

Submission  
No 260

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

**Name:** Ms Suzanne Everett

**Date received:** 19/02/2010

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To Whom It May Concern

Thank you for including my submission in the current parliamentary inquiry into funding and teacher allocation for disabilities/special needs education. I ask that the proposed model for the funding and teacher allocation for disabilities/special needs education currently under consideration be discarded for the reasons outlined below.

There are three aspects of the proposal currently before the Department of Education that are unworkable in their implementation for both regular and disabled/special needs students at Dulwich High School, Visual Arts & Design.

Firstly, the proposal to replace specialist support teachers trained & experienced in working with a wide-range of disabilities and needs with generalist staff who may or may not have this training and experience. This part of the proposal is effectively a withdrawal of resources for the disabled/special needs students. This withdrawal of appropriate support for these students diminishes their educational opportunities. The result of this implicit withdrawal of resources from a labour intensive student group in our school would be the withdrawal of education resources for the wider student body. The effective outcome of the implementation of this proposal would be the dismantling of a system that serves the needs of the entire student population and replace it with one that severely diminishes the educational opportunities for the entire student body. This is contrary to the Government's stated education priority both at a State and Federal level.

Secondly, the proposal: allocation of funding and teachers according to the prevalence of disabilities/special needs of the District rather than a case-by-case basis is incredibly problematic. The implementation of this proposal would again amount to a withdrawal of resources for our entire student body. Dulwich High School, Visual Arts & Design has one of the highest percentage of disabled/special needs students per school population in our district. The implementation of this proposal would mean that the resources allocated for our disabled/special needs students would be spread across the schools in our District. Schools that do not have the same percentage of these students. Our disabled/special needs students would be deprived of the appropriate support and the flow-on effect of those unmet needs would impact on the education resources and opportunities for the entire student body.

Thirdly, the proposed removal of discretionary powers of the principal. The discretionary power of the principal ensures that the actual needs of the students and the situation are addressed appropriately. The range of needs within the disabled/special needs student body requires a very targeted approach to get the best value for money in terms of the support the Government puts in place. The Principal, and in particular our Principal, is best placed to monitor the efficacy of the teacher support to the needs of the student and the situation. The removal of this discretion ensures that the Government can be seen to act irrespective of whether that act is relevant or appropriate to the actual needs of the students and the situation.

The overall impact of these proposals for Dulwich High School, Visual Arts & Design, and schools like it, is the withdrawal of resources not only from disabled/special needs students but from the general student body of our school. Dulwich High School, Visual Arts & Design has high percentage of disabled/special needs students. The level of support for the high percentage of disabled/special needs students has a direct impact on the resources available within the school for entire student body. My daughter is not a special needs student, she is part of the Specialist Arts Stream which is the only such program offered in NSW. If the proposed funding and teacher allocation for special needs education were to go ahead this would have a profound and disastrous effect on my daughter's education opportunities.

I ask that the proposed model for the funding and teacher allocation for disabilities/special needs education currently under consideration be discarded. The current system serves the needs of our students far more economically and effectively.

regards

**Suzanne Everett**