

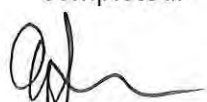


Briefing Note: Multi-year Evaluation of Partnership Schools I Kura Hourua Policy: Summary of Findings Across Years

To:	Hon. Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
Date:	29 March 2018	Priority:	High
Security Level:	In Confidence	METIS No:	1112296
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Messaging seen by Communications team:	Yes		

Summary

- The paper provides you with the key findings from an independent evaluation undertaken by Martin Jenkins and Associates on the Partnership Schools I Kura Hourua (PSKH) policy.
- The latest evaluation focussed on understanding who attends the PSKH schools, and the views of these and their whānau. The report also includes summaries of the two previously published reports.
- The findings from the Stage 3 evaluation paint a positive picture and identify the demographics of students who have ever attended a partnership schools and analyse survey responses from current or former students and whānau about how they viewed their experience.
- Limitations of the study included the inability to draw any final conclusions about the overall success of PSKH policy due to limitations in administrative data (e.g. attendance data was not sufficiently robust to be included. In addition, there was no comparison cohort identified to compare outcomes of the PSKH cohort and survey responses from students and whānau were not representative of all eight schools in scope.
- The Ministry of Education (Ministry) proposes to release the evaluation report in early April on Education Counts after you have had the opportunity to consider the report. We are working on a communications plan and will share this with your office when completed.



Dr Craig Jones
Deputy Secretary
Evidence, Data and Knowledge

29/3/18

Background

1. The Ministry contracted Martin Jenkins and Associates Ltd (MartinJenkins) to evaluate the implementation and outcomes of the PSKH model. MartinJenkins was selected using an open tender process. A three-stage evaluation covering four years was considered by Cabinet in 2013 [SOC Min (13) 24/4 refers]. They have now completed a multi-year programme of evaluation and research of the PSKH policy. The evaluation was conducted over a number of years (beginning in 2014) and focused on the eight schools/kura that opened in 2014 and 2015, not the PSKH model as a whole.
2. The specific focus of each of the three evaluations was determined through an annual scoping phase and was guided by a detailed intervention logic.
 - a. Stage 1 evaluation (reported in 2015) focused on innovation, in particular the structural framework and implementation of the charter school model.
 - b. Stage 2 evaluation (reported in 2016) focused on the approaches taken by PSKH to meet the needs of priority students, and further examining the delivery of the policy.
 - c. Stage 3 evaluation (third and final report completed on 27 March 2018) aimed to build insight into the outputs and intended short-to-medium term outcomes of the policy. However, due to data limitations and the difficulty in constructing a valid comparison group, the Year 3 evaluation is largely descriptive, rather than evaluative, and narrowly focussed on whānau and student feedback. A significant part of the report is a descriptive analysis of administrative data. It also brings all three years of evaluation together with an overall summary.
3. The Stage 1 evaluation looked at Round 1 PSKH only (not including the secondary charter school that was terminated in 2016), while Stages 2 and 3 evaluation looked at both Round 1 and 2 PSKH – eight schools/kura in total.
4. The Ministry established an Evaluation Working Group (EWG). This group was established in 2014 and comprised representatives from the Ministry and the MartinJenkins evaluation team. In 2015 the EWG membership was expanded and Partnership School Kura Hourua Authorisation Board joined the group. A charter school sponsor representative also joined the EWG in 2017 (Karen Poole, Villa Education Trust).

Key findings across all three years of the evaluation

5. The following are the key findings from the multi-year evaluation.

Stage 1 report

- a. MartinJenkins suggests that there were some innovative features of PSKH, some of which were enabled by the funding model. The greatest levels of innovation in the first year of operation were in governance and management, appointing governance boards to access specific skills, and splitting their management functions into administration and academic leadership. PSKH showed less innovation in curriculum and engagement with the community.

Stage 2 report

- b. PSKH are successfully attracting priority learners, including learners with complex needs.

- c. Overall, assessment practice across the schools/kura was rated as 'good'. PSKH are using assessment practices well (eg, tailoring to context and need of the students).

Stage 3 report

- d. Analysis of administrative data confirmed that a notable proportion of PSKH students (30%) were transient prior to attending a PSKH, and that at least a fifth of them had experienced some level of schooling disengagement through stand downs and suspensions.
- e. MartinJenkins attempted to estimate the percentage of students leaving PSKH voluntarily by looking at students who moved part way through a school year and who went to a school in a different Ward. They estimate that around two percent of the PSKH overall cohort had 'opted out' of PSKH but acknowledge that it could be up to 17%.
- f. While the evaluation was unable to identify a valid comparison group, and survey responses were limited to those who remained in PSKH, the whānau who responded to the survey (33%) reported being happy with their school choice. The students that left the PSKH could not participate in the survey.
- g. Students from two Villa Education Trust case studies (Middle School West Auckland and South Auckland Middle School) who remained at the schools, and who responded to the survey, were positive about their experience.
- h. There was some evidence that the number of stand downs and length of suspensions were lower in PSKH than at the students' previous schools.

Stage 3 evaluation findings and Ministry comment

6. The third and final evaluation report is the last of a series of three evaluation reports we commissioned from MartinJenkins to look at different aspects of the charter school policy.
7. The report has two main components:
 - a. Analysis of administrative data to identify the demographics of students who have ever attended a partnership school.
 - b. Analysis of survey responses received from current or former students and whānau about why they chose a charter school, and how they viewed their experience.
8. The findings from the Stage 3 evaluation paint a positive picture, but are the authors note that these are based on data that have significant limitations. Survey responses from students and whānau were not representative of all eight schools in scope. Whānau response rates were low (33%) and unevenly spread across schools/kura. The overall response rate for students was 47% but 90% of the respondents were from the two Villa Education Trust middle schools.
9. The evaluation did not focus on PSKH outcomes because it was too early to determine 'success':
 - a. Schools/kura were still becoming established.
 - b. Numbers of students that had received a 'full dose' of the PSKH intervention were low – their educational outcomes were not solely the outcome of the last 1-3 years of education.

10. Furthermore, emerging policy questions remained focused on understanding implementation of the PSKH model.
11. The authors note that data limitations and the difficulty in constructing a valid comparison group meant that the Stage 3 evaluation was not able to make robust evaluative judgements about the impact of students attending PSKH on their outcomes.

Release of the evaluation report

12. There have been suggestions in the media that you or the Ministry are intentionally withholding the release of the third and final MartinJenkins report. This is not correct. The report needed to go through our usual quality assurance processes to ensure that it meets the standard required of any report commissioned by the Ministry.
13. The Ministry received the first draft of the third and final report at the end of November last year. We provided feedback on 23 December 2017. MartinJenkins sent us a second draft on 8 February 2018. After further review, we sent our consolidated feedback on 8 March and a final draft was received on 14 March. A confidential copy of the final draft report was sent to the partnership schools (from round 1 and 2) to review and they were given until 22 March to provide their feedback. MartinJenkins provided us the final report on 27 March.
14. The Ministry intends to publish the report in April on the Education Counts website. We will work with your Office with support ahead of the release.

Annexes

- Annex 1: Multi-year Evaluation of Partnership Schools | Kura Hourua Policy: Summary of Findings Across-Years

Annex one: Multi-year Evaluation of Partnership Schools | Kura Hourua
Policy: Summary of Findings Across Years
