

Submission
No 94

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

Name: Name Suppressed
Date received: 15/02/2010

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. Within the Public School system, children with disabilities are often left to struggle with inadequate resources and support. Teachers often flounder and are left seeking answers as to how to best cater for these students. Students with a variety of disabilities are placed in classes of up to 30 students with minimal support staff and resources. This means that not only does the student suffer, but the teacher and other students also suffer.
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.
As students with disabilities vary widely, their functioning ability should be paramount when considering placement and funding. Lumping students under a disability heading is not helpful when determining levels of funding.
3. The level and adequacy of current special education places within the education system. There are too few special ED places and with the review of STLA and special classes, this will only get worse. Trying to get students into OL is almost impossible as there are too few places for the number of students requiring assistance.

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

Totally inadequate! Classroom teachers are experiencing more students with disabilities particularly ASD. They have little training in how to cater for these students and receive limited in class support. There is no time allocation for these teachers to meet with STLAs to collaborate in differentiating the curriculum for these students.

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

Apart from some observational assistance from the Behaviour Team there is little help available. Teachers have to purchase their own resources and make educated guesses at how to differentiate the curriculum.

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

School Counsellors are often difficult to see as they have a great work load only being part time in each school. Huge waiting lists for Public services. Huge expense for private services

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

Needs to be far more pro active. Limited opportunities for teachers to attend TPL and at great cost to school. When casual wages are taken into account, schools can only afford to send 1 or 2 teachers to each course.

8. Any other related matters.

With the greater number of students with disabilities entering the public system, teachers need to be given far more support in terms of training and planning.