

## **Education Report: Special Education Update 2015**

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### **Executive Summary**

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- 1 This paper outlines thinking to date on the Special Education Update and proposes a programme of action to remodel the education system for children and young people with special education needs, their parents and whānau.
- 2 Updating the Special Education system is a key deliverable under the Strengthening Inclusion Priority Area (EWP3) of your Education Work Programme. Other Education Work Programme priority areas will be linked to and will help realize the changes proposed by the Update.
- 3 The scope of this Update includes all aspects of special education including design of the system, structure of the system, decision making, defining and reporting on performance and service delivery regardless of who delivers it.
- 4 Since the 2010 Review of Special Education, good progress has been made in some areas for children and young people with special education needs:
  - Recent ERO reports indicate that the inclusivity of the education system has improved for children and young people with special education needs.
  - Some fresh models of service delivery and practice are being trialed and these are showing signs of success in some instances.
- 5 However, persistent concerns about many aspects of how children and young people with special education needs are supported have not been resolved. These concerns can be viewed from two perspectives:
- 6 For children and young people with special education needs, their parents/whānau and everyone involved in their education:
  - Support for children and young people with special education needs (and their parents and whānau) has become highly fragmented, leading to service barriers at key transition points (such as progressing from early childhood education to primary school).
  - The funding model is compartmentalised and has become increasingly complicated and inflexible as funding is ring-fenced for discrete purposes.
  - Access and decision making about assistance are unnecessarily complicated for everyone involved. This hampers the prompt intervention which might allay the need for longer term, high intensity intervention.
  - Too many children are waiting too long for service. Given we know the earlier support is provided the better the long-term outcomes, this may be having long term negative effects on many of our children.

- There is no one point of contact and coordination for everyone involved in the education of a child or young person with special education needs.
- Education pathways for children and young people with special education needs are not always adequately planned and managed causing unnecessary difficulties for the child, their parents and whānau and everyone involved in their education.
- Special education need varies in terms of severity, duration, and the intensity of intervention needed to make a difference. These dimensions in combination should determine the type and intensity of assistance each child receives, when and for how long. However current funding and service models do not always take these factors into account.
- Methods of assessing educational progress and achievement are not appropriate for many children and young people with special education needs – they do not always capture the progress made or provide information on the effectiveness of interventions.
- The importance of early identification of need and early intervention is not sufficiently emphasised, and children are proceeding through the education system with unmet and in some cases exacerbated needs.
- The special education workforce is highly compartmentalised and there is insufficient coordination across professional groups or flexibility to manoeuvre human resources to areas of need.
- Inefficiencies and confusion arise for everyone involved due to insufficient coordination between the education system and the health and welfare systems.

7 For the Ministry of Education and others responsible for the education system as a whole:

- About \$530m is invested each year in special education through a range of mechanisms. About one third of this is through services provided directly by Special Education in the Ministry. The remainder are delivered through funds provided to the education sector. However, we have a very limited understanding of what these funds are spent on, the bases for these decisions and the resulting educational outcomes being achieved for children and young people with special education needs.
- There is no agreed system wide model of service delivery to provide adequate transparency and certainty for the people involved in a child's education.
- There is no stewardship or leadership of the whole system. Because special education has not been seen as a system, the Ministry of Education (the Ministry) has not taken ownership of it or its performance as a whole. There is insufficient focus on the design, monitoring, evaluation and management of the system as a whole. This makes it very difficult to continuously improve the system and ensure it is responsive to changing demand. It also means that Ministers very rarely receive advice about the whole system. There are no real barriers to changing this. It requires the system to be properly defined and recognizable, and the Ministry to take on the stewardship role.

