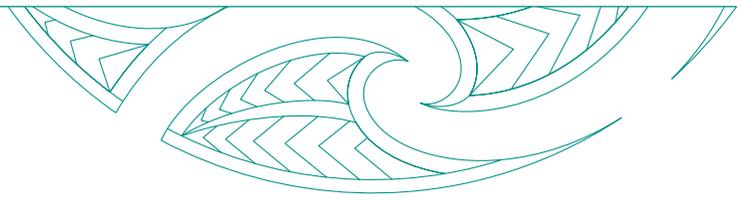




Education For All Our Children: Embracing Diverse Ethnicities





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- Professor Stephen May, Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Auckland
- Prem Singh, Multicultural New Zealand
- Nera Tautau, Human Rights Commission.



Executive summary

Aotearoa New Zealand is ethnically diverse, and is rapidly becoming more so. In schools across the country more of our learners are from ethnic communities. By 2043, it is expected that more than one in four learners in New Zealand will be from an ethnic community. In Auckland, we expect more than two in five learners will be Asian.

It is critical that education meets the needs of all our children. This study looks at how education meets the needs of our learners from ethnic communities. It finds that many learners from ethnic communities do really well at school. Learners from ethnic communities are more likely to achieve well at NCEA and go on to university.

But this study also finds that our learners from ethnic communities encounter widespread racism, isolation, and lack of cultural understanding. It also finds that education is not always reflecting what New Zealand's ethnic communities want.

As New Zealand's schools become more diverse, there is an exciting opportunity to look again at what we teach and how we teach. Many schools are already changing to embrace diverse ethnicities, but more change will be needed. This report includes options for change to make Aotearoa New Zealand a great place to learn for our children and young people from ethnic communities.

What is ethnic diversity?

There are many forms of diversity including, among others, ethnic, cultural, language, gender, sexual identity, and religious diversity. For this study we focus on ethnic diversity and associated language, cultural, and religious diversity. Ethnicity is defined as the ethnic groups that people identify with or feel they belong to. Ethnic communities included in this report are African, Asian, Latin American, and Middle Eastern.^a

Who are these learners?

Learners from ethnic communities are very diverse with a wide range of ethnicities, religions, cultures, time in New Zealand, and family backgrounds. More than two thirds of learners from ethnic communities were born in New Zealand. Many learners have multiple ethnicities, and more than half of ethnic communities speak multiple languages.

^a The term 'ethnic' refers to people who identify their ethnicity as Middle Eastern, Latin American, Continental European, Asian or African. Due to the responses to our surveys, and the data available, we do not include Continental European learners' experiences in this report.

What does ethnic diversity look like in Aotearoa New Zealand schools, and how is this changing?

Aotearoa New Zealand is ethnically diverse, and this is changing quickly. Diversity is increasing across the country, but most rapidly in urban areas. Learners will be from a wider range of ethnic communities. By 2043, it is expected just over one in four (26 percent) learners will identify as Asian and around one in 20 (3.6 percent) will identify as Middle Eastern, Latin American, or African (MELAA). In Auckland, more than two in five (43 percent) learners will identify as Asian.

What are the educational experiences of learners from diverse ethnic communities and their whānau?

1) Many learners from ethnic communities achieve well in education.

Looking at National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA), achievement and endorsements are higher for Asian learners than the New Zealand average, and both MELAA and Asian learners are more likely to achieve University Entrance and go onto university. However, there are significant differences across ethnic communities, and within all ethnic communities there are learners who are not achieving well.

2) Learners from ethnic communities experience widespread racist bullying, which too often is not taken seriously by their school.

One in five learners from ethnic communities have experienced racist bullying in the last month, and over half have seen others being bullied because of their ethnicity. Both whānau and learners report that racist bullying needs to be better identified and addressed at school. Nearly a third of learners from ethnic communities do not think their school takes racist bullying seriously.

3) Learners from ethnic communities often do not feel they belong.

Nearly one in five learners from ethnic communities reported they frequently feel they do not belong and a third feel lonely at school every week or every day. Nearly one in five also feel they have to hide their ethnic identity at school or feel excluded from activities because of their ethnic identity. MELAA learners in particular have very low wellbeing.

4) Education provision does not always reflect what whānau and learners from ethnic communities want.

As Aotearoa New Zealand changes, what communities want from education changes too. Education is not currently always reflecting what whānau from ethnic communities want. Four in 10 whānau, and nearly a third of learners from ethnic communities, do not feel schoolwork is challenging enough. Almost two-thirds of whānau think schools should support their mother tongue, but there are 11 ethnic languages – including Hindi, which is the fourth most commonly spoken language in Aotearoa – which are not available as NCEA qualifications. Some whānau also want schools to teach more about religions.

5) Whānau from ethnic communities face barriers to engaging with schools.

Whānau from ethnic communities want to be part of their children's education. They attend parent information sessions more than any other activity but find information about their children's learning insufficient or confusing. They are significantly under-represented on school Boards – for example, only 2 percent of parents on school Boards are Asian.

6) Many learners from ethnic communities go on to tertiary study, but pathways are confusing, and, for some, choices are unfairly constrained by teachers' biases.

Learners from ethnic communities are more likely to go on to tertiary study than the New Zealand average. But for some, their choices are being constrained. More than one in four secondary learners from ethnic communities report that teachers' recommendations for their course selection are influenced by ethnicity. Both learners and whānau from ethnic communities find NCEA confusing, and a fifth of learners do not feel supported in choosing subjects or career pathways.

How are schools meeting the needs of learners from ethnic communities and their whānau?

1) Some schools are already innovating and adopting new practices to meet the needs of ethnic communities.

ERO visited schools and found that many were adapting what and how they teach, were connecting with ethnic communities, and increasing their understanding of their learners' cultures and learning needs. However, we also found schools facing challenges as they adjust, that not all schools are adopting new practices, and many do not know if what they are doing is working.

2) Teachers' understanding of their learners, including their culture, is key to learners' experiences at school, but this needs building.

Teachers' understanding of cultures is not keeping up with our changing population. The teaching workforce does not reflect learners' ethnicities. For example, only 5 percent of teachers are Asian. Whānau and learners are concerned about teachers' lack of cultural knowledge and awareness. Teachers report having limited awareness of learners' cultural and learning needs. More than half of teachers do not feel confident connecting with ethnic communities. Half of the learners from ethnic communities reported having their names mispronounced by their teacher.

What are the implications for education in the future?

As New Zealand's schools become more diverse there is an exciting opportunity to look again at education including what we teach and how we teach. We have identified five big implications when considering the future of education in Aotearoa New Zealand.

1) Every school needs to be able to respond to increased ethnic diversity.

Ethnic diversity is increasing across the country – not just in Auckland – and the largest changes are in our young population. This increase in ethnic diversity in schools is reflected in an increase in the diversity of cultures, and the diversity of languages spoken. Every school needs to be able to meet the needs of learners from ethnic communities so not only do they continue to achieve in education but they also thrive at school.

2) Every school needs to be able to tackle racism.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, too many learners from ethnic communities experience racist bullying and racial biases. And, when they raise concerns, they are not always acted on. We must do better. Every school needs to be able to prevent and tackle racism.

3) We need to get better at delivering education for learners from ethnic communities.

We need to understand more about what the learning experiences are and outcomes that diverse ethnic communities want. This may include the types and locations of schools, and subjects taught. We must increase the cultural capability of the current teaching workforce and develop a more ethnically diverse teaching workforce for the future.

4) We need to better understand the education experiences and outcomes for learners from ethnic communities and give them a stronger voice in education.

In 2043, a quarter of learners will be from ethnic communities; their communities should have a strong say in the education they receive. Our learners from ethnic communities and their whānau are too often invisible in the data we collect in education, in the conversations we have about education, and in the decisions we make. We need to understand their experiences and outcomes (particularly how they differ between different ethnic groups), and provide ethnic communities with a stronger voice in education.

5) For Aotearoa New Zealand's future we need education to be good for learners from ethnic communities and their whānau.

Learners and their whānau from ethnic communities have high aspirations for their education and value maintaining their home languages. Supporting these aspirations and making Aotearoa New Zealand's education a great for learners of all ethnicities and cultures, will help us strengthen our education system, workforce, culture, and relationships with other countries.

What now? Key focus areas for the future

Many learners from ethnic communities are achieving in education, but they have to overcome widespread racism, isolation, and lack of cultural understanding. To thrive as a country we need to change. There are five areas where there are opportunities for change going forward.

1) Ending racism.

In the future, there are options to set stronger expectations on tackling racism and providing clearer avenues for parents and learners to raise concerns when racism is not tackled. We could also have concentrated efforts to tackle racism against those groups who are most often targeted.

2) Changing what is taught.

In the future, what is taught in schools could be changed to reflect more closely what New Zealand's ethnic communities and their learners want from education. This could include changing the languages taught in schools, the way we teach about religions, the visibility of ethnic communities and their histories in what is taught, and the level of challenge in schoolwork.

3) Changing how it is taught (and who the teachers are).

In the future, teachers will need to be able to understand and respond to the needs of a much more diverse set of learners. There are options to develop the skills of all teachers and to provide pathways that support more members of ethnic communities into teaching and becoming Teacher Aides.

4) Changing where it is taught (expanding options).

In the future, ethnic communities may seek schools that match their expectations for education. There are existing mechanisms to create schools with distinct values, characters, and expectations and options to increase support for communities to do that.

5) Increasing visibility and voice of ethnic communities in education.

Looking forward there are options to more rigorously collect and track information about how these learners are faring, and to prioritise and proactively recruit ethnic communities and learners into school governance.

Conclusion

Aotearoa New Zealand is becoming increasingly ethnically diverse. This provides an opportunity for our education system to embrace this change and adapt so that learners from ethnic communities and their whānau thrive. By 2043, one quarter of all our students will be from ethnic communities. What they want for education matters.

By education embracing diversity and meeting the needs of all learners Aotearoa New Zealand will become stronger socially, economically and culturally. It will also become an even more attractive place for people from diverse ethnic communities to live, learn, work, and raise their families.



About this report

Aotearoa New Zealand society is changing. The Education Review Office, in partnership with the Ministry for Ethnic Communities, wanted to understand the experiences of learners from ethnic communities and their whānau, and to explore the implications for the future of education.

This report describes what we found, and the changes needed.

About the Education Review Office

The Education Review Office | Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga (ERO) is the Aotearoa New Zealand Government's education evaluation agency. We work with early learning services, kōhanga reo, schools, and kura to help them and their learners' flourish. We are interested in what is working well and what can improve.

Our focus is on equitable and excellent outcomes for all learners. ERO is responsible for reviewing and reporting on education performance. As part of this role, ERO looks at how the education system supports learners' outcomes – in this case, on education for learners from ethnic communities in schools.

This is a Long-Term Insights Briefing

A Long-Term Insights Briefing (LTIB) helps identify and explore issues that matter for the future wellbeing of the people of Aotearoa New Zealand. They provide information about medium- and long-term trends, risks, and opportunities, and explore options on how best to respond.

LTIBs look to the past and present to think about the future – they are not Government policy. Chief Executives have a statutory duty to produce these briefings independent of Ministers. More information about LTIBs is on the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet website (see <https://dpmc.govt.nz/our-programmes/policy-project/long-term-insights-briefings>).

This report is about making a difference

This report describes what we found about the increasing ethnic diversity in Aotearoa New Zealand, and the quality of education provision for learners from ethnic communities in schools. We also look at the implications of increasing ethnic diversity for the future.

The voices of learners from ethnic communities and their whānau^b are highlighted throughout this report. We describe their experiences of participation and learning, their outcomes, and how teaching practices impact on their learning and lives.

^b "Whānau" refers to the parents/caregivers and extended family of these learners to acknowledge the importance of their close relationships and connections.

By providing a better understanding of ethnic diversity, this report will help schools and the education system to better prepare and plan for a more diverse Aotearoa New Zealand.

Through understanding the experiences of these learners, and showcasing good practice, this report will enable schools to better respond to the diverse ethnicities in their communities.

We partnered with others and drew on their expertise

For this evaluation, ERO partnered with the Ministry for Ethnic Communities.

The newly established Ministry for Ethnic Communities is the Government's chief advisor on ethnic communities, ethnic diversity, and the inclusion of ethnic communities in wider society. They work with communities, other government agencies, and a range of organisations to help increase social cohesion and ensure Aotearoa New Zealand is a place where everyone feels welcome, valued, and empowered to be themselves.

We also worked closely with the Ministry of Education and an Expert Advisory Group with a range of expertise, including people from ethnic communities, academics, practitioners, and agency officials.

Public consultation guided us

This report has been guided by ethnic communities. In March 2022, we published a LTIB topic consultation document¹ and asked for submissions. The consultation document was available in seven languages (English, Te Reo Māori, Arabic, Chinese (Simplified), Hindi, Japanese, Korean). In November 2022 we released a draft report for public consultation, held hui, and received written feedback about the report. More details about our engagement approach, a summary of the submissions on the draft report, and our responses can be found in [Appendix 2](#).

What we looked at

This report looks at:

- 1) **Demographics:** How has ethnic diversity changed in schools, and how will it change going forward?
- 2) **Experiences and outcomes:** What are the education experiences of learners from ethnic communities and their whānau?
- 3) **Schools' practices and challenges:** What are good practices schools have in place, and the challenges in meeting the needs of learners from ethnic communities?
- 4) **Future:** How can the education system and schools in Aotearoa New Zealand prepare for a more diverse future, and how can they be supported?

Where we looked

We focused on gathering the views of whānau and community leaders in ethnic communities in the context of English medium schools. To ensure we captured a range of experiences, across a variety of learning contexts, we invited learners, whānau and communities, school leaders and teachers from a range of school types to participate in our surveys and interviews.

We also relied on available and relevant data from the Ministry of Education, New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA), Stats NZ, and national surveys conducted by other governmental agencies.

How we collected information

To understand how good education is for learners from ethnic communities, we gathered information in multiple ways:

- surveys of whānau (1,250 responses), made available in 10 languages
- surveys of learners (558 responses)
- surveys of teachers (263 responses)
- site visits at eight schools
- thirteen community hui/focus groups
- interviews with 12 community leaders or submitters
- fifty-six submissions
- online focus groups with school leaders from eight schools
- a wide range of data from other government agencies (e.g., NZQA, Ministry of Education, Stats NZ).

In our surveys, not everyone who responded to our surveys answered every question. The numbers we report are the proportions of those who answered each particular question.

Further details of the methods we used are in [Appendix 1](#).

What type of diversity?

There are many forms of diversity including, among others, ethnic, cultural, language, gender, sexual orientation and religious. For this project we focus on ethnic diversity and associated language, cultural, and religious diversity. ERO has already looked at some other forms of diversity separately, for example, our work on education for disabled learners.

What do we mean by ethnicity?

Throughout the report, ethnicity is defined as the ethnic groups that people identify with or feel they belong to. Ethnicity is a measure of cultural affiliation. It is not a measure of race, ancestry, nationality, or citizenship. Ethnicity is self-perceived, and people can belong to more than one ethnic group.²

Which ethnicities do we focus on?

The ethnic communities we focus on in this report are those defined by New Zealand's Ministry for Ethnic Communities and include anyone who identifies their ethnicity as:

- African
- Asian
- Continental European
- Latin-American
- Middle Eastern.

While we asked about experiences and outcomes for learners from Continental Europe, the small number of responses and data available means we are not able to report on these learners in this report. Instead, this report focuses on Middle Eastern, Latin American, African (MELAA) and Asian ethnic communities.

This research complements ERO's wide range of research and resources on education provision for Māori and Pacific learners. We included the experiences of Māori and Pacific learners who belong to multiple ethnic communities. We also drew on learnings from successful culturally responsive practices for Māori learners and how they may help support a broader range of diverse learners.

People from ethnic communities in Aotearoa New Zealand represent over 200 ethnicities and speak over 170 languages.³ Ethnic communities include those who are born in New Zealand as well as those born overseas. Within different ethnic groups there are diverse ethnicities, languages, religions, migration backgrounds, and socioeconomic statuses.

Research participants' generational migration information was not consistently collected across our data sources. This means that this report is unable to fully capture any substantial differences in the experiences between first, second, and third generation New Zealanders.

Our commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and tangata whenua

Focusing on the ethnic communities listed sits alongside our first and primary commitment to *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*. ERO is committed to giving effect to the Crown's obligations under the articles in *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*. In undertaking this work, we acknowledge the primacy of tangata whenua and the status of *Te Tiriti* and recognise that New Zealand is a bicultural nation, with multicultural communities.⁴

Terms used in this report

In this report, when we use the term “learners from ethnic communities” we are referring to learners who identify as African, Asian, Latin American, and Middle Eastern.

Data from Stats NZ about the population – past, present and projected – is grouped by age group. We use children aged 5–19 when thinking about changes in the school-age learner population and refer to this group as “learners”.

We use “whānau” in reference to the extended family of these learners to acknowledge the importance of their close relationships and connections.

Report structure

This report has nine parts.

- Part 1 describes who learners from ethnic communities are.
- Part 2 sets out how ethnic diversity in schools is changing.
- Part 3 sets out what sort of education provision drives good outcomes for learners from ethnic communities.
- Part 4 sets out the educational outcomes of learners from ethnic communities.
- Part 5 captures the educational experiences of learners from ethnic communities and their whānau.
- Part 6 examines how able learners from ethnic communities and their whānau are to participate in education.
- Part 7 sets out the pathways and destinations of learners from ethnic communities.
- Part 8 outlines how schools are meeting the needs of learners from ethnic communities and their whānau.
- Part 9 brings together the key findings from the evidence and their implications for the future of education.



Part 1: Who are learners from ethnic communities?

Ethnic communities are diverse and include a wide range of ethnicities, languages, and beliefs. In this section we describe the learners from ethnic communities we focus on in this report.

What this section describes

- 1) Which ethnicities we focus on in this report.
- 2) The diversity of learners from ethnic communities.

How we gathered information

To understand diversity within ethnic communities in Aotearoa New Zealand, we used a variety of existing data and met with a wide range of ethnic community leaders, members, parents, whānau, and learners. Existing data we drew on includes:

- Census population data
- Ministry of Education data.

What we found: An overview

Learners from ethnic communities are very diverse with a wide range of ethnicities, languages, religions, cultures, time in Aotearoa New Zealand, and family backgrounds.

- There are over 200 ethnicities in New Zealand.
- Twenty-one percent of Asian learners have multiple ethnicities and 37 percent of MELAA (Middle Eastern, Latin American, and African) learners have multiple ethnicities.^{5,6}
- More than half of ethnic communities speak multiple languages.
- Many learners from ethnic communities belong to a wide range of religions (and many are not religious).
- More than two thirds (72 percent Asian and 67 percent MELAA) were born in New Zealand.⁷
- On average, people from ethnic communities are more highly qualified than other New Zealanders.

1) Which ethnicities we focus on

The ethnic communities we focus on in this report are those defined by New Zealand's Ministry for Ethnic Communities and include anyone who identifies their ethnicity as:

- African
- Asian
- Continental European
- Latin-American
- Middle Eastern.

Unfortunately, due to limited data available for people from Continental Europe, our report is not able to report on learners from these ethnic communities.

2) The diversity of learners from ethnic communities

There are a wide range of ethnicities

Within the broad ethnic groups of Asian and MELAA there are many different ethnicities. The category of Asian includes people who identify with the following ethnicities:

- East Asian: Chinese, Hong Kong Chinese, Japanese, Mongolian, Korean, Taiwanese
- South Asian: Indian, Sri Lankan, Bengali, Afghan, Bhutanese, Maldivian, Nepali, Pakistani
- South-East Asian: Burmese, Cambodian, Indonesian, Lao, Malay, Filipino, Singaporean, Thai, Vietnamese.

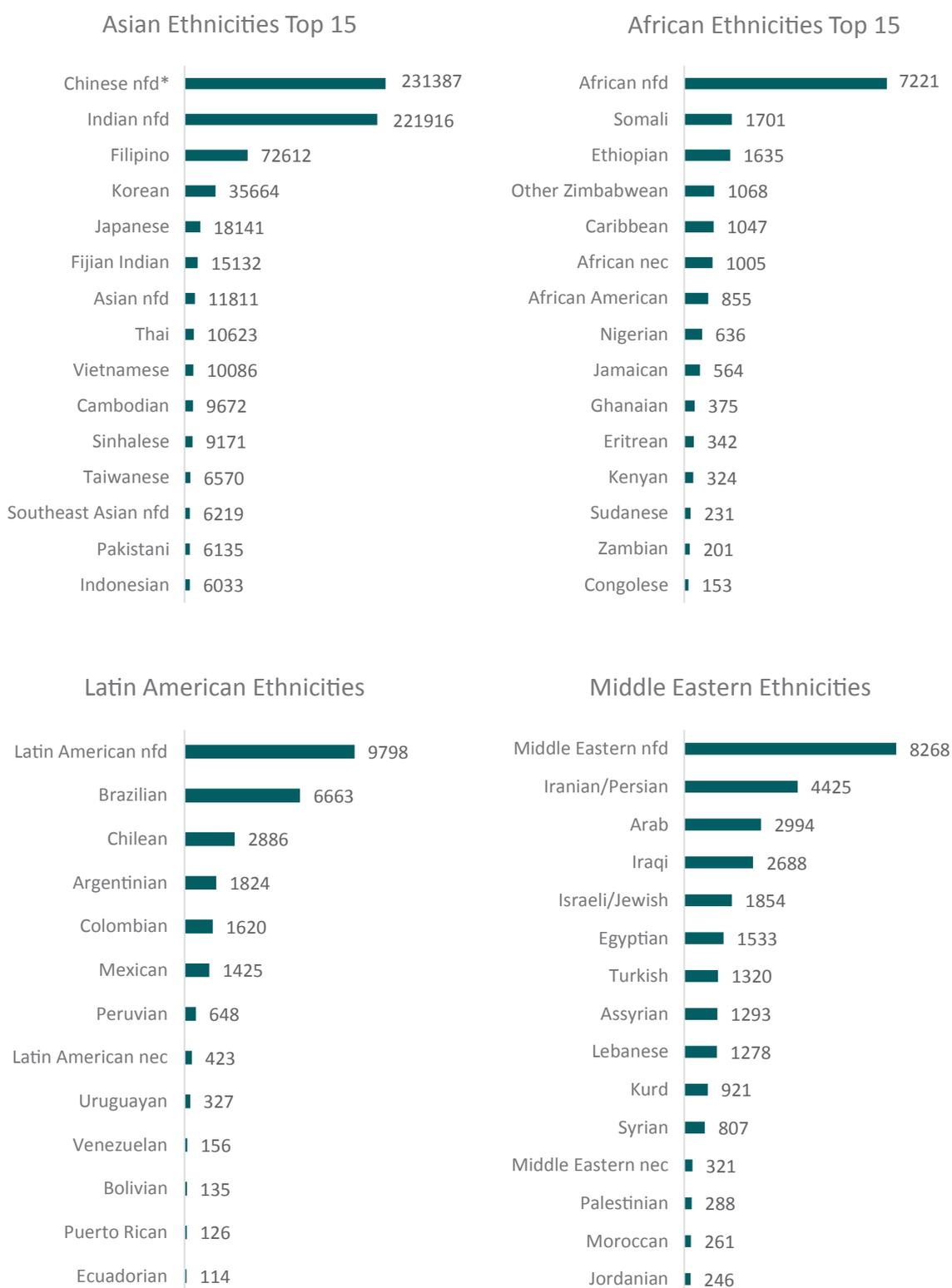
Within each of the above ethnicities, there are also more specific ethnic identities such as Tamil, Gujarati, Cantonese, and Sichuan. People can also identify with more than one ethnicity.

MELAA is one of the broadest ethnic categories. It includes people who identify with the following 39 ethnicities:

- Middle Eastern: Algerian, Arab, Assyrian, Egyptian, Iranian/Persian, Iraqi, Israeli/Jewish, Jordanian, Kurd, Lebanese, Moroccan, Palestinian, Syrian, Turkish
- Latin American: Argentinian, Bolivian, Brazilian, Chilean, Colombian, Ecuadorian, Mexican, Peruvian, Puerto Rican, Uruguayan, Venezuelan
- African: Jamaican, Kenyan, Nigerian, African American, Caribbean, Somali, Eritrean, Ethiopian, Ghanaian, Burundian, Congolese, Sudanese, Zambian, Other Zimbabwean.

Figure 1 shows the largest ethnic communities in New Zealand.

Figure 1: Top 15 ethnicities within Asian, Middle Eastern, Latin American, and African (2018)⁸



Source: Stats NZ, Census 2018, Ethnic group.

Note: Stats NZ classifies South African Europeans as European. Therefore, they are not included in the African ethnicities graph. In 2018, 37,155 people identified as South African European.

* nfd stands for Not Further Defined

Learners increasingly identify with multiple ethnicities

Many learners have multiple ethnicities. Data from the 2018 New Zealand Census shows that:

- a fifth (21 percent) of Asian learners (aged between 5 and 19 years) identified with more than one ethnic group, up from 16 percent in 2006⁹
- thirty-seven percent of MELAA learners identified with more than one ethnic group, up from 24 percent in 2006.¹⁰

Most learners from ethnic communities are born in New Zealand

Learners from ethnic communities include those who are descendants of the first Chinese settlers who arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand over 180 years ago (in the 1860s), through to those who are new arrivals.

Most learners from ethnic communities are born in New Zealand:

- in 2018, 72 percent of learners (0–14 years old) of Asian ethnicity were born in Aotearoa New Zealand, an increase from 59 percent in 2006
- in 2018, 67 percent of learners of MELAA ethnicity were born in Aotearoa New Zealand, an increase from 49 percent in 2006.¹¹

For those learners who have migrated to Aotearoa New Zealand, their families have followed a range of pathways, for example, as skilled migrants, for family reunification, accompanying families of workers, as entrepreneurs, and as students.¹² Of learners in Aotearoa New Zealand, 9,366 (approximately 10 percent) are former refugees. ^{c,13}

A variety of family backgrounds

Learners from ethnic communities come from a variety of family backgrounds. One indicator of this is their qualifications. Ethnic communities are more highly qualified compared to the general population, with a higher proportion of bachelor and postgraduate degrees than the general New Zealand population (see Figure 6).

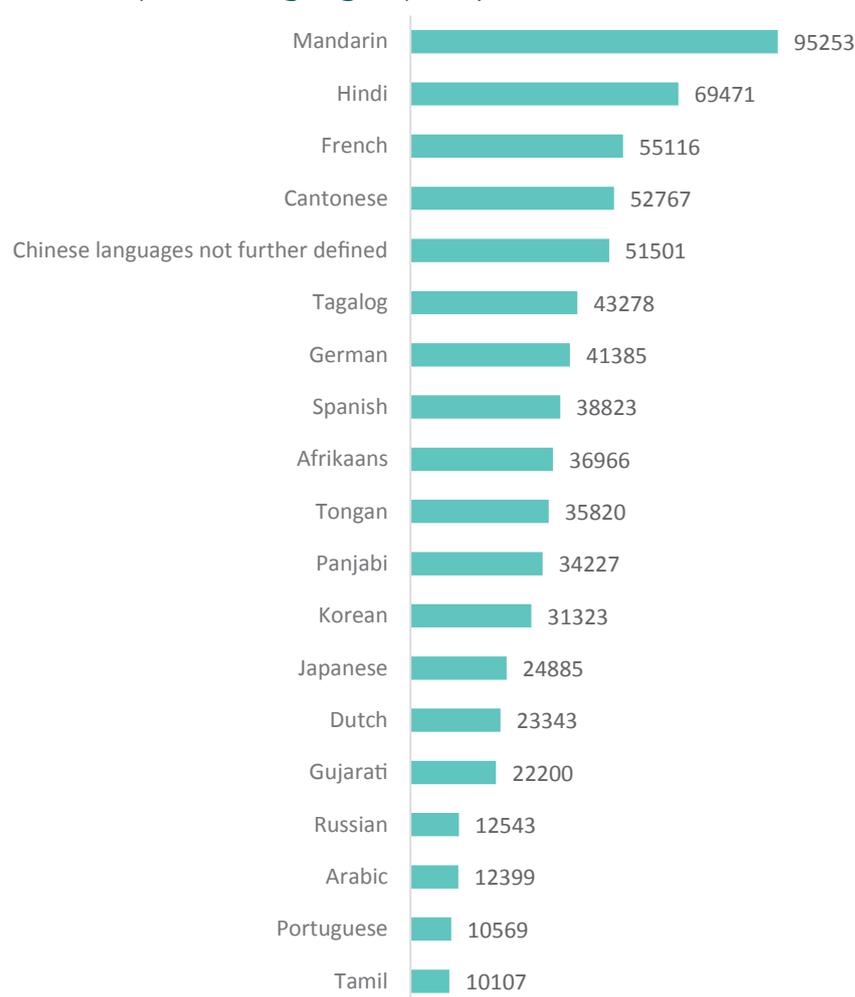
Learners speak a wide range of languages

Learners from ethnic communities speak a wide range of languages (see Figure 2). Most speak English and many communities also speak another language:

- fifty-five percent of Asian New Zealanders speak two or more languages
- fifty-six percent of MELAA New Zealanders speak two or more languages.¹⁴

^c Note: This is not an official statistic. It was created for research purposes from the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI), managed by Statistics New Zealand.

Figure 2: Number of speakers of ethnic community languages in New Zealand, 19 most spoken languages (2018)¹⁵



Source: Stats NZ, 2018 Census, Languages Spoken.

English as an additional language

Whilst we cannot accurately measure how many learners from ethnic communities speak English as an additional language, we do know that:

- in 2021, 25 percent of Asian students and 32 percent of MELAA students received support (English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)), as English was their second language¹⁶
- thirty percent of Year 5 Asian learners speak English at home.¹⁷

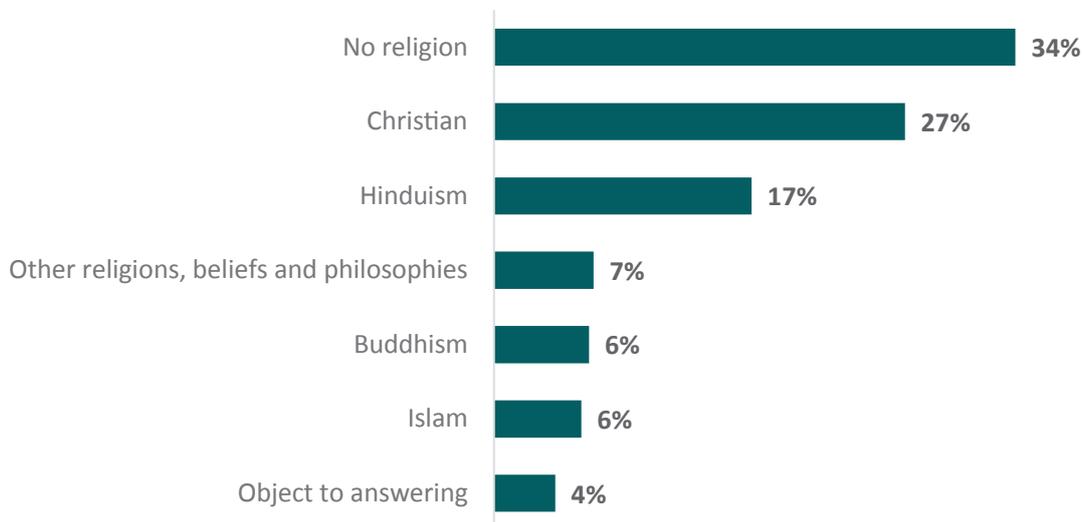
Non-English speakers

While most members of ethnic communities speak English, some do not. Stats NZ data shows that 26 percent of Khmer (largely Cambodian) speakers, 25 percent of Korean speakers, 23 percent of Vietnamese speakers are non-English speakers. Similarly, 23 percent of Cantonese speakers, and 22 percent of Mandarin speakers are non-English Speakers.¹⁸

A wide range of beliefs

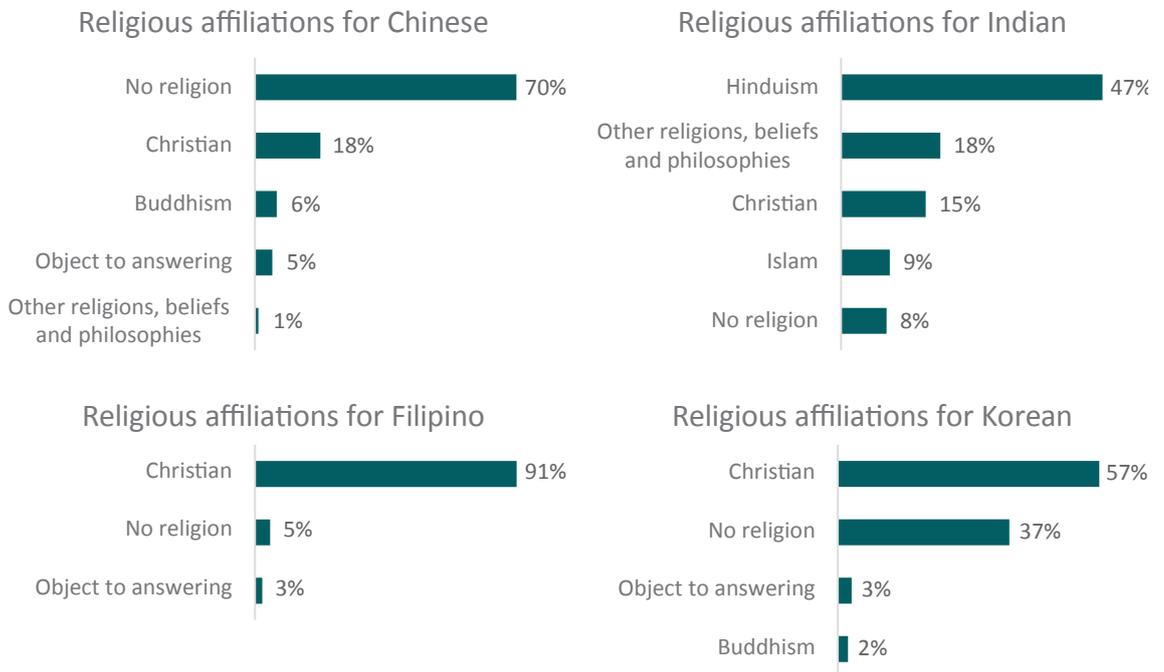
There is a wide range of religious affiliations across and within ethnic groups. While we do not know about learners' religious beliefs, we do know that different ethnic groups have very different religious affiliations. For example, the largest four Asian ethnic groups, with the biggest populations (Chinese, Indian, Filipino and Korean), have very different patterns of religious affiliations (see Figure 4). The majority of Chinese have no religious affiliation, whereas Indians report affiliation to Hinduism, followed by other religions, beliefs, and philosophies. Filipinos have high proportion of Christians (over 90 percent) and over half of Koreans identify as Christian. For Middle Easterners, Islam is the most affiliated religion (see Figure 5).

