

Briefing Note: Update on Priorities in the Learning Support Action Plan (2019-2025)

To:	Hon Erica Stanford, Minister of Education		
Date:	17 January 2024	Priority:	Medium
Security Level:	In-Confidence	METIS No:	1320371
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Seen by the Communications Team:	No	Round Robin:	No

Purpose of Briefing

The purpose of this briefing is to provide an update on the six priority areas of the Learning Support Action Plan (LSAP) 2019-2025.

It provides context for the accompanying briefing on Improving education for children and young people with learning needs [METIS 1320715 refers] and is intended to support a discussion with you about how the Government could respond to the issues in this space.

Summary

1. The LSAP was designed to support progress towards improving the performance of the education system for ākonga/learners with learning support needs [METIS 1320715 refers].
2. The Learning Support Action Plan (LSAP) 2019-2025 Summary Update to December 2023 is attached as **Annex 1**.

Proactive Release

Agree that the Ministry of Education release this paper subject to appropriate redactions under the Official Information Act 1982 once it has been considered by you.

Agree / Disagree



Sean Teddy
Hautū
Te Pae Aronui

17/01/2024

Hon Erica Stanford
Minister of Education

__/__/__

Proactively released

Background

1. Around one in five students have additional learning needs. The majority of these ākonga/learners (99.5%) attend local schools and kura, and most of these ākonga/learners also attend early childhood education services and ngā kōhanga reo.
2. Some ākonga/learners require ongoing support throughout their education journey, while others may only need short-term support – for example, at transition points i.e., commencement of the school year.
3. Learning support is most effective¹ when it is:
 - provided at the right time.
 - part of an early intervention approach.
 - tailored to the individual strengths, needs, and aspirations of learners.
 - planned and monitored with the learner and their whānau/families at the centre.
 - coherently linked when more than one support or service is required.
 - supported by local expertise and resources.
 - underpinned by inclusive values and practices.
 - responsive and sensitive to the identities, languages, and cultures of learners.
 - based on evidence of what works best.
 - tailored to the child or young person's learning and social context.
4. The LSAP fits within a broader context of supporting 47,593 ākonga/learners² with learning support needs in the education system and builds on the everyday supports that are provided by specialists and the broader education workforce.

Learning Support Action Plan (LSAP) 2019-2025

5. The LSAP was introduced in 2019 and was informed by the Kōrero Mātauranga Education Conversation³, in particular:
 - ākonga/learners, parents, whānau/families, iwi, Māori, Pacific peoples, disabled people, and those with learning support needs.
 - teachers/ kaiako, educators, leaders, and education experts.
 - the 2016 select committee *Inquiry into Identification and Support for Students with Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and Autism Spectrum Disorders*.
 - October 2018 public consultation on the draft Disability and Learning Support Action Plan.
6. The purpose of the LSAP was to drive progress towards an education system where all ākonga/learners are welcome and where their achievement, progress, wellbeing, and participation is valued and supported. We identified a need to:
 - build teachers' capabilities to meet diverse learning needs.
 - identify students/ākonga learning support needs earlier.
 - provide new, flexible supports and services for ākonga/learners, and their whānau/families, who are not eligible for existing services, whose needs are not well met, and/or, who are at risk of disengaging from education.

¹ [Learning Support Coordinator Guide](#) - This list is a collection and summary of best practice outlined across Inclusive Education, and the voices heard in Kōrero Mātauranga and the 2016 Select Committee Inquiry.

² [Annual-report-2023.pdf](#)

³ [Kōrero Mātauranga Education Conversation](#)

7. Substantial investment in learning support has been made across a range of learning support services to address cost pressures, demand pressures, service gaps and LSAP priorities. This includes spending approximately \$1.3 billion per year on learning support. The majority of this is non-departmental funding provided to schools, kura, early learning services, and contracted providers, with \$417m in departmental funding for Ministry-provided services.
8. Significant progress has been made since the LSAP was launched in 2019 as set out in the attached Summary Update (**Annex 1**).
9. The Government has an opportunity to consider what could replace the LSAP in 2025 and bring together the Government's response to:
 - the Highest Needs Review
 - the Māori Affairs Select Committee Inquiry into learning support for ākonga Māori
 - the IHC claim
 - the recommendations from the Education Review Office's (ERO) recent reviews of Alternative Education and education for disabled learners
 - the Concluding Observations of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Learning Support Action Plan (LSAP) Priorities

10. The six LSAP priorities outlined below were developed to address the 2016 select committee inquiry's recommendations and subsequent feedback received by the Ministry.

Priority 1: Learning Support Coordinators (LSCs)

11. The LSC role was introduced to support ākonga/ learners with mild to moderate, neurodiverse, or high and complex learning support needs and ensure appropriate help was received at the right time, when needed. The role was established in response to consistent requests over many years for a dedicated, fulltime learning support role in schools.
12. LSCs support teachers and kāiako to identify, plan for, and provide for the learning support needs of ākonga/learners. Key actions were to design, implement, monitor, and evaluate the first tranche of LSC's into schools and kura, which has been completed.
13. In November 2018, funding of \$217m (over 4 years) was provided to implement the LSC role. In 2020, the first 623 LSCs were allocated to 124 learning support clusters, covering 1,052 schools and kura, covering approximately 300,000 learners. As of 1 June 2023, there were 586.6 Full Time Teacher Equivalent (FTTE) LSCs employed. Ongoing funding is available for LSC salary, travel, and networking.
14. A three-phase evaluation took place over 2020 and 2022. The third and final phase was completed on 26 August 2022⁴. The evaluation showed the LSC role was making the intended difference to learning support in schools.
15. Seven in ten kura/schools, seven in ten LSC, and six in ten kaiako/teachers, rated the Government's investment in the LSC role as good or very good value.

⁴ [Learning Support Coordinators Evaluation: Phase 3 | Education Counts](#)

16. However, the evaluation showed the design of the LSC role did not reflect te ao Māori and the pedagogy of kura kaupapa and suggested that the original design would not work in Kaupapa Māori or Māori Medium settings. Budget 2023 allocated \$40m to strengthen learning support co-ordination in Kaupapa Māori and Māori Medium education. This work is at a very early design phase partnering with the Kaupapa Māori and Māori medium education sectors.
17. The design and implementation of further tranches is subject to future funding. Under the current model and settings to provide access for schools and kura that did not receive a LSC we would need a further 1,050 LSC at an approximate cost of \$550m⁵ for subsequent tranches.

Priority 2: Strengthening Screening and the Early Identification of Learning Support Needs

18. Early identification and response to need, has long term benefits for ākonga/ learners. Priority 2 identified that we need to be more systematic in how we identify ākonga/learners who might benefit from additional learning support. The intent was to develop a new set of improved screening methods, rather than relying on diagnosis of conditions, to assess all ākonga/ learners at certain stages. We proposed to work with the Ministry of Health to integrate early identification into a coherent system of checks and screening; this work was delayed by prioritisation of responses to Covid-19.
19. In September 2023, Kōwhiri Whakapae, the early learning practice and progress tool for social and emotional learning was launched for the early learning sector. This tool provides information to support teachers to notice, recognise and respond to learners' growing capabilities over time.
20. We continue to focus on building teacher knowledge, understanding and capability to identify and respond to the needs of diverse ākonga/learners, aligning with the bicultural framing of Te Whāriki, the Early Childhood Curriculum.
21. As schools currently use many different tools to assess ākonga/learners starting school, creating a consistent set of tools for all schools has been challenging. School Boards can and do choose to use many different diagnostic and screening tools.
22. Budget 2019 allocated \$13.5m (for four years and \$1m in outyears) for a School Entry Kete (SEK). The SEK concept tools were designed to support teachers to notice, recognise, and respond to the strengths and needs of all ākonga/learners in English medium schools. The concept tools were used with 34 schools, representing 11 regions across the country. Feedback was positive about shifting away from screening tools to a strengths-based approach.
23. The SEK project ceased on 31 March 2023, due to concerns about sequencing and alignment with the refresh of the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC)⁶ and the redesign of Te Marautanga o Aotearoa⁷, the digital complexity, the risk of duplication with other enterprise level technical projects, and re-prioritisation of Budget 2023 funds. From the original allocation of \$13.5m the SEK project spent \$3.4m on creation and sector engagement with the SEK concept tools. In Budget 2023 the SEK project was

⁵ Based on modelling in 2023.

