



**Te Kura**

TE AHO O TE KURA POUNAMU

THE CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL

**Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu**

**Briefing for the Incoming Minister**

**October 2014**

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## 1. Introduction

This briefing introduces Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu (Te Kura), outlines the school's strategic direction and highlights the current areas of focus of which the Minister of Education should be aware.

An organisational overview of Te Kura can be found in Appendix 1 and a summary of our strategic direction in Appendix 2.

Further information can also be found on the Te Kura website at: <http://www.tekura.school.nz>

## 2. Current areas of focus

### Authentic Learning Pilot

*Te Kura is currently in the first year of a four year pilot that will deliver a sustained, authentic learning programme to 80 'at-risk'<sup>1</sup> students in Years 9-11 in multiple geographic locations. The pilot tests an approach that is resourced at a significantly higher rate than the current rate for a full-time student enrolled at Te Kura. The Ministry of Education will evaluate the pilot in the 2016 school year.*

A 2012 review of Te Kura by the Ministry of Education concluded that distance education on its own may not be a fit-for-purpose model for learners that have not been well served by the education system<sup>2</sup>. It recommended piloting a new approach that could more effectively blend together the different contributions of Te Kura and other partners into a flexible model of teaching and learning.

In March 2014 the Minister of Finance and Minister of Education agreed to a pilot in which Te Kura would deliver a sustained, authentic learning programme to 80 'at-risk' students in Years 9-11 in multiple geographic locations. The pilot tests an arrangement that is resourced at a significantly higher rate than the current rate of a full-time student enrolled at Te Kura but which is still less than other existing interventions like Alternative Education and Activity Centres.

Authentic learning is based on an intervention logic connecting context-relevant learning, practical experiences and the support of a significant adult, with achievement – particularly for students who have not enjoyed learning or achieved success at a face to face school.

The \$1.372m cost of the pilot in 2014/15 and 2015/16 is funded from the Budget 2012 operating contingency "Initiatives to Accelerate Achievement of Priority Learners". The Ministry of Education has proposed that funding of the \$1.337m cost of the pilot in 2016/17 and 2017/18 from reprioritisation within the Vote Education baseline. The Ministry will evaluate the pilot in the 2016 school year. The evaluation will measure the engagement and achievement of participating students compared to similar at-risk students enrolled at Te Kura.

### Broadening Access to Te Kura

*Te Kura and the Ministry of Education are working on a paper that will ask you to consider giving more students access to the learning approach that Te Kura offers. The potential benefits include*

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<sup>1</sup> The enrolment policy of Te Kura is agreed with the Ministry of Education annually. Students enrolled through particular gateways are considered at higher risk of underachieving. This includes students that have been not-enrolled, excluded or expelled from local schools. It also includes students referred by Ministry of Education - Special Education.

<sup>2</sup> The Future Role of Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu in New Zealand's Education Network (Ministry of Education, 2012)

*increased student engagement through meeting unmet learning needs, enhancing the wellbeing of the student and delivering personalised, contextual and flexible learning that is relevant to the student. The sector may view the proposal with caution so consultation with key sector bodies is recommended.*

In 2013 Te Kura provided the Minister of Education with a paper, *Broadening Access to Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu* (access paper). The access paper explored several ways for Te Kura to expand its role, including allowing a wider range of students eligible for a free education under the Education Act 1989 to enrol for a full programme of study.

In January 2014, Te Kura and the Ministry set up a joint working group to respond to the proposals contained in the Te Kura access paper. The Ministry and Te Kura are close to supplying you with a paper outlining the benefits and risks, and potential costs, of the general concept of broadened access. Te Kura would like to begin a broadened access enrolment process from November this year for the 2015 academic year.

The sector is likely to view this proposal with caution, however, because of the possible effect on the rolls of some schools. To mitigate this risk consultation with key sector bodies on the proposal is recommended. A cap on the number of students who can initially enrol through this new enrolment gateway is another mechanism that could be used to manage the risk.

Although this proposal does not require legislative change to implement the Ministry has received legal advice that Te Kura's desire for fully open access, i.e. through an enrolment gateway without enrolment criteria, could be ultra vires under the Education Act 1989. To avoid this possibility Te Kura is currently working with the Ministry to describe enrolment criteria for broadened access that focus on best meeting the learning needs of students. However, this will add to the number and complexity of Te Kura's enrolment gateways and is an area that will need to be reviewed in future.

