

# 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](http://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](mailto: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?

NO

2. Are you a student with special education needs?

NO

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

NO

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

YES – Kelston Deaf Education Centre's learning community

5. Do you work in the education sector?

YES

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?

Kelston Deaf Education Centre (KDEC) was established under S98 of the Education Act 1964 as a Residential Special School.

In 1998, Government agreed that core functions and additional services would continue to be aligned with wider SE2000 initiatives. - CAB (98) M22/13 refers


Annual funding is described in Resourcing Notice for KDEC – 2010. This document outlines funding schedules for Core Education: Day school; Special Education Resourcing (ORRS); Residential services; Property; Early Childhood; Regional Education services; Resource and technical services.

Options submitted for discussion in the “Review of Special Education 2010” potentially strike at the mandate under which KDEC operates on a day to day basis.

*Deaf students are a cultural group, often in the linguistic minority, roughly 85% of whom, unlike other groups who are unfortunately labeled “disabled”, actually have the potential to achieve at rates commensurate with their hearing peers.*

The Board has limited its discussion in this submission to the specific s around Deaf Education, in the belief that others with specialist contributions will likewise limit their submissions to the relevant area of expertise.

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:	Kelston Deaf Education Centre Private Bag 93008 New Lynn WAITAKERE 0640	
Positions:	David Foster – CEO/Principal Dave Thomas – BOT Chairperson	

## 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?

The KDEC Board believes that four things need to be present at an organisation level in order for the school to succeed:

1. Focus on raising student achievement
2. Attention to the efforts and methods of staff
3. Encouragement to innovate and respond to changing needs
4. Clear guidance from the governing bodies

To ensure that the focus on students' success is maintained the following characteristics needed:

Student must be present at school

The learning environment must provide both access to and adaptation of curriculum

There must be a focus on the needs of the whole child, physical, social and emotional well-being

Most important in all of this for Deaf students is a rich and articulate communication environment.

Communication for success for Deaf students relies on individually managed access the continuum of communication options. For some students this is access to New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL), for others this is tight focus on access to sound and sound quality. For most it means managing an environment that has a balance of visual and auditory access.

In order to create such an learning environment we hold the belief that Deaf children need access to a specialized environment and a range of highly trained specialist staff in order to achieve maximum success.

Government needs to state recognition of and adequate financial resources for these needs. The relationship between the Government (expressed through Ministry of Education) and Schools need to be based on partnership in the pursuit of these aims.

## Schooling

Q 1b How could schools work together to succeed?

The KDEC Board seeks to highlight that, through its existing relationships with over 250 other state and integrated schools AND its relationships with nearly 500 families from Turangi to Kaitaia, there is already substantial evidence that it can “work together to succeed” within the current operational frameworks.

The Board would cite the following examples of policy and procedural practice that underpins these relationships:

- Memoranda of Agreement (with 8 schools) for the accommodation of KDEC enrolled students create a satellite network. Some of which have been in place for over 20 years, some established as recently as within the past 6 months.
- An agreed strategic plan with the MOE for the rationalization and development of the satellite network over the next 10 years.
- Memoranda of Agreement (with over 12 schools) to accommodate Resource Teachers of the Deaf in order to facilitate operation of the regional services network.
- Voluntary participation in the SEIT project and its development to gain data about the perceived effectiveness of Resource Teachers of the Deaf over the past 3 years.
- Keep in Touch Days (K.I.T) for students who would otherwise be living in isolation from other Deaf students, provide a range of social and educational opportunities for over 400 student per year.
- KDEC Regional Sports Day draws together over 200 student each year. 2010 event was attended by students from as far away as Kaitaia and Opotiki.
- Mainstream teacher courses and associated follow-up contact, provides professional development for staff (teachers and paraprofessionals) in up to 200 schools.
- Joint venture delivery of Cochlear Implant habilitation services to school aged students up to 3 years post implant provides expert guidance for over 120 students in just over 100 schools
- NZSL courses and tuition for staff, and parents of Deaf students
- Hearing aide and FM system repairs and maintenance for over 1000 students. Consistently around 87% of repairs and maintenance are completed with the device back to the student within 5 working days.

Clearly the Board does not support discussion proposing the closure of this Residential Special School (Option C: page 18).

The Board respectfully submits that the Ministry could rather be discussing funding KDEC to capture its operating philosophy and share this as training and develop with other potential specialist service providers. The Board seeks to be able to continue to operate its school and specialist services in tandem.

## Transitions and agencies working together

Q 2 What needs to be done to make transitions work better?

Most student experience a minimum of four transitions during their period compulsory schooling.

