

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

**Organisation:** Bomaderry High School .

**Date received:** 25 February 2017

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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.**

A) The Shoalhaven Tutorial Centre is a regional resource providing a short term, intensive program of behaviour and learning support to students from secondary schools across the Shoalhaven area. STC staff require additional resources in order to support the learning needs of students who present with disabilities or learning difficulties within a limited time frame. NEEDS BASED funding is critical in order for this regional resource to support students with special needs and disabilities to develop positive learning behaviours that enable them successfully transition back into their home school.

#### **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.**

B) The Government's Every Student Every School Policy has failed to meet the needs of students at the STC. Students who have completed programs within the STC suffer on returning to their home school, as ESES failure to deliver on funding promises means that classroom teachers continue to struggle making reasonable adjustments for students. Delays in the distribution of funding through Every Student Every School has negatively impacted on staffing levels in regional special school and behaviour school settings, which has been detrimental to the learning progression of our most vulnerable 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.**

The experience of teachers in classrooms regarding the implementation of recommendations of the General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2 is that increased funding for students with disabilities has not flowed into the classroom setting. Schools and settings such as the STC have developed plans to ensure that we are providing individualised learning that targets specific areas of need for our students, and it is disheartening that our plans are stymied by a lack of funding on the ground

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

The parents and carers of the STC tell us that they feel powerless to advocate for the needs of their children with the Department of Education. Teachers feel the stress of being unable to provide effective advice to parents and carers regarding the support available for their child. More successful outcomes for students are achievable when student learning needs are identified and interventions are implemented early in the students' learning journey.

**E) Any other related matters.**

E) The timely release of additional funds is critical to the educational success of students in classrooms in 2017, in particular those engaging in short term intensive programs such as those offered at the STC. Staffing levels need to reflect the significant additional learning needs of our students, who typically present with a history of long periods of non-attendance and disengagement in mainstream education, resulting in gaps in their learning continuum and the need for high-level support in areas of wellbeing and social capacity. It is the lived experience of teachers in this setting that, with smaller class settings, individualised learning, and social support, students are able to develop the self-confidence and self-efficacy to be successful learners when they return to their home schools.

This email was sent from the NSW Teachers Federation website.