



Briefing Note: Highest Needs Review Change Programme 2023 workplan

To:	Hon Jan Tinetti, Associate Minister of Education		
Cc:			
Date:	31 January 2023	Priority:	Medium
Security Level:	In Confidence	METIS No:	1300886
Drafter:	Clare Lawrence	DDI:	04 463 8074
Key Contact:	David Wales	DDI:	04 463 7669
Messaging seen by Communications team:	No	Round Robin:	No

Purpose of the Report

- To update you on the Highest Needs Change Programme workplan for 2023.

Summary

- On 17 November 2022, you made an announcement on the findings of the Highest Needs Review and the recommendations for change. The review found that the current system is not fit for purpose and that for every seven students receiving support, three may have unmet needs. The review phase of the work is now complete.
- As part of the announcement, you noted that while the new transformed model is being designed, the Ministry will streamline the existing model so it's simpler for students and their whānau to get the support they need¹.
- The Ministry has commenced work on the business case for a start-up decision from Cabinet in June 2023.
- We have also developed a work plan for improvements the Ministry is making in the next six to twelve months to streamline the existing model.
- Whaikaha have requested that you share this paper with the Hon Minister Priyanca Radhakrishnan, Minister for Disabled people.

¹ [New model to better support kids with the highest needs | Beehive.govt.nz](https://www.beehive.govt.nz/news/new-model-to-better-support-kids-with-the-highest-needs)

Proactive Release

- a **agree** that the Ministry of Education release this briefing in full once it has been considered by you. Agree / Disagree.

☒ Agree ☐ Disagree.



Sean Teddy
Hautū Te Pae Aronui

03/02/2023



Hon Jan Tinetti
Associate Minister of Education

05/02/2023

Background

- The Highest Needs Review is complete. The review found that the current system of support for students with the highest needs for learning support is not fit for purpose, and that for every seven students receiving support, three may have unmet needs.
- On 7 November 2022, Cabinet agreed to the direction of travel for how we deliver learning supports for children and young people with the highest needs [CAB-22-MIN-0490 refers]. This involves the development of a new mixed model approach in which schools, kura and early learning services partner with learners and their whānau to decide what would best work for each learner. The new approach will be supported by seven building blocks for change:
 - a. A new service delivery system;
 - b. Customised tailored supports;
 - c. An integrated and inclusive schooling network;
 - d. Learning supports for Māori and Pacific whānau and families developed by Māori and Pacific people;
 - e. A confident, capable workforce with the capacity to respond;
 - f. A new funding model to support a tailored and flexible approach; and
 - g. Stronger integration with other agencies.
- Cabinet noted that the building blocks are medium- and long-term changes, and that short-term investments will be needed to reduce pressures in the current system before we can expect services and schools to embrace significant change.
- Whaikaha have requested that you share this paper with the Hon Minister Priyanca Radhakrishnan, Minister for Disabled people.

A business case is being developed

- Cabinet agreed that the Ministry of Education would develop a Business Case to support the significant system changes required to deliver on the recommendations from the review. Cabinet has invited you to report back to SWC by June 2023 with a Business Case and the work programme to support implementation of the mixed model over the next two, five and ten years [CAB-22-MIN-0490 refers].
- A business case is being prepared for you to seek a 'start-up' decision from Cabinet in June 2023.
- We plan to start engaging with key Government and non-Government organisations from March 2023 and to undertake formal external review processes with key agencies starting mid-April 2023. A key focus of these review processes is testing the level of support of the main stakeholders.
- For this programme, we will collaborate closely with Whaikaha throughout the development of the Investment Logic Mapping, business case, and through our more formal review processes.
- We intend to share an early draft of the Business Case and an update on stakeholder feedback with you in late March / early April 2023.

- 9(2)(f)(iv)
- Annex 1 contains a high-level overview of key dates for business case development and key phases for this programme over the next two, five and ten years.

