

# Cabinet Paper material

## Proactive release

Minister & portfolio Hon Jan Tinetti, Minister of Education  
Name of package Progress Update on the Highest Needs Change Programme  
Date considered 3 July 2023  
Date of release 11 August 2023

### These documents have been proactively released:

**Cabinet Paper: Progress Update on the Highest Needs Change Programme**

Date considered: 3 July 2023  
Author: Office of the Minister of Education

**Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee Summary**

Date considered: 28 June 2023  
Author: Committee Secretary

**Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee Minute**

Date considered: 28 June 2023  
Author: Committee Secretary

**Cabinet Minute: CAB-23-MIN-0296.01**

Date considered: 3 July 2023  
Author: Secretary of the Cabinet

### Material redacted

Some deletions have been made from the documents in line with withholding grounds under the Official Information Act 1982. Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

The applicable withholding grounds under the Act are as follows:

Section 9(2)(f)(iv) to protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials

Some deletions have been made from the documents as the information withheld does not fall within scope of the Minister's portfolio responsibilities, and is not relevant to the proactive release of this material.

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<http://legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1982/0156/latest/DLM64785.html>

## In Confidence

Office of the Minister of Education

Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee

## Progress Update on the Highest Needs Change Programme

### Proposal

- 1 This paper provides Cabinet with an update on the Highest Needs Review and a programme of work to respond to the recommendations from that review, as well as the development of a Programme Business Case to progress the recommendations. It seeks agreement to the next stage of partnering with Māori as Te Tiriti partners and engaging with disabled people and their communities, the education sector and Pacific communities to enable collaborative development and design of a new system of learning support for children and young people with the highest levels of need.

### Relation to government priorities

- 2 The Highest Needs Review (the Review) relates to pre-election commitments signalled in the Labour Party's Education Policy for the 2020 election. It seeks to further the achievement of the Government's five objectives for education. It also supports the achievement of the Government's Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy, as well as its commitment for delivering bold and transformative change for the disability community through the Enabling Good Lives approach and making New Zealand the best place in the world to be a child. There is also alignment with several other Government strategies and work programmes, including the Health of Disabled People Strategy.
- 3 There are various legislative frameworks and guidelines that support the rights of children and young people with disabilities and learning support needs to inclusive, high-quality education in Aotearoa New Zealand. Two key frameworks are the Education & Training Act 2020 and the NZ Disability Strategy 2016 – 2026, Outcome 1 – Education. Additionally, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD) Article 24 is highly relevant.

### Executive Summary

- 4 Following the Highest Needs Review, Cabinet agreed to a direction of travel for a new system of learning support for children and young people with the highest levels of need to enable them to be present, participate and progress in their learning. The Ministry of Education (the Ministry) is establishing a programme of work to address the Highest Needs review findings (the Programme) and has made progress on an Indicative Programme Business Case to support investment decisions for a new system of supports.

- 5 9(2)(f)(iv)

- 6 The Ministry will take action to address these issues, including partnering with Māori as Te Tiriti partners and engaging with disabled people and their communities, the education sector, and Pacific communities to define the programme's objectives and activities. This will inform the development of an Indicative Programme Business Case to seek agreement and funding for the further design and implementation of a new system of supports.

