
3. Te reo Māori and school provision for ākonga Māori

Schools play a key role in supporting the identity and wellbeing of ākonga Māori as Māori as well as in their academic success. We know Māori students do much better when education reflects and values their identity, language, and culture. Te Tiriti o Waitangi obliges all schools to provide education that is relevant to Māori. System-level support for English-medium schools to understand what this means and how to improve the experiences of their ākonga Māori has been patchy and not sustained.¹³ However, the last few years have seen stronger emphasis on growing school and teacher commitment and practice from government agencies and sector organisations. In May 2019 Te Ahu o te Reo Māori programme was also launched with pilots in four regions, to normalise the use of te reo Māori in English-medium classes.

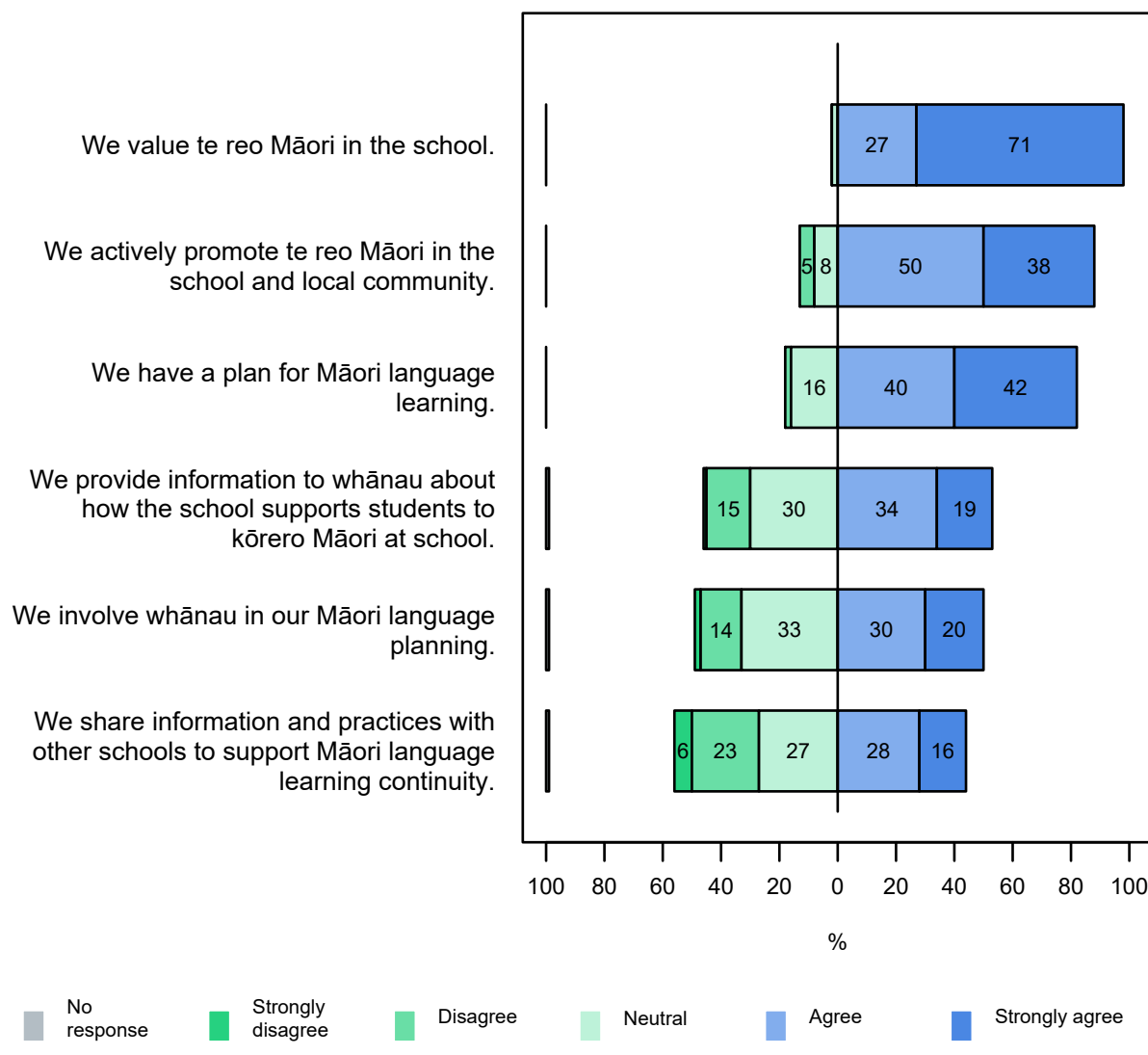
In this chapter, we start with the provision of te reo Māori, in schools and within classes, and support for ākonga Māori to maintain their reo Māori during school transitions. Then we turn to support for ākonga Māori wellbeing. School relations with local iwi and hapū, increasingly emphasised in relation to both ākonga Māori wellbeing and success, are then reported on. We conclude this chapter by looking at primary school focus on ākonga Māori achievement, what principals described as the most effective thing their school had done in the last 3 years to improve outcomes for ākonga Māori, and Māori parent views of their child's learning.

