Education Report: School Entry kete

To:	Hon Jan Tinetti, Associate Minister of Education		
Cc:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
Date:	18 December 2020	**Priority:**	Medium
Security Level:	In Confidence	**METIS No:**	1246501
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Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide you with an update on in the development of 'a consistent set of tools at school entry to identify learning needs' (the School Entry kete) to date.

Summary

- The Ministry is developing a School Entry kete (SEK), so that teachers have a well-informed understanding of new entrant ākonga strengths and needs in key foundational areas to inform next learning steps. Significant progress has been made on developing and trialling components of the kete aligned to the refresh of *The New Zealand Curriculum.*

- A co-design approach is being used to ensure that the project is guided by, and responds to, the voices of teachers and principals as end users.

- A review of Aro Matawai Urunga a-Kura (AKA) (school entry assessment tools for Māori medium pathways) will be timed to align with the refresh of *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* and the wider *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* curriculum progress and achievement work programme.

- There are some matters still to be resolved with the development of the School Entry kete. These include the use and storage of data, alignment of learning pathways from early learning into the early years of schooling and ensuring alignment with initiatives such as supporting early literacy learning through the Ready to Read Plus texts.

Recommended Actions

The Ministry of Education recommends that you:

a.   **Note** the progress on the development of the School Entry kete to date.

Noted

b.   **Agree** to meet in the new year to discuss your goals for this project.

Agree / Disagree

c.   **Agree** that this Education Report is not proactively released at this time because components of the SEK are still under development.

Release / Not release

Alexander Brunt
Acting Deputy Secretary
Evidence, Data and Knowledge
18/12/2020

Hon Jan Tinetti
Associate Minister of Education

___/___/_____

Background

1. The first School Entry Assessment (SEA) kit for use by schools was developed by the Ministry in 1997 and contained assessment activities for oracy (*Tell Me*), literacy (*Concepts about Print*) and numeracy (*Checkout*). While the kit is no longer produced, aspects of the kit are still in use by many schools. Many schools have supplemented or replaced parts of the kit with a range of other assessments that better reflect their learner profiles.

2. The Aro Matawai Urunga a-Kura (AKA) (kōrero, pānui and pāngarau) tools parallel to SEA) were developed by the Ministry for use in Māori medium pathways. The AKA is now out of print and we lack data about the tools kura are using.

3. The 2016 Education and Science Select Committee inquiry into support for students with dyslexia, dyspraxia and autism highlighted the lack of a consistent approach to the early identification of specific learning difficulties. In response to this, Priority Two of the Learning Support Action Plan (LSAP) seeks to strengthen screening and early identification of learning support needs through consistent assessment at school entry, and screening for dyslexia, dyspraxia and giftedness.

4. On 1 April 2019, around 30 education leaders (principals, teachers, learning support specialists, academics and professional learning and development providers) met with Ministry of Education officials and the former Associate Minister of Education, the Hon Tracy Martin, to discuss learning support needs of ākonga. At this hui, participants agreed that:

    i. there was need for a consistent and robust *formative* assessment at entry to school, covering key domains of literacy, oracy, numeracy, social, and emotional development;

    ii. the tool should have two branches of development – one for ākonga learning through *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* and one for ākonga learning through *The New Zealand Curriculum*; and

    iii. any new tool should be developed and grounded in evidence.

Approach to the development of School Entry kete (SEK)

5. While early intervention is important for learner success, effective 'screening' of ākonga requires a holistic and strengths-based picture of a child's learning and development.

6. There are potential issues with a 'screening tool' approach. Feedback from a range of sources, including the SEK project's schools reference group, requested the emphasis be on a universal and mana-enhancing 'learner profile', to minimise the risks of deficit theorising and negative labelling.

7. The Ministry will meet this need by replacing the existing SEA with a kete of several tools to support teachers and learners at school entry across important foundational areas.

8. The tools will consider information from a range of sources, including from parents and whānau, and early learning services. The design of the kete tools will reinforce the importance of relationships and the learning environment.

9. The SEK will support teachers and whānau to identify areas of strength, need, and next learning steps for ākonga. It will help learners, their whānau and their teachers to understand what additional support may be required to meet identified needs.

10. The SEK aligns with work underway to refresh the national curriculum. The curriculum refresh will provide clarity on the learning that cannot be left to chance and what progression in that learning looks like.

