



Te Kura

TE AHO O TE KURA POUNAMU

THE CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL

Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu

Briefing for the Incoming Minister

November 2017

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1. Introduction

This briefing introduces Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu (Te Kura), outlines the school's strategic direction and highlights the current areas of focus of which the Minister of Education should be aware.

An organisational overview of Te Kura can be found in Appendix 1 and a summary of our strategic direction in Appendix 2.

Further information can be found on the Te Kura website at: www.tekura.school.nz

Te Kura offers personalised, high quality learning programmes to over 20,000 students throughout New Zealand each year who access all, or part, of their learning with Te Kura. We offer programmes from early childhood (age 3) to Year 13/NCEA Level 3.

Te Kura is the largest school in New Zealand, with nearly 100 years' experience in distance education. We have more than 300 registered teachers based in locations from Christchurch to Whangarei, all highly experienced in providing learning programmes at a distance using a range of learning and communication tools.

Today, we use online learning for much of our educational provision. We utilise a range of technologies and techniques that minimise the impact of isolation, intensify attention to individual needs, blend face-to-face learning with self-directed activity and respect the role of whānau in the educational process.

Personalised, authentic learning is at the heart of Te Kura's approach to teaching and learning. We have a regionalised delivery model that offers regular opportunities for face-to-face interaction between teachers and students. Students who are enrolled with us full-time meet with teachers to receive guidance and support in their learning, as well as meeting other students.

The establishment of Communities of Online Learning reinforces the direction we are already heading in, particularly our focus on online learning, personalised and authentic learning experiences, and priority groups.

2. Current areas of focus

Te Kura's current areas of focus are:

Communities of Online Learning

- Te Kura is well placed to become the first Community of Online Learning (COOL). We believe being a COOL will give learners and their whānau greater flexibility to choose the education that best suits their needs. The proposed changes reinforce the direction we are already heading in.
- Te Kura is very willing to work with education agencies and other providers to share our knowledge of providing quality learning programmes and pastoral care at a distance and online.
- Te Kura has experience and capability that will enhance the development of the new regulatory environment. In particular, we would welcome the opportunity to work with the Ministry of Education on accreditation criteria for new COOL and design of the new funding system.
- Te Kura is in discussions with the Ministry of Education about our own transition to becoming a COOL no later than 31 December 2019. We would like to explore opportunities to reflect the intent of legislation - to provide learners and their whānau with more choices - by reviewing and simplifying our enrolment criteria prior to 2020.

Online Learning

- Te Kura aims to have most of our students learning online in our online learning environment 'My Te Kura' by the end of 2018
- In 2015, we rewrote year 9-10 programmes for the online environment. In 2016, the majority of NCEA Level 1 courses were adapted into interactive online modules. In 2017, we completed adaptation of NCEA Level 2 resources, and have begun the adaptation of Level 3. Our integrated programme for years 7-10 is currently being adapted for online delivery.
- At the beginning of 2017 Te Kura implemented a new student and whānau support service dedicated to helping students start working in the online environment as quickly and smoothly as possible.
- Te Kura has made a commitment to assist our full-time students who wish to enrol in online courses but do not currently have access to a suitable device and/or internet connection due to financial hardship. This represents a significant financial investment for Te Kura.
- Digital delivery of courses and fully online courses create issues for some education providers, especially if they are not currently able to offer sufficient access to computers for students who are dual registered with Te Kura.
- Te Kura is particularly keen to work with alternative education providers to help support their access to technology, but we believe involvement by the Ministry is crucial.
- Te Kura is also working closely with the Department of Corrections to facilitate access to our online learning environment for prisoners who are eligible to work online in the Department's secure online learning environment.

Authentic Learning Pilot

- Personalised, authentic, project-based learning is at the heart of Te Kura's approach to teaching and learning.
- 2017 is the final year of a four-year Te Kura pilot to deliver a sustained, authentic learning programme to 80 'at-risk' students in Years 9-11 in multiple geographic locations.
- The pilot tests an approach that is resourced at a significantly higher rate by the Ministry of Education than the current rate for a full-time student enrolled at Te Kura.
- Interim results are encouraging and show pilot students achieving at a much higher rate than control groups
- The Ministry of Education has contracted the Education Review Office to evaluate the pilot.
- Te Kura is now funding its own virtual authentic learning pilot. The aim is to test the approach in an online environment with fewer dependencies on the geographical proximity of students.

