

**Submission  
No 325**

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

**Name:** Name suppressed  
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Partially  
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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.**

Equitable access should include the research and evaluation that has been completed and trialled in ALL Primary schools for Kindergarten to Year 2 - smaller class sizes. If this is important for regular students, it should be just as important for students with a disability, those foundation years can make a very big impact on the readiness of a child to learn, gaining the fundamental skills in numeracy and literacy etc. If a Multi categorical class with a weighting of 10 = 6 students that is equal to a class of 30 students. Let's give students with a disability confirmation with either IN2 or IN3 the very best start possible by giving them the assistance that they need by allowing them an extra weighting whilst they are younger, thus enabling them to have a great start at school like all K to year 2 students. This would also mean class sizes would be smaller for these younger students. If it makes a real difference to K – 2 students in Primary schools why won't it make a big difference to students in special schools and support classes too?

#### **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.**

Funding in SSPs is inequitable and inadequate to meet the learning and wellbeing/safety of students and staff. Historical staffing models and new funding models associated with the Department of Education's reform agenda is increasingly disadvantaging SSPs compared to primary and high schools, for example • Secondary aged students in SSPs remain funded as primary students despite their age and requirement to access secondary curriculum. • Quality Teaching Successful Students staffing allocation (a primary school initiative) only applies to the K-6 enrolment in an SSP, despite the whole teaching staff (K-12) requiring the professional learning anticipated through this funding. SSPs do not have secondary teacher release conditions for the assistant principals/ expert teachers to

support teachers in years 7-12. The funding was allocated with a loading of '3', 3 x number of K-6 students. This loading does not give equitable funding for teachers K-6 in an SSP compared to primary schools. Teachers 7-12 in SSPs get no support to improve quality teaching • Professional learning funds allocated on teacher numbers only does not take into account the professional learning costs of an SSP where over half the staff are SASS. The introduction of Performance and Development Plans (PDPs) for SASS will result in over 40 additional PDPs in this school without any additional resources (funding to buy time) to support their development or subsequent professional learning. • The School Budget Allocation does not provide individual "Targeted" funding (above the existing staffing entitlement) for students with disabilities with complex behaviour and health care needs. This means that these students are not getting mandatory hours of access to curriculum and students and staff are facing unreasonable health and safety risks. Suggested Response • Fund secondary aged students in SSPs as secondary students • Use total SSP student enrolment based on each student's factor of need, to allocate Quality Teaching Successful Students staffing allocation • Provide Professional Learning funds based on total staff allocation • Provide targeted funding above the staffing entitlement in the school budget allocation to support the long-term learning and wellbeing/safety needs of students with complex behaviours and or healthcare conditions

**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.**

What a massive disappointment it is to read the 2010 inquiry and note that so many of the recommendations have not been fulfilled. Let's get these recommendations in place. Students with disabilities are counting on educators to get this right, these very important strategies that will ensure that people with disabilities are able to take a fulfilling role in their community. That the Department of Education and Training provide additional resources, including relief time for teachers to develop Individual Education Plans. That the NSW Government address the current anomaly in which Schools for Specific Purposes are staffed and funded on a primary school formula, even though they cater for a large number of high school aged students.

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

Understand that there are many gray areas in Special Education Ensure that support is available when needed.

**E) Any other related matters.**

Acknowledge Special Schools and students with disabilities when all initiatives, policies and procedures are developed.

This email was sent from the NSW Teachers Federation website.