



## Briefing Note: Meeting with Dr Rosemary Cathcart

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<b>To:</b>	Hon Jan Tinetti, Associate Minister of Education		
<b>Cc:</b>	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
<b>Date:</b>	8 September 2022	<b>Priority:</b>	High
<b>Security Level:</b>	In Confidence	<b>METIS No:</b>	1294187
<b>Drafter:</b>	Carmel Irwin	<b>DDI:</b>	9(2)(a)
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<b>Messaging seen by Communications team:</b>	No	<b>Round Robin:</b>	No

### Purpose of Report

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The purpose of this paper is for you to:

- **Note** the background information for your meeting with Dr Rosemary Cathcart from REACH Education at 9-9.30am on Tuesday 13 September 2022.
- **Agree** that this briefing will be proactively released.

### Summary

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- You are meeting with Dr Rosemary Cathcart from REACH Education on 13 September 2022.
- Dr Cathcart would like to discuss “a six-step plan for bringing provision for gifted learners into line with the overall philosophy of the Aotearoa New Zealand education system and with the direction of the Curriculum Rereash project”. This plan has not been provided to Te Mahau. Dr Cathcart would also like to “acknowledge that current provisions for gifted learners are significantly inadequate in scope and in implementation”.
- Te Mahau is focussing on aligning gifted with priority work including Ka Hikitia – Ka Kāpaitia, the Pacific Island Action Plan and the Curriculum Refresh.

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

☒ **Agree** ☐ **Disagree.**

Julia Novak  
**Director, Curriculum Design**  
**Te Poutāhū | Curriculum, Pathways and Progress**

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Hon Jan Tinetti  
**Associate Minister of**  
**Education**

10/09/2022

## Background

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1. You are meeting with Dr Rosemary Cathcart from REACH Education online on Tuesday 13 September 2022. Dr Cathcart would like to discuss an implementation plan to rectify the shortcomings she sees in gifted education in New Zealand and with the gifted package provided by Te Mahau. Dr Cathcart has questioned information from your address in June to the online symposium organised by the New Zealand Centre for Gifted Education. She believes you were provided with misleading material by the Ministry. She provided her views on:
  - PLD for Learning Support Co-ordinators (LSCs) – that it is inadequate.
  - Identification of gifted learners – is it happening?
  - Events and Opportunities projects – learning is not fed back to schools and not reaching enough learners.
  - Awards for Gifted Learners – are not reaching enough learners.
2. Dr Cathcart requested that the meeting focuses on the “possible positive steps that she will be bringing with her”.
3. This briefing provides background information on REACH Education, on the issues Dr Cathcart would like to discuss, and on other issues she has raised with Te Mahau recently.

## REACH Education

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4. REACH Education provides courses and advice for schools and teachers on how to engage gifted learners, including the internationally recognised Certificate of Effective Practice in Education. This Certificate has been assessed by NZQA to be equivalent to 15 credits at Level 6 on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework.
5. Dr Cathcart QSM founded REACH in 2005 and is a member of the Gifted Expert Group that advises the Ministry of Education on education of gifted learners.
6. Dr Cathcart has been extensively involved in gifted education since the early 1980s and has been a constant advocate for gifted children. She was a foundation board member of GiftedNZ and is a recipient of the Te Mau Kōtuku award in recognition of her outstanding service and contribution to the education and development of the gifted children in Aotearoa New Zealand. She is an Honorary Life Member of the New Zealand Association for Gifted Children. She is also the first person outside the US to be an invited member of the Columbus Group, an affiliate of the Institute for the Study of Advanced Development.
7. 9(2)(j)  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]
8. 9(2)(g)(i)  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted] The Ministry recently provided an article in the Education Gazette on Dr Cathcart’s contribution to gifted education. [Positive changes afoot for gifted learners – Education Gazette](#).
9. Te Mahau has provided eight teachers and Learning Support Coordinators (LSCs) with financial support to undertake the REACH course, through the Awards for Teachers of

Gifted Learners. The funding goes directly to the applicants for their course fees. All award applications for REACH course fees have been approved, totalling \$8,182.

