

<p>Media Release 5 March 2015 Attention: Education & Political Reporters For immediate release</p>

CLOSING THE GAP ON INCLUSIVENESS

A report released by the Education Review Office today indicates that schools are close to hitting the Government's target of 80% of schools practising inclusive behaviour towards special needs students by the end of 2014. The report states that 78% of schools are now inclusive compared to 50% in 2010.

'That's good progress,' said Denise Torrey, President of the New Zealand Principals' Federation (NZPF), 'and what we must continue to do now is keep pushing for more special education funding and support in our schools because 100% of children with special needs deserve the best education we can offer them.'

'Principals across the country want to see children with any form of disability included in a school learning programme that is commensurate with their capabilities,' said Torrey, 'because every single child has a right to an education that leads them to fulfil their potential.'

Principals have for a long time argued that in order for schools to become 100% inclusive, the Ministry needs to apply appropriate levels and types of resource so that special needs students can be successfully integrated into the mainstream environment. That means funding according to real need, not some arbitrary measure.

'When you have a child at school who requires toileting, irrespective of their intellectual capabilities, that child needs and deserves support for the full school day, not just the morning or the afternoon,' said Torrey. 'Unfortunately schools are sometimes left without the critical support needed to keep all of their special needs children in full time schooling,' she said.

Link to the full report:

<http://www.ero.govt.nz/National-Reports/Inclusive-practices-for-students-with-special-needs-in-schools-March-2015>

ENDS

For more information:

NZPF Spokesperson: NZPF President, Denise Torrey: 021 262 5557

www.nzpf.ac.nz