

# Te Whakaahu Hautūtanga

## Advanced Leadership

*A programme for women in education.*

**“ I unpacked my moral purpose as a practitioner and I am now leading a kaupapa that is my absolute passion – Māori Achievement. ”**

### Needs and challenges

New to a senior leadership position, Renay believed it was important to undertake professional learning and development to grow into her role. Advanced Leadership appealed as she “saw a strength in building women in leadership”, especially in secondary education where leadership roles “tend to be dominated by men”.

Keen to connect with other women in leadership roles, Renay welcomed the opportunity to “understand the theory behind educational leadership, and what being a leader means”. In her role, communication with staff, students and whānau was an essential element and Renay wanted to improve her skills for these sometimes challenging conversations.

### Key expectations

- Build networks with other women in leadership
- Understand leadership theory and models of practice
- Improve skills for difficult conversations



### Renay Jones

Senior Leader, Māori Achievement

Whakatane High School

*Ko Matiti te maunga*

*Ko Waioweka te awa*

*Ko Ngāti Ira te hapu*

*Ko Te Whakatōhea te iwi*

## Programme experience

Renay felt the programme was very well organised, noting “having the schedule of Zoom webinars from the start made it easy to manage time and fit the programme around other commitments”. Credible research and models of practice, presented from experts in educational leadership, were regular contributors to her positive experience. Combined with the fact Advanced Leadership was a women-only course, which created a “safe space for conversation and openness that can’t be replicated in a mixed-gender setting”. This was further enhanced with access to a peer mentor, who provided “a sounding board for ideas outside of your own context”.

Whilst participating in the programme, Renay faced a massive period of change and challenges when she was unexpectedly “thrust” in the role of Deputy Principal. CORE Consultant and Facilitator Shona Smith, along with the cohort of women on the programme, created a welcome “team of support”. Renay acknowledged that Shona was “invaluable – she went above and beyond”.

## Learning development highlights

Advanced Leadership changed Renay’s outlook. With a “new consciousness for leadership pedagogy”, she was able to set realistic goals for her future, and grow confident about where her potential lies. In support of her development, anonymous staff survey results acknowledged her approachability and improved communication skills.

Renay completed the programme strong in the belief she “could be a leader in a male dominated environment”. This confidence enabled Renay to advocate for herself, resulting in the creation of a new role as a Senior Leader in Māori Achievement.

This new position is already having a positive impact on Māori ākonga (students) in her school. Renay noted “they know they have someone they can come to who will advocate and fight for them”. As her leadership journey continues, Renay has plans for a new programme to engage whānau in the learning of their ākonga, ultimately resulting in better learning outcomes for all.



## Key takeaways

- Confidence and self-belief of leadership ability
- Keep staff mana intact through challenging conversations
- Implementing transformational change

**Learn more:** [leadership@core-ed.ac.nz](mailto:leadership@core-ed.ac.nz) | [core-ed.org](https://core-ed.org)

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