



Briefing Note: Ministerial consultation on the Cabinet Paper *Implementing a free and healthy school lunch prototype for Year 1–8 students*

To:	Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern, Prime Minister and Minister for Child Poverty Reduction Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education Hon Tracey Martin, Minister for Children		
Date:	4 June 2019	Priority:	High (return by 10 June 2019)
Security Level:	Sensitive	Briefing Reference:	Education: METIS-1193455 DPMC: DPMC-2018/19-1314
Key contacts:	Kristie Carter, Director Child Poverty Unit, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet Damian Edwards, Associate Deputy Secretary Education System Policy, Ministry of Education		
Messaging seen by Communications:	N/A	Round robin:	No

Purpose of Report

This briefing note provides you with a draft Cabinet paper titled, "Implementing a free and healthy school lunch prototype for Year 1–8 students", for your consideration. It seeks your agreement to undertake Ministerial and party consultation on the draft Cabinet paper. A summary of agency feedback, following consultation with them on the draft Cabinet paper, is also provided.

Following your consideration, and circulation for Ministerial and party consultation, officials are aiming to finalise the Cabinet paper for lodgement with the Cabinet Office on 20 June, for consideration by the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee (SWC) on 26 June.

Summary

- Cabinet has established tagged operating and capital contingencies in Vote Education through Budget 2019, together totalling up to \$44.483m, to support a phased school lunch prototype for students in selected schools.
- Joint Ministers (the Ministers for Child Poverty Reduction and Children and the Minister of Education) have agreed the key parameters of the prototyping programme and approach to implementation (DPMC 2018/19-1230 and METIS 1191068 refers), and to take a paper to SWC in June seeking Cabinet agreement to the prototype and the drawdown of funding to enable implementation.

- Officials have drafted the attached draft Cabinet paper for consideration by Joint Ministers, and seek your agreement to circulate it for Ministerial and party consultation. It seeks Cabinet agreement to the high level policy objectives and parameters of the prototype, outlines the proposed implementation approach, and a partial drawdown of contingency funding.
- The policy and implementation details reflect those agreed to by Joint Ministers in May. Following Treasury advice, a two-phased approach is proposed to draw down the funding, with delegated Ministerial authority sought for subsequent draw downs, and any policy and operational decisions, within the parameters agreed by Cabinet.

Recommendations

The Ministry of Education and Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet recommend you:

1. **agree** that the attached draft Cabinet paper be circulated for Ministerial and party consultation

Prime Minister Ardern **Agree / Disagree**

Minister Hipkins **Agree / Disagree**

Minister Martin **Agree / Disagree**

2. **agree** that this briefing, and the attached draft Cabinet paper, not be proactively released.

Prime Minister Ardern **Agree / Disagree**

Minister Hipkins **Agree / Disagree**

Minister Martin **Agree / Disagree**



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Background

1. As part of the Government's commitment to reducing child poverty and improving child wellbeing, Ministers have sought advice from officials on the introduction of a free school lunch programme to directly address food insecurity and its effects on children's outcomes.
2. On 15 April 2019, Cabinet agreed to establish tagged operating and capital contingencies in Vote Education, together totalling up to \$44.483m, to support a phased free school lunch prototype for students in selected schools [CAB-19-MIN-0174.13 refers]. Draw-downs from these contingencies are subject to Cabinet approval.
3. Officials subsequently sought the agreement of Joint Ministers to the key parameters for the prototype, and approach to implementation. Joint Ministers agreed these matters, and to take a paper to SWC in June seeking Cabinet agreement to the prototype and the drawdown of funding to enable implementation (DPMC 2018/19-1230 and METIS 1191068 refers).
4. We have now prepared the attached draft Cabinet paper for your consideration, and seek your agreement for it being circulated for Ministerial and party consultation.

