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Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga

Special Education 2000: Monitoring and Evaluation of the Policy Final Report Summary

Phase Three

Commissioned and funded by the Ministry of Education
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Final Report Summary – Phase Three

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

BEST	Behaviour Education Support Team (now known as Behaviour Support Team - BST)
Fundholder	A term usually used in reference to the Ongoing and Reviewable Resourcing Schemes which describes the function of the purchaser, <i>i.e.</i> the entity which decides what services are to be purchased for a student or group of students
IEP	Individual Education Plan (Programme)
ORS/OTRS	Ongoing Resourcing Scheme/Ongoing and Transitional Resourcing Scheme
ORRS	Ongoing and Reviewable Resourcing Schemes
RES	Residential Special School
RHS	Regional Hospital Health Schools
RTLb	Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour
SBI	Severe Behaviour Initiative
SEG	Special Education Grant
SES	Specialist Education Services
SE2000	Special Education 2000
SLI	Speech-Language Initiative
SLT	Speech-Language Therapy/Therapist

This summary report presents the findings of the three year evaluation (1999-2001) of the introduction of the first comprehensive policy exclusively for special education in Aotearoa New Zealand, Special Education 2000 (SE2000). The evaluation study was commissioned and funded by the Ministry of Education. The research was designed, conducted and analysed by a team of 15 researchers at Massey University.

The study addressed 126 research questions provided by the Ministry of Education. In broad terms, the Ministry wanted to know how SE2000 was affecting students, parents, schools and providers. In order to do this, the study focused on the perceptions of those involved in implementing the policy and experiencing its effects.

Research data were collected from over 8,000 educators during the three year evaluation. Schools, early childhood centres and kura kaupapa Māori were surveyed nationally. Case studies were undertaken in the Severe Behaviour Initiative, Regional Hospital Health Schools and Residential Special Schools. Principals, teachers, teacher aides, parents, students and providers were interviewed for various stages of the research and state-funded residential special schools were also visited.

To help put the complexity of the evaluation in perspective, during the implementation of SE2000, there were a number of changes to the level and types of support services. Therefore, the services available in 2001 were somewhat different from those available in 1999. The major changes made to policy, funding, and operations aspects of some of the SE2000 resourcing strands were:

- the allocation of Transition Bridging Funding to individual schools on behalf of students with ' S.9 agreements' who have not/were not verified for Ongoing and Reviewable Resourcing Schemes (ORRS)
- the allocation of Learning Support Funding to Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour (RTLB) clusters to enable them to provide assistance to schools on a needs basis to support their students with moderate needs
- the temporary devolution of funding for and management of transport to fundholders
- the introduction of transitional resourcing through ORRS (formerly known as Ongoing and Transitional Resourcing Scheme) for children aged 5 to 7 years old, whose long term educational needs were still unclear

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- an increase in funding for ORRS students in rural schools
- the creation of regional facilitator positions within the Ministry of Education to provide facilitation or support for, schools, families and whanau where there are difficult situations regarding access or support.

In addition, during 2001 Government decided to change the way special education is provided following a review of some aspects of special education by Dr Cathy Wylie. Changes included the decision to disestablish Specialist Education Services (SES) and put in its place a new network of support and resource centres. The Government also began to implement a number of Dr Wylie's other recommendations that included adjusting the eligibility criteria for ORRS and developing a Schools High Health Needs Fund. It also increased the number of MOE facilitators, setting aside funding for schools that attract students with special education needs and are known for their ability and willingness to cater for those needs and putting in place a three year package of support and research for students with physical disabilities.

The aim of the evaluation was to monitor the changes as they took place and to evaluate their consequences. In this regard, the Massey University evaluation team's findings will be a valuable resource for the continued development and evolution of special education policy and service provision.

Special Education 2000

The first comprehensive policy exclusively for special education in Aotearoa New Zealand was introduced in 1996. Introduced as Special Education 2000 (SE2000), it restructured the way resources and service provision were distributed to learners with special education needs. It also changed the way schools managed special education resources.

In 1997 the Ministry of Education published policy goals for SE2000. These were designed to:

- enhance education outcomes for children and young people with special education needs in the early childhood and school sectors
- develop a clear, consistent and predictable framework for resourcing special education
- provide equitable levels of special education resource irrespective of the educational setting
- enable students with special education needs to participate in and benefit from early childhood and school programmes.

Additional funding was introduced to support the policy changes. The main service provider at that time, Specialist Education Services (SES), was restructured to reflect the changes and, as a result, SES services became more specific and more focused.

SE2000 introduced a number of provisions. The most intensive provision for students with high or very high needs included:

- Ongoing and Reviewable Resourcing Schemes (ORRS, previously ORS)
- Severe Behaviour Initiative (SBI)
- Speech-Language Initiative (SLI).

The initiatives for students with moderate needs included:

- the Special Education Grant (SEG)
- Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour (RTLb)
- support for students with a sensory impairment and/or physical disability who are not supported under ORRS
- the establishment of three Regional Hospital Health Schools (RHS).

SE2000 provided a significant increase in funding designed to provide assured and predictable resourcing for individuals and schools. It was accompanied by a major restructuring in the distribution of resource and service provision.

Professional development for schools was introduced to support the associated resourcing and policy changes. In addition, SE2000 provided a range of support to children in the early childhood years in conjunction with the health sector to address all levels of need.

The evaluation

The Ministry of Education commissioned and funded Massey University to evaluate and monitor SE2000 over three years from 1999 to 2001. This is the summary report of the full evaluation, *Special Education 2000: Monitoring and Evaluation of the Policy*.

The purpose of the evaluation was to monitor and evaluate changes to the funding and delivery of special education services brought about by SE2000.

The evaluation was designed to answer a number of questions posed by the Ministry of Education. The questions addressed these issues:

- a picture of the use of SE2000 provision in a sample of schools
- obstacles to positive outcomes from existing programmes and provision identified by schools
- the range of service providers and how this has changed in response to SE2000
- whether the specific needs of Māori were being adequately addressed by SE2000. If not, the challenges that need to be addressed, and the methods that are appropriate.

A Phase One final report was completed in 1999, and a Phase Two final report in 2000. A kura kaupapa Māori report has also been completed. Summaries of these reports are available from the Ministry of Education at <http://www.minedu.govt.nz>. The full reports can be accessed at <http://specialeducation-research.massey.ac.nz>.

This final report of the evaluation examines the initiatives that make up SE2000 over all three phases. It also addresses:

- support services
- Residential Special Schools
- Regional Hospital Health Schools
- issues for Māori students with special education needs in English-medium schools
- provision for special education within kura kaupapa Māori
- provision for early intervention within early childhood services
- professional development for schools
- partnership with parents.



THE METHOD AND THE RESPONSE

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The method

The three-year evaluation used both qualitative and quantitative methods. The main sources of data were national surveys, case studies and interviews.

National surveys

A range of national surveys were conducted using specific questionnaires for each purpose. These included:

- a national survey was sent to the same random sample of 1198 primary and secondary schools in each of the three years of the evaluation
- around 400 early childhood centres were surveyed in the first and third year of the evaluation
- all kura kaupapa Māori were surveyed in 1999 and 2001
- all RTLB were surveyed in 2000
- a range of service providers were surveyed
- schools that had been on the SE2000 professional development contracts were surveyed in 2000
- a parent survey was sent out through schools in 2001.

Case studies

Case studies were undertaken in Residential Special Schools, in four SES areas for the Severe Behaviour Initiative, and in the three Regional Hospital Health Schools.

Interviews

Extensive interviews were conducted with principals, school and early childhood teachers, teacher-aides, parents and representatives from kindergarten and playcentre associations, in addition to the data collected from the national surveys. Parent forums were also held in four centres in 1999.

