

# Paerata School

Perseverance Achievement Excellence



## Whānau Engagement Plan

## **Introduction**

The Paerata School Board of Trustees are committed to preparing every student leaving Paerata School to be ready for high school. Research is clear that quality family and community engagement in student learning is critically important to achieving that goal.

Our Whānau Engagement Plan supports the role of families, communities, and local cultures in the school. Viewing parents as the first and best teachers of their children goes beyond their role in early education. Engagement means involving whānau in every aspect of educational planning, implementation, and evaluation throughout their children's education.

Our aim is to improve whānau engagement and making concerted efforts to grow a culture of trust and partnership between families, community members, and formal educators toward the goal of growing successful and happy pupils.

## **Impact of Family Engagement on Student Success**

Families play a critical role in student success. As noted by the Harvard Family Research Project:

“From the time children are born, parents influence their cognitive, social, and emotional development. Parents’ interactions and activities help shape children’s readiness for school, and consistent engagement during children’s elementary years is also related to positive academic and behavioral outcomes. Family engagement remains important in adolescence and predicts healthy youth behaviors and higher rates of college enrollment.”

It is widely acknowledged that family engagement is a critical component of children’s school success “from cradle to career.” Research suggests that family engagement promotes multiple benefits for students, including improved readiness for school, increased achievement, superior social skills and behavior, and increased likelihood of high school graduation.

In the 2002 research review *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement*, Anne T. Henderson and Karen L. Mapp conclude that there is a strong relationship between family involvement and student success, regardless of race/ethnicity, economic status, or parents' level of education. It is clear that when families are involved in their children's learning, both at home and at school, their children do better in school.

Parents, educators, administrators, and the community share responsibility for family engagement. Three consistent elements of successful family engagement efforts that emerge from the research are that:

1. All parties work together to build a foundation of trust and respect;
2. Family engagement efforts and strategies are firmly connected to learning objectives; and
3. Efforts to reach out and engage parents go beyond the schoolhouse doors and do so consistently throughout the year.

## The Six Components of Successful Family Engagement

The Whānau Engagement Plan is built around the following components critical to student success and achievement through family engagement:

### Welcoming Every Family

Every family coming into the school or interacting with school personnel feels welcome.

### Two-Way Communication

Whānau and school staff engage in regular, two-way, meaningful communication about student learning.

### Sharing Power

Whānau and school staff are equal partners in decisions that affect children and work together to create policies, practices, and programs.

### Supporting Student Success

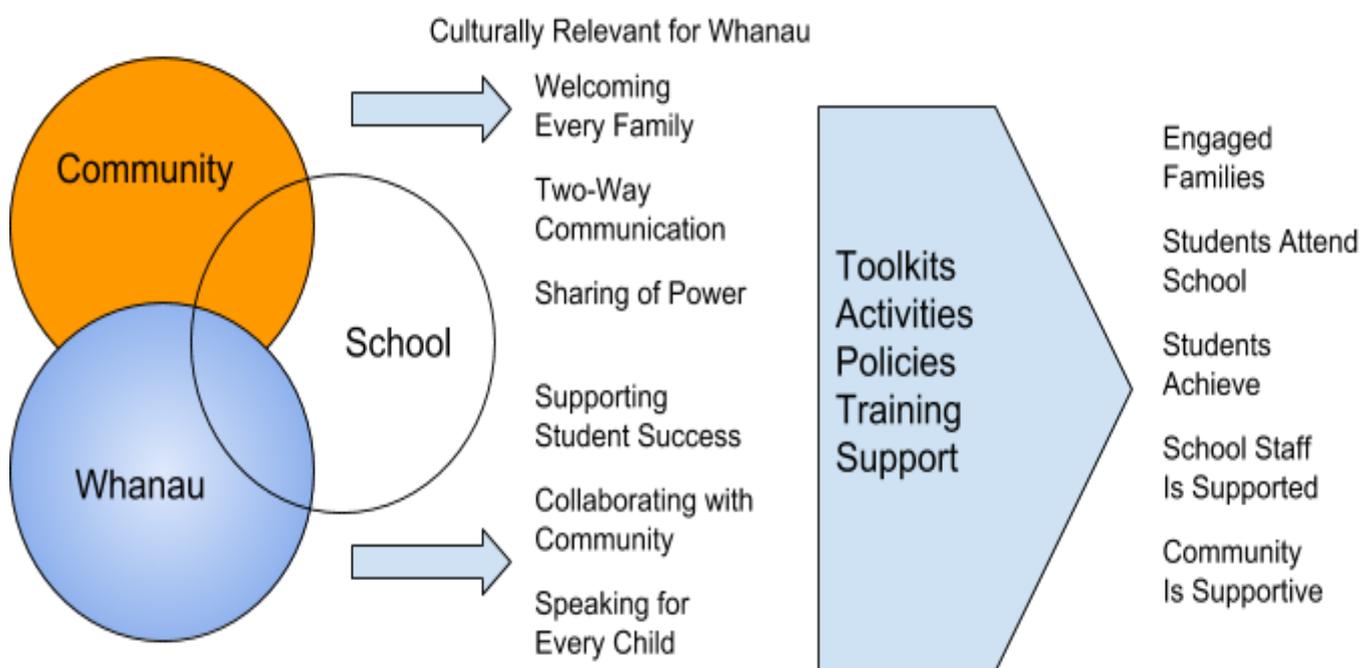
Whānau and school staff continuously collaborate to support students' learning and healthy development, both at home and at school.

