

In-School Learning Support Coordinator Role Information



**Te Tāhuhu o
te Mātauranga**
Ministry of Education



Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

Contents

Background	3
› Te Tiriti o Waitangi	3
› Pacific education	4
Learning Support Coordinators – why are they important in the Learning Support system?	4
What is Learning Support?	5
› Learning Support works best when it is	5
Inclusive education	6
Working with ministry and RTLB colleagues	7
› Ministry of Education Learning Support Specialists	7
› Resource Teachers Learning and Behaviour (RTLB)	7
› LSC role in working with ministry specialists and RTLB	7
Working across the school context	8
› LSCs and school leadership teams	8
› Working with class teachers and kaiako	9
› Working with teacher aides and kaiāwhina	10
› Working with learners and their whānau	10
› Working with structured literacy approach and Maths Pāngarau intervention teachers	10
› Working with other learner supports	11
Supporting growth and capability	11
› Learning Support Network (LSN)	11
Combining your LSC FTTE with other schools	12
Monitoring and reporting	13
Getting the right person	13
› Minimum requirements	13
› Knowledge and qualifications required	13
› Skills and experience required	14

Background

Sitting at the heart of Learning Support is a collaborative approach to supporting all learners to experience success and belonging in their learning and relationships.

Collaboration brings together the collective knowledge, experience and skills of those who know learners best, alongside Learning Support specialists and others, to identify their strengths and learning needs, plan effective support strategies and, where necessary, access appropriate services and resources.

With collaboration comes the flexibility to be responsive to local education communities, drawing on their strengths and supporting their diverse needs. Integral to creating education communities that are inclusive of all learners is the role of the **Learning Support Coordinator (LSC)**. LSCs are in the unique position of applying their relevant expertise in teaching and learning to support the progress and wellbeing of learners across the school setting and in partnership with kaiako, whānau and other Learning Support specialists.

This detailed role information provides schools with further details on the responsibilities and connections, skillsets and areas of knowledge required for a LSC to be successful.

*Hui te mārama hei
purapura ora*

*Working together to nurture
and support the growth
and wellbeing of mokopuna*

DR WAYNE NGATA, RAUKURA –
CHIEF ADVISOR TE AO MĀORI (2019)
FOR HE PIKORUA

Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Te Tiriti o Waitangi is the foundation for a partnership that is culturally sustaining and inclusive of all children | tamariki and their families | whānau.

The Treaty's principles of partnership, participation and protection guide all aspects of Learning Support. LSCs are essential to effective learning supports for tamariki. LSCs have a role to play in supporting kaiako, teachers and school and kura leaders to enact these principles:

- › through strong partnerships, educators and whānau share their expertise and plan and work together to ensure that barriers to education success are addressed
- › when whānau are welcomed as active participants in the co-construction of inclusive, culturally sustaining support, the identity, language and culture of tamariki and whānau are valued and promoted
- › when the wellbeing and cultural identity of tamariki are authentically supported and strengthened, the principle of protection is enacted.

Giving practical effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi is one of five guiding principles for *Ka Hikitia – Ka Hāpaitia | The Māori Education Strategy*. At the heart of the strategy is Māori enjoying and achieving educational success as Māori, as they develop the skills to participate in te ao Māori, Aotearoa and the wider world.

Pacific education

In addition, the Action Plan for Pacific Education 2020–2030 sets out a long-term commitment to lift outcomes for Pacific learners and their families by ensuring education is responsive, affirming and inclusive of Pacific identities, languages and cultures. It highlights the importance of strong partnerships with Pacific communities and places Pacific success at the centre of system planning and practice. Learning Support Coordinators play a key role in supporting this vision by working in culturally sustaining ways that uphold the aspirations of Pacific learners and their families.

Learning Support Coordinators – why are they important in the Learning Support system?

LSCs ensure learners with disabilities and/or additional learning and wellbeing needs can access the support they require to fully participate and progress. The dedicated in-school LSC role is fundamental to facilitating and maintaining connections across the education system, with parents and whānau and other providers of Learning Support. The LSC is situated around those who best know the learning setting and those learning within it, which strengthens the opportunities for meaningful and effective collaboration and change.

