Briefing Note: Meeting with Otago Primary Principals’ Association
Annual Meeting on Friday 22 November 2019

To: Hon Tracey Martin, Associate Minister of Education
Cc: Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education

Date: 19 November 2019
Security Level: In Confidence

Priority: High
METIS No: 1211243

Drafter: Aimee Te Tau
Key Contact: Julia Anderson

Messaging seen by Communications team: No
Round Robin: No

Purpose of Briefing

The purpose of this briefing is to:

- provide you with background information and talking points to support your meeting with the Otago Primary Principals’ Association Annual Meeting, at the Dunedin Art Gallery, on Friday 22 November 2019, 10.30-11.30am

- seek your agreement that this briefing will be proactively released.

Agree / Disagree

Susan Howan
Associate Deputy Secretary
Sector Enablement and Support

Hon Tracey Martin
Associate Minister of Education

19/11/19
22/11/19
Otago Primary Principals’ Association (OPPA)

Contact Name: Jenny Clarke, Principal, Opoho School
Contact Number: 59(2)(a)
Address: 96 Signal Hill Road, Dunedin

Key People
OPPA President: Chris McKinlay, Elmgrove School
Principal: Jenny Clarke, Opoho School (OPPA Executive Committee)
Ministry Official: Julie Anderson, Director of Education for Otago and Southland 59(2)(a)

Event Background

1. You have been invited to address the Annual Meeting for the Otago Primary Principals’ Association (OPPA). Approximately 50 principals are expected to attend.

2. Throughout the year, the OPPA Executive hosts a number of seminars, professional learning opportunities and the Annual Meeting. The Annual Meeting usually runs across a school day and includes professional learning opportunities and a guest speaker.

3. You have been invited as a guest speaker.

4. You will be met by the following people:
   - Chris Mackinlay, OPPA President
   - Jenny Clarke, Executive Committee Member
   - Julie Anderson, Director of Education, Otago and Southland.

5. Ministry officials from the Equity Index work programme are also presenting at the OPPA Annual Meeting.

6. Talking points are attached as Annex 1 for the Learning Support Action Plan (LSAP), Learning Support Coordinator (LSC) role and allocation, and alternative education to improve education for children and young people at risk of disengaging from their learning.

7. An event summary run sheet is attached as Annex 2.

Background on OPPA

8. The Otago Primary Principals’ Association (OPPA) has operated since 1992 with a primary focus on the welfare of Otago Primary School principals. OPPA serves schools across the wider Otago area covering 126 schools. OPPA is affiliated with the New Zealand Principals’ Federation (NZPF).
9. The key objectives of OPPA are to:
   - promote professional growth of school leaders
   - provide collegial support and guidance
   - promote high standards of performance to provide a top quality and equitable education system
   - inform OPPA members about new developments in education.

10. The OPPA Executive involves 22 principals who have formed a number of sub-committees.

Learning Support Coordinators: allocation for Otago

11. There are currently 20 learning support clusters across Otago at various stages of implementation, ranging from very early stakeholder engagement through to being fully implemented.

12. Ten Otago clusters have been allocated 28 Learning Support Coordinators (LSCs) in the first tranche.

13. All clusters allocated LSCs were represented at the LSC workshops held in early November. Two workshops were held across the wider Otago and Southland region — one in Gore and one in Dunedin.

14. The morning workshop session covered the context for change, the intent and purpose of the Learning Support Delivery Model (LSDM), the role of the LSC and sharing specific clusters' progress. The afternoon session focused on forming a common vision for their learning support teams with a map of activities and actions needed to realise that vision.

15. At 18 November 2019 all LSC vacancies have been advertised for Otago. A small number have indicated that they were unable to appoint in the first round and have re-advertised.

Issues that may be raised by OPPA

16. OPPA may express their concerns about:

LSC role, administrative funding and property allocation for schools that have been allocated LSCs

- Clusters receiving LSCs have been largely positive, however, some OPPA principals have expressed a desire for more professional services as opposed to a coordinator, and some principals perceive that this role will add an additional layer of bureaucracy for schools wanting to access support for students.

