

**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.

Students with significant and complex disabilities often with higher support needs (both medical and complex behavioural needs, complex communication needs) require more resources (ie specialist human resources as well as access to specialised equipment and programs.) Their teachers and SLSOs require more support to provide high quality education for this group of learners. On many occasions, the complexity of our students needs cannot be met adequately with current staffing and overall funding. In general, the staff who teach students with complex needs are often not acknowledged and are undervalued for the level of expertise they provide on a daily basis.

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.

The PLASST tool does not capture the complexity and significant adjustments and accommodations required by students who have complex learning and communication needs. PLASST did not provide our teachers with adequate strategies and knowledge to support and teach their students.

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.

In 2010, the recommendations proposed to fix the anomaly of schools for Specific Purposes being staffed and funded on a primary school formula, even though they cater for a large number of high school aged students. In 2017, this issue has still not been addressed leading to inequity at schools

who educate students with significant disabilities.

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

Due to the lack of resources available there is not adequate time to provide quality discussions and support to our families. Our families need to be supported as they are raising children with complex needs. Often this has a significant impact on siblings and other family members.

E) Any other related matters.