- The inflexibility of current funding and delivery arrangements creates additional administration overheads and diverts frontline line resources away from service delivery. This in turn contributes to higher workloads for staff and lower job satisfaction and morale.
8. These are enduring challenges that have not been addressed by the actions of previous reviews. Their solution requires introducing new levers that will work systematically together to promote change and advancement. Key proposals for improving the education system for children and young people with special education needs are outlined later in this Report. These will be discussed, tested and adapted during the engagement with representative groups from the education and disability sectors between March and May of 2015. Alongside that, analysis and design will continue with a view to proposing a programme of work for 2015 – 2016 in a Cabinet Paper to be completed for your consideration in July 2015.
  9. Opportunities exist with the establishment of Communities of Schools to introduce new approaches to decision making, assessment of need and service delivery. The system design work to be undertaken will accommodate the opportunities to use new approaches in Communities of Schools.
  10. This paper outlines current concerns about the education system for children and young people with special education needs and proposes several areas for improvement that are consistent with the Ministry's strategic intentions and the wider work programme. This is followed by a description of the programme of work required to introduce the proposed improvements.
  11. Appendices 1 and 2 describe how the current system is viewed by the people most involved – and how they would like it to change. Appendix 3 provides a high level timetable for the proposed programme of work.

## Recommended Actions

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### We recommend that you:

- a. **note** the Ministry of Education's thinking on the Special Education update 2015;
- b. **note** the process of engagement with key stakeholders in the education and disability sectors as outlined; and
- c. **note** that recommendations for further action will be included in the Cabinet Paper to be scheduled for the end of July.



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Hon Hekia Parata  
**Minister of Education**



## **Education Report: Special Education Update 2015**

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### **Purpose of Report**

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1. This paper outlines our thinking on the Special Education update 2015 (the update) and proposes next steps.

### **Background**

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2. In 2010, the Government's review of special education confirmed a commitment to work towards 100 percent of schools demonstrating inclusive practice by 2014, and increased access to some existing services.
3. It was agreed that following that work, we would build on the principle of inclusiveness that sits at the heart of the education system's accommodation of those children and young people who have special needs, the findings of the 2010 Review, and the progress made since then towards achieving greater equity of provision, better targeting and more personalised pathways for individual achievement.
4. Recent ERO reports indicate strong improvement with regard to inclusivity. 78% of schools are considered to now be using mostly inclusive practices. Those schools that are not "fully inclusive" are still likely to be fulfilling their legal obligations for student with special education needs. The focus on "inclusiveness" has lifted the bar to ensure that schools are doing better than just fulfilling their legal obligations.
5. However, while much progress has been made with regard to the inclusivity of the education system for children and young people with special education needs, there is significant room for improvement.
6. Further work is required to update the special education system so it fully capitalise on New Zealand and international evidence of what works and which serves a clearly defined purpose i.e. to help children and young people with special education needs to progress and achieve in education alongside their peers.
7. Updating the Special Education system is a key deliverable under the Strengthening Inclusion Priority Area (EWP3) of your Education Work Programme. Other Education Work Programme priority areas will be linked to and will help realize the changes proposed by the Update. The other workstreams include:
  - Investing for Educational Success (EWP 1)
  - Improve student-centred pathways EWP 2)
  - Strengthen 21st Century practice in teaching and learning (EWP4)
  - Review of the Education Act 1989 (EWP 5)
  - Review the funding systems for ECE and schooling (EWP6)

8. The programme of work to ensure the education system works for children and young people with special education needs will focus on significant improvements in the five areas summarised below.
- **Improved integration:** the improved system will be predicated on removing the fragmentation and compartmentalisation that has evolved as each new component (or additional source of funds) has been added. Service delivery and funding will be reconsidered to ensure that access to services is simplified and barriers are removed to enable children and young people with special education needs to progress naturally through the system. This links to several of the Education Work Programme workstreams (Implement Investing in Educational Success – and Improving student-centred pathways).
  - **Joint decision making:** schools can and should be more involved in the decision making for children and young people with special education needs enrolled - or expected to enroll at their school. In the revised system their views and the views of other key parties will be included in the decision making process. Communities of Schools provide an ideal platform for this way of working. This links to the Education Work Programme workstream Implement Investing in Educational Success.
  - **Refining and expanding core standards of service:** any integrated special education system needs to be sufficiently defined and managed to raise standards across the board – but sufficiently adaptive to support the different modes of education already present. It must enable a consistent level of service throughout New Zealand while still allowing for local flexibility and in particular the ability to tailor support to meet the specific needs of the child or young person. This is particularly important for children and young people in rural areas. They and their families should receive the same standards of service even though how that service is delivered may be different from their urban counterparts. This links to the Education Work Programme workstream Champion 21<sup>st</sup> Century Practice in teaching and learning.
  - **Improved management of each child's education pathway:** the education pathway for every child and young person with special education needs will be characterised by early identification and intervention, a focus on achievement, ongoing coordination, managed transitions and services and funding matched to the child's needs throughout their education. This links to several of the Education Work Programme workstreams (Implement Investing in Educational Success – and Improving student-centred pathways).
  - **Improved information about the system:** we'll address the current major gaps in information and understanding about where special education funds are being spent and the return on investment being achieved. In addition, the new system of determining the needs of children, planning, and delivering interventions will provide information which, when aggregated, will inform us on how well the system is working. Adjustments (e.g. moving services to areas of increased demand, improving the quality of services to ensure an improved outcome) can then be made to enhance performance as required. This links to several of the Education Work Programme workstreams (Champion 21<sup>st</sup> Century Practice in teaching and learning and Improving student-centred pathways).

