

## Educationally powerful connections with parents and whānau

The Education Review Office (ERO) evaluated how well schools worked with parents and whānau in their response to students at risk of underachievement. The report shares the stories of schools that developed effective relationships with families to accelerate and improve achievement for students who weren't doing well.

ERO found that the most important factors for success were:

- a whole-school focus on involving parents and whānau
- the focus and complexity of the collaboration changed as students got older
- teachers and leaders involving parents and whānau in designing and implementing a solution to underachievement.

These factors meant that students extended their learning across school and home.

The report includes some powerful quotes from students, parents and teachers.

Students:

*"I've really enjoyed it – I've taught mum all these new games. It's fun and I haven't been struggling in maths anymore and I can get my work completed."*  
*"[It] makes us feel like we have a place in the school."*

Parents:

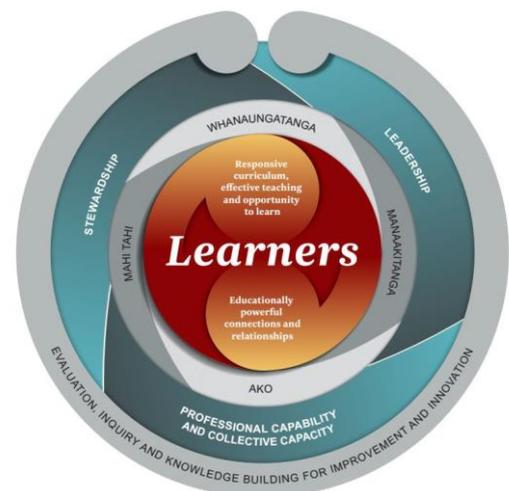
*"We want the school to see the good in our boys, and recognise and build on their mana as young Māori men."*  
*"We realised the school was with us once they really listened to us. They helped us with our boys as well as helping our boys."*

Teachers and leaders:

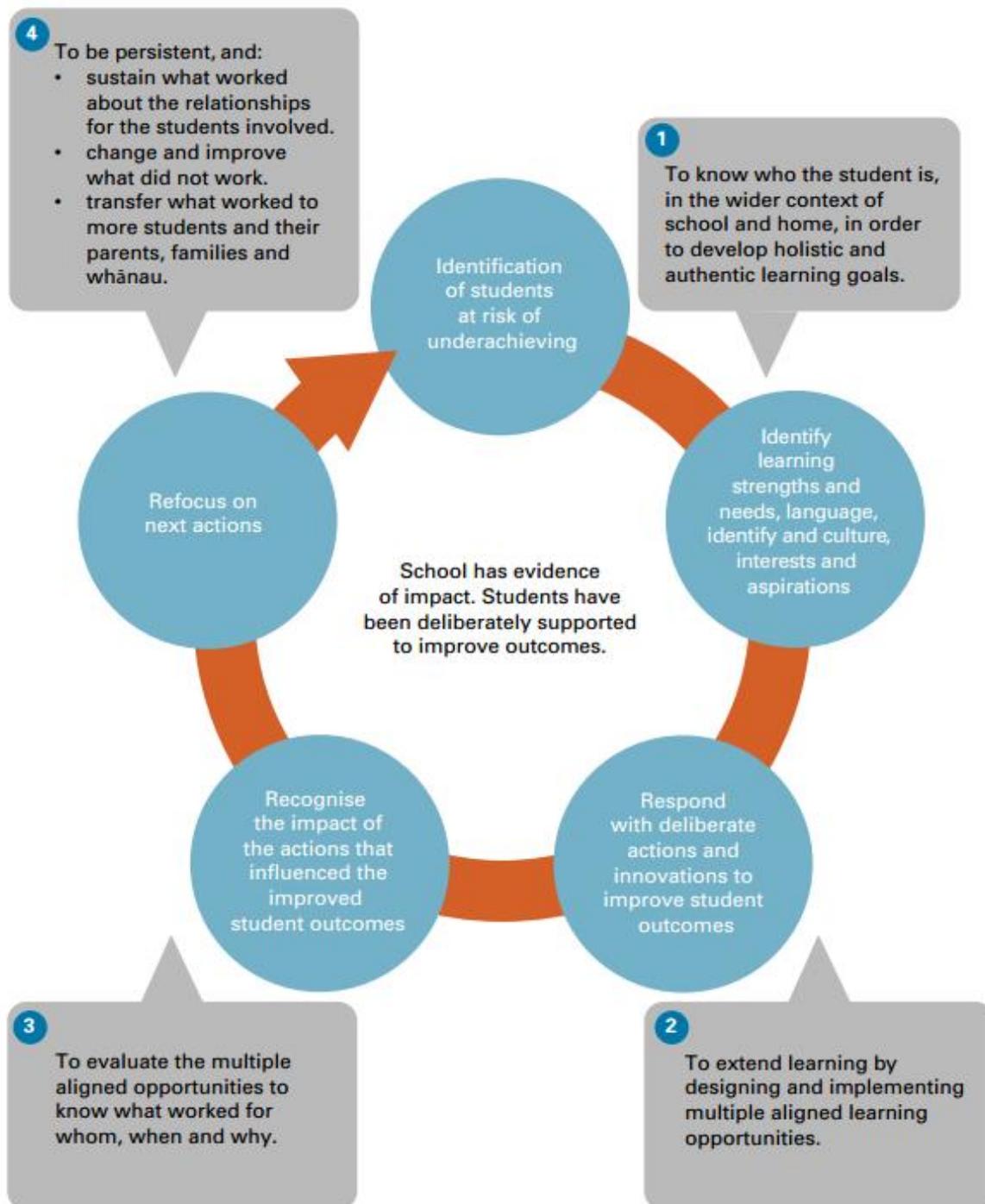
*"The students are more focused and engaged in learning. It's great to see them succeeding."*  
*"I hadn't really thought about how wide an impact students' underachievement could have on a family... We are trying to engage with more families before they get to this stage of frustration with us."*

ERO's *School Evaluation Indicators* highlight effective relationships with parents and whānau, in particular indicators from three domains:

- Leadership of conditions for equity and excellence.
- Educationally powerful connections and relationships.
- Responsive curriculum, effective teaching and opportunity to learn.



Teachers and leaders may find the following inquiry framework useful when thinking about how to improve learning partnerships with the parents and whānau of students who are not achieving:



Based on *The New Zealand Curriculum Teaching as Inquiry* tool.