Briefing Note: Meeting with Deirdre Quarnstrom, General Manager, Minecraft Education, Microsoft

To: Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education

Date: 24 October 2018

Security Level: In Confidence

Priority: Low

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DDI: No

Messaging seen by Communications team: No

Round Robin: No

Purpose of Report

This paper provides you with information to support your meeting with Deirdre Quarnstrom, General Manager, Minecraft Education, Microsoft.

Agree that this Briefing will be proactively released.

Agree / Disagree

Summary

- You are meeting Deirdre Quarnstrom, General Manager, Minecraft Education, Microsoft with supporting people from Microsoft New Zealand on Monday 29 October.

- This meeting provides you with an opportunity to hear about how technology, such as Minecraft for Education, can be used to support teaching and learning. Deirdre Quarnstrom is interested in hearing about your 30-year vision for education in New Zealand.

Stuart Wakefield
Chief Information Officer

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

24/10/18

25/10/18
Background

1. On Monday 29 October 2018, you will be meeting with Deirdre Quarnstrom, General Manager, Minecraft Education, Microsoft along with Jeff Healey, Public Sector Director at Microsoft NZ & Anne Taylor, Education Lead at Microsoft NZ. The meeting will be held at your office between 5.00 – 5.30pm.

2. The Ministry entered into a new Microsoft schools software agreement this year that covers all state and state-integrated schools. The benefits took effect from July this year, (including making Minecraft: Education edition available at no cost to schools). Other software within the scope of this agreement includes:
   a. Minecraft: Education edition;
   b. Windows desktop;
   c. Microsoft office – including home use rights for every student;
   d. Windows server; and
   e. Productivity software (e.g. Skype for Business, Teams, Flow).

3. Microsoft promote Minecraft as an open-world game that promotes creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving in an immersive environment where the only limit is your imagination. Microsoft say that Minecraft: Education Edition is a special version of the game developed specifically for educational use. This version adds features and controls for classrooms, including communication tools, and a tutorial for first-time educator use.

4. Since Minecraft: Education edition was made available, over 600 schools have requested access to the software.

Other Relevant Information

5. Microsoft NZ has advised that Nikki Kaye – MP will also be meeting with Deirdre Quarnstrom while she is in New Zealand.

Talking Points or Speech Notes

You may wish to talk about your 30 year vision for education:

6. The Minister may want to discuss some of the points below with Minecraft for Education.

7. What potential do you see for Minecraft for Education to support curriculum delivery in New Zealand schools and kura?

8. Tell me about some of the most impactful ways Minecraft for Education has been used in schools.

9. New Zealand has both English-medium and Māori-medium systems of schooling. In what ways has Minecraft for Education been used to support schooling for indigenous communities and to support indigenous communities’ aspirations for their children’s schooling?
Tell me about Minecraft for Education's product roadmap. How do you see Minecraft for Education developing in the medium term?

International discussion about the future of education (for example, OECD Curriculum 2030) is focusing on students having the knowledge, skills, and attitudes and values to thrive in the 21st century, as well as a focus on student well-being. How could Minecraft for Education support these ideas?

Proactive Release

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.

Annexes

Annex 1: Biography of Deirdre Quarmstrom
Annex 2: Biography of Jeff Healey
Annex 3: Biography of Anne Taylor
Annex 4: Minecraft in use at Opateke School
Annex 5: Minecrfat in use at Taieti School
Annex one: Biography of Deirdre Quarnstrom

- Deirdre Quarnstrom is a General Manager in the Xbox division at Microsoft where she is responsible for strategy, product development and community engagement for Minecraft in education, including Minecraft: Education Edition, a version of the video game Minecraft created for education.

- Previously, Deirdre served as Chief of Staff for Xbox and held finance, operations and strategy roles at T-Mobile USA and StairMaster, Inc. In 2013, Deirdre was a mentor aboard the Semester at Sea Spring Voyage for the "Unreasonable at Sea" social entrepreneurship accelerator.

- Deirdre currently serves as a Director on the board of Block by Block, a non-profit partnership between Mojang and UN-Habitat which uses Minecraft to empower youth and women in the developing world. Deirdre is also a Trustee on the Board for the French American School of Puget Sound.