11. We anticipate that the SEK will be located on the Te Rito platform which will interface with schools' student management systems. In time, Te Rito is intended to provide a platform for a rich record of learning, so that the information can follow ākonga and be used and accessed within the limits of agreed data protections. We are continuing to work with the sector to build trust and social licence for the use of education data to improve outcomes for learners.

12. The SEK will form an important part of noticing-recognising-and-responding to all ākonga entering the schooling system.

13. The AKA tools will be revised to align with the Māori medium curriculum progress and achievement work programme, including the refresh of *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa,* the implementation of *He Tamaiti Hei Raukura* framework, and the development of He Tīrewa Ako (learning progressions) and Te Tīrewa Mātai (monitoring and reporting tools.

Progress to date

14. There are a number of key principles that are informing the design and development of the SEK. These include the co design process, consultation with key stakeholders, and the Response to Intervention theoretical framework that underpins the use of the kete (refer Annex 1).

Co-design Process

15. The development of this SEK is being delivered as part of the Ministry's work under Priority 2 of LSAP and is being funded through Budget 2019 [CAB-19-Min-0174.13].

16. Prior to release of funding, an informal school's reference group was set up to place 'end-users' perspectives and needs at the core of the design process. This reference group includes principals and new entrant teachers, as well as contributing early learning centre teachers. It also includes two New Zealand Education Institute (NZEI) representatives from schooling and early learning respectively, along with two Resource Teachers Learning and Behaviour (RTLB); New Zealand Māori Principals' Association and New Zealand Principals Federation (NZPF) representation.

17. A half-day hui has been held with the reference group each term in 2020 to formulate guiding principles, to identify risks and tensions for possible solutions, including those

stated above, and to present various existing tools, and approaches for possible inclusion.

18.   In addition, there have been two full-day Te Rito prototype design workshops with participants drawing on existing and ideal practice and tools for the school entry assessment. This has been followed by individualised feedback on the resultant prototype for iterative review and refinement.

19.   To date, all 14 reference group schools, all union representatives and the two RTLB Māori have indicated their commitment to participating in the project hui for 2021. Several schools have also indicated they are keen to participate in the oracy and literacy school entry assessments trials from February 2021.

20.   The SEK project team continues to meet regularly with NZEI, debriefing after the schools' reference group hui held once a term, and to problem-solve any issues that may have emerged. The project team has also briefed the president of the New Zealand School Trustees Association, representatives from the Education Review Office and has identified other peak bodies to liaise with on a regular basis.

21.   The SEK is underpinned by the *Response to Interventio*n three-tiered theoretical framework, which places the emphasis on first effective classroom teaching as the foundational response; more targeted personalised teaching to better support specific identified needs; and a third-tier which identifies a more individualised response with the support and guidance of specialist personnel. A more systematic approach could result in the identification of ākonga, teachers, schools and kāhui ako who require significant additional resourcing to meet identified professional development or specialist support needs.

Te Marautanga o Aotearoa

22.   Māori medium contexts have different requirements. The AKA tools, which support Māori Medium settings will be reviewed alongside the review of *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* (*TMoA*). A core component is He Tamaiti Hei Raukura, a framework that provides an ākonga centred, holistic and future focussed curriculum grounded in te ao Māori.

23.   It is essential that the review of AKA progresses alongside the update of *TMoA* and the development of He Tīrewa Ako and Te Tīrewa Mātai to ensure that our tools and resources derive from te ao Māori, are fit for purpose and meet the needs of Māori medium ākonga, whānau, kaiako and kura.

Tool sourcing and development

24.   The Ministry is drawing on a range of evidence and feedback to inform the criteria for the identification of existing school entry tools, or for the development of new ones. The schools' reference group decided to adopt the principles of Ka Hikitia (the Māori Education Strategy) to inform the kete development, and to guide how the tools should be identified, developed and used.

       Tools must be:

- inclusive of *all* ākonga;
- mana-enhancing, supporting the languages, cultures and identities of ākonga and focus predominantly on what ākonga *can* do at the time of assessment;
- support teachers and kaiako to reflect on the overall profile of the child and recognise patterns of learning, development and progress;
- support teachers and kaiako to identify next learning steps within their teaching and learning programme and to identify where further support may be required;
- be valid and reliable and take cognisance of the range of contexts which can enhance or impede an ākonga's ability to demonstrate their knowledge and skills across a range of areas.

