

# End of Inquiry Report Summary 2020

*What schools do really well and What our schools can do even better.*

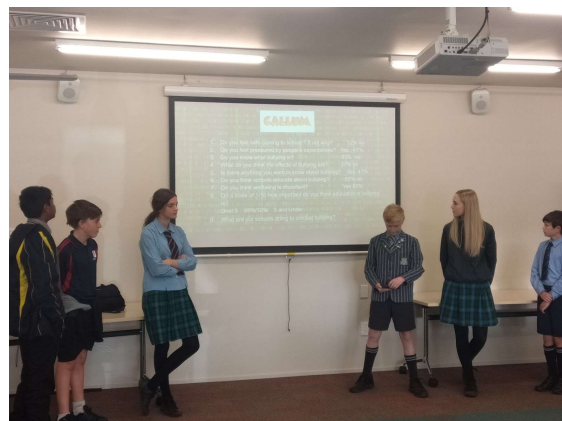
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## **Schools participating in the Student Led Inquiry**

Chanel College  
Douglas Park School  
Fernridge School  
Hadlow Preparatory School  
Lakeview School  
Masterton Intermediate School  
Opaki School  
St Patrick's School  
Solway Primary  
Wairarapa College



Whareama and St Matthews were involved in the first session but didn't return after COVID-19 Lockdown.

Thanks for all schools that released students and importantly their WSL's: James Riley, Renee Gleeson and Katherine Cronin.

## **Introduction**

As an outcome of discussions over 2019 the idea to commence a Student Led Inquiry in the Whakaoriori Kahui Ako was developed. We had previously gathered student voice in Term 4, 2019. The Across School Leads (ASL) visited all Kahui Ako schools and interviewed small groups of students - representatives of the student community, around aspects of the Kahui Ako achievement challenge. From this work the ASLs had seen the strength of our student community and the agency they wished to have.

Therefore in Term 1, 2020, Year 5 - 11 Students were offered the chance to work with the Kahui Ako team members and school principals to lead an important

investigation. All schools were offered places, with 11 able to take this opportunity at the start. This gave us a starting crew of 35 children, from 3 Secondary and 8 Primary, with three ASL's and three Within School Leads forming the planning and leading group. They answered the questions: **What schools do really well and what our schools can do even better?**

COVID-19 stopped our flow after the first session, and when we started again one new school joined, with two others feeling they could not continue.

Six different schools hosted the Thursday morning meetings over the timeframe of the project (3 terms) - 5 primary, 1 college. The sessions followed a deliberate routine and promoted student leadership from the host school. An Appreciative Inquiry Model was formulated and used throughout the inquiry process. During the inquiry, minimal and optimal support was provided by the teaching staff at each stage of the process so that students' agency drove the inquiry, with just enough structure to scaffold the learning. We are thankful to South Wairarapa Kahui Ako and Jean Annan, and Pupuke Kahui Ako for being so generous with their work they had previously done with their student led inquiry process. Our process was completely shaped to meet our needs - more explanation later in the report.



This following report is our student led inquiry that was completely about learning and designed to have students as active participants. The inquiry process allowed students to have agency in driving changes to improve learning experience and outcomes. The student led inquiry work was an essential part of our Kahui Ako activity and consequently helped to develop relationships among schools.

### **Our approach**

We started with a simple inquiry model to stimulate ideas and brainstorm the issues facing the students in education. We asked students to consider .....

### **Brainstorming**

In the initial session there were lots of discussions and sharing of ideas, which were later compiled and sorted into several interest areas. From here the students opted into an area that interested them the most. Six groups were established.

*I enjoyed seeing the opinions of younger kids on the topics that I think about.*

*Participating student*

## The inquiry approach

While we went into lockdown we decided to change the model to an appreciative one which encourages the students to dream big and not focus on negatives too much in our Post COVID-19 new normal.

### Step one - Define

In their interest groups the students discussed their area of interest more and defined the issue - What did they hope to learn? Who/where do we need to gather information from. We provided them with a students booklet to record the notes, questions and thoughts.



### Step Two - Discovery Part 1

Gathering of information to help inform their inquiry was the second step. The students collaborated and created a set of questions to interview other students and collect authentic information.

### Step Three - Discovery Part 2

The phase of discovery is about sharing, summarising information and identifying what additional information is needed. Here we ask the students to summarise their findings from the surveys, identify trends and start to analyse their data. They also had to find additional information (research, reports etc) that might back up their findings. Some looked at what other schools in New Zealand are doing, and many discovered new information.

### Step Four - Dream

Imagine big! Imagining what could be! Taking their findings, gems that were already happening and adding in new ideas of what might be! The students dreamed big.

### Step Five - Design

Determine a course of action for future, The students here again working collaboratively they fleshed out their dream into a proposal for the future.

