

Digital Enablement, Porirua

What is it? *Digital Enablement, Porirua* is a project to provide children and young people in Porirua East schools with the digital tools to learn, function and achieve as digital citizens.

If children have the digital tools they need to learn at school and at home, parents will be able to link more closely with schools and help children with their learning.

How will it happen? *Digital Enablement Porirua* will work with schools and families so that

- every family can have laptops for learning at an affordable price.
- every family can have affordable access to broadband at home.

By working together as a community, we can buy quality laptops at discount rates. Families can pay very low weekly prices without interest until they own the laptops.

Teachers are already using digital technology to improve students' learning and they have a programme to keep learning about all the ways technology can help children do better.

Why is it happening? Children are living in a digital world. All children need to be able to use this digital technology from a young age and studies show it can help learning.

It isn't fair if only some students can afford laptops and others do not get to use them to help their learning.

At the Porirua Education Summit this year, more than 200 people agreed to work together to help *all* young people in Porirua achieve their full potential. The Porirua East Group of schools have been working together to raise student achievement and are ready to take the step so children can have affordable access to digital technology at school *and* at home.

Who is involved? 13 schools in Porirua East are leading this project, and early childhood education centres expect to join in too. At first, all schools will have just one or two classes involved in the project, with more joining each year. The project is supported by SHINE, the Porirua Education Initiative, and by others in the local community. The Manaiakalani Trust, which has been working with Tamaki schools on a similar project, has also offered support.

When will it start? We plan to have the first groups of students and their families involved in this project from 2014 so we have a lot of work to do over the next few months.

What difference will digital technology make to students? Research shows that digital technology helps students to be more engaged in their learning. It helps them work on different tasks at their own pace, or in teams. It also helps parents to stay in touch with what children are learning and how well they are progressing. In Tamaki, it is helping improve student achievement in core skills like literacy.

What does this mean for Boards of Trustees? Boards of Trustees are the democratically elected representatives of the community who help schools set and achieve their vision for children. Boards need to endorse their school's involvement in this project but they don't have to carry the responsibility and the risk for it on their own because a new Trust will be set up to carry this burden.

What does this mean for whānau and families in Porirua East? Whānau and families will have an affordable way of buying and using digital technology at home. They can stay in

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close touch with what children are learning each day and ask questions, give feedback and make suggestions to help children achieve their full potential.

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Background

The Porirua East Group (PEG) is made up of 13 schools (Porirua College, Brandon, Corinna, Maraeroa, Natone Park, Tairangi, Rangikura, Russell, Cannon's Creek, Glenview, Windley, and Holy Family) who have been working together to raise student achievement. In 2013 Te Kura Maori o Porirua chose to join the cluster.

Since this collaboration began in 2007 our cluster has developed a culture of sharing information, setting targets and committing to ongoing improvement in our schools.

We have:

- Established an interagency (Police, CYFS, Health) approach called Raising Achievement Across the Youth sector (RAAYS), to address the issue of low student attendance. In 2012 our cluster had an average attendance of 93% (3% higher than the national average), an increase of approximately 5%.
- Identified our common challenges when trying to manage and sustain change in teacher practice so that we can be in the best position to meet the needs of students and to implement the principles and goals of the NZ Curriculum for the 21st century.
- Developed a shared vision and goals (2013) to improve outcomes for students through high quality teaching and improved relationships for learning as professionals. We have also set up moderation processes across the cluster for the teaching and assessment of writing and reading using the National Standards. Learning Media is supporting this development.
- Engaged with Core Education (as part of Te Toi Tupu) to support the development of blended e-learning environments in all our schools. This initiative has led to a high take up of the pedagogy and e-learning tools by groups of teachers. Most of our schools have the infrastructure to provide greater access to teaching and online learning opportunities for students.

A strong collegial culture is now established between the schools with a shared agenda for raising achievement and providing students with the digital tools and accessibility to enable them to keep learning **both at school and home**.

Our proposal

In 2014 the principals in PEG aim to provide their students and families with opportunities to purchase affordable e-learning tools, such as laptops and tablets, as well as affordable access to the internet using Ultra Fast Broadband (UFB) from home.

We have looked to Manaiakalani, a cluster of 10 schools with a similar profile to ours, located in East Tamaki, Auckland. The parents of students from years 5-13 in Manaiakalani purchase laptops for their children through a lease to own system, at a very affordable price they determined themselves. Research into this project indicates that student engagement in learning and student achievement has improved significantly.

The East Tamaki schools are supported by a trust of business entrepreneurs, Auckland City Council and community leaders who access funds and offer time to facilitate the management of the project. The Manaiakalani Trust, chaired by Pat Snedden, serves the needs of the schools and their families. Without this backbone organisation it is unlikely that such a wide-ranging roll out of digital tools and affordable access to the UFB could have taken place so quickly and effectively.

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A similar organization with access to the necessary funds and expertise and time will need to be established to support our aim for our Porirua East cluster. We look forward to your involvement.