



7 September 2009

Dear giftEDnz Member

Thank you to those who provided input and suggestions for the meeting organised by the Associate Minister of Education, the Hon Heather Roy, held on 28 August. The meeting was well attended and I am pleased to be able to share with you the notes from the day's activities.

It is important to remember that this is just one element of the Minister's consultation with stakeholders in gifted and talented education. Therefore, none of the principles and practices suggested in these notes should be viewed in isolation or regarded as confirmed future actions.

The notes are a summary of discussions held by groups representing parents, professionals, and private providers of programmes for children, their teachers and families. Importantly, this meeting provided an opportunity for groups that have not always had a strong voice in Ministry initiatives a chance to have their say.

Being able to seek your input and share with you the outcomes of the meeting indicates transparency, consultation and inclusiveness as we move forward in gifted and talented education.

Also, there is a new spirit of collaboration and working together which is developing. The national advocacy campaign around Gifted Awareness Week was successful, and this meeting was but one outcome of our combined efforts. The groups brought together for the meeting last week have made a commitment to continue working alongside one another and this can only be positive for our future as a field.

It is my understanding that over the coming weeks, Minister Roy will be establishing a new Advisory Group for gifted and talented education. Some members of the former Advisory Group may follow through, but the Minister wants clear representation across all sectors, inclusive of early childhood, school, Maori, academic, parents and private providers.

I will endeavour to keep our members informed and welcome your questions, comments and suggestions. Please feel free to email me: [T.L.Riley@massey.ac.nz](mailto:T.L.Riley@massey.ac.nz)

Sincerely  
Tracy Riley, Chairperson

# GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION WORKING GROUP

**FRIDAY 28 AUGUST 2009 – 9.30am-4pm**  
**MASSEY UNIVERSITY (WELLINGTON CAMPUS)**

**Host** – Associate Minister of Education, Hon. Heather Roy

**Co-facilitators** – Tracy Riley (Chairperson giftEDnz) and Chris Harwood (Ministry of Education)

**Purpose of the meeting:** To seek expert advice on and recommendations for the future direction and organisation of education for gifted and talented children and young people regionally and nationally, including:

- The principles and practices that should underpin a shared delivery of education for gifted and talented learners.
- The design of flexible and responsive models that build partnerships with schools to support gifted and talented learners within and across national and regional networks.

**Preparation for the meeting:** Invitees were asked to discuss with their groups:

- Principles and practices that should underpin future delivery
- Options for the design and delivery of gifted and talented education that build partnerships with schools
- How groups and organisations can work together nationally and regionally
- What their organisation can commit

## Agenda item one: Welcome and Introductions

<b>Apologies</b>	Carolyn Stein, Otago Association for the Gifted and Talented Rose Blackett, New Zealand Association for Gifted Children
<b>Terms of Reference</b>	They are for this meeting only Any confidential information re commercial sensitivity will be respected. Confirmed meeting notes will be subject to Official Information Act.
<b>Agenda</b>	Confirmed

## Agenda item two: Session with Hon Heather Roy

Invited members introduced themselves and provided background information about their role/organisation.

<b>Tracy Riley – giftEDnz The Professional Association for Gifted Education</b>	New (approx.1 year) national association for teachers, principals, counsellors, RTLBs, educational psychologists, teacher educators, professional development providers, researchers, postgraduate students and anyone with a professional interest in gifted and talented education. Ongoing concern is to support the needs of professionals
---	---

	working directly with gifted and talented students. Survey of members showed that greatest need is ongoing professional development and support.
<b>Chris Harwood – Ministry of Education</b>	Within schooling division. Main role to support effective teaching for all children in all classrooms. Been in the position about 2 years. Past experience includes in-school GATE co-coordination.
<b>Clive Sharpe – Gifted Kids Programme –</b>	Focus to give less advantaged an opportunity through 1-day model. The trust goal is to help every gifted child. About 460 students attending across North Island, 120 schools involved. Professional development within those schools. Also specific programmes in Masterton and Invercargill. Advice given to schools on “as needed” basis. The trust has a range of sponsors.
<b>Kate Coleman – Canterbury Association for Gifted Children and Youth</b>	Not for profit organisation run by volunteers Support children, parents, educators and anyone involved in the lives of gifted children and youth - low membership fees \$55 (Families & Schools) and \$30 (Individual adults & Families with C/S cards) Provide Pre-school Playgroup, Discoverer's Club - including an annual family camp, Youth Philosophy group (currently at McDonalds) and other Youth activities, Home Educators & Preschool Workshops, After-school workshops provide weekly opportunities for gifted students to come together. This term 8 workshops are run on Fridays after school and 2 on Wednesday. Small group workshops. Maximum numbers (eg Junior art classes have about 13 children) – prefer about 6 - 8 students. Fees were minimal to cover costs. Regular (usually 1-2 /month) Adult education seminars are run. Small charge (\$5) for non-members/ Free for CAGCY members including any number of staff from School members. Advertised to the Public and ECE & Schools through out Canterbury are emailed. Adult Social events are run to provide support (Evenings and daytime Coffee time), Twice Exceptional Social Support for Adults-social /educational.
<b>Jeanette Christensen – Christchurch Association for Gifted Education</b>	The association is regional with a similar mandate to giftEDnz. Schools are charged \$50 pa and after school seminars are provided with local, national and international speakers once or twice a term. Many professionals involved across all sectors. A concern that teachers receive ongoing professional development.
<b>Kathy Williams – The Gifted Education Centre</b>	The centre was established in 1995 and opened first One Day School™ in 1996. Offers online programme for those who cannot access classes, and a small poppies programme for gifted, bright, preschoolers. About 460 on the roll.

