Cabinet Paper material
Proactive release

Minister & portfolio  Hon Tracey Martin, Associate Minister of Education
Name of package  Redesigning alternative education: An end-to-end system of support for children and young people at risk of disengaging from education
Date considered  23 September 2019
Date of release  7 October 2019

These documents have been proactively released:

Cabinet paper – Redesigning alternative education: An end-to-end system of support for children and young people at risk of disengaging from education
Date considered: 18 September 2019, Social Wellbeing Committee
Author: Ministry of Education

Cabinet paper – Appendix 1
Date considered: 18 September 2019, Social Wellbeing Committee
Author: Ministry of Education

Cabinet paper – Appendix 2
Date considered: 18 September 2019, Social Wellbeing Committee
Author: Ministry of Education

Social Wellbeing Committee minute – SWC-19-MIN-0129
Date considered: 18 September 2019, Social Wellbeing Committee
Author: Cabinet Office

Cabinet minute – CAB-19-MIN-0487
Date considered: 18 September 2019, Social Wellbeing Committee
Author: Cabinet Office

Material redacted
Some deletions have been made from the documents in line with withholding grounds under the Official Information Act 1982. Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

The applicable withholding grounds under the Act are as follows:

Section 9(2)(f)(iv) to protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials

Some deletions have been made from the documents as the information withheld does not fall within scope of the Minister’s portfolio responsibilities, and is not relevant to the proactive release of this material.
You can read the Official Information Act 1982 here:
In Confidence

Office of the Minister of Education

Office of the Associate Minister of Education

Chair, Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee

Redesigning alternative education: An end-to-end system of support for children and young people at risk of disengaging from education

Proposal

1 This paper outlines the direction we are taking to redesign and improve educational options for both primary and secondary ākonga | learners at risk of disengaging from education.

Executive Summary

2 As part of Priority 6 within the Learning Support Action Plan 2019 – 2025, we are working to redesign and improve alternative education for ākonga at risk of disengaging from education.

3 The education system is failing to support a significant group of ākonga, who are becoming disengaged from their learning journey. Alternative Education, Activity Centres and Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu | The Correspondence School (Te Kura) provide education for this cohort.

4 There is evidence that these alternative settings are a positive experience for some ākonga. However, outcomes in these alternative settings are variable, and the people working in alternative settings have said that it is increasingly difficult to meet the needs of the ākonga in their care.

5 This paper presents our proposal for the ideal future state for alternative education. Once this is implemented, it will provide an end-to-end continuum of supports that are more strongly integrated within the wider education system. There will be a new model of alternative education, which will be referred to as intensive provision until we decide on a new name. This new model will provide intensive support for ākonga who are disengaged from education at either an on-site or off-site location.

6 In the new end-to-end system, in-school supports will be the first response to signs of disengagement. Ākonga will have a single plan of support in place before a move to intensive provision is considered, and entry into intensive provision will be planned for, rather than based on stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions and periods of non-enrolment.

7 When in intensive provision, ākonga will have access to appropriately skilled, registered teachers and pastoral care staff. The markers used to measure success will be flexible and reflect the needs, goals and aspirations of ākonga. Schools and intensive providers will work together to ensure ākonga have equitable access to school resources, facilities and information, including learning support.
Post-school transition support for ākonga will be a key feature of the new system. Relationships will be maintained with ākonga after they have left intensive provision to ensure their transition to their best next step is successful.

Alternative educational settings will be integrated into the Learning Support Delivery Model that the Ministry is rolling out through 2019. Alternative settings will be a part of the package that learning support clusters can use to improve educational outcomes for ākonga.

**Background**

This Government has a vision for an inclusive education system where every child feels a sense of belonging, is present and makes progress. Within this system, the wellbeing of all ākonga will be safeguarded and promoted, throughout their life-long learning journey.