## Background

- 7 The Government has a vision to shape an inclusive education system that delivers equitable and excellent outcomes, regardless of a child's background or learning needs.
- 8 One in five children and young people need some kind of extra support for their learning. This might be because of disability, learning difficulties, disadvantage, physical or mental health, or behaviour. These students have the same rights to enrol, attend, and receive education as other students, and an effective learning support system is a critical enabler of this.
- 9 We spend around \$1.3 billion annually on learning support. As a Government, we have made significant investments in learning support including:
  - 9.1 \$217 million for the first tranche of Learning Support Coordinators
  - 9.2 \$297 million invested in the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme
  - 9.3 \$24.3 million for maintaining Ministry specialist staff
  - 9.4 \$18 million to expand Te Kahu Tōi, the Intensive Wraparound Service
  - 9.5 \$11.2 million to strengthen Positive Behaviour for Learning School-Wide
  - 9.6 \$7.7 million to expand Check & Connect: Te Hononga and Te Mana Tikitiki with targeted support for Māori and Pacific learners
  - 9.7 \$7.8 million for the Incredible Years programme
  - 9.8 \$11.2 million to strengthen supports for Deaf students, including \$4.8 million for New Zealand Sign Language at School and \$6.46 million for NZSL professional development.
  - 9.9 \$40 million for Learning Support Coordination in kaupapa Māori and Māori medium education schooling.
- 10 While this substantial investment means that more students are receiving some form of support, there are still many who are not getting the support they need to fully exercise their rights to education. Over 2021/22 the Ministry reviewed supports for learners with the highest levels of need (the Highest Needs Review (the Review)).
- 11 The Review found that students with the highest needs are still experiencing persistent barriers to being present and being able to participate, progress and achieve in their education journey, and that for every seven students who receive support, there's

around three who may have a potential unmet high need at some point during their education journey. This is driven by a range of factors, including a lack of coordination and connection between supports and settings, meaning that despite the good practice we know is occurring, existing resources are not always being utilised as effectively as possible. . Early learning services and schools are still not receiving adequate support to feel confident and capable to support students with the highest levels of need.

- 12 Informed by the Review's findings, in October 2022, Cabinet agreed to a direction of travel for a new system of learning support for children and young people with the highest needs [CAB-22-MIN-0490]. This new system would take a mixed model approach to how services are accessed and delivered, moving from an application-based system to one where schools, kura and early learning services partner with learners and their whānau to consider the individual's needs and decide what would work best for each learner. It includes the following building blocks for change:
  - 12.1 A new service delivery system
  - 12.2 Customised tailored supports
  - 12.3 An integrated and inclusive schooling network
  - 12.4 Learning supports for Māori learners and whānau developed by Māori
  - 12.5 Learning supports for Pacific learners and families developed by Pacific people
  - 12.6 A confident, capable workforce with the capacity to respond
  - 12.7 A new funding model to support a tailored and flexible approach; and
  - 12.8 Stronger integration with other agencies.
- 13 Cabinet also agreed that the Ministry should prepare a business case to outline the investments, benefits and approach required to move to a new model for supporting learners with the highest levels of need.
- 14 The scale of change envisaged by the Review will require significant investment to achieve, in addition to our current investment in learning support. This level of transformational change will take many years to design and develop. Many of the current core supports for learners with the highest levels of need were introduced as a result of the Special Education 2000 review. While 2015 saw a significant shift from the concept of Special Education to Learning Support (which conceptualises need for support as being driven by context, rather than residing within the individual), the supports available, who can access them and how they are accessed largely remained the same. We need to ensure that we get this right. There will be a significant amount of work to collaboratively develop and design the new system with Māori, disabled people and their communities, the education sector and Pacific communities. Public consultation on the high-level design will be required. The Ministry is establishing a programme of work to deliver the changes required.

## Progress on the Highest Needs Change Programme and Business Case

- 15 Within the constraints of existing data and information, and available Ministry resourcing, the Ministry has made progress on early thinking that supports the development of an Indicative Programme Business Case for a new system of support. A key action for this has been to describe at a high level the potential options for Cabinet to consider.
- 16 As part of this the Ministry has worked with Whaikaha to ensure that, as per Cabinet's direction [CAB-22-MIN-0490], an understanding of what the Enabling Good Lives (EGL) principles could look like in Education is reflected in the thinking and options for the new system. While this work has begun, the Ministry recognises that it will not be possible to progress it further without Te Tiriti partnership and engagement with, disabled people and their communities, the education sector and Pacific communities.
- 17 The Ministry has started to unpack the work that would be required to deliver the mixed model approach and address the building blocks for change [CAB-22-MIN-0490]. It has also identified some ways to make short to medium term improvements to the system and start to meet existing unmet needs. However, engagement since October 2022 has been limited. Further work with Māori as Te Tiriti partners, disabled people and their communities, and with the education sector and Pacific communities is now required to ensure that the Ministry collaboratively develops and designs the new system and understands the short-term changes that will have a meaningful impact.
- 18 Based on our current thinking and plans for engagement, the following timeframes for delivery of the Business Cases are estimated:
  - 18.1 Start up decision: 12-18 months
  - 18.2 Initiate and funding contingency decision: 3-4 years
  - 18.3 Implement and funding allocation decision: 6-7 years (by 2030).
- 19 The specific timeframes of the various business case stages will be dependent on the shared views of Te Tiriti partners and those we engage with. 9(2)(f)(iv)