Figure 3: Religious affiliations for Asian ethnicities (2018)¹⁹



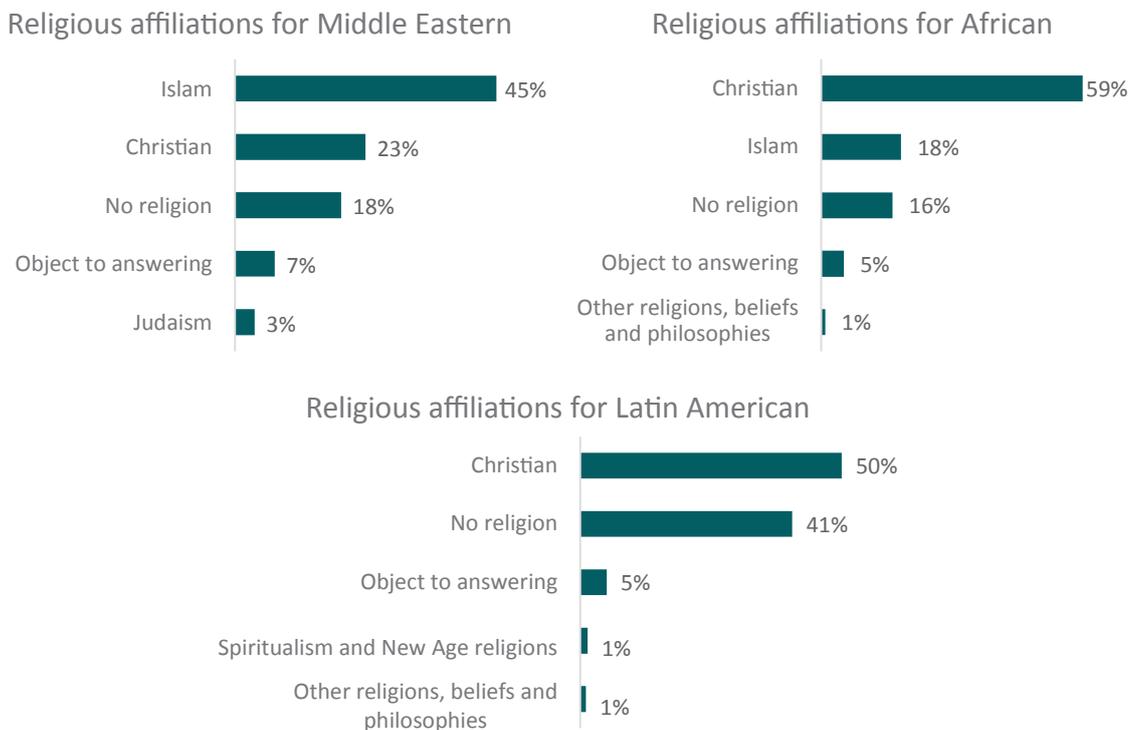
Source: Stats NZ, 2018 Census, Religious affiliation.

Figure 4: Top five religious affiliations for selected ethnicities within Asian ethnicities (2018)²⁰



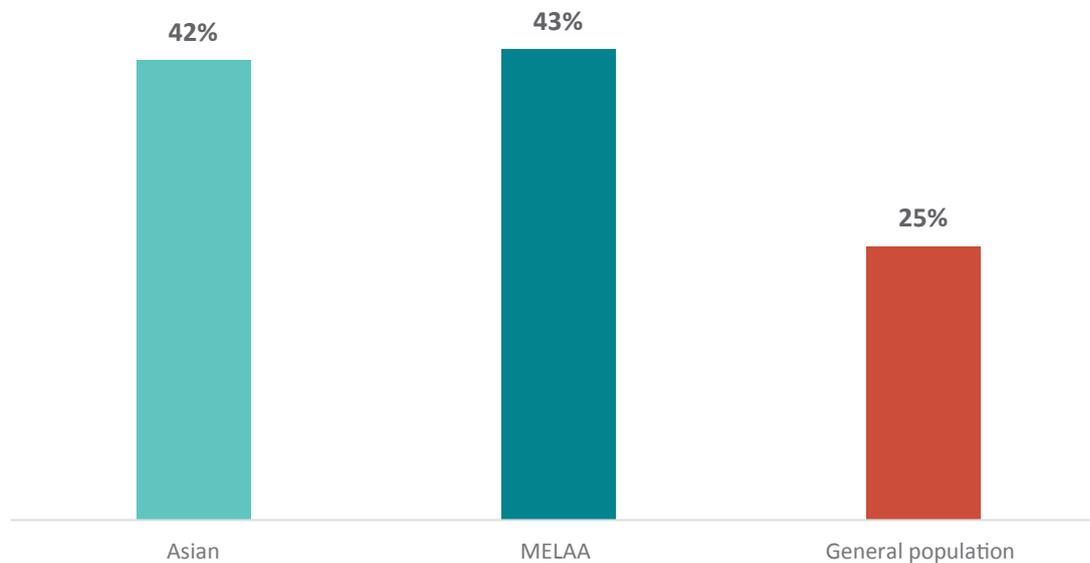
Source: Stats NZ, 2018 Census, Religious affiliation.

Figure 5: Top five religious affiliations for Middle Eastern, Latin American, and African, ethnicities (2018)²¹



Source: Stats NZ, 2018 Census, Religious affiliation.

Figure 6: *Percentage of bachelor's degrees and above holders – Asian and MELAA (2018)²²*



Source: Stats NZ, 2018 Census, Highest qualification and birthplace.

Conclusion

Learners from ethnic communities are very diverse. Their experiences and outcomes from education will reflect this diversity. In the following chapters, we look at how well learners from ethnic communities are faring in education, as a group overall, and by different ethnicities. But beneath this, there is a more complex picture as learners' gender, language, religion, family background, and newness to New Zealand will also significantly shape their experiences of education.

About the data in the following infographics

Page 21

Left: Stats NZ. (n.d.) *Birthplace (New Zealand or overseas) and ethnic group (grouped total responses) by languages spoken (17 languages), for the census usually resident population count, 2006, 2013, and 2018 Censuses.* [Data set]. 2018 data shown. Selected languages.

Right: Stats NZ. (n.d.) *Religious affiliation by ethnic group (total responses) (level 1, level 2, level 3, level 4) For the census usually resident population count, 2006, 2013 and 2018 Censuses.* [Data set]. 2018 data shown.

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Top and middle box left: Stats NZ (n.d.) *Ethnic group (detailed total response - level 3) by birthplace (detailed NZ or overseas born) by age group, for the census usually resident population count, 2006, 2013, and 2018 Censuses.* [Data set]. 2018 data shown.

Top and middle box right: Ministry for Ethnic Communities (n.d.), *Ethnic Communities Data Dashboard* based on 2018 New Zealand Census data.

[Note: Ministry for Ethnic Communities data differs from Stats NZ data. For example, the Ministry for Ethnic Communities reallocated a small number of groups categorised as European and 'Other' to African. This means you cannot make a consistent comparison between Data Dashboard and Stats NZ 2018 ethnicity data.]

Bottom: Stats NZ. (n.d.). *Highest qualification and birthplace (NZ born/overseas born) By ethnic group (total responses) (level 1, level 2, level 3, level 4) For the census usually resident population count aged 15 years and over. 2006, 2013 and 2018 Censuses.* [Data set].

Aotearoa New Zealand's ethnic communities are diverse

Ethnic communities speak a wide range of languages

Mandarin

95,253

Hindi

69,471

German

41,385

Afrikaans

36,966

Panjabi

34,227

Chinese languages not further defined

51,501

Spanish

38,823

French

55,116

Cantonese

52,767

Tagalog

43,278

Korean

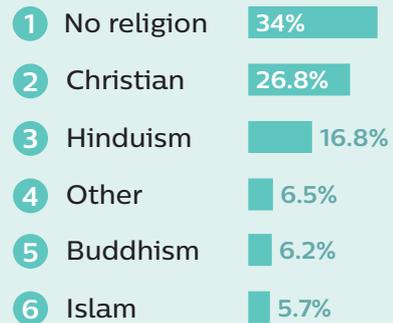
31,323

Japanese

24,885

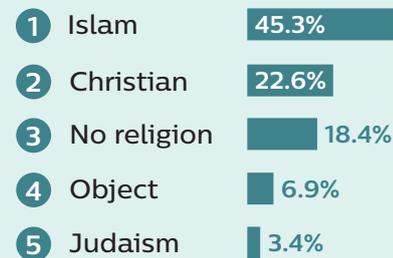
Ethnic communities have a wide range of religious affiliations

Asian top 6 religions

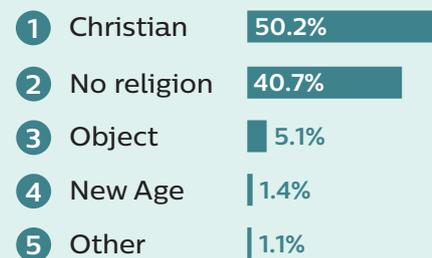


MELAA top 5 religions

Middle Eastern



Latin American



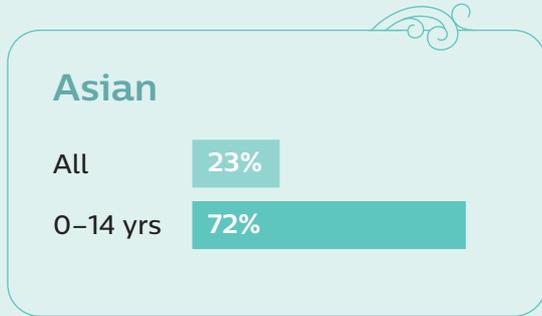
African



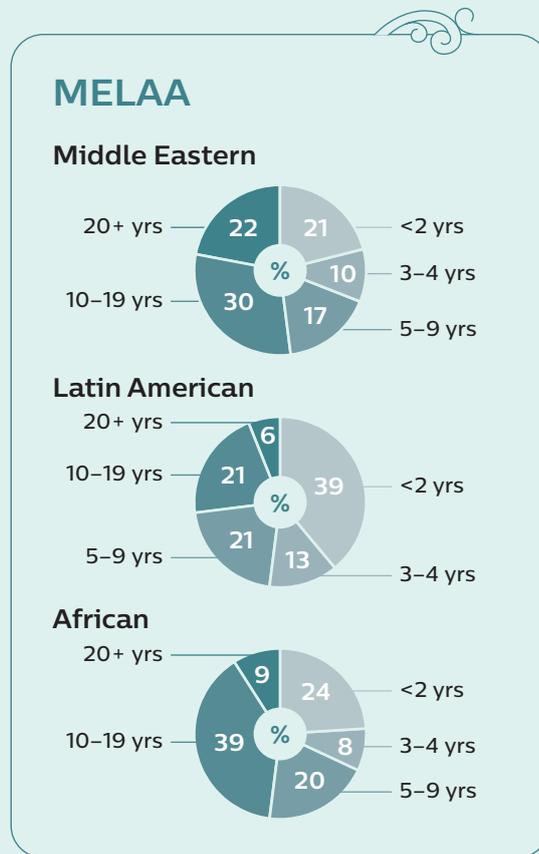
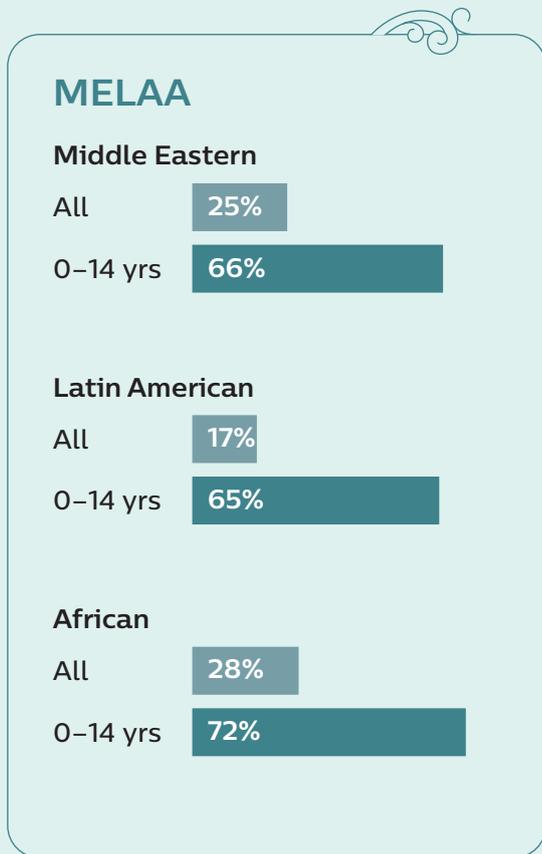
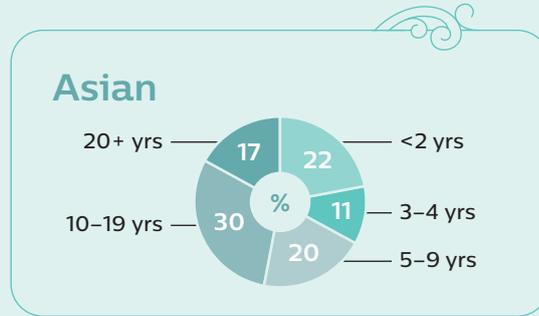


Increasingly, people from ethnic communities are born in Aotearoa New Zealand and have lived here a long time

Percentage of population born in Aotearoa New Zealand



Time since arrival in Aotearoa New Zealand



Ethnic communities have higher rates of tertiary education qualifications compared to the general population





Part 2: How is ethnic diversity in schools changing?

Ethnic diversity in Aotearoa New Zealand is increasing, and the number of learners from ethnic communities in our schools is growing. To support these learners, we need to understand ethnic diversity in Aotearoa New Zealand now, and what it will look like in the future.

In this section we set out how ethnic diversity has changed in Aotearoa New Zealand schools, and how it will change going forward.

What this section describes

- 1) How ethnic diversity is changing in schools.
- 2) Differences between schools.

How we gathered information

To understand how ethnic diversity in Aotearoa New Zealand schools has changed, we spoke to a wide range of ethnic communities and used a variety of existing data. This included:

- Census population data
- Ministry of Education data
- data from international studies on education.^d

To understand how the population of learners will change in the future, we have used Stats NZ's population projections. As the future is far from certain, these projections include ranges. We have used the median projection of these ranges. [Appendix 4](#) has more detail on these projections.

^d Studies we looked at include PISA, TIMSS, and PIRLS. These provide background knowledge of students' learning to facilitate better education, specifically in terms of reading, mathematics, and science. They are global studies administered by the OECD.

What we found: an overview

Ethnic diversity has increased. The ethnic diversity of Aotearoa New Zealand’s learners has grown over the last two decades. Diversity has also increased within ethnic groups, and our school-age population has become more diverse. These changes have not been limited to a specific region – they have happened throughout the country. In 2018, 14 percent of learners^e were Asian and nearly 2 percent were Middle Eastern, Latin American, and African (MELAA). In Auckland, 26 percent of learners were Asian and over 2 percent were MELAA.

Ethnic diversity will continue to increase. In the next two decades, ethnic diversity will continue to increase, with the largest growth expected to be in the numbers of Asian learners. By 2043, it is expected just over one in four (26 percent) learners will identify as Asian, and around one in 20 (3.6 percent) will identify as MELAA. In Auckland, more than two in five (43 percent) learners are expected to identify as Asian.²³

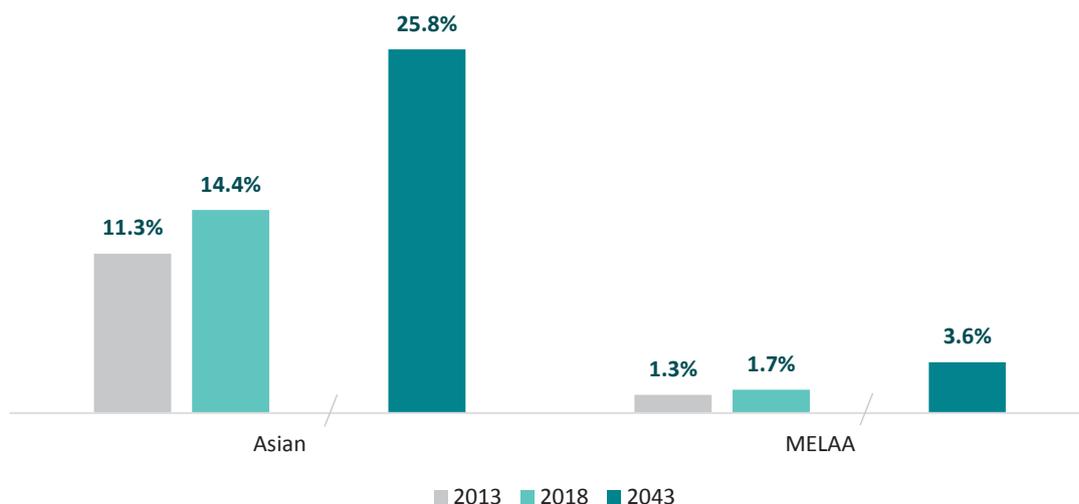
1) The changing population of learners

Ethnic diversity is increasing in Aotearoa New Zealand schools

In 2018, 14 percent of learners in Aotearoa schools were Asian, up from 11 percent in 2013. The percent who identified as MELAA was 1.7 percent, up from 1.3 percent in 2013.

The number of MELAA and Asian learners is expected to continue to grow quickly. By 2043, 26 percent of learners will be Asian and the population of MELAA learners is projected to more than double to 3.6 percent (see Figure 7).²⁴

Figure 7: Proportion of learners (aged 5–19) in Aotearoa New Zealand who identify as MELAA or Asian^{f,25,26}



Stats NZ, 2013 and 2018 Censuses, Ethnic Group (for 2013 and 2018); and National ethnic population projections: 2018(base)–2043, Median projections (for 2043).

^e Aged 5–19 years

^f This graph uses the median projections for 5 to 19-year-olds. See Appendix 4 for more information about population projections.

2) How ethnic diversity has changed across schools

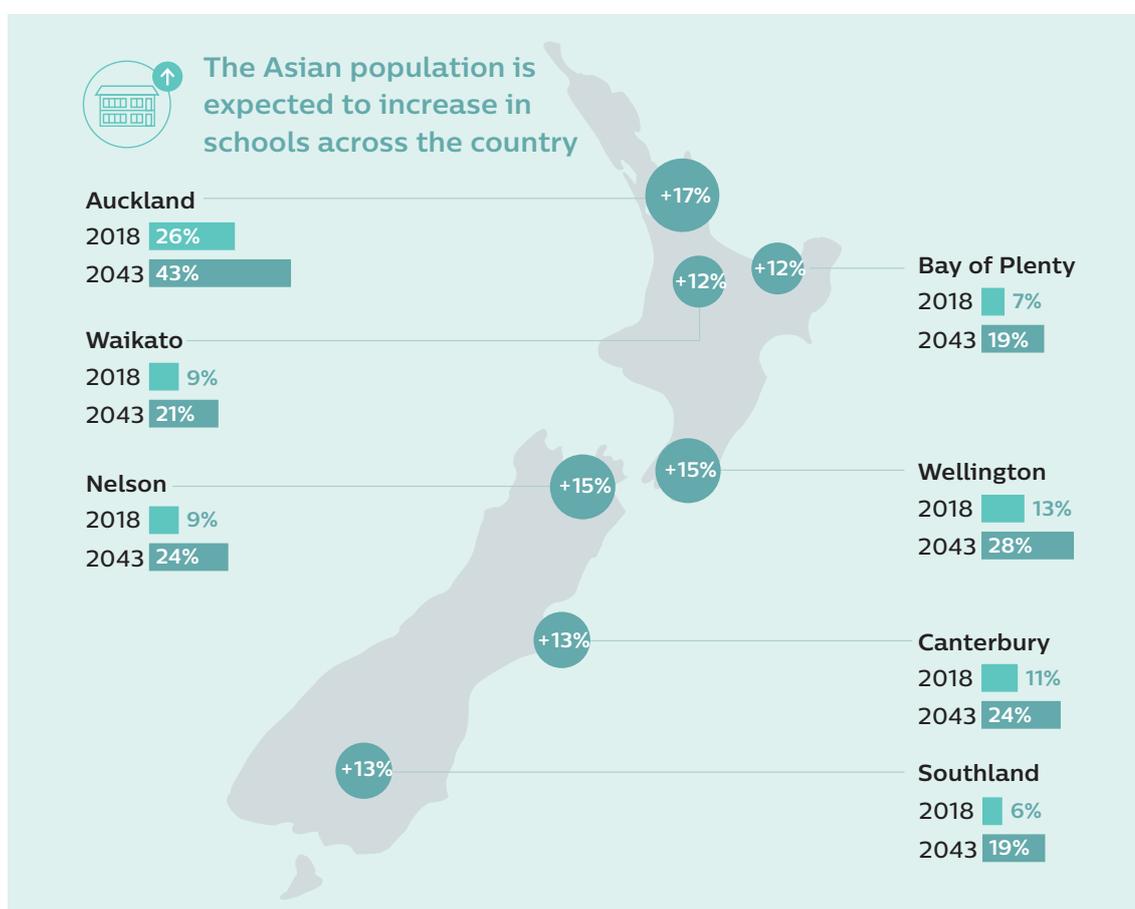
Ethnic diversity of learners has increased in all regions

Ethnic diversity has increased across the country. Whilst Auckland is home to most learners from ethnic communities, the fastest change has happened in the Southland region.

Ethnic diversity in schools is expected to continue to increase across the country. By 2043, the proportion of learners who identify as Asian is expected to increase in:

- Auckland, from 26 percent in 2018 to 43 percent
- Waikato, from 9 percent in 2018 to 21 percent
- Bay of Plenty, from 7 percent in 2018 to 19 percent
- Wellington, from 13 percent in 2018 to 28 percent
- Nelson, from 9 percent in 2018 to 24 percent
- Canterbury, from 11 percent in 2018 to 24 percent
- Southland, from 6 percent in 2018 to 19 percent (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: *Proportion of learners (aged 5–19) regionally who identify as Asian^{27,28}*



Source: Stats NZ, 2018 Census, Ethnic group (for 2018) and Subnational Population Projections 2018-base, Median projections (for 2043).

Changes at a regional level will affect the diversity of individual school rolls in different ways. Some schools will likely see a large increase in the number of learners from ethnic communities. For some schools, the increase may be small numbers from a wider range of ethnicities. For others, the increase may be from one or two ethnic communities. This may look different for neighbouring schools.

More information about these Stats NZ projections can be found in [Appendix 4](#).

Learners from ethnic communities are more likely to be in urban schools

Most learners from ethnic communities go to schools located in urban areas. For example:

- ninety-nine percent of Chinese and Indian learners go to schools in urban areas, compared to 92 percent of the average New Zealand population
- ninety-seven percent of South-East Asian, 95 percent of African, and 94 percent of Latin American learners go to schools in urban areas.²⁹

Some ethnicities are more likely to attend high decile schools

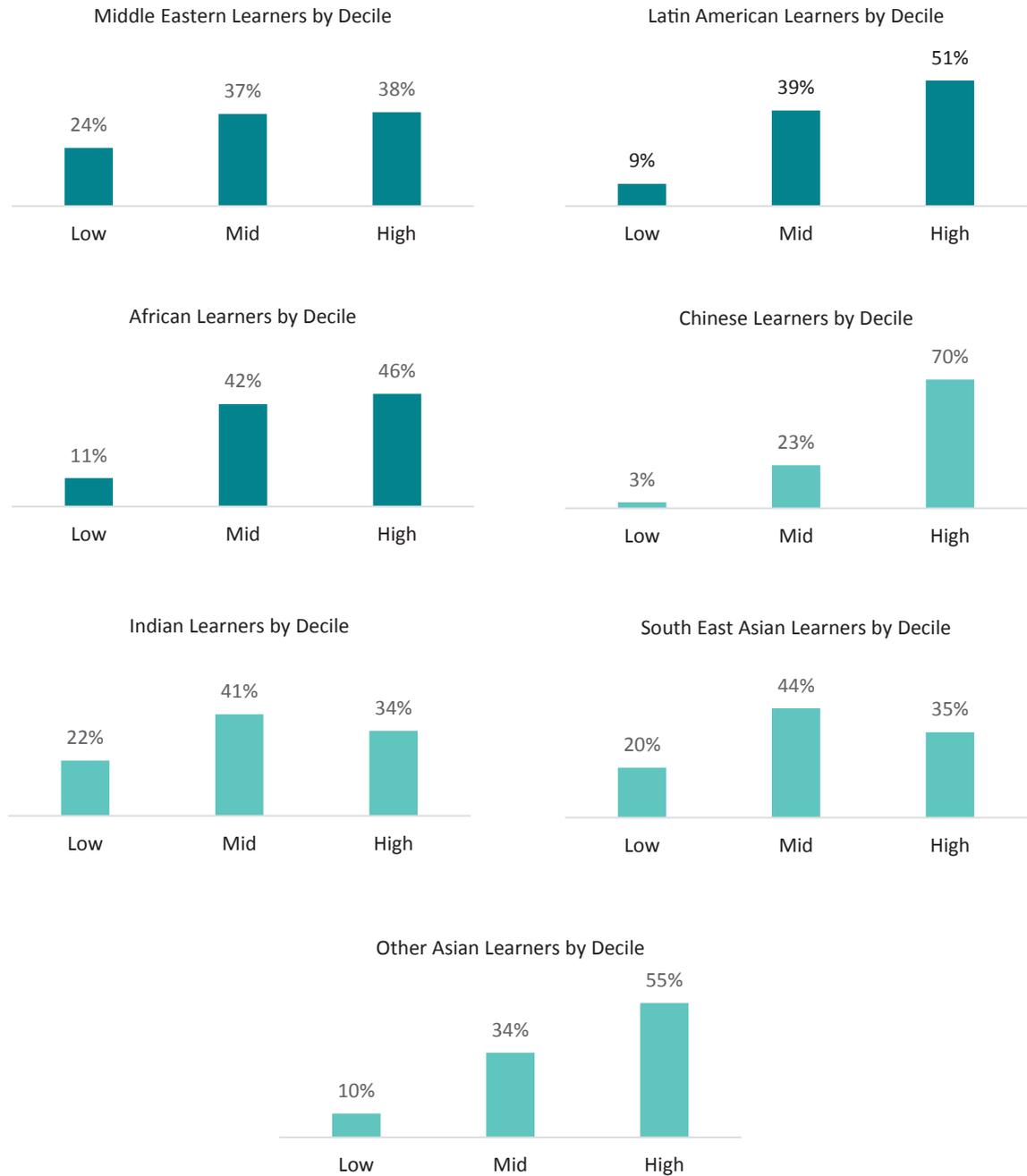
Changing diversity looks different for different schools. For example, ethnic distribution varies across school deciles. Typically, low decile schools serve poorer communities, and high decile schools serve richer communities. In 2021, Indian, South-East Asian, and Middle Eastern learners were evenly spread across deciles nationally, but Chinese, Latin American, African, and other Asian learners mostly attended high decile schools (see Figure 9 on the following page).^g

Conclusion

New Zealand schools are changing, with learners being ever more ethnically diverse, and this change is occurring right across the country. In the following chapters we look at how well education currently meets the needs of learners from ethnic communities, and possible implications for the future of education in New Zealand.

^g Low decile refers to deciles 1, 2 and 3. Middle decile refers to deciles 4, 5, 6 and 7. High decile refers to deciles 8, 9 and 10.

Figure 9: Ethnicity spread across school decile groups (2021)³⁰



Source: Ministry of Education, Education Counts, School Roll by Ethnicity, 2021

About the data in the following infographic

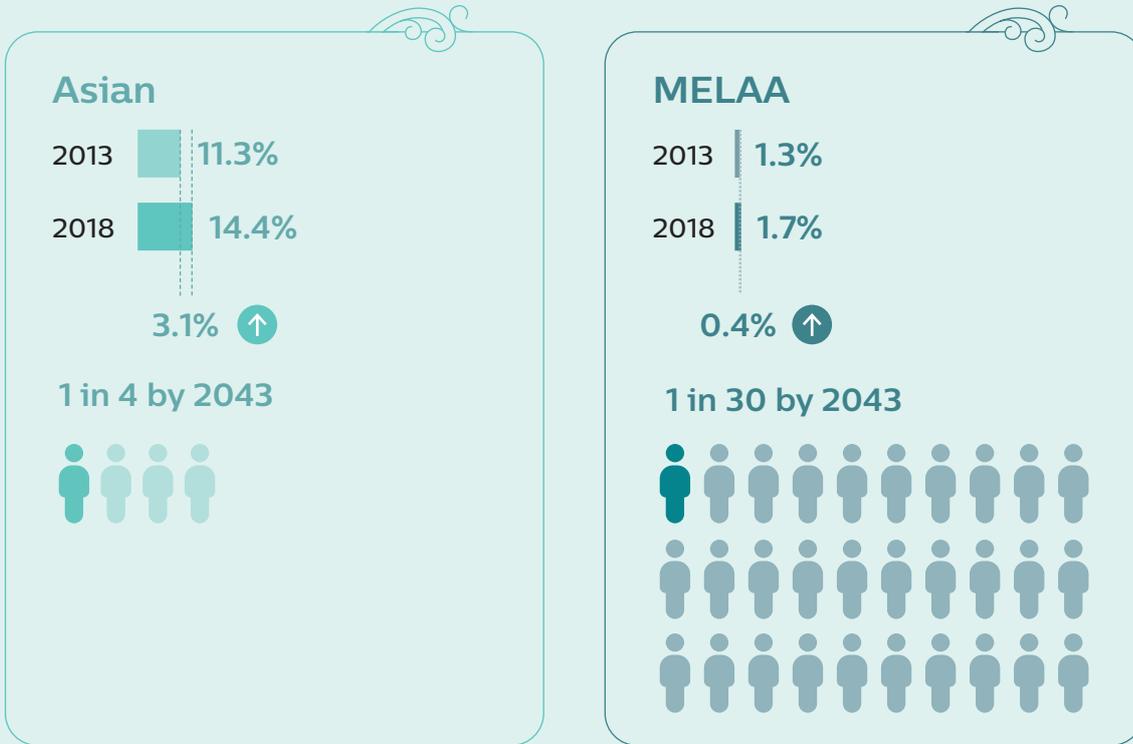
Page 28

Top box left and right: 2013 and 2018: Stats NZ (n.d). *Ethnic group (detailed total response – level 3) by age and sex, for the census usually resident population count, 2006, 2013, 2018 Censuses.* [Data set]. 2043: Stats NZ, National ethnic population projections: 2018(base)–2043. [Data set].

Map: 2018: Stats NZ (n.d). *Ethnic group (detailed total response – level 3) by age and sex, for the census usually resident population count, 2006, 2013, 2018 Censuses.* 2043: Stats NZ (n.d). Subnational Population Projections 2018-base (March 2022). [Data set].

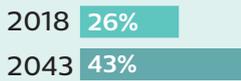
Note: Differences are percentage points.

Ethnic diversity in schools is increasing (learners aged 5-19)



The Asian population is expected to increase in schools across the country

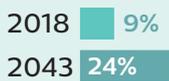
Auckland



Waikato



Nelson



Bay of Plenty



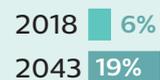
Wellington



Canterbury



Southland





Part 3: What sort of education provision drives good outcomes for learners from ethnic communities?

This section describes what sort of education drives good outcomes for learners from ethnic communities. It identifies the critical elements of effective education provision and the expectations that support them.

What this section describes

In this section, we look at expectations for education, the importance of quality, inclusive education, and good practices for leaders and teachers.

How we gathered information

Supported by our external Expert Advisory Group, we identified critical elements of effective education provision for learners from ethnic communities. To understand what quality, inclusive education looks like for learners from ethnic communities, we reviewed Aotearoa New Zealand's expectations for education for diverse learners, and national and international literature on best practice.

