

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date received: 9 February 2017

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.

I am a teacher with almost 40 years experience working with students in NSW public schools. Over many years I have worked intensively with students requiring additional support. I now despair as the need has risen and the supply of support has dropped. I coordinate services and support to families in our school of 180 students in coastal NSW. Speech therapy is almost non existent and we have a student who uses Royal Far West adobe connect, at a cost of \$90 for half an hour that the parents have agreed to pay.

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.

Whilst this program has so much merit and I feel teachers are working hard to fill commitments, it is the tight guidelines on what constitutes a fundable disability that concerns me. Schools are stretched to support students with additional needs and continually write access requests and seek external agency support, only to be told students don't meet guidelines for support. This is particularly evident with Behaviour/Emotional needs. In my earlier years we received support for students with a mild cognitive disability.....nothing extra today.

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.

We are currently experiencing acute staff shortages and staff turnovers at the administration level.

Submissions are going many weeks overtime and responses are poor. Staff dealing with access requests, appeals and complaints are overstretched and stressed.

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

Efforts are always made to get best outcomes.....loud voices, advocacy and brilliant submissions all take time and effort.

I worry about equity of action.

E) Any other related matters.

Currently I am attempting to timetable SLSO support for four funded students at our school. It feels like putting a bandaid on a gaping wound. We always do our best with limited resources, which in my experience, is dwindling each year. I am strongly opposed to the continual establishment of support units in regional areas, as the drawing schools can sometimes be small and students are taken from their Community or peers.

All these statements are personal feelings and do not always reflect the general policy of our school.)