At school entry – there needs to be a plan for entry into school that begins well before the fifth birthday. The deaf child needs to feel welcomed into their new environment and this welcome is most often manifest in the attitudes of the people they meet and the level of access they experience.

From primary to secondary (and possibly through an intermediate) the deaf child again needs access to a welcoming community who have prepared for their presence and committed to making the adaptations (e.g. installation of a sound-field system) prior to the child's arrival. Parents' at this time want assurance that someone already employed within the system is explicitly taking the leadership role to ensure that introductions are brokered, information is collated and exchanged and that opportunities are created for discussion about their child's needs.

Parent s DO NOT wants to have to re-tell their story as if to strangers every time their child makes a transition. They hold the reasonable view that the system should be coordinated.

The final transition for each student is school exit. For increasing numbers of Deaf students school exit involves moving on to other fields of study, university, polytechnics, private or independent training providers and employment.

For Deaf students logic suggests that the Deaf Education Centre's are well placed to accept responsibility for managing ALL of transitions, given their broad knowledge of which students are currently in the system (or about to enter it) , where they are attending school (and preschool) and when they are exiting the system at completion.

Access to the funding for accepting responsibility for this work and policy mandate to provide the leadership would be the necessary changes.

## Transitions and agencies working together

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

Reduce the number of people and organisations that have a stake in the processes.

Throughout the 2000's a Deaf Education Aotearoa NZ, facilitated a quango of deaf education stakeholder groups "the Service Design Group" (SDG) met regularly to discuss this very question. Their reports, the National Plan for Deaf Education, and the Service Design Matrix, have never been endorsed by the Ministry of Education, nor do they appear to have they been seriously considered as policy advice to the Government.

In essence the documents state an agreed national preference for early, effective coordinated services that are delivered equitably throughout the country.

The SDG proposed that a nationally coordinated Deaf Education service was both achievable and desirable. The document requested that establishment of national coordinating groups who would oversee the delivery of all services for Deaf children from birth to age twenty one.

KDEC Board is a signatory to this work and continues to support its adoption as a blueprint for change.

During 2008 /09 the KDEC Board directed resources to enable selected trustees to be present at national steering committee meetings sponsored by the Deputy Secretary for Special Education. The Board demonstrated its commitment to the ideal of the national plan by ensuring that its representation to these meetings included, Deaf and hearing, parents, professional and students' views.

As recently as December 2009 the KDEC Board resolved in the presence of the Deputy Secretary to engage in whatever discussion was deemed necessary to expedite processes about how nationally coordinated provision could be achieved.

In summary the key changes that need to be contemplated are;

- Nationally coordinated governance
- Birth to school exit as the mandate for that coordination
- Reassignment of resources currently "held" by MOE - Special Education into management of the Deaf Education Centre (e.g. Advisers of Deaf Children, Cochlear Habilitation funding, NZSL curriculum resource development.)
- Recognition of the 'human rights' dimension of the debate about what levels of resourcing would meet international tests of being adequate.

## Funding and resource use

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

### Funding

Has become increasingly fragmented into: initiatives (e.g. severe behaviours) programmes (e.g. enhanced programme fund), funds (e.g. ORRS, TFEA etc) and grants (e.g. SEG).

Add to this that various organisations are being increasingly being funded for smaller roles in the wider delivery network and it is not surprising that inefficiency is becoming an issue for stakeholders.

Funding arrangements should be simplified down to as few components as possible. Central Government needs to take a consolidation approach to leading this work by critically examining which of these multitudes of discrete funds are actually delivering value to the wider network.

### Decision Making

The predominant decision for Deaf students is whether or not their need will continue throughout school. This is the premise for underlying the ORRS verification process. At present significant chunks of potentially productive time are being consumed in temporary decisions, reviewable decisions and revisiting decisions which at times mystify parents and mainstream schools.

Funding guarantees for some students should be made for the duration of schooling e.g. a student whose access to curriculum is through NZSL should have this need recognized as ongoing for the duration of their schooling.

Decisions should NOT be made on the basis of fundamental geography – e.g. a student living in or close to Auckland or Christchurch has access to a broader range of access options than one living on the east coast, North Island or west coast, South Island.

Earlier comments about the potential for improvement through nationally coordinated governance arrangements would go some way to alleviating this inequity. Recent rationalization of the vision sensory network (BLENNZ) is an example of policy and practice that needs to be more widely contemplated.