10. REACH partnered with Ngā Potiki a Tamapahore Trust to provide a marae-based Events and Opportunities project for young, gifted Māori learners in Papamoa from May 2019 to December 2020. 9(2)(g)(i)

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#### The gifted package

11. 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. While these initiatives deliver to a small portion of gifted learners, the intention is to find out more about what learners will respond to. Feedback from learners and whānau is generally good, and we will find out more of this through the evaluation. The challenge is getting resources where they are needed most. A description of the different initiatives in the package is included in Annex 1.
12. Te Mahau is focusing on aligning work for gifted learners with the Curriculum Refresh, support for changes in teaching practice and changes to learning supports. This approach will provide gifted learners with a satisfying learning experience within their school and class environments alongside their peers, rather than being singled out.
13. Priorities for the gifted package in 2022 are:
  - i. Increasing access to resources for gifted ākonga Māori and Pacific learners and learners from low income or geographically isolated areas.
  - ii. An improved approach for identifying gifted learners. This will have a direct impact for gifted learners within the school system.
  - iii. Aligning gifted work with Te Mahau priorities, including Ka Hikitia – Ka Kāpaitia, the Pacific Island Action Plan and the Curriculum Refresh.
14. Te Mahau has recently commenced 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 these initiatives with the school sector. The evaluation has a focus on provision for ākonga Māori and Pacific learners and will include learner and whānau voices.
15. The evaluation team includes experienced Pacific and Māori evaluators. The evaluation plan was developed with Te Mahau and a member of the Expert Group who has current research experience and brought a Pacific view to the work.

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#### Items Dr Cathcart may want to discuss

#### Identification of Gifted Learners

16. 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 was asked for advice on the skills and knowledge a provider will need to undertake this work. This will inform the procurement process. Some


Expert Group members may tender for this work, so the group's input must be carefully managed to prevent conflicts of interest.

17. 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 as this will improve access for teachers to gifted resources.
18. The identification guidance and supports will encourage schools to respond to gifted learners within their own learning environments rather than 'othering' them and separating them from other learners.

### **Streaming and Grouping practices**

19. Some members of the gifted community have expressed concern about the move away from streaming learners by ability. 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, and groups should not be fixed or labelled by ability. Research indicates that:
  - There is mixed evidence that learners in high ability groups are any better off when grouped or streamed by ability.
  - International evidence and local experience indicates 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.
20. Schools and kura who want to move away from harmful streaming and grouping practices now can already apply for whole-school professional learning delivered by accredited providers against the national PLD priorities of Local Curriculum Design, Cultural Capability or Assessment for Learning.

### **Gifted PLD**

21. 9(2)(f)(iv)  

22. Gifted PLD has been removed as a speciality on the Ministry's PLD website and is included under Inclusive Design. Schools can find the list of gifted PLD providers by

typing “gifted” into the website search. This means it is easier than ever for schools to search for gifted providers. REACH has been a registered PLD provider for Te Mahau for at least five years and has never been contracted by schools or kura to deliver regionally allocated PLD in that time.

23. Dr Cathcart was involved in the development of the *Global Principals for Professional Learning in Gifted Education* and would like to see them adopted for PLD in Aotearoa New Zealand. The goals have commonalities with the work on the Regional PLD Panels to support Te Mahau’s direction, including a focus on equity and taking a holistic approach to responding to learners. See the global goals at [professional-learning-global-principles.pdf \(tki.org.nz\)](https://professional-learning-global-principles.pdf(tki.org.nz))
24. In addition to regionally provided PLD, Te Mahau supports Networks of Expertise (NEX). NEX provide just-in-time teaching, learning and assessment support through PLD, resources and collaborative face to face and online opportunities. They also offer on-going advice and guidance to build capability and adaptive expertise for kaiako and teachers. NEX are led by expert, passionate and innovative kaiako and teachers from across the education sectors. They have a strong understanding of professional learning and development (PLD) needs and aim to develop, grow and support peer to peer networks across Aotearoa New Zealand. The monitoring and evaluation of NEX supports is managed by Teacher Development Aotearoa.
25. The NEX Gifted contract is delivered by the New Zealand Centre for Gifted Education (NZCGE). It has a small but growing membership and has been providing a series of accessible online information cafes after school that include presentation and group discussions. 9(2)(g)(i)

## Learning Support Co-ordinators

26. 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 specialists help to support classroom teachers.
27. 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, and be assisted by the Learning Support Facilitator function and work within the Learning Support delivery model.
  - Working with the school/kura leadership team to plan support for all learners.
28. General professional learning and development for LSCs is the responsibility of the employing school.
29. 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 or kura’s learners as a unit.

