MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
TE TĀHUHU O TE MĀTAURANGA

Education Report: Progress on developing a National Languages Strategy for schooling

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
C.C.	Hon Jan Tinetti, Associate Minister of Education Hon Kelvin Davis, Associate Minister of Education Hon Aupito William Sio, Associate Minister of Education		
Date:	27 April 2022	**Priority:**	Medium
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Drafter:	9(2)(a)	**DDI:**	9(2)(a)
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Purpose of report

This paper seeks your agreement to high-level decisions on the direction of travel and process for the development of a National Languages Strategy (NLS). This will inform the development of a discussion document for initial consultation on a strategy.

This paper also provides a revised timeline and process for consultation on the strategy.

Summary

1. In June last year, you commissioned the Ministry to develop a draft National Languages Strategy (NLS) to provide an overarching framework for teaching and learning languages in New Zealand schools including English medium, Māori medium and Pacific bilingual and immersion settings. The refresh of the national curriculum will reflect the NLS alongside existing direction provided by the Education and Training Act, National Education Learning Priorities, Tau Mai te Reo, the Action Plan for Pacific Education and the wider draft Pacific Languages Strategy, led by the Ministry of Pacific Peoples.

2. Key challenges within our current language learning arrangements include:

   a. There is a relatively low uptake in learning languages and varied provision.

   b. The teaching of te reo Māori is currently varied from school to school, depending on the extent to which schools are already integrating te reo Māori into students' learning.

   c. The options offered in schools do not meet the needs of diverse learners.

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d. Learners' existing language skills are not currently recognised and valued in the education system.

e. Workforce shortages and poor data gathering.

f. We lack a coherent approach to determining which languages should be supported by Government as second/additional languages offered in schools.

3. In response to these challenges, we recommend the following objectives for a National Languages Strategy (NLS):

a. Expand provision to increase the number of learners learning languages and continue to support those already learning a second or additional language.

b. Support the normalisation of te reo Māori as a national language of Aotearoa New Zealand and part of everyday exchanges between teachers, students, whānau and their peers.

c. Increase recognition and utilisation of learners' existing language skills.

d. Build quality language teaching and grow the language teaching workforce.

e. Provide a coherent approach to which languages are supported as second/additional languages in New Zealand schools and kura.

4. We recommend the following vision for the NLS:

Learners have the opportunity to benefit from quality language teaching and learning that meets their diverse linguistic needs and their whānau aspirations.

5. We recommend that three high level policy choices should be considered and consulted on as part of the development of the NLS:

a. Whether it should be compulsory to provide an additional language as part of the National Curriculum, at least for English medium settings[1].

b. How the NLS will reflect Government's Tiriti obligation to protect and promote te reo Māori as a taonga.

c. How the NLS should reflect the place of NZSL as an official language of New Zealand, and promote the teaching of Pacific Realm languages and other Pacific languages.

6. Once decisions on these choices have been made, we can explore what kind of framework should be used to determine how languages are prioritised for support by Government for teaching in schools/kura, and what guidance or direction should be given to schools.

7. The Ministry does not recommend making language learning compulsory due to the significant funding, curriculum resourcing, and workforce capability and capacity implications. Instead, we recommend using funding/resourcing and awareness raising as key levers to build the workforce capacity and capability required prior to considering making language learning compulsory. We also recommend that te reo Māori is prioritised as the focus of this effort consistent with the goals of Tau Mai Te Reo.

[1] Note that in Māori medium school settings, te reo Pākehā is compulsory, along with te reo Matatini.

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Document Set ID: 955680
Version: 1, Version Date: 03/08/2022

8. However, we are aware that some stakeholders will be in favour of compulsory language learning, so we recommend that this choice is explicitly consulted on.

9. The development of the NLS is of great interest to many ethnic and language communities. Language is key to a community's sense of identity, and many communities seek confirmation that their heritage languages are valued by the schooling system.

10. For these reasons, we recommend a two-stage consultation process. The first stage would seek views on the objectives and vision for the NLS, the place of te reo Māori, NZSL, Pacific Realm languages and other Pacific languages within the NLS, a framework for language prioritisation and the option for compulsory language learning outlined above. We would draw on the feedback received in this first stage to develop a draft strategy, which would be the subject of the second stage of consultation.

11. Our recommended timeline for this process is:

Development of draft discussion document and cabinet approval	May – July 2022
First consultation phase	Aug 2022
Development of draft strategy and Cabinet approval	Sept – Dec 2022
Cabinet approval of draft strategy for consultation	Nov - Dec 2022
Second consultation phase	Feb - March 2023
Development of final strategy and Cabinet approval	March – May 2023
Budget decisions on support for the strategy announced	May 2023
Complete languages aspects of the refresh of National Curriculum to align with the Strategy	2024

Recommendations

The Ministry of Education recommends that you:

a. **note** that, following the voting down of the Education (Strengthening Second Language Learning in Primary and Intermediate schools) Amendment Bill (the Second Languages Bill), you agreed that the government would develop a National Languages Strategy

Noted

b. **note** that the National Languages Strategy will apply to the schooling sector including English medium, Māori medium, and Pacific bilingual and immersion settings

Noted

c. **note** that we will seek feedback from Māori medium settings, and Pacific bilingual and immersion settings, and their whānau communities on how they would like the National Languages Strategy to apply to them

Noted

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Document Set ID: 955680
Version: 1, Version Date: 03/08/2022

d. **agree** to a two-stage consultation process, with a discussion document as the first phase and the draft languages strategy as the second phase

Agree / Disagree

e. **agree** to the following draft vision for a National Languages Strategy: *Learners have the opportunity to benefit from quality language teaching and learning that meets their diverse linguistic needs and their whānau aspirations*

Agree / Disagree

f. **agree** to the following draft objectives for a National Languages Strategy:

i. Expand provision to increase the number of learners learning languages and continue to support those already learning a second or additional language;

ii. Support the normalisation of te reo Māori as a national language of Aotearoa New Zealand and part of everyday exchanges between teachers, students, whānau and their peers;

iii. Increase recognition and utilisation of learners' existing language skills;

iv. Build quality language teaching and grow the language teaching workforce;

v. Provide a coherent approach to which languages are supported as second/additional languages in New Zealand schools and kura

Agree / Disagree

g. **agree** that the draft discussion document include the following three high-level policy questions for public consultation:

i. Whether it should be compulsory for schools to teach an additional language as part of the National Curriculum

Agree / Disagree

and

ii. How the NLS will reflect Government's Tiriti obligation to protect and promote te reo Māori as a taonga

Agree / Disagree

and

iii. How the NLS should reflect the place of NZSL as an official language of New Zealand, and promote the teaching of Pacific Realm languages and other Pacific languages

Agree / Disagree

h. **note** that the Ministry does not support making learning languages compulsory due to the significant funding, curriculum resourcing, and workforce capability and capacity implications required and that we recommend using funding/resourcing and awareness raising as key levers to build workforce capacity and capability prior to considering making language learning compulsory

Noted

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Document Set ID: 955680
Version: 1, Version Date: 03/08/2022

i. **note** that we recommend prioritising te reo Māori in any investment of funding/resourcing and awareness raising

Noted

j. **note** the proposed timeline to develop a National Languages Strategy, which includes two rounds of public consultation, in August 2022 and February – March 2023, with a final draft strategy document being submitted to Cabinet in May 2023

Noted

Proactive Release recommendation

k. **agree** that this Education Report will be proactively released once decisions on the development of a languages strategy have been made.

