



**Te ohonga ake i taku moemoeā,
ko te puāwaitanga o ngā whakaaro:
The Moerewa School Story**

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Ngāi Tahu

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requirements for the degree

Doctor of Māori Development and Advancement

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to the 17 students who were in the Senior Class at Moerewa School in 2012, who exemplified success every day, through their leadership and tenacity to achieve culturally, socially and academically.

The never ending love, support and care that was shown to these amazing young women and men by their whānau and wider community must also be acknowledged. The insistence of their teachers, and support staff to believe always in their potential, and to do “whatever it takes” to guide these young people to success, is now also recognised, documented and mostly appreciated.

Nō reira, nei rā te whakamānawa ki a koutou. Aku nui, aku rahi, aku whakatamarahi ki te rangi, tēnā koutou katoa

Acknowledgements

This work has made it through to this final stage due to the help and support of many people. This is a collective achievement.

Firstly, I want to acknowledge the staff, students and community of Moerewa School from 2005 – 2014 when I had the privilege of being the Principal in the school. I learnt a great deal from all of you, and was humbled by your request for me to document this story on our behalf. I thank you all for your continued interest and support. I wish the community, the school, the staff and its students all the best for the future.

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*Tēnei ka whakamiha i a koutou e aku nui, e aku rahi, koutou kei aku poutuara, kei aku poutaunaki e kore e ārikarika aku kupu whakamihi i a koutou.
Ko te puna aroha e kore e mimiti.*

My final acknowledgements are to my own. To my husband David. My children, Chey, Blake, Georgia and Kairangi. You were all with me during the journey that was Moerewa School. You were impacted also. You stood solidly by my side and were

my constant source of safety and unconditional support. Your interest in this writing has been constant, and your help and encouragement have meant that I got this over the line! My roles as Mum, Nanny and Hon are the titles I'm the most proud of. Thank you all so much. E kore e mutu ngā mihi aroha ki a koutou.

To my mokopuna, Atareta, Te Haakura, Tiipare and Te Hiringa o te Raa, who think that everyone has a Nanny who sits on the sofa writing a Doctorate on their laptops, surrounded by whānau craziness, love and support.



I hope that this work, and the work of other educators means that the education system you engage with, treasures your Māori world view, and expects nothing less than for you to reach your fullest potential.

Me whakatipu ki te hua o te aroha, me whakapakari ki te hua o te mātauranga.

Nurture them with love, and strengthen them with education.

Abstract

On 23rd April, 2012 the Minister of Education disestablished the Board of Trustees at Moerewa School, a rural, predominantly Māori school in Northland, New Zealand, and appointed a Commissioner. The Commissioner's arrival in the school the very next day was recorded on national television and in print media in the day's national news. What happened in this small Māori community to invoke the highest level of statutory intervention from the Minister of Education, and what were the events that brought the school and community to such prominent national focus?

The Moerewa School experience is a story of a community and a people marginalised and rendered powerless in a Eurocentric education system. It is also a powerful counter-story. The events played out in the media, only told one part of the story. This case study uses the narratives of the Moerewa community who were actually involved, as students, parents, teachers, school leadership, and whānau, to tell the story from their perspective. This school's experience is mirrored in many similar schools and communities across the country, where statutory intervention, designed for schools defined as *failing*, should not have been the option. Their experiences, while possibly not as public, are stories of disempowerment in communities that were led to believe the education system gave them autonomy to shape an education model to fit their children.

The case of Moerewa School, and the Moerewa community's battle for educational sovereignty pitted white privilege and a monocultural, white-centred system, against a Māori community who were very clear about their aspirations which were Māori-centric. This *dream*, clearly articulated in the community's submission to the Ministry of Education in 2003, was that Māori knowledge, a Māori voice, history, tikanga and experiences be the foundation of their children's learning. The vision was driven by the whakapapa of the community's history and the history of the whānau involved. The ensuing battle was between an urban and centralised government bureaucracy and a small rural Māori community. The whānau and the

community brought their own experiences of colonisation and assimilation through the tools of education into the whakapapa of the struggle. The fact that key players in the government-led decisions were Māori added a further layer of complexity. The community is left with many scars from this battle. In many ways they believe they triumphed in the end. In other ways, and from the position of the students involved, they lost.

This is a Māori community. The study of this case was conducted under Kaupapa Māori research and Whakapapa methodologies. TribalCrit methodology also connected this study to the wider picture of the alienation of Indigenous youth from schooling and education on an international scale. Data was gathered in ways that were Māori-focused, through korero, with both individual and in groups, in locations chosen by the participants and in ways that they chose. This is a story which we will co-construct to accurately reflect the experiences of the participants. Ultimately, I hope it will be a story which will heal.

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Chapter One: A New Day Dawning

We believe that a person's passion unlocks their learning potential, and we want to provide opportunities for learning in a variety of mediums within the community, we believe that the community is part of the total learning environment of the child.
(Moerewa Community Submission, 2003)

In 2003 the Mid North region of Northland was involved in a Network Review imposed by the Labour Government of the time. This is the process followed by the Ministry of Education in order to reach a decision to restructure schooling in communities. Rather than have a possible merger or closure forced on the community, the people of Moerewa wrote a submission outlining the community's wishes regarding future education, philosophy, and direction. The submission made bold statements about education provision, with the key message that the current status quo in the existing schools was not going to assist the community's children to achieve. The submission talks about a "new day dawning" and describes the community's expectations that things will be different.

Each chapter in this thesis is introduced with a statement from the Moerewa Community Submission. These statements locate this story with the people who were affected most by the events this thesis describes.

Introduction

This research tells the story of Moerewa School's experience of being involved in a statutory intervention imposed on the school by the Minister of Education on 23 April, 2012. The particular focus of this research, and the intervention, was the formation of a senior secondary school class of 27 students. A statutory intervention can be imposed on a state or state integrated school by the Minister or Secretary of Education if they "have reasonable grounds to believe that the operation of a school or the welfare or educational performance of its students, is at risk" (Ministry of Education, 2014c, p. 4). In 2017 there are six types of statutory interventions, ranging from a requirement for the Board of Trustees to provide

specific information, to the dissolution of the Board and the appointment of a Commissioner to carry out all functions of the Board. In Moerewa School's case a Commissioner was appointed.

Moerewa School had strong community links and whānau support. The school actively engaged with whānau to determine the experiences and learning pathways for their children. The Moerewa community's applications and submissions to the Ministry of Education, are both the catalyst for this research, and the context of a Māori community, who tried to change the shape of education for their children.

Ko wai au?

Who am I to be conducting this research? It is important that I clarify my position given that it is multi-layered and embedded in this story.

*Ko Keri Milne-Ihimaera tōku ingoa
Ko Ruapuke te motu
Ko Motu Pōhue te maunga
Ko Te Ara a Kewa te moana
Ko Te Rau Aroha te marae
Ko Tuhawaiki te tangata
Ko Ngāi Te Ruahikihiki te hapū
Ko Ngāi Tahu te iwi*

I am a participant in the narrative, as the Principal of the school at the time a Commissioner was placed in the school and throughout the period of this intervention. I have since left this area after living within the community for 10 years. In my position as Principal of the school throughout this time, I played a lead role in implementing the actions that the Board of Trustees and the school took to develop a relevant education for their children. Through this role and through the whakapapa of my children, I am a member of this whānau . There are long-standing friendships and whānau relationships that ensure I will be accountable back to the school community and the wider community group.

The Moerewa Community Submission

On 4th September 2003, Education Minister Trevor Mallard initiated a Network Review of schooling in central Northland. The Network Review process imposed on communities was supposed to be consultative, however many communities felt intense pressure to make decisions which went against their better judgement. This was the case with Moerewa School and many others in this Network Review that were targeted for merger or closure. Rather than have a solution forced on the community by the Ministry of Education, the community decided to come together as a collective to talk about education plans in Moerewa. They held a series of five public meetings, and a working party was formed to bring together the final recommendations from the community. The community facilitated a debate and conducted a community ballot. The community submission outlines that one third of the Moerewa community was involved in these discussions and in reaching the final decision. The outcome was a recommendation from the community to close both existing primary schools and re-open as a new school. This decision was a difficult one, as many of the people involved had long-standing histories with the schools, and this recommendation would mean a whole new description of the delivery of education in Moerewa.

This Moerewa Community Submission (Moerewa Community, 2003) became the foundation document of the newly formed Moerewa School (a merger of the existing Moerewa Primary School with Otiria Primary School), and was used to set key strategic goals for the school and community. The submission is a key document in this study as it provides the context to the aims and objectives of Moerewa School from 2003 up until 2012 (when the statutory intervention was implemented). The submission outlines the wishes and desires of the community at the time, with regards to future education philosophy and direction. There are bold statements about education provision, and the overall message was that the current status quo in the existing schools was not going to assist the community's children to achieve. The submission talks about a "new day dawning" and describes the community's expectations that things will be different.

The Moerewa Community Submission also starkly highlights a common dilemma for Māori communities and whānau. It speaks about the escalating social problems for Māori whānau, grappling with the economic realities of unemployment, the growth of a sub-culture of illegal activities as whānau tried to survive in the community. These harsh realities are juxtaposed with the desire for the best education possible for their children, as a means of breaking this cycle. However, the community knows all too well, from previous experience, that they want something radically different, “a total change, not just tinkering around with existing systems.” They know too, even at this early stage, that they will meet resistance. The Submission states, “The biggest risk that we see to this process, is that the Ministry is not courageous enough to make significantly strong move into a different style of Education for our children and our whānau” (Moerewa Community , 2003, p. 1). The title for this thesis – comes from a whakatauki (proverb) used in this community submission; Te ohonga ake i taku moemoeā, ko te puāwaitanga o ngā whakaaro (Dreams become reality, when we take action).

The Research Purpose

During the statutory intervention at Moerewa School there was much that was discussed, assumed, and written by those outside of the school, that those inside the school felt was incorrect. This “misinformation” was often misleading and always dangerous. The idea of being able to tell our own, authentic “inside” story—in the community’s own words—was often spoken about by all who were involved. The opportunity to tell this story through research and writing was seen by the wider group of school staff involved as a powerful way to tell the authentic story and to look at the wider situation through a research lens. This suggestion was met with unanimous support from the staff involved in the school at the time.

This desire of the participants that the issue of the “Intervention Story” would not define the school and the community was the basis of the research “problem.” As a lead participant (and insider) in the story, I was very aware of all of the problem’s different parts. We wanted to be able to reclaim our own position of power, and

tell the story as participants in the struggle. The research is intended to tell the story on behalf of the students, staff, whānau and community of Moerewa School. In particular, it represents the impact of the intervention and the struggle on the students and whānau involved in the Senior Class. This is their story. This is our collective story.

These different groups will be able to see their voices represented in the research. A criticism from staff and whānau during the statutory intervention period was that there was no opportunity given for input from anyone else except from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry-appointed Commissioner. The research therefore, will reflect the community voices of those concerned. It is hoped the final thesis will document the important events that lead to the statutory intervention being imposed, as well as the impact of the intervention on the students, staff, whānau and community of the school.

Research Questions

This research is guided by the following three research questions:

1. How did Moerewa School support their community's aspirations for relevant education, *as Māori*?
2. How did institutional barriers impact on the realisation of the Moerewa community's dream
3. What lessons can be learned from this experience?

The Research Rationale

The story of Moerewa School is not an isolated incident in New Zealand's education landscape. As Wylie (2012, p. 1) observes, the policies and system introduced with *Tomorrow's Schools* (Department of Education, 1988) gave New Zealand the "most decentralized system of school self-management in the developed world."

While the devolution of the responsibility for school governance to local communities and parents in the 1990s was supposed to create a model of shared

power, the reality was that the power is still controlled by the State. Thrupp (2007, p. 254) observes that schooling, “long geared to the concerns and interests of the middle classes, remains so, and is even increasingly so in some ways.” He calls this education’s “inconvenient truth.” Against this middle class, white, advantage, was Moerewa School an easy target? The school’s low socio-economic, Māori community, is a common factor in Ministry of Education interventions. The Moerewa story will add new knowledge, and contribute to the gap in the literature, about the use of statutory interventions as a heavy-handed tactic, wielded by a powerful bureaucracy. While this is a case study about one specific school there are many other examples.

There is much for the community, and for the wider education community, to learn from this research. The research aims to:

1. Provide information about other communities who have been in similar situations locally, and nationally.
2. Identify both the common themes across these experiences, as well as the differences and circumstances that were unique to Moerewa.

Outline of Chapters

Chapter names are derived from a section of the Moerewa Community Submission that is relevant to the chapter content. A short quote from the excerpt chosen for the chapter is provided in italics after the chapter title.

Chapter 1: A New Day Dawning

“We believe that the community is part of the total learning environment of the child”.

This chapter introduces the issues faced by the community of Moerewa when it attempted to develop a model of education responsive to the needs of their predominantly Māori community. It outlines the questions that will guide the work and provides the context for the study. It also introduces my personal involvement

as the then Principal of Moerewa School, and locates me as a participant in the research story.

Chapter 2: Methodology and Methods

“Whānau are charged with the responsibility to seek the solutions.”

This chapter provides the theoretical and methodological framework for this study. The choice of methodologies and methods contained within Kaupapa Māori, and in particular, Whakapapa and TribalCrit methodologies – this will ensure that indigenous ways of thinking and knowing are central focus to this research. The methods of data collection using focus group interviews and online surveys are described and the process using NVivo (QSR International, 2016) coding and thematic analysis are explained.

Chapter 3: A Drafting Process

“We realised that at school there was a drafting process happening.”

This chapter examines the literature relevant to one side of the dilemma that the Moerewa submission clearly identifies: literature about Māori education and the aspirations of Māori for an education that fits their children. It also provides an overview of the different approach developed at Moerewa School between 2005 and 2011, before the statutory intervention.

Chapter 4: The Emperor has no Clothes

“This story tells us that if a lie is said often enough eventually people buy into it.”

In this chapter the other side of the dilemma—literature about New Zealand’s wider education system, the sweeping education reforms of the 1990s, the neoliberal agenda that underpinned these reforms, and the barriers they created for Moerewa—why “education has not worked for far too many children” as the Community Submission claimed—are examined. The chapter explores the policy and systemic background to school interventions, and their subsequent impact, professionally and personally, on those most often caught between the different factions involved—the school Principal. It identifies significant inconsistencies in

support, in the rationale, and in the processes used by the Ministry of Education to implement an intervention.

Chapter 5: The Dream

“Dreams become reality when we take action.”

This chapter provides the background and rich history of the Moerewa community, and the initiative they took, in the face of a Ministry of Education imposed network review, to dream big, and dream differently for their children. It has described the first successful steps towards that dream in the realisation of a successful application to change the class of the school to include Years 9 and 10.

Chapter 6: The Death of the Dream

“The Ministry is not courageous enough to make significantly strong move into a different style of education for our children and our whānau.”

This chapter outlines the sequence of events and actions that took the community and the school from being on the brink, they felt, of achieving their long-held dream, to having that dream destroyed. It describes the conflict over the senior students’ NCEA results, a conflict that became the focus of national news media, the Ministry of Education, and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority, and it describes the life of the school after the abrupt sacking of the Board of Trustees and the arrival of the Ministry-appointed Commissioner.

Chapter 7: The Heart of the Flaxbush

“It is people, it is people, it is people.”

This chapter presents the data collected via surveys and focus group interviews with the staff, community, and students of Moerewa School, as well as the data from a number of media articles that included interviews with participants. The chapter widens these data to include information gathered from other Principals who had also experienced statutory interventions in similar circumstances as Moerewa. The task of this chapter is to analyse these data to present the findings of

this research, to identify the themes from the data, and to answer the key research questions

Chapter 8: A Way Forward

“If you always do what you have always done, you will always get what you have always got.”

This chapter draws on the experience of the school, the students, the community and other Principals who have experienced similar interventions. It considers the final key research question, “What lessons can be learned from this experience?”

This chapter answers to that question. It raises new questions about what we learned, and what could be done differently and proposes a different way to approach the issues of schools needing support.

Chapter 9: A School of Passion

“Womb to the tomb, means learning is a lifetime process, fashioned around passion, need and excellence.”

This chapter provides the conclusion to the research. It provides an evaluation of how this learning contributes to new knowledge in the field of statutory interventions in schools in the future. It discusses the strengths and limitations of the study and finally offers possibilities for future research.

Conclusion

The study intended to accurately record the events that took place, from the community’s perspective, while providing a factual account of the intervention and the events leading up to this event, it will be received by the community, as a document that releases many of the burdens carried by individuals as well as the collective, and contributes towards healing in the community – and closure of this “hurt.”

It will also makes a contribution to the academic space by telling the story of a statutory intervention from the inside perspective, and documenting the

professional and person impacts felt by those involved. This will include proposing a new model for intervention, that brings together all of the insights, new learning and concerns about the existing model and suggests a more restorative perspective to replace the current control and compliance mechanism that is statutory intervention in schools.

Chapter Two: Methodology and Method

We believe the answer lies in working together, that all the stakeholders have a responsibility to seek solutions, and where whānau are involved in seeking solutions that we come up with very real, very tangible and very workable solutions, but the key to that is that whānau are charged with the responsibility to seek the solutions. (Moerewa Community Submission, 2003)

Introduction

The predominant theoretical framework for this study is Kaupapa Māori Theory. However two further theories, Whakapapa theory and Mana Wāhine, which also come under the umbrella of kaupapa Māori, are relevant to the circumstances experienced in the Moerewa story. This chapter is informed by these ways of knowing and also widens to consider theoretical understandings from other indigenous people, specifically Tribal Critical Race Theory which considers colonisation endemic in our society. The chapter describes methods of data collection and analysis, also through a Māori lens and identifies eleven themes and sub-themes that are evident in the data.

Theoretical Frameworks

Graham (2009a) uses the Māori notion of whakapapa as the basis for a research framework, that enables the Māori researcher to engage in research within their own Māori communities. Whakapapa theory and whakapapa methodology locate the research in a school, in a community, within an iwi, and it also locates me as the researcher within this whakapapa.

Pihama examines Mana Wāhine as a Kaupapa Māori Theory (Pihama, 2001). An unusual characteristic of the Moerewa story is that it was publicly played out, both in the media and in the events as they unfolded, between myself, as the school and community spokesperson, and the Minister of Education. This very public conflict pitted two very strong Māori women in polar opposite positions and clearly

demonstrated the power of one, albeit power derived from the predominant colonising framework, over the other. Mana Wāhine is definitely relevant to this aspect of the conflict and to the study.

Finally, a fourth theory will allow me to locate the experience of the Moerewa community in the wider context of indigenous struggle. The theoretical framework most relevant to this context is Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit) (Brayboy, 2005). The primary idea of TribalCrit is that colonisation is endemic to society. This theoretical framework places the focus on colonisation, imperialism, assimilation, and White supremacy, to further understand how and why educational sovereignty was denied the Moerewa community. TribalCrit is also closely aligned to, and in part derived from, Kaupapa Māori Theory. These theories are further explained in the following section.

Kaupapa Māori Theory

Kaupapa Māori underpins the methodology for this study as well as providing the theoretical framework for the actions of the Moerewa community and Māori whānau to reclaim and transform the education of their children.

Smith (1997) uses Kaupapa Māori theory as transformative theory, identifying its capacity building intent as crucial in this process. Inherent in kaupapa Māori are six key principles: tino rangatiratanga (the self-determination principle), taonga tuku iho (validation of cultural aspirations and identity), ako Māori (culturally preferred pedagogies and practices), kia piki ake i nga raruraru o te kainga (the mediation of socio-economic difficulties), whānau (the extended family structure principle), and kaupapa (the principle of collective, rather than individual, structures and philosophies). These are the everyday realities of Māori communities who struggle to develop stories that are counter to the hegemonic norms of our society. Smith (2003), also identifies six “critical sites of struggle in assisting indigenous communities and peoples to transform themselves.” He reminds us of Freire’s advice that we need to “first free ourselves before we can free others” (Freire,

1972). Smith's sites of struggle are summarised as spaces or sites where there is a need to understand and respond to:

- the unhelpful divide between indigenous communities and the Academy.
- the new formations of colonization
- the 'politics of distraction'; to move beyond being kept busy and engaged with liberal strategies.
- the construction of an ultimate vision of what it is that is being struggled for; there is a need to develop the 'end game'
- the struggle for the Academy; to reclaim the validity and legitimacy of our own language, knowledge and culture;
- to engage with the State to encourage the State apparatus to work for indigenous interests as well. (p. 4)

These sites of struggle certainly are evident in the Moerewa story. Indeed, with the substitution of the words, "Ministry of Education" for the word, "Academy" all six sites are relevant to the Moerewa struggle. Smith's notion of a cycle of conscientisation, resistance, and transformation describes the process the Māori community of Moerewa were engaged in. Although this concept was introduced by Freire (1972), who suggests a progression from conscientisation to action and struggle as the oppressed learn to "read the world" and act upon it, Smith maintains that this process for Māori whānau is not linear. In his model, all of the components are equal and are held simultaneously, and individuals and groups enter the cycle from different positions depending on their previous experience, and depending on the issue.

Smith (2003a) believes it was precisely the development of this mindset and thinking in Māori whānau in the 1980s in New Zealand that was the "real revolution" during this time, and which drove the initiatives to revitalise te reo Māori. He maintains that the "lesson of the Kaupapa Māori approach from New Zealand is that transformation has to be won on two broad fronts; a confrontation with the coloniser and a confrontation with ourselves" (p. 3).

Bishop (1999) seeks to identify how issues of epistemological racism are addressed in practice within an indigenous kaupapa (philosophy) Māori approach to research.

One fundamental understanding in a Kaupapa Māori approach to research is that the practice positions researchers in such a way as to ensure self-determination for research participants. This is because the aspirations, understandings, and practices of Māori people implement and organise the research process. Further, the research issues of power; initiation, benefits, representation, legitimisation, and accountability are addressed and understood in practice by practitioners of Kaupapa Māori research through the development of a participatory mode of consciousness. Walker, Eketone, & Gibbs (2006, p. 331) also speak of Kaupapa Māori as “both a form of resistance and a methodological strategy, wherein research is conceived, developed, and carried out by Māori, and the end outcome is to benefit Māori.” They make it very clear that what sets Kaupapa Māori research apart from other methodologies is the principle of tino rangatiratanga, which they translate as sovereignty, self-determination, governance, autonomy, and independence, “It is about a Māori-centred agenda where the issues and needs of Māori are the focus and outcomes” (p. 333). This is also the basis of whakapapa which is described in the next section.

Whakapapa Theory

Whakapapa is a fundamental principle in establishing a Māori world view. Graham (2009a) contends that whakapapa is a way of thinking, a way of storing and debating knowledge, and a way of linking the past, present and future, “The concept of whakapapa is consequently the all-inclusive interweaving mechanism that provides a legitimate foundation from which Māori research can be conducted and validated today” (p. 166).

Royal (1998, p. 4, cited in Graham 2009a, p.166) identifies whakapapa as an analytical tool used traditionally by Māori to understand the nature, origins, connections and relationships, trends, location and future of phenomena. Whakapapa allows us to examine the past, but also denotes growth and development into the future. Graham contends that Māori knowledge and a whakapapa “infrastructure” is already recognised as legitimate and, “Whakapapa

not only provides this 'space' but it also validates the rights and obligation of Māori to utilise it" (2009a, p. 167).

Graham identifies both traditional and contemporary notions of whakapapa. Both feature in this study in the traditional whakapapa of Māori whānau, hapu and iwi, and in the whakapapa of Moerewa School. Whakapapa theory also authenticates my position as I write "our story" as an insider in the research. Graham states:

Whakapapa for example is the credential that gives the author licence to be Māori; whakapapa identifies who I am, where I am from and in doing so identifies a place that I can proudly call my tūrangawaewae. It is this whakapapa knowledge that gives an individual or collective a sense of purpose that as Te Rito (2007a) reflects, grounds us to Papatūānuku. For instance, my whakapapa and iwi affiliations are my biological and kinship credentials that form my Māori identity and by alluding to my tūrangawaewae I have established a connection to my wāhi tapu. (2009b, p. 1)

According to Graham, whakapapa legitimates Māori knowledge, provides the basis for the organisation of this Māori knowledge and is a means and a way of acquiring new knowledge being the all-important link between the past, present and the future (2009b, p. 3).

Mana Wāhine Theory

Pihama (2001) contends that it would not have been necessary to develop Māori women's theories had colonisation, or the "imposition of racist, sexist, heterosexist, classist ideologies" (p. 257) not occurred. She argues that Mana Wāhine theory is a Kaupapa Māori theoretical framework that "attends to the multiple issues that are faced by Māori women." Irwin (1992) describes Mana Wāhine as a type of Māori feminism and also refers to these multiple and multi-faceted issues when she explains that:

Māori women must be provided with the time, space, and resources necessary to develop the skills to undertake this work, starting with the exploration, reclamation, and celebration of our herstories, our stories as Māori women. Mana wāhine, then, is a space where Māori women can, on our own terms and in our own way, (re)define and (re)present the multifarious stories and

experiences of what it means, and what it meant in the past, to be a Māori woman in Aotearoa New Zealand. (p. 7)

Mana Wāhine is relevant to the Moerewa experience in several ways. Firstly through the experience of Māori mothers and grandmothers, and their aspirations for their children's education. Mana Wāhine is also linked to the theory of whakapapa discussed earlier. Most of the literature on Mana Wāhine is related to the struggle of Māori women against a colonising history, and the right of Māori women to claim a space for themselves that sets them apart from the Pākehā feminist discourse.

A second and important struggle, which relates to Mana Wāhine in the Moerewa story seems to expose a major gap in the literature. How is Mana Wāhine theory relevant when two key people in the conflict, in fact in lead roles in the conflict or issue at stake, are both women and both Māori? This was not a struggle between me, as the female Māori Principal of Moerewa School and their designated spokesperson, against a Pākehā Minister of Education who made the decision to sack the Board of Trustees and close the Senior Class. I could have found plenty of literature relevant to the use and misuse of power and the denial of Māori rights had this been the case. However, many of the key players on the Ministry of Education's side of this conflict were in fact Māori. The Minister of Education and the local Te Tai Tokerau manager of the Ministry of Education were both Māori women. The Commissioner sent by the Minister of Education to replace the sacked board was also Māori. All three were carrying out the rules and regulations required by a white dominated and white regulated system, against a Māori community and a Māori Principal. On many occasions our community members commented that this was not a "Māori way" of relating or decision-making.

It is not difficult to rationalise why Māori, working in an institution such as the Ministry of Education, or the Government, struggle to find Māori spaces. Waitere and Johnston (2009, p. 19) aptly describe this situation as, "Where we are physically present, we are often vocally absent, while in the spaces where we are vocal, the forces of the already powerful act to deny our physical presence." It is harder to

understand why Māori in positions of power and authority use that power to disempower other Māori individuals and communities. Mikaere (1995) makes the point that colonisation has created an imbalance within Māori society, which in turn has been internalised by many as the truth. This disruption “destroyed the equilibrium between male and female.” I suggest in this case that colonisation and power also disrupted and destroyed harmony within and between wāhine Māori. The next section examines this damage from a wider international indigenous perspective.

Tribal Critical Race Theory

Tuck (2009, p. 413) describes the default for Western theory as a “theory of change” —“implicit in all social science research, maybe all research.” She calls it “damage-centred research” which documents pain or loss in an individual, community or tribe.” This position often portrays schools and communities as “broken, emptied or flattened.” This is certainly the case in the educational history of the community of Moerewa, and their submission to the Ministry of Education makes clear that they want to counter this mind-set. Critical Race Theory (CRT) has been utilised by indigenous scholars (Brayboy, 2005; Haynes-Writer, 2008) to examine and counter the effects of race and racism and, as Haynes-Writer explains, “as a mechanism to perform truth-telling—to speak back to colonization and oppression” (2008, p. 3).

While CRT focuses on race and racism, Brayboy (2005) has developed Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit) to address more completely the issues of Indigenous peoples. For Brayboy, this is Indigenous peoples in the United States, however the theory and the methodology are applicable to the situation for Māori in Aotearoa. The primary idea of TribalCrit is that colonisation is endemic to society and “colonisation” in Brayboy’s setting is defined as meaning that “European American thought, knowledge and power structures dominate present-day society in the United States” (p. 430). Brayboy summarises the nine tenets of TribalCrit as follows:

1. Colonization is endemic to society.
2. U.S. policies toward Indigenous peoples are rooted in imperialism, White supremacy, and a desire for material gain.
3. Indigenous peoples occupy a liminal space that accounts for both the political and racialized natures of our identities.
4. Indigenous peoples have a desire to obtain and forge tribal sovereignty, tribal autonomy, self-determination, and self-identification.
5. The concepts of culture, knowledge, and power take on new meaning when examined through an Indigenous lens.
6. Governmental policies and educational policies toward Indigenous peoples are intimately linked around the problematic goal of assimilation.
7. Tribal philosophies, beliefs, customs, traditions, and visions for the future are central to understanding the lived realities of Indigenous peoples, but they also illustrate the differences and adaptability among individuals and groups.
8. Stories are not separate from theory; they make up theory and are, therefore, real and legitimate sources of data and ways of being.
9. Theory and practice are connected in deep and explicit ways such that scholars must work towards social change (2005, pp. 429–430)

Critical Race theory has been utilised by indigenous scholars (Brayboy, 2005; Haynes-Writer, 2008) to examine and counter the effects of race and racism.

Brayboy clearly identifies the disconnect between Western and indigenous attitudes towards research when he tells his relatives and elders of a colleague's comment that people like him "told good stories" but added that, because of this he might never be a good theorist. His mother commented, "Baby, doesn't she know that our stories are our theories? And she thinks she's smarter than you because she can't tell stories?" (2005, p. 426). As Brayboy points out, locating theory as something missing or absent from stories is problematic in indigenous communities, and the story is central to the theory and the methodology of the study of the conflict between the Moerewa community and school, and the Ministry and Minister of Education. It is a classic David and Goliath story, with power, racism and colonisation at its centre.

These are all relevant principles and "truths" which apply to the Moerewa story and which make TribalCrit an important theoretical framework and methodology to underpin this study. The use of the tenets of TribalCrit locate the Moerewa story in

the experiences of indigenous people the world over in their struggle to contest and change the educational landscape for their children. These indigenous struggles provide the wider context to the Moerewa situation. This is not simply the story of the struggle of a small, rural Māori community, it is a struggle replicated in indigenous communities across the globe. However, the Moerewa community is a Māori community in Aotearoa. The children and whānau involved are Māori and the background to the story is the battle of Māori whānau for an education which fits. While TribalCrit will be used to support the methodology in this study, the primary theory and methodology used will be Māori.

The Moerewa School experience is a powerful counter-story. It is also a story of a community and a people marginalised and rendered powerless in a Eurocentric education system. It is a story played out in the media, which only scratches the surface and does not get close to the truth or the background journey. For these reasons Kaupapa Māori theory and methodology and Critical Race theory and methodology with their focus on storytelling and counterstorytelling are relevant to this study.

Kaupapa Māori methodology

The terms “Kaupapa Māori” and “theory” have been deliberately linked by Graham Smith (1997). Intrinsic to Kaupapa Māori theory is the critique of power structures in Aotearoa that historically have constructed Māori people in binary opposition to Pākehā, reinforcing the discourse of Māori as the “other.” Kaupapa Māori theory aligns itself with Critical Theory in that it seeks to expose power relations that perpetuate the continued oppression of Māori people (Pihama, 1993).

In Kaupapa Māori methodology collaborative stories focus “on [researcher] connectedness, engagement, and involvement with the other research participants within the cultural world view/discursive practice within which they function” (Bishop, 2005, p. 118). In this type of storying, the researcher and the participants co-construct meaning and jointly reflect on shared experiences, in what Bishop &

Glynn (1999, p. 176), call spiral discourse. This requires the researcher and the participants to continually “cycle” the information as it is gathered, checking back with participants to ensure collective understanding and agreement. It also requires that the questions originate with the research participants’ knowledge and understanding and that questions regarding who initiated the research problem, who is advantaged or disadvantaged, who is represented, and how, who are the researchers accountable to, are considered.

Similarly, Smith (1999, p. 143) believes, “that researchers have to clarify and justify their intentions,” when working within an indigenous framework where methodology has to be concerned with the broader politics and strategic goals of indigenous research. Smith also asks about accountability and initiation: Who defined the research problem? For whom is this study worthy and relevant? Who says so? What knowledge will the community gain from this study? These questions, in relation to the Moerewa community and to the Moerewa School research are answered on the next page in Table 1 (Smith,1999).

Pihama (2010, p. 5) describes the evolution of Kaupapa Māori theory and research. Kaupapa Māori as she explains is shaped by the knowledge and experiences of Māori, “It is a theoretical framework that has grown from both Mātauranga Māori and from within Māori movements for change.” Pihama states:

Kaupapa Māori is transformative. To think and act in terms of Kaupapa Māori while experiencing colonisation is to resist dominance. This is not something in which Māori alone are engaging. It is the experience of vast numbers of indigenous peoples across the world. (p. 6)

Table 1: Accountability for research

Who initiated the research?	<p>During the Statutory Intervention at Moerewa School there was much that was discussed, assumed and written by those outside of the school, that those of us 'inside' the school felt was incorrect. This 'misinformation' was often misleading and always dangerous. The idea of being able to tell our own, 'authentic' story – in our own words – was often spoken about by all who were involved.</p> <p>The opportunity to tell this story through research and writing was seen by the wider group of school staff involved as a powerful way to tell the authentic story and to look at the wider situation through a research lens. This suggestion was met with unanimous support from the staff involved in the school at the time, and I agreed that I would do this.</p>
Who defined the research problem?	<p>The participants and their desire that the "Intervention Story" would not define the school and the community defined the research problem. As a lead participant in the story, I was very aware of all of the problem's different parts. We wanted to be able to reclaim our own position of power, and tell the story as participants in the struggle.</p>
Who is represented?	<p>The research is intended to tell the story on behalf of the students, staff, whanau, and community of Moerewa School. In particular, it represents the impact of the intervention and the struggle on the students and whānau involved in the Senior Class. This is their story.</p>
For whom is this study worthy and relevant?	<p>These different groups mentioned above will be able to see their voices represented in the research. A criticism from staff and whānau during the Statutory Intervention period—was that there was no opportunity given for input from anyone else—except from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry-appointed Commissioner.</p>
Who says so?	<p>The research will reflect the community voices of those concerned. It is hoped the final thesis will document the significant events that lead to the Statutory Intervention being imposed, as well as the impact of the Intervention on the students, staff, whanau, and community of the school.</p>
What knowledge will the community gain from this study?	<p>There is much for the community to learn from this research, It will provide them with information about other communities who have been in similar situations locally, nationally and across the world. It will identify both the common themes across these experiences, as well as the differences and circumstances, which were unique to Moerewa.</p> <p>The thesis is intended to be seen as an accurate record of the events that took place, from the community's perspective. While providing a factual account of the intervention and the events leading up to this event, it will be received by the community, as a document that releases many of the burdens carried by individuals as well as the collective, and contributes towards healing in the community – and closure of this "hurt."</p>
Who is the researcher accountable to?	<p>As the researcher, I have now left this community after living within the community for 10 years. In my role as Principal of the school throughout this time I played a lead role in implementing the actions the Board of Trustees and the school took to develop a relevant education for their children. Through this role and through whakapapa I am a member of this whanau. There are long standing friendships and whānau relationships that ensure I will be accountable back to the school community and the wider community group.</p>

Royal (1998) outlines Mātauranga Māori as theory, and whakapapa as research methodology. Pihama further explains that mātauranga Māori is created by the use of whakapapa which in itself is an analytical tool used by Māori as a means to understand our world and relationships. George (2010, p. 245) further expands on Royal's idea of whakapapa as a means of analysis. Just as people have a whakapapa, so too do events. By searching back along the lines of whakapapa, it is possible to locate an event in its preceding history and in context.

The case of Moerewa School and the community's battle for educational sovereignty pitted White privilege and a monocultural, White-centred system against a Māori community who were very clear about their aspirations that Māori knowledge, a Māori voice, history, tikanga and experiences be the foundation of their children's learning. This would be driven by the whakapapa of the community's history and the history of the whānau involved. The battle was between an urban and centralised government bureaucracy and a small rural Māori community. The whānau and the community brought their own experiences of colonisation and assimilation through the tool of education into the whakapapa of the struggle. The fact that key players in the government-led decisions were Māori added a further layer of complexity. The community is left with many scars from this battle. In many ways they believe they triumphed in the end. In other ways, and from the position of the students involved, they lost.

The methodology which has the most potential to be transformative in this story therefore sits under the umbrella of Kaupapa Māori, but goes a further step to locate the story within the tribal and Māori setting of Moerewa. Graham (2009a & 2009b) has developed a methodology he calls Whakapapa Methodology and this framework I believe is the one best suited to the detail of the Moerewa story.

Whakapapa Methodology

In his Doctor of Philosophy thesis; *Whakatangata Kia Kaha, Toitū te Whakapapa, Toitū te Tuakiri, Toitū te Mana —An examination of the contribution of Te Aute*

College to Māori Advancement, (Graham, 2009a) introduces the notion of Whakapapa Methodology. His thesis utilises the Māori notion of whakapapa as the basis for a research framework, that enables the Māori researcher to engage in research within their own Māori communities. The context for his research was Te Aute College.

His thesis initially looks at the first 150 years of history of Te Aute College and brings this to identify the special character of the school in these modern times. In his thesis, three interconnecting themes emerge: The Te Aute Experience, The Contribution of Te Aute College, and the theme of collaboration. He analyses these themes in conjunction with the whakapapa of the College and the role of Te Aute in the future to sustain its contribution to the advancement of Māori.

In keeping with Māori thinking, whakapapa is a fundamental principle in establishing a Māori world view. Graham contends that whakapapa is a way of thinking, a way of storing and debating knowledge, and a way of linking the past, present and future. The concept of whakapapa is consequently the all-inclusive interweaving mechanism that provides a legitimate foundation from which Māori research can be conducted and validated today (p. 2).

Graham's thesis links to my work as research about the story of a school, and the recording of its important and significant history. However, this thesis also is of interest to me as I write as an "insider" in the research. Graham states (2009b, p. 1):

Whakapapa for example is the credential that gives the author licence to be Māori; whakapapa identifies who I am, where I am from and in doing so identifies a place that I can proudly call my tūrangawaewae. It is this whakapapa knowledge that gives an individual or collective a sense of purpose that as Te Rito (2007a) reflects, grounds us to Papatūānuku. For instance, my whakapapa and iwi affiliations are my biological and kinship credentials that form my Māori identity and by alluding to my tūrangawaewae I have established a connection to my wāhi tapu. (2009b, p. 1)

Similarly, Graham is an “insider” in his research. Whakapapa links him to the Māori tribal area where Te Aute College is situated, and he is also a past student of the College. Rather than defend his position as an insider in this research, his whakapapa methodology legitimises his position and his links to the school, and in fact possibly places him in an even more suitable position to carry out the research.

Whakapapa acts as a control and a balancing factor that efficiently facilitates the role of the researcher when engaging in research with their Māori community, a whakapapa-centred approach to research utilises this *modus operandi* where alliances and networks are strengthened by multiple layers of whakapapa (2009, p. 162).

Graham explains that a whakapapa approach allows the researcher to get close to the experiences and feelings of all the participants in a mutually beneficial relationship, which extends throughout the research process and beyond. This close relationship allows the discovery of experiences together, rather than an assumption of what people think and feel by the researcher.

Utilising this research methodology, connections between the research participants, the research, and the setting would be explored. These would then link with the narratives, histories, personal aspirations, concepts, metaphors, symbols, and individual stories that were shared. In Graham’s thesis, he also used questionnaires to complement the interview questions – and enable the voice of the ‘other’ to be heard. He deliberately designed questions and questionnaires to enable subjective and objective data, and qualitative and quantitative data to be gathered.

Utilising whakapapa methodology is one way of ensuring that “indigenous knowledge, voices and experiences” (Smith, 2005, p. 87) are recognised as part of this research study. This methodology is about being connected to the community and the study you are researching—as part of the research—and recognising all the previous, current, and future connections to the place and the story in the research.

Ensuring that an authentic indigenous perspective is evident in the research and that the methodology used will be transformative and critical is an important consideration. By choosing to utilise the approaches contained within Kaupapa Māori, and in particular, Whakapapa and TribalCrit methodologies – this will ensure that indigenous ways of thinking and knowing are a central focus to my research – rather than “add-ons” to another way of thinking that is in conflict with basic Māori values and indigenous world views. Similarly, a Māori lens is essential in the methods of data collection and analysis described in the next sections.

Methods

Researcher Position: Whakapapa

Ko wai au? Who am I to be conducting this research, and what methods will I use to fit the Māori preferences of the research participants? It is important that I clarify my position given that it is multi-layered and embedded in this story.

I became the Principal of Moerewa School in 2005 and was appointed specifically to implement the community’s vision for an education that was different, and an education that was Māori. Obviously, my whakapapa does not connect me to Moerewa or to Ngati Hine. My children however whakapapa directly to the North, through their father’s whakapapa. We had moved to Te Tai Tokerau specifically to reconnect our children with their links to Ngapuhi. Our three daughters all attended Moerewa School for their primary education. Our second daughter was a student in the developing Senior Class at Moerewa School and her education was significantly impacted, as were all the other students, by the statutory intervention and the closure of the class. I am therefore connected to this story as an educator in a lead role, as a Māori educator, as a Māori woman, as a wife and a mother of those closely connected to the community through whakapapa, and as a parent of a student personally affected. I am very aware this is not my story, but I am intricately woven into the whakapapa of the journey and so am very much a participant and an “insider” in the story and the research. My connection with the

community and the school are longstanding and ongoing as a member of the wider whānau.

Challenges

This close connection also brings its ethical challenges. I no longer hold a position of authority in the school, which alleviates to some extent the issue of power relations. I have access to “unobtrusive data,” to documents, minutes, records and communication, both electronic and written. Much of this type of data during the term of this story was written by me or to me in the form of reports and records of meetings. Much of this story was also public, in the form of News items and other media, in newspaper articles and radio or print interviews. I also have access to material requested by others under the Official Information Act, and subsequently made public in the media.

My challenge was to compare and check these data using primary sources such as focus group interviews as ‘he kanohi kitea’ (the seen face) with those who were directly involved. Against the wealth of written and public information, and often in stark contrast to the assumptions made as a result of this information, are the truths as experienced by the 27 students who were in the disbanded Senior Class and the whānau of these young people. Gathering these stories must be empowering for these participants who still feel the “mamae,” (pain)—as does the school and community. The students concerned are now all adults. My selection process was simply to invite anyone who wanted to participate to do so. I acknowledge there are some who were so traumatised by the events they may not want to revisit them, and there are others, a much bigger group I believe, who passionately wanted their voices heard. I respect the strong and very legitimate feelings of both.

I am very aware that the community story is significantly different from the story portrayed by the Ministry of Education. The ‘official’ story will be reported factually from the wealth of data which exists in the public domain. However, this very public story has been what Love (2004, p. 229) refers to as “majoritarian” stories —

“the description of events as told by members of dominant/majority groups, accompanied by the values and beliefs that justify the actions taken by dominants to insure their dominant position.” Solórzarno and Yosso (2002, p. 28) explain:

Specific tools used in the construction of majoritarian stories serve to obscure white privilege and cause it to appear as normal, natural, and ordinary. These tools include such devices as fostering invisibility, making assumptions of what is normative and universal, promoting the perspective that schools are neutral and apolitical, promoting the myth of meritocracy, endorsing the notion that there is equal educational opportunity for all, referencing dominants as “people” while “othering” subordinates.¹

The story of the participants is the counter-story to the public majoritarian story. Data was gathered in ways that are Māori, through korero, both individual and in groups, in locations chosen by the participants and in ways that they chose. At all stages, the story was discussed further, or checked back with the whanau. This is a story that is co-constructed, and a story I am very aware needs to reflect accurately the experiences of the participants.

Participation

Initially, I planned to access data that was already in the public domain. The events that occurred in Moerewa during the statutory intervention were played out in the media and in the wider community. I would also be able to include my own deep knowledge of what took place during the intervention. This plan was formulated in the early stages when it seemed that the Moerewa School Board of Trustees, still composed of Ministry of Education appointees, was reluctant to offer their full support to my research. They feared that this would stir up the emotions of the past and make it hard for the school to move forward positively in the future. I also felt that, five years on, the issue might have been more important in my mind than it was in the community’s memory. I planned to interview a small number of

¹ See also Milne (2013 & 2016). There is also a relatively long history of media bias internationally and within Aotearoa New Zealand representing people of colour in deficit ways and in negative statistics (see Barclay, Liu, 2003, Shields, Bishop & Mazawi, 2005).

people, either individually or in focus groups, who would be representative of all of the stakeholder groups.

However, in June 2017 I was invited by the Board of Trustees of Moerewa School to attend a community meeting, convened by the board, “to assist with the bringing together of all parties, to heal the mamae that was caused by the intervention 2012 – 2014.” Earlier that year, the school had tried to engage the community in the school’s new strategic direction by holding a meeting at the local marae. At that meeting the school Principal was asked by community members what he and the school board had done to acknowledge the intervention that had occurred and, more importantly, what was the school doing to assist the school’s community to move forward. The community felt they were unable to support the future of the school when, in their minds, the school had done little to acknowledge the past events.

The Moerewa School Principal and the Board of Trustees met urgently following that community meeting and decided that they did need to take action to recognise the effects of the intervention and to work with the community to acknowledge the pain and suffering of the affected students, staff, and whānau. The second community meeting and the invitation to me to attend and explain my research proposal, was the result of this decision.

The combined Board of Trustees and community meeting was held on 21st July, 2017 at Moerewa School. It was obvious at that meeting that the feelings about the intervention from community members, past and current staff, and whānau were still strong. Many were emotional, and all had a strong desire to acknowledge the effects of the intervention on the Moerewa community. It may be unusual to present data in this chapter, however, I feel it is appropriate given the nature of this thesis and to provide specific examples to show the level of frustration and hurt that the community felt. These comments made by individuals at the meeting were typical of this feeling:

It was like the government rounded us up like a herd of cows to the slaughter. It was like it all went 'poof' – gone! (BM, Community member).

What happened five years ago destroyed the trust between the community and the school. In the past, we'd fill this hall at a hui. Look now (LM, Educator).

I'm still pretty angry! Five years later, \$275,000 of our kids' money later, he was gone. That's the reality (PR, Community member).²

It became clear that the school's community was very invested in this research work, and they saw this as a way of ensuring their voices were heard, and the story was told from their perspective. My challenge therefore was how to widen my participant group to make it possible for anyone who wanted to contribute to have space to do so. While a strong core group of those involved are long-term community residents, who still live in Moerewa, others who were stakeholders at the time of the intervention are now dispersed across New Zealand, and some are in Australia. This is particularly the case for the young people who were students in the Senior Class at the time.

Cultural considerations

In addition to the fact that some key participants were no longer in the community, there was the need to approach the gathering of information from a kaupapa Māori perspective. The fundamental beliefs about reciprocity and being "he kanohi kitea" is explained by Smith (1999, p. 15), as part of how one's credibility is continually developed and maintained. It was important therefore that I ensure that participants had a choice of face-to-face, semi-structured focus groups as well as the opportunity to respond individually via an online survey.

Use of names

Names are extremely important to Māori, and this had to be respected. All participants, in all types of data collection, were given the choice to use their full

² From notes taken at the community hui on 21 July, 2017 at Moerewa School.

name, their first name only, or not to use their name at all. Most wanted their names used.

However institutional requirements (of TWWoA) have asked that I protect those who made disclosures. It was felt that some participants may need to be shielded from possible personal and/or professional repercussions in the future. While I am respectful of the participants' wishes to reject anonymity and to publically own their comments, I also would not want to cause any potential issues in the future. For this reason, I have coded respondents' names, to ensure anonymity. This also covered off the ethical considerations for the TWWoA Research Ethics Committee. See Appendices A, B and I.

Case Study

The overarching method of this case was a single case study of one specific school. Burns (2000, p. 461) noted historical case studies trace the development of an organisation/system over time. This method was used to investigate the changes that took place in Moerewa school during the period under review. In highlighting elements or benefits of case studies, According to Stake (2005, p. 444) case study "concentrates on experiential knowledge of the case and close attention to the influence of its social, political, and other contexts." He uses the term, "instrumental case study" (p. 445) to describe a particular case that examines its depth and its context but helps our understanding of interests external to the case. The potential of the issues examined in the Moerewa School experience to highlight and advance our understanding of statutory interventions is an example of this type of case study. Anderson and Arsenault (1998, p. 249) defined case studies as 'an empirical investigation ... [and] ... a qualitative form of inquiry that relies on multiple sources of information'. These authors suggest that in conducting case studies, researchers typically use seven sources of evidence: documentation, file data, interviews, site visits, direct observation, participant observation and physical artefacts (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998, p. 155). However, they also argued that the interview is the prime

source of case study data. The majority of these sources of evidence were utilised in the current study.

Data Collection

Information was available from a wide range of sources. Data fell into eight broad categories (see Table 2). Data analysis and the identification of themes are outlined in detail in the last section in this chapter.

Table 2: Data collection sources

Focus Groups discussions	Conducted with community members, Moerewa School staff, Principal colleagues, former students, and family members
Online surveys	Open to all who were involved in Moerewa School at the time of the statutory intervention. Also surveys of other Principals who were involved in statutory interventions in their schools
Moerewa School documents	Official school documents written by me and school staff, public documents, accessed with Board of Trustees' knowledge, School Newsletters, School website
Kia Aroha College documents	Official school documents between Moerewa and Kia Aroha College, public documents, accessed with the Kia Aroha College Board of Trustees' knowledge
Media	Newspaper articles, television programmes, radio interviews about Moerewa School and the statutory intervention
Personal records	Emails, letters, meetings, discussion, personal writing – my own and other personal documentation provided to me by others
Publicly available records	Board of Trustees minutes, Education Review Office Reports, Annual Reports, School Charter, Student achievement data and analysis of variance
Official Information Act documents	Requests were made via the Official Information Act by myself, Kia Aroha College, other Principals, journalists, and politicians

Focus Group Interviews

Krueger and Casey (2014) explain focus groups as follows:

The purpose of conducting a focus group is to better understand how people feel or think about an issue, idea, product, or service. ...Participants are selected because they have certain characteristics in common that relate to the topic of the focus group. The researcher creates a permissive environment that encourages participants to share perceptions and points of view without pressuring participants to vote or reach consensus. (p. 2)

Krueger and Casey identify five characteristics of focus groups: (1) a small group of people who (2) possess certain characteristics, (3) provide qualitative data, (4) in a focused discussion (5) to help understand the topic of interest. This describes the

nature of the discussion groups who met with me, *kanohi ki te kanohi* in Moerewa following the combined board and community hui in 2017. Although some open-ended questions were prepared as a guide for discussion, in practice most of these were not used other than to start the conversation, which then developed as participants bounced ideas off each other as each added their information to the collective. Occasionally, I used a question or comment to refocus the discussion, or to ask for further information or input, but my role was primarily that of a listener and observer.

I conducted face-to-face focus group interviews with three groups of participants: a group of seven teachers who were working at Moerewa School at the time of the intervention, a group of six community members—parents, grandparents, board members, and support staff, and with two Principals who were local colleagues at the time of the intervention. Other participants from these groups, who were unable to attend the group discussions, participated in the online surveys. These different groups gave me the opportunity to collect, compare, and contrast a range of opinions. All of these discussions were electronically recorded with the participants' consent.

Online Surveys

Wright (2006) discusses the advantages and disadvantages of online surveys. Advantages include the ability to access individuals who might not be able to participate in any other way, the saving of time by enabling researchers to continue working on other tasks while the survey is collecting data online, and the capability of survey software to analyse data and produce reports. One disadvantage particularly relevant to a community such as Moerewa, where access to the internet could be limited for a variety of reasons, is that in any community, some individuals are more likely than others to complete an online survey. In Moerewa's case the online survey was both an opportunity for those who had participated in the community meeting, or the focus groups to add further comments via the

survey, and also to reach out to those who had been unable to contribute in the face to face options.

An online survey (Appendix G) (Survey Monkey Inc, 2017) was set up, and the web link to this survey was widely distributed. Those whose contact details were known were asked to forward the link to others. The community members who attended the community meeting were invited to participate, and were asked to pass the survey link on to their family members and networks. I circulated the survey link through my own personal networks via social media and email, again with the invitation to pass on to others. I also sent the link to the social media pages of Otiria Marae, and Ngāti Hine, where it was promoted. Others passed the link on to other social media pages, such as Te Tai Tokerau. The intent was to honour the undertaking given to the 21 July 2017 community meeting to give as many people as possible the opportunity to contribute. Twenty seven participants completed the survey (Appendix G) which included both multiple-choice and open-ended questions. These participants represented range of students, parents, community members and staff (Figure 1). I note it is not usual to report the data collected in the study whilst discussing the methods for collecting and analysing it. However, to highlight the range of participants and respondents to certain methods, I have chosen to highlight these where necessary.

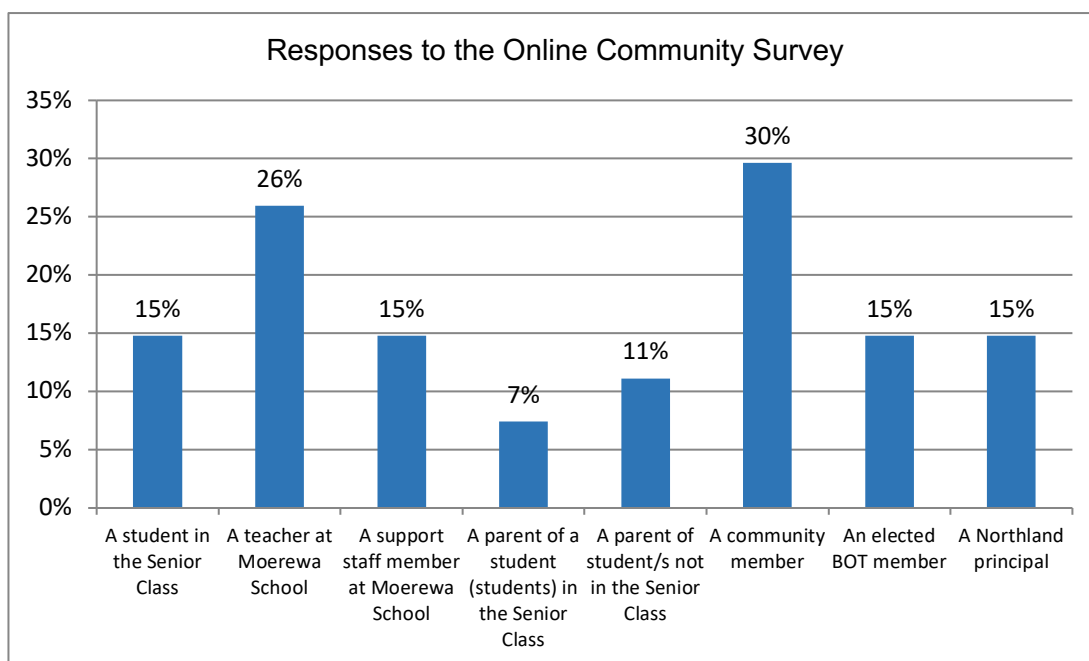


Figure 1: Online Community Survey Responses, 2017

A further four students contributed information through emails and letters, and five attended the community meeting. Several survey participants also took part in the focus group interviews. Four Northland Principals participated in the survey and a further two engaged in the focus group interview.

A second online survey (Appendix H) was sent to Principals who were known to have had statutory interventions in their schools. Again, those who were known were asked to invite others to participate. This data allowed me to compare my experience as a school leader with others in similar circumstances to identify patterns, similarities and differences. Text answers from the surveys were analysed and categorised according to recurring themes and comments. The analysis and identifying of themes in the data is described in the next section.

Data Analysis

Spencer, Ritchie, and O'Connor (2003, p. 202) describe qualitative data as "usually voluminous, messy, unwieldy and discursive." This is certainly the case with the wealth of data related to the Moerewa story. The task is to reduce this wide variety

of data into its core meaning, by identifying key themes, concepts and categories, by looking for patterns of agreement, or disagreement across the different stakeholder groups.

At the heart of this data analysis were the key research questions:

1. How did Moerewa School support their community's aspirations for relevant education, *as Māori*?
2. How did institutional barriers impact on the realisation of the Moerewa community's dream
3. What lessons can be learned from this experience?

Telling the Story

Analysing and reducing the data into manageable themes and concepts, that relate to the key questions and research purpose is one task. Spencer, Ritchie, and O'Connor (2003, p. 214) cite Lofland's (1971) explanation of this process:

Qualitative analysis asks such questions as: what kinds of things are going on here? What are the forms of this phenomenon? What variations do we find in this phenomenon? That is, qualitative analysis is addressed to the task of delineating forms, kinds and types of social phenomena; of documenting in loving detail the range of things that exist. (Lofland, 1971, p.13)

The "documenting in loving detail" is a crucial part of this process for me. This is a community story, a powerful story that belongs to the people of Moerewa, the former students, the parents and whānau, the community members, the teachers – past and present – of Moerewa School. It is not intended, nor helpful, therefore to create the story in a way that is not accessible or meaningful to the community or that does not honour the power of their voices or their pain. At the heart of Kaupapa Māori and critical race methodologies is counter-storytelling that names colonising and racist practice. In the Moerewa story this puts a Māori worldview at the centre of the analysis to co-construct a narrative that respects the participants' quest for truth. As the storyteller, given this responsibility by the community, I am keenly aware of the need to fulfil that expectation.