Staff from the Ministry of Education were interviewed, as well as SES staff, including area managers, service leaders, behaviour support workers, psychologists and special education advisers.

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The response

In all, over 8000 people were involved in providing data for the evaluation.

The quantitative data - national surveys

The response to the national survey of schools declined each year. From an overall 62% response in 1999, it dropped to 56% in 2000 and 52% in 2001. In order to encourage school participation, the number of items asked each year was reduced from 51 items in 1999, to 29 items in 2001. This means that not all areas of interest were tracked throughout the evaluation.

The percentage of types of schools represented in the data (eg, primary, secondary, area, and special schools) were proportionally represented in relation to the type of schools in New Zealand. Between 49% and 62% of the primary and intermediate schools surveyed responded in each of the three years, and the response from secondary schools fluctuated from 42% to 58% in the three years.

School survey questionnaires were largely completed by senior management in the schools, including principals, deputy and assistant principals and heads of departments of special education needs. A much wider range of educators contributed to the responses.

There was considerable variation in response rates across the country. In 2001 the highest return rate was from the West Coast, which had had a low return in 2000. Gisborne, in contrast, had a 71% response rate in 1999, but 52% in 2001. Southland, Canterbury, Nelson-Marlborough, Waikato, Northland, Auckland and Taranaki all had response rates higher than the national average.

In each of the three years of the survey, 25% or less of the schools that reported their decile ranking were decile 1-3, around 40% were decile 4-7, and about 33% decile 8-10.

The qualitative data – interviews

Qualitative data from schools were gathered in four areas – Auckland, East Coast, Central¹ and Canterbury.

Teachers were trained to collect the data using structured interview schedules. Using teachers as fieldworkers in this way had the advantage of being seen as credible by schools. The teacher fieldworkers also had the benefit of having an understanding of how schools operate and knowledge of special education systems.

In Phase Two of the research, 246 parents of students with special education needs were interviewed. Most parents were interviewed by phone, although there were some face-to-face interviews.

In Phase Three interviews were undertaken with 41 parents of children accessing early intervention services.

All parents were asked about general issues to do with SE2000, support services, professional development and cultural issues. Only parents whose children were involved in a specific resourcing initiative were asked about that initiative.

The information gathered through interviews with parents was supplemented by a survey of parents undertaken in 2001.

¹ Includes Wellington, Wairarapa, Horowhenua, Wanganui, Palmerston North and Hawkes Bay.



AN OVERVIEW OF SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS IN THE SAMPLE SCHOOLS

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Students receiving support

The number of students receiving special education needs funding or support in the schools that contributed to this evaluation was fairly consistent over the three years.

Table 1 Number of students in the sample receiving funding or support through SE2000	
Number of students receiving funding or support	
1999	4836
2000	4840
2001	5107

Unless otherwise indicated, all the figures, proportions and percentages in the remainder of this section are drawn from information supplied by the schools to the evaluation in March 2001, and are based on the schools' 2000 data.

Table 2 Percentage of students in the sample receiving each type of funding or support - 2001		
Type of support or funding	Number	%
ORRS	2120	42
SBI	242	5
SLI	618	12
RTLB	1898	37
Non ORRS Physical/Sensory	229	4
Total	5107	100

In 1999, the first phase of the evaluation, a much higher proportion of students received ORRS funding. This may be due to the fact that other initiatives of the SE2000 policy were still in their early stages. The proportion of students receiving support or funding in each category reported by schools in 2000 was very similar to the proportions reported in the 2001 survey and presented in Table 2.

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Ethnicity

Table 3 shows the ethnicity of students in this sample being supported under each SE2000 initiative in the data returned in 2001.

2001 n = 5107	Māori %	Pacific %	NZ European %	Other %	Total %
ORRS	19	10	63	8	100
SBI	33	8	56	3	100
SLI	18	9	67	6	100
RTLB	27	7	63	3	100
Non ORRS Physical/Sensory	24	7	64	5	100
All types of support and funding	22	9	63	6	100

Approximately 20% of students in the school system are Māori. Table 3 shows that Māori learners were highly represented in the two initiatives with a behaviour component, SBI and RTLB, and slightly over-represented overall when compared with their proportion in the school population. However, as the evaluation highlighted, the support received by these Māori learners was not always regarded as necessarily culturally appropriate.

Gender

Males made up just over two-thirds (69%) of the 5107 students identified by these schools in 2001 as receiving some form of support under SE2000. Within all funding or resourcing components, male students were highly represented; this was particularly significant in the SBI where 87% were male.

The high proportion of funding or support that went to male students was a clear and consistent finding in each phase of the evaluation.

Suspensions

Thirty percent of the students who had been suspended from schools that responded to the survey in 2001 had received funding or support from the main SE2000 resourcing initiatives – ORRS, SBI, RTLB and SEG. This was higher than the 22% reported in Phase One of the evaluation and the 28% reported in Phase Two. There was a higher rate of suspension for Māori learners within the SBI strand and SEG.

Fundholder schools

In this evaluation, fundholder schools were defined as schools that managed funds for ORRS students and decided which services were to be purchased for a student or group of students. SES was the fundholder for 55% of all students.

In Phase Two, 13% of schools that responded indicated that they were fundholders, and a further 14% used another school to act as their fundholder.



OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH SE2000

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A better deal?

In 1999 and 2001 schools were asked whether students with special education needs were getting a better deal under each of the SE2000 initiatives than they did before SE2000.

On each occasion schools expressed the greatest satisfaction with the moderate needs initiatives, RTLB and SEG, followed by the high needs initiative, ORS/ORRS. While the least satisfaction was expressed with non-ORRS provision for sensory impairment and/or physical disability, it also drew the most 'don't know' responses. This suggests that it may have been too early in the implementation phase of these initiatives for schools to make a judgement about their value or that schools didn't have many students in these initiatives.

SE2000 in principle and in practice

Over the three years of the evaluation the level of satisfaction with SE2000 *in principle* was fairly steady for the high to very high needs initiatives – ORS/ORRS and SLI, while satisfaction in principle with the SBI showed a marked decline. However, in the moderate needs initiatives, the level of satisfaction with SEG *in principle* rose slightly, and there was a marked increase in satisfaction with RTLB *in principle*.

Table 4 Satisfaction with SE2000 in principle (Phases One, Two and Three)

In principle	Very satisfied/ satisfied			Very dissatisfied/ dissatisfied		
	Phase 1%	Phase 2%	Phase 3%	Phase 1%	Phase 2%	Phase 3%
SBI	36	21	26	25	20	24
ORS/ORRS	58	51	56	24	24	23
SLI	34	30	34	14	13	18
SEG	52	53	54	25	24	31
RTLB	64	70	75	15	14	13

As can be seen from Table 5, over the page, the level of satisfaction *in practice* went up markedly for all initiatives over the three years of the evaluation – except for the SBI – for which there was only a small increase in satisfaction. Table 5 shows the level of satisfaction with SEG *in practice* went up 13 percentage points over the three years and for RTLB *in practice* by 20 percentage points. The level of satisfaction with ORS/ORRS *in practice* also rose, by 11 percentage points over the three years of the evaluation.

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Table 5 Satisfaction with SE2000 in practice (Phases One, Two and Three)

In practice	Very satisfied/ satisfied			Very dissatisfied/ dissatisfied		
	Phase 1%	Phase 2%	Phase 3%	Phase 1%	Phase 2%	Phase 3%
SBI	16	17	20	25	25	28
ORS/ORRS	40	49	50	34	27	27
SLI	22	26	32	19	15	18
SEG	37	47	50	34	29	33
RTLB	49	64	69	23	17	26

The results show a generally positive trend in all resourcing components of SE2000, except the SBI. During the three years of the evaluation, schools indicated increased satisfaction *in principle* and *in practice* with all SE2000 initiatives for students, apart from the SBI.



