



Briefing Note: Meeting with SPANZ 12 June

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
Date:	11 June 2020	Priority:	Medium
Security Level:	In Confidence	METIS No:	1231153
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Messaging seen by Communications team:	No	Round Robin:	No

Purpose of paper

The purpose of this paper is to support your meeting with the Secondary Principals' Association of New Zealand (SPANZ) on Friday 12 June.

Summary

- The SPANZ executive members have indicated they wish to discuss when they should expect the return of international students, and what work is underway to support this occurring as soon as possible. This paper covers:
 - The safe return of international students to New Zealand – we are progressing work on this issue as fast as possible, but it is a complex issue requiring work across government agencies, and there are a number of details that need to be worked through.
 - Temporarily allowing the provision of distance education and NCEA to international students based offshore. You will be making an announcement on this shortly.

Proactive release

Agree that this Briefing will be proactively released.

☒ **Agree** / ☐ **Disagree**

Ben O'Meara
Group Manager
Education System Policy

11/06/2020



Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

17/6/2020

Background

1. SPANZ is an independent organisation representing secondary principals in New Zealand. It offers professional learning and development opportunities, legal support and professional representation for secondary principals. SPANZ supports collaborative relationships across the education sector and with other sectors. Most executive members are practising secondary principals.

Meeting Attendees

2. The meeting will be attended by the following members of the SPANZ executive:



Deidre Shea, President
Principal at Onehunga High School



Vaughan Couillault,
Vice President
Principal at Papatoetoe High School



Scott Haines, Vice President
Principal at Waimea College



Elizabeth Forgie, Executive
Principal at Kerikeri High School



Steve Lindsey, Executive
Principal at Papamoa College



Mike Newell, Executive
Principal at Northern Southland College



Jeff Smith, Executive
Principal at Papanui High School



James Thomas, Executive
Principal at Whangaparaoa
College



Michael Williams,
Immediate Past President
Principal at Pakuranga College



Jo Hickey,
Executive Manager
SPANZ



Suzy Acar-Reynolds, Executive
Assistant
SPANZ

The safe return of international students to New Zealand is a complex issue, and the Ministry of Education is working with other government agencies on it.

3. The strategic recovery plan for the international education sector includes how and when students can safely begin re-entering New Zealand.
4. We know that getting students back into New Zealand is a crucial and urgent step for re-starting the international education sector. However, this needs to be balanced with the public health risks.
5. While we support the sector in wanting to get international students in as soon as possible, the decisions regarding the border sit with central government, including senior officials from the Ministry of Health, Police, Defence, Customs, and MBIE.
6. Work is underway across these agencies to determine what border controls and quarantine and isolation arrangements would need to look like, for wider border opening so that New Zealanders have confidence that those entering the country are not carrying the COVID-19 virus.
7. This is a complex issue with many details to be worked through. These include how students will travel safely from the moment they arrive in New Zealand, how those in

quarantine and isolation will be monitored to ensure they follow the rules, and how the costs for quarantine and isolation can be shared by the students arriving.

8. It is likely to be a long time before the New Zealand border is “fully open” to arrivals from all countries. It is more likely to be opened in phases to limited groups of arrivals. International students are being included as a possible group for early entry, but it may not be *all* international students.
9. The Ministry has been receiving queries from schools about enrolling international students whose visas have expired. While there does not appear to be any legal barrier to this there are some administrative issues to be worked through and officials will be communicating to schools once they have done that work.

Proposed amendments to the Education and Training Bill will temporarily allow the provision of distance education and NCEA to international students based offshore during the COVID-19 pandemic.

10. The COVID-19 pandemic has created considerable uncertainty for international fee-paying students studying in New Zealand this year, and for the New Zealand schools that host and educate them, about the continuation of their New Zealand schooling pathway. Some of these students are currently outside of New Zealand, and others may wish to return to their home countries later this year.
11. Currently, the Education Act does not allow State and State-integrated schools (except for the distance school Te Kura) to offer education, including offering NCEA, to students based outside of New Zealand. This does not currently apply to private schools.
12. The Education and Training Bill, which is currently before the House, prohibits the provision of NCEA to students based offshore, with two exceptions: Domestic students outside NZ if they are studying through a distance school, and in jurisdictions with which NZ has an arrangement to support the provision of NCEA there. Currently only the Cook Islands and Niue have such an arrangement.
13. To provide more certainty for international students and their schools affected by the pandemic-related travel restrictions, proposed amendments to the Bill will shortly be announced.
14. These proposed amendments will temporarily allow for State and State-integrated schools to provide distance education to their students while they are based offshore, where approved by the Minister of Education.
15. They will also temporarily allow schools to provide NCEA to their students while they are based offshore, where approved by NZQA in accordance with their Rules. NZQA will also have the authority to grant schools consent to assess specific standards in this situation, focussing on those standards that are more suitable to teaching, learning and assessment by distance.
16. The proposed provisions are time-limited, and will expire on 1 January 2023. This will allow affected students who are studying towards NCEA Level 1 in 2020 to continue their NCEA pathway through to Level 3.
17. These provisions will take effect as soon as the Education and Training Bill obtains royal assent.
18. It is possible that some schools have continued to support their international students that have returned home during this period, via distance education. If SPANZ asks about the position of any such schools, you could say that we recognise that enrolled students

who are currently outside of New Zealand due to COVID-19 should not be missing out on their New Zealand education. Once the announcement is made, we would ask that any schools already supporting their international students in this way contact the Ministry, so we can ensure they will be doing so in a legally compliant manner once the legislation is in place.

19. Outside the proposed response to the current COVID-19 pandemic, and the proposed amendment to the Bill, the basic policy principles relating to the provision of education and NCEA to students based offshore have not changed.

Proactively Released