

Meet Semurana Bradbrook, an Special Education Advisor (SEA)

Based in Christchurch, Semurana joined the Ministry of Education in 2006.



Semurana's story

As a trained primary school teacher, Semurana joined the Ministry in 2006 by becoming a Behaviour Support Teacher. This specific role was for the Canterbury District's Youth Education Services Programme. In 2008 his role evolved to become a Special Education Advisor.

Semurana's day-to-day

Semurana's core role as an SEA is to support students in years 0 – 10 that meet criteria for a Learning Support - Severe Behaviour Service. He works in teams alongside ākonga, their parents/caregivers and whānau, school and other agencies to understand their diverse strengths and needs within the settings in which they live and learn. Together they create collaborative learning and wellbeing plans that help to create environments where ākonga achieve social and academic success.

When required, Semurana gets to work with other amazing colleagues from the various disciplines that make up Learning Support; all to achieve the same goal. He also gets to wear different hats under the SEA role which include:

- working with teams around a child on the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme
- safe Physical Intervention trainer
- being an Incredible Years Parent Programme facilitator
- responding to a traumatic incident at a learning setting

Reflecting on values in his work

Semurana fosters positive relationships with all parties surrounding the student. When this is established, trust and understanding often falls into place – allowing for decisions in the best interest of the student to be made.

Rewards and challenges of the role

“Being able to help children and their families make sense of their disability/challenges is humbling.”
When Semurana is initially invited into family homes, there is always a sense of vulnerability from the host. He finds it rewarding being granted trust to help a child with their education journey. Working alongside educators is the same thing too. Being present in classrooms can be intimidating for some teachers; therefore, adding value and purpose to their practice needs to be achieved every time.

Future aspirations

Being an Special Education Adviser is challenging, but enjoyable at the same time. There is a great amount of opportunity to access professional development and continued growth in this role. Semurana feels that he still has a lot to offer Learning Support and the sector. There are also other roles at the ministry he is keen to explore too.

Special Education Adviser – Role Information

Role responsibility:

- work closely with schools, teachers to support them plan to meet the special education needs of children and young people within the NZ Curriculum or Te Marautanga o Aotearoa
- work collaboratively with a child or young person’s family/whānau and wider support team to agree on challenges and barriers and the solutions to enhance children and young peoples’ presence, participation and achievement.

Qualifications and experience needed:

- a teaching qualification with the full New Zealand teacher registration and a current practising certificate
- extensive experience working with children and young people with special education needs.

Skills and knowledge

In addition to the qualifications a special education adviser must have knowledge of or skills in:

- working in schools and the NZ Curriculum/ Te Marautanga o Aotearoa
- teaching and teaching practice
- managing special education needs in a variety of settings
- education theory and child development, learning and behaviour

- community and family support services
- effective communication, teaching, research and planning.

Career development

Becoming a Special Education Adviser with the Ministry of Education will give you the rewards and challenges of the job itself, as well as opportunities to develop your career.

You will be:

- be supported and supervised by experienced professional colleagues
- be kept able to keep up to date with the latest evidence and take part in ongoing training
- work to support the development of schools and teachers
- have opportunities to share and extend your knowledge and skills.

There might also be opportunities to take part in projects or working groups and in time, you might be considered for leadership roles.

Further information

Learning support careers and professional development

For more information about the role of a special education adviser and working in learning support, visit our [learning support careers page](#)

Learning support scholarships and study awards

If you're interested in a career in learning support, you may be eligible for a scholarship or study award. Find out [more here](#)