

**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.

Teachers feel overwhelmed by the level of differentiation that is required in the classroom. They do not feel that they have the level of expertise to meet the huge discrepancies in the abilities within their class. They have a limited amount of resources available as these resources are spread over the whole school. There are no trained teachers who we can call on to give specific specialised support eg itinerant teachers for behaviour, special education experts etc. The reduction of funding has meant that students who we used to be able to provide assistance to are no longer catered for on an individual level. The amount of time needed to provide a quality program for children with specific learning needs is not manageable as well as preparing for the other students in the class. Access to parents has places huge time restraints on teachers.

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.

The introduction of the ESES policy has seen our school receive no funding for students who fall into the lower levels of disability. This is unrealistic as these children require additional individual support which we are unable to provide. We are fortunate that we have a parent body that is able to provide some additional funding. The amalgamation of the LaS teachers into one role has seen a drop in the level of quality support provided. Teachers do not feel confident or are even aware of the PLASS tool which is user unfriendly. There is no additional time allocated in any funding for teachers to access this tool and complete it in consultation with the Learning and Support teacher/team.

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.

There has been no development of a functional assessment tool which is used to inform decisions about access to disability funding/ no training provided in using any such tool eg PLASS. We have not had any commitment concerning Dalwood Assessment Centre and Palm Avenue to provide residential services for regional children needing reading support. We have a Learning and Support team which is partly funded by the parent body and not adequately supported by the Department. Not all members are Special Education trained. Online training has time constraints which are often difficult to negotiate and specific in school scenarios cannot be explored and discussed. Pre-service teachers should have specific practical exposure to differentiation and variety of learning needs within the classroom.

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

Time to meet with parents is extremely difficult to organise as teachers are unable to be relieved from class. Collaboration between the LaS teacher, class teacher and parent is essential - funding must be provided for this. Integration of students into mainstream classes is made difficult as there is no funding for the mainstream school. Parents of children with specific learning needs are required to be a very vocal advocate for their child to access any appropriate level of support. This then means that there is a huge discrepancy in the equity of resources available to children requiring assistance with their schooling needs.

E) Any other related matters.

This email was sent from the NSW Teachers Federation website.