

**Local Service Profiling  
National Report**

March 2005

The Ministry of Education, Special Education  
referred to in this report is also known as  
GSE and Group Special Education

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## Report structure

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This is a long report and has several parts that can be considered separately depending on the reader's interests.

The first two sections give information about current special education context, policy and resources. This material was largely developed as part of the bringing together of information for the Action Plan for Special Education which will be further developed in 2005.

Within the section on Special Education Services and Resourcing we have noted several current national projects and programmes that are influencing special education provision and the research activities being undertaken which will inform future policy and provision. The aim for these sections is to give a background and an updated context for special education to be a common base for discussion as we work together to improve service provision.

Although the local service profiling was collected locally, the process was developed nationally and national themes emerged. The third section of this report gives the background to the process undertaken and how it was implemented.

*In the "What you said" section this report briefly identifies the national themes that have been summarised from the local district material.*

The final section notes what will happen to the feedback from a national point of view.



# Executive Summary

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## **Tēnā koutou katoa**

A big thank you to the 5,000 parents, educators, students and others interested in special education for the time and energy you gave through the 395 community meetings, and your many written responses last year.

I am pleased to present the national report incorporating your feedback and the initial actions that will follow the local service profiling exercise.

The feedback presents challenges to some current ways of doing things. It has good ideas about how more collaborative and effective ways can be developed. We look forward to continuing to work with you to support and raise the learning of children and young people with special education needs, to further refine the system and get the best possible benefit from the resources available.

The Ministry of Education has sector strategies: the early childhood strategy, 'Pathways to the Future: Nga Huarahi Arataki', the Tertiary Strategy and the 'Directions for a Schooling Strategy' (in the consultation process), that are inclusive of all learners. Within each of these strategies it is important to find ways to maximise outcomes for children and young people with special education needs.

**Howard Fancy**  
**Secretary for Education**  
**Ministry of Education**

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Thank you to all who participated in the local service profiling exercise.

We are committed to continuing to work with you to improve our services. You will be able to read about what actions will be taken later in this report and what the next steps will be in your local area in your local report.

We will also ensure that the feedback we have gathered will be available for the public, the wider Ministry of Education, educators and our Ministers to read and reflect on.

Your feedback reflected your desire for more and improved services, your wish to retain the range of educational settings currently available and the need for cooperation between the various providers.

Many participants expressed their concern and frustration at the effort required to get the educational support they wanted for their children. The whole of the education sector has a role to play in closely examining the feedback and working together to address these concerns.

A vital area for action will be to develop welcoming, valuing attitudes and the building of skills within the whole of the education system.

The Action Plan for Special Education that will be developed over this year will guide the work of Ministry of Education, Special Education and further advance implementation of strategies to achieve the educational aspirations you have identified for your children.

We make a commitment to continue to talk with you and listen to you as we move to improve our services.

**Barbara Disley**  
**Group Manager**  
**Ministry of Education, Special Education**

## **What you said**

The following is a summary of the collation of feedback from the 395 engagement meetings and submissions from the Let's Talk questions:

*What are your aspirations for children and young people with special education needs?*

*What is working well?*

*What is not working so well?*

*What are your priorities for change?*

## **Aspirations for children and young people with special education needs**

Parents and educators want the same things for children with special education needs as for any children.

They want children with special education needs to:

- reach their potential; to feel valued and accepted, to be happy and have the opportunity to experience success
- feel included, not marginalised or set apart; to enjoy a broad range of experiences
- enjoy quality learning experiences and an education that is responsive to their needs
- be educated by people who are well-trained and skilled; who have empathy for them. Educators want more classroom support for teachers; they want behaviour problems recognised and supported
- have access to 'can do' schools, schools that will make things work; to be able to move easily between levels of education, between schools and between classrooms

- know about and have access to the best learning environment for their needs
- later live in society as independently as possible, accepted by their community; to have real job opportunities with good work experience and transition programmes
- have enough funding to provide for their needs – whatever those needs are
- experience a coordinated effort by schools and support agencies who will work together and with their families to help them achieve their potential
- have support for their culture and language, especially for Māori and Pasifika children and children of migrants and refugees.

Additionally, parents want to have an active part in deciding what happens to their children; they want their knowledge recognised.

### **What students said**

While students were not a targeted group in the engagement a number did give feedback. Those who were involved said they wanted to:

- take part, to be included and not just known as disabled
- make friends, feel valued, feel safe and be happy
- have more one-on-one time with teachers
- have smaller and quieter classes
- gain experiences, to be prepared for the outside world
- go on to further training
- gain employment.

### **What's working well versus what's not**

Summarising the national picture on the parts of the special education system that are working well and those that are not is challenging. It could be said that all parts of the system are working well, somewhere in New Zealand. The same could be said for what's not working well.

Generally parents appreciated the services available to support their children, and, generally, educators believed the special education services they received were helpful.

Where children and young people with special education needs were getting services, and relationships and communications were good, parents and educators reported that the system was working well and had improved in recent years.

Reasons cited for the system not working well were a low level of resourcing and staffing, a lack of coordination and the complexity of the system. These factors were the priorities for change noted by parents and educators.

## **Priorities for change**

Parents and educators have much the same views on the parts of the special education system they'd like to see changed.

### ***Improving funding/resourcing and services***

People feel that many children and young people with special education needs do not receive support and that those who do receive support would benefit from more. There was a call for improved funding to support all aspects of special education and that there should be increased accountability for the resources in special education.

### ***Improving transition***

Parents and educators agree that children with special education needs face difficulties in making the transition to new learning environments and services. They say the education system needs to improve planning and processes so that support is available as children move through the system, and encourage thinking ahead and preparing for adulthood.

### ***Improving staffing***

The training of all staff, focusing on attitude change and skill building for those working with students with special education needs is seen as a priority. A high turnover and shortage of specialists – especially speech-language therapists - employment issues, and training of teacher aides and support workers were often mentioned concerns.

### ***Improving early intervention***

There is concern that some children are missing out on early intervention programmes, especially as it is felt that access to such programmes can make a very real difference to children and their families and reduces the need for funding in later years.

### ***Improving cooperation***

People want all those working with children with special education needs to coordinate and cooperate. They see this as vital to delivering services that are less fragmented and for making transitions smoother for students and to stop students falling through the cracks.

### ***Improving information and communication***

Parents and schools want information about how the whole system works and how to access programmes and services. Many parents want to improve communication between themselves and those providing services.

### ***Improving relationships***

People want good or improved relationships and networking between all the groups working in special education, particularly when it comes to access to schooling, services and resources.

### ***Improving parents' voice***

Parents don't feel their voice is heard and they want to be more involved in their children's education. Some feel their role has been reduced to fighting for access and resources. They want to be more involved in influencing how the system can support their children and all children with special education needs.

### ***Improving options***

Parents and educators alike support the range of learning settings available and in some cases support more options. They want a system that caters to a variety of needs.

The debate over what is considered good practice continues, with views divided on whether special schools, units, regular class settings or a mix, best meets children's needs.

Many parents wanted regular school options but said that for regular class placement to work well for more children and young people, attitudes and funding need to change.

A large number of parents and educators support special schools and units because they feel they allow more access to resource teachers and specialist therapy staff.

### ***Improving services for Māori***

In addition to the above, Māori parents want a focus on the total wellbeing of the child and whānau, and more Māori staff in special education to meet their children's cultural needs. They also want quality te reo Māori options so that Māori students with special education needs have access to learning in their language.

### ***Improving services for Pasifika***

As well as noting the above priorities Pasifika parents want better working partnerships with schools and the Ministry of Education, Special Education. They want more Pasifika staff to work with their families and more information made available for Pasifika families.

## **Actions**

### ***Publish feedback and provide further opportunities for discussion***

Some of the feedback you have provided related specifically to Ministry of Education, Special Education service provision. We have plans in place to address some of the issues already and we will work with you to address others locally. Some feedback was for the wider education sector and we will feed this information to the relevant parts of the Ministry of Education and the sector. There was some feedback that needs to be considered as part of ongoing policy work and we will share your concerns and ideas with Ministers, the full Ministry of Education and related government departments.

Our first action nationally and locally is to give feedback on what you said and to provide a variety of opportunities for further exploration of the rich information that is now available. We will meet with you again in a range of situations to do more in-depth work on improving services. We are very conscious of the need to grow confidence and trust in our interactions within the sector if we are to create a system that everyone can be part of building and supporting.

Every district has made commitments to establish or extend reference or focus groups in their communities as part of the feedback process and to build local actions into their plans for the 2005-2006 year. Nationally we will continue to work with already established national reference groups and draw together information from reference or focus groups around the country to strengthen the national overview.

### ***Incorporating feedback into national output planning for 2005-2006***

Output planning is the process used by the Ministry of Education to ensure each group has a work programme for the financial year. Ministry of Education, Special Education districts will work with stakeholders to process your feedback and confirm prioritised actions which will be incorporated into each of their district plans. Throughout the year work progress will be monitored and reported back to stakeholders.

### ***The Action Plan for Ministry of Education, Special Education***

The local service profiling feedback will help us to develop a five year Action Plan This Action Plan will:

- be a common focus for Ministry of Education staff, families and stakeholders
- be an important building block to achieving government goals and outcomes
- enable specific focus on the learning needs, aspirations and outcomes for learners with special education needs and how they can be best supported in the New Zealand education system



- be a way to achieve integration of planning and thinking across the Ministry of Education and the sector.

We will use the information you have provided already, work with national reference and sector groups over the coming months, and talk with you locally, to help us develop our priorities for the next five years



## Special education in the overall New Zealand education context

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The Special Education 2000 Policy guidelines define special education as:

*“the provision of extra assistance, adapted programmes or learning environments, specialised equipment or materials to support young children and school students with accessing the curriculum in a range of settings.”*

There is no separate special education system in New Zealand. The key features of education policy as it relates to children and young people with special education needs are:

- students with special education needs have the same rights to enrol and receive an education in a state school as students who do not have special education needs (s8, Education Act 1989)
- the early childhood curriculum, Te Whāriki, and the New Zealand Curriculum Framework both cover the learning of children and young people with special education needs, and allow for adaptation of teaching and learning by teachers to suit individual learner’s needs
- children and young people with special education needs generate the same regular resourcing for early childhood education services and schools as do other learners
- additional resourcing to help meet the special educational needs of these learners is provided through a mix of individually and population-targeted funding and staffing, and specialist services. Early childhood education services and schools are expected to use their regular resourcing and the additional special education resourcing to meet these learners’ education needs. The Ministry of Education, Special Education is the main provider of specialist services
- access to the majority of special education support and services is determined by those closest to the learner, such as schools and specialist providers. Access to a few services is through a statutory process set out in sections 9 and 10 of the Education Act 1989, requiring the agreement of the Secretary for Education. Services currently covered by section 9 are: enrolment in a special school, eligibility for the Ongoing and Reviewable Resourcing Schemes (ORRS), and eligibility to access education before and beyond normal age limits (eg to 21 years of age)
- boards of trustees can set up classes for students with special education needs using their regular operational resourcing and whatever special education resourcing individual students generate for a school. The central resourcing of special classes and units ended in 1998
- special schools operate primarily under the same policy framework as all schools and are part of the broader network of education provision.

## Historic and current policy context

Students with disabilities and impairments were excluded from state education at its inception in 1877. During the latter part of the nineteenth century, education of students with significant special education needs was not perceived as a state responsibility. Children who were blind, deaf or had physical or intellectual disabilities were largely educated by churches and voluntary organisations.

During the first half of the twentieth century there was an increasing acceptance of the right of some children with special education needs to have an education financed by the state. By 1944, some provision was made for children in hospitals, health camps, special classes in regular schools and The Correspondence School. There were four residential special schools, one for students who were deaf, one for students who were blind and two for students who were slow to learn. There were also day special schools for students with intellectual disabilities. From the 1960s through to the 1980s increasing numbers of students with special education needs were educated on regular school sites.

In 1987, the Education Act was amended to include people with special education needs into the state's provision of education. To make this provision clear Section 8 of the 1989 Education Act provided for equal rights to primary and secondary education for all students, stating *“people who have special education needs (whether because of disability or otherwise) have the same rights to enrol and receive education at state schools as people who do not”*.

The 1989 education reforms saw considerable change to the compulsory schooling sector. The major theme of the reforms was the establishment of partnership with local communities. This was achieved by devolving governance responsibilities to school boards of trustees elected by the parents of students. The Department (before 1989), and then the Ministry of Education put in place regulations and guidelines that effectively required schools to accept and provide appropriate education for their students.

## Special Education 2000

In 1996 the government approved the development of a new model for resourcing and delivery of special education to be implemented in stages by the year 2000. The new policy recognised the increasing numbers of children requiring special education service support and the increased number of parents who wished to have their children receive their education in regular settings.

The aims of Special Education 2000 (SE 2000) policy were to improve educational opportunities and outcomes for children with special education needs in the early childhood and school sectors, ensure there was a clear, consistent and predictable resourcing framework for special education and provide equitable resourcing for those with similar needs irrespective of the school setting or geographic location. The policy covered both the school sector and the early childhood education sector.

The SE 2000 policy was based on an international move toward inclusion of all children with special education needs in local educational settings. This approach involves a shift away from a biological categorisation of children with special education needs to an ecological paradigm. This later model focuses on identifying what a child needs to assist him or her to participate in and achieve in education. It has a stronger focus on how the social and physical environment can be adapted to support learning across all domains. The policy is about supporting a child regardless of context to maximise their learning. Resourcing decisions are based on a child or young person's learning needs rather than a diagnosis or category of disability.

Certain children with special education needs could still attend a special school by agreement between the Secretary for Education and the child's parents or by the Secretary's direction. This provision was maintained to ensure that the best interest of a student could be served by ensuring an appropriate placement.

The SE 2000 resourcing framework was designed within the Tomorrow's Schools policy context, with considerable resourcing devolved to schools.

### **The key components of the SE 2000 resourcing framework**

Initiatives for students with high needs, delivered by specialist providers, specifically:

- Ongoing and Reviewable Resourcing Schemes (ORRS) for students with ongoing high and very high support needs
- Severe Behaviour Initiative for students experiencing severe behaviour difficulties
- Speech - Language Initiative for students with severe speech-language difficulties
- Early Intervention for children aged 0-5 years with high and very high support needs.

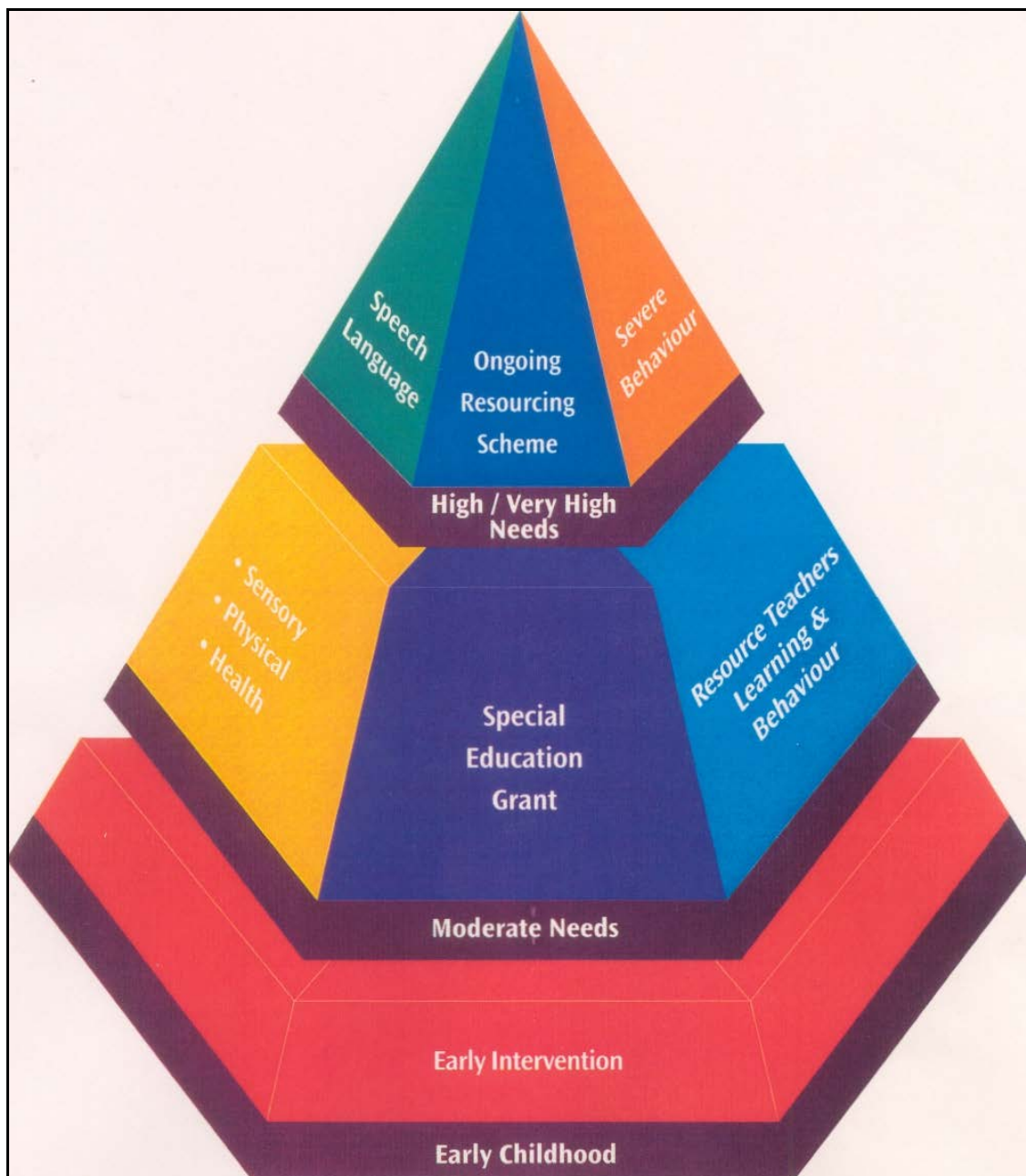
Several initiatives for students with moderate special education needs, mostly provided by schools, specifically:

- Special Education Grant (SEG) which every state funded school receives
- Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour which all state funded schools can access and are managed by clusters of schools
- Moderate Support Initiatives which provide specialist support for students with moderate-level visual, hearing and physical impairments
- Early Intervention for children in early childhood education centres and homes with moderate development needs.

Other support provided at the time included transport assistance, support through The Correspondence School, special schools, and specialist equipment and technology.

Special education funding increased from \$155 million in 1991 to \$326 million 1999-2000 to \$438 million in 2004-2005 and a far greater number of students have progressively received support. With SE 2000 about 3 percent of the school population receives support for high needs initiatives, an additional 4 to 6% through the moderate needs initiatives, and about 5% of the early childhood population through early intervention.

**Figure 1 Special Education Resourcing Framework 1997**



**Equipment, Transport  
Professional Development and Training  
Research, Monitoring and Evaluation**

## Wylie Review

In 2001 the government asked Cathy Wylie to review the SE2000 policy. The Wylie review concluded that SE2000 was sound in principle but in practice had resulted in fragmented provision of specialist support. The most far-reaching change to arise from her recommendations was the disestablishment of Specialist Education Services (SES) as a stand-alone agency and establishment of Special Education as a group of the Ministry of Education to coordinate provision of special education support across the education sector.

Other changes to the SE2000 framework since the Wylie Review are:

- provision of additional teaching and specialist support (Supplementary Learning Support) for students who have high moderate special education needs and require additional specialist and teacher time
- the Ministry of Education is now the sole fundholder for the Ongoing and Reviewable Resourcing Schemes and some schools may be delegated to provide services to ORRS students
- the School High Health Need Fund has been established
- enhanced programme funding has been put into place
- professional development initiatives, including research and evaluation processes, have been initiated.

## Current education environment

Special education policy and provision sits within the broader Education context for all New Zealand learners.

The government's Education Priorities give an explicit focus to addressing systematic under achievement and preparing New Zealanders for the new century.

The Ministry of Education's *Statement of Intent* is signalling key outcome shifts in excellence in teaching, family and community engagement in education, and quality education provision. The significance of these aspirations is that they are expected to lead to better education outcomes for all students, including those with special education needs.

There has been considerable discussion about a shift from a focus on outputs (how many students, how many activities, etc) to capturing the outcomes represented as meaningful, relevant benefits to clients from participation (in education, or a programme). Outcomes are usually expressed in terms of enhanced learning (knowledge, literacy, perceptions/attitudes or skills) or functions, eg, increased self-reliance, etc.

### ***Early childhood education context***

It is not compulsory for children to take part in early childhood education. However, it is recognised that early childhood education is a critical first step in building the foundation for a child's ongoing learning and development.

The curriculum for early childhood education, Te Whāriki, is the Ministry of Education's early childhood curriculum policy statement. Te Whāriki is a framework for providing for tamariki and children's early learning and development within a socio-cultural context. It emphasises the learning partnership between kaiako and teachers, parents, whānau and families. Kaiako and teachers weave a holistic curriculum in response to the learning and development processes of tamariki and children in their early childhood education setting.

Early childhood education services are provided within the Desirable Objectives and Practices (DOPs) framework. Guiding principles for early childhood education are:

- management and educators of chartered early childhood services, in partnership with parents/guardians and whānau, will promote and extend the learning and development of each child attending or receiving the service, through the provision of quality early childhood education and care
- educators will develop and implement curriculum which assists all children to grow up as competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to society.

The Early Childhood Education Strategy Pathways to the Future: Ngā Huarahi Arataki was published in 2002 and has three focus areas. These are to:

- improve participation in quality early childhood education services
- improve quality of early childhood education services
- promote collaborative relationships.

Work is being undertaken to ensure that services for children with special education needs in the early childhood education sector are closely aligned with the actions to implement the Strategic Plan for early childhood education. Budget 2004 included more funding for early childhood special education to provide extra services for the increased numbers of children with special education needs who will be enrolled in early childhood education as a result of the government's participation strategies. Currently children with special education needs do not participate as much or for as long as children who do not have special education needs.

### ***Schooling context***

Schools are responsible for the education of all their students. There are several references to students with special education needs in components of the National Education Guidelines. These are statements of desirable achievements by the school system, or by an element of the school system; and are statements of government policy objectives for the school system.



Another component of the National Education Guidelines is the National Administration Guidelines (NAGs), which, among other directions, set out the requirements relating to planning and reporting. The most specific to learning for all is NAG 1, which states that each board, through the principal and staff, is required to:

- develop and implement teaching and learning programmes:
  - 1 (a) to provide all students in Years 1-10 with opportunities to achieve for success in all the essential learning and skill areas of the New Zealand Curriculum
  - 1 (b) giving priority to student achievement in literacy and numeracy, especially in years 1-4
  - 1 (c) giving priority to regular physical activity that develops movement skills for all students, especially Years 1-6
- through a range of assessment practices, gather information that is sufficiently comprehensive to enable the progress and achievement of students to be evaluated giving priority first to:
  - student achievement in literacy and numeracy, especially in Years 1-4 and then to
  - breadth and depth of learning related to the needs, abilities and interests of students, the nature of the school's curriculum, and the scope of the New Zealand curriculum (as expressed in the National Curriculum Statements)
- on the basis of good quality assessment information, identify students and groups of students:
  - who are not achieving
  - who are at risk of not achieving
  - who have special education needs
  - aspects of the curriculum which require particular attention.
- develop and implement teaching and learning strategies to address the needs of students and aspects of the curriculum identified above
- in consultation with the school's Māori community, develop and make known to the school's community policies, plans and targets for improving the achievement of Māori students
- provide appropriate career education and guidance for all students in Year 7 and above, with a particular emphasis on specific career guidance for those students who have been identified by the school as being at risk of leaving school unprepared for the transition to the workplace or further education/training.

In addition to the NAG requirements on all state schools to ‘foster student achievement by providing teaching and learning programmes’, there are explicit statements about learning for all in the New Zealand Curriculum Framework

*‘we need a learning environment which enables all our students to attain high standards’*

[the New Zealand Curriculum] *‘establishes the principles which give direction to all teaching and learning’*

[the New Zealand Curriculum] *‘applies to all students, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, belief, ability or disability, social or cultural background, or geographical location’.*

The principles of the New Zealand Curriculum Framework are ‘based on the premises that the individual student is at the centre of all teaching and learning’.

Indicators show significant under achievement among disabled people. The 2001 Disability Survey found that 39% of people with disabilities left school with no educational qualifications, compared with 24% of non-disabled people.

Work is currently being undertaken to ensure that the curriculum is effective for the diverse range of students in New Zealand, including those with special education needs.

The development of the Schooling Strategy for New Zealand is being undertaken by the Ministry of Education, and another series of consultations will be completed in early 2005.

### ***Tertiary education context***

The Tertiary Education Strategy 2002-07 sets an objective for people with impairments to be achieving skills and qualification in greater numbers.

Tertiary Education Organisations (TEOs) are expected by government to ensure equity of access and opportunity for people with disabilities and to provide the support these students require for full participation. TEOs have autonomy in applying government funding to a range of purposes but under the Education Act 1989 they must work towards meeting government objectives articulated in the *Tertiary Education Strategy* and the *Statement of Tertiary Education Priorities*, including objectives about people with disabilities, in order to access funding.

Tertiary Education Institutions (TEIs) receive a Special Supplementary Grant in proportion to the size of the institution, to contribute towards supporting students with disabilities who have high cost support needs. That is in recognition of their statutory obligation under the Education Act 1989 to ensure all community groups are well represented in an institution.

A new Resource Centre for Deaf Tertiary Students provides services, which will include training for support staff (eg, notetakers) working with deaf students in tertiary institutions, needs assessment for deaf tertiary students and provision of some assistive technology.

In November 2004 Achieve, the National Post-Secondary Education Disability Network Incorporated released *Kia Orite Achieving Equity New Zealand Code of Practice for an Inclusive Tertiary Education Environment for Students with Impairments*, go to: [www.achieve.org.nz](http://www.achieve.org.nz) for more information.

## Legislative influences

In addition to the Education-specific legislation, the New Zealand Disability Strategy (NZDS), 2001 outlines clear requirements on the education sector. The Strategy was launched with the vision of a society that highly values the lives and continually enhances full participation of disabled people. The Strategy is constructed in the social model of disability, whereby *“disability is not something individuals have. What individuals have are impairments. They may be physical, sensory, neurological, psychiatric, intellectual or other impairments. Disability is the process which happens when one group of people create barriers by designing a world only for their way of living, taking no account of the impairments other people have”*.

The Human Rights Act, 1993 and, more pertinently, its successor the Human Rights Amendment Act, 2001 contains non-discrimination standards. The first, set out in Part 1A, brings the non-discrimination standard from section 19 of the Bill of Rights Act into the Human Rights Act and clarifies that it applies to all public sector activities, including education. This standard states:

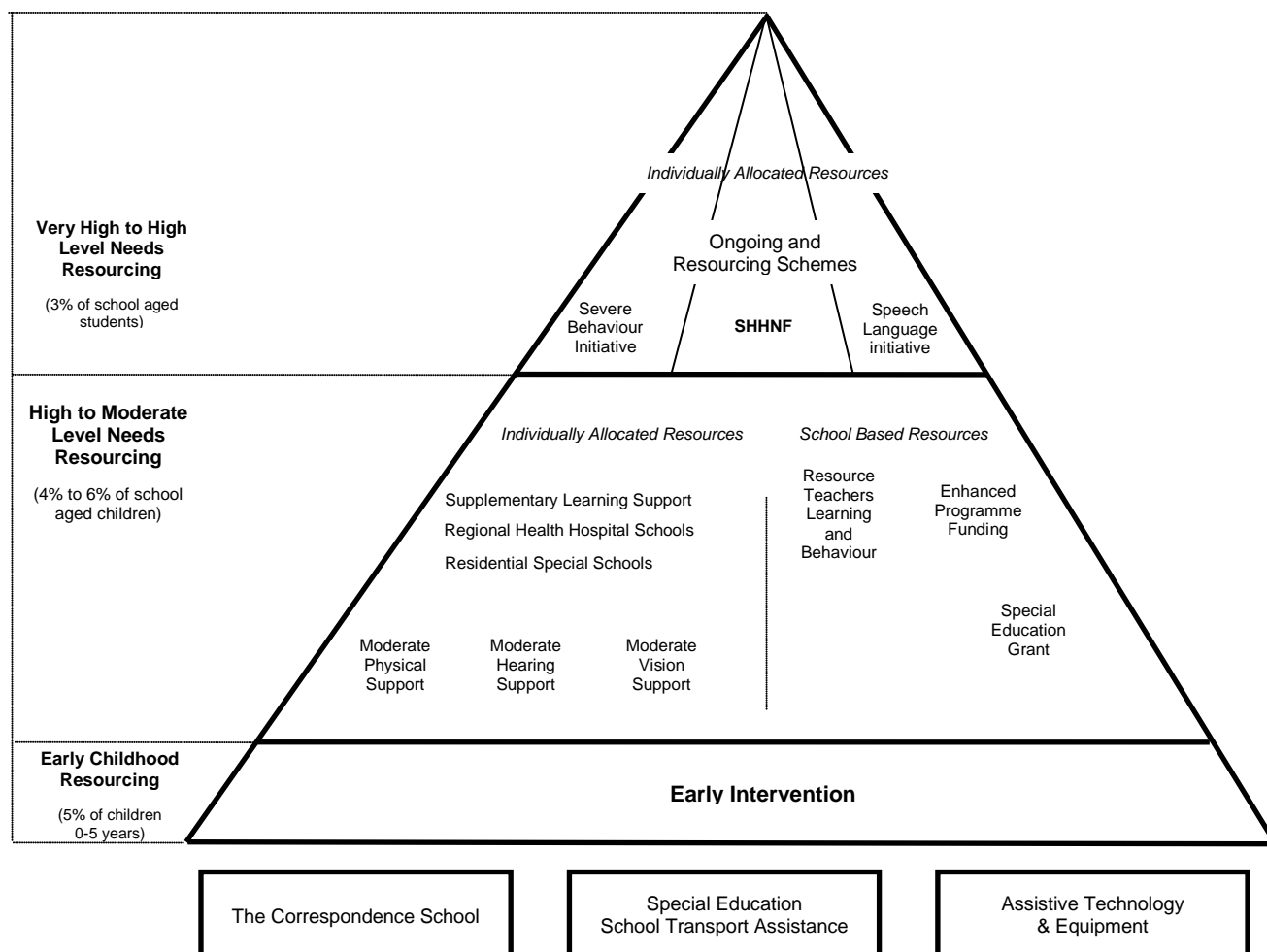
- everyone has the right to freedom from discrimination on the grounds of disability in the Human Rights Act 1993
- measures taken in good faith for the purposes of assisting or advancing persons or groups of persons disadvantaged because of discrimination that is unlawful by virtue of Part II of the Human Rights Act 1993 do not constitute discrimination
- disability is one of the thirteen prohibited grounds of discrimination.



# Special education services and resourcing

SE 2000 is the basis for the allocation of services and resourcing for special education. The original framework has been modified over the years and the one below shows the changes made from that shown in the 1997 version in Figure 1.

**Figure 2 Special Education Resourcing Framework 2004**



## High and Very High Needs initiatives for school-aged students

Most of the services and resources for students with high and very high special education needs are managed and coordinated centrally because of the low incidence of these students and the very specialised nature of their support.

Of the three percent of children and young people with high and very high needs in school settings the Ministry of Education, Special Education specialist staff provide support to approximately one percent of students with severe behaviour needs, one percent of students with speech-language needs and is the fundholder for the one percent of students in the Ongoing and Reviewable Resourcing Schemes (ORRS).

### ***Ongoing and Reviewable Resourcing Schemes (ORRS)***

ORRS is a mechanism for providing extra resourcing support to school students who have the highest level of special education needs. The Ongoing Scheme is for students who are expected to require significant extra support for their entire school career in order to access the curriculum. The Reviewable Scheme is for those students who meet the criteria at the time of their application but it is unclear whether their needs will remain at the same level throughout their schooling. Their eligibility is reviewed after three years. Some will no longer be eligible.

Eligibility for ORRS is based on meeting at least one of nine criteria. These criteria are related to the need for support in order to access the curriculum. Full details of ORRS criteria and more information about the schemes are available on:

[http://www.minedu.govt.nz/index.cfm?layout=search\\_results&criteria=ORRS](http://www.minedu.govt.nz/index.cfm?layout=search_results&criteria=ORRS)

A team of specialists within the Ministry of Education manages the process of determining eligibility. Having one team decide on eligibility for all students ensures consistency throughout the country. Eligible students are classified as having either high needs or very high needs.

Eligibility for ORRS means that extra teaching time is provided to the school at which the student is enrolled and is to be used to help the student. A very high needs student is allocated 0.2 Full Time Teacher Equivalent (FTE). A high needs student is allocated 0.1 FTE.

A student who is eligible for ORRS also attracts a cash component to purchase support from specialists such as speech-language therapists, physiotherapists, advisers on deaf children, sign language interpreters and teacher aides.<sup>1</sup> The cash component has two levels and usually receives an annual inflation adjustment. In 2005, very high needs students attract \$14,356 per annum and high needs students attract \$8,356 per annum. This funding is paid to a fundholder.

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<sup>1</sup> Some ORRS students receive extra assistance outside the ORRS package from specialist itinerant teachers such as Resource Teachers Vision and Itinerant Teachers of the Deaf.

Fundholders are either the Ministry of Education, Special Education or schools acting under a delegation. Fundholders aggregate into a pool all the funding they receive for the students for whom they fundhold. They then make an assessment of the needs of each student and draw up an Individual Education Plan (IEP) to set the learning goals for each student over a period of time. This process involves the school, the parents, the fundholder and the student (where this is appropriate). Once this is done the fundholder decides on the type and quantum of support to be provided from the pool for each student. Specialist services and therapies, teacher aide support and consumables to ORRS students are then provided to support the IEP.

Schools that have fundholding responsibility are known as Accredited Special Education Service Providers (ASESPs). They fundhold for approximately 40% of ORRS students. Ministry of Education, Special Education is the fundholder for the remaining approximately 60% of ORRS students.

As at the end of November 2004, there were 1,795 very high needs students receiving ORRS support and 5,157 high needs students<sup>2</sup>. In the 2004 school year, the total cash component of ORRS was \$70.83 million and the staffing component was \$55.835 million.

The criteria were reviewed in 2001 after concerns that they did not identify enough high needs students who need ongoing support. The review found that the criteria were being applied consistently, but proposals to widen them to identify a bigger group of students would be unworkable in practice. Rather than creating uncertainty by dismantling the ORRS system it was decided to use a different process for identifying and supporting students with ongoing needs who do not meet the criteria for ORRS. These students are eligible for the Supplementary Learning Support initiative.

The schemes were put in place to correct a perceived lack of fairness in the distribution of resources to students with the highest needs for special education assistance. Specifically the schemes ensure that the funding and resources are put in place wherever the student is located. The former system had developed progressively over the last century and mostly delivered resources according to special schools or special classes.

The proportion of the school population to be funded through ORRS is approximately one percent although entry to the schemes is not capped to any particular number.

Students verified for the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS) can receive services while they are enrolled in a school to the end of the year in which they turn 21 years of age.

Students verified for the Reviewable Resourcing Scheme (RRS) receive support for the rest of the year in which they enter the scheme and for three more school years. Towards the end of that time a new application is made if the school and parents consider the student requires ongoing support.

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<sup>2</sup> As at July 2004, 19% of ORRS students were Maori, with Maori forming 21% of the school-age population. However the figures may under-represent the position as ethnicity is a voluntary field.

### ***School High Health Need Fund (SHHNF)***

Approximately 210 students with high health needs are verified to receive paraprofessional care and supervision so they can attend school safely. A paraprofessional provides care for a student so that they can participate at school. The student's parent/caregiver, health care workers and educators agree on the level and type of care required in an Individual Care Plan. The care does not include help for students with their learning needs or for catching up on work missed through absence from school. The SHHNF is in addition to the services provided by Regional Hospital Health Schools (RHHS). These schools are for students in hospital, or convalescing at home, or returning back to their usual school. To be eligible for the fund, students must meet specified criteria. Eligibility is determined by the Ministry of Education, Special Education Eligibility team. Further details about this fund are available on: <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/index.cfm?layout=document&documentid=5373&data=1>

### ***Severe Behaviour Initiative (SBI)***

The Severe Behaviour Initiative (SBI) aims to help children and young people displaying severe and challenging behaviour such that it endangers themselves and/or others, damages property or affects their social interactions and learning. The SBI focuses on working with children and young people, the families and teachers from Year 1 through to Year 10 in schools. Services are provided to about one percent of the school-aged population. Where children and young people are experiencing severe and challenging behaviours and are supported through Early Intervention or the Ongoing and Reviewable Resourcing Schemes they receive behaviour interventions within those services. Staff work with families and schools to provide assessment and multi-element programmes to support students and to increase their appropriate behaviours and learning. Other agencies and professionals are often involved.

As well as the in-school based services provided by the Ministry of Education, Special Education, there are also Centres for Extra Support that provides education for students with severe behaviour problems on or off school sites. There are currently eight centres for extra support involving different arrangements according to local priorities.

There are also three Residential Special Schools for Children aged 8 to 13 years specialising in working with students with severe behaviour.

Westbridge Residential Special School in Auckland provides residential and school services for 28 students as well as Centre of Extra Support day programmes both onsite at Westbridge and in local schools. A programme funded by Child, Youth and Family is also being implemented at Westbridge providing intensive family support for enrolled students while the children are at the school and when they return home. The Westbridge joint education-social service programme is being evaluated to inform broader policy.

Waimokoia Residential Special School in Auckland provides residential and school services for 41 students and day programmes for a small number of students as required.

McKenzie Residential Special School in Christchurch provide residential and school services for 29 students.



There are two residential special schools for students who have intellectual and social difficulties. They enrol students who are in Year 7 to 10 on entry. Salisbury Residential Special School in Nelson provides residential and school services for 80 girls and Halswell Residential College in Christchurch provides residential and school services for 90 boys.

The Ministry of Education is also participating in an interagency initiative led by Child, Youth and Family on reducing antisocial behaviour and conduct disorder among children and young people. A key focus for these initiatives is likely to be intervening earlier to prevent development of severe behaviour difficulties.

### ***Speech language initiative***

The speech-language initiative provides assistance to students with high needs who have speech difficulties, fluency disorders, voice resonance disorders, language difficulties or significant language delay.

Under this initiative services are provided for students with severe communication needs representing about one percent of the school-age population. The focus of intervention is on the first three years at school, although older students may receive a service. Parent and teacher professional development opportunities are also part of the communication initiative.

### ***Deaf education***

There are approximately 2,300 deaf and hearing impaired children and young people in early childhood and compulsory education. Specialised education services are provided through the van Asch Deaf Education Centre in Christchurch and the Kelston Deaf Education Centre in Auckland. Each Deaf Education Centre runs a base school, a residence and regional services. Children not attending one of the base schools receive their education in a regular setting with support from the regional services such as specialist teachers of the deaf or in units. Deaf Education Centres collectively employ about 97 Teachers of the Deaf. There are about 43 residential placements between the two schools. Some students with a hearing impairment also access ORRS funding and the specialist, teaching and paraprofessional support the schemes provide for.

The Ministry of Education, Special Education employs Advisers on Deaf Children (AoDC), a network of specialists who give support, information and education advice to families with deaf and hearing impaired children. They also offer assessment, support, information and advice to early childhood education facilities and schools with deaf and hearing impaired children.

Increasingly children born deaf will have cochlear implants. The implants and the surgery are provided by Vote Health. Education through the Ministry of Education provides post surgical habilitation services to children and young people to enable them to learn to use the device to develop communication skills. In 2003 the Ministry of Health, in association with the Ministry of Education, commissioned a review of cochlear implant services. In May 2004 it was agreed by the Ministers of Health and Education that cochlear implant services be provided by two independent agencies that subcontract all providers in New Zealand.

From 1 July 2005 the Ministry of Education will become a co-funder with the Ministry of Health Disability Services Directorate for cochlear implant service and habilitation services. These will be provided by the Southern Hearing Trust in the South Island and lower half of the North Island and the Auckland District Health Board will establish an independent Trust and provide services in the upper North Island

Ministry of Education, Special Education is working with the deaf sector to implement a National Plan for Deaf Education, with the agreed objectives of early, co-ordinated and effective service provision. Deaf Education Aotearoa New Zealand (DEANZ) is the charitable body created to bring the sector together to realise the principles of a National Plan, and this is happening in a collaborative way.

The Ministry of Education is part of an Office for Disability Issues led interdepartmental working group developing implementation plans for the New Zealand Sign Language Bill.

### ***Vision education***

There are approximately 1,300 children and young people who have been identified as being blind or vision impaired. Most of these young people are being educated in their local early childhood education centre or school. Currently specialised education services are provided through Homai National School for the Blind and Vision Impaired and 30 itinerant Resource Teachers: Vision based at 11 Visual and Sensory Resource Centres.

In 2003 and with extensive consultation, the board of Homai developed a new strategic direction for vision education across the country. Homai and the Ministry of Education are now working on implementation including the creation of a national network of services for the education of blind and vision impaired children.

An umbrella group, the Vision Education Agency (VEA) is contracted by the Ministry of Education to act as a conduit for information to and from the vision education sector, which includes a number of interest groups.

### ***Physical therapy***

Physical therapy provision by physiotherapists and occupational therapists that was attached to some schools and units for high and very high need students before ORRS was introduced has remained in those settings as centrally funded provision. In 2000 the transitional funding for these positions was extended until the end of 2003 to allow for research to be undertaken. This has now been extended to 2006.

Generally students who are supported through the Ongoing and Reviewable Resourcing Schemes (ORRS) requiring therapy services have their therapy needs funded from the cash component that is part of ORRS. This cash component may be used by fundholders to employ therapists, or to purchase therapy from other providers. Where centrally funded positions noted above continue then this provision is in addition to ORRS funded therapy and services.

### ***Special Education Assistive Equipment (Technology)***

The Ministry of Education, Special Education undertakes specialised assessments and allocates Assistive Equipment (Technology) to students in schools to help students access the curriculum. This includes a range of tools such as computers, software and brailers.

Assessment for and provision of assistive equipment is a highly specialised area which ranges from the provision of a simple, inexpensive communication board to allow a student to select from a small range of options, to complex high tech devices allowing the student to write text using eye pointing alone.

Some items, such as wheelchairs, are deemed to be for personal care and not education whilst others such as written communication devices are considered to be for education alone. Protocols have been agreed between the Ministries of Health and Education to determine the boundaries between equipment that is for personal care and that intended for education and each agency operates separate systems for provision of equipment from their funding pools. A third source of funding for equipment is from the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) which will provide funding for equipment for students who meet its criteria.

### **Moderate Special Education needs initiatives for school-aged students**

In line with the self management of schools, most of the funding to support students with moderate special education needs is allocated to and managed directly by schools. The Resourcing Framework provides funding and support directly to schools for about 4-6% per cent of students who are regarded as having moderate to high special education needs.

The division of supply of services and resources between the centralised management of the high and very high initiatives and the largely school-based management of the moderate special education needs initiative creates a number of tensions – not the least of which is the requirement to determine whether a student has moderate, high or very high needs. Division of management across the high, very high and moderate special education needs also increases the need for coordination mechanisms across the provisions.

### ***Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour (RTL B)***

Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour, or RTL B as they are usually called, work within schools around the country to provide advice and guidance to teachers of students who are at risk of low achievement due to learning and/or behaviour difficulties.

RTL B are allocated to clusters of schools. The cluster has a management committee which makes the day-to-day decisions about how the RTL B are to work. One or more of the cluster schools employs RTL B on behalf of the cluster.

RTL B are provided on the basis of a national average of 1 to 750 students and there are 765 positions in total. Each cluster also has learning support funding which they use as determined locally to support programmes developed for the students.

The Ministry of Education provides a professional RTLB training course at tertiary level that all new appointees are required to undertake unless they have similar prior qualifications.

Ministry of Education Guidelines, *RTLB Clusters: Effective Governance, Management and Practice* have been developed and distributed to all clusters.

RTLB work with teachers of students from new entry in the primary school to Year 10 in the secondary school. Year 11 to 13 funding is provided to each cluster to provide locally determined services to that group of students.

Some of the RTLB positions are dedicated to focus on the learning needs of Māori students. In some clusters an RTLB (Māori) may work entirely with kura kaupapa Māori or te reo immersion classes. Some are employed within a cluster and others work across more than one cluster. In 2004 there were 45 RTLB Māori.

Clusters with high numbers of Pasifika students may chose to designate an RTLB position as RTLB (Pasifika). The first RTLB (Pasifika) was appointed in 2004.

The findings of the Education Review Office (ERO) Review Report of RTLB services in June 2004 will be the focus of work of the Ministry of Education and the sector over 2005-06.

### ***Special Education grant***

The Special Education Grant (SEG) for schools began in the 1997 school year. The intention of SEG is to provide schools with an additional resource to meet the needs of students with moderate special education needs. SEG replaced a special education discretionary grant (SEDA) which had previously been available to schools on the basis of individual student annual applications.

The SEDA system was unpopular because of the fixed term nature of the resource and the amount of administration involved. The Special Education Grant is distributed to schools on the basis of roll size and weighted by the socio-economic decile ranking of the school. The certainty of the allocation enables schools to plan more effectively for the medium to long term.

Initially there were concerns that this funding was not always being applied to the support of students with moderate special education needs. However following provision of Guidelines to schools, national reviews from ERO found that by 1999, nine out of 10 schools used SEG appropriately and effectively. ERO is undertaking another review of SEG provision during 2004-05 and will report later in 2005.

Schools provide programmes, resources, training or paraprofessional support as determined by the school's planning process.

Because there is a strong correlation between special education needs and socio-economic factors, decile rankings combined with roll numbers provide the formula for allocating SEG. A base grant for all schools and a per pupil rate is calculated and weighted for the decile ranking of the school.

### **Supplementary learning support**

Supplementary learning support is a new special education initiative designed to provide additional support to students with ongoing high educational needs who require additional support from teachers and specialists.

Supplementary learning support was piloted in eight Ministry of Education, Special Education districts in 2002, and then implemented across all Ministry of Education, Special Education districts in 2003 with 550 students. For 2005 the total number of students receiving supplementary learning support is 1000. Under supplementary learning support, funding has been made available to provide students with an additional 0.1 FTE teacher support (called a Learning Support Teacher) and up to 45 additional specialist hours per year dependent on need to identified students. This support is additional to the support that students are already accessing. The Learning Support Teacher's job description is focused on working closely with the student, the student's class teacher(s) and teacher aide(s) to provide a programme to maximise learning outcomes.

Identification of students is a joint responsibility of Ministry of Education, Special Education team and RTLB. Four criteria for supplementary learning support have been developed :

- the primary criteria for eligibility will be if the student's achievement in literacy and numeracy is at Level 1 of the New Zealand Curriculum
- the student is well known to Ministry of Education, Special Education staff and/or RTLB and is considered a priority for and highly likely to benefit from an enrolment with a specialist teacher
- significant individualised assistance is currently and has historically been provided for the student to allow them to access the curriculum
- the student has a history of intensive use of special education and other specialist resources where access has been available.

Some schools will be too remote for an attached teacher to reasonably provide an itinerant service and there are also students educated in kura kaupapa Māori who will require teachers able to teach in total language immersion environments. To ensure students in either of these circumstances have access to the resource small pools of staffing will be kept available at Ministry of Education, Special Education district level to allocate directly to the schools of students in these settings. The management of these pools of staffing will be by local panels. Guidelines for administration of the managed pools of staffing are held by Ministry of Education, Special Education district offices.

An evaluation study is underway to assist in the fine tuning of this initiative.

This addition to the services framework in special education runs the risk of increasing the complexity and fragmentation of the system. Reducing fragmentation within the sector can also be achieved through improvements in coordination and management, and this initiative is attempting to develop mechanisms between RTLB and the Ministry of Education, Special Education staff that will assist in this regard. This aspect will also be studied in the evaluation of the initiative.

### ***Enhanced programme funding***

Schools that have a significant number of students with moderate special education needs are eligible for enhanced programme funding. Enhanced programme funding was introduced to help schools that have attracted a disproportionate number of students with moderate special education needs, often referred to as “magnet” schools. Enhanced programme funding is to help these schools enhance, refine and/or further develop effective special education programmes and complements the other school and cluster-based funding.

To date, there have been four funding rounds of EPF since 2002. A total of 347 schools have received EPF funding, for a maximum of three years. These schools generally met the following characteristics:

- lower decile
- medium to large school rolls
- high proportion of Māori students on the school roll
- many of the programmes funded in earlier rounds have had a literacy and/or numeracy component.

During 2003 and 2004, enhanced programme funding advisors were appointed in each region. These advisors provide systemic support to build capability in schools eligible for enhanced programme funding. The evaluation of funding includes an evaluation of the enhanced programme funding advisor role, which will continue until 2007.

The Enhanced Programme Fund Guidelines have been revised. The revision of the Guidelines put a larger emphasis on the policy intent of identifying and supporting students with moderate special education needs, rather than including the broad group of students who schools identify as not achieving. It is expected that schools that have a large number of students accessing special education initiatives will be eligible for enhanced programme funding regardless of the decile rating of their school.

How “moderate needs” is defined for students and the methodology for directing the funding to schools with disproportionate numbers of students with moderate special education needs is the major issue for enhanced programme funding. There is no universally accepted definition of moderate special education needs and the magnet school concept is often used to describe schools that have significant concentrations of students who have high and very high as well as moderate special education needs. There is similarly no agreement on which schools would be seen as magnet schools.

The model for the 2004 round of applications aligns the use of this funding much more pragmatically to schools which have high proportions of students accessing the SE 2000 high and moderate special education needs resources with the exception of ORRS students who have individualised support provided.

### ***Moderate physical contract***

The moderate physical contract is the provision of occupational therapy and physiotherapy services to students with moderate physical disabilities. Moderate physical contract services are provided by both Ministry of Education, Special Education and some schools for students with physical disabilities or schools which have special facilities for students with physical disabilities.

The services are provided for students who have physical disabilities that provide a barrier to learning in the educational context of school, and have predictable and intermittent needs for therapy and support. Services cover provision of therapy, advice and information, assessment, programme development, monitoring and review.

Schools are responsible for referral to their local service provider who assess students' needs and determine priorities and services provided. The providers are contracted to provide services based on approximately 0.1% of the population nationally.

### **Moderate physical contract provision for Special Education 2005**

<b>Ministry of Education, Special Education District</b>	<b>Provider</b>
<b>Tai Tokerau</b>	Ministry of Education, Special Education
<b>Northwest</b>	Ministry of Education, Special Education for Rodney District and North Shore City Waitakere College for Waitakere City
<b>Manukau</b>	Papatoetoe South School
<b>Auckland City</b>	Mt Roskill Intermediate
<b>Waikato</b>	Ministry of Education, Special Education
	Hillcrest High School for Hamilton City
<b>Bay of Plenty West</b>	Ministry of Education, Special Education
<b>Bay of Plenty East</b>	Ministry of Education, Special Education
<b>Gisborne</b>	Ministry of Education, Special Education

<b>Ministry of Education, Special Education District</b>	<b>Provider</b>
<b>Hawke's Bay</b>	Ministry of Education, Special Education
<b>Central</b>	Ministry of Education, Special Education
<b>Taranaki</b>	Ministry of Education, Special Education
<b>Greater Wellington</b>	Ministry of Education, Special Education
	Kimi Ora School for Wellington City
<b>Marlborough/Nelson/West Coast</b>	Ministry of Education, Special Education
<b>Canterbury</b>	Ministry of Education, Special Education
	Hammersley Park School for Christchurch City and Selwyn and Waimakariri District
<b>Otago</b>	Ministry of Education, Special Education
	Kings/Queens High Schools for Dunedin City
<b>Southland</b>	Ministry of Education, Special Education
	Waihapai School for Southland and Gore District

### ***Special Education School Transport Assistance (SESTA)***

The Ministry of Education may provide special education school transport assistance to enable students to access education. The Ministry of Education is responsible for determining the type of assistance to be provided. Applications for this transport are made by Ministry of Education, Special Education and ORRS fundholders

### **Early intervention services**

Under SE 2000 Early Intervention services are provided to approximately 5% of young children in homes and early childhood education settings.

Specialist service provision in the early childhood education sector for children with high special education needs is a shared responsibility with the Ministry of Health that funds a number of services such as occupational therapy and physiotherapy. There is therefore a need in this initiative for close coordination between the Ministries of Health and Education.

Education funding is provided for 2590 children with high special education needs and covers paraprofessional support, provided by education support workers, and specialist support, provided by early intervention teachers, psychologists and speech-language therapists.



Early Intervention to young children with the highest need is delivered by the Ministry of Education, Special Education and 11 Accredited Service Providers (ASPs) which are contracted to provide services. Current ASPs are all non-profit making organisations. These are five NZCCS providers (Auckland, North Taranaki, Canterbury, South Canterbury, Otago), Conductive Education Waikato Trust, Conductive Education Christchurch, Champion Centre in Christchurch, the Wellington Early Intervention Trust, the McKenzie Centre in Hamilton and Ohomairangi Early Intervention Service in Papatoetoe.

Parents can request support from Ministry of Education, Special Education and the Accredited Service Providers directly or can be referred by Health, early childhood services or other service providers.

Early Intervention services are available for children with moderate special education needs in the early childhood sector through the Ministry of Education, Special Education and can be delivered in the home or the early childhood education service. There is a team approach to delivery as well as a strong parent support and education role. Interagency work is important, especially the close links in the early years with Health.

A policy project currently underway is looking at the barriers to participation in early childhood education for children with special education needs. Operational projects underway to improve quality include a framework for transition to school and exemplars that help early childhood education teachers record and assess the learning achievements of children with special education needs.

There is a growing focus across a number of government agencies on the need for more effective interventions and investment in early childhood education (ages 0-5 years). An example of this is the work programme to develop an early intervention system for at-risk children aged 0-5 years being led by the Ministry of Social Development.

## **Special Education facilitators**

The role of the special education facilitator is designed to foster partnerships between families and whānau of children with special education needs and schools. Facilitators are available to facilitate, negotiate and, where appropriate, mediate if difficulties arise. The facilitator will involve everyone in problem-solving processes which are focused on achieving a consensus on the issue of concern. The facilitator can provide information to assist with understanding and clarification of Ministry of Education policies and guidelines and once issues have been addressed and systems are in place to support educational outcomes, the facilitator's work is complete.

Facilitators also advise other Ministry of Education staff on how schools are working on special education issues and maintain an overview of the provision of services to students with special education needs.

Special Education Facilitators are employed by the Ministry of Education, National Operations and work from regional and local offices.

## **Provision which link closely with special education**

### ***Regional Health/Hospital Schools***

There are three Regional Health/Hospital Schools located in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. Students who are unable to attend their regular school due to illness can access this service. Students receive education services in their home or in hospital.

The Regional Health/Hospital Schools have a core role as schools for students who are chronically ill and cannot attend their regular school for long periods, or have a psychiatric illness and live in a health-funded institution, or need transition support as they return to their regular school after a lengthy absence due to medical intervention.

### ***The Correspondence School***

The Correspondence School is a significant provider of services to students with special education needs. Students with special education needs are enrolled full-time or as dual enrolments.

### ***Alternative education and activity centres***

Alternative Education is a programme for young people aged 13 to 15 who have become 'lost' or alienated from the education system. Either they are unwilling to attend a regular school, or schools are unwilling to enrol them in a mainstream setting. Desired outcomes are that students re-enter mainstream schools or continue into tertiary education to gain qualifications prior to entering the workforce.

The current Alternative Education (AE) Policy provides 1820 full-time placements for students. To be eligible for Alternative Education, students must be verified as being alienated from school.

There are also fifteen activity centres around the country each providing education for up to 20 'at risk' secondary school students. Each centre is an attached unit of a secondary school that is responsible for governance and management. Some centres are seen as places where students can have time out to allow them to settle, organise themselves with assistance, and then be returned to regular secondary schooling. Other centres are seen as alternatives for those who cannot cope with regular school settings.

### ***Education Advocacy Service***

The Commissioner for Children's Office provides a service that:

- fields education complaints and inquiries
- coordinates and liaises with a nationwide network of community-based mediators
- provides an 0800 freephone legal information line.

The three key objectives of the services are to assist in:

- providing positive outcomes for schools and students by maintaining students within the education system
- reducing barriers to learning which are created by conflict between schools, students and parents
- improving the relationships between the education sector and the community.

### ***Innovations pool***

This initiative aims to improve educational outcomes for at-risk students by supporting schools to try innovative, new approaches to improving educational outcomes for these students.

The Innovations Pool targets schools that seek support to trial innovative programmes for at-risk students. Programmes focus on changing the school environment to make it more supportive of at-risk students. Programmes are approved for between one and three years, with an expectation that they will become self-sustainable. Three national programmes have also been approved since 2000 from the Innovations Pool. These programmes are: Cool Schools; Tu Tangata; and Kiwi Can and each run in approximately 25 schools.

### ***Resource Teachers:Literacy (RT:Lit)***

Resource Teachers:Literacy work within clusters of schools to provide advice and support on meeting the needs of students in Years 0-8 who are considered at risk in the acquisition of literacy. They provide expert tuition for a small group of students from schools in the cluster who require intensive support for a short time. They also provide general advice and support in collaboration with other literacy professionals to help principals and literacy leaders monitor and maintain effective practice for at-risk students.

The RT:Lit service was established in 2000 and there are currently 109 RT:Lits.

### ***He Ara Tika***

He Ara Tika aims to improve education participation, retention and achievement by Māori students. It aims at boosting self-esteem and identity of Māori students with the ultimate aim being to encourage students to succeed at school and/or go on to further education.

Focusing on secondary school students He Ara Tika, launched in 2002, is a youth mentoring programme targeting 1000 Māori secondary students across the country. Social and/or academic support for individuals or small groups of students is provided by trained mentors. The support is centred on guiding the student and building on the student's strengths and has a strong focus on knowledge, skills and guidance in relation to education.

17 Māori Community Providers are contracted to manage and facilitate He Ara Tika.

### **Health Camps**

Health Camps are a Ministry of Health-funded initiative to improve the health and wellbeing of primary school-aged children and their families with health and social needs.

The Ministry of Health contracts the Foundation of Child and Family Health and Development to provide short term residential placements in health camps. The Ministry of Education funds education provision on each of the seven health camp sites.

### **Social Workers in Schools (SWiS)**

Social Workers in Schools, an early assistance and prevention programme targeted at Year 0-8 children and their families in low decile schools, is led and financed by Child, Youth and Family. It is designed to give early help to children and families in order to prevent problems becoming more serious and difficult to overcome.

There are currently 85 social workers working in 220 low decile schools across the country. These social workers are employed by non-governmental service providers contracted to Child, Youth and Family. The social workers work closely with the schools in the SWiS cluster, resource teachers, health nurses and other professionals in the community, to give children the best possible chance to learn.

Thirteen more full-time equivalent (FTE) social workers will be appointed early in 2005 with a further 10 FTE positions to begin in July 2005. The SWiS programme will continue to expand. By 2007, there will be 115 social workers delivering services to around 330 schools.

### **Strengthening families**

Strengthening Families is a government approach for improving the wellbeing of *“families who are experiencing multiple and persistent disadvantages which compromise family functioning and increase the chances that their children may have poor long-term outcomes”*.

In 69 places around the country Local Management Groups (LMGs), made up mainly of staff from government agencies, work together to assist families in need. Government agencies contribute funding to the Ministry of Social Development for the employment of Strengthening Family coordinators; some of these agencies also contribute funding to support training in facilitating case management. Schools, Ministry of Education, Special Education, and RTLB make referrals for interagency case meetings when they think more could be done for a particular family by involving other agencies.

### ***High and complex needs***

The High and Complex needs Strategy was established in 2001 and is equally funded by the Ministries of Health, Education and the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services. It promotes intersectoral collaboration to identify and meet the needs of a relatively small group of children and young people who have high and complex needs. This is a highly idiosyncratic group who are being actively supported by at least two of the sectors listed above, but whose needs are so complex that they cannot be addressed without both intensive case coordination and additional resourcing. There are three key elements to the Strategy:

- effective local individual case co-ordination, collaboration and management, along with access to relevant services within the sectors. This usually takes place within the context of Strengthening Families (also known as Effective Practice meetings)
- the development of effective intersectoral services for children through better integration of existing sector services, development of additional service capabilities, or developing new joint services (also known as Joint Services Response Fund)
- individual packages of funding to support the implementation of intensive intersectoral intervention plans for a small number of children and young people who present the highest and most complex unmet needs. (Also known as the Exceptions Fund) This is a source of short-term funding for up to a year in the first instance, with a focus on maximising the achievement of gains and outcomes for the young person.

### ***Targeted Funding for Educational Achievement (TFEA)***

Targeted funding for educational achievement is a resource to assist schools to lower barriers to learning faced by students from lower socio-economic communities. All decile 1 to 9 schools receive this funding according to roll and decile.

## **Ministry of Education, Special Education**

As well as providing services through districts and local offices there is a special education national function within the Ministry of Education.

### **National role and functions**

The Education Management Policy section of the Education Improvement and Support group has overall responsibility for special education policy development. Placing special education policy in this division helps ensure that it is informed by broader policy frameworks.

The Ministry of education, Special Education group, through district and local offices, provides services for students with high special education needs in the school sector and for children with high and moderate needs in the early childhood education sector. They also contract or delegate schools and early childhood special education providers to provide similar services. The group also undertakes a number of projects that inform and influence special education across the sector.

Both of these Ministry of Education groups work closely together on policy development and operational issues and work closely with other parts of the Ministry of Education concerned with teaching and learning, curriculum, resourcing and research.

## **National projects and initiatives**

The following are some of the service-based activities currently being undertaken nationally. These projects are generated as a result of government directions, effective practice information or provision needs of staff and consumers.

### ***Māori Strategy for Special Education***

The Māori Strategy for Special Education is being implemented over a period of four years. There are 11 key achievement areas that have been identified, and each Ministry of Education, Special Education district will focus and report on three of these initiatives during each year of implementation.

The key achievement areas or heke are: research and innovation, cultural awareness and responsiveness, Māori for Māori Services, bicultural services, Iwi/Māori Partnerships, workforce development building Māori capacity and capability, organisational structure/culture, Te Reo Māori/Tikanga, Hui Māori, participation/collaboration and leadership.

### ***Pasifika Action Plan for Special Education***

A Special Education Pasifika Action Plan was drafted in 2004 to ensure Pasifika communities have increased awareness of special education services and how to access them.

### ***Development of Networks of Learning Support***

In 2001 Specialist Education Services (SES) integrated into the Ministry of Education. It was envisaged that the new group within the Ministry of Education would continue to provide services and work across the sector to establish more collaborative working arrangements and networks of learning support. Over recent years Ministry of Education, Special Education has coordinated activity such as developing sector-based mechanisms around the distribution of new funding (enhanced programme funding, supplementary learning support); entering into more collaborative fundholding contracts for ORRS, with local monitoring of the contracting arrangements; increased interagency collaborative projects; and the development of learning support networks and resource and support centres.

In 2004 pilot resource and support centre developments were piloted in eight Districts whereby ORRS students enrolled at their local school may receive additional teaching from an itinerant teacher from a school with expertise in the teaching of students with high special needs. This will be extended to 16 Districts in 2005. Homai, the National School for the Blind and Vision Impaired, and the Ministry of Education are working on the implementation of a national network of services for the education of blind and vision impaired children. The Ministry of Education is working with the sector to achieve and implement a National Plan for Deaf Education.

### ***Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD)***

The term 'Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD)' is used to describe people with autism as well as those with Asperger Syndrome and other pervasive developmental delays. With more accurate diagnosis and by including those on the autistic spectrum as well as those with 'classic' autism, in New Zealand and internationally there is an apparent increase in prevalence of ASD from 1 per 1,000 to approximately 6 per 1,000.

Young people with ASD often find early childhood education centres and schools highly challenging. In turn, families and educators report high levels of stress when trying to support young people with ASD.

In 2004 funding was provided for an ASD programme which is intended to improve outcomes for children and young people with ASD by developing effective practices among parents, teachers, support staff and specialist providers. The elements of this programme are:

- research and development initiative to promote an effective knowledge and practice base in the New Zealand context (most research is from overseas) and to evaluate the impact of practices on young people's outcomes
- education and skill-building programmes for up to 70 families a year, with a focus on children newly diagnosed with ASD
- twelve research-led capability projects to develop new practices in centres and schools
- up to 28 whole-team professional learning programmes to disseminate known effective practice in centres and schools
- specialist teacher professional learning programmes for 40 specialist teachers a year.

These initiatives build on previously-funded projects that set the scene for a strategic approach to supporting children and young people with ASD.

The Ministries of Health and Education jointly fund Autism NZ to provide the Early Bird programme to help upskill families in which a young child has been diagnosed with autism. A team from Auckland University has conducted an evaluation of the programme's effectiveness, and was also funded by the Ministry of Health to examine patterns of access and uptake, particularly by Māori, Pasifika and Asian families.

Nine action research local projects, each supported by an experienced mentor, will be concluded by February 2005. Together the projects cover the whole country and represent children and young people across the education system, from early childhood until leaving school. Reports from the individual projects will be analysed during Term One, 2005. The initial findings have been very positive, as teams report on their shifts in practice and the learning, social and cultural outcomes for the young people themselves.

A separate study about Māori perspectives and expectations of people with ASD has been published. This is the first such study and provides valuable insights into the particular needs of Māori young people with ASD.

An Education sector team is developing guidelines to effective practices for school-aged young people with ASD as part of the development of a suite of ASD guidelines. The rest are being developed by the Ministry of Health. The final, collated ASD guideline is due to be published in the second half of 2005.

The approach taken in the above work has a strong focus on developing and promoting effective practice in regular education settings.

### ***Better information to address barriers to learning***

The Better Information to address Barriers to Learning programme involves children and young people from birth to eight years of age. The aim is to generate better information and early action to address barriers to learning. The programme involves the design, implementation and trial of early identification processes and coordinated early intervention systems and builds on current assessment practices in early childhood education settings. It will develop a process that will be acceptable and useful for schools, early childhood education services and families.

The first step in the programme is to conduct a literature review and stocktake of current tools and early identification processes, with the report due in May 2005.

The literature stocktake and review will inform the development and testing of an identification process, which will be trialled in three sites across New Zealand. The screening tool will improve the ability of educators of children in both the early childhood and school settings to be better informed and to contribute more effectively to earlier identification of barriers to learning.

Trial sites have been identified in three Ministry of Education, Special Education Districts: Manukau, Otago and Gisborne.



## ***Enhancing effective practice in Special Education***

Enhancing Effective Practice in Special Education is one of the strategies aimed at recognising the diversity of all learners and the different contexts in which learning occurs. It consists of research carried out over four years to help address the government's investment in building capability in special education. The focus is on students with moderate, high and very high special education needs who require significant adaptations to the content of the curriculum. Māori and Pasifika students with special educational needs form an important component of the study.

The aim of the research is to improve our knowledge of effective educational practices and provisions for students with moderate, high and very high needs in special education. More specifically the research aims at improving learning, social and cultural outcomes for these students. In order to achieve these objectives the research is supported by professional development which aims to build teacher and school capability. It is part of a broader initiative to support teachers to maximise the participation of learners, and to improve the quality of learning, social and cultural outcomes for students with special educational needs in regular schools, special schools and kura kaupapa Māori.

When completed, the research reports will provide information that will assist with developing policy and guiding practice.

A literature review has been completed by Donald Beasley Institute which was commissioned to inform the pilot study. It has undergone national and international peer review. The information in the report will be published for teachers and other professional staff.

A pilot study during terms 2 and 3 of 2004 involved a sample of New Zealand schools across four settings; regular schools, kura kaupapa Māori, special schools and school based classes for students with special education needs. It identified effective pedagogy and practices in the above schools and settings. Focus groups of school leaders, teachers, parents, whānau, professionals and students identified what they perceived to be effective learning, social and cultural outcomes.

The findings of the pilot study are being fed into the next phase of the project which will further explore student outcomes and effective ways to support teacher professional learning and development. There are two components to the next phase. Seven schools from the pilot study and fifteen new schools and two kura kaupapa Māori will continue in a year long action research and professional learning and development programme. In the second component, 25 schools will participate in professional development facilitated by Ministry of Education, Special Education staff. This phase will identify and explore what pedagogy and practices are most effective to maximise the learning, social and cultural outcomes for students with special education needs who require significant adaptation to the curriculum content and identify the support needed to sustain teacher capability.

### ***Research into integrated, effective therapy practices for students with physical disabilities***

Although the intent of SE 2000 was for students to receive support wherever they attended school, some people perceived the changes in resourcing mechanisms as disadvantaging units and special schools for students with physical disabilities. The Wylie Report (2000), reviewing special education provision, highlighted particular concerns for students with physical disabilities, especially the need to identify effective occupational therapy and physiotherapy practices for this group of students. Transition funding was provided to the affected units and schools to maintain pre-SE 2000 levels of resourcing while research was carried out.

Research was commissioned by the Ministry of Education's Advisory Reference Group for Students with Physical Disabilities, which includes several parents as well as the perspectives of people with disabilities, therapists, schools and the relevant union. Funding was provided for a three-year research programme into best practice therapy provision in education, and the costs associated with that provision. It is expected that the research programme will help to identify what makes therapy programmes work best to achieve students' learning potential, as part of an integrated package of services.

Final reports are currently being collated and the expectation is for the release of findings to begin in March 2005. The next piece of work is around benchmarking student needs to inform work on resource needs. This work is programmed to be done in 2005.

In the interim the additional transition funding provided to schools and the moderate physical contract funding has been extended until the end of 2006.

### ***Capability building for Special Education staff***

Various initiatives have been implemented by the Ministry of Education to develop the capability of the different specialists and resource teachers who work in special education, and to ensure their continued supply. Study awards and scholarships, for example, are provided to support the training of RTLB, resource teachers vision, teachers of deaf, early intervention teachers, classroom-based teachers of students with special education needs, (including learning support teachers), psychologists, advisers on deaf children, speech language therapists, and sign language interpreters who are fluent in te reo.

The Ministry of Education actively manages the specialist teacher awards to achieve a better alignment of these with the provision of special education services and associated workforce needs. The current value of specialist teacher study award fund is \$3.5m.

The Ministry of Education has commissioned a review of specialist teaching to identify strategies most likely to promote positive learning outcomes for students with special education needs. A literature review is underway and will be completed by the end of February 2005. Work will then be done to review and clarify the roles of specialist teachers and their specialist training and ongoing professional development needs.

To help overcome the problem of limited access to specialist training, the Ministry of Education assists training providers to deliver their courses at sites other than on campus. Currently, this includes support for the University of Auckland to teach by distance its Diplomas in Early Intervention and the Education of Students with Vision/Hearing Impairment, and support for a consortium of three universities (Auckland, Waikato and Victoria) to train RTLB. Massey University (Albany) is also provided with assistance to deliver the distance components of its educational psychology internship programme.

The Ministry of Education is in the process of negotiating a new training option for Adviser of Deaf Children which will be offered by Renwick College in Sydney, with components of the programme taught in New Zealand. The New Zealand provider will be selected early in 2005.

There has been some difficulty recruiting sufficient speech language therapists. This is a worldwide problem exacerbated here in New Zealand by the fact that only one institution previously provided training for this professional group. The short supply of speech language therapists is expected to become less of a problem as more graduates from two new Auckland-based training programmes established two years ago begin to enter the labour market.

Continued support for the training of educational psychologists and early intervention teachers is expected to prevent supply difficulties associated with these workforces.

There is an under-representation of Māori and Pasifika in the specialist workforces, both within those employed by the Ministry of Education as well as those employed in the wider special education sector.

### ***Health Practitioners Competency Assurance Act (HPCAA)***

On 18 September 2004 the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (HPCCA) came into effect. The principal purpose of the HPCCA is to protect the health and safety of members of the public by providing for mechanisms to ensure that health practitioners are competent and fit to practise their professions. Three of the special education specialist workforces - psychologists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists – are covered by the HPCCA. The Ministry of Education is taking steps, and assisting schools who employ these specialists to ensure staff understand and are able to comply with the requirements of the Act, particularly the requirement to demonstrate on-going competence to maintain a current practising certificate.

### ***Revision of the Section 9 processes***

The section 9 process has been reviewed in relation to day special schools and changes to the operational framework have been made to ensure it is consistent with the legislation.

### ***A national service description***

Ministry of Education, Special Education is developing a national service description which will be implemented in 2005. Service standards and service guidelines will be developed and are designed to assist consistency within a national service framework and to provide transparency around the quality and quantity of services delivered locally by Ministry of Education, Special Education staff. The standards and guidelines will also be implemented through delegated and contracted services. The standards for the Behaviour Service are currently being developed and will be the first to be implemented within the framework.

### ***Informed consent***

A project with Ministry of Education and sector group members has been established to develop a process to ensure that parents, and where possible children and young people, are actively involved and informed about the options and implications of the services they receive.

### ***Implementation of the Education Review Office (ERO) Report (June 2004) Recommendations on Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour (RTLB)***

The Ministry of Education will work with the sector to implement recommendations for an improvement programme over the next few years.

### ***ERO review of ORRS and SEG 2005***

ERO is currently undertaking a review of the provision of services from ORRS and SEG funding. As with the RTLB review this review will give direction for further work. ERO will report mid 2005.

## Background to the report

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### Why we did it

This work was done because Ministry of Education, Special Education has a commitment to providing effective coordinated services within current policy and resources, and in response to recommendations and feedback from the wider sector.

The influences leading to compiling the local service profiles include:

- a report commissioned by government in 2000 noted the need for seamless, accessible and integrated services (*The Wylie Report*)
- sector consultation 2001 (*Working Together: how the sector sees it*) further reinforced the need to address fragmentation, unclear accountabilities and inequalities of resourcing and opportunity
- government agreeing to collect and analyse local information about special education and to seek parent and educator feedback (*The Daniels Settlement*)
- the Ministry of Education, Special Education's commitment to providing effective services to improve student outcomes and enhance wellbeing, inclusion, participation, learning and achievement
- the Ministry of Education's commitment to involve stakeholders in the development of service provision not only for individuals or families and whānau, but at the local and national organisational levels
- the Ministry of Education's commitment to a shared approach for the provision of services and resources to children and young people with special education needs with an emphasis on local responsiveness and solution development
- contribution to the achievement of the Ministry's mission statement to *Raise Achievement and Reduce Disparity* through improved outcomes for children and young people with special education needs.
- government and Ministry directions for an integrated approach within education and the wider social sector
- the Ministry of Education's commitment to the New Zealand Disability Strategy.

Feedback gathered from this process will inform policy advice and strategic direction, including the Action Plan and local service plans from 2005 onwards.

## **Strategic background**

- The government's policy statement: *Education Priorities for New Zealand* gives strong direction to the involvement of the sector, families, whānau and community; and on developing a collaborative and responsive education network.
- The Ministry of Education first *Statement of Intent 2003 to 2008* represented a step forward in outcomes-based thinking and articulated the Ministry's vital outcomes, goals and priorities for five years. The Statement of Intent also noted the requirement to work closely with the sector and families and whānau for these outcomes to be achieved and for emphasis to be put on excellence in teaching, quality community engagement in education and quality providers.
- Working with the sector and local service development has been a direction for Ministry of Education, Special Education since its merger with the Ministry. Changes in the accreditation processes for the Ongoing and Reviewable Resourcing Schemes fundholding was an early expression of the devolvement to local responsibility and the opportunity for local capacity building between schools and the Ministry of Education, Special Education. The work around the recent special education initiatives: enhanced programme funding and supplementary learning support have emphasised the need to work across the sector and to develop local responsiveness within nationally consistent guidance. The ongoing work around Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour also has this emphasis.
- *The New Zealand Disability Strategy* also gives direction to the work we do and the requirements to be met. The vision of the disability strategy is a fully inclusive society. New Zealand will be inclusive when people with impairments can say they live in a society that highly values their lives and continually enhances their full participation. The central strategic objective for Special Education is to provide the best education for people with disabilities.

By engaging with local communities to share information about the provision of special education an important step in increasing awareness, equitable access to resources and the promotion of appropriate and effective inclusive educational settings has been taken.

Within the engagement process and local management of special education we have actively worked to provide better information and to invite input into decision-making and involvement in service development and delivery.

The New Zealand Disability Strategy aims to help remove barriers to participation faced by people with disabilities. Government departments are required to develop annual New Zealand Disability Strategy implementation work plans to describe the work they are doing to implement the fifteen objectives which make up the strategy.

The Local Service Profiling work is featured on the 2004-2005 implementation plan for the Ministry of Education as an important part of the Ministry's response to the New Zealand Disability Strategy. The engagement and reporting process responds to many of the objectives of the Strategy.

The fostering of leadership by people with disabilities is another objective being responded to by the Local Service Profiling process as people with disabilities themselves have been part of the planning how the engagement process will take place as well as being encouraged to be involved in decision-making in the longer term. Recognising people with disabilities as experts of their own experience, and encouraging debate on the special education which is a disability issue are both central to the first objective of the Strategy, which is to encourage and educate for a non-disabling society.

The Ministry of Education, Special Education is pursuing the objective of being a more aware and responsive public service. Material to be produced will improve the quality of information available including where to go for more information, special education services available and how to access them. Overall this increased collaboration, information, and shared future planning will contribute to the objective of enabling children and youth to lead full and active lives that are well supported by accessible, appropriate and welcoming services.

- As the Local Service Profiling has been implemented over 2004 the *Ministry of Education's Business Plan 2004-2005* has been published. It details the intervention options available to achieve the outcomes of effective teaching, family and community engagement and quality providers. This document states:

We need to build an education system where:

- all students expect to succeed and where we all take a shared responsibility to see that this occurs
- there is a focus on roles and relationships and strategies rather than blame and excuses
- there is a focus on planning and reporting and a sense of strategy at all levels
- we work in harmony with other agencies
- we have a strong sense of what the most powerful drivers for change are and what we can do to influence them.

## **What we did nationally**

### ***Deciding on an approach***

After the settlement between the Crown and the Daniels' plaintiffs in August 2003 Barbara Disley made the following statement: "*The settlement provides a positive platform for us to move forward and progress the work needed on developing local networks of learning support.*" This statement established the expectation that the settlement agreements would be addressed within the current directions and work of the Ministry of Education.

The Ministry of Education, Special Education National Management Team held discussions about the approach to be taken regarding the range of agreements within the settlement. They determined that the Local Service Profiling project was to be integrated into the other work of the Ministry so an ongoing engagement process could be integrated with the need to have feedback from the 2004 engagement by the end of 2004 as a first stage. This direction was confirmed with the Ministry of Education Strategic Management Group, Special Education National Reference Group and the Schools Consultative Committee in March 2004.

### ***Compiling the information we presented***

During February and March the Resourcing Division of the Ministry of Education worked with the Ministry of Education, Special Education group to make available special education resourcing and staffing information for each district – by cluster and school as appropriate. This material was used for local engagement meetings to give a context to the discussion about special education resources and services.

A national team of Ministry of Education, Special Education managers and staff worked over April and May to develop draft resource and presentation material and, linking with the National Management Team and local managers and staff, progressively developed materials.

During the development of the national resource and presentation meetings the long term goals of the government and the Ministry of Education were balanced with the need to ensure the commitments of the Daniels settlement were met. Specifically the following:

*The Crown will conduct an exercise of gathering and analysing information (“the exercise”) in relation to special education resources at each school, cluster and Group Special Education (“GSE”) district level nationwide.*

*The purpose of this exercise will be:*

*To inform local and national decision-making so as to improve practices in schools for children with special educational needs;*

*To develop better ways of providing assistance to children with special education needs;*

*To improve co-ordination and co-operation amongst providers of special education assistance;*

*To enable the Crown to identify the range, nature and amount of special education resources available to both a national and local level;*

*To enhance development of regional and district data in relation to special education;*

*To inform decisions about interventions and resource allocation by schools and GSE;*

*To enhance policy developments in relation to special education;*



*To provide information at a local level that will enable future resourcing and service development decisions to be made so as to better match special educational needs;*

*The exercise will be conducted according to guidelines to be formulated by GSE but will include the following recommendations, namely that:*

*Each local process will include local parent representation;*

*Well-publicised open forums will be held to enable parents and teachers to have input into the exercise;*

*Comprehensive district reports will be produced including parent perspectives of the adequacy and appropriateness of local resourcing; identification of gaps between resourcing and the needs of students; any recommendations for any changes needed in funding mechanisms and any recommendations concerning the need to have or maintain special educational units in that locality; and*

*The crown will, through GSE, school clusters and schools, promote local meetings involving (as may be appropriate in each context) people with disabilities, parents, teachers, school boards, GSE staff, and other educational professionals.*

*The purpose of the local meetings will be to provide feedback for the development of special education policy and best practice, and to inform local and national decision-making concerning special education.*

*The local meetings will be an ongoing feature of special educational policy.*

### **The questions we asked**

For the engagement process for August to October 2004 we deliberately developed open-ended questions so that we would not be directing the comments of the community. We were hopeful that collecting information this way, and the use of a qualitative research tool to analyse the findings, would pick up real trends presented and not just those that we may have predicted.

We also determined that the focus of the engagement would be local meetings. This decision also reinforced the need to use a qualitative rather than a quantitative approach to information collection and analysis.

### **Developing a local focus**

District Managers attended a one-day seminar (12 May 2004) on Engaging Communities and this was followed up with the publication “*Guidelines for Engagements: Action Plan and Local Service Profiling*” which was developed with local input and comment from the Special Education National Reference Group (SENRG) members. This document became the national guidelines for districts to develop engagement plans for their local meetings.

Regional Managers worked with District Management Teams to develop appropriate plans and processes for local engagement.

### ***Communication with districts***

On 16 April 2004 the first of the packages of required actions and resource information was sent to District Managers. As material was developed nationally further packages were sent to districts on 30 June, 16 July and 12 August.

A Māori translation of the presentation was included in the material to districts on 12 August.

In July “*Let’s Talk*” (a four-page leaflet containing the four questions) was sent to districts to distribute to clients, schools, early childhood education centres and community groups with letters inviting them to local meetings. A website was also set up within the Ministry of Education’s website ([www.minedu.govt.nz](http://www.minedu.govt.nz)) to give information about the meetings and invite feedback from individuals and groups.

Weekly updates were sent to districts starting with material to support the presentations and moving into information collection as the months went by. Information about related issues that might have influence on the engagement process was also included eg release of the Education Review Office report on Resource Teachers Learning and Behaviour (RTLBs), and the Quality Public Education Coalition’s (QPEC) survey, and later its report.

### ***Communicating with national groups***

Although the major focus of the engagement process for August to October was on local meetings, national stakeholder groups were identified. Each group received a copy of “*Let’s Talk*” and a letter encouraging local participation in meetings and asking if they wanted their national group to have the presentation. Many agencies and groups have spread the information via their own newsletters and websites.

### ***National input***

Presentations were made to the following national groups to give them information about the engagement process:

- New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI) Te Riu Roa
- School Consultation Committee
- Early Childhood Advisory Group
- Autism New Zealand
- Quality Public Education Coalition (QPEC)
- IHC Advocacy service

- NZ School Trustees Association
- Feedback was received from the following national groups:
- New Zealand Educational Institute Te Riu Roa, Primary Classroom Teachers' Advisory Group
- Special School Principals' Executive
- A group representing the school sector made up of representatives of the Secondary Principal association of NZ (SPANZ), NZ Principals Federation (NZPF), NZ School Trustees Association (NZSTA), NZ Post Primary Teachers' Association (PPTA), NZ Special School Principals' Association, NZ Educational Institute Te Riu Roa (NZEI), Quality Public Education Coalition (QPEC), NZ Intermediate and Middle Schools Association (16.08.04)
- Special Education Facilitators
- Child Cancer Foundation
- Autism New Zealand
- A joint group representing organisations in the Education of the Blind sector
- The New Zealand Resource Teachers Learning and Behaviour Association.

Material presented by Salisbury School and Kelston Deaf Education Centre was also included in the national information.

Feedback from these national groups was collated and their views fed into the engagement process.

Throughout the whole process a weekly update was sent to key Ministry staff. In addition, the National Management Team received a more in-depth monthly update. The Associate Minister of Education had Briefing Papers in mid June, mid July and late December.

### ***Report writing***

A risk analysis of the project to date was conducted in August. This identified a number of risks and recommended that a project coordinator be employed to ensure that the information gathering to report-writing phase was completed by the 31 December deadline (as stipulated by the Daniels Settlement). A project coordinator was employed on contract from that time.

Each Ministry of Education, Special Education district nominated a report writer to coordinate the writing of their district report.

An overall framework for district reports was developed at national office, keeping the main points of the Daniels Settlement in mind. National reference groups were consulted about this framework and changes were made after their comments had been received. The framework identified which sections of the reports would be written nationally and which at the district level.

This framework also contained guidelines for the district report writers. The aim was to provide enough guidelines to ensure all reports contained the necessary information but left enough freedom for local writers to respond to local issues. The report writers were consulted about the guidelines and they were tested by a small group of report writers before being confirmed. A national report template was developed so that all reports had the same design and contained the same sort of information.

### ***Report information and data***

The data from local meetings was initially coded by eight regional analysts. Wherever possible they coded responses as coming from parents, educators or from another source. There were some meetings where it was not possible to identify who had made a particular response. The analysts also used their knowledge of the data to identify the major themes emerging from the local meetings.

In early November a training day for report writers was held. During that day the analysts met with the writers to explain the data they had coded and to plan how to transfer the information to the report writers. Analysts and report writers kept in close contact during the report writing phase.

Each district conducted a review of the process used to organise and hold meetings and this review was part of the final reports. Meetings conveners and those involved in organising the meetings contributed to this review. When the main issues arising from the meetings had been identified, districts carried an internal consultation to see what immediate changes, within current policies and resources, could be made. They also developed a process to develop longer term responses to the issues raised. What each district did is explained in their district report.

### ***After the reports were written***

Sections of the reports were completed between mid November and mid December. Analysts checked Section 5 of the reports containing the results of the local meetings. They confirmed that the final report was consistent with the data. The draft reports were also reviewed by local people, who had been involved in organising the “Let’s Talk” meetings, key district staff and Regional Managers.

Two national groups (SENRG and a group representing the school sector) were asked to review the summarised district responses and to make comments about how the feedback matched with what they were aware of in their sectors. The groups were also asked to give their first impressions on any changes they saw might meet the community feedback.

All district reports and the advisory group feedback went to a National Management Team meeting in late December. The meeting signed off the unedited versions of the reports.

All district reports and the national report were edited during early January to ensure a consistency of style and that the summary reports were easy to read for a wide readership.

The final edited reports were all formally signed off for printing in late January.

### ***Distribution of the reports***

Each district posted their Summary Report and the National Summary Report to everyone on their mailing list. The National Summary Report was also sent to everyone on the Ministry of Education national office mailing list.

A copy of all full reports are available from districts (the full National Report is available from national office). These will be sent to those people who request them. Each full district report (and the National Report) will also be available on the Ministry of Education's website: [www.minedu.govt.nz/goto/LetsTalk](http://www.minedu.govt.nz/goto/LetsTalk).

## **Overview of the data analysis methodology**

### ***An introduction to qualitative research***

Within the overall enterprise of educational research, there are many specific strategies. Broadly speaking, these can be broken into two often overlapping and interacting domains – namely – quantitative research and qualitative inquiry.

In quantitative research, as the label implies, the emphasis is predominantly on counting, on generating accurate numerical expressions and measuring whatever is being measured or observed, eg weight, height, reading abilities, or the frequency of a behaviour occurring. Research of this nature typically, therefore, involves hard data and the use of statistical procedures.

Qualitative research, however, emphasises interpretation. It focuses on interpreting what people say or write. It also construes how people act and seeks to arrive at an understanding of issues which people have indicated as important. The investigator, therefore, assembles relevant documents, interview transcriptions, observations and field notes and interprets these in order to make sense of what is going on. Research of this nature typically involves the interpretation of words and these are sometimes thought of as being soft (messy) data. In qualitative research the development of a detailed validated story is emphasised which means that the frequency with which behaviours are noted is not a prime concern as is often the case for quantitative researchers. However, most qualitative researchers also employ statistics when and if it is necessary to do so (for this project, for instance, the number of meetings and participants were counted).

Overall, the work that was completed for this study was qualitative in nature, focusing on identifying the issues that participants thought were important.

### ***Selecting the software to analyse the responses***

The series of district meetings and subsequent written responses produced a large number of comments made by the more than 5000 participants and the over 1,100 additional written submissions. This was a large amount of data. Ministry of Education, Special Education decided that a specialist software analysis tool was necessary to support the analysis of this data within the timelines required and purchased copies of QSR NVivo software. NVivo is a qualitative research analysis software package that enables management and analysis of qualitative data. Using this tool an analyst can select segments of data and organise them into categories, thus allowing all data assigned to that category to be retrieved. This process is referred to as “coding”. The original text stays intact during coding and analysis

This software, together with a supplementary application, QSR Merge, was selected because it enabled Ministry of Education, Special Education to bring together the large amounts of data from across all of the districts that were involved. It enabled a team of data analysts to manage and rapidly analyse information while working independently – or quasi-independently – and allowed them to subsequently fuse together findings within and across districts. In other words, the software enabled the analysts to store and retrieve data very quickly and then helped them code that data in a systematic manner for interpretation and reporting.

Although the Ministry of Education, Special Education purchased the NVivo software primarily to support the data analysis of this particular engagement process, NVivo had the advantage of already being used within the Ministry of Education. NVivo will also provide Ministry of Education, Special Education group with a useful tool for future work which may include ongoing internal projects and possible future consultations with stakeholder groups.

### ***Training to use NVivo***

To ensure they were able to use the software effectively, eight analysts (two from each Ministry of Education, Special Education region attended a two-day training course<sup>3</sup> which was followed by a one day meeting focusing on how to develop a valid framework and a robust approach to managing and analysing the engagement data.

### ***Transcribing data***

An MS Word template was sent to all districts to be used to enter all responses received. The template was based on the four questions posed in the “Let’s Talk” feedback sheets. As far as possible, information was entered under each question and with the type of respondent to whom the information could be attributed, identified, ie parent, educator, student, other.

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<sup>3</sup> Dr Jens J. Hansen and Lyn Lavery provided assistance here and Dr Hansen advised Ministry of education analysts about aspects of their data analysis strategies.

## **Coding**

After each meeting district offices transcribed the meeting data onto the word template and sent it to the analysts. The documents from each district were stored and analysed separately.

The analysts then imported the transcribed Word documents into NVivo. This enabled them to make use of the automatic section coding capability of NVivo so that, for example, all parent responses to the question “*What are your aspirations for your child?*” could be assembled for subsequent retrieval.

At the training meeting the analysts developed a list of possible category headings which were based on their initial reading of the data. Headings developed at this stage included topics that later emerged as key themes “*transitions*”, and “*communication*” and some that were less often commented on eg “*Consistency*”, “*Quality of services*” and “*Learning*”.

As comments from meetings and from written submissions were received, the analysts coded them under the agreed categories. The two analysts in each region worked together in order to check that they were coding the data reliably under the same headings. After two weeks each region forwarded two examples of their coding to a Ministry of Education Senior Business Systems Analyst, who checked that all regions were being consistent in their coding. Emerging matters were discussed during a series of regular conference calls.

These calls discussed progress and agreed on any changes required in theme headings. They assisted with resolving a number of technical problems as well as addressing issues about how to code individual responses. Chiefly, they enabled the coders to ensure that all meeting responses were coded consistently so that comparisons within and between districts could be made at a later date.

Comments were often coded in several ways. For example, a comment about parents contributing to the cost of a teacher aide would be coded under the themes of funding, parents and staffing so that when the analysis was completed, that comment could surface as a finding in a blend of ways. Comments affecting funding policy were coded both under “*policy*” and also under the category dealing with “*funding*”.

## **Analysis of the data**

The process of coding enabled sections of data relating to identified themes to be rapidly gathered together. Analysts generally found that the best way to identify the major themes was to print off a hard copy of all responses and look at the big picture. They then underlined key words and looked for commonalities. This enabled them to develop an overview of what was emerging. By using this process analysts were able to develop a list of the major themes that affected each district but more importantly, they were able to interpret the data with which they had worked to assign meaning to it.

Once the data had been grouped in broad themes, the analysts used the search tool to assist in gathering of clusters of more specific themes. This involved carrying out searches, printing the results, examining the text and making notes.

For example, a number of themes could have been cross-tabulated or linked to parent responses to each question. By examining all of the comments that parents had made relating to a theme and/or to a relevant question eg “What is working well?” all of the responses made by parents could be viewed for generating commentary in the form of a report.

### ***Communication between report writers and data analysts***

A person from each district was selected to be responsible for facilitating the writing of the reports. Both report writers and analysts attended a training workshop on November 5, which provided an opportunity to discuss assigned themes with the designated report writers. This enabled multiple viewpoints to be brought to the process which added strength.

Each region developed further its own process for ensuring that report writers fully understood the data. In some regions the analysts wrote a first draft of the Section “What you Said” as they had the best understanding of the data. In others, the data were handed over before a first draft had been written. In all cases, close collaboration between analysts and reports writers during the report writing ensured that an accurate and comprehensive report was produced. For this reason, analysts and report writers checked each others’ work to verify that the final report reflected the comments from the meetings.

### **What was done locally – a national summary**

The Local Services Profiling process involved at least 5,387 people who attended 395 different meetings in 52 different towns and cities. As not all people registered their attendance the actual figure is higher than the statistics show.

The sixteen district reports show the planning and effort went into making sure that the local engagement process worked well and that as many people as possible attended.

All Districts sent out information about the proposed meetings to a wide range of interested people and groups. Over 14,000 invitations were sent in the 7 districts that reported a definite number of invitations. In every case, the invitations were sent to parents of children and young people receiving a service from Ministry of Education, Special Education and to local schools who were asked to pass the information on to teachers and parents. Some also circulated sector groups and interested community organisations. Most districts also advertised meetings in newspapers. One used radio and in one, the district manager appeared on local TV. Several reported that individual staff followed up the invitations with direct contact.

All districts decided to organise meetings that were local, so that people did not have to travel far to attend. They also planned a range of meetings targeted at different groups. Some districts consulted with reference groups or parents in deciding how many meetings there should be and their location. Canterbury held the most meetings (46) and also had the greatest attendances (over 1100). Most districts offered a choice of meeting times in at least the larger cities, although it appears that the evenings were the most common times.



Most meetings were public and most people who attended were either parents or educators. All districts held some special targeted meetings eg for Māori, or parents, or meetings that focused on specific special education needs eg autism, vision impaired or for special schools. Although some students attended some public meetings it does not appear there was a high involvement of students. No district recorded the ethnicity of participants so it is not possible to determine this. Some districts with high Māori populations (eg Gisborne) reported high participation by Māori parents, but in other regions the participation of Māori was not high.

There was a lot of variety in attendance. Three districts reported a situation where no one showed up. The largest attendance was a meeting of 70 in Waikato.

All meetings were facilitated. Central South region used the same facilitator for all districts in their region. In other districts the district manager or a senior staff member was the facilitator. A few districts used parents.