Agree / Disagree

Ben O'Meara
Group Manager
System & Schooling Policy
Te Puna Kaupapahere

27/04/2022

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

26/ 7 / 2022

I'd like to place further work on the National Languages Strategy on hold for now while the sector continues to grapple with COVID-19 and issues around attendance and engagement, along with other items on the Education Work Programme that are more advanced in the process. I don't think adding this to the work we are doing with schools at this point would be helpful or get constructive engagement. Let's revisit this towards the end of 2022 and consider something further in 2023. It is unlikely this area will be a priority for B2023 bids given the pressure already growing in Vote Ed. CH

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Document Set ID: 955680
Version: 1, Version Date: 03/08/2022

Background

1. In July last year, we provided you with advice regarding our proposed timeline and process for developing a NLS [METIS 1262676 refers]. At that time, we envisaged a draft strategy would be submitted to Cabinet for approval to consult in February 2022 with a post-consultation final draft going to Cabinet in September 2022. This work has been delayed by COVID-19, so this report provides our recommended new timeline and proposes a scope for the initial phase of development.

Why are we developing a National Languages Strategy for schools?

2. The Education (Strengthening Second Language Learning in Primary and Intermediate schools) Amendment Bill (the Second Languages Bill) was terminated at its Second Reading in June 2021. Government members expressed support for second language learning but considered the Bill was flawed because it did not recognise:

    a. the special significance of te reo Māori in New Zealand and the Crown's commitment under the Te Ture Mō Te Reo Māori Act 2016 to actively protect te reo Māori for future generations;

    b. the importance of Pacific languages and the Pacific Realm languages in New Zealand;

    c. that there may be multiple communities within a school who need support to protect their family or heritage languages.

3. Instead of the Bill, you asked for a National Languages Strategy which would:

    a. be developed in consultation with learners, parents, teachers, schools, and the diverse language and cultural communities in New Zealand;

    b. prioritise the place of te reo Māori and New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL), as official languages of New Zealand in language learning;

    c. set out the Government's strategy for supporting Pacific Realm languages in New Zealand schools, and help recognise and promote the importance of other Pacific languages in New Zealand schools;

    d. support the teaching and learning of first, home or heritage languages and the acquisition of new languages, as well as support learners of English as a second language;

    e. consider how the capacity and capability of the teaching workforce can be aligned with current and future demand for language learning;

    f. address resourcing for schools for additional language learning, and how such resourcing could be aligned with the overall approach to funding schools.

4. New Zealand does not currently have a coherent and clear national languages strategy or policy position for additional languages in schooling. The policy direction for learning languages in schools is expressed in *The New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC) and *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* (TMoA).

5. The Ministry began work on a New Zealand strategy for languages in mid-2007. However, this work did not progress beyond producing an initial consultation draft. Since

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Document Set ID: 955680
Version: 1, Version Date: 03/08/2022

pausing working on this draft strategy, the Ministry has progressed work on strategies for specific languages, but not for an overarching or umbrella language strategy.

Scope

6. While research indicates that it is desirable to start learning a second language at as young an age as possible (provided learning is sustained), we consider widespread introduction of language learning in early childhood through to tertiary to be unrealistic in the New Zealand context in the short to medium term beyond goals related to the normalisation of te reo Māori.

7. We know that the early learning sector, the tertiary education sector, and adult/community-based language learning settings have an important role in supporting language learning. However, we do not recommend these settings should be in scope for the NLS. This is because language learning in early childhood education mainly focuses on the development and maintenance of children's first language(s) and early oracy skills. In the tertiary and adult community settings, language learning is largely driven by individual choice and interest.

8. Whilst the current focus is on developing a NLS for schools, a broader languages strategy could be developed at a later stage to cover early childhood education through to tertiary and adult/community education. Through increasing participation in language learning in schools, the strategy would also aim to increase over time the pool of students who may continue language study at tertiary level.

9. Within the schooling sector, there is a question as to how the NLS should apply to te reo Māori education pathways, and to Pacific bilingual and immersion settings. In these settings, students already learn English/te reo Pākehā in addition to the language that forms the medium of instruction. These settings currently face significant difficulties with kaiako/teacher supply, and this causes additional workload pressure. We recommend that consultation on the strategy seek feedback from these settings and their whānau communities as to how they would like the NLS to apply to them and reflect their contexts.

Language learning in the National Curriculum

10. The importance of language learning is reflected in the Learning Languages learning area in the NZC, and Ngā Reo and Te Reo Pākehā learning areas in TMOA. Te reo Māori and NZSL, as the official languages of New Zealand, have a special mention in the NZC. Whilst it is not a requirement for schools to offer te reo Māori and NZSL, guidelines specific to the learning of official languages have been developed by the Ministry to provide detailed information for schools that choose to offer them.

11. Current curriculum expectations around language learning in different settings are:

    a. The NZC enables school Boards of Trustees to provide language learning for all non-Māori medium students in Years 1-13, but places lesser expectations on schools compared to all other learning areas. The NZC does not require second language learning for students in Years 1-6 and specifies that schools with students in Years 7–10 should be *working towards* offering students opportunities for learning a second or subsequent language. Schools are able to select which

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Document Set ID: 955680
Version: 1, Version Date: 03/08/2022

languages they wish to teach (or use as a medium of instruction) based on the skill base of their teachers and the interests of their school community.[2]

b. For te reo Māori education pathways, *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* requires te reo Māori and te reo Pākehā to be taught. The timing at which te reo Pākehā is taught and the curriculum level it begins at differs between kura but it is usually introduced from Year 7 or 8. Third and additional languages are offered by some kura but there is little data about what proportion of kura offer this opportunity. It is expected that kura boards will consult their kura communities to inform their decisions about when te reo Pākehā will be introduced and what other language learning will be offered, if any[3].

c. Pacific bilingual and immersion education pathways are not explicitly acknowledged in *The New Zealand Curriculum*. However, schools have the flexibility and authority to shape their curriculum so that teaching and learning is meaningful and beneficial to their particular communities of students. This means that the design and personalisation of local curriculum enables each school to identify the cultures, languages and identities of its communities and adapt its programme around this, including providing Pacific bilingual and immersion education[4].

12. The Government has programmes in place to strengthen te reo Māori education pathways and is developing a policy on Pacific bilingual and immersion education. These programmes will be increasingly important elements of its approach to embedding learning languages, culture and identity through schools.

