

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

**Name:** Mr Mercurius Goldstein

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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.**

We can provide an even more supportive learning environment for all students once funds targeted to students with a disability come on-stream. This is because we will be able to assign more hours for direct tutors and aides to students with special needs, which in turn creates a more consistent, stable and orderly learning environment that benefits every other student in the classroom as well, in addition to the individual students who receive the specialist support.

#### **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.**

#### **E) Any other related matters.**

There are life-long health, economic, social and employment benefits to individual people and the NSW community when support for students with disability is provided in a targeted and individualised fashion. One profound example I know involves recently-graduated students from our school

community who were born with Down Syndrome, but who are now happy, well-adjusted, independent and engaged members of our community. Because they could participate in normal schooling arrangements, they became socialised and educated enough to participate in the usual aspects of adult life -- living and working, getting their driver's license to do local errands, and becoming just a regular everyday person in our community. The benefits are enormous, for everybody -- especially if you contrast this to generations past, where people with Down Syndrome were falsely thought to be "ineducable" and so were raised unfairly to be dependent, to remain child-like, and so were unable to provide for themselves or to contribute/participate meaningfully in the community.

**Name** Mercurius Goldstein

**I am a** Teacher