

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date received: 21 February 2017

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.

I am concerned that parents with limited resources, especially from low SES background, are not successfully getting an appropriate diagnosis re their child's disability and this is impacting on funding to meet these children's needs. I believe this is directly impacting students I teach, especially those who present with symptoms of anxiety disorders and those who appear to be on the Autism Spectrum. Teachers like me offer what support we can but without better help, including that from trained psychologists additional to already overworked school counsellors, these students miss many hours of learning because of absences and negative classroom behaviours.

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.

There is not enough funding to provide sufficient support even to students identified as needing support. I have students in English classes nearly every day who only get funded support once a week despite this classroom support being of huge benefits to the students themselves and indirectly to their peers. This applies to a range of disabilities, but applies particularly to students with behavioural problems which contribute to off task and disruptive behaviours in the classroom.

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.

Students for whom access requests are made frequently do not receive timely and appropriate access to e.g. 'Tuition Centres. The 'Cafe Horizons' program which was part of Links to Learning has been helpful for our students needing an alternative educational setting and transition from school to work. This has been closed because of not receiving ongoing funding.