

Teaching, School, and Principal Leadership Practices Survey

Aggregate picture 2021

Cathy Wylie and David Coblenz

2022

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1. Introduction

The Teaching, School, and Principal Leadership Practices Survey (TSP) was developed to give each school taking part robust data about key practices that research has shown are worth paying attention to because of their direct and indirect effects on student learning.

TSP is free for Aotearoa New Zealand schools to use in terms 2 and 3 each year. It is available online, with schools getting their individual reports as soon as the principal and staff have finished the survey. More than a quarter of primary and secondary schools have used it since it was first made available in 2017. The Ministry of Education funded its original development and continues to fund its ongoing availability to schools. The New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) developed the tool with the support of an expert advisory group.

In 2020 we did a small study of schools that had used TSP for 3 consecutive years. This study showed principals used TSP to inform their own development and appraisal, to identify priorities for change in school and teaching practices, and to check whether change was happening at a sustainable pace, often alongside other school data about student achievement, wellbeing, and engagement.¹

Drawing the data together from all the schools that take part in any one year gives a sound aggregate picture of teaching, school, and leadership practices, showing the strengths and needs in our schools overall.

The tool, advice on its use, information about its development, and the aggregate reports for earlier years are available at www.tsp surveys.org.nz.

This report

This report gives the aggregate picture for 2021, covering the 3,645 teachers at 223 schools, and 227 principals who took part.

Section 2 provides the graphs showing teachers' ratings of their teaching practices, and teacher morale and views of their workload.

Section 3 gives graphs of teacher and principal ratings of their school practices, and teacher and principal views of what they were gaining from their school's Kāhui Ako membership.

Section 4 gives graphs of teacher and principal ratings of their school's principal leadership practices, and principal reports of their workload, and support.

Section 5 provides demographic information about teachers' roles, and about their and principals' length of experience in their role, and time at their current school. It also provides a table of the school characteristics of the 2021 TSP participants, comparing these with the national school statistics.

Section 6 looks at differences evident in primary and secondary teachers' responses.

The final section reports on the similarities and some differences between 2021 and 2017 aggregate TSP responses for teachers. This section considers the rate of change we can expect in schools in relation to policy emphases, and the support provided to leaders, teachers, and schools.

1 https://www.tsp surveys.org.nz/images/TSP_Principals_use_of_TSP_tool.pdf

2. Teaching practices | He mahinga kaiako

There are five domains in the Teaching Practices section of the survey tool. The graphs for these five domains are presented in this section. They show teachers' responses in 2021. The proportions are taken from the number of teachers responding to each domain.

At the end of this section is a graph showing levels of teacher morale and views of their workload.

FIGURE 1 Optimising opportunities to learn | Te whakamana i te ako o ngā ākonga (n = 3,372)

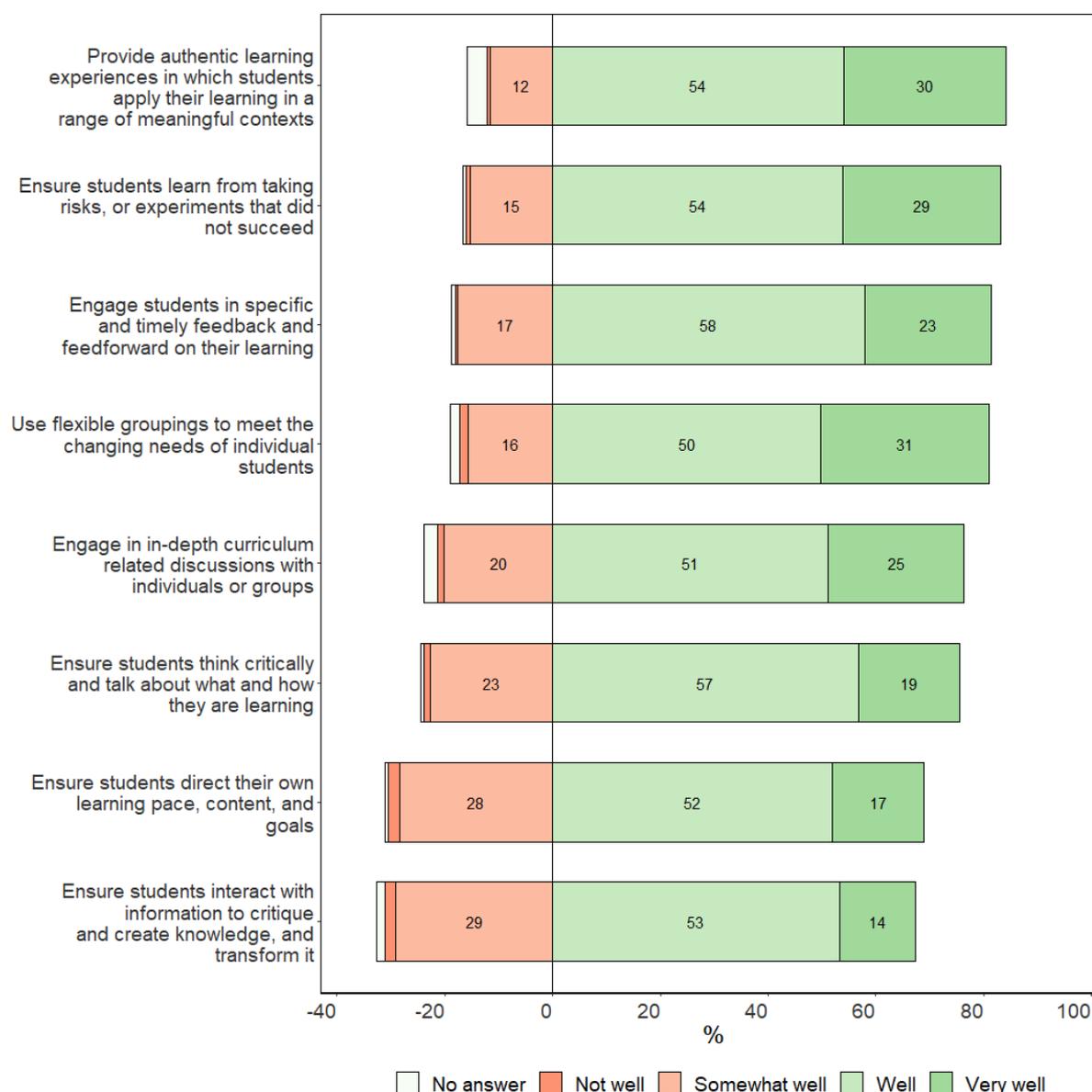


FIGURE 2 Diversity, equity, and inclusion | He mana kanorau, he tōkeke, he whakawhāiti hoki (n = 3,353)

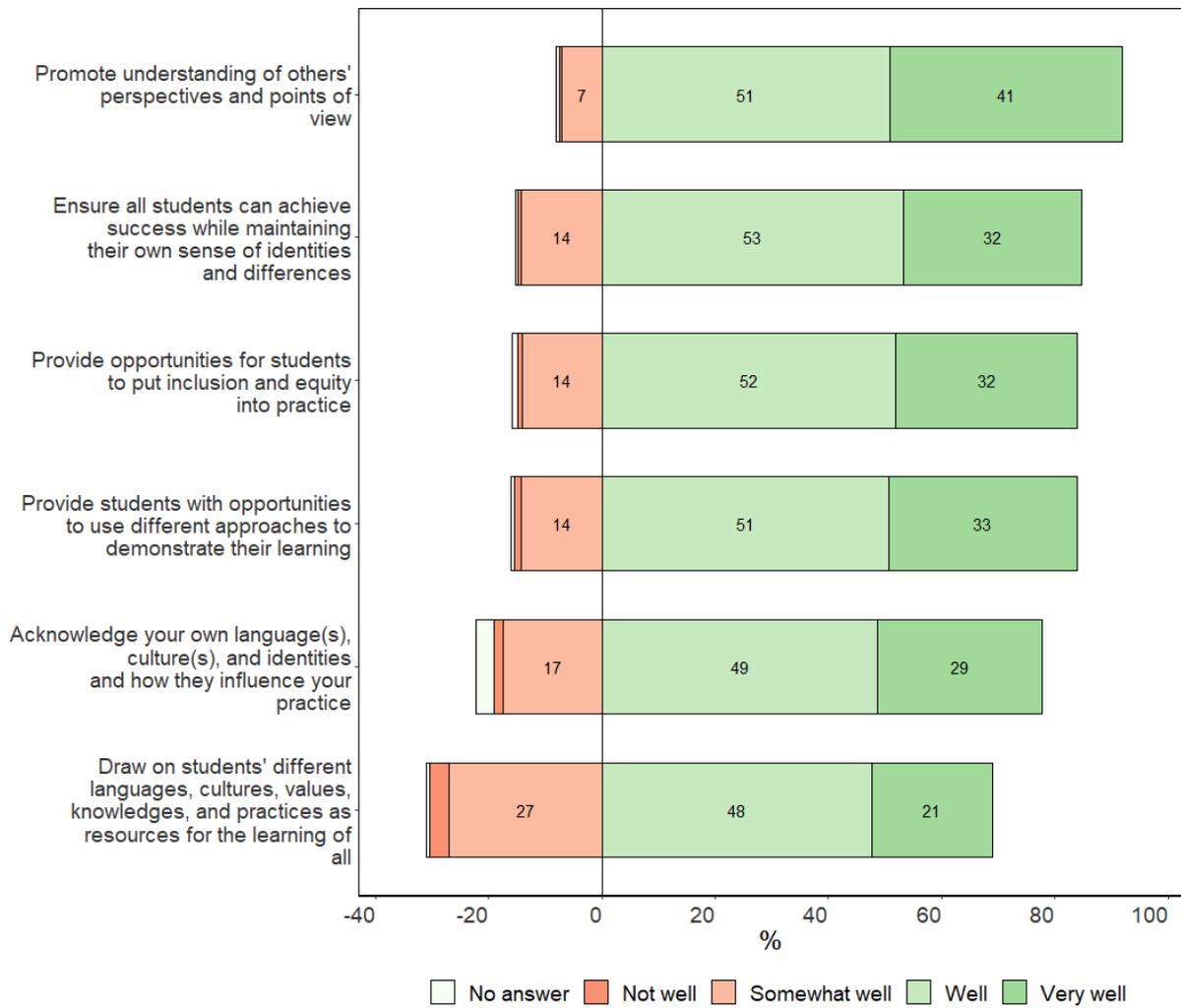


FIGURE 3 Learning-focused partnerships | He mahi tahi, he ako te hua (n = 3,329)