What we found: An overview

New Zealand has robust expectations that education provision must meet the needs of learners from ethnic communities. These expectations reflect the importance of quality, inclusive education. To deliver good outcomes for learners from ethnic communities, education provision needs to be based on clear goals and expectations for schools, strong teacher capability and capacity, inclusive teaching practices, engagement with parents and whānau, and an understanding of the outcomes and progress for these learners.

What are the expectations for education?

Our understandings of expectations for education for learners from ethnic communities is informed by Aotearoa New Zealand’s international and national commitments to diversity.

Under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights everyone has the right to access quality education without discrimination. Non-discrimination is also a fundamental principle of The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.^h The State has an obligation to protect children from any form of discrimination and to take positive action to promote their rights.

At a national level, Aotearoa New Zealand has strong expectations for education to respond to the needs of all learners. The *Education and Training Act 2020* states that it is desirable, as far as is reasonably practicable, that every Board should reflect the ethnic and socio-economic diversity of the student body of the school or special institution. School Board obligations include ensuring that every student is able to attain their highest possible standard in educational achievement. Boards also need to ensure they provide a physically and emotionally safe place for all students, give effect to relevant student rights, and takes steps to eliminate racism, stigma, bullying, and any other forms of discrimination within the school.³¹

Additionally, one of the National Education and Learning Priorities (NELP) is to ensure that places of learning are safe, inclusive and free from racism, discrimination, and bullying, and that schools “create a culture where diversity is valued and all learners/ākonga and staff, including from diverse ethnic communities, feel they belong”.³²

The *New Zealand Curriculum* (2007) also sets out expectations for an inclusive and responsive curriculum. Schools and teachers are expected to deliver a curriculum that:

- reflects our linguistically and culturally diverse nation
- affirms learners’ different cultural identities
- incorporates learners’ cultural contexts into teaching and learning programmes
- is responsive to diversity within ethnic groups
- helps learners understand and respect diverse viewpoints, values, customs, and languages.

The Teaching Council is Aotearoa New Zealand’s professional body for teachers. The *Code of Professional Responsibility and Standards for the Teaching Profession* (2017)³³ sets out the expectations for the teaching profession, including expectations for how they work with learners from ethnic communities and their whānau.

^h <https://www.unicef.org/nz/child-rights>

The Standards, for example, expect teachers to:

- understand and acknowledge the histories, heritages, languages, and cultures of partners to *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*ⁱ
- critically examine how [their] own assumptions and beliefs, including cultural beliefs, impact on practice and the achievement of learners with different abilities and needs, backgrounds, genders, identities, languages, and cultures
- create an environment where learners can be confident in their identities, languages, cultures, and abilities
- design learning based on curriculum and pedagogical knowledge, assessment information, and an understanding of each learner's strengths, interests, needs, identities, languages, and cultures
- design and plan culturally responsive, evidence-based approaches that reflect the local community and *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* partnership in New Zealand
- harness the rich capital that learners bring by providing culturally responsive and engaging contexts for learners.³⁴

Why quality, inclusive education for learners from ethnic communities matters

High quality, inclusive education is critical in driving successful outcomes for all learners.³⁵ Education is a key driver for learners from ethnic communities' wellbeing now and for their lifetime outcomes. If an education system does not meet the needs of learners from ethnic communities there will be inequitable outcomes, making it difficult for learners to go on and become thriving members of society. For Aotearoa New Zealand to be strong economically and socially, it needs all its learners to thrive.

What does good look like?

We considered a variety of international frameworks when designing this work. In this report, we use the framework of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which sets out the key elements that drive quality education for learners from ethnic communities.³⁶

- 1) **Governing** diversity, inclusion, and equity in education; including goals and expectations for teachers and schools.
- 2) Developing **capacity** for managing diversity, inclusion, and equity in education; including awareness of diversity in education and teacher capability and capacity.
- 3) Promoting **school-level interventions** to support diversity, inclusion, and equity in education, including teaching practices, support for learners, and engagement with parents and communities.
- 4) **Monitoring** and evaluating diversity, inclusion, and equity in education; including understanding progress.

ⁱ Note: Treaty partners include all people who have come to Aotearoa NZ: "New Zealand is an increasingly multicultural nation, and *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* is inclusive of today's new settlers. As with earlier immigrants, their 'place to stand' comes with an expectation that they will live here in a way that respects the commitments of *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* and the position of Māori as tangata whenua" (from *Standards for the Teaching Profession, Our Code | Our Standards, Teaching Council, 2017*).

The OECD's fifth element of **resourcing** is outside the scope of this project. A diagram giving an overview of the framework is in [Appendix 3](#).

We used these elements of the OECD framework to guide our data-gathering and analysis, to explore the practices of schools, the outcomes for learners from ethnic communities, and to help us understand their experiences and those of their whānau.

What practices support quality, inclusive education for learners from ethnic communities?

Learners from ethnic communities need the same quality education practices as all learners. In addition, through our review of national and international evidence, we identified five important practices that make the most difference for learners from ethnic communities and their whānau.

1) School leaders prioritise learners from ethnic communities and commit to supporting, respecting, and celebrating their cultures.

Effective leaders steer their schools in a direction that values and practices inclusion. They focus on creating an equitable environment for learners and their whānau. This ensures learners and their whānau engage in school activities and contribute to decision-making with a sense of safety and belonging. Leaders also use opportunities such as cultural celebrations to educate their school staff and learners on diversity and inclusion, thus, showing they are accepting and respectful of differences.³⁷

2) Everyone has high expectations of learners from ethnic communities.

Leaders' and teachers' beliefs and expectations about their learners influence how they communicate with and support learners in their learning. These interactions impact on learners' confidence, motivation, and achievement. Teachers regularly consider their learners' strengths, areas for improvement, and interests to provide them with support to help them achieve their potential. Teachers are open-minded and unbiased in their communication, which helps to enrich learning experiences and reinforces their high expectations for learners.³⁸

3) Teachers seek to understand, value, and respect learners' culture in their education.

Culture influences our thoughts, perceptions, and communication – and learning is mediated through culture. Teachers recognise that their learners come from diverse experiences and actively demonstrate positive attitudes and perceptions towards culturally diverse learners. Teachers show inclusive values by being curious and respectful about their learners' cultural practices, and by demonstrating an interest in their language. In this way, teachers develop a knowledge base of diverse cultures, build strong relationships with their learners and whānau, and are better equipped to create a safe and supportive learning environment. These inclusive and welcoming practices form the foundation for effective implementation of culturally responsive teaching, discussed below.³⁹

4) Teachers learn about and enact culturally responsive teaching and inclusive practices.

Teachers reflect on their cultural knowledge and assumptions, for each of their learners, to ensure their teaching is culturally responsive and inclusive. Teachers plan for and create culturally responsive learning opportunities that encourage learners to make links to their culture. In this way, teachers use students' cultural knowledge, perspectives, and skills as a resource for teaching. Teachers facilitate and encourage meaningful dialogues that enable learners to build knowledge by sharing experiences, perspectives, and questions. This supports every learner to feel valued and included.⁴⁰

5) School leaders and teachers connect and partner with whānau and their ethnic communities.

We know that learners benefit from home/school partnerships where there is a focus on relationship-building, and the school is a safe place for whānau to participate and raise concerns, especially about cultural practices. Teachers engage sensitively and regularly with whānau to support learners' engagement and learning. They seek knowledge about, and are responsive to, the aspirations, needs, and strengths of the families.⁴¹

Recognising the importance of community networks and support groups is an important aspect of connecting with families. In this way, schools are able to provide authentic engagement and on-going consultation and dialogue to learn about their ethnic communities and tailor their approaches for different groups.

We have used the four key elements from the OECD framework and the five key practices, identified through the evidence, to examine how well education in Aotearoa New Zealand is currently meeting the needs of learners from ethnic communities. The following chapters set out learners' experiences of education and their outcomes, and what practices schools are adopting, including examples of good practice and challenges.



Part 4: What are the educational outcomes of learners from ethnic communities?

Education is critical for all children and young people's futures. This section describes the education outcomes of learners from ethnic communities. It finds that many learners from ethnic communities achieve well, but there are significant differences across and within ethnic communities.

What this section describes

This section looks at educational outcomes of learners from ethnic communities, with a particular focus on the national qualifications, National Certificates of Education Achievement (NCEA) and University Entrance.

How we gathered information

To understand the educational outcomes of learners from ethnic communities, we gathered information through:

- surveys of learners and their whānau
- interviews and focus groups with learners and their whānau
- National Certificates of Education Achievement (NCEA) data from New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA)
- Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) data from the Ministry of Education.

What we found: An overview

Many, but not all, learners from ethnic communities achieve well in education.

NCEA achievement and endorsements is higher for Asian learners than the New Zealand average, and both MELAA and Asian learners achieve University Entrance at a higher rate than the New Zealand average. However, there are significant differences across ethnic communities, and within all ethnic communities there are learners who are not achieving well.

Learning and achievement

Learning and achievement in Aotearoa New Zealand schools is measured and reported in many ways. In primary schools, and up until Year 10, teachers and leaders choose how to measure and report learners' progress and achievement. Because this information is not collected at a national level, this section mainly focuses on the NCEA achievement outcomes for secondary learners from Years 11 to 13.

In secondary schools, learners can show their learning and achievement through the national qualification – NCEA. NCEA is offered at Levels 1, 2, and 3, which broadly line up with learners in Years 11, 12, and 13. Learners' achievement is graded as either Not Achieved, Achieved, Achieved with Merit, or Achieved with Excellence (endorsements). They can choose credits and courses that suit them and their desired educational pathway. Learners may also gain University Entrance, which demonstrates they have the knowledge and skills required to enrol in first year studies at university.^{j,k}

In this section we set out:

- a) areas that are stronger:
 1. higher NCEA achievement for most
 2. higher endorsements (e.g., excellence or merit)
 3. higher University Entrance
- b) areas of concern:
 1. greater gender gaps for Indian, African, and Middle Eastern learners
 2. not being challenged at school
 3. lack of support for home language.

a) Areas that are stronger

a1) Higher NCEA achievement for most

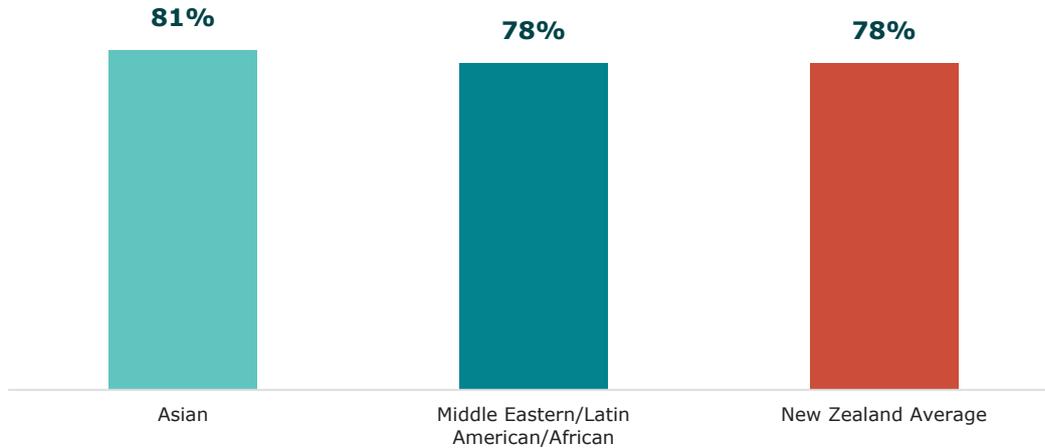
Learners from ethnic communities achieve well compared to others. Eighty-one percent of Asian Year 12 learners achieve NCEA Level 2, compared with the New Zealand average of 78 percent. MELAA learners achieve at an equal rate to New Zealand learners overall (see Figure 10 on the following page).

Within the Asian ethnic community, we can see many ethnicities achieve more than the Aotearoa New Zealand average (see Figure 11 on the following page).

^j In this section, different ethnic groups (e.g., Asian, MELAA etc.) are examined alongside the overall New Zealand results. Learners from Ethnic Communities are included in the New Zealand results and therefore while the New Zealand results provide a point of reference, a direct comparison should not be made.

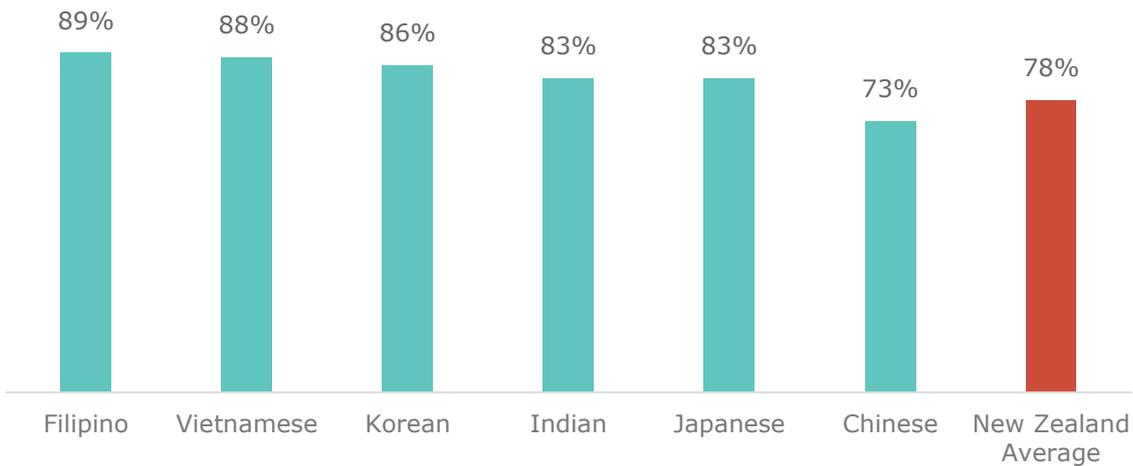
^k An overview of NCEA can be found at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/understanding-ncea/how-ncea-works/>.

Figure 10: NCEA Level 2 attainment, by ethnicity (2021)^{L42}



Source: NZQA, NCEA Attainment by Level 1, 2 and 3 ethnicities, 2021

Figure 11: NCEA Level 2 attainment, by Asian ethnicities (selected) (2021)⁴³



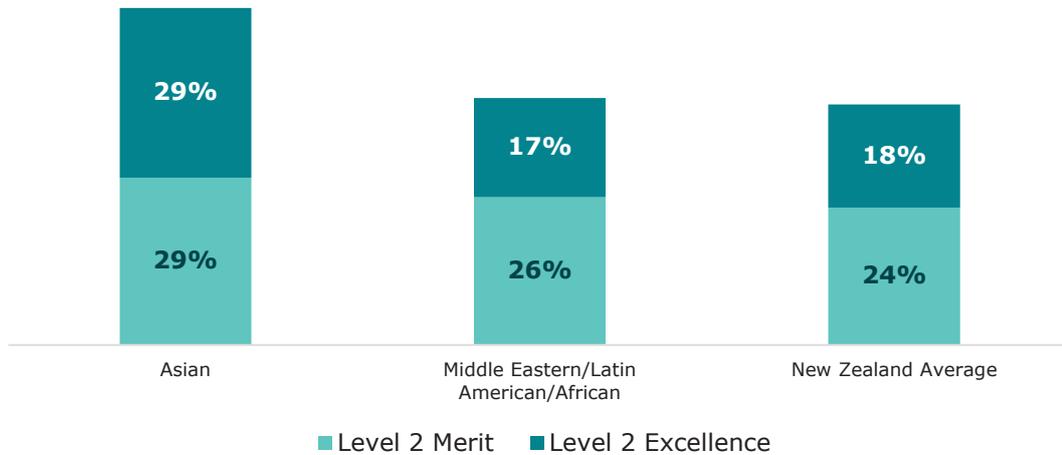
Source: NZQA, NCEA Attainment by Level 2 and 3 ethnicities, 2021

Note: Enrolment-based attainment rates of Year 12 students attaining NCEA Level 2 by ethnicity

a2) Higher NCEA endorsements

Learners from ethnic communities achieve Merit and Excellence endorsements at a high rate. Fifty-eight percent of Asian learners and 43 percent of MELAA learners achieve these endorsements at NCEA Level 2, compared to 42 percent of Aotearoa New Zealand learners as a whole (see Figure 12 on the following page).

^L Note: Enrolment-based achievement rates of Year 12 students attaining NCEA Level 2 by ethnicity

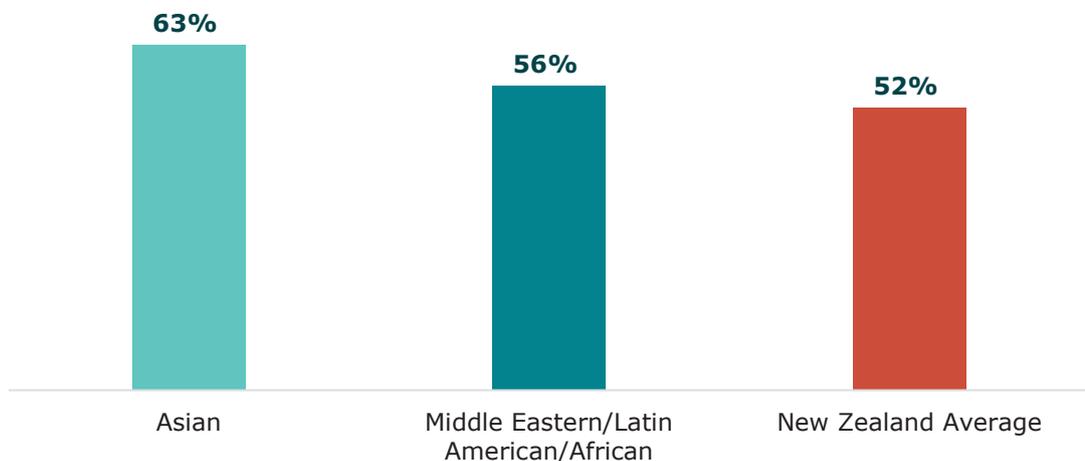
Figure 12: NCEA Level 2 Merit and Excellence endorsements, by ethnicity (2021)^{m,44}

Source: NZQA, UE Attainment by Level 1, 2 and 3 ethnicities, 2021

Note: Enrolment-based Year 13 Students attainment of University Entrance by Ethnicity

a3) Higher University Entrance

Many learners from ethnic communities are well-placed to attend university. Figure 13 below shows that 63 percent of Asian learners and 56 percent of MELAA learners achieve University Entrance, compared with the New Zealand average of 52 percent.

Figure 13: University Entrance attainment, by ethnicity (2021)⁴⁵

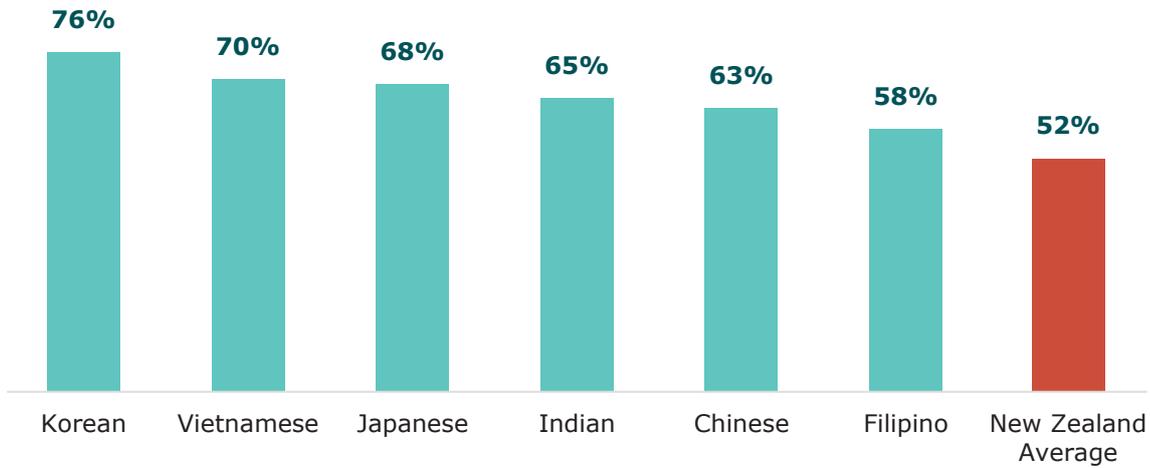
Source: NZQA, UE Attainment by Level 1, 2 and 3 ethnicities, 2021

Note: Enrolment-based Year 13 Students attainment of University Entrance by Ethnicity

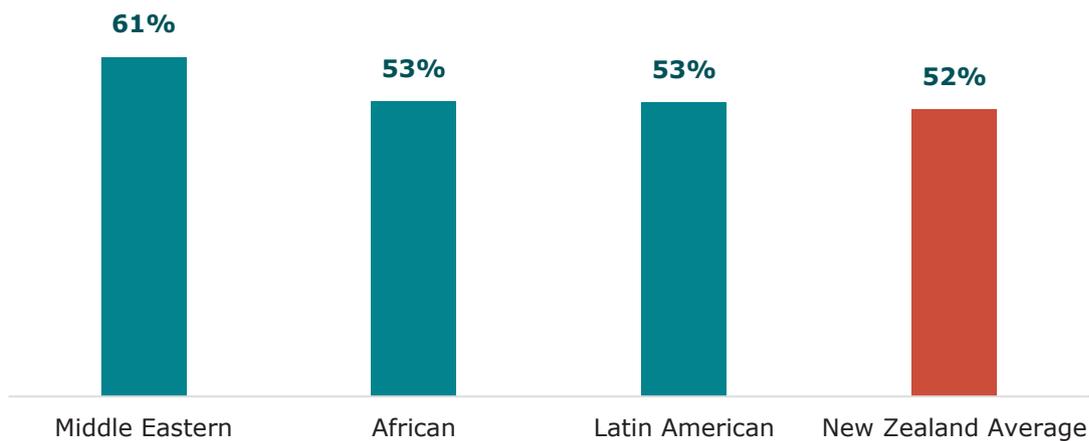
Within the Asian ethnic community, many ethnicities achieve University Entrance at a higher rate than the national average, with Korean learners achieving at the highest rate (76 percent) (see Figure 14 on the following page).

Middle Eastern, African, and Latin American learners also achieve University Entrance above the New Zealand average (see Figure 15 on the following page).

^m Note: Enrolment-based attainment rates of Year 12 students attaining NCEA Level 2 by ethnicity

Figure 14: *University Entrance attainment, by Asian ethnicities (selected) (2021)^{n,46}*

Source: NZQA, UE Attainment by Level 1, 2 and 3 ethnicities, 2021

Figure 15: *University Entrance attainment, by MELAA ethnicities (2021)⁴⁷*

Source: NZQA, UE Attainment by Level 1, 2 and 3 ethnicities, 2021

b) Areas of concern

High achievement is not universal across learners. Within all ethnic groups, there are learners who are not achieving as well overall, or across the breadth of the curriculum.

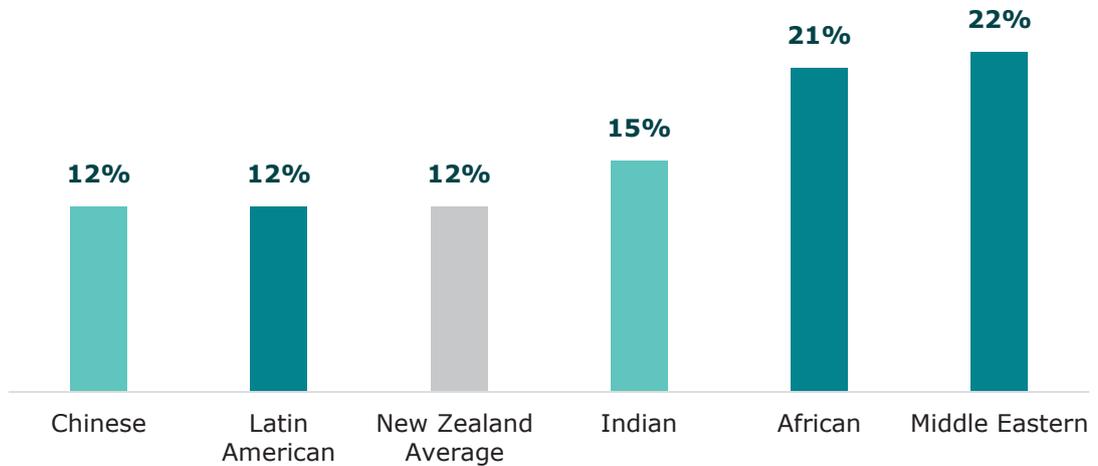
b1) Poorer outcomes for boys than girls for Indian, African, and Middle Eastern ethnicities

For Indian, African, and Middle Eastern learners, the percentage point gap between male and female achievement for University Entrance is larger than the New Zealand average (see Figure 16 on the following page).

Achieving University Entrance is a pre-requisite for many future destinations and pathways, so large gaps between male and female learners are concerning.

ⁿ Note: Enrolment-based Year 13 Students attainment of University Entrance by Ethnicity

Figure 16: Achievement gap between male (lower achievement) and female (higher achievement) learners (Year 13) by ethnicity for University Entrance (selected) (2021)⁴⁸



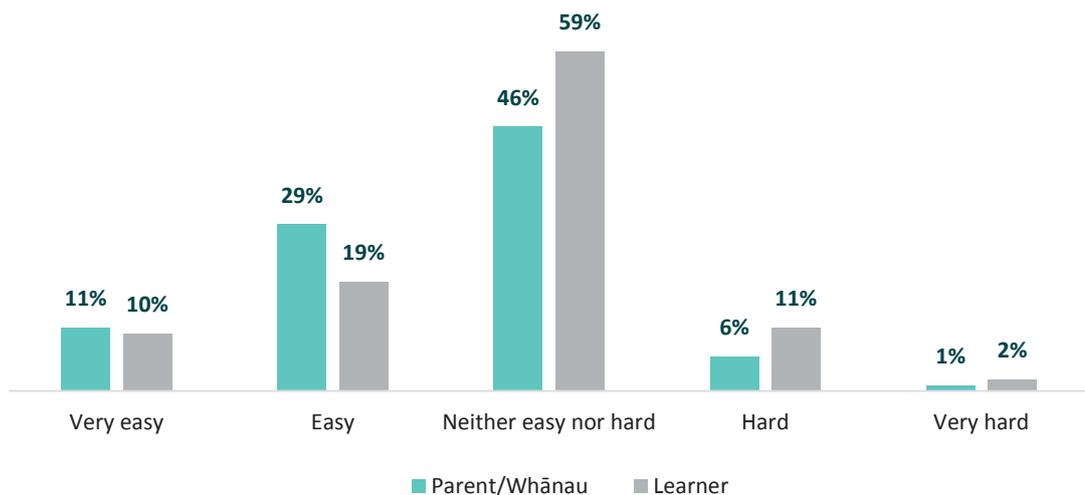
Source: NZQA, NCEA Attainment by Level 1, 2 and 3 ethnicities, 2021

b2) Not being challenged at school

It is important that learning is at the right level to ensure learners' progress.

Forty percent of whānau from ethnic communities think their child's schoolwork is easy or very easy, and 29 percent of learners from ethnic communities also think this (see Figure 17).

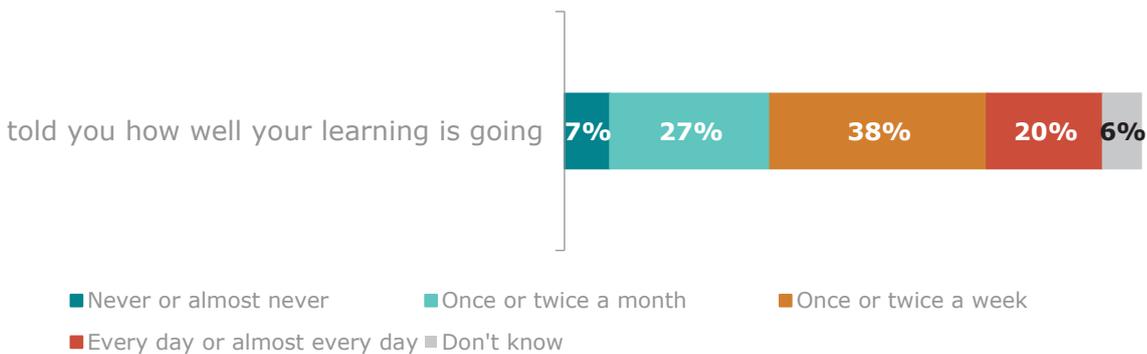
Figure 17: Perceptions of difficulty level of schoolwork by parents/whānau and learners (Year 4–13) from ethnic communities



Source: ERO student survey, ERO whānau survey

Many learners and whānau from ethnic communities lack information about how well they are learning and progressing. Over a third of learners from ethnic communities are rarely or almost never told how well they are doing (see Figure 18).

Figure 18: How frequently learners (Year 4–13) are told how well they are doing



Source: ERO student survey

Some whānau from ethnic communities report being concerned when their child is not achieving, and teachers have not communicated this to them. This may contribute to concerns about their child's level of academic achievement or challenge at school.

“School reports are very complicated... parents need extra help understanding them.”

PARENT

b3) Lack of access to home language

Learners from ethnic communities and their whānau expressed deep concerns about the lack of opportunities to study their home/heritage language, and the impact this has on their connection to their culture. We heard in community hui and submissions that it is a challenge to maintain home/heritage languages due to lack of learning opportunities. Almost two thirds of whānau think schools should support their mother tongue.

PISA (2018) found that multilingualism and learning a language were less common in New Zealand than on average across OECD countries.

There is a mismatch between the home/heritage languages of ethnic communities and the languages taught in schools.⁴⁹ For ethnic community languages with 10,000 speakers or more, only six languages are taught as NCEA level subjects at school (French, Spanish, German, Mandarin, Korean and Japanese). There are 11 languages, including Hindi – the fourth most commonly spoken language in Aotearoa – which are not available as NCEA qualifications (see Figure 19).

Figure 19: Ethnic community languages with over 10,000 speakers (2018)^{50,51}

Source: Stats NZ, 2018 Censuses, Languages spoken. and NZQA, Subjects: Languages

Conclusion

Many learners from ethnic communities achieve excellent outcomes in education and, on average, achieve better than other New Zealanders. But within ethnic communities, there are learners (particularly boys) who are not faring so well. There is also lost potential as many learners from ethnic communities think the learning is too easy, and many are not able to study their home/heritage languages. Students' achievement is impacted by their experiences of belonging, inclusion, and wellbeing, which are discussed in the following section of the report.



Part 5: What are the educational experiences of learners from ethnic communities and their whānau?

Like other learners, learners from ethnic communities and their whānau want a variety of experiences from their education so they can make friends, develop skills for life, and find pathways to careers.

This section describes experiences of learners from ethnic communities and their families in Aotearoa New Zealand schools. It finds that, although learners from ethnic communities have strong cultural identities, they face discrimination and widespread racism that damages their sense of belonging and wellbeing.

What this section describes

In this section, we describe the educational experiences of learners from ethnic communities. According to the OECD framework, individual outcomes such as psychological and social wellbeing are key indicators of an inclusive environment. In this section, we look at cultural identity, sense of belonging and inclusion, and wellbeing.

How we gathered information

To understand the educational experiences of learners from ethnic communities, we spoke to learners from ethnic communities and their whānau, conducted a survey, and drew on two national surveys: *What About Me* and *Youth2000* series.

What we found: An overview

Learners from ethnic communities experience widespread racist bullying, which too often is not taken seriously by their school. One in five learners has experienced racist bullying in the last month, and over half have seen others being bullied because of their ethnicity. Both whānau and learners reported that racist bullying needs to be better identified and addressed at school.

Learners from ethnic communities often do not feel they belong. Nearly one in five learners reported they frequently feel they do not belong and a third feel lonely at school. Nearly one in five also feel they have to hide their ethnic identity at school or feel excluded from activities because of their ethnic identity.

Cultural identity, belonging, inclusion, and wellbeing

Learners are more likely to succeed in their learning when they are able to express their identity (which includes their cultural or ethnic identity) freely, and feel a sense of belonging and inclusion. Research shows that maintaining family traditions and cultural heritage, cultural values, and religious beliefs are especially important for learners from ethnic communities.⁵²

To understand how well learners from ethnic communities are supported in their cultural identity, sense of belonging and inclusion, and wellbeing, we asked them and their whānau about their experiences of school. We also looked at data from a range of sources to get a deeper understanding of the experiences of these learners.

In this section we set out:

- a) areas that are stronger:
 1. positive cultural identity
 2. often treated fairly
- b) areas of concern:
 1. widespread racism
 2. not being accepted and not belonging
 3. poor wellbeing.

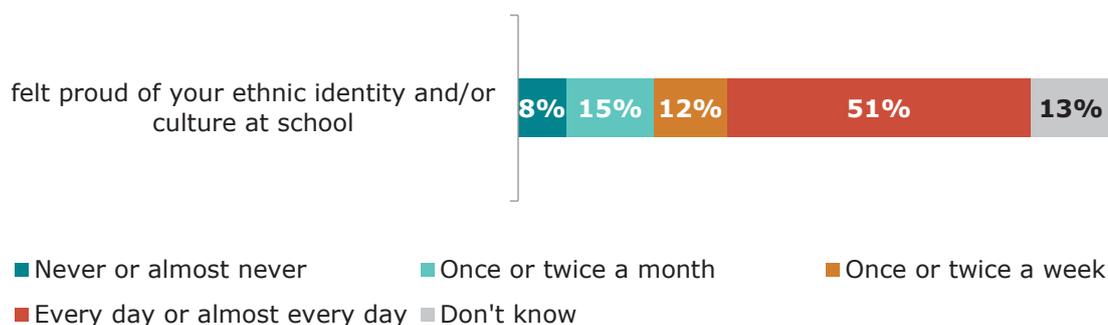
a) Areas that are stronger

Many learners and their whānau from ethnic communities have strong cultural identities and often feel included by their school communities.

a1) Learners have positive cultural identities

Two thirds (63 percent) of learners reported feeling proud of their ethnicity at least once or twice a week. From our survey, learners who lived in Aotearoa New Zealand for five years or less were more likely to feel proud of their ethnic identity compared to learners who have lived here for more than six years.

