**(Neurodiversity in Education Coalition – incl DFNZ) NIE COALITION RESPONSE TO MoE LEARNING SUPPORT PLAN 2019 - 2025 UPDATE**

**NIE Coalition Request**

Made by email to Secretary of Education, 26 April 2023

In relation to **work already undertaken** under each of the six priorities, we'd like to understand:

* The nature of the work undertaken, its cost and who undertook the work
* Where the work involved specific outputs (eg developing tools, preparing resources, undertaking reviews etc), could you please share a link to these?
* The outcomes of the work undertaken, including any evaluation
* Where work involves ongoing roles, programmes or services, the length of funding provided. Where funding has or is due to run out, what plans are there to continue funding/ scale up?

Where **work has not yet been undertaken**, we're keen to understand the reason for that and what plans there are to complete it.

**KEY MESSAGES RE MoE RESPONSE**

* The Ministry of Education has totally dropped the ball in implementing the Learning Support Action Plan 2019-2025
* This action plan set out six priorities for critical and urgent work to support neurodiverse students and others with learning needs
* MoE responses to a request for updates on the six priorities show an abject failure to implement what was already a very limited commitment to improving education outcomes for students with neurodiversities and learning differences
* The work that has been done represents a watered down, ineffectual approach that falls far short of the commitments made
* Given that one in every five children in our education system are neurodiverse, this is a slap in the face for students who need support to unlock their full potential
* With appropriate support, neurodiversity brings creativity, fresh thinking and focus that adds value across all aspects of life
* On the flipside, undiagnosed and unsupported neurodiversity plays a significant role in disengagement from school, truancy, alarming literacy and numeracy standards, intractable mental health outcomes, youth offending and unemployment
* To have a Learning Support Action Plan in place, but essentially gathering cobwebs, just perpetuates these poor outcomes.
* The six priorities were:
	+ Learning Support Coordinators be introduced to work across schools and kura
	+ Screening and early identification of learning support needs
	+ Strengthening early intervention
	+ Flexible supports for neurodiverse children and young people
	+ Meeting the learning needs of gifted children and young people
	+ Improving education for children and young people at risk of disengaging
* Specific commitment for action were made against each of the six priorities, ranging from funding a first tranche of Learning Support Coordinators and designing the rollout of a second tranche; through to developing evidence-based screening tools, reducing waiting times for early intervention and creating a comprehensive set of tools and resources to help parents, teachers and other educators to better meet the needs of neurodiverse children and young people
* The MoE update on the priorities and specific commitments shows little concrete progress has been made. Whilst various frameworks, pilots and draft guidelines have been developed, these are no substitute for action

**MoE Response**

Provided 10 May 2023

| **Priority** | **Specific Commitments** | **MoE-Provided Update** | **NIE Response**  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Priority One**: Learning Support Coordinators*Learning Support Coordinators (LSCs) will work together**across a school cluster to ensure children and young people**with learning support needs get the help they need. LSCs**will work with teachers, school and kura leadership, and**within the Learning Support Delivery Model to implement**processes that help all children and young people progress,**participate and make successful transitions.* | Design and implement the first tranche in schools and kura. *Apr ‘19-Dec ‘21* Monitor/evaluate the implementation of the first tranche of LSCs. Design and implement the second tranche [subject to funding]. *Jan ‘20-Dec ‘25* | Funding of $217 million was allocated in Budget 2019 for the first tranche of Learning Support Coordinators (LSCs) to start from January 2020. The first 623 LSCs have been allocated to 124 learning support clusters, covering 1052 schools and kura. Ongoing funding is available for LSC salary and travel and networking costs, as these are permanent roles.A Learning Support Network of Expertise has been set up to provide an online community of practice and resource hub for LSCs.The three-phase evaluation of Tranche 1 of the LSC initiative is now complete. The Evaluation reports may be accessed here:* Phase 1: [Learning Support Coordinators Evaluation: Phase 1 Formative and process evaluation | Education Counts](https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/learning-support/learning-support-coordinators-evaluation-phase-1)
* Phase 2: [Learning Support Coordinators Evaluation: Phase 2 | Education Counts](https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/learning-support/learning-support-coordinators-evaluation-phase-2)
* Phase 3: [Learning Support Coordinators Evaluation: Phase 3 | Education Counts](https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/learning-support/learning-support-coordinators-evaluation-phase-3)

Subsequent LSC tranches will be subject to future Budget decisions. | * To clarify, do we understand correctly that the first tranche of LSCs are now funded by baseline funding?
* Why has the second tranche of LSCs not yet been brought on, five years after the LSAP was announced?
* What work has the Ministry of Education done to prepare for the second tranche roll-out?
* Is the Ministry confident that there will be sufficient high-quality teachers able to take on these new roles - 1560 teachers? Education workforce capacity a clear issue
 |
| **Priority Two**: Screening and early identification of learning support needs*Early identification and response to need has long-term benefits for children and young people. We need to be more systematic in how we identify a child’s learning support needs, so they get assistance as quickly as possible. We will add a new set of screening tools to assess all children at certain stages, and work with the Ministry of Health (MoH) to ensure these are integrated into a coherent system of measurement with health checks and screening.* | Develop evidence-based screening tools reflecting Māori concepts and focused on learning needs (rather than diagnosis) [subject to funding]:* Screening for dyslexia, dyspraxia and gifted - *Jul ‘19-Dec ‘25*
* A consistent set of tools at school entry. *Jul ‘19-Dec ‘25*

 Explore (through MoH initiatives) early childhood measurement (around age three) and teen health screening [subject to funding]. *From ‘20* | Kaiako-ākonga-whānau relationships are supported with tools to support the transition to school and elevate learner voice.A separate project to review the Aro Matawai Urunga-ā-Kura tool has been established to achieve the same for Māori-medium and Kaupapa Māori education.The following link provides information on other resources from the Learning Support Toolkit which may be helpful to you: [Learning Support Toolkit – Conversation space (education.govt.nz)](https://conversation.education.govt.nz/conversations/learning-support-action-plan/learning-support-coordinators/resources/)Due to re-prioritisation, there is an opportunity to cease further work on both the School Entry Kete and Aro Matawai Urunga-ā-Kura and not progress with the development of the digital platform for the School Entry Kete as planned.The School Entry Kete work completed to date would be leveraged within the Curriculum and Assessment work programme as part of developing a suite of supports to help teachers notice, recognise, and respond to learner progress.The Social and Emotional Literacy pilot will be completed by 30 June 2023. Cabinet has committed $19.7 million to deliver ENGAGE to 1,830 early learning services over the next four years, Incredible Beginnings will become part of the Incredible Years suite currently offered, the learnings and resources from The Alert Program will be shared with regional offices to use. | * ‘Supporting the transition to school and elevating learner voice (ie of 4 and 5 year olds) as stated here is a very different endeavour from early identification of learning support needs, as intended in priority two, including being more systematic about identifying these needs. Provision of information in the Learning Support Toolkit is not the same as systemic early identification. We note that giftedness is not included in the Learning Support toolkit despite being an identifiable learning support need
* The Social and Emotional Literacy pilot is again not equivalent to early identification of learning support needs, nor is the Incredible Years programme. These are programmes potentially of use AFTER early identification has taken place.
* The LSAP undertook to create a new set of screening tools to assess children at the following stages, working together with the Ministry of Health. These were to include:
	+ Universal health checks at age 3, including for ASD
	+ School entry
	+ Screening for dyslexia, dyspraxia and gifted (when?)
	+ Move from primary to secondary school
* Have these screening tools now been created?
* What percentage of children and young people are now being screened for neurodiversity and learning support needs at each of these stages?
