

H3K4me2 distinguishes a distinct class of enhancers during the maternal-to-zygotic transition

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Abstract

After egg fertilization, an initially silent embryonic genome is transcriptionally activated during the maternal-to-zygotic transition. In zebrafish, maternal vertebrate pluripotency factors Nanog, Pou5f3 (OCT4 homolog), and Sox19b (SOX2 homolog) (NPS) play essential roles in orchestrating embryonic genome activation, acting as “pioneers” that open condensed chromatin and mediate acquisition of activating histone modifications. However, some embryonic gene transcription still occurs in the absence of these factors, suggesting the existence of other mechanisms regulating genome activation. To identify chromatin signatures of these unknown pathways, we profiled the histone modification landscape of zebrafish embryos using CUT&RUN. Our regulatory map revealed two subclasses of enhancers distinguished by presence or absence of H3K4me2. Enhancers lacking H3K4me2 tend to require NPS factors for de novo activation, while enhancers bearing H3K4me2 are epigenetically bookmarked by DNA hypomethylation to recapitulate gamete activity in the embryo, independent of NPS pioneering. Thus, parallel enhancer activation pathways combine to induce transcriptional reprogramming to pluripotency in the early embryo.

Introduction

In animals, embryonic development begins with a transcriptionally silent zygotic genome under the control of maternally deposited RNAs and proteins (Lee et al., 2014; Vastenhouw et al., 2019). In fast-dividing embryos of taxa such as *Drosophila*, *Xenopus*, and zebrafish, embryonic chromatin transforms over the course of several cleavages during the maternal-to-zygotic transition (MZT), leading to transcriptional competence and zygotic (embryonic) genome activation (ZGA) in the blastula (Blythe and Wieschaus, 2016; Esmaeili et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2018; Phelps et al., 2023). Genome activation is facilitated in part by maternally deposited transcription factors that bind gene-proximal promoters and gene-distal enhancers in the embryonic genome (Colonna et al., 2021; Duan et al., 2021; Gaskill et al., 2021; Gentsch et

34 al., 2019; Liang et al., 2008; Paraiso et al., 2019; Phelps et al., 2023; ten Bosch et al., 2006). In
35 zebrafish, maternal *Nanog*, *Pou5f3*, and *Sox19b* (NPS) – homologs of the mammalian
36 pluripotency factors *NANOG*, *OCT4*, and *SOX2* – are essential for regulating a large proportion
37 of genome activation (M. T. Lee et al., 2013; Leichsenring et al., 2013; Miao et al., 2022), thus
38 mechanistically linking mammalian pluripotency induction and the zebrafish MZT.

39 NPS, like their mammalian counterparts, act as pioneer factors capable of binding DNA
40 regulatory sequences in the context of condensed chromatin (Gao et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2018;
41 Miao et al., 2022; Pálffy et al., 2019; Riesle et al., 2023; Veil et al., 2019), which tends to occlude
42 binding of non pioneers (Barral and Zaret, 2024; Soufi et al., 2015). Binding induces increased
43 chromatin accessibility, leading to the acquisition of activating histone post-translational
44 modifications such as acetylation and H3 lysine 4 (H3K4) methylation, which are correlated with
45 the onset of embryonic gene transcription (Chan et al., 2019; Miao et al., 2022). However, a
46 triple maternal-zygotic mutant for *nanog*, *pou5f3* and *sox19b* (*MZnps*) still activates some
47 genes, implicating other unknown mechanisms that act alongside of NPS to regulate genome
48 activation (Miao et al., 2022).

49 Chromatin is dynamic in the early zebrafish embryo. During the first two hours post
50 fertilization (h.p.f.), chromatin is tightly condensed and mostly lacks histone modifications
51 (Lindeman et al., 2011; Liu et al., 2018; Pálffy et al., 2019; Vastenhouw et al., 2010; Zhang et al.,
52 2018). Subsequently, a minor wave of genome activation begins, focused on a small number of
53 gene promoters including the tandemly repeated microRNA *mir-430* encoding locus (Hadzhiev
54 et al., 2023; Heyn et al., 2014). Chromatin accessibility and activating histone modifications
55 have started to emerge, increasing by 4 h.p.f. (sphere stage) to tens of thousands of accessible,
56 highly histone-modified promoters and enhancers (Bogdanovic et al., 2012; Lindeman et al.,
57 2011; Liu et al., 2018; Pálffy et al., 2019; Vastenhouw et al., 2010; Zhang et al., 2014; Zhu et al.,
58 2019). By this point, the major wave of genome activation is underway, involving transcription of
59 >7,000 genes, some of which are de novo expressed in the embryo (strictly zygotic), but the
60 majority of which were already represented in the embryonic transcriptome from the maternal
61 contribution (maternal-zygotic) (Harvey et al., 2013; M. T. Lee et al., 2013).

62 Many of these chromatin changes require NPS pioneering, but several studies also
63 implicate differential DNA methylation as being instructive for genome activation (Hickey et al.,
64 2022; Jiang et al., 2013; Kaaij et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2015; Liu et al., 2018; Murphy et al., 2018;
65 Potok et al., 2013; Wu et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2018). Both gametes contribute selectively 5-
66 methylcytosine modified DNA, though rather than establishing differential parent-of-origin
67 imprinted patterns like mice, zebrafish embryonic genome methylation is largely reprogrammed

68 to match the paternal pattern by 3 h.p.f., through enzymatic-mediated methylation at some loci
69 and passive demethylation at others (Jiang et al., 2013; Potok et al., 2013). Promoters that
70 acquire or sustain hypomethylation recruit “placeholder” nucleosomes, characterized by H3K4
71 monomethylation (H3K4me1) and the histone variant H2A.Z (H2AFV in zebrafish), which help
72 maintain hypomethylation and chromatin accessibility (Murphy et al., 2018). Hypomethylation at
73 distal regulatory regions is also associated with dynamic regulation, though so far such regions
74 have been found to co-occur with repressive histone modifications like H3K27me3 and H2Aub
75 and thus may represent poised enhancers with roles later in development (Hickey et al., 2022;
76 Kaaij et al., 2016).

77 These observations implicate a combinatorial regulatory code underlying genome
78 activation that may be further elucidated with additional characterization of embryonic
79 chromatin. There are >100 different histone modifications described thus far (Zhao and Garcia,
80 2015), the vast majority of which are understudied in any context let alone in embryos. Recent
81 work in mouse embryonic stem cells (mESCs) demonstrates that acetylation of the histone H2B
82 N-terminal tail (H2BNTac) is strongly characteristic of enhancers as compared to most
83 promoters (Narita et al., 2023). Additionally, although most of the focus in gene regulation
84 literature has been on modifications of histone tails, acetylation in the core globular domain of
85 histone H3 has recently been associated with enhancers as well. H3K56ac was shown to co-
86 occur with Oct4 binding in mESCs (Tan et al., 2013), while H3K122ac and H3K64ac appear to
87 mark a set of active enhancers lacking H3K27ac enrichment (Pradeepa et al., 2016). To our
88 knowledge, these marks have not previously been evaluated in zebrafish.

89 Finally, H3K4 methylation has already been extensively profiled, but the logic dictating
90 methylation degree at regulatory elements – i.e., mono-, di-, or tri-methylation – still needs to be
91 more fully elucidated (Wang and Helin, 2024). Classically, H3K4me3 has been associated with
92 active transcription and is found promoter-proximal in gene bodies, while H3K4me1 and to
93 some extent H3K4me2 is more diagnostic of enhancers (Barski et al., 2007; Ernst et al., 2011;
94 Heintzman et al., 2007; Zentner et al., 2011). Some studies have also found H3K4me3 at
95 enhancers in certain contexts (Barski et al., 2007; Hu et al., 2017; Koch and Andrau, 2011; Liu
96 et al., 2024; Pekowska et al., 2011); however, a recent analysis of several widely used H3K4
97 methylation antibodies has revealed a high prevalence of cross reactivity, calling into question
98 the extent to which specific methylation degrees can be conclusively deduced at different
99 regulatory elements (Shah et al., 2018). Indeed, using new SNAP-ChIP verified antibodies, only
100 H3K4me1 and H3K4me2, but not H3K4me3, are observed at enhancers in K562 cells (Shah et

101 al., 2018). These results motivate the re-evaluation of H3K4 methylation status in other
102 systems.

103 Here, we have mapped the genome-wide distribution of 10 different histone
104 modifications in the early zebrafish embryo using Cleavage Under Targets and Release Using
105 Nuclease (CUT&RUN), to capture signatures of differentially-regulated enhancers and
106 promoters during genome activation. We observe that characteristic combinations of these
107 histone modifications broadly separate putative enhancers and promoters, but we also find that
108 H3K4me2 and not H3K4me3 specifically marks a subclass of active enhancers, distinguishing
109 them from other enhancers bearing only H3K4me1. Both H3K4me1 and H3K4me2-marked
110 enhancers can distally regulate gene transcription. However, H3K4me1 enhancers largely rely
111 on NPS pioneering to gain activity, whereas H3K4me2 enhancer activation is correlated with
112 DNA hypomethylation that reflects their prior activity in gametes. Our findings reveal that
113 differential H3K4me2 can distinguish enhancers subtypes, and that parallel pathways for
114 enhancer activation underlie embryonic genome activation, explaining how some genes can still
115 be activated in the absence of NPS pluripotency factors.

116

117 **Results**

118 **CUT&RUN effectively maps histone modifications in zebrafish blastulae**

119 We adapted and optimized CUT&RUN to zebrafish blastulae as a low-input alternative to
120 conventional chromatin immunoprecipitation sequencing (ChIP-seq) (Akdogan-Ozdilek et al.,
121 2022; Hainer et al., 2019; Skene and Henikoff, 2017). We profiled embryos at the onset of dome
122 stage – 4 to 4.3 h.p.f., the tail end of the major wave of genome activation (Fig 1A) – to assay
123 the histone tail acetylation modifications H3K9ac, H3K27ac, H4K16ac, and H2BK16ac (an
124 example of H2BNTac); the non-tail H3K56ac, H3K64ac, and H3K122ac modifications of the H3
125 histone globular core; and H3K4me1, 2, and 3 using SNAP-ChIP verified antibodies to precisely
126 distinguish between methylation degrees (Fig 1B) (Supp. Table 1). Only 10 embryos per sample
127 (~70,000 cells (Joseph et al., 2017)) were required to generate robust CUT&RUN libraries. We
128 centered our analyses on genomic intervals flanking accessible chromatin as determined by
129 ATAC-seq from two previously published studies (Liu et al., 2018; Pálffy et al., 2019) (N =
130 48,395 open-chromatin regions), many of which likely represent active gene regulatory
131 elements in the embryo (Fig 1B). To identify correlated histone mark enrichment patterns across
132 the regions, we performed a principal component analysis (PCA) (Fig 1C-E, Supp. Fig 1A-C).
133 The first two principal components captured 49% of the variation and broadly separate
134 promoters – defined as open regions overlapping Ensembl, RefSeq, and UMMS (Lawson et al.,

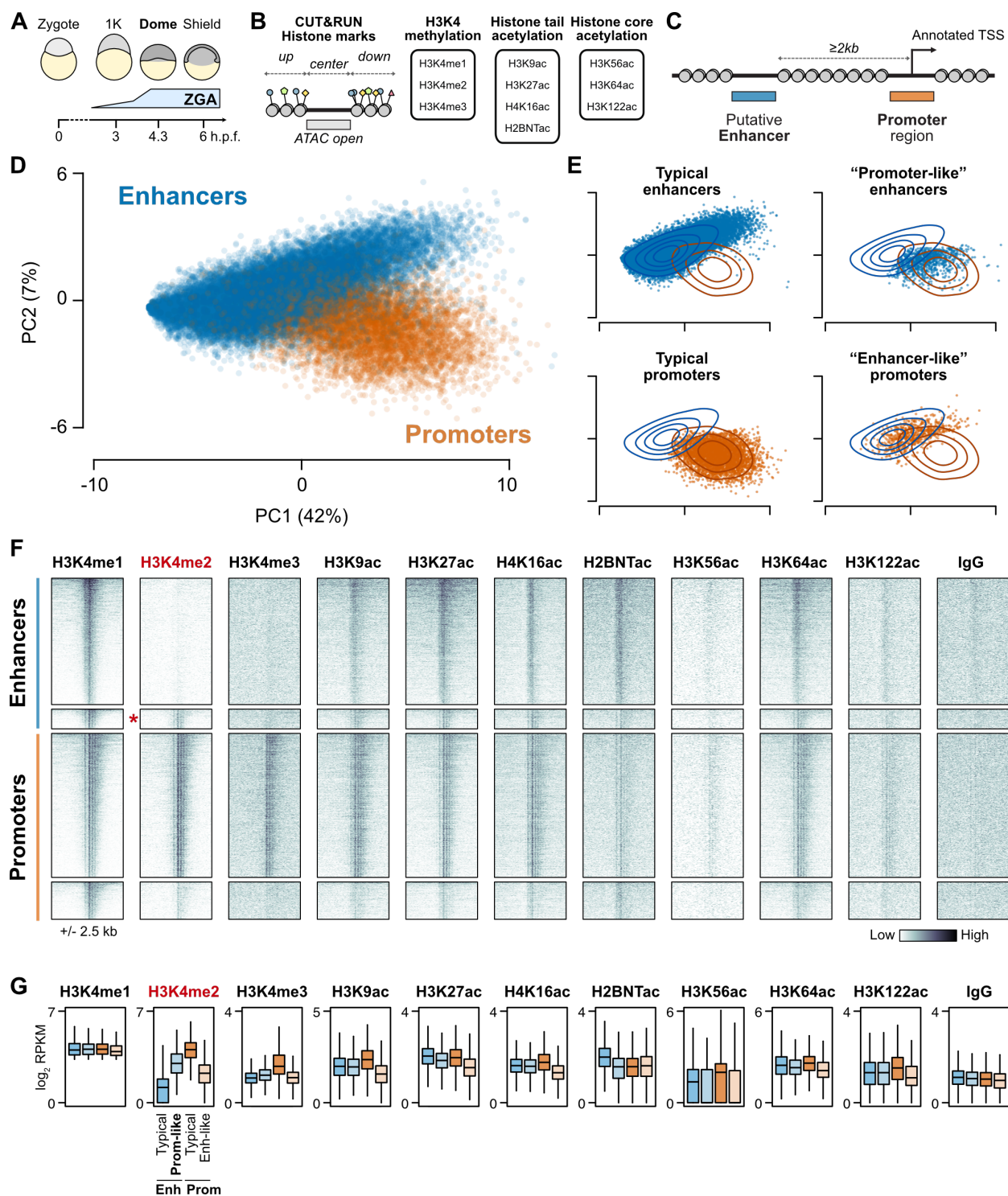


Figure 1. Histone modifications distinguish regulatory elements during the maternal-to-zygotic transition. (A) Schematic of early zebrafish embryogenesis spanning the 1-cell zygote, 1K-cell, dome, and shield stages, showing the timing of zygotic genome activation (ZGA). h.p.f. = hours post fertilization. **(B)** CUT&RUN read coverage was measured on open chromatin regions defined by ATAC-seq and adjacent 500-bp upstream and downstream regions for 10 histone modifications. **(C)** Open chromatin regions were classified as TSS-overlapping promoters or TSS-distal putative enhancers. (cont'd...)

