



Education Report: Initiating consultation about redesignating Whangaruru School (1667) as a designated character school

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
CC	Hon Kelvin Davis, Associate Minister of Education (Māori Education)		
Date:	13 October 2021	Priority:	Medium
Security Level:	In Confidence	METIS No:	1272330
Drafter:	Mark Scott, Senior Adviser	DDI:	9(2)(a)
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Messaging seen by Communications team:	No	Round Robin:	No

Purpose

This report seeks your approval to consult on a proposal by the board of Whangaruru School (1667) for redesignation from an ordinary state school to a designated character, kura-ā-iwi under section 200 of the Education and Training Act 2020 (the Act).

We recommend you agree to this consultation.

Summary

1. Whangaruru School is a state co-educational, decile 1, Year 1 – 8 primary school near the Whangaruru Harbour in the heart of *te rohe o Ngātiwai*, a rural area south of Russell in the Bay of Islands. Most ākonga and staff whakapapa to Ngātiwai iwi.
2. The school opened in 2005, following the closure of Ngaiotonga Valley School, Helena Bay School and Punaruku School. As of 1 July 2021 Whangaruru School had 42 students enrolled. Historically, between 80% and 100% of students have been of Māori descent.
3. In 2016 and 2017, following community consultation, the school charter noted a growing demand for provision in te reo Māori and Ngātiwai tikanga. It determined a timeframe to initiate the process of providing education in te reo Māori.
4. In 2020 the board initiated a staggered transition from English medium to Te Reo Māori medium, beginning with its Year 1 – 3 class operating at Māori medium education (MME) Level 1. The transition plan is designed so that the kura will take four years to become full immersion.

5. The board also applied for membership with Ngā Kura ā Iwi o Aotearoa (NKAI), and in 2020 Whangaruru School was informed it had gained full membership (Annex 1). NKAI has given its full support for it becoming a kura-ā-iwi designated character school, should this be approved. It also aligns with our work with NKAI to support their strategic planning and Māori medium education in this catchment.
6. In 2021 the Education Review Office (ERO) reported the board was well led by an experienced, capable chairperson; the principal has successfully built high relational trust with the community and has deliberately sought the perspectives and aspirations of whānau, iwi, ākonga and staff. The school has made very good progress in designing a more localised, responsive curriculum with a strong connection to Ngātiwai.
7. The board now seeks to be redesignated as a designated character school, kura-ā-iwi under section 200 of the Act.
8. Approving this proposal will support Maihi Karauna, the Māori language strategy, foster increased participation and success for Māori students through the advancement of Māori education initiatives, and aligns with Ka Hikitia. It also aligns with the National Education Network Plan to support Māori medium education in the network.
9. If this proposal to become a designated character school is approved, Whangaruru School would change its name to *He Puna Ruku Mātauranga o Whangaruru*, to reflect this change.

Recommended actions

We recommend that you:

- a) **note** that the Ministry has received an application from the board of Whangaruru School to be redesignated as a designated character kura-ā-iwi; **Noted**
- b) **note** that before making a decision about redesignation of a school, you must first consult with the boards of all state schools whose rolls might be affected by the change under section 209 of the Education and Training Act 2020; and **Noted**
- c) **agree** that the Ministry undertake, on your behalf, consultation under section 209 of the Education and Training Act 2020 with all schools whose rolls might be affected by the possible change; **Agree / Disagree**
- d) **sign** the enclosed letters to the board informing it of your decision (Annex 2); **Signed**
- e) **agree** that this education report be proactively released as per your expectations. Any information that might need to be withheld will be done so in line with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982. **Release / Not release**



Isabel Evans
Te Mahau | Te Tai Raro
Deputy Secretary
Te Mahau (North)