## Early thinking on options and a preferred way forward

- 20 Early thinking on a preferred way forward was developed through a process of analysis and internal engagement. Workshops with Ministry staff and Whaikaha were used to develop assessment criteria, critical success factors, and undertake options analysis.
- 21 While this work was informed by the extensive engagement that was undertaken during the Review phase, there has been limited external engagement since Cabinet agreed to the direction of travel in October 2022. In April 2023, early thinking was tested with other government agencies, and a sector workshop was held. The Ministry received clear feedback of a need to urgently undertake more engagement on this

work with Māori, disabled people and their communities, the education sector and Pacific people.

- 22 The Ministry has identified four short-listed options. At this point, these options are at a conceptual level, and are intended as indicative of what a future system of support could look like. The options identified to date are:
- 22.1 **Enhanced Status Quo** – this would involve short term changes to the way learning supports are accessed and delivered. This option builds on the existing system with a focus on simplifying processes to increase efficiency, reducing administrative burden and freeing up capacity. These improvements would lead to more learners who require support having their needs met, though capacity constraints would remain. This approach would likely be the only feasible option if additional funding is not sought through future budget rounds.
  - 22.2 **Do Minimum** – this focuses on increased flexibility with how supports are delivered alongside increased capacity to allow all learners to receive some, but not all the supports they need. This includes more supports designed by Māori, for Māori. Some of the constraints of the siloed approach in existing services would be broken down and learning supports would be delivered more proactively. The system would continue to be led by the Ministry.
  - 22.3 **Do Moderate** – includes all the changes of Do Minimum but builds on them with further increased flexibility and capacity, as well as much greater partnership and collaboration around the development and design of supports at a regional level. The increased capacity would address current unmet need and enable all high needs learners to receive all the supports they need to be present, participate and progress. The Ministry would continue to control budgets but with increased student, whānau and educational setting involvement in decisions over appropriate supports.
  - 22.4 **Do Maximum** – This option would see the development of a new, learner centric system with full integration of Enabling Good Lives. There would be a partnership between the Ministry, the student, whānau and the educational setting to identify the best packages of support. There would also be integration with other agencies' services.
- 23 The Ministry's initial analysis of the options was undertaken based on highly caveated assumptions. More work is required to codevelop and codesign these options and their impacts and costs, with Māori, disabled people and their communities, the education sector and Pacific communities. Once this work has occurred, I will be able to return to Cabinet with a recommended way forward.

### The Gateway Review

- 24 9(2)(f)(iv)



9(2)(f)(iv)

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9(2)(f)(iv)

I accept the findings of the Review, and consider that it is critical to address the resourcing and engagement challenges identified within the Programme, to enable us to begin to meet the expectations of the families, teachers, sector representatives and others who have engaged in this process to date. I want to use this opportunity to redirect and enhance the programme of work so that we can deliver for the students who are currently not accessing the quality inclusive education we aspire for.

### Next steps

28 The next step for the Ministry in developing a Programme Business Case will be to address the recommendations of the Gateway Review by putting in place arrangements for:

28.1 good governance,

28.2 benefits realisation,

28.3 risk management and assurance processes,

28.4 partnering with Māori, and

28.5 meaningful engagement and collaboration with disabled people and their communities, the education sector and Pacific communities.

29 An engagement approach for the next stage of work will be established to enable the collaborative design of options for a future system of supports for learners with the highest level of need. This will enable existing assumptions in the analysis to be tested and refined, providing a stronger basis for understanding the costs associated with change. It is important that through this process we don't continue to perpetuate a history of exclusion for these groups and design a system that works for them.

