Education Report: Key insights and High-Level Options for Change Highest Needs Review

To:	Hon Jan Tinetti, Associate Minister of Education		
Cc:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
Date:	8 June 2022	Priority:	High
Security Level:	In Confidence	METIS No:	1288002
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Key contact and number:	9(2)(a)	DDI:	
Messaging seen by Communications team:	No	Round robin:	No

Purpose of report

The purpose of this paper is to:

- **Provide** a summary of the NZCER key insights report that draws together the information from the literature review, Social Wellbeing Agency's data analysis and engagement phases.

- **Outline some** initial high-level options along a continuum of change for the Highest Needs Review.

- **Discuss** the implications of progressing any option for change within the current fiscal restraints.

Summary

1. Following Cabinet approval to the scope and terms of reference for the Highest Needs Review (the Review) [refer CBC-21-MIN-082], the Ministry undertook public engagement to help unpack identified issues, barriers and areas of concern, and to inform the development of options and solutions for change. The second phase of engagement was completed on 31 March 2022.

2. We received a total of 1093 submissions, with 717 received through the online submission portal. As of 30 May 2022, we have analysed around 71% of the total submissions and expect to have the remainder analysed by the end of June.

3. NZCER have been commissioned to draw insights for the Review from across the engagement, a literature review, and statistical analysis of IDI data. The high-level insights are outlined in Annex One.

4. The Review has committed to ensure options are developed using the Enabling Good Lives (EGL) principles[1] and Ka Hikitia – Ka Hāpaitia (Ka Hikitia) outcome domains.[2] The importance of this approach has been confirmed through the engagement, which outlined that future service delivery and supports need to be based on inclusive education[3] and the EGL approach.

5. The desired outcomes for the Review and the initial high-level options are provided in Annex Three. To achieve all of the outcomes of the Review, significant change across all layers of the education system would be needed.

6. This is because students with the highest needs are supported within the wider context of the education system, so making changes to individualised supports in isolation would be insufficient to meet their needs. For example, changes to schoolwide and classroom practices need to set the foundations for all learners so that tailored supports can be fully integrated to support the presence, participation, progress and belonging of learners with high needs in local settings.

7. We also consider that the changes could not be done all at once due to the level of change required.

8. This paper provides you with three initial high-level options along a continuum of change from 'highly complex, large in scale, and difficult to cost' to 'lower in complexity, smaller scale change, and more predictable cost'. Once you have provided an indication of which options you want to further analyse, we will provide detail on how we could achieve them.

9. It is important to note that these options are not mutually exclusive from one another. It is possible to select elements from each option along the continuum of change to create a new option.

10. Our research and evidence tell us that achieving all of the outcomes of the Review is a significant undertaking that would involve a considerable resource commitment. Fully meeting need in a system that is currently designed to ration services would involve a large fiscal cost, and a multi-year investment plan will be needed to support implementation.

Recommended Actions

The Ministry of Education recommends that you:

a. **note** the summary of the NZCER key insights report

Noted

b. **agree** to the desired outcomes of the Review:

i. The system of supports will build local relationships and create educationally powerful connections with learners, family and whānau to improve educational outcomes

Agree / **Disagree**

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[1] Enabling Good Lives principles: Mana enhancing, beginning early, person centred, easy to use, ordinary life outcomes, self-determination, relationship building.

[2] Ka Hikitia outcome domains: Te Tangata, Te Whānau, Te Kanorautanga, Te Tuakiritanga, Te Rangatiratanga.

[3] When we mention inclusive education we are referring to the UNCRPD definition of inclusion.

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ii.   Families and whānau will have greater choice and control in the access to and delivery of supports

Agree / Disagree

iii.   Supports are person centred and provide ordinary life outcomes and opportunities for education, future employment, and social participation in life

Agree / Disagree

iv.   Adults in the system will be confident in meeting the needs of learners with high and complex needs

Agree / Disagree

c.   **agree** to further analysis of one or more of the following options for change:

Option A: Integrate Enabling Good Lives into individualised learning support services

Agree / Disagree

OR

Option B: Mixed Model Approach

Agree / Disagree

OR

Option C: Strengthening the current system

Agree / Disagree

OR

A combination of the above options and their elements

Agree / Disagree

d.   **note** that the evidence and insights we have gathered during the review demonstrate that fully meeting needs carries a large fiscal cost, and a multi-year investment plan will be needed to support implementation

Noted

Proactive Release Recommendation

e.   **agree** that this briefing is not released at this time as it is subject to Ministerial decision and future Budget consideration.

Agree / Disagree

Ben O'Meara
Group Manager
Te Puna Kaupapahere

08/06/2022

Hon Jan Tinetti
Associate Minister of Education

21/06/2022

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Background

1. Following Cabinet approval to the scope and terms of reference for the Highest Needs Review (the Review) [refer CAB-21-MIN-0356], the Ministry undertook public engagement to help unpack identified issues, barriers and areas of concern and inform the development of options and solutions for change.

2. The second phase of engagement was completed on 31 March 2022. We received a total of 1093 submissions, with 717 received through the online submission portal.

3. As of 30 May 2022, we have analysed around 71% of the total submissions and expect to have the remainder analysed by the end of June.

4. We provided you with an information update [METIS 1285932 refers] on the Social Wellbeing Agency's analysis using the Statistics New Zealand's Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI). The analysis indicates that for every seven learners there's around three who are not having their needs met (around 5%).

5. The IDI data is indicative, at this stage. We are undertaking further analysis to see if there is any refinement that needs to be done to quantify the level of unmet need more accurately.

Summary of the NZCER Insights report

6. We asked NZCER to draw on the thematic analysis of engagement (410 of the total submissions were provided to NZCER), analysis of a literature review, and statistical analysis of IDI data, to provide insights relating to the six scope areas of the Review. The high-level insights are outlined below and more detail on these are provided in Annex One. The insights received are not new and align with what we have heard through previous engagements, such as the Learning Support Action Plan. These insights are being used to inform our thinking and advice about policy options.

    a. **Scope area 1 - the journey through the education system.** Well-planned and supported transitions will ensure children and young people are well-placed to learn and enjoy positive relationships with their peers.

    b. **Scope area 2 - access to support**. The current suite of separate funding pools is not enabling identification of all the real needs for, and access to, additional supports. In addition, as identified in the following points, there does not seem to be sufficient resourcing for the various support funds.

    c. **Scope area 3 - responsiveness of supports.** Taking a child-centred holistic approach to identifying a child's needs is likely to identify the best responses and supports.

    d. **Scope area 4 - fluid boundaries.** There seems to be an interest in being able to use specialist schools' expertise and resources for children, teachers and teacher aides in local settings, where appropriate.

    e. **Scope area 5 - supports for adults across the system.** Professional development for teachers and teacher aides needs to be improved, as does support for whānau to understand their child's needs, how to access supports and what they can do to support their child learning and wellbeing.

    f. **Scope area 6 - alignment across agencies.** There is scope to both reduce complexity for whānau working with various agencies to obtain supports for their child, and to increase cross-agency collaboration to build a more locally integrated provision of education, health, and parental support.

Issues the Review aims to address

7. Through two engagement phases we have heard from a wide range of stakeholders[4] about the persisting issues with accessing and receiving support for learners with high and complex needs. The feedback we have received has informed the key issues, the scope of the Review and the desired outcomes. The core issues the Review aims to address are:

    a. There continues to be persistent inequity of access to supports for:

        •   rural or isolated learners and those learners across those settings where there is not equity of access to specialist supports (e.g., alternative education, Te Kura, Māori-medium settings);

        •   Ākonga Māori and Pacific learners, which is exacerbated by the lack of culturally and linguistically appropriate services, programmes, assessment measures, and resources; and

        •   learners who are Deaf, hard of hearing, or vision impaired, and who require access to adults with a high proficiency in New Zealand Sign Language or Braille for language acquisition.

    b. There is unmet need[5] in the system and there are shortages and delays in the type and range of supports available including:

        •   insufficient support for children transitioning from early childhood services to school;

        •   long wait times for accessing support;

        •   insufficient flexibility in how supports are accessed and delivered;

        •   applying for support is confusing, difficult to complete, often based on rigid criteria, deficit focused, and creates negative experiences for children and families.

    c. There are gaps in the system relating to:

        •   education system infrastructure that are impacting on service quality and preventing the learning support network from being delivered as a cohesive and integrated provision of services.

        •   the alignment of supports across agencies. Services are disconnected from each other causing confusion for families/whānau.

    d. Families don't feel empowered or supported in the decision-making process on how to best support their child/young person.

    e. Educators and specialists don't feel enabled, including being able to undertake ongoing professional development, to meet the diverse needs of the learner population.

8. The NZCER insights and the key issues that have come out of the Review so far confirm what we have heard through previous engagements, such as the Learning Support Action Plan. These insights and issues will be used to inform the outcomes and options development phase of the Review.

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[4] Stakeholders include parent groups, Māori, Pacific communities, disabled persons, the education sector including resource teachers and specialists, the health, disability sector and social sectors
[5] When we say unmet need we mean learners who have unidentified learning support needs.

Principles and frameworks guiding these outcomes

9. The Review has committed through the Scope Cabinet paper [CAB-21-MIN-0356] to ensure options are developed within the Enabling Good Lives (EGL) principles[6] and Ka Hikitia – Ka Hāpaitia (Ka Hikitia) outcome domains.[7] The importance of this approach has been confirmed through the engagement, which has told us that future service delivery and supports need to be based on inclusive education and the EGL approach. The high-level options for change outlined from paragraph 32 consider how well they meet the EGL principles and Ka Hikitia outcome domains.

10. The Review will also be underpinned by Te Tūāpapa o He Pikorua[8] and consider the wider education context and its impact on options development. For learners with the highest needs, effective support relies not only on specific individualised supports but also on the support provided through inclusive education practices within schools more generally.

The Ministry has made changes to the tiered model of support

11. The Ministry has made improvements to He Pikorua, its practice framework and has updated the tiered model of support to become Te Tūāpapa o He Pikorua (Te Tūāpapa).

12. Te Tūāpapa reflects the change practices within He Pikorua that emphasise the deliberate acknowledgement and inclusion of learning supports within day-to-day teaching and learning across settings. It moves away from the concept of learning supports and services that are separate or stand alone. It provides a focus on understanding the strengths, aspirations and needs of children and young people in their different settings and planning for meaningful and successful education pathways. It consists of Te Matua (universal), Te Kāhui (targeted) and Te Arotahi (tailored) practices. Annex 1 provides additional detail on the layers of Te Tūāpapa and how they aim to set the foundations of a dynamic, inclusive educational journey.

Desired outcomes of the Review

13. Following the key insights provided by NZCER and discussions with the Review's Advisory Group, we have identified desired outcomes for the Review. These outcomes are closely tied to the Enabling Good Lives principles and Ka Hikitia outcome domains and are outlined below.

The system of supports will build local relationships and create educationally powerful connections with learners, family[9], whānau to improve educational outcomes

14. Children and their whānau will be able to access the support they need from the moment they enter early learning until when they leave school. Children and young people will be supported throughout any transition points in their education journey. Supports will either follow them through to the next stage of learning or the support they require will be planned for and begin on their first day in their new setting.

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[6] Enabling Good Lives principles: Mana enhancing, beginning early, person centred, easy to use, ordinary life outcomes, self-determination, relationship building.

[7] Ka Hikitia outcome domains: Te Tangata, Te Whānau, Te Kanorautanga, Te Tuakiritanga, Te Rangatiratanga.

[8] He Pikorua is the practice framework that provides guidance to all Ministry and RTLB Learning Support practitioners, managers and practice leaders in their day-to-day mahi. Refer Appendix two.

[9] When using the term family/families throughout this paper this is inclusive of different and diverse Pacific conceptions of family, including Aiga (Sāmoa), Matavuvale (Fiji), Magafaoa (Niue), Kāiga (Tokelau), Kāinga (Tonga), Ngutuare Tangata (Cook Island), and Kaaiga (Tuvalu).

15. We will have an inclusive education network where schools/kura are welcoming and children/young people feel they belong. Children/young people can access an inclusive curriculum on an equal basis to others to be able to participate, progress and achieve throughout their education pathway.

Families and whānau will have greater choice and control in the access to and delivery of supports

16. A partnership approach with Māori, iwi, Pacific and disabled communities recognises that they have the in-depth knowledge on how to best support their family and whānau to access, progress, and achieve in the education pathway of their choice. Family/whānau voice is valued and there is a collaborative relationship with schools and specialist staff so that whānau have true choice in identifying what supports will best meet their needs.

17. Family/whānau have multiple options for accessing support within decision-making and there is true flexibility in what that support looks like. For example, whānau can have a kaumatua at the table.

Supports are person centred and provide ordinary life outcomes and opportunities for education, future employment, and social participation in life

18. Children and young people have opportunities for learning that build on their strengths, support goals and aspirations for post-secondary school (for example employment and social participation) like others at similar stage of life.

19. Māori whānau and Pacific families and communities have easier and greater access to a range of supports available from agencies that uphold their identity, language and culture. These supports are coordinated, cohesive, mana enhancing, and person/family centered so they are easier to navigate and access when needed.

Adults in the system will be confident in meeting the needs of learners with high and complex needs

20. Adults in the system hold high expectations, value and respect all children and young people and tailor learning programmes to support the aspiration and strengths of learners.

21. The network of support for children and young people provides ongoing learning and capability building for adults; to recognise and respect the strengths and skills of children and young people with the highest needs.

22. Specialist roles are valued and there is an emphasis on creating a diverse workforce representing Māori, Pacific and disabled peoples that learners can identify with and see themselves within.

How the Review will achieve these outcomes

23. To achieve the outcomes of the Review significant change across all layers of the education system needs to take place. This is because the individualised needs of our learners with the highest needs occur within the wider context of the education system, so changes to fully meet their needs cannot be achieved through changes to individualised support in isolation. For example, changes to schoolwide and classroom practices need to set the foundations for all learners so that tailored supports can be

fully integrated to support the presence, participation, progress and belonging of learners with high needs in local settings.