LSCs bring a wealth of skills, knowledge and experience to their role. The value they bring as part of the school community is in their strong relational capability, existing trusting relationships, their understanding of the diverse learners in their learning context and their direct connections with the systems, processes and everyday teaching and learning in their education settings. They are well positioned to positively impact practice and outcomes from the outset with contextual, timely and accessible supports. With this dedicated and focused role, LSCs can invest the time, thought and energy into enabling more support and positive change.

LSCs will understand the configuration of Early Learning Services (ELS) and Early Learning providers that most directly link to their school. While it is recognised that children often attend ELS outside of a school's zoned area, frequently used learner pathways will exist and the LSC can purposefully engage with these services to plan for transitions in advance of school start dates. This joined-up planning, which may include other specialist providers, will contribute to the LSC's understanding of the evolving profile of the school's roll, what specialist supports are in place already and anything additional that may be required.

LSCs play a key role in identifying and planning for learners' needs, coordinating support services and ensuring that well-resourced, closely monitored plans are in place for those who require extra support in their learning and relationships. This includes all learners, including those receiving Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS) support, when LSCs work with the specialists involved to provide connection, oversight and coherence of tailored supports.

LSCs strengthen teachers' capability to support all learners. They work effectively with teachers to enhance inclusive teaching and learning practices within class and across the school and kura.

In collaboration with Learning Support regional services such as Ministry teams and Resource Teachers Learning and Behaviour (RTLBs), LSCs help build school-wide capability, connect with specialist supports and work alongside colleagues such as Special Education Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) and other resource teachers and professionals.

As LSCs influence and support school leadership teams, they bring strong relationship-building skills that benefit both internal school communities and the wider communities they serve.

What is Learning Support?

Learning Support refers to the practices, systems and services that help children and young people with diverse strengths and needs succeed in learning and relationships.

Learning Support is grounded in inclusive values that make education settings welcoming for all learners and their whānau.

In every learning environment there are learners with diverse support needs. Some will require long term support, while others will benefit from short-term help for a particular reason or time — especially during transitions. Effective support is flexible, timely, responsive and clear in intention.

Effective Learning Support involves the collective expertise of leaders, teachers, kaiako and kaiāwhina | teacher aide or learning assistant in partnership with families and whānau. Some situations will require schools and kura to engage with external services such as RTLBs, the Ministry, health and social services and other community organisations.

Learning Support needs are just one aspect of a learner's wider profile. Taking a holistic, strengths-based approach ensures that learners are valued for their full and diverse contributions to and within their learning community.

Learning Support works best when it is

- › timely and proactive
- › planned with learners and whānau at the centre
- › tailored to each learner's strengths, needs and aspirations
- › embedded within the learner's everyday activities and routines
- › inclusive and culturally responsive
- › building on universal supports and integrating targeted and tailored supports when appropriate
- › coordinated across services
- › supported by local expertise
- › evidence-informed

To understand more about Learning Support, go to education.govt.nz/our-work/strategies-policies-and-programmes/learning-support

Inclusive education

Children and young people in Aotearoa New Zealand want to live in a country where culture and diversity are not just accepted but increasingly embraced and celebrated. Inclusivity is a foundational value that shapes how we support learning and wellbeing.

LSCs enable equitable opportunities for every learner to thrive—academically, socially and emotionally—within their school or kura environment. This means fostering a culture of inclusivity, where every learner feels respected, valued and connected.

Inclusivity is not just about what we do—it's about who we are and how we relate to others. It is reflected in the way we think, speak and act.

The practices that support inclusivity look, sound and feel like:

- › all learners engaging in age-appropriate activities with their peers
- › teaching spaces where the climate is welcoming, positive and celebrates diversity
- › respectful and collaborative interactions among learners
- › high expectations for all learners, communicated clearly and consistently
- › learners actively participating in curriculum decision-making
- › language that acknowledges diverse perspectives and ways of being, knowing and expressing
- › use of literature and resources that explore difference, promote belonging and foster an anti-bullying culture
- › whānau of learners with support needs are encouraged to participate in the school community, feel welcomed, heard and valued as partners in planning and decision-making.

Inclusivity is embedded throughout *The New Zealand Curriculum*, *Te Whāriki* and *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* and is central to the values underpinning the professional code and standards for New Zealand teachers.

From a te ao Māori perspective, tamariki are seen holistically as taonga, deeply connected to their whānau.

LSCs play a vital role in nurturing environments where learners and their whānau:

- › are accepted, respected and valued
- › experience manaakitanga—kindness, care and respect
- › are free from racism and discrimination
- › build stable, healthy relationships
- › stay connected to their culture, language, beliefs and identity, including whakapapa and tūrangawaewae.

Further information about inclusive education can be found at inclusive.tki.org.nz/.

Working with ministry and RTLB colleagues

Ministry of Education Learning Support Specialists

The Ministry provides Learning Support services to learners, families and whānau and teachers and kaiako within early learning, schools and kura across New Zealand. LSCs and Learning Support (LS) Service Managers will foster a strong working relationship. This will be an important enabler for the connections all LS specialists have with learners, their parents, families | whānau and teachers | kaiako across the school community.

Part of the LSC role is to understand and oversee all specialist service delivery across the school.

Ministry specialists work in collaboration with teams in schools and kura to understand the complexities of situations and enable the right support at the right time. They partner with LSCs, kaiako and whānau to carefully plan and deliver supports that are evidence informed, inclusive and mana-enhancing. Through working together, school systems, practices and teacher capability are strengthened to enable the adults who know learners best to have the confidence and skills to meet their unique learning and wellbeing needs. LSCs play a central role in facilitating connections between Ministry specialists, kaiako and whānau.

There will be times when Early Intervention Specialists (EIS) are supporting the transition of learners from ELSs into school or kura for their first year. LSCs have an important role in connecting with specialists, whānau and kaiako to plan for and create learning environments that enable continuity of learning, familiar, clear and predictable routines, positive peer and adult relationships and experiences of safety and belonging.

Resource Teachers Learning and Behaviour (RTLB)

RTLBs provide specialist teaching support around learning and wellbeing needs. They, like Ministry specialists, partner with LSCs, kaiako and whānau to understand and plan for the unique needs of learners and their contexts. They work together to ensure that supports are planned for and implemented, well integrated and aligned with learner and whānau goals and aspirations.

LSC role in working with ministry specialists and RTLB

It is the LSC's role to:

- › initiate requests for support, coordinate access and facilitate initial connections
- › contribute to team planning and support plans to be embedded into class practice
- › maintain regular communication with whānau and specialists, lead review meetings and adjust support plans based on progress.

He Pikorua is the common practice framework that guides the work of Ministry Learning Support specialists and RTLBs. It provides a shared, values-based approach for working collaboratively with learners, whānau, educators and communities, supporting ethical and informed professional decision-making. As LSCs will often work closely with these roles, using a shared framework like He Pikorua helps strengthen consistency, build interprofessional relationships and ensures joined-up support. The framework includes a set of practice principles, a model for integrating supports and a collaborative inquiry process. LSCs will have opportunities to learn more about He Pikorua and how it can support their work with others.

Working across the school context

In an inclusive school environment, the classroom is part of a broader ecosystem of support designed to meet the diverse learning and wellbeing needs of all learners. The school environment is structured around a multi-layered system of support.

The work of LSCs sits within this multi-layered system of support. This starts with planning for all from the outset – strengthening the culture of the learning community, the ways kaiako teach, the design of learning experiences and the everyday systems and routines within the learning setting. Building on solid universal practices are targeted supports focused on enhancing participation and progress where there are emerging needs. Sometimes a tailored approach is necessary to address more refined planning and specialist support for learners with complex learning and wellbeing needs.

