Towards making achieving cool

Achievement in Multi Cultural High Schools
(A I M H I)

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We have to change what is cool. In class I give them the task - like to give a speech. We listen to the speech, the voice, the body language and we give each other feedback.

I teach them to admire someone who improves and how to criticise constructively.

We are working towards making achieving cool.

AIMHI Teacher

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Achievement Initiative in Multicultural High Schools

AIMHI

Eight decile one schools with high ratios of Pacific Island students were selected to be part of a developmental project called AIMHI. These schools also have significant numbers of Maori students. AIMHI is a Ministry of Education project which has the following goals -

∗   To increase the market share of students attending the participating schools

∗   To raise the levels of performance of the schools and students in the areas of

- high student achievement
- strong college governance and management
- strong school/community relationships
- integrated social services support policy

(The schools will set their own targets - individually, at a cluster level or project level)

∗   Achieving sustainable self-managing schools

As part of this project, in the 1996 year, a research programme took place with the aim of learning about the effects of school organisation and governance, parental and community involvement, and any other issues relevant to student achievement in these schools. A baseline is described of the situation the students and schools are experiencing in 1996. Over a six month period a broad range of data was collected from school documents and principals, members of the senior management teams, teachers, support staff, students from years nine to fourteen, trustees and both Maori and Pacific parents. National data on achievement were also analysed. The full report contains substantial data to support statements made in this executive summary.

What is considered to be valid achievement for secondary students is a value laden issue and the effective measurement of student 'achievement' is complex. At this point in time, although the schools are trying to expand and improve their assessment practice, the main criteria being used by the Ministry of Education and by parents in evaluating the effectiveness of the schools with respect to achievement, are School Certificate and Bursary results and retention data. This research considers achievement both from the viewpoints of the stakeholder groups as well as in its widest context including every type of progress made by students as part of their learning experience.

Student achievement is influenced, both directly and indirectly, by a number of variables that are external to and not under the influence of schools. The impact of poverty, health, dysfunctional families, and dysfunctional and violent communities, must not be underestimated. Data from the schools show they are finding it

increasingly difficult, sometimes impossible, to access the level of support they need in the areas of health and welfare. Children are powerless to influence most of these things that directly affect their day to day existence. As well as the stresses for students, these external factors place increasing demands on the low decile schools which they are not resourced to meet.

Education policies such as school self management, dezoning and contestable funding; and Ministry of Education decisions such as allowing some schools to recapitate or change status; have combined with demographics and poverty to produce outcomes such as more rapidly falling rolls, increased competition between schools and competition for funding. These influences have disproportionately disadvantaged the AIMHI schools and the services they are able to provide to their students. The students and families in these schools are seldom able to exercise educational "choice" and in the few instances when they do have a choice, they are often reliant on information given to them by schools that are ruthlessly competing for students in order to maintain their own rolls.

Of the eight schools, it is not coincidental that the five that have a sad history including factors such as conflict, poor leadership, lack of resourcing and poor reputation, are the five lowest decile schools and at the bottom of the parental preference order. They have fallen into a spiral of decline that has become self-fulfilling as their rolls drop dramatically with dezoning; their staffing numbers decline as a result of the falling roll and the publicity from unfavourable ERO reviews; the senior programme able to be offered is adversely affected by the reduction in the number of staff and the difficulty in attracting skilled staff; and the demands on the existing staff continue to increase because smaller schools do not benefit from the economies of scale available to larger schools.

Also outside of the control of the schools are the influences of parent beliefs and attitudes, cultural values, the practices and demands of the churches, physical and sexual abuse, substance abuse, and peer culture. Because each of these impacts directly on the attitudes, behaviours and needs of the students, they also place demands on the schools that have little to do with the teaching and learning role of a school. Many students arrive at these schools late (if at all), hungry, unwell, unable to see or hear properly, tired, stressed, abused, influenced by alcohol and/or drugs; or a combination of any of these. It reduces their ability to access, and for teachers to provide, teaching and learning experiences that most students in other schools take for granted. For most of these students, English is not the language spoken in their home. While they can socially converse in English, they lack the formal language required by school programmes and external exams. All teachers in these schools, therefore, need to be teachers of language as well as of their specialist subjects.

Maori are tangata whenua and as a foundation culture of Aotearoa, parents want to be supported by our education system. There has been a clear call from these parents for a return of their children to Maori cultural values and beliefs in order to provide a base to rebuild self esteem, self image, confidence, pride, and ethnic and personal identity. Individualism has to be replaced by group and whanau kinship (whanaungatanga). Parents are clear that there has to be an emphasis on stronger programmes of teaching and learning Maori language, knowledge, traditions, values, and beliefs. Substantial and on-going support for these kinds of Maori initiatives in terms of appropriate leadership, staffing, professional development, funding, resources and equipment are needed.

Pacific parents, many of whom were born in the Islands, have minimal understanding of the New Zealand education system. They do not understand the recent changes to the curriculum and qualifications structures, or the ways the schools organise themselves. This impacts directly on the way they perceive their role and responsibilities as parents of students attending these schools. It also impacts on the expectations they have of the schools. The parents' own experiences with school and schooling and their knowledge of what schools are like is based on schools in the Islands and is therefore outdated and redundant. Although it no longer applies to what is happening in our New Zealand schools, parents still make decisions about their child's education based on these understandings. They are not sure how to help their children with their education, or how to interact with the school. There is an urgent need for a Pacific parent education programme.

Within the control of the schools, to some extent, are the responsibilities of governance, leadership, management and organisation. There have been examples of weak leadership in the past, and a lack of willingness and/or ability to achieve consistently high quality teaching throughout some of the schools, although the ERO reports did not identify these issues at the time they were evident to the schools. There have also been instances of ethnic conflict and politicking both within the schools and in the school communities, which have interfered with the cooperative running of some of the schools. There are different governance needs in schools where most Trustees do not speak English well and lack expertise and experience in administrative, organisational, and financial management. This currently places a significant extra burden on the Principals. Most of these Trustees are extremely able policy and decision makers, however, it is strongly recommended on the basis of the evidence gathered that these schools be provided with the administrative support they need rather than take away their right to govern the schools for their children.

Students and parents need to be more actively involved in assessment for better learning and students need to be provided with experiences outside of their immediate worlds in order to gain the confidence and motivation to succeed. They need to be taught skills that will help them communicate, study, manage their time, manage conflict, deal with peer pressure and become interactive rather than passive learners. Because being in a healthy and teachable state is a prerequisite for effective learning, they need health education, access to health screening programmes, and ongoing access to student appropriate health services. Students need their parents to be more knowledgable about the conflicting worlds they live in and parents need help and advice in order to know how to support their children's education. Schools need extra staffing to enable them to liaise and work with these parents.

In order to improve the potential for achievement of these students, the challenge is to find ways of measuring and rewarding achievement that are appropriate to them; to find ways to attract the right types of teachers and leaders to the schools; to support them to the level they need in order to deliver effective programmes; to resource the schools equitably so that the inability of a poor community to fundraise does not educationally disadvantage its students; to provide for the health, welfare and pastoral care needs of the students so that teachers can spend most of their time teaching rather than being truancy officers, counsellors, taxi drivers, and health workers; providing administrative support and in-school training for Trustees; and developing review processes that will provide an accurate and balanced assessment of their performance without perpetuating or accelerating any existing difficulties.

National data show that there is a disproportionate and significant difference in the current ability of students in decile one schools to "achieve" using School Certificate and Bursary as measures of achievement. Within the decile one group of schools, the lowest on the socioeconomic ladder are the ones with the greatest difficulties. There will always be schools in this "lowest" position in any society, and in order for them to provide for their students appropriately, they need differing levels and types of support. Once a decile one secondary school's roll begins to drop, given current education policy and resourcing, the impact of reduced staffing alone will make it almost impossible to reverse the trend, regardless of the quality of leadership and governance. The reputation of these very poor areas makes them less than desirable places for schooling, in the eyes of parents, and unless the schools have the support they need to educate, communicate with, and work alongside parents, they will continue to be judged to be poor regardless of the quality of the programme they provide.

Recent Ministry of Education initiatives through the School Support Project and AIMHI have the potential to provide conditions in these schools through which student achievement can be enhanced providing the necessary resourcing is available for the schools to manage, at least to some extent, the external pressures and demands that are part of the every day life of a school in a low socioeconomic area. Our data suggest that the Qualifications Framework will provide a more appropriate means of gaining qualifications. New and appropriate assessment tools and techniques need to be available to schools so that the real gains made by students in these multicultural schools can be recognised. It is clear from the study data that School Certificate has a profoundly detrimental effect on the students and on these schools. The very low rate of School Certificate passes achieved at most of the decile one schools constantly reinforces the idea that the schools and their students are "failures" while the evidence is that there are a whole range of areas in which they are achieving. Other more valid ways of evaluating student achievement and the success of schools need to be used by parents and by the education community.

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GLOSSARY

AIMHI   Achievement Initiative in Multicultural High Schools is a project set up by the Ministry of Education with the main goal of improving student achievement in schools with Pacific and Maori students.

CAPNA   Curriculum and pastoral needs analysis. When there is a drop in the number of students enrolled in a school, the school has to decrease the number of teachers it employs. The formal process that is used to identify the teachers who are to be redeployed is called the CAPNA process.

dac   marijuana

decile   All New Zealand schools are ranked on a decile scale of one to ten. It is a measure of socio-economic position with decile ten schools having the highest status. Some school funding is allocated on the basis of decile ranking in an attempt to provide for equity.

DP   Deputy Principal

ERDC   Educational Research and Development Centre of Massey University, Albany is a self-funding autonomous Centre within the Educational Faculty of the University.

ERO   Educational Review Office. This office is the government department responsible for evaluating and reporting on education in all schools. Two types of reviews take place. Assurance audits review the governance by the Board of Trustees and effectiveness reviews evaluate the educational programme in the school. Reports are made available to the media and to the public.

ESOL   English Speakers of Other Languages. Refers to students for whom English is a second language and who need special language programmes, resources and teacher skills.

FOBs   "Fresh off the boat". A student term in reasonably common usage for students who are very recent immigrants from the Pacific. Their difficulties with English and naivety of Kiwi culture distinguish them.

HODs   Heads of Departments. Each of the schools is organised into curriculum area departments and each department has a 'head'. These departments are sometimes quite large such as the core subject departments of Maths, English, Science and Social Sciences/Studies. Other departments are small and may only have one or two teachers.

IEP   Individual educational programme. This is an educational programme designed to meet the specific needs of an individual student.

LTL   Learning Through Language. This is a programme that a school elects to offer to its staff which gives them the theory, skills and practical strategies they need in the classroom to work effectively with students for whom English is a second language.

MOE   The Ministry of Education. This is sometimes abbreviated to "the Ministry". They have funded the project and have overall responsibility for it. Key personnel at National office are involved, as are personnel from the Auckland and Wellington offices.

nark   Or "dobbing in". Terms that refer to one student telling on a fellow student to someone in authority.

NESB   Same as ESOL. Refers to students who come from a 'non English speaking background'

NZQA   New Zealand Qualifications Authority. The organisation independent of the Ministry of Education to oversee the Qualifications Framework. They administer School Certificate, 6th Form Certificate, Bursary and the National Certificate (consisting of unit standards).

Pacific   This word is used instead of the words 'Pacific Islanders' or 'Pacific Islands'. This was on the advice of the Pacific research team.

Pakeha   New Zealand born European.

Palagi   Pakeha/New Zealander or European

PATs   Progressive Achievement Tests. New Zealand designed norm-referenced tests available in Reading, Comprehension and Vocabulary, Listening, Maths and Study Skills. They are designed to be used from Years 3 to 9.

PI   Pacific Island, Pacific or Pacific Islander

PIERC   Pacific Islands Education Resource Centre

potato   Derogatory term to describe a Pacific person (usually a teacher) who is "brown on the outside but white on the inside" i.e. someone who is more palagi in their values and behaviour than they are true to their own culture.

recapitate   When a primary or intermediate school decides to increase the year level to which it teaches students, e.g. a primary school including year seven and eight students who would otherwise be at an intermediate school.

Reference Groups The Ministry set up Reference Groups in Auckland and Wellington. They comprise Ministry personnel, community representatives and designates from relevant social and government agencies. Their role is to be informed about the needs of the AIMHI schools and the project developments, and to support the project in any way possible.

scabbing Student term for asking to "borrow" money from friends, usually to pay for lunch. It may or may not be paid back.

SES Special Education Service

SSR Sustained silent reading. This is a specially designated time set aside throughout the school in which students do nothing other than read silently. They are assisted to select books they will enjoy.

STAR Secondary Tertiary Alignment Resource. Contestable funding for which secondary schools can apply to provide specialist transition courses sometimes in conjunction with tertiary institutions.

Steering Committee This committee comprises the principals of the eight schools, Ministry personnel, and board and community members. It is chaired by the project coordinator, meets monthly and is responsible for the overall direction of the project. The research coordinator reports monthly to the meeting.

tikanga Maori culture, Maori ways.

whanaungatanga Pastoral care. Being supportive of each other as a group or whanau.

Year 9-13 Year nine is the first year at Secondary school and used to be called the third form.

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

In most New Zealand secondary schools the majority of students turn up to school on time in the morning, dressed in reasonable uniform, having slept and eaten well the night before. They have probably had breakfast and will have either a school lunch or money to buy one at school. They will each have a school bag with the books, pens and equipment they need for school work.

If money is required for a school trip that is part of the teaching programme, a note home to parents will be responded to promptly and result in the majority paying and the trip going ahead. Parents will help with or pay for transport and will often help organise and supervise the trip.

Most homes are equipped with books and newspapers and many will have at least one computer. Children will have a bed and a table or desk at which they can do homework. Parents will ensure they have time to do the study and assignment work required and will sometimes supervise and help with this. Most children of secondary age will have travelled outside of their immediate neighbourhood, have probably been into the city, will have been to a beach, and will have experienced the countryside. They may learn music, belong to sports clubs or have other organised recreational interests.

If they are sick, a parent will take them to the doctor and arrange for them to have the prescribed medication and/or medical aids.

The school will have most of its school fees paid and will probably have parental help with fundraising in order to buy the extra equipment, such as computers, for which are not funded. Sports teams are often coached and managed by parents.

The teachers are, therefore, able to spend most of their professional time in the preparation, delivery and assessment of teaching and learning for the students. If they are concerned about a student, one phone call will bring the parents to school for a discussion. Even so, these teachers will currently feel under pressure because of teacher shortages, new curricula, the new Qualifications Framework, and the demands that have resulted from schools being self-managing.

The contrast between this scenario, and that of the eight decile one study schools is so great as to be unrecognisable. None of the above are the norm for the majority of these students or for their schools.

THIS REPORT

This report describes the educational world of the students in the eight study schools and describes the other worlds they inhabit as they experience them. The purpose of the research and the report is to identify, understand and describe the things that impact on student achievement in order that the knowledge will enable all parties involved to work together in order to improve opportunities for the students. It is also written to provide baseline data against which changes and progress made by the schools through their involvement in the AIMHI project can be measured.

The danger in writing up the data is that in describing the reality, even through the eyes of the students, teachers and parents, the researchers are publicly exposing the people most in need of support. Published research has often been used as a means of 'blaming the victims' and putting the responsibility on them to improve their lot. Researchers have often been criticised for 'taking' information and not giving anything in return to these communities. At the same time, the researchers do not have any control over how the media choose to portray and publicise the findings, or over how the policy makers choose to respond to the recommendations.

The researchers saw their responsibilities as being to provide accurate, quality data that can be used by many people and organisations to empower students. All readers of the report have the right to respond to it as they see fit, but all readers also share a responsibility to understand the report as a whole and to use the data with integrity.

The researchers made a commitment, which they have already actively begun to action, to feed back and share the findings with as many of the participants as possible. This will be continued in the future.

It is our hope that the following will also occur-

- That **students** will use the data to better understand their circumstances and that this will help them make decisions and choices for their lives in and beyond school

- That **teachers** will be able to understand even better the complexity of the worlds that their students live in and will use some of the ideas in the report to improve their own practice and the organisation of services in their school

- That **parents** will understand more about the conflicting pressures their children are subjected to, will understand more about the needs the schools have and how, as parents, they might work with the schools to help their children. They will have data on which to base decisions about priorities for their children and will be able to use it as a talking point with them

- That the **schools** will evaluate their own situation carefully in light of what is important for student achievement and will use some of the ideas and knowledge to build on what is already successful in their schools

- That the **media** will be aware of the damage that has been caused in the past by sensationalist and unbalanced reporting, will be aware of how vulnerable the schools and communities are, and will present a full, accurate and sensitive account. Using quotations or phrases out of context, publishing sensational headlines, focusing on the problems more than on the positives, blaming the students or the schools, or not presenting a full picture would be examples of irresponsible journalism.

- That the **Educational Review Office,** without in any way compromising the integrity of their role, will be aware of the enormously detrimental effect the publicity resulting from their reports has had on some of the schools and how this had directly contributed to the falling rolls, low staff morale, difficulty in recruiting and retaining teachers and low student self esteem. The Office needs to be flexible enough in its procedures and to adapt the review process to the circumstances of schools at risk in order not to become part of a self perpetuating problem

- That the **educational policy and decision makers** will accept the national and international data on these schools in the lowest socioeconomic areas and be willing to provide the schools with the type of resourcing they need to make a difference. It may be administratively more convenient to provide separately for educational, health, welfare and other needs, but the schools do not have this luxury in working with their students and families. They have to be able to provide for the needs in a planned and ongoing way and they must have resourcing that is adequate and comes in a way they can manage .

It should be noted that there have been many innovative and positive changes in the schools over the year of the project and research study. This is particularly the case in two of the schools most at risk. There is therefore always the danger that some details are out of date before the report is printed.

Whenever possible the words of the participants have been used to illustrate and expand on points made by the researchers. These quotes are indented and in italics, and words in the body of the script in italics are also those of participants. Care has been taken to select verbatims that accurately reflect issues that are being discussed and that add to the readers' understanding. They are a conservative selection by the researchers who have not included the extreme or sensationalist examples. It is very important that quotes are not taken out of their context.

The report is set out in chapters which discuss particular areas and issues. Because, in reality, many of these are so interconnected that they are inseparable, in writing about them in sections, there is inevitably some overlap. The researchers have tried to avoid major repetition by cross-referencing data, but there is some repetition in order that key points are made in every context in which they are relevant.

The Maori and Pacific researchers have written the chapters with the parent data and these chapters each include their own recommendations. These recommendations have not been repeated in the final chapter but should be read at the same time and taken as being of equal importance.

The AIMHI project is planned to be enacted over another four or five years. The researchers see themselves as partners in the process and this initial research report is a working document to assist that process.

Chapter Two

METHODOLOGY

2.1   INTRODUCTION

The AIMHI project was initiated by the Ministry of Education and began its planning early in 1996. The research project is a part of the overall project. Data collection began in the eight AIMHI schools in May 1996.

2.2   THE SAMPLE

There are eight schools in the AIMHI project. At the beginning of the project (1996), they were all secondary, year 9-13 schools. One is in Wellington and seven are in Auckland. All are State Co-educational Schools, except one Catholic Integrated Girls' school.

The schools were selected because they are decile one secondary schools with high ratios of Pacific students. It is significant that six of the schools have very vulnerable rolls and some rolls are falling. Most of these schools are currently being directly affected by the activities of their local contributing primary and intermediate schools attempting to retain students.

Three of the schools have had unfavourable publicity following ERO reports and most have been affected by a recent ERO report on the Otara and Mangere schools.

Over the period of this year, three of the principals and one of the deputy principals have resigned. One school has a commissioner.

Overall, it is important to note that all of the schools are under a great deal of pressure in their day to day school life, and some are very fragile as a result of a combination of the factors mentioned above, as well as the recent history of conflict in some of the schools.

2.3   THE RESEARCH TEAM

Two Pakeha/palagi women conducted the in-school data collection. They are very experienced qualitative researchers and very familiar with these particular schools having worked in several of them in recent years. They are familiar and experienced also in working in a research role with Pacific and Maori teachers and students.

The community research team which worked with the parents comprised four researchers each well qualified to undertake the task: a Maori man, a Samoan woman, a Cook Island woman and a Tongan woman. All are native speakers of their own language, they have had recent experience of working in schools and are familiar with the education system. All have some research knowledge or experience, and all were able to work part time in the evenings and weekends and had writing skills.

2.4 IN SCHOOL DATA COLLECTION

Two researchers, each working in four schools, collected data in the following ways:

- Schools were given a list of documents that the researchers needed copies of (Appendix 1). These were collected and analysed over a period of months. It is interesting to note that the process of collection, in itself, taught the researchers much about each school in terms of its organisation, systems, efficiency and climate.

- Both teaching and non-teaching staff in each school, were interviewed individually. The duration of the interview varied between half an hour and two hours depending on the areas of responsibility the individual had in the school. In the six smaller schools almost every member of staff was interviewed. In the larger schools, staff who had particular roles[1] were interviewed and then a selection[2] of the general teaching staff was interviewed. Some individuals were followed up for second interviews, or aspects of their work was followed up later in the year.

- The Principal and members of the senior management team were interviewed individually. Since these were key individuals who have an overview of the school they were sometimes interviewed several times.

- Students participated in small group discussions. The size of the groups varied but ranged between three and eight. Most groups comprised five or six students. They were usually groups of age peers and were sometimes girls or boys only, but some groups were of both genders. Each discussion lasted a school period which ranged between 45 minutes and an hour.

- The researchers attended at least one Board of Trustees meeting at each of the schools. In addition, they interviewed each board member individually face to face, in a small group or over the telephone.

The researchers always introduced themselves and their role in the AIMHI project with particular care to emphasise that they had no guarantee there would be action to follow and no direct involvement in the decision making. It was possible, however, to explain briefly about the work of the steering committee and the commitment made to date by the Ministry of Education to the AIMHI project. Confidentiality was assured although respondents were told about the two types of reports that would be written in which the data would be included in generalised formats. Since, in some of these schools, there was a high degree of anxiety about written 'reports' (following ERO reports), respondents were also told about the formative nature of the research and the informal reporting back of issues to their own school.

Respondents were very keen to tell their own story and talk about their experiences, feelings and beliefs. The students, in particular, were very frank about their own lives sometimes to the point of disclosing very personal experiences. Some of the students had been to more than one secondary school and some of them had

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[1] This included deans, health personnel, truancy monitors, pastoral care staff, HODs, and any other roles that related to achievement in its broadest sense.

[2] A range of staff were selected to include a balance of gender, ethnicity, experience both in and out of that particular school and subject departments.

attended two of the AIMHI schools. The ability to make comparisons between schools was valuable to the research. Teachers also had rich experiences to share. Some of them had, in reasonably recent years, attended one of the AIMHI schools as a student, many had taught at more than one school and a few had taught at more than one of the AIMHI schools. Many of the Pacific teachers had lived, or still do, live in the area and were able to talk about the issues from many perspectives.

The researchers did not attempt to tape record the interviews or group discussions for two reasons. First, it was important that the respondents were comfortable and trusted the assurances of confidentiality and there was not adequate time to achieve this type of rapport with a tape going. Secondly, the size of the sample is very large and funding was not available for transcriptions.

2.5   COMMUNITY DATA COLLECTION

A team of researchers worked in the school and wider community to listen to the views and needs of parents and whanau/fanau in relation to the schools and their children's education. The team, which comprised a Maori, Samoan, Cook Island, and Tongan researcher, represented ethnic groups that had the greatest numbers of students at the eight schools. Although they cooperated together as a working team, they each accessed their own ethnic community in the most appropriate ways.

2.6   FORMATIVE PROCESS

Since the whole purpose of the AIMHI project is to assist the schools to improve student achievement, it was appropriate that the research was designed to do the same and so it was designed to be formative in nature. The two in-school researchers met frequently and exchanged information, asked questions and challenged each other. As a new issue emerged, it would be discussed and the researchers would go back into the schools to collect more data. The two in-school researchers also met with the community team for several workshops in which issues were discussed and questions identified for each team to collect data on. The in-school researchers are both very experienced qualitative researchers and used a set of research questions (Appendix 2) to guide, but not to determine or direct, the questioning. Interviews were unstructured and often followed areas of discussion that respondents raised and felt to be important.

The schools were given regular informal, and at times formal, feedback. This took place through talking with the principal, senior management staff, teachers, students, trustees and sometimes parents. Meetings were arranged in all of the schools for staff to hear feedback. At the same time the researchers worked with the project coordinator, the steering committee, and Ministry personnel, to provide ongoing information. The researchers worked with the steering committee to identify 1997 priorities and to plan for the future of the project. The focus was always to work **with** the schools rather than to do research **on** them.

2.7   DATA ANALYSIS

The researchers developed a thorough system of working with the data. Each page of notes was given a code and this code was written in the left margin alongside each paragraph. In the right margin, key words were written to describe the content of that sentence or paragraph. A list of these 'topics' or category headings is in Appendix 3. Each page of notes was then photocopied. The originals remain intact to be used for the feedback to each school. The photocopied notes were cut up and sorted under topic headings.

Each topic was then analysed, and the notes and verbatims sub-grouped and collated onto pages. Some resorting and renaming took place and drafting of chapters began. Having the two researchers who had each collected data on every topic working on every chapter was a major advantage in triangulating data.

2.8   VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Both of the researchers who worked in the schools are Pakeha/palagi and female. They bring these subjectivities as well as many years of research to the work. The way they decided to overcome any lack of understanding of other cultures was to ask the respondents themselves to explain things fully and for the researchers not to make assumptions about their level of understanding. The large sample size gave plenty of opportunities to check things out with many respondents. This was as relevant to understanding the student peer culture as it was to understanding ethnic cultures.

The students were very happy to explain ideas and words and even spell things for the researchers.

The methodology was multi-faceted and included interviews, group discussions, document analysis and observations. The researchers were in and out of the schools for half a year and observed assemblies, staff meetings, morning briefings, lunch times, board meetings, prize givings and many other aspects of the life of the school. They also had access to various research reports and ERO reports, which are independent evaluations of the schools. Triangulation was made even easier because there were two researchers working in four schools each, which allowed for. verification, comparisons and interrogation of the data. It was very reassuring to the researchers that, although the eight schools were different from each other in many ways, the data were amazingly consistent across the eight schools. The same issues, experiences, feelings, opinions and interpretations can be found in data from all eight schools, irrespective of location (Auckland and Wellington), school, researcher, and often ethnic group. Although the schools differ in many ways, the major issues for the schools and their students are the same.

2.9   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

One of the issues raised again and again at parent meetings was the concern about "research" happening in these schools. They talk of "years of research" that has taken place with no beneficial outcomes for the schools or communities. Why should these people support the AIMHI research and allow themselves and their children to be

researched again when, in their view, there is either no feedback or no resultant action. It is unclear what "research" is being referred to and from the occasional vague reference it is clear that people are including studies by agencies such as health and welfare as well as reviews by the Education Review Office as part of this "research" history. Nevertheless the message is clear that these communities feel unhelped by past research and damaged by the publicity their schools and communities have received. This is a heavy responsibility for the research team to take on since, as researchers, we are unable to promise any "outcomes" or direct "benefits" from the research itself. We were able to assure the groups that we were working alongside the AIMHI project and that this was set up to benefit the schools and their communities and that we were committed to working **with** the schools rather than merely doing research **on** them. At the same time, we are aware that the report will be a public document and that we will have no control at all over what the media may or may not choose to print.