### **Online Learning**

*Te Kura is aiming to have all of its courses available as purpose-designed online learning material by 2019. There are many benefits to students of doing this. We have made a commitment to assist any of our full-time students who wish to enrol in these courses but do not currently have access to a suitable device and/or internet connection. However, this may be a path which is at odds with advice from the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Reference Group that the cost of digital devices not be met by Government. Digital delivery of courses and fully online courses is also being regarded with concern by some schools, especially if they are not currently able to offer sufficient access to computers for their dual registered students.*

Te Kura recognises the need to integrate technology into all aspects of our teaching and learning. Our two main technology foundations for online learning are already in place: the Student Management System (SMS) and the Online Teaching and Learning Environment (OTLE). Some staff have found the transition to the new SMS difficult but on the whole the system is operating well.

We already offer all of our NCEA courses digitally and this year we began a two-year project to rewrite our year 9 and 10 courses as creative, compelling online courses which will enable students to learn the skills they need to use technology safely and effectively. By February 2019, Te Kura aims to have all of its courses available as purpose-designed online learning material.

#### *New online courses*

Te Kura is currently redeveloping 13 courses primarily at curriculum levels 3 to 5, which will be offered as partially online courses for the 2015 school year and fully online from 2016. Many of the

students enrolled in these courses are dual registered students, and our expectation is that schools will ensure students they enrol with Te Kura have access to appropriate devices and connectivity.

Te Kura has made a commitment to assist full-time students who wish to enrol in these courses but do not currently have access to a suitable device and/or internet connection. We are developing partnerships with Computers in Homes and Remarkit to source devices and connectivity for those who do not have them, but we know that some of our students will be restricted in their ability to access the internet by factors which are outside our ability to control (such as those who are geographically isolated, itinerant or living without electricity). There are a number of risks associated with providing access to devices and connectivity which we are working hard to mitigate. We do expect families who already have access to a device and the internet to make these available to their students for the purpose of completing their school work, and this may not suit some families.

We are aware that Te Kura may be about to embark on a path which is at odds with advice from the 21st Century Learning Reference Group that “the cost of digital devices not be met by Government”<sup>3</sup>. Provision of devices and connectivity to students who do not have sufficient access also represents a significant financial investment for Te Kura. An alternative could be to recognise Te Kura’s special nature as the only provider of distance education in the compulsory schooling sector and amend the legislation so we are able to require that students have access to technology.

### *Implications for schools*

Te Kura has digitised all NCEA course materials and these are now available to download as PDF files through our Online Teaching and Learning Environment. For 2014, dual registered students registered for NCEA courses with Te Kura have been required to download their materials through the OTLE, with the option of receiving NCEA Level 1 course materials through the post once the first assessable work has been returned. In practice this has seen many schools print off the course booklets for their students to fill in and return through the post, although we are encouraging students to return work digitally wherever possible. For 2015 the requirement to access materials digitally will apply to all NCEA materials.

Digital delivery of NCEA courses, combined with the new online courses for curriculum levels 3 to 5, is being regarded with concern by some schools which see cost implications for them, especially if they are not currently able to offer sufficient access to computers for their dual registered students. The costs of printing and/or internet access should still be well within the resourcing each school already receives for the student. As you know, schools receive full funding for students even if they register those students with Te Kura. Schools are able to register students with Te Kura at no cost to them.

We are aware, however, that dual registered students enrolled through alternative education providers (AEs) may not have adequate access to a suitable computer to complete their course work online. We have met with the Alternative Education National Body to discuss the matter. While some AEs have worked hard to ensure students have access to technology, many others do not have the economies of scale required to make providing access to technology affordable.

