

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date received: 26 February 2017

Partially
Confidential



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.

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.

When a student is referred to the LST and it is deemed by all relevant parties that the student needs to have an AR (Access Request) submitted due to the student not coping in a mainstream setting, being bullied to the extent that they no longer attend school or the teachers simply believe that the setting they are in is not appropriate for the student, there is no equitable response. Yes, you tell us to put an AR in, however, if the school supposedly manages that child and the region does not hear any complaints from the school or the parents, then the region "decides" that this child is fine and all are coping. THIS IS NOT THE CASE. The reason that child and family are coping is because the school continue to find ways to support that child in which there is no funding for. You may say, well that is what we want - teachers, schools to "own" the student and deal with their issues. No.....

when a school like ours puts in an Access Request, it is because the mainstream as well as any support systems in place have depleted of all school resources and funding. Good schools with good staff don't give up and do the best they can to support ALL students despite the lack of funding and resources. It is insulting that a school like ours puts in an Access Request to have the "panel" ignore or decide that that child can wait or be put in a setting that isn't the best setting for them. Parents don't know and learning engagement officers are able to convince parents that their child would be okay in a setting that is not suitable. Once again, this is due to funding and people that do not understand what it is like to support students in the mainstream that need extra support but yet do not receive it due to people in an office that think that because the school or the parents are "kicking up a fuss" then they must be okay.....no, not true. The fact is that the more our young teachers, our ones that come in so motivated and ready to make a difference see this sort of response from yourselves and from their region become disengaged, disappointed and eventually, seek work elsewhere. We regularly lose our best teachers to the corporate world or to other industry due to them feeling exhausted and disillusioned by the DOE. When an AR is put in, it needs to be responded to. It takes many months at times to convince a parent that their child would be more suited to a different setting, yet, we can put an AR in for over twelve months for the same student and no response from the region or any extra funding support.