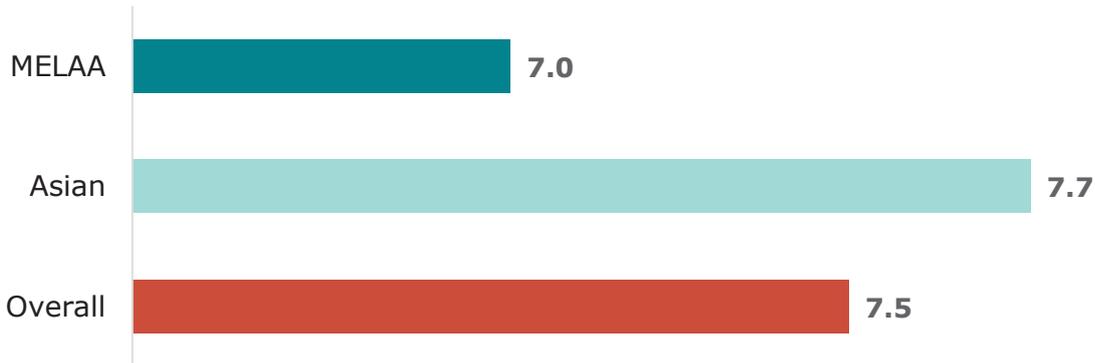
Figure 20: *How often learners (Year 4–13) feel proud of their ethnicity/culture at school*



Source: ERO student survey

The *What About Me?*^o survey results show that Asian learners feel more strongly than New Zealand learners overall that their identity and values are considered (see Figure 21).

Figure 21: *How strongly learners (Year 9–13) from ethnic communities feel their identity and values are considered by teachers (scored 0–10/ disagree to agree)⁵³*



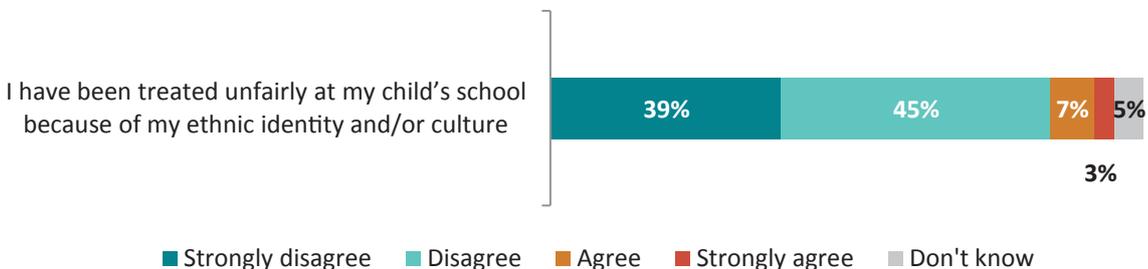
Source: Ministry for Social Development. *What About Me – The biggest survey of your generation.*

a2) Often treated fairly

The *What About Me?* survey also asked about how fairly learners are treated by their teachers, and results were generally positive. Asian learners agreed most strongly (7.9 out of 10) that they are treated fairly, compared to their New Zealand peers (7.4 out of 10). This was supported by our survey which found 80 percent of learners did not think they were treated unfairly.

Whānau also feel positive about their cultural identity when it comes to engaging with their child’s school – more than eight out of 10 said their identity is not a factor in how fairly they are treated by the school (see Figure 22).

Figure 22: *Parents/whānau agreement that they have been treated fairly*



Source: ERO student survey

^o *What About Me* asks students to respond to questions on a 10-point scale ranging from disagree (0) to agree (10). Reported scores are the mean scores of responses. Numbers higher than 5 reflect a positive sentiment, and numbers under 5 reflect a negative sentiment.

b) Areas of concern

Sadly, learners and their whānau report too many examples where their ethnicity or culture is not accepted or respected, and their sense of belonging is negatively affected. Many of these examples reflect widespread instances of racism, which have measurable impacts on the wellbeing of learners and their whānau.⁵⁴

b1) Widespread racism

While ethnicity is distinct from race, people from different ethnic communities experience racism. Racism is a complex issue.⁵⁵ The Human Rights Commission describes racism as “any individual action, or institutional practice backed by institutional power, which subordinates or negatively affects people because of their ethnicity.”⁵⁶ Racism can occur within people, between people, and across organisations and society. It can be hidden or obvious, conscious, or unconscious.⁵⁷

International and Aotearoa New Zealand research on the impacts of racism on children, highlight the wide range of impacts racism can have. Racism negatively affects children and young people’s:

- academic achievement, and contributes to the achievement gap between different ethnic groups⁵⁸
- physical wellbeing, including increased likelihood of illness and impaired cognitive development⁵⁹
- health-related behaviours, such as smoking and binge drinking⁶⁰
- psychological wellbeing, increasing experiences of anxiety, depression, distress, and low resilience⁶¹
- quality of life, reducing levels of happiness, self-esteem, and self-worth.⁶²

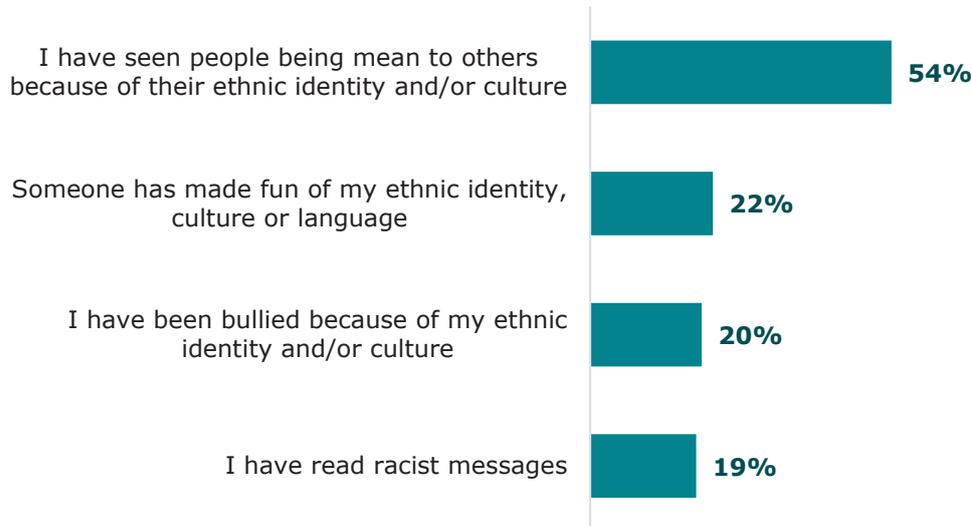
These impacts occur both when children experience racism themselves, or witness it occurring to others, such as their peers and/or whānau (known as vicarious racism). Because the harms associated with racism are so impactful it is incredibly important incidents are taken seriously as racism is often under-reported.⁶³

Our research found deeply concerning levels of racism and racist bullying^p that were key concerns for families and learners in our survey (see Figure 23). Learners reported high levels of racist incidents within the last month:

- more than half (54 percent) of learners reported seeing someone being mean to others because of their ethnic identity and/or culture
- one in five (22 percent) have experienced someone making fun of their ethnicity, culture or language
- one in five (20 percent) have been bullied because of their ethnic identity and/or culture
- one in five (19 percent) have read racist messages.

^p Bullying is defined as: deliberate – harming another person intentionally; involves a misuse of power in a relationship; usually not a one-off – it is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated over time; involves behaviour that can cause harm – it is not a normal part of growing up (from BullyingFreeNZ, <https://bullyingfree.nz/about-bullying/different-types-of-bullying/>).

Figure 23: Learners' (Year 4–13) experiences of racist bullying and racism over the past 30 days^q



Source: ERO student survey

Learners told us about other kinds of ethnic bullying and racism that have happened to them in the last month. They described incidents of microaggressions^r and stereotyping.⁶⁴

When looking at learner experiences, just under half (45 percent) of those students who reported an instance of racism in the last month had experienced more than one racist incident. More than one in five (23 percent) had experienced an instance of racism more than three times in the past month.

In our survey, we asked learners what they would like to see improve in their school. One learner expressed the lack of support when it came to experiences of racism:

“I see so many teachers and staff at my school be racist and don’t care about you because you’re a different race – I hate when it happens, and it irritates me a lot. I feel like shouting and screaming every time something like that happens. Something EVERY school needs is a counsellor that will listen to you, kinda like a school therapist, as the mental health for students is not good at all.”

LEARNER

Additionally, data from 2019 shows that learners from ethnic communities experience a higher proportion of ethnicity-related bullying than their European peers. Ethnicity-related bullying also occurs more frequently for secondary learners who have arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand more recently.⁶⁵

^q The overall percentage of responses is larger than 100 percent because respondents could select multiple options.

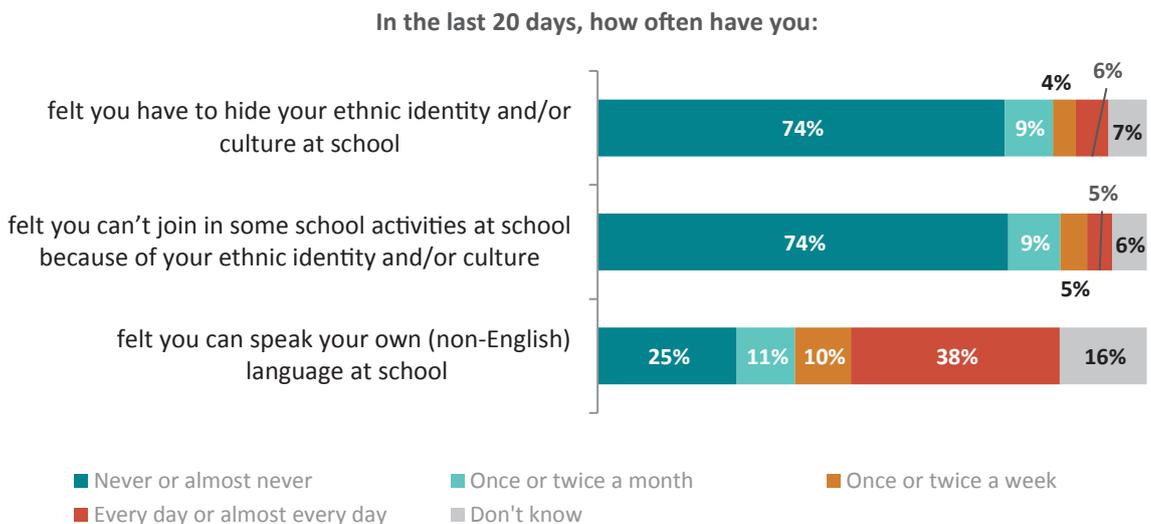
^r Microaggressions are brief, everyday interactions – spoken or actions – that communicate biases and negative thoughts and feelings about someone’s ethnicity and can have significant impacts on people’s wellbeing.

b2) Not being accepted and not belonging

The high level of racism contributes to the worryingly high levels of feeling not accepted or not belonging that we found:

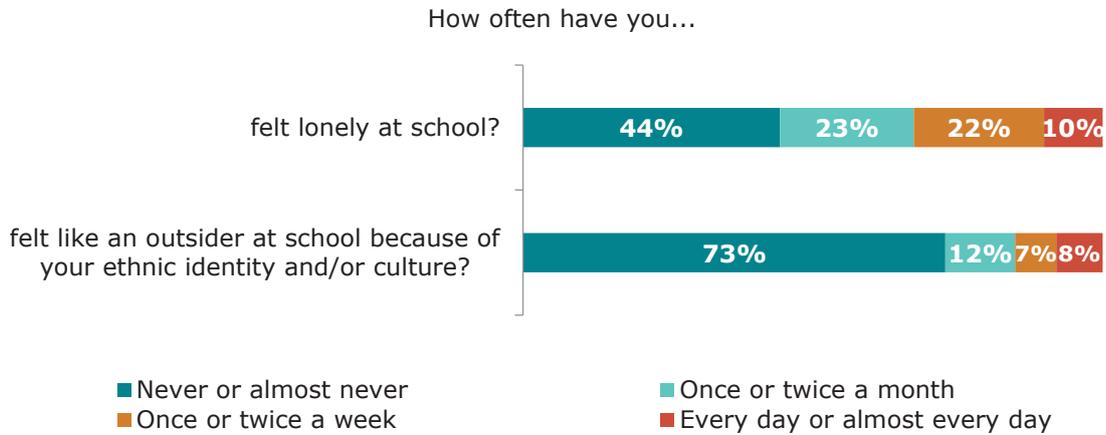
- almost one in five (19 percent) learners from ethnic communities told us they have to hide their ethnic identity at least once or twice a month
- one in five (19 percent) learners from ethnic communities feel excluded from activities at school because of their ethnic identity at least once or twice a month
- one in four (25 percent) learners report they never or almost never feel they can speak their own language at school
- almost one in five (17 percent) learners from ethnic communities told us they never or rarely feel they belong at school
- a third (32 percent) of learners from ethnic communities feel lonely at school every week or every day
- more than a quarter of learners (27 percent) from ethnic communities feel like an outsider at school at least once or twice a month.

Figure 24: Learners' (Year 4–13) experiences related to their ethnic identity



Source: ERO student survey

Figure 25: Learners’ (Year 4–13) experiences of belonging and loneliness



Source: ERO student survey

Story 1. Learner discouraged from speaking his home language

Ahmed, a Year 5 student, uses his home language on the school bus when he talks to his siblings. His fellow travellers tell him not to speak in his language:

“They think I’m saying bad words in my language, and they want to know what I’m saying because they don’t understand my language. I don’t listen to them. I just talk to my sisters [anyway].”

Ahmed says some of his schoolmates “say mean things” about him and his country, but he doesn’t report it because, “I don’t want them to get in trouble”.

In focus groups and through community hui, learners shared instances of when they or their peers did not feel accepted due to their cultural identity. Much of this centred around cultural practices which differed from others, including religious practices, clothing, or eating.

“I still feel kind of weird taking Indian food to school as you have to eat it with your hands. One of my friends—she is Indian too, got bullied so badly for her food (smelly) that she became a loner. And she tried to bring sandwiches to school even though she didn’t like them, but it was too late.”

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Story 2. Learner's intersecting experiences of belonging, participation, and engagement

Meera described how she had interviewed confidently for a position on the student arts committee, but felt a sense of insecurity and anxiety about being the only Asian kid there. In their discussions,

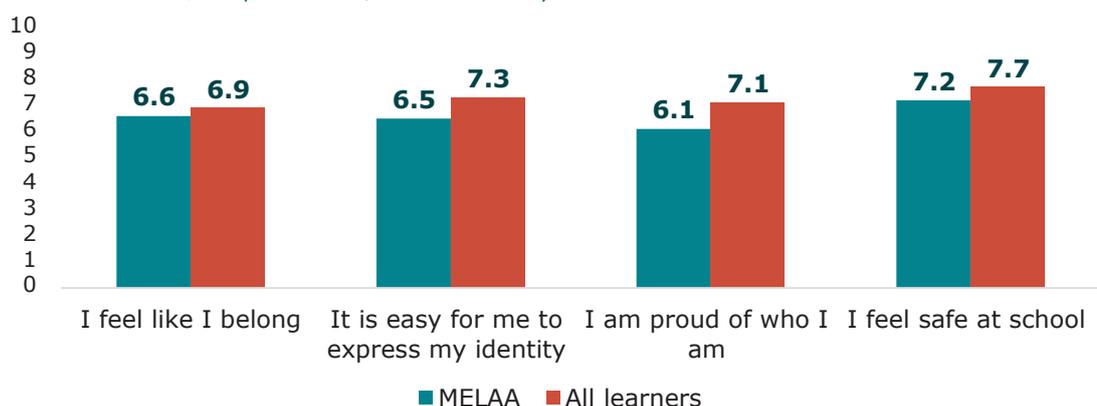
“They would name singers and, you know, and references that I didn't know anything about. And I was like well, I have no idea what you're talking about. And what happened then, they, instead of stepping up and asking me what the issue is, they just removed me from the group. And they asked me for my badge and they're like 'we feel that you're not committed enough. [I thought] It's not just about them not knowing about our culture, it's about me knowing about yours too! The entire time I was in the arts committee, the entire meetings, I did not give one single idea because I just couldn't raise it.”

In developing friendships, she felt she had limited options to connect with “Kiwis”. In the school at break times, she would join in a room claimed by girls from ethnic communities.

“They were Chinese, there were Colombian, there were Nepali and Indian, Korean. And they would all just be in one space... and there would be no Kiwi girl in the room. They were like we'll go here every morning tea and Kiwis would step in, they would have a look [and think] Okay – we have no one here we can talk to, so they step out. It wasn't like we blocked the door or something. They come in; they'll see that Nope! And then they'll be out.”

Not being accepted is more pronounced for some groups, as seen in the *What About Me?* survey results. Learners from MELAA ethnic groups have the lowest feeling of acceptance of any group at school. This group also feel least proud of who they are, least able to express their identities, and least safe at school. They also have a low sense of belonging (see Figure 26).

Figure 26: MELAA learners' (Year 9–13) feelings of safety, belonging, self-expression, and identity⁶⁶



Source: Ministry for Social Development. *What About Me – The biggest survey of your generation.*

b3) Very low wellbeing for MELAA learners

Lack of inclusion, racist bullying, and racism contribute to poor wellbeing. According to the *What About Me?* survey, learners from some ethnic groups are struggling more than others (see Figure 27). Students belonging to MELAA ethnic groups were the least likely to be scored as having “good to excellent wellbeing” (40 percent) on the WHO-5 rating scale^s (e.g., feeling cheerful, rested, and calm on most days) when compared to learners from other ethnic groups. Even more concerning:

- more than two in five (44 percent) MELAA learners indicated they were in serious distress (compared to 28 percent of respondents overall)
- nearly three in five (57 percent) MELAA learners felt overwhelmed (compared to 49 percent of respondents overall)
- over half (51 percent) of MELAA learners felt life was not worth living (compared to 41 percent of respondents overall)
- two in five (39 percent) MELAA learners have seriously contemplated suicide (compared to 26 percent of respondents overall).

Figure 27: Overall well-being score for learners (Year 9–13) from ethnic communities based on the WHO-5 (2022)⁶⁷



Source: Ministry for Social Development. *What About Me – The biggest survey of your generation.*

In focus groups with learners and whānau, and in community hui and interviews, we heard there were concerns about learners’ high levels of anxiety in managing school life and learning, and concerns about the lack of tailored mental health supports to meet their needs.

^s The WHO-5 is a well-being index that asks questions on feeling cheerful, refreshed, calm, relaxed, and having days filled with activities that are interesting. The index is a five-point scale ranging from 0 (at no time) to 5 (all of the time).

“Some migrants have experienced inter-generational trauma, can be shy to share problems, so you have to make the environment conducive, where they can go up and talk about their problems. Intergenerational trauma is quite a problem with immigrant kids, and trauma from race-related bullying, and [they need to] have counsellors [from different ethnicities] that can support them through that because they can understand it better. People even face microaggressions and racism from Pākehā counsellors or sometimes they can't understand [issues raised] properly.”

LEARNER

Findings from the *Youth2000* survey series⁶⁸ which focused on East Asian, South Asian, Chinese, and Indian students in Aotearoa New Zealand, were concerning. The report indicated that nearly 34 percent of East Asian students scored at a level of not good mental and emotional health.^t The number for South Asians, although lower, was still high at 29 percent.

The study also found that more than one in five (21 percent and 23 percent) South Asian and East Asian students reported self-harm, and, nearly the same number (18 percent and 23 percent), had seriously considered suicide.

Conclusion

Many learners from ethnic communities feel supported in their cultural identity. However, their sense of belonging, isolation, and overall wellbeing is severely impacted. Unfortunately, many have also encountered widespread racism. These outcomes can impact on their participation, engagement, and representation in education. These experiences are described in the next section of the report.

^t based on the WHO-5 Wellbeing index



Part 6: How able are learners from ethnic communities, and their whānau, to participate in education?

Participation is critical to all learners' success in education. Expectations, the importance placed on school, and attendance are key drivers of education outcomes. Whānau engagement in their child's learning is also key. We found that attendance and engagement in education is high for learners from some ethnic communities, but low for learners from other communities, and that there are real barriers to whānau participating in their child's education.

What this section describes

This section looks at the participation, engagement, and representation outcomes of learners and their whānau from ethnic communities. In particular, we examine learners' attendance, stand-down, and suspension rates. We also look at opportunities for participation in school activities, and learner and whānau representation on school Boards.

How we gathered information

To understand learners from ethnic communities' participation and engagement, we visited schools, interviewed learners from ethnic communities, and used data from surveys and administrative data collected by schools.

What we found: An overview

Many learners from ethnic communities are highly engaged in their education, attending school more often than their peers and seeing school as more important for their futures. However, learners from the MELAA community face barriers to participation – seeing school as less important for their future and being less likely to feel that their school cares for them.

Whānau from ethnic communities face barriers to engaging with schools.

They attend parent information meetings more than any other activity but find information about their children's learning insufficient or confusing. They are significantly under-represented on school Boards.

1) Learners' participation and engagement

Participation and engagement at school is important for learning and supporting learners' sense of belonging and inclusion and is critical for educational outcomes.

National and international evidence shows that attendance is directly related to how well learners achieve, both in primary and secondary schools.^{69,70,71,72} The more learners attend, the higher their achievement, and the more NCEA credits they gain.^{73,74}

This section looks at the following areas of participation and engagement:

a) areas that are stronger:

1. attendance for Asian learners
2. engagement of Asian learners
3. opportunities to participate

b) possible areas of concern:

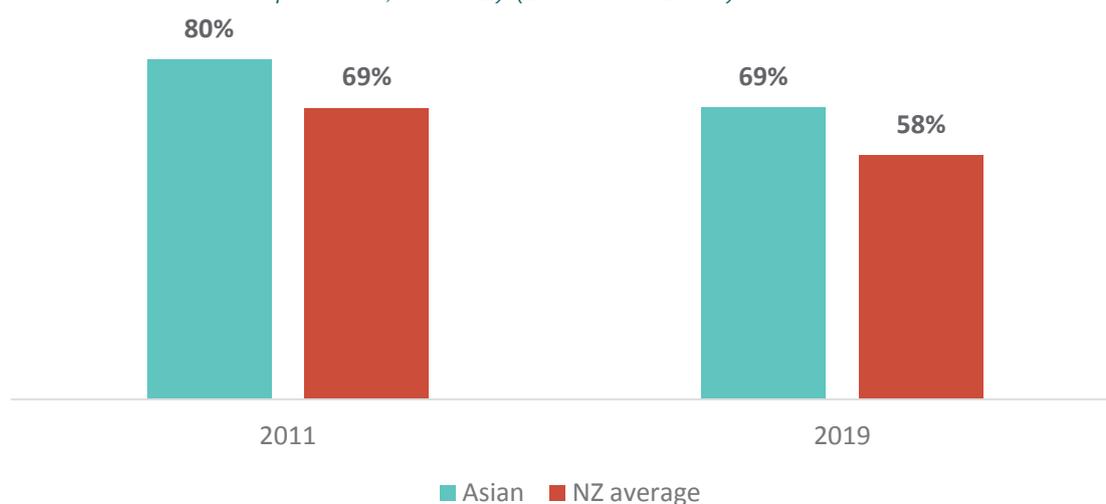
1. engagement and attendance for MELAA
2. low representation of learners from ethnic communities on Boards.

a) Areas that are stronger

a1) Attendance for Asian learners

Learners from ethnic communities have high attendance. Asian learners are more likely than other ethnic groups to attend school all of the time (see Figure 28).

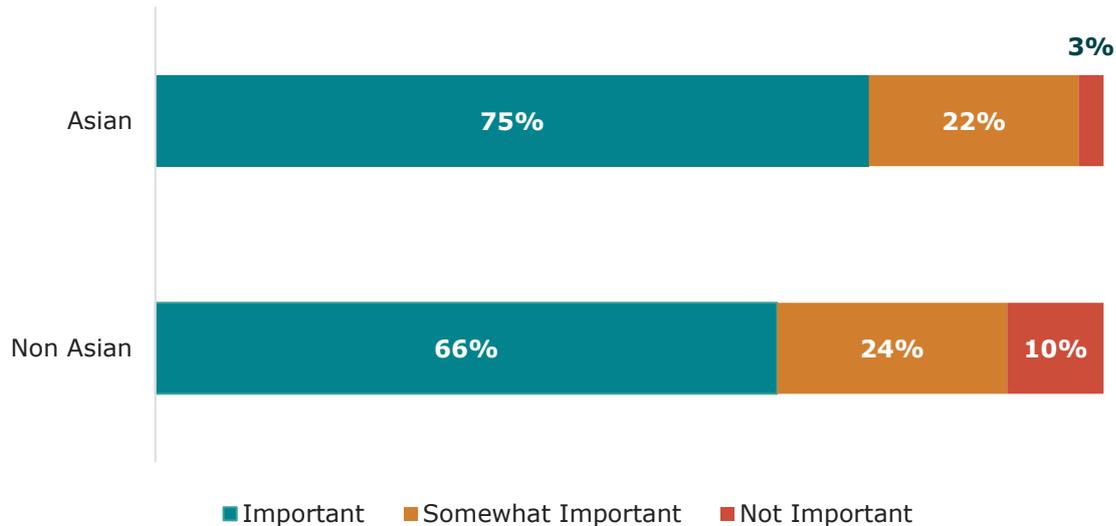
Figure 28: Regular school attendance, by ethnicity (percentage attending over 90 percent, Term 2) (2011 and 2019)⁷⁵



Source: Ministry of Education, Education Counts: Student Attendance by Ethnicity

Expectations are a key driver of attendance.⁷⁶ Asian learners are much more likely to think it is important to go to school every day, compared to non-Asian students (see Figure 29). From our surveys, we found that three quarters of Asian learners (75 percent) think going to school every day is important.

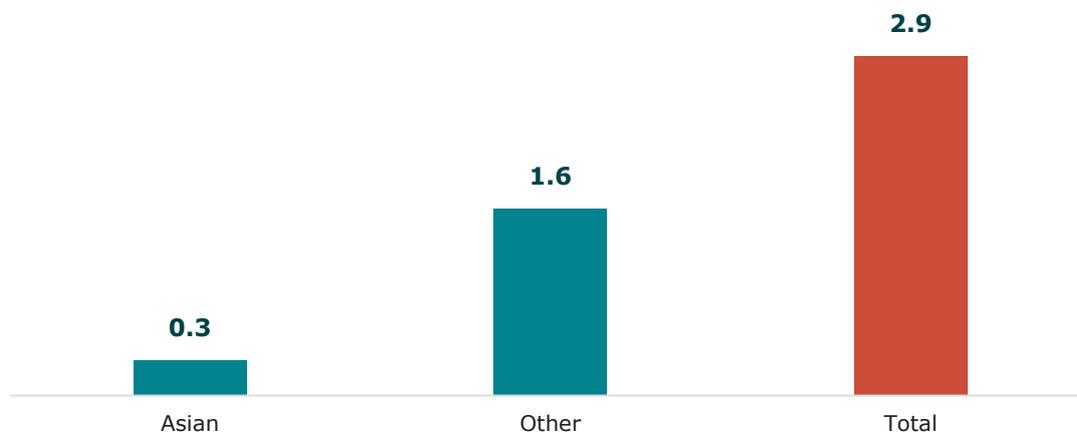
Figure 29: Learners' (Year 4–13) opinion of how important it is to attend school every day – Asian and non-Asian ethnicities



Source: ERO, Missing out? Why aren't our children going to school, 2022.

Asian learners also have the lowest suspension, stand-down, exclusion, and expulsion rates per 1000 learners (see Figure 30 and Figure 31 on the following page).

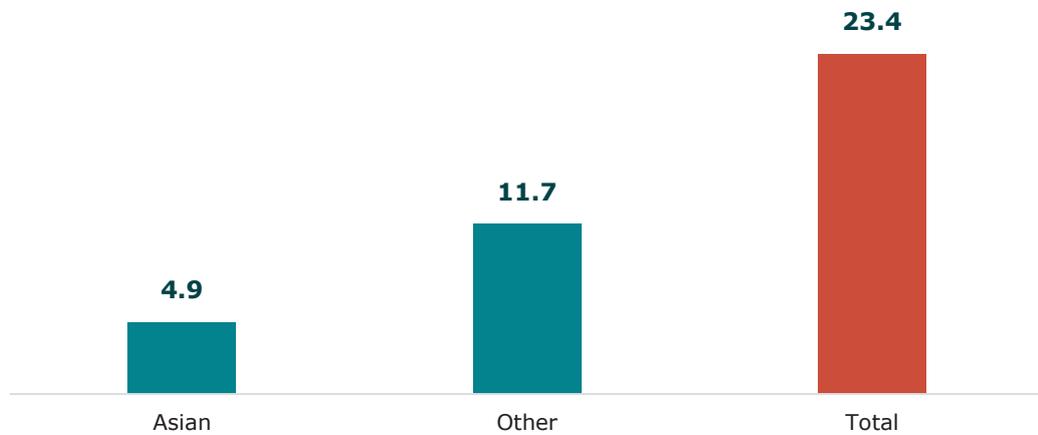
Figure 30: Age-standardised suspension rates per 1,000 learners (aged 13–15), by ethnic groups (2020)^{u,77}



Source: Ministry of Education, Education Counts: Age-standardised suspension rates

^u Note: For this indicator ethnicity is prioritised in the order of Māori, Pacific, Asian, other groups except European/Pākehā.

Figure 31: Age-standardised stand-down rates per 1,000 learners (aged 13–15), by ethnic groups (2020)^{v,w,78}

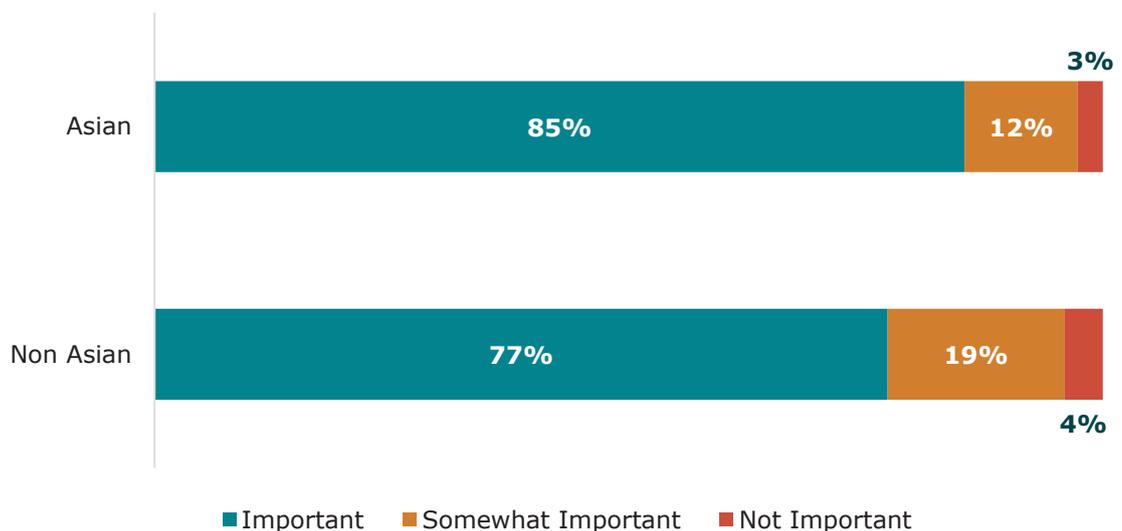


Source: Ministry of Education, Education Counts: Age-standardised suspension rates

a2) Engagement of Asian learners

Asian learners are more likely than other learners to say they want to go to school because it is important for their future (85 percent, compared with 77 percent of non-Asian learners, as shown in Figure 32).

Figure 32: Learners' (Year 4–13) opinion of how important school is for their future – Asian and non-Asian ethnicities

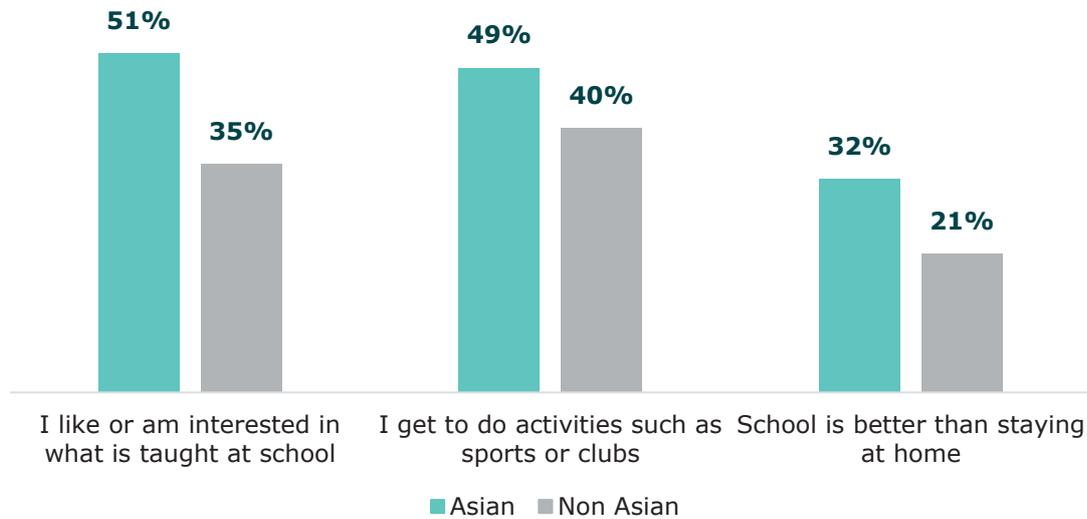


Source: ERO, Missing out? Why aren't our children going to school.

