

## Enabling, encouraging or empowering?: Maori members on school boards of trustees

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### ABSTRACT

In 1989 a number of changes were made to the New Zealand education system which facilitated Maori 'access' and 'participation' in the decision making processes governing schools. Central to these processes were beliefs operating on the premise that Maori would have 'considerably more scope than they have at present to exercise a fair measure of influence over their children's education' (ibid: 66). As a consequence of the interpretations made through *Tomorrow's Schools* (1988), the increased scope for influence, access and participation has resulted in Maori individuals being eligible for membership to School Boards of Trustees. This critique in relation to School Boards of Trustees will focus on three basic analytical concepts: 'Enabling', 'Encouraging' and 'Empowering'. The question which will be asked of the reforms then is: Are Maori interests and aspirations in the new education system enabled, encouraged and empowered by the provisions made?

We see the need for a system that recognises and supports the culture, values and language of the Maori people. In order to promote this objective, we opted for changes which would encourage community involvement . . . We are convinced that this change, together with the others we have recommended, will result in an education system within which Maori have considerably more scope than they have at present to exercise a fair measure of influence over their children's education.

Administering for Excellence, 1988: 6

### Introduction

In 1989 a number of changes were made to the New Zealand education system which facilitated Maori 'access' and 'participation' in the decision making processes governing schools. Central to these processes were beliefs operating on the premise that Maori would have 'considerably more scope than they have at present to exercise a fair measure of influence over their children's education' (ibid: 66). As a consequence of the interpretations made through *Tomorrow's Schools* (1988), the increased scope for influence, access and participation has resulted in Maori *individuals* being eligible for membership to School Boards of Trustees.

This critique in relation to School Boards of Trustees will focus on three basic analytical concepts: 'Enabling', 'Encouraging' and 'Empowering'. In analysing these three concepts with regard to policy, Roger Dale (1991) states:

for these strategies and mechanisms [ contained within the legislations, regulations etc] to produce outcomes consistent with and faithful to the aims of the policy - effecting the desired change(s) and/or empowering target groups in designated ways, a necessary ... condition is that they must contain two key prior elements: - they must enable the achievement of policy goals by setting in place (at least the minimum) conditions (e.g. financial, organisational) for this achievement, - they must encourage the fulfilment of those conditions in ways consistent with the achievement of the policy goals by privileging and installing in practice interpretations of the enabling conditions that are likely to promote such achievement (Dale, 1991: 151).

The provision enablement factors as outlined by Dale (1991) is present in the new education system with the placement of the Treaty of Waitangi into School Charters and the existence of legislative rhetoric called Equity. Encouragement derives explicitly from a targeted funding called Maori Language Factor Funding. The question which will be asked of the reforms then in relation to what is claimed by the opening quote and what is legislated for Maori is:

Are Maori interests and aspirations in the new education system enabled, encouraged and empowered by the provisions made?

### ***Administering for excellence: The claims and recommendations***

The Taskforce to Review Educational Administration received a number of submissions which outlined a collection of Maori interests and aspirations on Maori educational expectations. These submissions encompassed a variety of views which were summarised by the Taskforce team into seven main points:

1. The education system is seen as a means of revitalising Maori language and culture;
2. The key to addressing Maori underachievement at school is the revival of the Maori language and culture;
3. The education system should make a commitment to biculturalism and bilingualism;
4. All Maori children should have access to Maori language;
5. Environments should be non-hostile to Maori values and Maori forms;
6. The whanau [family] should have some measure of autonomy, and its members, access to the classrooms; and
7. More resources should be made available to hasten the spread of bilingual education and greater use should be made of existing fluent Maori speakers (*Administering for Excellence*, 1988: 65-66).

From the submissions, the Taskforce further highlighted that two major 'camps' of Maori interests (which they considered to be mutually contradictory) existed. The first of these interests encompassed those whose submissions believed that the present education system was overly Pakeha-oriented and thus incapable of accommodating Maori values and forms. Those in this category generally preferred Maori creating their own educational institutions (*Administering for Excellence*, 1988: 66).

The second group identified by the Taskforce and the group with which this paper is concerned, were those who were confident that the desired changes could be achieved within a 'partnership' between the whanau and the institution. This group supported the present approach of establishing bilingual schools or bilingual units within schools (*Administering for Excellence*, 1988: 66). What appeared in *Tomorrow's Schools* (1988), however, digressed dramatically from the submissions outlined by the Picot Taskforce, and from the resulting recommendations made by the Taskforce with regard to those same submissions.