One of the first concerns the researchers had was to gain informed consent from the schools. The AIMHI project was one in which the Ministry had selected the schools, rather than the schools asking to be part of it. The Ministry had negotiated the research contract and the funds were to come from the project funds. Although the school principals knew of the research, the staff, students and school communities did not. This was dealt with at a special meeting of all the principals and board representatives. The researchers presented the research objectives and methodology and invited discussion. There was some initial resistance and concerns were expressed. After discussion, the researchers asked directly if they had a mandate from the schools to do the research as proposed. All schools, through these representatives, gave their permission but requested that the literature review be expanded to include international research and be given priority.

Gaining consent in schools is a very complex business and the researchers were keenly aware that, while the school leaders had given their permission, this in no way meant that teachers, students, or parents even knew about the project or the research, let alone having given their informed consent. In order to address this it was planned that a series of communications and meetings were set up. The researchers attended and spoke to a board meeting, a staff meeting, and a parent meeting, in each of the schools. Letters, translated into the main languages of the schools, were sent out and information was included in several school newsletters. Parents were given the opportunity to have their name withdrawn from the school contact list. Even after these efforts, the researchers knew that not all students and parents would know or fully understand the research process. Care was taken before each interaction with a respondent to explain the relevant parts and the purpose of the research and then to ask the respondent's permission to take part. Very few people chose not to participate. This happened in only two schools and in both cases, the Maori parents, through either the Maori teacher or Whanau spokesperson, declined to be involved.

Another issue that soon became evident was for the researchers working with students to know what to do if they disclosed private experiences during the discussions. Discussion about physical abuse (hidings and beatings) was the norm rather than the exception but because it was such a normal part of their lives for most students, they did not feel concerned about discussing it. On several occasions, however, more serious disclosures occurred. These included attempted suicide, suicide of someone close, and sexual abuse. When this occurred the researcher acknowledged the courage it must have taken for the student to raise the experience

and then ensured that they could name at least one adult that they trusted enough with whom they could discuss it further.

Chapter Three

NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT DATA

3.1   INTRODUCTION

The New Zealand Schools data presented in this chapter is described in greater detail in the statistical annex of the 1995 School Sector Report (Ministry of Education, 1996). Data on key school indicators were provided by the Ministry of Education along with breakdowns of school achievement at the School Certificate and Bursary level for Pacific, Maori and other students. The summary data presented here enables a comparison of school by group (AIMHI versus Others) and between school decile levels (1-10) on key school indicators. The data analysis covers 364 schools, including 8 AIMHI Schools.

Data were analysed using procedures from the *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* (SPSS). This package enabled the data to be recoded and analysed to examine school certificate and bursary achievement for Pacific, Maori and other students. Despite the small number of AIMHI schools in the analysis (N=8), it was decided to compare the means for schools and decile levels on the basis that these schools represent a relatively large and stable number of observations for each school achievement indicator.

The summary data presented here should provide a useful baseline from which it will be possible to measure the effects of future interventions on key school indicators. The intention of this section of the report is to provide an indication of trends and to compare the key indicators for AIMHI and other schools without attempting explanation. Causal associations between key indicator variables are complex to understand but, taken together with the qualitative data presented in this report, should better clarify and identify the key considerations related to school achievement of Pacific and other students.

The use of mean comparisons is considered appropriate for the purposes of these analyses, but care needs to be taken to consider variations amongst schools and to recognise that variance estimates for the key indicators are often large and sometimes affected by missing data. For this reason, the standard deviations and the N of cases is presented for each analysis. It was decided to use t-tests to measure the statistical significance of mean differences. This was done to illustrate the extent of the differences rather than to precisely determine the level of statistical significance.

It is important to note that two schools have significant numbers (8% and 12%) of Pakeha students, and that one of these schools also has 11% Asian students. This results in increased levels of achievement for these two schools and because of this it inflates the achievement levels of the AIMHI schools as a group.

3.2   AIMHI SCHOOL LISTINGS

The following tables display information regarding the characteristics of AIMHI Schools. Table 1 shows a listing of the ethnic proportion of students at each school as well as the total head count roll as at 1 July, 1995. As can be seen, there are substantial differences in the ethnic composition of the schools. The majority of students at all AIMHI Schools are Pacific.

Table 1

	ASIAN	PACIFIC	MAORI	JULYROLL
	.00	76.10	23.50	468.00
	5.10	68.00	22.60	722.00
	2.30	80.20	6.40	560.00
	1.70	62.70	35.30	408.00
	10.50	60.30	21.40	1234.00
	.30	54.00	34.40	389.00
	.20	76.00	21.80	546.00
	.80	74.40	21.00	391.00

Table 2 shows the proportion of papers at each of the AIMHI Schools that were graded B and higher and C and higher. This also indicates the Classroom Student/Teacher Ratio (CL Ratio). F3Enter refers to the number of University Bursary/Entrance Scholarship candidates at each school divided by the regular classroom Form 3 roll at that school 4 years earlier.

There are large variations in the grade distributions but the results show that the majority of passing papers are graded at a C level rather than B or higher. The classroom student/teacher ratios are very similar for all AIMHI schools. The proportion of students who enter at 3rd form and present as 7th form candidates four years later is relatively low (i.e. 13-32 %).

Table 2

	BURSARYB	BURSARYC	CLRATIO	F3ENTER
	.00	1.60	15.90	15.60
	7.00	31.00	19.00	15.30
	17.60	57.30	18.60	25.70
	10.30	29.30	14.00	15.50
	15.80	51.50	18.60	32.60
	.	.	15.60	.
	3.60	21.70	17.10	13.00
	7.60	33.30	15.10	17.40

Table 3 displays information on the proportion of students leaving with a Form 7 qualification. F7QUAL shows the proportion of all students while F7QUALM indicates the proportion of Maori students leaving with a Form 7 qualification. PRIOR12 refers to the proportion of all students leaving prior to year 12. Likewise PRIOR12M is the proportion of Maori students.

A characteristic feature of AIMHI Schools is that relatively few students leave with a Form 7 qualification (4.5-17.7 %). It is apparent that a substantial proportion of AIMHI students leave school prior to year 12. (Further information on the school leaving data is presented in a later section of this chapter.)

Table 3

	F7QUAL	F7QUALM	PRIOR12	PRIOR12M
	4.50	.00	22.90	35.10
	14.70	10.00	51.60	78.00
	16.50	.	13.90	.
	8.30	12.90	26.40	25.80
	17.70	6.00	8.30	10.30
	9.60	2.30	15.20	25.00
	9.30	3.40	45.60	51.70
	8.50	.00	31.00	38.20

*   Information on Pacific students not available

3.3   SUMMARY OF UNIVERSITY BURSARY CANDIDATES: AIMHI COMPARED WITH ALL OTHER SCHOOLS

The following tables provide a comparison of candidates-Form 3 entrants for AIMHI versus all other schools. This indicates the number of University Bursary/Entrance Scholarship candidates at each school in 1995 divided by the regular classroom Form 3 Roll at that school 4 years earlier in 1991. This indicator shows participation rates in national examinations for AIMHI and other schools. It was not possible to obtain separate listings for Pacific, Maori, and other students from the national data.

Tables 4 and 5 show that AIMHI schools have a substantially lower participation rate compared with other schools. AIMHI participation rates in national exams at 7th Form level are slightly lower than other decile 1 schools.

Table 4

```
Summaries of Candidates/Form 3 Entrants
AIMHI Versus All Other Schools

Variable        Value  Label                       Mean     Std Dev    Cases

For Entire Population                             49.7731   36.9446      290

GROUP             1  Other Schools               50.5269   37.0686      283
GROUP             2  AIMHI Schools               19.3000    7.1330        7

  Total Cases = 364
Missing Cases = 74 or  20.3 Pct
```

Table 5

```
Summaries of Candidates/Form 3 Entrants
By levels of      DECILE      School Decile 1-10

Variable        Value                       Mean    Std Dev    Cases

For Entire Population                      49.2149   35.7626     289


AIMHI SCHOOLS                             19.3000    7.1330       7

DECILE            1                        21.9933    6.7253      15
DECILE            2                        32.1600   11.8274      30
DECILE            3                        41.8781   24.7493      32
DECILE            4                        36.7814   10.9653      43
DECILE            5                        59.2000   72.1721      44
DECILE            6                        47.9561   16.8896      41
DECILE            7                        56.6161   25.7752      31
DECILE            8                        59.3071   15.0712      14
DECILE            9                        69.7391   18.2819      23
DECILE           10                        77.8938   31.9904      16


  Total Cases = 364
Missing Cases = 75 or   20.6 Pct
```

The relationship between mean number of UB candidates and decile level is graphically illustrated in the following chart. This generally shows that the number of candidates increases at the higher decile levels.

3.4 ANALYSIS OF KEY INDICATORS: AIMHI COMPARED WITH ALL OTHER SCHOOLS

The following analyses compare AIMHI Schools with all other schools on several selected variables. For the purposes of these analyses, an independent samples t-test has been conducted to measure the significance of differences. This approach is justified on the basis that, even though the AIMHI sample is small (N=8), the data proportions are relatively stable given the large number of students involved in the analysis. The t-values and levels of significance were adjusted by means of a test for equality of variances.

Table 6 indicates the proportion of all University Bursary/Entrance Scholarship papers sat at each school in 1995 that were graded either S (Scholarship pass), A or

B. This indicator is only recorded for schools with 15 or more candidates sitting Bursary so as not to distort the comparison for small schools. The results show that other schools record a significantly higher proportion of papers graded B or higher compared with AIMHI Schools. (Data from one school are not included because they did not have 15 candidates).

Table 6

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Bursary B or Higher                                                       │
│                                                                           │
│                                 Number                                    │
│ Variable                        of Cases    Mean        SD       SE of Mean │
│ ------------------------------------------------------------------------- │
│ Other Schools                    283       36.2322     11.489       .683  │
│ AIMHI Schools                     7         8.8429      6.296      2.380   │
│ ------------------------------------------------------------------------- │
│ Mean Difference = 27.3893                                                 │
│ Levene's Test for Equality of Variances: F= 3.048  P= .082               │
│ t-value= 6.28     df=288      2-Tail Sig. = .001                          │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Table 7 shows the proportion of all University Bursary/Entrance Scholarship papers sat at each school in 1995 that were graded C or higher. The results show that other schools record a significantly higher proportion of papers graded C or higher compared with AIMHI Schools. (Data from one school were unavailable).This indicator is only recorded for schools with 15 or more candidates sitting Bursary so as not to distort the comparison for small schools. The results show that the proportion of papers graded C or higher (passing grades) at other schools is more than twice that of AIMHI Schools.

Table 7

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Bursary C or Higher                                                       │
│                                                                           │
│                                 Number                                    │
│ Variable                        of Cases    Mean        SD       SE of Mean │
│ ------------------------------------------------------------------------- │
│  Other Schools                   283       72.7731     11.361       .675  │
│  AIMHI Schools                    7        32.2429     18.530      7.004   │
│ ------------------------------------------------------------------------- │
│ Mean Difference = 40.5303                                                 │
│ Levene's Test for Equality of Variances: F= 2.224  P= .137               │
│ t-value= 9.17     df=288      2-Tail Sig. = .001                          │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Table 8 indicates the ratio of general classroom students to general classroom teachers. The calculation of this ratio varies slightly by school type. The 1995 grading roll has been used as a measure of the general classroom roll. Foreign fee paying students and overseas students studying under MFAT scholarships are excluded. The results show that there are no significant differences between the two groups.

Table 8

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Classroom Student/Teacher Ratio                                           │
│                                                                           │
│                                 Number                                    │
│ Variable                        of Cases    Mean        SD       SE of Mean │
│ ------------------------------------------------------------------------- │
```

```
 Other Schools                        356      17.3893      1.634         .087
 AIMHI Schools                          8      16.7375      1.865         .660
 ------------------------------------------------------------------------
Mean Difference = .6518
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances: F= .662   P= .417
t-value= 1.11        df=362      2-Tail Sig. = .266
```

Table 9 displays results concerning the number of University Bursary/ Entrance Scholarship candidates at each school in 1995 divided by the regular classroom Form 3 roll at that school four years earlier in 1991. There is a significant difference between the means for the two groups. Other schools have a significantly higher proportion of candidates that continue on from the 3rd Form to 7th Form level. (Data from one are not included because they did not have 15 candidates).

Table 9

```
Candidates/Form 3 Entrants

                             Number
 Variable                    of Cases    Mean        SD        SE of Mean
 ------------------------------------------------------------------------

 Other Schools                283      50.5269     37.069        2.203
 AIMHI Schools                  7      19.3000      7.133        2.696
 ------------------------------------------------------------------------
Mean Difference = 31.2269
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances: F= 1.419  P= .235
t-value= 2.22        df=288      2-Tail Sig. = .027
```

Table 10 indicates the proportion of students leaving with a form 7 qualification defined as University Bursary (Scholarship pass, A or B Bursary), Entrance qualification from University Bursary, or Higher School Certificate. The results show a significantly greater proportion of qualified leavers from other schools compared with AIMHI Schools.

Table 10

```
All students leaving with a F7 Qualification

                             Number
 Variable                    of Cases    Mean        SD        SE of Mean
 ------------------------------------------------------------------------

 Other Schools                324      36.9290     18.897        1.050
 AIMHI Schools                  8      11.1375      4.619        1.633
 ------------------------------------------------------------------------
Mean Difference = 25.7915
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances: F= 7.467  P= .007
t-value= 3.85 df=330    2-Tail Sig. = .001
```

Table 11 indicates the proportion of Maori students leaving with a form 7 qualification defined as University Bursary (Scholarship pass, A or B Bursary), Entrance qualification from University Bursary, or Higher School Certificate. The results show that other schools have a significantly greater proportion of Maori students leaving with a seventh Form qualification compared with AIMHI Schools. (Data from one school were unavailable).

Table 11

```
Maori Leaving With F7 Qualification

                              Number
 Variable                     of Cases      Mean         SD      SE of Mean
 -----------------------------------------------------------------------

 Other Schools                  193       16.5870      13.549        .975
 AIMHI Schools                    7        4.9429       4.971       1.879
 -----------------------------------------------------------------------
Mean Difference = 11.6442
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances: F= 3.042   P= .083
t-value= 2.26      df=198      2-Tail Sig. = .025
```

Table 12 indicates the proportion of all students who have left school prior to year 12. This includes Maori and other students. The results indicate that other schools have a significantly lower proportion of students who leave compared with AIMHI Schools.

Table 12

```
All Students Leaving Prior to Year 12
                              Number
Variable                      of Cases      Mean         SD      SE of Mean
 -----------------------------------------------------------------------
 Other Schools                  325       14.8040      12.663        .702
 AIMHI Schools                    8       26.8625      15.328       5.419
 -----------------------------------------------------------------------
Mean Difference = -12.0585
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances: F= .727   P= .394
t-value= -2.65     df=331      2-Tail Sig. = .008
```

Table 13 indicates the proportion of Maori students leaving prior to Year 12. The results show that AIMHI Schools tend to have higher proportions of Maori students leaving prior to Year 12. (Data from one school were unavailable).

Table 13

```
Maori Students Leaving Prior to Year 12

                            Number
 Variable                   of Cases    Mean        SD       SE of Mean
 ------------------------------------------------------------------------

  Other Schools             193       26.3974     17.183       1.237
  AIMHI Schools               7       37.7286     21.912       8.282
 ------------------------------------------------------------------------

Mean Difference = -11.3312
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances: F= .305   P= .581
t-value= -1.70      df=198      2-Tail Sig. = .091
```

3.5 ANALYSIS OF KEY INDICATORS: AIMHI COMPARED WITH OTHER DECILE 1 SCHOOLS

Table 14 compares the mean proportion of all University Bursary/Entrance Scholarship papers sat at each school in 1995 that were graded either S (Scholarship pass), A or B. This indicator is only recorded for schools with 15 or more candidates sitting Bursary so as not to distort the comparison for small schools. The results show that other decile 1 schools record a significantly higher proportion of papers graded B or higher compared with AIMHI Schools. (Data from one school were unavailable).

Table 14

```
Bursary B or Higher

                            Number
 Variable                   of Cases    Mean        SD       SE of Mean

  Other Decile 1 Schools      8       23.6750     12.078       4.270
  AIMHI Schools               7        8.8429      6.296       2.380
 ------------------------------------------------------------------------

Mean Difference = 14.8321
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances: F= 1.954  P= .186
t-value = 2.91       df = 13        2-Tail Sig. = .012
```

Table 15 shows the proportion of all University Bursary/Entrance Scholarship papers sat at each school in 1995 that were graded C or higher. This indicator is only recorded for schools with 15 or more candidates sitting Bursary so as not to distort the comparison for small schools. The results show that other decile 1 schools recorded a significantly higher proportion of papers graded C or higher compared with AIMHI Schools. (Data from one school were unavailable).

Table 15

```
Bursary C or Higher


                            Number
Variable                    of Cases      Mean          SD    SE of Mean


 Other Decile 1 Schools        8        58.2875      14.780       5.225
 AIMHI Schools                 7        32.2429      18.530       7.004
------------------------------------------------------------------
Mean Difference = 26.0446
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances: F= .131   P= .723
t-value = 3.03       df = 13         2-Tail Sig. = .01
```

Table 16 indicates the ratio of general classroom students to general classroom teachers. The calculation of this ratio varies slightly by school type. The 1995 grading roll has been used as a measure of the general classroom roll. Foreign fee paying students and overseas students studying under MFAT scholarships are excluded. There are no significant differences between the two groups in terms of class student/teacher ratios.

Table 16

```
Classroom Student/Teacher Ratio


                      Number
Variable              of Cases      Mean        SD        SE of Mean
 ------------------------------------------------------------------

 Other Decile 1 Schools   22      16.2727      1.598         .341
 AIMHI Schools             8      16.7375      1.865         .660
 ------------------------------------------------------------------
Mean Difference = -.4648
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances: F= .560   P= .461
t-value = -.67       df = 28   2-Tail Sig = .505
```

Table 17 shows the number of University Bursary/Entrance Scholarship candidates in 1995 divided by the regular classroom Form 3 Roll at that school 4 years earlier in 1991. As can be seen, the mean for AIMHI participation rates in national examinations is lower than for other decile 1 schools although this is not statistically significant . It was not possible to obtain separate listings for Pacific, Maori, and other students from the national data.

Table 17

```
Candidates/Form 3 Entrants


                      Number
Variable              of Cases      Mean          SD    SE of Mean
 ------------------------------------------------------------------



 Other Decile 1 Schools    8      24.3500      5.766       2.039
 AIMHI Schools             7      19.3000      7.133       2.696
 ------------------------------------------------------------------
Mean Difference = 5.0500
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances: F= .573   P= .463
t-value = 1.52       df = 13   2-Tail Sig = .153
```

Table 18 displays the proportion of students leaving with a form 7 qualification defined as University Bursary (Scholarship pass, A or B Bursary), Entrance qualification from University Bursary, or Higher School Certificate. The results show

that, although not statistically significant, the proportion of students leaving with qualifications from AIMHI schools is slightly lower than the proportion from other decile 1 schools.

Table 18

```
All students leaving with a F7 Qualification


                              Number
Variable                      of Cases     Mean         SD    SE of Mean
------------------------------------------------------------------------


 Other Decile 1 Schools       17       12.5353       9.194       2.230
 AIMHI Schools                 8       11.1375       4.619       1.633
------------------------------------------------------------------------
Mean Difference = 1.3978
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances: F= 5.621   P= .026
t-value = .40        df = 23   2-Tail Sig = .69
```

Table 19 indicates the proportion of Maori students leaving with a form 7 qualification defined as University Bursary (Scholarship pass, A or B Bursary), Entrance qualification from University Bursary, or Higher School Certificate. The results show that other decile 1 schools have nearly twice the proportion of Maori qualified leavers compared with AIMHI school leavers.

Table 19

```
Maori Leaving With F7 Qualification

                              Number
 Variable                     of Cases     Mean         SD    SE of Mean
------------------------------------------------------------------------


 Other Decile 1 Schools       17        8.4882       7.436       1.803
 AIMHI Schools                 7        4.9429       4.971       1.879
------------------------------------------------------------------------
Mean Difference = 3.5454
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances: F= .970   P= .335
t-value = 1.15      df = 22    2-Tail Sig  = .26
```

Table 20 shows the mean proportion of all students who left school prior to year 12. The results indicate that AIMHI schools have a similar number of students leaving prior to Year 12 compared to other decile 1 schools.

Table 20

```
All Students Leaving Prior to Year 12


                              Number
 Variable                     of Cases    Mean         SD     SE of Mean
 -----------------------------------------------------------------------


 Other Decile 1 Schools          17     28.9765     25.717      6.237
 AIMHI Schools                     8     26.8625     15.328      5.419
 -----------------------------------------------------------------------
Mean Difference = 2.1140
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances: F= 1.313  P= .264
t-value = .26      df = 23   2-Tail Sig = .83
```

Table 21 displays the proportion of Maori students leaving prior to Year 12. The results show that AIMHI schools tend to have slightly higher proportions of Maori students leaving prior to year 12, although not statistically significant. (Data from one school were unavailable)

Table 21

```
Maori Students Leaving Prior to Year 12


                              Number
 Variable                     of Cases    Mean         SD     SE of Mean
 -----------------------------------------------------------------------


 Other Decile 1 Schools          17     32.8882     26.479      6.422
 AIMHI Schools                     7     37.7286     21.912      8.282
 -----------------------------------------------------------------------
Mean Difference = -4.8403
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances: F= .442   P= .513
t-value = -.43      df = 22   2-Tail Sig = .67
```

3.6   ACHIEVEMENT DATA FOR AIMHI SCHOOLS

This section of the report presents data summaries on School Certificate and University Bursary results for AIMHI schools. The achievement data was analysed by comparing the number of graded papers at each level with the total number of papers and the number of candidates for each school. Separate analyses were carried out for Pacific, Maori and other students. These results are displayed in Tables 22-33.

Number and Proportion of School Certificate Papers Graded A or B For Pacific Students at AIMHI Schools

N Cand.	N Papers	N Papers Scored A,B	% of Total Papers
59	180	3	1.67
115	493	38	7.71
98	440	35	7.95
51	183	9	4.92
138	502	26	5.18
28	87	1	1.15
81	297	6	2.02
35	120	12	10.00

Number and Proportion of School Certificate Papers Graded A or B For Maori Students at AIMHI Schools

N Cand.	N Papers	N Papers Scored A,B	% of Total Papers
13	22	1	4.55
35	138	14	10.14
16	66	6	9.09
24	64	3	4.69
46	165	18	10.91
20	61	2	3.28
17	45	6	13.33
4	6	0	.00

Number and Proportion of School Certificate Papers Graded A or B For Other Students at AIMHI Schools.

N Cand.	N Papers	N Papers Scored A,B	% of Total Papers
1	3	0	.00
15	64	20	31.25
13	65	30	46.15
2	6	0	.00
37	134	18	13.43
5	14	0	.00
1	2	0	.00
2	9	2	22.22

Number and Proportion of School Certificate Papers Graded C or Higher For Pacific Students at AIMHI Schools.

Table 25

N Cand.	N Papers	N Papers Score C>	% of Total Papers
59	180	23	12.78
115	493	107	21.70
98	440	142	32.27
51	183	30	16.39
138	502	129	25.70
28	87	14	16.09
81	97	39	13.13
35	120	42	35.00

Number and Proportion of School Certificate Papers Graded C or Higher For Maori Students at AIMHI Schools.

Table 26

N Cand.	N Papers	N Papers Scored C>	% of Total Papers
13	22	5	22.73
35	138	47	34.06
16	66	27	40.91
24	64	10	15.63
46	165	61	36.97
20	61	14	22.95
17	45	17	37.78
4	6	2	33.33

Number and Proportion of School Certificate Papers Graded C or Higher For Other Students at AIMHI Schools.

Table 27

N Cand.	N Papers	N Papers Scored C>	% of Total Papers
1	3	0	.00
15	64	42	65.63
13	65	51	78.46
2	6	1	16.67
37	134	59	44.03
5	14	1	7.14
1	2	0	.00
2	9	5	55.56

Number and Proportion of University Bursary Papers Graded B or Higher For Pacific Students at AIMHI Schools

Table 28

N Cand.	N Papers	N Papers Scored B>	% of Total Papers
21	57	0	.00
24	75	5	6.67
29	107	14	13.08
7	19	0	.00
54	205	25	12.20
1	3	2	66.67
22	72	3	4.17
19	61	4	6.56

Number and Proportion of University Bursary Papers Graded B or Higher For Maori Students at AIMHI Schools.

Table 29

N Cand.	N Papers	N Papers Scored B>	% of Total Papers
2	4	0	.00
6	15	1	6.67
2	7	1	14.29
16	39	6	15.38
11	40	5	12.50
1	1	0	.00
4	10	0	.00
1	1	1	100.00

Number and Proportion of University Bursary Papers Graded B or Higher For Other Students at AIMHI Schools

Table 30

N Cand.	N Papers	N Papers Scored B>	% of Total Papers
.	.	.	.
8	39	3	7.69
5	17	8	47.06
.	.	.	.
29	91	23	25.27
5	14	0	.00
1	1	0	
1	4	0	.00

Number and Proportion of University Bursary Papers Graded C or Higher For Pacific Students at AIMHI Schools.

Table 31

N Cand.	N Papers	N Papers Scored C>	% of Total Papers
21	57	1	1.75
24	75	19	25.33
29	107	54	50.47
7	19	3	15.79
54	205	94	45.85
1	3	3	100.00
22	72	18	25.00
19	61	19	31.15

Number and Proportion of University Bursary Papers Graded C or Higher For Maori Students at AIMHI Schools.

Table 32

N Cand.	N Papers	N Papers Scored C>	% of Total Papers
2	4	0	.00
6	15	5	33.33
2	7	7	100.00
39	14		35.90
11	40	23	57.50
1	1	0	.00
4	10	0	.00
1	1	1	100.00

Number and Proportion of University Bursary Papers Graded C or Higher For Other Students at AIMHI Schools.

Table 33

N Cand.	N Papers	N Papers Scored C>	% of Total Papers
.	.	.	.
8	39	16	41.03
5	17	14	82.35
.	.	.	.
29	91	56	61.54
5	14	2	14.29
1	1	0	.00
1	4	2	50.00

3.7 ACHIEVEMENT DATA: AIMHI COMPARED WITH OTHER DECILE LEVELS

This section contains analyses of achievement data relating to School Certificate and University Bursary. The mean proportion of grades at AIMHI Schools is shown along with the mean proportion of grades at each decile level. The mean proportion for the entire population of schools is also shown. These data are presented separately for each student group--Pacific, Maori and Others. All schools were included in the analyses even though some had very small numbers of candidates. The inclusion of all schools should provide a stable and conservative analysis of the mean difference in proportions at each decile level.

The following tables (34-39) display the School Certificate grade proportions for each group of students at each decile level. A chart is presented below to show trends in the distribution of grade proportions.

Summaries of SC Papers Graded B or Higher/all papers - Pacific Students

Table 34

Variable	Value	Mean	Std Dev	Cases
For Entire Population		13.9880	18.6007	209
AIMHI SCHOOLS		5.0745	3.2923	8
DECILE	1	7.2590	10.4281	17
DECILE	2	7.4817	9.1451	21
DECILE	3	9.3621	12.7581	25
DECILE	4	11.8821	20.6086	32
DECILE	5	14.0497	20.4440	31
DECILE	6	16.5639	18.1822	26
DECILE	7	20.4192	24.2469	19
DECILE	8	27.0721	17.5637	10
DECILE	9	15.2465	14.6571	19
DECILE	10	23.7916	30.7192	9

