

Education Report: Special Education Update

Executive Summary

1. This paper summarises the findings of the Special Education update (the update) being undertaken by the Ministry of Education (the Ministry). It proposes a significant programme of work to ensure the education system fully supports the progress and achievement of *all* children and young people, including those who need additional learning support.
2. In recent weeks the Education and Science Select Committee has begun an inquiry into the identification and support for students with the significant challenges of dyslexia, dyspraxia, and autism spectrum disorders in primary and secondary schools. The Ministry expects that aspects of this report will be relevant to the inquiry.
3. Feedback received during engagement for the update indicated that as our education system becomes more inclusive, the term "special education" is becoming outmoded. Therefore the expression "additional learning support" is used in this paper to refer to all the additional services provided to children, young people (and their educators, parents and whānau) to ensure they can progress and achieve in their education.
4. Current additional learning support arrangements have evolved over time and now comprise several major, separate sources of expertise arranged around multiple sources of funding established to address particular forms of need.
5. These arrangements ensure that children and young people with the highest needs can receive the required support. However this does not provide sufficient certainty and continuity of support for others and the multiple sources of expertise and funding have become silos that limit adaptability.
6. The fragmented state of current services also means that the Ministry does not have sufficient system - wide oversight of the total investment and this limits its ability to ensure that service delivery is fully responsive to changes in demand and developing evidence of what works best.
7. Detailed analysis undertaken for the update has resulted in a more complete picture of the system - wide funding arrangements for additional learning support. This analysis shows that \$586 million was invested in additional learning support during 2014 across the whole education system.
8. This paper describes the problems that the update has identified in the current arrangements for additional learning support and proposes a programme of work to address these.

9. From 2016 the Ministry will lead a programme of work that will significantly redesign the system of education for students with additional learning needs. The programme will involve:
- a. Designing a recognisable, simple system of additional learning support.
 - b. Re-designing the service delivery model to remove fragmentation inflexibility and other barriers to effective service delivery.
 - c. Implementing this revised service delivery model.
 - d. Undertaking an ongoing programme of work to ensure the best use of made of the total funds and examine the return on investment for all components of the system.


Recommended Actions

We recommend that you:

- a) **note** that the Ministry is commencing a substantial programme of work to deliver the outcomes described in this paper;
- b) **note** that the Ministry will report to you again in July 2016 on progress with the work programme;
- c) **note** that this work programme will be supported by ongoing engagement with leaders in the education and disability sectors as well as parents, whānau, educators and other professionals to ensure that the improvements implemented are consistent with their expectations; and

NOTED/APPROVED

- d) **forward** a copy to Rt Hon John Key, Hon Bill English, Hon Steven Joyce, Hon Paula Bennett, Hon Anne Tolley, Hon Nikki Kaye, Hon Dr Jonathan Coleman, Hon Nicky Wagner and Hon Nick Smith.


Katrina Casey
Deputy Secretary
Sector Enablement and Support

Encls


Hon Hekia Parata
Minister of Education

20/11/15

Education Report: Special Education Update 2015

Purpose of Report

1. This paper summarises the findings of the Special Education update (the update) recently undertaken by the Ministry of Education (the Ministry). It outlines a significant programme of work to ensure the education system fully supports the progress and achievement of all children and young people, including those who need additional learning support.
2. Feedback received during engagement for the update indicated that as our education system becomes more inclusive, the term "special education" is becoming outmoded. Therefore the expression "additional learning support" is used in this paper to refer to all the additional services provided to children, young people (and their educators, parents and whānau) to ensure they can progress and achieve in their education.

Background

3. In 2010, the Government's review of special education affirmed a commitment to work towards ensuring that all schools demonstrate inclusive practice by 2014 and to increased access to some existing services.
4. Much has been achieved in recent years to increase the inclusivity of our education system for children and young people who need additional learning support. Data from 2014 shows that schools are increasingly demonstrating inclusive practices and 95 percent of children and young people who need additional learning support are enrolled in regular schools and early childhood education centres.
5. Each year almost \$600 million is invested in the education system to provide additional learning support. One third of this investment funds a range of support provided by the Ministry (including professional contracts with other providers) and two thirds is utilised by early childhood centres, schools and special schools. How these funds are currently deployed is illustrated in Appendices A and B.
6. An estimated 80,000 to 100,000 children and young people receive some form of additional learning support each year. In 2014 ninety five percent were enrolled in regular schools and early childhood centres. Around 4,000 students attended special schools including residential schools, regional health schools and vision or deaf education centres.
7. Children and young people who need additional learning support come from diverse backgrounds and are present in schools of every decile. For example, students in the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (i.e. those with the highest level of needs) are equally likely to come from a Decile 10 school as a Decile 1 school.
8. Many children and young people have learning support needs arising from physical and/or intellectual disability. This includes for example, children and

young people with high health needs, those in hospitals, the vision and hearing impaired and mobility impaired. Other children have learning disabilities arising from disorders such as autism spectrum disorders. For others delayed language development will impact on their learning and wellbeing.

9. Additional learning support takes many forms due to the extremely wide range of circumstances which give rise to need. A large proportion of support is provided by teachers adapting how they teach the curriculum. However additional learning support also ranges from the temporary provision of school transport for a child who is convalescing from an illness through to intensive, expert engagement with the small number of children (and their educators, parents and whānau) who present with severe behavioural difficulties.
10. Some children and young people who need additional learning support are also of concern to agencies such as Child Youth and Family. However the great majority simply require the right additional learning support to progress and achieve in their education.
11. Personnel costs represent the largest component (\$436 million or 73% in 2014) of the investment in additional learning support:
 - a) 900 Resource Teachers for Learning and Behaviour (RTLb) are employed by schools to provide advice and guidance to educators in primary and secondary schools and from time to time, work with individual students. The RTLb service is funded through \$86 million administered by the Ministry of Education.
 - b) A similar number of personnel; speech language therapists, educational psychologists and others are employed by the Ministry to work with individual children and advise and guide educators in early childhood education and schools. In 2014 this comprised \$100 million of the investment in personnel.
 - c) About \$80 million is invested in Teacher's Aides employed by schools and Education Support Workers employed by the Ministry to work in early childhood education.
 - d) The remaining investment in personnel is comprised of various forms of additional staff for students in special schools and Ongoing Resource Scheme (ORS) students in fund holder schools.
12. How additional learning support is currently organised has developed over time in response to concerns about particular areas of need. As a result the system is now comprised of multiple, discrete sources of expertise and funding with limited continuity between these. The components of this system are illustrated in Appendix B.
13. Under the current system, children and young people with the highest levels of need receive intensive support and may be educated in special schools or in the mainstream education system supported by the appropriate expertise. However the continued establishment of specialised sources of expertise (and funding) has resulted in a system that is compartmentalised, fragmented and inflexible.
14. We know that the education system still presents significant challenges to children and young people with additional learning needs, and to their parents

and whānau, which prevent their full participation, progress and achievement in education. There is significant room for improvement in the system.

15. Since the 2010 Review of Special Education, good progress has been made in some areas for children and young people with additional learning support needs but we know more can be done.

Engagement about the update

16. National and local level engagement with educators, parents and whānau, other agencies and many representative bodies from the education and disability sectors has been a key component of the update. We held a series of engagement forums in April and May of this year and a further series in August and September. 157 forums were held in total and over 3,600 people participated in this process.
17. A report on the key themes from the engagement process and next steps has been produced and was released by the Minister on 20 November. A summary of the full Engagement Report is attached as Appendix G.
18. The Ministry will continue to involve the education and disability sectors and its partner agencies at a local and national level as progress is made on the programme of work resulting from the update.