- Deirdre holds an undergraduate degree in Economics from McGill University in Montreal, an MBA from Seattle University and completed the Stanford Executive Program in 2018.

- Deirdre, her husband and their two daughters live in Seattle, Washington.
Annex Two: Biography of Jeff Healey

- Jeff Healey is the Public Sector Director for Microsoft New Zealand, where he is responsible for driving engagement with Government, Educational, Health and other publicly funded entities.

- Jeff previously work for Hewlett-Packard in a number of roles at both a local and Regional level including Networking Sales Director Asia Pacific and Japan.

- Jeff holds a Bachelor of Management Studies, Finance and Economic from University of Waikato.
Annex Three: Biography of Anne Taylor

- Anne Taylor is the recently appointed Education Lead at Microsoft New Zealand where she leads Microsoft's Education business in New Zealand and is responsible for implementing the company's vision to empower students and educators to achieve more.

- Anne has been with Microsoft for 17 years with the last 5 years as the Schools and Academic Programs Manager. In this role she was the Microsoft Manager of the K-12 School sector and the Microsoft Education programs for Microsoft New Zealand. The role includes strategic relationship management of the Ministry and programmatic broad marketing to the sector.

- Anne holds a Bachelor of Commerce, Marketing from University of Auckland.

- Anne and her partner Denny have two sons and live in Auckland.
Annex Four: Minecraft in use at Opaheke School

This has been provided by Microsoft.

At Opaheke School we are nuts about Minecraft! We use Minecraft to express our incredible ideas in 3D form. Anything from eco houses, fraction gardens, Andy Warhol inspired art work, to responses to novels we’ve read like new zoo enclosures for Ivan the gorilla. We use minecraft across all curriculum areas! Minecraft is incredibly engaging, it allows us to focus on problem solving, thinking, and of course collaborative skills.

Over the past two years we have funded Minecraft:EE by holding Minecraft dress up days (gold coin donation) and support from our board. We are delighted that Minecraft (and the learning that goes with it) is now funded by the ministry’s agreement. In our school, every dollar counts. Asking our parents for one less contribution means a lot! Next year, we intend to reallocate this subscription cost to support students with less access to digital tools.

A few examples of our 3D learning!

Our fraction gardens

Reading response – rebuilding the Arras tunnels.
Reading response - New zoo enclosures for "The One and Only Ivan"

Henry’s Pepeha – marae, maunga, awa, waka

Andy Warhol inspired art work – made with the help of the code connection.
Annex Five: Minecraft in use at - Taieri School

This has been provided by Microsoft.

I have been using Minecraft in my classroom for 3 years.

The biggest impact Minecraft has made for my learners is it provides a platform for collaborative work for students, especially those who might struggle to collaborate due to different levels of literacy. This tuakana/teina learning allows students more confident with content to share it in a less intimidating way, and often less confident students can be the leader of the Minecraft world and take a leadership role that is out of reach in other activities. I have often learned from my students how to complete a particular task, and they take great joy in teaching me, building stronger relationships in my classroom. Minecraft allows students agency to show their learning in a context relevant to them, and to tell their own stories.

As a Science teacher, MinecraftEDU (and the chemistry add in) allows an amazing link between the virtual and real world. For example, we made coloured flaming torches in MinecraftEDU, using a variety of chloride salts. Some of these could be replicated in real life, and others, like mercuric chloride, could not be due to safety guidelines. They mixture of virtual and real world experimentation also lends itself well to integrating the new digital technologies curriculum, for both computational thinking to follow the various algorithms required to make the correct mixtures, as well as designing digital outcomes when displaying finished outcomes. It also makes these type of experiments available to all learners, even if a specialist teacher is not available or the various practical components are not accessible due to cost constraints.

It is important that MinecraftEDU is available to all students in New Zealand as it is a uniquely useful software for allowing collaboration and creativity. It is a useful tool in every teachers tool box as we strive to meet the needs of our increasingly diverse learner needs. Students own their learning and can express their ideas in unique and personalised ways. We love it.

from Rachel Chisnall - Taieri School