



Education Report: School lunch programme: intended approach to implementation during phase one

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
Cc:	Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern, Prime Minister and Minister for Child Poverty Reduction		
Date:	01 August 2019	Priority:	Medium
Security Level:	In Confidence	METIS:	1199575
Key contacts:	Jann Marshall, Associate Deputy Secretary, Director of Education for Taranaki-Whanganui-Manawatu Lucy Lawrence, Programme Manager School Lunch Programme, Sector Enablement and Support		
Messaging seen by Communications:	N/A	Round robin:	No

Purpose of report

This paper recommends the Minister of Education defer beginning the free and healthy school lunch programme until Term 1, 2020.

It also identifies ten schools and kura in Hawkes' Bay/Tairāwhiti and Bay of Plenty/Wairariki, including Murupara Area School, which Ministry of Education officials have selected to receive an invitation to participate in phase one of the school lunch programme.

Summary

1. The Ministry of Education has initiated phase one of a free and healthy school lunch programme per Cabinet agreement [CAB-19-MIN-0329 refers]. As per the Cabinet proposal, officials initially intended to begin the programme in Term 4, 2019.
2. The direction we have received to date is not to approach providers nor principals to discuss this programme prior to the Prime Ministers' announcement of the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy, which was scheduled for July or August 2019.
3. However, with the announcement likely to be delayed to late August or early September, our ability to approach potential providers and principals would be affected, thereby impacting our ability to ensure the successful provision of free school lunches in Term 4.
4. 9(2)(g)(i)
5. We seek your direction as to how you would prefer we proceed i.e. approach the recommended schools prior to the Prime Minister's announcement of the programme (and aim to implement in Term 4) or approach the recommended schools once the Prime

Minister has announced the programme alongside the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy (and implement in Term 1).

6. From an implementation perspective, we recommend deferring implementation of the first tranche of the programme until Term 1, 2020. This recognises the difficulty in beginning detailed communications with schools and providers until after the programme is publicly announced. It will also allow us to work with up to 30 schools in Term 1, rather than 10 in Term 4.
7. In anticipation of the Term 4 announcement, the Ministry of Education has identified ten schools and kura in Hawkes' Bay/Tairāwhiti and Bay of Plenty/Wairariki as suitable for participation in phase one of the school lunch programme. These schools are in three clusters, 9(2)(f)(iv) [REDACTED]. The Ministry will contact these schools following the announcement of the programme, provided the partial strike action by primary school principals has concluded.
8. Alongside the initial ten schools mentioned, the Ministry of Education will also contact 20 additional schools to enter the programme on a rolling basis throughout Term 1, for a total of up to 30 schools. This second tranche of schools would be the first of several tranches which continue the planned roll-out across the 2020 school year.

Recommended Actions

The Ministry of Education recommends the Minister of Education:

- a. 9(2)(g)(i) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Noted
- b. **indicate** your preferred approach:
 - option one: officials begin confidential communications with schools and providers now, prior to public announcement, using non-disclosure agreements and other tools in an effort to preserve confidentiality, and begin implementation in Term 4

Yes / No

OR

 - option two (recommended): officials wait until the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy (and this programme) is announced before beginning communications with schools and providers, and consequently you direct officials to defer implementation of the first tranche of schools until Term 1, 2020

Yes / No
- c. **note** that, should implementation be deferred, officials expect the programme to be:
 - working with approximately 30 schools in Term 1, 2020
 - implemented in approximately 60 schools by the end of Term 2, 2020
 - implemented in approximately 120 schools (around 21,000 students) by the beginning of the 2021 academic year, as originally intended.

Noted

d. **note** that officials intend to initially approach the following schools for participation in the discovery phase of the programme:

- 9(2)(f)(iv) [redacted]
- 9(2)(f)(iv) [redacted]
- 9(2)(f)(iv) [redacted]

Noted

e. **note** that the Ministry of Education recommends you forward this briefing to the Minister for Children for their information

Noted

Communications and Proactive Release

f. **agree** that the Ministry of Education will:

- update the Minister of Education quarterly on the progress of the programme, including key developments and risks
- provide separate updates to the public which contain non-sensitive information from within the above quarterly reports

Agree / Disagree

g. **note** that this Education report will not be proactively released until after future policy and investment decisions are made, likely through Budget 2021, in order to preserve the integrity of the programme's design processes.

Noted

Katrina Casey
Deputy Secretary
Sector Enablement and Support

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Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

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Damian Edwards
Associate Deputy Secretary
Education System Policy

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School Lunch Programme

1. Cabinet has agreed to prototype a time-limited, small-scale, free and healthy school lunch programme (the programme) in a selection of schools and kura from mid-October 2019 (Term 4) to December 2021 [CAB-19-MIN-0329 refers].
2. We have previously provided you with advice about the scope and intent of the programme. In particular, please refer to your Cabinet paper, *Implementing a free and healthy school lunch prototype for Year 1-8 students* for details of the programme [SWC-19-MIN-0077, confirmed by CAB-19-MIN-0329, refers].

Timing Risks and Public Announcement

3. A project like the school lunch programme is a difficult undertaking, especially at pace and with a high level of public interest anticipated. Contacting schools and providers is an important step prior to implementation, as it allows us to test policy assumptions about our expectations in a real-world environment.
4. When Cabinet agreed to prototype a free and healthy school lunch programme, Ministers noted that it would be announced in July or August 2019 through publicity associated with the release of the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy (the Strategy). We understand that this announcement has now been delayed until late August-early September.
5. In order to effectively implement this initiative in Term 4, we would need to begin discussions with providers and schools prior to the new announcement date. While the Ministry of Education could begin communications with schools and providers now, the delay in announcement significantly increases the risk the programme will become public knowledge prior to the announcement of the Strategy. Use of non-disclosure agreements and other tools to maintain confidentiality may not entirely mitigate the risk of early disclosure.
6. Current timelines for the announcement of the Strategy mean that there is already a real and increasing risk that Term 4 implementation will begin on a “rolling basis” (i.e. food provision may not begin on day one, term 4, in all participating schools), or be non-viable if the Strategy is delayed.
7. 9(2)(g)(i)
[REDACTED]
8. Given these issues, we have developed two options going forward and, on balance, seek your direction on how to proceed:
 - a. option one: officials begin confidential communications with schools and providers now, prior to public announcement, using non-disclosure agreements and other tools to preserve confidentiality if possible and plan for a Term 4 start.
 - b. option two (recommended): officials wait until the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy (and this programme) is announced before beginning communications with schools and providers and, consequently, you direct officials to defer implementation of the first tranche of schools until Term 1, 2020.
9. While Ministers have previously expressed an interest in beginning implementation during the 2019 academic year, later implementation allows the public announcement to proceed without introducing further programme sequencing and success risks.

10. Should implementation be deferred, officials intend to begin implementation in the ten schools identified below from day one of Term 1, 2020. We also expect to be working with another 20 schools in Term 1, in order to begin implementation on a “rolling basis” in those schools.
11. Both options will see the programme in 60 schools by the end of Term 2, 2020, and continue to aim for full implementation in 120 schools (around 21,000 students) by the beginning of the 2021 academic year.

Phase One Approach

The Ministry of Education intends to initially approach ten schools and kura in Hawke’s Bay/Tairāwhiti and Bay of Plenty/Waiariki

12. We intend to approach ten schools and kura from the Hawke’s Bay/Tairāwhiti region, in order to invite them to participate in the programme during Phase One. These schools are in three clusters as outlined below:
 - a. 9(2)(f)(iv) [REDACTED]
 - b. 9(2)(f)(iv) [REDACTED]
 - c. 9(2)(f)(iv) [REDACTED]
13. Per the terms of the Cabinet proposal [CAB-19-MIN-0329 refers] and in consultation with Ministry of Education regional offices, these schools have been selected because they include a range of rural and urban schools, roll sizes, and relationships to existing food programmes. We have also identified clusters of schools to enable a more community-based approach.
14. Officials stress that we have been unable to approach these schools at this time, due to the requirement to maintain secrecy of the programme.
15. We will also be working closely with schools and communities to identify potential lunch providers during the discovery phase, both locally and nationally. These may include:
 - a. existing charities or social enterprises, such as Eat My Lunch
 - b. local community groups that produce food at scale, such as iwi or church groups
 - c. existing providers of school lunch programmes
 - d. commercial food providers, such as cafes and restaurants
 - e. commercial catering operators, such as Spotless.
16. Whether or not implementation is delayed beyond Term 4, we still expect to expand the programme to approximately 120 schools (21,000 students) by the beginning of the 2021 academic year in line with the approach proposed in Cabinet.
17. For your information, we note there are a range of other new government programmes that are expected to be announced or begin implementation in the next few months, including the:
 - a. Learning Support Action Plan, expected to be announced on 26 July
 - b. Learning Support Co-ordinator allocation, expected to be announced on 02 August—we expect learning support co-ordinators to be allocated to some of the schools selected to participate, so will take care to ensure effective implementation through matching staff and areas served where that makes sense for us to do so

- c. launch of the Healthy Active Learning initiative, expected to be announced in mid-August—the physical activity workforce will be deployed in areas covered by the Gisborne and the Bay of Plenty Regional Sport Trusts (among others).

Next Steps

18. If you agree to delay implementation to Term 1, 2020, officials will continue to work to other agreed timelines and 9(2)(g)(i) [REDACTED]
19. Cabinet has empowered you to make operational decisions you consider appropriate to implement the programme (with very limited exceptions), subject to a requirement that you consult with the Ministers for Child Poverty Reduction and Children. We have proactively provided a copy of this report to the Prime Minister, and recommend you forward this briefing to the Minister for Children for her information.
20. In particular, we will provide you with further advice in September 2019 for your information and comment, including:
 - a. an evaluation framework and implementation plan
 - b. a communications and engagement plan.