Briefing Note: Release of reports: The voices of people with disabilities or in need of learning support

To: Hon Tracey Martin, Associate Minister of Education
Cc: Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education

Date: 17 July 2019
Priority: Low / Medium / High

Security Level: In Confidence
METIS No: 1198944

Drafter: Michael Parker
DDI: s 9(2)(a)

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DDI: 

Messaging seen by Communications team: Yes
Round Robin: No

Purpose of Report

This report briefs you on the online survey report The voices of people with disabilities or in need of learning support, which is part of the Kōrero Mātauranga | Education Conversation. It is proposed that you release this report prior to the release of the Learning Support Action Plan, currently scheduled for Friday July 26 2019.

Recommended Actions

The Ministry of Education recommends you:

a. note that The voices of people with disabilities or in need of learning support is available for release.

b. note that The voices of people with disabilities or in need of learning support is available in the following versions: braille, e-text, Easy Read, New Zealand Sign Language and Te Reo Māori.
c. note that your office has requested a briefing note recommending an approach to release "The voices of people with disabilities or in need of learning support" prior to the release of the Learning Support Action Plan.

   Noted

D. note that the Ministry of Education recommends that you release the report prior to the release of the Learning Support Action Plan, on your social media channels, by writing to relevant people on your mailing list and by media statement (as attached) on the Beehive website. You may wish to emphasise in your communications, that through the report 'We've listened and heard your kōrero. The voices of people with disabilities and those in need of learning support are important in helping to shape the future of education in New Zealand'.

   Approve / Not approved

E. agree to be interviewed by Radio New Zealand and other media, about the report, the 2019 Budget initiatives and the work being progressed by the Ministry with early learning services and schools to reduce waiting times for accessing early intervention support. If so, we will supply you with any additional information you may require to support these interviews, such as talking points and a Q and A, to accompany the media release.

   Agree / Disagree

F. agree you will brief the Office of the Minister of Education Chris Hipkins on the proposed release of the report

   Agree/Disagree

G. note the summary and full report are attached for your information. Please note that the summary report is a Ministry of Education product, based on the full report, which has been completed by research company Global Research.

   Noted

H. agree that this briefing will be proactively released.

   Agree/Disagree

Joana Johnston
Acting Deputy Secretary
Strategy Planning and Governance

Hon Tracey Martin
Associate Minister of Education

18/1/19

22/1/19
Background

The voices of people with disabilities or those in need of learning support

1. The attached Ministry of Education summary of The voices of people with disabilities or in need of learning support is taken from a full 90-page report prepared by research company Global Research. Of 16,466 people responding to the survey, 1199 (or 7 per cent) identified as having a disability or a learning support need.

2. When you release the report, the summary and full version will be published on the Kōrero Mātauranga website, along with accessible versions and a te reo translation.

3. In general, people told us:

   a) We need to make sure all students have equitable access to education, future opportunities and successful outcomes in school and life, regardless of their background or personal circumstances.

   b) Equity means ensuring that all students receive the support they need; celebrating diversity and providing learning environments that support students' wellbeing so that they feel safe, confident and empowered.

   c) Early identification of a disability or learning support need is significant for a student's success in school and life. This needs to be followed up with adequate resources and services so that students don't lose confidence in their abilities.

   d) Independent learning and collaboration, empathy for others, global citizenship, and a healthy self-identity are important traits for everyone to learn at school.

   e) Life skills, basic literacy and numeracy, technological competency and social skills such as collaboration and communication are key skills for all students at all stages.

   f) Individualised and competent teaching is a major contributor towards ensuring all students are successful in their learning and life.

   g) They want teachers who can adapt to individual learning needs in a proactive and empathetic manner. Such teachers are seen to give each student every chance of success and the ability to reach their full potential - especially for students who require learning support or who identify as having a disability.

   h) Teachers need to be trained and be given professional development opportunities to learn behavioural and learning approaches for students with learning support needs such as autism and dyslexia.

   i) Accessible funding, resources and support services are essential for those students who identify with a disability or require learning support.

4. You may wish to use this opportunity to also highlight Budget 2019 initiatives including the provision for 600 Learning Support Coordinators, funding for gifted education; at risk students; early intervention; and population and demand growth for learning support.
5. Should you wish to release the report and link it to these Budget 2019 initiatives we will provide a revised media statement, talking points and Q&A closer to the time of release.

The Kōrero Mātauranga | Education Conversation online survey

6. Last year as part of Kōrero Mātauranga, the Ministry launched an online survey in March seeking peoples' views on the schooling system. which was open from March to October 2018. The survey is a rich source of invaluable information for the Ministry's policy teams in developing policy advice. The online responses have been broken down into four priority voices comprising The voices of young people, The voices of people with disabilities or in need of learning support, The voices of Māori and The voices of Pacific people.

7. The voices of young people report was released on the Kōrero Mātauranga | Education Conversation website to coincide with Youth Week from 18-24 May 2019. The voices of Māori is scheduled for release on 8 August 2019. A date for the release of The voices of Pacific people is to be confirmed.

Key Benefits and Issues

8. Releasing information on what people with disabilities or in need of learning support have told us prior to the Learning Support Action Plan, along with a summary of learning support initiatives and actions to date, gives the Government the opportunity to show it has listened and heard their kōrero and how it is acting on the issues raised.


10. The release will also build confidence in the benefits of continuing to engage in the Kōrero Mātauranga as we feed back to people who have participated in this process so far. The release of the summary, and the later release of the Action Plan, also demonstrates to people with disabilities that their voices count.

11. This work gives the Ministry valuable insights to help inform policy development, and increase the pool of information available to policymakers, Ministers and the general public as we progress other initiatives as part of the Education Work Programme.

12. Releasing this report may prompt questions about perceived delays in releasing the data. The level of engagement through the online survey was significant with an unprecedented volume of responses. It has taken the Ministry time to analyse these responses. Priority was given to feeding them into the various initiatives being undertaken as part of the Education Work Programme.

Next Steps

13. Subject to your agreement, we will work with your office to:
   - agree a time to release the Kōrero Mātauranga | Education Conversation online survey report The voices of people with disabilities or in need of learning support on your social media account, a media statement and by writing to the relevant people on your mailing lists; and
   - support any media interviews you may wish to do.
17. We recommend that this briefing is proactively released as per your expectation that information be released as soon as possible. Any information which may need to be withheld will be done so in line with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982.