



Gifted and Talented Education

Fact Sheet

Gifted and talented students are those with exceptional abilities and qualities in one or more of a wide range of areas, including academics, culture, leadership, arts, creativity, and sport. Gifted and talented students are found in every cultural, social, ethnic and socioeconomic group, and include those with disabilities. This means that up to 20% of our children and young people could potentially be gifted and talented, and have special educational needs.

From Term 1, 2005 it became **mandatory** for all state and state-integrated schools to demonstrate *how they are meeting the needs of their gifted and talented learners*, as they are currently required to do for students who are not achieving, who are at risk of not achieving, and who have special needs (National Administration Guidelines).

A 2008 Education Review Office review of gifted and talented education found that:

- Less than half of schools reported multi-categorical definitions, and these reflected a limited range of areas of ability.
- The majority of schools overlook cultural, spiritual and emotional giftedness, especially in relation to Maori concepts.
- Most schools do not use formal or informal methods of identification, only identify one area of ability, do not triangulate the results of their identification processes (showing reliance on a singular rather than multiple approaches) and fail to identify both potential and performance. Less than twelve percent of the schools reviewed were employing culturally appropriate methods of identification.
- In 58 percent of schools reviewed the provisions for gifted and talented students were either somewhat, or not, responsive and appropriate.
- "Gifted and talented students expressed dissatisfaction, boredom and frustration at the lack of challenge in their classroom programmes" (ERO, 2008, p. 30) – with little or no differentiated classroom programmes in more than half of the schools reviewed.

These results are similar to those reported in a Ministry of Education-commissioned research project undertaken in 2003-2004 and show failure by many schools to meet the requirements and expectations of the National Administration Guidelines.

The Ministry of Education has provided additional funding in the School Support Services Contract for the delivery of gifted education advisory support to schools since 2003, led by a national coordination team. The 2009 Budget shows education savings in this area. These services will be terminated at the end of 2009.

Between 2003 and 2008 the Ministry of Education funded thirty-eight Talent Development Initiatives, innovative programmes for gifted and talented students, their teachers, communities and families. The Ministry has delayed advertising the next round of contestable funding (planned for 2009-2011) while it undertakes a review of gifted and talented education provisions.

Resources, including an online community page, a handbook for schools, and a book for parents have been developed by the Ministry of Education. However, some of these have not remained current and up-to-date, despite commissioned reviews and revisions.

In 2006, a national professional conference was sponsored by the Ministry of Education, attracting over 700 delegates. No further conferences, or support for the national association which grew from this conference, have been forthcoming from the Ministry.

There has been limited funding and support in gifted and talented education for professionals in early childhood education, the parents of young children or the children themselves.

The provisions for gifted and talented education in New Zealand are currently under review by the Ministry of Education. The outcomes of this review remain unknown.

The 2009 Budget has resulted in cuts to professional development support from advisory services.

The future for our country's gifted and talented students is uncertain.