

## **Information for Canterbury schools (primary, intermediate, secondary) who are ready to implement a learning management system for the first time**

### **What is the objective of this project?**

The Ministry of Education has made available a limited amount of funding to assist schools to implement a system that gives their parents and students access to online information that supports teaching and learning.

Research indicates that the involvement of parents is a key factor in improving student engagement. Parents who are involved in their children's learning, encouraging their children to be the best they can be, make a real and positive difference to how their children learn.

Parents and whānau are best able to help their children when they receive useful, focused, and timely information and support from schools. Learning management systems and parent portals provide new ways for schools to communicate with parents and for families to follow students' progress and engage with their learning.

### **Who is eligible?**

To be eligible you must be a state or state-integrated school using eTAP, MUSAC, KAMAR, or PC Schools as your SMS.

### **What are the programme options?**

There are three service categories to choose from:

- a. A parent portal as part of the SMS system (currently only available to eTAP schools).
- b. A third party parent and student portal available to schools who either do not have an approved LMS, or who are not ready for full LMS functionality.
- c. A learning management system with parent portal access. This category caters for:
  - Schools who wish to implement an LMS for the first time.
  - Schools that already have an LMS and are now ready to implement the link to the SMS data.

### **How do I know if we are ready for a learning management system?**

A learning management system (LMS) is a safe and secure online learning environment in which a collection of software, services and Web 2.0 tools are blended together to enable more dynamic ways of learning.

In this environment learners and teachers have ready access to online resources, can create and store work online, and are able to communicate and collaborate online. They can create e-portfolios, select items to publish, seek and receive feedback from others who can help them with their learning, and interact with their peers in a social learning network.

A learning management system makes it easy for all teachers to set up online classrooms populated with resources and learning activities which complement, enrich and extend the classroom programme. The tools within these virtual classrooms make it easy to create engaging, multimedia-rich learning experiences assisting teachers to provide differentiated learning programmes.

Parent logons give parents access to this secure environment enabling them to gain easy access to school information, to monitor their child's attendance, to view assessment data and to readily message the school with questions or concerns or to update information. The real strength of an LMS is that the data made available to parents can be presented within the context of the learning programme – with an understanding of the learning objectives, with insight into the classroom activities, with reference to exemplars and models of best practice and with the ability to interact with and support their child's learning. Through this additional functionality an LMS enables parents to build a much richer view of their child's learning progress than is possible through the display of data alone.

If this is the experience that you want for your learning community then you are ready to join the nearly 600 New Zealand schools already working with a learning management system.

## What are the benefits of choosing to implement a full LMS at this time?

- a. International research has identified that in addition to assisting parents to support their child's learning in and beyond school, an LMS offers a great deal to schools in the areas of:
  - Supporting school organisation, management and practice.
  - Extending opportunities for collaboration, interaction and communication.
  - Information and data management.
  - Facilitating new approaches to learning.
- b. Since October 2009, Edtech, in collaboration with the MOE, has been working with 38 schools in a pilot programme so as to build insight to inform the current initiative. The focus of the pilot programme was to gain a better understanding of the key factors which enable or inhibit the successful implementation of a learning management system in NZ schools.

The initial group of schools that joined the Ultranet pilot in Term 4 2009 have completed the programme and have submitted their milestone reports. These highlight three key areas where the implementation of Ultranet has led to immediate benefit:

- Strengthening the links between home and school.
- Heightening student motivation and involvement in learning.
- Contributing to the smooth running of the school.

From the outset, for many of the schools, the LMS quickly became a vehicle for strengthening the links between home and school. These links were forged by the interest of parents in the drivers for implementation, and in the extended opportunities that the system will offer as it becomes bedded in. Building on this, several of the schools have hosted parent/community information evenings and/or maintained a high level of communication with their parents during the first phase of the project so as to bring them along on the journey.

The impact of Ultranet on learner motivation is clearly evident with the schools reporting that students are highly motivated to use the tools to document and share their own learning, are encouraged by feedback from 'buddies', and that the process of publishing and sharing facilitates reflection on learning.

Also evident are organisational benefits linked to the visibility that the LMS brings to many facets of school operations. These include enabling senior managers to more easily keep in touch with what is happening across the school; and making it easier for teachers to collaborate and to reflect, leading to greater consistency between pedagogical beliefs and practices.

A quarter of the schools identified the benefit of having a context and an environment to teach children about appropriate behaviour online.

- c. Schools will receive funding assistance only once for parent portal implementation. Schools opting to use this opportunity to provide parent portal functionality alone will have to use their own funding when they are ready to upgrade to the richer LMS solution at some point in the future. It therefore makes sound economic sense to maximise the current opportunity.

## What is the implementation timeline?

For most schools the implementation of a learning management system will be phased in over a 9-12 month period.

## How does the programme operate?

The Ultranet implementation support programme is delivered over a 12 month period during which the school has an ongoing involvement with their assigned implementation facilitator.