We still have a great deal of work to do before we can achieve this vision. There is a significant group of ākonga who the education system is failing to support, and who are becoming disengaged from their learning journey. This disengagement can start at an early age, and often has a negative impact on educational attainment and long-term outcomes.

The Learning Support Action Plan 2019 – 2025 (the Action Plan), announced on 26 July 2019, sets out the improvements we aim to make to learning support (CAB-19-MIN-0139 refers). The Action Plan includes six key priorities, designed to make a big impact for ākonga and their families, whānau and teachers.

Priority 6 of the Action Plan seeks to improve education for ākonga at risk of disengaging from education. We propose to progress this priority by redesigning alternative education. We are socialising the ideal future state with Cabinet prior to developing more detailed options for implementation.

**Current state of alternative education**

In 2017, there were 4,459 rangatahi | young people in alternative education settings. Māori and Pacific rangatahi are overrepresented within this cohort, with 62 percent of rangatahi identifying as Māori and 12 percent identifying as Pacific peoples. Alternative settings include Activity Centres, Alternative Education and Te Kura’s at risk gateways. Te Kura also runs a face to face programme delivering personalised learning and pastoral care to a small number of at risk ākonga. The ākonga who are in these settings are mostly of secondary school age.

The aim of these alternative settings is to support ākonga who are disengaged, or at risk of disengaging, to reengage in education or to successfully transition on to further training or employment. An overview of current provision is included as Appendix 1.

---

1 For Activity Centres, this data is based on ENROL inputs and is missing information from 209 Activity Centre ākonga.
The current system of support for ākonga who are disengaged from their education is not performing consistently. For some ākonga, alternative provision provides an important opportunity to take a break from their local school and get a fresh start. However, outcomes vary considerably and many are ending up in the Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) cohort, or are having ongoing interactions with the justice system.

An ideal future state for alternative education

We have been working with the sector and the Ministry of Education to redesign and improve alternative education settings.

The proposal outlined in this paper draws on the feedback received at the Alternative Education Hui on 22 February 2019, the voices of ākonga who are in alternative settings, a sector engagement held by the Ministry on 21 June, and a review of the research on good practice. A second Hui will be held on 20 September to discuss next steps.

To reflect the size of the shift needed, the proposed ideal future state is an end-to-end system of support. Current alternative education settings will be replaced by a new model of intensive provision. We will continue to work with Activity Centres, Alternative Education providers and Te Kura to transform the current models of alternative education into a new model of intensive provision. We have provided an overview of our proposal in Appendix 2.

We recognise that in order for ākonga to be engaged and learn, their basic wellbeing needs must be met. In addition, the end-to-end system of support must be built on strong foundations. These include:

21.1 Whānaungatanga: The education system must support authentic engagement and partnership with ākonga and their caregivers, family and whānau. By upholding whānaungatanga, shared understandings and reciprocal benefits can emerge from relationships that are built on trust and respect;

21.2 Inclusive practices: The success of this proposal will also hinge on changes for some teachers and schools. Some schools will need to work to adjust their practices, attitudes and behaviours in order to be inclusive of all ākonga;

21.3 Whānau-centred and ākonga-centred approaches: Support for ākonga must keep their voices and interests at the centre, with decisions made with ākonga and their caregivers, family and whānau. Support must prioritise the agency and mana of ākonga and their family and whānau; and

21.4 Culturally responsive practices: To ensure positive educational outcomes and promote a sense of belonging for all ākonga, it is critical that teachers and

---

schools cultivate practices that value ākonga identity, language and culture. These practices are central to high-quality teaching and learning.

The end-to-end system will offer a continuum of supports, and be fully integrated into the wider education system

22 Once fully implemented, we propose that the new system will consist of a continuum of supports that are strongly integrated within the Learning Support Delivery Model and the wider education system. This continuum of support will include in-school supports, a new model of intensive provision, and post-school transition support and pathways. Support will be available and accessible, as and when it is needed.