Te Kura is keen to work with the AEs to help support their access to technology, but we believe involvement from the Ministry is crucial. If AEs are to move into the 21<sup>st</sup> century their students need to have the same access to online learning opportunities as students in mainstream school classrooms. We believe that perpetuating the situation by continuing to provide paper-based

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<sup>3</sup> The report by the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Reference Group, *Future-focused learning in connected communities* states on Page 11 ‘We recommend that the cost of digital devices not be met by Government’, and cites evidence from Australia and the United States in support of its recommendation. It goes on to say ‘We think it reasonable to expect parents and whānau to meet the cost of digital devices. Best international and New Zealand practice demonstrates that more responsibility and care is taken with digital devices when parents own them.’

courses is not the solution. Besides, at the current level of funding, it is not possible for Te Kura to develop paper-based equivalents of these online courses. We plan to meet with the Ministry to discuss the implications for AEs of our online delivery of years 9 and 10 courses from next year, and how access to the appropriate technology for AEs might be facilitated.

### **International Enrolments**

*Te Kura has been developing options to offer distance education to students outside New Zealand and we are currently looking closely at the Malaysian market. We have discussed the proposal with Education New Zealand (ENZ) and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA). We will be writing to you to request the specific inclusion of enrolment of international students and the charging of fees for these students in the Ministry's enrolment policy for Te Kura.*

In support of the government's export education strategy, Te Kura has been developing options to offer distance education to students outside New Zealand. Our intention is to provide learning and qualifications which will support students to gain entrance to tertiary study, particularly in New Zealand.

The most promising opportunity currently is to offer distance learning in the Malaysian market. A proposal is being drafted to obtain independent advice on matters such as market conditions and compliance requirements existing in Malaysia. We have discussed the proposal with ENZ and NZQA and have requested approval from the Ministry of Education to offer NCEA in this market. Once approval is gained we will confirm assessment processes with NZQA for both internal and external assessments.

Earlier this year Te Kura commissioned legal advice on a number of issues to do with current enrolments at Te Kura and specifically about our ability to enrol and charge fees for international students. We received legal advice that Te Kura should request the specific inclusion of enrolment of international students and the charging of fees for these students in the Ministry's enrolment policy for Te Kura. The suggested changes are to support practice which has been in place for many years as acceptable to the Ministry and Te Kura. We were also advised that the matter would be best clarified by a law change but recognises the time such a change might involve. We are keen to validate our current enrolments and future-proof our position regarding international student enrolments. We will be writing to you to request the specific inclusion of enrolment of international students and the charging of fees for these students in the Ministry's enrolment policy for Te Kura.

### **Achievement of Priority Groups**

*Māori students are a significant proportion of our roll and a high priority in our planning. Our Māori Student Success Framework and Pasifika Strategy include a number of initiatives specifically targeted at supporting priority students. We have also been a part of the Ministry funded He Kakano programme and are currently working with the Building on Success and Starpath programmes in association with the University of Waikato and the University of Auckland.*

Improving education outcomes for Māori and Pasifika students and other groups currently prioritised by the Ministry of Education remains a significant focus for Te Kura. We already have in place a number of initiatives specifically targeted to support priority students. Māori students, in particular, are a significant proportion of our roll and a high priority in our planning. In 2014 we implemented our new Māori Student Success Framework, following a review of our Māori Responsiveness Strategy 2010–2012, and we continued implementation of our Pasifika strategy. Providing authentic and engaging learning experiences as part of personalised learning programmes will be key to raising the achievement of all our students. Te Kura has also been a part of the Ministry funded He Kakano and Building on Success programmes and Auckland University's Starpath programme.

## **EFTS based funding model**

*Te Kura's EFTS based funding rate has not been adjusted for some years and the buying power of our funding is falling. Many services that students receive at face-to-face schools are also not available for Te Kura students. When our funding was last discussed with the Ministry they concluded that we were operating within budget, and therefore could be expected to continue to do so. However, this has come at a cost to the level and appropriateness of the service we have been able to give our students, many of whom have been under-served by the wider education system. We are hoping to discuss our resourcing model with the Ministry in the near future.*

Te Kura's EFTS based funding model was last reviewed in 2011. The school's funding has not been adjusted since the model was adopted in 2007, apart from teacher collective increases and the operating increases which apply disproportionately to Te Kura when compared with other schools. In the 2011 review commissioned by the Ministry and undertaken by Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC), the report confirmed that the buying power of Te Kura funding had fallen from the equivalent of a decile two to four school to that of a decile eight school. The report also noted the increasingly diminishing effect of the way the model works, effectively lowering the amount per student by setting a fixed amount as base funding. The diminishing value of our EFTS identified in that report has been further eroded since that time.

