

**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.

Problematic is the incredibly complex Access Request, an application process that rewards students with funding based on a difficult to understand needs based model. The small amounts of money provided for students (even those in the highest categories of need) does not allow schools to adequately support students in need. For example, students receiving USSF money (emergency funds for students with immediate needs) is exceptionally small, around \$1250. This equates to approximately 1 1/2 weeks of SLSO time. For many students who do not qualify for Access Request funding, USSF is the only source of funding available. A further problem has been caused by nominating the ratio of students with autism as 1:100. This school of 300 students has 12 students with autism (both formally and informally diagnosed). Funding is based on this ratio.

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.

Merging integration/behaviour support/etc. funds across the State has led to unforeseen difficulties faced by school teachers every day. Schools with very difficult to support students, those schools that miss out on Access Request sourced funding, are now cared for by unsupported schools. Having Wellbeing Officers based at district offices, while useful, does not equate to those expert teachers who once physically supported school staff with very difficult to care for students. A further problem has been caused by the loss of corporate knowledge held by these specialist teachers - a depth of knowledge that is now supposed to be held by every LaST teacher.

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.

NA

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

Parents at my school have not experienced any difficulties.

E) Any other related matters.

Generic funding models invariably fail to support all students in need. Targeted funding through Access Request, is too time consuming, too complex, and not transparent. Overall, the amount of money attached to various supports for students with high care needs is insufficient. We call upon the Federal Government to contribute their fair share of funding - funding that has been withheld from schools for the past two years.