

Mid-term Review of the Pasifika Education Plan 2009-2012

Proposal

1. This paper sets out the key findings of a mid-term review of the *Pasifika Education Plan 2009-2012* [SOC Min (09) 20/1 refers]. I outline the next steps to be taken to accelerate progress and seek Cabinet agreement to future areas of focus, which will form the basis of a new plan to be developed in 2012.

Executive Summary

2. The Ministry of Education (the Ministry) has developed *Pasifika Education Plans* over the past 10 years to ensure a strong and continued focus on improving educational results for Pasifika children, students and young people. In 2009, Cabinet approved the *Pasifika Education Plan 2009-2012 (Plan)* which was revised to align with Government's education priorities for Pasifika students, which are to:
 - a. build **strong learning foundations**
 - b. lift Pasifika **literacy and numeracy achievement**
 - c. increase the number of Pasifika students **achieving and leaving school with qualifications**.
3. A mid-term review of the current *Plan*, for the period November 2009 through to May 2011, shows that two thirds of the targets set for 2012 are likely to be met. Also of note:
 - Pasifika participation in Early Childhood Education (ECE) has improved by 9.5% since 2009 and 24.9% since 2006 (largest increase compared to all ethnicities other than Asian)
 - the number of Pasifika students leaving with NCEA Level 2 qualifications has increased from 45% to 66% between 2005 and 2009¹
 - Pasifika students stay at school longer than all other groups (except Asian students)
 - Pasifika students' take-up of Youth Guarantee is 20% of all young people participating.
4. Further action is required to address a number of areas:
 - although Pasifika participation in ECE has increased more than any other ethnic group other than Asian, it is still the lowest participation rate
 - significant disparities remain evident in literacy and numeracy achievement for Pasifika students at age 10
 - the South Auckland attendance pilot identified that attendance levels of Pasifika students between the ages of 5-7 is a concern
 - disparity in achievement levels between Pasifika and non-Pasifika students widen at higher qualification levels, restricting opportunities for Pasifika students to move into higher levels of education and compete for the best employment opportunities.
5. Actions are underway to accelerate improvement during the course of the current *Plan*. To ensure future success, I propose the next *Pasifika Education Plan*:
 - set more ambitious targets informed by in-depth investigation, discussion, and comparative analysis about Pasifika and non-Pasifika achievement
 - include further actions to drive continued improvement in literacy and numeracy achievement, and attainment of qualifications
 - focus on attendance as a foundation for engagement in learning and achievement

¹ 2010 NCEA ethnicity comparative data at time of review not available

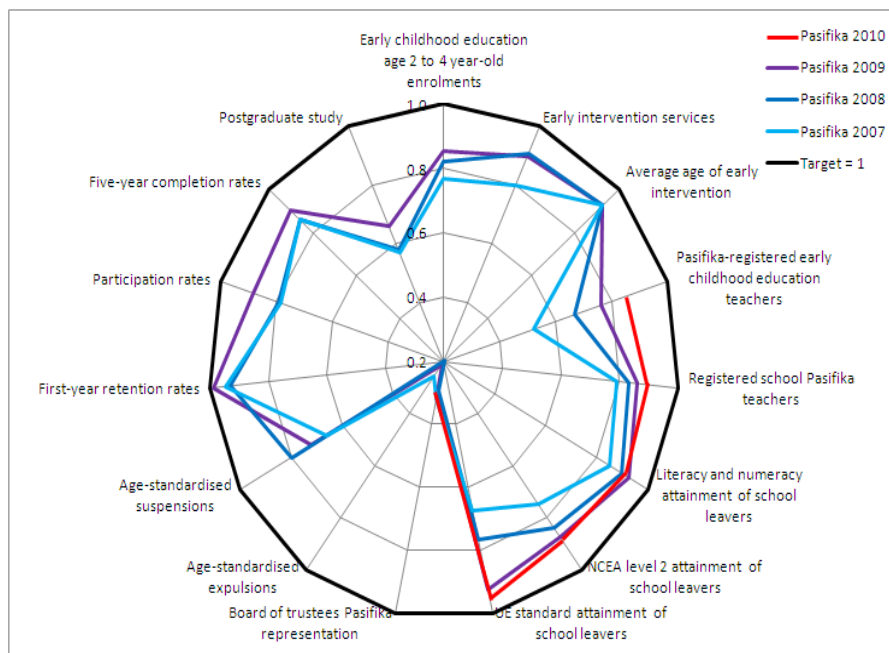
- emphasise the importance of Pasifika identities, languages and cultures and working closely with Pasifika parents and families
- incorporate the full implementation of Youth Guarantee
- focus on skills essential to the future New Zealand workforce.

