

FALE PASIFIKA

Our framework for lifting Pasifika educational achievement at Titahi Bay School 2016 - 2020.

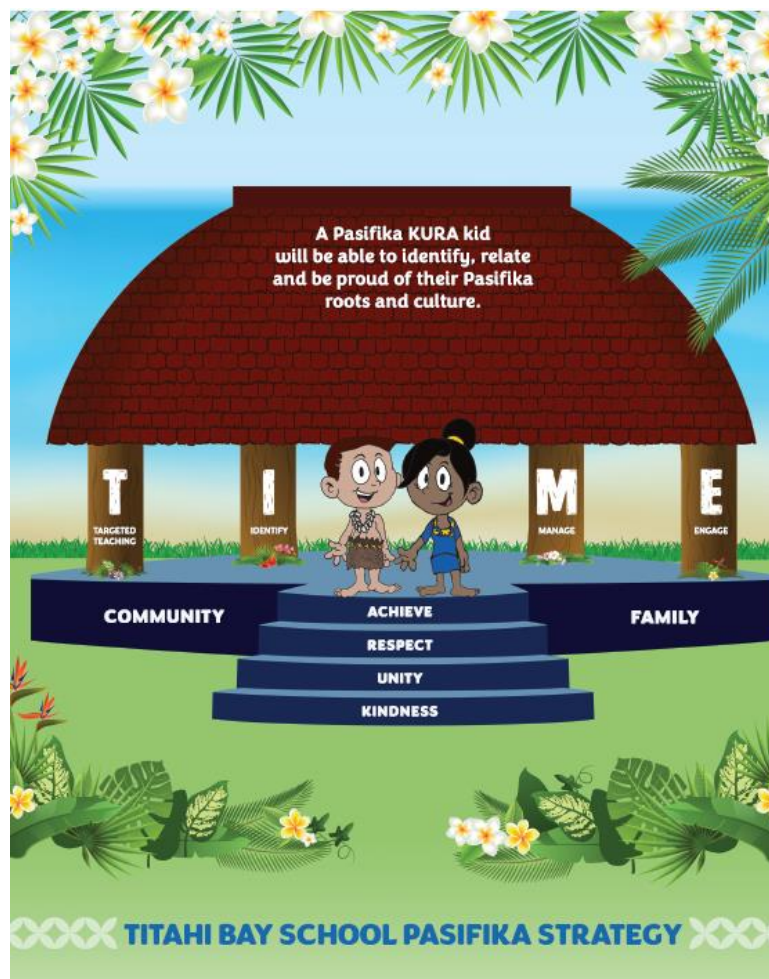
Titahi Bay School is in the heart of Titahi Bay, Porirua. We have over 430 students, 12% of which identify as Pacific.¹

Fale Pasifika is the strategic framework in which our School aims to operate under to lift Pasifika education achievement at our School. This framework is intended to work and co-exist with our School's Charter, our School's Maori Strategic framework, and the Ministry of Education's *Pasifika Education Plan* (PEP).

This strategy is not about setting academic standards that our Pasifika learners need to strive for. That, we believe, has been already set by the School Charter and the Ministry of Education's PEP.

This strategy is about how our School, our parents, our families, and our community will work in partnership to house, shelter and provide support for our Pasifika learners, so that when they leave the gates of our kura and move onto the next stage of their educational journey - **a Pasifika KURA kid should be able to identify, relate, and be proud of their Pasifika roots and culture.** This is the outcome our parents and community wanted for their children when asked in 2014.

We believe that once a Pasifika learner can stand firm in their Pasifika identity, this will remove barriers that may impinge on their educational success.



¹ The percentage of Pasifika children that attend Titahi Bay School is actually greater and the data is limited by the Ministry of Education's prioritisation policy (i.e. nationality data is recorded based on the first nationality that is noted by parents). In 2014, 26 other children were identified off the Maori and the general roll as Pasifika.

A Pasifika view of the world

Pacific peoples in New Zealand comprise of multi-ethnic groups and are diverse. Any strategy incorporating Pacific people needs to acknowledge that there is profound diversity and complexity within these groups. For example, diversity between our Pacific Island nations, diversity between those NZ-born and those born in our Pacific homelands, diversity of language and culture between groups, and complex social structures within each group.

This strategic framework endeavours to find some commonalities within this diverse group so not to narrow the scope of its application. It is a simple model so that all stakeholders, including our Pasifika learners, can recognise and understand its meaning.

