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## **Deaf Education is Changing- What you need to know 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2018**

### ***Where have we come from:***

At present, providing deaf education services in New Zealand is the responsibility of two centres serving the whole of the country. These are van Asch Deaf Education Centre in Sumner, Christchurch and Kelston Deaf Education Centre in Auckland. Between them, they support more than 2,000 deaf and hard of hearing children nationwide. In 2012, the Ministry of Education combined the Boards of Trustees of each centre into one national Board.

The six key drivers behind this change were:

- 1. Increased opportunities for communication and sharing knowledge and skills between the Deaf Education Centres (DECs)*
- 2. The flexible use of resourcing to meet demographic changes in the deaf and hearing impaired student population*
- 3. Maximising the Review of Special Education initiative for sensory schools to provide more flexible services for ORS verified students*
- 4. A national approach to service provision*
- 5. Ensuring perspectives of the key stakeholders are represented well*
- 6. Assuring governance arrangements best suit the service provider roles of the Deaf Education Centres*

### ***Where are we now:***

Since 2012, many efforts have been made to align our two services to provide a nationally consistent schooling and support programme.

We have made good progress in aligning accounting systems, information technology, student information databases, staff professional development and policies. We know there is still progress to be made to deliver an equitable accessible efficient service nationwide.

In December 2017, after extensive consultation with staff, parents and stakeholders the Board ratified seven strategic goals. These goals were to:

1. Develop a holistic progressive service for deaf and hard of hearing learners that maximises educational, social and emotional outcomes and is accessible, equitable and efficient in its delivery.
2. Develop one new national organisational structure that enables excellent educational outcomes for deaf and hard of hearing learners New Zealand wide.
3. Inform decisions, priorities, and resourcing by utilising data, evidence based best practice and research that underpin child centred values of Excel, Choose, Grow and Belong.
4. Build and maintain strong, collaborative relationships with the deaf community, including external stakeholders.

5. Use and manage financial resources to provide the maximum educational benefit for our learners within budget and contractual frameworks.
6. Lift student achievement through effective pedagogy for all of our deaf and hard of hearing learners.
7. Align property and infrastructure to support a nationwide service delivery model.

***Where to from here***

In late September 2018, the Board wrote to Minister Hipkins with a proposal to merge the two Deaf Education Centres. On the 2nd of October, the Board received a response from the Secretary for Education supporting the steps we have taken to date and our view that merging the two DEC's will result in a stronger service.

The Board will continue its consultation with staff, students and parents. Once the feedback has been received, it will be forwarded to the Ministry of Education who will combine it with feedback from other stakeholders. The Minister will then consider the merger proposal. If the proposal is approved, the Board will work with the Ministry to appoint an Executive CEO/Principal and develop a new leadership structure who will lead our services going forward.

We are excited for the future of Deaf Education in New Zealand, and for the opportunity to provide services that allow each and every deaf and hard of hearing child to Belong, Grow, Choose and Excel, becoming the very best version of themselves.