

Managing the Special Education Grant

A Handbook for Schools



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Special Education 2000 allows for profound changes in the ways that schools support students with special education needs. Schools are allocated the Special Education Grant to enable them to use the money creatively to best meet the needs of their students. This handbook is an initial guide to schools on how this can be achieved. The sections follow a process that a school could go through in setting up a system for the management of its Special Education Grant. As every school will already have some mechanism for handling students with special education needs, a reader can pick and choose the sections that are relevant to the individual school and its students.

This handbook has been written for principals, teachers, members of boards of trustees and parents involved in the management of special education in schools. It will be updated with feedback from school communities. Comments, questions and suggestions are welcome. Please forward them to the Project Manager Special Education, Ministry of Education, Private Box 1666, Wellington.

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1.1 Defining 'Special Education Needs'

A student with special education needs will require extra assistance, adapted programmes or learning environments, specialised equipment or materials to support them in special or regular education settings.

Special education needs can be difficult to determine because they can vary from one setting to another. A student may appear to have special education needs in one class but not in another, simply because of specific learning or behaviour requirements.

Some students have received support in the past under Special Education Discretionary Assistance (SEDA) and now do not qualify under the new stricter criteria of the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme. They *do* need to be supported by the Special Education Grant and are likely to be a school's top priority.

- **High needs students**

Students at the highest end of the spectrum of intellectual, physical and sensory special needs are catered for by the *Special Education 2000* Ongoing Resourcing Scheme. Many schools will have students with relatively high needs who do not qualify for support from the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme. This could be because their needs were not seen to be permanent or ongoing. The Special Education Grant is intended to meet these students' needs.

- **Behaviour difficulties**

Special Education 2000 has a Severe Behaviour Initiative to support students with behaviour needs. These are students whose behaviour is of such intensity, frequency or duration that it:

- jeopardises the physical safety of the student or others
- threatens to cause or causes significant property damage
- severely limits the student's access to ordinary settings and interferes with social acceptance, sense of personal well-being and their educational performance.

Others who need to improve their behaviour at school can be helped by the Special Education Grant and special education teachers.

- **Speech-language difficulties**

Special Education 2000 has a separate focus on communication through the Speech-Language Initiative. Additional funding has been provided to Specialist Education Services to help students with speech-language difficulties. Priority will be given to students with high needs who have motor speech difficulties, fluency disorders, voice/resonance disorders, language difficulties or significant language delay.

- **Non-English speaking background students**

These students are supported from a different pool of money, however they may be supported through the Grant if the problem is something other than the effect of their non-English speaking backgrounds.

- **Reading Recovery**

Reading Recovery is a separate system, however, a school may wish to use the Special Education Grant to extend the scope of its remedial reading programme.

- **Gifted students**

This is likely to be a contentious area when a school discusses spending priorities. It could be useful to ask the question: "Does this gifted student have learning or behaviour difficulties?" If the answer is "yes" then using some of the Special Education Grant for the student is probably justified. If the answer is "no, we just want to provide an extension programme" then it is probably not a valid use of the Special Education Grant. Each school has to determine its own priorities and make these decisions.

1.2 Professional Development of Teachers

Professional development can be supported by the Special Education Grant if it leads to an improvement in the learning or behaviour of students with special education needs.

While *Special Education 2000* is becoming established in schools there will also be two centrally funded sources of professional development - one for teachers and principals in all schools, and one for boards of trustees.

1.3 What if the Special Education Grant Isn't Enough?

This handbook is not attempting to resolve this debate. Its purpose is to help schools make the most of the money provided. The Special Education Grant is part of a school's operational funding - other operational money can also be spent on special education needs.

1.4 Provision of the Special Education Grant - Three Principles

Three principles run through the provision of the Special Education Grant:

(a) The money has to improve students' learning and/or behaviour.

The Special Education Grant is a finite amount of money for schools to use to improve students' behaviour or learning. While this may seem obvious, actual improvement has not always been achieved, largely because schools had no choice in the way the money was spent. Teacher aide time was provided as the only intervention for many students with special education needs, whether or not the aide had the skills to assist.

Schools are responsible for ensuring that the money does make a difference. The flexibility in the way the money is spent allows schools to break away from the teacher aide mind-set and to create imaginative uses for the money that will improve student's lives.

(b) The school community decides how the money is spent.

The school community is a term used to include everyone with a stake in the operation of a school - students, teachers, principals, boards of trustees, parents and others. Each school community creates its own decision making process to determine how the Special Education Grant will be spent. Each school has its own systems for working with parents and its own unique relationship between its board of trustees and staff. The board is accountable for the finances of the school, and the principal is responsible for making the day-to-day decisions. Each school community will determine its own special education priorities and how these goals can be met.

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(c) Ownership of the process by the school community is essential for it to work.

When people are marginalised from decision making their frustrations can show in different ways. A parent who has a child with special education needs may complain that the school "isn't doing anything for their child". Teachers often state that they don't get any help for their students with special education needs in their classes.

Everyone in the school community who is involved in some way with special education, needs to be actively included in decision making and responsible for achieving results. The principal and teachers increase this sense of ownership when they make sure that parents of children who have special education needs have easy access to the school and feel that their concerns are being addressed.



2.0 MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

2.1 Creating a Special Education Policy

A school has a lot of freedom in the way it uses its Special Education Grant. Along with the flexibility and control comes an obligation to use the money in a highly effective and professional way.

The first step in this process is the creation of a special education policy. A school may already have a policy in place that is durable enough to guide the management of the Special Education Grant. Or, perhaps the existing policy is a more general statement pledging commitment to meeting students' individual needs. If this is the case then a stronger statement is needed to set priorities for the school and shape the specific procedures to be followed.

A Special Education Policy needs to:

- pledge commitment to meeting students' individual needs
- consider all students in the school's community
- describe how the special education priorities for any year will be set
- create the general structure for the operation of the Special Education Grant within which the principal and staff will operate
- define the review and evaluation procedures
- set the reporting requirements for the principal to the board of trustees.

The next step is to allocate responsibilities in the management of the Special Education Grant.

