

## **Success for All – Every School, Every Child**

### **Aggregating sensory resources**

#### **Key messages from 30 March 2011**

All three sensory schools and the Ministry were represented at the meeting.

- Feedback from the letters to schools sent in mid March has been light to date, but it is good to note that where principals have questions or concerns they are contacting the sensory schools or the Ministry. Issues raised will be incorporated into the planning process.
- The principals of the sensory schools have been meeting with regional groups of the special schools to discuss the implications of the policy for their students with multiple needs.
- A data base of students eligible for the aggregation of sensory resources has been developed and information from the Ministry Special Education about what services the students are currently receiving has been added. There will always be changes as students move but the current list is appropriate for planning purposes for the roll out of the aggregation of sensory resources from 2012. The list will be validated with the March returns from all NZ schools when they have been processed by the Ministry.
- The approximately 700 ORS students who have a vision impairment have been divided into two groups. One group is of those students who have vision impairment as their primary need. There are about 250 students in this group and it is this group of students for whom resourcing will be aggregated to BLENNZ. The other group of students have a vision impairment as well as other disabilities, and therefore have a more complex range of needs and support requirements. This group numbers about 450, and we will not aggregate resourcing to BLENNZ for this group. Schools currently do, and can continue to discuss with BLENNZ if the transfer of ORS teacher staffing would best meet the needs of these students.
- For the approximately 420 ORS students who have a hearing impairment resourcing will be aggregated to Kelston and van Asch Deaf Education Centres. For the small group of students within this number, who have other disabilities as well as their hearing impairment, discussions will be held with schools where there are groups of students, in order to find the right mix of teacher and para professional support for the students.
- Consideration was given at the meeting to the current and past methods of allocating teacher's aide time by the Ministry of Education and this was discussed along with other approaches to the distribution of specialist teacher and paraprofessional hours. Reviewing options will continue as planning develops

- The difference in how the sensory schools currently serve their client groups was highlighted for further discussion and the move to a consistent approach by the three schools overtime. The sensory schools also provide services to vision and hearing impaired students who are not ORS verified and with the aggregation of the ORS .1 and .2 teacher time and the paraprofessional time there can be a more fair distribution of services across the whole range of students with vision and hearing impairments over time
- The 5<sup>th</sup> project management team meeting is scheduled for 28 April 2011.

### **Background to Aggregating Sensory Resources**

This policy initiative is the result of:

- feedback to the Review of Special Education discussion document. The majority of the feedback came from parents. Educational staff, advocacy and interest groups also contributed.
- the need to get a more flexible and responsive service which meets the individual needs of children with sensory impairments
- the Ministry of Education working with the sensory schools over time. In particular, this initiative follows on from the work of sensory schools to match student need with specialist teacher capacity.

### **Benefits of policy initiative for children**

- allows for more flexibility in how and what resources are provided
- allows for redefinition of types of workforces to most appropriately meet student need
- will strengthen relationships between sensory schools and regular schools which have children with a sensory impairment on their rolls
- will allow for more direct access to specialist teachers
- supports specialist teachers to manage workloads efficiently to meet the needs of individual students
- allows opportunity to strengthen and build professional development of those working around children with sensory impairments
- contributes to lifting confidence of schools through providing better training and understanding
- will increase access to a wider range of services by families
- strengthen collaborative approach of the team to supporting the learning needs of individual children.

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