

Rt Hon Prime Minister Christopher Luxon
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

cc Hon Erica Stanford, Minister of Education

E te Pirimia

As leaders of the education sector, we jointly urge you to continue the Government's current level of investment in Ka ora Ka Ako, the school lunches programme.

One in five children in our country live with food poverty. Nutritious food is essential for learning, which is why the school lunch programme was created. It currently offers lunches to 230,000 students in about 1,000 of the least advantaged schools, providing a major safety net against food poverty and poor nutrition.

Research from the PISA (Program for International Student Achievement) shows that students who miss meals due to lack of money are two to four years behind their peers who never miss meals in terms of their educational achievement. Of concern is that the most recent PISA results found 14 percent of New Zealand students did not eat at least once a week because of lack of money, compared to 8% of students on average across the OECD.

Your Government is committed to improving student achievement and supporting Kiwi families who are facing significant cost of living pressures. The most recent research evaluating the Ka Ora Ka Ako programme reinforces the views of school principals that it has led to students being more focussed on their learning, fewer working to support their families, fewer behavioural problems, improved social bonding and reduced food poverty stigma through all students sharing meals together.

We strongly believe that Ka Ora Ka Ako is a critical investment to make in our students and in their ability to fulfil their potential. We therefore encourage you to maintain the current levels of funding for the programme.

Mark Potter, President | Te Manukura – NZEI Te Riu Roa

Vaughan Couillault, President, Secondary Principals Association of NZ

Chris Abercrombie, Te Amorangi/President - New Zealand Post Primary Teachers' Association Te Wehengarua

Angela Lowe, President – Association of Intermediate and Middle Schools

Leanne Otene, President – NZ Principals Federation

Lorraine Kerr, President – NZ School Trustees Association | Te Whakarōputanga Kaitiaki Kura o Aotearoa

Bruce Jepsen, Te Manukura – Te Akatea

Louisa Barham, President – NZ Area Schools Association

Dr. Kevin Shore, Chief Executive - New Zealand Catholic Education Office

Kathy Wolfe, Chief Executive - Te Rito Maioha | Early Childhood New Zealand

Cathy Wilson Chief Executive / Kaiwhakahaere matua - Montessori Aotearoa New Zealand

Jill Bond, Chief Executive Officer - New Zealand Kindergartens Network