Asian learners are also more likely to like, or be interested in, what they are taught (51 percent, compared with 35 percent of non-Asian learners), and believe it is better than staying at home (32 percent compared to 21 percent of non-Asian learners, see Figure 33 on the following page).

^v Note that 2020 has a lower overall rate of stand-downs due to COVID-19.

^w Note: For this indicator ethnicity is prioritised in the order of Māori, Pacific, Asian, other groups except European/Pākehā.

Figure 33: *Reasons Asian learners (Year 4–13) want to go to school*

Source: ERO, Missing out? Why aren't our children going to school.

a3) Opportunities to participate

In our survey, whānau reported that their children have opportunities for socialising and participating in sports. This social engagement creates opportunities for these learners to develop friendships and peer relationships which supports learners' wellbeing and academic achievement. Figure 33 shows that Asian learners are more likely to enjoy going to school because they get to do activities such as sports or clubs, when compared to non-Asian learners.

In focus groups and interviews, parents and whānau of learners spoke of the importance of opportunities for promoting inclusion. These included sports, performance arts, cultural events, and Education Outside the Classroom. Some parents highlighted ways in which schools work collaboratively with them to ensure activities are undertaken in culturally appropriate ways to enable their child to participate fully (e.g., swimming and camp activities). Learners appreciated the range of opportunities to hold leadership roles within the school.

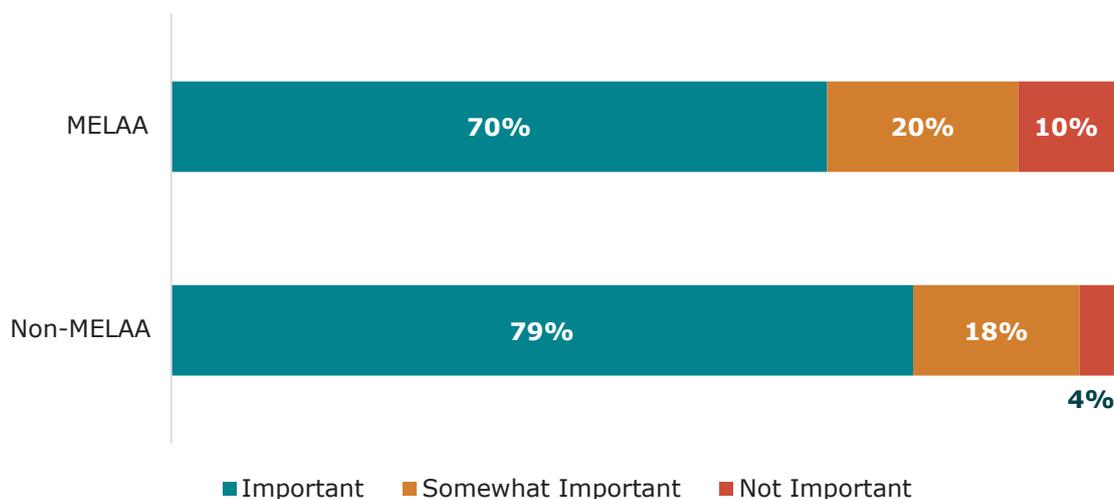
b) Areas of concern

b1) Engagement and attendance for MELAA ethnicities

Learners with MELAA backgrounds are less likely to think school is important for their future than learners from other ethnicities. Ten percent of MELAA learners do not think school is important for their future, compared with 4 percent of other learners (see Figure 34 on the following page).

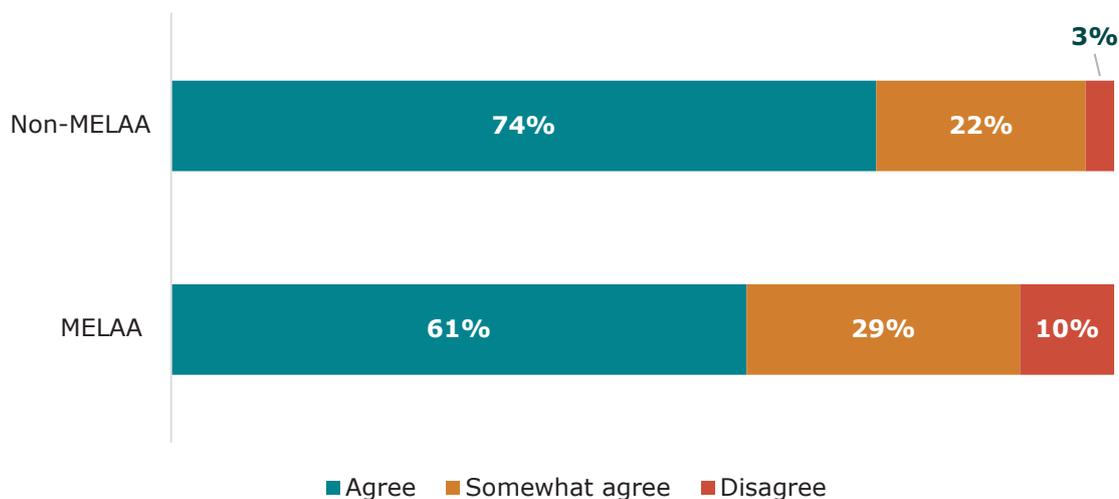
We also found that MELAA learners (61 percent) were less likely to agree that their schools care about them compared to non-MELAA learners (74 percent).

Figure 34: Learners' (Year 4–13) opinion of how important school is for their future – MELAA and non-MELAA ethnicities



Source: ERO, Missing out? Why aren't our children going to school.

Figure 35: Opinion on how much learners (Year 4–13) agree that their school cares about them – MELAA and non-MELAA ethnicities

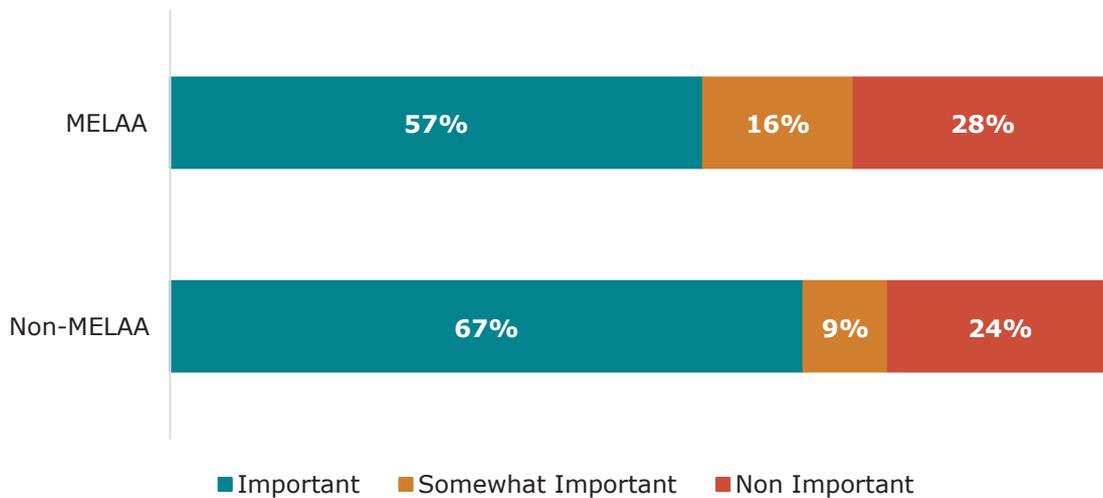


Source: ERO, Missing out? Why aren't our children going to school.

This attitude towards the importance of school is mirrored in MELAA learners' views on the importance of attending school every day. Only 57 percent of MELAA learners think it is important to attend school every day, compared to 67 percent of other learners (see Figure 36 on the following page).

While we do not have attendance data for MELAA, the *What About Me?* survey⁷⁹ shows only 54 percent of learners belonging to MELAA ethnic groups attended school all the time, compared to 66 percent of learners overall (see Figure 37 on the following page).

Figure 36: Learners' (Year 4–13) opinion of how important it is to attend school every day – MELAA and non-MELAA ethnicities



Source: ERO, Missing out? Why aren't our children going to school.

Figure 37: Percentage of MELAA learners (Year 9–13) who attend their school or kura all of the time (What About Me? survey)⁸⁰



Source: Ministry for Social Development. What About Me – The biggest survey of your generation.

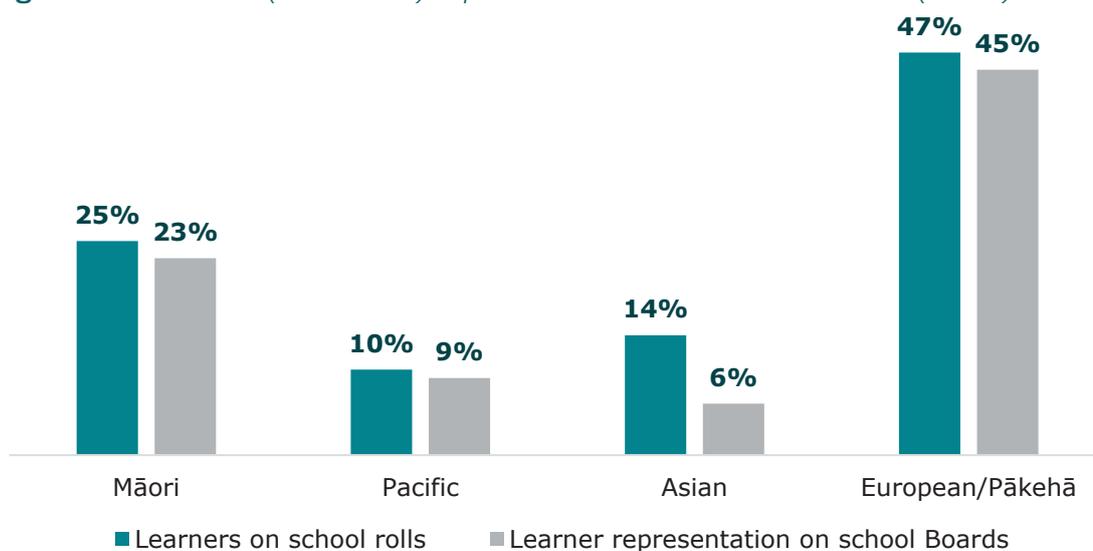
Our research also indicates that MELAA learners are more likely than others not to go to school because they do not want to participate in certain activities (e.g., school swimming sports), cannot participate in some activities at school, or because they find their schoolwork too hard.^x

^x We have not provided percentages due to the low number of MELAA respondents identifying each reason for wanting to miss school.

b2) Low representation of learners from ethnic communities in governance

Ministry of Education data shows representation of learners from ethnic communities on school Boards is low. While Asian learners make up 14 percent of the learner population, only 6 percent of student representatives are Asian (see Figure 38). Diverse representation on school Boards is important because Board members provide a voice for their communities.

Figure 38: Learner (Year 9–13) representation on school Boards (2020)^{81,82}



Source: Ministry of Education, Education Counts: Board of Trustee members; and School Roll by Ethnicity

2) Whānau participation, engagement, and representation at school

For all learners, their parents and whānau engagement in their education is critical to their success. This requires close relationships with schools. The way in which members of the school community (teachers, learners, and whānau) work together is key to supporting high participation and positive engagement.

We found:

a) areas that are stronger:

1. opportunities for whānau participation

b) areas of concern:

1. barriers to whānau engagement
2. low whānau representation on Boards.

a) Areas that are stronger

a1) Opportunities for whānau participation

Parents and whānau from ethnic communities attend information sessions more than any other engagement activity with the school. Regular and timely communication between whānau and teachers creates opportunities for setting expectations, clarifying information about assessment and learning, and improving whānau participation in school activities.

In focus groups and community hui, we learned parents and whānau appreciate opportunities to be involved in schools. This includes opportunities to contribute to learning activities and share their knowledge or aspects of their culture. In some cases, their involvement becomes formalised and leads to them becoming support staff to support learning, translation, or development of resources.

We heard from whānau about ways in which they value being involved in school life, and that they are appreciative of the opportunities for this in the Aotearoa New Zealand system. They spoke of a variety of ways in which they can contribute to school activities and events, despite sometimes being non-English speakers. For some whānau, involvement in their child's school was the first and main point of interaction with the Aotearoa New Zealand way of life, and involvement in school helps them to understand the education system and what it has to offer.

“Coming into the school, I felt I was trusted as a migrant. They included me to have a teacher aide role – I felt a sense of responsibility and trust. Employment is hard, and this has a massive impact on families.”

PARENT

b) Areas of concern

b1) Barriers to whānau engagement

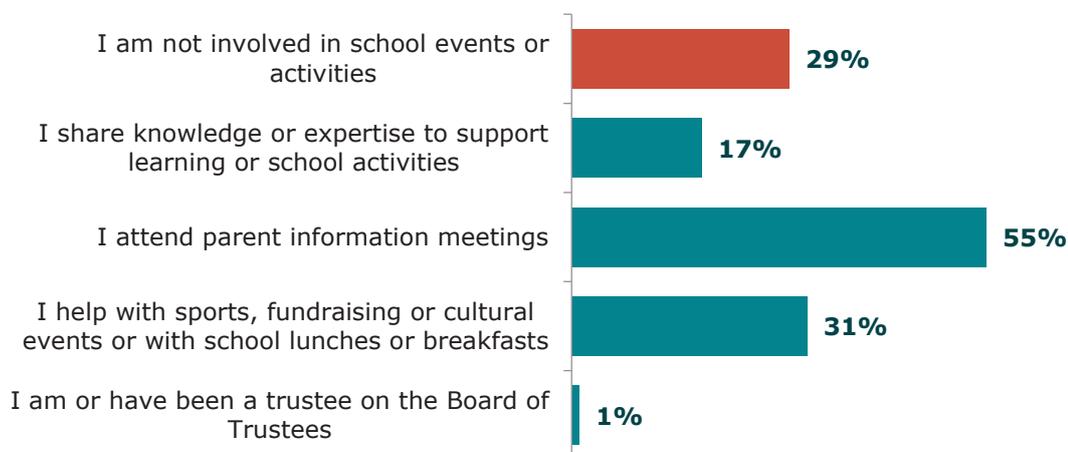
Nearly one third of parents and whānau from ethnic communities are not involved in school events or activities (e.g., fundraising or cultural events, sharing knowledge or expertise) (see Figure 39 on the following page).

From our surveys, we heard that barriers to whānau engagement include language, frequency, and mode of communication. In our surveys, some parents and whānau mentioned they do not have email, or the content in English is not accessible to them. Several parents and whānau commented that they want information from school to be translated into their language. Others mentioned further barriers to participation.

“I resigned from there [parents association] because, I couldn't relate! I found like I'm so, I'm not adding any value. I waited for two years almost, but there was no platform that they – they're ready to listen to us.”

PARENT

Figure 39: Participation rates of parents/whānau from ethnic communities in school activities



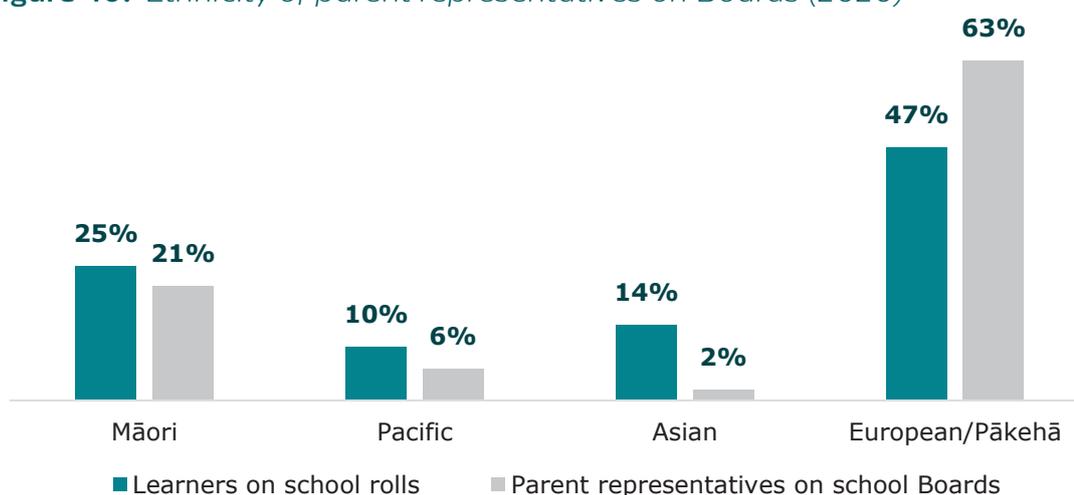
Source: ERO whānau survey

b2) Low whānau representation in governance

Ethnic parent representation on school Boards is low. Only 2 percent of parent representatives are Asian (despite making up 16 percent of the population) making them the most under-represented ethnicity (see Figure 40). Only half of Asian parents and whānau agree they know the role of the Board.

We do not have data on MELAA representation on Boards.

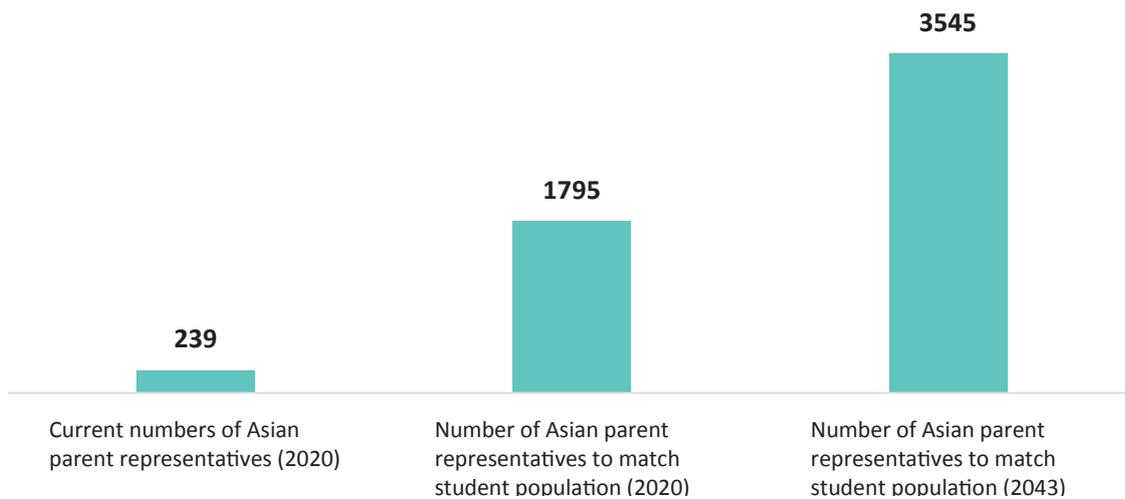
Figure 40: Ethnicity of parent representatives on Boards (2020)^{83,84}



Source: Ministry of Education, Education Counts: Board of Trustee members; and School Roll by Ethnicity

The number of parent and student representatives from ethnic communities on school Boards needs to significantly increase to better represent the ethnicity of the student population. A simple calculation provides some insights into the challenge. For example, the number of Asian parent representatives in 2020 was only 239. We expect that 3,306 more Asian parent representatives will be needed to match the projected student ethnicity in 2043^{y,z} (see Figure 41).

Figure 41: *Number of Asian parent representatives that are needed on Boards*⁸⁵



Source: ERO analysis using Stats NZ, Population projections 2018(base)–2043.

Conclusion

Many learners from ethnic communities are engaged in school and hold high attendance rates. MELAA learners are less motivated to go to school than Asian learners. Whānau are most active in parent-teacher engagement, but face barriers to participate in a wider range of school activities. These experiences are critical for learners as they go on to choose destinations and pathways for their future, which is described in the next section.

^y The available parent representative data doesn't report MELAA as a separate group. Eight percent of parent representatives are recorded as Other/Not Stated.

^z This analysis has the following assumptions: The overall parent representative/student ratio remains constant. Note the analysis is at the national level. The distribution of the Asian student population could mean that fewer Asian parent representatives are needed.



Part 7: What are the pathways and destinations of learners from ethnic communities?

Education is critical for all children and young people's futures. Like other learners, learners from ethnic communities and their whānau want a variety of experiences and outcomes from their education and to find pathways to careers.

We found that learners from ethnic communities have clear and high aspirations for future learning and success. However, for many learners and their whānau, access to pathways or destinations is not always clear, and sometimes learners' choices are limited by advice from teachers which reflects biases or stereotypes about their ethnicities.

What this section describes

This section looks at educational experiences related to pathways and destinations of learners from ethnic communities. This section includes school support for future learning, learner satisfaction with subject choices, and chosen career pathways of learners from ethnic communities.

How we gathered information

To understand the educational experiences related to pathways and destinations of learners from ethnic communities, we examined data from internal and external sources.

Internal sources include:

- ERO surveys
- focus group interviews.

External sources we looked at include:

- Ministry of Education data
- Ministry of Social Development's *What About Me?* survey (2021).

What we found: An overview

Many learners from ethnic communities go on to tertiary study, but pathways are confusing, and, for some, choices are unfairly constrained by teachers' biases.

More than one in four secondary learners report that teachers' recommendations for their course selection are influenced by ethnicity and only half of secondary learners are fully happy with their subject choices.

Learning pathways and destinations

Like all learners and their families, learners from ethnic communities want education to provide them with pathways into future careers. This includes making sure learners, and their parents and whānau understand the choices available to them, and receive good career counselling and advice on course choices for future learning or work.

This section sets out:

- a) areas that are stronger:
 1. parents' expectations and aspirations
 2. links between education and employment
 3. enrolment in tertiary education
- b) areas of concern:
 1. racial bias in career advice
 2. lack of support when planning for future
 3. NCEA is confusing

Across each of these areas, we identify areas that are stronger and areas of concern.

a) Areas that are stronger

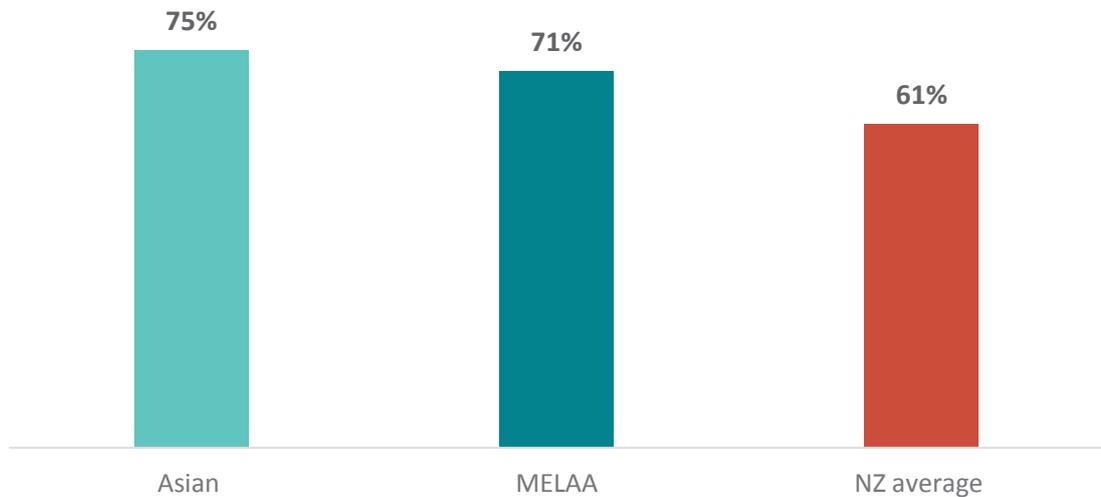
a1) Parents' expectations and aspirations

Learners' engagement, participation, and academic achievement are all strengthened by having clear goals and support to plan for them.

Almost all parents and whānau (99 percent) from ethnic communities who responded to our survey have high expectations, and see the following three things as important for schools to help their children to develop:

- social skills and friendships
- literacy and numeracy skills
- English language skills.

The *What About Me?* survey found that 75 percent of Asian and 71 percent of MELAA learners said a university degree was the highest level of qualification they wanted to achieve in the future, which is much higher than the Aotearoa New Zealand average for learners (62 percent) (see Figure 42 on the following page).

Figure 42: *University aspirations of learners (Year 9–13) from ethnic communities*⁸⁶

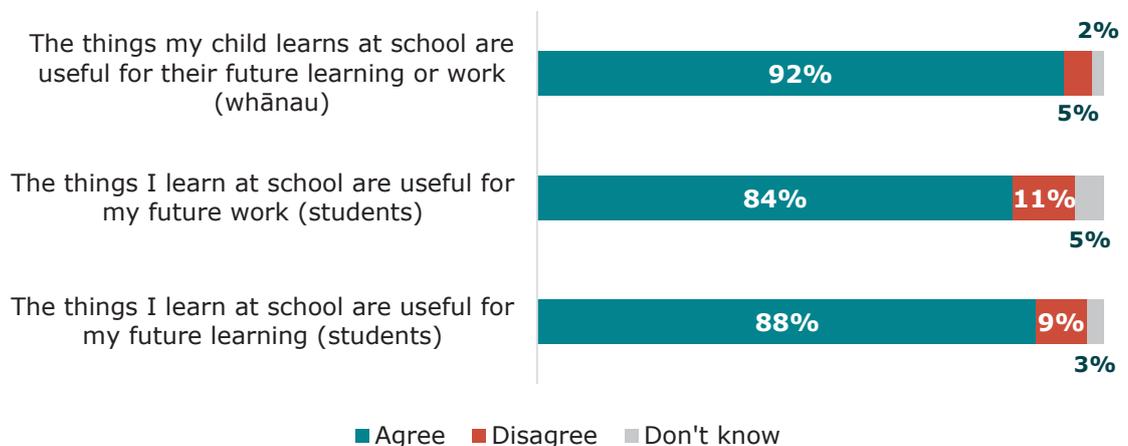
Source: Ministry for Social Development. What About Me – The biggest survey of your generation.

In our focus groups, learners described their intentions for tertiary study and professional careers. They spoke of being motivated by their families to achieve educational success, and to honour and make contributions to their families.

Parents and whānau of learners from ethnic communities have high expectations for their child's achievement and a wide range of aspirations for their child more generally (e.g., equal opportunities for learning, freedom of self-expression).

a2) Link between education and employment

The majority of learners (over 80 percent) from ethnic communities and their parents and whānau (92 percent) we surveyed, agree their learning at school is useful for future learning and work (see Figure 43).

Figure 43: *Parents/whānau and learner (Year 4–13) perceptions regarding the usefulness of their learning for future work/learning*

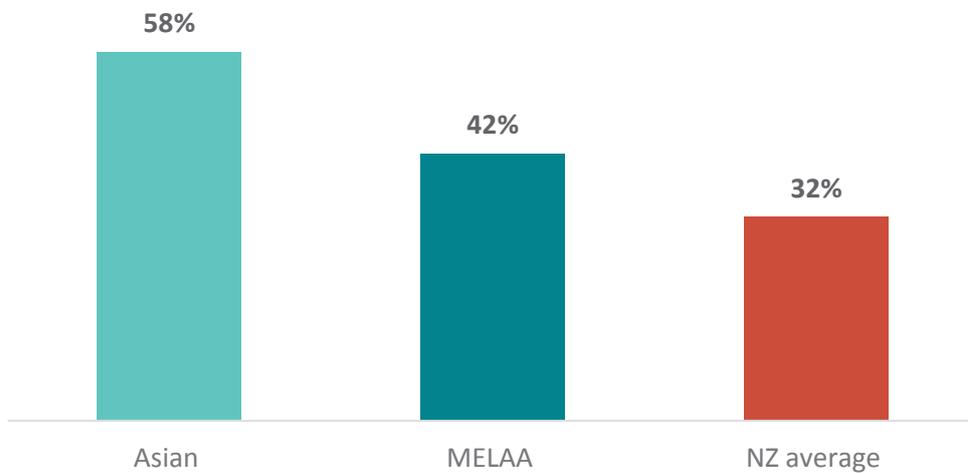
Source: ERO student survey, ERO whānau survey

a3) Enrolment in tertiary education

Asian learners have the highest enrolment in undergraduate and post-graduate programmes and are the least likely to not be in employment or education after school. Only 6.5 percent of Asian 15 to 19-year-olds are not in education, employment, or training (NEET),⁸⁷ compared with 7.1 percent of all young people.⁸⁸

MELAA learners also have high rates of enrolment in tertiary education (42 percent) (see Figure 44). There is no data on the percentage of MELAA who are NEET.

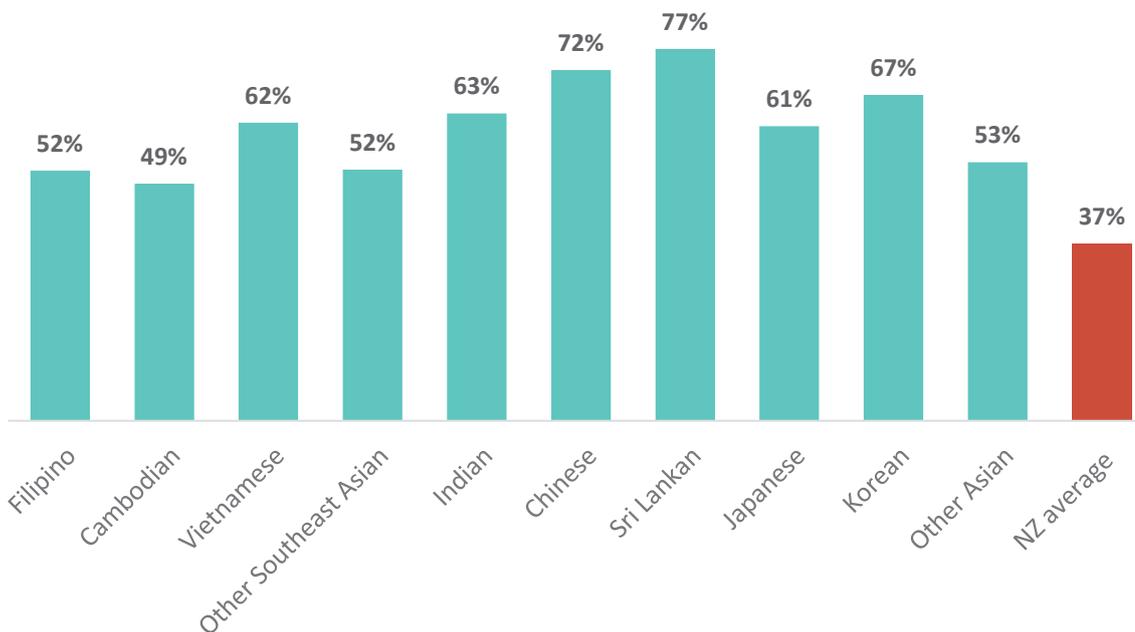
Figure 44: 2020 enrolment in Bachelor degrees or above for 2019 School Leavers, by ethnicity^{aa,89}



Source: Ministry of Education, Education Counts: Time Series School Leaver Destinations

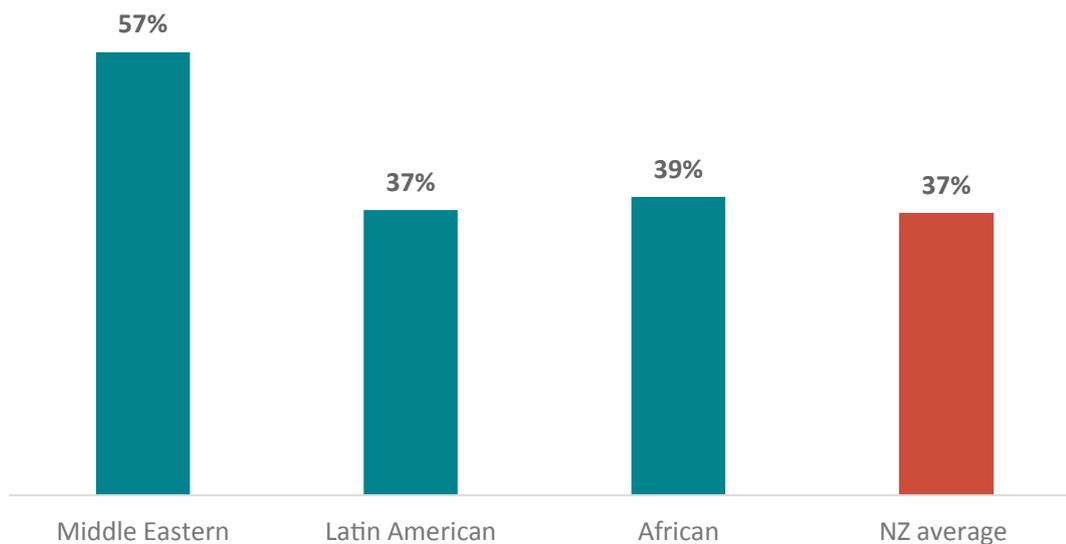
All ethnicities within the Asian ethnic group have high enrolment rates for degrees and above. The rate for some Asian ethnicities were double the New Zealand average rate in 2021 (see Figure 45 on the following page).

aa Domestic enrolments only – excludes international student enrolments

Figure 45: *Enrolment rate for Bachelor degree or above (Asian) (2021)*⁹⁰

Source: Ministry of Education, Leavers Qualification, Level 3 Ethnicity, 2021

Within MELAA, Middle Eastern learners have high enrolment rates for degrees (Level 7 qualifications) and above at 57 percent (around 20 percentage points above the New Zealand average rate). The enrolment rates for African and Latin American students were slightly higher than the New Zealand average rate (see Figure 46).

