

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

Name: Ms Wendy Wilkinson

Date received: 27/02/2010

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*).

Please indicate if you would like your submission kept confidential.

Not 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.

I believe the level and adequacy of funding is inadequate as I have experienced classroom ratios of one teacher and one aide per 20 children of which have varying abilities and disabilities. Some class ratios are one teacher and one aide per 10 IO children and one teacher, one aide per 8 IM children. A high percentage of children have IEP's (Individual Education Plans) and require a high level of one on one support. There is limited access to Itinerant Support teachers and support aides in every grade. Some support staff are funded from other sources not from a specified 'disability' fund to cater for this short fall of funds.

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.

I believe a holistic approach to an individual is **not** beneficial, as one size does not fit all. A \$value seems to be allocated to a child which could mean time allocated in 2 day slots or 4 ½ day time slots which may not benefit an individuals requirements. There are many other medical conditions that require consideration. Some children are prone to sickness just in the winter months. The system must be flexible in its application.

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

Due to our changing cultural environment, there is now a greater demand to provide adequate special education places. Through the use of our Learning Support Plans actioned by our Learning Support Teams we have ESL (English Second Language) students, some coupled with a disability that require special education placement. I believe there are inadequate places for the growing needs of the children.

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

I believe integrated support services could be improved. The ranges of disabilities children may have in an integrated classroom include language (both expressive and/or receptive) disorders, Autism Spectrum, Aspergers, Behavioural disorders, ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder), Dyspraxia etc. Some children have a combination of these disorders that firstly needs to be diagnosed by a professional support service. These reports and recommendations are then followed up by our Support Teams and supported in the classroom by available teachers and aides and these staffing level require funding.

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

Any child with a disability or conduct disorder requires individual attention from an itinerant support teacher or aide as outlined in the child's IEP. This requires time and professional skill from the Support Team to implement individual programs that requires constant monitoring, reporting and changing according to the child's needs.

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

To access professional services such as Speech Therapy, in our area, there is an excessive lead time. My own experience with my son resulted in a five-month delay in accessing this service. I believe there is a lack of professional services to cater for the volume of cases and this needs to be addressed. There are no 'free' services and restricted conditions on Government Assisted Services. I was charged \$75 per session and \$350 for an Initial Assessment Report over 2 months and then recommended for a term of short ½ hour sessions at \$65 per session targeting just comprehension. This would not be possible for some low-income families.

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

Professional Development Courses are available to teachers but the choice and/or number of courses are restricted by the funding allocation. I believe the funding would be inadequate for all teachers to be up skilled in the basic areas of the curriculum without keeping abreast with technology matters.

8. Any other related matters.

Name: Wendy Wilkinson

Address:

Telephone No.:

Date: 25th February 2010

(Please tick)

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

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
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Online: and click
on Special Education Inquiry