25. In addition to the above, for ākonga in Māori medium pathways, tools must also:

- value the centrality of te reo, tikanga and mātauranga Māori
- consider the length of time in immersion, which is a key factor when selecting appropriate aromatawai tools and levels;
- be grounded in te ao Māori; and
- reflect the principals of Rukuhia Rarangahia and the eight aromatawai positions, which reflect Māori values.

26. The review of AKA tools for reo ā-waha, pānui, tuhituhi and pāngarau is yet to begin as this work will need to be incorporated into the wider TMoA curriculum progress and achievement work programme.

Literacy and Oracy

27. The Ministry has identified two existing tools for assessing literacy and oracy capabilities. These have been presented to the schools' reference group, who are keen to be part of the trialling process in 2021.

28. Phonological awareness, letter knowledge and rapid naming are robust predictors of efficient word decoding and reading comprehension ability. In turn, early word decoding and linguistic comprehension ability predicts later reading comprehension. These are the critical aspects that need to be incorporated into any school entry assessment of literacy and oracy capabilities.

29. The literacy and oracy assessment tools will comprise six subtests focussed on: Initial Phoneme Identity; Letter-Sound recognition; Phoneme Blending; Phoneme Segmentation; Non-word Reading, and Story Retell.

30. Teachers will be able to access professional support over two years from 2021 – 2022 from the Better Start Literacy team and new online resources. The intention is to build capability in the effective use and interpretation of the SEK tools and data; the new enhanced Ready to Read Phonics Plus texts and pedagogical approaches, and parent and whānau workshops.

31. The SEK project will be closely involved in the first year of this support and will conduct an independent evaluation seeking teachers' feedback on the design and usefulness of the tools to inform next learning steps.

32. For *TMoA*, tools for pānui will need to take into account Te Tīrewa Ako Pānui and the revision and re-levelling of Ngā Kete Kōrero readers by te reo matatini experts which was completed in 2019.

Numeracy

33. There were no existing numeracy tools that met all of the SEK project criteria. However, there was a project underway that provided a sound basis for tool development.

34. The New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) has been developing the *Inclusive Descriptors of Progress within Level 1 Mathematics tool* under contract to the Ministry of Education. This tool is being developed to encompass all ākonga working within Level 1 of *The New Zealand Curriculum (NZC)*, with special consideration given to learners with additional educational needs. The framework can be used to identify where the learner is and understand their next learning steps.

35. The comprehensive and inclusive nature of the approach made it an ideal platform from which to investigate opportunities for SEK numeracy tool development. A scoping report commissioned from NZCER has recommended six indicators that have strong predictive validity in developing understanding of mathematical concepts:

    i.   Subitising (instantly recognising the number of items in an arrangement);
    ii.   Joining sets;
    iii.   Repeating patterns;
    iv.   Transforming shapes;
    v.   Measurement, and
    vi.   Organising data.

36. The findings of the NZCER scoping report strongly align with the overall intent and principles of the SEK, and align well with other Ministry tools such as the Progress and Consistency Tool (PaCT) and the Learning Progressions Framework (LPF).

37. The Ministry will look to work with NZCER and other providers from January 2021 to progress the SEK numeracy tool development.

38. The timeframe for AKA pāngarau tool development will be determined by the timeline for refreshing *TMoA* and the development of Te Tīrewa Ako Pāngarau.

Social and Emotional Development

39. There were no existing tools in the areas of social and emotional development that met the SEK criteria.

40. Analysis of existing national and international research on important social and emotional development for four to six-year olds, has revealed that self-regulation in young learners has very strong predictive validity for successful learning and positive life trajectories.

41. The Ministry is developing a suite of mapping tools to help teachers and whānau to understand the NZC key competencies that support social and emotional learning. A small trial conducted in 2020 will inform further development of the tools and support the development of a progress map. The SEK project will draw on aspects of this work to inform tool development in the social and emotional domains.

42. In addition, practice and progress tools focussed on social and emotional development are being developed for early learning settings. The SEK tools will support continuity of teacher practice to ensure smooth transitions to school.