## Improving the System

9. We know a lot about what a good system looks like for children and young people with special education needs. Forty years of robust evidence shows that the learning needs of children with special needs are the same as those who do not have such needs. This research has shaped and continues to shape special education practice via evidence-based frameworks<sup>1</sup>. The research shows that regardless of their needs children and young people learn best when:
- assessment of learning needs has a focus on the **individual, their context and environment**;
  - strategies and supports are provided in a **natural, least intrusive** environment ie naturally occurring routines at home and in education contexts;
  - they **participate** actively in decisions that affect them, taking into account their ability and level of understanding;
  - supported by a **coordinated and collaborative** approach to assessment, planning and decision making, implementation of strategies of supports and reviewing and monitoring of progress, where a 'team around the child' has the shared responsibility and accountability for decision making;
  - the focus of the specialist support is primarily about **building the** capabilities and confidence of the 'adults around the child';
  - the diverse needs of the child and their family are addressed in ways that enhance their presence, participation and learning **alongside their peers**;
  - the child's and young person's **culture, language, identity and background** are valued and integrated meaningfully into their learning and teaching experiences.
10. Some children and young people who have special education needs also require additional supports and services to enable their learning and achievement in the school, classroom, home and community. These may include specific adaptations to teaching strategies, curriculum and assessment within the NZ curricula, environmental accommodations, support from teacher aides, and access to specialist services. Leading practices in the planning and decision making about what supports and services are required looks to a shared and collective responsibility involving the family/ whanau, school, ECE, specialist services and other relevant agencies – with the child and young person's learning needs at the centre<sup>2</sup>. The role of specialist services has moved from an expert medical model (doing to) to being a collaborative partner (working with and alongside). A feature of leading practice internationally is a move towards a more integrated and coherent approach to how specialist services come together around the needs of the child and young person. This is particularly necessary for children and young people with the most complex needs necessitating an across agency approach<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> eg Bourke, Holden and Curzon, 2005

<sup>2</sup> Mitchell, 2010, Shaddock, 2009, Giangreco, Suter & Graf, 2011

<sup>3</sup> Mitchell, 2010, Shaddock, 2009, Church, Giangreco, Rain forth & York-Barr, 1997, McWilliams, Meyer & Evans, 2006

11. Internationally, education systems are moving from conceptualising and positioning of special education as a separate 'system' (which led to a 'siloed' and a less effective approach to the delivery of supports and services) to now being viewed as being within the broader education system i.e. one education system for all children and young people, where policies and practices must take account of the general education context<sup>4</sup>. This means that there needs to be a collective responsibility involving educators and specialist services to see that all children receive the education, supports and services necessary for them to be successful learners. The critical role of school leaders in shaping a school culture and learning environment that is inclusive and enables the learning and achievement of all learners<sup>5</sup> and the critical impact of the quality of teaching on achievement of all learners<sup>6</sup> is well evidenced.
12. Children and young people, their parents and whānau engage with the education system because they expect that education will develop and enrich them - and play an important role in their participation in society, now and in the future. Therefore understanding what constitutes achievement for each student in the context of these expectations – and ensuring the system is geared to those outcomes for them, is fundamental to whether the education system is working - or not.
13. For that reason, achievement should be placed at the heart of the education of children and young people with special education needs. Focusing on achievement links with several of the Education Work Programme workstreams (Improving student-centred pathways and Champion 21<sup>st</sup> Century practice in teaching and learning). Focusing on achievement alone however is not sufficient to bring about system wide change, and all other features of the system can, and should be aligned in support of this i.e.
  - inclusion matters because it ensures children and young people with special education needs have access to education on the same footing as their peers and can achieve what they're capable of. Inclusion links with several of the Education Work Programme workstreams (Improving student-centred pathways and Champion 21<sup>st</sup> Century practice in teaching and learning);
  - pathways through the education system matter because these ensure integrated support for the child as he/she progresses towards achievement of his/her goals. This work links with several of the Education Work Programme workstreams (Implementation of Investing in Educational Success, Improving student-centred pathways and Champion 21<sup>st</sup> Century practice in teaching and learning);
  - best practice in special education matters because it will ensure the right support at the right time for each child in the achievement of their goals. Best practice links to the Education Work Programme workstream Champion 21<sup>st</sup> Century practice in teaching and learning;

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<sup>4</sup> Mitchell, 2100, Report on Californian State-wide Task force on Special Education, 2015, Shaddock, 2009

<sup>5</sup> Booth & Ainscow, Carrington, 2009, Fullan, 2009, 13, 14, Mitchell, 2010, Shaddock, 2009, ERO report on Inclusive Education, 2015, Bolstad, and Gilbert, with McDowell; Bull, Boyd and Hipkins 2012

<sup>6</sup> Hattie, 2009



- exemplary stewardship matters because it will ensure that the government's investment in the system is effectively managed and that all components function as a whole system. This links to several of the Education Work Programme workstreams including Review the Education Act 1989 and Review the funding system for ECE and schooling.

### **Achievement**

14. Achievement comprises the processes, practices skills, knowledge and beliefs that in combination provide for children and young people to work towards defined educational goals.
15. While NCEA is relevant to many children and young people with special education needs, definitions of achievement need to be reconsidered for some. This will form part of the work programme to introduce the proposed new model.
16. In the proposed system, progress will be understood in terms of the achievement that is possible for the child or young person. This will be based on the New Zealand Curriculum. It will be planned, monitored, reported on and acted on consistently throughout the child's education.
17. Responsibility for being the single point of contact for each child's education pathway includes being responsible for ensuring that the child or young person and everyone involved in their education are fully involved in defining achievement for that child and planning their education pathway accordingly.

### **Inclusivity**

18. Inclusivity comprises the processes, practices, skills, knowledge and beliefs that in combination ensure that children and young people with special education needs participate fully in the education system alongside their peers.
19. While the main thrust of the system will continue to be towards greater inclusiveness we will retain residential special schools, special schools, special needs units, and other specialist services in order to enable choices to be made about what best meets a child or young person's needs at a particular point. These services will be viewed as part of larger networks which offer learning pathways for students. Both the entry to and exit from these services will be planned.
20. Increasing inclusivity will continue to be supported by the professionals in the school at all levels (from early childhood through primary and secondary schooling). Ensuring they are well supported and confident in how they work with children and young people with special education needs will form part of the programme of work planned to support introduction of the new model of the system.
21. Inclusivity provides a context in which "universal approaches", like PB4L School Wide, have the potential to address some presenting problems before they develop to require more specialist services. Extending the use of these universal approaches and aligning them with specialist services will be a key component of future service design.