⁶ [Refreshing The New Zealand Curriculum](#)

⁷ [Te Whakahou i Te Marautanga o Aotearoa | Kauwhata Reo](#)

discontinued returning \$4.6m for the 2022/23 financial year and \$4.0m as forgone for the next 4 financial years.

24. We are considering integrating components of the draft SEK concepts with the overarching curriculum, assessment and aromatawai workplans. Any further work will depend on strategic decisions on the wider suite of supports and will require future funding bids.

Priority 3: Strengthening Early Intervention

25. Intervening early is a significant predictor of good educational and wellbeing outcomes for ākonga/learners with learning support needs⁸. Time taken to access early intervention support for ākonga/learners and whānau/families can be too long and misses the opportunity to respond early.
26. To have an impact, screening needs to be backed up by providing ākonga/learners with the support they need. Priority 3 aimed to target wait times, identify services needed, and ensure parents and whānau are empowered and involved in decisions.
27. We proposed to integrate flexible supports with other agencies. Multi agency flexible supports remain unavailable to ākonga/learners due to realignment across agencies, such as the establishment of Whaikaha, and changes to Te Whatu Ora. However, multi-agency professional relationships have been developed and continue to be strengthened.
28. Overall demand for services and supports in the Early Years has increased 7% between 2019 and 2023 while the waiting times have not changed (as at June 2019 there were 15,109 ākonga/learners that received the early intervention support during the year, waiting an average of 105 days, respectively there were 16,157 ākonga/learners waiting 105 days as at June 2023).
29. Wait times for individual services have multiple factors and are impacted by increasing demand for support, and specialist staff workforce recruitment and retention challenges.
30. We are working in partnership with early learning services and whānau/families, using our integrated model of Te Tūapapa o He Pikorua⁹, to help meet demand in the longer term and will continue to raise the confidence and capability of the sector to meet the diverse needs of all ākonga/learners and whānau/families.
31. The ongoing work for supporting diverse ākonga/learners will focus on building teacher confidence and capability to notice, recognise, and respond to the learning support needs of ākonga/learners within their own learning environments.
32. Te Kōhanga Reo Trust and the Ministry have developed a trusting relationship, with all work led by the Trust and supported by us. This has resulted in increased engagement and more equitable access for mokopuna and their whānau/families, evidenced by increased requests for support (for the 2019 calendar year there were 62 mokopuna requests for support during the year, respectively there were 201 mokopuna requests for support in 2023).

⁸ [A Great Start? Education for Disabled Children in Early Childhood Education.pdf \(ero.govt.nz\)](#)

⁹ [Flexible, tailored model of support – He Pikorua](#)

33. We evaluated the Oral Language and Literacy Initiative (OLLI)¹⁰ and three social and emotional learning programmes (The Alert¹¹ Program, ENGAGE¹² and Incredible Beginnings¹³) within mainstream settings to support teacher capability in building communication, self-regulation and social skills for ākonga/learners. These evaluations confirmed the importance of all teachers embedding social, emotional and communication skills as part of everyday teaching and learning, rather than focusing on individual support.