How this is achieved depends on the:

- type of school - small or large, primary or secondary
- present special education culture - for example support, skill levels
- nature of the relationships between the teachers and senior staff
- nature of the relationships between the school, board of trustees and the broader community.

The Grant may be managed by individuals either on their own or supported by an advisory group or a committee, for example senior staff members, teachers, or those elected from the school community. See Table 1 for some possible options.

No matter which option is chosen, one person should be responsible for the coordination, and accountable for the daily operation, of the Special Education Grant.

TABLE 1: OPTIONS FOR MANAGING THE SPECIAL EDUCATION GRANT

| | Advantages | Disadvantages | Best for: | Cautions |
|----------|--|--|--|---|
| Option 1 | The principal manages the Special Education Grant alone. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fast decision making Classroom teachers' workload not affected Decisions will have authority | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hard to establish sense of ownership so teachers may be unwilling to cooperate Principal may lack special education knowledge Staff expertise may be unused No opportunity for parent input Principal's workload increased | <p>If there is any mistrust over how the money is spent then Option 6 or 7 would help to strengthen the sense of trust between everyone involved.</p> |
| Option 2 | Another staff member manages the Special Education Grant alone. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fast decision making Classroom teachers' workload not affected | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hard to establish sense of ownership so teachers may be unwilling to cooperate No opportunity for parent input Decisions may lack authority and need later ratification by principal | <p>Undermining of special education programmes may happen if the relationships are not secure enough.</p> |
| Option 3 | A group of senior staff members manages the Special Education Grant. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decisions will have authority Experience of senior staff expertise used Most classroom teachers' workload not affected | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hard to establish sense of ownership so teachers may be unwilling to cooperate No opportunity for parent input Workload increase for principal and senior staff | <p>Lack of ownership by teachers is the biggest problem with this option.</p> |
| Option 4 | A committee of teachers manages the Special Education Grant. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sense of ownership by teachers will encourage them to cooperate Staff expertise used | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slow decision making Decisions may lack authority and need later ratification by principal Teachers' workload increase No opportunity for parent input | <p>Ensure one person is allocated responsibility for co-ordination.</p> |
| Option 5 | A representative committee from the school community manages the Special Education Grant. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sense of ownership by teachers will encourage them to cooperate Staff expertise used Community goodwill may encourage parents to cooperate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slow decision making Decisions may lack authority and need later ratification by principal Privacy concerns may restrict the committee to being a policy one only Teachers' workload increased | <p>Any school wishing to strengthen its special education culture.</p> |
| Option 6 | A coordinator manages the Special Education Grant supported by an advisory group of teachers that regularly meets. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sense of ownership by teachers will encourage them to cooperate Staff expertise used Presence of coordinator allows for fast day-to-day decisions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decisions may lack authority and need later ratification by principal Teachers' workload increased No opportunity for parent input | <p>Any larger school.</p> |
| Option 7 | A coordinator manages the Special Education Grant supported by a representative advisory group from the school community that regularly meets. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sense of ownership by teachers will encourage them to cooperate Staff expertise used Community goodwill may encourage parents to cooperate Presence of coordinator allows for fast day-to-day decisions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decisions may lack authority and need later ratification by principal Privacy concerns may restrict the operation of the advisory group Teachers' workload increased | <p>Any larger school wishing to strengthen its special education culture.</p> |

2.2 Responsibilities

The following list is a typical set of activities associated with the operation of the Special Education Grant. No matter what option is chosen, the school will need to identify who is going to carry out each function.

TABLE 2: ALLOCATING RESPONSIBILITIES

| Responsibility | Person Responsible |
|--|--------------------|
| Budget planning | |
| Monitoring the budget | |
| Identification of students' special education needs | |
| Identification of resources and services available in the community | |
| Creation of new teaching resources within the school | |
| Personal supervision of teachers and teacher aides | |
| Public relations within the school | |
| Liaison with parents | |
| Staff training | |
| Teaching students with special education needs | |
| Monitoring progress of students with special education needs | |
| Reporting to board of trustees | |
| Coordination with students receiving help from other <i>Special Education 2000</i> initiatives | |

3.0 DEFINING PRIORITIES

Allocating the Special Education Grant is a difficult task. It is likely that a school will give first priority to students who have been receiving Special Education Discretionary Assistance (SEDA). Professional development for teachers leading to more successful programmes for students with special education needs is also likely to be a priority. While *Special Education 2000* is becoming established in schools, there will be centrally funded sources of professional development additional to the Special Education Grant allocation.

Strengthening the behaviour management skills of teachers, teaching students self-managing behaviours and improving the behaviour systems of a school are also all valid uses for the Special Education Grant. When a class is running well every student's learning increases.

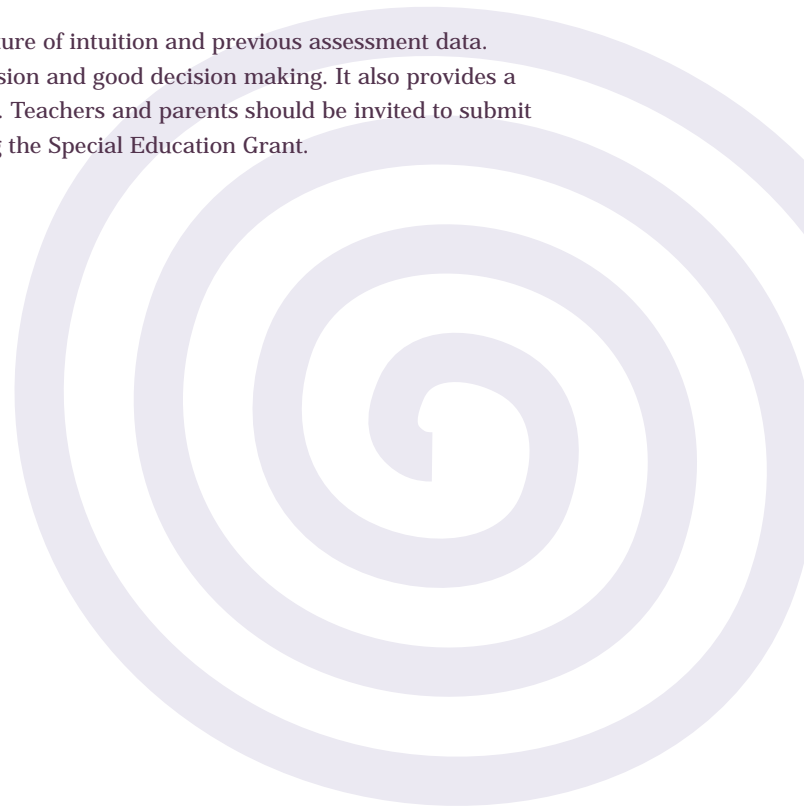
How priorities are defined will vary from school to school. The board of trustees may decide as a matter of policy. In other schools, the decision may be made by the staff, or by the special education advisory group.

