

**Submission
No 362**

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

Organisation: Ms Susan Greaves

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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.

Our school has many students with diagnosed special or additional needs. Most classes have at least one student, often more, who have additional needs. They do not receive any funding explicitly for them. Some students "officially" receive funding, but it doesn't provide for the amount of SLSO time that is needed for these students. Classroom teachers are expected to fill the role of SLSO as well as teacher. Access Requests are not always successful, even when the student has a diagnosed disability. There are not enough support placements available in our region.

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.

We are disadvantaged with the "bucket" of funding that we receive. Increasingly we have to stretch these funds to provide support both in the classroom and in the playground. Meeting the complex needs of some students is at times overwhelming for teachers, and other students. Teachers need more support which cannot be provided simply because there isn't the funding available. Not all students with a disability are having their needs adequately provided for.

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.

Not all of the recommendations have been adopted. Increased resources for students with identified disabilities in mainstream classes - hasn't happened! Relief time for teachers to develop what used to

be known as IEPs isn't provided. This time is organised from other funds, taking money away from other initiatives and professional learning for staff.

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

Systems are in place within our school, however review processes etc are very time consuming.

E) Any other related matters.

Students who have a diagnosis and are placed in a support unit in primary schools do not automatically get offered a placement to a suitable unit in a high school. Term 4 every year is an anxious time for year 6 students and their parents or care-givers. The uncertainty of a suitable placement is a very stressful situation for the students as well. Often students have no idea where they will be going to high school, when their mainstream cohort are having orientation to their own high schools. Some will be forced into a mainstream setting that is not at suitable. We need to address the fact that there are not enough support units in our region. Also, the process of requesting placements takes far too long. Waiting for a panel to meet and decide who gets offered a placement and who misses out is not good enough. This is in no way meeting the provision of equitable access to resources for students with a disability.

Name Susan Greaves

I am a Teacher