



Briefing Note: Agenda items for December ECAC

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
Date:	12 March 2021	Priority:	High
Security Level:	In Confidence	METIS No:	1252292
Drafter:	Seneca Grant	DDI:	9(2)(a)
Key Contact:	Keith Newton	DDI:	
Messaging seen by Communications team:	No	Round Robin:	No

Purpose of Report

This paper provides you with a briefing on the agenda items ahead of your meeting with the Early Childhood Advisory Committee (ECAC) members on Wednesday, 17 March 2021. The paper includes presentation content for the meeting.

Agree that this Briefing will be proactively released.

☒ Agree / Disagree



Helen Hurst
Associate Deputy Secretary
Sector Enablement and Support

12/2/21



Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

17/3/2021

Background

1. The purpose of ECAC is to foster a relationship between Government and the early learning sector to achieve common goals. ECAC is made up of senior representatives from early learning sector organisations.
2. You asked to be briefed on the following items ahead of your meeting with ECAC members:
 - a. Early Learning Regulatory Review update
 - b. Urgent Response Fund (URF) update
 - c. Early Learning Action Plan (ELAP) Dashboard update
 - d. Vaccine Strategy Taskforce update
 - e. Early Learning Sustainability Fund update
3. The 17 March ECAC agenda for this meeting is attached as *Annex One*.
4. As part of the Minister's update, ECAC members may ask questions and share their views on the Early Learning Regulatory Review, Urgent Response Fund, Early Learning Action Plan, Early Learning Sustainability Fund and Equity Index.
5. The update on the Early Learning Regulatory Review presentation slides are attached as *Annex Two*.
6. The update on the Urgent Response Fund (URF) presentation slides are attached as *Annex Three*.
7. The Early Learning Action Plan (ELAP) dashboard for March 2021 is attached as *Annex Four*. Slides relating to Gazetting Te Whāriki are attached as *Annex Five*. Further papers on Gazetting Te Whāriki are attached as *Annex Six*.

Early Learning Regulatory Review

8. John Brooker, Group Manager, Education System Policy will provide an update to ECAC following on from consultation on tranche one of the Early Learning Regulatory Review. John will take members through:
 - the outcome of consultation
 - indicate where there are likely to be changes from what was proposed at consultation
 - signal the next steps in the Review
9. Consultation on eleven proposals in tranche one closed on 12 February 2021. There were 258 responses to the survey and 21 written submissions received via email, including from several ECAC members. Of those that responded to the survey, 87% were either service owners/managers or teachers/educators, 72% were connected to education and care services and over half were from either Auckland, Wellington, or Canterbury. Most of the proposals were well supported by respondents.
10. We will be briefing you in April on the outcome of the consultation and seeking your direction on the proposed changes to the regulations as a result, ahead of seeking Cabinet agreement to the final regulations in May 2021. This Education Report will also seek your agreement to the public release of a consultation report.

Urgent Response Fund (URF) update

9. Pamela Cohen, Group Manager System Innovation and Strategic Design, and Georgina Muir, Manager System Innovation, will provide an oral update on key metrics on the Urgent Response Fund (URF) as at 10 February 2021.
- This is based on URF data from the 18 February EWU
 - The next monthly briefing note updating you on the URF for the period of 4 August 2020 to 24 February 2021 was provided to you on 10 March 2021
 - The Ministry is working with your office to proactively release URF data for applications funded in 2020 in mid-March 2021
 - The URF data in *Annex Three* will not be shared with ECAC before the meeting, but will be sent to ECAC, following proactive release of the URF.

Vaccine Strategy Taskforce update

10. National Director Operations for the Ministry of Health-led COVID-19 Vaccine Immunisation Programme, Joanne Gibbs, will provide an update on the progress of the COVID-19 vaccine rollout and what this means for the education sector as they work towards the wider population rollout in the middle of the year.

Curriculum work programme / Early Learning Action Plan update

11. Nancy Bell, Director, ELSA, will present the March 2021 Early Learning Action Plan dashboard and provide an update on three initiatives of interest for ECAC members at present:
- Gazetting the goals and learning outcomes of Te Whāriki (ELAP action 4.1) to support engagement with the full curriculum framework when designing local curricula.
 - The timeline in the Gazetting Te Whāriki slide pack differs from the indicative timeline in the previous Education Report we provided to you on Gazetting Te Whāriki (METIS 1246520 refers). We have extended the early engagement phase by pushing out the start of the online consultation to ensure we complete the engagement with Māori medium services and other key stakeholders
 - Progress with the review of early learning PLD (ELAP action 3.6)
 - Progress with developing the social and emotional learning practice and progress tools to support formative assessment and teach practice by early learning kaiako (ELAP action 4.2)
 - Nancy will also update ECAC on the public launch of Talking together, Te kōrerorero.

Early Learning Sustainability Fund update

12. Keith Newton, Group Manager, SE&S, and Siobhan Murray, Senior Policy Manager, will provide an oral update to ECAC on the Early Learning Sustainability Fund. Keith and Siobhan will take members through the following points:
- In 2020, Government put in place the early learning sustainability fund to support services hardest hit by the impact of COVID-19, where they are a crucial part of the network

- The fund aims to support the diversity and viability of services, particularly in low socio-economic areas or services that specifically cater for children from disadvantaged backgrounds
- The fund is application-based. The eligibility criteria are designed so that the funding supports the viability of services in areas of greatest need
- The volume of applications received, processed and currently being assessed.

The second round of the Sustainability Fund is now open and has been re-advertised in the Early Learning Bulletin. There continues to be a small number of applications.

Proactive Release

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