



# Working in special education

Resource Teacher:  
Learning and Behaviour





## Meet Lesleigh Henderson, an RTLB in Te Awamutu

Lesleigh lives in the heart of Te Rohe Potae (The King Country) and became a Resource Teacher: Learning and Behaviour (RTLB) in April 2012.

### Lesleigh's story

Lesleigh began her career working in finance and administration, before training as a teacher, which she describes as “my life's vocation.”

### Lesleigh's day-to-day

Lesleigh's daily schedule depends on the referrals she receives – “I have a combination of individual students, whole school staff professional learning, and also classes, small groups and Gateway assessments.” The Gateway Assessment process was developed to support children and young people entering State care. It involves collecting clear, detailed information about the child's health, educational, and emotional needs so necessary action can be taken.

Lesleigh works to “re-engage so called ‘switched off’ senior learners – young people who want to learn, but struggle to access knowledge, or face teaching styles that don't accommodate them and how they experience the world.”



### Reflecting cultural values in her work

When working with whānau Māori, Lesleigh “strives to identify and remove barriers to effective and authentic communication so as to create an inclusive environment.” To do this, she believes, requires humility; “it’s a key attribute when working with people from different cultural backgrounds.”

### Rewards of the role

“I love the variety of this role,” says Lesleigh, “working collaboratively with schools, families, teachers and students, in a diverse range of places and environments.”

“I also love that the diversity, geographic spread of schools across our region and the autonomy, requires a lot of responsibility and decision-making.”

### Future aspirations

For Lesleigh, her present goal is “to learn as much as I can.” She would also love to “see the public perception of what our service offers to schools, students and whānau hold more mana, and to build further confidence and trust in that service.”

## Nature of the work

Resource teachers: learning and behaviour (RTLb) are employed by a lead school Board of Trustees and provide a service to a 'cluster' of schools in that area.

### Resource teachers: learning and behaviour:

- › work with Years 1-10 school students with learning and behaviour challenges
- › support Māori and Pasifika school students, and children and young people moving into State care
- › support and up-skill teachers to better meet the needs of school students within an inclusive education system
- › develop professional practice by networking and supporting school policy development
- › collaborate with a range of people including whānau/families, schools, Ministry of Education staff and Special Education Needs Coordinators (SENCO).



## Qualifications and experience

To become an RTLB you will need:

- › a teaching qualification
- › a current practising certificate
- › full New Zealand teacher registration
- › experience working with children or young people with learning and behaviour needs
- › to have attained, be working towards, or be willing to work towards a Postgraduate Diploma in Specialist Teaching (Learning and Behaviour).

RTLB are supported to study to achieve this qualification and are expected to attain it within four years of starting work as an RTLB.

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## Skills and knowledge

In addition to the qualifications and experience, an RTLB must have knowledge of or skills in:

- › human and child development, learning and behaviour, and education theory
- › managing special education needs in a variety of settings
- › community and family support services
- › effective communication, New Zealand teaching pedagogy, research and planning skills
- › working in schools and the NZ Curriculum/ Te Marautanga o Aotearoa.

## Career development

Becoming an RTLB will give you the rewards and challenges of the job itself, as well as opportunities to develop your career.

### You will:

- › be supported and supervised by experienced professional colleagues
- › be kept up to date with the latest evidence and take part in ongoing training
- › have opportunities to share and extend your knowledge and skills.

In time you might have opportunities to take on a leadership role, for example by moving on to become an RTLB practice leader or RTLB cluster manager.









## Further information about RTLB

Learn more about the role of RTLB service by visiting **[www.rtlb.tki.org.nz](http://www.rtlb.tki.org.nz)**

### Special education careers and professional development

For more information about working in special education, visit our special education careers webpage **[www.education.govt.nz/careers-in-special-education](http://www.education.govt.nz/careers-in-special-education)**

### Special education scholarships and study awards

If you're interested in a career in special education you may be eligible for a scholarship or study award. Find out more at **[www.education.govt.nz/r/sestudyawards](http://www.education.govt.nz/r/sestudyawards)**

### Career information

For profiles of different careers visit the Careers New Zealand website **[www.careers.govt.nz](http://www.careers.govt.nz)**

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## Contact us

Want to speak to someone about a career as an RTLB? Give us a call or drop us an email.

### Ministry of Education – Special Education

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