

Review OF SPECIAL EDUCATION 2010

Submission form

You can use this form to provide your feedback on the *Review of Special Education: discussion document*.

You can get a copy of the discussion document from www.minedu.govt.nz or from the Ministry of Education.

Submissions close at 5pm on Friday 19 March 2010

Please send your submission to:

Post: Review of Special Education consultation
Ministry of Education
PO Box 1666
Wellington 6140

Instead of completing this form, you can make a submission online

Online: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ReviewOfSpecialEducation>

You can also send your submission as an email

Email: SE.review@minedu.govt.nz

For further information please contact the Ministry of Education

Phone: 04 463 8000 Fax: 04 463 8254

About you

If relevant, you may answer yes to more than one of the following questions. This information helps us understand whether different parts of the sector have different views about the issues discussed.

1. Are you responding as parent or caregiver or family of a child with special education needs?

Yes No

2. Are you a student with special education needs?

Yes No

3. Do you work in the health or disability sector?

Yes No

4. Are you responding on behalf of a community or other non-government organisation?

Yes No

5. Do you work in the education sector?

Yes No

6. If you do work in the education sector, is your position mainly funded through special education funding, for example special school principal or teacher, specialist or RTLB?

Auckland Special Schools Principal Association	
Note: funded through Teachers Salaries	

7. If you are responding on behalf of a community or other non-government organisation please name your organisation and your position within that organisation. Please also make it clear if this is the “official” response from that organisation.

Organisation:	Auckland Special School Principals' Association
Position:	President

10 questions for your response

The Government is seeking feedback from the wide range of people that have a view of the special education sector. Please tell us your views on the following issues and any other aspects of the sector that are important to you. Answer as many questions as you wish and attach additional pages as required. We look forward to your contribution.

Schooling

Q 1a What is needed to help schools succeed?

Capacity	<p>There is a pressing and urgent need to develop the capacity of the sector to respond to the complex nature and needs of wide-ranging special education provision. Capacity can best be developed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to well planned and delivered training and development programmes specifically targeted i.e. principals/teachers/support staff/families and matching students’ needs • Ongoing Professional Development, focusing on up to date and relevant pedagogies, interventions and practices e.g. positive behavioural approaches, visual communication strategies etc. • An effective Professional Learning Community – focused on leadership, innovation and future thinking • A <i>transdisciplinary</i> approach in meeting student needs binding effective
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therapy practice with relevant pedagogy

- Appropriate services and support matching with child's needs
- Using key areas of strength and expertise within the community

Attitude A key area for successful schools is within attitude of staff and community. In addition to the capacity of schools which has a major affect on attitude, community attitudes can also be developed with:

- Well planned disability awareness programmes
- Ownership of an adapted and meaningful curriculum
- Quality partnerships with families

Resource No initiative can develop effectively without appropriate resourcing. A model with **Specialist Schools as a Resource Centre (SSRC)** is a resource already at hand. This model provides a professional and flexible wraparound service for students and families. It would provide for:

- Effective economies of scale
- Quality and informed pedagogy and high levels of expertise
- Timely and efficient service
- Sector ownership
- Transdisciplinary approaches
- Additional services coordinated and managed such – health / mental health
- Quality partnerships with families through specialist teacher/key worker relationships
- Quality partnerships with other agencies / service providers / post school or tertiary
- A seamless provision of service and transition
- Appropriate and adapted resources and equipment directly related to student individualised learning needs

Q 1b How could schools work together to succeed?

Many schools and clusters around the country are already seeing the benefit in working professionally together. The provision of service from a SSRC would focus on the development of a *Professional Learning Communities* facilitating, managing and building on the future capacity for special education provision of and with a wide range of providers. A closer network of school/cluster collaboration and provision would be managed by the SSRC. Some aspects of this would include:

- Expansion of the **Special Education Itinerant Teacher** service (SEIT) - nationally ensuring professional and expert teacher support is provided for ORRS students in mainstream settings
- Seamless transitions across mainstream and special schools managed by specialist teacher/key worker
- Clear and effective communication systems
- Transdisciplinary approach
- Shared professional development initiatives across specialist centres
- Resource pooling
- Other school initiatives
- Effective use of RTLB & SLS (incorporation)
- Curriculum development and adaption
- Case management
- Decisions made locally

Transitions and agencies working together**Q 2** What needs to be done to make transitions work better?

Effective transitions, in, out and across services are critical in achieving successful student engagement.

