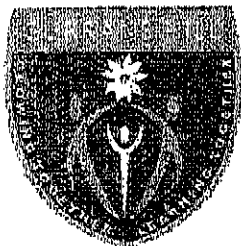


Submission
No 142

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

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Date received: 17/02/2010



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Inquiry into the Provision of education to students with a disability or special needs

Terms of Reference

#1 The nature, level and adequacy of funding for the education of children with a disability

The amount of funding is decreasing whilst the number of children being formally diagnosed with a disability is increasing. The funding is not keeping up and schools are asked to "manage" and stretch the funds further.

#3 The level and adequacy of current special education places within the education system.

We have a child with ADHD, autism spectrum (aspergers) who has successfully gained a place in an ED unit (Emotional). She is being integrated back into our school one day per week but we are not able to access integration funding which has been frozen due to her placement. In order to gain funding support in 2009 we had to:-

- Access ISTB (Itinerant Support for Behaviour) and learning support on a weekly basis
- Write 2 RSSSP submissions to get aide support to cope with her violence and disruptions
- Apply for integration funding and liaise with many agencies – lengthy documentation
- The child had 2 short and 2 long suspensions (could have had more)

We want her transition back into mainstream to be successful so we need aide support in the room on the day she returns to our school. As she is at the ED unit 4 days per week we receive no funding so now we must again write another submission for RISSP funding which, if successful, will only provide minimal support for a short term and then we need to apply yet again!

More special places are urgently needed. Many students attend a special setting for a set period of time and are often integrated back into the mainstream still requiring significant support. Time is taken away from other students and their learning is disrupted.

4 The adequacy of integrated support services for children with a disability in mainstream settings, such as school classrooms.

Inadequate support for students with ADHD, ODD, Aspergers in classroom situations. Students in the class have their learning disrupted continually as the individual requires constant attention. A child at our school has aspergers, an intellectual disability and epilepsy. She requires 1:1 attention and cannot work independently. The remainder of the class do not receive the right amount of attention in many circumstances. The child with the disability is also not reaching their potential because we can't give her enough support either.

It is frustrating that children who are IM (Mild intellectual disability) or just above (missed out on new lower level) do not have access to support funding based on their individual needs. The STLA staff has to try to cater for them as a group!

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

There is a great need for these special supports services. Speech pathologists for receptive and expressive language disorders are a common problem in our school.

We need more school counsellor time. We have 2 ½ days per week for 470 students. Much of our counsellor time is used to assess, report and write submissions. There is limited time to actually counsel students and this need is essential. We need more counsellor time!

We highly recommend the return of the school nurse to test sight and hearing of students.

Families cannot access these professional services and waiting lists are too long – cost for many families is way too much so many families rely heavily on the school to support them (the school counsellor).

We now have a new Keep Them Safe policy implemented into schools. DOCS are only handling cases of “significant” harm. The school (Learning Support Team and counsellor) is left to arrange support for families for everything else and to liaise with other agencies. It may sound good in theory but again, with limited counsellor time how can these people be expected to take on more duties.

#8 Any other related matters.

The DET’s newly proposed model for supporting students will, if allowed to be implemented, be extremely detrimental to students. Aide funding support is to be cut dramatically and one teaching staff member given online training to be the “expert” to provide advice and support to students in need and to upskill classroom teachers. The majority of direct support for students will disappear. It may be cost effective but at a cost to students. The “expert” teacher, after their online training, will need to support students and staff in academic areas of Literacy and Numeracy, behaviour issues, classroom management, autism issues, etc.....

The proposal relies on schools determining where the support will be used for their school but the fact is..... limited support means cost saving and less support for students in need.

Kind regards,