(...cont'd) **(D)** Biplot of the first two principal components (PCs) of a PCA performed on histone modification coverage on open chromatin regions. Points are labeled blue for enhancers, orange for promoters, as defined in (C). Percent of total variance explained per PC in parentheses. **(E)** PCA biplots separated according to support vector machine (SVM) classification on the first three PCs. “Typical” enhancers and promoters where the SVM classification matched the labels are plotted on the left panels, while regions where SVM classification disagreed with labels are plotted on right panels. Contour lines representing the density of enhancer (blue) and promoter (orange) points in the full PCA plot in (D) are overlaid. **(F)** Heatmaps of CUT&RUN coverage centered on H3K4me1-marked regions from each of the four groups defined in (E). Top to bottom, N = 4,128 typical enhancers, 644 promoter-like enhancers (marked with a red asterisk), 4,707 promoters, and 1,224 enhancer-like promoters. **(G)** Boxplots summarizing the coverage observed in (F). Boxes are first through third quartiles, center bar median, whiskers extend to 1.5x the interquartile range, outliers are not shown. H3K4me1 was used to select the regions, so differences between groups are expected to be minimal. H3K4me2 through H2BNTac have significant differences each at $P < 1 \times 10^{-100}$, and the remaining marks are significant to $P < 1 \times 10^{-30}$, by Kruskal-Wallis tests. RPKM = reads per kilobase per million.

135 2020) annotated transcription start sites (TSS) – and putative enhancers at least 2 kb from any
136 TSS (Fig 1C, D) (Supp. Table 2).

137 However, some annotated enhancers cluster with the promoters and vice versa,
138 indicating that these regions have histone modification patterns that resemble the other
139 category (Fig 1E). Inspection of the PCA loadings revealed that H3K4 methylation strongly
140 contributed to the first three principal components (Supp. Fig 1B). Focusing on regions marked
141 by H3K4me1, when visualized in CUT&RUN coverage heatmaps, the “enhancer-like” promoters
142 simply appeared to be inactive compared to the other promoters, with weak acetylation and
143 lacking the classic hallmark of gene activity H3K4me3 (Fig 1F, G, Supp. Fig 1D). By contrast,
144 the “promoter-like” enhancers had comparably strong acetylation to the other enhancers, but
145 were additionally marked by H3K4me2, whereas most enhancers only had H3K4me1 (Fig 1F,
146 G, Supp. Fig 1D). Of note, H3K4me3 was minimal in both enhancer classes (Fig 1F, G, Supp.
147 Fig 1D), consistent with the recent re-evaluation of H3K4 methylation degree at enhancers
148 (Shah et al., 2018). H2BNTac is strongly enriched in typical enhancers but less so in the
149 “promoter-like” enhancers (Fig 1F, G, Supp. Fig 1D), while the core globular acetylation marks
150 H3K56ac, H3K64ac, and H3K122ac, which contribute to subsequent principal components
151 (Supp. Fig 1B), do not distinguish enhancer groups in zebrafish blastulae (Supp. Fig 1E, F).
152 Moving forward, we focused on further characterizing the strong dichotomy of H3Kme2-marked
153 versus non-marked putative enhancers.

154

155 **H3K4me2-marked distal regions are likely a distinct class of bona fide enhancers**

156 We first considered whether H3K4me2 might not be specific to the promoter-like
157 enhancers at dome stage, but may instead be a temporally variable property of all enhancers.
158 We performed additional CUT&RUN experiments at an earlier and later time point – 1K-cell
159 stage (3 h.p.f.), just prior to the onset of the major wave of genome activation, and shield stage
160 (6 h.p.f.), during gastrulation. We found that H3K4 methylation is overall weak at 1K-cell stage,

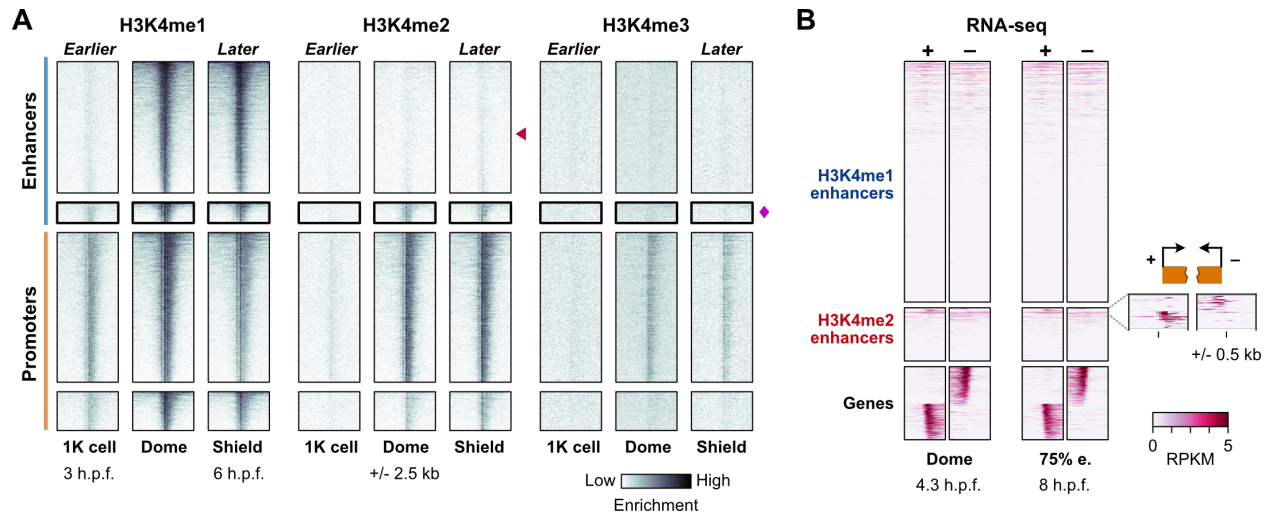


Figure 2. Genomic profiles over time support a stable subset of H3K4me2-marked enhancers. (A) Time course of CUT&RUN coverage for the regions defined in Fig 1. Red triangle points to the typical enhancers, which lack H3K4me2 coverage, magenta diamond marks the promoter-like enhancers, which do not gain H3K4me3. **(B)** Heatmaps of strand-separated RNA-seq coverage centered on the typical enhancers (H3K4me1 enhancers) and promoter-like enhancers (H3K4me2 enhancers), with a subset of gene TSSs shown below to illustrate the expected pattern of unidirectional (-) strand read coverage extending upstream for (-) strand genes and (+) strand coverage extending downstream for (+) strand genes. A zoomed view of coverage at 75% epiboly stage (75% e.) over the top-covered H3K4me2 enhancers is shown to the right. h.p.f. = hours post fertilization, RPKM = reads per kilobase per million.

161 with no evidence for H3K4me2 at any putative enhancer, while H3K4me2 presence/absence
 162 patterns observed at dome stage are largely preserved at shield stage (Fig 2A, Supp. Fig 2A,
 163 B). So, it is unlikely that H3K4me2 is a generic property of all enhancers.

164 We next considered whether the H3K4me2-marked predicted enhancers (hereafter
 165 called H3K4me2 enhancers) may in fact be unannotated gene promoters. H3K4me2 enhancers
 166 do not subsequently gain H3K4me3 (Fig 2A, Supp. Fig 2B), nor do they specifically co-occur
 167 with repressive marks in previously published datasets for H3K27me3 (Zhang et al., 2014; Zhu
 168 et al., 2019), H3K9me3 (Duval et al., 2024), and H2Aub (Hickey et al., 2022) (Supp. Fig 2C),
 169 suggesting that these regions are not poised promoters. Additionally, we queried existing RNA-
 170 seq datasets (White et al., 2017) looking for evidence of gene-specific transcription but found
 171 only ~7% of H3K4me2 enhancers with any evidence for directional, stable transcripts (Fig 2B,
 172 Supp. Fig 2D). Although the RNA-seq signal was weak, we removed these regions from
 173 subsequent analysis.

174 To assess the capacity for H3K4me2 enhancers to distally activate gene transcription,
 175 we designed and constructed reporter plasmids, cloning 23 putative regulatory elements each
 176 upstream of an mCherry open-reading frame with a minimal β -globin promoter (Fig 3A, Supp.
 177 Table 3). Independent promoter activity is detected by divergent mTagBFP2 and EGFP open-

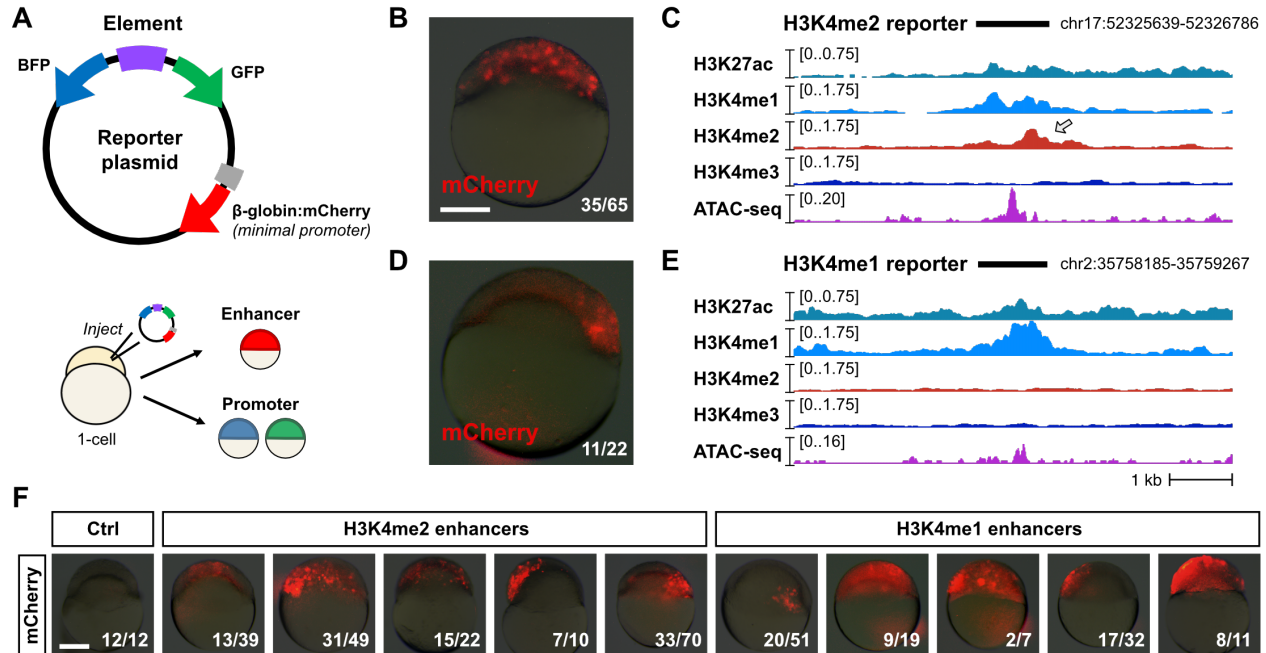


Figure 3. Reporter assays demonstrate enhancer activity. (A) Map of the reporter plasmid. Putative regulatory elements are cloned in between divergent mTagBFP2 and EGFP open reading frames to detect (-) strand or (+) strand promoter activity as blue or green fluorescence, respectively. Distal regulation is detected by a far downstream mCherry open reading frame with a minimal mouse β-globin promoter. Reporter plasmids are injected into 1-cell embryos and fluorescence is screened in cells (top of the embryo) in the late blastula / early gastrula. (B) mCherry fluorescence from a reporter (Enh_2a) encoding a putative H3K4me2 enhancer. A brightfield image at 25% opacity is overlaid. Fraction of injected embryos fluorescing is shown on the bottom right. (C) Genome browser tracks showing CUT&RUN (this study) and ATAC-seq open fragment coverage (data from Liu et al, 2018) over the H3K4me2 reporter tested in (B) (black bar). Arrow points to the H3K4me2 enrichment. (D) mCherry fluorescence for an H3K4me1 reporter (Enh_1a). (E) Genome browser track for the reporter tested in (D). (F) mCherry fluorescence for five additional H3K4me2 (Enh_2b-f, middle group) and H3K4me1 enhancers (Enh_1b-f, right group). Control embryos injected with empty reporter plasmids have no fluorescence (left panel). Scale bar = 250 μm.

178 reading frames (Fig 3A, Supp. Fig 3A). We performed transient expression assays by injecting
 179 plasmid into 1-cell embryos and visualizing fluorescence at 6 h.p.f. to allow time for fluorophore
 180 transcription, translation, and maturation. Ten H3K4me2 enhancers and 10 H3K4me1
 181 enhancers drove mosaic mCherry expression (likely due to injection variability) of varying
 182 intensity, demonstrating their enhancer capability (Fig 3B-F, Supp. Fig 3A-C). We additionally
 183 observed some mostly weak GFP or BFP expression for three H3K4me2 and three H3K4me1
 184 reporters, suggesting some dual enhancer-promoter functionality (Supp. Fig 3, Supp. Table 3).
 185 All together, these results support the existence of two distinct enhancer classes in the early
 186 embryo with similar regulatory capacity to drive gene activation during the MZT.

187

188 H3K4me2 enhancers are activated by maternal mechanisms independent of known 189 pioneer factors

190 We next sought to understand how H3K4me2 enhancers become active during the MZT.

191 First, to determine whether enhancers gain H3K4 methylation through maternal or zygotic
192 mechanisms, we inhibited genome activation by treating embryos with the Pol II transcription
193 elongation inhibitor triptolide (Chan et al., 2019; Kontur et al., 2020) and performed CUT&RUN
194 for H3K4me1 and H3K4me2, including a yeast mononucleosome spike-in to aid in normalization
195 (Fig 4A, Supp. Fig 4A). We found that triptolide-treated embryos maintain the pattern of
196 H3K4me1 and H3K4me2 marks observed in DMSO-treated control embryos, again clearly
197 distinguishing the two enhancer classes. Thus, enhancer H3K4 methylation occurs through
198 maternal mechanisms, suggesting that H3K4me2 enhancers can participate in zygotic genome
199 activation.

200 Next, we asked whether maternal NPS pluripotency factors equivalently regulate both
201 enhancer classes. We analyzed previously published blastula ChIP-seq data for Nanog, Pou5f3,
202 and Sox19b (Miao et al., 2022; Xu et al., 2012) and found widespread binding across both
203 H3K4me1 and H3K4me2 enhancers, though with somewhat less intensity for the latter (Fig 4B).
204 When we inspected the underlying sequence for the binding motifs recognized by the factors,
205 we found that H3K4me2 enhancers were significantly depleted for these motifs compared to the
206 H3K4me1 enhancers ($P < 1 \times 10^{-11}$, Chi-squared tests, 2 d.o.f.) (Fig 4B, Supp. Fig 4B),
207 suggesting that NPS may not be binding directly or specifically to many of the H3K4me2
208 enhancers.

209 In *MZnps* mutants, the absence of the three maternal pluripotency factors leads to loss
210 of chromatin accessibility and H3K27ac across many enhancers (Miao et al., 2022). When we
211 compared sphere-stage ATAC-seq open chromatin and H3K27ac ChIP-seq coverage between
212 wild-type and *MZnps*, we found that H3K4me2 enhancers indeed do not require NPS for their
213 accessibility or H3K27ac acquisition, in stark contrast to the H3K4me1 enhancers (Fig 4C).
214 Together, these data demonstrate that H3K4me2 enhancers are largely NPS-independent.

