

Building Sustainable Schooling Networks:

The Implementation Phase for Network Reviews

FINAL DRAFT

Stage 4

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Foreword

Network reviews create new opportunities for strengthening teaching and learning in community schools for the benefit of all students.

Building Sustainable Schooling Networks has been designed to support principals, boards and their communities in their development and implementation of strategies directed towards the provision of stronger education, following a network review.

I acknowledge that the process of change has been challenging but believe that the reviews can and need to help to strengthen the network against future school roll declines by reducing potential future uncertainties and through freeing up resources that can be directed towards increased learning.

The resource provides detailed information about the changes that may result from reviews and how such changes might be managed and implemented to support and develop teaching and learning. It sets out the roles and responsibilities of the key people involved and clarifies important legislation, policies, processes and procedures.

Specialist support and resources are also available from the Ministry of Education in order to assist you throughout the implementation process if required. Funding entitlements and ways to access them are explained in Section 2 of the resource.

Building Sustainable Schooling Networks is the result of consultation with a number of stakeholders in the review process. Their feedback and advice have been invaluable in developing what we hope you will find is an informative, practical and user-friendly set of reference materials.

The resource has been organised into independent sections within this ringbinder. For ease of use, the contents and page references for each section are on each section's introductory page. The loose-leaf design of the resource means that it can be easily amended and further information added if necessary.

The Ministry of Education is committed to working with schools to support efforts to ensure a smooth and successful implementation transition takes place. I wish you every success as you embark on this stage of your journey.

Howard Fancy
Secretary for Education
Ministry of Education

Contents Overview

Network Reviews

This resource is prepared for use in the following network review areas:
Central Northland, Russell Peninsula, Matakaoa, Wairoa, Coastal Schools, South Egmont, Taihape, Upper Hutt/Stokes Valley, Grey Valley, Timaru, Invercargill

Foreword from the Secretary for Education

An Overview

This section provides a summary of the main issues regarding implementation.

Glossary

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This section examines the broad range of implementation issues that need to be taken into account once the Minister of Education’s decisions have been made.

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AN OVERVIEW

MEETING THE LEARNING NEEDS OF STUDENTS DURING AND AFTER NETWORK REVIEWS

Meeting student learning needs and ensuring the delivery of quality educational outcomes are goals that underpin education planning. These goals should continue to lead the thinking of boards during the process of a network review and any subsequent reorganisation. This focus will help to establish continuing schools on a sound educational footing.

The Ministry recognises that achieving this can be more complex during a time of change. Several sources of assistance are available to support boards in this area:

- ▲ A Project Manager is appointed and funded by the Ministry
- ▲ An Education Facilitator is available through the local Ministry office, for a period of time after the final decision is announced, to assist individual schools to develop educational strategies
- ▲ Continuing schools are required to use part of their EDI funding to employ an Operational Change Manager in a full or part-time capacity. Several of the Operational Change Manager's functions may have a bearing on the learning needs of students including:
 - time-tabling where relevant
 - staffing decisions.

Further details on these roles can be found in Section 1 of this resource. Information on the EDI funding can be found in Section 2.

THE IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

Boards must be closely involved with the implementation of the Minister's decisions. It is their opportunity to shape education for their area. Reviews are not easy and often community feelings are high. Best outcomes will be achieved when boards and principals come together in a group and consider the issues, not just for their own schools, but for education in their area.

THE BOARD AS EMPLOYER FOLLOWING THE FINAL DECISION

Boards must ensure that they consult and report back to school staff. Boards must take account of the employment agreements of all teaching (NZEI/PPTA) and non-teaching staff (NZEI/SFWU). Boards should seek advice from the New Zealand School Trustees Association (NZSTA) regarding employment issues.

THE ROLE OF PRINCIPALS

Principals will be integrally involved. Their expertise and knowledge of students and their families and the community will be invaluable.

They may be asked by their boards to oversee the information that goes out to parents and students such as newsletters or pamphlets. They will also need to be available to answer questions and deal with the day-to-day queries and concerns that arise from both parents and staff. Boards must monitor the principal's workload and make arrangements for support during the process if this is required.

Principals have a responsibility to keep school staff focused on student learning throughout the course of the changes and afterwards during the transition phase. However, they also need to acknowledge the potential stress for staff. Boards and principals should set in place appropriate support for all staff (perhaps in the form of change workshops or counselling or an employee assistance programme) throughout the review and transition period.

THE IMPLEMENTATION REFERENCE GROUP

After the Minister's decisions, an Implementation Reference Group needs to be formed to guide the process of implementation across the cluster. The Implementation Reference Group may comprise the same members as the Review Reference Group, but the group needs to be formed to suit the new purpose.

