



Briefing Note: Meeting with the Southland Primary Principals' Association on Friday 5 August 2022

To:	Hon Jan Tinetti, Associate Minister of Education		
Cc:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
Date:	3 August 2022	Priority:	Medium
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Purpose of Report

This briefing provides you with information to support your meeting with the Southland Primary Principals' Association (SPPA) in Invercargill on Friday 5 August 2022.

Summary

You are meeting with the SPPA Executive and other key education representatives in Invercargill. Attendees would like to discuss issues that are prevalent in Southland. These issues will likely include learning support services, staffing shortages and principal wellbeing.

Proactive Release

a **agree** that the Ministry of Education release this briefing in full once it has been considered by you.

Agree / Disagree



Nancy Bell
Hautū | Deputy Secretary
Te Mahau | Te Tai Runga

Hon Jan Tinetti
Associate Minister of Education

03/08/2022

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Background

- 1 There are 70 primary schools in Southland. This grouping includes one wharekura, one specialist school and one area school.
- 2 Principals are members of either the SPPA, Gore and Districts Principals Association or the Invercargill Primary Principals Association (IPPA). Most Invercargill schools are members of both SPPA and IPPA.
- 3 The exact attendees are yet to be confirmed by the SPPA, but will likely include:

Name	Principal	Location	July 2022 Roll
Ascot Community School	Wendy Ryan	Invercargill	330
Otautau School	Simon Bell	Otautau	165
Waikaka School	Bronwyn McCall (Eastern Southland Kāhui Ako Lead)	Gore District	68
Otatara School	Sharon Livingstone	Invercargill	283
Donovan School	Peter Hopwood (NZEI rep)	Invercargill	413
Makarewa School	Kevin Silcock (IPPA President)	Invercargill	143
Tisbury School	Andrea Joyce (Invercargill City Kāhui Ako Co-Lead)	Invercargill	111
Rimu School	Kate Webster	Invercargill	111
Thornbury School	Kay Teviotdale	Riverton	59
Pukerau School	Lisa Parish	Gore District	65
Riverton School	Tim Paige	Riverton	136

- 4 Mary Geary, Manager Education will be the Ministry official supporting you at this event. Her mobile number is 9(2)(a)

Issues that may be raised

Learning Support demand and resourcing

- 5 Principals may raise concerns about funding levels for Learning Support. This could relate to the amount of funding that is provided compared to the costs of employing support staff, as well as the level of support provided to individual students.
- 6 Principals regularly discuss the increasing complexity and range of support students need. They also discuss they believe the resourcing to support these students is insufficient to meet the demand. They may also raise concerns about the availability of the Intensive Wraparound Service and High and Complex Needs support, as well as Learning Support waiting times.
- 7 We have worked with several schools to resolve individual issues as they arise. This has included developing Learning Support Registers, to support more proactive and planned interventions to support students. We are continuing to work with groups and individual schools, in geographic areas, with Learning Support registers to enable wider services through the Learning Support Delivery Model. This is advantageous for

many smaller and more geographically isolated schools, who at times struggle to ensure wider agency engagement and support.

- 8 For some rural schools, accessing wider agency support and securing teacher aides is a challenge. Some of the services we provide account for this issue in the allocation of resources. There is still a perception in some schools that students with additional needs should be resourced through the Ministry or other agencies, and that schools cannot afford to dedicate resources to meet their needs. We have met with schools to discuss this, and to promote inclusive practice and equitable outcomes for all students.

The Learning Support Coordinator role

- 9 SPPA principals are likely to raise some concerns about the Learning Support Coordinator (LSC) role. Some schools have expressed a desire for more professional services as opposed to a coordinator. Schools that do not have access to an LSC believe that this has create more inequity across the system.
- 10 Principals will be interested any information about future tranches of LSC positions. They will also be interested in learning more about the allocation process, for any further roles.

