



TE WHARE WĀNANGA O  
AWANUIĀRANGI

IMPACT OF AN EQUITABLE,  
HOLISTIC, WHOLE SCHOOL  
APPROACH TO WELLBEING  
ON YOUNG CHILDREN  
AND RANGATAHI (EARLY  
ADOLESCENCE) LEARNING  
SUCCESS

YOLANDA JULIES  
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*A thesis presented to Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi in fulfilment of  
the requirements for the degree of Doctor Philosophy in Education, Te Whare  
Wānanga o Awanuiārangi*

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# DECLARATION

## DECLARATION

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Yolanda Julies

Signature:.....

Date:.....01.12.23.....

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I know someone loved me.....

*When they did not make me feel like I needed to compromise my brokenness with their wholeness, they accepted I was a work in progress.*

*I did not need to change or alter myself to be seen, heard, or understood. My passions did not intimidate them. Instead, they clapped and celebrated me like I was their dream. They felt me, and when they could not, they gave me the space I needed to breathe. They brought patience, peace, and bliss. I know someone loved me when they loved me in my love language, not theirs. (The Feels, the Moon, and my Soul)- Sara Sheehan).*

This is how I feel about you all, you are special and deserve to be loved and nurtured.

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## PERSONAL POSITIONING (TUAKIRI)

Kia ora e te whanau  
Ko Jacob Daniels tōku matua  
Ko Louise Daniels tōku whaea  
Ko Brent Mitchell taku hoa tāne  
Ko Lerina Julies taku tamāhine  
Ko Levi rāua ko Leeroy ako mokopuna  
No South African ahau engari, ko Te Tairāwhiti tōku kainga i naia nei.  
He Tuamaki ki te Kura Reo Rua o Waikirikiri mo te, tekau ma iwa tau  
Ko Yolanda Julies ahau  
Nau mai haere mai ki te korero mo te kaupapa rangahau i tēnei rā.  
Nō reira tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa

This research is reflective of and underpinned by personal experiences lived and seen in the daily realm of my work setting and context. I am currently the Tumuaki of Te Kura Reo Rua o Waikirikiri and have been here for nineteen years. I have previously taught in South Africa for twenty years before embarking on my journey to New Zealand in January 1999. I started my New Zealand teaching journey in Taumarunui at Tarrangover Primary School. This was my first Māori Medium Cultural experience in teaching. After 2 years at this kura I was offered a Principalship position at Rere School in Gisborne. Having spent 5 years at this kura, I then took up the position of Tumuaki at my current kura, making history as the first South African to be appointed in a Ngāti Porou Kura.

The journey at Te Kura Reo Rua o Waikirikiri had been challenging but had also opened my eyes to the inequality in education for Māori students. Being in a Decile one school has opened my eyes to the social injustices and inequality for Māori students and how this affects their wellbeing at Kura. I am daily exposed to the conflicting world that my students dwell within as the school and home norms are in total opposition to each other. I daily comment my students for being at kura and the resilience that they display despite adverse circumstances they daily experience. I am full of admiration for a dedicated staff who give of their all each day to our very deserving tamariki.

During the covid 2020 experience, these underlying needs of students were highlighted and brought to the forefront more explicitly. It exposed the inequality in certain family's socio-economic conditions and the effect it has on young adolescent development as economic crisis negatively affects families. Parents and family life are the foundations for building an adolescent's personality and identity, values and social norms that forms the basis for them making choices in terms of their social behaviour. It is well known that there are racial and ethnic disparities in poverty rates that directly affect adolescent development. This is very evident in the school community that I serve as a principal.

As a non-Māori individual, I am very cautiously aware of my personal positioning whilst proposing to do this research in a Māori setting within a Māori community with Māori learners. Being an indigenous South African, married to an indigenous Canadian Indian from the Ojibwe tribe, I am respectfully aware of how I traverse and interact across different cultural spaces.

I, therefore, had in-depth conversations with three of our kuia (kaumatua and teachers and advisors of our kura) about my role as a non-Māori researcher proposing to do Kaupapa Māori research. It has been a soul-searching exercise, however with their blessing and assurance that my established relationships and given commitment to our kura for 19 years will demonstrate my sincerity and commitment to our learners. This has given me the courage to pursue with this thesis. I am, therefore, hopeful that I will be able to do justice to the expectation of my school community and whānau and their confidence in me to respect and follow the principles of Tikanga Māori.

My personal koha and commitment to participatory kura, teachers and leaders is to share my research knowledge through presentations in principal forums, workshops with teachers, boards and whānau to support them with the development of wellbeing practices within their kura. I have already presented initial findings and shared our kura wellbeing journey to date to three beginner principal's forums and to our Kahui Ako leaders and teachers.

## ABSTRACT

To have future thriving societies we need thriving young people today; tamariki (children) and rangatahi (young adults) who can positively shape and interact with the world around them. However, our current school system is not working for young people themselves which impacts on society. Unfortunately, not all young people get the same chances to succeed, and most are not being well prepared for the future (Berryman & Eley, 2019). The importance of student wellbeing to positive youth development is widely accepted, despite little consensus of what it means for youth to be well in school. We all recognise that wellbeing and academic achievement are compatible educational goals however, a few education systems have clearly established how wellbeing can be meaningfully and purposefully implemented in educational spaces and contexts.

Educators working with children and young people are perfectly placed to make a difference to students who have experienced trauma. Neuroscience shows that one of the most important ways to help children and young people to heal and get well from the impact of trauma is through developing connected relationships and a psychologically safe schooling environment. Given that the relationship between mental health and academic achievement is bidirectional and highly correlated, a trauma-informed school nurtures this relationship while maintaining its primary focus on educational outcomes. Teacher training, therefore, should consider including holistic wellbeing models that are inclusive of culture, social and emotional learning, and Trauma-informed approaches which can potentially be implemented through school structures, systems, and environments.

Although school welfare agencies play an important role in schools, teachers spend most of their time with students in the school environment, and therefore, have more knowledge and insight about student-wellbeing. Teachers continually report an increase in school-related issues such as behavioural and emotional problems that occurs in children and young adults that effect their schoolwork. Creating a supportive and safe school environment that is conducive to learning whilst simultaneously promoting the mental, emotional, and social health and wellbeing of young people is an important part of schooling. Setting specific, targeted interventions, provided within a whole-school, trauma-informed framework, address the needs

of students who require additional support. Social and emotional competencies taught, modelled, and practiced lead to positive student wellbeing outcomes that are important for success in school and in life.

To assess the effectiveness of school-based mental, emotional, and social health promotion and interventions, it is essential to understand the views of school professionals on student wellbeing activity in schools. A whole school approach to student wellbeing calls for practices that are embedded into a school's policies, curriculum, culture, and ethos with shared responsibility from all stakeholders. However, implementation of school-wide practices is challenging as it requires fundamental changes in the ways in which schools operate and are organised.

This study contributes to the gap in knowledge by drawing on experiences of implementers in the context of research literature about student wellbeing and educational change.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Copyright</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Declaration</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>PERSONAL POSITIONING (TUAKIRI)</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>1.0 Chapter Introduction</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>1.1 Background to the Study</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>1.2 Aim and Research Questions</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>1.3 Purpose/Significance of the study</b> .....	<b>23</b>
<b>1.4 Overview of the methods</b> .....	<b>25</b>
1.4.1 Research question one .....	26
1.4.2 Research question two .....	26
1.4.3 Research question three .....	27
1.4.4 Research question four .....	27
<b>1.5 Overview of the thesis</b> .....	<b>27</b>
<b>1.6 Chapter summary</b> .....	<b>30</b>
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b> .....	<b>31</b>
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW</b> .....	<b>31</b>
<b>2.0 Chapter Introduction</b> .....	<b>31</b>
<b>2.1 Key Literature topics</b> .....	<b>32</b>
<b>2.2 A Literature Review on existing school-based wellbeing models implementation internationally</b> .....	<b>39</b>
2.2.1 A Literature review comparison of International School Based Wellbeing Models or Approaches ..	41
2.2.2 A review of New Zealand mainstream School Based Wellbeing Models and Approaches .....	49
<b>2.3 Literature review findings, discussion, and summary</b> .....	<b>71</b>
<b>2.4 Chapter Summary</b> .....	<b>75</b>
<b>CHAPTER THREE</b> .....	<b>76</b>
<b>RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>76</b>
<b>3.0 Chapter Introduction</b> .....	<b>76</b>
<b>3.1 Methodology Overview</b> .....	<b>76</b>
3.1.1 Research design and scope .....	76
3.1.2 Case study .....	79
3.1.3 Literature review methodology .....	80
3.1.4 <i>Strengths</i> .....	81

3.1.5 Limitations.....	81
3.1.6 Diversity of approach.....	81
<b>3.2 Methods .....</b>	<b>82</b>
3.2.1 Research question one and methodology .....	82
3.2.2 Research Question two and methodology.....	82
3.2.3 Research question three and methodology.....	83
3.2.4 Research question four and methodology.....	83
3.2.5 Research design .....	84
<b>3.3 Ethics .....</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>3.4 Participants.....</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>3.5 Setting .....</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>3.6 Role of the researcher .....</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>3.7 Chapter Summary.....</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>CHAPTER FOUR - ARTICLE .....</b>	<b>89</b>
<b><i>TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICE AS A COMPONENT TO IMPROVE STUDENT WELLBEING. .</i></b>	<b>89</b>
<b>CHAPTER FIVE - ARTICLE .....</b>	<b>110</b>
<b><i>āHURUTANGA-CREATING PSYCHOLOGICALLY SAFE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS AND SPACES FOR WELLBEING AND LEARNING.....</i></b>	<b>110</b>
<b>CHAPTER SIX.....</b>	<b>123</b>
<b><i>THE ROLE OF THE COLLECTIVE (EDUCATORS, WHANAU) WELLBEING ON STUDENT WELLBEING .....</i></b>	<b>123</b>
<b>6.0 Chapter Introduction .....</b>	<b>123</b>
<b>6.1 What is student wellbeing, what does the student voice say about their wellbeing and what factors influence their being well at school. ....</b>	<b>124</b>
<b>6.2 Why it is important to have healthy educators in the schooling contexts? How does this impact student wellbeing?.....</b>	<b>138</b>
6.2.1 The role of Leadership wellbeing .....	138
6.2.2 The role of Staff Wellbeing in student wellbeing.....	149
6.2.3 The role of whanau wellbeing in student wellbeing .....	160
<b>6.3 Findings and conclusion .....</b>	<b>169</b>
<b>6.4 Chapter summary .....</b>	<b>170</b>
<b>CHAPTER SEVEN .....</b>	<b>172</b>
<b>CASE STUDY.....</b>	<b>172</b>
<b><i>INCLUDING STUDENT EXPERIENCES AND MORE COLLECTIVE VOICE ON WELLBEING IMPLEMENTATION AT SCHOOL .....</i></b>	<b>172</b>
<b>7.0 Chapter Introduction .....</b>	<b>172</b>
<b>7.1 Background information .....</b>	<b>173</b>
7.1.1 Method and participants .....	173
7.1.2 Relevant background of the researcher.....	174
7.1.3 Approach and Rationale.....	174

<b>7.2 Voices of the collective within the school setting where students attend.....</b>	<b>176</b>
7.2.1 Staff interview .....	177
7.2.2 Student interviews and questionnaires- Year 6 to 8 student voice .....	199
7.2.3 The voice of year 9 students (ex -students) .....	201
<b>7.3 Discussion with leaders on their learnings and further challenges and where to next .....</b>	<b>208</b>
<b>7.4 Findings .....</b>	<b>211</b>
<b>7.5 Chapter Summary.....</b>	<b>214</b>
<b><i>FINDINGS AND RESULTS FROM THE RESEARCH.....</i></b>	<b><i>215</i></b>
<b>8.0 Chapter Introduction .....</b>	<b>215</b>
<b>8.1 Key themes that emerged from the literature review findings. ....</b>	<b>216</b>
8.1.1 Challenges, prohibitors and barriers identified as key themes that emerged from the data. ....	217
8.1.1a) The challenge of meaning and understanding of the concept of wellbeing .....	218
8.1.1b) Challenge of measuring wellbeing .....	219
8.1.1c) The challenge of lack of funding resources and time to address teacher learning .....	220
8.1.1d) School wellbeing is often mistakenly linked to and seen as challenging student behaviours .....	221
8.1.1e) Challenge of schools’ lack of control on factors outside of school .....	222
8.1.2 For wellbeing implementation to be impactful, student wellbeing cannot be viewed in isolation of its collective. ....	222
8.1.3 Educator wellbeing are challenging to promote, even though it is an important contributor for student success and wellbeing.....	223
8.1.4 School organizational culture, ethos, structure, and a psychological safe environment are important to cultivate student wellbeing and safety .....	224
8.1.5 Student voice place connected, respectful and predictable relationships at the heart of their wellbeing. ....	225
8.1.6 A holistic approach to wellbeing (body, soul, mind, spirit) includes cultural identity, and practices and collectivism.....	226
8.1.7 New and emerging areas such as trauma-informed practice, neuroscience as valuable components to wellbeing as strengthening factors.....	226
<b>8.2 Data collection.....</b>	<b>228</b>
<b>8.3 Discussion tables and figures and its intended function .....</b>	<b>231</b>
<b>8.4 Research questions and discussion .....</b>	<b>238</b>
<b>8.5 Correlation of the findings .....</b>	<b>242</b>
<b>8.6 Chapter Summary.....</b>	<b>244</b>
<b><i>CONCLUSION .....</i></b>	<b><i>245</i></b>
<b>9.0 Chapter Introduction .....</b>	<b>245</b>
<b>9.1 Thesis overview.....</b>	<b>245</b>
<b>9.2 Key findings .....</b>	<b>246</b>
<b>9.3 Future recommendations .....</b>	<b>248</b>
9.3.1 Psychological safe and supportive school environment .....	248
9.3.2 Wellbeing policy practice that promote cultural, social and emotional learning. ....	248
9.3.3 Educator’s Wellbeing .....	249
9.3.4 Emerging new research topics .....	249
<b>9.4 What this thesis is adding to the research base knowledge.....</b>	<b>251</b>
9.4.1 New and emerging concepts that can add to new growing knowledge base. ....	251

9.4.2 Wairuatanga (Spirituality) identified as an underserved and under-researched area to complete a holistic wellbeing framework .....	252
<b>9.4.3 Clinical of supervision, counselling, or holistic wellbeing coaching for principals .....</b>	<b>253</b>
<b>9.5 Limitations .....</b>	<b>254</b>
<b>9.6 Thesis closing .....</b>	<b>254</b>
<b>Appendices.....</b>	<b>282</b>
Appendix 1: Copy of ethics approval letter .....	282
Appendix 2: Chapter 2-Principals group questionnaire.....	283
Appendix 3: Chapter 4- Leadership Team questionnaire (trauma informed) .....	284
Appendix 4: Chapter 5- Āhurutanga questionnaire to staff .....	285
Appendix 5: Chapter 6- Student questionnaire google forms. ....	286
Appendix 6: Chapter 6- Student questionnaire two google forms. ....	287
Appendix 7: Relates to Chapter 6- Female principal’s questionnaire one. ....	288
Appendix 8: Chapter 6- Female principal’s questionnaire two .....	289
Appendix 9: Chapter 6- Female principal’s questionnaire three .....	292
Appendix 10: Chapter 6- Staff wellbeing (first group) questionnaire.....	295
Appendix 11: Chapter 6- Staff wellbeing (second group) questionnaire.....	298
Appendix 12: Chapter 6 -Whānau wellbeing questionnaire and Mums .....	299
Appendix 13: Chapter 6- Whanau wellbeing- questionnaire for wānanga type interview with kaumatua .....	301
Appendix 14: Chapter 7- Semi -structured interview questionnaire (staff) .....	302
Appendix 15: Chapter 7 - Semi-Structure interview questionnaire (students-year 9) .....	304
Appendix 16: relates to Chapter 7- Wellbeing team Questionnaire.....	305
Appendix 17: relates to Chapter 7- Leadership team Case study. ....	306

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Our kura.....	21
Figure 2 Question 1: I care about my physical and mental wellbeing. ....	125
Figure 3 Question 2: Which statements describe you best? .....	126
Figure 4 Question 3 Tell us about your friendships.....	127
Figure 5 Question What makes you happy at school.....	128
Figure 6 Question: What is your understanding of wellbeing. ....	129
Figure 7 Relationships with teachers. ....	130
Figure 8 I do better in my learning if my teachers is interested in me. ....	130
Figure 9 Question 1a) How does your kura assess the wellbeing needs of students? .....	131
Figure 10 Question 1b) How does your kura support the needs of your students to improve their Wellbeing?.....	132
Figure 11 Question 1c) Which of these Wellbeing pillars/concepts do you encourage mostly at your kura? (Top 2)].....	133
Figure 12 Question1 e) What impact does your wellbeing practices have on students' attitude, behaviour, and learning?.....	134
Figure 13 Question1 e) What impact does your wellbeing practices have on students' attitude, behaviour, and learning?.....	135
Figure 14 Question 4 What impact did your wellbeing practice have on teachers' behaviour and responses? .....	137
Figure 15 Question 5: What are the barriers/challenges associated with implementing your programme or wellbeing practices? .....	138
Figure 16 Question 3: What (if any) are barriers or challenges for you to focus on personal wellbeing Multiple choice question).....	145
Figure 17 How would you rate your anxiety level during alert levels during covid 19? .....	157
Figure 18 How would you rate your anxiety levels now during alert level 2?.....	157

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 A Literature review comparison of International School Based Wellbeing Models or Approaches .....	41
Table 2 A review of New Zealand mainstream School Based Wellbeing Models and Approaches .....	49
Table 3 Review of the Components and aspect of Māori and Pasifika Health Models present in NZ schools. ....	55
Table 4 School settings and context of the participants.....	58
Table 5 Question 1: What does your approach to Wellbeing implementation look like in your school kura? .....	59
Table 6 Question 2: Which components are present in your wellbeing model/programme/practice. ....	62
Table 7 Question 3: What impacts does your wellbeing implementation have on the student’s wellbeing.....	66
Table 8 Question 4: How do you measure the wellbeing of your students and staff?.....	68
Table 9 Question 5: How is student voice evident in your practices? .....	70
Table 10 Research design .....	84
Table 11 Survey data on Workload hours (Arnold et al., 20220; Riley et al., 2021) .....	146
Table 12 Question 1: How would you describe wellbeing? (your understanding).....	150
Table 13 Question 2: What contributes to your positive wellbeing at school? .....	151
Table 14 Question 3: What are the negative things that impact on your wellbeing at school? .....	152
Table 15 Question 1: What are some of the challenges that you face daily that impacts on your wellbeing as a teacher.....	153
Table 16 Question 2: How does this affect your ability to be an effective teacher? .....	154
Table 17 Question 3: What happens to the way you are teaching when you are tired and the impact on student. ....	155
Table 18 Question 4 : What needs to happen to change this situation. ....	158
Table 19 Question 1: ( Kuia-Nans) what is your understanding of wellbeing?.....	161
Table 20 Question 2: How does your wellbeing impact on looking after your mokopuna. ..	162
Table 21 Question 3: How does your moko’s health benefit from you looking after them? ..	163
Table 22 Question 1: What would make a difference to the wellbeing (hauora) of your tamariki at school? .....	165
Table 23 Research design .....	229

## LIST OF IMAGES

Image 1: Figure 1- Our Kura

Image 2: Photo of Nan T with a 5year old student

Image 3: Photo of Whānau wananga at the haerenga

Image 4: Phot of year 7 and 8 students and staff, 2022

Image 5: Photo of Nan sharing her waiata

Image 6: Photo of Whānau skinning deer after a hunting session

Image 7: Photo of Mums doing “building Awesome Whānau in the bush

Image 8: Photo of Whānau fitness wānanga

Image 9: Photo of student voice activities example

Image 10: Photo of Manukura (student leadership) group

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Chapter Introduction

This chapter introduces the thesis. It provides a background and sets out the context of my study by introducing the research questions which will explain the interest of my research focus. The literature discussed in the chapter reveals the wide range of information that is available about wellbeing and its wide range of theoretical perspectives, clinical and methodological approaches.

The research described in this thesis focuses on the dilemma faced by young children, Early Adolescence learners and marginalised learners globally. The research aims to focus specifically on marginalised learners with an emphasis on the trauma, emotional and social wellbeing challenges and impacting life changing factors, throughout their schooling journey. Hence, the dual purpose of this thesis to understand the concepts of trauma, social and emotional wellbeing learning in particularly that of young children and adolescents whilst, simultaneously investigating the awareness of educational leaders and teachers' moral obligation, and knowledge on the implications of a school wide approach to wellbeing.

The question to inquire into is to see whether a more focused whole school approach to positive health and wellbeing education, (which are both contextually and culturally responsive) would be more beneficial to the personal growth and successful interaction in society for this group of learners. Understanding adolescent development requires answers to a number of difficult questions: how adolescents develop physically, how their relationships with parents and friends change, how young people are perceived as a group and treated by society, how adolescence in our society differ from adolescence in other cultures, and how has adolescence and adolescent development changed over the past few decades due to social and environmental impacts. Understanding the challenges of adolescent life in terms of the “power of peer pressure”, self-worth, self-awareness and self-efficacy is important as it greatly influences “their being” in a world of many challenges (Lerner & Steinberg, 2013).

It is widely recognised that emotional health and wellbeing of ākonga (learners) influences their cognitive development and learning as well as their physical and social health, and their mental wellbeing in adulthood. Children and young people face many challenges in life ranging from stress and anxiety to complex, serious and debilitating long-term mental health conditions (Public Health England, 2015; Rohan, 2019). Focussing on social and emotional learning, using a trauma informed lens, provides opportunity for children and young people to acquire and apply knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions, and social interaction, establish and maintain positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and achieve their personal best (CASEL, 2019; Goodman, 2021).

Webber (2019) points out that the protective factors for children and young peoples' wellbeing are positive family functioning, social and community support and physical activity. Webber (2019), further highlights that the risk factors are social isolation, peer rejection, and experiences of bullying and discrimination which can affect their mental health. Therefore, schools play an important role in supporting children and young people by helping them become resilient and mentally healthy by promoting mental wellbeing and providing access to education, giving a sense of belonging, coping strategies and developing their social and emotional skills (Weare & Nind, 2011).

Gross (2008) states that the school context, the development and education of young children and adolescents involve inter-relationships between emotion, cognition, and socialization; therefore, emotional, and social skills management cannot be disconnected from student learning. Gross (2008) further implies that for children who come from less than favourable home backgrounds and communities the intervention of the school can be the turning point in their lives. This statement is supported in the studies done by Berryman & Eley (2019) when they investigated school experiences for Māori students.

Schools are on the front line of wellbeing efforts in many countries as communities must deal with the growing crisis of trauma and mental health worldwide. Studies done by Quilan & Hone (2020), points out that there is a growing understanding that the intervention required, is more than a quick fix approach, but rather “an ability to create schools that are communities supporting the growth and development of young people who can be flourishing, resilient, contributing citizens over their lifetimes”. However, Quilan & Hone (2020) argues that

although schools and colleges play a significant and valuable role in helping to promote student emotional health and wellbeing, their contribution should be considered as one element of a wider multi-agency approach. For this to happen schools will have to develop explicit teaching and adopt policies, processes and practices that engender belonging, inclusion, and mental alertness which are contributing factors to balanced wellbeing (Quilan & Hone, 2020). Similar studies done by Weare & Nind (2011) states if these are not implemented with clarity, intensity, and fidelity it can equally be ineffective. Fraillone (2004) argues that the notion of effective functioning in the school community supports the description of well-being using noticeable student attitudes and behaviours that implicitly represent the underlying elements of well-being, and explicitly represent effective school function.

Studies done by Waters (2011), points out that to define wellbeing is complex and that it is subject to interpretation as it depends on the location, context and setting. According to Fraillon (2004), well-being was initially considered to be a component of an overarching concept of health, later health and well-being were considered as complementary, and more recently health has been a component of an overarching construct of well-being.

The emerging challenge for educators is to determine whether defining, measuring, and monitoring student wellbeing can affect positive change for children and young people or have the potential to do so. Research done by UNICEF (2009), World Organization (2013), and OCED (2013) suggests that education is recognized as the key factor in developing capabilities, not only for work and social engagement, but also for experiencing a flourishing life. To build on this understanding some important questions need to be addressed, for example: what is wellbeing? How do educational experiences influence understandings and experiences of wellbeing? How can wellbeing be measured in educational contexts, particularly in relation to existing assessment programmes for learning. Answers to these questions may inform the creation of positively framed wellbeing models that draw upon empirical and theoretical research, reflects the experiences of students and compliment current educational practices.

Schools represent organized environments with a moral obligation to help children and young people learn the knowledge and skills, and values they need to lead healthy, happy, and productive lives. It is a place where they spend a lot of time in their formative years, this makes health promotion an important aim of education. It is also a setting where interventions can be

most efficiently and economically be delivered. Langford, et al., (2014) points out that given the inextricable link between health and education, investment on health in schools during “the formative years can prevent suffering, reduce inequity, create healthy and productive adults, and deliver social and economic dividends to the nation”. Similarly, Wyn (2009) points out that national education policies and their focus on economic development, marginalize the social development goals of education.

Despite the responsibility of promoting wellbeing, school structures and cultures often create stress with intense pressure to perform. An important next step for educators would be to build on the emerging findings of this research and to establish a wellbeing discourse relevant to the educational context and to further develop positive educational experiences that enhance and sustain wellbeing during schooling years and beyond.

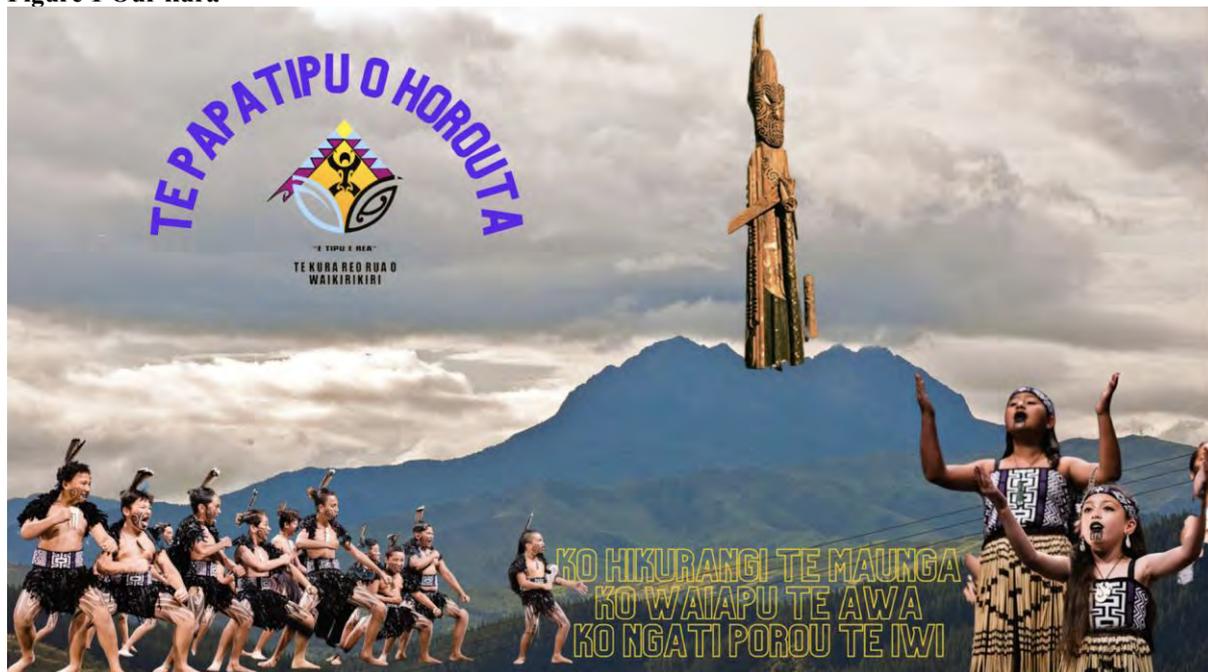
## **1.1 Background to the Study**

This chapter sets out the context of my study and introduce the questions which clarifies and explains the personal interest of my research focus. This research seek also to explore current New Zealand educational policies, systems, school ethos and culture as well as the educational leadership awareness in the delivery of trauma informed practices, social and emotional health and wellbeing for these particular groups of learners, inclusive of their school community and the difference it aims to make to them having more successful outcomes.

This research is based in, Gisborne (Te Tairāwhiti) New Zealand. The main Iwi from the southern boundary of the district are Ngāti Porou, Aitanga-a-Hauiti, Ngai Tamanuhiri, Rongo Whakaata, Whanau a Kai and Te Aitanga-a-Mahaki. Ngāti Porou has the highest number of iwi affiliation among Gisborne Māori, with just over 12,000 people in the district identifying with that iwi.

This research is centred within a Māori Medium Bilingual Kura, with early adolescent students particularly Years 6 to 8 students based in this rohe (region). The research also includes a Case Study with the Year 6 to 8 ākonga (learners) based at Te Kura Reo Rua o Waikirikiri, of which I am the principal.

Figure 1 Our kura



Te Kura Reo Rua o Waikirikiri has a current roll of 199 students, 99% of these tamariki are of Māori decent and affiliates with Ngāti Porou Iwi. Te Kura Reo Rua o Waikirikiri is a Bilingual kura which has a Bilingual Unit of five classes where the Curriculum delivery is Level 3 Immersion (30-50% delivery in Te Reo Māori) for Years 1-3 and Level 2 Immersion (50-80% delivery in Te Reo Māori) for Years 4 to 8. There is also a Rumaki Immersion Level 1 Unit (80-100% delivery in Te Reo Māori) with four classes from Year 1 to 8. This kura received Recapitulation Status from the Ministry of Education to retain year 8 students for both units in 2019. The main reason for the application for Recapitulation status was to ensure the continued schooling success for Years 7 and 8 Māori students in an environment where they experience a “sense of belonging” and connectedness. Staff and whanau from this kura were also interviewed as they have influence on the future and mana of the tamariki. This study also includes interviews and questionnaires with leaders from Māori Medium kura, Kura Kaupapa Māori, and mainstream Intermediate kura.

The fundamental purpose of this study is to investigate how the holistic wellbeing needs of learners (specifically those who are in the early adolescent phase) are catered for in these kura and to evaluate whether a whole school holistic wellbeing (healthy mind, body and spirit) approach from a contextual and culturally responsive perspective will be more beneficial and

contribute towards them achieving success as Māori learners. The study aims to also evaluate the effectiveness of a whole school approach inclusive of staff, whānau (families and parents), systems and policies as contributors to the success of all students. This study will also aim to gauge an understanding of tikanga (protocol) and te ao Māori (Māori world view) upbringing of tamariki within a whānau context, understanding their home background and environment. Therefore, adding whānau(family), kaumatua (elderly) and rangatahi (young adolescents) voice to the research is a necessity to explore.

During the research, focus will also be based on discussions with school leaders and teachers to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of their school conditions, policies, systems, processes, and implementation of wellbeing programmes. The literature review will also compare international and national implementation of existing wellbeing approaches in schools. This will allow to simultaneously investigate whether the NZ education system invest in conditions where students' sense of belonging and wellbeing are promoted and whether there is equitable opportunity for them to flourish and be successful. This will further explore the notion of whether our school system truly contributes to the creation of thriving societies and are set up to tackle the real challenges we face, and if school is a place where all young people learn how to truly thrive. Berryman & Eley (2019) refers to flourishing within schooling as being “linked to the concept of *mauri*, where one's life force or inner essence is in a state of *ora* (are flourishing and is strong”).

## **1.2 Aim and Research Questions**

The primary aim of this study is concerned with the wellbeing, trauma, emotional and socio-ecological perspectives, social justice, cultural embeddedness, and relationships, and how these impacts on young children, specifically early adolescence students and how it affects “their being” at school.

A secondary aim is to draw from these understandings to evaluate and interpret how informed, aware, and prepared schools are in dealing with the wellbeing of these tauira (students). Also, to determine what consideration is given to the characteristics and challenges faced during the developmental stages of tauira specifically within a NZ schooling context.

This may bring about the question whether there is a need to develop a whole school wellbeing model or approach from a contextualised and or cultural perspective that focusses specifically on successful outcomes for ākongā (learners). Furthermore, to assess how such a model can assist educators who are seeking to make wellbeing an integral part of the educational experience.

Subsequently, the overall aim of the study is to evaluate the current situation, document the successful implementation and make future suggestions and recommendations that can add value to the importance of holistic wellbeing implementation. The research, therefore, aims to both measure the success indicators as well as identify the prohibitors or barriers to success to create an adoptable framework that has meaningful impact and successful outcomes all students.

To achieve the aims as described above, the research seeks to first answer several questions:

1. What impact will a contextualized and culturally responsive, holistic, whole school approach to wellbeing make to successful schooling outcomes for all learners and early adolescence learners (Rangatahi) in particular.

2. What does the young children and Rangatahi (early adolescence students) voice say about their schooling experiences of how their wellbeing challenges are understood during their developmental stages.

3. Does nurturing the wellbeing of leaders, teachers and whānau have impact on students' cognitive development and successful learning outcomes?

4. To what extent do schools currently implement wellbeing practices and how are these elements reflected throughout the school systems, policies, procedures, curriculum, school ethos and school culture with the understanding that it is a critical component for successful schooling outcomes.

### **1.3 Purpose/Significance of the study**

This study is significant for the following reasons:

1. The purpose of this study is to gain a systematic and in-depth understanding of how the wellbeing of the collective in a schooling context influences the wellbeing of our children and young adolescents, particularly how their school experiences are significant in helping them to flourish and become successful contributors to society. It seeks to gain understanding of the opportunities and challenges to social and emotional competencies taught, modelled, and practised that lead to positive student wellbeing and therefore positive outcomes that are important for success in school and in life (CASEL, 2019).
2. A UNICEF report from September 2020, using internationally agreed criteria, ranked New Zealand at 35<sup>th</sup> of 41 European Union and OECD countries in the “Child Wellbeing Rating” category (UNICEF Office of Research, 2020). This report drew attention to New Zealand’s high adolescent suicide rate at 14.9 youth suicide deaths per 100,000 adolescents. New Zealand had the second highest youth suicide rate of all the forty-one countries, and within these statistics, Māori are disproportionately over-represented. On mental wellbeing, NZ sits at 38<sup>th</sup> on the list and on physical health it is ranked at 33<sup>rd</sup> (UNICEF Office of Research, 2020). These statistics are in urgent need of change, and it can be addressed by embedding the principles of wellbeing into the school culture and using evidence-based wellbeing frameworks, creating measurable and meaningful impact in school communities.
3. This research aims to provide insight into how governance and monitoring systems in schools can be re-designed to support a whole system approach, through emphasis on strategic planning, policies and detailed practice. Developing whole-school equitable wellbeing practices requires awareness and long-term commitment from schools to provide professional development in wellbeing and trauma to leaders and teachers. This study will support adopting evidence-based frameworks, creating significant culture shifts that will have meaningful impact to guide governance actions (Quilan & Hone, 2020) supporting the wellbeing of tamariki (children), specifically young adults and those in the early adolescent phase. Furthermore, if a model or framework is available, it could assist educators who are seeking to make wellbeing an integral part of the educational experience. Such a framework will allow a focus on wellbeing for learning and life, as

well as trauma informed practices, which builds resilience in children, young people, their whānau and support people.

4. This study is significant as it aims to help build capacity for and provide the knowledge to exercise judgement and responsibility to act on matters of ethics and social justice as it will serve to strengthen and support the moral imperative of schools and schooling to be inclusive, supportive, and nurturing environments in order to maintain and sustain student wellbeing. To date the Literature review uncovered evidence that Internationally there are some whole school models or approaches but not enough data to proof its effectiveness. In New Zealand there are research models for secondary schools and currently there is a move towards Wellbeing in a few individual primary schools. This study would like to investigate NZ resources and build on designing a culturally responsive school wide approach which is inclusive of whānau (families/parents) and school community.
5. This study will provide a review of literature relevant to creating the knowledge and understanding of the pathways to flourishing and unleashing potential of these taurira (students) to tino Rangatira (leaders) in charge of regulating their emotional and social interaction. Therefore, the study will highlight and support the notion of the need for Culturally appropriate /responsive Trauma-informed Care, Counsellors, and Pastoral Care in Full primary schools to further support the mental wellbeing of students and educators.

#### **1.4 Overview of the methods**

Through the research questions the aim is to understand experiences and understandings of wellbeing in the context of Full primary schools where early adolescent students attend. These questions look to find the answers that will contribute to them flourishing and unleashing their potential. Participatory research, an instance of critical theory in research, breaks the conventional ways of constructing research as it concerns doing research with people and communities rather than doing research to or for them. This method empowers participants and respects their indigenous knowledge. It allows for equal control of the research. To examine discourse in this way and answer the research questions, data collection for this study will be in the form of collecting data from both younger and older participants, their whānau, principal peer groups, year 6 to 8 teachers as well as the school wellbeing team. Chapters 2 to 7 each

investigates aspects and components of wellbeing, it includes introductions, literature reviews, research processes, methods, and methodologies used to meet the outcomes of answering the proposed research questions.

#### *1.4.1 Research question one.*

What impact will a contextualized and culturally responsive, holistic, whole school approach to wellbeing make to successful schooling outcomes for all learners and early adolescence learners (Rangatahi) in particular.

A Literature review as a research methodology was used to do an environmental scan of existing Wellbeing practices and approaches nationally and internationally in schools to investigate the impact of implementation and the components or aspects present. An effective and well conducted review as a research method creates a firm foundation for advancing knowledge and facilitating theory development (Webster & Watson, 2002). By integrating findings and perspectives from many empirical findings, a literature review can address research questions with a power that no single study has.

I also engaged in a critical document analysis of the NZ Health and Physical Education curriculum, resources and Wellbeing models and approaches currently being updated by the Ministry of Education to support educators in the teaching of student wellbeing. I also seek to understand from principals how they implement wellbeing in their respective schools.

#### *1.4.2 Research question two.*

What does the Rangatahi (early adolescence students) voice say about their schooling experiences of how their wellbeing challenges are understood during their developmental stages.

Several methods were chosen to triangulate the data to give substance to the importance of this question. The first method were surveys and questionnaires, secondly a focus group of students were interviewed and thirdly a Case Study was performed with a group of students over a period of time.

#### *1.4.3 Research question three.*

Does nurturing the wellbeing of leaders, teachers and whanau have an impact on students' cognitive development and successful learning outcomes.

Questionnaires and semi structured interviews were the methods chosen to answer the first part of question three. A wananga type unstructured interview was conducted with whānau and kaumatua to gain authentic voice on Wellbeing from a Māori perspective. Feedback on whānau engagement on the wellbeing practices was gathered from different parent groups who are currently involved in the school. Insights through a questionnaire from the a wellbeing team, who are implementers of a wellbeing model, gave insight into their role and experiences. Educator voice was sought through semi-structured interviews and questionnaires.

#### *1.4.4 Research question four.*

To what extend do schools currently implement wellbeing practices and how are these elements reflective throughout the school systems, policies, procedures, curriculum, school ethos and school culture with the understanding that it is a critical component for successful schooling outcomes.

A questionnaire analysis from principals who are implementing Wellbeing in some form can be found in chapter two. An analysis of the documentation and programmes that these principals are using was done as part of a research method to identify themes so see how it compares to the review of School based wellbeing models used internationally and those identified as been used in NZ schools. A professional learning group of female Māori principals took part in discussions and questionnaires to assess how they implement wellbeing practices at their schools.

### **1.5 Overview of the thesis**

Chapter one introduces my research topic and provide some background and significance of the study. This thesis has a dual purpose of analysing and understanding the concept of wellbeing in particularly that of young children and early adolescence students in their school contexts. The thesis simultaneously investigating awareness of educators' knowledge on the implications of a school wide approach to wellbeing.

Chapter two is a review of the literature on how wellbeing is conceptualised or understood within and across educational settings. The literature review is also structured into and throughout chapters four to seven, addressing various aspects of the concept of wellbeing nationally and internationally. The literature discussed in the chapters reveals the wide range of information that is available about wellbeing and its wide range of theoretical perspectives, clinical and methodological approaches. There appear to be common themes and conceptual frameworks that presents the multi-faceted variables of wellbeing as understood in various contexts and learning settings.

Chapter two further discuss the literature review on aspects of wellbeing that impacts on student learning and success. It looks at components of an effective, holistic school-based wellbeing models that are both contextualised and culturally responsive. It discusses aspects of international school-based wellbeing frameworks and models, as well as New Zealand models, both mainstream and Kaupapa Māori models. Chapter two also includes a discussion with a group of principals who are currently implementing wellbeing approaches within their various schools. It analyses the models and documentation that they use in the effort to find similarities and differences but to also find the gaps that exist that will make implementation more successful.

Chapter three presents the theoretical framework underpinning the study. The chapter discusses the research framework and methodologies within which my research is based (Kaupapa Māori, qualitative, grounded theory, etc). This chapter also describes the methods I have used to seek answers to my research questions. In brief these are oral semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, a case study, analysis of documentation, focus group interviews, and a literature review as a research methodology.

Chapters four and five includes stand-alone articles. Chapter four focus on Trauma-informed practice in schools and how it complements and enhances the wellbeing of students.

Chapter five puts the spotlight on Āhurutanga (creating psychological safe and whakatau (calming) learning spaces and environments for learning) from a Te Ao Māori (Māori worldview) and therefore is another stand-alone article. It stands alone as it underpins and supports chapter 4 in its argument on Trauma informed practices as an emerging component to effective wellbeing implementation.

These two chapters bring understanding of the components and aspects that should also be present or included as part of a wellbeing model. These two aspects are currently being identified as components that are the missing gaps to a more effective implementation of school-based wellbeing models. It is hoped that these articles will add value to the research base and shed light on these two components as strengthening factors for the implementation of effective wellbeing models. This is an emerging space that should be followed with having continuous improvement of practice and mindset shifts at the forefront.

Chapter six shifts from the focus on school-based models to the wellbeing of the collective within educational settings, exploring this aspect and its impact on positive student outcomes. Chapter six further focusses on the nurturing aspects of student wellbeing within the educational context. It also seeks to explain that the wellbeing of the collective within the educational context is equally as important as the systems, policies and processes that set the ethos of the setting. Chapter six therefore, studies awareness of, and the circumstances that effect educators and whānau (families) wellbeing and the flow on effect on student wellbeing. It also measures preparedness of leaders to implement an integrated approach to wellbeing. The chapter highlights the challenges, social inequalities, and inequities present that are barriers to the wellbeing of the collective.

Chapter seven presents in the form of a Case Study that explores the lived experiences of students in the educational contexts and adds student voice to this study. The Case study also includes the voices of adults who have worked with these students over a period of three to

four years. The purpose is to explore first hand if in fact what the research is saying is valid, and how the lessons and new learnings can be applied to other school settings.

Chapter eight presents the finding of the results which was based on the literature, current implementation and research methods used to find answers on the research questions. It provides an overview of the study, reiterate key findings to other theories and similar research particularly those referenced in the Literature reviews and stand-alone chapters.

Chapter nine summarises and concludes the thesis Chapter nine is also a discussion of the limitations, and future recommendations. It considers the extent to which the aims and objectives of the study have synthesised the notable findings. This concluding chapter draws on some recommendation for policy and research implications for future practice by identify emerging areas for further research, as well as some concluding reflection comments.

## **1.6 Chapter summary**

This section concludes the thesis introduction and overview of the content and layout of the thesis. The next chapter reviews the literature on Wellbeing with a particular emphasis on its impact on students and their learning both nationally and internationally. It also looks at Indigenous models of wellbeing currently present in New Zealand schools. It also explores school-based wellbeing implementation globally.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Chapter Introduction**

This chapter reviews the literature on Wellbeing with a particular emphasis on its impact on students and their learning. It reviews literature from an international, national, indigenous and iwi Māori perspective. The literature and research discussed in this chapter reveals the diverse range of information available on the concept of wellbeing, the theoretical perspectives, and methodological approaches. This literature review methodology is a starting point that presents wellbeing as a multi-faceted phenomenon that will be explored throughout the thesis by examining concepts, frameworks, components, and aspects in which it sits and resonates with the data sources. Chapter two answers question four of this research study “To what extent do schools currently implement wellbeing practices and how are these elements reflected throughout the school systems, policies, procedures, curriculum, school ethos and culture with the understanding that it is a critical component for successful schooling outcomes.” This chapter also explores the impact of a holistic, whole school approach to wellbeing on successful schooling outcomes of young children.

In order to understand the impact of a contextualised and culturally responsive approach to wellbeing it is important to know what aspects should be present and considered when implementing a holistic, schoolwide approach that nurtures wellbeing of vulnerable children and young people so that they can experience schooling success. Chapter two consequently, discusses the components of an effective holistic wellbeing model that are both contextualised and culturally responsive. As a result, this literature review methodology is used to compare these components and their impact on student wellbeing.

Furthermore, to explore how wellbeing is framed and applied in different learning settings, it is necessary to explore the voices, understanding, and experiences of those collectives who make up the context of school settings. This chapter, therefore, includes a discussion with a group of principals who are currently implementing wellbeing approaches within their various

schools in New Zealand. It analyses the models and documentation that they use, in the effort to find similarities and differences, but also to find the gaps that exist to make wellbeing implementation more successful. It also partially answers research question four.

## **2.1 Key Literature topics**

As the world strives for ideals such as democracy, justice and equity, concerns of human rights have gained prominence in wellbeing, health, and education discourse. The evidence-based literature on mental health is by far the most prevalent in student wellbeing promotion. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2014), approximately 50 percent of mental health disorders occur before the age of fourteen and many more remain undiagnosed and undertreated (WHO, 2014). It has been suggested by WHO (2014), that a collaborative and coordinated response to mental health requires partnerships with multiple public sectors including health, education, employment, social along with private sectors. Schools are well recognized as critical contexts for the promotion of mental health and wellbeing as it can reach large numbers of children and young people at an early age and at a time that they are still developing important attitudes and behaviours.

At the heart of initiatives such as the Child-Friendly School, Inclusive Education, and Health Promoting Schools by global agencies such as UNICEF, UNESCO, and WHO, are the promotion of children's fundamental rights to education and wellbeing. According to UNICEF (2006), Child-Friendly Schools aspire to promote a healthy, safe, and protective environment for children's wellbeing, and promote quality teaching and learning processes of wellbeing through the provision of school-based policies and practices that are gender sensitive, and in partnership with families and communities. Consequently, it embraces a philosophy that fosters equality, respect for human rights and participation of all children. The WHO (2014) defines a health promoting school as "one that constantly strengthens its capacity as a healthy setting for living, learning and working". The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) recommends that schools adopt a comprehensive 'Whole school' approach to the promotion of emotional health and wellbeing (NICE, 2009).

In addition, similar research done by St Leger, Young, Blanchard, and Perry (2010) define health promotion in schools as activities “undertaken to improve and or protect the health of everyone in the school community” that consists of the following six essential components:

1. *School policies* that are clearly defined in documents or in accepted practices that promote health and wellbeing (e.g., policies that enable healthy food practices, and policies which discourage bullying).
2. *Physical environment* such as the design and location of buildings, grounds, and equipment in and around the school: provisions of natural light and adequate shade; spaces for physical activity; and facilities for learning and healthy eating.
3. *Social environment* such as the quality of relationships among and between staff and students; relationships with parents and the wider community; and connections among and between all key stakeholders in a school community.
4. *Health skills and action competencies*, or the formal and informal curriculum and associated activities that will enable students to gain age-related knowledge, skills and experiences, or competencies to improve the health and wellbeing of themselves and others in their community; and enhance their learning outcomes.
5. *Community links* or the connectedness between school and families, community, and other stakeholders to engage them in appropriate consultation, participation and support.
6. *Health services* that are local and regional, school-based, or school-linked for health care and promotion of students including those with special needs (St Leger et al., 2010)

The six components outlined above can fall into three interrelated domains or components of a whole -school approach to wellbeing:

1. *Formal curriculum* to teach essential skills and knowledge for making enlightened choices affecting wellbeing.
  2. *The school ethos, organization, and environment*, which refers to the quality of the physical and social environment, policies, and services.
  3. *School-community partnerships* for consultation, participation, and support.
- (St Leger et al.,2010)

These three components or domains are supported by studies done by Martin and Hill (2003); Weare (2000). Nevertheless, the practical realities and challenges involved in using evidence in policymaking, decision-making and school practices and outcomes are dependent on the context and individual input (Pawson, Greenhalgh, Harvey, & Walshe, 2005).

Over recent years there has been increasing interest in the notion of wellbeing and how it is linked to overall educational outcomes. It is argued, that there are two separate yet related areas of wellbeing. The first is subjective (hedonic) wellbeing and the second is psychological (eudaimonic) wellbeing.

Ryan & Deci (2001) describe subjective wellbeing in terms of pleasure attainment and pain avoidance, and an approach that focusses on happiness. The psychological approach focusses on meaning and self-realisation and whether a person is fully functioning (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Subjective wellbeing is more external and a quick fix that brings instant gratification and is pleasure driven e.g. enjoyment, comfort, and positive feelings. Psychological wellbeing focusses on internal fulfilment, connection, purpose, and growth which is more intrinsic (Ryan & Deci, 2001).

There remains the issue of how wellbeing is to be defined, understood, and continues to be variable, discrepant, and unclear. An example of the multi-faceted understanding of the definition of wellbeing is demonstrated by some of the following definitions of well-being between 1946 to 2003:

*Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. (WHO, 1946)*

*Wellness is an integrated method of functioning which is oriented toward maximising the potential of which an individual is capable. (Dunn, 1961)*

*The ability to successfully, resiliently, and innovatively participate in the routines and activities deemed significant by a cultural community. Wellbeing is also the states of mind and feeling produced by participation in routines and activities. (Weisner, 1998)*

*Wellness implies a lifestyle with a sense of balance. This sense of balance arises from a balance, or harmony within each aspect or 'dimension' of life. (Lowdon, Davis, Dickie, & Ferguson, 1995)*

*The striving for perfection that represents the realisation of one's true potential. (Ryff, 1996)*

*Wellness, or a sense of well-being includes one's ability to live and work effectively and to make a significant contribution to society. (Corbin, 1997)*

*A way of life oriented toward optimal health and well-being in which mind, body, and spirit are integrated by the individual to live life more fully within the human and natural community. (Witmer & Sweeney, 1992)*

*Wellbeing – to optimise health and capabilities of self and others. (Tasmania, 2000)*

*Wellbeing is a complex construct that concerns optimal experience and functioning. (Ryan & Deci, 2001)*

*Wellbeing is the state of successful performance throughout the life course integrating physical, cognitive, and social-emotional functions that results in productive activities deemed significant by one's cultural community, fulfilling social relationships, and the ability to transcend moderate psychosocial and environmental problems. Well-being also has a subjective dimension in the sense of satisfaction associated with fulfilling one's potential. (Bornstein, Davidson, Keyes, & Moore, 2003)*

As wellbeing is a social construct, its meaning is subject to shifts across time and space. Nevertheless, with the need to make Wellbeing measurable to be scientific as well as to facilitate implementation and assessment of policies and public affairs, it is also viewed as a measurable and achievable state with several dimensions. For instance, the UNICEF (2007) Child Wellbeing Index consist of material wellbeing, health and safety, educational wellbeing, family and peer relationships, behaviour and risk, and subjective wellbeing. In the broader sense wellbeing can include physical, material, and educational dimensions as well as the more familiar social and emotional elements.

Research done by Durie (2004) and Norozi (2023) defines a holistic approach to wellbeing as an approach that views a child as a whole being, considering their physical, emotional, social, intellectual, environmental, psychological, cultural, and spiritual dimensions. However, the spiritual aspect of wellbeing is often overlooked in a school setting because of a reluctance to address spiritual topics due to personal or religious reasons.

Norozi (2023) argues that a holistic and a comprehensive wellbeing framework capitalises on strengths, abilities, attitudes, and personal aspirations that can enable students to fulfil meaningful roles in their learning and development. Norozi (2023) further argues, that by adopting this approach students can become self-directed and self-empowered to move beyond how they perceive their own wellbeing. Additionally, a strengths-based approach to wellbeing focuses on students' strengths rather than focusing on problems and weaknesses.

In a schooling context, wellbeing is linked to the social and emotional health, and wellbeing and development of students. More specifically, it is thought that social and emotional learning might improve academic achievement by improving emotional regulation skills, such as the ability to attend, concentrate, and engage with work, and the ability to moderate and self-regulate impulses and behaviours in social contexts (Lopes, Brackett, Nezlek, Schutz, Sellin & Salovey, 2004).

Children and adolescence need a balanced set of cognitive, social, and emotional skills in order to achieve positive outcomes in school, work, and life (OECD, 2015). While Social and

Emotional (SEL) models are extensively researched and developed, NZ has fewer initiatives in this area (Goodman, 2021). Social and emotional learning is a crucial educational approach that focusses on nurturing students' emotional intelligences, self-awareness, interpersonal skills, and responsible decision-making. It refers to the process of acquiring and applying these skills, attitudes, and knowledge to manage emotions, achieve positive goals, establish, and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (CASEL, 2019). CASEL (2019) also argues, that SEL contributes to healthy wellbeing and safe schools.

SEL is a of paramount importance for students as it lays the foundation for their holistic development and forming of their identities to support and navigate interpersonal relationships (Payton, et al., 2008).

Research points to the fact that SEL plays a vital role in shaping young minds and fostering a positive school environment and are important for the following reasons:

- Emotional wellbeing
- Positive relationships
- Academic achievement
- Behaviour and classroom management
- Long-term success

By fostering SEL it empowers students to manage stress, build resilience and handle conflicts constructively which leads to improved mental wellbeing. Through SEL programmes, young learners cultivate the necessary tools to thrive personally and socially, setting the stage for a brighter and more compassionate future (CASEL, 2019). These skills increase student engagement and lead to improved academic performance and long-term wellbeing impacts (Mahoney, Durlak and Weissberg, 2018).

There is an important link between sense of belonging and social and emotional wellbeing. Connectedness or belonging refers to the extent to which learners feel accepted, respected, included, and supported by others at school or in early learning. Baumeister and Leary (1995) states, that a sense of connection to school is associated with positive health and academic

outcomes and is linked to positive social and emotional wellbeing outcomes, such as decreased anxiety levels.

Furthermore, Bond et al. (2007) is of the view, that students with diminished school connectedness are more likely to experience various negative schooling outcomes, including poor health and wellbeing with elevated risk of anxiety and depression. Renshaw (2015) further asserts, that connection encompasses the importance of a person's connection to place and identity. Aboriginal, Indigenous and Māori communities emphasise the importance of their land, culture, to the wellbeing of the individual, spirituality, and ancestry and how this affects the individual. Educators and school leaders have an important role in supporting the wellbeing of learners through the fostering of cultural safety in their schools by creating an environment that is spiritually, physically, socially and emotionally safe and celebrating their identity (Williams, 1999).

In addition to the evidence that suggests that wellbeing is closely related to academic achievement, there is also evidence to suggest that students that come from trauma backgrounds, socio-economic deprivation, and experienced educational inequalities, can have life-long mental health and wellbeing impacts that affects their abilities and attitudes towards learning (Venet, 2023). With this in mind, and in the context of the findings presented from this study, it is useful to better understand and conceptualise the wellbeing of students and explore whether holistic wellbeing as a concept associated with academic achievement, is worth paying attention to.

