

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

I would like to ask that more funding be allocated for students with Dyslexia so they can be given more support from informed and qualified instructors and administrators throughout school - in class and in assessments. More funding would provide:

Better training:

Better training is needed to make teachers aware of what dyslexia entails, how varied it can be, how teaching can be tailored to enable dyslexic students to learn.

Non-discriminatory testing/measurement:

With more funding, learning support teachers would be better informed and able to argue for the exemptions dyslexic children need - especially in light of the recent announcement regarding minimum literacy standards for the HSC. Better informed agency staff are also needed to enable them to adequately assist with requests from schools for exemptions and adjustments. At the moment, the accommodations being suggested are inadequate and as such the new minimum literacy standards that have been set for students to be awarded their HSC are discriminatory.

Special provisions/adjustments/accommodations can be made for dyslexic students in the areas of Reading, Writing, Maths, and Grammar; however, in the area of Spelling there are NO accommodations or adjustments that can be made to help a dyslexic student find the incorrect word and spell it correctly. In NSW, if a person in a wheelchair cannot access a door, an alternative access path must be constructed. What is the alternative access path being constructed for dyslexic students to be awarded their HSC and thus entry to jobs and university straight from school like all other students? Readers, scribes, extra time will not help in the area of Spelling.

I urge you to consider the doors you are slamming shut to dyslexic students who have brilliant minds in every other aspect. Remember, Albert Einstein, Steven Spielberg, Richard Branson - all dyslexic - could not spell. Imagine holding these brilliant minds back. Telling them they were failures and not worth of an HSC in this day and age when we know the importance of individual learning strategies and the contributions dyslexic minds can make to society. Will you relegate them all to the factory floor?

The Minister for Education says he wants the HSC to be a "standard". It already is. If a student has completed all assessments, sat their exams and passed, they receive a HSC. Surely their literacy and numeracy is proven via their subject work? Make English and Maths compulsory if they aren't already. But remember, English is not all about Spelling, and in real life Spelling can be fixed very easily! This government needs to move with the times. And it needs to admit its own negligence. The system is failing dyslexic students. My daughter has been told, from Year 3 to Year 6 that her issues with spelling did not matter because her reading is fine, her comprehension is above average. She has been told to use spell check and a dictionary. We sought private tuition because we were told our school couldn't do much to help. And I knew the limited funding they had needed to go towards others worse off - with autism, Aspergers, ADHD. I now regret not demanding in school support, because now she is in Year 7 and we find out that by Year 12 she must have proven that she can spell! Newsflash: Dyslexia cannot be cured. More work on spelling IS NO GUARANTEE! The thousands of dollars I have spent so

far on tutoring are proving this to be so. Meanwhile, my daughter's anxiety goes up and her self esteem goes down the harder we try to "fix" her spelling. I ask you: how are dyslexic students supposed to cope with the normal workload for high school and jump over the impossible hurdles? It really is akin to asking a person in a wheelchair to stand up and run.