



Cabinet Social Policy Committee

SOC Min (13) 24/4

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Minute of Decision

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Further Application Rounds for Establishing New Partnership Schools

Portfolio: Education

On 6 November 2013, the Cabinet Social Policy Committee (SOC):

- 1 **noted** that on 25 July 2012, SOC invited the Associate Minister of Education (Hon John Banks) to report back on designing an evaluation process for Partnership Schools [SOC Min (12) 14/4];
- 2 **noted** that on 15 July 2013, Cabinet invited the Minister of Education (the Minister) to report to SOC in September 2013 on the policy and fiscal implications of an annual application round for establishing Partnership Schools [CAB Min (13) 24/15];
- 3 **noted** that Partnership Schools are part of the government's strategy to improve outcomes for those learners for whom the education system is not performing well, especially Māori, Pasifika, students with special education needs and students from low socio-economic backgrounds;
- 4 **noted** that Partnership Schools have greater flexibility than state schools, for example they can:
 - 4.1 negotiate the number of registered teachers they employ;
 - 4.2 negotiate salary levels and employment conditions with employees;
 - 4.3 employ a chief executive responsible for the day-to-day running of the school, who is not a registered teacher;
 - 4.4 set their own length of school day and year;
 - 4.5 set their own curriculum, providing it uses the vision, principles, values and key competencies of the New Zealand Curriculum;

Implications of further rounds

- 5 **noted** that the main policy benefits of further application rounds for establishing Partnership Schools are increased choice, a wider range of educational options for parents, and proven new approaches that could be adopted in the state system;

- 6 **noted** that the main policy challenges to be managed are:
 - 6.1 the impact of extra schools on the existing network of state schools, especially where practices for state schools such as those around school size might be seen to be different for Partnership Schools;
 - 6.2 getting the level of support right to assist potential sponsors before they engage in a selection process and successful applicants in the establishment phase, in order to make sure that sponsors have the capability to govern a school and manage a large budget;
 - 6.3 meeting the public interest through greater transparency about the applicants at an earlier stage;

7 **noted** that additional funding will be required for new Partnership Schools established through further rounds, since the property support and the base funding for Partnership Schools cannot be offset by funding already in the system;

8 **noted** that there will be increasing costs from increasing numbers of Partnership Schools, such as contract increases for existing schools, the inclusion of the schools in new initiatives and support for sponsors and potential sponsors;

9 **noted** that these increased costs can be justified in terms of the significant benefits from students from low socio-economic backgrounds gaining a level of education that will enable them to achieve economic and social well-being throughout their lives;

10 **noted** that the results of the first round indicate that there is ongoing sponsor and community demand for Partnership Schools that justifies further investment as a means of improving outcomes for priority learners;

11 **agreed** that there be a Round Two for Partnership Schools, with these new schools to be opened in 2015;

12 [Redacted]

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13 **noted** that, when calling for Round Two applications, the Minister intends to give specific directions about the types of schools and other factors that will be given preference in determining successful applications;

14 **invited** the Minister to report to SOC on available monitoring information, including the initial results of the evaluation, early in 2015 [Redacted]

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15 [Redacted]

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Evaluation

16 **noted** that an external evaluation of the Partnership Schools model will add to the credibility of assessment from other sources and provide an overview of how the model is developing and the outcomes achieved;

17 noted that a three-stage evaluation covering four years is being developed that will report cumulatively on how the schools are using the new model to set up institutions that are different from state schools; how well they are setting the conditions for educational success; and how well the model is achieving the outcomes sought;

Financial implications

18 noted that on 15 July 2013, Cabinet approved appropriation increases to establish Partnership Schools [CAB Min (13) 24/15];

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19 [Redacted]

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20 [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

21 [Redacted]

22 [Redacted]

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23 [Redacted]

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Publicity

24 noted that the Minister will announce Round Two at the appropriate time after Cabinet has confirmed its decision;

25 noted that Minister intends to release the paper under SOC (13) 148 and related Cabinet decisions online, subject to any deletions that would be justified if the information had been requested under the Official Information Act 1982.

[Redacted]

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Committee Secretary

Reference: SOC (13) 148

Distribution: (see over)



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