Most English-medium schools plan and promote te reo Māori

Almost all the principals responding said te reo Māori was valued in their school. Forty-two percent strongly agreed that they have a plan for Māori language learning in the school, and 36% actively promoted te reo Māori in the school and local community. However, although guidance commonly underlines the value of actively involving whānau, it was less common to involve whānau in schools' Māori language planning, or to inform them about how the school supports students to kōrero Māori at school. Figure 14 has the details.

¹³ See, for example, Office of the Auditor-General. (2016). *Summary of our education for Māori reports* [Parliamentary paper]. www.oag.govt.nz/2016/education-for-maori-summary/docs/summary-education-for-maori.pdf

FIGURE 14 School planning for Māori language learning (Principals, n = 145)



Increased attention to te reo Māori in teaching and professional learning

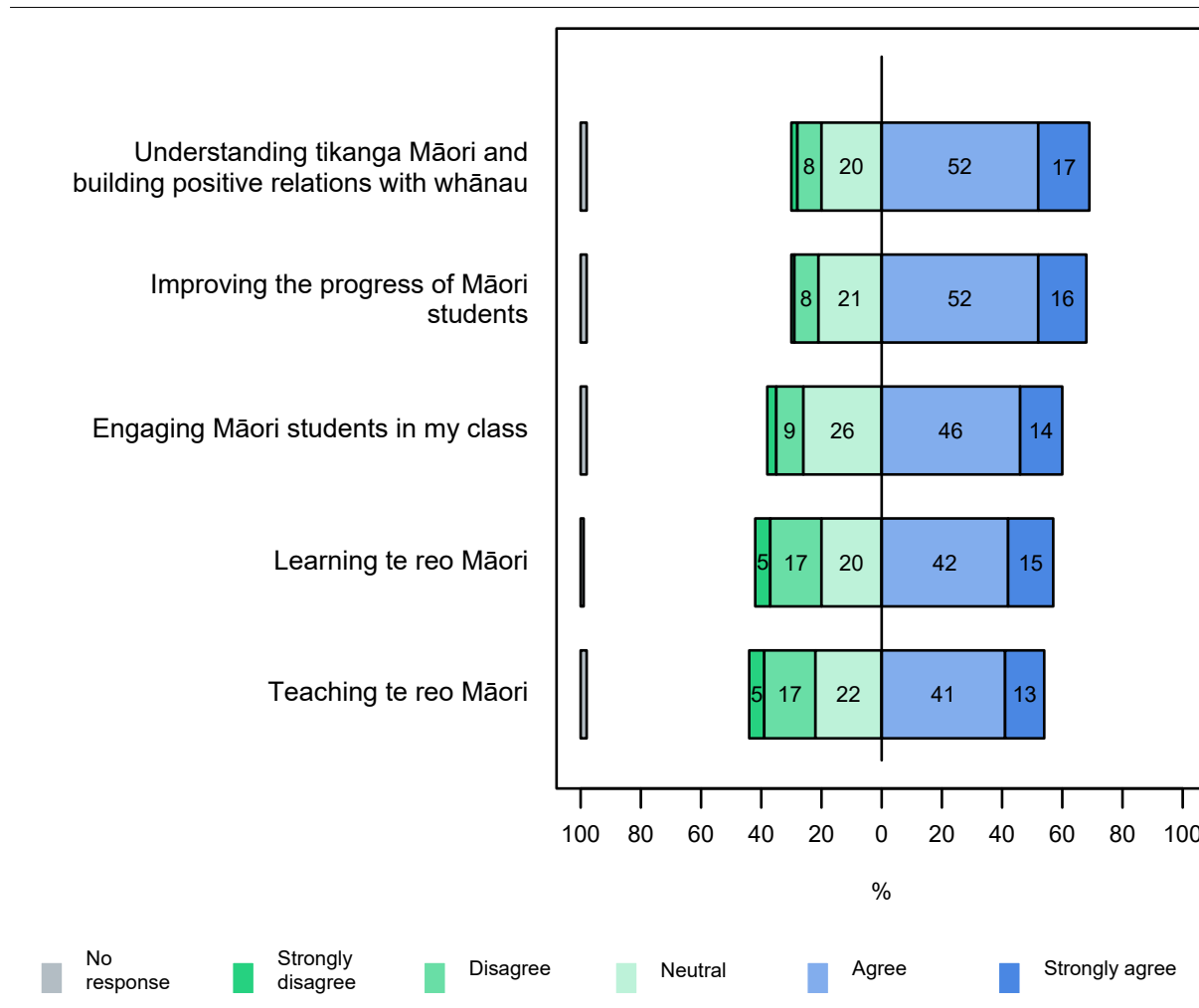
More principals in 2019 indicated difficulty finding teachers of te reo Māori than in 2016, which may be due to both increased attention to te reo Māori in schools, as well as the continuing shortage of teachers:

