

# Review OF SPECIAL EDUCATION 2010

## Submission form

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

You can get a copy of the discussion document from [www.minedu.govt.nz](http://www.minedu.govt.nz) or from the Ministry of Education.

## Submissions close at 5pm on Friday 19 March 2010

### Please send your submission to:

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

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

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

**You can also send your submission as an email**

Email: [SE.review@minedu.govt.nz](mailto:SE.review@minedu.govt.nz)

**For further information please contact the Ministry of Education**

Phone: 04 463 8000 Fax: 04 463 8254

## About you

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

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

Yes  No

2. Are you a student with special education needs?

Yes  No

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

Yes  No

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

Yes  No

5. Do you work in the education sector?

Yes  No

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

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

Organisation:	Parent to Parent New Zealand Inc - Helen Gempton
Position:	Executive Administrator

## 10 questions for your response

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

### Schooling

**Q 1a** What is needed to help schools succeed?

- An improvement in the communication between all parties involved with a child with special education needs, including GSE, schools and parents, and parents knowledge and understanding of their child and his/her needs must be respected in this process
- A more collaborative approach should be developed between the parties also, so that everyone is working "on the same page".
- More effort needs to be made to ensure that both parents and schools understand the Special Education system fully, including rights and responsibilities.
- Standardised processes and systems in Special Education need to be implemented throughout the country.
- All student teachers need to learn about special education at College, as a compulsory subject.
- Teachers and teacher aides need better access to specialist support, and more

regular and relevant professional development.

- Individual Education Plan's (IEP's), need to be more regular and must be driven by the school
- Having SENCO's, who receive regular professional development In this area, present in every school
- More financial resources to allow training, professional development and support to families to happen
- There needs to be a genuine commitment to Inclusion from Principals, Boards of Trustees, teachers and specialists

**Q 1b** How could schools work together to succeed?

- An emphasis on collaboration and communication needs to be fostered between schools in respect of Special Education
- Resources should be pooled where possible, for example, with specialist support in some instances, training and professional development
- Having designated special schools as well as mainstreaming options for families, and making mainstreaming a genuine and attainable choice for parents
- Ensuring that schools offer a variety of choices for parents when they are deciding on the most suitable form of education for their child.

### **Transitions and agencies working together**

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

- A consistent and comprehensive transition procedure needs to be used every time a child moves from one learning environment into another.
- There needs to be a hand-over system for teachers and parents, from year to year, so that teachers have an understanding of the child's learning needs at the start of each school year
- Professional Development around transition needs to be made available to teachers
- Parents need to know who to turn to for support during the transition process - whose role is it to advocate for the parent and child
- GSE staff need to feel confident about standing up to schools on behalf of children and their families
- Parents knowledge of their childs' needs to be respected by all parties during the transition process

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

- More interaction and dialogue between the agencies working with a child, his/her family and the school - a collaborative approach
- Having someone to walk beside parents during the transition process, who can help co-ordinate meetings and appointments, and who can advocate for families should this become necessary
- A good lead-in period for every transition, rather than a last-minute rush
- Parents need to be kept informed of the outcomes of any specialists visits to school during the transition process.

## Funding and resource use

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

- There must be greater transparency and consistency in the ORRS verification system
- There must also be more clarity, and less inconsistency during the funding process, including clearer guidelines for schools and families about ORRS funding
- Equity in funding between special and mainstream schools must be achieved. Currently there is an imbalance which favours children at special schools. Children should be able to get the same level of support and service for their needs whether they are at a special school or in a mainstream setting.

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

- Resources could be pooled, where possible, within individual schools
- Clusters of schools could also pool resources and work more collaboratively
- Schools could work together to provide teachers and teacher aides with better professional development around special education which might reduce the need for more expensive specialist intervention

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

- Training student teachers about special education in college, and providing regular professional development for teachers and teacher aides
- Schools working together in clusters to pool resources

## High quality services and being accountable

Q 6 How can the quality of services be improved?

- Improve accessibility to services
- Professional Development for teachers and teacher aides
- Encouraging expertise to be shared within and between schools
- More financial resources and more efficient use of these resources
- Improve specialists employment packages so that they stay in education and don't move out of the sector
- Surprise ERO visits - not allowing some schools time to cover up how special education really operates within them

Q 7 How can families and schools be better informed?

- Public access to comprehensive information about special education, including the services available to children, their families, and schools
- Better communication systems between specialists, schools and families
- Letting parents know when a specialist is going to visit their child at school
- Conduct more research about special education, what works and doesn't work, and pass this on to schools and families

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

Special Education is successful:

- when it is invisible
- when you have happy and engaged students who are being challenged at their learning level
- when kids with special needs are made to feel genuinely welcome
- when effort is made to address children's social needs in schools, by thinking creatively about how to foster friendships
- when parents are not rung at the drop of a hat to come and collect their children because the school is unable to manage them
- when Inclusion is the base standard, and not something to aim for

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

- The Ministry of Education needs to work with families, principals and teachers face to face when problems arise.
- ERO: accountabilities need to be followed through, and areas of concern worked on
- Advocacy services need to be made freely available to families, and need to be adequately resourced
- Families need to have clear guidelines to follow, and access to support when things start to unravel

### In closing

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

- A commitment to Inclusion by everyone involved
- Better communication between GSE, schools and families
- More emphasis on the importance of good transitions, and a focus on how these might look
- A collaborative approach between all parties involved with a child and respect shown for a parents knowledge about his/her child
- Transparency and equity in the ORRS funding process
- Compulsory training for teachers about Special Education at college
- On-going, quality professional development for teachers and teacher aides
- Realistic and genuine choices for parents including special schools and mainstreaming
- Equity in funding between special and mainstream schools must be achieved

## Oral presentations

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

Yes

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

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

Christchurch  Wellington  Auckland

Email address (if available):	helen@parent2parent.org.nz
Daytime contact telephone number:	(07) 853 8491

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

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