



Education Report: Consideration of merger of Kelston and van Asch Deaf Education Centres

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
Date:	13 February 2019	Priority:	Medium
Security Level:	In Confidence	METIS No:	1173058
Drafter:	Mark Atkin	DDI:	s 9(2)(a)
Key contact and number:	Philippa Pidd	DDI:	
Messaging seen by Communications team:	No	Round robin:	No

Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is for you to:

consider the results of consultation over the proposed merger of the Kelston and van Asch Deaf Education Centres;

agree to the proposed merger of the Kelston Deaf Education Centre and the van Asch Deaf Education Centre to form one national school and service provider for students and children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing;

agree that van Asch Deaf Education Centre will be the continuing school, operating as a dual site school;

agree that the merger date will be 20 July 2020;

sign the letters to the Combined Board of Trustees, and local MPs, advising them of your decision;

sign the attached notice for the *New Zealand Gazette*; and

agree to release the attached media statement including the link to it in New Zealand Sign Language.

Summary

- 1 The Combined Board of Trustees for Kelston Deaf Education Centre (503) and van Asch Deaf Education Centre (519) (the Combined Board) wrote to you on 21 September 2018 requesting that the two schools merge to become one national school and service for children and students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. On 15 October 2018 we updated you on the Ministry's consultation plans, noting that there were no schools whose rolls might be affected by the merger, but that we would consult widely due to the national coverage of the two schools [METIS 1153724 refers].

- 2 The Combined Board has completed its consultation under section 156A of the Act. This included 40 face-to-face meetings with parents and staff in 20 locations throughout New Zealand, and a survey for parents and staff should they prefer that medium for response. We have also completed extensive consultation with stakeholders. All consultation was conducted over November and December 2018. The consultation reports are attached as Annexes 4 and 6.
- 3 The consultation showed that 77 percent of respondents support the proposed merger. The main concern expressed by those undecided or not supporting the merger was that this merger might not result in material changes to the quality of delivery, although that is its purpose. They also considered they needed more detail about the proposed service provision structure and location(s) to make an informed decision. Overall the deaf community is somewhat dissatisfied with the service from the schools to date, and is of the opinion that this has disadvantaged students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing.
- 4 This proposed merger is consistent with a suite of seven strategic goals developed following the Combined Board's engagement with stakeholders in 2017. It is also consistent with recommendations in the Limited Statutory Manager's reports of September 2017 and May 2018.
- 5 We, and the Combined Board, consider that should the merger be approved, the proposed changes in management structure for the merged school would provide the opportunity to make the required service provision changes. These changes can only take place under a single school structure. If you approve the merger, the Combined Board and new principal will develop the new staffing structure and service delivery model to take effect from the date of the implementation of the merger.
- 6 Under section 156A of the Education Act 1989 (the Act) you may, by notice in the *New Zealand Gazette*, merge one or more state schools with another state school. The latter is known as the continuing school. In this unusual merger, the continuing school would be in name only, as education would continue on both sites.
- 7 It is proposed that van Asch Deaf Education Centre be the "continuing school" and that it operate as a dual site school, as otherwise the "merging school" would be an "off-site location".
- 8 Education Development Initiative (EDI) funding of \$234,500 would be generated regardless of which school is nominated as the continuing school. This funding is based on the 1 July 2018 roll of van Asch (29 students) as per the policy. EDI funding is used for projects to help students transition and to raise student achievement.
- 9 It should also be noted that we are developing a new funding model to address the unique features of the merged schools' delivery. This will include an assessment of its operational funding and staffing, and will be implemented from the date of merger.

Recommended actions

The Ministry of Education recommends you:

- a. **note** that the Combined Board of Trustees for Kelston and van Asch Deaf Education Centres (the Combined Board) seeks to merge the two schools;

Noted

- b. **note** that the required consultation, and wider consultation with the deaf community, has been completed, with strong support for the merger;

Noted

- c. **agree** to merge Kelston Deaf Education Centre and van Asch Deaf Education Centre under section 156A of the Education Act 1989, with van Asch Deaf Education Centre being the continuing school, operating as a dual site school;

Agree / Disagree

- d. **sign** the attached letters to the Combined Board of Trustees and Members of Parliament advising them of your decision, and return the letter for the Combined Board chairperson to the Ministry to be hand delivered by Ministry officials;

- e. **sign** the attached notice for the *New Zealand Gazette*;

- f. **agree** to release the attached media statement including the link to it in New Zealand Sign Language; and

Agree/ Disagree

- g. **agree** that this Education Report be proactively released as per your expectations. Any information that might need to be withheld will be done so in line with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982.

Release / Not release


Katrina Casey
Deputy Secretary
Sector Enablement and Support

13.12.2019


Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

— / —

Background

1. The Kelston Deaf Education Centre (KDEC) provides services across the upper North Island, including metropolitan Auckland whilst van Asch Deaf Education Centre (van Asch) covers the lower North Island and South Island.
2. These services differ considerably from ordinary schools. The combined schools have a regional roll of 2475 students, 722 of whom receive a direct service and 1753 of whom receive an indirect service. Additionally, 128 students are enrolled in satellite units operated by the schools. The centres also provide pre-school education, and transition services for 18 – 21 year olds. There are two residences for live-in students (one in Auckland and one in Christchurch). The Combined Board oversees a staff of 365 and an annual budget of \$40 million.
3. On 25 September 2012, the then Minister of Education, Hon Hekia Parata, approved formation of a combined board of trustees for KDEC and van Asch.
4. The Combined Board of Trustees is currently supported by two Limited Statutory Managers (LSMs). The portfolios that are currently managed by the LSMs are: Policy, Employment, Finance and Property. The Board retains powers for Health and Safety, and Curriculum.
5. The Combined Board wrote to you on 21 September 2018 requesting that the two schools merge and become one school/service provider. This change aims to better support children and students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing across New Zealand.
6. The Combined Board's rationale for this request was that it considered both schools had been in a state of limbo for many years, and that making progress on a consistent and equitable service across New Zealand is unlikely to be achieved under two separate school management structures.
7. The Combined Board has assessed the work required to prepare for the proposed merger, and considers the beginning of Term 3, 2020 (20July) to be a suitable date.

Rationale for merger

Combined Board

8. There were six key drivers behind the move in 2012 to bring the two schools under the governance of a combined board:
 - a) To increase opportunities for communication, and sharing knowledge and skills between the two centres.
 - b) To allow for flexible use of resourcing to meet demographic changes in the deaf and hearing-impaired student population.
 - c) To maximise the Review of Special Education Initiative for sensory schools to provide more flexible services for ORS-verified students.
 - d) To set a national approach to service provision.
 - e) To ensure perspectives of the key stakeholders are represented well.
 - f) To assure governance arrangements best suit the service provider centres' roles.

9. The Combined Board considers that there has not been significant progress in realising these objectives. The two schools have retained separate cultures, staffing structures, and ways of working. This has resulted in a continued inequity of resources and educational outcomes for deaf and hard-of-hearing students.
10. The (policy and employment) LSM's scoping report of September 2017 confirms the continued inability of the Board to make progress against these goals, for a range of reasons and despite best intentions.
11. The LSM's 2017 report also notes :

“Currently, the combined Board governs the two schools as separate entities. This has advantages, as it allows a comparison between the two facilities, but it also brings challenges, as the Board is not governing a nation-wide service model. Although the Board is working hard to align the reporting structures between the schools, this alignment (other than Student Achievement Function (SAF)) is in relation to reporting, as opposed to promoting consistent New Zealand-wide service delivery.”

Development of strategic goals

12. Following the LSM's report and engagement with the school community, the Combined Board ratified seven strategic goals in December 2017. These were as follows:
 - a) Develop a holistic progressive service for deaf and hard of hearing learners that maximises educational, social and emotional outcomes and is accessible, equitable and efficient in its delivery.
 - b) Develop one new national organisation structure that enables excellent educational outcomes for deaf and hard of hearing learners New Zealand wide.
 - c) Inform decisions, priorities, and resourcing by utilising data, evidence-based best practice and research that underpin child-centred values of Excel, Choose, Grow, and Belong.
 - d) Build and maintain strong, collaborative relationships with the deaf community, including external stakeholders.
 - e) Use and manage financial resources to provide the maximum educational benefit for our learners within budget and contractual frameworks.
 - f) To lift student achievement through effective pedagogy for all of our deaf and hard of hearing students.
 - g) To align property and infrastructure to support a nationwide service delivery model.
13. In pursuit of the second goal – developing a single national organisational structure – the Combined Board considers that, while some progress has been made, duplication of resources is ineffective. The Combined Board therefore considers it needs to address the organisational structure of the two schools if it is to make tangible progress against its seven goals.

14. The May 2018 LSM report notes:

“The greatest risk relates to the two Centres operating without a single CEO, and without a nationwide organisational structure. Without this, communication is complex, energy is expended where it does not need to be, and the children are not receiving a consistent service that is accessible, equitable, and excellent in all areas of New Zealand.”

Resourcing

15. Under the current resourcing model, merging the two schools would result in a reduction in teaching staff entitlement by 3.4 FTTE, and a reduction of 15 management units, compared with the resourcing for the current two schools.
16. Only a proportion of students assisted by the schools are enrolled at either KDEC or van Asch. The majority of students receive assistance while enrolled at and attending ordinary state schools.
17. Additional funding provided in Budget 2018 has assisted the schools financially.
18. Alongside the merger proposal the Ministry will also re-examine the funding basis for the schools' delivery
19. Whenever there is one fewer school in the network the change generates Education Development Initiative (EDI) funding. For this merger the EDI funding is based on the July 2018 roll of the smaller school (van Asch, 29 students) and amounts to \$234,500, which would go to the combined school in this instance. This is a one-off funding provision and can be used for projects that support students and raise achievement.

Consultation

Legislative requirements

20. Under section 156A of the Act the Minister of Education may merge state schools if satisfied that:
- (a) each board of a school concerned has made reasonable efforts to consult the parents of students (other than adult students) enrolled full-time at the school about the proposed merger; and
 - (b) the consultation that has taken place has been adequate in all the circumstances; and
 - (c) the creation of a single school by the proposed merger is appropriate in the circumstances.
21. Under section 157 of the Act you must first consult with boards of all State schools whose rolls might, in your opinion, be affected if the merger takes place.
22. The two schools are unique in New Zealand, and no change in the scope of delivery is proposed. There are no schools whose rolls might be affected by the proposed merger.

23. The Combined Board conducted extensive consultation with students, parents, staff and stakeholders prior to the formulation of the seven strategic goals in December 2017 (which included merging the two schools). NZEI and the PSA were also briefed at this time.
24. The Combined Board and the Ministry have conducted extensive consultation with parents and the wider Deaf sector regarding the proposed merger, fulfilling and exceeding minimum statutory requirements.
25. All consultation was conducted over November and December 2018.