Thematic analysis

Bowkett (2015) explains that Kaupapa Māori theory requires that the analysis of data is “focused on the concept of interpretation of data and understanding of the phenomena under investigation, which are reliant on personal knowledge, understanding and world view” (p. 66). This requires an informed awareness of Māori systems, knowledge, people, and processes. Bowkett acknowledges that the researcher’s level of knowledge can be labelled as a form of bias in the execution and interpretation of data, but explains:

Kaupapa Māori acknowledges that such biases may exist and requires the researcher to use their cultural knowledge in the analysis phase. Thus Kaupapa Māori theories affirm and advocate for the researcher to acknowledge the validity of Māori knowledge and to utilise this knowledge and a Māori worldview in the interpretation and analysis of the data. Pivotal to the analysis is the researcher’s ability to appropriately interpret and understand information that is interwoven with tikanga Māori, Māori knowledge and understandings. (p. 66)

This Māori understanding is implicit in the voices of the Moerewa students, staff, and community as well as in the opinions expressed by fellow Te Tai Tokerau Māori Principals. This understanding, and my interpretation of this worldview is woven into this analysis.

A key issue in the analysis and writing up of the data in this chapter is its accessibility to the Moerewa community and my accountability to them to tell their story with their voices and their knowledge. Pihama (2010, p. 10) observes that “Māori academics often speak of being caught in the bind between our communities and the academy.” She explains the dilemma for Māori researchers between the expectations of what constitutes a thesis and theory from the university, and the fact that their priority audience is their whānau and wider Māori community.

This analysis also takes whakapapa methodology, as described in Chapter 2, into account. Paki and Peters (2015, p. 50) describe whakapapa as a “layering of

knowledge” examining the interconnections between the people in their data. This was very relevant to the data collected from Moerewa participants. It is impossible to analyse these data without understanding the whakapapa and whanaungatanga of the participants. How can you classify information from one participant as “Moerewa staff” or “Moerewa community” or “parent of a Moerewa student” when the participant belongs to all three groups, and more? Whānau connections and the understanding of these different relationships are integral to this analysis. Where one such participant made the same statement, or expressed the same opinion in two different focus groups, or in the survey and a focus group, that comment was coded once. When the same person expressed either different opinions in the respective forums, or had a slightly different angle as a parent, or as a staff member on the same point, these were coded and counted separately.

However, analysing and identifying themes from the data was not always about numbers. As Braun and Clark (2017) observe, “Although occasionally reporting percentages or frequencies is useful, in general we argue no, it not better to report percentages or frequencies.” They cite Pyett (2003) who argues that “counting responses misses the point of qualitative research.” They further explain that just because a certain opinion or theme in the actual data is absent, we cannot assume it is unimportant because “we have no way of interpreting what is not reported in qualitative data.”

The focus group interviews are an example of this reality. Often, one person would make a comment and there would be a chorus of voices agreeing, or others visibly nodding in agreement. The comment would be coded as one person’s opinion, whereas in fact almost everyone affirmed that point of view. Some numbers and percentages are used in the analysis, but most often expressions such as “a common theme” or “many (or most) participants agreed that...” in preference to percentages and frequency.

Reflexivity

These very Māori understandings and interrelationships are echoed, albeit from a different perspective, by Pyett (2003, p. 1171) when she describes the process of analysis in qualitative research as one that “involves continuous reflexivity and self-scrutiny.” She explains that reflexivity operates as we ask ourselves:

How might my knowledge, position, and experience be shaping my analysis? Reflexivity can include checking our method, our analysis, and our interpretation not only with the academic literature but also with the population we are researching, either by working collaboratively or by having a “critical reference group,” which should include a range of stakeholders critical to the study. (p. 1171)

This has certainly been the case with this process of analysis as I have repeatedly sent off themes, sections of text, or whole chapters, and my thoughts as they have developed, to a group of former Moerewa staff, or a small group of Principal colleagues, or other Principals who had experienced interventions. Each time members of these critical groups have given me feedback, or made suggestions and interpretations which I have then incorporated into my thinking and reflection. In some cases, for example in the development of the themes, input from other stakeholders caused significant changes. Pyett (2003, p. 1172) cites Ward-Schofield’s assertion that in qualitative research, the goal is:

Not to produce a standard set of results that any other careful researcher in the same situation or studying the same situation would have produced. Rather it is to produce a coherent and illuminating description of and perspective on a situation that is based on and consistent with detailed study of the situation. (p. 202)

Whakapono

A relationship displaying transparency, good faith, fairness and truthfulness is captured in the concept of ‘whakapono’ and the whakatauki (proverb) “kia u ki te whakapono me te aroha tetahi ki tetahi” (hold fast to the truth with respect for each other). Where research is framed by tenets of kaupapa Māori the above sets of requirements will be augmented by clear evidence that implications of using this methodology is transparently

manifested right across the application and in all additional and supporting documents. (Hudson, Milne, Reynolds, Russell, & Smith, 2010, p. 7)

This quote affirms Bishop's (1999, p. 4) contention, that Māori have always had criteria for evaluating whether a process or a product is valued for them. He argues that "kaupapa Māori rejects outside control over what constitutes the text's call for authority and truth." Instead, a kaupapa Māori approach to validity, "locates the power within Māori cultural practices where what is acceptable and what is not acceptable research, text and/or processes are determined and defined by the research community itself in reference to the cultural context within which it operates."

This is the principle I have followed in my approach to trustworthiness and credibility (Mutch, 2005 p. 114) in this research. My Māori world view, my deep understanding of the school, the community, and the whakapapa and whānau connections of everyone involved underpinned my analysis and identifications of themes in the data and ensures my accountability to the participants and the community. The references and voices of the different participants from different sources has added a further layer to the reliability of the data. My ongoing reflection and checking with critical participant groups has ensured the truthfulness this work. My accountability for the authenticity and truthfulness of the data, and the story, is always to the community of Moerewa, who should hold me responsible.

According to Mutch (2005) trustworthiness means you have clearly documented the research decisions, research design, data-gathering and data-analysis techniques and demonstrated an ethical approach. Because of the nature of qualitative research, it is not possible to replicate the study and achieve similar results (p. 114). Furthermore, for qualitative studies the researchers are not generalising their findings to a broader population. Credibility means the researcher have used some way to ensure the findings resonate with those in, or who are familiar with the case or setting (Mutch, 2005, p. 115).

Lincoln and Guba (1985, cited Marshall & Rossman, 2006, pp. 201-204) proposed alternative four constructs to deal with issues of research soundness, these are:

Credibility – in which the goal is to demonstrate the inquiry was conducted in such a manner as to ensure that the subject was appropriately identified and described.

Transferability – in which the researcher should argue that the findings may be useful in others in similar situations or with similar research questions. Although this should be noted is problematic in qualitative research.

Dependability - in which the researcher attempts to account for changing conditions in the phenomenon chosen for study and changes the design created by an increasingly refined understanding of the setting.

Confirmability – capturing the traditional concept of objectivity. These authors stress the need to ask whether the findings of the study could be confirmed by another.

Organising the data

The research questions have been used to structure the analysis of data under two overarching headings: “The Dream”, and “The Death of the Dream.” The structure for this analysis can be seen in Table 15 (in Chapter 7, on page 169).

Braun & Clarke (2006) suggest six phases of thematic analysis: familiarization with the data, coding, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing up to weave the analytic narrative “to tell the reader a coherent and persuasive story about the data, and contextualizing it in relation to existing literature.” This process has been followed in this analysis.

I was very familiar with the data in the surveys and the information shared in the focus group interviews both from the perspective of a participant and from my own personal experience of the intervention. I had to be mindful of the fact that the perspectives and experiences of others might not have been the same as mine, and I was careful to regularly check my position against that of participants. In fact, in many instances the two perspectives, mine and other participants, were strikingly

similar. This was very evident in the information from other Principals who had experienced interventions in their schools.

All of the transcripts and notes from the meetings and audio recordings of the focus group interviews, as well as the individual responses to the two surveys were imported into NVivo (QSR International, 2016). Each of these individual sources was classified as a member of a dataset e.g. Moerewa community, Moerewa staff, Moerewa students, Professional community, Principals under intervention, Ministry of Education, NZQA, and Media. This classification enabled me to run NVivo queries to search the data for similarities or disagreement.

An example of such a query is the recurring comment in the data that one of the reasons for the intervention was the school's stance against National Standards. There were 16 references to this idea in the community survey, but the NVivo search revealed that there were also comments made by the staff, the students, the professional community in the focus group interviews, and in the media about this stance. It was also a reason given by one of the other Principals who experienced an intervention as the catalyst for Ministry of Education scrutiny of her school. The fact that these different groups made similar comments validates the theme by finding it evident in multiple sources.

Identifying themes

Coding was started with a "broad-brush" approach using NVivo's capacity to search text but this was found to be not necessary and my familiarity with the data allowed me to go directly to create nodes from the information. An example of this is the theme of the impact of the intervention which recurred throughout all the different datasets. Coding began with searches for references to impact, but it became very evident that there were sub-themes in this category: impact on students, on staff, on the school, on the community, on participants' health, personal and professional impact, and these were all coded accordingly. Braun & Clarke (2013) explain this process of searching for themes in this way:

A theme is a coherent and meaningful pattern in the data relevant to the research question. If codes are the bricks and tiles in a brick and tile house, then themes are the walls and roof panels. Searching for themes is a bit like coding your codes to identify similarity in the data. This ‘searching’ is an active process; themes are not hidden in the data waiting to be discovered by the intrepid researcher, rather the researcher constructs themes. The researcher ends this phase by collating all the coded data relevant to each theme. (p. 78)

The identified themes were continually checked for meaning and revised to merge or separate according to the number of references or patterns found. This included what Braun and Clarke describe as the fifth step in the process, naming, renaming, and what they call “identifying the ‘essence’ of each theme.” Eleven different themes were identified, and some of these were broken further down into sub-themes. Finally, these themes were organized into four broad groups (Table 3):

Table 3: Broad theme groups

1. Moerewa-driven	The aspirations of the Moerewa community for an education that was relevant to their children, Māori-responsive, Māori-centred learning.
2. The Myth of Autonomy	The myth of the power of the community to achieve a different model. The “death” of the dream. The roles of the Minister and Ministry of Education and NZQA.
3. Power and Control	The power of the Commissioner and the intervention itself. The impact on everyone involved, including the personal and professional impact on my leadership
4. Personal and Professional	The lessons learned from the Moerewa experience and the experiences of other Principals subjected to similar interventions

The data collected from community, school, and wider education sources are analysed in these four broad theme groups in Chapter 7 to answer the key research questions and to present the findings of this research.

Another way of overcoming issues to do with trustworthiness is by incorporating Keeves’ (1997) and Patton’s (1990) triangulation methods which assisted in consistency and enhance credibility and reduce researcher bias (McMillan & Wergin, 1998). Triangulation is the process of using multiple data sources, data collection methods, and/or theories to validate research findings, help eliminate bias and detect errors or anomalies in the research (see Anderson and Arsenault,

1998). Methodological triangulation as a form validation procedure is well outlined in the literature (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000; Davidson & Tolich, 1999) and was used in terms of comparing the specific datasets for recurring themes.

Conclusion

This chapter has described the methodologies and theoretical understandings that underpin this research. The methods of data collection and analysis have been described. Throughout the collection and analysis of data and themes a Māori lens has been used to ensure that the findings of this research are respectful of, and relevant to, the community of Moerewa, and that their voices are heard. The terms “reflexivity” and “whakapono” are used in preference to constructs of validity and triangulation because these are in keeping with a kaupapa Māori lens. The next chapter examines the literature about Māori education and provides the backdrop to the aspirations of the Moerewa community.

Chapter Three: A Drafting Process

We realised that at school there was a drafting process happening, some went on to University and professions and others into the industries - what was left of them. What that did was to force many people to create a subculture built around growing and selling of drugs and the black market around stolen goods. For us in this community it meant a real loss of control, of deciding or determining what our futures looked like. (Moerewa Community Submission, 2003)

Introduction

The literature that is relevant to this study falls into the two sides of the dilemma that the Moerewa submission clearly identifies. Firstly, on the one side, literature about Māori education and the aspirations of Māori for an education that fits and secondly, on the opposing side, literature about the New Zealand education system which is a tense and difficult landscape for Māori learners to navigate, and which has largely worked against the interests of Māori. For this reason, and because the two sides clearly define the frontier this battle was waged on, it has seemed more respectful to the Moerewa participants to keep them separate. This chapter examines the background of Māori education in New Zealand. It also provides an overview of the different approach developed at Moerewa School between 2005 and 2011, before the statutory intervention. The New Zealand education system is examined in Chapter 4.

At the heart of the community's dream for an education that was relevant and that they felt would work for their children is the idea of tino rangatiratanga, the sovereignty and right to determine for themselves what this learning would look like. This is the fundamental idea of Kaupapa Māori theory and Kaupapa Māori methodology.

Literature about Māori Education

Literature about Māori education and Māori learning is divided into two categories in this review: traditional and pre-colonial learning, and the education which followed the arrival of European colonisers, which intentionally set out to assimilate Māori people into European thinking and practice. Smith describes Native Schools in New Zealand as:

placed in the heart of Māori communities like Trojan horses. Their task was to destroy the less visible aspects of Māori life: beliefs, value systems, and the spiritual bonds that connected people to each other and to their environment. (1986, p. 2)

Penetito (2010, p. 57) observes that it became clear that what Māori saw as the transformative potential of education, was in fact “transforming Māori into brown Pākehā and Māori knowledge into peripheral archaisms.” Māori communities and Māori people were “rendered subservient to English language education and cultural mores over the last 150 years or more” (Smith & Rapatahanga, 2012, p. 79) as a result of these intentional education policies. Smith and Rapatahanga maintain that many Māori would describe themselves as still “shackled” by the colonising effects of this type of education. The Moerewa community would agree with this thinking.

Simon & Smith (2002) also describe the Native Schools as a civilising mission. But as Belich (2002, p. ix) notes in the Foreword to the book:

From the establishment of the first mission station in New Zealand in 1814 until the 1960s the main official policy of Pākehā towards Māori was to convert them into Brown Britons ... The official purpose of the system was to assimilate Māori, notably through the almost exclusive use of English as the medium of instruction. Especially in the 1930s and 1940s, pupils in some schools were physically punished for speaking Māori, even in the playground. It is this bitter memory that has made the Native Schools a symbol of a harsh, longstanding, and many-faceted assault on Māori culture. The assault did exist and Native Schools were a site of it. But the schools were also a site of Māori resistance, and persistence and – unofficially – of a degree of intercultural accommodation. *A Civilising Mission?* explores both sides of the story.

However, these schools whilst successful, were always under the watchful eye of the Provincial authorities and later the State/Government (Simon & Smith, 2001). As Smith (2002a, p. 92) noted, there were Inspectorial reports on the Native Schools from as early as the 1860s onwards, however, Inspector's Reports for 'regular' (read Pākehā schools) were not included in the Appendices to the House of Representatives until 1872. This provides further evidence of authorities demanding greater accountability and control over schools with Māori students. This theme of 'extra' accountability and the power imbalance between the State's central educational authorities in relation to schools, is pertinent both historically and in relation to this thesis which provides a contemporary example.

Traditional Māori learning

Pihama, Smith, Tiakiwai and Lee (2004) review the literature to provide an overview of Kaupapa Māori principles and practices, which form the basis for Māori educational pedagogy. They identify pre-colonial Māori pedagogies. An example is the concept of 'ako' to demonstrate "an educative process that was integral in the creation, conceptualisation, transmission and articulation of Māori knowledge." Smith (1987) defines Akonga Māori as being derived from traditional concepts and values.

Akonga Māori emphasises the inter-relationship of teaching and learning, in that they are not understood as separate concepts. In Māori world view, "teaching" and "learning are one in the same idea; thus the Māori term for "learn" is Ako, the Māori term for "teach" is Ako. This perception differs significantly from the Pākehā notion which perceives "teaching" and "learning" as distinctly separate items. (p. 1)

Other Māori academics (Mead, 2003; Pere, 1994; Smith, 2003a) also refer to the concept of ako. The similarity with all these perspectives is that the concept of ako in a pre-colonial sense, is interlinked with other Māori concepts. In a modern day setting we are often trying to come up with a singular word translation to explain the word—rather than looking more broadly at the concept.

Another example of pre-colonial Māori education pedagogy described by Pihama et al, is whanaungatanga (relationships and connections between whānau) (Makareti, 1986; Hohepa, 1990; Smith G. , 2003). Pihama et al. state that the principle of whānau, the extended family structure principle, sits at the heart of Kaupapa Māori (p. 48). Hohepa (1999) describes both the traditional and the more recently understood meanings of whānau, which include, “Whānau based on unity of purpose rather than whakapapa lines, sometimes termed 'kaupapa whānau' or 'metaphorical whānau', develop around a particular aim or goal (p. 18).

Linking these two traditional approaches, Pere, 1994 (cited in Pihama et al, 2004) states that traditional Māori learning rested on the principle that every person is a learner from the time they are born (if not before) to the time they die” (p. 54). The concepts of ako and whānau were also linked at Moerewa School into the learning approach the school described as a Pedagogy of Whānau (Smith G. , 1995; Milne, 2013). This philosophy is confirmed in the 2009 Education Review Office Report on Moerewa School which describes the school’s practice:

The school acknowledges and celebrates Ngāti Hine heritage and tikanga. Students have a sense of connection with their rich cultural heritage. Moerewa learning contexts are well embedded in the holistic curriculum and values of whakawhānaungatanga (sense of whānau and building relationships), atawhai (nurturing/working together), tū pono (knowing self), mahingātahi (working collaboratively), manaakitanga (care and respect), wairuatanga (spiritual health), and rangatiratanga (self determination). (Education Review Office, 2009)

Māori responses

It is clear that pre-colonial Māori practices and values suffer when they are misunderstood in modern and mainstream education settings. Macfarlane, Glynn, Grace, Penetito and Bateman (2008) were commissioned by the Ministry of Education to comment and report on the proposed key competencies in the New Zealand curriculum. The group drew on their own knowledge of a Māori worldview to contrast and compare the proposed framework with this understanding. Five important cultural constructs: tataritanga (thinking and making meaning),

manaakitanga (nurturing care and respect), rangatiratanga (personal autonomy and leadership), whakawhānaungatanga (establishing relationships), and whaiwahitanga (engagement and participation) (Grace, 2005) were placed alongside the proposed five key competencies and then compared from a Māori perspective. These experienced educators concluded that there was more evidence that the Māori constructs did not match the Western key competencies because they were coming from quite different knowledge and value bases. This was the understanding of the Moerewa community, when they sought alternatives for their children.

It was also the understanding of Māori whānau and communities who led the development of Te Kohanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa Māori, and those whānau who continue to seek these options rather than enrol their children in New Zealand's mainstream schools. It is also the understanding of those whānau who seek to develop and support Māori-centred learning models within the state education system, in Māori-medium language options and in the development more recently of Puna Reo, Kura-a-iwi and designated-character schools, with a specific character designed by the community to support Māori aspirations. This section examines the literature around different options that Māori have developed by either stepping outside the system or, as the Moerewa Community attempted to do, creating Māori-centred spaces within the system.

Resistance initiatives

Māori communities armed with the new critical understandings of the shortcomings of the state and structural analyses began to assert transformative actions to deal with the twin crises of language demise and educational underachievement for themselves (Smith, 1997, p. 171)

Smith (2003b, p. 5) asserts that any transformative theory, which aims to benefit indigenous communities, must be designed to build capacity. He lists these as: the capacity to be sustainable in a context of unequal power relations, the capacity to 'be owned' and make sense to the indigenous community themselves, the capacity to make a difference, and the capacity to be continually reviewed and revised by

those the theory is designed to serve. He describes two key understandings, which underpinned the success of Māori education ‘resistance initiatives’ in the 1980s. Firstly, they were able to “unhinge themselves from the ‘gate-keeping’ reproductive elements of the dominant controlled system,” and secondly, all of the responses “were developed by individuals and communities who were prepared to take action for themselves and were willing to go outside of the constraints of the system to achieve it.” According to Smith, a statement heard often as a justification for a community action was *“we can’t do any worse than the system is currently doing – there is only one way to go – upwards”* (italics in original). This is also the thinking underlying the Moerewa Submission’s example, “the emperor has no clothes - Education is not working for far too many of our children.”

Tooley (2000) illustrates this ongoing tension between Māori aspirations and the State’s agenda (Table 4) underpinned by what he describes as a “fundamental structural and ideological contradiction between state dominant views on one hand and iwi Māori subordinate on the other.” These conflicting interests describe the dilemma faced by the Moerewa community, and the two sides of this dilemma explained previously. They also clearly delineate the different worldviews of Māori and Pākehā which drove the resistance initiatives of the 1980s and saw the establishment of Te Kohanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa Māori.

Table 4: Conflicting Interests

(Tooley, 2000, p. 62)

Pākehā Interests	Māori Interests
Pākehā culture, language and knowledge	Māori culture, language and knowledge
Acculturation and assimilation	Validity and legitimacy of things Māori
‘We are one people’	‘We are Māori’
Domination	Survival
Maintain status quo	Work for change
State schooling system	Kura Kaupapa Māori

Māori whanau, dissatisfied with an education system that served Pākehā interests first and foremost, fought to establish a system, outside the State dominated system that put Māori interests first.

Kohanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa Māori

Te Kōhanga Reo is a Māori development initiative which began in 1981, driven initially by the then Department of Māori Affairs. The movement grew in response to Māori concerns to ensure the survival and revival of te reo Māori, to totally immerse Te Kōhanga Reo mokopuna, and whānau through te reo Māori me ona tīkanga (Te Kohanga Reo National Trust, 2013). Kura Kaupapa Māori were initiated in 1985 due to the growing realisation that Kohanga Reo graduates had no options for Māori language continuity when they entered New Zealand's compulsory school system at the age of five years. Kura Kaupapa operate within a whānau-based Māori philosophy, "Te Aho Matua," a formal charter and curriculum common to all Kura. Te Aho Matua describes Māori cultural and spiritual beliefs and values which underpin Kura Kaupapa Māori practice.

Both Kohanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa Māori are examples of initiatives driven *by* Māori, *for* Māori, and *in* te reo Māori. These resistance initiatives grew out of the frustrations of disaffected Māori parents with the state, Pākehā education system. Johnston (1998) investigates the relationship between educational policy and Māori under-achievement. She believes that Kohanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa Māori, initiatives that are Māori initiated, "based on pedagogical, ideological, and philosophical inclusions of Māori knowledge and world-views," represent the epitome of addressing Māori under-achievement (Tooley, 2000, p. 65).

Penetito (2010, p. 232) however, takes the view that kaupapa Māori resistance initiatives did not so much, "rise like a phoenix out of the ashes of despair" but rather evolved from change laid down in earlier periods of development, especially through the 1970s. He describes a gradual but persistent growth of consciousness throughout this period of change (Table 5). This can be seen in the progression in Table 4 from learning "about" Māori in the 1970s to "being" Māori in the 2000s. He agrees however that Kohanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa Māori would not have been "discovered" by mainstream education and therefore needed to be driven by Māori themselves. He asks the question that, if it took a reason to initiate resistance, why

did this not happen much sooner, “for example, in the days when using Māori Language in schools was forbidden?

Table 5: Interventions, Catalysts for Change and Strategic Foci for Systemic-wide

Change for Māori Education 1970-2002.

(Penetito, 2010, p. 233)

	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
Intervention	‘Māoritanga’ teacher in-service courses	Tu Tangata reforms and pan-Māori educational administrative bodies created	Whānau, hapu, iwi education plans	Hui Taumata Mātauranga, Te Ao Māori – Te Ao Whanui interface
Strategic focus	Māori culture – learning ‘about’ Māori: changing consciousness; using the marae to engage whānau	Māori language – learning ‘in’ Māori; politicisation; getting better organised	Māori language – learning ‘for’ Māori; curriculum; creation of infrastructure	‘Being’ Māori; philosophical base; community

Initially Kohanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa Māori received very little financial assistance from the government. In 1990, when the Department of Māori Affairs was disestablished, Kohanga and Kura came under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and within the legislation of the Education Amendment Act (1989). While becoming state-funded alleviated some of the financial burden this brought its own tension:

Kōhanga Reo had to come to terms with the regulatory environment, and the compliances of the ‘early childhood sector’, whilst maintaining the unique kaupapa of the Kōhanga Reo movement. Such a system of measurement often came at a heavy cost to the kaupapa. (Te Kohanga Reo National Trust, 2013)

Milne (2004, p. 74) also notes the conflict inherent in the involvement of the government education evaluative agency, the Education Review Office, in the assessment of practice in Kura Kaupapa Māori, which, “brings up the obvious contradiction inherent in the incorporation of Kura Kaupapa Māori (and Te Kohanga Reo) into the State system, against the principle of relative autonomy.”

As Penetito (2010, p. 224) points out, that while these initiatives may have been set up as parallel to the mainstream education system, they are still reflections of the mainstream “and have not grown out of endemic roots.” Both are now part of an existing education system and therefore, “subject to the same structures, assumptions and power relations.” As the dominant force, Pākehā will make decisions therefore about the growth of these options for Māori parents, if consensus is not reached, and will determine the systems, policies and processes which deem Māori to be treated “equally.” Penetito observes, “The history of the education system is filled with these equal treatment measures.” Smith (1990) makes the same point:

New Zealand schools are locked into a cycle of social and cultural reproduction of Pākehā culture premised on an imperialistic presumption that Pākehā defined cultural capital is the most appropriate for all New Zealand’s peoples. Herein lies the difficulty of Māori people attempting to realize support for their educational preferences within state Pākehā dominant education. No matter how much emphasis is given to adjusting, adding, or initiating programmes to meet Māori needs, they are subject to moderation by dominant interests. (p. 80)

The total number of Māori students enrolled in all school types in New Zealand in 2016 was 187,731, which represents 23.8 per cent of the total number of students in all schools. As at 1 July 2016 there were 18,444 students (Māori and non-Māori) enrolled in Māori medium education, representing 2.3% of the total school population. This remains unchanged since the previous year (Ministry of Education, 2016a).

The Ministry of Education classifies “Māori medium” education as students who are taught the curriculum in Māori language for at least 51% of the time (Māori Language Immersion Levels 1-2). The next level of Māori language learning in schools is classified by the Ministry of Education as “Māori language in English medium” i.e. children are learning te reo Māori up to 50% of the week. Level 3 Māori Language learning is calculated as 31% to 50% of the time and Level 4 is up to three hours per week. Table 6 shows the percentage of all Māori students who were engaged in learning te reo Māori in 2016. Significant in these data is that only

3.7% of Māori students attend Kura Kaupapa Māori. Clearly it behoves mainstream New Zealand schools to recognise their responsibility to the remaining 96.3% of Māori learners.

Table 6: Māori students involved in Māori Language learning: July 2016

(Ministry of Education, 2016a)

MOE Classification	School type	Time per week	Percentage of all Māori students
Māori Medium	Kura Kaupapa Māori	> 51%	3.7%
	Non-Kura: Māori Medium		5.8%
Māori Language in English Medium	All schools: Level 3	31-50%	3.0%
	All schools: Level 4a	Up to 30%	2.2%
	All schools: Level 4	At least 3 hours	7.1%
	All schools: Level 5	Less than 3 hours	18.9%

Smith & Rapatahana (2012, p. 92) are correct to point out, that despite decades of supposed reform, “We must therefore continue to stress that most Māori *still* – at the time of writing – attend state schooling options and are *still* taught via the English Language” (emphasis in original).

Māori-centred spaces within the mainstream education system

The previous section has described resistance initiatives that evolved during the 1980s as a Māori-driven response to the decline of te reo Māori and the failure of schools to deliver a relevant or authentic model of learning to Māori children. Initially established outside the system, Kura Kaupapa Māori and Kohanga Reo were brought back into the system with the advent of *Tomorrow's Schools* the regulations of the Education Amendment Act 1989. However, resistance has not been exclusively the domain of these strategies. The devolution of school governance to local communities that was integral to this legislation also provided space for other models of action and resistance.

Puna Kohungahunga, mentioned above, is an example of a relatively new early childhood option that is developing within the system in response to community demand. Other examples have been created through Section 156 of the Education

Act which has enabled the establishment of designated-character or special-character schools. Kia Aroha College (Milne, 2013, 2016) is an example of a designated-character school, which actively resists “Whitestream” practice in favour of a critical, culturally responsive, bilingual learning approach, which fits the school’s 100 percent Māori and Pasifika learners. Kura-a-iwi are a further example of communities making use of Section 156 to develop special character iwi-based schools. The curricula of Kura-a-Iwi are tailored to reflect the philosophy and language of the respective Iwi within the framework of Te Marautanga o Aotearoa³ (Ministry of Education, 2014). Many mainstream schools have established strong Māori-medium Māori language classes and programmes as the figures in Table 5 show.

Given the legislation and the precedents set by other communities, and in fact the community’s own previous success in extending the year levels at Moerewa School, it is little wonder that the community felt they could achieve the change of status and keep their senior students. The community was very aware of the legislation and of their rights. Against this backdrop of efforts by Māori to develop a relevant education model, the next section describes how the Moerewa community and Moerewa School designed a model in keeping with the Community Submission’s goals.

Moerewa School’s response

The dreams and aspirations for the Moerewa community, were written in the community submission to the Ministry of Education in 2003. They were clear that their Māori knowledge, their Māori voice, history, tikanga and experiences be the foundation of their children’s learning. Here was a Māori community who was very clear about their goals. The learning model developed by Moerewa School, aligned with community’s education aspirations, was a direct and deliberate challenge to the monocultural, White-centred education system. The community submission stated:

³ The National Curriculum for Māori-medium schools.

Many years ago we realized education was a major key to breaking cycles, and as a community got alongside the schools, to run programs at school, to work with whānau, to run parenting programs, and play our part on Boards of Trustees etc. The realization for us was that we were only tweaking around the edges, and that the change that was needed was total. (Moerewa Community, 2003, p. 2)

The school's strong commitment to the realisation of this community dream is described in the introduction to this research. However, this section provides more detail about the actions the school took to effect the total change, the community identified was needed. Between 2005 and 2012, when the statutory intervention occurred, these actions involved changes to school structure, pedagogy and curriculum and to the positive engagement with whānau and community. Some of these actions, and the staff, students', and community's advocacy for them, can be seen in their comments in the data analysed in Chapter 7.

All school and classroom structures were reorganised to better reflect whānau systems and hierarchies. This included multi-levelled, multi-aged classrooms where older and younger, able and less able, students were working within the same classroom. Students were not separated into typical school single-year groups. This classroom teaching and learning organisation was replicated in the secondary classes, in Years 9 and 10, and then in the Senior Class, not just because the numbers of students were small, but because we believed in the philosophy of whānau.

Parents/whānau and community were encouraged to be active participants in the school day. Initially, it had been a challenge to get parents and community through the front gates of the school. Consistent with many mainstream schools, years of broken promises, of only requiring parents to be at school for negative reasons, of not having any real voice or say in what happens at school, took a long time for the school to break down. Deliberate classroom, group, and wider school activities that encouraged parents/whānau and community to participate in the school were a priority. As one indicator, the numbers of parents coming into the school increased

to the point where the school consistently would get over 90% of parents attending parent report evenings.

We encouraged classrooms to be engaged in community initiatives, events, and meetings. Students were taken to local Waitangi Tribunal Claims' hearings, they met with the local council representatives about environmental issues in the community, and the school was active at the local marae. All curriculum topics had to be relevant to our community and there were often times where parents/whānau and community were engaged in the school as experts in their fields of knowledge.

The senior secondary students were also directly involved in leadership roles across the school. It was normal for the Senior Class students to organise activities, events, and programmes for the whole school to participate in. Senior students would take leadership and mentoring roles in classrooms around the school. Student attendance was never a problem and all students loved coming to school every day. This is confirmed in student comments in the data.

Moerewa School was a hub of activity on any given day. Parents/whānau and community were actively involved in the school. There is much documented evidence to confirm Moerewa School's support of the aspirations of its community for its children, and its commitment to deliberately re-designing all aspects of its organisation and pedagogy to support learning as Māori.

The complete change to the school's established philosophy and direction that occurred in 2012, with the arrival of the Commissioner, is evident in an email thread in December, 2013. Following a request from the Commissioner for a detailed professional learning and development (PLD) plan, I provided a plan which focused on what had been the school's priority areas of Ngati Hinetanga, Social Justice, and Māori education. This PLD plan was responded to by a member of the four member community-initiated advisory board to the Commissioner, asking that

I be involved (refused by the Commissioner) in discussing this PLD. The Commissioner commented to us all that:

The ERO priorities have to be our major priorities. If something has to be re-prioritised it may have to be social justice which does not seem to be linked to any of the Ministry Māori education initiatives, nor is it part of ERO's thinking.

In an intentionally provocative response, I questioned should we also therefore remove the Ngati Hinetanga focus from the plan given the same statement would apply to that goal? He responded that would stay, "because of the clear links with student achievement and Māori Education as articulated by *Ka Hikitia*."

Social justice however, a well-articulated core component of our Moerewa School approach was not so fortunate, even though he admits that the community advisory board had "identified social justice as a key area of interest." He then asked me to prepare a presentation for the advisory board, and him, that answered these questions:

- What is social justice?
- How is it relevant to the NZ curriculum?
- How does it accelerate student achievement?
- How is it appropriate to student learning Years 1–10?
- How does it specifically relate to the ERO review priorities?
- How many other schools in NZ are involved in social justice?
- How does social justice specifically prepare Year 9 & 10 students for secondary school education?

I agreed to present to the group and tried to explain, to little avail, the school's programme and direction as the emails below in Table 7 show. This is indicative of the complete undermining of the school's direction and the community's aspirations for a deliberately different Māori-centred approach.

Table 7: Emails between the Commissioner and me regarding PLD, December 2013

<p>3 December 2013</p> <p>Me to Commissioner</p>	<p>Our school's focus for the past 8 years has been to deliberately design our curriculum differently to address the educational needs for Māori children in Moerewa. We all know the current educational statistics for Māori are unacceptable – and our school has been focused on doing things differently from the current status quo that has not served Māori learners in the past. Through this presentation I would like to show how our school's priority areas of Ngati Hinetanga/Social Justice/Māori education/ are all inextricably linked – rather than three separate pathways. <i>Ka Hikitia</i> merely supported this direction the school was already on – when it was released in 2008.</p>
<p>4 December 2013</p> <p>Commissioner to me</p>	<p>With regard to <i>Ka Hikitia</i> "merely supported the direction the school was already on – when it was released in 2008" you are surely not suggesting that the school direction predates <i>Ka Hikitia</i>? I've cut and pasted the timeline for the development of <i>Ka Hikitia</i>, which I suppose started "officially" in 1998 but was the subject of much discussion and debate in the years prior. I know this because I was part of it when I worked in Wellington. [provides a timeline]</p>
<p>4 December 2013</p> <p>Me to Commissioner</p>	<p>Yes, I am suggesting that our school direction, organisation and practice was in place prior to the official launch of the Māori Education Strategy (<i>Ka Hikitia</i>) in 2008. Obviously many of us were aware of the important work that had gone on pre-dating the confirmed strategy's release – and based on this knowledge, university research, our own professional experience, overseas indigenous study and linking all this to the community vision for the school (Community Campus strategy, 2003) – we had been working on this similar direction to that espoused in <i>Ka Hikitia</i> since 2005 at Moerewa School.</p> <p>The statistics that have come out of the recent <i>Ka Hikitia</i> refresh (<i>Me Korero – Let's Talk</i>), that led into the subsequent strategy released this year, as well as the work I am involved in in conjunction with the Ministry/NZPF/Te Akatea on the MACs (Māori Achievement Collaboratives) Projects, confirm that the majority of mainstream schools did not engage effectively with the strategy when it was initially launched in 2008.</p> <p>Moerewa School celebrates the fact that we had already started on a journey that re-looked at how we design curriculum for Māori children, and prioritised what worked for Māori children – before we were officially asked to do so. We are a school 100% committed to <i>Ka Hikitia</i> – and in fact this was our self-selected focus of our ERO review in 2009.</p>

The Commissioner's and my own perspectives on *Ka Hikitia* in the email exchange in December are not unique to us or to Moerewa. Choudry (2007) identifies the difference in two positions when he argues that the intent of policies and moves developed ostensibly "in partnership" with Indigenous people needs critical analysis:

National government, private sector, and international institutional claims to legally recognize Indigenous Peoples' status, to consult and form 'partnerships' with them, must be critically examined to ascertain whether these moves are meaningful moves to address colonial injustice, or merely new

forms of assimilation and cooptation into neoliberal/colonial frameworks (p. 109)

I saw the work Moerewa School had been doing over a long period of time as a strategic movement towards reclaiming Māori rights and knowledge, and addressing colonial injustice, and used the underlying principles of *Ka Hikitia* to support the community's vision. We saw both documents as naturally aligned. The Commissioner used *Ka Hikitia* as a tool to bring us in line with the government's neoliberal/colonial objectives.

The next section further explains the point I was making in my 4 December email above, from my experience in national sector groups and Māori initiatives, regarding the slow uptake of schools with the Government strategy and vision for Māori education.

Ka Hikitia

The Ministry of Education (2015a) provides a timeline of events from the first strategy for Māori Education in 1999, to the current Government Māori Education Strategy - *Ka Hikitia – Accelerating Success 2013–2017*. According to the timeline, in the first six years after the first education strategy was released, Māori students were seen to be showing some “significant improvements” in educational performance.

In 2006, *Ka Hikitia: Setting Priorities for Māori Education* was published as an internal document in the Ministry of Education. This document also aligned with the Tertiary Education Strategy 2007–12. In 2007, *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success: The Draft Māori Education Strategy 2008–2012* (Ministry of Education, 2008) was released without much fanfare. In his Ian Axford (New Zealand) Fellowship in Public Policy report about *Ka Hikitia*, Goren (2009) states:

Ka Hikitia was launched alongside at least fourteen other Ministry of Education strategic initiatives and actions. Its release came at a time when Ministry staff members were focused on the development of standards for the education sector in response to

a key priority of the new government. Although the Ministry and political leadership emphasise the importance of Ka Hikitia, it is easy to see how it could get lost as one of the many issues on the agenda for the education sector. New initiatives will continue to be created by the Ministry annually. The challenge is to prioritise the many strategies in order to get a few, such as Ka Hikitia, out in front of all educators, Boards of Trustees, and government agency staff. (p. 37)

This became a fundamental challenge with the *Ka Hikitia* release for schools. Many schools “discovered” the document years later in the bottom drawer of the Principal’s desk, where it had not even been read. In the Auditor General’s report to the House of Representatives (Controller and Auditor-General, 2013) these difficulties are confirmed:

3.21 In our view, the Ministry was not ready to introduce Ka Hikitia to schools and did not build on the good will and work schools were doing to help raise education outcomes for their Māori students. The effort to engage schools did not match the aspirations of Ka Hikitia or take into account how many schools there are. This resulted in a mixed response from schools, with varying degrees of action to put Ka Hikitia into effect.

3.22 Most school Principals reported receiving the Ka Hikitia strategy in the mail. Only a modest number of school leaders reported hearing about Ka Hikitia first hand. The Ministry did not explain clearly to schools what response it expected. Guidance to schools in the Ka Hikitia documents was not clear. Schools did not understand the relationships between Ka Hikitia and other Ministry strategies and initiatives.

3.23 Schools have a high degree of autonomy, and high trust and understanding between the Ministry and schools is needed to make sure that initiatives are accepted and acted on. In our view, the way Ka Hikitia was initially distributed and introduced to schools did not have enough support and guidance, and might have undermined the relationship between schools and the Ministry. (Office of the Auditor General, 2013)

In 2012 the Ministry of Education introduced a survey about *Ka Hikitia* called *Me Kōrero – Let’s Talk!* (Ministry of Education, 2013). It was reported that this survey information would be used to contribute to the next Māori education strategy document: *Ka Hikitia – Accelerating Success 2013–2017*. However the biggest

development with regards to Ka Hikitia in 2012, was that the Education Review Office's new approach to school reviews saw all schools/kura having to report to ERO on educational outcomes for Māori, as Māori. The impact of choosing to ignore *Ka Hikitia* for school leaders was that their school would receive a negative review from ERO. This suddenly changed the landscape and Principals of schools who had previously received positive ERO reports but who had not considered how they could improve outcomes for Māori, began to worry.

The most recent Māori education strategy document is *Ka Hikitia – Accelerating Success 2013–2017* (Ministry of Education, 2013b). While some small successes were identified, the overall implementation of *Ka Hikitia* strategies in schools had been slower than expected (Ministry of Education, 2013b). The catch cry of “accelerating success” was also confusing for schools as one of the challenges from schools around the original *Ka Hikitia* strategy was that there were no definitions of what success for Māori, as Māori, looked like. Because the release date also coincided with the time period that legislated implementation of National Standards, schools tried to align these policies, when philosophically they are very different.

This philosophical difference and the weakening of the potential strength of *Ka Hikitia* to Ministry of Education National Standards goals is evident in the Commissioner's stance described earlier. My position, and the position Moerewa School had adopted, was aligned with the last two words in the vision of *Ka Hikitia*, “Māori children enjoying and achieving educational success “as Māori.”

“As Māori”

In 2015, a group of students from Kia Aroha College investigated the vision of *Ka Hikitia* and what is meant to them in their schools. They presented their findings to the New Zealand Association for Research in Education (NZARE) national conference in Whakatane. One student researcher argued:

In a 2006 paper to Treasury about Māori well-being. Sir Mason Durie makes it very clear that participation *of* someone who is Māori is different from participation *as* someone who is Māori. We think that the Government's vision has very little to do with "as Māori" and is mainly about the results *of* learners who just happen to be Māori. (Matthew Katipa in Pirini-Edwards et al., 2015)

"To live as Māori" was one of three goals proposed by Sir Mason Durie at the Hui Taumata Matauranga, the Māori Education Summit in 2001. These words became the foundation of the vision for *Ka Hikitia*. Moerewa School's learning approach encompassed Durie's own definition of "as Māori," which he described as "having access to Māoridom, access to language, culture, cultural practice, marae, resources, iwi, hapū and whānau" (Durie, 2001). He states further that:

Being Māori is a Māori reality. Education should be as much about that reality as it is about literacy and numeracy. In short, being able to live as Māori, imposes some responsibilities upon the education system to contribute towards the realisation of that goal. (Durie, 2003, p. 200)

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the literature about Māori education in New Zealand that was the backdrop to the Moerewa community's dissatisfaction with the education system and their determination to develop a different model. The chapter has described Māori responses and resistance to the mainstream system in the shape of Kohanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa Māori, models developed by Māori, for Māori, as well as Māori resistance within the mainstream. Moerewa School's response is discussed, against this background and the differences in interpretation of the government's vision for Māori, and Moerewa School's very Māori perspective of the strategy *Ka Hikitia*, are highlighted. Finally, the words, "as Māori" that are supposed to drive the vision, and certainly underpinned the Moerewa approach, are discussed. The two different perspectives on *Ka Hikitia* and "as Māori" serve as a lead in to the next chapter, which examines the literature about New Zealand's wider education system.

Chapter Four: The Emperor has no Clothes

As children many of us heard the story 'The Emperor has no clothes.' This story tells us that if a lie is said often enough eventually people buy into it. The parallel with a community like ours has been that we have continued to perpetuate a process of learning, as well as poured in mega resources, that has not produced the quality outcomes in Māori communities. We as a community are standing up and saying like the boy in the story.... the emperor has no clothes... Education is not working for far too many of our children. (Moerewa Community Submission, 2003)

Introduction

Literature about Māori education, was discussed in Chapter 3, to preface the expectations of the Māori community of Moerewa and the events that unfolded in their quest for a community response to the education of their children. These events are outlined in detail in Chapter 5. In this chapter, the other side of the dilemma—literature about New Zealand's wider education system, the sweeping education reforms of the 1990s, the neoliberal agenda that underpinned these reforms, and the barriers they created for Moerewa—why “education has not worked for far too many children” as the Community Submission claimed—are examined.

The New Zealand Education System

Milne (2013, 2016) describes one “whitestream” school's transformation as it sought to find answers to the nation's historic failure of Māori learners. This struggle against the tide of neoliberal education's conservatism, is the experience of many Māori communities. Too often, the blame for the failure of our education system to provide a relevant education for Māori learners has been laid at the feet of Māori whānau themselves. Rejecting this deficit-theorising, Milne documents a counter-hegemonic transformative journey for a community, similar to Moerewa's, that has been the subject of decades of negative media and deficit education attention. This research is extremely relevant to my topic. Not only has Kia Aroha

College (the school in Milne's study) successfully achieved what the Moerewa community aspired to develop, but Kia Aroha College supported the Moerewa community during this process. The Kia Aroha College journey therefore has many parallels to the Moerewa story.

Tooley (2000, p. 40) explains that Māori have always taken an active interest in the school curriculum and have challenged the knowledge taught to their children since the beginning of early missionary schooling. Schools were one of the major tools of the Crown's assimilationist policies. The 1944 Native Trust Ordinance made this intent very clear:

In undertaking the colonisation of New Zealand, Her Majesty's government have recognised the duty of endeavouring by all practical means to avert the disasters from the native people of these islands, an objective which may best be attained by assimilating as speedily as possible the habits and usages of the native to those of the European population. (Native Trust Ordinance 1844)

Pihama (1993, p. 5) argues that the implicit intention of schooling in New Zealand was social control and a means to "civilise the natives." Johnston (1998) analyses the successive phases and policies of assimilation, integration, multiculturalism and biculturalism (which included taha Māori) in New Zealand's education history.⁴

In 2013, somewhat surprisingly, given New Zealand's treatment of Māori learners historically and currently, the Controller and Auditor-General announced a five year series of performance audits focusing on the responsiveness of the education system to Māori and the educational achievement of Māori students (Controller and Auditor-General, 2013). Drawing on the experience of an Advisory Group made up of esteemed Māori educators and academics: Dr Mere Berryman, Lorraine Kerr (School Trustees Association), Professor Angus Macfarlane, Professor Wally Penetito and Distinguished Professor Graham Smith, the group's role was to "enhance our understanding and help to ensure that our work will be appropriate

⁴ See also Irwin (1999; Johnston, 1999 & Penetito, 2010).

and useful.” The audit programme posed one overarching question, “How well does the education system currently support Māori students to achieve their full potential and contribute to the future prosperity of New Zealand?” In the report which provides the rationale for undertaking this work there is a comprehensive timeline which details Māori education policy and developments since 1816. The timeline is provided below in its entirety as it is an extremely useful overview of Māori education (Table 8). The timeline is prefaced by this statement from the Ministry of Education:

What is clear from data over many years is that the education system has consistently failed whānau, hapū, and iwi for many generations, and this has led to low expectations by all of education system performance for Māori and of Māori achievement.

Table 8: Dates and events related to Māori education policy and developments:
1816-2012
(Controller and Auditor-General, 2013).

1816	First mission school opens in the Bay of Islands. Missionaries teach in te reo.
1840	Signing of the Treaty of Waitangi.
1847	George Grey introduces the Education Ordinance Act (an assimilation policy).
1862	Government expectations of Māori are not high. School inspector reports to the House of Representatives that "a refined education or high mental culture" would be inappropriate for Māori because "they are better calculated by nature to get their living by manual than by mental labour".
1867	Native Schools Act is passed, setting up a system where Māori provide the land and the Government provides the buildings and teachers. (The Act prefers English as the only language used in the education of Māori children, but this was not enforced rigorously until 1900.) Schools for Māori focus more on manual instruction than academic subjects.
1880	Inspector of Schools releases a Native School Code. Te Aute College produces first Māori graduates in the 1880s, but the College comes under pressure to abandon the academic curriculum and teach agriculture instead.
1903	Nationwide policy to impose a ban on (or discourage) te reo being spoken in the playground. A wide range of punishments used against children who speak te reo at school (including corporal punishment).
1915	Department of Education has an assimilation policy for Māori and low expectations of Māori students. Annual report includes statement from the Inspector of Native Schools that "So far as the Department is concerned, there is no encouragement given to [Māori] boys who wish to enter the learned

	professions. The aim is to turn, if possible, their attention to the branches of industry for which the Māori seems best suited."
1930/31	Attempt by the New Zealand Federation of Teachers to have te reo introduced into the curriculum is blocked by the Director of Education. In his view, "the natural abandonment of the native tongue involves no loss to the Māori". Director of Education states that education "should lead the Māori lad to be a good farmer and the Māori girl to be a good farmer's wife".
1950	Western influences begin to affect Māori families, who start to raise their children as predominantly English speakers.
1960	Hunn Report draws attention to the educational disparity between Māori and Pākehā, and rejects the assimilation policy in favour of "integration". (Between 1900 and 1960, the proportion of Māori fluent in te reo decreases from 95 percent to 25 percent.)
1963	Currie Report emphasises the need to centralise the notion of Māori educational underachievement and initiates a range of compensatory education programmes.
1970	Ngā Tamatoa and the Te Reo Māori Society lobby for the introduction of te reo in schools.
1971	Report of the National Advisory Committee on Māori Education advances the concept of bicultural education.
1973	All seven Teachers Colleges have courses in Māori Studies. Presentation of Māori language petition to Parliament by Ngā Tamatoa and the Te Reo Māori Society.
1981	Hui Whakatauira of Māori leaders proposes and establishes the first kōhanga reo as a response to impending loss of te reo.
1985	First Kura Kaupapa Māori established at Hoani Waititi Marae, West Auckland.
1986	Report of the Waitangi Tribunal on the Te Reo Māori Claim (WAI 11) asserts that te reo is a taonga guaranteed protection under Article II of the Treaty of Waitangi.
1987	Māori Language Act recognises te reo as an official language. Māori Language Commission (Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori) is established.
1989	Education Act formally recognises kura kaupapa Māori as educational institutions.
1990	Education Act is amended to recognise wānanga as educational institutions and allow the Minister of Education to designate a state school as a kura kaupapa Māori.
1997	Strong push from Māori involved in initiatives to increase the numbers of speakers of te reo. There are 675 kōhanga reo (catering for 13,505 children), 54 kura kaupapa Māori, three wānanga, more than 32,000 students receiving Māori-medium education, and 55,399 students learning te reo.

1998	Te Puni Kōkiri report identifies education system's underachievement for Māori. First Māori education strategy developed by Ministry of Education and Te Puni Kōkiri.
1999	Education Act is amended to make it mandatory for kura kaupapa Māori to adhere to Te Aho Matua principles.
2001-05	Series of Hui Taumata initiated by Minister and Associate Minister of Education and Ngāti Tūwharetoa to debate issues, barriers, and future directions. Redevelopment of Māori education strategy, drawing on Te Puni Kōkiri's "Māori Potential Approach" policy.
2008	Launch of strategy for improving the performance of the education system for Māori, <i>Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success</i> .
2012	Range of initiatives, programmes, and activities to implement more self-determined approach to Māori education. (Includes iwi partnerships, ECE participation projects, and professional learning and development programmes.)

The completed report from this series of performance audits was published in 2015 (Controller and Auditor General, 2015). The report claims to present information not previously collected, about the relationship between schools and families, and in particular schools and Māori whānau. The report found that, “About 60 percent of whānau members who responded to our survey believe that they have effective relationships with their child’s school, whereas about 90 percent of schools that responded to our survey believe that they have effective relationships with whānau.” The Māori Advisory and Reference Group observe in their foreword to this report:

Healthy communities offer opportunities for children to explore issues with cultural and spiritual guidance and give ideas for coping with difficult life challenges. That said, there remains much room for improvement in the way the schooling system responds to Māori community aspirations, and their expectations that the sector provides a context for tamariki “to be Māori.” (Controller and Auditor General, 2015, p. 4)

Smith and Rapatahana (2012) also outline historical policies and Government decisions which colonised, assimilated, integrated and marginalised te reo Māori and Māori learners. Their focus is the impact of the English language as the “nemesis for Māori.” Although they find that Māori have fought back against these policies, they ask, “So have things really altered that much from the 1970s

onwards?” Their answer is, “a little, but not enough.” They believe that change must be made and cite Vasil, a non-Māori, as an example of the shift in Pākehā thinking that is necessary:

... it is important for Pākehā to realize that they are dealing with an entirely transformed, awakened, articulate and assertive Māori community that can neither be bought, or coerced. It will no longer be fobbed off by the Pākehā’s ‘reasonable’ solutions based on higher sacrosanct norms and principles (Vasil, 1990, p. 410, cited in Smith & Rapatahana, 2012, p. 97)

In the Moerewa community’s situation it is very clear that this shift in thinking was far from the minds of education officials in Wellington, who seriously underestimated the community’s vision and determination. The Moerewa community’s struggle highlighted the tense and difficult New Zealand education landscape which has largely worked against the interests of Māori.

“Tomorrow’s Schools”

Before the mid-1980s, New Zealand’s 1877 Education Act guided an education system built on the idea of social equity (Adams, et al., 2000). Free education became a right for everyone - not just a privilege for the wealthy few.

In the 1980s, the education scene changed dramatically. It moved away from its long held policy of equality of opportunity for all, to a commodity, something that could be bought and sold for a price. The key players in this change in philosophy were Treasury and the State Services Commission.

In 1987, David Lange, Prime Minister of the time, initiated a Taskforce to look at the Administration of Education. The outcomes were written in *The Picot Report*. The Government policy that subsequently followed was called *Tomorrow’s Schools* (Department of Education, 1988) which resulted in radical changes in our education system. The two main objectives of *The Picot Report* for the education system were:

- Every learner should gain the maximum individual and social benefit from the money spent on education.

- Education should be fair and just for every learner regardless of their gender, and of their social, cultural and geographic circumstances (Taskforce to Review the Administration of Education in New Zealand, 1988).

Although there would be little argument from New Zealanders on these goals, Snook, Adams, Clark, Codd, Collins & Pearce, (1999, pp. 3-4) point out that there were two rival agendas right from the start:

One, favoured by the educators, was for a partnership between parents and the fostering of equity ('parents as partners'); the other, favoured by the Treasury and the business people, was for competition and choice ('parents as customers'). Both these agendas appeared in the reports and the policy documents and, to this day, they are in tension with each other.

In 1997, looking back on a decade of this educational reform, David Lange, emphasised the goal of community empowerment—the fact that local differences could be accommodated and, “schools could shape themselves in ways which met the distinctive needs of the local community” (Lange, 1997, cited in Fiske & Ladd, 2000, p. 95). These education reforms in the 1980s contributed significantly to the expectations of communities like Moerewa, that they had the right, and the power to have a significant say in the shaping of an education for their children and community. The effects of the educational reforms and greater aspects of accountability is well covered in the literature of that time and later (Smith, 2002a & 2002b; Bottery, 2000; Codd & Gordon, 1991; Gordon, 1997; Gordon & Whitty, 1997; Thrupp, 1998; Troman, 2009; Wylie, 1995).

In 1990, the Government changed and the National Party came into power. One of their first actions was to pass the Education Amendment Act of 1991, which resulted in major changes being made to limit the powers of community and extend parents' choices to access schools outside of their community.

Thrupp (2009) outlines these crucial developments in school-level education policy during this first year of the National Government, noting their “clear neo-liberal direction” and “a decline in consensus in the educational sector as it contested some of the new directions” (p. 32). Thrupp argues that the new government's

support for the *Te Kotahitanga* programme, an initiative developed under the previous Labour Government to develop teachers' cultural competency and engagement with Māori learners, was essentially a school effectiveness initiative from the National Government's perspective, one which "would appeal to any government that wanted to put responsibility for student failure on the shoulders of schools and teachers" (p. 39).

Hence the paradox of *Te Kotahitanga* is that its enthusiasm for the power of teaching could help to support a situation where 'poorly performing' schools are publicly castigated, find it difficult to recruit teachers, and could even be shut down. Many of those schools will invariably be low-decile schools and many will have large numbers of Māori students. To the extent that teachers serve communities, including remote and disadvantaged communities, support for the politics of blame can be expected to have wider consequences than for teachers alone. (Thrupp, 2009, p. 40)

Who has the power?

Juxtaposed with the expectations of the Moerewa community for a voice and in fact, the autonomy promised by *Tomorrow's Schools* therefore, was this escalating neoliberal agenda that sought a return to a centralised system and an increase of a managerial, "schools as businesses" approach. This movement further marginalised rural and low socio-economic communities, like Moerewa. It is not hard to see how this shift from a social democratic and cooperative way of operating to competitive individualised models of social and economic organization (Small, 2009) were impossible for communities in poverty, and directly opposed to Māori and Indigenous values of collectivism and whanaungatanga:

A particular feature of neoliberal subjects is that their desires, hopes, ideals and fears have been shaped in such a way that they desire to be morally worthy, responsabilized individuals, who, as successful entrepreneurs, can produce the best for themselves and their families. To play their part in the neoliberal scenario, the newly responsabilized citizens must be unequivocally middle class. They become the enthusiastic consumers of goods and investments: In this new field, the citizen is to become a consumer, and his or her activity is to be understood in terms of

the activation of rights of the consumer in the marketplace. (Rose, 1999, pp. 164-165, cited in Davies & Bansel, 2007, p. 252)

In education the neoliberal agenda included ideas such as merit pay for teachers, standardised testing, vouchers and user-pay models. As Doherty (2007, p. 276) describes, the new educational discourse “reverberated with ideas such as freedom, choice, standards, excellence, tradition and parents’ rights.” These were portrayed as preferable to values such as equality and equity. In the neoliberal project inequality and a lack of wealth are perceived as an incentive to work harder. Economist George Gilder (2012, p. 166) explained this thinking as, “In order to succeed, the poor, most of all need the spur of their own poverty.”