Section 3.2 of *Tomorrow's Schools* (1988) 'Maori Interests' states:

1. Opportunities will be made available to parents who wish to have their children learn or be educated in the Maori language;<sup>1</sup> and

2. The whanau will have access to and participate in education. This will be possible through individuals within the whanau being eligible for election to the Board of Trustees, and also through the close partnership envisaged between the community and the institutions (*Tomorrow's Schools*, 1988: 26).

*Tomorrow's Schools* (1988) ignores basic and fundamental concepts embraced in Maori values and views. In particular, collectivism which comprises the philosophies underlying whanau, iwi, and hapu, is reduced to a state of individuality. Individuality further reduces Maori collective interests to an aggregation of individual choices. *Administering for Excellence* (1988) and *Tomorrow's Schools* (1988) are also founded on some basic misconceptions which will effect the extent to which Maori will be able to achieve some measure of influence as members on a School Boards of Trustees.

### *The first misconception*

The first of these misconceptions is that Maori interests will be able to compete against the interests of the dominant group - Pakeha. Historically, Maori have not been able to implement or control their own interests in the state education system, a situation which eventually resulted in Maori developing their own educational institutions - Te Kohanga Reo, Kura Kaupapa Maori and recently Whare Kura - outside conventional schooling institutions. The fact that Maori have suffered drastically and have been educationally disadvantaged within the state education system over the last one hundred and fifty years has been totally ignored (Smith, 1988: 41).

The introduction of 'Equity' to address the position of Maori as a 'disadvantaged group', to ensure Maori participation in the education system, is a concept fraught with difficulties which are replicated in *Tomorrow's Schools* (1988). Several groups are highlighted as being disadvantaged by *Tomorrow's Schools* (1988) but no recognition is made of the point that the position of disadvantage occurs for different reasons. Equity however, is portrayed as the remedial pill for all. Andrew Sharp (1990) further notes that the concept of equity has never been defined or clarified, and that what is meant in the name of equity has not been agreed upon. Complicating this position further is that no recognition is given to Maori as tangata whenua or that Maori have a different 'agenda' to 'other' groups. David Pearson (1990) outlines that the relationship between Maori and 'other' ethnic groups is one in which

Maori politics, in all their myriad forms, revolve around the issue of the primordial legitimacy of the aspirations of indigenous peoples to some degree of self-determination, either through reform of the nation state or a more radical redressing of the balance of power (Pearson, 1990: 199).

Sharp (1990) points out that Maori are in fact not treated as members of an ethnic group in *Tomorrow's Schools* (1988), but as individuals who just happen to be Maori (Sharp, 1990: 226). In commenting on the groups which are categorised under equity, Sharp (1990) states that:

the Maori might have been forgiven if they had judged that this way of thinking was not entirely suited in approaching their problems. It mixed their demands with other's; it defined groups according to multiple criteria (1990: 226).

Maori have become just another disadvantaged group of individuals.

### *The second misconception*

The second misconception encompasses the notion that the introduction of Maori language and culture through the Treaty of Waitangi in the non-negotiable section of the Charters, guarantees that Maori interests will be met. References to the Treaty of Waitangi which appear in Ministry of Education Directives (such as the Charters) are insipid weak accounts that do not promise anything. For example, the 'Goal' of the Treaty of Waitangi within the Charter framework is "To fulfil the intent of the Treaty of Waitangi by valuing and reflecting New Zealand's dual cultural heritage" (Charter

Framework, 1990: 12). What the actual 'intent' of the Treaty in the charter is, however, has never been defined by policy decision-makers who use the Treaty of Waitangi as a basis to set down policy. Introducing the Treaty of Waitangi into the non-negotiable section of the charter in the form of 'principles' is also problematic. Moana Jackson points out that Maori rights have been defined through Pakeha law in terms of 'principles', and that this has led to many Maori endeavouring 'to formulate broad based guidelines for Maori/Pakeha conduct' (nd, 9). In international treaty law

there is no procedure for diving 'principles' from a Treaty. Instead one is required to use the text and the rule of travaux preparatoires to help interpret the document. If there are interpretative difficulties in reconciling two different language versions, then the contra proferentum rule, not 'principles' should resolve the problems. In his [sic] sense the use of Treaty 'principles' as an aid of defining what the Treaty means is contrary to accepted notions of Treaty interpretation and application. In the specific context of the Treaty of Waitangi the use of 'principles' may be construed as contrary to the Treaty itself because of the way it is implemented. It is a sad fact that the whole process of defining principles rests with just one party to the Treaty - the Crown. Through the courts and legislature the Treaty is being effectively redefined with no negotiation or input from the other Treaty party, the Maori (ibid: 13).