The central role of the Implementation Reference Group is to ensure that implementation is planned across schools for the mutual benefit, both present and future, of all the schools in the network. The merging, closing and continuing schools have an obvious interest in the implementation process, as do the schools that have not changed as a result of the review. It is important to realise that one of the goals of a network review is to increase co-operation between the schools that remain, to maximise educational benefit. Therefore, it is essential that the non-affected schools be involved in the Implementation Reference Group even if there are aspects of the implementation in which they do not need to be closely involved.

Implementation matters involve property, appointments and enrolment issues, sorting out new transport arrangements, thinking about how to spend EDI and JSIF money, as well as planning educationally for the new schooling arrangement.

APPOINTING MANAGERS FOR THE CHANGE PROCESS

The Ministry appoints a **Project Manager** to oversee and facilitate the implementation of the whole project. An **Operational Change Manager** is usually appointed for each merger and a **Closure Manager** will be selected for each closing school. (A Project Manager's role may be combined with that of a Operational Change Manager or Closure Manager, particularly for less complex reorganisations). Schools appointing an Operational Change Manager will fund that position from the EDI money.

The Implementation Reference Group works with the Project Manager, Operational Change Manager and/or Closure Manager to ensure that together they have an action plan for the merger or closure. The Ministry oversees this work as the decisions of the Minister are carried out. The Ministry will support the managers and the boards through this process. The Ministry will also give support to boards and principals, individually and across the network, to ensure that the schools receive a good educational start.

MERGING SCHOOLS

When two or more schools are required to merge, one school is designated 'the continuing school' and that school board is termed 'the board of the continuing school'. The board of the continuing school has the mandate to govern through the transition merger process and each board of the merging schools must be represented on the board of the continuing school by a co-opted trustee for the balance of the board's term of office.

From the date that the Minister's decision to merge schools is published by notice in the *New Zealand Gazette*, the board of the continuing school has 28 days within which it must co-opt a trustee from each of the merging school boards.

When the merger takes effect (which is the date specified in the Gazette notice that can be no earlier than the end of the term after the term during which the notice is published) the board of the continuing school must hold elections for a new board within three months of that date.

If the merger takes effect after 31 October in the year before an election year and before 31 December in that election year, then the board of the continuing school does not have to hold an election until the next election year. All trustees on the board of the continuing school, including the co-opted trustees, would hold office until the trustees elected at the next election take office.

If, immediately before the merger took effect, a combined board was established under section 110 of the Education Act 1989, then the board of the continuing school would be the combined board and it would continue to govern until the next election year.

CLOSING SCHOOLS

When the Minister decides to close schools, there are a number of actions that must take place. The Project Manager will work with these schools to support them through this process.

HOW IS A SCHOOL REORGANISATION FUNDED?

After the Minister's decisions are made, there are implementation costs such as:

- ▲ communications costs
- ▲ staff and board counselling/support costs
- ▲ costs of any additional board meetings.

These costs are either met from individual school funds or from an advance on EDI funding (with the agreement of the Ministry and the Implementation Reference Group).

The Education Development Initiative (EDI) policy has been developed to ensure that when schools merge or close, additional money, paid for from the savings created by the reorganisation, is used for the benefit of the schools in the network. Some of the funding is used to implement the decisions of the review. Most of the money, however, is intended for re-investment in the on-going education of the students whose schools are merged or closed.

The way that EDI funding is used to reinvest in education is a matter for negotiation between the schools and the Ministry of Education. The Ministry and the boards of merging and continuing schools will sign a Memorandum of Agreement that identifies the key projects to be funded.

STAFFING ENTITLEMENTS AND APPOINTMENTS

As good employers, boards must be mindful of their responsibilities towards staff and should work with the NZSTA Industrial Services. Unions (NZEI, PPTA, SFWU) will be involved from the start of the process and will assist in supporting staff.

The period of reorganisation is a difficult time for all staff who face uncertainties about their positions and the people they will be working with. Staff should have access to all available information as early as possible.

