Principals' Working Group

Purpose

The purpose of this working group is to help shape the details of the change by:

- providing ongoing advice and feedback to the Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) Governance Group and the Ministry's project teams
- advising on the best actions to be taken to ensure minimal disruption of the service.

Summary from the February and March 2011 Principals Working Group meetings

The transformation of the RTLB service was announced by Minister Tolley in late September 2010 at the RTLB annual conference. The Minister referred to the ERO 2009 review of RTLB clusters recommendations as guiding the key design changes. These were:
- keeping the service school-based was seen as important but a need for fewer clusters was identified
- reducing the number of clusters was seen as a way to help reduce variability in practice and encourage better coordination of local services
- targeting resources and funding to where they could make the most difference along with a clearer accountability for how they are used.

The clusters have been constructed to meet the twin purposes of creating:
- clusters of sufficient size to provide effectively managed without becoming too unwieldy
- as little disruption as possible to RTLB's relationships with and services to the schools they currently work in.

The proposed distribution takes the following factors into account:
- Population (maintaining the ratio of 1 FTTE:750 students nationally) - based on the cluster's percentage of national total of Year 1-10 students.
- Decile rating (relative effect of 0.2) – accounting for a higher percentage of students with needs in lower decile schools within each cluster. Dr John Church's work (Canterbury University) indicated that the prevalence of children with antisocial behaviour in decile 1 and 2 schools was twice the prevalence rate of the whole sample of students in his study and almost six times greater than the prevalence rate on decile 9 and 10 schools.
- Māori and Pasifika student numbers (relative effect of 0.2) – accounting for the higher percentage of students with needs in these ethnic groups. We know that low decile schools with predominately Māori and Pasifika students are under extraordinary pressure to have

ALL Māori and Pasifika students showing progress. This cannot happen without a resourcing formula that targets support to learners in those communities.

- Isolation index (relative effect of 0.4) – we know that remote areas with greater travel distances and smaller populations will require additional resourcing. This accounts for additional resources required by smaller schools and rural schools.

In creating the most recent RTLB clusters:
- RTLB staffing calculation for each school was generated based on the most recent roll data using the revised formula
- neighbouring clusters were merged where possible to generate new clusters with approximately 20 full-time equivalent RTLB, with no clusters larger than 30 FTE

Improving cluster governance and management

Improved organisation of local services and support is essential to provide seamless service and support for schools.

Fewer numbers of clusters will allow a pooling of resources and practice expertise to achieve better economies of scale. One employing school within each cluster would also strengthen accountability and make it easier for clusters to align resources, planning and efforts at a local level and to provide leadership, ownership and accountability for improved student outcomes. Improved RTLB cluster governance and management will create additional benefits including:
- embedding reflective professional practice by individual RTLB
- providing professional guidance, review, and supervision support for individual RTLB
- improving individual RTLB accountability arrangements with their managers
- increasing the number of students and staff serviced by the RTLB service
- addressing the extensive range of current expectations, many of which are conflicting, from different parts of the sector about what the RTLB service should provide.

A dedicated practice leadership and supervisory function will address the current variability in RTLB practice.

Practitioners' working group

Purpose

The purpose of the Practitioners' Working Group is to provide ongoing advice and feedback to the PB4L sector reference group and the Ministry's project teams. The Practitioners' Working Group will focus on advising on effective

practitioner practice and the best ways to better support schools and classroom practice for students.

Summary from February practitioners' working group meeting

The underlying principles for the transformed service are:
- a focus on inclusive teaching philosophy
- an ecological approach to assessment and intervention
- a collaborative and seamless model of service provision
- a culturally responsive approach
- an evidence based model of practice.

Some design parameters of the transformation programme (mainly related to changes in structure) as outlined in Minister Tolley's speech last year. The key changes include:
- a merger of current clusters to create fewer clusters (approximately 40 will be created)
- a single employing school for each new cluster that is also the fund-holder
- approximately 20 full-time equivalent RTLB in each new cluster
- a dedicated cluster manager for each new cluster from aggregating attached staffing across the country
- creating practice leadership roles within each cluster enabling practice specialisations (such as Maori, Pasifika, secondary, ASD) within each cluster
- RTLB continues to be based in schools within the new cluster and continue to work across a number of schools
- changes to occur in a fiscally neutral way with no overall reduction of RTLB across the country.

The transformed RTLB service needs to be nationally consistent whilst being responsive to local concerns with evidence of best practice across all new clusters.

Other topics of discussion included:
- mandatory qualifications and training requirements
- a career pathway for RTLB
- roles and job descriptions of the practice leaders and cluster manager
- the processes of engagement with schools and screening for referrals
- systems for monitoring case work
- incorporating cultural perspectives within models of practice, working with whānau, phases of intervention, and when employing practice leaders and cluster managers
- transition considerations such as keeping clusters together where possible, merging where it makes sense, and shifting individual RTLB as little as possible.

There was some feedback on draft operational documents from the Principals' working group. These draft documents were:

- Roles and responsibilities in the transformed service
- The selection process for lead schools
- How the new service will work

Key messages from RTLB working groups May 2011

Level 1
Fleshed out many of the details relating to the design of the service, support systems required for the service, transition issues and policies and procedures required

Level 2
Fleshed out details relating to the design of the service, support required for the service, transition issues and required policies and procedures. Some were:

- the design of the service
  - utilise specialist knowledge within clusters
  - the role of needs analysis
  - RTLB model of practice
  - the essential elements of a good lead school, good lead principals, good cluster managers
- support systems, in particular
  - how to ensure lead schools are adequately resourced and well supported
  - the training and support required for cluster managers and principals in lead schools
  - the administrative support required to support new and larger clusters
  - guidelines for how RTLB funding should be utilised
- transition issues, in particular
  - the transition support required for schools and that this will need to continue for up to two years in some cases
  - the property issues around accommodating RTLB in host schools
- policies and procedures, in particular
  - what governance and management documents should cover
  - how we develop a transparent, consistent, national system for measuring and evaluating the RTLB service and success against ERO's baseline data.