- 24% had difficulty finding teachers of te reo Māori at a basic level (10% in 2016)
- 17% had difficulty finding teachers of te reo Māori at a moderate level (3% in 2016)
- 17% had difficulty finding teachers of te reo Māori at a high level (4% in 2016).

Half the principals said te reo Māori and tikanga Māori had been a focus for professional learning and/or change in teaching practice over the last 2 years in their school, a marked increase from the 38% who said this in 2016, and the 29% who said this in 2013.

Many primary teachers thought their professional learning over the last 3 years had given them practical help in relation to supporting Māori students, ranging from 69% in relation to understanding tikanga Māori and building positive relations with whānau, and 68% in improving the progress of Māori students, to 54% in relation to teaching te reo Māori. These proportions are much the same as 2016. Figure 15 shows the details.

FIGURE 15 Practical help from professional learning to support Māori students (Teachers, n = 620)



School decile was associated with teachers strongly agreeing that their professional learning had given them practical help to improve the progress of Māori students (29% of decile 1 and 2 school teachers strongly agreed, decreasing across deciles to 9% of decile 9 and 10 school teachers).

Teachers' use of te reo with their students is evident but limited

Students of 14% of the teachers could learn te reo Māori most of the time, up from 10% in 2016, and 8% in 2013. Another 47% of the teachers reported that students in their classes can learn te reo Māori quite often, 32% sometimes, and 5%, almost never.¹⁴

Table 3 shows more of the ways in which te reo Māori is used in classes. For most teachers, te reo Māori use is limited to giving some instructions or directions, and/or using a few Māori words or phrases. It is encouraging to see 41% of teachers consciously learning te reo Māori in their daily practice, using ako.¹⁵

¹⁴ We included 'learn te reo Māori' in a bank of items asking how often students did them in teachers' classes. As the next paragraph shows, this learning is limited in English-medium schools.

¹⁵ Teachers could select more than one use of te reo Māori.

TABLE 3 Teachers' use of te reo Māori with their students

	Teachers (n = 620) %
I use te reo Māori to give instructions or directions (e.g., E noho, E tū)	61
I use a few Māori words or phrases (e.g., greetings and farewells)	52
My students help me practise and strengthen my reo Māori so we learn together (ako)	41
I confidently use reo Māori phrases and short sentences, other than instructions, in my class on a daily basis (e.g., Ka wani kē! Kei te aha koe āpōpō? Nō wai ēnei tōkena?)	16
I occasionally lead short lessons or discussions in class using te reo Māori only	7
I'm not confident using Māori words or phrases so I don't if I can avoid it	3
I can confidently teach across the curriculum and conduct all class activities in te reo Māori only	2

Māori teachers¹⁶ used te reo Māori more: 31% were confident to use te reo Māori phrases and short sentences and used it daily, compared with 14% of other teachers, and all but one of the nine teachers who conducted class activities in te reo Māori only were Māori. Five of these nine teachers taught in decile 1 and 2 schools; these schools also had a higher proportion of teachers who identified as Māori (29% compared with 7% in decile 3 to decile 10 schools).