The current state

19. The engagement and analysis undertaken for the update identified several key areas for improvement in the current system of additional learning support. These are outlined below and this section concludes with a description of the proposed future state.

The current state of service delivery

20. The current provision of additional learning support is inflexible. Many areas of the investment in additional learning support are targeted to specific types of need and artificially restricted by age group. However, demand is changing and the range of support available has not kept pace. Currently two areas of need are of particular concern:
 - a. Children are increasingly participating in early childhood education and this is driving increased demand for additional learning support in this age group. The international evidence also suggests that early identification and response can in some cases reduce or preclude the need for increased support in later years. While some sources of expertise are currently dedicated to early childhood it is thought that more could be achieved through greater investment of expertise in this area.
 - b. Early childhood facilities and schools are faced with increasing numbers of students who present with moderately severe needs which are challenging for their educators, parents and whānau but not severe enough to attract intensive support from sources such as the Ongoing Resource Scheme (ORS). The government committed \$23.3 million over four years for additional in - class support in the 2015 budget and this will help. However using the level of support provided by the ORS as an initial indication, some

students with less severe but nevertheless significant need may not be getting sufficient support from the current system.

21. Services are fragmented and compartmentalised. Resource Teachers for Learning and Behaviour (RTLb) and the Ministry's specialists (around 2,000 staff in combined total) comprise the majority of the expertise invested in additional learning support. Special schools provide outreach services in many areas. However each of these services functions separately with minimal coordination between them. While there are instances of effective collaboration, collective planning and deployment of resources is not routine.
22. The Ministry's services are too compartmentalised. The Ministry provides multiple specific forms of additional learning support at varying levels of intensity for different age groups. This has given rise to multiple application processes and a lack of continuity as the child transitions from early childhood education to primary school and onwards.
23. This compounds the fragmentation leading to a lack of clarity for educators, parents and whānau, and duplication of processes.
24. Some children and young people who need additional learning support are unlikely to progress beyond level one of the curriculum due to the nature of their learning disability. However these children still make progress with the right support. Currently the progress and achievement of these children is not monitored and reported to Boards of Trustees and parents. The Ministry has begun working with schools to address this.

Interagency collaboration

25. The aim of the education sector is to support the progress and achievement of all children and young people. This intersects with the responsibilities of other agencies when welfare and health concerns impact on individual children and young people.
26. For these children and young people, collaboration between the child's educators, the Ministry, health and welfare agencies, parents and whānau is essential to their health, wellbeing and their educational outcomes. Feedback received during engagement about the update confirms that interagency collaboration needs to improve and this is particularly evident to the parents, whānau and educators of children and young people with high health or welfare needs.

Teacher capability and confidence

27. Because about 95% of children who need additional learning support are in mainstream education, feedback in the 2010 Review and ongoing feedback since then has questioned whether initial teacher education and professional learning and development for teachers has sufficient focus on inclusive education practices.
28. Improving educator capability and confidence was a key theme during the engagement undertaken for the update and the international evidence also indicates that best results are achieved through developing educator (and parent and whānau) capability and confidence.

29. Resources have been developed by the Ministry for professional development providers to help them ensure that the professional learning and development they provide also includes a focus on children and young people who need additional learning support.
30. A useful next step would be for the Ministry to work with the newly established Education Council to examine how well initial teacher education programmes focus on inclusive education practice.
31. The Ministry will also work with its contracted providers to ensure the professional development provided to educators is the best match to requirements and fully utilises the resources developed for them.

The current state of system design

32. Over the years the Ministry has consistently taken a leadership role with regard to many aspects of additional learning support. What has been achieved with regard to inclusivity, in partnership with the disability and education sectors, is a good example of this. The Ministry's leadership of initiatives such as the national system for response to traumatic incidents is another.
33. However additional learning support arrangements have developed ad hoc over time and have not been understood or managed as a total system. The fragmentation and compartmentalisation evident in the service delivery model is symptomatic of this.
34. This has contributed to the absence of a system wide view of the whole investment in additional learning support. As a result it is not well equipped to lead continuous improvement of the system based on a thorough understanding of the current state. Gaps in information include:
 - a) There is no nationally aggregated information about the progress and achievement of children and young people who need additional learning support.
 - b) No substantial analysis has been undertaken of the comparative value for money between different forms of additional learning support.
 - c) Demographic change affects demand for additional learning support; however the Ministry does not routinely monitor and report on the impact of trends in demand.

The current state of funding arrangements

35. During the first half of 2015, as part of the update the Ministry sourced and analysed all the data needed to provide a picture of the system wide investment (\$586 million) in additional learning support.
36. The financial model developed to support this picture can now provide an up to date picture of the annual total investment. The Ministry will use this to identify areas of inconsistent investment or potential unmet need to be addressed through a more flexible system in future.

37. There are approximately 50 different areas of expenditure on additional learning support distributed across nine different appropriations in some ways reflecting the range of needs and support required for students with disabilities/special education needs. The great majority of this expenditure occurs in two appropriations: Interventions for Target Student Groups (Departmental) and Special Needs Support (Non - departmental).
38. Historically, funding for additional learning support within these appropriations has been targeted to particular areas of need and particular age groups. These constraints have been maintained over time resulting in the fragmented and disjointed mix of services referred to earlier in this section of the paper.
39. Funding and resources can be re-allocated within the appropriations without recourse to Cabinet or the Joint Ministers if there is good reason to do so and the change does not represent a significant policy change.
40. The Ministry will be in a better position to recommend redeployment of funds within its appropriations once it has a better picture of utilisation, the outcomes being achieved and changes in demand.
41. Some people who gave feedback during the update suggested that some of the problems with the current approach to additional learning support could be resolved by simply increasing funding in those areas. Once again, a full picture of demand, utilisation and outcomes achieved is needed before recommendations can be made about whether the overall level of funding is appropriate.

The Proposed Future State

42. From the analysis undertaken for the update and the findings from the engagement forums, the Ministry has developed a vision for a new model of service delivery for additional learning support. The key features of the proposed new system are outlined below and illustrated in Appendices C and D.

The proposed new service delivery model

43. In future, additional learning support will be designed around the needs of children and young people, and the setting in which they're educated, rather than the sources of funding for additional learning support that have evolved over time.
44. The re- design of the system recognises that all children need support to learn and additional support will be required from time to time by many children in the education system. The system of additional learning support must be sufficiently flexible to provide for a continuum of need that may begin with a parent or educator adapting how they engage with a child, to educators and specialists working on a child's language development, through to children who require intensive, multiple forms of support to participate and progress in their education.

