



Education Report: Report of the Advisory Group on Charter Schools on Charter Schools' 2018 Performance and other matters

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
Date:	24 April 2019	Priority:	Routine
Security Level:	In Confidence	METIS No:	1182542
Drafter:	Kevin Wilson	DDI:	9(2)(a)
Key Contact:	Simon Laube	DDI:	
Messaging seen by Communications team:	Yes	Round Robin:	No

Purpose of Report

The Advisory Group on Charter Schools (the Advisory Group) has submitted its final report to you on the performance of partnership schools kura hourua (charter schools) for the 2018 school year.

For 2018 you asked the Advisory Group to complete its performance assessment on a fast-tracked timeframe as all charter schools' contracts were terminated by December 2018. This report considers performance for the 11 charter schools operating, measured against the contractual performance standards that applied. It is based on all information that was available up to the point that contracts were terminated (METIS 1129228). A covering letter from the Chair and the group's full report is enclosed (Annexes 1 and 2).

The Advisory Group has also included in its report wider reflections, including a recommendation that further evaluation is undertaken. We provide our initial advice on this recommendation. It is unlikely to be an investment priority for the Ministry.

We also brief you on a supplementary report we have developed working with Villa Education Trust to analyse learning progress made at its charter schools, prior to consulting on a draft (attached as Annex 4).

Summary

1. This paper provides you with the performance assessment carried out by the Advisory Group in respect of partnership schools kura hourua (charter schools') performance in 2018, to assist your consideration of the performance of each charter school.

2. For 2018, the Advisory Group was tasked to undertake a fast-track report. Assessment advice has been developed for you based on the performance standard areas available from the sponsor's quarterly reports up to and including the third quarter of 2018. The Ministry will provide further reporting later in 2019 on NCEA performance, when the data becomes available.
3. For 2018 there are no decisions to be made about charter schools' retained operational funding, as the decision was made in June 2018 to include retention funding in mutual termination discussions. For the schools operating in 2018, all reached mutual termination agreements. Had that not occurred for specific schools, retentions would have been available for release following the Advisory Group's report.
4. The Advisory Group has also provided its further reflections and recommended a further evaluation be commissioned that is focused on student outcomes (as distinct from school performance).
5. We would like your feedback on whether or not to progress a further evaluation, and if so to direct the Ministry to scope it and consider how to it could be resourced.
6. If you agree, this report will be proactively released along with Annexes 1 and 2, as part of the final charter schools proactive release.
7. The term of the Advisory Group ends on 30 April 2019. Letters are enclosed for you to acknowledge each member's contribution and thank them for their service.
8. Annex 4 provides a draft supplementary report into learning progress at Villa Education Trust's two charter schools. Accelerated learning progress has been identified, more so at South Auckland Middle School than Middle School West Auckland.

Recommended Actions

The Ministry of Education recommends you:

- a. **note** the enclosed report of the Advisory Group on Charter Schools (the Advisory Group) on the 2018 performance of eleven partnership schools kura hourua (charter schools);

Noted
- b. **note** the Advisory Group's advice recommending a further evaluation of student outcomes in charter schools;

Noted
- c. **indicate** whether, having considered the advice of the Advisory Group on the performance of eleven charter schools, you would like further advice on sponsor performance from the Ministry or the outgoing Advisory Group;

Yes / No
- d. **note** that release of the assessment report ensures public accountability is maintained;

Noted

- e. **note** that the term of the members of the Advisory Group ends on 30 April and the group will cease at that time;

Noted

- f. **sign** the letters of recognition to members of the Advisory Group annexed to this report;

Sign

Further evaluation of charter schools

- g. **note** that the Advisory Group has proposed further evaluation of charter schools, however charter schools have been removed from the education system and the contracts ended and the Ministry is currently in the process of closing out the programme (including documenting lessons learned);

Noted

- h. **note** that designing a further evaluation at this time will require additional resourcing, and that an evaluation of charter schools was completed in 2017 and it is not currently an investment priority for the Ministry's research;

Noted

- i. **indicate** if you would like the Ministry to provide advice, including reporting back on the design options and consideration of potential funding sources (e.g. the charter schools contingency), into further charter school related evaluation or research such as:

- i. overall charter school students' performance (not school-level performance) including consideration of innovative teaching and curriculum approaches for engaging Māori students at relevant state schools that replaced charter schools;

Yes / No

OR

- ii. do not seek advice at this time, defer for potential reconsideration in the future.

Yes / No

Supplementary report into Students' Learning Progress at Villa Education Trust's two charter schools

- j. **note** that we committed to a programme of work with Villa Education Trust (the Trust) in 2016 with the intention of establishing progress measures for the charter school contracts, but this was overtaken by events and analysis was able to be completed instead;

Noted

- k. **note** that we intend to commence consultation with the Trust on the enclosed supplementary report that examines three alternative learning progress analysis approaches: the Trust's own approach (this has been verified), effect size calculations and violin plots showing the distribution of student achievement (Annex 4 refers);

Noted

- l. **note** the supplementary report provides broader context and is not directly relevant to the assessment advice provided by the Advisory Group for 2018, however it may help inform future work on school-based learning progress generally and support teaching practice at the specific schools;

Noted

- m. **agree to proactively release** this Education Report including Annexes 1 and 2 in the next scheduled release of charter school information with appropriate redactions and consultation with sponsors.

Release / Not release



Ellen MacGregor Reid
Deputy Secretary
Early Learning & Student Achievement

24/4/19



Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

1/6/19

Background

1. You appointed the Advisory Group on Charter Schools (Advisory Group) to provide you with advice on the educational performance of charter schools. This fast-tracked performance assessment is their second and last report.
2. The Advisory Group will cease on 30th April 2019 having met eight times between May 2018 and March 2019. Its membership included Bruce Adin as Chair, Bernardine Vester as Deputy Chair; and the following members: Murray Jack, Jason Swann, Moe Milne and Te Rau Kupenga. Mr Kupenga's involvement was limited due to his competing priorities.
3. All contracts between the Crown and charter school sponsors ended at the end of 2018. This will, therefore, be the final assessment report of all the charter schools that were operational in the 2018 calendar year.
4. A key feature of the charter school contract-for-outcomes model is that schools are assessed against four performance standards, as set out in the contracts with sponsors. The four performance standards were: student engagement, targeting priority learners, student achievement, and financial performance.
5. In June 2018 you agreed to invite the Advisory Group to undertake a fast track report of charter schools performance in the 2018 year, based on the sponsors' third quarterly reports due at the end of October 2018 (METIS 1129228 refers).
6. The performance of schools with secondary students is required under the contract to include assessment based on NCEA results. The results were not available; therefore, they are not assessed in the Advisory Group assessment report. The Ministry will complete a report on charter school NCEA results once available.
7. Since the contracts were terminated at the end of the 2018 school year, sponsors were no longer expected to provide the Ministry audited financial statements. For this reason, financial performance had not been assessed in the Advisory Group fast-track assessment report.
8. For 2018 there are no decisions to be made about charter schools' retained operational funding, as the decision was made in June 2018 to include retention funding in mutual termination discussions. For the schools operating in 2018, all reached mutual termination agreements. Had that not occurred, retentions would have been available for release for specific schools following the Advisory Group's report.
9. Te Rangihakahaka Centre for Science and Technology was one Round Four charter school that opened in 2018. 2018 was its first year of operation and this is the first time advice on this school's performance has been reported.

Report from the Advisory Group on Charter Schools

10. Within the agreed scope of the fast-track assessment, the Advisory Group has applied a consistent approach as with the previous years' assessments and in accordance with the requirements of the performance management system set out in charter schools contracts with the Crown.

11. They have considered a range of assessment information from the following sources:

- sponsors' first, second and third quarter reports from 2018
- for schools with year 1 to 10 students' end of year student achievement data (which include self-reported National Standards and Ngā Whanaketanga Rumaki Māori)
- for primary schools progress data is used (as in the 2017 assessment report).