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Involving the school community as much as is practicable in the setting of priorities will increase the commitment to ensuring the money is well spent.

3.1 Using Data

Priorities will probably be based on a mixture of intuition and previous assessment data. Clear data is vital for informing the discussion and good decision making. It also provides a basis for measuring improvement later on. Teachers and parents should be invited to submit what they think are priorities for spending the Special Education Grant.



4.0 RESOURCES AND SERVICES

Once the priorities for spending the money are set then the school confirms the 'resources and services' required to meet the objectives.

Resources may include books, videos, computer software and packaged teaching programmes. Services are those provided by teachers, teacher aides, psychologists, behaviour consultants and other specialists. A service may be simply advice, or it may be more "hands-on" such as teaching and running professional development seminars. The services can be controlled by the school - such as teachers and teacher aides employed directly by the school - or they can be sourced from outside - like consultant psychologists, teachers employed in private education provision, physiotherapists and occupational therapists employed at the local medical centre.

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4.1 Finding Resources and Services

It can be difficult to access the resources and services that are available, particularly when they are not always in every area. Some schools create resources and services for their own use and sell them to other schools.

Most of the information on resources and services is available from:

- principals of schools within the region
- other teachers at curriculum association meetings
- the local Specialist Education Services office
- the local teacher training provider - college of education, university, polytechnic or private training establishment
- staff at local special schools
- NZEI or PPTA representatives.

Local initiatives will grow along with the market for educational providers.

4.2 Selecting Resources and Services

This section has some comments on what to look out for when selecting a resource, teacher or service in common areas for students with special education needs. Comments included are based on evidence of current practice and are designed to spark discussion. The aim is to encourage a school to be critical when selecting resources and services.

The message here is to be discriminating. Be honest about the success of what has happened in the past and make selections based on what is best for your students.

TABLE 3: SELECTING RESOURCES

| | What to watch out for |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Language | <p>Is the work based on careful assessment of existing skills?</p> <p>What skills are fundamental to the programme?</p> <p>Will the language instruction involve the regular collection of data, analysis of the data and modifications based on the analysis?</p> |
| Reading | <p>Will the reading instruction involve the regular collection of reading data, analysis of the data and modifications based on the analysis?</p> <p>If a teacher aide is doing the work and does not have the skills required, is there a trained person who will regularly monitor progress so that constant changes can be made to the programme?</p> |
| Mathematics | <p>Are the current mathematical skills analysed before any teaching takes place?</p> <p>Is progress constantly monitored so that changes can be made to the programme if necessary?</p> <p>For an intervention in a secondary school: Is assessment done to find any gaps in primary school mathematics knowledge that may be hindering progress?</p> |
| Behaviour | <p>Does the behaviour service take account of the patterns of behaviour surrounding the students being targeted?</p> <p>Changes in behaviour usually require very close monitoring and feedback from an experienced person over an extended period of time. Does the service provide this?</p> <p>One-to-one counselling of behaviour rarely works without being combined with other interventions. Are other interventions being provided?</p> <p>Be careful with packaged programmes on behaviour management. Does the package match your school's conditions?</p> |
| Self-esteem | <p>Does the programme set personal goals for students to achieve?</p> <p>If the self-esteem programme targets a particular cultural group, is it carried out in an inclusive manner?</p> |
| Social skills | <p>Does the social skills programme deliberately plan to generalise skills taught in the classroom to other settings?</p> <p>Does the social skills programme take account of the patterns of behaviour surrounding the students being targeted?</p> <p>Does the programme set personal goals for students to achieve?</p> <p>Does the programme keep data on students to show that changes have occurred?</p> |
| Assessment | <p>Does the service give you information that you can use?</p> <p>Does the service understand the dynamics of your school?</p> <p>Does the service understand the unique characteristics of students in your school?</p> |
| Professional Development | <p>Does the service or course presenter take account of course members' individual learning needs?</p> <p>Does the service find out about the specific features of the schools involved?</p> <p>Does the course help a teacher make new professional connections with other teachers?</p> <p>Are learning targets set?</p> <p>Does course evaluation consider whether learning outcomes were achieved? (Not questions of the 'did-you-enjoy-the-course' kind.)</p> <p>One-off seminars rarely answer "Yes" to these questions so are unlikely to be a valid use of the Special Education Grant.</p> |

4.3 Creating New Services

Resourcing and services are developing in many areas. In the event of them not being available, schools do have the option of creating their own. An example of this is sharing teachers with other schools in your area.

4.3.1 Shared teachers

Only large schools generate a big enough Special Education Grant to cover the full-time salary for a teacher. Many schools will employ part-time teachers, however those who are available may not have the specific expertise to do the work.

One solution is for clusters of schools to pool a portion of their Special Education Grant to make up the salary for a whole teacher. This may attract better skilled applicants viewing the job as a specialist position rather than a fill-in job. It is likely that teachers who have diplomas in teaching students with special education needs will be attracted to a job of this kind. They can then function as resource teachers serving the schools that pay in any way that is agreed.

Issues to consider include:

- Will the teacher be based at one school and identify as part of the staff there?
- How can the teacher become accepted as a staff member at the other schools?
- What organisation structure will operate? The organisational options in this handbook would apply. The 'school community' would now refer to the combined school communities.
- Who is responsible for negotiating the teacher's employment contract?
- What length of tenure would make the job attractive to applicants but would also allow enough flexibility for the participating schools?
- Who will supervise the teacher?
- How much travel will be involved and how will the costs be met?
- Who is responsible for the purchase of teaching resources, and where should they be kept?

5.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

5.1 Monitoring

Monitoring is when teachers keep frequent written notes on what they did, and more importantly - what the student or students did – to ensure that educational objectives are being met.

Students who are hard to teach or to manage, need to be taught or responded to in unique ways. Monitoring, particularly on a daily basis, can save a lot of teaching time because teachers can identify strategies that do not work and replace them with ones that do.

All teachers who work with students with special education need to develop the monitoring habit. Any service that the school pays for must also be monitored constantly.

5.2 Evaluation

Evaluation is the process of judging the effectiveness of teaching. It is a formal statement on how things have gone. Evaluating the use of the Special Education Grant involves deciding whether or not the money has been well spent, by determining how much the students' learning or behaviour has improved.

5.3 Difference Between Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring needs to be done constantly. Monitoring records are working notes that a teacher refers to from day-to-day. A teacher does make judgments on the basis of the monitoring notes but the decisions relate to how the teaching or behaviour management is going.

Evaluation is done occasionally - perhaps twice a term, every six months or once a year. It is a broader, more conceptual process that looks at the big picture. Evaluation will be based on the monitoring notes and any other information that can help answer the question - *How has this work been going?*

Evaluation leads to a report that is a carefully prepared formal document whereas monitoring produces working notes.

Schools evaluate to decide if the:

- teachers or services being used are succeeding
- money has been well spent
- chosen priorities have been addressed.

Evaluation should not be time consuming if the monitoring has been done well. Evaluation of the use of Special Education Grant forms part of a school's accountability system. An Evaluation Report is prepared for the board of trustees to be consistent with the reporting policies established by the board. The Education Review Office will examine these procedures and outcomes as part of its work with the school.

5.4 Evaluation and Summative Assessment

Evaluation is similar to summative assessment but it goes further. Summative assessment is done to decide what has been learned. Evaluation goes further by including a judgment of the quality of the resource or service.

5.5 The Evaluation Report

There are many ways of preparing an Evaluation Report. Here is one suggestion to help schools choose their own procedures.

Section 1: The Priorities

To give it focus, the report can begin with a statement of the chosen priorities for the use of the Special Education Grant.

Section 2: Resources and Services

A description of the resources and services with the amount of money spent on each.

Section 3: Evaluation Forms

A detailed description of the outcomes achieved by each resource or service. This can be done on the enclosed form where a before-and-after picture is painted for each student or group supported by the Special Education Grant. Codes can be used for names to ensure student privacy as these forms will be seen by the board of trustees and by the Education Review Office.

A sample Evaluation Form appears opposite.

Section 4: Impact Summary

A summary that judges the quality of the outcomes achieved through the spending of the Special Education Grant.

SAMPLE EVALUATION FORM

Resource or service: _____ Money spent: _____

| Person or group | Focus area | Before | After | Comment |
|-----------------|------------|--------|-------|---------|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

6.0 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development has already been identified as a valid use of the Special Education Grant so long as it leads to an improvement in the learning or behaviour of students with special education needs. The section on Resources and Services described what to look out for when selecting a professional development service. This section looks at some staff training options a school could consider to maximise the impact of its allocation of the Special Education Grant.

6.1 Behaviour Management

The most effective way of addressing the problems of students with special behaviour needs in a school is by training the teachers in how to manage the students more successfully. Unlike academic learning where one-to-one teaching of students with special learning needs can be effective, students with special behaviour needs rarely respond to this kind of intervention. The responsibility to manage the students will always come back to the classroom teacher, who needs to be helped to cope with these problems.

A school should look for a professional development service in behaviour management that:

- understands the pressures in a teacher's working day
- takes account of the patterns of behaviour surrounding the students being targeted
- provides close monitoring and feedback from an experienced person over an extended period, to ensure that the teachers really learn new skills.

6.2 Assessment

Successful work with students who have special education needs requires a high level of rigour and clarity in the teachers' assessment practices. For many teachers this assessment is far more detailed than that done in their training or current work.

Professional development in assessment techniques can help classroom teachers become more self-reliant with their special needs students. The long term effect is that the money from the Special Education Grant goes further and can be used more for the students who are not easily supported by their own classroom teachers.

6.3 Individual Teaching Techniques

The same comments made for Assessment apply here. Professional development in specific individual teaching techniques can have significant impact. Classroom teachers can build them into their repertoire of skills for use with all their students.

6.4 Tutoring for Parents and Others

Many individual teaching programmes at school have limited impact because of the small amount of actual teaching. If parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters know how to tutor properly, then they could continue the practice and fluency components of a teaching programme and become real partners in the teaching process for students with special education needs.

6.5 Attitudes to Special Education

Knowledge, skills and attitudes are integral parts of the New Zealand Curriculum. It is easy to describe the knowledge and skills needed to make teaching students with special education needs successful. Professional development to increase knowledge and skills is likely to be successful if good teaching techniques are followed.

Attitudes are much harder to identify or change. Some believe that students who are hard to teach, or who behave in disruptive ways, should not be in normal classes. The best way to change attitudes is for teachers to have success in their professional work with students who have special education needs.

This is where personal supervision can be very effective.

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6.6 Personal Supervision

Personal supervision is not done by a boss - senior teacher, head of department or principal. It is a kind of counselling supervision where an independent person works through the issues in a teacher's professional life in a supportive way. *Personal supervision is not a form of appraisal.* There is absolutely no connection between personal supervision and line management.

In a school, personal supervision can be done by any teacher who has the skills to do it, possibly from another school. Two schools may work together to provide personal supervisors for selected teachers. Personal supervision can also be provided by private consultants, staff of teacher education providers, and other education agencies. Personal supervision is a form of professional development and is a valid use for the Special Education Grant.