PROVISION FOR STUDENTS WITH HIGH OR VERY HIGH NEEDS

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The Ongoing and Reviewable Resourcing Schemes

The Ongoing and Reviewable Resourcing Schemes (ORRS) were originally introduced as the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS). This is how it was known in the Phase One of the evaluation. After ORS had been introduced, a transitional component was included and the scheme became known as the Ongoing and Transitional Resourcing Schemes (ORST) during Phase Two. In Phase Three the scheme took on the title Ongoing and Reviewable Resourcing Schemes (ORRS). Included in ORRS in 2001 was provision for a new group of students within the high needs band, those with *combined moderate needs*.

To minimise confusion these three initiatives will be henceforth referred to as ORRS in this report.

ORRS was designed to support students with high or very high ongoing education needs throughout their school years. The scheme guarantees students continuity of support, and schools appropriate assistance in developing effective programmes to meet students' education needs. In addition, the scheme aims to increase the participation of students with high or very high education need in classroom programmes.

In order to be eligible for funding under ORRS, students must have their high needs verified against specific criteria. The verification process constitutes an important component of ORRS.

Once their needs have been verified, students under ORRS get a staffing entitlement of 0.1 for high needs, or 0.2 for very high needs, full-time teacher equivalent. Funding to cover teacher-aide time, therapy and specialist support is delivered in a cash amount to fundholders, the amount depending on whether the student has verified high or very high needs.

Six themes emerged from the evaluation of ORRS:

- transition to ORRS
- the verification process
- curriculum access and education outcomes
- level of professional and paraprofessional support
- management of funds and fundholding
- co-ordination between school, service providers and families.

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Transition to ORRS

In Phase One of the evaluation the majority of schools reported difficulties in making the transition to ORRS. The most common concerns were the amount of paperwork, confusion and difficulty in understanding criteria for inclusion in the scheme, a view that the criteria were too stringent and a concern for the needs of those students who were marginally excluded from ORRS, and consequently put pressure on SEG resources.

Teachers who commented on changes to education outcomes for students during Phase One of ORRS indicated an improvement in learning outcomes for ORRS students; however, they also noted changes for the worse in students who had had their applications for ORRS funding declined.

Towards the end of Phase One, and in Phases Two and Three principals and teachers reported that processes associated with ORRS were improving. Overall, schools' satisfaction with ORRS remained the same *in principle* but increased *in practice* during the three years of the evaluation, and dissatisfaction decreased.

Table 6 Satisfaction level with ORRS in principle and in practice

	In principle			In practice		
	Phase 1%	Phase 2%	Phase 3%	Phase 1%	Phase 2%	Phase 3%
Very satisfied	14	13	14	10	13	12
Satisfied	44	40	42	30	36	38
Dissatisfied	18	15	14	22	16	17
Very dissatisfied	6	9	9	12	11	10
Too early to tell	-	3	1	-	2	1
Not applicable or no response	18	20	20	26	22	22

During Phase Two the majority of parents reported that there had been positive changes for their child as a result of ORRS funding.

The verification process

In Phase One schools raised a number of concerns about the verification process. They included: lack of clarity or transparency in criteria for verification; the length of time the process took; not enough children being verified; the verification experience itself; the decision making process; inconsistency of application of criteria; and concerns about the application form. Parents also expressed dissatisfaction with the verification process and, in particular, with the application form, which they considered required the teacher to maximise a child's disabilities in order to improve the chance of that child being verified.

During Phases Two and Three of the evaluation, the Ministry of Education redesigned the application form for verification and supplied further information on the verification process. This, in conjunction with more experience in the verification process by principals and teachers, reduced dissatisfaction with the process, as identified in the later phases of the evaluation.

Curriculum access and educational outcomes

In Phase One of the evaluation teachers said that the biggest benefit of ORRS had been in the area of student learning outcomes, followed by improvements in social development.

The main ways schools ensured curriculum access for ORRS funded students were through employment of teacher aides, teachers adapting the curriculum and the use of IEPs. Teachers reported the main effects on them as increased demands on their time, the need to seek advice from specialists, having to co-ordinate programmes, and an increased need to work with other professionals and paraprofessionals.

In Phase Three teachers reported that for 26% of ORRS students education outcomes had improved greatly, for 31% they had improved slightly, for 15% they had stayed the same and for 5% education outcomes had deteriorated.³ These were teacher perceptions and were not validated by examination of student records.

³ No response: 23%.

5

Level of professional and paraprofessional support

Classroom teachers were very positive about the support they got from teacher-aides to meet the needs of ORRS funded students. The contribution of teacher-aides was also rated highly by parents of students with special education needs, although they also expressed concern that increasing demands were being placed on teacher-aides to cope with students with high and very high needs. The question was raised in the evaluation whether teacher-aides are sometimes being used when more specialist services would be appropriate.

Teachers ranked the support of specialist teachers and special education advisers highly.

Management of funds and fundholding

The allocation of funds for ORRS students was generally regarded as satisfactory by parents and schools. Schools were generally satisfied or very satisfied with the management of ORRS funds. Principals reported that ORRS funds were used mainly for staffing, IEPs and resources.

In Phase One, most schools indicated that they preferred schools as the fundholder of ORRS funding but, by Phase Two this had changed, with most schools reporting that SES was their preferred fundholder.

Co-ordination between schools, service providers and families

Many principals and parents of ORRS funded students made positive comments about co-ordination between schools, service providers and families. Their comments reflected: increased co-operation and communication; better support and co-ordination with IEPs; more choice of providers, and more stability of funding.

Severe Behaviour Initiative

The Severe Behaviour Initiative (SBI) was designed to support students with high or very high behaviour needs. It was intended that the initiative would meet the needs of the 1% of school students who had the highest behaviour needs. Criteria for inclusion included behaviours of such intensity, frequency or duration that the physical safety of the student or of others was jeopardised, significant property damage was threatened, and/or the student's access to ordinary settings was severely limited by their behaviour.

In May 1998 multidisciplinary Behaviour Education Support Teams (BEST) were introduced to provide intensive in-class and in-school support, and to liaise with home and community agencies. In 1999 BEST became Behaviour Support Teams (BST).

Throughout the evaluation schools remained divided between those that were satisfied with the SBI and those that were not. The main reasons for dissatisfaction included the inability to positively change student behaviour, ineffective support for classroom teachers, ineffective support for students and variable responses to requests for support. Because only 1% of students received support under the SBI, the majority of the schools sampled did not have the experience of SBI that enabled them to give a view on the initiative.

Five themes emerged over the period of the evaluation of the SBI:

- the intervention model
- the focus on the learner
- the balance between assessment and intervention
- the Behaviour Support Teams (BST)
- support for Māori learners exhibiting severe behaviour.

The intervention model

Throughout the country SES, which managed the SBI, adopted one model of behaviour assessment and intervention for students with severe behaviour. Those implementing the model recognised its strengths, which they identified as: the thorough assessment and analysis of the student's behaviour; the peer review component; the focus on specific behaviours to be modified; and, positive programming, direct support and an ecological approach.

However, workers in the field became increasingly dissatisfied with the restrictions the model placed on them, and with what they perceived as an emphasis on assessment rather than intervention. Teachers also expressed some dissatisfaction with the interventions used.