12. Availability of information for the fast-tracked performance assessment report enabled the Advisory Group to assess three performance areas for schools with year 1 to 10 students, and two performance areas for those schools with secondary students (NCEA results are subject to subsequent further reporting by the Ministry, once they are available), they can assess. Overall assessments were not considered in the fast-track assessment report because they serve no purpose with retentions out of scope.

Advisory Group assessments on charter school performance for 2018

13. The table 1 below is extracted from the Advisory Group's report, entitled Assessment Results for Charter School (page 7, paragraph 28). It summarises the Advisory Group's assessment results for each school for the performance areas that could be assessed.

Table 1 2018 Assessment Results for Charter Schools

Charter School	Year Levels	Student Engagement	Priority Learners	Student Achievement		
				National Standards	Ngā Whanaketanga Rumaki Māori	NCEA results expected
The Rise UP Academy (R1)	1-8	✓	✓	✗		
South Auckland Middle School (R1)	7-10	✓	✓	✗		
Middle School West Auckland (R2)	7-10	•	✓	✗		
Te Kura Māori o Waatea (R2)	1-6	✓	✓	✗		
Te Kāpehu Whetū Teina (R2)	1-6	✓	✓		✗	
Te Kura Hourua O Whangarei Terenga Paraoa (R1)	7-13	✓	✓	✗		Yes
Vanguard Military School (R1)	11-13	•	✗			Yes
Pacific Advance Secondary School (R2)	11-13	✓	✓			Yes
Te Aratika Academy (R3)	11-13	✓	✓			Yes
Te Kōpuku High (R3)	7-10	✓	✓	✗	•	No
Te Rangihakahaka Centre for Science and Technology (R4)	1-10	✓	✓	•		No

Key: ✓ Satisfactory • Almost satisfactory ✗ Not satisfactory

(R) refers to the contract framework that applies, eg (R1) is Round One

14. Table 1 shows that:

- nine schools were assessed as 'satisfactory' for Student Engagement, two schools (Middle School West Auckland and Vanguard Military School) were assessed as 'almost satisfactory'

- b. ten schools were assessed as 'satisfactory' for Priority Learners, one school (Vanguard Military School) was assessed as 'not satisfactory'
 - c. six schools were assessed as 'not satisfactory' for Student Achievement against National Standards or Ngā Whanaketanga Rumaki Māori, two schools (Te Rangihakahaka Centre for Science and Technology and Te Kōpuku High for Ngā Whanaketanga Rumaki Māori) that were assessed as 'almost satisfactory'
 - d. four schools' student achievement performance standards are assessed against NCEA results. These are to be completed that part of the assessment when the results are available.
15. In addition to assessing the performance of each school against agreed contracted performance standards, the Advisory Group has included their reflections in the report on the performance management system and the charter school contract-for-outcomes model (paragraphs 16 to 22).
 16. The Advisory Group reflected on the appropriateness and achievability of the performance standards to ascertain the success of the school, in particular whether charter schools were at improving educational outcomes for students over time.
 17. In looking at the schools performance for 2018 they note that student performance is very complex to analyse and quantitative data only makes sense when there is a clear feel for how a school is being run (not evident from the data alone).
 18. The Advisory Group note in the report that the charter school model was introduced with clear and ambitious aims to improve the outcomes of priority learners who had been not well served by the state system. Four years later, and with the charter school model of schooling in New Zealand now ended, they cannot be confident about the extent to which the policy achieved its aim. They note that based on the self-reported data, many schools did not meet some of their contractual performance standards but also that, in their view, the contract was too one dimensional in respect to the performance standards required.
 19. They make comment on their view that the 85% aspirational target in respect of National Standards or Ngā Whanaketanga Rumaki Māori for Primary students became a heavy and unreasonable burden for some sponsors, especially as it came to be more of a minimum standard than aspirational.
 20. The Advisory Group report also contains their reflections on a range of other factors that limit their ability to be confident about the extent to which the policy achieved its aim to be effective at improving educational outcomes for priority learners. These include the lack of monitoring or assessment information for students in years 9 and 10, no ongoing tracking of students into employment or further education, the burden of administering schools through a contract framework, potential over-reliance on sponsor's self-reported data and that (the Advisory Group's) options to consider Crown intervention were significantly constrained considering the context was all contracts in 2018 were in the process of being ended.
 21. They conclude that had there been student achievement standards for learning progress, they would have had scope to make assessments about whether charter schools were making a difference for students over time.
 22. They recommend you consider commissioning a further evaluation focused on the outcomes for the students that enrolled in charter schools. They suggest that this would use available data to build up a picture of charter school students' earlier educational pathways (before enrolling) and look at any changes that can be observed once they

