

ERO Readiness Review PSKH interim progress:

Pacific Advance Senior School

December 2014

Pacific Advance Senior School is an initiative of the Pacific People Advancement Trust (PPAT). It is designed to provide culturally responsive education for students from Years 11 to 13. It is anticipated that most of the students will have Pacific heritage and the programme is to be built on Pasifika values and worldview. The goal is to provide Pacific learners with a sound foundation to choose pathways into their future.

The school will operate in converted industrial premises in Otahuhu. The repurposed buildings are expected to be ready for use by the start of the school year. Existing community facilities on site include a cafe that is promoting an innovative model of Pacific entrepreneurship.

The sponsor is planning to enrol 100 students in the first year. Marketing has started and they anticipate a high degree of interest from learners who are at high risk of poor outcomes.

A project manager has been appointed until January to lead the initial development of the school. She is working collaboratively with the joint principals to develop initial documentation and school systems. The joint principals bring experience of working in kura kaupapa Māori and of motivational work with young people that makes them a good fit for this model of school.

Care has been taken to build a useful governance model within the wider organisation. A Curriculum Advisory Board is in place to question and critique developments. Managers are also benefiting from the support of the governance facilitator, and are very willing to seek external support and advice.

PPAT is a complex organisation. It has a long involvement with local schools in running a mentoring programme for Pacific students and this programme will continue. In developing a school as part of its operating model it is important that communication is open, roles are clearly defined and that decisions are made in a timely fashion. The tight timeframes for the development of the school do not allow for any unnecessary delays.

The pedagogy of the school is based on tupu'anga, consistent with the wider organisational philosophy of community engagement and provision of pastoral care and access to other agencies. It is important that all appointed staff develop a shared understanding of this vision and understand their specific roles and responsibilities in implementing it. Determining what Pacific culture means across different Pacific nations and generations will be an important first step.

The sponsor's goal is to appoint 90% Pacific staff. This may be difficult. The management team are well aware of the need to appoint teachers with the capacity to build deep foundations for learning and foster the desire to build personal success.

The principals plan to use standardised tests to gather diagnostic data on students as they enter the school. It is important that teachers have good understanding of how to use these data to develop Individual Learning Plans that are responsive to learners' needs. Staff are working closely with NZQA to ensure that Consent to Assess is in place for the opening of the school year.

Pacific Advance Senior School is making steady progress towards operating and managing a Partnership School/Kura Hourua and to providing for students at the beginning of 2015. Current priorities are appointing staff, getting the building ready and working on Consent to Assess.

Strengths

- The sponsor's vision is very clearly focused responsive to identified need in the local Pacific community. The model is based on engaging learners who are at risk and raising their achievement to provide them with wider life choices. Sponsors and appointed staff share their commitment to implementing the vision successfully.
- The project manager and principals have gone to considerable trouble to ensure students' views are included in decisions made about the development of the new school, working within and beside existing organisational structures.
- Support from other community organisations and schools is evident and valued.
- The project manager is able and willing to draw on professional networks to support the development of the school, including documenting the curriculum and providing teacher induction.
- Care is being taken to develop policies and procedures that are specific to the school environment.

Challenges ahead include:

- ensuring that all staff understand the importance of culture and identity as the platform for personal growth and subsequent achievement
- developing a shared understanding of what is meant by a Pasifika world view and values and how that will play out in the culture of the school
- designing a curriculum that is consistent with the sponsor's vision and supporting teachers' capability to deliver it
- ensuring the appropriate assessment regimes are in place to enable teachers to provide valid and reliable reporting on student progress and achievement in relation to NCEA
- being realistic about what can be delivered to meet learners' needs and interests within the existing capacity of the school, and exploring other avenues to support programme delivery if needed
- managing the ongoing development of the school after the project manager finishes in January.

The ERO Readiness Report for this school is due at the end of Term 1, 2015.