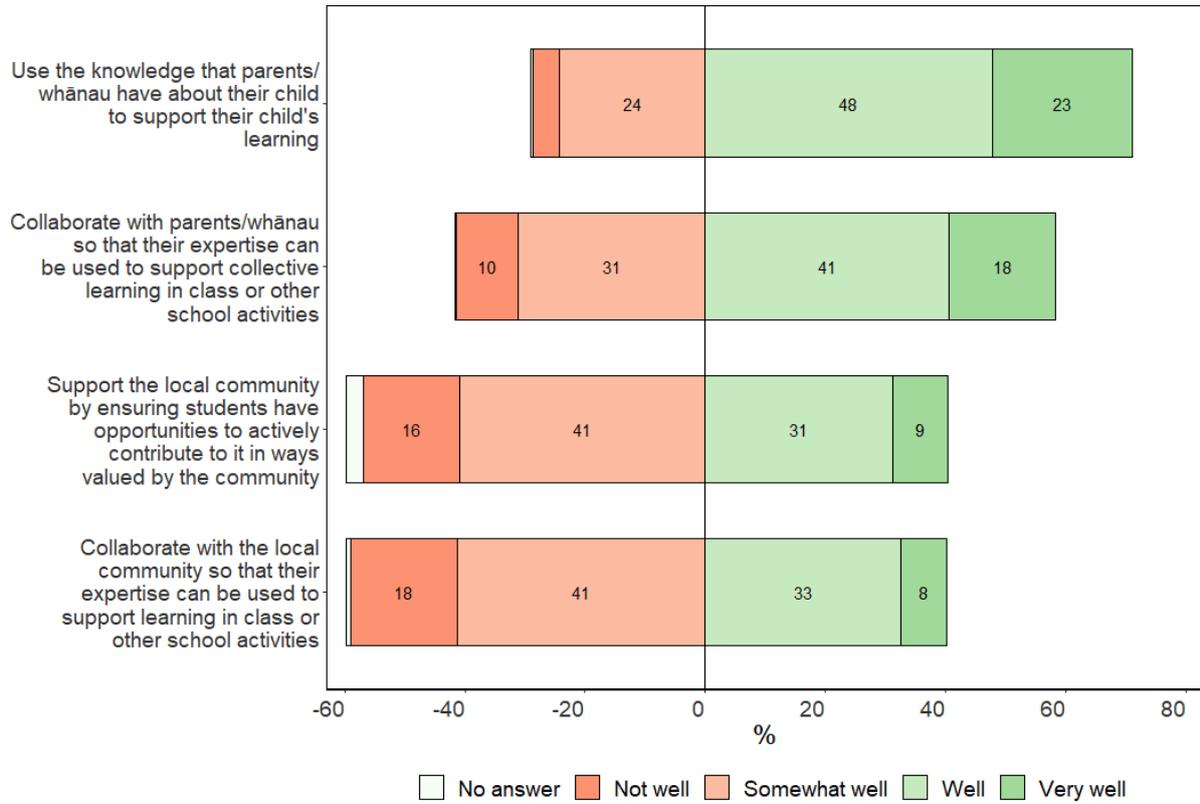


FIGURE 4 Teaching as inquiry | He whakaako pakirehua (n = 3,321)

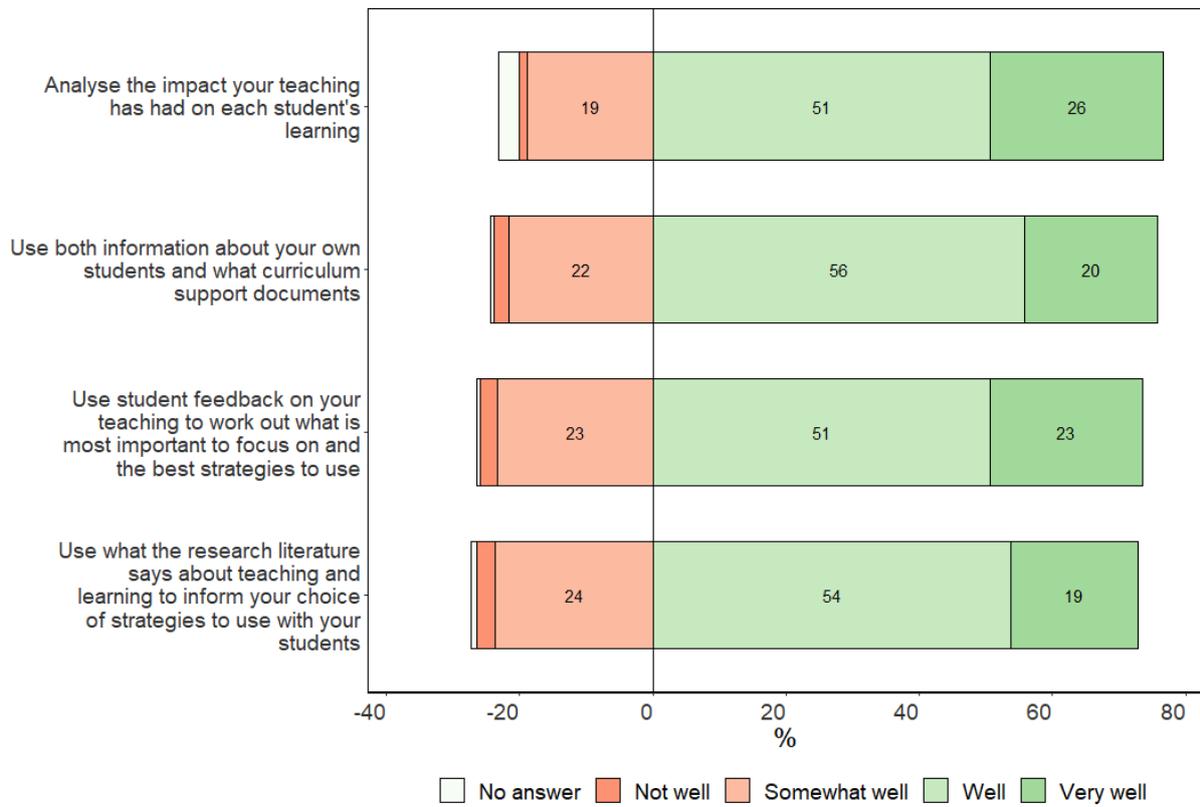


FIGURE 5 Being professional | He ngaiotanga (n = 3,333)

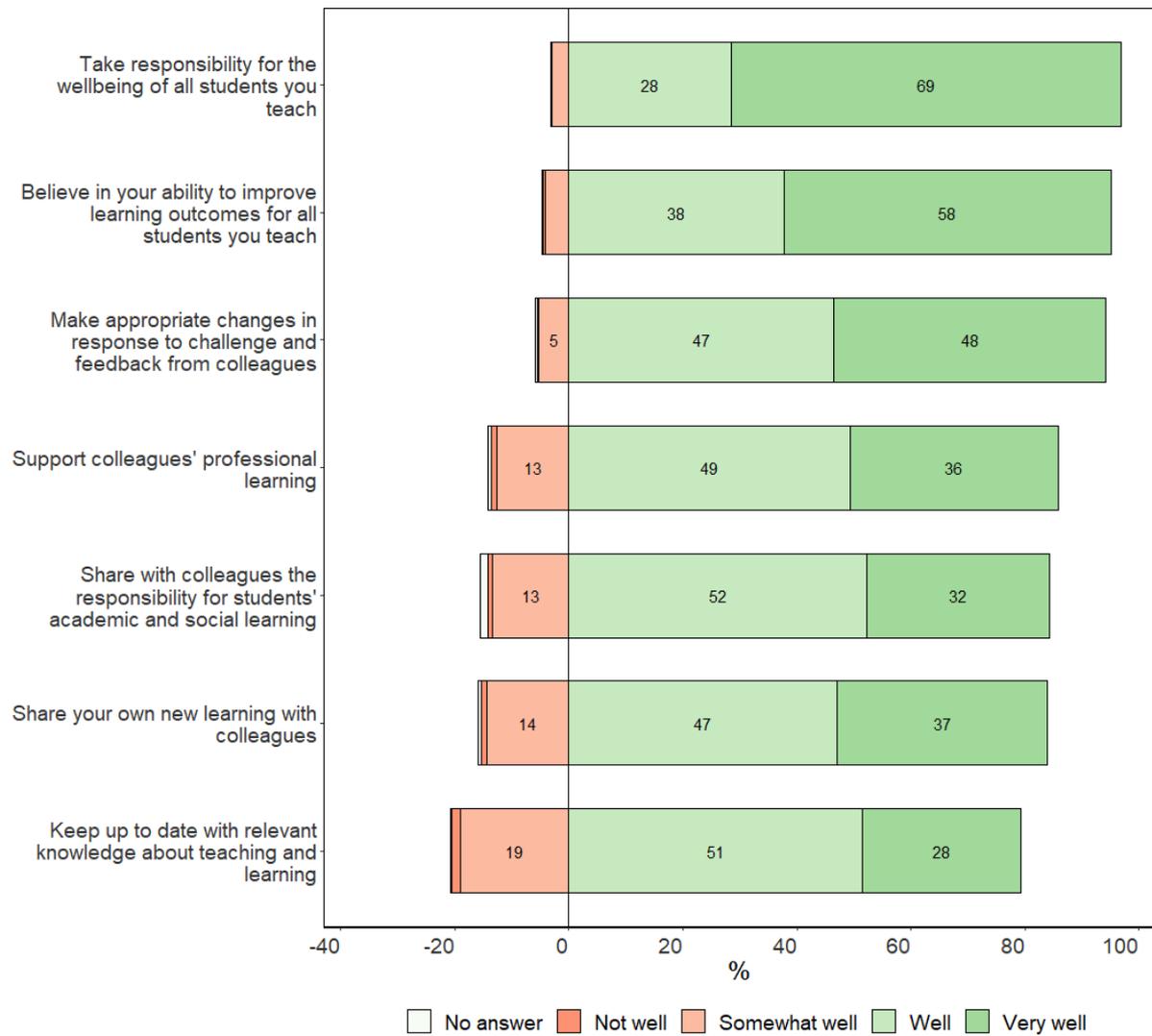
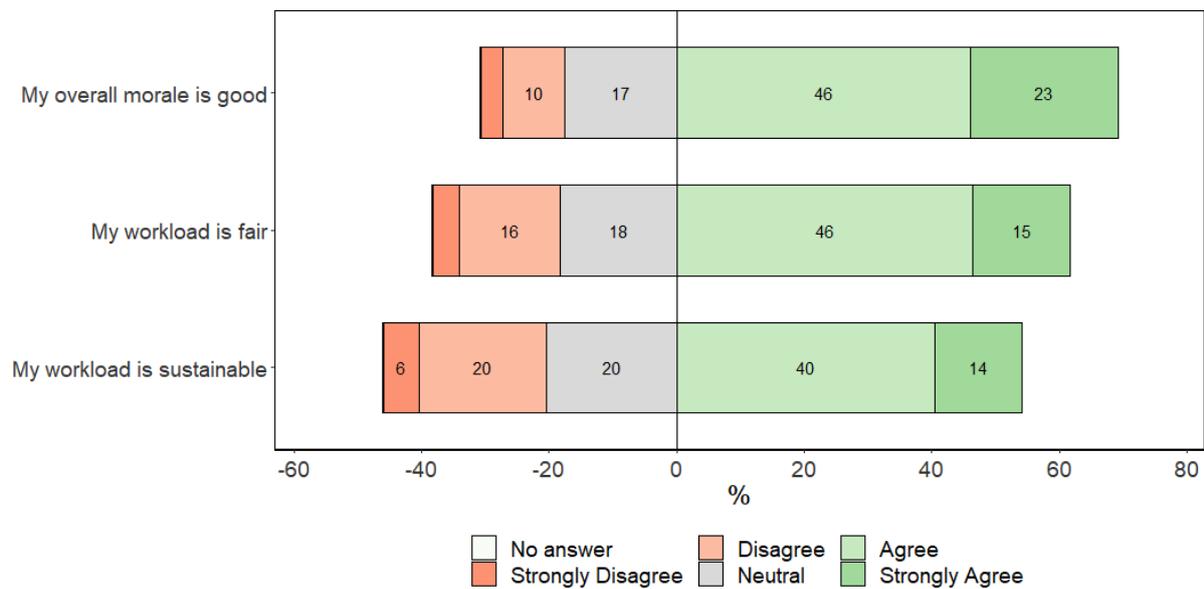


FIGURE 6 Teacher workload and morale (n = 3,423)



3. School practices | He mahinga kura

The TSP survey tool includes eight domains covering school practices. The following graphs give the responses for both the teachers and principals who did the TSP survey in 2021 for each of these domains.

There are four other graphs in this section.

Two graphs bring together separate items located in different school practices domains:

- school practices focused on Māori learners
- teachers' collaborative work together.

Two more graphs show what teachers and principals thought of their Kāhui Ako experiences.

FIGURE 7 Supportive and caring environment | He ao tautoko, he ao manaaki
(n = 3,510 teachers, 220 principals)

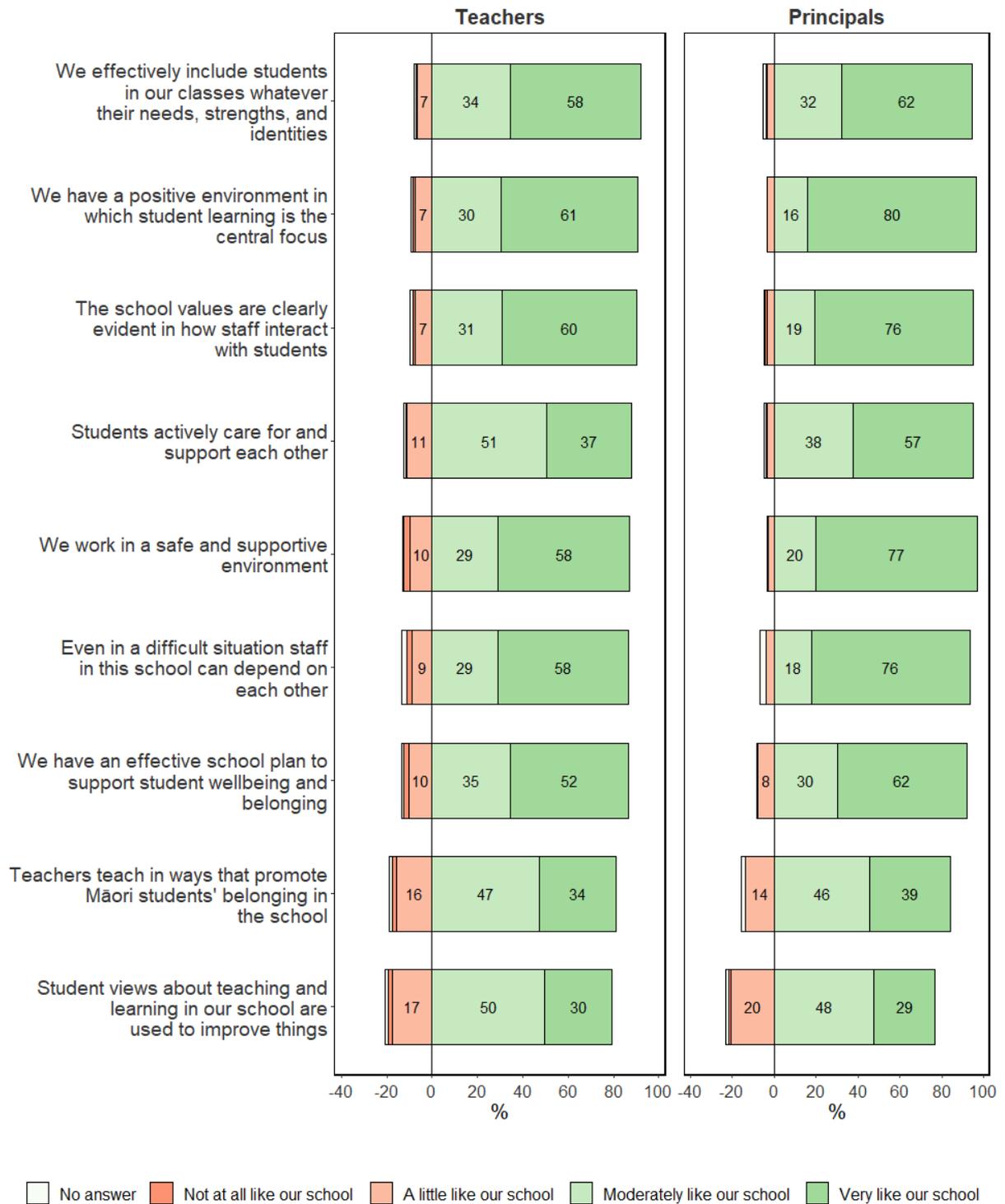


FIGURE 8 Learning-focused partnerships | He mahi tahi, he ako te hua
(n = 3,510 teachers, 220 principals)

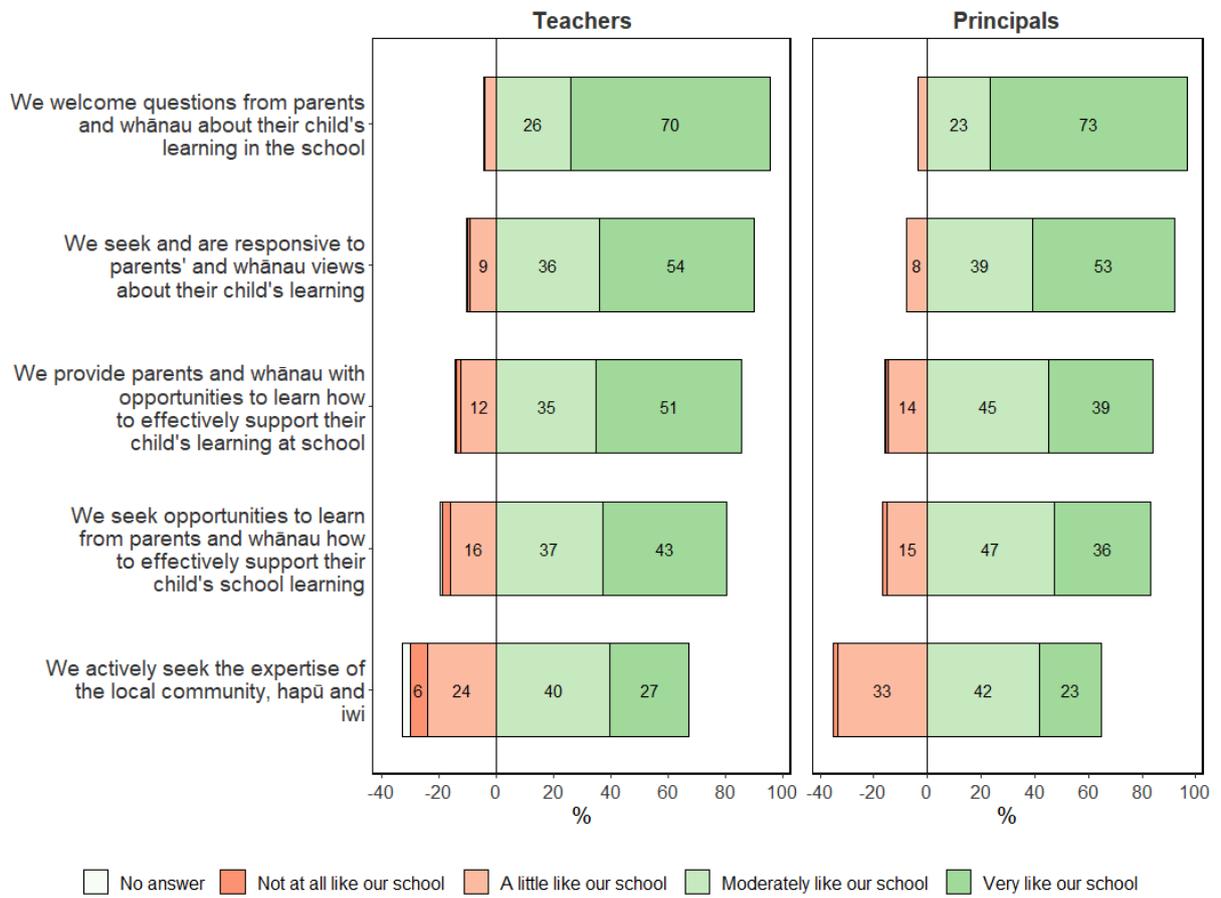


FIGURE 9 Teaching as inquiry | He whakaako pakirehua (n = 3,414 teachers, 210 principals)

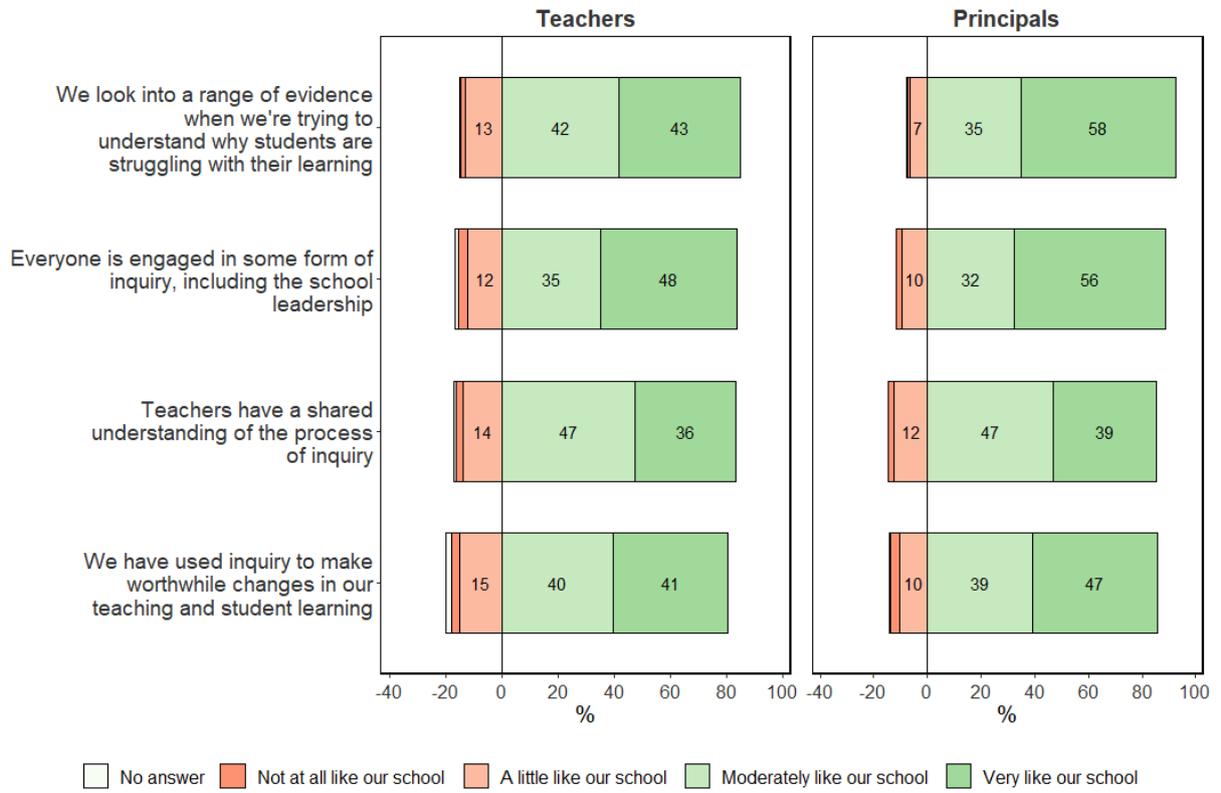


FIGURE 10 School goals | He whāinga ā-kura (n = 3,519 teachers, 222 principals)

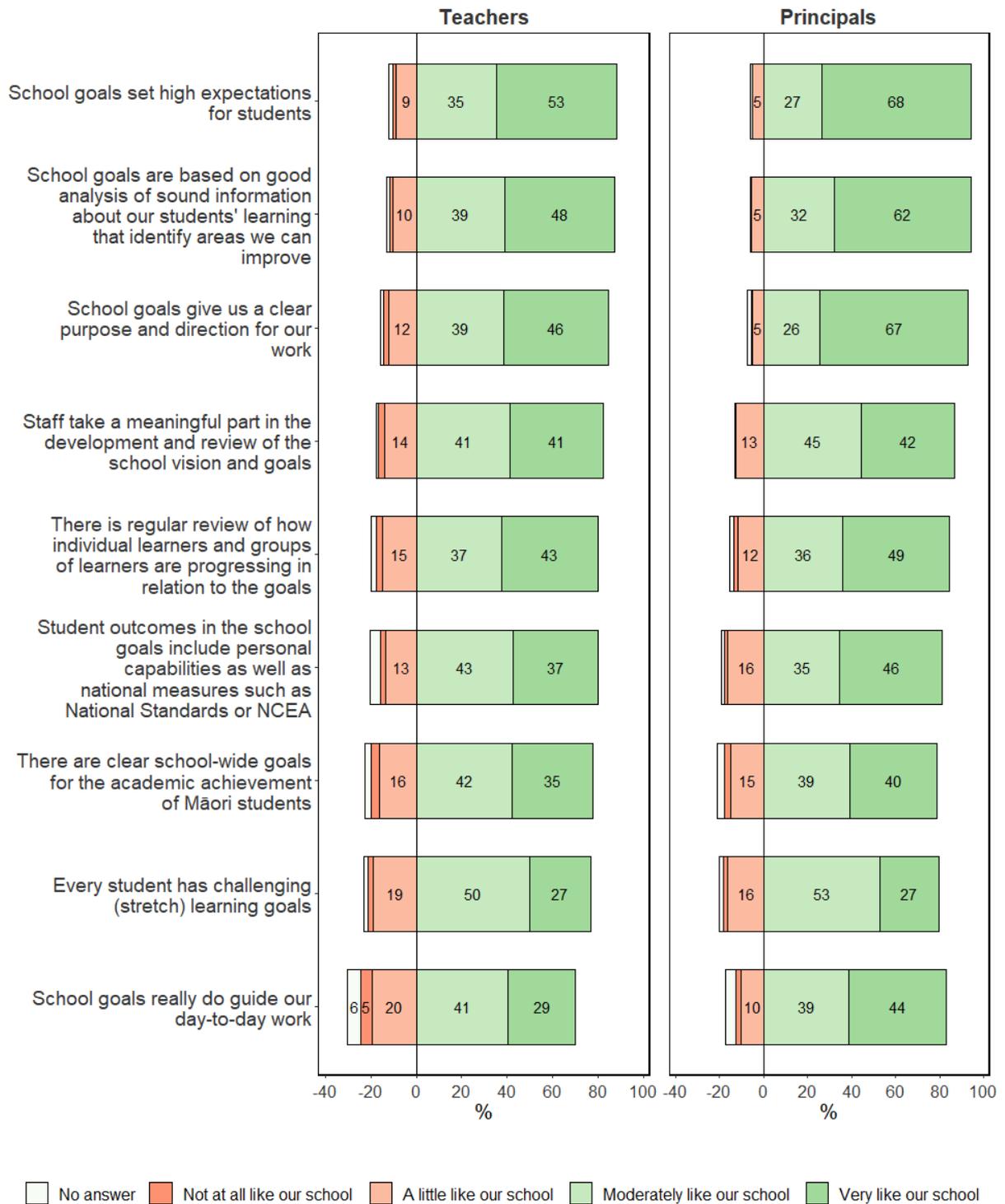


FIGURE 11 Professional community | He kāhui ako (n = 3,456 teachers, 213 principals)

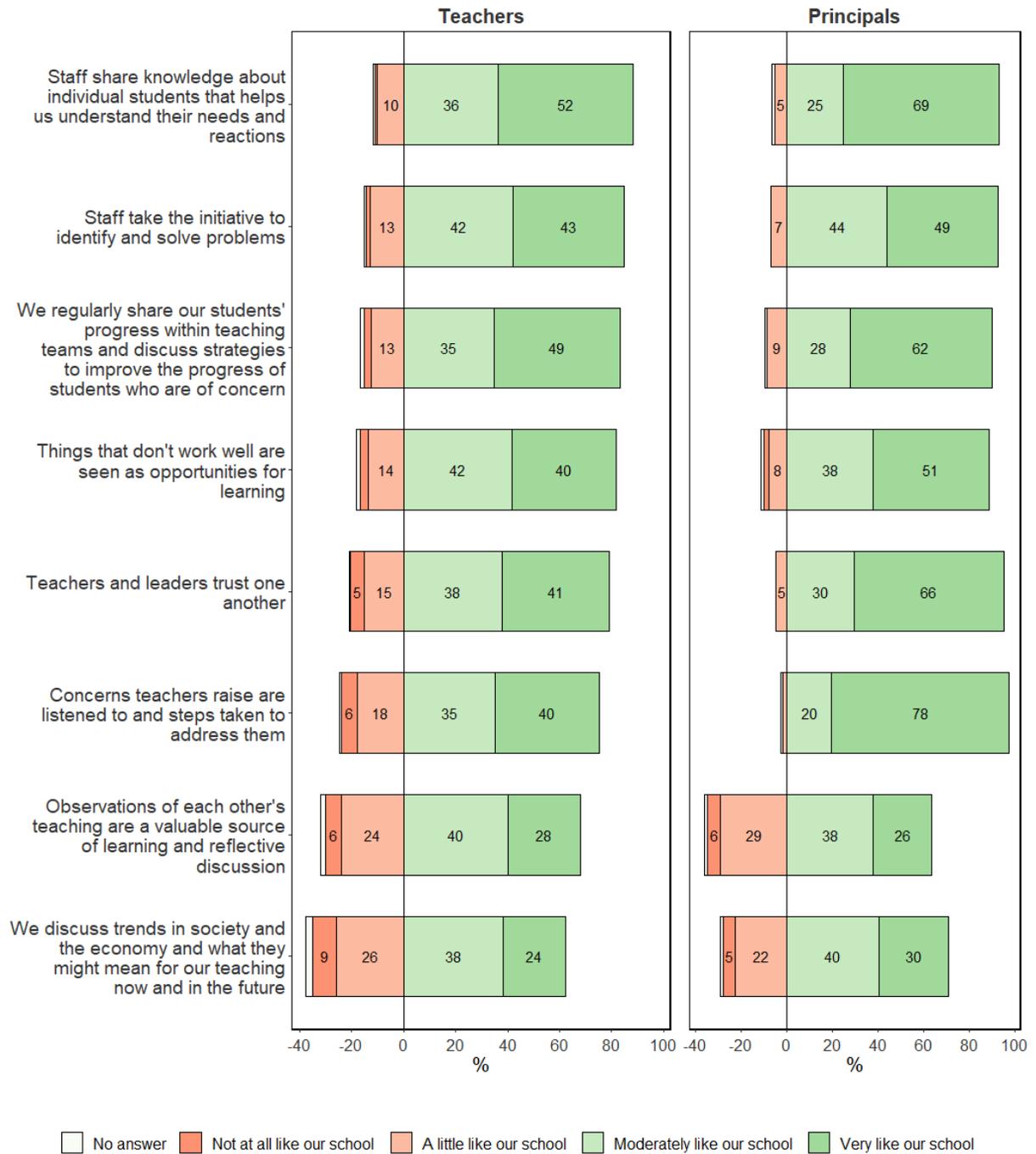


FIGURE 12 Coherent curriculum and evaluation | He marau mārama, he arotake hoki
(n = 3,491 teachers, 216 principals)



FIGURE 13 Professional feedback and support | He tautoko, he whakahoki kōrero
(n = 3,439 teachers, 213 principals)

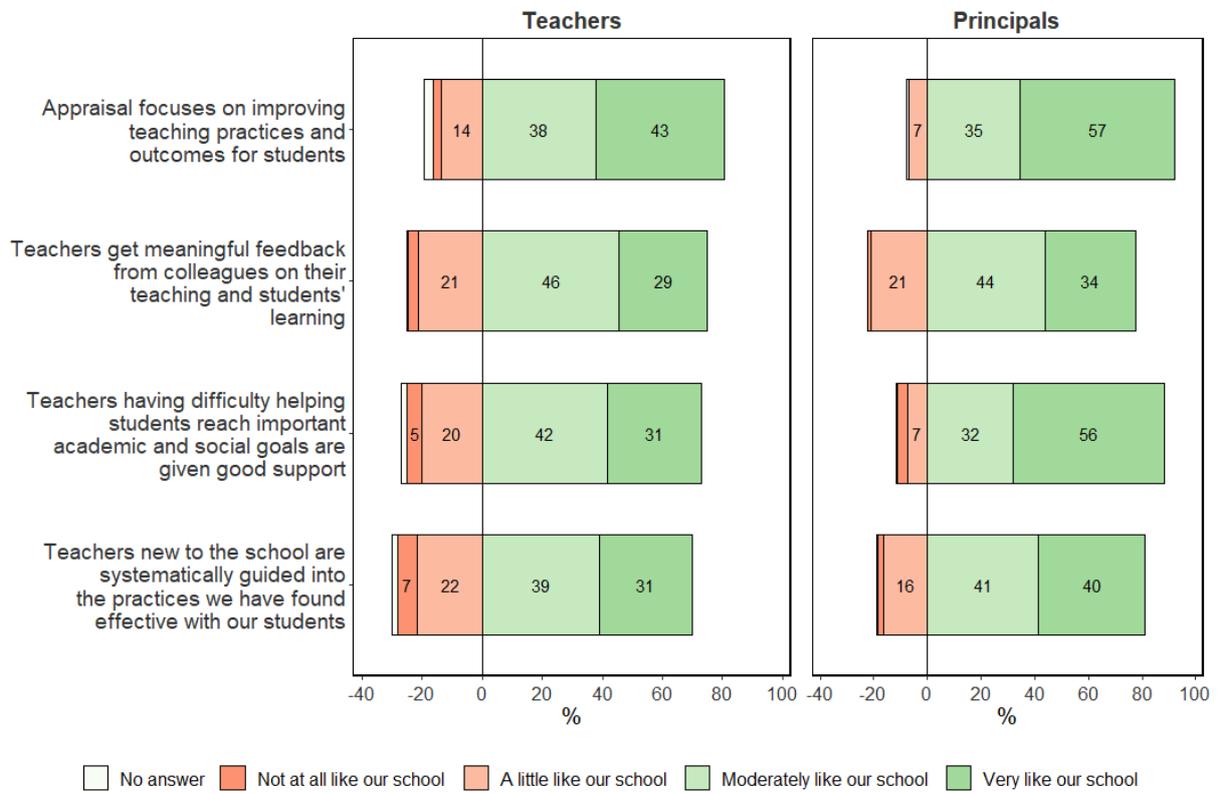


FIGURE 14 Strategic resource allocation | He rautaki toha rauemi (n = 3,448 teachers, 213 principals)