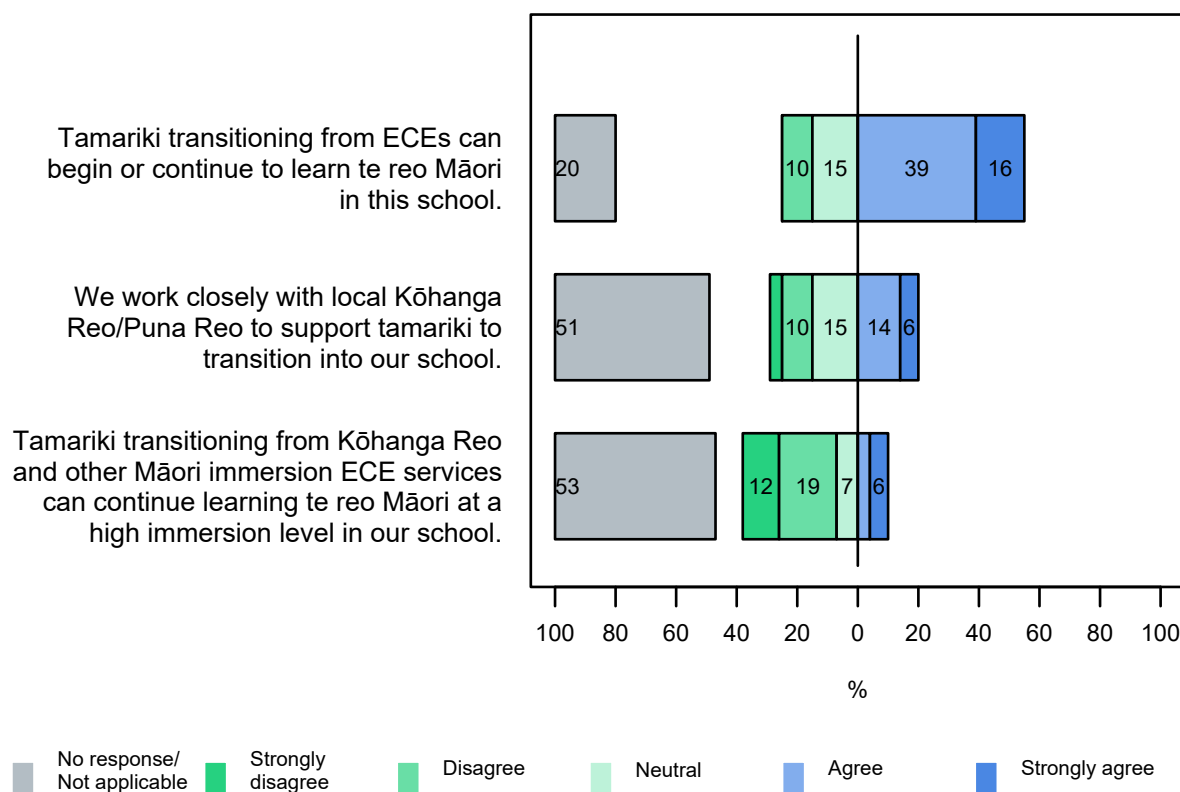
Most of the parents and whānau responding to the survey said that their child's school helped their child learn to speak te reo Māori: 30% very well, and 44% well. Māori and non-Māori parents and whānau had similar responses.

Few English-medium schools can provide a high level of te reo Māori for tamariki from Māori immersion early learning services

Figure 16 gives principals' answers to our questions about support for students transitioning from Kōhanga Reo or other Māori immersion early learning services. A fifth of the principals worked closely with local Kōhanga Reo / Puna Reo to support the transition of students, but only half of these (9%) said that these tamariki could continue learning te reo Māori at a high immersion level at the school. More generally, 55% of principals said that tamariki could begin or continue to learn te reo Māori in their school.

¹⁶ Ten percent (n = 60) of the teachers responding identified as Māori.