According to Hoare et al., (2017) a whole-school, holistic approach to wellbeing involves the whole school context and its collective. When school leaders, staff, students, and their whanau as well as the school community work together to build and embed processes and strategies that develop wellbeing for students and staff and take a collaborative approach to wellbeing, it becomes part of the fabric of the school culture, climate, and ethos. This provides sustainability which has a positive impact on many aspects of school life such as behaviour, relationship, attendance, attainment, and engagement (Hoare et al., 2017). Furthermore, it is an opportunity to explicitly teach and implicitly cultivate strategies for wellbeing that can become and early

intervention and protection against the onset of mental health and wellbeing problems (Hoare et al., 2017).

## **2.2 A Literature Review on existing school-based wellbeing models implementation internationally**

To understand how the promotion of student wellbeing can be made an integral part of a school calls for an understanding of educational change and refinement of school practices. The literature review for that reason, examines a range of contexts in school setting across five countries (and their various states) where the implementation of whole school wellbeing approaches has been undertaken. These contexts recognised that wellbeing needs to be considered against a background of how we feel and function across several domains, recognising the multidimensional nature of wellbeing. These domains include cognitive, emotional, social, and physical, wellbeing. The literature is to explore characteristics of the wellbeing approaches, initiative, and activities at systems levels. Also, to investigate how outcomes are measured and the impacts on students and their families. It also seeks to find the gaps for future priorities. This environmental scan relied on Internet searches and semi structured interviews with key participants. The purpose of the using Literature review as a research method was to find and bring understanding, as well as confirmation of the components that are needed to be present to make a whole school approach to Wellbeing in schools, successful and effective.

I also wanted to find out what was missing and why. For this reason, I have chosen peer reviewed published articles on whole school approach to Wellbeing from an international perspective, to compare components, domains, and aspects. I have excluded meta-analysis because it was complicated to compare the data with what was realistically happening in the schooling setting. I have included articles where school-based Wellbeing models were currently been implemented. The second literature review was done on existing school-based models within the NZ schooling context and curriculum. The third Literature review was done to study Indigenous health models in particular Māori health models used in schools and to also identify commonalities in these models. This section also includes the voices of six NZ principals who are currently implementing school-based wellbeing in some form.

For my research, it helps to provide an overview of the school-based wellbeing frameworks that are currently being used globally and to gain understanding of the components that contribute to effective implementation. Findings are discussed to bring together these aspects and components. Findings from each review are compared to find commonalities that strengthens wellbeing models.

2.2.1 A Literature review comparison of International School Based Wellbeing Models or Approaches

Table 1 A Literature review comparison of International School Based Wellbeing Models or Approaches

STUDY ARTICLE UK SCHOOLS- England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland)	AUDIT MEASURES	PROTECTED FACTORS/BARRIERS	PRINCIPLES/COMPO NENTS	IMPACTS
<p>Mentally Healthy schools Anna Freud National Centre for children and Families (2020) <a href="https://mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/whole-school-approach/">https://mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/whole-school-approach/</a></p> <p><b>DEFINITION OF WELLBEING</b> A mentally healthy school is one that adopts a whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing. A whole-school approach involves all parts of the school working together and being committed. It needs partnership working between senior leaders, teachers, and all school staff, as well as parents,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding the Mental Health Landscape (Anxiety, Attachment disorders, Bereavement and grief, challenging behaviours, Self-harm and suicidal thoughts, depression/moods, obsessive compulsive behaviours, Eating disorders, Overactivity and poor concentration, trauma)</li> <li>Mental Health on the curriculum</li> <li>Mental health services in schools</li> <li>Auditing the school and implement changes.</li> <li>Strategy and policies</li> </ul>	<p><b>Lifestyle factors</b> (body image, puberty, drugs, etc.) <b>School base factors-</b> (absenteeism, school exclusion, transitions, Bullying, relationship and belonging, Peer pressure) <b>Vulnerable children:</b> (Autism, Disabilities and illness, race /racism, gender identity, Neurodiversity, Refugee, children with additional needs) <b>Home-based Risk Factors;</b> (home environment, child abuse and neglect, poor parental mental health,, parent substance misuse, poverty and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School ethos and environment</li> <li>Curriculum teaching and learning</li> <li>Leadership and management that supports and champions change</li> <li>Enabling student voice</li> <li>Staff development</li> <li>Identifying need and monitor impact</li> <li>Working with parents and carers</li> <li>Targeted support and appropriate referral</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positive school ethos and culture</li> <li>Sense of belonging</li> <li>Inclusivity- community</li> <li>Promoting good health across curriculum</li> <li>Relationships</li> <li>Commitment and support from and to staff, students, and leaders</li> <li>Increase student knowledge on wellbeing.</li> </ul>

<p>carers, and the wider community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspection and Self-evaluation Framework (ISEF) – Assess and report on student Wellbeing and Mental Health</li> </ul>	<p>unemployment, young carers)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student voice</li> </ul>
<p><b>STUDY ARTICLE: AUSTRALIA</b></p>	<p><b>AUDIT MEASURES</b></p>	<p><b>PROTECTED FACTORS/BARRIERS</b></p>	<p><b>PRINCIPLES /COMPONENTS</b></p>	<p><b>IMPACTS</b></p>
<p><a href="https://education.nsw.gov.au/student-wellbeing/whole-school-approach">https://education.nsw.gov.au/student-wellbeing/whole-school-approach</a>  <a href="file:///Users/yolanda/Downloads/Wellbeing_Framework_for_Schools.pdf">file:///Users/yolanda/Downloads/Wellbeing_Framework_for_Schools.pdf</a>  <a href="https://www.aitsl.edu.au/research/spotlights/wellbeing-in-australian-schools">https://www.aitsl.edu.au/research/spotlights/wellbeing-in-australian-schools</a>  <b>DEFINITION OF WELLBEING</b>          In very broad terms, wellbeing can be describing as the quality of a person’s life. Wellbeing needs to be considered in relation to how we feel and function across several areas including our</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusive Education Policy for students will disabilities.</li> <li>• Student Behaviour policy</li> <li>• Restrictive Practice Framework to ensure safety and respect of every student.</li> <li>• Reducing the length of suspensions</li> <li>• Early interventions and targeted support</li> <li>• Determine Wellbeing targets aligned with specific context or needs and wellbeing improvement measures e.g., “<i>Tell them from me</i>” (TTFM)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance matters</li> <li>• Behaviour and Engagement</li> <li>• Child protection and safety</li> <li>• Mental Health and wellbeing</li> <li>• Student wellbeing programmes and nutrition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding the domains of the wellbeing framework for schools</li> <li>• Classroom and school-wide strategies to build holistic student wellbeing.</li> <li>• How to build-in student wellbeing improvement measures into new and existing wellbeing programmes</li> <li>• Teaching and learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student voice</li> <li>• Student care and safety</li> <li>• Knowing, valuing, and caring for all students</li> <li>• Engaging and respectful</li> <li>• Inclusivity</li> <li>• Building character</li> <li>• Early invention means student needs are met.</li> <li>• Aligning wellbeing with school excellence</li> </ul>

<p>cognitive, emotional, social, physical, and spiritual wellbeing. Wellbeing in schools is for all students. A focus on wellbeing goes beyond just welfare needs of a few individual students and aims for all students to be healthy, happy, successful, and productive individuals who are active and positive contributors to the school and society in which they live.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aligning student wellbeing improvement measures with school excellence frameworks and principles of Inclusive practice.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Behaviour, discipline, and character education</li> <li>Professional practice</li> <li>Effective Leadership</li> <li>School planning</li> <li>Commitment to Wellbeing</li> <li>Social and Emotional learning</li> </ul>	
<p><b>STUDY ARTICLE USA</b>  <a href="https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/the-whole-school-approach/">https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/the-whole-school-approach/</a>  <b>definition</b>  A school wellbeing approach is cohesive and collaborative action by a school community that is being strategically and continually constructed to improve student learning, behaviour, and wellbeing.</p>	<p><b>AUDIT MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An overarching supportive, safe, and inclusive school culture</li> <li>School-based programs in and out of the classroom that focus on social emotional learning and respect for differences.</li> <li>School policy that prioritizes, monitors, and reports on progress</li> </ul>	<p><b>PROTECTED FACTORS/BARRIERS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance policy and practice - Solving chronic absenteeism.</li> <li>Improve learning environment.</li> <li>Rethink discipline in policy, data, and practices</li> </ul>	<p><b>PRINCIPLES AND COMPONENTS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School climate reform vision</li> <li>Commitment to staff support and development</li> <li>Relevant classroom practice and curricula</li> <li>Family and community engagement</li> </ul>	<p><b>IMPACTS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promising futures</li> <li>Strengthening families</li> <li>Safe learning environment</li> <li>Improve student learning</li> </ul>

<p>Every school has different needs and starting points. The whole school approach is a framework that can be used to assess what exists, create a plan to address gaps and identify measures of progress.</p>	<p>for all students, with a focus on eliminating disparities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School partnerships to bring community programs and resources into the school setting, to augment school capacity and address families' needs beyond the classroom.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student as leaders and upstanders</li> <li>• Leadership for continuous improvement</li> </ul>	
<p><a href="https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/wssc/index.htm">https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/wssc/index.htm</a></p> <p><b>USA</b></p> <p><b>DEFINITION</b></p> <p>Healthy students are better learners, and academic achievement bears a lifetime of benefits for health. Schools are an ideal setting to teach and provide students with opportunities to improve their dietary and physical activity behaviours and manage their chronic health conditions (asthma,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The education, public health, and school health sectors have each called for greater alignment that includes, integration and collaboration between education leaders and health sectors to improve each child's cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development.</li> <li>• Public health and education serve the same children, often in the same settings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting healthy behaviours</li> <li>• Managing health conditions</li> <li>• Assessing school health</li> <li>• Improving school health</li> <li>• Data and research</li> <li>• Less likely to engage in risky behaviours (violence, sexual health, and substance use) <sup>1,2</sup>.</li> <li>• More likely to engage in positive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical education and physical activity.</li> <li>• Nutrition environment and services.</li> <li>• Health education.</li> <li>• Social and emotional climate.</li> <li>• Physical environment.</li> <li>• Health services.</li> <li>• Counselling, psychological, and social services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy and safe young people</li> <li>• Social connectedness</li> <li>• Character building through social and emotional learning</li> <li>• Positive relationships</li> <li>• Lifelong healthy behaviours</li> </ul>

<p>diabetes, epilepsy, food allergies, and poor oral health). When school health policies and practices are put in place, healthy students can grow to be healthy and successful adults.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Whole School Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model focuses on the child to align the common goals of both sectors to put into action a whole child approach to education</li> </ul>	<p>health behaviours (physical activity and healthy eating)<sup>2,3</sup>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More likely to have higher grades and test scores, have better school attendance, and graduate high school.</li> <li>Less likely to have emotional distress and thoughts of suicide among adolescents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employee wellness.</li> <li>Community involvement and Family engagement</li> <li>Training and Professional development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved student learning</li> <li>Responsible decision-making</li> </ul>
<b>STUDY ARTICLE CANADA</b>	<b>AUDIT MEASURES</b>	<b>PROTECTED FACTORS/BARRIERS</b>	<b>PRINCIPLES AND COMPONENTS</b>	<b>IMPACTS</b>
<p><a href="https://phecanada.ca/active/healthy-schools">https://phecanada.ca/active/healthy-schools</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/childhood-adolescence/programs-">https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/childhood-adolescence/programs-</a></p>	<p>Canadian Healthy School Standards. Comprehensive School Health (CSH) is an internationally recognized framework to support improvements in students' educational outcomes while addressing school health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>mental wellbeing - resilience, self-esteem, and self-confidence</li> <li>physical activity</li> <li>sense of belonging.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social and physical environment (including land-based activities)</li> <li>Teaching and learning (with an interactive and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student voice</li> <li>Students as change makers, advocate for their collective benefit</li> <li>The meaningful participation of all students</li> </ul>

<p><a href="#">initiatives/school-health.html#a2</a></p> <p><b><u>DEFINITION</u></b></p> <p>Schools provide a unique setting to support the well-being of children and youth in Canada and to promote the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary for lifelong health and well-being.</p>	<p>in a planned, integrated, and holistic way.</p> <p>This model builds capacity to incorporate wellbeing as an essential aspect of student achievement.</p> <p>Actions address distinct but interrelated components that comprise a comprehensive school health approach:</p> <p>honours each person, the interconnection between them, and the land upon which they live.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• values broader ways of knowing</li> <li>• focuses on what the school community can do together</li> <li>• identifies where there is energy, interest, and capacity to strengthen the health and wellbeing of the school community and supports action in that direction.</li> </ul>	<p>engagement, and deeper connection to the school community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• internalized values such as responsibility and empathy</li> <li>• grounding in and appreciation of one's environment.</li> <li>• supportive communities, positive role models) that can help people to be more resilient in the face of risks or challenges (e.g., adverse childhood experiences, poverty, violence, inequality).</li> </ul>	<p>(w)holistic approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy (that has meaningful procedures)</li> <li>• Partnerships and services (respectful of equity and diversity)</li> <li>• staff wellbeing</li> <li>• cultural safety in learning environments</li> </ul>	<p>fosters a culture of acceptance and belonging for all students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students feeling valued, having a sense of purpose, and having opportunities to make meaningful contributions.</li> <li>• Young people want to be involved in accessible and culturally relevant activities in their communities.</li> <li>• academic success</li> <li>• Inclusivity</li> </ul>
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Internationally, implementation of school-based mental health services is variable and affected by school culture and climate, teacher perception regarding needs and roles, funding mechanism, programme fidelity and cooperation of school leadership (Durlak et al., 2008; Reinke et al., 2011).

Some commonalities and key areas found in the review for wellbeing improvement and implementation of these school-based models are:

- Whole school approach included school wide policies, strategies, culture, ethos, and practices to build student wellbeing.
- Behaviour, discipline, and character education are key features.
- Effective leaderships and management champion for support is necessary.
- Commitment to training and professional development for staff initiatives.
- Commitment to a school-wide student wellbeing vision.
- Social and emotional learning and school climate
- Health services, agencies and stakeholders, counselling, and targeted interventions with clear pathways.
- Physical school environment.
- Parent and community involvement.
- Aspects of a holistic model were implemented.

Findings from the USA Department of Education, (2021) states that “Taking a co-ordinated and evidence-informed approach to mental health and wellbeing in schools leads to improved pupil and student emotional health and wellbeing which can help readiness to learn”. The Collaboration for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) defined two decades ago social and emotional learning as an integral part of education and human development and has most recently updated and evidence-based guide (CASEL, 2020a, 2020b). The USA schooling system thus, has a strong social and emotional evidence-based framework based on the CASEL guide.

Positive Education has gained rapid momentum in Australian school settings and abroad to meet the need for fostering positive wellbeing and protection against mental health problems during adolescence (Hoare et al., 2017). Positive education aims to foster character strengths,

resilience, wellbeing, and adaptive functioning abilities in the educational settings, providing opportunity for individuals to flourish.

Despite the evidence in support of a whole-school approach and the potential of system-wide changes, several studies pointed out challenges and barriers to implementation. To advance the understanding of the conditions necessary to achieve successful wellbeing outcomes, a greater focus on consistency of the implementation research of essential components of whole school interventions is required. Findings are that the quality and consistency of implementation and intervention determines the effectiveness on student impact. Gaining commitment from all stakeholders is critical to the successful implementation process.

A whole- school approach to student wellbeing promotion is not only complex, but it also requires shifts in thinking, attitudes, and doing things. The reality is that in schools there are leaders who can either stifle or advocate for this change in practice and school culture. Therefore, factors such as teacher training, teacher attitude and experience, time and resources and student involvement are bound to also impact the implementation. External partnerships with the community service can add value to the sustainable implementation of wellbeing. There also continues to be a need for work with young people to better understand what acceptable, effective preventative school-based mental health and support looks like, and to improve access to services at the school level (Spencer et al., 2020a).

2.2.2 A review of New Zealand mainstream School Based Wellbeing Models and Approaches

Table 2 A review of New Zealand mainstream School Based Wellbeing Models and Approaches

STUDY ARTICLE/PUBLICATION NZ	AUDIT MEASURES	PROTECTED FACTORS/BARRIERS	PRINCIPLES AND COMPONENTS	IMPACTS
<p><b>NZ RESOURCES FOR WELLBEING IMPLEMENTATION</b>  <a href="https://ero.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2021-05/Wellbeing%20for%20success%20a%20resource%20for%20schools.pdf">https://ero.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2021-05/Wellbeing%20for%20success%20a%20resource%20for%20schools.pdf</a>  <a href="https://healtheducation.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Mental-Health-and-Hauora.pdf">https://healtheducation.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Mental-Health-and-Hauora.pdf</a>  <b>DEFINITION – ERO PUBLICATION</b>                      Student wellbeing is strongly linked to learning. A student’s level of wellbeing at school is indicated by their satisfaction with life at school, their engagement with learning and their social emotional behaviour. It is enhanced when evidence-informed practices are adopted by schools in partnership with families and</p>	<p>Although student well-being and mental health are government-identified responsibilities for New Zealand schools, the extent to which school-based well-being and mental health interventions are currently delivered is unknown.</p> <p>The ethical responsibility of teachers, leaders and trustees is to consider, promote, balance, and respond to all aspects of the student, including their physical, social, emotional, academic, and spiritual needs.</p> <p>These considerations require deliberate expression and action across all curriculum areas, pastoral care, strategic priorities, and teaching practices. To maximise the role that schools have in promoting and responding to student wellbeing, these systems, people, and initiatives</p>	<p>The study showed lack of funding and low investment for MOE towards student wellbeing as biggest barrier.</p> <p>Sporadic implementation of various programmes across different schools and regions.</p> <p>Eurocentric models and programmes such as PB4L having minimal impact.</p> <p>Various resources available but no standardized wellbeing framework Nationally.</p> <p>ERO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promoting wellbeing for all students</li> </ul>	<p><b>ERO PUBLICATION:</b>                      The following section explains these five aspects through the six domains of the School Evaluation Indicators and shares the effective practices evident in the schools well placed to respond to student wellbeing.</p> <p>Agreed values and vision underpin the actions in the school to promote students’ wellbeing:</p> <p>The school’s curriculum is designed and monitored for valued goals.</p> <p>Students are a powerful force in wellbeing and other decisions.</p> <p>Systems are in place and followed to respond to wellbeing issues.</p> <p>All students’ wellbeing is actively monitored:</p> <p><b>Domain 1: Stewardship</b></p>	<p><b>ERO FRAMEWORK</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Noticing</li> <li>Investigating</li> <li>Collective sense making</li> <li>Prioritising and take action.</li> <li>Monitoring and evaluating</li> </ul>

<p>community. Optimal student wellbeing is a sustainable state, characterised by positive feelings and attitude, positive relationships at school, resilience, self-optimism, and a high level of satisfaction with learning experiences.</p>	<p>require a high level of school-wide coordination and cohesion. Support for a focus on students' wellbeing exists in professional frameworks including The Code of Ethics for Registered Teachers, Registered Teacher Criteria, the National Administration Guidelines, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Vulnerable Children Act. Student wellbeing is not only an ethical and moral obligation for teachers, leaders and trustees but also a legal responsibility.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having systems in place to Respond to issues.</li> <li>• School values curriculum</li> <li>• All adults provide guidelines for students to make good choices.</li> <li>• All adults provide guidelines for students who have been developed through the Care System</li> </ul>	<p><b>Domain 2:</b> Leadership of conditions for equity and excellence  <b>Domain 3:</b> Educationally powerful connections and relationships.  <b>Domain 4:</b> Responsive curriculum, effective teaching, and opportunity to learn.  <b>Domain 5:</b> Professional capability and collective capacity  <b>Domain 6:</b> Evaluation, inquiry and knowledge building for improvement and innovation.</p>	
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For the New Zealand studies, it was more difficult to compare as there was not an universal Measure of implementation. The Education Review Office-ERO (2016a) view student wellbeing as: “A student’s level of wellbeing at school is indicated by their satisfaction with life at school, their engagement with learning and their social emotional behaviour. It is enhanced when evidence-informed practices are adopted by schools in partnership with families and community. Optimal student wellbeing is a sustainable state, characterised by positive feelings and attitude, positive relationships at school, resilience, self-optimism, and a high level of satisfaction with learning experiences”. This ERO report also identifies that at schooling year 7 and 8 are important years in terms of wellbeing due to the greater risks as children get older, pubertal changes and the cumulative effects of their wellbeing needs been met in previous years.

In 2014 The Education Review Office (ERO) undertook an evaluation of the extends to which NZ was promoting and responding to student wellbeing in primary and secondary schools. The ERO (2016a) publication, “Wellbeing for Success-Effective Practice”, describes some common themes from schools with good wellbeing practices. These vital aspects are:

- Agreed values and vision underpins the actions in the school to promote students’ wellbeing.
- The schools’ curriculum is design and monitored for valued goals.
- Students are a powerful force in wellbeing and other decisions.
- Student wellbeing is actively monitored.
- Systems are in place and followed to respond to wellbeing issues.

(ERO, 2016b)

The Ministry of Education resources and ERO reports published between 2013 and 2017 are currently available in schools to use to find common ground. These publications that are related to student wellbeing are:

- Guidance and Counselling in Schools: Survey Findings (July 2013)
- Improving Guidance and Counselling for Students in Secondary Schools (December 2013)

- Wellbeing for Success: Draft Evaluation Indicators for Student Wellbeing (November 2013)
- Wellbeing for Children’s Success at Primary School (February 2015)
- Wellbeing for Young People’s Success at Secondary School (February 2015)
- Wellbeing for Success: Effective Practice (March 2016)

In the Health and Physical Education Curriculum document (Ministry of Education, 2007) wellbeing is explicitly defined as “students learn about their own wellbeing and that of others and society, in health-related and movement contexts”. In this learning area, the association with wellbeing in health is reinforced using the Māori term *Hauora*, which provides a second reference to wellbeing in the New Zealand Curriculum. In the NZC (Ministry of Education, 2007), *Hauora* is defined as ‘a Māori philosophy of wellbeing that includes the dimensions of *taha wairua*, *taha hinengaro*, *taha tinana*, and *taha whanau*, each one influencing and supporting the others (Durie, 1994). In the document, these dimensions are translated in the glossary as relating to spiritual, mental, and emotional, physical, and social wellbeing respectively (Ministry of Education, 2007). Although there are other health models such as “Five Ways” published by The NZ Mental Health Foundation through the New Economic Foresight Project on Mental Capital, the Māori health model from sir Mason Durie is more commonly recognised and used in NZ schools.

In the NZ curriculum Health and physical education encompasses of three different but related subjects: health education, physical education, and home economics.

By exploring health related and movement contexts, ākonga (learners) learn:

- That wellbeing is a combination of the physical, mental, and emotional, social, and spiritual aspects of people’s lives.
- To think critically and make meaning of the world around them.
- How to bring about sustainable health enhancing change for individuals, communities, and society.

The Te Marautanga o Aotearoa, the Māori medium curriculum, lists *Hauora* as one of seven *Wahanga Ako* (learning areas). The purpose of this learning is for students to have ‘Access to the world of *hauora*. Students will therefore have opportunity to learn about total health and wellbeing of spirit, mind, body, and heart as well as environmental health. They will develop

understanding about hauora by describing, explaining, trialling, and evaluating its many facets’, (Ministry of Education, 2007). The learning strands and achievement objectives in Te Marautanga o Aotearoa make explicit reference to each of Durie’s (1994) model (spiritual, social, mental, and physical) dimensions.

Te Whāriki, the NZ Early Childhood curriculum has an intentional focus on adopting a more holistic, relational, culturally responsive pedagogy to wellbeing. While this is evident in the Early childhood education document it is not so explicit within the primary and secondary curriculum.

Guidelines and policies to support schools that are currently available are:

- Mental Health Education: A guide for teachers, leaders, and school boards
- Relationships and sexuality education: A guide for teachers, leaders, and Board of Trustees.
- Preventing and responding to suicide: Resource kit for schools.
- Education outside of the classroom.
- Guidelines for school food programmes
- Alcohol and other drugs
- Aquatic skills
- Bike and fitness tracks
- Physical activity for healthy confident kids
- Five ways

While these documents provide “common direction”, schools are expected to design the curriculum in ways that address the needs, interests, and circumstances of the school’s students and community.

According to the most recent NZ developed Te Kete Ipurangi (tki.) resource, there are ten elements that are essential aspects of social and emotional learning in NZ schools. The first five elements of *relating to others* to establish and negotiate learning relationships that upholds mana and respectful partnerships:

1. He tūrangawaewae- Connection to place

2. He tirohanga whānui-perspective taking.
3. He honongaki te hāpori- community connection
4. He āroa, he kanorau- social awareness and diversity
5. Tū tangata- people of inspiration

These elements are also about manaakitanga, whanaungatanga and mahi ngātahi and recognising and valuing our ancestors (hpe.tki.org.nz).

The other five elements are related to the *managing-self* capabilities that are developed as part of a whanau, their wide and diverse community, and te taiao, (the natural world).

1. Mahi tahi- collaboration
2. He mauri, he wero - understanding emotions and meeting challenges.
3. He ihumanea, he toa-intuition and bravery
4. Mana motuhake- self-determination
5. He taukiri, he reo, he tikanga, he mātāpono- identities, languages, cultures, and values

However, *Cultural, Social, and Emotional Learning* (CSEL) is suggested by Goodman (2021) as an approach that is attuned to the multicultural and multilingual nature of Aotearoa New Zealand. Goodman (2021) argues, that CSEL is more holistic and collective and draws on Indigenous worldviews, ways of knowing, and practices. Schools' prioritisation of CSEL appeared to offer students multiple opportunities to understand concepts such as whanaungatanga, taha whānau (social wellbeing), and taha hinengaro (mental and emotional wellbeing), (Goodman 2021).

Although the NZ education sector acknowledges that child development is holistic, there appears to be a gap where education meets health policy. Selecting single dimensions of hauora and teaching them isolation and only focussing on those dimensions does not do justice to the holistic approach or understanding of hauora. In NZ the high variability found in schools relating to approaches to develop wellbeing reflects universal conceptualisation of wellbeing and the low consideration for culture and language in wellbeing and social and emotional learning (Goodman, 2021).

To prevent health issues in adults the process of how to stay healthy mentally, emotionally, socially, and physically needs to be enhanced in a wide range of policy. Neuroscience, physical, and social environments work together and influence the roots of life-long wellbeing (Wyn et

al., 2000; St Leger, et al., 2010). If children experience physical and emotional harmful environments the effects can be lasting throughout their life (Wyn et al., 2000; St Leger, et al., 2010). Consequently, schools should be a safe place to support individual interest, to explore and navigate their world through a lens of wellness.

### 2.2.3 Review of the Components and aspect of Māori and Pasifika Health Models present in NZ schools.

**Table 3 Review of the Components and aspect of Māori and Pasifika Health Models present in NZ schools.**

<b>Model</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Domains/Dimensions</b>
<b>Te Whare Tapa Wha- Sir Mason Durie (1984)</b>	<p>This model describes health and wellbeing as a wharenuī/meeting house with four walls.</p> <p>When all of these walls are in balance we thrive.</p> <p>Our health is impacted when one of the walls are out of balance.</p>	<p>The walls represent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taha Wairua (spiritual wellbeing)</li> <li>• Taha hinengaro (mental and emotional wellbeing)</li> <li>• Taha tinana (physical wellbeing)</li> <li>• Taha whānau (social and family wellbeing)</li> <li>• Our connection with the whenua (land) forms the foundation that keeps us grounded. The earth connects to the tipuna (ancestors)</li> </ul>
<b>Te Wheke Model- Dr Rose Pere</b>	<p>Te Wheke (octopus) is often used as a symbol for integrative and holistic health.</p> <p>The Te Wheke model allows for people to focus on their own lived experiences of health and deeper self-awareness and self-reporting of health.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waiora – total wellbeing of the individual and also family.</li> <li>• Wairuatanga – spirituality.</li> <li>• Hinengaro – the mind.</li> <li>• Taha tinana – physical wellbeing.</li> <li>• Whanaungatanga – extended family.</li> <li>• Mauri – life force in people and objects.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whatumanawa-open and healthy expression of emotion</li> <li>• Mana Ake-unique identity of individuals and family</li> </ul>
<b>Te Pae Māhutonga- Sir Mason Durie (2004)</b>	The four central stars represented in this model represents the four key tasks of health promotion and 2 pointers that represents pre-requisites for effectiveness are leadership and autonomy.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mauriora- Cultural identity</li> <li>2. Waiora- Physical environment</li> <li>3. Te Oranga- participation in society.</li> <li>4. Toiora- Healthy lifestyles</li> <li>5. Ngā Manukura- leadership</li> <li>6. Te Mana Whakahaere- Autonomy</li> </ol>
Fonofale Model – Fuimaona Karl (1984)  The Fonofale model incorporates the values and beliefs of Samoans, Cook Islanders, Tongans, Niueans, Tokelauans and Fijians.	The Fonofale model incorporates the metaphor of a Samoan house with the foundation, or the floor, posts and roof encapsulate in a circle to promote the philosophy of holism, continuity, and interaction.	<p>This model of health encompasses different foundations of life, including family, cultural values, and beliefs, spiritual, physical, mental and other.</p> <p>These foundations are interrelated, and health is about maintaining and sustaining balance between these foundations (Pulotu-Endeman, 2001).</p>

The Te Whare Tapu Wha model and Fonofale models are referred to within the NZ health and physical curriculum framework under the concept of hauora. Hauora is the Māori philosophy of health unique to NZ and comprises of the dimensions of the Te Whare Tapu Wha model.

The Fonofale model of wellbeing provides a Pasifika perspective on the concept of wellness and health. Like Te Whare Tapa Wha, it is built around the idea of a house which represents the wellbeing of an individual and is made of several components. The floor represents family and wider family, the roof is the culture, beliefs and values which shelters the family. The four pou represents physical, mental, spiritual, and other aspects of a person. They connect the culture, family, and compliment and interact with each other which cannot stand in isolation. Surrounding the fale (house) is a boundary which represents aspects that are external to the individual such as the physical environment, social and economic and political contexts.

The Te Wheke model is more commonly used in a few Māori medium and Kura Kaupapa Māori schools. The model illustrates that health of the individual is intertwined with and cannot be separated from the health of whānau (family) and that the health of whānau is inseparable from that of hapū, and that the health of hapū is inseparable from that of the iwi (Pere, 2009).

The commonalities found in these Indigenous models of health are:

- They are holistic and reflects fundamental elements that are equally critical and interrelated for a balanced and sustainable wellbeing as they are interwoven.
- Cultural, Social and Emotional wellbeing is a multi-dimensional concept of health that recognises the importance of connection to land, cultural traditions and beliefs, spirituality, ancestry, family and community and its impact on individuals and how it can promote positive behaviours and attitudes.
- It promotes collectivism and includes the wellbeing of children in the context of whānau (families), the health of whānau therefore, is inseparable from those of our ākonga (learners).
- All these concepts are interrelated and must be in balance to sustain positive wellbeing for all.

To have a deep understanding of wellbeing, all factors such as environmental and socio-economic factors, and their influences on individuals and communities, must be considered (Stewart, 2004). Health for Māori is still a contested political space, and it is still not seen within the context of a Treaty of Waitangi partnership that acknowledges Māori

rangatiratanga (sovereignty). This socio-ecological perspective impacts `negatively on wellbeing of students and their whānau.

*2.2.4 A Review of Health Models or Approaches currently used in school as identified through a discussion with a group of NZ principals.*

To gauge the extent to which schools in NZ are currently implementing wellbeing practices and how the aspects and elements of wellbeing is understood, and is reflected throughout the school systems, policies, procedures, and curriculum, it is important to add the voice of school leaders in this section.

Participants for this section were leaders and principals in schools where school-based wellbeing programmes or approaches are currently being implemented. A questionnaire (appendix 2) was given to participants to complete, two participants requested to have a face-to-face interview and answered the questions based on the questionnaire presented. I have originally made requests to ten principals but only seven has responded thus far.

Purposeful sampling is a technique widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information rich cases and involves individuals with experience and knowledge in study, in this instance, school-based wellbeing implementation in their contexts.

**Table 4 School settings and context of the participants**

Location	Type	Population	Roll
School 1 Hauraki	Full-primary (Yrs.1-8), Co-education, English medium	Māori-64, Pacific-10 Asian-20, European-213	316
School 2 Christchurch	Secondary (Yrs. 9-15) Girl’s school English medium	Māori-259, Pacific-70 Asian-55, Other-20 European- 669 International-12	1,085
School 3 Napier	Primary (Yrs. 1-6) Co-education English Medium	Māori-233, Pacific- 25 Asian- 1, Other -4 European- 33	296

School 4 Porirua East	Primary (Yrs. 1-6) Co-education English medium	Māori-38, Pacific-44 Asian-11, Other-9 International-0 European -2	104
School 5 Gisborne	Full Primary (Yrs. 1-8) Co-education Māori medium	Māori-182 Pacific-2	184
School 6 Hastings	Special School Co-education English Medium Special Needs aged 5-21yrs	Forty percent- Māori Sixty percent European	116

**Table 5 Question 1: What does your approach to Wellbeing implementation look like in your school kura?**

School leader	Responses
School 1	<p><i>We had a growing number of students displaying lack of self-regulation strategies and social skills, and self-harming. Gradually more teachers were mentoring students outside of the classroom from New entrants to year 8. Students were arriving at school in the mornings after experiencing traumatic events at home. There was a lack of support from MoE learning Support, and other MoE agencies and our school did not qualify for the Counselling in Schools programme. The system was broken until we realised that we were part of the system. We looked internally at our own processes, budgets, and allocations of staff. We soon realised that not only did we can resource to better support our students but also that it was our responsibility. We realised that we had to do better to understand the needs of our students through research, readings and visiting schools, and professional learning. This gave us valuable insights.</i></p> <p><i>We had a lot to unlearn for us to embrace what we named “Trauma Healing Practices”.</i></p>
School 2	<p><i>Due to the number of events that impacted the health and wellbeing of students and staff our wellbeing focus is a very big focus. Due to the Christchurch earthquakes our school was displaced first on another school site then in prefabricated buildings and now in in a forced arrangement, sharing a site. We are the only place in NZ with two separate schools on one setting. We have two sets of everything for example two principals and two boards and we also have shared facilities. On the one hand you have a traditional boy’s school and on the other an innovative girl’s school. This impacted on our wellbeing and a loss of some students. The earthquakes were followed by the Mosque shootings while we were still in the prefabricated buildings. It happened down the road from us. Then came covid with the lockdowns. When we finally returned to the new buildings just before covid, we felt displaced and had a sense of lost identity</i></p>

	<p><i>which impacted hugely on staff and student wellbeing. Being in a Private public partnership meant that we could not add any innovative spaces as property money was locked into this arrangement. We were move down to an area where we had no connection, we landed in a big field. We had no roots and no connection to the other schools in the community. There is a lot of hurt amongst teaching staff but also a lot of resilience with a willingness to change as it is all that they have ever known. The socio-economic status of the school is also now quite different, we need school lunches. We are part of Kahui Ako. The removal of schools and movement of people caused lots of trauma and anxiety.</i></p> <p><i>I noticed that several students had a high reaction to higher red brain activities. Trauma from the earthquake, mosques shooting, covid, no sense of routine or habit with claustrophobic buildings, with low roofs, no shade, open plan. The results were mediocre, there was a sense of low expectation and stereotyping, Māori students were not feeling valued and left the school. There was no sense of safety only survival. I mean who are we what do we stand for and what do we belong to. This is where wellbeing started for us.</i></p>
School 3	<p><i>We implemented a schoolwide approach to wellbeing, loosely based on Sir Mason Durie’s Te Whare Tapa Whā. I say loosely because we implemented initiatives and programmes without being fully aware of his model. When we did become aware of the model, we were pleased that what we had in place aligned well. In other words, we used a western model very much although a lot was intrinsic so you could also infer the thinking behind what we put in place was done through an indigenous lens, but not strategically or formally.</i></p> <p><i>Whilst each step of our approach was strategic, there was not an actual Trauma Informed Philosophy until much later in our journey. We were purely responding to the needs of our kids, staff, and community. Collectively our responsive initiatives formed a thorough approach which became known as our Trauma Informed Approach.</i></p> <p><i>The key part of the approach for us was the change in mindset of the adults. Through my learnings from the Neuro-sequential Model in Education via Dr Bruce Perry, I was able to share what I had learned with our team. Our PLD hui were focussed primarily on wellbeing, not the core curriculum. During these hui I would share the theory and weave through the stories of our tamariki. I would share my own personal experiences and through sharing my vulnerable stories other staff started to share their own.</i></p>
School 4	<p><i>Our wellbeing approach is strongly influenced by:</i></p> <p><i>Te Ao Māori</i>  <i>Te Ao Pasifika</i>  <i>Trauma-informed practice in Education</i>  <i>Relational Neuroscience</i></p> <p><i>In recent years this has looked like:</i></p> <p><i>Staff have had significant training in neuroscience related to wellbeing, engagement, learning and behaviour. Dr Bruce Perry’s Neuro-sequential Model in Education (NME).</i></p>

	<p><i>New and existing staff are well supported by Māori and Pacific leaders and colleagues to understand Polynesian values, tikanga, hauora, rongoā, wellbeing models.</i></p> <p><i>We have developed our Aaiotanga Framework to contextualize the NME approach for our school - we have illuminated the connections between Te Ao Māori and NME.</i></p>
School 5	<p><i>Our approach to wellbeing is through a Te Ao Māori lens. The Te Wheke health model from Dr Rose Pere is our kura foundational values which was already embedded into our school culture as such when we looked at wellbeing models, we adopted Sir Mason Durie’s Te Whare Tapu Wha model alongside our kura values. We believe in a holistic, comprehensive whole-school approach to wellbeing and embrace aspects of the Mana Potential Model for our social and emotional learning component. Our approach for the last 2 years has been to change our school culture from a punitive approach to trauma-informed approach that resonate with Te Ao Māori understandings. Learning how the trauma brain works helped us to understand and respond to behaviours differently.</i></p>
School 6	<p><i>A happy child is a learning child.</i></p> <p><i>Wellbeing comes first -Board resource to reflect this.</i></p> <p><i>Strong relationships with child and their whānau - we ‘enrol’ the whānau not just the child.</i></p> <p><i>Deep knowledge of every student</i></p> <p><i>Learning built on student interests and culture.</i></p> <p><i>High expectations of staff performance and assuming student competence</i></p> <p><i>Focus on holistic development each student - academic is just a part of this</i></p>

Reference was made by some schools to the health model of Sir Mason Durie as part of their Wellbeing framework and that their framework resonates through a Te Ao Māori lens. The emerging theme of Trauma informed practice and the Neuro-sequential model sparked an interest in me to further explore these two aspects and to understand how they contribute to the effective implementation of wellbeing in schools. Thus, chapters four and five explore these aspects further. Social and emotional learning are mentioned as components to help students with self-regulation and self-management skills.

Goodman (2021) argues that social and emotional learning (SEL) to support students’ wellbeing is even more critical within schools dealing with trauma from the Covid 19 pandemic. We need SEL interventions “more than ever” to “learn strategies to deal with adversity” (Marsay, 2020). Goodman (2021) further asserts, that SEL from different world views (Indigenous, Pasifika and Māori) highlights the necessity for cultural, social, and emotional learning (CSEL) to create transformative spaces that support holistic wellbeing. One

principal mentioned the Mana Potential Model (a Māori SEL model) being used in such a way at their Māori Medium Kura. This model puts the mana (power) of social and emotional wellbeing in the hands of the individual.

I was also interested to know from principals what components were present in their holistic approach to wellbeing and how it was implemented in their respective schools. Consequently, question two of the questionnaire designed to shed light on this wondering.

**Table 6 Question 2: Which components are present in your wellbeing model/programme/practice.**

School leaders	Response
School 1	<p><i>We embrace “Trauma Healing Practices”, Neurodiversity, trauma effects on the brain. We withdrew a teacher from the classroom to appoint as a wellbeing teacher (2 days a week). We refurbished a dedicated space known as Te Punanga, as place of safety and refuge. It is our space of calmness, a space to be happy, a space to heal. We redrafted our behaviour management policy to Understanding and responding to student behaviour. We realised that change could not happen without engaging parents in the changes as they have their own trauma. Extended Play – An extended 15-minute lunch break once a week where all staff (from principal to caretaker) go out to connect and play with students on the playground.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Mindfulness – This programme runs throughout the school, although I must remind the teachers every now and then the “why” behind the programme. There are times when teachers are overwhelmed with programmes, and changes, and therefore some of our “non-negotiables” are shifted aside.</i></li> <li>• <i>“What’s Up” – an online form available to all students when they have a burning issue but feel that they cannot speak to an adult (at home or school). Once the very basic form has been filled in, an email is automatically sent to the Wellbeing Committee, who will then decide who will be the best person to follow up.</i></li> <li>• <i>The Wellbeing Committee meets every Thursday to cover a range of needs, programmes, and initiatives to ensure that the needs of all our students are being met.</i></li> <li>• <i>A “Trauma Healing Conference” with 364 registered delegates was an effective way for all our staff, all personnel from kura within the Hauraki Kāhui Ako and beyond to share the importance of understanding and embracing trauma healing practices in every kura</i></li> </ul>
School 2	<p><i>Our wellbeing model started with building a sense of belonging and identity. Also, what does it look like to care for our students and what does it look like to care for each other. After a year we threw out the old sets of values used the Māori whakataukī “looking backwards to look forward” a lot. We got to know the community better and developed our own values called “Te Poutama, Te Whare</i></p>

	<p><i>Mauriora” Kia tu, Kia maia, Kia manawanui, Kia manaaki, Kia Rangatira. We now have a strong identity after 2years of working in this area.</i></p> <p><i>We have also done Trauma informed practices with our staff. We now have developed small groups of 12 to 14 years 9 to 13 students led by a teacher. They meet every day and an hour our on Wednesdays. This is also a platform to build confidence in achievements, social media and getting to know whanau well. The Akon teacher is the connector between whanau and school. Other systems are moved back to year 9 and 10 students in shared interest classes such as sustainability, we do not stream. We also have a Kura Kaupapa Māori system, a Te Ao Māori space and pastoral care. An have high expectation for student achievement.</i></p>
School 3	<p><i>We created physical spaces for kids to be present and to self and co-regulate in and with. One of the spaces was the Quiet Place, a large outdoor space where kids could just chill before school, during breaks (and during class time if needed). No ball tag, scooters, yelling and screaming - that can happen in other areas. We also created Te Āhuru Mōwai - our sensory garden, which included a large reflexology sensation pathway. Another space for kids to self-regulate with nature, reconnect with Papatūānuku and to co-regulate with others.</i></p> <p><i>Men’s &amp; Women’s Hui were created to provide safe space for our community and staff to heal together. These made a huge difference in our connections with our community but also with each other. Our understanding and showing of empathy, compassion and understanding really transformed here.</i></p> <p><i>But again, the biggest shift was the change in mindset and our growing and ever evolving knowledge of relational neuroscience.</i></p> <p><i>Trauma informed with elements of mindfulness, relational neuroscience, and Te Ao Māori.</i></p>
School 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Trauma-informed practice: we began this journey following the discovery of Dr Bruce Perry’s “The boy who was raised as a dog” and NME.</i></li> <li>- <i>Aspects of mindfulness and breathwork</i></li> <li>- <i>Cultural and musical practices</i></li> <li>- <i>A strong focus on physical activity, health, and nutrition</i></li> <li>- <i>Bush play is a key part of our curriculum, especially for our Year 1-2 students.</i></li> <li>- <i>Garden to Table and Enviroschools are also key components of our local curriculum.</i></li> <li>- <i>Neuroscience learning for senior students.</i></li> <li>- <i>A strong values foundation: Our MANA values are explicit and omnipresent. The values of manaaki and whanaungatanga have strong alignment to our neuroscience beliefs.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>All the above are present because we recognise their importance for the holistic wellbeing, positive engagement, and success of our learners.</i></p>
School 5	<p><i>A holistic approach that includes social and emotional learning (Mana Potential) and cultural aspects, as wells creating psychological safe (āhurutanga) and calming (whakatau) spaces such as our sports gym, art space, cultural space, and Puna ora (a safe space for both teachers and tamariki to self-regulate and co-regulate). We</i></p>

	<p><i>cater for our neurodiverse learners and their whānau through our sensory garden and play-based space. Components of our wellbeing practice are karakia, waiata, kids' yoga, mindfulness/breathing, stances, mau rākau, kapa haka and brain breaks. Trauma-informed practice has been included over the last 2 years.</i></p> <p><i>Emphasis is also placed on whānau inclusive practice and staff wellbeing. We also have a wellbeing team which is led by the principal, and consists of a wellbeing teacher, Social Worker in Schools, Counsellor and Whānau Facilitator and SENCO. An Internal lunch model operated by four of our mums ensure healthy and nutritional meals for our tamariki which is an important component of wellbeing.</i></p>
<p>School 6</p>	<p><i>Daily communication with whānau for better understanding student of across settings. Deep knowledge of child (helps when only have 6-8 students in class) Personalised approach- individual IEP goals written with whānau (key competency based) and personalised academic goals.</i></p> <p><i>Same teacher for 2-3 Years (sometimes longer). Lots of input and support from the therapy team - SLT, OT, Physio, Music Therapist, Psychologist when needed. Overarching focus on communication - adults should not be making decisions on behalf of students - need to find a way for non-verbal students to have a voice. In depth transition process i.e.- ECE visit by our staff, meeting with whānau, therapists' involvement at each step, transition visits. Also have transition procedures for movement within school. Transition out of school starts to intensify 12-18 months before leaving school- co-ordinate planning between agencies, young person, and parents.</i></p> <p><i>Te Whare Tapa Wha - in 2023 will trial being key component of IEP document (and choice of Fonofale for Pasifika whānau).</i></p> <p><i>Russell Bishop's Relationship First/ Teaching to the NE - started this year. Focus on strong relationships and quality teaching. Removal of deficit thinking. Want to challenge staff to further develop cultural awareness and responsiveness.</i></p> <p><i>Growing staff awareness of trauma - start day with morning circle - calming, routine, connection time (aware up to 40% of students arriving at school impacted by something that has happened that morning or in the past - Nathan Wallis).</i></p> <p><i>Whole staff PLD offered from Clare Taylor- neuro-sequential model. Some staff attended Kathryn Burkett, Jase Williams, Emma Woodward PLD days.</i></p> <p><i>All staff trained and certified in CPI Safety Intervention to support students positively and at the lowest stage of anxiety/ escalation. Training includes Trauma Informed Practice and a high-level focus on the integrated experience between students and staff - lots of self-reflection.</i></p> <p><i>Occupational Therapist on staff with background in mental health- works 1:1 with students where need identified.</i></p> <p><i>Psychologist support when needed to support students, whānau and staff.</i></p> <p><i>Therapy team includes psychologist; SLTs; OTs; Music therapist; physiotherapist. Staff often accompany whānau to specialist appts eg. paediatrician as an advocate for young person and family</i></p> <p><i>Boys' Club/ Girls' Club - talk about friendships, puberty, sexuality, feelings etc. in safe small group single sex environment. Also tailored to support individual needs.</i></p> <p><i>Mana Enhancement - linked to positive behaviour support plans.</i></p> <p><i>Seniors have yoga classes (yoga instructor on staff)</i></p>

Once again, the holistic approach to wellbeing was mentioned and attempts to implement the holistic approach was made through wellbeing practices such as mindfulness and brain activities. One school leader made mention of the spiritual and cultural components to wellbeing as part of their holistic approach to wellbeing. Two schools mentioned the need for wellbeing teams or committees and having a wellbeing teacher to support implementation. These schools find funding as a barrier to sustainable implementation. Creating safe spaces and safe environments are mentioned as elements that contribute to the wellbeing of students. Gillet-Swan (2022) describes the other factors which influence student wellbeing, as the experience of psychological safety, a strong sense of trust and belonging, that their voice is acknowledged, validated, and acted upon in meaningful ways. Genuine interest in their opinions, students need to see and feel change and experience change on an individual level and through noticeable trends and norms school-wide (Gillett-Swan, 2022). Practices that are inclusive of whānau is also evident at most schools.

Three school leaders mentioned the inclusion of neuroscience learning and two principals talked about understanding how the trauma brain works as an important factor to understand student behaviour. Neuroscience and the neuro-sequential model is another area for further investigation to study its impact on student wellbeing. Again, these areas need to be further explored as they were elements that were absent in the international whole school-based health models. As a result of this reason, I further explored these elements in the stand-alone chapters four and five to gain understanding of the role that these elements play in the holistic approach to student wellbeing.

The following set of questions to these principals aim to understand if there were any impacts on students because of the wellbeing implementation practices and if so, what they were and how it was identified.

**Table 7 Question 3: What impacts does your wellbeing implementation have on the student’s wellbeing.**

School leaders	Response
School 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>We have completed the second “Resilience project” survey (Yr 4-8) this year and were pleasantly surprised at the progress made in student wellbeing made the past year. I can share some of the longitudinal data we have if needed.</i></li> <li>• <i>Staff – The most pleasing is the significant shifts our staff have made the past 18-24 months. It is so rewarding to hear the language being used in the staffroom, and that I would say, is the most important shift and progress made.</i></li> <li>• <i>Serious behaviour incidents – there has been a significant drop in reported challenging behaviours. While staff are still having to deal with these regularly, they now have a better understanding of the triggers, and how to respond to the behaviours.</i></li> </ul>
School 2	<p><i>Although we have a lot of Trauma informed training for teachers on behaviour, we are still concerned with the increase of the 1% to 5% of highly traumatised students, who are not ready for school and are unable to function in class and have made this known to the Ministry. Their behaviours are severe and for the safety of others I have done more suspensions this year. Me had to draw the line in the sand to say that high level behaviours such as assaulting a teacher is not tolerated. The BOT had to unwillingly exclude some students. These students need healing and I have been talking to the Ministry about support for them. Before we suspend them however a lot of wraps around support, pastoral care, agency care, etc had gone into them. But discipline must be part of it especially for sever incidents. The safety of all students is necessary otherwise it further traumatise them and some have anxiety. Although we must remember it is only the 1-5 % a huge difference from before but keeping an eye on it and supporting these students although through discipline, it prevents the escalation towards the middle group.</i></p> <p><i>The BOT has also heavily invested in wellbeing by employing double the number of Deans to support the Ako teachers then I have two counsellors and two social workers to give further wrap around support.</i></p> <p><i>We have also consulted on cell phone use and the BOT has decided to ban cell phone. It is working and has a big influence on the wellbeing of students and creates a safer space.</i></p>
School 3	<p><i>It is calmed the entire school environment. Learning spaces are calm and kids can focus and learn better - our academic results prove this. Behavioural response incidents are almost non-existent. Adults are more aware of themselves: their story, bias, energy, etc so we are unlikely to transmit and re-traumatise, traumatised kids.</i></p> <p><i>Any behavioural response incidents that did occur were able to be dealt with in a responsive and mana empowering manner and even conversations with whānau were calm due to us dosing relational neuroscience over time to our community via newsletters, social media, assemblies, community days, and in our Men’s and Women’s Hui.</i></p>
School 4	<p><i>The below shifts took place over a 4-year period during which we grew our understanding of trauma-informed practice and NME, as well as further developing our Bush Play programme:</i></p> <p><i>Behavioural incidents needing principal input reduced from c.400 to c.5 per year.</i></p>

	<p><i>Incidents requiring physical restraints, internal stand-down, or class evacuation from approximate 100 to 0 per year.</i></p> <p><i>Stand down, suspension and exclusions=0</i></p> <p><i>Learning and achievement of previously distressed students has “skyrocketed”.</i></p> <p><i>Reading and writing school wide achievement: very good improvement in 2022</i></p> <p><i>Staff retention is high.</i></p> <p><i>School attendance is above average for similar decile schools.</i></p>
School 5	<p><i>A calm and peaceful environment, a place where tamariki feels safe, included, and have a sense of belonging.</i></p> <p><i>Great reduction in severe and harmful incidents of behaviour</i></p> <p><i>Self-harming and vaping down to almost zero incidents per week this is down from ten or more per week before.</i></p> <p><i>No stand downs or exclusions</i></p> <p><i>Increased attendance</i></p> <p><i>Focussed and engaged learners which increased achievement across kura.</i></p> <p><i>Students can articulate or use trauma-informed language to express their emotions and use their Papatuanuku strategies (SEL) to regulate.</i></p>
School 6	<p><i>High attendance (other than genuine sickness) - students want to come to school.</i></p> <p><i>By focusing on supporting wellbeing and ensuring basic needs are considered first e.g., are students hungry/ tired/ needing an energy break, this means students can be more ready to engage and learn and achieve.</i></p>

Principals report when attention is given to creating safe environments through wellbeing practices, that there is improvement in behaviour, attendance and engagement. Gavin, Brown, Lee, & Qui, (2020); Walness, (2016) states that when school environments are psychologically safe, there is greater positive outcomes for students, increased self-confidence, emotional wellbeing, and cognitive processing become more evident. Students also participate in new experiences, activities, and learning. They become problem-solvers and collaborators that are motivated for their academic journey Walness (2016). This impacts on student achievement outcomes and less challenging and at-risk behaviours (Gavin, et al., 2020; Walness 2016). Nonetheless, principals struggle to find the balance of when to decide whether behaviours of students are involuntary or wilful and whether to punish accordingly.

The next question is to find out how student wellbeing was been measured and understood in each context.

**Table 8 Question 4: How do you measure the wellbeing of your students and staff?**

School leaders	Response
School 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The resilience project gives us annual in depth very specific annual data and longitudinal data.</i></li> <li>• <i>Staff Wellbeing – we have put emphasis on staff wellbeing. Yet it is the most challenging one to make significant change. Teachers are dedicated to their profession and students, and any form of leave granted makes them feel uneasy. We have tried a range of strategies/initiatives with mixed success. The key to it all is the role the individual plays in personal wellbeing. Yet, we acknowledge we somehow need to find that golden key to unlock a meaningful wellbeing package for staff.</i></li> <li>• <i>ERO – it has also been the focus for our ERO visits. Please see attached report (although the modern format does not say much either).</i></li> </ul>
School 2	<p><i>We use two annual wellbeing surveys as well as the Australian wellbeing survey which cost a bit of money. Then we have the Kahui Ako student wellbeing survey which is done once per year to track student wellbeing across schools.</i></p>
School 3	<p><i>It is such a tough thing to measure and in lots of ways I was never interested in formally measuring the impact as we now had a calm environment where our kids, staff and community felt safe and seen. You could argue how could I prove this. Again, I was not really interested but because of the nature of this kaupapa, it is felt and experienced!</i></p> <p><i>However, we entered the Prime Minister’s Education Excellence Awards in the wellbeing category, so a large part of this process was proving that there were shifts and anecdotal stories and snippets were not enough. So, we engaged the support of MOE and MOH/DHB and through their data we were able to prove the impact that our approach had, had on our stakeholders.</i></p> <p><i>But I am not focussed on the data and measuring this kaupapa, and more about feeling the impact.</i></p>
School 4	<p><i>We currently use anecdotal, observational, and non-formal ways to measure wellbeing. Staff and student voice. As well as some outcome data (eg. records of behavioural incidents) such as in information above.</i></p>
School 5	<p><i>Using student surveys and questionnaire based on their health and wellbeing, health, and wellbeing report, using the Skodel app where students self-report their wellbeing daily. Daily check-ins with significant adults for some students. Staff wellbeing is monitored by the leaders and annual surveys. Staff wellbeing is looked after through staff wellbeing practices such as staff yoga, wellness Wenerei activities, staff pampering, and a staff “tag in” system when support is needed.</i></p>
School 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Engaged students.</i></li> <li>• <i>Engaged whānau can also be an indicator of wellness.</i></li> <li>• <i>Improved student outcomes</i></li> <li>• <i>Happy connected students</i></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Decreased behaviour incidents</i></li> <li>• <i>Consultation with whānau</i></li> <li>• <i>IEP goals can often have a wellbeing focus, and these are tracked to show progress and achievement.</i></li> </ul>
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Different methods are used to measure student wellbeing which in most cases seem to be self-reported by students through surveys and questionnaires. Two principals mentioned the use of Australian models and tools to measure their students' wellbeing. Some principals measure student wellbeing by noticing improved engagement, attendance, connectedness, happy students, and limited behavioural incidents.