Focus on the learner

The case studies of students receiving support under the SBI highlighted the difficulty and complexity of the problems behaviour support workers were trying to address. Placing behaviour at school in the context of other aspects of the student's life highlighted the need to be realistic about how far a single initiative could make dramatic and permanent change in that behaviour.

Case studies showed that the students who received support generally became attached to the support of the BST worker, were responsive to that person and felt their worker was there for them. Parents were enthusiastic, and many recognised that without the support of the BST worker their child would not be able to remain in school.

5

Balance between assessment and intervention

Over the three years of the evaluation there were critical changes in the model used by BST. A more flexible approach to severe behaviour problems was developed in order to increase the number of students that could receive the service. The original comprehensive approach was pared down for students who did not appear to need the full and very time-consuming assessment process. By 2001 the full comprehensive assessment model was rarely in use. BST workers were still using the ecological framework, just not completing each assessment in such minute detail.

During the period of the evaluation, the balance between assessment and intervention shifted from an intense assessment leading to a prescribed intervention, to a growing collaboration between all people involved in a case.

Behaviour Support Team

The evaluation identified four areas of interest in relation to BSTs:

The structure and interaction of the team

Case studies carried out for the evaluation highlighted the professionalism, expertise and dedication of the staff at the regional levels. Every student receiving support under the initiative has a key worker – usually a psychologist or special education adviser – and at times a behaviour support worker as well.

Each BST studied in the evaluation was quite different from the others in composition, attitudes and methods of interaction, and each evolved quite differently over the three-year period.

Aims and responsibilities in the schools

Some teams were clearly oriented towards advocacy for the student with behaviour problems, and struggled with some punitive attitudes within schools. Some schools wanted a ‘take him away and fix him’ approach (the majority of the students on the SBI being male), and found the inclusive collaborative model tedious and time consuming.

The evaluation found that there is an understated professional development component in the collaborative model – in that the intention is to leave teachers more experienced and able to work with students with severe behaviour.

Adaptations of the model

Some BSTs were concerned about the move away from the comprehensive model because they felt they had invested a great deal of time and energy in selling it, with its long assessment period and enormous school commitment, to reluctant schools.

Gaps in the system for supporting children

Principals and BST team leaders were concerned about the gaps between ORRS verified students, students supported through SEG and students supported by BSTs. All parties voiced concern about students ‘falling through the cracks’ throughout the evaluation. There was also concern about the national averaging system for allocating SBI resources as students with severe behaviour do not seem to be equally distributed at 1% throughout the country.

Support for Māori learners

Support for Māori students was considered an important issue within SBI. The main issues identified were:

The need for a Māori framework

The need for a multi-faceted model that exists within a Māori framework was an issue that was raised throughout the evaluation. The cultural assessment intervention model was considered to be inappropriate and too intrusive for Māori.

Attracting and retaining Māori staff

Attracting and retaining Māori staff was a high priority for BSTs, especially in areas of high Māori population.

Providing cultural supervision for non-Māori staff

Māori understaffing did not prevent some BSTs from taking proactive steps by providing cultural supervision to non-Māori staff.

Involving the learners in cultural programmes

In some areas teams were also proactive in creating protocols and organising initiatives for working with Māori learners and their families.

Speech-Language Initiative

The Speech-Language Initiative (SLI) is the component of SE2000 that provides support for students with speech-language difficulties. Initially the funding allocated to this initiative was targeted to students in the early school years who had difficulties with speech-language, to provide a basis for the development of their literacy and numeracy skills. In 1998, the target group was broadened to include students who had high needs but were not ORRS funded. Students with more moderate speech-language needs could expect support from schools through the SEG.

5

The evaluation of SLI identified five major themes. These were:

- increasing satisfaction with the Speech-Language Initiative
- speech-language services
- speech-language therapists
- students and learning outcomes
- professional development.

The Speech-Language Initiative

In each of the phases of the evaluation, schools reported their overall level of satisfaction with the SLI *in principle* and *in practice*. As Table 7 shows, there was little difference in the degree of satisfaction *in principle* over the three years, but some increase in the level of satisfaction *in practice*. Once again a large proportion of schools had had no experience of SLI and were unable to comment.

Table 7 Sample Schools' Satisfaction level with SLI in principle and in practice

	In principle			In practice		
	Phase 1%	Phase 2%	Phase 3%	Phase 1%	Phase 2%	Phase 3%
Very satisfied	5	6	6	3	7	6
Satisfied	29	24	28	20	20	26
Dissatisfied	11	9	12	12	11	12
Very dissatisfied	4	4	6	7	5	6
Too early to tell	-	4	2	-	3	2
Not applicable or no response	51	53	46	58	54	48

The perception of schools was that Pakeha students were getting a better deal under the SLI than were Māori students.

Speech language services

During the three phases of the evaluation schools were asked whether the level of support services in speech-language therapy had improved since the introduction of SE2000. The results were fairly consistent across the three phases, with schools being fairly equally divided between those which thought the level of services had improved, and those which did not. By Phase Three, there was a small increase in the proportion of schools that thought the level of service had improved.

Speech-language therapists

Speech-language therapists (SLTs) were perceived by schools to be more effective with students with moderate communication needs than with students with high communication needs who were not ORRS verified. However, effectiveness with both groups of students was rated higher in Phase Three than in Phase Two.

Students and learning outcomes

Quite a large number of teachers had difficulty responding to a question about whether there had been any improvement in learning outcomes for students with speech language difficulties. More than a quarter didn't know, or did not have the data available to draw a conclusion. Those who did give an opinion were divided between teachers who reported some improvement and those who reported no improvement.

Students' access to SLTs was identified as a major concern and increasing source of frustration for both schools and parents over the three years of the evaluation.

Professional development

The evaluation showed that schools believed SLTs took the major role in assessing and providing remedial intervention for students with speech-language difficulties, but that teachers and teacher-aides also worked with these students although neither was adequately trained to do so. Despite a national development programme being introduced in 1998, in 2000 only 14% of eligible teachers from schools in the evaluation had received professional development in speech-language assessment.



PROVISION FOR STUDENTS WITH MODERATE NEEDS

6

Special Education Grant

The Special Education Grant (SEG), developed as part of SE2000, is an allocation of funding distributed to all state and state integrated schools. From the beginning of 1997 schools received a SEG amount which included a base grant, and a per pupil sum calculated on a formula which takes into account school decile and total roll.

The introduction of the SEG was well received by schools because it was both additional funding, and the funding was delivered in a way that gave schools autonomy and flexibility in meeting students' needs. The decision making process for using the SEG also raised awareness in the schools of the special education needs of some students.

These issues emerged in relation to SEG:

- the inequity associated with the SEG funding formula and the associated distribution of the fund
- equity issues associated with rural schools, and schools with a high transient population
- the use of SEG to support students with high needs.

The SEG funding formula

Lower decile schools receive more money per pupil under SEG than higher decile schools. By 2001 the per pupil amount for a decile 10 school was a little less than half the amount received by a decile 1 school. However, there was generally not a high proportion of students identified with special education need in the decile 10 schools.

In Phase One, almost half of the principals who participated disagreed with the decile ranking their school had been given, and almost of them all thought the decile ranking for their school was too high.

Equity issues for rural schools and schools with high transient populations

Principals of and teachers in rural schools and schools with a high transient population reported that the distribution of SEG was inequitable because of specific factors associated with their schools. For example, it cost more for a rural school to bring in a specialist to work in the school because of travel costs.

There was also a widespread view that the SEG funding formula disadvantaged schools that attract students with special educational needs and are known for their ability and willingness to cater for those needs.