Achievement of priority groups

- Māori students are a significant proportion of our roll and a high priority in our planning.
- Good progress has been made in improving the achievement rates of Māori students in recent years but that progress now appears to have plateaued and achievement rates are still lower than those of the rest of the school.
- In 2016, we reviewed our Māori Student Success Framework and we are now in the process of implementing the recommendations.
- Te Kura is increasingly using data analysis to target learners for specific interventions, including working with the Ministry of Education to support students at risk of not achieving.
- Te Kura is currently reviewing our Pasifika strategy.
- Engagement with Pasifika communities is challenging but we are committed to developing a new strategy and creating greater awareness and understanding of what Te Kura has to offer.

Kāhui Ako | Communities of Learning

- Te Kura's nationwide reach means we can see value in being involved in Kāhui Ako Communities of Learning.
- Our regionalisation strategy means we have a physical presence in many New Zealand cities and towns and is well aligned with the intent of Kāhui Ako.
- Many of our dual registered students are currently enrolled in schools that are part of a Kāhui Ako. Many of our fulltime and young adult students have come from, or will return to, schools that are part of a Kāhui Ako. All of our students are part of their local communities and could benefit from Te Kura being involved in local Kāhui Ako.
- Te Kura is currently in discussions with the Ministry of Education about having a greater involvement in Kāhui Ako, and have identified locations where we have a high concentration of students.

International education

- By leveraging our investment in the development of online teaching and learning resources Te Kura is able to play a role in supporting the school sector to achieve the goals in the Government's Leadership Statement for International Education (2011).
- Areas where we may be able to assist include:
 - Providing introductory courses offshore to students who are considering coming to New Zealand to study with a tertiary provider.
 - Providing high quality educational services to students in other countries wishing to improve their English language skills.
 - Developing educational resources in Pasifika languages that reflect and value Pasifika learners' identity, language and culture that other providers and agencies may not prioritise or have the knowledge to develop.
 - Providing training for teachers in online learning whether delivering Te Kura courses or not.

3. Appendix 1 - Organisational overview

Te Kura is New Zealand's state distance education provider, and subject to most of the legal and regulatory frameworks that apply to other schools, with some key exceptions. These include:

- the appointment and composition of the Board
- a funding model based on student enrolments and engagement
- an enrolment policy that states specific criteria for enrolment, and
- specific provisions related to Te Kura within the primary and secondary teacher's collective employment contracts, and site collectives for support staff and early childhood teachers.

What Te Kura does

Te Kura provides educational services to early childhood, primary and secondary level students for whom it is the best current option.

It also provides specialist subjects for dual-enrolled students attending other schools who do not have access to a broad curriculum, and supplementary services to students with special needs.

Te Kura aims to have all its students achieve their potential. Our focus is to work with students, their families, whānau, communities and other agencies to provide effective teaching and learning that is personalised to each student's individual needs and aspirations.

Our students

Te Kura's full-time roll ranges from students in geographically remote families to urban students who enrol for a wide variety of reasons (see Table 2 below). These are students for whom face-to-face schooling is not currently the best option, including those who have been referred to Te Kura as alienated or excluded from their face-to-face school, those who have been referred by Ministry of Education Special Education because they have psychological or psycho-social needs, and students who have been referred by the Ministry for Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki. These students make up 32% of our full-time roll at years 1 to 8, and 59% at years 9 to 13.

As can be seen in Table 2 below, the students with whom the school has been long associated – those who are geographically isolated, itinerant and those living overseas – now make up 41% of the full-time roll for years 1 to 13.

Te Kura's early childhood enrolments continue to be drawn mainly from rural areas and most go on to attend their local primary school. As part of the Ministry of Education programme to increase participation in early childhood education, in particular for Māori and Pasifika families, parents of children who are ineligible under any other early childhood gateway to enrol at Te Kura may make an application for their child's enrolment. Students enrolled through this gateway are likely to be living in urban areas.