The 'principles' therefore are an attempt to negotiate around the relationship between Maori and Pakeha, a relationship which is primarily based on 'reciprocal rights and obligations which the Treaty imposed, and on the clear belief that such obligations should be honoured' (ibid: 7). The Treaty remains however, a controversial document which continues to be debated. Snook (1990), Biggs (1989) and Walker (1989) further show that discrepancies exist between the Maori version and the English version, and indeed, translation (from either English to Maori, of Maori to English) is problematic (see Royal Commission on Social Policy, Volume Two, 1988: 83-88, which shows four different versions). The major differences predominantly identified between the two versions are:

In the English version, the Crown was given 'all rights and powers of sovereignty over their land' while Maori were granted 'exclusive and undisturbed possession of their lands and estates, forests, fisheries and other properties'. The Maori version gave the Crown 'te kawanatanga' while Maori retained 'tino rangatiratanga'. The meaning of the two expressions is of course crucial. It is now generally accepted that 'kawanatanga' (given to the Crown) meant governance while 'rangatiratanga' (retained by Maori) meant sovereignty ... In addition ... the 'taonga' (treasures) protected in the Maori version applies also to less tangible possessions such as their culture and language (Snook, 1990: 4).

Furthermore, there is no indication of which 'version' of the Treaty is being used in the charters, whether it is the English or Maori version, or an amalgamation of both. Yet the charter readily adopts the 'principles' of 'the Treaty' into its non-discretionary section.

What the 'principles' actually are is also a contestable issue. The New Zealand Maori Council vs the Attorney General identified ten implicit principles and the Crown identified only five (Royal Commission on Social Policy, 1987: 14-15). The crux of the whole matter is, however, that Maori cannot be guaranteed empowerment by simply including the 'principles' of the Treaty in the charter. The real test of empowerment for Maori is *who actually decides how the Treaty will be translated into practice at the institutional level*.

The appearance of the Treaty of Waitangi in the Charters is therefore merely a 'tokenistic' gesture which has no clout. In its present form, the potential 'effectiveness' of the Treaty is nullified by the unequal 'power relations' that exist in New Zealand society today, dominant Pakeha and subordinate Maori. It is further disputable that a minority (numbers) in a system that relies on a majority vote - such as the Board of Trustees - can effectively be heard. Maori have always relied upon the goodwill of the 'dominant treaty partner' with regard to having their interests and aspirations catered for. There is nothing in the recent spate of changes made to the education system which suggests that this situation will change.

*The third misconception*

The third misconception is the belief by Policy makers that Maori language and culture is seen as intrinsically valuable to all. The assumption is that Maori language/culture can compete on the same terms as Pakeha. Domination of Maori culture and language by Pakeha has, however, produced an ideology which fosters the belief of Pakeha superiority of knowledge, culture and education. The indication is that the validity for Maori knowledge/language in a schooling situation does not extensively exist. It is still believed that Maori language and culture are inferior to English and that learning Maori will 'not get you a job' (see Johnston 1991, Smith 1991, Simon 1986, 1990). The existence of other ethnic minorities has further complicated the issue with the idea that New Zealand is a 'multicultural' society wherein all cultures should be catered for in schools - not only Maori (Sexton, 1990). On this point David Pearson states:

A further danger with multiculturalism, therefore, is that dominant groups will use cultural diversity as an empty gesture to disguise the true nature of social rankings. Multiculturalism becomes an effective mechanism to divide and rule. By setting one minority against the other, majority rule is preserved (1990: 234).

The fundamental premise of these arguments is based on the ethnocentric view in which Pakeha is the norm in schools, and all other ethnic group interests are just that - interests. In the multicultural view, there is no recognition of Maori as tangata whenua and no recognition of the dominant culture (Pakeha) still maintaining control.