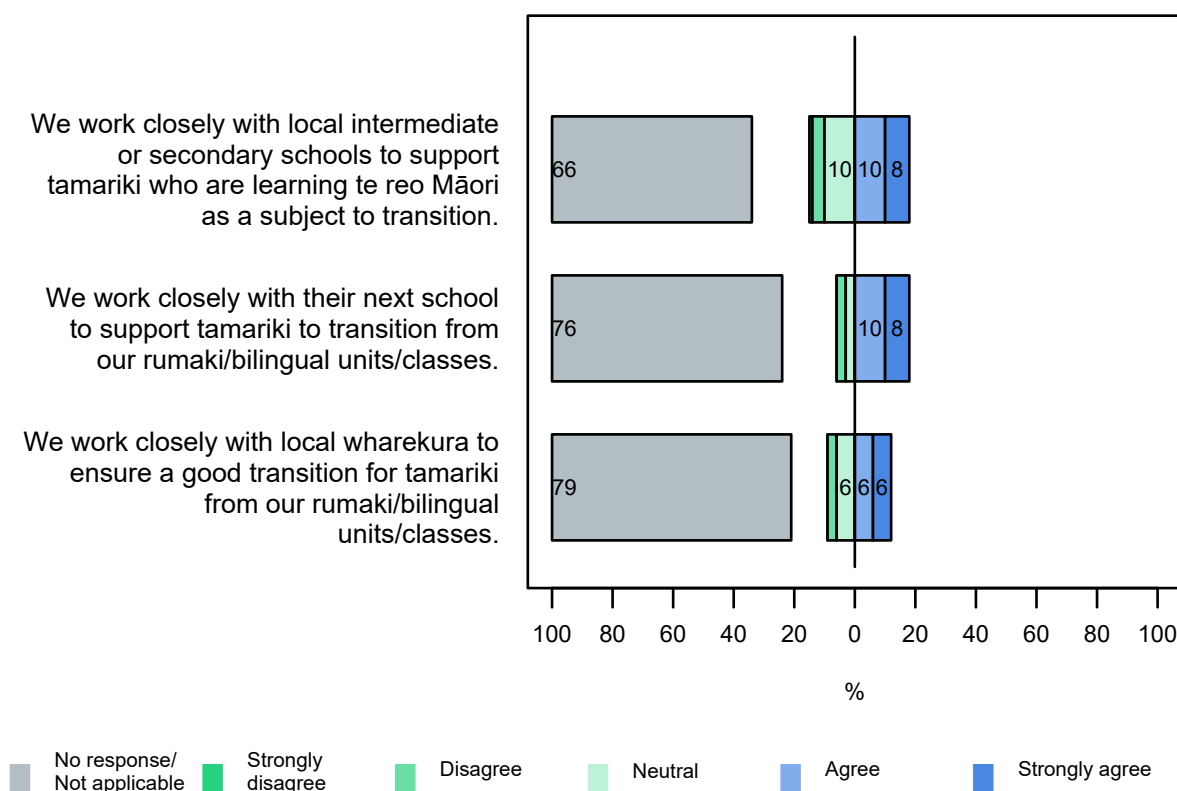
FIGURE 16 Support for tamariki transitioning from Māori immersion into primary school (Principals, n = 145)



Some schools work to provide transition support for te reo Māori from English-medium primary schools

When it comes to transitioning to secondary or intermediate school, 17% of the principals said they worked closely with the next school for tamariki from their rumaki/bilingual units/classes, and 18%, worked closely with the next school for tamariki who were learning te reo Māori as a subject. There has been little change here since 2016. Figure 17 shows the full picture.

FIGURE 17 Support for te reo for tamariki as they transition to secondary or intermediate (Principals, n = 145)