## **Pathways**

22. Pathways comprise the processes and practices which ensure that the education of children and young people with special education needs is planned and managed with smooth transitions.
23. Communities of Schools are being established and these provide a great opportunity to address some concerns, increased joint decision making in particular. The concept of pathways for all students is consistent with the approach behind Communities of Schools. It is expected that smoother transitions will be more achievable in that context.
24. A key goal of the proposed work is that the education of children and young people with special education needs is planned and managed for as long as they need it to be. This plan will ensure that they receive support as promptly as possible that is tailored to their need rather than the availability (or otherwise) of services. This plan should also determine the best sequence of assistance e.g. the right support for the classroom teacher delivered quickly may preclude the need for specialised intervention which cannot be delivered so promptly.
25. Joint decision making is integral to successful education pathways for children and young people with special education needs. Therefore routinely involving schools alongside other professionals will be a feature of an end to end, managed approach to each child's education pathway. Jointly planned approaches are already being used with children and young people with high intensity special education needs. Extending this way of working across the special education system will go a long way towards addressing some of the current difficulties arising from the compartmentalised approach that has prevailed in the past. In particular it is likely to provide a better way of supporting schools to work successfully and inclusively with children and young people with special education needs at all points on the scale.
26. There will be a single point of contact responsible for oversight of the child's education pathway, anticipating and managing transitions, with the authority to broker the required assistance. This may be a responsibility to be taken on by existing roles such as an RTLB, a Teacher's Aide, or, where it makes sense, one of the specialists working with the child, or it may be a function provided by a team of professionals. We will determine the best approach to this through the design work we will do. The key will be to ensure that children stay on their learning pathway and do not become disconnected from the additional supports they require, particularly at transition points. This approach will endure for as long as necessary to support the child's education. Ensuring joint decision making occurs will be a key expectation of this role. This approach is similar to approaches used by other agencies and we'll examine such approaches in New Zealand and internationally to determine the best approach for the education system.
27. Alongside the introduction of a single point of contact, improvements need to be made to information about where to go for help. There should be "no wrong door" i.e. everyone involved can engage with the education system at any time and from any point i.e. parents, young people, the classroom teacher, the Principal, the parents, education professionals can all initiate a response from the system.

28. Improved anticipation of long term needs will also occur when a planned approach is taken from the outset i.e. some children will need a certain level of support throughout their education. Transition points should be anticipated and planned for rather than used as points to cease or start services.
29. It is clear from the international and New Zealand evidence that intervention should start as early as possible and for many this will be in early childhood. Subsequent contact with services may be brief, intermittent or ongoing. In the revised system we will put greater emphasis on early identification of needs, and intervention will reduce the need for an escalating intensity of support and in some cases may prevent later problems. As it operates we will be able to test the return on this early investment, and adjust the system accordingly.

### **Best Practice**

30. The special education workforce consists of specialist practitioners with a high acceptance of the professional ethos of best practice. Many of the approaches used are based on international evidence for their effectiveness, and yet we do not currently have good system-wide mechanisms to test how well these interventions contribute to the progress of children and young people with special needs. The promotion of best practice at a system level fits with the other aspects of the model in that setting achievement goals and the pathways to meet these will allow us to evaluate how well our interventions are working. This is particularly important when determining the effectiveness of approaches developed overseas on local populations, including Māori.
31. The improved system will better allow for innovative practice to be harnessed, tested, and adopted widely when it is shown to deliver better results. Related to this, it will help us better define what “informed trade-offs” can be made locally to adhere on the one hand to best practice standards but modify these to match the reality of local circumstances.
32. Promoting best practice at a system level will allow for a more co-ordinated approach to workforce development and the transfer of skills and knowledge between specialists. This is important as a key feature of the improved system – no wrong door – relies on all roles, specialist or otherwise, being capable of undertaking generalist activities.
33. The improved system will emphasise the value of specialists working as a “team of professionals” rather than the segmented teams of specialists that define current arrangements. These teams will be able to provide a greater degree of “wrap around” services, to varying degrees of intensity, as required.
34. Applying best practice interventions early will allow us to determine whether there is a return on this investment through the prevention of more serious difficulties later. It is thought that early investment in children and young people with low to medium severity of need (albeit of long duration) may reduce the likelihood that they’ll require very intensive intervention at later stages of their education.

### **Stewardship and the Funding Model**

35. Stewardship comprises the roles associated with leadership and oversight of the whole education system for children and young people with special education needs, including the range of interventions and activities that make up the services provided to these children, the funding required to provide these, the workforce who deliver them, and the information gained on how well these interventions are working.