```
  Total Cases = 364
Missing Cases = 155 or  42.6 Pct
```

Summaries of SC Papers Graded B or Higher/all papers - Maori Students

Table 35

Variable	Value	Mean	Std Dev	Cases
For Entire Population		12.9566	12.9681	350
AIMHI SCHOOLS		6.9987	4.5336	8
DECILE	1	5.1854	4.3698	30
DECILE	2	7.9020	6.7401	42
DECILE	3	8.4022	6.1736	38
DECILE	4	11.9428	10.8960	50
DECILE	5	15.1242	14.4347	53
DECILE	6	12.5253	14.2873	47
DECILE	7	18.9902	16.8592	37
DECILE	8	14.9010	9.3051	15
DECILE	9	23.3702	15.9098	22
DECILE	10	18.7734	15.8128	16

```
  Total Cases = 364
Missing Cases = 14 or    3.8 Pct
```

Summaries of SC Papers Graded B or Higher/all papers - Other Students

Table 36

Variable	Value	Mean	Std Dev	Cases
For Entire Population		28.1278	11.7717	350
AIMHI SCHOOLS		14.1324	17.6604	8
DECILE	1	14.7946	13.8745	26
DECILE	2	19.7099	11.3083	38
DECILE	3	23.0401	6.8139	36
DECILE	4	27.1880	7.8552	52
DECILE	5	28.1924	9.3776	53
DECILE	6	29.6926	7.4294	50
DECILE	7	31.5899	8.3840	40
DECILE	8	34.6610	7.4680	15
DECILE	9	40.7429	11.6599	24
DECILE	10	45.4808	11.3943	16

```
  Total Cases = 364
Missing Cases = 14 or    3.8 Pct
```

A summary of the previous distributions for each student group is presented in the following chart. This clearly shows a positive association between achievement and decile level for all groups of students, but especially for the group of students designated 'other'.

Summaries of SC Papers Graded C or Higher/all papers - Pacific Students

Table 37

Variable	Value	Mean	Std Dev	Cases
For Entire Population		38.8944	26.1400	209
AIMHI SCHOOLS		21.6335	8.5961	8
DECILE	1	20.7511	16.3863	17
DECILE	2	32.9044	21.1887	21
DECILE	3	34.5783	22.7453	25
DECILE	4	33.9985	27.8948	32
DECILE	5	40.0225	29.8063	31
DECILE	6	45.5262	26.2159	26
DECILE	7	45.1351	32.0303	19
DECILE	8	55.0283	16.2401	10
DECILE	9	43.6694	22.6031	19
DECILE	10	52.3120	23.1296	9

Total Cases = 364
Missing Cases = 155 or 42.6 Pct

Summaries of SC Papers Graded C or Higher/all papers - Maori Students

Table 38

Variable	Value	Mean	Std Dev	Cases
For Entire Population		40.7071	19.0975	350
AIMHI SCHOOLS		30.5439	8.9643	8
DECILE	1	28.3362	10.9478	30
DECILE	2	30.3902	12.5630	42
DECILE	3	33.2142	12.1629	38
DECILE	4	38.4059	14.6765	50
DECILE	5	44.1972	20.7648	53
DECILE	6	40.6019	21.3672	47
DECILE	7	50.7396	20.0253	37
DECILE	8	47.1284	17.0555	15
DECILE	9	56.3092	18.4611	22
DECILE	10	54.0460	22.4660	16

```
  Total Cases = 364
Missing Cases = 14 or   3.8 Pct
```

Summaries of SC Papers Graded C or Higher/all papers - Other Students

Table 39

Variable	Value	Mean	Std Dev	Cases
For Entire Population		62.0171	15.0301	350
AIMHI SCHOOLS		33.4352	31.3355	8
DECILE	1	40.8380	27.0922	26
DECILE	2	52.9815	17.5385	38
DECILE	3	56.5508	9.7741	36
DECILE	4	62.0823	7.8694	52
DECILE	5	62.5722	10.6367	53
DECILE	6	65.0084	7.4986	50
DECILE	7	67.3166	7.8373	40
DECILE	8	69.6067	8.3588	15
DECILE	9	74.5850	10.4279	24
DECILE	10	79.5765	8.4798	16

```
  Total Cases = 364
Missing Cases = 14 or   3.8 Pct
```

The following chart shows the distribution of grades for Pacific, Maori, and Other students across decile levels. While achievement proportions for Pacific and Maori students are relatively higher here than in the previous chart, it is evident that they are at a lower level than the 'other' group.

Tables 40-45 display grade distributions for University Bursary papers. The distribution for each of the three groups is presented separately, followed by a chart that shows trends and provides a comparison of the distributions. It should be kept in mind that the actual number of Bursary candidates in some schools could be small. The number of schools for which data are available at each decile level is displayed in the tables.

Summaries of UB Papers Graded B or Higher/all papers - Pacific Students

Table 40

Variable	Value	Mean	Std Dev	Cases
For Entire Population		19.0131	23.3907	165
AIMHI SCHOOLS		13.6671	21.9573	8
DECILE	1	13.5558	19.4823	12
DECILE	2	21.9152	30.5123	18
DECILE	3	14.8020	12.7068	20
DECILE	4	16.0635	13.1931	21
DECILE	5	15.7710	23.9605	23
DECILE	6	9.4208	14.3469	20
DECILE	7	30.3981	34.4632	19
DECILE	8	24.9336	15.6179	8
DECILE	9	24.5415	22.9676	17
DECILE	10	28.7512	36.6406	7

Total Cases = 364
Missing Cases = 199 or 54.7 Pct

Summaries of UB Papers Graded B or Higher/all papers - Maori Students

```
Table 41
```

Variable Value	Mean	Std Dev	Cases
For Entire Population	23.6989	21.9422	302
AIMHI SCHOOLS	18.6046	33.5355	8
DECILE 1	26.5769	32.7708	25
DECILE 2	16.9092	13.4035	37
DECILE 3	19.2709	24.1100	36
DECILE 4	21.8602	20.1539	46
DECILE 5	20.6679	17.7732	46
DECILE 6	22.6427	22.3379	36
DECILE 7	25.1878	18.7299	28
DECILE 8	24.4416	18.0565	12
DECILE 9	42.7773	21.1687	21
DECILE 10	33.6627	23.7795	15

```
  Total Cases = 364
Missing Cases = 62 or  17.0 Pct
```

Summaries of UB Papers Graded B or Higher/all papers - Other Students

```
Table 42
```

Variable Value	Mean	Std Dev	Cases
For Entire Population	37.8784	15.0701	328
AIMHI SCHOOLS	13.3376	19.2102	8
DECILE 1	25.4031	20.0480	16
DECILE 2	33.2708	19.4739	33
DECILE 3	34.9655	16.8818	36
DECILE 4	35.1920	12.5254	52
DECILE 5	37.2018	11.3999	51
DECILE 6	34.4844	11.6330	47
DECILE 7	42.1817	14.1572	38
DECILE 8	48.4058	15.1547	16
DECILE 9	47.2270	7.2230	23
DECILE 10	53.0824	7.1666	16

```
Total Cases = 364
Missing Cases = 36 or   9.9 Pct
```

A comparison of the three distributions across decile levels is provided in the following chart. Fluctuations in the Maori and Pacific groups may reflect the fact that there is a comparatively small number of candidates at each decile level. As can be seen, there is a positive association between achievement and decile level for all three groups.

Summaries of UB Papers Graded C or Higher/all papers - Pacific Students

Table 43

Variable	Value	Mean	Std Dev	Cases
For Entire Population		52.2276	30.5771	165
AIMHI SCHOOLS		36.9182	29.8453	8
DECILE	1	37.1360	26.5013	12
DECILE	2	47.4269	33.7390	18
DECILE	3	54.0084	26.6083	20
DECILE	4	55.0611	24.9878	21
DECILE	5	55.9004	31.0310	23
DECILE	6	38.5160	33.0515	20
DECILE	7	56.9002	35.2278	19
DECILE	8	56.7141	16.5769	8
DECILE	9	57.2740	30.2624	17
DECILE	10	73.8986	35.8596	7

Total Cases = 364
Missing Cases = 199 or 54.7 Pct

Summaries of UB Papers Graded C or Higher/all papers - Maori Students

Table 44

```
Variable       Value                          Mean     Std Dev   Cases

For Entire Population                        59.6614   24.6040    302

AIMHI SCHOOLS                                40.8413   42.0236      8

DECILE          1                            50.3874   33.4927     25
DECILE          2                            49.1794   22.8664     37
DECILE          3                            52.6171   25.8848     36
DECILE          4                            58.7163   25.8599     46
DECILE          5                            59.9750   19.7126     46
DECILE          6                            63.4825   21.5732     36
DECILE          7                            62.2426   20.8934     28
DECILE          8                            65.8668   11.2566     12
DECILE          9                            78.1856   21.5285     21
DECILE         10                            74.9290   21.9961     15


  Total Cases = 364
Missing Cases = 62 or   17.0 Pct
```

Summaries of UB Papers Graded C or Higher/all papers - Other Students

Table 45

```
Variable       Value                          Mean     Std Dev   Cases

For Entire Population                        74.1880   13.1075    328

AIMHI SCHOOLS                                41.5338   30.3507      8

DECILE          1                            56.8600   23.2742     16
DECILE          2                            70.4429   13.0793     33
DECILE          3                            73.4128   11.7812     36
DECILE          4                            72.8687   11.8947     52
DECILE          5                            75.0750    8.9048     51
DECILE          6                            71.9799   13.4695     47
DECILE          7                            76.9304   12.7027     38
DECILE          8                            80.3108    8.5302     16
DECILE          9                            82.0813    6.4790     23
DECILE         10                            84.9481    5.1172     16


  Total Cases = 364
Missing Cases = 36 or    9.9 Pct
```

The following chart compares the three distributions across decile levels. Again, fluctuations in the Maori and Pacific groups may reflect the fact that comparatively, there are small numbers of candidates at each decile level. It is apparent that a linear association exists between achievement and decile level. In other words, the higher the decile level, the higher the proportion of passing grades.

3.8   SCHOOL LEAVER DATA BY SCHOOL DECILE LEVEL

This section presents the mean proportion of students who left school at each decile level. It also shows the mean proportion of AIMHI students who left prior to year 12.

Summaries of ALL Students Leaving Prior to Year 12

Table 46

```
Variable        Value  Label                  Mean     Std Dev    Cases

For Entire Population                        15.1392   12.8320      332

AIMHI SCHOOLS                                37.7286   21.9118        7

DECILE            1                          28.3000   22.5929       25
DECILE            2                          23.5128   16.4954       39
DECILE            3                          14.6886    9.2851       35
DECILE            4                          16.8327    8.4347       49
DECILE            5                          16.3429   10.4101       49
DECILE            6                          11.1953    8.3656       43
DECILE            7                          11.4486    8.3276       35
DECILE            8                           5.8000    6.3367       16
DECILE            9                           7.3667    6.7595       24
DECILE           10                           6.4882    7.3611       17