13. Details about currently available curriculum and other teaching and learning supports that the Ministry provides for the languages learning area are included in Annex 3.

The importance of teaching languages in the New Zealand context

14. Providing access to quality te reo Māori education in schools contributes to the Crown meeting its Te Tiriti obligations. Te reo Māori is recognised as a taonga of iwi and Māori, as well as one of New Zealand's official languages expressed through Te Ture mō Te Reo Māori Act (2016). It is also a vital part of New Zealand's national identity. Under the Māori Language Act, the Crown is expected to work in partnership with iwi and Māori to continue to actively protect and promote te reo Māori for future generations.

15. Maihi Karauna, the Crown's Strategy for Te Reo Māori Language Revitalisation, recognises the education system as Government's most powerful lever for the acquisition of te reo Māori. Maihi Karauna sets out three goals[5] to achieve by 2040 and the government is committed to meeting these goals. The Ministry has a specific role in contributing to achieving these goals.

[2] In 2020, the most common languages that years 1-8 students learnt in English medium were te reo Māori, Chinese, Spanish, French, Gagana Sāmoa, Japanese, and German. For years 9-13, the most common languages learnt were te reo Māori, Spanish, Japanese and French, as well as ESOL.

[3] The most commonly offered languages in Māori medium other than English are Spanish, Mandarin and Japanese.

[4] In 2022, the most commonly offered Pacific languages at level 1 and 2 were Gagana Sāmoa and Lea Faka-Tonga.

[5] The three goals set out in Maihi Karauna to achieve by 2040 are:

1. 85% of New Zealanders (or more) will value te reo Māori as a key part of national identity.
2. One million New Zealanders (or more) will have the ability and confidence to talk about at least basic things in te reo Māori.
3. 150,000 Māori aged 15 and over will use te reo Māori as much as English.

Proactively released

Document Set ID: 955680
Version: 1, Version Date: 03/08/2022

16. Learning another language offers many cognitive, intercultural, and economic benefits. Through language learning students build key cognitive skills and gain insights into their own as well as other cultures. In the New Zealand context, language learning in schools plays an important role in building both a stronger national identity and better global connectedness as we learn our national languages and the languages spoken in the wider world.

17. Maintenance of language and culture is of central interest to New Zealand's diverse ethnic communities. Language is recognised as one of the most important parts of a culture. For many learners, second language education allows them to maintain, acquire and develop their home/ heritage language. The right to learn, use, and develop one's own language is an internationally recognised human right and a powerful lever in building better home-school partnerships in support of learning.

18. The 2018 census shows that a large proportion (78 percent) of New Zealanders speak only one language. This means that many New Zealand students are missing out on the intellectual, social and cultural benefits of learning another language.

19. Through the Kōrero Mātauranga 2018, where 43,000 New Zealanders told us what they wanted in their future education system, we know that there is strong support for strengthened language provision in schooling, particularly our official languages and home/heritage languages, to ensure all learners benefit from learning additional languages and have the ability to communicate in more than one language.

20. Targeted engagement to develop the draft plan to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples found strong support for te reo Māori me ōna tikanga to be embedded through the whole education pathway.

Challenges and issues within the current state

There is a relatively low uptake in learning languages and varied provision

21. The Ministry's July Roll Returns data[6] suggests that the number of students learning te reo Māori, Asian and Pacific languages has steadily increased over the past 10 years, while the number of students learning European languages decreased. However, the overall number of students learning a second or additional language, including te reo Māori, is low and this trend hasn't increased significantly over the past ten years. In 2020:

    a. Less than 54% of all primary students were learning a second or third language.

    b. Less than 29% of all learners in secondary schools were learning a second language.

    c. Around 7% of secondary learners participated in NCEA languages[7].

[6] Due to collections being incomplete, the Ministry has not publicly released data regarding language learning since 2018. Calculation of proportional splits of languages or language groups within a given year may still provide some useful indicative information. The Ministry Roll Returns data does not differentiate between the fluency level of students engaging in language learning.

[7] We know the numbers of students enrolled in each category of languages. However, we don't know how many students are learning more than one language, so these percentages could overstate the proportion of students enrolled in language learning.

Proactively released

Document Set ID: 955680
Version: 1, Version Date: 03/08/2022

22. Language learning provision is inconsistently spread across New Zealand. Some schools provide year-long programmes delivered by specialist language teachers (mostly in State or State-integrated schools covering Years 7-8) while others provide sporadic exposure to different languages delivered by non-specialist teachers over shorter time periods, for some as little as 30 minutes per week for half a term. The figures above include all provision, and do not reflect the true level of engagement in sustained second or additional language learning in schooling, which is likely to be lower.

23. The teaching of te reo Māori varies from school to school, depending on the extent to which schools are already integrating te reo Māori into students' learning. Some schools may be working to use te reo Māori more regularly and beginning to integrate tikanga Māori in the day-to-day life of the school, while other schools may be taking the next step in incorporating te reo Māori and tikanga Māori into all learning contexts.

The options offered in schools do not meet the needs of diverse learners

24. The range of languages offered to students by schools is not sufficiently diverse to meet the needs of our diverse learners, in particular those who speak a home or heritage language. Where a language is offered, there is often a lack of clear pathways for students to continue study of a particular language from primary to intermediate and/or through to secondary school.

Learners' existing language skills are not currently recognised and valued in the education system.

25. Many students within New Zealand speak languages other than English at home[8]. However, the global dominance of English means that not everyone is aware of the potential identity and engagement benefits from maintaining and strengthening a first or heritage language.

26. At the same time, people's attitudes towards learning and using their home languages are not always positive and are influenced by a number of societal factors, including viewing English as a key to success and experiences of racism and colonisation. For example, Census 2013 to Census 2018 data shows that the proportion of speakers of Pacific languages in Aotearoa has declined across the board. This is reflected in a decrease in the number of students continuing to use and learn their own family heritage languages.

High level decisions for developing the National Languages Strategy

27. We have undertaken initial policy work for developing a NLS, including researching approaches to language learning in other jurisdictions and the current state of language learning by school students in New Zealand.

28. We have also had initial discussions with the Office of Ethnic Communities, Te Puni Kōkiri and the Ministry for Pacific Peoples (MPP) to get their perspectives on a languages strategy for schooling, and to link in with related work they are doing in this area. We have also spoken to COMET Auckland - Te Hononga Akoranga who convened

[8] About 25% of Year 5 students in PIRLS 2016 reported speaking a language other than English at home. The most commonly spoken languages for this cohort were Te Reo Māori (19%), Gagana Sāmoa (12%), Chinese (11%), Hindi (6%), and Tongan (5%). Preliminary information from PIRLS 2021 shows that Afrikaans is also a language commonly spoken at home among this year group. According to PISA 2018, 8% of 15-year-olds reported speaking another language at home. Although there are some differences between how the information was captured from primary and secondary students, the languages noted above are likely to be the same as those spoken by the younger cohort. About one third of 15-year-olds reported they could speak two languages well enough to converse with others.