Many services that students receive at face-to-face schools are not available for Te Kura students. These include:

- Careers Information Grant
- Enhanced Programme Fund
- ICT Funding
- Māori Language Programme funding
- RTLB years 11-13+
- Secondary Tertiary Alignment Resource (STAR)
- Targeted Funding for Educational Achievement.

Given the makeup of our student population, not receiving resourcing for these services will further impact on our ability to fully support students.

Te Kura has managed the resources available to us and has operated consistently within budget for the past several years. This has come at a cost to the level and appropriateness of the service we have been able to give our students, many of whom have already been under-served by the wider education system.

Te Kura clearly sees that many of our students are unequally provided for when they enrol with us. As many are in the priority groups we are focused on supporting, this can significantly impact on our ability to make a difference for those student groups and support key government policy relating to achievement of NZQA level two. At the time of the last discussion around our funding, it was concluded by the Ministry that we were operating within budget, and therefore could be expected to continue to do so. The ongoing impact of this approach has led and will continue to lead to diminishing levels of service and achievement if fiscal control is the primary measure of our success. The extent to which internal savings due to automation, use of technology and rationalisation of processes can be further leveraged, is becoming marginal. We are hoping to discuss our resourcing model with the Ministry in the near future.

### 3. Appendix 1 - Organisational overview

Te Kura is a correspondence school, as defined in the Education Act 1989, and subject to most of the legal and regulatory frameworks that apply to other schools, with some key exceptions. These include:

- the appointment and composition of the Board
- a funding model based on student enrolments and engagement
- an enrolment policy that states specific criteria for enrolment, and
- specific provisions related to Te Kura within the primary and secondary teacher's collective employment contracts, and site collectives for support staff and early childhood teachers.

#### What Te Kura does

Te Kura provides educational services to early childhood, primary and secondary level students for whom it is the best current option. It also provides specialist subjects for dual-enrolled students attending other schools who do not have access to a broad curriculum and supplementary services to students with special needs.

Te Kura aims to have all its students achieve their potential. Its focus is to work with students, their families, whānau, communities and other agencies to provide effective teaching and learning personalised to each student's individual needs and aspirations.

#### Our students

Te Kura's full-time students range from the traditional geographically remote families to urban students who enrol for a wide variety of reasons (see Table 3 below). These are students for whom face-to-face schooling is not currently the best option, including those who have been referred to Te Kura as alienated or excluded from their face-to-face school, those who have been referred by Ministry of Education Special Education because they have psychological or psycho-social needs, and students who have been referred by Child, Youth and Family (CYF). Together, these students make up 52% of the full-time primary and secondary roll. (Referred students make up 22% of our full-time roll at years 1 to 8 and 62% at years 9 to 13.)

As can be seen in Table 3 below, the students with whom the school has been long associated – those who are geographically isolated, itinerant and those living overseas – now make up 41% of the full-time roll for years 1 to 13.

Te Kura's early childhood enrolments continue to be drawn mainly from rural areas and most go on to attend their local primary school. As part of the Ministry of Education programme to increase participation in early childhood education, in particular for Māori and Pasifika families, parents of children who are ineligible under any other early childhood gateway to enrol at Te Kura may make an application for their child's enrolment. Students enrolled through this gateway are likely to be living in urban areas.

Enrolments in Te Kura's programmes for adult learners include a large number of young adult students – those over 16 years of age who have already left school and have an entitlement to free education up to and including the end of the year in which they turn 19.

Total enrolments over the year to the end of 2013 were 26,388 (7,755 EFTS – see Table 2) with almost 14,000 students enrolled at any one time. However, many of Te Kura's students do not stay on the roll for the full year, with only 38% of students enrolled for the whole year.

Table 1 below shows cumulative enrolments (which includes withdrawn students) for 2013, plus a snapshot of the school's roll on 22 November 2013 across all categories.