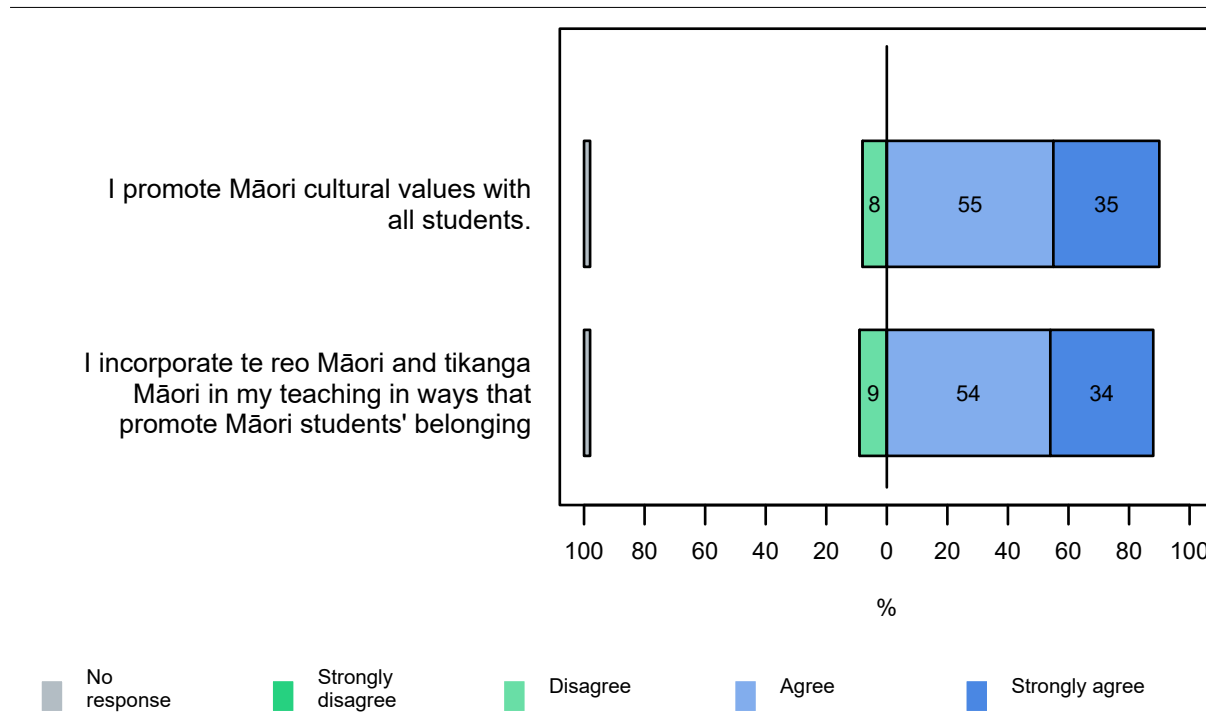


Most teachers and schools report some support for ākonga Māori wellbeing

Understanding and honouring te Tiriti o Waitangi in their school values and day-to-day activities was rated as very good by 31% of the teachers, and good by 42%. Twenty percent thought this was satisfactory in their school. Five percent found it poor, and 1%, very poor.

Around a third of the teachers strongly agreed that they promoted Māori cultural values with all students, and incorporated te reo Māori and tikanga Māori in ways that promote Māori students' belonging. A further 54%–55% agreed that they did these things. Only 8%–9% said they did not. This is much the same picture as in 2016, with the exception of a small increase in the proportion who strongly agreed that they incorporated te reo Māori and tikanga Māori to promote Māori students' wellbeing, from 27% in 2016 to 34% in 2019.

FIGURE 18 Teachers' support for ākonga Māori wellbeing (n = 145)

