issues with “backfilling” these positions due to a teacher shortage, particularly in Auckland. Performance agreements are still being worked on for ASTs, WSTs and DPs as Leaders. There seems to be much uncertainty about how the performance management of a Kāhui Ako Leader who is not a Principal will be carried out. A model for this is currently being worked on by the Education Council.

Although most Kāhui Ako have some ECE involvement, the MOE are not yet resourcing this involvement. The national Kindergarten Association are encouraging kindergartens to be involved and have offered to resource their involvement in some cases. Some Kāhui Ako prefer to work with the state kindergartens as there is a common structure in place. However, reality is that our learners come from a wide variety of state and private ECEs. Private ECEs are in competition with each other, therefore there may be an issue with collaboration and sharing of resources. A few Kāhui Ako have some tertiary inclusion in their community, however they are not yet resourced to be involved either.

Some Kāhui Ako haven't really setup a governance group yet, although have had their Memorandum of Agreement signed by their Board chairpersons. Most have a management team of some/all principals and some include some Deputy Principals. There is not yet much talk about collaboration or sharing of property or resourcing. However, some think that with continual communication between schools that eventually some things will seem obvious to combine – for example, a group of schools may get a better deal with an electricity company, an internet company, or a photocopying company if they do a joint deal, rather than negotiate individually. There is potential for this to lead into other areas. Both our local RTLB cluster manager, David Crickmer, and our Acting Service Manager with the MOE Psychologist Team, Johan Rall, seem to think that it may be better for their services to be provided to a Kāhui Ako rather than to a school and that resources could then be allocated/pooled more appropriate to need. RTLBs were given the idea, allegedly by the MOE, that each Kāhui Ako would have a “super-SenCo” – a Special Needs Co-ordinator for the entire Kāhui Ako.

PLD Funding and how to access it has changed. It has meant that jobs are not so secure for some and roles have changed for others. Stanmore Bay School gained centrally funded PLD, but could then not get a facilitator as all suitable facilitators were booked up well in advance. However, people are apparently “scrambling” for jobs as expert partners or as PLD facilitators. How do schools/Kāhui Ako figure out which expert partners and/or PLD facilitators are credible/best?

PLD for Principals seems to possibly be an issue. Principals/teachers don't know what they don't know. There has been no development for principals in some Kāhui Ako and one leader says that the principals are “simply not interested”.

Many Kāhui Ako have primary school ASTs and WSTs block their release time over 1-2 days per week - all at the same time. Secondary schools can't do this easily due to their timetable structure and tend to release teachers from classes spread over the week. This means that their ASTs and WSTs miss out on many meetings or PLD opportunities.

Resistant teachers will need to understand that it's not just about the few Maori boys in their inquiry but it's about changing their practice for all. As we know, what is good for Maori, is good for all (Bishop, 2014).

Although each Kāhui Ako is supposed to come up with their own achievement challenges, all Kāhui Ako were supplied with data from the MOE and guided to have challenges focussed on National Standards and NCEA results. Once achievement challenges were decided upon, each Kāhui Ako Leader whom I spoke to was told to stretch their targets; that their targets were not high enough. Kāhui Ako Leaders feel that their targets have become unrealistic and that they are simply ticking boxes to meet requirements, rather than setting realistic/achievable targets. This has resulted in some Kāhui Ako believing that they should do what they are told to get endorsement and then “do what they like”. At least one Kāhui Ako has completely rewritten their Achievement Challenge targets after endorsement.

Achievement Challenges in the Kāhui Ako in this study

Kāhui Ako Name	Achievement Challenges
Whangaparaoa Pensinsula Kāhui Ako	Writing Mathematics Post-secondary success – U.E. focus
Mid-Bays Kāhui Ako	Writing Mathematics NCEA L2 Post Secondary Education including Progression to Tertiary
Orewa Kāhui Ako	Mathematics Writing Reading NCEA and U.E.
Northcote Kāhui Ako	Writing Reading Mathematics NCEA L2 – Maori, Pasifika and Male
Piratāhi Kāhui Ako	Mathematics Reading Writing NCEA L2
Devonport Kāhui Ako	Writing Mathematics NCEA L2, L3 and U.E.
Waitakere Kāhui Ako	Reading Writing Mathematics NCEA L2 Retention of Maori Students
Whanau ki te Ako: Albany Kāhui Ako,	Writing Mathematics NCEA and U.E.