30 This engagement needs to be progressed as soon as possible to maintain momentum on the programme of change. I am aware that we are entering a period of restraint,

ahead of the election, and that there are risks that the engagement may become politicised. However, I consider that deferring engagement to collaboratively develop and design the new system will lead to delays in changing the system to better support learners with the highest level of need. To this end, I seek your endorsement for engagement to take place over this period.

- 31 I also acknowledge the risk that this engagement will raise the expectations of our communities the work aims to serve that all of their priorities will be implemented and funded. The Ministry will be clear that this collaboration does not pre-empt future funding and policy decisions by Cabinet.
- 32 Many young people, their families/whānau and advocates in the sector have been waiting for change for far too long. It is also important we use what we heard from these communities through the Review to make changes now where we can. The Ministry has identified short to medium term changes that have been made and/or will be underway soon that will help to ensure those learners identified by the Review as having unmet need, are able to access services that support their presence, participation and progress in education. These include:
  - 32.1 The continued roll out of He Pikorua and the Learning Support Delivery Model
  - 32.2 Continued supports for professional learning including in areas such as reducing physical restraint use, inclusive curriculum design, and social and emotional learning in early years
  - 32.3 Increasing capacity and streamlining access to supports including supporting teacher capability through the Oral language and literacy initiative
  - 32.4 Streamlining access to supports at a regional level, including access to teacher's aide funding through In Class Support.
- 33 The Ministry will look to increase the capacity for existing services and design and deliver more flexible approaches to delivering additional supports in the short to medium term, while work on the collaborative design of a new system is progressed.  
9(2)(f)(iv)
- 34 There is also further work to do to articulate the scope and scale of the changes signalled in the Review in relation to other work currently underway to progressively realise an inclusive education system in line with the UNCRPD. Much of this work is having an impact now or will start to make a difference soon. This includes ongoing implementation of the Learning Support Delivery Model, and Te Tūapapa o He Pikorua (the Ministry's practice framework for learning support). It also includes work to build inclusion into the universal aspects of the education system, including curriculum, teaching methods and assessment. Work such as refreshing the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC), redesigning Te Marautanga o Aotearoa (TMoA), the Literacy & Communication and Maths Strategy and Hei Raukura Mō te Mokopuna, and the NCEA Change Programme are critical to taking this forward.
- 35 Having a better understanding of this landscape and the intersections between work will enable us to better articulate the scope of the programme of changes required.

This needs to be positioned within a clear definition of what inclusive education means in a New Zealand context. The Government response to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities' recommendation that New Zealand develop an inclusive education strategy will provide a useful overarching framework for building this understanding.

### Te Tiriti impacts

- 36 Ākonga Māori and their whānau experience institutional bias and discrimination in the education sector. This experience is then compounded for ākonga Māori who have additional learning needs, due to the lack of alignment between western and te ao Māori conceptions of disability.
- 37 Social Wellbeing Agency (SWA) analysis found that ākonga Māori have the largest proportion of learners with evidence of highest needs. While students receiving learning support services are disproportionately ākonga Māori, with 15% of ākonga Māori receiving one or more supports, the extent to which the need is met by the current learner supports can differ. In addition, the supports that ākonga Māori are receiving tends to not be culturally or linguistically appropriate.
- 38 We recognise that in the development of the business case and next steps we will need to work with whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori to consider:
- 38.1 **Tino rangatiratanga:** The guarantee of tino rangatiratanga, which provides for Māori self-determination and mana motuhake in the design, delivery, and monitoring of education and, in particular, learning support.
  - 38.2 **Equity:** The principle of equity, which requires the Crown to commit to achieving equitable education outcomes for Māori.
  - 38.3 **Active protection:** The principle of active protection, which requires the Crown to act, to the fullest extent practicable, to achieve equitable education outcomes for Māori. This includes ensuring that it, its agents, and its Treaty partner are well informed on the extent, and nature, of both Māori education outcomes and efforts to achieve Māori education equity.
  - 38.4 **Options:** The principle of options, which requires the Crown to provide for and properly resource kaupapa Māori learning support services. Furthermore, the Crown is obliged to ensure that all learning support services are provided in a culturally appropriate way that recognises and supports the expression of hauora Māori models of care.
  - 38.5 **Partnership:** The principle of partnership, which requires the Crown and Māori to work in partnership in the governance, design, delivery, and monitoring of learning support. Māori must be co-designers, with the Crown, of learning support for Māori.
- 39 The partnership approach proposed by this paper aims to reset the relationship with Māori on this Kaupapa, to ensure we are taking a genuine partnership approach and meeting our Te Tiriti obligations.

