



**Briefing Note: Address to Resource Teacher: Learning and Behaviour Lead School Forum on 15 August 2022**

<b>To:</b>	Hon Jan Tinetti, Associate Minister of Education		
<b>Cc:</b>	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
<b>Date:</b>	5 August 2022	<b>Priority:</b>	High
<b>Security Level:</b>	In Confidence	<b>METIS No:</b>	1291144
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<b>Messaging seen by Communications team:</b>	Yes	<b>Round Robin:</b>	No

## Purpose

This briefing note supports your attendance at the Resource Teacher: Learning and Behaviour (RTLb) Lead School Forum on 15 August 2022 at Te Papa from 9.00 to 10.00am. You have an opening address from 9.30 to 9.45 am and Q & A session from 9.45 to 10.00 am.

This briefing provides information about the Forum and an overview of RTLb service successes and issues, an event run sheet, talking points and questions and answers.

**Agree** that this Briefing will be proactively released.

**Agree / Disagree**

## Summary

- Your participation includes being present at the opening Mihi for the Forum from 9.00 to 9.30 am.
- You will make your address from 9.30 to 9.45 am, followed by questions and answers with participants 9.45 to 10.00 am.
- The attached speaking notes focus on recent RTLb service achievements, contributions, and issues. The questions and answers reflect the issues likely to be raised by RTLb Lead School principals and Cluster Managers.



Janet Blake  
**Acting Associate Deputy Secretary**  
Te Pae Aronui

5/8/2022

Hon Jan Tinetti  
**Associate Minister of Education**

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## Background

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1. The RTLB service provides itinerant specialist teachers who respond to learning and behaviour needs across the schooling network in Years 0-10. In 2022, the national RTLB workforce consists of 1001 FTTE RTLB plus 40 Cluster Managers, employed by 40 RTLB Cluster Lead Schools.
2. In 2021 we worked with you, the RTLB Executive and across the Ministry to agree on RTLB service priorities within the renewed RTLB Funding Agreement for 2022 and 2023 (Metis 1256639 and 1264892 refer). These priorities have now been in place for two school Terms and the Forum is a key opportunity to focus on progress towards meeting these.
3. RTLB funding agreements specify that at the end of the two-year term the Ministry may request return of unused funds. The Ministry receives annual financial reports from each RTLB cluster and collates these to understand patterns of under or overspend. 9(2)(f)(iv)  
[REDACTED]
4. 9(2)(g)(i)  
[REDACTED]
5. Last year day two of the 2021 RTLB Lead School Forum was cancelled when the country went into lockdown overnight. Since then, RTLB clusters and Lead Schools have made continual adjustments to service provision in response to alert level and traffic light level changes, the vaccine mandate, changing patterns of RTLB service requests-for-support, and the direct impacts of illness on RTLB and school staffing.

## The RTLB Lead School Forum

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6. The annual Forum is a two-day event. In 2022 it will be held on 15 and 16 August 2022 at Te Papa Wellington in Rangimarie rooms 1, 2 and 3. The Forum is a key opportunity for the Ministry and cluster leaders to come together, to strengthen relationships and share ways of working in partnership.
7. Your office has advised you will arrive at the Forum at 9.00 am and leave at 10.00 am on 15 August. From 9.00 to 9.30 am you will be present for the mihi to open the Forum. You will make an opening address from 9.30 to 9.45 am and have time for questions from 9.45 to 10.00 am.
8. You will be speaking to an audience of approximately 100 people. This will include 40 RTLB Cluster Managers, 40 Lead School principals and approximately 20 Ministry staff including the Managers Learning Support, and Te Pae Aronui representatives.

## RTLB service strengths and achievements in 2021 and 2022

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9. In April 2022, we provided you with a briefing note on the RTLB 2021 satisfaction survey results (Metis 1284106) which found the overall satisfaction with RTLB quality of service remained high at 78%, with only 9% being dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. This was unchanged from the 2019 (pre COVID-19) level.
10. In 2021 we added a question about service satisfaction during COVID-19 in 2020 and 2021. Responses showed 65% were satisfied or very satisfied and 13% were

dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. The survey also found some reductions in service performance and outcomes which could be due to COVID-19 impacts on service delivery.

