



Gifted Awareness Week, 13-19 June 2016

# BELONGING

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Dear Gifted Education supporter; teacher, parent, professional, student and/or interested other,

In celebration of Gifted Awareness Week our organisations are encouraging our members and stakeholders to "Blast Parliament!" with a letter-writing campaign.

We have developed a template letter you can use, or you can develop a letter of your own.

Your letter needs to be mailed to Parliament as soon as you can this June.

The letter needs to be addressed to:

**Name of MP, Freepost Parliament,  
Private Bag 18 888, Parliament Buildings,  
Wellington 6160**

A current list of all MP's contact details (including email) is available online at <http://www.parliament.nz/en-nz/mpp/mps/curren-> alternatively it is [firstname.lastname@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:firstname.lastname@parliament.govt.nz).

During Gifted Awareness Week we will also be sending out a letter on behalf of our organisations to all Members of Parliament.

Yours sincerely

**Deborah Walker**  
*Chief Executive*

**Louise Tapper**  
*Chair Person*

**Andrew Patterson**  
*President*



## (Cut and paste into your document of choice... Word Doc or email?)

Template Letter

Dear *(Insert name of your MP. See Parliament's website for details.)*

Every child deserves the right to an appropriate and meaningful education.

*(Insert a personal statement that reflects why you feel gifted and talented students need an appropriate and meaningful education.)*

This coming week, **13 to 19 June**, we will celebrate *Gifted Awareness Week* across New Zealand to bring broader awareness to the joys – and challenges – in teaching, parenting, mentoring, supporting and, most importantly, *being* a gifted and talented child. As a member of *(insert the name of your association/s)* or as a parent/teacher of a student attending *(insert the name of your programme)*, I am writing to urge you to discuss and debate the issue of gifted and talented education.

Giftedness and talent is broad and wide-ranging, inclusive of all ethnicities, cultures, socio-economic groups and those with disabilities. Having exceptional academic, creative, artistic, cultural, leadership or physical abilities and qualities means these children have unique learning needs and social and emotional differences that require appropriate education, support and understanding.

Since 2005 schools have been required to identify and provide for gifted and talented students, and this was a huge step forward in raising the awareness and interest for appropriate gifted education provisions for all schools. However, ongoing reports demonstrate that many schools ten years later are still struggling to meet this requirement due mainly to limited funding and insufficient professional development and support. In addition, the resourcing allocated to gifted education, both in dedicated personnel and in dedicated funding has dwindled to approximately \$900,000 and we have been told, after 2016, it will not exist at all.

Gifted kids are diverse learners who belong in our education system and who have the right to progress and achieve to their potential. The Ministry of Education has placed these learners legally within the category of Special Needs and we request this policy is met with appropriate and targeted procedures and resourcing. If the government truly believes gifted children are Special Needs learners then let us see dedicated resources in this field, resourcing within Special Education, for our children.

*(Insert how this cut and/or review might impact upon you, your school, your children, and so on – personalise the letter with your own story.)*

We celebrate *Gifted Awareness Week* by urging you and your colleagues in Parliament to question, debate and discuss the review, with the aim of *increasing* the investment in and attention to our gifted and talented children. Please start by reading the position statement on '*Gifted Education- where does it belong?*' co-written by the New Zealand Centre for Gifted Education, The New Zealand Association for Gifted Children and giftEDnz, the Professional Association for Gifted Education.

Yours sincerely

*(Insert name and association/organisation.)*