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Media Release

Shift in Managing Student Behaviour

Details of the rollout of a Positive Behaviour for Learning Action Plan were announced by the Ministry of Education today and have been published on www.minedu.govt.nz. The Plan has been developed in association with eight other education sector agencies.

From Term One next year already successful programmes will start to be rolled out to communities and schools in response to priorities agreed by a *Taumata Whanonga* behaviour summit held in March. These include programmes and initiatives for parents and teachers, school-wide programmes, improved behaviour crisis support for schools and improved intensive programmes for individual students with severe behaviour problems.

The programmes and initiatives will be rolled out gradually over the next five years, with a budget of \$45 million for implementing the Plan through re-focusing current services and through reprioritising the Enhanced Programme Fund and Student Wellbeing Initiative to support the Plan.

“The Plan focuses on both the most challenging behaviour issues and those issues associated with more frequent but less disruptive behaviour – both issues impact on learning and the well-being of students and teachers,” says Ministry of Education Deputy Secretary, Nicholas Pole. “Teachers are expressing real concern about these issues. The Plan is a response to those concerns. We will also look next year at how work around truancy, alternative education and the work of Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour (RTLB) can align with the plan.”

“The Plan provides a proactive approach to addressing behaviour problems in a consistent and focused way across the country,” says Nicholas Pole. “We are acting on the advice of experts at the Taumata that we work carefully, implement well, and focus our resources and effort on a narrower range of programmes and initiatives that have been demonstrated to achieve results. The more complex and challenging behaviour of older students is an issue that will require further attention as we implement the Plan.

Many of the initiatives in the Plan focus on preventing behaviour problems – getting in early in the life of the child and in the life of the problem. “There are no quick fixes, but with long term commitment from parents, teachers, schools and communities we can achieve our aim,” says Nicholas Pole. “We will start with a gradual rollout which takes account of the fact that 2010 will be a busy year for schools.”

“We will know this programme is successful when students are doing better at school and at home, when there are fewer problems with poor behaviour, when parents have better relationships with their children, and when teachers are confident in addressing behaviour problems and have the support they need,” says Nicholas Pole.

The Ministry also reminds schools that they can continue to access support for students with behaviour problems through current provision. This includes Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour, who provide support for up to 20,000 students a year, the Ministry of Education Special Education severe behaviour services, and the Interim Response Fund, which was doubled in this year’s budget to \$20 million over the five years of the Positive Behaviour for Learning Action Plan.

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Additional details about the Plan

As the Plan rolls out, parents, schools and early childhood centres will be able to access support in five complementary areas:

- Positive Behaviour for Learning – Parents
 - Expanding on the *Incredible Years* parenting programme over five years to reach up to 12,000 parents. This is a 12 to 20 week programme for parents of three to eight year-olds that teaches parenting skills and builds their confidence. This is targeting the parents of the five per cent of children with the greatest difficulties. Through this programme parents learn skills such as how to reward good behaviour, set boundaries and appropriately discipline children.
- Positive Behaviour for Learning – Teachers
 - An intensive six-day programme for early childhood and classroom teachers that helps them better manage students, the classroom environment, and support children's social and emotional development. Over five years 5,000 teachers will participate, with a focus on those teachers working with children aged three to eight years of age.
- Positive Behaviour for Learning – School-Wide
 - Support and training for school staff from up to 400 schools over five years in how to promote positive behaviour, lift student engagement and better respond to challenging behaviour. This aims to support school leadership, and strengthen school culture and climate to address challenging behaviour. Schools will receive support and be guided through this process by trainers and coaches. The focus of this programme will be secondary and intermediate schools.
- Positive Behaviour for Learning – Behaviour Crisis Response
 - A Behaviour Crisis Response Service will be piloted and evaluated in 2010. Experienced and skilled staff will be able to support schools following the most extreme incidences of behaviour, ensure safety, stabilise the school environment and coordinate resources for ongoing support.
- Positive Behaviour for Learning – Intensive Wrap-Around Service
 - Over five years the 500 most challenging and at risk students will be supported by an intensive wrap-around service. These students have ongoing extreme behaviour that has a major impact on the life of the school. A pilot will be trialled in South Auckland and Waikato, supported by a team of behaviour specialists. This team will work across agencies and contract additional services as required. The intention is to actively support the school, the family and the individual student through an individualised programme.

Sector groups providing advice on the Plan

The Positive Behaviour for Learning Action Plan has been developed in association with eight other education sector agencies who will continue to provide advice and support for the Plan, and are available to comment on the Plan. Those agencies are: the New Zealand Early Childhood Council; New Zealand Education Institute (NZEI); NZEI Principals Council; New Zealand Principals Federation (NZPF); Post Primary Teachers Association (PPTA); New Zealand School Trustees Association (NZSTA); Secondary Principals' Association of New Zealand (SPANZ), Secondary Principals Council (SPC) and the Ministry of Education.

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