Figure 46: *Enrolment rate for Bachelor degree or above (MELAA) (2021)*⁹¹

Source: Ministry of Education, Leavers Qualification, Level 2 Ethnicity, 2021

b) Areas of concern

b1) Racial bias in career advice

Disappointingly:

- more than one in four secondary learners (28 percent) from ethnic communities reported their teachers think they should take some subjects/courses because of their ethnic identity and/or culture
- almost one in five parents and whānau (19 percent) reported that their child's teachers suggested that they take some subjects/courses because of their ethnic identity and/or culture.

Ethnic identity should not influence what teachers think about learner course choices.

Learners spoke of the pressure to conform to stereotypes about destinations, and how this sometimes limits their opportunities to consider different options.

“I take all the sciences and STEM subjects – my teachers are quite ‘you want to go to med school’ and feel like a lot of people think – Oh, she’s Indian so of course she wants to go to Med School!”

YEAR 11 LEARNER

We heard similarly in our conversation with a community youth leader:

“There were a lot of students from ethnic communities in high school, predominantly Asian. It was a competitive environment where students were pushed towards certain degrees – I was the only ethnic person who did drama all the way up to Y13. I was heavily discouraged by teachers from doing this, [as well as my parents] even though it should have been my choice. To have this reinforced by teachers made it a bit more discouraging.”

COMMUNITY YOUTH LEADER

b2) Lack of support when planning for future

Whilst many learners from ethnic communities feel supported by their school in planning for the future, some do not.

- A fifth (21 percent) of secondary learners from ethnic communities do not feel supported by their school with career advice, or when choosing subjects/courses for future learning or work.
- Almost a fifth (18 percent) of parents and whānau from ethnic communities do not think their child's school provides useful career advice.

“Stereotyping of what particular ethnic groups should aspire to is very limiting and doesn’t enable students to reach their aspirations.”

COMMUNITY YOUTH LEADER

In focus groups, we heard about the challenges that learners from ethnic communities encounter when planning their learning pathway. These include a lack of timely advice, and the need to push back against ethnic stereotypes. These experiences can be discouraging for both learners and their parents and whānau, contributing to disengagement at school.

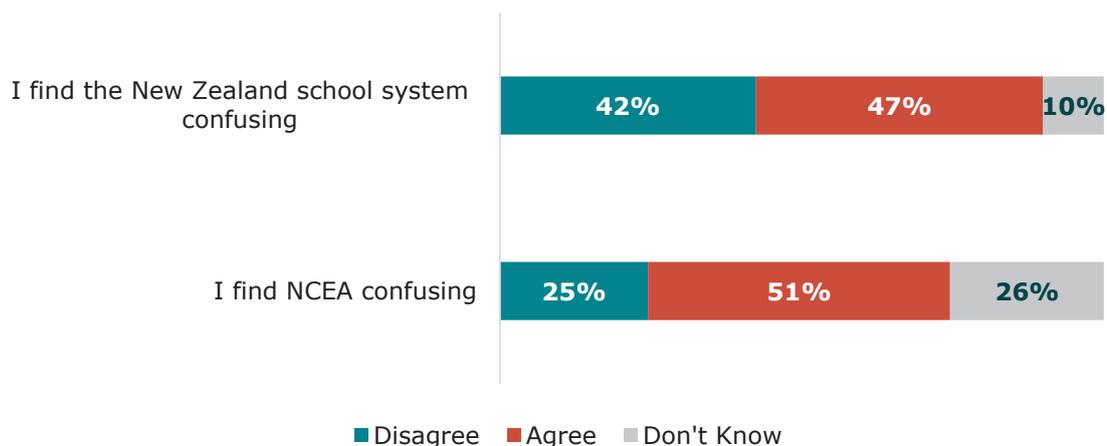
“I still don’t know what I want to do when I leave here, and I think it gets more and more urgent each passing day because as I move on through the years, the options get narrower and narrower and I need to make a decision on a set pathway to go down – had an initial conversation about pathways in Year 9, but not really anything since.”

YEAR 11 LEARNER

b3) NCEA is confusing

In our surveys, we learnt that 51 percent of whānau reported they find NCEA confusing, and 47 percent find the school system in Aotearoa New Zealand confusing (see Figure 47).

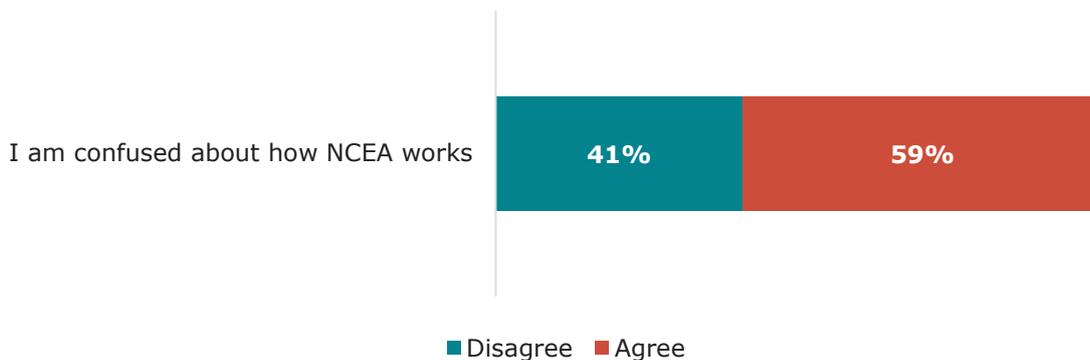
Figure 47: Parent/whānau confusion about NCEA and Aotearoa New Zealand school system



Source: ERO whānau survey

We also found that 59 percent of secondary learners from ethnic communities are confused about how NCEA works (see Figure 48).

Figure 48: *Secondary learners (Year 9–13) from ethnic communities' confusion about NCEA*



Source: ERO student survey

In our focus groups with learners, and interviews with parents, there was a range of understandings about the NCEA system. Learners who had regular academic mentoring by teachers showed better understanding of their progress towards credits and their achievement in relation to their courses. In contrast, one learner had ended the year without her or her parent knowing she had not had sufficient opportunity to gain the credits required for gaining University Entrance and had to take an additional course over summer.

“I couldn’t understand the credit system. And she failed! It hurts me every single day... And that’s why she couldn’t get enrolled in her Uni for this year – she couldn’t understand the expectation, like what teachers are expecting. She couldn’t understand.”

PARENT

Conclusion

Learners and whānau from ethnic communities have high expectations of their school, and most feel supported in choosing their pathways. However, there are some learners who face barriers such as racial bias and confusion around NCEA when selecting their pathways. To improve educational outcomes and experiences of learners from ethnic communities, it is crucial to examine how well schools are meeting the needs of their learners and whānau. In the next section, we describe good practices and challenges shared by schools and teachers, and how these impact on experiences of learners and whānau.



Part 8: How are schools meeting the needs of learners from ethnic communities and their whānau?

Learners from ethnic communities and their whānau reported a variety of educational experiences. This section describes what schools are doing for learners from ethnic communities – the strategies that work and challenges they encounter. We identified a number of teaching practices and activities that have positive impacts for learners.

What this section describes

As discussed in Part 3, we identified five key practices that have a strong impact on the quality and equity of experiences for learners.

- 1) School leaders prioritise learners from ethnic communities and commit to supporting, respecting, and celebrating their cultures.
- 2) Everyone has high expectations of learners from ethnic communities.
- 3) Teachers seek to understand, value, and respect learners' culture in their education.
- 4) Teachers learn about and enact culturally responsive teaching and inclusive practices.
- 5) School leaders and teachers connect and partner with whānau and their ethnic communities.

In this section we describe how schools adopt these practices and highlight examples of good practices and areas of challenge.

How we gathered information

This section draws on information shared with us about school practices through:

- site visits to schools
- focus groups and interviews with teachers and senior leaders, ethnic community groups, learners and whānau
- whānau and learner surveys
- teacher surveys.

What we found: An overview

There are many good examples of schools which support the engagement and learning of learners from ethnic communities and their whānau, including incorporating multicultural and multilingual content into learning, and having visible culturally competent leaders who liaise with families and in the community. But there are challenges, including teachers' knowledge of ethnic diversity and culturally inclusive practices.

Practice is variable across and within schools, and tackling racism is an area of weakness. Learners and whānau consistently identified a need for schools to better address the racism they experience.

1) School leaders prioritise learners from ethnic communities and commit to supporting, respecting, and celebrating their cultures

International research tells us that effective leaders have a strong positive influence on students' learning, attendance, and long-term outcomes.⁹² What they do and say matters, as it sets the standard and direction for the whole school community.

Learners and whānau have better experiences of education in schools when leaders show they value and respect the diversity in their school and community.

Culturally responsive leaders are able to engage teachers, learners, and whānau in discussions about inclusion, promote positive attitudes, and combat prejudices⁹³ – all of which contribute to creating an inclusive school. They can direct teacher professional development to ensure it is culturally responsive, which then improves the classroom experiences of learners.⁹⁴ Good leaders also focus on ensuring that lessons reflect the cultural diversity within a class, and that classrooms are places of inclusion and respect.

Key practices for leaders

- Ensure all policies and plans (strategic and curriculum documents) are inclusive to reflect the diversity of their learners, whānau and communities.
- Spend time engaging respectfully with whānau and learners to learn about their aspirations and concerns. Provide additional support for families who find it difficult to navigate the system.
- Ensure there are good systems to support the sharing of good practice and for reviewing the provision and outcomes for learners from all ethnic communities.
- Establish schoolwide practices and cultural celebrations for respectful behaviour and communication that reflect an openness to differing attitudes, beliefs, and world views.
- Facilitate professional learning that supports staff to positively respond to diversity, surface unconscious bias and to teach about, and counter, discrimination.

What we found

We heard a variety of experiences from learners and their whānau, some of which highlighted where schools can strengthen their practice and focus their leadership influence. We also saw a range of leadership practices that were meaningful for learners and communities.

a) Good practices we found

Celebrating cultures

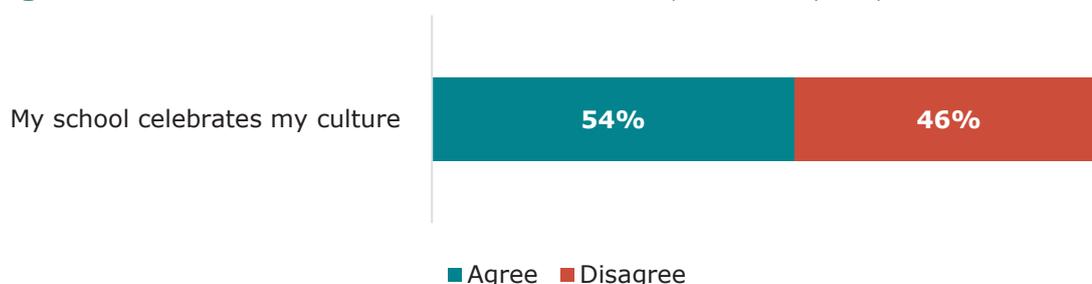
Whānau and learners in schools that prioritise them and their cultures show a strong sense of belonging and engagement.

In our interviews and focus groups, whānau described a range of inclusive practices schools engaged in, for example, valuing religious practices, and having flexible uniforms to accommodate the needs of different ethnic communities.

Nearly 54 percent of learners surveyed, and 74 percent of whānau, said their school celebrates their culture through events (see Figure 49 and Figure 50). Of the learners who agree that their school celebrates their culture, those who have been in Aotearoa New Zealand for five years or less were more likely to agree than those who reported to being in Aotearoa New Zealand for six years or longer.

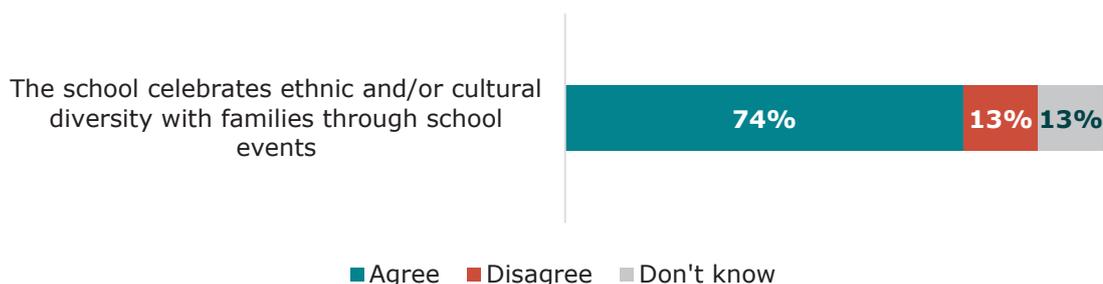
We also found that Asian learners (62 percent) were significantly more likely to agree that their school celebrates their culture compared to MELAA learners (26 percent).

Figure 49: *Schools celebrate culture – learner (Year 4–13) responses*

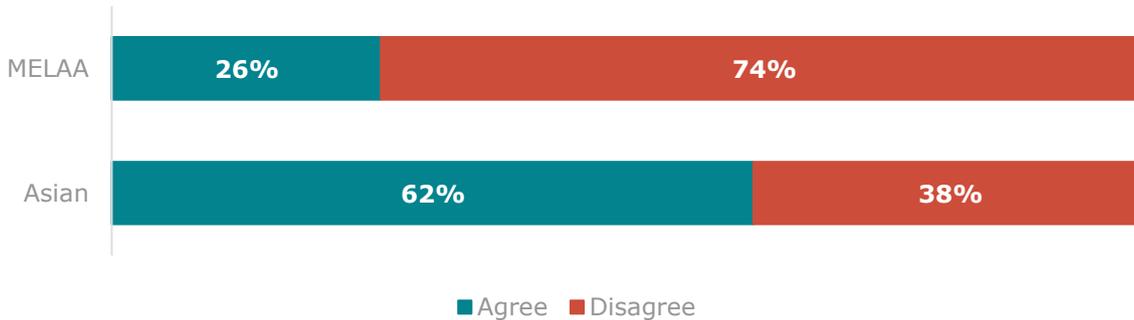


Source: ERO student survey

Figure 50: *Schools celebrate culture – parent/whānau responses*



Source: ERO whānau survey

Figure 51: Schools celebrate culture – Asian and MELAA learners (Year 4–13)

Source: ERO whānau survey

In our focus group conversations and interviews, learners and whānau identified ways in which schools celebrate different cultures. Such celebrations are valued for acknowledging diversity itself, which makes them feel valued and welcomed. It also gives learners opportunities to connect with others and feel part of school life. Teachers shared some examples of how their schools celebrate different ethnicities and cultures:

“[We hold a] cultural celebration festival when everyone can wear cultural dress. Each year group learns and performs a cultural item, and students are invited to do a cultural (family, regional, national, etc.) show and tell in class.”

“Inviting parents/community to share aspects of their cultures with the students (during Cultural Week). Each year level has a focus on a different culture during our annual Cultural Week – they share what they have explored/learnt about this culture with other year groups and with parents/community when they are invited into the school during Cultural Day.”

TEACHERS

Whānau and learners are largely appreciative of these efforts by the school. Such cultural events acknowledge and recognise their culture, which makes them feel valued and welcomed.

“The school provides a cultural literacy programme once a week. They recognize the ethnicity and give them value at school.”

PARENT

“School culture is accepting of differences and doesn’t tolerate bullying.”

PARENT

Inclusive and welcoming

In our focus groups and interviews, whānau told us they appreciated when:

- schools have a family-like atmosphere
- schools worked to make community networks strong
- school staff are approachable
- a diversity of cultures is visible at their child's school.

Most whānau felt their child's school is supportive in dealing with issues and concerns that are raised. Some school leaders spoke about the ways in which they spend time with families and learners to get to know them and make them feel they belong.

“Being welcoming – It's about bringing them in, letting them see, making them feel comfortable, seeing that its safe and supportive, showing them that we care about their children.”

SCHOOL LEADER

In our community hui, whānau described inclusive practices in their school which included food and religious practices. Some schools were also more flexible with uniforms, to accommodate the needs of different ethnic communities. Members of the community found that some schools took a strength-based approach to diversity. Additionally, whānau and learners felt comfortable in their school environment because there were so many different cultures visible.

“It [the school] is a quite diverse community, so different cultural backgrounds are very present. The school does put a lot of effort into recognising these different communities.”

PARENT

Good practice example 1. When school staff demonstrate genuine care and put in the effort to connect with learners and their whānau, it makes a difference to their experiences at school

A primary school in Dunedin was particularly appreciated for its diverse student community. Parents and whānau felt that the school puts in a lot of effort to recognise the diverse cultures of students:

“[Effective school practices include:] Fostering her sense of belonging, having dedicated time for the children to share ‘news’ about events from their life outside school, friendly staff, before and after school care programmes, consistent routines.”

PARENT

In particular, teachers and school leaders were commended for the care and support they give students. Teachers stated that they actively listen, and invite whānau to participate in their child’s school life and to celebrate their culture with the school.

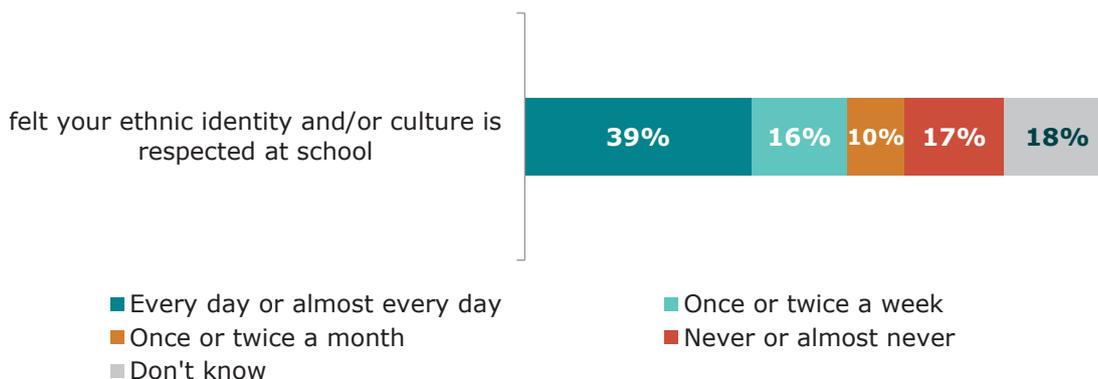
b) Challenges we found

Culture not being sufficiently recognised or respected

Across all schools, we found some learners (17 percent) who feel their culture is not respected or valued at school (see Figure 52).

Figure 52: *How often learners (Year 4–13) feel ethnic identity and/or culture is respected at school*

In the last 30 days of school, how often have you...



Source: ERO student survey

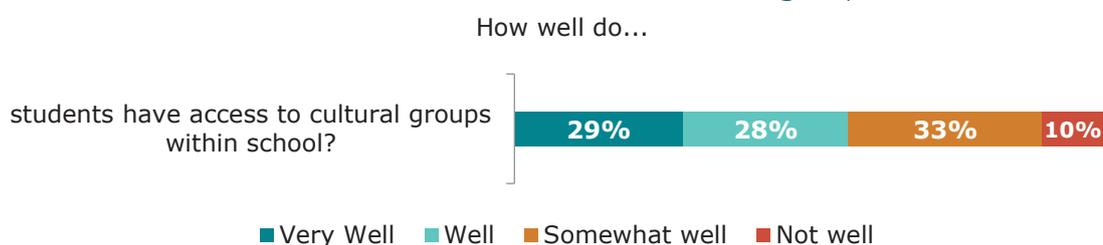
Additionally, learners we spoke to at some schools identified a lack of opportunity to connect with learners from their culture.

“I feel like the only time you can interact with your own culture is [annually] in Culture Week.”

SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNER

About 40 percent of teachers also reported a lack of opportunity for learners from ethnic communities to connect with other learners from ethnic communities (see Figure 53).

Figure 53: *How well schools provide opportunities for learners (Year 4–13) from ethnic communities to access cultural groups*



Source: ERO teacher survey

Although many learners and whānau are positive about how their schools include their cultural practices, some participants spoke about how cultural celebrations do not always authentically reflect the ethnicities and cultural practices of learners and their whānau. This has the potential for learners to feel further marginalised through not seeing themselves represented in activities.

“When schools set up a celebration day and the teacher doesn’t know the history or importance of what is being celebrated.”

COMMUNITY LEADER

Teachers acknowledge and recognise this limitation. They described their challenges in not having resources and information that could support meaningful celebration and recognition of cultures.

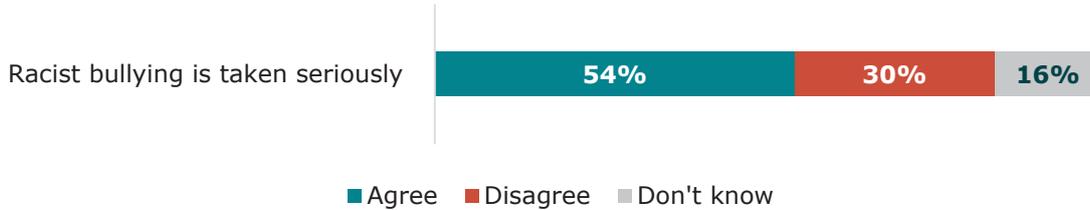
“[We need to] be provided with the information from countries around the world that have celebrations and customs that we could join in with.”

TEACHER

Addressing racism

Both whānau and learners reported racism and racist bullying needs to be better identified and addressed by their school. Concerningly, 30 percent of learners do not think their school takes racist bullying seriously (see Figure 54).

Figure 54: School takes racist bullying seriously (learner (Year 4–13) responses)



Source: ERO student survey

A community leader told us:

“Spoken words can have a long term negative impact. An Asian child did really well in school exams. The teacher asked the student ‘Did you cheat?’ This was so impactful for the student who has doubted their ability.”

COMMUNITY LEADER

In our focus groups with learners and whānau, and in community hui and interviews, the need to better identify and address racism came through strongly. Some learners noted that teachers often disregarded or minimised their concerns about microaggressions, negative comments about ethnic backgrounds, and stereotyping ethnic or religious backgrounds. The inaction by teachers, and lack of clear boundaries about what is acceptable and not acceptable, impacts on learners’ ability to counter these. Additionally, in several incidents, learners noted that leaders “took the teacher’s side or perspective” when learners reported racist encounters or incidents.

From our focus groups, we found secondary students were less likely to report that racist bullying is taken seriously compared to primary students.

Story 3. Learners’ experience with racism and not feeling it was taken seriously by teachers

Ana, a Year 13 learner, noticed how students’ attitudes to them changed as they progressed through her large multi-ethnic inner-city secondary school.

“From Year 11 to 13 it gets a little hard because some students tend to behave differently and be a bit racist to me and my friends.”

She described challenging encounters regarding racist remarks or incidents with teachers and students. In raising these with school leaders, she felt that her perspective as a student was not listened to and got shut down – the teachers’ perspective was always valued over the student’s.

These insights contrast to teachers' perspectives, almost all (92 percent) of whom think racist bullying is taken seriously in their school. This mismatch in perceptions suggests schools are not always aware of the experiences of learners and whānau which could be a contributing factor in learners finding it difficult to raise issues of racist bullying.

Story 4. Learners' experience of lack of support at school with experiences of racism

At a large urban secondary school, learners note the lack of opportunities to talk about issues of racism. They spoke about the lack of teachers or school counsellors who they could relate to, or who were from ethnic communities, and that this meant they did not feel comfortable to raise issues of racism or other issues. A senior secondary learner connected with a teacher because of their ethnicity and found support from them even though they didn't teach her.

Examples of successful strategies shared by schools:

→ **Appointing cultural facilitators/leaders**

In one school, several leaders with expertise and experience with ethnic communities support provision. One leader's role is to connect with and network with people and organisations in the community, to search out and provide support for identified needs. Leaders liaise with families from ethnic communities and assemble bi-lingual teams with translators for learners and their whānau. At the school level, they share resources and articulate and model culturally responsive practice to support teachers. They monitor learners' outcomes and review provision and initiatives across the school.

→ **Leaders being visible in ethnic communities**

In several schools, cultural leaders and the principal regularly attend community events, first language classes, or church meetings hosted by different ethnic groups, to show respect and connect with families and community leaders. These events offer opportunities to build relationships, offer support, listen to community views, and communicate information.

→ **Making cultures visible in the environment**

Several schools have undertaken large scale, semi-permanent art projects to celebrate the ethnic diversity represented at school. The process included research and collaboration with community members, whānau, and students. In two schools, visual displays were developed around significant stories of mana whenua and incorporated symbols and stories from other cultures.

Good practice example 2: Recognition and celebration of cultural diversity

Teachers from a primary school in Wellington, not only acknowledge and celebrate the diversity of their ethnic communities but have successful strategies for meaningful engagements with whānau from ethnic communities. Teachers tap into the resources and knowledge of whānau from their ethnic communities to support their learning programmes. Whānau are invited to share their expertise on their culture in the classroom and to participate in learning programmes.

Resources in multiple languages are available or used for school hui and teacher meetings to assist parents to engage and help with the sharing of learning information. In this school, whānau from ethnic communities are encouraged to work as teacher aides in the classroom to support learners to use and hear their first language as they learn. It contributes to a diverse workforce.

“[At this school we prioritise] Spending quality time at enrolment to hear their stories and aspirations. Shoulder tapping to ensure families with diverse ethnic backgrounds are represented when parents are involved e.g., as trip helpers. We have noticed that engaging with this research project and inviting them to be part of a focus group has helped them to feel that their voice is valued.”

TEACHER

2) Everyone has high expectations of learners from ethnic communities

We know that high expectations of learners are key to their engagement and success. It is particularly important for learners from different cultural backgrounds or learning environments, as low expectations lower achievement, satisfaction and motivation. Communicating high expectations raises learners' levels of interest and self-belief which push them to attempt difficult tasks, achieve success, and grow. High expectations also show that teachers are thinking and acting inclusively as they are holding learners from ethnic communities to the same high standards as any other learner.⁹⁵

Key practices for teachers

- Enable learners to set high expectations for themselves by creating opportunities for learners to share their aspirations, set goals, and make choices about their learning.
- Develop their understanding of each learner's capabilities, express their expectations for the learner, offer appropriate levels of challenge, and give specific feedback on learning tasks.
- Move away from defining learners from ethnic communities primarily as ESOL or English language learners.
- Invest in, and take personal responsibility for, students' success.
- Provide multiple options for how students can interact with instructional content and assessment.

What we found

We found learners from ethnic communities and their whānau experience a mix of expectations about their learning. Some teachers are implementing impactful strategies to support learners' learning.

a) Good practices we found

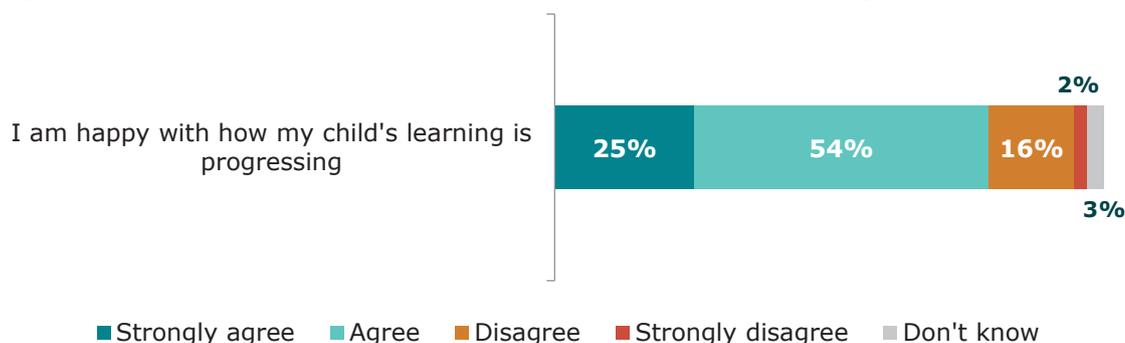
Support and satisfaction for learners' progress

Sixty-eight percent of learners said their school helps them very well with their learning, and their parents agree. Most (80 percent) whānau of learners from ethnic communities agree their child's school gives them good information about their child's learning. They feel they know how well their child is learning and progressing and are happy with their child's progress (see Figure 55).

“In other schools we never saw the principal or teachers, asked a teacher how your child is doing, and they say they're fine. But here, teachers are in touch with you, they're assessing your child constantly – your child needs help with this – let's help them!”

PARENT

Figure 55: Parent/whānau satisfaction with their child's progress



Source: ERO whānau survey

Members of the community reported some schools have an equitable system that allows for equal access and opportunity to all learners through ensuring all learners can participate in learning and co-curricular activities.

b) Challenges we found

Too low expectations for learning

Nearly a quarter of whānau (27 percent) said teachers never or rarely have high expectations for their child's learning and as mentioned in Part 3, just under half of learners and whānau thought schoolwork was easy or very easy.

Some learners also spoke to us about how teachers make assumptions about their learning ability based on their level of English proficiency, or their participation in class discussions.

“Sometimes when I’m called on in class, I feel pressured and sometimes can’t get my words out about what I’m thinking or take too long to answer and so I look like I don’t understand the question.”

STUDENT

Teachers acknowledge their challenges when trying to meet the needs of learners from ethnic communities. Teachers in our survey acknowledged the need to develop fully individualised programmes for those with diverse backgrounds and ethnicities, especially for those who are new to Aotearoa New Zealand and with low proficiency in English, and the limited ESOL resources available to support their needs.

Challenges teachers identified include:

- getting to know learners and their capabilities through the language and cultural barriers
- pitching work at unknown levels/languages/English proficiency for multiple different English language learners
- finding appropriate assessments for placement and teaching.

Examples of successful strategies shared by schools

→ Academic mentoring by teachers

In several schools, a teacher regularly meets individually with students to discuss their learning progress over their time in school. They talk about their aspirations and find ways to support them to gain credits or take courses towards achieving their goals. In one school, they have a transitions team made up of leaders who meet with each senior student to discuss their aspirations and pathways. This team meets weekly to review the progress of each of their learners towards their goals.

→ Setting challenging tasks

In some schools, teachers provide tasks with a high level of challenge which build on learners’ prior knowledge and learning. The tasks enable learners to make choices about their learning and to connect to their culture and language. Teachers provide specific support to enable them to access the task and experience success.

→ Communicating expectations

In some schools, teachers communicate their high expectations for these learners through detailed feedback to students and whānau about their learning and next steps.

Good practice example 3. Parents appreciate it when schools are able to meet the academic needs of their learners

A school in Auckland was recognised extensively for the opportunities to learn. In our surveys, parents and whānau expressed appreciation for the curricular breadth offered by the school.

“[there are] Many interesting subjects and great teachers who are passionate about their subjects”

“The Year 9 curriculum is broad and covers not just academic but also physical and mental health”

Parents felt like their child was challenged academically and encouraged to perform well.

“The teachers pay attention to students’ academic performance, encourage students to read and are willing to communicate with the parents.”

“The school closely follows my child’s ability and moves him to the same class to match his ability and he doesn’t get bored because the curriculum is too easy.”

“A nurturing environment that encourages hard work and excellence. My child feels seen and valued.”

PARENTS

3) Teachers seek to understand, value, and respect learners’ culture in their education

Teachers who learn about, affirm, and respect learners’ cultural identities and include their cultures in their learning have a positive influence on learner learning.⁹⁶ Because these teachers value the cultural knowledge and perspectives of their learners, they can create equitable learning environments that validate and support learning for all learners.

Key practices for teachers

- Identify learners’ cultural and learning strengths, and learning needs, and consider ways to adapt practice to respond to these.
- Invite learners and whānau to share information about their ethnicities, cultures, and languages.
- Develop an understanding of cultural practices important to individual learners and their whānau, and seek input to understand underpinning ideologies to avoid being tokenistic.
- Work with whānau to create environments which are rich with cultural artifacts.
- Develop a welcoming, positive classroom climate that consistently promotes respect, empathy, and dialogue in classroom interactions.

- Model and foster inclusive language and respectful relationships which include asking learners how to pronounce their names correctly.
- Create safe and inclusive spaces (physical and social) where learners of all ethnic groups can safely connect over issues of importance.
- Actively involve parents and whānau in decision-making and planning for their child. This might mean finding ways to communicate through language barriers, such as working with translators, school staff with language expertise (such as teacher aides), or community groups.

What we found

Some teachers actively develop their understanding of the diverse cultures in their classrooms. But many teachers find it challenging to gain this knowledge and awareness which is, in turn, felt by learners and their whānau.

a) Good practices we found

Teachers proactively learning about different ethnic communities

In focus groups with teachers, they spoke of ways in which they deliberately seek out information about the cultural backgrounds, practices, and home languages of their learners by talking with them and their whānau. They work to ensure they develop an in-depth understanding of cultural practices, and help to support the learning of others.

These teachers provide opportunities and review resources to ensure learners from ethnic communities regularly have opportunities to share or make links to their culture through classroom learning activities. They are highly alert to opportunities to make links to cultural practices and build the cultural knowledge of all learners.

