



## Briefing Note: Additional wellbeing support for education workforce

<b>To:</b>	Hon Jan Tinetti, Associate Minister of Education		
<b>Cc:</b>	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
<b>Date:</b>	28 November 2022	<b>Priority:</b>	Medium
<b>Security Level:</b>	In Confidence	<b>METIS No:</b>	1298966
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<b>Messaging seen by Communications team:</b>	No	<b>Round Robin:</b>	No

### Purpose of Report

This paper seeks to notify you about the allocation of the balance of COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund to support the wellbeing of the education workforce. The funding will enable direct wellbeing support for school staff in Tāmaki Makaurau and Te Tai Tokerau and fund the trial of a new initiative to support principal wellbeing in rural locations. These recommendations are supported by the Accord.

### Summary

1. The Ministry has ~\$1.058m remaining from the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund to support the education workforce wellbeing for FY2022/23.
2. On 12 October 2022, the Accord recommended:
  - funding the implementation of the Small School Admin Support Project to pilot administration support for principals of small and rural schools.
  - distributing discretionary funding to schools facing wellbeing concerns in Tāmaki Makaurau and Te Tai Tokerau.
3. The decision to support these initiatives was informed by:
  - ongoing extraordinary high levels of sick days taken by the teaching workforce in 2022.
  - continued sector feedback on the need to provide additional discretionary funding to schools and kura to ease workload pressures and improve principals' wellbeing given the exceptional pressure on the education workforce during 2022.

- ongoing COVID-19 related disruptions that require principals to perform extra duties and leading schools through the recovery period of the pandemic to deliver quality education for learners, as noted in the ERO report release on 6 December 2021.
4. The Ministry will work with a small number of schools in the Waikato region to test the benefits of the pilots designed to support principals of small schools to relieve them of administration duties.
  5. An assessment of the benefits from the pilots will be undertaken to determine if the programme should be expanded to more small schools in other regions.
  6. The Ministry will distribute the funding to schools and local principal associations in Tāmaki Makaurau and Te Tai Tokerau to use for wellbeing support. The Ministry will provide guidance to ensure the appropriate use of the funds.

## Recommendations

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The Ministry of Education recommends you

- a) **note** that we will use \$0.758m to implement the Small School Admin Support Project to relieve the administrative burden and time taken to manage administration for principals of small schools.

**Noted**

- b) **note** that we will provide \$0.300m to Te Mahau Te Tai Raro regional offices to support schools facing wellbeing concerns in Tāmaki Makaurau and Tai Tokerau. Local Te Mahau offices will work with local principal associations to determine where need is identified, and the distribution of funds will be managed at a local level.

**Noted**

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

**Agree** Disagree.



Anna Welanyk  
Te Puna Ohumahi Mātauranga

28/11/2022



Hon Jan Tinetti  
Associate Minister of Education

04/12/2022

## Background

7. In May 2020, as part of the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund (CRRF), Cabinet agreed to support education workforce mental health and wellbeing in response to COVID-19. This resulted in a funding allocation of \$15.988m over three years. An initial package of wellbeing initiatives was subsequently developed in partnership with the Accord and agreed by you in September 2020 [METIS 1240426 refers].
8. The Ministry has been working with the Accord to develop and implement wellbeing initiatives using the allocated funding amounts which are summarised in the table below.

<b>CRRF Educator Wellbeing Fund (in \$m)</b>	<b>FY2020/21</b>	<b>FY2021/22</b>	<b>FY2022/23</b>	<b>Total</b>
Allocation	\$7.850	\$4.650	\$3.488	\$15.988

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>What the initiative does</b>	<b>Desired outcome</b>	<b>Financial Year</b>
EAP counselling services in Tāmaki Makaurau	Provide one-on-one counselling session in person, phone or video call	Provide access to immediate support to increase wellbeing and ease immediate pressures related to COVID-19 disruptions	2020/21
Wellbeing Support for the Māori medium education workforce	Include funding to existing outcome agreements with two Māori medium pathway providers	Ensure equitable access to wellbeing and enable Māori to provide for Māori	2020/21 – 2022/23
EAP counselling nationwide	Provide one-on-one counselling session in person, phone or video call	Provide access to immediate support to increase wellbeing and ease immediate pressures related to COVID-19 disruptions	2021/22 – 2022/23
Preventative wellbeing online programme (Gold Star)	Online wellbeing programme with e-learning modules and webinars with topic specialists	Equip workforce to look after their wellbeing, increase resilience and positive thinking	2021/2022-2022/23
First-time principal wellbeing funding	Distribute \$12,000 to 530 schools with first-time principals to use for their professional wellbeing and invest in school wellbeing culture	Equip workforce to look after their wellbeing, increase resilience and positive thinking	2021/22

9. Feedback from principals indicated that the first-time principal wellbeing funding was used to provide release time, bring in administration support and access professional development to support workforce wellbeing in the short-term.

*“It has certainly made a positive impact for staff; they are appreciative and feel valued to have had this injection. It hasn’t been a game-changer, more of added-value and a sense of added positivity to staff culture and wellbeing.”*

*“Thank you for this funding - it has truly been a life saver for me. I loved the fact that all staff could benefit from it too.”*

### Some CRRF funding from the original allocation remains

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10. The Ministry has ~\$1.058m unallocated funding from the CRRF that is available to use for education workforce wellbeing in FY2022/23. This is the last year where this funding is available.
11. We have been working with the Accord to determine how to distribute this money so that it has an impact in the areas of greatest need. If we do not spend the money, any unspent funds will be returned to Treasury.
12. Small school principals and schools in Tāmaki Makaurau and Te Tai Tokerau are still facing a high level of COVID-19 resurgences and managing the long-term impacts of COVID-19, including workforce exhaustion and student behaviour continue to put pressure on school leaders. Both initiatives are in scope of the CRRF.

