

*Has this been sitting on my desk all this time??*



**Education Report:** Summary of feedback from the Alternative Education Hui

<b>To:</b>	Hon Tracey Martin, Associate Minister of Education		
<b>Date:</b>	14 March 2019	<b>Priority:</b>	Medium
<b>Security Level:</b>	In Confidence	<b>METIS No:</b>	1174533
<b>Drafter:</b>	Jessie Smart	<b>DDI:</b>	s 9(2)(a)
<b>Key contact and number:</b>	Ben O'Meara	<b>DDI:</b>	
<b>Messaging seen by Communications team:</b>	Yes	<b>Round robin:</b>	No

**Purpose of report**

This paper provides you with a summary of the feedback from the Alternative Education Hui (the Hui) on 22 February 2019.

The paper also provides you with a high-level overview of the work programme for this work s 9(2)(f)(iv) for the future of alternative education.

**Recommended Actions**

The Ministry of Education recommends you:

- a. **note** the summary of feedback received from attendees attached as Annex 1

**Noted**

- b. **note** the more detailed summary of feedback attached as Annex 2

**Noted**

- c. **agree** to release the summary of feedback to Hui attendees by 22 March 2019

**Agree / Disagree**

- d. **agree** to the proposed work programme s 9(2)(f)(iv) for the future of alternative education

**Agree / Disagree**

Proactive Release Recommendation

- e. **Agree** that this Education Report is proactively released with the relevant redactions relating to the work programme once the summary of feedback has been sent to participants.

Agree / Disagree



Dr Andrea Schöllmann  
Deputy Secretary  
Education System Policy

14/03/2019



Hon Tracey Martin  
Associate Minister of Education

26/6/19

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## Background

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1. At the Alternative Education Hui (the Hui) held on 22 February, you committed to provide the attendees with a summary of the feedback within four weeks.
2. We have now collated the feedback received and have developed an A3 pack (attached as Annex 1). The pack provides a summary of the feedback. This is intended to be sent out to the attendees by 22 March.

## Summary of feedback received

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### ***Feedback was broadly in support of your vision for the future of alternative education***

3. Attendees responded positively to the call for change, remarking that improvements to the system were long overdue.
4. The key themes in the feedback aligned with the key components of your vision. Attendees also suggested some additional values and design principles to be considered for the next phase of developing options for the future of alternative education. These are outlined in detail for you in Annex 2.
5. There was significant feedback from attendees that whatever alternative education becomes, it needs to be integrated into the current education system and needs to be a part of the Learning Support Delivery Model.

### ***Participants recognised the need for earlier support for primary aged children but found it difficult to speak to the needs of this age group***

6. Responses to questions in relation to primary age intervention were limited. Participants expressed surprise at the fact there was no alternative provision for younger children. Attendees noted that they found it difficult to speak about this age group and their needs due to not having worked in this space.
7. Participants agreed that the underlying principles and supports for this age group would be similar to what is needed for the older age group. It was noted that there would be some necessary differences in delivery to make the provision developmentally appropriate.
8. Co-located provision within the mainstream school setting for primary aged children was strongly supported. There were no written responses in support of off-site provision for younger children. Off-site provision is seen as isolating and could create a negative barrier for successful transitions back to school.

### ***Strengths-based, therapeutic and youth development models were emphasised***

9. Attendees highlighted the need for the pedagogy delivered within alternative education to be solutions focused and designed around the individual's interests, aspirations and strengths.
10. The Youth Development Model and Therapeutic Model were raised as current examples of good practice for ages 13 to 16, because they are focused on empowering the individual and connecting them with their community.

11. Play-based pedagogy was raised by attendees as critical for supporting the younger 5 to 12 year olds to stay engaged in education.