Some key aspects for making transitions effective:

- Ensuring there is accountability for transition funding in terms of outcomes for the student
- Effective and managed communication and transition systems with pre/post and other school providers
- SSRC provides for a clear continuum of service and continuity of programme and support
- Working more closely with post school providers. Note: There is an increasing need here for actual options as traditional providers are opting out of service for high needs students.

- Seamless provider/provision
- Case management with support of specialist teacher/key worker
- Interagency work/knowledge, relationships, systems
- A revolving door across a continuum enabling provision to become more flexible and community oriented
- Consistency across the sector. Guidelines and standards already in place

Q 3 How could services be better coordinated and focused on the needs of students and families?

Using an SSRC services could easily and effectively be coordinated specifically to meet needs across the education continuum. These could be better focused and coordinated by:

- Using specialist teacher/key worker across settings
- Developing collaborative teaching arrangements across the continuum
- Ensuring strong links to other agencies and improving interagency effectiveness, cooperation and responsibilities/ownership
- Developed cultural sensitivity and awareness
- Fostering quality relationships with families. Seeing family involvement as an educational partnership
- Using local knowledge, skills and resources
- Using ICT and systematic communication systems to coordinate and communicate across a range of settings and environments
- Using the SSRC as an assessment and resource centre

Funding and resource use

Q 4 What arrangements for funding, decision-making, verification, and fundholding should we have?

Allow the SSRC to develop within their local communities. Give them the capacity to grow capacity. This will mean there will legitimately be more local options available to families. Fundholding considerations should include:

- Open up fundholding to allow SSRC to deliver Specialist Services to ORRS students in mainstream and other settings and include, administration training and development programmes and specialised resourcing
- Expansion of the SEIT service across the country. This creates an identified teaching specialist for every student and ensures more effective programming and intervention and better value for money. Enforcing hand over of .1 and .2 may create resistance. Suggest services are grown from new applications.
- Develop a supportive and facilitative role for ministry bureaucracy. This would reflect development and capacity of different regions. Services need to develop and run more centrally to the child
- Entitlement funding for teacher aides ensuring people are at the centre of the provision and ensuring an ongoing development of the workforce. The sector is increasingly reliant on trained teacher aides. There is another tier of professionalism that needs to be properly catered for.
- Collaboration and flexibility in the application of funds, such as SEG to meet wider cluster needs
- Funding mechanisms in place to ensure the SSRC management, teaching and specialist structure remains in place in the event of role decline. i.e. a non reliance of notional role for delivery of community service

With regard to verification and ORRS decision making improvements could include:

- An ORRS application process that is simplified and has an accompanying and consistent assessment process. At present is reliant on the skill and subjectivity of the assessor to create a strong deficit-based application. We note there are some overseas models that have some strengths and if standardised for New Zealand conditions could be applied to the ORRS process.
- An appeal process which utilises local assessment/attestation
- Along with a .1 or .2 entitlement a teacher aide entitlement also follows child

Q 5a How can individually targeted services and supports be made more efficient?

Putting services closer to the child should be a priority for Government and our Ministry. The SSRC model through the use of a specialist teacher achieves this. A key to this would be the ability of the SSRC to deliver a transdisciplinary approach across a continuum of provision. Efficiency would be achieved through:

- Appropriate utilisation of specialist teacher/key worker
- Application of effective assessment, programming, implementation and reporting regime
- Effective use of ICT and communication systems
- Transdisciplinary teams working in collaboration. This could include other providers
- Outside provision fitting into “best practice” framework
- Seamless transition resource centre model
- A quality IEP process including standards, guidelines and consistency of delivery
- A reduction in bureaucracy and red tape and ability for initiatives to develop
- Use of appropriate and effective assessment tools

Q 5b Is the current mix of programmes, services and supports right and does it provide value for money? What changes would you suggest?

It is important we don't create a one size fits all approach to special education. It is an eclectic area full of eclectic people with eclectic ideas and eclectic needs. Examples of excellence in special education can be found across the continuum.

What is also essential is that educational leadership is given the opportunity to lead in a culture of change that is focused on the right of the child to high quality provision. If you measure value for money in quality of provision then the sector must grow, develop and build capacity and capability within itself. Imposed change will not work.

We work in a system that currently boxes up provision and students, is subject to patch protection and administered by a bureaucracy that is one step removed from the student, family and school. There is a need to look more flexibility in the application of funding, support and placement. We also need a Ministry that

facilitates and supports innovation. Innovation will enable structures and systems to develop that will build on knowledge, skills and capacity. As the saying goes, “Teach a man to fish...”

High quality services and being accountable

Q 6 How can the quality of services be improved?

