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This is an Easy Read report.

This is a long document.

Some things you can do to make it easier are:

- read it a few pages at a time

- have someone help you to understand it.
This report is about the **Learning Support Action Plan 2019 – 2025**.

An **Action Plan** is a document that lists what steps must be taken to reach a set of goals.

The Ministry of Education looks after the **education system** in New Zealand.

**Education system** means things like:

- early childhood places such as kindy / kōhanga reo
- schools / kura
- adult learning places like university / wananga.
What the Ministers say about the Learning Support Action Plan

Chris Hipkins is the Minister for Education.

Tracey Martin is the Associate Minister for Education.

This is what they have to say about this Action Plan.

We want New Zealand to have the worlds best education system.
We want an education system where all **students** can:

- take part in their learning
- do well no matter what their needs are.

**Students** are children and young people who use the education system to learn.

We know that **1 in 5 students need some extra support** with their learning at school.
This might be because they are students who:

- have a disability
- find learning hard to do
- have behaviour support needs
- have health issues and are unwell
- have mental health issues like feeling worried or sad
- experience **disadvantage**.

Being **disadvantaged** may be where a students family / whānau does not have enough money to pay for things they need.
Most of these children and young people go to:

- early childhood centre service / ngā kōhanga reo
- school / kura.

We know that:

- these students are an important part of our education system
- we need to make sure the education system is able to meet their needs.
We also know that:

- some of these students may need support for the **whole time** they are part of the education system.

- some of these students may only need support for **some of the time** they are part of the education system.

The government wants to have an inclusive education system.

**Inclusive education** means when everyone:

- can take part

- is supported

- is valued.
We want an inclusive education system that makes **every student feel** like they:

- belong at school
- want to be at school
- want to do well at school.

We also want an education system that looks after student’s **wellbeing**.

**Wellbeing** can mean things like:

- how we feel about ourselves
- looking after our bodies with good food and exercise
- looking after people when they feel sad or worried.
We know that it is important that disabled students get the support they need so they can do well at school.

In 2018 the Ministers asked the Ministry of Education to write a draft Disability and Learning Support Action Plan.

**Draft** means writing something for the first time.

The draft gets changed after people say what they think about it.

Some people told us they did not like the word disability being used.

These people said using the word disability means people look more at what the disabled students cannot do rather than what they can do.
So we have taken out the word “disability” from the title of this new Action Plan.

However **support for disabled students** is still an important part of this Action Plan.

Having an inclusive education system means the government keeps working on doing what it has to do in the:

- **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons**

- **New Zealand Disability Strategy** – Outcome 1 which is to get an excellent education and achieve the best we can in our lives.
We want an education system that works well for Māori.

**Te Tiriti o Waitangi / Treaty of Waitangi** means the government has to do things so Māori students can do as well as others at school.

We want an education system that:

- looks after *taonga* like Te Reo Māori

*Taonga* is something which is very important like Māori language.

- understands *kaitiakitanga* by iwi and Māori.

*Kaitiakitanga* means being able to decide how taonga are protected and kept safe.
In 2016 there was a Select Committee Inquiry.

A Select Committee is made up of Members of Parliament (MPs) from different political groups.

A Select Committee Inquiry is when a Select Committee looks at an issue or problem.

People are invited to tell the Select Committee what they know about the issue.

The Select Committee uses this information to give the government advice about how to make things better.
The **2016 Select Committee Inquiry** looked at how schools supported students with neurodiverse learning needs.

**Neurodiverse** means that:

- the brain works in a different way
- a person learns things in another way.

Neurodiverse includes:

- dyslexia
- dyspraxia
- autism spectrum disorder.
Dyslexia is a learning disability that makes it harder to learn to:

- read
- write.

Dyspraxia is difficulty with putting together movements such as:

- walking
- jumping.

Autism spectrum disorder is where students may have difficulty with:

- social skills
- communication.
People told the Select Committee that there is **no one way that schools could find out** if students had neurodiverse learning needs.

This meant that schools:

- supported these students in many **different ways**
- did **not** always meet the students learning support needs.

The Select Committee also found out we need to work with **teachers** to help them support students with neurodiverse learning needs in better ways

This is important because students with neurodiverse learning support needs are **more at risk of leaving the education system.**
In 2018 the Ministry of Education talked to people about what they thought of the draft Disability and Learning Support Action Plan.

This new Action Plan has some changes because of what people told us.

This Action Plan talks about what we want to do to make our education system better for everyone.

We have decided on 6 priorities that we will work on over the next few years.

A priority is something that is very important.

It must be done before other things.
The 6 priorities we will be working on are:

1. new **Learning Support Coordinators** in schools / kura

2. having better ways of **finding out about** students learning **support needs**

3. making **learning support services** better

4. supporting **neurodiverse** learners

5. supporting **gifted** students

6. supporting students who are at **risk of leaving** school early.
The Action Plan also looks at other things we can do in schools to make our education system better.

This might mean looking at:

- what students are already good at doing

- what students are interested in

- what students language support needs might be

- what students cultural support needs might be.

We will keep looking at the Action Plan to see what needs to be changed.
We are going to make our education system better for everyone.

Kia ora – Be well

Kia kaha – Stay strong

Kia manawanui – Do not give up

Huihui tatou katoa – We are all together.

______________________________________________________________

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

______________________________________________________________

Hon Tracey Martin
Associate Minister of Education
What is the Learning Support Action Plan?

1 in 5 students need some extra support with their learning at school.

There needs to be better ways of supporting students:

- with disabilities
- with neurodiverse learning needs
- at risk of leaving school.

Teachers need better training to work with students who have learning support needs.

Schools need someone at school whose job is to make sure students get the support they need.
This Learning Support Action Plan brings together what the Ministry of Education heard from:

- early childhood services / ngā kōhanga reo
- schools / kura
- parents and whānau
- teachers
- disabled people.
The Learning Support Action Plan builds on what is already in place – the **Learning Support Delivery Model**.

The **Learning Support Delivery Model** brings together services to support the needs of students in the area.

The services that are brought together in the **Learning Support Delivery Model** are:

- early childhood education services
- schools / kura
- other government services like the Ministry of Health.
The Learning Support Delivery Model:

- has been used in some places in New Zealand since 2015
- will be set up in more places in New Zealand by the end of 2019.

In 2018 the government gave the Ministry of Education **283 million dollars in funding** to use over 4 years to help make learning support work well.

There have already been lots of things happening to make our education system better.
The Learning Support Action Plan has 6 priorities which will be talked about next in this document.

A priority is something that is very important.

It must be done before other things.

These 6 priorities will be worked on in the years 2019 to 2025.
Priority 1: new Learning Support Coordinators in schools / kura

From January 2020 there will be 600 Learning Support Coordinators in the education system.

Learning Support Coordinators will work with:

- teachers
- parents / whānau
- students - children and young people.
Learning Support Coordinators will work together using the Learning Support Delivery Model to:

- find out what support students need
- help schools to put in place the learning support that their students need.

To make sure this works well the Ministry of Education will work closely with:

- the Learning Support Coordinators
- education system
- disability services
- parents / whānau.
Priority 2: having better ways of finding out about students learning support needs

Teachers will have better **screening tools** for checking students learning support needs.

A **screening tool** is something that teachers can use to see if their students have any learning support needs.

When a **child starts school** there will be a screening tool to understand what their learning needs are.
Once the child has been a school for a little while there will be screening tools for:

- dyslexia
- dyspraxia
- giftedness.

**Giftedness** is when a student may find some parts of learning easy. They may learn at levels above their years at school. It can make them feel like they do not fit in with the other students at school. They may need activities that are not provided by the school.
The screening tools will also have Māori ideas in them such as:

- **tino rangatiratanga** – making decisions about ourselves

- **whānau** - family

- **mana whakapapa** – importance of knowing about:
  - where we are from
  - who we are
  - our identity

- **mana tikanga** – importance of how things are done

- **mana tangata** – importance of people.
We want to have these screening tools in:
Te Reo Māori

- New Zealand Sign Language.

The Ministry of Health will also look at health screening tools for:

- young children (0 – 5 years old)
- teenagers.
Priority 3: making learning support services better

We want to make learning support services better by having better early intervention services.

Early intervention is about doing something as soon as possible to support students with things that is hard for them.

The Ministry of Education wants to find out:

- what sort of support students might need?
- how much support students might need?
- what support is needed by the students family / whānau?
The Ministry of Education will **work with other services** that support children and young people who have learning support needs.

For example the Ministry of Education is working with **Mana Whaikaha**.

Mana Whaikaha is a new disability service that supports people with disabilities who live in the Mid Central region which includes:

- Palmerston North
- Horowhenua
- Manawatu
- Ōtaki
- Tararua.
The Ministry is also working with Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust (TKRNT).

They are working together to support Māori with how they can ask for support if they think their children has learning support needs like:

- talking and language support needs
- behaviour support needs
- autism spectrum disorder.
Priority 4: supporting neurodiverse students

We need better services to meet the needs of our neurodiverse learners.

This means having better services to support their:

- parents / whānau
- teachers
- other education workers like teacher aides
It is very important to support neurodiverse learners who do not get high levels of support funded by the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS).

The Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS) is funding given to students with very high support needs.

The Ministry of Education will work on creating better support for neurodiverse learners with assistance from:

- people who work in the education system
- parents including:
  - Maori whānau
  - Pacific Island parents.
Priority 5: supporting gifted students

Some gifted students find learning easy.

Other gifted students may not find learning easy so learning needs to be done in different ways to better meet their needs.

The Ministry of Education is going to work out how to better support gifted students with ideas also coming from:

- teachers
- family / whānau
- experts.
An expert is someone who knows a lot about something.

For example it may be a person who knows a lot about giftedness in children.

We will increase the learning opportunities for gifted students by having funded support available from 2019.
Priority 6: supporting students who are at risk of leaving school early

We know that if students leave the education system early this can mean:

- they do not feel good about themselves
- they do not do well in life.

We are working with:

- people who work in the education system
- the Māori community
- the Pacific Island community
- other people who are concerned about early school leavers.
Together we want to look at ways of supporting students:

- to stay at school
- to go back to school if they leave.
In 2018 the Ministry of Education wrote the *draft* Disability and Learning Support Action Plan.

**Draft** means writing something for the first time.

The draft gets changed after people say what they think about it.

The Ministry of Education talked to people across New Zealand to ask them about what they thought of the draft Disability and Learning Support Plan.

893 people who read the *draft* Disability and Learning Support Action Plan told us what they thought of the plan.
This is what they told us:

- most of them liked what was in the plan

- some said it would help make our education system more inclusive

- many people were still worried that it **did not do enough** to make our education inclusive

- some people thought that **Māori** students would still not get the learning support they need

- some people thought that **Pacific Island** students would still not get the learning support they need.
People talked about the things that made it hard for Deaf students to do well at school.

People also talked about some of the things that made it hard for students who are learning the English language.

The draft Disability and Learning Support Action Plan had 4 priorities which the Ministry also asked for feedback on.

A priority is something that is very important.

It must be done before other things.
Priority 1: Having better ways of finding out what children and young peoples learning needs might be.

People said they liked the idea of having better screening tools.

A screening tool is something that teachers can use to see if their students have any learning support needs.

People were worried about what follow up support there is when students find out they have learning support needs.

People had different ideas of what age children should be screened for learning support needs.
Priority 2: Having lots more ways of supporting students with learning support needs.

People said they liked the idea of Learning Support Coordinators in schools.

They wanted to know:

- who would decide where in New Zealand the Learning Support Coordinators would work
- how they would be paid for.

People also said there needed to be better support for students with mild to moderate learning support needs.
People wanted the Ministry of Education to look at the **Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS)** so that more students could use it.

The **Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS)** is funding given to students with very high support needs.

People said that **early intervention** was very important.

**Early intervention** is about doing something as soon as possible to support students with things that is hard for them.
People also said that there needed to be better supports for students with learning support needs who were moving from:

- early childhood services to starting school
- primary school to secondary school or high school
- secondary school or high school to higher education like university.
People also said they wanted to see **groups working together** to make the learning support system stronger.

The groups working might be:

- families/whānau
- teachers
- support staff
- specialist support services
- government services.
People said it was good to see government departments working more closely together.

Government departments like:

- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Health

Some people said they would also like to see the Ministry of Education working more closely with *Oranga Tamariki*. 
Priority 3: looking at ways to make our education system better

This means looking at how we can make schools / kura better for everyone.

People said they were worried about:

- if there were enough teachers to work in all the schools
- if teachers had done enough training so they could support students with learning support needs.

Teachers and parents said they wanted to have more **accessible information** about learning support needs.

**Accessible information** is information shared in ways that everyone can understand.
Priority 4: making sure there is enough money to pay for learning support services.

People said they were worried about schools having enough money to pay for all the learning support services needed.

Some people talked about how:

- they were already waiting a long time for learning support services
- they were not getting enough learning support services to meet their needs.

People want to see all students receive the support they need so they can do their best at school.
If you want to find out more about what people said about the draft Disability and Learning Action Plan there is information on this website:

This information has been translated into Easy Read by the Make It Easy service of People First New Zealand Inc. Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi.

The ideas in this document are not the ideas of People First New Zealand Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi.