MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
TE TĀHUHU O TE MĀTAURANGA

Briefing Note: Strengthening and Embedding the Learning Support Delivery Model (LSDM)

To:	Hon Jan Tinetti, Associate Minister of Education		
Cc:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
Date:	28 September 2022	**Priority:**	High
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Purpose of Report

The purpose of this briefing note is to provide you with information about our current integrated work programme to strengthen and embed the Learning Support Delivery Model (LSDM) across takiwā ahead of the Strategy Session on 19 October 2022.

Summary

- The LSDM describes a way of working together to plan and deliver joined-up learning support by identifying local needs, gathering available resources, and enabling collaborative decision making to strengthen learning support across a range of needs.

- When the LSDM is operating well ākonga and whānau get the right support, in the right place, at the right time. This will support earlier and more flexible approaches to reduce early intervention, communication and behaviour wait lists and wait time through targeted and universal approaches.

- Information from Te Mahau takiwā and the LSC Evaluation reports suggest that the LSDM is in place across most communities to varying degrees, with a high proportion of schools participating in a cluster with a focus and activity around understanding, prioritising, and responding to the learning support needs of the ākonga and teachers in that cluster. Most, but not all, LSDM clusters are part of an established Kāhui Ako.

- LSDM ways of working are a key enabler to give life to Te Mahau's purpose to respond to regional voice, take practical action to give effect to te Tiriti o Waitangi, and establish more effective feedback loops with the sector.

- Strengthening and embedding the LSDM across takiwā will provide a robust local delivery platform for more timely and effective learning support.

- In the longer-term, through partnering with local clusters and communities, the LSDM approach can provide a platform for delivering a broader range of initiatives to improve education outcomes for all ākonga and whānau.

- Based on Te Mahau's work to date and the findings of the final LSC Phase 3 evaluation report, a work programme of five enabling initiatives over the coming 12 – 18 months will strengthen and embed the LSDM.

- Some initiatives in that programme are underway. We are gaining better visibility of LSDM operational strengths, opportunities and challenges, and what specific actions are most effective to embed and strengthen the LSDM.

- We will provide you with regular updates on this programme of work.

Recommended Actions

The Ministry of Education recommends you:

a.   **note** that information from Te Mahau takiwā and the LSC Evaluation reports confirms that the LSDM is in place across most communities

Noted

b.   **note** that achieving Te Mahau's purpose will be supported through strengthening and embedding the LSDM

Noted

c.   **note** that in the longer-term the LSDM has the potential to provide a robust platform to support the delivery of a broader range of education initiatives by partnering with local clusters and communities

Noted

d.   **note** that we will keep you informed about the LSDM work programme to strengthen and embed the LSDM

Noted

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

Agree / Disagree

Sean Teddy
Hautū – Te Pae Aronui | Deputy Secretary

28/09/2022

Hon Jan Tinetti
Associate Minister of Education

17/10/2022

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Background

1   The LSDM is a way of working to enable clusters, iwi, and communities of learning to use data to derive insights to make local decisions for local solutions through access to responsive, accessible, and integrated learning support for all ākonga. The Learning Support Action Plan 2019 – 2025 sets out key priorities for improving the scope and effectiveness of learning support. It builds on the LSDM.

2   The LSDM was developed using the feedback, information and experience gained from:
- the 2015 Learning Support Update
- the 2016 trial of 22 small local improvement projects to test new ways of tailoring support to meet needs within a local community
- the 2016 Select Committee Inquiry into Identification and Support for Children and Young People with Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and Autism Spectrum Disorders in Primary and Secondary Schools
- the 2017 pilots in Ōtūmoetai, Whakatāne and Taupō Kāhui Ako.

3   The LSDM has four core characteristics that are progressed by local clusters in a community to:
- proactively identify local needs and gather available resources
- work together to plan and deliver joined up support
- collaboratively make decisions
- strengthen support across a range of needs.

4   The Learning Support Action Plan prioritises the early identification of learning support needs, so that learners can get the support they need as quickly as possible. It also focuses on improving transitions and ensuring support for neurodiverse learners.