Rashbrooke (2013, p. 2) provides the picture of inequality in New Zealand. By 2013, the ever-widening gap between the wealthy and the poor was the widest since detailed records began in the early 1980s. From this time until the mid-2000s this gap had widened faster in New Zealand than in any other developed country. The average income of the top 10 percent of households was nine times higher than the income of those in the bottom 10 percent and the top 1 percent of adults owned 16 percent of the country’s total wealth. In 2017, according to an Oxfam Briefing Paper, this has increased to 20 percent (Oxfam, 2017). Perry (2013, p.124, cited in Marriott & Sim, 2014, p. 4) reports that Māori and Pacific people typically have poverty rates that are around double those of Pākehā, regardless of the measure used. Marriott & Sim find that:

The gaps in inequality among the majority of the indicators investigated in this study show worsening outcomes for Māori and Pacific people. This growing gap in inequality between Māori and Pacific people, and the European population, warrants greater government attention if the gaps are not to continue increasing into the future. (p. 24)

The greater government attention in education has translated into even more market-based solutions which, build on National Standards, equate academic achievement with ‘success’ and place schools in competition with each other for students, while at the same time expecting them to collaborate. The *Investing in*

Educational Success (IES) initiative (Ministry of Education, 2014a) and the tool for implementing this policy, Communities of Learning, are an example of this situation. Although the new Labour-led government, elected in New Zealand in 2017, have promised to abolish National Standards and league tables that compare schools' outcomes, there is no indication that Communities of Learning will be discontinued.

Investing in Educational Success

The perfect example of this thinking is the *Investing in Educational Success* (IES) initiative, announced at the start of the 2014 election year with an investment of \$359 million over four years and then \$155 million each year after that. IES is a top down, one-size-fits-all model which requires schools to cluster locally in "Communities of Learning | Kāhui Ako." Communities of Learning (CoL) can make appointments, using the funding, to three roles: a Community Leader (usually a "Lead" Principal), "Across-Community Teachers" and "Within-School Teachers" — all of whom receive significant additional salary for these roles. In 2015, the primary teachers' union, the New Zealand Education Insititute (NZEI) identified that in the first phase of the IES scheme, large high decile schools were "pocketing the majority of funding, while decile 1 and 2 schools are getting just 6%, even though they make up 14% of the schools in the scheme" (NZEI Te Riu Roa, 2015).

An evaluation of Communities of Learning | Kāhui Ako in December, 2016 (Ministry of Education, 2016b) states there were 180 approved Communities of Learning, nearly two-thirds (62 percent) of the 2,409 schools that are eligible to access the three new roles were in Communities of Learning. Of those 1,500 schools, 519 (35 percent) were in Communities of Learning with endorsed achievement challenges. These challenges, which have to be endorsed by the Ministry of Education in order to access the funding, are overwhelmingly based on National Standards' data, which is painstakingly analysed by each cluster to demonstrate the low achievement of Māori and Pasifika children in their National Standards results for reading, writing, and mathematics. A search through these published endorsed

achievement challenges which are published on the Ministry of Education website, shows scant attention to “Māori enjoying education success “as Māori” as *Ka Hikitia* prioritises, but rather an overwhelming focus on “Māori boys’ writing” and similar goals with little thought about context or culturally responsive practice.

In a 2017 survey by the New Zealand Principals’ Federation (Cormick, 2017) Principal respondents spoke of CoL being over-loaded with new functions other than professional collaboration to improve learning and teaching for young people. Several commented that in respect of CoL they are “operating in the dark, building the plane in flight.” Many Principals were struggling with the inflexibility of the leadership structure, uncomfortable with the notion of a few roles taking all the money, and the “rigidity of the funding being mostly tied up in salaries.” Principals did not trust that the model is genuinely about collaboration and learning, but is rather a managerial system which will completely undermine the relationship between a school and its community.” Many schools are not willingly joining CoL but feel coerced, bullied and threatened by fear of missing out on the funding for professional development that is tethered to approved, endorsed achievement goals. This feeling of being bullied or threatened by the Ministry of Education to implement policies and practice that experienced educators feel is not in the best interests of children was an often repeated comment regarding the implementation of National Standards that many of us took a strong stand against. It was also a strong feeling among school leaders during the initial implementation of *Ka Hikitia* (Goren, 2009) and the subsequent iterations of this policy for Māori achievement, which Principals felt was largely unsupported and under resourced (see Chapter 4).

School Effectiveness

New Zealand has a single national education system. There are four national government education agencies: the Ministry of Education (MOE), the Education Review Office (ERO), the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) and the Education Council of New Zealand (EDUCANZ). As Wylie (2012, p. 1) observes, the

policies and system introduced with *Tomorrow's Schools* gave New Zealand the “most decentralized system of school self-management in the developed world.”

With the devolving of responsibility to local communities and parents, it became evident that this also meant there were no mechanisms in place to identify problems or to improve “failing” schools’ performance. Wylie describes the gap in the policy between the Ministry of Education, which was developed as a policy department, with no role in the support of schools, and the Education Review Office, whose focus at the time was on compliance with administrative regulations, again with no mandate to support schools they might identify as needing help.

In 1995 the government addressed this gap with the introduction of the Schools Support Project (Wylie, 2012, p. 4). The purpose of this intervention was to prevent schools who were identified as struggling from getting further into difficulty. Identifying these schools was most often done through ERO reports or through sector groups such as Principal associations, teacher unions, or school trustees’ associations working with the MOE.

In 1996 an initiative called the *Schooling Improvement Strategy* was added to allow clusters of schools to work together on “improvement.” In an example of this strategy in action schools in the decile one community of Otara found themselves in the media spotlight with the release of just such an Education Review Office report entitled, *Improving Schooling in Mangere and Otara* citing “non-performance” of 35 percent of the 18 schools in the community.⁵ Thrupp (1997, pp. 58-59), a member of the external reference group for this report, criticised the findings on two counts: the weak methodology, and the dismissal of the impact of poverty on the schools and community, concluding that “Mangere and Otara schools are primarily overwhelmed rather than ineffective” (p. 65).

⁵ The South Auckland area and other parts of the country in lower socio-economic circumstances with high proportions of decile one schools were the focus of the Education Review Office’s targeted regional reviews e.g Mangere and Otara (ERO, 1996); the East Coast (ERO, 1997); and the Far North (ERO, 1998). For an evaluation of these reports and their impact see Smith (2002a).

This experience of having an intervention imposed, ostensibly described as school support, is relevant to the experience of the Moerewa community and Moerewa School. Milne (2004, p. 156), discussing the “Strengthening Education in Mangere and Otara” (SEMO) initiative and the involvement of the school where she was the Principal, states, “The intervention team never did understand Clover Park’s philosophy and struggled to frame it within the Eurocentric solutions they had devised.” This highlights the same problems as the Moerewa community encountered with the intervention imposed on them. It also questions the role of ERO and their capacity to develop reports on a wide range of educational issues based on a synthesis of their individual school reports.

In 2012 the Ministry of Education implemented another schooling support initiative called *Learning and Change Networks*. The definition and description of the purpose of this initiative is described by the Ministry of Education as follows:

A Learning and Change Network is a group of schools, kura and communities working together to grow capability to accelerate student achievement in a culturally intelligent way recognising the diversity of 21st century learning. (Timperley & Earl, 2012, p. 5)

Learning and Change Networks were designed to cluster groups of schools together, to work on a collective goal, predominantly with a literacy and/or numeracy focus. Once again the approval of these cluster plans is managed by Ministry of Education personnel who are “working with” the cluster group. In light of the findings of research previously cited in this section, you might think that new approaches to school support might have been considered over the past 10 years. However, the same issues of Eurocentric domination that Milne (2004, 2013) writes about, are still very relevant in today’s context, and are mentioned specifically in relation to the Moerewa School situation later in this chapter.

Statutory Interventions

Wylie (2012, p. 5) describes the greater range of interventions, including statutory interventions, implemented by the Ministry of Education since 2001, and signals

pending changes following an Auditor-General's critical report on the MOE's schooling support systems (Office of the Auditor-General, 2008).

Hawke (2008) studied the current Ministry of Education policy which more recently "supports" schools who are identified as "declining" (Hawke's term) failing or at-risk, in depth. She describes the area of school decline as "largely un-researched" and suggests a set of possible predictors of decline that could assist with understanding, preventing or dealing with school decline in the future.

Hawke examines causal factors that lead to school decline. These include school leadership, Government policy, socio-economic status of the community the school is situated in. She groups these potential predictors into themes of:

- Macro (Societal) influences – including socio-economic status, poverty, conflicting societal values
- Meso (Institutional) influences – including governance, school organisation, declining enrolments, school culture, school management, poor performance
- Micro (Personal) influences – including Principal, staff, parents, students, personal agendas

Hawke (2008) is largely supportive of intervention in schools. She rationalises that schools in decline need to halt the decline, and rebuild and repair, and that intervention is one positive way to do this. Schools and school leaders in this study were described as being insular and inward looking - and had lost the ability to comprehend how a good school would operate. However it is also noted that the schools in the study received a range of external interventions and none were effective enough to halt the school's decline during the period of study. Education Advisors who were interviewed, gave other examples where this was the case in other schools also.

A key finding of this research is that when a Ministry of Education intervention is in place—as far as possible—the control of monitoring activities, should reside at school level. The study states that the schools involved, were often over analysed, and the literature used in the study provides other examples of schools that

suffered "overlapping periods of trial by media, trial by ordeal and trial by inspection" (Fletcher, Carson, & Williams, 1985, p. 113).

Hawke (2008) acknowledges that because this thesis is written about school decline, it can paint a negative discourse about predictions and warnings for schools where these factors are present. It advocates a pro-active action in these instances (p. 266).

Review of Statutory Interventions

In late 2013 a number of key sector groups raised concerns about the cost and length of some statutory interventions and as a result the Minister of Education asked the Secretary for Education to undertake a review of the statutory intervention process (Ministry of Education, 2014).

There is no doubt that Moerewa School's statutory intervention was a significant catalyst for the concerns of some of the sector groups. After almost two years of unsuccessful attempts to determine any terms of reference, or rationale for the long term status of the Minister-appointed Commissioner, events moved very quickly once sector groups and Principals' associations started publicising information they had requested under the Official Information Act. Typical of this publicity was a series of articles and interviews on radio, television and in print media.

On 11 November 2013, in an interview on Radio New Zealand, Paul Goulter, the then Secretary of the New Zealand Education Institute (NZEI) commented that the current model of school intervention was "perverse" in that it "incentivises Commissioners to stay longer, and the sort of statistics we hear from the school in the far north is indicative of that." (Goulter, 2013). This reference was to Moerewa School, and the disclosure by the Te Tai Tokerau Principals' Association that the Moerewa School Commissioner had been paid nearly \$150,000, including expenses, to run Moerewa School part-time. The Te Tai Tokerau Principals' Association had

spent six months making several OIA requests, two appeals to the Ombudsman and threatening legal action to establish that the size of these payments, which predominantly came out of the school's operations grant funding. Goulter also raised the concern across the education sector that "these Commissioners and LSMs [Limited Statutory Managers] are being used in a punitive way, where if a school doesn't 'toe the line' a Commissioner is threatened, and that doesn't help children's learning either." This was definitely the case in Moerewa.

Māori Television ran the same story on 11 November 2013, again quoting Māori Principals in Northland and the Northland Principals' Association president, Pat Newman, who commented the Commissioner at Moerewa School was, "Getting good money and by the hours that he claims he can't sleep at all because he must be doing 24 hours in a day." (Newman, 2013). Newman was instrumental in driving the OIA requests and demanding action be taken as a result. The source of the information publicised by the media was a press release issued from Newman in his capacity as the Te Tai Tokerau (Northland) Principals' Association in which he states:

Unless the Minister and Ministry had some kind of hidden agenda, there is absolutely no legal, or educational reason for Mr Eru to still be claiming an average of over \$12,000.00 a month from the community of Moerewa, especially one of his core roles, was to work with an advisory group to prepare for the election of a new Board. 18 months to do this, and it's not done". ... Who are the members of this advisory group? How often have they met? What documentation exists to support such meetings and their decisions? Why is Mr Eru still there collecting an average of \$12,000.00 per month? (Newman, 2013)

The purpose of the Ministerial review was to "identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current system and establish a baseline of effective practice to be used consistently in the statutory intervention framework." (Ministry of Education, 2014, p. 5).

Table 9 shows that, at the time of the review in October 2014, which was during the period of the Moerewa intervention, there were 70 statutory interventions in place

involving 69 state and state integrated schools in New Zealand (one school had two concurrent limited statutory managers dealing with two different lead issues)

Table 9: Number of Statutory Interventions, by region, 2014

(Ministry of Education, 2014c, p. 5)

Ministry Region	78K* Specialist Advisor	78L Action Plan	78M Limited Statutory Manager	78N (1) (2) Commissioner	78N (3) Commissioner	Total
Northern	4		7	8	5	24
Central North	1		14	1		16
Central South			8	3	1	12
Southern	1		9	3	5	18
Total	6	0	38	15	11	70

* These reference numbers are explained in Tables 10 & 11 later in this chapter

This means that 2.8% (69/2,444) of state and state integrated schools had statutory interventions in place in October, 2014. Redmond (2017) used figures released by the Ministry of Education under the Official Information Act to reveal that in the three years prior to 19 January, 2017, 154 schools either had a limited statutory manager (LSM) to handle specific responsibilities for the Board of Trustees, or a Commissioner. Of this number, 65 (42%) of the school boards were under Crown management, with a Commissioner in place. This equates to one in every sixteen schools nationally, with Māori-language immersion and low-decile schools disproportionately represented in intervention with one in nine Kura Kaupapa Māori and nearly 85% of decile one schools affected (see Redmond, 2017). The average decile of a school requiring intervention was 3.5 (on a scale of ten). According to the Ministry of Education Head of Sector Enablement and Support, Katrina Casey, "about two-thirds" of interventions happened on request by the Education Review Office, or the school itself. Eighty-eight percent of schools cited "employment" as the main reason for intervention followed by problematic board processes, organisation or management (51%) and falling student achievement (35%).

The two previous examples of data relating to statutory interventions have had to rely on third party investigations and their OIA requests. It has been very difficult to obtain data directly from the Ministry of Education regarding a breakdown of statutory interventions. On 29 October, 2017 I submitted a request to the Ministry of Education under the Official Information Act, for the names, decile, type, geographic region of statutory interventions since 2000. I also asked for the beginning and end dates of these interventions, the name of the Commissioner or Limited Statutory Manager, and the cost to the schools involved and to the Ministry of Education. On 6 November, 2017, I agreed to a Ministry of Education request to narrow the time frame to between 2012 and 2017. On 22 November, 2017 I was informed by the Ministry that they needed to extend the timeframe for a further 20 days, “as the consultations necessary to make a decision on the request are such that a proper response to the request cannot reasonably be made within the original time limit” and “the request necessitates a search through a large quantity of information.” It would seem therefore that this information is not kept by the Ministry, or at least, is not readily available. The response to my amended request was received on 19 December, 2017 with a refusal to provide costs, “as the information is not held by the Ministry,” and the “substantial collation and research” the information required would “unnecessarily interfere with the operations of the Ministry.”⁶

The data identified 202 statutory interventions during this five-year time period between January 2012 to November 2017. In 18 cases the same school is counted twice (one school is listed three times) if they had two different interventions e.g. when an LSM changed to a Commissioner. This represents 184 individual schools. In the following discussion and data analysis however, the 202 interventions have been counted separately as that is how they are treated in the OIA information. In December 2017, 70 of these interventions were still “active.” Two of these active cases employed the same Commissioner as was at Moerewa School—as a Limited Statutory Manager. One of these is a position he has held in that school since

⁶ Letter from Katrina Casey, Deputy Secretary, Sector Enablement and Support, Ministry of Education, to Keri Milne-Ihimaera dated 19 December, 2017.

September, 2014, after previously being the Commissioner in that same school since May 2010 (New Zealand Government, 2010)—at the time of writing, a total of seven years and seven months as a statutory appointee in the same school. The following analysis from the data shows what a valuable resource this information would be to reviewing and revising the process of intervention in schools. Deciles one to three schools make up 62% of all interventions (see Figure 2).

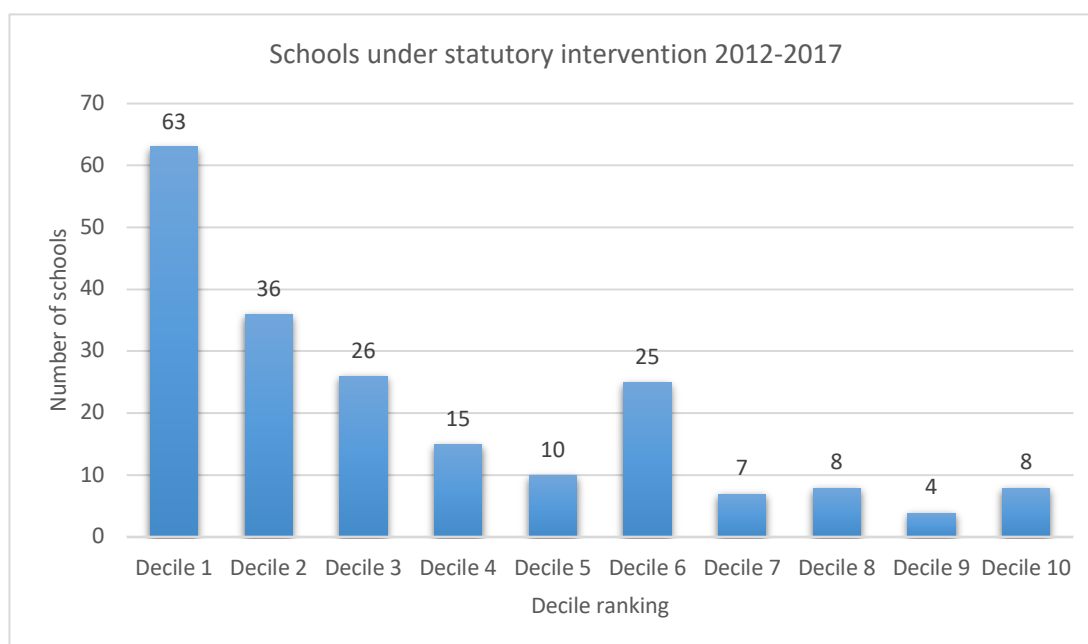


Figure 2: Schools under statutory intervention 2012-2017, by decile⁷

The highest number of statutory interventions during this period occurred in the Northland education region (see Figure 3). Not only was this the region with the highest number of interventions (30 interventions), it as one of only three regions where the interventions were the most severe, with 16 Commissioners and 14 LSMs. The only other two regions where Commissioner numbers were higher than LSMs were Southland and the West Coast, where the total number of interventions were significantly lower than Northland.

⁷ Official Information Act data from the Ministry of Education, December 2017

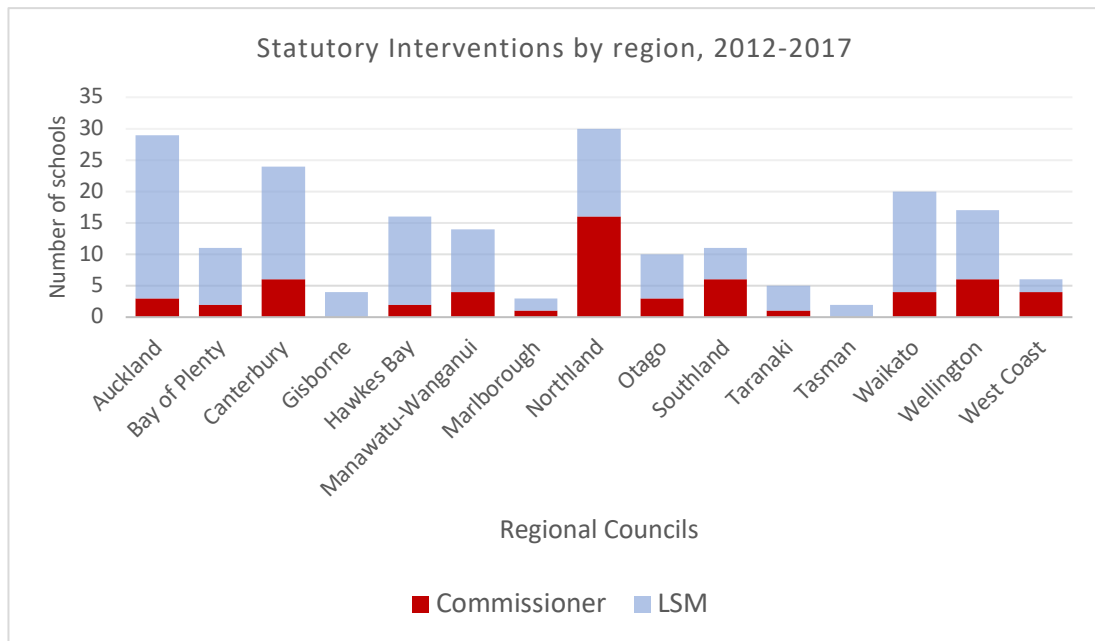


Figure 3: Statutory Interventions by Regional Council, 2012-2017⁸

In the Northland region 30 out of a total of 152 schools⁹ means that 19.7% of schools were involved in a statutory intervention. In the Auckland region, with the second highest number of schools (29 interventions) this number is out of 545 schools, which represents 5.3% of schools in this region. The analysis of interventions in each regional council is provided in Figure 4, which shows Northland, the West Coast, Southland, and Hawke’s Bay as the four regions with the highest percentage of interventions.

⁸ Official Information Act data from the Ministry of Education, December 2017

⁹ The source for the total numbers of schools in this analysis is Ministry of Education: Education Counts 2016 Regional Summaries (<https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/know-your-region>)

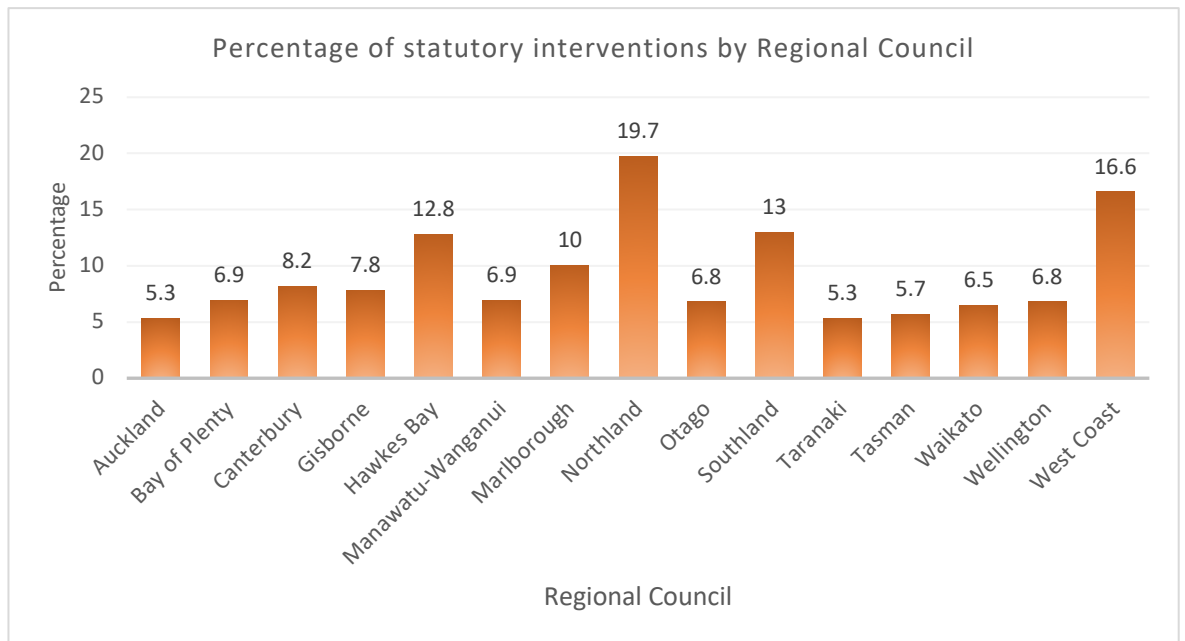


Figure 4: Percentage of statutory interventions by Regional Council, 2012-2017

So what is the explanation for the high number of interventions in Northland? Is it a high number of small, rural, and often isolated schools? While that is possibly a factor, an analysis of the number of schools in each region that are Grade U1 or Grade U2¹⁰ (fewer than 100 students) shows that Northland has 37% of schools that fit this category, but other regions have a higher percentage of small schools: the West Coast (53%), Gisborne (47%), and Southland (39%). In a study of principals' well-being in 2005, Hodgen and Wylie (2005, pp. 2-3) found that U1 and U2 schools were more likely to have female principals, principals who were younger (33% were under 45 years), and who were less experienced (40% had less than five years' experience). While all of these factors can certainly impact on a school, they do not explain the high number of Northland schools that have experienced intervention.

Could there be an argument therefore that poverty and socio-economic status are a causal factor in schools that are struggling? If that is the case, could different resourcing be a better solution than an intervention? The *New Zealand Index of*

¹⁰ Primary, intermediate and secondary schools in New Zealand are graded based on roll size for the purpose of determining the principal's salary. A Grade U1 school has a roll size between 1 and 50 students, Grade U2 between 51 and 100 students..

Multiple Deprivation (IMD) (Zhao & Exeter, 2016) provides a picture of disadvantage in overall terms, as well as in terms of seven domains of deprivation: employment, income, crime, housing, health, education and access. Data zones are ranked from the least to most deprived and grouped into five quintiles. Quintile 1 represents the least deprived section of the population whilst quintile 5 represents the most deprived section. This information has been used by the Ministry of Health in New Zealand to develop District Health Board deprivation profiles. While these are not the same as the Regional Council locations used by the Ministry of Education they do provide a comparison from a different sector across similar regional boundaries.

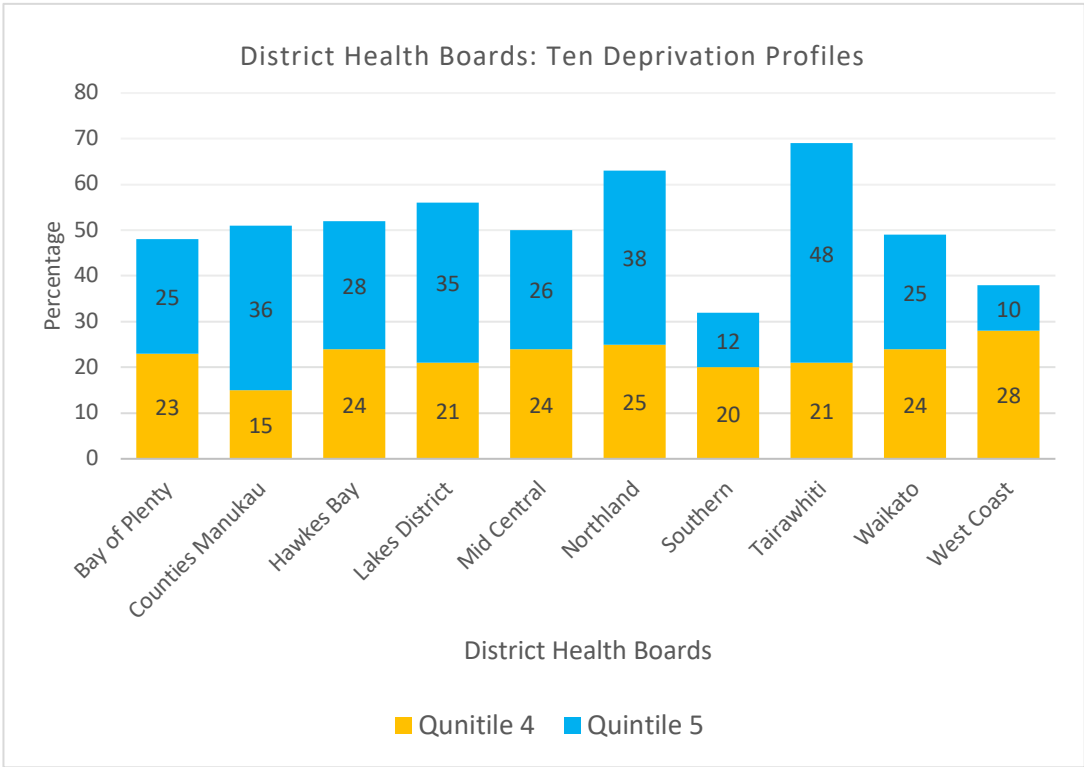


Figure 5: District Health Boards: Ten Deprivation Profiles

(Ministry of Health, 2016)

What is clear in Figure 5 is that while Northland has a very high proportion of people in the most deprived section of the population compared to the national average, there are other regions with a similar profile. Figure 5 shows this using a selection of District Health Board’s profiles, showing their highest levels of

deprivation (Quintiles 4 and 5). The selection includes the four regions identified as having the highest percentage of statutory interventions (see Figure 4). The reason for Northland having the highest percentage of interventions in the country, and also most severe level of statutory intervention, cannot therefore be explained by poverty and deprivation alone.

My own explanation, from experience in Northland is that context and regional issues matter little to a Ministry of Education with a one-size-fits-all mindset. This was evidenced when Tai Tokerau schools pleaded to the Ministry of Education for more support than other regions for children with high needs, for better and different resourcing (Norton, 2014; Lambly, 2017). These pleas from the chalkface, no matter how real, often fall on deaf ears. The solution proposed by Aka Tokerau (Northland Māori principals, which is explained in Chapter 8) shows, regions such as Northland need Ministry of Education personnel who not only understand the contexts of the schools they serve and who use this local knowledge and understanding to advocate on behalf of their schools, but who also have recent local school leadership experience. The Aka Tokerau solution worked effectively with schools, as all the mentors used to work with schools were current successful school Principals, who more often than not had tribal or local connections to the area. The experience in Northland seems to be that punitive measures are too readily used by the Ministry of Education officials and often these do not necessarily fit the different school circumstances. Many of the Ministry of Education officials responsible for advising schools in Northland, have been long term public servants with few having any recent school experience, with many never having been school Principals themselves. Could these issues regarding Northland Ministry of Education officials, and the fact that the Ministry of Education itself is reluctant to offer a 'tailored' solution where necessary, be a major factor in Northland schools featuring so prominently in the Statutory Intervention statistics?

The key question about the information obtained through the OIA request is how can the Ministry of Education possibly tailor fair and relevant solutions if they do

not have this data at their fingertips? Without this information how can they identify and monitor differences and trends, and how do they explain how one region's schools are so impacted? The current situation suggests that from the Ministry of Education's perspective, the schools and their principals are the problem, and their input into the solutions are rarely sought, or heeded.

Throughout the submissions received for the 2014 Ministerial review, there was a number of recurring themes. Overall, the sector had concerns about the perceived lack of transparency, partnership, collaboration, and trust between the Ministry and the other agencies in relation to the statutory intervention process (Ministry of Education, 2014, p. 16).

The review stated that the Ministry used a range of sources of information and evidence to determine the appropriate response to identified schools at risk. The list of examples include: ERO reports, charters, student achievement data and targets (NCEA or National Standards), annual reports including financial statements and analyses of variance, attendance data, stand-downs and suspensions, parent and community complaints, feedback from Special Education and the New Zealand School Trustees' Association (NZSTA). None of these issues were evident in the case of Moerewa School.

The cross-sector Working Group's recommendations, as a result of the review, are categorised into four groups: system monitoring; shared responsibility; consistent, transparent and robust practices, and the funding model. In all the review makes the following eight recommendations (pp. 3-4):

1. The sector will be involved in the discussion about schools in difficulty so that early and appropriate support is provided.
2. The criteria for approval of statutory appointees to the national pool will be equitable and transparent.
3. The process for selecting appointees for specific interventions will be transparent and ensure the most suitably qualified person is appointed.
4. Statutory intervention processes and practices will be consistent and transparent.

5. A robust professional development framework will ensure that the national pool of statutory appointees includes a range of skills, attributes and experience, and appointees are supported to maintain and build on their skill base.
6. Professional development of Ministry staff will ensure consistent application of the statutory intervention framework and sustainable institutional knowledge.
7. The criteria for funding of statutory intervention costs will be equitable and transparent.
8. The Working Group will continue to meet at regular intervals to monitor the implementation of approved recommendations.

In 2014, I was an elected member of the New Zealand Principals' Federation (NZPF) Executive. We received a copy of the draft report as the Federation had a representative involved in the Working Group. The NZPF's suggestions for changes relating to Statutory Interventions were for interventions that:

- are funded by the Ministry of Education. This would ensure that the Ministry was better involved, informed, and motivated, while reducing financial stress on an already vulnerable school
- are designed to empower and strengthen a whole community
- follow a needs analysis process that is detailed, transparent, consultative, and robust
- provide multiple supports for change. Schools are highly complex organisations where a narrow focus (such as removing the Principal), will not transform, and where temporary improvements will not endure
- include a transparent and valid monitoring process which adjusts to changing dynamics and challenges (Ministry of Education, 2014b)

Many of these recommendations came from my experience at Moerewa School, and were also supported from others of the Executive membership who had been involved in some type of statutory intervention in their school.

The Working Group's report was received with mixed views from Principals I contacted, in my capacity as an NZPF executive member, for their feedback. I was interested to note that there were references to processes that were not followed in the lead up to the Commissioner being appointed at Moerewa School. There was support for the implementation of the recommendations at the end of the report requiring more transparency from the Ministry with regards to the selection and

suitability of statutory appointees, and for the processes and practices to have some kind of national consistency and transparency, but there was scepticism that this report would amount to much change. By and large, the feedback was that it was an exercise in consultation from the Ministry of Education that would not necessarily lead to any real and relevant change for schools who had some kind of statutory intervention already in place in their schools. The biggest disappointment expressed by those I spoke to, was that the report did not address the concerns that were expressed about transparency of information being shared from the Ministry of Education and Commissioners with schools, and the accountability of the Ministry of Education and Commissioners to the schools and communities they were engaged in. This feeling is captured in this comment from a Principal who was also involved in an intervention in her school:

[NZPF] spent 12 months having a talk fest with the MOE and a select group and produced a document that was meant to improve the intervention process. Place this in the shredder, it is a nonsense, I was so disappointed. (CM, Educator, 2017)

A clear gap in the literature, highlighted by the Moerewa community's experience, is that most of the research supports the concept of intervention when a school is identified as failing. This poses the questions: who defines failure, what is school success and whose definitions count? Thrupp (1998) finds, at the heart of the concept he calls a "managerialist doctrine of external accountability to prevent 'provider capture' and improve effectiveness," are the "politics of blame." He defines this as the attempt by external agencies to "construct school failure as the clear responsibility of schools themselves." Thrupp (2007) also raises what he describes as education's "inconvenient truth," the issue of poverty and middle class advantage in our education system. He argues that "by failing to raise middle class advantage in education as an issue, politicians and policymakers help it to be hegemonic: that is, to appear natural and how the world should be" (p. 265). Thrupp's work critiques neoliberal education policy and the politics of education research, particularly in terms of school effectiveness, school improvement, school change and school leadership. These themes are extremely relevant to the story of Moerewa School and its situation.

The Moerewa community maintain that their school was not failing. They had received a series of positive ERO reports and enjoyed major community support. There is very little literature which discusses the situation where schools do not fit the conventional model of being in 'decline'.

In an interview with a focus group of staff, who were teachers at Moerewa School during the intervention, many commented about the Ministry of Education's need to "bring the school back into line" over the school and community stance against the Ministry of Education, as being the real motivation for the intervention.

Simply put, the Ministry of Education did not want to be defied. They saw Moerewa School as defiant, with a defiant Board of Trustees, Principal, Staff and community who had to be 'taught a lesson'. (TH, Community member, 2017)

The Education Amendment Act 2017

The Ministry of Education describes the amendments to the Education Act in 2017 as the most comprehensive update of New Zealand's education legislation in almost 30 years (Ministry of Education, 2017a). The Act's changes will take effect gradually between 19 May, 2017 and January, 2020. One of the amendments relates to Statutory Interventions. This amendment came into effect from 19 May, 2017. Previously there were six types of statutory interventions:

1. 78J: The Secretary requires the Board to provide specified information.
2. 78K: The Secretary requires the Board to engage specified specialist help.
3. 78L: The Secretary requires the Board to prepare and carry out an action plan.
4. 78M: The Minister requires the Secretary to appoint a limited statutory manager (LSM) to carry out specific functions and powers of that Board.
5. 78N(1): The Minister dissolves the Board and requires the Secretary to appoint a Commissioner to carry out all powers and duties of the Board.
6. 78N(3): The Secretary dissolves the Board and appoints a Commissioner to carry out all powers and duties of the Board (in certain defined circumstances).

There are now two thresholds that need to be met for a statutory intervention by the Minister of Education or Secretary for Education in a school:

1. The Secretary must have reasonable grounds for concern about the operation of the school, or the welfare or educational performance of its students; or
2. The Secretary must have reasonable grounds to believe there is a risk to the operation of the school, or the welfare or educational performance of its students.

Under the previous intervention system all except one intervention needed to satisfy the higher threshold. The Ministry of Education calls these changes a more graduated range of interventions and comments that changes have been made to the interventions framework so schools can get quicker and more tailored support from the Ministry to get back on track when they are struggling. However, comments from some in the sector seem to reflect the feeling that these changes have merely increased the range of ways for the Ministry of Education to be officially involved in a school. This is a serious and valid concern. The issues of power and control are discussed in detail in the analysis of themes in Chapter 7, and the imbalance of power is at the centre of the proposed alternative model introduced in Chapter 8.

The four main changes and other intervention amendments are:

1. Introducing four new intervention options:
 - a. A **case conference**, which would be a meeting between board representatives, school representatives, the Principals and other relevant people. Decisions made at the case conference would be recorded in writing and become binding on the people present. The lower threshold for intervention applies to this intervention.
 - b. A **Specialist Audit**, where a school, kura or board is assessed by a third party, with specific skills. The lower threshold for intervention applies to this intervention.
 - c. Issuing a **Performance Notice**, which would require the board to remedy a breach of performance by a certain time. The lower threshold for intervention applies to this intervention.
 - d. A **Statutory Appointee to the Board** appointed by the Minister of Education, who could provide a managed transition back to self-governance as there would be experienced guidance for the board. The higher threshold for intervention applies to this intervention.

2. Moving two of the existing intervention options from the higher threshold to the existing lower threshold:
 - a. requiring the board to procure or access specialist help or advice. Any person(s) engaged are to provide a report to the Secretary and the board at a time nominated by the Secretary
 - b. requiring the board to prepare and carry out an action plan.

3. Extending two existing interventions to be more comprehensive:
 - a. requiring the board to provide information is being extended to require a board to provide an analysis of that information, if necessary
 - b. requiring the board to procure or access specialist help or advice is being extended to require any person engaged in specialist help to provide a report to the Secretary and the board.

4. Enabling the Secretary to waive the fees and costs associated with the more serious and ongoing interventions. These include:
 - a. Specialist help
 - b. Specialist audit
 - c. Limited statutory manager
 - d. Commissioner.

(Ministry of Education, 2017a)

There are now nine different statutory interventions that can be used to support the different situations and issues schools and kura may face and these are outlined in Tables 10 & 11 on the following pages:

Table 10: Levels of Intervention: reasonable grounds for concern.

(Ministry of Education, 2017b)

RISK THRESHOLD	TYPE OF INTERVENTION	LINK TO LEGISLATION	WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE BOARD
Reasonable grounds for concern	Requirement to provide information	Section 78J:	The Board retains its powers but is required to provide specified information, and may be required to provide analysis of information provided.
	Specialist help	Section 78K:	The Board retains its powers but is required to engage specialist help (specialist advisor), and may be required to report on the specialist help.
	Action Plan	Section 78L:	The Board is required to prepare and carry out an Action Plan.
	Case conference	Section 78LA	The Board retains its powers but is required to attend a case conference (which may

			result in the board agreeing or being required to take a particular action/s, and provide a report/s on the action/s).
	Specialist Audit	Section 78LB	The Board retains its powers but is required to engage an appropriately qualified person to undertake a specialist audit of any aspect of the school's affairs (which may also include reporting requirements by the board on the audit).
	Performance notice	Section 78LC	Board retains its powers but is required to carry out a specified action by a specified date (the performance notice may also include reporting requirements by the board on the action taken).

Table 11: Levels of Intervention: Reasonable grounds for concern.

(Ministry of Education, 2017b)

RISK THRESHOLD	TYPE OF INTERVENTION	LINK TO LEGISLATION	WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE BOARD
Reasonable grounds to believe	Appointment of additional trustee who may also be presiding trustee by Minister	Section 78LD	Board retains its powers. The appointed trustee will only have one vote. If appointed as the presiding trustee, the trustee will have no special powers other than to preside at meetings. Appointee is only eligible for the same honoraria as other trustees.
	Limited Statutory Manager (LSM)	Section 78M:	Some Board powers are temporarily removed and vested in the Limited Statutory Manager.
	Commissioner	Section 78N(1)(2)	Board is dissolved and a Commissioner is appointed to replace the Board. The Commissioner holds all the functions, powers and duties of the Board the Commissioner has replaced.
		Section 78N(3)	Commissioner appointed by the Secretary as there is no functioning Board (e.g. owing to election issues or too few members or refusal to meet). The Commissioner holds all the functions, powers and duties of the Board the Commissioner has replaced.

The Illusion of Power Sharing

Educational Leadership and Interventions

Wylie (2012, p. 99) identifies a combination of factors in *Tomorrow's Schools* that worked to benefit some Principals. These included schools large enough to employ administrative support, Principals who did not have a teaching load, a relatively

experienced Board who trusted the Principal, good quality staff, and a location where the student population was growing. She comments:

But school self-management was sown on uneven ground. Many Principals did not enjoy such a fortunate combination of circumstances, particularly those who led schools in poor or rural areas, often the schools serving Māori students, who were especially meant to benefit from Tomorrow's Schools. (p. 99)

Moerewa School, decile one, the lowest socio-economic school rating, rural, predominantly Māori, could have been seen as a school with almost none of these "fortunate" circumstances. That was not Moerewa's perception—or mine. With a strong and committed board, long term local staff who were passionate about, and often related to, the children, Moerewa, as the Community Submission made clear, were driven to make self-management work in their favour.

There is no doubt however, that under *Tomorrow's Schools* Principals' work hours soared, as they took on new administrative roles with minimal training and support. This workload has not abated. *The Principal's Health and Well-being Survey 2016* (Riley, 2017), commissioned by the primary sector union, the New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI), spoke to 398 Principals across the country, and to 14 deputy and assistant Principals, finding that "the vast majority of primary school Principals are working large amounts of overtime, struggling with limited resources and huge demands, and some are 'just surviving'" (Dogan, 2017). Riley (2017, p. 15) states, "What is clear is that this level of demand is dangerous to the long-term health and wellbeing of Principals who find consistently that the resources available to them are not concomitant with the demands."

This report, and an earlier investigation into Principal wellbeing and stress (Hodgen & Wylie, 2005), both cite many factors contributing to Principal stress. These include the sheer quantity of work, the multi-tasking nature of the job, Ministry paperwork, a lack of time to focus on teaching and learning, lack of resourcing, financial management and the ongoing implementation of changing Government initiatives. Neither of these studies however, asked questions about, or reported on

the circumstances of Principals involved in statutory interventions. I have been unable to find data that is relevant to these situations, which makes the following section crucially important in that it tells the stories of those who have experienced an imposed statutory intervention during their leadership of a school.

The lack of available public information about Statutory Interventions is interesting. One could question whether this is a deliberate strategy by the Ministry of Education, its leadership, or indeed the Minister of Education. Are the numbers sufficiently high as to warrant questioning the success of *Tomorrow's Schools* and site-based self-management and governance? The appointment of an LSM, or a Commissioner happens when there are the most difficult cases for the ERO or the MoE to address, but are these the tip of the iceberg? It is beyond the scope of this present study to pursue these issues, but it would indeed make a valuable study and research contribution to the lack of knowledge and information that is publicly available at this point.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the policy and systemic background to school interventions, and their subsequent impact, professionally and personally, on those most often caught between the different factions involved—the school Principal. It has identified significant inconsistencies in support, in the rationale, and in the processes used by the Ministry of Education to implement an intervention. This inconsistency was a finding of an Office of the Auditor General Report (2008) which stated:

The Ministry has effective policies and procedures for managing statutory interventions once it intervenes. These are usually followed. However, the Ministry needs to improve how it monitors statutory interventions and assesses the effectiveness of statutory interventions. There is not enough information on the effectiveness of statutory interventions in improving board governance in the long term. (p. 6)

The report also raised an issue just as pertinent now as it was in 2008, and one still without a transparent process:

An important aspect of implementing statutory interventions is appointing people to carry out the intervention. The capacity of the statutory appointee to work with the board and school management is a vital component of making the statutory intervention successful. Each regional or district office has a group of people it can call on. In some areas, Ministry staff indicated that it was hard to get enough people. The Ministry did not provide evidence of a transparent procedure for how people who are available to do statutory intervention work are included in the group. Some concerns were raised in interviews about there being little transparency. (p. 39)

Given the consistent comments from the Principals surveyed about bullying and seemingly irrational decision-making, with supreme authority, and low accountability from the LSM or Commissioner the capacity of these appointees is a key issue that puts Principals in an extremely vulnerable position. The medical, emotional, psychological, financial, and relational stress are powerfully articulated by the participant Principals in Chapter 7, and is evidence of the long lasting impact on their professional status and careers. The previous two chapters have examined the literature about education in New Zealand, both in Māori and mainstream settings. The literature concerning school effectiveness and statutory interventions has been discussed. The literature has provided the background for the events that were to unfold in the community of Moerewa.

The next chapter moves to Moerewa and explains how the community exercised their tino rangatiratanga repeatedly over time to try to shape the education approach they wanted, and one they were determined to design.

Chapter Five: The Dream

“Te ohonga ake i taku moemoeā, ko te puawaitanga o ngā whakaaro”

“Dreams become reality when we take action” (Moerewa Community Submission, 2003)

Introduction

The title for this chapter comes from the Community Submission written in 2003, and explained in detail in Chapter 1. “The Dream” written about in the submission was a clear description about what schooling, and education ‘could’ look like in the community, if everyone was brave enough to think beyond the current realities at the time. This chapter outlines the community dream, and the steps that Moerewa School took, to turn this dream into a reality.

Moerewa

The 2013 New Zealand Census (Statistics NZ, 2015) provides a statistical snapshot of the Moerewa community in comparison with other communities in the Far North District of New Zealand. The Far North comparisons are provided in parentheses where these are relevant. In 2013 the population of Moerewa was 1,431. This is a decrease of 102 people since the 2006 Census. Moerewa has a young population with a median age of 30.9 years (43.3 years) and 28.1% (22.2%) under the age of 15 years. Māori make up 88.3% (44.5%) of the population of Moerewa. English is the most common language spoken and 34.6% (15.1%) speak te reo Māori. The median income for people aged 15 years and over in Moerewa was \$17,800 (\$21,500). The unemployment rate for people aged over 15 years was 19.2% (11.5%) in 2013, with ‘labourers’ the most common occupational group.

The statistics paint a picture of a small predominantly Māori community, with a declining population, strong in Te Reo Māori, young in comparison with the wider Far North community, with high unemployment and low income. The community

website for Moerewa however, shows us another side. The website¹¹ introduces the community in this way:

"Tama tū tama ora, tama noho tama mate"

(To stand is to live to lie down is to die)

This whakataūāki has been the catch cry for many of us living here in Moerewa. It is about standing up and taking our place, and not being swept away by the tides of change. ...We live within the mountains that form the pillars of the house of Ngāpuhi. We are in the far north of the north island. Who are we? We are the descendants of Rāhiri.

A description of the town's history, that captures this community voice, is presented in this same Moerewa community website:

Moerewa History

History of the Town - Nā Te Aroha Henare

Moerewa emerged from the relocation of Taitokerau-wide Māori who by the 1940s were landless and who moved into about 30, 1 - 2 room abandoned American transit huts, at the back of the Moerewa Freezing works, providing labour for the Dairy Factory and Freezing works. Moerewa attracted Māori who started a settlement that came to be known as "Tuna Town" a ghetto that acquired a romantic aura. This disguised abject Māori poverty, the result of the crown limiting Māori development and Māori housing.

Māori Housing

Māori housing was introduced by Kawiti, Henare and Ngata in rural Waioamio in the early 1920s, however what they started was revised by the crown. Ngata's land initiatives proved to be effective but unpopular. Māori housing became restricted to urban "pepper-potted" situations. Māori were not permitted to build on their own land: rather, they were required by various means to sell or swap their land, to obtain a deposit to live somewhere else! Many went to Auckland from the 1950's onwards. In the 1960s the crown reverted to allowing some semi urban Māori housing settlements, such as Taumatamakuku, these were no better off than Tunatown, in spite of the crown's involvement. It was reflected in the provision of bare housing features in each house, the lack of insulation, floor coverings, floor space, quality

¹¹ <https://netlist.co.nz/communities/Moerewa/Index.cfm>

paint, wall coverings, concreting, fencing, sewage and community facilities.

Taumatamākuku

Taumatamākuku was a new subdivision of some considerable size. It was a cheap settlement dumped on rocky scoria, with thin topsoil, immediately bordered on its west side by a railway line, and by State Highway One on its immediate eastern side, one couldn't imagine a more dangerous setting to raise young children!

In its time Taumatamakuku was touted as a fine model of Māori housing. The freezing works was seen as motivation for town development. In truth the negative displacement of Māori off their land was a primary cause. "Urban drift" was a blame free malaise! The freezing works benefited from cheap labour in Moerewa, amongst them were landowners from whom Moerewa, being situated smack dab in the middle of the North was destined for development as a service industry town. With the establishment of large corporate companies such as the Allied Farmers Freezing Company, (AFFCO) the BOI Dairy Company, the railways and associated businesses, the small rural town comprising 86 % Māori (1996 census) was regarded as booming in the heydays of the 1960s and 1970s. Māori had long been groomed for employment in the semi-skilled labouring arena, so that when these industries were established Māori became the predominant workforce. Many commuted daily from outlying districts, for employment, while others uprooted and moved to Moerewa away from culture rich and familiar whānau and hapū structures of neighbouring communities to engage in a range of labouring jobs created.

One community person recalled his childhood feelings:

"In my mind as a child it puzzled me why there were no Māori doctors, why all the people in charge were always white people. Māori always seemed to work for other people"

While it can be argued that these were good times for Māori: there was employment, money, housing and schools built to educate the children of the workers, there was also a negative other side to the picture that would become apparent further down the track.

In the 1980s major economic, environmental, and political changes beyond the scope of the community's control led to the demise or radical downsizing of these industries that had once kept the town alive. The decisions being made had a major negative impact on the people of Moerewa. For many years following this period the township battled to survive. The once vibrant community was soon to be known for a raft of negative statistics - violence, crime, alcohol & drug problems, un-employment, youth problems, social problems and low

levels of achievement. For many these indicators of poor health, wellbeing, and socio economic status were regarded as the norm, just the reality of Moerewa.

People felt that the solutions government departments and agencies offered were short term programmes, aimed at dealing with the presenting issues, rather than the core problem. The community began to see that much of the assistance provided over this period was creating dependency on Government initiatives. The suggested approach by some of the agencies was to declare the older generation a "lost cause" as they were deemed too difficult to deal with and unable to make changes and instead resources would just concentrate on the young people. This notion was challenged by community people, who believed the generations could not be separated out, as each group learned from each other, and a more holistic approach was needed. One quote was "Where do you think our children learn from? ... their parents. ... the people you have just written off, you are going to perpetuate the problem, unless you deal with the whole whānau".

Motivation for change had to come from within, the community had to find solutions for their problems. A number of local people who not only wanted better for themselves and their children, but also had a passion for the potential of young people in a community caught up in a cycle of deprivation. They had a drive that would lead to the restoration of Moerewa to the vibrant town it once was.¹²

Ngāti Hine

Moerewa is situated within the tribal boundary of Ngāti Hine. Ngāti Hine have a long history of their determination for Ngāti Hine to speak on behalf of Ngāti Hine. In an affidavit presented to dispute the Crown's selection of a group "Tuhoronuku" to settle Treaty grievances of Northland tribes – Shortland (Waitangi Tribunal, 2014) outlines Ngāti Hine's vision for the future of the tribe:

21. Ngāti Hine's vision is:

Mā Ngāti Hine anō a Ngāti Hine e kōrero

Mā roto i te whānaungatanga me te Kotahitanga

'Self-determination through kinship and unity'

¹² <https://netlist.co.nz/communities/Moerewa/Index.cfm>

22. By this, we mean that Ngāti Hine will:

- a. Decide what is important for ourselves;
- b. Be unified, well organised and think strategically;
- c. Kia kotahi te reo, ko taua reo kia Ngāti Hine – speak with one clear voice and that voice be Ngāti Hine;
- d. Uphold with pride ‘te tū o Ngāti Hine’;
- e. Re-establish control of te rohe o Ngāti Hine and manage all our resources and taonga on our own terms; and
- f. Thrive economically and be politically independent.

Henare (Waitangi Tribunal, 2014) discusses the position of the larger, main Northland tribe, Ngāpuhi. He states that during the 1840s, Ngāpuhi was a group of emerging hapū situated mainly in the mid-Northern areas of New Zealand. He reminds the Crown that in the Treaty itself, there is no mention of this ‘collection’ of tribes called Ngāpuhi. He describes the “cultural hegemony” of Missionary history and early non-Māori historians that the Crown sees in their best interest to validate in today’s times. He states that Ngāti Hine should negotiate directly with the Crown on matters of interest to Ngāti Hine:

From our Ngāti Hine perspective there is only one Te Tiriti o Waitangi. That is the version that was signed by our ancestors. They signed and understood Te Tiriti i roto i te reo Māori. It is from Te Tiriti o Waitangi and, in particular Article II, that guaranteed to Kawiti, and therefore Ngāti Hine, our mana and our rangatiratanga, or, our supreme authority to decide for ourselves. Te Tiriti o Waitangi gave the Crown a limited right to govern its subjects. It also contained the collective vision and wisdom of our tupuna to establish a relationship with the Crown founded on the principles of partnership, good faith and respect. Any other interpretation that would have us ceding our rangatiratanga or mana is a denial of historic reality. It is a manipulation of the past to make it fit what exists now.

Tipene-Hook (2011, p. 20) also notes that Ngāti Hine see themselves as kaitiaki of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and have long regarded themselves as having “a solemn obligation to oppose breaches of Te Tiriti o Waitangi whenever they arise.” There

could be no greater breach of the Treaty than in the field of education and the failure of schooling to provide for Māori children, and this is clearly recognised in the Moerewa Community's aspirations described in the following section.

These examples show clearly that Ngāti Hine has always had an expectation that they will have the authority to make decisions about what is good for Ngāti Hine, and that they would speak up about injustice. These were not newly found expectations that came about as a result of Moerewa School exploring what was possible within the State education system, but rather these attitudes and beliefs existed already.

This position was affirmed during the focus group sessions with interview participants. In a discussion about these historical positions, described in Tipene-Hook's work as being Ngāti Hine's obligation to oppose breaches of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, participants were asked if they felt these were still just as relevant in today's times, and did they think this historical environment may have contributed to the community's current acceptance that challenging the Crown was seen as an inevitable part of the process? All participants overwhelmingly agreed, with one participant claiming "Yes this fighting thing is in our blood!" (MM, Community Member, 2017)

The Dream: The Moerewa Community Submission

In 2003 the Mid North region of Northland was involved in a Network Review of the schools in Central Northland and the Russell Peninsula, imposed by the Labour Government of the time. Network Reviews followed the Government's Educational Development Initiatives (Stewart, 1992, Savage, 2005). The Network Review process was initiated in 2000 by the then Minister of Education Trevor Mallard, beginning with schools in his own electorate in the Wainuiomata region near Wellington. Harris (2005) also undertook research on EDIs which was commissioned by the New Zealand School Trustees Association. From her analysis of Network Reviews Harris recommended the importance of regular clear communication from

the Ministry of Education and giving Boards of Trustees the power to control the process. She found that changes in school organisation, when schools are the hub of a community, have a long lasting and far reaching impact on people's lives, which include a process of grieving over what has been lost and coming to terms with the change. (Harris, 2005, cited in Hills, 2013, p. 39). It is to the Moerewa community's credit that they seized the opportunity to regain control of a process that had been arbitrarily imposed on them.

This Network Review saw many schools in the region targeted for merger or closure. Rather than have a possible merger or closure forced on them, the community decided to come together as a collective to talk about education plans in Moerewa. They held a series of five public meetings, and a working party was formed to bring together the final recommendations from the community. This working party visited other schools to look for solutions, and read widely including *Our Secondary Schools Don't Work Anymore* (Hood, 1998). A community debate was facilitated and finally a community ballot was conducted. The submission outlines that one third of the Moerewa community were involved in these discussions and reaching the final decision. The outcome was a recommendation from the community to close both existing primary schools and re-open as a new school. This decision was a difficult one, as many of the people involved had long standing histories with the schools, and this recommendation would mean a whole new description of the delivery of education in Moerewa.

The community sent their submission to the Ministry of Education Bay of Islands Review Team, in a letter written on 28th November, 2003. The covering letter explains that the Ministry was aware the Moerewa community had engaged in a series of meetings to discuss the options regarding the future of education provision in the town. It also signals the community's strong desire to reject the current educational status quo, and to look at a radically different set of behaviours and expectations.

