

**Submission  
No 266**

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

**Organisation:** Ms Anita Terry

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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.**

At present there is a large number of students missing out on funding that require it. This is due to the amount of funding not being large enough to cover the need. We currently have to wait for students to become significantly worse before they are considered eligible for funding. As a special needs teacher and a parent of a child with special needs, I find this appalling. If the funding was available to use before the child becomes significantly worse, the child could achieve so much more and ultimately their education becomes more valuable. The value of a child's education is life changing and yet the current system automatically puts some children at a disadvantage. While it is understood there is not unlimited funding, and that there will always be some that miss out, it is also common knowledge that the earlier intervention is received, the better the outcome. At present our system of waiting for a child to reach crisis point before receiving funding, is out of step with the rest of the disability service provider sector. Currently the system is reactive when it needs to be proactive. Every child should be given the best chances and education possible. How can we say that is true at present when we see children who need help but won't help them until they are in crisis? How much potential is being lost from these children due to the current system? The amount of funding available needs to be increased.

#### **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.**

#### **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.**

If parents/carers do not know the education system beyond their own school it is very hard to take any complaint or review of significance anywhere. Even before a complaint or review becomes significant, the system is not always easy to navigate for parents/carers, and it is not always transparent either. It needs to be made clearer to parents/carers exactly what the processes are and where to go beyond their own school if required.

**E) Any other related matters.**

**Name** Anita Terry

**I am a** Teacher