The programme is built around a phased approach to full implementation with a specific focus and achievement objectives for each term. The programme is ongoing with the facilitator directly involved at key points throughout the year as follows:

### *Familiarisation and Exploration (Weeks 1-10)*

- Site set up and configuration
- Implementation project team meeting
- Administrator training
- Hands on workshops for lead teachers
- Guided online preparatory module for project team
- Regular remote interaction with facilitator
- Ongoing help desk support

### *Planning and Development (Weeks 11-20)*

- Scoping and planning meeting to finalise the development plan
- Regular remote interaction with facilitator (links to research, readings and other resources which support LMS implementation, sharing learnings and initiatives from other schools)
- School visit with agenda customised to meet the school's specific needs
- Parent portal planning session
- Ongoing help desk support

### *Introducing the Parent Portal (Weeks 21-30)*

- SMS-LMS interoperability familiarisation and training
- Regular remote interaction with facilitator (monitoring performance of the data transfer and resolving any issues)
- School visit with agenda customised to meet the school's specific needs
- Ongoing help desk support

### *Operation and Extension (Weeks 31-40)*

- Regular remote interaction with facilitator
- Ongoing help desk support

## Does the programme allow for requirements specific to my school?

The Ultranet implementation support programme is adjusted to meet the needs of each school and can readily accommodate school specific requirements.

## What milestones need to be achieved during the programme?

There are four milestones to meet during the course of the programme as follows:

- Week 12:** An implementation plan is in place and this is providing direction and clarifying areas of focus.
- Week 20:**
- 50% of teachers have populated their class space with content and resources to support a unit of work.
  - At least 20% of students have received logons and log in at least once a week.
- Week 30:** Parents have received logons and are logging in at least once a term to see attendance and assessment information (Primary: 50% of parents; Secondary 25% of parents).
- Week 38:** Prepare a report which:
- Documents the school's implementation journey to date.
  - Identifies the benefits attained thus far.
  - Identifies the challenges/barriers encountered during the implementation process and the strategies employed to overcome these.
  - Details 'Where to from here?'
  - Describes the measures taken to ensure that development will be sustained beyond the period of the contract.

## What does the funding cover?

The funding assistance provided by the Ministry covers the following costs associated with the implementation of a new system:

- Site set -up
- SMS-LMS connectivity
- Training for the system administrator
- Operating costs for 6 months (software licence and hosting fees)
- The implementation support programme (12 months). The goal of this programme is to assist schools to build the necessary capability and momentum to provide a foundation for sustainable ongoing development of their learning management system.

## What costs (short term and ongoing) will be incurred that are not covered by the funding offer?

- The school is responsible for all teacher release costs associated with attending meetings and training sessions, preparing resources, providing support for staff etc.
- The implementation programme focuses on providing professional development and support for the school's Implementation Project Team. Any additional workshops or training required for the wider staff are funded from the school's professional development budget.
- The school is responsible for the facilitator's travel costs associated with the components of the support programme that are delivered onsite.

## What will be the cost of continuing the service after the fee-free period?

Following the 6-month fee free period, the school is responsible for the ongoing operating costs (i.e. annual site licence and monthly hosting fee) for the balance of the two year term of the contract i.e. 18 months, and ongoing thereafter.

## For how long will this funding assistance opportunity be available?

The Ministry has limited funding to assist a subset of the 1,200 schools that are eligible to implement an approved learning management system at this point in time. These places are open to all eligible schools across the country – on a first in first served basis.

The funding opportunity will only be available until the places have been filled so do move quickly to register your interest in taking up a spot so as not to be disappointed.

Once you have secured a place, it is possible to defer the commencement of the implementation programme until Term 4 this year or at the very latest until the beginning of Term 1, 2011.

## Our school has limited internet connectivity and would prefer to host the LMS in-house. May we use the funding for a locally installed LMS or parent portal?

No, the funding is available for hosted services only. The Ministry has only selected hosted providers, as they anticipate high speed connectivity reaching 95% of schools of the next few years.

Note that many schools report that a lot of the traffic to their LMS is outside school hours where it is the speed from home that is the limiting factor.

## Will this opportunity be made available again in the future?

The supply contracts that the providers have with the Ministry are four year contracts so it is likely that this opportunity will be available again in subsequent years. As with many Ministry programmes, funding is only confirmed annually.

## How do I confirm our wish to participate in this implementation project opportunity with Ultranet?

To let us know that you are keen to take advantage of this opportunity please fill out the following form and return it to eTime, Ultranet's agent in Canterbury, at the address shown on the form. eTime will then contact you regarding the next steps.

Alternatively you can email me directly [chris@etime.co.nz](mailto:chris@etime.co.nz) or phone (03) 366 9876 if you have any further questions.



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Learning  
Management  
System



## LMS Implementation Funding Assistance Project Confirmation of Intention to Participate

- I/We understand the obligations and responsibilities associated with the funding assistance for full LMS implementation and would like to confirm our school's wish to take up a place in this programme.
- Please send me the formal paperwork and initial instructions as to how to proceed from here.

School Name

Student Roll

Address

Name of SMS

MOE Number

Name of Key Contact

Contact Email Address

*Signed on behalf of the school by:*

Name

Position

Signature

Date

Please return this form as a scanned image to eTime by email [office@etime.co.nz](mailto:office@etime.co.nz) or fax it to (03) 366 9874.