

Please note:

In order to make a decision on whether to proceed with reprioritising funding for RT Literacy and RT Māori, the Minister required an early Budget decision from Cabinet before she could initiate the reprioritisation proposal.

The Minister was then required to give notice of her intention by 1 March and seek feedback on the proposal, which is the process the Minister followed.

Final decisions on the proposal were made after the Minister had received and considered the consultation feedback.



**Te Tāhuhu o
te Mātauranga**
Ministry of Education

Report: Budget savings decisions for Resource Teachers: Literacy and Māori

To:	Hon Erica Stanford, Minister of Education		
Date:	27/01/2025	Deadline:	28/01/2025
Security Level:	Budget Sensitive	Priority:	High
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Why are we sending this to you?

- To implement your savings initiatives for Resource Teachers: Literacy and Māori, you will need an early Budget decision from Cabinet.
- This paper provides you with advice and a draft Cabinet paper (Annex 1) for that purpose.

What action do we need, by when?

- This report seeks your preferred approach for reprioritisation of Resource Teachers: Literacy and Māori as part of your 2025 Budget savings package.
- Please return the signed paper by 28 January 2025.


Key facts, issues and questions

- 9(2)(f)(iv)
[Redacted text]
- To make these changes we need to notify the sector stakeholders about changes to Resource Teacher allocations by 1 March 2025 (as per collective agreement requirements). This means that Cabinet will need to approve these savings initiatives and agree that this can be announced to the sector by the end of February.
- There are current issues with the allocation and utilisation of RTLit and RTM roles. So, while disestablishing these roles does present some risks, these can also be somewhat mitigated by improving on the status quo through reinvestment of this resource.
- We have provided you with a draft Cabinet paper for consideration. In order to notify the sector of changes, we will need to lodge the finalised Cabinet paper for consideration by SOU on 12 February and Cabinet on 17 February.

Alignment with Government priorities

1. This report supports the Government's Budget priorities to:
 - a. Deliver more efficient, effective and responsive public services to all who need and use them – in particular, to improve educational achievement.
 - b. Get the Government's books back in order and restore discipline to public spending.

Background

2. The Government has committed to a wide-ranging education work programme to lift achievement outcomes and close the equity gap for all learners. However, we are operating in a tight fiscal environment. This means trade-offs and reprioritisation of existing resource is crucial for delivering on the Government's six education priorities.
3. 9(2)(f)(iv)

4. This report provides you with a draft Cabinet paper (attached as Annex 1) for your consideration, and advice on the savings proposals.

Reprioritising RTLit and RTM makes funding available for reinvestment, however there are risks

Summary of funding available for reprioritisation

5. The current proposals to reprioritise funding for RTLit and RTM roles present opportunities to reallocate this resource to deliver on your education priorities. Removing the RTLit and RTM roles would save \$55.165 million over four years. The savings and the timing for those savings are provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Estimated savings in \$0.000m generated from RTLit and RTM reprioritisation

Initiative	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29 & outyears	Total
RT Lit	-0.941	-10.299	-13.965	-13.965	-39.171
RT Māori	-0.338	-3.842	-5.882	-5.882	-15.994
Total	-1.279	-14.141	-19.847	-19.847	-55.165

6. Please note, as these changes affect teacher employment, surplus staffing costs will likely be incurred for the 2026 school year for affected staff. This means the savings from these initiatives would be realised from the 2027 school year.

Overview of current RTLit and RTM provision

7. Resource teachers are covered by the teacher collective agreements and are allocated to schools each year via the Education (School Staffing) Order ("the Staffing Order"). RTLits and RTMs mainly work in primary and area schools. A summary of these existing services is provided below:
 - a. **RTLit** – these roles provide specialised literacy assistance to learners in years 0 to 8 in English medium who are experiencing difficulties with literacy learning. The Staffing Order provides for a maximum of 121 full-time teacher equivalents (FTEs) for RTLit. There are currently 110 FTE allocated for RTLit roles across the system. These roles are fully released and receive a salary unit. The employing school receives funding for travel, admin and a small support time allowance to manage the roles.

