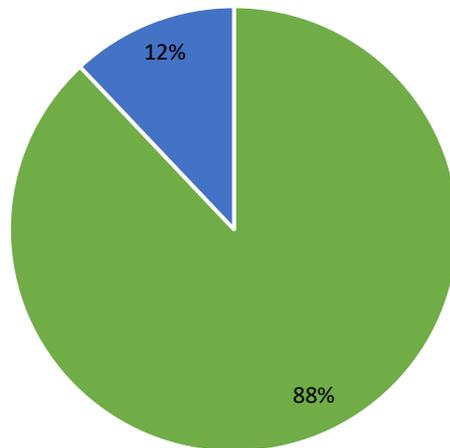


## **Appendix I.**

### **Proposed Merger Consultation Results Kelston and van Asch Deaf Education Centres**

#### **Parent Responses and Emergent Themes Face-to-Face Meetings December 2018**

## Percentage of Parents in Favour of Merger



■ In Favour of Merger     
 ■ Not In Favour of Merger

### Breakdown of Approval Ratings from Region

Place	Who	Date	% in favour of Merger
Timaru	Parents	30/10/18	100%
Napier	Parents	1/11/18	83%
Auckland	Parents	6/11/18	100%
Whangarei	Parents	7/11/18	100%
Tauranga	Parents	12/11/18	100%
Hamilton	Parents	5/11/18	100%
South Auckland	Parents	13/11/18	91%
Taupo	Parents	14/11/18	100%
New Plymouth	Parents	15/11/18	100%
Gisborne	Parents	27/11/18	100%
Nelson	Parents	28/11/18	100%
Palmerston North	Parents	5/12/18	14%
Invercargill	Parents	10/12/18	57%

## Emergent Themes and Overview

Overall, the proposal to merge the two DECs is receiving positive support around the regions. Most parents are excited about the idea, mainly because they believe it offers the potential for equity and a streamlined service.

**The need for consistency:** The lack of consistent service delivery at present was raised many times with several parents recounting how they had been forced to travel from region to region to access the best services for their children. The variance between the support offered by VADEC and KDEC was highlighted frequently with some parents suggesting that VADEC appeared to be better resourced than KDEC. There was a perception that if someone lived in Auckland or Christchurch, they could avail of better support. There was also discussion between how differently SCIP and Hearing House operate and it was asked if these two organisations might also merge. Parents also talked about how different audiology support is in both DEC regions, again another example of inconsistency in how the DECs work.

It was suggested that part of the change could be having clear guidelines as to how the two DECs could work closely together to standardise assessments, accountability and service delivery and ensure equity for all DHH learners who are a heterogeneous group. At every parent consultation, people supported the idea of streamlined, consistent services nationwide as a priority.

**Equity:** The notion of Equity is a critical one for parents. Feedback reflects a consensus that it is a good idea, but some ask how it will be achieved. One parent asked that in order to achieve equity, would we bring some students down and raise others up. Some parents are a cynical that equitable and consistent services are achievable without increased resources from the MoE.

Also, it is important for parents that if a merger goes ahead, services will be flexible to address regional circumstances and variance. Recurrently, ORS funding was discussed with many querying whether the needs of non-ORS funded children were being adequately met and whether a merger would affect how ORS funding would be allocated going forward. Parents who have non-ORS children want to know will their children receive ongoing, consistent RTD service and specialist service that their child may require.

**Resources:** A common theme voiced by parents of deaf children is that they have to fight very hard to get the support their children need. Some people said that they were good at this because they knew the system and knew where to go for help and information. They were concerned for those other parents who missed out on what they might be entitled to because they did not know how to work the system. These parents worried that a merger might mean they lose the little they already have. Parents from the van Asch region in particular, expressed the fear that they would lose what they regarded as good levels of support. A predictable and dominant theme for parents was a need for assurance that their child would be better off and not worse off after any merger.

This was closely linked to the question of resources. Parents asked if change would bring additional funding. They were open to the idea of “working smarter” and to the use of technology to facilitate remote learning and support, however they expressed the need for caution in relation to younger kids and children with complex needs. They felt that these children would still need face-to-face contact. Many expressed gratitude for the current level

of support they were getting and praised the work of teachers on the ground who were working very hard. Many talked of the awesome teachers they had and despaired at losing these as kids transitioned. The need for more NZSL learning opportunities was raised several times.

**What will change look like?:** At most meetings, the physical landscape of change interested parents. Several parents asked what would happen to existing sites such as those at Sumner and at KDEC. Would these be lost? If not, then would the MoE upgrade the facilities at Sumner in a similar way to KDEC? Where would the new base be? Would it be in Wellington? Major investment had taken place at KDEC. Would the MoE invest in the older buildings at Sumner?

**Parent Engagement:** In several areas the issue of parent engagement was raised. It was highlighted that communication with parents is not strong. Parents said they hoped that change would also mean better communication with families. There was very positive support for the proposed DEC's Facebook page which will go live at the end of the year. A system for texting an alert to parents via their mobile phones was also proposed. Parents in several locations also asked that parents be involved in shaping the vision of future service delivery.

**Information:** Parents need more information to help them make informed choices and guide their kids. Several asked for a pathways document. It was raised repeatedly that parents do not know what services they are entitled to or can expect the DEC's to provide. It was noted that transitions, all the way through from the early years to when kids leave school are particularly important and stressful times for parents. They need information to help them support their kids. It was pointed out that while VADEC have a careers person, KDEC do not. Also, some kids get information about scholarships from some teachers while others do not.

Many parents asked if more could be done to make classroom teachers more responsive to the needs of deaf learners, such as Deaf Awareness training. While some teachers were active in encouraging children to use assistive devices, others were not. Often parents were not aware of this (as they do not have eyes with the classroom) and depend on their children to inform them.

**The Process:** The process for change raised many questions and often these led off agenda to Service Model Delivery. People asked what the timeframe would be, how the new Principal would be recruited, whether there would now be 3 Principals, what the new structure would look like and if a merger would result in job losses. This particular aspect concerned many parents as they felt that the DEC's already struggled to staff their service adequately.