### A new name for Alternative Education

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12. You asked participants at the Hui to provide suggestions for a new name for alternative education.
13. There were very few comments in response to the call for a new name. Attendees commented that the name 'alternative education' was not necessarily negative and that we should be working on getting the principles, model and outcomes right, before focusing on a name change.
14. Attendees suggested that it would be good if the name for alternative education was child-centred and included the word rangatahi or a Te Reo word for hope or potential. Possible new names raised included:
- Te Araroa o Te Mātauranga | The Long Pathway of Education;
  - Te Ara Marama | The Path of Light;
  - Te Ao Rerekē | A Different World.

### Work programme

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15. A high-level overview of a proposed work programme for this work is outlined in the table below. s 9(2)(f)(iv)

Key milestone	Due
Overview of Hui feedback provided to Hui attendees	22 March
Youth engagement underway	Late March
Discussion document: Current state, gaps and best practice	18 April
Engagement with the Ministerial Youth Advisory Group	May
Education Report: Summary of youth feedback	Late May
Overview of youth feedback provided to participants	Early June
s 9(2)(f)(iv)	

## Next steps

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16. Once you have agreed to the release of Annex 1 we will send this out to attendees.
17. We will also move forward with the youth engagements. A draft email has been provided to your office for sending to the four providers you highlighted in the status meeting on 4 March. We are also arranging to meet with the young people at s 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]

## Annexes

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- Annex 1: Alternative Education Hui – Summary of feedback slide pack  
Annex 2: Alternative Education Hui – Summary of feedback detailed document

# Alternative Education Hui

What we heard

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# Overview



On 22 February 2019, Hon Tracey Martin, Associate Minister of Education presented her vision for the future of alternative education to the Alternative Education Hui, held in Wellington.

The 72 participants included a wide range of people including alternative education teachers, providers from alternative education and activity centres, staff working in learning support as well as staff from Oranga Tamariki, Police, and Whānau Ora.

The Minister spent the day with participants to hear their feedback in two areas:

What could be done to **improve current** alternative education provisions

*for young people aged 13 to 16*

What a **new** alternative education provision could look like

*for children aged 5 to 12*

The five questions asked in each area were:

- Q1 What are the markers of success for this age group?
- Q2 What are the core or specialist skills needed to best support this age group?
- Q3 What should alternative education for this age group look like in different settings: urban vs rural, off-site vs on-site?
- Q4 How can students and their parents, caregivers, family and whānau be best engaged?
- Q5 Who is best placed to support transitions to intermediate and secondary school, further education, training or employment, and what supports are needed to make these transitions seamless?

# Feedback was generally positive and aligned



Participants' views were broadly aligned with and generally positive regarding the Minister's vision.



- There was little difference in feedback regarding improving current provisions and what a new alternative education provision could look like.
- Key differences related to the physical setting of the alternative education model, and the type of pedagogy being delivered.
- If there was to be a new primary-aged provision, it must be co-located and integrated within mainstream schools to ensure children remain connected to their peers and school.
- Pedagogy for the primary provision needs to be play-based.

# Key themes emerging



A series of key themes emerged as vital for the future of alternative education provision:

## **Community-based** –

alternative education delivery needs to have a strong partnership with iwi and be strongly connected to the values of the community.

## **Responsive and delivered early** –

alternative education is currently being provided too late. Support needs to come earlier, before young people become disengaged from their education.

## **Flexibility in design and delivery**

– national core functions need to be agreed to with the ability for local adaptations to meet the specific needs of the children, young people and their whānau. There needs to be flexibility in who can provide the support, including the option for iwi-based responses.

## **Strengths-based pedagogy** –

the delivery of education within alternative education needs to be solutions-focused and designed around the individual's interests, aspirations and strengths.

## **Family and whānau-centred** –

whānau need to have a seat at the table and a voice in the planning of support provided to their child or young person.

## **Inclusive, holistic and longer-term** –

alternative education needs to have relationships with enrolling schools and have the ability to provide longer term support to children and young people when required.