- b. **RTM** – these roles work with principals and teachers to provide teaching and learning programmes primarily for students in Year 0 to Year 8, who are undertaking Māori immersion programmes (Levels 1 and 2), and Māori language levels 3 - 6. There are currently 53 FTTE allocated for RTM roles across the system. Of these, 50 roles are currently filled. These roles are fully released and receive a salary unit. The employing school receives funding for travel, admin and a small support time allowance to manage the roles.
8. Current analysis shows that there are issues with the quality of the RTLit Service. This includes inconsistent practices (both professional and management) across the devolved service, inefficiencies evident in the significant time spent travelling to schools, and insufficient evidence of impact based on current data measures [METIS 1341125 refers].
9. Similar issues exist for RTM roles. One of the key limitations of the RTM service is insufficient system-level reporting on how these roles are being utilised or how they are supporting improved outcomes for learners. The most recent evaluation of the programme was completed in 2008 by the Education Review Office (ERO)¹. It noted significant variability in RTM practice and management arrangements across the country, which affects the quality, consistency and location of services provided.
10. The allocation of RTM roles is based off a dated model and does not reflect the current education landscape. In particular, the kaupapa Māori and Māori medium network has changed significantly since these roles were established, and we do not consider the roles to be distributed to where they are most needed. For example, there are three RTM in Invercargill despite only having one wharekura in the region. Meanwhile other regions have much higher relative number of learners and schools/kura in te reo Māori language learning settings, yet RTM resource is not allocated accordingly.

The key risks associated with this change can be mitigated by the need to improve current allocation through reinvestment of this resource

Where possible, we recommend communicating at a high level how this reprioritised funding will be reinvested

11. While there are risks associated with this type of change, given the limitations outlined above regarding current provision, there is room for more effective reinvestment of this resource to achieve better outcomes.
12. The risks outlined in more detail below may be partially mitigated depending on how this funding is reinvested, particularly for RTM savings (i.e., if RTM savings are reinvested into other Māori education programmes). 9(2)(h)
13. However, these decisions will only be finalised as part of Budget processes. Where possible, we recommend providing a high-level indication of areas this funding will be reinvested, and that further detail will be provided as part of Budget 2025 announcements. This will also inform any planned communications. We have included high-level content on reinvestment in paragraphs 15 and 16 of the draft Cabinet paper attached, and this aligns with your recent Budget letter to the Minister of Finance on early Budget decisions [METIS 134842 refers].
14. While this high-level information may mitigate some of the associated risks, it is likely further questions may arise from the sector if detailed decisions cannot be communicated until after Budget 2025 is finalised.

¹ [Evaluation of the Resource Teacher: Māori Service](#)

15. 9(2)(f)(iv)

Overview of key risks

16. We have summarised the key risks associated with both of these savings proposals below, noting that an overview of these risks has been included in the attached draft Cabinet paper.

Depending on how this funding is reinvested, disestablishment of these roles could result in reduction in literacy and Māori education support

17. The disestablishment of these roles will be perceived by some to result in a reduction in the current level of specialist literacy and specialist Māori education support for learners, tumuaki and kaiako in Years 0 to 8 and could be perceived as cutting across action to lift literacy outcomes. However, we note the RTLit savings is balanced against the significant investment in literacy recently, with \$67 million allocated through Budget 2024 for structured literacy approaches and rangaranga reo ā-tā PLD and supports, as well as interventions to accelerate students' literacy and te reo matatini learning, including the expansion of structured literacy approach staffing resource which has been allocated to 970 schools in 2025.

18. While there are other supports in the system, this will have a distributional impact given the scale of these current services and the number of schools and learners it reaches throughout the country. For example, 4,092 students accessed RTLit services in 2023. We do not have information on the numbers of principals, teachers and students reached by RTMs.

