MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
TE TĀHUHU O TE MĀTAURANGA

# Briefing Note: Wellbeing Package to Support Ākonga Engagement in Learning Options Narrative

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| **To:** | Hon Jan Tinetti, Associate Minister of Education | | |
| **CC:** | Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education | | |
| **Date:** | 8 April 2022 | **Priority:** | Medium |
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| **Drafter:** | Kosal Kong, Learning Support Policy | **DDI:** | 9(2)(a) |
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| **Messaging seen by Communications team:** | No | **Round Robin:** | No |

## Purpose of paper

This paper responds to your request for a narrative to draw together the components of the Wellbeing Package for ākonga in Budget 2022, including initial information about how initiatives will be implemented.

## Summary

- Our proposed narrative for ākonga wellbeing is driven by the government's inclusive education vision, which is developing an education system that will meet the wellbing needs of all ākonga. It will do this by better positioning the education system to flex around the needs of our diverse ākonga.
- The establishment of Te Mahau positions the Ministry to work with the sector to grow capability and confidence in relation to curriculum, leadership, school culture and relationships with communities, to deliver an inclusive education system which supports student wellbeing.
- The Wellbeing Package initiatives in Budget 22 progress the vision and approach by building on existing and proven interventions, and providing additional funding across the system to wrap supports around ākonga at risk of disengagement.
- Implementation planning for initiatives is underway, and indicative planning information (including timelines, delivery highlights and identifying who will deliver) is provided in Annex 1 and Annex 2.

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## Proactive Release Recommendation

**Agree** that the Ministry of Education release this briefing once it has been considered by you, with appropriate redactions following the announcement of Budget decisions.

**Agree** / **Disagree**

Ben O'Meara
**Group Manager**
**Te Puna Kaupapahere - Policy**

8/04/2022

Hon Jan Tinetti
**Associate Minister of Education**

10/04/2022

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**What is our overall system vision for student wellbeing?**

1. The government's vision is for a fully inclusive education system that meets the wellbeing needs of all ākonga. This is reflected in section 127 of the Education and Training Act 2020, which sets out the primary objectives of school boards, including to ensure that the school:

    - is a physically and emotionally safe place for all students and staff;
    - gives effect to relevant student rights set out in the Act, the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990, the Human Rights Act 1993;
    - takes all reasonable steps to eliminate racism, stigma, bullying, and any other forms of discrimination within the school.

2. The vision for inclusive education is also reflected in the Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities, Ka Hikitia: Ka Hāpaitia and the Action Plan for Pacific Education 2020-2030. Within this vision:

    - Every student is recognised as an active, capable learner;
    - Schools adapt to fit the student, rather than expecting the student to fit the school;
    - Collaborative decision making is at the heart of supporting all students with additional learning needs;
    - Families and whānau are supported to be active participants in building and maintaining ākonga wellbeing;
    - Student engagement, learning, and achievement depend on the relationship between the teacher and student;
    - Language, identity, and culture count. Knowing where learners come from, and building on what they bring with them, is essential.

**How will we achieve this vision?**

3. There are a wide range of interventions and approaches to support building inclusiveness in our education system. However, due to the fragmentation of the sector, implementation is variable both in quality and sustainability. The Ministry is positioning itself to better support the sector to realise the objectives of key strategic documents and initiatives. Key to this approach is the establishment of Te Mahau, a separately branded business unit within the redesigned Ministry. Te Mahau will work closely with the sector, giving priority to local and regional voices and improving information and feedback loops. The role of Te Mahau is to grow capability and confidence in relation to curriculum, leadership, culture, and relationships with communities.

4. The way we work with the education sector has the potential to be a powerful driver of change. In particular, Te Mahau can support change by:

    - Providing stronger supports for teaching practice and the delivery of curriculum through Te Poutāhū (the curriculum centre), including a common practice model for teachers and exemplars for local curriculum delivery;
    - Better supporting early learning and school leaders to lead learning and to manage the wide range of organisational management issues they face every day;

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- Working alongside NZSTA, Te Runanga Nui and Ngā Kura a Iwi to ensure that school and kura boards have the support they need for their governance roles, including in their roles as employers, as connectors to their communities and in setting the strategic direction for their school or kura;
- Facilitating connections between schools and mana whenua to give practical effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi;
- Supporting clusters of schools to implement the Learning Support Delivery Model to provide an inclusive education system that can meet the needs of all learners; and
- Supporting schools and kura to maximise school attendance and engagement by building strong connections with their communities, families and whānau.