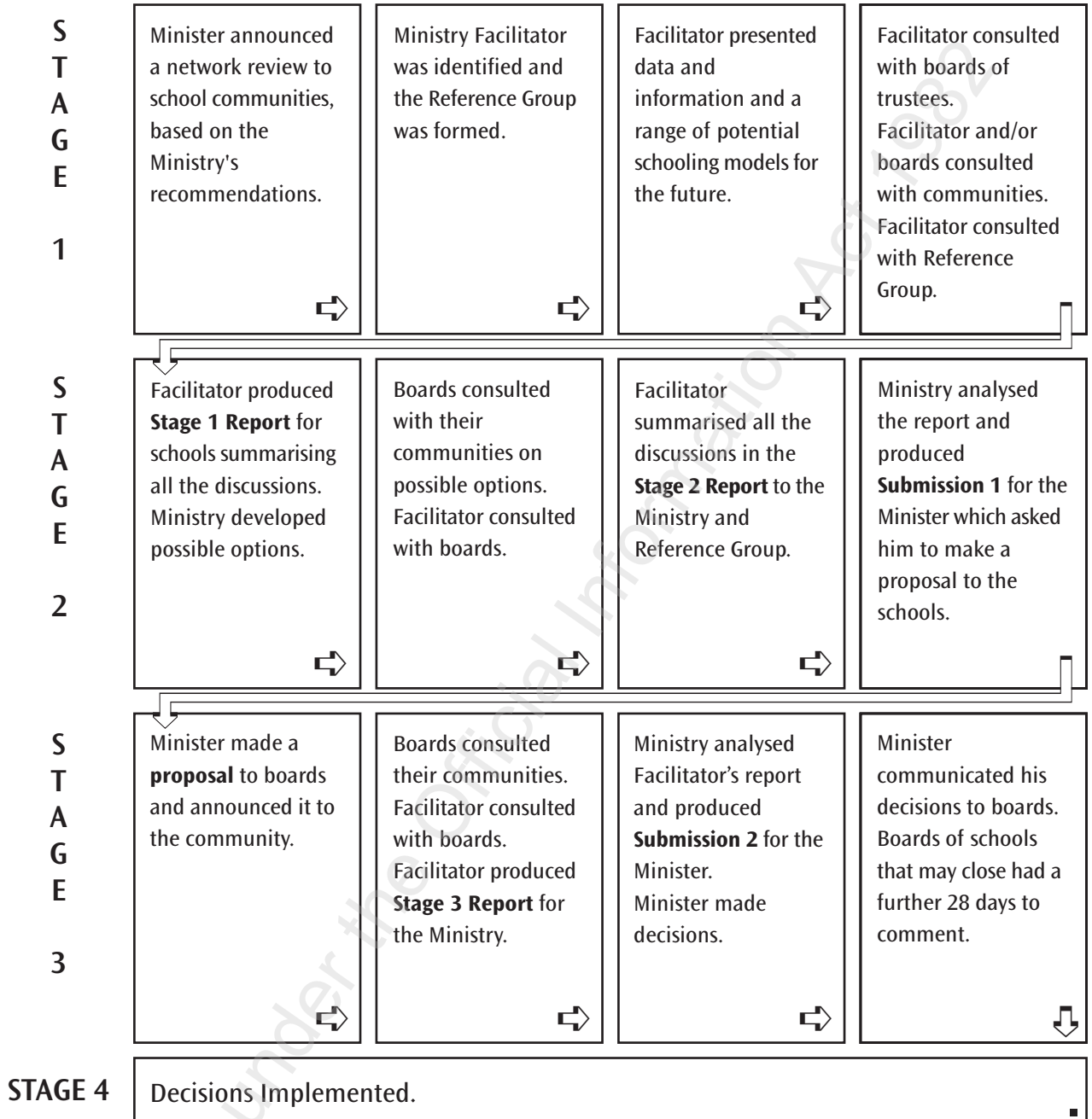
All appointment decisions should be made in time for the reorganised schools to begin, fully staffed, on the implementation date. The Ministry works with NZSTA, boards and unions to clarify legislative requirements and to ensure that processes for appointing staff are clear.

Working together for the best possible results

Board members who work together and with the local community achieve the best possible results for students during a school reorganisation.

Boards can work through problems more easily if they are clear about their own roles and responsibilities with regard to school governance issues and if they can take a broad view of the educational needs of their whole community, now and through the next 10-15 years.

What was the review process?



In some cases review areas chose mediation, which occurred during Stage 3 of the review, after the Facilitator provided the Stage 3 Report. The areas that chose mediation were: Central Northland, Russell Peninsula, Wairoa, Stokes Valley, Timaru and Invercargill.

Glossary

APIS

Association of Proprietors of Integrated Schools.

Area/composite schools

Are usually based in rural areas and combine primary, intermediate and secondary schooling at one location.

Boards of trustees

All schools must operate under the provisions of the Education Act of 1989. Boards of trustees govern all state and integrated schools in New Zealand. The boards are made up of elected parents, the school principal and a staff representative. Secondary school boards must also have a student representative.

