



LETTER-WRITING CAMPAIGN: BLAST PARLIAMENT!

In celebration of Gifted Awareness Week regional and national organisations are encouraging our members and stakeholders to "Blast Parliament!" with a letter-writing campaign.

We have developed a template letter you can use (on the next page of this file), or you can develop a letter of your own.

We would also like to strongly encourage your students, their parents and whanau and other community members get involved by writing to Members of Parliament.

Your letter needs to be mailed to Parliament the week of 7-15 June, a week in advance of Gifted Awareness Week – or during the week itself (15-22 June). It is never too late!

Your letter needs to be addressed to: MP, Freepost Parliament, Private Bag 18 888, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160

A current list of all MP's contact details (including email) is available online at Parliament's website: <http://www.parliament.nz/>

The template on the next page was developed by:
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Kate Coleman, Canterbury Association for Gifted Children and Youth
Louise Tapper, North Canterbury Support for Gifted and Talented Children

Insert return address and date

Dear ***(Insert name of your MP. See Parliament's website for details.)***

Every child deserves the right to an appropriate and meaningful education.

(Insert a personal statement that reflects why you feel gifted and talented students need an appropriate and meaningful education.)

This coming week, **15 to 22 June**, we will celebrate *Gifted Awareness Week* to bring broader awareness to the joys – and challenges – in teaching, parenting, mentoring, supporting and, most importantly, *being* a gifted and talented child.

As a member of ***(insert the name of your association/s)*** or as a parent/teacher of a student attending ***(insert the name of your programme)***, I am writing to urge you to discuss and debate the issue of gifted and talented education.

Giftedness and talent is broad and wide-ranging, inclusive of all ethnicities, cultures, socioeconomic groups and those with disabilities. Having exceptional academic, creative, artistic, cultural, leadership or physical abilities and qualities means these children have unique learning needs and social and emotional differences that require appropriate education, support and understanding.

Since 2005 schools have been required to identify and provide for gifted and talented students, and this has been a huge step forward in raising the awareness and interest for appropriate gifted education provisions for all schools. However, recent reports demonstrate that many schools are struggling to meet this requirement due mainly to limited funding and insufficient professional development and support.

The Ministry of Education has supported initiatives in gifted and talented education since 2003, including professional development, innovative programmes and research. The 2009 Budget has cut funding for professional development through School Support Services. The other initiatives are currently under review and potentially at risk. The future of gifted and talented education is unknown.

(Insert how this cut and/or review might impact upon you, your school, your children, and so on – personalise the letter with your own story.)

We celebrate *Gifted Awareness Week* by urging you and your colleagues in Parliament to question, debate and discuss the review, with the aim of *increasing* the investment in and attention to our gifted and talented children.

Yours sincerely

(Insert name and association/organisation.)