7.0 OTHER SPECIAL EDUCATION 2000 INITIATIVES

7.1 Ongoing Resourcing Scheme

A school may or may not have any students with special education needs separately supported by the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme. It is likely however that the school has a group of students it would like to have supported by the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme. The problem is that the student did not meet the criteria. These students may have received funding in the past.

A school may wish to seek a review of the verification decision. Also, if there is new or different information available, a school can send in a new application form. If a school finds that it needs to spend a relatively high amount of money from the Special Education Grant on one particular student, then an application to include the student in the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme may be considered.

Included in the special education duties in a school could be the responsibility for preparing applications for inclusion in the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme. Once the scheme becomes well established, new applications are likely to be less frequent as these students are likely to have been identified very early on - mostly before starting school.

The local Ministry of Education Management Centres can advise schools on the criteria for verification. Schools can also apply to Specialist Education Services for students who need support for severe behaviour or speech-language difficulties.

7.2 Severe Behaviour Initiative

Additional funding has been provided to Specialist Education Services to help schools with very difficult students. These are students whose behaviour is of such intensity, frequency or duration that it:

- jeopardises the physical safety of the student or others
- threatens to cause or causes significant property damage
- severely limits the student's access to ordinary settings and interferes with social acceptance, sense of personal well-being and their educational performance.

A prototype of the Severe Behaviour Initiative is being trialled in the Waikato area. Schools in other areas should contact their local Specialist Education Services office for details about help for students with behaviour difficulties in their local area.

7.3 Speech-Language Initiative

Additional funding has been provided to Specialist Education Services to help students with speech-language difficulties. Schools wishing to refer students should contact their local Specialist Education Services office. Priority will be given to students with high needs who have motor speech difficulties, fluency disorders, voice/resonance disorders, language difficulties or significant language delay.

APPENDIX: CASE STUDIES

These case studies are fictitious examples based on real schools' use of their special education funds.

RED VALLEY SCHOOL

Full primary school

Roll: 93

Decile: 6

Special Education Grant: \$3,348

Red Valley School is a moderate sized rural school on the outskirts of a provincial town. It serves a stable community and the principal - John Mellor - and teachers have a comfortable and constructive relationship with the parents.

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When the Special Education Grant was discussed, the board of trustees acted on John Mellor's recommendation that he decide how best to use the small grant and report to them later in the year. There was no interest in preparing a new policy on special education as it was felt that what was in the current charter was quite sufficient.

The principal decided to follow Option 1 (see Table 1 page 5) and manage the small Special Education Grant himself. He took the opportunity of using this new fund to strengthen the already good collegial atmosphere in the school by having a full discussion on how the money should be spent at a staff meeting and also bringing it to the next meeting of the PTA to get parent views. His management style had always been to listen to comments and advice and then decide.

Getting Started and Setting Priorities

For several years the junior school teacher and the Reading Recovery teacher had worked together to intervene very early and effectively with children needing reading support. Red Valley had no children considered by the school to have moderate or high special education needs. The discussion with the teachers and the PTA showed that mathematics was now an area that some children appeared to be having difficulty with at years 6, 7 and 8. John Mellor decided to make mathematics the focus for 1998. He also decided to continue the focus on reading, assisting those children who had left Reading Recovery to become part of the classroom programme.

Resources and Services

John Mellor decided that the post Reading Recovery support could effectively be provided by a teacher aide as the role was one of monitoring and occasional assistance. Red Valley had three parents in the area who had worked as teacher aides before and one in particular showed that she had a very good understanding of the reading process.

The mathematics focus was more difficult. John Mellor decided that a part-time teacher would be employed to release a teacher to manage the mathematics intervention. The teacher was willing to carry out the supervision of the mathematics work but freely admitted that she lacked some skills in remediation in mathematics. The school advertised for a part-time teacher and received an application from Alison West - a teacher in the local town who was not currently working. She had earlier spent time working as a mathematics advisor in the city. After some discussion, the plan was changed so that the part-time teacher was offered the chance to coordinate the mathematics intervention.

The budget plan was very simple:

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------|
| Teacher aide - reading support | \$1,200 |
| Alison West - part-time teacher | \$2,148 |

Responsibilities

| Responsibility | Person Responsible |
|--|---|
| Budget planning | John Mellor - the principal |
| Budget monitoring | John Mellor |
| Identifying the students' special education needs | Teacher in room 1 |
| Identification of resources and services available in the community | John Mellor |
| Creating new teaching resources within the school | Teachers in room 1 and 4 |
| Personal supervision of teachers and teacher aides | John Mellor |
| Public relations within the school | John Mellor |
| Liaison with parents | John Mellor |
| Staff training | John Mellor |
| Teaching students with special education needs | 1. Teacher in room 1, 2. Teacher aide, 3. Part-time teacher |
| Monitoring progress of students with special education needs | John Mellor and teacher in room 1 |
| Reporting to board of trustees | John Mellor |
| Coordination with students receiving help from other <i>Special Education 2000</i> initiatives | Not applicable - no children supported by either scheme |

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The Work Underway

It was decided that Alison West would begin by conducting a thorough assessment of the mathematics skills in years 6, 7 and 8 and then identify particular students who needed support. She did this and found there were three categories of children needing support:

1. Children who lacked instant recall of basic addition facts.
2. Children who had instant recall of basic addition facts but lacked instant recall of multiplication facts.
3. Children who knew basic facts, although their mastery was not fluent, but their attitudes to mathematics interfered seriously in their class work.

It was agreed that Alison West would work personally with children in the first category for Term 1, and prepare suitable resource material for the class teachers for the other two categories.

For reading, the teacher aide worked as planned under the supervision of the Reading Recovery teacher.

Evaluation

An Evaluation Report was prepared for the board of trustees. The following page is an extract from Section 3: Evaluation Forms. It describes the impact of the work done by Alison West with some of the children she worked with who lacked instant recall of basic addition facts.