* Of those screened, how many children have been picked up as likely to be neurodiverse/ have learning support needs ?
* What action is taken when a child is identified as likely to be neurodiverse/ have learning support needs?
* What tracking is undertaken of these children to ensure that they are receiving the support they need?
* What support is given to whānau when and after their child is identified?
 |
| **Priority Three**: Strengthening early intervention*We will identify the volume, mix and additional types of services needed, including information and support for families and whānau, and build on services introduced since 2017. We will work with other agencies to integrate and provide more flexible supports eg with MoH on Mana Whaikaha, and with Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust on an awareness campaign.* | Reduce waiting times for existing early interventions. *Jul ‘19-Dec ‘25* Improve early intervention for young children and their whānau. *Jan ‘19-Dec ‘25* Improve alignment with MoH, MSD, Oranga Tamariki and other agencies. *Jan ‘19-Dec ‘20* | The Ministry has developed and is continuing to embed, the practice framework He Pikorua ([Home – He Pikorua (education.govt.nz)](https://hepikorua.education.govt.nz/)). This framework works as a guide for all learning support staff and RTLB.To improve early intervention the Ministry is working on pilots and processes through the implementation of Te Tūāpapa.The Ministry has continued its partnership with Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust to create practical resources to support the needs of mokopuna. These resources reflect the Kōhanga reo curriculum and support kaiako in their daily interactions with mokopuna and whānau.KorowaiMokopuna – Massey University and Te Kōhanga Reo National trust have also supported the development of a new specialist teaching endorsement called Korowai Mokopuna. Kōhanga Reo kaiako doing this course are eligible for a learning support study award.  | * He Pikorua is a practice framework and does not increase capacity for early interventions as per the first action in this priority. What has the impact been of He Pikorua and Te Tūāpapa on early intervention?
* What volume, mix and type of services were identified by the Ministry as being needed to strengthen early intervention, including support for families and whānau? This has specifically not been addressed.
* To what extent has the Ministry now built the services identified? How many children are currently being supported by them? Are they available to any child throughout the country?
* What work has the Ministry undertaken with the Ministry of Health, MSD, Oranga Tamariki and other agencies in this regard? What has happened as a result in terms of improved alignment of services?
* What resources have been built together with the Kohanga Reo National Trust? How are they being used in practice across kohanga reo? What difference have they made to awareness of neurodiversity amongst kaiako and whānau? How is that being assessed?
* What was the baseline waiting time for early interventions when the LSP came in? What steps has the Ministry taken to reduce it? What is it now? This has clearly not been addressed
 |
| **Priority Four**: Flexible supports for neurodiverse children and young people*The focus in this priority is on building the understanding and capability of early learning services, schools and kura to teach and respond to neurodiverse children and young people to progress their learning at an appropriate depth and pace. We will work with the education and disability sectors, parents, whānau, young people and experts to develop new tools and resources for teachers, design new supports for children and young people, and address gaps in specialist services. There will need to be room for innovation and flexibility in the types of support. We will also have some specific work streams to provide for particular needs, eg dyslexia and autism spectrum disorder.* | Create a comprehensive set of tools and resources to help parents, teachers and other educators to better meet the needs of neurodiverse children and young people. *Jul ‘19-Dec ’21* Strengthen specialist supports for children and young people with ongoing needs who don’t qualify for the highest level of support and resourcing [subject to funding]. *May ‘20-Dec ‘22* Design improvements with the Resource Teacher:Literacy service. Implement agreed improvements [subject to funding]. *Jun ’20-Jun ‘22* | The Ministry has been working to provide flexible supports for neurodiverse ākonga. The following initiatives are completed or underway:* Highest Needs Review. Cabinet has agreed the high-level direction for change, and seven key shifts in the system. We are developing advice on the approach and next steps for the High Needs Work Programme. There is no additional Budget funding for this work to date. In 2023/2024 financial year the core project team across the Ministry was funded within baseline. Please find information here [Highest Needs Change Programme – Education in New Zealand](https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/changes-in-education/highest-needs-change-programme/)
* Inclusive Design Modules for educators leading inclusive practice in their schools and services are currently being trialled and a finalised. A set of resources will be available online from June 2023. More information is here [Inclusive design modules - Planning for diversity | Inclusive Education (tki.org.nz)](https://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/planning-for-diversity/)
* Dyslexia specific resource – a kete of resources was provided to all schools for use by kaiako and learning support staff to build knowledge about supporting ākonga with dyslexia or dyslexic-type traits. Please find further information here [Dyslexia Kete – Literacy Online](https://literacyonline.tki.org.nz/Literacy-Online/Learning-about-my-students-needs/Knowledge-of-the-learner/Literacy-and-students-with-special-education-needs/Dyslexia)
* For Māori medium specifically, Tīpaopao – Kauwhata Reo – is an introductory resource for supporting ākonga with dyslexia.
* Māori Medium Dyslexia Resource - The Ministry is working with Tainui Kāhui Ako to develop Māori medium resources to support dyslexic ākonga in Years 9-13. Five decodable texts for ākonga, a whānau information booklet and PowerPoint, and kaiako support guides were developed.
* Specialist teacher training – the Ministry provides about 350 kaiako with study awards each year to study in a two-year part-time Massey University Post-Graduate Diploma in Specialist Teaching. Up-to-date core content on autism and neurodiversity is now woven throughout the learning for all specialist teacher qualifications.
* [Inclusive.tki.org.nz](http://inclusive.tki.org.nz/) includes guidance for teachers and kaiako to design supports across the curriculum on: Dyslexia and Learning, FASD (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder) and Learning; ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder) and Learning; and Autism and Learning.
* Autism training – the Ministry continues to build capability to help teachers and kaiako understand and include neurodivergent ākonga. This includes:
* Learning Support Coordinators and teams around specific children can access autism training to better support autistic and other neurodivergent ākonga (Tilting the Seesaw for LSCs and Teams from Autism NZ). By the end of 2022 around 40% of LSCS had attended the course.
* The Ministry partnered with the Taonga Takiwātanga Trust to host 5 marae-based wānanga for exploring the Māori world view on takiwātanga (autism). The results of this were very positive, and the Ministry is now working with the Taonga Takiwātanga Trust to adapt the takiwātanga professional learning for Teacher Aides, Alternative Education providers, Attendance Services, and Iwi.
* The Ministry is a co-funder of the Aotearoa New Zealand Autism Guidelines (Guideline) through an MoU with the Ministry of Health and Education. Following the establishment of the new Ministry for Disabled People – Whaikaha, MoH’s Guideline responsibilities were transferred to Whaikaha on 1 July last year. The Guideline provides an opportunity to better understand and communicate best practices for supporting autistic people and their families and whānau.

The work on this Priority has been funded from within the Ministry baseline. | * Where are the comprehensive set of tools and resoures as noted?
* The HNR was specifically focused on those with highest needs - the action point in this priority specifically addresses supports for those children who do not qualify for highest needs funding. So, what specialist supports are now available?
* What work did the Ministry undertake with the education sector, learning support professionals and parents to identify the full range of tools and supports needed, and to build those tools? What tools were provided? What has been created for parents? What about for neurodiversities beyond dyslexia and autism such as ADHD, dyspraxia, sensory difficulties etc? How effective have these tools been? How does the Ministry evaluate this?
* What specialist supports have been strengthened for young people not at the highest level of support? Did the Ministry convene a user group of young people, parents, Māori and teachers and other educators to co-design a range of supports? What was implemented? How effective has it been?
* Were improvements designed with the Resource Teacher Literacy Service to better support young people with literacy difficulties, including dyslexia? Were they implemented?
* Re specialist teacher training - of the 350 annual awards for this programme, how many are for RTLBs? It is noted that RTLB do not work in classrooms with students, instead their remit is to advise teachers. Has the Ministry conducted any survey to understand the whether young people, parents and teachers do now feel well-supported to provide flexibly for the needs of neurodiverse children and young people?
* Again it is noted that gifted learners are excluded from the remit of the inclusive tki.
 |
| **Priority Five**: Meeting the learning needs of gifted children and young people*We are working with sector experts to design a group of flexible supports for gifted children and young people. This work will address a current gap in support and provide new tools for teachers and other educators, whānau and their children.* | Increase access to supports for gifted children and young people by implementing an initial package of support. *Jan-Dec ‘19* Implement an extended package of support for gifted children and young people. *Nov ‘19-Dec ‘20* | The Ministry has implemented an extended package of support for gifted children and young people. The following link will provide you with information on a programme of events, guidance for kaiako, and awards [Home » Gifted & Talented Education (tki.org.nz)](https://gifted.tki.org.nz/)The Ministry has increased access to support for gifted ākonga and is working to design flexible supports that take account of Māori concepts of giftedness. This work is not yet complete.A budget of $1.27M p.a. was announced in 2019. | * What work did the Ministry do with sector experts to design a group of flexible supports for gifted young people? (The only national gifted education provider, NZCGE, was not provided with an opportunity to contribute to this.)
* How many children have received gifted student awards? At what value? Of what impact? Why have stories of impact not been shared as per repeated requests for this via the Gifted Advisory Group.
* How many teachers have received teacher awards? At what value? Of what impact? Why have stories of impact not been shared as per repeated requests for this via the Gifted Advisory Group
* What evaluation has been done of the impact of the awards and the events and opportunities programme?
* What percentage of gifted children have been impacted by the gifted education package?
* Contracts under the gifted education package finish in July and December 2023. Why is the Ministry not working together with sector experts to review and refine the package now?
 |
| **Priority Six**: Improving education for children and young people at risk of disengaging*We want to prevent disengagement at any stage of a child or young person’s educational journey, improve at-risk education provision for those who need it, and ensure better support is available to help children and young people re-engage in learning. Strengthening screening and the early identification of learning support needs will help identify learning difficulties that may lead to disengagement. Providing early additional support will address the needs of children and young people with behavioural needs.* | Review options, drawing on good practice in NZ and overseas. *Feb-Jul ‘19* Co-design a more adaptable, flexible system of at-risk provision that better meets individual needs and is integrated with schools. *Feb-Oct ‘19* Implement new provision, including negotiating new contracts for service provision [subject to funding]. *Jul ‘20-Jan ‘21* Review the stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions and expulsion guidelines. *Feb-Jul ‘20* | The first draft of the revised guidelines on stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions, and expulsions (SSEE) are now out for feedback from the SSEE Advisory Group and Ministry groups. These updated guidelines will help educators to better recognise and understand ākonga experiences to reduce the prevalence of SSEE, by providing best practice for managing and de-escalating situations that might otherwise result in SSEE. Information about the guidelines can be found here: [Stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions and expulsions guidelines – Part 1 – Education in New Zealand](https://www.education.govt.nz/school/managing-and-supporting-students/student-behaviour-help-and-guidance/stand-downs-suspensions-exclusions-and-expulsions-guidelines/)The redesign of Alternative Education provision has not yet been progressed. Incremental improvements have been made through the re-contracting of alternative education providers.In Budget 2021, Alternative Education received $4.444 million (Five-year operating total) cost pressure increase to “maintain education provision for the most at-risk young people by addressing the inflationary cost-pressure for Alternative Education (AE)”. Funding can be used flexibly by providers to help to meet the costs of essential resources and supports, such as access to quality teaching and learning experiences; learning resources; access to health, mental health, and broader social services; enrichment activities; transport costs; and other basic wellbeing needs”In Budget 2022 Alternative Education received a further $2.25 million (Five-year operating total) to “meet the increased costs of essential resources and supports to re-engage students. This could include learning resources, access to health, mental health and broader social services, enrichment activities or transport costs” In Budget 2022,Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamureceived $15.5 million (Four-year operating total) to “scale up Te Aho o Te Kura support for at-risk young people to reengage in school, in line with its proven ‘Big Picture’ approach, supporting around 2,500 at-risk students once fully implemented” | * Why has the review of the provision of education for children and young people at risk of disengaging from education not gone ahead?
* Why has the SSEE guidelines review been so delayed (due to be undertaken Feb-July 20)?
 |

**Follow-Up**

**Questions in the House**

* Why hasn’t the Government brought on the second tranche of LSCs?
* How many

**OI Act request**

**Call for s Select Committee inquiry**

* Into whether its own recommendations have been followed?
* Into the implementation of the Learning Support Action Plan?