Measuring wellbeing can be complex due to the variable understandings of wellbeing. Tracking tools can be compartmental for example measuring mental health or healthy eating or physical activity. Student wellbeing are often measured across four areas: cognitive, physical, psychological, and social/emotional and can include socio-cultural aspects. Student wellbeing are also quite often measured using the subjective domain, asking questions about life satisfaction, feelings, happiness, worthwhileness, and anxiety for example. Wirtz, Kruger, Scollin, & Diener, (2003) and Thomas & Diener (1990) argues that the psychology of those being measured affects the measure, while at the same time, the measures can psychologically impact those being measured. Therefore, the measurement of student wellbeing in schools presents unique challenges and influences the results of the data because it can be dependent on how well students are and how safe they feel.

Studies done by Pitama et al., (2002) points out that measuring wellbeing of Indigenous cultures, including Māori, who view wellbeing as spiritual and holistic, embedded within oral traditions of storytelling and collectivism; directly contrasts with deeply individualistic Eurocentric notions that is underpinned by universalistic “one size, fits-all” notions.

The next question focuses on the inclusion of student voice within the implementation of these school-based models. I wanted to find out whether school leaders consider student voice when designing their wellbeing models and whether students have opportunity to share their needs and whether these needs are included to be addressed.

**Table 9 Question 5: How is student voice evident in your practices?**

School leaders	Response
School 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Through our Resilience Project surveys.</i></li> <li>• <i>We have also sought feedback from 3 student focus groups as part of our strategic review. Again, this has given us invaluable feedback, and will be considered when mapping our strategic plan for 2024-2025.</i></li> </ul>
School 2	<i>The student leadership lead certain aspects. They lead presentations to teachers especially our Māori and Pasifika students, they present to teachers their lives and the barriers that they face. It is like a co-partnership with the leadership. There is also a student rep on the BOT.</i>
School 3	<p><i>Student voice. Nothing formal was ever captured aside from asking some of our senior students for voice when putting together our Prime Minister's Education Excellence Awards application video and when the film crew/judges came to school.</i></p> <p><i>We talk to and with our kids every day and we are responsive in real-time. We do not typically document these conversations. I really believe if you know your kids this is a natural and organic process and not a contrived tick the box thing.</i></p> <p><i>I think our Community Day and Men's &amp; Women's Hui are unique approaches and initiatives. They have made a huge difference here in our connections with whānau and aren't hard to get up and running.</i></p>
School 4	<p><i>Student voice has been evident through some Kāhui Ako work: for example, several focus groups and group interviews about curriculum, wellbeing, language, culture, and identity. These have been facilitated by outside PLD providers. Outcomes of this suggest that generally our learners feel connected, have a strong sense of belonging, are happy at school and feel that their cultures are reflected and celebrated.</i></p> <p><i>Learners share their voice with staff in an informal way every day: although there is more, we can do here to ensure that all are well heard. We believe that student voice can also be seen in non-speaking ways such as positive engagement, reduced dysregulated behaviours and happy smiles in the playground.</i></p>
School 5	<i>Student voice is included through student surveys and Manukura (student leadership groups). The year 6 to 8 classes design their own classroom treaty with protocols designed by them, they hold each other to account and measure each other's behaviours against the treaty. This keeps them safe which contributes to their mental health.</i>
School 6	<i>Can be challenging for our neurodiverse students to tell us what they think/feel etc. Communication is a big focus like an umbrella 'subject' as communication is a fundamental human right. Our students 'talk' with their voice, signing, low tech (e.g., visuals) or high tec devices (e.g., iPad talker). Lots of input and support from SLTs</i>

	<p><i>Students should always have access to their communication tools - not just in a learning context.</i></p> <p><i>Small classes - strong nurturing environment - extension of whānau - students comfortable to have a voice.</i></p> <p><i>We build very close relationships with students and can often understand subtle non-verbal communication.</i></p> <p><i>Storypark entries with photo/ video evidence of student voice and learning</i></p>
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Student voice is captured through surveys, focus group discussions and communication. When principals report higher levels of student voice, there are several benefits which can be observed both in external processes and skills level, and on an internal emotional level. Students that are put in the “driver’s seat” of their own education, classroom environment, and mental wellbeing, are enabled to feel empowered to make positive change (Gavin, et al., 2020). There is a need for genuine interest in their opinions, students need to see and feel change and experience change on an individual level and through noticeable trends and norms school-wide (Gillett-Swan, 2022).

Data from the interviews with principals revealed the variation of school-based implementation and measuring of wellbeing programmes based on their differences in contexts. Studies done for the Ontario Ministry of Education (2016c) states that there is no clear way to measure the precise impact of schools on student wellbeing however, there is clear indication that there is discrete impact on overall student wellbeing and should consequently not be seen as an impossible or misguided goal.

As a result of the discussions with these principals’ new components such as Trauma-informed practices, safe environments, the neuro-sequential model, and neuroscience has been highlighted as components of a wellbeing model. After doing further readings and studies in these areas, I found it areas worthwhile exploring throughout this thesis to gauge the impact and the place that is has or should have in and on student wellbeing.

### **2.3 Literature review findings, discussion, and summary**

From the overall findings of the above literature reviews and discussions, it becomes apparent that the notion of wellbeing is understood and implemented differently in different contexts even within the domains and components of wellbeing models. This review highlights both opportunities and challenges in implementing a whole school-approach to student wellbeing.

Implementing a whole-school approach can be complex, requiring the involvement of a multitude of strategies, sites, and stakeholders, and making direct attribution of outcomes to interventions may not always be clear-cut. In addition, there appears to be a lack of information on the implementation process to determine why and how interventions worked or did not work. For instance, Blank et al., (2009) states that often school-based interventions lacked detailed information on what the interventions involved beyond their length and number of sessions, suggesting a lack of process evaluation or measurement intervention accuracy.

However, the overall literature review suggests that a whole school-approach can be effective in promoting student wellbeing despite these challenges because a whole-school approach to student wellbeing promotion involves interventions in multiple domains, involving all stakeholders, including parents and community agencies. Several systematic reviews report research evidence in support of a whole-school approach to student wellbeing promotion. For example, St Leger et al., (2010) based on their review of research literature on health promotion assert, that school programmes that are integrated, holistic, and strategic are more likely to produce better health and educational outcomes than those which are information-based and implemented only in individual classrooms.

Gaining further insights from the principal discussion group it is evident that in NZ there is clearly variability in the ability of schools to develop wellbeing in students. Research done by ERO (2015) identified this variability to respond and support the development of the wellbeing in students. A study done by Thabrew et al., (2023) highlighted that although, student wellbeing and mental health are government-identified responsibilities, for New Zealand schools, the extent to which school-based wellbeing and mental health interventions are currently delivered is unknown. Thabrew et al., (2023) states that currently, “a wide range of primarily non-evidence-based wellbeing and mental health interventions are delivered in a variable manner by school-based and external providers”. Despite current enthusiasm by schools, there is room for improvement in the quality and equity of intervention delivery.

Recent data from Boyd et al., (2017) also supports these finding in a national survey of primary and secondary schools that drew on the model of Te Whare Tapu Wha and included dimensions of social and spiritual wellbeing. Boyd et al., (2017) used a response to intervention framework, advocated by CASEL (2019) to categorise activities into Tier 1 or universal approaches, Tier

2, or selective approaches for specific groups with identified needs, and Tier 3 for intensive approaches for high-risk students. They found that 27% of schools had zero or one approach to fostering wellbeing embedded, and only 26% of schools surveyed, had more than five approaches embedded within their school. Wellbeing and belonging in Māori and Pacific students were more commonly fostered in Decile 1 and 2 schools. Few schools consulted students about approaches to foster wellbeing and many schools (70%) placed a clear focus on approaches that were for improving student behaviour (Denston et al., 2022). Low rates of wellbeing are associated with negative educational outcomes for students in NZ, including increased rates of disengagement, standdowns, suspensions, and school abandonment (Bishop et al., 2009).

The NZ Ministry of Education data (2019), indicates that Māori males experience stand downs at twice the rate as Pākehā males and Māori females experience standdowns at three times the rate as Pākehā females (MOE, 2020). Data are similar for Pacific students with males stood down more frequently than Pākehā males and Pacific females stand downs twice as frequent as Pākehā females. Youth in NZ also holds the highest rates of suicide and self-harm more so for Māori (Flemming et al., 2014).

After exploring the literature about health models both internationally and nationally, I was curious to know more about why New Zealand's wellbeing data continuous to be at the lowest end of the scale within the OCED countries. As a researcher my next wondering was about why schools continue to implement policies and systems such as stand downs and exclusions which, in many cases affects marginalised students. I wanted to know as a researcher why the challenging behaviours of students were recurring, the effects on student wellbeing and I wanted to understand the root causes more.

My revelation was when I read the recommended books by Doctor Bruce Perry “The Boy Who was Raised a Dog”, and “What happened to you?”. This led me to pursue further knowledge on the Trauma brain, relational neuroscience, and Trauma-informed practices in schools. I then further pursued this knowledge by completing a certificate in Trauma informed practices. My curiosity also led me to explore trauma informed practices from a Tikanga Māori perspective, as I wanted my staff to have professional development in this area. To me, it became evident

that this was the missing gap and the answer to solving the challenging behaviours and teacher stress.

The discussion with a group of principals also led to the discovery that trauma-informed education and neuroscience informed approaches were emerging and evolving in a very few individual schools in NZ and internationally. I wanted to explore the educators' perspectives on the key enablers of implementing sustainable trauma-informed approaches, practices, and systems in NZ schools. However, not much data was available to explore within the NZ schooling context. To date there is also limited culturally responsive practice-based evidence on trauma-informed practices and research situated in an Aotearoa, NZ schooling context.

I, therefore, focussed on international readings on trauma informed practices, creating safe spaces for learning, neuroscience and behaviours, and polyvagal theories to understand how the gap that currently exist in understanding student wellbeing from a holistic viewpoint, can be addressed. The literature review covered in Chapters four and five will give insight into these readings. To further add to the research base, Chapters four and five consequently, explore trauma informed practices and safe learning spaces (Āhurutanga) more in depth as wellbeing components that could close the gap and add value to student wellbeing.

Wellbeing research done from an educational perspective by Mashford-Scott et al., (2012) argues that research undertaken in relation to children and young people are often descriptive and often does not include their perceived experiences. The Literature explored also only referred to "what" was implemented but not "why" and it also did not measure the impacts of school-based models on students' wellbeing. Consequently, the Case study in this thesis attempts to add student voice and experiences.

All adults in the school, from the principal to the teachers and other staff members, are the people who define the general culture and the behaviours in the school. If they are to be trained in wellbeing, neuroscience, and trauma as part of their teacher training and in-service training programme, this could enable sustained change. If school leaders and teachers understand how to develop the Mauri (essence) of students by looking at it from a whole child development perspective, it will create the knowledge and understanding of the pathway to flourishing, unleashing potential of these students to Tino Rangatiratanga (leadership) status (Te Whare Tapa Wha- Sir Mason Durie).

Whilst there is a good degree of alignment in ways in which student wellbeing is perceived by and based on experts' views, young people's views can enrich and enhance their more relevant needs through a sense of agency. Actively involving young people in their own wellbeing should be an important element of a student wellbeing programme. As a process, school climate and relationships should reflect this as an outcome, students should be educated and taught skills and attitude that will enable them to be well and contribute to their own wellbeing and that of the community and society at large.

## **2.4 Chapter Summary**

This concludes the overall literature review summary and overview outline of the thesis.

The next chapter discuss the research design and methodology used throughout the thesis to gain further understanding on the topic of student wellbeing approaches in schools and to answer the research questions.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Chapter Introduction**

The previous chapter engaged with the literature to gain understanding of what wellbeing is, and how it can be defined and implemented in an educational context to understand its impact. This chapter discusses the epistemological perspectives, paradigms, data collection, data analysis, and the research methods which underpin this study.

This chapter also describes the theoretical framework that will be employed in the study to explore the relationship between a holistic wellbeing approach to positive student achievement outcomes and to answer the research questions posed. The aim of the study is to gain understanding of the aspects that impacts on student wellbeing for them to be flourishing in their own selves and as learners.

#### **3.1 Methodology Overview**

This section describes the overview of the research frameworks used to inform this thesis and explore the research questions which frames the approach to the research to further gain in depth understanding. Theoretical frameworks help define the specific viewpoint the researcher will take in analysing and interpreting the data (Jacard and Jacoby, 2010; Swanson, 2013). They also facilitate the construction of new knowledge by validating or challenging theoretical assumptions (Swanson, 2013). This enables the researcher to discern which assumptions or factors are important and which are not (Jacard and Jacoby, 2010)

##### *3.1.1 Research design and scope*

The Critical theory is the guiding principle for this thesis as it provides the lens for transformational practice and a co-construction approach that allows researchers to position the participant voices to be viewed both structurally and socially, culturally, and politically located beings, describing their practice (Berryman & Bishop, 2009). Participatory research, an instance of critical theory in research, breaks the conventional ways of constructing research as it concerns doing research with people and communities rather than doing research to or for

them. This method empowers participants and respects their indigenous knowledge (Berryman & Bishop, 2009). It allows for equal control of the research. To examine discourse in this way and answer the research questions data collection for this study will be in the form of collecting data from both younger and older participants, their whānau, principal peer groups, educators as well as the school wellbeing team who are all of Māori descent.

This research is therefore closely concerned with social justice and inequity issues. It draws heavily on various participatory groups and seeks to understand, affirm, and validate social, cultural, and educational practices across different contexts and settings. A constructivist worldview forms the basis of the research as it values the meanings, insights, and understandings that the participants create in their social and cultural contexts.

This research design consists of a Māori-centred approach drawing strongly on Kaupapa Māori theory and principles using qualitative methods. Tikanga Māori (ethics, principles, and philosophies) provides the foundations and scope that informs the Kaupapa Māori approach to research; the research undertaken with or about Māori is beneficial to the researched and makes a positive contribution to Māori aspirations (Smith, 1999). The research for this thesis was informed by Tikanga Māori principles from beginning to end. It is based on Whakapapa or whanaungatanga (relationships), tika (research design), manaakitanga (cultural and social responsibility) and mana (justice and equity) which form the tikanga based principles. As the researcher, I recognise that my own background and personal experiences in education will shape my interpretation as I position myself in the research. Nash, Munford and Donoghue (2005) assert that qualitative methodology acknowledges that reality is socially constructed, and thus subjective experiences are valued. Furthermore, they describe qualitative methodology as being multi-method focused, an approach that studies things in their natural settings attempting to make sense of it and the meaning that people bring to them.

Qualitative research is particularly effective when investigating issues within the context of a particular population or specific period (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Here, the primary objective is to “Describe and understand how people feel, think, and behave within a particular context relative to a specific research question” (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Therefore, qualitative research forms the foundation of this thesis. Therefore, for this thesis study I will draw on a qualitative research methodology as I see this as the best approach to understand how students and educational leaders understand and experience trauma, social and emotional learning for

wellbeing. Creswell (1998) suggests that five different aspects are represented within qualitative research: biography, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography and case study. These aspects allow for options when addressing research questions.

Bogdan and Biklen (1992) argue that qualitative research involves five main elements:

1. The researcher in a qualitative investigation serves as the primary instrument for data collection, relying heavily on the natural setting as the source of data.
2. Analysis in qualitative research is secondary to description.
3. The process is as much a focus for the researcher as the product.
4. Inductive analysis serves as the mechanism for interpreting results such that emergent findings influence further data collection, with data analysis and theory development following in a dynamic and co-existing relationship.
5. Meaning making is a central thrust of qualitative research.

Using qualitative interviewing as a data-collection tool is useful in a range of methodological approaches and may therefore be applied to address several research questions. A qualitative research methodology is also a better approach to understand how schools and students understand and experience wellbeing in different contexts and holds the potential to give voice to these groups. Interviews enable a process of talking back and creates a space for genuine exchange of views enabling the marginalised and otherwise silent voice to be heard. This fits well with Kaupapa Māori theory in terms of retrieval of space and the emancipatory purpose of Māori-centred research (Cunningham, 1998; Smith, 1999).

Interview methods were used to give participants a voice to discuss their interpretations of the context in which they live and teach and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view. In this instance the interviews were not just simply concerned with the collection of data but also its human embeddedness (Kvale 1996; Dyer, 1995). Focus groups interviews is a qualitative method where groups of participants are interviewed together to gain a more in-depth understanding of social issues. I have therefore, purposely chosen a participatory group of principals, teacher groups and students to gain a wider perspective and scope from different contexts to have a statistically broader sample presentation. Semi-structured, open, and in-depth interviews are appropriate qualitative methods through which it will be possible

to make visible the voices of these participants, giving them autonomy to express their views. These were applied with a group of students and a group of staff members involved in the Case study as well.

The interviews also allowed for a reciprocal relationship between the researcher and the participants, allowing space for them to elaborate and give unique and personal answers (Galetta, 2012). Semi-structured interviews allowed for topic and areas to be narrowed down thereby reducing the risk of topics and themes being too broad and not closely related to the research questions being explored (Rabionet, 2011). Throughout the interviewing process and data collection the researcher aspired to adhere to the values and principles of tikanga Māori, which ensured ‘right ways of doing things with Māori’ (Smith, 2006). Following the principles of tikanga Māori helped the researcher to endure respectful collaboration, and it allowed for participants to define their own space. Interviews were conducted in a cautious, safe and reflective way, including protection of the mana and dignity of participants (Smith, 2006).

### *3.1.2 Case study*

A Case Study will also be performed as it is Critical Ethnographic research, according to Dowling and Brown (2010), that gives an opportunity to investigate our own lives and being a participant in a familiar setting as a researcher, using a combination of interviewing, observation, and participation methods.

Data were collected pertaining a certain educational setting to provide in-depth and prolonged exploration and description of this context and its collective (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2020). Case studies allows for findings to emerge through insight into “how things get to be the way they are” (Stake, 2005 as cited in Merriam, 1998). By drawing on the natural setting, case studies can provide a “richness and holism” and lead to the presentation of data through “thick descriptions that are vivid, nested in a real context” (Miles & Huberman, 1994). By “getting close to the phenomenon under study” the emergent findings contribute to a deeper understanding of how participants experience and make meaning of their world (Patton, 2005).

Case studies also provide a way to clearly communicate the findings, which can be useful for educators seeking understanding and insight from this research for their own practice. Case studies, therefore, contribute towards accessible “democratization” of decision making (and knowledge itself) as it allows readers to judge the implications of the study for themselves (Adelman et al., 1980). However, Nisbett and Watt (1984) argues, that a weakness of the Case studies is that they are not easily open to cross-checking, hence they may be selective, personal, and subjective to observer bias despite attempts made to address reflexivity.

Field notes will be taken from documentation such as policies and possible existing models, programmes, or approaches of well-being as well as for the Case study.

### *3.1.3 Literature review methodology*

This thesis also contains a literature research methodology to measure the implementation of existing wellbeing practices and approaches nationally and internationally. This is to gain understanding of existing research on this topic or area of study and to present that knowledge in the form of a written report analysis that will build knowledge in the field of education. This literature review is an integrative review which is a research method that allows for critical assessment and synthesis of available evidence as well as identify gaps that are indicative of future research developments. A literature review can broadly be described as a systematic way of collecting and synthesizing previous research (Baumeister & Leary, 1997; Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003). An effective and well conducted review as a research method, creates a firm foundation for advancing knowledge and facilitating theory development (Webster & Watson, 2002). Webster & Watson (2002) explains that by integrating findings and perspectives from many empirical findings, a literature review can address research questions with a power that no single study has. In some cases, a research question requires a more creative collection of data, in these cases; an integrative review approach can be useful when the purpose of the review is not to cover all articles ever published on the topic, but rather to combine perspectives to create a new theoretical model (Webster & Watson, 2002).

### *3.1.4 Strengths*

Group interviews generate qualitative narrative data using open questions. This allows the respondents to talk in some depth, choosing their own words. This helps the researcher develop a real sense of a person's understanding of a situation. Qualitative data also includes observational data, such as body language and facial expressions. They also have increased validity because some participants may feel more comfortable being with others as they are used to talking in groups in real life (i.e., it is more natural) (Creswell, 2014).

### *3.1.5 Limitations*

The difficulty in using a group interview is to ensure that all participant details remain confidential and that their privacy is respected (Creswell, 2014) as the researcher cannot guarantee that the other people in the group will keep this information private. Creswell (2014) thus argues that interviews are less reliable as open-ended questions that may allow deviation from the interview schedule making them difficult to repeat. Creswell (2014) also further states that group interviews may lack validity as participants may lie to impress others.

### *3.1.6 Diversity of approach.*

The diversity in approaches provide multiple opportunities to address the research questions and have shown some alignment amongst the findings. Diversity in methodologies allows minority population groups such as Māori the opportunity to consider their own perspectives without the bias or assumptions of researchers imposing their own constructions (Cohler, Stott, & Musick, 1995).

According to Merriam (1998) an essential trait of qualitative approaches is that they seek to "elicit" understanding and meaning with the researcher serving as the "primary instrument of data collection and analysis". A Thematic analysis which is a grounded theory will be used to identify and analyse themes, ideas, language, recurring patterns of belief.

## 3.2 Methods

This section describes the methods I will use in the research. Each research question links to the research method used to answer the research question. Each research question is further substantiated by a literature review in the form of a stand-alone chapter that critically looks at further understanding on how it is displayed within the educational context. The literature methodology is also extended for the use of the two stand-alone chapters (that was intended as articles) to explore emerging areas for further research. This literature review is mainly extracted from published books as research is yet to be done on the implementation of these emerging areas as components to be added to a wellbeing model in the future.

### *3.2.1 Research question one and methodology*

What impact will a contextualized and culturally responsive, holistic, whole school approach to wellbeing make to successful schooling outcomes for all learners and early adolescence learners (Rangatahi) in particular.

- A questionnaire with principals who are already implementing Wellbeing practices.
- A thematic analysis of documentation, approaches, models and or programmes used by these principals.
- A Literature review to explore, identify and compare components and aspects that make up an effective school-based wellbeing model and approach globally.

### *3.2.2 Research Question two and methodology*

What does the Rangatahi (early adolescence students) voice say about their schooling experiences of how their wellbeing challenges are understood during their developmental stages.

- Interviews: Focus group interviews with semi-structured questions with adults at the school
- Semi-structured wānanga type interviews with students
- Questionnaires with students

- Case Study: Critical Ethnographic research, according to Dowling and Brown (2010), gives an opportunity to investigate our own lives and being a participant in a familiar setting as a researcher, using a combination of interviewing, observation and participation methods. An ongoing participatory action research which will trial the suggested school wide approach to a wellbeing model hoping to create positive outcomes for Māori students. This Case study is underpinned by stories of individual students and their whānau. This method allows studying in a natural setting and making sense and meaning of first-hand experiences. This resource focus comes from my own interest in discovering what areas best support children in their primary school and how to involve teacher and parents as partners in school improvement initiatives.

### *3.2.3 Research question three and methodology*

Does nurturing the wellbeing of leaders, teachers and whanau have an impact on students' cognitive development and successful learning outcomes.

- Questionnaires and surveys from leaders and teachers.
- A Wānanga type interviews with whānau and kaumatua will be employed to gain voice and perspectives on their own understanding of wellbeing and effects on student wellbeing.

Focus group of principals wānanga type discussions.

### *3.2.4 Research question four and methodology*

To what extend do schools currently implement wellbeing practices and how are these elements reflective throughout the school systems, policies, procedures, curriculum, school ethos and school culture with the understanding that it is a critical component for successful schooling outcomes.

- Questionnaire with principals who are currently implementing Wellbeing practices.

- Thematic Analysis of documentation, approaches, models and or programmes used by these principals.
- Literature review methodology- thematic analysis of wellbeing models.

### 3.2.5 Research design

**Table 10 Research design**

Research questions	Evidence required to answer the question	How will this evidence be gathered?
What impact will a contextualized and culturally responsive, holistic, whole school approach to wellbeing make to successful schooling outcomes for all learners and early adolescence learners (Rangatahi) in particular.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of school-based wellbeing models globally</li> <li>• Review of school-based cultural models</li> <li>• Rational of policies, programmes, and practices</li> <li>• Experiences and perceptions of school leaders and school wellbeing leaders</li> <li>• School curriculum and implementation documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literature review methodology</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Questionnaires</li> <li>• Analysis of documents and Policies</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Analysis of wellbeing components implemented at schools globally</li> </ul>
What does the Rangatahi (early adolescence students) voice say about their schooling experiences of how their wellbeing challenges are understood during their developmental stages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus groups of adults</li> <li>• Focus groups of children</li> <li>• Case Study</li> <li>• School applications and measures</li> <li>• Field notes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Semi-structured questionnaires</li> <li>• School survey data</li> <li>• Field notes</li> <li>• Literature review</li> <li>• Observations</li> </ul>
Does nurturing the wellbeing of leaders, teachers and whanau have an impact on students' cognitive development and successful learning outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus group of principals</li> <li>• Focus group of whanau</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questionnaires on google forms.</li> <li>• Wananga type interviews</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus group of teachers</li> <li>• Student focus groups to include student voice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Semi structured interviews</li> <li>• Literature review</li> </ul>
To what extent do schools currently implement wellbeing practices and how are these elements reflective throughout the school systems, policies, procedures, curriculum, school ethos and school culture with the understanding that it is a critical component for successful schooling outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus groups of teachers, leadership team, staff, support staff</li> <li>• School documents on student wellbeing</li> <li>• Analysis of models and frameworks currently used in schools.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Thematic Analysis of documents</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Questionnaires</li> </ul>

### 3.3 Ethics

Ethical consideration for this thesis were examined and approved by the Ethics Research Committee at Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi. In undertaking the research, I agreed to comply with the Code of Ethics set down by Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Confidentiality and anonymity of participants, organisations and data has been protected by not recording participants' names or personal identifiable details.

Approval for my research was also granted by the Waikirikiri School Board of Trustees. As all students were under the age of sixteen, informed consent was given and signed by their parents or caregivers. In relating ethics to research conducted with children, most definitions either explicitly or implicitly emphasise the importance of values, moral principles and obligations, and the protection of children from all harm and danger throughout the research process (Sieber 1993; Morrow & Richards 1996). Ethical research involving children is positioned within a social justice theoretical framework, upholding the human rights and dignity of all children is a major tenet of social justice theory (Pillay 2014a). A social justice framework compels researchers to treat children with respect and dignity and to ensure that they are provided fair and equal opportunities to develop and function optimally in society,

irrespective of their race, gender, class, creed, ethnicity and/or (dis)ability (Pillay 2014a). It means that children should be actively involved in all studies relating to them, thus affording them the opportunity to express their personal views and relate their experiences at different developmental stages (Pufall & Unsworth 2004).

Participants were informed about the research process and project and their right to withdraw information or participation from the study at any time.

### **3.4 Participants**

#### *Participatory groups*

*A Case study / Ethnography.* The school's wellbeing team will be included as a focus and participatory group in the Case study as they are part of the team who implements the programmes within the whole school model. Frontline tutors, including teacher aides as well as the year six to eight teachers forms another part of this Case study as they experience first-hand the effects of wellbeing implementation on students.

*Semi-structured qualitative interviews* with the schools' leadership team, early adolescent students as well as focused group of year 9 students transitioning to secondary schools, frontline tutors and classroom teachers will be conducted. The group of year 9 students were part of the implementation phase since 2020 hence their participation. These groups give an on the ground perspective on how they experience and understand wellbeing in their setting.

*Questionnaires and e-Surveys:* Students from the identified schools will complete questionnaires/e-surveys to be used for comparative data to be analysed in a reliable and valid way. An e-survey will also be conducted across sector with staff of participating kura to determine current wellbeing practices, wellbeing literacy and investment in staff wellbeing.

*A wānanga type unstructured interview:* These interviews will be conducted with whānau and kaumatua to gain authentic voice on Wellbeing from a Māori and personal perspective.

*A questionnaire with structured questions* will be completed with participating groups of principals (2 groups from Te Tairāwhiti and one group of principals across the region who are

currently implementing some form of wellbeing programme or initiative in their respective schools).

### *Participant numbers*

Participants in this study:

12 NZ Principals/school leaders locally and nationally across NZ schools

Nineteen teachers

48 year 6 to 8 students

6 year 9 students

3 Wellbeing team members

4 Leadership team members

6 Adults for the case study (frontline support staff, tutors, and teachers)

A total of twenty-one whānau voices were included.

- 3 Kaumatua voices
- 9 Whānau member voices (41 whānau were present at a haerenga of which nine quotes of whānau voice were used from the wānanga (these voices are representative of the voices of other whānau members that were present).
- Two groups of five mums (5 in the neurodiverse support group, five working with the whānau facilitator on their wellbeing).

### **3.5 Setting**

The school-based observations and interview data were collected over a period of three years at a specific school. A second setting are schools with early adolescence students and those who had implemented wellbeing programmes in some form.

### **3.6 Role of the researcher**

It has been necessary to set parameters for my research due to my dual role as observer researcher as well as being the principal of the school where the Case study research was conducted. For this reason, where possible, questionnaires and interviews with the students

were conducted by the wellbeing teacher to remove all forms of bias and manipulating of the data as I hold a position of influence. This was a significant issue to address from the onset as I identified several pitfalls which could become a challenge in terms of ethical considerations. Coghlan and Brannick (2014) states that the “insider researcher” needs to know and analyse what is familiar and apply tried and tested processes in the pursuit of authenticity. These processes are integrated into the main body of the research that are intentionally designed to create new knowledge by authentic and transparent means within a constructivist paradigm.

### **3.7 Chapter Summary**

This chapter discussed the methodological approach used in the study. The research questions were introduced along with the sources of data collection and participants to inform the research.

Chapter four and five reviews further literature relevant to the thesis. This provides for further understanding of the aspects of a wellbeing model and framework and its current place in educational settings globally. These chapters highlight the gap that currently exists within the implementation of wellbeing as was discussed in chapter two. Chapters four and five are standalone chapters as they were intended to be published articles. These chapters lend exploration and further understanding on Trauma informed practices and āhurutanga (the creation of psychological safe spaces and environments) which are the missing links identified that could, if included, lead to the implementation of a more sustainable and equitable wellbeing approach.

As these are emerging areas that can be seen as contributing to the effectiveness of a school based wellbeing model in a social just and equitable way, it is necessary to explore and understand how, and what the impact on student wellbeing could be. I wanted to explore these areas as stand-alone chapters to give an in-depth insight into the value of these concepts as contributing factors to student wellbeing and to highlight why further research in these areas are needed.

## CHAPTER FOUR - ARTICLE

### TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICE AS A COMPONENT TO IMPROVE STUDENT WELLBEING.

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**Title: *Transforming the school culture from a punitive approach to a Trauma-Informed approach.***

#### ABSTRACT

This article sets out to bring perspective on systemic changes needed to occur to bring about equitable learning experiences and for all children and young people to experience care and nurture in a safe school environment. A trauma-informed approach versus a punitive approach to challenging behaviours in schools requires a change in thinking from compliance to connected relationships. Educators working with children and young people are perfectly placed to make a difference to students who have experienced trauma. Neuroscience shows that one of the most important ways to help children, young people, and adults to heal from the impact of trauma is through developing connected relationships as it has the power to counterbalance adversity (Perry, 2021).

The neuroscientist, Dr Stephen Porges (2011) explains that “behavioural responses represent how a person’s nervous system is constantly regulating the body’s response to stress. Therefore, a child’s persistent behavioural challenges indicate that the child’s nervous system is automatically adjusting and responding to these various forms of stress”. A trauma-informed approach focuses on understanding trauma and its effects on behaviours. It brings about the understanding that challenging behaviours displayed at school, is a cry for help.

*Every child deserves a champion: an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists they become the best they can be (Rita Pierson. Educator for 40 years and a staunch antipoverty advocate).*

## **METHODS**

This article reviews the evidence-based literature of current trauma-informed approaches and practices concerning the schooling contexts and explores how educator knowledge, systems, and policies address student health, safety, and behavioural issues that can either enhance or exacerbate students' experiences with trauma. It investigates current statistics from two sets of international and two national case studies as a basis of the argument to discuss the impact trauma has on students and teachers and to argue that systemic change and paradigm shifts are needed when addressing challenging behaviours of students.

Data was also collected through a research conversation with 15 Māori teachers. These conversations explored trauma-informed practices and principles these teachers used in their teaching. This method of collective and personal sharing of knowledge aligns with the Tikanga (protocol) of hui and wānanga and ensured a meaningful and collective process. It also analyses the answers of a teacher questionnaire on trauma-informed practice that give insight into their personal opinions measured against the literature review.

**KEYWORDS:** Trauma-Informed Practice, connected relationships, neuroscience, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES), psychological safe spaces

## **RATIONALE**

The aims of this article are two-fold. First, it sets out to critically discuss Trauma Informed Practice as a key component or element in a holistic school-wide approach to wellbeing. Secondly, it argues that as attention to the potential negative outcomes of childhood trauma has grown, so have calls for schools to take an active role in supporting students experiencing trauma. The research and rationale of this paper show that making connections with students and then building genuine and sincere relationships is key to healing trauma. "The healthier relationships a child has, the more likely he will be to recover from trauma and thrive. Relationships are the agents of change, and the most powerful therapy is human love" (Perry, 2021).

This article is written to show and address the notion that a “one size fits all” approach to challenging behaviours is not the way forward neither is a “rewards and consequences” approach as neither of these efforts proved to be effective. This paper aims to explain and give insight into trauma-informed practices versus a behaviourist or punitive approach to children experiencing challenging behaviours within a schooling context. It aims to give insight into existing practices and exploring whether a change in thinking is needed in educators' approach when faced with situations when children display these challenging behaviours.

## **INTRODUCTION**

It is important to clarify from the onset that the intent of this article is not to propose that educators should take on the role of clinicians, psychologists, as these are specialized areas. Educators cannot fix or heal trauma, but they can facilitate spaces for healing so that children and young people can show up “differently” and tap into their strengths, potential, and resilience to heal their minds. Nurturing the Wellbeing of the collective in our educational and schooling contexts is about “creating safe” spaces that allow for everyone to turn up and “be”.

Schools can play a key role in addressing the effects of traumatic stress on students. Delahooke (2019) explains that traumatic experiences in childhood can impact a child’s mental, physical, social, or emotional wellbeing and their ability to function in school and other settings. This means that exposure to trauma and adversity can have serious short- and long-term impacts on children and young people.

The primary mission of schools is to support students in educational achievement however, to reach this goal, we know that children must feel safe, supported, and ready to learn. As schools strive to accomplish this for all students regardless of strengths, needs, and capacities schools must recognize the influence of the student’s personal experiences on their learning and achievement (NCTSN, 2017). Thus, as schools maintain their critical focus on education and achievement, they must also acknowledge that mental health and wellness impacts students’ success in the classroom and a thriving school environment. There are many ways to weave trauma-informed approaches into the systems of schools, including strategic planning by school governance and leaders, approving trauma-informed policies, staff training, direct

intervention with traumatized students, and building knowledge and communication in a variety of domains, all with a focus on creating and supporting academic achievement, behavioural competence, and mental health of all students, families, and staff.

Research is clear that exposure to trauma early in life can result in neurological, psychological, physical, social, and learning challenges across the lifespan. Recent research has also shown that, when teachers respond sensitively to the impact of trauma, it helps children better engage in school, gives them a sense of belonging, and helps to reduce disruptive behaviours. In my recent experience as a principal, it is important to ensure that teachers, leaders, and other school staff are taught about the prevalence and consequences of childhood trauma. The more that teachers know and understand about childhood trauma, the more confident and better equipped they will be to appropriately support students who have experienced trauma. “Getting out in front of negative behaviours is the radical change in our discipline protocols we are needing to cultivate for the sustainable behavioural changes that have been lost inside reactionary responses” (Desautels, 2022).

## **DEFINITION OF TRAUMA**

There are various definitions of trauma but, trauma refers to experiences that cause intense psychological stress reactions. It can refer to a single event, multiple events, or a set of circumstances that is experienced (directly, witnessed, or learned about) by an individual. It could be physically and or emotionally harmful or threatening and have lasting adverse effects on the individual’s physical, social, emotional, or spiritual functioning and wellbeing (SAMHSA, 2014). Both Desautels (2023) and Perry (2021) defines trauma as an experience, or pattern of experiences, that impairs the proper functioning of the person’s stress-response system, making it more reactive or sensitive.

Perry (2021) explains that trauma can affect people at any time in their life and that it is not the event that is traumatic but how a person responds which has significant impact on their health and wellbeing. Dr Bruce Perry (2021) further explains that the timing, nature, pattern, and intensity of a traumatic experience can all influence how a person can be impacted.

Research into ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) has led to an understanding that trauma is prevalent and that it can have a devastating and lasting impact on a person’s life. Adverse

childhood experiences also lead to greater engagement in health risk behaviours (e.g., alcohol abuse, drug use), physical morbidity, lowered academic achievement, higher unemployment, and welfare dependence in adulthood (Kezelman et al., 2015). Grief and loss heighten traumatic stress reactions which can cause disconnected and negative reactions to relationships and leads to general disengagement from school (NCTSN,2017)

While there is a growing focus on Trauma-Informed practice in Aotearoa, New Zealand, Māori health providers have noted that approaches and practices have been based on western views in particular those that derive from Britain and the USA. Western views focus is individualised and based on personal trauma as a context for mental illness and does not include the wider societal contexts of trauma experiences. The Māori trauma informed body of literature focuses on the impact of colonial trauma on whanau, hapū and iwi since the early 1800's. Māori researchers have focussed their understanding on the impact of colonial historical and intergenerational trauma, racism and discrimination, unequal rates of violence, poverty, and ill health on whanau, hapū and iwi. Mātauranga and tikanga Māori (Māori knowledge and protocol) are critical foundations for the healing of traumatic experiences for Māori in both individual and collective contexts (Pihama, et.al. 2019).

## **TYPES OF TRAUMA.**

Across the spectrum of research trauma types are not mutually exclusive and are recognised as:

- Single Incidence Trauma/Acute Trauma/Situational trauma occurs because of a specific or discrete events (Car accident, sudden loss of the death of a loved one, undergoing or witnessing a violent attack or murder, PTSD)
- Complex and Repetitive Trauma is described as multiple enduring experiences that threaten or cause harm to wellbeing (developmental and relational trauma, grooming bullying, family violence, unmet needs due to neurodiversity)
- Historical, Collective, or Intergenerational Trauma (racism, colonisation, and marginalisation, disconnections from culture and family, dislocation from land, being negatively indoctrinated about one's culture or heritage)
- Secondary or Vicarious Trauma (prevalent in helping professions)
- Little “t” trauma (smaller but noteworthy events that impact our sense of the world as a safe place).

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) experiences of abuse and neglects that occurs to people under the age of 18 years (includes emotional, physical, and sexual abuse due to household disfunction, substance abuse, parental divorce/separation/incarceration).

### **WHAT DOES A TRAUMA-INFORMED SCHOOL LOOK LIKE**

Trauma-informed schools reflect an international movement to create educational environments that are responsive to the needs of trauma-exposed youth through the implementation of effective practices and systems-change strategies. Defining and sharing what constitutes trauma informed teaching and trauma responsive schools requires an understanding of how diversity and trauma impact the developing brains and bodies of children and young people. There is no “one size” fits all fix solution or treatment protocol (Desautels, 2022).

A trauma responsive school deeply address the science and primary need for safety and connection as a foundation of emotional, social, and cognitive wellbeing. In a trauma responsive school, social and emotional learning are integrated throughout the day, addressing the culture of safety, equity, and connection (Desautels, 2023). A trauma informed school therefore prioritizes a feeling of safety at school, staff interact with students using connection and regulatory practices and check in with their own nervous systems to ensure that their bodies offer a true presence of safety (Desautels, 2023). Teachers in these settings are consistently mindful of their own trauma responses throughout the day-to-day interactions with students, parents, and colleagues (Desautels, 2023).

Trauma -informed schools work in a way that recognises and validates people's trauma, experiences, and how these experiences can impact people's behaviours and wellbeing, as well as their potential to heal. It is a strengths-based way of working that is concerned with ‘what happened to you?’ instead of ‘what is wrong with you?’ (Perry, 2021). The school staff knows the prevalence and impacts of trauma and adversity and the developing brain and therefore consider its influence on behaviour. These schools are sensitive and empathetic to rangatahi (young peoples) emotions and feelings and work alongside their whanau (family) to support them (Emerging Minds, 2020).

Desautels (2023), defines trauma-informed schools as “trauma-responsive and a place that have collectively shifted their perceptions of discipline; and at the core of this shift, co-regulation and the educator’s brain and body state are the critical change agents”. A trauma-informed approach to education is all about looking at the whole child that is coming through the school gate each morning, understanding their experiences and how these impact their learning. According to Delahooke (2019) and Porges (2011), a trauma-informed classroom is an environment where understanding and sense are made of how trauma and stress affect students' behaviours, what they think, feel, and believe, and how it affects their learning capacity.

Given that the relationship between mental health and academic achievement is bidirectional and highly correlated, a trauma-informed school nurtures this relationship while maintaining its primary focus on educational outcomes (NCTSN, 2017). This impacts the ability to learn and to fit into the educational institution box. Often educators try to solve the surface problems that might be showing as attendance or behaviour, but under those problems lie the real problem of trauma (Porges, 2011). Understanding and addressing this can have huge positive benefits on a child’s health, and social and academic wellbeing.

According to research done by NCTSN (2017), a trauma-informed approach within any system aims to adhere to the “4 Rs”:

1. Realizing the widespread impact of trauma and pathways to recovery.
2. Recognizing trauma's signs and symptoms.
3. Responding by integrating knowledge about trauma into all facets of the system.
4. Resisting re-traumatization of trauma-impacted individuals by decreasing the occurrence of unnecessary triggers (i.e., trauma and loss reminders) and by implementing trauma-informed policies, procedures, and practices.

A trauma-informed school system is one in which all leaders and staff, students, families, and community members recognize and respond to the potentially negative behavioural, relational, and academic impact of traumatic stress on the collective within the school system as well as on the system itself (Conzalez, et.al., 2015; Venet, 2021). Such a school system provides trauma awareness, knowledge, and skills as part of the school culture, practices, and policies and acts in collaboration with those who are involved with the child, including families,

community agencies and leaders, (NCTSN, 2017). The school also recognizes that there are cultural differences in experiences and ensures that responses of school staff are culturally appropriate, eliminating disproportionality in punitive and exclusionary discipline (Armstrong, 2021). Connecting and engaging with community partners and families with school wide planning and implementation can enhance a climate of cultural responsiveness and support cultural practices as a priority for these schools (NCTSN 2017).

Perry, (2021); Delahooke, (2019); Desautels, (2023); Dix, (2017) all point out that a trauma-informed school promotes a safe and welcoming climate; seeks to create a structured and predictable learning environment that minimizes unnecessary trauma and loss reminders; focuses on building positive and attuned relationships between teachers and students, and among school staff. When using a trauma-informed approach, the school promotes the wellness of all students, ensuring they feel safe and supported physically, socially, emotionally, and academically (NCTSN, 2017).

A trauma-informed school recognizes the relationship between and alignment of trauma-informed core areas with social, emotional, and behavioural learning practices, classroom management, and student and professional support. It acknowledges the impact that mental health can have across all major developmental domains (physical/health, cognitive/learning, behavioural, social/emotional) both inside and outside of the classroom, as well as how the scholastic experience can influence mental health (Dix, 2017; Delahooke, 2019).

Similarly, Norris and Brunzell (2021) explain that a trauma-informed classroom “*is one in which the teacher seeks to develop nurturing and healing relationships with students built on consistency, warmth, and respect*”.

According to Norris and Brunzell (2021), trauma-informed classrooms have two primary goals:

1. To heal dysregulated stress response and arousal systems and to build self-regulatory capacities.
2. Support students to form relational capacity and healing attachments.

Traditional methods of shaping children's behaviours typically ignore their emotional state, at great cost to the child's ability to learn, develop, and form secure relationships (Delahooke,2019). Most approaches to challenging behaviours fail to examine them in the context of a child's neurodevelopment, instead, the focus is on common causes for behavioural challenges such as attention-seeking, non-compliance, manipulation, and avoidance of non-preferred activities (Dix,2017; Armstrong, 2021).

## **CURRENT CLASSROOM EXPERIENCES AND THE IMPACT OF TRAUMA ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

*“Children are the most honest barometers of the health of our communities. Their disruptive behaviour is a call to action to all of us to tend to the broken links and suffering with compassion and wisdom” (Trauma Informed Positive Behaviour Support Website).*

Traumatic stress can arise from a variety of sources, both internal to the school environment and external, such as bullying, dramatic weather events, community or domestic violence, grief due to the loss of a loved one or imprisonment of a parent, and even the day-to-day exposure to events such as divorce, poverty, homelessness, abuse and/or neglect (Desautels, 2020,2023; Delahooke, 2019). Porges (2011) points out that students traumatized by exposure to violence are at increased risk for displaying emotional dysregulation, disruptive behaviours, declines in attendance and academic achievement. They may have increased difficulties concentrating and learning and may engage in unusually reckless or aggressive behaviour (Porges, 2011).

Studies done by Perry (2021) highlight that repeated childhood exposure to traumatic events can affect the developing brain and nervous system. The brain is more easily triggered into survival mode even when there is no actual danger present. When areas of the brain associated with survival are triggered and highly activated, the thinking and learning areas of the brain are bypassed and largely “go offline” (Perry, 2021). Children and young people who have experienced chronic stress, adversity, and trauma spend much of their time in the “survival brain” as opposed to their “thinking brain”. When students feel safe, they are using their thinking brain and can process information and display on-task behaviour, whereas when they feel unsafe (physically or emotionally) the brainstem and limbic systems take over (Perry, 2021; Siegel, 2020). When this occurs the cortical (thinking) part of the brain switches off and

allows the survival system to overtake which is often the behavioural response to a threat that teachers observe (Siegel, 2020; Perry,2021). During these times students revert to emotionally dysregulated behaviour. Understanding a neurodevelopmental approach can help teachers make sense of student behaviour in the classroom. Delahooke (2019) argues that using brain science and compassion to understand and solve children’s behavioural challenges brings about a change in thinking in understanding and treating children with disruptive behaviours.

In the classroom, behaviours resulting from exposure to trauma can lead to reduced learning time, suspensions, and exclusions. School environments that do not recognize that the emotional dysregulation of a student is a result of trauma and loss when externalizing behaviours, may respond in a punitive and potentially harmful way (Perry, 2021; Portell, 2022; Porges,2011; Delahooke, 2019; Desautels,2023). Dix (2017) and Portell (2022) point out that such punitive discipline approaches contribute to the criminalization of children, and students of colour and disabled students are most impacted. This perspective ignores the reality of inequity that can cause trauma and schools are often heightening the inequities when implementing punitive approaches (Dix,2017). Perry, 2023; Delahooke, 2019; Dix, 2017; Norris and Brunzell (2021) remind educators that behaviours are a form of communication; children communicate through their behaviour, whether voluntary, involuntary, intentional, or unintentional. An additional concern is that some “mis” behaviours occur because a child’s brain has not developed the necessary skills to inhibit the undesired behaviour or to produce the desired behaviour. This can be the case for children with developmental delays, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, among others. No number of incentives (positive or negative) can motivate a child to do something that their brain cannot do (Armstrong, 2021).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Data from international research done by Perfect, Turley, Carlson, Yohannan, and Gilles (2016) and their findings from eighty-three empirical studies with school-aged youth, document the widespread impacts of trauma exposure and traumatic stress symptoms on the cognitive, academic, and teacher-reported social-emotional-behavioural outcomes of students. Based on their review of existing prevalence research, Perfect et al. (2016) estimate that school-age children are likely to have experienced at least one traumatic event by age 17. Similar research done by Porche, Costello, and Rosen-Reynoso (2016), reports prevalence rates close

to that estimate based on a sample of school-aged youth who participated in the National Child Study of Children's Health. Among the 53.4 % of youth who experienced adverse family events, the average number of exposures was 2.1. The research done by Porche, et al., (2016) on the educational implications of exposure to family adversity found the impact of family adversity on school engagement to be excessively high. Taken together, this systematic review conducted by Perfect et al. (2016) and Porche, et al., (2016) is a critical resource for schools to help expand the lens and help them realize the educational implications of trauma exposure and "typical" traumatic stress reactions.

In April 2019 the New Zealand Ministry of Social Development published two research reports on Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) among children and families in New Zealand. The report shows that by the age of around four and a half, over half (52.8%) of all children had experienced at least one ACE and 2.6% had experience four or more. However, the researchers state that the results will be higher, as they were only able to collect data from the first 54 months of a child's life and that the data collected did not include sexual abuse ACEs. This data demonstrates the high number of children that have experienced and still are experiencing trauma. However, aside from preliminary data from these case studies little is known about whether it is a rationale for the educational sector to find trauma-informed approaches acceptable and feasible.

### **Interviews with NZ teachers**

During the research conversations with teacher participants, I asked the question:

"What are your thoughts about using a trauma informed approach when students are dysregulated". These words and comments of concern were spoken more than once by the teachers:

*What about the safety of the other kids in the class?*

*The other kids in the class are being traumatized by their behaviour.*

*What about my safety?*

The first concern of teachers was about the safety of the other children in the classroom if we allow for behaviours to carry on and hold space for students until they are regulated. For some

of them the understanding was that we allow for the behaviours to carry on without addressing it. Further comments were about concerns for themselves and the effects that dysregulated behaviours have on those witnessing the behaviours. Comment was as follow:

*As an adult, it can be difficult to be present when students are in crisis and having a meltdown. We naturally worry about how our students feel when a classmate's behaviour is escalated and whether they are experiencing trauma as well.*

*Is their safety been compromised?*

Others were concerned about the trauma experienced by those who witness the escalated behaviours and how it may affect their wellbeing and the classroom atmosphere. Comments such as the ones below were articulated by teachers:

*Can students discuss or express their emotions when they are struggling?*

*How can I help without re-traumatizing them?*

*Their behaviour is harmful to the mana and wairua of other students caught up in the drama.*

*I do not have enough time or extra support to deal with severe needs.*

*I get triggered by their behaviours and am still learning to regulate myself.*

Shalaby (2017) is of the opinion that when one child is struggling visibly and loudly, our response to that one student speaks volumes to all the rest and that it is not the behaviour of the children that threatens the classroom community; it is the response to that behaviour, and the use of exclusion, which threatens classroom community". Furthermore, Shalaby (2017) explains that "when a child is excluded, it teaches the other children that belonging to the classroom community is conditional, and contingent upon their willingness and ability to be a certain kind of person. In this paradigm, belonging is a privilege to be earned by docility and compliance, not a basic human right that is ensured for every child" (Shalaby, 2017). Belonging and being loved are core to the human experience and existence.

The leadership team understood the concerns of these teachers as many of them were classroom teachers themselves. They understood that with professional development some of the fears

may be alleviated and that it may take time to embed trauma informed practice in the school culture and that a mindset change was needed.

The next section includes responses from a recorded conversation with the leadership team of the school that were on their journey to implementing trauma-informed practices. I wanted to understand why the changes and what challenges they have experienced and the impacts on students.

**Table1: Question 1 Why have you started to implement trauma informed practices at your school?**

Leader	Response
1	<i>We have seen so much emotional distress amongst our tamariki We knew that something had to change, and trauma informed practice sounded like the answer because so many of our tamariki experience trauma.</i>
2	<i>Our principal showed us a video on by Mate Gabor on trauma and the effect. This triggered some of us, but it also made us realise that trauma is real, and it raised some questions which was personal but also professional.</i>
3	<i>Yes, that is true, but we also watched a conversation between Oprah Winfrey and Dr Bruce Perry where they discussed the book “What happened to you?”. This discussion was something we could relate to as it reminded us about so many of our tamariki some staff also related because of their own personal life experiences.</i>
4	<i>Our journey started when we learned more about Dr Bruce Perry’s Neuro-sequential model and how the trauma brain works. We could see how some of our tamariki operates from a trauma brain when they become dysregulated. We also had PLD from Jase at Interlink to teach us about trauma informed practice and how we can add this to our wellbeing model. We learned how to apply it in our school and with our challenging kids.</i>
1	<i>Our wellbeing team already implemented wellbeing across kura, practices such as mindfulness, kids’ yoga, brain breaks, and social and emotional learning with the senior students. Trauma informed practice aligned well with what we already had in place. It enhances the wellbeing practices but gives us better understanding and strategies to respond to children’s behaviour in a different way.</i>
2	<i>We had a big learning on connected relationships vs compliance and changing how we respond to behaviours and reframing our language. Mostly understanding ourselves too. I became more aware of my own triggers. It was challenging but many of us realised that sometimes it is how we respond. The conversations we had at staff hui was often about how we stop, find space, or hold space and self- regulate.</i>

During the recorded conversation and through a thematic analysis, some of the barriers to implement trauma informed practices were highlighted by the teacher and leader participants. They are such as:

- Resistance of many to implement trauma- informed practices due to lack of knowledge.
- Understanding and acceptance of trauma events and impacts in children or childhood.
- Introducing new models are time consuming and yet “another change”.
- Use of the word “trauma” is emotive and scary.
- Not knowing the background and history of students can be challenging.
- Being triggered by the behaviour of students and not knowing how to regulate themselves.
- Many struggled with self-regulation and understanding that the student behaviours many times come from a place of trauma that is real and part of the students’ life.
- Learning and accepting that a difference response is needed and not to take outbursts from students personally. This was the area where the biggest shift was required and caused much resistance.

**Table 2. Question 2: What were some of the challenges you faced when trying to implement trauma-practices.**

Leader	Response
1	<i>At the start we had a lot of resistance from staff because they did not understand trauma, some did not like to use the word “trauma”. Some teachers said that they are not there to heal children’s trauma, which they thought what was asked of them.</i>
3	<i>Some teachers thought that we were asking them to overlook the challenging behaviours of children and not to reprimand them. They thought that trauma informed practice meant that we accept children’s challenging behaviour.</i>
1	<i>We had some what you call “early adopters” who started to try out some of the strategies like co-regulation. During our shared sessions staff talked about learning to regulate themselves first.</i>
2	<i>When we had PLD about the trauma brain it started to make more sense for some of us. I think the staff who were already understanding the importance of connected relationships found it easier to make the change. It was also challenging to understand that many of our kids have trauma and that their home backgrounds expose them to trauma especially our DV kids. We also learnt that our whanau suffer from generational trauma. Well.... this triggered some of us but with that trigger came understanding. A lot of things started to make sense for me personally, especially why some of our kids behave the way they do. But some teachers even though they knew about this, still put-up walls and still focussed on the behaviours and wanted to make the behaviours the focus.</i>
1	<i>We are still learning to use the right language and say thing differently at the right time. What I had to learn was a lot about myself and my triggers. We have been doing it for so long and it is hard to shift your mindset and adopt new practices.</i>
4	<i>Being the boss in the class was always my thing but I am learning, yes, I am (laughing) to let go and hear the students more. For me that is what trauma informed is about learning to acknowledge the tamariki’s feelings and riding the wave until they can talk to</i>

<i>me. But it also helps to understand where the behaviour is coming from and why. I learnt that sometimes it is me and if I can just control myself and my reactions when the kid flips the situation is not so big you understand what I mean. I keep on thinking about the words “two dysregulated people cannot work”. A lot of teachers are like me struggling with this letting go of control bit.</i>
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Dix (2017) states that the prevailing response to dysregulated behaviour within our education system (school sector) is rooted in a behaviourist theory. Dix (2017) argues that it requires a distressed child to engage their cortex to rationalize and make good choices to receive a reward, not a punishment. In my experience as a principal, how teachers and schools typically respond to children’s behaviour falls across a wide spectrum. Using our “teacher voice”, calling in the principal, calling the parents, calling the police in extreme situations, clearing the classroom, taking away privileges, physically restraining the child, moving the child to a seclusion room, standing down and suspensions, threats, punishments, and bribes, are common occurrences playing out in schools daily.

My experience as a principal has also shown me that when teachers were asked to make shifts from punitive and compliance approaches to trauma informed practice, teachers are often concerned for other students who witness their struggling peers. However, trauma-informed practice does not mean that teachers are trained to treat trauma, but rather that they understand the wide-ranging impact that trauma can have on children, their development, their wellbeing, and their ability to succeed and thrive at school. I also noticed that the beginner teachers were more accepting of the change, but that they lacked the experience and communicative language to address behaviours during the restorative phase. Although the more experienced teachers understood that change was needed, their embedded practices was hard to let go of.

During the conversation with the leadership team some of these required shifts were discussed. The biggest shifts required were about reframing the language, adjusting their mindsets, and facing what was in front of them with truth, for many it meant “seeing” the tamariki and understanding them for the first time.

**Table 3 Question 3: What were the biggest shifts and impacts on teachers and yourself to date?**

Leader	Response
1	<i>Being a classroom teacher myself, the biggest change was about reframing the language and responding differently to behaviours. This was a big shift, but it seems like my relationship with tamariki is improving because I have better understanding of the “why”.</i>
2	<i>My understanding on how the trauma brain works helps me to understand that the tamariki are not even in charge of their feelings and behaviours that stem from these feelings. When this realization happened, I just felt a bit ashamed of how I have responded in the past but now I try look through a trauma lens and find that I have more empathy for the tamariki.</i>
3	<i>I am now more self-aware of my own triggers and know when to find space and ask for the wellbeing team to come in and support me to have that space. I deal with behaviour incidents better but not every day is the same but it is getting better. I have noticed more understanding from the other children now that they know about the brain also.</i>
1	<i>Well, we are all still learning and have moments that are testing, and we sometimes revert to old ways of doing but I certainly reflect more on how I could have done better. I have grown.</i>
2	<i>I know right, its hard but rewarding when you have had a successful way, but what I have noticed is that the tamariki especially the seniors can now articulate their feelings and know when to find space and regulate themselves, I mean that is huge and that helps.</i>

Perry (2021) states that learning is about relational environments being safe, feeling connected, part of a community, where you are seen, heard, and acknowledged by the teacher. Understanding a neurodevelopmental approach can help teachers make sense of student behaviour in the classroom. Leaders and teachers can change the course of children’s lives by teaching them skills to regulate their emotions and behaviours, partnering with families to strengthen children’s relationships with adults in and outside of the school, and allowing them to develop their academic potential. Having the tools and strategies to identify, address, and manage traumatic stress empowers all stakeholders involved within the schooling context, and supports their primary goal of educational achievement.

Given the diverse theoretical and practice frameworks for the implementation of trauma-informed approaches, outcome-focused research must be framed explicitly within a theory of change. International reports from uncontrolled studies of trauma-informed schools have reported drastic reductions in suspensions (Stevens, 2012, 2013a, 2013b). However, it is not clear: (a) what specific elements of the trauma-informed schools may have contributed to those changes, (b) what short-term outcomes (e.g., changes in classroom management approach,

changes in school discipline policies, changes in student functioning) may have served as precursors to those changes, or (c) whether other long-term outcomes could be expected. There are still multiple outcome-related questions to be asked about trauma-informed schools; a more explicit focus on theories of change will help generate and refine those questions (Stephens, 2013b).

The literature scan highlighted some common themes for supports to effective implementation of trauma informed practices and states that:

1. There must be a planned process of change based on evidence and strategy.
2. Leaders and managers commitment to change organisational culture.
3. Collaborative design and implementation and intentional support for and with staff.
4. Building staff capacity in a supportive and psychological safe environment.
5. Have organisational systems in place to support workforce/staff wellbeing.
6. Understand the needs of the children and young people.
7. In a New Zealand context understand Māori health frameworks and models.
8. Evaluate outcomes.

What is clear though is that a change in basic assumptions in understanding and treating children with disruptive behaviours is needed within the Education system (Porges, 2011). Venet (2021) agrees that there is a need to change our school culture and create safe spaces to accommodate our most vulnerable children and that when looking at trauma-informed practice schools should shift equity to the center as they consider policies and professional development. When schools focus on the challenging behaviours of students and ascribe them to circumstances faced outside of school, they ignore the reality that educational inequity itself causes trauma (Venet 2021).

I would also argue that state policymakers need to take a more comprehensive approach in creating policies to support students experiencing trauma to support their healing, mental health, and Wellbeing. Additionally, it has become evident to address the required teacher training as the effects of trauma place a heavy burden on teachers and often causes professional ‘burnout’. To bring about systemic change we need to ask these questions:

- How can we build teachers’ knowledge and understanding about childhood trauma?

- Do we have policies in place to support students who have experienced trauma?
- How can we support teachers to develop classroom practices that are responsive to students who have experienced trauma?

Trauma-focused professional development training should aim to create a shared understanding of the problem of trauma exposure, build consensus for trauma-informed approaches, and embed attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours conducive to the adoption of system-wide trauma-informed approaches (Norris and Brunzell, 2021). When schools implement trauma-informed practices based on connected relationships in a safe and nurturing school environment, healing for some students can take place over time. Teachers who understand how the trauma brain works are better able to support students when they become dysregulated. Teacher training, therefore, should consider including holistic wellbeing models inclusive of Trauma-informed approaches which can potentially be implemented through school structures, systems, and environments. This intentional paradigm shift is not currently a systemic part of training across educational providers and professionals.

## CONCLUSION

Trauma-informed practices are not just about decreasing problem behaviour or restoring order, but more about equity-centredness, affirming positive educational experiences as a right for every student. Therefore, it is my experience that implementation of a trauma-informed approach requires an intentional organisational and systems change processes that identifies and address barriers, ensures leadership commitment to a collaborative design process that builds staff commitment and capacity. Pihama, et al., (2017) states that Trauma Informed Care needs to support collectivism, within Te Ao Māori the traditional and contemporary cultural realities that are actively expressed through whanaungatanga and whakapapa relationships in contrast with fundamental western valuing of individualism. In culturally responsive pedagogy the classroom is a critical to the empowerment of marginalized students. It reflects a space of values, trust, partnerships, and academic mindsets that are at its core.

It is acknowledged that overthrowing inequitable systems is a process, not an overnight change but it can be transformational if educators work together, and teachers realize that they can do

more from within their individual classrooms. Trauma-informed practices are universal and benefit everyone. An initiative-taking universal approach not only helps individual students impacted by trauma, but it also creates a more equitable and trauma-informed environment for everyone in the school community. Using a lens of wellness and wellbeing will help us consider how schools can proactively create environments that respond to and prevent trauma. This shift is necessary to move closer to the principles of equity-centred trauma-informed education. This will ensure that all children and young people have a right to enriched educational opportunities and pathways toward future learning.

This article concludes with recommendation for dissemination of trauma-informed practices across schools at stages of readiness. There are three main areas identify for further exploration: 1) assessment of school staff knowledge and awareness of trauma; 2) assessment of school policies, systems and implementation of trauma-informed principles and practices; 3) changing school culture for discipline from a punitive, behaviourist approaches to a trauma informed approach which focusses on connected relationships.

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## CHAPTER FIVE - ARTICLE

### ĀHURUTANGA-CREATING PSYCHOLOGICALLY SAFE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS AND SPACES FOR WELLBEING AND LEARNING

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#### ABSTRACT

Research states that school climate refers to the quality and character of school life. School climate reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures. Climate also includes values and expectations that support people feeling engaged and respected as well as socially, emotionally, and physically safe. A sustainable, positive school climate fosters youth development and learning necessary that leads to a productive, contributing and satisfying life in a democratic society.

Understanding school climate is key to building a strong school culture. School culture is strong where people have connected relationships and there is a cohesive interaction amongst the collective in the context (Harvard Education). It is a space where students, families and educators work together to develop, live, and contribute to a shared school vision. Each person in the collective context contribute to the operations of the school with educators modelling and nurturing attitudes that emphasize the benefits and satisfaction gained from learning.

There is an expanding body of research that demonstrates that school connectedness is a strong predictor of adolescent health, academic outcomes, violence prevention, and student satisfaction (Cohen et al., 2013).

**KEY WORDS:** school climate, ethos, culture, safe psychological environment, student wellbeing, safe spaces, calming spaces, āhurutanga, whakatau spaces.

## **METHOD**

A qualitative research method was used to gain understanding of how the literature review is displayed in an educational setting. A semi-structured interview was conducted with two teachers, two frontline staff for sports and art and two kapa haka tutors. These staff members are all part of their school's Wellbeing team. This article was written to form a chapter as part of my PhD thesis on "the impact of a whole school approach to wellbeing and its components". Data was taken from the Case Study notes that forms a part of this PhD studies.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The climate, culture, ethos, and environment of a school can have deep impact on both student and staff mental wellbeing. My experience as a principal has shown me that school environments that are unsafe, disruptive, chaotic, or unpredictable can be harmful to the mental health and wellbeing of teachers. This creates stressful working conditions for teachers. By promoting safe spaces as part of an integrated whole school approach to wellbeing, schools are in a unique position to be able to help prevent mental health problems (Cohen and Greier, 2010).

Schools that lack contextual variables that define a school's climate, (supportive norms, relationships, and structures) are more likely to have students that experience violence and bullying, punitive disciplinary actions, and peer bullying, which are typically accompanied by reduced levels of academic achievement and higher levels of absenteeism (Astor, Guerra, & Van Acker 2010). Similarly, Rapti, (2013) argues that the concept of school climate is seen in the values, safety practices, organisational structures, teaching practices, diversity, leader-teacher, teacher-teacher, parent-teacher, and student-teacher relationships. Gruenert (2008) associates school culture ("the way we feel around here") as strongly aligned with school ethos ("the way things are done here") or how we "intent to be" in a certain space and that this equates to the standard of performance that are set. Gruenert (2008) further affirms that these standards are driven by a set of norms, values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours from the collective within the context.

## **The role of school climate and culture in the creation of a safe school environment**

Bradshaw, Wassdorp, Debnam & Johson, (2014) describes school climate as a predictor of school safety issues and disorder. Bradshaw et al. (2014) further states that negative school climate is linked to multiple behavioural, health, social, emotional, and academic outcomes. Furthermore, Bradshaw et al. (2014) states that the attitudes of staff and students is a powerful aspect of school culture and is reflected through their opinions, feelings, and actions. Bradshaw et al. (2014) further explains that when a safe inclusive environment exists, one can bring ‘your whole self’ to work and where there is a culture of learner safety in the school context, learning is encouraged and celebrated. Deal & Peterson (1999) present the view that school culture fosters improvement, collaborative decision-making, professional development and staff and student learning.

Research has produced evidence that school climate is correlated with several factors in the school setting. These factors include student academic achievement and suspensions (Bear, Yang, & Gaskins, 2014), teacher commitment (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2011), teaching efficacy and job satisfaction (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012), academic optimism (Kilinc, 2013), teacher leadership (Kilinc, 2014), school satisfaction (Zullig, Huebner, & Patton, 2011), and overall school effectiveness (Rapti, 2013).

Kilinc (2013) believes that the improvement of an effective learning environment and increased student learning are highly dependent upon teachers’ beliefs about student achievement.

School chronic absenteeism, poor achievement and school dropout are examples of negative school climates. Osher & Berg, (2017) point out that a positive school climate creates psychological safety which allows students and teachers to build trusting relationships, interactions, and positive expectations. This provides the support needed to create equitable learning opportunities that encourage the academic success of all students (Osher & Berg, 2017).

Conner (2014) singled out that relationship building among teachers to students and teachers to teachers as a primary element to consider in improving school climate. The social need is a result of the need to feel accepted and loved by others, for example, relationships, affection in

family, a sense of belonging among loved ones and peers (Gobin et al., 2012). The connectedness that people feel to one another in a school is one of the most important aspects of relationships of how they take care of and feel about themselves (Cohen et al., 2013).

Cohen and Greier (2010) identify four components that supports and strengthens school climates:

- Safety (e.g., values and norms promote social and physical safety)
- Relationships (e.g., the school promotes caring and connectedness, respect for diversity, as well as effective relations with parents, peers, and teachers)
- Teaching and Learning (e.g., the learning environment promotes and supports learning for all students)
- Physical Environments (e.g., the physical environment is looked after and promotes a sense of community)

School climate provides the conditions in which social and emotional learning takes place. Freiberg et al. (2013) maintains that the way classrooms are formed, sets the foundation for emotional and intellectual wellbeing and the overall climate of the school. According to Maslow (1943) feeling safe (physically, intellectually, emotionally, and socially) is a fundamental human need and powerfully promotes healthy development and student learning (as cited in Devine & Cohen, 2007).

### **Creating Āhurutanga (psychological safe spaces) for leaders and teachers**

Psychological safety is defined as a climate in which people feel comfortable to express themselves, it is a prerequisite for people to thrive in a team environment. Amy Edmondson defines psychological safety as the condition in which human beings feel -

- included,
- safe to learn,
- safe to contribute, and
- safe to challenge the status quo,

without fear that one will be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes and that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking' (Edmondson n.d.).

Group performance depends on behaviour that are continuously fed by signals that implies ‘we are safe and connected and we have a common future’ (Edmondson n.d.). The capacity to disagree should not only be a matter of individual personality but be a characteristic of workspaces where there is a culture of psychological safety, fostered by good leadership and relationships. Edmondson (n.d.) asserts that psychological safe environments lead to a feeling of engagement and motivation that leads to better decision-making which fosters a culture of continuous learning and improvement. Hence, the safer teachers feel in their ability to share classroom practice, innovative ideas, concerns, taking risks to try latest ideas without fear of failure, the better they will perform and grow. Investing in better supportive working environments for teachers builds and enhance everyday workplace wellbeing (Green, 2022).

### **Creating Āhurutanga (Calming and inviting learning spaces) for wellbeing using a trauma informed approach**

A trauma-informed classroom approach is a new concept in the educational setting. Research has shown that two thirds of children will have experienced at least one traumatic event by the time they reach the age of sixteen. Currently in some classrooms the focus is on rules, compliance, and punitive approaches, which is not helpful for children who had suffered trauma. Due to the trauma students may have experienced, they may have displayed challenging behaviours because of an overreactive physiological stress response and not from reason or logic.

A trauma-informed classroom explicitly integrates strategies that help students to regulate their state of arousal, and to soothe their dysregulated stress-response system (Norris & Brunzel 2021). A safe place for learning is the heart of self-regulation, a space where children can go to change their inner state from upset to composer to optimize learning, to provide a safe learning environment, teachers can focus on creating a sense of psychological safety for their students. Psychological safety is a space where individuals can be themselves, speak up without the risk of being ridiculed, embarrassed, punished or rejected. It requires mutual respect, inclusion, and interpersonal trust (Sweetman, 2022).

Berger (2019) explains that children who have suffered trauma become overwhelmed with painful emotions which get in the way of effective learning. They need a safe learning space, which is what a trauma-informed classroom offers. Delahooke (2019) argues that too often we

assume that a child is intentionally misbehaving when the child is responding to basic survival instincts, including the need to feel safe. By creating positive and trusting classroom environments teachers can provide their students the safety and support they need for personal growth and development. Edutopia (n.d.) states that an unsafe learning environment, even if it is just a perception of being safe, can have a profound impact on students' overall wellbeing and their successful schooling.

Berger (2019) states that there are five essential approaches to use in a trauma-informed classroom:

1. Predictability and consistency: create emotional safety.
2. Knowledge: teachers learning about how trauma affects children and the types of traumata to recognise the signs.
3. Physical safety: adjusting the classroom environment and classroom management strategies.
4. Non-judgemental space: understanding how trauma affects students' behaviours instead of condemning.
5. Self-awareness: teachers being aware of their own triggers and how they react emotionally to students' behaviours

Delahooke (2019) states, that a powerful modulator of a child's stress response is in the safety of a relationship. A study done by the American Psychological Association found that teachers who forge positive relationships with their students create a classroom atmosphere that encourages learning and better meet the needs of students developmentally, emotionally, socially, and academically. Norris & Brunzel (2021) asserts that nurturing student-teacher relationships are foundational for student learning, wellbeing, and feeling of belonging at school. Furthermore, Norris & Brunzel affirms that "nurturing student-teacher relationships help students regulate stress in escalated moments, and also build their own capacity to meet their unmet relational needs overtime" (pg. 130).

## DISCUSSION

### Relevance of the literature review in a schooling context

This section describes the semi-structured interview with two wellbeing leaders, two frontline tutors and two kapa haka tutors. The semi-structured interview questions were based on the how and the why of the need to embed calming safe spaces into their school culture and how it impacted on student wellbeing and learning.

Given the above-mentioned research the kura felt the need to put a culturally responsive lens on creating safe spaces by understanding and learning the meaning of Āhurutanga and to embed it into the school culture. Moorfield (2011) defines āhurutanga as warmth and comfort. “Āhurutanga is the creation of spaces and places that are safe to be. Places where we actively engage with each other respectfully to re-ignite the love for learning, and to connect with each other in a nurturing and whakatau (calming) space. Āhurutanga inquires one to understand their own whakapapa that creates a sense of belonging and therefore, a safe space situated within their own epistemological views. This allows for individuals to navigate safely and acknowledge the space of others” (Pohuta, 2003). Te Ao Māori values consider āhurutanga as a holistic principle for Māori wellbeing (Pohuta, 2013). It is important for our learners through āhurutanga to feel protected and be surrounded by confident practitioners in their physical environment.

The school started to intentionally create sensory spaces for their neurodiverse learners and calming spaces for self-regulation and co-regulation after professional development on trauma informed practice and understanding how the trauma brain works. With this knowledge and the understanding of āhurutanga this area became embedded into their school culture.

Semi-structured Question: *“Can you please describe your Calming spaces, the reasons for implementing these and the impact it makes for the learners?”*

The description of these spaces was given by interviewees are as follows:

*“Providing a space that includes a wide variety of creative materials ensures children have endless opportunities to process what is happening in their world and come to terms with their*

*experiences. A space where children's voices and perspectives are seen and heard". (Koka M – Wellbeing teacher and Acting Principal)*

*"Affirmations, mindfulness, and restful breathing activities, including puaio (Yoga), can all help 'cultivate calm' while fostering a peaceful and positive mindset. Creating a daily ritual with affirmations and yoga or meditation and breathing empowers children to nurture their self-awareness, set positive intentions and work through emotional regulation in healthy and helpful ways". (Koka M W- Wellbeing Team leader)*

*"Calming and reflective spaces in The Puna offer a peaceful setting in which tamariki can embrace quiet. In here, tamariki can spend time relaxing and reflecting away from the hustle and bustle of their busy classroom. Cushions, fabrics, tents, and dens all contribute to quiet and reflective spaces, making cosy and comfortable spots for tamariki to explore and make their own. Combine these spaces with books, puzzles, soft toys, tea parties or anything else that children would like to add to their retreat. A calming and reflective space can be just the thing to refuel children's energy". (Koka M W- Wellbeing Team leader)*

*"Giving students opportunities to participate and excel in Sport has had a positive impact on our students' attendance, wellbeing, behaviour, and academic achievement. This inspired us to develop our own gym and Sports Academy space – Ruawharo. We know that regular, repetitive movement helps to calm the body and the brain and helps with self-regulation if students become stressed or dysregulated students are feeling and are noticing the benefits of regular physical activity". (Matua A- frontline wellbeing person and sport-coordinator)*

*"Tupai is our Creative Arts / Mahi Toi space. We have a lot of very talented student artists at our kura. Tamariki expressed how calm they felt when they were carving, doing mahi tukutuku and drawing. The students will be able to explore many other different art forms and media such as painting, raranga/weaving, clay sculpture). A new laser and vinyl cutter is an exciting addition. Tupai will provide a space where they are able to express themselves in the arts of their tipuna". (Matua T- frontline wellbeing person and Art Tutor)*

*"Both spaces complement our Puna Ora where students can come to co-regulate, in a safe space with a trusted adult. These spaces are embedded in our school culture and are the Papatūānuku spaces that keeps them grounded." (Koka M- Acting principal)*

## FINDINGS

Since the implementation of safe calming spaces there are fewer challenging behaviours. There is less need to use punitive approaches (1 x in house stand down- student work with Wellbeing teacher on social and emotional skills). Teachers respond to behaviours differently and are more understanding of where behaviours stem from. This helped to form more connected relationships with students. Predictable and consistently safe classrooms help students to stay regulated and focussed on learning. Ex-students come back on a weekly basis to kura, a place where they are welcomed, nurtured, and feel safe (Acting principal).

Snippet from the school's newsletter:

*“Another epic effort 120/186 tamariki coming to school every day this week. Well done tamariki and whanau. Top classes: Huturangi- 94%, Paoa-90% and Paikea-91%, Hinehikirangi-93% and Huturangi 90%”. As an example, out of 186 students, 120 students had 100% attendance results term 3 2023. This is a great improvement on the chronic absenteeism number we had before.*

In Term 3 2022 year 8 students had top attendance in the region. There is also a reduction in languishing behaviour students are more engaged in the learning. Overall Attendance increased.

*“What we have noticed is the transient students no longer disrupt the learning like in the past because the wellbeing classroom practices are embedded, and this sets the climate to which new students adopt. The strong classroom culture and school ethos sets the tone”. (Koka M- Acting Principal)*

From the discussion with these participants, the change of school culture and school climate provided a psychological safe environment for their tamariki, Norms and values were embedded into the culture and practices which created a predictable environment that engaged and motivated students. Students and staff create the social environment needed to support positive conditions of learning through caring relationships, positive modelling, and reinforcement (Darling-Hammond & Cook-Harvey, 2018). Student perception of school climate, e.g., physical, and emotional safety, supportive teacher and peer relationships, cultural responsiveness and high expectations climates are critical as this influence's

students' attitudes toward school, levels of engagement and school attendance (Osher & Berg, 2017; Byrd, 2017).

## **CONCLUSION**

Building trauma sensitive and safe schools involves changes to school policy, practice, and culture. It requires ongoing efforts to ensure that all students are experiencing social and emotional safety, and educational success. It also requires commitment from leadership to ensure that teachers are well equipped and knowledgeable to meet the needs of students. This type of school climate does not occur magically rather, it must be cultivated through deliberate school-wide strategies, expectations, norms, and values. A safe supported school culture should reflect shared values that consider the communities and cultures that it serves. It must therefore include sound practices and have appropriate support including social wellbeing and mental health. It is important not to underestimate the benefits students obtain from a predictable school routine that creates a sense of safety and belonging.

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## CHAPTER SIX

### THE ROLE OF THE COLLECTIVE (EDUCATORS, WHANAU) WELLBEING ON STUDENT WELLBEING

#### 6.0 Chapter Introduction

The previous two chapters concluded the focus on trauma informed practices and creating safe spaces as possible missing components to a wellbeing model that could make significant difference to the successful schooling of tamariki in a psychologically safe environment. The next chapter focussed on the wellbeing of the collective within the schooling context and how their “being well”, further enhance or play a role in the wellbeing of students. Chapter six also discuss the factors that influence or contribute positively or negatively on the wellbeing of the collective.

Chapters six shifts from the focus on models and approaches of wellbeing, to the importance of the wellbeing of the collective within educational settings and its role and impact on positive student outcomes. This chapter seeks to find the answer to question three “*What impact does nurturing the wellbeing of leaders, teachers and whanau have on the students’ cognitive development and successful learning outcomes*”.

Although, it is important to understand the factors and conditions that contribute to students’ wellbeing, equally important, are the people or the collective within the schooling context as they are the ones who sets the tone, ethos, values, and culture of the school. When a “whole-school approach” to wellbeing is talked about, it often refers to the wellbeing practices that involve all classrooms across the school, whether it be certain aspects of activities or practices. However, the wellbeing of and the role of leaders and staff, who are implementers and direct influencers of these aspects are often overlooked.

To understand the influence of the educator’s wellbeing on student wellbeing it is necessary to look at what their wellbeing should be like, what impacts on their wellbeing, and why it is important for them to be well. It is also necessary to understand what student wellbeing is and how the collective of educators directly influences their wellbeing and how it impacts on their

learning outcomes. Educators play a vital role in developing “confident and creative individuals who have a sense of self-worth, self-awareness and personal identity that enables them to manage their emotional, mental, spiritual and physical wellbeing and have a sense of optimism about their lives and future” (Education Council, 2019).

Increasing evidence shows school leaders and teacher benefit both professionally and personally from having high levels of wellbeing, it improves their overall mental health, relationships, and creativity, as well as their professional commitment and performance. Educators are exposed to numerous stress factors that can compromise their wellbeing, responding to workload demands, student demands, parental demands, lack of respect and appreciation and in some cases job insecurity can add to negative health outcomes.

The practices and leadership of principals influence the school conditions, teacher quality, instructional quality, and student achievement. Research indicates that effective principals have significant positive effects on student absenteeism, student engagement with student academic and self-efficacy, staff satisfaction, and collective teacher efficacy (Dou, Devos, & Valcke, 2017; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Loeb, Kalogrides, & Béteille, 2012).

Coleman (2009) fittingly noted that “schools are communities containing not just children and young people, but adults as well”, as such he suggested that: “it might even be argued that the quickest way to promote student wellbeing in schools would be to promote high staff morale, enhance staff awareness of emotions, and provide high quality training and support for all the adults working in the school”

As a result, this chapter explores these areas by looking at the role of leaders and staff (teachers and support staff) in their own wellbeing and in school-based wellbeing implementation and its impact on students’ wellbeing and outcomes. As parents, caregivers and whānau are part of the collective in a schooling context, their wellbeing is also explored as a contributing factor or barrier to student wellbeing. Chapter six also explores how the collective measure their own wellbeing, and how they position others as contributing factors to their own wellbeing.

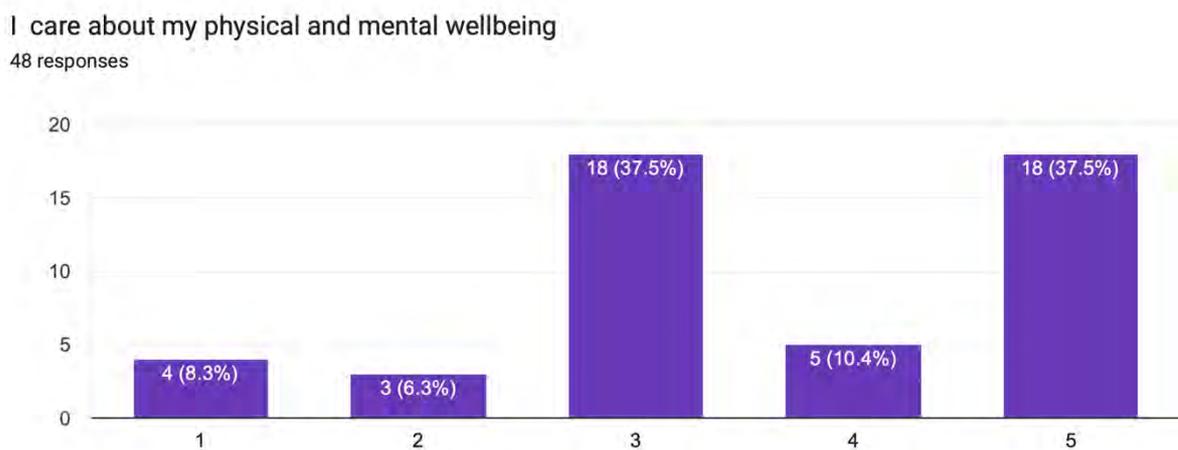
## **6.1 What is student wellbeing, what does the student voice say about their wellbeing and what factors influence their being well at school.**

There are multiple factors and conditions that contribute to students' wellbeing, whether it be positive or negative. Factors which influence student wellbeing are experiences of psychological safety, a strong sense of trust and belonging, that their voice is acknowledged, validated and acted upon in meaningful ways.

The following questionnaires and surveys were completed with a group of 48 year six to year eight students to explore their understanding of what it means for them to be well and the factors that contribute to them being well at school. The questionnaire was completed with them by their wellbeing teacher so that the data collected were in a natural setting and not a forced upon questionnaire from the researcher. Permission from their parents and whanau were obtained to include their voice in the research section.

**Figure 2 Question 1: I care about my physical and mental wellbeing.**

(On a linear scale 1 to 5: 1 = not at all; 2= a little bit; 3= mostly; 4 =very much; 5 =at all times)

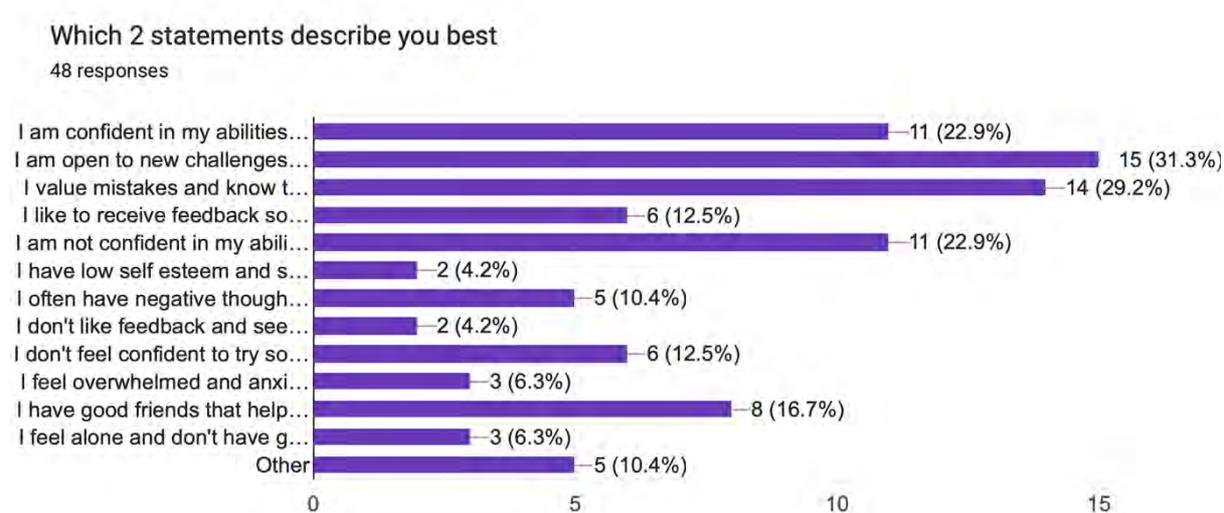


These results suggest that students do care about their physical and mental wellbeing and realise that it is important. Feeling good about themselves and being well supported adds value to their wellbeing.

Many students experience immense stress, either contributed by their home environment wherein they are under pressure of parental expectations or lack of boundaries and home circumstances, and then also within the school environment. At school there might be academic and peer pressure and bullying. Studies done by (Dou, Devos, & Valcke, 2017; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Loeb, Kalogrides, & Béteille, 2012) all state that “early adolescence students experience biological changes and often dwell within the conflicting world of adulthood and childhood. These early adolescence students undergo constant adjustments and changes in themselves and their environment at this stage”. This can be challenging for their wellbeing. Perceived stress can cause exhaustion, and emotional instability, which can affect their daily life and can sometimes lead to depression. This impacts their ability to deal with problems and difficulties in life emotionally and socially (Dou, Devos, & Valcke, 2017; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Loeb, Kalogrides, & Béteille, 2012).

The next questionnaire was to find out how students thought and feel about themselves as this is a contributor to their wellbeing.

**Figure 3 Question 2: Which statements describe you best?**



Studies from (Baeva & Bordovskaia, 2015; Delizonna, 2017; Kislyakov, Shmeleva, Karaseva, & Silaeva, 2014) argues, that when student’s wellbeing is negatively impacted, their self-esteem and mental wellbeing become reduced, and students feel anxiety or anger because they

are masking their self-expression and ability to be who they are. This is when students disengage from learning and become passive contributors who languish instead of flourish.

The Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI) for 6 to 12 year-olds had identified five dimensions which impact on and are designed to assess child wellbeing inside and outside of school. They are:

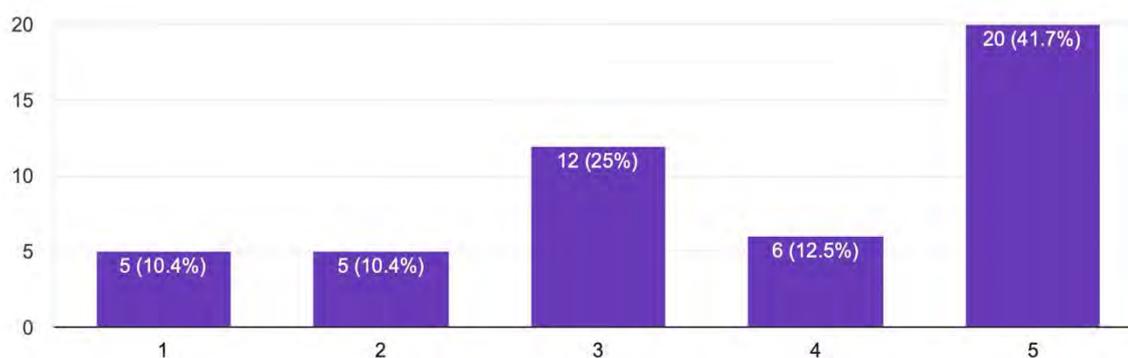
1. Social and emotional development
2. Connectedness to peers and to adults at school, home and in the community
3. School experiences
4. Physical health and wellbeing
5. Constructive use of time after school

The following question was asked to find out about friendships with their peers and how that factor into their wellbeing.

**Figure 4 Question 3 Tell us about your friendships.**

I have friends who listen to me and support me

48 responses



(On a linear scale 1-5: 1=No friends at all; 2= only one or two friend; 3-4= a few friends, three to five; 5= a big group of friends- more than 5).

Friendships, peer relationships, and their opinions and support matters to students. Disliking school is strongly related to a students' perceptions of their schools psychological climate and safe environment (Frazer et al., 2015). Students dislike for school are when they experience

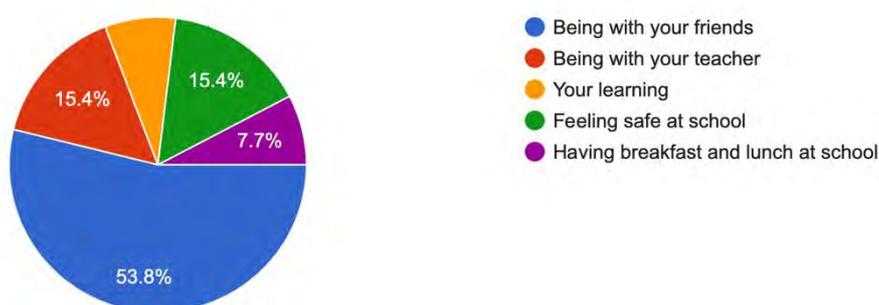
peer harassment, including regular teasing, name calling and exclusion from friends (Eisenberg et al., 2003).

An individual's sense of belonging is also a predictor of good health. When relationships are understood as part of wellbeing, we begin to understand it is not just an individual experience. Peer relationships and school connectedness have been found to increase confidence in young people. Rangatahi Māori experience hauora as living your shared values, so when times are tough, they turn to their peers, trusted loved ones and community for support (Muriwai, Houkamau and Sibley, 2015). Hence, for them cultural connectedness and inclusion raises their wellbeing.

The following questionnaire was completed with a group of 13 year eight students during a group discussion with them on wellbeing by their wellbeing teacher. Thirty percent Students rated having good friends as important to their wellbeing as well as 38.5% rating a combination of having good health, being happy, happy families and good friends as contributors to their overall wellbeing.

**Figure 5 Question What makes you happy at school.**

What makes you happy at school  
13 responses



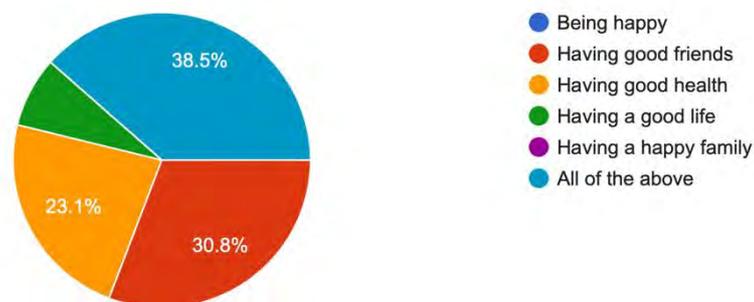
Interpersonal relationships are important for adolescents' life satisfaction. Children and young people face many challenges in life ranging from stress and anxiety about exams, to complex, serious, and debilitating long-term mental health conditions. At the same time, poor attachment, peer rejection, and experiences of bullying and discrimination can affect their mental health (Oldham 2015.) Oldham (2015) further argues, that good social, emotional, and mental wellbeing can create the foundations for healthy behaviours and educational attainment.

The following question was asked of students to gauge their understanding of wellbeing. As wellbeing is multifaceted, the focus was mainly on subjective wellbeing to see which area is most important to them. Unsurprisingly they measured their understanding of wellbeing based having good friends.

**Figure 6 Question: What is your understanding of wellbeing.**

What is your understanding of wellbeing

13 responses

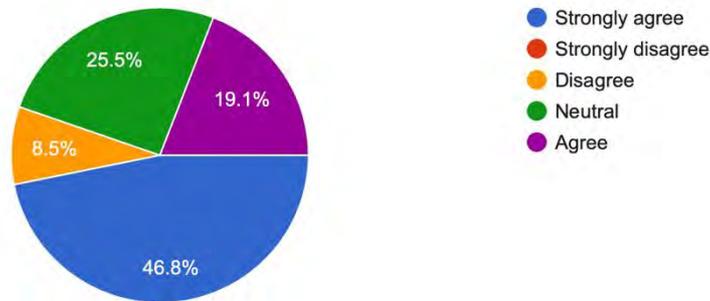


With the onset of puberty adolescents compare themselves more with others to get a better rating of their own abilities in comparison to these other people (Helfert, & Warschburger 2013). During adolescence young people compare themselves more with their classmates to assess their own abilities in relation to the adolescents in their class. If an adolescent perceives that their level of abilities is low it may affect how they do in school, their psychological health, or their overall self-esteem (McLaughlin & King 2015).

When the student voice is respected and considered, feelings of trust from students towards teachers improves. Creating an environment that celebrates differences, provide students with the understanding that everyone has different interests, cultures, strengths, etc. Giving students a voice by encouraging feelings of safety and trust and providing a platform to communicate needs. The next figure describes that for students their relationship with their teacher is of importance.

**Figure 7 Relationships with teachers.**

I do better when I have a good relationship with my teacher  
47 responses

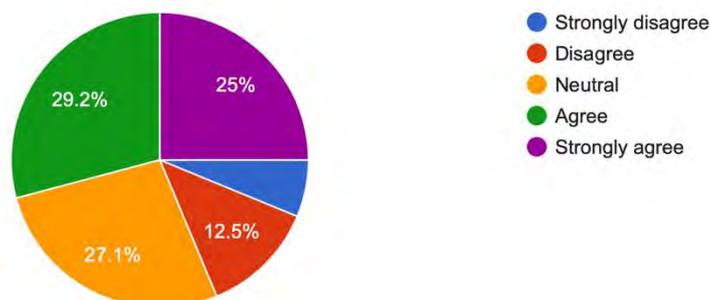


Research on student wellbeing has established that teachers can influence and make a difference to students' lives and contribute to their wellbeing. As a result, the role of a teacher is challenging and demanding. Data from 47 years 4 to 8 students show that they strongly agree that the relationship that they have with their teacher influences their achievement.

A student teacher relationship that is positive and based on respect for each other encourages students to become better and become successful, stronger learners that feel safe in their classroom environment. Student-teacher relationships are important in the short term because it creates a thriving classroom where students develop self-worth which improves their mental health (Buffet, 2019). Furthermore, Buffet (2019) explains, that these positive relationships foster academic success and decreases behavioural problems.

**Figure 8 I do better in my learning if my teachers is interested in me.**

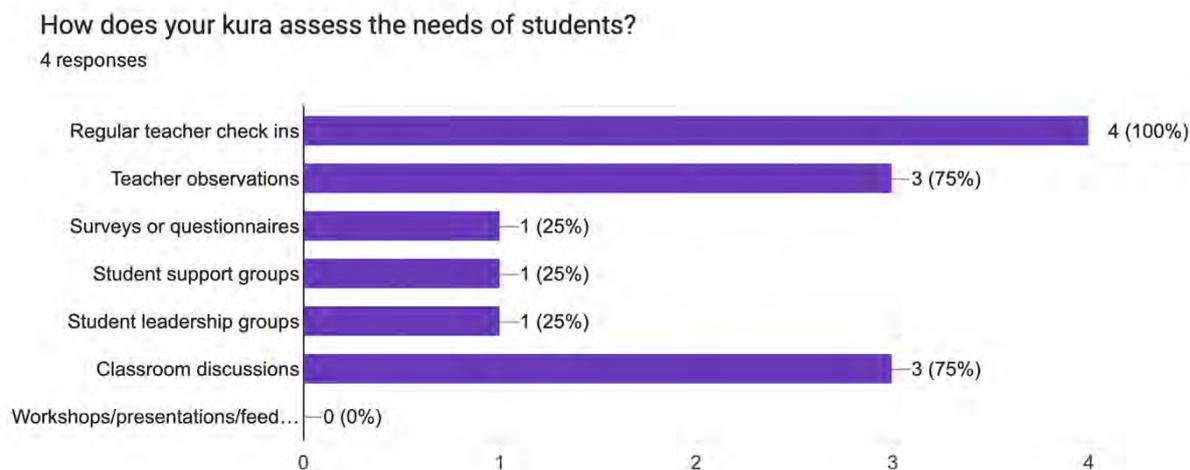
I feel better about my learning when my teacher is interested in me  
48 responses



Students also feel better about their learning when their teachers are interested in them and have connected relationships. School connectedness includes a student’s sense of school belonging, their acceptances in the social environment of their school, how they are respected and supported (Goodenow, 1993). It therefore includes but extends beyond the teacher-student relationship. When the student voice is respected and considered, feelings of trust from students towards teachers improves.

The next section covers an area that were discussed by a principal group during our data gathering conversations to understand how they assess student wellbeing and cater for their wellbeing needs at their various schools. The theme we discussed as principals were about the understanding of student wellbeing, wellbeing practices, and how we know the impacts of wellbeing practices. I was interested to see how this group perceived wellbeing measurement of students as four of these principals were beginner principals.

**Figure 9 Question 1a) How does your kura assess the wellbeing needs of students?**



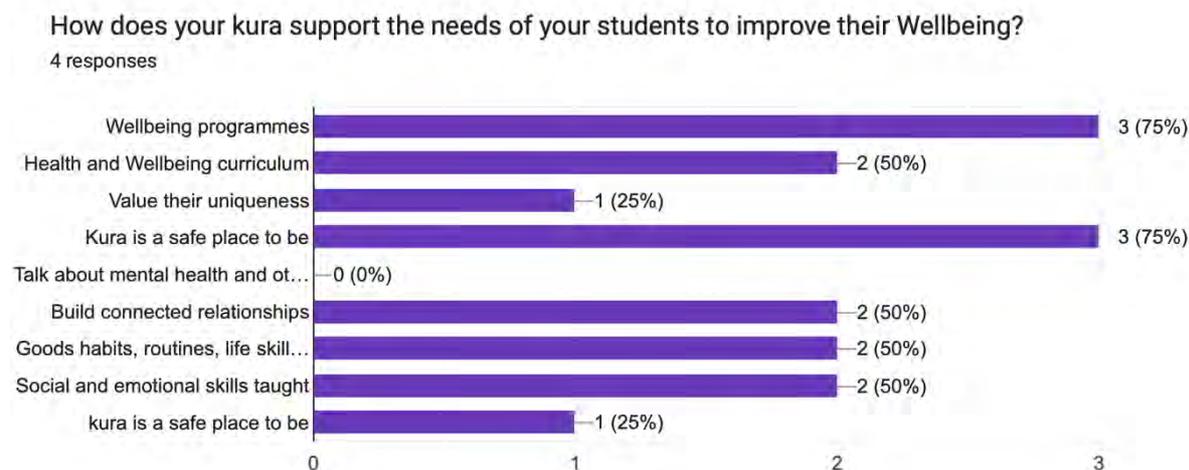
School leaders identified teachers and student check-ins, teacher observations and classrooms discussions as measures to gain information on student wellbeing.

The argument for Measuring and assessing student wellbeing is that, the greater the wellbeing of students are, the greater their academic achievement, and that the absence of wellbeing diminishes academic achievement. This argument among researchers also acknowledges that

being well may help student succeed in school, but that school success does not necessarily make students well. This brings to question the rational and move to ask the question whether we should measure wellbeing and if so, then work is needed to develop valid and reliable tools and measures to measure individual student wellbeing. Studies done by Ott et al., (2017) suggest when promoting measuring student wellbeing, that teacher wellbeing should be considered as linked to, if not mutually dependent on, student wellbeing, and that when, trying to understand or measure wellbeing in a school context, teachers should be considered alongside children. When choosing wellbeing practices these practices should then reflect the needs of students and the impact it will have on them being well at school (Ott et al., 2017).

I was also interested to see how kura supports the wellbeing needs of students and what they prioritize as important to student wellbeing. The following multiple-choice questions were completed by the same group of principals. For them wellbeing programmes and kura being a safe place to be important.

**Figure 10 Question 1b) How does your kura support the needs of your students to improve their Wellbeing?**

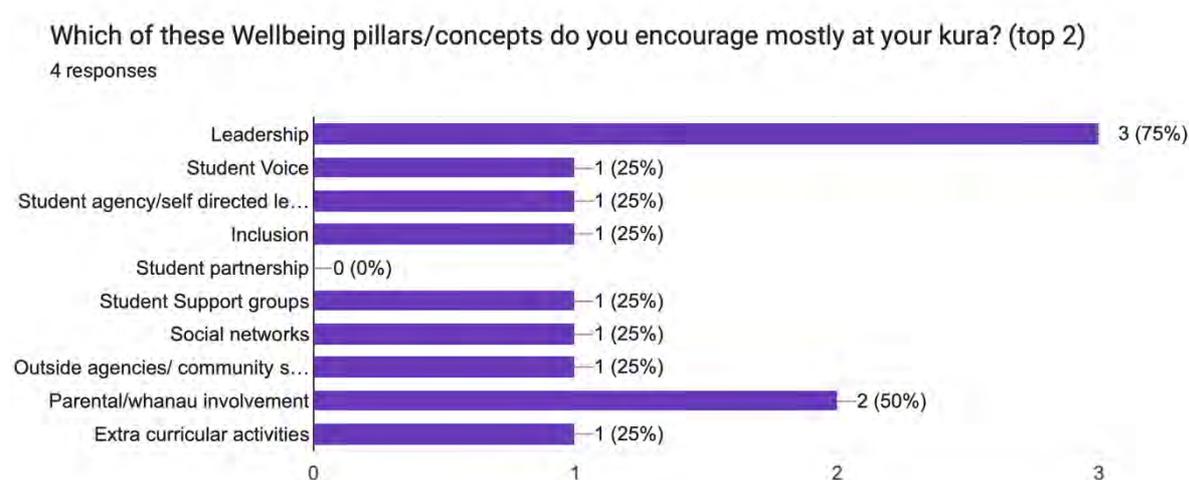


Supporting and improving student wellbeing is through wellbeing practices and curriculum delivery and in most cases creating kura as a safe place to be, is of importance. Being connected to school is positively associated with wellness and impacts on educational achievement (Niehaus et al., 2012). Students that are put in the “driver’s seat” of their own education,

classroom environment, and mental wellbeing, are enabled to feel empowered to make positive change. Conner, Posner, & Nsowaa (2022) asserts, that the student-teacher relationship is crucial for further communication and opportunities for support.

Other contextual and systemic factors such as policies, discipline, pedagogical and wellbeing practices, peer support and acceptance and autonomous decision-making are seen as measures to support the needs of students (Ott et al., 2017). The following question draws attention to the concepts that were mostly focussed on to encourage and support wellbeing at kura.

**Figure 11 Question 1c) Which of these Wellbeing pillars/concepts do you encourage mostly at your kura? (Top 2)**



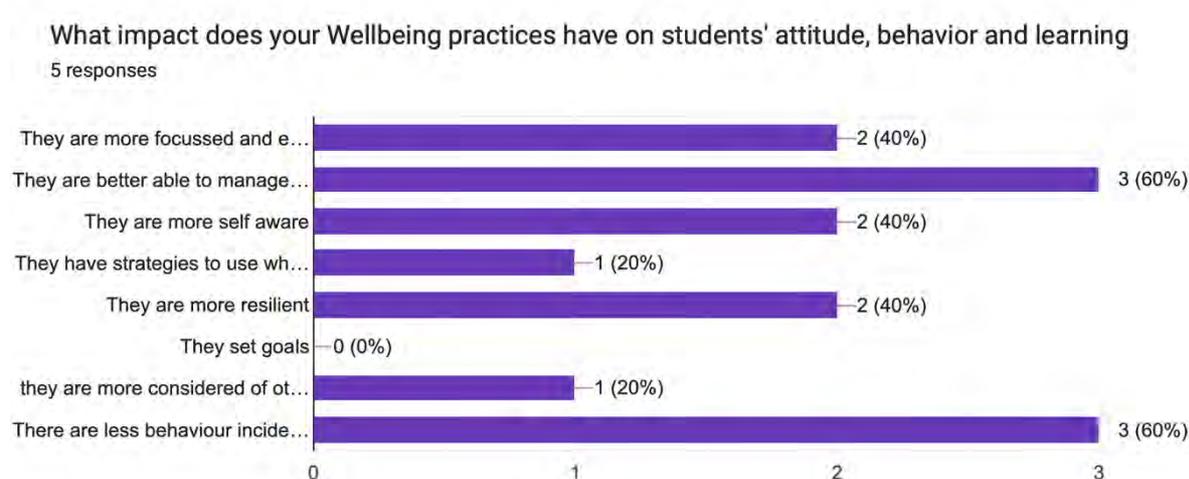
When students feel more involved in the daily organisation and management of the classroom, they begin to positively manage themselves and each other because they have felt a sense of belonging.

Although well intended, if not geared towards the needs of students the wellbeing programmes will not benefit a student who is languishing. Students who do not have a sense of belonging at school and who are not flourishing within the school environment, are likely not to reach their full potential (Durie, 2004). Durie (2004) further states, that for the student in the centre of ‘student-centred programs,’ to be flourishing, they must demonstrate factors of mauri ora,

(wellbeing) which is to be engaged in positive relationships with others, be spiritually and emotionally strong.

The follow up question was to understand whether the impact of wellbeing practices on students were similar that of the previous principal participants in chapter 2.

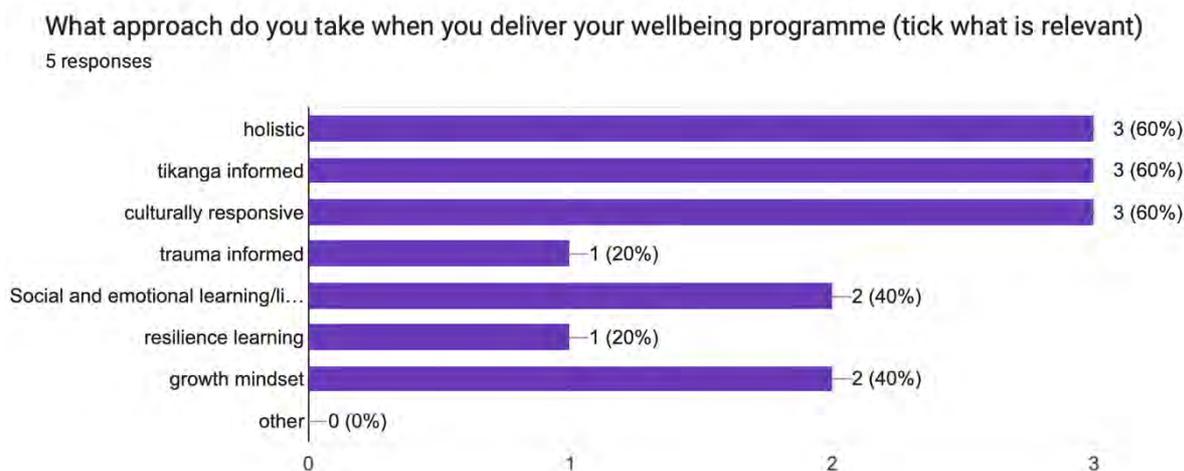
**Figure 12 Question1 e) What impact does your wellbeing practices have on students' attitude, behaviour, and learning?**



Similar to the data reported by the previous principal group in chapter 2, these principals also report that a whole school, holistic approach to student wellbeing impacts positively on behaviour, as students are better equipped to manage themselves, they are more self-aware and become more resilient. The focus on social and emotional learning contributed to their mental wellbeing as it helped them becoming more emotionally intelligent and socially aware.

The next section explores the approaches, impacts, and challenge when implementing student wellbeing programmes or initiatives with the school leaders to understand their awareness and readiness to implement student wellbeing.

**Figure 13 Question 1 e) What impact does your wellbeing practices have on students' attitude, behaviour, and learning?**



The Wingspread Declaration (2004) describes belonging in school settings as the belief of students, that the adults within their school community and setting, care about their learning, have an interest in them as individuals, and have high academic expectations of them. This also includes students that have positive teacher-student relationships and feeling safe at school.

The next question that we inquired into was about the school environment and the importance these leaders placed on its impact on student wellbeing.