Proactively released

Document Set ID: 955680
Version: 1, Version Date: 03/08/2022

the Auckland Languages Strategy Working Group. The working group has members representing all sectors of education, research and community, across a wide range of languages and areas of language expertise.

Proposed objectives and vision for a NLS

29. In response to the challenges set out above, a NLS could provide a clear vision for the learning of second and additional languages in school, as well as helping to ensure coherence, consistency, and high-quality language learning opportunities.

30. Drawing on the current state challenges outlined above, we recommend the following objectives for the Strategy:

    a. Expand provision to increase the number of learners learning languages and continue to support those already learning a second or additional language.

    b. Support the normalisation of te reo Māori as a national language of Aotearoa New Zealand and part of everyday exchanges between teachers, students, whānau and their peers.

    c. Increase recognition and utilisation of learners' existing language skills.

    d. Build quality language teaching and grow the language teaching workforce.

    e. Provide a coherent approach to which languages are supported as second/additional languages in New Zealand schools and kura.

31. We recommend the following vision for a Languages Strategy:

    Learners have the opportunity to benefit from quality language teaching and learning provision that meets their diverse linguistic needs and their whānau aspirations.

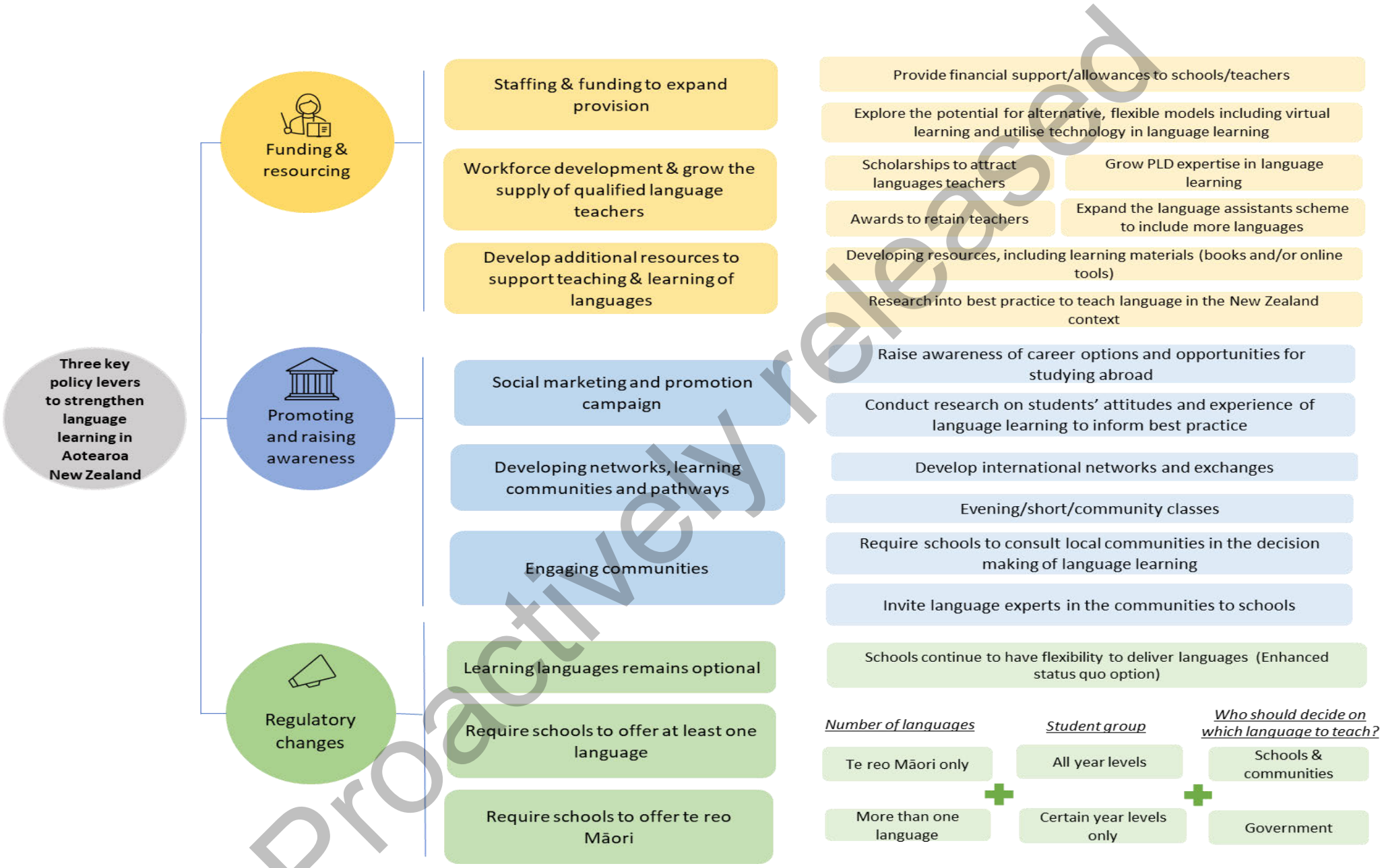
A draft strategic roadmap

32. We have identified three key policy levers to improve provision of language learning in schools: the use of funding and resourcing to support additional language teaching, promoting and raising awareness of the benefits of language learning, and regulatory change, such as setting stronger curriculum expectations for language learning.

33. The diagram below shows some potential kinds of interventions that Government could adopt under each lever to achieve the draft objectives. These initiatives could be combined in different ways to develop a package of support for language learning. However, the first stage of consultation will need to traverse some key policy decisions before a proposed programme of work can be developed.

Proactively released

Document Set ID: 955680
Version: 1, Version Date: 03/08/2022



Proactively released

Document Set ID: 955680
Version: 1, Version Date: 03/08/2022

Key policy choices

34. In light of the above, we recommend that the first step in developing a NLS should be to confirm with you some high level policy decisions that will determine the scope and priorities. We recommend a first stage of consultation that seeks school and community feedback on the following issues.

Should second/additional language learning be compulsory in NZ schools and kura?

35. One key opportunity for the NLS could be to strengthen curriculum expectations for schools to teach a second or additional language.

36. In considering this, it would be important to weigh up:

    a. Cost and time required to implement new curriculum expectations.

    b. Workforce implications and the impact on teacher supply and teacher workload - there are currently a limited pool of people with the right levels of language and teaching skills.

    c. Potential impacts on overall curriculum delivery from devoting more time to language learning.

    d. Government's obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi to promote and foster te reo Māori.

    e. Any equity implications for learners, including the possibility of building on their existing language capability and context.

    f. Alignment with other government obligations and commitments, in particular the other language strategies outlined above.

37. When the Second Languages Bill was being considered by the Education and Workforce Committee, the Ministry estimated that the cost of requiring all Primary schools in years 1-8 to offer at least one language would range from approximately $48.8m per annum (for 1 hour teaching each week) to $259.2m per annum (for 5 hours teaching each week). This estimate includes a small operational grant but does not include the costs of any additional professional learning and development, language teacher supply initiatives, or centrally provided curriculum resources.

