

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

**Name:** Ms Elizabeth Levar

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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.**

I teach students with severe to moderate vision loss and believe most of them do not have equitable access to the curriculum on the same basis as their peers, as specified in the Disability Standards for Students 2005. This manifests itself in lack of Braille books, large prints books, compulsory and recreational reading, and in unequitable participation in sports and physical education due to lack of training and resources. Mainstream teachers need extra training, staff, and equipment to support students with special needs, especially in areas of blindness and low vision.

#### **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 have not witnessed any benefits to any of my students since the introduction of this policy. None of them have received extra funding, support, resources, or equipment. The teachers at their school have not received extra training in supporting students with vision impairment.

#### **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.**

I have again seen no evidence of development in the provision of resources, funding, staffing and training for equitable participation and access on the same basis as their peers. I find there has not only been no development or progress, but that we have also gone backwards with no new vision teachers being fully funded for retraining which now leaves most vision teams under staffed and

forced to employ untrained casuals.

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

Parents are not adequately informed of their rights and the procedures through which to make their complaints or raise their concerns.

**E) Any other related matters.**

It concerns me that my students are not reaching their full potential for no other reason than lack of resources and funding. They all have great ability but are impeded in accessing all aspects of the curriculum through lack of basic supplies.

Name Elizabeth Levar

I am a Teacher