**Table 8 Question 2: How does your learning environment contribute to student wellbeing and student safety?**

Principal	Response
1	<i>Positive staff relationships that model our school values which are integrated into all that we do. We know our students well. We are therefore aware of the things that impact on our ākonga wellbeing and consider these aspects when planning learning experiences for our ākonga alongside their whanau</i>
2	<i>We access external support appropriate to ākonga wellbeing needs. This includes regular BoxFit and sport opportunities. We utilise the expertise of an in-school counselling service. RTL, SWIS, teacher aide resourcing being allocated where necessary and Learning Support coordinator input. Teacher Pastoral Care support system.</i>
3	<i>We are guided by our kura rules and kura values.</i>
4	<i>Our school value: Manaaki - mihi atu, tautoko, kia kaha. Manaaki - be welcoming, be respectful, be your best. We are a PB4L School and manaaki is taught, modelled, and practised by all staff and tamariki. We are a small and whanau orientated kura. We</i>

	<i>have staff who provide active supervision during break times. Staff have established strong and positive relationships with each other and the tamariki.</i>
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The physical environment and psychosocial climate in schools can set the stage for positive student perceptions of school. Children and young people learn better when they are engaged, feel safe, and are included. As further explained by the Child Youth and Wellbeing Strategy (2019), this means for them that their needs are understood, and their identities, languages, cultures, and abilities and personal qualities are recognised, respected, and valued.

I also wanted to find out whether students were considered as agents of their own wellbeing and that they have a voice in decision-making that influences the design of the wellbeing practices and how these principals perceive this as an important contributor to student health and wellbeing. The next question gives insight into this aspect.

**Table 9 Question 3: How does your kura ensure that all students have an opportunity to express their views and influence decision making?**

Principal	Response
1	<i>We just talk when incidents happen</i>
2	<i>Circle time reflections. Student voice surveys. Whānau surveys and regular feedback received from the student BOT representative.</i>
3	<i>We have Wā Kōrero - Where all tamariki are encouraged to report or share their whakaaro, feelings around what is on top for them. We also use it to help discuss what bothers</i>
4	<i>In class, tamariki are encouraged to participate and express their views during the daily classroom program through questioning, hypothesising, suggesting, discussion. They also have access to a school counsellor and all staff. We need to do more in terms of providing opportunities for tamariki to influence decision making not only in the classroom but throughout the kura.</i>

Students especially our adolescence students, are expert in their own lives and this needs to be valued. Children and young people want their voices to provide insight and perspective on what matters to them (Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy, 2019). There is an expectation that central and local government, schools and service providers seek, hear, and empower the views and voice of children and young people (Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy, 2019).

As teachers are the implementers of wellbeing programmes and practices I wanted to know if the professional learning that they receive to implement these initiatives have impacted on the way they respond to the wellbeing of students.

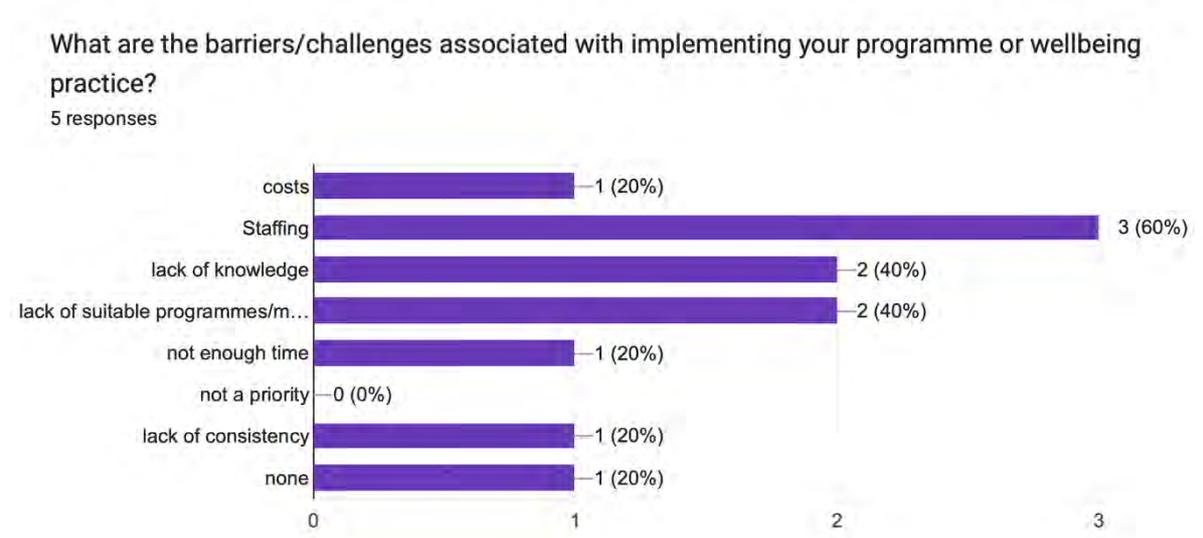
**Figure 14 Question 4 What impact did your wellbeing practice have on teachers' behaviour and responses?**



Most of the participants express teacher support for school-based initiatives that improves student wellbeing and incorporate wellbeing into their core values and practices. Although, there is enthusiasm to the delivery of programmes, there is insufficient funding, resources, and time as well as teacher knowledge to provide effective interventions to achieve the aim of student wellbeing. Other problems with existing programmes included into the curriculum is that it is not tailored to the needs or issues pertinent to specific needs of diverse groups of students. When external providers are sourced, it takes time for students to adjust to them and at times some providers do not understand the values of the school.

The following theme we explored was to investigate the barriers leaders face to the implementation of student wellbeing. As these principals had U1(1-50 students) and U2 (51-100 students) schools that they lead, it was clear from the discussion that although they would like to implement effective wellbeing programmes; funding, staffing, and resourcing was limited due to the size of their schools. When asking the question about the impact on teachers and teacher wellbeing, I was reminded that in most of these cases the principal had a dual role and was a teacher also and, that the U1 schools only have one or two other teachers to support implementation of programmes.

**Figure 15 Question 5: What are the barriers/challenges associated with implementing your programme or wellbeing practices?**



This data displayed confirms that staffing and costs are contributing factors to limited or no school-based wellbeing approach implementation. This made me realise that the wellbeing of these principals is more impacted as they carry much of the workload on their own. Principals of small schools were nearly twice as likely to report that their workload was unmanageable compared to principals of very large schools (ER0, 2021).

Schools provide both a context and can act as the agents of change for student wellbeing. To fulfil the role as an environmental context for student wellbeing, school community must be defined so that any school community is readily identifiable according to its function. Beckett (2000), measure and evaluated schools as caring communities and defined communities as ‘a cohesive caring group with a shared purpose’. For small school principals communities become their support network.

## **6.2 Why it is important to have healthy educators in the schooling contexts? How does this impact student wellbeing?**

### *6.2.1 The role of Leadership wellbeing*

What is an educational leader’s role in supporting student wellbeing? One could argue that firstly, they take responsibility for their own wellbeing, and for the organisation’s climate,

culture, and connected relationships. In addition, their role is to build the wellbeing capacity of others in their learning community. The Australian Institute for Teachers and School Leaders (AITSL, 2022) similarly explains that “Principals build capacity by creating a culture of empowerment, responsibility and self-directed research that leads to the development of a professional learning community. They model the importance of health and wellbeing, watch for signs of stress in self and others and take action to address it. They modify their leadership behaviour based on learning from experiences and feedback from colleagues”.

The demands faced by school principals overlap with those in other occupational settings but, are also distinct regarding its educational focus, working with children, dealing with parents/whānau, focussing on student achievement, building wellbeing of staff, students, parents, and community, as well as dealing with political pressures (Riley, 2021). School principals are vital to the life of schools and communities. Riley (2021) also argues that a good school leader can create a supportive school ethos and culture that facilitates positive motivation of teachers and students and lifts academic success.

Further research done by Riley (2017, 2019, 2021) has highlighted an issue facing leaders in education and has been a response to the “perceived health threats” that had emerged from global educational reform movements. The main stressor as identified by Riley (2017, 2019, 2021) was the “increased emphasis by governments on accountability for uniform curriculum delivery along with the devolution of administrative tasks from central to local control”. International studies done by Dewa et al., (2008) and Petzko (2008) reported on wellbeing in areas such as mental health status of principals, along with perspectives of their multi-faceted roles, knowledge, and skills. Educator surveys done by the NZPF (New Zealand Principals Federation) and NZEI (New Zealand Educational Institute) during 2021 and 2022 raised concerning questions about the wellbeing in the schooling workplace, these results are discussed further in this section.

To explore principal or leaders’ wellbeing further, the following questions come to mind: What does leadership wellbeing look like? What challenges leaders face and how it impacts on their wellbeing? Are leaders aware of their own wellbeing and how it impacts on students and their staff? Do leaders understand the importance of staff wellbeing and its influence on student

wellbeing? Research states that principals are expected to be versed in the latest research and development in student wellbeing and to create an ethos of respect, considering the spiritual, moral, social, and physical health and wellbeing of students (AITSL, 2022).

Being a principal myself, I had encountered experiences of stress and “burn out” and was interested to hear the voices of other principals on this topic. To gain perspective, I have engaged principals from my Professional Learning Group to discuss and answer questions on their wellbeing understanding and how wellbeing is implemented in their schools. This group consisted of a mixture of experienced and first time Māori, female principals. These principals were leaders of U1 and U2, decile one schools where most Māori students attend. Discussions took place at our monthly meetings where it was decided that the topic of wellbeing was too big and multi-faceted and that we should break our discussion into four areas and discuss those areas as themes at each meeting and by answering a google questionnaire beforehand on each of these themes or areas. We decided to add the questionnaire as it was not guaranteed that everyone would attend at each meeting and that it would allow time to think about the topic of discussion.

The areas of focus were:

- 1) Personal understanding of wellbeing
- 2) Awareness of wellbeing and how we invest in our own wellbeing/personal wellbeing practices
- 3) Wellbeing practices implemented at individual schools
- 4) Measuring the impacts of these wellbeing practices

Based on the Narrative methodology, semi-structured interview questions and questionnaires, attempts were made to grasp understanding of first hand experiences at the schools that they are leading. Quotes were taken from interview transcripts as well. The second attempt to gain more information from a principal perspective was to send the same google form questionnaire to the Kahui Ako group of principals, unfortunately to date only two of those principals have responded (1 female and 1 male). Their responses are also included in this section as they shared similar experiences.

This section also provided opportunity for myself to reflect on my leadership journey in principalship. I have a personal experience of leadership wellbeing that changed the way I

address workload and use rejuvenation strategies and self-care practices to maintain emotional, mental, and spiritual wellbeing to prevent burnout.

The first theme of discussion was asked about their perspective and understanding of wellbeing, how they perceive their current wellbeing status and challenges or barriers to wellbeing and factors that promoted their wellbeing.

Theme one personal understanding of wellbeing.

**Table 10 Question 1: What is your personal understanding of wellbeing?**

Principal NWHM	Response
1	<i>I immediately think hauora. It is a combination of family, physical, mental / emotional, spiritual, social, academic / intellectual, financial, occupational. Depending on who you are will depend on what you prioritise. I think balance. For me, I need to connect with my people and Papatūānuku regularly. That keeps me uplifted. I look to Māori Health models Te Whare Tapa Whā or Te Wheke for understanding of wellbeing.</i>
2	<i>E ora ai are three words that reflect my belief of Wellbeing. It is practices that are part of my everyday routines to keep well, e ora ai au, a tinana (body). a wairua (spiritually). a hinengaro (mind). a taiao (environmentally).</i>
3	<i>Ensure that my "whole" self is well - mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually are in positive space a good space.</i>
4	<i>Balance between work and whānau. Allowing and spending quality time with family. Happy, relaxed. (Not pre-occupied with unfinished tasks, stressed and consumed with unrelenting paper trail)</i>
5	<i>Holistic view of health - taha hinengaro, tinana etc-if one is imbalance, I am not ok.</i>
6	<i>When all is well with the whanau, when all is well physically, mentally, socially, emotionally. When you feel energised, motivated, and confident to manage day to day life. When you are aware of the need for balance in your life. When you feel valued and appreciated. When you can recognise and respond to the well-being of others</i>

The multifaceted roles of a principal, (particularly for the new principals and small school principals in this group), and the realisation that the demands of it are exhausting, can hinder an appropriate work-life balance (Clarke et al., 2007; Gentilucci et al., 2013). In an interesting insight into the wellbeing of New Zealanders, White et al. (2013) noted that older females (aged 50 to 79) show higher flourishing scores. It is worth noting the contradiction in the report findings from Riley (2017) that states the greater job satisfaction was experienced by principals and that most are positive about their roles when compared to the general population.

The toll on wellbeing of building and maintaining professional relationships and social capital is another factor to be considered (McCallum & Price, 2010). It is also worth noting that this group of principals valued the Professional Learning Group as the place where they could freely speak and seek support in a safe environment when stressful situations arise. However, during discussion time on what would benefit their wellbeing, one principal made a remark that resonated with me. These were her words “*gosh I don’t think I need more advisors or mentors as a beginner principal. I think I need supervision*” (Leader 5) My question to her was what supervision would look like to her, her response was “*I need less talks about compliance*

*and leadership stuff like guidance on appraisal and professional growth cycles, I can read up on that. I need mental help like counselling. Although, we talk about stuff in this group and give each other advise, if we are honest... we don't talk about deeper stuff because we don't want to admit our failures or deep worries. I want to talk privately to someone who is objective and have nothing to gain from the knowledge I share but will just listen and let me spill the beans....., you know... like release everything that's bottling up inside of me" ( Leader 5).*

This was an honest response from a young beginner principal of a small school. To follow up on this point, I tried to find some research on this topic, but the word "supervision" was understood differently in educational context. It was more about guidance, and leadership characteristics and actions. I was unable to find any research base on counselling for principals or educational leaders specifically. There is an area that certainly needs to be researched in the future, as there is a definite gap in this space.

Research done for the NZPF by NZCER (2005) point out that principals from smaller schools are more likely to be vulnerable and find aspects of their job more stressful, such as multi-tasking and the tension of finding the balance between teaching, leadership and management. Added stress are fluctuating or declining rolls. Woman and Māori principals were more likely to be heading small or rural schools and were likely to identify these sources of stress. These principals report that 41% of them had no quality socialising time (NZCER, Hodgen & Wylie, 2005). Not much had changed since 2005 compared to the recent report done for NZEI.

Our second theme of discussion was on the principals' awareness of personal wellbeing and how we invest in our own wellbeing. The other themes are discussed in other areas throughout the thesis.

**Table 11 Question 2: What value do you place on personal wellbeing or self-care.**

<i>Principals NWHM</i>	<i>Responses</i>
1	<i>I always put the needs of others first, so very little personal wellbeing or self-care for myself and yet I am always making sure others are looking after themselves or being looked after. My workload is such that the job is never done. There is always something that is more important than anything that I might have gone on. My time is never really "my time". I know what I should be doing to look after my own wairua but somehow never do.</i>
2	<i>I place a high level of value on personal well-being or self-care.</i>
3	<i>The whakaaro and want is there - but it is not until something goes down then I realize something is wrong or needs fixing.</i>
4	<i>Very little</i>
5	<i>In action I am pretty appalling, but in words I can give all the right answers.</i>
6	<i>It is very important to take care of yourself. - no one else will! If you feel healthy, strong, and confident, you can achieve whatever you set out to do</i>

The answers from this group revealed that although, as principals we know the importance of our own wellbeing, we continue to place more importance on our role and its demands as well as putting others first. After spending almost 45 years in education of which 24 years were in principalship roles (5yrs in a U1-small and rural school and 19 years in a Māori medium bilingual school), I can attest to the need of ongoing self-care. I shamefully must acknowledge neglecting my own needs in exchange for school leadership. I have learned the hard way however, I can now say that focussing on self-care and being true to my authentic self, had strengthened my holistic and spiritual wellbeing. My initial thoughts about self-care were that it was a selfish act, but I had since learnt that to support staff and students I need to show up as an energised, self-aware, and a resilient leader. Helpful strategies of self-care such as walking outside of the school grounds for a few minutes, breathing and mindfulness exercises, finding time to eat lunch, scheduling time for pampering sessions, time-out in nature, and not neglecting whānau time had brought back some work-life balance for me personally.

In her Newsletter “The Work of Wellbeing” on LinkedIn (2023), Amy Green highlighted an interesting differentiation between self-care and wellbeing. Green (2022) is of the view that these aspects was interconnected but with distinct meanings and roles. She states that “self-care typically refers to specific actions or practices aimed at nurturing your physical, mental

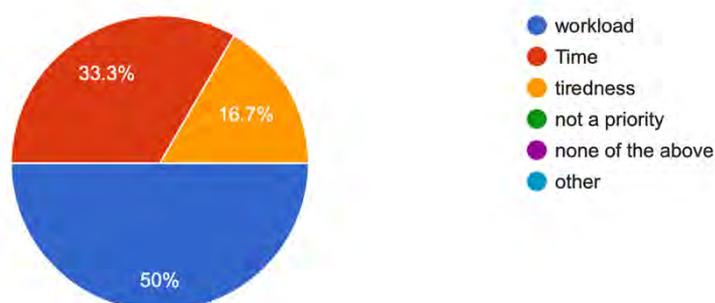
and emotional health that is essential to managing daily stress to maintain mental and emotional balance”. She continues to say that “wellbeing on the other hand, encompasses a broader and more integrated approach to overall health not just isolated acts. Wellbeing includes factors such as nutrition, exercise for mental clarity and a fulfilling social life, as well as having meaning and purpose”. Green (2022) further argues, that “although self-care moments are valuable and necessary to consider, a more comprehensive approach to wellbeing, and balance between the two aspects, can create a more fulfilling and meaningful life”. Green (2022), furthermore states, that for leaders to achieve optimal wellbeing requires setting boundaries, doing the work, saying no, looking inward, holding yourself accountable, and healing past traumas.

The biggest change to my leadership mental wellbeing was to create a school that is psychologically safe for staff, students and their whānau, a place where everyone is valued and cared for, a place where staff, student and whānau wellbeing takes priority.

The next question explores the barriers or challenges faced by principals on a daily basis and prevalent to this is mental wellbeing and nurturing positive emotional states.

**Figure 16 Question 3: What (if any) are barriers or challenges for you to focus on personal wellbeing (Multiple choice question)**

What (if any) are barriers or challenges for you to focus on personal wellbeing (tick as many that relate to your situation)  
6 responses



Interestingly, the data from principals’ surveys funded by New Zealand Educational Institute Te Riu Roa (NZEI) during 2020 and 2021 present similar findings on workload hours spent by principals.

Compared to principals from other countries it is reported that NZ principals work the longest hours in the world (OECD, 2020). A main stressor identified by Riley (2017) was “increased emphasis by governments on accountability for uniform curriculum delivery along with the devolution of administrative tasks from central to local control”. These results indicated that the wellbeing of principals was compromised.

The next survey has shown that workload is a significant issue with many New Zealand primary school leaders facing heavy administrative workloads, long working hours, and an imbalance between their working and private life (Riley et al., 2021).

**Table 11 Survey data on Workload hours (Arnold et al., 20220; Riley et al., 2021)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>More than 50 hours per week</b>	<b>More than 55 hrs Per week</b>	<b>More than 60 hrs Per week</b>
2020	69%	45.5%	19.9%
2021	72%	44%	15.8%

Schools with greater principal stability or lower principal turnover tend to have higher student achievement. During the Covid 19 period principals continued to be on the frontline and in-service of their school communities without opportunity to slow down, with the result additional tasks took emotional tolls on some leaders.

In 2020, NZ primary school leaders report experiencing five demands at work more often than the general population. They report sometimes experiencing more work than they can complete and report regularly having to work at a fast pace. School leaders often experience cognitive challenging work. They also report regularly dealing with emotionally challenging situations (emotional demands) and frequently having to conceal their emotions at work (emotional labour) ( New Zealand Primary Principal Occupation, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report-2020).

During that time NZ principals also reported that in the last 12 months, 23% experienced bullying, 32% report receiving threats of violence and 35% have experienced physical violence. In comparison to the general population NZ principal leaders are at far higher risk of experiencing offensive behaviour at work ( New Zealand Primary Principal Occupation, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report-2020).

Similar data was reported by NZCER (New Zealand Council of Educational Research) (2022), when they surveyed secondary school principals, more than half of the respondents reported to working 61 hours on average per week. In the 2023 survey these principals listed the topmost prominent issues facing their schools:

- Providing support for vulnerable students -80%
- Too much being asked of schools-76%
- Recruiting quality teachers-71%
- Hard to keep up with the pace of change in curriculum and NCEA- 71%
- Accessing specialist support for students with learning needs-64%
- Funding – 56%
- Dealing with inappropriate use of technology- 53%
- Re-engaging students who have not come back to school post Covid 19 lockdowns- 49%
- Property maintenance or development-44%
- Timetable to support a growing range of student learning opportunities- 42%
- Cost of maintenance and replacing of digital technology-40%
- Low student attendance- 38%
- Staffing level/class size-38%
- Parent and whanau engagement-24%
- Managing new equity index funding system -18%

This is a representative sample that gives insight into principal perspectives on challenges faced by secondary principals.

Currently, principals do have mentoring and advisors but are reliant on external facilitators and ministry of education providers for support. These advisors at times have no principalship experience. The principal mentors who are principals of their own schools, have limited time to do justice to the support their colleagues may need because they have to at times deal with matters concerning their own schools and also have their own workloads.

Considering all this data, I was curious to know from a primary school principals' group how they invest in their wellbeing and the practices that help them or that they hope to implement.

**Table 13 Question 4: How do you invest in your own wellbeing (wellbeing practices your implement)?**

Principal NWHM	Responses
1	<i>Every 8 weeks I get my hair done. I study part time at the Wānanga (though this is becoming difficult, and I cannot give this the time I want to at the moment because of my mahi and caring for my Mum). Every now and then I get to crochet. Not often enough</i>
2	<i>I invest in my own well-being e "ora ai au" a wairua using regular affirmation and karakia and visiting the moana. I love to watch sunsets and sunrises also. E ora ai au a hinengaro by reading, listening to motivational tedtalks and use meditation music to relax my mind.</i>
3	<i>I focus on different areas of my well- being. Physical wellbeing - I go to the gym every day. I play sports and interact with other people in different areas of my life. I also check in with my partner who supports me in keeping myself grounded</i>
4	<i>Currently little to none.</i>
5	<i>GOING FORWARD? - Healthier personal lifestyle - eating, sitting to eat, fitness, getting home at decent hour, leaving work behind, energy to attend to own tamariki needs</i>
6	<i>I get my hair done once a term and have pj days every Sunday</i>
7	<i>Adequate sleep - 6-8 hours per night. Whanau time at home, whanau time with wider whanau. Try not to take work home. Regular visits to hairdresser. Church once per month. Time alone at beach, up the coast, at the marae. Try to delegate. Learn new things like karanga, mōteatea</i>

Studies done by White et al., (2013) states that wellbeing is the balance between life, physical fitness, and mental health which includes happiness and contentment about work and life. However, some of the principal participants had a more holistic view on wellbeing and social aspects such as the importance of friends and whānau that were greater determinants of wellbeing. Self-care by some is about time spent in nature, and spirituality featured as part of a holistic approach to wellbeing. High job demands lead to exhaustion while low job resources lead to disengagement. Both exhaustion and disengagement are symptoms of burnout.

Discussion with this group of principals also further focussed on the self-care that we as principals should attend to. Self-care takes many forms attending to our physical, psychological, emotional, social, spiritual, personal creative, financial, and professional wellbeing. Some of the practices we discussed were on mindfulness practice, setting daily intentions and establishing healthy habits, practice of gratitude, building self-regulation skills

(social and emotional competencies) and investing in building positive relationships that are meaningful for our wellbeing. We all agreed that as school leadership continues to become more stressful, promoting concrete steps for principals' self-care is no longer a selfish or wonderful thing to do, in fact it is essential to sustaining effective and healthy leaders.

Sun & Leithwood (2015) points out, that although school leaders' influence on student achievement is indirect, they can improve teaching and learning in the schools they lead by influencing beliefs, attitudes, and conditions about teaching and learning. They focus on workplace wellbeing, build cohesion and support for improved teacher and student wellbeing ( Sun & Leithwood, 2015).

### *6.2.2 The role of Staff Wellbeing in student wellbeing*

Teacher wellbeing is about valuing and recognising the incredible work teachers do, while ensuring they can work and function at their best (Green, 2022).

Teaching and learning to teach, are stressful due to the changing nature of a teacher's work and how it is regulated and managed (Corcoran & O'Flaherty, 2018; Vesely, Saklofske, & Nordstokke, 2014). This makes the role of a teacher challenging and demanding with accountability measures, heavy workload, diverse ranges of student needs and behaviours, time constraints, and occupational stress. This plays a significant role in job satisfaction.

Teacher attrition and the issues surrounding rising levels of mental ill-health among teachers has resulted in higher numbers of teachers leaving the profession (Department for Education, 2018; Teaching Council of Ireland, 2015). Teachers have been identified as one of the highest ranked professional groups to experience burnout due to emotional demands such as student discipline, social and mentoring support, performance management and organisational leadership (Corcoran & O'Flaherty, 2018).

McCallum and Price (2010) advocate that for children and young people to be well, teachers must also be well. McCallum and Price (2010) imply, that the education of children is at the core of teachers' work and their success underpins their daily effort, enthusiasm, and commitment. Darling-Hammond (2012) support this opinion; and Hattie, (2009) and Wyn

(2009) assert that well teachers are able to contribute to the social, emotional, cognitive, spiritual, and physical wellbeing of their students. Darling-Hammond (2012) further asserts that some of this stress is natural to teaching, because cognitive, metacognitive, and emotional demands deplete one's resources and coping mechanisms. Teaching is also a social context whereby inter-personal exchanges with students add complexity, and a need for educators to adjust accordingly (Wyn, 2009). Consequently, promoting self-awareness of wellbeing in beginning teachers will contribute to their longevity and productivity.

Teachers' well-being itself has a significant role to play in the attraction, retention and sustainability of teachers. Teachers are the most important in-school factor contributing to student achievement, belonging, satisfaction and flourishing (Hattie & Yates, 2014; Allen, Kern, Vella-Brodick, Hattie, & Waters, (2018). Globally, the impact could be much wider if initial teacher education programs included a wellbeing curriculum in their programs and courses. Teacher wellbeing is an individual, collective, and community issue, as there is a clear link between teachers' wellbeing, their role in the classroom and school community, and the success and satisfaction of children and young people' (Mc Callum & Price, 2010).

Data from eleven teacher participants has identified that teachers feel that they are placed in situations where they are underprepared and lack confidence, and therefore feel unsupported to manage student wellbeing in an effective manner.

**Table 12 Question 1: How would you describe wellbeing? (your understanding)**

Teacher	Response
1	<i>Being able to manage a day pleasantly</i>
2	<i>Being healthy and balanced in all aspects of life</i>
3	<i>What is good for someone, what is the self-interest of the person, also what is good for the person intrinsically</i>
4	<i>self or other wairua, mental, physical, and work/life balance</i>
5	<i>Te whare tapa wha - (whānau, wairua, hinengaro and tinana) If all those aspects are in order, then my wellbeing is in order that is how I would define wellbeing.</i>
6	<i>Having a balance of work, life, whanau, and exercise. Feeling happy and supported</i>
7	<i>Being Happy in my workplace, Having a good balance of school and home life. Time to relax and unwind</i>
8	<i>When a person is strong in their mana - wairua is calm, positive, settled in their world.</i>
9	<i>Balancing all aspects of being - te whare tapawha - taha tinana, whanau, wairua &amp; hinengaro</i>
10	<i>Good balance</i>

11	<i>Being well in all aspects of te whare tapawhā</i>
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Teachers spend a significant amount of their time at school and more time at home completing tasks. Knowing that our teachers influence so many areas of school culture, it makes sense to have teachers that are flourishing in their wellbeing and who actively take care of their physical, spiritual, mental, emotional, and social health.

**Table 13 Question 2: What contributes to your positive wellbeing at school?**

Teacher	Response
1	<i>Positive interactions with staff and children</i>
2	<i>Our pamper days, positive relationships with colleagues, sharing the workload, people offering support</i>
3	<i>Wellbeing Team, Support from and for all.</i>
4	<i>boiled kettle, dishes done, being kept up to date and knowing the circumstances of the students in my care, as well as my colleagues, FOOD is always an incentive, Being reminded to do practices across the school,</i>
5	<i>My home life is good - Kids, husband, house, whānau whānui Exercising, regular supervision would be good, My marae, hapū and iwi engagement - I see my marae as a rejuvenating and healing place being on their always has huge positive impact on me.</i>
6	<i>People stepping up and doing what they need to be doing, a happy classroom, feeling heard, friendships, supportive colleagues</i>
7	<i>Our Staff that is helpful, Caring, and able to laugh all the time</i>
8	<i>Students responding to my lessons, even though learning is at various levels all students are making connections.</i>
9	<i>being able to cater to the needs of nga taha e wha while delivering to nga ākonga</i>
10	<i>Getting on with the task in hand. Staff putting away what they have used.</i>
11	<i>Having approachable colleagues/leadership to give advice, coaching and tips. Having clear communication and knowing what is going on in kura well before things are due</i>

There is a need for teachers to receive support to allow them to develop their emotional and social abilities and skills that will help them to become effective and resilient teachers (Kidger et al., 2009; Poulou, 2017). In the workplace, teacher wellbeing increases and has a strong positive impact on how they work as individuals and in teams. Along with everyday wellbeing teacher wellbeing should also focus on building self-efficacy, and collective efficacy (Green, 2022).

**Table 14 Question 3: What are the negative things that impact on your wellbeing at school?**

Teacher	Response
1	<i>Self-centred attitudes and actions</i>
2	<i>Lack of whanau support with our high behavioural need students, high workload, whanau, and iwi commitments (outside of work commitments)</i>
3	<i>The negative behaviour due to what happening out of kura (what is happening out of kura, e.g., at home)</i>
4	<i>people not checking the calendar, emails (LOL me!), not enough time to do everything, Stress from children's behaviour</i>
5	<i>When my whare is not right - sick kids, late nights (working, planning, messy house etc), new teacher, old study assignments, tangihanga</i>
6	<i>Time management - Not being prepared for work, kids home etc...</i>
7	<i>When I do not exercise - I have no energy. I do not exercise because I have no time too much work.</i>
8	<i>Drama and gossip, people not listening during hui and then asking questions about things that have already been covered, when students in my class arrive "down" because of their home situation. Students coming to school who display emotions that are having impact on their settling into the classroom.</i>
9	<i>Having our class programme interrupted when my high needs child in my class needs my 1-1 attention and demands it with his off-task behaviour</i>
10	<i>the wide range of demands imposed from the needs of tamariki, whanau, kura, moe and other agencies. in class behaviour, tamariki wellbeing and workload</i>
11	<i>Cleaning up after others, cannot find things that have a place.</i>

Teacher wellbeing is found to be impacted by several factors that are both positive and negative, some of these factors are within the teachers' control while others are not. Teacher wellbeing is a complex issue and should be viewed from a holistic approach, which should include strategies which complement their authentic self.

The next set of teacher voice data was contributed from eight teachers at another school to compare how they perceive factors that impact on their wellbeing to the first group and to explore the similarities and differences. Workload, and challenging, and diverse needs of children seem to be the most concerning factors contributing to teacher wellbeing. This theme was highlighted by the first group of teacher participants and was evident from the answers of this group of teachers, which is a prevalent issue.

**Table 15 Question 1: What are some of the challenges that you face daily that impacts on your wellbeing as a teacher.**

Eight responses

Teacher	Response
1	<i>Managing behaviours and prioritising my tamariki who require more attention first</i>
2	<i>For me personally nothing. For some of my learner's trauma is still apparent in their daily life. This is evident according to two wellbeing programmes we use</i>
3	<p><i>1.Health- Often we are faced to work during times of sickness and personal struggles due to a wide range of reasoning. Here are some examples from this year; Having high number of behavioural and diverse learners in your class which you know will struggle tremendously in your absence. Already being short staffed and a reliever shortage. Pressure of teaching, testing, and reporting.</i></p> <p><i>2.Workload- Teachers often have a heavy workload, including lesson planning, grading, and administrative tasks, which can lead to long hours and high stress levels. amount of workload that is required of teachers and leaders to do outside of work hours is very strenuous, especially when it tends to take up a lot of your personal and whanau time.</i></p> <p><i>3.Diverse learners- A high percentage of students are coming in with overly complex learning and behaviours needs, and we are undereducated in the new conditions that are presenting in our kura and are just working it out with what knowledge we do have. Trial and error</i></p> <p><i>4. Duty- Having to go on duty every day and not get that time out to have a break, especially when you have been dealing with a lot of dysregulated and emotionally distressed students.</i></p> <p><i>Expectation- increasingly are being asked and required of teachers e.g., personal time, workload, learning in the classroom, organisation, administrative.</i></p> <p><i>6. Incident reports- The time-consuming process of incident reports taking away from teaching time and breaks</i></p>
4	<i>When I am at home -worrying about the student's wellbeing outside of school, thinking about problems they are having that they have told me about, thinking of ways to support students with compassion, who are having problems and it is showing in their behaviour</i>
5	<i>Workload, fatigue, sickness, low energy, Covid, modality new thing</i>
6	<p><i>While not all these issues may not be a daily occurrence these are some of the challenges that impact my wellbeing. The impact of absent staff and no relievers. Having to cover for them. Students that are neurodiverse and having to re-tweak differentiated teaching and learning. When technology does not work! Worrying about students at risk in your class. Worrying how students may present every day, or when they are absent, wondering if they are safe. Changes to programs that impact the long term program, i.e., Assessments, daily program coverage. Trying to fit everything in. Whether we may go into an emergency or not. Being hypervigilant Having to do duty. Takes away from your short non-contact time/personal break time. Weighing up the pros and cons of whether to come in sick or stay home. Thinking about the fall-out from not being present. Catching up on hui or work while absent. Not having enough relievers to fill the needs. Job creep. Increasingly expected by teachers. Wellbeing of students and whanau. Covid. Having to fill in incident reports. Yes, I know they are important. But when you must interview students, it takes away from your class teaching time or your own break time.</i></p>

	<i>Open modality is challenging in that noise and the ability to teach effectively is affected by either spaces noise level which leads to stress on teachers' voices and throats. Students who have hearing or sensory issues are not catered for in such an open setting even though I try to provide quiet nooks within the open space</i>
7	<i>Diversity of the tamariki that are entering the classroom. the high needs of these tamariki. unknowing their triggers and reactions that can take a while for the to regulate.</i>
8	<i>The stories that I hear from tamariki about their home life, worrying that they are not being looked after, dealing with violent behaviour i.e., fighting (not so much daily) and having time to regulate myself while being responsible for fifteen others, staff members with negative attitudes and taking their attitudes out on students and other staff.</i>

Data from teacher participants has identified that teachers feel that they are placed in situations where they are underprepared and unconfident and therefore, feel unsupported to manage student wellbeing in an effective manner. Workload, accountability measures, diverse range of student needs, work stress, unsafe work environment, etc had all been identified as reasons for teacher burnout and emotional exhaustion. Furthermore, they have been the main determinates of lowering teacher's unmet wellbeing needs. Kidger et al., (2009) believes that many teachers often have unmet wellbeing needs in the educational setting and that this effects their ability to meet and respond to student wellbeing needs. The flow on effect is often increased difficulties in the classroom as both teacher and student have identified and unidentified emotional needs.

**Table 16 Question 2: How does this affect your ability to be an effective teacher?**

Teacher	Response
1	<i>It can take time away from other tamariki who are willing to learn.</i>
2	<i>I must halt the learning and move the student who has experienced trauma to the wellbeing teacher.</i>
3	<i>Being overwhelmed with the daily workload, administration task and student management and behaviours takes crucial time away from the real essence and reasoning for pursuing this career which is being inspirational and creative teachers. Constant fatigue from juggling so much inside the hours of 8.30-2.30pm and outside these houses. Not having the time to focus purely on the teaching time and planning of your class.</i>
4	<i>Sometimes behaviours when they are dysregulated means that I must use my Papatuanuku to self-regulate. Having to address behaviours which affect the wellbeing and wairua of other students takes time away from learning</i>
5	<i>sickness -ability to talk, workload-ability to not finish work to 100%, low energy- not put in 100%, Covid -memory loss, ability to hold information. Modality -noisy modality affects teaching and learning-affects voice -coughing continuously</i>
6	<i>Being tired before the students arrive if I had to organise relief work or juggle duty. Lacking enthusiasm to see students walking through the gate/class door. Worrying</i>

	<i>about students if there has been an incident in class/kura or at home for our tamariki. The brain does not switch off leads to mental and emotional fatigue. Poor work - life balance. Having to be hypervigilant for anything that may occur. Being less empathetic and less attuned to the individual needs and challenges of students. This can lead to a one-size-fits-all approach to teaching and their wellbeing. Unconsciously raising the level of your inside teaching voice which leads to throat infections and throat stresses = tiredness, loss of hearing</i>
7	<i>Some days it can take its toll. Some situations mean that my attention and energy can be targeted to the high needs tamariki, and the rest of the class misses especially important learning. It often can use a lot of energy and time.</i>
8	<i>Hypervigilance, moving between flight, fright, and freeze mode</i>

Green (2022) points out, that teaching is also a social context whereby inter-personal exchanges with students and other staff members add more complexity, and a need for educators to adjust accordingly. The more teachers can operate in a psychological safe environment where they can speak up or ask questions, without fear of humiliation, they will better perform and grow (Green, 2022).

**Table 17 Question 3: What happens to the way you are teaching when you are tired and the impact on student.**

Teacher	Responses
1	<i>I still manage to teach my tamariki and give them the best I can, then I will go home and unwind, ready for the next day! :)</i>
2	<i>Take the tamariki to a time out, e.g., playground, bike park, PBL space</i>
3	<i>A result of teaching when tired is I become very short and have little patience. My teaching style becomes very bland and low energy rather than exciting and enthusiastic. I resort to teaching or organising work students can do quite easily and what most students will deem boring instead of teaching that for which I have planned. This can result in behavioural issues with the students due to not being stimulated enough. When tired my students feed off my energy and can become easily triggered. I can become disengaged in daily and learning conversations with the students which can send the message that I do not care about what they are saying.</i>
4	<i>I am less effective and that I get bothered and dysregulated by things that would not normally bother me.</i>
5	<i>Instructions are not followed, my voice rises causing noise in modality to rise. Repeating of instruction and lessons and times frames not met. Lesson not</i>

	<i>completed 100%. Self and expectations are not met. Memory loss -Professional develop not retained and fully implemented</i>
6	<i>Less patience for any behaviours that would warrant a verbal warning. Then students are triggered. The wairua of the class is LOW because the teachers wairua is LOW. Inability to meet time frames. Forgetting to check in with the 'quiet' students in class. Neglect. Choosing the easy teach options within the daily program opposed to teaching what you had planned. Students not challenged. Bored students. Reduced creativity = Boring program</i>
7	<i>When I am tired can mean less effort and enthusiasm put into structured lesson time. Or it means do what you can to get through the block/or the day. The impact that would have on the students is their learning and i am not giving the best of my ability at that time.</i>
8	<i>Routine can sometimes differ if there are incidents/fights that I need to deal with, students may have to become more independent as I co-regulate with others/regulate myself, hypervigilant when entering room - not knowing what the wairua of the room is going to be, hearing kids being constantly yelled at is very triggering and draining</i>

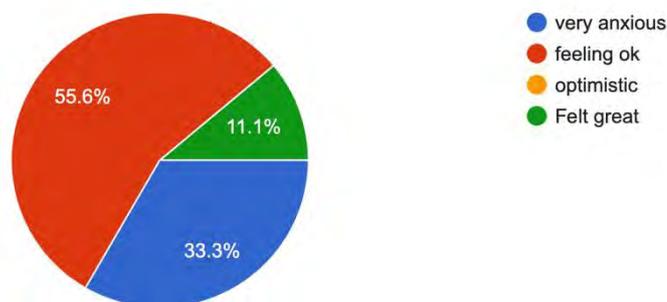
For teachers to have a positive impact on the wellbeing of students and to role model good wellbeing practices, and to assist young people, they must be well themselves. Educator's emotional state influences how they think about and function in their teaching (Sutton & Wheatley, (2003); McCallum and Price (2010) similarly argues and suggests, that teachers need a wellbeing strategy in place to assure their own wellbeing for their effectiveness in the classroom. Teachers that are well contribute to the effectiveness of the school.

Numerous studies found that employee wellbeing and effectiveness relate to greater productivity and performance and better outcomes for the organisation. Work-related wellbeing has been identified as “the part of an employee’s overall wellbeing that they perceive to be determined primarily by work and can be influenced by work-place interventions” (Juniper et al., 2011).

Furthermore, during a public health crisis, teachers experience new and unexpected challenges alongside their existing stressors. The following survey was taken from nine teachers after the Level lockdown period during the COVID 19 epidemic.

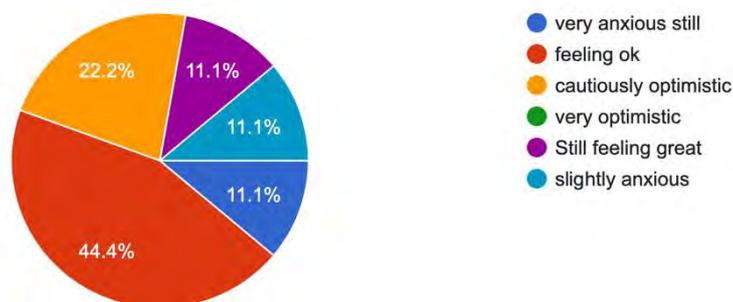
**Figure 17 How would you rate your anxiety level during alert levels during covid 19?**

how would you rate your anxiety level during alert level 4  
9 responses



**Figure 18 How would you rate your anxiety levels now during alert level 2?**

how would you rate your anxiety levels now during alert level2  
9 responses



Surveys done by ERO (2020, 2021) review points out there is a decline in teachers’ enjoyment to teach since 2020. In 2020, 62% of teachers reported enjoying their work whereas in 2021 it was at 56%. Workplace stress, burnout, and fatigue are commonplace amongst educators, and are compounded by the ongoing challenges of teaching and learning during a global pandemic and natural disasters (ERO, 2021). Overall, the findings conclude that teachers’ and principal’s life satisfaction is also low, with only 57% of teachers and 62% of principals reporting that they were satisfied with their life in June and July of 2021. This data compares poorly to the overall population, with 86% of New Zealanders rating their life satisfaction highly in a survey done by Statistics New Zealand (2021). More than quarter of principals (27%) reported that staff wellbeing had not returned to where it was before the Covid 19 disruptions.

The following question was asked of teachers to see if they have reflected on changes that need to happen to ensure better work conditions and outcomes that would have a positive impact on their wellbeing.

**Table 18 Question 4 : What needs to happen to change this situation.**

Teacher	Response
1	<i>Finding strategies that will support my tamariki who tend to be more unsettled. Support with high needs tamariki. Which i am also getting but I think looking at the number of high needs tamariki that we have in the classroom at one time. it can feel quite overwhelming when a high percentage of new students starting school, come with some sort of need without the extra support</i>
2	<i>Continue with our learning programmes, e.g., mana potential, check in wall, wellbeing class/teacher being better able to support tamariki.</i>
3	<i>Less administration workload for teachers so we can focus on the stuff we love and enjoy doing which is teaching, being creative and inspiring our students. Rather than drowning in administration tasks and prioritising it over being great in the classroom teachers</i>
4	<i>Get rid of duties so that teachers can get the breaks (no contact time with students) we desperately need and deserve it.</i>
5	<i>Make access to support for our diverse and high behavioural students more simpler and accessible- instead of having to jump through so many hoops, and filling out loads of paperwork, on top of having loads of hui with these agencies (especially now that these students are become more of a higher percentage in our classrooms e.g. in my class 7 out of 18 students either have diverse learning or high behavioural needs or both)</i>
6	<i>Change the narrative and expectation for teacher to 'just suck it up'. We are expected to take on all the physical, emotional, and mental challenges this profession requires of you and to just do it and suck it up. Teachers need to be acknowledged and recognised for their commitment, perseverance, and energy they put into their tamariki and jobs</i>
7	<i>Classrooms need more support to help cater to the needs of our diverse and behavioural students and classroom size cap needs to be lowered and measured against the needs in your classroom.</i>
8	<i>Relievers to relieve, as we often come to school sick as very sparse. Taking care of voice - coughing since covid -sometimes not speaking when do not need to. Being more proactive and self-diagnosis of what I need listen to the doctor that I have a virus and it is not a virus but prolonged cough from asthma, allergies and covid</i>
1	<i>More relievers. On call staff to release class teacher in the event of hui, wellbeing - resetting break, incidents that need to be dealt with, as current staff are busy with their own hui and programs Not having to do DUTIES, so staff are having proper breaks away from students. Spaces need better acoustics to dampen noise in open modality</i>

	<i>or provide voice amplifiers to save our throats and hearing, and provide a quieter environment for students who are noise sensitive</i>
2	<i>I continue to prioritise work and what I can do at school (over emotions about whether I can change their situation at home) and I also ask for help when I need it wellbeing forms/leadership team/SENCO/RTLB, It can be really draining for me when I am ready to teach/learn and I hear negative remarks, yelling at children - I try to avoid this energy/take a breath/walk outside, I understand the job is stressful but children draw the short straw when adults are dysregulated which isn't fair - I also understand that we all make mistakes/we all have trauma, so we need to learn more strategies for when we are triggered, what triggers look like/sound like/feel like in a classroom/in a meeting/in the hall - some tips and tricks to deal with this specifically during a school day etc</i>

Teachers clearly ask for support to manage workload, challenging behaviours from students and to have strategies that help them support learners who have learning needs. Teachers also seek acknowledgement and recognition for the emotional stress that they have to endure on a daily basis.

The following recommendations that had been highlighted since 2017, have been published in the 2019, NZEI report on school leader and teacher occupational health and wellbeing survey:

1. Improvement of school resources to support the work practices of principals.
2. Professional development and support for building and maintaining effective professional relationships.
3. Addressing violence and offensive behaviour.
4. Improving professional support.
5. Gender equity since this has been a significant area experienced by female principals.
6. More support for early career teachers.

A primary pathway for principal influence is the management of the teaching force. Sun & Leithwood (2015) found leadership effects on student learning are intervened by teacher emotions, such as collective teacher efficacy, teacher commitment, and trust in colleagues, the principal, students, and parents. Increasing evidence shows school leaders and teachers benefit professionally and personally from having good wellbeing and improving their relationships.

The teachers have an important part to play in the fundamental role of schools which is the education of students. It could consequently be argued, that the quality of a school's system

rests on the quality of its teachers, yet the wellbeing of teachers is languishing. Teachers are the greatest resource and biggest asset in education and therefore, must be given opportunities to learn skills in resilience, emotional intelligence and self-efficacy to ensure that they flourish and grow the profession's sustainability. Teachers must be supported in learning practical strategies to enhance their wellbeing. This can have a positive effect on their self-confidence, sense of personal agency and resilience in essence kaitiaki (guardians) of their own wellness.

### *6.2.3 The role of whānau wellbeing in student wellbeing*

The NZ Children's Act (2014) requires, for children and young people to be seen in the context of their families, whānau, hapū and iwi, other culturally recognised family groups and communities. A whānau-centred approach is not new. It is grounded in Māori models of wellbeing, such as Te Whare Tapu Wha and Te Wheke, and sit behind the Whānau Ora outcomes framework.

It is well known that in the process of developing their individual identity, young adolescents go through physical, social, and emotional changes. During the adolescence phase most of the issues faced by these students seem to be centred around home and school. Responding to the feeling of been misunderstood by those adults around them, most adolescent's do not therefore share their problems with their teachers, and parents. They suppress their emotions, which results in psychological issues such as depression, anxiety, and stress.

All of these tamariki (young children) and Rangatahi (young adults) who come from different backgrounds are influenced by different cultures and norms as well as parental expectations that stem from different attitudes toward values and norms in society. There are racial and ethnic disparities in poverty rates that directly affect adolescent development. Similarly, adolescents from more affluent families face other challenges. Home environments are not just the physical space that the individual dwells in, it also refers to aspects of the domestic life, emotional bonding, positive interaction, learning experiences and nurturing relationships between parents and their children (Joshi & Tomar, 2006).

Healthy home environment helps in nurturing children who are to become emotionally and socially stable as adults. The strength of students and their whānau (family) should be valued and used as a basis for promoting and responding to student wellbeing. Joshi & Tomar (2006) states that wellbeing is present when a person realises their potential, is resilient in dealing with natural stresses of their life, takes care of their physical wellbeing, and has a sense of purpose, connection and belonging to the wider community. It is an adaptable way of being and needs nurturing throughout life.

The following section includes whānau voice taken in various settings and different times with different parent or whānau groupings. Some of these conversations and data are presented in the Case study chapter to further highlight the importance of whānau partnerships through whānau inclusive practices.

The section starts off with the voices from three of our kaumatua (grandparents) who are tasked with bringing up their mokopuna (grandchildren) with limited means and resources and contributing health issues. This conversation was recorded and done in a wānanga type setting. Conversations quite often let to other topics around their mokos (grandchildren). I tried to capture the answers which were relevant to the questions I was seeking answers to. These are snippets from a recorded conversation during this wānanga session.

**Table 19 Question 1: ( Kuia-Nans) what is your understanding of wellbeing?**

	<i>Response</i>
<i>Nan T</i>	<i>Firstly, I would like for you to use the word hauora koka. Hauora means when the whole body, soul, mind, spirit is well-holistic. Like how Mason says if one part is not working well the whole body is out of balance and is unwell. Taking care of your hinengaro is important to everyone, regardless of whether you have experienced mental illness or distress.</i>
<i>Nan B</i>	<i>I agree with T. I can feel it now in my own body if the body aches that's physical, but it affects the mental side because some days you want to give up but, you know the mokos are there.</i>
<i>Nan M</i>	<i>That is why when we talk about hauora a lot has to do with ourselves. Caring for ourselves, using Rongoa and Māori medicines to keep the body going. It keeps the mind going if the body is good.</i>
<i>Nan T</i>	<i>Did you know koka that culture and identity is very important to hauora, because of the wairua that culture brings. For example, when we visit the Marae, we become connected the same as in nature, te taiao. If we know our whakapapa, we feel good about ourselves. When I step into my Māori world and my marae, I feel</i>

	<i>good, healthy because I connect with my tipuna. I like that our kids learn karakia, himene and waiata it lifts the wairua that helps with the hauora.</i>
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The conversation then shifted as the Nans proceeded to tell me about Māori healing protocols, medicines and the Tohunga Suppression Act (1907) which came into force and removed the value of Māori healing themselves and the shifts to western medicine.

*“The tohunga were our doctors and caregivers. They struggled to get recognition for the healing they have done with our own Rongoa(medicines) from leaves of bushes and trees, from the sap of different plants. These were used to heal all sorts of pains, sores, illnesses, and diseases”. (Nan T).*

*“Our Tohunga had the ability to talk to spirits to heal mental health. Today pākehā people are given free reign to do the things our Tohunga were doing and they are paid well” (Nan M).*

Reclaiming Indigenous knowledge has become essential part in psychology. The growing presence of Mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) represents a trend to resist the dominance of Western psychology as a universal paradigm of wellbeing for Māori (Waitoki, Dudgeon & Nikora, 2018 at cited in Pihama & Tuhiwai Smith 2023). The learning from this is that whanau, hapū and iwi have their own means through which to undertake healing in a way that is self-determining.

**Table 20 Question 2: How does your wellbeing impact on looking after your mokopuna.**

	Response
<i>Nan T</i>	<i>I am aware that if I am not well then, I am moody and grumpy and take it out on the moko’s. They feel it because I can hear them say to each other do not make a noise nan is grumpy, she will give us a growling. I feel guilty but some days are hard if they are all over the place. I do not want to make them unhappy, but I cannot help it. So yes, it does affect them because the oldest one will have to look after the others.</i>
<i>Nan M</i>	<i>I feel unhappy if I cannot help them with their schoolwork. It stresses me out. With the older one, she wants to be out with her friends, and I cannot drive or go look for her, so she comes home late, I worry, and we get into arguments which is not good for both our mental wellbeing, and then there is this thing called social media. I cannot keep my moko’s safe and it worries me a lot.</i>
<i>Nan B</i>	<i>There are many things we cannot do because of our health and not having enough money. There is always stress over this and the kids are embarrassed because I am old. I want to be able to give them more or better food, but food is very expensive,</i>

	<i>and I am so grateful for the school lunches and the fruit they get. All this impacts on their health, I try to do the basis right keep them clean and a roof over their heads.</i>
<i>Nan T</i>	<i>Some lifestyle choices get in the way a having a healthy Taha Wairua. Because I can do physical activity it brings on depression and affect you brain and mind.</i>

Parenting practices are also influenced by culture, and an adolescent's upbringing is affected by the ethnicity, values, and traditions that they belong to, as well as their socio-economic situation. A family's socio-economic condition influences adolescent development as economic crisis and poverty negatively affects families and their wellbeing.

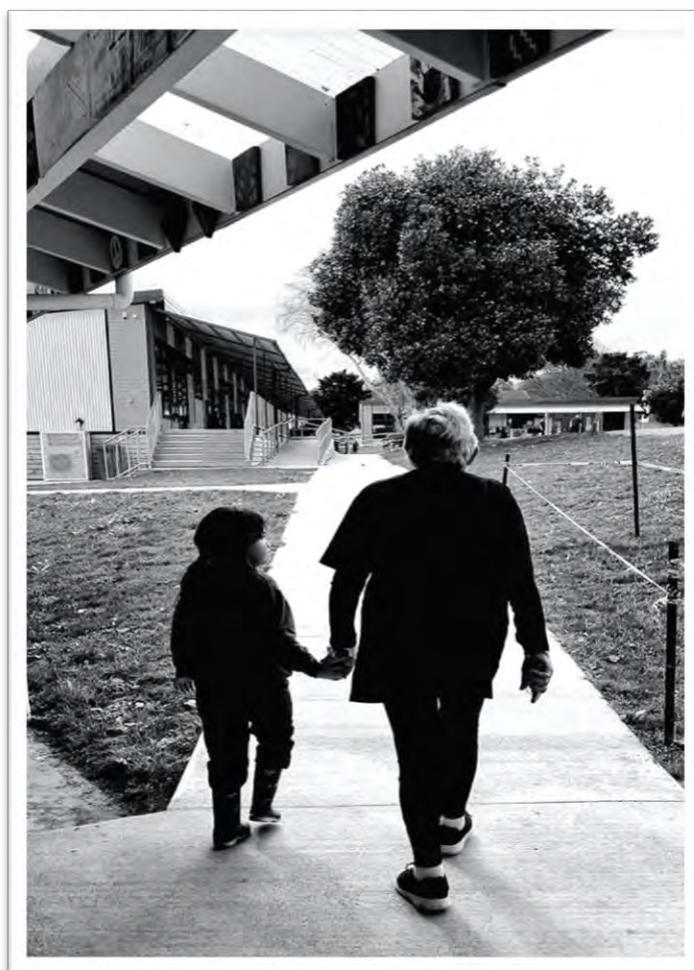
**Table 21 Question 3: How does your moko's health benefit from you looking after them?**

Nan	Response
<i>Nan 1</i>	<i>Spending time with whanau, doing things for our mokos and getting involved gives you a sense of purpose, connection, and wellbeing. It benefits you and strengthens the whanau. I am the core source of strength, support, security, and identity for my whanau. Whānau plays a central role in your wellbeing</i>
<i>Nan 2</i>	<i>I teach my moko their culture and language. We go to the Marae together. It is hard looking after them but at the same time it is a privilege as I get to teach them Māori ways. It makes them stronger as Māori.</i>

During our conversation one of the Nans discussed with me and revealed to me the value of kaitiakitanga (guardianship) and that in their role as caregivers of their mokopuna they are their kaitiaki. They explained to me *“that their mokopuna look up to them to interpret, protect and preserve tikanga (cultural practices) as this is an important factor towards the contribution of mokopuna wellbeing” (Nan T).*

During my conversation with these kuia, I was therefore, reminded by them of the principles of kaitiakitanga, kotahitanga and mahi ngātahi. I was looking through westernised eyes when I approached them about looking after their mokopuna. I was looking at it as a difficult task. However, these kuia saw it as an honour to be Kaitiaki (guardians) of their mokopuna and affirmed that raising Māori children is a collective and collaborative approach (kotahitanga) that involves all of the whānau (whanaungatanga and mahi ngātahi) working together to support their upbringing. This contributes to the wellbeing of the whole whānau.