215 We considered the possibility that H3K4me2 enhancers may be activated by a yet-
216 unknown maternal transcription factor. However, ChIP-seq binding profiles of other putative
217 maternal activators (Dubrulle et al., 2015; Ladam et al., 2018; Miao et al., 2022; Stanney et al.,
218 2020) showed no strong enrichment at H3K4me2 enhancers over H3K4me1 enhancers (Supp.
219 Fig 4C). Motif enrichment analysis revealed some transcription factor binding sequences, but
220 none that unify the H3K4me2 enhancers compared to the H3K4me1 enhancers (Supp. Fig 4D).
221 Thus, NPS pioneering underlies H3K4me1 enhancer activation, but H3K4me2 enhancers as a
222 group seem to activate independent of NPS or any other known sequence-specific pioneer
223 factor.

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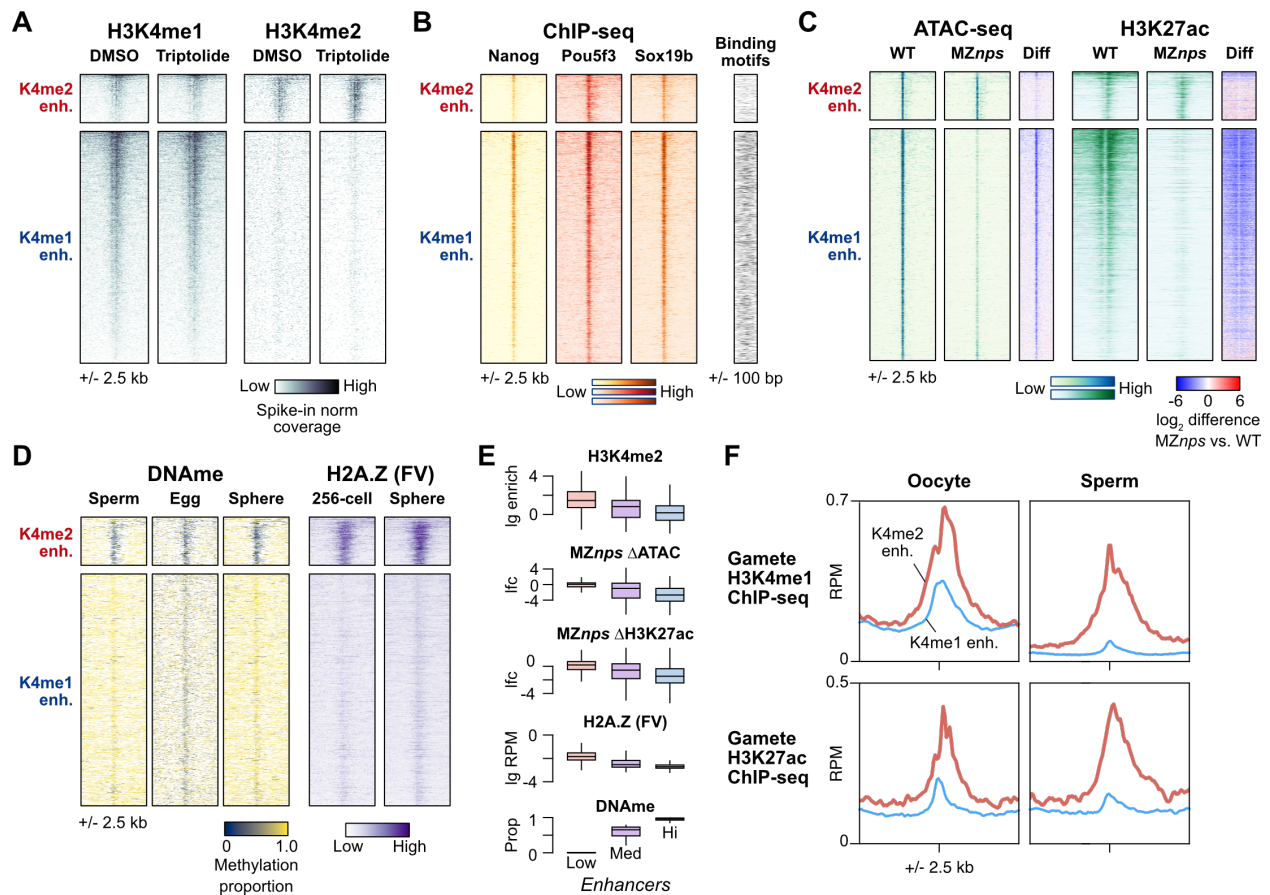


Figure 4. H3K4me2 enhancers have distinct activation pathways. (A) Heatmaps over H3K4me2-marked enhancers (K4me2 enh.) and non H3K4me2-marked enhancers (K4me1 enh.) showing H3K4me1 and H3K4me2 CUT&RUN coverage in control DMSO embryos and embryos treated with the Pol II inhibitor triptolide. (B) ChIP-seq coverage for Nanog, Pou5f3, and Sox19b (data from Miao et al, 2022). Binding motif occurrence for the three factors over the regions is represented as a heatmap on the right. (C) ATAC-seq open fragment and H3K27ac ChIP-seq coverage in wild-type embryos and MZnps embryos (data from Miao et al, 2022). Log₂-fold difference heatmaps of MZnps coverage versus wild-type are shown on the right for each chromatin feature. (D) DNA methylation proportion from bisulfite sequencing (data from Potok et al, 2013) and H2A.Z.FV ChIP-seq coverage (data from Murphy et al, 2018). (E) Boxplots comparing correlated chromatin features on enhancers separated into groups with low (<20%), medium (20-80%), and high (>80%) DNA methylation. Boxes are first through third quartiles, center bar median, whiskers extend to 1.5x the interquartile range, outliers are not shown. (F) Aggregate plots for the two embryonic enhancer groups (K4me2 enhancers, thick red curves; K4me1 enhancers, thin blue curves) showing oocyte and sperm H3K4me1 ChIP-seq average coverage (data from Zhang et al, 2018, and Murphy et al, 2018, respectively) and oocyte and sperm H3K27ac (data from Zhang et al, 2018). Ig = log₂, lfc = log₂ fold change, RPM = reads per million.

225 H3K4me2 enhancers are hypomethylated and enriched for H2A.Z

226 In the absence of strong evidence for a novel pioneer factor, we looked instead for
 227 epigenetic differences between the two enhancer classes. Previously, Kaaji et al found that
 228 putative zebrafish embryonic enhancers exhibit a range of DNA methylation levels, which was
 229 also correlated with different chromatin characteristics including H3K4 methylation degree (Kaaji
 230 et al., 2016), while Murphy et al demonstrated that a subset of hypomethylated embryonic
 231 promoters gain accessibility through H2A.Z-containing placeholder nucleosomes (Murphy et al.,

232 2018). Given that we originally identified H3K4me2 enhancers due to their similarity to
233 promoters, we queried previously published bisulfite sequencing (Potok et al., 2013) and H2A.Z
234 (H2AFV) ChIP-seq data (Murphy et al., 2018). We indeed found that H3K4me2 enhancers are
235 strongly hypomethylated in the egg and maintain low DNA methylation through genome
236 activation (Fig 4D, E, Supp. Fig 4E, F), in contrast to H3K4me1 enhancers, which are
237 hypermethylated. Additionally, H3K4me2 enhancers but not H3K4me1 enhancers acquire
238 strong H2A.FV levels (Fig 4 D,E). Thus, H3K4me2, lack of NPS dependence, low DNA
239 methylation, and H2A.Z are all correlated chromatin features that distinguish a subset of
240 zebrafish embryonic enhancers (Fig 4E)

241 Genome-wide, DNA methylation patterns in the zebrafish embryo have been found to be
242 reprogrammed to match sperm and not the oocyte/egg (Jiang et al., 2013; Potok et al., 2013),
243 and indeed we find that here to generally be the case for embryonic enhancers (Fig 4D, Supp.
244 Fig 4G). However, a large fraction (69%) of hypomethylated embryonic enhancers is
245 equivalently hypomethylated in both eggs and sperm (Supp. Fig 4G, H), suggesting that these
246 represent a shared enhancer set used by both gametes and embryos. Indeed, querying existing
247 gamete H3K4me1 and H3K27ac ChIP-seq data (Murphy et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2018)
248 reveals that the embryonic H3K4me2 enhancers identified here have high levels of these
249 activating histone marks in both oocytes and sperm, while H3K4me1 enhancers do not (Fig 4F,
250 Supp. Fig 4I). Thus, H3K4me1 and H3K4me2 enhancers' orthogonal activation pathways may
251 relate to their past activity in gametes: the former rely on maternal factor pioneering to establish
252 de novo activity, while the latter already have a history of activity in gametes and are
253 epigenetically bookmarked to resume activity in the embryo.

254

255 **H3K4me2 enhancers likely activate NPS-independent genes**

256 Given that H3K4me2 enhancers are activated through non-NPS dependent pathways,
257 we asked whether they could underlie activation of genes not repressed in *MZnps* embryos. It is
258 likely that each zygotic gene is regulated by multiple enhancers with variable levels of
259 redundancy, additivity, or synergy that contribute to expression levels, which would complicate
260 deducing regulatory dependence (Kvon et al., 2021). Despite this, under a strict definition (>3-
261 fold enriched H3K4me2 CUT&RUN signal over IgG), we find that H3K4me2 enhancers are
262 mildly but significantly nearer to non NPS-dependent gene promoters compared to H3K4me1
263 enhancers ($P = 3.3 \times 10^{-6}$, Wilcoxon rank sum test), indicating a potential regulatory relationship
264 (Fig 5A). This is not the case for NPS-dependent genes ($P = 0.06$, Wilcoxon rank sum test) (Fig
265 5A). But reversing the perspective, NPS-dependent and non-NPS dependent genes seem to

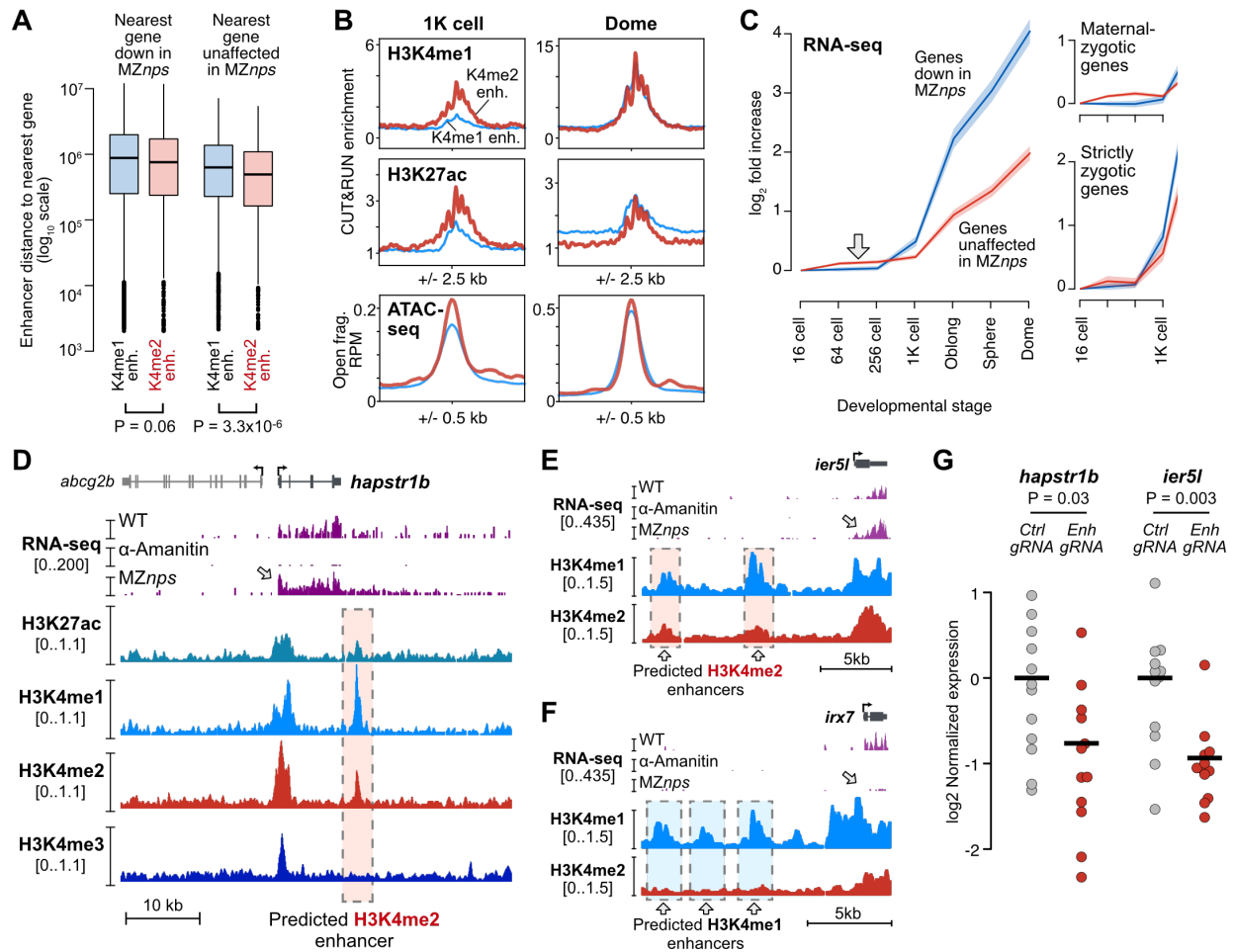


Figure 5. H3K4me2 enhancers likely regulate non NPS-dependent genes. (A) Boxplots representing the distance to the nearest gene for each enhancer, for each enhancer/gene combination. Boxes are first through third quartiles, center bar median, whiskers extend to 1.5x the interquartile range, points are outliers. (B) Aggregate plots of CUT&RUN (this study) and ATAC-seq open fragment coverage (data from Liu et al, 2018). K4me2 enhancer average plotted as thick red curves, K4me1 enhancer average as thin blue curves. (C) Plot of average wild-type RNA-seq log₂ fold increase over time for genes according to their fate in MZnps embryos – down in MZnps as classified by Miao et al, 2022 (blue line) or unaffected in MZnps (red line). 95% confidence intervals are highlighted. Right panels show the plot stratified into genes with a maternal contribution (maternal-zygotic) or strictly zygotic genes. RNA-seq data from Vejnar et al, 2019. (D-F) Genome browser tracks illustrating regions with predicted enhancers. Top tracks show Click-iT RNA-seq coverage in wild-type, α-amanitin treated, and MZnps embryos (data from Miao et al, 2022). Lower tracks show CUT&RUN coverage (this study). Predicted enhancers are highlighted with dashed boxes. (G) qRT-PCR quantification of zygotic gene expression (*hapstr1b* or *ier5l*) in individual F0 CRISPR-Cas9 enhancer loss-of-function embryos targeting the predicted *hapstr1b* enhancer shown in (D) (left) and two *ier5l* enhancers simultaneously, shown in (E) (right).