5   Current state of the LSDM

6   The LSDM is in place across clusters, iwi, and communities of learning to varying degrees. Information from the LSDM maturity rubric used in 2018 and 2019 (BERPI)[1] indicated that in December 2019, 254 clusters were implementing the LSDM, comprising over 1,392 early learning services me ngā kōhanga reo and 2088 schools and kura covering 686,633 ākonga. At that point in time 86% of schools and kura were participating in the LSDM way of working.

7   In July 2020 the Ministry's regional teams working with clusters reported the following learning support insights and differences for ākonga arising from the LSDM:

- more ākonga had been supported through earlier and more flexible approaches
- a reduction in total Early Intervention wait list and wait time, Communications wait time and Behaviour wait time through broader approaches that were targeted and universal
- increase in the number of ākonga receiving support through targeted and universal services
- clusters planning and making joint decisions about how to use resources more flexibly to respond to learning support needs

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[1] BERPI (Beginning, Engagement, Refining, Pre-implementation and Implementation) was a progression map used 2018 - 1019 to assess implementation stages of the Learning Support Delivery Model.

- joint response to identified trends resulting in across school professional development workshops to lift teacher confidence and capability to better support ākonga
- improved ability for clusters to identify and specifically define areas of need and put in place tailored and local responses to address learning support needs.

8   Given our priorities to develop and embed Te Mahau working collaboratively with the sector, this is the right time to give fresh impetus to systematic capture of data and a national picture of LSDM implementation.

9   We are working on initiatives to strengthen and embed the LSDM identified in mid-2021 to provide a robust and local delivery platform to improve education outcomes for all ākonga. Some initiatives in that programme are underway.

10   We are gathering better visibility of LSDM operational strengths, opportunities and challenges, and examples of good practice across takiwā. This approach will enable us to better understand how Te Mahau staff are engaging with the LSDM across takiwā and to understand what works for the sector.

11   **Appendix 1** provides early feedback from Managers Learning Support (from eight regions) about LSDM operational strengths, opportunities and challenges, and examples of good practice across takiwā.

12   Many aspects of the LSDM are working well across learning support clusters, iwi, and communities of learning, but there is scope for further improvement. The Learning Support Coordinator (LSC) Phase 3 evaluation, for example, suggests that collaborative behaviours and decision making on collective priorities has potential for further development. The LSC Phase 3 Evaluation report also found that although the majority of schools have established and are using a learning support register, this is not being used at a cluster level to the same extent, and that the delay in Te Rito (a standardised learning support register) has impacted collaborative endeavour across clusters.

Benefits of strengthening the LSDM

13   LSDM ways of working are a key enabler to give life to Te Mahau's purpose to respond to regional voice, take practical action to give effect to te Tiriti o Waitangi, and establish more effective feedback loops with the sector.

14   Learning support, as currently designed and delivered, is a complex system made up of many players, services, and funding streams. The LSDM is in operation alongside Te Tūāpapa o He Pikorua; together providing the practice models and frameworks and the operational approach for learning support within clusters and tākiwa. Stronger and more consistent implementation of both together will deliver better outcomes to ākonga and their whānau.

15   A strengthened and embedded LSDM will reduce early intervention, communication and behaviour wait lists and wait times.

16   A strengthened and embedded LSDM across clusters, iwi and communities of learning will enable improved:

- capture and sharing of information for the identification of learning support need and the planning and delivery of tailored, targeted, and universal responses that can support ākonga and whānau earlier and more flexibly

- networking and collaboration to more effectively plan, prioritise and respond to learning support needs
- use of incidence, trend information, data, and implementation gaps to support planning
- local decision-making for local solutions
- integrated responses and access, for those ākonga underserved by the education system, including Māori, Pacific and disabled ākonga and those from disadvantaged backgrounds
- intentionality and innovation to tackle complex challenges, that no one support, or organisation can do alone
- joined up professional learning development to lift teacher confidence and capability to better support ākonga and whānau.

