

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

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential



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.**

There is simply too many students missing out. Teachers have worked with parents and spent hours collecting accurate data (under the NCCD). This was supposed to inform the delivery of the disability equity loading under Gonski. To date, this loading has not been delivered. Every day that passes without this funding means children re missing out. The impacts fall on others in the classroom also, who are affected by the knock on effects of a student with a disability's needs not being met.

There is also huge uncertainty for students with a disability when it comes to placements in appropriate settings that meet their needs. Often this creates anxiety and exacerbates issues further. From what I have seen in many cases I believe the DoE has a systemic failing in this area that on the surface appears to be flat out discrimination.

In regional areas the difficulties can compound with distance, travel times etc to gain access to services.

#### **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.**

ESES which has seen the reduction of specialist teaching positions into a single role has been a disaster for the delivery of service to students with a disability. To truly meet the needs of students highly skilled teachers specialising in the direct field they are supervising is integral. To lump everything under one position does nothing positive for delivering service. There is also less time to adequately spend on assessing students. Whilst there are some good tools to use, having the personnel and release to do this, on top of things like the NCCD is placing a huge burden on teaching

staff.

There is also the issue of students with severe needs and teachers often doing medical procedures that they have no training or qualifications for. I believe should something go wrong the DoE would have serious problems in justifying why there are no trained medical staff (such as a nurse) on site where students have severe disabilities that require complex support.

**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.**

Without the proper funding being delivered (recommendation 1), thanks to the Federal Government not fulfilling the disability equity loading, many of the recommendations lay in waiting. SSP staffing & funding is still inadequate (recommendation 3). Yearly burdensome workloads of continually justifying a student's disability (4) still occurs. Students do not magically lose a disability and this is unnecessary workload to achieve a basic human right of meeting a student's educational needs. The DoE continually refuses to accept that there is serious unmet need in the system (8). Maybe they should get out of their air conditioned offices in Bridge Street and visit some schools. There is also a lack of spaces for students in special needs classes. This often manifests in the transition from year 6 to year 7 where students with a disability have no idea where they are going and are waiting to be placed, sometimes up to late in term 4 and beyond. Every other student in their class knows from early term 1 and is able to partake in a structured transition to high school with activities throughout the year. Meanwhile, students with a disability and their families wonder, wait, and become anxious as they have an uncertain educational future. Very unfair and cruel.

There is often not enough teachers/support staff to facilitate a safe learning environment. This is a WHS issue and the DoE doesn't seem to be interested in rectifying it even though staff/students are injured daily. The WHS hotline is so cumbersome that many instances go unreported. There is still not enough counsellors and the suggestion that psychologists with no teaching degree can undertake the role of a school counsellor is offensive. Additional resourcing (back to the Federal Gov failure to provide the disability equity loading under Gonski) has not been delivered to provide support/release to ensure IEPs are prepared.

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

Schools are very good at responding and working with parents however the stumbling block comes when a school, with the support of parents approaches the DoE for support. Often begging for resources to support a child and ensure a safe environment for all people on site. Additional teachers/SLSOs or a medical professional such as a nurse. Basic human rights needs denied by the DoE putting students and teachers at risk.

**E) Any other related matters.**

Until the funding is implemented there can be little or no reform. The Federal Government must implement the disability loading in full and without delay or another generation of students will be negatively affected. If we truly care about inclusive education for all members of society then fully fund Gonski - resource the system properly, implement quality reforms (such as the 31 points from the 2010 enquiry) and let the students and teachers flourish.


This email was sent from the NSW Teachers Federation website.