23 An integrated approach is needed to close existing gaps in our educational options for ākonga. These gaps result in many of the ākonga enrolled in alternative settings having extended periods of disengagement and non-enrolment from the current education system.

In-school supports should be the first response for ākonga at risk of disengagement

24 Support for ākonga must be provided in school before intensive provision is considered as a response. The intensity of response should depend on the changes needed to meet the wellbeing and learning needs of ākonga. This response will be a part of the Learning Support Delivery Model (LSDM) and will include the development of a single plan of support for ākonga.

A new model of intensive provision will be developed

25 Intensive provision will provide another option for ākonga who need support. This setting will have the flexibility to adapt to the context and needs of the local community and respond accordingly.

26 The property used for intensive provision may be on or off the school site, depending on the needs of the local community. Physical spaces must be fit-for-purpose, and will be required to meet the same health and safety standards as schools.

Moving into intensive provision

27 The criteria for entry into intensive provision will be flexible and based on the need for support. The decision to move into intensive provision will be planned and made with the ākonga, and their family and whānau.

28 If not already in place, creating a single plan of support for the ākonga will be the first step taken when planning a move into intensive provision.

Moving through intensive provision

A single plan of support will put the ākonga at the centre

29 The ākonga, their family and the relevant adults (including those from government agencies) will come together to update a plan of support to include the move into
intensive provision. The plan will be based on the identity, language and culture of ākonga. It will be specific to their needs, interests, strengths, aspirations and goals.

30 The plan will become the focal point for regular check-ins with the group. It will be revisited regularly and adjusted as needed to reflect changes in goals and aspirations.

**Stronger relationships between schools and intensive provision will help ākonga stay connected to school**

31 Once ākonga are in intensive provision they will continue to have equitable access to school resources, facilities and information. For example, ākonga will be able to access careers advice, guidance counsellors, specialist subject facilities (e.g. science labs), secondary-tertiary pathways, extra-curricular activities, learning support including resource teachers, and opportunities to learn outside the classroom.

**Wrap-around services and support from agencies and non-government organisations will be available and accessible**

32 When in intensive provision, support from other agencies and non-government organisations will continue under the Learning Support Delivery Model to wrap around the ākonga and their family and whānau.

**Markers of success will be diverse and flexible**

33 The markers of success for ākonga in intensive provision must be flexible and accommodate not only the needs of ākonga, but also their goals, aspirations and progress. Ākonga will leave intensive provision with a broad range of outcomes that will set them up to succeed as they continue on to their best next step and beyond. Outcomes could include: a sense of belonging; greater confidence in self-esteem and identity; improvements in health and wellbeing; progress in learning that builds on the level of education that ākonga entered into intensive provision with; increased ability to self-manage and self-reflect; and improvements in social skills.

**Staff in intensive provision will have pastoral care and quality teaching skills and expertise**

34 Intensive provision will have low ākonga to staff ratios. This will ensure ākonga receive the attention and support they need to feel safe and secure, to reengage with learning and to achieve their goals.

35 Staffing for intensive provision will be organised in a flexible way in order to best support ākonga. This would mean access to staff who are skilled in providing pastoral care, teaching and trained in trauma-informed responses.

36 Ākonga will have access to appropriately skilled, registered teachers with practising certificates, who are able to provide a rich and engaging curriculum relevant to the local context.
Staff in intensive provision will have adequate on-site administrative and management support to ensure smooth day-to-day operations. This will mean more dedicated time to support ākonga.

**Intensive provision will have the right tools to support learning and collaboration**

Intensive provision will have access to the appropriate technologies to support ākonga and to enable collaboration with schools, as well as to access online resources to support learning for both ākonga and staff.

**Moving on from intensive provision**

A successful transition to the best next step must be seen as a good outcome, regardless of whether this step is integrating back into a school or on to something else. Intensive provision will enable access to a range of future pathways.