### The Accord has identified a wellbeing benefit for small school principals and schools in Tāmaki Makaurau and Te Tai Tokerau

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13. Teachers in schools have claimed more than 411,046 paid sick days so far in 2022 (as of 6 September 2022), an increase of 75 percent compared to the same period in 2021.
14. Small school principals told us that they need administration support to ease stress and free up time to deal with COVID-19 related disruptions, such as delivering more teaching hours due to increased absences.
15. On 12 October 2022, the Accord agreed to direct remaining CRRF funding as follows:
  - \$0.758m to implement the Small School Admin Support Project to ease the long-term administrative burden faced by principals and;
  - \$0.300m to Te Mahau Te Tai Raro regional offices to support schools facing wellbeing concerns in Tāmaki Makaurau and Tai Tokerau.
16. Details of these two programmes are provided below. Investing in these initiatives will help to achieve the government priority to develop school staff and strengthen leadership (NELP priority 6).

#### *Small School Admin Support Project*

17. Small schools struggle to pay for appropriate administration support and often direct funding to other more pressing areas to support staff and students. Most small schools cannot benefit from the economy of scale that larger schools can. A lack of available administration support or the ability to pay for administration support with the required technical expertise can lead to unintended and undesirable outcomes. This includes the commissioning of maintenance work - if not properly undertaken -

can result in inadequate property maintenance of school buildings and infrastructure and become an ongoing issue for the school.

18. In December 2021, ERO reported the stress levels around workload of small school principals are higher than in larger schools.<sup>1</sup>
19. The Ministry's Small School Admin Support Project will develop and test cost-effective shared service solutions by providing centralised administration support to small schools to support the management and maintenance of their properties, and support the day-to-day administration needs of the school (this includes development of a group contact shared service model which will include a painting contract).
20. It is anticipated that the pilots will:
  - a. reduce a major source of stress for principals by freeing up time to prioritise teaching and student support addressing higher levels of staff absences and difficulties of accessing relief teachers. The pilots will give small school principals time back to focus on pedagogical leadership and manage disruptions effectively while giving them confidence that ongoing administration and maintenance work is being undertaken with the required expertise.
  - b. identify the benefits of a shift towards more shared contracts across small schools and explore benefits of expanding the service offering to other regions.
21. At an estimated cost of \$0.758m, the Small School Admin Support Project will work with 14 small schools in the Waikato region for the next 7 months to deliver the following three workstreams:

Small Schools Admin Support Project		
No.	Workstream(s)	Description
1	<i>Pilot 1: Property Maintenance/Management</i>	Develop and test a shared service model that includes scheduled maintenance (pest control, grounds maintenance, HVAC, cleaning etc), reactive maintenance (urgent, complex and qualifying repairs), and a Helpdesk where Principals/schools staff can log calls which would be allocated to contractors for attendance/completion.
2	<i>Pilot 2: Shared Administrator Support</i>	Develop and test a shared service model that includes management and coordination of communications platforms, human resources, procurement, and distribution of resources, maintaining and providing information on the school's policies, administering school accounts.
3	<i>Group Paint Support</i>	Stream 1: Develop a 'Guide to Painting my school' which will include minimum requirements for suppliers, quality measures, insurance information etc.

<sup>1</sup> ERO (2021): [The Impact of Covid-19 on Teachers and Principals - Summary | Education Review Office \(ero.govt.nz\)](#)

		<p>Stream 2: include 'painting advice' in Helpdesk service (this service is provided via Pilot 1)</p> <p>Stream 3: Develop a Proof of Concept (prototype) - Explore and develop the methodology /model to test the likely success of a Group Paint support programme.</p>
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22. The Ministry will evaluate the progress of this initiative with support of an independent evaluator. If successful, we will consider expanding the programme to other locations once funding arrangements have been determined.

*Discretionary funding to support schools with wellbeing concerns in Tāmaki Makaurau and Te Tai Tokerau*

23. In 2021, the ERO report found that COVID-19 had a greater impact on Tāmaki Makaurau schools. Schools are recovering slower, and principals are more likely to report staff wellbeing below pre-COVID-19 levels. Feedback from the sector shows that principals need additional flexible resources to support the wellbeing of their school staff.
24. To support staff wellbeing, the Ministry proposes providing \$0.300m of discretionary funding to schools in Tāmaki Makaurau and Te Tai Tokerau. Providing flexible funding will ensure that wellbeing support can be tailored to the specific needs of the individual school community to ease immediate pressures, such as release time, bring in additional support, invest in professional development and support team culture and positive workplace relationships.
25. Te Mahau regional offices will work with the local principal associations to identify schools that are most at risk, and who would benefit most from the limited funding from now until June 2023.
26. The Ministry will provide a light-touch reporting framework to ensure that funds are used appropriately. This will include what the funding has been used for, how effective it was to support principal and staff wellbeing and recommendations for improvement.

## Communication

27. We will work with your office to determine what public announcement you may wish to make.
28. The Ministry will share the insights of the small school admin support project with the sector after its completion.

## Financial Implications

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29. The cost of the two initiatives is expected to be \$1.058m which is currently the amount unallocated within the CRRF wellbeing workforce budget. As such we are not seeking additional funding.
30. The CRRF needs be spent by 30 June 2023. This is the Accord's preferred approach to spend the remaining funding before the end of this financial year.

## Next Steps

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31. We will:
  - a. implement the Small School Admin project and set up contracts for shared services in 2023.
  - b. work with Te Mahau in Tāmaki Makaurau and Te Tai Tokerau to identify eligible schools for the discretionary funding.