



Briefing Note: Curriculum, Progress & Achievement Reference Group

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
Date:	11 April 2018	Priority:	High
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[Redacted]			
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Summary

- This briefing outlines the role, model, membership, and timeline for a Reference Group to inform the work on strengthening the use of the curricula to understand and support all students' progress and achievement.
- The Reference Group will provide a broad 'on the ground' view to inform the *Curriculum Progress and Achievement* work programme, including your Ministerial Advisory Group. The Reference Group will also support engagement with students and regional networks to allow diverse voices to be heard (e.g. parents, disability perspectives and rural voice).
- The Reference Group will include members of peak bodies and education sector representation, including boards of trustees members. It will be chaired by Ministry through the Associate Deputy Secretary, Early Learning and Student Achievement. Reference Group members will be invited to work with students within their schools to gather student voice.
- We are going to issue invitations in order to confirm membership of the Group, and will provide you with the final list in late April. We will work with your office to draft an announcement of the Reference Group alongside the MAG, should you wish to do so.

Pauline Cleaver
Associate Deputy Secretary
Early Learning and Student Achievement

11/04/2018

Background

1. On 6 March 2018, you held a strategy meeting on strengthening the use of the curricula to understand and support all students' progress and achievement (METIS 1103867 refers). At this meeting, you agreed to convene a *Curriculum, Progress and Achievement Ministerial Advisory Group* (MAG).
2. You agreed to the proposed Terms of Reference and membership of the MAG on 14 March 2018 (METIS 1111525 refers). The Terms of Reference is being considered by SWC on 11 April and you intend to confirm the MAG membership at CBC on 24 April.
3. We are now forming a Reference Group that will complement the MAG by engaging with 'on the ground' representatives. This briefing provides information on the role and formation of the Reference Group, including the proposed membership (Annex 1) and draft terms of reference (Annex 2).

Reference Group

4. The Reference Group will include members of peak bodies and sector representation from a range of perspectives, including a board of trustees. It will be chaired by the Associate Deputy Secretary, Early Learning and Student Achievement. The Ministry will provide the secretariat role.
5. The Reference Group will provide a vehicle for broader engagement than is possible with through a MAG. It will provide an 'on the ground' view to inform the Curriculum, Progress and Achievement work programme through advice to both the MAG and the Ministry.
6. The Reference Group will also support engagement with students and regional networks. Regional networks will be formed to include diverse voices and bring in specific perspectives (e.g. parent focus groups, disability perspectives, rural voice). These will be aligned with wider engagement activities as part of the national Education Conversation and build on the Education Summit in May.
7. We will seek suggestions from within the Reference Group for parent representation that accurately reflects the New Zealand population to participate in regional networks.
8. Reference Group members will be invited to work with students within their schools to gather student voice. We propose that student voice be captured using video vignettes.
9. The Reference Group will genuinely engage and take on board what they are hearing from regional networks and students, and to faithfully report those perspectives through to the MAG and the Ministry.
10. The Reference Group will:
 - a. Collate and analyse information from the regional networks to feed into further work and thinking, including engaging with students within their school to gather student voice.
 - b. Report to the MAG and the Ministry on issues that emerge from the regional networks and student engagement.
 - c. Consider issues identified by the MAG and identify further action required, including referring them to a regional network.
 - d. Test ideas from the MAG and other groups to provide an 'on the ground' perspective.

11. To enable efficient use of Reference Group time, a subgroup will be identified by the membership that will lead the development of the agenda for meetings and respond to urgent requests and issues.
12. The Ministry will, through its secretariat role, manage a standing item on the meeting agendas of both the MAG and Reference Group to ensure coherent messaging.
13. Annex 1 provides the draft terms of reference for the Reference Group.

Role of the Ministry

14. The Ministry will primarily act as stewards in facilitating and supporting the work of the Reference Group and the regional networks:
 - a. The Ministry will ensure there is appropriate secretariat support for the Reference Group and regional networks.
 - b. Support will be provided for the formation of regional networks, and capturing regional network perspectives and student voice as required.
 - c. Ministry staff members, including regional Directors of Education and those with specific expertise, will participate in groups as appropriate.

Reference Group membership

15. The presidents of the peak bodies will be invited to be members of the Reference Group. If they are unable to attend meetings, they may nominate an alternative representative from within their organisation. We will also seek membership from schools and early learning services, and from education consultants. [REDACTED]

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Next steps

16. We will begin approaching the nominated representatives, with a view to finalising membership by late April.
17. We will notify you of the finalised membership and work with your office to prepare a press release announcing the formation of both groups. This announcement is likely to happen between 1-4 May, following confirmation of the MAG membership by Cabinet.
18. The Reference Group will meet for the first time shortly after the first meeting of the MAG on 10 May. Their first meeting will inform the formation of regional networks and collection of student voice over May and June.

Annexes

- Annex 1: Draft Terms of Reference for the Curriculum, Progress and Achievement Reference Group
- Annex 2: Proposed representatives for Reference Group

Annex 1: Draft Terms of Reference for the Curriculum, Progress and Achievement Reference Group

Background

In December 2017, the Minister of Education, Hon Chris Hipkins, revoked Ngā Whanaketanga Rumaki Māori and National Standards, and asked the Ministry of Education to work with experts and stakeholders to develop an approach to assessment and reporting which is based on understanding progress across the curricula, including key capabilities for success in life, learning and work.

To understand progress, one needs to understand what is most important to be learnt. The national curricula set expectations for teaching and learning, and provide flexibility for local curricula to be designed and delivered in a way that meets the needs of the learners within early learning services, kōhanga reo, kura, schools or Communities of Learning | Kāhui Ako.

Assessment and aromatawai is important for understanding how individual learners are progressing in relation to curricula expectations. It assists teachers to plan learning opportunities that support each learner's next learning step, including where more learning opportunities or additional support is needed. It also assists students' and their parents' understanding of progress and achievement.

There are a range of assessment tools available for understanding learners' progress, but these do not cover the full breadth of the curricula and few provide teachers with a comprehensive picture of progress against a curriculum learning area or for students working long term in level 1. As well as having tools available, teachers need to make effective decisions about when and how to use these tools to support students' progress without adding unnecessary workload.

We have a system-wide focus on ensuring that every child gets the necessary support and opportunities to learn, and to be successful in life, learning and work and to contribute to society. The achievement data shows that, despite pockets of improvement, the education system is not yet closing the equity gap. To address the equity gap, we need a system that reflects on student progress and re-focusses teaching, learning and system-level settings to better support all students' progress across the curricula, especially for Māori, Pasifika, those with additional learning needs, and those that are disadvantaged.

To support the Curriculum, Progress and Achievement work programme, the Minister of Education ('the Minister') has established a *Curriculum, Progress and Achievement Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG)*. The MAG will provide advice to the Minister on strengthening the use of the curricula to understand student progress and achievement.

The Role and Purpose of the Reference Group

The Reference Group will provide a vehicle for broader engagement than is possible with through a MAG. It will provide an 'on the ground' view to inform the Curriculum, Progress and Achievement work programme through advice to both the MAG and the Ministry.

The Reference Group will also support engagement with students and regional networks. Regional networks will be formed to provide a particular voice on specific matters (e.g. parent focus groups, disability perspectives, rural voice).

Objectives

The Reference Group will provide input into the development of a programme of work that builds teacher and leader capability to work with their students, parents, whānau and communities to:

1. design and deliver local curricula that include learning opportunities that integrate knowledge, skills and key competencies in The New Zealand Curriculum, and Māori medium graduate qualities and characteristics in Te Marautanga o Aotearoa
2. personalise learning opportunities to meet the needs and aspirations of all students and their whānau, within an inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment

3. be data literate, understanding and acting on data/evidence for improvement, including making effective and efficient use of information in inquiry, planning and reporting, and sharing meaningful reports with students, parents and whānau.

Scope

The scope of the *Curriculum, Progress and Achievement Reference Group* is to:

- collate and analyse information from the regional networks to feed into further work and thinking, including engaging with students within their school to gather student voice
- report to the MAG and the Ministry on issues that emerge from the regional networks and student engagement
- consider issues identified by the MAG and identify further action required, including referring them to a regional network
- test ideas from the MAG and other groups to provide an 'on the ground' perspective.

Functions of the Reference Group

The Reference Group's role is subject to these Terms of Reference.

The Reference Group will be:

- an 'on the ground' view to complement the academic expertise of the MAG
- a source of broader perspective that will feed into the thinking and advice of the MAG and the Ministry
- a vehicle for bringing diverse voices into the process (e.g. parent focus groups, student voice, disability perspectives, rural voice).

Regional networks will be formed as required to include diverse voices and bring in specific perspectives (e.g. parent focus groups, disability perspectives, rural voice). Suggestions from within the Reference Group will be sought for parent representation that accurately reflects the New Zealand population to participate in regional networks, including Board of Trustees representation. The Reference Group will identify the required regional networks at their first meeting. The Reference Group will be expected to draw on their own local networks for these groups.

Reference Group members will be invited to work with students within their schools to gather student voice.

The Reference Group will genuinely engage and take on board what they are hearing from regional networks and students, and to faithfully report those perspectives through to the MAG and the Ministry.

Advisors to the MAG

The primary and paramount function of the Reference Group is to inform, guide and work alongside the MAG by providing an 'on the ground' view, and championing the perspectives heard through the regional networks and student engagement.

Advisors to the Ministry of Education

The Reference Group will provide support and advice to the Ministry to assist in their delivery of the *Curriculum, Progress and Achievement* work programme.

The Ministry, through the Deputy Secretary, Early Learning and Student Achievement, may ask the Reference Group to provide support and advice by:

- contributing to, or reviewing, key documents prepared by the Ministry to support the process
- providing advice on the structure and nature of engagement with stakeholders and the wider public.

Membership

Members of the Reference have been selected to provide representation of peak bodies, a diverse range of schooling contexts, English, Māori and dual-medium pathways, early learning services, boards, ITE and educational consultants.

To enable efficient use of Reference Group time, a subgroup will be identified by the membership that will lead the development of the agenda for meetings and respond to urgent requests and issues.

Chair

The Reference Group will be chaired by the Associate Deputy Secretary, Early Learning and Student Achievement. The Chair will lead meetings of the Reference Group, unless otherwise agreed.

Fees

Reference Group members will not be paid, however the Ministry has a budget to operate the Reference Group, including Teacher Release Days and travel costs.

The Reference Group and its members will not have an independent budget.

Secretariat

The Ministry will provide the secretariat role, and will ensure there is appropriate support for the Reference Group and regional networks.

Support will be provided for the formation of regional networks, and capturing regional network perspectives and student voice as required.

Ministry staff members, including regional Directors of Education and those with specific expertise, will participate in groups as appropriate.

The Ministry will, through its secretariat role, manage a standing item on the meeting agendas of both the MAG and Reference Group to ensure coherent messaging.

Media

The Reference Group, and Reference Group members acting in that capacity, will not make media statements without the prior agreement of the Ministry of Education.

If the Reference Group are asked to provide comment on any issue relating to education by a third party (i.e. other than the Minister or Ministry), that Reference Group will forward the question or request to the Ministry of Education through the Assessment and Reporting mailbox: (AssessmentandReporting@education.govt.nz).

Meetings

Meetings of the Reference will be held in Wellington. The Reference will meet up to ten times between May and December 2018. Reference Group members are expected to attend Reference Group meetings wherever reasonably possible.

The presidents of the peak bodies will be members of the Reference Group. If they are unable to attend meetings, they may nominate an alternative representative from within their organisation.

The Ministry of Education will support the Reference Group to prepare meeting agendas where appropriate. The agenda and papers for meetings of the Reference Group will be circulated to Reference Group members six working days in advance of each meeting, and draft minutes will be circulated to Reference Group members no later than five working days after each meeting.

Contestability of advice

The Reference Group will provide advice to the Ministry and the MAG on the *Curriculum, Progress and Achievement* work programme in good faith, and with regards to the interests of the other. The Reference Group and Ministry will provide the other with copies of relevant advice provided to the MAG.

Conflicts of interest

Members of the Reference Group will be required to disclose conflicts of interest relating to the Reference Group and the *Curriculum, Progress, and Achievement* work programme.

Members of the Reference Group who have a specific, real conflict of interest in relation to an issue or item will advise the Ministry and recuse themselves from consideration of those issues or items.

If members of the Reference Group develop new, relevant conflicts of interest, whether real, potential or perceived, in the course of the *Curriculum, Progress and Achievement* work programme, they will inform the Ministry's secretariat as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Key relationships

In addition to the Ministry of Education, the Reference Group will have relationships with the *Curriculum, Progress and Achievement Ministerial Advisory Group*.

Unless otherwise agreed with the Ministry (in relation to the MAG), the Reference Group's contact with these groups will be facilitated by the Ministry.

It is expected that the Reference Group will engage in the process in good faith, and champion the *Curriculum, Progress and Achievement* work programme process with stakeholders.

Confidentiality

The work of the Reference Group is confidential, unless otherwise agreed by either the Ministry of Education. Members of the Reference Group will maintain this confidence, and will not disclose information about the operations of the Reference Group to any person without the above agreement.

Annex 2: Proposed representatives for Reference Group

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