



Briefing Note: Visit to Tomarata School on Tuesday 06 September 2022

To:	Hon Jan Tinetti, Associate Minister of Education (School Operations)		
Cc:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
Date:	01 September 2022	Priority:	Low / Medium / High
Security Level:	In Confidence	METIS No:	1294285
Drafter:	Sanjalin Naicker	DDI:	09 638 2831
Key Contact:	Kirsty Ross	DDI:	09 632 9417
Messaging seen by Communications team:	No	Round Robin:	No

Purpose of Briefing Note

- The purpose of this paper is to support your visit to Tomarata School on Tuesday 06 September 2022 from 12.15 pm to 1.15 pm.
- A run sheet for the visit is attached. Annex [1] refers.

Core Tomarata School Information

Tomarata School [1115]

Contact Name: Cherylene Neels
9(2)(a)

Address: Pakiri Block Road
Road 4
Wellsford 0974

Key People

Board Chairperson: Jason Kerrisk
9(2)(a)

Principal: Cherylene Neels
9(2)(a)

Ministry Officials:

TelwiNgaro Dunn – Education Manager
09 632 9301

Allan Jon - Learning Support Service Manager
09 632 9427

Kirsty Ross - Senior Education Adviser
09 632 9417

Profile Information

Authority	State
School Type	Full Primary (Year 1-8)
School Gender	Co-ed
Education Medium	English
Decile	5
Electorate	Kaipara ki Mahurangi
Te Mahau Region	Auckland

The July 2022 breakdown of roll information by ethnicity is shown below:

July 2022 Roll	Number	Percentage (%)
Māori	20	27.8%
Pacific	3	4.2%
Asian	1	1.4%
Other ethnicity	0	0%
European/Pākehā	48	66.7%
International	0	0%
Total	72	100%

Tomarata School Context

- 1 Tomarata School is a small rural full primary school near Wellsford.
- 2 The school's learning spaces include 3 blocks of classrooms, the 'Rata Room' for activities such as Visual Art, Music, Dance, Drama, and a classroom for Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics (STEAM) activities. They also have a hall, library, swimming pool, playing field, adventure playground, a small orchard, worm farms, school gardens, a butterfly garden, a 'Recycled Garden', chickens and a much-loved sandpit.

- 3 Tomarata School's whakatauki is 'Poipoia te kakano kia puawa: Nurture the seed and it will blossom'. The school's overarching vision and aims are focused on igniting students' learning, developing success for all, promoting student wellbeing and building strong relationships with the school community.
- 4 The school has recently established links with Ngāti Manuhiri and completed an induction course to understand the symbolism of key geographical places in and around the school, including Tawharanui and Te Hauturu-o-Toi (Little Barrier Island).
- 5 Of particular importance is the school's new understanding of their area as Tomorata; a tomo is a hole or an opening and the name refers to the gaps that are formed in large rata trees among their bulging roots. Maori would put the remains of their relatives in the holes and wait for the flesh to rot before the bones could be put into their final resting place. The area was named Tomorata when Manuhiri laid his brother to rest there. Today's spelling morphed due to the speaking inflection of pakeha.
- 6 The school is planning to rename the school following a consultation process with its parent and broader community and with support from Ngāti Manuhiri. This will coincide with the launch of the school's refreshed local curriculum and include a redesigned front of school.
- 7 A local farmer has provided a bush block which the school is using to create their Nature Classroom. Massey University gifted money to develop some facilities on the land including toilets, a bridge and fire pit, which the students co-constructed. The school uses centrally funded PLD to develop their Education Outside the Classroom (EOTC) and they will be hosting Ruud Kleinpaste and Mike King (forager) to establish a sustainable model. The Nature Classroom will be officially opened by Ngāti Manuhiri in Term 4, 2022.
- 8 Students recently planted 675 trees donated from Trees for Survival on the land provided for them.
- 9 The school is implementing Structured Literacy and maths programmes that are showing positive results.
- 10 The school runs a Clubs programme with a range of activities for students to engage. Pakiri School and Tomarata School come together every Friday to join in Kapa Haka and Club activities.
- 11 During 2016 to 2019, the Ministry of Education appointed consecutive Limited Statutory Managers (LSM) to improve stewardship, staff relationships and engagement with the school community.
- 12 The Principal, Cherylene Neels, was appointed as a beginning Principal by the Limited Statutory Manager (LSM) at that time and began at the school in July 2020.
- 13 The LSM intervention was revoked in Dec 2019.
- 14 The Principal has continued to manage a range of complex and ongoing employment matters alongside a comprehensive curriculum review, including engaging the school with Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) through their Kāhui Ako.

Education Review Office (ERO)

- 15 The school has recently returned to a regular review cycle following a 1–2-year review that began in August 2020. At that time ERO recommended that the school seek support from the Ministry of Education in order to bring about improvements in curriculum design, implementation and review; establishing effective assessment systems and processes; effective teaching and learning to improve students' learning outcomes.
- 16 ERO also recommended that the school access support from New Zealand School Trustees Association (NZSTA) to help it effectively meet its statutory legislative requirements.
- 17 The school engaged the support of ERO and are completing their final report and expecting to transition to ERO's Evaluative Partnership model following positive progress in addressing identified issues and recommendations.

Kāhui Ako | Communities of Learning

- 18 The school belongs to Twin Coast Kāhui Ako who receive funding for Learning Support Coordinators (LSC).

Learning Support

- 19 The school is accessing funds through Settling 5 & 6 year olds (Flexible Fund) to support student communication, engagement and wellbeing. The BRICKS programme has been implemented to support this project.
- 20 The Ministry's Learning Support team are responding with a systemic approach to the current challenging situation where there is a high proportion of neurodiverse students in one class.
- 21 Interim Response Funding (IRF) is being provided.
- 22 A Property Modification is pending to fix cabinets to the wall to secure lunches from a student with a High Health need.
- 23 Current Active Learning Support – 2 students with High Health (HH), 4 students with a Behaviour Service, 1 student with a Communication Service. Waiting for service – 5 students for Behaviour Service (hence the systemic approach by the Educational Psychologist).

Participation in government programmes

School Donations Scheme

- 24 The school opted-in to the School Donations Scheme for 2021 and 2022. The school received \$18,300 in 2021 and \$13,350 in 2022 in lieu of donations based on the July roll returns.

Ka Ora, Ka Ako | Healthy School Lunch Programme

- 25 The school is ineligible for the programme.

Ikura | Manaakitia te whare tangata – Period products in schools initiative

- 26 Tomarata School have opted-in to the initiative and have ordered period products.

Creatives in Schools

- 27 The school was successful for Round 2 of the Creatives in Schools. The name of their project was “Student lead art workshops in community” which involves students from Year 6 to 8 and their creative is Geva Downey, Mindy Catt.

Impact of COVID-19

- 28 The school lost several families (12 students) during Auckland’s extended COVID19 lockdown in 2022 when families moved their children to a school across the regional border they could physically attend. The resulting roll decrease is likely to impact on a reduction in staff for 2023.
- 29 The school received the following funding to support it through COVID19 in 2022:
- \$12,000 Wellbeing Funding – First Time Principal
 - \$5,554 Regional Response Fund and
 - \$3,107 COVID19 Distance Learning Grant.
- 30 The school received the following funding to support it through COVID19 in 2021:
- \$10,270 Urgent Response Fund
 - \$3,000 Counselling in Schools and
 - \$4,729.31 Rapid Response Fund.

Property

- 31 Tomarata School is a decile 5 full primary school located in Wellsford in the Auckland region. As of July 2022, the school had a total roll of 72 students.
- 32 Overall, the school property is in good condition.
- 33 The school has a current 5 Year Agreement (5YA) allocation of \$160,000 and an annual maintenance grant of \$23,000. The school also received \$160,000 from the Accelerated Modernisation Scheme (AMS) and \$80,000 from the School Investment Package (SIP).
- 34 The school has recently finalised a project to replace the pool changing rooms, pump room, and garden shed by using its 5YA and SIP funding. The school has also finalised an AMS funded project to upgrade 2 classrooms to Designing Quality Learning Spaces (DQLS) standards and to introduce a breakout space.
- 35 The school are pleased with the recent instalment of a new artificial turf on its existing courts, which was funded by the school’s SIP allocation. The turf is a great asset for winter conditions.
- 36 The school has requested for an integrated fire and security system to be installed at a cost of \$130,000. As there is no remaining 5YA funding available, Unforeseen Funding is being considered to support this project.

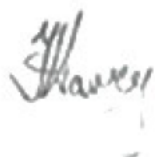
- 37 As of 25 August, the school has been sent a total of 2 portable air cleaners through all three distributions under the Ministry's COVID-19 ventilation response. The school have also received 3 CO2 monitors, 2 from the term 1 and 2 distributions at the start of the year and 1 from the term 3 distribution.

Other known risks or issues

- 38 The school has experienced a significant roll drop over the past two years, including losing some students due to the impact of an employment issue and 12 students due to COVID-19 lockdown. This drop will result in a loss in funding and staffing, including the Principal needing to become a teaching Principal. The principal has expressed her concern about being able to manage a teaching Principal role.
- 39 The school is struggling to fill roles to support their students with additional learning and behaviour needs. They have not been able to retain a counsellor (Wellbeing Fund) or make appointments for teacher aide positions to support in the classroom.
- 40 The school joined the Twin Coast Kāhui Ako after allocations of LSCs were made. The Kāhui Ako have said they don't have capacity to provide LSC support to Tomarata School.

Proactive Release

- a **agree** that the Ministry of Education release this briefing once it has been considered by you and the visit has occurred.



Tanya Harvey
Director of Education
Area 2 - Southwest, West, North
Te Mahau | Te Tai Raro

31/08/2022



Hon Jan Tinetti
Associate Minister of Education
School Operations

04/09/2022

☒ **Agree** ☐ **Disagree**

Annex 1: Run Sheet

Time	Activity	Other details
12.15 pm	Minister Tinetti arrives and is greeted by Ministry representative and/or Principal	Other attendees include N/A
1.15 pm	Minister Tinetti leaves	