MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
TE TĀHUHU O TE MĀTAURANGA

Education Report: Finalising the NELP and the TES

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
Date:	12 February 2020	Priority:	High
Security Level:	In Confidence	METIS No:	1217794
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Purpose of report

This paper seeks your agreement to changes to the statement of National Education and Learning Priorities (NELP) and the Tertiary Education Strategy (TES), following consultation undertaken in late 2019, and our proposed timeline for Cabinet approval of the final NELP and TES.

Summary

1. During September – November 2019, the Ministry of Education (the Ministry) undertook consultation on *Shaping a Stronger Education System with New Zealanders*, including on the proposed Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities (NELP) and the Tertiary Education Strategy (TES).

2. We propose some changes to the NELP and TES to reflect the feedback received.

3. We have sought to align the NELP and TES, and now propose 11 priorities that would be joint across the two strategies. To address some sector-specific issues, we also recommend one NELP-specific priority and four TES-specific priorities, making a total of 16 priorities overall.

4. We are considering the best approach to support places of learning to implement the NELP. There are a number of existing resources available to support the implementation of the NELP in the schooling sector, however there are gaps which may require the development of additional tools. The Ministry will also work closely with the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) in their implementation of the TES.

5. We would like to discuss this report with you at the agency meeting on 17 February 2020.

Recommended Actions

The Ministry of Education recommends that you:

a. **discuss** with us the revised NELP and TES priorities detailed in this report

<div align="right">**Agree / Disagree**</div>

b. **provide feedback** on the NELP and TES priorities, and any that you consider could be removed

<div align="right">**Yes / No**</div>

c. **note** that we are currently finalising the summaries of the feedback received during consultation on the NELP and the TES, and will liaise with your office before publishing these reports

<div align="right">**Noted**</div>

Implementing the NELP and TES

d. **agree** that, in relation to the NELP, early learning services and schools will have the ability to choose the priorities that are most applicable for their setting to focus on – rather than adopting all 12 as their strategic focus

<div align="right">**Agree / Disagree**</div>

e. **note** that the Government's Response to the Tomorrow's Schools Review includes a workstream on support for greater engagement by iwi/Māori in school governance, with advice due by June 2020; and that this work would be well placed to consider how to support early learning services and schools to implement NELP/TES Priority 15

<div align="right">**Noted**</div>

Monitoring the NELP and TES

f. **note** that the work currently underway on the data collection requirements to measure education system outcomes will encompass the monitoring of the NELP and the TES

<div align="right">**Noted**</div>

Next steps

g. **note** that our indicative timeline for progressing the NELP and TES to Cabinet for approval is as follows:

Deliverable	Date
Draft Cabinet Paper to Minister's Office, with draft NELP and TES document	26 February
Feedback provided	2 March
Revised drafts to Minister's office	6 March
Agency and Ministerial consultation	9 – 20 March
Revised Cabinet Paper and NELP & TES Document to MO	1 April
Final documents lodged	2 April
SWC	8 April
Cabinet Approval	20 April

<div align="right">**Noted**</div>

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Proactive Release Recommendation

h.   **agree** that this Report is proactively released once the final NELP and TES have been approved by Cabinet and published.

Agree / Disagree

Dr Andrea Schöllmann
Deputy Secretary
Education System Policy

12/02/2020

Andy Jackson
Group Manager
Graduate Achievement, Vocations & Careers

12/02/2020

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

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Background

1. Towards the end of 2019, the Ministry of Education (the Ministry) undertook a broad-based consultation on the Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities (NELP) and the Tertiary Education Strategy (TES), as part of the integrated strategy for education: *Shaping a Stronger Education System with New Zealanders.*

2. We have previously provided you with reports which included the details of the consultation process, and the themes and key messages we heard through various meetings, submissions and survey responses (METIS 1205230 and 1214917).

3. We have now considered the feedback gathered during consultation, and propose some changes to the priorities in response to that feedback.

General feedback

4. *Shaping a Stronger Education System with New Zealanders* presented a whole-of-system approach to education. Consultation indicated that there is general support for this approach, and for positioning the NELP and TES within an overarching framework.

5. There was some support for a common set of shared NELP and TES priorities. However some stakeholders, particularly the universities, thought there should be more differentiation between the two strategy documents.

6. The question of how implementation of the NELP and TES would be supported was raised often during consultation. Many participants commented that implementing the priorities would be challenging for places of learning, and questioned how Government would assist in this.

7. There was some feedback that the priorities were too vague, high level, or unclear. We have tried to address this by using plainer language, and by having each priority focused on one key idea.

8. Some additional priorities were suggested during consultation, while other feedback said there were too many priorities, and that some should be removed or merged. We seek your feedback on your preferred number of priorities, and whether there are any that can be removed.

Changes to the NELP and TES priorities

9. The following sections of this report outline the key changes we have made to priorities, and the rationale for these changes. This section is supported by the attached A3 (Annex 1). Changes have been made to reflect feedback from consultation and from your office on Friday 31 January 2020.

High level approach to revising the NELP and TES

10. NELP and TES priorities are now aligned as much as possible, given the generally positive response to a whole-of-system approach. Across both the NELP and TES, there are now 16 proposed priorities, 11 of which are joint across both strategies. This compares with 9 NELP priorities and 13 TES priorities in the consultation document. To address issues that are specific to one or other of the sectors, we propose one NELP-specific priority and four TES-specific priorities.

11. We propose adding some new priorities, to reflect important issues raised during consultation. These are focussed on the barriers faced by learners/ākonga with disabilities or learning support needs, the importance of a focus on foundation skills, and a stronger focus on the role of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in education. We also recommend making the focus on careers reach across both the NELP and the TES, in response to feedback that careers support needs to begin earlier in schools.

12. A more detailed description and the rationale for the key changes we recommend to the priorities is provided in Annex 2, attached.

Supporting the implementation of the NELP

Places of learning to select the NELP priorities they will focus on

13. During consultation, we heard that the original number of NELP priorities (nine) was too many for places of learning to meaningfully focus on. Following the revisions made, there are now 12 priorities that we will be asking early learning services and schools to have regard to – 11 priorities that are joint across the NELP and the TES, and one NELP-specific priority.

14. Due to the complexity and diversity of the schooling and early childhood sector, not all of the priorities will be equally applicable for all places of learning. For example, it may not make sense for kōhanga reo, kura or wharekura to have a focus on *incorporating te reo Māori and tikanga Māori in the life of the place of learning;* or for an early learning service to have a focus on careers education and advice. We also know that research suggests that the most effective way to embed quality teaching and leadership disciplines is to have a narrow, deep and sustained focus on a few evidence informed priorities.

15. Therefore, we recommend that places of learning are able to select some NELP priorities as a focus for their strategic planning, rather than expecting them to have regard or particular regard to all NELP priorities at once. We seek your view on this approach.

Existing resources to support the implementation of the NELP

16. In implementing the NELP, we envisage that the first step for places of learning will be to undertake inquiry into their own school or service environment, to find out how staff, learners/ākonga, and family and whānau feel about how things are. When they've gained some insights into where they currently stand in relation to their selected priorities, they will be able to identify actions to make improvements, with the ability to use the same tools again after some time has elapsed, to check whether they are making their intended progress.

17. There are a number of existing resources that could be used to support this inquiry in schools. We also envisage that aggregated national information will give us a sense of the impact of the NELP following implementation. The following tools and surveys collect information that can be used to assess current practices in schools, so leaders can identify areas that need to be improved or developed. Some also provide tools to support schools taking the next steps. A number of these tools have costs associated.

   a. The **Teaching and School Practices Survey Tool (TSP)**, developed by NZCER, is a free online survey tool that can be used in English-medium schools and Kāhui Ako. The survey is taken by teaching staff and the principal, and supports inquiry into teaching, school, and principal leadership practices.

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b.   The **Wellbeing@School Toolkit** explores how different layers of school life contribute to creating a safe school environment that deters bullying. It includes student and teacher surveys, and a School Self-Review Tool, designed to support review of current school practice, identify areas of strength, and where improvement could be made.

c.   The **Inclusive Practices Toolkit** includes student, staff and community surveys, a School Review Profile, and actions for next steps to improve inclusive practices. It is designed to assist school staff to consider what inclusion means, and encourage schools to engage in a dialogue with their community to think critically about how best to support a diverse range of learners/ākonga.

d.   The **Teacher Workplace Survey** (NZCER), which asks teaching staff to rate their physical working environment and resources, their satisfaction with school, school leadership, professional development, and school organisation.

e.   The **Me and My School** survey (NZCER), designed for year 4 to 6 learners/ākonga and gives a snapshot of the learning culture in the school, including whether akonga like learning and feel like they are learning.

18.   The Ministry will publish a curated list of existing resources and guides that places of learning can access to support their work on the priorities, which will be included in the final NELP document. We will also provide guidance for the Ministry's regional staff about the use of these resources, to support their involvement in the implementation of the NELP.