38. A long lead time would be necessary before the expectation took effect – as has been the case with the development of the new Aotearoa New Zealand Histories and Te Takanga o Te Wā curriculum expectations, but on a larger scale.

39. If language learning was to become compulsory, there would be a range of other decisions needed, for example:

    a. what level of language proficiency we want students to attain;

    b. how many additional languages schools should be required to offer;

    c. at what year level it should be compulsory;

    d. how much classroom time is expected to be spent on language learning;

    e. whether language learning should be delivered by specialist teachers (as is often the case with music, or technology) or generalist teachers.

Proactively released

Document Set ID: 955680
Version: 1, Version Date: 03/08/2022

40. Annex 1 provides examples of approaches to compulsory language learning adopted by a range of other jurisdictions including some that are working to revitalise indigenous languages.

Our recommended approach

41. Our view is that it is preferable to use the other two levers outlined in the key policy lever diagram above - funding/resourcing and awareness raising - to build workforce capacity and capability before taking the additional step of making language learning compulsory.

42. The Ministry does not currently support making language learning compulsory for the schooling sector for the following reasons:

    a. Strengthening curriculum expectations around language learning would have significant resourcing, workforce capability, and implementation implications. This is particularly relevant given the recent release of the Aotearoa New Zealand Histories curriculum, Te Takanga o Te Wā, and the literacy and communication, mathematics and te reo matatini and pāngarau strategies as they will require the investment of additional resources and work to upskill teachers. There is a limit to the number of learning areas where schools will be able to raise equity and achievement over an extended period.

    b. Creating and adding a new compulsory learning area to the curriculum would impact on the overall curriculum delivery, adding to teacher workload and potentially crowding out teaching time on other learning areas.

    c. Given that schools are obliged to take all reasonable steps to make instruction available in tikanga Māori and provide tuition in te reo Māori, teaching another language could put too much pressure on the school system and teachers' workloads when they are already struggling to strengthen their use and teaching of te reo Māori.

    d. There is only a relatively small workforce equipped to teach second languages and there may not be enough professionals available to teach languages in all schools[9]. The nature of the New Zealand school network (with many small and rural schools) would also be a barrier to implementation, even with the provision of additional funding.

43. For a NLS to have a meaningful impact, additional investment in growing the language teaching workforce, learning resources and ongoing professional learning and development will be needed. These investments can be made without taking the additional step of making language learning compulsory. Actions to consider would include:

    a. Using digital technologies and modes, such as Virtual Learning Networks and other distance learning channels, so that more students are able to access quality learning for languages of their choice.

[9] For example, our data about ITE completion by subject in 2019 and 2020 highlights a significant lack of secondary ITE graduates in language subjects. In 2020, 30 out of 815 domestic secondary ITE graduates had completed their ITE qualifications with a language as their teaching subject. A further 20 had te reo Māori as their teaching subject, and another 5 had English as a Second Language (ESOL) as their indicative teaching subject.

Proactively released

Document Set ID: 955680
Version: 1, Version Date: 03/08/2022

b. Research into best practice and evidence of what works well for language teaching and learning in New Zealand schools.

c. Strengthened data gathering so that we have better data to inform decisions made about language learning moving forward.

44. Simply increasing opportunities for students to learn languages will not necessarily result in increased participation or achievement. There is also a need to raise the awareness of various educational, cognitive, social, intercultural, professional and economic benefits of language learning. To achieve this, the following actions could be considered:

a. Conducting awareness-raising to highlight the value and benefits of language learning and the importance of maintaining, learning, and using a home or heritage language.

b. Finding ways to recognise and utilise learners' existing language skills in the schooling system.

c. Developing international networks and exchange communities to provide opportunities for more students and teachers to study abroad in an immersion environment.

d. Making more use of the language resources that are already abundant in our communities by inviting community language experts into schools.

45. We recommend prioritising te reo Māori in the provision of additional funding/resourcing, and in any awareness raising, for the reasons outlined below.

How will the NLS reflect Government's Tiriti obligation to protect and promote te reo Māori as a taonga?

46. As noted above, several Government strategies commit to growing the number of speakers of and normalising te reo Māori as a language of Aotearoa New Zealand. The government has a well-recognised obligation under Te Tiriti o Waitangi to protect and promote te reo Māori as a taonga.

47. A number of Government strategies have already set goals for more use of te reo Māori in schools, and for the growth of te reo Māori more widely:

a. Ka Hikitia sets out the key outcome of "supporting the growth and development of the Māori language to strengthen belonging, engagement and achievement as Māori so that Māori learners can actively participate in te ao Māori, Aotearoa and the wider world."

b. Under the Education and Training Act 2020, one of the primary objectives of school Boards is to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, including by taking all reasonable steps to make instruction available in tikanga Māori and te reo Māori[10]. There is an expectation in the Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities that schools will meaningfully embed te reo and tikanga Māori in the life of the school.

c. Tau Mai Te Reo sets milestones by 2040 for the three levels within the strategy: Mihi Mai Te Reo (85% of New Zealanders Valuing Te Reo Māori), Kōrero Mai Te

[10] Education and Training Act 2020, s127 (d)(ii)).

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Document Set ID: 955680
Version: 1, Version Date: 03/08/2022

Reo (to have one million conversational speakers of te reo Māori) and Tau Mai Te Reo (150,000 Māori aged 15 years and over will use the Māori language at least as much as English). This aligns to the goal of normalisation of te reo Māori within wider society and means that the treatment of this language must be different to ensure these outcomes occur.

d. Te Ahu o te Reo Māori builds the capacity of the workforce by providing professional learning and development for our current workforce to ensure they have the capabilities to be able to reach these milestones and continue to normalise te reo Māori within our education system. This support ensures the workforce will be capable of meeting the milestones set out within Tau Mai Te Reo. To make these expectations a reality will require significant sustained investment in teachers' te reo Māori competence.

Our recommended approach

48. The Government wants to encourage the use of te reo Māori as appropriate in English content to normalise the language for non-fluent audiences. This will help achieve the goals set out in the Maihi Karauna to have one million (or more) New Zealanders gain the ability and confidence to talk about at least basic things in te reo Māori by 2040. This requires our education services to create the conditions for te reo Māori to be seen, read, heard, and spoken as part of their everyday exchanges.

49. We recommend that the strategy supports the Government's goal of normalising te reo Māori and building interest and awareness of it. This means the strategy will need to create space and support for te reo Māori, separate to decisions about other languages so that te reo Māori is not "competing" with other languages for space/resources/teaching time.

How should the NLS reflect the place of NZSL as an official language of New Zealand, and promote the teaching of Pacific Realm languages and other Pacific languages

50. The NLS will also need to differentiate the place of NZSL, as an official language of New Zealand, from other languages. NZSL was recognised as an official language by the introduction of the New Zealand Sign Language Act 2006. The Act permits the use of NZSL in legal proceedings, facilitates competency standards for its interpretation and guides government departments in its promotion and use. However, there is significant scope to further progress NZSL in the Education system.

