



Briefing Note: Meeting with Deb Walker

To:	Hon Jan Tinetti, Associate Minister of Education		
Cc:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
Date:	17 November 2022	Priority:	Medium
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Messaging seen by Communications team:	No	Round Robin:	No

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this paper is for you to:

- Note the background information for your meeting with Deb Walker from Massey University at 8.15-8.45am on Tuesday 22 November 2022.

Summary

- You are meeting with Deb Walker from Massey University on Tuesday 22 November 2022.
- Deb Walker would like to discuss “if the MOE has a vision for gifted learners and have a plan of how gifted learners can be better embedded into Learning Support, Inclusion, the LSAP and the Curriculum Refresh”. Deb Walker would also like to discuss flexible grouping, role of Learning Support Coordinators (LSC) and SENCOs and creating some momentum for gifted education.
- Te Mahau is aligning gifted initiatives with priority work including Ka Hikitia – Ka Hāpaitia, the Action Plan for Pacific Education, the Literacy & Communication and Maths Strategy and the Curriculum Refresh.

Proactive Release

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

☒ Agree / ☐ Disagree.

Pauline

Pauline Cleaver
Associate Deputy Secretary
Te Poutāhū | Curriculum Centre

17/11/2022

Jan Tinetti

Hon Jan Tinetti
Associate Minister of
Education

20/11/2022

Background

1. You are meeting with Deb Walker from Massey University on Tuesday 22 November 2022. Deb Walker indicated she would like to talk about:
 - If the MOE has a vision for gifted learners and has a plan for better embedding gifted learners into Learning Support, Inclusion, the LSAP (Learning Support Action Plan) and the Curriculum Refresh.
 - The steps taken by the MOE to support flexible grouping as a viable and positive alternative.
 - Whether the Learning Support Coordinator and the SENCO roles become specialist positions.
 - Creating momentum in gifted education.
 - Consolidating gifted inclusion in the LSAP.
 - Support that the sector can offer to help the MOE achieve the points above.
2. This briefing provides background information on Deb Walker, the gifted education package and the key points Deb would like to discuss.

Deb Walker

3. Deb began working in gifted education in 2002 and has multiple roles in gifted education.
4. She is Project Lead of Gifted NEX (delivered by the NZ Centre for Gifted Education), the gifted education coordinator of the Massey University Specialist Teacher Postgraduate Diploma, a member of the MoE Gifted Expert Group, a delegate to the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children, and she has her own gifted consultancy called GEMS Aotearoa.
5. Initially coming from a primary and intermediate background with experience in state and kura kaupapa Māori, Deb spent 10 years delivering specialist gifted education at Gifted Kids and MindPlus, then spent another 10 years as the CEO of New Zealand Centre for Gifted Education (NZCGE). Through her work with the NZCGE, she was heavily involved in curriculum development, identification processes and the development and growth of services.
6. Deb is passionate about supporting gifted learners through the provision of quality professional learning opportunities and support for educators. She is currently doing a PhD at Massey University to explore diverse perspectives of giftedness and achievement trajectories across multiple domains.
7. Deb has served on multiple committees and advisories, including being a member of the Ministry's 'Guardians of the Education Conversation' group and Gifted Expert Group.
8. Deb is employed by Massey University to deliver the gifted content in the specialist teacher qualification. The Ministry funds five teachers each year to do Massey University's Postgraduate Diploma in Specialist Teaching (Gifted) through Gifted Study Awards. As this is a two-year course, there are ten teachers receiving the award at

any given time. Deb was part of the panel that assessed applications for the 2022 Gifted Study Award.

9. Deb is actively involved in the gifted community and a frequent correspondent about gifted education.

The Gifted Package

10. The gifted package is focused on direct provision to learners, in line with the wishes of the previous Associate Minister for Education. Since implementation in 2019, the package has been used to trial multiple initiatives with learners. A description of the different initiatives in the package is included in Annex 1.
11. Te Mahau has begun an evaluation of the initiatives in the gifted package that are new to Aotearoa New Zealand. These are the Events and Opportunities projects, the awards for learners and teachers and the early learning project. Te Mahau will share the learning from the evaluation with the education sector. The evaluation focuses on provision for ākonga Māori and Pacific learners and includes learner and whānau voices.
12. The evaluation team includes experienced Pacific and Māori evaluators. The evaluation plan was developed with Te Mahau and a member of the Gifted Expert Group who has current research experience and brought a Pacific view to the work.