General Learning and Advice from other Kahui Ako

- Two leaders warned me that Kāhui Ako will need to be careful communicating data success publicly as it could be perceived that some schools are putting down other schools in the same Kāhui Ako. Principles for Sharing Aggregated Information to assist with this are included in the “Community of Learning Guide for Schools and Kura” (MOE, July 2016).
- It is not necessary to appoint all of the AST and WST positions. If Kāhui Ako management don't believe they have the right person for the job, then they can wait and re-advertise later. However, the resourcing for the positions is not allocated to the school until appointments are made.
- Teaching as Inquiry, Leadership Inquiry and Reflection processes are the same/similar across sectors of education. It would therefore seem that the Kāhui Ako structure can enable more collaboration in these areas, increasing expertise across the sectors.
- Many Kāhui Ako have setup a shared space for resources. It may be worth considering a website, blog or shared drive that lists what inquiry each teacher is working on and enables interaction between teachers to enable collaboration on inquiries.
- Most Kāhui Ako Leaders agreed that the job is time consuming. Suggested ideas for working around this were: DPs instead of principals for Leaders; Co-Leads; retired principal does 0.4 (part-time) as Leader or co-leads for 0.2 of the time.
- One WST stated that: “The first year was nerve wracking. It felt like we're spending government money and not doing much but we, as over achievers, think we have to always be busy. I wasn't appraised in the first year. This allowed me to focus on my own inquiry without feeling pressured.”
- Kāhui Ako in Tauranga are trialling the use of an 0800 telephone number for parents to call if they are concerned about their child's lack of learning.
- RTLBs have worked on projects in the past – eg eliminating violence. If the Kāhui Ako felt there was an area of perceived need – eg learners with anxiety – RTLBs could be trained to assist teachers and learners.
- Vicki Barrie, Leader of Northcote Kāhui Ako advised, “Don't try to do too much.
- Vicki Barrie also advises, “Check that the problem you are trying to solve is actually, in fact, the problem.” Vicki gave a copy of Vivanne Robinson's (2011) *Student Centred Leadership* book to each AST.
- It is important to discuss the Kāhui Ako vision in the beginning and get learner, teacher, parent, community voice to make the document feel as if it belongs to your Kāhui Ako. Some Kāhui Ako didn't do this and regret that the document doesn't feel “ours”.
- Some Leaders and Across School Teachers allocated particular days of the week to work on Kāhui Ako tasks. Others were more flexible with the way they allocated their time to their school and to the Kāhui Ako.
- Other Kāhui Ako Leaders advised me to ensure that the Leader, AST and WST contracts are renewed in time for the following year's timetable.

- Although the Kāhui Ako has an Action Plan, each school also has their own Action Plan, included in their charter. There should be links from one to the other.
- Colin Dale, Principal at Murray's Bay Intermediate School, advises Kāhui Ako to put a number by each priority learner in the data you gather, so that you know you are comparing apples with apples when you compare later data.
- Whangaparaoa Peninsula Kāhui Ako encouraged/allowed teachers to apply for both WST and AST positions and appointed on a similar timeline, but appointed the ASTs first.
- Relief for Kāhui Ako needs to be done through banking staffing.
- AST and WST roles have a specified amount of teaching time that the person in each role must be doing. Teaching time can be "working with children" – eg a Special Needs Co-ordinator (SenCo) may be working with children but not actually teaching some of the time.
- A significant number of learners at ECEs are not having breakfast at home in the morning, so teachers ensure that they are eating carbohydrates at morning tea and have their fruit or lighter food later. It is hoped that this will form good habits that they will carry on.
- Anxiety, particularly for girls, but some boys also, seems to be a significant issue across sectors – ECE, primary and secondary.
- Moderation and ensuring that data is comparative is an issue. One teacher questioned, "Do we know what OTJs are and do we agree on them?"

Middle Leadership in Kāhui Ako

The introduction of Kāhui Ako has meant many opportunities for aspiring middle leaders within and across schools. Although the resourcing for the AST and WST positions is not provided to schools until the Achievement Challenge document is endorsed, many Kāhui Ako chose to appoint these middle leaders subject to endorsement, rather than waiting. Most believed it more important to appoint the best people to these positions and then possibly decide on areas of specialty later. However, one Kāhui Ako appointed ASTs with areas of specialty/expertise from the beginning. Most leaders believe that with ASTs, it is all about "fit" and that a variety of personalities are needed to work with the variety of teachers across the Kāhui Ako. ASTs don't need to be the boss, but need to be good at asking questions to help others develop.

The role of the ASTs and WSTs vary across Kāhui Ako. Northcote ASTs and WSTs take a one student case study and look at what helps/prevents learning. Some WSTs in some Kāhui Ako are leading professional learning groups (PLG); others in other Kāhui Ako are working on individual projects/inquiries. Some schools WSTs are general coaches and in other schools they have specific roles.

Some Kāhui Ako are bending the rules around the number of management units (MUs) that an AST/WST can already have, to allow current Heads of Faculty to become an Across School Teacher, for example. Some teachers are temporarily relinquishing permanent MUs to take up fixed term MUs instead to allow them to

take on a Kāhui Ako leadership role. There is disparity in that primary teachers do not have a limit on how many management units they can already have when taking on a Kāhui Ako AST or WST role, however secondary teachers cannot have more than two permanent units.

When considering what professional learning and development (PLD) your middle leaders need, consider that teachers in one Kāhui Ako in a recent survey indicated that they were talked "at" too much by outsiders. There is a wealth of expertise within each Kāhui Ako.

The Role of ASTs in the Takapuna Kāhui Ako includes:

- Work with in school leaders to support each school to meet its individual targets.
- Oversee a register of identified targeted students within each school.
- Identify, model and effectively share examples of best practice which accelerates progress for identified students.
- Develop and reflect upon best practice ways of supporting the professional learning of teachers.
- Oversee transition from contributing schools to Intermediate to Grammar.
- Support the implementation of inquiry practices across the Kāhui Ako.

Across the Kāhui Ako in this study, Across School Teacher roles vary from:

- General Coach/Mentor for other teachers particularly focussed on Inquiry

to more specific roles:

- Leader of Reading
- Leader of Writing or Literacy
- Leader of Mathematics or Numeracy
- Leader of Cultural Responsiveness
- Leader of NCEA
- Leader of Maori Retention
- Leader of Data Collection, Analysis and Use

Colin Dale (June, 2016), in an article entitled "*A Better Way to Lead?*" believes that the characteristics of leaders in the new Kāhui Ako need to include:

- Organisation Developer – develop the organisation, rather than sustain or manage compliance
- Evaluator of Performance of the organisation
- Stewards of our Eco-System – co-ordinators of collective responsibility
- Creators of an Authorising Environment – creating new practice and authorising the learners to make new knowledge, make mistakes, take risks and enjoy what they are learning (Darling-Hammond, 2016, cited in Dale, 2016).
- Facilitative

- Instructional Leadership by Inquiry - developing students and staff to be able to develop knowledge (Darling-Hammond, 2016, cited in Dale, 2016).

PLD undertaken by Mid-Bays Kāhui Ako for their middle leaders has included a focus on:

- Data Collection, Testing, OTJs to identify Priority Learners
- Teaching as Inquiry Cycles & Spirals of Inquiry
- Action Plans
- Must, Should, Could, Need in my Role
- Observation Purpose & Protocol
- Communication
- The Elevator Pitch

It is important when beginning your Kāhui Ako journey to ensure that everyone within the Kāhui Ako knows their role and can convey that to others. The Elevator Pitch for teachers means “the walking back from morning break or on duty pitch A 20 second speech that summarises what you’re doing and why you’re doing and why it’s worth it” (Tod, 2016). Sometimes the elevator pitch will need to be used with local parents or other community members who want to know that their tax dollar is being spent well on these Communities of Learning.

“A good elevator pitch is:

- Concise
- Compelling
- Conversational
- Consistent
- Customised (tailored to the person you are talking with)”
(Tod, 2016, adapted from O’Leary 2008).

Most agree that ASTs are coaches, facilitators, mentors of other teachers. Inquiry is the main focus. Colin Dale says that what “could be” and the “hunch” is important in developing new learning. When implementing new ideas, “what we say” is important. We need to use “repetitive cognitive dialogue” and “use of new words” to make new learning memorable. Colin also believes that “powerful stories” that enable learners to have “rapport and connection” with new learning are important.

The MOE publication, “*Leading from the Middle*”, states that “distribution of leadership responsibilities is crucial for twenty-first century New Zealand schools” (MOE, 2012). The Kāhui Ako certainly ensures that leadership is distributed and that there are plenty of opportunities for teachers to take leadership. An Educational Leadership Model has been developed by the MOE and is below:



I would expect that most ASTs and WSTs, to be appointed to their position, would already be quite strong in their pedagogical understanding, their self-belief and the importance of being a lifelong learner. I would also hope that they are already leading with moral purpose – or as Fullan (2001) puts it “intensely committed to betterment”. It would seem then that PLD for ASTs and WSTs should be focussed on:

- Developing relationships, partnerships and networks.
- Understanding the culture of each school and the Kāhui Ako.
- Coaching - āwhinatanga (guiding and supporting).
- Some understanding of each school’s systems and developing systems for the Kāhui Ako.
- Change management and problem solving.
- Continual learning about best practice for teaching and learning.

NEXT STEPS

During this research, a number of possible, useful next steps have emerged:

- There is a need to share resources across schools in a Kāhui Ako. There are a number of possible solutions to this, which may include a website, blog, shared Google Drive, Facebook page, emails, Google Site, monthly/quarterly

newscast/newsletter. Consider purpose and types of communication. Also consider how to share quality resources and professional reading.

- An across-school glossary for common understandings of terms, such as recount and inquiry, may be useful for a Kāhui Ako.
- If our ASTs and WSTs are to lead our teachers, they are going to need appropriate PLD to build their capability and capacity as middle leaders, including aspects bullet-pointed on the previous page. Whangaparaoa Peninsula Kāhui Ako is currently working with Evaluation Associates to co-construct an Emerging Leaders PLD programme.
- A detailed Plan of Action is needed to be able to identify which sources of funding you might apply for; the more detail the better as you may be able to copy and paste parts of the plan into your application.
- A Change Maker could be a useful resource use for coming up with a public relations/marketing plan; or to investigate an issue such as learner anxiety in the community; or to setup a communication system including prize givings, assemblies, newsletters, newspaper, website, blog, etc.
- MOE finance personnel – it would be useful if there was a step-by-step guide for school finance departments for the Kāhui Ako funding coming in to schools – ie – what funding to expect with which positions and how to organise/code this and when to expect it.
- A lot of setup time needed initially – perhaps the leaders should all get a term of sabbatical to setup?
- More public relations (PR) is needed with the public/parents to inform them of the good of the Kāhui Ako and explaining how the AST and WST roles work. They need convincing why it is good for their child's teacher to be out of the classroom for 0.4 of the time. Who should do this PR? The MOE? The Leaders? The schools? All of the above?
- More clarity is needed for performance management of Leaders of Kāhui Ako who are not principals. I am aware that the Education Council is currently working on this.
- All ECEs to provide transition reports to primary schools. Perhaps some leadership can be taken here by the MOE ECE Advisers

Conclusions

As I mentioned previously, it has been hugely beneficial to have the sabbatical time to be able to research, spend time in my Kāhui Ako schools and visit other Kāhui Ako. I have been invigorated and inspired by the passion of my colleagues with whom I worked on this study, who are all leading with moral purpose for the betterment of our next generation. It is exciting to have the Kāhui Ako model resourced to enable this and I am confident that with increased collaboration we will overcome the challenges in the next steps in the journey to provide better teaching and learning, catering for all individual learners in each community.

REFERENCES

Achievement Challenge documents of other Kāhui Ako from MOE website - <https://education.govt.nz/communities-of-learning/teaching-and-learning/achievement-challenges/>

Bishop, Russell. (10 August, 2014). *Preparing the Parrots*. <https://treatygate.wordpress.com/category/waikato-university/russell-bishop/>

Dale, Colin. (June, 2016). *A Better Way to Lead?*

Fullan, Michael. (2001). *Moral Purpose, Chapter 2 in Leading in a Culture of Change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, ISBN 0-7879-5395-4

Ministry of Education (MOE). (2008). *Kiwi Leadership for Principals*.

Ministry of Education (MOE). (2012). *Leading from the Middle*.

Ministry of Education (MOE). (July, 2016). *Community of Learning Guide for Schools and Kura*.

Ministry of Education (MOE). (Feb, 2017). *Communities of Learning Core Story*.

O'Leary, Chris. (2008). *Elevator Pitch Essentials: How to Create an Effective Elevator Pitch*.

Tod, Julia. (22 June, 2016). Cognition Presentation, Mid Bays CoL. *Who are we and what has been our learning journey so far?*