266 have equivalent potential to be regulated by both H3K4me1 and H3K4me2 enhancers, with
 267 >95% of genes from either group potentially residing within 1 Mb of either class of enhancers
 268 (Supp. Fig 5A-C). This likely reflects the regulatory complexity of promoter-enhancer
 269 relationships, especially given that NPS-dependent genes show varying levels of residual
 270 activation even in the absence of NPS (Miao et al., 2022).

271 We did however find evidence for a functional connection between H3K4me2 enhancers
272 and non NPS-dependent genes. There is a temporal asymmetry in the activation of the two
273 enhancer classes that is mirrored by the expression dynamics of differentially NPS-dependent
274 genes. At 1K-cell stage, we detect higher levels of H3K4me1, H3K27ac, and chromatin
275 accessibility in H3K4me2 enhancers compared to H3K4me1 enhancers (Fig 2A, Fig 5B, Supp.
276 Fig 2A), demonstrating that H3K4me2 enhancers are activated earlier. By dome stage, the
277 signals equalize (Fig 5B, right). We note that H3K4 methylation levels are overall low at 1K-cell
278 stage and barely detectable at enhancers only when using an alternate H3K4me1 antibody
279 (Supp. Fig 2A). Concomitantly, we find that across several RNA-seq time courses, non NPS-
280 dependent genes have earlier detectable up-expression than NPS-dependent genes by at least
281 two cell cycles (Fig 5C, Supp. Fig 5D-G), though NPS-dependent genes subsequently overtake
282 non NPS-dependent genes in magnitude of increase. This phenomenon is unlikely due to
283 dynamic poly(A) tail lengths because we observe the trend in ribosomal RNA-depleted, spike-in
284 normalized datasets (Fig 5C, Supp. Fig 5D) as well as with 4SU metabolic labeling of de novo
285 transcription (Supp. Fig 5F). The effect seems to be primarily driven by maternal-zygotic gene
286 activation (Fig 5C, right, Supp. Fig 5D), consistent with our model where H3K4me2 enhancers
287 are recapitulating oocyte roles during the MZT, reactivating some of the same genes that
288 previously helped shape the maternal contribution (Fig 4F, Supp. Fig 4I).

289

290 **H3K4me2 enhancer loss of function reduces activation of NPS-independent genes**

291 Finally, we used an F0 CRISPR-Cas9 strategy to target specific H3K4me2 enhancers
292 likely regulating non NPS-dependent zygotic genes (Fig 5D-F). We injected 1-cell embryos with
293 Cas9 protein complexed with a pool of three different guide RNAs targeting a predicted
294 H3K4me2 enhancer downstream of non NPS-dependent *hapstr1b* (Fig 5D, Supp. Fig 6A). We
295 measured *hapstr1b* activation in individual crispant embryos at sphere stage by quantitative
296 reverse-transcription PCR (qRT-PCR) and found on average a 1.7-fold decrease in *hapstr1b*
297 expression compared to control embryos injected with Cas9 + guide RNAs targeting the non-
298 zygotic *slc45a2* (*albino*) promoter ($P = 0.03$, Wilcoxon rank sum test) (Fig 5G). The
299 downregulation is highly variable, as is expected from embryo-to-embryo variability in Cas9
300 targeting efficacy. As we could not recover sufficient genomic DNA from embryos at such an
301 early developmental stage for genotyping, we instead genotyped sibling crispants at 32 h.p.f. by
302 PCR. We indeed found mosaic patterns of genomic lesions in the *hapstr1b* enhancer locus
303 (Supp. Fig 6A, B), which likely underlie variable effects on *hapstr1b* activation.

304 We additionally tested two predicted H3K4me2 enhancers upstream non NPS-
305 dependent *ier5l* (Fig 5E, Supp. Fig 3B, Supp. Fig 6C), which were not included in our earlier
306 analyses due to lower H3K27ac enrichment at dome stage. Nonetheless, when we targeted
307 both enhancers in parallel with CRISPR-Cas9 and two guide RNAs per enhancer, we found an
308 average 1.9-fold decrease in *ier5l* expression in F0 crispants compared to *albino* controls ($P =$
309 0.003, Wilcoxon rank sum test) (Fig 5G). Crispant siblings similarly exhibited mosaic genomic
310 lesions (Supp. Fig 6C-E). Thus, H3K4me2-marked enhancers can regulate zygotic expression
311 of genes that do not depend on maternal NPS pioneer factors.

312

313 **Discussion**

314 Here, we have demonstrated that two distinct sets of enhancers regulate the maternal-
315 to-zygotic transition in zebrafish, contributing to widespread gene activation as the embryo
316 induces pluripotent stem cells. Among the 10 histone modifications we profiled using
317 CUT&RUN, it is only H3K4 methylation degree that strongly distinguishes these two enhancer
318 classes. H3K4me3 is not enriched at any enhancer. Putative enhancers marked by H3K4me1
319 but not H3K4me2 attain chromatin accessibility and activating histone modifications de novo in
320 the embryo through the pioneering activities of maternal pluripotency factors Nanog, Pou5f3,
321 and Sox19b. In contrast, enhancers marked by H3K4me2 are hypomethylated early, which
322 facilitates acquisition of H2A.Z-bearing nucleosomes that promote open chromatin independent
323 of maternal NPS. A large proportion of these H3K4me2 enhancers overlap with putative
324 hypomethylated oocyte enhancers, suggesting that H3K4me2 enhancers recapitulate gamete
325 regulatory activities in the embryo. Thus, parallel enhancer activation pathways operate during
326 the maternal-to-zygotic transition that are responsible for activating different zygotic gene
327 repertoires (Fig 6).

328

329 **A unified model of zygotic genome activation**

330 Our findings unite and extend several previous studies aiming to decipher the regulatory
331 logic of zebrafish embryonic genome activation. The initial discovery that maternally provided
332 pluripotency factors Nanog, Pou5f3, and Sox19b play major roles in genome activation (M. T.
333 Lee et al., 2013; Leichsenring et al., 2013) reinforced the regulatory connection between
334 transcriptional reprogramming during the maternal-to-zygotic transition in non-mammalian
335 vertebrates and pluripotency induction in mammalian cells. However, these factors did not
336 account for all zygotic gene activation, implicating additional unknown mechanisms. Subsequent
337 elucidation of NPS's pioneering activity at many but not all promoters and enhancers motivated

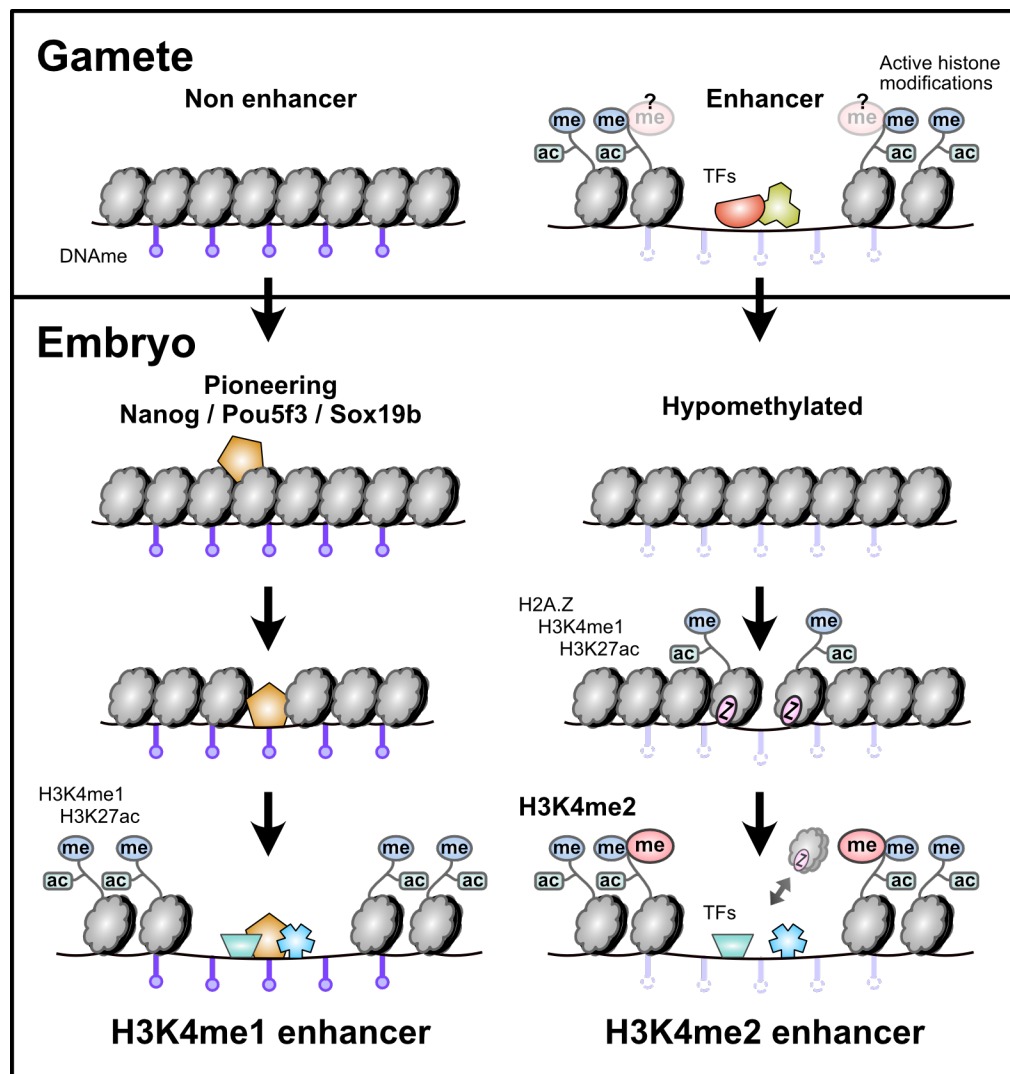


Figure 6. Parallel enhancer activation pathways during the maternal-to-zygotic transition. Enhancers that lack evidence for gamete activity are hypermethylated, rely on NPS-pioneering, and are marked with H3K4me1 but not H3K4me2 in the embryo. Enhancers that have evidence for gamete activity are hypomethylated, recruit H2A.Z-containing placeholder nucleosomes rather than relying on NPS pioneering, and are marked with H3K4me2.

338 the search for additional factors that could similarly engage and activate nascent, condensed
 339 embryonic chromatin (Liu et al., 2018; Miao et al., 2022; Pálffy et al., 2019; Veil et al., 2019).

340 Meanwhile, several groups recognized the role of DNA methylation in influencing early
 341 embryonic regulatory sequence activity (Hickey et al., 2022; Jiang et al., 2013; Kaaij et al.,
 342 2016; Lee et al., 2015; Liu et al., 2018; Murphy et al., 2018; Potok et al., 2013; Wu et al., 2021;
 343 Zhang et al., 2018). Hypomethylation was found to be associated with open chromatin at
 344 promoters (Liu et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2018), and the characterization of embryonic
 345 H3K4me1/H2A.Z-bearing placeholder nucleosomes by Murphy et al provided a mechanism for
 346 the acquisition and maintenance of promoter accessibility (Murphy et al., 2018). By contrast,

347 enhancers overall were found to be hypermethylated, which was surprising given the correlation
348 between high DNA methylation and gene repression described in other systems (Kaaij et al.,
349 2016; Lee et al., 2015; Liu et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2018). Zhang et al noted that these
350 enhancers were distinct from gamete enhancers (Zhang et al., 2018), and Liu et al hypothesized
351 that NPS were uniquely capable of binding methylated DNA in the embryo (Liu et al., 2018).
352 Kaaij et al recognized that some distal loci were instead hypomethylated, while also bearing
353 bivalent repressive H3K27me3 and activating H3K4me2 and H3K4me3 (Kaaij et al., 2016)
354 (though, antibody specificity may have been confounding, see (Shah et al., 2018)), suggesting
355 that these represented poised enhancers that would later play cell-type-specific roles. Hickey et
356 al subsequently showed that acquisition of repressive H2Aub and later H3K27me3 at
357 hypomethylated enhancers also depended on placeholder nucleosome acquisition (Hickey et
358 al., 2022). Finally, Wu et al found that inhibiting DNA methylation led to ectopic enhancer
359 activation and acquisition of H3K4me3 (contingent on antibody specificity), further linking
360 hypomethylation with higher order H3K4 methylation (Wu et al., 2021).

361 We now find that a subset of hypomethylated enhancers shared with gametes are
362 indeed active in the early embryo and uniquely acquire H3K4me2. These H3K4me2 enhancers
363 likely account for non NPS-dependent embryonic gene activation during the maternal-to-zygotic
364 transition, while enhancers bearing only H3K4me1 correspond to NPS-pioneered enhancers
365 that regulate NPS-dependent genes. This division of labor has implications for how proper
366 transcriptome composition and cellular identity may be maintained throughout germ cell and
367 embryonic development. The maternal contribution is transcribed and curated during the germ
368 cell-to-maternal transition (Abrams and Mullins, 2009; Blatt et al., 2021) to contain the potent
369 reprogramming cocktail centered around Nanog, Pou5f3, and Sox19b, which will eventually
370 induce genome activation and pluripotency in the embryo. Until then, NPS activity presumably
371 must be inhibited to prevent ectopic transcription of developmental triggers. This can be
372 accomplished by limiting their translation until after egg activation (Lorenzo-Orts and Pauli,
373 2024), but also by inhibiting their target enhancers in the oocyte through DNA methylation. It is
374 still unknown why NPS can activate methylated DNA in the zebrafish embryo, but the high
375 concentration of these factors that accumulates through extremely elevated translation (M. T.
376 Lee et al., 2013) may contribute to their pioneering capacity (Hansen and Cohen, 2022; Yan et
377 al., 2018). Conversely, oocyte enhancers that supported transcription of the maternal
378 contribution would not need to be so tightly controlled, since any aberrant activity would simply
379 add to the existing maternal mRNA pool, allowing them to remain poised through
380 hypomethylation to be reactivated in the embryo.

381

382 **Clarifying H3K4 methylation degree at enhancers**

383 H3K4 methylation has long been recognized as a hallmark of enhancer loci, and the
384 predominance of H3K4 mono-methylation specifically distinguished enhancers from gene-
385 proximal regions that tend to bear di- and tri-methylation (Barski et al., 2007; Ernst et al., 2011;
386 Heintzman et al., 2007; Wang and Helin, 2024; Zentner et al., 2011). Some reports have
387 suggested that enhancers can indeed attain H3K4me3 (Hu et al., 2017; Koch and Andrau,
388 2011; Liu et al., 2024; Pekowska et al., 2011), somewhat blurring the distinction between
389 enhancers and promoters. However, these conclusions are called into question by the recent
390 finding that H3K4 methyl antibody cross-reactivity may contribute to false detection of higher-
391 degree methylation at many loci. Using rigorously tested antibodies, Shah et al demonstrated
392 that at least in K562 cells, only H3K4me1 and H3K4me2 but not H3K4me3 are characteristic of
393 enhancers (Shah et al., 2018). Here, we extend these results to zebrafish blastulae: indeed,
394 H3K4me3 is not enriched at enhancers, but we also find that H3K4me2 is not a generic property
395 of all enhancers, but rather marks only a subset of hypomethylated, putative gamete-inherited
396 enhancers that do not depend on pluripotency factor pioneering.