51. We will also need to consider how the NLS differentiates Pacific Realm languages as well as other Pacific languages due to the strong geographic, political, cultural and historical ties and relationships between Pacific nations and New Zealand. For many Pacific nations, a significant proportion of their population reside in New Zealand and some Pacific languages are facing extinction. Through the constitutional status of Tokelau, Niue and the Cook Islands, their languages are also Indigenous within the Realm of New Zealand, which means they are protected by the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Our recommended approach

52. The Ministry has obligations under domestic and international legal frameworks to promote teaching and learning in NZSL, including:

a. to progressively achieve an inclusive education system, accessible by students in the communities in which they live;

Proactively released

Document Set ID: 955680
Version: 1, Version Date: 03/08/2022

b. to reasonably accommodate individual students' learning needs by making education accessible through appropriate formats, including NZSL, and through the provision of services and supports without additional cost to the student;

c. to facilitate the learning of NZSL and promote the linguistic identity of the Deaf community;

d. to employ and train a teaching workforce with appropriate skills in NZSL.

53. The Ministry recommends that the NLS aligns with the language planning priorities set out in the New Zealand Sign Language Strategy 2018−2023 to further support and promote the teaching and learning of NZSL in schools.

54. This alignment is underway through the NZSL Development Map, which informs our advice on NZSL, and our work on how to progress NZSL within the Education System. The NZSL Development Map has as its foundation the policies, international agreements and legislation related to NZSL and Education, including The NZSL Act 2006, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

55. The Ministry for Pacific Peoples (MPP) is currently developing and consulting on a Pacific Language Strategy. A final strategy is expected to be considered by Cabinet in May. The strategy supports nine Pacific languages[11], which have been categorised in relation to their constitutional status and legal obligations, language vitality, and demographics. We recommend that the NLS aligns with this approach in further promoting and prioritising Pacific languages, including Indigenous languages of the Pacific Realm of New Zealand.

Next steps

56. The timeframes we are proposing for developing the NLS are:

Development of draft discussion document & cabinet approval	May – July 2022
First consultation phase	August 2022
Development of draft strategy & Cabinet approval	Sept – Dec 2022
Cabinet approval of draft strategy for consultation	Nov - Dec 2022
Second consultation phase	Feb - March 2023
Development of final strategy and Cabinet approval	March – May 2023
Budget decisions on support for the strategy announced	May 2023
Complete languages aspects of the refresh of National Curriculum to align with the Strategy	2024

57. The issues covered in the development of a NLS touch on matters relevant for all Education Ministers and the Minister for Diversity, Inclusion and Ethnic Communities.

[11] The nine Pacific languages supported by the strategy are Te Gagana Tokelau, Vagahau Niue, Te Reo Māori Kuki 'Āirani, Gagana Sāmoa, Lea faka-Tonga, Te Gana Tuvalu, Vosa Vakaviti, Fäeag Rotụam, and Te taetae ni Kiribati.

Proactively released

Document Set ID: 955680
Version: 1, Version Date: 03/08/2022

You may wish to forward this report to Hon Priyanca Radhakrishnan in her capacity as the Minister for Diversity, Inclusion and Ethnic Communities.

Annexes

Annex 1: Evidence about language learning and models for language learning, maintenance and use in other jurisdictions

Annex 2: Current state of language education in New Zealand schools

Annex 3: How the Ministry currently supports language learning

Proactively released

Document Set ID: 955680
Version: 1, Version Date: 03/08/2022

Annex 1: Evidence about language learning and models for language learning, maintenance and use in other jurisdictions

What Research says About Language Learning - Key findings



Starting age
What is the best age to start learning a language?

There are many reasons why young children may be better at learning languages. These include superior neural plasticity, more years of learning, limitations in cognitive processing that prevent them from being distracted by irrelevant information, a lack of interference from a well-learned first language, a greater willingness to experiment and make errors and a greater desire to conform to their peers. Some studies have shown that children who started learning a language at age 11 performed better than children who started learning at age 8. Young children can learn new languages quickly by mimicking their family, and they often end up with better pronunciation. However, teaching languages in classrooms is different, as the language is not used as regularly, and children are not fully immersed in it. Older children may be better at learning a new language within the classroom as there are experiential and cognitive limitations in young children.



Depth and Breadth
Should a breadth of languages be taught within the curriculum or should teachers focus on teaching one language in depth?

If students study a range of languages at primary school, they will be able to make more informed choices about what language to study in secondary school. This also means that language specialists are not needed as much in primary schools. Exploring a range of languages can promote social cohesion and enhance relationships with the school community. Studying only one language means students have less choice and may not have the opportunity to study their own language. To study a language in depth, the regular curriculum may have to be compressed and other subjects may be affected. The more time spent learning a language, the more proficient a student is likely to be. If a student is able to focus on one language, they can learn it to a higher standard and are likely to become more fluent. Learning a range of languages may mean that students only learn basic terms and the pace of learning may be too slow for some students. Teachers may also focus more on cultural activities rather than language learning. There is a risk that students will be unable to converse properly in any language.



Teacher Proficiency
Should teachers be fluent in the language they are teaching?

Teachers possess an extensive range of knowledge and understanding of how children learn. They can use their existing skills in the teaching of English as they introduce languages. Also, some communities have a limited number of speakers who can teach their language, so it is preferred to have a non-fluent speaker teach it than no one at all. A lack of subject matter knowledge can lead to teachers avoiding teaching material, or a heavy reliance on the textbook and the use of direct styles of instruction. When teachers are more confident with languages, they have a higher self-efficacy, and this will promote teaching and learning.

Resources:

- What Matters for Language Learning? The questionnaire Framework for the PISA 2025 Foreign Language Assessment (OECD, 2020)
- A critical period for second language acquisition: Evidence from 2/3 million English speakers (Hartshorne et al., 2018)
- Languages, diversity and communities: language learning policies and primary practice in England (Griffiths, 2010)
- The Teaching of International Languages in New Zealand Schools in year 7 and 8: An Evaluation Study (Ministry of Education, 2003)
- Affecting Factors of Native-Like Pronunciation: A Literature Review (Qian-Mei Zhang, 2009)

Language learning provision in other jurisdictions

Scotland

Scotland has a "1+2 Approach", this means that every child will start learning a new language at the beginning of primary school (age 4/5) and a second near the end of primary (age 8/9). There is some time dedicated to learning Gaelic, which is an official language, and Scots. These languages can also be used by schools in the '1+2' approach. Any two languages (chosen by schools from a list of 8) can be taught.

Ireland

Ireland implemented a strategy for foreign languages called Languages Connect (2017-2026). This involved improving proficiency, diversifying languages being taught, increasing awareness, and enhancing employer engagement. They also have a 20-year strategy for the Irish language (2010-2030). This aims to ensure that as many citizens as possible are bilingual in English and Irish. Irish, which is an official language, is compulsory throughout schooling and foreign languages are strongly encouraged.

