

Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour



RTLB Matters: Issue 4 2012

22 March 2012

Albany Travel claims - deadline

The deadline for getting your travel reimbursement claims in to Joy Mehlhopt Joy@eventlink.co.nz is **5 April 2012**.

Please – don't forget to include your bank account details on your claim form.

NZRTLB Association Annual Conference

This year's conference will be held from 26-29 September at the Claudelands Events Centre in Hamilton. The conference theme is, aptly, Transformation Better Than Before – te huringa kei tanga kia whai hua kia angitu, with a focus on Ministry key goals.

Cluster Managers will be making decisions about the funding of professional development for RTLB based on the needs of the cluster and individual RTLB. We realise that you will be looking at a range of PLD opportunities and that you will be wanting to target professional development to make the very best use of your PLD resource.

The Association is well-placed to offer a quality programme for RTLB and you should consider it along side the other PLD options available for your staff. It would be expected that those attending the conference returned to present their learning back to their cluster, so that all RTLB benefit from their experience and development.

Practice Leaders and Leadership funding

Practice Leaders (PLs) are appointed as an RTLB under that position description and then they are assigned the role of PL with an attachment to their RTLB job description (in a number of cases they will still be undertaking RTLB work as well as PL duties - it's an addition to the RTLB role.

RTLB leadership funding for is made available for "additional delegated responsibilities" the same way 'management' units are used by schools. That is the RTLB cluster manager uses those leadership payments carefully and strategically to build leadership within the cluster. The funding also provides a career/professional development opportunity for RTLB to share their expertise and experience with their colleagues.

The leadership payments can be used to recognise **team leadership** - managing and leading a team of RTLB in a location; or **service leadership** - an RTLB with a leadership focus within the cluster, for instance improving Māori service provision capability.

There is the option to make either **permanent** or **fixed term** allocations of the leadership funding. Flexibility and non permanent allocation allows the opportunity to respond to new issues and initiatives. Permanent allocation provides some sustainability.

This year as clusters evolve and planning evolves more flexibility (non permanent) allocation of leadership funding would be wise.

A revised **duties for Practice Leaders** is being drafted and will be sent to you soon.

Leadership payments and staffing notices

MOE resourcing tell us that leadership payments are not showing on the staffing notices yet, but the school can still allocate these payments to the cluster manager and others as appropriate. As long as you stay within your entitlement for leadership payments, you can allocate them to whichever RTLB you choose (such as an allocation to your RTLB practice leader).

The Pay Centre cannot do anything without an instruction. The school will need to instruct their payroll service centre to make these payments via the appropriate form:

1. Either the ESP1t if the person is a new employee
2. Or the ESP2t if they are an existing employee moving to a new role. On the ESP2t, it is loaded under the "Allowance details" fields 15 & 16.

The forms are located at the following address: <http://www.schoolpayroll.govt.nz/Site/Forms/Find/All-forms.aspx> and they explain what is required for each form.

Resourcing tell me that you should expect to see your leadership payments in your notices sometime in the next few weeks.

Using 2011 funds from previous fund-holder schools

We have had questions around whether you are obliged to spend any carry-over funding on the same budget lines it came from (i.e. if it was travel money, then can it only be used for travel?)

The **first priority** for carry-over spending should be on **services and support for learners** – that is, Learning Support Fund-type expenditure.

It is hoped that the funding allocated to clusters for the 2012 school year is sufficient for operational expenditure for the cluster. It is important to those schools that have transferred funding to the new cluster that this funding is learner-focused and used across the cluster.

Where there is pressure on operational budgets a minimal amount of funding could ease that pressure where that operational funding is service related.

Reporting

Now that you are all well into the process of collecting information and analysing your cluster needs, many of you are also starting to think about reporting requirements.

This is to let you know that this will be covered in an upcoming "RTLB Matters" Newsletter. We are drafting the necessary forms and templates so that we receive consistent reports and data from across all 40 clusters. It is on our work-plan.

In the meantime, go to your Funding and Service Agreement (Contract) – that gives the reporting 'must dos'. What the Ministry requires in the way of reporting should not differ greatly from your reports to your Boards.

Banked Staffing – update on progress...