36. How the investment in the special education system is being utilised and what outcomes are being achieved need to be thoroughly understood. Work currently underway to develop a reliable and valid outcomes measure will be brought into line with other aspects of the model and further developed with it.
37. We envisage a greater use of overarching, nationally defined service standards which draw together the standards described relevant to individual services at present to set ensure consistency and promote evidence based practice. Service standards will set minimum requirements for timeliness, access to services and decision making processes regarding the action required. In this way, instances of evidence based good practice can be reproduced across the system.
38. A simple classification system will be necessary in order to allocate the right services at the level, time and duration. It is likely the system will at least need to include the severity of need, the intensity of intervention required (this is usually but not always aligned to severity) and the duration of need. Such an approach would offer a common approach to capturing the basics of a child of young person's circumstances regardless of the services they require. The system would help unify currently disjointed services.
39. An aggregated view of what is being achieved by children and young people with special education needs will be established to inform our understanding of what is working and enable adaptations to be made in response.
40. Early identification and effective intervention will help provide a picture of demand that is not distorted by factors such as high volumes of high intensity intervention due to unmet needs escalating over time. A more accurate picture of demand will allow resources to be moved in response to this.
41. Services provided by the Ministry and those provided through funding to schools have historically been considered separately. This has led to inflexibility in considering options for the most efficient way of purchasing services. Considering the full \$530m will allow more flexible options to be considered in the way services are funded. As we develop and operate the new model, we will need to make further decisions about how the appropriations are best arranged.

## Proposed Approach

42. A significant programme of work is proposed to achieve the comprehensive range of improvements described above. This work will be supported by work underway in other Education Work Programme priority areas and deliverables (see paragraph 7 above).
43. Some priority areas present immediate opportunities (eg CoS) while others require us to do specific work inside the Strengthening Inclusion Priority Area and then converge with other Education Work Programme Priority Areas. One critical example is undertaking the significant work required to fully articulate the present funding model which has evolved for special education to a point that it will be clear and useful for the wider review of funding systems for ECE and Schooling. Ultimately these pieces of work will converge.

44. We will continually update and engage across the Education Work Programme as we progress the SE work, and engagement with SE stakeholders, to ensure that the Strengthening Inclusion Priority Area (and Update of the SE system in particular) will inform and be informed by the other Priority Areas and deliverables. Our intension with this approach is to foster a rolling motion of change that is synchronized with the wider work in education.
45. Some specific changes (such as the introduction of a single point of contact for each student) are proposed and, subject to feedback from the sector, can be designed and implemented in the short term. However other items such as the wider review of the compartmentalisation of the service delivery model – or a redesign of the funding model, are likely to require a rethink of a wide range of factors, including the constraints of current legislation. Therefore engagement and design in some areas will be able to progress immediately while other tranches of work may need to progress over a longer timeframe and, as above, synchronized with the wider work programme..
46. We envisage that the work programme will constitute the tranches of work set out in the table below. A high level schedule for the work to be done in 2015 - 2016 is described in Appendix 3.

Tranche		Activity
1.	Design and implement the revised approach to service design and delivery.	<p>Identify all potential sources of unnecessary compartmentalisation in current service delivery and recommend changes to eliminate or modify these.</p> <p>Redesign how decisions are made about the identification, management and assistance provided to children and young people with special education needs.</p> <p>Redesign the service delivery and workforce models (as necessary) to incorporate a single point of contact and any other changes arising from the wider review referred to above.</p> <p>Determine and compare the cost of the current and proposed service delivery models.</p>
2.	Revise and recommend changes to the funding arrangements to ensure more integrated, streamlined funding	<p>Analyse the options, recommend and implement an improved funding model that reduces the frustrations caused by current level of fragmentation and ensures effective use of funding in the system.</p> <p>Scan the legislation to identify and recommend the legislative changes necessary to enable the proposed new funding model.</p>
3.	Design and implement national stewardship of the investment in special education.	Scope, design and implement the stewardship needed to provide consistent, efficient oversight of the government's investment in special education and accountability for the effectiveness of the education system for children and young people with special education needs.
4.	Design a system wide information framework.	Scope, design and implement a comprehensive definition of the information required about special education that supports national stewardship of the system.