Priority 4: Flexible Supports for Neurodiverse Children and Young People

34. Priority 4 aims to build the understanding and capability of early learning services, schools and kura to teach and respond to neurodiverse ākonga/learners to progress their learning. We aimed to develop new tools and resources for teachers, design new supports for ākonga/learners, and address gaps in specialist services. Specific workstreams were developed to provide for particular needs e.g., dyslexia and autism spectrum disorder.
35. The 2016 select committee inquiry called for an improved range of services for neurodiverse ākonga/learners whose needs were not being met. The recommendations focused on building understanding of neurodiversity and supporting teachers in inclusive design practices to support learners to attend, engage, and participate in their learning.
36. We invested in supports such as inclusive design modules designed to build teacher capability (launched in August 2023); Tilting the Seesaw (Autism training) offered to LSCs, and wananga to explore the Māori world view on autism in partnership with Taonga Takiwātanga Trust.
37. We aimed to design improvements for Resource Teachers Literacy (RTLits) to better support teachers of ākonga/learners with literacy difficulties. As at December 2023, there were 107 RTLit employed by 86 clusters of schools across New Zealand. There has been no additional funding to initiate design improvements. Reviewing and strengthening the role and functions of RTLit is now included in the 2022 Literacy and Communication and Maths Action Plans.
38. There is an opportunity to align existing learning support resources and supports with the current work around the NZ Curriculum refresh and the Common Practice Model¹⁴ guidance.

Priority 5: Meeting the Learning Needs of Gifted Children and Young People

39. Priority 5 recognises that understanding giftedness is complex. Gifted ākonga/learners can develop emotionally, intellectually, and physically at different rates to their peers and giftedness can increase feelings of being different or not fitting in.

¹⁰ [Oral-Language-and-Literacy-OLLI-Evaluation.pdf](#)

¹¹ Standard of Proof Alert Pilot Phase 2 Evaluation

¹² Standard of Proof ENGAGE 2021-2022 Pilot Process Evaluation

¹³ Standard of Proof Incredible Beginning Pilot Process Evaluation

¹⁴ [Common Practice Model – Education in New Zealand](#)

40. The aim of Priority 5 was to work with sector experts to design flexible supports for gifted ākonga/learners to address a gap and provide new tools for teachers, other educators, families and whānau.
41. We have invested in direct support and opportunities for gifted ākonga/learners, through MindPlus one day schooling, awards for ākonga/learners, and out of school experiences. The evaluations (2022, 2023) of the gifted package highlighted the positive impact of the out of school experiences for gifted ākonga/learners. It also recommended changes to the professional learning development offered in early learning services, and teacher and ākonga/learner awards.
42. We have current funding of \$100,000 per annum for the next two financial years to develop guidance and support for schools and kura to identify gifted learners.

Priority 6: Improving Education for Children and Young People at Risk of Disengaging

43. There are significant long-term impacts for ākonga/learners who are or could be at risk of disengaging from their education. Priority 6 aims to prevent disengagement from education, improve at-risk education provision for those who need it, and ensure better support is available to help ākonga/ learners re-engage in learning.
44. Following sector and ākonga/learners' engagement, and a review of the research on good practice for education provision for ākonga and learners at risk of disengaging, Cabinet set the direction in 2019 to redesign Alternative Education including Alternative Education (AE), Activity Centres and Te Kura At-Risk gateways. Incremental improvements have included:
 - \$41.1m (over four years) was provided in Budget 23 to support cost pressures
 - updating guidance, eligibility criteria and entry process
 - new contracts in 2023 supporting local decision making.
45. Budget 2023 also provided \$14m over four years to develop and implement localised responses to support primary and intermediate aged ākonga/learners in years 0-8 at risk of disengaging or who are disengaged from learning.
46. An additional \$350,000 over two years (2023/24 and 2024/25) will support monitoring and evaluation of the local response to inform future investment proposals for supporting younger ākonga/learners experiencing disengagement.
47. We are reviewing the Standdown, Suspension, Exclusion and Expulsion (SSEE) guidelines to address disengaged ākonga/learners who are stood down or suspended. The aim of the guidelines is to assist school boards, principals, and teachers to meet their legal obligations and duties under relevant statutory requirements. As there are no changes to the legislation of SSEE the focus is to improve school practice and inform ākonga/learners and whānau/families of their rights and responsibilities.
48. We will align the reviewed guidelines with the Education and Training Act 2020 and the Education (Stand-down, Suspension, Exclusion and Expulsion) Rules 1999 and share these with schools, boards, and stakeholders during 2024.