Maori concerns highlighted in *Administering for Excellence* (1988) have therefore been reinterpreted through *Tomorrow's Schools* (1988). The previous example of whanau becoming individuals on School Boards of Trustees clearly illustrates this point. This situation of Maori having to contend with the ideology of the dominant group, and the unequal power relations that exist in New Zealand society, means that Maori who opted to work in partnership with institutions did not get what they asked for in the new education system. Policy (implementations) have been adjusted by the dominant interest group to conform to already predetermined Pakeha structures and frameworks in what Penetito refers to as 'accounting for Maori viewpoints after the main consideration of what needs to be done, eg, now what needs to be done for you' (1989: 2). In this respect *Tomorrow's Schools* (1988) is no different from past policy initiatives of education for Maori. The indication is that in order for the provisions made for Maori in *Tomorrow's Schools* (1988) to be successful, the reliance on the goodwill and commitment of those involved with Maori is needed. Further questions which are raised then is can the inclusion of the enabling, encouraging and empowering provisions relating to ensuring that Maori language and culture is present in schools adequately address Maori interests and aspirations for their children in the education system, or are the basic structures in place doomed to fail on the basis of their misconceptions and assumptions?

**'A fair measure of influence'?: Findings from the research**

In 1988 *Administering for Excellence* stated:

We see the need for a system that recognises and supports the culture, values and language of the Maori people. In order to promote this objective, we opted for changes which would encourage community involvement ... We are convinced that this change together with the others we have recommended, will result in an education system within which Maori have considerably more scope than they have at present to exercise a fair measure of influence over their children's education (*Administering for Excellence*, 1988: 66).

Research I have undertaken (Johnston, 1991) accepted the genuineness of this statement and set out to evaluate it at the point where the legislation for Maori is supposed to work - School Boards of Trustees. The evaluation of this claim was carried out through interviews with Maori Members on School Boards of Trustees from the Auckland Region. In the process of selecting the data sample group, a comparison was made between the school rolls in the Auckland area and Maori Members

on the School Trustees Association Register. Of particular note was that some schools in the 40% + brackets had up to, and in some cases more than, three Maori Members on the School Boards of Trustees, and some schools in the 0-19.9% bracket which had one and in some cases no Maori Members.

*TABLE 1*  
THE PROPORTION OF MAORI CHILDREN ON SCHOOL ROLLS IN THE  
AUCKLAND REGION, JULY 1990

Category	Number of Schools	Percentage
No Maori Students	19	4.0
Less than 1%	6	1.3
1% to 9.9%	174	37.0
10% to 19.9%	117	24.9
20% to 29.9%	78	16.6
30% to 39.9%	33	7.0
40% to 49.9%	28	6.0
50% +	15	3.2
TOTALS	470	100.0

(Johnston, 1991)

On the basis of the two sets of data, the 20% to 29.9% bracket was selected as the sample group. This was done on the following grounds. Firstly, the 20% to 29% percentile appeared critical because the number of members was reducing. Above the 30% bracket, the number of schools was reducing and below the 20% bracket, the number of Maori members was reducing.<sup>2</sup> The 20% to 29.9% bracket contained a balance of both schools and Maori Members. Secondly, there was a reasonable number of schools (78) within the 20% to 29.9% bracket. Thirdly there were also a reasonable number of Maori Members on the Boards of Trustees (32). Finally, the intention was to interview twenty to twenty-four participants and it was feasible that the 20% to 29% bracket would produce this number. The decision to select this percentile category was not, however, based only or even mainly on 'convenience' criteria. This was because it was assumed that the proportion of Maori Members on the Boards of Trustees both above and below the selected category of 20% to 29.9% would reflect the proportion of Maori children in those schools. Above 30% the Maori Members might be expected to have a 'voice', and below 20% it might be expected that they would have less of a voice. Therefore the 20% to 29.9% was a critical group to test the effectiveness of legislation, particularly since the proportion of Maori children on the school roles were well above the national average and numbers of pupils. Where there were more Maori children (30% + ), the likelihood of having more than one to two Maori members was increased and conversely where there were fewer Maori children (0% to 19.9% ), there was also a likelihood of having no Maori Members. Of the 78 schools which came into the 20% to 29.9% bracket, 32 Maori Members in 23 schools were identified and finally resulted in 16 members being interviewed.

#### *School boards of trustees*

Half of those members interviewed were co-opted on to their school Boards of Trustees. The procedures for this co-option varied. Some were approached directly by the principal, others lobbied to have a Maori representative, while others were put forward by Maori community groups.<sup>3</sup> Prior to the co-option of these Maori Members, Maori representation had been non-existent.<sup>4</sup> Two

important points surfaced while interviewing the co-opted members. Firstly, that co-option (for whatever reason) had been difficult for these Maori Members who were involved with having to 'catch up' and quickly 'come to grips' with ministerial material so that decisions could be made from an informed base. Secondly, co-option generally occurred after the charters had been discussed, and after decisions (which should have involved the Maori community) had already been made.

