

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Transition support for students with additional or complex needs and their families

Report 45 - March 2012

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Received by <i>L. Race</i>
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Resolved by Yes / No

Summary of recommendations

Recommendation 1 31 That the NSW Government create a central online access point for information about transition support for students with additional or complex needs.

Recommendation 2 33 That the NSW Government establish state-wide workshops and online forums for families of children with additional or complex needs to share their transition stories and experiences.

Recommendation 3 41 That the NSW Government create an ongoing electronic record of the strengths, abilities and supports required for individual students with additional or complex needs that can be accessed by relevant providers with the consent of the student (or their parent/guardian if under 18 years of age).

Recommendation 4 41 That the NSW Department of Education and Communities consider adopting a tool similar to the Victorian Transition Learning and Development Statement, to facilitate the sharing of information about a student's learning and development.

Recommendation 5 52 That the NSW Department of Education and Communities allow families to submit placement panel applications at either their local school or a School for Specific Purposes. Recommendation 6 56 That the NSW Department of Education and Communities introduce a policy that standard placement panel decisions should be made by the beginning of Term 3 of the year prior to school entry, and that it publicise the date that placement outcomes will be notified throughout the community and on the central online access point for information.

Recommendation 7 57 That the NSW Department of Education and Communities standardise application dates across all regional placement panels, and publicise these dates throughout the community and on the central online access point for information.

Recommendation 8 70 That the NSW Department of Education and Communities introduce a policy that post-school transition planning for students with additional or complex needs should commence at 14 years of age.

Recommendation 9 76 That the NSW Ageing, Disability and Home Care Agency undertake assessments for the Transition to Work and Community Participation programs in Year 11, and that students be notified of outcomes by the end of Year 11. LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL Transition support for students with additional or complex needs and their families xviii Report 45 - March 2012

Recommendation 10 76 That the NSW Ageing, Disability and Home Care Agency consider developing a blended service that would allow people to transfer between the Transition to Work and Community Participation programs if a participant's needs change. Recommendation 11 76 That the NSW Department of Family and Community Services' Ageing, Disability and Home Care enable students with a disability to trial the Transition to Work and Community Participation programs from Year 10.

Recommendation 12 78 That the NSW Department of Education and Communities fund additional Support Teachers Transition to ensure that all schools have adequate access to their services, particularly in rural and regional New South Wales. Recommendation 13 85 That the NSW Department of Education and Communities provide ongoing funding and support to establish transition programs for newly arrived refugee children and young people, such as the 'Beginning School Well' pilot.

Recommendation 14 85 That the NSW Government develop a standard assessment process for all newly arrived refugee children and young people to determine their skill and education level, so that they can be placed in the most appropriate educational setting based on their capabilities and educational needs rather than age.

Recommendation 15 96 That the NSW Government consider ways to increase transition support services for students with additional or complex needs and their families in rural and regional New South Wales.

Recommendation 16 103 That the NSW Government amend the Supervisor Subsidy Scheme so that funding continues while a student is enrolled in school, even after the student turns 18.

Recommendation 17 112 That the NSW Department of Education and Communities provide training to all school staff on their obligations regarding students with additional or complex needs, and that the training include a section on the importance of transition planning and support. Further, that the Catholic and independent school sectors be encouraged to review and where appropriate, introduce similar training to staff in the schools they operate.

Recommendation 18 116 That the NSW Department of Education and Communities review its Disability Criteria to consider including children with a mild to moderate disability. STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL ISSUES
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Recommendation 19 121 That the NSW Government ensure there is a dedicated section within the NSW Department of Education and Communities that has authority to collaborate with other state government agencies to provide dedicated transition support for students with additional or complex needs. Further, that the section engage in ongoing dialogue with the Catholic and independent school sectors to improve the sharing of information for students with additional or complex needs who transfer across sectors.

Recommendation 20 122 That the NSW Government fund the NSW Department of Education and Communities to provide adequate and timely case management through the dedicated transition section to support students with additional or complex needs through key transitions.

Recommendation 21 129 That the NSW Department of Education and Communities implement a flexible, family-centred approach to transition planning and support for students with additional or complex needs.

Recommendation 22 134 That case managers within the dedicated transition section of the NSW Department of Education and Communities develop transition plans for students with additional or complex needs locally with families, schools and other stakeholders. The transition section should have ongoing carriage of and responsibility for these plans.

Recommendation 23 137 That the NSW Government introduce legislation to mandate transition planning for students with additional or complex needs, and that it consider the impact of the legislation on the reasonable adjustment process required under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth). **Recommendation 24 143** That the NSW Department of Education and Communities introduce a policy that planning for students with additional or complex needs transitioning between schools should commence at least 12 months prior to transition, and that support should continue for at least six months after.

1.16 The NSW Legislative Council General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2 released a report in July 2010 on the provision of education to students with disability or special needs. The report identified significant inadequacies in the NSW education system for these students and made a number of recommendations to ***increase funding and teacher training, improve assessment processes, enhance access to professional support and address unmet demand for special education places.***

1.17 In September 2009, the NSW Parliament Joint Committee on Children and Young People released a report into the needs of children and young people aged 9-14 years in New South Wales. The report identified gaps in services across a range of areas including education, health and welfare, as well identifying a number of promising programs. The report also highlighted the benefits of enabling children and young people to have input into decisions that affect their lives, including input into policies and programs.⁷

Report structure

1.18 Chapter 2 provides an overview of educational transitions, 'additional or complex' needs, *the transition support service system in New South Wales and general issues with that system*.

1.19 Chapter 3 examines issues regarding access to information about transition funding and support, and the *inadequate transfer of information about individual students between education and service providers*.

1.20 Different schooling options for students with additional or complex needs are considered in chapter 4, which also considers issues with the school enrolment process.

1.21 Chapter 5 explores issues that apply specifically to the transitions *from home to early childhood education, early childhood education to school, primary school to secondary school, school to post-school and between different educational settings*.

1.22 Issues that are particular to specific groups of students with additional needs and their families are discussed in Chapter 6.

1.23 Chapter 7 examines issues regarding funding, teachers, school and principal attitudes and 'invisible disabilities'.

4 Productivity Commission, Disability Care and Support: Executive Summary, Report no. 54, July 2011, p 5. **5** National Disability Insurance Scheme, NDIS Select Council, accessed 30 January 2012, **6** NSW Legislative Council, General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2, The provision of education to students with a disability or special needs, Report 34, July 2010. **7** NSW Parliament, Joint Committee on Children and Young People, Children and Young People Aged 9-14 Years in NSW: The Missing Middle, Report No. 5/54, September 2009.

1.24 The final chapter, chapter 8, considers best practice methods for the provision of transition support for students with additional or complex needs, including the need for an ongoing, centralised approach to transition planning.