24. The changes can also not be done all at once due to the level of change required.

25. The recommendations of the Review will need to be coherent with other developments across education. There is work underway to strengthen the system for all children and young people. This work is focused on the design of learning environments, curriculum and assessment where all learners have their learning valued and recognised. These foundational pieces of work currently underway include:

   a. **The Māori Medium Education / Kaupapa Māori Education work programme** – focused on growing the pathway and provision of MME/KME in Aotearoa, from early learning through to schooling and into tertiary education, as well as supporting iwi and Māori to have greater agency and authority over the work programme.

   b. **New Zealand Curriculum Refresh** – will ensure that the curriculum truly honours Te Tiriti, is inclusive, and explicitly serves and cultivates all learners so that they are confident in who they are and in their abilities.

   c. **Literacy & Communication and Maths Strategy** – will guide action to shape the early learning and schooling system to deliver equity and excellence in the teaching and learning of literacy & communication and maths. Learners being more successful in these foundational skills, and enjoying their learning more, will also help children and young people to stay engaged in education.

   d. **The NCEA Change Programme** – seeks to make NCEA more inclusive and accessible by designing achievement standards and resources to give equitable opportunities for all learners; and simplifying the application and evaluation process for Special Assessment Conditions (SACs).

   e. **Making school property more accessible** – the Ministry has recently updated the design standards for new builds through the Designing Schools in New Zealand (DSNZ) guidelines. Our aim is to ensure the most common accessibility requirements are met in every new build so that our priority learners are freely able to access local learning. The Ministry is also working to improve the approach to modifying existing buildings to meet individual children's needs to ensure there are no barriers to taking part in school life or learning.

26. Building and embedding the foundational pieces of work above means that while the Te Matua layer is strengthening the culture and practices of the learning community, the Review can focus on making improvements to Te Kāhui and Te Arotahi and make sure they are integrated into a system of support across all layers of Te Tūāpapa.

High-level options for change to work towards achieving the outcomes

A continuum of change should be considered

27. This paper provides you with three initial high-level options along a continuum of change from 'highly complex, large in scale, and difficult to cost' to 'lower in complexity, smaller scale change, and more predictable cost. Annex Three provides an overview of the three options for change. Once you have provided an indication of the options you want to further develop, we will provide detail on how we could achieve this. These options are not mutually exclusive from one another. It is possible to select elements from each option along the continuum of change to create a new option.

Option A: Integration with the Enabling Good Lives (EGL) and Whānau Ora approach

28. This option considers integrating most of the Ministry's Te Arotahi and some of the Te Kāhui supports into the EGL national rollout as well as integrating into Whānau Ora. This means the available type and mix of supports from education would be extended and combined with supports available from other agencies who are a part of EGL and Whānau Ora. This integration would create a strong partnership approach with Māori, iwi, and Pacific communities and ensure equity of access for kura to meet the needs of ākonga in the way that works best for them. However, children, young people and their families/whānau would need to be eligible to access EGL and its services.

System changes to how supports are accessed and delivered

29. The control of resources would be given to family and whānau rather than sitting with the school or service. In practice schools and services would need to be a part of conversations with families and whānau, to ensure that the package of supports worked for the school or service as well as the family or whānau. Whānau would have agency and authority in choosing and purchasing supports that meet their needs, maintain their mana, and uphold their identity, language and culture. They would have access to a connector / kaitūhono to help them navigate and choose which supports they require.

30. Children and their whānau would be able to access the support they need from the moment they enter early learning until when they leave school, and they would have control over changing what this support looks like as their child's needs change.

Planning for diversity and inclusion

31. This option would focus on inclusion by reconsidering the role of day and residential specialist schools, to achieve an inclusive education network where children/young people are learning alongside their peers in local schools.

32. It would develop a network of support for children and young people. This network would provide ongoing learning and capability building for adults to recognise and respect the strengths and skills of children and young people with the highest needs. It would be supported by learner information systems for families and supporting adults to access.

33. This option would value a much wider range of specialist roles than we currently have. It would acknowledge and value families and whānau choosing who they know and trust to support them, including the ability to be supported by kaumātua and tohunga. This option would place an emphasis on creating a diverse workforce representing Māori, Pacific and disabled peoples that learners can identify with and see themselves within.

How this option meets the desired outcomes of the Review

34. This option would deliver on all the outcomes of the Review. It provides choice and control to family/whānau in access to and delivery of supports. It also provides a strong partnership model with Māori, iwi, Pacific and disabled communities and would create educationally powerful connections between schools and families by empowering whānau voice in how to best meet the needs of their child/young person.

Key considerations of the option

35. This option would be an extensive change for education as it is moving the control of resources from schools to families/whānau. This option would allow education and other agencies within EGL and Whānau Ora to be more aligned making the delivery of supports more joined up for families/whānau.

36. The implication of this option for schools and services will need to be worked through. Schools and services may not agree that the mix of services a family or whānau has chosen is what they need to support the learner. It may mean that the Ministry would need to enforce/guarantee the right of every learner to attend school based on the supports that the family or whānau chose.

37. We will also need to further work through how we will enable family/whānau to develop their own package of supports who require access to Te Arotahi supports but who do not identify as disabled.

Option B: Mixed model approach

38. This option would provide a mixed model approach to how services are accessed and delivered. It would provide multiple pathways and opportunities to access different supports depending on what works best for children/young people and their family/whānau, while maintaining some elements of the current system.

System changes to how supports are accessed and delivered

39. This option would support the development of a partnership approach by utilising EGL infrastructure and the Whānau Ora approach. This would provide a flexible pathway to accessing supports for children/young people and their family/whānau. It would allow us to deliver more of the benefits of EGL and Whānau Ora within the current system framework. The Ministry would remain the decision maker and budget holder but would work with a connector / kaitūhono to put together a cross agency package of supports and services (the personal budget aspects of EGL would not be implemented within education).

40. A kaitūhono role would also assist in ensuring families/whānau know what supports are available to them at each point of their education journey.

41. This option could allow for greater flexibility in ways specialists and supports can be delivered across different agencies to support children, young people, and their family/whānau. For example, if a speech language therapist is required this could be provided through either education or health services[10] depending on the type of need and the families' wishes. This could reduce duplication and allow for greater flexibility and still support specialist knowledges found in health and education.

42. A network of supports by Māori for Māori with a particular focus on Māori-medium settings would be developed in partnership with Māori and iwi.

Planning for diversity and inclusion

43. This option would create fluid boundaries to allow the ability to move freely between the different local or specialised learning settings according to the need at the time. This is to allow for an integrated network of settings that highlights and builds on the strengths of each setting. For example, readily available access to specialist time in a specialist school as well as the ability for children and young people and their whānau to have access to inclusive curriculum and pedagogy within their local school.

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[10] Currently, for school-age children with disabilities, The Ministry of Education and schools provide support to access education, while health services tend to be accessed for whole of life support. This is largely managed through the Needs Assessment and Service Coordination service contracted by the Ministry of Health.

44. There would be greater collaboration and community of practice ways of working between schools, learning support staff, and Te Mahau by building on the Learning Support Delivery Model. School staff and specialists would be provided with enough release time to invest in this way of working.

How this option meets the desired outcomes of the Review

45. This option would deliver on several of the outcomes for the Review. It would develop a partnership approach with Māori, iwi, Pacific and disabled communities, provide for multiple pathways and flexibility in how supports are accessed and delivered. It would also create an integrated network where learners or supports can move easily between settings. From a service delivery perspective, it would help to integrate the service mix across agencies already supporting these learners and reduce duplication, as well as remove confusion for families and whānau in accessing support.

46. However, it only partially delivers on providing choice and control to families/whānau on access to supports as within this option the Ministry would still be the final decision maker on what mix of supports are provided.

Key considerations

47. This option would also require significant change for education. This is because it is creating multiple pathways for learners to access support through EGL and Whānau Ora. However, this option would provide greater certainty than Option A for the Ministry around what support is offered.

48. This level of change has the potential to realise many of the benefits of the EGL and Whānau Ora approach. The Ministry would have certainty around what is offered and forecasting demand could be managed within this option. However, we would need to consider how to create greater accountability for where funding is going.

49. We would need to work closely with EGL and Whānau Ora to work through any barriers of the option and to ensure utilising the approach and infrastructure would work as intended.

Option C: Strengthening the current system

50. This option would work to strengthen the current system and service delivery approach and fill some gaps in the system. Option C will not change the current service delivery approach for how services are accessed and delivered. This would mean it would not fully achieve the outcomes of the Review as the way supports are accessed and delivered are two core issues the Review aims to address.

System changes to how supports are accessed and delivered

51. This option would seek to align individual education plans, create increased accountability for education goals, and prioritise family/whānau voice within the plans. It would address the deficit focused application process, simplify application criteria, and look to make them more consistent across supports.

52. This option would address the inequities in access to support for those children and young people who are not in their local school. For example, those in alternative education, Te Kura, those in home education, and those in Oranga Tamariki care and residence. It would also look to address a level of unmet need in the system within the current mix of services that are available.

53.   This option would also reassess how we measure and evaluate the success of supports provided. It would be shifted from an input and output approach to measuring the effectiveness of supports based on education outcomes.

Planning for diversity and inclusion

54.   This option seeks to close the relationship and partnership gap between specialist settings and local schools and would support specialist schools to become a greater resource for supporting learners and their family/whānau within their local school. This would be achieved through ensuring all education settings are a part of and included in clusters and Kāhui Ako and the Learning Support Delivery Model.

55.   Lastly, this option would allow for adults in the system to have access to a wider range of professional learning and development as needed. Teacher aides would be supported to upskill in areas specific to the learners they are supporting.

How this option meets the desired outcomes of the Review

56.   This option would begin to deliver on creating educationally powerful connections by prioritising family/whānau voice within individual education plans. It also begins to create a more inclusive education system by ensuring access to supports for those children and young people who are not in their local school and by seeking to close the relationship gap between specialist and local schools.