Eight members were elected to their local school Boards of Trustees. Their reasons for standing varied. The main reason appeared to be the need for some form of Maori representation. Of the 16 members interviewed, 13 came to be regarded as the Maori representative (whether they wanted to or not) and from this 13, nine had decided to stand/be co-opted because of their commitment to Maori take.

Irrespective of how members had joined School Boards, the problems they experienced were generally the same. As a group, Maori Members were not well informed and tended to acknowledge the 'expertise' of their Pakeha counterparts. It was also apparent that Maori Members were involved on committees that had no direct influence on the running of the school. The areas in which they were involved on their Boards were predominantly community oriented sub-committees and basically, only in direct relevance to Maori issues.

One of the most profound findings highlighted from the interviews was that being the only Maori member on the Board at times proved to be extremely difficult. Some members came into direct conflict with their Boards when trying to represent the wishes of Maori communities in relation to Maori Language Programmes. Three members spoke of antagonism towards them, two others spoke of aggressive tactics by Board members, and yet another two spoke of racist attitudes and remarks made to them (see Johnston, 1991). This situation is clearly intolerable in an education system which claims to offer Maori parents 'considerably more scope than they have at present to exercise a fair measure of influence over their children's education' (*Administering for Excellence*: 66). This situation however is fairly indicative of the types of attitudes and circumstances that Maori interests and aspirations prevail within.

#### *Equity and Maori language factor funding*

Equity funding to schools in New Zealand is divided into two areas: Special Needs and Maori Language Funding. The funding allocated in this area for 1989 was \$21 million. Special Needs funding is available on application to the Ministry of Education. It is not an automatic funding, but is allocated according to a specific criterion of need. For example, a school in a lower economic area is entitled to apply for Special Need funding, as is a school that has a large proportion of Pacific Island and Maori students. The purpose of this funding is to help schools alleviate educational disadvantage (Ministry of Education, 14 December 1989). The Maori Language Factor Funding (MLFF) is a separate part of equity provisions. Funding which had initially been used for Maori language programmes (such as Taha Maori) under the old educational administration, disappeared under the new administration. The result was the establishment of the MLFF.

The initial difficulty with MLFF was to initiate some method which would see an even distribution 'across the board'. This would mean a formula which did not rely on those administering the fund 'to be judgmental in delivery on application from schools to the centre' (Ministry Official No 1, 1991) and it also meant that those involved in administering the fund could not be influenced by what they perceived as being suitable ways of spending this funding. As a result, the Maori Language Factor Formula was developed to be allocated as a per Maori pupil rate. Delivery to schools is based on the number of self-identified Maori students on school rolls.

In the initial stages and from the official count (of previous school rolls), the amount targeted to each pupil was \$75. When the actual roll numbers came during 1990, this amount dropped to \$70.33 simply because of the fixed amount that had been set aside for MLFF (\$8.5 million), and

because of an increase of 'Maori students' by some 10-11,000. This was further adjusted in July 1990 (the start of the Government's financial year) by an 'inflation factor' raising the amount to \$71.33.

Towards the end of 1990 the Minister of Education, the Honourable Lockwood Smith, approved another change to the funding formula which, again, affected the per pupil rate. It had become apparent through various Maori personnel that the funding was being used 'for all manner of other purposes that were totally unrelated to what the funding had been intended for' (Ministry Official No 1, 1991). As a result, 10% of the \$8.5 million (\$850,000) was held back from the 1991 funding pool, and put into a contestable fund called Kaiarahi Reo.<sup>5</sup> This bought the MLFF down to \$59.58 per child for 1991.<sup>6</sup>

It is clear that decisions on spending MLFF are left entirely up to the discretion of the School Board of Trustees. This decision also includes which children the funding is to be allocated to.

### Maori language factor funding as a test of Maori influence

The MLFF as an area (where it was envisaged that Maori should have some input) was used as a crucial test of Maori Members' influence on their Boards by investigating who decided how the funding was spent. This also enabled a test of the validity of the claims made by *Administering for Excellence* (1988) and *Tomorrow's Schools* (1988).

