

Submission
No 385

**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.

In relation to the NSW Department of Education: Students with disabilities and/or special needs need access to additional support so appropriate adjustments can be made to their teaching, learning and assessment activities. Far too many students who have diagnosed and un diagnosed special learning needs miss out on these vital resources. Equitable access to school learning specialists must be improved. Increased resources in the form of Learning and Support Teachers, School Counsellors, School Learning Support Officers and related school based teams would allow for students to receive adequate and timely support. Having students funded based on functionality as well as diagnosis where appropriate would ensure that students with disabilities and non diagnosed special needs would allow for greatly enhanced access to support. Students receiving integration support do not have adequate or timely access to such support. Teacher professional judgement at times seems to not be respected when Access Requests are made and support for the student or a placement in an alternate setting not occurred. Often this occurs with the school being offered unsatisfactory rationale or support to meet the student/s needs at their current school. Greater funding and resourcing is needed to support genuine ongoing consultation with parents and carers. Greater funding and resourcing is needed to assist in timely identifying needs and necessary adjustments to students. Increased funding and resourcing would assist teachers in providing time to further develop personalised learning and support as well as giving teachers access to specialised professional learning. It is essential for teachers to access in class support. Teachers need increased access to resources to provide every child with equitable access to teaching and learning activities for students with a disability and/or special learning need.

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.

Access and provision faces significant barriers in NSW due to Every Student Every School and the Federal Government's failure to deliver the Students With Disability loading component of the "Gonski" Every Student Every School. Every Student Every School has forced schools to work with insufficient resources. Under a Gonski model, together with funds coming through the Students With Disability Loading, this strategy to reduce expenditure on students with disability is completely unnecessary. The Gonski Review of Funding for Schooling confirmed that it costs more to deliver on equity and excellence for students with disability. The NSW Department's refusal to address this is in stark contradiction to the principles and recommendations of that recommended by Gonski.

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.

Many of these recommendations remain unaddressed. Recommendation 1 was "That the NSW Government substantially increase funding for students with disabilities and special needs in NSW Government schools to ensure all students have equitable access to education". Policy such as Every Student Every School has prevented this from occurring. This recommendation is a responsibility of government. Implementation of Students with Disability loadings as recommended by Gonski will, in this context, substantially increase funding and provide resourcing necessary to facilitate recommendations from 2010 such as Number 25, "that the Department...provide additional resources, including relief time for teachers to develop Individual Education Plans". Staffing of SSP Schools has not been addressed and is not alone in terms of inaction in relation to many of the 2010 recommendations.

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

E) Any other related matters.

This email was sent from the NSW Teachers Federation website.