## Financial Implications

40 9(2)(f)(iv)

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## Legislative Implications

42 There are no legislative implications arising from this paper. However, as identified in previous Cabinet papers, as the Programme is progressed there may be future legislative implications. For example, updating the Education and Training Act 2020 to allow for dual enrolment between specialist school and local school settings.

## Impact Analysis

### Regulatory Impact Statement

43 A Regulatory Impact Statement is not required.

### Climate Implications of Policy Assessment

44 A Climate Implications of Policy Assessment (CIPA) is not required.

## Population Implications

45 The changes will contribute towards reducing the inequities for priority groups within the education system. Children and young people are central to this Review and all the proposed building blocks for change work to provide better outcomes for students. The population groups specific to the Review and the impacts are outlined in the table below.

Population group	How the proposal may affect this group
Māori	Ākonga Māori are overrepresented in learning support services and the support they receive tends to not be culturally or linguistically appropriate. The building blocks for changes aim to increase the number of te reo

	speakers in the teaching and specialist workforce and resource iwi to develop culturally appropriate support models for specialist workforce roles. Supports and services that meet the needs of whānau will also be developed in partnership with Māori and iwi.
Disabled people	Disabled people experience exclusion from local school settings with some specialist schools still operating as separate entities despite our UNCRPD obligations to progressively realise an inclusive education system at all levels. The changes envisaged by the Programme will work together to ensure that the education system better supports disabled learners to be present, participate, and progress in education.
Pacific communities	Based on the SWA analysis using the IDI, Pacific students are the largest portion of students with 3+ high or very high learning needs. Having complex needs can require accessing support from multiple services and having to fit within the criteria for each of the separate supports. The building blocks for change will replace the existing application requirements for access to support with a needs-assessment approach that will tailor supports to the student's need. Pacific families and communities will also be supported to develop culturally appropriate supports that best meet their needs.
Rural communities	There are known gaps in access to supports in rural communities and remote areas, with the current workforce being mainly spread across urban centres. The building blocks for change will map where the workforce gaps are and consider how to be more innovative in how we respond to the demand.
Oranga Tamariki children in care and protection	It is known that the children in the care and protection of Oranga Tamariki have complex needs that are often not met by agencies. There are gaps in supports for children who have high needs in the Oranga Tamariki system. The building blocks for change will provide flexible trauma-informed services that will support positive engagement in education for children and young people who are involved with Oranga Tamariki care and protection and youth justice systems
Ethnic communities	Students with high needs in scope of the Review may also be from ethnic communities and/or children/young people who are English language learners (ELLs). Based on 2021 data, there were around 56,000 ELLs in schools. Some of these students may also have a disability, be neurodiverse or have other needs that present in the classroom that result in needing a high level of support. These students will benefit from the changes being proposed in this paper.
Girls and women	Based on the SWA analysis using the IDI, female students make up 35% of the group of students with high or very high learning needs, and 41% of those with unmet needs. People providing care for children and young people with the highest levels of need are primarily women. Any system that improves support for this group of learners will also have benefits for primary carers, e.g. reducing stress, improving wellbeing.

## Human Rights

- 46 The proposals in this paper are consistent with our obligations under the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 and the Human Rights Act 1993.

## Consultation

- 47 In drafting this paper, the following agencies were consulted: Te Puni Kōkiri; the Ministry for Pacific Peoples; Te Tari Mātāwaka – Ministry for Ethnic Communities; Manatū Hauora – the Ministry of Health; Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children; the Ministry of Social Development; Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People; and Treasury. The Human Rights Commission was provided with an opportunity to comment. The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet was informed.