43. The ENGAGE[1] programme that has emerged from the Dunedin study utilises a range of different games and activities to identify the strengths, needs and next learning steps for ākonga in the area of social and emotional development. Further exploratory work with the ENGAGE and Growing up in New Zealand (GUiNZ) projects to help inform SEK tool development will be progressed early in 2021.

44. For *TMoA*, social and emotional learning is integrated into the *He Tamaiti Hei Raukura* framework, a framework that places a strong focus on developing marau ā-kura centred on the needs, interests and passions of mokopuna and ākonga.

45. There is an agreed emphasis on holistic development and education with the use of te reo Māori, values and concepts and an importance and value placed on developing skills for life-long learning.

Communication

46. Communication has been identified as an additional area to the original five domains that needs to be included in the SEK after further analysis of research and discussions with experts. In order to be truly inclusive and mana-enhancing, it was important that the SEK tools enabled teachers and schools to capture more fine-grained communicative capabilities.

47. This is particularly important for identifying next learning steps for those learners who may be non-verbal, or whose strengths are not necessarily demonstrated through a story retell but may be demonstrated in other curriculum or cultural contexts e.g. recitation; explanation, or performance.

48. The Ministry will look to work with NZCER and other providers from January 2021 to progress the SEK communication tool development.

Other components

49. It is recognised that the majority of ākonga Māori enrol in English-medium schools and the SEK must therefore be culturally inclusive and mana-enhancing, particularly for Māori. The SEK will be accessible in both Te Reo Māori and English.

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[1] https://www.otago.ac.nz/hekitenga/features/otago043299.html

50. Feedback from Te Ao Māori advisors and the schools' reference group reinforced the critical importance of establishing positive relationships with whānau at the beginning of ākonga transition to school. The SEK project team is therefore exploring the use of *Learning Maps*[2] and other related activities to capture ākonga/whanau voice and aspirations and people important in ākonga worlds.

51. The SEK project team is also working closely with the Ministry of Health's Tamariki Ora team to identify what possibilities there might be to share important ākonga health and wellbeing information as part of the transition to school process. There are several privacy and data sovereignty considerations to be worked through in this area.

Key Risks and Benefits

52. The following table shows potential risks that have been identified in the SEK project which are currently subject to mitigation processes:

Risks	Mitigations
1. Concern about how data collected from the SEK of tools could be used negatively regarding learners and teachers, similar to the issues associated with former National Standards[3]. There are a number of ways in which we are seeking to mitigate this risk.	i. The Ministry is continuing to work closely with, and to seek feedback from a range of stakeholders and union representatives. NZEI Te Riu Roa has agreed to work with the SEK team on its communication strategy to ensure the emphasis remains on the significant benefits associated with assessment *for* learning and supporting effective first practice and to do no harm. ii. The Ministry will continue to ensure we remain focussed on (and communicate clearly) the priority for the SEK of tools being to support teachers and schools to gather important information to better support the progress of all ākonga. iii. For Māori medium, work in this area is underway as part of the Māori medium curriculum progress and achievement work programme. This includes work around the principles of Māori data sovereignty including governance, data analysis and use, storage and location.

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[2] http://infinitylearn.org/infinity-maps-2/

[3] In December 2017, Cabinet agreed to revoke National Standards (NS) and Ngā Whanakitanga Rumaki Māori (CBC-17-MN 0042 refers). Cabinet decided there would be a focus on strengthening the use of the curricula to understand and support the progress and achievement of all students, rather than developing a new approach [CAB-18-Min-0165 refers].

Risks	Mitigations
	iv. The Ministry is consulting and collaborating on solutions associated with the Data Protection and Use Policy, including the use of any tools that are accessed via the Te Rito platform.
2. Concern expressed that as the SEK project is part of the LSAP, assessment will be overly focussed on specific needs and perpetuate deficit-theorising, rather than a holistic strengths-based orientation towards ākonga and their whānau.	i. This is being managed through the co-design process undertaken with the schools' reference group. Working closely with participants is ensuring that prototype development reinforces the importance of a rich ākonga profile that captures whānau aspirations, strengths, and areas requiring additional support or further investigation.
3. Current funding for the SEK is for its design and development. Feedback received from sector representatives has highlighted the importance of a well-supported implementation strategy including targeted professional development. This would ensure the effective and considered use and application of the tools, and the use of the information to positively impact ākonga and their teachers. As no funding for the implementation phase is currently allocated, this is a risk to the current project and the ongoing commitment of the schools' reference group.	i. Should you consider this a priority, we could develop a new initiative bid in Budget 21.