397 Our findings are reminiscent of a recent report that H3K4me3 marks a putative TCF
398 enhancers in mouse oocytes as well as a subset of enhancers in pre-implantation embryos,
399 during a period of global DNA demethylation (Liu et al., 2024). These enhancers are likely not
400 related to the zebrafish H3K4me2 enhancers, which do not have evidence for TCF binding
401 (Supp. Fig 4D); and moreover, mammalian ZGA is in many ways mechanistically distinct from
402 zebrafish genome activation (Guo et al., 2024; Lee et al., 2014; Svoboda, 2018; Vastenhouw et
403 al., 2019). Regardless, together with our findings, this suggests that some higher-order H3K4
404 methylation at enhancers may be correlated with the transmission of epigenetic information from
405 the germline to the embryo, or during cellular transitions generally, distinguishing persistent or
406 “reawakened” enhancers from “reprogrammed” enhancers that are newly activated. The extent
407 to which this distinction exists in other contexts, e.g. embryonic or artificial pluripotency
408 induction in mammals, remains to be determined.

409

410 **Additional regulatory players remain to be elucidated**

411 How precise H3K4 methylation degree is achieved at the two enhancer classes likely
412 involves differential recruitment of chromatin regulators, particularly methyltransferases.
413 Vertebrates encode six major H3K4 methyltransferase variants (Van et al., 2024), many of
414 which are duplicated in zebrafish. In vitro, KMT2A/B (MLL1/2) and KMT2F/G (SETD1A/B) are

415 capable of catalyzing all three of mono-, di-, and trimethylation, while KMT2C/D (MLL3/4) can
416 only catalyze mono- and dimethylation (Li et al., 2022). However, the kinetics suggest that
417 KMT2A/B and KMT2C/D preferentially generate H3K4me2 and H3K4me1, respectively (Li et al.,
418 2022). KMT2C/D have been shown to install H3K4me1 at enhancers (Herz et al., 2012; Hu et
419 al., 2013; Jozwik et al., 2016; J.-E. Lee et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2016), though KMT2A/B have
420 also been found to localize to some enhancers (Hu et al., 2017; Zhang et al., 2016).
421 Concordantly, zebrafish H3K4me1 and H3K4me2 enhancers could arise through differential
422 recruitment of these methyltransferases, via mechanisms specific to their respective activation
423 pathways. KMT2A/B contains CXXC domains that direct it to specifically unmethylated CpGs
424 (Allen et al., 2006; Ayton et al., 2004; Birke et al., 2002), which could underlie how
425 hypomethylated enhancers attain H3K4me2. Indeed, Liu et al showed a link between
426 hypomethylated promoter accessibility and Kmt2a and Cxxc1b, the zebrafish ortholog of CXXC1
427 (CFP1) that complexes with KMT2F/G to similarly target unmethylated CpGs (Lee and Skalnik,
428 2005; Liu et al., 2018).

429 We presume that specific maternal transcription factors engage each enhancer and
430 contribute to the recruitment of chromatin factors (Chan et al., 2019; Miao et al., 2022). Unlike
431 the NPS-bound H3K4me1 enhancers, H3K4me2 enhancers as a group do not have strong
432 enrichment for any one binding motif (Supp. Fig 4D), suggesting that a diverse collection of
433 factors each bind a subset of different enhancers. This could account for the dozens of other
434 transcription factors represented in the maternal contribution (M. T. Lee et al., 2013), which
435 likely have combinatorial roles across both enhancer classes in elaborating individual gene
436 expression levels. This is likely true for all enhancers, but it is only a requirement for NPS
437 pioneering that underlies the strong NPS motif signature in H3K4me1 enhancers, a function that
438 is unnecessary for H3K4me2 enhancers. Though, we cannot ignore the transcriptional
439 activating functions of NPS, and indeed at the peak of genome activation, their zygotic gene
440 targets do seem to be more strongly activated on average than non-NPS targets (Fig 5C, Supp.
441 Fig C-F).

442 Finally, the regulatory logic underlying DNA methylation reprogramming is still
443 incompletely understood. This is particularly relevant for the subset of hypomethylated
444 embryonic enhancers that were previously hypermethylated in the oocyte (Supp. Fig 4G, H),
445 suggesting that some enhancers may interconvert between activation pathways. Further
446 characterization of the underlying chromatin is warranted as we continue to dissect the
447 regulatory logic of the maternal-to-zygotic transition and embryonic pluripotency induction.

448

449 **Methods**

450 **Animal Husbandry**

451 All animal procedures were conducted under the supervision and approval of the
452 Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee at the University of Pittsburgh, Protocol
453 #21120500. *Danio rerio* were housed in a recirculating aquatic system (Aquaneering) at 28°C
454 with a 14/10 hour light/dark cycle (light 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.). Fish were fed 2x daily (10 a.m. and 2
455 p.m.) with *Artemia* nauplii.

456

457 **Embryo collection**

458 Four to five adult TUAB males and females each were set in divided 1.7 L sloped
459 breeding tanks (Tecniplast #ZB17BTE) overnight. Water was changed and dividers removed at
460 8-9 a.m. the following morning, and embryos were collected at 1-cell stage. Embryos were
461 dechorionated by treatment with 1 mg/mL Pronase (Sigma #P5147) in egg water (60 µg/mL
462 ocean salt in DI water) for two minutes then washed. Embryos were incubated at 28.5°C on
463 agarose coated petri dishes with egg water and collected at appropriate stages as determined
464 by morphology.

465 For Triptolide (Apexbio #MFCD00210565) treatment, a 4 mM stock solution dissolved in
466 DMSO was added to 1-cell stage embryos in 6-well plates to a final concentration of 2 µM
467 Triptolide and 0.05% DMSO in egg water. DMSO control wells were treated with 0.05% DMSO
468 final. Embryos were collected when DMSO control embryos reached dome stage.

469

470 **CUT&RUN**

471 The CUT&RUN procedure was adapted from Hainer et al (Hainer et al., 2019), which
472 incorporates optimizations of the method of Skene and Henikoff (Skene and Henikoff, 2017).
473 For each sample, approximately 70,000 cells were used: 70 1K-cell stage, 10 dome stage, or 8
474 shield stage embryos, using average stage cell counts from (Joseph et al., 2017). Embryos
475 were deyolked in batches of 50-200 embryos: embryos were transferred to 1.5 mL Eppendorf
476 tubes removing excess liquid with a P200 pipettor, then yolk lysis buffer added (55 mM NaCl, 1.8
477 mM KCl, 1.25 mM NaHCO₃). Tubes were shaken at 1100 RPM for 5 min at room temperature,
478 centrifuged at 300xg for 30 sec to pellet, yolk lysis buffer drawn off, and 1 mL Yolk Lysis Wash
479 Buffer was added (110 mM NaCl, 3.5 mM KCl, 2.7 mM CaCl₂, 10 mM Tris pH 8.5). Tubes were
480 shaken at 1100 RPM for 2 minutes at RT, centrifuged at 300xg to pellet, and supernatant was
481 again removed and replaced with 600 µL Nuclear Extraction Buffer (20 mM HEPES-KOH, pH
482 7.9, 10 mM KCl, 500 µM spermidine, 0.1% Triton X-100, 20% glycerol).

483 Samples in Nuclear Extraction Buffer were gently resuspended by pipetting up and
484 down, centrifuged at 600xg at 4°C for 3 min, supernatant removed, and again resuspended in
485 600 µL Nuclear Extraction Buffer. To bind nuclei, 150 µL of concanavalin A beads (Polysciences
486 #86057) per sample were activated by added to 850 µL Binding Buffer (20 mM HEPES-KOH pH
487 7.9, 10 mM KCl, 1mM CaCl₂, 1mM MnCl₂), placed on a magnet stand, and washed twice with
488 Binding Buffer. Beads were resuspended in 300 µL Binding Buffer and slowly added to nuclei
489 with gentle vortexing (~1500 rpm), then rotated 10 min at RT. Supernatant was drawn off on a
490 magnet stand, then beads were blocked for 5 min in 1 mL Wash Buffer (20 mM HEPES-KOH
491 pH 7.5, 150 mM NaCl, 0.5 mM spermidine, 0.1% BSA w/v) with 2mM EDTA for 5 min at RT. To
492 bind antibody, supernatant was drawn off on a magnet stand and washed 2x with 1 mL Wash
493 Buffer. Beads were resuspended in 500 µL of 1:100 primary antibody in Wash Buffer for 2 hr at
494 4°C on a rotator. To bind pAG-MNase, beads were washed 2x in 1 mL Wash Buffer, then
495 resuspended in 500 µL of 1:200 pAG-MNase (gift from Sarah Hainer) in Wash Buffer for 1 hr at
496 4°C, and washed again 2x with Wash Buffer. Beads were resuspended in 150 µL Wash Buffer
497 and placed on ice for 5 min, then the pAG-MNase was activated by adding 3 µL 100 mM CaCl₂
498 while gentle vortexing and returning to ice. After 30 min, the reaction was stopped using 2x
499 STOP Buffer (200 mM NaCl, 20 mM EDTA, 4 mM EGTA, 50 µg/mL RNase A, 40 µg/mL
500 glycogen; and 10 pg/mL yeast mononucleosome as a spike-in (20 pg/mL for the Triptolide
501 experiments). Nuclei were incubated at 37°C for 20 min followed by centrifuging for 5 min at
502 16,000xg at 4°C, drawing off the DNA fragments with the supernatant. The extracted fragments
503 were treated with SDS (0.1%) and proteinase K (2.5 µL of 20 mg/mL stock) at 70°C for 10 min
504 followed by phenol chloroform extraction and ethanol precipitation. Purified DNA was
505 resuspended in 50 µL of water. Antibodies used were: H3K4me1, Invitrogen #710795, lot
506 #2477086 (all stages), and ActiveMotif #39297, lot #01518002 (for 1K-cell stage only);
507 H3K4me2, Invitrogen #710796, lot #2246656; H3K4me3, Invitrogen #711958, lot #2253580;
508 H3K27ac, Abcam #ab4729, lot #GR3357415-1; H3K9ac, Cell Signaling #9649, lot #13;
509 H3K56ac, Invitrogen #PA5-40101, lot #XA3485152A; H3K64ac, Abcam #ab214808, lot
510 #GR3312057-4; H3K122ac, Abcam #ab33309, lot #GR3427528-1; H4K16ac, Millipore
511 #37707329, lot #3770263; H2BK16ac, Abcam #ab177427, lot #GR199432-1; IgG, Invitrogen
512 #10500C. CUT&RUN libraries were constructed using the NEB Ultra II DNA library prep kit
513 (NEB #E7645) and indexed adapters according to manufacturer's protocol. DNA was end
514 repaired and then ligated to sequencing adaptors diluted 1:100. Ligated DNA was purified with
515 0.9x Sera-Mag Select beads (Cytiva #29343045) and PCR amplified for 15 cycles, then purified
516 again with 0.9x Sera-Mag beads. Libraries were run on a 1.5% TBE agarose gel, and a band

517 corresponding to 175 - 650 bp was cut out and gel purified using the NEB Monarch DNA gel
518 extraction kit (#T1020). Concentration was verified by Qubit dsDNA high sensitivity and
519 Fragment Analyzer. Sequencing libraries were multiplexed and paired-end sequenced on an
520 Illumina NextSeq 500 at the Health Sciences Sequencing Core at Children's Hospital of
521 Pittsburgh.

522

523 **In Vivo Reporter Assay**

524 For the enhancer reporter plasmid, starting with a pTol2 α -crystallin mCherry plasmid,
525 CMV:EGFP was amplified from pCS2+ cytoplasmic EGFP (gift from Antonio Giraldez) using F-
526 aaactagagattctgtttagaattcGTCGACCATAGCCAATTCAATATGGC and R-
527 ctagagtgcgaGGTACCGGGCCCAATGCA and inserted using NEB HiFi Assembly (NEB #E5520).
528 The β -globin minimal promoter was amplified from mouse genomic DNA (gift from Sarah
529 Hainer) using F-aaaggtacCAATCTGCTCAGAGAGGACA, R-
530 aaagctagcGATGTCTGTTTCTGAGGTTGCA and cloned into the plasmid with KpnI/NheI to
531 replace the existing mCherry promoter. mTagBFP2 was amplified from pBS mTagBFP2
532 (derived from pCS2+ mTagBFP2-LL2, gift from Carson Stuckenholtz) with F-
533 aactagagattctgtttagaattcGGAACAAAAGCTGGAGCTCCACC, R-
534 tgaattggctatggtcgacgAATTCCTGCAGCCCGGGG and inserted using HiFi Assembly. To flip the
535 CMV promoter (to generate the CMV:BFP version), the plasmid was cut with BamHI (flanks
536 both sides of CMV) and re-ligated. Candidate regulatory regions were amplified from genomic
537 DNA (~800-1200 bp) and cloned into the plasmid cut with EcoRI/HindIII using HiFi assembly or
538 classical cloning. Primers are listed in Supp. Table 3. Sequences were verified by whole
539 plasmid sequencing (Plasmidsaurus) and concentrations quantified by Qubit.

540 30 pg of each reporter plasmid was injected into dechorionated 1-cell embryos into the
541 cell using a PV 820 Pneumatic Pico Pump. Fluorescence was visualized at 6 h.p.f. on a Leica
542 M165 FC scope with a FlexCam C3 camera with the following settings: Gamma: 1.5,
543 Sharpness: 10, Noise Reduction: 4, Saturation: 0. For each fluorophore, settings were:
544 mCherry, Exposure 125 ms, Gain 35 dB; BFP: Exposure 125 ms, Gain 28 dB; GFP: Exposure
545 88.3 ms, Gain 22 dB. Images were edited in Adobe Photoshop using the Levels function, setting
546 the output levels to be (Shadows/Gamma/Highlights): mCherry 30/1/55, GFP 14/1.13/122, BFP
547 38/0.62/124.

548

549 **CRISPR mutagenesis**

550 Cas9 crRNAs were designed referring to the IDT design tool and CRISPRscan (Moreno-
551 Mateos et al., 2015) and synthesized by IDT (Alt-R-XT for *albino* and *ier5l*, Alt-R for *hapstr1b*)
552 and resuspended to 100 μ M in IDT duplex buffer. crRNAs were hybridized with tracrRNA (IDT)
553 and complexed with Cas9 protein (Alt-R S.p Cas9 Nuclease 3NLS, IDT #1074181) as described
554 in (Hoshijima et al., 2019): final concentration 10 μ M Cas9, 10 μ M gRNA duplex (equimolar pool
555 of multiple guides), 0.04% Phenol red in a 5 μ L volume. CRISPR crRNA sequences: *hapstr1b*
556 (ENSDARG00000012458) enhancer: GGTGACATTGTAAGTGG,
557 TGTTAGCTGCTGACCCCTAG, TCTTTGATGAGAAATGAGCG. *ier5l*
558 (ENSDARG00000054906) proximal enhancer: TCCGGTGGCAGGAGGACCAG,
559 ACAACAGTAGGCTACCATGG. *ier5l* distal enhancer: TGCGCGCTGCAGGGTGACAG,
560 CGTGAAGTGTAGCAGCAC. *slc45a2* (ENSDARG0000002593, *albino*) promoter (negative
561 control): TCAAGACTTGTGAGCTGAGA, TCCTGCTGGGAGTGGACAAT. Guides were pooled
562 per gene for each set of injections (i.e., all three *hapstr1b* guide were pooled, all four *ier5l*
563 guides were pooled).