We wish to emphasize to the minister that our dream of a new day dawning is not possible by working alongside the status quo. If the system could have been changed from within, it would have happened by now, we have all been very active on boards of trustees, and staff of schools. We know what we are proposing will work; because it has to, 'our children's futures depend on it.' (Moerewa Community Submission, 2003)

The Community Submission was headed, "To establish a quality 21st century Moerewa Community Campus." The Submission also documented the frustrations felt by the community regarding the local high school. This sets the scene for what was to come in future years, and shows the community's long-standing commitment to try and be involved in solutions to support a better education pathway for their children:

In Nov 2001 the school boards of Moerewa and Otiria primary schools called a meeting with Bay of Islands College to talk about issues and concerns that whānau from Moerewa had, to do with the progress of their children at college. The meeting was to try and find more effective ways to work through issues and create better relationships between the community and the college, the community also wanted to work in partnership with, and have input into, changing what was perceived to be not working. In all we had 4 education hui, 1 culminating in a full community hui. We felt that the community input was not valued at that point and in the end became a threat. It has now got to the point where over the last 2 years our community's involvement in the college has diminished. They now employ some local mentors (which is good) but no longer talk to the community. We need to say that some of our kids have at times learnt and succeeded, but mostly in spite of, and not because of the current schooling. (Moerewa Community Submission, 2003)

At a community hui, called by the Moerewa School Board of Trustees in 2017, a community member, describing this time fourteen years later, captures that vision and the community's determination to fight back. Te Puna i Keteriki is the spring at Otiria. A local whakatauki tells of the baby eels, and their journey when returning from the sea to their rivers. Only by co-operating and working together can they successfully scale the waterfall, Tiria. The community member connects the

community's vision connecting it to the tuna (elvers) of Moerewa and their efforts to "swim against the tide."

In the original network review the Ministry of Education said the community was too small to sustain three schools. Moerewa saw this as an opportunity. The vision of 'twinkle to wrinkle'—cradle to the grave, was born. It wasn't an easy thing to do even back then. There was a lot of heartache. The idea was, it takes a community to grow a child. We talked about elvers swimming up the waterfall, to join together, then swim against the tide. That's what we did. (DP, Community member, 2017)

This submission became the foundation document of the newly formed Moerewa School (a merger of the existing Moerewa Primary School with Otiria Primary School), and was used to set key strategic goals for the school and community to work towards.

The submission is a key document in this research as it provides the context to the aims and objectives of Moerewa School from 2003 up until 2012 (when the statutory intervention was implemented). The submission outlines the wishes and desires of the community at the time, with regards to future education philosophy and direction. There are bold statements about education provision, and the overall message was that the current status quo in the existing schools was not going to assist the community's children to achieve. The submission talks about a 'new day dawning' and describes the community's expectations that things will be different.

There is no doubt, as this community action denotes, that the Moerewa community was politicised, highly organised, and knew what they wanted. Kelly, (2002, p. ix, cited in Choudry and Kapoor, 2010, p. 4) argues that "too often, our standards for evaluating social movements pivot around whether or not they 'succeeded' in realizing their visions rather than on their merits or power of the visions themselves." The Moerewa community vision was powerfully derived from the struggle and experiences of Māori learners, parents, and whānau who dared to challenge colonial injustice and the hegemony of low educational expectations of their children and community by others.

Prior to the interviews to select the Principal to lead the newly merged school, all shortlisted applicants were sent the Community Submission document. The Board of Trustees asked each applicant to prepare a presentation answering one question, “How will you realise this community dream?” It was clear from this direction set by the Board of Trustees, before they had even made a decision about who the successful candidate would be, that the new Principal was to make sure that the community submission was the foundation document for the school.

The Schools

It is important to understand the background to the writing of the submission and what schooling had been like in the community prior to the merger of Otiria and Moerewa Schools.

On 4th September 2003, Education Minister Trevor Mallard initiated a Network Review of schooling in central Northland. A network review is a process initiated by the Ministry of Education under the direction of the Education Minister. It assesses the way education is being provided in a particular area, and identifies what re-organisation might be necessary to ensure a high quality of education is provided for the next 10–15 years. Reviews do not consider the performance of individual schools but what is best for the area as a whole.

In the press release announcing his decision to start the review, Trevor Mallard encouraged communities to get involved:

I urge people to get actively involved in this process. This review is an opportunity for schools, their communities, parents and boards to contribute to the future shape of local education. ... I would like to see everyone contributing their ideas about possible future education in the region. We need to make sure education resources are spent on teaching children, and not on maintaining underused or empty buildings. (Mallard, 2003, Press Release)

During the time of the Network Review, the Moerewa community worked on and wrote their submission. They had obviously heeded the Minister’s words, and felt

that they had an opportunity to be a part of the decision making about the future shape of education for Moerewa.

Moerewa School was originally opened in 1913, and was situated on Station Road in Moerewa. In 1997 the Otiria Primary School and Bay of Islands Intermediate were merged into one full primary school known as Otiria School, on Otiria Road in Moerewa. Otiria School was designated as a full primary school, enrolling students from Year 1 – 8. Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Taumarere started as a registered private school. It became a Kura Kaupapa Māori in 1995, and was granted Wharekura status in 2010, enabling it to cater for Year 9 – 13 students.

In 2005 as the result of the Network Review, both Moerewa Primary School and Otiria School were merged and the new Moerewa School opened on the former Bay of Islands Intermediate school site.

On 6th May 2004, the Education Minister Trevor Mallard announced the final decisions on the review of schools in the Northland area. The following decisions were made:

Central Northland

- retain Kawakawa School and Hukerenui School;
- merge Tautoro School and Te Kura o Awarua on the Tautoro site to form a Year 1-8 school with Tautoro as the continuing school;
- merge Moerewa School and Otiria School on the Otiria site with Moerewa as the continuing school;
- merge Maromaku School and Towai School on the Maromaku site with Maromaku as the continuing school with the Towai site to operate as a second site of the continuing school until 28 January 2007;
- close Te Kura o Matawaia and Orauta School; and
- undertake further consultation on the issue of Māori immersion provision in the area. To allow full consideration of all options, decisions on whether to retain Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Taumārere and close Motatau School will be postponed until after this consultation. (New Zealand (Mallard, 2004, Press release)

The closures of neighbouring Te Kura o Matawaia, and Orauta Schools, was strongly opposed by their communities. This decision of the Ministry of Education, removed two very strong community schooling options, both grounded in Te Reo Māori provision.

When the other schools identified as closing were finishing their final school year in December 2004, the Orauta School Board of Trustees Chairman, Ken Brown, announced that the school would refuse to listen to the Ministry of Education's edict to close. He stated that the community would do all they could do to keep the school open for the children of the school. The Orauta community occupied the school site, and fought for two years to keep the school open. Eventually the Ministry of Education evicted the community from the school, and spent more than \$700,000 on security and maintenance costs. A major part of this expenditure was positioning a security guard at the empty school premises. Ten years after it was closed, the school land was returned to the descendants of the former owners, as a result of an order from the Māori Land Court (Molloy, 2012).

Even though Moerewa School and Otiria School had been in the same community for a number of years, they did not have a history of working together. Both schools had some of the same family groups in both schools, but there was a clear division between the sub-communities of Moerewa and Otiria.

The idea that it would be a simple merger and that these two schools and their respective communities would be able to come together, was not the reality for the community. Moerewa School had retained its name, however it had shifted to the Otiria School and Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Taumārere site. The physical move was an emotional experience for many of the staff and community. The old Moerewa School had been moved in its entirety as it had officially closed. All of the school's documents, equipment, and furniture was dumped in the new Moerewa School hall. It was left to me as the brand new Principal of the school, and the staff who had not worked together before, to work out how this mountain of school history and paraphernalia, was going to be moved. The idea that staff might be able to

discuss classroom pedagogy and educational philosophy on our first few days of being together, was very quickly reassessed as we realised there were other more urgent priorities to take care of first.

Years 9 and 10

In October 2005 an email was circulated to local primary schools by the Principal of Kawakawa School, Peter Witana. Witana was concerned after provisional NCEA results for the local secondary school (Bay of Islands College) were extremely low. Other primary school Principals and Board of Trustees Chairs were asked to meet to discuss this issue.

Due to the attention surrounding Bay of Islands College at that time, parents of Year 8 students at Moerewa School were keen to discuss schooling options for their children for the following year. An initial meeting was held with parents and whānau of Year 8 students at Moerewa School in November 2005. The Board of Trustees approved a Year 9 class would start at Moerewa School from 2006. The decision was communicated to the school community through the school newsletter:

Our Board of Trustees has supported the wishes of the majority of Year 8 parents, and has approved a Year 9 class will start at Moerewa School from next year!

We realise that this was a direction the community asked the school to move towards at the time of the Network Review last year. It was at this time, the Moerewa Community Campus Submission was written to the Minister of Education at the time, Trevor Mallard. The following is taken straight from the Community Submission written at that time. It is great to feel that we are moving in the right direction to achieve the dreams that were written about just last year:

Moerewa Community School Campus Profile

1. Yr 1 – 13+
 2. A “kaupapa” Māori school
 3. 250 students
 4. Decile 1 School
 5. 99 % Māori Roll
- Seamless curriculum
 - Shared school leadership
 - Strong focus & development of ICT
 - Sharing resources for the benefit of all
 - Environment is very important
 - Community investment in School

This is an exciting initiative for our community, as it means that whānau will now have a choice of schools after Year 8. We intend that this will always be an option for students at Moerewa School. If parents chose to send their child to secondary school in Year 9, we would support that too.

We aim to continue to Year 10 in 2007. This will mean that students are able to stay at Moerewa school for their Year 9 & 10 education from 2007!

We will keep our parents and whānau well informed about this development – but we know that next year we will have a class of approximately 20 Year 9 students at Moerewa School!

(Moerewa School Newsletter, 24th November 2005)

In February 2006 a Year 9 class of 14 students started at Moerewa School. This was agreed to by the Ministry of Education, who brokered a formal relationship with Bay of Islands College, and a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between both schools' Boards of Trustees was signed. This MoU meant the students were on the roll of Bay of Islands College but would attend Moerewa School. This was commonly called an Attached Unit or a Satellite Unit in education legislation. Section 158 of the Education Act 1989 provided that, “by agreement between the boards concerned, students enrolled at one state or state integrated school may receive tuition at or from another.” There was no requirement for Ministry of Education approval, but the Ministry was involved in brokering this initial partnership. A class of Year 9 students was also started at Kawakawa School, and was also attached to the roll of Bay of Islands College. Both Year 9 classes at Moerewa School and Kawakawa School worked closely with each other.

The relationship between Bay of Islands College and Moerewa School was strained, mainly due to Bay of Islands College insisting that Moerewa School run their Year 9 class in similar ways to the College's existing Year 9 organisation, and Moerewa School wanting to design a different provision pathway for their students. In 2007, we had initiated a different host school arrangement to enable us to retain Year 9 and 10 students to our school roll. The host school in 2007 was Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Kaikohe. We felt we were much better aligned philosophically and practically to their Wharekura students who were already sitting external examinations in Year 10, so we were keen to explore these ideas also.

In 2007 the Year 9 class at Kawakawa school did not continue. They felt that Bay of Islands College had made enough improvements for them to have more confidence that the needs of their students would be met there. However the issues at the College were only one of the reasons that the Year 9 class was established at Moerewa School. More importantly for Moerewa School was the connection to the community vision of providing "cradle to the grave" education on the one campus. Our Year 9 class in 2006 had been the start of realising that community dream, and so there was never any doubt that the class would continue beyond its first year of inception.

In 2007 there were 11 students in total in Years 9 and 10 at Moerewa School. In late 2007 the Moerewa Board of Trustees lodged a Change of Status application with the Ministry of Education to formalise this arrangement. This application would result in the status of the school being permanently changed from that of a full primary school to a composite Year 1 to 10 school. This would mean that Moerewa School didn't have to constantly find "host school" relationships with local schools, in order to legitimately offer this option to local parents and whānau, and keep Years 9 and 10 students on the school site.

In 2008, we waited for the outcome of the Change of Status application. At that time Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Kaikohe was going through some challenges of their

own, and we agreed we would not ask them to host our students in 2008. We approached Northland College, located in Kaikohe, and set up a formal Memorandum of Understanding between the two school boards.

On 14th April 2008, we received notice from the Minister of Education, Chris Carter, that our Change of Status application was successful. A notice was posted in the *New Zealand Gazette* on 24th April, 2008 stating we would be a Year 1–10 Composite School. The restriction that we would not be able to offer education to students after Year 10, proved to be problematic in the future, however at that time the school was thrilled that we were able to offer this option to our whānau. Northland College continued to work with us to help monitor the quality of our NCEA programme, using their school's accreditation to enable us to deliver NCEA credits.

In November 2009 I contacted the Ministry to advise them that we had a request from parents to continue to provide education for students in Years 11–13 from the following year. I also emailed our local Ministry of Education manager, Deputy Secretary Group Māori, and Manager, Māori Education Strategy. I suggested to them all that Moerewa School was more than happy to be a pilot class or a case study situation, and invited the Ministry of Education to work with us to develop a positive option for Māori secondary school learners. We asked the Ministry of Education to outline the options that were available for us to consider. This signalled our desire to work collaboratively with the Ministry of Education. There was no intention to challenge the status quo or be difficult. We wanted to be proactive about the suggested direction from our community to retain students in Years 11–13, and explore ways we could make this a reality for our community.

However, what we did not anticipate was that the link between Moerewa School's intended strategic and community direction, and the school's clash with Government policy over National Standards, would prove to have a significant impact on our desire to retain senior students at Moerewa School. The school's strong position on National Standards is explained below.

National Standards

On 23rd October 2009, the Government launched their National Standards policy (Ministry of Education, 2015b). The National Standards policy aimed to ensure that all children are at the same level at the same time at school.

The National Standards provide a nationally consistent means for considering, explaining, and responding to students' progress and achievement in years 1-8. They provide reference points, or signposts, that describe the achievement in reading, writing, and mathematics that will enable students to meet the demands of the New Zealand Curriculum. They will help teachers to make judgements about their students' progress so that the students and their teachers, parents, families, and whānau can agree on the next learning goals.

When used in conjunction with effective assessment practices, the National Standards will be a powerful means of informing students, parents, families, whanau, teachers, schools, and the education system about how well things are going and what could be done better to improve learning for all students. (Ministry of Education, 2015b, p. 4)

The new legislation required schools to set achievement targets against National Standards in their school Charters from 31st January, 2011. Principal groups (including New Zealand Principals' Federation) and Union groups (NZEI) did not attend the National Standards' launch. There was a great deal of opposition to the introduction of this policy by schools and their representative organisations. This situation is critiqued in a new book; *The search for better educational standards: A cautionary tale* (Thrupp, 2018).

In September 2010, Minister of Education Anne Tolley, announced she would set up a National Standards Advisory Group to give the education sector a formal avenue to air concerns about National Standards. This was further evidence that the policy was not receiving the support that was needed, and acceptance and implementation was becoming problematic within the sector.

On 3rd November 2010 a group called “Boards Taking Action Coalition” (BTAC) was launched. This was a group of school boards, and Principals who were concerned about the introduction of this National Standards policy. Perry Rush from Island Bay School in Wellington lead this group. I was one of the initial Principals invited to be a part of the coordination group. Almost immediately after this group was set up 225 Boards had joined the coalition, and by the end of November 2010 there were 300 school Boards of Trustees who were members of BTAC. Travel funding, legal support, and strategic direction was coming from private donations and networks that many of these school Boards of Trustees had access to.

At this same time, the Ministry of Education started contacting the Boards of Trustees of every primary and intermediate school in the country to find out their stance on National Standards. This was followed up by a letter to every Chair of every Board, by Education Minister Anne Tolley, stating that there had been some “public argument” about National Standards, and appealing to each Chair on a personal level by saying this "may have made your job more difficult". This personal contact from a Minister of Education to Boards of Trustees’ chairpersons was highly unusual, and Principal colleagues I have spoken to cannot recollect any other time that this has happened prior to the introduction of National Standards, and they state it has not occurred again since. It was around this time that I decided to stand for the New Zealand Principals’ Federation Executive. I wanted to be involved in education at a national level, and I felt I could use my strong Northland education base to make a contribution at a wider level. I was one of 12 other Executive members, who were voted in by Principals. I started on the NZPF Executive in January 2011, and left at the end of 2014 due to me securing employment outside of the compulsory schooling sector.

In April 2011, a survey of primary and intermediate schools by the Boards Taking Action Coalition (BTAC) found almost one third of survey respondents said they refused to compromise quality learning for children by setting achievement targets for National Standards in their school charters. Boards of Trustees who were planning to defy this first major requirement of the legislation by refusing to set

National Standards achievement targets, made up 29.7 percent of respondents to the survey. A further 26.4 percent of respondents in that survey said they would take a position of "minimal compliance". (Press Release, Boards Taking Action Coalition, 19 April, 2011)

At the New Zealand Principals' Federation conference in April 2011, the New Zealand Principals' Federation (NZPF), under Peter Simpson's presidency, passed a vote of no-confidence in National Standards. There is no doubt that Minister of Education, Anne Tolley was becoming increasingly frustrated at the lack of support this new policy was receiving from the sector. However there was growing speculation that a "hit list" of Principals was being talked about. This was referred to in a blog post by Kelvin Smythe:

... Tolley's office, in response, drew up a flow chart of schools that were standing out from national standards—and from the larger group of schools listed, a smaller group of Principals were selected for special attention. Warnings from both NZPF and NZEI executives went out to those Principals that, given Tolley's demeanour, they should be very much on guard. Some of those Principals were Pat Newman, Brent Godfrey, Marlene Campbell, Allan Alach, Keri Milne-Ihimaera, Kerry Hawkins and Perry Rush. (Smythe, 2014, September 3,)

On 20th September 2011 the Moerewa School Board of Trustees met with the Northern Regional Manager of the Ministry of Education, and the Senior Advisor from the Ministry of Education. This was the first time that the Board had met with anyone from the Ministry of Education, and came about as a result of an invitation from the Board to the Ministry of Education. A letter from the Board to Hira Gage following this meeting notes that the meeting was positive, and that the Board enjoyed being able to tell the Ministry of Education representatives about the school, and that they were interested to listen. The letter states the Board spent a considerable time after the meeting discussing the options and considering a way forward. The Ministry representatives had tried to convince the Board to include National Standards targets into the school Charter, to make the school Charter compliant with the new legislation. However the Board also states that they felt there was no further evidence to prove that National Standards would be in the

best interests of the students at Moerewa School. The Board continued to feel strongly that National Standards would have a significant negative impact on the students and therefore they would not put a statement in their Charter endorsing National Standards. The letter also asked for research evidence that National Standards would benefit the students and school, and offered to work with the Ministry of Education to look for alternative models that work specifically for Māori students. It is interesting to note that this letter also documents the first instance where the Ministry of Education makes an implied warning that if we did not comply there would be further discussions about this:

We understand too that our decision means that the Ministry will now have to decide on a consequence for our school. We heard you say that while this decision was going to be up to the Minister and therefore you would have little influence, you did confirm to us that this would mean an 'escalation' of MoE involvement in our school. We are disappointed by this response from the Ministry in Wellington, and would really like to be able to work together to ensure that outcomes for Māori students are able to be raised. (Milne-Ihimaera, 2011)

The opposition from across the country towards National Standards and the advice from Moerewa School to the Ministry of Education that we were considering further extending our education provision for students, was to prove to be an unfortunate coincidence in terms of timing, that we had not anticipated would become connected in Ministry of Education thinking.

The initiation of the Year 9 and 10 class at Moerewa School was the beginning of the realisation of the Community Campus dream, written about in the Community submission in 2003. It was to be expected that parents and whānau would ask themselves the same questions about where their child was to go to after graduating from Year 10, as they had previously done, prior to 2006, when their child completed Year 8. The establishment of a Senior Class therefore, was an anticipated "next step." While the school did not encourage this at the time, it was obvious to the board, staff, and parents that this would be a natural progression of our Year 9 and 10 programme.

The Senior Class

In November 2009, the Moerewa School Board of Trustees was approached by a group of whānau to discuss keeping a small group of students at the school in Years 11 and 12 in 2010. These families were long-standing Moerewa School whānau, and they wanted to keep their children and mokopuna at the school.

In 2010 the Board of Trustees of Moerewa School approached the Board of Te Whānau o Tupuranga in Otara, to attach seven senior secondary students in Years 11 and 12 to their roll. Prior to this these senior students had been attached to Northland College. The approach to Te Whānau o Tupuranga¹³ came as it was becoming obvious to Moerewa School that they needed an attachment to a school with a similar philosophy towards curriculum delivery and pedagogy for senior students. I was a previous senior staff member at Te Whānau o Tupuranga, and my mother remained there as the Principal, however the decision to agree to formally link the two schools together was made by the members of the schools' Board of Trustees. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the two Boards of Trustees, and Moerewa students were enrolled in Te Whānau o Tupuranga at the beginning of Term 2, 2010. This was after the 2010 March Return that is an official process used by the Ministry of Education to count roll numbers and allocate funding and staffing to schools. The question about attached units does not appear in the Ministry of Education's July Roll Return, so funding and staffing generated by these students (that was paid to Te Whānau o Tupuranga by the Ministry of Education), was simply transferred to Moerewa during 2010.

In 2011, the Memorandum of Understanding was re-signed by the Kia Aroha College Board of Trustees after the merger of Te Whānau o Tupuranga and Clover Park Middle School. The attached unit at Moerewa School was declared in the 2011 and 2012 Kia Aroha College March Returns to the Ministry of Education and Kia Aroha College received staffing for the unit, and funding for the students, which

¹³ Te Whānau o Tupuranga was merged with Clover Park Middle School in January 2011, to become known as Kia Aroha College.

was then transferred to Moerewa School. Kia Aroha College also declared the attached unit in Ministry of Education roll and resourcing audits in 2010 and 2011. The “attached unit” process and requirements were not new to either school. As has been explained, Moerewa School was variously “attached” to several other schools previously, and knew what was required to then to add senior year levels. Pamapurua School had also formerly been attached to Moerewa School. Clover Park Middle School (before it merged to become Kia Aroha College) had attached students from Ferguson and Bairds Intermediates in Otara when they were applying to become middle schools and Te Whānau o Tupuranga students had been attached to Papakura High School when they were struggling to retain their senior students. Therefore both Boards of Trustees were very familiar with the requirements. This was a common practice nationally, and remains in place in schools to this day.

It is interesting to note that from 19 May 2017 the legislation regarding formalising arrangements for off-site locations, was changed as one of the amendments to the Education Act. The updated Education Act now requires schools to seek approval from the Minister of Education to use an off-site location or host an off-site location for another school. Once approval has been given, schools must enter into an agreement with the Secretary for Education before using that off-site location. This change formalises arrangements for off-site locations and make it clearer who is responsible for the education, safety and welfare of the students receiving education at the off-site location. (Ministry of Education, 2017a)

This is important to the Moerewa School story, because during the litigious period of the debate between the Minister of Education and the school, many times she would state publicly that we had acted illegally by setting up an offsite unit. We continually challenged that claim, explaining that we were officially receiving funding from the Ministry of Education, via our declared status with Kia Aroha College to fund and staff the operation of the Senior class. Figure 6 shows a confirmed allocation of 1.20 teachers for the offsite unit at Moerewa School in Kia Aroha College’s official staffing entitlement notice from the Ministry of Education.

STAFFING ALLOCATED TO OTHER SCHOOLS						
Type	Other School	Start Date	End Date	FTTE	UNITS	MMA
CURR	Moerewa School	26-Jan-2011	13-Dec-2011	1.20	0	0

Figure 6: Ministry of Education: November 2011 Confirmed Staffing Entitlement for Kia Aroha College

(Kia Aroha College)

It appears that this “loophole” in the legislation has now been closed, to ensure that the Ministry of Education is not in a similar situation as they were with Moerewa School, where the previous legislation allowed Boards of Trustees to instigate these relationships between schools, without Ministry of Education approval. This recent change to legislation is evidence that we were not acting illegally and were in fact acting within the existing legislation at the time.

Change of status application

On 31st March 2011, an application to Change the Range of Year Levels from Years 1–10 to Years 1–13 was submitted to the Ministry of Education. Because we had already been successful in our previous application to change the status of the school from a full primary to a restricted composite school, the advice that we had received from the Ministry of Education was that we simply needed to apply to extend the range of year levels at Moerewa School. While it might have appeared that this was a simple process, the application was a comprehensive document. The application included previous Education Review Office reports, background information linking this application to the school’s strategic direction (including the Community Campus submission of 2003), extensive consultation with parents and staff, implication for education provision in the wider community, transport and property implications, and an overall scoping of what this would mean at Moerewa School. A large section of the application was dedicated to discussing and documenting the need for a different approach to secondary school provision for Māori students, including what learning “as Māori” meant at Moerewa School.

Since 2005, Moerewa School has been re-defining learning by exploring models that work for Māori students within a mainstream setting. This work precedes the introduction of *Ka Hikitia*. (Change the Range of Year Levels application, 2011, p. 9)

The application was an opportunity to formalise the arrangement that Moerewa School had been operating within, for the past three years. During the past three years the Ministry had been informed annually via the required roll data returns that schools must fill in and return to the Ministry of Education twice a year. The Ministry had funded the programme each year through the host school, so they were very aware of this arrangement as they were allocating funding and staffing to support it.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided the background and rich history of the Moerewa community, and the initiative they took, in the face of a Ministry of Education imposed network review, to dream big, and dream differently for their children. It has described the first successful steps towards that dream in the realisation of a successful application to change the class of the school to include Years 9 and 10. The next progression of the dream, the addition of Years 11–13 was now well under way with no expectation from the school or community that this would not also be successful. The next chapter describes the death of the Moerewa community dream. What happened to have this dream destroyed?

Chapter Six: The Death of the Dream

The biggest risk that we see to this process, is that the Ministry is not courageous enough to make significantly strong move into a different style of education for our children and our whānau.
(Moerewa Community Submission, 2003)

Introduction

This statement from the Moerewa Community Submission unfortunately was proven to be accurate. This chapter outlines the sequence of events and actions that took the community and the school from being on the brink, they felt, of achieving their long-held dream, to having that dream destroyed. It describes the conflict over the senior students' NCEA results, a conflict that became the focus of national news media, the Ministry of Education, and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority, and it describes the life of the school after the abrupt sacking of the Board of Trustees and the arrival of the Ministry-appointed Commissioner. While much was written about the school by others at the time, this chapter provides the school's narrative and explanation of what actually happened at Moerewa School through school documents and records, and the experience and tacit knowledge gained from being involved every day as the situation unfolded.

The closure of the Senior class

On 4 October 2011, the Moerewa School Board of Trustees Chairman received a letter (Image 1) from Anne Tolley, Minister of Education, stating that our application to change the range of year levels, to become a composite Year 1–13 school, had been declined. The letter stated the main reasons were the impact that a reduced number of year 11–13 students would have on the roll at Bay of Islands College, and the difficulty Moerewa School would have in providing a full curriculum for senior students given the size of its roll. The letter also noted that the Minister was informed our school had not implemented National Standards and therefore the school's Charter was non-compliant. This was the proof that our stand against National Standards had indeed had an impact on our Change of Status

application. Not only did the letter decline our application, it finished by stating that the Ministry of Education would be in contact with Kia Aroha College to end the satellite arrangement Moerewa had with the College.

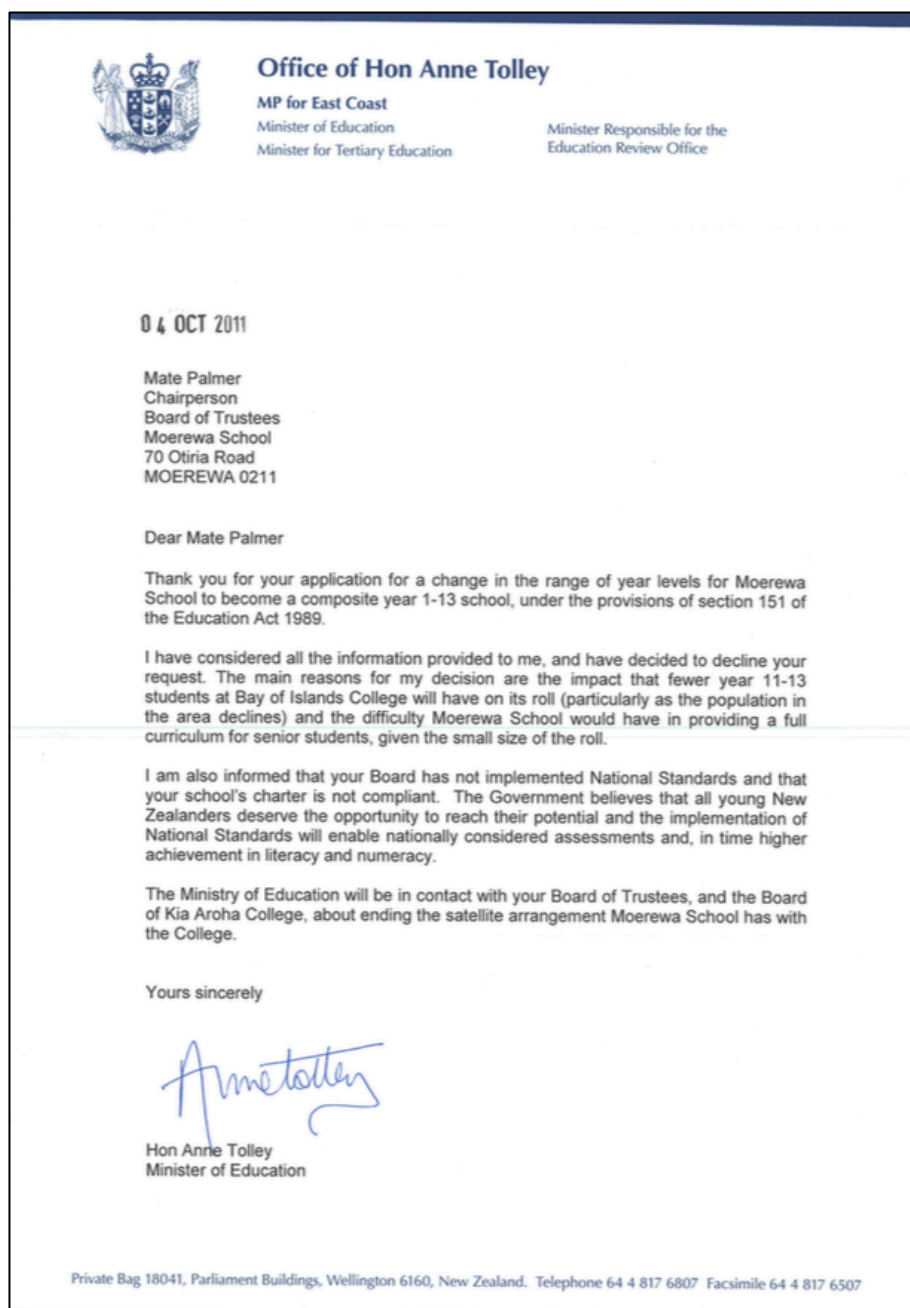


Image 1: Letter from the Minister of Education: 4 October, 2011.

(Moerewa School)

Not only did the decline of the Change of Status application close the long-term window of opportunity for the class, but by stopping the satellite arrangement with the host school there was no other solution on offer. We were devastated to get this news, which we felt had come completely out of the blue. There had been no visits from the Ministry of Education to the school to look at our programme or to make contact with us to discuss our options. The previous Education Review Office review in 2009 had commented on the Year 9 and 10 class in the “Areas of Good Performance” section of the confirmed Moerewa School report:

Year 9 and 10 class. The Year 9 and 10 open-plan classroom promotes the learning of adolescent students. The programme is based around NZQA achievement standards and many students achieve unit and achievement standards that hold them in good stead for their Years 11 to 13 education. Students report that they appreciate opportunities to participate in a curriculum that includes a wide range of extracurricular learning activities. (Education Review Office, 2009)

We were stunned. We met immediately as a Senior Leadership Team and with the staff of the Senior Class. We spent time thinking, strategising, discussing what our next steps could be. The Board of Trustees also met urgently to discuss the letter and to decide what they should do next. Added to our shock and disappointment was the fact that we were leading up to the 2011 national Elections (New Zealand) on 26th November 2011. We knew we had a small window of opportunity to enable us to make this a significant election issue, if not nationally then at the very least, to get our local politicians to throw their weight behind our cause. We all knew we had to act fast.

The Community Response

On 3rd November 2011 the school held a Twilight Gala. At the gala the community were issued with the letter the Board had received from Anne Tolley. A survey was conducted with the parents, whānau and community that attended, asking two questions that required a yes/no answer from survey respondents:

1. Do you support the BoT's current stance on National Standards, that is, to not implement National Standards at Moerewa School?
2. Do you support the BoT's current stance to keep the Yr 11 – 13 programme in our school from 2012 and beyond?

There were 130 responses collected on this night and 99.7 % of responses answered 'yes' to both questions. This gave the Board of Trustees a clear indicator that there was support to continue.

On 14th November 2011 a community meeting was called to discuss Moerewa School's position on both the issues raised in the survey issued at the Twilight Gala. Seventy people attended this meeting held in the school hall. In the first part of the meeting the attendees were broken up into four groups to rotate around four information stations. The stations were:

1. National Standards— All you need to know
2. Assessment —How do we know your child is progressing?
3. Senior Class —That's how WE roll
4. Board of Trustees role — Is our community voice under threat?

Peter Simpson, then President of the New Zealand Principals' Federation (NZPF) rang to wish us well for the meeting. Ian Leckie, the National President, the Primary Teachers' union, NZEI Te Riu Roa, and Stephanie Mills, Director of Campaigns, NZEI Te Riu Roa, were both in attendance at the community meeting. At the end of the meeting, the community committed to supporting the Board of Trustees "100%" and told the school to "go for it."

We also met with the students of the Senior Class to explain the situation and to ask them what they wanted to do. All were adamant that they wanted to stay, and that Moerewa School was a good place for them to be. Shutting down the class was not an option anyone was prepared to discuss.

Due to the tight timeframe we had imposed upon ourselves, there were many different things happening and much to coordinate. We had to be sure that we did not miss out something important. Our community decided they needed to coordinate their efforts as well.

Community organising

Community and whānau members then set up their own group, to support the work of the Board of Trustees and the school. They decided one of their first tasks was to coordinate community and whānau “action points”. They set about organising themselves, and working on a wider communications plan. There was nothing ad hoc about the actions that followed, all were well thought through, and coordinated by a small group of people that included representation from the school, the Board of Trustees, whanau, and community members. The plan was to share the positive impact the Senior Class was having, as widely as possible. We all felt that by sharing the good news about the many achievements of the class, it would help galvanise support behind our position.

Moerewa School Senior Class Hits the Press

On 17th November 2011, Moerewa School issued a press release to media, local community members, local Principals, NZPF executive members, and members of Parliament. Media contacts were supplied by NZEI. The press release was entitled “Anne Tolley Attempts to Close Successful Māori Secondary Class” and it expressed our disappointment that the Minister of Education was directing us to close the Senior Secondary school class, and introduced our preliminary National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) findings for the students in the Senior Class. It is important to note that these were preliminary results, which we described, whenever we spoke of them, as “interim” results. We were well aware they had yet to go through verification the full New Zealand Qualifications Authority’s moderation process.

The catalyst for issuing the press release was that we were proud of the Senior Class and the interim results we had assessed. We had a school saying, “Whatever it takes” as our reminder to ourselves, that all students were expected to succeed and we would need to think of a range of ways that we could support students to do this. The two teachers and one teacher aide in this class involved whānau and wider community members, to engage with these students and help with their NCEA school work. After school homework sessions and even weekend noho (sleep overs) were a regular occurrence. At times it was difficult to notice where ‘school’ stopped and started, as parents/whānau community were regularly involved in the classroom during the day and once school was finished, these same parent/whānau/community members were back again offering their active and practical support and guidance at any weekend noho or afterschool homework centre. While the teachers ensured work was completed within NZQA assessment guidelines for authenticity, whānau and community prepared food, and provided support in every other way.

The interim National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) results were a result of this combined effort and hard work of the teachers, the parents and whānau, the wider community and of course the students themselves. We struggled to understand why the Ministry of Education would not want to support this and see the class and students flourish. Many of the expectations espoused in the Ministry of Education’s own Māori Education Strategy, *Ka Hikitia*, were in operation in the wider school and in this Senior class. We felt we were a living model for others to be able to see *Ka Hikitia* ‘in action’, and that the Ministry of Education would want to see this succeed. We were hoping that the press release would gather support and put pressure on Minister Tolley to support the class. The interim NCEA results for this Senior Class were issued in the press release on 17th November. The press release stated:

The interim NCEA results for this Senior Class speak for themselves:

- Moerewa School - Year 11 - Level 1 - 93% pass rate

- A local college achieves 54.8 % Māori pass rate, 92.3 % non-Māori pass rate
- The national statistics are 60.9 % Māori pass rate, 82.9 % non-Māori pass rate
- Moerewa School - Year 12 - Level 2 – 83% pass rate
 - A local college achieves 65.9% Māori pass rate, 100% non-Māori pass rate
 - The national statistics are 70.2 % Māori pass rate, 85.7% non-Māori pass rate
- Moerewa School - Year 13 - Level 3 - 100% pass rate
 - A local college achieves 30.8 % Māori pass rate, 100 % non-Māori pass rate
 - The national statistics are 62.3 % Māori pass rate, 79.3 % non-Māori pass rate
- Moerewa School - Year 13 – UE (University Entrance) - 100% pass rate
 - A local college achieves 16.7 % Māori pass rate, 100 % non-Māori pass rate
 - The national statistics are 47.7 % Māori pass rate, 72.7 % non-Māori pass rate

Between 18th and 22nd November 2011, Moerewa School featured extensively on both Māori and mainstream radio and television media channels, and in many newspapers across the country. Further press releases were issued by NZPF and NZEI in support of Moerewa School. The Co-Leader of the Māori Party in Parliament, Tariana Turia, raised our situation in a live radio interview on *Radio Live* and said she was “utterly appalled” at the lack of support. Our local Member of Parliament, Hone Harawira, also commented about Moerewa School in another radio interview. The opposition Labour Party's Associate Education spokesman, Kelvin Davis, was quoted in the *New Zealand Herald*, calling for the decision to be “reversed immediately”. The Tai Tokerau candidate for The Māori Party announced he had secured a meeting with Anne Tolley and us, that would take place after the elections. We had certainly captured the attention of the politicians. We knew our case was gaining traction, and there was much interest in our situation.

The Moerewa Community Takes Action

On 20th November 2011 a Facebook group, “Save the Senior Class at Moerewa School” was set up. It was an attempt to create one place where all the feedback,

media releases, new articles, and new developments could all be placed. By that evening comments were appearing on the page and support was mounting. By the 22nd November the Facebook page had 900 members, and by the 26th November had swelled again to 1,040 members.

On the 21st November 2011 the whānau called another meeting. Whānau wanted to update our local Member of Parliament, Hone Harawira on the situation. He asked what we wanted him to do? The meeting asked him to talk about us where ever possible, and to use his influence in Parliament to further progress our case. He committed to contacting Māori Party leaders and Anne Tolley, which he did follow through with and do.

On the 23rd November, the whānau communications team asked everyone to email local and national politicians, including the Prime Minister John Key, Anne Tolley and Hekia Parata to ask Anne Tolley to reverse her decision about the Senior Class at Moerewa School. We were overwhelmed by the support and the volume of emails that were sent.

I also sent an email to Minister Tolley on 23rd November. Again, I asked her to reverse her decision. I also stated our desire to work with the Ministry of Education.

We wish to reiterate that we believe strongly in our programme, and we believe strongly in the positive difference it can make to the lives of Māori students in the senior years of their secondary education, and their whānau. We again offer our programme as a pilot programme that the Ministry could support – to show other mainstream secondary schools, that we might have a few things they could learn from us. We would be more than happy to work with the Ministry and achieve positive outcomes for our students together. (Personal email).

The whānau group was also actively planning for the imminent visit of the Governor General to Moerewa.

The Governor General's visit

The Governor General, Sir Jerry Mateparae, had been invited to attend a function at the Otiria Marae in Moerewa on 24th November 2011, and this meant he would have to drive directly past our school. This would be his first official function in Northland. It was decided this would be a great opportunity to profile the Senior Class issue. The whole school assembled along the fence line with placards and signs saying 'Save Our Senior Class'. We explained the peaceful protest action to the whole school and invited parents, whanau, and community members to join us. The students were well behaved and well-coordinated by staff. Parents were enjoying catching up with each other. We had balloons and streamers, we sang songs and the mood was cheerful. We invited media to attend, and our local member of Parliament Hone Harawira was there, as was a local candidate Waihoroi Shortland, who was vying for seat in Parliament. We all waited in anticipation for the Governor General to arrive.

When the Governor General's convoy was seen coming up the road, a small group of parents (including an elderly woman using a walking stick) walked across the pedestrian crossing directly outside the school. We did not know this was going to occur. Local Member of Parliament, Hone Harawira, was with the group crossing the road. The security car and the Governor General's car immediately turned around in the middle of the road and left. It was reported in the media that the Governor General's convoy had been "blocked by protesters" (*Northern Advocate*, 25 November, 2011).

The same story appeared in the *New Zealand Herald* the following day. However, the perspective of the whānau was that the security detail had acted so quickly, they did not even have time to cross the road! There was never any attempt to stop the Governor General, in fact there were students from the Senior Class at Moerewa School who were ready at the local marae waiting to welcome the Governor General. Once again Moerewa School featured on Māori Television news

(*Te Kāea*) and Radio New Zealand's '*Checkpoint*' show as a result of the day's activity.



Image 2: Moerewa students welcome the Governor General at Otiria Marae,
24 November, 2011
(Godwin, 2011)

On 30th November, an article was written about the visit of the Governor General to Otiria Marae, with this photo (Image 2). This photo shows two of the Senior Students in Moerewa School's Senior Class, Darcy Rapana, and Jesse Rogers, welcoming Sir Jerry Mataparae on to Otiria Marae. This was immediately following the reported "protest" along Otiria Road that stopped the Governor General from arriving at the marae. The scroll in the Darcy's right hand, is what Darcy placed in front of the Governor General for him to pick up as part of the wero (challenge) process. The scroll is a submission for the Governor General to support keeping the Senior Class at Moerewa School and is another example of the students in the class being totally engaged in the struggle, and never missing an opportunity to take action.

The Next Press Release

On the same day as the Governor General's visit to Moerewa (24th November 2011), Moerewa School issued its second Press Release. This Press Release acknowledged the overwhelming support the school had received from around the country. We had been receiving copies of emails that the community had sent to politicians. We had received letters and emails from people we did not even know, and people who had no connection to the school or community. The education community had also made contact with us and we received so many emails from individual teachers and Principals, as well as emails signed by all members of staff in particular schools. One secondary school teacher from Invercargill said in his email that he had one piece of advice and that was that we should do the Cambridge Exams, because that way "nobody can accuse you or audit the hell out of you". Many of these individual teachers and Principals and schools had also emailed Anne Tolley and other members of parliament. We challenged Anne Tolley to make a decision before the voters turned up to the polling booth.

We urge the Minister of Education to listen to the overwhelming support our school is receiving – and come up with a definitive statement about the continuation of our Senior Secondary class programme, before voters turn up to the polling booth on Saturday. With only three weeks of the school year left – we need this statement now, not after the election. (Scoop, 2011)

It was to no avail. Understandably, with only two days before the national Election, we were not a major election priority for Anne Tolley, and no statement was made. Her inaction made it clear that the status quo remained, and that the situation was that our Senior Class was to close.

Election Impact

On the 26th November 2011 it was election day. Moerewa School was actively involved in assisting the community to take part in voting, and school vans were organized to drive around the community. Community members could flag down a van in order to get a ride to the polling booth.

The result of the election was that the National Party was re-elected as the Government. Minister Tolley was relinquished of her education portfolio and took up the Police and Corrections Ministerial role. Education was passed on to Minister Hekia Parata. There was definitely excitement in Moerewa that a Māori woman as the Education Minister might be beneficial for the continuation of the Senior Class at Moerewa School. Unfortunately, this was not the case.

On 21st December 2011, Hone Harawira mentioned Moerewa School in a speech in Parliament:

To the new Minister of Education, Hekia Parata, I urge you to consider the plight of Moerewa School, not in terms of their unwillingness to participate in a hazy national education programme, but in terms of pure academic achievement and to celebrate the startling success of a wonderful decile one school in one of the country's most impoverished areas and look to use their success as a template for others, rather than deny them the right to seek higher standards for their children. (Harawira, 2011)

It was clear that the new Education Minister was going to find it difficult to ignore the situation at Moerewa School.

Hekia Parata visits Kawakawa

We learned that Minister Parata would be visiting our neighbouring community of Kawakawa on February 4th to open a local Iwi Health Trust's early childhood facility. I emailed her Private Secretary on 30th January, inviting her to meet with our School Board:

I understand that Minister Parata will be in Kawakawa on February 4th – to open the Ngati Hine early childhood facility.

You may not realise that Moerewa and Kawakawa are neighbouring communities – and Moerewa School is literally 5 minutes up the road. This may pose the perfect opportunity for the Minister and our school Board to get together and discuss our school's situation in a face to face meeting.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet the Minister and to be able to hear what her concerns are about our school's Senior Class – so that we may be able to give her the information she needs to be assured that we both

want the same thing when it comes to Māori children achieving success as Māori at school. (School email)

We realised it was extremely late notice, and so were excited to receive an email on 1st February from Minister Hekia Parata's Senior Private Secretary, confirming that the Minister had agreed to meet with our Board on 4th November 2012. This meeting would be at the Ngati Hine Health Trust Office in Kawakawa, from 1.30pm to 2.15pm.

The Board of Trustees met twice between the confirmation of the meeting with the Minister on the 1st February and the meeting with her on the 4th February. This included meeting with whānau and community. At this meeting whānau were adamant that they wanted to show the Minister that the Board had the full support of the parents/whānau and school community. They talked about showing up with placards in the carpark of the Ngati Hine Health Trust and were all excited about how they could ensure that the Minister realised this was an issue for the entire Moerewa School community. I communicated this to the Minister's office, explaining that our whānau were talking about assembling peacefully in the carpark to show their support.

We asked for an agenda for the meeting, and were told the Minister was keen to hear from the Board about two broad issues; National Standards, and options for the Senior Class Students. It was difficult for the Board to prepare when we were uncertain about the structure of the meeting, and what specifically the Minister wanted to know about.

On the afternoon of 3rd February, I received a call from our Local Ministry of Education Manager, who had been contacted by the Minister's office. They were aware that our whānau would be in the car park and the Ministry official said that they wanted reassurance that we would not be distracting from the events of the day. I remember feeling a sense of urgency, that I had to talk fast to make sure that she understood that our whānau had discussed this specifically, and understood

that the meeting with the Minister was too important to jeopardise. I assured her they would not be causing a scene. It sounded as if the Minister might pull out of the meeting. I immediately contacted our whānau group and explained the situation. They were not happy about being asked not to show up. They felt strongly it was their right to be there and to show the Minister that this issue was about families supporting their children's education. After many discussions, the whānau group generously agreed to assemble back at Moerewa School, and not make an appearance in Kawakawa at all. I made sure to communicate this to the Minister's office. We were desperate that the meeting go ahead the next day.

Our Board went in to the meeting with Minister Parata well prepared with a list of points that we had felt were important. We were able to introduce ourselves and say a few brief sentences about our school and the kaupapa we were there to talk about. We naively thought we would be able to have a discussion with the Minister and we thought there would be further opportunity during the meeting for further questions from her that we would be able to answer. However, after these brief introductions from the Board members, the Minister talked, and dominated the precious time allocated to us. She talked about how she understood our position because she knew all about communities such as Moerewa. She made comparisons between her upbringing in Ruatoria, and the situation in Moerewa. She said she would need to wait for the outcome of the NZQA audit that was currently under way (see the later section in this chapter) before she made a decision about the future of the students. She talked about the programmes we were offering and during her dialogue there were many errors of fact, and issues that we could disagree with.

Before we knew it, she was thanking us for coming, and she was finishing the meeting. I spoke and said I wanted to follow up on a few of the issues she had raised. She did not want to do this. I kept talking. She said she didn't want to get into an argument and wanted to leave the meeting on a positive note. She physically stood to end the meeting, and left the room.

We were shattered. We had hoped we might receive some positive news, or at the very least we might meet with the Minister who was responsible for deciding our fate, and she might be prepared to enter into a dialogue and listen to the hopes and desires of the Board. She was obviously now able to say she had met with the Moerewa School Board of Trustees and could tick the consultation box. We were nervous about returning to the whānau and community waiting back at the school. What would we say about the meeting?

With hindsight, we could have approached the meeting more strategically and asked the Minister what were the reasons the Ministry was not supporting us? However at the time we had no agenda, no information about what the meeting would be about, no idea about the format – and what was in our heads about how the meeting was going to run, obviously wasn't the Minister's plan. The feedback from the Board of Trustees to the parents/whānau/community who were waiting back at Moerewa School, was that they had felt patronised, spoken down to, and the Minister was often misinformed!

In July 2013, I received information sourced through an Official Information Act request from a Member of Parliament, Catherine Delahunty. She had asked for all correspondence between the School Commissioner (Mike Eru), and Ministry of Education staff. Included in the pack was an email from the Ministry of Education's Local Manager, to the Commissioner dated 25th April 2012 (two days after the Commissioner first arrived at Moerewa School). The email talks about a meeting that was being organised at the time with whānau and New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA). In the email from the Ministry official, she says "There is some concern that Keri will turn this into a public meeting, which has occurred in the past, rather than having the key people at the table" and "Due to past experiences with Keri there is a very low level of trust at the moment, if any at all."

I emailed the Local Manager of the Ministry of Education, on 23rd July 2013, and expressed my concern over these comments and asked for actual examples of times when this had occurred. In her reply to that email she cited the Board of

Trustees' meeting with Minister Parata as an example where they had to carefully manage the situation to ensure that key people were at the table with no media present and that they had to seek reassurance from the Board to ensure this could take place. Despite our phone conversation prior to the visit by Minister Parata to Kawakawa, and despite my emails to the Minister's Senior Private Secretary, where I was clearly mediating the competing interests of all the different groups, the Local Manager still felt it was appropriate to represent me in this way to the incoming Commissioner

In her email reply she said she was not referring to my professional conduct or behaviour, and she extended her apologies to me if her comments had caused me any concern. I felt the damage had already been done. I felt that this sentiment from the Ministry would have been expressed to the Commissioner prior to his arrival at Moerewa School, and no doubt this would have contributed to it being difficult to form a working professional trusting relationship between us.

A Window of Opportunity?

On the 9th January, the Moerewa School Board of Trustees' Chairperson received a letter from Minister Parata. In the letter she stated that a copy of the letter would be provided to the Principal of the school, and to all others whose support we had "solicited" and who had contacted the former Minister of Education, other Government Ministers and the Ministry of Education. She also said she was providing a copy of the letter to the Kia Aroha Principal and Board Chair, as our students were on their roll. Finally she stated a copy of the letter would also be provided to her parliamentary colleagues, Dr Pita Sharples, the Associate Minister of Education, The Hon. Tariana Turia, and our local member of Parliament, Hone Harawira, who had all met with her over this issue. By mentioning the volume of people she was making this letter available to, it was obvious that she was under pressure from a wide range of people to reverse Minister Anne Tolley's decision to close the Senior Class, and cease the satellite arrangement with Kia Aroha College.

In this letter she surprised us with an agreement that because the Board of Trustees had refused to comply with the previous instructions issued by the Ministry of Education, the students had not been “prepared for their transition” to other schools. She felt this put the students at a disadvantage at this beginning stage of the school year, and so agreed that the status quo in terms of their enrolment arrangement would remain “for the beginning of the school year”. There was no specific timeframe given.

In the letter she also wrote that she was awaiting the outcome of a NZQA audit of the students NCEA results and once again National Standards was written about under a heading of “Lawfulness”. She stated upon receipt of our 2012 Charter consideration would be given to demonstrate the Board of Trustees willingness to act within the law and to fulfil its governance responsibilities.

We communicated this to our community, and school started a few weeks later with our senior students attending school at Moerewa School.

Native Affairs Show

By this stage the situation at Moerewa School was growing in popularity and interest. We had been in many media stories already and Māori Television’s *Native Affairs* current affairs show contacted us to see if we were interested in them coming to do a story on our situation. We discussed this at length with our Board of Trustees and the staff of the Senior Class and decided we would agree to this. We felt that it was our chance to tell our story about the success of the class, and discuss the reasons behind its success in a much more comprehensive way. We felt that the reporters on the show were sympathetic to our situation and we felt we had a good chance that they would represent our position well.

On 9th April 2012, *Native Affairs*¹⁴ ran their story about Moerewa School. They were inundated with messages of support and questions for the Ministry and Minister of Education. They ran a follow up interview on 16th April, where I appeared live on air. We had expected that Hekia Parata was to be there and we would be interviewed together. She did not appear, and despite numerous requests from the *Native Affairs* show, no other representatives from the Ministry of Education appeared either.

Secretary for Education visits

On 19th April 2012 our Board of Trustees was invited to meet with the then Secretary for Education, Lesley Longstone. The invitation came at 8am, and the meeting was to be at 1pm. The meeting was not held in Moerewa, but in a community 25 kilometres away. We had had no previous notice or warning about this meeting. The Secretary for Education (SfE) was supported by Regional and Local Managers, from Ministry of Education.

I compiled an email from my notes taken during this meeting, and sent it to staff, the NZPF executive, and other supporters, to report the outcome. At this meeting The Secretary told the Board to, “stop the politicking and stop the publicity, because it was not going to work.” She stated that the Ministry had made up its mind and that we needed to send the senior students to another school immediately. She couched her views with concerns for students she had never met, in front of their families and tried to say she had the best interests of the students at heart. She stated that unless we stopped all of this “carry on” we would be faced with a Commissioner in our school. She would not approve any further satellite arrangements and, if our students returned to school on the first Monday of the term, their learning would be put on hold as no one would be able to assess them or moderate their work. She expected us to help transition students to the local secondary school (that had already excluded many of them). She believed that this

¹⁴ This *Native Affairs* broadcast has been archived and is no longer available so has not been able to be referenced.

school could offer our children a better education than we could. She found it “puzzling” that we had not already worked to transition our students as we knew we had cheated and lied about their results.

We returned to the school to be met by a staffroom full of parents and whānau who had gathered to see what the outcome of the meeting was. We told them that the senior students could no longer stay on our roll and that despite our best efforts, the fight was now over. I remember feeling as if we had just heard the news that someone had died. The emotion was visible and undeniable. There were periods where no one spoke. The Board of Trustees and parents discussed plans to keep the class together and enrol them en-masse in other schools. Even when faced with such serious news, giving up and sending their children to another school was still not an option parents/whānau were prepared to consider.

Monday 23rd April, 2012 – A Day of Action

On 17th April 2012, we sent out an email to almost 200 contacts, inviting them to join us on Monday 23rd April being the first day of Term 2. We initially wanted to invite everyone to help us welcome the students back to school to continue with our programme of resistance. However, after the meeting on the 19th April with Lesley Longstone, it was clear the fight was now over. We decided that we would still welcome the students back into the school, and acknowledge their efforts and achievements. The attention at that time over their NCEA achievements, and the criticism that the students had cheated in order to achieve their results, had had a profoundly negative effect on the senior students themselves. We wanted to celebrate their commitment to their learning and publically acknowledge them before they were forced to move on to another learning environment.

In a Facebook post on the ‘Save the Senior Class at Moerewa School’ page the day before the event I posted:

We are currently working through some options with our community - where our students will be moving to another school as a unit. We are thankful to our community for supporting us and

coming up with some ideas! Unfortunately we have received another directive (this time from the Secretary for Education, Lesley Longstone) that our students must move on as their work will not be assessed if they stay, that we also can't set up a new Satellite arrangement as this will not be approved (does this happen to other schools?), and if we don't do all of this - a Commissioner will be appointed to the school (the Board would be disestablished).

Please understand this is NOT our choice and the Ministry/Minister has NEVER presented with options for us to consider. We will continue to explore our own ideas that allow our community to realise the vision they have for our school. We are not giving up - and we will let the Ministry know that our vision for the school is to have Year 1 - Year 13 students on our school site in the future.

It was a wonderful event. Community support was high. Principals from all over Northland arrived, some even brought groups of their school students. There was a positive feeling and most importantly our Senior Students were acknowledged as the hard working, role models that they were.

The Board is sacked!

On the afternoon of 23rd April 2012, our Board of Trustees Chairperson received a letter via email from The Secretary for Education, Lesley Longstone, dissolving the Board of Trustees of Moerewa school under section 78N(1) of the Education Act 1989 (the Act) and appointing a Commissioner to replace the Board of Trustees under section 78N(2) of the Education Act 1989 (the Act). An email with the letter and a copy of the formal *Gazette* notice was sent to the Chairman at 3.41pm.

The letter covered her concerns regarding the ability of Moerewa School to deliver a high quality education to senior students at Moerewa School, and also talked about the impact retaining these students at Moerewa School, would have on the neighbouring Secondary School.

That same afternoon at 3.55pm the Māori news programme on TVNZ, *Te Karere*, ran a story for 9 minutes 44 seconds that was solely about Moerewa School. It is most unusual for a news programme to run such a long story about one topic and again was evidence that this issue was indeed topical and of great interest to their viewers. The story concluded with a live interview with Hekia Parata. In that live interview she announced that that afternoon she had removed the power of the Board, and that the Secretary for Education would be appointing a Commissioner to govern the school. I had only just hung up the phone from talking with our Board Chairman who was telling me about the Minister's decision, when other Board members were ringing the school and ringing me on my cellphone to say they had learned that the Board had been removed, on the television.

The next day the Commissioner was brought into the school to meet me.

The NCEA Controversy

So what was the problem with Moerewa students' NCEA results, and how did these become the centre of intense scrutiny and attention? This section discusses this issue which had been developing in the background from November 2011, at the same time as the school was protesting the rejection of their application to extend their range of year levels to Year 13 and retain the Senior Class. Not only was there much media attention about the class and the interim NCEA results we had published in our first press release on 17th November, but this media attention had, in fact, sparked an NZQA investigation into the validity of these interim results. One has to wonder what would have happened if a wealthy, white community had published such results? Would that have sparked such suspicion? That the initial press release was the trigger, was confirmed in a letter in May 2012 from Dr Karen Poutasi, Chief Executive of NZQA, to the Principal and board chair of Kia Aroha College, and in emails between NZQA staff members obtained under the Official Information Act.