Background

- Persistent low level skills present a significant challenge to the well-being of Pasifika communities and wider New Zealand. By 2021, Pasifika people will represent 12% of the younger age workforce in New Zealand, and an even higher proportion of the workforce in Auckland.
- In 2009, Cabinet approved a revised *Pasifika Education Plan 2009-2012*, to focus the education sector on the Government's education priorities for Pasifika students, which are to:
 - build **strong learning foundations**
 - lift Pasifika **literacy and numeracy achievement**
 - increase the number of Pasifika students **achieving and leaving school with qualifications**.
- The Ministry of Education has overall responsibility for the *Plan*, which is supported by other agencies.

What has been achieved so far?

- Since 2007, there has been progress against the majority of targets set out in the *Plan*, and it is likely that all the targets will be reached by 2012 (except for average age of early intervention, suspension and expulsion rates, Pasifika boards of trustee representation and five year completion rates for tertiary). The diagram below uses available data to illustrate progress made toward the *Plan's* 2012 targets.



Early Childhood Education

10. During the course of the current *Plan* there has been a clear focus on increasing Pasifika children's participation in quality ECE. The latest data shows that participation has increased more for Pasifika children than for all other ethnic groups except Asian, but is still the lowest rate of participation in ECE by a substantial margin.
11. Actions underway to increase Pasifika children's participation in quality ECE include:
 - funding new ECE participation projects in Northland, Auckland and Waikato (areas with the highest numbers of non-participating children)
 - evaluating and reporting on ECE services' practices for Pasifika children and their families (conducted by the Education Review Office)
 - revising scholarships to better target people with skills and knowledge in Pasifika cultures and languages to lift the proportion of Pasifika applicants for the 2011 scholarship round (by 150%) and improve the overall quality of ECE experiences for Pasifika children.
12. It will be important to build on participation gains by taking action to ensure greater success for Pasifika children in the early years of primary schooling.

Compulsory Education

13. Actions to achieve compulsory schooling targets have focused on improving Pasifika students' participation and engagement, achievement in literacy and numeracy, ensuring teacher effectiveness, and lifting achievement of senior secondary level qualifications.
14. Activities specific to progressing literacy and numeracy achievement include:
 - a. implementing National Standards to help schools understand where Pasifika students are at; to identify strategies needed to ensure progress; and provide support for teachers and Pasifika families to communicate better about student achievement
 - b. scaling up the Reading Recovery and Reading Together programmes across all Decile 1-3 schools and schools with the highest numbers of Pasifika students
 - c. piloting an exploratory study in 2010, *Achieving Literacy in Mathematics*, involving 250 students from 39 schools – the study investigated how to accelerate the learning of students at risk of underachieving in mathematics and found that short term, structured, and targeted programmes (6-10 weeks) delivered in small groups (two to six children) by effective teachers can accelerate most underachieving students' achievement by 1-2 years.²
15. Other actions taken this year have included refocusing and better targeting professional learning and development for teachers, to ensure they are equipped to respond to the needs of Pasifika students, and implementing the new Student Achievement Function to support school leaders and disseminate good practice.
16. There are many schools demonstrating positive gains for Pasifika students since the launch of the current *Plan* in November 2009. An example is Flaxmere College, which committed to the objectives of the *Plan* and has since reported that their Pasifika students are the highest achieving cohort for both NCEA Level 1 and 2 (in 2010). Central to this achievement has been setting high expectations and providing responsive leadership and teaching. A key contributor is teachers valuing the cultural backgrounds of their students.
17. To increase the understanding of Pasifika issues at the school board level, the Ministry has worked with the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs (MPIA) and the New Zealand School

² Case 1: Developing communities of mathematical inquiry. (Showcasing the work of Pasifika researcher, Dr Roberta Hunter). On-line from May 2011 <http://educationcounts.govt.nz/goto/BES> In Alton -Lee, A., Pulegatoa-Diggins, C., & Sinnema, C. (forthcoming). Quality Teaching for Diverse (All) Learners in Schooling: Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration [BES] He Ako Reikura, He Ākonga Rerekura (Te Katoa): Hei Kete Raukura [BES].

Trustees Association (NZSTA) to encourage more Pasifika people to stand for board elections. This has resulted in an increase in Pasifika representation from 29.7% in 2009, to 33.3% in 2010.

