

**Submission
No 59**

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

Name: Ms Marie Van-Beek

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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.

Students are not provided with equitable access to resources. As a Learning and Support teacher, I am being asked to fill in gaps with staffing simply because my school can't afford to hire a casual member of staff to fill in gaps. This tells me that students with disabilities are not priorities and resources for day to day running of school are stretched. Every year the additional funding for students with disabilities is tightened, not increased as needs based funding demands. There also students who are not eligible to access funding as their disabilities are not recognized. With students with disabilities making up 20% of the school population, further access needs to be provided not only in funds but also in a timely way.

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.

'Every school, every student' seems to be simply a catch phrase. Every student but not ADHD students, for example who can't access any funding to meet their learning needs. These students are still seen as having behavioural problems or a result of bad parenting. There is a lack of knowledge and understanding about those with working memory issues. I know as I am the parent of one of these students. The students at the school I currently teach are not all receiving the help and assistance they require. Teachers are 'under the gun' to meet the demands of course requirements, struggling against the clock to engage in updating their knowledge and skills in the use of technology, that they often face extreme difficulty in finding the time to address the specific needs of individual students. We have a student with a severe disability who has been at this school for over 12 months and still can't access certain classes to participate in Visual Arts, Technology labs etc as upper levels across the school are not wheelchair accessible. I understand the principal has put in a

request to dept; however, in this day and age it is appalling that requests even have to be sought. It is my belief that all areas of all schools should be fully accessible to wheelchair bound individuals.

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.

Since 2010 the teachers in my school have completed mandatory training in DDA and this has improved their understanding of the Act and their position as educators. This has given staff better understanding and appreciation to my role as Learning and Support Teacher. However, more professional development in making adjustments for these students is required. The 2010 inquiry produced a funding model at the base level and we have only reached 36% percent of that base level funding. We are falling extremely short of meeting the needs of all students, and if only 36% percent of base level funding for all students is the present situation, then this means that students with disabilities are even further behind in reaching a base level for a funding to meet their needs.

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

E) Any other related matters.

SLSO's are a vital resource in our schools and additional funding needs to be provided to ensure that all students with learning and support needs are met.

Name Marie Van-Beek

I am a Teacher