The best next step will be decided on by the ākonga, with support from their family and whānau. The best next step may change and adjust as ākonga progress through their personalised learning plan³.

Relationships between ākonga and staff in school or intensive provision will be maintained, and learning supports, health and social services will continue as needed during the transition period.

**Wider Education and Government priorities**

The redesign of alternative education is a stream of a larger work programme seeking to improve the education experiences of ākonga at risk of disengagement. This work includes improving the Attendance Service; reviewing the legislative framework for, and the guidelines on, stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions and expulsions; and developing support for primary aged children who are at risk of disengaging from education. The Action Plan also aims to make wider improvements to how learning support is facilitated to better serve ākonga in their local schools.

Improving education for ākonga at risk of disengaging is just one of the changes we are making to the education system through the Education Work Programme. The ideal state will leverage improvements being made through the Curriculum Progress and Achievement work, the Tomorrow’s Schools Review, the National Education Learning Priorities, the Reform of Vocational Education and the Tertiary Education Strategy to ensure equitable access and excellent outcomes for all ākonga, including those who are at risk.

Implementing the ideal state will also require workforce planning to ensure we have the right people with the right skills in intensive provision. Workforce requirements for alternative education are included in the Learning Support Workforce plan.

---

³ The best next step could be: a supported transition into their enrolling school, or a different school; employment; vocational or other training; further education; or other opportunities, goals or aspirations e.g. overseas experience or volunteering.
A fully implemented ideal state will ensure there is equity within the system for all ākonga, in the context of their whānau, which aligns with the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy.

Consultation

Treasury, Ministry of Health, Te Puni Kōkiri, New Zealand Police, Ministry for Pacific Peoples, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Education Review Office, Tertiary Education Commission, Ministry of Social Development, Office for Disability Issues, Oranga Tamariki, Department of Corrections, New Zealand Police and Ministry of Justice were consulted on this paper.

Financial Implications

Implementing the proposed changes to alternative education will have associated costs. We know that alternative education settings are currently insufficiently resourced to provide adequate support to ākonga who are disengaged or at risk of disengaging. We also expect that once redesigned, alternative education will have greater usage than current provision.

Funding already committed

In December 2018, Cabinet agreed (SWC-18-MIN-0191) to invest $1.08 million from Ministry underspends to fund the first three years of the Napier Managed Move Service for primary aged children at risk of disengaging from school.

An additional $9.8 million in funding was secured through Budget 2019 to provide an increase of 6.9% to Alternative Education and Attendance Service providers, and to fund the Te Kura Big Picture programme.

Legislative Implications

Priority 6 of the Learning Support Action Plan, improving education for ākonga at risk of disengaging, has committed to reviewing the stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions and expulsion guidelines. This work could result in legislative changes.

In addition, as the paper highlights, the criteria for entering into the new intensive provision will become a part of a planned for and managed pathway. This differs from the current entry criteria for Alternative Education, which mostly focus on

---

4 Of this funding, Alternative Education providers will receive an additional $5.8 million over four years, Attendance Service providers will receive an additional $1.4 million over three years, and the Te Kura Big Picture programme will receive an additional $2.6 million over four years.

5 Current criteria for entry into Alternative Education is based on ākonga being out of school for a period of time, excluded, and refused by local schools, multiple suspensions, alienation and chronic absences.
having a period of non-attendance at school prior to going into an alternative setting. Legislative change may be required to implement this. However, this will not be known until implementation options have been developed.

**Human Rights**

53 The proposals in this paper are consistent with the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 and the Human Rights Act 1993.

**Gender Implications**

54 Males are disproportionately represented in alternative education settings, and may therefore benefit from the proposed improvements.

**Child Impact**

55 New Zealand made a commitment under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC) to consider the views of children and young people at all levels of decision-making. The ideal state presented here is informed by engagements with ākonga for the Learning Support Action Plan (LSAP) and National Education and Learning Priorities (NELP), consultation with the Minister for Education’s Youth Advisory Group and engagements with ākonga in alternative settings. This aligns with Article 12 of UNCROC, which states that children have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account.