- Some clusters consider that co-locating LSCs in hubs will allow for greater collaboration and a consistent response across the community. Some clusters are still making decisions about where LSCs will be accommodated.
Ministry support

- We are continuing to work with clusters to emphasise the benefits of locating LSCs in schools, and the importance of LSCs being a link to parents and whānau and working alongside teachers and leadership teams within schools.

LSC allocation process in the first tranche – schools/clusters not allocated LSCs

- Some OPPA cluster principals may express disappointment at not being allocated LSCs in the first tranche.

Ministry support

- To support the implementation of the LSDM, we are continuing to work with clusters of schools that were not allocated LSCs. OPPA has been consulted as these clusters of schools have become involved in implementing the LSDM.

- We have discussed the LSDM, the Learning Support Action Plan and allocation of the first tranche of LSCs with the schools that have not been allocated LSCs and with the principals that attend the Otago Sector Reference Group and OPPA Executive meetings. We also held an information meeting for all OPPA members earlier this year, with approximately 30 principals in attendance.

Resourcing and funding concerns to meet local learning support demand

- Principals may raise concerns about the funding level for students with learning support needs. This could be about the amount of funding that is provided, compared to the real costs of employing support staff and the level of support provided to individual students.

- Principals may also raise concerns about the availability of the Intensive Wraparound Service (IWS) and High and Complex Needs (HCN) support, as well as Learning Support waiting times.

- Principals may also be interested in the development of screening tools as a way to respond to the needs of neuro-diverse students.

- It is anticipated you will receive questions about how support for students identified through screening will be resourced, and how professional development to build the capability of teachers will be delivered.

Ministry support

- We are working with schools to resolve individual and school cluster issues as they arise. We are working with schools and clusters to develop learning support registers to encourage collaborative decision making practice to support all students within a learning support cluster and community.

- We are also working to bring together groups of schools in geographic areas to enable connection with wider agency services through the LSDM.
- This is advantageous for many smaller and more geographically isolated schools who at times struggle to access wider agency engagement and support.

- We are continuing discussions with schools, where there is a perception that students with learning support needs should be resourced by the Ministry and other agencies, with a view to promote inclusive practice and equitable outcomes for all students.

**Addressing the needs of primary school aged students at risk of disengaging from their learning**

- OPPA has raised concern about the increasing complexity of engagement and learning opportunities for primary school aged students.

  - s 9(2)(a)

- Some principals consider that some primary school aged students would benefit from the specific education engagement plans that are developed through the London House Activity Centre programme.

- OPPA Executive members are aware of the Managed Moves pilot in Napier for students in years 3-6.

**Ministry support**

- s 9(2)(g)(i)

- Additional Ministry funding would be needed if the request was approved.

- We view the Managed Moves initiative as a more appropriate learning support approach for primary school aged students should it be extended in the future.

- We have advised OPPA Executive principals to consider wider community links, including iwi, to support an integrated community proposal.

**Principal wellbeing and stress**

- Principal wellbeing and stress is regularly raised at sector and association meetings. Many principals have reported that it is challenging to keep up with the Education Work Programme and the current range of issues and areas under review.

- In addition, principals are raising concern about the time required, challenges and need for support to respond to school and community traumatic incidents.
Ministry support

- We respond to all school and community traumatic incidents when it is required.
- We are currently providing direct wellbeing support for all principals when it is needed. We are also working alongside their mentors to ensure that appropriate ongoing professional support is provided.

Network issues – enrolment schemes

- Enrolment schemes across some areas, but particularly in Dunedin city, are seen by many principals as contributing to an inequity of enrolment of at-risk students. There is a perception that enrolment schemes are used to prevent students with additional learning support needs being enrolled in some parts of Dunedin city.

Ministry support

- We have worked with schools with enrolment schemes to ensure they understand the enrolment processes and legislative requirements. We have asked principals to alert us to any issues if they do present so we can follow these up.

Proactive Release

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