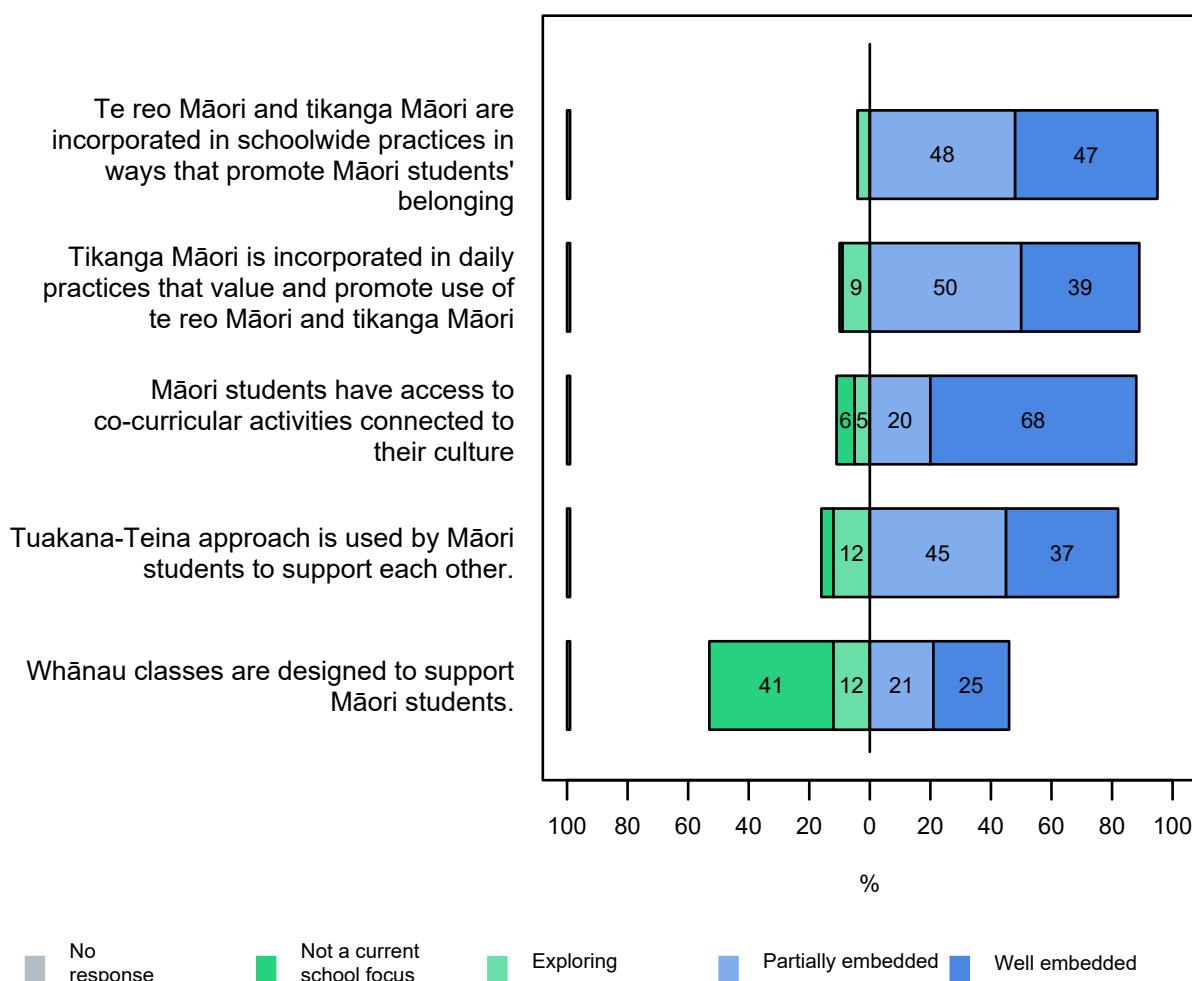


Around twice as many decile 1 and 2 school teachers strongly agreed that they promoted Māori cultural values with all students (60% compared with 31% of decile 3 to 10 school teachers), and incorporated te reo Māori and tikanga Māori in their teaching in ways that promote Māori students' belonging (56% compared with 31% of decile 3 to 10 school teachers).

Almost all the parents and whānau responding to the survey said that their child's teacher/s pronounced their name properly: 77% strongly agreed, and 21% agreed. Māori parents and whānau had similar responses as non-Māori.

Principals' reports of school-wide practices to support ākonga Māori wellbeing give a similar picture, showing a spread in terms of how well embedded these practices are, with small proportions still exploring ways to do this, and just a few saying it was not a focus—with the exception of providing whānau classes, organised vertically through year levels. Figure 19 has the details.

FIGURE 19 School support for ākonga Māori wellbeing (Principals, n = 145)



In 2019, more principals said their school was using the tuakana–teina approach (37% said this was well embedded, up from 20% in 2016, and only 4% said it was not a focus, compared with 25% in 2016). Whānau classes that were well embedded had also almost doubled: 25% in 2019, up from 13% in 2016. These were not a focus for 41% of schools, down from 59% in 2016.

Tuakana–teina approaches were well embedded more in decile 1 and 2 schools (54%), followed by decile 7 and 8 schools (42%), and decile 3 and 4 schools (39%). Whānau classes were also well embedded more in decile 1 and 2 schools (50%).

We also asked about kaupapa Māori support programmes for groups of students who need extra wellbeing support (see Figure 3 in Section 2). Such programmes were well embedded in 14% and partially embedded in 17% of the schools, much the same as in 2016. More schools were exploring such programmes in 2019: 31% compared with 19% in 2016. Decile 1 and 2 school principals reported the highest rate of embedding such programmes: 25%.

School interactions with local iwi and hapū are occurring, but need more support

Schools have been increasingly encouraged to work with their local iwi and hapū in partnership, so that Māori students can experience belonging and success as Māori, and that all the students in a school understand and respect the culture, knowledge, and language of their local iwi and hapū.