## Communications

- 48 As this Cabinet Paper is not seeking any new policy decisions, I am not intending to make any associated announcements. The Ministry will update stakeholders on this report back and next steps for engagement to progress the Highest Needs Change Programme.

## Proactive Release

- 49 I intend to proactively release this Cabinet Paper with appropriate redactions relating to decisions yet to be made by Cabinet and Budget sensitive information.

## Recommendations

The Minister for Education recommends that the Committee:

- 1 **Note** the Highest Needs Review signalled a need for significant and transformational change to the system of providing learning supports that ensures that students with high needs are able to be present, participate and progress.
- 2 **Note** that in October 2022, Cabinet agreed to the direction of travel for a new system of learning support for children and young people with the highest needs which includes the seven building blocks for change [CAB-22-MIN-0490]:
  - 2.1 A new service delivery system;
  - 2.2 Customised tailored supports;
  - 2.3 An integrated and inclusive schooling network;
  - 2.4 Learning supports for Māori and Pacific whānau and families developed by Māori and Pacific people;
  - 2.5 A confident, capable workforce with the capacity to respond;
  - 2.6 A new funding model to support a tailored and flexible approach; and
  - 2.7 Stronger integration with other agencies.
- 3 **Note** that the Ministry of Education is establishing a programme of change to address the recommendations of the Highest Needs Review.

- 4 **Note** the progress the Ministry of Education has made towards developing an **Indicative** Programme Business Case to support investment decisions required to move to a new model for supporting learners with the highest levels of learning need, including identifying options for change.

5 9(2)(f)(iv)

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- 7 **Agree** that the Ministry of Education will partner with Māori, and work with disabled people and their communities, the education sector, and Pacific communities to establish relationships, build trust, and collaboratively develop and design options for a new system of supports.

- 8 **Note** that engagement on the development and design of options for a new system of supports will not pre-empt future policy and funding decisions by Cabinet

- 9 **Note** the proposed engagement and development of the high-level design will be used to inform an Indicative Programme Business Case which reflects the Ministry's response to the Gateway Review's recommendations.

- 10 **Note** that the Ministry will put in place arrangements for good governance, benefits realisation, risk management and assurance processes for the programme of change.

- 11 **Note** that the Ministry of Education does not have the required capacity or capability internally to deliver on the work to collaboratively develop and design the new system of supports beyond the 2023/24 financial year.

12 9(2)(f)(iv)

- 13 **Invite** the Minister for Education to report back to Cabinet with an Indicative Programme Business Case, which reflects the collaborative development and design of options with Māori, disabled people and their communities, the education sector and Pacific communities, to seek agreement and funding for the further design and implementation of a new system of supports that ensures that learners with the highest needs receive the support they need to be present, participate and progress.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Jan Tinetti

Minister of Education



# Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee

## Summary

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### Progress Update on the Highest Needs Change Programme

#### Portfolio

#### Education

This paper provides a progress update on the Highest Needs review and seeks agreement for the Ministry of Education to work with Māori, disabled people and their communities, the education sector, and Pacific communities to collaboratively develop and design options for a new system of supports. The scale of change envisaged by the Highest Needs review is complex and will require significant investment over the next 20 years.

9(2)(f)(iv)

#### The Minister of Education recommends that the Committee:

- 1 note that the Highest Needs Review signalled a need for significant and transformational change to the system of providing learning supports that ensures that students with high needs are able to be present, participate and progress;
- 2 note that in October 2022, Cabinet agreed to the direction of travel for a new system of learning support for children and young people with the highest needs which includes the seven building blocks for change:
  - 2.1 A new service delivery system;
  - 2.2 Customised tailored supports;
  - 2.3 An integrated and inclusive schooling network;

- 2.4 Learning supports for Māori and Pacific whānau and families developed by Māori and Pacific people;
- 2.5 A confident, capable workforce with the capacity to respond;
- 2.6 A new funding model to support a tailored and flexible approach;
- 2.7 Stronger integration with other agencies;