5. Across our work we are taking a Response to Intervention (RTI) approach. An RTI approach allows early identification of learners who are not progressing as they should despite accessing evidence-based learning experiences within a strong general education programme. The RTI approach provides supports at three levels: universal, targeted, and intensive.

6. At the universal level, we are supporting shifts in school cultures and practices, to move towards a more child-centred, inclusive mindset, with a stronger sense of collective responsibility for supporting all ākonga to be engaged. A critical success factor for this shift will be strengthen relationships between schools, families and whānau.

7. At the targeted level, we are supporting schools to identify additional learning needs earlier, and to wrap supports around ākonga. Wellbeing initiatives at this level include parenting programmes, mentoring programmes and other short term supports.

8. At the individualised level, where learners with the highest levels of need are situated, we are working to enable the most intensive supports to be combined through tailored packages for ākonga and whānau. We are shifting to a model where these intensive supports are integrated into the rest of the schooling system to consistently provide quality pastoral and educational support to ākonga. Key to enabling this integration to happen will be the outcomes from the Highest Needs Review.

9. Key strategies and approaches which help guide the work of Te Mahau with the sector include:

    - the refresh of the New Zealand Curriculum, the Engagement Strategy and the National Education and Learning Priorities focus on making school/kura an inclusive and responsive place where learners enjoy being, where they can succeed and where they feel welcomed.
    - The Learning Support Delivery Model (LSDM), Using the LSDM helps educators to make suitable adjustments to teaching and learning and wellbeing supports. This will ensure that the right levels of support are in place for all ākonga.
    - He Pikorua, the learning support practice framework, is integral to making a change in the way we work with learners. He Pikorua brings learning support practitioners together alongside whānau and educators to support the learning and well-being of ākonga.

**How does Budget 22 support our vision and approach?**

10. The initiatives in the Budget 22 wellbeing package step us towards an inclusive education system that meets the wellbeing and learning support needs of all ākonga. The initiatives provide additional investments at all three levels of the RTI approach (universal, targeted, and intensive). The initiatives build on existing and proven



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interventions, providing additional funding to wrap supports around ākonga who are facing barriers to their learning, wellbeing, or engagement.

11. The package is grounded in the LSDM. The LSDM recognises that we need a range of supports in the system, so that we can activate the right option for ākonga at the right time, to ensure that ākonga remain connected to the education system.

12. Some of the initiatives focus on lifting capability at the early intervention end – identifying those with support needs early, and wrapping culturally appropriate, coordinated, and locally-led supports around ākonga to lean against the factors driving disengagement. We know that irregular attendance, and low levels of engagement, impact on both wellbeing and achievement.

13. At the universal level, a refresh and enhancement of PB4L School-Wide delivery will better support schools to foster safe, inclusive environments in a culturally responsive way, particularly for ākonga and whānau Māori. The refresh will improve the foundational support to implement initiatives targeted to meet specific learner needs, enhance wellbeing, improve achievement, and reduce negative outcomes such as bullying.

14. Updating of the Physical Restraint Rules and Guidelines (funded from reprioritisation) will build school capability to use effective whole of school and individualised approaches, strategies, and practices to minimise and where possible, eliminate the use of physical restraint in New Zealand registered schools and kura.

15. In addition, the budget provides continued funding for Community Learning Hubs for ethnic families and communities in Christchurch, Auckland, Wellington, and Hamilton. The Hubs provide workshops and information to support ethnic parents and communities to engage with the education system to enhance their children's wellbeing and education outcomes.

16. At the targeted level, the expansion of Check & Connect, Te Hononga, a bicultural programme, and Te Mana Tikitiki, a Kaupapa Māori approach will provide support for ākonga, whānau and schools to develop ākonga mana, self-confidence and improve learning and engagement. An increase in funding rates for Incredible Years early intervention will enable communities to continue to build social and emotional regulation for young tamariki who are neurodiverse or have behavioural support needs.

17. A funding increase for New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) at School (NZSL@School) will provide support for deaf or hard of hearing (DHH) children enrolled at their local school to build their NZSL fluency and access the curriculum. This will complement investments (from reallocated underspends) in professional learning development for the education workforce to increase the NZSL competency of adults working with DHH ākonga.

18. At the more intensive level, additional funding for the Attendance Service redesign will support locally-led brokerage approaches with schools, including partnerships with iwi and Pacific organisations, to invest in their relationships with chronically absent students and their families and whānau. Approaches will align with and leverage social sector agency support. All Attendance Service providers are members of local interagency case management and coordination groups.

19. Other initiatives in the package recognise the role that intensive learning options play in supporting students who are encountering significant difficulties by providing small group support for wellbeing or acting as a circuit breaker. Through the LSDM, schools/kura can work together earlier to identify when an alternative pathway might be desirable. We are working to better integrate alternative settings into the rest of the schooling system through the LSDM.

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20. Cost pressure funding for Alternative Education will enable continued delivery of the service. Increased funding for Te Kura's At-Risk gateways recognises the increasing role of Te Kura as an education provider for at risk ākonga and will make it possible to wrap well-being supports around more students, as well as providing education. A fiscally neutral use of underspend to increase the rates of boarding allowances will support at-risk ākonga to access education via the multiple barriers allowance, as well as supporting those facing access barriers due to being geographically remote.

21. Funding to expand the First Signs programme for whānau and deaf or hard of hearing children under five will enable more whānau to access First Signs, a home-based service enabling whānau to strengthen their ability to communicate with their deaf child. First Signs supports age-appropriate language acquisition and communication for the deaf child with their whānau in the home.

22. The table below sets out the components in the Wellbeing Package to support ākonga engagement in learning. Note that the proposed funding in this table is subject to final Budget decisions from the Minister of Finance.

| Title | Proposed Funding | Comments |
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| Creating safe, inclusive schools – Targeted and Intensive supports for Māori & Pacific learners at risk of disengaging | OPEX 7.745m | Check & Connect, Te Hononga uses trained mentors to monitor attendance, achievement, and pastoral data to support problem solving, build skills, and enhance learner engagement for Māori and Pacific students in Years 8-11. Te Mana Tikitiki supports Māori learners in Years 4-8 experiencing behavioural and wellbeing challenges. Trained facilitators use tikanga and te reo Māori to build mana and self-confidence, to improve learning and achievement. This will deliver 96 Te Mana Tikitiki programs across 48 schools to 1056 students and Check & Connect mentors to support between 300 to 400 students. |
| Cost Adjustment Alternative Education Provision | OPEX 2.250m | This initiative will provide a per-place funding rate increase of 2.75% to Alternative Education provision for 1888 places for ākonga in years 9-12 who are disengaged or at risk of disengaging. The funding will be used to meet the increased costs of essential resources and supports to re-engage students; this could include learning resources, access to health, mental health and broader social services, enrichment activities or transport costs. |
| Price increase for Incredible years programmes | OPEX 7.832m | Incredible years (IY) are targeted early intervention and capability building programmes delivered by NGOs and iwi organisations, for caregivers and teachers, to support young children with behaviour issues and promote social and emotional regulation. The price for IY programmes has not increased in 11 years. This funding provides an increase of 19.4% equivalent to the CPI increases over this period which will enable the IY programmes to be maintained and reduces the risk of NGO's not renewing contracts. |
| Supporting schools to improve student attendance, engagement, and participation | OPEX 6.000m | This initiative will address Attendance Service cost pressures. Funding will allow providers to increase capacity to support schools to effectively manage attendance, reduce unjustified absence rates and non-enrolment, reduce the time taken to return students to education and respond to cases of non-attendance and non-enrolment across the country. |