A typical example of how the metaphor of “it takes a village to raise a child”-the kotahitanga principle; is displayed at the kura where one of these nans work. Below is a photo that captures the image of her looking after one of the 5 year olds at this kura. This photo reminds me of the words and image of Dame Whina Cooper taken in 1975 as she was holding her mokopuna’s hand during the march to assert the rights of Māori Language to be spoken. Her words still rings true today “ *Take care of our children. Take care of what they hear, take care of what they see, take care of what they feel. For how the children grow, so will be the shape of Aotearoa, NZ*” (Dame Whina Cooper, 1975).



( Image 2 : Photo-Nanny T with one of our students - she treats all of these students at kura as her mokopuna)

Young children and adolescence are influenced by different cultural norms and parental expectation that stem from different attitude towards values and norms in society. Parents and family life are the foundations for building an adolescent's personality and identity, instilling

values and social norms that form the basis for their decision-making process and future social behaviour.

The next section includes voices from whānau which was taken at our school haerenga (camp) where forty-one parents attended. This discussion was done in a wānanga type setting and are snippets of the conversation that was held. Although there was a big group of whānau on this occasion, only a few of the whānau spoke out loud as individuals, it was clear from their body language, that most whānau agreed with what was been said. It could, therefore, be assumed that they spoke on behalf of those present. We discussed things that would make a difference to the wellbeing of their tamariki and things that are important for the school to focus on to ensure that the tamariki continue to be well at school.

**Table 22 Question 1: What would make a difference to the wellbeing (hauora) of your tamariki at school?**

Whānau Member (WM)	Response
WM 1	<i>It is important for our tamariki to be proud of their Māori culture and whakapapa. It helps with their wellbeing as it makes them feel good about knowing themselves.</i>
WM 2	<i>I think to be safe at school is important, no bullying, put downs and shutdowns from teachers.</i>
WM 3	<i>I love that this school is a safe environment and have a place where our tamariki can go when they feel sad or angry.</i>
WM 4	<i>Teachers are important for the wellbeing of our kids. They make or break a child and their love for school. It mentally impacts on them if they are not happy at school.</i>
WM 5	<i>Talking to whānau inviting them to kura is saying to our tamariki that their whanau is important. I love coming to school stuff and feeling welcome, because if you welcome me, you are saying to my child that you value his mum which nis good for his wairua. It gives a sense of belonging</i>
WM 6	<i>I like that our kids learn about the Tapa Wha model, especially the tinana side with the waiora programme.</i>
WM 7	<i>For me it is first that my kids are happy at school and with their teacher and their friends and that they want to go to school.</i>
WM 8	<i>The teachers here treat our kids with respect and are talking to them nicely it makes them feel valued as a person and its good for their wairua.</i>
WM 9	<i>I love the kapa haka, mauritau stuff and the waiora programme it supports their wellbeing and their cultural identity.</i>

There is growing evidence of Kaupapa Māori research which repositions whānau as “sites of wellbeing” and this presents useful insight for educators working in Mainstreams school. The studies show that the wellbeing of tamariki and Rangatahi Māori is multidimensional and interwoven with the collective wellbeing of whānau, hapū, and iwi (Simmonds et al., 2019). Whānau inclusive practices, collaboration, and participation, engaging the community in the vision for whole-school wellbeing implementation is therefore a vital component to student wellbeing (Simmonds et al., 2019).



**( Image 3: Photo- Whānau wānanga during our haerenga at Whangara Marae, 2023)**

A second group of whānau voice was a more in-depth conversation with a group of five mums who works with the whānau facilitator on their own wellbeing. Some of this korero (conversation) is carried over into the Case study chapter to illustrate the importance of engaging whānau in their wellbeing and how them being well transfers to their home environment.

**Table 25 Question 1 What is your understanding of wellbeing?**

<i>Mum</i>	<i>Response</i>
1	<i>To care and protect the physical, mental, and spiritual existence of humankind</i>
2	<i>Happy, mental, comfortable, how you are feeling in your life</i>
3	<i>Pride and self-confidence, knowledge, strength of whanau</i>
4	<i>Wellbeing to me is looking after yourself and whanau.</i>
5	<i>Healthy lifestyle, mind, and body</i>

Tamariki are reliant on their whānau or caregivers to achieve their personal wellbeing. School therefore needs to provide a more inclusive environment where whānau are welcomed and feel safe to participate and partner. During the Covid 19 pandemic period both in NZ and globally teachers recognised the connection between child and parent wellbeing thus, included whānau support in their regular contact (ERO, 2021). ERO (2021) also found that 55% of leaders interviewed, identified that support of wellbeing of whānau was paramount to their response.

I asked the following question to gain understanding whether parents whānau understood their role in the wellbeing of their tamariki.

**Table 26 Question 2: How does your wellbeing affect the wellbeing of your tamariki?**

<i>Mum</i>	<i>Response</i>
1	<i>It depends, we live in an ever-changing world. Our biggest challenge is society which affects our wellbeing, young and old. There are many factors that affect wellbeing, important to identify and manage it. Many situations can affect tamariki wellbeing.</i>
2	<i>Positive goals and love, having a positive attitude, support tamariki and they will have trust and be well</i>
3	<i>My wellbeing affects my whanau because if I am not well and look after myself how can I look after them.</i>
4	<i>Honesty, love, purpose, whanau always first, purpose to honour and respect therefore I can give them some mana, pride, and happiness</i>
5	<i>If I am not in a good state of mind my babies are not getting me at my best.</i>

**Table 27: Views from mums who are in a support group for their neurodiverse tamariki.**

<i>Questions</i>	<i>Mum</i>	<i>Responses</i>
<i>What is your understanding of wellbeing</i>	1	<i>Wellbeing is the holistic representation of a person's thoughts, needs, cares being taken care of, respected, and accepted. This goes beyond someone's physical needs but also emotional social and spiritual. It is also like status that describes the state of someone's health "holistically".</i>
	2	<i>Working alongside whānau and teachers with kids that have special needs supports my health and wellbeing.</i>
	3	<i>Being happy and well.</i>
<i>How does your wellbeing affect the wellbeing of your tamariki</i>	1	<i>It has the greatest effect in many ways for example caring for them in words and actions makes them feel loved and respected thus, it radiates in their personalities. My positive mindset also affects their mood specially my little boys who is diagnosed with Asperger</i>

		<i>syndrome. How parents treat their children leaves a lasting imprint in the mind and soul of a child.</i>
	2	<i>I do not show when I am unwell. So that it does not affect my tamariki. I know it is important.</i>
	3	<i>I am learning every day, it can sometimes be frustrating, but I have awesome support from whanau, friends, and staff its school. It helps my wellbeing so that I can support my tamariki</i>
<i>How can the kura help to better the wellbeing of both you and your tamariki</i>	1	<i>Kura is the second home to my tamariki hence, the astounding role of building better parents and tamariki. One way this kura does, is to provide different other learning environments and opportunities for parents and children. It provides a platform for parents and teachers to support each other and foster good supportive relationships. This kura also helps parents of neurodiverse learners like me, to get understanding and expand my awareness.</i>
	2	<i>What the kura is doing for my moko is awesome we learn something new. The kura is supportive with new ideas and day by day nurturing of our whānau.</i>
	3	<i>Just continue showing their kindness to us as they already are.</i>

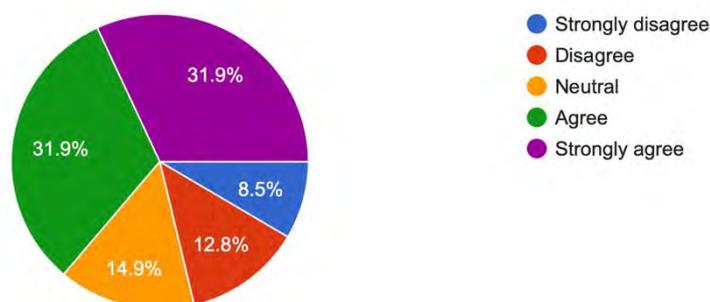
Whānau who have neurodiverse children need support groups where they can learn from each other, give support, and develop strategies together. Sometimes they need just a place where they can relax and breathe and regain their wellness to move forward. They need a welcoming school environment that receives both them and their tamariki with nurturing arms in a safe environment.

Every parent and whānau want to support their children’s learning at school and wellbeing at school. However, the whānau of students with additional needs often have more significant concerns in relation to their children’s education (ERO, 2008). Whānau want their relationships with educators to be based on mutual respect. A productive partnership starts by understanding that Māori students are connected to whānau and should not be viewed and treated as separate, isolated or disconnected. Parents and whānau must be involved in conversations about their children and their learning” ( MOE, Ka Hikitia, 2013-2017).

The next section is to see what students think of whānau as influencers of their wellbeing. I have asked the students opinion on how whānau wellbeing impacts on their personal wellbeing. These are their thoughts accumulated through the google form platform.

**Figure 17 This is what the student voice says about their whānau wellbeing.**

I do well at school if my home situation is good  
47 responses



Home and family environment play a significant role in the development of the young children and adolescents as it is the place where they spend majority of their time.

### 6.3 Findings and conclusion

Findings are that it is important to review, and address the drivers of workload intensification of educators through advocating government policy reform to address educator wellbeing and resourcing (Cross & Falconer, 2021). Teachers need a wellbeing strategy in place to ensure their wellbeing for effectiveness in the classroom. Interaction between student wellbeing outcomes are intertwined with teacher wellbeing. Similarly, Harding et.al., (2019) and McCullum et al., (2017) argues, that higher teacher wellbeing enables greater connections and professional commitment which enhances student learning and achievement.

It is imperative to consider the influences on wellbeing, particularly the impact of school climate on the school community, when implementing policy and practices to improve school

leaders' and staff mental health and wellbeing. Cross & Falconer (2021) argues that it is not only for career performance and commitment, but for the health and wellbeing of the whole school community.

Children and young people's mental wellbeing is influenced by a wide range of factors: a sense of connectedness or belonging, stability, security, physical health, attachment and parenting, cultural identity, education environments and support through important transitions (such as from primary to secondary school) (Gillett-Swan, 2022). The effect of these factors is reliant on how well the individual adults (educators, whānau and services) are within themselves and the awareness of the importance for them to take care of their own wellbeing.

Engagement increases for both students and their families/whānau when school leaders are committed to working in partnership with parents and whānau of all students. The Ka Hikitia Strategy description of productive partnerships with whānau connects with Durie's (2006) argument about the need for engagement between whānau and schools to be constructive and potential focused. Durie (2006) states that "For many whānau, contact with school only occurs when there is a crisis or a problem, or funds to raise or a hangī to prepare. Parents are often placed in a defensive position which all too often leads to a deteriorating relationship with school. The crisis approach to whānau involvement is not one that will induce a sense of whānau enthusiasm for learning or for education. While it is important is that parents are kept informed of difficulties, it is more important that parents are also able to work with schools to identify potential and then to jointly construct pathways that will enable promise to be realised". Schools need to provide psychological and culturally safe spaces for whānau and school to talk and work together. The creation of such spaces can be mutually beneficial and reciprocal as school can also have access to whānau and their untapped potential and knowledge.

## **6.4 Chapter summary**

The next chapter focusses on the Case Study which further explore student voice on wellbeing and their experiences within schooling contexts where wellbeing practices were both present,

prioritized and where it was absent. Case Study chapter also explores student and whānau voice further to value to their important role in a whole school approach to wellbeing. The Case study also investigates how the new emerging area of trauma-informed practice has been included as part of the kura wellbeing journey and gives a practical view of what trauma informed practice from a Māori perspective could look like.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **CASE STUDY**

#### **INCLUDING STUDENT EXPERIENCES AND MORE COLLECTIVE VOICE ON WELLBEING IMPLEMENTATION AT SCHOOL**

##### **7.0 Chapter Introduction**

This section focus is on how students define and experience wellbeing in their schooling context and how creating safe spaces will enhance the wellbeing of the collective in the schooling context. The Case study highlights the importance of having wellbeing practices in schools and how it impacts on student wellbeing. It also includes the voice of the adults in the schooling context to bring understanding that the improvement of student wellbeing is a collective approach.

Due to its in-depth situated nature, the findings from an educational case study research can be seen as limited to the situation and context in which it is conducted. However, I would argue that because of the issues raised about the place and role of wellbeing in schools and in particular the lack of clarity and consistency even in the legislation over what wellbeing is, that the study is important and may add value to academic debate especially where controversial opinions exist. Also, from the onset, I present this case study itself as being part of a journey that was highly transformational in the setting and beyond, it sets a culture of evidence-based practice for teachers as researchers and leaders in education.

This Case study investigates the wellbeing journey of this kura where the emerging areas of trauma-formed practice and relational neuroscience was incorporated as components of their wellbeing model through a culturally responsive pedagogy.

## **7.1 Background information**

### *7.1.1 Method and participants*

The first 3 years of this ongoing Ethnography, Narrative inquiry used participant observation, videos, photography, student surveys and focus group interviews to gain student voice that describes their learning experiences and how their school culture contributed to their achievement outcomes and engagement. Interviews were also had with individual students who were currently transitioning to secondary school. This study also includes comments from recorded interviews with three teachers, one sports coach and two teacher aide frontline tutors, two cultural tutors, the wellbeing teacher, the wellbeing team, and the school leadership team who have all worked with the students and their parents/whānau since 2019. The first participants are a group of years 6 to 8 students during the timeframe of 2020 to 2023. The second group of participants are six Year 9 students who are currently transitioning to secondary school to capture first hand their experiences, challenges, successes and struggles as they do so.

This case study can also be seen as an example of a holistic, whole school approach to wellbeing, as the school in this case study had adopted and embedded cultural wellbeing practices as part of its ethos and school climate. This school is also exploring trauma-informed practices, the neuro-sequential model, relational neuroscience, and āhurutanga as concepts that are integrated into their whole school, holistic approach to wellbeing.

This Case Study is to investigate the relationship between wellbeing and the learning of children and young people. The study will explore the impact Wellbeing has on student achievement outcomes and to illustrate the value of including student voice to more fully understand what students are actually experiencing in their learning spaces.

### *7.1.2 Relevant background of the researcher*

It has been necessary to set parameters for my research due to my dual role as observer researcher as well as being the principal of the school where the research was conducted. For this reason, questionnaires and interviews with the students were mostly conducted by the wellbeing teacher to remove all forms of bias and manipulating of the data as I hold a position of influence. This was a significant issue to address from the onset as I identified several pitfalls which could become a real challenge in terms of ethical considerations. Coghlan and Brannick (2014) states that the “insider researcher” needs to know and analyse what is familiar and apply tried and tested processes in the pursuit of authenticity. These processes are integrated into the main body of the research that are intentionally designed to create new knowledge by authentic and transparent means within a constructivist paradigm.

### *7.1.3 Approach and Rationale*

During 2020 the School leadership, Board of Trustees, and whānau, fully committed to the implementation of a wellbeing approach across kura (school) through its strategic plan and strategic goals. It was then vital to empower teachers in the classroom, and their support staff colleagues to trial, adapt, design and pilot ideas and activities to nurture well-being in their environments and circles of influence. To ensure the long-term viability of Wellbeing, it became evident that the school needed to invest in building the capacity of teachers to lead and drive the ongoing delivery of training to new staff members, new parents and new students and also appoint a teacher to lead the initiative. The principal advised the BOT from a very early stage that any investment in human resources and operational costs for Wellbeing education would not be a one-off payment but, would be an ongoing financial cost in order to sustain and embed these practices.

The kura had a strong belief that nurturing connected relationships, strengthening identity, sense of belonging and cultural engagement would restore dignity and healthy lifestyles. This aligns with their school’s mission and values. The school’s goal was to change the students’ state of Mauri noho (languishing) to that of Mauri ora (flourishing). The kura started their journey on Wellbeing based on research from the Te Whare Tapa Wha Model by Sir Mason Durie (1997, 2004) and Dr Rose Pere’s (2009) Te Wheke Health Model, and later studying the

Neuro-sequential Model in Education (NME) from Dr Bruce Perry. This supported the argument that teachers who have knowledge on student wellbeing are better able to support challenges students face, especially early adolescence students. The kura recognised that a change in thinking was needed in education to where children are valued in a holistic way for who they are, as well as what they can achieve. Also, to move away from punitive approaches and compliance to understanding the root causes of behaviours and to build connected relationships within safe school environments.

This long journey is also the pursuit of answers to the question. *“How can schools nurture the Wellbeing of children and young people through a holistic school wide approach and what elements or aspects should be present in a wellbeing model to ensure successful outcomes for these students”*.



( **Image 4: Photo- Year 7 and 8 students and their tutors and teachers, 2022**)

This Case study observations was done with a focus group of year 6 to 8 students between the 2020 to 2023 period. This was after noticing the evident changes in behaviour, attitude, engagement, and academic achievement brought about by the Covid period in 2019. Key observations journalled in 2020, highlighted that students were in a state of Mauri noho (languishing). These behaviours manifested as anxiety, depression, self-harm, withdrawn, not engaged in the learning, low attendance, or sporadic and chronic absenteeism. The year 7 and

8 students, who are early adolescence students presented challenging behaviours, which led to relationship disempowering post covid. The kura wanted students that have enlightened spirits, alert, and inquiry minds. They knew that it was important for the tamariki to feel strong in their own identity, have strong sense of self and self-worth and wanted them to be able to have positive interactions with their peers and the staff. This was based on the knowledge that “Belonging and being loved are core to the human experience. We are social species, we are meant to be in community-emotionally, socially, and physically interconnected with others” (Perry & Winfrey, 2021).

The Kura wanted to create a safe environment for learning that was predictable, consistent and nurturing and place where it is easier for teachers to teach tamariki who were displaying challenging behaviours. They started off with social and emotional learning by looking into the “Mana Potential” model as a framework as they thought that as a cultural model it would provide a good framework, however, it did not bring the understanding of why the behaviours occurred rather how to manage it. The school appointed a wellbeing team as they realised that the wellbeing needs of the tamariki was high and needed to be prioritized. The other wellbeing practices and cultural health models which the kura adopted, and its impacts on student wellbeing, are also discussed in this Case study chapter.

This chapter further delves into how schools can effectively nurture the wellbeing of ākongā (children/learner) and Rangatahi (young people) through the implementation of a holistic school-wide approach by looking at the schooling environment in the school context. By integrating student and educator voice and researcher observations this Case study explores the journey of the kura, their learnings and reflections, next steps, and recommendations.

## **7.2 Voices of the collective within the school setting where students attend.**

The symptoms and patterns by which we identify the adolescent, as laid down by the experts, indicates that no matter what race or culture forms the background to the individual, they will always stand out as the person who stands between two distinct patterns of existence: that of childhood and adulthood. It is a period of transition which is experienced with physical, psychological, social, and emotional changes. It shapes their relationships with adults, peers, and their whanau, while they are in this process of developing their individual identity.

### 7.2.1 Staff interview

There are multiple factors and conditions that contribute to students' wellbeing, whether for better or for worse. Connection with family and friends, social and emotional wellbeing, community involvement, extracurricular activities, development of identity, use and influence of technology, and academic pressures, are but a few of these factors.

The following interview was done with the adults who worked closely with the group of year six to eight students over the period before covid, after covid and currently. These are snippets from a recorded interview conducted with these seven adults (sports coach and frontline tutor, art tutor and frontline tutor, the cultural tutors, and the year 6 to 8 teachers).

**Table 28 Question 1: What factors and challenges impacted on the wellbeing of senior students in particular during the Covid period?**

<i>Adults</i>	<i>Responses</i>
<i>Adult 1</i>	<i>Family relationships, friendships, lack of social connection, lack of social supports, exposure to bullying and family violence, family relationship break ups, drugs and alcohol use, whanau imprisonment, inequalities, poverty, lack of culturally appropriate support services, mental illness, childhood trauma and the list goes on. All these things and so much more impacts on tamariki and continues to do so.</i>
<i>Adult 2</i>	<i>I can add social media. Dramas is a big one, they take that beef everywhere with them. Sleep deprivation due to gaming and going to socials, home issues, whanau problems such as alcoholism and drug abuse and all that carry on.</i>
<i>Adult 3</i>	<i>Start of the week is usually a big impact on our senior students and is also most challenging. Social media and gaming late are also a big factor that impacts on the tamariki resulting in lack of sleep. Once again, the biggest impact at the start of the week. Community and environment at home is hard for most of our tamariki</i>

During my first observation I have noticed that students were very dysregulated on Mondays due to them having to conform to a norm and expectations that was different from that at home. Students found it hard to step back into a place of order. I have noticed over the 2022-2023 year when the school started to implement trauma informed practices that incidents on a Monday had become less overtime. My feeling is that tamariki had come to a place of understanding that school is a safe place where they are being cared for and nurtured by teachers, and that some of them are using the social and emotional tools and strategies that they

have been taught. Changed behaviours were especially evident in those students who have been using these strategies for at least two years or more.

This table shows the answers to the second question posed to the adults in this case study.

**Table 29 Question 2: What were some of the behaviours you have noticed about the tamariki when they returned from experiencing Covid 19.**

Adults	Responses
1	<i>Distant, very quiet, shell shocked, quite a few of the seniors were cutting especially year 8 boys (self-harm) with a range of things like glass, pin on the wall, they seemed really sad, They missed the relationship they had. At that time, we did not have “go to people” like now. Well, we were the go-to people, but they did not know it then. A lot of them seems very tired, just no energy, no motivations they were there but, simply different like compared to when they left. We had twenty-nine kids in the class, and they used to be very boisterous, lots of laughing, happiness before covid hit, they were very close knit. That is why we noticed the drastic change. Homelessness, displacement in motels brought, uncertainty, unhappiness fear and anxiety. Some students walked around looking lost and have lost their spark for life. We started the kohine toa and tama toa programme back up. Closer investigation and formed relationships highlighted mental health unwellness, emotional instability anger outburst, flight or fight, physical appearance. URF application funding a programme with a focus on mental wellbeing.</i>
2	<i>It was also overcrowding of homes with whanau staying together during covid. I also noticed the use of social media increased a lot, they became savvy online, a lot of drama and this was taken online too, at school was the disconnect, disengaging, very quiet their mood swings they could go from happy to quite angry way more drastic. There were ones that were excessively clingy and wanted your attention more too.</i>
1	<i>Realizing the issue, the principal and leadership team attended Suicide workshops that were available at the time as well as the principal doing research on the matter to gain some knowledge on the subject. The biggest realization was that within our region there was no counselling available for under 12’s. The principal reached out to our BOT chairperson who was a clinical nurse at Gisborne DHB for advice on his matter. A Doctor and our BOT chair helped with a couple of sessions with the girls to bring awareness to the topic. The session had to stop. But the self-harm had not stopped- when they both got into trouble with their supervisor for stepping outside their lane.</i>
3	<i>Quiet, not much talk, hard to engage with - not all of them but a big group, probably because they had to be cooped up in the whare for a long time and left to their own devices and then having to come back to kura and then try and re-engage, it can be big on their mental health.</i>

Home environments and social media played a big role in these observed behaviours. The underlying causes of these behavior came from stress, anxiety, depression, and lack of self-worth. Boys displayed these tendencies through their behavior, challenging authority and displaying non-compliance attitudes.

Studies from (Baeva & Bordovskaia, 2015; Delizonna, 2017; Kislyakov, Shmeleva, Karaseva, & Silaeva, 2014) argues that when student’s wellbeing is negatively impacted, their self-esteem and mental wellbeing become reduced, and students feel anxiety or anger because they are masking their self-expression and ability to be who they are. This is when students disengage from learning and become passive contributors who languish instead of flourish. Creating an environment that celebrates differences, provide students with the understanding that everyone has different interests, cultures, strengths, etc. is paramount. Giving students a voice by encouraging feelings of safety and trust and providing a platform to communicate needs becomes vital to improve their wellbeing (Baeva & Bordovskaia, 2015; Delizonna, 2017; Kislyakov, Shmeleva, Karaseva, & Silaeva, 2014).

This table is a continuation of the conversation with the adult participants.

**Table 30 Question 3: What were some of the interventions you have implemented and why?**

<i>Adults</i>	<i>Responses</i>
1	<i>It started more than two years earlier as the school investigated ways to proactively nurture student well-being. While exciting progress and growth have been seen over the past 2 years. The school recognizes that wellbeing education is an ongoing journey, and that one off programmes do not bring sustainable and long-term change. During 2020 with school leadership on board and fully committed to the implementation of wellbeing approach across kura, it was then vital to empower teachers in the classroom, and non-teaching colleagues in their offices to trial, adapt, design and pilot ideas and activities to nurture well-being in their environments and circles of influence. To ensure the long-term viability of Wellbeing it became evident that the school needed to invest in building the capacity of colleagues to lead and drive the ongoing delivery of training to new staff members, new parents and new students an also appoint a teacher to lead the initiative. The principal advised the BOT from a very early stage that any investment in human resources and operational costs for Wellbeing education would not be a one-off payment but would be an ongoing financial cost.</i>
1	<i>Co-constructed class treaty tamariki were involved, made the rules, and translated into Te reo Māori. This came about after our learnings about the Te Tiriti. They made their classroom treaty based on this learning. This was the standards or benchmarks they had set in terms of expectations not just for behaviour but for things like character eg. Honesty and taking responsibility for actions and accepting the consequences. They started holding each other accountable. It was like an extension of our kura kawa. We started Mana Potential while the other teachers were focussing on the atua, we knew that we needed for the kids to have a tool kit. So, we looked at Papatuanuku to remind them of things that go well, the things that bring them joy that will bring them out of the way that they are feeling.</i>
2	<i>For me, I tried to get them back into physical activities as much as possible, with our waiora programme. It is still happening the positive endorphins help them to come back and it helps the body to feel more positive as well, especially a lot of them feeling trapped, it gave</i>

	<i>them some normality in that time as well. With Covid are sports got cancelled so we had to do a lot of in-house sporting activities as well.</i>
3	<i>Bringing them back to their Māoritanga through the arts and teaching them about their Māori side about how much they mean to themselves and their whanau because art holds a lot of spiritual value. At that time not just in the tamariki but the whenua and the people.</i>
1	<i>However, teacher reported noticing the younger students were showing similar behaviours. Greater emphasis was put on wellbeing extending the programme to years 4-6 student but in a different way focusing more on mindfulness, kids' yoga, growth mindset and physical activities and EOCT. Cultural activities mauraka, waiata, kapa haka use as outlets for emotions and brought cultural connectedness, lifted mauri and wairua – the spiritual side.</i>

Teachers adopted and modified aspects of the Mana potential model as an example one teacher used the Papatuanuku area as a kete (basket of knowledge) for tamariki to use for the development of their social and emotional skills to keep them grounded. Another teacher used the stories and characteristics of the different atua (Māori gods) as a wellbeing “check-in” tool. The group that used the Papatuanuku area, would use the tools in their kete such as listening to music, shooting hoops, and going to a safe space to manage their emotions. The Mana Potential model is discussed further in this chapter by one of the teachers who continues to use this domain of the model as part of the wellbeing practices in her classroom.

#### The Mana Potential Model and Framework:

Mana Potential is a strength-based tool for behavioural change it, is a framework that upholds and value the uniqueness of each individual (Ngawiti Osborne, Marshall, 2015, 2016).

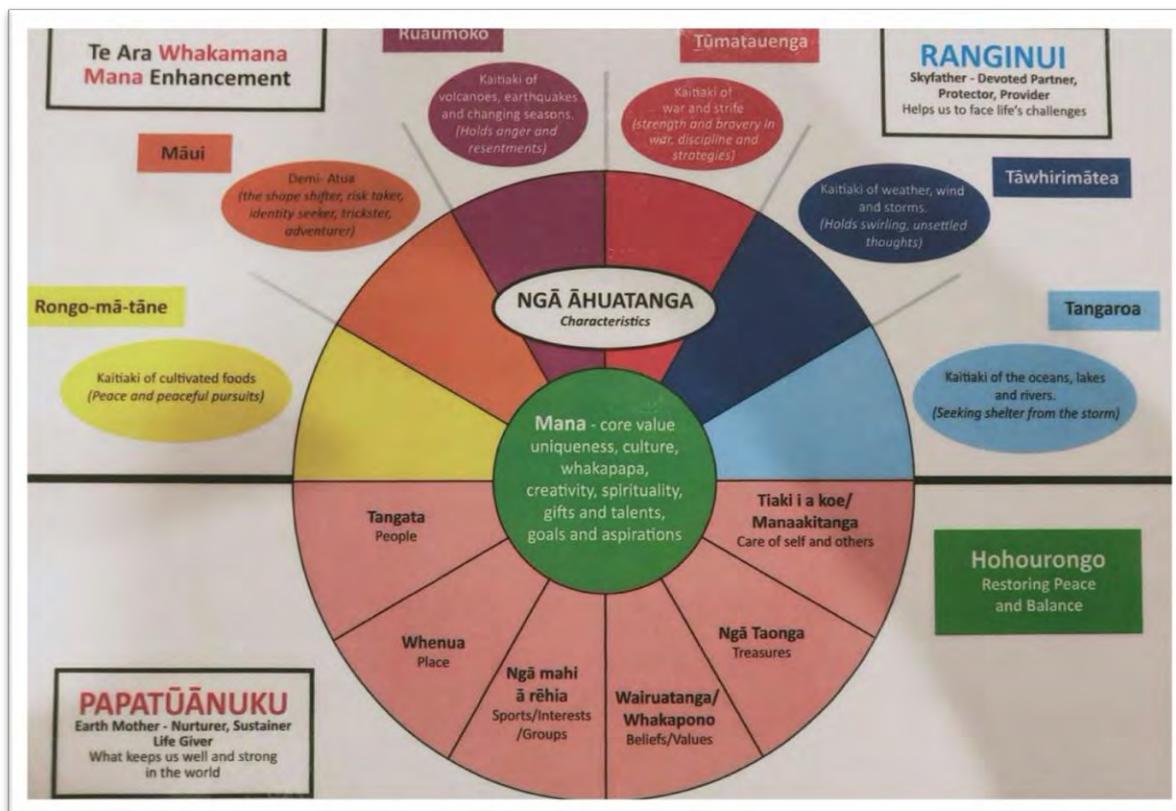
Mana Potential provides a culturally appropriate response to effective and sustainable management of challenging behaviours in a holistic way. It upholds the mana of the individual-recognising that they have the strength and potential to manage their own emotions and behaviours. It uses the pūrākau (stories) of the creation and the story of each atua (god) and their characteristics in a manner that is relatable to each individual’s unique experience. The use of this narrative therapy uses discussion around the attributes and trials and tribulations of these atua and how it relates to the individual. These pūrākau are used to both assess needs, and is used a therapeutic tool (Ngawiti Osborne, Marshall, 2015, 2016).

To gain understanding of the Mana Potential Model and its place in the school’s wellbeing model, I had a conversation with the Wellbeing teacher and the year 7 and 8 teacher to bring clarity.

**Question 4: Can you tell me about the Mana Potential Model and how it is helpful for the tamariki and their wellbeing?**

“The Mana Potential model is a cultural model that helps tamariki with their Social and Emotional Learning and it also supports their Māoritanga as this model is culturally responsive and resonates with the tamariki, It provides our tamariki the opportunity for their feelings to be acknowledged and expressed. This puts them in charge of understanding their emotions and behaviours and provides them the tools and words to express their feelings. Puts them in charge of next steps/choice” (Koka M).

**Figure 18a) The Te Ara Whakamana tool and the Mana Potential tool are similar concepts and are used in alignment to each other.**



(Image :AKO Solutionz, 2019).

This tool is used in a practical form to support the Papatuanuku kete.

“We started Mana Potential after our tamariki had shown signs of anxiety, depression, and anger. While the other teachers were focussing on the atua, we knew that we needed for the kids to have a tool kit to manage their emotions. So, we looked at the Papatuanuku area to remind them if things that go well, the things that bring them joy that will bring them out of the way that they are feeling. So, there is a range of different activities, people, places, things that we treasure. Students identify some things that they treasure, their favourite places, e.g., nature, groups they belong to, or hobbies, interests, sport etc. It helps them to identify how they show care, things that they believe and love, but most importantly they identify people that they can go to when they need help and support. Every student created their own Papatuanuku which is a tool kit of strategies that they can use either at home or at school when they face challenges to help them cope” (Koka M).

**Figure 18(b): Example of tamariki working with their teacher completing their Papatuanuku kete of the Mana Potential Model.**

In our Year 7/8 class, with many having challenges at home, we recognised the need to have a toolkit - our own Papatuanuku - that we could draw on to settle our wairua when things were not going well for us. This may be with the learning, classroom, playground or out of school time - identifying our 'go to people' who might be able to help us in all contexts.

Reminders of things that are going well in our lives that we can draw on to retain and enhance our mana.  
The knowledge that these things help to keep us connected, strong and grounded in the world.

The students understand that feeling a range of emotions is okay and is healthy. Their Papatuanuku helps them to not "live there" and dwell on them if it impacts on their wairua. If needing time out, students will sit and reflect on their Papatuanuku and draw on whatever will help them to reset ie Maori art, going for a short walk, thinking about their whanau and group connections etc. This time is respected by both the teacher and fellow students.

Restorative conversations are had following if required.

**PATUANUKU**  
Wh Mother - Nurturer, Sustainer, Life giver  
presents sources of strength, what is us well and strong in the world.

I have also shared parts of my Papatuanuku with them ie listening to Maori music. They know when I am drawing on my Papatuanuku and respect the time I take when I need to reset as well. Modelling and discussion is valuable in helping the students to make sense of their own feelings.

Year 8 Student

Research shows that social and emotional learning improves achievement and increase prosocial behaviours such as kindness, sharing and empathy (hpe.tki.org.nz- a health and physical education guide for teachers, leaders and Board of trustees). Crucial to social and emotional learning are the relationships between students, teachers, families, and whānau across all learning pathways. Relationships are viewed as being underpinned by

communication skills and holding understandings of emotions and emotional states (Denston, et.al., 2022).

Question 5 and 6 were asked to the culturally tutors to gain understanding of the role of culture in a student wellbeing model.

**Question 5: Building on culturally responsive pedagogy, can you tell me how important cultural practices are for the wellbeing of our tamariki.**

*“Cultural spaces engage tamariki in karakia, kapa haka, and waiata, students gain a deeper understanding of their cultural heritage. This knowledge strengthens their cultural competency and instils a sense of pride in their Māori identity. Cultural practices like waiata provide a creative outlet for students to express their emotions, thoughts, and experiences. Singing traditional songs or performing in kapa haka can be an empowering experience, helping students cope with stress, building resilience, and developing emotional intelligence. These cultural practices promote holistic wellbeing by incorporating physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual elements. For example, kapa haka involves physical movement and exercise, which contributes to physical health. Karakia and waiata can have a calming and grounding effect, supporting mental and emotional wellbeing”. (Matua A- Kapa Haka Tutor.)*

*“I believe that Te Ao Māori me nga tikanga allow students to connect to their roots. Through their pepeha and whakapapa students can learn and share who they are and where they come from, which enhances their confidence and gives them a sense of belonging. Culture contributes to the beliefs and values of the individual so manaakitanga and whanaungatanga are values that we have inherited from our tipuna for example the pōhiri process on a marae. Those are attributes I feel is important to share with our tamariki, I feel like our school do it naturally anyway. It is important to share it with students so that they can share it with their whānau. We do that through teacher to students and students to their peers, coaches, etc. making these connections. With culture naturally comes language which can also be shared in different forms. Language also helps our students to understand what is happening for example at tangihanga and marae tikanga and the whaikorero. Speaking māori is a gift and it allows them to represent their whānau. When students feel good about these things it uplifts their wellbeing it keeps them grounded and know that they have their iwi and whānau behind them” (Koka A-Kapa Haka tutor).*

**Question 6 : What cultural components did you integrate into your wellbeing model and why?**

*“It has Cultural elements that align with our kura mission statement “E Tipu e Rea” aspects and pedagogy: Te Whare Tapa Wha model- Mason Durie, Te Wheke Model from Dr. Rose Pere, Mana Potential for Cultural, social and emotional learning, We added Trauma informed Practice, Āhurutanga which focus on psychological safe and calming environments and spaces, Neurodiversity and sensory spaces came later and we are only now starting to embed it into our school culture” (Acting Principal- KM).*

*“In practice it looks like: Student wellbeing practices: Manukura, Waiora programme, Kohine Toa, Tama Toa, Maurakau, Mauritau, brain breaks, kids-yoga, life-skills, community service, sensory garden. Staff wellbeing practices: psychological safe environment, staff support in the classroom, The Puna Ora as a self-regulation space, self-care practices, staff treats of self-care and retreats. Whanau Wellbeing practices: Whānau retreats in nature- SPOTO, Kai ora, Kai Kete, Building Awesome Whānau programme, Hunting and fishing, whānau fitness. These were all included overtime since 2020 up to now. A long journey... , we added components as we learnt about it and we also trialled it as you know, to decide whether it fits our school culture and values. We had to make big decisions about it. Some things we tried worked and others didn’t.... we had to let go of it” (Koka M W-wellbeing teacher).*

*“Here is an example of our school Wellbeing model and what it symbolises” (Koka M.W- Wellbeing teacher).*



*(Designed and permission given to use by: Tamanay Tuhou- Art Tutor at Waikirikiri School 2022)*

1. *River (Wai/water - Symbolises healing our tamariki. They find healings in the nurturing environment and the connected relationship they have with their peers and teachers (Taha Wairua- wairuatanga).*
2. *The kowhaiwhai symbolises their parents/family/Whānau and community that supports them- Whanaungatanga- Mana ake (Taha Whānau).*
3. *The middle symbolises that the child is at the centre of everything we do. In the centre of the child is their heartbeat (whatumanawa) this is where their potential, strength, aspirations, and emotions sits. It also represents their body (Taha Tinana). They are the kaitiaki(guardians) of these (Taha Hinengaro).*
4. *Their legs and arms represent the four walls of their whare (their body) (Te Whare Tapa Wha). If all four walls are in balance their wellbeing is good. (Waiora, Mauriora- Te Wheke Model)*
5. *The Maunga (mountain) in the background is a silhouette of Mount Hikurangi that represents their Ngati Poroutanga and the excellence for which they are striving.*
6. *At the bottom of their feet is Papatuanuku (Taha Whenua) it is where they find the strategies in their kete (Mana Potential) that keeps them grounded.*
7. *The other spaces that surround them are Te Taiao (nature, land, soil, environment) for restoration, protection, and sustainability (Toiora- Te Wheke model)*

Observer notes on this school's wellbeing model:

1. This model represents an integrated approach that this school has taken to implement a whole school wellbeing model. It is based on the Te Whare Tapa Wha model from Mason Durie and incorporates their school's foundational values based on Dr Rose Pere's Te Wheke Model.
2. It is contextualised because it is based on culturally responsive pedagogy which includes wellbeing practices such mauritau, mau rākau, kapa haka, karakia, waiata mōteatea and himene (wairuatanga/spirituality).
3. It has practices of collectivism as it includes the wellbeing of the collective within their setting for example student wellbeing practices, staff wellbeing practices and whānau inclusive wellbeing practices.
4. When engaging with whānau and tamariki wellbeing practices are grounded in tikanga Māori such spending time in te taiao (nature) connecting to the whenua (land) when doing hunting, fishing, kai gathering, and gathering leaves and plants for and rongoā

(medicinal use) meanwhile also supporting to look after the whenua. These practices help to maintain physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of the collective.

5. The kura focus on creating a learning space that celebrates tuakiritanga (identity) and sense of belonging which is vital to mauri ora (wellness)
6. The school focuses on creating psychological safe environments through the creation of whakatau (calming) and sensory spaces through the practice of āhurutanga (inclusive and safe environment practice).
7. They are on a journey of transformation that includes transforming their school culture from a punitive, behaviourist approach to a trauma- informed approach that resonate within Te Ao Māori (a Māori worldview). Teachers respond to behaviours differently and are working on building connected relationships with students.
8. The school is on a journey of evidence-based practice, this include relational neuroscience to strengthen connected relationships that include traumas-informed practices, neurodiversity and the neuro-sequential model.

With the implementation of all these practices, I wanted to understand from the adults whether they were able to observe any impacts or changes in student behaviour and attitudes.

**Table 31 Question 4: What were the impacts of your interventions?**

Adults	Responses
1	<i>They were able to start managing themselves instead of the adults having to step in they were calling each other out respectfully. It helped with people feeling safe. The year 8's became very able to help themselves which gave me time to work with the ones that were struggling. It took about three months of intense work before we saw a change in behaviours At the end of 2022, we saw a raise in student achievement data for the 8 students. I was the year 7 and 8 teacher since 2018 and for me this was very evident. The year 8's had the highest attendance regionally.</i>
2	<i>Some engaged quickly and got back into it and were easily pulled out of their routine by the ones who were still dysregulated. We did things like kohine toa and tama toa (girls and boys winners club). Our kids designed it themselves, things they wanted to do and things they wanted to learn about, community service-based work and passion programmes. Our more intense waiora programme was born from this as the boys wanted to learn more about their muscles. The ones who participated in waiora were the ones who went back into their routines and old life quicker and were more engaged. Waiora was early morning (6am) because our kids told us that mornings were the hardest times for them at home. We picked them up for training on the van and it took them out of the time in their whare where they were the most conflicted, where they had to be little mummies and daddies, removing</i>

	<i>them from that environment. They had breakfast at school in the hall. They were learning about nutrition as well. They were the ones doing better at school.</i>
1	<i>We used student voice and check in to see how students are going and use the “Skodel” app to check in on the wellbeing of our students daily to give the teachers an idea of how children come to school. When we changed the questions to personalised it towards our observations on student needs. In one class in particular one class became very real and honest about their wellbeing which enabled the teacher to act upon real time data and real time interventions. Positive impacts at the end of term three was becoming visible. Their attitudes changed and they started to use words rather than lashing out to each other or throwing things around. They also started to use their Papatuanuku.</i>

Similar to previous discussions with other participants, it is evident that a focus on wellbeing and the implementation of wellbeing practices have positive impacts on students’ attitudes, behaviours, attendance and engagement. When students are asked, they will inform the adults about their needs if adults have enough time to pay attention.

The next conversation and question that I had during my observation period was for the wellbeing team and acting principal to gauge the inclusion or place of whānau within their wellbeing model. This discussion also took place at a wellbeing team meeting and are snippets from a recorded conversational session which was transcribed verbatim.

**Question 1: How have you included whanau in your school’s wellbeing model and how do you support their wellbeing?**

*“The kura has a Wellbeing team who work together to strengthen and implement wellbeing practices which includes the whānau. The wellbeing team consists of the principal who is also the SENCO, the Social Worker in Schools, the wellbeing lead teacher (Te Pou Oranga) and the Whānau facilitator (Te Kaihapai whānau) who is also the Counsellor. The whānau facilitator works with vulnerable whānau as well as implementing activities and initiatives such as Kai Ora, bush walks and retreats, hunting, physical challenges, Building awesome whānau, to name but a few” (Acting Principal- Koka M).*

*“I love working in the grey areas to try and get the best for our families. Being able to share my experience of hunting and fishing is great. A lot of families are struggling with finances and*

*food. I am a firm believer in giving a hand up, not handout, so have started a food subscription service in partnership with a community group. Whānau pays \$10 a week and they receive deliveries of MPI certificated venison, fresh veggies from our kura garden and other suppliers and a meal plan from our kura foodbank called Kai Ora” (Koka T- whānau facilitator).*

*“When I take families into the bush, I know that they come out changed for the better. It is something you cannot get from a textbook; you cannot document it- you have to experience it first- hand.?” Koka T- Whānau facilitator).*



**(Image 6: Photo of whānau skinning the deer after a hunting session with the whānau facilitator.)**

*“By connecting whānau back with their whenua and in nature, healing takes place in a tikanga Māori way. By helping our whānau to focus on their wellbeing supports our tamariki in theirs. I have seen whānau connect back to their spirituality and whakapapa when we do these outings in nature. For example one of our Nans composed a waiata and taught it to us while we were in the bush. This must be uplifting is it not?””( Koka T Te Kaihapai Whānau).*



**(Photo of Nan R sharing her waiata which she composed while spending time with other whānau in the bush)**

The words from this nan after her experience being out in nature

*“I feel like my spirit has come alive since I’ve been here. I have a sense of wellbeing and I hope I can hold onto that when I get back in the day to day because my mokos need me to be well” (Nan R).*

The next comments include the voices of the mums who often worked with the whānau facilitator on different wellbeing initiatives.

The Building awesome whānau course took place in a forest due to the focus on the te whare tapa wha health model and its aim to build strong and well families. The following are snippets from the recorded interview session with the mums done with the whānau facilitator.

*“I have never done this before but loved every moment of it. I reckon any mum should try and do it” (Māmā and graduate- L. L).*

*“The programme gave me a chance to reflect and talk about different parenting styles. The course had a significant spiritual impact” (Māmā and graduate- K).*

*“With my taha wairua, I was suppose..... average, but strong coming out of the bush. I was over the moon.... You must be there to experience it. it is really uplifting” (Māmā and graduate- K).*



**( Image 7: Photo of our Mums doing the “Building Awesome Whānau” programme in the Bush with our whānau facilitator.)**

The following table is comments from three of the wellbeing team members based on a questionnaire that was given to them to complete individually through the google forms platform. These questions were about their approaches and roles when working with whānau.

**Table 32 Question 2: What is your approach to student and whanau wellbeing when you work in your particular role.**

Wellbeing Team	Response
SWIS	<i>Te Ao Maori: Model of practise that reflects the values of the five pou TRONPnui: Rangatira, Whairawa, Whanau, Matauranga, Kaitiakitanga , Also Whakawhānaungatanga (respectful relationships, Ahurutanga (safe space) , Assessment (insight to the whanau dynamics ) Ata constituents Taina Pohatu that guides safe practise</i>
Te Pou Oranga	<i>Māori students are capable of greater achievement. As a Māori myself, I take into my role a culturally responsive approach, I adopt positive beliefs about my ability to make a difference for Māori students through my teaching experience with Māori. Relationships are key, connections, love, understanding and</i>

	<i>communication. Māori culture is an integral part of my role and I reject Māori deficit thinking and theories. Māori students take part in co-curricular activities connected to their culture, Te reo Māori and tikanga Māori incorporated in schoolwide practices in ways that promote Māori students' belonging (e.g., mihi, pōhiri, wānanga). Tikanga Māori incorporated in daily practices that value and promote use of te reo Māori and tikanga Māori (e.g., supporting students to kōrero Māori in and outside of classrooms) Tuakana-teina approach used by Māori students to support each other Kaupapa Māori programmes are provided for small groups of students (e.g., wānanga taiaha; whānau Ora programmes)</i>
Te Kaihapai Whanau & Counsellor	<i>Whānau classes designed to support Māori students. These things create a sense of belonging for students and whānau and makes my role easier in a sense that they feel they belong as soon as they walk into a space where we work collaboratively. Listening for understanding is also key. Making sure whānau and students understand they have these four components to their wellbeing and to identify what they need to focus on to build this strong whare. Also giving age-appropriate examples of how they can nurture these four domains</i>

The whānau tangata principle reminds us that there is an important link between a child's wellbeing and the wellbeing of their whānau. The wellbeing of whānau members along with their values, behavioral expectations and beliefs about bringing up children influences the development of a child's social and emotional competence.

**Table 33 Question 3: What type of wellbeing practices do you use in your role and why?**

Wellbeing team	Response
SWIS	<i>My social work model of practise guides my practise, Ko wai au - knowing who you are, where you come from - my mana derives from all those things which enhances my well-being</i>
Te Pou Oranga	<i>Puaio (Yoga) improves strength, balance, and flexibility. It benefits heart health. relaxes you, to help you sleep better. Can mean more energy and brighter moods helps you manage stress. promotes better self-care. It is a great way to incorporate purakau, local iwi stories, karakia, nga atua māori. Mauritau – Mindfulness &amp; Meditation. Meditation is something anyone can do, anytime, anywhere - even someplace loud. It is easy to learn and can positively impact mental and physical health.- to feel less stressed, get better sleep, be more focused, or improve relationships-every meditation is one step closer to building healthier habits for a happier mind. Mana Potential/Enhancement-It is a great way to incorporate pūrākau, local iwi stories, karakia, nga atua māori. Its good in that each atua has a duality, students build a Papatūānuku that acts as a support for them through times of challenge or struggle.</i>

<i>Te Kaihapai Whanau &amp; Counsellor</i>	<i>Connecting Whānau to their Kai. Practising the customs of our ancestors. Gathering, harvesting, growing, karakia, fitness etc. Tinana: Physical exercise classes, nutritional guidance via HP &amp; health checks, fitscans. Wairua: Connection to creation and the outdoors, te reo māori and karakia</i>
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“A productive partnership starts by understanding that Māori students are connected to their whānau and should not be viewed and treated as separate, isolated or disconnected. Parents and whānau must be involved in conversations about their children and their learning” (Ka Hikitia, 2013-2017).

**Table 34 Question 4: What impacts or effects have you noticed for whānau and or tamariki when you implement these practices?**

Wellbeing team	Responses
SWIS	<i>I have seen significant changes much better than before or none at all, sometimes it is not just the case of what we can do for whānau but what can do for themselves. We are just here to remind them that they are capable of, they can do it, we can give them the tools, but they accomplished it on their own we do not need to empower whānau who already have power we are just reminding them of the power that they already have.</i>
Te Pou Oranga	<i>I now see glimpses of these practices affecting children in times of struggle or challenge, it is a part of their Papatūānuku. They are using it to calm themselves when stressed. I see staff taking part in the practices daily with their students and after school for their own hauora.</i>
Te Kaihapai Whanau & Counsellor	<i>Whānau become aware of the importance of looking after themselves holistically. They connect to the community we create at kura. Trust is gained when implementing these practices and engagement is excellent from whānau. Tamariki are more aware of their own well-being and take individual ownership of this. This allows them to reset a lot easier when needed. This has built more confidence in their identity and sense of mana</i>

While schools cannot address many of the issues that causes stress in whānau, they can provide support by working in partnership with the whānau and valuing their contribution, their skills, and strengths. “Give them joy, hope and connect them back to Papatuanuku, uplift their wairua and strengthen their tinana. Bring the whare in balance” (Koka T- Whānau Facilitator).



( Image 8: Photo- Whānau wānanga and fitness challenge with our Te Kaihapai Whānau)

Further discussion with the wellbeing team led to the following question :

**Table 35 Question 5: In your view should whānau/parents/caregivers be included in a wellbeing programme that a kura is implementing and why?**

Wellbeing team	Response
SWIS	<i>Optional - Whānau /parents/caregivers - should be encouraged to take part in a wellbeing program so that we are educating transformation through education within homes as well whether it be a new skill, strategy to cope with behaviours etc.</i>
Te Kaihapai Whanau & Counsellor	<i>Absolutely! Establishing partnerships with parents and whānau and creating a sense of belonging for all is crucial. Positive child and family outcomes are those where knowledge/avenues of knowledge from home are valued, where both families and kaiako share responsibility for supporting children's learning, as we know that when parents and whānau are involved in children's education, this is beneficial for long-term achievement and success.</i>
Te Kaihapai Whanau & Counsellor	<i>Yes absolutely. It needs to be a whole community approach. Not just a whole school approach. Parents need to feel and be included at all stages. A by Parent for Parent approach should be implemented. Then a by community for community approach.</i>

The building and maintenance of whānau connections and relationships through shared experiences “extends to non-kinships relationships where there is mutual need, support and reciprocity” (source: Otago Polytechnic).

The next section focuses on the discussion with the staff on how they measure and report student wellbeing. I wanted to know if there were specific tools to measure the wellbeing of students and whether it was subjective or objective measurement and whether it was teacher designed or student designed and directed.

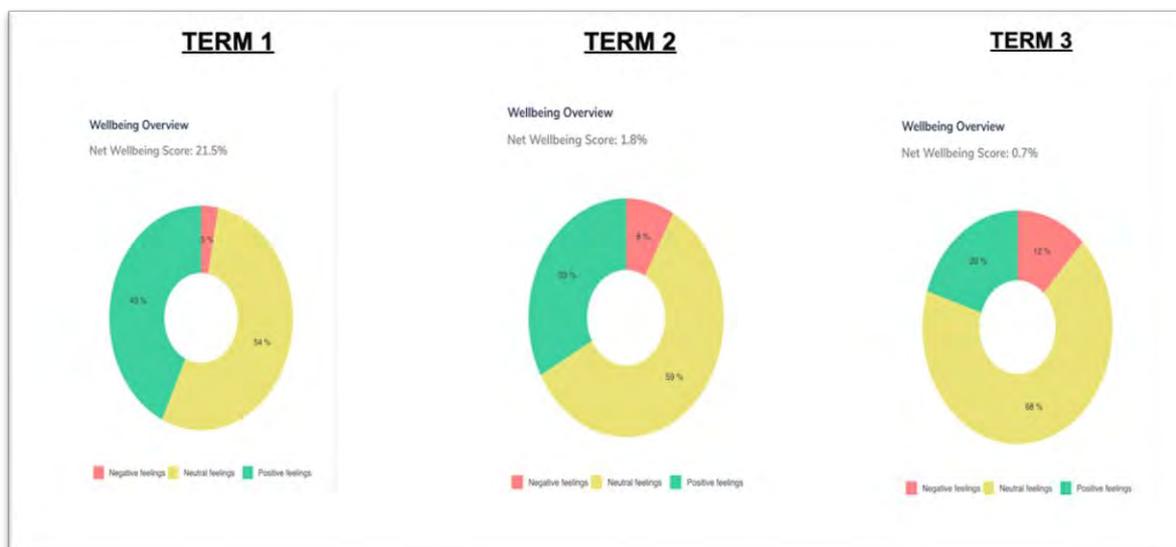
**Question 1 How did you measure the wellbeing of your tamariki?**

*“Skodel is a wellbeing app that allows for student to daily check-in on the app and for teachers to evaluate the state of wellbeing of each student and to comment on their notification. Student wellbeing is self-reported using the app (Wellbeing teacher koka M. W).*

Below is an example of teacher voice and evidence collected on student wellbeing from over term 1, 2 and 3 using the Skodel app.

