

**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.

As we are in a remote area, our health, mental health and disability support services are limited. Ability for students to gain access to professionals/specialists is limited and wait times are becoming dangerous, in particular in relation to assessment of students experiencing seizures. Students such as these need to travel 3.5 hours for assessment and wait times can be 3-4 months. In the meantime these students suffer between 1 - 3 seizures a week. Lack of resourcing is compromising the ability of school based resources to perform other functions as a result, let alone the cost of ambulance attendance to the running cost of the school/NSW government. Additionally, in relation to students with special needs or emotionally disturbed (identified and unidentified students), 80% of the time of senior executive members is tied up dealing with between 15 - 20 students on a daily basis. They have very little time to spend focusing on their core business of teaching and learning and leading a dynamic educational environment. Increased resourcing to case manage these students is required with a cross departmental coordination of resources if targets to improve literacy and numeracy are to be achieved. Perhaps some review of the discipline policy is required here to better empower educators to manage non-compliant and aggressive behaviours. So too, greater funding and support from FACS/DOCS bodies and involvement AT the school on a daily basis might be a better use of resources. Re-examining resource allocation, in regards to number of executive staff (based on a numbers formula) should consider socio-economic status as part of its formula (as quite often in low socio-economic communities a large number of students go undiagnosed and untreated for a wide variety of health, mental health and special needs requirements). Government funded assessments, in addition to Aboriginal specific mobile health care assessment and management, for students identified by Special needs and Learning Support staff as potentially requiring support for previously unidentified conditions.

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.

This is important if we are to ensure no student is left behind and that every student has equal opportunities in education. It will assist greater community understanding and help better connect people with disabilities to life opportunities outside of and after the completion of school. However, schools are currently under-resourced to effectively support students with these needs to a level that would be considered desirable.

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.

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

E) Any other related matters.