## **Culturally appropriate** –

alternative education needs to be delivered in a way that supports the culture and world view of the children and young people accessing the support. Māori should be able to succeed as Māori.

## **Equity of access to supports** –

children and young people need to have access to all of the supports they need and these must be wrapped around the child or young person and extend beyond just education. A cross-agency response is required.

## **Linked into the system and cohesive** –

alternative education needs to be a part of Kāhui Ako, school clusters and the Learning Support Delivery Model to ensure increased consistency in supports, coordination in responses and cohesiveness. Being a part of the system supports an inclusive and holistic response.

## **Alignment between agencies** –

to ensure supports are linked between different government agencies and are continuously provided to the child and young person.

## **Staff in alternative education** –

need to hold quality relationships with the children and young people, have a wide skill set that is not limited to being a trained teacher, and need to have access to regular Professional Development.

## **Resourcing and funding** –

at the levels required to deliver the support needed. Buildings and resources need to be of good quality.



## Q1 What are the markers of success?



Need to be **flexible** and developed to reflect the individual need of the child or young person, their goals and aspirations.

Markers of success **cannot be fixed or a one-size-fits all** measure like they currently are.

Outcomes to be achieved for the young people in alternative education included:

- ✓ Feeling empowered
- ✓ Walking away with mana
- ✓ Being independent
- ✓ Resilient
- ✓ Respectful
- ✓ Generous
- ✓ Having had their needs met

Other markers of success:

- ✓ Improvements in children and young peoples' self-esteem, identity, wellbeing and sense of belonging
- ✓ Improvements in social skills, behavioural outcomes and being positively engaged with their community
- ✓ Children and young people are engaged in education, attending and enjoying school, or are attending alternative education regularly. Whānau are engaged in their young person's journey and outcomes
- ✓ Positive transitions back into education, into further training and/or employment

## Q2 What core or specialist skills are needed to best support learners?



Services and support need to be **responsive, continuous and flexible** with a variety of options offered, that are **needs-based** rather than time-based.

- ✓ Continuity of services and funding is required.
- ✓ Key support people required that move with the child or young person regardless of the setting they were placed in.
- ✓ Equity of access to a variety of support resources that are coordinated by someone who knows the young person and their family:
  - Resources included: RTLBs; specialist teachers; psychologists; social workers; counsellors; mental health supports; youth workers; and drug and alcohol support.
- ✓ Work together more effectively, connecting alternative education to the Kāhui Ako and the new Learning Support Delivery Model / better agency coordination of services and support.
- ✓ Provide access to basic needs such as transport, food and clothing. Healthcare and sanitary products were also mentioned.
- ✓ Training in trauma responses required.
- ✓ Early identification of behaviour and learning support needs and the necessary supports need to be in place earlier.
- ✓ Fair pay that reflects the work support staff are doing, linked to staff skill sets rather than qualifications.
- ✓ Workforce planning to ensure there are enough staff to meet the needs of young people.
- ✓ Continued access to Professional Learning and Development.
- ✓ Mainstream school needs to be engaged throughout the whole process to support positive transitions and whānau involvement.

## What should alternative education for this age group look like in different settings: urban vs rural, off-site vs on-site?



The needs of the young person can be quite different between urban and rural settings. These settings therefore require different alternative education models.

- ✓ In rural settings, the voice and values of the community, hapū and iwi are important in the design of any programme or service. They need to be embedded into the local context so children and young people are not alienated.
- ✓ Alternative education should be brought closer to mainstream models while recognising that the need for having a separate space is sometimes helpful.
- ✓ Flexibility is required in relation to age restrictions.
- ✓ Support is needed before school in order to assist transitions from ECE and primary school.
- ✓ A short intervention (i.e. 10 weeks) could have merit, but only if support continued once the child was back in school.
- ✓ All efforts should be made to keep children connected to school and there was no support for off-site provision for the primary age group.
  - Co-located spaces would be best and alternative education must be well integrated into the 'mainstream', while focussing on the needs of individual children.
- ✓ Need to consider the impacts of geographical isolation and population density on resourcing. Rural settings experience barriers to access of supports, services and resources.