This section discusses the prolonged argument with the New Zealand Qualifications Authority and the dispute regarding students' NCEA results. This battle is at the

very heart of what played out at Moerewa and is the part of the story the school was unable to tell at the time, in spite of our best efforts to do so. It is also the part of the story that, as the focus group conversations and survey show, still causes confusion and pain to this day. The section contains never-before released information regarding communication between NZQA and Kia Aroha College that is provided with written permission for its use in this research from the Kia Aroha College Board of Trustees in 2017.

The situation in 2011

To understand the issues surrounding the NCEA interim results that were published in the initial press release issued by Moerewa School, it is important to look briefly at how the class was set up and what moderation processes were in place to support the learning that was taking place. In 2011, the roll of the attached unit at Moerewa School generated 1.20 teachers. In addition to this staffing, Moerewa School had a number of staff who had experience with assessing NCEA in their previous schools, including one formerly at Bay of Islands College. The Moerewa and Kia Aroha Schools' staff worked closely together and shared professional learning and development in culturally responsive, critical, whanau-based pedagogy over a number of years so both schools had a similar philosophy and an aligned intent to work differently for Māori learners.

In 2011 a teacher from Kia Aroha College with NCEA experience, was given the responsibility of supervision and oversight of the Moerewa School students' work. This staff member travelled to Moerewa regularly, and the Moerewa senior teacher and students travelled to Kia Aroha College. Using the Student Management System *eTAP*¹⁵ which has an online planning module, staff at both schools planned NCEA work collaboratively and worked together on assessment and the moderation of work. Initially most of Moerewa School's work was scanned and emailed to Kia Aroha staff for this moderation and for storage. Towards the

¹⁵ This programme, eTAP (Electronic Teaching, Assessment, & Planning), has been developed by ESD (Educational Software & Devices), based in Manukau, Auckland.

end of 2011, all Moerewa School work was stored in Kia Aroha College's NCEA system. Moerewa School's teachers therefore had access to, and support from, all of the Kia Aroha College staff so it was misleading for critics to imply that Moerewa teachers worked on their own, or were unsupported, or did not have instant access to help or expertise, or were any more limited than other small schools in terms of what they could offer the students.

Much comment was made by the Ministry of Education and New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) about the small size of the Senior Class at Moerewa School, Moerewa School's inability to provide a range of senior subjects, and the inability of two teachers on the Moerewa site to cater for students at different levels, and across different subjects. Small numbers at senior secondary level is hardly unusual in rural schools, in Kura Kaupapa Māori, or in some designated-character schools such as Kia Aroha College, as the 2011 roll numbers for a selection of these types of schools in Table 12 shows:

Table 12: Moerewa Senior Class roll numbers in 2011 compared with other small schools

(Ministry of Education, 2011)

2011 roll numbers	YEAR 11	YEAR 12	YEAR 13
(Moerewa Unit) Kia Aroha College	(15) 68*	(6) 28*	(3) 21*
Broadwood Area School	10	8	19
TKKM o Kaikohe	2	4	0
TKKM a Rohe o Mangere	18	9	15
Te Kura o Hirangi	11	9	8

* These numbers are the total numbers of students in this year group on Kia Aroha College's roll. The bracketed numbers are the students attending Moerewa School. These students were included in the overall Kia Aroha College numbers.

The Managing National Assessment (MNA) Review

The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) reviews the assessment systems of secondary schools at least once every four years to ensure that assessment is valid, fair, consistent, reliable, accurate, to the national standard and in accordance with the Assessment (including Examination) Rules for schools with Consent to Assess (6.3), and to confirm that the requirements for the consent to assess are

being maintained. An MNA review sets out to answer the question, “How effectively does the school ensure the credibility of assessment for national qualifications?” (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2017)

Moerewa School’s first Memorandum of Understanding was formalised with Te Whānau o Tupuranga which was accredited to deliver NCEA programmes. On 28 January 2011 the two schools on a shared campus in Otara, South Auckland, merged. In this merger, Clover Park Middle School, a Year 7 to 10 restricted composite school, and Te Whānau o Tupuranga, a Year 7 to 13 designated character, Māori bilingual school became a Year 7 to 13 designated character school named Kia Aroha College. The Memorandum of Understanding was subsequently re-signed with Kia Aroha College at the beginning of 2011. This agreement, as explained earlier in this chapter, meant that Moerewa students were on the roll of Kia Aroha College and their work was assessed for NCEA under the Kia Aroha College’s accreditation.

On 3 November, 2011, two NZQA School Relationship Managers, one senior and one less experienced, arrived at Kia Aroha College to carry out the first MNA Review for Kia Aroha College. The school had been advised in prior communication that this was to be a “trial” review as Kia Aroha was considered by NZQA to be a “new” school due to its merger. In their later submission to NZQA the Kia Aroha College board chair and the Principal wrote:

During the day our staff had concerns about the way the MNA was being conducted as we had assumed it would be a supportive process intended to provide us with guidance and advice as a “new” school. Finally, in the debrief session, we questioned why the review had been so intense and rigorous, and why Harsha was talking about a formal MNA report, given it was a trial? Rob Grant was obviously surprised by this question, and questioned Harsha – who couldn’t remember whether it was a trial or not! She had to go back to the office and check. She then advised by email on 11 November (8 days later) that the MNA was indeed a trial, and we would receive the findings in a letter. This letter was not received until 29 November, almost the end of the school year,

and almost a month after the trial MNA. (Kia Aroha College submission to NZQA)

This letter from NZQA (above) detailed areas of good practice, and some areas for improvement, which included applying the Kia Aroha College process for internal moderation to the off-site work, documenting that process, and storing all Moerewa work on the Kia Aroha site. The letter then stated: “Areas that require immediate and urgent action: NIL.” This was hardly a cause for alarm or concern and Kia Aroha College expected they would be given time to remedy any of the areas for improvement.

“A bizarre sequence of events”

There followed what Kia Aroha College senior managers described as a “bizarre sequence of events which we were at a complete loss to understand.” The school Principal complained to senior managers of NZQA, and received a phone call and an apology from one. Their specific issues were around their treatment by the NZQA Auckland Relationship Managers, who they stated, “certainly handled the relationship with us extremely badly.” The school argued that:

Right from the start of this process we felt under suspicion and as if we were not professionals in the process. Meetings were demanded at very short notice. There was no indication of what the meetings were for, until I finally said I would refuse to meet any further without information prior to the meeting. (Kia Aroha College Principal, 2012)

The day after the letter stating there was nil cause for urgent or immediate action, Kia Aroha College received a second email from NZQA. This email, from the Relationship Manager liaising with the school followed another requesting a copy for the MoU with Moerewa and it advised she “might need to collect Moerewa work.” This was to start an intense process of what the school described as “heavy handed tactics” on the part of NZQA.

While this was a feeling at the time of the collection of students' work in December, January, 2011, on 8 April, 2012 Kia Aroha College's Board of Trustees sent an Official Information Act request to NZQA asking for, among other items:

All communication, written or electronic, internal and external, including letters, emails, memos, reports, and minutes of meetings, between any NZQA personnel (regional and national) and between NZQA and the Minister of Education, or the Ministry of Education regarding Kia Aroha College on both the Otara school site and the Moerewa site, between 1 August 2011 to date.

While this information is heavily redacted, some comments validate the feeling of both schools that some NZQA and MOE staff did not treat the schools with professional respect, as these internal emails between NZQA staff show:

18.11.2011 NZQA staff to NZQA staff:

What do we know about any agreement Kia Aroha has with Moerewa College for assessment and reporting results? Note their 'skiting' about their 'draft' NCEA results including UE. ... To some degree it's academic as the MOE is instructing them to close their 'senior school.' (Note this was almost six months before Moerewa School was given this information)

November 2011 NZQA staff to NZQA staff

Next steps?

Make MOE aware that the statistics that are appeared [sic] in the newspaper are not comparing apples with apples. The national figures quoted (or the figures for the local schools) include Not Achieved results, but the results for the Moerewa class exclude Not Achieved results. That's like Dan Carter having a 100% goal kicking record because he is only counting the ones that go over!!!! Well done Dan Carter – boo to Piri Weepu whose statistics include the ones he missed!

Do you want me to forward this to (redacted) at MOE?

The information in these emails is incorrect, filled with assumption and evidence of negative attitudes about the Moerewa School/Kia Aroha College situation. The

emails are shown to confirm that the schools' feelings of being misunderstood and misrepresented were in fact correct.

The Kia Aroha College Principal met the two NZQA relationship managers on 20 December 2011 when the whole school, including the office staff had closed for the holiday break. She was told that the 366 pieces of Moerewa work (84% of all work completed by Moerewa students in 2011) was required by 13th January. Her comment, that it would be difficult to get the amount of work required by the deadline, was later interpreted by the Minister of Education as the Principal had said staff were entitled to a holiday. This was completely untrue. At that meeting she advised them both that, although she was not happy with the request, or the time frame, we would meet the deadline. She subsequently advised the Auckland relationship manager by email on 11 January that the work was ready for her to collect – two days ahead of the deadline. During those three weeks the school brought staff in between Christmas and New Year and in their weekends and holidays to comply. Moerewa School staff and I also travelled to Auckland to help throughout this time.

On 20th December also, Moerewa School senior students all received letters from NZQA in the mail. They were not at school at this time, as school had already ceased for the holiday break. These letters told the individual students that their NCEA results were “on hold” until the NZQA audit of their results had been completed. Understandably students and their families were upset and confused.

It was extremely frustrating therefore to find no reciprocal urgency from NZQA, again in spite of constant contact from Kia Aroha College to try to determine what was happening—all without success. By April the Moerewa School students from 2011 still had no record of any of the credits they had achieved. Surely NZQA would have recognised this was a major issue, and could have pulled in extra staff so that the results could be checked and commented on – without jeopardising the future of these students? The delay caused students, families, and teachers unnecessary stress and caused students to miss out on entry to the Navy and other

opportunities, as they had no record of learning to be able to show the credits they had achieved. It also subsequently jeopardised students' transition to other schools when some families tried this option in Term 1, 2012. Some students, whose destination schools would not believe they had any NCEA results at all, and who required them begin their respective levels again, left school altogether and did not re-enrol.

The meeting between the Ministry, NZQA, and the schools

On 4th April 2012, the Kia Aroha College Principal and Board of Trustees Chairperson, and Moerewa School's Board of Trustees Chairman and I, were summonsed to meet urgently with Ministry of Education and NZQA representatives in Auckland. We had less than 24 hours notice of the meeting. Unfortunately, the Moerewa School Board of Trustees Chairman had his flight to Auckland cancelled that morning, and was unable to make the meeting as he was stranded at the Kerikeri airport.

At the meeting there were three NZQA representatives. They presented us with a three page letter from Dr Karen Poutasi, which we had to read and digest immediately while everyone else in the room watched on and waited. The letter said that NZQA had reviewed 84% (366 pieces) of Moerewa work. 73% was at an agreed standard, and 28.7% was not. For that 28.7% of work, those students had their grades reduced from 'achieved' to 'not achieved'. The letter stated that NZQA had reason to be concerned

We were shocked! We asked, how can we possibly respond to the generalisations contained in the letter? Where were the details, which students were they talking about, which standards? Once again, we were in the situation where NZQA and MoE had the details and we did not so there was little opportunity to challenge and dispute the findings. However, we did manage to quickly find some analytic capacity in amongst the panic, and we asked about the qualifications they had removed. How did we know if the students were actually really close to their

number of credits? We asked, had some students achieved 10 out of 80 required credits or do they have 70 out of 80 credits? We were able to see that there seemed to be a problem with approximately 11 numeracy results, which effected the Level 1 total. We asked, could it be that they are just this one standard short, but because we did not have the details, we could not work it out.

At the end of our questions, NZQA committed to urgently give us all the information they had, and we agreed that we would tell our students and parents the outcome of this audit, once we had the details. NZQA said the students' results would remain locked until we said we were ready for these details to be unlocked so the students could access their records.

Then it was the Ministry of Education's turn. The Ministry officials presented both schools with a letter from Minister Parata. The letters stated that Moerewa School had to advise parents of all students in Years 11, 12 and 13 that they had to find another school by the beginning of the next school term, which was in two weeks time, and that the satellite class had to stop.

We followed the same process of trying to work out what were the important questions to ask, or the pertinent points we wanted to make, and represent our parents, whānau, community and school appropriately, while trying desperately to process the information we had only just been given. We asked how the Ministry had any jurisdiction over a satellite class when it did not require Ministry of Education approval as it was an agreement between boards? That surprised the Ministry and they said they would have to "get a ruling" on that matter. I advised them that Moerewa parents had no intention of sending their children anywhere else so, if Kia Aroha is not allowed to assess us and work with us, then we would have to find another board if necessary, and attach our students to another secondary school. The Ministry of Education Regional Manager asked me, did that mean I wanted him to tell the Minister that Moerewa was not going to follow her instructions? I said, "Yes". He seemed quite surprised by that.

The outcome of the investigation

On 12 April 2012, the Principal of Kia Aroha College received a letter from Dr Karen Poutasi, Chief Executive Officer of NZQA advising of the outcome of NZQA's investigation of results reported for the Moerewa satellite site. Commenting that she was aware that the College did not agree with the imposition of conditions on the school's consent to assess, the CEO "accordingly," attached a statutory "Notice of the intention to impose a condition (without agreement) against Kia Aroha College under the Education Act 1989." This notice limited Kia Aroha College's consent to assess against standards to students who attend Kia Aroha College's South Auckland site at 51 Othello Drive, Manukau City. The Notice of Intention made the following claims:

- In January 2012 the school was required to submit materials, including student work for check marking for 130 randomly selected results.
- In March 2012 the school was required to submit materials, including student work for check marking for all the remaining results for the eight subjects with assessment concerns.
- In total, NZQA check marked student work for 366 of the school's 436 reported results (84%) across 12 subjects
- The grades awarded by Kia Aroha College were not at the national standard for 105 of the check marked results (28.7%). In almost all cases the school's Achieved grade was lowered to Not Achieved

What had happened to escalate a trial review and a report with no urgent or immediate needs to be addressed to result in the issue of a statutory notice to limit Kia Aroha College's consent to assess NZQA standards? The Kia Aroha College board was given until 16 May to submit a response to this notice.

Kia Aroha College identified five key points in their response, which was sent after the Moerewa Senior Class was closed by the Minister of Education, and after the Commissioner was appointed to replace the Moerewa Board of Trustees. The key points were:

- 1) The situation has now changed.
 - i) The situation that gave rise to this condition, the senior students located at Moerewa School, is no longer an issue since the sacking of the Moerewa Board of Trustees and the appointment of a Commissioner, who

is charged with moving the students elsewhere. The Kia Aroha College Board of Trustees is therefore prepared to voluntarily undertake not to assess students who are not located on the campus thus making the formal condition unnecessary.

- 2) Issues with the process:
 - (1) Aside from the condition itself, we have serious issues with the process undertaken by NZQA which led to this decision, and the treatment of our staff by NZQA personnel. We wish to register the following specific concerns regarding the process:
 - (a) A closed and secret process where we felt patronised and not treated as professional equals
 - (b) The prolonged delay in receiving reports of the check-marking process, which seriously affected the students involved.
- 3) Issues with the check-marking and the check-marked results
- 4) Issues regarding authenticity and the dissemination of these concerns by NZQA to the media
- 5) The impact on students and whānau¹⁶

Each of these five key points was accompanied by a detailed explanation of Kia Aroha College's and Moerewa Schools' points of view. In particular we refuted the NZQA claim that the grade awarded by the school was at the national standard for 261 results (71.3%), providing reasons why we believed there was actually agreement established for 78.2% of our results. The Kia Aroha College submission stated:

NZQA advised us, at the joint meeting with MOE, in response to our question about an acceptable moderation agreement rate, that they have no idea what the 'acceptable' rate is for schools' assessment agreement nationally. Various this has been stated at from 77% to 85% for grade agreement on the NZQA website. We were told in this meeting that there is no definite figure and the new National Systems Check moderation process initiated in 2012 is supposed to determine this. Therefore we have no idea, and nor does NZQA by their own admission, just how far "below" a national agreement tolerance the Moerewa work is. We suggest that in any school where 84% of all work is checked, that an agreement rate of 78.2% is within reasonable limits. Instead of

¹⁶ Submission from Ann Milne, Principal, on behalf of the Board of Trustees Kia Aroha College, to Dr Karen Poutasi, Chief Executive of NZQA, dated 16 May, 2012.

painting a picture of “appalling results” (Minister of Education’s words) if, as NZQA claims, “moderation is a professional interaction,” as NZQA claims, and if we had been treated as professionals in the investigation, there was room for professional dialogue that could have resolved this situation.

During this time, we tried to find other secondary schools who had been subjected to similar levels of scrutiny, or who had had the same types of engagement with NZQA over discrepancies with students’ results. We have been unable to find other schools who have experienced anything that compares to the Moerewa School and Kia Aroha College situation. An Official Information Act request was sent to NZQA on 11th November, 2017 to ask for the names of schools that had been required to send more than 80% of their students’ NCEA work to NZQA for moderation, for any one given year. The official response from NZQA confirmed our suspicions that this had not happened to any other school. The letter states “NZQA is not aware of any school with consent to assess where more than 80% of their students’ work has been submitted for moderation”. The letter also confirms that in 2011, NZQA did require Moerewa School to submit more than 80% of their work for moderation, and finishes by stating “NZQA is not aware of any other instances of this nature in the last five years”.¹⁷

The Mathematics result

In our initial press releases about our interim results we had claimed potential pass rates of:

NCEA Level 1: 93%

NCEA Level 2: 83%

NCEA Level 3: 100%

University Entrance: 100%

¹⁷ Information contained in the letter dated 11 December 2017 from Dr Karen Poutasi (CEO) of the NZQA in relation to the OIA 11 November 2017 from the researcher (see Appendix J, page 305).

In their media press release on 10th April 2012, NZQA published the following results that came out of their audit of the Moerewa School students' work. This step, to publish a school's agreement rates and investigation results, before students and their families had been notified, was highly unusual.

NCEA Level 1 – 11% achievement rate

NCEA Level 2 – 33% achievement rate

NCEA Level 3 – 33% achievement rate

Using NZQA's agreed results I sent the following explanation as a press release providing details of the difference, it is noted in Table 13:

Table 13: Press release explaining NCEA scores

From NZQA press release	Moerewa School's response	Total number of students
NCEA Level 1 – 11% achievement rate	<p>The NCEA Level 1 information we received from NZQA on Thursday 5th April tells us;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 33% of students have over 80 credits confirmed by NZQA after the audit. The issue appears to be two numeracy standards which students could have easily re-submitted. • 27% of students are between 2 and 7 credits away from achieving this qualification • 13% of students are within 12 credits of achieving this qualification • Of the remaining 27% (a total of 4 students), 1 was on 2 year pathway, and 1 was absent a lot due to illness <p>These facts paint a very different picture to the one that NZQA portrays in their press release issued this afternoon.</p> <p>In actual fact, NZQA's investigation has identified an issue with one or two Maths standards only. This is actually a matter of a very few credits not the entire level 1 qualification – which could have been easily rectified.</p>	15 students

NCEA Level 2 – 33% achievement rate	<p>The NCEA Level 2 information we received from NZQA on Thursday 5th April tells us;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% of students have achieved over 60 credits at Level 2 and are halfway to Level 3 after audit • Of the remaining 50% of students, 1 student is less than 8 credits short and another is 18 but both have 30 plus credits at Level 3 confirmed by NZQA following the audit • Final student was completing Level 1 after returning from a mainstream school 	9 students
NCEA Level 3 – 33% achievement rate	<p>The NCEA Level 3 information we received from NZQA on Wednesday 4th April</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of students achieved University Entrance qualification (a fact omitted from their press release today – we wonder why?) • Two out of these three students have Level 3 achieved (as posted on the NZQA website today) • One student has 2 credits only to complete to achieve NCEA level 3. <p>These 3 students have been unable to use their University Entrance qualification to gain entrance into University or the Navy as they have had no results released to them prior to today. This is completely unacceptable.</p>	3 students

In May 2012 Kia Aroha College had the Maths work from Moerewa School students (which NZQA downgraded), cross- checked by a senior, experienced, Maths teacher at a large Auckland high school, along with other Kia Aroha College Maths work, without disclosing which work was which. The cross-checker's assessment agreed with the original Kia Aroha grade in all but two pieces of work in the two contested standards (at Level 1 and Level 2). This suggested to us that the work must have been very close to or, as we believed, at the standard. Given the importance of the numeracy standard to the completed NCEA Level 1 qualification outcome for the Year 11 students, who had sufficient credits to achieve Level 1 we believe we should have had an opportunity for these students to submit another standard and have this marked to enable them to achieve the qualification. The standard practice with other secondary schools would be that NZQA would work with the school and teachers involved as that is where the mistake or misunderstanding had occurred. Students would not be affected, or students would be given the option to re-submit. None of these options were afforded to Moerewa School.

Much was made in the media, aided by the NZQA media release to the national media, of the 11% NCEA Level 1 pass rate. This one standard would have made a significant difference to the results but we were unable to rectify the situation given that results were frozen, and we were not permitted to assess any further work.

Authenticity

It was often stated, particularly in response to a Moerewa parent who rang NZQA regularly to ask about his son's results, as well as by the media, that Kia Aroha College had all the information from NZQA as to why students' work was downgraded. They did not, and repeatedly asked for this detail, and were refused it. It was impossible therefore to refute the claims made by NZQA and in the national media which repeated the issues of authenticity and resulted in allegations of cheating.

The NZQA report, and the Notice of Intention, used the word "some" ("Some student work being word for word identical to text on Wikipedia)." We contested this claim and asked, repeatedly, to be shown the work, and to be given the names of students where this was detected.

On 16th May, 2012 Kia Aroha College received a phone call from NZQA because a media source had requested information from NZQA under the Official Information Act regarding the prevalence of copying from the internet, and asking if they had any reason, under the OIA, to withhold the school's name. The email has provided us, finally, after asking since January, the name of the student and the standard referred to. We were then able to find the work and confirm that this was a single case, where *Wikipedia* was used and not included in a reference list. We were amazed that this piece of work could be so rapidly identified by NZQA when it was an OIA request and destined for the media, but our repeated requests for this information were ignored. The single offending piece of work, which had been used to accuse all the students of cheating, and caused our school's name to be

slandered across the national media by the Minister and Secretary of Education, and by the Chief Executive of NZQA, is provided below. The student has stated that *Wikipedia* is the source of her list but she has not included *Wikipedia* in a reference list at the end of her assignment.

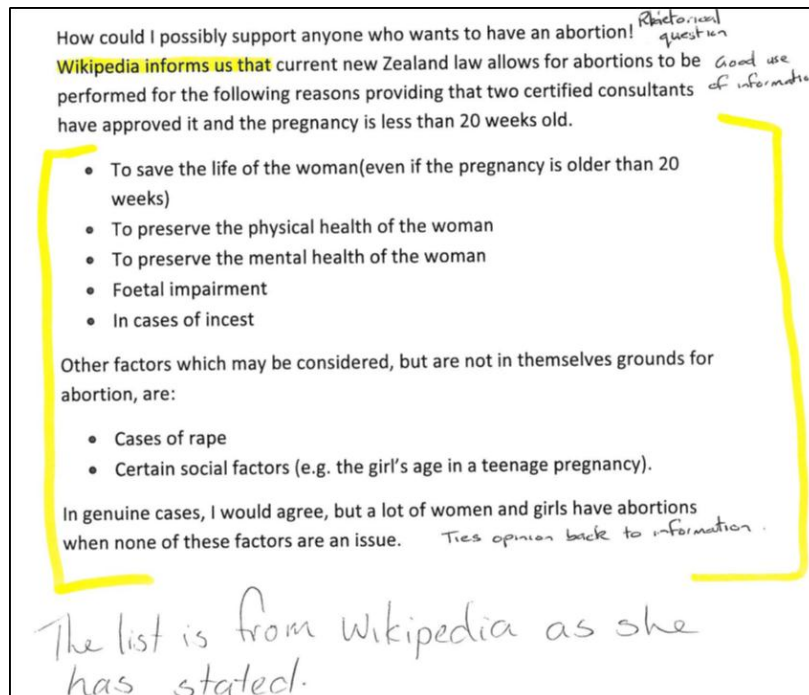


Figure 7: The *Wikipedia* work sample

*The annotations are the teacher's.

Similar issues apply to the NZQA statement claiming, "Some student work being written by another person, later identified as another student." Again, the use of the word "some" implies this was more than a single occurrence. In fact, Kia Aroha College had told the NZQA school liaison person of this instance, which had applied to one student who had a writing disability and who had dictated this half-sentence (16 words) to a teacher, out of six pages of work. The school was advised that although in future they should get prior approval for this sort of assistance, this one piece of work was acceptable this time. Again this "concern" was widely quoted in the media and by NZQA in reports and in the Notice of Intention. This is the offending half-sentence, dictated to the teacher because the student was stressed about completing the assessment in time due to his slow laborious writing.

3. Describe an interpersonal strategy a friend (eg Chris or Terri) could use to support Joe's well-being:

They can help by listening to him and what he has to say. ✓
 Show Joe that they care by supporting him in any way possible. ✓

Explain how this strategy could enhance Joe's well-being:

by knowing he has encouraged ✓
 By close friend and family. supported through the break up of Sam + Pete.

Figure 8: The work "written by another person"

Kia Aroha College's submission, in response to the Notice of Intention, resulted in an 8-page response from NZQA dated 23rd May, 2012. This response ended with NZQA's acceptance of Kia Aroha College's statement to voluntarily agree not to assess students who were not located at the Otara campus. Given that the Senior Class no longer existed, and the Commissioner was in place, this was a non-event. The response detailed further examples of work being similar to exemplars, or work similar to other students—none of which we had seen or been told of before, and none that could be proven to be fair. By this time there was little point in further arguing back and forth.

On 10th February, 2012 and 27th February 2012 two of the three Moerewa Year 13 students received a letter from NZQA advising them that their results had been "released." One had achieved NCEA Level 3, University Entrance and the National Certificate in Mathematics Level 1. The other had achieved NCEA Level 3. These results were too late for their acceptance into tertiary programmes. The results of the other students remained "frozen" until September, making it impossible for them to be taken into consideration by the schools they transitioned to. By September, many had had to repeat standards they had already achieved.

After all of this attention, I think the mood at Moerewa School can be best summed up in two social media posts by one of the Moerewa School staff working in the Senior Class with our students. On 19th April 2012 she writes:

Whānau imagine what it's like to be a young Māori person from Moerewa and to learn that there are people in this world who doubt your intelligence, your ability to apply yourself, your work ethic, your commitment to your goals and your integrity. And because they doubt you, they have doubted your whānau and your community. Imagine what it's like to have to go through all of this just because you had the audacity to succeed.

Both the Ministry and NZQA are very selective about the information they release to media. Here are some more facts that NZQA will not be sharing through the media:

Previously our students have passed external exams in Year 9 and 10 at both Achieved and Merit level. We no longer sit external exams as we are philosophically opposed to them as a valid form of assessing a student's knowledge. We are not cheats! NZQA found 1 sentence in 1 six- page assessment activity (out of 366 standards) where the handwriting differed. At this point NZQA were communicating their findings and upon explanation no credits were taken away.

NZQA have raised 3 other authenticity concerns that unfortunately we have received very little information about. However none of these concerns have resulted in the removal of any credits.

NZQA audited conducted their audit in 2 stages. The first stage consisted of 130 assessments and from this 4 subjects areas were cleared and our results were re-released.

Of the 105 standards NZQA reported as Not Achieved 10 were reported by us first. This means that NZQA agree with 78.3 % of our marking and that we are 7.7% away from the acceptable level of 86%. Yes there is room for improvement but surely not grounds for closure.

By NZQA's own reckoning we achieved this with 2 teachers covering 71 standards across 12 subjects in up to 3 levels. According to us we do this and a whole lot more (refer earlier posts). And that is our point exactly!

This whole thing started when we applied for better resourcing by way of extending our status to include Year's 11, 12 and 13. At that time we dared to dream of the possibilities for our students if only we could be resourced the same as everyone else.

Now we are fighting just to stay open. More important than that we are fighting for the mana of our students.

The next day, on the 20th April 2012, she again explains what she and others felt was unjust treatment of Moerewa School and its students, in comparison to what is

the usual expected practice for Secondary schools. It is difficult to imagine the pressure that she and the other teacher were under after this intense scrutiny:

NZ: expect to have less than 10% of your NCEA to be externally moderated by NZQA
Moerewa: expect everything

NZ: expect to know what that 10% will be in Term 1
Moerewa: expect a surprise attack over Christmas

NZ: schools receive moderation reports and students never know it happened
Moerewa: expect comments made publicly on national TV but don't expect a report

NZ: no results are removed or lowered despite the findings of NZQA, what your school told you stands
Moerewa: expect to wait 4 months to have your credits and qualifications taken away (and still no report)

NZ: 86% correct out of less than 10% of predetermined external moderation is acceptable
Moerewa: 78.3% out of a surprise audit that looked at 84% of your year's work is grounds for closing you down

Hard times whanau. Lots of sadness, hurt, anger, tears, frustration, humiliation, fear, sleeplessness, worry and stress. But we're Moerewa hard so we have more strength, together as a whanau, than everything else put together.

The Commissioner Arrives

On 24th April 2012, the Commissioner, Mike Eru arrived at the school at approximately 2pm. He was brought to the school by the Ministry of Education Local Manager who did not come into the school. The Commissioner's arrival was met with television cameras and newspaper photographers, who walked up the school driveway asking Eru questions as he made his way to the school office.

What the Commissioner would not have known at the time was that media had been "camped" out at the school all day. The news the afternoon before, that the Board of Trustees had been sacked was of high interest to local and national media. They arrived at school that morning to wait for the Commissioner to arrive. There were also whānau who had arrived to wait for the Commissioner to arrive. One 70

year old grandfather had brought a small chair and set himself up in the bus bay to wait. He said he was going to lie down across the school drive way to stop the Commissioner coming into the school. We had no idea of the specific time that the Commissioner would be arriving, and we spent a great deal of the morning looking at every car that came into the school. After the school's morning tea break, we went outside to invite the group into the staffroom for a cup of tea. They appreciated this offer and came in. It was not a leisurely break as it did not take them long to be back outside to continue to wait. Lunchtime came and went and there was still no sign of the Commissioner. Early in the afternoon, the Grandfather who had been waiting on his chair in the bus bay, went home to get some medication he'd forgotten to take that morning. It was then that the Commissioner arrived. The Commissioner's arrival was shown on the Māori news channels and photos were included in local newspapers the next day.

I met the Commissioner in the school reception area, and invited him into my office. Again, this was filmed by television reporters and photographers. I felt embarrassed that our school's shame was being captured so publicly. I couldn't wait to get both of us into my office as soon as possible.

My recollections of our first meeting were that we spent the first 20 minutes being pleasant to each other by introducing ourselves, and talking about our backgrounds. It didn't take long for the Commissioner to talk about the reasons he was appointed. One of his first tasks was to restrict my public profile. He wasted no time in telling me I was not to have any more media interaction, and all communications from the school would go through him first, before being sent out to parents/whānau and community. This included the regular school newsletter. I was to focus on the school only, and to stop my community, local and national profile. There was no formal agenda, no list of questions and no documentation provided for me.

His first task was to 'transition' the Senior Students on to other schools. Over the next few weeks, parents and members of the whānau of these students met with

the Commissioner. They were adamant that simply transitioning to the local college was not an option. They met as a whānau group many more times, and explored many options. The whānau group met with the Kura Kaupapa Māori in Moerewa and tried to broker an arrangement for our students to transition into the Wharekura (secondary area of the school). At the same time the Ministry of Education had brought in officials to make home visits to families of the students, to offer any assistance in the form of paying for school uniforms, school stationery and anything else that might have helped with the transition. Many families resented this approach and many made it very clear to the Ministry employees that it was too late for the Ministry to offer help and support to their children now. Many families refused to meet, and some Ministry staff did not make it past the front gate of one or two houses as they attempted to come on to properties to meet with whānau.

The Ministry also set up meetings at school to discuss curriculum pathways with students and families. During this entire time, the families concerned were adamant that they wanted to retain a learning environment that was consistent with what they had experienced at Moerewa School. There was never any suggestion from the families concerned that Moerewa School's organization and teaching pedagogy was wrong and they wanted to return to a more traditional approach. After much discussion and negotiation, whānau made the decision to keep the students together as a group, and set them up as a 'Pod' at the local community Trust building in Moerewa. This local Trust was already an Alternative Education provider, and the Moerewa School pod, was welcomed by the Trust. The Pod explored learning options such as The Correspondence School (Te Kura) programmes as a way of delivering the curriculum.

On May 21st 2012, our Senior Students were required to be enrolled at another school. On that day, I received an email from the Commissioner requesting me to confirm there were no senior students on our premises. It was a sad day. Table 14 shows where these 17 young people went once they left Moerewa School.

Table 14: Destination options chosen by students in the Senior Class in 2012

	<i>Year level in 2012</i>	<i>Where they went after they were forced to leave Moerewa School</i>	<i>Completed Year 13</i>
Student 1	YR 12	Left school – went to work at Affco	
Student 2	YR 11	TKKM o Taumārere	
Student 3	YR 13	Correspondence School/Te Kura	
Student 4	YR 11	Correspondence School/Te Kura	
Student 5	YR 13	Left school – went to work at Affco	
Student 6	YR 11	Correspondence School/Te Kura	✓
Student 7	YR 11	Bay of Islands College	
Student 8	YR 11	Kia Aroha College	✓
Student 9	YR 12	North Tec – did one course – went to work at Affco	
Student 10	YR 13	Left School – went to work at Affco	
Student 11	YR 12	Correspondence School/Te Kura	✓
Student 12	YR 12	Correspondence School/Te Kura – then Bay of Islands College	✓
Student 13	YR 11	Correspondence School/Te Kura	
Student 14	YR 12	Correspondence School/Te Kura	
Student 15	YR 13	Correspondence School/Te Kura	
Student 16	YR 12	Correspondence School/Te Kura	
Student 17	YR 13	Correspondence School/Te Kura	✓

From the very first meeting with the Commissioner, and in most of the subsequent meetings with him, I requested a copy of the list of issues he was required to deal with at Moerewa School. I said if we both knew what he was here to achieve, we would be able to contribute to helping him tick these things off his list. He was never able to provide this documentation. On the 8th August 2012, I emailed Northern Regional Manager, Ministry of Education, requesting a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding governing the appointment of the Commissioner in the school. I was after the list of issues or actions that the Commissioner was

expected to deal with during his time at Moerewa School, and expected that this would be documented in the official MoU. The Northern Regional Manager replied saying I was not entitled to see that document.

What was to follow was a barrage of Ministry of Education Advisors, Student Achievement Function (SAF) advisors, Professional Learning and Development providers, Literacy and Numeracy advisors, and Education Review Office reviewers, who were all brought into the school to advise us. At no stage could any of them find any issues of significance with our curriculum delivery, with student achievement, with the school's organisation and management, and no issues were identified with my leadership.

In November 2012 we had the first ERO review of the school. We waited anxiously for the confirmed report. After repeated requests from me to ERO for the confirmed report, in an email from the Commissioner to me on 21st February, he stated "I have a work in progress version that is not suitable for sharing. I expect the confirmed report will be released in the near future." He confirmed that ERO had asked him not to share the report with me. This collusion between all the agencies involved in the school, leaving me completely out of any communication, continued for the duration of the Intervention.

The priorities that came out of the November 2012 ERO review are listed below. We felt that by the time we had received the confirmed review document in late February, many of these things could already be ticked off as completed.

School achievement information

- Refine reporting of achievement information to provide clear picture of how students at each year level (Year 1 to 10) are achieving and progressing in reading, writing, maths.
- Setting of achievement targets for Year 9 and 10.

Implementation of National Standards

- Use of nationally referenced assessment tool to support reliability of Overall Teacher Judgements in relation to National Standards.

- External support to support speedy implementation of National Standards.

Ensure current developments in teaching and learning practices are considered

- Provide external professional learning opportunities for teachers that build on their understandings of teaching and assessment practices.

Strengthen strategic planning and self review

- Identify and prioritise specific steps to support implementation of vision.
- Systematically evaluating progress.
- Evidence based approach to self review that includes external perspectives.

We then entered into ERO's 'Progress Visit/Paetawhiti' process where we would expect reviews over the next one to two years. We had ERO visits in August 2013, then October 2013, and finally in April 2014. Staff were exhausted by the constant level of scrutiny and the number of "advisers" in the school over two years had caused stress, which is evident in the focus group data in the next chapter.

We continued to maintain that the original reason for the intervention was over within one month of the Commissioner arriving, when the senior students were moved off the school premises. There was no evidence that the school needed intervention in any of these other areas, so the parade of advisers, officials and agencies were simply initiated by the Commissioner without consultation, with no grounds whatsoever that they were needed. Most of the advisors and reviewers working in the school struggled to understand the school's well researched pedagogy about what makes a difference for Māori learners. Instead of celebrating the deliberately different approach the school had been taking to ensure success for Māori learners, as Māori, we were challenged always to return to a narrow, conventional literacy and numeracy focus only.

Over the two years that the Commissioner was in the school, it would be fair to say that the professional relationship between the two of us was difficult. I felt that the Commissioner was constantly undermining my leadership role. This happened when he would override my professional judgement and experience, and make educational decisions on behalf of the school without my involvement. An example of this is when he and the Ministry of Education officials, filled in the Professional Learning and Development applications, to apply for professional development for staff. I was presented with these already completed and had no opportunity to discuss what was selected and why.

I was required to seek permission from the Commissioner before leaving the school, and all local, regional and national Principal forums I was involved in were seriously questioned by him. He felt I needed to focus on Moerewa School only, even when this networking was encouraged in the Professional Standards for Principals. At one stage as he was re-writing the school's new Charter document, he made one of the objectives "Sticking to our knitting" meaning he wanted me to focus my attention exclusively on the school. Of course instructing a Principal to focus only on the business of the school would be totally appropriate if the school was not running effectively, or if there was an inexperienced Principal or Senior Leadership team, or if there were other issues impacting on the efficient running of the school. None of these were the case at Moerewa School. I had to calculate the days I was to be off site each term and present this to the Commissioner.

On the other hand, we very rarely knew when the Commissioner was expected in the school. We never received a calendar of his scheduled visits despite him travelling from Hamilton and obviously needing to organise flights and accommodation each time. It was not uncommon for me to receive a phone call from someone I knew on the same flight as the Commissioner, to tell me they had just landed and he must be coming into the school.

There were times when I felt I needed legal representation, and Paul Goulter (National Secretary NZEI) was actively involved in my case, and worked with NZEI lawyers who would represent me. One such time was when I was presented with an

exit package from the Commissioner after a few surprisingly pleasant meetings between the two of us, where I had wondered, at the time, why he was expressing concerns regarding my welfare, and asking how I was finding things all of a sudden?

Lawyers also assisted me to obtain a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding in April 2013, almost a year to the day of the Commissioner arriving in the school. Lawyers were also involved when the Commissioner insisted I withdraw from this doctoral study and refused to allow me attend any classes or study sessions that were to be held during school time.

The Commissioner would prepare the school budget, and then present large invoices to the school for payment with no description of the work that had been completed. None of the Commissioner's progress reports were ever shared with us by him, and when I did see some of these after receiving them via Official Information Act requests by other people, I could see that much of it was my work simply transferred on to his reporting template. There seemed to be few checks or balances on the Commissioner's timetable, his work, and the authenticity of the reporting, and there was no one I could raise these concerns with. There was never a time when we co-constructed solutions to issues together, and there were many things that he was responsible for that seemed to take far too long to achieve. We could not understand the reason for these delays.

During his final months at Moerewa School, the Commissioner featured regularly as the subject of many media stories. Many newspaper articles and television news reports discussed the length of time he had been in the School, the overall costs of the intervention on the school, the lack of information that had been shared and the fact that there seemed to be no obvious reasons as to why he was still in the role in the school. As an example, on 11th November 2013, on Māori Television's news programme *Te Kāea*, a Moerewa School parent Esme Sherwin was also interviewed: This had become a growing concern for Sherwin, "I would like to see an itemised account of what he's done maybe a publicly issued description of his job" (*Te Kāea*, 2013).

Finally by the time ERO visited the school in April 2014, we had been advised by the Ministry of Education that there was an end date for the intervention. This was to take effect on the 9th June 2014 when the new Board of Trustees would take office.

While we were excited to be able to return the school's governance role to a Board of Trustees, there was also concern about the make up of the new Board. The school community would only be able to vote for one representative to the reinstated Board, and the other positions would be appointed by the Ministry of Education. Advertisements were placed in local newspapers to publicise the appointment process, and anyone could apply to the Ministry for selection on to the new Board.

Green Party education spokeswoman Catherine Delahunty, who visited the school last year, said it appeared the ministry did not trust Moerewa to choose the best people for the board.

"This is a very good school, they get excellent ERO reports, and they've been punished enough by having a very expensive Commissioner for the past two years. It's cost a poor community a lot of money," she said. (deGraf, 2014)

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a detailed description of the sequence of events that took place at Moerewa School between 2011 and 2014, before and after the sacking of the Board of Trustees and the imposition of a Commissioner. The story has been told from the viewpoint of the school, and provides an insight into the impact on all involved. The next chapter analyses the data gathered from surveys, focus group interviews, media, and school-related documentation to present the findings of this research. It presents the opinions and feelings of the students, the staff and the wider community about the events this chapter has described. The data also includes the experiences of other Principals who have been involved in similar interventions to provide a deep understanding of the personal and professional toll on those involved.

Chapter Seven: The Heart of the Flaxbush

*Hutia te rito o te harakeke
Kei whea te tauranga o te Komako e ko
Ki mai koe ki ahau
He aha te mea nui o tenei ao?
Maku e ki atu
He tangata, he tangata, he tangata*

*What future do we have if we destroy potential?
If you were to ask me where is the greatest potential
I would answer
It is people, it is people, it is people (Moerewa Community
Submission, 2003)*

Introduction

The previous two chapters have provided the background and the sequence of events that unfolded at Moerewa School. They have been derived from the personal experience of those closely involved and from a significant volume of documentation, including official school documents, email correspondence, and information received under the Official Information Act (New Zealand Government, 1982). These data have been quoted in the previous chapters where they have been relevant to the events that occurred. In particular, the chapter examined the two key issues: the efforts of the school to extend the range of year levels to Year 13, ultimately rejected by the Minister of Education, and the controversy that arose with the New Zealand Qualifications Authority after the publication in 2011 of interim NCEA results by Moerewa School.

This chapter presents the data collected via surveys and focus group interviews with the staff, community, and students of Moerewa School, as well as the data from a number of media articles that included interviews with participants. The chapter widens these data to include information gathered from other Principals who had experienced statutory interventions in similar circumstances as Moerewa.

The task of this chapter is to analyse these data to present the findings from this research, and to address the key research questions:

1. *How did Moerewa School support their community's aspirations for relevant education, as Māori?*
2. *How did institutional barriers impact on the realisation of the Moerewa community's dream*
3. *What lessons can be learned from this experience?*

Chapter 2 has described the methodology and the methods of data collection and thematic analysis. The eleven themes and sub-themes identified in the data, and their connection to the research questions and the two main sections of this research are outlined in Table 15. The eleven themes were then grouped under four overarching headings to acknowledge the interconnection of the themes as these four separate aspects of the data were very evident:

1. Moerewa-driven
2. The Myth of Autonomy
3. Power and Control
4. Personal and Professional

The data are examined under these four headings, and the themes relevant to each heading are discussed. The theme of leadership is relevant to two research questions and in two of the overarching categories; the positive aspects of leadership that led the community to seek a driver for their aspirations, as well as the impact on school leadership as the result of the intervention. The questions and themes are outlined on Table 15 on the next page

Table 15: Questions and Themes

	Research Questions		Themes	Sub-themes
The Dream	How did Moerewa School support their community's aspirations for relevant education, as Māori?	MOEREW-DRIVEN	1. Challenging the status quo	
			2. By the community, for the community	
			3. Māori-driven education	
			4. Leadership (1)	
The Death of the Dream	How did institutional barriers impact on the realisation of the Moerewa community's dream	THE MYTH OF AUTONOMY	5. The Minister and Ministry of Education	
			6. NZQA	
		POWER AND CONTROL	7. The Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power and control • The Commissioner • Costs • Reasons
			8. The impact of the intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On students • On the school • On the community • On health
			9. Leadership (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal impact • Professional impact
The Way Forward	What lessons can be learned from this experience?	PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL	10. Other Principals' experiences	
			11. Lessons learned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternate options • Other models

The Dream

Theme Group 1: Moerewa-driven

This section answered the question, “How did Moerewa School support their community’s aspirations for relevant education, as Māori?” It groups together and analyses data coded to the themes:

- Challenging the status quo
- By the community, for the community
- Māori-driven education
- Leadership

The comment below, from a community member of the focus group interviews is indicative of the feeling of the staff and community in 2017, five years after the intervention:

How can, the community of Moerewa, who created the Charter and the Strategic Plan, actually achieve versus the government criteria? You know, as a community, we put our hearts into this, this is the kaupapa, this is how it's going to roll, these are our beliefs, but the government says, 'No, sorry, legislation dictates.'
(BM, Community member, 2017)

At the heart of this comment are the two diametrically opposed viewpoints at issue throughout the intervention, and since. On the one hand, the hearts and souls of the community, and their years of effort to develop a model of schooling that was relevant to their Māori learners and therefore different from the status quo. On the other hand, the hidden 'power' of the government to override the school and the community's wishes came to the surface. What was at issue here in the policy domain is the false promise (the hegemony) derived from the *Tomorrow's Schools* (Department of Education, 1988) framework, which set up Boards of Trustees that would supposedly enact parents' wishes and remove the detrimental and over influence of professional educators. Under the hegemonic catch cry of putting power back into the hands of parents, the hidden power and real control of government was submerged and disguised.

There is overwhelming evidence in the data collected of the pride of the community in the education model they had developed. A survey respondent affirms the strong connection between the community and the school, aligning this with whakapapa and a Māori perspective:

There is a long history and association between Moerewa School and the community of Moerewa. This is a community that has seen generations of whānau educated at Moerewa School by members of the Moerewa community. The relationships between all sectors of our community was strong, built on history, pride and an unwavering belief in its people. With these foundations firmly cemented in whakapapa, the school had its role in bringing the hopes and dreams of a community to fruition. (HM, Educator 2017)

There was also a strong sense that the approach developed at Moerewa School was theory-based, was driven by research, and the knowledge of the Moerewa Māori community itself in knowing what worked best for their children. Data from the online surveys, the three focus group interviews (staff, community and Principals) were analysed for references that contributed to the themes in this group namely: a research and theoretical base, a direction driven by kaupapa Māori, and a clear intent to be different and to challenge the status quo. All of these themes show the extent to which this development was driven by the community, for the community of Moerewa. Table 16 shows that 121 references were found that supported these themes in 43 different sources.

Table 16: References to Theme Group 1: Moerewa-driven

Nodes	Number of coding references	Number of sources coded
Theoretical foundation	8	5
Māori-driven	16	8
Community research	9	5
Challenge status quo	40	13
By/For Community	48	12
TOTALS	121	43

The following comments from: two Moerewa School teachers, two Te Tai Tokerau Principals, the then president of the national primary teachers' and early childhood union, community members and parents, a Senior Class student, the Board of Trustees' chair, and a member of parliament, show that this feeling of the school's success and strong educational, and Māori foundations, was widespread:

We used to pride ourselves in being 'different on purpose.' This was driven by an absolute belief that the solutions for our community did not lie in a mainstream approach to education. Moerewa School has been put back in the box. (PK, Educator, 2017)

I really would have liked to see the programme that Moerewa was trying continued to see if that type of schooling idea helped the students who were having difficulties with the traditional and somewhat white high school approach. As an education service we lost a great opportunity to try something which might have given children a better chance. (YR, Educator, 2017)

Moerewa School clearly has the confidence of its community and NZEI believes the government should listen to that as a matter of urgency. The government should not ignore the resolve of communities such as Moerewa, in standing up for their children's education. What we're seeing in Moerewa will be repeated in communities around the country if the government continues to pursue flawed policy and enforce it with unreasonable action. (New Zealand Education Institute, 25th November, 2011 [Press Release])

It was a proud school. Your social justice curriculum, that was number one. Students learnt about racism, elitism, the pride was noticeable. Students walked tall, sounded tall, they knew they were Māori, and they looked a million bucks. (CR, Educator, 2017)

This school is different. This school became a beacon of hope. This school did fantastic things. I'm proud of this school. (Member of Parliament, 2017)

There was a strong partnership between community and Kura The community was adamant on supporting the change to retain the students from year 9 to 13. A community hui regarding the impending changes with the BOT called for a "cradle to the grave" educational experience. I was in the audience. (RV, Community member, 2017)

Moerewa School was building a community of excellence (MJ, Community member, 2017)

There was a warm light we were all going towards. (TJ, Educator, 2017)

During the intervention I thought that it was unfair that our class wasn't able to carry on because we were doing some cool stuff that helped us to learn together and grow together. We did Duke of Edinburgh, kapa haka, mau rakau, and supported lots of Māori kaupapa in our community. I enjoyed these challenges because I liked the physical and mental challenges that we faced together as a whānau. (MT, Student, 2017)

The references and comments regarding the community's vision for a relevant Māori education in Moerewa refer to times both before and after my leadership as Principal of the school. The Moerewa Community Submission has been thoroughly discussed in previous chapters, as has been the fact that I was appointed to the Principal's position to carry out the community's educational vision. The theme of

leadership is evident throughout the data and falls into two very broad categories: my leadership, along with that of the Board of Trustees, and the Moerewa School staff before the statutory intervention, and the personal and professional impact on my leadership during the period of intervention. The first of these categories is analysed in this section.

Leadership pre-intervention

At the Moerewa Community meeting on 21 July, 2017, I told the community that “the recipe was already here. It was a privilege as a new Principal to action the vision of the community.” I strongly believed that, and still do. The foundations were laid in the passion and determination of the Moerewa community’s submission and, as I told the community focus group, the only question I was asked at my interview for the Principal’s position was how would I lead the school to fulfil that dream. These comments are some of those that support we were well on the way to seeing that dream realised:

Moerewa School was on track creating a community of leaders before the Education Department intervene, it had great vision and lead by great Principal. (MJ, Community member, 2017)

A Principal with her staff took a stand against what MOE believed was right, the Principal was courageous and stood by her expertise and knowledge about what was best for her school and community. (Survey respondent, 2017)

Many participants were clear that my leadership role involved challenge and advocating on behalf of the school and community. This was my own expectation of my role, and I expanded this to membership of local, regional and national Principals’ associations in executive positions. Each of these roles gave me further opportunity to represent the voices of Moerewa’s students and whanau. One of the stances I took on behalf of the community and school was to stand up against the imposition of National Standards in our schools. This stand has been explained in detail in Chapter 5, and the number and range of comments in the data about National Standards was briefly mentioned earlier in this chapter as an example of validating and triangulating data using multiple sources. My position on National

Standards was in complete agreement with the school's stance as this excerpt from a *New Zealand Herald* article on 17th June 2010 shows:

Moerewa School in Northland was one example. Principal Keri Milne-Ihimaera said the policy was not in the best interests of local children and the school had the board's backing in refusing to implement the new system. Board chairman Midge Palmer said at the time that sacking boards which did not force Principals to implement the policies—as suggested by the minister—would not be welcomed by the community. As Moerewa was not alone in its stance, he also questioned 'how many Commissioners are they going to have to employ nationally?' (*New Zealand Herald*, 2010)

There was no doubt that the school, the Moerewa community, and the professional education community saw my high profile against National Standards and the Board of Trustees' participation in the Boards Taking Action Coalition (BTAC) as a catalyst for the close scrutiny of the school by the Ministry of Education. There were 29 separate references to this stance, across ten different sources, and as has been previously shown, the Minister of Education noted the school's refusal to include National Standards in the letter instructing the school to close the Senior Class, in spite of the fact the school had already complied and had, reluctantly, included National Standards targets in its Charter and Strategic Plan. Comments and references regarding National Standards, coded to the theme of leadership included:

Our stance on National Standards upset the Minister and our Principal not backing down infuriated the Minister. I feel the whole intervention was a personal attack on our Principal, Keri. (LM, Educator, 2017)

In my own personal opinion I believe that the Principal was a target for the Ministry well before this issue even occurred. The Principal has been a strong advocate for Māori students in Education. In her various roles throughout the Ministry as a Principal and an executive on Regional and National Principal Groups, Keri has voiced opposition against key Ministry policies that exclude and marginalise Māori in education such as National Standards and introduction of Charter Schooling. Keri was a strong advocate for community involvement in schools and a curriculum that related to students lived experiences and their cultural surroundings. (ID, Community member, 2017)

I personally feel that the community's stand against national standards did assist in why Moerewa school at the time was punished. (KL, Community member, 2017)

National Standards wasn't suitable for our kids. It was like fitting a round peg in a square hole. It didn't fit... as a member of the board and as a parent I knew I couldn't see any joy or success in this change for Moerewa School. (ME, Community member, 2017)

National Standards and the Principals, kura, and community stance on refusing to implement these in Moerewa School. The then Minister of Education's personal vendetta and stifling voices of those who opposed these. (FR, Educator, 2017)

While National Standards, and our opposition to the policy, certainly grabbed the headlines and put us in the spotlight well before the issue of NCEA results or the rejection of our application to retain our senior students arose, the community is clear about the school's strengths and goals, and the reasons behind the school's direction during this period of my leadership. Teachers spoke of pedagogical direction, described as a "pedagogy of whanau" (Smith, 1995). They spoke of theory, such as appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005) used in our interaction with the community, and what they described as "absolute total care for our students."

Summary of Theme Group 1

Data analysed in this group of themes has provided consistent evidence, from community, student, staff, and wider educational community sources, that the direction and pedagogy of Moerewa School were driven by well-researched practice that originated with the community's passion for an educational approach relevant for Māori learners. I was privileged to be charged with the leadership of the community's dream and I took this role seriously, becoming an advocate, outspoken at times, for the community's position for an approach that was "different on purpose." A significant number of references provide grounds for the community's belief that our opposition to National Standards brought us to the Minister and Ministry of Education's attention, and that this scrutiny is seen by

many as the catalyst for the opposition that was to follow, and that led to the destruction of the Moerewa community's dream.

The Death of the Dream

This section answers the question, "How did institutional barriers impact on the realisation of the Moerewa community's dream?" It groups together and analyses data coded to the themes in Group 2 and Group 3. The references to the Minister and Ministry of Education, and NZQA are discussed in Theme Group 2. In Theme Group 3, the intervention, the impact of this on all involved, and specifically the second aspect of leadership—personal and professional—are analysed.

Theme Group 2: The Myth of Autonomy

- The Minister and Ministry of Education
- NZQA

The previous chapter (Chapter 6) detailed the sequence of events that led to the closing of the Senior Class, the sacking of the Board of Trustees, and the appointment of a Commissioner at Moerewa School. It also provided detail of the controversy around the students' 2011 NCEA results. The data gathered from the online surveys and focus group interviews show that the pain and hurt from these events are still raw and vividly remembered by the community. The shattering of the dream of the Moerewa community to develop a Māori-centred learning model for Moerewa, by Moerewa, was built on the promise of autonomy devolved to schools and communities by the introduction of *Tomorrow's Schools* (Department of Education, 1988). That this promise was a myth was exposed in the events that transpired in Moerewa and the community were not prepared to allow their autonomy to disappear without fighting back. The "mamae" (pain, wound) as it was often referred to, is deeply felt.

There is little doubt in the data, in the minds of the Moerewa community, and in the wider professional community, that the Ministry of Education handled the situation at Moerewa School badly, and that the intense scrutiny of the school was

directed by the Minister of Education at the time of the intervention, Hekia Parata. Table 17 shows the number of these references and the number of sources where these occurred.

Table 17: References to Theme Group 2: Minister and Ministry of Education

Nodes	Number of coding references	Number of sources coded
Ministry of Education	35	10
Minister of Education	25	7
TOTALS	60	17

Although the rejection of the application to extend the range of year levels at Moerewa School was the decision of the previous Minister of Education, Anne Tolley, the Moerewa community certainly articulated their hopes and their expectations that the incoming Minister of Education, Hekia Parata, would provide a Māori perspective and would bring a deeper understanding of their vision. Their disappointment, and anger, that this was not the case is a strong theme throughout the students, school, and community sources. It is also expressed by Māori Principals and the wider education community.

The fact that the two primary opponents in this situation; Minister Hekia Parata and myself, were strong Māori women was acknowledged in Chapter 2 with reference to Mana Wāhine (Irwin, 1992; Pihama, 2001, 2015) theory and methodology, and the relevance of this theory to the Moerewa struggle. Many members of the community, both the teachers of the Senior Class, the wider school staff, and some of the senior regional members of the Ministry of Education, were also Māori women. The stand-off and adversarial process that took place between these two opposing groups was the complete opposite of the way the school and community, or I, felt was a Māori lens on decision-making or a way forward—there was never an opportunity for kanohi ki te kanohi dialogue as was the community's expectation. In fact, many comments made by respondents refer to the power exercised over the community within the actions of the Ministry of Education and the Minister.