*“Students Wellbeing has been a big focus for me this year. From my elaborations on each term, you can see the challenges we have had to address and overcome with opportunities and experiences we have created to support our students. The most common concerns were lack of sleep and eating therefore in our class kitchen we provide breakfast and fruit and snacks or left over lunches for tamariki that are hungry. Then I noticed a pattern of sad or unmotivated responses where I had one on one check ins which led several of my female students opening about Self-harm and home. It was devastating and a lot of the issues or reasons behind it was due to their home environment. So, referrals were made to our Well-Being team with the support of whānau as well. Vaping was also something that had come back into our space although much smaller than before” (Koka A)*

**Figure 19: Example of Measuring wellbeing through the Skodel App**



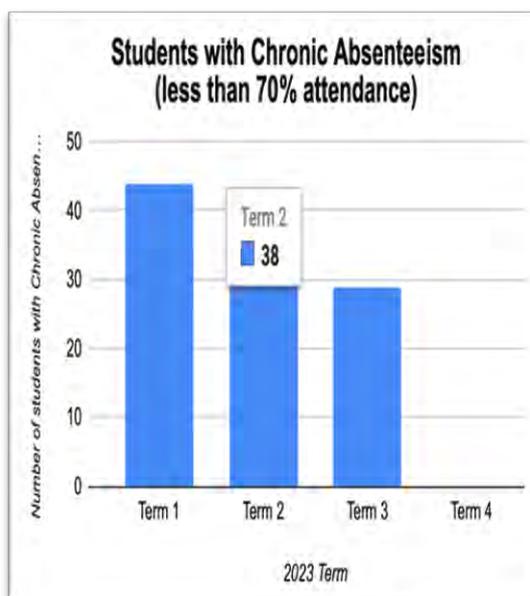
*“During Term 1-2023, our rohe went through the impact of Cyclone Gabrielle as well. But I noticed that students were happy and glad to be back at kura. Term two has seen the return of some more Covid cases. Cases of Covid returned and students health became a concern when they were attending school unwell. More bad weather impacted on their wellbeing. Attendance also became a concern which impacted on students learning. For me the data shows students opening up about how they truly feel and how hard they are working to have a good education & experience at school which is not easy” (Koka A).*

*“This Term, I decided to personalize my questions as I noticed a shift in the well-being and behaviour of my students. Health wise they were unwell, social relationships were alarming and events outside of school. Majority of the students then made me aware that they worry or are unhappy when I am not in the space or at school which affected my emotional well-being as well. They individually created and worked on their Papatūānuku kete to support them in with their wellbeing as a reminder of the good things and people they have. My personalized questions: How are you feeling today? Did you have a good sleep? Did you have breakfast? Are there any concerns at home? Do you have any health concerns? Do you need someone to talk to? Student behaviour changed and they become more learning focussed as the term went on. During term four the focus will continue”. (Koka A).*

The Acting principal noticed a shift in attendance data. Although these shifts are not always evident in the overall data the school data is comparative to regional and national data or in some year levels perform above average. Data was also influenced by Cyclone Gabriel and other continuous flood and weather related issues that came after Cyclone Gabriel and also the return of Covid cases. The attendance of individual students who attended sporadically previously or were chronic attendees had shown positive shifts to more regular attendance and is more evident in their class data.

**TRACKING INDIVIDUAL ATTENDANCE  
DATA OF CHRONIC ATTENDANCE (70% AND LESS)**

Year level	Gender	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
1	B	26	14	22
	B	47	62	86
	B	59	64	66
1	G	9	17	90
		43	53	61
2	B	5	7	30
		49	53	90
		58	70	85
		67	91	91
		62	56	74
3	G	62	71	78
		64	93	90
4	B	15	83	49
		49	48	76
5	B	59	64	66
6	B	54	76	92
	G	69	74	85
7	B	58	89	80
	G	62	71	78
8	B	29	42	69
		51	47	53
		39	39	65
		0	8	19



The Ministry of Education NZ reported national data in November 2023 that states, that less than half of students consistently attended school in term 2, 2023. Primary school students had a regular attendance rate of 49.8% while for secondary students the rate was 41.7% in term 2 2023. Unjustified absences reached 6.1% of class time, the highest term two figure on record. The Ministry of Education report that incidences of Covid and winter illness resulted in the absences of both students and staff. The same applies to this kura, the main reasons for students not attending are still short-term illness and the most significant contributor for this school was the weather disasters that continued to plague their region. These factors all impact on the wellbeing of students which in turn affect their learning outcomes.

There was also a noticeable reduction in stand down notices since the kura embedded trauma informed practices into their school culture. Students were better able to articulate their emotions and feeling and used strategies from their Papatuanuku kete and safe spaces to manage themselves. They also started to use regulating strategies such as breathing/mauritau.

**TABLE 36: TRACKING STANDOWN DATA**

Gender	2020	2021	2022	2023
Girls	4	3	2	0
Boys	6	4	2	1

*“The staff worked hard on transforming the school culture from a using punitive approach or behaviourist approach to a trauma informed approach that resonate within a Te Ao Māori worldview” (koka M.W). “We introduced a trauma-informed framework versus a traditional, behaviourist approach after our online workshop with Matthew Portell in 2022” (Koka M).*

Below is the framework designed by Matthew Portell who is a principal in the UK that has worked intensively on student behaviour and incorporated trauma -informed practices into his school’s model. Staff attended an online workshop to learn how to use transformative practices to bring changes in student behaviours that were challenging.

**TABLE 37: MATTHEW PORTELL (2022) WORKSHOP FRAMEWORK**

<b>TRADITIONAL /BEHAVIOURIST EDUCATION</b>	<b>TRAUMA-INFORMED EDUCATION</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliance and obedience</li> <li>• What is wrong with you.</li> <li>• Focus on labels and pathology.</li> <li>• Blame and shame is driving compliance.</li> <li>• My way or the highway</li> <li>• Behaviour is always a personal choice.</li> <li>• Assuming all students have the skills to behave</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empowerment and collaboration</li> <li>• What has happened to you? What is right with you.</li> <li>• Looks beyond the surface into individual needs.</li> <li>• Respect modelling</li> <li>• Let us plan together.</li> <li>• Behaviour is a response and a form of communication.</li> <li>• Look for students’ individual needs as skills gaps and teach it.</li> </ul>

(Matthew Portell online workshop, 2022)

“Staff also studied books from Dix (2017) and Delahooke (2019) to learn new behavioural approaches. The focus continued to be on trauma-informed practices and listening to audio books from Dr Bruce Perry to understand how behaviour, relationships and trauma connects” (Koka M W- wellbeing teacher).

Upon the return of students after Covid 19 in the 2020 year the leadership team of this kura shifted the focus from reporting on learning to reporting on student wellbeing. Wellbeing became a big focus during 2020 as students were not in a mental space to learn. Below is an example of such reporting to whānau.

**Table 38: Reporting to whanau on student wellbeing 2020**

DIMENSION AND INDICATORS	ALWAYS	MOSTLY	SOMETIMES
<b>PHYSICAL WELL- BEING: TE TAHA TINANA</b>			
• Actively participates in physical activities	✓		
• Can care for self and others			
• Shows respect for themselves, others and their environment			
• Celebrates their strengths and acknowledges strengths in others			
<b>SOCIAL WELL-BEING: TE TAHA WAIRUA:</b>			
• Attempts new learning			
• Takes responsibility of their learning and accepts mistakes as a part of learning			
• Is a leader			
• Is respectful to others' beliefs and views			
<b>MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL BEING: TE TAHA HINENGARO</b>			
• Is able to share how they feel			
• Is able to express their emotions appropriately			
• Works well without constant supervision			
• Participates respectfully in karakia			
<b>ENGAGEMENT, ACCEPTANCE AND CONNECTEDNESS - TAHA WHĀNAU</b>			
• Connected by pepeha and whakapapa			
• Positively participates and contributes to class/whānau/kura life			
• Connects well with others and is a good friend			
• Respects the individuality of others			
<b>General Comment:</b>			

Observations on student wellbeing Post Covid 19 as was observed by the acting principal:

*“Upon the return to kura post covid tamariki were not in a great place. They were not ready to focus on learning. The principal and leadership team decided that wellbeing of both staff and students should be a focus until we were all in a good place emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. We leaned heavily on the kura values and health model Te Wheke (Dr. Rose Pere) integrated with the Te Whare Tapa Wha Model (Mason Durie, 1997). We reported to whānau on the wellbeing of their tamariki as opposed to learning or curriculum areas in 2020, term 4 and 2021, term one.” (Koka M-Acting principal)*

This wellbeing report included wellbeing dimensions such as physical health, cultural, social, and emotional learning, engagement, acceptance, and connectedness. The kura values were integrated with the key competencies, and the Te Whare Tapa Wha health model. For example Te Taha Tinana (Mauri Ora- Managing self); Te Taha Wairua (Whatumana, wairuatanga-managing self).

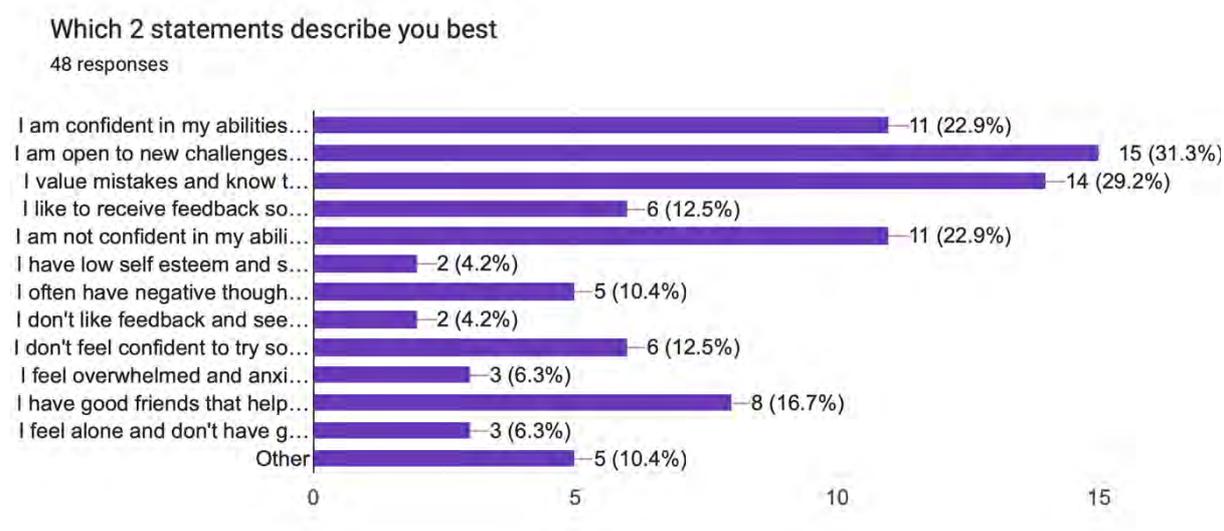
As stated by Perry & Winfrey (2021), “our modern adolescent youth crisis of wellbeing is not just a psychological phenomenon, but also a biological one. This is why awareness of the biology and finding strategies to temper our stress responses are more critical than ever. It is unrealistic to expect children to be mild mannered and even tempered in a world of unpredictability”.

### *7.2.2 Student interviews and questionnaires- Year 6 to 8 student voice*

This section further delves into how schools can effectively nurture the wellbeing of ākonga (children/learner) and Rangatahi (young people) through the implementation of a holistic school-wide approach by looking at the schooling environment in the school context and hearing the student voice.

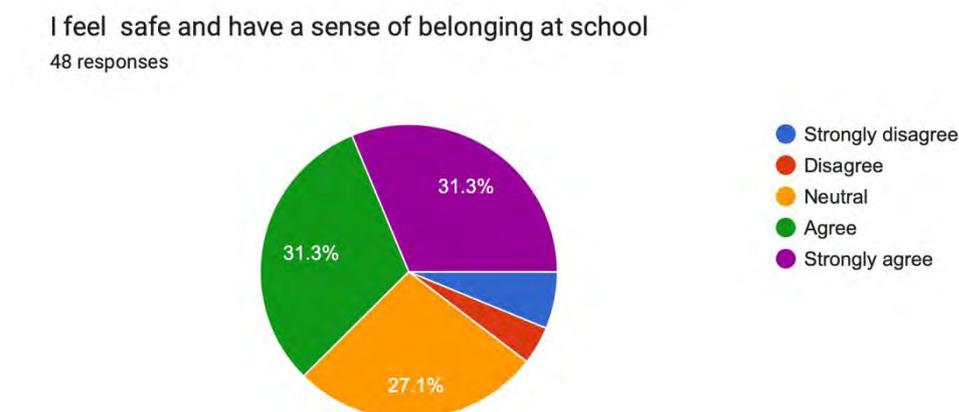
The following questionnaire and surveys were completed with a group of year 6 to 8 students to explore their voice about what it means to be well and what in their view influences their wellbeing. This data was taken in 2022 term 4. This questionnaire was to find out how students feel about themselves as these are contributors to their wellbeing:

**Figure 19 Question: Which statements describe you best.**



There are multiple factors and conditions that contribute to students' wellbeing, whether for better or for worse. Connection with family and friends, social and emotional wellbeing, community involvement, extracurricular activities, development of identity, use and influence of technology, and academic pressures, are but a few of these factors.

**Figure 20: I feel safe and have a sense of belonging at school.**



Other factors which influence student wellbeing is experiences of psychological safety, a strong sense of trust and belonging, that their voice is acknowledged, validated, and acted upon in meaningful ways. Genuine interest in their opinions, students need to see and feel change and experience change on an individual level and through noticeable trends and norms school-wide (Gillett-Swan, 2022). Research suggests that student learning is optimised when the

learning environment reflects cultural values, attitudes, and practices of all students' cultures. When students are feeling valued and accepted it enhances their wellbeing, interest, and engagement in learning.

### *7.2.3 The voice of year 9 students (ex -students)*

This section was completed through a focus group interview done with a group of year 9 students who were students of the kura during the 2020 to 2022 year and are now sharing their lived experiences of transitioning to secondary school and their current challenges.

I refrained from giving a fixed set questionnaire, but chose more of a discussion that flowed from the conversations, as the process was iterative. I explained to this group of students that I did not want a formal session but would like to have a conversation about a few general experiences during the transitioning phase to secondary school to their respective schools and for them to describe their experiences (challenges and successes). I asked their previous frontline coach and tutor to facilitate these conversations that reflected their lived experiences and tell their stories. I chose to audiotape instead of videotape to protect student privacy, therefore, I had difficulty in transcribing the audio recordings at times due to two or more voices speaking concurrently.

What the participants in this focus group shared was their lived experiences and frustrations of being misunderstood and not been heard. Their narrative suggests that school and learning environments are not always conducive for the education of minorities. They had also previously shared similar experiences with their previous teacher when visiting back at their old school.

**Table 39: Recorded conversations with Year 9 students on their schooling experiences**

Students	Perceived inequities Experienced	Student words (responses)
<b>K</b>	Racial prejudice, Stereotyping Stand down. Lack of support	<p><i>It started the first day when I attended the class, the teacher talked about attendance, another teacher looked around and said, “do you hear that, it’s for your boys”. She was looking at us we were the group of Māori student there.</i></p> <p><i>There is no “go to person” that we can talk to when we are feeling down or need help. They just say you are at high school now you are not babying anymore.</i></p> <p><i>I have had two stand downs now, I was trying to explain to the teacher why I was late, he would not listen and said I was talking back and said I was being disrespectful and need a stand down.</i></p>
<b>RM</b>	Lack of predictability and consistency. No time to form relationships. Shamed Disrespected	<p><i>It was hard from the start, having one teacher for a whole year who knew me very well to having 4 to 5 periods a day and seeing them for one hour per day and my vertical teacher in between. In term 2 and 3, I had new teachers only two or three teachers stays the same.</i></p> <p><i>We get put in detention if we do something wrong and we must stand up in front of assembly so that everybody can see who we are.</i></p>
<b>I</b>	Lack of engagement	<p><i>The teachers do not talk to us much or even explain the work. That frustrates me and if I ask, they say read the instructions.</i></p>
<b>KD</b>	Unsafe environment	<p><i>I hate school and do not want to go anymore, because it is boring and kids get bullied on the playground, so I just go to the library at playtime.</i></p>
<b>M</b>	Treated with disrespect Double standards	<p><i>Some of the teachers swear at us, they say we not supposed to swear but they do it, it is not fair it is like double standards.</i></p>
<b>K</b>	Class difference Gang affiliation Marginalised Stereotyping	<p><i>We feel like because we Māori and not rich they say these things to us because they can. They know we come from the Kaiti area and think that all our whānau belongs to the gangs and do drugs so its ok to treat us this way coz they think we are used to it, but it is still not right. We feel like we get treated different sometimes.</i></p>

**Question: What do you need from your teachers to make school a good place?**

*“I do not want to be their friends I just want them to understand me and that I have responsibilities at home and that is why I’m late, give me a hearing and I will tell you why do not just give a stand down” (K).*

*“Don’t just use my sports skills for the school to win games but acknowledge me as a person” (KD)*

*“Allow me to have a voice and say how I feel” (RM)*

*“I want the teachers to consider my feelings, and understand my background just talk to me stop growling at me” (K).*

*“When I go back to my old school, teachers talk to me like I matter, they believe in me and always encourage me to stay in school and finish it, but it is sometimes hard I go back because I don’t want to disappoint them” (K)*

*“And don’t have double standards say one thing and do something else like it doesn’t apply to them, it’s like do what say but not what I do” (K).*

“Agency” is a technical term for the feeling of “being in charge of your life,” knowing who you are, where you stand, knowing that you have a say in what happens to you and knowing that you can shape your own circumstances. Through listening, promoting agency and giving action to matters voiced by students, educators can empower and offer more appropriate and genuine support towards the collective wellbeing of whānau and their tamariki.

Conversations indicate that Rangatahi Māori know and experience wellbeing as living shared values. They search for safe spaces, both human and environmental, to grow, challenge and express who they are and who they want to become. They described the yearning to be seen, heard, understood and accepted just as they are.

**Question: What are the positives about secondary school**

*“Seeing my friends, being able to do sports but sometimes they use sports to punish us” (K).*

*“I love everything about school when my friends are happy. I do not like to see them getting into trouble unfairly” (RM).*

*“ I like Kapa haka” (I).*

*“I like it when I can see that the teachers are proud of me like when I do well in sports” (I)*

*“It is heart-breaking to hear the stories and experiences of these rangatahi (young people) and to hear the frustration and hurt in some of them as they share. Some of these students had 90% plus attendance during year 8 and to now go down to 40-50% attendance in year 9 raises concerning questions” (Acting Principal).*

From listening to the conversations with these students, it had become evident that the most liked aspects of school for them was friends, sports, some learning, kapa haka and culturally responsive teachers. The least liked aspects of school for them are the double standards of discipline, detention, bullying by peers, teacher behaviour towards them, and unfair treatment. From my observations some of these students do go back to their previous school where they feel cared for, understood and safe. The teachers at their previous school build up their self-belief and empower them to go back and try again, building the resilience factor.

Transitioning from primary to secondary school is a period where the wellbeing needs for individual students may be greater as it represents time of change which can be stressful in the short term. For some students however, who may not have the support, it may take longer and may create an intense response that have impact on their wellbeing. Transitioning to secondary

school occurs during a challenging adolescence developmental stage, and then they are required to adjust to a new schooling environment with new ways of teaching and learning, as well as new people. Some students make this move successfully and are “more likely to have higher or long-term success in measures of academic engagement and outcomes, and social and emotional, and behavioural competencies, while students who do not, are at a greater risk of dropping out of school” (Sniedze-Gregory, et al., 2021).

The research and rationale of this section also show that making connections with students and then building genuine and sincere relationships is key to healing trauma. According to the research evidence, many of our marginalised students suffer from intergenerational trauma. “The healthier relationships a child has, the more likely they will be to recover from trauma and thrive. Relationships are the agents of change, and the most powerful therapy is human love” (Perry & Winfrey, 2021).

*7.2.4 Data collection using condensed field notes to journal noticings, and observations of student behaviours and interventions impacts between 2020 and 2023.*

**Table 40: Researcher observational fieldnotes condensed.**

<b>NOTICINGS</b>	<b>INTERVENTIONS</b>	<b>IMPACTS</b>	<b>NEGATIVES</b>
<b>2020</b> Languishing Unsettled Anxiety Self-harm Depression Withdrawn lack of interested in learning Withdrawn Non-participation  Lack of engagement	SWIS programme with year 7 and 8 teachers Kohine Toa (girls) Tama Toa (boys) (fun activities and life skills) Introduction of nutritionist food more regular food breaks	Tamariki were happier but were still finding it hard to focus on the learning.  They were still hard to engage in activities and almost seemed scared to have too much fun.	Attendance was sporadic which limited the opportunities to work with students effectively.  Impacts of whānau stress and poverty was high Whānau mental wellbeing was low in some households
<b>NOTICINGS</b>	<b>INTERVENTIONS</b>	<b>IMPACTS</b>	<b>NEGATIVES</b>
<b>2021</b> Languishing continued for some students Self-harm, anxiety, depression still evident	Sports Gisborne Facilitator for term 1 to 3- physical activities and out of school outings	Term 1-3 was better than previous year but still not to the expectation of the impact which was needed to make a difference.	Highly emotional students Home environments challenging. Whanau are stressed due to impacts of COVID.

<p>High levels of Vaping entered into the picture.</p>	<p>Intervention with hospital staff on Vaping and self-harm Term 4 Waiora programme (gym sessions from 6 am) Wellbeing Team Established (Principal, wellbeing teacher appointed, SWIS, SENCO , Whanau Facilitator)</p> <p>Food breaks have positive impact Wellbeing practices introduced by wellbeing teacher. (mindfulness, yoga)</p>	<p>Challenging behavioural incidents and stand downs high Term 4 – Waiora programme lifted the spirit of tamariki</p> <p>Social and emotional learning through Mana Potential started to have a positive effect.</p> <p>Student became slightly better at managing themselves using the Papatuanuku area of Mana Potential as a means to build social and emotional skills to help them regulate themselves better</p> <p>Whānau facilitator worked with groups of whānau to provide regular weekly kai (food) packs -thanks to funding from Te Puni Kokiri and Kids Can donations.</p> <p>Starting of marakai initiatives.</p> <p>Kids Can donations helped to minimise some stresses.</p>	<p>Many of the whānau were concerned about the future and how they were able to care for their tamariki.</p> <p>These fears had impacted on older students as they verbalised their concerns to their teachers</p>
<p><b>NOTICINGS</b></p>	<p><b>INTERVENTIONS</b></p>	<p><b>IMPACTS</b></p>	<p><b>NEGATIVES</b></p>
<p><b>2022</b></p> <p>Sporadic incidents of self-harm</p> <p>Vaping became less frequent but now included year 5's and 6's</p> <p>Less behavioural incidents</p> <p>Reduction in the severity of incidents-anger issues were of a lower level.</p>	<p>Continued Waiora programme for year 7 and 8</p> <p>Decision to include year 4 to 6 students in physical activities</p> <p>Internal lunch model to provide better food for our tamariki</p> <p>Social and emotional learning and Wellbeing practices implemented across kura from NE to Yr 8</p> <p>Introducing Papatuanuku kete for</p>	<p>Increased attendance- Year 8 students highest attendance in the region.</p> <p>Great Sporting achievements 4 teams to AIMS games,</p> <p>Improvement in student behaviour</p> <p>Students were managing their emotions better (SEL)</p> <p>Less stand downs</p> <p>Improved student to student and staff to student relationships.</p>	<p>Transient students impacted on the wairua of others.</p> <p>The decision to take on students who were suspended /excluded from other schools sometimes required more patience and effort from staff.</p> <p>Students are struggling to transition to secondary schools.</p>

	<p>SEL of years 7 and 8 students</p> <p>Trauma informed practices and Neuro sequential learning for staff.</p> <p>Teacher wellbeing practices</p> <p>Whānau hunting and bushwalks sessions</p> <p>Cultural responsive Counselling services integrated</p>	<p>Trauma informed knowledge changed perspective of teachers.</p> <p>Whānau inclusive practices brough whānau back into the kura</p> <p>Year 9 and 10 students come back to re-connect.</p> <p>Building awesome whānau programme supported the wellbeing of whānau.</p>	<p>Disruption from transient students are not as impacting as the previous year but are still evident.</p>
<b>NOTICINGS</b>	<b>INTERVENTIONS</b>	<b>IMPACTS</b>	<b>NEGATIVES</b>
<p><b>2023</b></p> <p>Transient students are getting better because Year 7 and 8's becoming Tuakana in showing others how to use their Papatuanuku kete.</p> <p>Students who have been part of the wellbeing implementation since 2021 are flourishing</p> <p>Attendance of the students who were "cause for concern" are better.</p> <p>For the whole of 2023 only 2 incidents of self-harm was reported</p> <p>Only one stand down for the year 2023</p>	<p>Waiora continues</p> <p>Sports academy, gym and wellness centre opened at school</p> <p>Art centre opened</p> <p>Trauma informed practice and Wellbeing embedded into the school culture</p> <p>āhurutanga -Creation of safe and Whakatau (calming) spaces in each class and outside of class (sensory garden, play-based area)-</p> <p>Create safe cultural spaces and practices</p> <p>Whānau hour in class.</p> <p>Whānau time-table on for gym sessions and art (carving) sessions.</p>	<p>Students are using language to describe their feelings better.</p> <p>Students are taking themselves to their Papatuanuku spaces to self-regulate.</p> <p>Students use their "go to Person"</p> <p>Teachers are more aware of their own triggers and respond to behaviour differently.</p> <p>Teachers are asking for help from the wellbeing team.</p> <p>Teachers have better connected relationships with most students.</p> <p>Year 9 and 10 students come back to re-connect and give back by teaching younger students.</p> <p>Students who have been part of the wellbeing journey since 2020 shows greater resilience, self-control and self-management. They are able to hold others to account.</p>	<p>Students are struggling to transition to secondary school</p> <p>We have enrolled a few excluded students which at times, until they are used to the kura kawa disrupts the flow of things and sometimes compromise safety of current students.</p> <p>Until these students have found their "sense of belonging" the disruption takes a toll on teachers and leaders at times.</p>

		Students have go to people and go to space to self and co-regulate	
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Creating an environment that celebrates differences, provide students with the understanding that everyone has different interests, cultures, strengths, etc. Giving students a voice by encouraging feelings of safety and trust and provides a platform to communicate needs.



**(Image 9: Photos-Example of activities students are doing that they have asked to do-student voice)**

### **7.3 Discussion with leaders on their learnings and further challenges and where to next**

The next questionnaire was designed for the leadership team to find out what their new learnings and next steps were especially since they have included Trauma-informed practices and had a focus on planning to create safe spaces at kura as part of their wellbeing practices.

**Table 41 Question: What were some of the learning of the past three years as a leadership team and how will you do things differently now?**

Leader	Response
1	<i>Student-teacher relationships is important. Encouraging equitable connected relationships with adults and positive friendships with peers- connections over compliance. The development of our Manukura (student leadership) allowed students to oversee their own wellbeing, it gave students agency, voice, and mana (kaitiakitanga).</i>
2	<i>Provide awareness, knowledge and strategies for leaders, teachers and support staff when responding to behaviours and know that it starts with the adults.</i>
3	<i>Change the conversation and it will change the triggers thus, the behaviours. Reframe the language (respond vs reaction to behaviour).</i>
2	<i>Unpacking wellbeing, neuroscience, trauma informed language to gain shared language used by staff across kura is still a work in progress to be developed further but, we can already see small impacts. Teachers are more reflective.</i>
3	<i>Enhance learning success through creating healthy wellbeing of children and young people. Do research how to support children's holistic wellbeing.</i>
1	<i>Be clear about what consistency and predictability looks like in the classrooms. Implement wellbeing practices across kura brings consistency that becomes embedded into the school culture. This takes time but when it works its worthwhile.</i>
3	<i>Increase whole staff knowledge and support. School culture and embedded practices. Whānau inclusive practice as whānau is crucial to the wellbeing of our tamariki.</i>
1	<i>Create psychological safe and calming spaces that can be used together with the trauma informed care, provide culturally responsive counselling and practices.</i>

**Question to the Acting principal: How did Trauma-informed practices change, impact or contribute to your wellbeing approach positively or negatively.**

*“Negatively, I would say was in the beginning as the adults struggled to change their behaviours. But I think as we learned more about the neuro-sequential model and how the trauma brain works and then about the polyvagal system; the adults had a good think about their responses to student behaviours. I think when we learned about generational trauma a lot of the adults could relate. They started to look at their own triggers and understand themselves more. It took about nearly a year for some them to change the way they respond to student behaviours. Some are still struggling and sometimes there are glimpses of change in them. As our tamariki responded in the way they managed themselves, some adults came*

*around. Looking at trauma from a Māori view also helped as it hit home for some adults. Now in our third year lots have changed positively. Our focus on wellbeing supported the trauma-informed practices. I think when one understand the behaviours and look at each child uniquely and we know their backgrounds and have relationships with them it gets better” (koka M – Acting principal).*

**Question to the wellbeing teacher: How do you deal with challenging behaviours differently now?**

*“In the past the easiest way out was a stand down but now we stop, think, and ask why did this happen? How can we make it better to get a better outcome next time?. Tamariki go to their ‘go to person’ to self or co-regulate and have a restorative conversation when they are ready. This helps us to find out the root cause of behaviours and let tamariki know when behaviours are unacceptable, but instead of punish we give strategies. We then help tamariki to work through their Papatuanuku strategies and support them with setting goals to use it next time. They now spend time at school with the wellbeing teacher or principal who helps them work through their issues instead of being sent home where they do nothing, but at least at school they are learning to grow emotionally and socially with the help from adults. This way had helped a lot of students. We do have some that are still struggling but they are getting better at self-regulating and articulating their feelings. We try to build relationships instead of punishing them. I think it’s a better outcome for all. I must honestly admit it can be hard at first, but the more you do it the better and easier it becomes” (Koka M W- Wellbeing Teacher)*

**Question to the acting principal: what is your vision for your students ?**

*“We want our students to be safe physically, socially, emotionally and culturally. They must feel supported by having meaningful and connected relationships with the adults. We must challenge them by having high expectations for behaviour and learning. They must be socially capable, emotionally intelligent, and culturally competent”. (Koka M- Acting principal).*

Research highlights the need for leadership awareness of unintended negative consequences of schooling experience if there is an absence of student voice, student agency and social justice

within their school context. It points to ways leadership practices must evolve to provide safe transformative learning space that better meet the needs of students.



**( Image 10: Photo- Manukura (student leaders) Term 3, 2023)**

A strengths-based approach, intrinsic motivation and growth mindset and the development of Rangatiratanga/manukura (student leadership), kaitiaki (agency) of their own wellbeing (mauri tau, mauri ora, mauri oho, mauri moe) is needed for tamariki to thrive (Durie, 1997). This kura had a strong belief that nurturing relationships, strengthening identity, sense of belonging and cultural engagement would restore dignity and healthy lifestyles. The school's goal was to change the state of Mauri noho (languishing) to that of Mauri ora (flourishing).

## **7.4 Findings**

It became clear from observations, conversations, and feedback from parents, and whānau that the focus on the wellbeing of students, educators inclusive of whānau, have benefits for all within the contexts. The flow on effect of everyone striving to be well, have positive mental, emotional, and social outcomes. Predictable safe environments with adults that are consistent in the way that they show up every day brings psychological safety and creates a calming and

nurturing space for all. It is therefore, necessary for educators to have a shared understanding of wellness and wellbeing and that they are supported to be well.

The wellbeing model of this kura included domains and dimensions previously mentioned in the literature review but most prevalently, the model is holistic. There is a strong focus on culturally responsive practice and holistic wellbeing which included neglected domains such as spirituality (wairuatanga). The wellbeing of educators, students and their whānau are equally important for this kura because there is an understanding that the collective within their schooling context are in partnership and collectively responsible for the wellbeing of the tamariki (students) and each other. This kura had derived at a systems level that illustrates and supports a contextualised model that works for the collective in their setting.

Drawing also from the observations it is evident that this kura's experience aligns with the Literature that recognises that the implementation of a student school-based wellbeing model, is complex. The individuals as well as the context in which they interact in itself is also complex. It is influenced by the actions and commitment of the collective which shapes the wellbeing of the children and young people.

A key question for this kura is whether it is possible to construct a measurement instrument that collects accurate evidence of student wellbeing. Currently, student self-reporting and check-ins are used to gauge where their wellbeing is at. It can be argued that there can be a questionable degree to which it is possible to trust the authenticity of the student responses. A secondary limitation of self-reporting is the cognitive understanding and language capacity to answer the questions correctly.

Despite the recognition that a holistic whole school approach to wellbeing promotes and is beneficial to the collective in the context, it requires transformational change in the way the kura typically operates. It also requires a fundamental shift in the way that schools think about student wellbeing. This case study aimed to contribute towards challenging school leaders towards an openness and willingness to explore opportunities and equitable systems that advance student wellbeing.

This kura is part of a small minority of individual New Zealand schools that are paving the way towards exploring the emerging area of Trauma-informed practices through a cultural lens, relational neuroscience, the neuro-sequential model, and creating safe spaces and conditions for learning. This Case Study together with chapters 4 and 5 give insight into these emerging fields. Although these areas are yet to be further researched to understand the effects and impacts on student wellbeing, there is already clear benefits to be seen as it trauma informed practice address social inequities.

A new Mātauranga Māori framework for the understanding how the roro (brain) works “Te Whare o Oro”, written by Mclachlan, Kingi, Waitoki, Cribb-Fox. M, & Cribb-Fox .W, (2023) incorporates the Te Whare Tapa Wha model from Mason Durie in focussing on healthy development for tamariki Māori. Mclachlan et al., (2023) states, that the brain and the body are connected and that the body must be tau (at peace) to engage in higher levels of knowledge. Maclachlan et al., (2023) has laid a foundation for Mātauranga Māori as a lens to view neurodevelopment and trauma through the metaphor of te whāre tipuna (marae-house of our ancestors). These lessons bring recognition for the role of whānau their needs and identified strengths that create mana-enhancing pathways to healing.

Consequently if trauma-informed practices are to be implemented as a component to a school-based wellbeing model, a systems and policy change is needed to transform a school culture from a behaviourist and punitive approach to a trauma informed care approach. There has to be learning and understanding for educators about:

- Neuro-sequential development -understanding how the trauma brain works
- Māori philosophy related to the brain
- Understanding of the Polyvagal theory
- Relational neuroscience
- Understanding of neurodiversity
- Creating whakatau spaces and āhurutanga (psychological safe spaces and conditions) for learning

All of the above includes policy and systems change to a design of an equitable, social just system that caters for the wellbeing needs of all students in a culturally responsive way. Further

studies and research to see how these elements can support trauma-informed practices from a cultural perspective to be impactful for tamariki Māori and rangatahi Māori.

## **7.5 Chapter Summary**

This chapter concludes the Case study which contributed to the data collection on the factors that impact on students being and what it means for students to be well at school. The next chapter summarizes and reports on the findings and results identified in this thesis. The next chapter identifies challenges, opportunities of new and emerging areas and under-researched areas that could add value to and equitable implementation of a school-based wellbeing model.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **FINDINGS AND RESULTS FROM THE RESEARCH**

#### **8.0 Chapter Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings from this research study. The data collected from participants' interviews, questionnaires, wānanga, school documents, literature reviews and reviews of school-based health models were analysed using a reflexive thematic analysis.

The data in this study came from the shared lived experiences of leaders, teachers, tutors, as well as students and their whānau, all of whom forms part of the collective within the educational setting. These experiences were compared to data from the literature review to further support understandings of how the wellbeing of students is experienced in the education setting and how this is paramount to their wellbeing to enhance learning success and positive outcomes. The interviews and questionnaires to leaders were to explore their awareness, understanding and readiness to implement school-based models of wellbeing. The Case study supports and give insight into the lived experiences of the implementers and receivers of a holistic whole school approach to wellbeing. The data gathered also helped inform the answers to the four research questions posed. Data from individual and focus group interviews were transcribed verbatim and imported into a table and were thematically analysed to identify similar themes and how they correspond with the research presented.

A three-tier approach to data collection was used to produce the overall data findings. The first was derived from students (student voice), a second set of data came from educators (school leaders and teacher voice), and the final set of data came from parents/families and whānau (whānau voice). This was done with the purpose of investigating the role that students play in their own wellbeing, as well as the role of educators and the role of whānau as part of the collective in a whole school approach to student wellbeing. A comprehensive literature review was used to investigate school-based wellbeing models and implementation globally, also to review Māori and Pasifika health models. The themes that derived from the literature review was compared to the views and perspectives gained from the student, educator, and whānau

voice to highlight challenges and identify opportunities and impacts, as well as find the gaps that currently exist in the space of school-based wellbeing implementation.

This chapter is therefore, divided into four sections 1) key findings from the literature review, 2) the data collection process, 3) a discussion on the tables and figures and its intended purpose to add the voices of the collective within the schooling context and 4) how the research questions were answered. This chapter concludes with a correlation of these sections to summarise the thesis findings.

As stated in the Methodology chapter, to aid the authenticity of my research as in insider researcher, I use the approach suggested by Coghlan and Brannick (2014) which separates personal reflections and insights from the data presented.

### **8.1 Key themes that emerged from the literature review findings.**

The findings of this study identified a few key areas of challenge, the prohibitors, as well as the key contributors that can either be strengthened or added as valuable components to adopt for more successful school-based wellbeing implementation:

1. There are several perceived challenges and barriers that prohibits effective implementation and measuring of wellbeing and this limit the extent to which leaders are can effectively implement school-based wellbeing practices and initiatives.
2. For wellbeing implementation to be impactful, student wellbeing cannot be viewed in isolation of its collective and the student's voice.
3. Educator's wellbeing is challenging to promote even though it is an important contributor for student success and wellbeing.
4. School organizational culture, ethos, structure, and a psychological safe environment are important factors to cultivate student wellbeing and safety.
5. Student voice place connected, respectful and predictable relationships at the heart of their wellbeing.

6. A holistic approach to wellbeing (body, soul, mind, spirit) includes cultural identity, cultural practices and collectivism.
7. That there are new emerging areas such as trauma-informed practice and relational neuroscience that are valuable components to wellbeing, that should be considered as strengthening factors and components to a school-based wellbeing model.

To summarise, the findings of this study suggests that it is necessary to look at filling the existing gaps by introducing new components such as trauma informed practice, neuroscience, as well as the importance of creating psychological safe spaces for learning. Adding greater emphasis on the inclusion of culture and identity, and specifically wairuatanga (spirituality) contributes value to a holistic whole school approach to student wellbeing. A whole school approach to student wellbeing involves educators therefore, their wellbeing is important for positive student learning and achievement outcomes. Whānau wellbeing, including the school community enhances a more effective and sustainable school-based wellbeing implementation.

#### 8.1.1 *Challenges, prohibitors and barriers identified as key themes that emerged from the data.*

Findings suggests that schools are ideal sites for the promotion of student wellbeing as it can provide opportunity to implement practices that can address issues such as mental health issues. This can be done through whole school approach with practices that are embedded in the school culture, policies, and curriculum. However, implementation of wellbeing in schools has proven to be challenging as it requires fundamental changes in ways schools operate and are organised.

The study points out these key prohibitors, barriers and challenges for student wellbeing promotion and implementation in schools:

- Challenges related to the meaning and multifaceted understanding of student wellbeing which brings lack of understanding of the importance of a holistic and culturally responsive implementation of student wellbeing.
- Measuring wellbeing is difficult due to its complexity and the multi-faced nature and how wellbeing is being understood and defined differently in different contexts.
- Lack of funding, resources, and time to address and support teacher learning.

- School-based wellbeing is often mistakenly linked to and seen as challenging student behaviours that need to be addressed.
- Schools have no control over out of school social-economic factors, home and family life, community, and environmental factors such as social media, which influences and impacts student wellbeing.

#### *8.1.1a) The challenge of meaning and understanding of the concept of wellbeing*

The term *Wellbeing* have become general use in education in recent years but is used and understood in different ways in different contexts. This paper findings argues that a more comprehensive understanding of Wellbeing is essential to promote student wellbeing in educational settings. The lack of uniformity in the interpretation of policy by professionals creates an indirect gap in understanding wellbeing within educational research. Attempts to examine wellbeing through empirical studies have been made by researchers, but even then, the research focusses on one or two aspects or components of wellbeing. Most educational research examine time-bound programmes that mostly target vulnerable children or their behaviours.

From the overall findings of the literature reviews and discussions, it becomes apparent that because the notion of wellbeing is understood differently, as a result, it is implemented differently in different contexts, even within the domains and components of the wellbeing models. The research suggests however, that a whole-school approach to promoting student wellbeing can be effective, despite it also being challenging and complex to implement. One reason whole-school approaches are effective is because they include multiple components that address different layers of the system that surrounds students. However, less is known about which is the most effective component, how they can be aligned to become holistic, and which student group it would best benefit.

The research outlined had demonstrated an often inconsistent relationship between wellbeing and achievement due to the variability and clarity of the understanding of wellbeing definition; its implementation methods and approaches, commitment, consistency, and length of time of delivery, within each of the educational contexts.

Given that the notions of wellbeing have appeared in academic and educational research for several years, there has been a few attempts made to define the term itself. The way to resolve this contradiction of wellbeing understanding, is to establish a common definition of student wellbeing that is applicable across all educational sectors. Although it may bring greater consistency in resourcing, monitoring, measuring, and responding, it is also important to note however, that if there was to be a consistent sector-wide definition of student wellbeing, that there may be a consequent loss of schools' independency to design wellbeing models and approaches that are contextualised, holistic and cultural.

#### *8.1.1b) Challenge of measuring wellbeing*

As school processes, policies and procedures differ from context to context, and there is no universal method of delivery, it therefore becomes challenging to track and monitor impact on students wellbeing and to gain a reliable picture. The evidence on the content and effectiveness of programmes and practices, and the pedagogy is unclear as some implementations are more effective than others. Currently, the quality of the programmes, models or initiatives, and the consistency with which it is implemented, is measured through the impacts on students' behaviour, engagement and attitudes. Most of these programmes are fragmented and appear to be isolated from collectivism, and a holistic and cultural understanding of wellbeing. Hence, there is a need to consider a more comprehensive, culturally responsive, holistic approach and framework to wellbeing of children, as this is an integral part of their identity and their school lives. This also applies to the measurement of wellbeing, it is unsure whether it is possible to measure student wellbeing accurately when it is done independently of the students' cultural background. It could be argued, that a culturally appropriate measurement tool needs to be constructed to give validity to the outcomes.

Currently, the most impactful way to measure wellbeing of individuals is to focus on capturing student voice and insights through responses to questions and in-depth interviews, or conversations. Findings shows that most of the global longitudinal measurement of wellbeing is through self-reported answers to questionnaires or surveys using measurement tools designed to measure certain aspects of health and wellbeing. These are often a set of commonly

represented or shared aspects of wellbeing topics and is based on national and international research into student wellbeing. When measuring wellbeing often relational factors, environmental, and home conditions are excluded as influencers, enablers or prohibitors of their wellbeing. The research states, that a distinction between *influential factors on wellbeing* and measures *of wellbeing* is fundamental to the process and definition of designing a measurement model, scale, or tool for student wellbeing. Measuring of wellbeing is currently that of individuals rather than group measurement, using subjective indicators such as questions about feelings and judgements of life. The act of measuring does not in itself lead to improvement of the components being measured; it is only indicative of how the person feels at a specific time. To move from promoting wellbeing to measuring wellbeing, is consequently complex. There are currently no clear reliable and valid tools to measure holistic wellbeing to support the interpretation of its impact.

#### *8.1.1c) The challenge of lack of funding resources and time to address teacher learning*

Promoting student wellbeing requires both structured time to teach the required knowledge, skills, and attitudes, as well as time to respond to social, and emotional issues, behaviours and conflict management. Time for the promotion and implementation of student wellbeing activities, programmes, and or practices also must compete with the more traditional academic learning areas, and the availability of health services and community agencies. Time allocation for teacher training is influenced by the extent to which student wellbeing is considered as important within each context.

The underlying issue that the findings highlight is the shared understanding of the deeper meaning of student wellbeing and how it can be achieved by educators. In most cases schools are still traditionally structured to view student wellbeing as separate from academic learning and the ensuring of orderly disciplined environments. These traditions and structures are deeply embedded in the school culture and thus funding and resources are often allocated to where schools place importance, priority, and value.

There is also a lack of funding from the governments and ministries of education to resource and support wellbeing implementation.

*8.1.1d) School wellbeing is often mistakenly linked to and seen as challenging student behaviours*

Student wellbeing is often rooted into the behavioural system which is seen as a predictor of the wellness. During the discussion with twelve leaders, one of them had a semi-constructed policy that leaned towards student wellbeing specifically, others include wellbeing within their health and physical curriculum policy. Nevertheless, behaviour policies were embedded within their schools' values, beliefs, and approaches. These were designed mostly with clear expectations for behaviour. Reward systems were identified within the behaviour policies as recognition for good behaviour and were often rewarded during assemblies in the form of certificates, badges, etc. Sanctions identified in most schools include stand downs, detention, exclusions, and isolation. This excludes relational connections and signal a heavy reliance on rewards and punishment and at times shame (as was highlighted in the student voice section).

As is highlighted in the Trauma-informed standalone chapter in this study, many of these disciplinary actions are directed towards students with disabilities or those that display trauma behaviours that are fight-flight-freeze responses. At times educators do not recognise the difference between wilful and involuntary stress responses displayed from these students. They do not recognise that behaviour is a form of communication for help and draws conclusions that questions the behaviour. Many a time unseen factors such as trauma and neurodiverse factors make students incapable of meeting the behaviour expectations and compliances schools expect. For example, due to health conditions such as ADHD, students may be unable to regulate their emotions, and this could be an underlying feature of the disruptive behaviour. This brings us back to the challenge of training of staff to update their understanding of brain development, neuroscience, neurodiversity, and trauma responses.

We should have schools where adults have high expectations of students and never lower their standards because of poor behaviour. However, adults should have the calmness, build rapport, and have emotional currency to have control of themselves, before they attempt to control the students. Research findings in the trauma informed chapter shows that emotionally mature adults are flexible enough to change and be present to respond in the toughest moments and not react with judgement, but keep everyone safe. Finding states that if adults are predictable

and consistent in their expectation and restorative conversations, they will change behaviours and manage them less.

#### *8. 1.1e) Challenge of schools' lack of control on factors outside of school*

Schools have no control over external factors such social-economic factors, home and family life, social media, community, and environmental factors that influence and impacts student wellbeing. Intergenerational factors such as trauma and marginalisation that impacts on student wellbeing are also present, and school is the place where these impacts are most felt and seen. Given the Covid pandemic where children were forced to stay at home, their home life played a significant role in how they returned to school, and some are yet to return.

The research argues that if a child is not nurtured by home and society and are made to feel insecure, they will develop psychological defences that will exhibit throughout their life. The research asserts, that psychological defences and coping strategies may interfere with the child's ability to learn and survive school expectations, and therefore they struggle to comply. Schools are increasingly involved in incidents where activities of students at home, or in their own time, (for example online bullying and vaping) have an impact on life in school.

Similarly, the findings states that some positive non-school factors such as positive role-models, sport and cultural experiences and participation in youth activities can strengthen student wellbeing. When children and young people have avenues to reduce their stress, improve their physical and mental health, and explore other interests, they can better focus on school and navigate academic challenges.

#### *8.1.2 For wellbeing implementation to be impactful, student wellbeing cannot be viewed in isolation of its collective.*

Findings also show that student wellbeing cannot not be viewed in isolation and be removed from the wider school context and the collective therein. Finding shows that when schools talk about whole school approaches to wellbeing it is often referring to all classrooms across the school participation, but does not take into consideration the collective within its context.

Findings suggest that the key implementers in school face numerous interconnected challenges starting with educators being well themselves, and having a shared understanding of what it means to be well, for both them and the students.

Schools provide both a context and can act as the agents of change for student wellbeing. Māori whānau acknowledges a holistic, collectivist thinking about health versus Eurocentric individualistic thinking. School communities and whānau provide therefore, both the defining context which has the potential to significantly influence student wellbeing. A school whānau and community have often been defined in how they experience a of sense of belonging, participation, and engagement. To fulfil the role as a contributor to student wellbeing, any school community should be readily identifiable according to its function. Beckett (2000), measure and evaluated schools as caring communities and defined communities as ‘*a cohesive caring group with a shared purpose*’ in this instance, the shared purpose being the promotion of student health and wellbeing.

The wellbeing of members of the school community is so inextricably linked that it can become either a righteous or threatening cycle, with effects on the wellbeing of others resulting in a continuous process of wellbeing decline or improvement. A whole school approach to student wellbeing, therefore, involves educators as well as the whānau wellbeing, including the school community, to contribute to be effective and sustainable implementation.

### *8.1.3 Educator wellbeing are challenging to promote, even though it is an important contributor for student success and wellbeing.*

Findings also propose, that system and school-level actions must prioritise and monitor school leader and staff wellbeing. Schools can do this by providing necessary school resources, address escalating workload and have sufficient staff capacity to support the complex needs of the students and school community. Establishing a school culture that values and normalises respectful and positive relationships, work-life balance, and psychological safe environments, can thereby reduce the harm from work overload, stress, and intensity.

The literature finding states, that when taking a school system approach to improving the collective wellbeing, it should be contextualised, and embedded into the school culture. Training and support provided to the leadership and staff, will have the greatest effect. This

goes beyond increasing knowledge of educators to the understanding of the importance of the elements that effect their wellbeing, but also understanding the links to student wellbeing. Findings state if school staff does not have a positive sense of wellbeing this impacts on their ability to perform effectively. Stress at work also effects their professional relationships. Lack of job satisfaction and poor physical and mental health has a knock-on effect on students' wellbeing. Teachers who persist with low level of personal wellbeing are exhausted and become emotionally and socially disconnected from students which can influence the school climate. School leader and staff wellbeing thus, is critical to help students reach their full potential.

Further findings are that the Covid pandemic has further exposed the high rates of school leader and staff stress and exhaustion from the intensification of their frontline work supporting the health, development, and learning of their students. Governments, school systems and the community must act now to reduce the potential impact of 'long-COVID' on our school leaders, staff (and students') wellbeing. Promoting and supporting educators' wellbeing is an explicit way of making a clear commitment to wellbeing implementation.

*8.1.4 School organizational culture, ethos, structure, and a psychological safe environment are important to cultivate student wellbeing and safety.*

Research states that school ethos and culture are critical components for successful schooling outcomes and can have a deep impact on student and staff wellbeing. Leaders and principals view students' wellbeing as integral to learning but school structures and practices often prohibits the aspiration of wellbeing implementation. Principals find that strategic direction, organizational beliefs, policies, and approaches to student wellbeing has greater impact.

Literature also suggests, that a school's ethos and environment serve as key determinants of wellbeing and mental health in schools. This can be argued, goes beyond policy, as a school's ethos and environment is a place where students should feel connected, listened to, and supported, this is central to their wellbeing, engagement, and achievement.

### *8.1.5 Student voice place connected, respectful and predictable relationships at the heart of their wellbeing.*

Research of this thesis established the importance of student voice as an essential component of a whole school approach to wellbeing. When conducted well student voice can improve sense of belonging and connection, and in doing so, can improve wellbeing and behaviour. As a result, schools need to engage students, include their suggestions and perspectives, respect their cultures and backgrounds, and provide peer support that enable them to become active participants in their own wellbeing.

There is a clear agreement in the literature that some young people are at a greater risk of mental and health difficulties and may need increased levels of support without the judgement and stigma attached. Some children and young people are at a greater risk due to life circumstances and home environments, adverse childhood experiences, trauma, and neurodiverse challenges, which requires targeted interventions and support that will have positive impact on their wellbeing.

Children and young people's own views of what wellbeing means to them is not well-addressed in the overall research literature, however many studies report on it. Children and young people's perceptions of wellbeing appear quite clear. Studies done by Fattore, Mason, & Watson (2007) had identified 3 themes in their view of wellbeing as 1) having 'agency' or mana (power) to take independent action, 2) a sense of 'security' to able to engage fully in life and 3) having a 'positive sense of self', or feeling good about who you are and what you do. Similar studies done by Layard & Dunn (2009) found the themes on what 14–16-year-olds saw as a good childhood was, having positive relationships with others, safety, and freedom. Although wellbeing programmes are more defined by experts, it has differences to young people's views, which might have implications for practice and implementation.

*8.1.6 A holistic approach to wellbeing (body, soul, mind, spirit) includes cultural identity, and practices and collectivism.*

Inclusion of student voice, their culture and identity as important informants of their needs is an essential element to recognise if a holistic approach to wellbeing is to be child centred. Cultural identity and factors that constitutes identity, such as beliefs and traditions, are often not included and woven into the wellbeing models. For example, for models to be holistic the element of spirituality, which is a core element for te ao Māori (Māori world view) and relevant to mental health needs to be included. However, it is often ignored as a component of the holistic wellbeing model due to the challenges to personal beliefs it presents to implement it. Whānau voice in this research identified that Māori value the principles of a kotahitanga (collectivist approach) and whanaungatanga (family relationships) approach to wellbeing as it binds people together and provides a sense of unity and belonging, as well as collective responsibility (mahi ngātahi). Hence, the inclusion of whānau as an important part of a school-based wellbeing model. Exploring the shape of wellbeing policy and practice for Māori students and their wellbeing protection, is a next step in promoting student wellbeing.

*8.1.7 New and emerging areas such as trauma-informed practice, neuroscience as valuable components to wellbeing as strengthening factors.*

Findings suggests that it is also necessary to look at filling the gaps by including new components such as trauma informed practice, neuroscience, neurodiversity and creating psychological safe spaces. These are key aspects that are overlooked as important factors that can strengthen a wellbeing model and thus add value to sustainable implementation. The gaps that have been identified are:

- Assumption that individuals have control over their behaviour and will change behaviour if given the right information, incentive, reward and or punishment hence, the exclusion of Trauma-informed care and neuroscience as additional components of a wellbeing model.
- Connected Relationships are key contributors to positive student wellbeing therefore relational neuroscience needs to be considered.
- A predictable, consistent, psychological safe school environment is key to student wellbeing.

An emerging and growing research base demonstrates a strong association between the experiences of trauma in childhood and poor physical and mental health, and academic functioning as long-term negative outcomes. As attention to childhood trauma has grown so are the calls for schools to take an active role in supporting students experiencing trauma. These calls should now be extended beyond the efforts of individual schools to mandated policies. Not only is the call for systems to recognise and respond with appropriate supports but they must realise the role of trauma in contributing to other behaviours and wider health needs of students.

Findings further emphasise that a whole-school approach involves creating supportive, safe, caring, and friendly learning environments. This is often found to be at odds with the traditional ways of discipline, order, respect, and that are mostly punitive and consequence-based approaches to discipline. All these strategies have short-term efficacy. Wellbeing leaders account of the challenges that relate to their school cultures, revolve around the tensions between their aspirations to implement a trauma informed approach to that of challenging teacher attitude which are often incompatible to these aspirations. A Wellbeing team report that they are often called in to fix behavioural, emotional, and mental issues which could be minimalised if there was relational trust or understanding by teachers of how the trauma brain works. Trauma informed practices and the creation of safe and calming spaces for learning, adds value to the wellbeing model. These findings have implications for leadership to adopt transformative practices as well as continuing professional development for self and staff.