The Maori Members interviewed discussed the various ways in which MLFF was used towards language programmes in their schools. Broadly, these programmes fell into five distinct categories:

- a. Bilingual Units:
  - i. Language
  - ii. Culture
  - iii. Resources
- b. Whanau Programme
- c. Total Immersion
- d. Curriculum
- e. No programmes

#### *Bilingual units*

The main feature of the bilingual unit programmes is they are available to all children in the school. Seven members interviewed referred to their programmes as either Bilingual or Basic. These types of programmes entailed half an hour to two hours per week and involved those children whose parents agreed to let them participate.

Of the seven Maori Members interviewed, six experienced problems in relation to setting up a bilingual programme in their schools. These problems were that: firstly, the Principal of the school involved was not altogether supportive of a Maori Language Programme being implemented; secondly, the Boards of Trustees were also not supportive of a Maori Language programme; thirdly, some teachers did not support the inclusion of Maori language in their everyday teaching; and fourthly, the result of this lack of support resulted in the commitment of the school to language programmes of half to two hours per week.

Nine members interviewed spoke of 'cultural group' activities. In some cases the MLFF was being used to outfit the concert party for costumes, or as koha (donation) for tutors who were involved with the 'cultural groups'. These nine members included those from the bilingual language programmes and one other member whose school had no language programme at all. The MLFF was also spent to transport children to various destinations as either part of the 'cultural groups' activities, or as part of Maori cultural activities in general. The latter included marae trips.



Fourteen members spoke of resources, either buying books, video tapes, cassettes or Maori dictionaries for their libraries. In two instances these resources were available to the Maori language children only, and this was seen as a positive situation for these children. The other schools used their resources for all the children in the school.

### *Whanau programme*

This programme (which involved one school) is unique in that its formation and direction was completely Maori initiated. The programme is also fully supported by the Principal and is not subject to interference from other interest groups. The implementation of this programme was through the Maori Studies Department at the school and the Maori Member on the School Board of Trustees. The directions that the staff received for the whanau group were from the Maori parents in the community (a whanau support system). The funding from the MLFF is controlled by the Maori Studies Department under the supervision of the Principal. The programme implemented is based on a whanau support system and involves various Maori children within the third and fourth forms (children who would have been streamed into different classes were put together into this one class). The whanau support programme revolved around two factors. The criteria for being involved in the programme were that firstly, the students must sit School Certificate Maori and secondly, that Maori values and 'being Maori' was part of the normal everyday function of the class. This involved students helping each other with schoolwork, sharing 'knowledge', caring for the wellbeing of fellow students, and peer-teaching with the understanding that the class operated according to shared 'whanau responsibility'. This involves collective support for each member in that whanau group.

A positive spin-off for this whanau programme is the way in which other fourth form classes have come to view the students in the whanau class. The initial belief had been that students in the whanau group were 'dumb' because they were all Maori. This attitude soon changed when it became known that various members in the whanau group were going to sit School Certificate Maori. Non-Maori children were asking to join the whanau group, even agreeing to sit School Certificate Maori to become part of that group.

The only major group who were not totally supportive of the whanau group sitting School Certificate were some of the teachers. Resistance was for two main reasons: firstly, whanau students passing School Certificate would create teaching/class problems at the fifth form level; and secondly, teachers were concerned about the morale of students who did not pass. The Board of Trustees member who was interviewed stated, however, that neither one of these factors is significant enough to prohibit the whanau students from sitting School Certificate because sitting School Certificate in the fourth form is already a prevalent practice in some of the more 'affluent' schools in Auckland.

### *Total immersion*

There is one example that falls into this category. The programme is referred to as bilingual on the basis that there would be some objections if it was known as a total immersion course (all the classes are in Maori). This programme was initiated for this area by the Board of Trustees, because the school attracted a large number of children from Kohanga Reo. It was because of the Kohanga new entrants that the Total Immersion programme was set up in what the Board of Trustees Maori member clearly identified as the school's attempt to meet the needs of the children within the area.

The programme is well supported by the Boards of Trustees and the principal of the school, and is further supported by a fluent Maori speaker who is also a certified teacher.

### *Curriculum programmes*

Two schools involved had classes in Maori language which were part of the schools' curriculum (involving one secondary and one contributing school). For the secondary school, Maori Language was available as a School Certificate option, and was in place prior to MLFF. The MLFF was used to boost resources for those students involved in these classes.

For the contributing school, these classes are available three times a week to the children, with the teachers at the school also having lessons. The support of the teachers and the principal has been invaluable for the functioning of this programme.