	<p>Assessment services provided. Professional development for educators and parent workshops provided.</p> <p>Have started to look at a model to assist schools at 6-year-net time to offer an indication for early targeting, while not being a formal assessment.</p>
<p><b>Louise Tapper – North Canterbury Support for Gifted and Talented Children</b></p>	<p>Represents small but active group in North Canterbury. Co-founded in 1996 as parents felt they needed regional and local activity, particularly the small rural schools.</p> <p>About 40 members and 20 schools – schools were members at instigation of parents. Sirius programme, cluster programme and eventually that became part of a wider initiative with schools/parents providing programme.</p>
<p><b>Rosemary Cathcart – REACH Education Consultancy</b></p>	<p>Provides online course for teachers (NZ and some from Australia). Workshops. National conference this year. Bringing overseas experts to NZ. Trying to get World Conference here.</p>
<p><b>Mary St George – The Waikato Association for Gifted Children</b></p>	<p>Have surveyed the needs of membership – need to advocate for school because their children’s needs are misunderstood. Events, and parents’ evenings sometimes educational and sometimes social. About 90 family members.</p>
<p><b>Annette Collins (For Rose Blackett) – New Zealand Association for Gifted Children</b></p>	<p>Established 1975. 600 members, including 350 school memberships.</p> <p>Activities include professional development, <i>APEX : The New Zealand Journal of Gifted Education</i>, a peer reviewed journal, and a magazine called <i>Tall Poppies</i>. At a level for teachers, but includes all levels including early childhood. Branches offer children’s activities. Parent teacher evenings, children’s camps, parent camps. Parents like to share issues concerning their children.</p> <p>Three camps a year.</p> <p>Specific teenage groups, such as POP – Philosophy over Pizza and Socialising on Saturday — SOS – strong group, explorers and discoverers.</p> <p>Active website especially the forum used by parents, professionals and teachers in NZ and overseas.</p> <p>Rose is president, and an educational psychologist, past teacher and RTLD, on SENG Board, parent of gifted children and assessor for Gifted Education Centre. She could not be here today.</p>
<p><b>Jane Johnston – Wellington Association for Gifted Children.</b></p>	<p>In addition to providing similar services, events or activities as noted by the other associations present, our membership’s priority is to become more effective advocates with schools in the region.</p> <p>In any year, typically we have 45 to 60 member families (gifted children and their parents), involved in club activities. We provide opportunities for these children to interact and for their parents to gain better understanding of their needs and how to support them. A key role seems to be as a parents’ support network.</p>

<b>Sally Jackson – Minister’s Private Secretary</b>	Employed by Ministry of Education and works in Minister’s office to facilitate information flow. Minister’s portfolio includes independent schools, gifted, and special education.
<b>Carolyn Stein – Otago Association for the Gifted and Talented</b>	Tracy shared these points from Carolyn’s note: Some programmes such as Saturday morning, and workshops for parents are provided. Concerns around identification of giftedness and not having qualified psychologists but once identification is made needs are not necessarily met. Professional development for teachers is desperately needed. Specifically 1-day gifted programmes are not everywhere, costs are high, schools may not provide. Otago considers itself quite isolated and that needs to be in our thinking.

**The Minister explained the two outcomes she expected for the day:**

1. That the Working Group nominate two of its members for a new Advisory Group.
2. That the Working Group generate a set of issues and ideas to take to the new Advisory Group.

**Agenda item three: Clarifying the task and agreeing a process**

1. *Discussion of the draft recommendations put forward by the former Advisory Group (29 June 2009 meeting).* These recommendations are: 1), supporting the implementation of National Standards in years 1-8 within the national curriculum; 2), supporting the development and implementation of work programmes associated with developing worthwhile qualifications in secondary schools; and 3), strengthening the private, public, and sector partnerships to maximise the ‘in addition to school’ support options for gifted and talented students. A key conclusion of the discussion was that these represent existing opportunities within the Ministry’s work programmes that should include a gifted and talented education perspective.
2. Discussion of where gifted education ‘sits’ within the Ministry of Education, including its relationship with special education. An important conclusion of the discussion was a need to align more closely with special education by recognising and accommodating the special needs of gifted and talented students; but in forging this relationship, it is important that gifted and talented education is not subsumed by special education, but retains its unique and specialised identity.
3. Discussion of funding for gifted and talented education (\$1.2 million per annum). There is a need to identify how best to spend this money before the end of the current financial year.