6

Support for students with high needs through SEG

The evaluation showed that when applications on behalf of students for ORRS funding were declined, and when students did not meet the criteria to receive support from the BST, schools were faced with having to meet the needs of these students from the SEG. The SEG was also being used to provide supplementary services or support to meet the educational needs of students with high or very high needs who either already had access to a resourcing component of the special education policy, or who did not meet the criteria for other support.

The evaluation consistently found that the most common way for schools to use the SEG was to employ teacher-aides to work with an individual student or group of students. The type of support provided by teacher aides most commonly included implementing the IEP, adapting the curriculum and providing individual behavioural interventions.

The introduction of the SEG did not remove the challenge of catering for diverse needs; in effect it highlighted the range of diverse needs within every school.

Parents were very positive about the SEG funded support their child received, although generally frustrated about what they saw as inadequate funding to support their child's needs. Many parents expressed feelings of frustration and powerlessness when they were unable to get individual funding to meet their child's needs.

Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour

From the beginning of 1999, virtually all schools in New Zealand had access to Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour (RTLB). The aims of the RTLB initiative are to:

- work with teachers to support students with learning and behaviour difficulties in the classroom
- involve parents and caregivers in managing students with difficult behaviour
- manage crisis situations involving individual students
- co-ordinate support across sectors
- develop strategies to reduce the number of students with severe behaviour difficulties.

Schools' and Parents' views about the RTLB service

The results over the three-year period demonstrate a high degree of satisfaction by schools with the RTLB service.

Feedback during the early phases of the RTLB service raised issues about training, service demands, the lack of 'hands-on' support, service to secondary schools and transition for students. In subsequent years, as schools became more familiar with the service, concerns were expressed about the use of what had become a valued resource. Schools noted that RTLB were working with students with high behaviour and learning needs because these students were missing out on ORRS funding or SBI support.

The role of RTLB did vary across regions and, over time, schools became increasingly familiar with the specific role of the RTLB within their cluster. In 2001 schools reported that the most common functions for RTLB included providing support to classroom-based teachers, assessing student behaviour, liaising with students' families and preparing behaviour modification plans. Schools also indicated that RTLB were effective or very effective in making contact with parents, assessing learning needs, gaining information on particular methods and conditions and providing behaviour management, but less effective in reorganising the learning environment, adapting learning materials or adapting teaching methods.

From a parent perspective, the RTLB was both 'hands-on' and support for teacher and parents alike. The majority of parents interviewed considered that RTLB involvement had made a difference for their child.

RTLB views about their role

RTLB viewed their job primarily as that of a support and change agent. They played a number of roles to achieve this including; problem solver; teacher support; resource person; liaison person; and advocate. They reported varying degrees of satisfaction about aspects of their roles in schools and their confidence in performing the tasks associated with each role. Factors that influenced their role in schools included the type of school they were in, the principal, the reason for the referral and the teacher's expectations.

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Although the majority of RTLB felt confident in their role from the start, the evaluation identified a number of factors that would increase RTLB confidence in their work. These included: clarification of code of ethics; privacy and information sharing; practical training on dealing with learners with challenging behaviour; better knowledge of the range of community agencies which provide support; a supportive principal at a base school; teachers having more realistic expectations and understanding that there is no quick fix; classroom-based teachers prepared and able to work collaboratively rather than expecting the RTLB to be 'hands-on'; and, ongoing supervision.

RTLB generally rated their effectiveness quite highly, particularly in helping students with learning difficulties. They rated their effectiveness in the primary and intermediate school settings somewhat more highly than their effectiveness in meeting needs in secondary schools.

On the whole RTLB were satisfied or very satisfied with most aspects of their job. The greatest area of dissatisfaction was with the supervision they received in their role.

One of the factors affecting RTLB collaboration with teachers was time. Insufficient time in the day to complete tasks, or timing meetings to suit teachers who had little release time was an issue for them. Co-ordinating timetables between schools exacerbated these problems. Collaboration with teachers in secondary schools was often even more difficult because of communication systems, timetable complexities and the number of teachers involved with each student.

Most RTLB reported that, as a strategy to manage their work and their relationships with teachers and schools, they tried to keep regular contact and as far as possible a set timetable so that schools would know when to expect visits from their RTLB.

Overwhelmingly, RTLB reported that they responded more to the needs of students with behaviour difficulties than to those with learning difficulties. Although it was recognised that students referred for behaviour often had learning needs as well, some RTLB felt that students who had learning difficulties only were not given the attention they needed.

Among the challenges RTLB identified were time issues, including the pressures of a high workload and struggling to find times to meet teachers; travelling between and co-ordinating work across several sites; and unrealistic expectations from some principals and some teachers.

RTLB echoed the views of others involved in the evaluation in their opinion that the criteria for inclusion in ORRS or SBI was too stringent and that, as a result, the special educational needs of many students were not being met.

RTLB identified some of the barriers to optimal performance in their job. These are listed in rank order below:

- resistance from teachers and principals
- teacher expectations and confusion about the RTLB role
- issues associated with training
- time constraints
- administration and systems issues
- issues associated with working in a secondary school
- RTLB skill level
- issues associated with parents and families
- issues for Māori learners.

The main strategies suggested by RTLB to address some of these barriers were: RTLB giving increased attention to communication and relationship building with teachers and principals; modelling effective practice; additional release time for teachers; and professional development for teachers and principals.

6

Moderate needs: sensory impairment and/or physical disability

Students who have sensory impairments and/or physical disabilities and who are not eligible for funding under ORRS can receive support under this strand of SE2000.

A theme that has pervaded this strand is that of change. Phases Two and Three of the evaluation were marked by changing service provision and funding arrangements for this group of students, and there is an expectation of further change that will directly affect these learners.

In 1999 groups were set up to interpret data that had been collected, and to plan for a nationally integrated service for students with sensory impairments and students with physical disabilities. Some of the initiatives included in this strand of provision include:

- from 2000, students with moderate physical needs had access to physiotherapists and occupational therapists funded by the Ministry of Education
- the Deaf Education Agency (DEA), which first met in 2001, was charged with providing advice on structures and mechanisms to ensure that services to deaf and hearing impaired learners would be nationally integrated and equitable, and
- the Vision Education Agency (VEA) was established in 1999, and reflected a desire for collaboration and cohesion across the sector.

Students who have sensory impairments and/or physical disabilities, along with other students with special education needs, are also eligible for what is called assistive equipment. Assistive equipment is any tool which assists a student to do something, or to do something better than they were able to without the equipment.

The evaluation of this strand showed that:

- parents and teachers alike expressed concern at the amount of change and its impact on students and those who support them
- there was dissatisfaction with the limitation of ORRS provision, and concern that ORRS criteria do not adequately reflect the needs of students with sensory impairments
- there are transition issues for students who have sensory impairments and/or physical disabilities from early childhood services to school, and no national strategy in place to ensure good practice
- less than one fifth of more than 500 parents surveyed considered their children had received culturally appropriate support under this strand of provision.

For the purposes of this evaluation ‘support’ covers the activities of service providers, and includes information, advice, advocacy, assessment or direct work by specialist staff with students, families and whanau.

The policy and funding frameworks emphasise the need for strong and effective links between different strands of SE2000.

Changes in special education policy and delivery

Between 1999 and 2001, policy, funding and operational changes were made to some of the resourcing strands within the SE2000 framework. The major changes were:

- the allocation of Transition Bridging Funding to individual schools on behalf of students with ‘S.9 agreements’ who have not/were not verified for ORRS
- the allocation of Learning Support Funding RTLB to clusters to enable them to provide assistance to schools on a needs basis to support their students with moderate needs
- the temporary devolution of funding for and management of transport to fundholders
- the introduction of transitional resourcing through ORRS (OTRS) for children aged 5 to 7 years old, whose long term educational needs were still unclear
- an increase in funding for ORRS students in rural schools
- the appointment of regional facilitator positions within the Ministry of Education to provide facilitation or support for, schools, families and whanau where there are difficult situations regarding access or support.

