

**Submission  
No 216**

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

**Organisation:** Penshurst Public School

**Date received:** 21 February 2017

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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 who do not have a diagnosis are not currently receiving the required support necessary to access the curriculum. Their needs are not being met and the gap in their learning significantly widens. Students with a diagnosis are receiving minimal hours of integration and support, which is not meeting the needs of the student and is placing a great amount of pressure on teachers to deliver differentiated programs effectively to the whole class. Access requests for students have been denied, even though they hold a diagnosis (e.g. ASD). Problems arising from behaviour, social interactions and inherent motivation are putting pressure on teaching staff. Funding is currently used for SLSO support but falls short of providing specific educational resources needed for the adjustments recommended by specialists. We are currently lacking in our support of Early Career Teachers in accessing the appropriate training concerning ASD / other special needs courses. Teachers feel that they are not given the time or the support to follow up on recommendations made arising from referrals.

#### **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.**

1. Teachers are creating Personal Learning Plans in consultation with parents/carers to make visible, low level adjustments for students in class. Teachers are struggling with the diverse range of students where the widening academic, communicative and social range makes delivering the curriculum ever more challenging.
2. Teachers are not receiving adequate level of specialist teacher presence in class. Additional learning and support needs for teachers is not being met. Immediate access to additional support within the school to meet the educational needs of students with disability is sporadic.
3. LaST teachers / Hearing Support Teachers do not currently network with

other schools on a regular basis and are not provided with opportunities to observe Best Practice in other school settings. 4. Data is submitted to the department through PLASST but the majority of teachers are unfamiliar with the Tool at this stage. 5. The school is currently falling short of the recommendations regarding support for students with disabilities. There is a huge effort on the part of individual teachers to help students in mainstream classes, however, an overall strategy including external expertise is not currently effective.

**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.**

The school is not receiving the funding support required for the level of need. Funding mechanisms such as RAM and other school budgets are not transparent, and are not subject to scrutiny from a financial committee. The new LMBR system has made the financial running of the school less transparent as fewer people are fully trained in the system.

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

The school is fairly diligent in meeting with parents and carers of students with a disability to communicate the adjustments that are being made for their learning. teachers collaborate with LaST team and parents to ensure that adjustments are effective wherever possible.

**E) Any other related matters.**

Our major concern is the lack of time to administer the differentiation of the Curriculum. There are many examples of teachers who are overloaded and stressed due to the fact that students are slipping 'through the net' or not gaining to the expectations of the school community / Department.

**Would you like the committee to consider** Making the submission and your name public

This email was sent from the NSW Teachers Federation website.