

Student Voice

“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.
- We can embrace our Māori culture, especially with our successes. If we do well, we know that we have some influence. We can gain Excellence in any subjects we want. Being Māori doesn’t stop us at anything. It isn’t a boundary, and we can steer past those stereotypes - especially with our school. It allows us to grasp hold of our excellences and success and just fly.

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- Our success shows, and it leads down to future generations. When we achieve, it proves that more and more of us can achieve to get out of the thing of being, oh, being *troublemakers*, because our success will go down the line to our next generations.
- Every year, apart from Year 7, I've had an academic prize, so I've excelled in some of my subjects. I'm pretty good at Science. It's one of my favourite subjects. And one day I hope to be a scientist. Which would be pretty cool, because do you know a Māori scientist? I have done well in competitions like Te Manu Kōrero, and I also do speeches in Japanese as well.
- It felt so good passing, because every time you walk past a teacher that taught you, they'd always be like: "So good to see that you guys passed and that you decided to come back to school." It just feels great hearing them say that.
- I feel proud as a Māori when success comes through and you hear: "Oh, it's the Māori students. They're the ones passing." Māori students are excelling at our school.
- It means there's hope for Māori to become something more than everyone's stereotypes. It brings hope just to see that we can actually make a difference.
- Not a lot of Māori kids have actually made it to the senior levels in our school. I think people are scared of failure, because they'd feel ashamed. But failure, you can learn from it. It's nothing bad. Just push yourself. Who cares if you only get Achieved? At least it's something. So be proud of yourself, and have the mana. Actually, be the Māori kid that gets to the senior level and passes. It makes you feel really good about yourself.
- When you're a Māori and you achieve, it's amazing because quite a lot of Māori get underestimated. For Māori to show people our capabilities, what we can do, it's quite an amazing feeling. When other Māori see our achievements, they want to be just like us, so they push for it as well

- If you're a Māori, you're probably already put in those classes where they're not pushing you to succeed as much, so automatically you do not achieve well. That's the overall stereotype of Māori achievement. People aren't expecting as much of you.
- Back in the day, you never used to find very many successful Māori people out there doing things - and these days you do. We're kind of changing that. I want to do managing and marketing and go into Māori business, and get more of that kind of thing rolling.
- Success as a Māori student, for me, is breaking the stereotypes of not succeeding and not doing as well in school. For me, Māori is my strongest subject. But it doesn't get acknowledged as much as if you got endorsed with Excellence in English. So to break the stereotypes for a Māori student, is to succeed well and be acknowledged, just as much as succeeding in a non-Māori based subject.
- This year, being Head Girl has been pretty cool. That breaks the stereotype. Māori can be leaders and they don't just sit around and do nothing. We're passing NCEA Level 1, 2 and 3, and now getting UE and going off to University.
- I've noticed that when people are asked if they're Māori or not, not many people admit it. But for me, I'm actually proud to be Māori, and I think everyone should be.
- People saying stuff like: "Māori can't do this, can't do that" - it's just heart-breaking, because we do have a lot of Māori achievers within New Zealand. It's really good knowing when you have done something and you've done your culture proud.
- People in our community say, "Oh, that person's dumb because they're Māori". Being a school leader next year, I will work against this stereotype that Māori are underachievers. It's a privilege, and I hope that other Māori students and our community can realise that. Just because you're Māori, it doesn't mean that you're dumb. And it doesn't mean that you can't achieve.

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- When I was receiving my awards at the assembly, there was a Māori boy who said to me: “How did you get those awards? You’re a Māori boy. I don’t know how you got them and why you got them. You must be paying them”.
- Some people see Māori as a barrier. I do believe that our people need to look straight past that, because it’s not true.
- Learning is fun. If I could do it for a living... well, that’s me.
- You’re not going to look at a Pākehā person and be like: “Oh, he can do this. I bet a Māori can’t.”
- You really want to make something of yourself and make your family and iwi proud - and you want to beat the stats. You want to just be you and succeed.
- It’s about trying to change the stereotype that they’ve put on all of us as Māori. We can all actually achieve - sometimes even better than others.
- Everyone knows we have this stereotype - that we’re not as high achievers as anyone else in our world today. Yesterday, this actually happened to me. Someone came into work and when I was serving them they pretty much told me that Māori can’t achieve, that they’re not successful people. And it really hurt me. I want to prove that stereotype wrong.
- I just want to show the world that we as Māori can achieve, and we can achieve anything we want to if we put our mind to it.
- Regardless of your culture, your ethnicity, anyone can achieve anything. I mean, look at our Governor-General.
- A lot of people think being Māori is trying to work against something. But if you’re Māori, you’re working with your whole culture. You have your ancestors, your family, they’re all behind you. Being Māori is something that will support you, not something that you have to fight against.
- To be successful is not to conform to the negative stereotype that we all know is there with being a Māori student. Being successful, it’s not just academically or physically but it’s also the respect you get from the teachers and friends.

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- My older brother he sort of slacked off with school, and he knows it. He talks to me and he always says, "Don't be like me". He always pushes me to make sure I know where I am going. And like, I'm not trying to sound sad, but I don't want to do what he did.
- A lot of Māori do have talent, I can see it in my cousins and all my family, but they just don't bring it out to the table. You need to put your results on the table. Don't be shy. You need to be proud of who you are as a Māori - show your talents to the people.
- I think it's more about pride - showing the way for the rest of the family and for the rest of us as Māori. We just make the path bigger, not longer. And I reckon, being the oldest, I have to show my brothers and my cousins and my extended family that they can be more than what they are.
- The Māori pass rate for NCEA has lifted in our school. It is lifting every year and I think the word that's been thrown around is pride, and I do carry a lot of pride in seeing that I was part of that stat.
- Breaking that stereotype and those assumptions that are put on us as Māori. I don't think success for us is just academic. It's finding who we are and being happy with our well-being, and being able to confidently walk with te ao Māori and te ao Pākehā. (*the Māori and Pākehā worlds*). And showing them that we can do just as good as they can, and better.
- When all of us Māori kids can walk into our school and be proud to wear our uniform, I think that's a good success. Not just walking in, but when you walk out of our school and we're not rushed to take our uniform off because we're proud to wear it. I reckon that's a pretty big thing.
- I saw this Māori fella on the fifty-dollar note, and I asked my dad: "Who's this fella, Dad?" And he said: "Oh, that's Api (Apirana Ngata). He was the first Māori to graduate from a university." I know Api is a big inspiration for Māori, and I respect that. I want to be like that fella.

- We have to push past the expectations that the world has on Māori. We have so much talent and intelligence, but it's these statistics and the kind of image that everybody else has placed on us that hold us back. There is resilience amongst us, and it's slowly coming through. And that's what success means to me as a Māori,
- I was first in my family to pass Level 1 in school, and so for me I was happy as. I don't want to tell my mum yet. I want her to find out next year so she can be happy too.
- The lies that we get told - that we can't do it. But we are strong people. When you go back to the wars that were fought, the battles that were fought, that doesn't just stay in the past. Those battles were fought for us to be here, to move forward.
- My biggest success would be overcoming the barriers, the doubts, the stereotypes about me being Māori - and also the limitations of my school.
- It feels good to prove other people wrong when they're stuck thinking that because we're Māori we can't achieve in an academic world, and we can only achieve in Visual Arts and nothing related to English and careers and Science and Technology. Everyone is capable of anything we set our mind to.
- I'm the first. I'm the first one to make it to this point. To make it to Level 1 in my family is like: "Wow!"
- Times have changed. In our school we now see our Māori students succeeding at the same level as the Pākehā students.
- Just because I'm 'smart' doesn't mean that I'm not Māori. Success is being able to hold on to who we really are as Māori.
- It's not so much where you come from. For me it's who you make yourself to be.
- I'm one of a few Māori students in a prefect leadership role at our school. I think my success as a Māori student is I don't have to put away any part of my Māori identity. I'm allowed to walk in that identity and speak te reo Māori.

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