### Collaborating with Community

Whānau and school staff are connected to expanded learning opportunities, community services, and civic participation.

### Speaking for Every Child

Whānau are empowered to be advocates for their own and other children, to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.



## **Actions to Achieve Results**

### **Overarching Actions**

- o Timetable a community model of gatherings to maximize family involvement.
- o Develop a family and community engagement plan with the active participation of students, families, and community members.
- o Identify a family engagement specialist or liaison.

### **Welcoming Every Family**

- o Create a network of mentor parents to assist new families in learning about the school.
- o Establish a parent resource room/office to be the hub for support for students and family needs.
- o Host special traditional celebrations after school/weekends.
- o Conduct a family-friendly school walk-through with Principal or a member of staff allowing whānau to set the school in action and facilitate discussions.
- o At preschool/kindergarten orientations, share information with parents on how to be engaged.

### **Two-Way Communication**

- o Complete a beginning of school year family engagement survey, make adjustments based on results, and survey again at end of the year to determine the effectiveness of school efforts. Share results with all families.
- o Provide parents with student curriculum level expectations, reports, conferences, and follow up as needed.
- o Provide parents and staff with current contact information and include preferred ways and times for parents, teachers, and staff to reach each other.
- o Utilize all existing communication systems ( newsletters, emails, Facebook etc.) to keep parents informed and engaged.
- o Encourage parents and teachers to communicate regarding students' positive behavior and achievements.
- o Encourage and provide opportunities for informal interactions between staff, administration, and families.
- o Provide clear information regarding expectations, student placement, school activities, student support services and programs.
- o Regularly distribute student work for parental/family members' comments and review.

### **Sharing Power**

- o Provide opportunities for parents to join committees that set school policies, goals, or evaluation of programs.

### **Supporting Student Success**

- o Encourage teachers to keep families and students informed and reminded about homework through multiple means of communication, such as emails class newsletters.
- o Provide training to help families understand and prepare for transitions into primary and high school.
- o Provide information or training for parents about testing so that they understand what type of testing is being given and how results will be used to increase academic success.
- o Provide parents with an annual school calendar of important dates and events and develop a web site that is user-friendly and contains current contact information.
- o Create a database to capture what families can do in terms of volunteerism or services to the school.
- o Provide training for parents so they can know and understand Paerata School and the PB4L (Positive Behaviour for Learning) processes.
- o Provide training for in-school parent volunteers. Provide opportunities for parents who are unable to come to the school during the day to volunteer in other ways.