Implementing the NELP in the early childhood education sector

19.   There are fewer resources available to support early learning services to survey their staff, learners/ākonga, or parent and whānau community. However, Te Whāriki a te Kōhanga Reo and Te Whāriki Early Childhood Curriculum gives guidance on internal evaluation (previously referred to as self-review), emphasising the importance of the service's impact on children's learning and development, within the curriculum framework.

20.   Internal evaluation is a required part of the licensing criteria for early learning services. Services are expected to review their practice on an ongoing basis, and review findings are used to inform decision-making, improve the quality of practice, and promote positive outcomes for all children (ERO). Outcomes of the evaluation must be documented.

21.   This existing internal evaluation process can provide the framework for services taking the first steps in evaluating their practice to identify the priorities they should focus on, and to monitor their progress against those priorities.

22.   There are resources available to assist early learning services in evaluating their practice, and to guide them in taking the next steps for improving practice where required. These include:

a.   *Indicators of quality for early childhood education: what matters most (Education Review Office, 2019)*, which details a set of indicators that inform the judgements ERO evaluators make about the performance of early learning services, and can also be used to assist services' internal evaluation.

b. *Ngā Arohaehae Whai Hua: Self-review Guidelines for Early Childhood Education (Ministry of Education, 2006),* which can be used to support teachers, kaiako, management, families and whānau to learn about review, and to improve the effectiveness of self-review processes.

Supporting Māori communities to engage with the NELP and the TES

23. In the NELP and the TES we are asking Māori communities, including local iwi, hapū and mana whenua, to be involved in the planning and decision making in places of learning. Throughout consultation, we heard that while this was a positive step, these communities would need additional support and resourcing to effectively carry out these duties.

24. As part of the Government's response to the Tomorrow's Schools Review, the Ministry is developing advice on how Government could best support greater engagement by Māori in school governance. This workstream will provide an opportunity to consider how to best support Māori communities and mana whenua to support local curriculum design and strategic planning by schools and early learning services in their rohe. ████████
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Implementing the TES

25. As this is not the first TES, the TEC has well developed systems and processes to support its implementation. The Ministry will work closely with TEC as they implement the new TES, including the provision of planning guidance to support TEOs as they develop their investment plans for the 2021 investment round. We will also work with other relevant government agencies, including NZQA, and the sector to deliver on the actions in the TES. We do anticipate that providers will be asked to consider all of the priorities.

Monitoring the impact of the NELP and the TES

26. The higher level outcomes sought by Government for the Education system are set out in Shaping a stronger education system with New Zealanders – in particular, the five strategic objectives for the education system set out in that document. The Ministry is currently doing work to develop the next level of detail – how we might define and monitor measures for those objectives. We propose that this framework will also encompass our monitoring of the NELP and the TES. We have identified five broad types of outcome measures needed:

a. Development and learning of foundational skills;

b. Learning support needs;

c. Learner and whānau voice, including wellbeing;

d. Workforce capacity, capability and professional learning and development needs;

e. Community perceptions of the education system, including employers' needs.

27. For many of these we already collect some data, but not across all levels of the education system, or across the diverse settings within the system. You will be receiving advice shortly on our stocktake of the data currently gathered, and our proposed approach to collecting the data needed (METIS 1215702).

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28. To monitor progress against the priorities in the NELP and the TES at a system level we could use a number of international benchmarking studies. This includes Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), OECD Education at a Glance, and the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS). These include the use of streaming and same ability grouping at certain ages and for certain subjects; student and teacher attitudes to and confidence in different learning areas, the time spent on instruction in different learning areas, student experience of bullying, and teacher and principal workload. However, the frequency of these studies means that we would not have renewed data available until several years after the NELP and TES have been published.

29. The Ministry also collects extensive data on learner participation and achievement across all levels of the education system. To further track progress against employment, education and well-being outcomes we can use the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) Using available data sets and existing international indicators the Ministry will develop an indicators framework to track progress against the NELP and TES priorities.

30. In relation to the NELP, as outlined in paragraphs 16 - 22 above, there are a number of survey tools that support schools to ascertain how they are currently positioned in relation to a number of the proposed NELP priorities. The aggregated data from these tools also provides a snapshot of how we are placed across the schooling system. We note that such data needs to be interpreted with caution, as the use of the surveys is optional and there may be selection bias in the national picture such surveys provide. However, there would still be value in seeing how the national picture changes over time, as a way to get a sense of shifts across the system.

31. In relation to the TES, TEOs are also required to show in their investment plans how they will contribute to the priorities set out in the TES. These are submitted to the TEC who assess them as part of their investment process. For the TES, unlike the NELP, we do anticipate that providers will be asked to consider all of the priorities.

Further work to be done

32. There are gaps in the currently available resources to monitor the implementation of some of the NELP and TES priorities, such as: the development of staff, incorporating te reo Māori and tikanga Māori into the place of learning, supporting learners with disabilities and learning support needs, how learners/ākonga are being supported to make successful transitions, the reduction of financial barriers, and developing relationships with iwi and mana whenua. There is also a lack of tools that can be used by the early childhood sector, and tools developed for use by Māori medium settings.

33. Developing additional resources to support places of learning in implementing the NELP and monitoring their progress is work the Ministry will undertake before the new financial planning and reporting frameworks are in use.

Next steps

34. We are preparing summaries of the feedback received on the NELP and the TES during the consultation. We intend to publish two reports detailing what we heard, which will be available on the Kōrero Mātauranga website when the final NELP and TES are published. We will work with your office on this.

35. Following the discussion at the agency meeting on 17 February and your agreement to a revised set of priorities, we will draft a final joint NELP/TES document, which will detail

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what each priority means for each sector, and examples of what good practice would look like.

36. The below table outlines our indicative timeline for completing this work:

Deliverable	Date
Draft Cabinet Paper to MO	26 February
Draft NELP & TES Document to MO	26 February
Revised drafts to MO	6 March
Agency and Ministerial consultation	9 – 20 March
Revised Cabinet Paper and NELP & TES Document to MO	1 April
Final documents lodged	2 April
SWC	8 April
Cabinet Approval	20 April

Annexes

Annex 1: Shaping a stronger education system with New Zealanders: Proposed changes to the statement of National Education and Learning Priorities (NELP) and the Tertiary Education Strategy (TES)
(attached separately) Final Cabinet paper can be found here: https://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/R-1-1e-CAB-20-MIN-0094-Cabinet-pack-Redacted.pdf

Annex 2: Key changes to the priorities

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Objective One – Learners at the centre

1. *NELP/TES 1: Ensure places of learning are safe, inclusive, and free from racism, discrimination, and bullying.*

    There was very strong support across both the NELP and the TES for a focus on inclusion and wellbeing, including the need to address racism, discrimination, and bullying. This revised priority aligns the wording across both strategies, and shifts the focus to what places of learning should be like for learners/ākonga *and* for staff. The inclusion of staff is in response to feedback that staff need to be safe in the place of learning to be able to effectively carry out their work. This wording also aligns with the new objectives for boards of trustees proposed in the Education and Training Bill.

2. *NELP/TES 2: Partner with family, whānau, caregivers and communities in the education of learners/ākonga.*

    This was originally a NELP priority, but it is now a joint priority across the both NELP and the TES. Evidence shows that family and whānau involvement makes a significant difference to learner/ākonga educational achievement and wellbeing. We received mixed feedback on this priority, however there was general support for having greater involvement of family and whānau in places of learning.

3. *NELP 3: Have high aspirations for all learners/ākonga, and support these by reducing streaming and adopting inclusive education practices.*

    This priority has been revised to explicitly address streaming practices. Feedback on the earlier draft of this priority indicated that people weren't sure what it was getting at; when we explained that it was addressing practices, such as streaming and same-ability grouping, that tend to restrict access to a full curriculum, participants at meetings were supportive. This priority has been moved from Objective two to Objective one, also in response to feedback that people saw it as being strongly linked to putting learners at the centre.

Objective Two – Barrier free access

4. *NELP/TES 4: Welcome and support learners/ākonga with disabilities and learning support needs.*

    This is a new joint priority focussed on the inclusion of learners with disabilities and learning support needs into the education environment, and reducing the barriers to participation and success they face. This responds to concerns that learners with additional needs were not adequately visible in the original NELP and TES.

    This revised priority aligns with the Learning Support Action Plan 2019 - 2025, which has its goal for a system where learners/ākonga *"… with learning support needs, including disabilities, are welcome and where their achievement, progress, wellbeing and participation are valued and supported"* (p 14).

5. *NELP/TES 5: Collaborate to support learners/ākonga to take the next step in education and between learning and work.*

    This priority combines NELP 4 and TES 3 priorities to have one jointly focussed on the importance of collaboration to support learner/ākonga transitions. Collaboration

between places of learning, family and whānau, and employers and industry, was identified as crucial to ensure learners/ākonga successfully make their next steps in their education and as they enter the workforce.

The explanatory text will acknowledge that this is not a linear progression or pathway through education and into the workforce. People leave education and return to retrain or upskill at many points throughout their lives.

6.   *NELP/TES 7: Ensure every learner/ākonga gains sound foundation skills, including literacy and numeracy.*

We received some feedback highlighting the need for a continued focus on literacy and numeracy, across the education system. Evidence supports the importance of developing strong foundation skills from a young age, to allow people to adapt to a changing world, and to fully participate in education, employment, and society throughout their lives.

This is a new joint priority. The specific focus on literacy and numeracy is in response to the relatively low rates of literacy and numeracy in the New Zealand adult population, particularly for Māori and Pacific peoples, and the importance of developing functional literacy to ensure positive employment and wellbeing outcomes.

Objective Three – Quality teaching and leadership

7.   *NELP/TES 9: Provide teaching and learning that sustains all learner/ākonga identities, languages and cultures.*

Following the shift in focus of NELP/TES 1, identity, language and culture are now the focus of a separate priority. Evidence indicates that when learners/ākonga and their whānau feel their identities, languages and cultures are valued, learners/ākonga enjoy greater success.

Achieving this shift in our education system is key to improving outcomes for Māori and Pacific ākonga at every stage of the system, and this is reflected in the work underway on both Ka Hikitia and the Action Plan for Pacific Education. Messages supporting this priority will discuss the enduring importance of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in multicultural New Zealand society.

Objective Four – Future of learning and work

8.   *NELP/TES 11: Ensure clear and supported pathways to enable learners/ākonga to achieve their learning and career aspirations.*

A new priority on careers education in schooling and tertiary has been added to address feedback that this area was a gap for the NELP. The provision of quality careers education and advice from a young age supports learners/ākonga to make well-informed decisions about their future pathways. This is particularly important before learners/ākonga make decisions on NCEA subject choices.

In response to feedback, we intend to place greater emphasis on the importance of schools and TEOs collaborating with employers and industry. Evidence indicates that learners/ākonga who are able to access employers and undertake work experience earlier in their learning pathway typically have better long term employability.

9. *TES 12: Move the focus of teaching and learning more strongly towards workplaces.*

Feedback on this priority was mixed. Some stakeholders (particularly universities, and those involved in adult and community education) were not in favour of the emphasis on learning focussed specifically for the workplace. They argued that a broader education including skills to support civic engagement and critical thinking, were as important.

This priority was supported by a number of industry representatives and the Industry Training Federation. In response to feedback that the TES should signal the Government's vision for the Reform of Vocational Education (RoVE), this priority provides an opportunity to set expectations and articulate this vison.

Greater clarity and specificity around roles and responsibilities for new entities established through the RoVE (e.g. Workforce Development Councils and the New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology), will be addressed in this priority.

10. *TES 13: Expand the range of education options and delivery models to support lifelong learning in a changing world.*

We received feedback that the original priority for lifelong learning was too focused on foundation learning, and needed to also encompass higher skills and qualifications. We have revised this priority and moved it from Objective 2 to 4 to emphasise the importance of lifelong learning in response to a changing world including the future of work.

Objective Five – World class inclusive education public education

11. *NELP/TES 15: Give practical effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi by building meaningful partnerships with mana whenua and Māori communities.*

A greater emphasis on Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Mātauranga Māori have been incorporated into NELP/TES 14, and TES 15. We heard that Te Tiriti needed to be more visible in the NELP and TES, to ensure the rights of Māori as tangata whenua are realised, and to support Māori contribution to decision making and planning in the education sector.

12. *TES 16: Enhance the contribution of research and mātauranga Māori in addressing local and global challenges.*

Original TES 13 has been revised to reflect feedback that stronger emphasis on the importance of research was needed, particularly in the role of research addressing both local *and global* challenges. This also responds to comments that original priority was too insular in focus, and didn't acknowledge the importance of collaboration and New Zealand's contribution to international research. The revised priority also signals the importance of mātauranga Māori as a tāonga, and the role of Wānanga in sustaining this.

Priorities that have been removed

13. *Original NELP 8: Ensure they offer learning that equips learners/ākonga with an understanding of New Zealand's cultural identities and our history.*

Feedback on this priority was divided. Some people were unsure about how this priority would be implemented, and who would decide what histories and whose perspectives would be taught. Others felt that there were other priorities that were more important. As New Zealand history is now a compulsory part of the New Zealand curriculum, and in

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an attempt to reduce the number of priorities, we consider that this priority is no longer needed.

14. *Original TES 12: Recognise and value our unique national identity.*

This priority was contentious, and the focus on national identity received considerable criticism, with many people asking who and what defines our national identity. This priority has been removed.