13 / 10 / 21



Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

8 / 12 / 2021

Background

1. Whangaruru School is a state co-educational, decile 1, Year 1 – 8 primary school near the Whangaruru Harbour in the heart of *te rohe o Ngātiwai*, a rural area south of Russell in the Bay of Islands. Most ākonga and staff whakapapa to Ngātiwai iwi.
2. The school opened in 2005 following the Northland Network Review. As of 1 July 2021 it had 42 students enrolled. Historically, between 80% and 100% of students have been of Māori descent.
3. In 2016 kōrero with whānau captured a strong demand for provision of learning in “te reo Māori and tikanga of Ngāti Wai”. The board responded by including a plan to achieve this in its strategic planning. At that time it set 2017 – 2018 as the timeline to initiate developing te reo Māori immersion provision. The board then began to investigate te reo Māori immersion models.
4. In 2017 a second round of kōrero highlighted that the kura whānau wished to include more Ngāti Wai heritage, environments, history, narratives, customs and practices into the curriculum.
5. In 2018 the board and principal committed to developing a localised curriculum and support systems for staff and whānau to begin developing their cultural capability and capacity.
6. In the first half of 2019 the board organised kōrero with its whānau, community and respective tribal entities for a proposal to apply for membership with Nga Kura ā iwi o Aotearoa (NKAI). This included a presentation from NKAI on its model.
7. The board gained considerable support from its whānau, community, hapū and iwi, including its tribal trust board and education unit to apply for membership with NKAI.
8. By the close of 2019 NKAI granted provisional approval for Whangaruru’s application, before full approval was given at the close of 2020. NKAI agreed they would actively support them as a kura-ā-iwi designated character school, should this be approved.

Proposal for designation

9. We have received an application from the board of Whangaruru School to be redesignated as a designated character kura-ā-iwi.
10. A change to the designation of a school takes place under section 200 of the Education and Training Act 2020 (the Act). Under this section, you may designate a state school to become a designated character school.
11. Section 204 (which relates to establishment of designated character schools) applies to a school that is being redesignated in the same way as if it were being established as a designated character school for the first time. Under section 204 of the Act, a designated character school must meet the requirements in section 204(3) of the Act. The key requirements are:
 - a) the designated character school will have a character that is in some specific way(s) different from the character of ordinary state schools,

- b) it is desirable for students (whose parents wish them to do so) to get such an education,
- c) students at the school will get education of a kind that differs significantly from the education they would receive at an ordinary state school.

Designated character

- 12. The designated character, kura-ā-iwi has been recognised as meeting the requirements of section 204 of the Act.
- 13. The proposed designated character includes a bespoke approach to teaching and learning. This is detailed in the application as follows:
 - a) The school would integrate Māori medium education into all aspects of the school in the local dialect.
 - b) The school will ensure that, alongside Te Marautanga o Aotearoa, it will operate in accordance with the cultural practices of the hapū and iwi of Ngātiwai.
 - c) The school's curriculum would specifically reflect the mātauranga and tikanga of the tangata whenua of the hapū and iwi of Ngātiwai. This fits within the Ka Hikitia education strategy for Māori to achieve education success as Māori.
- 14. The Ministry considers that the application has met the legislative requirements for a designated character and has adequately detailed that:
 - a) the designated character school will have a character that is different from the character of ordinary state schools, as the kura-ā-iwi model is already established as having such character,
 - b) it is desirable for students (whose parents wish them to do so) to get such an education, as it fits within the Ka Hikitia education strategy for Māori to achieve education success as Māori,
 - c) the school's curriculum would specifically reflect the mātauranga and tikanga of the tangata whenua of the hapū and iwi of Ngātiwai.
- 15. Approving this proposal will support Maihi Karauna, the Māori language strategy, foster increased participation and success for Māori students through the advancement of Māori education initiatives, and aligns with Ka Hikitia. It also aligns with our work with NKAI to support their strategic planning and Māori medium education in this catchment.

Education at the school

- 16. ERO last reviewed the school in March 2021. Its report states:

The board is well led by an experienced, capable chairperson; the principal has successfully built high relational trust with the community and has deliberately sought the perspectives and aspirations of whānau, iwi, staff and students, and incorporates them in the school's vision, values and goals. The school has made very good

progress in designing a more localised, responsive curriculum with a strong connection to Ngāti Wai; considerable work has been done by teachers and support staff to become a cohesive teaching team; teachers use a range of assessment information to plan appropriate learning programmes that are responsive to students' strengths and learning needs; students participate and learn in caring, collaborative, and inclusive learning communities.

Impact on the schooling network

17. We consider that the proposed change in designation of Whangaruru School would have minimal effect on the schooling network.
18. Russell is the nearest centre to Whangaruru School, situated approximately 50 minutes to the North. There is a range of primary, intermediate, and secondary schools in this area, but it is unlikely any would be affected by the proposed change for Whangaruru School.

Property implications

19. There would be no change in property requirements.

Financial Implications

20. The single change in resourcing will be Māori Language Provision funding (MLP), which will increase whether the school becomes a designated character school or not.
21. Currently Whangaruru School is in the second year of a four-year staggered transition to operate as full immersion. Its 2020 Year 1 – 4 cohort was the first to be moved to immersion generating \$21,224. The remainder of the classes (Year 5 and 6) are educated at MLP Level 3 generating \$3,412 and Year 7 and 8 at Level 4, generating \$753 (GST Inclusive).
22. Based on the current roll of 60 students the projected immersion funding would increase to \$54,078.68 (GST Inclusive).

Transport

23. The Ministry currently provide two daily bus services, and one technology bus run for Whangaruru School. Route number and costs per annum:
 - Route #1040: \$93,802.66.
 - Route #1156: \$48,173.56 (Technology provision transport).
24. A redesignation to operating as a Māori medium school entitles Whangaruru School to qualify for Māori Medium school transport funding. The per-student rate is \$9.34 plus \$3.35 per student per quarter admin rate for a rural based decile 1 school for eligible students.

Staffing implications

25. The redesignation would not have any staffing impact.

Consultation

26. Section 209 of the Act requires you to consult the boards of all state schools whose rolls might be affected before deciding whether to change a school's designation. The Ministry would undertake this consultation on your behalf.
27. If you approve consultation, the Ministry will conduct consultation with the schools in the table below:

School Number	School Name	Year Levels
1014	Hikurangi School (35.3km drive southwest)	Year 1-8
1096	Russell School (43.7km drive northwest)	Year 1-8
1031	Karetu School (48.5km drive northwest)	Year 1-8
2102	Maromaku School (51.9km drive west)	Year 1-8
1072	Paihia School (67km drive northwest)	Year 1-8
1666	Te Kura o Waikare (37.2km drive northwest)	Year 1-10

28. We will also consult with sector bodies such as Ngā Kura ā Iwi o Aotearoa (NKAI), the New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI) Te Riu Roa, as well as the local iwi.

Conclusion

29. The Ministry's recommendation is that you approve the request to consult on this proposal. We have come to this view because:
- a) the board has had an indication that their local community supports the proposal,
 - b) the board and teaching team have proactively driven a review to design a localised curriculum to reflect its pending designated character,
 - c) alongside *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa*, it is intended a localised curriculum aligned to hapū and the iwi Ngāti Wai, will better deliver on the language, culture and identity demand becoming increasingly common across Māori communities,
 - d) as a kura-ā-iwi, Whangaruru School would also have the support of Ngā Kura ā Iwi o Aotearoa.

Next steps

30. If you agree to initiate consultation on the proposal, please sign the letter to the board (Annex 2) and return it to the Ministry to be provided to the school.
31. We will consult with the boards of all state schools whose rolls might be affected by the proposed change of designation. We will also consult with sector bodies, local iwi, and community groups as appropriate.

32. Following consultation, we will prepare a final report for your consideration and decision.

Proactive release

33. This education report will be proactively released as per your expectation that information is released as soon as possible. Any information that might need to be withheld will be done so in line with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982.

Annex

Annex 1: Nga Kura ā iwi o Aotearoa membership agreement

Annex 2: Letter to the board