**Table 1**

<b>Enrolment type</b>	<b>Cumulative enrolments to end 2013</b>	<b>Enrolled as at 22 November 2013</b>
Adults	3586 (incl 1337 Dept of Corrections enrolments)	1920
Young Adults	5954	2549
Early Childhood	999	530
Fee payer Year 1-6	8	141
Fee payer Year 7-10	35	
Fee payer Year 11-13	117	
Full-time Year 1-6	580	1926
Full-time Year 7-10	1054	
Full-time Year 11-13	1864	
Dual-enrolled Year 1-6	391	659 Year 1-8
Dual-enrolled Year 7-10	3496	6113 Year 9-13
Dual-enrolled Year 11-13	8304	
<b>Total</b>	<b>26388</b>	<b>13838</b>

**Table 2**

<b>Enrolment type</b>	<b>EFTS count as at end 2011</b>	<b>EFTS count as at end 2012</b>	<b>EFTS count as at end 2013</b>
Adults (incl Dept of Corrections students) and Young Adults	1881	1,759	2090
Early Childhood	707	647	589
Full-time	2529	2234	1971
Primary dual-enrolled	403	337	293
Primary fee-paying*	N/A	N/A	N/A
Secondary dual-enrolled	2500	2,641	2812
Secondary fee-paying*	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>8020</b>	<b>7618</b>	<b>7755</b>

\*Fee-paying enrolments do not generate EFTS

**Table 3**

<b>Enrolment type of full-time primary and secondary level students</b>	<b>Cumulative enrolments at end 2013</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Alienation	663	19%
CYF	104	3%
Department of Corrections	2	0%
Exclusion/Expulsion	228	6%
Isolation (all types)	518	15%
Itinerancy	363	10%
Overseas	562	16%
Psychological/psycho-social	832	24%
Sports/Arts	58	2%
Young Parents	168	5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3498</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Governance

Te Kura is governed by a Board of Trustees, the composition and appointment of which is determined by the Minister of Education in accordance with section 95 of the Education Act 1989. The constitution of Te Kura's Board is gazetted.

The Board is supported by the Risk Assurance Committee and the Employers Committee, which between them deal with much of the detailed work prior to consideration by the Board.

## Board members

Karen Sewell (Chair) – appointed September 2012  
Paul Adams – appointed September 2012  
Gillian Heald – appointed September 2012  
Maxine Moana-Tuwahangi – appointed June 2012  
John Sproat – appointed June 2012

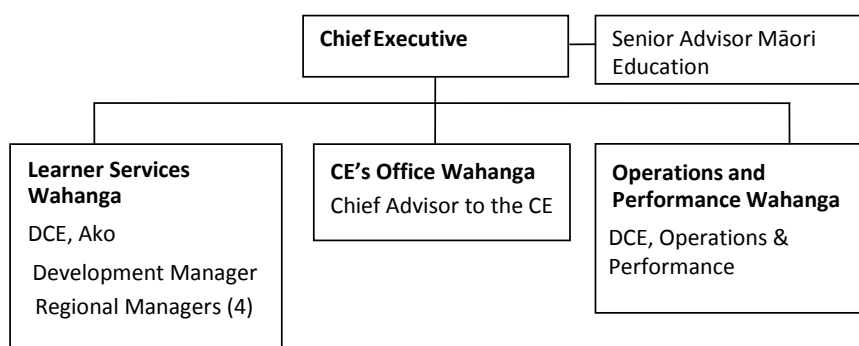
## Term expiry dates

September 2015  
September 2015  
September 2015  
June 2015  
June 2015

In May 2014 Minister Parata appointed Stuart Middleton and Lalita Rajasingham as new members to Te Kura's Board of Trustees, with effect from July 2014. This brings the Board up to its full complement of a chair and up to six members appointed by the Minister of Education.

## Structure

Te Kura's management structure is detailed in the diagram below.



Te Kura is organised into three wahanga (areas) – Learner Services, Operations and Performance, and the Chief Executive's office. The CE and the Board are supported by the Chief Advisor.

The Senior Leadership Team has responsibility for the overall leadership and strategic direction of the school, and comprises the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive Ako, Deputy Chief Executive Operations and Performance, and the Chief Advisor.

Te Kura has the equivalent of approximately 432 full-time staff members. In addition we oversee the employment of 173 teacher aides. Approximately 31% of our staff are based in regional offices outside Wellington.

## Funding

The Ministry of Education funds Te Kura in accordance with section 81A of the Education Act 1989. Funding is based on student enrolments and engagement.

## 4. Appendix 2 - Strategic direction

Our vision is that our students achieve their educational and personal goals, enabling them to participate effectively as members of their communities.

