

4 December 2013

The Inclusive Education Action Group (IEAG) is extremely disappointed by the discriminatory messages about students with disabilities and their families conveyed Basham's article 'Special needs changes defended' (Nelson Mail, Thursday 28th November).

Basham states "Thousands of dollars are being spent on special needs facilities at schools for children who sometimes do not end up attending. ... However, the Ministry of Education has no plans to introduce a policy requiring parents to give a commitment that their child will attend a particular school before there is a commitment to spend the money." , suggesting that the family who modifications are made for, should commit to attend the school.

Basham's article perpetuates unhelpful, negative and inflammatory perceptions that children with disabilities cost the education sector a disproportionate amount of time and money. The idea that children and their families should be locked into attending a particular school is discriminatory, contradicting the right of all children under the 1989 Education Act to attend the school of their choice, irrespective of disability.

IEAG supports the school principals' and MOE's perspective that creating a more accessible environment is in the best interests of all students, families and teachers, and contributes to inclusive and welcoming communities for all.

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