In a primary school in Wellington, successful strategies and practices were identified to integrate students' ethnicities into teaching and to engage with whānau from ethnic communities. Teachers noted the support of bilingual teacher aides in offering opportunities for students to speak in their first language.

“For Race Relations Day [sic] each year, each class shares about the cultures in their class with the rest of the school. Sometimes they focus on one particular ethnicity or language or culture in the class and they learn a song, or new vocabulary, or a cultural item that they share with the rest of the school. Students love these learning opportunities, especially those students who are the ‘experts’ of their culture/ethnicity as well as the rest of the class who love learning about their peers.”

TEACHER



b) Challenges we found

Limited cultural knowledge of teachers

Whānau and learners are concerned about teachers' lack of cultural knowledge and awareness.

“Teachers (inadvertently) belittle kids with different ethnic practices. A young child eating with their hands was told ‘that’s disgusting’ and physically removed child’s hand from her rice and directed the child to use a spoon.”

COMMUNITY MEMBER

In community hui and focus groups with learners, they shared a range of examples which demonstrated misunderstanding and lack of sensitivities about cultural practices.

Learners and whānau we spoke to told us that important aspects of their cultural identity or background are not always sought or known by teachers.

One in five teachers also reported only a limited understanding of cultural practices of the learners they teach (see Figure 56). Half of learners experienced their teachers saying their names incorrectly within the last month (see Figure 57).

Figure 56: Teachers' knowledge of the cultures of their learners (Year 4–13)

To what extent do you...



Source: ERO teacher survey

Figure 57: Learner (Year 4–13) experiences of teachers saying their name incorrectly

In the last 30 days of school, have any of these things happened to you at school?



Source: ERO student survey

In focus groups and hui, we heard how sometimes teachers’ understanding of culture can impact learners in the classroom.

“Teachers focus on English language as a prerequisite to access the curriculum. They do not try to understand students’ strengths.”

PARENT

Learners spoke to us about how teachers have limited understanding of their countries of origin, ethnicities, or cultural backgrounds. In our focus groups and community hui, participants highlighted the importance of accommodating their cultural and religious needs (e.g., prayer rooms) within the school.

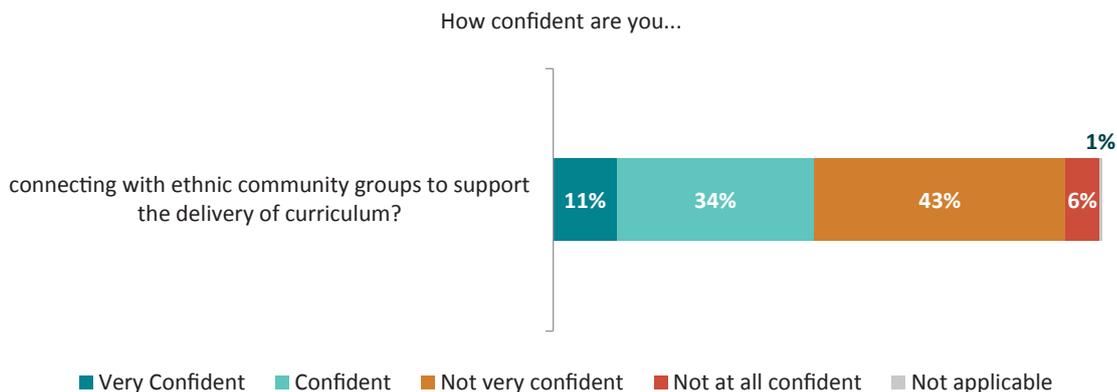
“The school does not deem it justifiable to miss school to celebrate cultural/religious beliefs.”

LEARNER

Teachers face challenges

Almost half of teachers stated they do not feel confident connecting with ethnic communities to support learning and curriculum delivery – a vital pathway to ensuring learning is linked to the cultural knowledge and heritage of learners (see Figure 58).

Figure 58: Teacher confidence to connect with ethnic community groups to support learning



Source: ERO teacher survey

Teachers also acknowledge their limitations around cultural knowledge and awareness. These include the following aspects:

- understanding students' cultural backgrounds, traditions, beliefs, and values to ensure teaching practices are culturally responsive for such a wide variety of ethnic communities
- lack of access to support people who have expertise in cultural literacy to enable them to interpret curriculum activities to suit individuals from diverse ethnicities
- lack of multilingual learning resources as well as wider support to engage diverse ethnicities.

“It isn't easy to find information that would support my students in class, in my subject. I can find ethnicities in [our school database] but what to do about that information. I just muddle through it for myself. I spend most of my efforts in this area focusing on Māori students and then Pacific students. It isn't easy to support them either. I do find it easier to support them than I do the other ethnicities you have listed here. I want to support them all and it really needs to be made easier.”

TEACHER

Teaching workforce does not reflect learners' ethnicities

In our conversations with learners, whānau, and community members, there was concern at the lack of ethnic diversity in the teaching staff at schools. Learners noted how this is sometimes a barrier to approaching staff for support.

“Staff and support staff are not diverse, [there is] almost no one to support students from ethnic community background.”

COMMUNITY MEMBER

Nationally, there is a large gap between the proportion of students and teachers who identify as Asian and MELAA. For example, in 2021:

- in the Auckland region, the percentage of learners who identified as Asian was 27 percent.⁹⁷ In contrast, just 12 percent of Auckland teachers identified as Asian⁹⁸
- in Southland, the percentage of learners who identify as Asian is 7 percent,⁹⁹ compared with just 1 percent of teachers¹⁰⁰
- in Auckland, 4 percent of learners identified as MELAA¹⁰¹ compared to just 2 percent of teachers.¹⁰²

This gap between the ethnicities of students and teachers is most apparent in high decile schools. For example:

- about one-fifth (19.7 percent) of the learners in high decile schools identified as Asian, compared to only 4.5 percent of teachers.

The percentage of teachers who are Asian and MELAA has slowly been increasing (from 3.8 percent in 2014 to 5.4 percent in 2021 for Asian and from 0.1 percent to 1.1 percent for MELAA).¹⁰³

This increase will need to accelerate over the next two decades. To match the projected student population in 2043, there needs to be approximately 13,491 additional Asian teachers and 1,674 additional MELAA teachers.^{ab} However, of students enrolled in Initial Teacher Education in 2021, only 9 percent identified as Asian compared to 76 percent European, 21 percent Māori, 8 percent Pacific Peoples, and 4 percent Other ethnicities.^{ac,104}

Examples of successful strategies shared by schools

→ Supporting the engagement and learning of migrant and multi-lingual students

In one school a teacher works in a purposeful way to include the cultures and prior learning of students to help them engage in task-based activities. This approach includes: getting to know the learners' strengths and needs; 'gentle' diagnostic activities to surface ways of thinking, interests, prior knowledge, and skills; and 'pre loading' discussion or activities. The teacher then discusses examples of the end-task and provides explicit teaching in response to individual needs. Students are then able to engage at the step they recognise and are supported to build towards the end task.

→ Writing in first language

One school provides annual opportunities for English Language Learners to work with members of their local community to write in their first language and publish a journal in multiple languages. Publications are launched at a prestigious community event and the stories are highly celebrated.

ab This analysis assumes the overall teacher/student ratio remains constant. The analysis is at the national level. FTTE is used, so head count can vary. Learner numbers are from school roll data. Teacher numbers are from school data.

ac Domestic, Headcount, First year enrolled in ITE.

4) Teachers enact culturally responsive teaching and inclusive practices

Learners' engagement and success in learning is supported when teachers' practice is culturally responsive. Culturally responsive teaching better enables teachers to design their lessons and deliver a curriculum in a way that builds on the strengths and funds of knowledge learners bring to their learning. This supports students to engage meaningfully in learning and promotes their achievement.

Key practices for teachers

- Build understanding of culturally responsive practice for learners from ethnic communities, and reflect on the effectiveness of their own practice.
- Use knowledge and understanding of the cultures of their learners and whānau to tailor their teaching to be culturally responsive.
- Deliver an inclusive, localised curriculum that acknowledges the place, experiences, and histories of ethnic communities both internationally and in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- Be alert to daily opportunities to make links to cultural practices and build the cultural knowledge of all learners.
- Find ways to demonstrate learners' home languages and cultural knowledge as assets in the classroom.
- Capitalise on learners' cultural backgrounds rather than attempting to override or negate them. Use learners' strengths as instructional starting points.
- Draw on learners' cultural knowledge (culturally familiar scenarios, examples, vignettes), life experiences, frames of reference, languages, and performance and communication styles to facilitate learning.
- Develop learners to think critically, examine bias in words and visual images and confront stereotypes or racism when it appears.

What we found

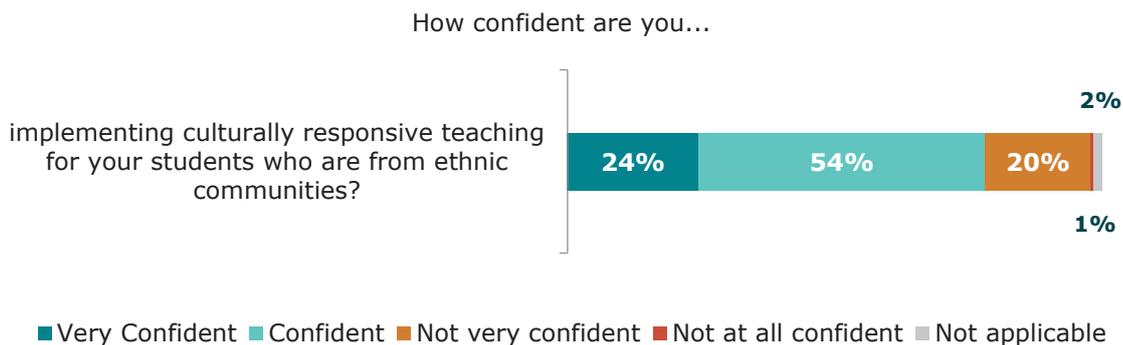
Most teachers expressed confidence in delivering culturally responsive learning and shared a few successful strategies and examples from their teaching. We also heard that some learners and their whānau feel like their culture is not visible in their learning.

a) Good practice we found

Culturally responsive teaching

Most teachers said they are confident or very confident in implementing culturally responsive practice (see Figure 59). This finding is supported by learners' perception: 76 percent of learners told us their teachers know about cultural practices that are important to them. Within this group, learners who had lived in New Zealand for less than five years were more likely to agree, compared to students who had lived in New Zealand for longer than six years.

Figure 59: *Teacher confidence in delivering culturally responsive teaching*



Source: ERO teacher survey

Teachers noted how it is important to be alert to ways to incorporate multicultural and multilingual content into learning.

An approach taken by several schools is to use te ao Māori as a launching pad for supporting teaching and learning for learners from ethnic communities. These teachers seek out opportunities to build relationships with learners and their whānau.

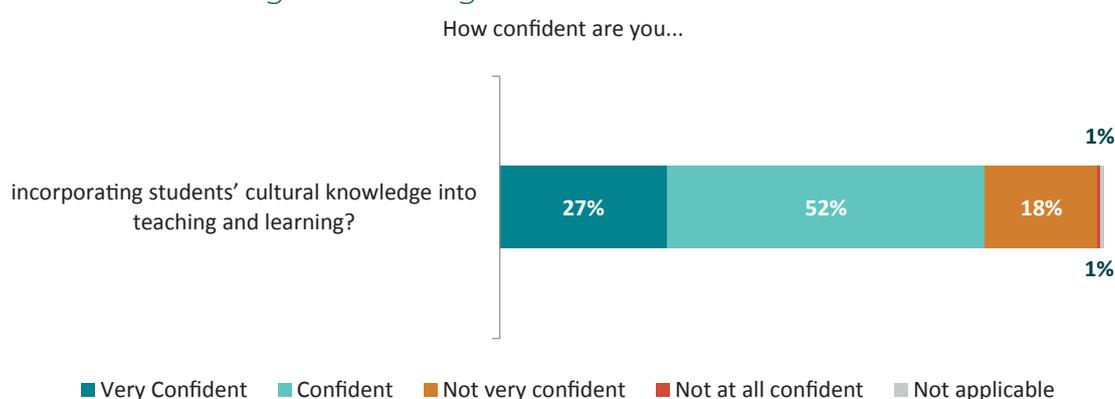
“Growing understanding of te ao Māori and our bicultural journey has had a significant impact. It has made us more sensitive towards others. More awareness of your own perspective helps. A strong and enriching journey – opens your ears, your heart and brain to other cultures. It’s not bicultural OR multicultural – it’s bicultural AND multicultural.”

TEACHER

In focus groups we heard about how teachers focus on being sensitive to different cultural practices or potential conflicts, and are courageous to lead difficult conversations. Teachers note how the newly introduced Aotearoa New Zealand histories curriculum is opening up conversations about a range of cultural practices, and recognise the potential for supporting understanding of, and belonging for other ethnic groups in their school.

Seventy-nine percent of teachers reported they are confident to incorporate learners' cultural knowledge into teaching and learning (see Figure 60).

Figure 60: *Teacher confidence incorporating learners' cultural knowledge into teaching and learning*



Source: ERO teacher survey

In schools that are doing this well, culturally responsive practice is a focus for professional development opportunities within the school. This is often grounded in effective practice for supporting Māori or Pacific learners. In these schools, teachers' cultural knowledge and practice is supported by in-school specialist knowledge or staff with ethnic identities or experience. Focused professional learning opportunities and collective inquiry support improved practice in schools that are doing well.

b) Challenges we found

Concerns regarding culturally responsive practices

Learners, whānau, and community members identified concerns about teachers' cultural competence and unconscious biases demonstrated in practice. This is seen in the selection of examples used in learning and the way in which teachers are unaware of key practices, events or developments affecting ethnic communities or their home countries.

Teachers believe they could better meet the needs of students from ethnic communities through sustained professional development on cultural competency, and through access to resources to support teaching for diversity.

Examples of successful strategies shared by schools:

→ Home languages as assets

Some schools use activities to prompt connection and opportunities for students to use their home language. These include developing digital messages about wellbeing in learners' own language and English that are shared with class and photographing "What success looks like" in the school environment. Learners use photos to write and talk about themselves and their aspirations through writing, oral language, and/or visual presentations.

→ Learning from conflicts

In several cases, teachers take opportunities to learn from conflict or cultural differences. This includes being responsive to children's questions about differences in cultural practices, and taking opportunities to explore current issues about cultural matters. In one school, playground skirmishes became an opportunity to develop understanding and sensitivities about cultural insults between children from different ethnicities, and ways to deal with cultural practices.

Good practice example 4: Culturally responsive practices

Teachers from a primary school in Dunedin reported that they acknowledge diversity by greeting students using their cultural norms, sharing news and events from their countries, and having the wall displays represent their diversity. Teachers also reported that their lessons allow for student-led inquiries into their culture.

We heard several strategies from teachers:

- “Use of traditional stories; encouraging inquiry related tasks centred around their [students'] culture and language.”*
- “Inquiry focuses such as ‘Stories from around the World’ which focus on the cultures within the classroom. ‘Taonga’ focus where children shared their treasures including cultural/family treasures with their class.”*
- “Making a language map – a Venn diagram showing all the languages students and teachers speak, learn, or are familiar with, and referring to it.”*
- “Being responsive to their individual needs and making sure they are happy to come to school, and that themselves and their individual cultures are valued in the classroom and the wider school community.”*
- “Researching and sharing authorship of texts of their ethnic communities’ political and social history, important past and current role models, science ideas and discoveries, etc, as material for reading, talking and sharing among others.”*

5) School leaders and teachers connect and partner with whānau and their ethnic communities

Strong relationships between schools, whānau, and their community are key to ensuring successful outcomes for learners from ethnic communities. Involving whānau as partners in their child's learning is crucial in promoting their progress. It also contributes to their feeling valued and included in school. When schools develop strong relationships with their ethnic communities, it increases opportunities for respectful dialogue and understanding of the varying perspectives, strengths and needs of their whānau and learners. This helps schools to better target their support for learners and their whānau.

Key practices for schools:

- Ensure staff interactions with whānau are warm, welcoming, and caring.
- Provide opportunities where whānau can connect with other adults at school and contribute to school life.
- Involve parents and community members in all stages of the school planning cycle.
- Build strong relationships with ethnic community leaders.
- Communicate information about school life and learning in multiple ways and languages as much as possible.
- Regularly and respectfully seek out the perspectives of whānau from ethnic communities about their concerns, planned developments, and what works best for them.

What we found

We found many schools are working hard to build relationships and connect with whānau of learners from ethnic communities, but whānau often experience gaps in communication that impact their ability to engage with the education system.

a) Good practice we found

The importance of warm, respectful relationships was emphasised as a foundation for learners and families to participate and engage in school. In schools that do this well, staff demonstrate a deep level of care for learners and their families. This is sometimes expressed as holistic, wrap-around support. Whānau members spoke to us about whānau-like relationships with school staff which make them feel at home. It enabled them to easily approach teachers and school leaders with any concerns or queries.

Regular, meaningful communication was identified as an important enabler for promoting partnership and sharing school and learning information. In schools that do this well, there are multiple communication platforms for sharing and listening.

Good practice example 5: Building partnerships

Teachers at one primary school in Auckland, where over half of their learners are from ethnic communities, have many ways of connecting with whānau of learners from ethnic communities to support learning. They are open to whānau being in the school and the classroom and provide opportunities for them to share about their cultures.

Teachers purposely seek opportunities to talk to their families about learning.

Regular use of a wide range of digital and face-to-face platforms provides many opportunities for meaningful learning conversations between teachers and parents. Learning partnerships are built on sustained teacher-learner-whānau relationships, developed over a three-year time period as a result of a deliberate school practice of a child only moving classes during their time at the school. Digital platforms include the *Dojo* app which supports learning conversations in different languages. The regular use of translators and translations for meetings, school documents and survey information also assist engagement.

In a primary school in Tauranga, a team of teachers, led by a multi-cultural programme team leader, works closely with families to support learning. On learning exhibition days, different cultural groups share their knowledge and skills in the way they like or works best for them. Families and students are invited to run workshops and share their stories, histories, art, songs, and cooking techniques with the school and in their classes.

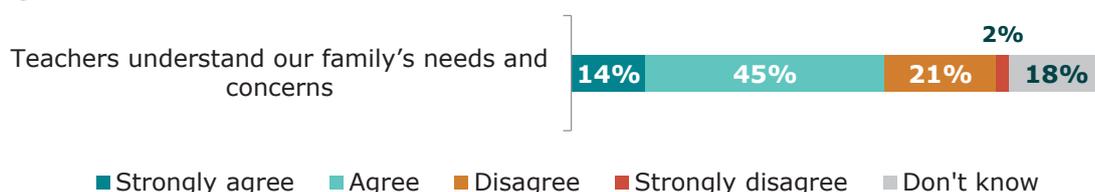
b) Challenges we found

Communication barriers

From our surveys and interviews, we found challenges faced in communication between schools and their whānau. Communication with whānau is supported by having vital information about school and learning translated into multiple languages and having bilingual staff present at hui and meetings. Whānau expressed they had a lack of clarity about the education system, curriculum and learning, and assessment practices. Some whānau felt there is a lack of connection between school leaders and their communities.

Most teachers reported their school has specific leaders to connect with their diverse ethnic communities. Around a fifth of whānau from ethnic communities do not feel teachers understand their family's needs or concerns (see Figure 61).

Figure 61: *Parent/whānau experience of teachers' intercultural understanding*



Source: ERO whānau survey

Teachers also expressed some challenges they face:

“not having access to interpreters and not being able to employ support staff who speak our students’ home languages can limit how we engage with our students’ families”

“limited knowledge of language teaching for multilingual learners”

TEACHERS

Mismatch of values and practices

Whānau and community members identified that there can be a mismatch in cultural and religious beliefs and practices between home and school. Sometimes this is in relation to curriculum content, school values and practices, or broader societal values. We heard learners and whānau can sometimes experience differences in:

- expectations that religious instruction is part of the curriculum
- how cultural or religious beliefs, customs, and traditions are not respected, as reflected by what is taught in the curriculum
- what is acceptable content in sexuality education
- understandings of what activities are appropriate in Physical Education
- attitudes and religious orientations to identifying as LGBTQ or transgender
- classroom discipline and what is acceptable behaviour.

“To be more understandable of our religion and culture and provide activities to support our second child. They almost forgot it make events for parents to be involved to understand the teaching system and stop teaching our children sex lessons completely. I am shocked when I found they will teach him that he has choice to any gender he wants. I started to think to leave not just school but all NZ. I am single mother and that just a lot for me to handle or deal with.”

PARENT

When this occurs, learners often have to work out how to deal with tensions and differences in understandings and expectations themselves. In some cases, this creates the potential for learners to be excluded from learning opportunities or for misunderstandings to develop between parents and schools.

“Migrant parents...often bring their collective approach into their home environment, which contradicts to the school’s preferred individual approach. These unique experiences can be heightened when they lack acknowledgment from their parents or teachers, and young people are left to negotiate the two different cultures without reference, which could lead to isolation. The latest can be a strength when one finds their feet in walking both worlds. However, it can lead to marginalisation when the two worlds collide.”

COMMUNITY LEADER – SUBMISSION

We also heard from our community youth leaders on the challenges of maintaining different identities and values at home and school.

“As a migrant you become used to carrying [different] identities at school and at your community or at home. It can be exhausting.”

COMMUNITY YOUTH LEADER

“The division between public life and private life – in school you present in a certain way and reflect certain (normal/Pākehā) behaviours and at home it’s about your family’s ethnic culture.”

COMMUNITY YOUTH LEADER

Lack of recognition

Whānau also told us there is sometimes a lack of connection between school and their communities. From our survey, only 29 percent felt that members of the Board understand the needs of their ethnic communities.

One community leader described what a lack of recognition of their ethnic identity looks like for parents and whānau trying to enrol their children at local schools, and how this impacts learners and their whānau.

“Recognition of the identity of children is extremely important for the self-respect, confidence and well-being of children...members of our community who have sought to enrol in schools have been told that their ethnic identities cannot be recognised and only those that are on the list... can be recognised, and these just refer to the major countries or continents, rather than ethnic identities.”

COMMUNITY LEADER

Examples of successful strategies shared:

→ Parent involvement in learning

Many schools appoint multi- or bi-lingual teacher aides from within the school/parent community. As well as helping with students' learning, these staff support teachers' understanding of language and cultural practices. It strengthens the school's contact with different ethnic groups and daily contact alerts school leaders to potential issues and successes. In some cases, parents acting in support staff roles enriches their understanding of the Aotearoa New Zealand curriculum/schooling system and teaching approaches.

→ Tailored information-sharing sessions

Some schools hold information evenings/presentations targeted for specific ethnic groups or languages to share curriculum information or preparation for Education Outside the Classroom activities to groups of parents. These presentations include translators, cultural practices, or cultural content.

In some regions, Ministry of Education Community Learning Hubs have been set up. These provide targeted sessions for parents and their children about aspects of the Aotearoa New Zealand education system to empower them in their learning journey. The Hubs offer the opportunity for schools to build relationships, and learn about and strengthen connections to their ethnic communities.

→ Communication

Several schools ensure school notices and communications about learning are regularly translated for families. In one school, they provide multiple digital or face-to-face platforms for engaging with families. Digital platforms are well monitored and include translation options – both for parents reading and replying to the school.

→ Seeking feedback

In several schools, leaders make opportunities to listen and seek feedback from whānau and ethnic communities. This occurs through regular meetings with community leaders (for example, mosque leaders), or hosting informal coffee mornings or planned hui to listen or communicate information. These meetings incorporate culturally relevant activities and protocols.

When schools engage meaningfully with whānau, they have positive impacts on the wellbeing of learners and their whānau.

“As immigrants we know there is no support structure for us. We don't have family here to help us out, we're on our own and have to figure it all out ourselves – got to keep our jobs, keep our kids healthy and maintain where they should be education-wise. It's a full plate we are trying to manage as immigrants. This school is the epitome of education with a heart – in the first week the principal knew who my child was, who we were, was fetching her for us. It's everywhere – even at Road Patrol – there's so much love coming out of the school – love, acceptance. At the start of the day, the principal is there: smiling, in the rain, greets every child and parent by name, knows who the parents are – he actually cares! And when you are leaving your children – the most important people in your lives – you are entrusting them, and it impacts you, especially if you don't have that support of family here. You want to know that your kids are getting the love that they're not getting from the family you've left behind in your home country.”

PARENT



Conclusion

There are good examples of schools and teachers who effectively support the engagement and learning of learners from ethnic communities and their whānau. However, practice can be variable, and there are a range of challenges schools face as they adapt to and embrace the increasing diversity of their learners. Tackling racism more effectively is a key priority.



Part 9: Findings and implications

This report has taken a deep look at the experiences of learners from ethnic communities in Aotearoa New Zealand schools. Ten key findings sit across this work which have implications for how we think about and deliver education now and in the future. This section sets out these findings and implications, and options for how we might move forward.

In this research, we answered three key questions.

- 1) How has ethnic diversity changed in schools and how will it change going forward?
- 2) What are the educational experiences and outcomes of learners from ethnic communities and their whānau?
- 3) What are good practices and challenges in meeting the needs of learners from ethnic communities?

To answer these questions, we spoke to, or interviewed, approximately 650 learners and whānau/community members from 40 ethnic communities across Aotearoa New Zealand. We also surveyed over 1,800 learners and whānau from ethnic communities. We have also learnt from the experiences of schools.

Our research found 10 key findings

- 1) Learners from ethnic communities are very diverse with a wide range of ethnicities, religions, cultures, time in New Zealand, and family backgrounds.**

More than two thirds of learners from ethnic communities were born in New Zealand. Many learners have multiple ethnicities, and more than half of ethnic communities speak multiple languages.

- 2) Aotearoa New Zealand is ethnically diverse, and this is changing quickly.**

Diversity is increasing across the country, but most rapidly in urban areas. Learners will be from a wider range of ethnic communities. By 2043, it is expected just over one in four (26 percent) learners will identify as Asian and around one in 20 (3.6 percent) will identify as Middle Eastern, Latin American, or African (MELAA). In Auckland, more than two in five (43 percent) learners will identify as Asian.

- 3) Many learners from ethnic communities achieve well in education.**

Looking at National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA), achievement and endorsements are higher for Asian learners than the New Zealand average, and both MELAA and Asian learners are more likely to achieve University Entrance and go onto university. However, there are significant differences across ethnic communities, and within all ethnic communities there are learners who are not achieving well.

4) Learners from ethnic communities experience widespread racist bullying, which too often is not taken seriously by their school.

One in five learners from ethnic communities have experienced racist bullying in the last month, and over half have seen others being bullied because of their ethnicity. Both whānau and learners report that racist bullying needs to be better identified and addressed at school. Nearly a third of learners from ethnic communities do not think their school takes racist bullying seriously.

5) Learners from ethnic communities often do not feel they belong.

Nearly one in five learners from ethnic communities reported they frequently feel they do not belong, and a third feel lonely at school. Nearly one in five also feel they have to hide their ethnic identity at school or feel excluded from activities because of their ethnic identity. MELAA learners, in particular, have very low wellbeing.

6) Education provision does not always reflect what whānau and learners from ethnic communities want.

As Aotearoa New Zealand changes, what communities want from education changes too. Education is not currently always reflecting what whānau from ethnic communities want. Four in 10 whānau, and nearly a third of learners from ethnic communities, do not feel schoolwork is challenging enough. Almost two thirds of whānau think schools should support their mother tongue, but there are 11 ethnic languages – including Hindi, which is the fourth most commonly spoken language in Aotearoa – which are not available as NCEA qualifications. Some whānau also want schools to teach more about religions.

7) Whānau from ethnic communities face barriers to engaging with schools.

Whānau from ethnic communities want to be part of their children's education. They attend parent information sessions more than any other activity but find information about their children's learning insufficient or confusing. They are significantly under-represented on school Boards – for example, only 2 percent of parents on school Boards are Asian.

8) Many learners from ethnic communities go on to tertiary study, but pathways are confusing, and, for some, choices are unfairly constrained by teachers' biases.

Learners from ethnic communities are more likely to go on to tertiary study than the New Zealand average. But for some, their choices are being constrained. More than one in four secondary learners from ethnic communities report that teachers' recommendations for their course selection are influenced by ethnicity. Both learners and whānau from ethnic communities find NCEA confusing. And a fifth of learners do not feel supported in choosing subjects or career pathways.

9) Some schools are already innovating and adopting new practices to meet the needs of ethnic communities.

ERO visited schools and found that many were adapting what and how they teach, were connecting with ethnic communities, and increasing their understanding of their learners' cultures and learning needs. However, we also found schools facing challenges as they adjust, that not all schools are adopting new practices, and many do not know if what they are doing is working.

10) Teachers' understanding of their learners, including their culture, is key to learners' experiences at school, but this needs building.

Teacher's understanding of cultures is not keeping up with our changing population. The teaching workforce does not reflect learners' ethnicities. For example, only 5 percent of teachers are Asian. Whānau and learners are concerned about teachers' lack of cultural knowledge and awareness. Teachers report having limited awareness of learners' cultural and learning needs. More than half of teachers do not feel confident connecting with ethnic communities. Half of the learners from ethnic communities reported having their names mispronounced by their teacher.

Implications for the future

These 10 key findings about learners from ethnic communities' experiences in education have strong implications for how we think about the future of education in Aotearoa New Zealand. This section draws on the findings, and the OECD conceptual framework for inclusive education for diverse societies,¹⁰⁵ to discuss the implications for education and how we might move forward to ensure education in Aotearoa New Zealand meets the needs of learners from ethnic communities.

We have identified five big implications when considering the future of education in Aotearoa New Zealand.

1) Every school needs to be able to respond to increased ethnic diversity.

Ethnic diversity is increasing across the country – not just in Auckland – and the largest changes are in our young population. This increase in ethnic diversity in schools is reflected in an increase in the diversity of cultures, and the diversity of languages spoken. Every school needs to be able to meet the needs of learners from ethnic communities so they not only continue to achieve in education but they also thrive at school.

2) Every school needs to be able to tackle racism.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, too many learners from ethnic communities experience racist bullying and racial biases. And, when they raise concerns, they are not always acted on. We must do better. Every school needs to be able to prevent and tackle racism.

3) We need to get better at delivering education for learners from ethnic communities.

We need to understand more about the learning experiences and outcomes that diverse ethnic communities want. This may include the types and locations of schools, and subjects taught. We must increase the cultural capability of the current teaching workforce, and develop a more ethnically diverse teaching workforce for the future.

4) We need to better understand the education experiences and outcomes for learners from ethnic communities, and give them a stronger voice in education.

In 2043, a quarter of learners will be from ethnic communities; their communities should have a strong say in the education they receive. Our learners from ethnic communities and their whānau are too often invisible in the data we collect in education, in the conversations we have about education, and in the decisions we make. We need to understand their experiences and outcomes (in particular, how they differ between different ethnic groups), and provide ethnic communities with a stronger voice in education.

5) For Aotearoa New Zealand's future we need education to be good for learners and their whānau from ethnic communities.

Learners and their whānau from ethnic communities have high aspirations for their education, and value maintaining their home languages. Supporting these aspirations and making Aotearoa New Zealand's education great for learners of all ethnicities and cultures, will help us strengthen our education system, workforce, culture, and relationships with other countries.

What now? Key focus areas for the future

This section outlines how we might move forward in making sure education in Aotearoa New Zealand meets the needs of learners from ethnic communities. It provides options for further exploration across five key areas. In each area there is already some existing policies and work underway – the question is how far and how fast to change.

- 1) Ending racism
- 2) Changing what is taught
- 3) Changing how it is taught (and who the teachers are)
- 4) Changing where it is taught (expanding options)
- 5) Increasing visibility and voice of ethnic communities

1) Ending racism

We must end racism in schools. Schools need to be able to recognise racism, understand its impacts, and tackle it more effectively. ‘Racism can be modified, it can be detected, prevented, minimised, and eliminated’.¹⁰⁶

Evidence shows that effective approaches to tackling racism require school leaders and teachers to develop awareness of the role of racial attitudes, and of culture and language. They need to (re)examine: the type and amount of information they have about communities, language, and racism; the feelings and opinions they have about difference, and about what issues are important; and the strategies they use to address them.¹⁰⁷ Additionally, it requires a whole-of school approach, working closely with families, with clear guidelines and strategies for consistent action.

Going forward there are options to:

- building off existing work, be clearer about what racism is, the effects it has, and set firmer expectations of Boards and schools to tackle racism
- provide stronger avenues for learners and whānau to raise concerns when racism is not tackled. This could include clear routes to raise concerns, which are then taken seriously, and advocacy support if needed
- understand and monitor racism in education and track how this is changing overtime. This could include establishing a clear way of identifying racism and reporting annually on incidences and outcomes
- make a more concentrated and concerted effort to tackle racism against those groups who are most often targeted, for example, MELAA learners. This could include targeted interventions and programmes to combat racism.

The strategic choices are:

- how far we set firmer requirements on schools to monitor, report on, and tackle racism (potentially with consequences) versus how far we want schools to have discretion on how and when they do this
- how we balance greater national and local monitoring with the need to not increase administrative burdens on teachers and schools.

2) Changing what is taught

In the future, what is taught in schools could be changed to reflect more closely what ethnic communities and their learners want from education.