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| Increased funding for Te Kura's at-risk students to better align funding rates with alternative education settings | OPEX 15.541m | This initiative provides a funding increase to Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu's (Te Kura's) programmes (similar to Alternative Education) that support at-risk ākonga to re-engage in school and improve their outcomes. The headcount of at-risk students referred by the Ministry of Education or Oranga Tamariki nearly doubled from 1,800 in 2015 to 3,500 in 2020. The funding, for approximately 2,500 equivalent fulltime students, will scale up from an initial $1,050 to $3,500 per EFTS over four years. It will reduce the gap between Te Kura's per student funding and other schools' and recognise the higher cost of serving this group of Te Kura's students. Te Kura will extend its intensive 'Big Picture' model of delivery, blending online and face-to-face and individualised programmes with pastoral care. |
| Strengthening New Zealand Sign Language in Education - cost pressure | OPEX 4.830m | This initiative provides a funding increase for New Zealand Sign Language at School (NZSL@School). This funding ensures ākonga who use NZSL will continue to access the curriculum. The initiative also provides NZSL professional learning development (PLD) to 150 schools with Deaf/hard of hearing ākonga accessing NZSL@School. The PLD component will be funded from Improved Quality Teaching and Learning MCA, Professional Development and Support.<br>This initiative provides a funding increase for First Signs, and an expansion of the service. A total of 100 more families will have access First Signs, a home-based service enabling families to strengthen their communication with their deaf child. |
| Creating safe, inclusive schools: Strengthening Positive Behaviour for Learning School-Wide (PB4L-SW) | OPEX 11.203m | This initiative will fund a refresh and enhancement of PB4L School-Wide delivery to better support schools to foster safe, inclusive environments in a culturally responsive way, particularly for ākonga and whānau Māori. School-Wide is a framework being implemented in 42% of primary and 57% of secondary schools that enables schools to create positive environments that promote caring relationships and positive behaviours. 14 FTE for additional School-Wide Practitioners will improve quality of delivery support. The refresh will improve the foundational support to implement initiatives targeted to meet specific learner needs, enhance wellbeing, improve achievement, and reduce negative outcomes such as bullying. |
| Community Learning Hubs - Maintaining and expanding support for ethnic communities' engagement in education | OPEX 6.394m | This initiative will maintain Community Learning Hubs in Christchurch, Auckland, Hamilton, and Wellington; and fund an evaluation of the model. The Hubs provide education workshops and information to support ethnic parents and communities to engage with the education system. Each year this initiative is expected to support approximately 800 parents and 1,200 early childhood and school-aged children from over 200 schools. Reinforcing the strengthened connections between schools and ethnic parents and communities that the Hubs model has supported, this initiative will fund development of resources and administrative costs to support involvement of school staff in increasing cultural awareness and inclusion. The initiative contributes to supporting social cohesion in Aotearoa. |

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| Physical Restraint Rules and Guidelines – Supporting Schools to Meet Their Statutory Obligations | Reprioritisation | This regulatory initiative aims to build school capability to use effective whole of school and individualised approaches, strategies, and practices to minimise and where possible, eliminate the use of physical restraint in New Zealand registered schools and kura. This will be done through:<br>• publishing and socialising new Physical Restraint Rules and Guidelines;<br>• the creation and provision of comprehensive mandatory training, resources and supports for school staff;<br>• establishing an accountability and performance monitoring and quality system, including an automated end to end incident reporting and management mechanism that meets privacy and security requirements. |
| Boarding Allowance for Remote and At-Risk Students | Use of underspend | This fiscally neutral initiative will use forecast underspends to provide an 8% increase to the rates of boarding allowances from 2023. The allowances contribute to an inclusive education system by making boarding more affordable for those who need or would benefit from this schooling option. The allowance rates have not increased since they were established in 2014. In 2021, around 930 at-risk students received a multiple barriers allowance and around 745 geographically remote students received an access barrier boarding allowance. |

## Indicative Implementation information

23. Implementation planning for initiatives in the Wellbeing Package is underway. An initial view of delivery is attached to this paper, including who will deliver, delivery highlights and indicative timeframes. These are subject to change as implementation planning continues.

## Annexes

Annex 1: Who will deliver and deliverable highlights

Annex 2: High level implementation timeframes for Wellbeing Package initiatives *(attached separately)*

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## Annex 1: who will deliver and deliverable highlights