Next Steps

53. The following components of the SEK of tools will be progressed in 2021:

- the literacy and oracy tools will be trialled from February 2021 as part of a wider early literacy approach incorporating the enhanced ready to read series;

- the development of the numeracy and communication tools will commence with NZCER from January 2021;

- development of tools in the social and emotional domain will commence in 2021 through collaboration with the Engage project and the Growing Up in New Zealand Study.

Proactive Release

54.   We recommend that this Education Report is not released at this time because components of the SEK are still under development.

Annexes

Annex 1:   Learning Support Action Plan Priority 2 Tool Development

DESIGN OF SEK OF TOOLS	2019		2000			2021			2022 -	
	→ July	Dec	Mar	July	Dec	Mar	July	Dec	Mar	July →
Review of Research and expert consultation incl. universities Otago: Dunedin Study/ENGAGE Canterbury: Well Child Institute Victoria: Clinical psychology Massey: Inclusive education Auckland: Growing up in NZ (GUiNZ).				Social and Emotional expert's hui 28 June	GUiNZ Team visit to Ministry of Education					
				Ministry of Health Well Child monthly meetings. Transition to school.						
Schools Reference Group for co design process		Confirmation of schools	Hui 1 Feb	Hui 2 July Hui 3 Sept	Hui 4 Nov	All reference schools confirmed 2021 project participation. Hui dates to be advised Participation in BSLA trial.				
			Prototype ideation workshops Oct 20 & 28.							
Peak Body Liaison										
NZEI	1 April Sector meeting		Two representatives from NZEI at July, Sep & Nov Hui and Prototype ideation workshops. Regular debriefs between hui			NZEI and NZPF confirmed 2021 project participation. Hui dates to be advised.				
NZPF			Representative at Sep and Nov hui & Prototype ideation workshops.							
STA			Briefing and invitation to Nov hui.							
Literacy and Oracy tools Criteria established Alignment required with Ministry's early literacy initiatives.			Identification of existing tools that met criteria.	Negotiations with University of Canterbury Better Start Literacy Approach (BSLA) Project's assessment tools.		Trialling of BSLA in selected schools, including SEK Schools Reference group. Independent user evaluation to inform refinements for access via Te Rito.			Te Rito requirements and co design testing with sector.	
	Review of research on existing tools and use.									
Numeracy/ Mathematics			NZCER Level One NZC project identified as potential source.	Scoping report requested Received 13 Nov .		Requirements clarified. Negotiations with NZCER. Co-design process with user feedback.			Te Rito requirements identified and co design testing with sector.	
	Review of research on existing tools and use.									
Social and Emotional Alignment requires with Ministry's Curriculum Progress and Achievement and Wellbeing initiatives.			Emergent indicator feedback process. Identification of potential sources: ENGAGE & GUiNZ.	Social and Emotional expert's hui 28 June .	Work paused to ensure alignment with curriculum progress maps.	TBC			TBC	
	Review of research on existing tools and use.									
Communication Identification by schools' reference group and NZCER of need for communication tool inclusive of all learners.					Scoping report received 13 Nov.	Requirements clarified and agreed. Negotiations with NZCER. Co-design process with user feedback.			Te Rito requirements identified and co design testing with sector.	
Whanau and ākonga voice Identification by schools' reference group and SEK project team of need for tool to capture whānau and ākonga voice.				Presentation of He Pikōrua one practice framework at 20 Oct workshop reinforced notion of whanaungatanga as starting point. Presentation on Learning Maps to explore as possible tool for whānau and ākonga voice.		Requirements clarified and agreed. Negotiations with Affinity Learning. Co-design process with user feedback.			Te Rito requirements identified and co design testing with sector.	
Te ao Māori SEK project team identified need for Te āo Māori cultural advisor for duration of project.				Presentation of Ka Hikitia framework at Nov hui. Schools' reference group decision to replace original principles with Ka Hikitia ones. Presentation of Pasifika Education plan to ensure inclusion and responsiveness to diverse cultures and languages, including ELLs. Review of reference group schools to ensure representative demographic. Tologa Bay Area School and Whangarā now included. Identification of rural, migrant and refugee schools underway.							