

**Submission  
No 38**

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

**Name:** Ms Jan Pennisi  
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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.**

Overnight students who had build rapport with support staff had this removed. I gained an additional 0.5 LAST, a wonderful staff member who works very hard but it cost me 6 SLSOs. Despite how wonderful my colleague is she cannot be in 6 places at once and for every classroom she cant be in students are falling further and further behind!

**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.**

A move away from individualised funding to a pooled funding model saw a slash in our funding of over \$45,000! We had to let go of trained SLSOs who had the expertise to support staff in delivering individualised programs. In a school of 730 odd students with 150 identified as needing additional support, I have an SLSO team of 2!!!! Staff are told to differentiate and do online training. Building the capacity of staff is all well and good but nothing can replace the benefit of that extra body in the room.

**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.**

The model sought to provide a global allocated fund for students with mental health and autism. Its calculations are woefully inadequate to deal with the growing numbers of students in these categories.

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

Our parents have limited knowledge of where to turn for help. 1 student has waited 22 months for a bench to support him in food tech. He is wheelchair bound and deserves the same access. His parent are so fed up they throw their hands in the air saying Nobody ever listens">"Follow up at school end leads to a trail of dept red tape and no one body want to take ownership.

**E) Any other related matters.**

These is so much rhetoric about levelling the playing field for students with disability. The greatest way to do this is to be inclusive. Teachers are wearing so many different hats that high need students are falling behind. We surveyed our staff and they overwhelmingly told us extra support in the classroom is the number one priority but ESES isn't helping to fund this, we are reliant on Gonski to meet these student needs, but this looks unsustainable!

Name Jan Pennisi

I am a Teacher