The Resourcing section in National Office is currently going through those schools affected by the glitches in the banked staffing processes at the beginning of the school year on a case-by-case basis. They are looking at returning schools to the position they would have been in had the RTLB not interfered with the managing of banked staffing.

Advisory Groups

Many clusters are now establishing their Advisory Groups.

Just a reminder, the focus and emphasis of the Advisory Group is on the *users* of the RTLB service.

The group provides feedback and guidance, and needs to be kept informed about key cluster decisions and performance.

There have been questions around RTLB representation on Advisory Groups. Because the group is there for the users of the RTLB service, RTLB representatives should not use their membership to criticise or challenge cluster policy and practice. That would be like a principal running a community advisory group meeting and one of their teachers turning up to the meeting to criticise and challenge school policy and practice. Wrong place, wrong time and not appropriate.

It is hoped that RTLB will have the opportunity *within* the cluster to provide input to cluster policy and practice.

RTLB Caseloads

Anecdotally, there is currently a wide variation in the caseloads of RTLB across the country. Whatever the reasons, the question of what an RTLB caseload should be is one of the hardest questions we need to address, with schools and the Ministry requiring greater consistency.

The most precious resource that we have in the RTLB workforce is the competency, skills, knowledge and commitment of RTLB *plus* TIME.

Please let the RTLB in your cluster know that workload is an important issue. It is important to monitor workload and over time develop expectations on what is reasonable. For health and safety reasons we do not want RTLB to be overworked or carry a workload that means their practice becomes unsafe. We also don't want overly high workloads to affect the quality or effectiveness of service.

Over time we will develop some benchmarks on what is reasonable. Reasonable will be a range of cases – not an absolute number. A well managed referral process, RTLB reporting back to their cluster on their work, and the development of a case management system will assist this.

It will be important to work carefully towards a caseload range – it won't happen overnight, and your appraisals will be a key step along that road.

If you asked us for an estimate, if an RTLB was not involved in too many project/systems work, or programmes such as Incredible Years Teacher, then we would expect over the year (at a very rough estimate) about 25 – 35 full cases might be reasonable. A full case would involve the following key steps:

- Referral negotiation
- Assessment/information gathering
- Plan development
- Implementation of the plan
- Monitoring and review, evaluation and reporting
- Closure

The other important issue is that project/systems work should be carefully agreed and monitored. A lot of potentially good service delivery hours can be lost under the guise of 'systems/project work'. Our view is that a cluster manager or RTLB lead practitioner should sign off and approve such work. It could alternatively, be submitted alongside other referrals. A proposal for systems/project work should show that the project is purposeful, time-framed and judged on its benefits for learners. A 'project plan' should outline:

- The objectives of the project
- The issue it is seeking to address (information and data)
- Rational e– how the proposal aligns with cluster priorities, national RTLB priorities (such as better outcomes for Māori) and national educational priorities.
- The commitment of the school/teachers to the project
- The key activities in the project, and who is responsible for do them
- Any risks are identified and a plan is in place to manage them
- How the outcomes will be reported and evaluated (including pre and post measures)
- Outcomes should cover learner outcomes as well as teacher/system outcomes
- An estimate of the duration, any additional costs, and the number of hours involved in the project

And finally....

Attached is a FAQ sheet which covers

- Lease cars

Hei konā rā

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RTLB FAQs (22 March 2012)

Lease Cars

Q: What guidelines are there for Lead Schools regarding the leasing of cars for RTLB who are travelling long distances each week?

A: For RTLB who are mainly urban based, it would be difficult to justify a lease car. For RTLB working in mainly rural settings it could be justified.

The best way to decide this would be to look at historical mileage claims. If the cost of reimbursing an RTLB's reasonable private mileage exceeds the costs of petrol + maintenance + lease costs + fringe benefit of a lease car then there is a case for a lease vehicle. It would be useful to get a good accountant to give advice on this.

It should also be realised that if a vehicle has not been well cared for as a lease vehicle, many companies have an additional end of lease charge.

Remember to factor in the costs of fringe benefit tax if the RTLB is taking the car home at night. Many RTLB have received 'advice' that fringe benefit tax is not liable in these circumstances, but IRD is the final arbiter on this and it is the Board of Trustees that is liable for fringe benefit tax.

Your Lead School administrator/finance person should be able to advise.