### Verification

Consideration has already clearly been given to broadening the scope of verification of student needs. Some students (for example those with severe speech language disorders) struggle to have their need qualify within the architecture of ORRS criteria. Other students become the victims of their own success... e.g. a Deaf student who works successfully with a specialist teacher may learn to read (because of the specialist's presence) at the next verification review the success becomes ground for removing or reducing the level of verification and the student subsequently falls behind because the specialist teaching input is reduced.

We need to learn to have verification conversations that acknowledge that some students are succeeding because of the specialist input and that if it is removed

their success rate will likely diminish. When this scenario plays out (as it currently can and does) parent express distress and disbelief that decision makers cannot see the logical consequences of their funding decisions.

The system needs clarification of the needs schools are expected to meet through operations grant and which needs are expected to be met through individual resourcing. This delineation then needs to be reinforced by clear policy. An example of the need for change is the lack of rigour in the instructions to Boards with regard to provision specialist teaching using the ORRS generated teacher time. Boards appear to be asked nicely to use their best efforts yet the Education Review Office has reported that significant numbers of schools cannot demonstrate the presence of a specialist teacher on their staff in response to the receipt of Special Education teacher time (ORRS part-time teachers).

### **Fundholding**

Fewer Fundholders with a specific set of accountabilities can and (in the cases of Deaf Education, Vision Education and some of the SEIT pilot schools) do manage to coordinate a range of service provision effectively.

Creating Specialist Resource Centre's opens up potential for improved workforce development, deployment and retention. This in turn saves considerable money up stream in staff training and recruitment.

The KDEC Board response to Question 5a examines the inefficiency of the existing system that see the ministry assuming ownership of responsibility for all four processes discussed above.

5a

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

“Who decides which students get which resources?” Re-examine the rationale presented in pages 27 – 30!! This section articulates the fundamental problem with the Current Situation / Status Quo (Option a: page 18)

Under current operational policy the staff Ministry of Education make MOST if not ALL decisions about which students and which resources. Decision making at this nexus may be appropriate but the next step in the process, dissemination of the funding closes options down and destroys any pretence of accountability. The Ministry of Education, having made the decision to accept or reject an application for funding then arbitrarily appoints itself as the Fundholder on behalf of the student and their family and then proceeds to make decisions about the allocation of the individual resources on the basis of a collective rationale.

Parents and stakeholder s express concern and dissatisfaction with the “overs and unders” rational often cited by District Office staff when challenged about resource allocation decisions.

Macro examination of the process clearly shows that colleagues on the same Ministry of Education Special Education - National Management Team share

responsibility for all aspects of the process from application to verification to dissemination and even employment of specialists, where MOE has retained itself as the “Fundholder” on behalf of a group of schools.

“..At present only the Ministry and schools are accredited as Fundholders....”

The Ministry accredits itself as the Fundholder!

As an outcome of this review the Ministry must reconsider this position. Fewer Fundholders (not the MOE funding itself) on behalf of larger groups of students, needs to be coupled with streamlined accountability processes to ensure that the highest possible percentage of money received is in fact spent directly on services and resources for the verified student.

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

The KDEC Board believes that many aspects of the current system do deliver value for money. This does not preclude the view that some of the mix is not right and that some programmes and services could benefit from change.

Changes that should be contemplated:

- Improve the focus by creating Specialist Resource Centres with national foci.
- Develop process to engage with the wider sector in strategic change management so that issues logs are maintained and a proactive approach is learned with each sector. This approach has definitely contributed to achievements in the Deaf sector and also made key problem solving activities possible among the Residential special schools e.g. improved property maintenance funding and future schooling strategy.
- Reduce fragmentation by bringing responsibility for Cochlear Implant Habilitation, Adviser on deaf services and curriculum development resources under the leadership of Deaf Education Centres.
- If ORRS verification is retained, allocate the Specialist Teacher time to Specialist Resource Centers and then work with collaboratively to improve work force planning and development processes.
- On the basis of good quality assessment practices, learn to make decisions about which school access options are recommended to parents. There is emerging evidence that the prevailing “parental choice” paradigm is leading to the creation of a service network that competes with itself for the finite pool of students. This is inefficient.

## High quality services and being accountable

Q 6 How can the quality of services be improved?

### **Nationally**

Create national Specialist Resource Centres, invest in further development of processes and practices to identify when and how value is being added to students.

### **Schools Level**

Continue to pursue the expectation that schools should be reporting to Government about student achievement as a basic measure of success. KDEC is happy to have its systems scrutinized and participate in future opportunities to improve performance in terms of being able to report on national student achievement trends.

### **Individually**

Learning to express student success in terms of life skills, social and emotional development is also needed. This will be challenging but is a current focus worldwide as communities learn to value presence and participation as characteristics of success.

