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**In what ways does principal leadership impact
on whānau engagement in a mainstream
secondary school?**

**A thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Philosophy Māori at Massey University,
Palmerston North, New Zealand**

**Dianne Lynette Wilson
2007**

ABSTRACT

In what ways does principal leadership impact on whānau engagement in a mainstream secondary school?

Principal leadership is an integral dimension in the schooling process. The principal ideally leads a team of professionals, guiding, supporting, and nurturing their development toward positive outcomes for Māori students including whānau engagement, to achieve this goal. In addition, s/he will ideally provide a framework of expectations, these being based on a theoretical and practical knowledge base as well as values that inform decision making.

Within the framework of Māori education, the dimension of whānau participation continues to be a dimension needing further exploration in terms of its potential contribution to positive academic, social and cultural achievements of students.

The focus of this thesis is to explore the role of the principal as both the leader of staff and the wider school community to support and enhance Māori student achievement in mainstream schooling. Principals lead from their knowledge base and their underpinning attitudes. It is the interweaving of these two elements, how attitudes inform behaviours and how these discrete set of skills required for leadership foster successful whānau participation which will be developed.

A role of the principal is to empower staff to take a leadership role. In terms of whānau participation, an area of the schooling process that continually needs fostering, principals set the direction for staff to develop relationships with the Māori community. The set of skills required to achieve this will be explored, expanded and reflected upon.

This thesis is a case study of one inner city secondary school which is a lead school in the Ministry of Education's Te Kauhua professional development project. Data will be collected from the principal, staff and whānau within this school community.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are a number of people who assisted and supported the development and completion of this thesis and while publicly acknowledging a few, there are many more that provided guidance and assistance throughout this journey.

To the principal, staff and whānau that willingly entered into this study, your input into this thesis is very much appreciated. To Dr. Ruth Gorinski, your feedback always provided challenges for further investigation. To my supervisor, Dr. Tairahia Black, thank-you for your patience, support and encouragement throughout this process.

To my own whānau and friends, thank-you.

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