

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

Organisation: Narooma High School Federation Workplace Committee
Date received: 23 February 2017



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.

Majority of teachers who are members of federation discussed difficulties with finding time allocation to attend appropriately to the diverse planning requirements. This included time to research the student need and internal data, collaborate with support mechanisms in the school, time to create plans with other staff and parents. Time constraints and availability of additional support in the form of SLSO, expert knowledge, Learning and Support Teacher, parent meetings and regional support. Staff are having difficulty finding the time to create diverse teaching and learning strategies (adjustments) and resources to cater for the wider range of needs within the classroom. This in turn affects the provision of adequate and effective teaching and learning to students with additional learning support needs. Student equity is affected by the distribution of students with significant additional learning and support needs, often quiet and compliant students are negatively impacted by the externalising nature of some behaviours of students with disabilities. Some classes have an uneven distribution of students with additional needs creating unequal and unreasonable work loads. Students with emotional and behavioural needs appear to receive unequal access to additional support and Integration funding support in comparison to those with obvious physical disabilities.

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.

Learning and Support staff reported difficulty accessing regional support in the forms of Assistant Principals Learning Support and Assistance Principals Behaviour affecting availability of expert advice and provision of support to classroom teachers and students. Online training has been ineffective in meeting the ongoing professional learning of staff as time has not been allocated nor are there sufficient Teaching and Professional learning Funds available to meet this requirement and all the

other existing needs of all students equitably. There is concern amongst staff in how existing funding for students with additional needs is being distributed to appropriate areas within the school and the clarity of where the funding goes. Such as administrative activities as opposed to supporting students and teaching staff 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.

No functional assessment tool to inform decisions and further enhance educational outcomes for students with disabilities. Increase resources for support of students with disabilities in mainstream classes. No access to regional Multi-Disciplinary teams to support professional and allied health provision. No guidelines as to the information required on Individual Education Plan, who formulates the plan in High Schools and its distribution to staff and community. No provision of resources and time for the development of Individual Educating Plans for staff. No provision of additional funding to for professional learning in the areas of Special Education for mainstream staff teaching students with disabilities. Need for formal training for SLSOs.

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

Difficulty in regional settings meeting with parents and resolving complaints in a timely manner due distances and provision of support services.

E) Any other related matters.

Concerns of the transparency in relation to how RAM, Gonski and funding for students with additional needs is distributed and the accountability measure in place within schools.

This email was sent from the NSW Teachers Federation website.