Q4

## How can students and their parents, caregivers, family and whānau be best engaged?



Whānau need to be involved from the beginning, in a way that best suits them. They need to be reassured their voice will be heard, and that their opinion on what's best for their young person is central to all decision making.

- ✓ Ensure we are explicitly asking the whānau what they want to do for their child or young person.
- ✓ Important for engagement to take place outside of an institutional setting.

Q5

## Who is best placed to support transitions to intermediate and secondary school, further education, training or employment, and what supports are needed to make these transitions seamless?



The person needs to have strong relationships with the child or young person, although very few responses were received to this question.

- ✓ The child's mainstream school needs to be in regular contact and needs to keep checking in on the progress being made. This is to reduce the feeling of being alienated from their school and will make it easier for them to transition back.
- ✓ Potential opportunity for a transition coordinator role which is resourced and supported.
- ✓ Parents are best placed to support transitions, however, they need more support from schools.
- ✓ Earlier intervention required to identify need and support transitions.

We **shape** an **education** system that delivers  
**equitable** and **excellent outcomes**

He mea **tārai** e mātou te **mātauranga**  
kia **rangatira** ai, kia **mana taurite** ai ōna **huanga**



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# Alternative Education Hui – Analysis of feedback

March 2019

Proactively Released

## Introduction

This document summarises the feedback received from participants during the Alternative Education Hui held on 22 February 2019. There were 72 participants at the Hui. Participants included alternative education teachers, providers from alternative education and activity centres, staff working in learning support, and staff from Oranga Tamariki, Police and Whānau Ora.

Hon Tracey Martin, Associate Minister of Education presented her vision for the future of alternative education to the group and then spent the day with participants to listen to their feedback. The discussions on the day focused on a set of five questions. These questions were designed to investigate what needs to be done to improve current alternative education provision for young people aged 13 to 16, and what new alternative education provision could look like for children aged 5 to 12. The questions asked included:

- What are the markers of success for this age group?
- What are the core or specialist skills needed to best support this age group?
- What should alternative education for this age group look like in different settings: urban vs rural, off-site vs on-site?
- How can students and their parents, caregivers, family and whānau be best engaged?
- Who is best placed to support transitions to intermediate and secondary school, further education, training or employment, and what supports are needed to make these transitions seamless?

Overall, feedback on the Minister's vision was positive and broadly aligned with the views of participants. Several key themes emerged from the feedback relating to the Minister's vision. These themes are outlined in the next section of this document.

Participants noted that there are some additional causes of disengagement from education for young people, including:

- racism;
- transience;
- lack of positive relationships at school;
- intergenerational dysfunction; and
- that the curriculum delivered in schools does not reflect the identity of Māori young people.

The responses received from participants to the five questions were very similar for the two age groups. The main differences between the two age groups related to the physical setting of the alternative education model, and the type of pedagogy underpinning delivery. Participants highlighted that if there was to be a new primary-aged provision, this should be co-located and integrated within a mainstream school to ensure children remain connected to their peers. Responses also signalled that pedagogy for the primary provision needs to be play-based. The last section of this document provides details on the responses to the five questions. This has not been split by the two age groups since the answers received were very similar for both settings.

## Key themes

Using the feedback received from participants on the day, we have developed some key themes. These key themes are what participants see as vital for the future of alternative education provision and are outlined below:

- *Family and whānau centred* – need to have a seat at the table and a voice in the planning of support provided to their child or young person.
- *Community based* – alternative education delivery needs to have a strong partnership with iwi and be strongly connected to the values of the community.
- *Inclusive, holistic and longer-term* – alternative education providers need to have relationships with enrolling schools and have the ability to provide longer-term support to children and young people when required.
- *Responsive and delivered early* – alternative education is currently being provided too late. Support needs to come earlier, before young people become disengaged from their education.
- *Equity of access to supports* – children and young people need to have access to all of the supports they need. These supports must be wrapped around the child or young person and extend across agencies beyond education.
- *Staff in alternative education* – need to hold quality relationships with the children and young people, have a wide skill set that is not limited to being a trained teacher, and need to have access to regular professional development.
- *Flexibility in design and delivery* – national core functions need to be agreed to with the ability for local adaptations to meet the specific needs of the children, young people and their whānau. There needs to be flexibility in who can provide the support, including the option for iwi-based responses.
- *Resourcing and funding* – at the levels required to deliver the support needed. Buildings and resources need to be of good quality.
- *Culturally appropriate* – alternative education needs to be delivered in a way that supports the culture and world view of the children and young people accessing the support. Māori should be able to succeed as Māori.
- *Linked into the system and cohesive* – alternative education needs to be a part of Kāhui Ako, school clusters and the Learning Support Delivery Model to ensure increased consistency in supports, coordination in responses and cohesiveness. Being a part of the system supports an inclusive and holistic response.
- *Strengths-based pedagogy* – the delivery of education within alternative education settings need to be solutions-focused and designed around the individual's interests, aspirations and strengths.
- *Alignment between agencies* – to ensure supports are linked between different government agencies and is continuously provided to the child and young person.

## Question 1: What are the markers of success?

Overall, feedback for this question centred on the need for the markers of success to be flexible and developed to accommodate the individual needs of children or young people, their goals and aspirations. They cannot be fixed or a one-size-fits all measure as they are currently.

The feedback received had a significant focus on the improvements made in children and young peoples' self-esteem, identity, wellbeing and sense of belonging. A number of comments focus on the improvements in confidence, the development of a positive sense of self, as well as self-management and self-reflection skills. Children and young people who are successful will be willing to contribute, exhibit confidence and be happy.

There was also a strong focus of success being related to improvements in social skills, behavioural outcomes and being positively engaged in their community. The other success factors raised were that children and young people are engaged in education, attending and enjoying school, or are attending alternative education regularly. Participants noted that it was important that whānau are engaged in their young person's journey and outcomes.

Positive transitions back into education, into further training and/or employment were also considered as successes for young people. Participants highlighted the need for longer-term measurement of successful transitions. For example, still being engaged in education, training or employment six months after they have left alternative education.

A number of participants also highlighted the outcomes they expect to be achieved for the young people in alternative education. These included feeling empowered; walking away with mana; being independent; resilient; respectful; generous; and having had their needs met.

There was one comment relating to the need to highlight academic success. There was also a small focus on the structure of reporting on outcomes to the Ministry. One participant noted that reporting could be done as stories rather than numbers. Participants noted that the timing of reporting also needs to be considered. For example, should providers be providing daily reporting, reporting at the end of the young person's placement, or over a period of time post-transition?

## Question 2: What do we need to best support this age group?

Feedback focused on the need for flexible, continuous and responsive services and support. Alternative settings need to provide options, with interventions being needs-based rather than time-based. Continuity was mentioned in relation to services and funding, and also in relation to a key support person that would move with the child or young person regardless of the setting they were in.

The types of services and supports and the equity of access to these were commented on the most. Services that were specifically identified included: RTLBs; specialist teachers; psychologists; social workers; counsellors; mental health supports; youth workers; and drug and alcohol support. It was noted that access to these services need to be streamlined to breakdown silos between agencies, ongoing no matter what education setting the child or young person is in, and be consistently delivered by the same professionals to maintain meaningful relationships. The delivery of these services need to be coordinated by someone who knows the child or young person and their family and whānau.