### *No language programmes*

Three members interviewed had no programmes running in their school (two of these members belonged to the same school). The reasons for this situation were:

1. Resistance by teaching staff to Maori Language programmes;
2. The tactlessness of a principal cost him the support of the Maori community to provide a tutor for their intended programme;<sup>7</sup>
3. Maori community members were already overcommitted in helping at the school with the culture club activities; and
4. The racism exhibited by staff members.

The last two Maori Members interviewed with regard to MLFF had no idea as to what the MLFF was spent on. One of these did not know of the existence of this funding until interviewed.

### *General findings*

With regard to the MLFF generally, principal support was imperative for the initiation and success of any type of programme. In all cases, the degree to which Maori input counted depended upon the commitment of the principal to Maori take. Teacher support was also an important factor. Some teachers resisted the idea of having a Maori Language programme and refused to have any part in it. By contrast there were teachers who actively supported the programme and contributed to them. The latter types of programmes were being developed further. Who 'taught' the programmes also influenced what type of programmes were implemented. Not having adequate certified teachers was used on many occasions as a reason for not having more hours committed to the language programmes.

At the Board level, Maori Members did not necessarily have any control over or input into the spending of MLFF. The degree to which this occurred varied considerably and was a significant factor contributing towards the types of programmes implemented. Where Maori 'control' was minimal or non-existent, so were the language programmes. Where Maori were more 'in control' of the MLFF, the implemented programmes reflected a greater commitment to Te Reo Maori. It was also evident that the funding was not always spent on that which it was intended for. Some of the more novel ways in which the funding was expended included mending broken bats and windows that Maori children broke, building barbeque/hangi areas, having signs put up in Maori and planting native trees.

Knowledge of the limitations and extent to which MLFF could be applied varied considerably. Maori Members were not altogether as a group well informed about this funding. The absence of Ministerial guidelines led to the control over this funding being contested and although it was never stated that the funding was allocated only for use by Maori children, the fact that it is part of 'Equity' funding and allocated according to per head of Maori, suggests that it is.<sup>8</sup>

At the community level and because of the MLFF, several whanau groups had been set up by the Maori Members. These whanau groups operated as Maori parent consultancy groups to the Board of Trustees/Schools. The degree to which this consultation existed varied. Programmes did not necessarily reflect the wishes of the Maori parents. Some programmes were a 'watered down' version with other programmes being quite different from those which Maori parents had asked for. It was also not always evident that parents were consulted in the processes relating to community participation.

## Conclusion

The *Taskforce to Review Educational Administration* (1988: 66) was convinced that the results of the new educational legislation would provide an education system in which Maori parents would have 'considerably more scope than they have at present to exercise a fair measure of influence over their children's education' (*Administering for Excellence*, 1988: 66). Accepting the genuineness of these claims, the research evaluated them at the point where the legislation for Maori was supposed to work - at the level of the School Boards of Trustees.

The research showed, however, that the claims by the *Picot Report* (1988) have not been borne out. This is because the recommendations for Maori involvement and interests in the new education system were founded on basic misconceptions; that Maori interests would be able to compete against the interests of the dominant group - Pakeha; that the introduction of the Treaty of Waitangi would guarantee Maori interests would be met; and; that Maori language and culture is seen as being intrinsically valuable for all. The result of the research is that in spite of its rhetoric, the new educational reforms are embedded in and contribute to a dominant culture whose interests are maintained in the new education system.

Three mechanisms in particular are important in this maintenance. The first mechanism is the actual interpretation of the *Picot Report* (1988) by *Tomorrow's Schools* (1988). The *Picot Report* claimed that the new reforms would support Maori people and recognise Maori input through community involvement and the whanau having access to the classroom. *Tomorrow's Schools* interpreted this proposal to mean individual membership to School Boards of Trustees in which collectivity becomes a collection of individual interests which can only operate through individual Maori members on School Boards. The result is that 'whanau' is weakened by the reinterpretation, to the point where whanau does not exist. The second mechanism is that Maori educational underachievement in the new reforms is *never addressed* by the changes that have been made. The legislation successfully side-steps the main point, or what should have been the major point of the legislation - Maori educational underachievement. The appearance of 'Equity', MLFF and the Treaty throughout the reforms focus on Maori interests and aspirations (language and culture in particular) without directly linking these to improving Maori educational achievement. A smattering of Maori language in school programmes will not address Maori underachievement and although the legislation does not say that this is the aim, the implication of the changes made is that it is. The third mechanism operates in the local context, a context that is multidimensional and includes parents, communities, schools, teachers, etc. Each one of these groups "functions to support and uphold its own interests, interests which may not necessarily correspond to Maori interests.

