

Submission
No 89

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

Name: Ms Heather West

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NSW LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL INQUIRY INTO THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION FOR 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.

Acknowledge it is expensive to provide personnel + building modifications. From practical point of view we need 2 Aides for toileting, can't employ for < 2 hr block. Mobility diff kids need Aides for lunch/recess, transition times to library, RFF, Computer Lab so needed for short periods scattered thru day. Level of service depends on number of chn with funding in school to pool time to employ Aides when needed. Class teachers help in room often not at optimum time

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. ^{personnel} ^{not ideal}

The number system to apply for integration takes into account functioning capacity.

Yes, some kids miss out because their disability doesn't fit into a neat medical category.

Intellectual disabilities are not funded in mainstream + have huge variety in functioning capacity.

Some parents either won't address their kids needs by attending professionals for official diagnosis or don't want their child labelled.

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

Huge need to address mental health issues of students before they can begin to engage. They disrupt the learning of others + present school systems don't support them. They need trained counsellors to deal with issues affecting emotional health.

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

Room sizes have not increased for more than 50 yrs. Students are physically bigger than previous generations, rooms have desks for several computers. Teaching is no longer sitting quietly at desks with teacher writing on board. Any child with wheelchair/walker, special desk, mobility issue should count as 2 or 3 students to limit overcrowding.

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

STLAs are experienced in helping teachers cater for intellectually disabled students, but not the time to help implement. The gap gets so wide by primary, that the CT cannot teach the curriculum to the class + manage an individual program adequately. No funding is able for Aide time. LAF funding didn't cover more than $2 \times \frac{1}{2}$ hr sessions/wk. Conduct disorder students need psychological interventions + support them + no-one is trained in schools to

6. Student and family access to professional support and services, such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and school counsellors. debar. Not a school counsellor in time area

Many parents won't/can't afford time off work to take their child. Assessments have long wait lists in Goulburn, but at least we have a service - unlike Yass + Cooma. Other country areas would be worse. Parents won't travel far for assistance. Therapy sessions are v. hard to get into + don't last long enough to make significant inroads.

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

Pre-service training not adequate. One prac should entail being on a class with at least one child with a significant disability + the teacher is effectively managing - so she they can learn strategies. On-going training is available but not given in the context of delivering the curriculum to the other students in the class while catering for the particular needs of child with disability.

8. Any other related matters.

In the 1990s when I did my Sp-Ed degree Canada counted each child with a disability as 4 students to reduce the teachers load so they could adequately cater for their needs.

I have just completed the On-line training for STLAs in Motor Co-ordination difficulties sourced from England. Each class has full-time Aides to deliver the programs. Can't see how we

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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.

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Authorised by:

Send your submission to:

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can in the personal time restraints in NSW DET schools