

**Submission
No 305**

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

Name: Ms Linda Steward

Date received: 26 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.

I find the Access Request process frustrating especially when a new counsellor is not accessible from your list of choices and you can't proceed with the application until they are. There is too much dependence on a previous person in the process. Also we don't get feedback from the panel re the application. Trying to get real assistance from the AP Learning & Support personnel is too difficult, time consuming & then to hear them say "we don't work with students" was the end of patience barrier.

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 removal of district support specialists has limited the access for students with disabilities and their teachers from their expertise and knowledge. Expecting one teacher to become a school specialist in learning difficulties, autism, behavioural disorders, social disorders, dyslexia, dyscalcula, anxiety to name a few, is unrealistic especially without adequate training. We are teachers not counsellors, doctors or psychiatrists. The use of PLASST has been frustrating as well. Every one I've completed has come back with nearly the same recommendations. They all say the student needs an individualise program. Each of my students had one already, but we not moving forward. I was looking for more specific guidance.

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.

Unfortunately most of the 31 recommendations have not been implemented. One concern I have is that all LaST are going to be expected to have special ed training. I don't have that 'piece of paper' even though I have worked in the area for many years. Does that mean I would lose my position? I haven't done the training because I do not want to teach a class of special ed students, and believe that if I use a scholarship to train I would have to teach wherever they send me!

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

As a school & group of experienced caring teachers we do have good relationships with most of our parent, both with children with & without disabilities.

E) Any other related matters.

I need more relevant training to fulfil the responsibility of LaST. The students need more personnel available to help them get through and achieve to their fullest. Extra resources for specific programs and specific assessments to enable me to cater for each student.

Name Linda Steward

I am a Teacher