The LSC sits at the centre of this system, acting as a connector between class practice, specialist services, whānau and system-level supports. The LSC ensures coherence across all supports, enabling timely, data-informed responses to learner needs. The LSC role is both relational and operational - building capability within the school, coordinating in-school supports and working with the wider learning support network within their region to ensure appropriate access to resources and expertise.

LSCs and school leadership teams

An LSC's active connection with leadership teams in schools will strengthen understanding of the school's wider profile of learning and wellbeing needs and highlight the level of engagement that exists between specialist services and the school at any point in time.

LSCs can support and work with leadership by:

- › contributing to strategic planning
- › sharing the context of specialist supports needed alongside those already in place across the school at universal, targeted and tailored levels
- › sharing examples of excellent practice, progress and achievement across the school
- › taking a continuous inquiry approach to monitoring and improving learning support systems and practices
- › identifying needs and potential professional learning opportunities for teachers and support staff in order to strengthen their learning support practice

- › collating and making connections through data and information gathering that helps to support planning and decisions about resource allocation
- › enabling strong connections between kaiako, whānau and other supports such as Ministry specialists and RTLB
- › ensuring whānau and learner voice is represented and heard when the school or kura is making decisions about learning support.

LSCs play a vital role in ensuring smooth, well-planned transitions for learners as they move through key stages of their education. From early learning services into school, LSCs work alongside Early Intervention Service (EIS), whānau and kaiako to support transition planning, share learner profiles and ensure inclusive environments are ready to meet their needs. This includes participating in hui, coordinating support plans and helping schools prepare for learners with additional needs — particularly during the first year of school.

As learners progress from primary to intermediate and intermediate to secondary, LSCs continue to support transitions by maintaining strong relationships with whānau, educators and specialist services. They help ensure continuity of support, monitor progress and facilitate handovers between services such as RTLB, behaviour and communication supports and other learning support roles. Their involvement helps reduce disruption, strengthen belonging, and ensures that a learner's strengths and needs remain central to planning and decision-making at every stage.

Working with class teachers and kaiako

Class teachers and kaiako have the primary responsibility for supporting all learners in their learning setting. They:

- › create and maintain a safe, respectful and supportive class culture that celebrates diversity
- › design and deliver engaging and inclusive learning experiences that are reflective of rich curriculum
- › monitor learner progress through ongoing assessment, information gathering and connections with whānau
- › identify and address barriers to participation and progress for diverse learning and wellbeing needs through universal, targeted and tailored supports that are embedded in everyday teaching and learning.

The role of the LSC is to work closely with teachers to interpret assessment data, identify learners who may require additional support and co-design support plans. They also provide coaching and professional development to build inclusive teaching practices and ensure that class strategies align with learning support goals.

When a teacher identifies a learner with persistent or complex learning needs, the LSC facilitates the request for support process to external specialists, ensuring that the teacher remains an active participant in collaborative planning and review. This partnership allows teachers to focus on teaching while knowing that learners with additional needs are being supported through a coordinated system.

Working with teacher aides and kaiāwhina

Support staff play a vital role in supporting teachers to deliver targeted and tailored supports within the learning setting. Thoughtful, strategic coordination of Teacher Aides (TA) helps maximise the impact of their support and ensures consistency in how learners are supported across different settings and times of day.

LSCs will:

- › help determine how TA hours are allocated based on learner needs and the learning setting
- › provide guidance and training to ensure TAs are equipped to implement specific strategies effectively and work in alignment with the goals set by teachers, whānau and specialists
- › ensure that TAs are integrated into the wider support team, with clear roles and responsibilities as identified in individualised plans and support strategies.

Working with learners and their whānau

The relationships that LSCs have with learners and their whānau are essential. They are in the unique position to form strong partnerships, taking the time to understand perspectives and support planning and decisions that are mana-enhancing, inclusive and well connected to their shared goals and aspirations for the learner.