18. Annual monitoring of the *Plan* has shown that the rate of achievement of senior secondary qualifications has improved for Pasifika students, but remains low when compared to the rate for other students.

Tertiary Education

19. The focus in tertiary education has been on increasing participation, retention and completions, and lifting the rate of Pasifika students moving into higher levels of qualifications and further education.
20. From 2008 to 2009, the proportion of Pasifika under 25 year old students studying qualifications at level 4 and above, increased from 69% to 70% in terms of equivalent full time student units. The comparable figures for all domestic students were 82% in 2008 and 83% in 2009.
21. These increases are a combination of the Government's tertiary education priority for more under-25-year-olds achieving qualifications at level 4 and above, the weak employment market and demographic changes³.
22. Initiatives underway specifically to support tertiary targets are part of Youth Guarantee such as the development of vocational pathways towards NCEA Level 2 in a secondary school or tertiary setting, and Trades Academies.
23. To increase the focus on retention and completion of qualifications, and progression to further and higher levels of tertiary education, the Tertiary Education Commission has also negotiated Investment Plan commitments with Tertiary Education Organisations that outline how they will improve achievement and the performance of learners in priority groups, such as Pasifika students. The tertiary education sector's progress will be judged on such improvements.

Priorities for the duration of the current Plan

24. For the remaining 18 months of the *Plan* the focus will be on surpassing current targets. Key actions are outlined below:

Participation in Quality ECE

25. The Ministry is planning to establish additional ECE participation projects in target areas in Northland, Auckland and the Waikato in 2012, building on results gained from the Counties Manukau Participation Project and the Tamaki Transformation Programme.
26. More integrated services for families will be trialled and developed by the Ministry with other agencies in communities with high Pasifika populations. Pasifika Early Childhood Playgroups are to have increased teaching and learning support. Parent mentoring groups will also be trialled in Pasifika communities, with an emphasis on improving parents' literacy and numeracy skills.
27. The Ministry has received positive feedback on a parenting programme, the Incredible Years, within a Pasifika context. Further work is being done to increase Pasifika participation with a focus on the Auckland region. The results will be monitored to inform future work.

³ The domestic Pasifika student population was younger in 2009 than New Zealand's total domestic student population. Forty-nine percent of Pasifika students were aged under 25 years, compared to 43 percent of all domestic students. The situation was reversed for those aged 40 years and over. Twenty-eight percent of the total student population fell into this age group in 2009, while for Pasifika people this was only 19 percent

Literacy and Numeracy Achievement

28. A key priority is substantially improving literacy and numeracy results for Pasifika by reviewing achievement against National Standards and closely monitoring all other indicators. Working to improve achievement levels for Pasifika students is a key focus of Student Achievement Practitioners now working with schools.
29. The Ministry is piloting a new long term approach to improving student attendance as a foundation for engagement in learning and achievement in South Auckland and Gisborne/East Coast where there are high numbers of Pasifika students.

Pasifika Medium Education

30. A focus on improving cultural responsiveness will now be included in Professional Learning and Development contracts. This will ensure this significant investment equips teachers to meet the needs of priority groups of students. For both Māori students and Pasifika students a key focus is ensuring teachers understand the importance and impact of identities, languages and cultures on student achievement.

Pasifika students achieving qualifications at level 4 and above

31. The focus in tertiary education will continue to be on providers' alignment with the *Plan's* goal of increasing the number of Pasifika students achieving at higher levels, as reflected in the priorities and expectations of the Tertiary Education Strategy 2010-2015. This includes working with agencies to lift the literacy and numeracy skills of Pasifika workers through interagency initiatives.
32. The implementation of Youth Guarantee to support better education and career choices will continue in 2011 and 2012, including the implementation of Trades and Service Academies, and the Tertiary High School at the Manukau Institute of Technology.

The next *Pasifika Education Plan*

33. The next *Pasifika Education Plan* will aim to stretch the system to perform better and faster, and achieve sustainable and continuous improvement. The *Plan* will:
 - set more ambitious targets, informed by in-depth investigation, discussion, and comparative analysis about Pasifika and non-Pasifika achievement
 - include further actions to drive continued improvement in literacy and numeracy achievement, and attainment of qualifications
 - focus on improving attendance as a foundation for engagement in learning and achievement
 - emphasise the importance of Pasifika identities, languages and cultures and working closely with Pasifika parents and families
 - incorporate the full implementation of Youth Guarantee
 - focus on skills essential to the future New Zealand workforce.
34. Development of the *Plan* will be informed by research and monitoring activities, to ensure it is informed by the best evidence of what works to improve results and accelerate progress.
35. The Ministry will continue to lead work with MPIA and Pasifika academics to produce a coordinated national plan for research that will further build the Pasifika education evidence base. This will be complemented by the Ministry's Best Evidence Synthesis (BES) which is advancing a report focused on effective teaching in literacy, with a focus on Pasifika students. The BES Programme is also preparing a case study for schools to demonstrate what works in Pasifika bilingual education settings.

36. The *Plan* will be supported by close interagency collaboration. I have asked the Ministry to strengthen its lead on education interagency work to ensure alignment of strategies and initiatives, and I expect ongoing close engagement with key agencies leading complementary work, such as the Department of Labour-led Hi-Tech Jobs Partnership programme, Maori and Pacific futures (years 7-8 students) pilot, Pacific Pipeline pilot and schools business partnership.

Consultation

37. The Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, Education Review Office, Tertiary Education Commission, New Zealand Qualifications Authority, Careers New Zealand and Teachers' Council have been engaged on this work. The Department of Labour and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade have had the opportunity to comment on this paper. The paper has been provided to Treasury, State Services Commission, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Ministry of Social Development, Human Rights Commission, and Ministries of Women's Affairs, Youth Development, Health and Justice for information.

Financial Implications

38. The *Plan* is funded within baseline by the Ministry of Education and partner agencies.

Human Rights Implications

39. The *Plan* is primarily about improving the performance of the education system for one of the most underserved groups: Pasifika students. Successfully implemented, it will enable Pasifika students to achieve more equitable education results in relation to the rest of the New Zealand population.

Legislative Implications

40. There are no legislative implications associated with this paper.

Regulatory Impact Analysis

41. There is no specific regulatory impact associated with this paper.

Gender Implications

41. The data shows that Pasifika boys are not performing as well as Pasifika girls in education (though this gender difference is represented in other student results for other ethnicities as well). The focus on literacy achievement (where boys underperform compared with girls overall) and culturally responsive teaching can be expected to positively impact on boys' educational achievement to reduce the current disparity.

Disability Perspective

42. The *Plan* supports the New Zealand Disability Strategy through its focus on early identification of special needs.

Publicity

43. Ongoing communications and engagement to support more effective teaching and learning for Pasifika students will focus on three main groups:

- internal Ministry of Education and Government audiences
- the sector – specifically teachers, principals and other educators
- Pasifika communities.

Recommendations

44. The Minister of Education recommends that the Committee:

- a. **note** that this report sets out the key findings of a mid-term review of the *Pasifika Education Plan 2009-2012* [refer SOC Min (09) 20/1] and actions that will be taken to accelerate improvements
- b. **note** that progress for Pasifika students is evident in:
 - increased participation in ECE
 - improved attainment of NCEA Level 2
 - ongoing good retention levels
 - high take-up of Youth Guarantee
- c. **note** that further action is required to:
 - build on and accelerate participation in ECE
 - further reduce disparities in literacy and numeracy achievement
 - support Pasifika students to go on and succeed at higher levels of education
- d. **note** that the current range of policies and programmes that will contribute to improved results for Pasifika students include:
 - increasing Pasifika children's access to *Reading Recovery* and *Reading Together* in all Decile 1-3 schools
 - a new long term approach to improving student attendance as a foundation for engagement in learning and achievement in South Auckland and Gisborne/East Coast where there are high numbers of Pasifika students
 - increasing the *Accelerated Learning in Mathematics* pilot and evaluation (which showed positive results for Pasifika students in a small trial in 2010)
 - refocusing teacher Professional Learning and Development services to lift cultural responsiveness and ensure teachers are better equipped to respond to the needs of Pasifika children and students, and other key priority groups
 - placing Student Achievement Practitioners in schools to support school leaders and disseminate good practice
 - implementation of National Standards
 - offering new career choice projects, which include a focus on Pasifika students and families
 - increasing the number of Youth Guarantee places to support Pasifika young peoples' transition into further education and work
- e. **agree** that future priorities for a new *Plan* designed to enhance Pasifika education success will:
 - set more ambitious targets, informed by in-depth investigation, discussion, and comparative analysis about Pasifika and non-Pasifika achievement
 - include further actions to drive continued improvement in literacy and numeracy achievement, and attainment of qualifications
 - focus on attendance as a foundation for engagement in learning and achievement

- emphasise the importance of Pasifika identities, languages and cultures and working closely with Pasifika parents and families
- incorporate the full implementation of Youth Guarantee
- focus on skills essential to the future New Zealand workforce