57.   However, this option does not fully deliver on any of the outcomes for the Review. For example, it will not create multiple pathways into accessing support and will not provide flexibility in what that support looks like.

Key considerations

58.   This option would not achieve the system change required to ensure excellent and equitable outcomes for children and young people with the highest needs. This is because it does not fundamentally change the way supports are accessed and delivered. This option only provides a way to improve the coverage and responsiveness of the current system without achieving the desired outcomes and significant change signaled. It would not go far in shifting power and control to families/whānau. However, some of the elements of option C could help to bridge some gaps while option A or B are implemented. For example, addressing the inequities in access to support for those children and young people who are not in their local school.

Advisory Group feedback on the options

59.   We tested the options outlined with the Advisory Group on 25 May 2022. Overall, they had positive feedback on the options and the direction they are heading in. They were pleased to see an emphasis on EGL and Whānau Ora and the development of a high trust model where the power and control is shifting away from the professionals to the family/whānau.

60.   There were questions about what these options would look like in practice, and the group provided feedback that will be used in developing the next more detailed package of options to achieve the level of change you agree to further develop.

61.   The Advisory Group thought option C was not ambitious enough and would not achieve the desired outcomes of the Review. There were also comments made about it not being possible to strengthen a broken system. However, some other members of the Advisory Group noted that elements within option C might help to bridge some gaps while option A or B is being implemented and embedded.

Analysis of options

62.   This section of the paper provides a high-level analysis of the options against the level of change and impacts for funding and workforce.

Scale of change

63.   Options A and B would require significant change for education and other agencies. This is because the way services are accessed and delivered would be substantially different. The types of support available would also be substantially different. The key change would be working to provide families and whānau with a greater level of choice and control in determining what supports will best meet the needs of their child.

64.   These two options would require us to work closely with the new Ministry for Disabled people and Ministries of Health and Social Development on the National roll out of EGL and Whānau Ora.

65.   Apart from the fiscal impact associated with meeting unmet needs within the current system design, the scale of change for Option C would be minor, as it would not change the service delivery model for how supports are accessed and delivered.

Funding impacts

66.   The data and evidence we have gathered during the Review all indicate that fully achieving the outcomes of the Review would be a significant undertaking that would involve considerable resource commitment. Options A and B would have the most significant funding requirements and would require a multi-year investment plan. These options carry a large fiscal risk as it takes a rights-based approach to accessing support, meaning all those who require Te Arotahi support are enabled to access it for as long as they need.

67.   Option C would still require significant investment if it was to address a level of unmet need in the system that has been indicated through the SWA analysis and the insights from engagement.

68.   We will be able to propose some reprioritisation of funding, but new funding will need to be sought even for option C. This is because we will need to address the level of unmet need in the system as indicated in SWA's report [METIS 1285931 refers]. The report suggests that for every seven learners receiving one or more of the in-scope learners supports, there are three more that need individualised in-scope learner support and are not receiving it. We are currently working with SWA to see if there is any refinement within the analysis that can be made to provide us with a more accurate estimate of unmet need.

69.   In addition to requiring significant investment, option A and B would take time to implement. We need to ensure we have sufficient time to work through the detailed design required to implement option A or B and to test this with the relevant stakeholders.

Workforce requirement to implement

70.   Implementation at any level of change will require us to consider the specialist workforce's capacity to respond. The current workforce is mainly spread across urban centres with known gaps in equity of access in rural and remote areas. Regardless of the option we progress, we will need to consider how we can support the workforce to be in the right places across the country.

71. All options will also result in some level of increased demand for support. This will have flow on impacts to the specialist workforce. We will need to work through detailed options on how to ensure we have a supported workforce to meet the level of demand required.

72. A Workforce Strategy is being developed for the EGL national roll out, so, if option A was to be progressed, we could connect to that process. In particular, the Workforce Strategy for EGL is exploring how to create the roles that the families and whānau of disabled people need to meet their needs, rather than assuming that current roles are fit for purpose.

73. Options A and B also provide opportunities to resource iwi and Māori to develop new models for specialist workforce roles, rather than assuming that the pākeha support model should be adopted within Kaupapa Māori educational settings.

Next Steps

74. Once you have agreed to further develop one or more options for change, we will begin to analyse the more detailed steps required to achieve it. This will include options that can be started in the shorter term, including cross-agency solutions. We are aiming to provide this to you by 14 July 2022.

