

**Submission  
No 187**

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

**Organisation:** Duval High School

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## **Duval High School**

# **Submission to the Senate Inquiry into Current Levels of Access and Attainment for Students with Disability in the School System and the Impact on Students and Families Associated with Inadequate Levels of Support**

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## **Disability Submission**

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 teacher statements as an index of unmet need and a call for equity for every student.

### ***Mitch Valentine – Support Classroom Teacher***

As a support classroom teacher, my experiences in the gap between the needs of students with a disability and the reality of services, are first hand. The number of students to aiding supplied is one of these issues. Time and time again we are having to prioritise some students and subjects over others, for aiding. There is also a large discrepancy between support class funding and other KLA funding. While a one time set up bonus is supplied (Establishment fund) to purchase items in an attempt to lessen the current student's handicaps, no funding is supplied for students who enter the setting once this funding has been spent. Students with disabilities are not a generic cohort. They require specific intervention strategies and assistive technologies to cater to them personally. Additionally, the hesitance to create support classes due to the cost, results in students with primary disabilities and co-morbidities clashing with other students with differing needs. This clash occurs because the student's needs are forsaken in the place of putting students with different disability conformations and categories in the same class. The approach, requirements and assistive technologies required for different categories of disabilities and handicaps are extensive. Expecting students to succeed in an environment which is generic and under-funded to appropriately cater for these individual students and their individual needs is ignorant.

***Alison Armstrong – Classroom Teacher***

DEC and their political masters should be ashamed. It's bad enough that they're choosing to mainstream disabled children with inadequate supports such as trained teachers, aides and teaching materials; but to dishonour the full Gonski commitment is unconscionable and negligent and will make the current situation infinitely worse. Special needs children will continue to miss out, as will all other children who must compete for precious resources in the classroom. History has shown that it will be teachers who will be blamed for any perceived systemic failure. Children deserve better, and so do teachers.

***Tom Model – Classroom Teacher***

60 minutes periods - 10min lesson set up, 10 min lesson conclusion. 40 minutes for 25 students. Average less than 2 minutes per student, one on one time with the teacher. How can this be meeting the learning needs of students with diagnosed learning and behavioural difficulties?????

***Kate Mitchell – Classroom Teacher***

As a beginning teacher, I have been astounded as to the level and variety of diagnosed disabilities which impact many student's learning, as well as the lack of funding available to such students. These students require additional and on going funding for resources and support in order for them to reach their full potential.

***Bruce Myers – Classroom Teacher***

Having taught for fourteen years, I am dismayed by the ever increasing expectations placed upon classroom teachers regarding the provision of educational services to Students with a Disability. With inadequate training and support, generalist classroom teachers are expected to juggle the unique demands of every student with a disability whilst maintaining a high quality standard of teaching for students who are not disabled, or more problematic, students whose families who are not in a financial position to be able to afford the diagnosis of suspected disabilities. All lose in the current system. Students with a disability are best served by appropriately funded specialist teachers in specialist facilities. The current level of funding is inadequate.

END SUBMISSION