Operational Change Manager

The Operational Change Manager's role is to assist merging or continuing schools with the additional property, site development, legal, financial and administrative processes required by a merger.

Closure

One possible outcome of a network review. Under a closure, a school legally ceases to exist on a certain date. After that date the outstanding obligations are looked after by a Residual Agent.

Closure Manager

The Closure Manager works at a closing school to assist the principal and board with all the additional property, legal, financial and administrative processes required by the school's closure.

Consultation

The purpose of consultation is to encourage participation by people affected by a decision. It provides the potential to improve the quality of the decision-making process. The courts consider that the consultor must:

- ▲ give sufficiently precise information on what is being proposed
- ▲ give the participants enough time to respond and raise issues
- ▲ keep an open mind and consider carefully the suggestions, rather than decide what to do before consultation occurs
- ▲ provide feedback to consultees whenever possible.

Continuing school

When schools merge, one school is identified as the continuing school. The board of this school works with the trustees of the merging school board(s) to implement the merger.

Continuing site

When schools merge, one school site usually remains in operation, the other(s) is (are) usually disposed of. The site school is not always the same as the continuing school. See "Continuing school" above.

Educational Development Initiative (EDI)

The EDI policy provides a pool of one-off funding that is generated if a school is closed or merged with another school. The funding is designed to fund new education initiatives in the schools that remain.

Enrolment Scheme

An enrolment scheme is a means of preventing overcrowding, or preventing the risk of overcrowding in a particular school. Schools negotiate enrolment schemes with the Ministry and consult parents and other schools about the scheme.

Implementation Reference Group

An Implementation Reference Group is established after the Minister's final decisions are announced, to help implement the Minister's decisions across the network.

Integrated schools

Integrated schools are mostly schools that started as private schools and have now become part of the state system. They teach the New Zealand curriculum but keep their own special character (usually a philosophical or religious belief) as part of their school programme. Their land and buildings are not owned by the Crown, but by the proprietors (usually a church or other similar trust board).

Joint School Initiative Funding (JSIF)

Funding generated as a result of a network review. The funding does not belong to any one of the continuing schools but to the network as a whole, and it must be used to improve educational outcomes in ways that are not specific to a particular school.

Kura Kaupapa Maori (KKM)

State schools where the teaching is in the Maori language. Kura Kaupapa Maori cater for students from Years 1-8 or Years 1-13. Kura Kaupapa Maori work within a particular philosophy called Te Aho Matua and involve whanau very strongly in the education of their children.

Memorandum of Agreement

An agreement signed by the Ministry and school boards that details the use of EDI and JSIF funding.

Merging

One possible result of a network review. This occurs when two or more schools merge together to form one school.

NZEI

New Zealand Educational Institute. The national union of primary teachers.

NZSTA

New Zealand School Trustees Association. The national interest group representing school boards of trustees.

PPTA

Post Primary Teachers Association. The national union of secondary teachers.

Project Manager

In the implementation phase of a network review, the role which pulls together all the property, site, financial, legal, administrative and scheduling activity, and which has overall responsibility for co-ordinating all the other parties.

Review Reference Group

The Review Reference Group is made up of a group of local people, including school and community people. It is established by the Ministry to ensure that everyone's voice is heard by the Ministry and that their ideas are presented to the Minister fairly.

Review Facilitator

A Review Facilitator is a person employed by the Ministry to provide schools with information, develop options for change and set up consultation during the review. The Review Facilitator also prepares two reports for the Minister to consider.

SPANZ

Secondary Principals' Association of New Zealand.

Section 156

Section 156 of the Education Act 1989 provides for the creation of designated character schools, i.e. schools where the education has a particular character that is different from all other schools in the area. Maori immersion schools that do not accept Te Aho Matua (see "Kura Kaupapa Maori") are approved under section 156.

Sector Groups

Teacher support and other organisations who are interested in the reorganisation of schooling in their region.

SFWU

Service and Food Workers Union: the union representing many administrative staff in schools.

Special schools

Special schools are state schools that provide education for students with special education needs. The curriculum is the same as at other state schools.

Stage 1 report

The report that the Review Facilitator prepared regarding possible models for the future.

Stage 2 report

The report to the Reference Group and the Ministry that the Review Facilitator prepared after information has been gathered from schools about their reactions to possible models for the future.

Stage 3 report

The second report that the Review Facilitator prepared for the Ministry, to record and reflect on the further consultation undertaken.

Submission

The Ministry wrote two submissions for the Minister to consider during various stages of the review. The submissions presented various options to the Minister for his consideration. A third submission was written if the Minister decided to close a school.