Education Report: Tabling of Ngā Kura o Aotearoa New Zealand Schools Report 2017

To: Hon. Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education
Cc: Hon. Jenny Salesa, Associate Minister of Education
Hon. Kelvin Davis, Associate Minister of Education
Hon. Tracey Martin, Associate Minister of Education

Date: 18 September 2018
Priority: High
Security Level: In Confidence

METIS No: 1152389

Drafted: Cathryn Ashley-Jones

Key contact: Dr Craig Jones

Messaging seen by Communications team: Yes

Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is for you to:

- Note that as Minister of Education you are legislatively required to table in Parliament the 2017 report on the performance of the compulsory schooling sector, Ngā Kura o Aotearoa New Zealand Schools Report 2017, by the 30 September 2018.

- Agree to the tabling of Ngā Kura o Aotearoa New Zealand Schools Report 2017 and its subsequent release on the Education Counts website.

- Note the draft communications strategy.

Summary

1. The Ngā Kura o Aotearoa New Zealand Schools Report 2017 is an annual report that provides a broad overview on the progress and performance of the compulsory schooling sector. The reporting requirements for this report are governed by sections 87B and 11Q of the Education Act 1989.

2. You are required to prepare and present a report on the schooling sector to Parliament for the 2017 year, by 30 September 2018.

3. In May 2018, we sought your advice [METIS 1120760 refers] on the structure and content for the 2017 report.
4. In August 2018, a draft report was sent to your office for review [METIS 1149580 refers], resulting in no significant amendments to the report. Your office subsequently confirmed, on Tuesday 11 September, that the report was ready for tabling and we have now sent it to the printer. A copy of this report is attached as Annex 1.

5. We will continue to work closely with your office and the Office of the Clerk to support the tabling of the report by Thursday 27 September, 2018 (the last Parliamentary sitting day before 30 September). A draft Communications Plan is attached as Annex 2.

6. The risks associated with the release of this report are low as it only includes information that is already publicly available.

7. There may be questions around the decision to exclude reporting that is considered relevant to the 2017 year. In particular, the decision to not report on National Standards/ Ngā Whangaketaanga Rumaki Māori and better public service targets. This issue is covered under the FAQs of the communications strategy.

8. We recommend that Ngā Kura o Aotearoa New Zealand Schools Report 2017 be released on the Education Counts website following its tabling in Parliament.

9. We also recommend that this Education Report is proactively released as part of the next publication.
Recommended Actions

The Ministry of Education recommends you:

a. **agree** that the 2017 report on the compulsory schooling sector *Ngā Kura o Aotearoa New Zealand Schools Report 2017* be tabled in Parliament by Thursday 27 September

   Agree / Disagree

b. **note** the draft communications strategy for *Ngā Kura o Aotearoa New Zealand Schools Report 2017*

   Noted

c. **agree** that *Ngā Kura o Aotearoa New Zealand Schools Report 2017* be released on the Education Counts website following it being tabled in Parliament

   Agree / Disagree

d. **agree** that this Education Report is proactively released as part of the next publication

   Release / Not release

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Dr Craig Jones  
Deputy Secretary  
Evidence, Data and Knowledge

Hon Chris Hipkins  
Minister of Education

18/9/17  
25/7/18

Annexes

Annex 1:  *Ngā Kura o Aotearoa New Zealand Schools Report 2017*

Annex 2:  Draft Communications Plan
Ngā Kura o Aotearoa; New Zealand Schools Report 2017
Draft communications plan
September, 2018

Purpose

This brief communications plan sets out how the Ministry intends to support the Minister’s office ahead of the tabling of this year’s Ngā Kura o Aotearoa; New Zealand Schools Report 2017.

It includes key messages and Q&A.

Background

The Minister of Education is required to table a report on the performance of the compulsory schools sector in New Zealand. It is a legal requirement for the review to be tabled in Parliament by 30 September.

The focus of the report is on 2017 school performance. The format of the report differs from the previous year and reflects feedback from the Minister. For example, information on student wellbeing and progress has been brought to the front of the document.

The report provides a range of information about all aspects of schools and their governance.

It pulls together information that has already been published and publicly available, much of it on Education Counts.

Communications approach

This report will be freely available as soon as it’s tabled in Parliament.

We do not recommend issuing a statement proactively but suggest publishing it on Education Counts, as soon as it’s tabled which is the usual process.

Media are not expected to be interested in the report because the information it contains is of relatively low news value – ie. it is not new.
However, if we are asked about a specific aspect of the report the Ministry will work across the groups to ensure we are ready to respond. This communications plan will be shared with the Ministry media team.