  Total Cases = 364
Missing Cases = 32 or    8.8 Pct
```

The following chart displays the distribution of students who left prior to Year 12 across decile levels. Clearly, there is an inverse linear relationship between the proportion of students leaving and decile level. The higher the decile level, the lower the rate of students who leave.

3.9 SUMMARY

There are several clear trends in the quantitative data. These are as follows:

- Relatively few students from AIMHI schools leave with a Form 7 qualification.

- A substantial proportion of AIMHI students leave school prior to year 12. The results indicate that AIMHI schools have almost twice as many students leaving prior to year 12 compared with other school deciles.

- The proportion of students leaving with qualifications from other schools (including decile 1) is more than 3 times greater than AIMHI Schools.

- AIMHI schools have a significantly lower participation rate in national examinations compared with other schools.

- AIMHI participation rates in national exams at 7th Form level are slightly lower than for other decile 1 schools.

- The number of candidates for national exams is associated with decile level-- i.e. the higher the level, the greater the number of candidates.

- Compared with students in decile 2-10 schools, significantly fewer students at AIMHI Schools are passing national examinations, particularly at higher levels.

- The AIMHI schools classroom/teacher student ratio is not significantly different from other schools.

- The results show that other school deciles have nearly four times the proportion of Maori qualified leavers compared with AIMHI Maori school leavers.
- Achievement proportions for Pacific and Maori students are relatively greater at higher decile levels. The higher the decile, the relatively greater the proportion of passing grades.

- There is an inverse association between the proportion of students leaving and decile levels. The higher the decile level, the lower the rate of students who leave.

It needs to be remembered that these data do not include achievements in a wide range of other areas and courses.

Increasing school achievement is a complex process that involves giving attention to several factors within educational, social and administrative domains. The quantitative analyses presented here should provide a framework for understanding important trends and associations between factors as well as a baseline for measuring future interventions. The quantitative analysis together with the extensive qualitative information presented in this report will enable a greater understanding of what needs to be done in order to create better conditions for the learning of these students.

Chapter Four

ACHIEVEMENT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter comments on the ways in which achievement is officially measured by the Ministry of Education, how achievement is perceived by the parents of the AIMHI school students, and how the AIMHI schools and many of their students struggle to fit into this system. The significant barriers that many students and consequently the schools and classroom teachers have to overcome in order for students to achieve are outlined. It discusses how schools are consciously broadening their methods of assessment, their concept of what counts as valid achievement and how the new Qualifications Framework is helping this process. A summary is provided of the many and varied ways in which students are rewarded and the difficulties schools experience in dealing with student attitudes towards receiving awards and acknowledging top achievers, particularly the students their peers call "scholars".

4.2 DEFINING ACHIEVEMENT

The data collected by the Ministry of Education to measure the achievement of secondary schools both individually and collectively, is reflected in the previous chapter. The retention of students at school and the results of external examinations, namely School Certificate and Bursary, have historically been the key measures used to provide nation-wide, norm-referenced data. These results have defined the way in which the effectiveness of any secondary school has been judged, particularly by the public, and have also been the defining measures of individual student success.

Until very recently, the results achieved by individual students were listed in local and national newspapers and schools were directly compared. League tables were published ranking schools from top to bottom in relation to the number of passes, and in the case of Bursary results, the number at each grade. These tables, usually published with raw scores and not percentages, which at least would have allowed for differences in the number of students from each school who sat the exams, were used by the media and by parents and communities to judge and rank schools. It was the main information used by parents to develop a "pecking order" or preference of schools.

> *League tables had a huge impact on our school. They branded us as losers. (Teacher)*

Even though these results are no longer published in this way, the mind set remains. Public perception ensures that external examination results remain as the high-stakes measure of achievement. At this point in time, there is nothing else to put in its place. Many parents have been through the same system, it is something they feel they understand and rightly or wrongly, these exams are seen as symbols of academic rigour. The Ministry needs to continue to promote, support and give public recognition to other ways of measuring achievement, and to other areas of achievement, until these are perceived to have equal status. Assessment is a complex discipline and difficult for parents to understand. Parents whose children are succeeding under the current system (i.e. those in high socio economic schools) have no reason to want changes.

More recently, Education Review Office assurance and effectiveness reviews have provided another measure of evaluating schools and, while they comment on a school's achievements in terms of programmes and strategies, when they discuss

student achievement, the schools feel that what counts are the figures and statistics they can supply. Typically, the data schools collect on achievement are standardised and norm-referenced tests - School Certificate, Bursary and Progressive Achievement Tests (PATs) in Reading and Maths (as well as diagnostic tests for specific purposes).

The data clearly show that gaining qualifications is very important to the students, parents and teachers, of the AIMHI schools and, because external examinations are the only way they can currently do this, passing School Certificate, 6th Form Certificate and Bursary are no less important than they are at any other school. While the students have these pressures, there are a number of things working actively against them. As will be explained fully in later chapters[3], some of these variables are external to, and beyond the control and influence of, schools and the students. They have more to do with government policies, their families, cultures, churches and communities. The students want qualifications and their teachers want them to pass, but norm-referenced assessment of academic subjects through written ranking examinations, seriously disadvantages most of these students. The validity of the use of PATs with language deficient students is suspect.

Currently schools are actively looking at other areas in which students are already achieving and are developing others they know will best advantage their students, in order for them to experience success and achieve qualifications. The schools are just beginning to identify, trial and implement valid ways of assessing these achievements so they will be recognised by the education system, parents and employers. Unit standards are helping considerably in this regard[4]. Definitions of achievement need to be broad and recognition and credibility given to them.

4.3   OTHER MEASURES OF ACHIEVEMENT

Practical, performance-based subjects

The students at these schools do better in the practical, performance based subjects than in subjects with an academic bias that rely on written English skills and expertise. While the students are still reliant on good teaching and sound programme delivery, their achievements and exam results in these subjects - Sport and Physical Education, Art, Music, Drama, Dance, Oral English eg speech-making, Graphics, Home Economics, Workshop Technology - are higher than those in other areas.

> *History, Geography, Maths and Science are word centred and this creates a barrier for the students. We're doing them justice by encouraging them to do Graphics and Woodwork. Many of them do well in Computer studies - word processing and programme development - which shows they are capable of quite abstract thought and not less intelligent. They shine in subjects that are independent of English. (Teacher)*

> *The kids excel at sport, there are hardly any kids who aren't good at it. They have a natural ability and they love getting involved in it. They get instant results and instant satisfaction. Many of them are involved with their families,*

---

[3] See chapters 5 and 6

[4] It is still early days in the development and trialing of unit standards. Data are based on those students trialed to date in these schools

especially through the church and outside of church. Often the only clubs or after-school activities they are involved in are associated with sport. Unfortunately, sport isn't going to give them all a job but it's one way we can recognise achievement. (Teacher)

We have a very strong Art Department and our marks are some of the highest in the country. (Senior Management)

Cultural activities

In the area of Performing Arts, many students demonstrate considerable skill and talent. Some of these activities are culturally based. It is also an opportunity for the senior students in particular to develop their leadership skills. Almost all of the cultural activity takes place in Term 1 when they are preparing for the Auckland Cultural Festival and is not continued throughout the year.

They take a lot of pride in performing well in their culture groups and are fiercely competitive. It's often the only time we see their parents in the school. (Teacher)

They have a lot of talent in performing in cultural activities. They put in hours of practice. Because it's a cooperative thing, they all get into it. The whole group would feel "shame" if someone let the side down. There's powerful group pressure at work. (Teacher)

One way I measure achievement is whether I'm making my mark as a Maori. For me, it's important to be successful in things Maori. (Senior student)

Behaviour and attitudes

Many teachers talked about the difficulty in documenting some of the big improvements students show in a range of areas related to behaviour and attitudes. For a number of students, getting to school, staying at school, showing up for class on time, doing homework and working through each class is a major accomplishment. The teachers believe that for these students, it represents an achievement that deserves full recognition and should be recorded in a way that will be useful for the student.

Getting to school and staying at school is an achievement. So is seeing it through to the 7th form without getting pregnant, dropping out or getting kicked out. (Students)

These kids won't end up as doctors and lawyers but good behaviour and attendance might get them a job, at least a start. We need to make more of the little things that represent achievement. (Teacher)
Kids don't get School Certificate for turning around their attitudes and behaviour but they should get something, something that counts. (Teacher)

Social skills and citizenship

Data from teachers suggest that a number of these students have highly developed social skills. They are not only referring to the students who take on a leadership role in the school but also those who carry out major responsibilities in their families. The

latter in particular may or may not be known by the school and the students will probably not acknowledge it as an area in which they are achieving.

> *We have many fine young people here who are great citizens. We need to define a formula for developing and acknowledging that citizenship. (Teacher)*

> *We should be using measures other than School C to measure what these kids are achieving. - their survival skills, supporting a family on their own, getting their brothers and sisters off to school before they even begin their day, controlling the pressures they are under. Some of these kids have remarkable social skills. (Teacher)*

Qualifications other than SC, 6th Form Certificate and Bursary

All the schools provide the students with opportunities to achieve official qualifications in a range of subjects outside of the national examination system. Typically these are in Maths, English and Science and are usually an outcome of an alternative course geared towards these qualifications. While they do not have the status of the external exams they are another way of acknowledging hard work and achievement.

> *The Certificates give them something to show for what they've done. They get praise and recognition from their peers, parents and their teachers. They get that all important bit of paper. (Teacher)*

Unit standards are an example of another way of measuring achievement and gaining qualifications and are commented on later in the chapter[5].

The researchers were not given figures by all of the schools or by the Ministry of Education of qualifications achieved in these ways.

Getting a job

Many students measure their long-term success and those of their peers by their ability to get a job. Some teachers also referred to this as an example of the school's effectiveness. Given the difficulty of the task and resources of the schools, it isn't surprising that none of the them keeps a record of what happens to the students when they leave school. However, the data suggest that this is an important way in which to measure the worth of what schools do for students and of the achievements of the students.

> *The proportion of students to get qualifications like School C and Bursary will **not** increase. We have a problem with expectations that the school can't possibly meet. We are measured against schools that select their students. They only measure us for educational qualifications, they don't value us for getting jobs. We get jobs later and that is not valued or acknowledged. (Trustee)*

> *It's important to get a job - and to keep it! It's the only way to have a good future - and money. Some jobs are better than others but any job is better than none. If our grades are better, we'll get a better job. (Students)*

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[5] See 4.7

Ipsative assessment

A number of teachers talked about the need for the schools to put in place Ipsative assessment practices where a student's progress and their achievements are measured by comparing a performance against a previous performance. None of the schools maintains a process that monitors a student's progress over time so that comparisons can be made from one year to the next. One school has instituted Records of Achievement for each student which is working towards this outcome. Given that a number of these students will not pass external examinations, this form of assessment would be another way to measure the school's effectiveness and the progress of their students.

> *Even if a student hasn't passed School C they will know a lot more than they did at the beginning and that's important. We can't prove it in an exam but I know they know because they write about it in essays. (Teacher)*

> *We can document progress. Our kids come with less and they finish with less, but they do have value added. (Teacher)*

> *We need to keep track of the big picture while they're with us - grades, commendations, being a prefect, attendance, sporting achievements, part-time jobs they have, feedback from teachers. Just relying on exam results doesn't do them justice. (Teacher)*

4.4 TEACHER AND STUDENT PERCEPTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

There are conflicting data about the expectations of teachers. Between schools and within schools, what is expected of the students is perceived differently by different teachers. There is no consensus about what the expectations should be. A few said that other teachers' expectations are too high.

> *We have endless staff discussions about it but never come to any conclusion. Some staff say we should be setting higher standards and others say we have to take them from where they're at, that they're doing well given their background. (Teacher)*

Quite a number of teachers described their colleagues' expectations as too low. The perception is that these teachers accept lower standards, particularly achievement standards, because they are teaching in South Auckland and issues related to culture, English as a second language and language difficulties, and their socioeconomic status must be taken into consideration. The data show that these issues, and especially those related to poverty have an enormous impact on the students' learning needs and their teachable state. Many of these students come to school tired, hungry and with health problems that make it difficult for them to learn. Some of the problems they bring to school are beyond the brief and the control of the schools. Most teachers have a very accurate view of the circumstances of their students but many teachers are unsure what concessions they should make and where to draw the line. Some teachers are perceived by other teachers to have lost sight of what should be expected.

There is a subtle climate of reduced expectations on the part of the teachers. They don't expect enough because they believe it would be unfair to expect any more - this is South Auckland, things are hard, don't expect too much. (Teacher)

Its too comfortable to think it's the kids' fault. They say the kids are dumb or that they're OK, it's the kids". (Teacher)

Measuring achievement is very difficult. I'm sick of hearing teachers say they can't do this or that. We should be teaching up not down. (Teacher)

Lots of teachers have no idea of School Certificate and Bursary standards, especially School C. They have low expectations of the kids so the kids respond accordingly. After school coaching helps, the marks go up by 5 to 10. I've seen it happen. (Teacher)

We need to lift expectations - the kids' expectations of the staff, and the staff's expectations of the kids. Too many of us say, "Oh well, you don't know our kids." (Teacher)
I expect them to work at a fifth-form level. You have to lock the kids into the expectation that they can make it. I hope other teachers do but I don't know. The expectations of some of them are not stringent. I'm often appalled by pieces of work that are shown off. They're at about a standard 3 level. (Teacher)

We need to change the attitudes of some of the teachers. They let their expectations drop. We're not good at goal setting, we simply accept our position at the bottom of the heap. What we need to do is set realistic targets. (Teacher)

Some students also commented on the low expectations of some of the teachers and feel resentful and hurt when teachers' attitudes and frustrations result in patronising and derogatory comments.

Teachers say other schools are better, that palagi kids are better. They have no confidence in us. (Teacher)

Some teachers say we are dumb, that we want to pass School C but act like 12-year-olds. (Student)

There's an attitude problem at our school. Teachers say we are just wasting our parents' money being here. That we won't do any good anyway. (Student)

Teachers must push achievement with the students. They aren't good at showing that. What we get are the negative attitudes when they get frustrated. (Student)

Moderation processes are applied to internal assessments for 6th Form Certificate, internal exams for other year levels and student work in some subjects and departments. However, in general, there is no coordinated and systematic moderation of students' work or exemplars of student work available to teachers that would assist in establishing a common set of expectations across year levels in each

subject[6]. In the researchers' experience of working in the area of assessment for the last four years, the AIMHI schools are no different in this regard from almost all other secondary schools but these processes could assist in resolving differences in what should be expected of students and give confidence to those who are unsure what should be expected.

Many teachers experience high levels of anxiety and frustration when they put in a lot of time and effort for what they perceive as little reward, particularly when they are using external exam results as a measure. Some said their students have the potential but they just don't pass. Some teachers are also frustrated by students who work extremely hard and then don't pass.

> *When I first arrived, I measured my teaching by the number of School C passes. Now I have two groups in the class - those that want to go for School C and those that just want to do (the subject). But there will still be those that fail and it's so demoralising. We're better off than some of the other subjects because we get a 40% pass rate, some of the others only get 12 to 15%. (Teacher)*

> *It's heartbreaking. I'm putting a lot into it and the results just do not reflect the potential of the students. (Teacher)*

> *Each student has an achievement file in my class so I keep a careful record of what they are doing. 60% have the potential but only 20% pass. (Teacher)*

> *We got the message at the beginning of the year (from Senior Management) that the kids hadn't done as well as they'd hoped in some areas and we were told that from now on we would be doing this or that to try and bring the pass rate up. I'd slogged my guts out for those fifth-form kids and when I looked at the marks only 2 out of the 27 had passed. (Teacher)*

> *It's a problem for the teachers. They see a student with 26% and can feel great satisfaction when they think of the starting point for that student. But it's a private satisfaction only. There's no external recognition for it even within the school for the teacher or the student. It doesn't show up in the national statistics and it won't feature in an ERO report. So it's really hard for teachers - and the kids - to discern success. (Teacher)*
> *There's nothing worse than having a hard working kid who can't pass. (Teacher)*

When morale is low amongst staff, these frustrations and anxieties can easily lead to cynicism. While the following comment made by a teacher in response to a colleague at a staff briefing was intended as a "throw away", the message it conveyed was clear.

> *Maybe exams should be delayed a week.*
> *But that's the holidays (A response from another teacher).*
> *That's what I mean, the results will be better!*

The effects of a 50% pass/fail external examination system are devastating on the self-esteem of a large number of students at the AIMHI schools, and reinforce the

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[6] Assessment resource banks are currently being trialed but are not yet available to schools

spiral of failure that many are experiencing, some even before they get to secondary school. It also has a demoralising affect on the professional esteem of many teachers.

There were very few students in any of the groups who, when asked what they hoped to achieve, were unable to give an answer, who had no expectations or said they wanted to go on the dole. Most of the students mentioned one or other of the following -

- passing School Certificate
- getting a qualification
- getting a job
- getting a good job
- going to university
- making money
- joining a top sports team
- getting onto a course

A few students mentioned -

- giving something back to my family
- getting out of Mangere/Otara
- travelling
- giving something back to society

These were expressed as hopes for what they want to achieve.

As one student said -

The opposite to success is Social Welfare. Some think they'll end up there even if they don't want to. Most of their families are on the dole, Maori go on the dole, Mangere people go on the dole, it's the South Auckland image. (Student)

4.5   BARRIERS TO ACHIEVEMENT

The perception of the teachers is that many of the students have low expectations of what they can achieve. The data above suggest that most do have hopes and they do want to achieve. The challenge for all the other stakeholders - the Ministry, parents, and the schools - is finding ways to turn those hopes into expectations and finding ways to do this in spite of their circumstances or by improving their circumstances.

> *They want to get that piece of paper but getting them to attempt an outside exam, getting them to stick out the year is really difficult. They'll **say** it's too hard or their mum doesn't care. Some of them have such low expectations. (Teacher)*

There was an acknowledgment of the difficult home circumstances of many of the students where the effects of poverty and/or dysfunction impact on the students on a daily basis. Many of the parents and other family members have low-paying jobs or are unemployed and, while many of the students said their parents want them to do better than they did, the reality is they do not have the context or the models or the information they need to do so.

> *Many of the parents are unemployed and have no chance of getting employment. The families are in cycle of failure. It's too late to work with the parents. What we have to do is break the cycle with the kids. At (another school), we worked intensively with the senior girls to get them to university. They became role models for the others. (Teacher)*

Examples of the families of students who do achieve were described in ways similar to the following quotes.

> *Those who achieve have parents who accept the need to balance school, church and family. They have stable home backgrounds, private space and family support. (Pacific teacher)*

> *When I sat School Cert, I had to take myself away from the family to study. It's a total change in mind set. In church you **never** work on your own, but in school you have to sit exams alone so you have to study alone. My parents made the decision for me, that I **would** achieve. It was a conscious decision. (Pacific teacher)*

In the experience of a number of teachers, many of these students mature later than their counterparts in other schools in relation to things like work and study habits.

> *At the (school) reunion it was amazing how many kids had done so well after they had left school. (Teacher)*

> *Some people think our kids are different. I don't think they are. They **can** achieve but it's often later on after they've left school. It just takes time for the language to work and for them to get a taste of the outside world. (Teacher)*

The data suggest that this is linked to the fact that tests and feedback from teachers confirm that many students start their secondary school years up to 2 to 3 years behind in language and numeracy skills compared with similar cohorts in other

schools[7]. While this does not apply to all students, many begin in year 9 without the basic skills to cope with the year 9 curriculum and have learning needs that require special classes and programmes and at the very least, programme modifications[8].

Other teachers referred to not having sufficient students in their classes that model high levels of achievement and good study skills.

> *One third of the class has good habits and study skills. They are generally the more able students, the ones what will sit Scholarship and Bursary exams. The critical mass works the other way - most are not in that category. There aren't enough. (Teacher)*

Some students have difficulty thinking in the long term. They have difficulty setting goals for the future and tend to focus on the short-term. For some, just getting through the day is an achievement.

> *Many could set their sights higher but they just don't feel good enough. They can't see the long-term. All they can think about are the financial constraints and the 3 or 4 years of study. Even their parents don't realise they can do it. These kids can achieve - five went to Engineering School last year. (Teacher)*

Many of the students were described as lacking in confidence and self-esteem in their school work.

> *It's a confidence issue for some students. It takes a huge effort to get the kids to **believe** they can do well. (Teacher)*

> *You wonder why some of the good kids don't achieve. They seem to run away from problems rather than front up to them. It's like they're afraid to fail. (Teacher)*

The students are also afraid of ridicule and put downs if they excel or stand out in any way. This can apply to giving a correct answer in class or to achieving an award and doing well in exams. Some teachers said that they do look up to those that achieve but use the put downs as a way of making themselves feel better.

> *They look up to kids who achieve but there's a heavy "pack" mentality. They'll use put downs if the kids are different in any way or if they want to feel OK about their poor marks or the fact they haven't worked hard. (Pacific teacher)*

> *You feel really afraid to stand out at school. But my parents want me to achieve, so there's a real conflict there. If you get an answer right some of the other students put you down. It's really sad because deep down it does hurt. You're happy inside but nobody else is sharing that joy. Maybe it's jealousy. Maybe it's just joking, but not always. It doesn't feel like it's joking. (Senior student)*

Sometimes teachers were at a loss to explain why the students didn't appear to feel proud about what they had achieved.

> *Sometimes it's really hard to get a measure on what they applaud and value. We praise progress but there's little evidence of them caring about it. I judged*

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[7] See 4.6 for additional information
[8] See 8.8

the 4th form speech contest the other day. I've judged hundreds of school speech competitions in my time and the quality was as good as it is anywhere. Even compared with the schools that have the reputations which by the way, always look better printed than read. A couple had notes but they really spoke from the heart, they were very convincing. I spoke later to the kids who had done so well but they didn't seem to care and when we presented the certificates they didn't seem to value them highly. (Senior Management)

4.6   YEAR 9 ASSESSMENT

All of the schools collect data from their contributing primary, intermediate and middle schools. While schools acknowledge that much of the information passed on is very valuable it is often not in a form that is useable in a system where individual teachers take responsibility for individual subjects. Some schools ask for additional information recorded on an individual sheet for each student. Most of the information passed on is used for placement purposes only and for recording and acting on information about special learning needs, health issues, behavioural difficulties or any special family circumstances. Information is also gathered from the students and their parents or guardians at the time of enrolment. The teachers reported that they do not get a lot of information, if any, about the students before they meet them in their classrooms. This not only applies to year 9 students but also to students in other year levels. While in the smaller schools many of the students are known by all the teachers, this is not the case in the bigger schools. The needs of the students are identified by the teachers over the first few weeks of school by special tests designed by a department and/or tests designed by individual teachers and/or by assessing students' work.

> *We give all the third formers an English test but mostly we learn about the students from having them in our classes. It can often take a few weeks. (Teacher)*

All schools use at least one of the Progressive Achievement Test (PATs) to assess the students ability in Reading and occasionally in Maths. In the past, some of the AIMHI schools stopped conducting PATs because, in their view, *the contexts of the tests were inappropriate for the students and were therefore not an accurate measure of what the students could do.*

Because the tests cannot be held until March, the data often came too late to be useful for placement and initial understandings. The tests have been resumed because the results were needed when applying for contestable funding and because, despite their shortcomings, they are the only New Zealand designed norm-referenced tests available at this level and at low cost. Because there is also an associated link between PAT results and School Certificate results, they also provided the schools with some justification for their low pass rates that would be accepted by ERO. Nonetheless, their misgivings about using the tests remain.

> *The results are not always accurate. With a running record or a Prose Inventory you get much more reliable and useful information. One of the reasons they (PATs) don't work is that it's an exam-like atmosphere. Because of peer pressure they don't want to be seen to be trying so they fill it out quickly and go A, B, C, D - I've watched them. Most of the examples are outside their experiences, they're not real for them. Even when they refer to Maori, they're not real situations for these kids. (Teacher)*

> *The PAT data goes to the English teachers and we use them for placement. But they're not much use because of their (students) language problems. It shows up in the placements. Some with poor marks do quite well in class. There are also problems in administering the tests. (Teacher)*

> *The PATs tell me nothing except the real bottom end. They're an indicator, not the be all and end all. (Teacher)*

Data gathered by the schools indicate that when students enter the schools in year 9 they can be up to two or three years behind in their language and/or numeracy skills. For a range of reasons, often beyond the control of schools and the students, students do not have the skills in English and Maths that enable them to easily manage a year 9 curriculum. While this does not apply to all students and some are achieving at or above year 9 levels, the data indicate that these students are in the minority. While this creates enormous difficulties for schools in their organisation and planning of classroom programmes it also has implications for the ways in which the achievements of the schools, the teachers and individual students are measured. It is unfair in these circumstances to measure their performances against schools where the majority of students would be achieving at or above year 9 levels at entry to school.

> *The challenge is that their levels on entering the school are much lower, they are often down 2 to 3 years when they arrive. It is related to poverty and to language barriers. What we need to do is give them more of the basics pitched at a form 1 or 2 level. (Teachers)*

In the interviews some teachers identified the need for a full and diagnostic assessment of their third form intake. In subsequent meetings with all the schools, at which the researchers were present, this has been further reinforced. There is an urgent need for these schools to have access to a properly funded and resourced entry level test across core subject areas to assist with placement, identifying special needs, to assist teachers with the planning and delivery of teaching and learning programmes and to use as a benchmark to measure progress over their time at the school. Senior Management teams were impressed with the New South Wales tests and the marking and diagnostic information provided within such a short timeframe. There is a real need for their schools to have access to a programme similar to this, with contexts appropriate for their students.

Schools are experiencing great difficulty in assessing students for whom English is a second language and in getting accurate assessments of a student's ability in their own language.

> *It's hard to tell with new arrivals, they may only have a language problem, but we are just guessing. (Teacher)*

> *We enrolled an Asian student who is now in CYPS care. They have a (Asian) speaker working with her/him. They say s/he's not work experience material but we are sure s/he is. There was also a young (Pacific) student who was a behaviour problem that we had difficulty assessing correctly. S/he's finally ended up in the Work-Experience Unit but we went through a lot of unnecessary hassle to get that far. (Teacher)*

4.7   QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK AND UNIT STANDARDS

Teachers were very critical of the external examination system and the ways in which it penalises the students that attend the AIMHI schools.

> *The kids don't think they're successful because they sit the exams and don't pass. But the exams aren't geared for these students. The structure, the vocabulary and the whole emphasis of the language they use isn't geared to these kids. (Teacher)*

> *School C is a huge stumbling block. So few pass and even if they do it's only a stepping stone.. If they stumble and fail, they're in trouble. If they get it and see it as the end point, they're in trouble. (Teacher)*

> *There is no room for personal improvement in our current system. For instance the 6th Form Certificate grades are determined by their School C grades. This disadvantages and constricts our kids. The new Framework will help because it will recognise individual achievements and allow for their later development. (Teacher)*

> *Why can't they be made to succeed in the system? They don't need pass/fail exams. They need qualifications that focus on what they can do rather than what they can't. (Teacher)*

> *What have they got to show for their time at school if they don't get School C or 6th Form Certificate? They often leave without anything to show for their hard work. Its such a terrible waste of human resources. (Teacher)*

> *School C excludes 50% of the students who sit. It's a gatekeeping strategy and is never an honest measure of what kids can achieve. It's an indicator of privilege. (Senior Management)*

> *Even if we double our School C pass rates, we will still be failing 50%. Where is the justice in that? (Senior Management)*

Overall, the schools were positive about the potential of unit standards to deliver a more valid and fair qualifications structure for their students. Teachers gave a number of reasons why they are optimistic about the possibilities they offer.

- The objectives are specific

  The new assessments are ideal. You can reward the students for their strengths and abilities. There are clear outcomes and short timeframes. (Teacher)

- Students are not penalised by a heavy emphasis on language

  We have 5 unit standards in place now for Home Economics and it is a much improved and fairer process for our students. They're still doing written work but its more geared to their practical work, it's relevant. I got so frustrated with the School C course. No matter how hard I tried, it was still an English paper. Anyone who could read it could pass - that's wrong. They should be asked to demonstrate that they can put what they know into practice - its a practical subject. (Teacher)

- The system is flexible

  There's a work-experience component for some of the students. Lots of our kids work part-time in shops so we can get their employer to assess some areas like their ability to use a till. (Teacher)

  We enrolled some of our students in an Open Polytech course to get 5 credits. (Teacher)

- Students can work on units that are relevant to their life experiences

  We are working on Project K with some of our "at-risk" kids. They are accredited to run all the outdoor recreation unit standards. The kids will now get 20 or 30 credits per year for that work. I used to think it (outdoor recreation) was a waste of time but I've changed my mind. I know it's the answer for these kids. (Teacher)

  We have 8 unit standards operating in Transition this year. It's a way of giving them credit for things they find useful and relevant. And the kids know it will help them get a job. (Teacher)

  *For **some** of the kids some of the units are so much more relevant. So what if they can't write a Shakespeare essay? (Teacher)*

- Students get immediate rewards and so are more willing to try to achieve them. It is easier for them to set goals and establish a clear direction.

  The units of work are smaller, and right from the beginning the objectives are clear and they know what they have to do. It avoids that whole year's work hinging on three hours and a single mark. In fact the less able are performing better than the more able. Some of the bright kids thought it would be easy, that they'd blaze through it. That wasn't the case but they're coming around. (Teacher)

  In principle, they are fantastic for our kids. They can see if you do this, you get that. They respond to success. (Teacher)

Unit standards are a real boost to the kids. They understand the Framework and know that they are building blocks. They understand they can transfer them. (Teacher)

Unit standards are good. It lets you show what you can do. It allows you to be good at some things and not have to be good at everything. (Students)

- The reassessment process is positive as it prevents students not attempting exams for fear of failing.

Only 6 out of 18 got the full unit standard the first time round but, because they now know what is expected, I know they'll try harder and will get through. They will be more focused. It's so much better than doing the work now and being tested in October. (Teacher)

The "resit" schedule helps the kids to achieve some success. In one of the unit standards, one of the "bad" kids gave the others a lecture about working hard for the resitting. (Teacher)

Getting a second chance straight away is good. (Student)

- It allows the students to get qualifications and to get *a bit of paper*

Last year some kids got 60 or 70 credits through STAR courses. They were amazed to learn they had achieved national qualifications. They get the NZQA printout and the kudos that goes with that. (Teacher)

I would like to see a more academic side to our kids as well as courses that will reward them with a certificate. Unit standards will help in this way. (Teacher)

Even though teachers were generally positive about unit standards, a number of concerns were expressed. Some are concerned that unit standards will become *the poor kids qualification* particularly if a dual system comes into operation. At this point in time, the schools are continuing offering both systems of qualifications but are looking forward to some clear direction being offered.

At the moment it's not clear where the Framework is heading. There are too many loose ends. Right now it's a mixture of credits that may or may not add up to anything. (Teacher)

Feedback from teachers and students makes it apparent that parents are still unclear about unit standards even though some schools have distributed information about the new system. At this point in time, parents still want their children to pass School Certificate. Some teachers fear that they will not value unit standards.

They see exams as the traditional qualification and may not see unit standards as being as good. (Teacher)

Many teachers feel overwhelmed by the workload involved in getting unit standards in place in their departments. Many are finding that they are still having to rewrite some unit standards to make them appropriate for their students.

