

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

**Name:** Name suppressed (PC)

**Date received:** 9 February 2017

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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.**

is an off-site facility attached to - about 5 kilometres from the main school campus. consists of the three classes and students are placed by a regional placement panel. The students are then shared through ERN with their home school, as their home school and their distance education provider. The program offered here at is vastly different from a mainstream setting .

\* Students seen as more complex in mainstream ED settings are referred to this off-site (occasionally have been expelled from other ED settings)

\* The majority of students have multiple disabilities

\* Over 50% are Aboriginal

\* Many parents/carers are unaware that their child has been referred for an off-site placement until they are contacted for an interview to take up said placement.

\* Many students have been rebadged so that they can have a new access request completed and be placed at the . Changing their primary diagnosis to a mental health category to fit the selection criteria for an alternative placement.

RAM funding that is allocated on student needs does not follow students when they enrol in the program at . The students home schools have not embraced the philosophy that no students with a disability will miss out on the services they need and that these students with high or complex learning and support needs should still be valued and supported by their home schools.

There is a historical culture of moving problem students into the programs offered off-site and then not providing any support that would encourage their integration back to their mainstream school setting.

### **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.**

which has been operating for over 30 years would have under this current funding model benefited from being identified and funded as a specialist school setting or SSP mentored by

This model has resulted in no longer having a school counsellor as the disbandment of Regional Panels overlooked the two off-site programs when the formula for schools was ratified.

had always been allocated a specialist counsellor one day a week from the regional pool but as this model no longer exists the base high school tries to provide counselling service for 1.5 hours per week if possible.

has historically been neglected and under resourced. As the current Head Teacher I have used my personal money to improve the teaching environment and provide current resources to better deliver a valuable curriculum in a therapeutic environment.

This year has to date received \$3000 from RAM or \$143 per student for the year. This is for students who are:

- \* 100% with a mental health diagnosis
  - \* 33% with an intellectual disability
  - \* 100% low socioeconomic
  - \* 50% Aboriginal
  - \* 12% on the Autism Spectrum
  - \* 50% known to the Juvenile Justice with 34% having been incarcerated in Juvenile Justice centres.
- We also have no access to specialist teaching rooms and with shrinking casual salaries budget have been encouraged not to cover absent colleagues. This is a grave concern with students who have complex needs. If we are understaffed and a critical incident occurs resulting in an individual being hurt this would be a difficult hurdle to overcome.

**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.**

is funded the same as mainstream ED settings but with no funding to provide the specialist intervention necessary to the students, parents and staff. The Education Minister stated in June 2016 "Every child in Australia with a disability will be able to receive the correct loading, as they should, to match their disability".

In order to provide the best possible services to initiate change there should be a formula that can be applied so that each student receives an amount that reflects their needs and circumstances. Then the funding could follow the student and be used to target their specific learning and emotional deficits. Without this recommendation much of the targeted funding will never reach the students for which it was intended. A good school follows the department guidelines a great school strives to improve the lives of all its stakeholders.

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

has an excellent relationship with all our students parents/carers and I invite this committee to visit and see what a dedicated and committed staff can achieve on a shoe string budget. We also have our own webpage that showcases the achievements of our students and produce a newsletter each month that is posted home to every family.

**E) Any other related matters.**