## Next Steps

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47. Between April and May of this year the Ministry will test our thinking on five specific, proposed improvements to the model of special education service design and delivery with representative groups from the education and disability sectors. This will include parents/whānau, schools and other education providers, representatives of the disability sector, community and Iwi representatives and staff, to discuss and refine the areas of focus proposed in this paper.
48. At a national level we will engage with:
- The Sector Advisory Group
  - The disability sector: including DPA, Balance, CCS, Vision Impaired
  - National parent groups: Vision Impaired, Autism New Zealand, Federation of Deaf, Downs Syndrome, IHC and CSS parent groups, Parent to Parent
  - Ngā Kura a Iwi, Te Runanga Nui, Kōhanga Reo
  - NZEI representatives group
49. At an area level each of the 10 Directors of Education and the Regional Managers Special Education will use their networks to convene regional forums for representatives of the key perspectives for special education in the region. These forums will engage Ministry of Education staff including Special Education staff, Principals, groups of providers and groups of parents. Where possible they will utilise existing forums.
50. We propose to engage these groups in discussion with regard to five proposed improvements to the model of service design and delivery for special education so that we can fully understand the impact of these proposals, how these might best work and take into account further suggestions people are likely to make.
51. The engagement process will seek feedback on the following five topics:
- i. *We know that while NCEA is relevant to some young people with special education needs, we think that achievement needs to be redefined for others.*
    - *What gets in the way of using the New Zealand Curriculum to establish achievement needs all children and young people with special education needs?*
    - *What would you do to address this?*
  - ii. *We think that schools should be much more involved in all decisions about children and young people with special education needs.*
    - *How would you see this occurring?*
    - *What would be the impact on your role?*
  - iii. *We think that children and young people with special education needs should be provided with a single point of contact with the authority to plan, coordinate and broker the assistance the child or young person needs. This role will endure for as long as necessary to support the child's education.*

- *From your perspective, what impact would this role have?*
  - *What benefits would you want from this?*
  - *Where do you think this responsibility best fits?*
- iv. *It is proposed that a single assessment and planning process is developed that identifies the specific package of support each individual child requires throughout their learning pathway. The plan would be periodically reviewed and updated as the needs of the child change over time.*
- *What information would need to be included in this plan?*
  - *What are some of the potential barriers to effective planning and implementation of the plan across parents/whānau, early childhood centres, schools, RTLBs, specialist practitioners etc*
  - *How might these barriers be managed?*
- v. *Evidence suggests that early identification and intervention has lots of benefits for children and young people with special education needs and everyone involved in their education.*
- *What do you think are the barriers to early identification of special education needs?*
  - *What would you do to improve the early identification of needs?*
52. Analysis and design of the initiatives we have identified will begin immediately, incorporating what we learn from the engagement process. Implementation of the work programme will commence in mid 2015. Some areas of the work programme such as revising current funding arrangements, are expected to require a longer lead in time due the legislative changes that may be required to implement these.



# UPDATING THE EDUCATION SYSTEM FOR THOSE WITH ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS

## Perspectives on the present system



### CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

#### What do I need?

I need to achieve like all other kids and I have the same right to expect a high quality education as them.

I need to belong and participate in learning like everyone else. I need effective teaching that is personalised for me.

Some of us need highly specialised support.

#### My challenges

There are lots of highly skilled people who can help me, but not all of them are at my school. Sometimes I am not sure who to ask for help.

Some grown-ups take my needs and interests seriously but not everyone sees me as a student just like the others because I have additional and sometimes ongoing needs.

I am worried about my parents and whānau; they have to keep asking for help. And I worry too that I won't get help when I move to another school.

Sometimes I am not included with other kids in my class because I don't have the support I need.



### PARENTS AND WHĀNAU

#### What do we need?

We need what all parents and whānau need from the education system. We need our child to learn and achieve, leading to a good life.

We need to know our child is making progress and we need to be involved in planning and goal setting in our child's learning.

#### Our challenges

We have a say in our child's education, but there is not enough involvement for us in decision making and planning at the right level.