In addition, a government-commissioned review of special education led to a decision taken in February 2001 to disestablish SES and put in its place a new network of support and resource centres. Other policy changes resulting from the review included widening the eligibility criteria for ORRS and developing a Schools High Health Needs Fund. It also increased the number of Ministry of Education facilitator positions and set aside funding for schools that attract students with special education needs and are known for their ability and willingness to cater for those needs.

Together, the changes affected the level and types of support services available under SE2000 over the three years of the evaluation. So, while it is possible to get an indication of changes in levels of satisfaction, it must be remembered that the services available in 2001 were different from those available in 1999.

7

Satisfaction with support services

Schools' satisfaction with support services

Table 8 shows that the proportion of schools that were satisfied or very satisfied with support services *in principle* remained fairly constant over the three years of the evaluation, but this varied considerably between the various resourcing initiatives. There was an increase in schools' satisfaction with the way support services were delivered over the three years.

In terms of the support provided by SES, schools were consistently least satisfied with the support services provided for SBI, and most satisfied with the support provided for ORRS.

Schools were less likely to give their views on support provided by other, non-SES, providers, but those which did indicated more satisfaction than dissatisfaction with the services provided.

Table 8 Satisfaction level with support services for SE2000 in principle and in practice

	In principle			In practice		
	Phase 1%	Phase 2%	Phase 3%	Phase 1%	Phase 2%	Phase 3%
Satisfied or very satisfied	45	43	46	32	39	41
Dissatisfied or very dissatisfied	23	18	23	31	22	26
No response	32	24	17	37	23	19
Too early to tell		5	4		6	3
Not applicable or no response		9	10		10	11

Throughout the evaluation concern was expressed about those students whose needs fell just outside the criteria for ORRS verification. By 2001 there was some indication that schools felt the links between the high/very high needs initiatives and other forms of support were functioning satisfactorily (with the exception of SBI).

Parents' satisfaction with support services

The parents who participated in the evaluation were generally supportive of schools' and SES's efforts to support the learning needs of their child, although this masked considerable variation. Some parents greatly appreciated the advocacy, information, intervention and support that were provided by SES, while others were frustrated by the lack of responsiveness, inaccessibility and discontinuities of service.

Comments from parents about support from other providers were overwhelmingly positive.

Variations in satisfaction with support services

Rural isolation was a major inhibiting factor in providing comprehensive support services. A distributed population and the limited availability of specialist staff greatly inhibited how well services performed *in practice* when compared to provision *in principle*. The main difficulties involved in operationalising the policy included: contractual and organisational constraints; shortages and turnover of specialised staff; and, workloads associated with trying to provide common support systems across a diverse education system.

There was little statistically significant relationship between schools' decile ranking or fundholder status and their satisfaction with support services.



RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOLS AND REGIONAL HOSPITAL HEALTH SCHOOLS

8

Residential Special Schools

The state funded Residential Special Schools fall into two groups. The first group, which in the evaluation included McKenzie, Waimakoia, Hogben, and Salisbury Residential Schools, function primarily as a school and a residential facility. Schools in the second group – Van Asch Deaf Education Centre, Kelston Deaf Education Centre, and Homai Vision Education Centre – have a resource centre in addition to both a school and a residential facility.

Evaluation of the Residential Special Schools involved national surveys, in-depth case studies, and follow-up interviews. During the three-year evaluation, Waimakoia, Salisbury, van Asch and Kelston appointed new principals, Homai Vision Education Centre's status changed to that of a state funded Residential Special School, and Waimakoia School underwent significant restructuring. Hence, many of the respondents who had contributed to the earlier phases were no longer at the schools during Phase Three.

The evaluation highlighted the unique nature of each of the schools but also identified some common themes which include:

- enrolment issues
- scope of services
- educational experiences.

Enrolment issues

Enrolment issues included changes to referral processes, shortened tenure and closer connection with BSTs for McKenzie and Waimakoia, while for Hogben and Salisbury Schools changes included shortened tenure, increased age of referrals to the schools and closer connections with RTLB for referrals.

The key issue for van Asch, Kelston and Homai Centres was the national restructuring of education for students who are deaf or who have hearing impairments, as well as learners who are blind or have vision impairments. Follow-up interviews with principals indicated that on the whole the schools had adjusted well to these changes.

8

The scope of services

The scope of the services offered by the Residential Special Schools increased over the course of the evaluation. The services cited by the schools initially as contributing most to students' long-term education, behavioural and socio-emotional outcomes tended to be related to the availability of specialist staff using a consistent approach throughout 24 hours in a stable environment. By the third year of the evaluation, there had been some key developments in the scope of services offered by each school. Some of the changes included: services to strengthen students' links with home and family; improvements in the way the progress and achievement of students was being assessed and recorded; more attention to meeting the needs of Māori students; more opportunities for professional development and supervision for staff; and meaningful partnerships with the community.

Educational experiences and transition issues

The Residential Special Schools recognised that their students had particular issues related to the transition between home and school. These included the challenge of separating from home and family and adapting to new routines; learning to share a living space; forming new friendships; reintegrating to family and community on return home; and transferring the skills learnt at a residential school back into the home and school environment.

The evaluation found that the principals thought that transition was an area of significant development and improvement under SE2000. The funding and support offered to students returning to their home and school was particularly valued.

Regional Hospital Health Schools

The main priority for Regional Hospital Health Schools (RHS) is to ensure that students with high health needs receive equitable education provision, irrespective of where they, or the health services they receive, are located. It is the RHS' responsibility to ensure that students with high health needs have their education needs met.

The RHS component of the evaluation was introduced in Phase Three. It consistently identified the unique teaching function of the RHS, which involves advocacy, negotiation, liaison and administration. Unlike teachers in other settings, RHS teachers' caseloads are small, transient and complex. Some students are enrolled only with the RHS, others are also enrolled in The Correspondence School or with a base school, or in some cases both.

RHS teachers are attached to one of Southern Regional Health School, Central Regional Health School or Northern Hospital Schools. While the focus of the teachers is on the provision of education and curriculum support, for many of the RHS teachers students' health difficulties are a factor in how they support the student to meet curriculum objectives. The balance of educational and health needs was a tension for many of the teachers working with these students.

There were three issues that were common across the RHS areas:

- concern that the criteria for RHS support (a hospital admission of 10 days or more) is denying some short-term students access to the education opportunities provided by RHS
- a perceived need for increased staff to facilitate community-based teaching, and increased administration resources to meet high communication costs
- support for the retention of hospital-based classrooms to assist meeting the needs of both students hospitalised for long periods of time, and short-stay students.



Issues for Māori students in English-medium schools

SE2000 is based on the principles contained in the Special Education Policy Guidelines. Principle Six acknowledges the importance of taking a learner's language and culture into consideration in programme planning and provision. The Guidelines require special education to be responsive to the needs and preferences of the tangata whenua.

The evaluation examined the extent to which SE2000 is achieving this aim, the challenges that are still to be addressed, and the methods appropriate to address them. It must be noted, however, that those involved in the evaluation were mainly Pakeha educators, and that the evaluation presents a predominantly Pakeha view of the situation for Māori learners with special education needs.