Annexes

Annex One: Summary of NZCER Insights Report

Annex Two: Additional context on Te Tūāpapa o He Pikorua

Annex Three: A3 on initial high-level options for change *(attached separately)*

Annex One: Summary of NZCER Insights Report

1. **Scope area 1 - the journey through the education system.** Well-planned and supported transitions will ensure children and young people are well-placed to learn and enjoy positive relationships with their peers. The key things that will enable this are:

   a. Early identification of need plus well-planned individual learning and support plans and histories that travel with a child through their education journey could better support children and young people to settle into, and make progress through, educational settings.

   b. Transitions to educational settings should be well-planned by a team that includes the child, parents and whānau, ECE and primary teachers, and relevant specialists who have worked with the child. Such plans could be recorded in individual learning plans which are currently in use but their quality and use in supporting a good journey is highly variable.

   c. Transition between educational settings need deliberate preparation and involvement of a child's current 'team of support', and the 'team' the child will be working with.

   d. Transition from school needs to be planned for some years ahead, both within the school and through good connections with relevant organisations and educational institutions.

   e. The key factor to a successful learning journey through school is the capability of staff to include a child in learning, share information with each other, including progress overtime, and to include a child in the social life of schools.

   f. Learners' reactions may be being identified as behaviour problems rather than an expression of unmet need. This could indicate a gap in capability and confidence of staff or schools to identify or respond to need.

2. **Scope area 2 - access to support**. The current suite of separate funding pools is not enabling identification of all the real needs for and access to, additional supports. In addition, as identified in the following points, there does not seem to be sufficient resourcing for the various support funds.

   a. Long-standing frustration with separate funding pools, complex and confusing application processes with rigid criteria, and the increasing number of children that need support but who are not able to access support, or support at the right level, is increasing interest in a system that would take a more individualised identification of need and response. However, effective use of resources for individual benefit depends on also being able to provide at a collective level.

   b. Te Aho o Te Kura (Te Kura) is a key part of our education settings. However, it cannot access all the supports needed for its learners, in particular, the Intensive Wraparound service, Learning Support Coordinators (LSC) and Resource Teachers Learning and Behaviour (RTLB).

   c. Demand for specialist supports, including Ministry of Education employed specialists and culturally appropriate specialist support, is greater than available provision.

   d. LSCs and SENCOs are making a positive difference to the provision of supports for learners in their school settings. However, LSCs are not currently available to all schools.

   e. Some improvements could be made to the current suite of additional funding that would partially improve access to additional supports. For example, enabling some learners to be eligible for more than one funding stream, or widening the age groups or criteria eligibility for some funding streams.

3. **Scope area 3 - responsiveness of supports.** Taking a child-centred holistic approach to identifying a child's needs is likely to identify the best responses and supports. The following would help achieve this:

   a. Include and value parents and whānau as members of their child's "team". This includes genuine sharing and respect of parent and whānau knowledge to inform evaluating the effectiveness of support and decision-making to support their child's inclusion and progress.

   b. Build on collective working approaches, such as clusters and Kāhui Ako and He Pikorua work and continue rollout of key roles to enable collective working, such as LSCs.

   c. Review the sustainability of the Ministry's specialist roles to ensure we build and retain an effective workforce.

   d. Work with Kaupapa Māori organisations to identify and put in place a strategy to improve support for ākonga Māori with highest needs. This would also support reducing inequity for learners in relation to specialist support and resources.

4. **Scope area 4 - fluid boundaries.** There seems to be an interest in being able to use specialist schools' expertise and resources for children, teachers and teacher aides in local settings, where appropriate. There is an opportunity to explore the following:

   a. Joint enrolment and funding approaches to maximise the use of specialist school expertise, for children learning in mainstream schools.

   b. Specialist school expertise to support the professional development of teachers and teacher aides.

5. **Scope area 5 - supports for adults across the system.** Professional development for teachers and teacher aides needs to be improved as does support for whānau to understand their child's needs, how to access supports and what they can do to support their child learning and wellbeing. The following would help achieve this:

   a. Improve training to build teacher and teacher aide awareness, knowledge and understanding and confidence about their role in including learners with the highest and most complex needs.

   b. Provide teachers and teacher aides with easy and timely access to relevant knowledge and expertise for effective strategies to meet the needs of specific learners.

   c. Build local networks of good practice, linked to national networks and resources, for parents, educators, specialists and NGOs to strengthen shared knowledge, and to build relationships and trust.

   d. Make readily available accessible material and resources for parents and whānau.

   e. To provide an effective teacher aide workforce, teacher aides need formal professional development and career pathways.

6. **Scope area 6 - alignment across agencies.** There is scope to both reduce complexity for whānau working with various agencies to obtain supports for their child, and to increase cross-agency collaboration to build a more locally integrated provision of education, health, and parental support. The following would help achieve this:

   a. Processes and provision could be simplified by developing protocols for whānau for working with different services and agencies, both locally and nationally.

   b. Information-sharing protocols between education and health professionals and services and Oranga Tamariki could enable useful identification of students with highest needs.

c. Continued support for and expansion of collaboration across different parts of the Education system is needed. Where it has been planned and resourced, this collaboration, which is usually local, is having a positive impact on support for students.
d. Build on the opportunities presented by changes to District Health Boards to develop joined-up specialist services.