Special schools across the country are already providing quality services. The Ministry already has in place a mechanism for reviewing specialist services. The Quality Specialist Service Provision (QSSP) practice guidelines were developed by stakeholders across the sector. There is ownership of this work which focuses on provision across the service pathway. Evaluation of services are based on judgments of an organisations self review process as well as their capacity in meeting the standards. It is also good to see a more informed Education Review Office with a number of *specialist* reviewers now on the team.

Quality of services would be further enhanced by:

- An ongoing and skilled inspectorate. People who understand need, pedagogies, skills etc
- Quality training and development, particularly in teacher training
- Ongoing review and implementation of the QSSP
- Schools and organisations following quality teaching principles
- Ensuring service delivery fits within established management and control systems. Note: This is where some of the RTLB model has fallen down
- **Professional Learning Groups** working within active **Professional Learning Communities**
- Use of quality digital resources and ICT infrastructure and support

Q 7 How can families and schools be better informed?

Families can be more successfully informed when:

- Initial family involvement involves the development of an ongoing quality relationship
- Schools and organisations have an open and welcoming culture
- Schools and organisations are culturally responsive
- Providers use innovative and developing use of ICT
- Schools and organisations follow a quality IEP process
- Students are assessed appropriately using well developed and proven assessment tools
- Students and families receive quality transitions
- The Ministry website information is easy to access and contains thorough content about the sector
- Information and advice given across the country is consistent
- There is effective implementation of the access strand of QSSP
- ECE services are well informed and early transitions are in place

Q 8 What does successful special education look like and how should we measure it?

Future special education provision is a community based system reflecting local strengths and needs. Some of our organisations are already “living in this future.” We believe successful deliverers of special education would exhibit the following qualities:

- Families would be at the hub of student learning and be well supported and informed across agencies and environments
- Learning programmes would be tailored to individually meet needs and are based on the New Zealand National Curriculum
- Use collaborative approaches
- Exhibit a degree of flexibility in structure and application. May and will look different in different parts of the country
- Build inclusive learning communities which sees diversity as an everyday reality
- Have high expectations of success for students
- Have a commitment to providing lifelong learning communities
- Engage in transdisciplinary practices
- Be confident outward looking centres of excellence

Successful special education can be measured in the same way as one would measure success of many organisations. The ability to self-review and improve. Students make progress by accessing relevant meaningful learning through well informed and supported teachers.

Ultimately you end up with:

- Happy kids - engaged/learning/having fun
- Happy families - informed/partnership/heard/supported
- Happy staff - professional/knowledgeable/supported/successful
- Happy Ministry - quiet/hands off/facilitative

Q 9 When things do not go well, what arrangements should be in place to resolve issues?

A service provider should provide families with clear expectations of service provision. These expectations should be accounted for through the students IEP process and additional specialist provision.

A specialist teacher/key worker would assist families with any initial issues. Most organisations and schools have complaint procedures well established which should help resolve most issues.

It may also be appropriate for families to have access to some independent advocacy and support if necessary. The ability of schools to work flexibly, collaboratively and innovatively with each other and families on issues will also help solve most concerns. It may also be useful to have an appointment of independent ombudsman for unresolved issues.

In closing

Q 10 What is the most important change that would improve outcomes for children and young people with special education needs?

The Resource Centre model is based on building the future capacity for special education provision of and with a wide range of providers. Focus will be on the development of successful professional partnerships meeting the challenges of leadership, innovation and change. The model is related to a community of learning and support and not solely individual organisations. It is generalised and would evolve uniquely in different areas, reflecting the communities in which it would operate and serve. Within the scope of this review, the ability for special schools to support students in and across settings utilizing a seamless, transdisciplinary approach is essential in providing real options for families and for growing the capacity

of the teaching service.

Oral presentations

Once submissions have closed, the Associate Minister of Education will convene a panel to enable submitters to present the key points of their submission to the Government. If you wish to present to the panel please indicate this below and provide your email address and daytime telephone number so that we can contact you. The Government will endeavour to hear from as many submitters as possible in the time available.

 Yes

I would like to make an oral presentation and have provided my contact details.

If yes, please indicate whether you would like to present in (please select one location):

Christchurch Wellington Auckland

Email address (if available):	admin@arohanui.school.nz
Daytime contact telephone number:	(09) 838 6696

If you require assistance to make an oral submission (for example a sign language interpreter) please tell us the assistance you need

Please enter your comments here

Review of Special Education discussion document feedback

Please note that all submissions can be requested by members of the public under the Official Information Act. However, we will seek to withhold the personal details of individual submitters when responding to Official Information Act requests.