A commonality - spiritual and temporal

Given the holistic way in which Pacific people view the world, our strategy gives reference to the temporal (i.e. the here and now) and the spiritual. The duality of physical and spiritual is seen right throughout various Pacific cultures, for example Samoan chief (*matai*) system that has an spiritual arm the *ali'i* and an operational arm led by the orators (*tulafale*). Or in the Tongan concepts of *taa* and *vaa* (time and space).

Both in scriptures (which the majority of Pacific people have an affiliation to) and the natural/physical world there is the common concept of "seed, time and harvest". This resonates strongly with our homelands in the Pacific Islands that still largely operate within a subsistence economy. That is, we grow our crops, tend to them, and harvest them to feed our children and families, or to sell to our local or inter-island markets.

We plant a seed. Time is needed for this seed to grow. Work is needed to tend to our seeds. Then we can enjoy in the fruit/or harvest of our works.

Another common element of all Pacific nations is the fale/whare/house. The physical building of a fale (home/house) whereby a foundation is set, pillars are inserted and strengthened to support a roof that completes this enclosure and shelters its inhabitants.

The 'house of learning' has quite fittingly been a recurrent theme throughout the three years the Pasifika Parent's Group² has been together.

In some Pacific cultures, dance, imagery, and art is based on the building of a fale and the seed/time/harvest process. These two analogies are a common duality for our unique cultures that form the Pacific Islands and provide the basis for our Fale Pasifika.

The framework – Fale Pasifika

Foundations

The foundations of the fale are laid by the community and the family. Community in a wide sense and it could be many communities e.g. a family's church or religion they belong to, Titahi Bay and/or the Porirua community, a child's sport's community etc. The family is also wide and covers more than the immediate family of siblings and parents, e.g. grandparents, extended family, friends, adopted family. It is laid by those who the child affiliates to and identifies with.

Steps

The steps into the fale are the PB4L values of K.U.R.A (kindness, unity, respect and achieve) that is already stable and firmly implanted into our school's values and settings. Ensuring that these PB4L steps are in place helps to provide an entry into our fale of learning, as it helps to remove barriers to engagement and improves our Pasifika learner's wellbeing.

² The Pasifika Parents Group was formed in early 2013, and consists of Pasifika parents, grandparents and close friends of Titahi Bay School, who meet regularly during the year, to discuss issues or drive events with a Pasifika focus.

Our seeds

The “seed” are our Pasifika learners. Standing, growing, and developing in the centre of the fale. Firm and connected to the foundations set by their communities and family. Like a greenhouse shelters seedlings before they can be planted, so too does our fale protect our children.

Pillars

The four pillars that hold the roof up represent “time”, that is, the period that is needed to grow our seeds. T.I.M.E stands for:

T – Targeted teaching

Teaching our teachers so they can have a number of tools to effectively target, teach, and build quality relationships with their Pasifika learners and their family.

- Ensuring our teachers have a tool belt of different methods learnt through professional learning and development courses that focus on accelerating learning and learning to engage with Pasifika learners and their families. For example, a large number of Pasifika learners are kinaesthetic learners (i.e. learn by doing, trial and error, case studies or examples, the use of Te Manawa), so ensuring that teachers have sufficient professional development to suit this learning method or other methods that have been shown to be effective in Pasifika case studies e.g. “teaching as inquiry” or other culturally responsive teaching practices.
- Ensuring sufficient assessment data tools are available and using the data available to them (as well as being able to read the data) will help to prioritise what professional development is needed for teachers. This includes information on where Pasifika learners spent their early childhood, and where needed putting in processes to help transition from a language nest setting to school, or bridging between the home and school setting if other languages are spoken in a learner’s home.

I- Identify

Pasifika learners can be identified and they can identify themselves.

- Due to the Ministry of Education (“MoE”) prioritisation of ethnicity, data on who is a Pasifika learner may not be accurately recorded. As a result Pasifika learning initiatives may not reach the intended learners. It may also show that Pasifika learners may actually be achieving much higher than what is recorded for MoE purposes. The school capturing this data at enrolment rather than depending on MoE data will be pivotal to ensuring there is accurate data.
- However despite what a roll might note in relation to a learner’s ethnic identity, the learner also needs to be able to identify with who they are. Therefore similar to how tikanga Maori is entwined in the school, the curriculum should where possible incorporate Pacific languages, culture and identity.
- Identifying and ensuring there is a transition plan for those learners where ESOL or where another language is spoken at home. Particularly for those who came from an ECE language learning nests e.g. Aoga amata.

Possible examples include: Pacific Island language weeks using the salutations for this language throughout communications with learners, their families and the community. Incorporating a Pasifika focused pepeha for Pasifika learners, so that learners can actively question their own families as to which Pacific Island they belong to, their mountain, water etc – further strengthening partnerships between the school and families. Or in consultation with the whanau group and the school’s Maori leaders having, where appropriate, the opportunity for Pasifika male leaders the space to deliver a mihi in their native tongue. Or having a Pasifika teacher/school support teach the whole school Pasifika songs that can be part of the schools repertoire of music sung at assemblies or special occasions. All this leads to an outcome of fostering an environment where Pasifika identity and culture becomes “normal” for the school.

This includes, where appropriate, consideration on a "diversity strategy" when it comes to class placements, so that Pasifika children and other children from other ethnicities are spread throughout all classrooms so that other children have a Pasifika learner within their midst and to help with familiarising cultural diversity.

M-Manage

The Board of Trustees, school leadership team and teachers are accountable for the educational success of Pasifika learners.

- It is important that there is strong leadership within our school to ensure a solid focus on the learning and other needs of our Pasifika learners. The school leadership team should report regularly (or have as a standing order in all Board meetings) on Pasifika achievement in relation to National Standards, identifying the gaps (if any) with learning, the availability of school initiatives to address these gaps, engaging with parents about their role in the children's learning etc.
- There should be active encouragement and identification of potential Board of Trustee members by the school and Parents Group from its pool of Pasifika parents, grand-parents, friends of the school or community members or leaders etc, to put themselves forward for Board of Trustees elections. This will help to solidify the Pasifika voice at the governance level. If none are elected, then for the school to follow its current process of co-opting a Pasifika member to help with Pasifika initiatives where necessary.

E- Engage

Strong partnerships and connections between the school and the Pasifika learner, Pasifika parents, family or home.

- Research and common sense shows that strong partnerships and connections between Pasifika communities, families, homes and the school is critical to educational success. The school needs to be pro-active in bridging the cultural divide (e.g. use of Mutukaroa, maths nights, electives) where possible and appropriate.
- Research also shows that Pasifika learners (more so than other cultural groups) are more motivated when their teacher shows they care about their learning. This goes beyond caring for the learner personally.
- This support from the School needs to be reciprocated by Pasifika parents, families and leaders from the community (including the Pasifika Parent's Group). It is a two-way relationship. Therefore parents should where possible, attend parent-teacher interviews
- Continuing partnerships, discussion and support of the Pasifika Parents Group. For example, supporting of events where Pasifika culture and language can be showcased and used as a lever to attract families into the school (for example KapoKapo, Pasifika Language weeks, annual event celebrating Pasifika).
- Ensuring teachers are familiar with the Fale Pasifika strategy

For example, Pasifika learners children who are "below" or "well below" the national standard, the teacher should endeavour to engage with the families/parents of these children. Teachers should take the parents through what exactly these measurements mean, the learning that is needed to move from different levels of National Standards, the plan the school has in place to help the child and what the parents can do at home to help their child (e.g. asking for time on Mathematics if electronic devices are available). If English is a second language for these parents or families, engaging with the Pasifika Parents Group so that home-visits can be accompanied with a speaker of the child's family's native tongue will help overcome any language barriers.

The roof

The roof of our fale is the highest point. It is made up of the values that Pasifika learners and people treasure, but also provides the "goal" for this Strategy.

As noted above, this Strategy is to be read in conjunction with our School Charter. The Charter already provides an expectation or a vision that a Year 6 student who has spent at least 3 years at Titahi Bay School before leaving:

- Be at the expected National Standards level in Reading, Writing and Maths. To be achieving at the expected level and have the necessary skills to be moving onto Year 7/8.
- Proud of his/her achievements, school and community
- Confident (motivated and happy)
- Organised (responsible for self)
- Able to persevere (set goals and work hard)
- Able to get along with others (friendly and fair), show gratitude
- Resilient (able to handle setbacks and conflict)
- Able to think for him/herself and take responsibility
- Able to read, write, communicate and use maths skills – to his/her potential
- Creative, healthy and active
- Excited about learning and future opportunities

This Strategy adds another expectation for a Pasifika learner and that is, a Pasifika learner should be able to **identify, relate and be proud of their Pasifika roots and culture.**

This expectation was the outcome of consultation with the Titahi Bay School Pasifika Community at the 2014 *Celebrating our Pasifika Communities* event. At this event a family survey was distributed and we received 36 family responses, from which this expectation was drafted:

- Identify – know they/and their family are Fijian or Samoan or Tongan. This aspect was mentioned numerous times in the responses.
- Relate – this is a subjective criteria and it can also be different for each child. For example if they are Samoan, having had the ability to be a part of the KapoKapo or know basic words such as Talofa for hello or savalivali to walk.
- Be Proud – to be comfortable, stand tall and happy to pronounce that they are a child of the Pacific.