**Innovative uses of Learning Support Funds- Feedback from Cluster Managers**

* One of the most effective ways is **to release teachers** to work with RTLB to plan, learn new strategies, observe and feedback how other teachers manage students etc.  It means teachers can focus without having to worry about their other commitments.  We also **release teachers to evaluate interventions** and plan for future management of students and groups of students.
* **A community literacy project –** funding teachers from 12 schools and RTLB to attend facilitated literacy workshops with a specialised literacy facilitator – hosted at one of our cluster schools every term.

**An on-line maths software program** trial being used with Year 7 & 8 students at our lead school. The project is being run by two practice leaders

**Word Q – a writing software program for low literacy students**. We have supported teacher and teacher aide PD for schools (using the organisation trainer); student app for iPads; class license for desktop computers.

**Clicker 6** – another writing software program designed for very low learners particularly good for HLN students (same as above)

**PD sessions for teachers and teacher aides to** up-skill with the Talk to Learn programme

**Rapid Reading intervention** at Intermediate level

·         Up-skilling teachers with **Tom Nicholson Phonics** programme

**Supporting Reading Eggs** programme

**Teacher release** – to work alongside an RTLB to work collaboratively on curriculum adaptation and inclusive practice for HLN

* **Free PD for schools in a topic if referral patterns** are coming through as set trends. Release time for teachers to meet/plan for children’s needs….this can happen **internally** in a school or **teachers from a variety of schools** that may benefit from networking around needs of certain students i.e. ADHD, etc. **Teacher aide training in IYT** themes so T.A can truly support the behaviour plan in class. T.A do not normally attend IYT programmes.
* I am also trying to move my cluster away from the heavily reliant TA interventions.  It’s a hard habit to break.  The only other options that we offer are **special projects.**  They apply for a limited pool to implement a programme to meet a need. Unfortunately at this stage it seems to be TA running the programme… the cycle continues.
* Contribution to **counselling. Teacher release** for meetings - complete gateway educational profiles, attendance at SENCO network meetings, planning meetings. **Purchase of incentives** for reward programmes,

contribution towards assessments – 50. **Taxi vouchers** for family members to attend meetings - if this is a barrier. **Contribution towards teacher PD** if the PD is not part of their appraisal and it supports referrals to our service. **50% towards the purchase of software** to a maximum of $400

* **We use the "Leg-up Trust" for abused, anti-social and behaviorally difficult students**. The Leg-up Trust has stables of horses and these are used to help the students discover how positive actions get the best results. The students are matched with a horse. Some of the horses really test the student's resilience - even a hardened Y9 has been known to be in tears of frustration -then some sessions later bursting with pride as the horse responds to him. They are then tasked to control the horse (not ride).  To achieve this they need to get the horses's cooperation.  They discover that respect and tolerance achieve the best results.  The students gain a sense of achievement and pride when the horse is like "putty in their hands".  Towards the end of the programme the students may get to ride the horse.  I'm not sure whether has been any research about the long-term benefits but short-term - it's great.
* Our schools still love the TA concept. We have 20% for **transitions.**  We use LSF to **lease ipads and laptops** for RTLB to use for technology applications I also give all the RTLB $400.00 per year as discretionary LSF for consumables. We have allocated a considerable amount to **"Resources** " especially technology as we believe Teacher Aide funding is a short term attachment although very valuable it doesn't really offer a long term solution for those students not labelled HLN. **We are developing a bank of ipads and tablets** that are allocated to cases on a longer term basis.
* We have some good work **being funded by LSF to release SENCO’s** to meet with the liaison RTLB for some of our schools. This has resulted in a **more streamlined and focussed number of referrals.** I have also just drafted a document on LSF projects based on the current model for 11-13 which I am aiming to pilot for 2014. I am looking at using 10% of the LSF funding although for 2014 we will be using some surplus for the trial. As I say our cluster is really locked into the TA provision model and the idea of moving to **project based funding** will be very alien to schools.
* We have started **project funding** this last term and have some interesting applications. **We have a STEPS implementation programme, A 2 year level Multilit programme, several schools trailing/ implementing Quick 60 Literacy programs (2 as targeted groups and 1 in class group), 2 targeted social skills programs for junior students who are not 'school ready',** These are both afternoon groups and use a developmental based programme (1 is a group one a whole class). We have a virtual writers group targeting reluctant writers at an Intermediate school and we have just accepted one for a school that is doing **PB4L** and wanting to now target **their 5 % ers with additional staff training etc.** The aim of project funding is to develop sustainable programs/ skills/ interventions that **build school capability** and reduce RTLB referrals. They are all driven by school data and are formulated in conjunction with RTLB.
* We are still largely, although not exclusively, **using LSF for teacher aide work** to support the RTLB and teacher implement negotiated assistance/support/interventions/programmes, which are mostly IEP or RTLB devised, led and managed.
* I see each case as unique, requiring its own unique plan and approach. **Certainly the Leg Up Trust** has provided some wonderful opportunities for students. **Student’s inclusion and access** in many cases has been supported by LSF. The Leg Up Trust’s capacity to accommodate students is limited. There are other one off initiatives which I believe have been beneficial. It appears that secondary school preferences are towards use that will assist a student achieving NCEA credits. Many schools are progressing down a **path using iPads/tablets** as a learning resource to engage students, and there may be some capacity in this area for the use of LSF.
* We had an **influx of referrals** for individual students at a time when the RTLB had full case loads and full diaries. **The recurring theme in eight of the requests for assistance was that the student was distractable, had poor focus, distracted others and interfered with their learning, found it had to get started and produced little work.** A number of them also seemed to process instructions very slowly or forgot what they were supposed to be doing (sound familiar??).**We decided that rather than pick them all up as individuals we would contract Frances Steinberg,** an internationally regarded speaker who is an authority on students with attention, processing difficulties, to deliver a one day workshop, with the emphasis on understanding the needs of these students and on 'doable' strategies for the classroom teacher**. LSF was used to pay for her fee and the venue and to release the 8 teachers who had made the referrals for the day to enable them to attend the workshop.** We asked them to bring information about the students they were concerned about and we scheduled time at the end of the workshop for a question and answer time focused on their specific concerns. **We also opened the workshop up to other teachers in the cluster (free of charge but with the cost of relievers met by the schools).  82 teachers attended. The 'focus teachers' i.e. those who had made the initial requests for RTLB assistance** who were the catalyst for this workshop were told that if, having implemented the strategies they had learned at the workshop, they had on-going concerns, then the original referrals could be reactivated. **Interestingly none of the teachers opted to do this.**

We felt this was a useful way to respond in a timely way to teacher and student need, without overloading the RTLB. **Evaluations suggested that the teachers who attended it found the day very relevant and worthwhile** and they came away from the day with lots of practical strategies.

**The second example also relates to teacher professional development.** Across the cluster there were a number of teachers being supported by RTLB with the focus on meeting the learning needs of students with traits suggestive of dyslexia. **LSF paid for teacher release and workshop fees to enable these teachers, along with the RTLB involved, to attend a Dyslexia Workshop.** They were also funded through **LSF to have a half day release time** to meet with the RTLB after the workshop  to 'unpack' their new learning in relation to the target student and plan suitable adaptations for the classroom. The RTLB were able to support the adoption of these new strategies by coaching and mentoring the teachers in the following weeks.

**We have also used LSF to buy assistive technology and software to address learning needs.** We have protocols for lending these out to schools for trial, with a view to schools purchasing their own if they are found to be successful in meeting the identified learning needs.