A reactive statement has been prepared (Appendix 1) in the event we are asked about the report.

Q&A have also been prepared (Appendix 2) and a PR has been drafted should it be needed (Appendix 3).

**Key messages**

**Its findings**

- Over-all the report is positive.
- It underlines that the New Zealand education system is performing pretty well but we want it to do even better and have initiated important work on a number of fronts to achieve that. See Q&A below.
- It reports progress in a number of important areas but also highlights areas where there are continuing challenges.

Positive progress includes:

- The number of Maori and Pacific school leavers attaining NCEA level 2 has increased
- The number of students participating in Maori language has increased
- PowerUp - an initiative to empower Pacific families to support their children’s education – continued to be successful
- Wellbeing continues to be important in determining a student’s progress and over-all achievement levels
- As at December last year - the end of the report’s timeframe – over half of all secondary schools were implementing positive behaviour for learning school wide programme.
- Many schools have comprehensive approaches to bullying prevention and now have free access to the Wellbeing at School survey and tool
• Over-all our schools are doing well but there continues to be areas where more effort is needed to boost wellbeing and attainment.

BUT

• The report also highlights continuing challenges. For example, equity of student outcomes continues to be an issue and rates of attendance at school could improve.

About the report

• The report is a valuable summary of key aspects of our schools and education’s future landscape

• It’s important to note that the information in it has already been published so can’t be considered ‘new’

• It is a sort of ‘annual report’ for New Zealand schools and the wider education system

• All of that information is publicly available.

Action to boost wellbeing

• This year’s report has a particular focus on wellbeing, how schools are progressing against the learning areas of the curriculum and school-leaver destinations

• It reinforces where more work is needed to support schools to help students be the best they can be

• Recently-held education summits, found young people’s wellbeing was highly valued and should be our key focus

• As a Government, we want New Zealand to be the best place in the world to raise a child

• We know that wellbeing is a necessary pre-condition of achievement, qualification attainment and overall good life outcomes

• The Government is focusing on wellbeing and developing a Child Wellbeing Strategy. This is an ambitious strategy that will address issues common to all children.
- The Ministry is looking at a range of ways to improve wellbeing support for schools and kura

- It is exploring a framework for developing students’ wellbeing, and designing a comprehensive, whole-school approach to wellbeing that integrates positive behaviour, social and emotional learning and anti-bullying strategies

- We are also looking at how we can systematically ensure that it supports more inclusive, culturally responsive teaching and learning focused on the progress, achievement and wellbeing of Māori students

### Communications activities / material

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Completed by</th>
<th>Release timing</th>
<th>Owner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MPs</td>
<td>Ngā Kura o Aotearoa report, 2017 tabled in Parliament</td>
<td>EDK in liaison with the office of the clerk</td>
<td>Sept 27</td>
<td>Cathryn Ashley Jones / EDK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister’s office</td>
<td>Draft PR (Appendix 3) Q&amp;A and reactive statement (Appendix 1 &amp; 2)</td>
<td>Comms</td>
<td>Sent</td>
<td>Comms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership team</td>
<td>Oral briefing/update Email summary</td>
<td>Craig Jones</td>
<td>Before Sept 27</td>
<td>Craig Jones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Report only (Ed Counts)</td>
<td>EDK</td>
<td>Sept 27</td>
<td>EDK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Risks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication issues, concerns</th>
<th>Mitigation (what is being done or will be done to address the concerns)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Many of the findings are positive and attributable to the previous Government.</td>
<td>Reiterate it’s great that many NZ schools are doing well but many, particularly in poorer areas, need more help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have no idea how our primary students are going because National Standards have gone</td>
<td>Reiterate the message that we are working closely with sector on how schools use good quality assessment information that draws on a range of evidence of student learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This report is different to previous reports. Is that because you have rewritten it?</td>
<td>Reiterate the message that it is not unusual for the reports such as this to be refocussed to take account of a change in government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are you doing to raise achievement of the significant number of students who are falling behind between years 4 and 8.</td>
<td>As above work is progressing on how we can ensure every student makes progress. The priority is to ensure students make progress in the breadth of learning that is important for lifelong wellbeing, and that all students experience a rich and engaging curriculum.</td>
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## Opportunity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunity</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gives us a chance to emphasise wellbeing and other new priorities</td>
<td>Share link with media who request information and communication team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One source of information to which we can refer</td>
<td>Share link with communications team</td>
</tr>
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Appendix 1
Draft (reactive only) media statement

The Education Minister is required each year to table in Parliament a report providing a summary of how New Zealand schools are going.

