

**Submission
No 10**

**INQUIRY INTO STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY OR
SPECIAL NEEDS IN NEW SOUTH WALES SCHOOLS**

Organisation: Ms Lyn Collins
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As public school teachers and NSW Teachers Federation members we continue to campaign for the right of every student to receive a public education of the highest quality and for all students to become successful learners.

We are committed to equity and excellence for every student and in doing so assert, as was confirmed in The Review of Funding for Schooling (Gonski Review) that it costs more to deliver on these values for students with disability.

We will not stand by the currently inadequate provision of education to students with disability and the lifelong implications this inequity has.

The National Education Reform Agreement (NERA) and Australian Education Act 2013, acknowledge the requirement for, and commitment to additional funds for students with disability. The NSW government's unwavering commitment to the Gonski funding model paves the way for this investment to be realised.

We stand ready to work with our employer and NSW government in delivering equitable quality education but can only do so effectively when equipped with the necessary tools and supported by a system that is responsive to need.

We offer the following submission as an index of unmet need and a call for equity for every student.

A) Equitable access to resources for students with a disability or special needs in regional and metropolitan areas.

B) The impact of the Government's 'Every Student Every School' policy on the provision of education to students with a disability or special needs in New South Wales public schools.

I would like to address the impact of the ESES Model. As a (now retired) teacher, qualified to work in the area of supporting students with special needs from 1990-2016, I have seen various 'models' come and go. I was an IM Teacher, a Literacy/Numeracy Teacher, an STLD, an STLA and finally a Designated STLA. In each school based position I was able to build my experience and expertise in the field of learning difficulties mostly associated with literacy and numeracy. I became an 'expert' in this field, and with the availability of many opportunities for professional development, knowledge and experience in related fields was built up over time, but my area of expertise was always Literacy and Numeracy. 'Experts' in other fields of support, such as ASD, Behaviour, Language and Communication and various other disabilities were always available for information and direct or indirect interventions.

With the introduction of the ESES Model, teachers with specific expertise were rolled into a 'pool'. Support structures were collapsed - Support Classes Language and Reading, Designated STLA's, Support teachers for Behaviour and Autism Outreach - and all personnel became Learning and Support Teachers (LAST's) allocated to specific schools.

Research highlights the importance of the 3 tier levels of support (diversity of support) and this 3rd level became unavailable to school based LAST's. Support for students with additional learning needs was not improved, and there was no level of support for students with significant needs (apart from some specific classes for students with ASD) beyond that which was provided at the school level by the LAST, SLSO's and/or the LST.

Many teachers without specific qualifications in Special Education were employed in the LAST

Positions and although online training was/is provided, being able to provide mentoring, collaboratively plan and team teach as the role requires, is taking time to provide the necessary expertise for the ongoing support for students with additional learning needs. In conclusion, the knowledge and expertise of LAST's will build up over time, with access to ongoing professional learning and formal qualifications, to support most students with additional learning needs at the school level. However the needs of students with significant needs continue to remain unmet with the unavailability of the '3rd Tier' Level of support.

Thank you.

C) Developments since the 2010 inquiry by General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2 into the provision of education to students with a disability or special needs and the implementation of its recommendations.

D) Complaint and review mechanisms within the school systems in New South Wales for parents and carers.

E) Any other related matters.

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I am a Teacher