### **Collaborating with Community**

- o Use community facilities (library, community hall, local reserves and parks) for learning opportunities.
- o Make local agencies and businesses aware of local school happenings.
- o Recruit community members to volunteer in school activities.
- o Participate in community clean-up or beautification projects.
- o Invite community organisations to promote and provide leadership training for parents.

### **Speaking for Every Child**

- o Provide training for parents so they can know and understand school, student and family rights as well as resources available.

## **Community Level**

### **Overarching Actions**

o Encourage cultural organisations to collaborate with schools. Work with kaumatua and longstanding respected people in the community who can share clear messages with families about the value of education.

### **Welcoming Every Family**

o Make a unified effort with all entities (medical, social, educational organisations, etc.) to engage each set of parents as a child is born to help the family know how special they are, what their role is, and how to connect with resources. Provide ongoing support for families to know what to do and who to turn to when they are not sure.

### **Two-Way Communication**

o Continually assess needs and share information about family resources and opportunities with families and schools.

### **Sharing Power**

o Community agencies collaborate with schools to educate and support parents in sharing power in decision-making that impacts policies and programs affecting children.

### **Supporting Student Success**

o Offer to provide health and social work to support families of children with stress in the family, medical, behaviour, extended absences.  
o Attend celebrations of student talent and achievement, supporting every youth.

### **Collaborating with Community**

o Community groups partnering with school to educate business owners on the importance of family engagement and what they can do to help. For example, a business owner can allow employees time off to volunteer at a school.

### **Speaking for Every Child**

o Community businesses enhance efforts to be family and young person friendly, making all feel welcome to conduct business.

## Whānau Level

### Overarching Actions

- o Begin work to develop a collaborative relationship with your child's teacher and principal early in the school year.
- o Maintain high expectations for your children and share them with the teacher.

### Welcoming Every Family

- o Build relationships with other families and talk about how to help each other in supporting children.

### Two-Way Communication

- o Provide teachers with important information you feel may impact your child's learning. (Changing family circumstances.)
- o Inform the teacher when you notice your child having difficulty with homework.
- o Read all materials sent home from school and ask questions when an item is unclear to you.

### Sharing Power

- o Help set goals and develop a personalised education plan for each child.

### Supporting Student Success

- o Attend school meetings on learning expectations, assessments, and information.
- o Create regular routines at home (meals, homework, sleep).
- o Work with your child to find a place for homework that is comfortable, quiet, and well lit.
- o Discuss your child's school day and homework daily.
- o Set the expectation for your child that attending school is a "non-negotiable" unless he/she is sick.
- o Identify non-academic activities that can motivate the child's interest in learning.
- o Talk to your children often about the value of education and its importance to their future.
- o Attend school activities and training opportunities that will help you support your child's learning.
- o Read every day, by yourself and with your child.
- o On homework, let your child find the solution if at all possible. Give guidance, not answers.

### Collaborating with Community

- o Encourage student engagement outside the school day, such as attending local sporting events, or engaging in youth activities.
- o Thank local businesses and business owners who support activities at school.

### Speaking for Every Child

- o Respect the school's processes as you advocate for your child and other students.

## Conclusion

These identified actions are the result of many formal and informal discussions and meetings involving education providers, teachers, support staff, students, parents and community members of Paerata School.

We respect that every family and community looks different, and that many families have different feelings about formal education, and that families speak many different languages.

We also respect that our whānau want the best for their children. Students thrive when they know that everyone around them - in the home, in the community, and in the school - has the highest expectations of their behavior, school work, and citizenship and wholly support them.

Our Whānau Engagement clearly states that when we partner with whānau, and respect the culture of every family, students will succeed.