[CAB-22-MIN-0490]

- 3 note that the Ministry of Education is establishing a programme of change to address the recommendations of the Highest Needs Review;
- 4 note that the Ministry of Education (the Ministry) has made progress towards developing an Indicative Programme Business Case to support investment decisions required to move to a new model for supporting learners with the highest levels of learning need, including identifying options for change;
- 5 9(2)(f)(iv)
- 6
- 7 agree that the Ministry partner with Māori, and work with disabled people and their communities, the education sector, and Pacific communities to establish relationships, build trust, and collaboratively develop and design options for a new system of supports;
- 8 note that engagement on the development and design of options for a new system of supports will not pre-empt future policy and funding decisions by Cabinet;
- 9 note that the proposed engagement and development of the high-level design will be used to inform an Indicative Programme Business Case which reflects the Ministry's response to the Gateway Review's recommendations;
- 10 note that the Ministry will put in place arrangements for good governance, benefits realisation, risk management, and assurance processes for the programme of change;
- 11 note that the Ministry does not have the required capacity or capability internally to deliver on the work to collaboratively develop and design the new system of supports beyond the 2023/24 financial year;
- 12 9(2)(f)(iv)
- 13 invite the Minister of Education to report back to SWC:
  - 13.1 with an Indicative Programme Business Case which reflects the collaborative development and design of options with Māori, disabled people and their communities, the education sector, and Pacific communities;

- 13.2 to seek agreement to, and funding for, the further design and implementation of a new system of supports that ensures that learners with the highest needs receive the support they need to be present, participate and progress.

Rachel Clarke  
Committee Secretary

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**Hard-copy distribution:**  
Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee

Proactively Released



# Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee

## Minute of Decision

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### Progress Update on the Highest Needs Change Programme

**Portfolio**                      **Education**

On 28 June 2023, the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee (SWC):

- 1        **noted** that the Highest Needs Review signalled a need for significant and transformational change to the system of providing learning supports that ensures that students with high needs are able to be present, participate, and progress;
- 2        **noted** that in October 2022, Cabinet agreed to the direction of travel for a new system of learning support for children and young people with the highest needs which includes the seven building blocks for change:
  - 2.1      A new service delivery system;
  - 2.2      Customised tailored supports;
  - 2.3      An integrated and inclusive schooling network;
  - 2.4      Learning supports for Māori and Pacific whānau and families developed by Māori and Pacific people;
  - 2.5      A confident, capable workforce with the capacity to respond;
  - 2.6      A new funding model to support a tailored and flexible approach;
  - 2.7      Stronger integration with other agencies;

[CAB-22-MIN-0490]

- 3        **noted** that the Ministry of Education (the Ministry) is establishing a programme of change to address the recommendations of the Highest Needs Review;
- 4        **noted** that the Ministry has made progress towards developing an Indicative Programme Business Case to support investment decisions required to move to a new model for supporting learners with the highest levels of learning need, including identifying options for change;

- 5        9(2)(f)(iv)

- 6 9(2)(f)(iv)
- 7 **agreed** that the Ministry partner with Māori, and work with disabled people and their communities, the education sector, and Pacific communities to establish relationships, build trust, and collaboratively develop and design options for a new system of supports;
- 8 **noted** that engagement on the development and design of options for a new system of supports will not pre-empt future policy and funding decisions by Cabinet;
- 9 **noted** that the proposed engagement and development of the high-level design will be used to inform an Indicative Programme Business Case which reflects the Ministry's response to the Gateway Review's recommendations;
- 10 **noted** that the Ministry will put in place arrangements for good governance, benefits realisation, risk management, and assurance processes for the programme of change;
- 11 **noted** that the Ministry does not have the required capacity or capability internally to deliver on the work to collaboratively develop and design the new system of supports beyond the 2023/24 financial year;
- 12 **noted** that the Ministry intends to submit a Budget 2024 bid for funding to collaboratively develop and design the new system and to progress short term improvements including addressing unmet demand for current learning supports;
- 13 **invited** the Minister of Education to report back to SWC:
- 13.1 with an Indicative Programme Business Case which reflects the collaborative development and design of options with Māori, disabled people and their communities, the education sector, and Pacific communities;
- 13.2 to seek agreement to, and funding for, the further design and implementation of a new system of supports that ensures that learners with the highest needs receive the support they need to be present, participate and progress.

