

Submission
No 135

**INQUIRY INTO THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION TO
STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY OR SPECIAL NEEDS**

Name: Ms Kerrie Mead

Date received: 17/02/2010

NSW LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL INQUIRY INTO THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION TO STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY OR SPECIAL NEEDS

SUBMISSION

The Inquiry is requesting submissions from the public that address some or all of the following terms of reference. You are invited to detail your views, examples and recommendations for improvement in the spaces provided (copy additional forms if more space is required):

NB: Not all terms of reference need be addressed.

1. The nature, level and adequacy of funding for the education of children with a disability.
 Support classes for children with a hearing loss and communication needs are always under threat of "review" - do the numbers come up? There is no sense that there will be a continuity of service for students - that new students will come on caseload, that parents and students need a sense of where they will proceed from pre-school to primary, secondary and tertiary support. Funding is based on budget (or budget cuts!) rather than outcomes per student.

2. Best practice approaches in determining the allocation of funding to children with a disability, particularly whether allocation should be focused on a student's functioning capacity rather than their disability.
 Over my history of teaching hearing impaired students (27 years) the "goal posts" for gaining funding have moved many times - usually further away. Funding based on an audiogram!! A student with a significant hearing loss & communication deficit who has been supported throughout primary school can be derailed with withdrawal of that support overnight because a decision is made (by whom?) that his hearing is "good enough". "Functioning" must be the driver of how students are supported.

3. The level and adequacy of current special education places within the education system.
 Hearing support classes have grown from 8 student maximum to 9 student maximum against "best practice" research would suggest is effective. Language support class programs reduced from 1-2 to 1 year program - if students can gain entry to program at all. 11 students with no specific program until 8 years of age! Autism classes closing as diagnosed students increases!!

4. The adequacy of integrated support services for children with a disability in mainstream settings, such as school classrooms.
 Our school receives 4 days STLA service which is stretched over up to 50% of students who have scored poorly on MAPAS tests, across K-6. Only thru the grace of P.S.P funding we have also the support of teachers aides to move special programs forward. However unless there is an expensive, possible "diagnosis" many of our students receive no other funded support.

5. The provision of a suitable curriculum for intellectually disabled and conduct disordered students.

Curriculum content must be supportive of equity issues and ability of students.

6. Student and family access to professional support and services, such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and school counsellors.

Unless parents are financially well off such services are beyond their means. Waiting times of a specious is available at all, are detrimental to remediation. School counsellors are stretched beyond possible serving students well.

7. The provision of adequate teaching training, both in terms of pre-service and ongoing professional training.

Sweden - 5 year degree course to become a teacher at the dead. full time
My training - 25 years ago - 1 year post graduate course to become t.o.d.

Current training - 1 unit of university degree in sensory loss education

8. Any other related matters.

We are always asked to do more with less. Students miss out. Teachers lose heart.

compare & contrast!

Name: Kerrie Mead

Address:

Teleph

Date:

(Please tick)

<input type="checkbox"/> Parent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Teacher
<input type="checkbox"/> Principal	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____

If you are making a submission on behalf of an organisation, please indicate who has authorised it, for example, the executive committee, president or chairperson.

Organisation:

Authorised by:

Send your submission to:

The Director
General Purpose Standing
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Online: www.nswtf.org.au and click on
Special Education Inquiry