enrolled in the charter school, including parent and community engagement; school leaver data and any other post-school data that is available. The evaluation would be focused on student outcomes, not school-level performance. It could be connected, where possible, to the extent to which the contract focused governance and management on what makes the most difference to student outcomes, the extent to which this was supported or hindered by the performance management regime, property provision, financial management requirements and flexibilities around staffing.

23. The term of the members of the Advisory Group expires at the end of April 2019 when the group ceases. Draft letters to each member recognising their service are annexed to this report for your consideration.

Ministry comment – charter schools related evaluation

24. We are in the process of closing out the charter school programme, including documenting lessons learned. An evaluation of the kind described by the Advisory Group could be designed. It could be limited to consideration of the performance information we hold in the Ministry (as opposed to a potentially costly further data collection(s) that may have major limitations engaging with previous sponsors). To date, performance assessment has been focused on school-by-school results for the purpose of contract management. We have not focused on the performance of charter school students overall.
25. Evaluation was built into the original charter schools programme [SOC Min (13) 24/4 refers] by the previous Government. It was contracted to MartinJenkins Ltd (MJ) and delivered to the Ministry in three stages (three reports). It was completed by May 2017 at a total cost of nearly \$500,000. The MJ evaluation did not focus on student performance outcomes overall or consider sponsors' reported performance information. Performance-based information was available but out of scope from the MJ evaluation as it would have potentially conflicted with the regular contract performance assessment regime (that applied under contracts while the charter schools were operational).
26. A charter schools student performance evaluation in 2019/20 (or later) would require additional resourcing which is not currently available from our baselines. It is not currently an investment priority for the Ministry's research. If you would like a charter schools student performance evaluation to be prioritised funding could be allocated to it from the charter schools removal contingency. We can provide you with further advice if you request. If not, further evaluation could be reconsidered in the future.
27. Through our recent debrief meetings with sponsors, a number of them, including Te Aratika Charitable Trust, have suggested that research or evaluation be undertaken into their innovative teaching and curriculum approaches for engaging Māori students that had previously been disengaged from education. In some cases the change from operating under the charter school model to the state system is creating opportunities to identify aspects of the state system that may be limiting. This could similarly be explored further in further advice.

Supplementary report into Students' Learning Progress at Villa Education Trust's two charter schools

28. In 2016, Villa Education Trust (the Trust) raised issues about the lack of learning progress measures and measures for students in years 9 and 10 in the contract. We committed to a programme of work with the intention of establishing progress measures, but it was overtaken by events.

