



Auckland Pacific Education Conversation: Findings Summary

Talofa lava, Malo e lelei, Kia orana, Talofa ni, Fakaalofa lahi atu, Ni sa bula vinaka, Kia ora.

We want to express our gratitude to everyone who shared their ideas and opinions at our Auckland Fonu.

We know that to build a system that responds to the unique identities, languages and cultures of our Pacific communities we must continue to work together. We will be returning to communities later in 2019 to share our response and to continue the conversation.

Bias & racism

Racism exists and it is harmful.

“Stop institutional racism and bias! We as Pacific are successful, value us and our children.”

In education this means being judged on what you look like, lower expectations for Pacific students, a white curriculum and teacher bias.

“Move away from deficit thinking about our students... How do we persuade our teachers to stand strong against: racism, discrimination, poverty and housing issues?”

There is a feeling that you have to “become white” to succeed.

“The Education system shouldn’t throw away our culture for academic success.”

Accessing Education

Free education is not free. Many of us feel burdened by school fees, NCEA fees, uniforms and extra-curricular costs.

“[We need]... Fees free NCEA so you don’t have to worry about what courses you’re taking because you don’t have to pay the fees.”

There is a strong desire for Pacific languages to be supported in more meaningful ways. Some ideas include a language commission, Ministry-run workshops, advertising in Pacific language and Pacific language policies, legislation and resources.

Many of us also see a need for a pathway that supports Pacific identities, languages and cultures, similar to Kura Kaupapa.

“Extend Aoga Mata to primary, secondary and tertiary (like wānanga) – with a focus on culture and language. There are cognitive benefits to learning two languages.”

We want smoother transitions across the education system with a better understanding of pathways. Many of us are worried about options being cut off without realising it. Some of us see a stronger connection between education and work, and tertiary support systems reaching into secondary schools helping address this.

To address equity issues, we think government agencies must work together in a more coordinated way.

“We need legislative change to make it a requirement for government agencies to work together. At the moment they don’t listen.”

A learning community

Education should involve everyone – not just learners and teachers. We see a role for the church to be more involved, in helping build connections between parents and schools. Some of us see community leaders as playing a similar role, especially supporting learners who have disengaged from education.

“[We need] collaboration between family and schools to understand Pasifika kids are walking in parallel worlds that may conflict.”

Both of these ideas suggest a need for a navigator who has a relationship with learners and their families and supports them through the system.

“[There is a] Difference between catholic schools and state schools. Why aren’t state schools doing so well? Catholic schools providing more emails about assignment due dates, interview dates – that admin contact is worth the cost for parents.”

There is demand for more learning for parents and families – on NCEA, the cultural context in New Zealand, our role in supporting our children and the importance of speaking our first language to our children, where possible.

“Parents [need] to influence or be a part of the learning cycle. Parents can only teach as much as they know, but when their knowledge is limited, they can’t help.”

Wellbeing

There are a number of protective factors that promote wellbeing for Pacific children and young people:

- ✓ Family support and positive influences
- ✓ Participating in cultural environments
- ✓ Being strong in your cultural identity
- ✓ Having basic needs met – safe and warm housing, food, clean clothes

“Kids must have food, clean clothes. They don’t care about 1+1 is they are hungry or wearing dirty clothes.”

There are a number of factors that have a negative impact on wellbeing:

- Social media and the pressures it brings
- Bullying in schools and online
- Physical discipline (feeling physically unsafe at home or at school)
- Being made to feel ‘dumb’ in school

“If schools felt safe you would see higher attendance. We need to tackle bullying, racism, discrimination. We need policies in place in schools.”

“With things happening in our outside lives, sometimes it’s hard to come to school and focus on what 1+1 is”



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Teaching & learning

We want more diverse learning opportunities, like communal learning in groups, tuakana/teina models, opportunities to co-design learning, field trips, interactive activities and flexibility in the school day and timetable.

“Can we learn in groups and sit exams and assessments in groups?”

In our learning, we want:

- ✓ A curriculum that is relevant and inclusive of the histories, values, stories and accomplishments of Pacific people (and of Pacific LGBTQIA+)
- ✓ Better Pacific language options in schools (to be supported by language transmission in homes)
- ✓ Opportunities to learn about a wide variety of careers paired with quality careers advice that engages families in opportunities to make decisions alongside their children

“Incorporate culture into learning, but have resources to support this. If we are learning about astronomy - link it with Matariki or Pasifika voyaging.”

We see the opportunities created by technology – learning at your own pace in your own space and increasing connectedness- but are concerned about how distracting it is, and issues around security and inequitable access.

We need everyone involved in our learning to have high expectations of us. We need teachers who understand who we are, learn from us and value what we bring to our learning.

“Teachers should try to understand us and where we are coming from so they can teach us in effective ways instead of trying to reverse what has already been taught through upbringing i.e. religion, culture etc.”

Important knowledge & skills

We see the education system having a role to play in developing a number of key skills and attributes, including:

- ✓ Cultural competence, cultural awareness, cultural values (including speaking your heritage language)
- ✓ Ability to walk confidently in both worlds
- ✓ Confidence, having goals, knowing who you are and having a growth mind-set

“[They need a] strong understanding of who they are and where they come from... To celebrate the fact that they are the Pacific navigators and have strong historical understanding.”

- ✓ Ability to challenge norms
- ✓ Creativity, critical thinking & problem solving
- ✓ Adaptability, communication skills, relationship skills, self-control, perseverance and time-management

“In school we are not taught what we need for our futures. We are taught requirements for University. That's great and all but how many of those skills can we really use in real life?”

- ✓ Life skills: financial literacy, conflict management, career planning, voting, study skills

“Financial literacy - will enable children to be secure, have financial freedom, help us first so we can help our future generations, share info to teach us how to be independent.”

- ✓ Values: respect, empathy, care, humility, inclusiveness, positivity

Success

Some of the key indicators of a successful Pacific New Zealander is someone who:

- ✓ Spends lots of quality time with family
- ✓ Invests time supporting those in need
- ✓ Achieves goals they have set themselves
- ✓ Is proud and confident in their cultural identity
- ✓ Is happy, kind, loving and puts God first
- ✓ Has a good education and a good job

“Fulfilment is only achieved if my neighbour is fulfilled too.”

Success is a strongly collective concept and is grounded in the value of relationships and the obligation to care for those in the community.

It is about everybody playing their unique role to achieve shared success.

Listening to communities

Alongside some of **what** needs to change for Pacific communities, some of us shared feedback on the engagement process.

Some of us are frustrated that, despite sharing what needs to change, we never seem to see action in response.

“We have had so many meetings and given feedback but for me it is about movement. What are they going to do with it? It disappears. I'm at the point of being over talking. I want movement. Action. Now.”

Some of us are encouraged by the fono process and feel more hopeful having engaged in the process.

“I feel hopeful because of talanoa like these where the 'student voice' is being heard.”

“This process was good - it's the validation & solutions focus.”

Keeping up to date with Pacific communities and education

We want to make sure that all of you who participated in the meetings, or who are interested in what ethnic communities have said, are kept up to date.

For more information about the ethnic communities conversation, go to <https://conversation.education.govt.nz/conversations/pacific-education/>