45. **Key features of the new system include:**

- a) The progress and achievement of *all* children will be monitored and reported and aggregated data will be available to inform decisions about the best use of the system wide investment in additional learning support.
- b) Additional learning support will be an integral component of the wider education system. The learning support needs of individual schools and early childhood facilities and whole Communities of Learning will be recognised and planned for as well as the needs of individual students.
- c) Educators, parents and whānau will be recognised as the primary providers of teaching and learning and advising and guiding them will be a priority for additional learning support professionals. In the future the Ministry and other providers of additional learning support will:
 - Partner with educators, parents and whānau when identifying and planning how to respond to need
 - Ensure that immediate advice and guidance for educators, parents and whānau is a component of all service delivery
 - Incorporate the roles of educators, parents and whānau into all plans for addressing the additional learning support needs of individual children
 - Provide tailored professional development for educators to help them become capable and confident teachers of *all* children and young people.
- d) Early identification and response to need will be a priority for everybody. This will include:
 - Early childhood educators, parents and whānau will have sufficient knowledge and information to identify the potential need for additional learning support early and they'll be clear about how the Ministry and other professionals can help.
 - Educators, the Ministry and other professionals will work closely with other agencies involved with children in their early years to ensure coordinated, multi agency approaches when required.
- e) The process for identifying and responding to need will be simple and prompt and provide continuity of support over time when that's needed. The progress and achievement of children and young people is supported by a planned, managed, child centred approach that ensures continuity of support for as long as it's needed. To achieve these outcomes the new system will include:
 - The need for additional learning support will be identified early through simple processes that include discussion, planning and review with everyone involved in the child's education. Local health and welfare agencies are partners in this planning and response process.
 - All providers of additional learning support (the Ministry, RTLB service, special school outreach services etc.) will use a one, common process for identifying and responding to need.

- When a need for additional learning support is identified, support will be tailored to the nature and duration of the child's needs and the setting in which the child is being educated.
- Transitions from one educational setting to another will be planned for and managed by everyone involved in the child's education.
- Age related criteria will not constrain continuity of support. Decisions about how support will be funded will be made by the Ministry and others as part of their regular management responsibilities.

Parents and whānau experience of the system

46. In the future, parents and whānau will be provided with prompt, easy to access information, advice and guidance about how the education system will support the learning needs of their child. They (and their children who need additional learning support) will be involved in identifying, planning and reviewing the response and their role in their child's learning will be well supported.

Alignment with Communities of Learning

47. Communities of Learning offer significant benefits for children and young people who need additional learning support because of the opportunities for better managed transitions, improved continuity of service and economies of scale. Therefore alignment with Communities of Learning is integral to the proposed new system of additional learning support.
48. As Communities of Learning mature, opportunities will become available to combine resources associated with the provision of additional learning support and manage these differently.
49. Special schools are a key component of the education system and could play an important role in Communities of Learning. They provide outreach services to many students in mainstream education as well as providing full education to a smaller number of students in residential schools. Special schools are involved in some of the proposed projects to trial the new system of additional learning support.

Defining the system of additional learning support

50. In the future, all the components of additional learning support will be clearly defined and managed as a system. Accountability for all components of the system will be clearly defined. The outcomes expected will be defined and reported on by the Ministry so that decisions about the system are informed by a thorough understanding of how effectively it is working.

Future funding arrangements

51. The total investment in additional learning support will be monitored and reported on to inform decisions about the most effective deployment of resources.
52. The total investment will be managed as a whole with a view to improving continuity of support and to address areas of unmet need.

Proposed plan

53. From 2016 the Ministry will lead a programme of work that will significantly redesign the system of education for students with additional learning needs. The programme will involve:
- a. Designing a recognisable, simple system of additional learning support.
 - b. Re-designing the service delivery model to remove fragmentation inflexibility and other barriers to effective service delivery.
 - c. Implementing this revised service delivery model.
 - d. Undertaking an ongoing programme of work to ensure the best use of made of the total funds and examine the return on investment for all components of the system.
54. The proposed programme of work is outlined below and a timeline for the programme is provided in Appendix E.
55. The Ministry will continue to engage key people in the education and disability sectors to ensure their ongoing support for the system wide improvements to additional learning support.

Designing the additional learning support system

56. To ensure that the all components of additional learning support are managed as a system the Ministry will describe the future system of additional learning support and the associated accountabilities and establish the monitoring and reporting required to inform decisions about the system.

Redesigning the service delivery model

57. The current multiple processes and criteria for identifying and responding to need will be replaced with one, simple, joint process that is used by all providers of additional learning support: the Ministry, the RTLB service and others.
58. A continuum of additional learning support will be established for each child accompanied by individual plans that provide for continuity of support and regular review of need.
59. Collaboration between additional learning support providers, educators, parents and whānau and other agencies will be introduced for all aspects of identifying and responding to need: i.e. the needs of individual children and the needs of whole schools/ early childhood centres and whole Communities of Learning.
60. In partnership with established Communities of Learning, the Ministry will align the new service delivery model with the Communities of Learning model.
61. The Ministry will work with Child Youth and Family and health sector agencies to improve interagency collaboration so that the impact on educational progress and achievement is fully accounted for in plans for the health and wellbeing of individual children and young people who need additional learning support.

62. The Ministry will work with the newly established Education Council to examine how well initial teacher education programmes focus on inclusive education practice and determining how well current contracted professional development providers are using the resources developed for them.
63. A nationally consistent approach to professional development (in relation to inclusive education practice) will be established for educators from early childhood education onwards.

Implementing the new service delivery model

64. A programme will be established to implement the redesigned service delivery model.
65. The engagement process completed as part of the update identified some aspects of current service delivery that can be improved quickly with minimal or no service design required. The engagement process also created some momentum for improvement. To continue this momentum we have established a set of 22 projects that can start almost immediately and that, at a local level, will address some key problems with current service delivery. The projects will also help inform the service design work that will occur concurrently.
66. The Ministry will monitor the area projects and develop a national implementation approach to be rolled out across the education system during the remainder of 2016. A list of the proposed projects is provided in Appendix F.

Funding analysis

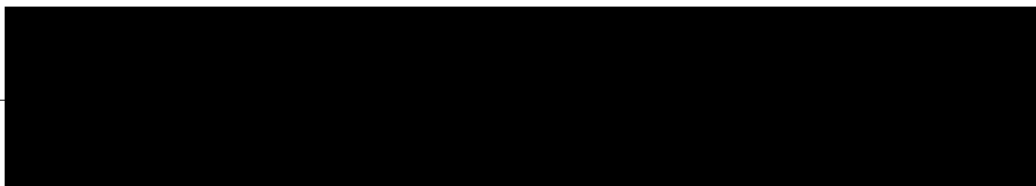
67. An ongoing programme of work will be established to examine the return on all components of investment in additional learning support. This will ensure that the best use is made of the total funds invested and may identify opportunities for redeploying funds to areas of greater need.

Other Relevant Information

IHC Complaint to the Human Rights Commission

68. In August 2014 the IHC lodged a claim with the Human Rights Tribunal of systemic, unjustified discrimination against students with disabilities, where such disabilities require accommodations to enable learning and achievement in school. The Ministry of Education is defending that claim on the basis that the complaints cannot be substantiated and that in any case a range of actions have been taken to further improve the responsiveness of the education system to accommodate the needs of all children.

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Appendices

70. The following appendices are attached to this paper:
- a) The total investment in additional learning support.
 - b) The current state of the system of additional learning support.
 - c) Overview of the proposed future state of the system.
 - d) The key features of the proposed future state.
 - e) Timetable for the programme.
 - f) A list of the proposed area projects.
 - g) A summary of the update Engagement Report.

Appendix A: the total investment in additional learning support

Not for Public Release

Total services delivered by*:

Ministry of Education \$143.9 m (25%)

Schools including residential & special schools:
\$394.5 m (67%)

Independent service providers \$48.3 m (8%)

Total: \$586.7 m

* As opposed to budget held by

** Changed from original Update A3 to include
\$18.5 m of MoE funding that was missed.

SERVICES FOR STUDENTS				
Service	Number of students	Age group	\$000 (FY 13/14 actual)	Responsibility
Residential & Special Schools	4,000	5 to 21	**\$155,879	Schools
Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS) excluding ORS students at special schools	5,323	5 to 21	\$144,256	MOE & schools
High Health Needs	742	5 to 18	\$5,929	MOE
Intensive Wraparound Service	285	9 to 14	\$7,687	MOE
Complex Communication needs	1,233	5 to 8	\$4,404	MOE
Communication service	5,694	5 to 8	\$17,591	MOE
Severe Behaviour Service	3,550	5 to 18	\$39,043	MOE
Moderate Physical Disability needs	451	5 to 18	\$3,000	MOE
Early Intervention Services	14,134	0 to 5	\$44,390	MOE
Hearing Service for those not covered by ORS	1,314	0 to 14	\$1,500	MOE & Deaf Education Centres
SUBTOTAL	36,726		\$423,679	
GENERIC SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS				
Resource Teachers Learning & Behaviour (RTLb) supported students	13,214	5 to 14	\$86,763	RTLb service
Special education grants, estimated 30 – 50,00 students per year are directly supported	40,000	5 to 18	\$36,922	
SUBTOTAL	53,214		\$123,685	
Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L), currently supporting inclusivity in 582 schools		5 to 18	\$31,008	MOE & contracted specialist providers
Assistive technology, specialist assessments, equipment & advice, eligibility verification.		5 to 18	\$5,118	
National study awards (primary & secondary school staff)		5 to 18	\$3,245	
SUBTOTAL			\$39,371	
TOTAL	\$89,940		\$586,735	



Appendix B: the current state of the system

Not for Public Release

Children and their whānau find access to additional support difficult to navigate, fragmented, lacking in continuity and often subject to delay.

Most services are accessed via separate processes, different criteria & different age limitations.

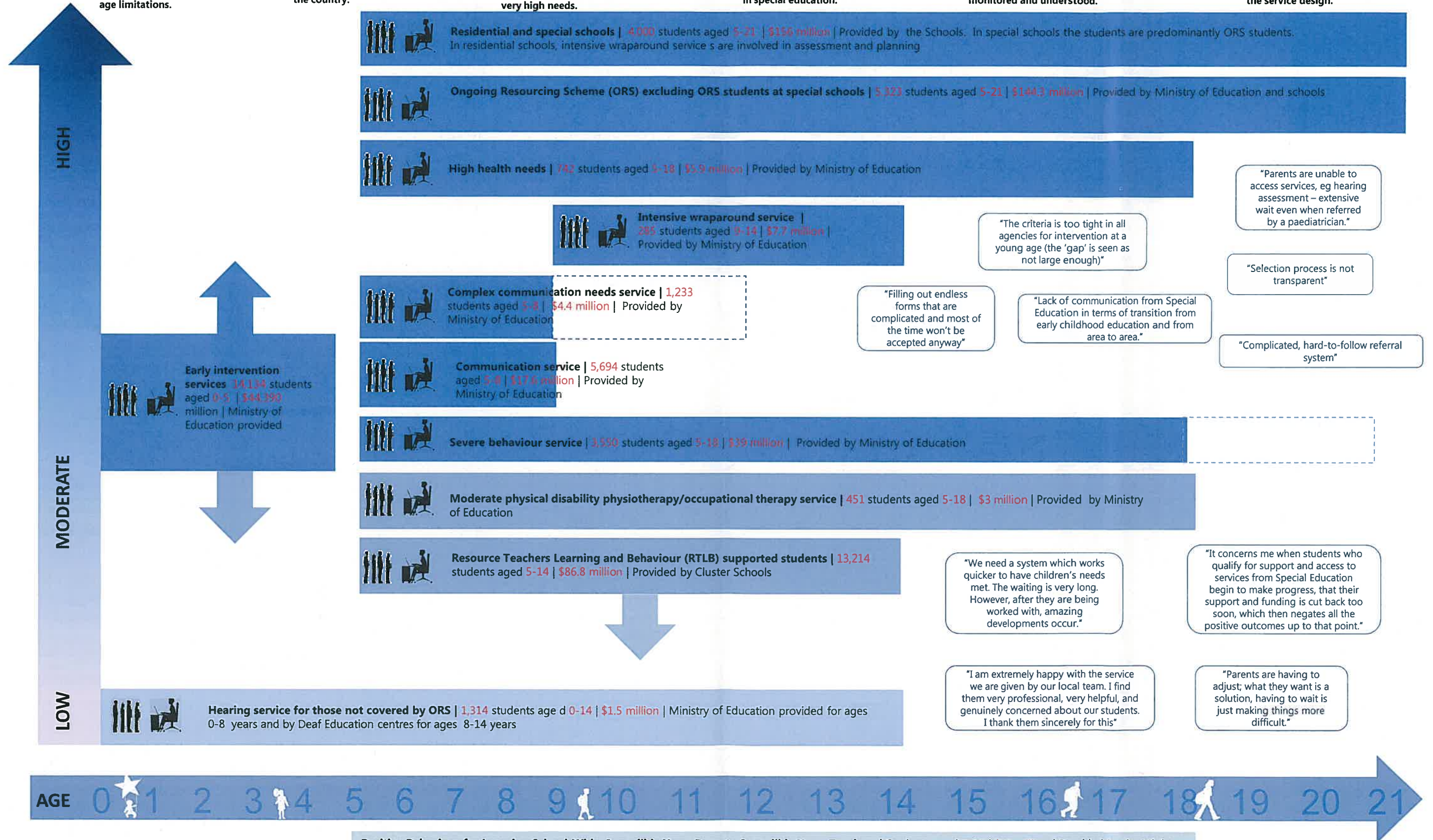
Wait list times for some services vary widely across the country.

Additional learning support is not aligned to a continuum of increasing intensity of need. Many services are only available to students with high or very high needs.

The Ministry does not have a sufficient system-wide view of the whole investment in special education.

