

**INQUIRY INTO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY IN NEW SOUTH WALES EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS  
HEARING – 23 April 2024**

**SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS**

- 1 Why is the NSW DoE’s policy definition of “person with disability” more confined than the definition under the Disability Discrimination Act?**
- a. What was the process of prescribing this definition?**
  - b. When was this last reviewed?**

The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (section 4) defines disability broadly, so as to include physical and psychological impairments, and also present and past illnesses, genetic predispositions to illness, and disability that is imputed to a person.

This definition is necessarily broad to capture the various instances where organisations and authorities should adjust the delivery of their services to ensure they can be accessed by everyone, regardless of the nature or term of the characteristic that might be affecting a person at that time.

The department’s inclusive education for students with disability policy refers to a broad definition of disability. It states that students with disability do not need to have a formal diagnosis for the policy to apply.

The definition referred to in the inclusive education for students with disability policy reflects the definitions of disability under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992.

The department made minor updates to the inclusive education for students with disability policy as part of its line-by-line policy review to simplify all policies and published the update on 14 March 2024. The policy will continue to be monitored and reviewed periodically.

- 2 How many children are currently not enrolled in a school, and are also not enrolled in homeschooling?**

The Department of Education is working with the Commonwealth on legislation conditions to use the Unique Student Identifier (USI) to address this gap.

- 3 How many of the recommendations from the 2017 Ombudsman Inquiry into behaviour management in schools have been implemented to date?**

The Department of Education commenced work to progress all recommendations of the 2017 Ombudsman Inquiry and accepted all recommendations of the 2017 Legislative Council Inquiry into Education of students with a disability or special needs in NSW. The latter inquiry also recommended the department implement the NSW Ombudsman’s proposals.

The Department of Education has implemented 38 of the 39 recommendations of the parliamentary inquiry. Recommendation 4, that “the NSW Government works with the Commonwealth Government to increase the overall funding available to ensure that adequate funding is provided to government schools to meet the needs of students with disabilities and special needs”, is ongoing.

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**4 What is the NSW DoE doing to increase the number of Deaf teachers in NSW schools?**

The Department of Education is committed to creating an inclusive workplace for all people with disability, including people who are deaf or hard of hearing. The department's Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) outlines specific actions to advance inclusion for existing or prospective staff with disability. Current areas of focus include barrier-free recruitment practices and streamlining workplace adjustment processes.

Teachers seeking approval to teach may declare that they are hard of hearing or deaf. The department provides support during the application to teach process, including arranging for interviews to be conducted with the support of interpreters.

**5 How many Deaf teachers are currently employed in SSPs?**

The Department of Education does not collect data on specific disabilities. We have a voluntary Equal Employment Opportunity survey; which asks if the staff member has a disability and whether or not the disability requires a workplace adjustment.

**6 How many Deaf teachers are currently employed in mainstream public schools?**

**a. Of these, how many are working solely within a support unit in a mainstream public school?**

The Department of Education does not collect data on specific disabilities. We have a voluntary Equal Employment Opportunity survey; which asks if the staff member has a disability and whether or not the disability requires a workplace adjustment.

**7 How many teachers with disability have been employed to work in NSW schools, in each school year since 2015? Please break down by SSP, support unit within a mainstream public school and mainstream public school.**

Diversity information on staff, including data on whether someone has a disability, is collected via the Department of Education's voluntary Equal Employment Opportunity survey. As part of the data collection privacy policy, data is not shared internally or externally where there is a risk of any individual being identifiable.

**8 How many hours does a mandatory priority area professional development on supporting students with disability take?**

The Disability Standards for Education Leaders is mandatory training for staff who are substantive, active or relieving as a Director, Educational Leadership, Principal, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal or Head Teacher. This training must be

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completed on commencement and revisited every three years. MyPL course time is 4 ½ hours.

**9 How many hours does a voluntary disability elective for professional development take?**

The Department of Education currently offers 13 e-learning courses totalling 188.5 hours of accredited professional learning within the NESA priority area of students/children with disability for teachers to access.

This e-learning includes opportunities from 15-minute online modules to longer blended learning courses.

**10 How many teachers completed voluntary disability electives for professional development, in each school year since 2015? Please break down by SSP, support unit within a mainstream public school and mainstream public school.**

Based on the training modules available between 2015 and 2024 a breakdown of school-based completions is below.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total</b>
2015	24,775
2016	14,450
2017	4,983
2018	4,733
2019	7,466
2020	31,374
2021	25,092
2022	7,655
2023	9,705
2024	5,584
<b>Total</b>	<b>135,817</b>