

Submission
No 387

**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.

As a teacher of a support class in a mainstream school it is difficult to access relevant professional learning. The lack of programs is evident compared to a mainstream classroom teacher. Our school is provided an Instructional Leader to support Kinder –Year 2. Our school uses RAM allocation to mirror this for Year 3-6. This provides an off class AP to mentor and support classroom teachers. The school accesses L3, Town and Ten programs and then the Instructional Leader and Year 3-6 AP are able to be in classrooms modelling and evaluating teaching practices of these programs and other individual goals. As it is a parents decision to choose whether a child attends a mainstream class or a support class it is evident of the lack of opportunities students in a support class are provided. Students within a mainstream class are provided additional supports and learning programs where as students in a support class are seen to be receiving the support they need due to being in a support class. Although students are in a smaller class in a support class, students have to cope with being in an environment with a number of other students who have a diverse range of needs and sometimes demonstrate behaviours. As support class teachers it is difficult to cater to these needs with the limited training provided. The needs of a class are ever changing and it is a constant battle to try balance the needs of all students. It is a challenge as a support class teacher to attend training to meet the diverse needs of a support class and there is minimal in class support to providing mentoring and evaluation of teaching practices.

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.

Although the Learning and Support teacher has a special education qualification she does not have the experience to provide support. Our LST is not confident in providing support to the support

classes. We are fortunate to have three support classes at our school so we are able to work closely together to the best of our ability. We are not involved in a network to share knowledge, expertise and specialist resources available. At times we have contacted the Special school in our local area however the support has been minimal and not very relevant.

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.

We have had a number of school counsellors in the past few years. These counsellors have not had adequate training to assist support teachers. As a support unit teacher we have not had department training to develop an IEP. We are not provided relief time from the DET to develop our IEP's. Developing an IEP is a lengthy process involving communication with parents and service providers. Much of this time is during RFF and outside school hours.

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

E) Any other related matters.

The continuum and syllabus do not cater for students with disabilities. Many students do not have the skills to be placed on the continuum.