



THE GROWTH BUDGET

Frontline Services

BUDGET
2025

Hon Erica Stanford Minister of Education

22 May 2025

Largest boost to Learning Support in a generation

The Government is delivering the most significant investment in learning support in a generation to better support Kiwi kids to thrive at school, Education Minister Erica Stanford says.

Key investments include substantial annual increases to teacher aide hours, building up to over 2 million additional teacher aide hours per year, from 2028; Learning Support Co-ordinators for all schools with Year 1-8 students; expanding early intervention services from early learning through to end of year 1; and an historic overhaul of the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS) funding model to ensure that demand for the service is met with guaranteed funding so all students with high and complex needs who are verified for ORS receive the support they need.

“Too many children wait too long to receive support, or miss out altogether, on the help they need to succeed. We are addressing this by investing in a smart, system-wide reform that significantly increases specialist and support staff resources in our schools. We’re powering up support to the frontline and investing early to ensure our kids get the tailored help they need, and so that teachers have more time to teach the basics brilliantly,” Ms Stanford says.

Budget 2025 invests \$2.5 billion over the forecast period in Vote Education with a focus on delivering a transformational boost to learning support funding.

“Backed by a social investment lens, this is a seismic shift in how we support learning needs in New Zealand. We’re deliberately prioritising early intervention, investing in what works and directly tackling long-standing inequities in the system.”

The learning support funding package includes:

- **\$266 million** to extend the Early Intervention Service (EIS) from early childhood education through to the end of year 1 of primary school. This will fund more than 560 additional FTE for EIS teachers and specialists. We are investing in:
 - **expanding the service** through to the end of Year 1 to support the effective transition into school of around 4,000 children with additional needs.
 - **reducing existing waitlists** in early intervention so that more than 3,000 children that need the support receive it sooner.

- **increasing the amount of specialist support** provided to the more than 7,100 children who are currently enrolled in EIS.
- building up annually to **an additional 900,000 teacher aide hours per year**, from 2028, to support young learners in EIS.
- **\$122 million** to meet increased demand for ORS (Ongoing Resourcing Scheme) for students with high and complex needs. This includes a structural change to the funding model so every child who is verified for ORS funding receives the support they need. This investment will also increase the number of specialists and teacher aide time to support the more than 1,700 additional learners forecast to access ORS over the next four years.
- **\$192 million** to ensure that over three years, all Year 1-8 schools and kura are funded for a Learning Support Coordinator to work with students, families and educators to identify and respond to learner needs. This investment will benefit 1250 schools and an additional 300,000 learners around New Zealand.
- **\$43 million** for an extra 78.5 FTE speech language therapists, as well as additional psychologists and supporting teacher aide hours to help meet the growing demand of students with communication and behaviour needs. This will provide specialist supports to around 2500 students over the next four years.
- **\$3 million** of investment in our teacher aides with targeted professional development for working with learners with social, emotional, wellbeing, behavioural, and neurodiverse needs.
- **\$4 million** to employ 25 intern educational psychologists each year to enable a more sustainable pipeline of locally trained workforce.
- **\$90 million** of capital for approximately 25 new learning support satellite classrooms to provide around 225 new student places across the Ministry of Education's specialist school network, as well as provide learning support property modifications so that schools are more accessible to learners with additional needs.

“Across all learning support services in Vote Education, we are building up to more than 2 million additional teacher aide hours into the system every year from 2028.

“The education sector has been calling for more support for a long time, and this Government is delivering results. This investment recognises and responds to the growing number of children with additional learning needs and the pressure it places on teachers,” Ms Stanford says.

Budget 2025 also includes substantive key investments in the Government's priority areas:

- \$298 million into strengthening Curriculum and Assessment supports, including \$132.2 million for accelerated learning in literacy and maths.
- \$572 million of capital funding invested into school property.
- \$100 million of operating funding, to maintain and upgrade classrooms.
- \$150 million to build the education workforce of the future through leadership development pathways, teacher supply initiatives, and funded registration and certification.

- \$104 million to support Māori learner success, including \$50 million of capital funding for new classrooms in Māori Medium and Kaupapa Māori schools.
- \$140 million for a new attendance service and to support and strengthen frontline attendance services.

“To deliver this investment, we have assessed underspends and reprioritised initiatives that are underperforming or lack clear evidence that they’re delivering intended outcomes. Around \$614 million within the vote has been identified for reinvestment into frontline, priority education initiatives.

“Budget 2025 builds on the strong foundations we’ve already laid through teaching the basics brilliantly. We will continue to invest to raise achievement and close the equity gap in schools across the country, so all Kiwi kids have the knowledge, skills and competencies they need to reach their full potential,” Ms Stanford says.