Consultation and results

26. The Combined Board has completed consultation under section 156A of the Act. This included 40 face-to-face meetings in 20 locations throughout New Zealand with parents and staff, and a survey for parents and staff should they prefer that medium for response. The results are summarised below. (See Annex 4 for the Board's report on this consultation).

Deaf Education Centres' staff feedback

27. 92 percent of staff at face-to-face meetings, and 74 percent of surveyed staff, supported the proposal, seeing opportunities for improvements in efficiencies as well as in service delivery and equity. They identified the need for a principal with business experience and strong people skills to lead a single organisation. They also saw opportunity for wider collaboration and innovation, incorporation of best practice, and for ensuring consistency of delivery across the country.
28. Those not supporting the proposal were concerned about how the merged school would value the separate cultures from each centre, and the possibility of centralisation of services leading to increased silos, with communication becoming more difficult. They were also concerned about staff morale and job security, and the possibility that the number of support staff might decrease, causing an increase in staff workloads.
29. A key area of interest was how the new organisation would look – where would it be based, would it have a new name/ school number, would it have a new website?

Parent feedback

30. 88 percent of parents at face-to-face meetings and 68 percent of parent survey responses supported the proposal, with around 75 percent of surveyed parents expecting improvements in equity and excellence.
31. Parents wanted more information and improved communication on the reality of what the merger would look like and how this would benefit their children. They especially wanted to know how the merger would lift student achievement and life skills, and how it would impact the lives of the students and their families. They were also concerned about the future of current facilities and wanted to know about the future staffing structure. The Combined Board responded that all of these aspects of the implementation of the merger would be managed by the Board and staff, and that it would be done sensitively and collaboratively.

32. Parents saw the merger as an opportunity to reduce the fragmentation between the two centres and within the organisation. They commented that if the merger were to occur, the organisation must be aware of individual needs of the children and cater for all, as opposed to a one size fits all approach. Parents hoped that a merger would provide more resources for students within the classrooms.
33. Parents asked if the change would bring additional funding, as they find it difficult to get the needed level of support for their children currently.

Ministry consultation

34. The Ministry has also completed extensive consultation with stakeholders. We advertised for submissions in the *Education Gazette* and the *School Bulletin*. Both provided a link to the information in New Zealand Sign Language. We directly emailed principals of special schools, state schools where the two deaf schools have satellite classes, and national and regional deaf sector bodies. Ministry staff attended three of the Combined Board's public meetings, where these were attached to consultation with a wider stakeholder group than parents and staff. We also held a joint meeting (with the Combined Board) in Auckland with the deaf community outside of the Combined Board's meetings. (See Annex 5 for a list of those consulted with directly by the Ministry, and Annex 6 for a report on the face-to-face consultation sessions).

Face-to-face sessions

35. In Wellington, Christchurch, and Auckland an average of 72 percent of respondents agreed with the proposal to merge the schools. In Dunedin 27 percent agreed with the proposal. A key concern for Dunedin attendees was a lack of detailed information about the implementation of the proposed change, resulting in a reluctance to voice support for it.
36. One of the key themes of the discussion was the need to connect the proposed merger with changes to service delivery, in order to bring about positive results. It was noted that this would be managed through the implementation process, so we are not able to give details of what it would look like at this time.
37. Attendees in Christchurch were concerned that the future organisation might become dominated by Auckland staff, with resultant loss of focus on Christchurch.
38. Attendees in Auckland were the most positive about the proposal. They recognised the merger process would need to safeguard the history and heritage of deaf education in New Zealand, and the good work being done in both centres.

Responses to the Education Gazette notice

39. Four responses were received, all from individuals. The message of three was that, while they supported the merger, the real issue was the standard of deaf education in New Zealand, which they saw as seriously inadequate. The fourth focussed solely on the service model for deaf education, including the need for national consistency, and did not specifically address the merger.

Staffing

40. In a merger the principal's role is advertised nationally. Other positions are advertised internally and staff with suitable qualifications and experience can apply. Positions that are not filled by internal candidates are then advertised nationally.

41. Using the standard staffing model the merger would result in a reduction of 3.4 FTTE and 15 management units.
42. However, we are reviewing the funding model for the schools' provision due to the complex mixture of services and the national profile of delivery. We will continue to work on this with the Combined Board. We do not consider a significant loss in staffing or operational funding to be likely should the proposed merger be approved.

Risks

43. The primary concern expressed during consultation was that the merger might not actually achieve desired improvements, and that fundamental structural and delivery change would be required to improve delivery to the deaf sector. This was most notably voiced in the Ministry's Dunedin face-to-face meeting. The implementation of the merger will be managed by the Combined Board. We will continue to work with the Combined Board through this process so that the issues raised are addressed and that further consultation with stakeholders about the service provision is undertaken, to mitigate the risk of disengagement of the deaf community.
44. We also note that the merger proposal arose from wide consultation in 2017. Specific consultation on the proposal has confirmed strong support.

Financial Implications

45. As noted above, because of the scope of services provided by the schools, the Combined Board is not funded directly on enrolments. We are reviewing the funding model for the schools' delivery and therefore do not have details about how the merger will impact on the merged school's operational funding. We do not consider that there will likely be a significant loss in staffing or operational funding should the proposed merger be approved.
46. EDI funding of \$234,500 would be generated.

