

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

**Name:** Name suppressed

**Date received:** 24 February 2017

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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 living in regional and rural areas have much less ready access to allied services and therapists. It is often reports and recommendations from these services and therapists that make support funding available through DET. These services are also increasingly important in supporting the teacher/school through recommendations/suggested strategies and ongoing assessment of student need, in providing the best possible opportunities for our most vulnerable students.

**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 focus on diversity rather than difference is commendable but using this as a reason to withdraw funds from targeted support is not.

**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.**

Support from regional teams is being watered down to the point of non existence. New policies that mandate recent school based experience for regional staff which includes officers and coordinators of disability services have led to a team of people that are possibly not well equipped to

meet the immediate needs of our students and schools. Lack of corporate knowledge may lead to a slow response to requests for support.

**E) Any other related matters.**

The new AR2 system is clunky and time consuming, whilst not directly accessible to schools it is the central point of admin. of Access requests for disability supports and support classes. I do not believe the DET fully recognises the particular needs of our students with Mental Health conditions and diagnosis. Ed support classes are not treated much differently to other special needs /education classes. Where the needs are markedly different. ED support classes in mainstream schools are often treated with contempt from other staff within the school because the ability to manage these students is very difficult within a mainstream setting.