Adequacy and effectiveness of SE2000 initiatives for Māori students

At the start of the evaluation in 1999, there was a sense that Māori students were getting a better deal 'mostly/always' and in 'some cases' than they were before the special education policy was introduced. However, by 2001, this view had declined. RTLB and SEG had improved their satisfaction rating for Māori students over the evaluation period. The RTLB initiative was perceived to be working well for Māori learners with special education needs. The level of satisfaction with this initiative increased from 14% in 1999 to 47% in 2001. This initiative received top ranking each year in respect to providing Māori learners with a better deal.

SEG was also perceived positively and was second to RTLB in 'better deal' and satisfaction rankings, with an increase in the latter from 11% in 1999 to 40% in 2001.

Satisfaction with the support ORRS, SBI, SLI and SES provided to Māori students all declined during the period of the evaluation:

- the level of satisfaction with SBI declined by over 20 percentage points during the three years
- satisfaction with ORRS dropped from 34% in 1999 to 23% in 2001, the level of satisfaction with SLI and support services declined by a similar amount over the three years
- SES specialists were consistently perceived by schools to be less effective in meeting the needs of Māori learners than those of non-Māori learners.

9

Programmes and provisions for Māori learners with special education needs

Very few schools have implemented new programmes or provisions for Māori students with special education needs as a result of the special education policy.

In 1999 and 2000 schools were asked to identify the challenges they faced in relation to providing programmes to meet the needs of Māori students. They reported that their responsiveness to meeting these students' needs was limited by a lack of parental support, involvement and communication, by insufficient funding and by a shortage of staff and special education professionals with cultural and reo expertise.

The research also revealed that some educators' beliefs and attitudes were acting as barriers to providing for Māori learners with special education needs. These include the beliefs that culture is irrelevant in special education provision, the needs of Māori and non-Māori students are the same, and catering for differences is discriminatory. A tendency to blame the parents for their children's special education needs and to have low expectations of Māori students were also noted among some educators.

On the positive side, the research found a wide variety of effective strategies and provisions being used to meet the needs of Māori learners with special education needs. There is some excellent work being done by a small number of schools.

The most effective strategies include:

- the provision of small group support and one-to-one teaching for Māori students with special education needs
- the inclusion of Māori content in students' programmes
- the use of positive reinforcement and self-esteem building activities
- the involvement and consultation with parents and whanau.

While SE2000 policy and initiatives are benefiting some Māori learners with special education needs, attention needs to be given to fostering cultural and reo expertise in teachers and special education providers. There needs to be an increase in culturally appropriate programmes and provisions for Māori learners with special education needs. Negative and uninformed beliefs and attitudes that are disadvantaging Māori learners must also be addressed, and attention needs to be paid to increasing parental involvement and support.

Kura kaupapa Māori

All kura kaupapa Māori were surveyed during the evaluation. Seventy percent of kura, with a combined role of over 3700 students, responded to a survey sent to them in 2001.

Responses to the survey revealed that while knowledge and use of RTLB was generally widespread, understanding of other SE2000 initiatives was limited. These schools had a low referral rate to ORRS, SBI, SLI and support for students with a Sensory Impairment and/or Physical Disability, not supported under ORRS. This seemed to reflect limited knowledge about available services and a reluctance to refer to services which could not be provided in te reo Māori, rather than a lack of need among students.

As well as a low referral rate to these services, it seems that referrals from kura kaupapa were declined at a higher rate than referrals from mainstream schools. Less than 0.7% of students in the kura which responded to the survey were receiving ORRS, SLI or SBI assistance. As these initiatives target approximately 3% of students nationally, this low figure suggests kura were being significantly under serviced by ORRS, SBI and SLI.

Where students with high needs from kura accessed services feedback was mixed. Although there was some support for ORRS because the funding stayed with the student no matter where they went; there were complaints that the service was difficult to obtain, that it was not enough and that the verification process did not take the unique circumstances of kura kaupapa Māori into consideration. Feedback about SBI and SLI was limited with very few students having access to these services. The most common complaint was about the lack of specialist staff who could speak Māori.

Views on RTLB were also mixed. While some schools were positive about the contribution of RTLB, there were three main concerns about the service: there were not enough RTLB; in some areas, there were no RTLB with knowledge of Māori culture and te reo; and, a number of kura did not like being clustered with English-medium schools for RTLB services.

The flexibility and availability of SEG were much appreciated; however, SEG was frequently criticised for being insufficient to fund any long-term meaningful provision.

Some aspects of support services and professional development were viewed positively by kura; but, once again, there was criticism of the lack of people with expertise in Māori culture and te reo, and the consequent lack of services.

9

There was widespread belief that SE2000 initiatives were geared to English-medium schools rather than to students in total immersion education. There was a serious shortage of Māori-speaking professionals working within special education, and, where they did exist, they were expected to be able to fulfil an unrealistically broad range of functions.

Challenges in meeting the needs of Māori students with special education needs

The evaluation identified five major challenges to meeting the needs of Māori students with special education needs in kura kaupapa Māori. These were:

- shortage of services delivered using te reo
- shortage of special education professionals with knowledge of Māori culture and te reo
- shortage of resources relevant to Māori to implement and evaluate special education programmes
- lack of assessment measures relevant to Māori to identify learners with special education needs
- shortage of culturally appropriate services.

These challenges were identified as a considerable or major problem in at least 85% of kura in the 2001 survey and had increased in severity over the evaluation period. Sixty-seven percent of kura believed that Māori students were missing out on funding and support in four main areas: special educational needs relating to learning te reo Māori; the provision of whanau-focussed, holistic programmes and services; students at risk because of socio-economic circumstances; and students with behaviour problems.

Participants in the evaluation made a range of suggestions of ways of meeting these challenges. The overriding view was that the number of Māori speakers among professionals and paraprofessionals working in special education should be increased, and that other staff should have a greater appreciation of Māori culture and te reo. More programmes and resources to support Māori students with special education needs was another popular suggestion.

There was a view that increased staffing within the schools would provide greater opportunities for one-to-one assistance. Increased funding and other resources; adaptation of the verification process; and, the use of retired staff members, parents and whanau to develop and implement special education programmes were other suggestions to address the needs of students with special education needs within kura kaupapa Māori.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

10

The evaluation examined the professional development strand of the SE2000 policy.

The Ministry of Education contracted a range of universities, colleges of education and SES to provide professional development to schools to support the implementation of SE2000. Twelve regional contracts were let, and each was obliged to offer professional development opportunities to 80% of schools in the region. While there were differences between them, most of the contracts included:

- in-service courses introducing SE2000 policy, including an overview of the strands of the policy
- school-based courses and policy writing
- optional modules on identified needs.

While the professional development component of SE2000 was designed particularly to help classroom *teachers* understand how to provide for learners with special education needs, attendance at professional development courses tended to be by principals and teachers who had general responsibility for special education in the school.

The majority of participants thought that the professional development had a positive effect on both their attitudes to special education and their classroom practices. There was a high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the professional development models, in particular with the personnel delivering the contracts and the content of the courses. The majority of participants also reported that they had been given the opportunity to identify their needs prior to the professional development and that some or most of those needs had been met.

In Phase One schools reported that the programme provided an overview of the policy which tended to allay fears of the unknown, and introduced the various options and possibilities available. In Phase Two teachers and principals reported that they were becoming more familiar with the policy and that the professional development was giving them increased confidence in catering for the needs of learners with special education needs. Phase Three of the evaluation suggested that for most teachers this confidence had increased.

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Some teachers reported that the professional development did not increase their confidence in meeting students' special education needs. Many gave no reasons, but those who did indicated that they already had confidence and expertise in this area and the courses offered them nothing new.

Teacher-aides reported that professional development was critical to their confidence and skill to do the job.