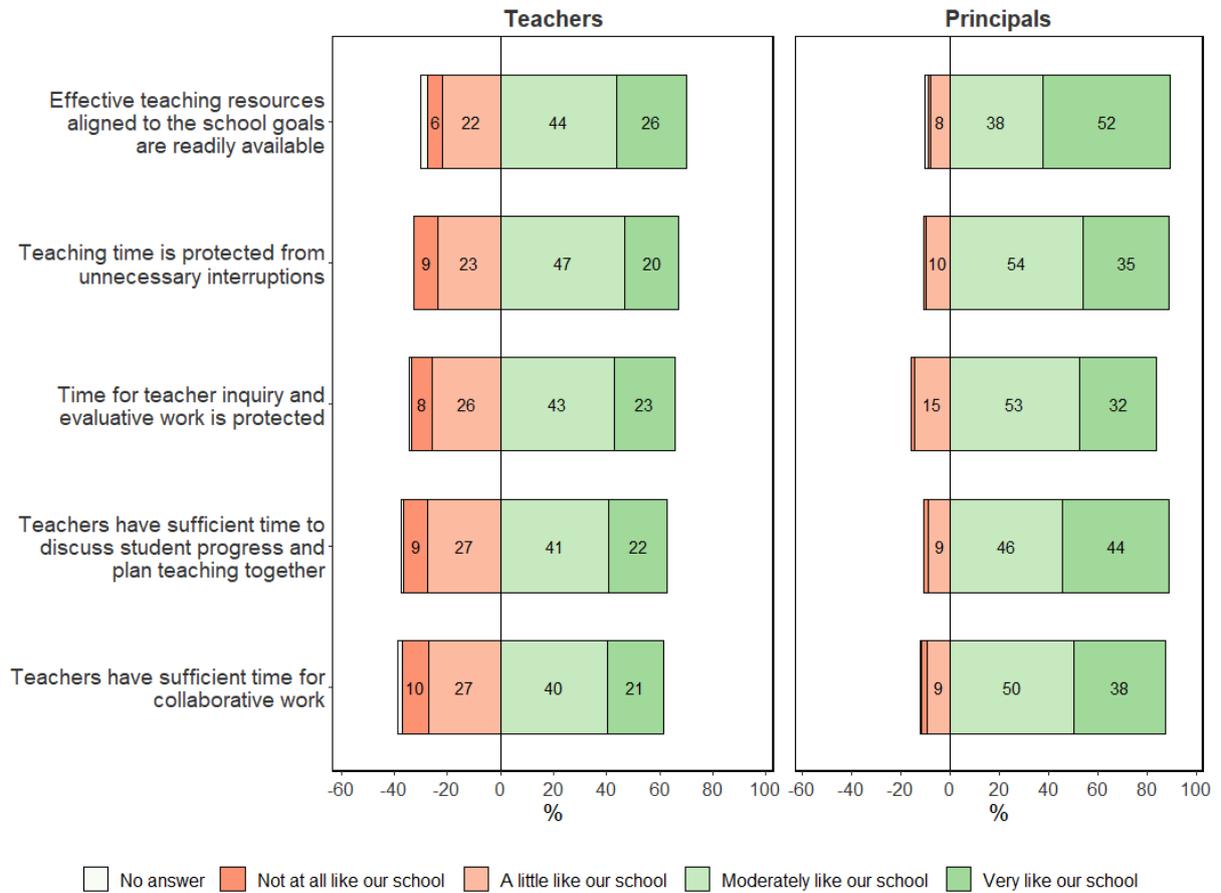


FIGURE 15 School practices for Māori learners | He mahinga kura hei tautoko i ngā ākonga Māori (n = 3,507 teachers, 220 principals)

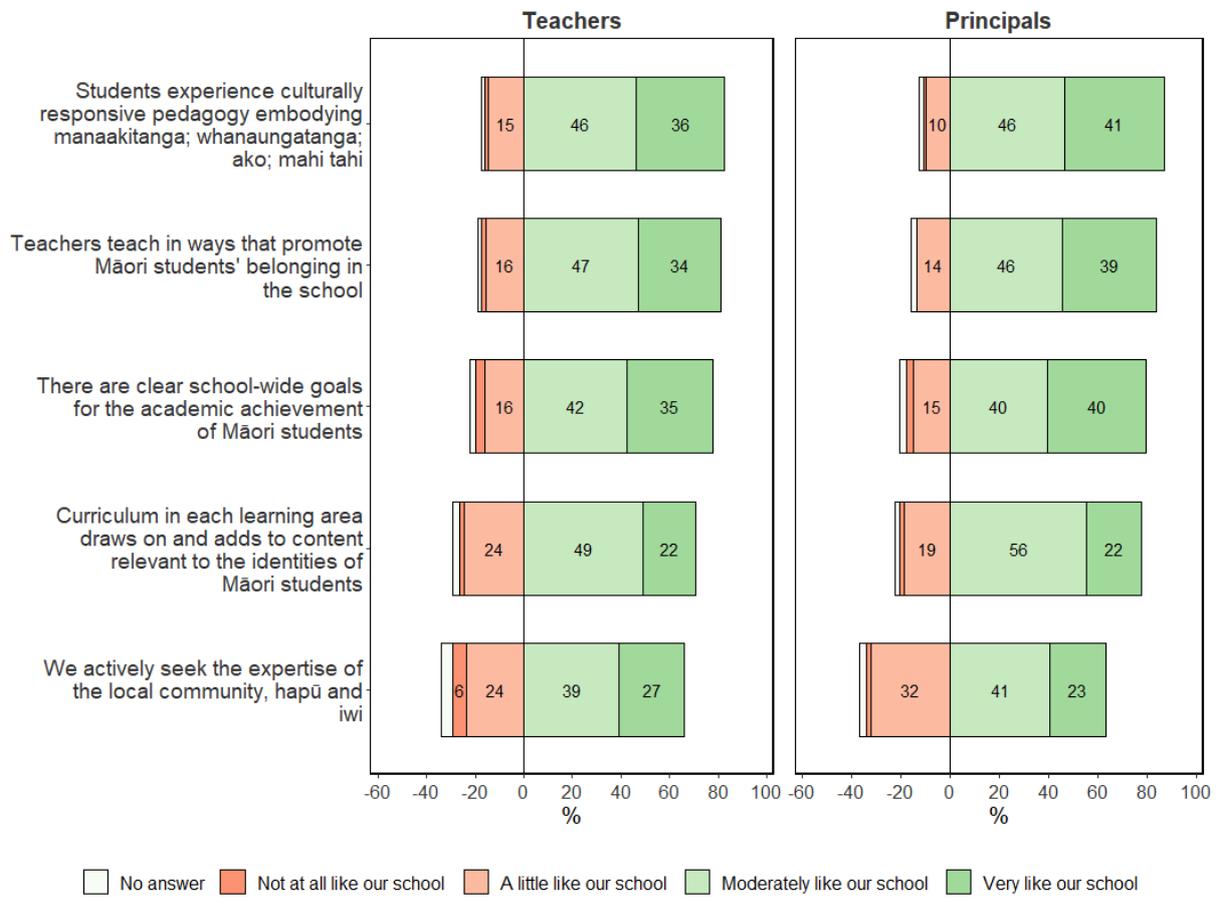


FIGURE 16 School collaborative practices | He mahinga kura, he mahi tahi
(n = 3,477 teachers, 215 principals)



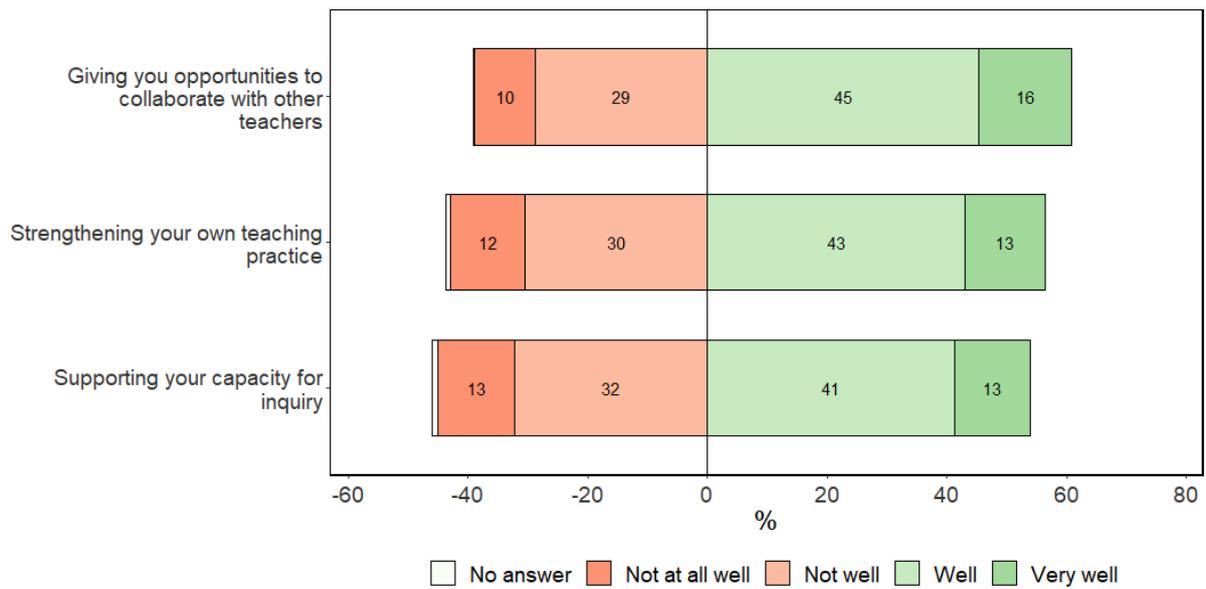
Experiences of Kāhui Ako

Teachers and principals were each asked three additional questions about their Kāhui Ako experience.

Teacher ratings of their Kāhui Ako experience

Eighty-two percent of teachers said their school was part of a Kāhui Ako. Interestingly, 11% were not sure if their school was part of a Kāhui Ako. The following graph shows responses from teachers who had indicated that their school was part of a Kāhui Ako.