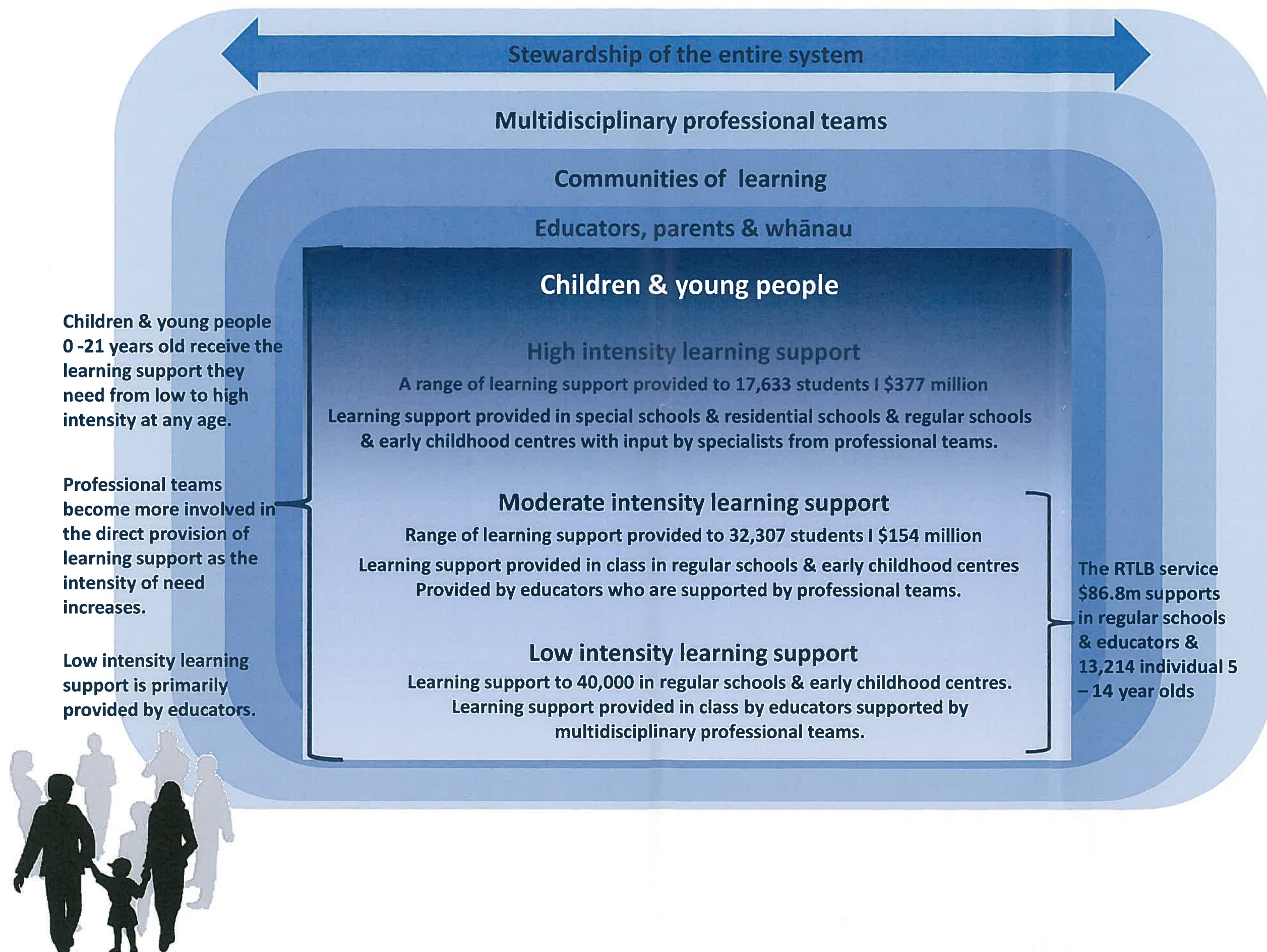
There is some evidence that demand is changing, however trends in demand are not adequately monitored and understood.

Collaboration across ECE & school occurs in some instances but is not an expectation of the service design.



Appendix C: overview of the future state

Not for Public Release



Appendix D: key features of the future state

Not for Public Release

PRINCIPLES

Educators , parents & whānau are well supported as the primary providers of teaching & learning.

Child centred: the right learning support from early childhood as long as it's needed.

Additional learning support is provided at an individual, group & system level.

Active collaboration between professionals, educators, parents, whānau & other agencies.

An inclusive education system that provides for & monitors the progress of *all* children and young people.

STEWARDSHIP

System wide monitoring & reporting against key indicators for the total investment in additional learning support.

Aggregated information about student progress is a key indicator.

Adjust the focus of investment & expertise in response to demand.

Leadership of improvements to the system - in keeping with the evidence of best practice.

Establish feedback loops with the education & disability sectors.

FEATURES OF THE NEW SYSTEM

Professionals collaborate

MOE, other specialists & RTLBs work in partnership. Collaborate with parents/whānau , educators & other agencies. Provide nationally consistent advice, guidance & professional development to educators.

Single point of contact

When a need for learning support is identified, a single point of contact will be provided to the child & parents, whānau & educators.

Educators

Supported by professionals with advice, guidance & PLD to be confident & capable teaching diverse learners. Collaborate with parents, whānau & professionals.

Parents/whānau

Are supported by the professionals with information, advice and guidance. They are involved in identifying and planning responses to their child's additional learning support needs.

Other agencies

Other agencies may identify a need for additional learning support & initiate action. Agencies will combine resources to support the child effectively.

Single, early identification of need

A single process is used to identify the need for additional learning support. Identification occurs early, can be initiated by anyone, and involves all the relevant people.

Managed transitions & reviews

Professionals work with the school/ECE to ensure seamless transitions and regular reviews of the additional learning support in place.

Monitoring progress & achievement

All educators will have the tools & skills to monitor & report on the progress of all children & young people receiving learning support. Aggregated system wide progress data is monitored & reported.

Simple and timely processes

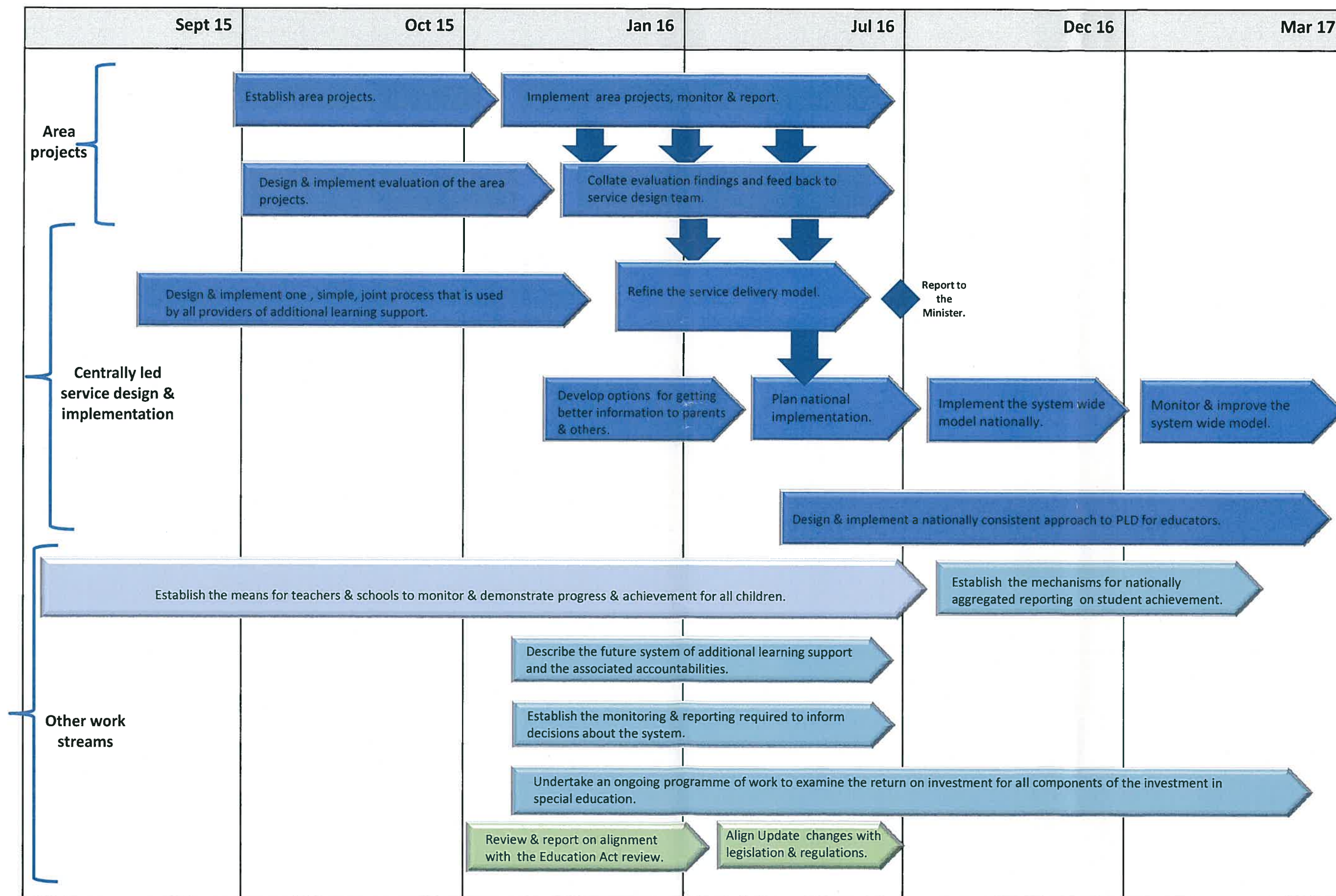
Identification and response is simple and prompt. Decisions about how responses will be resourced and funded are made by the professionals and do not determine or constrain the identification and response process.

Communities of learning will provide an ideal vehicle for the improvements we want to achieve for children and young people who need additional learning support, particularly continuity of support and collaboration amongst professionals, educators and others.



Appendix E: timetable for the programme

Not for Public Release



Appendix F: Special Education update projects

22 Special Education update improvement projects are being set up around New Zealand. The Ministry of Education is working in partnership with the Resource Teachers for Learning and Behaviour (RTLb) service and will collaborate with educators and health and social service agencies. Four of the project teams will work with established Communities of Learning (CoL) and others will establish relationships as opportunities arise.

The problem or opportunity	What we'll do	Outcomes
Tai Tokerau Many primary school new entrants transition from early childhood with inadequate language and social skills	We'll train and coach early childhood educators to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> help children develop the oral language and social skills needed to participate successfully at primary school pass on skills and tips to parents and whānau 	Children progress to primary school with better language and social skills Early childhood educators can better support language and social skills development Educators, parents and whānau and others are more confident to offer additional learning support
Tai Tokerau Many students arrive at intermediate or high school needing additional support and this demand is not adequately met	We'll better engage students transitioning to intermediate and secondary school and their educators with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a simpler more joined up process for educators to access support a range of useful and easy to access resources for educators and more tailored professional development clearer and managed pathways for Kaikohe students as they transition to intermediate and college in 2017 	Simpler, more joined up support for students, educators, parents and whānau Increased educator confidence in teaching diverse learners Increased joint ownership of decision making Smoother transitions
Auckland City Transitions from ECE to primary school are sometimes poorly supported for children with moderate needs.	We'll target EC centres that have children enrolled with identified moderate need for learning support and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> help EC staff understand how to identify and respond to diverse learning needs, including through targeted professional development closely involve educators, parents, whānau and specialists in each child's transition to primary school 	Simpler, more joined up support and seamless transitions for children with moderate needs Improved educator understanding of the links between the EC and primary school curricula Increased educator confidence in identifying and teaching diverse learners Stronger relationships with educators and other agencies so concerns are more easily addressed
North West Auckland Transitions from ECE to primary school are sometimes poorly supported for children with moderate needs.	We'll target about 20 – 30 children in ECE already receiving a moderate level of early intervention support who will transition to school in the first 6 months of 2016. We'll: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> partner with the RTLb service and involve EC centres in RTLb school clusters so we can improve transitions. We'll: phase improvements in West Auckland, then Hibiscus Coast and finally the 	Simpler, more joined up support and seamless transitions for children with moderate needs Improved educator understanding of the links between the EC and primary school curricula Increased educator confidence in identifying and teaching diverse learners

	<p>North Shore, learning from each phase to inform the next</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide a point of contact, liaison and information for the parents, whānau and educators of each child needing additional support 	Stronger relationships with educators and other agencies so concerns are more easily addressed
<p>Manukau</p> <p>Transitions for Māori and Pasifika children from ECE to primary school need to be better supported – these students are over represented in their need for additional help</p>	<p>We will collaborate with educators, parents and whānau and special school outreach services to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> tailor support for 76 Maori and Pasifika children with moderate to complex needs as they transition from ECE to school. 	<p>Simpler, more joined up support and seamless transitions for Māori and Pasifika children with moderate needs</p> <p>Improved educator understanding of the links between the EC and primary school curricula</p> <p>Increased educator confidence in identifying and teaching diverse learners</p> <p>Stronger relationships with educators and other agencies</p>
<p>Franklin</p> <p>Many EC centres aren't confident teaching children who need additional learning support and children can transition to primary school with learning difficulties that could have been addressed sooner</p>	<p>We'll work with a local special school, early intervention educators and an initial 20 ECE centres, kohanga reo and kindergartens to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> support EC staff to easily access specialist help and build their capability and confidence over time provide tips and guidance for educators, parents and whānau support children whose transition to school needs additional support support whānau and educators where needs are complex and ongoing 	<p>Early identification of need and reduced waiting times</p> <p>Increased support options through a team approach</p> <p>Educators are confident, skilled and fully include children with additional needs</p> <p>Parents and whānau are better informed.</p> <p>Specialist time is freed up to work with children who have more intensiveneed for support.</p>
<p>Hamilton</p> <p>Transitions from ECE to primary school are sometimes poorly supported for children with moderate needs.</p>	<p>We'll work with a cluster of schools and early childhood centres in Fairfield to jointly provide additional learning support to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> clarify and understand expressed concerns in the cluster identify support needs of children and educators earlier, providing immediate interim assistance develop more comprehensive plans to support students, schools and EC centres in the cluster to jointly resolve more issues independently 	<p>Clearer, shared understanding of needs in cluster EC and schools and better tailored responses, including professional development</p> <p>Quicker responses to support immediate needs</p> <p>Increased educator confidence in teaching diverse learners</p> <p>Smoother transitions for children through the cluster of schools</p>
<p>Hauraki</p> <p>Remote, predominantly Māori communities are transitioning to primary school with unmet needs</p>	<p>We'll collaborate with the local RTLB service, kura, a new EC centre and the community to raise everyone's knowledge and skills to identify and meet need. We'll:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> clarify and understand how greater collaboration can work provide tailored EC and school support into homes, kōhanga reo and kura 	<p>The Ministry and RTLB service will better understand how to deliver effective support to remote, rural and predominantly Maori communities</p> <p>Educators, parents and whānau and others will be more capable and confident in addressing needs for additional learning support</p> <p>Children will be better prepared to progress and achieve in primary school</p>
<p>Tauranga</p> <p>More support is needed to better support students with the highest needs and challenging behaviour.</p>	<p>We'll work with the RTLB service and a cluster of 7 schools to help educators and parents better meet the learning needs of 6 children and young people with the highest needs and challenging behaviours. We'll:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> simplify processes for educators, students, parents and whānau use existing PB4L processes to identify students who need extra help change how behaviour support is delivered within this cluster of schools 	<p>Smoother pathways for children parents and whānau as they progress through the cluster of schools.</p> <p>Simpler processes and quicker access to immediate and/or interim support</p> <p>Clearer, shared understanding of needs and better tailored responses</p> <p>Increased educator confidence in teaching diverse learners.</p> <p>An approach to planning and prioritising needs in a Community of Learning</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • train, coach and better support approx 30 adults supporting the young people 	
Whakatane Work with a Community of Learning to improve additional learning support planning and continuity of support for groups of students	We'll work with the RTLB service and Whakatane Community of Learning schools and EC centres to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify all sources of additional learning support funding and economies of scale for the professional development • agree a service delivery plan that identifies the best ways of providing additional learning support and all available funding 	More planned, joined up and responsive services for students, educators, parents and whānau More focused specialist support where it's needed including building educator knowledge, skills and confidence Better shared understanding of inclusive education and how to achieve it Schools better identify and address the needs of students
Hawkes Bay Work with a Community of Learning to improve additional learning support planning and continuity of support for groups of students	We'll work with the RTLB service, special schools and Hastings and Napier Community of Learning to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agree a service delivery plan to improve support for staff and students • deliver seamless transitions for children and young people within the Community of Learning • build educator knowledge, skills and confidence to meet needs in a sustainable way 	More planned, joined up and responsive services for students, educators, parents and whānau More focused specialist support where it's needed including building educator knowledge, skills and confidence Better shared understanding of inclusive education and how to achieve it Schools better identify and address the needs of students
Rotorua Transitions from ECE to primary school are sometimes poorly supported for children with moderate needs and behavioural difficulties.	We'll focus initially on urban Rotorua EC centres and primary schools (and then more broadly) to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop a transition plan for each child outlining how they'll be supported and their expected learning support needs • assign one person for each child and their parents and whānau as the point of contact during and after their transition • work with new entrant educators in primary schools to understand their needs and help them develop knowledge, skills and confidence to teach children with moderate learning and/or behavioural needs 	Smoother transition pathways for children, parents and whānau Quicker responses by working with educators, parents and whānau on support they can immediately provide Increased educator confidence in teaching diverse learners and a positive impact on other children in the classroom
Gisborne Additional learning support is compartmentalised and needlessly bureaucratic, complex and confusing	We'll work with the RTLB service and other agencies to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establish a single process for identifying and responding to children's needs and agree a plan and funding for each child • jointly make decisions about the best use of available funds and how to best build educator capability • engage with educators and tailor professional development to better support them 	A single simple process for all requests for support, earlier identification of need and quicker responses Smoother transitions for children, parents and whānau Increased educator confidence in teaching diverse learners and a positive impact on other children in the classroom Better use of joint resources
Gisborne Improving poor language skills in ECE so children adapt well to school, progress and achieve	We'll work with a group of EC Centres and schools that report new entrants with poor good language skills to improve oral language development. We'll: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support educators to complete intensive Learning Language and Loving It training and coaching in Term 1 2016 If successful we'll extend delivery to clusters of other EC centres and schools.	Children will transition to school with better language skills EC educators will be better able to support language skill development Educators, parents and whānau and others will be more confident in addressing needs for additional learning support