LSCs will:

- › enable learners to be present and participating in all aspects of school life. Their learning and wellbeing needs are well understood and planned for
- › facilitate progress for learners in ways that acknowledge their unique culture, language identity, interests, strengths and needs
- › emphasise a strong sense of belonging for all learners across the school and in their learning and relationships
- › support learners and teachers through understanding the strengths and needs across the school and utilising in-school and external supports at the right time
- › guide and support parents and whānau to partner successfully with their child's teacher at transition points and throughout their schooling
- › support parents and whānau to understand and participate in learning support processes and to make connections with appropriate support contacts if needed.

Working with structured literacy approach and Maths | Pāngarau intervention teachers

These specialist teachers provide additional capacity to meet the needs of students from Years 0-6 who need additional support to meet curriculum expectations in literacy and maths | pāngarau.

Working together with the class teacher and understanding assessment data and information drawn from active class observation, the LSC helps to identify learners who would benefit from time with these specialist teachers. They coordinate access to these interventions, ensuring that they complement class teaching and are responsive to learners' strengths and needs.

The LSC monitors the effectiveness of these interventions, facilitates communication between the intervention teacher and class teacher and adjusts plans as needed. This ensures that learners receive consistent, high-quality support that accelerates progress and addresses specific gaps in learning in a timely way.

Working with other learner supports

As part of the school community, LSCs may have opportunities to work closely with a Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCO). The role the SENCO plays and the connection with the LSC will depend on what is important in each school context. Decisions about the responsibilities and activities of these roles will need to take into account the skills, knowledge and experiences they both bring to their learning community. Having a clear understanding of how these roles work together will be an essential part of developing a cohesive and well-functioning learning support team.

Supporting growth and capability

Ongoing growth and capability development is essential to sustaining and uplifting the impact of the LSC role. To be effective, LSCs need to invest in building their knowledge, confidence, competence and connections across the system.

Induction materials and ongoing Professional Learning and Development (PLD) will be made available to support LSCs in their role, as well as access to the Learning Support Network. These resources are designed to build confidence in inclusive practice, data use and system navigation. LSCs are encouraged to actively participate in these opportunities to ensure they are well-equipped to meet the diverse needs of learners and their families | whānau.

Learning Support Network (LSN)

LSCs are encouraged to be part of a nationally coordinated network designed to strengthen collaboration, consistency and capability across schools. The Learning Support Network (LSN) supports LSCs to work not only within their own school communities but also as contributors to a more integrated and effective national Learning Support system.

The LSN facilitates:

- › **cross-school collaboration** – enabling LSCs to share effective practices, resources and strategies to support learners
- › **professional learning and development** – through regular webinars, curated resources and access to ongoing PLD opportunities
- › **peer support and connection** – providing forums for discussion, problem-solving and mutual learning among LSCs and other practitioners
- › **system-level insights** – contributing to Ministry planning and decision-making through shared intelligence and feedback from the field.

New LSCs are strongly encouraged to engage with the LSN early in their role. The connections, shared knowledge and professional development opportunities available through the network are valuable in building confidence, competence, capability and a sense of belonging within the wider LSC community.

More information about the Learning Support Network can be found at lsn.nz.

A LSC must be a registered teacher with a current full teaching practising certificate and relevant teaching qualification.

Combining your LSC FTTE with other schools

In some cases, schools may choose to combine their Learning Support Coordinator (LSC) Full-Time Teacher Equivalent (FTTE) allocations to create a shared LSC role across multiple schools.

To support schools in exploring this option, the **Combining LSC FTTE Checklist** has been developed. This checklist outlines key considerations for schools before completing a staffing transfer, such as:

- › establishing shared goals and communication systems
- › mapping learning support needs across schools
- › designing a collaborative role and employment structure
- › ensuring proportionate access to the LSC's time and expertise
- › clarifying reporting, accountability and dispute resolution processes
- › planning for sustainability, professional development and review.

The **Checklist** is intended to help schools think through the practical, strategic and relational aspects of a shared LSC role alongside important aspects around employment arrangements. It supports schools to make informed decisions that uphold the integrity of the LSC role and ensures learners across all participating schools receive consistent, high-quality support.

If your school is considering combining FTTE with other schools use this checklist to explore potential challenges and develop strategies to address them. A well-considered plan will help avoid disruption and ensure the arrangement is suitable and sustainable.

