

Minutes of the Governing Council meeting

KAUPAPA SUBJECT:	Governing Council		
RĀ DATE:	Wednesday 26 November 2025		
WĀ TIME:	9.00am–2:00pm		
WĀHI VENUE:	Teaching Council offices, Wellington		
MANATŪ KAUNIHERA GOVERNING COUNCIL ATTENDEES:	- David Ferguson (Chair)	- Liam Rutherford	- Leanne Stewart
	- Andrée Atkinson	- Patrick Walsh	- Susan Hassall
	- Heath Chittenden	- Dr Sarah Brown	- Pat Newman
KAIMAHI STAFF ATTENDEES:	- Tom Gott (Interim Chief Executive)		
	- Clive Jones (Deputy Chief Executive Pou Kaiāwhā)		
	- Ian McEwan (Chief Financial Officer) – Item 6		
	- [REDACTED] (Governance Advisor)		
WHAKAPĀHA APOLOGIES:	- Simon Curnow		
	- Cathy Wilson		

Heath Chittenden opened the meeting with a karakia.

1. In-committee

The Governing Council had In-Committee time.

The Governing Council reported back on recommendations from the People and Culture committee...

The Governing Council **approved** the following recommendations:

DECISION GC20251126/1a: Formally disestablish the current CE REM Committee – and merge the function and purpose into the People and Culture committee.

DECISION GC20251126/1b: Non-financial delegations - Amend to add Governing Council (Level A) delegations to the following:

- (a) Authorize release of briefings and reports to the Minister of Education
- (b) Approve External Communications
- (c) Approve external media releases (with note against media that the CEO has authority for media release on sensitive items)
- (d) Authorize responses to written PQs, OIA and Privacy Act requests

DECISION GC20251126/1c: Add in separate line and Level A (Governing Council) delegations for Senior Exec appointment, remuneration and benefits.

DECISION GC20251126/1d: Wellbeing survey will be deferred until 2026 and a review done of who (which survey company) and how the survey is conducted (questions to be revised).

DECISION GC20251126/1e: Open up access for all GC members to the Minutes for all committees in Diligent.

2. Opening items

2.1 Apologies

The Chair noted apologies from Simon Curnow and Cathy Wilson.

2.2 Interest Register

The Council noted the Interest Register and the Chair reminded members to send any changes to the Governance Advisor to update the register.

2.3 Minutes from previous hui

The minutes from the Board only In-Committee meeting on 28 October 2025 were noted.

2.4 Action List

The Council noted the Action List and the updated status of action items.

3. Organisational Performance

3.1 Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive's (CE's) report was taken as read.

Council members discussed:

- the ongoing development of support resources and building awareness around implementation of the new Standards, noting that in 2026 all schools and ECE services begin using the new Standards for their teachers' professional growth cycle.
- feedback on the improved access and usability of the updated Teaching Council website.
- Principal standards and the intention to defer consultation until 2026. The requirement to give regard to Principal Standards as per the Statement of Government Policy (SoGP) was noted and members discussed the number and range of players currently in this space. The draft consultation document and paper seeking Governing Council approval to undertake this consultation in late February 2026 are included for decision later in the meeting in Item 4.1.
- ongoing work on relief teaching – noting that at the September Governing Council meeting, members agreed not to progress work in relation to Limited Authorities to Teach (LATs) as a solution, and directed staff to continue work on streamlining processes for certificated relief teachers as an alternative solution for having regard to the SoGP on this issue.

Members noted the intention to circulate to teachers and key stakeholders revised proposals aimed at certificated relief teachers and that feedback from this consultation will be provided to the Governing Council in February 2026.

- service performance standards and expectations in the disciplinary area.
- The contribution and role of the positions held by the 'profession' on the conduct and disciplinary panels.

3.2 Issues Register

The Council received the Issues Register and noted the updates provided.

3.3 Performance Dashboard

The Council noted the monthly performance dashboard and discussed the continued growth in the number of teachers holding a practising certificate.

A query was raised about the pathways to certification in ECE centres, specifically in Playcentre settings. It was agreed that a sector breakdown of re-certification statistics would be provided on future dashboards and DCE Clive Jones would speak with relevant Council members offline to better understand the Playcentre issue.

ACTION GC20251126/3a: Management to provide a sector breakdown of re-certification statistics on future dashboards.

4. Items for Decision

4.1 Consultation on options for introducing standards for Principals

It was discussed that education unions have established distinct standards for Principals within their collective agreements - unlike the Teaching Council's Standards, these do not have legal standing in relation to re-certification processes or competence matters reported to the Council.

It was noted that there have been observations from within the sector regarding the complexity and lack of clarity arising from the existence of different sets of standards serving different purposes.

Alongside this, the Statement of Government Policy (SoGP) published in December 2024 expressed the Government's interest in the development of Principal standards that recognise the unique responsibilities inherent to the Principal role, which differ from those of teachers. The Council is required to give regard to this policy statement.

To date, discussions have taken place with key Principal stakeholder groups and unions regarding the introduction of Principal standards aligned to practising certificate renewal, and various proposed options have been explored with these stakeholders. In light of concurrent curriculum consultations and reform pressures the decision was made to defer consultation until next year.

Members noted the proposal that consultation on Principal standards begin early in 2026, following the start of Term 1, and it was discussed that following analysis of consultation feedback, a decision paper on whether to proceed with introducing Principal standards will be provided to the Governing Council.

The Governing Council recommended that the Teaching Council touch base with the Ministry to see how to proceed and to seek clarification on whether there is still a desire for this work to progress.