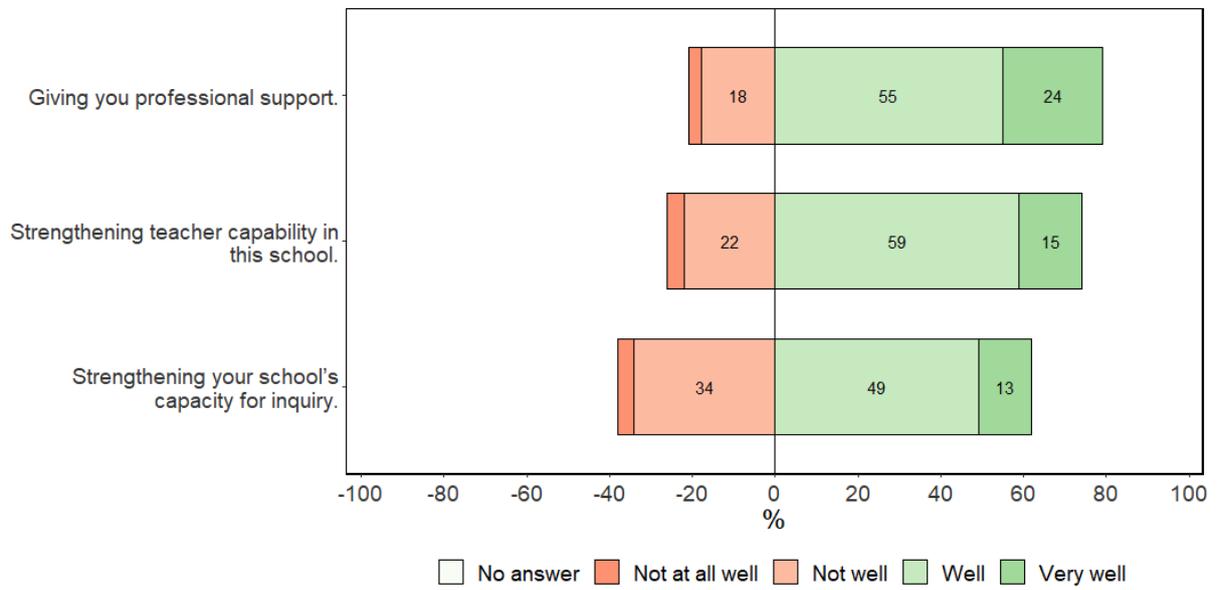
FIGURE 17 Teacher views of their Kāhui Ako experience (n = 2,733)



Principal ratings of their Kāhui Ako experience

Eighty-four percent of the principals said their school was part of a Kāhui Ako, and 17% of these were Kāhui Ako leaders.

FIGURE 18 Principal views of their Kāhui Ako experience (n = 173)



4. Principal leadership practices | He aratakinga tumuaki

This section provides teacher and principal views of the principal’s leadership practices. The two domains shown here were established through factor analysis of all TSP items that asked about the principal’s leadership.

At the end of this section are principal reports of their support and workload.

FIGURE 19 Principal leadership—Direction and fresh horizons | He aratakinga tumuaki—He aronga, he pae hou hoki (n = 3,430 teachers, 210 principals)

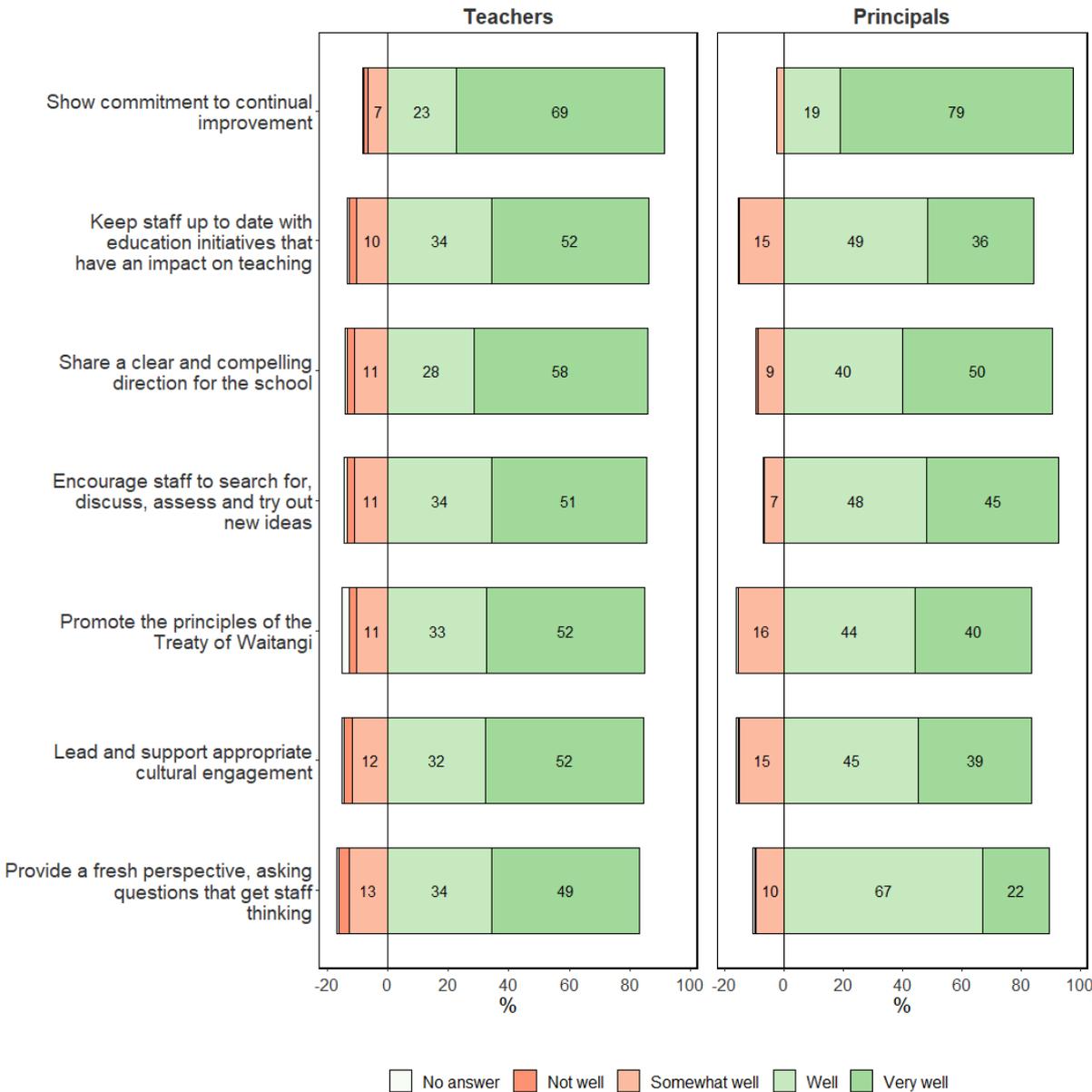


FIGURE 20 Principal leadership—Interpersonal relations and working with others | He aratakinga tumuaki—Whakawhanaungatanga, he mahi tahi hoki (n = 3,438 teachers, 210 principals)

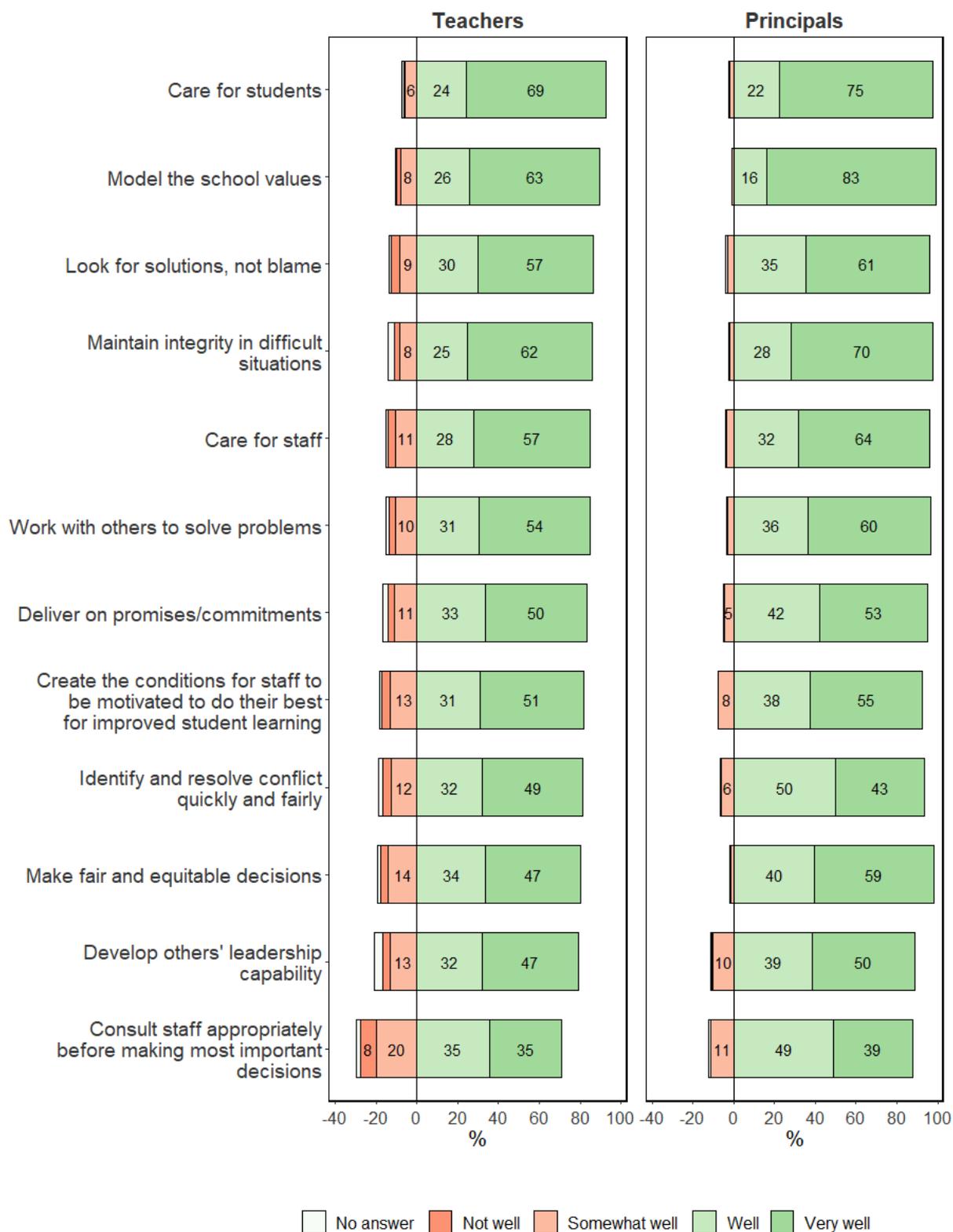
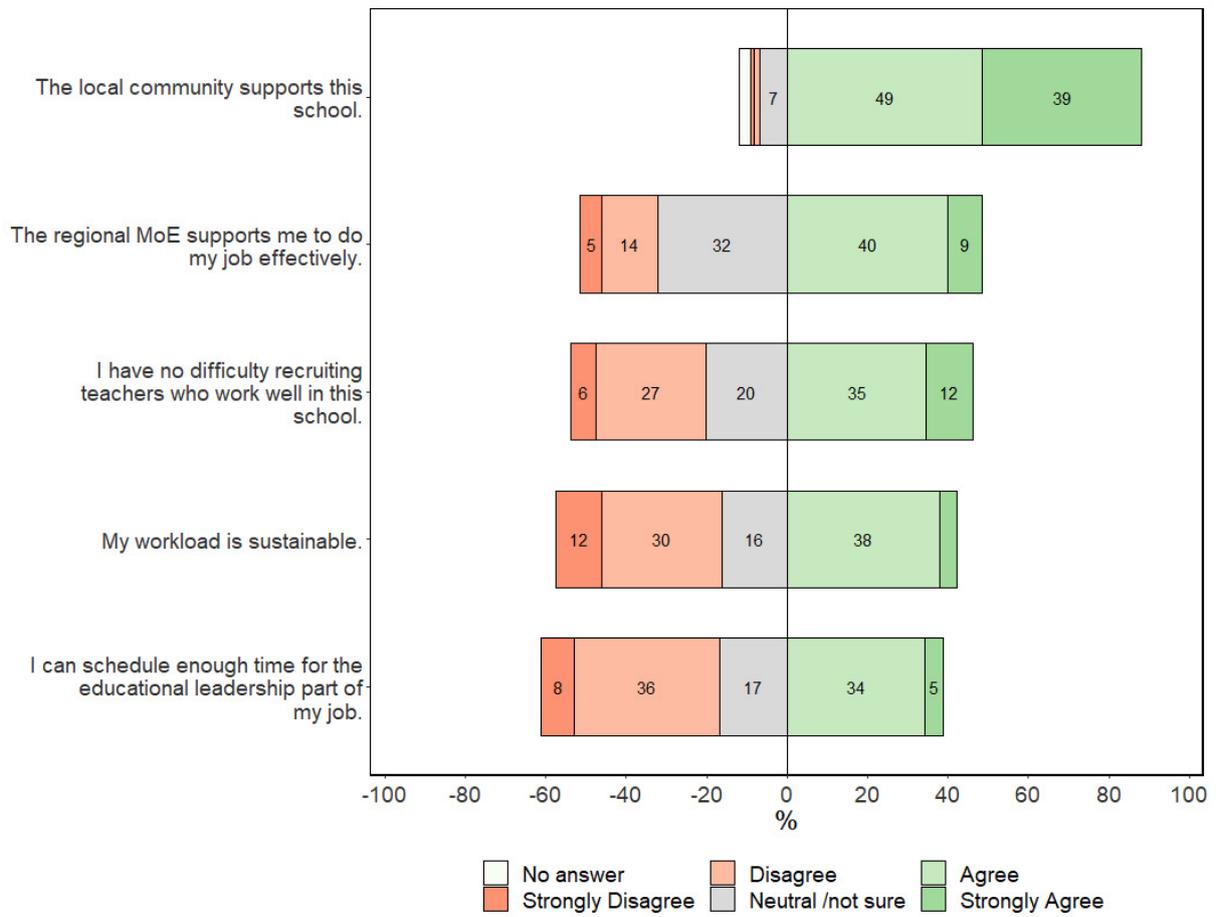