A community member, and parent of a student in the Senior Class, was prepared to acknowledge that the Minister might not be solely responsible:

I'm always mindful that regardless of how far we are up the food chain—even Hekia—Hekia would have had somebody with a big massive thumb on top of her, saying "Hey, this is how it's going to be, this is how we're going to do it." (BM, Community member, 2017)

However, others were not so prepared to excuse her actions. There were many references to the fact that the Minister was Māori, and should have therefore behaved differently towards a Māori community actively involved in developing a model of schooling specifically tailored to its Māori learners. The fact that the Minister was Māori added a definite layer to the community's pain and sense of outrage as is evidenced in the comments below. Five years after the intervention some community members want an apology for this hurt, particularly an apology from the Ministry of Education, and Hekia Parata, in spite of the fact she is no longer a member of parliament. The hurt they feel, is personal. While the previous Minister of Education, Anne Tolley, is never referred to as "Anne" in the community's comments, the Māori Minister is never referred to by them in any way other than her first name, "Hekia," indicative of the personal connection they feel. Māori Principals occasionally used her full name, or just her surname, but they voiced the same disappointment as the members of the community. Some of the comments made by Moerewa community respondents are listed first below, then followed by views expressed by some Māori Principals.

School and community references

An absolute dislike of the Minister of Education because she is a fellow Māori, and her Ministry people. (TH, Community member, 2017)

I just thought they couldn't do it. We had the people power, but led by Hekia, they did. (TJ, Educator, 2017)

Hekia wouldn't come [here], we had no rights. I learnt that the machine is powerful (TA, Educator, 2017)

[What did the intervention achieve?] NOTHING! Other than Hekia thinking that she was the master puppeteer pulling strings on our kids futures!!! A pointless attempt at thinking she had control of the situation. (ME, Community member, 2017)

You know how the government is apologising to all these people for all the wrong they've done to their communities, would we ever get anything like that? (LM, Educator, 2017)

I think we do need an apology, realistically, not from the new Minister or MOE now, but from Hekia. (BM, Community member, 2017)

Professional community references

It was downright bullying. Minister grandstanding to show NZ she was tough. No jumped up little Principal was going to dare challenge her direction! She found an excuse to bring full weight of her power down on the wishes and aspirations of the Moerewa community. Overkill. Must say others also endured immense pressure to conform. (NP, Educator, 2017)

The stronger you got the worse it got. Hekia was going to make it worse. (OL, Educator, 2017)

The intervention was massively over-the-top not required. I point the finger directly at Hekia Parata. It became personal from her. It was tough watching it, let alone watching you experience it. (CR, Educator, 2017)

Power! Power! Power! A narcissistic Minister of Education in love with her opinion and voice, was hell bent on showing she was all powerful. Simple as that. Typical East Coast Parata. Grand standing all the way. Would she have dared do this in Remuera, or Fendalton? Moerewa was easy pickings and we were a bit uppity up in Te Tai Tokerau, too often challenging Minister's decisions. She needed a scapegoat, an example to show the world she was boss. Nothing to do with what was good for kids, what was good for education, what was good for Māori. All about making Parata look good! (NP, Educator, 2017)

Despite the spin doctoring, a Māori Minister is ultimately responsible for this haki (sore) on this Māori community and EVERYONE will remember that. (CR, Educator, 2017)

The wider Māori community comment also directly criticised the Minister, as this Maui Street Blog on April 19, 2012 shows:

Hekia Parata isn't one to back down, it goes against her instincts. She'd be smart, however, to take a step back and reverse the decision to close Moerewa School. The Ministry and the Minister's Office are losing the PR battle and Hekia's mana is diminishing. Parata refused to front *Native Affairs* on Monday, however she gladly took a less stringent interview on *Te Karere* that day. Other than that interview, Parata has attempted to keep her hands clean, but she's taken a battering in the media rather than appearing above the fray. (Godfrey, 2012)

The Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education, with or without the influence of the Minister, was also at fault in the community's eyes, and this criticism was found consistently across all sources participating in the online surveys and focus group interviews. This is further affirmed in the final part of this chapter when the data is widened to include other Principals whose schools have experienced interventions similar to Moerewa's. These comments speak to the root of the problem as seen by these participants: the lack of communication or of any transparency, the violation, as several respondents described it, of the community's aspirations, the one-size-fits-all lens, and what the community and school saw as blatant 'lies' told about them by senior education authorities in national media.

A further major issue in the community and school data was the insistence of the Ministry of Education that the education sought by the Moerewa whānau, could be found at Bay of Islands College in Kawakawa. This is in spite of the community's longstanding dissatisfaction with this school, based on previous experience. This is precisely why the Moerewa Community Submission for a different model of education had been developed. The community feelings against the Ministry of Education are captured in the following comments in Table 18, which are categorised by source. Of importance is the level of consistency in the commentaries made across all sources:

Table 18: Comments relevant to Theme Group 2: Ministry of Education, sorted by source

Source	References
Online Survey (Staff & Community)	The Ministry also stated our arrangement with Kia Aroha College was illegal. This was incorrect as we had a Memorandum of Understanding in place which the Ministry were aware of a relevant funding was redirected by the Ministry to Moerewa School. Hardly the actions of an illegal arrangement! (PK, Educator, 2017)
	The community had no consultation with the Ministry, regarding the intervention and the affected parties, the tamariki, and their whānau until after it was done. This was felt like a deliberate undermining of power of what a board of trustees in a school can support, and it affected not just our tamariki, but the reputation of our community and school. ...I feel the strong stand against National standards was the catalyst and added fuel to the fire that pushed the Ministry of Education into a corner—so it fought back. (KL, Community member, 2017)
	Straight bullying by the Ministry...they knew none of their strategies worked and Moerewa had implemented the kaupapa that was working. (Survey respondent, 2017)
Staff Focus Group Interview	The vision of the school was way above others. this threatened the Ministry of Education. (WK, Educator, 2017)
	I got angry with the Ministry lady who thought I was lying. The ERO lady made me cry. As if our whānau can't understand graphs! They really did think we were thick, because I didn't have any letters behind my name. (LM, Educator, 2017)
Community Focus Group Interview	None of them wanted to go to Bay of Islands College. The order came from the Ministry of Education that they had to go, the Ministry of Education came to our doorstep. I didn't like it. (BM, Community member, 2017)
	Ministry of Education came to my house offering uniforms and transport [to go to Bay of Islands College]. I wouldn't talk to them. (BG, Community member, 2017)
	I don't see them going to Bay of Islands College [in 2017]. They are still choosing not to go, so what's the difference? What the Ministry wanted hasn't happened. (LM, Educator, 2017)
Principals' Focus Group Interview	We're so busy the Ministry have figured out when to put things strategically on our agenda, when we can't do anything. (OL, Educator, 2017)
	The government machine had that huge roll on. The more you listen to it, you are less informed - the more you don't listen you are well informed. (CR, Educator, 2017)
Online Survey (Principals)	There was no real evidence of the need for Ministry intervention. The whole procedure was staged because of some other non-related agenda. That intervention had more to do with the roll at Bay College than Moerewa. ...The Ministry had a desire to send the students to Bay College to assist the roll there. The fact that the students were failing at Bay seemed not to be a concern of the Ministry. They preferred to paint a picture of failure at Moerewa and used some rather questionable data to support their claims. The wishes of the students and the community were ignored. (YR, Educator, 2017)
	I bet Keri's conscience is clear. Mine is, but I hope many colleagues and Ministry officials, have some worries on their conscience. (NP, Educator, 2017)

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2017**

It was an example of Ministry pretending to give communities a role in their local education but which in fact was nothing of a sort. There is a now a new unwillingness of people to believe anything they hear from Ministry. (YR, Educator, 2017)

We had to go through seven ERO reviews in eight terms. We were powerless. I thought if that's what happens to adults, what is happening to our kids? (PK, Educator, 2017)

The people that violated us, they are not in the room, we are. ...We have been violated. We need the Ministry in the room. It's not over. (DP, Community member, 2017)

Media

As the NZQA audit found, work was copied from Wikipedia, exemplars were not altered and some of the work was completed by other students. That will not be tolerated from any school. Our learners deserve better. [Minister of Education quoted in the *New Zealand Herald*, 23rd April 2012] (Hyslop, 2012)

"The government says it wants to raise the tail of underachievement and Māori achievement. Moerewa School is doing that, and doing it very effectively. The government should not turn around and punish them for that". [NZEI immediate past-President Frances Nelson] (New Zealand Education Institute, 2011)

Not only does the following community member echo the sentiments expressed by others in Table 18, but he has a suggestion about how the Ministry of Education could have acted instead, that would have fitted with the community's expectations for dialogue. There were many comments about the way the community felt due to their treatment by the Ministry of Education—which this survey participant describes as abuse:

I believe the Ministry should have made every effort to make amends or taken responsibility for what and how they treated Moerewa and its surrounding localities. The Ministry should have put on a dinner and spoken to us, as it was easy for them to speak to the media or other channels but once they done their job and ran away, we haven't seen them again. This has made the area resistant and tighter, but I know that it will never put up with the same abuse it went through again! (RJ, Community member, 2007)

The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA)

Chapter 6 has documented the detail of the controversy with NZQA over the disputed results of the students in the Senior Class. NZQA refused, throughout this process, to have any dialogue whatsoever with Moerewa School, or the teachers of the senior students, claiming that the school was not accredited to deliver NCEA

standards and therefore their point of contact was Kia Aroha College. This is not disputed by either school. However, there is no doubt in the data that the school and community felt unfairly targeted and were put under more intense scrutiny than other schools and communities. The following reference attests to this feeling, which is common in the data:

This had never been done before with any school, and never since NZQA wiped all our kids' results. When it was later moderated there was 74% agreement with our marking – almost the same as national agreement. The usual process is to tell schools of the disagreement, but the kids would never know. They didn't do that to Moerewa. (PK, Educator, 2017)

The NZQA saga was played out publicly in the media, in newspaper and magazine articles, on the radio, and on television. The NZQA claims and their refuting of the interim NCEA results, without any explanation of the fact, that at the heart of this issue was a very small number of Mathematics results. This was repeated continually by their spokespeople, and by the Minister and Secretary for Education. However, this was seen through by some commentators who sought out this background information:

The Ministry is citing alarmingly low pass rates as a justification for closing the senior unit. However, given there are less than 20 students spread across three different achievement levels, even one person failing will bring down the percentage significantly. Before audit, the pass rates were 93%, 83%, 100% and 100% at level 1, 2, 3 and university entrance (UE) respectively. This is well above the national average for Māori. After audit, however, the pass rates were 11%, 33%, 33% and 100% at level 1, 2, 3 and UE respectively. Strangely, NZQA awarded the students UE, the requisite standard to enter university, but did not award level 3 meaning those students cannot go to university. This is a perverse situation. Of those students that failed, they only failed by a small number of credits. Usually, if a student fails an internal assessment, they're given a chance to redo the standard. However, in this case, the students that have failed will not get that chance, a chance that all other NCEA students get. (Godfrey, 2012)

There are many community references to the “shame” and embarrassment caused by the high media profile and the NZQA’s press release of their version of the NCEA results. As one community member and parent commented, “It was in the paper, the media, and my heart just went ‘boomp’. I really felt for our kids” (BM, Community member, 2017). Another said, “We were in the media, labeled as cheats and liars” (LM, Educator, 2017), and another, “I remember reading in the media, the Principal is doing this, and doing that, and I thought no, Keri is doing what the community wanted” (NC, Community member, 2017). A student in the Senior Class sums up this feeling when he comments, “I didn’t like it when they called us liars and cheats because we worked hard to get our credits for NCEA” (MT, Student, 2017). The only community-elected member of the Board of Trustees formed after the intervention observed, “The MOE used the media to accuse the school of cheating. Which it wasn’t, but not once have they seen fit to clear the school of all wrong doing (PE, Community member, 2017).

The school and community have good grounds for feeling the NZQA treatment of the students and the scrutiny of 84% of all students’ work was unfair, and they believed, unprecedented. An article in *The New Zealand Listener*, (Woulfe, 2011) that gathered information via the Official Information Act, and from a thorough investigation of schools’ *Managing National Assessment* (MNA) reports, asks about the credibility of moderator agreement of results:

So how credible are those grades? The question is directed mostly at internal assessments, which are set and marked by teachers, and almost always pull in higher pass rates than external exams. Each of these grades is meant to be checked by other teachers, before a sample is checked by NZQA moderators. We don’t know yet how many of last year’s grades NZQA disagreed with. But in 2009, NZQA disagreed with about 24% of the grades teachers awarded. In 2010, it disagreed with about 18%, and in 2011, 14%. None of those grades will be changed and the students involved will never be told. (p. 25)

The key sentence in this quote is that none of the students’ grades were changed and that students involved would never be told. Why then were the Moerewa

students' grades frozen, grades that had been awarded, removed, and their overall results made public in the media? The article cited an example of a school with audit reports in 2009, 2010 and 2011 detail "a serious decline" dating back to 2005. Why then, the intense scrutiny of the Moerewa students' results in the first year of their work at NCEA level, and with no prior concerns raised by NZQA about Kia Aroha College's assessment?

Woulfe (2011) also reports that, "Consistency varies between subjects, schools and teachers. For example, in 2011, 23% of maths grades checked were problematic, while in English, only 4% were." Given that the Mathematics results were at the centre of the issue with Moerewa students' grades, this finding confirms that other schools had similar difficulty in this subject in that year.

A report by the Office of the Auditor-General (Controller and Auditor-General, 2012) on the consistency and quality of internal assessment for NCEA confirms the *New Zealand Listener* article's agreement rates. It also provided further insight into NZQA's processes in working with schools to resolve issues. It states that, "NZQA told us that, in recent years, it has rarely used its full non-compliance proceedings against a school," and that, "NZQA takes such extreme action only after it has made considerable effort to solve the problem" (p. 34). It gives specific cases of NZQA School Relationship Managers working over time with schools where there were issues identified with internal assessment. These opportunities were never accorded to the students at Moerewa School.

Summary of Theme Group 2

The Moerewa community felt that their school was unfairly targeted by education authorities, specifically by the Ministry of Education and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority. They made no secret of the fact that they strongly believed this scrutiny was spearheaded by a Minister of Education who they felt should have understood the goals of the community. While they didn't expect special treatment, or to be favoured by the Minister of Education any more than

any other school, they put some faith in their belief she would view their direction and plans through a Māori lens. They were bitterly disappointed when the opposite was proved to be the case, as the data in this section has shown. This targeting of Principals, schools, and communities who speak out, or in some way draw negative attention from government agencies is further examined in the final part of this chapter.

Theme Group 3: Power and Control

- The Intervention
- The impact of the intervention
- Leadership (2)

In this group each theme is broken down into sub-themes because of the wealth of the data about each of these topics. It is difficult to describe how a school moves, in the space of one day, from being autonomous, and being seen by the community to be a thriving, vibrant, success story, to being completely under the control of someone else, who knows nothing about you, and is completely unknown to you.

The overall feelings of disbelief, of injustice, and disempowerment came through the voices of the community, the Moerewa school staff, and the former students who were involved. It was also a strong theme in the comments from Principal colleagues in Te Tai Tokerau and, as the final section in this chapter describes, Moerewa School was not alone in this feeling of an imposed, and unfair, intervention.

No one person comes under more scrutiny and comment in the data than the Commissioner, appointed by the Ministry of Education. The data in the first section of this theme group relate to the issues of power and disempowerment, which included references to racism and injustice. The data indicates that the community felt there were no valid reasons given for the intervention, and gives insights to their anger at the Commissioner himself and some of his actions. Also raised are

issues related to the costs of the intervention to the school. The variety of data and the number of different sources from which it is referenced can be seen in Table 19.

Table 19: References to Theme Group 3: Power and Control: The Intervention

Nodes	Number of coding references	Number of sources coded
Power and control	28	11
Commissioner control	26	15
Costs	19	10
No reasons	23	6
Racism	19	8
Injustice	31	11
TOTALS	146	61

We talk about this thing called democracy, there was no democracy here. We talk about freedom of speech, there was no freedom of speech, absolutely none. (LM, Educator, 2017)

This comment sums up how the community felt during the period of the intervention, the feeling of having no voice, the lack of transparency, and the secrecy that seemed to surround the actions of the Commissioner and his interaction with the Ministry of Education. Chapter 6 provided the detail of the arrival of the Commissioner with less than one day's notice, and the actions he then took to prevent me as the Principal from speaking out, and the subsequent moves to isolate me from the staff and community. That he was extremely successful in achieving this divide between myself and the community is evident in the comments made by the community respondents within the data. Five years after the intervention the community is still seeking answers as to why the intervention even occurred:

Do we actually know why the Commissioner came, because we did everything that they wanted us to do. Was it because we had the kids on our property? They came on the Monday so we could say goodbye because we thought they were wonderful—was that why? (LM, Educator, 2017)

Did we ever get a letter from MOE as to why? (BM, Community member, 2017)

Because we were doing better than other established high schools.
(IG, Student, 2017)

There was no consultation with BOT, staff, whānau or community as to why we needed to be so harshly dealt with. At the time I felt we were quite willing to sit at the table and explain our stance.
(TJ, Educator, 2017)

Many however, had definite reasons why they felt the intervention had occurred and why the school had been singled out.

It was an attack both from a racist stand-point and a political one. This is OPPRESSION on my people. This was hegemonic views and systems at their worst. This was a complete attack against Keri Milne Ihimaera and her stand against the government for HER community. She was singled out (and so were we) for opposing National Standards, despite the fact that the community stood against it. She was made an example of to show NZ what the Government were apparently capable of. This is racism at its finest! (WK, Educator, 2017)

We've been fighting the war for a long time. Pākehā colonised the Māori, now they are still trying to colonise the Māori. If you do anything different that they don't like, this is what happens. Colour has a lot to do with it, colonisation again. (BG, Community member, 2017)

Education for our children is getting taken away. The Commissioner concept is corrupt. White media is one-way media. We spend more money on a prisoner than we do on a kid at school. (PR, Community member, 2017)

This experience has affirmed my belief that NZ has a racist education system that promotes the aspirations and goals of white New Zealanders while perpetuating educational failure for Māori. I have been directly impacted by these racist tactics and have stood in solidarity with my Moerewa School whānau before, during and throughout the messy aftermath. (ID, Community member, 2017)

The cost of the Commissioner

This was a particularly popular topic in the media about the intervention at Moerewa School, and the subject of many of the community's and professional colleagues' questions. An example was the article in the *Nelson News* on 15th

November 2013, that reported that the teachers' union (NZEI) were welcoming the Ministry of Education's review into interventions in school. They quoted figures gained from Official Information Act requests to access information on the costs of the Commissioner to Moerewa School.

This follows the disclosure that Commissioner Michael Eru has been paid nearly \$150,000, including expenses, to run Moerewa School in Northland part-time. He was charging for 80 hours a month at \$100 an hour, and had expenses of more than \$50,000. (Moore, 2013)

This was particularly interesting to the public, because at the same time that Mr Eru was the Commissioner at Moerewa School, he was also the Commissioner in two other schools. Over the November 2013 period the media attention about the cost of Commissioners in schools was extensive. There were reports in many major media outlets, and all had local examples of the costs of Commissioners in communities their listeners and readers could relate to. It had taken the Tai Tokerau Principals' Association six months, several Official Information Act (OIA) requests, two appeals to the Ombudsman, and the threat of legal action to establish what the Commissioner at Moerewa School had been paid. This investigation finally revealed that between April 2012 and May 2013 the Commissioner charged Moerewa School \$95,000 for his services - 80 hours a month, at \$100 an hour - and also claimed expenses of \$53,000 from the Education Ministry (Radio New Zealand, 2013). Te Tai Tokerau Principals' Association president, Pat Newman, commented that during this time the regular Board of Trustees members would have cost the school approximately \$5,000 in total board fees.

Other Principals who were the subject of an intervention share their costs, to their schools, and personally, later in this chapter, but for the community of Moerewa where, for people aged 15 years and over, the median income is \$17,800 (Statistics NZ, 2015) the exorbitant salary paid to the Commissioner for just one of his part-time jobs was beyond their comprehension, and freely expressed their outrage as these references show:

Were we the only school to have a Commissioner for so long? I used to tell him about spending thousands of dollars of my mokos' money. We never saw him in the school. (BG, Community member, 2017)

The majority of parents were hōhā with the Commissioner, disgusted with him, lining his pockets with all this money spent. (BM, Community member, 2017)

The intervention achieved nothing but making a statutory manager richer and Moerewa School poorer. (TH, Educator, 2017)

The Commissioner was a waste of money. Redirected school funds to the Commissioner that could have otherwise been used towards the children. Teachers felt like there was a huge weight on the kura. The wairua changed. (FR, Educator, 2017)

The Impact of the Intervention

Table 20 shows the number of references coded to the theme of the impact of the intervention, and the breakdown into sub themes:

Table 20: References to Theme Group 3: Power and Control: The Impact of the Intervention

	Nodes	Number of coding references	Number of sources coded
Impact	Impact on health	8	5
	Impact on community	65	9
	Impact on school	40	9
	Impact on students	57	11
Leadership (2)	Personal impact	29	8
	Professional impact	41	7
Totals		240	49

The impact on students

At the very epicenter of this intervention were the students, who were impacted the most. The effect on their learning and their future career and study pathways, from the freezing of their results and the removal of standards and credits from their academic record was explained in Chapter 6. Their feelings, and the comments of those who knew and loved them, come through very clearly in the data. The students' comments include:

They labelled us students as cheats, and breaking up what was a whanau. (RD, Student, 2017)

It was stupid. We were passing papers why ruin something for a small town? Sadly most of those kids didn't stay in school and didn't get the chance to attend university. I had to move away from my family to Auckland. (IG, Student, 2017)

I loved Moerewa school. It [the intervention] pushed me back into a normal school which I wasn't really achieving at, because bunking class and not even attending school was so easy, where I had no choice at Moerewa School. (WT, Student, 2017)

I disagree with the Intervention that happened as it broke the strong connections between the community and the school. It also left a lot of students and families distraught as this school was a place they felt welcomed at, a school that welcomed one and all from near and far into their open arms. It hurt me to see all my friends leave the school, it hurt to see the people that I looked up to leave, and to see them hurt made me hurt. It was devastating to see many of my cousins come home and cry because they had to leave Moerewa School. (BJ, Student, 2017)

Many teachers, other staff, whanau, and other Principals commented on the impact of the intervention on the students in the Senior Class. The comments in these two survey responses are from a mother, and a community member:

They took our bright, young and confident children that loved coming to school every day and they crushed them. They caused anxiety, stress and pain for the students and all the whānau around them. The students had dreams and aspirations for the future but when the intervention happened they were so traumatised most of them did not recover from it. All it [the Intervention] did was cause a whole lot of hurt for our students, our staff, our whanau, our board of trustees and our community. What's worse is they just did it and they left. They didn't come back and check if our kids were ok, they didn't care what happened to them, they just crushed them and left. (MD, Community member, 2017)

Children did not like to attend school any more, some moved to other schools but were neglected and were unceremoniously treated like second class citizens, and were humiliated, mocked, and shamed. This was an outright disgrace to such an area of huge humility and pride, to be denounced, scolded and ostracized by media and more. (RJ, Community member, 2017)

A Senior student, talks about the wider implications of the treatment these young people experienced, that gives some hope that the learning that was embedded in the young people in the Senior Class was not lost altogether, and remains as part of their thinking and understanding in spite of all the efforts of bureaucracy to thwart it:

Now that I have left school and I am 21, I still remember all the good and bad times that we went through at Moerewa School it has helped me to recognize the injustice that is around us as Māori, and the daily challenges that we face, not only as adults but seeing and recognizing the pressure that is put on Māori students in school to follow the structures that have been put in place. We all still hold strong to the kaupapa Moerewa school was running and trying to achieve when its Senior Class was up and running.

My time at Moerewa School was a good time for me and my brother we got to make some lifelong friends and had some amazing teachers and adults in the school. I believe that if we were able to carry that on we would have so many successful young adults that would be able to give back in our community. (MT, Student, 2017)

Similarly, a student in the Senior Class describes her journey:

I went to Moerewa. I didn't want to go to Bol [Bay of Islands' College]. I had been bullied in other schools. We changed at Moerewa. It was the best decision Mum could have made. I gained NCEA and I was happy. I lost motivation [after the seniors were moved on]. I went to the Trust, then on to Correspondence, then Taumarere. I got NCEA Level 2 and 3, and UE. I'm in my third year of a Bachelor in Applied Management. (GC, student, 2017)

The impact on school and community

It is impossible to separate the effect of the intervention on the school from its impact on the community. The surveys and focus groups continually referred to both. They spoke of the divide the intervention caused in the community, where there were factions on both sides, often within whanau. As one community member at the community hui said, "We almost let a system kill our community. The system was always there, we let it tear us apart—whānau against whānau,

street against street.” One interviewee explained she stopped talking to her father for six months after an argument over a news item. She commented, “Whānau never saw past the Channel One news. They are white and right, so Dad believed them.” Others said their family members became politicised as a result. A staff member described how she withdrew from the community, because people kept asking about what was happening, “so we just stayed home. My son lost all his friends. He wanted to lie down in the school carpark in protest.” She also saw the strategy behind the lack of information and preventing of communicating with families when she says, “I was hating on groups of people who weren't here supporting us. The plan was to isolate us and it worked.”

In answer to the question how did they feel about the intervention five years after it began, school and community respondents and interviewees used words like, sadness, misery, hurt, disappointment, isolation, lost faith, resistant, corrupt, unjust, devastated, silenced, alienated, struggling, betrayed, disempowered, embarrassed, weakened, and broken. This has to be an indictment on the process and the reality of an intervention which purports to be about school “improvement.”

There were many references to the need for an apology and for healing to occur so the school could move on from what had happened in the past. However, an issue that arose during the community hui surfaced again in the surveys. Towards the end of the Commissioner’s tenure in the school, the Ministry of Education sought interest in applications for positions on the Ministry-appointed new Board of Trustees, which was to be comprised of one elected representative from the community, and four ministerial appointments. It was interesting to find that three of the successful four ministerial members did not have children at the school, and two of those three had chosen to remove their children from the school a few years previously. It was also notable that only one of the four member “Advisory Board” who had been meeting with the Commissioner for the previous eight months to develop a new Strategic Plan for the school was successful in being selected by the Ministry of Education to gain a Ministerial Appointment place on the Board.

While those who were successful, it was agreed at the hui, were strong community workers, there was also some surprise as community members, who would have been viewed as strong candidates, disclosed they had applied and not been chosen. Of further surprise, to many at the hui, was the information that the board had asked the Ministry of Education to extend the current board's term of office through to the next national election in three years' time. Comments in the interviews and surveys ask how this is possible and where was any consultation with the community who do not feel democratically represented. One survey respondent commented:

We are STILL being punished, we have government appointed board members, who decided among themselves to roll their time over. So after five years I as a whānau member of the school, can only vote for one community member to act on my behalf. BOT have not declared their interests, or intent. I wonder why they are still there. In their time, two terms, what have they achieved? (TJ, Educator, 2017)

Leadership – post intervention

As explained previously, leadership, specifically my leadership of Moerewa School as the Principal, is a recurring theme in the data and I have chosen to separate the references into pre and post intervention categories. This is because nowhere is the myth of autonomy more exposed than in the changes to the Principal's role with the appointment of a Commissioner. This is further verified later in this chapter in the stories of other Principals.

I was personally aware of the abrupt, and then ongoing challenge to my leadership role at school, and tried to keep the impact of this away from staff as much as I could. I was unaware of the repercussions the treatment of me by the Minister, the Ministry of Education, and by the Commissioner, would have on my professional colleagues, or the wider education community. Navigating that space between the professional and the personal was extremely difficult. In my interview with Principal colleagues one commented:

Did anyone ask you what it was like going through that? I hope, I hope you know that some of your staff were Facebooking me, “Our boss is crying at times, we’re seeing it.” I remember reading that at night and thinking..... So, I’d ring you, and you’d give us that, “Hey, lovey” and we’d think you were OK.

I hope you interview your own whānau, your husband, your own kids, you still had two of them there [at Moerewa School], strong in social justice, strong in their Māoritanga, and proud. This was over the top. This was too much, so I hope you do interview them. I want to see you as a leader of the Moerewa community, and you as yourself. (CR, Educator, 2017)

In fact writing the personal part of this journey was not something I planned to do. I never thought of this as my story, or my journey. I didn’t formally interview my whānau, but we have had many conversations both during and since the intervention. The stress I was under was certainly witnessed first, and often only, by them and I was fortunate to have their total support. This personal impact is woven into the next section.

The Personal Impact

What has been unexpected in this work, is the deep-set emotion I still feel personally, nearly three years after the intervention ended. I first realised this when I was asked to attend the Moerewa Community “Houhou i te Rongo” meeting on 14th July, 2017. That date was nearly three years to the day, after the Commissioner left the school. When speaking to the community about my recollections of what happened to the school, to the students, to the community, and to us, personally and professionally, I was overcome, and found it difficult to speak. I remember that tears of frustration, tears of anger, tears of resistance, and tears of responsibility became an ever-present experience during the time of the Statutory Intervention. This was not usual for me. However, I had no expectation that these feelings would still be sitting within me years later, just below the surface. The current Principal of the school whom I have known for many years, commented to me at the community meeting that this was the first time he had

seen me become “emotional” as I was well-known for being strong, outspoken, and confident. He was very surprised.

Another example has been the re-reading of documentation that was written or received by me during 2012 when I was the Principal of Moerewa School, when we were desperately fighting for the right to retain students in our school, and other documentation from 2012 to 2014 when the Commissioner was in the school. These records of hurt, have been difficult to read, and I have unexpectedly found them difficult to re-live. I have found myself wondering if I could have done things differently? Was there an alternative path we could have taken? Did I lead the community responsibly during this time?

At the community hui called by the current Moerewa School Board of Trustees on 1 July, 2017 my husband described my personal experience perfectly, in a way that no one else could. He described being in the position of seeing me through all of the hard times at home, the tears, the frustration, and the stress. But, he commented, “she’d get up the next morning, put on her red lipstick, and go to school, and no one else would know the cost”. I was very aware at the time, of the need to keep this stress and trauma away from the staff and the students. I was not as aware of the personal toll that took.

In April 2014, at the age of 44, I suffered a stroke. I had been exercising regularly and spending a lot of time with whānau, as we built up to perform in the Tai Tokerau Regional Kapa Haka Competition. I felt fit and healthy, so the sudden loss of my sight and confusion as to where I was, was a huge shock to my whānau, who rushed me to hospital. I remember being confused about where we were on that journey, despite having travelled that road many times before. While doctors cannot pinpoint the specific cause of my illness, we all agreed that the ongoing stressful environment I was navigating at school was undoubtedly a significant contributor. Once the news travelled around the community, staff and community members ramped up their care and support.

There were many other, not so dramatic, effects that I simply internalised or learned to live with—loss of sleep, anxiety, continual doubting of my own credibility, the damage to my professional reputation (particularly through the high media profile of the Moerewa situation), and the daily “second-guessing” of the Commissioner’s demands. High on this list was the need to support staff through the constant invasion of ERO (every term), and to attempt to manage the constant stream of Ministry of Education professional development “experts” being bought in by the Commissioner, who knew nothing of our children, our community, or were largely unable to operate in ways the Moerewa staff, students, or community would recognise as cognisant of Māori aspirations or values. I became the buffer between all of these different factions, all the while trying to act, for the benefit of the the Moerewa staff, as if everything was “normal.”

While there was no formal confidentiality agreement in place, the Commissioner had made it very clear from our very first meeting that all media interviews, all community meetings, all interactions with parents, would now stop immediately. I was to concentrate on the success of the school, and to lower my profile. Failure to do so would have extremely serious consequences. This included an order that all school newsletters now had to be reviewed and edited by him before they could be sent home. School newsletters had previously gone out to whanau, like clockwork, every two weeks, and waiting for the Commissioner to read, review, edit, and then approve the final version, meant there were long delays. Our teachers and community could tell from even this small change, that something significant must have happened.

Even though I tried very hard to shield everyone from these constraints that were placed on me, it was made clear to me in my focus group interviews with staff who were in the school during that time, that they were in fact aware. These comments were made following a discussion about how participants felt during the intervention, and how the school changed:

First off, you protected us a lot from all of that, Keri. You bore the brunt of it to let us get on with our own “social justice thing” [referring to the curriculum in the classroom]. I just felt that the pressure on you was just horrendous really. (WK, Educator, 2017)

Our teachers were allowed to carry on as normal, and you sat in your office with that man and had to put up with his abuse [chorus of agreement with the choice of the word “abuse,” another added, “his eyes.”] on our behalf. And that was the sad thing because, like I said, you were not allowed to say a thing. And you tried to carry on as normal, which was incredible [general sounds of agreement from the group], by keeping us going, by keeping us re-energised with all of your new initiatives, all your new mahi, and keeping us learning. It was hard for me in that office to see that. (LM, Educator, 2017)

I was also prohibited from attending many activities or events away from the school. This included my attendance in Wellington at NZPF Executive meetings, participation in Aka Tokerau Māori Principals’ Association events (where I was an Executive member). I had already enrolled in my doctoral study and was about to start attending the lectures and block classes, and was instructed by the Commissioner that I was to stop engaging any further with this study. At that time I had not decided on my topic of study, so his refusal to allow me to continue my study was not due to his awareness of the topic I eventually chose.

After almost two years of this type of treatment, I sought legal opinion from NZEI’s lawyers and, on that advice, on 3 April, 2014, NZEI lodged a personal grievance claim on my behalf, against the Commissioner, on the grounds that I had “suffered personal grievance in the nature of unjustifiable disadvantage (section 103(1)(b) Employment Relations Act 2000). The claim listed “a range of issues relating to your unfortunate treatment of Keri Milne-Ihimaera during the period of your time as Commissioner of Moerewa School.” The examples included: denying me a copy of his Memorandum of Understanding for the first 12 months of his tenure, blocking my participation in his interaction with the local community, persisting with inadequate billing practices in spite of my concerns, and requiring my urgent input into the development of the school charter where the delay in carrying out this work had been of his making. These actions it was claimed has caused me to suffer

“embarrassment and humiliation” and could have reflected badly on my professional reputation as an educational professional. Finally, the claim cited that “without good cause” I had been denied permission to attend a retreat relevant to my Doctoral programme, and to attend activities of the NZ Principals’ Federation scheduled for 3-6 April in Wellington. The letter concluded that these were “ part of an ongoing and persistent pattern of unfair behaviour.”¹⁸

I had also engaged Anderson Lloyd Lawyers for advice on the refusal of the Commissioner to allow me to participate in doctoral study or other activities, such as my membership of the NZPF Executive. In a letter dated 12 March 2014, the Commissioner had already been advised, among other rulings, that his role, who takes the place of the Board, has no more powers than the Board, and that whether or not I was in the school at any given time was a management decision, not a governance issue.

The personal grievance letter from NZEI was answered by an Adviser Industrial/Personnel Relations, New Zealand School Trustees Association, on 4 April, 2014. Advising that a full response to the contention that I had suffered personal grievance would be provided “in due course,” the letter states:

Mr Eru has asked if I would email you to advise that he has at no point sought to restrict Ms Milne-Ihemaera *[sic]* in her personal time, particularly this weekend. To this end she is at liberty to attend the NZPF Moot in Wellington at no cost to the school, Saturday and/or Sunday.

This response was not helpful given that the days I was being asked to attend were from Thursday 3 April to Sunday 6 April 2014. The adviser concludes his email by observing:

Mr Eru leaves the offer to attend mediation open, on the table for your client to accept. Surely time spent on this would be seen as far more important and productive than other activities away

¹⁸ Letter from Andrew Cassidy, General Manager Membership Services for the National Secretary, NZEI, to Commissioner Mike Eru, dated 3 April, 2014.

from the fundamentals of managing a school and working with the Commissioner.

The "offer to attend mediation" was something I turned down, given we had been advised that the Commissioner's tenure was to be over seven weeks from this date. I responded to the offer saying, "as you are shortly to be replaced by a Board, I see no particular purpose to be served in both the school and I incurring the costs involved in meeting to discuss 'problems in our working relationship'." For the same reason, I saw little point in proceeding with the personal grievance complaint. By that stage my focus was on the Commissioner leaving the school and I was working intentionally on every aspect of that goal.

That the Commissioner paid little heed to any of these legal warnings is evident in the email from lawyer, John Robson, NZEI, to Andrew Hampton, then Deputy Secretary for Education and Director of the Office of the Secretary, on 3 April, 2014:

I don't know what efforts or outcomes your regional officials have undertaken with respect to the Commissioner's instruction to the Moerewa Principal not to attend the NZPF annual moot, but 90 minutes ago, she received an email from the Commissioner which reiterates his previous instruction.

Some points to note ...

The last request to Eru re the NZPF event was 7 days ago. He sat on it until the 11th hour. He has played similar games with respect to the PhD programme.

Eru has the temerity to suggest "looking at our working relationship". This coming only 7 weeks before his warrant expires! Par for the course when it is recalled that although Eru's 12 April 2012 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) required him to establish a modus operandi with the Principal, he refused to show her the MoU for 12 months. She had no idea what his task was.

One could go on. One could mention the one line invoices. One could mention Eru's attempt to persuade the Principal to resign (after assuring her there was nothing wrong with her practice). Once *[sic]* could mention the fact that his regular reports to his MoE minders simply listed a whole bunch of stuff that MoE officials (not him) were doing anyway!

One could mention Eru's explanation to Jim Greening that he was blocking attendance at a PhD retreat because he didn't have a proposal (which you know now to be untrue). He gave the Principal completely different reasons which are also patently untrue.

One could mention lots more.

NZEI is now gravely concerned that we will be put in an impossible position when NZPF note the absence of one of their activists at their moot in such circumstances.¹⁹

I did not attend the NZPF “moot” event, and I did not begin this doctoral study as planned. In both of these refusals to allow me to participate, and in many other similar instances, the Commissioner’s ruling won. It was difficult to explain the reasons for these edicts and imposed isolation by the Commissioner as his only rationale was that I was needed in the school. My overwhelming feeling was that these “orders” were given with the expectation that if he pushed me hard enough I would finally balk, refuse to comply, thus giving him the perfect reason to remove me from my position. This, in fact, was something he threatened me he had the absolute power to do, as the Robson email above confirms. This effort to comply with everything, without question, and “do as I was told” was a major internal conflict for me. Any time I questioned or asked for the reasons for his decisions, the Commissioner took this to be a challenge of his authority. It was difficult to form any professional relationship. As a school and wider education leader who is normally able to speak my mind and make decisions, there was no acknowledgements of my leadership or my achievements, and no trace of any professional respect for my role in the school and community.

In my community focus group interview I asked participants how, as a community, they felt they had received information during that time, and how they had kept up with what was happening? This conversation followed:

¹⁹ Email copied to me from John Robson, NZEI, to Andrew Hampton, Ministry of Education, dated 3 April, 2014.

*We couldn't even have a meeting ay because of that b....
Commissioner. (BG, Community member, 2017)*

*No, we couldn't have a meeting. The newsletters were just
nothing, there was nothing in them. Our newsletters had always
been full of what the kids were doing, what events were coming
up, what events had gone past. (LM, Educator, 2017)*

*Yeah, he controlled those. Now we just had a photo of him sitting
at his desk. (PE, Community member, 2017)*

*It [the newsletter] had to be scrutinised by him before it was even
sent out (PE, Community member, 2017)*

***Keri: Did you guys know that at the time, or did it just feel to you
like these are not the same?***

We found out later (BM, Community member, 2017)

*But you could just sense it in the newsletter, that that wasn't the
school's, that wasn't from the school. (LM, Educator, 2017)*

Keri: So as a community you knew we weren't allowed to
communicate with you?

*If I told anybody something I would say, Don't tell everybody
because it's not just me whose job is on the line, it's Keri's, so if
you say something, Keri is going to be fired. (LM, Educator, 2017)*

*You are exactly right there, because when I signed those
documents, you were on the chopping block, we got told. ... we
had to be mindful of that. (BM, Community member, 2017)*

During the intervention at Moerewa School, there were many well-meaning Principals and colleagues who had much to suggest and advise. There was only a handful of supporters who would just listen and offer only their empathetic ear. Most wanted to be helpful by making suggestions about things that you “should” do. Many could not possibly begin to understand the complexity of the situation from my perspective as the Principal and educational leader of the school. Most times I would answer a question about how things were going at school with a one sentence, surface level, general answer. To tell the story about whichever current situation I was dealing with, meant that there needed to be two or three “background” stories told to set the context. There was a very small group of

professional colleagues outside of the school, with whom I shared the full and “real” story. Most other professionals really only had time for a short version of the truth. This often left me feeling professionally isolated as I listened to other Principal colleagues at professional gatherings talking about the difficult situations they were facing in their schools, and feeling there was little understanding of my situation. I remember feeling that from that point on, I would think very carefully before offering advice and guidance to others, in situations that I had not experienced firsthand.

In the online survey there were also comments from respondents who were staff at Moerewa School during the time of the Statutory Intervention. They spoke about the personal impact the intervention had on them.

I was still suffering from effects of an illness so this added stress and emotional upheaval did not allow me to heal and my physical and mental health deteriorated although I tried to carry on regardless. But things deteriorated even more and I had to retire early for medical reasons. I am still very angry over the whole fiasco because our whānau were so badly treated as was our Principal. (LM, Educator, 2017)

It also brought with it a degree of shame even though we had nothing to be ashamed of. Many of us were ill during the worst of it. Those of us who eventually left have moved on to jobs that allow us to continue to bring what we learned in our time at Moerewa School. It's hard though not to be bitter sometimes. (PK, Educator, 2017)

Physically, spiritually and mentally. The trauma was such that I cannot speak about it without feeling emotional and tearful. The impact was immense and will remain with me forever. When something this big impacts your life and the lives of those in a community in which you were born, raised and educated in, it is huge. (HM, Educator, 2017)

The Impact on Principal colleagues

I was also able to connect with other Northland Principals to explore the impact on them personally, or on the profession in more general terms, as a result of the intervention at Moerewa School. I was able to gather data using the online survey

and also by conducting an interview with two Northland Principals. Both of these data sets revealed comments from Principals that I was not aware of at the time of the Intervention. It is clear that while these Principals were not actively involved in the intervention, it weighed on their minds, and they have carefully considered how the situation at Moerewa School could impact on their school, their community and themselves as Principals.

It made me hesitate to challenge the Ministry. I felt as if any challenge or opinion of mine which might be different from the Ministry line would result in some form of punishment for my school such as intervention similar to Moerewa. (YR, Educator, 2017)

For those that I knew personally the impact was also intense. These close colleagues talked about feeling helpless during the Statutory Intervention at Moerewa School, and not knowing how to be able to help.

By the time it happened we were quite used to seeing Keri in the media. Out in front. I also felt helpless, in shock. It was unfair. We saw BTAC fall apart. It made us aware of our vulnerability. To be careful, wary, to this day. What happened to you has made us all gun-shy. We saw you as 'the last standing'. It made us question ourselves. How strong are my beliefs? What would I stand up for? (OL, Educator, 2017)

Summary of Theme Group 3

To have others share their deep feelings with me, has been a privilege. When listening to the recollections shared by community members, staff who worked with me during the intervention, and by the students themselves, we have all been able to appreciate our collective understanding by way of a look of empathy, a sigh, a nod of acknowledgement that we were in this together.

The overwhelming outcome of the analysis of evidence in this group of themes is the feeling of total disempowerment, of being relegated to become spectators in a game none of the participants had initiated, none knew the rules to, and where there was no chance of a positive outcome. There were no winners in this game as the impact on the different “players” has shown. In my summary to the community

hui in July I made the following comments, which I believe the data in this section have confirmed:

The intervention was unfair, it was unjust, it was unnecessary.
That's why we are all together now. If it was right, we wouldn't be feeling the way we do. I wondered if anyone even still cared, then I heard about this hui – we all care. This is a chance for us all to talk, then find a way to move forward. Let's not forget what happened, but this story doesn't define us.

Theme Group 4: Personal and Professional

This section opens up the question, "What lessons can be learned from this experience?" It presents the data gathered from other Principals with similar experiences of interventions and their personal and professional stories provide validity for the findings from the Moerewa experience. The full answer to this question, suggests different approaches to school support from the lessons learned in these interventions, and is the topic of Chapter 8.

The experiences of other Principals

Investigating the Moerewa intervention experience, has given me the opportunity to reflect again about the personal impact of the Statutory Intervention at Moerewa School. Because of my own involvement in an intervention that developed a high public profile, I found that other Principals were willing to share their personal experiences of similar interventions. This insider perspective is a clear gap in our understanding. In this section I have gathered the voices of other Principals involved in statutory interventions. Our reflections are very similar and very consistent.

Four former Principals who had various Statutory Interventions in their schools from 2012 to 2017, took part in an online survey as part of this study. Three had a Limited Statutory Manager appointed in the school. In one of these cases the Limited Statutory Manager was then upgraded to a Commissioner after 12 months. One had two Specialist Advisors in the school, that again resulted in a

Commissioner being appointed. From these respondents there were many parallels to the situation at Moerewa School. Two of these cases were as highly public as the Moerewa experience, although the four schools had very few other attributes in common—two were primary, two were secondary, Moerewa was decile one, rural, and predominantly Māori in the Far North of the country, the other four schools were deciles six, eight, nine, and ten respectively, and in the South Island. What makes the two high profile cases important is that both Principals, at enormous personal cost, fought and won their legal cases against the Ministry of Education for wrongful dismissal after a statutory intervention. This fact separates these two examples out from what might be perceived as confining my search to cases with similar circumstances to Moerewa, in that they had an outcome which provides legal evidence of unjustifiable actions from the intervention.

I also met with a Principal who is conducting doctoral research, initiated by her own experience of having a Commissioner in her school, and interviewing other Principals with similar experiences. (Cook, 2016). In these cases the statutory intervention was requested by the Principals or Boards of Trustees. While there were some similar outcomes, including a lack of transparency after the arrival of the Commissioner or Limited Statutory Manager, this situation is different from having an intervention imposed, with little forewarning and little understanding of the purpose of the intervention. The Moerewa experience highlighted the impact on school leaders of this type of intervention, and my investigation has exposed the gap in our understanding of this impact—on school leaders, staff, community, and students. For this reason I have chosen to focus on the stories of schools and interventions that will contribute to our knowledge in these types of cases.

In the following section names have been coded to ensure anonymity, and those who originally chose not to be identified are referred to as “Survey Respondent.”

The purpose of the interventions

At Moerewa School, the purpose of the Intervention was never made clear at the outset. Two of the respondents in my survey to Principals who had been involved in statutory interventions also talked about not being sure of the purpose of the interventions in their schools.

The purpose was never made clear to me as Principal; although it was under the guise of 'Communication and Employment' which was a cover for 'get rid of and destroy the Principal'. I was told by the MOE senior advisor that I would be given an opportunity to contribute to the scoping that went to the minister. When I rang to say I was ready to do this I was told, 'we have enough now thanks'. (Survey Respondent A)

Said it was for student well being but there was no evidence of any students at risk. (Survey Respondent B)

This was not dissimilar to the situation at Moerewa School as my description of the events in Chapter 4, and evidence in the previous section explains. Another respondent had experienced a similar battle to get information regarding the purpose of the intervention at her school:

I had to submit official information act requests to get any details of the anonymous complaints ERO and the MOE said they had. These were refused over and over and finally all I got was redacted information (CM, Educator, 2017).

Could there be other motivations?

There has always been a belief between professional colleagues, Moerewa community members, and other members of the public who spoke to me, that there must be some other reason for the intervention to be imposed on the School. Similar feelings were consistently raised by staff and community in the focus group interviews I conducted, and is also discussed by Principal participants in the online survey. An example of this is captured below from the online survey for Principals who had statutory interventions imposed at their school:

I was a staunch leader of the BTAC group - Boards Taking Action Coalition. I was also a very vocal opponent of National Standards.

My BOT refused to implement national standards. I was involved in an attack by Cameron Slater (Whaleoil Blogger) who was paid by the National Government to personally attack my credibility and professionalism following a Facebook Post in which I referred to Anne Tolley as reflecting the Nazi Germany dictatorship in that she ignored the BTAC proposal and petition. I was also a member of the NZPF and actively involved in opposing the Governments policy direction. I was oiled a number of times on this bloggers site as well as Kiwi Blog. I was a target identified in a group of strong Principals leading the resistance to the Government policy. (CM, Educator, 2017)

In an interview with two Northland Principals they talked about their belief that there were other motivations for the intervention at Moerewa School.

[The intervention was] Massively over the top! I point the finger directly at Hekia Parata. It became personal from her, Hira [Gage], Karen Poutasi, and then the Commissioner. Picking off ,one by one, of the BTAC Principals. (CR, Educator, 2017)

Comments like these were common during the intervention. I would always dispute them as who could possibly imagine that the Minister of Education would know who Keri Milne-Ihimaera even was? Surely she had much more important things to focus on? To be fair to Minister Hekia Parata, the same comments had been made about the previous Minister of Education, Anne Tolley and Moerewa School. In an article in the *New Zealand Herald*, on 21 November, 2011, the then Labour Associate Education spokesman Kelvin Davis said the decision by Minister Tolley to not approve the Moerewa School application to extend the years able to be taught in the school, had become personal:

Labour's Associate Education spokesman Kelvin Davis says Ms Tolley's decision to close the highly successful programme for Māori students is an 'act of spite' because the school's Principal has been a vocal critic of National Standards.

Her decision has nothing to do with Māori achievement, nothing to do with a Māori community's aspiration for its children, but everything to do with a spiteful minister. It's become personal. (Tapaleao, 2011)

From my own experience, I should have expected that the writings of professional colleagues who had been involved in statutory interventions in their schools, would also be raw and powerful. However, their stories have still come as a shock. One of the most challenging sets of data for me to read has been the feedback about the personal impact a statutory intervention has had on the Principals involved. It has become clear that it has not only been in Moerewa School where the personal impact on people has been significant.

I wonder if policy writers and decision makers in Wellington worry about the impact of a statutory intervention on the people involved? I have no doubt that the decision to impose some kind of statutory intervention in a school is not taken lightly, and it is expected that the rationale for these decisions will primarily be about ensuring that the best interests of the children in the school. In my experience I have never met a Principal or teacher who would dispute this rationale, or who doesn't also have the best interests of children as their main motivation for the work they do. In fact one could argue that teachers have a greater sense of responsibility to act in the best interests of children, when you know their names, their interests, when you see them each day, and when you are accountable to their parents and wider family on a daily basis, over policy writers who look at the best interests of children without any of this knowledge. When Principals and teachers write such profound statements about the negative effects they have endured as a result of an intervention in their school, we must understand the personal and professional impact this has on them, as well as on community they serve and the wider teaching profession.

I sent an invitation to participate to many Principals who I knew had had an Intervention in their school. This text message below was typical of a number of respondents:

Hi Keri. I did start the survey for you but got so upset reading the questions I had to stop... the thought of writing it all down was overwhelming ... it's two years this week since I left and I still feel broken. I will try again if you send the link but I've tried so hard to

forget and move on that it's like opening a wound... I'm not sure if I can do it. (Name withheld by request, 2017)

I'm sitting here crying even thinking about it. I was diagnosed with clinical depression 6 months after I resigned by a psychiatrist and saw a psychologist for 6 months. I'm on anti-depressants and I've lost confidence in myself, my teaching and am a shell of the person I was. (Name withheld by request, 2017).

Those who were able to complete the survey also told of these major medical impacts and personal trauma:

My physical health deteriorated - I weighed 60kg in February 2014 and in November 2014 I weighed 51kg. My mental health deteriorated - I had to be medicated by my doctor for acute anxiety and clinical depression. I lived 45km away from town on our farm and was therefore physically and geographically isolated in every way. I suffered personal humiliation and a loss of self-esteem. To win my case for Unjustified Dismissal cost \$123,000 and I will not recoup that loss. I have not worked in education since my suspension in April 2015. I went from an annual salary of \$190,000 to nothing overnight. I had to access my superannuation to pay my court costs and live on my savings while I regain my health. (BP, Educator, 2017)

Ongoing PTSD problems for myself, my wife and also my family. We are coming through this now but still suffer from anxiety. We have lost approximately \$200,000 of savings and a massive amount of personal income which I would have generated as a Principal moving forward had this not happened. (Survey Respondent A, 2017)

The impact on my life professionally was devastating, I went from being a member of the NZPF National Executive, the Southland Primary Principals executive and the Invercargill primary Principals executive to being isolated at home on home detention. Excluded from all professional networks, I was treated worse than convicted criminals, without a conviction, just an air of suspicion and innuendo. The impact on my whānau was equally devastating, we lost many friends, we discovered real friends and not. My closest friend and colleague of many years distanced herself and eventually disappeared, it felt like I had a contagious disease. We were bankrupted by this process, we spent \$350,000 to defend this, this ensured that I retained my full teaching registration finally. My Principal insurance was \$25K Anderson Lloyd granted us \$30K pro bono work, this is on top of the \$350,000 we spent of

our own money. A Give a Little page started by my employing BOT Chair raised \$5000. (CM, Educator, 2017)

Professional suicide. I either took their pathetic payoff and resigned or stayed to what looked like an absolute certainty they would sack me. Whilst my lawyer felt I would win a constructive dismissal case, I wanted to avoid the publicity, shame and risk losing my teacher registration so I agreed and walked away. Can not get any jobs due to the intervention and ERO report. (Survey Respondent B, 2017)

This survey respondent also highlights the cost to the Ministry of Education when they are engaged in legal battles with Principals involved in Statutory Interventions.

The MOE spent I believe in excess of \$750K they had four lawyers involved, they appealed every time we won. They appealed the costs decision. They were determined to drive us until we had no finances left. We went from mortgage free with retirement savings to no equity left in our home and all retirement savings spent to fight this legal battle. (CM, Educator, 2017)

This is also reflected in the *Listener* article in 2016, *What Really Happened at Rangiora High School?*

For Peggy Burrows, that pathway has been cut abruptly short. With lawyer Richard Harrison (who represented Christchurch Girls' High School Principal Prue Taylor when she was sacked in 2012), Burrows will challenge her dismissal. (Blundell, 2016)

Summary of Theme Group 4

This final group of themes has used the voices and experiences of other Principals whose schools, professional careers, and personal lives have been altered, in some cases, devastated by an imposed Statutory Intervention. In most cases, these were experienced, effective Principals. Their schools did not fit the Hawk (2008) picture of schools "in decline" but seemed to have drawn the attention of education officials for other reasons. They do not fit the commonly held idea of "failing" leaders of struggling schools. In fact, these were high profile leaders whose leadership had been acknowledged by professional colleagues in their election to representative roles within the sector. They had the experience, and credibility, and yet they found themselves in situations none of them could have predicted,

through a process, and in a situation, that did not work. All would ask, some years on from the different interventions, how their respective schools have changed, and how any changes are “better” than pre-intervention, did the interventions work? In these cases the answer would be an emphatic, no.

Conclusion

Moerewa School, the students of the Senior Class, the staff, and the wider community have spoken in this chapter. Their voices have described how Moerewa School supported the community’s aspirations for relevant education, as Māori? They have clearly identified the role institutional barriers impacted on the realisation of the community’s dream. In particular the issue of power and control over a rural, Māori community who had dared to think they could be different has been named and described. The voices analysed in this chapter make it very evident that the intervention at Moerewa was unsuccessful. It did not achieve what the community wanted, and it did not achieve the Ministry of Education’s goals for “better” learning outcomes for the small group of students it targeted. In fact, it sent most of these students out of education, disempowered by the process. It did not shift the students to the local college the Ministry decreed was a better option.

The next chapter moves on to the third of the key research questions to propose an alternative process from the lessons learned in Moerewa and other schools who experienced similar interventions.

Chapter Eight: The Way Forward

If you always do what you have always done, you will always get what you have always got. (Moerewa Community Submission, 2003)

Introduction

The previous chapter presented the findings of this research and analysed the impact of the Statutory Intervention on the students, the staff, and the community. It outlined how the aspirations from the Moerewa community for their school and community, were slowly but surely eroded away, until there was little of “the dream” left evident in any of the school’s organisation, philosophy or practice. It also described the impact of interventions on other Principals in different schools and in other parts of the country. This chapter draws on this experience, and proposes a different way to approach the issues of schools needing support.

Time has passed between my active involvement in the situation that unfolded at Moerewa School, to now no longer being directly linked to the community or the school, and this distance has provided the opportunity for everyone to fully reflect about what occurred during that time. The final section of Chapter 7 considered the theme of a way forward and opened up the final key research question, “What lessons can be learned from this experience?” The comparative experiences of other Principals who had been involved in statutory interventions were discussed. This chapter continues to answer this critique about what can be learned and what could have been done differently. Other new questions have arisen for example:

- What would we suggest as a different model of educational and schooling provision for Māori that provides more success and does not simply reproduce a system that is continuing to disproportionately fail Māori students?
- How could a different approach be used by the Government and officials when dealing with Māori communities – with particular sensitivity to understanding the social, economic, cultural, political and power differentials in play?

- How could official engagement with small schools be undertaken in better ways, that look after and protect community interests, and honour the government promises of more parental influence through Boards of Trustees and involvement in developing community aspirations within long term planning goals, teaching strategies and community cooperation?
- How could you ensure a much broader view of achievement is used to measure the success of an intervention in a school?
- How might a process of co-constructing solutions between Officials and the school and its community be undertaken, without having the solutions pre-determined by Officials without full and proper consultation and engagement?
- Where is the place for a community voice to determine the pathway for its children, and the direction of its school?

There was no doubting the enormous effort, research, thinking, discussion and wānanga that went into creating the Moerewa community's hopes and dreams for the education of their children. Community powerhouses reminded us of the wisdom, the foresight, the courage, the intergenerational connections and accountabilities, and the solutions that can come when good people get together, motivated to make a sustainable difference in their own community. Previous chapters have also outlined the negative impacts that Government policy, national education direction and ultimately State intervention had on the school and community, and the people concerned.