30. 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.
31. 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.
32. 9(2)(g)(i) [REDACTED]

### **Gifted Expert Group**

33. The Gifted Expert Group has been consulted on each of the new gifted initiatives as they have been developed. Rather than meeting regularly as a large group, Te Mahau has taken a small working group approach to developing initiatives. Group members also participate on all the panels for the learners' and teachers' awards.
34. The two large group meetings in 2022 have been used to communicate the groups views to Learning Support about the LSC PLD and role, to seek feedback on the approach to the curriculum refresh and inform the upcoming procurement for identification work.
35. 9(2)(g)(i) [REDACTED]

### **Psychological testing – financial support**

36. Te Mahau does not provide financial support for psychological testing of learners. Access to Te Mahau specialist supports is not dependent on a diagnoses or identification. If a parent is worried about their child's learning needs being met it is always best for them to start by discussing their concerns with their child's classroom teacher. Parents and the school are able to contact the Ministry for advice.

## **Annexes**

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Annex 1: Update on Gifted Package initiatives

## Annex 1

### Gifted Package progress to date – September 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 into the school sector. We can share what gifted learners find appealing and relevant as well as their views on the barriers to participation.</p> <p>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 evaluations approach will involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• a focus on improving delivery for ākonga Maori and Pacific learners.</li> <li>• an emphasis on ākonga and whānau voices, using a “with us, not about us” approach.</li> <li>• a summative evaluation of the content, processes, and impact of the three components.</li> </ul> <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 with 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, and 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 have recently 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. Applications for round seven are open now and will close on 30 September.</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>This has moved to one application round per year. The next round opens on 1 October.</p>
The Teachers Awards for the Massey University Post Graduate 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 are currently open and close on 30 September.</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"> <li>• Gifted learners are achieving their potential.</li> <li>• Gifted learners experience success and are challenged.</li> <li>• Gifted learners feel welcomed and valued in their environment.</li> <li>• Gifted learners are able to engage in a range of learning opportunities.</li> </ul> <p>As a result of their participation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gifted learners report improvements in their emotional/social and overall well-being.</li> <li>• Gifted learners who are Māori and Pacific report that they are supported as Māori or as Pacific.</li> <li>• Parents, communities and whānau are empowered to make positive decisions about learning options for their gifted tamariki.</li> <li>• Schools and kura use tools and planning resources to improve their in-setting responses to gifted learners.</li> </ul>
The Events and Opportunities projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CORE Education HiAko – Māori medium – South Auckland. Online and in-person. Digitally based enquiry into finding solutions to real life issues within their own whanau, hapu and iwi. HiAko draws on traditional Māori knowledge and promotes Māori values, practices and principles.</li> <li>• CORE Education Inventionator – online, NZ wide</li> </ul>

	<p>Digital based enquiry into finding solution 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"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Faith City Trust Project Y – South Auckland The project has three integrated approaches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Front Foot apps development competition</li> <li>- STEM week with MOTAT</li> <li>- Pasi IT Mentoring.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Nga Potiki a Tamapahore Trust, Bay of Plenty Project for ākonga Māori based mainly in Papamoa. This project has developed overtime 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..</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• VLN Primary – online Video Learning Network (VLN) provides an online programme specifically designed for gifted learners that involves: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Going deep in learning</li> <li>○ Being part of an online social network with like-minded students</li> <li>○ Individual inquiries and mentoring support</li> <li>○ Support for teachers of the learners.</li> </ul> <p>VLN is a newer project than the other projects.</p> </li> </ul>
9(2)(f)(iv)	

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"> <li>• Criteria for Awards – learners and teachers</li> <li>• Panels for all the Awards</li> <li>• Content of the Early Learning Project</li> <li>• Online presentations for the Events and Opportunities providers</li> <li>• Input into the curriculum refresh</li> <li>• the procurement of identification information for Ministry channels.</li> </ul>
Identification and Training	<p>This work involves developing an approach for schools, teachers and whānau to identify gifted learners. This work was disrupted with 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>9(2)(f)(iv)</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>