

Submission
No 48

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

Name: Name Suppressed

Date received: 9/02/2010

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):

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.

Totally inadequate or inequitably distributed. Itinerant support is ineffective for some students so we are left to cope as best we can which is often far from satisfactory for the school or the student. Few support personnel have strategies that actually work with conduct disordered children. Generally interventions don't work & children are returned to the mainstream fulltime & have not changed. Suggested programs are often impractical.

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.

Ideally each case would be looked at individually. We have 2-10 students who are doing well in the mainstream, but another one who we can't cater for adequately. We have a child in an ED setting who is fine in that setting but very disruptive on the day he is with us. His safety and well being are not catered for in a mainstream setting. Staff are unduly stressed by having to try to meet his needs.

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

Inadequate - we have been waiting 12 months for a placement in a multicategorical class for a student. Another 10 student has been waiting 3 months. If a child needs a special setting then ideally it should be available. It needs to be a priority to train teachers in special ed. especially for conduct disordered classes & to find venues to establish more classes.

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

As in ① above. The proper care of children in all disability areas will need significantly more money to be adequate to current & future needs in this area. Schools often just 'put up with' difficult students to the detriment of their own mental health. This children often end up being a drain on community resources in the future.

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

We are at a loss often, as to how to adequately provide an appropriate curriculum for these children. Conduct disordered students in particular create stress for staff & students as well as 'turning parents off' public education. Staff are not trained to deal with such a multitude of needs in the classroom.

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

As a small school we have a counsellor 1/2 day per week but we have at least a dozen children who need a significant level of support. Professional support is often too expensive for parents in low SES areas & the waiting list for cheaper options is several months. Many student needs consequently, go undiagnosed & unsupported.

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

Training is currently almost non-existent & not useful in a mainstream situation with seriously damaged children. Our class sizes are large and 2-3 challenging students ^{per class} seriously compromises the learning & comfort level of students & staff. Teachers cannot realistically provide quality teaching in this situation.

8. Any other related matters.

As a teaching principal it is frustrating to not be able to adequately support staff with seriously conduct disordered children coupled with poor parenting. We work hard but to no avail with some children for whom a mainstream setting is not appropriate. More research, more money is needed Now!

Send your submission to:

The Director
General Purpose Standing
Committee No. 2
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Fax: (02) 9230 3416

Email: gpscno2@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Online: www.nswtf.org.au and click on
Special Education Inquiry