Talk to your local Te Mahau Ministry team for guidance tailored to your school's context. For employment related questions, contact the New Zealand School Boards Association (NZSBA).

Monitoring and reporting

The Ministry will be undertaking monitoring and evaluation to understand the impact of the in-school LSC role over time, so it is important that schools and LSCs are aware of the broader system-level monitoring that will be taking place and how this may relate to their LSC role.

The Ministry will be tracking key indicators such as recruitment, induction, professional learning and development, alongside learner outcomes including attendance, achievement and earlier identification of learning support needs. These indicators will help assess how well the LSC role is being implemented and its contribution to improving learning support across the system.

Schools may be asked to participate in data collection activities or evaluation processes, such as surveys, interviews or case studies so principals are encouraged to support their LSCs in engaging with these processes and fostering a culture of continuous improvement and reflection. Awareness of the monitoring and evaluation approach will help ensure that the LSC role is embedded in a way that supports both local needs and national uplift.

Getting the right person

The LSC role requires relational capability, strategic thinking, and a strong commitment to inclusive education; someone who can connect, influence and lead.

The LSC role will work across the school, with kaiako, whānau and specialists, to ensure every learner is present, participating and progressing. LSCs need to be confident navigating complexity, using data to inform decisions and coaching others to lift capability.

The following section outlines the minimum requirements, key responsibilities and skills and experience required for the LSC role. The **Skills Matrix** can be used alongside the **Interview Questions Guide** to identify the right candidate.

Minimum requirements

There are minimum requirements for the role of a LSC. They must be a registered teacher with a current full teaching practising certificate and relevant teaching qualification.

Knowledge and qualifications required

The key knowledge and qualification requirements of the LSC role are:

- › demonstrated experience working with children with learning support needs
- › the ability to build and maintain strong relationships with parents, whānau and communities
- › the ability to confidently engage at a school or kura leadership level
- › influencing skills at a high working level within a school or kura
- › the ability to provide culturally responsive support that protects the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi
- › the ability to meet professional standards relevant to their current position.

Skills and experience required

The LSC role sits within a complex system of support so the person in the role must be able to connect across that system and lead confidently from within. Some of the skills required include:

- › **effective communication** | Communicates clearly and listens actively to build understanding across diverse audiences including teachers, specialists and parents
- › **cultural competence** | Demonstrates cultural competence by responding appropriately to the diverse backgrounds and needs of learners and families
- › **early identification and support** | Identifies early signs of learner challenges and guides others in implementing timely and effective interventions
- › **assessment and monitoring** | Uses assessment data to monitor progress, identify learning gaps and inform targeted support strategies
- › **adaptability and problem solving** | Adapts support strategies and solves problems using evidence-based approaches in response to changing learner needs
- › **digital and data fluency** | Applies digital and data fluency to leverage analytics, dashboards and collaboration tools for informed decision-making
- › **leading and influencing** | Leads and influences improvement, advocating for standards, supporting expertise development and fostering active participation
- › **facilitation and coaching** | Builds capability through facilitation and coaching, enabling non-specialists to confidently support learner needs
- › **capability development** | Assesses and influences capability development, guiding school leadership to invest in future-focused professional growth for all staff
- › **te reo Māori** | Understanding of bilingual and immersion education contexts, including the implications of Māori Language Learning (MLL) levels and the role of Te Reo Māori in identity and learning
- › **te ao Māori** | Ability to engage with whānau and hapū to uphold aspirations for Māori language revitalisation and ensure learning support practices reflect local tikanga and mātauranga Māori
- › Experience supporting learners in **Rumaki or Māori medium settings** is highly desirable.

The ideal candidate doesn't need to be a perfect match for every listed requirement and may still be a strong candidate if they meet the core needs of the role or have strong potential to learn.

Check the [In-school Learning Support Coordinator page](#) on the Ministry website for more information and resources, including:

- › Interview Question Guide
- › Skills Matrix
- › Combining LSC FTTE Checklist



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