Concluding Ministry Comments

49. While the LSAP has made some progress in the support provided to ākonga/learners with learning support needs, implementation has not been fully realised.
50. During the last four years we have strengthened the knowledge about diverse learning needs within our education system across the sector to include te ao Māori perspectives. We are building sector confidence and capability to notice, recognise and respond to ākonga/ learners with learning support needs.
51. When the LSAP was developed, several of the priorities & actions were subject to future funding for implementation. Funding through Budget Bids was not prioritised for some of these planned actions against other competing priorities for the Government and Ministry.
52. These budget constraints have limited the progress of some actions within the priorities such as the design and implementation of further tranches of LSC, the review of Resource Teachers of Literacy, and the ability to share training more widely alongside the resources created.
53. Implementation on the LSAP 2019-2023 occurred alongside Covid-19. As a result, the interagency work by education and health particularly did not get enough focus.
54. The context of our broader education system has also changed and evolved. Changes include the Education and Training Act 2020¹⁵ which outlines the rights of ākonga/learners with learning support needs, the refresh of the NZC and redesign of Te Marautanga o Aotearoa, and the launch of our integrated model of learning support, Te Tūāpapa o He Pikorua.
55. These system changes have emphasised the need to strengthen inclusion for ākonga/learners with learning support needs. They provide a more visible platform to share and promote inclusive practices and were not present at the time the LSAP was developed.
56. In 2019 the LSAP priorities focussed on specific groups of ākonga/learners and actions were not always integrated in a way that supported an overall inclusive approach. This has created challenges for collaboration, encouraged duplication of resources, and has slowed progress toward a fully inclusive education system.

Next Steps

57. Te Tūāpapa o He Pikorua enables a greater focus on universal and targeted supports, as well as individualised support. Continuing to focus on using this approach and strengthening the use of He Pikorua positions learning supports within teaching and learning, which benefits ākonga/learners with additional needs in an inclusive and more timely way.

¹⁵ [Education and Training Act 2020](#)

58. We will continue to build on and strengthen our partnerships with Māori peak bodies and providers to grow the sector's understanding of Te Ao Māori. We will also need to work more collaboratively with our government agencies to support this work.
59. There is an opportunity to reconsider our approach within the context of a broader inclusive education work programme and making the best use of limited resources. The *Briefing Note: Improving education for children and young people with learning support needs* [METIS 1320715 refers] explores our current context and possible future direction.
60. We would like to discuss the information in our two briefings to clarify the overall direction, priorities for investment, and actions to support an inclusive education system, at the meeting on 25 January 2024.

Annex

Annex 1: Learning Support Action Plan (LSAP) 2019-2025 Summary Update to December 2023.

Learning Support Action Plan (LSAP) 2019-2025

Summary Update: to 31 December 2023

● On track or complete
 ● Limited progress made
 ● Not expected to be achieved
● ● Work started but slowed or stopped (e.g., funding not prioritised to progress work)

Priority 1

Learning Support Coordinators (LSCs)

Key Actions:	Status	Achievements to Date
Introduce new Learning Support Coordinator roles in schools and kura.		
➤ Design, implement, monitor, and evaluate the first tranche of LSCs.	●	✓ Design of the LSC role was completed in time to implement in January 2020. ✓ A Learning Support Network (LSN) of Expertise is provided by Massey University offering an online community of practice and resource hub for LSCs and Special Education Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) to share resources, engage in professional development through webinars, and discuss evidence-based practice. As of December 2023, 177 LSCs were actively participating in the Network.
➤ Design and implement further tranches [subject to funding]	● ●	✓ Both Te Rūnanganui o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori o Aotearoa (TRN) and Ngā Kura-a-Iwi (NKaI) are leading the work to strengthen learning support co-ordination in Kaupapa Māori and Māori Medium education kaupapa, with regular communication and support from the Ministry. ✓ The initial focus for Kaupapa Māori and Māori Medium has been environmental scans within kura to understand learning support needs, priorities, and aspirations of ākonga/learners and whānau/families.