The conclusion to be drawn from the research is that Maori have not been given a fair hearing in the new educational reforms and despite the submissions received by the Picot Taskforce, the legislation has not adequately provided for Maori interests.

The question at the beginning of this script - which asked 'Are Maori interests and aspirations in the new education system enabled, encouraged and empowered by the provisions made' - is answerable with a definite *no*. The research indicates that from the initial rhetoric of the *Picot Report* and *Tomorrow's Schools* it appears that Maori interests are enabled, encouraged and empowered *but* the context in which these three concepts operate is conditional. They rely completely on the

goodwill and cooperation of the dominant Treaty partner - Pakeha - in negotiating for the interests of Maori. At the legislative level, this has resulted in Maori interests (ie whanau) being reinterpreted to conform to the notion of School Boards of Trustees (individuals). At the local level Maori cannot compete against the interests of the majority on School Boards and although the Boards both enable and encourage Maori participation there is not adequate jurisdiction to enforce the decisions that Maori make. Maori are therefore not empowered by the changes that have been made. Empowerment is not and cannot be forthcoming in a system whose frameworks and structures reflect the views and values of the dominant group. Nor is empowerment forthcoming when the basis of Maori society and culture are reconstructed in that dominant culture's perspectives. What is forthcoming is a formula that maintains the social, economic and political status quo for Maori. The legislation therefore does not provide adequate endorsement for Maori take, and the operation of the School Boards of Trustees does not and cannot deliver to the claim of "a fair measure of influence".

## Notes

1. *Tomorrow's Schools* (1988) provides for these interests by invoking an opt-out clause in which Maori who wish to create their own institutions are given the means to do so. The problems with the opt-out clause are well documented elsewhere (see Sharples, 1989).
2. It must be acknowledged that the register from which the name of Maori Members on School Boards of Trustees were obtained was a voluntary register of the School Trustees Association and may not reflect the 'true' proportion of Maori Members on School Boards of Trustees. The register contains only those Maori who identify themselves as being Maori, and not necessarily all of them. There is also no indication as to whether or not Maori are there as individuals, or as representatives of the community. The sample selection therefore is not typical or representative of Maori Members on Boards of Trustees.
3. Two pilot interviews were carried out prior to the initial investigation. From these interviews, questions were modified and extended. Auxiliary interviews (with officials acting in their official capacities) were also carried out after the main set of interviews. The need to carry out the latter resulted from the general confusion Maori Members exhibited when asked about Maori Language Factor Funding and their responsibilities on the Boards of Trustees. Information from the Auxiliary interviews was used as background information throughout the research.

I also interviewed Maori Members from other regions who had heard about this research and contacted me to share their experiences. The main value of recording their experiences is that they largely confirmed the experiences of Maori Members in the Auckland region. None of these interviews were used in the research.

4. There are two ways that individuals can become members on School Boards of Trustees: through election or appointment/co-option. The specific criteria under which members can be appointed/co-opted is that the School Board of Trustees should reflect (a) the ethnic and socio-economic diversity of the student body of the institution, and (b) the fact that approximately half the population of New Zealand is male and half female. The co-option of Maori onto School Boards of Trustees was generally to fulfil the specifications as laid down by the Education Act (1989).
5. Kaiarahi Reo is administered through the Maori Education Foundation. The criteria for application to the funding are that firstly, schools must be Primary catering for Kohanga Reo new entrants and secondly, that the Maori language programme in these schools must operate as total immersion courses of 80-100% Maori language content.
6. Since 1991 the MLF Funding has been whittled away further still. This funding is being competed for by other interest groups and it will be interesting in the future to watch the direction of this funding intended for Maori Language Programmes.
7. The principal had attempted firstly to find a tutor outside of the area, and then approached the local Kohanga Reo for a tutor when he was unable to find one. When the teacher at the Kohanga Reo agreed to teach, she was not given any guidelines or hours in which language could be taught in the

school. Subsequently, problems developed with the tutor waiting for some 'direction' and the principal not complying. The language programme fell through and at the time of this interview, the Principal had made no moves to rectify the situation (although he had been asked to do so by the Maori Members of the school Boards of Trustees).

8. The MLF funding can not be used to pay teachers' salaries.

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