

Submission
No 91

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

Name: Name Suppressed
Date received: 12/02/2010

Partially Confidential

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*).

Please indicate if you would like your submission kept confidential.

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.

Funding support is restrictive in terms of those students who qualify.

TVET Disability funding does not allow for adequate support of students in settings and for work placement, especially for the IM cohort. Discreet courses are sometimes inappropriate or too easy yet support is needed in regular courses.

There is inadequate funding / support in terms of classroom support whether it be SOSLO support or teacher in class. Greater support is needed for students integrated into regular settings, especially in high school. When students are integrated from the support class into the mainstream setting it can create strain on teachers re modifying materials. There is often not enough aid support available to go around all classes.

Considerations need to be made regarding timetabling in schools and the structure of classes in these settings. It is age inappropriate and somewhat archaic to have a class consisting of students 7 - 12. We need aged classes within the support class.

More funding is needed to facilitate work experience for IO and IM students on independent sites prior to leaving school. Focus should be on optimum numbers in classes given the particular mix of students and not be driven by maximum numbers. It is unrealistic to expect teachers to teach, be in school supervising, out at work sites developing work skills, and travel training, too many unrealistic expectations regarding ILP,ITPS are made.

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.

There needs to be a more consultative process undertaken and consideration made based on students intellectual functioning as well as functional ability, consideration should be also made for students with behaviour issues. People who have not met the child should not be determining allocation of funding.

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

Many more places and staff need to be made available for behaviour students or places within mainstream setting established to cater for the needs of these students. They are very labour intensive due to the whole conflict resolution process and time needed to intervene. Consideration should be made regarding the physical aspects and structure of the setting in which they are going.

Where there are more than 3 classes set up in a school whether IM or IO e.g. A Support Unit. Then there needs to be a non teaching executive placed to assist with management and support staff and students.

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

There seems to be more support in primary setting for this than in high school possibly because of the nature of the curriculum however, more supported integration in terms of lesson resourcing and training may assist. There are still barriers and misunderstanding of the application of life skills in the high school setting. Numbers in classes are impacted in the high school setting when students are integrated therefore more period allocation to construct smaller classes based on identified students with a disability who are integrated may alleviate this issue.

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

The current stage 6 curriculum for high school students is somewhat easy for some students.

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

There is normally no speech, occupational or physiotherapy services available for special education students in the high school mainstream setting and very little for students accessing the support units. Counsellor's within school needs to increase. Support in terms of adequate counsellor support to see students who are emotionally affected by daily events or reactive in the class setting and need debriefing is greatly inadequate in school setting. Where there are large support units a lot of testing needs to be regularly updated which can take time.

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

Teachers on special ed. classes need to be appropriately qualified, and qualifications upgraded or refreshed through teacher training. Some of the QTL approaches are excellent but inappropriate for Special Education children and are somewhat removed from the notion of individual educational plans for students.

Non trained teachers should not be placed in Special Education settings. While they may have excellent skills there is a lot of other aspects related to intellectual disability not covered in general teaching courses. There is very little school time available to support the T&D and debriefing these teachers sometimes require.

8. Any other related matters.

If a student's family move to another area and the student needs to transfer to an equivalent placement it should not be necessary to make an access request which may delay the student's enrolment.

Classes in support need to be a maximum of 8 for IO classes and 12 for IM classes.

Send your submission to:

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