

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
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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.

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.

Our school has been granted a 3rd special unit class but e have been unable to staff it with a teacher

with special education qualifications. This has to be addressed immediately. The school also has students with disabilities in mainstream classes - these student require additional support to ensure they are able to fulfil the work - there is a definite equity issues here - all students deserve the opportunity to participate and to achieve to the best of their ability - additional support is required to ensure that this occurs

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

Does your school have the capacity and resources to adequately and in a timely fashion: - establish meaningful relationships with parents/carers of students with disability? Not all the time - with additional commitments and limited release time to support and develop these relationships as they need to be developed - work with and consult with parents/carers of students with disability? - again due to the very nature of the family unit the time factor is at times impossible - these relationships are vital but from a school timetabling aspect difficult to fully develop - my own concerns have related to obtaining a USI for students - the parents in some circumstances were not able to answer all the questions so many hours were spent following these issues up - at times was put on hold because of school timetabling commitments - need greater flexibility with time to do these tasks - respond to concerns and complaints raised by parents/carers of students with disability? - always a time issue - not enough flexibility to ensure these are dealt with in a timely manner

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.

This email was sent from the NSW Teachers Federation website.