Northern Ireland

A strategy called 'languages for the future' was introduced in 2012. Foreign languages are required between ages 11-14 and schools are expected to give students opportunities to build on these skills. Irish is also an official language and is compulsory throughout schooling.

Wales

Welsh, which is an official language, is compulsory between ages 5-16. By 2050, Wales aims to have a million Welsh speakers. They are introducing a 'perilingual method'; students will be encouraged to use both Welsh and English in the curriculum. In addition to this, Wales has introduced a 'Global Futures' strategy. The purpose of this is for Wales to become a "Bilingual plus 1" nation.

England

Pupils are required to learn a language from age 7-14. There are no prescribed languages; they are chosen at the discretion of individual schools. Most pupils will be required to take a GCSE in a modern language under Government plans for the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) to be taken by 75% of year 10 pupils by September 2022, and 90% of pupils by 2025.

Canada

The *Action Plan for Official Languages – 2018-2023: Investing in Our Futures* is Canada's official languages strategy. This promotes the learning of English (in French areas) and French (in English areas). This strategy is focused on wider society – not just education. In most schools, official languages French and English are compulsory. In Ontario, French is learnt from Kindergarten to grade 12. It can be learnt through various levels of immersion at the discretion of schools.

Australia

The 1987 Lo Bianco National Policy on Languages has framed how Australia teaches languages. This policy outlines goals for Australia such as: English for all, maintenance of first languages where possible, all students learning at least one language other than English and language awareness. More recent language policies that have been introduced are the National Statement and Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools (2005-2008) and the National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program project (2008-2013).

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Annex 2: Current state of language education in New Zealand schools

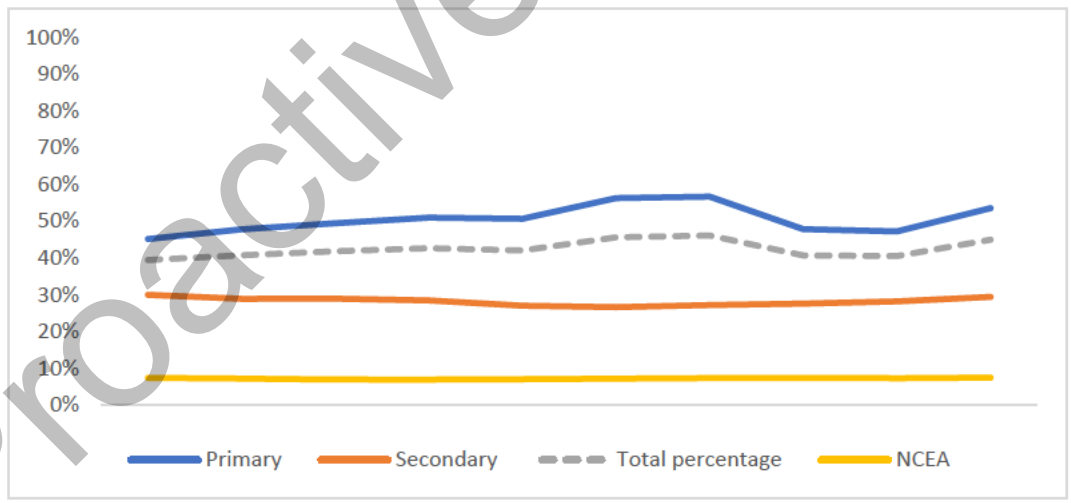
1. In 2020, less than 54% of all primary students were learning at least one language. The percentage has not improved significantly over the past ten years. Data in Secondary shows a similar trend, but the overall percentage (less than 29%) is lower. The percentage of students who continue study of a language through to NCEA level is even lower (around 7%) and the percentage who make it through to Year 13 is lower still[12].

2. Between 2010 and 2017, the number of students learning Asian and Pacific languages as a second language increased by 186% (from 28,529 to 81,638) and 178% (from 2216 to 6154. The number of students learning European languages dropped by 30% (from 71,548 to 50,231). During this period the number of students learning te reo Māori, either as a second language or as the medium of instruction, increased by 55% (from 102,706 to 159,276).

3. In 2020, the most common languages that year 1-8 students learnt were Chinese (42,599 pupils), Spanish (23,561), French (20,624), Gagana Sāmoa (5669), and German (5097). In 2020, 294,312 students were enrolled in Years 9-13. Less than 89,000 of these students were learning a language other than English. Though this number may double count as we do not know how many students are learning more than one language. This includes 30,600 students that were learning te reo Māori, 14,600 learning French, 13,200 learning Spanish, 12,000 learning Japanese, 6,300 learning a Chinese dialect and around 4,300 students learning a Pacific language. Of the students learning te reo Māori, for around 4,200 students te reo was the primary language of instruction.

4. Figure 1 below indicates the trend in percentage of students learning a language in primary school, secondary school, all of schooling, as well as the number of students learning NCEA languages.

Figure 1: Percentage of learners learning languages between 2011 and 2020[13]



[12] We know the numbers of students enrolled in each category of languages. However, we don't know how many students are learning more than one language.

[13] Our data is sourced from the July Roll Returns. Students are counted once in each language that they take. Between 2018 and 2020, there were fewer schools providing data relating to language learning at primary levels to the Ministry. We therefore consider recent data to be incomplete and have not published data from 2018 onward. Due to collections being incomplete, raw figures are not comparable across the years provided here, or with previous years' data provided online. Because the data is incomplete, the Ministry has not released this data publicly from 2018 onward. Calculation proportional splits of languages or language groups within a given year may still provide some useful indicative information.

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Document Set ID: 955680
Version: 1, Version Date: 03/08/2022

5. While these statistics indicate the numbers of students exposed to second language learning, the level of provision across schools varies considerably. In the primary school sector, some schools provide year-long programmes delivered by specialist language teachers (mostly in State or State-integrated schools covering Years 7-8). Others provide sporadic exposure to different languages delivered by non-specialist teachers over different time periods, for some as little as 30 minutes per week for half a term. There is currently no minimum requirement for schools. In the secondary school sector, some schools offer full year language options from Year 9 which include 3-4 instructional hours per week while others offer half year, third of the year or even single term variants, sometimes with as little as two instructional hours per week.

6. The total percentage of primary and secondary students studying languages steadily increased from 2011 to 2017. The increase may reflect an increased uptake in te reo Māori in the Primary sector, as suggested in figure 2. Data includes the number of learners learning te reo Māori in English medium settings at levels 3 (31-50% immersion), 4a (12-30%), 4b (at least 3 hours a week learning te reo) and 5 (less than 3 hours).