29. While the development of learning progress measures for the contracts did not get completed, nevertheless all schools (including charter schools) have the ability to measure student progress should they seek to. The Trust developed its own approach and provided individual student data and its analysis to the Ministry in 2018.
30. Enclosed in Annex 4 is a supplementary report that examines three alternative learning progress analysis approaches: the Trust's own approach (this has been verified), effect size calculations and violin plots showing the distribution of student achievement. The report is in draft and we would like to inform you of the work prior to commencing consultation with the Trust (Alwyn Poole). We expect Mr Poole to provide constructive feedback on the draft report, and the findings should come as no surprise as analysis was completed with his close engagement.
31. The draft findings show that significantly accelerated learning was achieved in both Reading and Mathematics at one of its charter schools, and at the other there was less accelerated learning. In some cases analysis showed areas where students were making less learning progress than expected. A detailed focus on individual learning progress is an excellent way to identify where students may need additional support. The report was prepared to support teacher practice to improve student outcomes, not as a tool for school assessment. However, it also shows that the students in the Trust's two charter schools started consistently behind their expected educational levels.
32. While you can consider the supplementary report when you make assessments of charter school performance, it provides broader context only, the information is not directly relevant to the 2018 assessment decisions you must make. No change is recommended to the assessment advice provided for South Auckland Middle School and Middle School West Auckland (you are advised that both be assessed as "not met" for student achievement in 2018). The Advisory Group was briefed on the draft findings in the supplementary report. It conducted learning progress analysis as well across all the charter schools where relevant data was available. What was possible under the contract was limited as individual student data was not required to be reported through the charter school contract. It has been a source of intense frustration to the Trust that learning progress was not assessed to determine sponsor performance under the contracts.
33. The supplementary report may help inform future work on school-based student achievement monitoring and assessment, and support teaching practice through the Trust's ongoing involvement in the state schools that replaced its charter schools.

Next steps and communications

34. We will advise sponsors of their performance assessment results once you have approved them.
35. We will commence consultation with Villa Education Trust on the supplementary report into learning progress.
36. Reactive messaging has been prepared to accompany any release of this report (including appendices). The Ministry will liaise with your office regarding finalising this material and the timing of the release of the report.
37. Release of the Advisory Group report will ensure public accountability is maintained.

Process in the event that your assessment is not accepted by a sponsor

38. As all contracts were terminated in 2018, your contractual obligation ceased in the context of responding to any sponsors that wishes to make a complaint about the assessment that you make.
39. In the case of a significant challenge, you could either ask the Ministry to provide further assistance or extend the term of the current Advisory Group (whose terms of appointment expire on 30 April 2019).

Proactive Release

40. We recommend that this Education Report is released, along with Annex 1 and 2 (the Advisory Group's cover letter and report), as part of the next scheduled proactive release of charter school information after the Ministry has communicated the assessment results to sponsors.

Annexes

- Annex 1: Cover Letter from Advisory Group on Charter Schools.
- Annex 2: Advisory Group on Charter Schools' Fast-tracked Report on Charter Schools' 2018 Performance.
- Annex 3: Letters of acknowledgement to members of the Advisory Group on Charter Schools
- Annex 4: Supplementary report into Students' Learning Progress at Villa Education Trust's two charter schools (Draft)

Hon Chris Hipkins

MP for Rimutaka

Minister of Education

Minister of State Services

Leader of the House

Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services



11 JUN 2019

Bruce Adin QSO
Chair
Advisory Group on Charter Schools

9(2)(a)

By email: 9(2)

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Dear Bruce

Thank you for your service leading the Advisory Group on Charter Schools.

I appreciated the group's most recent report, and the diligent and professional way in which the Advisory Group approached its role. I was pleased with how you were able to undertake your role and provide your collective view in a way which did not divert attention away from the important task of establishing the new state schools that have or will replace the former charter schools that was happening at the same time.

I do not anticipate further formal evaluation of the outcomes of the charter school model. There have been a number of experiments that have been tried over a period of time and there are always learnings to be had. However, evaluation of the charter school model is not an investment priority for this Government.

With the role of the Advisory Group concluding, I thank you for the important contribution you have made to education.

Kind regards

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Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

Hon Chris Hipkins

MP for Rimutaka

Minister of Education

Minister of State Services

Leader of the House

Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services



11 JUN 2019

Bernardine Vester
Deputy Chair
Advisory Group on Charter Schools

9(2)(a) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

By email: 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]

Dear Bernardine

Thank you for your service of the Advisory Group on Charter Schools.

I appreciated the group's most recent report, and the diligent and professional way in which the Advisory Group approached its role. I was pleased with how you were able to undertake your role and provide your collective view in a way which did not divert attention away from the important task of establishing the new state schools that have or will replace the former charter schools that was happening at the same time.

I do not anticipate further formal evaluation of the outcomes of the charter school model. There have been a number of experiments that have been tried over a period of time and there are always learnings to be had. However, evaluation of the charter school model is not an investment priority for this Government.

With the role of the Advisory Group concluding, I thank you for the important contribution you have made to education. Thank you also for the four months where you acted as Chair of the group.

Kind regards

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Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

Hon Chris Hipkins

MP for Rimutaka

Minister of Education

Minister of State Services

Leader of the House

Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services



11 JUN 2019

Jason Swann

Advisory Group on Charter Schools 9(2)(a)

[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]

By email: 9(2)(a)

Dear Jason

Thank you for your service of the Advisory Group on Charter Schools.

I appreciated the group's most recent report, and the diligent and professional way in which the Advisory Group approached its role. I was pleased with how you were able to undertake your role and provide your collective view in a way which did not divert attention away from the important task of establishing the new state schools that have or will replace the former charter schools that was happening at the same time.

I do not anticipate further formal evaluation of the outcomes of the charter school model. There have been a number of experiments that have been tried over a period of time and there are always learnings to be had. However, evaluation of the charter school model is not an investment priority for this Government.

With the role of the Advisory Group concluding, I thank you for the important contribution you have made to education.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'G. Hipkins'.

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

Hon Chris Hipkins

MP for Rimutaka

Minister of Education

Minister of State Services

Leader of the House

Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services



11 JUN 2019

Murray Jack
Advisory Group on Charter Schools

9(2)(a)

By email: 9(2)(a)

Dear Murray

Thank you for your service of the Advisory Group on Charter Schools.

I appreciated the group's most recent report, and the diligent and professional way in which the Advisory Group approached its role. I was pleased with how you were able to undertake your role and provide your collective view in a way which did not divert attention away from the important task of establishing the new state schools that have or will replace the former charter schools that was happening at the same time.

I do not anticipate further formal evaluation of the outcomes of the charter school model. There have been a number of experiments that have been tried over a period of time and there are always learnings to be had. However, evaluation of the charter school model is not an investment priority for this Government.

With the role of the Advisory Group concluding, I thank you for the important contribution you have made to education in this space and your continuing other roles.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'G. Hipkins'.

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

Hon Chris Hipkins

MP for Rimutaka

Minister of Education

Minister of State Services

Leader of the House

Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services



11 JUN 2019

Moe Milne ONZM
Advisory Group on Charter Schools

9(2)(a)

By email: 9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe Moe

Thank you for your service of the Advisory Group on Charter Schools.

I appreciated the group's most recent report, and the diligent and professional way in which the Advisory Group approached its role. I was pleased with how you were able to undertake your role and provide your collective view in a way which did not divert attention away from the important task of establishing the new state schools that have or will replace the former charter schools that was happening at the same time.

I do not anticipate further formal evaluation of the outcomes of the charter school model. There have been a number of experiments that have been tried over a period of time and there are always learnings to be had. However, evaluation of the charter school model is not an investment priority for this Government.

With the role of the Advisory Group concluding, I thank you for the important contribution you have made to education.

Ngā mihi

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'CH'.

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

Hon Chris Hipkins

MP for Rimutaka

Minister of Education

Minister of State Services

Leader of the House

Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services



11 JUN 2019

Te Rau Kupenga
Advisory Group on Charter Schools

9(2)(a) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

By email: 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]

Tēnā koe Te Rau

Thank you for your service of the Advisory Group on Charter Schools.

I appreciated the group's most recent report, and the diligent and professional way in which the Advisory Group approached its role. I was pleased with how you were able to undertake your role and provide your collective view in a way which did not divert attention away from the important task of establishing the new state schools that have or will replace the former charter schools that was happening at the same time.

I do not anticipate further formal evaluation of the outcomes of the charter school model. There have been a number of experiments that have been tried over a period of time and there are always learnings to be had. However, evaluation of the charter school model is not an investment priority for this Government.

I understand you have balanced a busy schedule of support to the current Government. Once again thank you for agreeing to serve on this group and for your service more generally.

Ngā mihi

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'G Hipkins'.

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education