Priority 2

Screening and Early Identification of Learning Support Needs

Key Actions:	Status	Achievements to Date
Develop evidence-based screening tools reflecting Māori concepts and focused on learning needs (rather than diagnosis).		
➤ Screening for dyslexia, dyspraxia, and giftedness.	●	✓ Dyslexia and dyspraxia resources were developed and promoted to all schools on the Inclusive Education website. The resources are reviewed against a criteria that was developed in consultation with dyslexia stakeholders, organisations, advocates and academics. The dyslexia learning guide is the 2nd most viewed guide, and our dyslexia resources generate 500 views per month.
➤ A consistent set of tools to establish a baseline at school entry.	●	✓ A draft School Entry Kete (SEK) was prepared and some concept components for English medium settings was completed.
➤ Actions for early childhood measurement and teen health screening	●	✓ Work is underway to complete the Kōwhiri Whakapae suite, to include oral language and literacy, and maths practices and progressions - due for release in July 2024. ✓ We are part of the Early Years Working Group, coordinated by Te Whatu Ora. Recent discussions have centred on tool development and information sharing across both Ministries of Health and Education. ✓ This is a Te Whatu Ora led initiative. We have been asked to feedback on health initiatives and common language across health and education.

Learning Support Action Plan (LSAP) 2019-2025

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Priority 3

Strengthening Early Intervention

Key Actions: **Status** **Achievements to Date**

Reduce waiting times for existing early intervention services.

➤ Research best practice on waiting times, set new targets and develop a multi-year plan for meeting the new targets.	●	✓ The focus on reducing wait times for individual ākonga/learners led to regions implementing a range of local short-term strategies which have not always been effective in the longer term. Moving forward, best practice on waiting times need to be developed in early 2024, with a multiyear plan implemented mid 2024.
➤ Progressively implement multi-year plan.	●	

Improve early intervention for young children and their whānau/families.

➤ Co-design and deliver with Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust an awareness campaign called Tamaariki to ensure that kaiako/teachers, and whānau/families are aware of (and confident to access) learning support.	●	✓ Tamaariki was completed on time and because of this initial success continues through Hohoutia ko Tamaariki, focusing on Takiwātanga (autism) social emotional learning and communication. Wānanga with learning support kaimahi working in Kōhanga Reo have supported cultural awareness and cultural responsiveness. ✓ Resources (pukapuka and the Korowai Taiō set of resources) have been produced and distributed, supported by wānanga with Kōhanga Reo. ✓ We are continuing the relationship with Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust leading this work supported by the Ministry. Focusing on strengthening local relationships with planned hui.
➤ Co-design with Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust capability building resources and professional learning and development for staff, whānau/families and kaiako/teachers to support ākonga/learners with learning support needs.	●	
➤ Identify what additional types, mix and volume of services are needed to provide timely interventions to ākonga/learners and identify and implement any improvements that can be made or new services that might be needed [subject to funding].	●	✓ The Oral Language and Literacy initiative (OLLi) was evaluated in mainstream settings (2018-2021) and continues to be implemented across regions. OLLi enables early learning kaiako/teachers and speech-language therapists to work in partnership to develop bespoke communication supports for local communities using curriculum resources for all ākonga/learners e.g. He Māpuna te Tamaiti and Te Kōrerorero. ✓ Continued implementation of Kōwhiri Whakapae practice and progress tools to support Kaiako/teachers to 'lay the ground' with practices that support all ākonga/learners, and to notice, recognise, and respond to ākonga/learners' specific capabilities. ✓ We will develop an outcome evaluations framework using He Pikorua in Action to support teams to continually assess, plan, implement and review their approach to intervention and to supporting the wellbeing of all ākonga/learners.
➤ Improve alignment with Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Development, Oranga Tamariki and other agency supports for a more seamless, flexible and coordinated approach to providing disability services and support.	●	✓ Continue work with Ministry of Health and Whaikaha at national and regional levels to support a seamless, flexible, and coordinated approach to disability services and support. ✓ We will continue to strengthen multi agency relationships formalising strategic relationships with Whaikaha and Te Whatu Ora with a focus on early years provision and child wellbeing.