ENDS

Media contact: Mitchell Alexander +64 21 846 701

Notes to editors

Learning support funding – detailed breakdown

- \$192 million of operating funding so all Year 1-8 schools and kura have access to a learning support coordinator (around 650 additional Full-Time Teacher Equivalents - FTTEs), enabling improved identification of and response to learner needs. This builds a nationally consistent model for in-school Learning Support services and reducing substantive inequities in access to support for children with additional learning needs
- \$266 million to extend the Early Intervention Service (EIS) from early childhood education through to the end of year 1 of primary school. This will fund more than 560 additional FTE for EIS teachers and specialists. We are investing in:
 - expanding the service through to the end of Year 1 to support the effective transition into school of almost 4,000 children with additional needs
 - reducing existing waitlists in early intervention so that more than 3,000 children that need the support receive it sooner
 - increasing the amount of specialist support provided to the more than 7,100 children who are currently enrolled in EIS
 - building up annually to an additional 900,000 teacher aide hours per year, from 2028, to support young learners in EIS
- \$122 million of operating funding to meet forecast demand for the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS). ORS provides specialist support for students with the highest levels of ongoing need, and the new funding will mean all learners who meet the criteria will receive the specialist support they need. This investment will also increase the number of specialists and teacher aide time to support the more than 1,700 additional learners forecast to access ORS over the next four years. This includes a **structural change to the funding model** away from a constrained annual Budget bid approach to a forecast driven model that automatically updates the funding each year, to reflect demand so every child who is verified for ORS funding receives the support they need.

- ORS provides a package of support for students who have the highest level of ongoing need, including access to specialists (such as therapists, psychologists), additional teacher time in school staffing entitlements, contribution to teacher aide hours, and consumables grants for small items to support students' needs. Students get a unique mix of resources, to reflect their individual needs. ORS follows the student and they continue to receive support for the whole of their schooling. ORS is provided on top of the per student funding paid to each school for every student.
- \$41.5 million of operating funding and \$1.4 million of capital funding for an additional 78.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) speech language therapists, 6.2 FTE psychologists and teacher aide time for behaviour and communication services. This will also help the service meet the forecast demand increase of 2,479 learners who'll need this support over the next four years.
- \$4 million of operating funding for 25 intern educational psychologists each year to boost the locally trained workforce and address shortages.
- \$7 million of operating funding for 45 additional places (a 7.5 per cent increase) for Te Kahu Tōi Intensive Wraparound Service, so more learners with the most complex social, emotional and behavioural needs can get tailored supports.
- \$3 million of operating funding for targeted professional learning and development for teacher aides, to help them support learners with social, emotional, wellbeing and behavioural needs associated with disability and neurodiversity.
- \$90 million of capital funding and \$18 million of operating funding for up to approximately 25 new learning support classrooms to provide 225 new student places across the Ministry's specialist school network, and up to 350 learning support property modifications so that schools are more accessible to learners with additional needs.

Knowledge-rich curriculum

- \$287 million in operating funding and \$11 million in capital funding to support the ongoing delivery of a knowledge-rich curriculum and structured teaching approaches in schools and kura. This includes:
- Early maths and pāngarau checks for learners at Year 2.
- 143 FTTE specialist accelerated learning teachers across Years 0–6 to raise achievement in mathematics and pāngarau.
- Maths/pāngarau tutoring for up to 34,000 Year 7-8 students per year.
- Increasing ongoing structured literacy staffing across Years 0-6 by 78 FTTE to 349 FTTE. This maintains the 2025 one-year expansion of 46 additional FTTE, and adds a further 32 FTTE
- Hands-on science and pūtaiao kits for all Year 0-8 learners to lift science engagement and achievement.
- Homework and tutoring services for Year 9-10 learners in schools with 50 per cent or more Pacific learners. This supports meeting the literacy and numeracy co-requisites and achievement across NCEA.

- Support oral language development in early childhood education. This includes the ENRICH (Enhancing Rich Interactions) programme for up to 525 early childhood education services.
- A new assessment tool for Years 3 to 10 in reading, writing, maths, pānui, tuhituhi and pāngarau to support quality, consistent assessment and reporting for approximately 540,000 students.

Māori Education

- \$54 million in operating funding and \$50 million in capital funding to support Māori learner success through investment in curriculum supports and professional learning and development for teachers. Key investments include:
 - Training and support for up to 51,000 teachers in Years 0-13 schools to learn te reo Māori and tikanga.
 - A Virtual Learning Network that will deliver online STEM education to more than 5,500 Year 9-13 students in Kura Kaupapa and Māori Medium education.
 - Seven new curriculum advisors to support teachers in understanding and using the redesigned Te Marautanga o Aotearoa and its key resources.
 - New curriculum resources in te reo matatini and STEM to support around 5,000 senior secondary students.
 - Developing a new Māori Studies subject area for The New Zealand Curriculum, for Year 11-13 English medium schools.

Supporting our Workforce

- \$150 million of operating funding in workforce so that we can bring more teachers and leaders into the classrooms and support our current workforce. This includes:
- Covering the costs of domestic teacher fees and levies for around 115,000 school and early childhood teachers over the next three years.
- 530 additional places in the School Onsite Training Programme over four years and cost adjustments for 1,331 places committed to through Budget 2024.
- Professional learning developments in literacy and te reo matatini, maths and pāngarau, and assessment and aromatawai, for 1,800 to 2,000 teachers working across Years 0-10 over the next four years.
- An aspiring principals programme for up to 200 principals each year from 2026 to help build their leadership skills and confidence.
- 17 more leadership advisors to provide one-on-one support to around 2,500 principals who can access the service, with specialist advisors available for rural, area, Māori, and Pacific principals.
- Domestic and overseas marketing campaigns to attract more teachers and raise the profile of the profession.

Schools' operational grants

- \$121.7 million of operating funding to increase school operational grants by 1.5 per cent to address cost pressures. This includes increased base funding for Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu, Secondary-Tertiary Programmes and Service Academies.

Attendance

- Around \$123 million for the delivery of a new attendance service and almost \$17 million to support and strengthen frontline attendance services.