FIGURE 21 Principal support and workload (n = 208)



5. TSP 2021 participating teacher and principal characteristics

This section first shows participating teachers' years of experience, their roles in their school, and the year levels they taught. Then it shows participating principals' years of experience and the number of schools they have led.

Finally, Table 5 shows the school characteristics of the 2021 TSP participants.

Teachers' length of experience and their roles

Teachers answering the TSP survey items in 2021 had a wide range of experience; from the 4% in their first year of teaching, to the 45% who had taught for 16 or more years. Table 1 also shows that 56% had been in their current school for 5 years or less, and 42% had worked at their current school with their current principal for less than 3 years.

TABLE 1 Teaching experience overall, in the school, and with current principal

Years	Years as teacher (%)	Years at current school (%)	Years at current school with current principal (%)
In my 1st year	4	n/a	n/a
In my 2nd year	5	n/a	n/a
0–2 years	n/a	29	42
3–5 years	13	27	31
6–10 years	18	19	13
11–15 years	14	11	5
16+ years	45	13	2
Unanswered	0	1	7

Most of the teachers worked full time (86%), in permanent positions (84%). Sixteen percent had fixed-term positions. Eight of the teacher respondents were relieving.

Forty-five percent of teachers were team teaching: 15% all the time, and 30% some of the time.

Table 2 shows the roles teachers had in their schools. Thirty-eight percent had roles beyond class or subject teaching.

TABLE 2 Teachers' roles in their school

Role	<i>n</i>	%
Class/subject teacher	2,897	79
Holder of management unit	1,059	29
Syndicate / Curriculum leader / Faculty leader / HOD	781	21
Assistant/Deputy principal	330	9
Specialist teacher	321	9
Kāhui Ako within-school teacher	263	7
Dean	135	4
Guidance counsellor	21	1
Careers adviser / transition teacher	27	1

There was good coverage of teachers at all student year levels, as shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3 Student year levels taught

Year level	<i>n</i>	%
New entrants	445	12
Year 1	589	16
Year 2	595	16
Year 3	607	17
Year 4	600	16
Year 5	607	17
Year 6	567	16
Year 7	608	17
Year 8	604	17
Year 9	952	26
Year 10	975	27
Year 11	842	23
Year 12	838	23
Year 13	736	20

Principals' length of experience in the role

Many principals using TSP in 2021 were experienced: 59% had spent more than 5 years in the role.

Table 4 also shows that 41% of the principals had been at their current school for more than 5 years.

TABLE 4 Principal experience ($n = 209$)

Years	Years as principal	Years as principal at current school
Under 3 years	17	25
3–5 years	25	34
6–10 years	20	19
11–15 years	17	13
16+ years	22	9

Sixty-one percent of the principals using TSP in 2021 had led only one school. Twenty-one percent of the principals had experience of leading two schools, 12% had experience of leading three schools, and another 7% had led four or more schools.

Teaching principals comprised 15% ($n = 32$) of the principals participating. These principals also answered the Teaching Practices survey.

School characteristics of 2021 TSP participants

Table 5 shows the school characteristics of those using TSP in 2021 and those for all Aotearoa New Zealand schools. Comparing the final three columns in Table 5 shows that the aggregate TSP picture for 2021 is reasonably representative of school type, but light on decile 1–2 schools. It is also light on small schools, and, related to this, light on rural schools. Small schools may find the TSP survey less useful because, for confidentiality reasons, reports for small schools give median rating scores rather than the spread of ratings.

The characteristics of teachers who took part (the far-left column in Table 5) are similar to the national figures for permanent and fixed-term teachers in 2020² in relation to school type. There were fewer teachers taking part from decile 1–2 schools (10%, compared with 16% of national figures), more from decile 9–10 schools (29%, compared with 11% of national figures), and fewer taking part from rural schools (7%, compared with 11% of national figures).

2 Source: <https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/teacher-numbers>. School size is not included in this dataset.

TABLE 5 School characteristics of TSP participants 2021

Category	Teachers (n = 3,645)	Schools with teachers completing survey (n = 223)	Principals (n = 227)	All NZ schools (n = 2,561) ³
Type				
Primary	56	75	76	71
Intermediate	5	5	7	5
Composite/area schools	2	3	4	7
Secondary	36	17	13	14
Other schools	1	1	1	3
Decile				
1	5	7	7	12
2	5	7	7	10
3	9	11	11	10
4	8	10	11	10
5	7	9	10	9
6	14	13	13	9
7	14	9	10	10
8	9	10	9	9
9	14	13	11	9
10	15	11	11	10
N/A	<1	<1	<1	2
Authority				
State: Not Integrated	91	85	86	83
State: Integrated	9	15	14	13
Private/Other	<1	<1	<1	3
Urban/Rural				
Main urban area	71	61	60	56
Minor urban area	13	11	9	12
Secondary urban area	10	12	11	6
Rural area	7	16	20	27
No answer	0	0	0	<1
Kāhui Ako membership				
School belongs to a Kāhui Ako	88	87	84	744

³ Source: <https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/directories/list-of-nz-schools> data downloaded February 2022.

⁴ Figure calculated from Education Counts data; this differs from teachers' responses (some were unsure).

TABLE 5 School characteristics of TSP participants 2021 (cont'd)

School gender				
Co-educational	94	97	98	95
Boys' school	1	<1	<1	2
Girls' school	4	2	2	3
N/A	0	0	0	<1
Size				
Small (up to 100)	3	14	15	30
Small-medium (101-250)	21	38	41	30
Medium (251-500)	38	32	30	26
Medium-large (501-1,000)	20	11	10	10
Large (over 1,000)	18	5	4	4
Proportion of Māori students				
Up to 7%	9	11	11	10
8%-14%	32	25	25	19
15%-30%	38	38	35	34
Over 30%	20	26	29	35
N/A	0	0	0	<1
Proportion of Pacific students				
Up to 7%	67	67	66	70
8%-14%	21	17	18	13
15%-30%	6	9	9	8
Over 30%	6	7	7	7
N/A	0	0	0	<1
Ministry of Education region				
Tai Tokerau	4	3	4	6
Auckland	34	26	27	22
Waikato	8	8	7	11
Bay of Plenty/Wairariki	5	5	6	7
Hawke's Bay/Tairarwhiti	2	3	4	7
Taranaki/Whanganui/Manawatū	5	8	8	9
Wellington	11	13	12	11
Nelson/Marlborough/West Coast	8	9	8	5
Canterbury/Chatham Islands	15	15	13	11
Otago/Southland	8	11	11	9

6. Differences related to school characteristics

Teachers' responses vary between schools, and previous analysis we have done shows that some of these variations are related, particularly whether a school was primary or secondary, and, linked to that, its roll size. The analysis we did of the 2017 TSP responses showed that teaching practices ratings were much the same for primary and secondary teachers. However, there were differences relating to school practices ratings, and, to a lesser extent, to principal leadership ratings. Primary teachers gave the highest rating more often than secondary teachers, but not always.

In 2021, we found similar patterns.

Teaching practices

Only a few differences of 10 percentage points or more were evident in the highest ratings given by primary and secondary teachers for the 29 teaching practices items:

- 38% of primary teachers gave the highest rating to their use of flexible groupings to meet the changing needs of individual students, compared with 20% of secondary teachers
- 28% of primary teachers gave the highest rating to their use of knowledge that parents/whānau have about their child to support their child's learning, compared with 14% of secondary teachers
- 22% of primary teachers gave the highest rating to their collaboration with parents/whānau so that their expertise can be used to support collective learning in class or other school activities, compared with 12% of secondary teachers
- 73% of primary teachers gave the highest rating to their taking responsibility for the wellbeing of all the students they taught, compared with 60% of secondary teachers
- 32% of secondary teachers gave the highest rating to their engaging in in-depth curriculum-related discussions with individuals or groups, compared with 20% of primary teachers; possibly related to the role NCEA plays in secondary schooling.