Figure 2: Learning languages in Primary (Years 1- 8) in the last ten years, including te reo Māori

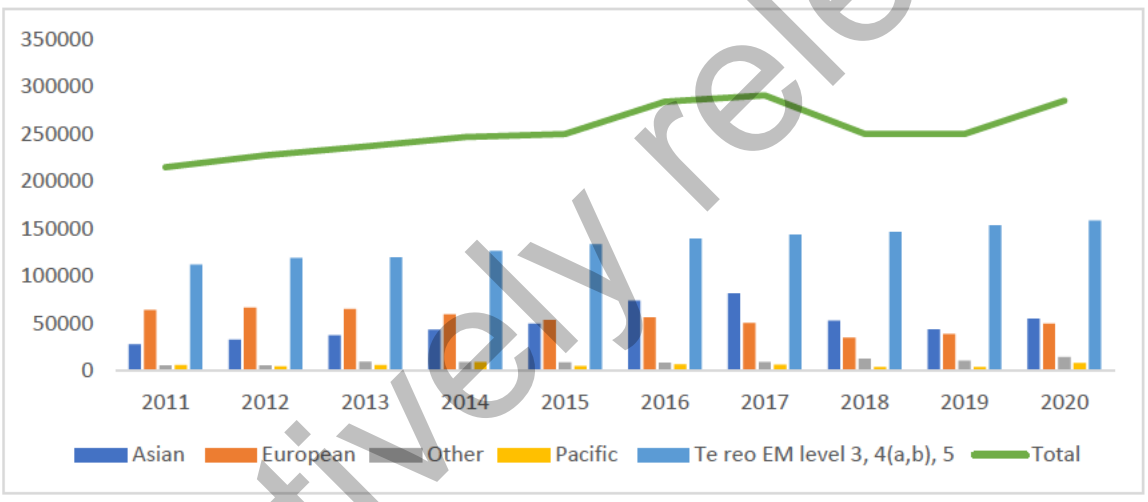
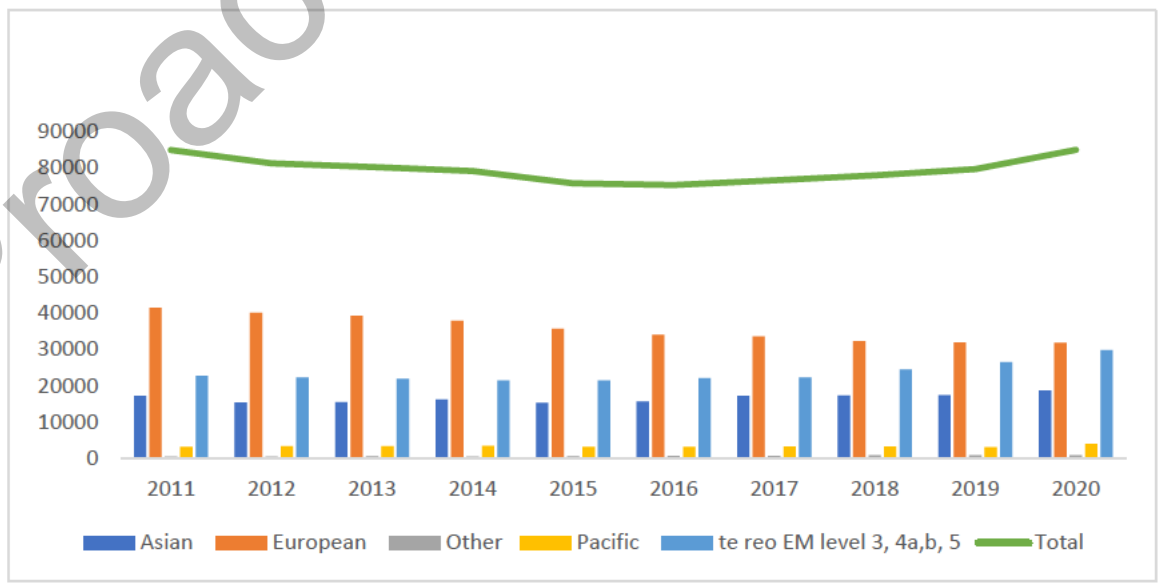


Figure 3: Learning languages in Secondary in the past ten years, including te reo Māori



Proactively released

Document Set ID: 955680
Version: 1, Version Date: 03/08/2022

Annex 3: How the Ministry currently supports language learning

What languages we support	The Ministry supports the teaching of certain languages through New Zealand's trade agreements, or formal educational arrangements, we have with the governments of China, France, Germany, Japan and Spain. This means that we have National Language Advisors and Foreign Language Assistants from these respective countries teach these languages in New Zealand schools.
What resources we support	MoE has supported (a total of $2,503,004 per annum) language learning by providing ongoing workshops, conferences, inquiry clusters, one-on-one support, and immersion trips to upskill teachers in the target language and culture. These come from MoE funding of both Future Learning Solutions - Centre for Languages and New Zealand Association of Language Teachers (NZALT). **Mandarin Language Assistants (MLAs) contract (**$98,034 p.a)**:** The MLA programme seeks to: promote Chinese language; improve the quality of Mandarin language teaching to enable students to converse with a native speaker; and raise the number of students learning Mandarin in school. MOE, as part of our commitment to the Free Trade Agreement (FTA), provides partial funding for 12 MLAs each year at a cost of $98,034 (NZD). **Support for Learning Languages contract (**$1,100,000 p.a)**:** This programme is being delivered by Auckland UniServices to help schools build sustainable languages programmes, and support building teachers' capability in effective languages pedagogy. This programme focuses on New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL), a number of Pacific languages, and a number of international languages including Mandarin. The programme is inclusive of mono-, bi- and multilingual settings. The supplier manages Learning Languages on TKI as part of this contract. **Coordination and Management of the National Language Advisers and Language Assistants contract (**$1,304,970 p.a)**.:** This contract coordinates and provides foreign language assistants from France, Germany and Spain to work in New Zealand schools, as well as five national language advisors from China, France, Germany, Japan and Spain to support language teaching. Auckland UniServices has the contract for this work and has close relationships with the five Embassies of these countries. There are also two **government funded Te Kura dual tuition gateways** by which students can access language learning. These are: • the Te Reo gateway for students in year 7 and 8 A principal may apply to the Ministry of Education, through a Ministry manager, to register Year 7–8 students for dual tuition at all levels of Te Reo Māori. Students may also register for a second subject within the Kaupapa Māori learning area. • the Subject Not Available: Cultural Affinity gateway, for year 9-15 students, where a student has a demonstrated family or cultural affinity with an ethnic group and requires tuition in that language.
What year levels these supports are pitched at	The range of supports the Ministry provides help schools to build sustainable language programmes based on evidenced-based pedagogical practices and educational research known to promote improved students learning outcomes in the Learning Languages area of the *New Zealand Curriculum*, with a special focus on students in Years 7-10.
Network of Expertise in the languages learning space	The New Zealand Association of Language Teachers (NZALT). NZALT is open to anyone who has an interest in second language learning and teaching, regardless of whether they are currently in a teaching position.

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Document Set ID: 955680
Version: 1, Version Date: 03/08/2022