



Briefing Note: Meeting with Dr Rosemary Cathcart from REACH Education

To:	Hon Jan Tinetti, Associate Minister of Education		
Cc:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
Date:	15 April 2021	Priority:	High
Security Level:	In Confidence	METIS No:	1255698
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Messaging seen by Communications team:	No	Round Robin:	No

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this paper is for you to:

- **Note** the background information for your meeting with Dr Rosemary Cathcart from REACH Education on Friday 16 April.
- **Agree** that this Briefing will be proactively released.

☒ Agree / ☐ Disagree

Summary

- You are meeting with Dr Rosemary Cathcart from REACH Education on Friday 16 April in your Tauranga Office.
- Dr Cathcart would like to discuss how equitable and effective provision for all gifted learners of all ages throughout Aotearoa New Zealand can be achieved. In particular:
 - ensuring the development of a national policy consistent with NAG I (iii)
 - establishing standards for professional development in this field
 - achieving an adequate and more equitable distribution of available funding across the different dimensions of provision

- reviewing ERO's role in practice in evaluating school performance in relation to gifted learners.

Pauline Cleaver

Pauline Cleaver
Associate Deputy Secretary
Early Learning and Student Achievement

15/04/2021

Hon Jan Tinetti

Hon Jan Tinetti
Associate Minister of Education

15/4/2021

Background

1. You are meeting with Dr Rosemary Cathcart from REACH Education on Friday 16 April in your Tauranga Office. Dr Cathcart would like to discuss how equitable and effective provision for all gifted learners of all ages throughout Aotearoa New Zealand can be achieved. In particular:
 - a. ensuring the development of a national policy consistent with NAG I (iii), in line with current research and best practice, and reflecting both our traditional child-centred approach and the Te Ao Māori perspective
 - b. establishing standards for professional development in this field which reflect the research on effective teacher development, and linking these both to PLD accreditation/attestation and to the training of LSCs
 - c. achieving an adequate and more equitable distribution of available funding across the different dimensions of provision - support for students, professional development for teachers, access to assessment and counselling services, New Zealand-based research, etc
 - d. reviewing ERO's role in practice in evaluating school performance in relation to gifted learners including the possibility of ERO updating its 2008 report on school provision for gifted learners.
2. This briefing provides some background information on REACH education and the issues above that Dr Cathcart has indicated as the focus for discussion.

REACH Education – Responding to Exceptionally Able Children

3. REACH Education provides courses and advice for schools and teachers on how to engage gifted learners including the internationally recognised Certificate of Effective Practice in Education. This Certificate has been assessed by NZQA to be equivalent to 15 credits at Level 6 on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework.
4. Dr Rosemary Cathcart QSM founded REACH in 2005 and is a member of the Gifted Expert Group that advises the Ministry of Education on education of gifted learners.
5. Dr Cathcart has been extensively involved in gifted education since the early 1980s and has been a constant advocate for gifted education. She was a foundation board member of Giftednz and recently received the Te Mau Kōtuku award by the Board in recognition of her outstanding service and contribution to the education and development of the gifted children in Aotearoa New Zealand. She is an Honorary Life Member of the New Zealand Association for Gifted Children. She is also the first person outside the US to be an invited member of the Columbus Group, an affiliate of the Institute for the Study of Advanced Development.
6. REACH partnered with Ngā Potiki A Tamapahore Trust to provide a Marae based Events and Opportunities project for young gifted Māori learners in Papamoa from May 2019 to December 2020. REACH recently withdrew from the project due to differences of agreement on teaching practice.

Ensuring the development of a national policy consistent with NAG I (iii)

7. The relevant part of NAG 1(iii) states that:

Each board, through the principal and staff, is required to identify students and groups of students through the analysis of good quality assessment information and develop and implement teaching and learning strategies to address the needs of students and aspects of the curriculum identified below:

- a. who are not progressing and/or achieving;*
- b. who are at risk of not progressing and/or achieving;*
- c. who have special needs (including gifted and talented students); and*
- d. aspects of the curriculum which require particular attention;*

8. The National Administration Guidelines (NAGs) will be removed from 1 January 2023 when the new strategic planning and reporting framework is introduced. Under the new framework, the NAGs will be replaced by the Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities (the NELP). The NELP was published in November 2020.
9. The NELP is a statutory document enabled by the Education and Training Act 2020. It sets out the Government's priorities for education, in order to ensure the success and wellbeing of all learners. Schools and early learning services are required to have regard to the NELP both in their planning and in their day to day work.
10. Reducing barriers to education for all learners, including those with learning support needs, is a key focus of the Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities (NELP). The NELP sets out seven priorities. As a whole, these priorities have a strong focus on creating a learner-centred, safe, and inclusive education environment for all children and young people in Aotearoa New Zealand. Priority 3, in particular, has a specific focus on supporting learners with learning support needs including gifted learners.
11. Priority 3 requires early learning services, schools and kura to reduce barriers to education for all, including for Māori and Pacific learners/ākonga, disabled learners/ākonga and those with learning support needs. Specific actions are outlined under each NELP priority that early learning services and schools and kura can take to give effect to the NELP. Key actions for Priority 3 include:
- a. For licensed early learning services:*
ensure disabled learners/ākonga and staff, those with learning support needs, and neurodiverse learners/ākonga, are safe and included in their early learning service, and their needs are supported.
 - b. For schools and kura:*
ensure disabled learners/ākonga and staff, those with learning support needs, gifted learners/ākonga, and neurodiverse learners/ākonga are safe and included in their school or kura, their needs are supported, and that learning support programmes are robust and effective.
12. Under NELP priority 2, early learning services, schools and kura are also required to partner with family and whānau to equip every learner/ākonga to build and realise their aspirations.
13. Meeting the learning needs of gifted children and young people is a priority of the Learning Support Action Plan (LSAP) for 2019 – 2025, which sets out six strategic priorities to ensure that children and young people get the right support, at the right time.