564 Dechorionated 1-cell embryos were injected with 1 nL Cas9 complex into the cell.
565 Embryos were incubated at 28.5°C and a portion were collected at sphere stage, individually
566 flash frozen in liquid nitrogen, and RNA was extracted by TRIzol (Invitrogen #15596026),
567 quantified by NanoDrop, and stored at -80°C until use for qRT-PCR. Sibling embryos were
568 collected at 32 hours post-fertilization for genotyping: individual embryos were boiled at 95°C in
569 100 mM NaOH for 20 minutes, followed by neutralization with 1 M Tris-HCl (pH 7.4) and stored
570 at -20°C until use.

571 For qRT-PCR, 40 ng RNA per embryo was used as template for the Luna Universal
572 One-Step RT-qPCR Kit (NEB #E3005S) with three technical replicates per embryo per primer
573 pair. qRT-PCR was carried out on a QuantStudio 3 96-Well 0.1mL Block machine with the
574 following cycling conditions: an initial 10 minute incubation at 55°C, followed by 40 cycles of
575 95°C, 10s; 60° C, one minute. Ramp speed was 1.6°C/s. Ct values for technical replicates were
576 averaged, then per embryo Ct values for the target gene (*hapstr1b* or *ier5l*) were normalized to
577 the reference gene (*dusp6* ENSDARG00000070914, an NPS-dependent zygotic gene to control
578 for ZGA timing) (Δ Ct). Values were converted to $2^{-\Delta$ Ct and then normalized by the control
579 embryo average so that the control embryo average value was 1 (0 on a log scale) for graphing.
580 Primers were: *dusp6*: F-AGCCATCAGCTTTATTGATGAG and R-
581 CAAAGTCCAAGAGTTGACCC (209 bp exon 2-3), *hapstr1b*: F-
582 TGTGTGTGTTATTTGAACGGGA and R-TAGGTTAGTGACGGCAGTTG (158 bp exon 2 +

583 intron, nascent transcript), *ier5l*: F-TGCAGTGGATGCACAAAGTC and R-
584 ATCTCCGCGTACTTCTCGTT (156 bp, single-exon gene).

585 For genotyping, 1 μ L of template was used in a 25 μ L PCR reaction (NEB 2x Ultra Q5
586 master mix, #M0544S), Ta = 67°C, 30 sec ext., and run on a 2% TAE gel. Genotyping for *ier5l*
587 enhancer deletion involved amplifying each enhancer locus separately, then in another reaction
588 amplifying the region spanning both enhancers using the distal forward and proximal reverse
589 primers to detect large deletions. Primers were: *hapstr1b* enhancer: F-
590 TTCAGCACACATTTCTTTTCTGT, R-AGACAGCCTTCAACAATACACA, *ier5l* distal enhancer:
591 F-CCATTGGATTCGTGACGCAC, R-TACTTGCGTGCCTACTCCTC, *ier5l* proximal enhancer:
592 F-TCGTGGGTTATTCTTTTACGCC, R-TTGAAGTGTGTTTTGCGTTGC.

593

594 **Data analysis**

595 For CUT&RUN analyses, paired-end reads were mapped to the zebrafish genome
596 (GRCz11) using bowtie2 v2.4.2 (Langmead and Salzberg, 2012) (--no-mixed --no-discordant -X
597 650). Filtered FASTQ files for each CUT&RUN library were first assembled by removing
598 contaminating read pairs that align the hg38 human genome and not the zebrafish genome
599 (GRCz11). High-quality alignments to zebrafish (MAPQ \geq 30) were retained, after additional
600 filtering to also exclude reads mapping chrM, or to satellite DNA or rRNA as annotated by
601 RepeatMasker. For the PCA analysis, only mononucleosome-sized CUT&RUN fragments (140 -
602 250 bp spanned by read pair) were used, which were trimmed (tag-centered) to 73 bp, then
603 filtered to exclude duplicate regions with identical start/end coordinates. To normalize triptolide
604 CUT&RUN samples with yeast spike in, unaligned reads were aligned to the *sacCer3* genome
605 to obtain the number of total unique yeast read pairs, and BigWigs were scaled by 1e6/yeast
606 pairs. Downstream analyses were performed using Linux shell scripts with the aid of UCSC
607 Genome Browser - Kent tools (Kent et al., 2010), BEDtools v2.30.0 (Quinlan and Hall, 2010),
608 Samtools v1.12 (Li et al., 2009), and deepTools v3.5.1 (Ramírez et al., 2014).

609 Accessible regions were defined using ATAC-seq datasets from Liu et al, GEO:
610 GSE101779 (Liu et al., 2018) and Pálffy et al, GEO: GSE130944 (Pálffy et al., 2019) (All public
611 datasets used are listed in Supp. Table 4). For the Liu et al dataset, reads from 1k-cell, oblong,
612 and dome stages were aligned to GRCz11 using bowtie2 (--no-mixed --no-discordant --dovetail
613 -X 2000), retaining read pairs with MAPQ > 2 with fragment length < 120 bp. Reads were
614 clipped using Trim Galore (-e 0.2) (Krueger et al., 2023) prior to mapping. Peaks were called on
615 the union of the stages using Macs2 (Zhang et al., 2008) with an effective genome size of
616 4.59e8 (GRCz11 summed chromosome length minus sum RepeatMasker annotated regions).

617 For the Pálffy dataset, published accessible regions were lifted over from GRCz10 to GRCz11,
618 then regions not overlapping the Liu peaks were added to the analysis. In total, there were $N =$
619 41,334 accessible regions from the Liu dataset (each region named in the form `atac_L00001`,
620 `atac_L00002`, ..., `atac_L41334`) and $N = 7,256$ additional regions from the Pálffy dataset
621 (`atac_P00001`, ..., `atac_P07256`), for a grand total of $N = 48,590$ regions.

622 To identify promoters, published CAGE-Seq data from dome, shield, and 14-somite
623 stages, SRA: SRP013950 (Haberle et al., 2014) was used in conjunction with Ensembl r100
624 gene annotations to select the maximally zygotically expressed TSS per Ensembl gene
625 (supported by >20 cage tags). Additional TSSs for genes not annotated by Ensembl were
626 added from RefSeq and UMMS v4.3.2 (Lawson et al., 2020) annotations. ATAC-seq accessible
627 regions that overlap a TSS were annotated as a promoter ($N = 10,299$). To classify enhancers,
628 all remaining ATAC-seq accessible regions <2 kb from any annotated TSS transcript isoform
629 were classified as TSS-proximal elements (alternate promoters or proximal enhancers, $N =$
630 11,899), while regions ≥ 2 kb from any annotated TSS were classified as distal elements, i.e.
631 enhancers ($N = 26,197$). ATAC-seq open regions on unassembled scaffolds lacking annotated
632 genes were discarded, leaving $N = 48,395$ total regions.

633 Raw CUT&RUN read coverage was calculated over the promoter and distal regions
634 using bedtools coverage in the ATAC-seq open interval, 500 bp upstream the interval, and 500
635 bp downstream the interval (3 counts per ATAC region, per CUT&RUN sample). 63 intervals
636 lacking 500 bp of flanking sequence (e.g., on the edge of a scaffold) were discarded. For PCA,
637 dome stage CUT&RUN coverage counts were used, pooling replicates per histone mark and
638 normalizing counts by region length as \log_2 RPKM/2 (i.e., per 500 bp rather than per 1 kb),
639 adding a pseudocount of 1. PCA was performed using R 4.1.0 `prcomp` with input matrix of
640 48,332 regions x 30 features (upstream, center, downstream per histone mark; "downstream"
641 was set to be the flanking region with higher total CUT&RUN coverage summed over all marks).

642 To define the "promoter-like" enhancers and "enhancer-like" promoters, rotated data for
643 the first 3 PCs were input into an SVM classifier using the R `svm` function in the `e1071` package
644 v1.7-13 using $\gamma = 1$, $\text{cost} = 1$; only Ensembl promoters and distal enhancers were used.
645 The SVM model was used to classify all regions using the `predict` function. For contour lines on
646 the biplot visualizations (Fig 1E), a 2D density kernel estimation was calculated for the first 2
647 PCs using the R `kde2d` function in the `MASS` package v7.3-54, $h = 3$, $n = 125$. For initial
648 heatmap visualization (Fig 1, 2), regions with ≥ 2 -fold H3K4me1 enrichment over IgG and ≥ 10
649 RPKM coverage in the center+downstream interval were used, $N = 4128$ typical enhancers, $N =$
650 644 promoter-like enhancers, $N = 4707$ typical promoters, $N = 1224$ enhancer-like promoters.

651 For subsequent analysis, refined active enhancer categories were used: ≥ 2 -fold H3K4me1 and
652 ≥ 1.5 -fold H3K27ac enrichment over IgG; and ≥ 2 -fold H3K4me2 for H3K4me2 enhancers or
653 < 1.25 -fold H3K4me2 enrichment for H3K4me1 enhancers. Poised enhancers with ≤ 1.5 -fold
654 H3K27ac enrichment were also annotated for reference. A subset of TSS-proximal elements
655 were also annotated as potential enhancers if they had < 1.25 -fold H3K4me3 enrichment, and
656 ≥ 2 -fold H3K4me2 enrichment for potential H3K4me2 enhancers.

657 CUT&RUN coverage heatmaps were generated using deepTools computeMatrix
658 reference-point (--referencePoint center -b 2500 -a 2500 --binSize 25 --missingDataAsZero)
659 (Ramírez et al., 2014) with adaptive color scales per histone mark: zMin in the plotHeatmap
660 command is set to the mean upstream signal in the leftmost 20 25-bp bins as calculated by
661 computeMatrix, zMax is set to the 90th percentile of the signal in the center 8 bins. CUT&RUN
662 enrichment heatmaps over IgG were plotted using fold-difference bigWigs generated by
663 bigwigCompare (--operation ratio --skipZeroOverZero --pseudocount 0.1 --binSize 50);
664 plotHeatmap colors ranged from zMin 1 (i.e., no enrichment) to zMax 10 for H3K4me1/2, zMax
665 4 for other marks. All heatmaps are uniformly sorted relative to descending H3K4me1 signal
666 unless otherwise indicated.

667 To assess RNA-seq signal at putative enhancers, strand-specific RNA-seq coverage
668 was calculated in a 100 bp window upstream and downstream (relative to genomic coordinates)
669 of each ATAC-seq open interval, using poly(A)+ RNA-seq data at dome, 50% epiboly, shield,
670 and 75% epiboly stages from (White et al., 2017). Potential (+)-strand gene TSSs were regions
671 with ≥ 1 RPKM (+)-strand coverage downstream that is ≥ 2 -fold higher than (+)-strand coverage
672 upstream, in at least two samples; (-) strand, ≥ 1 RPKM (-)-strand coverage upstream ≥ 2 -fold
673 higher than downstream. ATAC-seq open regions whose 100 bp flanks fall within a known
674 annotated exon were not considered potential TSSs (i.e., RNA-seq signal is likely due to the
675 surrounding gene).

676 For other chromatin dataset comparisons: NPS motif density was calculated in a +/- 100
677 bp window centered on the ATAC-seq open interval using the homer2 find command (Heinz et
678 al., 2010) on empirically determined Nanog, Pou5f3, and Sox19b motifs from performing
679 homer2 de novo motif finding on zebrafish ChIP-seq (Miao et al., 2022). A bigWig of motif hit
680 coordinates/occurrences was used as input to deepTools. Wild-type versus MZ*nps* chromatin
681 heatmaps were generated using deepTools bigwigCompare (--operation log2 --
682 skipZeroOverZero --pseudocount 0.01). DNA methylation was visualized by processing
683 previously published bisulfite sequencing, SRA:SRP020008 (Potok et al., 2013) using bwa-meth
684 (Pedersen et al., 2014) and MethylDackel extract (--mergeContext --minDepth 10)

685 (github.com/dpryan79/methylDackel). Heatmaps for methylation proportion were generated
686 using computeMatrix --binSize 100 and omitting the --missingDataAsZero parameter, and
687 plotHeatmap using --interpolationMethod nearest to improve aesthetics. For chromatin feature
688 boxplots, average signal over the central 500 bp for histone features or 200 bp for DNA
689 methylation and ATAC-seq was obtained from computeMatrix.

690 Motif enrichment analysis in enhancer groups was performed using homer2 findMotifs.pl
691 on 200 bp of sequence centered on ATAC open intervals. H3K4me2 enhancer sequences were
692 used as foreground and H3K4me1 enhancer sequences were used as background, then for a
693 separate analysis each enhancer group was used as foreground with background sequences
694 consisting of non-exonic ATAC-seq open regions with < 1.25-fold dome-stage CUT&RUN
695 enrichment for any histone mark (N = 2132). CpG and C+G content was calculated in the center
696 500 bp of each element using bedtools nuc.

697 Definitions of NPS-down versus NPS-unaffected genes were obtained from (Miao et al.,
698 2022) (N = 691 down, N = 1100 unaffected). Enhancer distances to each gene group were
699 calculated using bedtools closest, discarding enhancers on unassembled scaffolds. RNA-seq
700 time-course trajectories were calculated for each gene group as the mean log₂ expression at
701 each time point minus log₂ expression at time 0, using a pseudocount of 0.1. 95% confidence
702 bounds per time point were calculated as $\pm qt * \text{standard deviation} / \sqrt{n}$ where n = the
703 number of genes and qt is the 0.975 quantile of the t distribution with n-1 degrees of freedom.
704 Published normalized expression values from each study were used and joined with the Miao et
705 al gene IDs, with some genes dropping out due to different annotations used between studies.
706 For the Vejnar et al dataset (Vejnar et al., 2019), yeast spike-in normalized unique counts from
707 rRNA-depleted RNA-seq were used. Maternal-zygotic genes were defined as having pooled 2-
708 cell expression at >0.5 RPKM.

709

710 **Data availability**

711 Sequencing data are available in the Gene Expression Omnibus (GEO) under accession
712 number GSE269795. Analysis scripts are available at github.com/MTLeeLab/zf-k4 .

713

714 **Author contributions**

715 M.D.H. and M.T.L. conceived of the project, performed the analyses, and wrote the manuscript.

716 J.M.M. contributed some experiments.

717

718 **Acknowledgements**

719 We thank S. Hainer for providing the pAG-MNase enzyme and C. Stuckenholtz for the tagBFP2
720 plasmid; S. Hainer, K. Arndt, A. Carlson, M. Rebeiz, M. Tsang, C. Kaplan and their labs for
721 equipment use and feedback. This project used the University of Pittsburgh Health Sciences
722 Core at UPMC Children's Hospital Pittsburgh for sequencing and was supported in part by the
723 University of Pittsburgh Center for Research Computing, RRID:SCR_022735, through the
724 resources provided. Specifically, this work used the H2P cluster, which is supported by NSF
725 award number OAC-2117681. M.T.L was supported by NIH grant R35GM137973 and March of
726 Dimes grant 5-FY16-307.