Finally the groups developed a presentation. They determined what would be said to the principals of the Kaitiaki group using these prompts:

- Our interest area
- What did we find out (what the data said)
- Our dream
- What do we want from the principals



## **Findings**

Each of the six groups prepared a presentation to summarise their findings using the following prompts:

- what the data told them,
- their dream and
- what they wanted from the Kaitiaki group

## **Hauora Wellbeing and bullying**

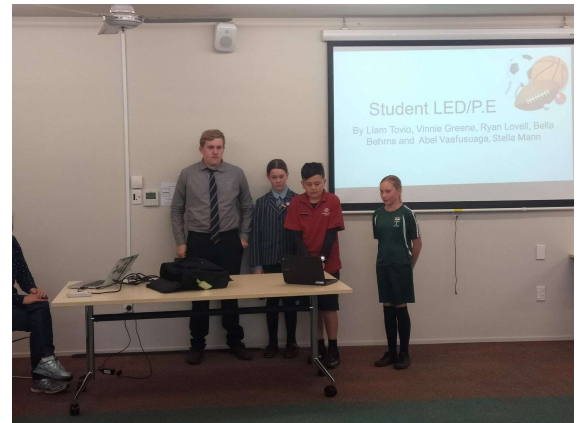
- Students felt that wellbeing was important to learning. They also discovered bullying was present in schools and there was still confusion over what it was and what to do about it.
- An app or website that links to an anonymous place to chat
- This would be linked through school websites, with school counselors and Dean / professionals on board for confidential advice , a chance to offload

## **PE and sport**

- Students believe they aren't getting enough choice about sport, not enough kids are playing sport, many kids aren't engaged with PE, obesity is becoming a problem. A majority of kids enjoy PE but wanted more and other options.
- Kids should choose what to do in PE, introduce more sports to promote outside of school sports, this could be done through tasters of different sports
- Term One provide tasters so kids could then choose sports they like to play - 3x a week / 4x week at College for PE

## **Opportunities to merge / combine subjects**

- Self directed learning / agency and engagement were the starting discussion in this group. They felt strongly about opportunities for students. This group found out that some students dread going to school, school is boring and subjects are plain.
- Their innovative and forward thinking idea of merging subjects would, they felt, make school a more enjoyable place. When subjects are merged they become interesting. They gave examples of possible merges.
- They wanted Kaitiaki to consider a pilot programme that had tasters of merged subjects i.e. hunting, journalism. A couple of days of merged learning a week would be ideal.



### Student teacher interactions

- This group discussed that teachers do not interact with students. The data showed that students feel teachers aren't interacting during class time with students. Students agreed that teachers should do this more, and teachers should join in during PE and Literacy.
- The dream was to encourage teachers to get involved more in the activities that are provided.
- Principals need to look at teachers and encourage them to join in, i.e making the rules a little easier to teachers, creating new games

### School environment

- They were interested in finding out about school environments in regard to stopping littering in our community. The data showed people know that they shouldn't litter, people are being lazy, some people are really trying to help. They came to realise that our schools are not taking a stand and not helping us to keep the environment healthy and clean.
- Their dream is to have a cleaner planet and to motivate and educate people in the community and school to help the environment and protect the world from littering.
- They want schools to be clean and tidy of rubbish and want to help all schools around the world. They wanted the Principals to hear their voice and take part in their project.

### Curriculum

- This group felt they wanted more agency and extension of learning. Data showed that students didn't feel supported by the curriculum and staff. Students aren't engaged, students aren't being extended to their capabilities, or able to follow their passions.
- Their dream was to form passion groups and individualised learning programmes. Through passion groups students would learn and acquire new skills that would lead them to choosing a thematic programme in Years 9 and 10, leading onto students being able to create their own individualised learning programme in Senior College.
- They were asking the Kaitiaki group to listen to their presentation with an open mind and take their ideas and help them refine them for the better. With support they would be implemented into schools curriculum for the better of students, their education in the future.



## **Limitations of the research**

While we were pleased with the number of schools that got involved, we are aware that smaller rural schools and secondary schools were not so well represented.

While we kept timely communications of essential details to schools - WSL's and Principals, these were not always read completely.



While the student survey only had 12 participants by the publishing of this report - showing 11 NZ Europeans, we still had a small proportion of Maori / Pacifica.

The small number of adults that took part in any way. Until this increases the awareness of the importance of student voice will ever slowly grow.

## **Discussion**

This student led inquiry process has been crucial in allowing secondary and primary students, Across and Within School Leads to work together to allow more student voice in our Kahui Ako.

The student representatives were a credit to their respective schools, they showed leadership, agency and were prepared to work hard and share with others.

The appreciative inquiry model that we formulated was a very positive way to direct the students inquiring. Students remained very positive and determined that their voice was to be heard.

The student survey showed positively that the participants had valued the experience - with new relationships formed and a greater understanding of other schools and students.