Wellington Additional learning support is compartmentalised and needlessly bureaucratic, complex and confusing	We'll work with RTLB and other agencies and listen to what 80 ECE, primary and secondary school children and their parents and whānau want to achieve. We'll: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop and regularly adapt plans to support each learner to progress and achieve identify and address service gaps and duplication raise teachers' ability to teach a range of student with diverse learning needs We will phase the plans in during Term One 2016 with the intention that plans will be established for all new requests for service from July 2016 onwards.	Smoother transitions for children, parents and whānau Quicker responses with immediate interim responses Increased educator confidence in teaching diverse learners and a positive impact on other children in the classroom
Porirua Earlier identification and support for Māori and Pasifika children in Pasifika ECE and Kohanga Reo	We'll send four appropriately skilled staff in to support 53 diverse EC centres in Porirua to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> be present on site to answer questions and give immediate advice provide support in the context of students' language and culture Depending on impact, this approach will be rolled out more widely later in 2016.	Earlier identification and tailored responses to need, including working with the cultural strengths of the children's EC centres Increased educator confidence in teaching diverse learners and a positive impact on other children in the classroom Average age at referral to reduce over the longer term and align with other ethnicities
Wellington, Manawatu and Taranaki Parents and whānau find accessing additional support for their children complicated and confusing and want more information about their child's education and what support they can access	We'll establish parent and whānau groups that are representative of diverse communities to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> initially listen and seek to deeply understand parent and whānau aspirations for their children, the barriers they face and how we can be more responsive understand what they want from ongoing engagement provide relevant information, advice and guidance that's of interest and value involve parents and whānau more in decisions about additional support 	Better and more timely support for parents and whānau Better support for children through immediate help for their parents and whānau in addressing aspects of their children's additional learning support needs. Improved access to information, advice and guidance Improved engagement processes with reduced isolation for some parents and whānau
Taranaki Raising knowledge and skills in EC communities to better meet increasingly diverse needs amongst children	We'll work with the Kindergarten Association and a community of 4 EC centres to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> deliver workshops so all educators develop a shared understanding of inclusion and knowledge and skills to support children with diverse needs, including Māori and Pasifika children, those from low income families and others with diverse needs adapt services so all children who need it will receive some form of service, rather than just the 3 - 5% with most severe needs. 	Increased educator confidence in teaching diverse learners Improved support for a wider group of children leading to some freeing up of specialists to work with a wider range of children
Nelson, Marlborough, West Coast Transitions from ECE to primary school are sometimes poorly supported and we need to better support all learners with behavioural difficulties and/or who are at risk of disengaging	We'll collaborate to establish a one service approach for West Coast, Marlborough and Golden Bay to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improve transitions from EC to primary school for children with moderate to severe needs support schools to retain and engage priority learners who are at risk, including those suspended or excluded 	A simple, single process for all requests for additional learning support Smoother transitions for children, parents and whānau Better joint use of education sector and other resources Stronger relationships so concerns are more easily identified and addressed Better understanding of educator needs and more tailored professional development

<p>Canterbury</p> <p>Transitions from ECE to primary school are sometimes poorly supported for children with moderate needs.</p>	<p>We'll implement a transition framework to support all children who need additional learning support and ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parents and whānau are informed and supported to lead the transition for their child, with the support of informed staff in EC centres and schools • roles in the months prior to transition are clear for the child's first weeks/months at school 	<p>Simpler, more joined up support with smoother transitions</p> <p>Increased engagement so everyone on the child's team is confident to say "We are ready!" on their first day at school</p> <p>Stronger relationships so concerns are more easily identified and addressed</p> <p>Better understanding of educator needs and more tailored professional development</p>
<p>Otago</p> <p>Work with a Community of Learning to improve additional learning support planning, transitions and continuity of support for groups of students</p>	<p>We'll work with the Cromwell Community of Learning to build understanding of inclusive education and to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agree a service delivery plan to improve support for learners and educators • improve information sharing between EC centres and primary schools • identify and address needs earlier • improve transitions for all students, and particularly those needing support • deliver professional learning and development in a cross sector community of practice, establishing available resourcing and specialist support 	<p>More responsive services across the Community of Learning</p> <p>More planned, joined up and responsive services for students, educators, parents and whānau</p> <p>More focused specialist support where it's needed</p> <p>Improved educator knowledge, skills and confidence to address needs</p>
<p>Southland</p> <p>Transitions from ECE to primary school are sometimes poorly supported for children with moderate needs.</p>	<p>We'll increase engagement between Gore/Mataura educators, parents, whānau and specialists to improve understanding among educators of the links between ECE and primary school and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify children with additional learning needs sooner • agree planned responses for children with everyone involved • establish the process and communication to better managed transitions 	<p>Earlier identification of children in Gore/Mataura who have additional needs</p> <p>Simpler, more joined up support and smoother transitions</p> <p>Stronger relationships and increased educator confidence in teaching diverse learners</p> <p>Improvements will benefit other children not currently receiving Ministry support</p>

Special Education Update

Summary of
engagement
findings



Minister's foreword

The Ministry of Education began work on the Special Education Update earlier this year to make sure the education system fully supports the progress and achievement of all children, including those who need additional support to learn.