9(2)(j)

19. 9(2)(f)(iv)

20. 9(2)(j)

Disestablishment of RTLit and RTM roles may have negative impacts on the education workforce

21. 9(2)(f)(iv)

22. The workforce implications associated with the removal of RTLit roles could be mitigated, to an extent, by the recent investment allocated for structured literacy. This investment may provide some potential for redeployment of expert literacy workforce affected by removal of RTLit roles. Approximately 90% of the current RTLit workforce have upskilled in structured literacy approaches, including the Better Start Literacy Approach PLD support. This means they meet eligibility criteria for the new structured literacy approach staffing resource which, alongside other opportunities, may provide alternate employment for some RTLit staff and mean specialist literacy capability is retained in the system. 9(2)(f)(iv)

9(2)(h)

23. 9(2)(h)

Next Steps

We will work to a tight timeframe to finalise Cabinet decisions by the March 1 deadline

24. As noted above, these changes require notification to employing Boards of changes to Resource Teacher allocations by 1 March 2025 (as per collective agreement requirements). To meet this timeline, Cabinet needs to approve these savings initiatives and agree that this can be announced to the sector before the end of February and prior to Budget announcements.
25. A draft Cabinet paper is attached (Annex 1) seeking approval from Cabinet to the reprioritisation proposal set out above. Table 2 below provides an indicative timeline to seek Cabinet decisions to meet the 1 March deadline noted above.

Table 2: Indicative timeline for finalising Cabinet decisions

Date	Milestone
28 January	Ministerial feedback provided on initial draft Cabinet paper Agency consultation authorised on the draft Cabinet paper
28 – 29 January	Agency consultation on draft Cabinet paper
29 – 31 January	Ministerial consultation on draft Cabinet paper
3 February	Revised draft sent for final review
4 – 5 February	Final feedback received and finalised
6 February	Cabinet paper lodged
12 February	Paper considered by SOU
17 February	Paper considered by Cabinet

There are key implementation milestones following Cabinet agreement on this reprioritisation proposal

26. Should Cabinet agree to approve and announce these reprioritisation proposals, the Ministry will need to undertake some key milestones to implement these changes. Table 3 below provides a high-level overview and timeline of these key milestones.

Table 3: Key implementation milestones

Date	Milestone
March 2025	The Ministry informs employing school boards by 1 March of the intent to remove RTLit and RTM roles from the start of 2026.
May 2025	Initial advice and engagement with PCO to draft the Education (2026 School Staffing) Order
July 2025	The Ministry confirms to school boards the withdrawal of funding for these roles from the start of 2026. Draft 2026 Staffing Order circulated for stakeholder review and feedback (early July). Cabinet paper and draft Staffing Order submitted to Ministers, LEG Committee and Cabinet (late July).
August 2025	2026 Staffing Order published and Gazetted by PCO.

September 2025

2026 Staffing Order comes into force and schools receive notification of their provisional staffing based on its updated provisions.

27. 9(2)(j)

Recommended Actions

The Ministry of Education recommends you:

- a. **note** that you wish to proceed with reprioritisation of Resource Teachers: Literacy and Māori (RTLit and RTM), however these changes require early Cabinet approval to enable notification to sector stakeholder of changes to Resource Teacher allocations by 1 March 2025 (as per collective agreement requirements)

Noted

- b. **note** that reprioritisation of both RTLit and RTM roles will realise savings of approximately \$19.8 million per year from the 2027 school year (\$55.2 million over the forecast period)

Noted

- c. **note** that reprioritisation of both RTLit and RTM roles carries some potential risks, including:

i. Reduction in literacy and Māori education support for learners, tumuaki and kaiako in Years 0 to 8 - **NOT a reduction - changing supports to higher performing interventions**

ii. Reduction in expert literacy and Māori education workforce

iii. 9(2)(f)(iv)

iv. 9(2)(h)

9(2)(g)(i)

Noted

- d. **approve** the attached draft Cabinet paper (Annex 1) for ministerial and agency consultation, subject to any necessary change following your consideration

changes to be made prior to lodging Approved / Not approved

- e. **note** that in order to meet the March 1 timeline, we will need to lodge the finalised Cabinet paper for consideration by SOU on 12 February and Cabinet on 17 February

Noted

Proactive Release:

- f. **agree** that the Ministry of Education release this paper in full once final decisions have been made by Cabinet

Agree / Disagree



Jennifer Fraser

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Te Pou Kaupapahere

27/01/2025



Hon Erica Stanford

Minister of Education

29/1/25

Annexes

The following are annexed to this paper:

Annex 1: Draft Cabinet paper – Early Budget 2025 approval: Reprioritisation of Resource Teachers: Literacy and Resource Teachers: Māori (attached separately)

Proactively Released