



19/01/2024

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**OIA: 1319267 – Better Start (BSLA) Funding and data collection**

Thank you for your letter of 14 November 2023 to the Ministry of Education (the Ministry) requesting the following information:

- 1. Please provide a copy of the contract variation or other agreement that provides funding to the University of Canterbury to proceed with Cohort 7 of the Better Start Literacy Approach PLD in Term 1 2024.*
- 2. Please supply any internal or external correspondence, emails, memos or briefing notes related to the contract under 1.*
- 3. Please provide the total dollar value of the amount spent to date or funded by the Ministry of Education to Canterbury University for delivery of the Better Start Literacy Approach PLD to schools.*
- 6. Please provide copies of all internal correspondence, emails, memos, briefing papers related to tendering for phonics-based literacy supports for teachers for 2024.*
- 7. Please provide all data and communication relating to the collection of data from schools that have opted out of further training of Betterstart and no longer use the programme?*

On 28 November 2023 we transferred the following parts to the University of Canterbury under section 14(b)(i) of the Act:

- 4. Please provide details on the average proportion of Year 1 and Year 2 teachers that have received BSLA training in each school. This could include across different cohorts.*
- 5. Please provide a list of schools sorted by region who have had teachers complete the BSLA training, and the number of teachers who have completed training by year level.*

Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).



In response to **part 1** of your request, the most recent contract for the Better Start Literacy Approach (BSLA) and supporting documents have been attached as **Appendix A**. Some of the information has been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act to protect the privacy of the natural persons. Further information has also been withheld under section 9(2)(b)(ii) of the Act, to protect information where the making available of the information would be likely unreasonably to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information. Where drafts of documents exist, we have considered the final version for release.

In response to **part 2** of your request, the information requested is attached as **Appendix B** and outlined in the **Appendix B document table** below. Some of the information has been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act. Further information has also been withheld under section 9(2)(ba)(i) of the Act, to protect information which is subject to an obligation of confidence, where the making available of the information would be likely to prejudice the supply of similar information, and it is in the public interest that such information should continue to be supplied. We have removed draft versions of any documents where the final version is provided.

In response to **part 3** of your request, since 1 July 2021, \$19,246,986.85 (excl. GST) has been funded by the Ministry for delivery of BSLA by the University of Canterbury.

In response to **part 6** of your request, no tender was held for phonics-based literacy supports to be delivered in 2024. I am therefore refusing this part of your request under section 18(e) of the Act as the documents alleged to contain the information requested do not exist.

In response to **part 7** of your request, schools do not opt in to the BSLA programme, and the Ministry is therefore unable to provide statistics about which schools have opted out of the programme. As such, I am refusing this part of your request under section 18(g) of the Act as the information requested is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds to believe that the information is held by another agency.

As required under section 9(1) of the Act, I have considered the public interest in releasing the information withheld. I do not consider the public interest considerations favouring the release of this information are sufficient to outweigh the need to withhold it at this time.

Thank you again for your email. You have the right to ask an Ombudsman to review my decision on your request, in accordance with section 28 of the Act. You can do this by writing to [info@ombudsman.parliament.nz](mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.nz) or to Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Please note, we may publish this response on our website after five working days. Your name and contact details will be removed.

Nāku noa, nā



Pauline Cleaver

**Hautū Taupua | Acting Deputy Secretary**  
**Te Mahau | Te Poutāhū (Curriculum Centre)**

## Documents included in Appendix A

#	Date	METIS #	Title	Decision on release
1	19 October 2023	Nil	Variation to Professional Support for Teaching Foundational Phonics Based Literacy Agreement (MOE11214) Variation 4	<b>Release in part.</b> Information has been withheld under sections 9(2)(a) and 9(2)(b)(ii) of the Act.
2	16 October 2023	Nil	Memo: Better Start Literacy Approach – Request for Contract Variation	<b>Release in part.</b> Information has been withheld under section 9(2)(b)(ii) of the Act.
3	Nil	Nil	Request for Contract Variation: procurement plan BSLA	<b>Release in part.</b> Information has been withheld under section 9(2)(b)(ii) of the Act.