The difference in philosophy between local solutions for local people and national direction being imposed using a 'one size fits all' approach, are evident. This chapter attempts to reclaim the hope, the positivity, the excitement and the vision that was so grounded in the original Moerewa Community Campus submission to the Education Minister in 2003. The intention is to re-center these values to provide a positive pathway for the school, its students, and the community. A pathway that does not simply close off this sorry period in the school's history, but one that resurrects the community and their school's courage to continue to reject an education and schooling approach managed by the State that persistently fails them in comparatively high and disproportionate numbers, and does not align with their community aspirations.

Intervention versus Support

As outlined in Chapter Four, as a result of amendments to the Education Act in 2017, there are now nine different statutory interventions that can be used to support the different situations and issues Schools and Kura may face. These are:

1. Requirement to provide information
2. Specialist help
3. Action plan
4. Case conference
5. Specialist audit
6. Performance notice
7. Appointment of an additional trustee, who may also be the presiding trustee, by Minister
8. Limited Statutory Manager
9. Commissioner

These interventions would be applied to schools where the Minister of Education or Secretary for Education perceives that there is a risk to the operation of an individual school, or to the welfare or educational performance of its students. A school's Board, or proprietors in an integrated school, may also request an intervention. The Minister of Education or the Secretary for Education has to approve an intervention. The Ministry of Education provides these examples of operational risk to schools, or risk to student welfare that would invoke a Statutory Intervention:

Risk to the operation of a school. This could include financial management issues, personnel management and/or asset management, poor planning, policy setting and reporting to parents, poor community relationships and not complying with legislation.

Risk to student welfare. This could include inadequate policies and practices to ensure student welfare, health and safety, persistently high truancy rates, and high suspension, exclusion and expulsion rates. When a critical incident relating to student welfare and safety occurs at a school, a statutory intervention may be put in place to assist the school with managing the crisis.

Risk to the educational performance of the school's students includes inadequate curriculum management, absence

of adequate policies and processes for student assessment, staffing issues that may influence student performance, persistently low student achievement in relation to comparable schools, and low achievement of particular groups within the school. (Ministry of Education, 2017b)

A list of agencies and sector groups providing early support options (Table 21) for all the areas involved in running a School or Kura, from health and safety advice, to finance and legal matters are provided by the Ministry of Education.

Table 21: Sector support for Schools and Kura

(Ministry of Education, 2017c)

	SPANZ 20	PPTA 21	NZEI 22	NZSTA 23	TE AKATEA 24	NZPF 25	NZAIMS 26	ERO 27
Internal or external evaluation				*				*
Health and safety		*	*	*				
Human resources	*	*	*	*				
Achievement Māori education		*	*		*	*		
Governance	*			*				
Leadership	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Finance	*			*				
Community and whānau engagement				*	*			
Legal	*	*	*	*		*		

The Ministry of Education also suggests using evaluation tools from the Education Review Office and NZ School Trustees Association to help identify areas where a School/Kura might need support. The Ministry states that “transparency and early engagement are key principles underpinning the Ministry’s stewardship role in

²⁰ Secondary Principals’ Association of New Zealand

²¹ Post Primary Teachers’ Association

²² New Zealand Education Institute

²³ New Zealand School Trustees Association

²⁴ New Zealand Māori Principals’ Association

²⁵ New Zealand Principals’ Federation

²⁶ New Zealand Association of Intermediate and Middle Schools

²⁷ Education Review Office

supporting Schools and Kura” and explains an “inquiry approach” using Education Advisers who will work with a school (Figure 9).

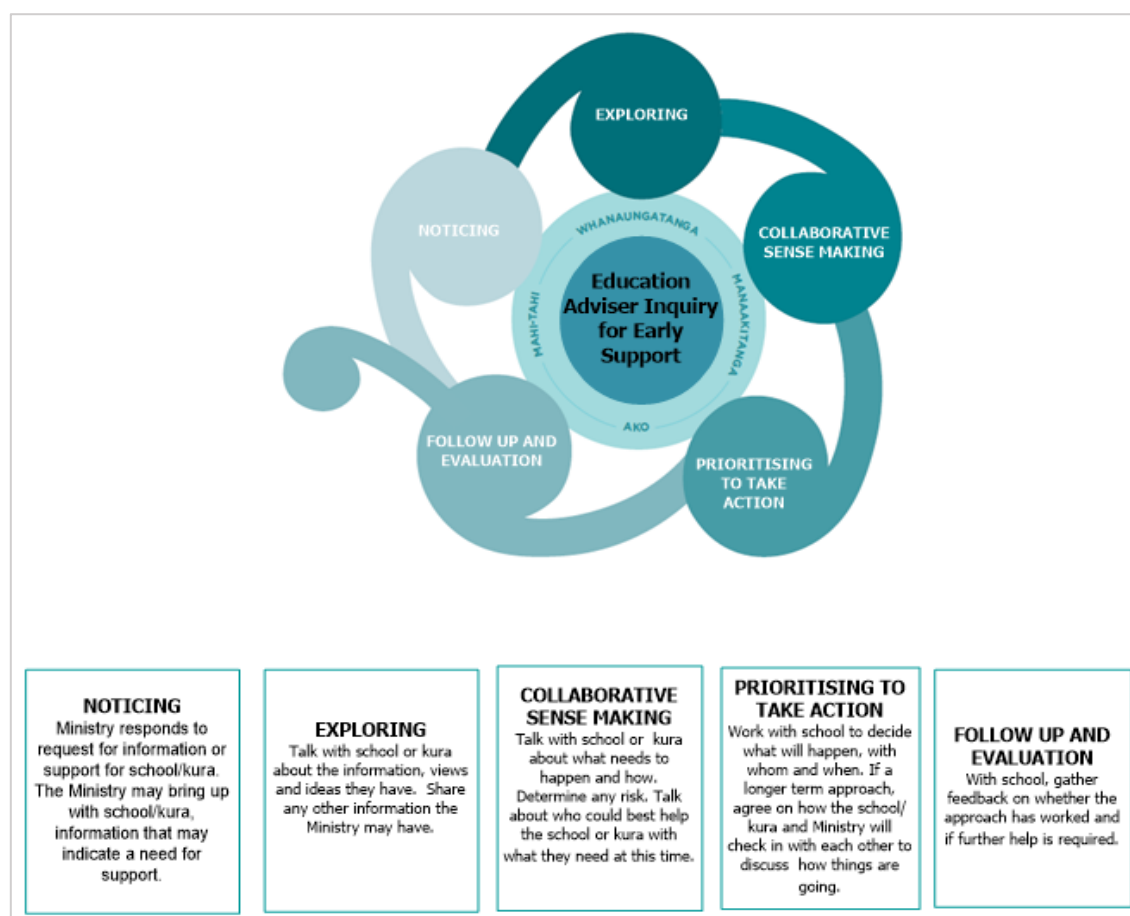


Figure 9: Ministry of Education "Inquiry Approach"
(Ministry of Education, 2017c)

At first glance there seems to be an array of options for schools that are struggling or require support. However, it is important to restate and re-emphasise the fundamental issue that the Moerewa School situation exposed, which is, that none of these processes or guidelines for intervention actually happened in the context of Moerewa School.

Firstly, Moerewa School was not acting illegally. When the Satellite Class was set up between Moerewa School and Kia Aroha College, the school was acting within the legislation at the time. The legislation previously stated that setting up an Attached Unit or a Satellite Class was an arrangement between two Boards of Trustees that

didn't require Ministry of Education approval. Moerewa School had done this a number of times with other schools, and during all of those arrangements the Ministry of Education had funded staffing and administration costs each year following the annual Roll Return process. It was never illegal, as accusations from the Minister and Ministry had suggested, and these arrangements were never outside the legislation. It was only when the Education Act was amended in May 2017, that setting up an Attached Unit or Satellite Class had to now have the permission of the Ministry of Education. We had also conceded the National Standards battle. Our 2012 Moerewa School Charter had included National Standards targets, and was accepted as being compliant by the Ministry. This meant that by April 2012 when the Board of Trustees were sacked, we were acting within the legislation that required schools to set targets against National Standards.

If we look at the lower level, inquiry approach, outlined in Figure 9, none of this support was offered to Moerewa School. There are many emails from Moerewa School to Ministry of Education local, regional and national staff, that confirm the school's requests for visits and support. In numerous emails to both Anne Tolley, and to Hekia Parata the school specifically suggested that our programme could be a pilot initiative, and invited Ministry of Education staff visit to see what was happening at the school. This never occurred.

This again brings up the question about the reason for the Statutory Intervention at Moerewa School. If the school was working within the legislation, why was the heaviest of penalties imposed? If the issue was concern for the welfare of senior students, as the school was refusing to close their class and send them on to another school, again this is a moot point. The NZQA audit of 84% of the student's work, shows that even after such scrutiny there is agreement with 73% of the grades the students were awarded. We have been unable to find other examples where NZQA has audited such a high percentage of students' work and it warrants speculation that if other schools would have had to provide this many examples of students' work for moderating and auditing by an external agency, would they have achieved a better result?

Māori Member of Parliament for Waiariki, The Hon. Te Ururoa Flavell, put this question to Hekia Parata, Minister of Education, in Parliament on 3 May, 2012: “Have New Zealand Qualifications Authority audits of any other schools reviewed a sample as big as 85 percent of student results, as was done at Moerewa; if so, what were the results?”

The Minister’s response, which does not directly answer the question, states the situation is “unique,” that occasionally there has been intensive sampling of a class or department, but this is “rather rare.” This would seem to imply that the answer to Flavell’s question is no.

The process followed by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority in relation to Kia Aroha College’s unsanctioned satellite class at Moerewa is a response to a unique situation. The satellite class at Moerewa has been acting illegally, and the results that it claimed it was achieving were dramatically different on the evidence of the audit. When normal processes identify specific concerns, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority formulates a response that best fits the circumstances, whether it be for a school, a particular department, or a year group. On occasions there has been intensive sampling of results of a class or a department within a school when there have been serious concerns. Fortunately, this is rather rare. (Parata, 2012)

If the Ministry of Education’s concern was for the welfare and the educational outcomes of the students, why was their recommendation to parents, actively encouraged by the Commissioner, that they transfer their children to a school that had NCEA pass rates that were amongst the lowest in the country? If this was a grave concern for the Minister and Ministry of Education, the students were being farewelled on the day the Board of Trustees was sacked and, less than four weeks later, were no longer on site at Moerewa School. With no other areas of concern about Moerewa School ever highlighted previously in Education Review Office reports, or any other formal documents to Moerewa School, how is it possible that the Commissioner needed to be in the school for two years, one month, and seventeen days?

Hawk (2008) investigated the issues with Statutory Intervention in the context of failing schools or schools in decline. Chapter Four has discussed her work in more depth, however Hawk's research suggests that Statutory Intervention is necessary in these situations, even though she writes that once decline begins in a school, it escalates and is difficult to stop. She identifies potential predictors in school decline and provides insights for school leaders and educational agencies that may assist in the prediction and prevention of school decline in the future (p. 92).

This thesis contributes to the academic body of work on statutory interventions, by telling the story from the perspective of an insider, to challenge the idea that a Statutory Intervention is a positive move, or in fact that it is necessary in all school cases where an intervention has been imposed, and to suggest an alternative to interventions in schools in the future.

What would have helped?

The Final Report and Recommendations to the Minister of Education in the *Review of Statutory Interventions in State and State Integrated Schools* (2014c) outlines a number of reoccurring themes that emerged from the submissions received as part of the overall review process. The report states: "Overall the sector had concerns about the perceived lack of transparency, partnership and collaboration, and trust between the Ministry and the other agencies in relation to the statutory intervention process (Ministry of Education, 2014c).

This review was sector led, and was made up from Ministry of Education officials, nine different sector representation groups, and four experienced statutory appointees. It was chaired by Katrina Casey, Deputy Secretary for Education, Sector Enablement and Support. However it is difficult to see how the recommendations made in the final report (p. 33) about transparency, partnership and collaboration have been actioned in the amendments to the Education Act in May 2017, or if any of those recommendations have resulted in changes to the Statutory Intervention

process. As identified in Chapter Four, the latest changes in Education Act now mean there are more ways for the Ministry of Education to be involved in a school.

This feedback in the “review and recommendations” stage of the Report, is consistent with the main areas that caused the most frustration during the Statutory Intervention at Moerewa School. Added to this list identified in the Report, was a definite move away from the key school philosophies and practice that had been well researched and deliberately designed to be different, in order to effect better outcomes for Māori students. The actions and processes that would have helped the most in the Moerewa School situation are discussed next.

Information sharing

Right from the first meeting between myself and the Commissioner, there was a lack of information. I was constantly requesting information on behalf of the school, rather than information being readily provided as a matter of course during the intervention. The examples already shared in previous chapters include the Memorandum of Understanding that outlined what the Commissioner was there to achieve, and which was not provided until an Official Information Act request was lodged by a lawyer, on my behalf. Why was this not the first piece of information that was given at the first meeting, so that there was clarity about the activities of the Commissioner in the school? There was no requirement for the Commissioner to share any regular written updates with myself or the staff. There were examples when we met and worked with professional agencies who had been brought in by the Commissioner, that meetings had already occurred and plans had already been decided without our input.

The issues about a lack of information and transparency during other Statutory Interventions at other schools have been highlighted at Moerewa and elsewhere, as is confirmed by events at Rangiora High School. Rangiora community member, Paul Finch, started an online petition calling for a judicial review of the intervention process at Rangiora High School, that resulted in Principal, Peggy Burrows, losing

her job. In an article in the *North Canterbury News* on 23rd November 2017, he states his concerns and argues that the intervention did not follow a “clear and transparent process”, which resulted in the dismissal of Mrs Burrows in March last year. (Bristow, 2017)

If information had been shared regularly at Moerewa School, it would have quickly established the tasks that the Commissioner was focused on achieving, and we would have been able to contribute to the achievement of those goals. It also would have assisted with building a professional relationship between myself and the Commissioner, and the Commissioner and the rest of the staff. It could have assisted with deflecting the emotion that the school was feeling, by having a set of objectives and tasks that we could have focused on achieving.

Erosion of Moerewa’s *Special Character*

One area that became a major issue early on, and continued throughout the length of the intervention was Moerewa School’s ‘way of doing things’, its special character, versus a more traditional approach to the delivery of mainstream education. Moerewa School had examined and interrogated every aspect of our school’s practice and pedagogy to redesign the school’s organisation and curriculum delivery, to deliver better outcomes for Māori students. We had utilised national and international research on culturally responsive and Māori-responsive pedagogies (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Delpit, 2006; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Smith, 1995) to inform our decision making. Staff were engaged in action research and there was a deliberate process of self-reflection and self-review in the school. The roll at Moerewa School was 99% Māori. Our curriculum was located within our community context. We had two non-negotiable questions that we used as a checkpoint for teachers to consider:

1. What is the Social Justice element to this unit of work?
2. What is Ngāti Hine’s position on this unit of work?

If teachers could not clearly answer those two questions relating to their unit of work, we did not teach it. There were no units of work on topics that were not based on our Moerewa children's realities and culture. We were firmly grounded in the aspirations set by our community, and saw the school's organisation and curriculum delivery as areas where we could bring a Māori world view to all decision making. This was highly unusual in a Mainstream school setting and was a celebrated accomplishment by the school, staff and community. Teacher, Kim Peita, explained this philosophy on the social media site "Save the Senior Class at Moerewa School" when she listed the topics, contexts, and activities covered by the students in the Senior Class, in addition to and in supplementing, their NCEA studies:

With the support of the wider school, whānau and community we achieved stunning results that we, our students and whānau remain proud of. We also know that NCEA is only a small part of our success. Here are some of our other proud achievements:

- We have student Poutahi, Pourua, Poutoru and Pourima (Mau Rākau gradings 1, 2, 3 and 5)
- We were present at Pā Horehore when five from Tai Tokerau graded Pouwaru (Grade 8 – the highest grade)
- We have 20 Duke of Edinburgh students moving into their Silver Medal awards this year
- We have students on the Northland Youth Council
- We have dived the Poor Knights Islands
- We were on the waka at the opening of the Rugby World Cup
- We have kayaked our awa
- We spoke to the council about the pollution (and they said "it's not the sewage that gets into the river, it's the river that gets into the sewerage"!)
- We attended the Te Paparahi o te Raki hearings to listen to the korero and do the dishes, set the tables and sweep the floors
- Students have performed at Tai Tokerau Festival, Polyfest, Te Matatini and now the Queen's 60th Jubilee in London next month
- We have hiked to Kaitoki and Whangamumu

- We have won the Tai Tokerau *Pasifika Smokefree Beats* competition with 5 days practice
- We have worked with the NZ Music Commission and Laughton Kora
- We have listened to Dr Jeff Duncan-Andrade, Assistant Professor, San Francisco State University at our own marae
- We have made it to the finals of the *Outlook for Someday* film competition
- We won Junior English at Manu Korero the first time we ever entered
- We have hosted Auckland University Medical students, Auckland University Māori Students' Association and Massey University Māori at our school

There is clear evidence that this 'deliberately different' school philosophy was well documented and shared by the school in a number of the official documents sent to the Ministry of Education. Examples included the initial Change of Status Application to the Ministry of Education in 2007, and in the follow up Extend the Range of Year Levels application (that was ultimately declined) in 2011, which both made the strong point that what we were offering was designed to look at how we could ensure better outcomes for Māori students within a mainstream school setting. We were unapologetic about our difference. The ERO review of Moerewa School in 2009 commented:

The school acknowledges and celebrates Ngāti Hinetanga. Whakawhanaungatanga is the basis of the school's organisation and practices. The values of atawhai, tū pono, mahingatahi, manaakitanga, wairuatanga and rangatiratanga are strongly reflected in school practices. This acknowledgement of Māori values supports the identity of Māori students and enables non-Māori to develop shared cultural understandings.

The school's education philosophy genuinely reflects and embraces the Ministry of Education Ka Hikitia education strategy, designed to enable Māori students to achieve and to realise their cultural distinctiveness and potential. The school's holistic view of learning is whānau-based and the community was involved in the development of the school's strategic goal of encouraging Māori students to achieve success as Māori. (Education Review Office, 2009)

With this philosophy and practice so embedded in Moerewa School it is not surprising that when a range of Ministry of Education Professional Learning and

Development advisors, Student Achievement Function practitioners, Senior Advisors from the Ministry of Education, and Education Review Office reviewers all came into the school in a very condensed period of time, it was difficult to find any of them who had any experience that affirmed the established school direction. All advice seemed to be intended to get us to return to the established tradition of prioritising reading, writing and mathematics teaching, and learning how to assess these. This was a very narrow and Euro-centric approach and one geared towards standardisation. Our professional knowledge in these areas was often not valued, and we often felt that the reviewers and advisors could learn a lot from our culturally responsive school model. Slowly, but surely, our existing school approach was eroded away.

In a British study of four comprehensive schools, Fletcher, Caron and Williams, (1985) found, “As part of the accountability measures, there were times when the study schools were over-evaluated. The literature provides examples of other schools that suffered, “overlapping periods of trial by media, trial by ordeal and trial by inspection”. (Fletcher, Caron and Williams, 1985, cited in Hawk, 2008, p. 249). The same is found here in New Zealand with the ERO reports on *Strengthening Education in Mangere and Otara* (1996); the East Coast (1997); and the Far North (ERO, 1998). The process of ERO naming and shaming is also well traversed in the literature (Thrupp, 1998; Smith & Thrupp, 1999 and Smith, 2002a & 2002b).

This was certainly consistent with the experience at Moerewa School. If there had been advisers or experts in the pedagogy being practiced in the school, and if the intervention was focused on how the school’s philosophy could be maintained and further enhanced, this would have gone a long way to ensuring professional relationships were honoured and appreciated.

Professional Dialogue

It was also difficult to discuss professional matters with the Commissioner. One reason was that he did not have a teaching or education background, and would

always have to defer his decision until he consulted with the Ministry. Another reason was that because the school's direction and philosophy seemed to be in conflict with the Ministry of Education's position, the Commissioner was reluctant to initiate any discussions to help him understand the thinking behind the school's position. It felt as if we were perceived as trouble-makers or that we were being antagonistic if we disagreed or challenged Official's actions that contradicted the school and community's already agreed, research informed pedagogy.

Engaging in a more professional dialogue would have at least shown us that our professional and cultural expertise as those on the ground were appreciated, and considered by Officials, most of whom were located well away and outside of our community, iwi and regional context. If there had been time early on in the intervention for the Commissioner to learn about what was important at Moerewa School, and what were the reasons for the decisions we had previously made, this would have helped to establish a professional rapport and trust.

Independent Perspective

When there was disagreement between the school and the Commissioner it was difficult to reach any resolution because there was no one to go to, to make a complaint or talk through the situation. When I had a professional issue with the Commissioner setting the school budget, providing invoices for payment with no details, and disputing the amount of time he had been in the community (and therefore we were being invoiced for), I could not alert anyone of a potential issue, or access anyone to discuss my concerns with. No school Board of Trustees would ever set the budget and pay themselves a large amount from this budget each month, so it was a most unusual situation, and one with seemingly no checks or accountabilities. We had ERO visits in August 2013, then October 2013, and finally in April 2014, as part of the ongoing "Progress Visit/Paetawhiti" process. In the final 'Progress Report' reports, we would see statements about meetings and initiatives that the Commissioner had said he completed. There were times when elements of these statements were a complete surprise to us and needed to be disputed. Many

of the final recommendations in the ERO reports were items that the Commissioner had sole responsibility for. We questioned the length of time it had taken to initiate simple things, like setting up a new appraiser for the Principal. Why had this taken so long? What were the reasons for this not being achieved, which then contributed to ERO needing to come again to the school? Who could we put these critical questions to? Who could we complain to?

In a press release issued by Pat Newman in his capacity as the Tai Tokerau (Northland) Principals' Association President, he raised the issue of the length of time taken by the Commissioner to set up an Advisory Board, and given that questions were being asked in the community about whether or not these meetings had in fact taken place, he asked the following supplementary questions, "Who are the members of this Advisory group? How often have they met? What documentation exists to support such meetings and their decisions? Why is Mr Eru still there collecting an average of \$12,000.00 per month?" (Newman, 2013)

In the recommendations made in the Final Report: *Review of Statutory Interventions in State and State Integrated Schools* (2014c), there were suggestions about utilising an independent person to conduct the scoping exercise. This is mentioned in the "Issue identification and pre-statutory support" section of the Report (p. 11). In the section on "Reporting on the progress of an intervention" (p. 13) there is detail about how the statutory appointee must report to the Ministry of Education. There are suggestions of other ways of reporting (including using a video clip) and setting up monthly "Round table meetings" with all the agencies involved, including the Principal. This would be a positive move. There is nothing in the report that talks about strengthening the reporting from the statutory appointee to the Principal, or increasing the transparency of information that is being shared by the statutory appointee.

In the Moerewa situation, having an independent broker would have been a huge help. An independent person who would come into the school once a term could have helped keep both sides honest and accountable. The school felt powerless and

alone. The reality was that the Commissioner had the backing and the support of the entire Ministry of Education, and many of the independent agencies working with the Commissioner seemed determined to work in the school in ways decided by him, rather than by working on a co-constructed model of support. An independent person could have been able to advise us and give us some perspective on our own position if this had become overly entrenched for example. We also would have simply felt heard, if we had had a person we could talk to about some of the issues around transparency of information and reporting, that we felt were fundamentally wrong.

Greater understanding of community context

Moerewa School is a mainstream State school, and its philosophies and practices were grounded in a Māori world view. This reflected the mana whenua position of Ngāti Hine. The school had a 99% Māori roll. The Moerewa community had every right to feel that their long-held, and often expressed views about Māori-centred education were legitimate, in fact promised under the devolution of control to communities in Tomorrow's Schools. In fact, the Treaty of Waitangi, productive partnerships, and realising Māori potential are key guidelines of *Ka Hikitia*, the Government's vision for Māori education. It made no sense to the community, the staff, or professional colleagues that here was a community that had undertaken genuine and extensive consultation, that had developed a community-driven approach, that was keeping rangatahi Māori thoroughly engaged in learning and achieving, yet this was dismissed and negated by the Ministry process exerted through the power of the Commissioner. There was no credence given by any of the external agencies brought in by the Commissioner to this vitally important community and school context.

This section has described and highlighted the frustrations of the Statutory Intervention experience and has made suggestions about what might have worked better in the Moerewa School situation. The next section describes an alternative

approach developed by Tai Tokerau Māori Principals to support Principal colleagues in the area.

Aka Tokerau

From 2009 to 2012 I served as the president of the Executive of the Northland Māori Principals' Association, Aka Tokerau. Aka Tokerau was a branch of the National Māori Principals' Association, Te Akatea. Throughout this period, (and later continued by the work of the executive members and the incoming president) the executive of Aka Tokerau invested significant time and energy in growing the network of Māori Principals in Northland, so much so it became the largest Principals' group in the region. We worked hard to establish, grow, and maintain our credibility. We were involved in regional and national forums and were often called on by the Ministry of Education to help them when there were issues occurring in schools across the region. We nominated members to take on strategic roles in other national Principal Associations (Te Akatea and New Zealand Principals' Federation), and we were an active professional association. As an example of the work we were involved in and the attention our Association was getting at the time, the *Northern Advocate* ran a story on 29th June 2012, covering the invitation of one of our Executive team to join leading Australian and international indigenous educators at a ground-breaking conference in Australia on behalf of Aka Tokerau (Northland Māori Principals Association).

Mrs Otene is an executive member of Aka Tokerau, an organisation made up of 45 Northland Māori Principals and said the conference is a chance to share the work Aka Tokerau has achieved.

"There are fewer numbers of Aboriginal teachers in Australia compared to Māori teachers here in New Zealand. The conference is a chance to show how Aka Tokerau supports its Principals and how we have grown capability and leadership in our schools," said Mrs Otene. (Perenara, 2012)

At a school level Aka Tokerau was also heavily involved in offering informal Principal support. We worked closely with Māori Principals, and Boards of Trustees. We were

able to hear early about an issue a Principal was having, and assist her/him to work out the solution that suited them best. We were aware of the communities in Northland, and knew the dynamics of many of the relationships between the school and its community in those areas. We were able to work out which one of the executive membership would be the most appropriate to work with each school or each Principal. We asked ourselves, who knows this community best? Who knows the Principal best? What sort of approach might be needed in this situation? The priority was the positive outcome for the Principal or the school or the community. We were also able to work as a group, and there were times when as a group we would be involved in helping to “audit” the situation at a school, and work with the Principal to plan out the solution.

We were clear that we wanted to work with Māori Principals and schools before there was a problem with the Ministry of Education, or before more formal types of Ministry of Education support were needed. There were times where difficult conversations needed to be initiated with Principals who in our professional and experienced opinion, were not suited to the role. We set up discussions with Boards of Trustees who we felt were well intentioned, but may have been hindering the progress of a school.

We also learned a great deal in this support and advocacy role. We discussed our own bias and ways of doing things. We had to be careful not to impose our way of thinking and doing, on to a new Principal trying to run their school in a different way. We had to listen to the aspirations of the Principal and try to suggest solutions that were aligned with their vision for their school. We were relying on the goodwill of the Principal or Board of Trustees, as there was no formal relationship or programme of support. If what we were instigating with a Principal or board member was not working, they had every right to walk away and stop our informal support. This never occurred.

All of the Aka Tokerau executive were experienced Principals. Some had been working in Northland for a long time and had extensive professional and personal

networks. Many of the executive were also fulfilling formal Principal mentoring and support roles with programmes like the *First Time Principals' Programme*, operated by the University of Auckland. We had a balance of genders in the executive group. In Māori settings, the executive could fulfil professional and Māori cultural roles. This was important as all of the Principals we were working with were Māori, many of the Boards of Trustees were made up of Māori trustees, and most of the communities we were involved in supporting were predominantly Māori. The informal Aka Tokerau work was never easy, but it was always rewarding. We felt we were making a significant contribution to growing the professional Māori education leadership in schools in Northland.

In 2012 there was a new President of Aka Tokerau. I remained on the executive team. In September 2014, I left Moerewa School and took up employment outside of the primary schooling sector. The work of Aka Tokerau continued, however by this time the executive had lost some members of the core team who had made up this informal support team to other employment opportunities and Principal roles outside of Northland. In 2015 a smaller Aka Tokerau executive realised that the association was in fact still doing a large amount of Principal support in Northland, and felt they were warranted to make an approach to the Ministry of Education for formal support and resourcing to run this programme effectively.

An analysis was conducted by the Aka Tokerau executive of the schools who were members of Aka Tokerau in 2015. The analysis also covered the schools who had been members of Aka Tokerau for the previous six years. These findings come from their report and proposal to the Ministry of Education:

- 26 membership schools have had FTPs [First Time Principals] with major issues that resulted in many an intervention with either a resignation or sacking of the Principal.
- It is our opinion only two of the above Principals were incompetent prior to appointment
- Three of the above schools have had several consecutively appointed FTPs that have experienced the same ongoing issues and the outcomes have been the same (resignation)

- All Māori FTPs have had difficulty with transitioning into Principalship. As an organisation with few experienced Principals, our capacity as an association has struggled to advocate, support and upskill.
- In our quest to be able to provide advice and guidance, the Aka Tokerau executive have organised three 'Engaging Māori Learners' conferences with annual attendance of over 300 delegates. This has been our major contribution to the wider PLD for our colleagues who are mainly non Māori.
- Attendance at our term by term hui has been erratic due to the difficulties of FTPs to get in release, some of this due to inflexible staff. (Aka Tokerau, 2015)²⁸

In April 2015 a proposal was presented on behalf of Aka Tokerau to the local Ministry of Education in Northland. The writers of the proposal were Robert Clarke, President of Aka Tokerau and Leanne Otene, executive member of Aka Tokerau. Clarke was the Principal of Whau Valley School in Whangarei and was also the president of Te Akatea. Leanne Otene was the Principal of Manaia View School in Whangarei and was also the Executive Secretary of Te Akatea. She was also a member of the NZEI Principals' Council at that time.

The proposal was entitled: "A proposal to make a difference to educational outcomes in the North by effectively building the leadership capability of Aka Tokerau Principals." The introduction clearly lays out the rationale and expectations of the Aka Tokerau executive:

This proposal, for a programme to make a difference to educational outcomes in the North by effectively building the leadership capability of Aka Tokerau Principals, has been prepared and designed by the executive members of Aka Tokerau. The Aka Tokerau Principals and their executive are the Northland members of Te Akatea, the national body of Māori Principals in Aotearoa.

This is a new proposal driven by our professional and collective need to build the leadership capability of Principals within schools

²⁸ This information and the proposal supplied to me via private email from Robert Clarke and Leanne Otene.

in our region. By providing sustainable, focused, and localised professional and collegial support for Principals in the north we expect to accelerate the achievement of our students. This proposal is about local solutions for local issues and is informed by our own professional knowledge, practice and experience of being Principals in the North, and by the Best Evidence Synthesis 'School Leadership and Student Outcomes: Identifying What Works and Why'.

Our proposal is embedded in and underpinned by the practices of manaakitanga, whanaungatanga, and te tika me te pono. It also is informed by self-review and will be delivered in a high trust environment.

The proposal contends that the wider professional network in Northland was aware of the professional learning and development offered at the time, but they were yet to see a measurable change in Northland.

Through their own personal and collective experiences as Principals in the North, the Aka Tokerau Principals identified four key areas as focus points for an effective programme of professional support, learning, and development for their Principal colleagues in the North:

1. Relationships
2. Day to day management
3. Governance issues
4. Cultural understandings and practice

The programme suggested there would be two parts for two different audiences. The first part of the programme was for newly appointed Aka Tokerau Principals. The second component of the programme was for the current Aka Tokerau Principals.

Aka Tokerau identified they would be able to work with Aka Tokerau Principals by supporting Principal appointment processes in the region, by supporting new Principals with a localised induction programme prior to the new Principal starting

their role, and by facilitating an ongoing professional development programme specifically for Principals. Their proposal acknowledges that these were new and bold ideas for the region and for Principal development that would be crucial to build leadership capacity in Northland. The proposal outlined four phases to their programme:

1. **Setting the scene.** The purpose of the hui is to introduce and socialise the focus and rationale for the programme, and provide a description of the programme over a year. This will include the introduction of a tool that will be used to match up the needs of the Principal with the expectations of the programme.
2. **Individual follow-up.** Lead Programme Facilitator to follow up with visits (kanohi ki te kanohi) to the Principals. The tool may be used during the visits. This will culminate in the development of the IPLDP for the Principal.
3. **On-going follow-up.** This will involve individual visits as well as hui with all participants and hui with clusters of participants and will be determined by individual and collective needs.
4. **Wananga.** These hui will be at points in time to review the programme. It is important to develop a culture of self- review within a high trust environment.

I am unaware of other Principal professional development and support programmes that have been developed in this manner, clearly using and celebrating Māori core values and principles. These elements are an essential foundation for the model I will propose in the next section as a new way of looking at the intervention process.

A New Way Forward

The findings of the previous chapter regarding the devastating effect, and long term damage to schools, students, individuals and communities from imposed and heavy-handed interventions and the question regarding lessons learned from the Moerewa experience are all considered in this section to inform a recommendation for an alternative model for school support and statutory intervention. This proposed process is markedly different from the recent changes to the Education

Act, which this research would contend is not significantly different, once a statutory intervention at Limited Statutory Manager or Commissioner level is in place. At issue with the recent changes is that the locus of control, which was a major problem in Moerewa, isn't changed in the updated process.

Initially I wanted to develop an alternate process that would be used, to determine if a Statutory Intervention was even necessary. However, the amendments to the Education Act that took effect from 19 May 2017 resulted in six interventions that meet the lower risk threshold of "Reasonable grounds for concern"²⁹. The four main changes in the legislation introduce three new intervention options at this lower risk threshold. These are:

A Case Conference, which would be a meeting between board representatives, school representatives, the Principals and other relevant people. Decisions made at the case conference would be recorded in writing and become binding on the people present. The lower threshold for intervention applies to this intervention.

A Specialist Audit, where a school, kura or board is assessed by a third party, with specific skills. The lower threshold for intervention applies to this intervention.

Issuing a Performance Notice, which would require the board to remedy a breach of performance by a certain time. The lower threshold for intervention applies to this intervention. (Ministry of Education, 2017a)

Utilising the early support and the "Inquiry approach" discussed earlier (Figure 9) and adding the Case Conference option or the Specialist Audit option to the Statutory Intervention stages for schools, could be effective ways of ensuring there is an open and honest dialogue between schools and the Ministry of Education to reach a positive outcome for schools in difficulty.

I acknowledge that these changes to the Education Act for more options for interventions at the lower risk threshold are new, and hope they will result in a

²⁹ <https://www.education.govt.nz/school/running-a-school/interventions-in-schools-and-kura/#examples>

more fair and transparent process for this decision making. However, if these new steps do not involve the school in a respectful and genuine partnership in the decision making process, they will do little to change the situation. Given that the changes are recent, I believe that there needs to be time to see how these lower threshold processes may be used by the Ministry of Education. Without genuine work to develop these steps as a high trust relationship, schools will have little reason to believe that much has indeed changed.

At the higher end of the statutory intervention process however, I see little hope for change. This thesis has exposed the situation that occurred not only at Moerewa School, but is consistent with other school experiences where the intervention was imposed, when there was no agreement between the parties as to the reasons, or the validity of the intervention, which many argue was not necessary. I have therefore focused on developing an improved model for schools, once a Statutory Intervention at the LSM or Commissioner level has been decided. Ideally, if the lower threshold steps are effective, fewer schools will reach this level of intervention, but this proposed model will hopefully ensure that what happened at Moerewa, or Rangiora, or Salford, or the many other schools who have endured traumatic interventions, will not happen again.

The first issue that arises in the proposed “Restoration Process” introduced in this thesis, before the process begins, is around the selection of Commissioners in general. On 3rd March 2017 a question was asked about the background and qualifications of Commissioners, in an Official Information Act requests, regarding Rangiora High. The response from Jim Greening, Group Manager, Sector Enablement and Support, Ministry of Education said:

To be successful in this process, applicants must show sound governance knowledge as well as various qualities and specific skills useful for the intervention.

The role of a statutory appointee does not require the appointee to have a particular qualification or employment background. Similarly, Trustees on a Board do not require particular skills or

qualification. Experience as a teacher or Principal is not essential to an understanding of good governance practice.

However, Peggy Burrows asks pertinent questions raised by this issue, that confirm my own comments about the Commissioner having no education background, yet having all the power. Burrows asks:

Why was a Principal with 38 years of experience, with a Bachelor of Education, a Master of Arts (Hons) and a nearly completed PhD in Educational Research, replaced by a person with no qualifications in Education?

Why was a Principal with 38 years of experience, undermined by a Specialist Advisors' Report she and the Board commissioned but never saw?

Why was a Principal with 38 years of experience expected to work with a government appointed Commissioner, who had been the Specialist Advisor who had produced that report? (Burrows, 2017)

Te Whakahaumanutanga - A Restoration Process

When developing the principles that would underpin a new framework, I was guided by this whakatauki:

Mā te rongo ka mōhio - Through hearing comes awareness

Mā te mōhio ka mārama - Through awareness comes understanding

Mā te mārama ka mātau - Through understanding comes knowledge

Mā te mātau ka ora - Through knowledge comes well-being

This whakatauki reminds us about process. That knowledge and well-being come after a process of first listening and hearing, to create awareness. That awareness is an important first step. The realisation that first being open to hearing, creates the understanding necessary to move to the next stage of a process. This staging system is important in the context of thinking about a different process that we could adopt when thinking about Statutory Interventions in schools.

The next stage after awareness is understanding. Simply hearing of a situation, or being involved in a situation does not necessarily mean there is understanding of all the many different components that have led to a situation arising. This stage reminds us that we need to ensure there is an understanding of the complexity of any given setting, before we can move through to being able to say we have knowledge. Once we know, once the knowledge about a situation is clear, then through hearing, through awareness, through understanding, through knowledge finally comes well-being.

This process could be applied to both positive and negative contexts, it is strengths based in its ideal, and focuses on an outcome of well-being. Through a Western lens it may seem obvious that first you must identify an issue and then work to solve it, however this Māori philosophical lens teaches us that knowledge and well-being come at the end of a carefully constructed process that includes other stages. All stages require a commitment to deeper thinking and understanding, and ultimately will require a commitment to investing the time that is necessary to move through the stages of this process. This model reminds us of the outcome of well-being, which moves far beyond concepts like completion, compliance, agreement and control. It is a deeper outcome, and one could argue a more sustainable and important outcome that deliberately locates the outcome of the process, with the well-being of the people involved in the process.

The Te Whakahaumanutanga process has evolved over time. As stated in Chapter 2, the process of continuous reflexivity and self-scrutiny (Pyet, 2003, p. 1171), has been an important part of the development of this new model. I have sought critique from staff and community members who were involved in the Moerewa School statutory intervention, from Principals who have had various types of statutory intervention imposed on the schools they were leading at the time, and from Principals who have had no experience with statutory intervention in their schools. I have sought advice from Māori whanau and colleagues, to check that this model is consistent with a Māori world view. I have also tried to look objectively at the model from the perspective of a Government Department official to test if this

new way of working would meet their needs? Subsequently this model has been re-worked, and adapted over time as a result of the feedback I have received from these different groups.

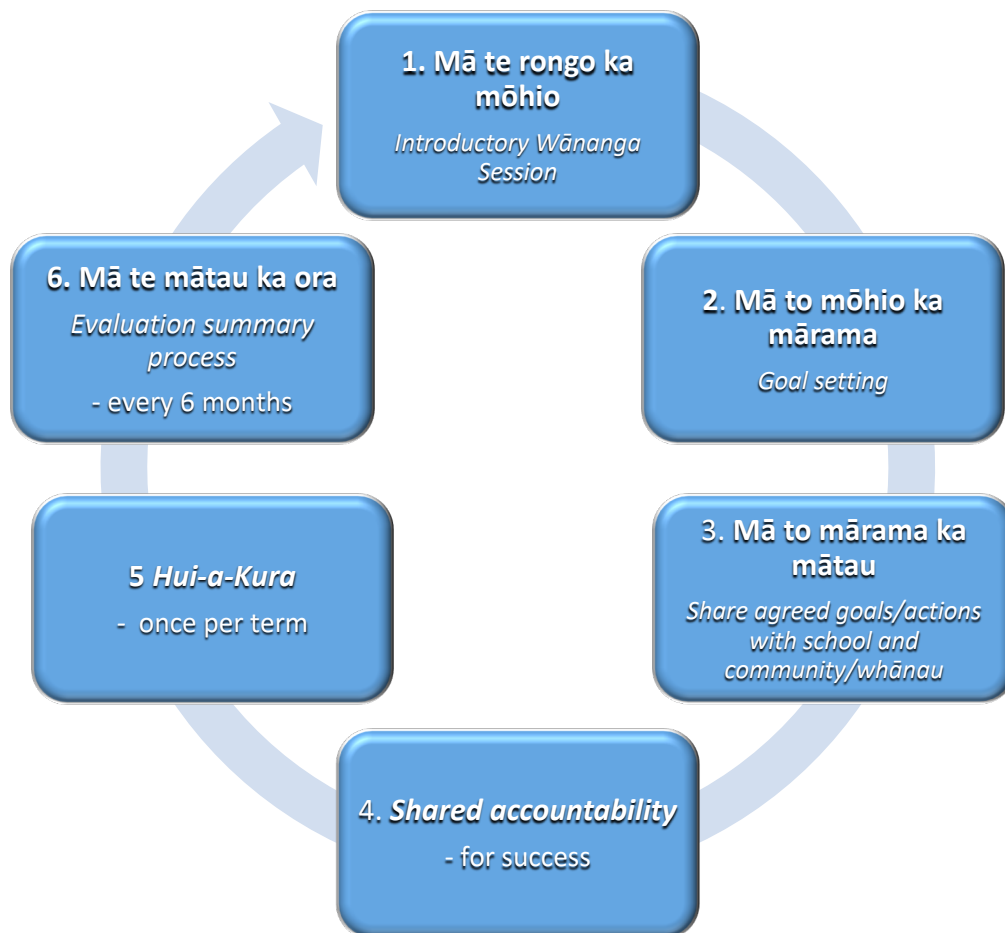


Figure 10: Te Whakahaumanutanga - The Restoration Process Model

The cyclical Te Whakahaumanutanga model shown above, is explained in more detail in Table 22 below.

Table 22: Te Whakahaumanutanga

Process cycle	What is this?	Who is involved?	Expected outcome
<p>Mā te rongo ka mōhio - <i>Through hearing comes awareness</i></p> <p>1. Introductory Wānanga Session</p>	<p>This is the initial session where there is discussion about the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What have been the successes of the school, and where are the areas of 'non negotiable' change/shift? - What is the problem that needs to be solved? - What are the values that we agree will be used for the duration of the intervention? <p>Agreed outcomes are arrived at through this discussion, wānanga, consensus process.</p> <p>If consensus is not able to be reached after this first session, this session must be repeated (after appropriate reflection time), until agreed outcomes are reached. There is no short-cutting this process</p>	<p>Independent facilitator is involved to facilitate the discussion between;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Principal o Senior Management? o Board Chair if LSM is in place (Possible value in Board Chair attending this session if Commissioner is in place – to assist with transition from Board to Commissioner) - Ministry of Education - Commissioner/LSM - Independent Moderator (Whakawhirinaki) <p>This sees the introduction of an 'Independent Moderator' (Whakawhirinaki) role. This person is involved in various stages of this Restoration Process. The Whakawhirinaki will work with all parties to ensure that fair processes are being used, that agreed actions are being realised, and that all parties are acting in good faith according to agreed values and actions.</p>	<p>This session would be lengthy. It is expected that the discussion would be robust and consensus is the aim of this session.</p> <p>A highly skilled independent facilitator is required, to assist groups to move from their entrenched positions to reach agreed outcomes. Once these agreements are made in this session, this sets the framework for the goals/actions that are to follow as part of this process.</p>
<p>Mā te mōhio ka mārāma <i>Through awareness comes understanding</i></p> <p>2. Goal setting</p>	<p>From the agreements reached during the Introductory Wānanga Session, next a set of agreed goals/actions and timeframes needs to be completed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Principal - Commissioner/LSM - Independent Moderator/ Whakawhirinaki 	<p>This forms the agreed set of goals and actions that will result in a successful outcome for the school, and see the removal of the Statutory Intervention.</p> <p>These goals are framed in positive language (as opposed to deficits) and highlight successes and key achievements that will be maintained and further extended as part of the Restoration Process.</p> <p>These goals would be shared with Ministry of Education and form the basis of the work that would be addressed in the Statutory Intervention.</p>
<p>Mā te mārāma ka mātau <i>Through understanding comes knowledge</i></p> <p>3. Share agreed goals/actions with school and community/whānau</p>	<p>There is an accountability and responsibility back to the wider school, the school community and parents/whānau. This part of the process acknowledges the contribution of a wider collection of people in the success of a school.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commissioner/LSM - Principal (and Board Chair if LSM is in place) <p>A community group may be set up at this stage, to ensure that there is regular discussion with community representatives?</p>	<p>The sharing of the agreed goals/actions and timeframes with the school and wider community means there is collective understanding of the journey the school is embarking on. It ensures there is transparency and everyone is aware of the key goals that are to be achieved.</p>

	At this stage, there needs to be a decision reached about the regularity of updates to the community, with those involved?		
4. Shared accountability for success	The responsibility for achieving the agreed goals and actions is a shared goal. The Principal is engaged to work on actions. The LSM or Commissioner works on their goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commissioner/LSM - Principal 	<p>One-page 'updates' on progress towards the agreed goals/actions between the Commissioner/LSM and Principal are shared formally each month in scheduled meetings.</p> <p>Agreed next steps are documented as part of these meetings.</p> <p>One page updates are shared with Ministry of Education and form the basis of regular, transparent reporting.</p>
Mā te mātau ka ora <i>Through knowledge comes well-being</i> 5. Hui-a-Kura	Once per term, a meeting of all education agencies, Commissioner/LSM, Principal and other representatives from the initial 'Wānanga Session' are held.	<p>The Independent facilitator returns to facilitate the meeting involving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Principal o Senior Management? o Board Chair if LSM is in place - Ministry of Education - Commissioner/LSM - Education agencies - Community representatives - Independent Moderator (Whakawhirinaki) 	<p>The purpose of these meetings are to ensure that all groups involved are talking with each other, and progress against agreed goals set in the Wānanga Session is shared. There is accountability to the group.</p> <p>Written evaluations are produced and shared with all parties.</p>
6. Evaluation Summary Process	Every six months a robust evaluation process occurs. Have the original goals set, been achieved? Is there evidence of sustainable practice in the school? Can the interests of the school and its community be restored? Is there an evidenced need for the Statutory Intervention to remain?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commissioner/LSM - Ministry of Education - Principal (and Board Chair if LSM is in place) - Independent Moderator (Whakawhirinaki) 	<p>This section of the process is the formal evaluation process where recommendations to the Minister of Education about the future of the Statutory Intervention are set.</p> <p>Exit from the intervention is always discussed as a possible outcome in these evaluation meetings.</p> <p>If it is recommended and then decided that the intervention is to remain in place, the 'process' starts again and all steps are again followed.</p>

The following section outlines the thinking that sits behind each of the parts of the process in order to come up with a different model once an intervention is determined for a school.

Te Whakahaumanutanga - in detail

1. *Mā te rongo ka mōhio - Through hearing comes awareness*

Introductory Wānanga Session

This model would start in the school as soon as Statutory Intervention has been announced. The first major difference is that there is a transparent process for the identification of the problem/s that has resulted in the Statutory Intervention being imposed on the school. This 'Introductory Wānanga Session' is built on the principle that time needs to be given for the Statutory Appointee to listen, and hear about the school's successes and particular context. The identification of the problem is discussed and agreed to. This would require input from both the Statutory Appointee and the School personnel. The issue regarding transparency of information has been raised by a number of sources as being a particularly challenging part of the Statutory Intervention process. This first session addresses these concerns, and ensures that all participants are clear about the history and successes of the school prior to the intervention occurring and are agreed in the identification of the issues that require attention and need addressing. As part of this process, a set of agreed shared values and principles that will be adhered to throughout the Statutory Intervention are discussed and decided on. The decision making process is about power sharing, rather than one person (usually the Statutory Appointee) having power over the school and community.

The second major difference in this very first stage, is the use of a trained facilitation expert to assist with the engagement of participants, and the clarity of decision making. The facilitation expert would only need to attend this one stage in the Restoration Process, however the length of time this may take would be uncertain at the beginning. The facilitator may be able to conduct a series of short two-hour sessions, or they may feel that a longer full day session might work more effectively depending on a number of factors. The word "Wānanga" has been used deliberately to denote a lengthy, ongoing discussion period where teaching and learning, and debate are encouraged. The aim of this session is consensus. This may mean that the different parties involved have to make concessions, and the facilitation expert would ensure that this took place. There is no shortcutting this part of the process. The introductory session may take a series of attempts to complete. There must be the belief that consensus can be achieved, even if this is not evident immediately. The independent facilitator must ensure that the

identification of successes that are agreed to continue, and agreed problems that need to be addressed, are very clear. This ensures that the subsequent goals that will be set in the next stage of the process are able to link clearly to the areas agreed to in this initial step.

The final difference in this very first stage, is that there would be an Independent Moderator (Whakawhirinaki) role. The independent factor is crucial to the success of this role. This person is not aligned to the school or to the Ministry of Education. It is not a role ERO can fulfil. The Whakawhirinaki is able to position themselves between the school and the Statutory Appointee and moderate both sides. Their role is to check on fairness of proceedings, to ensure that there is a transparent process and that information is shared, to check that key decisions that are made are adhered to, and to work alongside the process to ensure that both parties are acting in the best interests of the school and its community, in order to achieve the outcome of well-being. The Whakawhirinaki would be involved in the initial Introductory Wānanga Session as well as the Goal Setting session that would follow. They would also be involved in the once per term Hui-a-Kura meeting. They do not need to be active in the school or in meetings outside of this process. Their role is to maintain their independent perspective and to provide a level of confidence that the process, and the people in it, are working effectively together and are accountable.

There have been concerns expressed within this research where Principals, and community members have raised the issue of having nowhere to go, if you were concerned about an aspect of the Commissioner's role or behaviour. The Whakawhirinaki role would be used if one party felt there were concerns, or wanted to make a complaint. A pool of sanctioned Whakawhirinaki would be available for schools to select from prior to the intervention starting. The Ministry of Education appoints the Statutory Appointee, and so the school would select the Whakawhirinaki. Whakawhirinaki would receive appropriate training and development and may already be involved in similar roles outside of the education area. It is hoped that the Minister of Education would bring Whakawhirinaki

together once per year, to hear from them about how Statutory Interventions in the country are working. They would become an independent “watchdog” group. Any issues could be raised during this meeting with the Minister, and of course evidence that the process was working well would also be shared at this time. This would ensure that schools and communities felt they there would be independent feedback given at a national level. The Minister of Education would feel that she/he was receiving information directly from the collective of Independent Moderators working in schools involved in Statutory Interventions. This would be a one day meeting once per year, so costs would be kept to a minimum.

2. Mā te mōhio ka mārama - Through awareness comes understanding

Goal setting session

This next part of the process is the goal setting session. The goals set for the intervention must follow on from the agreed outcomes of the previous introductory wānanga session. There are no new areas of focus that can be introduced that are not already decided upon from the previous session. Established goal setting conventions will be followed during this session, and goals are expected to be ambitious.

During this session, participants will be asked if there are others that should be involved, and if there are other supports that could be sourced in order to support goals being achieved? Participants may feel that coaching or mentoring might be appropriate for particular people or roles? Maybe there is specific expertise that needs to be sourced to support the achievement of the goals? Is this an appropriate stage for whānau or community to be involved? Perhaps further explanation of the school and community desires might need to occur? All of the above should be considered during this session. If appropriate to the goals that have been agreed to in the introductory session, and if all participants agree, this would be the appropriate time to plan to bring in Ministry of Education Advisors, Professional Development facilitators or other specialist individuals and agencies.

A wide set of achievement indicators would be encouraged, so that things that were important to the school could be monitored, and enhanced through the goal setting process. This would ensure that goals were not just about literacy and numeracy objectives.

It may be necessary to bring in an independent person to facilitate this goal setting session if professional relationships between key stakeholders are still not able to be established at this early stage. Specific and measurable goals will be set, to be achieved within agreed timeframes. The goals are documented and shared with the participants in this session.

It is understood that in the rare situation where a decision can not be reached by consensus, and where the facilitation expert has not been able to assist the parties involved to make a decision together, where a Commissioner was placed in the school, they would make the final decision. This would ensure that in the situations where the school Principal was incompetent, or where the Principal and Statutory Appointee were combative, or where there was one issue that was having an impact on the greater good, there would be a way to move forward. It would be intended that the Whakawhirinaki role would be used in this situation to address the 'block' with the person concerned, to raise awareness with the view that this behavior would not reoccur.

The Whakawhirinaki role would be involved in this session, to ensure that principles and actions agreed to in the introductory session are consistent and are brought through to this session also. At the end of this session there is a clear understanding of the work that will need to be undertaken as a result of the goals that are set.

3. Mā te mārama ka mātau - Through understanding comes knowledge

Share agreed goals/actions with school and community/whānau

The missing piece of previous models has been the planned and intentional involvement of community and whānau. This stage of the process acknowledges that they are important participants in the school's success. Some school

communities may want to be involved more than others, but the premise that at the very least the intended activity of the Statutory Intervention should be shared with parent/whānau and community of the school and understood by them, is the basis of this stage. The school community should be made aware of both the Introductory Wānanga Session and the Goal Setting session, so they have confidence that the goals that have been set have been reached as part of a process where consensus has been reached. It would be expected that the community would feel more confident in a positive outcome for the school, if they knew the goals and actions that would form the basis of the Statutory Intervention, were co-constructed with key stakeholders.

Some school communities may want to set up a community, parent/whānau representative group, who get to meet regularly with the Principal and/or Statutory Appointee. This group would have no formal authority or formal role within the school, but this research has confirmed that not only at Moerewa School, but in fact other communities whose schools have been involved in various forms of Statutory Interventions, wanted to know what were the planned actions and expected outcomes of the Intervention in the school. There are many examples in the Moerewa School situation where the timeframe for the intervention was unclear and unknown. The sharing of this information with the parents/whānau and community at this stage of the process would ensure that the knowledge of all of these factors, was guaranteed. There would be the expectation that a regular reporting schedule would be discussed and agreed to with the community at this meeting.

4. Shared accountability for success

Regularly monthly meetings would be held between the Principal and the Statutory Appointee in a school. In the case of the Statutory Appointee being a Commissioner, this meeting would take the place of a formal Board of Trustees meeting. The initial part of these meetings would be to focus on the progress being achieved against the goals that have been set for the school.

There would be shared accountability for the achievement of these set goals, and the Principal would be clear about the actions that she/he was responsible for meeting, as would the Statutory Appointee be clear about the goals that she/he would be working on. One page updates using a Ministry of Education template would need to be completed by the Principal and another one page update would be completed by the Statutory Appointee, and presented prior to these meetings. These would then be discussed and the one page updates, with steps for the next month identified, would then sent to the Ministry of Education Senior Advisor working with the school.

This would ensure that a transparent reporting process was in place, and there were no surprises for either party at any step along the way. The Ministry of Education would have no other formal information or documentation from the Commissioner that the Principal of the school had not already seen.

5. Hui-a-Kura

Once per term there would be a meeting with all the education agencies and other stakeholder groups. This meeting would be facilitated by the Statutory Appointee and the Principal and would be an opportunity to share information with the group (ie: the progress against the agreed priorities and set goals). It would also be an opportunity for the members of the group to share information relevant to the wider group. This could include the Ministry of Education sharing information regarding the wider school network, or members of the Education Review Office sharing their latest reports about the school, or identifying professional support and assistance opportunities. This step of the process ensures that all the professional agencies are meeting at once with the school, and this avoids replication of information and the school being involved in a series of meetings with different groups, all with the same set of enquires. The Whakawhirinaki would be engaged in this meeting, to hear about progress on the agreed goals and actions, and also to check that the agreed values were still evident within the Intervention process.

Written summaries of these inter-agency meetings would be shared with the school community, and be another piece of documentation that would be used to track progress in the school.

6. Mā te mātau ka ora - Through knowledge comes well-being

Evaluation summary process

The final stage in Te Whakahaumanutanga, is the Evaluation summary process. This is a formal meeting between the Statutory Appointee, the Principal (and Board of Trustees Chairperson if the Statutory Appointee is a Limited Statutory Manager), and the Ministry of Education. The Whakawhirinaki is also involved. This meeting needs to occur at the six month timeframe of the Intervention.

This meeting is to formally discuss the progress of the Statutory Intervention. The goal is to return the school to a model of self-governance, and to withdraw the Intervention from the school as soon as possible. The commitment to well-being for the school would be evidenced at this meeting. There would need to be an acceptance from this group that it is entirely possible for a Statutory Intervention to be over in a school within six months. However, in this formal evaluation stage, evidence of progress against the agreed actions needs to be clear, and confidence that this progress would be sustained must be high amongst all parties.

Documentation from previous meetings and official stages of Te Whakahaumanutanga, would be used to ascertain the progress that had been made during the past six months. The purpose of the meeting would be to discuss the agreed actions and the goals set, to find evidence that they had been achieved. If there was evidence that the original problem was no longer an issue, or if the group was confident that all goals had been met, then a recommendation from this group to the Minister of Education would be made that the Statutory Intervention would end. A transition plan would be drawn up to exit the school from the Statutory Intervention, and a timeframe for this to occur would be agreed to.

If however, there was insufficient evidence of progress, or there were still too many outstanding actions needing to be completed, then the group would recommend

that the Statutory Intervention remain in place. Should this recommendation occur, then the school would be involved again in the Restoration Process. The Introductory Wānanga Session would occur again to set the expectations for the next six months in the school.

Conclusion

The Statutory Intervention experience at Moerewa School highlights many areas where an improved process would have resulted in better outcomes for the school and community. This experience is consistent with the experiences of other schools who have had a Statutory Appointee in their schools also. The lack of information provided to schools, and issues about power and control have also been raised by many participants. It is the strong recommendation of this research that a new model needs to be explored to ensure there is a more consistent, positive outcome for those involved.

Hawk (2008, cites Learmonth and Lowers', 1998) finding that an independent consultant may be able to "find common ground for those who have positioned themselves apart, and in doing so broaden the sense of common purpose and cooperation" (p. 143). Hawk also observes that an "outsider" or a "critical friend" can have a positive impact "by helping an inward looking school to reconnect with the education world" (p. 256). While other researchers have identified the benefit of an independent lens on the process, these consultants and advisers have generally been brought in from existing agencies who are also involved in a wider range of school consultancy work, and have existing relationships with the Ministry of Education as accredited service providers. Often, as was the case in Moerewa, the "independent" agencies are aligned with the Ministry or Commissioner pre-determined agenda, which is beyond the school's control or power to change.

It is intended that the new model for Statutory Intervention that comes out of this research, dramatically addresses the power imbalance that is evident in the current model when a Statutory Intervention occurs in a school. This model ensures that

there is power-sharing and that the decision making process is a collaborative one. Consensus is the aim of this process, although it is acknowledged that a school cannot be held to ransom if one of the key parties cannot offer any compromise. This would be the exception rather than the rule. A strong two way professional relationship is expected as a result of moving through the stages of Te Whakahaumanutanga and would result in the mutually agreed goals of the intervention being achieved with all stakeholders of the school being involved and informed. A crucial foundation for this to be an authentic collaboration is the establishment of the Whakawhirinaki group or watchdog agency, where the group's members receive full training in their role as genuinely independent moderators.

The cost of the proposed Te Whakahaumanutanga model would not be significantly different from the cost structure that currently exists for Statutory Intervention in school, and in fact it may actually reduce costs. The Whakahaumanutanga Model proposes two new roles (independent Facilitation role, and the independent Moderator Whakawhirinaki role) that are engaged at different stages of this process, and the access to support throughout the Restoration Process. This is a new cost in this model. However, it is envisaged that the genuine commitment to stakeholders working together, on an agreed direction, with clear milestone points along the way, would result in Statutory Interventions being in schools for a shorter period overall, and would eliminate the current situation where a Statutory Appointee is incentivised to continue the role longer than is necessary. The development of an authentic partnership would also lessen the likelihood of costly litigation. It is expected that the current formula set by the Ministry of Education for funding of a statutory intervention would remain in place, and that the Ministry of Education would pay for the Whakawhirinaki/Independent Moderator and the specialist Facilitator roles.

In the *Review of Statutory Interventions in Schools* (Ministry of Education, 2014b) the Sector Working Group and the Ministry agreed on these guiding principles for the review:

Intervene only when necessary: Intervention at statutory level should be considered only after other non-statutory support, including appropriate sector support, has been attempted. The Group also supports the statutory intent that any statutory intervention should not unreasonably interfere with the responsibilities of a school's democratically elected Board of Trustees.

Partnership: As far as is practicable when considering statutory interventions the Ministry should work in partnership with relevant sector groups to ensure that information is shared and evidence of risks is understood.

Transparency: All interventions should be based on a thorough needs analysis that is detailed, transparent, consultative and robust. The monitoring of any intervention should be transparent and flexible enough to adjust to changing dynamics and challenges.

About the kids: The ultimate aim of any statutory intervention is to build and support Boards of Trustees' capability and capacity "to perform its functions and exercise its powers in such a way as to ensure that every student at the school is able to attain his or her highest possible standard in educational achievement". (p. 8)

It seems to me that these principles should not only apply to the process of the review, but should apply to any future interventions in schools. The Restoration Model proposed in this chapter brings these principles, for transparency, for authentic partnership, for the co-construction of solutions, for democratic principles, autonomy, professional respect, and for accountability to whānau and community to the forefront of the process. It definitely is “about the kids” and their right to learn “as” they are, and in the way their whānau dream is possible.

Chapter Nine: A School of Passion

Womb to the tomb, means learning is a lifetime process, fashioned around passion, need and excellence. We believe that people working in their passion creates excellence and creates capacity for a more diverse and stronger community. (Moerewa Community Submission, 2003)

Introduction

This final chapter brings together and discusses the implications of this research for the Moerewa community, and for the wider education and schooling sector. The intention of the thesis has been to tell both the overt and submerged stories of what really happened in respect of the State intervention initiated at Moerewa School. An important layer within this research is to give 'voice' and to 'listen' to the perspective of parents, teachers, students and staff who during the intervention period had been disempowered, silenced, marginalised and divided by the power of the State, the actions of its officials and the impact of its policies. A central issue here is the tension between the State promise of more autonomy to communities to develop the education and schooling that they wanted for their children, versus the reproduction of State power and control. The move towards increased self-development in schooling by Māori had emerged because of the long history of the failure of State schooling in New Zealand to adequately respond to Māori educational development. This research has sought to honour and respect the work, knowledge and expertise of the school, the students, and the community in attempting to bring about change and to protect these changes in the school.

In undertaking this research I have systematically gathered the authentic stories, through interviews, focus groups, hui, public documentation of the perspectives of members of the Moerewa community who were actually involved, as students, parents, teachers, school leaders and whānau. This thesis allows them to tell their story of the Moerewa School Senior Class closure from their perspective.

This chapter will also summarise the previous chapters and again restate the unfolding arguments. Finally, It is hoped, that this chapter will not only be the final chapter in the thesis, but also, as far as is possible, bring some closure to this traumatic event that still lingers within the Moerewa community. This closure is important so that those involved feel that their version of events is told, and that they can put these events behind them and recommit themselves to believing in the potential ‘good’ of education and schooling and move forward together. The title chosen for this chapter, has been taken from the Moerewa Community Submission. It honours the foresight, courage and passion that united a community behind a Māori-centred, innovative schooling response that they felt they “owned” and were dedicated to. Just as importantly, they were committed to building a schooling response that would deliver on their aspirations of learning success for the young people in their community, while simultaneously maintaining their cultural well-being.

The aims and objectives of the research

Moerewa School’s experience is not unique. It is mirrored in the stories of many similar schools and communities across the country, where statutory intervention, designed for schools defined as failing have been applied. I argue that such drastic intervention measures should not have been an option at Moerewa and a proper, fair and just process of negotiated settlement between the community, the Board of Trustees, the Principal and the Ministry of Education should have been undertaken. The experiences of these other schools subjected to statutory intervention, are similar stories of disempowerment of communities that were led to believe that the education system gave them, through their Boards of Trustees, a level of autonomy to shape an education model to fit their children.

The progression for this concluding chapter is laid in Table 23 below. The three critical questions underpinning this research are summarised below, and the specific issues related to each question are detailed in the right column.

Table 23: Overview of Chapter 9

1. How did Moerewa School support their community's aspirations for relevant education, <i>as Māori</i> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Community Campus Submission • Neoliberal school reform – <i>Tomorrow's Schools</i> • <i>Ka Hikitia - Managing for Success 2008-2012</i> • Māori Potential
2. How did institutional barriers impact on the realisation of the Moerewa community's dream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory Intervention Review (2014) • Education Amendment Act (2017) • Death of the Dream • Power and Control
3. What lessons can be learned from this experience?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limitations of the research • Personal voice • Implications for Statutory Interventions • Definitions of success

How did Moerewa School support their community's aspirations for relevant education, *as Māori*?

The Community Campus Submission

The schooling and educational dream of the Moerewa community, was written by the community in a submission to the Ministry of Education in 2003. They were clear that their Māori knowledge, their Māori voice, history, tikanga and experiences were to be the foundation of their children's learning. Here was a Māori community that was passionate, about their aspirations for their children. The community submission argued that Moerewa School should be built solidly around the community's education aspirations. This was a direct challenge to the existing monocultural, Euro-centric schooling system.

Before and after the community submission was written there were two significant policy initiatives from the Governments of the time. These policies sent clear messages that supported the Moerewa community's actions of coming together to build and input their own vision for the schooling and education of their children. In view of these policy platforms, it was entirely appropriate for communities like Moerewa to design a schooling response that connected to their aspirations for their children.

The first of these policies was the introduction of the neoliberal school reform, *Tomorrow's Schools*, introduced in 1988, by the Labour Government, which

resulted in radical changes in the education system. The reforms relating to the provision of education in New Zealand were underpinned by principles of community empowerment and individual choice. The administration of all State schools was devolved from central government to a system where parents, community and whānau were elected to Boards of Trustees who would then govern schools. Moerewa community members were actively involved as Trustees on various Boards of Trustees in schools across the community from the very early introduction of the *Tomorrow's Schools* policy. They had every right to feel that it was entirely possible and in fact legislated, that school communities would have the autonomy to design a schooling model that met the wants and needs of each community.

The second policy initiative that was to contribute directly to Moerewa School's development was the Government's vision for Māori education. The Moerewa School's commitment to the realisation of its community dream is well documented in this research. The School's alignment to the direction set out in the Government's Māori Education Strategy *Ka Hikitia - Managing for Success 2008-2012* has also been explained. There was a strong link between the original aspirations clearly articulated in the Moerewa Community Campus Submission (2003) and the aims espoused in *Ka Hikitia*. The goals of *Ka Hikitia* aimed to change and transform the education system to ensure all students had the opportunity to gain the skills and knowledge they needed to realise their potential and to succeed. It set out specific outcomes, priorities for action and targets over the five-year period of 2008 to 2012 to build Māori potential. The overarching strategic intent of *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success 2008–2012* was “Māori children enjoying and achieving education success as Māori.” The strategy aimed to transform the education system and ensure Māori enjoying educational success as Māori was normalised. The Māori potential approach described in *Ka Hikitia* had three key principles:

- *Māori Potential*: all Māori learners have unlimited potential.

- *Cultural Advantage*: all Māori have cultural advantage by virtue of who they are – being Māori is an asset.
- *Inherent Capability*: all Māori are inherently capable of achieving.

By the time *Ka Hikitia* was released to the education community in 2008, this direction and application were already strong elements of the Moerewa School character and design. The school felt that they were enacting all the principles, aims and objectives of the Government's Māori Education strategy, and felt encouraged that the release of *Ka Hikitia* affirmed much of the school's established teaching and learning pedagogy. Much work had been done by the school prior to 2008, to examine and research reasons for Māori "underachievement," and to redefine a wider consideration of achievement and excellence, "as Māori." The school's entire professional development direction, pedagogical approach, and organisational structure were designed to deliberately accommodate more effective ways to deliver on the positioning of Māori students as being inherently capable of realising their full potential. The extent of the work done by the school is described in Chapter 3, and the progress the school had made towards the realisation of their dream is described in Chapter 5.

The fact that the commitment shown by Moerewa School to the Māori Education Strategy, *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success 2008–2012*, was *not* acknowledged by the Ministry of Education, was therefore a surprise to the school. What else could the school have done to put *Ka Hikitia* into practice? The school felt the Ministry would have jumped at the opportunity to work with a school that was demonstrating such strong alignment with the philosophies, aims and objectives of the strategy. This was not the case. The Government's barriers in opposition to the school's direction devastated the community and are detailed in Chapter 6. These events and actions were explored in answer to the second research question as indicated in Table 23.

How did 'official' institutional barriers impact on the realisation of the Moerewa community's dream?

The catch cry “one size does not fill all” has been used extensively within official education circles to remind us of the difference of each individual student, of each school, and indeed each community context. However, many education policy “solutions” do not lend themselves to be customised to respond to all individual differences. The current statutory intervention model is one example of a ‘broad brush’ policy approach that treats everyone the same, and applies a ‘level playing-field’ response, with seemingly little regard for the individual circumstances of Māori community aspirations shaped by their unique iwi and hapū interests.

The Statutory Intervention Review

The *Final Report and Recommendations to the Minister of Education in the Review of Statutory Interventions in State and State Integrated Schools* (2014) outlines a number of reoccurring themes that emerged from the submissions received as part of the overall review process. This Review was sector led, and was made up of Ministry of Education officials, nine different sector representative groups, and four experienced statutory appointees. It is difficult to see how the recommendations made in the final report (p. 33) about transparency, partnership and collaboration have been included in the amendments to the Education Act made in May 2017, or if any of those recommendations have resulted in changes being made to the Statutory Intervention process. The Report acknowledges these concerns, recommending that, “Statutory intervention processes and practices will be consistent and transparent” (Ministry of Education, 2014c, p. 33). With these changes incorporated in the update of the Education Act in 2017, and effective since May 2017, it remains to be seen if these changes will in fact be an improvement. They certainly did not apply in the Moerewa intervention.

The Education Amendment Act (2017)

The amendments to the Education Act in 2017, which included the changes to statutory interventions was described by the Ministry of Education as the most comprehensive update of New Zealand’s education legislation in almost 30 years. The changes are to take effect gradually between 19 May 2017 and January 2020.

The legislation, as it applies to Statutory Interventions, has nine stages of intervention that can be imposed on a school. This adds three earlier steps to the previous six types of interventions. None of the new changes have any requirement to take into account different circumstances that may set one school apart from another school of a similar nature, and in fact it could be seen that all the changes in the legislation have done is increase the ways that the Minister of Education can impose a statutory intervention on a school. None of the changes address the issue of the imbalance of power that was a key finding of this research.

The changes outlined in the *Review of Statutory Interventions in State and State Integrated School* (2014) and the Education Amendment Act (2017b) would not have helped the situation that occurred at Moerewa School. Both the Review Report and the changes to the Education Act continue to preserve a broken system and the institutionalised barriers that in the end, have prevented the realisation of the community's dream and vision for the education of their children.

The Death of the Dream

This thesis has described the struggle undertaken by the community of Moerewa, to courageously develop an education and schooling environment for their children that deliberately shifted away from the 'taken for granted' colonial model of schooling. This colonial construction of schooling has been damaging for Māori. It has been a schooling system that has been colonising. This system affirms non-Māori cultural dominance (and conversely, Māori marginalisation), and has also been criticised as perpetuating Māori social and economic inequalities. The Senior Class development at Moerewa School was one major step in countering the Māori learning crisis apparent in other schools. There was enormous pride in the achievements and successes of the students in the class. This was an important initiative, again, consistent with the community dream and vision.

When the New Zealand Qualifications Authority launched an investigation into the students' NCEA results, based purely on their belief that it was highly unusual for

Māori learners in a low decile, rural Māori community in Northland to be achieving such results, it started an ugly chain reaction. Had NZQA not read *Ka Hikitia* and adopted its 'Māori potential' approach? At the end of an unprecedented audit of 84% of the work achieved at Moerewa School, NZQA released the revised (and significantly lower) results to national media and the attention this attracted was devastating for the students involved. Why would NZQA release specific achievement information from one school to the national media? The students, staff and community strongly voiced their feelings in Chapter 7, about how it felt to be labeled a 'cheat', as the only explanation for how high marks were attained.

By far the most powerful section in this research is the unequivocal evidence that shows that the students in the Senior Class had worked hard, and that they were well supported by teachers, by their families, by the school and by the community at large to succeed. The students, their teachers, and their whānau clearly articulated that the reason for their success was a curriculum that was deliberately relevant to their backgrounds, delivered in an environment that had developed innovative pedagogy and support structures designed to sustain their identity as Māori.

Within four weeks after the State appointed Commissioner arrived at Moerewa School these 17 Senior secondary students had been moved off the school site, and forced to choose other options for their secondary education. The reason that the Commissioner then remained in the school for a further two years after the goal of closing the Senior Class had been achieved is attributed to another agenda that had little to do with the senior students. The senior students' class development and their NCEA results provided a convenient way for the Ministry of Education to advance its policy agenda. This move has been interpreted by many community members as a punitive measure against my public stand, in my role as Principal of Moerewa School and in my other representative roles on national principals' associations, to argue against National Standards and other government policies that disadvantaged Māori learners. One respondent noted the intention was to put the Principal "in her place." If this is indeed the case, then the tragedy is that the

community and the School became expendable and collateral damage in the effort to punish and attack my professional credibility.

Power and Control

This research has gathered data that allows a different view and interpretation of the *official* version of events as constructed by the Ministry, the Commissioner and others. The overwhelming indication from the data collected through focus groups, interviews and surveys, (and also cross referenced with media articles and commentaries), was that the Ministry of Education handled the situation at Moerewa School badly. Many respondents voiced their opinion within the surveys and through the focus groups that the heavy handed intervention at Moerewa was unnecessary and was viewed as a personal attack upon me, as the Principal. The fact that I was a strong advocate against the imposition of National Standards, and was an active member of various professional education groups that were also openly critical of the policy intentions of the Minister and the Ministry of Education, is not disputed in this work.

Many comments from the data refer to the mis/use of power by the various Ministers of Education and the Ministry of Education officials over the Māori community. Descriptive terms that exemplify this and which came out within the interview data were: 'bullying', 'Minister grandstanding', 'make it worse', 'over the top', 'not required', 'narcissistic', 'power' and 'overkill'. Similar sentiments were also expressed by other Principals and communities who were also involved in high profile statutory intervention cases. Other Principals who had statutory interventions imposed in their schools, but without the high public media profile of Moerewa, also talked about other challenges such as the lack of information and the unfair balance of power between the Statutory Appointee and themselves in their schools. The work of a Doctor of Education candidate investigating the impact of statutory intervention on schools that had voluntarily requested an intervention (Cook, 2017), also highlights the personal and professional impact primary school Principals experienced while leading a school during these statutory interventions.

There is no surprise therefore that sector concerns about a lack of transparency, partnership and collaboration, and the decline of trust between the Ministry and the other agencies in relation to the statutory intervention process were strongly represented in the Statutory Interventions Review process.

The idea that the Minister of Education and the Ministry of Education, run a fair, transparent and impartial statutory intervention system that is positive and working effectively to assist schools is seriously challenged by the community voices in this research. While it is acknowledged that some changes have been made recently as a result of the Statutory Interventions Review process to include earlier and lower threshold interventions, these need to be monitored as this system develops in order to gauge whether the imbalance of power and transparency issues are genuinely addressed. Ultimately, this research proposes a new model and process of intervention once the decision to place a Statutory appointee in a school has been made. What this new model might look like is discussed later in this chapter.

What lessons can be learned from this experience?

The Moerewa School experience has been shared in very personal ways by the community participants who had the statutory intervention imposed on them, to document the full story about what happened. This is important not just as a cathartic experience for those traumatically impacted by this situation, but also so that people can learn from this situation and thereby avoid making the same mistakes in the future. This research has been about enabling the school and the Moerewa community to reclaim its positivity and energy and move forward, as well as sharing a more rounded telling of the events, the experiences and the impact on community so that people might learn and make appropriate changes. This thesis makes a unique contribution to our knowledge of New Zealand education in some important areas:

1. This thesis documents the 'day to day' struggle by a Māori community to work with their local school and teachers to change the education and

schooling of their children. What is revealed is how the aspirations and transformative ideas that came out of the community were systematically undermined and dismantled. This provides insight into how notions, such as colonisation, assimilation and the reproduction of dominant power are deployed in practice. This research provides evidence to show how State power was able to manufacture a “crisis” of learning at Moerewa School and to solicit public consent for their intervention actions through the manipulation of the media and New Zealand public discourse. Despite the Ministry of Education’s policy promises of transforming Māori education and schooling, their default position after dismantling Moerewa School was back to the State system – the very system that has historically failed Māori and is still failing Māori. The case study of Moerewa School showed a highly politicised community who stood up, and spoke back to power and the media.

2. This research raises questions about a number of neoliberal concepts that the Ministry employs freely in its policy and publicity promises. Concepts such as ‘accountability’, ‘choice’, ‘devolution’, ‘evidence based’, ‘culturally responsive’ and ‘self-managing’ should have positively impacted the Moerewa School developments. However this did not happen because the interpretation of ‘what counts’ in respect of these terms was controlled and influenced by the Ministry of Education to suit their own, narrowly defined purposes. This was in complete contradiction of their own policies; “Māori learning as Māori” or “Boards of Trustees having the responsibility to self-manage their Schools” as examples. Those publicly stated directions espoused in Ministry of Education policy, legislation, and documentation made no difference whatsoever in the situation that developed at Moerewa School, and were never upheld by their own officials.
3. This thesis adds new knowledge and understanding about the formal intervention process and the role of the Commissioner. The engagement process by the Ministry of Education, NZQA, ERO and the Commissioner

with school, community, students and Principal is perceived as highly problematic and seemingly unethical by community and other Principals.

4. This thesis challenges the current statutory intervention process and requires a review of the actual engagement processes and protocols. It also highlights the potential collusion of these central Government agencies to name and shame the school and not be the neutral policy public servants of their Ministers and government. They worked collectively to a highly politicised agenda. The Network Review processes started by the previous Labour Government may have set the scene for transforming the school, but the National Government's agenda was more devisive and reactionary.
5. This research recommends a new process for statutory intervention that learns from the issues that arose out of the Moerewa case. The major element of this new model is building a more respectful process that is mana enhancing rather than mana diminishing, and that proper accountabilities are built in for all parties including education system officials. As was noted in the previous chapter its focus is on restoring more responsibility and community accountability and also genuine power-sharing within an openly transparent process.

The limitations of the research

This research looks intensively at one school, and is focused on the perspectives of that school, as told through the voices of participants who were involved in various roles related to Moerewa School. I have made comparative links to other schools that have been in similar situations to cross reference, verify some of the claims and experiences of Moerewa. While this research is focused on one situation, it is clear that some of these damaging experiences are commonly experienced in other schooling sites. This research is deliberately narrow in its focus as it reveals a counter-narrative to the official hegemony in the public domain about Moerewa School that has been derived from the Ministry of Education and its officials. The

perspectives, interests and aspirations of Moerewa School, its students, its staff and wider community were marginalised and silenced by the power of the State during the time of the intervention in the school. For this reason it has been important to prioritise the voices of community rather than those of the Minister or Ministry of Education, or the Statutory Appointee. The perspectives of these education officials were well documented and took precedence during the period of the intervention, often causing stress, shame and hurt for the people they were targeting. Moerewa School's intervention was played out in the national media. This made our 'business' very public, adding further layers to the story, that included divisions both within, and outside the community. The other intervention examples discussed in this research were chosen because they had suffered a similar, high profile, experience. Two of these cases had taken their grievances to court (at huge personal cost) and had won against the Ministry of Education. This research has not looked at schools that may have had positive intervention experiences. Rather it has deliberately sought to contribute to the existing gap in the literature about the impact, personal and professional, experienced by schools as a result of formal intervention processes.

However, there are also many strengths that come out of this research. The research has been framed within a Kaupapa Māori approach. That is, it has put Māori aspirations at the centre of the study. The research approach has been located within kaupapa Māori methodologies (Smith, 1999). It has required the researcher taking appropriate account of the cultural context of the Ngāti Hine community, of understanding the cultural, language and tikanga nuances of the participants. These cultural skills are a necessary component of a Kaupapa Māori approach in regard to collecting the narratives and perspectives of a Māori community who live and practise their cultural being every minute, every day. This research adds another example of how culturally appropriate methodologies can be usefully and purposefully applied to engage with Māori communities.

I have also positioned myself as an *insider* in the research. This is part of a Kaupapa Māori research approach. As Smith noted at the *World Congress on Qualitative*

Research 2017, “Māori communities will often judge the validity of the research by how much the researcher actually identifies with the research, puts themselves in it and overtly owns the research.” That is Māori are often less concerned about “third person positioning” or claims to researcher neutrality and so on and are more concerned that the researcher is prepared to own their words and not pretend that they are invisible when they are not. In this sense, issues of researcher *neutrality* and *objectivity* are exported on to the reader to assess how well this has been done. A further gap which this research addresses is that other work written about statutory intervention in schools is mostly written from an outsider positioning. Smith (1999, p. 139) supports this position in her research:

Insider research has to be ethical and respectful, as reflexive and critical, as outsider research. It also needs to be humble. It needs to be humble because the researcher belongs to the community as a member with a different set of roles and relationships, status and position.

I hope that I have been able through this work to live up to these expectations and commitments.

This research strongly challenges the position that statutory interventions are working well. On the contrary, the intervention process that unfolded in Moerewa did great harm to students, community and teachers. It also, because of its high media profile, contributed to the ongoing damage to the reputation of Māori education and Māori educators, generally. Most of all, because the intervention was arguably *not* driven by aspects of school failure, but by the need to punish our advocacy against National Standards was viewed as problematic, the intervention was conducted in a way that caused great distress to the Senior students and their parents, staff, and community.

Personal voice

This thesis therefore has been written where my perspective as an ‘insider’ has been intentional. I have been able to collate the “Moerewa School’s” side of this story using my extensive knowledge and experience from being “in” the struggle. It

has been unexpectedly difficult for me to re-live this experience three and a half years since the Commissioner left Moerewa School, and reflections about the personal impact of this intervention on myself, my family, and my life and the other staff in the school is documented strongly throughout this work. As noted elsewhere, an important point that is reiterated throughout this thesis is the impact of this intervention on the students of the Senior Class. It is the usual practice of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority to protect students and to do their best not to damage or negatively impact students if issues about their work are raised. This was not the case with the students at Moerewa School. It is distressing to observe that the Minister of Education, the Ministry of Education, and NZQA all felt that it was appropriate to freeze these students' results, issue their downgraded results to the media, and choose to shame and cause stress to 17 students in such dramatic ways. Their schooling and their positive engagement in their education was brought to an abrupt halt by the intervention. Although they tried to stay together, and some found a pathway that kept them in learning, others of them never regained momentum and were lost to education altogether. The education authorities involved in the Moerewa School intervention certainly did not assist these students to reach their unlimited potential as we had expected they would.

Other principals who have had statutory interventions imposed in their schools, have generously shared their experiences with me. Many respondents in the online surveys commented about the difficulty they had in answering the survey questions, due to the emotion that the survey was raising for them. Some participants started the survey, and messaged me to say they would be unable to finish due to the trauma they were experiencing. It has been challenging to find other research about statutory interventions in schools that is written from the position of an insider. This research has exposed the deep and long-standing emotional impact that the subjects of the intervention feel, sometimes for years to follow. I have no doubt that decision-makers in Wellington consider this impact as part of the process to decide if a statutory intervention will be the appropriate decision to make, however it is one thing to consider the impact, and something else entirely to experience it.

Implications for Statutory Interventions

This research has identified the damage done to a school and its community as a result of a heavy-handed, unnecessary intervention imposed by the State, on a school that was doing education for Māori students differently. The strong intention of this research is to move forward from this position, and to propose an improved process for the State to be involved in school interventions in the future. The strongest recommendation from this research is that future interventions in schools should do no harm – and work to more humanistic and ethical principles. This was not the case at Moerewa School, and at other schools who shared their stories as part of the research. The impact on students, communities, on staff, the personal impact, and damage to the professional reputations of those involved needs immediate attention and re-thinking. The imbalance of power and operational protocols between a State appointed Commissioner (who, we should remember, simply replaces the Board of Trustees), and the School Principal needs to be addressed. The Commissioner's position should not be seen as a role with all the power and authority without some accountabilities. A clear delineation between governance, leadership and management responsibilities seems like a simple requirement, however, this was not the experience of the schools in this study. The information gathered in this research identified that a consistent difficulty was the lack of professional respect for the Principal in a statutory intervention system.

A new model of interaction and progression through a statutory intervention is proposed and explained in Chapter 8. This new model uses principles of restoration, transparency, power-sharing, and communication as basic tenets, utilising Māori process-mapping frameworks to explain the sequence and stages, and to identify roles and responsibilities. The current model for statutory intervention uses principles of imposition, interrogation, deficit, power, and authority. These are fundamentally different positions. There is the concern that if the attitudes of the Minister of Education, and the Ministry of Education towards statutory intervention do not change, there is still the potential in the new model proposed in this

research, for the statutory appointee, and government agencies to see themselves in the power position over schools. This leaves open the possibility that certain groups or individuals can still be incentivised to use the statutory appointment to stay longer than necessary in a community. This will only change if the accountability measures are significantly different, and the introduction of the Whakawhirinaki (Independent Moderator) role is well supported by the Minister of Education and the Ministry of Education officials.

Definitions of Success

The introduction of education policy designed to define academic success in narrow terms, was problematic during the Moerewa School intervention. The school's success was defined only by NCEA credits and National Standards scores by the Ministry of Education and audit officials that were brought in to constantly evaluate the progress of the school. There would always be the token attempts at the beginning of any meeting to be interested in other philosophies and culturally competent pedagogies the school was promoting, however by the end of the meeting the only thing that mattered was percentages and literacy and numeracy assessment data. While the school was obviously happy to be accountable using these measures, the obsession by the officials to focus entirely on literacy and numeracy measures as the only definition of real success, rendered all other indicators to the margins.

If the Ministry of Education and the Education Review Office are serious about the intent of their own Māori Education Strategy, *Ka Hikitia*, then there is still much to do to make the link between Durie's (2003) comments about the Māori potential approach espoused in those strategy documents, and the measures used by their employees to track achievement when working in schools. Using the current system for measuring success, we perpetuate schools providing an "incomplete" education for many Māori learners:

If after twelve or so years of formal education a Māori youth were totally unprepared to interact within te ao Māori, then, no matter

what else had been learned, education would have been incomplete. (Durie, 2003, p. 199)

Moerewa School's pedagogy and organisation was intentionally designed to address this imbalance. It was a constant point of contention when the Commissioner and other education advisors, did not see this as a priority and required us to return to a tired traditional view about what Māori learners "need" to fit into their narrow definitions of success. This thesis pushes the education academy to step up their interrogation of the reasons why Māori students are disproportionately represented in the underachievement data in our whitestream/mainstream schools, and to challenge the schooling system to urgently adapt and look more at itself for those answers, rather than requiring the students to fit into models that quite clearly do not work. A Year 13 male student from Kia Aroha College summed this up perfectly in his research presentation to the New Zealand Association for Research in Education conference at Waikato University in 2017. When highlighting the over-representation of CoL (Communities of Learning) targets that are aimed at improving Māori boys' writing he simply asked "Why can't teachers teach us properly?" The problem with the disproportionate representation of Māori students in the statistics of underachievement in New Zealand, is not about the inability of Māori students to learn and succeed, but more about the inability of the system to change and adapt to meet the needs of these learners.

Conclusion

The Moerewa School experience clearly demonstrates the promise of self-managing schools where parents are legitimately able to have more say over their child's education, was a myth. In fact what is devolved to Māori parents and communities is the responsibility to be involved, but only narrow forms of accountability are released from the grip of the State. The reality is the State remains in control and has complete power and jurisdiction over resources.

In the New Zealand schooling system, colonisation has not disappeared, despite the rhetoric. Dominant Western social, cultural and political power relationships

continue to be perpetuated and reproduced within the hegemony of the current mainstream education system, and associated advisory agencies.

There is much future work to be completed as a result of the findings of this research. We will want to monitor the effectiveness of the updated Education Act in terms of enacting positive change with statutory interventions in schools. Will the Ministry of Education recognise there is a fundamental problem with the current model for Statutory Interventions and be bold enough to make changes? How can we think of different models where we can address hypothetical school decline early, and offer wrap around support for the school and its community, in ways highlighted in the Aka Tokerau school support model included in this thesis? We need to look for stories of successful interventions in schools, where solutions are co-constructed and all stakeholders feel the impact has been positive? Underpinning these questions about future work examining statutory interventions in schools, are the fundamental questions about the dominance of the State in schooling and its reluctance to relinquish power and control, and the systemic failure of the education system that are mainstream/whitestream schools, that continue to be unwilling to look at different approaches and structures that can make a difference for its Māori learners.

To conclude, I think it is fitting that the final word come from one of the students in the Senior Class at Moerewa School in 2012. This young man is able to show the importance of what we were trying to do, from his perspective. His words demonstrate a wisdom beyond his 21 years, and describe profoundly the impact of his time at Moerewa School. All young Māori learners are capable of thinking as this young man does. The problem that occurs is that our schooling system inflicts irreparable damage to Māori learners early on in that relationship, that inhibits this inherent and often unrealised potential. The Moerewa School situation shows that two Ministers of Education and their Ministry of Education prioritised supporting this broken schooling system, over what worked best for the students involved. We cannot forget their complicit role in the 'miseducation' those 17 students received.

To this day there is still the selected few adults and students that push against the structures and systems that have been placed upon kids in their schooling life, knowing that there is a better way to deliver knowledge, and giving the students not only a word for word understanding of a subject, but also getting hands on experience with the topic, giving more of a meaningful and spiritual connection to learning. Also the importance of getting a Māori perspective so we can grow as young Māori scholars with Māori being beneath us as a foundation so, when we do fall, we fall back on whakapapa, whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, and aroha, giving us a nice soft landing surface so we can get straight back up. This gave the students a greater understanding of themselves, not only in the world but their importance in their homes and community. (MT, 2017)

Glossary

Notes on the Glossary

Where it is necessary to understand a concept or sentence at the time of reading, meanings of Māori words have also been provided in the text. Meanings of Māori words have been provided in parentheses after their first use, unless they appear in a quotation. Other languages used in the text have had the meaning provided in parenthesis after the word or in a footnote.

The English meanings of Māori words in the following list are taken primarily from the *Te Aka Māori-English, English-Māori Dictionary and Index* (Moorfield, 2011, online version). (Moorfield, 2011 online version) Many words have a range of meanings. Those provided below are the meanings relevant to the context within which the word is used in this text. Māori titles of some of the literature, organisations, and/or programmes are also included in the glossary.

Aka Tokerau	Northland Māori principals Association
Ako	learn, teach
Ako Māori	Culturally preferred pedagogies and practices
Akonga Māori	Māori student
Aotearoa	common Māori name for New Zealand often translated as “the land of the long white cloud”
Hapū	kinship group, sub-tribe
Hikitia	to lift up, raise
He kanohi kitea	The seen faces
Houhou i te rongo	Healing, restore peace
Hui	gathering
Hui-a-kura	School meeting
Iwi	extended kinship group, tribe, nation, people
<i>Ka Hikitia</i>	The Māori Education Strategy 2008 - 2012
Kanohi kitea	To have a physical presence, be seen, seen face
Kanohi ki te kanohi	Face to face
Kapa haka	Māori cultural performing arts group
Kaupapa Māori	Māori ideology - a philosophical doctrine, incorporating the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of Māori society.

Kaupapa whānau	Group of people linked with a common association
<i>“Kia piki ake i nga raruraru o te kainga”</i>	The mediation of socio-economic difficulties
Kōhanga Reo	“Language nest” - Māori language preschool.
Kōrero	to speak, a speech, story
Ko wai au	Who am I
Kura	school
Kura-a-iwi	Tribal education
Kura Kaupapa Māori	school operating under Māori custom and using Māori as the medium of instruction
Mamae	Hurt/Pain
Manaakitanga	hospitality, kindness
Mana Wahine	Women’s power/authority
Māori	Indigenous person of Aotearoa New Zealand.
Mātauranga māori	Māori knowledge
Mokopuna	grandchild
Noho	Sleep over
Pākehā	New Zealander of European descent
Papatūānuku	Earth mother
Puna Reo	Māori early childhood centre
Rangatiratanga	sovereignty, chieftainship, right to exercise authority,
Reo Māori	The Māori language
Taonga tuku iho	Validation of cultural aspirations and identity
Tataritanga	Thinking and making meaning
Te Aho Matua	Foundation document and principles for Kura Kaupapa Māori
Te Akatea	Māori principals Association
Te Kotahitanga	Unity
<i>Te Marautanga o Aotearoa</i>	the NZ national curriculum for Māori-medium schools
Te Reo Māori	Māori language
<i>Te Tiriti o Waitangi</i>	Treaty of Waitangi – treaty signed in February 1840 by representatives of the British Crown and various Māori chiefs from the North Island of NZ
Te Tai Tokerau	Northland, New Zealand
Te Whakahaumanutanga	to revive, restore to health, revitalise, rejuvenate
Tikanga	correct procedure, custom
Tino Rangatiratanga	self determination
Tūrangawaewae	Place where one has rights of belonging through kinship and whakapapa.
Wahine	woman
Waka	canoe, vehicle
Wānanga	to meet and discuss. Seminar, conference, forum, a tertiary institution, school
Whakapapa	genealogy

Whakapapa whānau	group of people linked by kinship
Whakatauākī	proverb, saying
Whakawhanaungatanga	to build or maintain relationships
Whakawhirinaki	to lean against something, trust in, depend on, rely on.
Whānau	to be born, extended family group

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Appendices

Appendix A



INFORMATION SHEET FOR INTERVIEW & FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

School of Indigenous Graduate Studies
Private Bag 1006
13 Domain Rd
Whakatane
Date

TITLE OF PROJECT: *Te ohonga ake i taku moemoeā, ko te puāwaitanga o ngā whakaaro.*
The Moerewa School Story.

Date

Tena koe _____

I am the Executive Director of Student Services (Tumuratonga) at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa. I was the Principal of Moerewa School from 2005 to 2014, the last years during the period of statutory intervention from the Ministry of Education. I am currently enrolled as a student with Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi in their Doctor of Māori Development & Advancement (MDA) programme.

The purpose of my research is to tell the authentic story of what happened at Moerewa School during the period April 2012, to May 2014. I will also write about the lessons that have been learnt – with recommendations about different ways that Statutory Interventions could occur in schools. I hope that the final thesis tells a story that our Moerewa School whānau and community can utilise as a record of a part of the history of Moerewa School. This research is guided by two research questions:

1. How did Moerewa School support their community's aspirations for relevant education, as Māori?
2. What were the barriers that impacted on the realisation of the Moerewa community's dream and what lessons can be learned from this experience?

Participation

Information will be gathered through documentation that already exists in the school's regular records. A major part of this story was played out in the media and I will be utilising these news broadcasts and stories. During the intervention others sought information through the Official Information Act, and I have access to some of this documentation. I will also be able to draw heavily on my own personal knowledge of those years and their impact on the school.

However, the most important information will be from those who were personally affected by this intervention: the students in the Senior Class, teachers, wider staff, former board members and whānau. At a community hui, convened by the current Board of Trustees on 21 July 2017, it was very clear that the hurt from this action has not gone away. The Board and the community have pledged their full support for my research and for the telling of this story.

I am hoping to collect community information in the following ways:

1. An online community survey open to anyone who wants to participate
2. An online survey for the students who were in the Senior Class and who were most affected by the intervention. I will also conduct a semi-structured interview with a focus group of students who are available, and are still in the community.
3. Semi-structured focus group interviews with whānau members of these students – with those whānau who are available. These whānau members will also have the option of participating in the online survey.
4. Semi-structured focus group interviews with staff members who worked at Moerewa School during this time. These staff members will also have the option of participating in an online survey to give them a choice. Some staff have now moved away from Moerewa.
5. Interviews with Principal colleagues who were aware of the intervention and its impact, and also with other Principals who have been the subject of a Statutory Intervention. An online survey will be set up as an alternative to these face to face interviews to give the participants different options.

Interviews and focus group hui will be conducted in venues selected by the participants in the community of Moerewa. These are expected to be one hour to 1.5 hours long. Subsequent discussion to feedback or discuss information should take less time. Your participation in the study will mean contributing to two separate activities:

1. Participating in a one-to-one interview or focus group discussion (approx 1 to 1.5 hours)
2. Reviewing your transcript and providing further feedback or input

As a doctoral student at Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangī, I am bound by the following ethical guidelines:

Verbal consent

This will be obtained from meeting participants prior to these meetings and, where specific comments are used written consent from those participants will be used. Where it might be useful to have more detailed comment participants will be asked, prior to the

meeting, to agree to audio recordings of these meetings and discussions. Where these regular meetings are relevant to this study, participants will be advised beforehand and anyone not participating in this study will be given the opportunity to withdraw. Participants who are 19 years of age and over will also be invited to participate in semi-structured face to face interviews if necessary.

Participation in these interviews will be completely voluntary. Participants will be advised of their right to withdraw at any time up to six weeks following the final sharing back of the information.

Confidentiality

Each participant has the right to be anonymous and to use a pseudonym, however names will be used if participants prefer to do so. All raw data and evidence will observe requirements of confidentiality. Participants are informed that despite the best efforts of the researcher, absolute anonymity and confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. The community setting where participants are known to each other may result in participants being identifiable in the final report. Audio tapes used will be transcribed by the researcher. Any raw research data, including audio tapes or digital recordings, will be kept securely by the researcher and eventually destroyed, or returned to the research participants if requested.

Findings

Findings will be submitted to Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi as a doctoral thesis and may be subsequently submitted to journals for publication or as papers for conference presentations. Findings will be shared with the Moerewa School Board of Trustees, and the community of Moerewa

Your rights

If you agree to participate your rights are as follows:

- to refuse to answer any questions at any time
- to ask questions about the study at any time
- to provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used (unless you give permission to the researcher)
- to be given access to a summary of the findings of the study when it is finished
- to be given a copy of any material, including audio recordings if you ask for one
- to have the right to withdraw up to six weeks following the final sharing back of the information with you

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research.

Ngā manaakitanga

Keri Milne-Ihimaera
Contact: 0278072778
Email: keri.mihi@gmail.com

Supervisors:

Distinguished Professor Graham Smith
Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi
Domain Road
Whakatane

Associate Professor Richard Smith
Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi
Domain Road
Whakatane
Email: richard.smith@wananga.ac.nz
Phone: 07 306-3275

Appendix B



CONSENT FORM

THIS CONSENT FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF FIVE (5) YEARS

TITLE OF PROJECT: *Te ohonga ake i taku moemoeā, ko te puāwaitanga o ngā whakaaro. The Moerewa School Story.*

- I have read the covering Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.
- I know that my participation is entirely voluntary. I understand I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time up to six weeks following the sharing back of the information with me, and to decline to answer any particular questions.
- I agree to provide information to the researcher on the understanding that my name will not be used without my permission. The information will be used only for this research and publications and presentations arising from this research project.
- I understand that it is not possible for anonymity and confidentiality to be guaranteed in the final thesis. I also understand that I can choose to have my real name used in any quoted references in this study if that is my preference.
- I understand that this information will be gathered during online surveys and/or focus group or individual interviews.

Audio recording:

☐ I agree ☐ I do not agree

- To interviews where I am a participant being audio recorded but understand this will be made clear and approval sought prior to the meeting taking place.
- I also understand that I have the right to ask for the audio recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview.
- I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signed: _____

Full Name: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C

Letter seeking approval from the Moerewa School Board of Trustees, August 2017



August 2017

Tēnā koe e te Heamana

Ngā mihi nui ki a koe i runga i ngā āhuatanga o te wā.

As you are aware, I am currently enrolled with Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi in their Doctorate of Māori Development & Advancement (MDA) programme.

This letter is to formally give the Board of Trustees information about my Doctoral study. I would be really happy to come to a Board of Trustees meeting and speak to the board about this letter, and the briefing paper attached, if you would like.

The briefing paper (attached) is an overview of the intentions of my study. I felt it was important that the Board understands the full nature of my research proposal.

The Briefing Document explains that the purpose of my research is to tell the authentic story of what happened at Moerewa School during the period April 2012, to May 2014. I will also write about the lessons that have been learnt – with recommendations about different ways that Statutory Interventions could occur in schools. I hope that the final thesis document tells a story that our Moerewa School whānau and community can utilise as a record of a part of the history of Moerewa School.

This research is guided by these two research questions:

5. How did Moerewa School support their community's aspirations for relevant education, as Māori?
6. What were the barriers that impacted on the realisation of the Moerewa community's dream, and what lessons can be learned from this experience?

It is not the intention of this research project to re-open issues and events that are passed – but rather to critically reflect, and learn from these. Other schools have been involved in similar situations and I may be able to compare their stories with what took place at Moerewa School. The issues at Moerewa are bigger than one school, and a key undertaking of the research is to understand the systemic issues that occurred. Therefore, I believe the research proposal is one of low risk to the school. There is much to be learnt from this study that can contribute to a positive future for Māori education generally.

I would like to ask the Board of Trustees for their support of my research. The support from the Board doesn't mean the Trustees need to do anything. I would commit to providing the Board with regular updates (if you would like) to keep you all informed as to how the research was progressing. Once the thesis was completed, I would fulfil my responsibility to present this research to the

Moerewa School Board of Trustees and possibly the Moerewa School community if necessary. I would provide a copy of the Thesis to place in the school archives.

I learnt at the recent Moerewa Community 'Houhou i te Rongo' meeting – that the Board of Trustees intends to support this research. However, I will need this support formally documented from the Board.

If you are unable to offer your support, then I will re-shape my work accordingly, and the study will continue within the constraints put upon me. There is a great deal of information already in the public domain that is available to inform the research. My preference is that I conduct this research with the Board's full knowledge, and backing. I would like to be able to work positively with you to ensure there is a level of comfort for both the Board and myself, and produce a thesis that documents an important part of the history of Moerewa School.

I will spend the rest of 2017 continuing to research and write my thesis. I look forward to graduating in 2018. I was accepted into the programme while I was the Principal of Moerewa School in 2014 and much of the early research has been completed.

I look forward to being able to work on this research study with you all, and presenting something that documents our collective story.

Ngā manaakitanga

Keri Milne-Ihimaera


For BoT Chairperson:

- *Please send me a copy of the section of the Board of Trustees minutes that provides the formal documentation necessary to verify the Board of Trustees' decision to support my research.*
- *Please let me know if you would like me to come and discuss this research with the Board.*

cc. Principal of Moerewa School

Appendix D

Copy of Minutes from the Moerewa School Board of Trustees Meeting, 6 June, 2017, approving this research and offering support.

<div style="text-align: center;"> MINUTES OF MEETING Moerewa School Board of Trustees Meeting 6 June 2017 Start 6:50pm</div> <p><u>Board of trustee members in attendance:</u> Andrea Wikaire, Charn Ngawati, Margie Mathews, Suzi Hati and Jason Tane.</p> <p><u>Karakia:</u> Margie</p> <p><u>General Business:</u> Read Te Kauimua's email. Keri's right to tell that story, the historical value etc. But she didn't – we respect her for that.</p> <p>Best that it come from her. For the staff For the kids For the community</p> <p>Some will agree, some will disagree. But we need to heal, provide closure, move on.</p> <p>Jason to contact Keri to share our thinking and offer support around he completing her studies.</p> <p>Would be great to see her in our school, healing, mixing with our community.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Community forum around healing the intervention2. Pool3. Lucas road site <p>Timeline it all.</p> <p>Meeting closed.</p> <p>Signed <u>Andrea Wikaire</u> Date <u>13/09/17</u> (Chairperson)</p>
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Appendix E

Letter from the Board of Trustees of Kia Aroha College, dated 23 August, 2017, giving approval and support for this research.

Kia Aroha College
Te Whanau o Tupuranga • Fanau Pasifika
Developing Warrior-Scholars



23rd August 2017

Keri Milne-Ihimaera
105b Nixon Street
Hamilton

Dear Keri

Thank you for your letter dated 21st August 2017, which was submitted at our Board of Trustees meeting on the 22nd August.

The Board of Trustees of Kia Aroha College, gives approval and our full support for you to utilize any official documents and communications (including Official Information Request documentation) for your research.

The Board wishes you all the best with your research, and looks forward to receiving a copy of your thesis when it is completed

Yours sincerely



Julie Stewart
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

51 Othello Drive, Otara, Auckland 2023, New Zealand
Phone: (09) 274 5807 | Fax: (09) 274 5942
Email: office@kiaaroha.school.nz | Web: www.kiaaroha.school.nz

Appendix F

Focus Group Questions

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

These questions will be used to guide interviews and focus group hui

- Mihimihi and whakawhanaungatanga
1. Ko wai? No hea?
 2. Can you describe how you were involved in the Moerewa School experience? What was your specific role/s?
 3. How did this experience affect you personally?
 4. How did this experience impact on others – your whānau, your career, the community, the school?
 5. Can you explain what the Moerewa community wanted for their children at Moerewa School prior to the Minister of Education's intervention?
 6. What indicators were there that showed you the school was, or was not, meeting these community aspirations?
 7. I am interested in hearing your own story/stories of what happened at Moerewa School before, during, and after the intervention by the Minister of Education. (this might be as a group – e.g. former students, as a whānau, as staff, or as individuals).
 8. Did you agree or disagree with the intervention imposed by the Minister of Education – what are your reasons?
 9. In your opinion, what did the intervention achieve?
 10. Five years since the intervention began, what do you think the long term effect has been on Moerewa School and the Moerewa community?
 11. What do you think other communities can learn from what happened at Moerewa?
 12. Is there anything you want others to know, that might not have been covered by these questions, or might not have been spoken of during or after the intervention?

Appendix G

Online Community Survey

Keri Milne-Ihimaera Research Survey

1. Name (optional)
2. Email address (optional)
3. Phone Number (optional)
4. I have read the Information Sheet and understand the details of the study. I understand that I may ask questions at any time. I know that my participation is entirely voluntary. I understand I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time up to six weeks following the final sharing back of the information with me, and to decline to answer any particular questions.
 - Yes
 - No
5. I agree to provide information to the researcher on the understanding the information will be used only for this research and publications arising from this research project.
 - Yes
 - No
6. If I have provided my name in Question 1, I understand I can choose how this is used in the thesis. Please choose from the options below. If I choose not to use my real name I understand that it is not possible for anonymity and confidentiality to be guaranteed in the final thesis.
 - I prefer to use my full name.
 - I prefer to use my first name only.
 - I do not want my real name to be used at all (any quotes from your answers will be referenced as "Survey Respondent")
7. I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the information sheet and on this page.
 - Yes
 - No
8. Please enter the date you are giving this consent (today's date)
9. How were you involved in Moerewa School at the time of Statutory Intervention? Please tick as many answers that apply to you.
 - A student in the Senior Class
 - A teacher at Moerewa School
 - A support staff member at Moerewa School
 - A parent of a student (students) in the Senior Class
 - A parent of student/s not in the Senior Class
 - A community member
 - An elected BOT member
 - A Northland Principal
 - Other

10. BEFORE the Statutory Intervention which of the following statements do you think were true of Moerewa School?

- There was a strong partnership between the school and the community
- The school was carrying out the wishes of the community
- The community had supported the change of class to keep Years 9 and 10 (Forms 3 & 4) at Moerewa School
- The community supported the vision to keep students at the school through to Year 13
- The school was viewed positively by the community
- Children enjoyed going to school
- There was high quality learning at Moerewa School
- The Senior Class was regarded highly by the community
- Whānau had confidence in the school
- The Board of Trustees acted on the hopes and dreams of the community and whānau
- Other (please write in any other statements you think apply)

11. AFTER the Statutory Intervention which of the following statements do you think were true of Moerewa School?

- There was a strong partnership between the school and the community
- The school was carrying out the wishes of the community
- The community had supported the change of class to keep Years 9 and 10 (Forms 3 & 4) at Moerewa School
- The community supported the vision to keep students at the school through to Year 13
- The school was viewed positively by the community
- Children enjoyed going to school
- There was high quality learning at Moerewa School
- The Senior Class was regarded highly by the community
- Whānau had confidence in the school
- The Board of Trustees acted on the hopes and dreams of the community and whanau

12. Did you agree or disagree with the intervention imposed by the Minister of Education – what are your reasons?

- Completely agreed with the Intervention
- Agreed with some aspects of the Intervention
- Neither agreed nor disagreed
- Disagreed with some parts of the Intervention
- Completely disagreed with the Intervention

13. Other than the reasons given by the Ministry of Education, what is your personal opinion about why this situation happened at Moerewa School?

14. In your opinion, what did the intervention achieve?

15. Five years since the Intervention began, what do you think the long term effect has been on Moerewa School and the Moerewa community?

16. How did this experience affect you personally?
17. Is there anything you want others to know, that might not have been covered by these questions, or might not have been spoken of during or after the Intervention?

Appendix H

Online Intervention Principals Survey

Keri Milne-Ihimaera Research Survey: Intervention Experience

1. Name (optional)
2. Email address (optional)
3. Phone Number (optional)
4. I have read the Information Sheet and understand the details of the study. I understand that I may ask questions at any time. I know that my participation is entirely voluntary. I understand I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time up to six weeks following the final sharing back of the information with me, and to decline to answer any particular questions.
 - Yes
 - No
5. I agree to provide information to the researcher on the understanding the information will be used only for this research and publications arising from this research project.
 - Yes
 - No
6. If I have provided my name in Question 1, I understand I can choose how this is used in the thesis. Please choose from the options below. If I choose not to use my real name I understand that it is not possible for anonymity and confidentiality to be guaranteed in the final thesis.
 - I prefer to use my full name.
 - I prefer to use my first name only.
 - I do not want my real name to be used at all (any quotes from your answers will be referenced as "Survey Respondent")
7. I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the information sheet and on this page.
 - Yes
 - No
8. Please enter the date you are giving this consent (today's date)
From the responses in this section I hope to compare the Moerewa School situation with the stories of other schools in similar situations, to identify any differences, or any common themes across these experiences? While this research is primarily about Moerewa School, your stories will be extremely valuable in providing that wider picture.

Your experience of Statutory Interventions

9. What type of intervention was imposed on your school?
 - Special Adviser
 - Limited Statutory Manager
 - Commissioner
 - Other (please specify)
10. What year did this intervention start in your school?

11. What was the purpose of the intervention, and what did the Ministry of Education say it would achieve?
12. Other than the reasons given by the Ministry of Education, do you have any differing personal opinion about why this situation happened at your school?
13. What formal notification did you or the Board of Trustees receive from the Ministry of Education outlining their concerns before the Statutory Intervention was imposed?
14. What was the impact of the intervention (positive or negative), on the school, on you professionally and personally, and on the community. Were there any other impacts?
15. In your opinion, as the professional leader of the school, how else could this situation have been managed?
16. What did you learn from this intervention?
17. How did your intervention end?
18. Do you know of any recent changes to legislation that has improved the Statutory Intervention process? Please give reasons for your answer.
19. Is there anything you want others to know, that might not have been covered by these questions, or might not have been on record during or after the Intervention

Appendix I

TWWoA REC Approval Letter



Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi

EC2016/01/001
ECR2016/01/001

20.02.2017

Keri Milne-Ihimaera
Te Wānanga o Aotearoa
320 Factory Road
TE AWAMUTU 3800

Tēna koe,

Re: Ethics Research Application EC2016.01.001

Thank you for your re-submission, the Chairman of the Ethics Research Committee of Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi has re-considered your application. I am pleased to advise that your submission has been approved however the committee is expecting to receive a support letter from the Board of Trustees of Moerewa School.

You are advised to contact your supervisor. The Ethics Research Committee wishes you well in your research.

Ngā mihi nui

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Nathan Matthews'.

Professor Nathan Matthews
Chairman
Ethics Committee
Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi

Private Bag 1006
Francis st
Whakatane 3158
Aotearoa

Waea / Telephone : (07) 307-1467
Waea Whakaahua / Fax : (07) 307-1475
Ipurangi / Email : ssc@wananga.ac.nz
PaeTukutuku/Website : www.wananga.ac.nz

Appendix J

Letter from Dr Karen Poutasi (NZQA), 10 December 2017



11 December 2017

Keri Milne-Ihimaera
keri.mihi@gmail.com

Dear Ms Milne-Ihimaera

Official Information Act Request

I refer to your request of 11 November 2017 under the Official Information Act 1982 for the following information:

- 1. The names of schools required to send in more than 80% of their students' NCEA work to NZQA for moderation, for any one given year.*
- 2. For each of these schools identified, please also submit the percentage of work required, and the year when this occurred.*

National external moderation provides assurance that assessment decisions, in relation to internally-assessed standards, are consistent nationally. As part of NZQA's ongoing quality assurance process, approximately 100,000 samples of student work are moderated annually. The standards moderated are from the range of internally-assessed standards that schools with consent to assess can select to use in their assessment programmes.

NZQA rules require submission for moderation of eight samples of student work for selected achievement standards, and four samples of student work for selected unit standards, for each school that holds consent to assess. Except for very small schools, this represents a small proportion of their students' NCEA work.

NZQA can require a school to submit a higher proportion of their students' work to NZQA in particular subject areas if NZQA has significant concerns about assessment practice in that subject area.

NZQA is not aware of any school with consent to assess where more than 80% of their students' NCEA work has been submitted for moderation. However, accurate current and historical summary data by school on the percentage of student work requested is not readily available nor easily collated.

In 2011, NZQA did require one school to submit more than 80% of their students' NCEA work for moderation. That school, Moerewa School, did not hold consent to assess at the time, nor did the school have an approved subcontracting agreement with another school with consent to assess to undertake assessments on their behalf. NZQA is not aware of any other instances of this nature in the last five years.

If you believe we have misinterpreted your request, please contact Elizabeth Templeton in the Office of the Chief Executive, email elizabeth.templeton@nzqa.govt.nz or telephone (04) 463 3339.

If you are dissatisfied with our response, you have the right, under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act 1982, to lodge a complaint with the Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Poutasi', written in a cursive style.

Karen Poutasi (Dr)
Chief Executive

Appendix K

Datasets: Breakdown of participants

Online Research Survey

Former student in the Senior Class	4
Teacher at Moerewa School	7
Support staff member at Moerewa School	4
Parent of a student (students) in the Senior Class	2
Parent of student/s not in the Senior Class	3
Community member	10
Elected BOT member	4
Northland principal	4
	27 respondents (multiple roles)

Online Research Survey: Intervention Experience

Four principals who had experienced interventions responded to the online survey. Others commented via email but chose not to participate in the survey.

Limited Statutory Manager	2
Specialist Advisor, then Commissioner	1
Limited Statutory Manager, then Commissioner	1
	4 survey respondents

Focus Group Interviews

Staff	7
Community (parents, grandparents, former staff and BOT)	6
Local Principals	2

Community Meeting 21 July, 2017

Attended by approx. 50 people: former and current staff, students, parents, BOT members, community members