Sixty percent of the principals had some interaction with their local iwi:

- 37% had discussions with iwi about how best to provide for Māori students
- 35% had interactions with local hapū usually
- 16% had iwi feedback on their annual report
- 13% co-constructed some programmes with their local iwi
- 5% co-constructed some student support with their local iwi.

Forty-six percent identified partnerships with iwi and hapū as a major issue facing their school, and the same proportion also said they needed external expertise to engage with whānau, hapū, and iwi, and could not readily access this.

Hui with whānau Māori were reported by 20% of the trustees taking part in the survey as part of their consultation with their school community. This is much the same as in 2016, 2013, and 2010. Consulting on provision for Māori students was highest in 2010—30%, compared with 20% in 2016 and 9% in 2019. Incorporating te reo and tikanga Māori and provision for Māori students was a topic of school community consultation for 10% of the trustees, much the same as in 2016 and 2013.

Māori student achievement plays an increasing role in decisionmaking but a sizeable group of schools want reliable strategies to support Māori student learning

Three-quarters of the principals said that Māori student achievement data played a significant role in their board's decisionmaking. There has been a marked increase from the 10% who strongly agreed with this statement in 2016 and the 9% in 2013, to 23% in 2019.

There was still a substantial proportion of principals who said they needed and could not access external expertise on implementing reliable strategies to support Māori student learning, 41%, as did 37% in 2016.

Māori student achievement was identified by 25% of the principals as a major issue facing their school, somewhat lower than the 34% who identified this in 2016. Decile 1 and 2 school principals were most likely to identify this as a major issue for them—46%.¹⁷

Most principals can identify effective practices in their school that have improved ākonga Māori outcomes

We asked principals an open-ended question about the most effective thing their school had done in the past 3 years to improve outcomes for ākonga Māori and 130 comments were made. There were five main themes:

- use or increased use of te reo Māori and tikanga in everyday practice and visibility, with some mentioning school waiata, kapa haka, karakia, and performances for the school community

¹⁷ Māori student achievement was also identified as a major issue for their school by 30% of decile 3 and 4 school principals, 25% of decile 5 and 6 school principals, 13% of decile 7 and 8 school principals, and 14% of decile 9 and 10 school principals.

- whānau engagement, community involvement
- improving staff capability to teach ākonga Māori, through PLD, employment decisions, collaborative work
- using assessments and inquiry to identify ākonga Māori needs and tailor teaching
- greater emphasis on respectful relationships, localised curriculum, and pedagogy that supports student agency.

Māori parents and whānau responding to the survey were positive about their child's schooling experience

With the caveat that parents and whānau responding to the survey had higher education levels than parents and whānau as a whole, so they are not representative of all parents and whānau, the 55 Māori parents and whānau who took part in the survey were generally positive about school provision for their child, as were other parents and whānau. The full picture is given in Section 9.

Two-thirds of the Māori parents and whānau who took part in the survey strongly agreed that the cultural identity of their child was recognised and respected at the school, and that they were pleased with the progress their child had made in 2019.

Twenty percent of Māori parents and whānau coached or helped with kapa haka, 36% attended kapa haka at their child's school, and 13% taught te reo Māori and/or tikanga Māori there.

Summary

Overall, the national survey responses point to te reo Māori being used in English-medium schools, as part of daily life, but in a limited way. It is encouraging that there is a steady rise since 2013 in English-medium primary school students being able to learn te reo Māori most of the time, but the proportion is still low: 14%. The marked increase in the proportion of principals who have difficulty finding teachers of te reo attests to both the growing attention to te reo Māori in primary schools, and the continuing shortage of knowledgeable te reo Māori speakers who also want to teach.

Other signs of increased attention to the success and wellbeing of ākonga Māori are evident, with more use of tuakana-teina approaches, whānau classes, and exploration of kaupapa Māori support programmes, and Māori student achievement data playing a significant role in more school boards' decisionmaking. Most of the principals could identify something their school had done in the last 3 years to improve Māori student outcomes.

But it is concerning that there is still 41% of principals who need but cannot access external expertise to implement reliable strategies to support Māori student learning, and 46% needing but not able to access external expertise to engage with whānau, hapū, and iwi. Understanding of the importance of improving Māori student belonging, wellbeing, and success, and of these partnerships is evident, but more support will be needed for English-medium schools and teachers to put these into everyday practice.