

MEDIA STATEMENT

TUESDAY JULY 12 2011

EDUCATORS SAY NO TO FAILURE IN OUR SCHOOLS FOR PACIFIC

The NEET rate (not in employment, education or training) for Maori and Pacific youth 15-24 years, has increased over the past two years by 50%¹

Educators in Auckland, who are tired of the under-performance of the current education system for Pacific students, are holding a Fono (meeting) to come up with their own solutions.

RAISE Pasifika (Raising Auckland Pasifika Initiatives & Strategies for Education) is a community driven initiative which aims to achieve parity for Pacific students in education by 2020.

The Fono aims to address poor academic achievement in education institutions across the sector from ECE, schooling, tertiary, adult and community education, and industry training with the view of developing a cohesive Auckland Pasifika Education Strategy.

The drop-out rate for Pacific students aged 18 to 24 years, studying at Level 4 and above at tertiary institutions is 62%²

The *RAISE Pasifika* Steering Group is made up of representatives from different schools, institutions, government departments, training organisations and groups interested in improving Pacific achievement in all areas of education in Auckland, New Zealand's largest Polynesian city.

Tafilelea Fa'avae Gagamoe, *RAISE Pasifika* Steering Group Chair, says the majority of all Pasifika people in New Zealand live in Auckland so we have to get it right when it comes to the education of our young people.

"We need to be intolerant of this consistent failure of our education system to serve the educational needs of our Pasifika students. We don't want our children to keep inheriting

¹Department of Labour, 2010 Maori and Pacific Workers Recession v1.2, www.dol.govt.nz.

² 2010 Youth Guarantee Graduate Destinations Report.

this problem so it is up to our generation to take a hard look at what's going wrong and what's working and get it right.”

University of Auckland Lecturer, Patisepa Tuafuti says Pasifika people need a system that values their identities and cultures.

When we talk about Pasifika education, we also talk about their experiences, traditions, values and beliefs. Hence if we are to speak and discuss raising Pasifika achievements then we must 'listen' to Pasifika communities. Pasifika people need an education system that has the enthusiasm to learn and understand how to connect Pasifika experiences, aspirations and expectations, and the underlying beliefs and values to support academic achievement.

RAISE PASIFIKA is seeking a wider mandate from the Pasifika community and its Steering Group to keep working to improve education outcomes in Auckland for all Pacific students post-Fono.

The Fono will be held on Thursday, 21 July at the Telstra Pacific Events Centre.