## Documents included in Appendix B

#	Date	To	From	Title	Decision on release
1	12 September 2023	[name withheld]; Tasha Kent	Aditi Cook	RE: [approve] - Contract Variation - Better Start Literacy Approach	<b>Release in part.</b> Information has been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
2	12 September 2023	Leya Kurian; Jamie Merrick	[name withheld]	FW: [approve] - Contract Variation - Better Start Literacy Approach	<b>Release in part.</b> Information has been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.

#	Date	To	From	Title	Decision on release
3	14 September 2023	Jamie Merrick	Kirsty Farquharson	RE: BSLA for approval	<b>Release in part.</b> Information has been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
4	20 September 2023	Kirsty Farquharson; Jamie Merrick	[Name Withheld]	BSLA cohort 6 / 7 potential variation contract	<b>Release in part.</b> Information has been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
5	25 September 2023	Amelia Cartwright	Leya Kurian	For approval: BSLA Large Scale Implementation - Memo to Iona and Ellen	<b>Release in full.</b>
6	3 October 2023	[name withheld]	Kirsty Farquharson	Update on literacy procurements FW: BSLA procurement documents - as requested at your meeting with Julia and Ellen this afternoon	<b>Release in part.</b> Information has been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
7	4 October 2023	Julia Novak; Campbell Birch; Jamie Merrick; Leya Kurian	Kirsty Farquharson	RE: BSLA Large Scale Implementation - Memo to Iona and Ellen v2.docx	<b>Release in part.</b> Information has been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
8	6 October 2023	Kirsty Farquharson; [name withheld]; Jamie Merrick	[name withheld]	RE: Update on contract variation	<b>Release in part.</b> Information has been withheld under sections 9(2)(a) & 9(2)(ba)(i) of the Act.
9	18 October 2023	[name withheld]	Jamie Merrick	Signed	<b>Release in part.</b> Information has been withheld under sections 9(2)(a) and 9(2)(b)(ii) of the Act and as out of scope

#	Date	To	From	Title	Decision on release
10	18 October 2023	[name withheld]	Kirsty Farquharson	RE: Contract update	<b>Release in part.</b> Information has been withheld under sections 9(2)(a) & 9(2)(ba)(i) of the Act.
11	18 October 2023	[name withheld]; [name withheld]; [name withheld]	Jamie Merrick	Approval for BSLA	<b>Release in part.</b> Information has been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
12	18 October 2023	Jamie Merrick; Haley Payne; Neesha Patel	Kirsty Farquharson	FW: [FOR APPROVAL]: Procurement requests for literacy and maths supports	<b>Release in part.</b> Information has been withheld under sections 9(2)(a) and 9(2)(b)(ii) of the Act and as out of scope.
13	18 October 2023	Jamie Merrick; [name withheld]	[name withheld]	Re: Approval for BSLA	<b>Release in part.</b> Information has been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
14	19 October 2023	Jamie Merrick	Kirsty Farquharson	RE: Jamie Merrick shared "MOE11214 - Contract Variation 4 - BSLA V1" with you	<b>Release in part.</b> Information has been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
15	20 October 2023	[name withheld]	Jamie Merrick	RE: E7280 [withheld] - MoE Variation FW: contract for BSLA.	<b>Release in part.</b> Information has been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
16	20 October 2023	Amelia Cartwright	Kirsty Farquharson	For Julia's approval: BSLA Contract signing docs and memo to open round.	<b>Release in part.</b> Information has been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.

#	Date	To	From	Title	Decision on release
17	24 October 2023	Te Poutāhū ODS GCM	Jamie Merrick	RE: BSLA contract sign off preview	<b>Release in part.</b> Information has been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
18	25 October 2023	[name withheld]	Amelia Cartwright	BSLA Contract Variation - memo for Ellen	<b>Release in part.</b> Information has been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
19	26 October 2023	Te Poutāhū ODS GCM; Amelia Cartwright	Kirsty Farquharson	RE: BSLA Contract signing docs and memo to open round.	<b>Release in part.</b> Information has been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.