The Ngā Kura o Aotearoa New Zealand Schools Report 2017 contains some of Minister Hipkins’ key priorities and includes initiatives introduced by the new government.

For example, the report summarises work currently underway to improve wellbeing among students and points to new developments, such as a new strategic planning and reporting framework for state schools, due to start in 2019.

It’s important to note that it contains information already published and publicly available so is not new.

Towards the end of the year schools were informed they no longer needed to submit National Standards information so none of this data is included. Better Public Service targets were also discontinued so are not included.
Appendix 2
Draft Q&A

• What is this report?

The Minister is required to publish a report each year summarising important
developments and/or changes for schools and the wider education system including
any legislative changes, policies and initiatives the previous year.

The Ngā kura o Aotearoa New Zealand Schools Report 2017 is intended to keep the
New Zealand public informed about state schools’ operation and performance.

The Government sets the policy framework in which schools operate and monitors
the standard of education delivered.

• Why is it important?

The information is not new but it is a useful record of important developments made
during the previous year.

All of the information in this year’s report has been published previously and is
publicly available.

• There was a change of Government three-quarters of the way through the
year. Does it take account of the new Government?

Yes. It includes information on some of the new Government’s key education
priorities.

• What are the key findings?

It highlights the importance of schools promoting student wellbeing. It points to new
data showing the variability of student well-being and aggressive behaviour between
and within New Zealand schools and that well-being levels increase when strategies
to promote wellbeing are in place.

It also points to a range of evidence of negative link between aggressive or bullying
behaviours and well-being and achievement.

Other highlights include:

• The achievement gap between Maori and non-Maori at level 1 decreased
between 2016 and 2017.
• There was an increase in the number of students participating in te reo
• The Power-Up initiative remained popular
• The number of beginning teachers increased slightly from the previous year

It also highlights a learning challenge that has been apparent for a number of years – that most students are achieving at the expected level at year-4 but by year-8 the proportion of students achieving at the expected level drops to 41 per cent.

• So what’s the government doing to make a difference for students

It is still relatively early days, but this government has set out an ambitious 3-year work plan for the education portfolio that will set our country up for the next 30 years.

High-level initiatives include new ideas for NCEA, an early learning strategic plan, reviewing home-based early childhood education, reviewing how schools are governed and consulting on an action plan for learning support.

• Why are national standards and better public service targets not included?

The report includes developments in many areas of the education system but it also serves as an opportunity to look forward.

The new Government decided schools did not need to report 2017 National Standards data. They weren’t included because results weren’t requested from schools.

Information on the results from the National Monitoring Study of Student Achievement (NMSSA) is available on a regular basis.

• Are schools required to do anything?

No. Schools are not required to submit information specifically for this publication. They are required to make available to the Ministry their own annual reports and strategic plans about learning goals but that process is not directly related to this report.

• So all the numbers are retrospective?

Yes. The report captures important developments that occurred the previous year and includes trends in areas such as student progress and achievement, engagement, teacher supply, property funding and financial performance.
What are you doing to improve wellbeing among kiwi kids?

At our recent education summits, the wellbeing of our young people emerged as the value most of us want to focus on. As a Government, we want New Zealand to be the best place in the world to raise a child.

We know that wellbeing is a necessary pre-condition of achievement, qualification attainment and overall good life outcomes.

This Government is focusing on wellbeing and developing a draft Child Wellbeing Strategy. This is an ambitious strategy that will address issues common to all children.

The Ministry is looking at a range of ways to improve wellbeing support for schools and kura.

It is exploring a framework for developing students’ wellbeing, and designing a comprehensive, whole-school approach to wellbeing that integrates positive behaviour, social and emotional learning and anti-bullying strategies.

We are also looking at how we can systematically ensure that it supports more inclusive, culturally responsive teaching and learning focused on the progress, achievement and wellbeing of Māori students.
Appendix 3
Draft news release

The Ngā kura o Aotearoa New Zealand Schools Report (2017) published

Education Minister Chris Hipkins today tabled a report summarising key aspects of New Zealand schools and the wider education system during 2017.

The Ngā kura o Aotearoa New Zealand Schools Report 2017 contains wide-ranging information including student wellbeing evidence, attainment rates, learning support, student engagement, teaching and resources.

The Minister of Education is required to table the report in Parliament each year as part of its obligations under the Education Act.

The report, which contains information already been published and publicly available, summarises work currently underway to improve wellbeing among students and looks at the education’s future landscape.

It also gives an overview of expectations of schools in 2017, initiatives to strengthen Māori and Pacific education, and initiatives to improve early literacy and numeracy in secondary schools.

The report reflects a change in priorities following the change in Government in November.

Notes for editors