56 Under UNCROC, all children have the right to an education that helps to develop their personality, talents and abilities to the full. They have a right to be treated with respect and be encouraged to respect each other's rights and values. Alternative education will be used to ensure a child or young person's right to education is realised. It will be designed in a way that aims to ensure children and young people are free from discrimination and stigma, and reflects their identity, language and culture.

**Disability Perspective**

57 Alternative education is for ākonga who have disengaged or are at risk of disengaging from their education. Learners with learning or other disabilities, as well as those who are neurodiverse, may be disproportionately represented within this cohort.

58 The proposals in this paper are consistent with the principle inherent in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026, of people with disabilities getting an excellent education.

**Publicity**

59 We will be presenting the proposal for an ideal future state to a group of key stakeholders at a Hui on 20 September.
Proactive Release

60 This paper will be released with appropriate redactions once noted by Cabinet.

Recommendations

61 The Minister of Education and the Associate Minister of Education recommend that the Committee:

1 note that the redesign of alternative education responds to Priority 6 of the Learning Support Action Plan 2019 – 2025

2 agree to the direction for the work to redesign and improve alternative education, attached as Appendix 2

3 s 9(2)(f)(iv)

Authorised for lodgement
Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

Authorised for lodgement
Hon Tracey Martin
Associate Minister of Education
Appendix 1: Current state of alternative education provision

Alternative education
$21 million

Face-to-face provision for ākonga aged 13-15 years old who have been alienated from mainstream education.

Funded through contracts with managing schools at a rate of $11,020 per ākonga place. This covers staffing, property and operational costs, with a small amount dedicated to pedagogical leadership. Not regularly adjusted for price increases.

Workforce is primarily youth workers and tutors. Managing schools provide a small amount of registered teacher time.

Distance education provision for ākonga who are non-enrolled, excluded or expelled, ākonga with psychological or psycho-social grounds that prevent or seriously impede their attendance at school, young parents, ākonga in the custody and/or guardianship of Oranga Tamariki and ākonga attending Regional Health Schools.

Funding of $6,372 per EFTS.* Funding is adjusted for changes in teachers’ salaries and in alignment with schools’ operational grant increases.

An additional $7,925 per ākonga participating in the Big Picture Pilot.

Activity centres
$3.7 million

Face-to-face provision for ākonga in Year 9-13 who have disengaged from mainstream education.

Resourcing includes operational funding, staffing entitlement (at a 1:10 teacher:student ratio) and property. This is equivalent to around $13,200 per ākonga place. Funding is adjusted for changes in teacher salaries and as part of schools’ operational grant increases.

Workforce is primarily registered teachers.

Te Kura at risk gateways
$12.6 million**

Funding rates and enrolment data are for 2017.

*includes both base and per ākonga funding

**this funding includes full-time tuition, dual tuition and the Big Picture funding
Appendix 2 The ideal state for an end-to-end system of support

**DRAFT NOT GOVERNMENT POLICY**

### Identifying and responding to needs earlier

The Learning Support Delivery Model will enable us to work together and create more flexibility for ākonga | learner by:

- **Having family and whānau connection points** to help navigate the system
- **Better facilitation** to bring together local education and service providers to work collaboratively
- **Working together** to identify needs and set priorities across learning communities
- **More flexibility** to create support that is innovative and responsive
- **Sharing data** to get a clear picture of local needs, resources and response options

### A ākonga-centred model of supported provision, integrated within the schooling system

The education system and other social systems are not working for all ākonga, leading to their disengagement from learning.

- The schooling system offers many options, including education based on different languages, cultures, values, teaching philosophies, and religious beliefs, to meet need.
- Intensive provision is another option when ākonga need support.

### Continuum of support

- **Universal provision**
  - Support integrated into school class
- **On-site intensive provision**
- **Off-site intensive provision**

**Appendix 2 The ideal state for an end-to-end system of support**

#### Moving into intensive provision

- **Key health & social service professionals**
- **Learning Support specialists**
- **Teachers & other school professionals**
- **Parents, caregivers, & whānau**

The criteria for entry into intensive provision will be flexible based on the needs of the ākonga.

- The decision to move in intensive provision will be made by the ākonga, with the support of their family and whānau.
- A single plan of support is already in place.

#### Moving through intensive provision

- **Regional Health School**
- **Intensive support in their school**
- **Stigma-free environments**
- **Change in hearts and minds**
- **Intensive support on or off site**

Intensive support from agencies and NGOs come together under the Learning Support Delivery Model to wrap-around the ākonga and their family and whānau.

- **Learning & education**
- **Pathway transitions**
- **Health & wellbeing**
- **Justice & safety**

Ākonga have permeable access to school resources, facilities and information (including careers and guidance counsellor advice)

Professionals in school and in intensive provision have equal mana and recognise each others complementary skills are most effective when they work together. This could be in a school or in intensive provision.

- Intensive provision sites are warm and safe, where ākonga can have their material needs met.
- Ākonga can access learning teams that meet their pastoral care and teaching needs.
- Intensive providers have the management and administrative support for smooth day-to-day operations.

#### Continuum of support

- Ākonga will leave intensive provision with:
  - self-esteem | identity | wellbeing | sense of belonging
  - confidence | self-management | self-reflection | social skills | positive behaviour | willingness to contribute | community engagement | engagement in learning | academic success

The best next step for each ākonga will depend on their interests, strengths, aspirations, achievements and needs.

The best next step could be:

- Integrating into a school
- Employment
- Vocational or other training
- Further education
- Other opportunities, e.g. overseas experience

There are opportunities to link with work going on in the tertiary education space to better respond to at risk ākonga.

### Continuum of support

- **Post-transition, support is ongoing**
  - Ākonga can still access their teaching team and other supports until they are ready to continue independently.

The single plan of support is reflected on and adjusted to ensure ākonga are on-track and have the right supports to meet their goals. Goals may change as ākonga build confidence in their identity. The plan will enable greater information sharing between all adults, ensuring the right support is in place from the beginning of time in intensive provision.

In confidence
Redesigning Alternative Education: An End-to-end System of Support for Children and Young People At Risk of Disengaging from Education

Portfolio: Education / Associate Education (Hon Tracey Martin)

On 18 September 2019, the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee:

1. noted that the redesign of alternative education responds to Priority 6 of the Learning Support Action Plan 2019 – 2025, improving education for children and young people at risk of disengaging;

2. agreed to the direction for the work to redesign and improve alternative education, attached as Appendix 2 to the submission under SWC-19-SUB-0129;

3. [Redacted]

Vivien Meek
Committee Secretary

Present: Rt Hon Winston Peters, Hon Kelvin Davis, Hon Grant Robertson, Hon Chris Hipkins, Hon Andrew Little, Hon Carmel Sepuloni (Chair), Hon Tracey Martin, Hon Willie Jackson, Hon Poto Williams, Jan Logie, MP

Officials present from:
Office of the Prime Minister
Officials Committee for SWC
Office of the SWC Chair

Hard-copy distribution:
Minister of Education
Associate Minister of Education (Hon Tracey Martin)
Cabinet

Minute of Decision


On 23 September 2019, Cabinet made the following decisions on the work of the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee for the period ended 20 September 2019:

SWC-19-MIN-0129  Redesigning Alternative Education: An End-to-end System of Support for Children and Young People At Risk of Disengaging from Education
Portfolio: Education / Associate Education (Hon Tracey Martin)

CONFIRMED

Redactions made as content outside scope of Minister's portfolio responsibility

Michael Webster
Secretary of the Cabinet

Hard-copy distribution:
Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee