



Education Report: Covid-19 Budget Initiatives – Learning Support

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
Cc:	Hon Tracey Martin, Associate Minister of Education		
Date:	23 April 2020	Priority:	High
Security Level:	Budget Sensitive	METIS No:	1226500
Drafter:	Eva Sharma	DDI:	s 9(2)(a)
Key contact:	Ben O'Meara	DDI:	
Messaging seen by Communications team:	No	Round robin:	No

Purpose of report

This report sets out potential Covid-19 Budget initiatives to support children with learning support needs, and seeks your decisions on which of these initiatives should be submitted to be considered by Cabinet.

Summary

1. We know that children with learning support needs will be disproportionately affected by the disruption to the education system resulting from Covid-19. This report provides you with potential Budget initiatives to support this cohort.
2. Budget initiatives related to Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), must be submitted by 24 April to be considered by Cabinet on 11 May [Treasury Circular 2020/02 refers].
3. We are proposing the following package of initiatives:

Initiative	Cost (\$m)	Brief Description
	<i>5-year operating unless otherwise noted</i>	
Increasing Ongoing Resourcing Scheme teacher aide hours	144.222	This initiative delivers an increase in teacher aide hours for over 10,000 students in the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS). This initiative means schools with ORS students will receive increased funding to employ teacher aides for more hours to help with the transition back to school. Initially this will support high and very high needs students with physical distancing and hygiene practices, however it will also allow schools to respond to the individual needs of the student upon their return to school. Parents will experience greater wellbeing as a result of their

		children receiving the support they need to return to school safely
s 9(2)(f)(iv)		
Early intervention: Te Kōhanga Reo	2.839	This initiative will deliver targeted professional learning and development to support kōhanga whānau (made up of parents, extended family, kaiako and other kōhanga staff) to effectively identify, assess and manage the learning support needs of their tamariki. Working with Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust, the purpose is to empower kōhanga whānau to own the learning support approach they know will work best to realise the educational aspirations of their tamariki. Whānau from Te Kōhanga Reo should have agency and feel safe and supported to access the Ministry's early intervention services to meet the education and oranga tonutanga/continued wellbeing needs of their tamariki.
s 9(2)(f)(iv)		

- We will submit completed initiative templates to the Treasury by 24 April for those initiatives that you decide to submit for Cabinet consideration.

Recommended Actions

The Ministry recommends that you:

- a. **note** that we are asking for a decision by 23 April to allow initiatives to be submitted by 24 April, for Cabinet's consideration on 11 May

Noted

- b. **agree** to submit the following learning support initiatives related to COVID-19 response for Cabinet consideration on 11 May:

Initiative	Submit for Cabinet Consideration on 11 May
Increasing Ongoing Resourcing Scheme teacher aide hours s 9(2)(f)(iv)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agree / Disagree
[Redacted]	
[Redacted]	
[Redacted]	
Early intervention: Te Kōhanga Reo s 9(2)(f)(iv)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agree / Disagree
[Redacted]	

Proactive Release Recommendation

- c. **agree** that this Education Report is NOT proactively released at this time, because the information contained within it is Budget sensitive.

Agree / Disagree

Ben O'Meara
Group Manager
Education System Policy

23/04/2020



Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

24 / 4 / 2020

Background

1. Following the Ministry's most recent advice on Covid-19 Budget initiatives, you requested advice on providing support for children with learning support needs [METIS 1225877]. This report provides you with potential initiatives to support this cohort.
2. We know that children with learning support needs will be disproportionately affected by the disruption to the education system resulting from Covid-19. They will be facing specific challenges, such as barriers to engaging with distance learning material and lack of access to their usual supports. They may also be disproportionately affected by challenges that apply to all children, such as increased anxiety or stress or difficulties for family and whānau in supporting learning in the home. Without specific mitigation for the challenges faced by these children, we risk embedding disadvantage and allowing the creation of long-term inequities in education and wellbeing.

Proposed approach

3. We have identified initiatives that will mitigate or remediate the specific medium-term challenges that children with learning support needs are most likely to face as a result of Covid-19. Akonga Māori with learning support needs face even greater risk of negative impact. These challenges include:
 - a. A greater need for catch-up, as children in this cohort are more likely to have faced challenges accessing distance learning;
 - b. A higher risk of disengagement from education;
 - c. Greater challenges returning to school if physical distancing is required in schools in the medium-term;
 - d. More sustained periods of learning from home for those with higher/more complex health needs;
 - e. Increased risk of isolation as access to face-to-face supports will have been restricted for a significant period of time;
 - f. An increase in wellbeing and behavioural needs due to stress associated with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
4. The Treasury has set out the criteria that will be applied to COVID-19-related initiatives submitted for the 11 May Cabinet meeting, and has also provided a template that must be used to submit these. In summary, the criteria are:
 - a. the funding sought must be needed as a direct consequence of COVID-19;
 - b. the funding must be needed outside of the normal budget cycle to support the response and/or recovery from COVID-19; and
 - c. the cost cannot be met from within existing baselines.
5. The Treasury has advised us that Cabinet is expected to prioritise initiatives that are timely, temporary and targeted in terms of their impact on addressing COVID-19-related needs.

Proposed Learning Support Initiatives

6. We are proposing the following package of initiatives. Collectively, these will help address the additional challenges that children with learning support needs face as a result of Covid-19. Our assessment is that these initiatives meet the core Treasury criteria and are timely and targeted. At this stage most of our proposed initiatives are not temporary. This is because we expect the impact of this disruption to be long-lasting for children with learning support needs, and because once additional support is provided it would be challenging to reduce this. However, if Treasury challenge us on

this, most initiatives could be adapted to be time-bound [REDACTED]
s 9(2)(f)(iv)

System-wide initiatives, targeting the learning support cohort as a whole

8. Increasing Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS) teacher aide hours (\$144.2m operating)

a. This initiative will directly increase the support available for the cohort of students with high and very high needs by delivering an increase in teacher aide hours for over 10,000 students in the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS). Increasing teacher aide hours will provide additional support with physical distancing and hygiene practices for these children to minimise the risk to themselves and to others upon their return to school. It will also provide the additional support needed by these students to readjust to life in school and allow schools to respond to the individual needs of the student upon their return to school. Parents will experience greater wellbeing as a result of their children receiving the support they need to return to school safely. If these hours are not increased, it is likely that a return to schooling will be delayed for at least some students in this cohort, because of physical distancing requirements that won't be possible without additional teacher aid support.

b. The recommended level of investment is based on providing a level of support for these complex needs students to return to full time attendance. This would involve an initial significant increase in teacher aide support from July-December of this year. s 9(2)(f)(iv)

c. This initiative also includes ongoing investment to increase the base level of support for these learners. This reflects our expectation that the impact of Covid-19 disruption will be long-lasting for children with learning support needs. s 9(2)(f)(iv)

On average, it would be possible to increase the ongoing level of teacher aid support each week s 9(2)(f)(iv) from 10 hours to 13 hours for high needs students and from 17 hours to 20 hours for very high needs students. This would relieve schools of some of the pressures they face in supporting ORS students. Again, this investment could be scaled if necessary based on affordability.

9. s 9(2)(f)(iv)

s 9(2)(f)(iv)

10.

11.

12.

a.

b.

c.

13.

s 9(2)(f)(iv)

Smaller packages that target a more specific group within the learning support cohort

14. Early intervention: Te Kōhanga Reo (\$2.839m operating)

- a. This is an initiative in partnership with Te Kohanga Reo National Trust that will deliver ongoing targeted professional learning and development to support kōhanga whānau (made up of parents, extended family, kaiako and other kōhanga staff) to effectively identify, assess and manage the learning support needs of their tamariki. The purpose is to empower kōhanga whānau to own the learning support approach they know will work best to realise the educational aspirations of their tamariki.
- b. The Trust has sought Ministry advice and support in relation to Covid-19. This initiative would respond to what they have already identified is a concern as well as any ongoing impacts that Covid 19 will have. Anxiety and stress is the main concern identified immediately for both whānau and their tamariki and their concerns around returning to kōhanga or staying at home. They have requested information, resources (appropriate for them and their environment) and are wanting a place where they can ask questions and get some strategies to support their tamariki.
- c. The Trust had already identified that many of their whānau live in isolated places, this initiative will also ensure they remain connected and the right support is provided to meet their needs.

15. s 9(2)(f)(iv)

Cost Summary

Operating funding Sought (\$m)	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24 & Outyears	Total
Increasing Ongoing Resourcing Scheme teacher aide hours	44.781	33.147	33.147	33.147	144.222
s 9(2)(f)(iv)					

s 9(2)(f)(iv)					
Early intervention: Te Kōhanga Reo	1.138	1.150	0.275	0.276	2.839
s 9(2)(f)(iv)					
Total	64.755	59.828	58.087	58.505	241.175

Capital funding Sought (\$m)	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
s 9(2)(f)(iv)				
Total	2.869	11.794	14.025	-
	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	Total
s 9(2)(f)(iv)				
Total	-	-	-	28.688

Next Steps

- Following your feedback, we will submit completed initiative templates to the Treasury by 24 April for those initiatives that you decide to submit for Cabinet consideration.