727

728 **Declaration of Interests**

729 The authors declare no competing interests.

730

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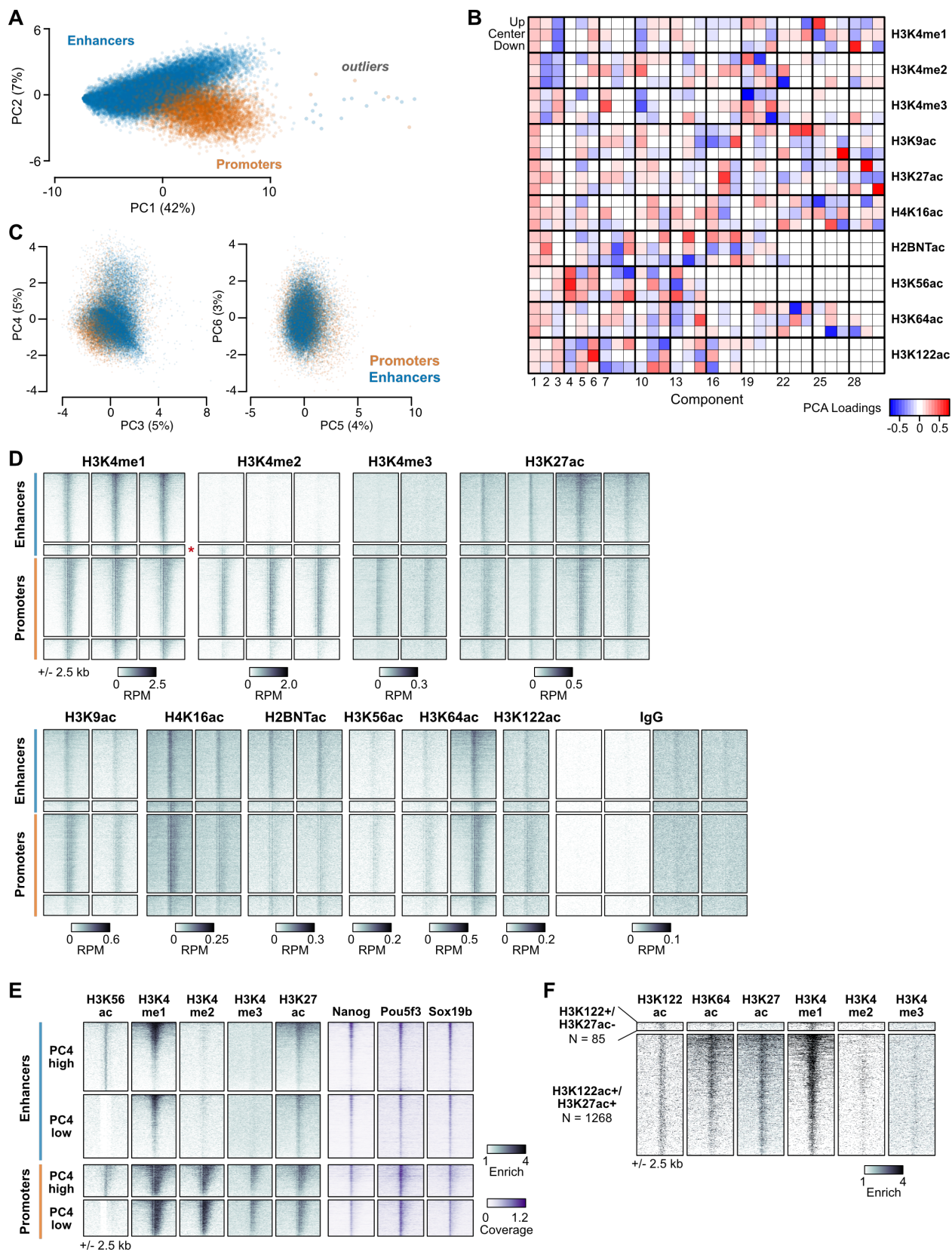
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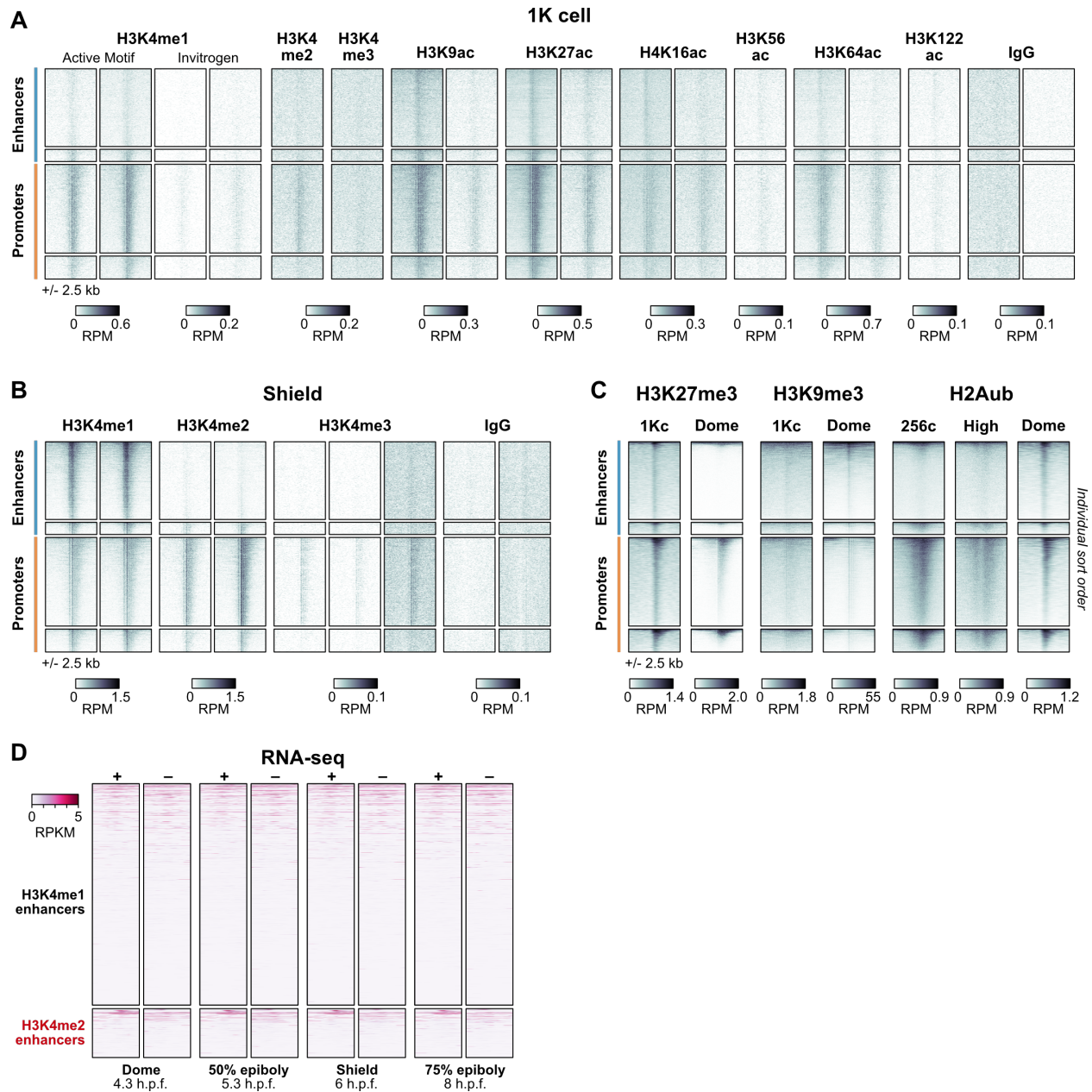
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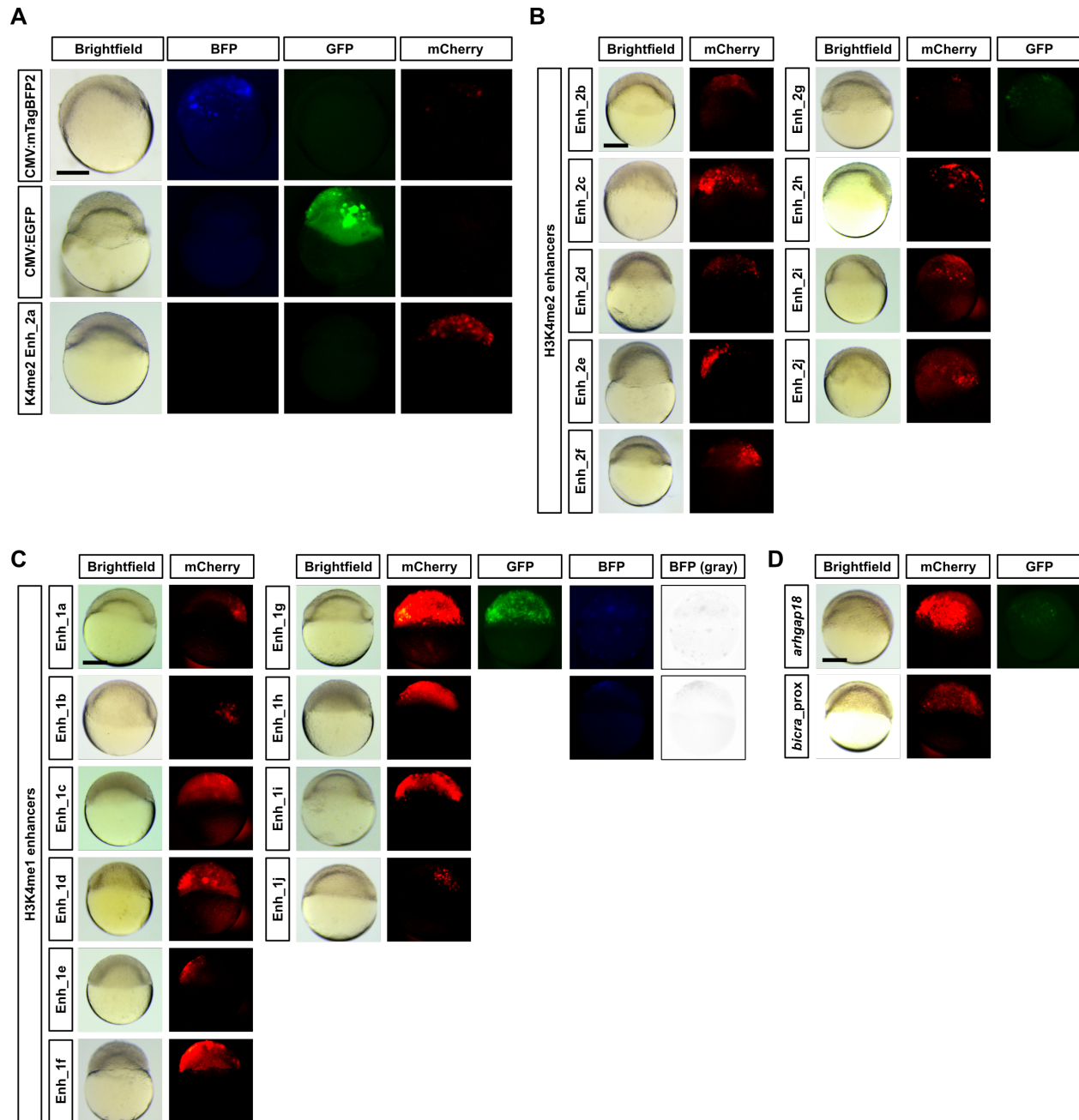
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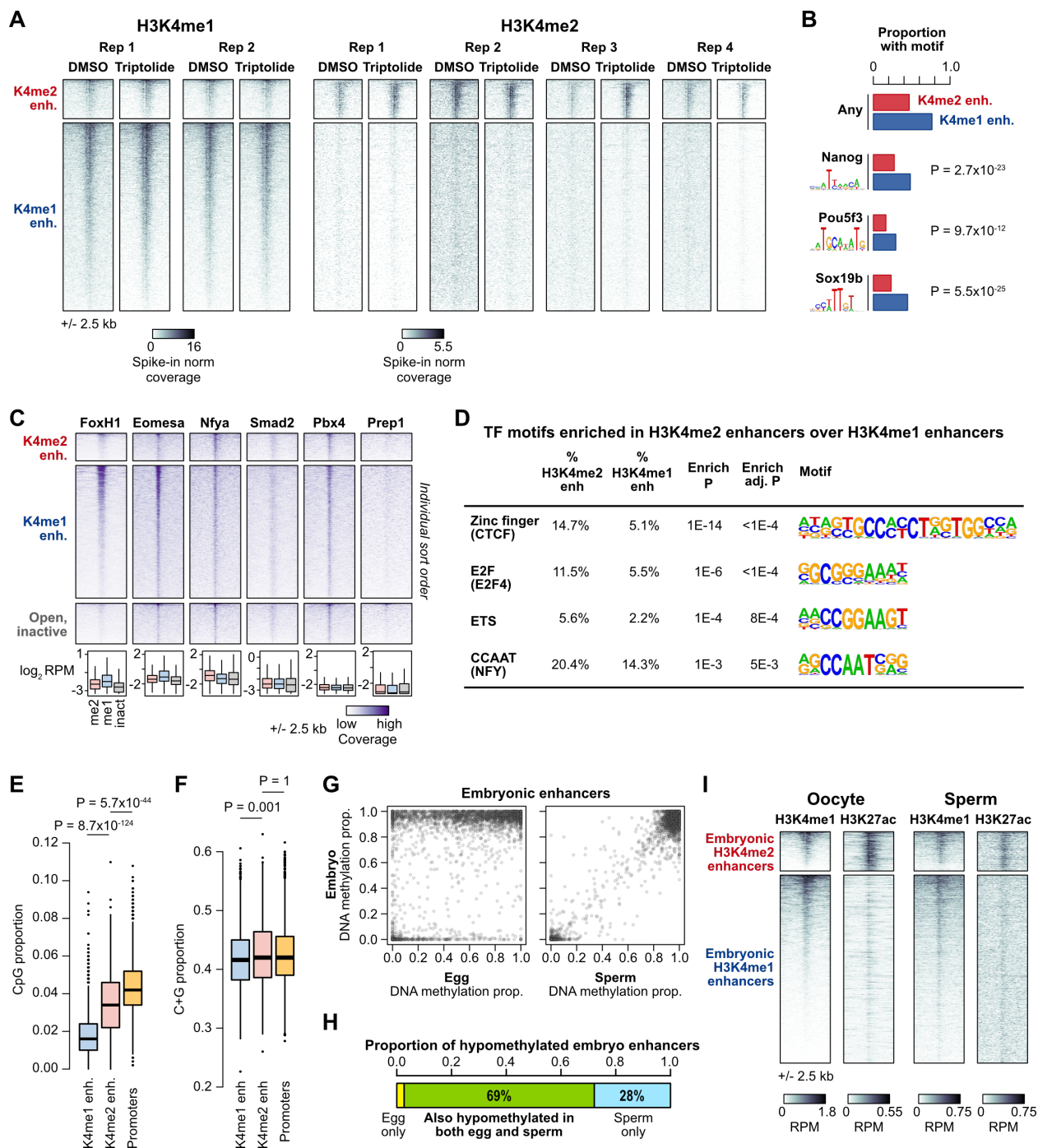
Supplementary Figure 1. Principal component analysis on histone modifications. **(A)** Full biplot of the first two principal components (PCs) as in Fig. 1D, including outliers far from the main point masses. Percent of total variance explained per PC in parentheses. Points are labeled as enhancers (blue) or promoters (orange). **(B)** Heatmap of the loadings from the PCA. Columns are principal components, rows are input variables – histone modification coverage on upstream, center, and downstream regions of predicted regulatory elements. **(C)** Biplots as in (A) for PCs 3 through 6. **(D)** Heatmaps of CUT&RUN coverage as in Fig 1F showing individual replicates. **(E)** Heatmaps of regions stratified by the fourth PC, which loads heavily on H3K56ac. PC4 high = greater than the standard deviation of PC4, PC4 low = less than $-1 \times$ standard deviation of PC4. Parallel heatmaps of Nanog, Pou5f3, and Sox19b ChIP-seq coverage (data from Miao et al, 2022) demonstrate minimal differences correlated with PC4, in contrast to mouse ES cells in which Pou5f3 homolog Oct4 correlates with H3K56ac (Tan et al, 2013). **(F)** Heatmaps of regions enriched for H3K122ac (>2 -fold over IgG), stratified by H3K27ac co-enrichment (<1.25 -fold or >1.5 -fold).