In recent years our education system has become much more inclusive. About 95 percent of children and young people who need additional learning support are now enrolled in regular schools and early childhood centres.

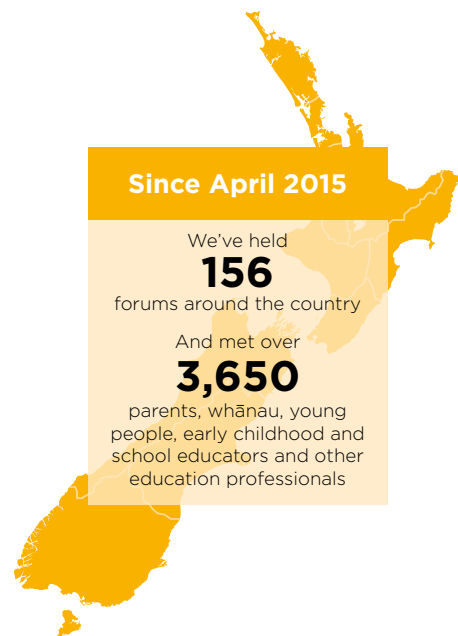
This suggests that the education system works well for many, but we've heard that sometimes our system fails and getting the right learning support is more complicated than it needs to be. There's a lot more we can do to help.

The Update forums

We've held 156 forums around the country since April 2015 to understand what improvements people think are needed. We met over 3,650 parents, whānau, young people, early childhood and school educators and other education professionals to find out how we can improve the education system for them.

These discussions didn't start from scratch because feedback since the 2010 review of Special Education gave us some ideas about what still isn't working. The topics we put forward for discussion at the forums focused on greater involvement of children, teachers, parents and whānau and simplifying and streamlining how additional learning support is provided.

We've gathered all the feedback from the forums, worked out the main themes and produced a full report to guide the next round of improvements for children and young people who need additional learning support. This summary introduces those themes and you can read the full report here: www.education.govt.nz.



WHAT WE HEARD

Most Update forum feedback was about six areas for improvement:

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|---|--|
| 1 Better guidance and training for teachers – from early childhood education onwards | 4 Better interagency coordination |
| 2 Greater involvement of parents and whānau and better information for them | 5 Better transparency and more joined up services across the education system |
| 3 Much simpler and more transparent access to support | 6 Streamlined support when a child moves – to primary or high school or to another school |

Update action plan

- ✓ The Ministry will work with others over the coming months and during 2016 to action these improvements in line with the engagement findings.
- ✓ We are going to reorganise how we support families and teachers and simplify the support we offer, so it's child centred, easy to access, prompt, early and carries on for as long as it's needed. Families will have a single point of contact and support will be driven by the child's needs.
- ✓ Collaboration between professionals, educators, students, parents and whānau must underpin this approach.
- ✓ The Ministry and its partners will start trialling improvements in communities across New Zealand over the coming months.
- ✓ We'll also improve the way we gather, analyse and share information and review teacher training and professional development to strengthen practice.

Thank you to everyone who is supporting and contributing to the Update and spoke at the recent forums with such passion and commitment.

Together we'll build a strongly inclusive education system so all our children progress, learn and have a brighter future.

Signature

What we heard

1 Better guidance and training for teachers – from early childhood onward

People at the forums know that confident and capable teachers make a big difference to the education and wellbeing of all children, particularly children who need additional support to learn.

They made the following points:

Good teachers can help all children progress and achieve no matter what their unique learning needs are.

Teachers should be comfortable raising their concerns with parents and whānau and know how to help organise the right support for children who need it.

We need a system-wide focus on improving teaching and all teacher training and development should include a much stronger focus on how to teach children with a diverse range of learning needs.

Universities have a big role to play because they train new teachers. The teacher training curriculum needs to emphasise teaching all children. Training should also inform trainee teachers about the additional support available to them as teachers and how to access it.

Teachers need to be better trained to quickly recognise when children need more help – and what to do about that.

2 Greater involvement of parents and whānau and better information for them

Parents want to be heard and respected as active and equal participants in their child's learning. This will reduce stress, anxiety and frustration for them. It will free up their time and mental energy for positive, child-centred interactions that improve relationships and are better for their child.

Some of the points made include:

Parents and whānau want to be much better informed about the help available to them and their children – and how to access it.

We need to get much better at supporting and involving parents and whānau in the process of understanding a child's learning needs and working out the best response. Too often parents and whānau hear about meetings and decisions after these have happened.

They also want easily understood information about their children's progress at each step and they often don't get that now.

Better information and involvement also makes it easier for parents and whānau to confidently support their child's education in the right ways.

Simplicity, transparency and accountability matter. The information parents get about their child's progress and wellbeing isn't always up to date or sufficiently detailed. We need to capture better data and improve the quality of reporting.

People liked our suggestion of a single point of contact to liaise with the child, parents, whānau, teachers and others to plan and arrange additional learning support.

Many parents also see the need for an advocate to make sure they get continuity of service and that there is a good 'fit' between the single point of contact, the child, parents, whānau and anyone else on a child's support team.

3 Much simpler and more transparent access to support

Most people at the forums described the same barriers to making sure the right additional learning support is in place.

Their concerns include:

Accessing timely service involves complex referral processes and paperwork. Some criteria are set too high and they can sometimes be unclear. Many forms of additional learning support are limited by age and there are waitlists for many.

Many people said the approach to identifying a child's need for support should be standardised and happen sooner. A simple, transparent and flexible identification process would make the service more timely and more responsive to need.

Information about how the system of additional learning support works is limited and confusing.

Services need to be culturally appropriate, available in all communities and free of negative perceptions.

Professionals outside the education system such as doctors and social workers find it just as difficult as parents to get action and a 'wait and see' attitude sometimes gets in the way of early help.

4 Better interagency coordination

Many people talked about the importance of identifying a child's need for additional learning support as early as possible – and that paediatricians, nurses and social workers who work with the very young are vital to getting this right. Education professionals need to link up with them much more.

With stronger relationships we can build wider understanding and help colleagues to spot the need for additional learning support as early as possible.

How well specialists in the education system work with their colleagues in the health sector in particular is a major concern. Many people said health and education services are disjointed. This leads to inefficiencies and some children “fall between the cracks”.

5 Better transparency and more joined up services across the education system

Many people said the current system of additional learning support is driven by multiple criteria, labels, ages, stages and other artificial barriers – not by what the child needs. Transitions can be difficult and transparency and continuity are a challenge.

People want streamlined, consistent, better coordinated services delivered by skilled professionals with clear roles and responsibilities.

Ministry staff and everyone else should use plain language to describe how we can help and avoid technical jargon.

Wellbeing and achievement plans should be in place for each child based on a well-rounded understanding of their need for additional learning support. This plan should also reflect the child's goals and aspirations and the views of parents and whānau and teachers. Plans should be reviewed and updated as the child's needs change.

6 Streamlined support when a child moves – to primary or high school or to another school

Transitions (for example, from early childhood education to school) can be challenging for all children and sometimes even more difficult for children and young people who need additional learning support.

We heard that better planning and information sharing and focusing on continuity of support make all the difference.

More information

More information about the Special Education Update, including the complete report of Engagement forums feedback, is available on our website: www.education.govt.nz

You can email us at: special.education@education.govt.nz