Curriculum Refresh

13. The refresh of the NZ Curriculum (NZE) aims to ensure that Te Mātaiaho, the refreshed curriculum framework, and supporting curriculum resources are inclusive of all ākonga. This means the learning of all ākonga, including gifted learners, recognises and values the multiple ways that ākonga engage with learning, demonstrate their progress and achieve success.
14. There is a representative from the NZ Association for Gifted Children (NZAGC) on the NZE Refresh Curriculum Voices Group. In addition, the Gifted Education Expert Group, including Deb Walker, meet with the Curriculum Refresh team to contribute to the refreshed NZE.

Streaming and Grouping Practices

15. Effective in-class grouping practices are an important part of teaching and learning, however, we know schools will need support to move away from harmful fixed-ability grouping practices. Learners need to be able to move in and out of groups as and when appropriate, Research indicates that:
 - There is mixed evidence that fixed ability grouping or streaming extends and challenges high achieving learners beyond other pedagogies. Any advantage that is transmitted to high achieving learners is likely to be minimal (refer Annex 2).
 - International evidence and local experience indicate that Māori and Pacific learners are more likely to be allocated to lower ability groups and streams. This is because group placement often happens not only based on prior achievement, but on assumptions based on ethnicity, socio-economic background, gender and disability.

- Flexible adaptive approaches to differentiating instruction benefit all learners, mitigating the risks of streaming. Groups should be flexible, changing with learners' variable confidence with concepts, responses to instruction, interests, motivations and social connections.
16. Deb Walker is likely to have alternative approaches to harmful streaming or fixed ability grouping that meet the needs of gifted learners she will want to share, including what needs to be considered when using flexible grouping. The Ministry could consider these as part of its future advice on meeting the needs of gifted ākonga and on grouping practices.

Learning Support Co-ordinators

17. Learning Support Co-ordinators (LSCs) provide a dedicated co-ordination function for a school or kura's Learning Support team and not direct support to learners. The LSC role works to identify and plan for the learning support needs of all children and young people in the school or kura, including those with moderate needs and who are gifted, to bring in specialist help to support classroom teachers.
18. LSCs are not specialist teachers and do not need a specialist teaching qualification, like Resource Teachers for Learning and Behaviour (RTLb). The LSC role focuses on five areas associated with learning needs:
- Support for students in schools.
 - Working with teachers/kaiako in schools and kura.
 - Working with parents, family and whānau.
 - Working with other LSCs across a cluster of schools and kura, assisted by the Learning Support Facilitator function and working within the Learning Support delivery model.
 - Working with the school/kura leadership team to plan support for all learners.
19. General professional learning and development for LSCs is the responsibility of the employing school.
20. A Learning Support team in a school or kura can be made up of RTLbs, Special Needs Coordinators (SENCOs), health workers, counsellors, gifted coordinators and other school leadership who are responsible for the needs of the school's or kura's learners.
21. Te Mahau has produced a resource, *Learning Support Coordinator: A guide to the role*, in both English and te reo Māori, that positions gifted learners clearly within the scope of the LSC role and includes information about how LSCs can provide support for neurodiverse learners and those who are gifted.
22. The Ministry of Education-funded Learning Support Network (LSN) has many resources to support gifted learners, which are available for LSCs and SENCOs to access. The network has produced a webinar and learning module on gifted learners, which are available to all members (85% of all LSCs are members). The content and focus within the network are on the five functions of the LSC role, which includes working with a range of colleagues as part of a cluster's learning support team, including gifted coordinators and other professionals, where such roles are retained by schools.

Upcoming work

23. Identification

- a. The work on identification of gifted learners was scheduled for 2021 but has been rescheduled to 2022/23 due to COVID-19 disruption. It is in the planning stages and the Gifted Expert Group have provided advice on the skills and knowledge a provider will need to do this work. 9(2)(f)(iv)
[Redacted]
- b. The identification work can now be done alongside key parts of the education work programme. For example, it aligns well with the Curriculum Refresh's focus on inclusion and equity. It is also useful that the identification work coincides with the development of the Online Curriculum Hub. We anticipate this will improve access for teachers to gifted resources and raise interest in giftedness and related PLD.
- c. The identification guidance and supports will encourage schools to respond to gifted learners within their own learning environments, rather than separating them from other learners

24. Updating MoE resources

- a. The Gifted Expert Group have asked the MoE to refresh the Gifted Manual (2012) and the gifted website and to provide more information to support the LSC role. It is not feasible to update the manual or the website while the Online Curriculum Hub is under development as the Hub will replace the current gifted website (and other websites) and the gifted manual.
- b. 9(2)(f)(iv)
[Redacted]
- [Redacted]

25. Gifted Expert Group

- a. Te Mahau has consulted the Gifted Expert Group on each of the new gifted initiatives. Rather than meeting regularly as a large group, Te Mahau is working with smaller working groups of Expert Group members. This approach makes it easier to manage the work to achieve outcomes. Group members are also on the selection panels for learner and teacher awards.
- b. 9(2)(f)(iv)
[Redacted]
- c. Short- to medium-term work for the group will include:
 - Ongoing advice on the Curriculum Refresh
 - Advice on a webinar for teachers and LSCs

- Advice on information for the Online Curriculum Hub, including identification of gifted learners.
- d. Te Mahau is considering reconfiguring the Gifted Expert Group to be smaller and more cohesive and to provide views that are not currently represented. Māori educators approached to join the group have declined, and we have had to seek te ao Māori views separately. The factors to consider in an update of the group are:
- Te ao Māori views
 - Pacific views
 - Early Learning (this is a new gifted focus for the Ministry)
 - Current school leader and teacher practice for gifted ākonga
 - Current research practice
 - Learner and whānau views.

Key Risks

26. 9(2)(f)(iv) [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

Annex 1

Gifted Package progress to date – November 2022.

	Progress to date
Evaluation	<p>The purpose of the evaluation is to gather new learning about what works for gifted learners and what doesn't so we can feed this back to the education sector. We can share what gifted learners find appealing and relevant as well as their views on the barriers to participation. We have engaged evaluators chosen through a robust procurement process. The evaluators developed an evaluation plan based on workshops with the Ministry and a Gifted Expert Group member who brings a Pacific view and is a current researcher.</p> <p>The evaluation approach will involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• iterative evaluation of the content, processes, and impact of the three components new to the gifted sector, that is, the Awards, Events and Opportunities and the Early Learning project. We are not seeking to prove what we already know.• a focus on improving delivery for ākonga Māori and Pacific learners.• an emphasis on ākonga and whānau voices, using a 'with us, not about us' approach.• a summative evaluation of the content, processes, and impact of the three components. <p>The Events and Opportunities projects will be the first aspect evaluated as this will inform up-coming procurements.</p>
Mindplus	<p>Mindplus one-day school is provided by the New Zealand Centre of Gifted Education. The Ministry funds curriculum development and more online provision for learners who cannot attend in person. Mindplus provides extension, challenge and social connection for students with like minds.</p>
Awards for Gifted Learners	<p>The Awards for Gifted Learners are monetary grants that support learners who are seeking challenge and extension outside their regular classroom learning. They can apply as individuals or as groups. Past awards have supported learners with art supplies and lessons, leadership development, cultural development, science camps, STEM fees, an environment club, chess tournaments, sports tournaments, coaching, music, dancing and theatrical performances.</p> <p>We continue to focus on making the awards more appealing to Māori and Pacific learners by promoting through Ministry channels.</p> <p>There have been six award rounds to date. We changed the award process from two rounds per year to one round per year to better manage the increased demand. We still allocate the same amount of funding each year.</p> <p>Applications for round seven closed on 4 October 2022.</p>

Awards for Teachers of Gifted Learners	<p>The Awards for Teachers of Gifted Learners are monetary grants that support access to learning opportunities for teachers to increase their skills for supporting gifted learners. Teachers can apply as individuals or as groups. The funding is flexible to enable learning opportunities that are more accessible for busy classroom teachers, fitting in with their timetables and locations.</p> <p>There is one application round per year. Applications for round 6 closed on 11 November 2022.</p>
The Teachers Awards for the Massey University Postgraduate Diploma of Teaching: Gifted Endorsement	<p>The inaugural Awards were made in October 2020, and the course commenced in 2021. Five new teachers will come online each year for the first year of the two-year course. This means there will be ten teachers receiving the Award at any given time from 2022 onwards.</p> <p>Applications for 2023 closed on 30 September 2022.</p>
Events and Opportunities	<p>These are community-based projects that offer learners the opportunity for challenge and extension outside of the classroom and in a group environment. Providers deliver project-based learning to enable gifted learners to connect and collaborate with each other in a range of forums and settings, in person or online. These often take a practical workshop and competition format.</p> <p>The Events and Opportunities will ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gifted learners are achieving their potential. • Gifted learners experience success and are challenged. • Gifted learners feel welcomed and valued in their environment. • Gifted learners are able to engage in a range of learning opportunities. <p>As a result of their participation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gifted learners report improvements in their emotional/social and overall well-being. • Gifted learners who are Māori and/or Pacific report that they are supported as Māori or as Pacific. • Parents, communities and whānau are empowered to make positive decisions about learning options for their gifted tamariki. • Schools and kura use tools and planning resources to improve their in-setting responses to gifted learners.
The Events and Opportunities projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CORE Education HiAko – Māori medium – South Auckland. Online and in-person. Digitally based enquiry into finding solutions to real life issues within their own whānau, hapu and iwi. HiAko draws on traditional Māori knowledge and promotes Māori values, practices and principles. • CORE Education Inventionator – online, NZ wide

	<p>Digital based enquiry into finding solutions to real life issues. This was originally face-to-face and is now online due to learner preference.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Aurora Education Foundation Charitable Trust – Tairāwhiti Working with local schools, iwi and community organisations to provide a range of activities for gifted ākonga, including environmental protection, creative writing, drama, chess, leadership, digital design. • Faith City Trust Project Y – South Auckland The project has three integrated approaches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Front Foot apps development competition - STEM week with MOTAT - Pasi IT Mentoring. • Game Lab, Wellington After-school game-based approach with in-person workshops in the Wellington area. Designed for learners 13–18 who are predisposed to technology interfaced thinking and learning. It is a crash course in game creation. • Nga Potiki a Tamapahore Trust, Bay of Plenty Project for ākonga Māori based mainly in Papamoa. This project has developed over time, focusing on leadership development and ākonga extension by exploring their philosophical, creative narratives within Te Ao Māori. The most recent contract included a strong arts focus. • Kiwa Digital Ltd, Auckland Introducing gifted learners to new media technologies in a real-world environment. They work alongside industry professionals with wrap-around support to encourage engagement and exploration. • VLN Primary – online Video Learning Network (VLN) provides an online programme specifically designed for gifted learners that involves: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Going deep in learning ○ Being part of an online social network with like-minded students ○ Individual inquiries and mentoring support ○ Support for teachers of the learners. <p>VLN is the newest of the projects.</p>
Events and Opportunities Māori-medium settings	<p>There are opportunities for extension outside kura for ākonga. A delivery plan has been developed by Te Uepū Reo Māori. This is an opportunity to explore giftedness with ākonga, whānau and kura and learn from that. Te Uepū Reo Māori intend to approach iwi and other organisations who already support talented ākonga.</p>

The Early Learning project	<p>This project provides coaching and resources for teachers in early learning centres in how to best identify and respond to gifted young learners. This involves in-person and online workshops, depending on centre availability and preferences.</p> <p>The original project was developed by the New Zealand Centre for Gifted Education (NZCGE). The second phase is being delivered by CORE with NZCGE participating on the advisory group.</p> <p>The Early Learning team are having discussions about the next phase with members of the Expert Group who specialise in Early Learning.</p>
Gifted Expert group	<p>The group provides advice to the Ministry on request. This has included working in small groups to contribute to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criteria for Awards – learners and teachers • Panels for all the Awards • Content of the Early Learning Project • Online presentations for the Events and Opportunities providers • Input into the curriculum refresh • The procurement of identification information for Ministry channels.
Identification and Training	<p>This work involves developing an approach for schools, teachers and whānau to identify gifted learners. This work was disrupted by COVID and will occur in FY 2022/23.</p> <p>The Ministry sought advice from the Gifted Expert Group on the knowledge and skills needed to undertake this work.</p> <p>The next step is to work internally to ensure the approach and procurement processes reflect the Ministry's key strategies, in particular Ka Hikitia – Ka Hāpaitia, as the framework for the work and using a format that can be used on the new Online Curriculum Hub.</p>

Extending and challenging more ‘able’ learners

Hornby and Witte (2014) found in interviews with schools that there was a perception of positive effects of streaming for gifted and talented learners (and for learners with disabilities and/or learning support needs).

There is mixed evidence that fixed ability grouping or streaming extends and challenges high achieving learners beyond other pedagogies (Preckel et al., 2019; Smale-Jacobse et al., 2019; Francis et al., 2020). Any advantage that is transmitted to high achieving learners is likely to be minimal (Hornby & Witte, 2014; Loveless, 2009; Hattie et al., 2017; Tieso, 2002).

Integrated effect sizes from 172 studies used by Steenbergen-Hu and colleagues’ (2016) second-order meta-analysis for learners in high ability groups were not statistically significant for between-class ability grouping (streaming), but small to moderate in the positive direction and statistically significant for within-class ability grouping. Effect sizes calculated by Hattie’s (2009) meta-analysis of 500 studies suggest that learners in higher ability streams are most likely to benefit from between-class streaming, but this benefit remained small. Effect sizes for within-class ability grouping were more positive for all ability groups and most positive for high ability groups. However, neither of the above analyses separated fixed from flexible ability groups (Hattie, 2009; Steenbergen-Hu et al., 2016).

Preckel and colleagues (2019) found high-achieving learners who were separated into ‘gifted’ classes had an accelerated learning trajectory compared to similar learners in other classes in the most academically oriented German secondary schools. Some studies have found that during the transition away from ability grouping and/or streaming, high-achieving learners’ performance decreases (Loveless, 2009)

https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0012/210027/He-Whakaaro-Does-streaming-work-.pdf