The most common meeting procedure followed that suggested by the national approach. An initial presentation gave an overview of special education resources in the local area. The presentation was generally followed by discussion groups. People then wrote their own comments

In addition over 1481 additional written submissions were received. These written submissions were all sent to the coders and analysed in the same way as responses received directly at the meetings.

District Reports detail what was done locally and are available on [www.minedu.govt.nz/goto/LetsTalk](http://www.minedu.govt.nz/goto/LetsTalk)



## What you said

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This section of the report reflects the comments from the District engagement exercise undertaken by the Ministry of Education, Special Education during August to October 2004. The exercise asked parents, educators, students and others interested in special education the following questions:

*What are your aspirations for your child / student with special education needs – the hopes and dreams*

*What's working well – the good aspects of the existing system*

*What's not working - the not-so good aspects of the existing system*

*What are your priorities for change – suggestions for changing the existing system.*

Each district has compiled the comments of local parents and educators from these questions into individual reports.

The following section of this report pulls together a national picture of these discussions.

The information is presented in four parts, based on the four questions, and outlines the parents' views followed by the educators' views where this distinction was made in the District Reports.

In the priorities for change section parent and educators views are combined in making suggestions for changes to the special education system.

While kept to a minimum, the following abbreviations appear in this section:

ORRS	Ongoing and Reviewable Resourcing Schemes
RTLBs	Resource Teacher: Learning and Behaviour
SEG	Special Education Grant

### Part One: Aspirations

Part One outlines the aspirations parents and educators have for children with special education needs.

#### Parents

Parents of children with special education needs want the same things for their children as all parents.

## ***Wellbeing***

Parents want their children to reach their potential; to develop as whole people – emotionally, spiritually and physically. They want their children to have friends and to feel valued for what they bring to their schools, their neighbourhoods and communities.

In describing the high quality of life they want their children to experience, parents want them to:

- be happy
- have a sense of belonging, of being accepted, being valued
- have choices and independence
- have self-esteem, self-confidence and respect
- have dignity and experience success.

## ***Participation***

Parents want their children to feel included, not marginalised or set apart. They want their children to attend schools that openly welcome them, and where they feel safe and secure, free of the fear of bullying. They want their children to be happy in their education environment. They want them to be exposed to the broadest range of experiences-to go on trips, to take part in activities. They want them to experience the joy of learning.

## ***Learning***

Parents want a quality learning experience for their children. They want them to be able to learn at their own speed, with access to the tools and teaching styles that help them learn. They want their education to be flexible, to be responsive to their needs, whether those needs are physical, emotional, social, mental or cultural. They want their children to develop:

- literacy skills
- social skills
- computer skills
- communication skills
- decision making skills
- job skills
- life skills.

Parents want their children to develop their creative abilities, to tap their strengths in music, dance and other areas.

### ***Learning support***

Parents want the people their children come into contact with to be well trained. They want pre-service teacher training (eg, diplomas and degree courses in education) to have a greater emphasis on special education. Parents want teachers who have empathy for their children who have the skills to accurately assess needs and to adapt the curriculum.

Parents too want more training for themselves in how they can best support their children.

### ***Education system***

Parents want more early childhood education placements and early intervention. They want smaller class sizes and they want their children to move easily from one level of education to the next, from one school to another, from one classroom to another.

Parents want a system with teachers who really care about them and their children. They want good relationships with schools. They want schools with ‘can-do’ attitudes, who’re prepared to find ways to overcome the barriers. They want schools who’ll talk to them. Parents want specialist assistance and they want therapists to think ‘outside the box’ when developing solutions.

### ***Options***

Parents want to be able to choose the best learning environment for their children, whether it be regular schools, special schools, special units or home-schooling. They want information about these options to help them determine which are best for their children’s needs. They also want help with transport costs so that their children are able to attend the school that best meets their children’s needs.

### ***Beyond school***

Parents want their children to be able to take their place in society when they are adults – to live independently in a community that accepts them. They want them to have the skills and supports that make securing a real job an option. They want them to be able to pursue further study and training and to get the help they need to succeed as adults. Parents want their children to have friends, to enjoy recreation activities, to form relationships and marry.

### ***Parents’ voice***

Parents want to play an active part in deciding what happens to their children; they want their voice to be listened to. They want their knowledge recognised and used in the planning of their children’s education.

## ***Funding***

Parents want enough funding to provide for the needs of all students; to make sure students with special needs get the help they need. They want to know more about what help is available, for whom, and they want a simple application process to seek that help.

Parents want more groups of children recognised-from learning disabled to gifted. They want schools to be accountable for their use of special education funding. They want to know there is a commitment to their children, so the uncertainty of funding year to year is removed.

## ***Māori parents***

As well as the above for parents who are Māori, the holistic development of their tamariki is important. They want their children's development to encompass:

- kotahitanga (unity)
- hinengaro (mind)
- wairua (spirit)
- whānau (family)
- te kaha o te tikanga (strength of culture).

They want their children to be accepted for who they are when they enter the classroom. They want their children to be proud of their Māori heritage and they want their culture and those of others to be respected. They want more teachers who can work with Māori and want more special education staff to speak Māori.

## ***Pasifika parents***

In addition to the above Pasifika parents want their voices and their children's voices to be heard. They want to form close links with educators and to gain greater support for the culture and language of their children.

## ***Refugee and migrant parents***

Parent who are new to New Zealand want educators to know more about their children's special education needs when they enter New Zealand schools. They want to see all agencies working together to provide greater support for their children.

### ***What students say***

Although students were not a focus group for the engagement some students took part in the discussion in several districts and shared some of their aspirations. They wanted:

- to take part, to be included and not just known as disabled
- to make friends, feel valued, feel safe and be happy
- to have more one-on-one time with teachers to help them learn
- to have smaller and quieter classes
- to gain experiences, to learn all they needed to so they are prepared for the outside world
- to go on to further training
- to gain employment.

### **Educators**

Educators have similar aspirations to parents for students with special education needs and had additional comments within the broad aspiration.

#### ***Wellbeing***

Educators wanted a strong focus on the student's wellbeing, for them to become independent and to feel valued, to have friends, be happy and free from bullying.

#### ***Learning***

Educators also want students to have all the services they need. They support more early intervention services and additional services to support behaviour. Educators want more priority given to identifying students with special education needs.

#### ***Learning support***

Educators want classroom support for teachers of children with special education needs including more teacher aides. They want wider specialist support and for that support to be available earlier. Educators want more training in special education and in how to include students with special education needs. They want recognition of the growing problem of violence and behaviour problems. They want training for parents and teacher aides, and for RLTB so they can better train teachers.

### ***Options***

Educators want options to be available. They want support and learning that takes into account students' cultures. They want support for students in rural areas, students on correspondence and students over 21 years.

### ***Transitions***

Educators want work experience and transition programmes for students moving out of school.

### ***Parents' voice***

Educators want parents and families to be supported in managing their children's learning needs and behaviours.

### ***Funding***

Educators aspire for sufficient funding to provide enough teachers and teachers aides to meet the individual needs of all students. Particularly mentioned were students with moderate special education needs and children with special education needs in early childhood education. A special education needs coordinator in every school was an ideal proposed many times.

Educators want funding based on needs, with more funding going to schools that willingly open their doors, and for special education funding to be more transparent and how that funding is used to be monitored.

### ***Coordination***

Educators want a coordinated approach to meet student's needs. They want to see schools and support agencies working together to help students achieve their potential. They want a clearer role for RTLB and how they work with the Ministry of Education, Special Education team in building a seamless path of learning for students.

Educators want case management, problem-solving opportunities and help from support services.



## **Part Two: What's working well**

Part two outlines the comments of parents and educators on the parts of the special education system that they feel are working well.

### **Parents**

#### ***Generally***

Generally, parents commented on the aspects that were working well for them and their children personally. The wide range of comments received suggests that just about every part of special education provision is working well, at least somewhere in the country.

While parts that are working well were often nominated by several districts, what is working well for some, is not working well for others.

Parents appreciate the services supporting their children. Many say they are beginning to see the positive results of the services.

*“ ...some recent initiatives by various parts of the special education service are beginning to reap some rewards.”*

#### ***Staffing and services***

Parents say Ministry of Education, Special Education team members are pleasant and professional and are now better at listening. They say that involvement of Ministry of Education, Special Education results in a more positive response from schools and improves the support their children receive.

Specialist staff, therapists and resource teachers are seen to be working well. The high quality of these staff was noted.

Parents noted motivated teachers and teachers who were well-trained in special education were those who were most effective. Parents also highlighted teachers who had the right attitude, such as a willingness to make things work.

For a number of districts the RLTB positions were a positive feature of special education services. The range of services provided and the fact that RLTB are cluster-based were the reasons some noted for them as working well.

Parents in a number of districts say the teacher aides supporting their children are great. A couple of districts noted the special education needs coordinator role in schools is working well.

Some parents also highlighted the work of social workers in schools, the use of parent advisors, supportive principals and the increasing number of Pasifika staff.

Parents also noted the work of other allied agencies as being positive.

## **Options**

Parents appreciate having a choice of services. For some this includes satisfaction with additional services that they themselves pay for, such as extra teacher aide hours, and private tuition and support.

## **Regular schools**

Parents supporting the regular schooling option like it because:

- children were seen to be doing well
- it is a good option for students with moderate special education needs
- they can tap into enrichment programmes and alternative teaching methods
- they can take their child out for extra tuition or specialist help
- the schools provide a balance between academic and social skills
- children can be included in a wide range of activities.

Some parents think that there is a high expectation that their children will attend a regular school. Many find schools are working hard to make it work for their children. They suggest a number of inclusion success factors:

- a supportive principal
- a welcoming attitude
- an attitude of *“we’ll try and make it work”*.

## **Special schools**

Parents sending their children to special schools feel they work well because:

- their children have access to therapy and specialist teachers who have more knowledge
- the teachers are there because they want to teach children with special education needs; they are passionate about, and champion, the children in their care
- special schools are less judgemental and safer
- they can meet other parents of children with special education needs
- there’s less stress; *“It’s the better choice for children who can’t cope in the mainstream environment.”*

- the learning programme is more suitable and the use of an adapted curriculum does not compete with the learning needs of mainstream students.

### **Special units**

Special units are seen as working well and as a valuable option for a number of parents.

Parents sending their children to schools with special units feel these services work well because they offer what they describe as the “*best of both worlds*”. They say their children have the benefit of small classes and teachers with specialist skills, and they also get to mix with the rest of the school.

### **Home-schooling**

Not a commonly commented on option. One parent said that they felt home-schooling was necessary “*until the child gained the confidence and the joy of learning; until he started reaching towards the outside world again*”.

### **Access**

Parents report their access to special education services has improved over recent years. This includes access to specialists and school-based services. Having a range of provision for ORRS students was seen as positive. Some parents are pleased by the variety of ways support was provided, eg, home visits, teacher aides, specialist support etc.

### **Learning**

Individual Education Programmes (IEP) are seen as vital especially the way they are completed (by a group approach).

### **Transport**

Parents in a number of districts report transport support is working well for them.

### **Transition**

Some parents believe that some parts of the system are working well to support transitions. Early intervention teachers are making a difference in the step from early childhood education to school. The Champion Centre transition programme was an example given of a successful programme. Having parents involved in the process is seen as a success factor.

### ***Parent voice***

The feedback suggests that parents' views about what's working well is closely related to the quality of relationships they have with people within the special education sector. The setting up of a parents' reference group was seen as a positive step.

### ***Coordination***

A number of districts report that the various parties involved in delivering services to their children with special education needs are working well together or improving. This included between agencies, between agencies and home, between agencies and school, and between school and home. Parents feel that positive relationships are the starting point for quality service.

### ***Information and communication***

In a number of districts parents feel that communication is good or is improving between schools and families and similarly, between the Ministry of Education, Special Education team and families. The 0800 number is appreciated.

### ***Funding***

Parents recognise some schools are working hard to provide great teaching within the funding available.

Parents believe ORRS is working well and certainly that it has improved on the previous system.

Making funding available to clusters of schools is seen as a successful way to distribute funds and parents are seeing more access to services.

### ***What students say***

Students included in the discussion in one district added some things they think are working well for them in the classroom. They like:

- buddy support
- cooperative learning
- learning based on having fun.

## **Educators**

### ***Generally***

Educators believe the special education services they receive are helpful in their work.

### ***Staffing and services***

Educators are generally positive about the work of the Ministry of Education, Special Education team with a strong response from areas where they say time has been taken to build strong relationships. The range and quality of the services offered by the team are well regarded by educators. The programmes for eliminating violence and behaviour interventions were highlighted by some districts as examples of positive assistance.

Early Intervention services are seen to be working well. Some educators also think support for children with moderate special education needs is working well.

Educators generally view positively the Ministry of Education, Special Education team roles of District Manager, Service Managers and team leaders. Kura kaupapa Māori are pleased with the Pouārahi-ā-Takiawā role. The role of liaison workers for schools and early childhood education centres is viewed as positive by some districts.

The employment of specialist resource teachers and therapists is viewed as of benefit.

RLTB are widely held in good regard. Educators appreciate their availability and responsiveness, their positive and collaborative approach and the professional development provided.

Educators are positive about the role of teacher aides and similarly support the 0.1 and 0.2 additional staffing for ORRS.

Educators value access to The Correspondence School.

### ***Options***

Educators believe it's important for parents to be able to choose the education option best suited to them and their children. They recognise though, the importance of teachers' attitudes in making things work.

### ***Early childhood centres***

Educators commented on the welcoming and inclusive nature of early childhood centres and, generally, believe these are working well.

### ***Regular schools***

Educators believe there are benefits to be gained from regular school placement, where everyone is committed. They say special education students gain great role models, while other students get to mix with children with differing needs. Educators say inclusion practices are now more embedded and that mainstream students today have better attitudes towards students with special education needs.

They recognise that schools are working hard to meet individual student needs and rural schools particularly are seen to be successful. Addressing needs through clustering schools is thought to be working well

### ***Special schools***

Educators see special schools as an important option available for parents. They see them as providing a community for both educators and students; an environment where teachers can pool their knowledge and support and where student can build real friendships. They see that special schools provide greater access to therapists and reduce the sense of being marginalised that students in special units or regular schools can experience.

### ***Learning***

Educators are positive about the amount of learning and adaptation of the curriculum that is being done to support students with special education needs. They are also very positive about Individual Education Programmes.

### ***Transition***

Educators in some districts believe transition services are working well. Some suggest the transition between schools is most positive when managed by the Ministry of Education, Special Education team.

### ***Parent voice***

Educators recognise the place of parents as part of the special education team. They say parents are more aware of their rights, advocate more on their children's behalf and have a key role to play in making decisions about the future of their children.

### ***Coordination***

Educators from a number of districts believe the cooperation between the different parties is going well. This includes:

- the special education team, teachers and parents working together

- the connections between the Ministry of Education, Special Education team, early childhood management groups and the Kindergarten Association; and
- the work between the Ministry of Education, Special Education team and RLTB.

Educators see the Individual Education Programmes helping to focus all agencies on a coordinated effort for student development.

### ***Information and communication***

Educators in some districts say communication between the special education team, schools and parents is working well. They themselves value regular networking meetings. The 0800 number is also appreciated by educators.

### ***Funding***

Educators in many districts believe that ORRS funding is working well, some commenting that they think the moderation process for the allocation of teacher aides is fair. Other funding programmes were mentioned in various districts, as was the provision of technology aids such as laptops, hearing aids etc. A number of educators expressed support for the fundholder concept and the direct funding of schools. Funding flexibility is most appreciated.

## **Part Three: What's not working so well**

In Part Three, the focus of the discussion for parents and educators was centred on the parts of the special education system that people feel are not working so well.

### **Parents**

#### ***Staffing and services***

Some parents say special education is too fragmented-there are different services covering the same areas and fulfilling similar roles. They say that while specialists assess their children they're unable to deliver the programmes. They are unsure of the overlap between health and education responsibilities and they're concerned with inconsistencies and lack of cooperation between service providers. They'd like the system to be more accountable.

Many parents believe principals, teachers, resource teachers, specialists and teacher aides don't get the right training both pre- and in-service.

Some parents find the Individual Education Programme process too rushed and have experienced difficulties in making the process work for them.

### ***Access to special education services***

Parents in a number of districts say they have difficulty getting access to therapists and resource teachers. They say they've had to wait too long for assessments and also reported that getting referrals to special education in the first place was difficult. Parents say there are too few Māori specialists and resource teachers who are able to work with kura kaupapa Māori.

Parents say certain groups of children with special education needs seem to miss out, eg, children in rural areas, children with a visual impairment, autistic children and children with moderate special education needs. Parents want more Early Intervention services and more help available locally to avoid travelling distances to services.

### ***Options***

Parents in some districts feel their options are limited. For some this happens at the early childhood education level. Some parents find some schools reluctant to enrol their children. They are concerned by the lack of a welcoming atmosphere in many schools and encounter negative attitudes from teachers and principals. Parents say some school environments are not inclusive and some schools lack the expertise in how to be inclusive.

### ***Transition***

For parents in a number of districts the lack of support for children moving from early childhood to primary level is of concern. Parents also noted they experience problems when moving from one area of the country to another. The transition from school was also of critical importance to many.

### ***Parent voice***

Generally parents feel theirs is a lonely position, where there is little support and their voice is not heard. They feel their input is lacking in decision and policy making, Individual Education Programme meetings, and in deciding how funding for their children is used.

Parents say that much of their effort has to go into “fighting” for resources and there is no independent body they can go to to get help or when things go wrong.

### ***Relationships***

Parents from some districts report tension between various parts of the system both within education and interagency.

### ***Information and communication***

Parents from a number of districts feel information on the services, options and resources available is lacking. The need to clearly explain ‘special education needs’ was noted.



## ***Funding***

Parents have a number of issues with funding.

Generally parents feel there is not enough funding to meet the growing need. They see the lack of funding adding workload stress for teachers and feel the level of funding their children receive depends on parents' ability to fight.

Parents think funding should be distributed according to need and say neither population nor decile-based funding work. Some parents see the current system as an all or nothing approach – if you don't meet the criteria you have no options. Still others question whether some groups of children are treated more favourably.

Some parents believe special schools receive more money. Some question whether funding is spread appropriately across the different education levels. Parents suggest there is not enough resourcing provided for specialist staff and teacher aides (and that aides are not paid enough).

Parents are concerned with what they see as a lack of accountability as to how schools use special education funding. Some parents believe money is sometimes not well spent.

Parents from a number of districts suggest there are too many funding pools. Some note that multiple application forms ask for the same information.

Parents also report that it can take a long time for funding to come through.

## ***Problems related to ORRS***

Many parents feel the application process is too complex. Some question the verification process and are concerned that decisions are made in Wellington rather than locally, where the child has been assessed. They don't find the process 'client friendly' and suggest that decisions are sometimes inconsistent. They note a clash between the strengths-based approach of Early Intervention and what they see as the focus on disabilities for ORRS. Parents suggest a balance is needed between the two approaches.

Parents grapple with the fear of funding being removed. Some feel that funding is reduced just when children are improving – as though there's a penalty for success.

Parents want to know who monitors ORRS, including teacher time and teacher aide time.

## **What students say**

Students included in the discussion in several districts raised a number of areas they think need improvement:

- they often feel left out and misunderstood at school
- they have difficulty socialising with other students and making friends

- they get teased
- teachers are often not able to help
- more disabled teachers are needed.

## **Educators**

### ***Staffing and services***

Some educators feel the systems for the delivery of services are piecemeal, and are not user-friendly in a busy school. Some suggest services would be more effectively managed by schools that could better target the support.

Some feel Ministry of Education, Special Education team members are too remote from schools and want them to be more accountable to their local stakeholders with local people in the sector having more input to decisions and planning.

Educators say teachers are under stress. They have difficulty in finding time to liaise with the various agencies and educators feel the special education needs coordinator role needs greater recognition.

Educators feel teaching staff need more training. They also note a lack of specific training at secondary level and for ORRS (0.1 and 0.2) teachers and teacher aides especially in adapting the curriculum and the classroom environment.

### ***Access to special education services***

Educators in a number of districts face difficulties in accessing Ministry of Education, Special Education and school or cluster-based services. Some find the administrative systems for accessing services too complex and that defining a high need problematic. Some report that rural areas miss out and that parents have to travel long distances to access what is available.

Educators say children and young people with moderate special education needs are missing out on resources.

### ***Options***

Educators acknowledge that not all schools have a welcoming school environment for children with special education needs. They recognise some teachers and principals lack the right attitude, something they say is not helped by the lack of sanctions for schools that refuse to enrol students with special education needs.

Educators say that while they support the concept of inclusion, they face difficulties in making it work. These difficulties include:

- the differing views on what the needs of a student are and the school's role in meeting them
- balancing the needs of all children in the classroom
- fear of becoming a 'magnet' and attracting a disproportionate number of children with special education needs
- the burden of the administrative requirements
- the additional stress on teachers in the classroom, especially with large class sizes and especially when there are severe behaviour difficulties
- the additional cost involved eg of running special units
- the difficulty of attracting people to 0.1 and 0.2 teaching positions

### ***Transition***

Along with more general problems, educators noted a lack of work experience options and options generally once students leave school.

### ***Transport***

Educators are concerned with the cost of transport assistance and the availability of transport in rural areas and for early childhood education services.

### ***Parent voice***

Educators in one district noted a need for a parents' advocacy programme.

### ***Coordination***

Educators say there needs to be greater coordination and better relationships within the education sector and between Health and Education on special education matters

### ***Information and communication***

Some educators believe schools need more information on the services, options and resources available.

## **Funding**

Generally, educators say there is not enough funding to meet the variety of identified needs. They offer this as a reason why some schools are not more welcoming of children with special education needs. Some educators do not support that funds are contestable, such as the enhanced programme funding.

Educators have difficulties with how the level of needs are defined. They suggest the complexity arises from having “*too many buckets*”.

Some educators feel the funding basis of SEG is faulty and some believe there needs to be greater accountability for schools’ use of SEG funding.

## **ORRS**

Educators say they find the application process too complicated, the criteria too narrow and the level of funding not enough so schools have to use other funding-often SEG- to top it up

The uncertainty of funding year to year for teacher aide time is an issue for schools.

## **Part Four: What needs to change**

Part four sets out the combined comments of parents and educators on the parts of the special education system that people would like to change. This includes some specific ideas suggested in districts.

### **Improving funding/resourcing and services**

Every district commented on what the participants saw as the inadequate level of funding/resourcing or levels of service. The comments related to all parts of the system. Some gave examples of areas where funding/resourcing and services are working well to support students. In many cases these examples were tagged as working well “*when you can access them*”.

*“There should be funding for all children to experience success.”*

Parents say high case-loads, long waiting lists, parents paying for teacher aides, therapy, private assessments and services, children “*not being able*” to be at school for the full day and having resourcing reduced when students show improvement but before the improvement is sustainable are examples of inadequate funding. Parents feel “*embattled*” in trying to get the resources they feel their child needs.

### **Ideas for change**

These ideas for change are suggested as ways to improve existing features of the system, in addition to the call for more funding.

- establish a special education needs coordinator position in all schools
- pool 0.1 and 0.2 teacher resources
- establish special units
- distribute funding to schools and/or clusters
- reduce the number of ‘buckets’ of funding
- remove the competition between providers and for resources
- establish one central education/health/community group body
- coordinate the input from all involved agencies
- reduce the administrative burden of application/verification processes and the control of funding
- strengthen the accountability to local stakeholders
- have resources monitored externally.

## **Improving transition**

Both parents and educators expressed concern about the difficulties children with special education needs face in making the transition to new learning environments and services. It is a common issue for all the districts.

Problems are experienced at all stages of a child’s development, when they move from early childhood to school, primary school to secondary school, between schools, between classrooms within the same school, one special education service to another, from one part of New Zealand to another and from secondary school to the outside world.

The education system needs to be made more seamless for children with special education needs. This includes improving planning to make sure supports are available as the child moves through the system and encouraging parents to think ahead for adulthood.

### ***Ideas for change***

- develop consistent guidelines and planning procedures on handling transitions.
- make sure that parents, educators and the young person know what to expect from each transition-a no surprises approach.
- provide increased support for students during the transition process.

- help children get to know their prospective teacher and teacher aide by them visiting the early childhood education centre before transition.
- reduce the number of changes in personnel at each transition.
- have a transition worker for each school.
- improve cooperation between the different agencies involved.
- improve access to post secondary school education.

## **Improving staffing**

Discussion mainly focused around providing more training for people working in special education, addressing shortages and attracting and retaining specialist and support staff.

The training of all people working with students with special education needs was regarded as a priority by all groups taking part in this discussion. Parents and educators alike believe all people who deliver or administer special education would benefit from more training. They think this training should be a requirement-not an option-at least at during pre-service training. In one district this desire for additional training was balanced by a warning against falling into the trap of thinking *“fix up the teachers and all will be well”*.

The focus of training would be for the development of skills around adapting the curriculum, ways of teaching a wide range of learners, how to access and use support services and also about accepting and valuing difference.

As well as training the professionals involved it was noted that including boards of trustees and parents themselves is important.

The recruiting and retaining of skilled special education staff was a priority in most districts. The shortage of speech-language therapists is the most commonly mentioned. Being able to attract and retain teacher aides and support workers in early childhood education was a priority for educators.

## **Improving early intervention**

While for some areas Early Intervention services are working successfully, increasing investment in Early Intervention programmes was seen as a priority for many of the participants. The benefits of Early Intervention was seen as reduction in the need for funding in later years and a means of ensuring children have the ongoing support they need.

## **Improving co-operation**

The majority of the districts raised concerns over the level of co-operation between agencies working with children with special education needs. People described this issue in various ways, referring to it as fragmentation, lack of coordination or collaboration, access difficulties, administrative complexity and bureaucracy. Effective co-operation would stop students falling through the cracks and make transitions smoother for students.

### ***Ideas for change***

- create forums for sharing of information, reporting on innovations and good practice
- develop more ways of sharing resources amongst schools, eg, having a cluster of schools employing some specialists
- establish a special education association of teachers and others involved
- improve the sharing of information and skills between special schools and regular schools.
- improve collaboration between the Ministry of Education, Special Education team and RTLB.
- adopt a multi-agency case management model with a case coordinator and a long term focus
- provide a ‘one-stop-shop’ or single point of contact
- house all the similar agencies in one building
- have a one-stop Early Intervention centre
- establish processes (eg, MAPS, Paths) that could ‘empower’ teams and keep the channels open between parents, educators and communities
- have one ‘key worker’ who can coordinate the family, school, and specialist help.

## **Improving information and communication**

Most districts felt the need for improved information and communication.

Parents say they need enough information to make better decisions for their children. They say they need more information about how the whole special education system works, the various programmes and services, what support is available so they can judge whether it’s worth applying, clear user-friendly guidelines on application processes, complaints procedures, and the contact people for their children.

Schools need more information about the resources available, back-up support training opportunities.

Many parents want to improve communication between themselves and other parts of the service. The need to improve communication between all those involved in special education was regularly mentioned during discussions.

Information supplied to parents needs to be accurate and supplied at the time it is needed.

### ***Ideas for change***

Information needs to be provided in a variety of ways:

- in a written form that is clear and understandable
- in local forums where people can ask questions and get answers
- through a national publication that includes all the different programmes and how they fit together
- a helpdesk for problems
- an 0800 help line for both parents and educators
- a knowledge database that parents can access
- by establishing “*specialist parents groups*”.

### **Improving relationships**

There is widespread desire for there to be good or improved relationships between all the groups involved in special education. Some districts have relationships that are working well. In other districts people – particularly parents - use the word ‘partnership’ to describe how they wish to see relationships develop.

Several districts want stronger parent-teacher partnerships. Some noted the need to ease the tension between the different groups which is seen to most often arise over funding and the control of resources. Parents want professionals to have productive relationships because that helps them and their children.

### **Improving parents’ voice**

Parents say they don’t feel their voice is being heard. They want to be more involved in the special education of their children. “...*to be recognised as a specialist on their child.*”



### ***Ideas for change***

- listen to parents more and work to better understand their views
- include parent views more in reaching decisions
- include parents as a key part of the team of people that decide about, and provide education for, their children
- establish a parents' reference group at the district level
- establish an impartial advocacy group to support parents
- provide parents with a process to make complaints when things go wrong
- provide parents with a way to 'appeal' if a school is not meeting students' needs. One district suggested a special education needs watchdog position to monitor educational issues which might impact on children with special education needs

### **Improving options**

Parents and educators alike support a range of learning settings being available to children with special education needs. They say as well as providing parents with choice, a range of special education options provides a system that can cater to a variety of needs.

Some parents and educators believe strongly in special schools and units. Other parents and educators argue passionately that going to the local school is the best option. Still others believe a mix best meets the needs of children. There is no agreement on what setting is the most effective but there seemed to be agreement that children should be welcomed and supported in whatever setting they are in.

### **Improving services for Māori**

Māori parents are particularly concerned that there be a focus on the total wellbeing of the child (Tapa Whā concept). Parents want quality te reo Māori, immersion options so that Māori students with special education needs have access to learning in their language. They want the partnership developed between school and whānau to continue when addressing special education needs. They also want other agencies to work with the Māori community in meaningful partnerships.

### ***Ideas for change***

- Involve more Māori in special education to meet the cultural needs of students.
- Have more Māori special education advisors.
- Develop more 'For Māori by Māori' services.

- Encourage whānau and respected elders to take a more active role in nurturing tamariki and rangatahi with special education needs
- Until this is in place, educate non-Māori staff on how to work in Māori settings.
- Establish a Māori special education network

## **Improving services for Pasifika**

Pasifika parents want to see more partnerships developed between schools and special education services and the Pasifika community. They also want more emphasis placed on special education in the Pasifika Education Plan. Pasifika parents want curriculum programmes translated into Pasifika languages so they could understand them and provide more help to their children.

### ***Ideas for change***

- Provide information to Pasifika families in Pasifika languages about resources so they know what they can access.
- Employ more Pasifika staff to cater for the diversity of Pasifika communities. This includes both special education staff and classroom teachers.
- Improve communication with families about the needs of Pasifika children.
- Train more staff in Pasifika languages.

## Where to from here

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### **Publish feedback and provide further opportunities for discussion**

Some of the feedback you have provided related specifically to Ministry of Education, Special Education service provision. We have plans in place to address some of the issues already and we will work with you to address others locally. Some feedback was for the wider education sector and we will feed this information to the relevant parts of the Ministry of Education and the sector. There was some feedback that needs to be considered as part of ongoing policy work and we will share your concerns and ideas with Ministers, the full Ministry of Education and related government departments.

Our first action nationally and locally is to give feedback on what you said and to provide a variety of opportunities for further exploration of the rich information that is now available. We will meet with you again in a range of situations to do more in-depth work on improving services. We are very conscious of the need to grow confidence and trust in our interactions within the sector if we are to create a system that everyone can be part of building and supporting.

Every district has made commitments to establish or extend reference or focus groups in their communities as part of the feedback process and to build local actions into their plans for the 2005-2006 year. Nationally we will continue to work with already established national reference groups and draw together information from reference or focus groups around the country to strengthen the national overview.

### **Incorporating feedback into national output planning for 2005-2006**

Output planning is the process used by the Ministry of Education to ensure each group has a work programme for the financial year. Over the early part of 2005 Ministry of Education, Special Education districts will work with stakeholders to process your feedback and confirm prioritised actions which will be incorporated into each of their district plans. Throughout the year work progress will be monitored and reported back to stakeholders.

### **The Action Plan for Ministry of Education, Special Education**

The local service profiling feedback will help us to develop a five year Action Plan This Action Plan will:

- be a common focus for Ministry of Education staff, families and stakeholders
- be an important building block to achieving government goals and outcomes
- enable specific focus on the learning needs of, aspirations and outcomes for learners with special education needs and how they can be best supported in the New Zealand education system

- be a way to achieve integration of planning and thinking across the Ministry of Education and the sector.

We will use the information you have provided already, work with national reference and sector groups over the coming months, and talk with you locally, to help us develop our priorities for the next five years.