



Education Report: The Prime Minister's Education Excellence Awards: Options for the 2020 Awards

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
Date:	15 May 2020	Priority:	High
Security Level:	In Confidence	METIS No:	1224525
Drafter:	Charlotte Hughes-Johnson	DDI:	s 9(2)(a)
Key Contact:	Deborah Kent	DDI:	
Messaging seen by Communications team:	N/A	Round Robin:	No

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this paper is for you to:

- **Agree** that the 2020 Prime Minister's Education Excellence Awards should be cancelled for 2020 due to COVID-19 disruptions

OR

- **Agree** to extend the timeline for the 2020 Awards due to COVID-19.

Recommended Actions

The Ministry of Education recommends you:

- a. **Agree** that the 2020 Prime Minister's Education Excellence Awards should be cancelled for 2020 due to COVID-19 disruptions

Agree / Disagree

- b. **Agree** that the opening of the 2021 Prime Minister's Education Excellence Awards be bought forward to early 2021

Agree / Disagree

OR

- c. **Agree** that the Awards continue for the 2020 Prime Minister's Education Excellence Awards with an extended timeline

Agree / Disagree

- d. **Agree** that this report is proactively released once a decision has been announced.

Agree / Disagree


Ellen MacGregor-Reid
Deputy Secretary
Early Learning and Student Achievement

15/05/2020


Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

27/5/2020

Background

1. The 2020 Awards opened for entry on 24 February 2020. The original close off date for the 2020 entries was 10 April. On that day we had received only 18 entries. In 2019 we received 112 entries across all categories.
2. The low number of entries is indicative of other priorities schools and early learning services have had due to COVID-19. Some schools and early learning services were also worried that the Awards may not go ahead and so were reticent to undertake the work required to submit an entry.
3. A number of concerns have been received from members of the Judging Panel about going ahead with the Awards this year as they consider it an extra stress on schools and early learning services that are currently dealing with issues in relation to COVID-19, and they consider it will be difficult for them to undertake an effective judging process.

Comments

Option one: Cancel the 2020 Awards and begin promoting the 2021 Awards

1. With the number of entries received by the original closing date of 10 April, it would not be possible to continue with the Awards. To make a competition, at least eight entries would be required for each of the five categories as four entries are selected by the judges as finalists in each category. This means that between 40 and 50 entries are necessary across all categories.
2. Early learning services and schools will continue to be focused on responding to the needs of their students and communities under a COVID-19 environment. Extending the timeline will not necessarily attract any more entries.
3. It may not be possible to hold a full ceremony for the 2020 awards under a COVID-19 environment depending on how many people are able to gather at one time. The awards ceremony normally would involve approximately 250 people.
4. If a decision is made to cancel the 2020 Awards, we will inform the sector of this decision accordingly and give consideration to transferring 2020 funding to 2021 to enable additional categories and awards.
5. We would then look to begin promoting the 2021 Awards. The 2021 Awards could be open early 2021.

Option two: Extend the timeline for the 2020 Awards

6. An extension of the timeline is possible. The entry close-off date could be extended to the end of June beginning of July with the judging process taking place in August/September, and the ceremony being held in November/December. This is now a very tight timeframe and may compromise the integrity of the awards.
7. With this new timeline it may be entirely possible for the judges to visit the finalists and for the film crews to film them. However, if this is still not possible the judges can have video conferences with each finalist and checks would then be done with regional offices to ensure the integrity of the Awards is not compromised. The filming could then be undertaken at a later date when they are able to enter schools and early learning services.

8. In the event the timeline is extended, the current entrants would be asked if they wish to revisit their entries and re-submit them on the new close off date.
9. Depending on the number of people able to gather in one place will have an impact on the 2020 ceremony which may have to take a different form if the awards are to continue this year.

Risks

10. There is a risk that extending the timeline will not bring in a substantial number of additional entries as schools and early learning services are currently dealing with a COVID-19 environment and concentrating on delivering on-line learning and supporting whānau at home.
11. There is also a risk that judges and film crews may not be able to visit schools and early learning services depending New Zealand's COVID-19 alert level status in August. As stated previously, the judging may be able to be completed using video conferencing which is not ideal. Filming may be able to take place at a later date. However, this may be a risk to the integrity of the Awards.
12. Extending the timeline will mean the Awards' ceremony will not be able to occur until the end of the year which may be immediately after the 2020 election. If the ceremony is held over until 2021 it will clash with the opening of the 2021 Awards.

Proactive Release

13. We recommend that this Education Report is not released at this time because it contains information that is not yet in the public arena. However it may be released once a decision has been made and socialised with the sector.