

Ngā Huatau Taiohi - Hūria Marae

Enjoying and achieving education success as Māori is:

- **Being able to resist the negative stereotypes about being Māori**

I'm just breaking that cycle of people in my family not passing, not wanting to go to school. Breaking that cycle of being a Māori on the dole.

With our NCEA achievement rate being higher last year, in all three levels than they were in previous years, it's given Māori students the confidence to do better this year, and meet that expectation of doing as well if not better than non-Māori students.

It's a bit of a challenge with stereotypes, but our mind-set now is thinking that our being Māori is not a disadvantage; we use it as an advantage within our school.

I'm Māori but I'm not that stereotypical Māori. I'm going to enjoy my education and find something that I'm passionate about.

Success for me was just making it to Year 13. I'm the first out of all my Mum's sisters, brothers - and all my first cousins - to make it this far. And just passing has been like a real big thing for me and my family. I almost got an Excellence endorsement in English.

Māori work really hard - they are really good at working at something and just keeping on and carrying on.



- **Being strong in your Māori cultural identity**

Secondary school is a time to find yourself. If you have your culture - your identity - you can build off that.

It really helps to have that tikanga, that foundation to be able to apply to curricular and extra-curricular opportunities.

We have a strong sense of what it is to be Māori within our school.

College for me was learning my Māori culture. I never grew up around my Māori side until I started college. I wasn't allowed to do Māori or anything when I was young.

It's using your culture as a tool to help you succeed. It can help you succeed in whatever you're doing. Just grab every opportunity, don't let it pass you by.

I've learnt different aspects of Māori culture and those different aspects have helped shape who I am as a person and how I identify as Māori. So that for me is my biggest success, just finding who I am.

Knowing you're Māori is having that extra pride in yourself, having that mana.

- **Being able to contribute to the success of others**

Just seeing her accomplishing everything - setting her goals and smashing them - and just breaking out of our mould, has motivated me to do what she has done, and just further myself.

You're not doing it by yourself. There's so many more of you out there. Whether it's in te ao Māori or not, you find your people and then you work with them - and then you grow.

Seeing Māori do really well is cool, and that builds up all the other Māori students as well.

- **Developing and maintaining emotional and spiritual strength**

I know who I am and where I'm from. That's how I identify myself as successful.

Success is defined by how the individual feels. It's an emotional thing. You have to get your mind in the right place, and that in itself is a journey. But mistakes are a good thing as well. Make mistakes - it helps you learn.

It's not just about achieving the goal. It's more about having a direction, something to strive for. You learn more valuable lessons from the journey than actually getting the goal itself.

I think people can motivate you, but you can only live off other people's motivation for so long. If you really want something you have to own it.

My family, my friends, my teachers - they've been a key part of my life. With them you can strive harder in life, and become the strong person you are.

If you find your true friends, you'll find who your family is, because you need that extra support at school. Just find your true friends, cause they'll be your backbone.

- **Knowing that you can access explicit and timely direction**

People have helped me all the way through just recognising the potential that I never saw myself. If anyone had told me a year ago that I would almost have Level 3 with Excellence I wouldn't have

believed them. These people have helped me to recognise what I actually am capable of achieving.

She sat down with me and looked through my grades and my NCEA and how I was achieving, and my attendance at school, and then gave me advice on how I can do further study. They helped and offered me heaps of opportunities.

I was disconnected from my culture for a long time, and it wasn't until my Year 9 Māori teacher, she just came up to me and asked me if I had any interest in it. I didn't at first, but she showed me the possibilities - where I could go with my Māori. If it wasn't for her encouraging me to learn my language, I probably wouldn't be where I am today.

- **Knowing, accepting and acknowledging the strength of working together**

If one of us succeeds, it's all of our success; it's a reflection of all of us Māori because everyone has helped us to do well. All the whānau has helped us do well.

I enjoy all aspects of te ao Māori - having all the opportunities to develop my te reo, to be able to immerse myself in kapa haka. My teachers sparked my interest of learning te reo, and they also helped me keep the fire going. My whānau have done so much for me. It's been overwhelming, having them involved in my education. It really did help for whānau to be involved along this journey.

My whānau, they've always pushed me along - kept me on the right track. A lot of the teachers, being in a small school, a lot of them are my uncles and cousins. They're always helping me out.

This year has been really good with teachers stepping up and being culturally responsive, and including Māori culture in what we learn in class. And so for me, that's what I think is Māori success - being able to have that connection in your subjects to really get the proper understanding that you need.

Definitely take every opportunity you're given. Push yourself out of your comfort zone and believe in yourself. Surround yourself with good people. That'll get you there.