Enrolments in Te Kura's programmes for adult learners include a large number of young adult students – those over 16 years of age who have already left school and have an entitlement to free education up to and including the end of the year in which they turn 19.

Total enrolments over the year to the end of 2016 were 22,741 with around 12,000 students enrolled at any one time. However, many of Te Kura's students do not stay on the roll for the full year, with only 40% of students enrolled for the whole year. Table 1 below shows cumulative enrolments (including withdrawn students) for 2016, plus the number of EFTS generated, across all categories.

Table 1

Enrolment type	Cumulative enrolments 2016	EFTS 2016
Early childhood	694	469
Primary fulltime	861	538
Secondary fulltime	2,327	1,385
Primary duals	494	150
Secondary duals	10,964	2,326
Adults	2,408	476
Young adults	4,824	1,711
Fee paying	169	n/a
Total	22,741	7,055

Table 2

Enrolment type of full-time primary and secondary level students	Cumulative enrolments 2016	Percentage
Exceptional arts/sports	80	3%
Exclusion/expulsion	243	8%
Isolation (all types)	434	14%
Itinerancy	297	9%
Non-enrolled (alienation)	493	15%
Oranga Tamariki	71	2%
Overseas	581	18%
Psychological/psycho-social	843	26%
Young parents	146	5%
TOTAL	3,188	100%

Governance

Te Kura is governed by a Board of Trustees, the composition and appointment of which is determined by the Minister of Education in accordance with section 95 of the Education Act 1989. The constitution of Te Kura's Board is gazetted.

The Board is supported by the Risk Assurance Committee and the Employers Committee.

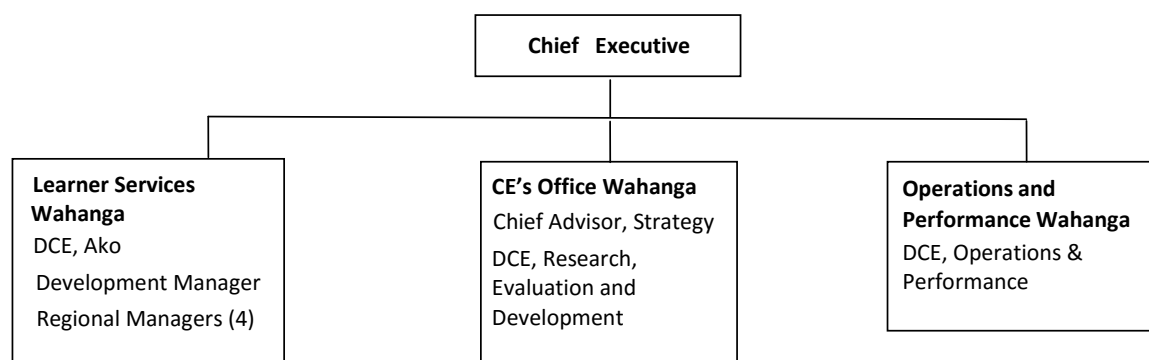
Board members

Term expiry dates

Karen Sewell (Chair) – reappointed June 2015	September 2018
Gillian Heald – reappointed June 2015	September 2018
Maxine Moana-Tuwhangai – reappointed December 2016	November 2019
Stuart Middleton – reappointed May 2017	May 2020
John Chemis – appointed September 2015	September 2018
Ruma Karaitiana – appointed May 2017	May 2020
Mele Wendt – appointed July 2017	July 2020

Structure

Te Kura's management structure is detailed in the diagram below.



Te Kura is organised into four wahanga (areas) – Learner Services, Operations & Performance, Research Evaluation & Development and the Chief Executive's office. The CE and the Board are supported by the Chief Advisor, Strategy.

The Senior Leadership Team has responsibility for the overall leadership and strategic direction of the school, and comprises the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive Ako, Deputy Chief Executive Operations and Performance, Deputy Chief Executive Research Evaluation and Development, and the Chief Advisor, Strategy.