Having the chance to collaborate on big ideas has empowered their voice.

*Loved seeing my students extended.*  
*Principal of a participating school*

Whakawhanaungatanga, the getting together of students across schools and being able to create and build relationships whilst collaborating, was reiterated

over and over as a real strength to the process. The ice breaker games, and tours of the schools at the start of every session was crucial; they reduced tension and enabled the students to develop positive working relationships.

*My students got out of it ... empowerment, mixing with other kids, seeing other schools, / appreciating difference, public speaking, data literacy, survey skills...*

*Principal of a participating school*

The input from the WSLs became stronger as they became more empowered by the process. It was exciting to see how kids collaborate and listen to each other's ideas and respect

each other - no matter what age. It is certainly an example of us all working together to improve schools in the Whakaoriori Kahui Ako.

The leadership by the host schools was very humbling and welcoming.

The video of the presentations has been uploaded to the Whakaoriori google site; when we get our facebook page running this would be a more appropriate host due to the amount of data this 40 minute video requires. We are excited about the video being able to be accessed by the wider community.

While we regularly encouraged Principals / management and the students to connect and talk, this probably didn't happen enough. Next time we could build more update material into our organisation emails.



Feedback has been given that students didn't get into clearer or deeper action, with the suggestion that maybe students propose three things:

- a real easy thing for schools to do (a surface action, but the kids would see some translation of their work into action),
- a medium effort action (a defined trial with a class, or classes perhaps)
- through to a serious action (something that requires requires actual structural change, organisational change or a rethink within my school)

*I was quite interested in the findings and voice on PE. Got me thinking - I'm keen to look at our school PE programme.*

*Principal of a participating school*

## **Conclusions**

While some of the inquiry questions appeared to reflect the younger age of many of the students, there is some freedom in the simplicity of the inquiry into the environment to take some action Kahui Ako wide later this year.

The trends definitely showed students desiring more ownership / agency in asking for more design over their learning. This is not a redesign of national curriculum but localised curriculum design.

Wellbeing issues show that students are concerned with confidentiality and desire instant response; if they are feeling concerned over a matter they want to communicate that immediately. Next year this could make a very focused inquiry. While students enjoyed the collaboration - problem solving could be best done in school groups. Principal and WSL support would help these projects move further along. Expert voice is also valuable and needed to deepen the inquiry.

We recommend that each of the students that were involved in this inquiry process take their group proposals back to their ako and request a meeting with their senior management team. The students should dig deeper, saying this is the evidence, how can my community help us make change?

Many of these inquiries require school leaders to listen to the students and make change within their community.

## **Where to now**

The consensus with the Kaitiaki group is that they would like to see this develop further. There are a couple of areas that we see could quickly become Kahui Ako initiatives - supporting the students: the environment group and combining subjects to have thematic options and days offered. We believe that the proposed Masterclasses will help this later one gain traction.

We believe other inquiries need to be addressed by individual schools to suit their communities and school climate / strategic goals.

With the Whakaoriori model now established, schools could easily use this model within their school - maybe led by the WSL to look further into a focus topic for individual school or Kahui Ako - Wellbeing seems a central focus at present.

Masterclass trial, term 4 2020, moving into 2021 is a direction that has evolved from student led inquiry, which will allow more interaction between college and primary students, and sharing of knowledge. This could naturally lead into thematic type curriculum days shared within our wider Kahui Ako.

*"The lovely thing for me was seeing the students from across the schools come together without 'school boundaries or cultures' detracting from their obvious team spirit and comfort with each other in their mahi. Tino pai rawe!"*

*Ministry of Education representative*



## Appendices

Booklet for students

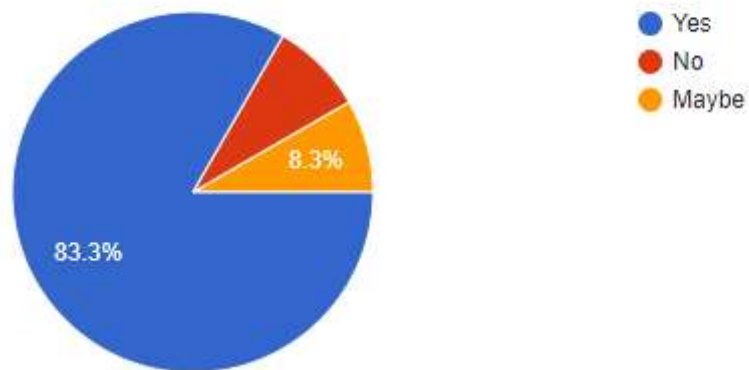
Links to the video presentations

Student and Kaitiaki survey and data

Two graphs from student survey responses.

Did you enjoy visiting other schools?

12 responses



Did you enjoy getting to work with other teachers?

12 responses