Going forward there are options to:

- change the languages taught in schools (and the qualifications that can be gained) to reflect home/heritage languages of ethnic communities. This could mean a move away from the languages currently taught. In addition, there is international good practice which encourages out-of-school provision e.g., through establishment of community language schools as, for example, in Victoria and New South Wales in Australia
- change the way religions are taught about in schools. This could include encouraging schools to increase use of existing provisions for religious education within the curriculum or making it a compulsory subject, (as it is in England, for example)
- promote the flexibility that is currently available to schools to provide religious instruction and observance
- increase the visibility of ethnic communities and their histories in the curriculum. This could build off existing opportunities in the curriculum to include clear expectations about how this content would fit within the curriculum in Aotearoa New Zealand
- change the level of expectations/challenge (so it isn't too easy). This could include building on the high educational expectations ethnic communities hold for their learners by ensuring there are opportunities for extension in our curriculum and qualifications.

The strategic choices are:

- how much to centrally prescribe or leave to local discretion the teaching about religion
- the relative priority of home language versus languages used in trade or international relations
- how to provide opportunities for religious instruction or observance within Aotearoa New Zealand's tradition of secular education.



3) Changing how it is taught (and who teachers are)

In the future, teachers will need to be able to understand and respond to the needs of a much more ethnically diverse set of learners. We also know that having a school workforce that reflects the ethnic diversity of learners is important.

Going forward there are options to:

- develop the skills of all teachers through stronger expectations, training, and support on how to adjust their teaching to meet the needs of learners from ethnic communities, and how to identify and combat racism and unconscious bias. This could build on previous cultural competency frameworks developed for Māori learners (e.g. Tātaiako¹⁰⁸) and for learners with Pacific heritage (e.g. Tapasā¹⁰⁹)
- attract more members of ethnic communities into Aotearoa New Zealand teaching. This could include: providing targeted support for students from ethnic communities to become teachers, and for members of ethnic communities to become teacher aides; and increasing transparency of the ethnic makeup of the teaching workforce.

The strategic choices are:

- how far we prioritise educating, developing, resourcing and supporting teachers to raise their cultural capabilities
- how far we want to promote pathways into teaching for members of ethnic communities and encourage/direct/shape who schools recruit
- how we recognise international teaching experience/qualifications and overcome language barriers.

4) Changing where it is taught (expanding options)

In the future, our growing ethnic communities may want schools that match their values, faiths, or expectations in education. In Aotearoa New Zealand there is a strong tradition and existing mechanisms for creating schools with special character, for example, state integrated schools with a religious character.

Going forward there are options to:

- support or encourage ethnic communities to use existing mechanisms to create designated character schools or special units within schools (e.g. for language immersion)
- support, encourage, or direct existing schools to better reflect what their ethnic communities want from education.

The strategic choices are:

- how far we want to support communities to increase designated character schools in Aotearoa New Zealand education system or how far we want to encourage/direct schools to reflect the values of their communities (and what to do if they do not).

5) Increasing visibility and voice of ethnic communities

This report found that ethnic communities and their learners are mostly invisible in our education system. Data about how well they are faring is not collected or tracked. Their voices (learners and whānau) are not heard in governance.

Going forward there are options to:

- more routinely and rigorously collect and track information about these learners (both in schools and nationally). This could include requiring schools to understand the ethnic makeup of their roll and to track achievement of different ethnic groups; publishing more detailed indicators on educational outcomes of different ethnic groups nationally; ensuring that government agency surveys specifically target ethnic groups so that ethnic community voices are heard
- targeted and proactive co-opting of members of ethnic communities and learners on to Boards. This could include targets for school Boards' composition, providing more information to ethnic communities about how New Zealand schools are operated and the importance of school Boards (this could include expanding initiatives such as learning hubs and producing translated guides) and developing new forums for ethnic communities' voices.

The strategic choices are:

- how much to set targets and quota centrally for Board membership, how far to support Boards to co-opt members, and how far to promote the use of the fullest range of mechanisms possible (for example parental advisory groups) to increase ethnic communities' voice.

Conclusion

Aotearoa is becoming increasingly ethnically diverse. Education needs to embrace this change and adapt so that learners from ethnic communities and their whānau thrive. By 2043, learners from ethnic communities will be one quarter of all students. What they want for education matters.

This will, in turn, put Aotearoa New Zealand in a stronger position economically and culturally as the country becomes an even more attractive place for people from diverse ethnic communities to live, learn, work, and raise their families.



Appendices

Appendix 1: Methods

Mixed methods approach to data collection

Our research questions

This report focuses on examining the following key questions:

- 1) How has ethnic diversity changed in schools and how will it change going forward?
- 2) What are the education experiences of learners from ethnic communities and their whānau?
- 3) What are good practices and challenges in meeting the needs of learners from ethnic communities?
- 4) How can schools prepare for a more diverse future and how can they be supported?

This research has a strong focus on examining learner outcomes, and learner and whānau perspectives.

Through a voluntary sample of schools, this research took a deeper look at effectiveness of school and teaching practices across a wide range of areas and heard from a wide range of school staff.

ERO partnered with the Ministry for Ethnic Communities on this project to pool our collective expertise.

ERO also worked closely with an Expert Advisory Group, and Multicultural New Zealand, whānau, academics, practitioners, and agency officials.

Analytical framework

In developing an analytical framework for this research:

- we reviewed the latest national and international research on effective practice for supporting learning and engagement for learners from diverse ethnicities.

Mixed methods approach to data collection

This research uses a complementary mix of quantitative and qualitative data sources to ensure breadth and depth in examining the key evaluation questions:

a) ensuring breadth through:

- online surveys of teachers from a sample of schools
- online surveys of learners and their parents and whānau, which were sent out via schools and ethnic community organisation networks
- literature review, administrative and international survey data, and interviews with key informants and experts.

b) ensuring depth of understanding of current practices, enablers, and challenges through:

- case studies which entailed focus groups and interviews with learners and whānau from ethnic communities, school leaders, as well as document analysis and site visits
- focus groups and interviews with parents and whānau and community leaders from ethnic communities
- online focus groups with school leaders.

Case study sample recruitment

We sent an email invitation for participation to 30 schools across Aotearoa New Zealand. These schools were identified from the administrative data as having high proportions of learners from ethnic communities. We selected schools which had experiences with learners from ethnic communities, and that ensured good regional and demographic coverage across the country.

School visits

From the above pool, a sample of eight schools across the country participated in the case study component of this project. The schools were located in Auckland, Canterbury, Wellington, and Tauranga.

Each visit included: focus groups/interviews with learners, whānau, school leaders and teachers; document analysis; and classroom observations. The interviews were conducted by ERO's research team, which included those with specialist experience in reviewing school practice.

Five of the eight schools were Contributing (Year 1–6) schools and the rest were Secondary. The schools were spread across most of the deciles.

School visits took place during June and July of 2022.

Focus groups with learners and whānau were guided by semi-structured questions that were developed from the relevant literature and feedback from submissions on the proposed LTIB topic. The insights from these discussions helped in understanding the patterns that emerged from the survey data.

Focus groups with school staff and Board members were guided by semi-structured questions that were developed from the framework on culturally inclusive school practice. The team was able to identify examples of good practices and challenges that schools were facing and understand the main contributing factors.

Online focus groups with school leaders

Eight schools participated in the online school leaders' focus groups. There were two each of Full Primary (Year 1–8), Contributing (Year 1–6) and Secondary schools and one each of Composite, and Intermediate. They were spread across most decile groups.

Interviews with sector experts and stakeholders (remote and face to face)

Fifteen interviews were conducted with key experts and stakeholders in the sector, including the Ministry of Education, Comet Auckland and academics from the University of Auckland and University of Otago.

Surveys

We invited 120 schools from across Aotearoa New Zealand to participate in our online teacher survey. These schools were identified from the administrative data as having high proportions of learners from ethnic communities. We selected schools which had experiences with learners from ethnic communities, and ensured good regional and demographic coverage across the country. We also sent the online teacher survey to schools who participated in the case studies and online focus groups.

The online learner and whānau surveys were distributed through two channels:

- a) the sample of 120 schools who received the teacher survey, and the schools who participated in the case studies and online focus groups
- b) ethnic community organisations networks.

We received survey responses from 263 teachers across 30 schools.

We received survey responses from a total of 558 learners and 1,250 parents and whānau.

Analysis of survey data

Both the learner and parents and whānau survey responses were filtered to include only those respondents who identified as being from at least one ethnicity with the definition of ethnic communities, or who responded to a translated version of the survey. We plan to undertake further analysis on the excluded responses.

Profile of parents and whānau who responded to the survey (filtered):

- Ethnicity: 4 percent Pākehā; 6 percent other European; 1 percent Māori; 1 percent Pacific Peoples; and 5 percent Filipino; 1 percent Cambodian; 1 percent Vietnamese; 28 percent Chinese; 8 percent Indian; 2 percent Sri Lankan; 5 percent Japanese; 18 percent Korean; 7 percent Other Asian; 7 percent Middle Eastern; 5 percent Latin American; 4 percent African; 5 percent Other Ethnicity.

Note: Multiple ethnicities could be selected. Percentages were calculated from the number of responses to this question (n=673).

Profile of learners who responded to the survey (filtered):

- Ethnicity: 15 percent Pākehā; 8 percent other European; 1 percent Māori; 3 percent Pacific Peoples; and 6 percent Filipino; 2 percent Cambodian; 1 percent Vietnamese; 26 percent Chinese; 10 percent Indian; 4 percent Sri Lankan; 2 percent Japanese; 9 percent Korean; 17 percent Other Asian; 8 percent Middle Eastern; 3 percent Latin American; 10 percent African; 8 percent Other Ethnicity.

Note: Multiple ethnicities could be selected. Percentages were calculated from the number of responses to this question (n=432).

Analysis of secondary data

Various secondary data was used in this report, including NCEA achievement data from NZQA, and PISA and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) data from the Ministry of Education.

Analysis, sense-making, and testing of recommendations

At the end of interviews with each school, the interviewers had synthesis and sense-making discussions to assess the practice at each school against the evaluation framework.

The interview data and open-ended comments from surveys were analysed and coded to identify key themes. The quantitative survey data was analysed using SurveyMonkey and Excel.

Following analysis of the data from the surveys and interviews, sense-making discussions were conducted to test interpretation of the results, findings, and areas for action with:

- ERO's team of specialists in reviewing school practice
- Expert Advisory Group
- Steering Group.

We then tested and refined the findings with the following organisations to ensure they were relevant and useful:

- Ministry for Ethnic Communities
- Ministry of Education.

Some numbers may differ from those published previously in the consultation document due to rounding and final quality assurance checks.

Appendix 2: Consultation and engagement

At each stage of this project, we sought to engage with as many different ethnic communities as possible. We have worked closely with Ministry for Ethnic Communities (MEC) to ensure we reached a wide range of ethnic community groups, organisations and community leaders to provide us with feedback on the proposal,^{ad} and on the draft report: *Education For All Our Children: Embracing Diverse Cultures – Draft for consultation*.^{ae}

A summary of the initial consultation is here: ero.govt.nz/our-research/long-term-insights-briefing-summary-of-submissions-and-topic-decision. Below is a summary of submissions from the second phase of public consultation on the draft report, and our response.

The initial consultation document was available in seven languages: English, Te Reo, Arabic, Chinese (Simplified), Hindi, Japanese, Korean; and the Draft report summary and the Phase 2 Consultation questions were available in English, Arabic, Chinese (Simplified), Hindi, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese.

Consultation on the Draft Report

In November 2022, we published a LTIB draft report and asked for submissions. The public consultation ran from 22 November to 20 December.

We received 35 written submissions. Seven submissions were on behalf of organisations which included: Asian Family Services, Al-Noor Trust, IWCNZ, NZPF, Wellington Tamil Society, New Zealand Sikh Youth, and Chinese High School Students' Association of New Zealand. We received four submissions on behalf of schools, and 26 submissions from individuals who were teachers, principals, board members, and parents.

We also conducted six community consultation hui between November and December 2022. Of the six, four were arranged in cooperation with the Ministry for Ethnic Communities (MEC) – including two with MEC ethnic youth leaders and academics, one in association with Multicultural New Zealand (MNZ), and one with religious organisations. Participants identified with a range of ethnicities including: Korean, African, Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Sri Lankan, Pākehā/New Zealand European, Middle Eastern, Latin American, South-East Asian, Kiwi-Indian, Indian, Chinese, Netherlands, Jewish.

Our consultation for the draft report sought out the opinions and reflections about the draft report through the following questions:

- How well do findings in the report reflect their experiences?
- What is the most surprising and why?
- What have we missed reporting on?
- What changes should schools/the system make?

We also provided an opportunity for other feedback. A summary for each of the questions and our responses to them is described below.

^{ad} Phase 1 Topic and Scope consultation <https://ero.govt.nz/our-research/embracing-diverse-cultures-schools-practice>
^{ae} <https://ero.govt.nz/our-research/education-for-all-our-children-embracing-diverse-ethnicities>

1) How well do findings in the report reflect their experiences?

- For the first question, the submissions were largely positive. From our hui, the two groups from the MEC hui indicated that the findings reflected their experiences very well, while the remaining groups found it fairly reflective. As for our written submissions, 12 people and three organisations found the report's findings were reflective of their and their members' experiences. Two schools, two organisations, and four individuals (who are staff in a school) thought the report poorly represented their experiences because they found the report did not capture good practices and positive experiences.

2) What is the most surprising and why?

- Although most of our submitters were not surprised by the findings of the report, there were some elements that caught their attention such as population projections, the pervasive presence and experiences of racism in schools, and gaps in perceptions between school staff and students. A few submitters from schools and our hui indicated they were surprised that the report did not cover certain elements such as the *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*, and regional differences.

How we responded: We have since added a context piece in the report which includes infographics based on regions. We have also added a statement which more clearly describes the centrality of *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* to our approach.

3) What have we missed reporting on?

- We had a range of responses identifying missing elements from the report. Most frequently raised by participants from schools were the lack of good practices examples and positive experiences.

How we responded: In response to this feedback, we provided additional vignettes to describe the positive experiences of learners, parents and whānau, and additional examples of good practices in schools which have been shared with us.

- Ethnic community youth leaders highlighted the challenges and difficulties of navigating home and school expectations which required high degrees of resilience and supportive communities. Another element that submitters from our organisations and hui found missing was adequate recognition of the complexity and nuance of ethnicities, and how this contributes to challenges and efforts required for meaningful change.

How we responded: In the current report, we have addressed this by adding a contextual piece that highlights the diversity of languages, religious beliefs, and migration backgrounds within and across ethnicities.

- Some of the submissions on behalf of the organisations indicated that more nuanced analyses would elevate the report.

How we responded: For the current report, we conducted additional analyses to highlight group differences among ethnicities, number of years in New Zealand, and generational variations. We have also included statistics on workforce diversity and students' learning achievement. We include a new section to the report (Part 2) where we describe, in further detail, the diversity in New Zealand. Additionally, we present current and future demographic details of the larger population as well as within the learner population.

- Submissions from schools, including school leaders and teachers, expressed the report did not adequately cover teacher voice.

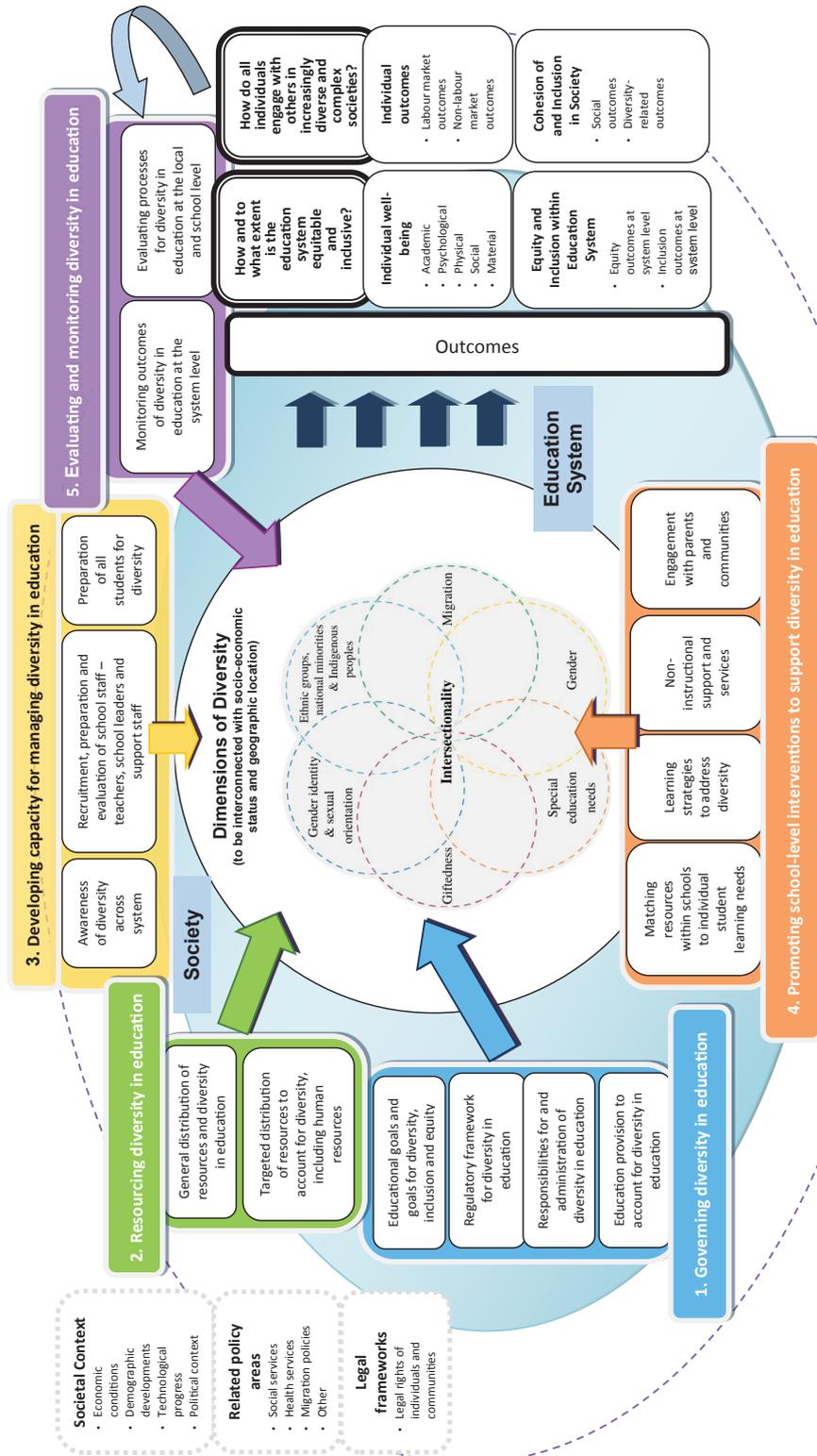
How we responded: In this report, we have increased the visibility of teacher voice throughout, to not only acknowledge and recognise good practice and efforts, but to also highlight identified challenges and where support is needed.

4) What changes should schools/the system make?

- Respondents had several suggestions and recommendations for improvement for schools and the education system. From our school-based submissions we heard that fewer demands need to be placed on schools and educators and more support needs to be provided to embrace diversity. Some of the individuals, who were parents or school Board members, expressed the importance of demonstrating how ethnic diversity is embraced. For example, having more cultural celebrations and encouraging students to use their native language at school. From organisations and our hui, we heard that the cultural diversity needs to be embedded within the curriculum in meaningful ways (e.g., history of immigration, literature) and for increased representation of ethnic diversity of personnel at multiple levels (e.g., teaching, ministry, Board, leaders). The importance of resourcing and leadership was underscored by submissions from organisations and through our community hui.
- Common among all submissions was the need to improve support and empowerment for cultural competency to help engage with students and communities. This includes leadership, and resourcing and support from relevant organisations or agencies such as the Education Review Office and the Ministry of Education.
- The feedback we received focused on improving systems and policies that increase engagement and participation between communities and education providers. Some submitters advocated for a space for ethnic communities to voice their concerns, needs, and opinions, so they can be heard. Submitters also noted the need for further detail in our report describing what directions or actions are required to address these issues for the future.

How we responded: We have provided further detail and focus in our *Findings and Implications* section (Part 9). Under a new *What Now* section, we provide options for further exploration across five key areas: Ending racism; Changing what is taught; Changing how it is taught (and who the teachers are); Changing where it is taught (expanding options); and Increasing visibility and voice of ethnic communities. For each area we identify some options for the future, and some considerations for strategic decision-making.

Appendix 3: Promoting inclusive education for diverse societies – A conceptual framework¹¹⁰



Cerna, L., et al. (2021), Promoting inclusive education for diverse societies: A conceptual framework. *OECD Education Working Papers*. No. 260, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/94ab68c6-en>.

Appendix 4: Population Projections

This report uses the most up-to-date, available projections from Stats NZ (as at 1 November 2022). For national projections we use “National ethnic population projections: 2018(base)–2043 (update)”, published in September 2022, which is available at: www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/national-ethnic-population-projections-2018base2043-update/. For regional projections we use “Subnational ethnic population projections: 2018(base)–2043”, published in March 2022, which is available at: www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/subnational-ethnic-population-projections-2018base2043.

This report uses the median projections for 5 to 19-year-olds.

As noted by Stats NZ¹¹¹:

“These projections are not predictions. They should be used as an indication of the overall trend, rather than as exact forecasts. The projections are updated every 2–3 years to maintain their relevance and usefulness, by incorporating new information about demographic trends and developments in methods.

At the time of release, the median projection (50th percentile) indicates an estimated 50 percent chance the actual value will be lower, and a 50 percent chance the actual value will be higher, than this percentile.

National ethnic population projections indicate the future population usually living in New Zealand for eight broad and overlapping ethnic groups: ‘European or Other (including New Zealander)’, Māori, Asian, Pacific, Chinese, Indian, Samoan, and MELAA (Middle Eastern/Latin American/African). New Zealand’s ethnic populations are not mutually exclusive because people can and do identify with more than one ethnicity. People are included in each ethnic population they identify with.

The projections indicate probable outcomes based on different combinations of fertility, mortality, migration, and inter-ethnic mobility assumptions. Users can make their own judgement as to which projections are most suitable for their purposes.”

Projection assumptions

Projection assumptions are formulated after analysing short-term and long-term trends, recent trends and patterns observed in other countries, and government policy.” (Stats NZ, 2018)

Migration assumptions

Migration assumptions are applied to each age-sex group to allow for net migration (migrant arrivals minus migrant departures). Ethnicity is not collected directly in external migration data, but the migration assumptions are based on the ethnicity of migrants derived from other government data (linked administrative sources); an assessment of recent and expected trends of arrivals and departures of New Zealand citizens and non-New Zealand citizens by birthplace; and observed intercensal ethnic population change.

The 2019–2020 years saw high net migration gains. The impact of COVID-19 and the resulting New Zealand and international border closures, significantly reduced migration flows in 2021–2022. The impact of this differs across different ethnicities. Under the median assumptions, net migration levels are assumed to increase from the 2022 low to their long-term levels (2026–2043). However, future net migration is uncertain and is assumed to fluctuate around the median.

Please see www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/national-ethnic-population-projections-2018base2043-update/ for more information including the assumptions relating to: Base population, Fertility and paternity, Mortality, and Inter-ethnic mobility.

About the data in the following infographic

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Stats NZ (n.d). *Ethnic group (detailed total response – level 3) by age and sex, for the census usually resident population count, 2006, 2013, 2018 Censuses. 2043: Stats NZ (n.d.). [Data set].*

Note: Differences are percentage points.

Ethnic diversity in Aotearoa New Zealand is increasing

In 2018, 15.1% of the population identified as Asian and 1.5% as MELAA



Asian

Year	Percentage
2006	9.2%
2018	15.1%

5.9% ↑

Diversity has also changed within this community

Ethnicity	2006	2018
Chinese	42%	35%
Indian	30%	34%
Filipino	5%	10%
Korean	9%	5%

MELAA

Year	Percentage
2006	0.9%
2018	1.5%

0.6% ↑

Diversity has also changed within this community

Ethnicity	2006	2018
Middle Eastern	50%	40%
Latin American	19%	37%
African	31%	24%



Appendix 5: Practice framework for supporting learners from ethnic communities

Domains of Practice	Critical Factors	Examples of Practices
Students' wellbeing and peer relationships	<p>Students' wellbeing and peer relationships are supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → a positive wellbeing culture → holistic approaches to wellbeing support, including Kaupapa Māori approaches → opportunities to develop student friendships, including cross-cultural → teachers monitoring how people from diverse backgrounds are referenced, and countering attitudes and values that underpin racism and prejudice → explicit links to <i>Te Tiriti o Waitangi</i> and indigenous Māori heritage to help construct a collective identity sense of belonging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Informal/formal classroom and school-wide activities that bring students of different backgrounds together → Use of a buddy system to support newly arrived learners who are new to the country → (Racist) bullying incidents are responded to in a timely and restorative way → Teachers and students have a common language and set of principles for responding to sensitive incidents → Safe and inclusive spaces are provided (physical and social) where young people of all ethnic groups can safely connect over issues of importance, discuss concerns and create solutions together

Domains of Practice	Critical Factors	Examples of Practices
<p>School/ Classroom climate</p>	<p>Students experience ‘culturally secure’ learning environments which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → are welcoming, nurturing, cooperative and affirming and promote sense of belonging → value community languages, practices, and ways of being → actively promote and normalise the inclusion of various forms of difference → foster inclusive language and respectful relationships → provide opportunities for students to express their voice 	<p>Learning environments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → are rich with cultural artifacts → offer regular opportunities for students to celebrate success and their language, culture and identity <p>Teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → demonstrate equitable treatment and respect for others, for example, learning to pronounce unfamiliar names correctly → identify and reduce barriers to students’ participation in school activities → promote power sharing, equal treatment and address microaggressions → use a range of effective communication strategies, including using interpreters and translations if needed → acknowledge the contributions of all students and seek feedback from students on improvements

Domains of Practice	Critical Factors	Examples of Practices
<p>Student-teacher relationships</p>	<p>Students' relationships with their teachers are supported through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → teachers' development of extended family-like relationships → reciprocal learning partnerships, based on the concept of ako → a culture of caring, mutual respect and trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Teachers and students freely share aspects of themselves and their lives (ako, reciprocity, whakawhānaungatanga) → Teachers demonstrate deep knowledge of students and their families and students' home lives → Teachers encourage students to use their students' given names instead of shortening or adopting English names that have no cultural meaning for them → Teachers provide weekly catch-up time for students to share their stories

Domains of Practice	Critical Factors	Examples of Practices
<p>Engagement with families</p>	<p>Students benefit from home/school partnerships where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → parents are an integral part of school life and empowered to participate → there is a focus on relationship-building and providing a safe place for whānau → schools actively engage with whānau to share aspirations for their children and support students' engagement and learning → engagement is <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – reciprocal – relational – culturally and linguistically responsive – the needs of the parents are acknowledged and they are allowed to define the nature of their school engagement 	<p>School leaders and teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → sensitively undertake enrolment processes to know the learner and their family → provide opportunities for families to share aspects of their culture and language with the school → make use of interpreters for parent-teacher meetings to enrich participation of parents/communities and provide resources in multiple languages for families → provide opportunities for families to increase understanding of New Zealand's education system → provide opportunities for families to discuss their aspirations and concerns for their children, including for their bi/multilingual learning and encourage them to support the maintenance of home languages → enact strategies that involve parents and community members from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds in all aspects of school life → provide safe places for whānau within the school

Domains of Practice	Critical Factors	Examples of Practices
<p>Community engagement</p>	<p>Connecting with community organisations is supported through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → actively fostering community-building → authentic engagement and on-going consultation and dialogue with wider community → relationships with families and other agencies and organisations are seen as critical → conversations with communities about what they desire and want to sustain through schooling → promoting student fellowship and community networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Connecting with local communities to access resources for culturally responsive learning that fits the community → Members of the school community are actively involved in creating the vision for a culturally inclusive school through on-going consultation and dialogue → Celebrations of diverse cultures which raise the mana of students in schools and communities through cultural or religious events etc. → Being sensitive to and concerned about any social and political unrest which might be happening in the home countries of families → Enhancing community networks for youth so that they are supported → Use of ‘cultural brokers’ which liaise with schools and communities to engage and support former refugee and new migrant families

Domains of Practice	Critical Factors	Examples of Practices
<p>Leadership and governance</p>	<p>Leadership and governance strategies to support inclusive, culturally responsive practices include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → a relentless focus on acknowledging, respecting and embracing difference → creating a shared vision for a culturally inclusive school → providing professional development to help staff understand their unconscious bias and deliver culturally responsive practice → increasing their awareness of and responses to young people who face discrimination → leaders demonstrate being comfortable with difference 	<p>School leaders and trustees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → develop policies and plans which incorporate inclusion and diversity and there is shared responsibility for implementing these → critically analyse current practice and policy to identify codes, processes and policies that disproportionately impact learners and families from ethnic communities → show a readiness and interest in learning about different perspectives, ideas, opinions and ways of doing things → evaluate the implementation of policies and the effectiveness of strategies for learners and whānau from ethnic communities, and identify further goals and actions → provide teachers with professional development and appraisal that has a focus on equity, anti-bias, multicultural, and culturally responsive/ sustaining pedagogies

Domains of Practice	Critical Factors	Examples of Practices
<p>Teacher cultural competency and dispositions</p>	<p>Teacher competence is demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → a readiness to learn about different perspectives, cultures and ideas, a growth mindset → having high expectations for each student → seeing students' home languages and cultural knowledge as an asset → recognising their own cultural frames of reference and understand how their assumptions, unconscious biases, experiences and beliefs influence their teaching → comfort with discussing race, culture, racism and bias 	<p>Teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → actively seek to learn about and discuss race and culture → reflect on their own beliefs, world-views and teaching practices → demonstrate knowledge of students' cultural, ethnic, and social identities → recognise the multi-layers of diversity, e.g., the differing migration statuses and backgrounds of students and their families → inquire into the effectiveness of their teaching for all learners → provide opportunities to use first language in classroom and multilingualism is seen as a normal and necessary part of the classroom → teachers learn about and understand unfamiliar cultural practices and embrace everyday inclusion instead of tokenistic celebrations

Domains of Practice	Critical Factors	Examples of Practices
<p>Curriculum design</p>	<p>Students benefit from a curriculum that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → is connected to students' real-life worlds and draws on their life experiences, frames of reference and languages → uses students' strengths as instructional starting points, and capitalises on their cultural backgrounds rather than overriding or negating them → centres students' languages, literacies, and cultural ways of being meaningfully and consistently in classroom learning instead of being considered as "add-ons" → provides students with the knowledge and skills needed to function in mainstream culture while also helping them maintain their cultural identity, native language, and connection to their culture 	<p>Teachers provide a balanced and inclusive curriculum that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → reflects the cultural, linguistic and religious diversity of students → makes minority groups visible → exposes students to a wide range of opinions and ideas → connects learning to the histories of cultural, racial, ethnic, and linguistic communities both locally and nationally → develops critical thinking skills and critical consciousness, including discussing aspects of race and bias → provides a wide variety of texts, pictures, and experiences → reflects the local community and <i>Te Tiriti o Waitangi</i> partnership in New Zealand, and promotes the history and culture of New Zealand to support help students develop a sense of identity and belonging in the host country

Domains of Practice	Critical Factors	Examples of Practices
Instructional practices/ pedagogy	<p>Students benefit from culturally responsive teaching practice which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → uses students' cultural knowledge, native language, experiences, prior knowledge as to facilitate learning → includes collaborative learning experiences to encourage students' participation and help build relationships → provides multiple options for how students can interact with instructional content → adopts language practices that demonstrate flexibility and a respect for both English and the students' home languages → sustains cultural and linguistic practices, while providing access to the dominant culture 	<p>Teacher Practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → inviting students to share their cultural knowledge, e.g., explain cultural meanings behind artefacts, festivals etc → using culturally familiar scenarios, examples, and vignettes, students' experiences, prior knowledge, and interests to facilitate teaching and learning → encouraging critical thinking and questioning in relation to 'information' and knowledge' → providing ready access to diverse resources (e.g., texts written in diverse languages and about diverse cultural practices) → language practices that are flexible and demonstrate a respect for both English and the students' home languages → explicit and systematic instruction → focused vocabulary development → use of predictable routines → engaging students with open-ended, rich visuals and creative tasks → use of consistent spoken and body language with all students to avoid unconscious bias in verbal or nonverbal cues

Domains of Practice	Critical Factors	Examples of Practices
Classroom management	<p>Students benefit from classroom management practices which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → are proactive and prioritise social emotional learning approaches → are fair, clear and consistent → consider students' cultural influences when responding to conflicts or challenging situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → The teacher gives clear instructions and directives → Rules and practices (for respectful behaviour and communication) reflect an openness to differing attitudes, beliefs and world views → The teacher uses inclusive language (e.g. monitoring the use of 'we', 'us', 'them', 'they' and positioning of people to these words) → The teacher establishes rules which help students effectively discuss controversial issues → The teacher encourages negotiation skills to bring about fairness when there are different points of view
Assessment	<p>Students benefit from assessment practices which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → are designed/adapted in response to diverse needs → include formative assessment and scaffolding → allow multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate what they have learned using a variety of assessment techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Use of formative assessment, providing timely and appropriate feedback → Breaking up larger assessments into smaller parts → Blind grading techniques → Assessments recognise the cultural strengths of students → Students have multiple opportunities to demonstrate in different ways what they have learned



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