Rachel Clarke  
Committee Secretary

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**Present:**

Hon Carmel Sepuloni (Chair)  
Hon Kelvin Davis  
Hon Dr Megan Woods  
Hon Jan Tinetti  
Hon Kiri Allan  
Hon Priyanca Radhakrishnan  
Hon Barbara Edmonds  
Hon Willow-Jean Prime  
Hon Rino Tirikatene

**Officials present from:**

Office of the Prime Minister  
Officials Committee for SWC



# Cabinet

## Minute of Decision

*This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.*

### Report of the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee: Period Ended 30 June 2023

On 3 July 2023, Cabinet made the following decisions on the work of the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee for the period ended 30 June 2023:

Out of Scope


SWC-23-MIN-0079

**Progress Update on the Highest Needs Change Programme**  
Portfolio: Education

Separate minute:  
CAB-23-MIN-0296.01

Out of Scope

Out of Scope



Diana Hawker  
Acting Secretary of the Cabinet

Proactively Released



# Cabinet

## Minute of Decision

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### Progress Update on the Highest Needs Change Programme

Portfolio                      Education

On 3 July 2023, following reference from the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee, Cabinet:

- 1        **noted** that the Highest Needs Review signalled a need for significant and transformational change to the system of providing learning supports that ensures that students with high needs are able to be present, participate, and progress;
- 2        **noted** that in October 2022, Cabinet agreed to the direction of travel for a new system of learning support for children and young people with the highest needs which includes the seven building blocks for change:
  - 2.1      A new service delivery system;
  - 2.2      Customised tailored supports;
  - 2.3      An integrated and inclusive schooling network;
  - 2.4      Learning supports for Māori and Pacific whānau and families developed by Māori and Pacific people;
  - 2.5      A confident, capable workforce with the capacity to respond;
  - 2.6      A new funding model to support a tailored and flexible approach;
  - 2.7      Stronger integration with other agencies;

[CAB-22-MIN-0490]

- 3        **noted** that the Ministry of Education (the Ministry) is establishing a programme of change to address the recommendations of the Highest Needs Review;
- 4        **noted** that the Ministry has made progress towards developing an Indicative Programme Business Case to support investment decisions required to move to a new model for supporting learners with the highest levels of learning need, including identifying options for change;
- 5        9(2)(f)(iv)

6

9(2)(f)(iv)

7

**agreed** that the Ministry partner with Māori, and work with disabled people and their communities, the education sector, and Pacific communities to establish relationships, build trust, and engage on development and design options for a new system of supports;

8

**noted** that engagement on the development and design of options for a new system of supports will not pre-empt future policy and funding decisions by Cabinet;

9

**noted** that the proposed engagement and development of the high-level design will be used to inform an Indicative Programme Business Case which reflects the Ministry's response to the Gateway Review's recommendations;

10

**noted** that the Ministry will put in place arrangements for good governance, benefits realisation, risk management, and assurance processes for the programme of change;

11

**noted** that the Ministry does not have the required capacity or capability internally to deliver on the work to engage on the development and design of the new system of supports beyond the 2023/24 financial year;

12

9(2)(f)(iv)

13

**invited** the Minister of Education to report back to SWC:

13.1 with an Indicative Programme Business Case which reflects the approach of engagement on the development and design of options with Māori, disabled people and their communities, the education sector, and Pacific communities;

13.2 to seek agreement to, and funding for, the further design and implementation of a new system of supports that ensures that learners with the highest needs receive the support they need to be present, participate and progress.

Diana Hawker  
Acting Secretary of the Cabinet

**Secretary's Note:** This minute replaces SWC-23-MIN-0079. Cabinet agreed to amend paragraphs 7, 11, 12 and 13.