Annex Two: Additional context on Te Tūāpapa o He Pikorua

1. Since 2015, the Ministry has been working to reduce the fragmentation in the delivery of learning support. The Government's 2018 Kōrero Mātauranga Education Conversation confirmed New Zealand's expectation that we build teachers' capability to meet diverse education needs, identify children and young people's learning support needs earlier, and provide new flexible supports to meet a wider range of needs.

2. To support this approach and the Government's vision for an inclusive education system, a new operating model (Learning Support Delivery Model, LSDM) was introduced.

3. The LSDM brings together clusters of early learning services me ngā kōhanga reo, schools and kura, government agencies, service providers, and in some areas, iwi and mana whenua to identify and respond to the learning support needs of children and young people in their area. The LSDM introduces greater local control and collaboration to deliver a tailored response for learners and their whānau, with local communities deciding how best to use available resources. The Ministry provides a facilitation function (usually carried out by a service manager). This collaborative approach allows for better identification and response to needs rather than 'referring out' and waiting for support. In September 2020, a new practice framework for learning support practitioners was launched to support the necessary practice shifts required to work within the LSDM.

He Pikorua

4. He Pikorua is the practice framework that provides guidance to all Ministry and RTLB Learning Support practitioners, managers and practice leaders in their day-to-day mahi. It grounds practice in being mokopuna- and whānau-centred, collaborative, strengths-based, culturally affirming, inclusive, ecological, and evidence informed. He Pikorua is shared across RTLB and learning support practitioners with the intention of increased collaboration and responsiveness.

5. He Pikorua, the New Zealand Curriculum, and Te Whaāiki aim to support adults to respond to the learning needs of children and young people and recognise their unique identities, aspirations, and achievement.

6. He Pikorua emphasises the deliberate inclusion of learning supports within day-to-day teaching and learning and across settings. It moves away from the concept of learning supports and services that are separate or stand alone. This is illustrated through Te Tūāpapa o He Pikorua.

Te Tūāpapa o He Pikorua

7. Te Tūāpapa creates quality educational experiences where children and young people and their family/whānau are supported to succeed in their education. Te Tūāpapa o He Pikorua has previously been referred to as the Tiered Model of Support.

8. Te Tūāpapa provides a focus on understanding the strengths, aspirations and needs of children and young people in their different settings, and planning for meaningful and successful education pathways. It consists of Te Matua (universal), Te Kāhui (targeted) and Te Arotahi (tailored) practices. See the following page for a diagram of this model.

9. As an example of how Te Tūāpapa works in practice, Ministry of Education specialist staff and RTLB are working together as part of clusters of local schools to support children and young people impacted by COVID-19 lockdowns and identify approaches that will support and encourage these learners back into school. All three layers of Te Tūāpapa are

integrated, building off one another, based on the strengths and needs of the community and resourced flexibly. Schoolwide changes are occurring through flexible curriculum, timetabling, use of resources based on reconnecting, building confidence and forming stronger whānau grouping across the school. Targeted approaches include a series of hui at local churches and marae for whānau to come together to talk about their concerns, reconnect with other whānau, share information on health and education matters etc. For some learners and their whānau more tailored approaches may be required, such as making plans around transport to school, support around the health order requirements, planning for hybrid learning and graduated transition etc.

Te Tūāpapa o He Pikorua

A foundation for inclusive learning communities for all mokopuna and their whānau.

Te Matua

Universal

Strengthens inclusive environments, cultures and practices.

Te Kāhui

Targeted

Offers focused approaches to enhance participation, learning and wellbeing.

Te Arotahi

Tailored

Provides more specific supports for unique needs and contexts.

Te Matua

10. Te Matua is planning for all children and young people from the outset. Te Matua includes strengthening the culture of the learning community, the ways kaiako teach, how local curriculum is designed, and the everyday systems and routines within settings. For many learners, this will be enough. However, sometimes targeted approaches may be needed for a particular reason or time.

Te Kāhui

11. However, sometimes targeted approaches may be needed for a particular reason or time. Te Kāhui builds on the effective practices of Te Matua to provide targeted supports. For example, this may focus on an aspect of teaching and learning that can enhance participation and progress, or support provided during a time of change or uncertainty.

Te Arotahi

12. Te Arotahi adds more specialised/refined planning and supports to maximise participation, learning, and wellbeing. Te Arotahi may focus on an individual learner around a particular

need or for a specific time - such as transition. While this support may be more specific, the strength is in the integration and connectedness with the support already planned for through Te Matua and possible Te Kāhui.

Context and environment are important aspects of Te Tūāpapa

13. The barriers children and young people experience in accessing the curriculum vary depending on the environment and context they are in. It also depends in the confidence of the adults around them. This means that the types of need a learner has will vary throughout their education. Te Tūāpapa requires the work of all kaiako, learners, family/whānau, educators, and practitioners, which is strengthened by the richness of skills, knowledge, and experiences they share together. This sets the foundations of a dynamic, inclusive educational journey.