

Build high expectations and strengths-based approaches

A suggestion for implementing the strategy 'Commit to whole-school approaches' from the Guide: [Behaviour and learning](#)

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- Includes:**
- Use strengths-based approaches
 - Foster high expectations
 - Empower students
 - Promote high expectations in teacher practice
 - Support students to have high expectations

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Behaviour and learning](#)

Strategy: [Commit to whole-school approaches](#)

Suggestion: [Build high expectations and strengths-based approaches](#)

Date

18 June 2026

Link

inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/behaviour-and-learning/build-high-expectations-and-strengths-based-approaches

Use strengths-based approaches

He Pikorua, the Learning Support Practice Framework, uses a holistic, strengths-based approach. This approach enhances the mana of the individual and their community by focusing on their strengths and their potential to address challenges. It avoids deficit thinking.

Support practice that:

- acknowledges and enhances strengths, abilities and interests.
- incorporates the cultural traditions, identity, language, and ways of knowing of mokopuna and their whānau.
- focuses on the future and not the past.
- facilitates change and hope.
- is sustainable.
- enhances the motivation, capability and capacity of the collaborative team.

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Foster high expectations

Sue Ngarimu-Goldsmith, principal at Te Kura o Hiruharama, explains how a whakataukī was used to inspire the thinking behind the school's mission "Striving for personal excellence".



Video hosted on Vimeo <http://vimeo.com/225811853>

Closed Captions

Source:

Ministry of Education Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga
<https://vimeo.com/225811853>

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Empower students

Promote a strengths-based lens that focuses on empowerment, restoration, and relationships rather than a deficit lens that focuses on power, punishment, and control.

For example:

- Mana-enhancing, restorative, problem-solving, inclusive rather than punitive, blaming, labelling, problem-finding, excluding.
- A holistic lens that focuses on recognising potential, skills, and the essence of the whole child, rather than an accusing lens that focuses on disobedience, defiance, and the behaviour of the child.
- An ecological lens that focuses on the whole child, their history, whakapapa, and whānau, and the relationships in the class, rather than an individual focus with a snapshot perspective of the present event and the individual child's behaviour or response.
- A circular process of restoration, rather than a linear process of blame.
- Cultural approaches using the big picture, achieving balance and restoring mana, and relational trust, rather than clinical approaches looking at the small picture, solving crises, regaining power, and leaving relational mistrust.
- Behaviour is seen in the context of overall wellbeing, rather than in the context of authority and control.

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Promote high expectations in teacher practice

Provide quality teaching for all students to reach high but realistic expectations.

- ✓ Build high but realistic goals for students.
- ✓ Foster ākongā confidence and self-belief.
- ✓ Support ākongā aspirations.
- ✓ Build pedagogies and teacher capability to set and support high expectations.
- ✓ Monitor the impact of teaching practice and take action when needed.
- ✓ Work with whānau to identify a student's full potential.
- ✓ Communicate high expectations across the school.
- ✓ Communicate and collaborate with Māori and Pacific whānau and ākongā.

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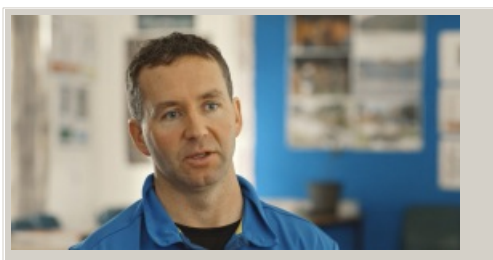
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Support students to have high expectations

Teacher Wayne

Robinson shares how he sets up and develops student ownership and high expectations for learning.



Video hosted on Vimeo <http://vimeo.com/225193089>

Closed Captions

Source:

Ministry of Education, [inclusive education videos \(NZ\)](#)
<https://vimeo.com/showcase/2950799>

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