School practices

Of the 53 school practices items, there was at least a 20 percentage point difference in the highest rating between primary and secondary teachers for 15 items, and a 10–19 percentage point difference on another 24 items, with more primary teachers giving the highest rating.

These marked differences between schooling levels likely reflect the larger size of secondary schools, and an adolescent student population, as well as more curriculum specialisation. These aspects of secondary schools result in a more complex organisation, in which it can be harder to achieve a consistent set of school practices, or for teachers to feel they know how strong a practice is across the whole school.

The 16 items where the difference between primary and secondary teachers giving the highest rating was at least 20 percentage points more for primary teachers were:

Supportive and caring environment domain

- We have a positive environment in which student learning is the central focus
- We effectively include students in our classes whatever their needs, strengths, and identities
- The school values are clearly evident in how staff interact with students
- Teachers teach in ways that promote Māori students' belonging in the school
- We work in a safe and supportive environment
- Students actively care for and support each other

Learning-focused partnerships domain

- We seek and are responsive to parents' and whānau views about their child's learning
- We seek opportunities to learn from parents and whānau how to effectively support their child's school learning
- We provide parents and whānau with opportunities to learn how to effectively support their child's learning at school

School goals domain

- School goals give us a clear purpose and direction for our work
- School goals set high expectations for students
- There is regular review of how individual learners and groups of learners are progressing in relation to the goals

Professional community

- We regularly share our students' progress within teaching teams and discuss strategies to improve the progress of students who are of concern
- Concerns teachers raise are listened to and steps taken to address them

Coherent curriculum and evaluation

- Students experience culturally responsive pedagogy embodying manaakitanga; whanaungatanga; ako; mahi tahi

Note that these marked differences of more than 20 percentage points were more evident for some domains or aspects of teaching than others. They were not evident in the Teaching as inquiry, Professional feedback and support, or the Strategic resource allocation domains, though there were differences of 10–19 percentage points between primary and secondary teachers for the majority of items in those three domains.

Principal leadership

None of the 19 items in the two domains here had a 20 percentage point difference between primary and secondary teachers giving the highest rating, though the majority of items had between a 10–19 percentage point difference, with more primary teachers giving the highest rating. There were no items where more secondary teachers gave the highest rating.

The four items where there was a difference of (only) 6 to 9 percentage points, where secondary and primary teachers were closest in their responses, were:

Direction and fresh horizons

- Promote the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi
- Encourage staff to search for, discuss, assess, and try out new ideas
- Keep staff up to date with education initiatives that have an impact on teaching

Interpersonal relations and working with others

- Consult staff appropriately before making most important decisions

There were no marked differences between primary and secondary teachers' ratings of their workload and morale, or their experience of Kāhui Ako.

7. How different is the aggregate 2021 picture from the aggregate 2017 picture?

TSP is voluntary, and its main purpose is to be a “smart” tool to support schools’ own evaluation work to progress their practice. Individual school patterns do change over time, reflecting their own priorities and work, as we found in our interviews with principals whose schools used TSP each year from 2017 to 2019.⁵

The aggregate picture each year gives a reasonable but not fully representative picture of Aotearoa New Zealand schools in terms of their main characteristics. Tracking aggregate patterns over time is therefore best done within the main school characteristic categories, particularly whether a school is primary or secondary.

However, the school characteristics of teachers in 2017 and 2021 were very similar: for example, 57% were primary teachers in 2017, and 56% in 2021; 32% were secondary teachers in 2017, and 36% in 2021. So we compared the 2017 and 2021 responses to see what differences there were in the aggregated picture 4 years apart.

We were unsure whether we would see much change between 2017 and 2021, because there has been little change in policy or support to schools over the 4 years. While substantial reviews of key areas have occurred within the 30-year Vision Te Pae Tawhiti work programme begun in 2018,⁶ their results are only just appearing, or have yet to reach schools. For example, the Government’s response to the Tomorrow’s Schools Independent Taskforce recommendations in late 2019⁷ laid the ground for significant change in the support given to schools and teachers, but the COVID-19 pandemic over the past 2 years and underlying issues of resourcing, capacity, and capability have considerably curtailed progress, and increased the demands on schools.

On the other hand, change in educational practice often takes time, and so we might see evidence in 2021 of earlier policy emphases and resourcing, such as the more concerted attention to Māori students, the introduction of Kāhui Ako from 2015, and the continuing emphasis on inquiry (some of this linked to teacher appraisal requirements and a sense of compliance, however).

At the school level, more of the principals taking part in TSP in 2021 than in 2017 had led their school for 3 or more years (75% in 2021, compared with 63% in 2017), which could mean more continuity with work to progress areas the school saw a need to focus on. And if increasing numbers of principals see value in data that support and help track change in relation to goals that are important to their school, and use the TSP, then we might also see some gains in aggregate patterns over time.

5 Wylie, C., & Johnston, C. (2021). *Principals’ use of the Teaching, School, and Principal Leadership Practices survey tool*. <https://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/publications/principals-use-teaching-school-and-principal-leadership-practices-survey-tool>

6 <https://conversation.education.govt.nz/about/>

7 Ministry of Education. (2019). *Supporting all schools to succeed. Reform of the Tomorrow’s Schools system*. <https://conversation.education.govt.nz/assets/TSR/November-2019/TSR-Government-Response-WEB.pdf> Appendix 2, pp. 38–49 shows the Taskforce’s final recommendations, and the Government’s response.

Teaching practices—no change between 2017 and 2021

Teachers' ratings of their own practices were much the same in both years for all the domains included.

School practices

Most of the 53 school practices items were rated much the same by those taking part in either 2021 or 2017. The differences between the proportions rating them as “very like our school” were less than 5 percentage points, and often around 1–3 percentage points.

The ratings that show some change over time are interesting. On the one hand, they give some grounds for encouragement that effective practices are growing in schools. On the other hand, they raise questions about why related practices are not also changing. What additional knowledge, confidence, or support within and beyond an individual school is needed?

Inquiry activity appears to have increased. Two of the four items in the Teaching as inquiry domain had more teachers saying they were “very like our school” in 2021 than in 2017:

- We have used inquiry to make worthwhile changes in our teaching and student learning (41% in 2021, 26% in 2017).
- Everyone is engaged in some form of inquiry, including the school leadership (48% in 2021, 40% in 2017).

And yet another item in this domain had *fewer* teachers rating it as “very like our school”:

- We look into a range of evidence when we're trying to understand why students are struggling with their learning (43% in 2021, 53% in 2017).

It would be useful to know more about what sources of evidence teachers are using, and whether the scores on this item decreased because of new understandings about evidence, such as the value of information and reflection from students themselves, and their parents and whānau, as well as more formal assessment scores.

The Professional community domain had decreases in teachers giving the highest rating (“very like our school”) for three items. This may reflect pandemic-related priorities and uncertainties, and, in some areas, particularly Auckland, online rather than in-school teaching that may have limited opportunities for professional interaction.

- Observations of each other's teaching are a valuable source of learning and reflective discussion (28% in 2021, 39% in 2017).
- Things that don't work well are seen as opportunities for learning (40% in 2021, 59% in 2017).
- We discuss trends in society and the economy and what they might mean for our teaching now and for the future (24% in 2021, 47% in 2017).

There was a somewhat surprising drop in the highest rating given to this item:

- There are clear school-wide goals for the academic achievement of Māori students (35% in 2021, 46% in 2017).

However, at the same time, teachers in 2021 were more positive about their principal's leadership in relation to the Treaty of Waitangi:

- 52% thought their principal did this very well in 2021, compared with 41% in 2017

and in relation to leading and supporting appropriate cultural engagement

- 52% thought that their principal did this very well in 2021, compared with 43% in 2017.

Two items in the School collaborative practices domain showed increases compared with 2017:

- Teachers have sufficient time to discuss student progress and plan teaching together (62% said this was very like or moderately like their school, compared with 54% in 2017).
- Teachers have sufficient time for collaborative work (61% said this was very like or moderately like their school, compared with 53% in 2017).

Anecdotally, some school staff have noted that the pandemic sometimes gave them more uninterrupted time on site if students were learning at home, and these changes in ratings may reflect some teachers' experience of that.

Principal leadership

Every item showed an increase on the two principal leadership scales here, most between 6 to 9 percentage points. Perhaps this reflects the increase of 10 percentage points in principals who had been at their school for 3 years or more in 2021, compared with 2017, giving more time for teachers to see their principal in action. Perhaps it reflects the pandemic-related focus on the school as a community in its need to respond, and with more attention to staff wellbeing.

Workload and support

Improvements in teachers' views of their workload

There were some positive increases between 2017 and 2021 for the two items related to teacher workload, combining strongly agree and agree categories:

- 61% of teachers thought their workload was fair in 2021 (51% in 2017)
- 54% of teachers thought their workload was sustainable in 2021 (46% in 2017).

Principal views of their workload and support in 2021 were very similar to principal views in 2017.

Principals saw somewhat less community support for their school

- 39% of principals strongly agreed in 2021 that their local community supported their school, compared with 47% in 2017.

Perhaps this reflects pandemic pressures on communities in 2021.

Kāhui Ako experiences—increasingly beneficial

In 2021, teachers in schools belonging to Kāhui Ako were much more positive than those responding in 2017 to these items about their gains from their Kāhui Ako experience:

- Opportunities to collaborate with other teachers: 61% rated this very well or well in 2021, compared with 46% in 2017.
- Strengthening your own teaching practice: 56% rated this very well or well in 2021, compared with 39% in 2017.
- Supporting your capacity for inquiry: 54% rated this very well or well in 2021, compared with 39% in 2017.

Because this difference was so marked, we checked to see if there was a similar increase in positive

views of Kāhui Ako among principals—and yes, there was:

- Professional support (for the principal): 74% rated this very well or well in 2021, compared with 64% in 2017.
- Strengthening teacher capability in this school: 79% rated this very well or well in 2021, compared with 54% in 2017.
- Strengthening your school’s capacity for inquiry: 62% rated this very well or well in 2021, compared with 53% in 2017.

These increases in positive views of Kāhui Ako suggest that there are benefits over time when schools focus on common challenges, and learning and working together. There has been little evaluation of Kāhui Ako since their early days, and this comparison of TSP aggregate 2017 and 2021 responses indicates that it would now be useful to find out more about what Kāhui Ako are doing, what this means for teaching, school, and leadership practices and for student learning, and what sustains productive work across individual institutions.

Food for thought

In our small study of schools that used the TSP consistently over 3 years, we did see increases in teacher ratings of practices in individual schools, attesting to what school leaders and staff had focused on.

But we see far fewer changes at the aggregate level. These comparisons between 2021 and 2017 aggregate data raise some questions about the nature of change in teaching, school, and leadership practices. The consistency of responses over this period indicates that shifts in teaching, school, and leadership practices may need precursor changes. Change in these practices need other changes to occur beyond individual schools if we are to see any gains in teaching, school, and leadership practices nationally that are related to gains for students.

These comparisons also raise questions about what time period is realistic to see changes in student learning and performance that are reliant on changes in teaching, school, and leadership practices. They underline the importance of ensuring that policy expectations of gains for students are matched with relevant and ongoing support for the spread of effective practices.