Achievement of our vision will be reflected in a school where:

- teachers and students work within a variety of flexible, interactive and engaging learning environments
- students are engaged in personalised, authentic and collaborative work
- partnerships are the basis of effective engagement with schools, family/whānau and other community organisations
- the majority of our teachers are based in the regions, closer to their students
- online learning and blended learning are embedded within the school's pedagogy
- the digital distribution of resources is the default setting
- teachers and students have access to a high standard of ICT resources (hardware, software, connectivity, content and support)
- the curriculum is flexible, adaptive and responsive
- diversity is recognised as a strength
- there is increased student achievement by Māori and other priority groups.

### Personalising learning

The key theme that runs through every aspect of our strategic plan is personalising learning. As a distance education provider we are free from some of the constraints that a face-to-face school has to deal with, such as managing classes and timetables. That means teaching 'one student at a time' is something that is a fact of life for Te Kura and embedded deep into our DNA. We also have a large student base with a wide range of circumstances and needs. This compels us to deliver a differentiated service where 'one size fits one'. In addition, we are well aware that personalising learning features consistently in the literature as a key component of future learning systems.

Personalising learning emphasises the place of students, their values, context and needs at the centre of all teaching and learning experiences. Students, together with their families, whānau and teachers, are actively involved in creating their own personalised learning pathways and plans. These recognise their unique potential, talents and strengths, meet their particular mix of requirements and are tailored to ensure they have the opportunity to succeed. By putting personalised learning at the centre of everything we do, we are also able to develop supporting strategies that are consistent and inclusive and which will provide improved educational outcomes for all of our students.

### Education 3.0

Another key theme in our strategic plan is a focus on future-oriented learning and teaching, and moving to Education 3.0. It is widely argued that current educational systems, structures and practices are not sufficient to address and support learning needs for all students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century<sup>4</sup>. Education 3.0 describes the transformation that is necessary in order for the current system of education, developed in the age of industrialisation, to meet the evolving and dynamic challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century<sup>5</sup>. It is synonymous with the terms '21<sup>st</sup> century learning' and 'future learning'.

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<sup>4</sup> Supporting future-oriented learning and teaching – a New Zealand perspective (Ministry of Education, 2012)

<sup>5</sup> Global Education Leaders Programme: <http://gelonline.org/node/14/what-education-30>

It borrows from terminology used to describe the development of the internet (Web 1.0, 2.0, 3.0) and characterises education during the agricultural age as Education 1.0; education for the industrial age as Education 2.0; and education for the knowledge age as Education 3.0.

Within Education 3.0 teachers include everybody, working alongside licensed professionals, and teaching can be delivered teacher to student, student to student or student to teacher. Teaching and learning can occur anywhere and family and whanau view schools as a place for them to learn too<sup>6</sup>.

The Global Education Leaders Programme describes a transformed Education 3.0 system as:

- aiming to provide equitable access to higher-order capabilities
- achieved through holistic change because the system is complex and interdependent
- characterised by a transfer of ownership from teachers to learners; and
- accelerated by collaborative learning techniques.

Te Kura's strategic direction for the next five years is centred on three overarching and integrated strategic goals, which are the focus of everything we do, within the context of teaching and learning being core delivery for the school.

Student Presence => Student Engagement => Student Achievement

Over the next five years we will focus on three strategic priorities:

- Online learning
- Improving education outcomes for Māori and Pasifika students and other priority groups
- Authentic and engaging learning experiences.

The key priorities will be supported by three enabling strategies which highlight the key things we need to do across the school to support the achievement of our strategic goals and priorities, and our core delivery of teaching and learning. These cut across every aspect of the school's operations and typically contribute to more than one of our strategic priorities.

Our five-year strategy is under-pinned by three capability improvement initiatives. These are focused on ensuring our resources, tools and systems are fit for purpose and focused on achieving our goals.

Te Kura's strategic framework for 2013-2018 is summarised in the strategy map that follows. More detail on the specific actions that will be taken over the next five years is available in a high level Action Plan contained in our Strategic Plan 2013-2018. Key actions are incorporated into our team annual plans each year.

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<sup>6</sup>Toward Society 3.0: A New Paradigm for 21st century education (Dr John Moravec, 2008)

# Strategy Map 2013 – 2018