*The paperwork is horrendous. They will help the kids a lot but setting them up is **very** time-consuming. (Teacher)*

I was worried for our kids because they were paragraph-type questions and I knew some of them wouldn't cope with that. I reset it out in boxes. Half of them did really well but it relied on my restructuring. (Teacher)

The setting-up also places an additional financial burden on schools for which they are not compensated. These are "hidden costs".

The cost of complying with unit standards is out of people's imagination - buying the computer disk with the Framework on it; printing, photocopying and typing costs; data keeping; attending moderation meetings that are called by NZQA and which are not voluntary; plus all the additional PD time. (Head of Department)

4.8   REWARDING ACHIEVEMENT

Teachers from some of the schools talked about the need to create a climate of achievement in the school. Examples were given of establishing and nurturing traditions; capitalising on whole-school events like school assemblies, organising special competitions or ceremonies and prizegivings; actively promoting achievement in the classrooms; acknowledging excellence; and encouraging students to accept and acknowledge both team and individual excellence.

At the academic evening at the beginning of the year we acknowledge the achievements of the year before. We also have a big end-of-year prizegiving where they get books, money and equipment through community sponsorship. The best academic House is acknowledged. There is lots of encouragement and lots of traditions. These are what keeps the school going. (Teacher)

We make sure that we heavily publicise any achievements at assembly in the staffroom, in newsletters and, if we can, in the local newspaper. (Teacher)

We hold a special sports awards dinner at the end of the year. It's a big occasion that we hold in the local rugby club. (Teacher)

*When I first came here, the kids would **not** win, sometimes they wouldn't even participate. For instance, the junior basketball team didn't show up for the finals! Over the last two years we've encouraged the kids to feel proud of what they are. The Hillary Commission Fair Play programme has helped too. Now the kids encourage each other no matter how well they do. (Teacher)*

There's a line of thinking that we (the teachers) have to make everyone feel good. But that's not good for the top students. There need to be incentives. The whole top line is missing. We assume our kids don't need that. (Teacher)

It's critical that we focus on the elite, and it's a real image thing. The choir have a special uniform and wear a badge on their school uniform. It often happens for sport and we need to do it for other things as well. (Teacher)

Schools that actively encourage parents to attend any occasions when students are being rewarded say it adds a positive dimension to the event and raises the status of the rewards with students.

> *We have a Celebration Evening for students who have done well in the previous year. The achievers get special invitations and their parents attend. It's a very happy occasion and very successful. They enjoy getting rewards with their parents. When they're with their parents it's a different story. **Everything** we do to have positive relationships with the community is important. (Teachers)*

There were some instances where teachers said their schools needed to do more to acknowledge achievement.

> *People have talked a lot about recognition but we haven't **done** a lot. (Teacher)*

> *The whanau/houses don't have specific awards or a brief to acknowledge achievement. Mention is made in weekly assemblies and some certificates are sometimes given out and that's about it. (Teacher)*

A number of students talked about how difficult it is to get noticed and rewarded by the school or by teachers. This is particularly so for the students who don't stand out in any way.

> *It's hard to improve and you have to improve big time before the teachers notice. (Junior student)*

> *The teachers give out certificates of merit but you have to be known to get there. You can predict who will get them. (Student)*

> *Mr and Mrs Average don't know what there is to aim for. (Student)*

> *We won the under-15's rugby award. They said it at assembly but it didn't seem much. We didn't get a trophy. The 1st XV got new jerseys, we just got hand-downs. (Students)*

Almost all the schools have a system of rewards that can be given out by teachers. For instance, one school has commendation stickers that add up to a certificate that is presented in assembly. Another school has a series of slips that add up to a small prize. These can be accumulated for a bigger prize. These systems appear to work best with juniors, when **all** teachers give them out, when teachers are consistent in giving them out and don't favour some students over others (eg ignoring the ones who always work well) and when the students perceive the rewards to be worthwhile (eg a tuckshop voucher or free time is valued more than a pencil). Most schools have school merit certificates which are given out for a range of efforts, achievements and responsibilities. One school posts a letter home when students receive an award. A number of the schools record achievements in school newsletters and school magazines.

Some departments and whanau/houses have set up their own reward systems as have a number of individual teachers across the eight schools. Lollies, stickers, free time, extra time on the computers and Macdonald's vouchers are all examples of

rewards used successfully in these instances. One department gives out course completion certificates for their option courses.

> *Our (department) options are often full. We give them course completion certificates and attendance is part of that. I showed them to them in the first lesson as an incentive. They do value certificates. (Teacher)*

Some students said the best reward was getting positive feedback and encouragement from teachers.

It was acknowledged by both students and teachers, that in some schools it is more acceptable to receive a sports award than an academic reward. Sporting achievements are acknowledged more often and more publicly and the students have more role models to look up to.

> *At every weekly assembly we have sports announcements and results are announced. So every week it's reinforced in front of the whole school. Academic excellence isn't rewarded in quite the same way.(Teacher)*

Teachers and students frequently mentioned that many students do not like to receive rewards, awards or even praise in front of others. They gave a number of reasons for this that are reflected in the quotes that follow.

> *It is good to go up in assembly but pushing over kids is not cool. No one wants to go first. Everyone is looking at you and rating you. Some other kids will call you a scholar. You feel "shame". (Students)*

> *They care about how you reward them You get really negative vibes if you pick out individuals for praise in the classroom, or berate them. The class want to stand up as equals. (Teacher)*

> *They like the rewards but they don't want you to publicise it. It isn't cool to go up in front of your friends. They want it (the reward) but they'll be teased by others in the class. (Teacher)*

Some teachers said they need to be trained in responding to rewards.

> *We fail to educate the students about getting rewards. It's a teacher responsibility. We haven't taught them how to behave. At the Sports prizegiving we ran two practices about how to behave and how to relate to achievement. It took time but it was worth it. They need to be told and told often. (Teacher)*

> *Luckily, lots of the top kids are strong in personality but, even so, when their name is put down for something they say they don't want us to tell their friends. They like rewards, but done quietly. You can humiliate them so easily. With the Cassio competition they asked early on if they had to go up on stage. Even though they said they don't want to do that, they **did**, deep down. So this year we'll talk to the whole student body about not being ashamed to achieve, it's the effort that counts. And we've spoken to the students who tease the bright ones. (Teacher)*

I challenge them. Some of them have never thought about it before. It's a cycle, it's a habit. They were surprised, it really made them think. I try to reward kids for improving their own mark in a test and I say, "We all know who the top kids are in this class but the aim is for everyone to up their mark." I give out the message that they are not to tease. (Teacher)

4.9   CONCLUSION

The evidence suggests quite clearly that these students are capable of achieving. A small percentage are succeeding in the external examinations system of School Certificate, 6th form Certificate and Bursary. Because of a range of factors, many do not have the language and numeracy skills to begin a "normal" year 9 programme and some can take time to catch up to their counterparts in other secondary schools. This affects their ability to pass these examinations within the usual timeframe or to achieve a number of passes. Some never pass. There is data to suggest that sometimes this "catching up" happens after they leave school. Schools have identified a number of areas where their students excel and achieve success and are wanting to find more ways of acknowledging and recording these and to help them to gain qualifications in them.

Schools are requesting that New Zealand designed, norm-referenced, diagnostic tests in core subjects be available for them to use with year 9 when they first enter their schools. These tests would be used to assist in organising and delivering appropriate programmes for the students, to establish a baseline against which they can measure their school's effectiveness in improving overall levels of achievement, and against which they can measure individual student progress. Tests that are currently in place are not adequate measures in which the teachers have confidence.

The consensus of both students and teachers is they like being rewarded and they want to receive rewards. There are benefits for students when teachers and the school as a whole actively discourage joking about and teasing students who excel or any other student who receives praise, a certificate or a prize.

Chapter Five

EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

5.1   INTRODUCTION

There are a number of policies, agencies and community realities which impact directly on the functioning of the schools and both directly and indirectly on student achievement. In order to improve learning opportunities for students, the schools find themselves having to attempt to deal in some way with the outcomes of these factors even though they have little or no control or influence over them.

5.2   POVERTY

In this discussion, poverty is being defined not only as a lack of dollars but as a situation that families and communities find themselves in, through no fault of their own, but as a result of the policies and practices of governments and society over many generations. It is the outcomes rather than the causes that are relevant to this research and these causes include low incomes, high unemployment and high over employment[9], large families, dysfunctional families, poor housing, overcrowding, poor health, lack of private space and lack of furnishings and household equipment, that most people accept as the norm. As well as the relative physical and material deprivation, there is a lack of the cultural capital that is an advantage in the western materialistic and individualistic world. This results in the feelings of hopelessness and failure that are described throughout this report. It all has a profound effect on the students in these schools, on their families, on the communities and on the schools and their teachers.

> *I had a student that we were very concerned about so I called on the home. It was a very old house, very clean. There was a dog and cats. The lawn was very tidy. It was a similar standard of living to that of a Tongan village. They had a tripod gas cooker and no hot water. There were sheets at the windows for curtains. It was very clean and very poor. (Senior Management)*

> *One of our senior students who was very talented just stopped coming to school. The house had no phone so I called around to see if I could get her to come back to school before she missed too much. The house had a TV but no other furniture, no kitchen table or chairs. When the Mother took me up to her bedroom there were mattresses on the floor and no other furniture. She had no desk to work at, no books, no newspaper, no pencil or paper and the family shared clothes. This girl had done really well in a couple of School Cert papers even thought she only attended about one day in three because she minded siblings while her parents were at work. What can we (the school) do to help her? We are not social workers. How can we help to overcome that level of poverty? (Principal)*

In many families it is the combination of many of these factors that is the day to day reality for the student.

> *They lack care and much of it is socioeconomic. There is not enough food and there is not a safe or comfortable place to sleep. Many are solo parents and*

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[9] This is a way of describing the situation many families find themselves in, when they try to find ways to generate the income they need to provide for their needs. Some mothers and fathers have several jobs, none of which pay well, and often involving shift work. The parents may not be home very often to supervise the children because of the work demands.

they rely on cigarettes and booze to make their own lives manageable. I see more of it than most people in the school do because I see the ones who are in trouble. (Pastoral care)

We had a student who was brilliant at art. The Mum dies leaving Dad unemployed with a lot of bills and having to find a way to keep the family intact. The student had to leave school to earn money. (Teacher)

They bring their home and community environment with them to school in everything they say and do. There are health issues. We are seeing the old diseases of poverty re-emerge. There is conflict and abuse. In many families there is no male role model and alcohol, smoking and dope are not uncommon. Food and poor nutrition are common problems. There is a lack of privacy, stability and positive reinforcement. (Senior management)

It is not surprising, therefore, that some students cannot visualise a different life and have difficulty setting and meeting long term goals.

There are some really hard-up people and very fractured and disjointed homes. They can only afford to think as far as their noses. Forget about long term goals, even three or four years out. (Teacher)

They can't get out of the poverty trap unless they get work but a ghetto psychology has developed. I asked the sixth formers what they wanted to do for a job. One said work with animals and one said an electrician but the others said they would probably be on the dole. I empathise but I want to shake them. To me it appears they are powerless. (Teacher)

Lack of money

The lack of money, in relationship to other issues such as family size, number of dependants, priorities for spending and (un)employment, impacts on students and on these schools in many ways.

- Food is not always available in the quantities or quality needed by growing adolescents. Teachers believe this is a major contributing factor to tiredness, poor health, problematic behaviour and short concentration spans.

- Health needs are often not met[10] and so students remain unwell or look to the school for help.

- Many homes are very crowded. This makes it difficult for students to find room to study, to get to sleep at a reasonable hour and to have any uninterrupted time.

- Resources at home that assist learning, general knowledge and studying are very limited. There may be no books, newspaper, computer or any means of accessing reference materials.
- Basic school uniform is an ongoing problem for teachers to monitor. Some families find it very difficult to afford.

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[10] This is discussed later in this chapter.

I don't get any privacy even though I have my own room. We have no living room in our house because we use all the rooms for bedrooms. If I am home I am babysitting for my parents. (Student)

The school has to supply all the sports uniforms. A few years back the cricket coach said "I want you all to come in white, and someone turned up in a Hellabys overall because that is all they had that was white". (Support staff)

I feel sorry for my parents and we all have to help financially because there are nine children in the family. I earn all my own money and I feel proud of that but it is a real worry. I still don't have enough but I feel it's wrong to ask my parents for it. If I do ask they understand but they can't always help. (Student)

Some students have half an hour or more to walk to school with no raincoat. There is real poverty for many. Some families pressure their children to leave school and get a job so they can financially support their parents. The decision is made for them by their parents. (Teacher)

Impact on curriculum and learning

There are many parts of the curriculum that require money from students in some form or other.

Materials for technical subjects such as wood, metal and fabric are required to be purchased by the students electing to take those subjects. Art and design have expensive materials also. Schools do not have the resources to provide the materials that students require to be able to do these subjects and many families, or students, have difficulty finding the money. It is extremely difficult for teachers who have to rely on the students either to purchase the materials themselves, or to bring money to school if the teacher does the purchasing. If students are late doing either the teaching programme suffers and so do both the student and teacher. Again the dependency dilemma applies. If the teacher does supply the materials, the teacher personally, the department, or the school, is out of pocket and some teachers think the student has not learned the independent behaviour they need. It also penalises the students who have managed to find the money and acts as a demotivator to do so again in the future. If the teacher does not provide the materials, some students start late, or never, on the course requirements. This is an equity issue also. Students in other schools, for whom finding money is no problem, are advantaged in what they can supply and what they can produce.

Basic classroom equipment is essential for some subjects as are text books. The schools have textbook loan schemes but these require a refundable deposit.

Many students don't have calculators or even refill pads. Some are very slow to pay their textbook card and so they are late to get their textbooks. This means they are late to get started and so they have trouble keeping up. (Teacher)

External exam fees (School Certificate and Bursary) are required to be paid by a specified date. Funding is available for families who are unable to afford the fees but this requires the family filling in forms and the school is often unable to get families to do this in time. Language is a barrier here because parents cannot read letters that go home from the school. Students are also often a barrier by ensuring their parents

do not get the school letters, or they mistranslate them so that the fees are not paid and they do not have to sit the exam. Whatever the reasons, some students do not even get the opportunity to **sit** the exam because the fee has not been paid.

> *Exam fees are very hard to get in each year. Some kids don't tell their parents so we post out heaps of letters but there will be about fifty kids who will not sit this year because of unpaid fees. (Senior Management)*

A similar situation applies to out-of-school courses and tertiary fees.

> *There is a talented girl who wants to go to (polytechnic) to do travel and tourism. She is working and the Mum and Dad both work but it does not look as though they will be able to find the fees for next year. (Teacher)*

School trips are sometimes an essential part of course work and other times are the types of experiences that these students would benefit from enormously. School camps and other outdoor educational experiences are events that teachers put a great deal of energy into providing. In most schools the parents would be sent a note and asked for the fee and in most cases it would be sent back in time. In these schools many students miss out on such experiences, and sometimes on part of their course, because the fees do not come back. Many involve the teachers and students in fundraising.

> *We can't organise the trips we would like to because the money does not come. The school is too poor and many of the parents are too poor and there is a limit to how much fundraising we can do. We only manage one camp and even that is difficult. (Teacher)*

> *We can't provide as much outside the school as we would like to. In middle class schools the parents take them to these places but our kids never get there. If we ask for money some will pay. Sometimes it comes out of our own pockets but other times we leave those that don't pay behind. (Teacher)*

Priorities

Many teachers and some students questioned the decision-making about family use of available money. The cash that students have for lunch each day was mentioned by many teachers who felt frustrated that the students had so much cash for junk food but could not afford a necessary pen, book, or school trip. A number of students felt angry that so much family money goes to the church when they needed school equipment, uniform and trips. Some felt upset that they had to work hard to pay for their own educational needs when so much family money goes to the Minister. Teachers questioned family priorities for spending and mentioned the money that goes on alcohol, housie, the TAB and church ministers.

> *Teachers make excuses and cover up for the kids when they can't afford things. Parents could afford pens and school things. They are struggling but they could prioritise better. (Pacific teacher)*

> *There are genuine cases of not affording but they are few because Social Welfare advances money. Many spend money on the TAB and housie. It's bullshit to excuse them for not meeting their children's needs. (Teacher)*

Parents say that education is a priority and it is important that their children get qualifications but I challenge them to add up how much they spend on education and supporting their children compared to how much they give to the church and other things. It's lip service. If it was a priority, they would be prepared to support it. (Teacher)

Insularity

Teachers in all eight schools talked about the narrowness of the experiences of their students and the difficulties that this creates for them. Many compared their students to their own children, friends and the children in other schools they had taught at. Students also gave examples through telling the researchers about the benefits and importance of particular experiences they had had.

These kids come without life experiences. When we teach them, we would like to build on where they are at but some of these kids are nowhere. They live in an insulated world. Most of them haven't been over the Harbour Bridge. They are kids without a concept of distance. (Teacher)

Most middle class kids by seventeen have had all sorts of experiences. Many have been overseas, to plays, to musical performances, rock climbing, camping and to the beach. These kids do school things and church things. They are not club joiners and they don't mix outside their community. They have no range of experiences. They only know this world and they don't know what they don't know. (Teacher)

If we had money we could show the kids that there is more out in the wider community. They are isolated here. They get a false impression of what society is like. We are very introspective and isolated. We don't connect with the real world. This is a benefit dependent society which looks strongly to its own culture. No-one can afford to take the kids out. (Teacher)

I took the sixth form to a camp in the Ranges. We were in the middle of the countryside and they kept saying how beautiful it was. They hadn't been in the countryside before. They don't even go into town. They don't know about the library or the museum. (Teacher)

Teachers have many ideas about what they would like to do to provide some of these experiences and all that prevents it is a lack of funds.

I can see the potential and would like to take them out of this environment, to open their eyes to what else exists. They have no conception of the possibilities. They need more exposure to the language. We need to take our kids out of the area to films and plays, not just to PI things. They need exposure to really white things. It's the money (that is the problem). It's always the money. (Pacific teacher)

Outdoor recreation could be the saviour of this school. It integrates the physical, social and emotional parts of the kids. It's a huge success when it happens. Lots of teachers notice and comment on the benefits they see in the students when they get back. (Teacher)

Students want these kinds of experiences also. They are to some extent aware of their insularity and of the opportunities that other children have. Their solutions to

finding the funds are not always very practicable as the following quote (given as a serious suggestion) demonstrates.

> *It would be great to have at least one trip a year. We could fundraise, but some kids are too lazy. We could just accept contributions or let people pay later. The teachers could pay if they really want us to learn. (Student)*

One of the ways that the insularity affects students is to withhold from them the knowledge and experiences which could offer options to aspire to and reasons to feel motivated. Several teachers noted that these students often mature later **after** they have had experience in the wider community. They attribute this maturity to that exposure. Some Pacific teachers recalled similar experiences in their own lives.

> *I lived in (AIMHI suburb) as a child and I came back here to teach. I see no change in all those years. These kids will have the same narrow experience that I had. They need role models from the outside. They need to see what is happening in other schools. This is a closed community. When they get outside it will blow them away. (Pacific teacher)*

> *They develop later. There is a naivety because they are so closeted in this world. They have to go out and see it for themselves. It is **after** they leave school and go to work that they see what happens in the world. We need to be able to do it for them early so that the school years are not lost. We could do it if we were not a poor school. (Teacher)*

> *They have a lack of knowledge of the education system and where they fit. They have no goals and expectations beyond Pak 'n Save. They can't plan for the future. (Teacher)*

Some of the experiences outside their own community made a big impact on some students. One of the important outcomes was a loss of fear of the unknown and the 'outside', and gains in self esteem and confidence.

> *To speak to people other than our teachers and the people we know was amazing. When we first went into the (company) building we walked into this big room with high class people. I was really scared and felt really small. I felt unimportant.....less than them. As the day went by I thought "what's the difference between us? There is no difference. I'm just the same as them". It was a **new** feeling for me. Since then my level of confidence keeps going up and up. (Student)*

> *The transition and job experience visits are really important. They go **out** of the school. It plants a seed. They see other people. They get to know what an employer expects. There are new experiences. (Teacher)*

Ministry of Education initiatives in the areas of careers and transition have been highly valued in these schools and used to the maximum that the funding allows.

> *(A company) offered small jobs to two girls. They were petrified to walk through the front door. Afterwards they felt fantastic. Now they know they can step through the doors to a previously untouchable world. This year STAR funding has opened doors like that. All the fourth formers did two-day*

sessions of induction and work shadowing. This way we can give them hope early enough to make a difference. (Teacher)

They are trying to help us. The courses and work experience are great. We have been to the Polytech and have done things in tourism, catering, engineering, hairdressing, store management, working with the disabled and butchery. We were treated like mature adults. They (employers) expect high standards. They showed us the future. They gave us knowledge. It was scary the first day but we got more confident all the time. (Students)

As well as the insularity being a major issue for nearly all the students, it is also for a small number of teachers.

Some teachers have taught here for their whole life. They are so isolated..... they have lost touch with the rest of the world. Students need to see what happens outside the area and so do teachers. (Teacher)

We need much more support for staff. We need teacher exchanges to bring freshness. We should have a system whereby we rotate teachers. They need to stay professionally alive and we don't have money like some schools to give scholarships and things. (Pastoral care)

5.3   HEALTH

After the researchers had sorted the data into topics, the folder entitled "health issues" was by far the largest. To condense it into a useable chapter will barely do justice to the importance with which teachers view this issue as an influence on student achievement. As with most of the other influences we are dealing with a complex set of interrelated factors.

Where do you start with health? There is poor diet and they don't eat breakfast or all day. They don't go to bed until after midnight so they are constantly exhausted. There is smoking and drugs and alcohol abuse. Hygiene and basic care is missing so they have skin diseases and infections that get out of control. They live in big families. If something goes wrong, you look after yourself. (Pastoral care)

Diet

The major problems have been mentioned briefly in the chapter which describes many of the students as not being in a 'teachable state'[11]. It begins with their not having breakfast in the mornings. If they buy something on the way to school, it will probably be junk food. The types of food that the students and teachers describe are high in sugar, preservatives, flavour additives and often fat. Most students said there is usually some food in the cupboard but they slept in or couldn't be bothered and parents were not around to check.

The same happens at lunch time although peer expectations play an important role at this time also. Many students bring money to buy lunch. The amounts reported to the researchers were very consistent across the eight schools. They ranged from $2

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[11] See Chapter 7.3

to $20 with the majority being between $3 and $5 each day. The students with the larger amounts of money are usually those with their own earning jobs. To bring lunch from home is "*shame", not cool* and associated with primary school. Peer values pressure students to share food that is acceptable to the peer group. This usually includes sweets, chippies, soft drink, ice cream, pies and/or hot chips. Students who do not have money may 'scab' small amounts off others until they have enough to buy something. Students give as reasons for **not** eating healthy food-

- it is too expensive
- it is not cool
- sleep's more important than eating
- it's not easy to share
- it's not important what we eat

> *They just want to buy junk food. It's cool because they don't know the importance of good food. Kids here don't **care** about what they eat. It's just all 'share' food. We are always told at home that we must not fuss over food. We must just be grateful for what we have. It's the same at school. (Student)*

If students are allowed, and even if they are not allowed, they *go down the road* and buy fish and chips, pies and other food not available in the student canteens. This makes it difficult for canteen contractors to compete financially and forces them to try to provide whatever the students want, rather than what may be healthy.

The researchers do not have detailed information about what families eat in the evenings. Students say there is usually a hot evening meal, although the timing varies. Some Pacific teachers mention concern about a lack of green vegetables and fruit and attribute this to cultural patterns transferred to New Zealand.

> *Some Pacific Islanders can't cope with paying for fruit. They are so used to it being available free or very cheap they would rather pay a dollar for a pie. Green vegetables are not common. The kids do love fruit. When we go on camp we take fruit and it all goes in the first day if you are not careful. (Pacific teacher)*

Teachers and pastoral care staff report significant behavioural and health outcomes as a result of the junk food. Headaches, faintness, tiredness, inattentiveness, and inability to concentrate are commonly reported.

> *..... By afternoon our students are hyperactive or blotto because of diet. (Teacher)*

> *After lunch is diabolical. It's hard to settle them down. They nudge and push each other and fool around. They don't realise what it does to teachers. (Teacher)*

There are students who are without food on some days. They often present to the sick bay with symptoms that give the nurse or counsellor the clue that lack of food is the problem. Several teachers and students gave examples of teachers giving students money to buy food.

I do see students who haven't eaten for two days. They are embarrassed to admit they are hungry. We give them food or money to buy it. They are not expected to pay it back. (Pastoral care)

(Name) and I worked out once that we were spending $50 a week on food for kids. (Teacher)

Tiredness

This has also been discussed in the chapter on 'teachable state'. There are many students who are in the habit of going to bed close to, or after, midnight on week days. The reasons vary and include-

- habit
- a combination of after school activities and family chores
- TV and videos
- part-time employment
- unable to sleep because of noisy/crowded home
- collecting family members from work/leisure
- cooking for parents on shift work

Some students also get up early in the mornings so their hours of sleep are short. Students and teachers gave examples of the overt evidence of tiredness.

Just one example was today when I had a girl go to sleep in class. She has part time work in the evenings. She is a good kid and could do well if she wasn't like this. I let her sleep on. Provided it isn't disruptive and the other kids aren't silly about it I ignore it. They have lots of out-of-school pressures. (Teacher)

I get to bed between ten (pm) if I'm lucky and one (am) during the week and I'm up by six (am). I feel (exhausted) at school and too tired for class. (Student)

I have three young Mums who often just come to school for a good sleep. (Pastoral care)

Iron levels

A local Paediatrician from one of the AIMHI communities presented a paper on the medical conditions he experiences in his every-day practice (see Appendix 6). One of these common problems is low levels of iron. He reported this being an issue for children of all ages including very young children and outlined the long term detrimental effect this has on learning. The issue is still a problem at secondary school and four of the schools reported being aware the problem. One of the ways it is drawn to the attention of the school is through the visiting blood bank collections where they test student donors before taking blood. They are turned down if their iron level is not at a healthy level.

Anaemia is a common problem. The blood bank picked it up again last year. Some of the girls were seriously anaemic. We wanted to do something about it but because of the Privacy Act they wouldn't give us the students' names so

we couldn't follow up. They gave them iron tablets but that is such a temporary solution. (Senior Management)

The medical statistics show that over a third of the children in our community have an iron deficiency. Their ability to learn is damaged years before they get to us at secondary school. (Teacher)

Vision and hearing

Several senior staff were frustrated that there are students at this secondary level who have hearing and vision problems. There are screening programmes during their primary years but somehow, there are still students with severe difficulties.

We need to watch the kids that sit at the back and copy from each other. This can be a sign that they can't see. But it is a hit-and-miss process. We need them tested. They cannot afford to be checked and even if they get it free they can't afford the glasses so they don't even go to be checked. (Teacher)

The Auckland health region chose not to screen hearing and vision. Last year we had a one-off project and picked up lots of kids who needed help. 61% of the senior self-referrals failed the vision test and seventeen kids got spectacles. (Senior Management)

Last year we sent sixty students for eye checks and there were forty who should have had glasses. Lack of money may stop some from getting them. (Pastoral care)

As one of the senior management staff pointed out, vision changes for some children at puberty and so even if they have been tested earlier on, it is needed again at this secondary level. The schools find it difficult to access regular screening for these problems.

In theory we should test every year. There are free public clinics for hearing loss but our kids won't get to them. The public health nurse will test one or two but we need a whole form level screened. We could try to have our nurse trained but we really need a proper service. (Senior Management)

The DP phoned the public health nurse who put the (vision) chart up and then refused to see the students. Some of them, after the testing, do have to have glasses but they can't afford it so the nurse advised them to sit at the front of the classroom. We need help to coordinate the services and to have them on a regular basis. If we do test for glue ear and vision, we can't access the outcomes if they are needed. (Senior Management)

In most middle-class schools, if the school suspected a vision or hearing problem, the school would only have to notify the parents and they would take over the responsibility and ensure, by paying for services if necessary, that the student's needs were met. Any student who cannot read will have great difficulty with classroom work. They miss out on basic knowledge and fail to pick up new skills and that begins the cycle of failure.

In these schools, because of language barriers, poverty, lack of knowledge of the systems, and sometimes lack of caring, the parents do not take over the responsibility and so the school is forced to try to find ways to have the child's needs met. They report having great difficulty accessing and coordinating both the initial screening that is needed and the follow-up care.

Sexual health

It is very hard to collect accurate data on the extent of sexual health problems in the schools. Because of the great fear that students have of their parents finding out that they are sexually active, they do not always chose to go through the normal channels such as the school nurse or counsellor. Even if they do, formal records are not kept in any coordinated way. Most of the schools reported a high level of students being sexually active. Some students have been before they reach secondary school. Student feedback substantiates this.

Parental attitudes play a major role in determining the way students seek information, help and advice. The general consensus is that discussions about sex with parents are *taboo,* and to be avoided at all cost. Many parents go to great lengths to prevent their daughters from any possibility of physical contact with boys. This is one of the reasons that some prefer a single-sex school for their girls. Daughters are often very restricted in their social contact or chaperoned. The message from the students is that they find ways around this and hide it from their parents. If they have a sexual health problem they will seek help from someone they trust and this will often be a teacher or member of the school pastoral care staff. There was no indication that the frequency of being sexually active was any different for the girls at the single sex school than for those at the co-ed schools and the rates of pregnancy testing and known terminations seemed to be about the same. Some of the cases described were sad.

> *There have been two pregnancies and two terminations that I know of this year but some will have gone through the counsellor and other people. One girl tried to do it on her own and then tried to commit suicide. One tried to terminate with her mother's help. (Pastoral care)*

> *We do lots of pregnancy testing. There is one girl who comes every month to be tested. Sometimes it's a way to get out of class. Sometimes she is pregnant. (Pastoral care)*

> *The number of kids who get pregnant here is huge. We can't keep records on it. The kids get abortions without ever telling their parents. If a girl approaches you, you may need to take her to a doctor. I have seen many talented young women fail because of this crisis in their life. Often you don't even hear about what happens. (Teacher)*

> *I have had three abortions and one pregnancy (i.e. four students) that I have had to deal with already. I had to ring up the nurse to see what to do. (Year ten tutor teacher)*

Sex is 'cool' and there are indications, from what teachers and students said, that it is happening younger. One of the AIMHI schools had a coordinated life-skills programme for its Year nine students that included information on sexuality and provided a clinic staffed part time by a nurse, Family Planning nurses, and a doctor.

The students valued the knowledge and the clinical service highly. They are more likely to seek medical and counselling help, and to use contraceptives, if they are available confidentially from the school. A fear of being seen often prevents them from using services available elsewhere in the community.

Smoking

Smoking is both a major health issue for students and a major control issue for schools. Students estimate that between fifty and eighty percent of girls smoke. This is a general 'catch all' figure and does not give us any idea of how many smoke how much. It is a much more frequent behaviour for girls than for boys. Students said that many have started smoking well before they get to secondary school and that it is strongly reinforced by peer values and pressure. It is also a family and community issue more than it is a school issue. Parents and extended family smoke and often condone their children's smoking.

> *More than half the girls smoke. In our group we nearly all do. It depends on your crowd. There's lots of pressure to smoke and we all did at intermediate. (Female students)*
>
> *You get pressure to smoke from others in the hapu. There are only five or so who don't smoke and we smoke in and out of school. (Students)*
