



# Briefing report

## Education Review Office (ERO): Exploring Collaboration in Action: Kahukura Community of Practice

Date	29 January 2021
Security Level	N/A
ERO Priority	Medium
ERO Reference	M20-34
Date requested	ERO initiated
Date due	ERO initiated
Proactive release	Recommended

Addressee	Action sought	Deadline
<b>Associate Minister of Education</b>	<p>It is recommended that you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <b>note</b> the attached reports <i>Exploring Collaboration in Action: Kahukura Community of Practice</i> and <i>Collaboration in Action: Lessons from a Community of Practice</i>.</li> <li>b) <b>note</b> that ERO intends to release these reports on 3 March 2021, and to host a research event on collaboration on 19 March 2021.</li> <li>c) <b>note</b> this briefing is recommended for proactive release.</li> </ul>	



### Attachments:

**Education Review Office (ERO):  
Exploring Collaboration in Action:  
Kahukura Community of Practice  
Collaboration in Action: Lessons  
from a Community of Practice**



### Comments:

Minister's Office to complete	
Noted	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seen	<input type="checkbox"/>
Approved	<input type="checkbox"/>
Referred to:	
Date signed by Minister:	



Our Ref: M20-34

29 January 2021

**Hon Jan Tinetti**  
**Associate Minister of Education**

## **Exploring Collaboration in Action: Kahukura Community of Practice**

### **Purpose**

1. This briefing provides you with key findings from an evaluation undertaken by ERO of the Kahukura Community of Practice (Kahukura), a community of schools based in Christchurch.

### **Collaboration supports greater learner outcomes**

2. Evidence confirms that collaboration between schools, focused on improving teaching and learning, has a positive impact on raising student, school and system performance.<sup>1</sup>
3. The Tomorrow's School review acknowledged that previous reforms in education have contributed to an autonomous approach and a culture of distrust between schools and that these reforms had stifled collaboration and transfer of knowledge and skills among New Zealand schools.<sup>2</sup>
4. As part of our research and evaluation work programme, ERO has an ongoing programme of work that looks at how collaboration across schools can contribute to improving student outcomes. In the collaboration in action series of reports, published between 2017 and 2019, ERO presents examples of collaboration between schools in order to encourage and support collective improvement.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Education Review Office (2016). [ERO-15968-School-Evaluation-Indicators-2016-v10lowres.pdf](#)

<sup>2</sup> The Ministry of Education (2019). *Tomorrows School Review-Government-Response*. Retrieved from: <https://conversation.education.govt.nz/assets/TSR/November-2019/TSR-Government-Response-WEB.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> ERO's collaboration in action series of reports can be accessed at the following link: <https://www.ero.govt.nz/find?Keywords=Collaboration+in+action>

## **ERO's evaluation of Kahukura**

5. In 2019, ERO was approached by principals of Kahukura to document and evaluate their community of practice (CoP). The principals wanted to share lessons and insights from operating a CoP and to identify areas for enhancement.
6. Kahukura is composed of seven schools: Addington Te Kura Taumata; Cashmere Primary Te Pae Kererū; Christchurch South Intermediate; Somerfield Te Kura Wairepo; Sacred Heart School (Addington); Thorrington Primary; and Te Ara Koropiko. Kahukura was formed from existing relationships in response to the 2010/11 Christchurch earthquakes. The principals of the schools involved wanted their own structure of collaboration, and established their community of practice to allow for:
  - a. local solutions to the local educational problems affecting their learners, rather than focusing exclusively on achievement objectives
  - b. flexibility with the responsibilities and remuneration of positions, with a desire for Kahukura leaders to not be taken out of their school role.
7. ERO visited each of the schools in the CoP during Term 2, 2019, and spoke to staff, students, and parents, and reviewed their documentation. This data was supported by the use of a new method called 'Social Network Analysis' (SNA), which measures the strength and quality of relationships.

## **What ERO found**

### **Kahukura supports collective improvement for the schools**

8. Since Kahukura was established, it has made strong progress in achieving its vision and learner outcomes. An ongoing focus on school improvement is driven through teacher inquiry, collective teacher efficacy, and Lead teachers.
9. Kahukura is supported by their: collective and shared leadership structure; clear purpose and unified focus; shared infrastructure and resourcing; joint inquiry; strong communication and relational trust.

### **Kahukura adds value to the schools, which would not exist without collaboration**

10. Kahukura has clearly defined focus areas that support student learning and wellbeing and has initiated collective and systematic monitoring and evaluation which will help Kahukura understand impacts on teacher practice and student outcomes.

## **Kahukura is likely to be sustainable into the future**

11. Kahukura includes the three components that define a community of practice, which are likely to support sustainability into the future. These components are:
  - a. Domain: Kahukura schools have a shared interest.
  - b. Community: Kahukura has well established leadership and decision-making processes.
  - c. Practice: Collaborative inquiry in each of the focus area helps to support improved teaching practice and sharing of resources is increasingly happening across Kahukura.

## **Key lessons for schools interested in collaborating**

12. Based on key lessons from Kahukura, ERO has identified seven lessons for schools to consider when collaborating. These include:
  - a. **Having a shared vision and priorities:** Leadership needs to consider what their schools are hoping to achieve, and how collaboration will help support this.
  - b. **Clear decision-making processes and communication are important:** Agreement on how decisions are made and how actions are delivered are important features of collaborative networks.
  - c. **Distributed leadership, role clarity and a shared direction are key:** Working collectively requires clarity around how roles and responsibilities of members will be defined, along with a shared direction into the future.
  - d. **Calibrate the network to the local context:** Leadership needs to consider the scope and boundaries of the network as it develops, such as the governance structure and the key people who need to collaborate.
  - e. **Recognise the importance of relationships:** Relationships are the basis of collaboration. Consideration needs to be given to the characteristics of collaboration: the purpose; frequency; and between who.
  - f. **Pay attention to resourcing:** Financial and time resources to collaborate will need to be scrutinised. Leaders need to consider how much resourcing will be required, and what may be forgone if resourcing is put into collaboration.
  - g. **Monitor and measure impacts and progress:** Agreement from the outset on the purpose of collaboration and what success will look like is important. Periodically, making time to reflect how the network is progressing is key.

## Next steps

13. To encourage and support greater collaboration between schools and, ultimately, improved student outcomes, ERO will be sharing their research with leaders and teachers. We will do this by:
  - a. publishing the attached reports: *Exploring Collaboration in Action: Kahukura Community of Practice* (Appendix 1) and, a shorter report, *Collaboration in Action: Lessons from a Community of Practice* (Appendix 2), on the ERO website on 3 March 2021. The reports will be designed and finalised prior to publication
  - b. having you launch the report in Christchurch on 3 March 2021
  - c. holding a research forum on 19 March on collaboration in action to share findings from this and other ERO research on collaboration.
14. Attached is a draft media statement for (Appendix 3) for your consideration.
15. Given the importance of collaboration to learner outcomes, ERO will continue to identify opportunities to build the evidence base on what works, where, and why.

## Recommendations

16. It is recommended that you:

- a) **note** the attached reports *Exploring Collaboration in Action: Kahukura Community of Practice* and *Collaboration in Action: Lessons from a Community of Practice*  Yes  No
- b) **note** that ERO intends to release these reports on 3 March 2021, and to host a research event on collaboration on 19 March  Yes  No
- c) **note** this briefing is recommended for proactive release.  Yes  No



Ruth Shinoda  
**Acting Chief Executive**

NOTED/APPROVED



Jan Tinetti  
**Associate Minister of Education**  
**with responsibility for the Education Review Office**

8 / 02 / 2021  
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