SAMPLE EVALUATION FORM

Resource or service: Alison West Money spent: \$2,148 for mathematics programme

| Person or group | | Focus area | | Before | | After | | Comment | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|---|---|--|--|-------|--|---------|--|
| MR Year 6 | Addition and subtraction facts. | Instant recall of doubles and +1 problems only. Finger set creation if sum < or = 5. Using ruler or counters for all others. Pre-test at start of term: 21/40 in 7 min 40 secs. | One hand finger count still used for 7+8, 9+8 and occasional subtractions. Instant recall of all others. Post-test at end of term: 39/40 in 1 min 23 secs. | Teacher reported significant attitude change in class to maths and other subjects. | | | | | |
| KR Year 6 | Addition and subtraction facts. | Instant recall of doubles and +1. Counting up from first number using finger tally - flawed >5. Set creation on paper for all subtractions - unreliable. Pre-test at start of term: 22/40 in 12 min 11 secs. | Instant recall now complete. Post-test at end of term: 40/40 in 1 min 11 secs. | Learned counting method very quickly and returned to class programme after 3 weeks. | | | | | |
| PT Year 7 | Addition and subtraction facts. | Has been kept on counters since junior classes and given alternative work. No attempt to use instant recall and even uses counters for +1. Refused to finish pre-test - walked out after 20 mins - 8/15. | At end of term one handed finger count well established for adding. Subtraction not attempted yet. Post-test on + only - 37/40 in 4 min 13 secs. | Class teacher taught programme. | | | | | |
| JN Year 8 | Addition and subtraction facts. | Instant recall of doubles, +1, -1, and tens complements. Counting up from larger number using memory - about 50% correct using this strategy. Pre-test at start of term: 31/40 in 7 min 24 secs. | Repertoire of instant recall extended. Still uses counting up from larger number using memory - slow but now accurate. Post-test at end of term: 40/40 in 1 min 25 secs | Finger count not emphasised. Tens complements + and - 1 and doubles + and - 1 taught. | | | | | |

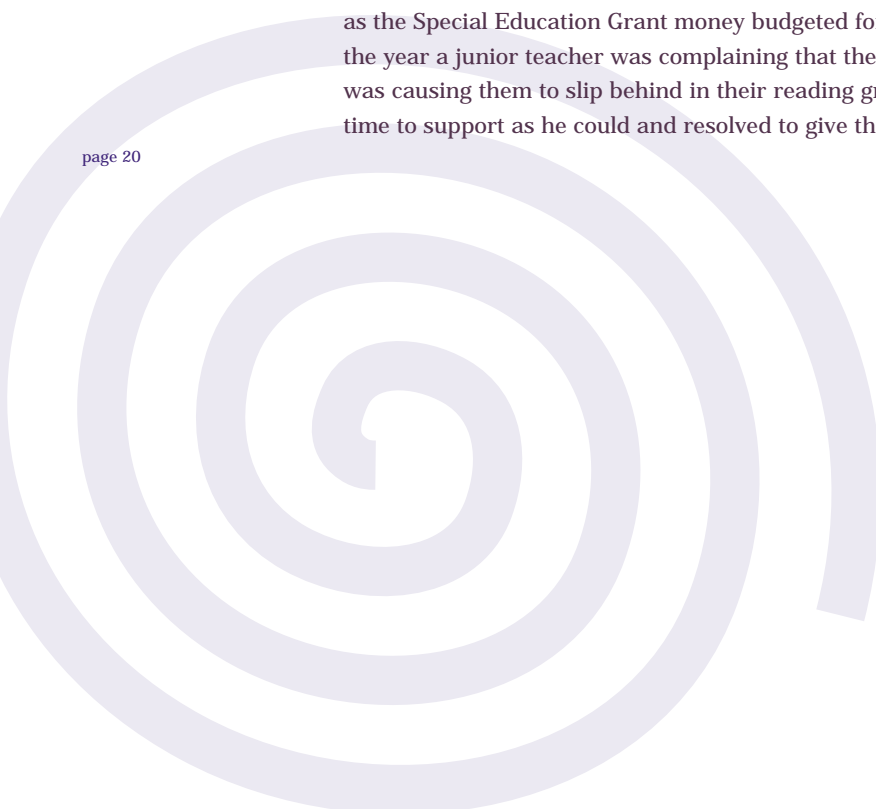
Professional Development

No formal professional development occurred although Alison West spent quite a lot of time - beyond her hours - explaining the mathematics resources she had prepared.

Glitches

The teacher aide working in reading left in the middle of Term 2 and the school did not replace her as the Special Education Grant money budgeted for her had been almost all spent. By the end of the year a junior teacher was complaining that the lack of ongoing support for her slower readers was causing them to slip behind in their reading groups. The principal used some of his release time to support as he could and resolved to give this area stronger support in 1999.

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MAUNGARUA HIGH SCHOOL

Secondary school

Roll: 1,149

Decile: 2

Special Education Grant: \$55,152

Maungarua High School was going through a critical time. Considerable concern was raised during a recent Education Review Office visit at the standard of behaviour in classes and the high number of students making minimal academic progress. Staff morale was low and the new principal - Jocelyn Treadwell - was treated with suspicion by many teachers. The roll had dropped as parents favoured sending their children to neighbouring schools.

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There was strong sense in the staff that the system had let them down. Teachers often talked about the fact that many of their students came from deprived backgrounds and the teachers felt that this was not recognised. Older teachers talked of a deterioration of standards in learning and behaviour due to changing social conditions.

The board of trustees, concerned at the Education Review Office report, spent a lot of time debating how to address the problems. Some perceptive board members - led by the principal - realised that the staff morale, students' poor performance and behaviour were all linked and that the way to address these issues was to empower the teachers to 'make a difference' in the students' lives. The staffroom talk was seen as the talk of powerlessness. The board of trustees decided to replace its former bland special education policy with one that established clear procedures and set annual targets to be achieved.

The board decided to adopt Option 7. The board members saw that the special education needs were so serious that they deserved the focus of a full-time coordinator to oversee all the special education services within the school - the Special Education Grant and the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme. However, because the coordinator would be charged with effecting change in the school, it was decided to provide support by establishing an advisory committee to give credibility and authority to the coordinator. The intention was to change the special education culture in the school by involving others in satisfying professional work and creating a sense of ownership of the changes.

This new position was created from a reallocation of other staffing and an injection of \$20,000 from the Special Education Grant.

Getting Started and Setting Priorities

The first stage of the set-up phase was to form the representative advisory group from the school community. The board delegated that issue to the principal, Jocelyn Treadwell. She asked the staff for suggestions and then established a committee consisting of:

- deputy principal
- head of department English
- a year 1 or 2 teacher
- another teacher
- a board of trustee representative
- special education coordinator (as chairperson when appointed).

The advisory group decided that the highest priority was to support the four students who used to receive funding but did not qualify now under the stricter criteria of the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme. The next pressing need was to improve the classroom behaviour in the junior classes. While few rooms could be thought of as out of control, the learning environment in many junior classes was badly affected by a high level of inattention and the unwillingness of students to work.

The other priority - basic literacy - was chosen to be as non-threatening as possible to classroom teachers.

This budget plan was made for the start of the year:

| | |
|--|----------|
| Contribution to special education coordinator's salary | \$20,000 |
| Behaviour consultant | \$12,000 |
| Assistance for special education coordinator | \$8,000 |
| | <hr/> |
| Balance | \$15,152 |

It was agreed that a decision on the balance would be made in May, once the results of the other work were known.

Responsibilities

| Responsibility | Person Responsible |
|--|---|
| Budget planning | Special education coordinator |
| Budget monitoring | Advisory group |
| Identifying the students' special education needs | Form teachers and special education coordinator |
| Identification of resources and services available in the community | Special education coordinator |
| Creating new teaching resources within the school | Special education coordinator |
| Personal supervision of teachers and teacher aides | Special education coordinator |
| Public relations within the school | DP and special education coordinator |
| Liaison with parents | Special education coordinator and deans |
| Staff training | Special education coordinator |
| Teaching students with special education needs | Special education coordinator and assistants |
| Monitoring progress of students with special education needs | Special education coordinator |
| Reporting to board of trustees | Advisory group |
| Coordination with students receiving help from other <i>Special Education 2000</i> initiatives | Special education coordinator |

Resources and Services

An outsider with a strong background in special education - Melissa Chant - was selected as the special education coordinator.

Two teacher aides were employed in the school in 1996, working independently doing remedial reading in year 9 English classes. It was decided to re-employ them both on a part-time basis as assistants to the special education coordinator. They would no longer act independently but work at her direction, implementing programmes designed by her. It was decided that the special education coordinator herself would teach the four higher need students in timetabled individual sessions.

The Work Underway

Melissa Chant decided to target three year 10 classes for Term 1. She met with the three English teachers and agreed on a timetable for herself and her two teacher aides. It was decided to identify a group of four to six students in each class who would work together on reading language tasks, keeping as closely as possible to the topics covered by the whole class. Melissa Chant used the time to establish detailed records on the reading and language skills of each of the 15 year 10 students.

A behaviour consultant was engaged to conduct staff development programmes in classroom management.

Evaluation

An Evaluation Report was prepared for the board of trustees.

Section 3 of the Evaluation Report included data from the consultant - Constructive Classrooms Consultancy. Rather than using Evaluation Forms, the data was presented in a table highlighting the changes.

Constructive Classrooms kept before-and-after data on three classroom indicators, as measured in the social studies classes:

- on and off task
- incidents of outrageous behaviour - as defined by the school
- average time taken class to come to attention.

The following table summarises this information.

| | On task (% during working time) | | Outrageous behaviour (incidents per period) | | Time to attention (Seconds) | |
|-----|------------------------------------|----|--|---|--------------------------------|-----|
| 3Pr | 12 | 56 | 2 | 0 | 25 | 10 |
| 3Ky | 24 | 77 | 4 | 1 | 21 | 8 |
| 3Tr | 31 | 34 | 4 | 7 | 135 | 120 |
| 3Wn | 45 | 90 | 0 | 0 | 15 | 7 |
| 4Ra | 66 | 87 | 1 | 0 | 32 | 10 |
| 4Wd | 40 | 75 | 3 | 0 | 25 | 15 |
| 4Yt | 21 | 15 | 3 | 3 | 148 | 138 |
| 4Pn | 34 | 67 | 1 | 1 | 29 | 13 |

Section 4: Impact Summary, included this comment on the outcome of the behaviour intervention.

“The work of Constructive Classrooms Consultancy has laid the foundation for a new behaviour culture with Maungarua High School. New patterns of respectful behaviour have developed in six out of eight junior classes.”

Professional Development

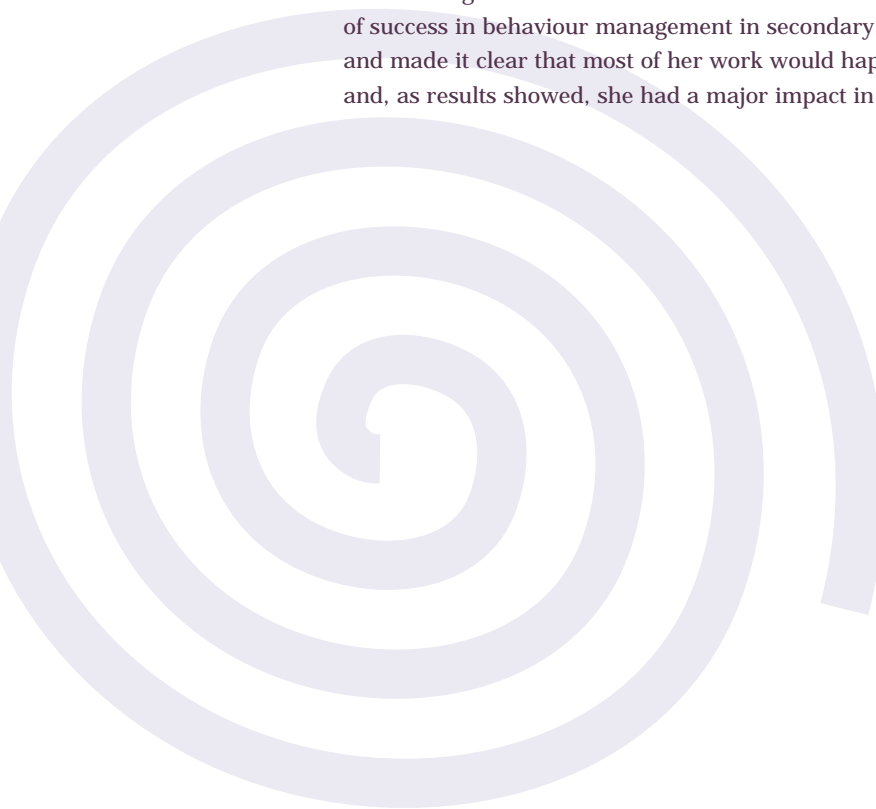
After Melissa Chant and the two teacher aides had been working for a term, the three English teachers noticed a major shift in the attitude of the students - even when doing normal class work. Impressed by the changes, two of the teachers asked if they could extend their own skills in teaching reading. A suitable course was found for them that required participants to implement the strategies between sessions, keep data and report to the group on progress. The course was paid for using some of the unspent Special Education Grant.

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Glitches

The first service the school engaged to work in behaviour management quickly alienated the staff. The two people who came to the school had an air of superiority that won them no friends. They were unwilling to go into classrooms and wanted to do their work through a series of whole staff seminars. They had a primary teaching background and did not seem to fully understand how secondary schools worked.

The school quickly decided to cut its losses, pay the service for work done and to engage another. A different organisation - Constructive Classrooms Consultancy - was engaged that had a track record of success in behaviour management in secondary schools. The representative put teachers at ease and made it clear that most of her work would happen in classrooms. She won staff confidence and, as results showed, she had a major impact in the behaviour area.



STRAWBRIDGE INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

Intermediate school

Roll: 477

Decile: 4

Special Education Grant: \$20,034

Strawbridge Intermediate is a city intermediate school with some good professional relationships among the teachers. The school has few students who have obvious special education needs. There was one girl with high needs in year 8 supported by the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme. Last year the school employed a teacher aide to help the student with toileting and mobility. One other student used to receive funding but no longer qualified.

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The board of trustees was pleasantly surprised with the amount of the Special Education Grant and viewed it as a bonus as the school had already put in place its own internal systems for identifying and helping children with special needs. The board members decided that the use of the Special Education Grant was a management matter and took no further part in discussing it; knowing that they would receive an evaluation report later in the year.

A committee already existed in the school to monitor the extra help made available. The principal declared that he was too busy to be involved and decided that he would simply delegate to this committee the whole responsibility for managing the Special Education Grant (Option 4). The chairing of the committee had been rather casual so the principal decided to formalise it by asking the committee to choose a chair who would have a 0.1 time release to monitor the programmes that were established.

Getting Started and Setting Priorities

The committee chose a senior teacher - Matthew Adams - as its chair. The committee reviewed the effectiveness of the current practices and made these comments:

1. The main contributing schools all provide full and useful data on the children before they arrive.
2. The school is very good at identifying exactly what help the children need.
3. Some of the help they have traditionally received from teacher aides has not been particularly effective.
4. Teachers find it frustrating having to supervise teacher aides and generally have allowed them to act independently.
5. Two years is a short time for working with students with special education needs, and more continuity would be helpful.

The conclusion was that the top priority for the school was to have a highly skilled teacher who could do some individual tutoring and also develop modified programmes for teachers to use in the mainstream. These duties were beyond the scope of teacher aides.

Matthew Adams had developed strong links with the school's three main contributing schools through his role as year 7 coordinator and he made an interesting proposal. He suggested liaising with the contributing schools to jointly employ an additional teacher with the Special Education Grants. This would allow some continuity as the teacher would work with children needing extra assistance at the primary school and then again once they reached intermediate. After considerable discussion, two of the contributing schools agreed and an additional teacher was employed using \$15,000 of Strawbridge's Special Education Grant and the balance coming from the contributing schools. Although there was not enough money for a full-time position it was decided to add some additional time made available within the school's staffing (including Matthew Adams's 0.1) to make a full-time job that would attract the most suitable person.

With the appointment of Alison Carter as the teacher it was agreed that the management model would change to Option 6 with the group of teachers operating as a committee advising Alison Carter. Representatives from each participating school were included. Matthew Adams remained as a member of the committee.

Responsibilities

| Responsibility | Person Responsible |
|--|--|
| Budget planning | Matthew Adams |
| Budget monitoring | Special education committee |
| Identifying the students' special education needs | Alison Carter and class teachers |
| Identification of resources and services available in the community | Matthew Adams |
| Creating new teaching resources within the school | Alison Carter |
| Personal supervision of teachers and teacher aides | Not arranged |
| Public relations within the school | Matthew Adams |
| Liaison with parents | Alison Carter |
| Staff training | Special education committee |
| Teaching students with special education needs | Alison Carter |
| Monitoring progress of students with special education needs | Alison Carter |
| Reporting to board of trustees | Matthew Adams, Alison Carter and the special education committee |
| Coordination with students receiving help from other <i>Special Education 2000</i> initiatives | Alison Carter |
| Liaison between schools | Matthew Adams until Alison Carter well established |

Resources and Services

Alison Carter as the shared teacher.

The Work Underway

Alison Carter identified a roll of 22 students - 12 at Strawbridge Intermediate and five at each of the two contributing schools. This roll included the two students who used to receive funding: one at Strawbridge and another from one of the contributing schools.

Evaluation

An Evaluation Report was prepared for all three boards of trustees. Much of the focus of the report was on the question of equity: Was each school getting its fair share of Alison Carter based on its financial contribution? Data presented show that her spread was fair but teachers at one school were not happy with her work and felt that she favoured Strawbridge Intermediate. The school threatened to withdraw from the arrangement if it was not improved.

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As a result of this objection, a more careful recording system was created for Alison Carter to record her time in each setting. Matthew Adams was given the responsibility of supervising Alison Carter and getting her to better record her time and the student learning outcomes.

Professional Development

No professional development occurred.

Glitches

No major glitches occurred.



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