A key theme was the need to work together more effectively. Connecting alternative education to the Kāhui Ako and the new Learning Support Delivery Model was mentioned. Feedback from attendees also highlighted the need for mainstream schools to be engaged throughout the whole process to support positive transitions and whānau involvement. There were a number of comments emphasising the need for better agency coordination of services and support.

Participants said that improvements in the way student data is collected and shared is needed. At the moment, when a student moves to a new setting, staff often have very little information about the student's history. This was seen as a barrier to student progress that makes it difficult for staff to get the right supports in place for students.

Transport was highlighted as an important component of any intervention. It was noted that funding for transport is difficult to find. Meeting basic needs, such as food and clothing, as well as healthcare and sanitary products were also mentioned.

Attendees said that staff in alternative education need training in trauma responses. Attendees were supportive of the early identification of behaviour and learning support needs in order to put the necessary supports in place earlier. Participants emphasised importance of support during transitions between different education settings. The ability to help children and develop social skills were also mentioned.

Participants highlighted the need to pay support staff fairly to reflect the work they are doing. Funding should not be linked to qualifications but the staff skill sets. There is a need for workforce planning to ensure there are enough people on the ground to meet the needs of young people. Feedback also highlighted the need for continued access to Professional Learning and Development (PLD).

### Question 3: What should the model look like in different settings?

There was significant feedback about the current barriers for rural education providers to effectively access supports and services, PLD, and resources compared to their urban counterparts. Comments focused on the impacts of geographical isolation and population density on resourcing. For example, when considering the Waitakere model, attendees pointed out that this case study clearly demonstrated the positive impact of access to pooled resources that are just not there in many regional settings. Working within alternative education in rural areas was also noted as being very isolating and hard to share best practice with others.

Participants also highlighted the need for different urban and rural models as the needs of the children and young person can be quite different. Feedback suggested that in rural settings, the voice and values of the community, hapū and iwi are important in the design of any programme or service. The programme or service needs to be embedded into the local context so children and young people are not alienated.

Attendees highlighted the need for alternative education to be brought closer to mainstream models while recognising that having a separate space at school is sometimes helpful. Doing so could help to reduce the current marginalising and isolation being felt within alternative education in all settings. Flexibility was also mentioned in relation to age restrictions. Some attendees felt that support was needed before children started school in order to assist transitions from early childhood education to primary school.

The Napier Managed Moves presentation prompted some discussion around the length of intervention. Attendees thought that a short intervention (i.e. 10 weeks) had merit, but only if support continued once the child was back in school.

There were no written responses in support of off-site provision for the primary age group, with attendees commenting that all efforts should be made to keep children connected to school. Attendees commented that co-located spaces would be best and that while focus on the needs of individual children must underpin any model, alternative education must be well integrated into the 'mainstream'.

#### **Question 4: How can students and their parents, caregivers, family and whānau be best engaged?**

The comments received on this question focused on the type of relationships needed with whānau and the purpose of these. In particular, participants noted whānau need to be involved from the beginning, in a way that best suits them. Whānau need to be reassured their voice will be heard, and that their opinion on what's best for their child or young person is central to all decision making. We need to make sure we are explicitly asking whānau what they want to do for their child or young person.

The feedback also noted that the place where the engagement takes place is important. This is because a lot of whānau have negative past experiences with the school system so it is important engagement occurs outside of an institutional setting.

#### **Question 5: Who is best placed to support transitions to intermediate and secondary school, and what supports are needed to make these transitions seamless?**

There were very few responses to this question. Responses noted that the person needs to have strong relationships with the child or young person. It was also noted that someone from the child's mainstream school needs to be in regular contact and needs to keep checking in on the progress the child is making to reduce the feeling of being alienated from their school. Doing so will make it easier for the child to transition back to school.

One piece of feedback also signalled the need for a transition coordinator role which is resourced and supported. In another comment, it was asserted that parents are best placed to support transitions, but they need more support from schools. Earlier identification of need was also mentioned in relation to this question.