Achievement Challenges
A summary of discussion from Waimea Kāhui Ako day Teacher Only Day

In session 2 of the day teachers were broken up into 20 groups of about 15 teachers. Part of the discussion based around the Achievement Challenges. A summary of the responses is below

What do you already know about the Achievement Challenges?
These had been included on a flyer for the day, so teachers seemed to understand that they at least existed or were aware of them. It was often mentioned that these were "based on data" or "ongoing issues in NZ education". It was pleasing to see many teachers make mention that these were part of school/faculty/syndicate goals for the year.

The 3 most common responses were:
- Boys Writing (50)
- Māori (45)
- Gender Gap (40)

with another 25 responses that referred to boys but not specially boys writing.

There were a number of comments about these been a narrow definition of success and that we should focus on less academic measures such as relationships, key competencies, creativity etc. This is likely a follow on from the thought provoking morning session from Nathan Mikaere Wallis.

Some interesting comments:
"Do objectives change each year?"
"Do boys and girls have to be evaluated on the same scale?"
"The Achievement Challenges seem to contradict the information presented in the morning"
"Culturally inclusive practices are not deep enough"

What are you already doing in your school to address part/s of the Achievement Challenges?
It was great to read the variety and depth of things that are already happening in our schools. I have listed the most common responses
- Targeted/small groups (30)
- Student choice in learning topics (27)
- Extra focus through Col/leadership positions (27)
- Identified Māori/PI learners (25)
- School-wide focus/strategic plan (25)
- Tracking priority learners (17)
- Whole school PD (16)
- Spend time building relationships (14)
- ALL writing programme (14)

- Connections with whanau (13)
- Teaching as Inquiry (10)
- 'Boy friendly' material (9)
- Using and analysing data (8)
- Celebrate/recognise successes (7)
- Boys reading group (7)
- Play based learning (6)
- Cultural sensitive topics (5)
- Use of Te Reo (5)
- Student support services (4)
- Use of ICT (3)
- Curriculum changes (3)
- Reading recovery (3)
- TLIF (3)
- Growth mindset focus (2)
- Māori deans (2)

Some interesting comments:
"Spending too little time on too many things"
"Don't focus on academic progress, start with key competencies"
"Reading more has a direct correlation to improved writing"
"Te Kotahitanga program works exceptionally well"

To what extent are we all responsible for the education of all our students throughout their educational pathway?
By far the majority of responses indicated that it is a collective responsibility, there were still a few that indicated that they are only responsible for the students in their class in that year. Other common responses include:
- Transitions along the pathway/contact between schools important (34)
- Partnership with parents/community (31)
- Broad skills, not just academic development (11)
- Relationships make it possible (9)
- Pastoral care important (5)
- Collaboration (5)

Some interesting comments:
"It takes a community to raise a child" (6)
"Parents expectations are high, but they put less into children and say it's more the schools job"
"Should we focus on reducing transitions rather than manage them"
"Specialisation by function creates efficiency but limits responsibility"

What underlying strategies/factors could impact on our progress towards these Achievement Challenges?
A real range of responses and some great ideas put forward
- Outside of school influences eg family life (31)
- Lack of time/workload (26)
- Too much focus on assessment/results (23)
- Extra funding/support needed (17)
- More quality PD (17)
- Communication/information sharing (16)
- Willingness to try a different approach (16)
- Engagement of the learners (16)
- Whanau involvement/engagement (15)
- Gender differences in brain development (13)
- Class sizes (13)
- Build relationships (13)
- Government systems/policy (8)
- Timetable/logistical challenges (7)
- Self-esteem/wellbeing of students (7)
- Cultural barriers (6)
- Consistency across Col (6)
- Key transition stages (4)
- Attendance (3)

Some interesting comments:
"A consistent approach across the Col - all singing from the same song sheet"
"If you always do what you have always done, you will get what you have always got"
"Government policy does not reflect research findings"
"Read 'New pedagogies for Deep Learning' Michael Fullan"