17   Strengthening and embedding the LSDM across takiwā will provide a robust local delivery platform for Te Mahau to work alongside local communities to plan and deliver learning supports more effectively, and in ways that reflects the needs, priorities, and preferences of local communities.

18   This is of particular importance in respect of Māori whānau, communities and iwi, where agency for Māori, access, and identity, culture and language are at the core of achieving more equitable outcomes.

19   Although the LSDM is currently focused on learning support, this way of working could in time provide Te Mahau a way of working for a broader range of initiatives to improve education outcomes for all ākonga and whānau.

Enablers to strengthen and embed the LSDM

20   Five enabling initiatives have been identified to strengthen and embed the LSDM. The initiatives will give effect to the Te Mahau promise to deliver greater responsiveness, accessibility, integrated services, and support through:

- evidence led decisions to improve equity
- services that respond to ākonga needs
- building educationally powerful connections.

21   Based on the initial work programme developed in 2021, the final LSC Phase 3 evaluation report and recent engagement across Te Mahau, the following five enabling initiatives are expected to have the greatest impact to strengthen and embed the LSDM across clusters, iwi, and communities of learning.

Enabling more effective clusters

- This work will support clusters and communities of learning to plan, strengthen and progress development of the LSDM by using a 'self-drive' co-designed development tool with Te Mahau to support clusters to be collaborative, responsive, accessible, and to promote equity to ensure all ākonga access the learning support they need.

Enabling better cluster facilitation

- The Ministry's LSDM facilitation function will be supported across clusters to co-design and deliver supports that reflect Te Tūāpapa o He Pikorua and taking account of local flexibility and with national consistency.

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- This work will provide greater clarity about how the facilitation function can work, build on what is working well and how we can improve access to supports for Māori medium and Kura Kaupapa Māori settings.

Enabling regional learning support funding to be tailored to local needs

- This work will develop practical information on how discretionary and flexible funds may be used to address demand from population growth and support inclusive education outcomes.

- This work will collate and analyse information on the initiatives funded and the measurable impacts to provide insights and advice to Te Mahau. This will build our understanding of how learning support funding is being flexibly applied across the LSDM to progress strategic objectives such as those in the NELP to improve equity for all ākonga and whānau.

Enabling Learning Support Coordinators

- This work will continue to support the effectiveness of Tranche 1 LSCs by responding to the findings of the evaluations including those related to how the effectiveness of the role in Māori medium and Kaupapa Māori settings can be improved. Subject to government direction, we will provide advice on and support for a future and full roll out of the LSC role.

- The work will provide and develop resources and support to strengthen the role of LSCs and SENCOs working within the LSDM based on findings from the LSC evaluation and feedback from the Learning Support Network.

- Subject to government direction and future funding, we will provide advice informed by the findings of the three phases of the LSC evaluation to support further roll out of the LSC role.

Enabling Supporting clusters to gather, share and use information

- This work will strengthen clusters' ability to make local decisions to ensure all ākonga and whānau access local services (including Ministry specialists, RTLB and agencies) and share information safely with guidance and support for privacy, security, and consent practices.

- The work will support the capture, sharing and use of of information to support decision-making about learning support in clusters, and progress the concerns raised with us about data sovereignty and the whakapapa of data in respect of iwi, hapū, whānau and ākonga Māori.

22   We will develop a detailed work programme of activity to deliver the enabling initiatives over the coming 12 – 18 months. The programme of work to strengthen the LSDM will take account of the recommendations of the Māori Affairs Select Committee Inquiry into Learning Support for ākonga Māori (MASC Report) and underpin our response to those recommendations where appropriate.

23   We will provide you with regular updates on progress.

LSDM – longer term integration with broader education initiatives

24   The LSDM is an example of how we can work with clusters, iwi, communities of learning and sector and partner agencies. The five enabling initiatives will build and strengthen local agency and local accountability among all parties to support equitable and inclusive education outcomes.

25   In the longer-term the LSDM has the potential to provide a robust platform to support the delivery of a broader range of education initiatives by partnering with local clusters and communities, for example:

- Attendance and Engagement strategy where attendance services and alternate education services are based on clusters
- Providing a way of working to support the implementation of early changes arising from the Highest Needs Review
- Network development and catchment planning with communities.