Summary of the contents of the draft Cabinet paper

The paper reflects the key objectives, policy parameters and implementation approach agreed to by Joint Ministers in May 2019

5. We have drafted the attached Cabinet paper in line with our previous advice about the rationale and evidence for school lunch programmes, the limitations of current food provision in schools, and matters to be tested through the prototype. It also reflects the objectives, parameters and implementation approach previously agreed by Joint Ministers. These are as follows:

Objectives

- Assist in the development of a robust implementation design
- Gather real-time evaluative information to support future policy and investment decisions regarding the provision of a free lunch programme beyond 2021
- Help ensure students in participating schools and kura have their basic needs met, by directly addressing food insecurity at school.

Policy parameters

- Schools and kura selected to receive funding will be from within the 20 percent of schools with the highest concentrations of disadvantage
- All students in Years 1-8 in participating schools and kura will receive a daily, free and healthy lunch.

Implementation approach

- Begin in a small number of early adopter schools and kura in the Hawkes Bay (including Tairāwhiti), Bay of Plenty, and Otago / Southland Ministry of Education administrative regions from Term 4 2019
- Reach up to 21,000 students (i.e. approximately 120 participating schools and kura) by the beginning of the 2021 school year
- Test different delivery approaches in a range of schools and kura
- Evaluate in real time and adapt where necessary and practical.


The paper seeks to draw down \$15.898m in operating funding and \$0.396m in capital funding across 2019/20 and 2020/21

6. The Cabinet paper seeks authorisation to draw down the following contingency funding to support the implementation of the prototype in up to 10,000 students in approximately 60 schools and kura, until the end of 2020:
 - \$9.281m in 2019/20 and \$6.617m in 2020/21 from the operating contingency
 - \$0.390m in 2019/20 and \$0.036m in 2020/21 from the capital contingency.
7. It also seeks delegated authority for the Ministers of Education and Finance to make further drawdowns, and for the Minister of Education to make further policy and operational decisions to support implementation of the prototype. In both cases, the Ministers for Child Poverty Reduction and Children are required to be consulted.
8. The paper also includes a number of technical recommendations relating to the draw down, including the establishment of a new category in appropriations to facilitate the draw-down.

A further report to Cabinet is proposed in late 2020 about the provision of free school lunches after 2021

9. Given the time-limited nature of the prototype and associated funding, decisions will be required ahead of Budget 2021 about whether to continue, or expand, the provision of free school lunches beyond the 2021 school year.
10. The Cabinet paper therefore notes the intention for the Minister of Education to report back to Cabinet in late 2020, with initial evidence of the impacts of the programme, and advice on whether to continue the programme beyond 2021, and any related Budget implications.

We have undertaken agency consultation on the draft Cabinet paper

11. We have consulted with relevant social sector and population agencies on the draft Cabinet paper (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, Oranga Tamariki, Ministry for Pacific Peoples, Te Puni Kōkiri, and Stats NZ).
12. There was broad support from agencies for the proposals in the paper, including the approach to implementation. Oranga Tamariki, Ministry for Pacific Peoples and Te Puni Kōkiri noted that the proposal is likely to have particular benefits for Māori and Pacific and children at risk of needing care and protection. Key issues raised by agencies included coverage of Māori medium schools and Pasifika students, and opportunities for iwi, Māori and Pasifika organisations to work with schools to develop and deliver healthy lunch programmes.
13. s 9(2)(f)(iv)

14. The attached draft Cabinet paper captures changes we have made to pick up these agency comments, including explicitly referencing kura as well as schools, and a free and healthy school lunch prototype.
15. A number of other comments made by agencies were focused on aspects of the implementation approach. We will provide more detailed feedback on these matters directly to agencies, and will establish mechanisms for consulting and sharing information with them as the prototype is rolled out.

Next Steps

16. We are seeking your agreement to circulate the draft Cabinet paper for Ministerial and party consultation. Following this, we will finalise the paper and seek your agreement to lodge it with Cabinet office. We are working to a timeframe of lodging on 20 June, for consideration by the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee (SWC) on 26 June.

Annex

- Annex 1: Draft Cabinet paper: *Implementing a free and healthy school lunch prototype for Year 1–8 students*

Proactively Released