DECISION GC20251126/4a: Subject to confirmation by the Ministry for this work to proceed, the Governing Council approved consultation to be undertaken with the teaching profession and stakeholders in the first quarter of 2026 on options for introducing standards for Principals.

4.2 2026 Assessment tool for maths competency – entry into ITE

Members received the paper seeking approval to continue use of the existing LNAAT maths assessment (competency) tool for entry into primary Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes in 2026.

It was noted that in 2024, the Teaching Council consulted on changes to the requirements for demonstrating maths competency for entry into primary ITE programmes. At this time, the Governing Council confirmed the LNAAT tool as the mechanism for undertaking pre-entry assessments for 2025.

During 2025, other options for a maths assessment tool for entry into primary ITE programmes were explored given the likelihood that the LNAAT tool will be de-commissioned in the future.

Council members were briefed that investigations to date have revealed that there are currently no suitable 'off-the-shelf' products available, and therefore options for a bespoke tool/ identifying a

provider for an alternative maths assessment tool in 2026 would need to be explored (for possible implementation from 2027).

DECISION GC20251126/4b: The Governing Council **approved** the use of the Literacy and Numeracy for Adults Assessment Tool (LNAAT) for maths competency pre-entry requirements for primary ITE programmes (English Medium) for 2026.

4.3 Teacher Education Refresh (TER) – proposed change to policy

Council members received the paper seeking approval to make permanent the current temporary changes to the Teacher Education Refresh (TER) policy which are set to expire on 31 December 2025 – enabling teachers returning to the profession (who have secured a job offer) to complete a Return to Practice Plan (RTPP) as an ‘on-the-job refresh’, rather than undertaking a formal TER programme.

Council members discussed the background and context to the temporary policy, introduced in September 2024, noting the approach has been widely supported by sector feedback. It was discussed that the paper’s recommendation reduces barriers to re-entry and accelerates the reintegration of experienced teachers back into the workforce.

It was noted that to ensure continuity and equity for applicants without a job offer, the Council will progress further policy work while the residual TER programme in 2026 is being delivered.

DECISION GC20251126/4c: The Governing Council **approved** the recommendation to make the current temporary change to the policy on TER requirements permanent.

5. Items for Discussion

5.1 Investment options for proposed approach to induction and mentoring

Council members were updated that analysis of feedback on an induction discussion paper circulated to the profession earlier this year is now complete. Work is underway with the Ministry on confirming the scale of ongoing investment and any adaptations to the approach that may be needed.

5.2 Update on collective bargaining

DCE Clive Jones provided an update on the current status of collective bargaining and the Council’s bargaining position. It was noted that the current collective agreement expired on 30 June 2025.

6. Finance, Audit and Risk

The Risk, Audit, and Finance Committee (RAF Chair) recapped key points from the RAF committee meeting on 24 November, including:

- the financial summary for the period ended 31 October 2025 showing overall financial performance is tracking to budget.
- for the four months to the end of October 2025, the organisation’s financial performance is showing an operating surplus higher than budgeted. This is largely due to revenue for both the month and year to date from higher-than-forecast volumes of overseas applications.
- personnel costs are under budget with vacancy savings swept into the unallocated project budget.

Clarification was provided by the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) on the cost recovery table in the annual report and discussion of the three components of the \$1.594m carried forward from the 2024/25 financial year.

6.1 Financial Forecast – Financial Year 2025/26

The RAF Chair updated members on the RAF Committee's recommendation to the Governing Council that the forecast be approved - subject to clarification and agreement on allowance for costs associated with the external reviews of the Council.

It was noted that the forecast includes [REDACTED] for expenditure related to the investigations and reviews which reflects costs incurred to date. Members discussed options for how these costs will be funded.

DECISION GC20251126/6a: The Governing Council:

- (a) **agreed** to use the underspend (vacancy salaries) from the current year (previously swept into the unallocated project fund) to offset the [REDACTED] cost to date; and
- (b) **gave approval** to keep the underspend (vacancy salaries) available in the meantime to meet ongoing expenses associated with the external reviews of the Council.

6.3 Annual Report sign out delegation

The CFO updated Council members on additions to the notes in the draft 2024/25 Annual Report regarding 'related parties' as well as additional wording following the Minister's announcement.

The CFO updated that the draft financial statements are awaiting final clearance from the auditor and that the auditor has not yet provided the wording for the Letter of Representation. The Council noted that two members of the Governing Council are required to sign and submit the Letter of Representation to the auditor before the auditor will issue their audit opinion.

Members were updated that arrangements are underway for Baker Tilly Audit Director, Chrissie Murray, to meet with committee members in early December to brief the RAF committee on audit findings.

Council members noted that the auditor will issue a Management Letter following completion of the audit and that this will be provided, together with any management responses to issues raised, to the RAF Committee when it is available.

The RAF Chair confirmed that at the 24 November hui the Committee agreed, subject to receiving clearance from Baker Tilly, to recommend that the Governing Council approve the final Annual Report including any changes that may be necessary following completion of the audit, and to delegate authority for signing the relevant documentation to the Governing Council Chair and the RAF Chair.

DECISION GC20251126/6b: The Council agreed to delegate authority, subject to receiving written clearance from Baker Tilly to the Governing Council Chair and Chair of the RAF Committee to:

- (a) sign the Letter of Representation to the auditor
- (b) sign the Statement of Responsibility for the financial statements
- (c) approve the final Annual report including any changes that may be necessary following completion of the audit.

7. Any Other Business

Noted that Governing Council calendar (including committee dates where confirmed) for 2026 has been provided for information. Next meeting date: **Online GC: Mon 15th December 8-10am.**

Signed:



David Ferguson, Chair

Approved by the Governing Council on 26 February 2026