We have confidence in the skills and knowledge of those who can help, but we are not always sure that the right people will be available at the right time to provide the right help.

When we get help we really value it, but sometimes we have to jump through hoops to get it. We worry that we will have to keep asking for it.

We think that the funding process is fair, but it needs to be clear that funding is about what our child needs, and not just the numbers.

There is more information about what is available and it's easier to access but it is not always helpful.



### EDUCATORS

#### What do we need?

We need all our children and young people to succeed, and we need good support and good advice.

We need strong leaders and capable teachers to work together and grow their expertise.

#### Our challenges

We are committed to introducing more inclusive practices but sometimes we are not sure how.

We are finding new ways of working together, but some schools and early childhood centres can be better at sharing resources and expertise.

We know more about how to support all children and young people to achieve, but our initial training and ongoing professional development needs to keep up with increasing demand and expectations.

Participation in early childhood education is increasing. We need to make better use of this opportunity for early intervention.



### SERVICE PROVIDERS

#### What do we need?

We need to support children, young people, their parents and whānau, and schools and early childhood centres to achieve.

We need high quality processes and systems to enable us to do our job.

We need our services to build support around the child.

#### Our challenges

We need strategic planning to develop the skills of the workforce to improve our practice.

We know what works, and we need to find new ways to put in into practice.

All staff within the sector need to have appropriate expertise and experience and they should continue to upskill, whatever their roles are. The system must support this.

Innovations need to be encouraged, and the system should be flexible enough to make them happen.

We need more effective partnerships with schools, parents and whānau, and other services.

## CHALLENGES FOR THE SYSTEM

Improve coherence in the system

Meet increasing demand

Enhance flexibility in the funding system.

Strengthen stewardship and clarify accountability

Ensure the New Zealand curriculum framework is used to lift the achievement of all.

Simplify and integrate decision making

### LEVERS

Data and Evidence

Legislation and Policy

System Design and Delivery

Workforce and Practice

Information and Access



# UPDATING THE EDUCATION SYSTEM FOR THOSE WITH ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS

When the system is working well



## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

### It works for me when

I feel I belong. I am included in all class activities with all other kids. My teachers teach me and spend time with me as much as other kids.

I can get around the school with no problems.

I have the support I need to learn and achieve like others. My teachers know what I am good at and not so good at. They have high expectations for me.

When I find it difficult to learn, my teachers adjust to my thinking and give me extra help.

I am well supported. I know there will always be people who can help me wherever I go.



## PARENTS AND WHĀNAU

### It works for us when

We can see that the system is fair and everyone is Committed to the educational achievement of our child.

We have opportunities to be involved in planning and goal setting for our child's learning.

We know there is good support from teachers, schools and specialists when our child needs their help, and the processes are there to support this.

When our child changes schools or early childhood centre, support is well planned and consistent.



## EDUCATORS

### It works for us when

All our children and young people achieve and all our staff are confident and capable to teach every child.

We are all committed to do better. Our early childhood centres and school communities share resources and best practices with each other.

We work together along the children and young people's learning journey right from the start.

Through our inclusive practices we are changing social attitudes towards those who need some extra help.

We feel well supported by specialists and other agencies.



## SERVICE PROVIDERS

### It works for us when

We continue to grow our knowledge and evidence base, and learn from our practice.

We know our practice is making a difference in lifting achievement.

We know where we are heading as a workforce, and the system supports us to develop our capabilities. It is sufficiently flexible to allow innovative practices to make a real difference.

Transitions are anticipated and well managed.

Our staff feel valued and are focused on delivering the best services to the child.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD SYSTEM

### Focus on student needs and achievements

Well embedded in the New Zealand curriculum and focused on 21st Century learning

Clear, consistent and fair decision-making

Early planning and effective management of transitions

Resources and knowledge sharing within school and professional communities

### Efficient and effective use of resources

Well coordinated processes

Long term strategic planning

Partnership with parents, schools, early childhood centres and communities

### Investment in capability and front line services

Proactive responses to future demand

Built-in flexibility and innovative best practices

Effective monitoring and evaluation

A strong evidence base



# SPECIAL EDUCATION UPDATE TIMELINE 2015 - 2016