11. The COVID-19 pandemic response has created many opportunities for collaboration and flexible support through the RTLB service.
12. In Term four 2021 and again in Terms one and two in 2022 the Ministry made an extraordinary request by asking all clusters to consider requests to step-in as classroom teachers. This was a short-term voluntary arrangement to address school staffing shortages when all other staffing options had been exhausted. Despite cluster leaders' concerns about the impacts on RTLB services, the offers of support and responsiveness of clusters has been appreciated by schools.
13. Another COVID-19 related example of service commitment is the willingness of one Lead School, Mairehau Primary School in Christchurch to take on governance of two clusters as an interim measure for 3 school terms in 2022. At the start of 2022, due to COVID-19 related workloads, no expressions of interest to be the Lead School had been received from Cluster 28 schools in Wellington leaving governance arrangements uncertain. The Mairehau Board and Principal John Bangma, agreed to take on the Lead School role for their existing Cluster 34, and Cluster 28 to ensure continuity of employment and service for Cluster 28.
14. In 2021 and 2022 RTLB and the Ministry have also continued to develop He Pikorua a shared practice framework for RTLB and Ministry specialists to realise service improvements in line with the Learning Support Delivery Model, and other education priorities including the Learning Support Action Plan 2019-2025, NELP, Ka Hikitia and The Action Plan for Pacific Education.
15. RTLB have been highly engaged in taking the intention of the framework and applying to their practice since the launch in Sept 2020. They are strong contributors to national work programmes including development of He Pikorua resources and the School Entry Kete development work.
16. Within the RTLB service Ngā Pouwhirinakitanga members continue to provide strong leadership and guidance to the service as RTLBs who are Māori. They contributed written and verbal submissions to the Māori Affairs Select Committee enquiry into Learning Support for ākonga Māori. They continue to contribute as a group across the RTLB service and the Ministry. 9(2)(a)  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]
17. A group of Pacific RTLB called Tautai also make a significant contribution to the shifts within the Action Plan for Pacific Education by supporting Pacific leadership across all clusters.

## Issues for RTLB Lead Schools and the RTLB service

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18. Clusters report risks and issues to the Ministry each term. The impact of COVID-19 on RTLB service provision is the most common issue across clusters due to staff and student illness, switching between hybrid and face to face ways of working, time away from RTLB services when working as classroom teachers, and challenges in managing changing request for support numbers and patterns. Other risks and issues include:
- 9(2)(j)
  - service impacts arising from vacancies and recruitment
  - changing patterns of requests-for-support including an increase in complex behaviour needs and needs relating to anxiety and mental health
  - impacts of service challenges for Ministry and RTLB teams including wait times and staffing issues.
19. The service numbers for RTLB individual services for the 2021/22 year are lower (13,661 students) than the previous 2020/21 year (15,270). The lower individual service numbers align with COVID-19 impact on schools and our requests for RTLB to provide staffing to keep schools open.
20. Some clusters report difficulties in managing larger teams where the numbers of RTLB FTTE have increased. In 2022 we have worked with the RTLB Executive to consider ways of addressing size in Clusters 26 and 28. Cluster 26 is one of the largest clusters based at Freyberg High School which employs 42 RTLB FTTE. They have a boundary with another large Cluster 28 in Wellington, so we explored the option of establishing a new cluster between the two on the Kapiti Coast.
21. To support this, you approved our request (Metis 1286948) to increase the number of RTLB manager positions by one in the 2022 School Staffing Order for 2023. We anticipated the proposed changes for Clusters 26 and 28 would be outlined in a further Education Report in June 2022 but this is no longer required as the Cluster 26 and 28 working group recommendation was to not establish a new cluster.
22. 9(2)(f)(iv)

## Other issues that are of common concern for RTLB and the wider sector

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23. The number of learners regularly attending school across the country has been declining since 2015 to now sit at around 60%. The Attendance and Engagement Strategy released in June provides the framework for programmes that help ākonga be present and participating in their learning so they can make progress. The strategy sets clear expectations for everyone and is relevant for the RTLB service as they work to respond to the to the priorities of their schools.
24. 9(2)(f)(iv)
25. The Māori Affairs Select Committee inquiry into learning support for ākonga Māori is a key opportunity to improve equity across learning support including the RTLB service. Clusters have contributed to the inquiry including members of Ngā Pouwhirinakitanga.

## Proactive Release

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26. We recommend that this Briefing is proactively released as per your expectation that information be released as soon as possible. Any information which may need to be withheld will be done so in line with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982.

Proactively Released

## Annexes

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Annex 1:	Run sheet for Minister's address
Annex 2:	Draft speaking points
Annex 3	Questions and answers

Proactively Released