**Agenda item four: Working Session**

For the working session two groups were formed:

Group 1: Clive Sharpe, Kate Coleman, Jeanette Christensen, Rosemary Cathcart and Mary St George

Group 2: Tracy Riley, Louise Tapper, Annette Collins, Kathy Williams and Jane Johnston

It should be noted that Chris Harwood did not participate in this agenda item.

The groups discussed principles and practices for gifted and talented education. Each group reported back their key ideas and these were recorded on the whiteboard.

### **Agenda item five: Report Back to Minister**

Tracy reported back to the Minister on behalf of the group, with all having an opportunity to contribute. The principles and practices discussed are summarised below. The last item on the practices list is the group's recommendations for the Advisory Board.

#### **Principles**

These are some key principles which were discussed during the meeting as important in any future initiatives:

Flexibility

Continuum of provisions (from within all classrooms to school-based to community-based, including alternative/private provisions)

Continuity

Certainty

Sustainability

Informed choices

Equity – across cultures, gender, socio-economic, disabilities, and locales

Transparency

Accountability

Quality assurance

Ongoing professional development and support

Recognition of the special needs of gifted and talented students

Partnerships between homes, schools, communities, providers, sponsors/businesses

Opportunities for acceleration (including early entry to school) and enrichment

Multi-levelling

Opportunities for gifted and talented students to engage with like-minds

#### **Practices**

The following are some recommended 'actions' for moving gifted and talented education forward.

##### *NAG 1 Retained*

##### *Provision of Professional Development and Support at Pre- and In-service Levels*

- Previous funding of advisory services was valued with requests to reinstate these services (despite advice that this is not possible at present)
- Compulsory content in teacher education programmes
- Content embedded in educational psychology, counselling, RTLB, Principals, Boards of Trustees, and other specialist training programmes
- Specialised support/professional development for gifted and talented coordinators/school leaders
- Compulsory professional development for classroom teachers and/or school leaders may be needed
- The Best Evidence Synthesis (2007) should underpin and inform any professional development opportunities

- Access to expertise and advice (for teachers, homeschoolers and parents)
- Specialised support/professional development for educational psychologists, school counsellors, RTLB and other specialists supporting gifted and talented students
- Parents should have access to some ‘professional development’ activities

#### *Stock-Take of Provisions Supporting Gifted and Talented Students*

- Undertake and “map” out provisions of support for students, their parents/whanau, teachers and others who support them (representative of a continuum of provisions – both within and out of school services)
- Sharing models of good practice, including resources
- Evaluating effectiveness (in part for the promotion and potential replication of programmes, resources and tools that have been proven effective)

#### *Resource Development*

- Ongoing
- Easily accessible (online is one option)
- Models of good practice
- Criteria/standards for quality gifted and talented education programmes (across the continuum)
- Identification tools (wide ranging and flexible in use)
- “How-to” frameworks (e.g., how to establish a parent group, how to select a programme for your child, how to find a mentor, etc)

#### *Development of School Clusters*

- Specialist teachers for gifted and talented students
- Grouping of like-minds
- Models for ‘good practice’ when establishing clusters
- Provide models of effective/working school clusters

#### *Research*

- Tracking of twice exceptional students through implementation of standards (because these students have been identified as a vulnerable group in overseas moves to more standards-based curricula, particularly in the US as a result of the No Child Left Behind policy)
- Evaluations of effectiveness of provisions

#### *Aligning with Government Priorities and Ministry Initiatives*

- Some support for the recommendations for primary and secondary education initiatives (as proposed by the Ministry’s Advisory Group in June 09)
- Concern raised regarding the potential for standards to ‘lower the bar’ for gifted and talented students
- Support for gifted and talented students being highlighted in national standards work programme, including literacy/numeracy exemplars; clarification of provisions for acceleration (e.g., grade-skipping), multi-levelling, above-level assessment and continuous progress
- Submissions to special education review encouraged

### *Homeschooling*

- Free access to correspondence school and other distance learning opportunities for secondary students in particular
- Free access to STAR – Secondary Tertiary Alliance Resource
- Inclusion of homeschooling voice in Advisory Board work

### *Working Group*

- Maintain/support opportunity for groups to work together
- Gifted Awareness Week: co-ordinate, work together and promote; would appreciate promotion and support from MoE and Minister

### **Advisory Board**

The nominees from this group for the to-be-established advisory board are:

1. Clive Sharpe, representing private providers of programmes for gifted and talented students, their families and teachers
2. A representative of the New Zealand Association for Gifted Children to represent that organisation, their branches and other parent groups which are not branch members of NZAGC (Rose Blackett has since confirmed agreement in principle)

In addition to the nominees, the working group also made the following recommendations in regards to the new advisory board:

- Transparency through open communication and information sharing
- Comprehensive and inclusive, rather than exclusive
- Opportunities for input from and consultation with relevant groups
- Representation from a professional development provider (e.g., a gifted and talented advisor or private provider)
- Maori representation: In addition to Jill Bevan-Brown, Angus MacFarlane and Patricia Johnston were suggested