Learning Support Action Plan (LSAP) 2019-2025

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Priority 4

Flexible Supports for Neurodiverse Children and Young People

Key Actions: **Status** **Achievements to Date**

Create a comprehensive set of tools and resources that teachers and other educators, and parents and whānau/families can use to better meet the needs of neurodiverse children and young people (building on what we already have):

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Update existing materials, and work with sector professionals and whānau/families to identify the full range of tools and resources needed, and priorities for developing new tools. ● ➤ Build a comprehensive set of resources [subject to funding]. ● ● | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 'Poipoia ngā ākonga kanorau ā roro' by Dr. Melanie Riwai-Couch provided insights into a culturally responsive educational system for neurodiverse ākonga/learners and is being used to inform the Ministry work programme and the development of neurodiverse resources. ✓ We co-fund the development of the New Zealand Autism Guideline: He Waka Huia Takiwātanga Rau led by Whaikaha. The guideline considers autism (takiwātanga) from early childhood through to adulthood and includes evidence-based recommendations on best practice to support autistic people in New Zealand. ✓ We developed inclusive design modules, launched on 14 August 2023, to support schools and early learning services to build teacher capability in understanding neurodiversity and designing inclusive learning environments. The modules are currently the 8th most viewed guide and generate an average of 80 downloads since launching in August. ✓ We supported Tainui Kāhui Ako to develop and test culturally appropriate resources for dyslexic ākonga in Māori Medium. The resources were evaluated to ensure they were fit for purpose following trials in Term 1, 2023. These resources will be shared with Resource Teaching: Learning and Behaviour (RTLb) and Learning Support Coordinators (LSCs). |
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Strengthen specialist supports for children and young people with ongoing needs who don't qualify for the highest level of support and resourcing, including the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Co-design with a user group (including ākonga/learners, whānau/families, Māori and teachers and other educators) a flexible range of specialist supports, building on existing supports and programmes [subject to funding]. ● ● ➤ Progressively implement new specialist supports and programmes [subject to funding] ● ● | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Taonga Takiwātanga Charitable trust have delivered eight marae-based wānanga for Learning support specialists, RTLb's, LSCs, teacher aides, education leaders and Kaiko/teachers to increase their understanding and strengthen strategies of taonga takiwātanga (autism) from a te ao Māori world view. Initial feedback indicates valuable learning for both whānau/families and the education sector. There is strong collaboration between the trust, iwi, and the Ministry. ✓ The Ministry contracts Autism New Zealand to offer Tilting the Seesaw (Autism training) for LSC's to build their understanding and ability to support autistic ākonga/learners. Evaluation reports from 2021 and 2022 report that LSCs are using the tools and strategies they have learned and share resources with whānau/families and professionals. ✓ The Taonga Takiwātanga Charitable Trust have three wānanga planned for 2024. The Ministry is due to receive an updated evaluation report early 2024 highlighting how following these wānanga the outcomes have been incorporated into schools and RTLb's. We have funding for 320 additional places over 2 years. ✓ An in-depth evaluation plan has been agreed with Autism New Zealand in evaluating the sustained impact and practice shifts for schools and kura supported by LSCs. |
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Specialist teacher support for teachers of children and young people with dyslexia or ongoing literacy needs:		
Priority 4 cont	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Design and implement improvements with the Resource Teacher: Literacy Service to better support teachers of ākonga/learners with literacy difficulties, including dyslexia [subject to funding]. 	<div> ● ● </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The two Resource Teachers: Literacy (RTLit) Manuals (Professional Guidance, and Administrative Processes) were combined and completed early 2021. ✓ There was no additional funding to design improvements for the RTLit service. Reviewing and strengthening the role is now included in the 2022 Literacy and Communication and Maths Action Plans.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review supports for ākonga/learners with the highest levels of need, including the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme, to ensure they are meeting needs of ākonga/learners, and delivering the intended outcome. 	<div> ● ● </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Highest Needs Review (HNR) and report back to Cabinet on the results and recommendations for change were completed. Cabinet agreed to a high-level direction and building blocks for change in the system. A progress report was provided to Cabinet in June 2023, noting that a change in response was required due to feedback from the disability and education sector and Treasury on the planned response. ✓ The Ministry has revised our approach to responding to the findings of the Highest Needs Review and positioning this in the context of a broader inclusive education work programme. This change of approach has been discussed with representatives of the disability and education sector.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Implement changes from review [subject to funding]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The intent is to ensure a coherent and evidence-based approach to responding to the issues experienced by ākonga/learners with learning support needs, simplifying and improving the current service through continuous improvement, making the best use of limited resources to improve outcomes for these learners. ✓ We are preparing advice and information for you on improving education for ākonga/learners with learning support needs. This includes information about the performance of the education system for ākonga/learners with learning support needs and more detail on the status of the Highest Needs Review. It is intended to support a discussion with you about how the Government could respond to the issues in this space.