Next steps

26   We will develop the detailed programme of activities that we will progress under each of the enabling initiatives.

27   We will provide you with regular updates on progress.

Annex 1: Summary from Managers Learning Support about LSDM operational strengths, opportunities and challenges, and examples of good practice across takiwā

LSDM operational strengths - what we heard

- overall clusters, iwi. and communities of learning are at different stages of engagement with the LSDM starting with developing through to robust, positive levels of engagement
- contributing factors to strengthening and embedding the LSDM include the existing functioning of the cluster, management of the LSC resource and role to facilitate effective collaboration by employing principals, willingness to reach out to the Ministry for support and early learning services me ngā kōhanga reo engagement
- the LSDM as a platform has brought together regional hui to connect LSCs, SENCOs and RTLB to look at patterns of referrals within clusters with the intent to bring in universal supports that are co-designed and reflect Te Tūāpapa o He Pikorua and taking account of local flexibility and with national consistency
- principals are seeing the LSDM as a platform to support attendance and engagement across
- clusters take approaches that suit their local contexts using data that is safely shared to support decisions around professional development for kaiako, as well as intervention plans for clinicians e.g., using a medical model or kaupapa Māori approach
- mental health workers in schools and kura are mentioned by several Kāhui Ako and clusters as being a positive development and outcome of the LSDM
- regional office staff are helping schools and kura move towards working as a cluster and facilitating relationships with external agencies to bring services directly to schools and kura.

LSDM opportunities and challenges – what we heard

- developing a stronger shared understanding across a broader group of sector stakeholders of how the LSDM can bring in universal supports that are co-designed and reflect Te Tūāpapa o He Pikorua and taking account of local flexibility when needed and with national consistency
- the level of collaboration with early learning services me ngā kōhanga reo across clusters is inconsistent, but where this is in place is delivering some good results, particularly in respect of transitions planning
- some clusters that were not allocated an LSC in the first tranche have been reluctant to participate in clusters
- some clusters have developed their own learning support registers; however, the lack of a standardised Learning Support Register has hampered the sharing of data in some clusters.

LSDM examples of good practice – what we heard

- Kaiako, whānau, and Ministry staff in a North Island town are working together to strengthen the LSDM. Learning support and services are becoming more responsive, and practitioners are taking more time to understand ākonga and their whānau. This stems from staff seeing themselves as part of the team, rather than the lead agency. They have also taken a more culturally responsive approach for whānau Māori, challenging assumptions about the whānau, and bringing the aspirations of whānau into each conversation.
- In a cluster of Catholic schools, RTLB and the Ministry are working together to grow their Kāhui Ako Panel to include more local organisations to support ākonga and whānau.
- In a cluster in adjacent suburbs of a North Island city, a collaborative project was launched with the Kāhui Ako, RTLB, and Learning Support specialists to strengthen practice around learners with autism traits that has led to targeted professional learning development being scheduled for 2023.
- LSCs in a smaller North Island city are building a system to identify ākonga who are transient and/or struggling with attendance
- In a North Island town, the Kāhui Ako lead principal is driving collaboration through a local Learning Support Register. This is helping to plan and respond to local needs and inform future planning for professional development.
- In a suburb of a North Island city, strong collaboration between LSCs and RTLB is strengthening collaboration in a Kāhui Ako that has faced challenging situations.
- In a satellite town for a major city, a Kāhui Ako that did not receive LSCs has chosen to appoint a SENCO to one of the Across School Leader positions to perform a similar function.
- A group of Kura Kaupapa Māori in a major city have been using the LSDM as a framework and adapted this to a kaupapa Māori approach to support disabled ākonga, recently for deaf and hard of hearing ākonga and, shortly, for ākonga takiwātanga (autism).
- A Kāhui Ako in a diverse suburb of a South Island city has been collaborating around Universal Design for Learning (UDL) practices.
- In a rural North Island area, cluster collaboration around the 2023 Matariki celebrations has led to more collaboration, especially around transitions between schools and kura.