Te Kura has the equivalent of approximately 440 full-time staff members. In addition, we oversee the employment of 140 teacher aides. Approximately 40% of our staff are based in regional offices outside Wellington, with 92% of teaching staff located in their region.

Funding

The Ministry of Education funds Te Kura in accordance with section 81A of the Education Act 1989. Funding is based on student enrolments and engagement.

4. Appendix 2 - Strategic direction

Te Kura's vision is that our students achieve their educational and personal goals, enabling them to participate effectively as members of their communities.

Achievement of our vision will be reflected in a school where:

- teachers and students work within a variety of flexible, interactive and engaging learning environments
- students are engaged in personalised, authentic and collaborative work
- partnerships are the basis of effective engagement with schools, family/whānau and other community organisations
- the majority of our teachers are based in the regions, closer to their students
- online learning and blended learning are embedded within the school's pedagogy
- the digital distribution of resources is the default setting
- teachers and students have access to a high standard of ICT resources (hardware, software, connectivity, content and support)
- the curriculum is flexible, adaptive and responsive
- diversity is recognised as a strength
- there is increased student achievement by Māori and other priority groups

Personalising learning

The key theme that runs through every aspect of Te Kura's strategic plan is personalising learning. As a distance education provider we are free from some of the constraints that a face-to-face school has to deal with, such as managing classes and timetables. That means teaching one student at a time is a fact of life for Te Kura. We have a large student base with a wide range of circumstances and needs. This compels us to deliver a differentiated service where 'one size fits one'. Personalising learning features consistently in the literature as a key component of future learning systems.

Personalising learning emphasises the place of students, their values, context and needs at the centre of all teaching and learning experiences. Students, together with their families, whānau and teachers, are actively involved in creating their own personalised learning pathways and plans. These recognise their unique potential, talents and strengths, meet their particular mix of requirements and are tailored to ensure they have the opportunity to succeed. By putting personalised learning at the centre of everything we do, we are also able to develop supporting strategies that are consistent and inclusive and which will provide improved educational outcomes for all of our students.

Future-oriented teaching and learning

Another key theme in our strategic plan is a focus on future-oriented learning and teaching. It is widely argued that current educational systems, structures and practices are not sufficient to address and support learning needs for all students in the 21st century¹. A transformation is required in order for the current system of education, developed in the age of industrialisation, to meet the evolving and dynamic challenges of the 21st century².

In a future-orientated teaching and learning environment 'teachers' can include everybody, working alongside licensed professionals, and teaching can be delivered teacher to student, student to student, or student to teacher. Teaching and learning can occur anywhere and family and whānau view schools as a place for them to learn too³.

¹ Supporting future-oriented learning and teaching – a New Zealand perspective (Ministry of Education, 2012)

² Global Education Leaders Programme: <http://gelponline.org/node/14/what-education-30>

³Toward Society 3.0: A New Paradigm for 21st century education (Dr John Moravec, 2008)

The Global Education Leaders Programme describes a transformed education system as:

- aiming to provide equitable access to higher-order capabilities
- achieved through holistic change because the system is complex and interdependent
- characterised by a transfer of ownership from teachers to learners; and
- accelerated by collaborative learning techniques

Te Kura's current strategic direction is centred on three overarching and integrated strategic goals, which are the focus of everything we do, within the context of teaching and learning as core delivery for the school.

Student presence => Student engagement => Student achievement

Te Kura is focused on three strategic priorities:

- online learning
- improving education outcomes for Māori and Pasifika students and other priority groups
- authentic and engaging learning experiences

The strategic priorities are supported by three key enablers which highlight the key things we need to do across the school to support the achievement of our strategic goals and priorities, and our core delivery of teaching and learning. These cut across every aspect of the school's operations and typically contribute to more than one of our strategic priorities.

Our strategy is under-pinned by three capability improvement initiatives. These are focused on ensuring our resources, tools and systems are fit for purpose and focused on achieving our goals.

Te Kura's strategic framework for 2013-2018 is summarised in the strategy map that follows. More detail on the specific actions that will be taken is available in a high-level Action Plan contained in our Strategic Plan 2013-2018. Key actions are incorporated into our team annual plans each year.

Strategy Map 2013 – 2018