Supplementary Figure 2. Genomic profiles over time. (A) Heatmaps of CUT&RUN coverage for histone modifications at 1K-cell stage centered on enhancer and promoter regions as defined in Fig. 1F. Individual replicates are shown. Two different H3K4me1 antibodies were used, Active Motif #39297 and Invitrogen #710795 (the same antibody used for all other time points). **(B)** Heatmaps of CUT&RUN coverage at shield stage showing individual replicates. **(C)** Heatmaps of ChIP-seq for repressive histone modifications. Each heatmap is sorted by descending signal per region group independently. Data are from Zhu et al, 2019 (1K-cell H3K27me3), Zhang et al, 2014 (dome H3K27me3), Duval et al, 2024 (H3K9me3), and Hickey et al, 2022 (H2Aub). **(D)** Strand-separated RNA-seq coverage heatmaps as in Fig. 2B showing intermediate developmental stages. Data are from White et al, 2017.

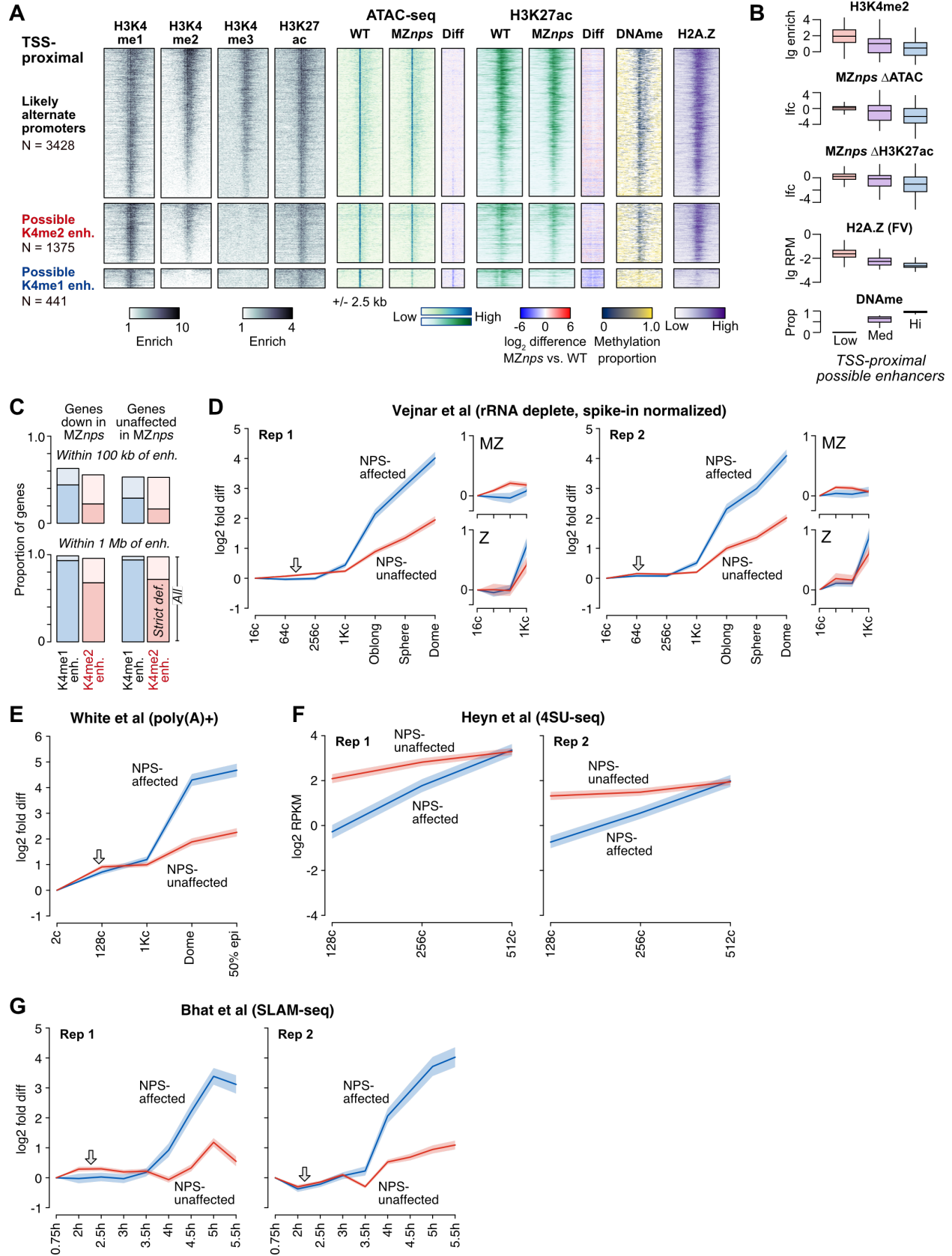


Supplementary Figure 3. Reporter assays for regulatory elements. (A) Representative embryos injected with reporter plasmids (top to bottom, CMV promoter oriented toward the mTagBFP2, CMV promoter oriented toward the EGFP, and H3K4me2 reporter Enh_2a) imaged in brightfield and BFP, GFP, and mCherry channels. Counts are reported in Supplementary Table X. **(B, C)** Representative embryo fluorescence for additional mCherry-positive enhancers. Panels for reporters additionally yielding GFP and/or BFP fluorescence are also shown. BFP fluorescence in these embryos was weak, so grayscale versions of the BFP images are also shown. Enhancers Enh_2i and Enh_2j are the *ier5l* enhancers tested in the CRISPR-Cas9 experiments. **(D)** Representative embryos for a promoter (*arhgap18*) reporter and an element proximal (< 2kb) to the *bicra* TSS, both showing mCherry fluorescence. Scale bar = 250 μ m.

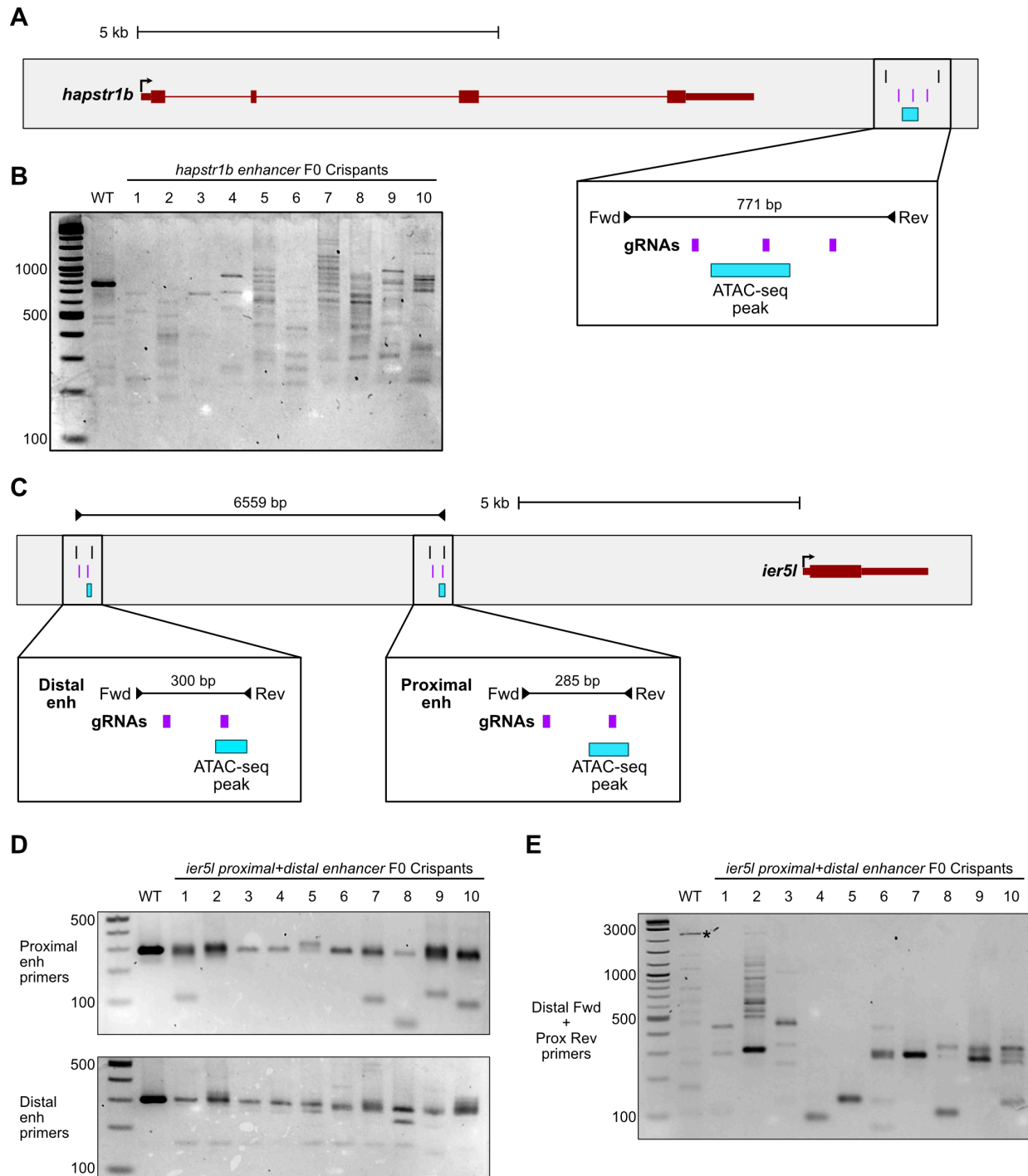


Supplementary Figure 4. Chromatin characteristics of the two enhancer classes. (A) CUT&RUN heatmaps as in Fig. 4A showing individual replicates. Each replicate is a paired DMSO control and triptolide treatment group. **(B)** Barplots showing proportion of enhancers containing predicted zebrafish Nanog, Pou5f3, and Sox19b binding sequences as represented by sequence logos (left) empirically determined from ChIP-seq (data from Miao et al, 2022). P values for Chi-squared tests (2 d.o.f.) are listed on the right. (cont'd...)

(cont'd) **(C)** Heatmaps showing ChIP-seq coverage for different embryonic transcription factors on enhancer regions as well as 1000 ATAC-seq open regions lacking enrichment for any dome-stage histone modifications. Each heatmap is individually sorted in descending order per group. Boxplots summarizing coverage are below each heatmap (boxes are first through third quartiles, center bar median, whiskers extend to 1.5x the interquartile range, outliers are not shown). Data are from Dubrulle et al, 2015 (dome stage FoxH1 and Smad2), Miao et al, 2022 (sphere stage Nfya and Eomesa), Ladam et al, 2018 (high/oblong stage Prep1), Stanney et al, 2020 (high/oblong-stage Pbx4). **(D)** Table of top enriched transcription factor binding motifs in H3K4me2 enhancers relative to H3K4me1 enhancers. One representative motif per family is shown. **(E, F)** Boxplots showing CG dinucleotide (CpG) and C+G nucleotide prevalence in 500 bp centered on H3K4me1 enhancers, H3K4me2 enhancers, and active TSSs. P-values for Wilcoxon rank sum tests are shown. **(G)** Biplots comparing DNA methylation proportion in gametes (x axes) versus sphere stage embryos (y axes) for predicted enhancers. **(H)** Stacked barplot showing the proportion of hypomethylated (<20% methylated) embryonic enhancers that are also hypomethylated in gametes. **(I)** Gamete H3K4me1 and H3K27ac ChIP-seq heatmaps over embryonic enhancers. Data from Murphy et al, 2018 (sperm H3K4me1) and Zhang et al, 2018.



Supplementary Figure 5. Enhancer association with zygotic genes. (A) Expanded enhancer annotations: similar to Fig. 4, heatmaps of chromatin features over TSS-proximal elements excluded from the main enhancer analysis (<2 kb from, but not overlapping, any TSS, regardless if there is evidence for zygotic expression). Elements with H3K4me3 enrichment (top) are considered to be alternate promoters. The remaining elements segregate into possible H3K4me2 enhancers (middle group) and possible H3K4me1 enhancers (bottom group). Reporter assays suggest that such promoter-proximal regions can function as enhancers, despite the ambiguity in annotating them as such (Supp. Fig S3D). **(B)** Boxplots similar to Fig 4E summarizing the correlated chromatin features for TSS-proximal possible enhancers, which likewise segregate into hypermethylated, NPS-dependent, exclusively H3K4me1-marked enhancers and hypomethylated, non NPS-dependent, H3K4me2-marked enhancers. **(C)** Bar plots showing proportion of genes with 100 kb (top) or 1 Mb (bottom) of H3K4me1 enhancers (blue bars) and H3K4me2 enhancers (pink bars). Darker shaded region of each bar represents proportions limited to only strictly defined enhancers (TSS distal and <1.25-fold or ≥ 3 -fold enriched for H3K4me2 for H3K4me1 and H3K4me2 enhancers, respectively). Lighter shaded regions include TSS-proximal elements. **(D-G)** Plots of average wild-type RNA-seq \log_2 fold increase over time as in Fig. 5C. MZ = maternal-zygotic genes only, Z = strictly zygotic genes only. Data are from Vejnar et al, 2019, White et al, 2017, Heyn et al, 2014, and Bhat et al, 2023.



Supplementary Figure 6. Genotyping F0 enhancer crispants. (A) *hapstr1b* locus showing the ATAC-seq open region, CRISPR guide RNA target sites, and genotyping primers at the predicted downstream enhancer region. (B) Genotyping gel for single embryos at 32 hours post fertilization. Lane 1 = NEB 1kb Plus ladder, lane 2 = wild-type, lanes 3-12 = embryos injected with a pool of Cas9 complexed with each *hapstr1b* enhancer guide RNA. (C) *ier5l* locus showing two upstream predicted enhancers annotated as in (A). (D) Genotyping gels for single embryos using primers to detect lesions in the proximal enhancer (top) and distal enhancer (bottom). Crispants were injected with a pool for all gRNAs targeting both enhancers. Gel configuration similar to (B). (E) Genotyping gels for the same embryos as in (D) to detect large deletions spanning the two *ier5l* enhancers. The wild-type product (6559 bp) should not efficiently amplify under the PCR conditions used. Bands appearing in the wild-type lane are likely off-target products (asterisk).

Supplementary Table 1. CUT&RUN samples generated in this study

Supplementary Table 2. Regulatory regions defined in this study

Supplementary Table 3. Enhancer reporters

Supplementary Table 4. Sources of public data used