Learning Support Action Plan (LSAP) 2019-2025

Summary Update: to 31 December 2023

● On track or complete
 ● Limited progress made
 ● Not expected to be achieved
● ● Work started but slowed or stopped (e.g., funding not prioritised to progress work)

Priority 5

Meeting the Learning Needs of Gifted Children and Young People

Key Actions:	Status	Achievements to Date
Increase access to supports for gifted children and young people.		
➤ Implement a package of support for gifted ākonga/learners.	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ From 2019-2022, out of school experiences and extension events enabled more than 4,200 gifted ākonga/learners to connect and collaborate with each other in a range of forums and settings, in person and online. ✓ Since 2019, MindPlus, one day school provision, has been provided by the New Zealand Centre of Gifted Education. The Ministry also funded curriculum development and more online provision for ākonga/learners who cannot attend in person. ✓ Since 2019, all gifted ākonga/learners can apply for an award that contributes towards, or funds completely, the cost of a learning opportunity suited to their gift. In 2023, 220 learners, at a cost of \$450,000, received awards (total of 984 gifted learners funded since 2020). ✓ Since 2020, Awards for Teachers of Gifted ākonga/learners can access learning opportunities to increase their skills for supporting gifted ākonga/learners. In 2023, 22 teachers, at a cost of \$60,000, received awards (total of 81 teachers of gifted learners funded since 2020). ✓ We worked with providers to develop supports for teachers in early learning services to recognise and respond to the needs of gifted children. The tool Mānawatia te Iho Pūmanawa has been developed to go on Te Whāriki online. ✓ The MindPlus One Day Schooling contract was extended to 31 January 2024 to ensure continuity for 2023 at a cost of \$239,130. ✓ In 2022 out of school experiences and extension events were evaluated, and in 2023 the teacher and ākonga/learner awards as well as the ECE PLD Pito Mata were evaluated.

Learning Support Action Plan (LSAP) 2019-2025

Summary Update: to 31 December 2023

● On track or complete
 ● Limited progress made
 ● Not expected to be achieved
● ● Work started but slowed or stopped (e.g., funding not prioritised to progress work)

Priority 6

Improving Education for Children and Young People at Risk of Disengaging

Key Actions:	Status	Achievements to Date
Improve the provision of education for children and young people at risk of disengaging from education.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review options, drawing on leading practice overseas and in New Zealand. ➤ Co-design with teachers and other educators, disengaged ākonga/learners, Māori, Pacific peoples, whānau/families, and communities, a more adaptable, flexible system of at risk provision that better meets individual needs and is integrated with schools. ➤ Implement new provision, including negotiating new contracts for service provision [subject to funding]. 	<div>●</div> <div>●</div> <div>● ●</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Improvements to Alternative Education as part of a redesign that began in 2019 have focussed on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Supporting a qualified workforce ○ Better utilising professional learning and development resource ○ Investigating property issues ○ Improving data collection ○ Strengthening current practice. ✓ Implementation of new AE provision continues to be subject to funding. ✓ The Ministry's response to the Education Review Office AE Evaluation 2023 recommendations will focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Further Budget increases to support quality provision ○ Transitions for ākonga/learners from AE.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review the stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions, and expulsions guidelines. 	<div>●</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ SSEE guidelines have been reviewed by internal stakeholders including Kaimahi Māori and the Ministry's legal team. ✓ In June 2023 we contracted an independent provider to conduct user testing and feedback workshops with key groups. ✓ The Ministry will develop learning resources to support the implementation of the guidelines and will work with NZSTA (New Zealand School Trustees Association) and NZPF (New Zealand Principals Federation) to support boards and principals to implement these guidelines in their schools.