>
> *Some parents let you smoke.....lots do really. If you are old enough to buy it[12] you are old enough to smoke it. If you can buy your own you can smoke. If you smoke you have to buy your own. (Students)*
>
> *Kids start smoking because their Dads smoke. Parents know and they understand. They know it's hard to stop. (Male students)*

In four of the schools, students asked for a smoking room so they could smoke without getting into trouble. It was made as a serious suggestion and demonstrates how normal a part of their lives smoking has become. Money to buy cigarettes comes from lunch money, scabbing, parents' money, exam fees, employment income, or shared money. There are 'hiding' places around the school where the smokers go. The toilets are one of the most common.

The health concerns aside, smoking is against the school rules in all the schools so its occurrence has to be policed. Seeing school students smoking in school uniform is one of the things that students, parents, and teachers, agree gives a school a bad name. On the other hand it is a regular part of the lives of some of the students who feel they are addicted and cannot go a whole day without a cigarette. This results in a frustrating and time consuming policing job for teachers and then the cycle of 'punishments' in order to try to stop a student re-offending. It is one of the self fulfilling processes which turn a smoker into a behavioural and discipline problem. The schools have made efforts to provide drug education and "stop smoking" programmes but the problem is so great as to be a *lmost a full time job in itself.*

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[12] This is referring to being old enough to have money from some source. It does not refer to the legal age for purchasing cigarettes.

I could stop the smoking in the toilets if I did nothing else. As a deputy principal I like to think there are other professional jobs I should be doing. (Senior Management)

Some of the students did ask for special programmes to help them stop smoking and *doing drugs.* They said that the success of such a programme depends on the person who takes it. Some people are more credible and effective than others. Some groups suggested it would be better if it was not a teacher.

Substance abuse

Again, it is difficult to get accurate data on the frequency and extent of the use and problems associated with drugs and alcohol. Students said it was a more common occurrence outside school than during school or on school property. In all eight schools, however, students reported *dac* being available and smoked by a small number of students at school and in school hours. In two of the schools it was particularly associated with some of the Maori students. Other more serious drugs are known to be available from certain students or '*connections'* they have. Students mentioned *damage, crack, indo and smack* as being available if you want it, though not likely to be used at school. Staff are aware of drugs being available in the wider community and occasionally a school student will come to their attention as being involved. Students reported gangs being involved in supplying and sometimes parents and extended family members being regular users.

Much more common, for both students and their families, is alcohol consumption. Again, this occurs more outside school than at school, but its consumption sometimes has a direct impact on student achievement. Alcohol abuse by parents affects the everyday lives of some of the students who have to deal with the demands, the cleaning up, the fights, the 'taxi driving', and the abuse that they associate with their parents' drinking. Teachers and pastoral care staff report the way that weekend drinking affects the ability of some students to cope on Mondays.

As with many other problems discussed in this report, substance abuse is not often directly a school problem. It is a community problem. The impact of it on both the students and the school can, at times, be profound.

Dental problems

One of the schools has an organised dental service for the students as a result of their research which showed that only 17% of students were taking advantage of free medical care. It, as with many of the medical services, operates because of the good will of a local dentist. The school organises trips twice a week and transports the students both ways in the school van. About ten to twelve students a week are taken. The service is interesting in a number of ways -

- It demonstrates a regular and ongoing need that was not previously being met.

- It relies on the good will of a local dentist. This is often the case with medically related problems.

- As with other similar medical needs, the parents are not accessing them for their children, even if they are free.

- It costs the school an enormous effort and time to set up initially.

- The school is not resourced to meet this need. It uses the school van to transport students both ways at a direct cost to the school. The truancy officer does the driving but this is instead of that time being spent doing the much needed truancy work

One other school meets dental needs as part of its full health care provision. Because the student needs in the eight schools are so identical, it is almost certain that the other six schools would demonstrate the same level of dental need as this particular school. This is typical of the types of services that the AIMHI schools have to try to provide if their students are to have basic health needs met. All of the money and staffing time is taken from the main role that schools are there to fulfil (teaching and learning) because these student health needs are prerequisites to their being in a physically teachable state.

Poverty diseases

All eight schools report a very high incidence of skin diseases including scabies, recurring boils and other serious, and often untreated, infections. Pastoral care staff attribute this often not to poor hygiene, but more to poor diet, poor general health and to a lack of knowledge of when to seek help.

> *They leave it until it is so bad that it is serious and hard to treat because they are ashamed to admit they have a problem they think is "dirty"..... or they treat it in inappropriate ways. This year we have had three panadol overdoses. It comes off the shelf and it's cheap so they use it rather than get advice. (Nurse)*

Other diseases that staff reported as occurring with increased frequency were TB and rheumatic fever.

Hygiene

This was not mentioned often and was not a problem with many students. There were some, however, who did not understand about basic cleanliness of their bodies or their clothes. Some of the nurses said that a lack of cleaning contributes to the skin problems they see. Having clean clothes is often made more difficult because students have only one of each uniform item and so regular washing of the uniform is less easy.

Toilets

In all eight schools the students discussed the condition of the toilets and the problems they have because of this. To some extent the conditions are a result of Ministry of Education funding policy and practice. Schools are not required to have or be supplied with hot water, soap machines, or hand driers. In one of the schools there is **one** toilet block for over six hundred students. Other problems are caused by a small number of students who use the toilets for smoking and students who vandalise and create unclean and unhealthy conditions. This is a nightmare for the schools to monitor and control. There is a secondary school in Auckland that employs security guards in the toilets to prevent such problems. The reason it is important is that the unhygienic conditions result in many girls not using the toilets at

all during the school day. Some go home or wag class to go to toilets elsewhere if they can't manage all day without going. If girls have a heavy period they may stay home for the day rather than have to use the school toilet. It is a health issue as well as a behaviour issue.

Schools' efforts to provide a health service

Schools are set up and resourced to meet teaching and learning needs. They do not have the expertise, the funding or the staffing to meet the ongoing medical needs of the students.

Many parents are either unable or unwilling to take on the responsibility of ensuring their children have their health needs met.

> *We had a thirteen-year-old withdrawn from College by a Mother because we took him to the doctor. He had a major infection of school sores that nothing had been done about. When she withdrew him, she did not tell us. He never went to another school and eight months later he came back. (Senior Management)*

> *They come with things that parents should be attending to. We had a student come with "bad 'flu" and we had to admit him to hospital with bronchial pneumonia. Often parents will send sick kids to school so that the school nurse will attend to it. Their English is not good and they have trouble understanding the doctor. They don't have the money to pay a doctor's fee. The parents work and it's hard to get time off. If we try to get parents at work they often won't put us through. The kids don't want us to contact their parents. It is all so complex and difficult and takes hours and hours of our time. (Nurse)*

Students avoid going to a GP especially if it is about anything personal. They particularly do not want their parents to find out and do not think they can trust a doctor to keep their visit confidential. Money is sometimes a barrier both because of the doctor's fee and because of the cost of the prescription if there is one. The same financial problems prevent students following up consultations with medical professionals such as physios, dentists and optometrists.

The services offered by the eight schools vary greatly as do the facilities they have to house a 'medical' service. One school can no longer afford a nurse. The others all have nursing services to some degree although the hours and their duties vary. Most are not registered professionals and the schools feel embarrassed at the small wages they are able to offer. The job descriptions of the nurses are not clear and they are often expected to do other tasks as well as nursing duties including sorting and delivering mail, buying the milk, washing the morning tea dishes, doing the banking, answering the phone, serving at the stationery shop and general office duties. Their relationship with other staff, and pastoral staff in particular, is not well defined and there appears to be a loss of important information between support services. They are usually not involved in the schools' health-education programme and they tend to respond to requests for help rather than take a proactive approach in the school. Their effectiveness depends on their ability to relate to students. In the schools where the nurse relates well to students, they are fully used for a wide range of needs.

Our nurse is registered. She is an ex-student and is very committed. She has great mana with the students and does a very important job for us. (Senior Management)

The students and pastoral care staff at this school endorsed these comments and it is clear that the role played by this nurse includes counselling and support as well as medical aid.

They come asking for a plaster or with a sore tooth but often they want to chat, and that is when you learn about what is really bothering them. (Nurse)

In the schools where the students do not like the nurse, she tends to be used for first aid and emergencies only.

The nurse is in and out. If you go and she's not there you don't feel like going back. She seems too busy..... as though it's not her problem. She just gives out panadol for everything. The old nurse was grumpy and we never used her at all. (Students)

The nurses are all female and are used mostly by girls. This is also the situation for other pastoral care support. Fewer boys ask for help for anything because it's not *tough* to do so. The researchers do not have accurate data to draw strong conclusions at this stage but it would appear that, where there are male pastoral care staff who are respected by students, boys are more likely to seek help providing nobody finds out about it. This need for student privacy has major implications for the siting of student support services. The tendency of some students to use the services as an excuse for wagging class also means that the schools need to have good systems of monitoring who attends and when.

The clinic facilities in the school are extremely inadequate for the demands that are made on them. The rooms are small, equipment is old and inadequate, and medical supplies are seriously lacking.

There are three beds in the sick bay and no treatment room. I have to shift gear around. There is no toilet and no hot water. (Nurse)

The light is poor. There is nowhere to wait except a public corridor with no seats. There are no windows and no privacy. It's not at all sound proof. (Nurse)

The clinic is too small. I have heaps of old supplies. Some have been there since 1986.....but I don't have the things I need. These kids should get the best health care available. I need bandages, dressings, and ice packs. (Nurse)

Student records are not well coordinated in most of the schools. One school has a comprehensive student profile and twenty-minute assessment of the health of each student. In most schools it is less well coordinated. In the other schools some information is kept by the nurse, some by tutors, some by deans and some in the schools' central records. The schools need to coordinate their student support services and to have a safe system of records that meets the requirements of the Privacy Act as well as meeting the needs of all the staff caring for them, in order, in turn, to meet the needs of the students.

The nurse keeps a book but anything serious is done verbally and no record is kept so it can't be tracked. The kids go to the nurse for emotional support as well as for health needs. (Senior Management)

All eight schools are clear in their knowledge that they need a full time, qualified and experienced nurse who can be employed permanently on a professional salary. To meet the sexual health sensitivities of the Pacific girls, including pregnancy testing, it needs to be a woman. Counselling skills are an essential part of the requirements.

One of the schools has the service that is needed by them all. It is a full no-cost health service with a full-time nurse, a health education coordinator, and a GP who visits once a week. It includes audiology, optometry, emergency care, physiotherapy, sex education, and dental treatment. It is valued highly and judged to be meeting very important needs. One other school had access to a similar service for one year. It was independently evaluated and also judged to be fulfilling vital needs but was not continued. The student needs in the other schools appear to be identical, so it is puzzling as to why an RHA would decide that the service is warranted in this school but not in other schools. The reason that this school has the service is that they took the initiative to apply for it and produced an application that met the requirements of the provider. It guarantees "outputs" that were felt to be acceptable by the provider. All the AIMHI schools need the same level of service.

5.4   GOVERNMENT POLICIES

The issues discussed in this section are varied and do not necessarily relate to each other. They represent things that impact on the schools and the achievement of students, things that have resulted from policies that have been implemented over the years. Some are more directly the result of specific policies than are others and they do not relate to any particular government.

Funding for equity and special programmes

Over the years since the beginning of Tomorrow's Schools the ways in which 'equity' funding has been available to schools have changed. It is a complex area and involves many different areas of equity. Overall, these schools feel that their needs are greater to a level that is not being equitably supported. The qualitative and quantitative data from this research project would support that assertion. In addition to data in other parts of this report, the following examples are presented to demonstrate the frustration felt by the schools.

We have to constantly argue for discretionary staffing in the Learning Centre. Top staff are needed there but we can't offer them a permanent position because we can't guarantee the funding. They say it makes people accountable but that is nonsense. If these specialist people are good they will want a permanent position and they will get one, so our kids miss out all the time because of the system. (Senior Management)

When they (MOE) changed the funding system for Maori language funding, we set up the bilingual unit as a way to keep the money for our students but it is not the best system and we didn't have the time to work it all out properly. It's typical of the sort of knee-jerk response schools have to make to cope with

changes that are sprung on us. We adapt to get the dollars to survive but without doing it to meet the school's needs. (Teacher)
Three of the schools commented on this same issue in a similar vein.

Now they have extended the TFEA out to decile nine. What sort of political pressure was brought to bear for that to happen? It's meant to be creating equity and we were nowhere near there before this happened. They should have kept focusing on the poor schools until they got it right. (Senior Management)

We do lots of IEPs in order to get a discretionary allowance. We have just about given up. One year one of our girls who had a reading age of seven missed out. We met the criteria in all four required areas but we still didn't get the money. What are we meant to do to meet the needs of these kids who are missing out because of some policy maker miles away? (Senior Management)

*We desperately need an ESOL teacher full time but when we apply we get given a few hours a week that are unpredictable. It's just hopeless. What is the point in giving us **part** of the funding for a person. If we are going to get the person we need the **whole** funding. They seem to think there are all these part people around out there who want part jobs for an unknown time. (Senior Management)*

*We have to rely on Telecom to give each school a free line. Now where will the money come from to use it? There are equity issues about the **use** of the internet. Our families won't be able to pay. We can't put fees up because we don't get them anyway.....so where is the money going to come from? These things are all **new** financial pressures that were not there before but again it is our kids that miss out. (Teacher)*

We have a whole range of learning problems including Downs Syndrome. We also have a reading support teacher but getting the hours for the extra support is almost impossible. Almost half of the students in this school need that support and we can't offer it. We have to be ruthless in the selection and choose the kids we think we can make the greatest difference for. That's not equity, it's the hard unfair reality. (Teacher)

*Our school needs high funding/staffing for ESOL and reading. Language is the first and big barrier that our students have. Our students are needy with **no** resources. Other ESOL students ...like the Asian students... have (family) money for coaching. We can no longer apply for NZ born NESB students to get ESOL funding. What start as ESOL problems, that we cannot address because of no funding, become learning problems and then behaviour problems.*
This is an issue that is common to all the AIMHI schools and was mentioned by staff in all eight schools.

Another funding area that has undergone several changes is that of transition and careers. Staff in the schools who have the responsibility for planning and implementing courses with the contestable funding have said that it is very difficult to make decisions and plan courses because the criteria keep changing. Some had lost track of what criteria are currently being used and were no longer sure what they

were actually being funded for. Others mentioned courses that had been run very successfully but under the new criteria are no longer funded.

> *These kids are achieving something for the first time in their lives and we can't stop doing it now. We will continue to run the courses but will not be funded for them. Something else will miss out. (Teacher)*

Dezoning

This particular policy had a profound and immediate effect in the AIMHI schools. Students left immediately and there was an immediate drop in the roll size of five of the schools. The rolls of six of the schools have continued to fall since that time. These are the schools that are perceived by parents to be at the bottom of the preference ladder. When discussing the reputation of the eight schools, the students had very clear views of what the reputations are held to be. They did not mention anything about the schools themselves or the way they were operated but rather talked about the areas in which they are situated. The reputation of these schools is inextricably tied to the reputation of the geographic area and all of the things parents associate with that area. The students often said their parents want a *better future* for them than the parents had. This includes enabling them to be upwardly mobile and move out of an area that has a reputation of poverty, violence, ethnic conflict, crime, drugs, gangs, unemployment and hopelessness. There will always be schools that are perceived to be at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder. If three or four close down, then another three or four will take their place. The answer for these low socioeconomic schools is to be resourced in such a way that they can meet the needs of their students and families and therefore become desirable for reasons other than simply socioeconomic reputation.

> *The top has been creamed off since dezoning and this has changed the nature of the school. We are left with kids who needed those role models. There has been a change in attitude towards race that is an intrinsic result of dezoning. When there was zoning, people had responsibility for this community. Kids went to school with the people they lived beside and there was a citizenship responsibility. Now we are left with the people who are loyal to us and a group who thinks no-one wants them. (Teacher)*

> *The theory is that if you go to a rich school that somehow the wealth will rub off. We are a poor brown school and some parents want their kids as close to a fat-cat white school as they can get them. It is more that than any educational decision. We get about 20 to 40 coming back after trying out other schools. This includes the kids the other schools can't cope with and throw back. They are happier here. The staff go the extra mile. There are smaller numbers and so we know the kids better. (Teacher)*

The last comment is of a sort that both students and teachers made. Many of the students in these schools **are** there because no other schools wanted them. The researchers were told frequently by students that they had applied to other schools and been turned down. These students had no choice. The schools they applied to had the choice and they exercised it, which is why the teachers talk about the *top being creamed off*. They are referring to students who are the most academically able, who have no record of behavioural problems or who may be exceptional in an area such as sport or music. The government's policy of choice does not apply to students or families in the lowest decile schools.

> *The other secondaries do all sorts of things to get the kids they want. They tell parents the roll is "closed off". Even the schools that have no enrolment policy and officially can't refuse often discourage parents and effectively get rid of the kids unless the parents pull a legal stunt. (Senior Management)*
> *When they eliminated zoning, all the kids that could... the good kids... shipped out. We have become a ghetto school and our kids are beginning to identify*

themselves more and more with the ghetto culture that they see in USA films and videos. It gives them a sense of pride. They want to be noticed and loved. (Teacher)

The issue of schools selecting students is not new and the current system has changed little in reality even though it has the appearance of giving choice to families.

Even though it was supposed to be controlled in the past it wasn't. The principal grabbed the good kids and cheated on the number of out-of-zoners. They tested and picked the best. It's the same now in most schools. The school has all the control. (Senior Management)

The only school-related things that students mentioned as relevant to a school's reputation were a fear of the school closing down through lack of numbers and the limited senior courses available. Both of these things are directly associated with the small size of the roll and the latter presents the schools with ongoing difficulties that become self fulfilling. The fewer students, the more teachers that are redeployed, and the fewer subjects that can be offered. The fewer subjects, the more students on correspondence and the more difficult it is to succeed. The less the success in external exams, the less desirable the school is seen to be, which results in a still lower roll.

School competitiveness

While the initial threat to the viability of the schools was dezoning, the new threat is the move by many of the contributing schools to recapitate and/ or become middle schools. Sometimes it is a ripple effect. A primary with a falling roll will recapitate and threaten the viability of the local intermediate. They become a middle school in order to retain their roll and that threatens the roll of the secondary school. In all the examples the researchers have been told about, the schools that have tried to recapitate have had roll problems themselves and although the decision is always said to have been made in the interests of the students, this would have to be questioned in the light of their vulnerable roll.

They took away zoning and that started the problems by contributing to the falling roll. Now we have (an intermediate school) threatening to recapitate. That will be the finish of this school. (Senior Management)

There is evidence of the contributing schools working actively to discourage parents from sending their students to particular secondary schools and some students talked of their parents being pressured to stay at their existing school. A few who stayed on at the school after being put under pressure, talked of being lied to about what would happen if they stayed and feeling angry that they had missed out on important opportunities as a result[13]. They had been told negative things about secondary school that were not true in their experience.

Another difficulty that the secondaries are experiencing is a lack of cooperation from the contributing schools in providing the opportunity to talk with parents about what the school has to offer. Student addresses are no longer handed over and parents and students are given negative messages in a number of ways. At the same time rumours about what may or may not happen abound and the Ministry is seen to be

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[13] See chapter 8.5

slow in making important decisions. Some of the actions by staff at the contributing schools have been unprofessional and border on being unethical. It would appear that the students and parents are unempowered pawns in a competitive 'game' that is being played out around them by personnel in some of the schools.

Support to manage student behaviour

Many teachers believe that there has been a change in the general behaviour of students over the past five to ten years, and in the last five in particular. Their opinions vary as to the possible reasons for the changes. They include general societal changes such as less stable homes, more solo parents, more unemployment, a wider gap between the rich and poor, more societal violence and a change in attitudes towards people's individual rights and their societal responsibilities. A few referred to 'Once Were Warriors'[14] as a reflection of the changes as manifest in our own society.

What the teachers were more clear about was the great difficulty their schools are having controlling some of the student behaviours and accessing the outside support that they need. In the section following about liaison with outside agencies, some of the schools' general needs are discussed but with specific reference to problematic student behaviour. There has been a decrease in support services at the time that there is an increase in demand for them. Visiting teachers, Psychological Services, Special Education Services, truancy officers and residential homes used to be readily available to the schools and they were at no cost to the school. In the opinion of school staff, these services have either totally disappeared or become so difficult to access that they do not meet the needs.

> *Support services are so run down that teacher assistance is gone. The school now has to buy professional input. Even if it was available when you need it, we can't afford it.*

Some staff and trustees discussed the problems their schools have in dealing with the extremely bad behaviour. Some students use an enormous amount of professional time because of their disruptive and sometimes dangerous behaviour and although the legislation provides for suspension, there is great pressure from 'outside' for boards not to suspend.

> *There is so much emphasis on human rights that students know they can get away with some terrible behaviour. There is real pressure from the government **not** to suspend but staff need support. We constantly have to justify and explain. The kids are given the benefit of the doubt. Why should teachers and other kids have to put up with kids like that? (Teacher)*

> *There is a lack of outside support services. It's disastrous for schools. There are no truancy officers or visiting teachers available. Teachers should not have to be driving around the streets after kids but the schools are responsible so we end up having to do these things instead of teaching. (Teacher)*

Problems of dealing with student behaviour are not unique to the AIMHI schools, but the extent and number of the problems are greater and they often involve the whole

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[14] A recent film about family and community violence and dysfunction.

family having needs. Because of greater and more frequent needs these schools are more aware of the difficulties in accessing help than are other schools.

Teacher shortage

The current teacher shortage has been well documented. It is New Zealand wide and through both the primary and secondary sectors but it is more serious in the Auckland area because of population growth. As with most other issues that affect all schools, the low decile schools are more adversely affected. When it is a buyers' market for teachers, and this sometimes includes incentives that a school with money can afford to give, why would a teacher chose to work in a school which is comparatively poorly equipped, has students with language and learning difficulties and families with social problems? In addition some of the schools have a reputation, reinforced by recent ERO reports, as schools where teaching quality, leadership and governance are poor.

These schools have had extreme difficulty getting applications for advertised positions and the great majority of applicants have had very poor English themselves. In these schools the teachers' clarity of speech and knowledge of English are of great importance. Getting sufficient numbers of quality relieving staff is also increasingly difficult.

> *We are short of staff and we are having great difficulty replacing them. We are lucky we have loyal relievers but we are burning them out. It's no good for the kids because they need stability. They need stability and steadiness and it's getting harder to keep it that way. (Senior Management)*

One of the ways the staffing shortage has recently affected some of the AIMHI schools is that it has made them reluctant to introduce teacher competency proceedings because of the fear that it may not be possible to replace a teacher with somebody who is more competent.

Technology

In the New Zealand Curriculum Framework, technology was included as one of the seven essential learning areas. Since this was a totally new requirement and since it requires expensive equipment as well as staffing expertise, some teachers were critical that the government had not financially supported schools to implement this. The AIMHI schools are some of the poorest in the country and have no prospect of fundraising. Most of the teachers who raised this issue saw it as an impossibility for the schools to ever afford even basic hardware to bring them to the level of other schools.

> *The government is not funding the implementation of technology. The school system has not provided our necessary staff development. We have to go outside at our own cost. We have two or three machines that work. The rest have fallen over. We bought 'cheap' so that we could at least put something in front of the kids but we have no maintenance back-up because the company went broke. We will never be able to do it. We have so many things that we have to fight for. (Teacher)*

General trends

Some staff talked about the general direction that recent governments have moved in and how they see this affecting these schools.

> *Government policies have wrecked these schools. The truancy system is in crisis. Housing policies have left our area with hundreds of empty houses, the economy has left our families poorer. Health is a mess. They, and we, are in survival mode. (Teacher)*

> *The New Right philosophy leaves our schools and families with nowhere to go. The removal of zoning, the public ranking of schools and the publicity of ERO destroy us. Ministerial statements about teacher incompetence and schools that should close down destroy community confidence. (Teacher)*

> *This era of having to contest and dispute everything is time consuming and wearing. Education went through a period where we threw things out. We need to re-establish some of the systems that used to work. We need to come of age. (Principal)*

> *The New Right philosophy has caused a lot of damage to our schools. It is a reward and punishment system that punishes victims. It has translated itself to students. Intrinsic motivation has gone for most of them. It's all about external rewards now. (Teacher)*

5.5   EDUCATION REVIEW OFFICE

There were no participants in this study who questioned the need to have some external agency monitoring and reviewing schools. Nor did teachers look back to the old system of the inspectorate with nostalgia. There was a general acceptance of the need for an agency like ERO. Of the eight schools, all had been reviewed in recent years. There is very little data on this topic from participants in two of the schools, which probably indicates that they were not unhappy with the review process as they experienced it.

History of reviews

One of the major criticisms of ERO relates to the history of reviews in three of the schools. These three schools have had a sad history of poor, weak and dishonest leadership, as well as a history of staff conflict. Some poor appointments have been made and there have been problems with the quality of teaching from some teachers. At the same time, there has been ethnic politicking and conflict within the community. While these things were going on and staff in the schools knew about them, the ERO reviews did not reflect these problems. The following quotes each relate to a different school[15].

> *ERO have been toothless in the past. During the second review the staff had a secret meeting with them to tell them the real truth but nothing happened.*

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[15] Because in this section of the report there are a small number of schools being discussed and because the ERO reports have received so much unfavourable publicity, the quotes in this section will not be attributed to particular staff positions.

Nor did they make any effort to follow up things they knew were a problem. It is a sort of dishonesty really. Then in the year that we were really making improvements we got slammed.

ERO previously were too praiseworthy. It was not accurate and it gave people a false sense of what was right.

For far too long they have been too kind and it allowed things to get worse. In 1992 we got an ordinary report that didn't say much but by 1994 they thought it was so bad they sacked the Board. There is no balance in that.

The criticism of ERO from many of the staff in these schools, especially some who have been at the schools for some time, is that, in not providing honest and accurate reports in the past when they clearly knew what was happening, the Office has given the staff in the schools a false sense of what should be expected and allowed the problems to continue and, sometimes, to get worse. Then for no apparent reason, when in at least one school things had improved considerably, they received severely critical reports.

Validity of the reports

In five of the schools there were criticisms of the overall validity of some of the reviews. Many staff criticised the length of time spent in the school and in individual classrooms as being inadequate. Some questioned the knowledge and skills of individual reviewers. Others said that reviewers seem to be impressed by the way in which some schools and principals do the paperwork and are articulate in selling their school as being effective and this results in positive reviews. On the other hand, if people are honest about their problems it is reflected back in the review in a negative way. Honesty and self reflection, therefore, are used against the school rather than being acknowledged as a strength.

The process is a farce. We ended up with a good report. There are lots of things here that need to be improved that ERO did not pick up on.

Because it becomes a public document, you have to remember that when you speak to ERO you are on record, so it's important that you don't speak about real things. We have an HOD who is a real (very derogatory term) and what is happening in that department is shocking but you won't see it in the report.

We weren't worried because we have all the paperwork. It's a bit plastic..... not the real stuff.
It was not a comprehensive assessment of our school. They did not have enough time, or skills or resources to do it. They relied on the information that the school provided. We didn't bullshit but we produced reports, graphs, and pretty covers. We need Senior Management skills but they didn't report that.

We were not at all happy about the report. They didn't know what we were talking about in some areas. They were unprofessional and they relied on gossip for some things. We caught them out on several things. They even misread manuals. Worst of all they had no concept of dealing with these children. Some of them had never been in a school like ours.

> *It was superficial. It focused on admin. and looked at marks and paper work.....not the programme. The kids were busy and good learning was happening but they just wanted to know that eight kids sat School Certificate and that eight passed.*

> *They looked at policy documents and numerical data. In this school we question assumptions. That's what ERO should do.*

The last three quotes allude to a concern that was mentioned often. Many teachers felt that the reviewers often had little or no idea of what it is like to work in a decile one school and that the measures they used to decide on school "effectiveness" were inappropriate and demonstrated their lack of professional knowledge and perceptiveness.

> *ERO effectiveness reviews don't work well in schools like ours with the process they use. Most Boards like ours don't have the measures to demonstrate their achievement. The ERO process can't be used validly for **all** schools. Schools are different. Just as we have to teach differently and provide for different needs in different ways, ERO should use different ways of reviewing and different measures of success.*

> *There is huge anger about the report. They were not here long enough. They don't have the right background. There are areas of concern and we accept that but what about the very committed people here. There is a teacher shortage. Lots of our kids are here because no other schools want them. Why should a teacher come and work in a school like this? We do it for the kids but we lose our reputation in the process.*

> *Despite ERO doing its best I feel very bitter about ERO. They have wrought devastation. They have worked on the basic premise that all the problems are ours to solve. They have disregarded outside issues that are different and varied and that make our job hard. We have no control over them (the outside issues).*

> *They don't know what it is like in a school like this every day. Some of what is in the report is fair but they don't understand.*

The last comment reflects the overall assessment of many teachers. They agreed with and accepted some of the critical parts of the reports but they felt that they lacked accuracy in that they missed out some of the critical understanding of the demands of these communities and because of the lack of acknowledgment of these unique problems, the reports lacked balance. Staff and students in these schools (even the three with critical reports) are aware of the work of some exceptional teachers. Many felt that the reports did not give such exceptional teachers and programmes the acknowledgment they deserved.

> *The last report put a blanket label on staff. Some staff are doing a fantastic job. The media are unfair and so we are all labelled as incompetent. ERO did not say that but they know what the media will do and they did nothing to compensate for that.*

> *The ERO report was realistic but they missed out the positive things about this school. We **need** the balance. What about the kids and their warmth and*

friendliness? What about the climate we foster in the school? What about the mixed cultural activities? What about recognition of our good teachers? The good things get lost amongst the negative.

Outcomes of the publicity from the reports

Many teachers felt *labelled, discouraged, misunderstood and devalued.*   In all three schools that had negative publicity after the reports, the researchers have specific examples of teachers leaving as a direct result of the published ERO reports and of teachers not applying for jobs or withdrawing applications because of the negative effect past and future reviews may have on their professional reputations.

Students feel angry, confused, insecure, and powerless. Many feel 'shamed' failures and accept this as the label they feel is put on them by the reports.

> *Students have read the publicity about the ERO report and they know about the media attention. They think the future of their school is in doubt. Where does that leave them?*
>
> *They are already demoralised and they think, "Why bother? We already have a bad name so what's the point?"*
>
> *The kids came and asked, "Is our school closing down?" ....."Are all our teachers bad?"*
>
> *We felt stink. There are good teachers at this school and some of us are working hard. What can we do? Where can we go? (Student)*
>
> *We already know what people think of our school. Since the ERO report, when we go to sports things it is shaming. You know what other kids think by the way they look at you and by what they **don't** say. (Student)*
>
> *Because of the publicity my mother didn't want me to come here. I was on a waiting list for (another high school) but I didn't get in. I really like it here. There is a friendly atmosphere and there are good teachers. (Student)*

Teacher morale hit an all time low in the schools.

> *It was the ERO gloom. There was a black blanket of depression and a feeling that we could never get out from under it. There were rumours that the school would close. The rumours were so damaging.*
>
> *It sapped people's energy. In our schools we can't afford for this to happen. The ERO report was like another nail in the coffin.*
>
> *Public castigation is demoralising. It has degraded us. It has changed the confidence of the public and it is not helping us (the school) by doing this to PI and Maori people.*

What was more serious was the immediate impact on the already falling rolls. For many teachers it was not the reports themselves   that they were devastated by but the way in which ERO allowed or, in the view of some, encouraged the media to

sensationalise the reports. This view is supported by the fact that the media get copies before the schools do.

> *We are taking the criticisms seriously even though I have contempt for the way ERO do things. It has hastened the school's falling roll. The kids heard it on the radio and it even got back to Samoa. They see us as a school of 'dummies'.*

> *It was like a lightning strike. It shook everyone up and there was no time to absorb it or respond to it before everyone knew about it. A lot of students just didn't come back. Parents phoned the school to ask if it was going to be closed. There were times it seemed as though everyone else knew more than we did.*

> *The Principal was contacted at 8 p.m. on the Saturday night by Radio New Zealand asking for his comments. He was contacted on the Sunday by the Herald and the school had still not received the report. What could be their (ERO) motive in not allowing the school at least a day or two to read it first when they know how the media behave. It is deliberate and unforgivable.[16]*

> *ERO released the report just prior to our enrolment week. They **know** what the media do but they go ahead anyway.*

> *They (ERO) released it as a public document yesterday and we hadn't got our copy. We have to grab the Herald so that we can see what it says about our school. It was the publicity in the local community that did the damage.*

> *It's not so much what she says (Chief Review Officer) but what she doesn't say and **how** she says it. She knows the whole report but she just focuses on the sensational bits.*

> *If they (ERO) are going to allow the media to have the reports for schools like ours where the parents don't understand English, then they have a responsibility to translate the reports so our parents can get an accurate version on Pacific Radio.*

Another area of concern for the three schools that had the worst reports was the speed with which the Office returned and did a follow up review. All three schools had accepted the need for immediate action and had begun to implement major changes. The effort this required from the senior staff in the schools and from the Trustees in two of the schools was enormous. Hundreds of hours of meetings, planning, training, employing expert help, liaising with the Ministry, letter writing, interviewing staff, and many other tasks specific to each school were undertaken. Six months was clearly not long enough to implement all of the required improvements and it was not nearly long enough to see changes in the classrooms, yet ERO did another full review and published it. The damage through yet another media release so soon was felt by many in the schools to be almost terminal.

> *We need to get our energy back. We need ERO to stop beating us up and we need some positive feedback about what we have been doing.*

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[16] This refers to the Otara/Mangere Special Report prepared by ERO in 1996.

ERO came back too soon. They did not give us time to do what they required. Writing and implementing curriculum can't be done in that time.
We wrote to them and asked them to go back to their "normal" timetable of audits. We were happy to have an informal visit or a visit that did not produce a public report but they must give us time to do what is needed without destroying the school with their reports.

Change has come about in the three schools that received the seriously bad reports and some of that can be attributed to the requirements of the ERO reports. At the same time, there is a great deal of anger and bitterness in at least three of the schools at the way ERO have acted. It is not the content of the reports that most staff take issue with but with the following:

- The lack of consistency in reviewing and reporting over time. When the schools were at their worst in terms of problems, they were ignored or glossed over. When they are working to their maximum to make positive changes, they receive negative public reports

- A concern at the validity of the review process and the heavy reliance on what reviewers are **told** rather than adequate time being spent in the classrooms and the school generally. There was criticism of the inability of the Office to pick up issues of significance in some schools

- A lack of understanding of the uniqueness of both decile one secondaries and the AIMHI secondaries in particular. This is demonstrated by the types of data the office require, and comment publicly on, as valid measures of achievement (eg PAT results)

- The Office has a policy of making public the school reports. The schools are not given their own report in time for staff, or even the principals, to read before the media have copies

- The lack of flexibility in the policy of making reports public, even in the situation of rapid follow-up reviews

- The timeframe given to three of the schools to implement major change was totally unrealistic and the Office would not listen to the schools when they tried to point this out. The follow-up reviews were devastating in terms of escalated falling rolls and staff resignations and applications

- In these schools the parents almost without exception are Maori and/or Pacific Islanders and the majority do not understand English. The Review Office should have to take the same care and responsibility that the schools do in reporting to parents in ways they can understand and that are culturally appropriate. The ways this can be done are outlined in this report. The Office should at least have the report translated and either mail copies to parents **or** support the schools to organise meetings of parents to discuss the report in their own languages

- The generalising and 'lumping together' of schools in the general "South Auckland" report and in the reviews of two of the secondary schools

- Inconsistencies in the use of data as measures of achievement. There is, for example, a contradiction in comparing secondary schools using national external exam results (which severely disadvantage decile one schools) and not using any such norm referenced measure at the primary level. An apparent unwillingness to acknowledge or explore the achievement levels that the students arrive with at these secondary schools and to investigate why they are leaving the primary system so "behind nationally". In the instance where the Office quoted PAT entrance levels, it used emotive language and appeared to be placing blame on the secondary school rather than acknowledging the difficulties they face.

5.6   AGENCIES

It is difficult to generalise about the experiences that the schools have had with the wide range of agencies that they have to deal with but it is important to mention them briefly because such liaison is more of a day-to-day reality for these schools than for most. The welfare, health, emotional, psychological, and family needs of these students are greater than average and they present at school because parents are unable or unwilling to access the help. This means that these schools, more than any others, spend a great deal of time trying to get the help they need. Sometimes this is on a school-wide basis such as the 'one-stop-shop' health initiative or the many teaching programmes that schools rely on agencies to provide. At other times it may be that help is needed for one child or one family.

Some very positive examples were given by school staff of effective liaison and support from the Police, the visiting teacher and Income Support. Other less satisfactory experiences were also related and one is included as an example of the types of difficulty a school can be faced with.

> *We had a very violent incident happen at school involving a student. I did an assessment but she needed a full psychiatric assessment. I had her in my office and I tried to get help. I couldn't get **anyone** to see her. I tried CYPS often, Campbell Lodge, her GP. I was told about understaffing, staff turnover and waiting lists and I still had the girl in my office. She was very violent so in the end I told the parents they had to keep her at home until we could get help. There was a family conference last week..... One month since the incident. The girl had been home with no help and no schooling for a month and the family already had its own problems. (Pastoral care)*

The following list outlines in summary the needs and difficulties that schools have in accessing help.

- Agencies need to be willing to listen to schools who have the student there on a day to day basis. If the school is to be included in a relationship with an agency to assist a child, the school will know best which staff member to involve. Sometimes agencies specify a person or position and it may not always be the best person.

- If schools have to apply for funding for a service, it takes considerable time to put together the application. Now that the funding is often available only on an annual basis, it is extremely difficult for the school to plan for a need they know is ongoing. The RHA vision testing programme is a typical example. It was a

one-off project. It gave evidence of a need that the school knew was there and knows will be there every year but the funds are now not available again. The data show that the need will be there every year in all the AIMHI schools and probably the decile one schools because it is caused by a complex set of variables that are directly linked to low socioeconomic status.

- Provision of 'seeding funding' is the policy of some organisations. The idea behind such a scheme is that a school will be provided with money for one or two years to 'set up' a programme and then the funding will stop and the school will continue to fund the programme. An example is the Hillary Commission funding for a sports coordinator. The problem that all the AIMHI and other decile one schools share is that they will never have, and will not be able to get, the funding to continue with such 'extra' luxuries. Most families do not pay even a low school donation/fee and fundraising for school extras is minimal if it occurs at all. The schools still apply for, and sometimes get, the seeding finance because they feel that two years is better than nothing but it is a terrible disappointment when a wonderful programme has to finish. There is a need to recognise the extreme position of these schools in an equitable way.

- The filling in of forms and applications takes school personnel many hours and this is on top of their regular job. If they don't make the applications they don't get the service or the funding but sometimes even when they do the paperwork, they still don't have the need met. Because the needs for social services are greater in these schools, the form-filling takes up more time at the expense of other work for students. Some agencies can be contacted for help by phone. Again, the time this requires to coordinate is significant.

- Accessing help for a student and/or family requires being in contact with parents. Because of contact difficulties, language difficulties, lack of transport and often other complications, this can become almost a full-time job for senior staff and they don't have the language skills. These schools need liaison people who can make the connections between the school, the family and the agency.

- A current need that is not being met for most of the schools is to have access to help for chronic truants and students with severe behavioural problems who cannot cope with the mainstream system. As well as the students not coping, the mainstream classes are disrupted by their presence. Effective models of alternative programmes are currently operating but are not fully funded or funded on a long-term basis. These schools tend to end up with the students who are expelled and rejected by other schools and need extra support to provide for them, so that their presence does not become a barrier to learning for other students.

5.7 RESOURCES AND EQUIPMENT

Most schools in New Zealand rely heavily on the collection of money from their community in order to provide any 'extras' that they need in the way of buildings, facilities and equipment. In recent years one of the most pressing and expensive 'extras' has been technological equipment of various kinds and computers in particular. Schools are funded on the basis of their decile rating and in theory, the

poorer schools should receive funding that is 'equitable' and will allow them to provide 'equitably' for their students.

A simple walk around these AIMHI schools, with the exception of one old and well-established school, will demonstrate to anyone familiar with New Zealand secondary schools that they are disadvantaged. The researchers have the advantage of working in a wide range and large number of secondary schools and are able to make comparisons. Listening to staff and to students brings this message home more strongly.

> *Our resources are way behind. Parents don't want to send their kids here because they know that. They are disadvantaged by coming here, where we can't provide any of the things they will get in other schools. We have no drama room, we have one old video camera with few functions, there are very few computers, we have only one TV that works. We need video and audio equipment, computers, science equipment, and technology materials. Rooms need upgrading and our furniture is falling to bits. We even need basic things like desks and text books. (Teacher)*

The comparative lack of resources needs to be seen in conjunction with the greater need and demands on the school. In most schools, the parents are on the phone and will come to the school if requested to do so. In these schools, it is a common occurrence for a member of staff to have to take their own car and go to the home in order to see the parents. It may take several trips. In most schools, if students are going on a sports trip, parent supporters or their own parents will transport them and collect them. In these schools, the teacher is often expected to collect and deliver students home, as that may be the only way to ensure they attend. The need for school vans and cars is greater than for other schools but they are much less likely to have them. There is more vandalism, stealing and damage in these schools and it is often from outside the school. While vandalism to buildings and property is paid for by the Ministry, the damage to equipment has to be paid for by the school or its insurance company. This all costs many hours of staff time and often dollars as well. In most schools, the teacher can request that parents provide a calculator, set squares, books and other basic gear like pencils and pens. In these schools, the school or the teacher must provide most of these things and constantly replace them. The particular learning and language need of these students means that text books, that in other schools would be acceptable learning aids, need to be processed before they are of any use to the students. This requires extra teacher time, extra resources and photocopying.

The quality of the curriculum that can be offered is also compromised because of lack of funds.

> *We have only one keyboard that can be used for exams. Most schools have a class set. We have to rely on barbershop quartets because they don't need equipment. We don't have the equipment to have a brass band or an orchestra. Our kids are extremely talented musically but these days to do music well costs money. We need computers for composition. Our kids are seriously disadvantaged compared to kids at schools that have the gear. (Teacher)*

> *Art is a very resource-based subject but we can't get money from our students. That will impact on what we can afford to do. It means we can't do clay,*

screen printing or lino printing. It severely limits the programme we can offer. Things are kept on a minimal scale or not done at all. It's worse for the seniors. They need oil paints and to take photographs but where do the dollars come from? (Teacher)

There were examples of teachers who use their own time to canvass for gear and equipment from any source they can tap into. There were other examples of teachers who have set up money-making initiatives within the school in order to buy the equipment they need for their classes. This clearly advantages students and enhances the quality of the programme that can be offered but some subjects lend themselves to these possibilities more than others and the question needs to be asked as to whether a quality programme should have to rely on teachers' being willing to use their personal time in this way.

We needed a scanner, digital camera, video and computer. We knew we would never get them from the school because it doesn't have the money so we make money by selling products that we make. There is a teaching spin off as well as the financial spin off. Even so we still need basic equipment like powerful enough computers, literature, books and magazines. Our budget for the whole of this **year** *will only buy us eight text books. We can't fund everything. (Teacher)*

Computers and the interfacing technology have become the most obviously needed equipment and seem to the schools to be forever out of their reach. It is not just the purchasing of the hardware but also keeping the software up to date and affording the maintenance and repairs. Again this is a difficulty that most schools face but because of the inability to fundraise and get fees from a poor community, the need has been largely unmet.

Our computers are antiquated and they break down all the time. We have no printers that work and it's pointless without a printer. Our budget is very constrained and we can't afford to call out the repair man. There is a $60 call-out fee and labour is on top of that. We needed him three times last term and that was more than our year's budget, which is meant to cover everything. (Teacher)

Even within the eight AIMHI schools, there is a difference that can almost be ranked, in what the schools can afford. The schools that are regarded as the most desirable by parents have the advantage of a larger roll with the economies of scale that go with that, the ability to get more money in fees, a longer history of stronger funding from the community and therefore more accumulated assets and more parental support with fundraising.

5.8   CONCLUSION

The decile one schools, and the AIMHI schools in particular, have been adversely affected by policies that have impacted on the community as a whole and on poor communities in particular. In particular some of the education policies have had both direct and indirect repercussions. The personnel in these schools have been aware of the changes as they have happened but have felt completely powerless to do anything about it. Some of the principals have been very active in writing and lobbying the Government and the Ministry of Education as they have felt the effects of

changes. They feel frustrated and angry that they have not been listened to. They have not expected general handouts of money, but have tried to point out that these schools do have unique problems that require specific and different remedies.

The AIMHI project, including this research report, will hopefully address most of these frustrations.

Chapter Six

PARENT/FAMILY/COMMUNITY INFLUENCES

6.1   INTRODUCTION

The researchers are concerned that in writing a chapter like this, people who are already under stress in their lives (some of the parents of the students) will feel even more weighed down. The labelling of ethnic communities and the stereotyping of South Auckland has resulted in reinforcement of the reputation of certain areas and low morale and confidence of the people who live in them.

The focus of this chapter is on some of the day-to-day things that affect the AIMHI schools in trying to meet the needs of their students and some of the day to day things that affect the ability of the students to achieve. The purpose of describing the issues in detail is so they can be better understood by all parties in order to work towards finding solutions. It needs to be remembered, however, that many of the things described in this chapter are just as much beyond the control of the parents to change as they are for the students or the schools.

6.2   DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

High mobility

One of the ongoing difficulties faced by the schools is keeping track of where students are living and who their caregivers are. Sometimes this is because a family shifts houses and other times it is because a student shifts, either temporarily or permanently.

> *There are high levels of mobility of students moving between relatives and between houses. Sometimes they go to the Islands for a while. It's very hard for us to keep tabs on and it's very disruptive of the student's learning. (Senior Management)*

> *We have one girl who now lives with her grandmother. She doesn't know who her mother is but she knows who her father is and she goes to stay there sometimes. It's hard to explain to the grandparents that she can't just go off and miss school without it making a big difference to her success. (Senior Management)*

Alcohol

All of the pastoral care staff and many other teachers talked about the extent to which alcohol use and abuse in families causes severe difficulties for many students. Student use of alcohol is serious also. Many students talked about how it affects them.

> *We learn a lot about their family lives from what they write about. In the weekends the crates (of alcohol) come in. It might be the birthday of a baby in the family but it will still turn into a weekend party of boozing. The kids do a lot of work for the celebration and sometimes they write about the strain it puts on them. By the fifth form, the boys take it for granted that they are the drinkers now..... everybody gets drunk..... it ends up in a big fight. It's not unusual for them because it happens so often. (Teacher)*

One student was worried about his report and had no one to come to the report evening or to school to talk about it. I took him and his report home and both Mum and Dad were there drinking. The parents really need help too. How can we change things for that boy? (Pastoral care)

My parents are alcoholics and they don't care about me. They expect me to pick them up all hours of the night. They phone and wake me up after I've gone to bed. I have to wait up till they go to bed. I break up the fights and solve the problems. I'm often late and tired because of this. My dean understands and I talk to her about my problems but it still makes it hard to get school work done. (Student)

I'm often late to school because there is no-one to wake me up. We have family problems..... everyone drinks in the week days as well as the weekend. Even when I do wake up it takes me an hour to walk to school. (Student)

It's at camp we really learn about their lives. At the beginning they can't eat breakfast because they are not used to it at home but by the end of camp they are all eating huge amounts. These kids are fourteen years old. Some of them get trashed during the week. They get drunk and stoned and stay up until 4 a.m. Some parents have no idea. The parents have lost the battle too. (Teacher)

Community problems

Teachers and students talked of the racism in the community itself. In particular, conflict between Maori and Pacific groups was mentioned. Students said some of the gang activity perpetuates ethnic separateness and conflict.

There are gang problems in our community. Some of the parents are involved. The ethnic groups are in conflict with each other. Currently there is a void. Until these groups get together there is not the support for the school in changing racism amongst students. (Trustee)

Some teachers and pastoral care staff gave examples of parents who are either convicted or active criminals. Students have been involved in theft through their families and some convictions relate to violent offences. Violence is another problem that is present in these communities and which students, and non-students, occasionally bring into the school.

The violence in our community is serious. We had a kid who was nearly kicked to death in the weekend. Some other kids trashed a stolen car and ran over someone. Last week an angry parent came in because his son had been beaten up by kids from this school. The beaten kid was hospitalised. It happened out of school hours but we were made to feel responsible and expected to do something. (Senior Management)

There is lots of community infighting and sometimes the school grounds get used as the place for it to happen. We have tried to do some things that will help with security but it is a social issue. (Support staff)

We had a fourth form boy who was made to watch his uncles beat up his cousin until he was so bad he (the cousin) was hospitalised. He was

distraught. How do we teach him to understand this? We had another boy whose dad was inside (prison) for killing the mother's boyfriend. The parents split up and this kid had to learn to cope with all that and manage school as well. (Teacher)

Lack of love, care, and control

Staff gave many examples of students who, in their opinion lack both love and care. Some of the students said that they feel unloved and uncared about and they were always able to explain the reasons. In some cases the teachers themselves try to provide the stability that the children need by making themselves available in an ongoing way to talk, advise and care.

I'm in touch with parents a lot. Some are abusive families. Some are stressed and just manage to survive. There is nothing left over for love and attention. These kids depend on the teachers as their stable adults. (Teacher)

We have trouble working with nearly all our Maori and Cook Island parents. So many of the families are seriously dysfunctional. They don't give a toss and they won't work with us (the school) to try to find ways to help their children. (Senior management)

*Some of these kids have adults moving in and out of their lives. One girl lives with a foster family. She doesn't know her real parents. She only knows a grandmother but doesn't get on well. She found she had one **real** sister who was her only real relative but then the sister committed suicide. (Senior Management)*

For three of these kids, I was the most stable adult they had ever had in their lives. You are a defacto father figure because they don't have anyone else who stays around long enough. (Pacific teacher)

We have a sixth form boy with a family structure that is hard to understand. He lives in a garage at the back of a 'family' house and is not under any control. He has no love or security or direction. He is operating alone. (Teacher)

Some of the families have no ability to control teenage behaviour. They are having real problems themselves over it. Mothers often know what is going on but they won't tell fathers because the fathers are violent to the mothers and the children. Some of the parents feel ashamed that they have lost control and won't admit it or ask for help. (Pastoral care)

School staff see these sorts of problems in the attitudes and behaviours of the students and the schools put in an enormous effort to identify the source of the problems. In order to help the student, they are very reliant on being able to work with the family. If the family is unwilling or unable to do this, then the school is not resourced to provide the help that the family needs. Sometimes they can provide help for the student alone but it is rarely a good solution.

Multifaceted and repeating problems

Many of the difficulties that some of the families have are a complex combination of factors that present long-term problems for which there are no simple solutions.

> *We did an assessment on a case of physical abuse and found that it was done to the child by her parents who are drug users. The children are expected to sell drugs to sustain the parents' habit and they get beaten if they don't sell enough. CYPS took the children away from the family but we still have them and have to find ways to help them adjust. We will become their security in the mean time. (Pastoral care)*

> *Some parents are mentally disabled and their kids really suffer. Some haven't eaten for a day or two because the money has gone on gambling and drinking. There is no-one at home to cook and if the money runs out, that's it. (Pastoral care)*

Some of the situations will affect the children in a way that will make it difficult for them to parent and already some teachers can observe problems that are evident in a following generation of children.

> *This generation of kids are the children of the kids we had here when I began teaching fifteen years ago. These are the children of the kids who lived with their noses in glue bags. There are a significant number of them. These kids have dispossessed parents who have no positive attitudes about parenting or schooling. (Teacher)*

> *There is a self-fulfilling cycle of problems. The parents are unemployed, have no work ethic, have mental problems, abuse the kids and so the kids opt out of school as early as they can. Girls get pregnant and the family encourages them to leave so they can collect the DPB. Then we have a third generation of children growing up in the same hopelessness. (Teacher)*

Violent abuse

Staff and students in all eight schools talked about the high level of physical and sexual abuse and the ways that this affects the attitudes of students towards learning.

Physical abuse is usually a *hiding* or a *beating* of children by parents. The students talked a lot about this practice and, overall, accept it as a normal and expected way for their parents to discipline them. Many do not think it is an appropriate or acceptable way, but generally accept that it is *the Pacific way* and that their parents do not know of other ways to discipline them. Maori students also talked of being beaten. The hiding may be with a hand, a stick, a hose, *or whatever their hands can get to at the time.* Students said that boys get more hidings than girls and that their reaction is often to laugh, which results in more hitting. They listed many reasons for beatings including *not doing chores, breaking something, stealing, being late home, fighting, wagging, swearing, telling lies and (especially) answering back.* The most frequently described feeling that students experience is anger. Some said they were afraid of the beating, afraid of being hurt and afraid of their parents. Others said they just wanted to run away. They also said that even though they may laugh when it is happening to them, it is not because they think it is funny or unimportant. Laughing is a way of keeping some sense of self esteem.

Pastoral care staff say that they have many students come to them for help the days following reports going home and parent/teacher interviews and there is much evidence of the physical abuse.

> *The bruises and cuts are there. Children are in tears because of it. It's very hard for them to keep their self esteem intact when they get abused for doing their best. (Pastoral care)*

Some of the Pacific teachers described the hidings from the parents' viewpoints.

> *They don't do it for nothing. There is a reason. Sometimes they are worried and they lash out. They act straight away.....there are immediate consequences. (Pacific teacher)*

> *Parents are aware of what they are doing. They are caring and concerned but they think if they let little things go, they will lose complete control. They need to know ways to manage problems. (Pacific teacher)*

Some students said that the hidings do work as a deterrent for them.

> *When my parents beat me I do learn from them. I did stop stealing because I was afraid of the beatings. (Student)*

Others said they did not think it was an effective way to discipline them.

> *The hidings don't last and don't stop us doing things. It's worse when they (parents) won't let us watch TV or visit friends. It's best if you can clean up the mess yourself first and then tell your parents but you won't tell them if you think they will give you a hiding. (Student)*

> *They do it (give a hiding) because they love you and sometimes that makes it OK but sometimes you can't help the things they do it for (like bad reports) and then you are angry and want to run away. (Student)*

Some reasons for beatings/hidings were directly related to school and learning and it is these which have a negative affect on student attitudes, confidence and success. Students reported getting hidings for a 'bad' report, bad grades, a letter from school, a detention, being late to school and comments from a teacher that parents did not like. This results in students hiding information (such as letters and reports) from parents, telling lies to parents and actively working to keep parents away from the school. Many students said they were unable to discuss school things with their parents because the parents may interpret it as a challenge to their authority and a form of answering back. It also results in students' losing confidence in their ability and willingness to be actively involved in the learning process.

There is a real dilemma for both students and teachers over reporting on student achievement, behaviour and attitudes. Teachers know that some students will be beaten if the things they say to parents or write in a report are less than ideal. They are aware of their professional role to report accurately on student progress but they see the negative affects that such reporting has for many students. School staff also find themselves in a dilemma over when, and when not to report physical abuse. The decision is made with what they believe is the best interests of the student in mind, but individual interpretations vary.

Many get very badly whacked. It is a grey area with Pacific Islanders because they think they are entitled to. If there was serious violence I would let CYPS know but not all teachers believe in mandatory reporting. The kids think they deserve the physical abuse. They accept it. (Teacher)

<u>Sexual abuse</u>

Senior and pastoral care staff in all eight schools reported a significant amount of sexual abuse of girls in particular.

There is lots of sexual abuse, an excessive amount. About half of the girls who come to me have been victims.. There is lots of incest. There are little things you pick up on and we use drama.....role play to allow them to disclose. (Pastoral care)

There is physical and sexual abuse. The boys and girls are physically abused and the girls are sexually abused. There are blurred boundaries at home about what is OK and what isn't and so the kids are easy victims. (Pastoral care)

The affect on student well-being and behaviour can be profound and can make a difference to many students in a group or a class.

We had a fifth form class that fell apart over the year. All the girls had either personally been abused or their friends had. Most of it was sexual abuse. (Principal)

Some girls don't want to be referred over it. I have had two girls recently who have been raped but who don't want any action taken. We could call in the police or a woman doctor. The women doctors reinforce the serious nature of it and get it noted. Parents are usually very reluctant for agencies to be involved. They see them as "the enemy" and as the "other side". But there is a real limit to what we can do. I can see that they are both still having difficulties because nothing has been resolved for them. (Pastoral care)

Sexual abuse is still unlikely to be disclosed, especially if it is a close member of the family who is the abuser. As mentioned in the section on ethics[17], a number of girls did talk to the researchers about their own experience of sexual abuse and about experiences their friends had had. They wanted and needed help at the time and afterwards but found it very hard to ask. Some mentioned doing things, such as wagging, drinking, and truanting, that they hoped would draw attention to themselves and result in a teacher intervening and helping.

6.3   PARENT ATTITUDES

The majority of families are Pacific families and both teachers and students talked about Pacific (or PI) ways of thinking and behaving. Clearly not all families have the same ideas, standards, expectations or ways of behaving but the researchers have so much data that demonstrate similarities and that relate directly to student

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[17] See Chapter 2.9

achievement, we have decided to include this chapter in the hope that it will provide the reader with insights into how students feel.

<u>High expectations</u>

Pacific parents, in particular, are felt to have extremely high hopes and expectations of their children as achievers. They want their children to have experiences that were not available to them, to not make mistakes that they made and to have a quality of life that is better than what they all currently have.

> *These parents work in factories. They don't want that for their kids. They want something better and they know their kids can do it and I do too. (Pacific teacher)*

> *Our parents grew up in the Islands. They want us to be different to them. My Mum got pregnant young. My Mum went out all right but they don't want us to make the same mistakes. (Student)*

Sometimes students feel that their parents want the achievement for their own (the parents') gratification and that they are living through their children rather than wanting it for the children in their own right.

> *Parents expect too much of their kids. They see themselves in you and live through you. They want to raise a "superchild". (Student)*

> *They (parents) want us to do what they haven't been able to do because they didn't have the education or because they had babies too early. Parents speak their own language and we have to learn it in case the Minister comes to the house ..... so our parents are not shamed. (Student)*

> *They compare us to cousins and are afraid of how other people see it. Especially at church, where all the comparing goes on. If you don't get all "A's you are letting your parents down. (Student)*

> *Parent pride is a real problem. They get a real buzz out of their children's achievement and they compete amongst each other for who can do the best. It is hard for the kids when that is happening. (Pacific teacher)*

> *They want us to do well so **they** will look good especially in front of relatives. (Student)*

Some students mentioned the desire their parents have for their own long term security and see the achievement of their children as the main way this can be secured.

> *Education is first because then you can get a good job. If I do that it means that I can buy a good house..... plan for the future..... and support them when they are old. They want me to get a good job which means one that pays good money. Not a factory job because you can't do that when you are old. The Army or the Police are OK. They have strong ideas but it's up to me so long as their future is OK as well. (Student)*

Students described how the parental pressure felt for them and how they (the children) try to understand how their parents feel.

> They think the system is what it was like for them. They ask "why do you need friends?". They think it should just be work for us. They portray the person they wish **they** had been and they want us to be different to what they were. They don't understand what the world today is like. (Students)

Pacific values in New Zealand

Students feel the parents' expectations, related to achievement and other things, are often unrealistic in the context of the generally accepted standards of New Zealand society. Students understand that these are Pacific standards held by their parents' generation, and that they reinforce values that are culturally important. Students and Pacific teachers value their culture highly also and their comments were in no way meant to be critical of cultural values per se. They felt that some of the expected behaviours are unrealistic for New Zealand in the 1990s and, because their parents will not consider any compromise, students usually do what they want behind their parents' backs.

> Parents impose things "because I love you" but these codes are rigid and don't make any sense for our kids here in New Zealand. They say to girls "don't go out till you are twenty-one years old. In the Islands you never **sat** with a boy. So there is lots of mother/daughter conflict and lots of pregnancies and abortions. Parents just won't listen. We (teachers) have to be very careful about how much we tell parents. (Pacific teacher)

> Parents have high moral standards and cultural standards that don't fit in New Zealand. We could not go flatting like other kids because it would be a disgrace on the family that you were not looking after your parents. One day we can be independent **after**........., and after....... There is always an **after**. (Student)

> The girls are not allowed to have boyfriends. They do of course and when they are found out they get hidings or leave home. It's exacerbated at an all girls' school but it happens at the other schools too. (Teacher)

> I really try to do my homework but I'm constantly interrupted. You can't say "no" because that is selfish. Mum says if you do well at home and do well at church you will do well at school. She really thinks God will do the school work for me. (Student)

> As a young PI person you get no support. All the energies are on the older siblings. It is our third formers who are more of a problem. As they get to be seniors they have a higher priority in the family hierarchy. Parents think the exam years are the important years. Our cultures don't support youth for learning. (Pacific teacher)

> We are a classed society also. Some of the parents in our community don't give a damn about (this school) because their kids go to other more prestigious schools. (Pacific teacher)

We have to look after our elders, especially our grandparents. Sometimes they are very demanding and call you from the other side of the house to do little things for them. They know they have power and they expect you to do it. That is more important to them than our homework because that keeps the family positions clear. (Student)

*Sex is such a "no no" that we are not allowed to know about it till we die. (In the health programme) we had a teacher who told us everything. Our parents just say "Don't do it!" but I didn't know what "**it**" was. Now I know what I'm not to do. I can't talk with my Mum about it so until the school helped us we had to talk to sisters and cousins to find out. (Student)*

Gender issues

In New Zealand educational circles there has been real pressure for gender equity. This was in all school Charters in 1989 and schools have been required to develop programmes with staff and students to ensure that equity values are practised. The data suggest that Pacific values are different, and teachers and female students find it difficult to reconcile these conflicting values. Girls are perceived by most teachers to have more family demands placed on them that make it difficult to do school work and activities outside of school. Female students agree and are often resentful of the situation they find themselves in. The following quotes are very typical of what the researchers heard in most group discussions in which there were girls.

*It's always us because we are girls. Brothers don't have to do anything. There are totally different rules for boys and girls. They are allowed to go out but we are not. We do all the work. We are not even allowed to ask them questions about it. "I often wonder what it would be like to be a boy". My brother is **meant** to do his washing but he never does. I have to do mine and my sisters'. (Female student)*

Girls have to stay home, do the housework, mind the children and do the cleaning. The mothers know this is not fair underneath but they won't admit it to the fathers. Some mothers are afraid of their husbands. (Female student)

*Boys do some outside work once a week or on the weekends but girls have to do everything all the time. We do dishes, vacuuming, cleaning, cooking, laundry and minding children and we do it **every** day. Girls have a harder time. My brother thinks he is "King". Boys have more freedom, they can stay out, they get first preference and it is easier for them to get out of things. They are not expected to do it. (Female students)*

Pakeha teachers understand us and see how unfair it is and how hard it is being an Island female. The expectations of us are just as high but we don't get the chance to work or anything else. We can't go out. We can't do a thing. We have to justify everything. They (parents) don't trust us about anything and it's all because they are afraid of pregnancy. (Female students)

As well as affecting homework and study time, such values have an impact on relationships. There are differences among the eight schools in the quality of student relationships with some being more harmonious than others. To a greater or lesser degree the following apply in all the schools.

> *Gender relationships in the school are appalling. Some of it is just being adolescent but it is worse because of racial values. (Pacific teacher)*

> *Girls sit and watch the male sports teams. The girls get no spectators, the boys get them all. (Teacher)*

Some teachers, both male and female, mentioned the chauvinistic way that some male students behave to both teachers and students.

> *Girls are very disadvantaged. Some tell me they will never put their children through what they have been through. Parents need to be re-educated on how women in New Zealand are treated. There is male chauvinism to teachers as well as to girls. Female teachers are often badly treated by male students. (Female teacher)*

> *The questioning girls really get teased. It takes two or three months before I can train a class so that the girls are used to asking questions. You can't get a word out of them at the beginning of the year because the boys give them such a hard time. We can change that while we are in charge but you know the minute they go home it's back to the sexist attitudes. It is a tension for the school because we value equality. Female success, when it comes, indicates a **very** determined young woman.*

> *I have had several parents who were puzzled about what I told them about their youngest son. They are spoiled and not asked to do much. Their sisters run around after them and then they think that is how life is and they treat the women teachers badly. We will not accept those values in a school. (Male teacher)*

When the researchers asked some of the groups of boys about their lives compared to those of the girls, they generally described the same things and sometimes commented, with a grin, that it wasn't fair. They did not seem to be aware of the feelings, or the strength of feelings, that the girls had about the unfairness.
Parent opinions of what are acceptable careers are often very gender specific and conservative.

> *Some girls don't even want to go home. They prefer to stay at school. It's the only way they get a chance. One of my (female) friends wants to be an audio engineer. Her parents won't listen. We don't get a choice of career. We are not allowed out. It's harder in every way for girls. (Female student)*

<u>Contradictions</u>

The contradiction most commonly mentioned by both students and teachers was between the expectations and hopes of the parents, and what they dictated as priorities in out of school time. Parents are perceived to **say** that education is a priority but are not perceived to give it priority in terms of support, equipment, study space or time.

> *Parents have very old fashioned British ideas of what is appropriate in terms of education. It's what they want but they don't support it. Parents don't check their work books or bags. They have very busy homes. Sometimes they work long hours and are not there for their kids. Church puts on pressures. A*

daughter will have to help them with cleaning work and serving tea and at eleven p.m. she is allowed to do homework. (Teacher)

Parents will say education is a top priority but then the children spend three or four nights a week at church until about ten o'clock. The truth for those parents is that church is the priority. Often church, family, culture and sometimes sport and music will come before time for homework, reading or having a good sleep. Education hasn't got a chance. (Teacher)

Pacific Island parents want you to have what they didn't have. Some drink. There is no back-up from parents. They spend their money on other things. (Student)

My Mum expects me to mind my sister all the time so I don't get any homework time. If I tell her I need to do some she says, "you should have done it earlier". I say, "I tried to but you told me I had to look after ....". It doesn't make any sense and she doesn't want to listen. (Student)

Sometimes these kids are breadwinners. Some start after school and work up to midnight. Parents say education is important but that is saying that money for the family is more important. (Teacher)

The money that goes to the church is **huge.** *Sometimes we challenge our parents about the dollars but they won't listen. Then we have to go out to work because there isn't enough money. (Students)*

Someone needs to **talk** *to parents. They don't understand your commitments. They don't understand that you need time* **all** *year. They will only give it close to exams. (Student)*

Many students commented on the way in which parents become supportive and give them study time close to exam time and as they get older. If they get to the seventh form, they will often be allowed more time for school things. Senior students could see that they needed this time in their early high school years and to only get it close to exams or in the senior forms was leaving it too late. They thought it was because parents did not understand the need to get into work patterns early and also that younger children have fewer rights and privileges than when they are older.

One of the greatest frustrations for teachers is when considerable efforts are made to involve and include parents but they don't come. This has happened in two ways in most of the schools. At some times, in all the schools, efforts have been made to set up and run parent groups for the various ethnic communities. There have been varying degrees of success but most groups have come and gone and not lasted over any length of time. The other occasion that teachers have put a lot of their personal time and effort into has been getting parents to attend parent/teacher interviews and/or report evenings. The main strategy used has been to telephone each family personally. Whenever this has been done, the numbers of parents attending have increased but not to the level the teachers would like to see.

We phone parents for these evenings and that has doubled the numbers but we still get about a third only. The worst thing is that we need the ones that **don't** *come. We phone and they say they can't make it but they* **do** *make it to*

housie. Parents send feeble excuses for themselves and sometimes for their students. (Pacific teacher)

*The parents have to take some responsibility. They **can't** expect the teachers to do it for them. No matter what we do to try to get them involved, they keep opting out. It's easy to blame the school and to say we need more Pacific Island teachers but they don't even support them. Also, they want a European education. They can't have it both ways and opt out of everything. (Teacher)*

There are contradictions between what parents want, from their own knowledge and experience, and what their children want, from **their** knowledge and experience.

Parents will want their daughter to go to university to be a lawyer, but she may be brilliant at design and want to do furniture making. (Teacher)

Lack of knowledge about how schools operate

It is clear to most school staff, including office staff, pastoral care staff and teaching staff that Pacific parents, and some Maori parents, do not clearly understand how secondary schools operate. There is also confusion over what is a parent's role and what is the school's role. Students said that their parents expect the school to fulfil all school related and educational roles and functions. This often brings about situations where there are conflicting expectations and there is the potential for both parties to judge each other negatively as a result. The following are examples of such situations -

- *Parents do not understand the commitment that students need to make to things. One of our students who had a starring role in the production was kept home to babysit because the parents were going out. (Teacher)*
  The researchers were not privy to how these parents saw this situation or why they made such a decision but that was the reason the parents gave when asked and it put the whole school production in jeopardy.

- *(My family) expect me to do well at school but they have **no** interest in the school. Parents don't care.....they don't ask. They expect you to do it yourself. If they do ask "how is school going?", you just say "good" even if it isn't because they don't want to know. (Student)*
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- *Parents have no idea about what is reasonable to expect from the school. They will ring to say their child is going to the doctor but they will take them away for the whole day. They will expect their child to have a day off to buy new shoes or they will phone and say they need (their child) to come home and babysit because they (parents) have to go to work. (Office staff)*

- *Parents have high expectations but students feel they can't live up to these. It's worse if your older brother or sister has done well. Then if you don't do as well as **they** expect, they think another school will "fix it" and you get moved. They accept things as they are. (Student)*

- *Most parents are very supportive but there are some parents who condone truancy, absenteeism and lying. They stick up for their children and make up excuses for them. How can we possibly stop these things when the parents work against us. (Senior Management)*

- *Our parents think school work should be done at school and it is up to the teachers to make sure we do it. Home is for family and church and not for study. That works when we are at primary school but it doesn't work at secondary school. (Students)*

- *Parents seem to think that the teachers are there as servants for them. There was a school party here at school and one of the girls phoned home. She was told to come home immediately but the parents didn't come to collect her. I was expected to take her home. The same happens if they need to go to hospital for anything. We (teachers) have to take them. The parents **expect** it. (Teacher)*

- *Sometimes children are taken over to the Islands on family matters but there is no notification to the school. We implement our systems and after spending lots of time we will eventually work it out. It's very one sided. Schools have a legal obligation to keep track of the students and the Board could be in trouble, but there is no follow-up of the parents or sanction for them when they are irresponsible. (Teacher)*

- *Lots of parents want the school to teach them English rather than PI languages. They have come here for a European education but they don't understand the difference between vocational subjects and academic subjects for their own sake. Sometimes we have problems trying to get kids to structure their course in a way that will help them long term. Parents say "don't do fifth form Maori..... do typing this year". Sometimes they will do six subjects when they would be better doing five well. (Teacher)*

The Pacific teachers could understand the difficulties from both the school's point of view and from the parents'.

*Families want kids to do well but they don't know how to help. They need a bomb under them. They think their role ends when the child goes out their gate. They think that if they send their kids to school they **will** be successful. They need education. Each ethnic group has to meet with its own speakers and language. We need people from the Islands who have been successful to explain what they need to do. They need to meet away from the churches. We have to help them understand what **they** have to do to get the kids to succeed. They need to prioritise their finances and support their kids more. They can hold onto their values but they are not prepared to change the things they do in order to get the most out of what New Zealand offers. They can't have it both ways. (Pacific teacher)*

*Parents think that problems at school should stay at school and it is up to the staff to solve it. They send their kids here for education so they don't think it's their job any more. They think it is just school work that is the problem and they don't think about the other issues that cause problems that **they** have to solve. Parents are more involved at primary school and I don't know why it changes. As our kids get older they (parents) don't think they (children) need them any more. At school we can see it happening but the parents won't help until we hit the crisis. (Pacific teacher)*

Knowledge of measuring achievement

The measurement , recording and reporting on achievement is complex and dealt with elsewhere[18].   What is relevant here is how parents view, understand and evaluate student progress.   Students were unanimous about what they think their parents expect.   School Certificate is seen as **the** first and most important achievement.   Up to School Certificate, parents are looking for **grades** rather than comments on the reports, and the only acceptable grade is an "**A".**

> *You either pass or get a hiding. It's grades they look at. They don't look at comments. It doesn't matter how hard you are trying or how much you have improved, it's black and white. The middle is not good enough. In our grades a 5 is a pass but for parents it isn't good enough. They don't understand the system. Everything is a failure if you don't get an A. They always refer back to the Islands.....the plastic bag and no shoes..... because we wear shoes we should pass. (Students)*

> *Parents want you to achieve so they can brag to their friends in church. Achieving for them is getting an A or passing in exams like School Cert. and Bursary. For students, achieving is doing the best you can and getting better than last time. The two are completely different. (Student)*

School Certificate is an exam that was designed to ensure some, about half, of the people that sit it fail. It was designed to rank people. Students in the low-decile schools always were more likely and always will be more likely to fail this type of exam, than students in high decile schools. The lack of understanding of this type of assessment tool is not confined to these parents but it does cause their children great difficulty.

> *Parents do not realise that School Certificate is not the end of the possibilities for their children. (Pastoral care)*

As has been noted elsewhere, many Pacific parents have a tendency to confuse attitude with achievement. They want to know from teachers how well their child is behaving and take this as a measure of achievement.
> *Parents believe in strong discipline and they think that this alone will result in good grades so they come to report evenings and ask about attitude. They ask "Do they listen in class", as though this will result in progress. We need to educate them. (Teacher)*

> *Parents are really stuck with "form five equals School Certificate" and that passing School C is **the** way to measure the future success of their child. We need to explain about "year nine and level five". The new Qualifications Framework will help. There is a lot of education needed. (Pacific teacher)*

The lack of understanding also applies to the selection of school subjects and to transition and careers.   Teachers explained the difficulties they sometimes have trying to get students and especially parents to understand about structuring a course that will work in the long term.   There is a tendency to want subjects that are clearly linked with a job that is perceived to be a desirable one.   Lack of experience of the wider job market limits both parents and students in seeing possibilities with which they are unfamiliar.   Sex-role stereotyping is another limitation that some parents impose.   For some parents there are jobs which are clearly only appropriate for one

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[18] See chapter4 and Section 8.9

gender. Working in a shop, for example, was thought by a parent to be "not man's work". Some parents have unrealistic expectations of their child's ability in relation to a job.

> *We would have a school full of lawyers if parents had their way. That's not realistic for any school and it is certainly not realistic for many of our kids. (Teacher)*

> *I saw a parent who wanted their son to be a submarine captain. I explained that there are no submarines in New Zealand and only one, I think, in Australia. Sometimes they have no idea of what is realistic. (Teacher)*

Making comparisons

A parent behaviour that many students described was that of comparing them with their brothers, sisters, cousins and others. Sometimes this was done privately within the home, sometimes in front of other people, and sometimes publicly at church. Whenever it happens, students feel uncomfortable and unhappy. The person who is being compared unfavourably feels guilty, a failure and ashamed. The person being compared favourably feels uncomfortable, disloyal and ashamed of the adult doing the comparing.

> *Parents refer back to the Islands..... no lunch and no shoes..... and try to make us feel guilty if we don't work. They compare us all the time. Compare us to those who do well and to those who don't do well. We will end up like our cousins - dole, babies, dropouts. Some people have had their names read out in church. It's so shaming for everyone. (Students)*

> *Parents are always putting you down. They compare you with your cousins. When you are watching TV they say "doesn't look like you'll pass School Cert.". We need encouragement but they get angry. You try to do your best but it's still not good enough. They use the family as examples to put me down. I need encouragement but I just get pressure every day. (Student)*

> *If older brothers and sisters have left before School Cert. you get compared with your cousins. Parents want to brag to their friends. Passing School Cert is such a big deal for them but it's not the end of the world. (Student)*

> *At church some parents give the Minister $20 so their kids success will be published. There are constant reminders if you are not at the top. (Student)*

Students described the feelings of pressure, guilt, shame and failure. Many felt that no matter what they did, or how hard they tried, they would **never** make their parents happy and so there was a feeling of hopelessness and inbuilt failure.

> *I want to get away from my family. Parents don't want to know how you feel. They want you to do well but it's impossible. They talk to family members and compare. They tell you to do well. If you do well they say "**but** look at your cousin" or "**but** ....". There is always a **but**! (Student)*

> *Parents give you guilt trips. They are never home to encourage you but they expect you to do well. "Prove yourself mate". It's more negative than positive.*

The other comparison that is frequently made by parents is with their own background and experience.   Again the feelings that students experience are pressure and guilt. The reaction that students have to such messages is to appear to listen, not to challenge and to accept that their parents do not understand their worlds and never will.   They love their parents but feel they will never be able to communicate with them and that the parents will never understand.

> *Parents give you growlings. They tell you about their past and the sacrifices they have made. They try to make you feel guilty. "We don't pay fees for nothing". (Student)*

> *They want you to do better all the time. There's no easy road and parents make it bumpy. It doesn't help if we don't know the language properly. If we go into English at all they say, "you're losing it". They mean well, they care about us but they don't understand what we live with. (Student)*

> *Parents want school things left at school. Mum doesn't understand the school system. They have big expectations but there is more pressure than support. What we need them to do is to wake us up in the mornings, pay our fees, give us lunch money and buy the books we need. Instead they waste money and don't give us time (to study). We are meant to leave school and find a job so there is money. They put pressure on about your mates as well. They don't make enough effort. They know how to speak English but not how to write or read and they are OK about that.....don't try to understand. (Student)*

Some teachers feel that there is evidence of more parents making an effort to understand and to listen to their children and to the school.   Some students commented along similar lines from their personal experience in their family.

> *Some parents are beginning to be realistic about their children's abilities. The longer they have been in New Zealand, the better they understand. They do need to learn to talk about it. They need help to understand. (Pacific teacher)*

> *It's better for me than it was for my older brothers and sisters. My parents are learning to listen. They used to give them (siblings) a hiding if they said things but they will let me talk about things now. (Student)*

> *Communication with parents is critical. Generally parents welcome it (Talking with a teacher). They appreciate being told. Once you have talked to them once and you understand them, it gives you confidence to call them again and it gives you leverage to work with the student. I'm more upfront and frank now. I was over-sensitive and culturally nervous. It didn't work. They (students) need to survive in New Zealand society and parents must be made to understand what this means for them. (Teacher)*

Communication blocks

Some students and teachers said that parents sometimes blame themselves for their child's lack of achievement but do not necessarily know what to do to change things.

> *Parents think it's their responsibility and their fault. Their pride is hurt. But they still don't understand or take time to listen..... they come from a different view. (Student)*

> *If parents don't feel confident they can't actively support their children. They may be concerned and feel responsible but they still don't know what to do to help so they are frustrated. (Teacher)*

Others said that parents won't come to school to listen to teachers because they do not respect them enough to give credibility to what they say. This applies especially to palagi teachers.

> *Parents won't come because they think some teachers don't understand. They (parents) don't want to hear anything that is not good. They may take it as an insult. Parents will only listen to someone they respect like the Minister. (Student)*

> *Parents are always respectful and polite but they won't listen to a white face. We are seen as privileged people who won't understand. (Teacher)*

Many students mentioned their inability to talk with their parents about issues that directly affect their schooling and learning. If they tried, parents often viewed the attempt as a challenge to their authority and either closed the communication or punished the child.

> *It is the traditions and the culture that stop us talking with our parents. We can't talk back to them or say they are wrong even when they are. They don't understand our world but they won't listen either. (Students)*

> *I want them to talk with me when I have problems but I can't talk with my parents. I keep my problems to myself. I was sent out of class so I went to the guidance counsellor. (Student)*

> *Our parents have ideas that punish us but it won't change. One of our mates (Year 13)..... his father won't let him come to the school ball. Our parents say "that's where it all starts"..... they mean girls, sex, drinking and smoking. They don't realise it started years ago and we are safer at school than where we usually do it. The church is very strict and very demanding. What the Minister says goes. They blame school for the problems. (Students)*

Language is a major difficulty for both teachers and parents. The schools have to rely on a small number of staff or on students to translate discussions between teachers and parents. Sometimes community people are able and willing to give their time. Because it is either voluntary time or putting extra pressure on Pacific teachers, the schools tend to make this effort for only the most serious or important occasions such as a discipline hearing or a health issue.

Effective parental support

There were examples given by both students and teachers of parents who were actively working with their children, and the school, to support their learning. In the examples the students gave it was evident that this was very effective for them and that they felt supported and strong in their efforts to achieve.

*Parents need to help their kids more. I know I am changing. I have learned about my mistakes. If I muck around at school I'm not allowed out. My Dad checks my homework. I have to keep this book to show him. It's good for me. My Dad checks on me **at school** if he thinks he has to. My parents came to school and talked with (the dean) and they are helping me but I know I have to do my bit. (Student)*

My parents are much better for me than they were with my sister. We can talk about things now. They don't think I'm backchatting or cheeking them. It really helps when they give me time after school to do my school work. (Student)

My parents will ask me, "what did you learn today?" and each day I have to tell them three things. Dad will force me to do homework. In the fifth form I may have to quit sport. (Student)

Not all such strategies work without complications. One student told the researcher that when his father asks what he learned at school today, he often says "nothing" and, as a result, the father went to the school feeling angry because he believed the child and assumed the school was not doing a good job if a student could be there for days and not learn anything.

There is a great need for parents to be directly in touch with the school and not to rely on everything that their children say.

6.4 CHURCH INFLUENCE ON ACHIEVEMENT

This chapter is not about any particular church or denomination. It does not apply to all students, although most Pacific students made reference to the part church plays in their lives and the life of their family. These are the views of students mostly, and sometimes of teachers. They are not the views of parents. Nor have the researchers included all the data given on the families' relationship with their church. The chapter focuses on the ways in which the church impacts on student learning and achievement, and how they feel about this. In voicing the concerns about the impact of the church on their education, students were not intending to diminish the value they placed on spirituality or on their church involvement but they were able to see, at the same time, the conflicting expectations and what they see as the hypocrisy of aspects of the church. Some felt pressured and others felt upset or angry at the demands they found themselves dealing with.

Time commitment

Many students discussed the time that they give to church commitments. This includes church services, preparation for them, Sunday school, bible classes and study groups, prayer meetings, youth groups, church competitions and socials, and bands and choirs. It was not this time alone that was the issue for them, but this time combined with the other family and employment commitments they have to fulfil. This was often the reason given for not doing homework, or for not getting to it until very late at night.

I did four years of seminary from six to seven every morning. Also I have responsibilities at church after school and all day in the weekend. It's too much

to manage, especially when homework and assignments are behind. (Student)

We spend lots of time there (church). One day every weekend and then there are youth competitions, sports, inter-church things, socials, and choir is the main one. At the moment, I have choir every day after school. (Student)

Many students mentioned being put under pressure to be involved in certain activities and how difficult, if not impossible, they find it to say "no" even when they know their lives will be over-pressured and their schoolwork will suffer. Sometimes the pressure comes from "the group", and sometimes from parents. The Minister and youth leaders were also mentioned often and sometimes pressure came from more than one direction.

I've had real group pressure to be there. I had an assignment overdue and I needed to be home to do it. What is worse, is that they say it is a seven o'clock start but the leaders don't get there till eight or nine. It's always late starting and I needed that time to get my work done. (Student)

We have bible study and family prayers and church every day from five to seven. Sometimes I'm desperate to get school work done and I'm let off but I can't argue with my parents. It's like talking to God. What they decide happens no matter what I need. (Student)

I have church all Sunday and about four times a week after school for choir, bible study, and practices. Then there is quiet time.....personal time with God. As well, I work sixteen hours in an icecream parlour. Family and church are number one and then my job, so school work has to get done at school. (Student)

Some PI parents think church is more important (than school). When kids try to explain to the teachers they don't understand. The Minister wanted me to be a Sunday school teacher and I said "no". My parents pressured me so I did. It's even more work than I thought it would be but it's hard to go against your parents. The church says you are a free agent but it's not a real choice. Somehow the parents make it for you. I think it has had a really bad affect on my Bursary work this year. (Student)

Financial demands

Many students talked about the financial strain the churches put on their families and, in particular, how this took priority over money needed for school fees, exam fees, uniform, school equipment, books, school trips and other education costs. Some students explained how they are expected to pay for all their school-related expenses themselves from money they earn. Others have to ask for what they need. Some have given up asking their parents because they get such a negative response when they do. There were students who felt very angry and bitter that the money they needed for basic educational purposes was not available to them because it goes to the church or to the Minister. They felt more angry at money going to the Minister than going to the church. Some teachers, and Pacific teachers in particular, shared the anger.

We have to keep giving money to build a new church. They (Ministers) do not ask if a family is struggling. They don't care. They just get what they want first and we have to manage with what is left over. (Student)

Is the church really God or are they (The Ministers) just trying to bribe you. Your donations are read out so there is shame on your family if you don't give what is expected. It's like shame on your family if your results are bad. It all works by making people feel guilty all the time. If someone dies there are special mats and lots of money. If we need money for school it's too bad because the school doesn't shame anyone. (Student)

Money is given because a family is too embarrassed not to give their quota. Everything, including the kids' education, is put aside to reach it. They read out in church how much each family has given. It's demoralising and shaming and it keeps the pressure on. Someone should do some research on what proportion families give to the church and the effect it has on children's lives. (Pacific teacher)

Priorities

Students and teachers felt that there was an ongoing struggle within families to try to meet obligations to their church, their extended family and to the school. To an extent it mirrors the struggle students have to manage their conflicting worlds and often it is the cause of much of it. The main currencies at issue are time and money. The general consensus was that although parents **say** that education is important and that they want their children to achieve, the reality is that the church has priority over both the money and the time. The schools' and the children's educational needs are met if there is money left over, or if the children are able to find the funds themselves, and if there is time left over. The leftover time, if it exists, is rarely quality time. The churches have well established strategies for ensuring their needs are met but schools are reliant on parental goodwill and responsibility.

The church comes first, the family second and education last. They (families) would give money to the church before they would give it for their children. The more money you give, the more status you have and it is announced in church so it is a powerful incentive. How can a school compete with that? (Pacific teacher)

Church activities have first priority over school. God comes first. Sometimes the activities don't finish until ten p.m. It's too late and the kids are tired. The Ministers need educating. Sometimes bible-study exams and choir competitions clash with School Certificate preparation. (Pacific teacher)

Their (church personnel and parents) ideas are unrealistic. The kids are tired. Nearly every Island kid in our school is tired most of the time. I say to a parent "your son is very tired, and he is not coping with his school work". They say "Yes, but church is important"......and they still expect them to pass School Cert.. School is expected to produce miracles. (Pacific teacher)

Church takes first place. So much is expected of the kids. They take days off for church things and often for family things. White Sunday[19] coincides with

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[19] White Sunday is a very important celebration for some Pacific churches

exams. Their priorities are different. They can't expect to have it both ways. (Teacher)

A few teachers were concerned at the church-influenced attitudes they perceive in some parents and students towards achievement. It would appear that some people rely on prayer alone to achieve. They have a belief that *God will do it for you if you pray hard enough.* Some students made similar comments to the researchers. There is a danger that these students could see spending time at church rather than doing school work, as the way to assist school achievement.

They think God will look after you. It takes the control out of their hands, and the responsibility. It doesn't empower them. They thank God for their gifts and congratulate God for their achievements. It's not a celebration of them or of their effort. (Teacher)

Another concern in the relationship between the church and the school is the perception of many students that the church and parents blame the school for bad student behaviour and activities. Somehow the schools seem to be blamed as the source of alcohol, drugs, fighting. promiscuity and other bad behaviours. The students do not think this themselves but are aware that some churches promote this view.

Our Minister thinks that school is a bad influence on us. Parents talk at church, people talk at church and it feels bad because it is not true. (Student)

It is clear that if the students' interests are to be served and they are to be helped to achieve, there need to be changes in the relationship between the churches and the school and a sharing of information. At the moment, the competing pressures are one more major problem for students.

Families need to learn to finance themselves, their children, and their parents but maybe not the whole extended family and the church. The kids see it for what it is. God did not want people to be poor or kids to miss out or to fail. The kids see the hypocrisy and they know they are missing out. (Pacific teacher)

Some participants tried to explore possible ways in which things could be improved.

*How can the school mirror the strictness of the church when it goes against good teaching practice? We can't bring the school to the church so we will have to bring the church to the school. Get the ministers to come to school and preach to the students about staying healthy and staying alive. Invite them (ministers) to our school meetings so they can see what we do and stop being **stale** in their messages. If they are going to associate pride with giving money they need to talk to the kids about the importance of getting a good education and job in order to earn the money. (Pacific teacher)*

We have to face the churches. There has to be a balance for the sake of our children. They (the churches) are into controlling the students. They do not give the schools a chance. (Teacher)

*The church has to be the source of parent education. We need them to teach the Christian value of **honesty** in relation to the school. (Teacher)*

The church is the place to make changes happen. We can't do all the church things and our school work as well. (Student)

The ministers need to preach to the parents about how they can help their children succeed. Some of the youth leaders timetable school into the activities. That needs to happen more. The school could give its planner to the church so they can do their things to fit with school demands on children. Samoa practice doesn't finish until eleven p.m. The church has to get real about such things. (Pacific teacher)

The kids want to talk to their parents but they are afraid of the reaction and the church plays a really big part in this. Religion and culture clash with reality. The kids live with reality. (Pacific teacher)

The church is the place to target the messages that students and parents need to hear. Get the ministers in here (to the school) so they can understand it. So they can see the work we do and what the needs of our students are. (Pacific teacher)

6.5   CONCLUSION

Some families are either unwilling or unable to help and support their children in the ways they need in order to cope and achieve at school. Some family situations put extreme stress on the children. These schools need extra financial and staffing resources to help the students who will not receive the help they need from anywhere else.

Other families, however, want to help their children but are currently not managing to do so. There are clearly areas of misunderstanding and a lack of parent knowledge about how schools operate and the respective boundaries of the roles and responsibilities of the school and the roles and responsibilities of the parent(s). Currently the schools are not able, for a range of reasons, to communicate with and involve parents effectively. There is an urgent need for parent education about these issues. Language and cultural barriers are the first block to effective communication and these schools need to be resourced to allow this to happen.

Students also have a need to be able to communicate effectively with their parents in order to be able to have the types of support they need related to their education. The students need skills in order to do this and parents need to understand better the worlds their children live in, in order to be able to help them in appropriate ways. Some of the things parents do in an effort to ensure that their children succeed, such as putting on unrealistic pressure, making comparisons, and using guilt and shame, work against student self esteem and confidence and act as a barrier to motivation and success.

If education and educational achievement is a priority, parents will need to demonstrate this in practical ways by -

- encouraging their children in a positive way without threats, guilt, shame or comparisons

- listening to and talking with their children in order to understand their lives, pressures, needs and hopes

- ensuring children eat breakfast and have money for an appropriate lunch

- ensuring they have quality and uninterrupted time for homework and a quiet space in which to do it

- ensuring children get to school on time in the mornings and are in full uniform

- working actively with the school staff to understand the progress their child is making and attending school report evenings

- becoming informed about the school and its systems and being supportive of it by keeping staff informed of current contact information and anything else that affects the wellbeing of their child

- expecting, and working with the school to ensure, that students attend fully and regularly and not imposing family requirements that take them out of class during school time

- ensuring their children have the resources they need for their school work[20], and helping them to get into a routine that includes having their own equipment ready to take each day

- helping children to manage their time and to make choices that will ensure they have time for homework and assignments

- beginning early in their school life to establish homework and school study patterns rather than waiting until the senior years when it is too late

It will be greatly to the advantage of children if the schools and the churches can work together to ensure the students are getting consistent messages about their education and if the churches can organise activities so that the demands on young adolescents are realistic. Parents need to help their children to find a workable balance between competing priorities.

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[20] Where there are financial difficulties for a family, the schools are happy to ensure students are provided with the uniform and gear they need.