Short term improvements to the current system

- The short-term improvements outlined below are part of the Ministry's current work programme and can be delivered within the current resourcing. They contribute towards meeting existing need. Some also are aligned with the longer-term shifts needed in the system.
- While the new system is being designed, the Ministry will find ways to streamline the existing processes so it's simpler for ākonga with the highest needs and their whanau to get the support they need².
- We are reviewing our work programme to ensure that our effort is focused on delivering high value activities that contribute towards the Government's priorities.
- The Ministry has developed a short term workplan for 2023 to investigate a range of options to streamline the current system. Some of these will be delivered from within baseline over the next 6-12 months while others would require additional investment through Budget 2023.
- Many of these options are currently ideas being investigated. We will continue to work across Te Mahau and the Ministry to better understand the detail of these options including the feasibility; expected results or outcomes and timeframes of delivering these.
- An outline of short-term options currently resourced within baseline and how they contribute to the building blocks and/or meet existing unmet need are included in the table below:

Meeting existing need and streamlining current processes	
Establishing a pathway for Te Kura students to access Te Kahu Tōi, Intensive Wraparound Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently, Te Kura is unable to access the full range of services available to other students. • Students enrolled at Te Kura do not currently have a pathway to access Te Kahu Tōi. Intensive Wraparound Service, although some students access Te Kura as part of their individualised plan through Te Kahu Tōi. • A common pathway for accessing Te Kahu Tōi, Intensive Wraparound Service is via the Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour (RTLb) service Specialist Schools or Ministry Learning Support services. Te Kura currently does not have access to this pathway.

² [New model to better support kids with the highest needs | Beehive.govt.nz](https://www.beehive.govt.nz/new-model-to-better-support-kids-with-the-highest-needs)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will establish a pathway for students at Te Kura to access Te Kahu Tōi, Intensive Wraparound Service via the Director's pathway. This would enable Te Kura to refer students via their regional Director of Education.
Changes to High Health Needs Funding (HHNF) including	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently, approximately 1700 students receive High Health funding annually. Of these, approximately 560 students have received it for three or more years. In some situations, High Health Needs Funding is renewed annually and requires the submission of current need evidence (e.g., a letter from a GP or Paediatrician). • Improvements in support for students with high health needs have been made. • Following a recent review, students with Type 1 Diabetes will now be reviewed at the end of the term in which they turn 11 years of age (rather than annually as they were previously), reducing the administration burden of applying for/being granted HHNF for these students. • We are starting a review of support for toileting support for ākongā with specific medical conditions, such as spina bifida, including reviewing the duration of support.
Renewal of Funding Agreements with Resource Teachers Learning and Behaviour (RTLb) Lead Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding agreements with RTLb lead schools are due for renewal in 2023. We will collaborate with key stakeholders to agree on changes to the funding agreements for RTLb clusters, to take effect from January 2024. We will use this opportunity to improve service access, flexibility, and response to a range of needs within Te Tuapapa and He Pikorua.
Customised tailored supports	
Continue to strengthen and embed the LSDM and roll out of He Pikorua	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He Pikorua and the Learning Support Delivery Model are central to providing quality and effective services in the future. We will continue activities to strengthen and embed the LSDM and roll out He Pikorua throughout the planning, design, delivery, and implementation of the Highest Needs Change Programme. • To successfully implement these models, there are substantial cultural, behavioural, and attitudinal changes required across the education system and public. These new models challenge underlying assumptions and beliefs about best practice, for example about the role of Teacher Aides in supporting students with the highest levels of needs in both English medium and Māori medium settings. Change of this magnitude and type take a long time to achieve.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst this is part of the longer-term transformation, it will also contribute to shorter term shifts in the system in places of early adoption.
An integrated and inclusive schooling network	
Trialling possible models for the future system design through locally designed initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work is under way to improve accessibility in all schools so that all ākonga can be present, participate and learn alongside their peers. This includes ensuring schools are appropriately designed at the outset, existing stock is progressively upgraded, and improvements are made to the process for modifying schools to meet individual needs. • Different approaches to the way outreach services are delivered that could demonstrate a potential shift in specialist school practice, are currently being trialled in Canterbury and are to be trialled in Auckland • Network planning is placing a greater emphasis on specialist provision within local schools so that more ākonga with high needs can learn alongside their peers. • Providing specialist support for kohanga reo and 'setting 52 six-year-olds up for success' initiatives (Auckland)