### **Workforce**

A natural consequence of the current structures is that people with the lowest levels of qualification are often spending the most time with students with the highest level of need.

There is an urgent need to develop a national qualifications framework of mandatory qualifications for those people working with Deaf students. This should include (but not be limited to) NZSL interpreting, note-taking skills, NZSL proficiency for all staff, demonstrated (perhaps accredited) knowledge of acoustic amplification technology, training in the pedagogy of child development.

Q 7 How can families and schools be better informed?

KDEC Board maintains that parents of Deaf students are generally well informed. Every student on the school roll has an individual education plan. Records of individual curriculum achievement are also rigorously maintained. Aggregated data from these records is presented to the Board annually and informs both evaluation and future planning.

The creation and maintenance of individual education planning is also used as one criterion for access to KDEC's regional teaching service. Harvesting data from these plans and aggregating it to improve reporting to the Board is a current focus and an opportunity for future improvement.

If all schools adopted a focus on reporting to parents based on shared planning and evaluation of outcomes then it is likely that outcomes would improve.

## High quality services and being accountable

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

KDEC Board believes that the definition of success for Deaf student begins by accepting that each Deaf student has a right to community. Accepting the right to community implies that the Deaf child will have access to a community with whom they can communicate freely, that includes people “just like them” and that has a shared vision of independent, well adjusted deaf adult making a sustained contribution to NZ society once they leave school.

We can measure this definition of success academically through key measures of literacy, numeracy and school exit qualification achievement. For example KDEC can show the levels of NCEA achievement of its students and discuss how these results are both achieved and sustained.

We can measure social and emotional health by the activities a student participates in and the quality of the relationships they can build and sustain.

We can measure contribution to society in longer terms such as employment rates, declined representation in negative social statistics such as mental health referrals and criminal convictions.

Most importantly we can measure the ultimate success of our education system when all Deaf children achieve at rates the compare favorably with other children of the same age and social circumstance throughout the country.

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

Developing complaints management procedures is a relatively minor part to this submission. Any organisation should be expected to maintain internal problem solving and dispute resolution processes.

The KDEC Board has tried to develop and model a partnership approach to high level issues resolution. The real learning has been for KDEC, its stakeholder groups and the Ministry to devote genuine time and energy to developing open, honest relationships in which issues are identified and raised at the earliest possible warning signs.

Each group can learn to accept that the others are working within boundaries (often not of their own making) and is making sustained efforts to understand the constraints. With this knowledge the Deaf sector has sought to learn to generate possible solutions that work within the boundaries or to work patiently towards developing policy recommendations to promote new or different policy that's responds pragmatically to changing needs.

## In closing

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

Urgent attention to the following is the most important thing ☺

### **Nationally**

Create of a network of National Specialist resource Centres. These would have specific specialisations – for example Deaf, Vision impaired, Cerebral.

Make these Centre the conduit for funding for student in that domain. Empower these Centres through charter (constitution), policy guidelines and reporting processes, to forge strategic alliance with their stakeholder groups (schools, parents, sector groups).

Remove from the control of Ministry of Education any link to the day to day deployment of resources (either personnel or financial) that were drawn down through Ministry of Education administered policy. The Ministry should either be policy and strategic development arm of the Government or a service provider. It cannot be both simultaneously. Service delivery responsibility should be invested into the specialist service providers networks.

### **On Behalf of Deaf Children and their Families**

Accept that parents of Deaf children have incredible energy and capacity to be involved in decisions about their children and an extraordinary ability to provide each other with learning opportunities, social connections and emotional support.

Accept that technological intervention is at the end of the day only a set of tools and equipment that provide access to communication, language development and learning.

Accept that these Deaf children are not problems to be solved or subjects to be cured or fixed. They are a group of children with a unique identity, learning style and ultimately way of life.

### **On Behalf of our Deaf Staff**

Invest in the future of our Deaf students by increasing funding for all New Zealanders to be able to learn about Deaf Culture and to communicate in the third official language of NZ.

Honour the commitments made by our Government when they became signatories to declarations of the rights of children and disabled people.

## 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 *face to face* representation and have provided my contact details.

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

Auckland

Email address (if available):	David Foster <a href="mailto:davidf@kdec.school.nz">davidf@kdec.school.nz</a> Dave Thomas <a href="mailto:DaveT@financialhealth.co.nz">DaveT@financialhealth.co.nz</a>
Daytime contact telephone number:	David Foster 09 8274859

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

The KDEC Board does request access to NZSL Interpreting during its face to face submission. If submissions are going to be received in a meeting open to the public (as for select committee processes) then the Board requests that NZSL interpreting is available during these meetings.

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.