Overall, culture, language, and identity as well as social and emotional learning are viewed as fundamental to student wellbeing and should be at the fore of the frameworks. Social and emotional learning should be localised within Indigenous understandings of wellbeing. It should therefore be an important component or aspect within a school-based wellbeing model.

In my view the purpose of wellbeing in education should not be to provide an alternative treatment for reducing mental, social, and emotional difficulties, but rather to help children to learn to stay happy, healthy, and flourishing by focussing on them as individual, unique, holistic beings with strengths, aspirations and potential.

## 8.2 Data collection

Data collected in this thesis was through a combination of surveys and questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with focus groups. Where semi-structured interviews were selected the researcher aspired to adhere to the values and principles of tikanga Māori to ensure that the rights ways of doing with Māori especially, our tamariki was done. Interviews were done in a respectful and humble manner understanding that the participants were the holders of the knowledge and experiences.

The data in this study as previously stated, came from the experiences of leaders, teachers and students and their whānau in the educational context. A three-tier approach to data collection was used to produce the overall data findings. The first was derived from students (student voice), second set of data came from educators (school leaders and teacher voice), and the final set of data came from parents/families and whānau (whānau voice).

This was done with the purpose of investigating the role that students play in their own wellbeing, as well as the role of educators and whānau as part of the collective in a whole approach to student wellbeing. A comprehensive literature review was used to investigate school-based wellbeing models and implementation globally and Māori and Pasifika health models.

The themes that derived from the literature review was compared to the views and perspectives gained from the student, educator, and whānau voice to highlight challenges, and identify opportunities and impacts as well as gaps that currently exist in the space of school-based wellbeing implementation.

These experiences were compared to data from the literature review to further support understandings of how the wellbeing of students is experienced in the education setting and how this is paramount to their learning success and positive outcomes. The data gathered also helped inform the answers to the four questions posed. The Case study supports and give insight into the lived experiences of the implementation of a holistic whole school approach to wellbeing. Table 7 outlines the research design.

**Table 23 Research design**

Research questions	Evidence required to answer the question	How will this evidence be gathered?
<p>What impact will a contextualized and culturally responsive, holistic, whole school approach to wellbeing make to successful schooling outcomes for all learners and early adolescence learners (Rangatahi) in particular.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of school- based wellbeing models globally</li> <li>• Review of school-based cultural models</li> <li>• Rational of policies, programmes, and practices</li> <li>• Experiences and perceptions of school leaders and school wellbeing leaders</li> <li>• School curriculum and implementation documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literature review methodology</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Questionnaires</li> <li>• Analysis of documents and Policies</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Analysis of wellbeing components implemented at schools globally</li> </ul>
<p>What does the Rangatahi (early adolescence students) voice say about their schooling experiences of how their wellbeing challenges are understood during their developmental stages.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus groups of adults</li> <li>• Focus groups of children</li> <li>• Case Study</li> <li>• School applications and measures</li> <li>• Field notes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews-focus groups</li> <li>• Semi-structured interviews</li> <li>• School survey data and questionnaire</li> <li>• Measurement tools</li> <li>• Field notes</li> <li>• Literature review</li> <li>• Observations</li> </ul>
<p>Does nurturing the wellbeing of leaders, teachers and whanau have an impact on students’ cognitive development and successful learning outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus group of principals</li> <li>• Focus group of whanau</li> <li>• Focus group of teachers</li> <li>• Student focus groups to include student voice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questionnaires on google forms.</li> <li>• Wananga type interviews</li> <li>• Semi structured interviews</li> <li>• Literature review</li> </ul>
<p>To what extend do schools currently implement wellbeing practices and how are these elements reflective throughout the school systems, policies, procedures, curriculum, school ethos and school culture with the understanding that it is a critical</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus groups of teachers, leadership team, staff, support staff</li> <li>• School curriculum documents on student wellbeing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Thematic Analysis of documents</li> <li>• Interviews</li> </ul>

component for successful schooling outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of models and frameworks currently used in schools globally.</li> <li>• Māori Health Models</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questionnaires</li> <li>• Review and analysis</li> </ul>
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The data gathered also helped inform the answers to the four questions posed. Data from individual and focus group interviews were transcribed verbatim and imported into a table and were thematically analysed to identify similar themes and how they correspond with the research presented.

## Participants

Participants in this study were:

12 NZ Principals/school leaders locally and nationally

Nineteen teachers

48 year 6 to 8 students

6 year 9 students

3 Wellbeing team members

4 Leadership team members

6 Adults for the case study (frontline support staff, tutors, and teachers)

A total of twenty-two whānau voices were included.

- 3 Kaumatua voices
- 9 Whānau member voices (41 whānau were present at a haerenga of which nine quotes of whānau voice were used from the wānanga. These voices are representative of the voices of other whānau members that were present).
- Two groups of five mums (5 in the neurodiverse support group, five working with the whānau facilitator on their wellbeing)

### 8.3 Discussion tables and figures and its intended function

#### Principal voices:

Tables 1 to 6 in chapter 2 are representative of the voices of 6 NZ principals nationally to gauge their understanding of student wellbeing, its implementation and impacts. To compare and contrast wellbeing implementation from a different and more cultural perspective, tables 8 to 18 in chapter 6 includes the voices from 6 local female Māori principals. Figures 8 to 11 is based on questionnaires completed by 6 Female principals who are of Māori descent and formed part of a professional learning group. These figures are indicative of their implementation and measurement to school-based student wellbeing practice.

Themes that derived from the principal voice data:

#### Implementation of wellbeing:

- *Variable understanding of the concept of wellbeing*
- *Variability in components, practices, fragmentation and time of implementation of programmes.*
- *Aspects of a holistic approach to wellbeing are taught in isolation.*
- *Different views on how impact is measured and measurement tools used.*
- *Variation in understanding of measuring student wellbeing*
- *School are not consistent in wearing a cultural lens when implementing student wellbeing programmes*
- *New immerging aspects such as trauma informed practice and neuroscience were identified.*

#### Personal wellbeing:

- *Personal wellbeing is impacted by workload stress, long hours of work, added duties and tasks curing Covid Pandemic, burnout*
- *Funding, resourcing, time, staffing are identified as barriers to effective implementation*
- *Conflict and safety: psychologically unsafe environments causes extra stress*
- *No time or limited time for self-care and whānau/family*

- *Māori principals viewed wellbeing as a holistic approach and refer to “The Te Whare Tapa Wha” health model and they also include whānau as part of their personal wellbeing framework.*
- *Some principals consider a more comprehensive approach to wellbeing which are inclusive of nutrition and lifestyle practices.*

## **Teacher voices**

Figures twelve to sixteen include the voices and views of ten teachers on their personal wellbeing. It is based on a questionnaire using the google forms platform. Tables 17 to 20 are from a second group of nine teacher participants. These seek to show their wellbeing challenges and how these impacts on their performance and the wellbeing of their students.

Themes from the teacher voice:

### Workplace wellbeing

- *Workload, stress, time, impacts on their health and how they show up at school.*
- *Unnecessary administration tasks*
- *Dealing with parent/whanau issues*
- *Concerns for Tamariki wellbeing and home environments*
- *Professional relationships*
- *Changes*
- *Challenging student behaviours*

### Personal wellbeing

- *Limited time for selfcare*
- *Performance measurement of anxiety levels during covid varies.*
- *Emotional stress due to coping with challenging behaviours of students.*
- *Trauma triggers when they become dysregulated.*
- *Psychological safe environments – teachers want to be heard and acknowledged.*
- *Teachers want support and resources to enable wellbeing of self and gain wellbeing implementation strategies.*

## Student voices

Figures 1 to 7 in chapter 6 is based on the voices of 48 year 6 to 8 students. This data was collected and accumulated through the google form platform survey. It captures how students feel about themselves and what makes them happy and how they understand the concept of wellbeing. It also finds out about their view on the importance of the role of their teacher in their lives. Table 39 in the Case study chapter captures the lived experience of six year 9 students transitioning to secondary school.

Themes from the student voice data:

What makes them happy?

- *When they feel good about themselves*
- *When their teachers take an interest*
- *When they are listened to and acknowledged*
- *When they are treated fairly*
- *When they are respected*

What matters to them?

- *Relationships with teachers/educators*
- *Relationships with whānau*
- *Peer relationships and friendships*
- *Acceptance and inclusion*
- *Connectedness*
- *Predictable environments and safe learning spaces*
- *Culture, language and identify.*
- *That their voice matters and that they are allowed to be agents of their own learning and wellbeing*

Implications: When honouring the dignity of children and young people and recognising their needs they feel empowered, engaged, and attend school. When interdependence and independence are cultivated in young people they flourish and thrive. Respecting student voice, their language, culture, and identity promote connected relationships. Inclusion brings feeling of safety and acceptance.

## Whānau voices

Tables 21 to 23 in chapter 6 includes Kaumatua (grandparents) voice. This was a wānanga type recorded interview. It was transcribed to bring out the main points of discussions which was relevant to the wellbeing of their mokopuna (grandchildren). Tables 24 to 27 in chapter 6 captures whānau voice from different whānau groupings in different forums.

What is important to whanau:

- *Inclusion into school decision-making and activities/events- feeling welcome.*
- *The wellbeing of their children – that they are happy and safe at school and that their teachers treat them with respect.*
- *They want their tamariki to be proud of their whakapapa (who they are, where they come from)*
- *Their own wellbeing is important to them.*
- *Being supported by the school and teachers*
- *Kaumatua voices wanted kura to acknowledge elements such as kaitiakitanga (guardianship) and kotahitanga (collectivism) in the wellbeing practices.*
- *Being acknowledge and respected.*

Implications: When whānau are included as part of the collective in a whole school approach to wellbeing it has a flow on effect to their tamariki. Whānau and community partnerships are established. A strength-based and collaborative approach support the wellbeing of students and their teachers.

## **Case Study - Chapter 7: Voices of the adults who are the implementers of a wellbeing model in a schooling context.**

### *Educators*

Tables 28 to 31 in chapter seven - the Case Study hears from the adult participants who are the implementers of the wellbeing and cultural practices that form an important part of the school wide holistic wellbeing model. Their views are transcribed from a recorded semi-structured interview. It captured the voices of six adults who worked closely with the students over a period of three plus years and after their return from the Covid pandemic.

These tables capture snippets and quotes transcribed from a semi-structured recorded interview. It also adds the quotes and snippets from a questionnaire as well as a continued discussion on creating safe spaces which was discussed in chapter five.

Key themes:

- *Student wellbeing was negatively affected by the Covid pandemic.*
- *A holistic approach to wellbeing implementation is more effective.*
- *Cultural practices, language and identity is paramount to student wellbeing (Māoritanga).*
- *Home conditions and factors impacts on student wellbeing.*
- *Creating safe and predictable environments help students to flourish.*
- *Physical education (waiora) is a big part of physical and mental wellbeing and it stimulate happiness.*
- *A holistic whole-school approach to wellbeing impacts on students' behaviour, engagement, and attendance.*
- *Students needs tools and strategies to cope with social and emotional wellbeing.*
- *Relationships with teachers and peers is very important to students.*
- *Trauma informed practices help understand and respond to behaviours better.*
- *Trauma informed practices help the teachers to become self-aware of their own triggers from their own trauma and how it impacts on their response to children's behaviour.*

*Wellbeing Team:*

Tables 32 to 35 in chapter seven of the Case study is based on a questionnaire from the three wellbeing team members in their various roles as supporters of the student wellbeing model implementation. It captures their role in working with the whānau of the students that they serve. This questionnaire also captures their perspectives on student wellbeing and the factors that they perceive as impacts on student wellbeing. Chapter seven also includes snippets from the whānau facilitator and her work with whānau and the whānau voices from an interview which she has conducted.

Key themes from his data

- *Whānau inclusive practices is a necessary part of the wellbeing model.*

- *Connecting whānau with nature and their whakapapa supports their wellbeing.*
- *Whānau need the correct support helping them to strengthen the four falls of their Te Whare Tapu Wha, they need reminding of their capabilities and strengths, they already have power and mana and can accomplish their own goals and aspirations.*
- *Working in partnership with whānau affirms their value, confirms their contributions, and builds relationships.*
- *It needs to be a whole community approach to implement wellbeing effectively.*

*Leadership team:*

Table 41 in chapter 7 captures the learning and insights of the past three years from the leadership team as implementers of the wellbeing model. This was a recorded interview with four members of the leadership team and the acting principal which was in a form of a wānanga type brainstorm and conversation. The conversation was about their learning experiences, observations and how and why they do things differently and the impacts that they have noticed. This wānanga was done by the wellbeing team leader so that my views as the researcher would not influence the results.

Themes of Learnings from this groups:

- *Having a holistic, whole school approach to wellbeing support the wellbeing of the collective.*
- *A whole school approach embeds transformative practices, shared learning and understanding.*
- *A trauma informed approach to wellbeing adds value to the model and brings understanding of challenging behaviours.*
- *Understanding how the trauma brain works helps teachers to respond to behaviours differently and in a timely manner- responsive versus reactive..*
- *Predictable adults and environments bring psychological safety for all.*
- *Respectful, connected relationships is key.*
- *Teachers need support with new learning and their own wellbeing to identify their own triggers.*
- *Whānau inclusive practices are paramount for successful and effective implementation of a student wellbeing model.*

- *It is important for whānau that their tamariki is well, happy and are supported.*
- *Whānau need support with their own wellbeing.*
- *Whānau are the key people of influence in the lives of their tamariki.*

### **Measurement of wellbeing**

Figures 36 to 39 in chapter seven, the Case Study discuss the measurements and impacts of a wellbeing model with the participants who are implementers of the wellbeing model at their school.

Findings: The school uses the Skodel wellbeing app as a check in tool. Wellbeing is self-reported by students, which allows for teachers to monitor and address concerning issues immediately. As previously mentioned, this a contentious and challenging area due to the variability of measures used by schools as well as different understanding of what it means to be well. Most leaders agree that a focus on wellbeing in whatever form brings, happiness, engagement, increased attendance, and a change in attitudes and behaviours. Reporting to whānau on wellbeing is a combination of the domains of the Te Whare Tapa Wha model and the NZ curriculum Key Competencies.

### **Stand-Alone Chapter four**

Tables 1 to 3 in chapter four as a stand- alone chapter, includes the voices from the leadership team to capture their experiences of a 2-year journey of implementing trauma-informed practices at their school.

Findings: There was initial resistance to the implementation of Trauma informed practices. With professional development and support for teachers from a wellbeing team, practices were embedded into the school culture. Creating a psychological safe environment changed teacher and student's responses to behaviours. Over time with the leadership commitment, teacher training and student support, wellbeing practices transformed the school culture from a behaviourist approach to a trauma informed response. Cultural practices support and whakatau (calming) spaces supported both teachers and students.

## **Researcher as the observer voice**

Table 40 in Chapter 7- Case study includes the Researcher observational condensed fieldnotes.

Findings: Wellbeing deriving from empowerment through interconnected relations, sense of belonging and inclusion across the collective leads to significant wellbeing improvement. When the necessary components are addressed in a holistic way, covering all domains through a whole school approach that are consistent brings psychological safety and builds relational trust. This can be achieved when there is a shared understanding.

## **8.4 Research questions and discussion**

The data gathered also helped inform the answers to the four research questions posed. Data from individual and focus group interviews were transcribed verbatim and imported into a table and were thematically analysed to identify similar themes and how they correspond with the research presented.

*Question 1 : What impact will a contextualized and culturally responsive, holistic, whole school approach to wellbeing make to successful schooling outcomes for all learners and early adolescence learners (Rangatahi) in particular.*

Findings on the impact on students:

Implementing a whole-school approach can be complex, requiring the involvement of a multitude of strategies, sites, and stakeholders, and making direct attribution of outcomes to interventions may not always be clear-cut. In addition, there appears to be a lack of information on the implementation process to determine why and how interventions worked or did not work.

St Leger et al., (2010) based on their review of research literature on health promotion assert, that school programmes that are integrated, holistic, and strategic are more likely to produce better health and educational outcomes than those which are information-based and implemented only in individual classrooms.

Norozi (2023) and Durie (2004) argue, that a holistic wellbeing framework capitalises on a student's strengths, abilities, attitudes, and personal engagement which can help fulfil meaningful roles in their development and learning. In addition, evidence suggests that wellbeing is linked to academic achievement therefore, students that come from trauma and deprived backgrounds can experience educational inequalities.

Haore et al (2017) assert that a whole school wellbeing approach cultivates strategies that can become early interventions and protection against later onset of mental health problems.

As a result, the impacts are:

- It cultivates strategies for early intervention to mental, emotional, and social health.
- If holistic it capitalizes on student strengths, abilities and engagement.
- If concepts taught are interrelated, it can sustain positive wellbeing.
- Positive student wellbeing impacts on better achievement in learning
- The principal group reported that when attention is given in creating safe learning spaces through wellbeing practices, that there is improvement in behaviours, attendance, and engagement.

*Question 2: What does the young children and Rangatahi (early adolescence students) voice say about their schooling experiences of how their wellbeing challenges are understood during their developmental stages.*

*Findings on Rangatahi (student) voice:*

Perry & Winfrey (2021) states that learning is about relational environments being safe, feeling connected, part of a community, where you are seen, and heard, and acknowledged by the teacher. There is an expanding body of research that highlights that school connectedness is a strong predictor of adolescent's positive health and academic outcomes, violence prevention, and student satisfaction.

Voices from the student surveys suggests that they do better at school if they have a relationship with their teacher and when they take an interest in them. Interviews with year 9 students suggest that their frustrations with school is being misunderstood, not heard, and being

marginalized. From the conversation the most disliked aspects of school are unfair treatment of their friends, disrespect, bullying behaviours from friends and teachers and double standards.

The most liked aspects are when their teacher take an interest and acknowledge them, take an interest in getting to know them.

Friendship and peer relationship, and their opinions and support, matter to adolescence students. Students who are agents of their own wellbeing feel empowered to make positive change. When students are involved in the daily organization and management of the classroom, they begin to positively manage themselves.

Perry & Winfrey (2011) further, that the more, healthy relationships a child has, the more likely they will be to recover from trauma and thrive as a result, relationships are agents of change.

The voices of children and Rangatahi underpinned by research says that they need:

- Positive connected relationships from predictable adults (educators and parents)
- Safe school environments where their identity and culture are respected, and their voices are heard.
- Acceptance and inclusion
- Positive interactions with peers in a safe environment
- Understanding of their behaviours- connections versus compliance
- Support that enables them to be kaitiaki (agents) of their own health
- Strategies to manage social and emotional learning.

*Question 3: Does the nurturing of the wellbeing of leaders, teachers and whanau have impact on students' cognitive development and successful learning outcomes?*

*Findings on the nurturing of the collective wellbeing on successful student outcomes:*

It is imperative to consider the influences on wellbeing, particularly the impact of school climate on the school community, when implementing policy and practices to improve school leaders' and staff mental health and wellbeing-not only for career performance and

commitment, but for the health and wellbeing of the whole school community. Children and young people's mental wellbeing is influenced by a wide range of factors: a sense of connectedness or belonging, stability, security, physical health, attachment and parenting, cultural identity, education environments and support through important transitions (such as from primary to secondary school) (Gillett-Swan, 2022).

The effect of these factors is reliant on how well the individual adults (educators, whānau and services) are within themselves and the awareness of the importance for them to take care of their own wellbeing. Engagement increases for both students and their families when school leaders are committed to working in partnership with parents and whānau of all students.

*Question 4: To what extent do schools currently implement wellbeing practices and how are these elements reflected throughout the school systems, policies, procedures, curriculum, school ethos and school culture with the understanding that it is a critical component for successful schooling outcomes.*

*Findings on the extent of wellbeing implementations, understandings, and awareness:*

The extent to which wellbeing is implemented is variable and depended on each school context. It is also depended on leaders' knowledge and willingness to adopt change and how this change is experienced by staff, parents, whānau and community. School-based wellbeing practice is also depended on the extent to which educators include student voice, identity, and experiences.

School systems and policies currently over-extend the focus on behaviour policies, and reward systems, and the physical education curriculum as predictors of student wellbeing. More emphasis should be on a holistic approach to wellbeing that include cultural, social and emotional learning, and trauma informed practices which leads to understandings of neuroscience and neurodiversity. Social and emotional learning should be localised within Indigenous understandings of wellbeing (Goodman, 2022). It should therefore be an important component or aspect within a school-based wellbeing model. Trauma informed practices and the creation of safe and calming spaces for learnings, learners, and teachers adds value to the wellbeing model.

These findings have implications for leadership to adopt transformative practices as well as continuing professional development for self and staff. True transformative and social justice leadership is not unchanged and straight forward, rather it is adaptive and based on new and evolving knowledge and systems, as well as relationships with students to include and capture their voice and lived experiences. Overall, culture, language, and identity as well as social and emotional learning are viewed as fundamental to student wellbeing and should be at the fore of the frameworks.

Building trauma sensitive and safe schools involves changes to school policy, practice, and culture. It requires ongoing efforts to ensure that all students are experiencing social and emotional safety, and educational success (Venet, 2023). It also requires commitment from leadership to ensure that teachers are well equipped and knowledgeable to meet the needs of students. This type of school climate does not occur magically rather, it must be cultivated through deliberate school-wide strategies, expectations, norms, and values. A safe supported school culture should reflect shared values that consider the communities and cultures that it serves. It must therefore include sound practices and have appropriate support including social wellbeing and mental health. It is important not to underestimate the benefits students obtain from a predictable school routine that creates a sense of safety and belonging.

### **8.5 Correlation of the findings**

From the combined findings, it is evident that for school-based wellbeing implementation to be impactful, the contextual barriers and challenges to implementation need to be recognised and addressed. As there is not yet a universal agreement of how wellbeing is understood and measured in educational settings, it is helpful for educators and whānau to know and have a shared understanding of what wellbeing looks like and is understood in their setting. If this definition is clear leaders and governance should work towards strategically invest in developing the ethos and culture of the context to create psychological safe learning environments that meet the wellbeing needs of the collective within their context.

A culturally responsive approach to wellbeing implementation promotes a holistic framework that includes the voices of the collective. A holistic framework that includes trauma informed

practices and neurodiversity capitalises on students' strengths, abilities, attitudes and personal engagement that address some of the inequalities that they experience. Whānau and community partnerships needs to be strengthened as they are key influencers of student wellbeing.

Student voice clearly asks for relational environments where they feel safe, connected, respected, included and allowed to be agents of their own health and learning. Support for educators to develop their social and emotional abilities, and skills to become resilient and effective in the workplace should be considered as part of their wellbeing promotion. Support and resources should be given to educators to feel empowered to support student needs and challenges.

Exploring the shape of wellbeing policy and practice for young children, Rangatahi, their whānau, and their wellbeing protection, is a next step in promoting student wellbeing. The correlation of the findings calls for leadership commitment to transform school cultures, systems, and policies. Findings identifies that a school-based wellbeing framework should include:

- Governance and Leadership commitment and vision to support change and transformational evidence, scientific based practices as well as emerging new fields of wellbeing.
- Inclusion of, and partnership with the collective voices in the educational setting.
- A culturally responsive view, contextual differences and diversity should be considered when making decisions about wellbeing practices.
- Understanding of holistic wellbeing and Māori philosophy of wellbeing.
- Support systems and policies that promote the wellbeing of the collective in the context.
- Support funding and resources that allows training for educators to effectively implement wellbeing practices that are beneficial themselves as well as the students and their whānau.
- Values, ethos, culture, and environments that promotes psychological safety.
- Identify, monitor, and measure impacts and interventions using a culturally constructed measurement tool to provide targeted support.

## 8.6 Chapter Summary

From the overall findings it is clear that involving students in time-tabled programmes is not enough, the whole school community needs to promote wellbeing and it should be implemented across every aspect of school life. It should become “*a way of being*” which is embedded into the school culture, its values, ethos, and policies.

For students to be well, their support systems and people have to be well. For students to be well, their strengths culture and identity need to be recognised and for them to be well, the systems around them must be socially and educationally equitable and just.

This concludes the data findings from the literature reviews and participant discussions. The next chapter concludes the thesis with future recommendations.

## **CHAPTER NINE**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **9.0 Chapter Introduction**

This chapter concludes the thesis and considers the extent to which the aims and objectives of this study has been met. It also synthesizes the most notable findings. This is followed by a summary of the studies contribution to new knowledge by identifying emerging concepts of wellbeing that must be included as components to effective and equitable wellbeing implementation. The concluding chapter highlights these areas as recommendations as future implications for practice, policy and research and ends with a reflective comment.

#### **9.1 Thesis overview**

The aim of this thesis was to investigate school-based wellbeing implementation in its current form, the challenges, barriers, and its effectiveness. A secondary aim was to interpret how students are experiencing wellbeing and the factors that impacts on them being well at school. This thesis also set out to investigate contextual factors and conditions that contributes to successful student wellbeing and academic outcomes. The answers to these questions informed how wellbeing models could be better framed to complement and strengthen current practices and give recommendations on future wellbeing discourse.

This thesis also reviewed existing frameworks components and school-based wellbeing models through a literature review methodology. This thesis provides evidence of the voices from the collective within the educational setting in comparison to the literature review on school-based student wellbeing implementation . It brings connection to the views of the collective and the extent and awareness of how wellbeing is currently perceived and implemented. The key informants of the collective voice had given insight and contributed personal views of their experiences.

This thesis explored evidence-based limitations of current policies, approaches and practices and highlights new emerging research areas that can add value to existing components. The thesis, therefore, investigated emerging new concepts of wellbeing as well as domains that will advance a more integrated approach to implementation.

I, therefore, argue in this thesis, that the emerging areas such as relational neuroscience, neurodiversity, the polyvagal theory, the neuro-sequential model to understand trauma, and trauma responsive care through a cultural lens, should be further investigated as valuable future components of an effective school-based wellbeing model. I also argue, that if these areas were to be included that a safe psychological learning environment in which to deliver such practices is paramount. This is a call for policy transformation that ensures support for teacher and leadership training in these areas take priority.

I also argue that for a holistic approach to wellbeing to be complete and well served, the area of wairuatanga (spirituality) should be further researched to gain wider understanding of the deeper meaning of and its place in a school-based wellbeing model.

My concluding argument is that if we want the implementers of the wellbeing model to do justice to student wellbeing their wellbeing should be seen as the highest importance. Educator (especially those of principals) wellbeing needs should, consequently, should be met first.

## **9.2 Key findings**

The findings established, that despite the recognition of challenge, a whole-school approach to wellbeing can bring transformational change in the way a school typically operates. While this is promising, the research has been limited in terms of demonstrating the effectiveness, due to the inherent complexity of practice and multi-level systems approach that influences implementation. Regardless, it requires fundamental shifts in the schools' policies, curriculum activities, culture, structure, relationship, and commitment from all stakeholders involved. The inclusion of student voice can contribute to sustainable outcomes. Our children and young people are our singular most focus and at the centre of everything we do hence, extensive support should sit behind each of them. Their wellbeing and educational experiences are our priority and moral imperative. Their most important support comes from the teachers and

principals who guide them. Teacher and principal's wellbeing being must for this reason, be looked after by reducing workload stressors such as class size, non-contact time and administration work that impacts on educators' mental health and wellbeing. Surveys measuring the wellbeing of principals and teachers demonstrated the increase of workloads, and barriers to obtaining support for principal wellbeing leads to early retirement.

Professional development and training for teachers and principals are inequitable and mostly reliant on funding resources. Government decision and resources directly affect the quality of education and care children, and young people receive. It means educational policies and investment must align with the needs of learners and educators. The vital elements for young people to thrive are their relationships with their whānau, their educators and their peers but also the government support toward improving their health and wellbeing. A universal definition in understanding of wellbeing in schools should be more clearly defined and have clear expectation of the responsibility of implementation in a culturally, holistic, whole school format. It is essential then when measuring wellbeing that a culturally valid wellbeing instrument of measurement should be constructed.

Unlike other professionals, principals do not automatically have access to psychological or clinical supervision, therapy, counselling or wellness coaching that directly focusses on mental, health and wellbeing. Recommendation from the Tomorrow schools review suggested a one stop Leadership Centre where all services needed by principals is provided. This is an area that needs intensive response and future research.

It is imperative to consider the influences on wellbeing, particularly the impact of school climate on the school collective. When implementing wellbeing policy and practices leaders and staff mental health and wellbeing should be considered, not only for career performance and commitment, but for the health and wellbeing of the whole school community. Engagement increases for both students and their families when school leaders are committed to working in partnership with parents and whānau of all students.

It is critical for educators working with children and young people to recognise the inherent mana, power, and agency of students. Educators have to create change in their learning

environments to enable the nurture and nourishing of children and young people. This will enable them to flourish and find a place of belonging. In culturally responsive pedagogy the empowerment of marginalized students is critical. The culturally responsive environment should reflect a space of values, trust, partnerships, and academic mindsets with wellbeing that is at its core.

### **9.3 Future recommendations**

There are several recommendations arising from this research. These are presented under the following headings.

#### *9.3.1 Psychological safe and supportive school environment*

Consideration should be given to factors that increase students' engagement and wellbeing. Children and young people's mental wellbeing is influenced by a wide range of factors such as a sense of connectedness or belonging, stability, security, physical health, attachment and parenting, cultural identity, education environments and support through important transitions (such as from primary to secondary school). A safe supported school culture should reflect shared values that consider the communities and cultures that it serves. It must therefore include sound practices and have appropriate support including social wellbeing and mental health. It is important not to underestimate the benefits students obtain from a predictable school routine that creates a sense of safety and belonging.

#### *9.3.2 Wellbeing policy practice that promote cultural, social and emotional learning.*

In exploring the shape of wellbeing policy and practice for children, Māori individuals, their whānau, and their wellbeing protection is a next step in promoting student wellbeing. Overall, culture, language, and identity should sit within the holistic framework as this allows for student voice to be situated as an important factor. Cultural, social, and emotional learning should be localised within Indigenous understandings of wellbeing. It is viewed as fundamental to teacher and student wellbeing and should therefore be a critical component or aspect within a school-based wellbeing model.

A *holistic* approach to wellbeing includes wairuatanga (spirituality). This is a under-researched area and should be further studied to investigate how it could support social and emotional learning and thereby strengthen a holistic wellbeing model.

### *9.3.3 Educator's Wellbeing*

The effect and impact of the factors that make a difference for student wellbeing and outcomes are reliant on how well the individual educators are within themselves and their awareness of the importance for them to take care of their own wellbeing. Consequently, systems and practices that support the wellbeing of educators is of greatest importance.

Based on the importance that the evidence placed on the educators' role on positive student outcomes for learning and achievement, I would argue and recommend that:

1. Teachers need support to have a personal wellbeing strategy in place to ensure their own wellbeing for effectiveness in the classrooms. This should look like:
  - Policy and practices that are designed to support teachers so that when they need help, they know what to do, and where to go, and who to ask.
  - Each teacher should have a self-care plan that will help them to regulate and self-manage when they become emotionally and socially stressed.
  - A psychological safe environment where teachers feel safe to ask for help, ask questions, have input and work collaboratively.
  - Workload expectations should be reasonable, manageable and well resourced.
2. Principals have access to supervision in the form of therapy, counselling and or wellness life coaching. This has been highlighted as an under-researched area.

### *9.3.4 Emerging new research topics*

Policy should now, based on emerging research, give attention to the importance of a compassionate and neuroscientific evidence-based approaches that views discipline

differently. It is now necessary for educators to be learning about relational neuroscience, and the polyvagal theory, trauma-informed practices, the neuro-sequential model, Te Whare o Oro (a Mātauranga Māori framework to understand the brain) to support those students who have experienced trauma and had adverse childhood experiences, this includes neurodiverse and students with additional needs. This brings clarity and deepens understanding why they sense, feel, and behave differently and why educators should consider connections with students over expected compliant behaviour. This will require a mindset shift from traditional to transformational education that is based on relational neuroscience. It is time to investigate the continuance of ignoring the root causes of why behaviours of marginalised students are met with punitive measures.

As a result, the implementation of a trauma-informed approach requires an intentional organisational and systems change processes that identifies and address barriers, ensures leadership commitment to a collaborative design process that builds staff commitment and capacity. Trauma Informed Care needs to support collectivism, within Te Ao Māori the traditional and contemporary cultural realities that are actively expressed through whanaungatanga and whakapapa relationships in contrast with fundamental westernised valuing of individualism.

When schools focus on the challenging behaviours of students and ascribe them to circumstances faced outside of school, they ignore the reality that educational inequity itself causes trauma. Trauma-informed practices are not just about decreasing problem behaviour or restoring order, but more about equity-centredness, affirming positive educational experiences as a right for every student. An initiative-taking universal approach not only helps individual students impacted by trauma, but it also creates a more equitable and trauma-informed environment for everyone in the school community. Trauma informed practices and the creation of safe and calming spaces for learnings, learners, and teachers adds value to the wellbeing model. Consistent, as with all other teacher training areas, building educator awareness is crucial to establish a foundation to broader understanding of trauma-informed approaches but implementation could be unsuccessful without infrastructure, funding, and resources to reinforce and encourage application of knowledge.

As a result, these recommendations have implications for leadership to adopt transformative practices as well as continuing professional development for self and staff.

#### **9.4 What this thesis is adding to the research base knowledge.**

This thesis highlighted three under-researched areas that can bring value to the implementation of a holistic, whole school approach to wellbeing.

##### *9.4.1 New and emerging concepts that can add to new growing knowledge base.*

An emerging and growing body of research demonstrates a strong association between the experiences of trauma in childhood and poor physical and mental health, behaviours, and academic functioning, among other long-term negative outcomes. What is clear through the findings is that a change in basic assumptions in understanding and treating children with disruptive behaviours is needed within the education system. Research agrees that there is a need to change our school culture to create safe spaces to accommodate our most vulnerable children, and that when looking at trauma-informed practice, and relational neuroscience schools should shift equity to the centre as they consider policies and professional development.

Using a lens of wellness and wellbeing will help us consider how schools can proactively create environments that respond to and prevent trauma. This shift is necessary to move closer to the principles of equity-centred trauma-informed education. This will ensure that all children and young people have a right to enriched educational opportunities and pathways toward future learning. It is acknowledged that overthrowing inequitable systems is a process, not an overnight change but it can be transformational if educators work together, and teachers realize that they can do more from within their individual classrooms. It requires ongoing efforts to ensure that all students are experiencing social and emotional safety, and educational success. This type of school climate does not occur spontaneously rather, it must be cultivated through deliberate school-wide strategies, expectations, norms, and values.

In education discipline has been traditional seen as a punishment and control method and a way to maintain order. New emerging evidence on neuroscience findings shows that a

compassionate approach to discipline creates opportunity for connection, understanding and growth. This scientifically proven approach is rooted in the belief that behaviour is a form of communication especially in children who have experienced trauma and adverse childhood experiences and adversity. Moving away from punitive policy approaches, rewards systems and incentives that are unattainable for most neurodiverse students and those experiencing trauma, should be replaced by holistic approaches that supports all students to experience success. It is normal for children who have experienced trauma to exhibit a range of internalising and externalising behaviours and other factors such as impulsivity, anxiety, depression, aggression, and other risk behaviours due to neurodiverse challenges.

There is also a growing body of research that focusses on Mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) in this area. For example, the most recent research done by McLachlan, et., al (2023) the Te Whare o Oro framework highlights a cultural framework that connects Mātauranga Māori with neuroscience and trauma care.

Growing attention to trauma, relational neuroscience, polyvagal theory and neurodiversity brings an evidence-based argument for discipline policy change and a change in instructional practices. Policies should be replaced with supporting systems for students to be assisted in safe trauma care and learning environments that refrains from re-traumatization. By understanding neuroscientific underpinning of behaviour and responding empathetically to the needs of students, educators can foster nurturing, effective and transformative learning environments.

#### *9.4.2 Wairuatanga (Spirituality) identified as an underserved and under-researched area to complete a holistic wellbeing framework*

This thesis has highlighted that for a holistic wellbeing approach to be complete, the domain of Te Taha wairua (spirituality, religious and non-religious) needs to be strengthened. Research into the meaning of an individual's wairua or spiritual wellness is lacking. This kaupapa is currently under-researched. Not only is this a culturally responsive kaupapa, but it carries weight as one of the four walls of wellbeing in the Te Whare Tapu Wha health model. These bring balance and wholeness to an individual's wellness (body, mind, soul, and spirit). This kaupapa also speaks of the synergy of the collective with which the individual identifies. Wairuatanga (spirituality) is an essential requirement and vital aspect of Māori

wellbeing and identity. The place of wairuatanga in a school-based holistic wellbeing model is an emerging area for further research.

#### ***9.4.3 Clinical supervision, therapy, counselling, or holistic wellbeing coaching for principals***

This area is definitely an under-researched topic that could change the effectiveness of school-based wellbeing implementation.

Although this thesis is about student wellbeing, I have come to understand that the wellbeing of school leaders and principals are pivotal to the actioning of student wellbeing. Supervision, counselling, or holistic wellbeing coaching should form a part of the principal's wellbeing package and should be written into Collective Agreements as a compulsory element. This will support the mental and emotional wellbeing of principals. From personal experience I believe that when principals become emotionally intelligent and self-aware, they show up as well and truly authentic leaders. I believe that if we want principals to show up as kind, caring, compassionate, and mindful leaders, they have to be well within themselves first. This allows for them to be strong in self-management and relationship management .

Therefore, would like to use a statement written by our current NZPF president as a closing argument, *“Principals play a pivotal role in shaping the future of children and young people. While teaching is a calling or a vocation, one could say that aspiring to be a principal is about embracing the profound responsibility of stewardship and leadership of the educational journey. Principals are not just administrators: they are the guiding lights, the visionaries, and the unwavering pillars of our school. They lead with wisdom, compassion, and determination, setting the course for both teachers and students. Principals are champions of innovation and change, working tirelessly to create a nurturing and dynamic environment for learning. Their dedication extends beyond mere management; it encompasses the desire to see every child reach their full potential”* (Leanne Otene, NZPF President).

I would argue that for principals to be all of the above, the wellbeing of principals is a significant area for further research.

## **9.5 Limitations**

Variability in the delivery of school-based wellbeing implementation, limits the measuring thereof, as a result knowledge of universal impacts are limited and could not be stated clearly as there is contextual agency. Although there is a clear need to define the term wellbeing in relation to educational settings, this can cause limitations for implementation approaches.

Further studies are necessary to define wellbeing in the light of trauma and neuroscientific evidence and to establish the relationship between these aspects in the creation of safe nurturing learning environments. There was limitation in understanding the impacts of these areas but as new future research findings emerge and more schools take the courageous step in this direction, the scope to measuring the impact will become wider.

Even though I realise the importance of looking at wellbeing through a Māori lens, as a non-Māori individual there is limitations in my understanding Mātauranga Māori due my lived worldview and lived experience that influenced my perspectives. As a researcher I was guided by the kaumatua that surrounded me with wisdom to complete this thesis.

This thesis was of a small scale; however, this thesis was able to identify emerging areas for further investigation and was able to bring to the fore future additional domains that is necessary to strengthen and give more effectiveness within wellbeing implementation areas.

## **9.6 Thesis closing**

Throughout the thesis the enormity of wellbeing is evident. It is, consequently, self-explanatory that the education system needs to prioritize this area. There is a call for policy change, to transform school cultures from punitive and compliance approaches to connected nurturing relationships. We should build a school where adults have high expectations of students and never lower their standards because of what they perceive as poor behaviour. Cultural embeddedness is indirectly related to improvement in wellbeing, subsequently culture can expose young children and rangatahi to positive experiences that cultivates long time

wellbeing. Classrooms that practice a culturally responsive pedagogy are cultivating and growing children that are well.

Adults should have the calmness, build rapport, have emotional currency and intelligence that helps them to have control of their own wellness. Teachers themselves do not need to be therapist to provide powerful interventions for students affected by trauma in fact, they should embrace the idea that teachers are one part of a healthy relational ecosystem of children and young people alongside their whānau, friends and community. Teachers can start by focussing on what happens in their classroom to ensure that it is safe, equitable, and social justice focused.

The future direction of equity-centred, relational neuroscience and trauma informed practice requires systems, rules, and procedures to undergo real change that are centred in our shared humanity. It can just be another buzzword or latest trend in education or be a healing force for creating strength-based classrooms. Trauma education is a lens through which we look, it is not a label, trauma informed education should fix schools not the children. A trauma informed lens requires that we look and think critically about our systems. There is no perfect policy that will work in every single school, the question to ask about policy is “does this support the culture of care or a culture of compliance”.

True transformative and social justice leadership is not unchanged and straight forward, rather it is adaptive and based on new and evolving knowledge and systems, as well as relationships with students to include and capture their voice and lived experiences.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Copy of ethics approval letter



## TE WHARE WĀNANGA O AWANUIĀRANGI

15/11/21  
Yolanda Julies 55 Darwin Road Gisborne 4010

Tēnā koe Yolanda,  
*Tēnā koe i roto i ngā tini āhuatanga o te wā.*

Student ID:  
2021000038

Ethics Research Committee Application EC2021.32 Outcome: Approved

The Ethics Research Committee Chair has approved your response to the committee feedback. The committee commends you on your hard work to this point and wishes you well with your research.

Please ensure that you keep a copy of this letter on file and include the Ethics committee document reference number: EC2021.32 on any correspondence relating to your research. This includes documents for your participants or other parties. Please also enclose this letter of approval in the back of your completed thesis as an appendix.

If you have any queries regarding the outcome of your ethics application, please contact us on our freephone number 0508926264 or via e-mail [ethics@wananga.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@wananga.ac.nz). If you have any queries in the interim, please let me know.

Nāku noa, nā  
Shonelle Wana, BMM, MIS  
Ethics Research Committee Administrator Phone: 0508 92 62 64

<b>WHAKATĀNE</b> 13 Domain Road Private Bag 1006 Wāikāino 3158 New Zealand Telephone: +64 7 307 1467 Freephone: 0508 92 62 64 Facsimile: +64 307 1475	<b>TĀMAKI MĀKAURAU (AUCKLAND)</b> Building 1 19 Lamble Drive Papatoetoe Auckland 2104 PO Box 76035 Manukau City Auckland 2241 Telephone: +64 9 260 4107 Facsimile: +64 9 263 5039	<b>TĒTAITOKERAU (WHANGAREI)</b> 12A Murdoch Crescent Whangarei Heights Whangarei 0310 Private Bag 9919 Whangarei Freephone: 0508 92 62 64 Telephone: 09 430 4901	<b>www.wananga.ac.nz</b>  <small>Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangī Whangarei, New Zealand Copyright © 2011 All rights reserved.</small>
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## Appendix 2: Chapter 2-Principals group questionnaire



# TE WHARE WĀNANGA O AWANUIĀRANGI

**THIS IS A GENERIC INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS AND ORGANISATIONS/ OTHER**

**PROJECT TITLE:**

**IMPACT OF AN EQUITABLE, HOLISTIC, WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO WELLBEING ON YOUNG CHILDREN AND RANGATAHI (EARLY ADOLESCENCE) LEARNING SUCCESS**

**RESEARCHER:** YOLANDA JULIES (Principal of Te Kura Reo Rua o Waikirikiri)

**RESEARCH SUPERVISOR:** PROFESSOR PAUL KAYES ( Academic staff member of Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi)

**QUESTIONS:**

1. What does your approach to Wellbeing implementation look like in your school/kura?
2. Which components are present in your wellbeing model/programme/practice (e.g. mindfulness, trauma informed, etc) and why?
3. What impacts does your wellbeing implementation have on the students wellbeing (What have you noticed /changes /differences and why)
4. How do you measure the wellbeing of your students and staff?
5. How is the student voice evident in your practices/

(if you have any programmes, policies, processes, models, etc that you would like to share please include those). Thank you.

Thank you very much for giving of your time to share your knowledge and experiences. It means the world to me as a principal colleague who can appreciate your busy schedule.

With much appreciation  
Yolanda Julies

**Appendix 3: Chapter 4- Leadership Team questionnaire (trauma informed)**



**TE WHARE WĀNANGA O  
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**RESEARCHER: YOLANDA JULIES (Principal of Te Kura Reo Rua o Waikirikiri)**

**RESEARCH SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR PAUL KAYES ( Academic staff member of  
Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi)**

**QUESTIONS:**

Why have you started to implement trauma informed practices at your school?

Where were some of the challenges you have faced when trying to implement Trauma informed practices?

What were the biggest shifts and impacts on teachers and yourself to date?

How do you deal with challenging behaviours differently now?

What is your vision for your tamariki at this kura?

**Appendix 4: Chapter 5- Āhurutanga questionnaire to staff**



**TE WHARE WĀNANGA O  
AWANUIĀRANGI**

**PROJECT TITLE:**

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**RESEARCHER: YOLANDA JULIES (Principal of Te Kura Reo Rua o Waikirikiri)**

**RESEARCH SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR PAUL KAYES ( Academic staff member of  
Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi)**

**SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTION**

Can you please describe your Calming (whakatau) spaces , the reasons for implementing these and the impact/difference it makes for the learners?

## Appendix 5: Chapter 6- Student questionnaire google forms.

What is your understanding of wellbeing?

- Being happy
  - Having good friends
  - Having good health
  - Having a good life
  - Having a happy family
  - All of the above
- 

What makes you happy at school?

- Being with your friends
  - Being with your teacher
  - Your learning
  - Feeling safe at school
  - Having breakfast and lunch at school
-

## Appendix 6: Chapter 6- Student questionnaire two google forms.

### APPENDIX 6: STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE YRS 6-8

I do better when I have a good relationship with my teacher

- Strongly agree
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree

I do well at school if my home situation is good

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

I feel better about my learning when my teacher is interested in me

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

I feel safe and have a sense of belonging at school

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

...

Which 2 statements describe you best

- I am confident in my abilities and know that I will always do well
- I am open to new challenges and is willing to give it a go
- I value mistakes and know that I will learn from them
- I like to receive feedback so that I can do better
- I am not confident in my abilities but try my best
- I have low self esteem and struggle to make friends
- I often have negative thoughts and feels low and sad or depressed
- I don't like feedback and see it as criticism (finding fault)
- I don't feel confident to try something new
- I feel overwhelmed and anxious
- I have good friends that help me when I face challenges
- I feel alone and don't have good friends
- Other

## Appendix 7: Relates to Chapter 6- Female principal's questionnaire one.

### FEMALE PRINCIPALS THEME ONE

What is your belief and understanding of Wellbeing \*

Long answer text

---

What value do you place on personal wellbeing or self-care \*

Long answer text

---

What (if any )are barriers or challenges for you to focus on personal wellbeing (tick as many that relate to your situation)

- workload
- Time
- tiredness
- not a priority
- none of the above
- other

How do you invest in your own well-being (wellbeing practices your implement)? \*

Long answer text

---

## Appendix 8: Chapter 6- Female principal's questionnaire two

What impact does your Wellbeing practices have on students' attitude, behavior and learning   Checkboxes 

---

They are more focussed and engaged 

They are better able to manage themselves 

They are more self aware 

They have strategies to use when they become dysregulated 

They are more resilient 

They set goals 

they are more considered of others 

There are less behaviour incidents 

Other... 

Add option

What are the barriers/challenges associated with implementing your programme or wellbeing practice?

- costs
- Staffing
- lack of knowledge
- lack of suitable programmes/models
- not enough time
- not a priority
- lack of consistency
- Other...

What type of Wellbeing practices do you implement at your Kura?

- Kids yoga
- mindfulness/mauri tau
- Brain gym
- Mana Potential/Mana Enhancement
- Waiora/fitness programme
- Other- please name:

What approach do you take when you deliver your wellbeing programme (tick what is relevant)

- holistic
- tikanga informed
- culturally responsive
- trauma informed
- Social and emotional learning/literacy
- resilience learning
- growth mindset
- other

What impact did your wellbeing practices have on teachers' behaviour and responses?

- They understand student behaviour better
- They manage their own response to behaviours better
- They are more tolerant and understanding of behaviours
- They moved away from punitive approach
- They make time for dialogue
- They more aware of and look after their own wellbeing better

How are these wellbeing practices reflected throughout your kura (tick as many as is relevant)

- A wellbeing programme
- A wellbeing model
- Your school culture
- In your school values
- In your school policies and procedures
- in your strategic planning
- In your curriculum
- A wellbeing or PE teacher
- other

How do you gather student voice about your Wellbeing practices?

- Student survey
  - Student leadership team
  - Student questionnaires
  - Student wellbeing team
  - Other..
-

## Appendix 9: Chapter 6- Female principal's questionnaire three

How does your kura support the needs of your students to improve their Wellbeing?

- Wellbeing programmes
- Health and Wellbeing curriculum
- Value their uniqueness
- Kura is a safe place to be
- Talk about mental health and other health topics
- Build connected relationships
- Goods habits, routines, life skills are taught
- Social and emotional skills taught

What challenges do your students currently experience? (Tick the top 2)

- Vaping
- Online bullying
- Drugs and alcohol
- Peer pressure
- Hunger / not enough food at home
- Lack of sleep/sleep deprivation

What type of social and emotional challenges are your students currently struggling with (tick the top 2)

- Self-harming
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Anger
- Fear
- Emotional outbursts
- Stress
- Suicidal thoughts
- Gender identity/sexuality

How does your kura assess the needs of students?

- Regular teacher check ins
- Teacher observations
- Surveys or questionnaires
- Student support groups
- Student leadership groups
- Classroom discussions
- Workshops/presentations/feedback

What factors impact on the wellbeing of your students?  
(Tick the top 2)



Checkboxes ▼

- Unsafe home environment X
- Adverse childhood experiences X
- Poverty X
- Bullying X
- Peer relationships X
- Making bad decisions/choices X
- Neglect X
- Add option or [add "Other"](#)

What social and emotional issues are your students struggling with mostly?

- Self- management(planning, goal setting)
- Responsible decision making (critical thinking, choices)
- Relationship skills (friendships, communication, leadership, interactions)
- Social Awareness (demonstrates empathy, compassing, feelings of others)
- Resilience
- Growth mindset

Which of these Wellbeing pillars/concepts do you encourage mostly at your kura? (top 2)

- Leadership
- Student Voice
- Student agency/self directed learning
- Inclusion
- Student partnership
- Student Support groups
- Social networks
- Outside agencies/ community support
- Parental/whanau involvement
- Extra curricular activities

What social and emotional issues are your students struggling with mostly?

- Self- management(planning, goal setting)
- Responsible decision making (critical thinking, choices)
- Relationship skills (friendships, communication, leadership, interactions)
- Social Awareness (demonstrates empathy, compassion, feelings of others)
- Resilience
- Growth mindset

How does your learning environment contribute to student wellbeing and student safety?

Long answer text

---

How does your kura ensure that all students have an opportunity to express their views and influence decision making?

Long answer text

---

## Appendix 10: Chapter 6- Staff wellbeing (first group) questionnaire

how would you rate your anxiety level during alert level 4  Multiple choice 

very anxious 

feeling ok 

optimistic 

Other... 

Add option

  Required  

---

⋮

how would you rate your anxiety levels now during alert level2 

very anxious still

feeling ok

cautiously optimistic

very optimistic

how would you rate your anxiety level during alert level 4



Multiple choice

- very anxious ×
- feeling ok ×
- optimistic ×
- Other... ×
- Add option



Required



how would you rate your anxiety levels now during alert level2

- very anxious still
- feeling ok
- cautiously optimistic
- very optimistic

How would you define/describe wellbeing?



Long answer text

---

What contributes to your positive wellbeing at school?

Long answer text

---

What are the negative things that impact on your wellbeing at school?

Long answer text

---

How important are relationships to your wellbeing?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Most Important	<input type="radio"/>	Somewhat Important				

## Appendix 11: Chapter 6- Staff wellbeing (second group) questionnaire

### Teacher questionnaire 2

APPENDIX 11- CHAPTER 6- TEACHER VOICE

Question

Option 1

What are some of the challenges that you face daily that impacts on your wellbeing as a teacher

Long answer text

How does this affect your ability to be an effective teacher?

Long answer text

What happens to the way you are teaching when you're tired and the impact on students

Long answer text

...

What needs to happen to change this

Long answer text

**Appendix 12: Chapter 6 -Whānau wellbeing questionnaire and Mums**



TE WHARE WĀNANGA O  
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**RESEARCHER: YOLANDA JULIES (Principal of Te Kura Reo Rua o Waikirikiri)**

**RESEARCH SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR PAUL KAYES ( Academic staff member of  
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**SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTION**

What would make a difference to the wellbeing of your tamariki at school?



TE WHARE WĀNANGA O  
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**QUESTIONS (table 25-27)**

What is your understanding of wellbeing?

How does your wellbeing affect the wellbeing of your tamariki?

How can the kura help to better support the wellbeing of your tamariki?

**Appendix 13: Chapter 6- Whanau wellbeing- questionnaire for wānanga type interview with kaumatua**



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**WĀNANGA TYPE CONVERSATIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTION**

Explain to me your understanding of wellbeing?

How does your mokos health benefit from you looking after them?

How does your health impact the wellbeing of your mokopuna?

**Appendix 14: Chapter 7- Semi -structured interview questionnaire (staff)**



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**PROJECT TITLE:**

**IMPACT OF AN EQUITABLE, HOLISTIC, WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO WELLBEING ON YOUNG CHILDREN AND RANGATAHI (EARLY ADOLESCENCE) LEARNING SUCCESS**

**RESEARCHER: YOLANDA JULIES (Principal of Te Kura Reo Rua o Waikirikiri)**

**RESEARCH SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR PAUL KAYES ( Academic staff member of Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi)**

**RECORDED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS-STAFF**

Teacher, wellbeing teaching and frontline tutors, art and sports coach

What factors and challenges impacted on the wellbeing of senior students in particular during the Covid period?

What were some of the behaviours you have noticed about the tamariki when they returned from experiencing Covid 1?

What were some of the interventions you have implemented and why?

Can you tell me about the Mana Potential Model and how it was helpful for the tamariki and their wellbeing?

What cultural components did you build into your wellbeing model and why?

What were the impacts of your interventions?

How do you measure the wellbeing students and the impacts?

Kapa Haka Tutors:

Building on culturally responsive practice – tell me how important cultural practices are for the wellbeing of our tamariki?

## Appendix 15: Chapter 7 - Semi-Structure interview questionnaire (students-year 9)



TE WHARE WĀNANGA O  
AWANUIĀRANGI

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### **SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTION**

1. What are your experiences so far at secondary school?
2. What do you need from teachers to make school a good place to be?
3. What are the positives about secondary school?

**Appendix 16: relates to Chapter 7- Wellbeing team Questionnaire.**



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**QUESTIONNAIRE WELLBEING TEAM**

How have you included whānau in your schools' wellbeing model and how do you support their wellbeing?

What is your approach to student and whānau wellbeing when you work in your particular role?

What type of wellbeing practices do you use in your role and why?

What impacts or effects have you noticed for whanau and our tamariki when you implemented these practices?

In your view should whānau/caregivers/parents be included in a wellbeing programme that a kura is implementing and why?

**Appendix 17: relates to Chapter 7- Leadership team Case study.**



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**SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTION**

Can you discuss with me some of the learnings of the past three years, also as a leadership team what will you do differently now?