Other ideas that could be investigated have been identified. However, these are not currently resourced.:

- Looking at how to simplify the ORS verification process
- Assessment of ORS criteria to confirm they are fit for purpose in respect of ākonga who are neurodiverse; different settings (including Kaupapa Māori settings); descriptors; and/or language
- Identify procedural practice improvements (e.g., streamlining applications processes), based on current leading practices
- Investigating enabling Te Kura to access RTLB services, or to extend RTLB service to 4.5 years old (from 5 years old currently) and up to year 13³
- Supporting local collaborations to strengthen specialist teacher networks across RTLB clusters, LSC/SENCOs, RTLit and ORS specialist teachers.

Changes that we are seeking funding for through Budget 2023

- The Ministry has submitted two bids as part of Budget 2023 that are intended to contribute to meeting existing needs in the shorter term whilst the longer-term transformational changes are designed and implemented:

a. 9(2)(f)(iv)

³ Currently RTLB service stops at the end of year 10 with funding provided directly to schools by the Ministry to support students in years 11-13

9(2)(f)(iv)

- b. *Building learning support in kaupapa Māori and Māori medium schooling (\$34.192m opex, \$15.171m capex over four years)*

This initiative builds towards the future model of support for learners with the highest needs by funding the delivery of Priority 1 of the Learning Support Action Plan 2019-2025 for schools and kura providing Kaupapa Māori and Māori medium education. It provides resourcing for the Māori-led design and delivery of solutions to strengthen the capacity and capability of these schools and kura to plan and coordinate responses to the learning support needs of ākonga in partnership with whānau.

This initiative responds to the findings of the Māori Affairs Select Committee Inquiry into learning support for ākonga Māori and Phase 3 of the Learning Support Coordinator evaluation. It has been designed to provide the level and flexibility of resourcing needed to recognise Māori rangatiratanga and support equity for ākonga Māori and the growth of Kaupapa Māori and Māori medium education pathways.

Ongoing policy work that supports the Highest Needs Change Programme

- Alongside the Short-Term Improvements to the system, the Ministry will undertake a range of policy work to develop more detailed options for progressing the key building blocks of the reforms, which will inform decision-making in the June Cabinet paper. This will include:
 - a. Joint work with Whaikaha to develop a shared strategic approach and agreed understanding on what an Enabling Good Lives approach could look like in education. The Ministry and Whaikaha will hold a series of workshops over February - April 2023 to progress this. This work will underpin the broader work programme, and more specifically inform the options in the Business Case.
 - b. Work to develop options for moving towards an inclusive schooling network, to ensure we provide an inclusive, integrated network of provision for students with the highest level of learning support needs. This work will take account of decisions about the Government's response to the recommendations of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities regarding Residential Specialist Schools.

- c. Options for a predictive funding model for learning support, which will underpin the “new funding model to support a tailored and flexible approach” building block. A comparative review of funding models in different jurisdictions for a range of learning support services is currently underway and will inform this work.
- d. Continued policy and operational support to progress Education related actions in the Oranga Tamariki Action Plan, which will contribute to the “stronger integration with other agencies” building block.

Key risks and benefits

- Whilst some of the work outlined above needs further investigation, it has been prioritised and is currently resourced on the Ministry’s work programme. Whilst the activities above will increase the Ministry’s ability to meet existing unmet need and streamline processes, additional investment is required to deliver significant change.

Next Steps

- The Ministry will continue to investigate these proposals. We will provide advice to you on the progress of these, and other ideas alongside a draft Cabinet paper in April 2023 providing the business case and outlining the two-, five- and ten-year workplan for the transformational change.

Annexes

Please list annexes by title. For example:

Annex 1: High-level roadmap of the Highest Needs Change Programme

Annex 1: High level roadmap of the Highest Needs Change Programme

Highest Needs Review –10 year work plan