While there was high overall satisfaction with the SE2000 professional development, teachers felt that they needed more help in addressing the needs of students who had missed out on high needs funding, as well as those learners with more moderate needs. This related, in particular, to behaviour difficulties. Individual teachers and schools would have appreciated follow-up support that helped them in applying strategies in the classroom.

A key principle of the Ministry of Education's Guidelines for Special Education is that young children with special education needs have the same rights to a high quality education as children of the same age who do not have special education needs.

In the early childhood sector this principle underpins an inclusive approach to special education whereby the majority of young children with special education needs are educated in early childhood centres. In addition to the regular provisions of the centre, many children with special education needs receive a range of specialist early intervention (EI) services.

The inclusive principle outlined above was a feature of early childhood education before the evaluation, and inclusive practices had already been mandated in the Desirable Objectives and Practices (DOPS) for chartered early childhood services.

Phase One of the evaluation concluded that early childhood educators were poorly informed about changes to EI provisions arising from SE2000. This is possibly because in the early childhood sector the changes introduced by SE2000 occurred at the level of resource allocation, through the allocation of funding to alternative providers, and through additional funding to SES EI services.

The aim of Phase Two was to identify the policies and contextual constraints affecting the implementation of the policy in early childhood centres. This was prompted by a need to understand more about how the policy interfaced with specific early childhood contexts.

Phase One of the evaluation reported survey and interview data from early childhood educators, and Phase Two gathered the views of kindergarten and playcentre associations. In Phase Three a wider group of participants, including parents of young children with special education needs, was accessed in order to broaden the perspective on the impact of SE2000 initiatives.

Although the data from kindergarten and playcentre association representatives suggested that major changes in service provision had not occurred in the early childhood sector, the issues identified in Phase Two of the evaluation included:

- kindergartens had major concerns with bulk funding policies which required children to attend centres full-time in order to qualify for funding. Many children with special education needs did not attend full-time and were, therefore, ineligible for government funding
- poor liaison between the early childhood and primary sectors resulting in a range of transition problems for children with special education needs
- a lack of information about SE2000 policies in the early childhood sector leading to under-utilisation of available services
- special education needs were not being identified and met effectively at early childhood level because of long delays in assessment and provision of services
- structural dislocations between health and education funding policies impacting negatively on meeting the needs of children and families in some areas.

The Phase Three evaluation focused on the EI strand and how well these services met the special education needs of young children in general, and these groups of young children in particular:

- children with sensory and/or physical needs
- children with behaviour difficulties
- Māori children
- Pacific children.

Early intervention (EI) services

The evaluation relied on the perceptions of key participants, parents, educators and EI professionals. It is important to recognise that the issues raised are based on perceptions rather than a systematic evaluation of practice.

The evaluation found examples of innovative and effective EI practices including:

- the integration of services to support inclusion in the early childhood years
- innovative preventive approaches used by SES such as work with teenage parents, language enrichment with parents and centres, Māori and Pacific initiatives to strengthen team approaches in those communities
- security of funding for accredited providers, leading to increased choice and opportunity.

As well as these positive outcomes, the evaluation identified several gaps in EI provision, including:

- identification of and services for children with moderate needs
- availability of speech-language services
- transition issues, in particular the deficit orientation of the ORRS verification process which not only causes stress but is inconsistent with EI and early childhood philosophies
- inconsistencies and gaps within the health/education interface
- inequities in provision in rural areas
- philosophical differences in the interpretation of inclusion between early childhood educators and EI professionals.

EI for children with sensory and/or physical needs

Most stakeholders agreed that the needs of children with obvious physical disability and high needs were reasonably well met in the early childhood sector, through services provided by the Health sector. Some service providers thought that children with sensory needs had access to more services than did children with physical disabilities. Most respondents agreed that where the children's needs were more moderate, it was sometimes harder to meet them within resource constraints.

Children with behaviour difficulties

EI professionals perceived a lack of provision for children with behavioural difficulties. They thought that increasingly there were services available for children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD), but little for children with other behavioural needs.

Educators were more optimistic with most agreeing that to some extent that young children's behavioural needs were being identified and met, although EI professionals reported that many centres were not coping with the numbers of children with behaviour problems.



Māori children

The evaluation showed that there was variability in the effectiveness of identification and provision of services for Māori children. However, it was clear that strategies to increase Māori staff and programmes and to strengthen provision in this area have been given priority.

The lower rates of attendance of Māori children in early childhood services were of concern. While some of the concerns were general to all children, it was considered that children with special education needs were particularly disadvantaged by not having access to services that can identify and support those needs.

Pacific children

As only 59 of 145 centres that responded to a survey about EI services, reported that Pacific children were enrolled, comparatively few comments were made about services for Pacific children. EI professionals had a concern that, with low levels of enrolment at early childhood centres, Pacific children with special education needs may not have been identified as early as they could be.

Accredited service providers reported little or no experience of working with Pacific children.



PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

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The quality of the relationships between schools and families was explored in each phase of the evaluation. The themes identified and examined included:

- the idea and experience of partnership
- information and communication
- decision-making and consultation.

The idea and experience of partnership

In its various publications, the Ministry of Education describes partnership in the context of special education in two ways. The first is that one result of SE2000 should be genuine partnership between parents, whanau and education providers. The second is the use of partnership as a means of achieving the goals of SE2000.

The principle of partnership as described under the Special Education Policy Guidelines is defined in this way:

The principle will be visible when:

- *information about barriers to learning and the provision of resources is shared between parents and education providers*
- *full information is provided to learners and parents to enable them to make sound educational choices and to participate fully in the enrolment, assessment, planning and programming, placement and monitoring of a learner's progress*
- *both education providers and parents share in the responsibility for ensuring maximum benefit from the resource*
- *parents are able to have placement and other decisions reviewed*
- *parents may choose to be supported by an advocate in assessment, planning, placement, review and appeal processes*
- *schools and early childhood services consult with parents of learners with special education needs when recruiting and appointing special education staff.*

When surveyed in Phase Three, 90% of the parents who responded viewed their working relationships with schools positively, and more than three-quarters considered they had 'a high level of partnership with the school'.

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It must be remembered that parents differ in what they consider constitutes a satisfactory involvement and sense of partnership with their child's school. Parents' reports of satisfaction with their level of involvement and partnership with their child's school need to be appreciated in the context of parents' varying views on what is an appropriate partnership.

What was clear from the evaluation was that, for parents, there needed to be frequent contact with SES, particularly around the time of an IEP, to develop their sense of partnership.

Information and communication

One of the factors that contributed to a sense of partnership was a feeling that communication was open and information shared. Parents had varying experiences of how easy they found it to get information from schools or SES. Some were frustrated with the amount of time it took to get information and others questioned the reliability of the information they received.

Almost half the schools surveyed considered that they could not improve communication with the families, caregivers and whanau of students with special education needs. However, in the parent survey the same year, 64% of parents felt that they were not given enough information, and almost half indicated that schools could improve their communication with parents.

Decision making and consultation

During Phases One and Two schools reported that SE2000 had made little difference to parent involvement. By Phase Three, however, schools had detected an increased involvement of parents in IEPs and behaviour management plans and attributed this to the special education policy. Between 2000 and 2001 schools were less likely to report that they thought parents expected too much involvement in their child's programme.

Schools continued to be ambivalent about the involvement of parents in decisions about funding allocation.

About three-quarters of parents felt they had been able to have a say in their child's programme, but several comments reflected some doubts about whether the consultation gave them real involvement or was simply paying lip-service.

Parents were much more likely than schools to think that they should be involved in decisions about funding. Parents were sometimes suspicious about the equitable allocation of funding, and whether or not actual allocated funding was being spent on their child. Funding, whether satisfactory or contested, was pivotal to the sense of partnership.