| | Who will deliver this service? | Deliverable highlights |
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| *Creating safe, inclusive schools – Targeted and Intensive supports for Māori & Pacific learners at risk of disengaging*<br>Te Mana Tikitiki | Te Mahau will approach the 6 Iwi from the original pilots regarding their involvement in the train the trainer model. We will work with interested iwi (and other) providers to co-design the delivery of this service to schools, including setting up funding arrangements and monitoring and evaluation systems. | Each 10-week programme will support up to 12 learners and programme delivery will begin in 2023. In total this will provide 96 Te Mana Tikitiki programmes across 48 schools to approximately 1056 students. Evaluation will begin in 2023. |
| Check & Connect, Te Hononga | Te Mahau will identify schools for the initiative, support for engagement with schools and providers, developing and delivering the train the trainer model, set up funding arrangements and monitoring and evaluation systems. Mentors may be employed by providers or directly by schools. | This programme will support Check & Connect, Te Hononga mentors to connect with between 300 – 400 students over four years. Evaluation will begin in 2024. |
| *Supporting schools to improve student attendance, engagement, and participation* | This is a cost pressure bid and funding lifts will be delivered through contract renewal processes with providers. | |
| *Price increase for Incredible years programmes* | This is a cost pressure bid and funding lifts will be delivered through contract processes with providers. | |
| *Strengthening New Zealand Sign Language in Education - cost pressure*<br>NZSL@School | NZSL@School additional funding will be provided to Ko Taku Reo to continue to deliver the programme. Each year the funding lift will be delivered through their annual Resourcing Notice. | This initiative provides a funding increase for New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) at School (NZSL@School). This funding increase will ensure ākonga who use NZSL can continue to access the curriculum and build NZSL fluency. This will address cost and demand pressures and an increase in key support staff FTE. |
| First Signs | Deaf Aotearoa hold the contract for First Signs, the current funding agreement will be varied so funding will be immediately available to meet cost increases. Expansion of service will be done through a variation to the current three-year agreement between the Ministry and Deaf Aotearoa from FY 23/24. | This initiative will expand the First Signs programme. This will enable 54 more families to access First Signs, a home-based service enabling families to strengthen their ability to communicate with their deaf child. Combined with an increase in population growth funding, a total of 100 additional families will be supported with the First Signs programme over 4 years. |
| NZSL PLD | This will be delivered via the Ministry's usual PLD channels. The Ministry will engage with NZSL stakeholders and education providers on the design and delivery of the programme to schools. | Raising the NZSL capability of this workforce will improve access to the NZ curriculum for Deaf or hard of hearing (DHH) ākonga. An opportunity to learn NZSL will be offered to 150 schools/kura that work with and teach DHH ākonga. |
| *Increased funding for Te Kura's at-risk students to better align funding rates* | This initiative provides a funding increase to Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu's (Te Kura's) programmes (similar to Alternative Education) that | The funding, for approximately 2,500 equivalent fulltime students, will scale up from an initial $1,050 to $3,500 per EFTS over four years. This will include additional teaching staff, pastoral care |

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| *with alternative education settings* | support at-risk ākonga to re-engage in school and improve their outcomes. Te Kura will use the funding to progressively implement its 'Big Picture' approach across this cohort over the next four years. | (kaiawhina and counsellors), and face-to-face learning opportunities for ākonga to meet their more complex educational needs. |
| *Creating safe, inclusive schools: Strengthening Positive Behaviour for Learning School-Wide (PB4L-SW)* | Initially the Ministry and key stakeholders will update the PB4L School-Wide framework and guidance to ensure it actively supports schools to build and sustain safe and inclusive environments, particularly for ākonga and whānau Māori, and delivers more equitable support. From mid-2023 14 additional School-Wide Practitioners (SWPs) will be employed in Te Mahau and all practitioners will be trained to support schools with effective implementation of the strengthened initiative. | Approximately 42% of primary schools/kura and 57% of secondary schools in Aotearoa will receive support from 14 FTE new trained SWPs and current SWPs to effectively implement a strengthened PB4L School-Wide framework. More practitioners and ongoing research and development will ensure that PB4L School-Wide can continue to be improved over time, so that the initiative stays effective and up to date. Evaluation will assess the impact of the initiative and help inform further development. |
| *Community Learning Hubs - Maintaining and expanding support for ethnic communities' engagement in education* | Initially this funding will maintain existing levels of support in Christchurch, Auckland, Hamilton, and Wellington. Over time relationships will be developed to enable coordination of multiple different local hubs within each region, tailored to meet local needs. This involves identification of support that would enable ethnic communities to fully participate in their children's education and wider society, and then coordination of access to this support for learners, parents, caregivers, families and whānau in ethnic communities. | **Programme delivery** is planned to continue from January 2023. Approximately 800 parents and 1,200 early childhood and school-aged children from over 200 schools will continue to receive locally tailored support to meaningfully engage in education. In addition to the hubs and active relationship development, resources will be developed for schools and multi-year evaluation of the Hubs will continue to collect evidence of the Hubs effectiveness at supporting ethnic communities and their return on investment. |
| *Cost Adjustment Alternative Education Provision* | The Ministry is currently engaging with the regions, National Bodies, iwi Māori on the AE redesign. We will also engage with the sector on bringing the AE provision closer to schools. These engagements will inform the referral process, service descriptions and performance measures of the provision.<br>The cost adjustment will be implemented through new contracts will be managed by Te Mahau. They are up for negotiation in August 2022 and will be ready to be implemented by January 2023. | Currently 1888 places in Alternative Education provision. Some regions have waiting lists whilst other regions have spaces not being used.<br><br>As a result of the changed referrals process Whānau will have a choice for their tamariki to be learning in alternative provision rather than a referral out. AE will not be a destination; it will be one of the choices for whānau |

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