Attendance and engagement

- 11 Principals are concerned about the decline in attendance across the region. We are working alongside schools to develop initiatives to address attendance issues. Examples include:
 - Waihopai Runanga and Ngā Kete have both received funding to support re engagement into schools and early learning. Waihopai are working with seven Southland schools and Ngā Kete are meeting the needs of whānau from Aparima and Awarua Runanaga.
 - A group of schools in the Riverton area have been provided with additional funding to support attendance initiatives in the area. This funding is held by Aparima College who have employed a teacher aide to target and support students back to school. This work is already having a positive impact on the school's attendance rates.
 - Attendance initiatives have also been supported at Waverley Park School for a cluster of Invercargill City primary schools, through the Eastern Southland Kāhui Ako and at Takitimu and Bluff schools.
 - We recently funded Seasons for Growth training in Southland. We also funded SPPA to host Kathryn Berkett, educational psychologist to run wellbeing sessions with Principals and Boards in Southland.
 - Five Invercargill primary schools identified through the Whāngaia Ngā Pa Harakeke (police-led family harm initiative) as having higher levels of family harm have been funded to support resilience programmes for targeted groups of children.
- 12 The redesign of the Attendance Service has been well received by the principals and will provide the opportunity for the service to be more closely connected to schools.
- 13 We will be working alongside the new MSD Community Connector roles to support families/whānau to access support to engage with school when children are not attending. This will help to build a non-judgemental connection with the Ministry, schools, and families.

Principal wellbeing

- 14 Principal wellbeing is regularly raised at sector and association meetings. Southland has a high number of small and geographically isolated schools, many of which can have first time or relatively new principals. Many of the rural and more isolated principals are not able to readily access wider social and community support to help address issues, which can impact on their wellbeing.
- 15 We have observed the impact that COVID-19 is having on some principals. Schools have been supported through the Additional Teacher Relief Fund (ATRF) but limited supply of permanent teachers and relievers has added to principal workload, particularly in smaller schools.
- 16 Twenty-one schools have received support through the First-time Principal Wellbeing Fund. Initial feedback has been positive, and the funding has been used constructively to help reduce principal workload and provide additional support to classroom teachers.

Curriculum Refresh timeline

- 17 Concerns have been raised about the current number of Ministry initiatives that are underway, particularly the Curriculum Refresh timeline. Our curriculum lead advisers have been working with Kāhui Ako and clusters to provide focused support, particularly in relation to the Aotearoa New Zealand Histories Curriculum. This has provided an opportunity for schools to link with iwi and to share opportunities to strengthen engagement.

Other issues

- 18 ATRF. Concerns may be raised about the application process and timeframe for these to be processed. This is putting increased financial pressure on schools and increased workload for principals. We are currently working to refine this process so that it is more responsive and user friendly.
- 19 Teacher supply. Principals are concerned about the limited supply of permanent and relieving teachers in the region. We are holding an online meeting with principals, on Thursday 4 August, where representative from the Ministry's workforce team will discuss a range of options that schools may wish to access.
- 20 Education Review Office (ERO). Principals have recently raised concerns about ERO's new model. This has been raised directly with ERO and individual concerns have been addressed.

Other Relevant Information

- 21 Enrolment schemes in Invercargill City and some other areas, are seen by many principals as contributing to an inequity of enrolment of at-risk students. Many principals still reference the 2004 Invercargill Network Review as contributing to some of the issues still existing.
- 22 Schools in the North of Invercargill are generally close to capacity and must manage their enrolment schemes to manage the risk of overcrowding. A large number of students in the South of Invercargill choose to enrol at schools in the North of the city, with much smaller numbers of students from the North, enrolling in the South schools.

- 23 The Invercargill Network Review led to most primary schools being Years 1-6 and secondary schools being Years 7-13. Ascot Community School is the only full primary school within the city area. Several schools just outside of the town area are full primary, including Bluff, which creates school transport issues when families opt to enrol at secondary schools in town at Year 7, rather than remaining in full primary schooling and then enrolling in Year 9.
- 24 Longford Intermediate and Gore High School have written requesting a merger between the two schools. You have agreed to for us to undertake consultation on your behalf. This consultation is currently underway.

Proactively Released