## What parents and communities expect of us

Expectations and Behaviour	How we work
<p><b>Value everyone</b> We value the contributions of all children and young people, and their families, whānau and communities.</p>	<p><b>Have vision</b> We have high expectations of ourselves and our children and young people, and aspire for them to achieve more.</p> <p><b>Have ethical leadership</b> We model and action the clear values that underpin our work.</p> <p><b>Support cultural aspirations, taonga tuku iho</b> We create contexts in which identity, language, knowledge, culture and values have a rightful place in learning.</p> <p><b>Use evidence</b> We take thoughtful action, based on what we know works.</p> <p><b>Be professional and flexible</b> We recognise that inclusiveness is not about a special response. It's about a professional, flexible response to the needs of all learners and their families, whānau and communities. There is no one-size-fits-all.</p> <p><b>Be innovative</b> We listen and are open to discovery and building on what we already know and do.</p> <p><b>Ako</b> We learn as well as teach and we reflect on the impact of our practice and actions.</p> <p><b>Work together for maximum impact</b> Together we find what works and get the job done.</p>
<p><b>Respect diversity</b> We recognise that every learner is unique and we build on their identities, interests, languages and cultures.</p>	
<p><b>Equity for all</b> We identify and remove any barriers to achievement.</p>	

## What Success for all Looks and Feels Like

Confident Children: I belong ... I am learning	Confident Parents and Whānau We are involved and supported and champion our child's learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I belong, feel safe, enjoy school and want to go there. Sometimes I don't even want to go home!</li> <li>● I have friends.</li> <li>● My teacher expects the same from all of us.</li> <li>● My teacher really gets me.</li> <li>● My school knows that my parents and my whānau whānui are a part of me and who I am.</li> <li>● My teacher pushes me to do better.</li> <li>● I have a say in what goes on for me and where I'm heading.</li> <li>● My school and whānau whānui praise me lots for what I have learned and achieved.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● We understand the various services that are available and the right people we can talk to.</li> <li>● We are confident in our kid's school and teachers.</li> <li>● We love seeing our kid learning, achieving and having friends.</li> <li>● We feel secure in the knowledge that our kid is happy, safe, belongs and can be themselves.</li> <li>● We have a say in what goes on for our kid and where they're heading.</li> <li>● Parents, kaumātua and members of our community feel supported and involved in guiding our kid's learning.</li> </ul>

## Children will be the best they can be when they are present, participating, engaged, achieving and belong.

Children will grow and reach their potential when schools reach into homes and connect with the aspirations, identity, language and culture of their learners and their families, whānau and communities.	
CONFIDENT TEACHERS We are providing quality, flexible teaching	CONFIDENT SCHOOLS We have ethical leaders, a strong culture, sound systems, and good planning and reporting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I am confident in my teaching and class programme.</li> <li>● I feel supported.</li> <li>● I know where my learners come from, how they make sense of their world, and I know their parents, families, whānau and communities.</li> <li>● I understand and respond to my learners' strengths, passions and interests.</li> <li>● I feel confident to utilise the skills and knowledge of parents, whānau and the community.</li> <li>● I enjoy and have pride in the achievements of all the learners in my classes and I tell them so often.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● We are confident that our school is a welcoming, safe and respectful place for everyone.</li> <li>● The students in our school and their whānau whānui belong and feel at ease here.</li> <li>● We are confident that all our learners are challenged and are learning and achieving.</li> <li>● We enjoy and have pride in the achievements of all the learners in our school.</li> <li>● We are confident in the services we receive.</li> </ul>

### Legislation

#### Education Act 1989 Part 8 (1):

People who have special educational needs (whether because of disability or otherwise) have the same rights to enrol and receive education at state schools as people who do not.

#### National Administration Guidelines 1:

Each board ... is required to ... identify students and groups of students who are not achieving, who are at risk of not achieving, who have special needs (including gifted and talented students), and aspects of the curriculum which require particular attention, and develop and implement teaching and learning strategies to address the needs of students and aspects of the curriculum identified.

### Education Policy/Strategy

**New Zealand Curriculum** All young people will be confident, connected, actively involved, lifelong learners.

**Ka Hikitia** Māori enjoying and achieving education success as Māori. All Māori students, their parents and their whānau participate in and contribute to an engaging and enjoyable educational journey that recognises and celebrates their unique identity, language and culture.

**Pasifika Education Plan - Vision:** Five out of five Pasifika learners participating, engaging and achieving in education, secure in their identities, language and cultures and contributing fully to New Zealand's social, cultural and economic well-being.