Property

47. Once the schools are merged they will be one school operating from two separate sites. We consider it appropriate to designate the continuing school as a "dual site school", as otherwise the second site would be an off-site location to the continuing school under section 71A of the Act.
48. There is already precedent for this. Tai Wananga (632) was established as a dual site school with campuses in Hamilton and Palmerston North. Kingslea School (518) is a multi-site school with campuses around New Zealand catering for children in the care of Oranga Tamariki.

Transport implications

49. As both sites will continue to operate at current roll levels, there are no school transport implications.

Conclusion

50. Overall we consider this a sound and sensible approach to addressing concerns held by the Combined Board, and expressed in the LSM scoping reports. We see it as building on the supports we have provided over the last 12 to 15 months, enabling the strengths from each school to be applied across the merged schools, including more consistent access to support. It would produce some back office efficiencies, and provide greater consistency in areas such as student achievement data and financial management and reporting.
51. The move to a national approach to service provision was one of the drivers behind the formation of the Combined Board in 2012, as well as being one of the seven strategic goals adopted by the Combined Board in 2017. We see the proposed merger as the next step in realising that outcome.
52. Although this is a necessary step to improving education services for the deaf and hard-of-hearing, it will not in itself achieve that goal. Further work will be required under the merged structure to do so.

Proactive Release

53. The Ministry proactively releases Education Reports once considered and approved by the Minister. As this is the final decision on the proposed merger we consider it appropriate to now proactively release this report and the previous report confirming initiation of consultation (METIS 1153724). Any information that might need to be withheld will be done so in line with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982.

Annexes

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| Annex 1: | Letters to the Combined Board and MPs |
| Annex 2: | Notice for the <i>New Zealand Gazette</i> |
| Annex 3: | Report on consultation by the Combined Board |
| Annex 4: | List of stakeholders directly consulted by the Ministry |
| Annex 5: | Report on four face-to-face meetings held by the Ministry (Appendix III of the Combined Board's report) |
| Annex 6: | Draft media release |

Annex 1: Letters to the Combined Board and MPs

Proactively Released

Hon Chris Hipkins

MP for Rimutaka

Minister of Education

Minister of State Services

Leader of the House

Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services



Rachel Douglas
Chairperson
Kelston and van Asch Deaf Education Centres Combined Board of Trustees
E: boardchair@deafeducation.nz

Dear Rachel

Thank you for the application to merge Kelston Deaf Education Centre and van Asch Deaf Education Centre.

After considering feedback from consultation conducted by the Combined Board and the Ministry of Education, I am pleased to inform you that I have approved the merger. This will take effect from 20 July 2020 (Term 3, 2020), and van Asch Deaf Education Centre will be the continuing school. I acknowledge that this is an important milestone in furthering the Combined Board's strategic goals for improving Deaf education in New Zealand.

I would like to thank you for the work of your Board during this time, and the work that has been undertaken to ensure that consultation with your school community was thorough and representative of the needs of your students and their families.

As you are already a Combined Board you will govern the continuing school and oversee the incorporation of the merging school.

In due course your Board might wish to apply to formally change the name of the merged school. This can be managed by the Ministry, and you should contact Grant Malins in the Auckland Office to progress it.

The Ministry will continue to work with your Board to implement this merger and to progress other matters relating to the strategic goals you have set for enhancing Deaf education in New Zealand.

Yours sincerely

Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

Hon Chris Hipkins

MP for Rimutaka

Minister of Education

Minister of State Services

Leader of the House

Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services



Hon Carmel Sepuloni
Member of Parliament for Kelston
PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Dear Carmel

On 21 September 2018 the Combined Board of Trustees for Kelston and van Asch Deaf Education Centres (the Combined Board) wrote to me requesting that the two schools merge to become one national school and service provider for children and students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. This is part of seven strategic goals to improve Deaf education developed following extensive consultation in 2017.

The Combined Board and the Ministry of Education have consulted with students, parents, and other stakeholders in the Deaf community. There has been strong support for the merger.

After considering all the information provided to me I have agreed to the merger, which will take effect from Term 3, 2020. Both schools will continue to provide education and services from their respective centres, but as one school under one management structure.

I am satisfied that this is an important next step in providing consistent access to quality Deaf education across New Zealand.

For your information, I have attached a copy of my letter to the Combined Board.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'CH', written over a large, faint watermark that reads 'Private and Confidential'.

Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

Enc

Hon Chris Hipkins

MP for Rimutaka

Minister of Education

Minister of State Services

Leader of the House

Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services



Hon Peeni Henare
Member of Parliament for Tāmaki Makaurau
PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Dear Peeni

On 21 September 2018 the Combined Board of Trustees for Kelston and van Asch Deaf Education Centres (the Combined Board) wrote to me requesting that the two schools merge to become one national school and service provider for children and students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. This is part of seven strategic goals to improve Deaf education developed following extensive consultation in 2017.

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For your information, I have attached a copy of my letter to the Combined Board.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris Hipkins'.

Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

Enc

Hon Chris Hipkins

MP for Rimutaka

Minister of Education

Minister of State Services

Leader of the House

Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services



Hon Ruth Dyson
Member of Parliament for Port Hills
PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Dear Ruth

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Yours sincerely

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Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

Enc

Hon Chris Hipkins



MP for Rimutaka

Minister of Education

Minister of State Services

Leader of the House

Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services

Rino Tirikatene
Member of Parliament for Te Tai Tonga
PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Dear Rino

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For your information, I have attached a copy of my letter to the Combined Board.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'CH', is placed over the typed name and title.

Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

Enc

Proactively Released



NEW ZEALAND GAZETTE NOTICE

Education Act 1989

Kelston Deaf Education Centre (503) and van Asch Deaf Education Centre (519) merger notice

Pursuant to section 156A of the Education Act 1989 I hereby declare that the Kelston Deaf Education Centre (503) and the van Asch Deaf Education Centre (519) will merge on 20 July 2020.

The continuing school will be a composite Special School providing education at Years 1 to 15.

Van Asch Deaf Education Centre will be the continuing school and the Kelston Deaf Education Centre and van Asch Deaf Education Centre Combined Board of Trustees will be the board of the continuing school during the interim period, which shall begin on the day after this notice is published in the *New Zealand Gazette*.

Dated at Wellington this 26th day of March 2019

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'CH', representing Hon Chris Hipkins.

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

Proactively Released

**Proposed Merger Consultation Report
Parents, Staff and Stakeholders**

Kelston and van Asch Deaf Education Centres

December 2018

**Terri Johnstone
Limited Statutory Manager**

**Michael Rondell
Limited Statutory Manager**

**Rachel Douglas
Board Chair**

The Change Process

- Change management is required to be adequately resourced and supported by the MOE in relation to the merger process.
- Additional change management is required from the MOE to resource and support the development of a new service model, and throughout the implementation phase.
- Review the school status (Primary/Secondary area and health?).
- The creation of one new school number and school name.

Service Delivery Model

- True choice is maintained in responding to learners' needs.
- NZSL together with support for oralism, meets the needs of the child.
- Service design facilitates connections between students in order to develop their language, social skills and identity.
- Two hostels remain to provide appropriate school choice and cultural fit.
- No reduction in service to students.

Staffing

- No changes from current MOE teacher staffing entitlement re number of staffing and specialist staff.
- No reduction of management units.
- Workforce is well supported in terms of professional development in order to reach increased expectations for educational outcomes.
- The Executive Principal role is re-scoped to ensure the salary matches the position, responsibilities and nation-wide focus.
- The organisational structure accommodates two Principal positions (one over regional students and one over ten satellite units).

Finance

- No reduction in the various funding streams currently being received. Also no changes to any terms and conditions around the use of the funding without the Board's agreement.
- MOE to provide funding to cover one-off costs associated with the merger including the change and implementation phases together with severance costs if applicable. In addition, the MOE supports the service design model.
- Flexibility to allocate funding where the needs actually are and to adapt services to respond to needs.

Property

- Coordination and consultation with the Board on all property matters.
- No reduction in property funding or current entitlement without consultation and agreement with the Board.
- van Asch CSR funding commitment is preserved along with any other property commitments including regional facilities.
- A national approach is taken for all property matters including MOE providing a national contact and coordinator.

Appendix I.

**Proposed Merger Consultation Results
Kelston and van Asch Deaf Education Centres**

**Parent Responses and Emergent Themes
Face-to-Face Meetings
December 2018**

Emergent Themes and Overview

Overall, the proposal to merge the two DEC's is receiving positive support around the regions. Most parents are excited about the idea, mainly because they believe it offers the potential for equity and a streamlined service.

The need for consistency: The lack of consistent service delivery at present was raised many times with several parents recounting how they had been forced to travel from region to region to access the best services for their children. The variance between the support offered by VADEC and KDEC was highlighted frequently with some parents suggesting that VADEC appeared to be better resourced than KDEC. There was a perception that if someone lived in Auckland or Christchurch, they could avail of better support. There was also discussion between how differently SCIP and Hearing House operate and it was asked if these two organisations might also merge. Parents also talked about how different audiology support is in both DEC regions, again another example of inconsistency in how the DEC's work.

It was suggested that part of the change could be having clear guidelines as to how the two DEC's could work closely together to standardise assessments, accountability and service delivery and ensure equity for all DHH learners who are a heterogeneous group. At every parent consultation, people supported the idea of streamlined, consistent services nationwide as a priority.

Equity: The notion of Equity is a critical one for parents. Feedback reflects a consensus that it is a good idea, but some ask how it will be achieved. One parent asked that in order to achieve equity, would we bring some students down and raise others up. Some parents are a cynical that equitable and consistent services are achievable without increased resources from the MoE.

Also, it is important for parents that if a merger goes ahead, services will be flexible to address regional circumstances and variance. Recurrently, ORS funding was discussed with many querying whether the needs of non-ORS funded children were being adequately met and whether a merger would affect how ORS funding would be allocated going forward. Parents who have non-ORS children want to know will their children receive ongoing, consistent RTD service and specialist service that their child may require.

Resources: A common theme voiced by parents of deaf children is that they have to fight very hard to get the support their children need. Some people said that they were good at this because they knew the system and knew where to go for help and information. They were concerned for those other parents who missed out on what they might be entitled to because they did not know how to work the system. These parents worried that a merger might mean they lose the little they already have. Parents from the van Asch region in particular, expressed the fear that they would lose what they regarded as good levels of support. A predictable and dominant theme for parents was a need for assurance that their child would be better off and not worse off after any merger.

This was closely linked to the question of resources. Parents asked if change would bring additional funding. They were open to the idea of "working smarter" and to the use of technology to facilitate remote learning and support, however they expressed the need for caution in relation to younger kids and children with complex needs. They felt that these children would still need face-to-face contact. Many expressed gratitude for the current level

Appendix II.

**Proposed Merger Consultation Results
Kelston and van Asch Deaf Education Centres**

**Staff Responses and Emergent Themes
Face-to-Face Meetings
December 2018**

Emergent Themes and Overview

Overwhelmingly, staff are positive and excited about the proposed merger. While for some people, this positivity is laced with trepidation, staff consultation in both DEC areas yielded very high rates of affirmation. Staff mentioned that they were already enjoying the changes they had seen over the past year, including better communication, e.g. Joint Staff Newsletter and collaborative projects (and for KDEC staff - the improved communication the new principal brought to the role). In fact, many staff commented that they thought a merger was already happening and were surprised they were being consulted on this. All staff expressed satisfaction that the Board valued them sufficiently to meet with them face-to-face, to talk through their ideas and concerns around the proposal.

A strong theme, which was repeated many times, was that staff were excited at the prospect of achieving equity within and across both DECs, as well as consistency in processes and systems. Staff agreed that the needs of the students came first. While many people expressed concern about the challenge the merger would bring in terms of service delivery, they agreed that it offered opportunities to meet the needs of students more effectively. Equity for staff also was raised several times. It was noted that regional staff, particularly those farthest from both bases, felt more isolated and did not enjoy the same level of support as staff in other locations in terms of access to P.D. and technological support (Whangarei and Gisborne). Several times, staff said that inadequate support systems made them “look unprofessional.” The need for equity for staff is a common theme across both DECs.

During the consultation process it was necessary to keep staff focused on the merger proposal rather than on how the Service Model might look. Understandably, at every single session staff wanted to know what the new structure would look like. Questions invariably centred on: Would a merger mean job losses? What would happen to the current Principal positions? What would alignment look like in terms of people’s jobs? What would be the timescale for change? Would additional resources be made available to bring about the changes? What would happen if the Minister decided not to proceed with a merger?

In particular, the new Executive Principal role aroused the greatest curiosity for staff. People wanted to know when this person would be recruited, what credentials they would have, especially in relation to Deaf Culture and deaf Education, who would oversee the selection process and how would the interests of the Deaf be represented. A strong and reoccurring theme was the need to recruit the right person for the job and to consult with staff on this task.

Several other important themes were repeated during the meetings. These included:-

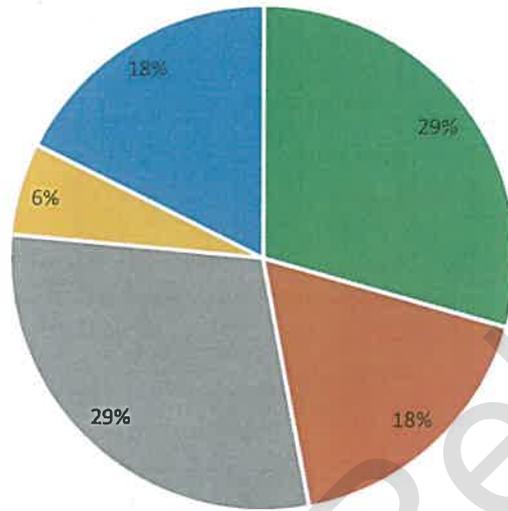
- **Resourcing:** Staff wanted to know if a merger would result in increased MoE funding and if this would be shared equally across both DECs. Several staff asked if the Board would look strategically at how to improve how the ASSIST service was resourced.
- **Future Shape:** Another common theme was how the new organisation would look. People asked if it would have a new school number, a new name and logo, a new website and where it might be based. People highlighted the importance of their being consulted on the name, logo etc. going forward.
- **Consultation with the Deaf Community:** Staff, particularly Deaf staff, were concerned that the MoE rather than the Board would be leading the consultation with the Deaf Community. Some people feared that the Ministry would not know who to speak to or engage properly with Deaf Stakeholders. Some worried that this

Addendix IV.

**Proposed Merger Consultation Results
Kelston and van Asch Deaf Education Centres**

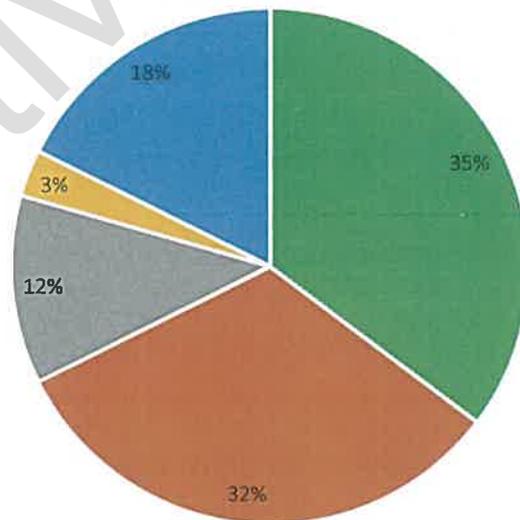
**Parent Responses and Emergent Themes
Proposed Merger Survey
December 2018**

Do you agree that merging the two Deaf Education Centres to form one new, nationwide organisation will improve Excellence?



■ 5 (Strongly Agree) ■ 4 ■ 3 ■ 2 ■ 1 (Strongly Disagree)

Do you agree that merging the two Deaf Education Centres to form one new, nationwide organisation will improve Efficiency?



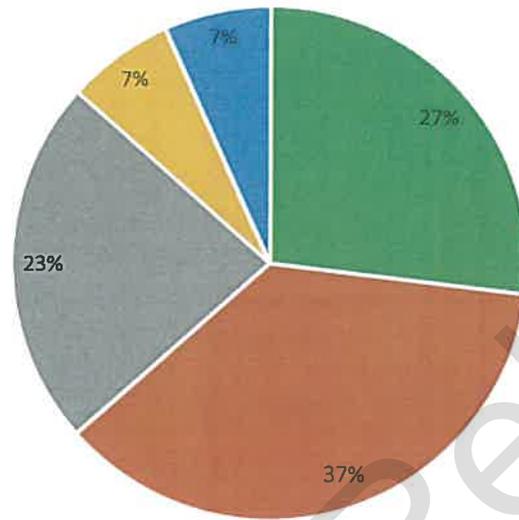
■ 5 (Strongly Agree) ■ 4 ■ 3 ■ 2 ■ 1 (Strongly Disagree)

Appendix V.

**Proposed Merger Consultation Results
Kelston and van Asch Deaf Education Centres**

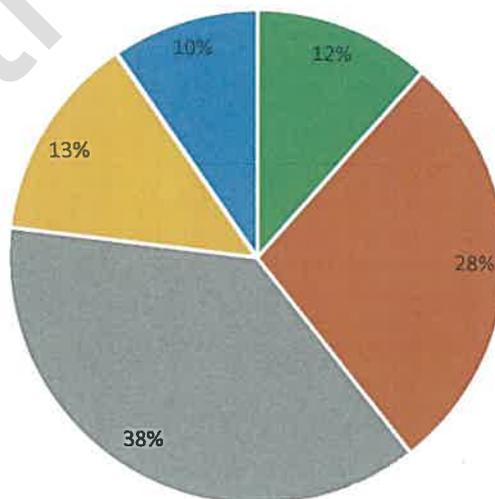
**Staff Responses and Emergent Themes
Proposed Merger Survey
December 2018**

Do you agree that merging the two Deaf Education Centres to form one new, nationwide organisation will improve Efficiency?



■ 5 (Strongly Agree) ■ 4 ■ 3 ■ 2 ■ 1 (Strongly Disagree)

Do you agree that merging the two Deaf Education Centres to form one new, nationwide organisation will improve Communication?



■ 5 (Strongly Agree) ■ 4 ■ 3 ■ 2 ■ 1 (Strongly Disagree)

Staff who are in favour of the merger were asked to share the opportunities that they see in the proposed merger. Themes from these comments included:

Best Practice: Some staff feel that there is an opportunity to look at what constitutes best practice within Deaf Education and for the new organisation to align itself around that. Staff want the best taken from both Centres, combining resourcing and expertise to improve the delivery of service. Staff would want the new organisation to aim high and become forward thinking with research around development and teaching practices to benefit students.

Leadership: Staff see opportunity for the Centre to be led by a Principal with business experience, good people skills and strong values. Also a leader who consistently links with mainstream leaders and schools. Staff would like a Senior Leadership Team that are qualified to make good decisions around teaching and learning, but with less top level management and more team leads on the ground getting tasks done. Staff see opportunities for more leadership pathways, and an investment in upskilling current staff with leadership skills. Staff see an opportunity for one strong voice for Deaf Education New Zealand.

Service Delivery: Staff would also like it to be easier for students to transfer between regions, so that parents can be confident that the level of service would remain the same. A strong theme was that staff want equity and consistency in access to services, funding, resources, infrastructure, practice, and in general service delivery nationwide. Staff would especially like better and more efficient use and distribution of resources.

Innovation: Staff see opportunities to bring in experts to support the new organisational structures and provide fresh eyes, vibrancy, and a fresh perspective on how to best meet the needs of students. Staff would also like more opportunities to engage in relevant professional development and upskilling.

Collaboration: Staff see opportunities in working between DECs to have a joint vision moving forward, with shared resources and knowledge. Staff also see promise in sharing ideas to support each other. Staff would like talents of people within the organisation to be utilised and for these staff to be given opportunities to share knowledge and receive recognition.

Systems and Processes: Staff see opportunity for systems and processes to be tightened around documentation. They see opportunity for assessment to consider the diverse needs of students, and to ensure consistency nationwide. Staff also see opportunity for systems and processes that support staff so that they feel valued and recognised.

Staff who are not in favour of the merger were asked to share their worries or concerns. Themes from these comments included:

More Information re Merger: Some staff commented that they felt that they need more information about the merger before they indicate their support. Staff voiced that they would like to know details about what the service model will look like, as well as what is happening with the sites, staffing, management structure, resourcing and funding.

Service Delivery and Equity: Staff are concerned that if the merger were not executed well, it would end up being a centralisation of services that would increase silos. Staff, especially staff from regions, are also concerned that the merger could lead to staff feeling disconnected and operating in their own ways, resulting in different experiences for learners based on where they live.

Annex 4: List of stakeholders directly consulted by the Ministry

Proactively Released

Special School principals:

Arohanui Special School
Sommerville School
Rosehill School
Wilson School
Sir Keith Park School
Mt Richmond School
Oaklynn School
Wairau valley Special School
Northern Health School
Blomfield School
Central Auckland Special School

Principals of schools with deaf education satellites

Kelston Intermediate
Kelston Primary School
Kelston Boys' High School
Kelston Girls' College
Ormiston Senior College
Ormiston Junior College
Oteha School
Ormiston Primary School
Hagley School
Wharenui School
Hillmorton School

Parents/ Deaf groups

Deaf Children
Auckland Parents of Deaf Children Inc.
Auckland Deaf Society Inc.
Bay of Plenty Assoc. for Deaf Children Inc.
Parents of Deaf Children (Taranaki) Inc.
Hawkes' Bay Parents of Deaf Children Inc.
Wellington Assoc. of Deaf Children Inc.
Wellington Deaf Society Inc.
Canterbury Parents of Deaf Children Inc.
Canterbury Deaf Society
South Canterbury Society for Deaf Children Inc.
Otago Association for Deaf Children Inc.

Other organisations

Blind and Low Vision Education Network NZ (BLENNZ)
Hearing House (North Island cochlear implant programme)
Southern Cochlear Implant Programme
Denise Powell, University of Canterbury, TOD Course (Teacher education)
Deaf Aotearoa
Ennoble
Susie Ovens – AUT (NZSL teaching)
National Foundation for the Deaf Inc.
Richard Peri – Deaf Komiti
NZSL Board – Office for Disability Issues (Chair)
Disabled Persons Organisation Coalition
Ali Breckon, Ministry of Health
NZ Educational Institute
NZ School Trustees Association

Proactively Released

Appendix III.

Proposed Merger Consultation Results Kelston and van Asch Deaf Education Centres

Stakeholder/Parent Responses and Emergent Themes

Face-to-Face Meetings

December 2018

Emergent Themes and Overview

Four meetings involving the Deaf Community were held in Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin and Auckland. These were well attended and generated lively discussion.

Wellington

Many of those attending the Wellington meeting were cynical about whether there would be change, suggesting that the issue of one national organisation had been circulating since the time of the National Plan. Many at the meeting were frustrated that the agenda limited conversation to a Merger proposal and frequently speakers went off task to discuss the experience of deaf learners and the need for greater provision for Deaf learners in Wellington, including a Deaf base/campus and greater access to NZSL.

Several people said that in theory the merger was a good idea- one speaker called it a "brilliant" idea, however it was felt by many people, that without detail on the direction of change, or information on service delivery, they were not confident about saying yes to a merger.

The issue of isolation experienced by Deaf students came up many times. It was suggested that this was not such a problem in the days before mainstreaming. It was felt by many that deaf children today are isolated and unconnected and that a greater emphasis should be put on connecting these children via technology and immersion opportunities etc. This was linked to the need to give greater attention to the social and emotional wellbeing of students which was described as "pretty dire". Several of those who spoke at the Wellington session expressed doubts about the merits of inclusive education and mainstreaming and were concerned that Deaf children were losing their Deaf identity and a sense of their Culture.

Those present also expressed a sense of urgency so that the process of change would not drag on and thereby fail to benefit those who needed support now. It was proposed that service delivery be looked at in tandem with the other issues being addressed next year, such as the recruitment of the Executive Principal and ongoing alignment work.

A request was made at the meeting that the Deaf Community in Wellington be fully engaged and consulted with on the changes going forward so that the Deaf voice could be heard.

Christchurch

As could be expected, people attending this meeting were concerned about the future of existing local provision, particularly relating to the hubs. Moreover, the most dominant theme was the recruitment of the new Executive Principal. People recognised that this person would have the power to influence the shape of the Service Delivery Model. With this in mind, they asked if he/she would be Deaf or have experience of the Deaf Community/Culture have a bias towards oralism and would Deaf interests be represented on the selection/interview panel. Other concerns were:-

- Property - It was noted that while KDEC has brand new modern buildings and van Asch buildings were older. It was asked if the MoE would be upgrading facilities at Sumner. Where would the new base be located, Christchurch, Auckland or somewhere else? Concern that all the managers would operate out of an Auckland base.
- Services – Would the proposed model look similar to the Blennz model?
- Staff – People were concerned that staff would have a greater workload after a merger

service but feel they need to advocate for their own children and region for better service delivery. Many present expressed their frustration that the consultation was merely a bureaucratic process and were sceptical that anything would deliver real change. Others said that it was difficult to comment when they had not been presented with tangibles e.g. where would the school be based, who would run it, what impact there would be on services, would property change?

While it was acknowledged that support in Otago had improved of late, it was pointed out that there are still children in Otago who do not receive services and schools in Otago that still do not know how to access services.

It was stated that families are experiencing battle fatigue and believe promises about services are made repeatedly but don't eventuate. There was a strong consensus that people were worried about what would happen during the duration any change process and the risk that services would stagnate if the process took a year or longer to work through.

Auckland

The final meeting involving the Deaf Community was held in Auckland and was very positive. Those present acknowledged the good work being done to support their children and appreciated that they were being consulted by the Board and Ministry. It was noted that the idea of one national organisation had been around for many years and people were happy this seemed to be moving again. While some people felt that Deaf Education was failing deaf people, it was noted that the current Board seems genuinely committed to bringing positive change and looking at best practice internationally.

A strong theme expressed by most people present was the vulnerability of Deaf Culture and Deaf language. It was felt that over the years, Deaf Culture was steadily being eroded and the plea was made that any changes would consider the importance of supporting and resourcing NZSL going forward. In particular, the value of immersion opportunities was highlighted. The case for more competent signers to support parents was made eloquently.

The remark was also made that stakeholder groups such as Hearing House should work more closely with other stakeholders and the Deaf Community. It was acknowledged that where resources were limited, better use could, and should, be made of networking and collaborative working.

Questions were asked about potential increases to resourcing and whether more funding could be made available for language development for children aged 0-5 yrs. Some felt that without a funding increase from the Ministry, a Merger would not improve support for students.

The needs of Maori learners were also highlighted, and this was linked to inequity in how these children were supported. The importance of the Maori at Kelston was also signalled.

The history and heritage of Deaf Education in New Zealand was discussed with affection and respect. It was felt that any Merger process would need to safeguard this as well as the great things happening at both DECs.