14. One of the strategic priorities is 'Meeting the learning needs of gifted children and young people'. As part of this priority, the Ministry works with the Gifted Expert Advisory group on the design of a package of supports for gifted children and young people, including:
- a. Expanding online learning modules.
 - b. Partially funding access to MindPlus one-day programmes.
 - c. Providing and promoting out-of-school experiences and extension events.
 - d. Establishing study awards for gifted learners and teachers of gifted learners.
 - e. Extending current supports into early childhood education.

Establishing standards for professional development

15. The Learning Support Action Plan includes specific supports for teachers' development. These are:
- a. Study awards for Post graduate Diploma in Specialist Teaching: Gifted Endorsement. There is support for ten teachers to be undertaking this two-year course at one time. There will be five places awarded each year. 2021 is the inaugural year.
 - b. Flexible Awards for Teachers of Gifted Learners. These are small awards for teachers to access informal learning opportunities in their own communities to increase their skills for supporting gifted learners.
16. In addition, schools and kura have access to regionally-allocated PLD which is designed to support teachers and kaiako to provide more responsive and rich learning experiences for all ākonga and students. REACH Education is a PLD provider. Dr Cathcart has expressed some specific concerns to the Ministry about the PLD website:
- a. not being inclusive of giftedness (only 19th on the list specialties)
 - b. treating giftedness and talented as the same specialisation
 - c. not clearly indicating who is qualified to provide PLD in gifted education.
17. We are continuing to improve the way information about PLD providers is communicated on our website. Currently it is configured to represent the specialties that facilitators have identified they are able to provide PLD in.
18. With regards to Learning Support Coordinators (LSCs), the Ministry has worked with the Teaching Council to provide guidance on how LSCs can meet the standards for the teaching profession and renew their practising certificates. This will be available shortly.

19. General professional learning and development for LSCs is the responsibility of the employing school. The Ministry provides a range of training and development opportunities for LSCs, including:
- LSC: A Guide to the Role, in both English and Māori
 - National forums and regional meetings and workshops
 - An online Network of Expertise for LSCs and SENCos
 - A customised training programme delivered by Autism NZ, Tilting the Seesaw
 - A Learning Support Toolkit for LSCs and the wider learning support community.

Achieving an adequate and more equitable distribution of available funding

20. State and state-integrated schools receive a Special Education Grant (SEG) as a component of the Operational Grant for schools. The purpose of SEG is to provide funding to support students with low to moderate levels of additional learning needs, which may include Gifted Learners. Schools have full discretion over how they spend their grant, as they do with all other components of their operational grant.
21. The total amount of SEG funding allocated in 2020 was \$43 million. Every school receives a fixed amount of funding (\$1,295.65 GST excl in 2020) and then an additional amount per student linked to the school's decile rating. The lower the school's decile, the more SEG funding the school receives per student. The per student funding rate for 2020 is shown in the table below.

Table 1: 2020 SEG per student funding rates

Decile	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
\$/student (2020, GST excl)	68.04	66.10	62.21	58.33	54.44	50.55	46.67	42.79	38.88	35.01

22. The Ministry has a total budget of \$2.34 million per annum for supports targeted at gifted learners as part of the Learning Support Action Plan. The previous Associate Minister of Education had requested the monies focused primarily on direct service provision for gifted learners.
23. The appropriation is currently distributed as follows:

Gifted budget breakdown 2020/21	
Mindplus One Day School	550,000
Events and Opportunities outside school	445,000
Events and Opportunities outside school Māori Medium	380,000
Awards for Gifted Learners	345,000
Awards for Teachers	300,000
Early Learning project - supporting teacher response for gifted learners	200,000
Identification and training development	120,000
Total	\$2,340,000

Reviewing ERO's role in practice in evaluating school performance in relation to gifted learners

24. ERO is committed to supporting improved outcomes and achieving equity for all learners, including gifted and talented learners. It has changed its operating model for schools, and the new model has a focus on understanding the context of each school in order to best serve its needs. Understanding the gifted and talented learners in the school and how the school supports them is an important part of the context of the school.
25. While updating ERO's research into gifted and talented provision is not in its current work programme, ERO is committed to continuing to work with all parts of the education sector and review its work programme periodically. ERO is happy to meet with REACH to discuss this further.

Other matters raised previously with the Ministry

26. Other matters that Dr Cathcart has raised with the Ministry over time include:
 - a. REACH not having free advertising in the School Gazette for its Certificate course. REACH can, however, advertise workshops and other short courses for free. The Gazette does not allow free advertising for degrees, postgraduate diplomas or certificates to any organisations.
 - b. An interest in creating a three or four module course for teachers in supporting gifted learners with Ministry support. The Ministry is currently in the planning stages of gifted identification and training for teachers. Teachers have been able to apply for funding support to undertake the REACH Certificate of Effective Practice in Education through the Awards for Teachers of Gifted Learners.
 - c. The lack of Ministry advisory capacity with qualifications in gifted education to support the development of gifted education. The Ministry is advised by a Gifted Expert Group that advises the Ministry on provision for gifted learners. Dr Cathcart is a member of this group.

Proactive Release

27. We recommend that this Briefing is proactively released as per your expectation that information be released as soon as possible. Any information which may need to be withheld will be done so in line with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982.