

Reference: 20150430

3 November 2015



Thank you for your Official Information Act request, received on 7 October 2015. You requested the following:

1. *“A copy of all reports, briefings and advice Treasury has prepared regarding the review of the education funding system, since 1 January 2014;*
2. *A copy of all reports, briefings and advice Treasury has prepared regarding the proposed funding model for partnership schools, since 1 January 2015;*
3. *A copy of any modelling undertaken by Treasury on possible funding models for partnership schools, since 1 January 2015”.*

Following communication with a Treasury official, on 9 October you agreed to re-scope the request to:

- *“A copy of all reports, briefings and advice Treasury has prepared regarding the review of the school operating funding system, including the decile funding system, since 1 January 2014; and*
- *A copy of any modelling undertaken by Treasury on possible funding models for partnership schools, since 1 January 2015.”*

As explained to you, Part 2 of your request was captured in the response to your OIA that we received on 18 August 2015. We also noted that it was unlikely there would be any information related to the last part of your request.

Information Being Released

Please find enclosed the following documents:

Item	Date	Document Description	Decision
1.	10 June 2014	Reform to school funding: FEC 18 June 2014	Release in part

I have decided to release the document above subject to information being withheld under the following section of the Official Information Act:

- advice still under consideration, section 9(2)(f)(iv) – to maintain the current constitutional conventions protecting the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers and officials.

Information Publicly Available

The following information is also covered by your request and is publicly available on the Treasury website:

Item	Date	Document Description	Website Address
2.	16 January 2015	FEC Briefing February 2015	http://www.treasury.govt.nz/downloads/pdfs/oia/oia-20150039.pdf

Accordingly, I have refused your request for the document listed above under section 18(d) of the Official Information Act – the information requested is publicly available.

Please refer to document 3 of the above web release. Please note that some of the information in this document has not been released, however this information was not relevant to your request.

Information to be Withheld

There are additional documents covered by your request that I have decided to withhold in full under the following section of the Official Information Act:

- advice still under consideration, section 9(2)(f)(iv) – to maintain the current constitutional conventions protecting the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers and officials.

Item	Date	Document Description	Proposed Action
1.	4 February 2015	MoF Education Chew Session Feb 2015	Withhold under s9(2)(f)(iv)
2.	18 June 2015	Treasury Report: Vote Education Work Programme	Withhold under s9(2)(f)(iv)
3.	1 September 2015	Schooling infrastructure review, briefing material for Minister of Finance.	Withhold under s9(2)(f)(iv)

This information is being withheld as decisions have not yet been made on the funding review. Releasing the information at this stage would compromise Ministers' ability to give the issues undisturbed consideration.

In making my decision, I have considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the Official Information Act.

Please note that this letter (with your personal details removed) and enclosed documents may be published on the Treasury website.

This fully covers the information you requested. You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision.

Yours sincerely

Grace Campbell-Macdonald
Manager, Education and Skills

Encl

Reform to school funding: FEC –18 June 2014

Key messages

- Treasury has a strong interest in how well the school funding model is supporting schools to lift student achievement, particularly those students at risk of underachievement.

- *Withheld under s9(2)(f)(iv)*

Key issues

- *Withheld under s9(2)(f)(iv)*

- Treasury's view is that schools and teachers need greater capability, tools, and support to identify and address underachievement. Actions underway across the system are starting to address these challenges, such as the new teaching and leadership roles established through *Investing in Educational Success*, the establishment of a new professional body for teaching, and a review of teacher professional learning and development. We believe the effective use of student assessment data by teachers and schools should also be a priority and could support a significant shift in performance.
- We are also interested in working with the Ministry to determine whether the school funding model could more effectively target resources (financial and human) to at-risk students. If teacher salaries are included, decile funding accounts for 3-4% of total operational expenditure on schools. In addition, some evidence suggests that low decile schools employ more beginning teachers and have higher teacher turnover which may impact on their quality of teaching. *[For context only: Last year the Minister of Education announced that she had called for a review of the decile funding system, but since then has asked not to receive advice on this until next year. No policy decisions have been made.]*

Questions & Answers

Question: Why isn't the government increasing funding for low decile schools?

Answer: The evidence suggests that improvements in material resources above a relatively low level do not benefit student performance, but improvements in teacher quality do. Some evidence suggests that low decile schools employ more beginning teachers and have higher teacher turnover, which may impact on their quality of teaching. However, we believe there is a need to review whether the school funding model could more effectively target resources (both financial and human) to at-risk students.

Question: Does the Treasury support introducing performance pay for schools/teachers based on student assessment results?

Answer: No, we don't think performance pay is the most effective way to support schools to lift student achievement. Schools and teachers need greater capability, tools, and support to identify and address underachievement, and actions underway across the system are starting to address these challenges. The effective use of student assessment data by teachers and schools is part of this, and could support a significant shift in performance.

RELEASED UNDER THE
OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT